

SERIAL STORY

Ticket to Hollywood

BY W. H. PEARLS

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YESTERDAY, after her quarrel with Gus, Francie assumed a languid air, refused to eat, worried, John Weston finally agreed to drive to Hollywood. First light out, Francie is surprised when a postcard arrives. And waving to her is Gus!

CHAPTER V

WAS Gus really going to Hollywood? This question crashed through Francie's slumbers and sent her out into the pink, clear morning before Aunt Hat was awake.

She strolled along the boardwalk that led to the small restaurant connected with the cabin camp. Her appetite and her curiosity gnawed simultaneously, enormously.

As she entered the restaurant a familiar voice smote her ears. "Gus!"

He stared at her. Francie, slim in blue slacks, with a cherry-red scarf over her amber hair, stared back. Color swept into her cheeks and her brown eyes flashed.

"Well, well, so you're still following me?" Gus said loudly. "Me? Following you?" Francie bit her lip. "I'd say it was just the other way around."

Gus winked at the waitress. "She loves me," he said, jerking his head toward Francie.

The proper thing, Francie felt, would be to freeze him with a glance and depart. But she couldn't do that. Not with simply dozens of questions buzzing through her head. She choked down her pride and seated herself at the counter.

Gus meanwhile was attacking a pair of enormous fried cakes. Francie, her appetite gone, made listless passes at her waffle.

"Gusta finally spoke: 'Gonna listen to me broadcast, Francie? Maybe I can get tickets so you can be in the audience.'"

"I happen to have some plans of my own," Francie retorted.

"Okay, don't be nasty about it." Francie put down her fork. "You're really going to try to get to Hollywood?"

"Darn right," he declared. "You know, Saturday night after you tried to chisel!"

"I-I didn't!"

"All right, you didn't. Anyhow, I got to thinking, 'Gus,' I said to myself, 'you won't get another chance like this. What's a measly 15-a-week job compared with the big time?'"

"Gus! You—didn't—quit your job?"

"Right, Sugar. Just like that." "But you haven't enough money to—" Francie eyed Gus's wrinkled slacks and polo shirt.

"Sure, why not? Maybe I am a little light on the old do-rum-bum but I'll make it." Gus slid off the stool and stood by Francie.

"Come on, Sugar, don't be a sore-head. You tried to get the ticket. I was too smart for you. Let's forget about it and be friends. I got a forgiving nature."

Francie gasped, but before she could retort her father and Aunt Hat entered. Aunt Hat ignored Gus. Mr. Weston gave him a friendly slap on the shoulder.

"Glad to see you, son. I suppose you'll be leaving us today?" "No, sir," Gus grinned. "I'm not pouring the coal to the old bus. I kinda figure I'll stick close to you folks—just in case you have trouble or something."

"Well, now, that's kind of you, Gus," Mr. Weston said.

"You see, I thought maybe, if you don't mind Francie to drive, she could ride with me today. We can meet you wherever you're going to stop."

"It's agreeable with me," Mr. Weston said, "but at the moment the lady seems disinclined."

WITH Francie driving they soon left Gus's old roomster behind. In the back seat, Aunt Hat was curious about Gus's presence.

"Francie, dear, have you any idea why the boy should be going to Hollywood?"

Francie pretended to be occupied with the road. "It—it's just one of his crazy ideas, Aunt Hat."

Mr. Weston said, "It's more than that, if you ask me, Francie. The boy hasn't much money. He must be pretty sure that ticket's on the level."

"But he hasn't—" Aunt Hat drifted into silence.

Francie could see her aunt's face in the rear view mirror. It was puckered with thought. Tonight, she promised herself, she would tell Aunt Hat the truth. But what if there was still a chance of getting the ticket?

It was a wild, impossible idea, yet she couldn't rid herself of it.

THEY saw no more of Gus until noon when he pulled alongside of them at a roadside barbecue. Gus was accompanied by a shabby man whom he proudly introduced as "Blubber."

Blubber, a squat, broad individual with a buttery complexion, had marble-round eyes that rolled shifty away from the directness of Mr. Weston's gaze.

"Glad to meet you," Blubber mumbled.

"He's thumbing to Amarillo," Gus explained with a triumphant look in Francie's direction. "And is he swell company!"

"I can imagine," Aunt Hat said dryly.

"He's a musician, too, aren't you, Blubber?"

"Sure, kid. Let's eat."

"He's good on the old guitar, all right," Gus went on. "Tonight we're having a little jam session. How about it, Blubber?"

Blubber's rolling eyes came to rest on Aunt Hat's two-carat solitaire. He nodded dreamily. "Sure, kid, a jam session. Let's eat."

Gus and Blubber moved to the counter. Mr. Weston bent toward Francie, spoke in a whisper: "Francie, I want to get Gus

away from that fellow without arousing his suspicion. In a few minutes you call him outside."

"But, Pops, I don't—" "Francie!"

When John Weston used a certain tone, neither Francie nor Aunt Hat ever argued with him. A moment later Francie obeyed, and Gus followed her outside.

"Decide to give yourself a break and be friends?" he asked.

"I have not!" Francie retorted. "Pops wants to talk to you."

John Weston stopped ostensibly to light his pipe. "Gus, I hate to meddle, but I'd advise you to get rid of that fellow."

Gus said, "Don't worry, Blubber's okay. Gosh, any guy that can send a guitar like he does..."

"Sending a guitar, I fear, is no criterion of honesty," Mr. Weston walked away.

Without thinking, Francie said, "Please take Pops' advice, Gus."

"Okay, Sugar, I'll ditch Blubber... if you'll ride with me."

"I will not!" Francie flung herself away from him in a fury.

THE tourist cabins where they stopped that night were set back among tall trees. At bedtime Mr. Weston left Francie and Aunt Hat and retired to his own cabin next door.

For a long time, Francie lay with her arms behind her head thinking of Gus. She didn't care what happened to him, of course; still, the memory of Blubber's ugly face gave her a sinking feeling in her stomach.

And then, as if to reassure her, there came through the open window the thin, sweet voice of

Gus's trumpet. Gus was improvising weirdly against the rhythm beat of a guitar. He was camped nearby and all was well. Francie slept with the music in her ears.

A sound awakened her. At first she thought it was only the wind rustling through the trees. And then she heard it again. Frozen with terror, she let her eyes roam around the room, bringing the doorway into view. Silhouetted against the moonlight, Francie saw the bulky outline of a man.

(To Be Continued)

The name of God is omitted from the Book of Esther in the Bible.

New Commander



New head of the Army's Third Division will be Brig. Gen. Charles F. Thompson, above, who July 1 takes over command at Ft. Lewis, Wash. He succeeds Maj. Gen. Walter C. Sweeney, who retires.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



AT THE HAGUE PEACE CONFERENCE IN 1899, MEMBERS DECIDED THAT AIRCRAFT SHOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO TAKE A COMBATIVE PART IN WAR.



IN ALMOST EVERY COUNTRY THERE ARE MONTHS THAT HAVE MORE RAIN THAN APRIL.

ANSWER: A shako.

PEOPLE'S PAINTER

HORIZONTAL

1 European artist.

5 His native land.

9 He — or sketched many cartoons.

12 Furnace valve.

14 Scorched.

16 Courtesy title.

17 Ran out as liquid.

19 To grow old.

21 Prickly pear.

23 Totaled.

24 To sanction.

25 Ream (abbr.).

26 Valley.

28 Therefore.

30 Sound of surprise.

32 Chief actors.

35 Part of hand.

37 Six (on a die).

38 North America (abbr.).

39 Three united.

40 Before.

41 To eat.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

MARY GARDEN

REEVE ROBE

BOATMAN

RUS NIPI

TSM SNAG SE

LEAP ICON DAMES

LIRAG TRAM DENT

I TITRE LAVA OSSA

AT NITL LADS APT

NOD NET LATA HE

TRET VAT MERGES

SEA LERIA REAR

SOPRANO MANAGER

42 Deity of the sky.

43 Land in a river mouth.

44 Dawdlers.

50 Numbered cube.

51 Airplane.

53 In the middle of.

55 To enlist.

57 Interior.

60 He was a famed painter of children's.

11 Brinks.

13 Postscript (abbr.).

15 Advertisement.

16 Accented.

18 Low Dutch (abbr.).

20 Gigantic.

22 To love.

24 To spouse.

27 Bronze.

29 Gas chandelier.

31 Form of suicide.

33 Wearied.

34 Small stones.

36 Wrinkled.

38 Chaos.

41 South Africa (abbr.).

44 Wigwag.

46 Sun god.

47 Cuckoo.

49 Sheaf.

51 Blue grass.

52 Being.

54 Above.

56 Railroad (abbr.).

58 New England (abbr.).

59 You and me.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON

RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



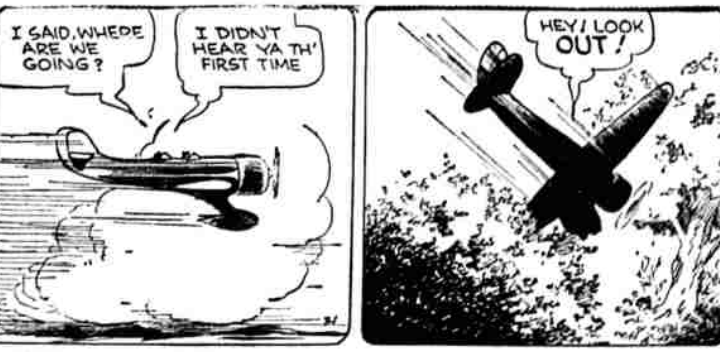
WASH TUBBS



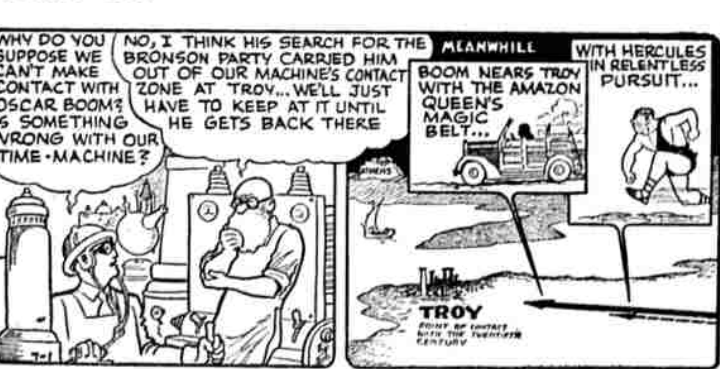
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



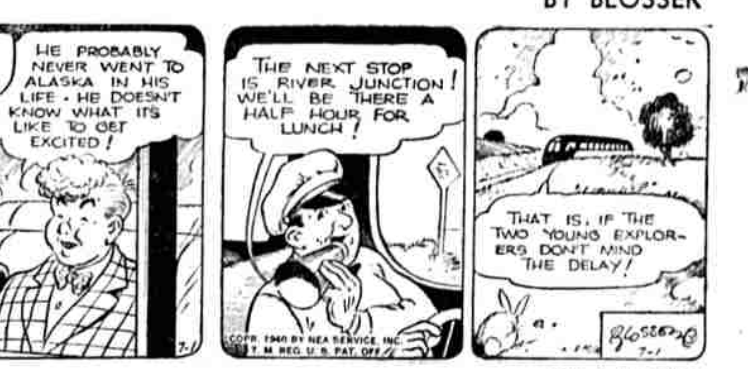
BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

