

SERIAL STORY

Ticket to Hollywood

BY W. H. PEARS

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YESTERDAY: Francie decides to use a woman's wiles to get the ticket from Gustie. After a dance, she urges him to park at the airport. Gustie is falling for her line, moonlight and perfume when Francie mentions the ticket. Angrily, Gustie agrees to surrender it, drives Francie home.

CHAPTER IV

FRANCIE slept on a tear-wet pillow. She awakened late, sunshine curled like a warm, yellow kitten on her bed. The gentle breeze lifted at the lace curtains. She brushed her hair languidly, studying her face in the mirror. Last night's tears had left shadows under her eyes. No color showed in her smooth, young cheeks. Francie suddenly felt herself very much the Lady of Sorrows. She arranged her hair in severe lines away from her ears, and scored all make-up.

Downstairs she paused outside the living room, hearing her father say, "As usual, Hat, you're making Wagnerian tragedy out of a simple quarrel. Francie'll patch things up with Gustie and forget all about this fool ticket." "Indeed, John? I hardly expected you to understand."

"I think I understand Francie," Mr. Weston said quietly. "She's got too much common sense to let this get her down." "Young dreams..." Aunt Hat murmured. "How little a man understands them! A soul crying for artistic expression. Ah, the poor child."

As if this were her cue, Francie entered the room. Without conscious effort, she slipped into the role assigned her by Aunt Hat. The white, quilled robe made her seem fragile. Her eyes held a faraway look.

John Weston scrutinized his daughter sharply. "Good morning, dear. Have a good sleep?" "I—I guess so, Pops."

"Is anything wrong, Francie?" John Weston asked. "I saw you go out with Gustie last night. Haven't you patched up your quarrel?"

Francie said frigidly, "My opinion of Gustie Gair has not changed, Pops."

"Oh." He returned to the Sunday paper, his brow furrowed. From the kitchen Aunt Hat called, "Do have coffee, dear."

Francie obeyed languidly. Tipping the dripolator, Aunt Hat whispered, "Did you get it, Francie? Oh, you did! You show the strain you've been under. That's it, isn't it, Francie?"

Truth, poised upon Francie's tongue, was never uttered. Aunt Hat was so eager, so sure that her methods couldn't fail. Francie simply headed off the courage to admit that Gustie had been too smart for them. Besides, what difference could it make? Pops wouldn't take them to Hollywood, anyway.

She said, "Everything's all right, Aunt Hat."

"Oh, darling, I'm so glad! You've no idea what this trip means to me." Francie said, "You're pretty sure Pops will go." "Trust me, Francie. I've only begun to work on him."

THE next few days bore out Aunt Hat's assertion. Morning and evening Francie would hear the discussion going on. Unwittingly, she herself contributed to the cause by falling deeper into her Lady of Sorrows role. Each day she waited for Gustie to come and beg forgiveness, but he remained stubbornly away. Each day Francie's pallor deepened.

At the dinner table Wednesday evening, John Weston said, "Francie, you haven't eaten a thing all week. You're losing weight. Just what is the matter?" Francie said wily, "Nothing, Pops."

"Your Aunt Hat doesn't agree, Francie. She thinks you need a change. Hollywood, perhaps. How does that sound?" "Why, Pops, I—" "Oh, John," Aunt Hat bubbled, "you're really decided to take us?" "I'm trying to look at it unselfishly," John Weston admitted. "Goodness knows, I don't want to be the only one to enjoy the vacation. I can fish in California, I guess."

For a moment Francie was infected with her aunt's enthusiasm. Even without the ticket it would be fun. And you could never tell what might happen. Some big director might see her and—"It's a long trip," Mr. Weston was saying, "but maybe it'll do us all good. Hat's worked hard and deserves a rest. And I'm hoping, Francie, that once you've satisfied your curiosity about Hollywood, you'll get your appetite back and be a normal girl. Well, do you like the idea?" Francie hugged him tight. "You're so swell to us. I—I think I'll have one of those pork chops now..."

THE week bustled by in a frenzy of shopping and packing. There was no time to think of Gustie. Whenever Aunt Hat mentioned the ticket, Francie evaded a direct answer. She didn't want to lie, nor could she bring herself to tell the truth. Aunt Hat's whole vacation would be ruined if she knew.

Friday evening John Weston said, "I had Gustie tune up the car today, Francie." Francie feigned disinterest, went on packing.

"He asked about the trip, what route we were taking and all. I told him he ought to drop over and say goodby."

Francie blushed. "Pops, you shouldn't..." "Gustie said he guessed it wouldn't be such a hot idea."

"N-no, it wouldn't," Francie said. But she watched for him all

evening. Now that Gustie knew she was going, the only decent thing he could do would be to bring her the ticket. . . . At 10 o'clock she gave up and went to bed.

John Weston had everyone awake at daylight. They were all too excited to eat breakfast. When they finally piled into the big sedan, Francie could hardly believe they were starting for Hollywood. Why, anything could happen in Hollywood! She might even see Jerry Finney. . . . "Say goodby to the old town for a whole month," Mr. Weston laughed.

Francie gazed back at the unimpressive skyline of Elspeth City. How drab it looked! How glad she was to get away from it! From small-minded people like Gustie Gair.

Mr. Weston said, "Think he'll wait for you, Francie?" "I—I don't want him to!" Francie cried. "I'm through with Gustie."

AND yet, as they drove along, she caught herself worrying about all the girls in Elspeth City who were crazy over Gustie. They were always chasing after him. Well, they'd have a clear field now. All Francie hoped was that no one like that disgusting Tilda Blake would catch Gustie.

John Weston drove at a moderate speed. Francie, in a fever of excitement, wondered how she could stand the long hours until they got to Hollywood.

At sundown, Mr. Weston decided to stop at the next cabin camp. They pulled up before a long row of stucco buildings and he went inside to register.

Aunt Hat had gone to inspect the sleeping quarters. Francie was alone in the car. Suddenly she sat upright in astonishment. She could scarcely believe her eyes. Down the road sped a debilitated old roadster. Behind the wheel

sat a black-haired young man. He slowed down as he passed and moored his assorted cow horns. He raised one hand in the air, grinned. "Hi-yah, Sugar!" Gustie Gair bellowed. (To Be Continued)

A low-price plane designed for private flyers will seat two passengers side by side, will have an 85 horsepower engine mounted in pusher style, will fly 130 miles an hour or better and land nose down.

Evacuated



War has an adventure side for these smiling English school girls. Because of danger of invasion of England's coast opposite German-held French ports, east coast children are being packed off to the west. One girl holds toy lion, symbol of British might.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



"Did you ever drive that enormous limousine of his?" "Uh-uh—I can't handle those two-garage cars."

NOTED SONGSTRESS

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for horizontal and vertical words. Includes a small portrait of a woman.

Continuation of the crossword puzzle grid.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

