

SERIAL STORY

CHRISTMAS RUSH

BY TOM HORNER

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YESTERDAY: Valerie is determined to tell the Connellys what she thinks of Jerry's wrecking her car. Mary stops her, leads her into admissions that she never intended to marry Jerry, dated him merely because he was the most eligible man at the university. When Valerie accuses Mary of leaving Jerry, Mary admits it. The Connellys overhear Valerie. Jerry is reacting easier, but is not out of danger.

JERRY CLOSES A YEAR

CHAPTER XII

DR. AND MRS. CONNELLY went directly to Jerry's room, when they reached the hospital, leaving Mary and the twins in the downstairs office. Kathleen thumbed through an out-dated magazine. Sheila and Mary waited near the window.

"I wonder if Dad and Mother will break the news to Jerry about Valerie," Sheila said. "He'll never believe we didn't have something to do with her leaving in a huff."

Mary nodded. The thought had been troubling her since Valerie stormed out of this same room five hours ago. Jerry loved Valerie. Mary loved Jerry. Valerie was in love only with herself. It was like a nursery rhyme riddle with no answer.

It was up to Jerry to find the answer. But how could they tell him what Valerie had said? Who would tell him?

"I don't know how that brother of mine could be so blind," Sheila went on. "He should have been wise to Valerie five minutes after he met her."

"He was unconscious while Val carried on about her car," Mary began.

"He's been unconscious for six months," Kathleen added, from behind the magazine. "He had to wake up sometime."

But the ending of Jerry's romance with Valerie would not solve Mary's problem. Jerry might be bitter, against his family, against her. He might even go through with his determination to quit medicine. If he did that, there was little hope that she would ever have the opportunity of seeing him again.

And seeing him was necessary. If Jerry returned to school, they might begin dating again, as they had before Valerie intruded. Some day—Mary clung to the hope—Jerry might fall in love with her. Then, after Jerry had finished school—

Martha's voice interrupted: "Jerry's awake now. He wants to see you. He asked particularly for you, Mary."

JERRY was grinning as they fled into the room. Bandages encircled his head. A framework supported his broken arm. His face was pale and drawn, but he still could grin.

"Happy New Year! Here, be careful!"—Kathleen and Sheila had rushed to the side of the bed to kiss him—"I'm fragile. I break easily."

Dr. Connelly's face and that of his wife mirrored their happiness. "Not so fragile, son," the doctor said. "The raps you took would have denied a stone wall. And that hard head of yours didn't even crack."

"Queer place to spend New Year's," Jerry was saying. "I tried to get home for that annual family breakfast. Didn't quite make it."

"Let's forget last night," Martha suggested.

"No, don't want to," Jerry persisted. "I've a lot of things to tell you. Valerie and I are through!" "You are?" The doctor's surprise seemed genuine.

"Yes. Washed up. Finished." Jerry reached for his mother's hand, grasped it tightly. "I'll tell you about it and then it will be buried in the past—that's the rule, isn't it? And all of this happened before midnight." They waited for him to continue.

"I started when I said I had to be home this morning. Val wasn't coming at first, but finally gave in when I promised to take her home early. We kept arguing most of the time during the drive over here. Val said some things I didn't like about you."

"I told her she'd have to like my family if she was going to marry me, and she set me back on my heels by telling me that she had no intention of marrying me—ever. I got mad then, took her home. And on the way, we hit this other car."

"Val told us, too. While you were unconscious," Martha said softly.

"It's all over and best forgotten, son," Hugh advised. "You'll have to stay here for a couple of weeks, and you'll be shaky for a month or so, but you'll get over this—"

and you'll get over Val, too."

"I'm over that right now, Dad. . . . Jerry's glance went around the room. "I've been pretty much of a fool. I've hurt you, Mother, and you, too, Dad. . . . Say, think you could be using an associate in your office in a year or two? I'm going back to school."

"What happened last year is past," Martha said as she kissed her son. "Hurry and get well. You're starting this new year from scratch."

"Mother, send Mary back here, just for a minute," Jerry whispered. "You all wait in the hall. I've something to say to her, alone."

THE doctor, Martha and the twins stood beside the train. In a few minutes Sheila and Kathleen would be on the way back to school.

"Tell the house mother we're keeping Mary for a week," Martha said. "Jerry wants her to stay, and it makes the long days in the hospital more endurable for him."

"Wait till the girls find out he wouldn't even let her come to the train to see us off—" Kathleen laughed.

"Don't you dare—" Martha began, then laughed herself.

"And we'll make plans to bring Mary back with us for spring vacation," Sheila reminded them. "That will be such a surprise for Jerry!"

"Jerry will probably have more to say about that than you will," Hugh said. . . . "Better say goodbye now. Time for the train to pull out. Call us when you arrive, and we'll let you know how Jerry's getting along. Don't worry about him. Goodbye."

HUGH settled himself in his chair, reached for his pipe. Martha's knitting needles clicked rapidly.

"Well, they're gone again," she said. "And we're alone—until"

Easter. Seems like it was just yesterday we were planning what we would be doing for Christmas—"

"And doing some of the things we did not plan—"

"I never dreamed we could cram so much into two weeks' time."

Hugh smiled at her, as he unfolded his evening paper.

"Isn't that what they call it—Christmas rush?"

(THE END)

ABOUT COMETS

Comets are semi-solid bodies with long tails, which come into the solar system from vast distances in outer space. They are visible only during a short period.



GRATEFUL—His country's gratitude for the sympathy expressed by F.D.R. was carried to the White House by Cimon P. Diamantopoulos (above), Greek minister to U.S.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ANSWER: Right. Stories of the longevity of elephants have been greatly exaggerated.

MARINE MAMMAL

HORIZONTAL

1 Aquatic

5 It belongs

to the group

12 To accumulate

14 Invisible

exhalation.

15 Alleged force.

16 Set of beliefs.

17 To secrete.

18 To thrive.

20 Bearded.

21 Healthy.

22 Old-womanish

23 To free.

24 Medley.

25 Auricular.

26 No good

(abbr.).

27 To retain.

28 Gaiter.

29 Pound (abbr.).

30 To vend.

31 Slovak.

32 To bind.

33 Male servant.

35 Modified.

36 Egg-shaped.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

WALT WHITT MAIN

ADORE BEE O WALT

ROSY VIPER

IPT VISITOR

CT BIG D MIA

E LIWIT LAMPS N

NAID LADEN SAGA

TED CAPRICE CUT

US TAN Y ELA NU

R SOUTH ARENA R

YU IS AM VALISE

YU ENDRIME AA

RAIED ECCENTRIC

37 Abbreviated.

38 Corded.

39 Skullcap.

40 Street (abbr.).

41 Bone.

42 Undersized

cattle.

43 Capuchin

monkey.

44 Spore sacs.

45 Secular.

46 It —s and

dives well.

47 It also —s

out onto land.

16 It is a —

beast.

17 Door clasp.

18 Small insect.

19 It has

slipperlike

limbs.

21 Back of foot.

22 Pertaining to

a renewed

manifestation

of heredity.

24 To liquefy.

25 Kind of gem.

27 To turn over.

28 Bed inh.

29 Falsehood.

30 To strike.

31 Sea swell.

32 Palm lily.

34 Class of biras.

35 To abound

and

tapering.

39 Mongrel.

40 Canvas device

on a boat.

42 Gypsy.

43 Serrated tool.

44 Tone "B."

45 Solemn

musical

syllable.

OUT OUR WAY.

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



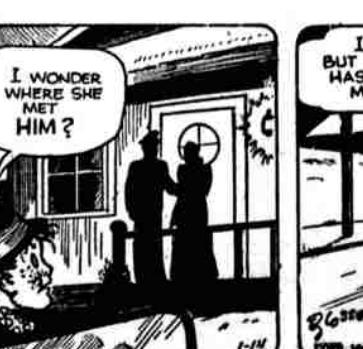
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



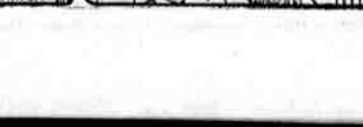
WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN

