

SERIAL STORY

BLACKOUT

BY RUTH AYERS

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YESTERDAY: Released by A. R. F. warden, Mary is hurried to Scotland Yard to tell her story of Carla's plot to sink an airplane carrier. The tragedy is averted. Carla captured and Vincent will escape the firing squad although he may be interned for duration of the war. Mary hurries to fill her, tells him she loves him, but must stand by Vincent.

CHAPTER XXIV

WHEN Mary reached Soho Square she was startled to find a caller.

A shriveled little old man was waiting.

Mary found something familiar about him although she could not place him at first. But when he spoke, she remembered the tobacconist from the shop near Vincent's lodgings.

"I've a note for you, Mrs. Lenox." He handed her a folded paper. She recognized Vincent's writing.

"Darling," she read, "I must see you at once. It's terribly important. Will you please come with the bearer?" It was signed with the letter "V."

Mary dashed cold water on her face. With a quick make-up she was ready.

"I'm to go with you," she told the old man. He nodded.

When they reached the shop the shutters were still drawn. The proprietor drew a key from his pocket and let her in the front door.

"He's in the back room," he directed Mary. She walked through the shop, rich with the odor of a hundred mellow blends. In the dim light of the room behind the counters, Mary saw Vincent's blanched face.

"I'm in one of my customary jams." He was debonair, but his face was ashen. "Scotland Yard seems to want me. I was lucky enough to see two of their men before they saw me. I ducked in here to be out of the way. That's why I asked you to come here. I had to see you."

"I know about your jam, Vincent," she spoke softly. "I had to be the one to inform you. Carla Marchetta kidnaped me yesterday. While I was at her house I heard plans for the sinking of the airplane carrier, Regency."

"How? You told them?" Vincent straightened. "Why, Mary, couldn't you see what it would mean? What might happen to me?"

"I wasn't thinking of you," she said with fire. "I was thinking of saving the Regency and the lives of a thousand men!"

He stroked the scar on his temple with indecision.

Mary softened. "But because of what I did you will get a break. You won't face a firing squad. But you will be interned for the duration of the war."

"I suppose this means you're through with me." His manner changed.

"No," she answered. "I'm going to stick by you. I feel it's the least I can do since I had to involve you."

He reached for her hand.

"This may be our last time together. Let's make the best of it. If I had only an hour with you I could make everything clear. I want to tell you about Carla—about what a fool she made of me. Come," he was commanding. "I've a car at the side. Let's ride."

HIS plight was so desperate and he asked such a little thing. Mary had not the heart to refuse him. She allowed herself to be led out a side door and into a tiny two-seater Vincent had borrowed.

"You asked about Carla and I told you the truth," he deftly directed the little car through the throngs of London's work bound. "But not all of it. I was ashamed to tell it all, I guess. The night of the air raid, I did receive a message from Carla, as you guessed. Inadvertently, I told her we were sailing on the Moravia at 1 o'clock. I had no idea this piece of information was vital to her. I know we'd been warned to secrecy but I regarded Carla as a friend. But what a friend she turned out to be!"

"You've never told me the true story of how you missed the Moravia's sailing. Was Carla in that, too?"

"Yes, of course." His voice was full of disillusion. "It was a stall. Something about a sick uncle in Bristol. I flew her there. I was tricked into it, believing I'd have plenty of time to get back and sail with you. But something went wrong with the plane and I panicked in a field, miles from nowhere. I know now she had it all planned. She thought I'd be useful to her and she didn't want me to sail on the Moravia."

"You knew she sent an enamored Continental boy on the boat?" Mary's words rang bitterly. "Yes, I learned it later. She

tricked him into sailing to watch you.

"Me—why me?"

"She was afraid you knew something or suspected something through me. When she found you didn't die after all, she was frantic."

The car was well out of London. An industrial suburb gave way to open fields. In the flat country, the single hangar of a small airport loomed like a large barn.

Vincent drew the car to a spot before a sandy spread of ground. "But Vincent?" Mary was aghast. "You're not quitting—you're not running away?"

"YOU said you were going to stick my me," he replied as he snapped back the emergency brake. "No matter what I've done, I love you and I've found a way out for both of us."

She was uncomprehending.

"I've made my plans," he continued decisively. "I knew something was wrong when I saw those Scotland Yard men and I acted fast. If I stay here and am interned it will wreck my whole life. I won't go to prison. It would be hopeless for both of us."

She drew back in horror.

"I've plans for us, a beautiful honeymoon. We'll see the sparkle of the sun on the blue Mediterranean. We'll swim in its waters and toast on its warm sands. At night the moon will come up out of Africa. You'll see the palms silhouetted against it, black and bending in the wind."

The picture he painted was bright indeed.

"I'll get a job for a commercial company and maybe you can come on some of the flights," he went on. "You'll see the Arabs around their camp fires at night in the

desert. They'll be making their coffee and the smell is heavenly. And if a war comes that promises adventure I'll enlist for the excitement."

A trim little ship was warming its motor.

"No! No!" Mary tried to hang back. "You can't leave like this. You were responsible for the sinking of the Moravia... for the death of Anna Winters and all the rest. You can't run away. You can never be happy!"

For answer, he hurried her toward the waiting plane.

(To Be Concluded)

On With the New in Mississippi



Newest Johnson in Jackson is Gov. Paul Johnson, above, who has just taken office as governor in the Mississippi capital. He succeeds retiring Gov. Hugh White.

OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS



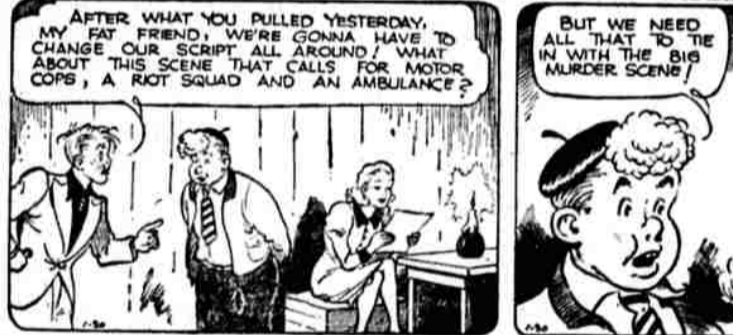
RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN



FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Well, boys, I guess this isn't gonna decide who'll take me to the dance. So let's make it whoever can whip me."

SINGING STAR

HORIZONTAL

- 1 Pictured singer.
2 Expert war flyer.
3 Native of Normandy.
4 Repute.
5 Into.
6 Toward.
7 To hold a session.
8 Since.
9 Speech.
10 Reduces.
11 Vampires.
12 Energy.
13 Exclamation.
14 Postscript.
15 Any group of eight.
16 A saying.
17 Mistake.
18 Wrath.
19 Performer.
20 Roman emperor.
21 Sand hill.
22 Sound of pleasure.
23 Genus of frogs.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

Crossword puzzle grid with answers filled in.

VERTICAL

- 11 Brim.
12 Indian mahogany.
13 Transposed.
14 He is a native opera star.
15 Mature.
16 Nose noise.
17 Drunkard.
18 Young cod fish.
19 Pronoun.
20 Molding.
21 Lair.
22 Thrifty administration.
23 Constellation.
24 Drink of the gods.
25 To corrode.
26 Attendant for sick.
27 Valiant man.
28 Comes in 47 100 square meters.
29 Hangman's halter knot.
30 Credit.
31 Standard type measures.
32 Coat end.
33 Whole number.
34 Snakes.
35 Above.

Large crossword puzzle grid.