

SERIAL STORY

FOR THE LOVE OF PETE!

BY BURTON BENJAMIN

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CHAPTER I

SIXTY THOUSAND people stood up and roared approval as State's blue-jerseyed squad came prancing out of the ramp onto the field. It was California's first glimpse of the most publicized football team in the country, a team that had flown almost 3000 miles to open its season on the coast.

Big, supple, confident, they jogged up and down the field—kicking, passing, loosening up. A buzz of anticipation filled the stands. The tall blond girl who sat in a 50-yard line seat behind State's bench was aware that one name seemed to be on everyone's lips.

"Which one's Laird?" "Watch him throw that ball!" "Look at that stride!" "That's Laird—number 52." The tall blond girl sat on the edge of her seat and clenched her hands. Her eyes never left that big "52" in the center of the field. They were lovely eyes—a deep blue, honest, intelligent. Her name was Anne Humphreys.

It seemed incongruous to Anne Humphreys to sit there and hear people idol-worship someone she knew as intimately as Pete Laird. They had met three years ago at a tea-dance when they were both freshmen at State. George Landers, Laird's closest friend, had introduced them. She remembered how this tall, bashful boy from a West Virginia mining town had blushed and struggled for words.

They had fallen in love even before she watched him develop into one of the nation's leading football stars. With fame had come poise and confidence and a knack for shaking off admirers as shruggingly as if they were would-be football tacklers.

George Landers, square-jawed and blunt, had moved along, too. His stocky, compact frame made him a blocking marvel. Few people realized his value, although State's squad thanked him the only way it could. By electing him captain.

But it was Pete Laird who carried the ball and Pete Laird who got the headlines. Anne bit her lip when she realized what this season meant to them. They wanted to marry right after graduation, but it all depended on the eight games ahead. They had no money, and their families couldn't help.

Then there was medical school for Pete—that took money, too. And there was only one place to get that money, to cash in on this football season. Success meant endorsements, publicity, plenty of lucrative propositions. It would have to be this year or never, for Anne knew well there was nothing so dead as last year's football heroes.

HER thoughts were broken by the thrust of a base runner. The crowd rose again and shouted. California had kicked off, and the game was underway.

For six or seven minutes Anne's glance shifted up and down the gridiron as State and California felt each other out. Suddenly State's juggernaut struck, and Anne was on her feet screaming. With the ball on its 40-yard line, State pulled a reverse with Pete Laird following four-man interference around right end. Anne saw the devastating State blocking mow down California defenders, saw Landers chop down the last man and Laird bolt into the open for a touchdown. She felt like running down on the field and throwing her arms around him.

Before the half had ended, Anne was almost numb. Late in the first quarter, Pete Laird, with the accuracy of a baseball pitcher, whipped a 50-yard touchdown pass to Landers in the end zone. Five minutes later he plowed through a wide gap in California's line, picked up his coterie of blockers and sped 75 yards unmolested.

"Come down to the corner of the stands by the ramp just before the second half," Pete had begged Anne earlier that day, so while California's band formed letters on the field and California's cheer leaders leaped through their antics, she made her way through a jostling crowd to a spot where she could call to Pete as the team returned to the field.

He jogged up the ramp slowly, looking for her, George just behind him. "Here, darling," she called, and Pete reached for her hand, squeezed it hard. Anne began pinching herself in the second half. California tried a quick kick, Laird picked up the loose ball on his 10-yard line and was off again. He dodged the diving California end, shook off one tackler, then another, stiff-armed a third. Up the middle of the field he stormed, bowling right over the last man who had a shot at him. Ninety yards, most of it covered single-handed!

California rooters sat stunned. This wasn't a football team—it was a Panzer division, a Molotov cocktail and a Spitfire rolled into one! But State wasn't through. California, desperate, began passing, and State intercepted. Two whacks at the line picked up three yards, and then they gave the ball to Laird. He went 23 yards for his fourth touchdown—and not a hand laid on him!

ANNE started toward the exit as Dinty Dugan, State coach, poured in his subs. She hailed a cab and ordered the driver to take her to a downtown hotel where the team was quartered. She had to catch an even-

ing train east, and her meeting with Pete would be brief. The driver flicked on his radio and she heard the final score—State 34, California 0.

In the locker room, Pete Laird sloshed under a shower and dodged playful pokes Landers directed his way.

"Same old stuff," Landers belted.

"Yep," chorried Laird, "you knock 'em, I run over 'em. They winked and laughed. Seven years together—high school and college—and they weren't stopping Laird and Landers yet. They were the Gallagher and Shean, Laurel and Hardy, and Amos 'n' Andy of football. The perfect team.

Newspaper men were waiting for Laird when he stepped out of the shower. The kid was good copy. He stood there dripping wet—a shock of brown, curly hair, dark eyes and a strong, fine face—answering their questions. Half an hour passed before Dinty Dugan—only his wife and the college president called him Lawrence—cleared the room. The players were all dressed except Laird. Landers shouted:

"Hey, Grange—step on it. Alumni are throwing a big feed at the hotel." Laird nodded and waved.

A messenger boy walked up to him. "Ain't you Pete Laird?" he asked.

"That's right, son. What'll you have?"

"Some doll outside asked me to give you this note," replied the messenger.

Dear Mr. Laird:

Congratulations. You were superb. As one of your great

admirers I'd like to tell you so in person. I'm sitting in a black limousine at Gate D. Please stop by.

Stephanie Stevens. Laird whistled. Say, this football business had a lot more than meets the eye! At least when a famous Hollywood star like Stephanie Stevens wrote notes asking for introductions, things were looking up. He slipped on his coat and hurried out.

(To Be Continued)

DOUBTFUL AID

CHICAGO, (P) — Maj. Gen. Samuel T. Lawton of the 33rd division, in town for the Armistice parade, told a story of one of his division officers who stopped to chat with a Tennessee farmer out in the hills.

"Kind of looks like we'll have to take care of Hitler," offered the Tennesseean. "Wonder if the Yanks will help us this time."

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8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ANSWER: 1. Sergeant. 2. Corporal. 3. Private First-Class. 4. Master Sergeant.

NEXT: Origin of the bed-casopy.

FEMININE WRITER

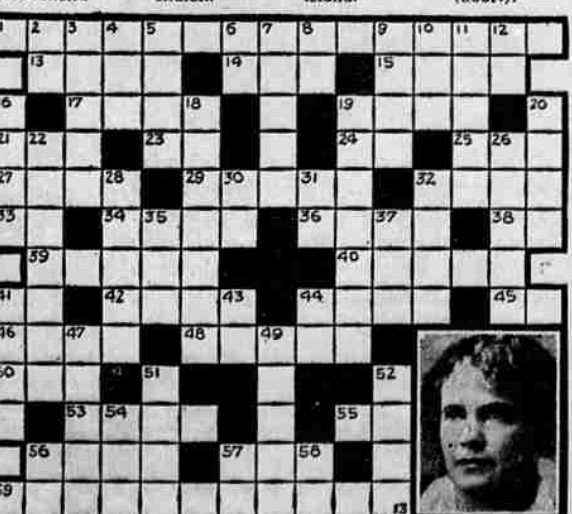
HORIZONTAL

- 1 Pictured writer.
- 3 Destiny.
- 14 Ever (poet).
- 15 160 square rods.
- 17 2000 pounds (pl.).
- 19 Space.
- 21 War aviator.
- 23 Chinese measure.
- 24 Music note.
- 25 Mineral spring.
- 27 Cushions.
- 29 Courtesy title.
- 32 Abound.
- 33 Comparative suffix.
- 34 Salver.
- 36 Challenge.
- 38 Compass point.
- 39 Clod.
- 40 Proportioned.
- 41 Louisiana (abbr.).
- 42 Sole.
- 44 Covenant.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

BEN LEAR YOOHOO
FEN ERGO EXACT
AGO ARABIC UT
JIN DORSALS ALE
EN A RIT CIGAR
NEEDS CORRIDORS
EH R NO
CORONATED NAVAL
T O AS T M T
INTENTS T A P
NU AGRA BEE
LE CLAY EPS
LE HEWS LEFT

- 19 Fleets of armed ships.
- 20 Her books have won her.
- 22 Body of a dead animal.
- 26 Depends.
- 28 Ostiole (zoo).
- 30 Affirmative vote.
- 31 Paid publicity.
- 32 Trial.
- 33 Regret.
- 37 Fabulous bird.
- 41 Lade.
- 43 Print measure.
- 44 Postscript (abbr.).
- 47 A boatsprit.
- 49 Bottomless gulf.
- 51 Premium.
- 52 Hurl.
- 54 Tree.
- 56 Greek letter.
- 57 Electrical engineer (abbr.).
- 58 Steamship (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

