● SERIAL STORY

This Could Be Your Story

BY MARGUERITE GAHAGAN

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YESTERDAY: Office gossip has it that young Clark is trying to sell some of his own property for an airport site. Nick's party could make capital of that to elect their own candidate. Nick predicts trouble at the Smithson factory, where Joe works. "And if there is a strike," he tells Sue Mary, "you'll see how smart operators work."

JOE MAKES PLANS

CHAPTER XVI

SUE MARY couldn't sleep. The hot August night wind merely moved the bedroom curtains and she tossed and wondered, puzzled, and could find no answer.

A strike: picket lines, fights, and police squads. She thought of the women she had met when she went to parties with Joe, wives of the plant workers. What would they do when the departments closed down and the pay checks ceased to come? How would they manage to run their homes, feed their families when their too-meager savings ran out?

And what would happen when the material needed by the plane factory ceased to be produced? What would happen, then, to that part of the national defense plan?

She wanted to ask all those questions and more, too, when she saw Joe later in the week. They had gone to a movie and then, coming from the air-cooled theater into the city heat, had turned the car out toward the lake for a few last moments of air.

"What would happen if your factory went on strike?" she asked finally.

Joe slowed down and looked at her, astonished.

"What would happen? Well, plenty, I suppose. We're really speeding up production now, with all these plane orders. But why should we go on strike?"

"Oh, I don't know. I guess I read something about a new union contract being negotiated at the factory," she explained lamely.

"Sure, but that doesn't mean we're going to strike. A new contract comes up every year, but we don't strike about it. Our representatives and the management get together and work things out."

She breathed deeply and settled back against the car seat. "I'm glad. I just wondered if there could be a strike. With picket lines and trouble—like there used to be."

"Well, it's possible, I suppose," Joe agreed.

"But certainly not probable. That part of unionism is about over. I mean the battles and sit-downs.

"Of course, there's always a certain element in every plant that would cause trouble. You get some of these smart guys and let them talk wild and a few dopes who can't think for themselves might follow along. But most of the men realize they are necessary in the work. Soldiers, sort of.

"And I hope the management won't take advantage of it. The work in the plants in this town ties together pretty much: making different parts for planes and cars and both of those are necessary if we're going to keep our country safe."

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JOE drew up along the beach and stopped the car. A hot, yellow moon bathed the waves in gold, and off in the distance a radio played softly. He took her in his arms and kissed her.

"You never used to worry about such things. I wish you wouldn't now. What you should be thinking about is us; about getting married. I haven't mentioned it lately because you—well, you didn't seem to want me to. I guess you were so interested in that crowd you work and play with that you saw me as a pretty dull fellow." His voice was low, filled with emotion.

"Sue Mary, I love you now, and I always will, and I do have a future. My boss told me yesterday that I'm to be in the research department from now on. I'll get a raise and there'll be more money in the future. And that's the work I want; the work I prepared for in college. And if you were only mine, well—I guess I could know real happiness."

"You do love me," he said, finally looking down at her. "I can tell it when you kiss me. That's all that matters. So let's set the date. We'll find an apartment, start buying furniture and get married before you find something else to worry about."

She rubbed her cheek against his and tried not to let him sense her worry. She wished she could set the date. She wished she could settle things that simply, but first she meant to discover what Vera and Nick and Natalie were working for, why they had used her.

If she were to tell Joe he would be furious. He would probably start out now and with swinging fists settle Nick to his own satisfaction.

It's not that I'm being melodramatic, she argued to herself. It's just that I feel responsible. I did get taken in. I did get Vera that job at the office, and I was a fool. But now I'm awake, and maybe they are dangerous. If their loyalty to their cause can make them go to such lengths, certainly I can do my duty.

A year ago politics was just a word to me. "Un-American activities" was a scare-phrase. Fifth Columnists hadn't even appeared in print. Maybe I'm hysterical; maybe there isn't anything to fear, but I have to satisfy my curiosity.

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JOE'S voice brought her back to the present. "Well, darling, say something. Shouldn't we get married?"

"Yes," she said. "I want to, Joe. We will, but we can't do it in such a short time."

"If you really love me there is something you can do right away," he told her. "You can break away from the Youth Progress crowd. You won't be lonely from now on. We'll see each other every night if you want, and you can keep busy shopping for our home. Girls always have plenty to buy at a time like this.

"Give up that crowd and move some place else. Make a clean break. They aren't our kind of people."

"I will, Joe," Sue Mary promised. "Give me time. They are my friends. I—I can't just drop them. When I was lonely they helped me. They've taught me to think and to see a whole new world. I can't just walk out on them simply because you don't like them."

She wanted time. If only a miracle could happen within a week and she could convince herself there was no danger, that they weren't a menace. But back in her mind hovered that horrible doubt.

"You're dodging the issue, Sue Mary." Joe took his arms away and turned to look at her. "One moment you say you love me and then the next you seemingly try to block our hopes and plans for marriage. That crowd of crackpots means nothing to you. I do. Now stop stalling and make the break."

"Joe, we mustn't quarrel. Not now." She had to make him understand. "You know I love you and I want to marry you. Let me take a little time to settle my own affairs."

"All right, Sue Mary. I'm not trying to be unfair. Take a week. It's not so unusual for a girl to want to get married. Tell them that and then move, and you won't have to see them any more."

"I'll try, darling."

A week. She wondered just what she could do in a week.

(To Be Continued)

New Jap War Chief

General Gen Sugiyama, supreme war councillor and former war minister, named chief of the Japanese imperial general staff when Field Marshal Prince Kotohito Kan-in retired.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

ANSWER: Ten. Each cow has four, and each horse one.

AUTHOR OF BOYS' STORIES

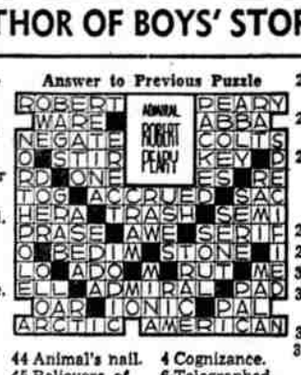
HORIZONTAL

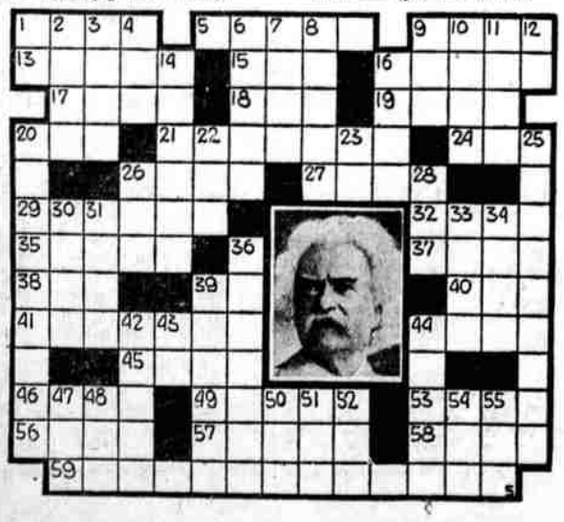
1, 5 Pictured author of "Huckleberry Finn."
9 Koran chapter
13 Stranger.
15 Wayside hotel.
16 Perforated.
17 Sound.
18 Dress.
19 Forearm bone.
20 Opposed to cold.
21 Inhaled an odor.
24 Skill.
26 Shirt button.
27 Essential being.
29 Ethics.
32 Large piece of timber.
35 Oval.
37 Very low male voice.
38 Corded fabric.
39 Soul.
40 Long inlet.
41 Membranes covering grain
44 Animal's nail.
45 Believers of a creed.
46 Wild duck.
49 Spider.
53 Pain.
56 Indian plant.
57 Blackbird.
58 Couple.
59 His real name.

VERTICAL

1 Mother.
2 Singing voice.
3 To go to excess.
4 Cognizance.
6 Telegraphed.
7 Shrub yielding indigo.
8 Fireplace.
9 Sun.
10 Measure.
11 Back.
12 Paid publicity
14 To take shelter.
16 Unopened flowers.
20 He was a famous American —— (pl.)
22 Genus of rodents.
23 Unit of electricity.
25 A famous boy character created by him.
26 Perched.
28 To recede.
30 Kiln.
31 Wholly absorbed.
33 English title.
34 Large continent.
36 Spendthrift.
39 Was suited.
42 Mohammedanism.
43 Northeast (abbr.).
44 Crinkled cloth.
47 Goddess.
48 Room recess.
50 Circle part.
51 Sick.
52 Born.
54 Food container
55 Pronoun.

Answer to Previous Puzzle





OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE

RED RYDER

BY FRED HARMAN

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

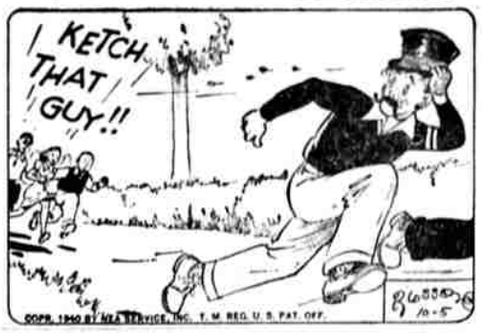
BY HAROLD GRAY

WASH TUBBS

BY CRANE

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

BY BLOSSER



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

BY MARTIN

ALLEY OOP

BY V. T. HAMLIN