

SERIAL STORY

BLACKOUT

BY RUTH AYERS

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YESTERDAY, Dr. O'Connell prepared Mary for the operation that may restore her beauty, and the paralysis of facial nerves. As she went under the anesthetic, Mary sees Vincent and Carla, the blood boy of the Moravia, Gilbert's voice comes to her, faintly, but reassuringly. She wonders if she will emerge as Mary Carroll or as Anna Winters.

CHAPTER XIX

MARY CARROLL woke in a soft white bed. Why did her face feel like hard-baked ginger bread? Why could she see only through little slits of stiff frosting?

Then she remembered. Dr. O'Connell had operated to end the paralysis from the blow she had suffered on the Moravia. Had the operation been successful? Was she Mary Carroll again?

Through the slits in the adhesive tape, cut for her eyes, she could see a white figure at her side. A private nurse, who introduced herself as Miss Babcock.

"What time is it?" Mary wanted to know. "Five o'clock. You've had a long sleep," Miss Babcock answered. Mary tried to move.

"You mustn't do that," the nurse cautioned. "You must lie perfectly still!" She held Mary's head in her hands to prevent further movement and Mary drifted back into a new world.

It was Paris and spring and there was no war. Only a "war of nerves" and the stout-hearted did not worry. There was a party at a count's villa at Passy. Mary would wear her Robin Hood red dress. And that distinguished young man with the scar on his face. Who was he?

Why, that's Vincent Gregg, an aviator. He was her fiance. Only not her fiance then, and later when he was why, Carla Marchetti—

She awakened with a scream. "The ether has made you sick," Miss Babcock spoke calmly. "Lie still and the nausea will pass away."

SEVERAL days later Miss Babcock told her she was much better. Mary knew it without being told. It seemed a preface of something the nurse would say. Mary waited. Finally it came:

"You mumbled some strange things about the sinking of the Moravia in your sleep, Mrs. Lenox," the nurse said. "It bears out what I've been thinking all along and what a lot of other people think, too. Someone was behind it, Mrs. Lenox. I know it."

Mary nodded, her face stiff behind the white muzzle of bandages. "I know," she agreed. "I've thought so, a thousand times."

"My father's an inspector at Scotland Yard," Miss Babcock went on. "I've told him what you said in your delirium. It may mean nothing at all. On the other hand, in wartime, one mustn't miss a single chance."

"The investigation about the Moravia will be reopened soon because of new clues. If you are well then, you may be called to testify."

"Of course," Mary said quickly. "I want to. What I have to say may not do a bit of good. But I'd tell every detail I remember."

Miss Babcock rose to attention as Dr. O'Connell's footsteps were heard in the hall. "Someone," she finished hurriedly, "has been tipping off the enemy to the time of ships' departures. The Moravia and others. Find out into whose hands the information went and you'll know something."

DR. O'CONNELL was hopeful, contrary to custom, after he had placed new dressings on Mary's face.

"You're doing beautifully, Mrs. Lenox."

"Would Mrs. Lenox be allowed a full tray tomorrow?" Miss Babcock asked.

For the past few days Mary had noted a sing-song:

Would Mrs. Lenox like this? Would she like that? Would Mrs. Lenox like to hear the radio? Would she care to have the nurse read to her? It was not only her own nurse who asked, but other nurses on the floor.

Mary could not understand why she was getting such attention. In wartime London, with a hospital full of patients, why should nurses be taking all this trouble for a mere refugee?

"Is it because of Dr. O'Connell that you are all so good to me?" she asked the night nurse.

"I don't understand, Mrs. Lenox," the nurse protested. "We don't do any more for you than for anyone else."

"But you have been good to me," Mary remembered the adequate, but scarcely exacting, care she'd had as a ward patient in the same hospital.

"Well, of course, we have tried to make you comfortable," the nurse replied. "For there's nothing anyone in this hospital wouldn't do for Dr. Lenox."

For Gilbert Lenox's sake, then, Mary had been given care that could not have been surpassed for members of the Royal Family. His wife—but only in name. These thoughtful suggestions, these comforts and kindnesses, all because of Gilbert.

"I wish Mrs. Tully could see me now," Mary smiled as she recalled the occupant of the next ward bed when the victims of the Moravia's torpedoing had been nursed back to health.

"THOSE bandages come off tomorrow," Dr. O'Connell bustled into her room one afternoon.

"Can you tell me anything about the results, Doctor?" Mary could not hold back the question. It was so important for her to know if the operation would be successful. It meant everything to her—the difference between sunshine and fresh air and the stifled existence of an eternal blackout.

Dr. O'Connell shook his thatch of iron gray hair. "Tomorrow will tell that," he said.

"THE next morning was unbearably long. The hours dragged until noon was announced with a hundred steeples. A brief sleep shortened the afternoon, but it was growing dark when Mary heard Dr. O'Connell's step at her door.

Soon she would know. But did she really want to know? What if she should always remain Anna Winters? Had Mary Carroll really died on the Moravia? She wished

now that she might postpone this moment. The doctor entered, followed by his assistant and several nurses. Gentle hands peeled the bandages from her face. A nurse seized Mary's hand as she lifted it toward her cheek. Mary's eyes questioned the surgeon, who stared down at her. His face was inscrutable. She heard a nurse sigh. Dr. O'Connell whistled softly. Someone handed her a mirror.

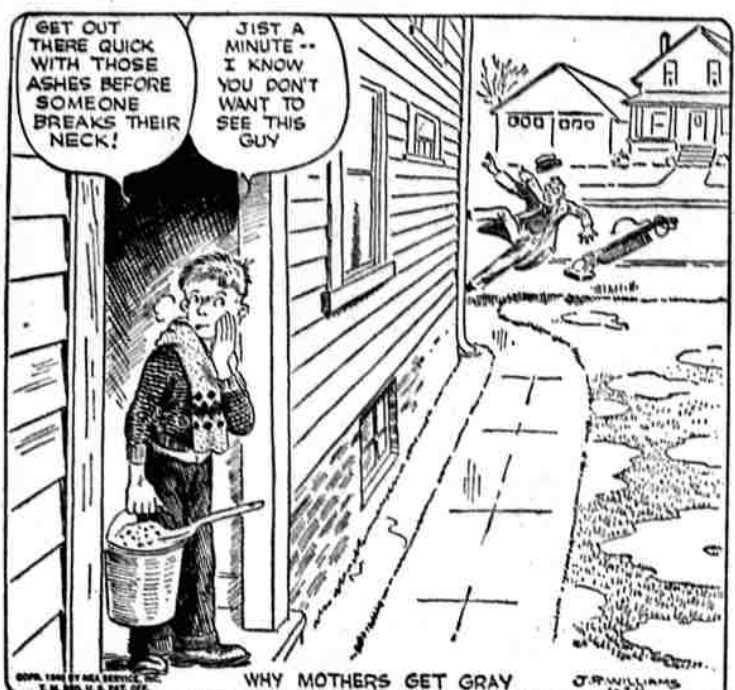
(To Be Continued)

In Man's Job



Only 18 years old, Milton Lamoureux of Sacramento, Cal., runs his own classes in aerial navigation, radio, meteorology and civil air regulations. He's the youngest certified ground instructor in the nation.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN

RED RYDER

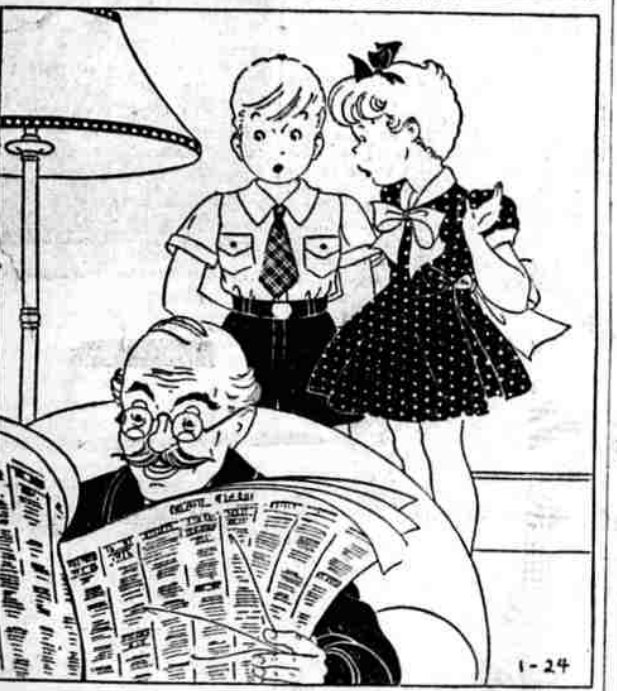


LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



BY HAROLD GRAY

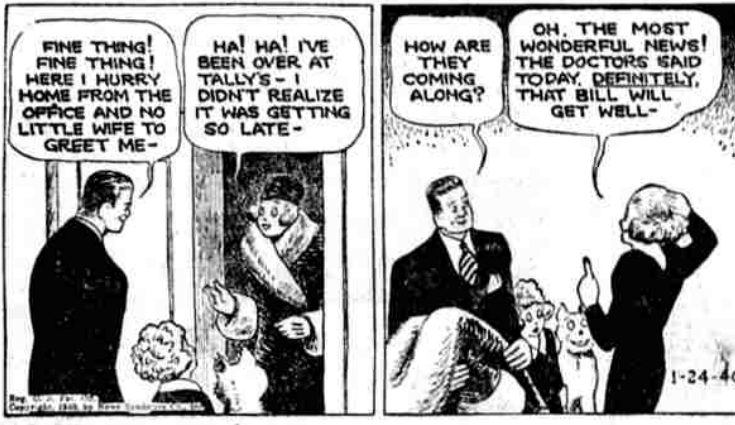
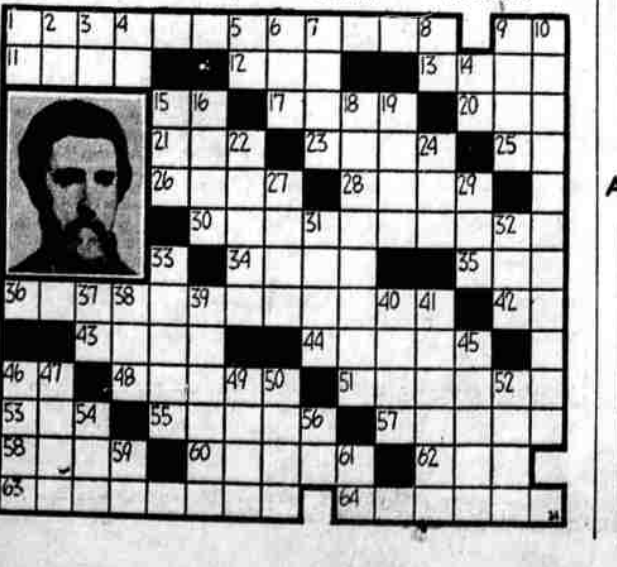
FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



"Grampa's awful old but his memory's perfect'y clear. You oughta hear him tell about the time Indians attacked his car an' he ran outta gas."

EMINENT SCULPTOR

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for horizontal and vertical words.



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BY BLOSSER



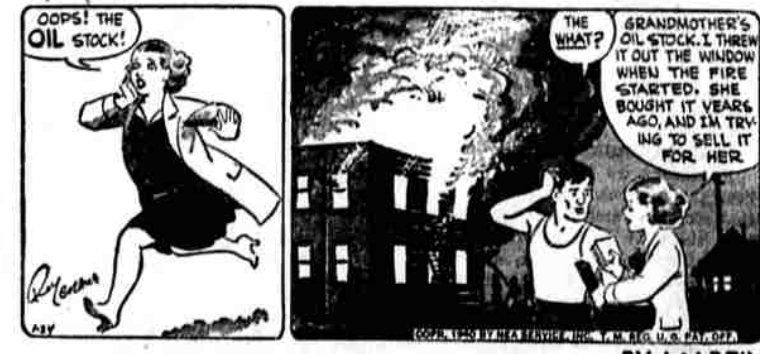
WASH TUBS



BY CRANE



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY MARTIN



ALLEY OOP



BY V. T. HAMLIN