

SERIAL STORY

CONSCRIPT'S WIFE

BY BETTY WALLACE

COPYRIGHT, 1941.
NEA SERVICE, INC.

YESTERDAY: The search goes on, but there is no trace of Bill. Martha finally gets a letter from him. He is in the army, and she is in the navy. He is a conscript, and she is a conscript's wife.

THE BEST CONSCRIPT'S WIFE

CHAPTER XXX

"MARTHA!" Bill cried huskily. "Martha!"

He darted forward as she awayed. His strong arm steadied her, and his blue eyes looked down into hers with concern and a quick, pleading humility. For the first time, she knew a sharp, leaping relief—a relief almost unendurable in its ecstasy. She clung to him, seeing in that one look the new haggardness of his face, the shamed uncertainty in his eyes.

But in the next moment, she was pushing him away. She was standing straight and rigid, the anger and despair which had whipped her on through the dreadful hours making her lips tighten and her voice hard.

"Where were you all this time? Don't you know we've been looking for you? I almost went out of my mind. Paul had detectives in New York—Suzanne hired detectives here—I phoned the camp, they said you'd deserted—where were you? Why did you do it?"

Bill's eyes dropped. He kicked morosely at a pebble. "After I—knocked Paul down, I—I had to hitchhike from New York. I went crazy, Martha. I didn't come to until they kicked me out of the hotel. But knowing you'd gone back to him—"

"Oh, Bill, don't start that again! I told you I've never been in love with him. I didn't go back to him!" Suddenly all the anger left her, the passionate desire to convince him. "Oh, never mind, Bill. That doesn't matter now. Do you know you're a deserter? You've got to get back to camp quickly! You must do everything you can to make them go easy on you."

"I've made a dreadful mess of things," he admitted morosely. "I guess it's too late. Oh, Bill, get into the car with me. You drive, please. Drive fast! We'll get to camp, I'll speak to the commanding officer. Perhaps they—they're not so heartless after all..."

As she sat there beside him, while the old car strained over the road, Martha thought of the guardhouse where she had found him last Sunday. Would this being absent without leave mean a longer term in the guardhouse? More severe punishment? "Bill, will they court-martial you?"

"I don't know." He turned and his eyes met hers. "All I know, Martha, is that I'm ashamed in my soul to have given you all this trouble. I—I could get down on my knees to you, I could—could cut off my arm... but it wouldn't help. Nothing could make it right again."

"Oh, sweet, will you ever trust me after this? Can you ever forgive me for my suspicions? I—I'd do anything, if only you'd give me another chance!"

"The Army's got to give you another chance," she said steadily. "That's our first concern. After that—oh, Bill, I've never stopped loving you!" She lifted her tear-stained face. Bill kissed her swiftly. Then they turned their faces resolutely straight ahead—to the immediate future that awaited them at the camp.

TWO hours later, going down the road that led to the sentry hut and the cantonment, Martha saw Suzanne's car. "Bill! There's Paul and Suzanne!" Bill touched the horn button. Paul and Suzanne tumbled out of their car in surprise and relief.

"Oh, Martha, you found him!" "Yes," her smile was tremulous. "There's no time now. Bill must report at once. Wait for me."

As Bill stepped on the starter, Martha saw Paul turn to Suzanne. "You've been wonderful," he said simply.

Suzanne answered, "I was wrong about those things I said at the hospital, Paul. I know now none of them was true. But you should have known, long ago, Paul—I'd do anything for you."

Martha thought, as they were left behind there on the road, that perhaps this crisis had worked a minor miracle. It had brought Paul closer to Suzanne—it had given Suzanne a chance to atone. "How odd, that my life and Bill's should touch the lives of others at every point..."

A moment later, Bill was smartly saluting a young officer. "Private Marshall reporting, sir. I—I've been absent without leave."

"If women could only get it through their heads that most men's attitude depends to a tragic extent on the attitude of their wives! Madam, it was your duty, as a soldier's wife, to see to it that your husband was inspired in his solemn job of training—not distracted. It was your duty to encourage him, to be enthusiastic, loyal, proud of his having assumed the duties of a citizen soldier!"

He rose abruptly. The interview was closed. "I shall try to do what I can to see that your husband is not dealt with too harshly," he added. "Goodbye."

A WEEK later, Martha was driving into that camp once more. She was being allowed to visit Bill in the guardhouse for the first time. He still had two months to serve. But when she saw him, she realized anew how tiny the punishment was, how gallantly he was enduring it.

"Oh, Martha, it's so good to see you!" "Darling!" She was close in his arms. "I'm so happy! Even though you're here, and I'm there, I keep feeling that we've started over. Everything's fresh and clean and wonderful!" She kissed him gaily.

"And I have news. Paul's being sent to our new plant on the West Coast. He and Suzanne are to be married before he leaves!"

Her eyes, gloriously sure now, teased him. "So keep your mind on the Army, Bill! A few more weeks, and you'll be out showing them the right way to go over the top, or whatever it is they teach you."

Frank Simeone, formerly with Paul Whiteman, now sits in the clarinet section of the Fort Dix, N. J., army band and plays his roudies and cadenzas for Uncle Sam at \$21 a month.

Bill's eyes dropped. He kicked morosely at a pebble. "After I—knocked Paul down, I—I had to hitchhike from New York. I went crazy, Martha. I didn't come to until they kicked me out of the hotel. But knowing you'd gone back to him—"

"Oh, Bill, don't start that again! I told you I've never been in love with him. I didn't go back to him!" Suddenly all the anger left her, the passionate desire to convince him. "Oh, never mind, Bill. That doesn't matter now. Do you know you're a deserter? You've got to get back to camp quickly! You must do everything you can to make them go easy on you."

As she sat there beside him, while the old car strained over the road, Martha thought of the guardhouse where she had found him last Sunday. Would this being absent without leave mean a longer term in the guardhouse? More severe punishment? "Bill, will they court-martial you?"

"I don't know." He turned and his eyes met hers. "All I know, Martha, is that I'm ashamed in my soul to have given you all this trouble. I—I could get down on my knees to you, I could—could cut off my arm... but it wouldn't help. Nothing could make it right again."

"Oh, sweet, will you ever trust me after this? Can you ever forgive me for my suspicions? I—I'd do anything, if only you'd give me another chance!"

"The Army's got to give you another chance," she said steadily. "That's our first concern. After that—oh, Bill, I've never stopped loving you!" She lifted her tear-stained face. Bill kissed her swiftly. Then they turned their faces resolutely straight ahead—to the immediate future that awaited them at the camp.

TWO hours later, going down the road that led to the sentry hut and the cantonment, Martha saw Suzanne's car. "Bill! There's Paul and Suzanne!" Bill touched the horn button. Paul and Suzanne tumbled out of their car in surprise and relief.

"Oh, Martha, you found him!" "Yes," her smile was tremulous. "There's no time now. Bill must report at once. Wait for me."

As Bill stepped on the starter, Martha saw Paul turn to Suzanne. "You've been wonderful," he said simply.

Suzanne answered, "I was wrong about those things I said at the hospital, Paul. I know now none of them was true. But you should have known, long ago, Paul—I'd do anything for you."

you." Her voice sang. "Oh, darling, I love you so! I'm waiting for you—and I'm the best, the happiest conscript's wife in the country."

Bill's voice shook. "You're the most wonderful conscript's wife, darling. I don't deserve it. But I'll spend the rest of my life showing you that I do appreciate it."

"About face, soldier!" she laughed. "From now on, the past's behind us. The future's ahead. Oh, Bill, I love you!"

"About face," he agreed steadily. "Together."

(THE END)



Frank Simeone, formerly with Paul Whiteman, now sits in the clarinet section of the Fort Dix, N. J., army band and plays his roudies and cadenzas for Uncle Sam at \$21 a month.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



SOME SCIENTISTS THINK THE ICE AGES WERE CAUSED BY THE EARTH'S CRUST SLIPPING ON ITS CORE SO THAT THE NORTH POLE WAS IN GREENLAND.

IN A NATIONAL LEAGUE HOCKEY GAME, THE TORONTO MAPLE LEAFS AND NEW YORK AMERICANS SCORED EIGHT GOALS IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES. (MARCH 10, 1939)

ANSWER: Wrong. Harmless garter snakes and poisonous rattlesnakes both give birth to living young, and the poisonous coral snake hatches from an egg.

RIGHTERONG? SNAKES THAT BRING FORTH THEIR YOUNG ALIVE ARE POISONOUS! THOSE THAT LAY EGGS ARE NOT!

WELL-KNOWN SHOWMAN

HORIZONTAL
1 American showman.
12 Dry.
13 Melancholy.
14 Cupid.
15 Puppets.
16 Finale.
19 One of an African tribe.
20 To relate.
21 Soft brooms.
22 Cry of inquiry.
23 Willingness.
24 Before Christ (abbr.).
25 Gypsy.
26 Dreadful.
27 Cravat.
28 Duck.
29 Hastened.
30 Owns.
31 Characteristic expression.
32 Neuter pronoun.
33 Beast of burden.
34 To grieve.
35 Electric unit.
36 Fold.



VERTICAL
1 Opposed to con.
2 Sword handle.
3 Lazy person.
4 Verb ending.
5 100 square meters.
6 Experiencing sensation.
7 Inferior.
8 Measure of area.
9 Low tides.
10 Pooled vases.
11 Witticism.
12 He — or publicized his —

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



ALBINO DEER, EH? SO THAT'S WHAT THEY LOOK LIKE

WELL, THEY'RE AN UNUSUAL COLOR, AN' I THINK THEY STUFFED HIM TO BRING OUT ALL TH' COLOR THEY COULD

ED BOREIN SEZ IT'S MODERNISTIC -- ALL THEY DO IS PUT A BALE O' HAY IN 'EM AN' CUT TH' WIRES

HOLD RYDER ON A GRAVE-ROBBERING CHARGE. SHERIFF, OR I'LL HAVE YOUR BADGE.

I'LL LOCK HIM UP TILL COURT OPENS TOMORROW, ANGUS.

RED RYDER

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

HA! HA! I'NT DADDY A CORKER? WONT BOTHER WITH BIG FANCY CARS AND CHAUFFEURS ANY MORE—BOUGHT AN OLD CRATE IN A SECOND-HAND LOT AND DRIVES IT HIMSELF—IMAGINE!

OH, HE SAYS HE'D BE AS BIG A SHOW-OFF AS ANYBODY, ONLY HE HADNT THE TIME NOW—GET! WHEN I THINK O' THE WAY HE USED TO LIVE---

WHY HE HAD HOUSES WITH HUNDREDS O' ROOMS--BET HE HAD FIVE HUNDRED SERVANTS. COUNTIN' GARDENERS, STABLEMEN, BUTLERS, FOOTMEN AND ALL--NOW HE HASNT GOT ANY AT ALL...

SURE! HE JUST HAD 'EM 'CAUSE HE COULD FORD 'EM AND WAS SPOSED TO HAVE 'EM--SHUK! THEY NEVER MEANT ANYTHING TO HIM--WHY THAR GUYS JUST TH SAME IF HE'S GOT A BILLION OR IF HE'S ON TH BUM! I KNOW--

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

WASH TUBBS

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

ALLEY OOP

BY GADFLY THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE IN ALEXANDRIA WHO'S PRETTY HANDY AT SEWING SEAMS WITH HOT LEAD?

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



SO YOU'RE THE GUY WHO'S BEEN SNATCHING THE VEIL I'VE BEEN USING FOR A BLANKET ALL WINTER! GIMME THAT CHUNK OF CREPE DE CHINE BEFORE MY CLAWS COME OUT AND I SCRATCH YOU OUTA THE FIFTH RACE!

AWP! SQUITY-TY! MY WORD, DONT ALARM THE WHOLE HOUSEHOLD! TAKE YOUR GENDARME HANDS OFF ME LEST YOU FEEL THE IRE OF AN AROUSED HOOPLE!

HOLD HIM THERE, MACK, WHILE I FRISK HIS LITTER FOR THE OLD SAIL THAT VANISHED FROM MY GLAB LAST NIGHT!

BY FRED HARMAN

BY HAROLD GRAY

BY MARTIN

BY CRANE

BY BLOSSER

BY V. T. HAMLIN

BY GADFLY THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE IN ALEXANDRIA WHO'S PRETTY HANDY AT SEWING SEAMS WITH HOT LEAD?

WELL, SWAB ME DOWN FOR A THREE-MASTED BRIGANTINE? I LIKE TIGHT THE PANTS SHOT OFF ME!

BY GADFLY THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE IN ALEXANDRIA WHO'S PRETTY HANDY AT SEWING SEAMS WITH HOT LEAD?

WELL, SWAB ME DOWN FOR A THREE-MASTED BRIGANTINE? I LIKE TIGHT THE PANTS SHOT OFF ME!

BY GADFLY THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE IN ALEXANDRIA WHO'S PRETTY HANDY AT SEWING SEAMS WITH HOT LEAD?

WELL, SWAB ME DOWN FOR A THREE-MASTED BRIGANTINE? I LIKE TIGHT THE PANTS SHOT OFF ME!

BY GADFLY THERE'S SOMEBODY DOWN THERE IN ALEXANDRIA WHO'S PRETTY HANDY AT SEWING SEAMS WITH HOT LEAD?