

SERIAL STORY

This Could Be Your Story

BY MARGUERITE GAHAGAN

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All characters, organizations and incidents of this serial are entirely fictitious.

YESTERDAY: Nick insists Sue Mary meet him at the office tonight. She fears a plot to involve her, keep her quiet. There is a call from the hospital. What if Joe died? Terrified, Sue Mary dials the number.

SUE MARY FINDS HELP

CHAPTER XXIV

SUE MARY hung up the receiver and leaned forward over her typewriter, resting her shaking arms on the carriage. Word from the hospital was not encouraging, but at least Joe was alive.

"Mr. Stefanski regained consciousness for a few moments," a nurse told her sympathetically. "He asked for you, and then went off again. The doctors think they may operate to relieve the pressure. If they do, it will probably be tonight. You can call later, or if anything comes up suddenly, we'll let you know."

"But I could see him—" "You can see him, but he won't know you," the nurse explained. "And you can't stay for more than a few seconds. Mr. Stefanski needs absolute quiet now. But you mustn't worry."

The hands of the office clock seemed to fly now that she knew the doctors were to take some definite action on Joe's case. Before that, time had dragged; now each minute was precious and time flew. She couldn't work. She couldn't think. She finally told Miss Grant her head ached and she wanted to leave early.

At the hospital she stood quietly in Joe's room, looking down at his white face, the shock of blond hair showing beneath the bandage; at his hands, so big, so capable, and now so helplessly limp on the sheet.

She wanted to touch them. Wanted to lean forward and kiss his lips, but the nurse was beside her, murmuring that a doctor was coming in to change the dressing and she must go.

SUE MARY went across the street to a little park and sat on a bench until her trembling legs could carry her back to the apartment. She picked up a paper someone had discarded and stared at the headlines.

"G-men investigate alleged subversive group," she read. In an eastern city an inquiry was being made by Department of Justice officials in an effort to stamp out possible fifth columnists.

She looked up and found a sudden strength welling up within her. Federal agents—until this moment the words had been one connected with the movies and thrill stories. To be sure, it was in the news, but it had never been a reality to her.

The girls in the office kidded about the strange men coming and going, since the national defense program had brought so much activity to the law office. But G-men still were people in a little boy's world. Until this moment.

Now her thoughts began to crystallize. Government men with the power to handle all situations. The power to act and the ability to recognize truth. They would keep a confidence. They would listen and judge and not rush off hysterically on a witch hunt. She stood up and walked back to the hospital to find a phone book.

It was late afternoon and she wondered frantically if she could contact anyone at headquarters. She found the address and ran out to flag a taxi.

The big federal building was cool and dim and nearly empty. There was still one elevator running and she made herself walk slowly and quietly down the hall.

THE young man in the outer room was looking up at her desk, but he didn't hurry her. He asked her name and a few questions about herself.

"What do you want to see Mr. Flanagan about?" he asked. "He's still here, but he's had a hard day, and so many people demand to see him. So many people come in here," he explained, patiently. "They all think they have valuable information about spy-plots."

She nodded her head in agreement. "Yes, I can imagine that. You see, that's why I hated to come. I might be wrong, too." "Only—well, I didn't dare wait any longer. Something is to happen tonight. These people—I think they are doing something that will hurt the government and—nice people here in town. Maybe I'm wrong, but an organization I belong to has a strange platform. I didn't know what it was all about. But I do now. And I'm beginning to wonder. It's called the Youth Progress Group." "Youth Progress?" he repeated slowly. "Maybe you had better see him. We know that outfit."

SITTING across the desk from Mr. Flanagan, Sue Mary managed to get her facts in order. He was kind and calm. He listened and drew out the story with questions.

"We've checked on the Youth Progress Group, of course," he said. "We've never been entirely satisfied. We know their candidate for governor is radical and that the platform is one that would never go over in this country. But we are also sure they can't win in this election. Not unless a miracle should happen. But anyway, tell me what you know."

She told him. Slowly the whole picture came out. "I didn't think much about it

until I heard Nick and Vera planning to get the papers that young Mr. Ross Clark will have at the office tonight. He's not like his father. Young Mr. Clark, I mean. He's stupid and in debt and easily led.

"Nick and Vera mean to use the information to hurt Governor Russell Miller. And they believe it will be enough to hurt the whole campaign platform. Destroy the people's faith and help their own cause."

"And then—then—" she added, "there's the picket line at Smithson. Nick's mixed up in that, too. I saw his picture in the paper. He's trying to keep the trouble going on out there. I know that."

"The YP insist we don't need to spend money on national defense. They keep talking it and printing it in their paper. And they mean to hinder production whenever they can."

"And Joe—my fiancé—was hurt at the factory. He's in the hospital now. He was hit on the head when coming from the plant. Maybe—maybe he'll die."

"You can't let things like that go on. Those people are dangerous—" She was crying now and frankly lost he not understand and believe her.

"So that's their game. There have been so many things to check on these last few months that we haven't been able to do as much investigating as we would like." Flanagan's voice was calm, comforting.

"We know about this Nick Alexander: a young fellow with a leftist turn. There are so many of them: blind, dissatisfied, led by smarter, older men who can mold them into tools."

He came around the desk and gave her his handkerchief. "Now don't worry. We'll clean the whole thing up. You go to the office tonight just as Nick wants. And let him go through with his plan."

Flanagan smiled and patted her hand. "Not frightened, are you?" "No—now that I know what to do."

(To Be Continued)

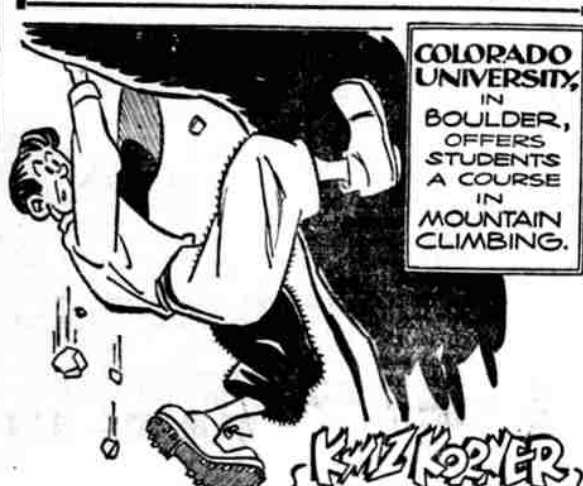
The Script Calls For Wedding Bells



Hollywood scenario writer Owen Crump, Jr., outlined a script to screen actress Lucile Fairbanks, above, in which they would be co-stars and live happily ever after. She took an option on it—and so the couple announced they would be married at Montecito, Calif.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



COLORADO UNIVERSITY, IN BOULDER, OFFERS STUDENTS A COURSE IN MOUNTAIN CLIMBING.

A HALF-DOZEN SHOT GUN PELLETS EATEN BY A DUCK ARE ENOUGH TO CAUSE ITS DEATH BY LEAD POISONING.



KWIK KOPPER

TO WHICH KINGDOM... PLANT, ANIMAL, OR MINERAL, DO THE FOLLOWING BELONG? CHALCEDONY ROSES SEA LILIES HORNED POPPY

ANSWER: Chalcedony rose, mineral kingdom; sea lily, animal kingdom; horned poppy, plant kingdom.

WARTIME ENVOY

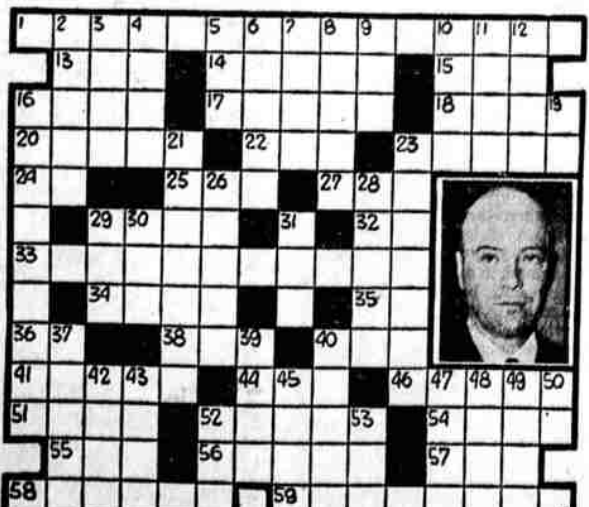
HORIZONTAL

- 1 Pictured American diplomat.
- 13 Cow's call.
- 14 Apple centers.
- 15 Poem.
- 16 Company of musicians.
- 17 To rub out.
- 18 To harvest.
- 20 Earthwork.
- 22 Reverence.
- 23 Terrors.
- 24 New England (abbr.).
- 25 Sick.
- 27 Definite article.
- 29 Wild buffalo.
- 32 Lava.
- 33 His official title (pl.).
- 34 Mocks.
- 35 Street (abbr.).
- 36 No good (abbr.).
- 38 To decay.
- 40 Pronoun.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

1. PICTURED AMERICAN DIPLOMAT
2. COW'S CALL
3. APPLE CENTERS
4. POEM
5. COMPANY OF MUSICIANS
6. TO RUB OUT
7. TO HARVEST
8. EARTHWORK
9. REVERENCE
10. TERRORS
11. NEW ENGLAND
12. SICK
13. DEFINITE ARTICLE
14. WILD BUFFALO
15. LAVA
16. HIS OFFICIAL TITLE
17. MOCKS
18. STREET
19. NO GOOD
20. TO DECAY
21. PRONOUN

- 10 Learning.
- 11 Thought.
- 12 To lacerate.
- 16 Calico handkerchiefs.
- 19 Additional message (letters).
- 21 One that rinses.
- 23 Banqueted.
- 26 Rope.
- 28 Severe.
- 29 Striped fabric.
- 30 Knock.
- 31 To total.
- 37 Pertaining to the throat.
- 39 Floor block.
- 40 Intelligence.
- 42 New star.
- 43 Numeral termination.
- 45 Hamlet.
- 47 Genuine.
- 48 Shaft part.
- 49 Stead.
- 50 Note in scale.
- 52 Gnawed.
- 53 Ever (contr.).



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLES



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

