

SERIAL STORY

CHRISTMAS RUSH

BY TOM HORNER

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YESTERDAY Jerry is quitting school to marry Val Parks. His decision means wrecking all the plans Dr. Connelly and Martha have made for him, means he will have to find a job. Martha wants Val may not want to live on a truck driver's salary. Jerry is happy when they begin to talk the matter over, will bring Val to see them. Late that night Dr. Connelly and Martha confab.

MARY REVEALS A SECRET

CHAPTER V

DR. CONNELLY paused in the doorway, watching the sobbing girl. His heart was full of pity for the lonely child, without a relative near to share the happiness of Christmas.

"Mary," he spoke softly, so not to startle her. "What's the matter, child?"

"Oh!" The dark head jerked up from the pillow, red-rimmed eyes spilling tears down her cheeks. "Oh, Doctor Connelly!"

He was beside her then, his arms enfolding her, shutting out the hurt, his voice quieting her jangled nerves, just as he had so often soothed the pain and troubles of his own daughters. "There... there... Go ahead and cry it out. Best medicine in the world for you."

Gradually the girl's hysteria passed. Finally she looked up at him, dabbing at her eyes with a soaked linen square, and managed to smile when he handed her his own huge handkerchief.

"Now, what's this all about? Too much Christmas?" he prompted.

"I guess that was it. Seeing all your family so happy together. I just couldn't stand it any longer. I had to get away..."

"We were thoughtlessly cruel—" "Oh, no!" Mary refused to let him blame himself. "I loved it, all of it. You all have been so good to me, including me in your Christmas. I even imagined I actually belonged—that I wasn't really an outsider. Then, when I realized—"

"What made you—?" The doctor began, stopped abruptly, switched to an entirely different subject. "I've just come back from the hospital and I'm half starved. How about joining me in a raid on the icebox? There's cold turkey, I'm sure."

"But I look so terrible." He ignored the protest. "There should be a mince pie around somewhere. Ideal for nightmares. . . Come on, now. I hate eating alone. If you won't join me, I'll have to wake Martha."

"The doctor had been right about the cold turkey. There was plenty of it, and cranberry sauce, too. Mary fixed sandwiches and

he made coffee. He drew upon an endless fund of amusing, personal anecdotes to keep her entertained while they ate, successfully restoring Mary to her normal, happy mood. For the time, at least, the emotional storm had passed.

"That was almost as good as the Christmas dinner," he said as the last of the pie disappeared. "Should keep me awake—coffee and two pieces of pie. . . Never found anything yet that could keep me awake when I had a chance to sleep." He filled a pipe, lighted it and puffed contentedly as Mary cleared the table. "Let the dishes go until morning."

"They'll only take a minute. . . No, you can't help. . . You look entirely too contented to dry dishes." Somehow, though, he managed to evade her protests, found a dish towel.

"You're a senior this year, aren't you?" he asked, making conversation. "What do you intend doing after graduation?"

"I had planned to work with a medical group in China. I'm majoring in bacteriology, you know." Mary explained. "There's so much to be done there. . . Dad was stationed in Shanghai for three years. He started me on the idea. Jerry says I should go on in medicine, though. . ."

"Too bad he can't prescribe some of that for himself." Mary busied herself with the dishes, said nothing.

"WHAT'S wrong with this boy of mine?" the doctor asked. "You know him pretty well, don't you? And this girl he wants to marry. If you were in love with him, Mary, would you want him to quit medicine, with only a little more to go?"

A plate slipped from her hands, clattered into the sink. Mary caught it, laughing at her clumsiness. She kept her eyes on the dishpan. "No. . . If I were in love with Jerry—she spoke slowly—" "I'd never marry him until he finished school and his internship."

"You are in love with him, aren't you?" Hugh Connelly's query was as casual as a comment on the weather. He waited for Mary's answer.

"Yes." She did not look at him. "I've loved Jerry ever since I met him at the spring party last year. He doesn't know it. How did you guess?"

Dr. Connelly laughed. "We doctors have a special gift for finding out more than the patient tells us. You have to have it to practice medicine successfully. . . I'm glad you didn't deny loving Jerry, Mary. I thought I saw symptoms, but I needed your word to make the diagnosis certain."

"The Connellys need your help—Martha and I, especially. What about this girl—this Valerie? She's a sorority sister, isn't she?"

Mary nodded. It was easy to talk to this grand, old doctor. She could trust him. Perhaps she could help. . .

"Valerie is really a very nice girl. I don't know a great deal about her. She transferred from the South at the beginning of the term. She seems to be sincerely in love with Jerry—and he must love her, to give up his career." She wiped the back of her hand across her eyes. "This soap chip dust makes your eyes smart, doesn't it?"

The doctor smiled. "Nasty stuff." He went on: "Sheila and Kathleen don't think so much of their future sister-in-law."

"I think that's due to a difference of ideas on how a sorority pledge should be treated. Valerie was a little tough on the girls at first—before she found out they had a brother. But every chapter treats its pledges differently. Mary hastened to explain. "Maybe we're a bit easy."

"It's better that way," the doctor agreed. "By the way, weren't you responsible for getting the twins into that sorority?"

"I couldn't let them pledge anything else. Jerry had asked me to arrange rush dates, last spring. After the girls met Sheila and Kathleen, it was no trick to get them through. . ."

"That may be one of the reasons for Sheila's disliking Valerie," she added. "Val told Jerry she made quite a fight to get the girls voted in. Sheila and Kathleen believed it, too, until they discovered that a transfer has a vote in the house until second semester. Then Sheila wanted to tell Jerry—"

"And you wouldn't let her—"

"It would have hurt him. . . I don't want Jerry, hurt—ever." Mary turned to face Jerry Connelly's father. She was trying to be fair, yet she could not deny her love for Jerry. "I love Jerry," she said. "I had hoped he loved me, until Valerie came along. I believe Jerry actually is in love with Valerie now. If I didn't, I never would have let him go, without a battle. "She loves him, too. But if I ever find out that she's making a fool of Jerry—that she really doesn't intend to marry him and make him happy—I'll do everything I can to wreck that romance." (To Be Continued)

About Fans In the early part of the eighteenth century, leaves of the finest fans were made of "chicken skin," which was not chicken skin at all, but the skin of the youngest of small animals. The best fans were made of the skins of unborn animals.

Discovered Accidentally Just 38 years ago, the scientific world first suspected the existence of the okapi. Sir Harry Johnston found natives of the Semliki forest, in Africa, wearing curiously marked skins, and eventually traced them to their source.

Hottest and Most Massive The Orion stars are the most massive and hottest of all stars. Their surface temperatures are estimated to be more than 20,000 degrees, compared with 11,000 degrees for our own sun.

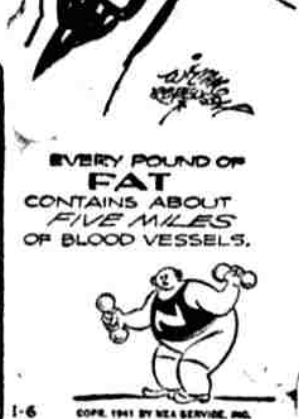
THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

GIACOMO MEYERBEER FAMOUS COMPOSER, WAS BORN JAKOB LIEBMAN BEER! HE CHANGED HIS NAME TO MEYERBEER IN DEFERENCE TO TERMS OF THE WILL OF A WEALTHY RELATIVE NAMED MEYER.



KNITKOPPER EVERY POUND OF FAT CONTAINS ABOUT FIVE MILES OF BLOOD VESSELS.



ANSWER: British Honduras does not touch the Pacific, and Salvador has no outlet on the Atlantic.

NEXT: Can you be too ugly to join the army?

SCHOOLMAN

- 1,6 Famous American. 9 Tunnel. 10 Boat deck. 12 Poem. 13 Instrument. 14 100 square meters. 15 To make thread. 16 Preposition. 17 To eat sparingly. 18 Cuckoo. 19 Fortune. 22 He was a most important children's. 27 Wanders. 28 Vulgar fellow. 29 To make amends. 30 Species. 31 Remote. 32 Slackened. 33 Mine shaft hut. 34 Legal rule. 35 Fragrant ointment.

Crossword puzzle grid with clues and a small portrait of a man.

Large crossword puzzle grid with numbers 1-49.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



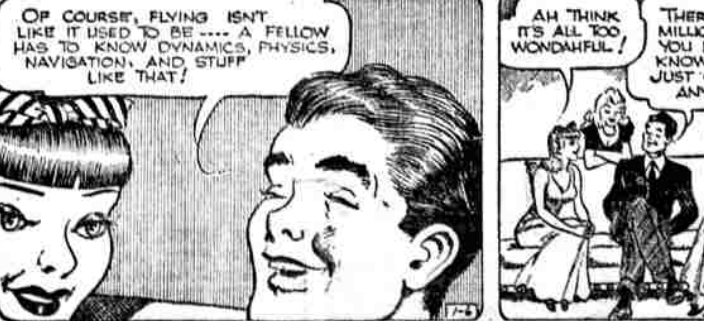
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



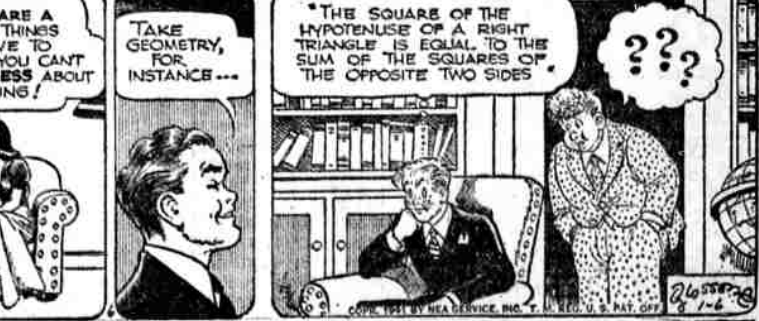
BY MARTIN



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY V. T. HAMLIN

