

SERIAL STORY

'BLACKOUT'

BY RUTH AYERS

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CHAPTER I

BLACKOUT in London!

Outside, the shaft in Trafalgar Square loomed like a ghost, towering and dim.

Inside, in a restaurant on a nearby street, blue bulbs cast eerie shadows on two figures.

They could see at a glance that Mary Carroll and Vincent Gregg were Americans, and Americans in love.

"Maybe this time next week we'll be back in New York," Mary said. "It'll be heavenly to see Broadway blazing in lights after all these weeks of blind man's buff. I've had enough war to last a lifetime."

Vincent chuckled. "Well, we'll have something to tell our grandchildren—yours and mine, I mean. You and I feeling like refugees from Paris and being here in London in blackouts. It'll be quite a yarn to spin from a rocking chair."

Mary smiled slowly. "Funny, isn't it," she mused. "You're already talking about our grandchildren and a few months ago we hadn't even met. It was all so strange, our meeting in Paris. I never could have believed that first day that you, my dashing, romantic soldier of fortune, would ever want to settle down."

"But I do," he said convincingly. "Never thought myself that I'd love a gal more than a war. But here you see the evidence before you. Our passports in order, our tickets bought for the Moravia. And all I want now is to get back to New York and marry you. I'll find a job making planes instead of flying them. You'll live in a little house with a rose garden and forget all about what the well-dressed woman is wearing."

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"And you, my love—are you one of the celebrities she's been rounding up?"

Vincent's black brows came together in a frown, but there was a trace of pride in his voice as he said, "Well, I've been to Carla's house in Mayfair, if that's what you mean."

Mary sensed that Carla's narrowed eyes were still on Vincent, but she couldn't be sure in the blue-black light. Nor could she account for the uneasiness that Carla's glance had aroused in her. With relief she saw the waiter approach with coffee.

Then her eyes widened. Distinctly, she saw the waiter slip a card into Vincent's hand. Turning to her fiance inquiringly, she saw Vincent glance at the card. His face was inscrutable when he looked up. Mary waited for an explanation. When he said nothing, she thought, "This is what war nerves do to people. I'm being jittery about nothing."

And then it happened!

The card, the waiter, even the glamorous Carla were blotted from Mary's mind that instant. Real terror instead of an imaginary one chilled her blood.

Outside, a piercing siren wailed. It meant only one thing. The air raid for which London had been gearing itself for months was here. "Quick! Run for shelter!"

It was as if everyone in the restaurant spoke in one voice. The dim lights snapped off and the room was plunged into inky blackness except for the beam of the hand flashlight pointing the way to the basement door.

Then she reached for Vincent's hand. He was not at her side. "Vincent!" she gasped. "Vincent!" Outside, the siren continued its screaming warning. It beat in Mary's ears. Trembling, breathless she was left alone as the

crowd pushed toward the stairs. Suddenly, her knees gave way and she felt herself falling—falling, into the gaping darkness.

Mary screamed. "Steady there!" a strange deep male voice cautioned. In the dark, Mary sensed a pair of unfamiliar arms lifting her and the rough brush of a trench coat against her cheek.

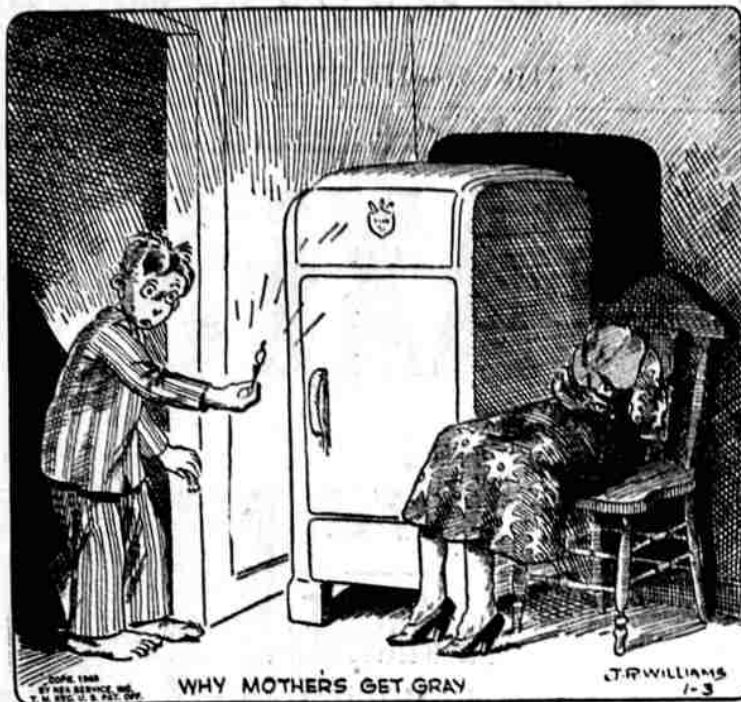
She caught a glimpse of a smiling face above her as the flashlight's beam paused momentarily upon her. Two other persons were watching.

(To Be Continued)



FCA HEAD—Change in the farm lending policies of the organization may follow recent appointment by F.D.R. of Dr. A. G. Black (above) as governor of the federal credit administration. He succeeds F. F. Hill, who resigned post.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

RED RYDER



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN

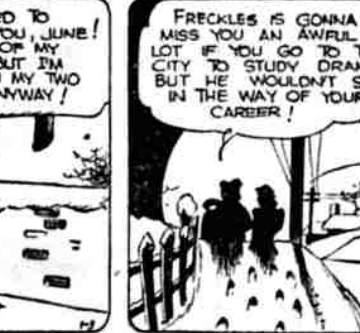
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

BY HAROLD GRAY



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

BY BLOSSER



WASH TUBBS

BY CRANE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

BY MARTIN



ALLEY OOP

BY V. T. HAMLIN



FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"... an' Fan'll come home dead-tired, an' find the desert all made! I just can't wait to see her face."

LITTLE CORPORAL

- Horizontal: 1 Emperor of France who died in exile. 2 Metropolitan of a province. 3 Indian gateway. 4 Sung by a choir. 5 Jesu. 16 Ocean. 18 Plant part. 20 Numeral. 21 Colonist. 23 Organ of hearing. 24 Southeast. 25 Flour box. 26 Mister. 28 Right. 29 Caterpillar hair. 30 Ridge. 32 Overshirt. 33 One not easily excited. 34 Officer's helper. 35 X. 36 Exists. Vertical: 10 Circle part. 11 Uncommon. 12 Transparent. 14 Wolframite. 15 His wife, Empress. 17 And. 19 Pertaining to the joints. 22 Painted. 23 To misrepresent. 27 Values. 29 Health spring. 31 Male child. 37 Sparoid fish. 40 Winger. 42 Breakwater. 44 Insensibility. 45 Custom. 46 Optical glass. 47 Advertisement. 48 Pertaining to air. 5 Langours. 6 Printer's term. 50 Onager. 52 Father. 54 Musical note. 56 Plural.

