

SERIAL STORY

BLACKOUT

BY RUTH AYERS

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YESTERDAY'S days pass with no letters from Gilbert. Finally his pay check comes. Mary knows now it was only fifty cents that prompted her marriage. She determines to earn her own way, sketching London in war days. Her drawings catch an immediate eye. Lady Ponce-Townsend asks to exhibit them in her Mayfair home.

CHAPTER XVII

STILL breathless after accepting Lady Ponce-Townsend's surprising offer, Mary sat down at the desk before the cozy coal fire and poured out her thoughts in a letter to Gilbert.

Dear Gilbert:

Your long silence is hard to understand. I do hope you are well and that some day soon I'll find a letter from you.

I'm writing today because I have news that's sure to please you. I have just had a visitor. Lady Ponce-Townsend, remember? She is very active in war relief work, as you know. She heard in some way about the sketches I've been doing and is anxious to give an exhibit of them at her Mayfair home. She intends to charge outrageous prices for admission to raise funds for war refugees.

She wanted me to be at the exhibit, but that, as I emphatically told her, is quite out of the question. I will not face anyone, as you well know, while I am still disgraced. Her ladyship finally understood and has some notion now of making a mystery of me to lend zest to the exhibit.

Having been so kindly treated as a refugee myself, I'm only too glad if I can repay the debt in a small way. In addition, as Lady Ponce-Townsend pointed out, the exhibit may lead to additional offers for me.

So now, enough about me. You are on my mind constantly. I wonder how you are and if all goes well. A letter would be so welcome. As ever,

night? Perhaps to warn her of Carla? What had happened that had made him prefer to throw himself into the sea than to be saved?

With sudden clarity, Mary Carroll recalled the first night she had seen Carla Marchetta in the restaurant. That strange feeling of foreboding when the woman's eyes had held Vincent's. That strange note: "At midnight." She was convinced now, beyond doubt, the note was from Carla and behind it lay the explanation of why Vincent hadn't been on the Moravia.

She wanted to crawl from the cloakroom and out of the Mayfair mansion in shame and horror.

BUT something made her lift her head in new hope when one of the women spoke again. Distinctly, Mary heard her say, "I feel sorry for Vincent Greg. They say he was almost crazy when the girl he was engaged to marry went down on the Moravia."

A slow sigh escaped her lips. That was it, of course. Carla was making a fool of Vincent only because Vincent was so shocked and shattered after the Moravia disaster that he was easy prey. Mary stepped from the room but remained close to a group of women nearby, anonymous among them. She had a job to do now and she was going to do it. There was something entirely questionable about Carla, and Carla's activities.

When Carla emerged, Mary followed her out the door and to the street where Carla's car awaited. She was close enough to see the chauffeur whisper something to Carla as he helped her into the limousine. A startled, ugly expression crossed the flawless face. "Why did you wait, you fool!" she hissed.

The chauffeur shrugged and got

vening the wheel. Mary stood uncertainly and then saw another car pull out of the waiting line and follow the limousine.

Mary walked back to her Soho rooms, mapping quick, perhaps foolish, plans.

But when she reached home, everything else in her mind was swept suddenly away. A message had come from Dr. O'Connell.

(To Be Continued)

In this warlike season, steamship companies are offering bargain sails to South American tourists.

Lashly Nominated to Head Lawyers



Jacob M. Lashly, St. Louis attorney, was nominated at Chicago convention to be president of American Bar Association, and will be elected to the office next fall.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



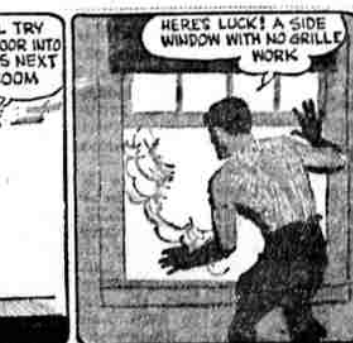
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



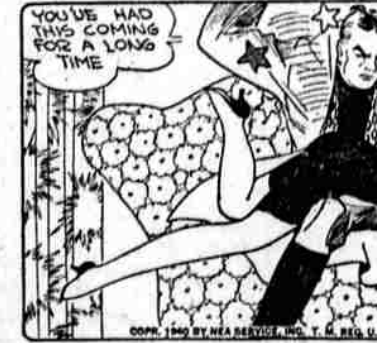
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Just wait 'till I get too big to wear pajamas with feet on 'em--then we'll see who shuts the window every mornin'."

INVENTIVE GENIUS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for horizontal and vertical words.

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Winter held its grip on London. On the Magnit Line, a temporary ball seemed like an ominous dark before a blasting dawn. Enemy planes and submarines struck repeatedly at British ships. The wounded behind its barricades were heroic dead. Espionage worked like some evil fungus in the dark and spy rings were tracked down by a...

On sudden impulse, Mary joined in the crowd that surged around the glamorous Carla. Mary pulled the veil on her toque across her face and, unnoticed, walked up the steps.

"Two shillings, Miss," an imperturbable butler demanded. Mary heard the coins click on the silver tray, but kept her eyes fastened on Carla. For all her alertness, Carla managed to vanish temporarily, sweeping into Lady Ponce-Townsend's drawing room with almost insolent hauteur.

Drawing into the shelter of a cloakroom, Mary waited until Carla would reappear. Then she heard voices. Someone was saying, "Shocking, that Marchetta woman's coming here!"

A brittle voice answered disdainfully, "If that woman isn't being watched, she should be. All kinds of strange stories are told about her."

The first voice cut in, "After all, nobody knows very much about her except that she set herself up in great lavishness in Mayfair."

Mary strained her ears, unashamed at eavesdropping. The woman with the brittle, clipped accent was going on, "It's odd that one of her young admirers isn't tagging along today. I mean that former Spanish war flyer, Vincent Gregg, is completely gone on her."

It couldn't be, Mary thought, drawing back faintly into the protecting gloom of the room. Now, she wanted to shut out the boom of these words. Vincent a slave to this worldly Carl! The voices went on mercilessly.

"Carla Marchetta, as she calls herself, has never explained why that young count who was so much in love with her sailed on the Moravia. Why was he aboard ship in the first place? My husband saw him at the club the day before and, seemingly, he had no intention of going to New York then."

"Yes, and that awful story about his suicide. In the admiral's record it was quite definitely established that he jumped from the deck needlessly."

The woman with the clipped accent broke in again: "If you looked into that woman's past, I dare say you'd find a trail of suicides of men she has ensnared and then tossed aside."

Mary was drained of all consciousness of the present. In memory, she was back on the Moravia. She remembered the haunted eyes that had followed her the night of the sinking. The youth who had returned her bereft. Had he been shadowing her that