

● SERIAL STORY

CONSCRIPT'S WIFE

BY BETTY WALLACE

Copyright 1941, NEA Service, Inc.

8-0-8 TO BILL MARSHALL

CHAPTER VIII

AT 5 o'clock that day, Martha Marshall was still enmeshed in the coils of her inner problem. How could she indicate to Paul Elliott, without hurting him, and yet without letting him know the real reason, that she preferred not to go out with him any more?

Paul opened the door to his office, and Martha seized her powder puff hastily.

"Ready to leave, Martha?" he called. "Wait a minute, I'll be right with you."

She steeled herself. She looked up at him. "Don't bother about me, Paul," she managed to say. "I—I don't feel awfully well. I want to go right home and get in bed."

He was all concern, immediately. She wanted to kick herself. She should have told him some story of being expected somewhere . . . catching a store before it closed . . . anything.

"I'm all right," she repeated tonelessly. "Just a headache." The phone in his office rang. "There's your phone," he said, and she slipped out while he was still talking.

THE next morning she avoided his eyes, was thankful when he had to go down to the production department to straighten out a tangle. It might take all day.

But at quitting time, he was back in the office.

"Feel like some chow mein?"

"No. I—I'm going home and cook Butch some hamburger. I've got a lot to do. I'm awfully tired."

His face fell. "I was looking forward to it. After all, there's no one waiting for you—"

"There's Butch."

"Suppose we stop off and buy the hamburger, you fry it while I walk Butch, and then—"

Martha averted her head, pretending to fish out the eraser and the pencils from under the legs of her typewriter. "No, Paul. Thanks, anyway."

"But why not?"

"No!" This time, her voice was sharp. Paul stared at her, his thick dark eyebrows a straight line over his brown eyes.

SHE walked home. A long walk, with her head high and chin up. She hoped there'd be a letter from Bill waiting in the box. But there wasn't. While she fried the meat for Butch, even while she walked behind him, later, she remembered Paul's surprised eyes, his set mouth.

Mrs. Kelly, the cleaning woman, was waiting for her in the hall when she and Butch returned. "Could you let me have a dollar on what you owe me?" she asked. "I know tomorrow's Saturday, but I can't wait for this." Her grandchild, she explained, was ill. "I gotta pay at the drugstore for prescriptions."

"Oh, that's all right. I'm sorry he's sick."

Martha said, dithering to tell her now, but knowing it had to be done. "I've been meaning to tell you, about the cleaning. There isn't as much to do as there used to be, and—"

"Oh, yes there is!" cut in the old woman argumentatively. "That friend of your husband's, he still comes, I can tell by the newspapers on the floor, and pipe ashes all around and didn't have a dollar on what you owe me?" she asked. "I know tomorrow's Saturday, but I can't wait for this." Her grandchild, she explained, was ill. "I gotta pay at the drugstore for prescriptions."

"Mrs. Kelly," she said evenly, "Mr. Elliott will not be calling any more." The words seemed very loud in the suddenly still room.

The cleaning woman eyed her shrewdly. Those little blue eyes, in their bed of wrinkles, were like the eyes of a bright, inquisitive bird. "Oh, so Mr. Elliott won't be calling, eh? How disappoined that Miss Trent upstairs is gonna be! Her with her tattling about him stayin' all hours." She folded her fat, chapped arms. "You're a smart girl, Mrs. Marshall. Husband's friend or no husband's friend, it don't do when a man pays too much attention to a pretty woman all by herself."

"I think we'd better get back to discussing the cleaning!"

"Yes'm," Mrs. Kelly said, defeated.

LONG after Mrs. Kelly had gone, Martha stood there in the foyer, motionless. Everybody, everybody had the same ideal. How stupid she had been! How blind! But as long as it wasn't true—as long as she wouldn't go out alone with Paul again—it didn't matter.

Bill was the only one who counted. He had never dreamed of such a thing. She held to that, desperately. That Bill had trusted her, that he'd trusted Paul. He knew them both more intimately and with more understanding than anyone else on earth. She seemed to hear again his voice as he said at the station, "Take care of her, Paul."

Suddenly she wanted to hear his voice again. She went to the phone. "Operator, I'd like to speak to Mr. William Marshall at Camp McAllister, please. No, no one else will do."

At long last, his voice came.

"Bill!" she cried. "Oh, Bill, is it really you?"

"Martha? Darling, what's the matter, why did you call, is anything wrong?"

HOW dear his voice was! "No, stupid! I just wanted to talk to you. How are you?"

"I'm fine, sweet. How are you?"

"Why didn't you call me when I asked you to?"

Almost, she could see the sheepish grin as he said, "Tell you the truth, I just didn't have the money."

"You could have reversed the charges, nut?"

"You've got too many bills to pay now."

"Oh, darling, it's so good to hear you! Tell me, do you like being in the Army?"

"It isn't bad. My feet hurt all the time. The chow's good. Tell me about you. Missing me?"

"Terribly. Always. Oh, darling . . ." She mustn't cry. "I miss you, too. How's Paul?"

"Fine."

"Is he doing all right looking after you?"

She said, carefully, "Suzanne and Paul were with me almost every night, the first two weeks. I wrote you, remember? But I—I'm not seeing much of either of them, any more. You know how it is, everybody has their own lives. Anyway, Butch and I are doing swell."

She was talking very rapidly. "I even took the cleaning off Mrs. Kelly's hands. She just comes in to feed Butch and let him out."

Then she raced on, "Bill, I'd like to drive up to camp this week-end. Is it all right? Are you allowed visitors yet?"

"Sure, we're allowed visitors. Every Sunday the camp's over-run with them. But it's an awfully long drive. Especially in Peg."

"I can make it, Bill. I might even take the train."

The operator's mechanical voice cut in. "Your three minutes are up."

"Goodbye, Bill. See you Sunday!"

"Goodbye, honey."

(To Be Continued)

Leads Engineers In Defense Effort



Frederick H. Fowler of San Francisco, above, was elected president of the American Society of Civil Engineers at its recent New York meeting. Important interest of the society under his leadership will be how U. S. could be protected against aerial bombardment and sabotage in case of war.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

TOM REESE, WHEN GAME WARDEN NEARLY CAUGHT HIM, HE DISGUISED HIMSELF AS A SCARE CROW!

KWAZZLER
T. M. REG. U. S. PAT. OFF.

HA HO HO HO

HOW MANY RIBS HAS AN ADULT MALE; ADULT FEMALE; FEMALE CHILD?

ANSWER: Normally, all have 12 pairs.

IN SKIING, ONE OF THE GREATEST DANGERS IS SUN BURN.

1-23

COPY, 1941 BY NEA SERVICE, INC.

SEAT OF INTELLECT

HORIZONTAL

1 Seat of intellect.

5 It is a mass of nerve in the skull.

10 English title.

11 Female relative.

12 Repulsive.

14 Watched secretly.

16 Gazed.

17 Palm lily.

18 Dry.

20 Idant.

21 Form of "a."

22 Gnawed.

23 Musical note.

24 Peeps.

28 Statue.

30 Oceans.

32 Exultant.

34 Shield fillet.

36 Footed vase.

37 Idle chatter.

40 Sun god.

41 Shoots forth.

42 Grain (abbr.).

44 Raspberry plant.

45 Serrated tools.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

1 ISAAC
2 PLUM
3 ISAAC
4 PLUM
5 ISAAC
6 PLUM
7 ISAAC
8 PLUM
9 ISAAC
10 PLUM
11 ISAAC
12 PLUM
13 ISAAC
14 PLUM
15 ISAAC
16 PLUM
17 ISAAC
18 PLUM
19 ISAAC
20 PLUM
21 ISAAC
22 PLUM
23 ISAAC
24 PLUM
25 ISAAC
26 PLUM
27 ISAAC
28 PLUM
29 ISAAC
30 PLUM
31 ISAAC
32 PLUM
33 ISAAC
34 PLUM
35 ISAAC
36 PLUM
37 ISAAC
38 PLUM
39 ISAAC
40 PLUM
41 ISAAC
42 PLUM
43 ISAAC
44 PLUM
45 ISAAC
46 PLUM
47 ISAAC
48 PLUM
49 ISAAC
50 PLUM
51 ISAAC
52 PLUM
53 ISAAC
54 PLUM
55 ISAAC
56 PLUM
57 ISAAC
58 PLUM
59 ISAAC
60 PLUM

VERTICAL

1 To exist.

2 Ranted.

3 Barren.

4 Sick.

5 Last will.

6 Capuchin monkey.

7 Brings legal suit.

8 Below.

9 Conjunction.

10 Domestic slave.

11 Cordage fiber.

12 Its surface is covered with ridges and

13 A section of the brain.

14 Bronze.

15 Self.

16 Skillet.

17 To furnish anew with men.

18 Glided.

19 Virginia willow.

20 Unit of work.

21 Age.

22 Beast.

23 To loiter.

24 God of love.

25 To lacerate.

26 Oleoresin.

27 Perspiration.

28 To applaud.

29 Identical.

30 Best of burden.

31 Snaky fish.

32 Gypsy.

33 Gibbon.

34 Note in scale.

35 North America (abbr.).

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

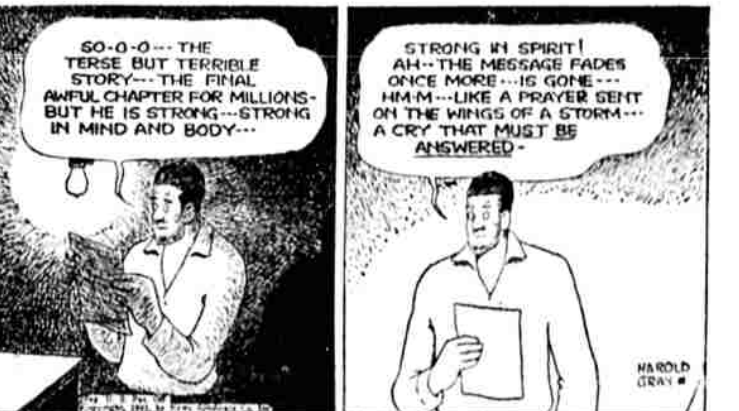
With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY MARTIN



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY V. T. HAMLIN

