

SERIAL STORY

DRAFTED FOR LOVE

BY RUTH AYERS



"Ann, the audition doesn't matter. Kent is home on leave. He needs you. He loves you!"

YESTERDAY Kent is home for three days. He was injured in the explosion of a bomb but his sight is not permanently impaired. Doctors believe an operation will restore it. He talks on still believing Ann is beside him. He asks about April, calling her the "Glitterbug." April is furious.

ANN REFUSES TO RETURN

APRIL managed to leave Kent at his gate with a murmured answer. It was an answer that said nothing but promised much in the manner of all sweethearts.

What mattered now was that she was leaving down the hill, escaping from what had been the strangest situation she'd ever known. The wintry air smelled good, fresh.

Kent Carter, temporarily blinded, had taken her for Ann, the sister with whom he was in love. Ann was away, but she'd be back tomorrow if April had to turn the world upside down to get her. She wasn't doing this for Kent. Not at all. She was doing it for Ann.

Glitterbug, indeed! Kent Carter would eat those words some day. Then she shrugged. What difference did it make what he called her? He was nothing to her.

Octavia was waiting, hovering in a way that made April alert. "How come you take so long, Miss April?" Octavia asked. "Dat train was on time 'cause Ah heard her looking same's usual. You must Miss Carter okay and give him the message?"

"Miss Carter is safely at home in the arms of Auntie," April answered. "And if you wonder why I'm late, you should take yourself downtown to see the traffic jam caused by the free barbecue in the bandstand square."

"Free barbecue?" Octavia was frowning at once off the scent, or rather thrown on it. The scent of ham and pork roasting on a spit. Knowing she must get Octavia out of the house at all costs and at once, April went on. "You better join the jamboree, Octavia. There won't be a hambone left in another hour."

"Sure 'nuff?" Octavia's eyes rolled and her voice rolled, too, until she remembered that she had to be on duty while her "folks" were off camping. She said as much to Miss April.

"Just as long as you're home in time for breakfast," April said, "you can go your merry way with my blessing."

WHEN the house was quiet at last, all the flippancy vanished from April. It was 9 o'clock. Within the next half hour the three handsome swains who were taking her to Casa Blanca would be ringing the bell. She must hurry to reach Ann by long distances, to make the homecoming arrangements, and then to figure some way out of tonight's date with Kent Carter to which she had committed herself.

In the dimly lighted hall where the telephone table stood, April looked up at the small oil portrait of Ann. An artist who had owed Dad money for settling a damage suit had painted it when the sister was 16. But Ann hadn't changed. There were her eyes, brown, wistful and appealing; there was the mole-brown hair and the quiet brow. "She doesn't need to be beautiful," April said half aloud. "She can sing—and how she can sing!"

"Here goes," April thought, and whirled the dial for long distance. "I want to place a call to New York."

Then almost before she could take breath, someone was answering at the other end. "Hello," April said to the unfamiliar voice, "I would like to speak to Miss Ann Burnett."

"Ann Burnett? I'm sorry, but I think she's just gone out."

"Oh, no," and April, who had forgotten about placing the call in person to Ann, fairly wailed. "Please, I've got to get her at once."

"Wait a minute. Maybe I can catch her." The strange voice drifted off and even 500 miles away, April could catch the sounds of hurrying steps and a door opening.

And then, unbelievable but true, a voice came through the wire—the voice that might have been her own, so identical was it. "Oh, hello," Ann was saying.

"Ann, dear, this is April!" And then, because she was trembling, April cradled the telephone in her hand and curled up on the lounge.

"Oh, April dear. What's wrong?" The quick pulse of fear traveled the miles in a split second. "We're perfectly all right," April made herself say steadily. "Mother and Dad went up to the cabin to build log fires and spend a rugged week-end. Octavia has taken herself downtown and at any minute Nip is going to howl hello."

"And you?" There was gay relief in Ann's question. "Oh, me. I'm my same gorgeous self, Annie. Reason I'm calling up has to do with you, Ann. You've got to come home at once—this very night on the midnight train."

"But why? There is something wrong, then?" "No, Ann, everything's as right as right can be. Better yet, Kent Carter came home today."

"Kent! You mean for good, from Fort Dodd?" "No, honey, not for good. On leave until Monday night. Now listen quick, Ann, because every word I'm saying costs money. It was all unexpected, I mean Kent's coming home. Naturally, he's crazy to see you."

All the things she'd meant to say vanished in Ann's quick answer. "But April, I can't come home, even to see Kent!" She paused briefly, went on, "As a matter of fact, if Kent only knew it, he was the one who spurred me on to take this New York venture. And now I'm having my chance at last. Tomorrow night I have an audition with Vivano—the great Vivano."

April clutched the telephone stubbornly. "It doesn't matter," she wailed. "You'll have to postpone it, cancel it, anything."

Ann might not have heard her. She was saying, "I've lived for this time, worked for it. It may be the making of my future. Yes,

a chance of a lifetime, this audition for Vivano."

ANN'S voice. Yes, white April and Ann talked alike and laughed alike, Ann's singing voice went away ahead and beyond April's. It was a lovely contralto and everything must be done to keep it that way.

Mother was always particular to have nothing disturb Ann before a recital. April knew if she told Ann now about Kent's blindness, her sister might go all to pieces. It might even spoil the audition. So instead, she almost howled into the phone. "Kent loves you, Ann. He's crazy about you."

"Of course he is," Ann gave a small sigh and then with the quick little gasp characteristic of her, asked, "Did he tell you so?"

"Yes—no," April floundered and then, blessing of blessings, Nip came bounding to bark his "howl."

When the barking was over, so was the bad minute. Ann, apparently being hurried away by someone who stood at her elbow in that halfway 500 miles away, spoke in her same, lovely, gentle lilt.

"You send word to Kent, April, that I'm heartbroken I can't make it. But don't dare tell him about the audition. That must be kept a secret until I know it's a success."

So that was that! She, April, was to send word to Kent Carter that Ann was heartbroken but couldn't get to Pattonville.

These were Kent's three days against the darkness! Out of her confusion and despair, a flash of sheer inspiration struck April.

(To Be Continued)

Although land in farms was greater than ever before, the 1940 census reported a 3.1 per cent decline in the number of farms since 1930. The new total is 6,096,789, compared with 6,812,350 in 1935 and 6,288,648 in 1930.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

Advertisement for Kwik-Kopier featuring a man pointing to a map of the St. Louis River area. Text includes: 'GEORGE WASHINGTON OWNED MORE THAN 100,000 ACRES OF LAND!', 'MIS HOLDINGS WOULD HAVE A VALUE TODAY OF ABOUT FIVE MILLION DOLLARS.', 'ST. LOUIS RIVER, WHICH RISES IN MINNESOTA, IS CONSIDERED THE SOURCE OF THE ST. LAWRENCE RIVER.'

ANSWER: QMC, Quartermaster Corps; AEF, American Expeditionary Forces; GHQ, General Headquarters; MP, Military Police; RAF, Royal Air Force; AWOL, Absent Without Official Leave.

BLACK BIRD

Crossword puzzle grid with clues. HORIZONTAL: 1. Pictured glossy black bird. 5. It is called a bird. 11. Promise. 12. Winged shoes of Mercury. 14. Branch of learning. 16. Stiff collar. 18. Pierced with a gore. 19. To exhaust. 20. Nude. 22. Musical syllable. 23. Front of an army. 24. Hermit. 26. Being. 27. Railway (abbr.). 28. Gnawed. 29. Palm lily. 30. Trunched with tooth. 32. Toward. 34. To attack. 35. An embrace. 6. Native metal. 7. To free. 8. Go on. 9. Artless. 10. Itinerant. 11. It was formerly or revered. 13. Learning. 15. Tensibility. 17. Worm. 21. Musical tone. 25. Golf terms. 31. Absconds. 33. Beginning. 35. Moldings. 36. Sugar. 38. Coin. 40. Bark. 42. Sun god. 43. To assist. 45. Clock face. 46. Auction. 48. Ocean. 50. To sock flux. 52. Father. 53. Room (abbr.). 55. Preposition. 57. Either.

Illustration of a black bird perched on a branch, part of the crossword puzzle.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS

Comic strip 'OUT OUR WAY' showing a group of men in a hallway. One man is being pushed or pulled by others. Dialogue includes: 'MY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN IN THIS COUNTRY SO LONG THAT WE HAVE STARS AN' STRIPES BIRTH-MARKS--AN' THEY FRISK MY LUNCH BOX FOR SABOTAGE? ONE OF MY ANCESTORS SHAVED WASHINGTON AND DIDN'T CUT HIS THROAT, AN' THEY FRISK ME? WHY--'

RED RYDER

Comic strip 'RED RYDER' showing a man on a horse. Dialogue: 'SO--ANGUS IS GONNA BLAST OPEN TH' DUCHESS' SAFE'

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

Comic strip 'LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE' showing a group of men in a room. Dialogue includes: 'THREE TOUGH ONES, ALL RIGHT--WHOS TH' ONE THAT'S STILL BREATHIN?' 'ANNIE--BACK AT HIS OLD TRICKS--'

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

Comic strip 'BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'REALLY THOUGH--I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR LOVING IT HERE, I DO TOO! IT'S BEAUTIFUL!' 'WELL, SLOW NOW, JUNIOR I NO NOW, THERE'S NO USE WASTING TIME--SIMPLY MUST GO!' 'MISTON JEFF!!'

WASH TUBBS

Comic strip 'WASH TUBBS' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'EASY AND UCKI SPEND TWO DAYS QUESTIONING THOSE WHO ATTENDED THE NATIONAL DEFENSE BANQUET' 'WHAT DAIRY PRODUCTS DID YOU EAT THERE?' 'A LITTLE BUTTER, I GUESS'

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

Comic strip 'FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS' showing a group of men. Dialogue: 'YOU'RE TOO MUCH ON THE DEFENSIVE, FRECKLES! YOU SHOULD LAUNCH AN OFFENSIVE FOR A CHANGE!' 'THAT CALLS FOR HECTOR--HE'S AS OFFENSIVE AS ANYTHING I CAN THINK OF!' 'I MEAN FOR FRECKLES GET SOME OTHER GIRL, AND TAKE HER TO THAT DANCE--AND LET JUNE WORRY!' 'BUT I HAVE TO WORK AT THE GEM!'

ALLEY OOP

Comic strip 'ALLEY OOP' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'YOU NEEDN'T THINK ANY OF OL' BOOM'S CRAZY CONTRADICTIONS THAT BOB AND ARE GONNA WAKE ME UP BY TRYIN' AN' HIDE MY HEAD! NO SIR, I'M STAYIN' RIGHT HERE!' 'ALL RIGHT THEN, BREAK OPEN THAT BOX AND FEED ME AMMUNITION FOR THIS BABY.' 'SEE? OL' WHISKEYS IS SURE UP THERE. HE'S JUST A SPECK--OR WAS. Huh--'

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman at a table. Dialogue: 'OKAY, MAJOR, YOU WANT ME TO TELL YOU WHERE YOU WERE LAST NIGHT? WELL, YOU PLAYED CARDS AT THE OWLS CLUB, AND WON! YOU CAME TO BREAK-FAST HAPPY AS A CAT AFTER DINING ON A CANARY--AND YOU'RE WEARING THE TIE-PIN TIM GOT FOR CHRISTMAS, AND SNUFFY'S POP-BOTTLE CUFF LINKS--THEY LOST THEIR CASH FIRST, NATURALLY, THEN THE JEWELRY!' 'ALL RIGHT, DIAMOND JIM! HOW MUCH? I'LL TAKE HALF, BEFORE BREAKFAST!' 'THE OLD BOY ASKED FOR IT--AND GOT IT, RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES!' 'ANN--SPUTT!' 'ANY MORE QUESTIONS?'

BY FRED HARMAN

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'EITHER HE MURDERED HER OR TH' PINE BOX HE BURIED ON BOOT HILL-- IS EMPTY?' 'BOOM!' 'I HEARD ANNIE HAD MANY FRIENDS THAT TURNED STRAIGHT, BUT--'

BY HAROLD GRAY

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'WAIT A MINUTE! ANNIE HES NO HOODLUM ANY MORE--THATS PEGS MONEY--ON THE WAY TO THE BANK--I GET IT NOW--QUICK--GET THIS MAN TO THE HOSPITAL--' 'STEP ON IT, BOYS--CAREFUL WITH HIM--' 'SURE--I KNOW ANNIE'S RECORD--BUT THATS ALL DONE WITH--I'LL GET HIM MY DOCTOR--IF HE NEEDS A TRANSFUSION, WELL SEE IF MY BLOOD WILL DO HE DESERVES TO LIVE--' 'I HEARD ANNIE HAD MANY FRIENDS THAT TURNED STRAIGHT, BUT--'

BY MARTIN

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'OH! I SEE YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT!' 'MISTON JEFF! MISTON JEFF! I DIS HEAR AM MISTON BULLY YOU'D HEARD ME SPEAK OF SO OFTEN, HE WAS ONE OF TO BESTEST FRIENDS!' 'HELLO! MY FATHER HAD MANY FRIENDS THAT WAS HIS GREATEST WEAKNESS!'

BY CRANE

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'YOU DIDN'T GET ILL, SUM, DID YOU TAKE CREAM IN YOUR COFFEE?' 'NO, I NEVER DRINK COFFEE' 'WHY, YES, COME TO THINK OF IT' 'AH, HAT ALL BUT TWO OF THE GUESTS WHO USED CREAM BECAME ILL' 'THAT GIVES US SOMETHING TO WORK ON, UCKI, NOW WELL GO TO THE HOTEL AND SEE WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COFFEE CREAM THAT DAY'

BY BLOSSER

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'GO TO THE DANCE AFTER WORK! BY COMING IN LATE, YOU'LL ATTRACT MORE ATTENTION!' 'BY THAT TIME, THE DANCE WOULD BE OVER! I CAN'T GET A DATE TO WAIT ALL NIGHT!' 'WHAT'S THE NEXT MOVE?' 'WE OUSHTA LOOK FOR HECTOR! HE WON'T BELIEVE HIS SERVICES ARE NO LONGER REQUIRED--AND ITS HARD TO FIRE A GUY WHO REFUSES TO QUIT!'

BY V. T. HAMLIN

Comic strip 'OUR BOARDING HOUSE' showing a man and a woman. Dialogue: 'Y'VECKON HE'S COMIN DOWN TO LAY AN EGG?' 'YEP, ANDEITHER WEVE GOT TO SHOOT HIM DOWN OR KEEP HIM SO HIGH HE CAN'T HIT HIS TARGET'