

SERIAL STORY

Ticket to Hollywood

BY W. H. PEARS

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YESTERDAY, Mr. Weston arranged to pay Gus's fine, but let the boy spend the night in jail. Francie confessed to her father that she took the ticket, decides to return it to Gus. But Gus leaves early, refuses Mr. Weston's help. Francie is afraid now that Gus won't be able to make Hollywood in time for the broadcast. Will she discover the thief of the ticket and hate her always.

CHAPTER IX

HOLLYWOODLAND! There it was in great white letters on the side of a big hill overlooking the city. Francie, who had been watchful and silent all day, read the magic letters with a pounding heart.

"Reach out and grab a handful of stardust," John Weston grinned. "John, don't be cynical," Aunt Hat said.

"Traffic's just like Elspeth City on Saturday," he grumbled.

"Look, Pops," Francie exclaimed, "there's the famous Tan Hat where all the stars eat!"

Aunt Hat craned her neck, sighed, "My goodness! John Weston was enjoying their excitement. "Just be calm, children. You've plenty of time to take in the big show. There's a nice little hotel off Hollywood boulevard. I'm giving you a whole week to gawk, then I'm going fishing."

Francie said, "Oh, Pops, that's grand."

He turned the car into a driveway lined with shaggy-boiled palms, drew up before a white stucco building. A bellboy hurried out for their baggage.

Francie's room overlooked a flagged courtyard with a murmuring fountain. In the distance she could hear the heartbeat of the city. Only the thought of the ticket marred her joy. Only the thought that tomorrow she must look for Gus and return it... give up her passport to the real glamor of this wonderful place.

SHE started out alone after breakfast. At Hollywood and Vine she asked an officer the way to I. B. C. studios. She walked several blocks down the boulevard, and the building was just to her left. It was large, modernistically curved, with glass block sides and a long promenade.

Within the spacious reception room was crowded with visitors. Uniformed page boys scurried about. Francie scanned faces. She went to the information desk and described Gus. The young man grinned, shook his head. Would she like to take a tour while she waited?

Francie said, "No, thank you." She watched a number of exciting-looking people enter the elevators. She tried to imagine who they might be. She saw herself mingling with them, a fellow artist. If only she could keep the ticket! It would be so easy to leave and not return until Saturday at 8.

She tried to interest herself in the big mural on the wall. It was no use. She turned blindly toward the door, bumping into a small, wiry man. He grunted, started to brush by her, stopped.

"Aggie!" he exclaimed, staring. "No, no, no Aggie. Too young. Don't tell me." He removed his loud-banded straw hat, scratched his head. "I got it home! Little torch singer back in the sticks. My last ticket. Right?"

"Mr. Koon," Francie said breathlessly.

"No other, honey. How you doing? Glad to see you. Like to have my kids show up. Say, wasn't there a boy with you, plenty hot on the trumpet?"

"He's in Hollywood, too," Francie said.

"Sorry, honey," Mr. Koon frowned. "Couldn't double you up if you was my own kids. No, sir."

"Oh, I didn't mean that. I'm waiting here to give Gus the ticket."

"So? Foolish of you, honey. It's dog eat dog in this racket. No sentiment. Go after the breaks; that's my motto. Let the boy friend look after himself."

KOON's big office was filled with people. "Sit here, honey," he said in his rapid, staccato way. "I'll buzz you in a few minutes." He breezed through a door marked "Private."

Francie sat down, crossed her legs. She swung her toe and tried to appear as if Hollywood were an every day occurrence to her. The platinum blond receptionist smiled.

"I'll keep after Koon," she promised. "He'll probably forget you."

"I hardly think so," Francie said with a touch of condescension.

"You see, I'm a personal friend of his."

But as the minutes dragged by she felt less and less important. She wished she hadn't been so haughty. She hated to ask the receptionist to buzz Mr. Koon now.

The door behind her opened to admit a stocky young man of about 19. He wore a loud plaid sport coat and a maroon shirt open at the throat. Dark glasses covered his eyes.

Approaching the receptionist, he said, "Top of the morning, blonde. How's about telling Koon I'm here."

"Slow up, handsome," the girl retorted. "Right now, Koon wouldn't see Clark Gable."

"Stop kidding," the young man said. He put his hand on the swinging gate. "I'm seeing Koon now." He turned to note the effect of his importance on the others who had waited, saw Francie. "Well!"

Francie was looking her best in blue. She had brushed her amber hair to a high-lustered perfection. Her brown eyes were big with excitement, her cheeks and lips freshly vivid.

The young man stared in bold

admiration. With a grin he said, "Maybe I'll wait, after all."

HE took the empty chair next to Francie and lit a cigaret. From the corner of her eye Francie saw that he had lovely red-gold hair like Jerry Finney. She tried to appear disinterested, but she could feel the sudden hammer of her pulses.

"Been waiting long?" he asked. Having been taught to beware of masher, Francie made her voice properly cold: "Oh, not long."

"I'll ease you in ahead of these other yokels," he said. "Koon ought to be shot keeping a beautiful creature like you waiting."

Francie didn't know what to say. She could feel hot color sweeping into her face. Without looking at him, she said sedately: "That won't be necessary, thank you. Mr. Koon and I are old friends."

"Just like that," he laughed, unabashedly twisting around to get a better look at her. "Say, anyone ever tell you you're darn photogenic?"

The word baffled Francie. "N-no."

"Well, you are. I don't mean any of this high-polish stuff like the make-up men dish out. You're fresh."

He bent so close that Francie could see the faint dust of freckles across his nose. "I'll bet you're not from Hollywood."

Francie struggled internally. She had never been talked to like this before. In a vague sort of way she recognized it as flattery. But the words had such a lovely sound. She wanted to hear more. "Okay, if you want it proper."

the young man said. "We'll make Koon introduce us." He took her arm. "Come on."

Dazedly Francie was pulled past the protesting receptionist into Mr. Koon's office. Koon withdrew his hand from a stack of papers, turned to her with a smile. The young man said, "We want to be introduced, Koon."

"Sure, sure," Koon chuckled, then said to Francie, "Fast work, honey. This beautiful Irish lad is Jerry Finney." (To Be Continued)

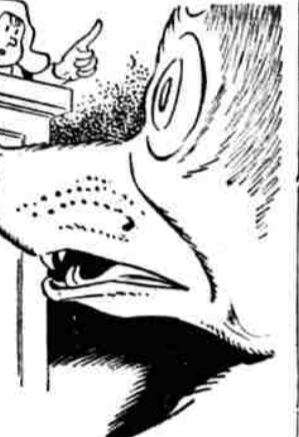


TO DETROIT—Here's Bill Hapac, 22, outfielder and former U. of Illinois baseball star, who has just signed with the Detroit Tigers. He's 6'2" and weighs 195 pounds.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

DURING THE MIDDLE AGES, ANIMALS WERE HELD LEGALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR CRIMES, AND WERE TRIED IN COURT THE SAME AS HUMANS.



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MAN HAS HAD PRINTED BOOKS ONLY ABOUT 500 YEARS.



ANSWER: Plastic lava, squeezed through openings in the earth's crust, and there hardened.

FAST FLYER

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers.

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and answers.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



THE LONG ROAD AND THE SHORT

RED RYDER



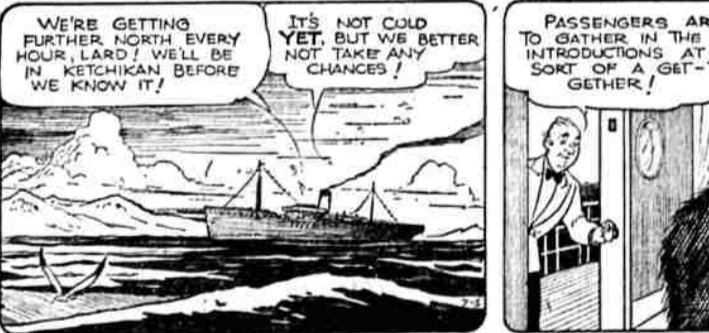
LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



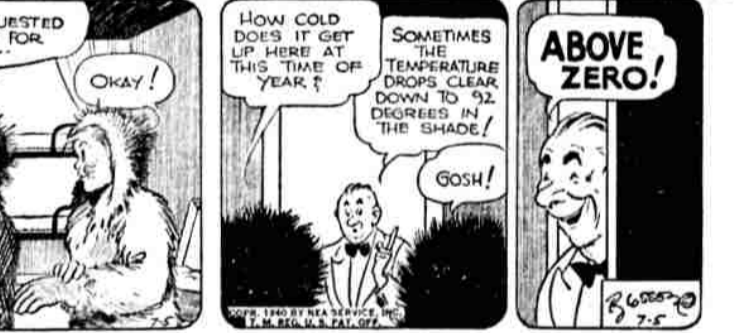
BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

