SERIAL STORY

$15 A WEEK

BY LOUISE HOLMES

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YESTERDAY: Steve makes a scene at the dance but a pleasant stranger saves Ann from embarrassment. Paul gives Ann a favor, a tiny silver bracelet. After the dance they walk in the park. While Ann sleeps Paul kisses her lightly. With dawn, they hurry home. Ann remembers not the dance and its glamor, but Paul.

CHAPTER XXI

ANN received orchids at the shop the following day. The satin box was tied with a wide ribbon. There was a note enclosed.

"I'm a little hazy about last night but, if my memory serves me at all, I again owe you an apology. Forgive me for behaving like a clown. Let the posies tell you that I mean it." The card was signed, "Steve."

He called at 5 o'clock, blithe as a spring breeze, cockily sure of himself. He invited Ann to go to the theater with him and, while she could see no harm in accepting, she hesitated. It would be fun to see a good play, but not so much fun to see it with Steve. Now if it were Paul— With the thought of Paul, she made up her mind. She declined and hurried on before he could argue.

He was not accustomed to feminine rebuffs. "Say—what's the matter with me? Am I poison or something?"

Ann could scarcely tell him that she was merely a new adventure to the bored Steve Claybourne, she could not explain that he only persisted in his attentions because she did not respond in kind, that he would not think of introducing her to his mother, that their paths were so widely separated that they could never meet. So she said the obvious thing.

"I don't go out with anyone but Paul."

That did it. He said, "Oh, I see."

She said, "Goodby, Steve," and hung up the receiver.

* * *

THE weeks rolled on and Ann did not see Steve Claybourne again. She almost never thought of him. Her life with Paul worked itself into a pattern. Each Saturday night they dined together at an inexpensive restaurant and went to a moving picture show. They were utterly companionable. The slightest show of sentimentality was studiously avoided.

Summer came with sizzling heat. Mrs. Follet's third floor was like a fiery furnace, the hat shop was little better. Ann grew thin, the roses left her cheeks. She and Paul sat on the bench in the park, occasionally they traveled across the city to the lake.

A burnished, hazy fall was banished by an early blizzard and winter was upon the city. Acrid smoke hung in the heavy atmosphere, the gutters were slimed with dirty slush. Then Christmas lights turned the city into a neon fairyland.

Paul gave Ann a silver bangle for her bracelet as a Christmas gift. It was a quaint little bell and tinkled when she moved her hand.

With the coming of the New Year Ann fretted over the static, changeless quality of her life. With the exception of an occasional marriage among the girls whom she had come to know, there was not the slightest difference in her surroundings. Neddy and Teddy still chattered and danced their way through the days and nights. Florabelle appeared in stunning new outfits, was forever "going on a party." Clara could talk of nothing but a certain expressman who delivered goods to the store.

Ann's static mode of living might have gone on indefinitely except for two things. In the first place, she realized that another change in rooming houses was imminent. Clara's expressman friend, Roy Swenson, was practically living in the apartment which the girls shared. He sprawled in one of the big chairs night after night, paying court to a most willing Clara. Ann knew that it was but a question of time until he would move in entirely, in which case, she must get out.

Secondly, spring rolled around again and Paul kissed Ann. That kiss, in the heady sweetness of spring, had a most unforeseen aftermath. Not yet had Ann admitted, even to herself, that her love for Paul had become a monstrous thing, too monstrous for any sort of peace of mind. She lay her unrest to the utter lack of progress in her ambitions.

* * *

ONE night she and Paul were sitting in the park. It was one of those humid evenings which sometimes come early in May. They were eating popcorn, each silently intent.

The bag was finally empty. Paul gave Ann his handkerchief and she wiped her hands.

"Paul," she said, "it's another year. We've been sitting on this bench and in the movies for a year."

"Yeah—I know. Last year I was making $18. Now I've shot up to $25. Soon I'll be hiring an investment broker to take charge of my surplus." He spoke bitterly.

"At least you've moved up a little," she said. "I'm just exactly where I was a year ago. Oh, Paul—I thought if a girl had ambition and was willing to work she could find a way."

He sighed. They were both in low spirits that night. Paul had come to realize that life without Ann would be as blank as a freshly plastered wall. He loved her, he wanted her, more than anything else he wanted to give her the beauty she craved. And there he was, helpless, shackled to a $25 job.

Of course, there was a future to his job—buyer, department head, managership of a store—but when—when? His soul cried out at the waiting. While he waited she would be lost to him.

"It's a rotten shame, Ann," he said, keeping his voice at a casual level. "Have you tried to get a better job?"

"Oh, yes." But her tone betrayed her discouragement. "I've tried everywhere. Fifteen a week is the best I can do. Fifteen a week," she cried furiously. "I hate the sound of it. A living wage, barely enough to keep soul and body together, no hope, nothing ahead—" Her voice broke and she stopped. "Let me have your handkerchief again, Paul. I must have a little cold."

At last Ann said, "We'd better be going back. Another day is creeping up from China."

"Yes, another day and another month and another year. We'll be old, Ann, still fighting—" Paul spoke savagely.

* * *

ANN slipped her hand into his. The two of them—hopeless. Suddenly she wanted Paul to take her in his arms. Suddenly she had an aching need of the comfort of his arms. His hand tightened on hers, he drew nearer on the bench.

"Ann," he said huskily, "I want to kiss you, but it's dangerous, dear. We promised to be friends and if I kiss you—I won't be your friend any more." He leaned toward her. She felt the muscles of his arm tighten.

"I don't care," she whispered.

"Oh, darling—" He put his arms around her and bent his lips to hers. The first kiss was tender, the second not so tender. It bruised her lips.

The big policeman, approaching along the path, turned quickly back. "That's better," he muttered. "That's more like it."

Ann did not see Paul for a week. During that week she lived in a rosy daze, not looking ahead, nor back. She knew now why little $15 girls married their men, she knew that if Paul asked her—that was the catch—if Paul asked her—

(To Be Continued)

WHAT'S THAT, AGAIN?

COATSVILLE, Pa., (AP) — Here's a new way to "oiled."

A transient shuffled into a filling station where an attendant was pouring oil.

"Looks good enough to drink, partner," he said.

With that he picked up a can and drank a pint. Smiling broadly, he walked on.

Russia resents implications that she's losing battles in Finland. Those dead soviet soldiers were probably just "purged."

HIS VIEW—"Any peace is better than war," said Prince Bertil of Sweden (above) during Philadelphia interview after news of Finnish-Russian treaty.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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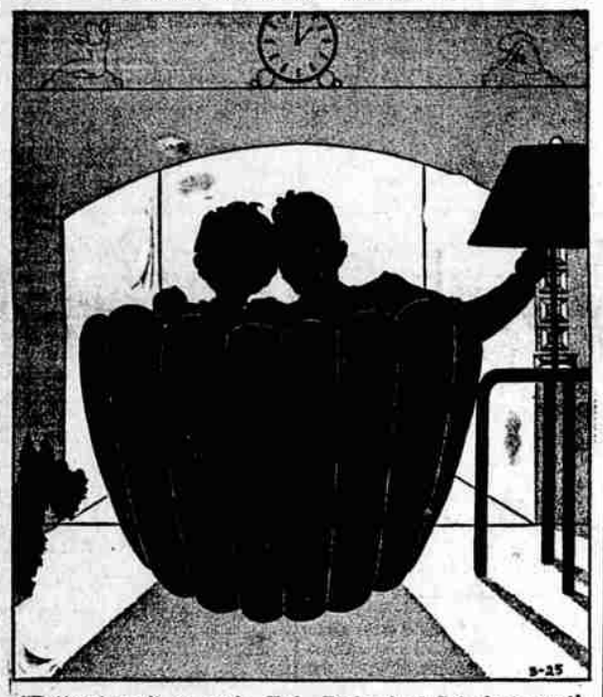


"Better turn it on again, Ted—Dad raised Cain last month because the light bill was so low."

YOUNG HEROINE

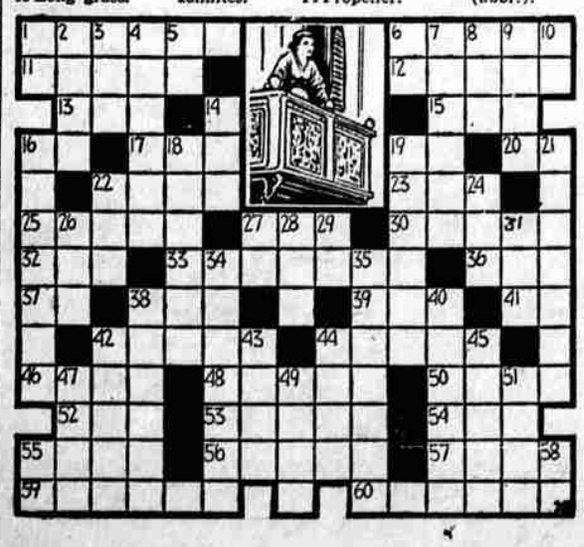
Answer to Previous Puzzle

HORIZONTAL

1 Young Shakespearean heroine.
6 Her sweetheart.
11 Mohammedan college.
12 House.
13 Fiber cluster.
15 To notch.
16 Parent.
17 Eucharist vessel.
19 Myself.
20 Conjunction.
22 To scrutinize.
23 Frozen water.
25 Looks sullen.
27 Gone by.
30 Pillar of stone.
32 Pedestal vase.
33 Duty rates.
36 To saunter.
37 Musical note.
38 Iniquity.
39 Rowing tool.
41 You.
42 Pertaining to a duke.
44 Beasts of burden.
46 Long grass.
48 Pertaining to sound.
50 Neat.
52 Fish.
53 Musical tragedy.
54 Fury.
55 One time.
56 Rhythm.
57 Close.
59 Acutely.
60 There was a —— or mortal misunderstanding between their families.

VERTICAL

1 June (abbr.).
2 Forearm bone.
3 Sheltered place.
4 Collision.
5 Each (abbr.).
6 Sun deity.
7 Her parents ——ed to her marrying.
8 Bird.
9 Knife's cutting side.
10 Whirlwind.
14 Propeller.
16 Her story is still a —— drama.
18 A resin.
19 Mass book.
21 This —— ends in the lovers' death.
22 Solar orb.
24 Snaky fish.
26 Coin.
27 Measure of area.
28 Cotton picker.
29 Preposition.
31 To deposit.
34 Skeleton.
35 Soft silk.
38 Unexpected.
40 Part of eye.
42 Two.
43 Easy canter.
44 Female horse.
45 Procreated.
47 Sea eagle.
49 Profits.
51 Indefinite amount.
55 All right (initials).
58 Railway (abbr.).



OUT OUR WAY BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE

RED RYDER BY FRED HARMAN

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE BY HAROLD GRAY

WASH TUBBS BY CRANE

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS BY BLOSSER

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES BY MARTIN

ALLEY OOP BY V. T. HAMLIN