

SERIAL STORY

LADY BY REQUEST

BY HELEN R. WOODWARD

NEA SERVICE, INC.

THE STORY: In handsome Stephen Curt, famous writer and commentator, about to offer her a job? Diana Tucker cannot understand why he followed her when she left the office of his lawyers after telling her former employer, Richard Thorpe, in Curt's presence, to go the devil, why he asked her to dinner, Curt's interest has been captured by the beautiful, fiery, red-headed girl. Naturally she is interested in him, even aside from her resistance to return to her downstate farm home, her hope that she can find another job in the city. Diana Tucker had resulted from her resistance to situate Richard Thorpe's advances?

STRANGE PROPOSAL

CHAPTER IV

DIANA sat up straight. Stephen Curt was going to offer her a job as she had hoped, but he was going about it oddly. As her eyes searched his face he began to speak very slowly as if choosing his words carefully so as to not be misunderstood.

"My father died several years ago, leaving me a very respectable though eccentric stepmother who loves me and whom I love very much. My own mother couldn't have taken more tender care of my sister, Adela, and me. But she's willful and domineering—a regular tyrant—she grows worse as she grows older—and unhappily my father left his entire fortune for her to administer. My father's will had several extraordinary clauses."

"But when Diana was thinking, 'has all this to do with me? I'm the one who's seeking a job—I should be giving the references. How strange that Stephen Curt should think I ought to know this!'"

Stephen Curt went on. "Knowing my proclivity to bachelorhood my father made his will to read that if I have not married by the time I am 35, his entire fortune, except for a bequest to Adela, will go to certain charities instead of to me. My stepmother's one purpose in life is to see that I don't try to break that clause. She has the devil's own stubbornness and—he drew a deep breath—"my 35th birthday is approaching rapidly. In fact by this time next month, it will have come and gone."

Diana's gray eyes were wide open with astonishment. She was staring at Stephen Curt.

"I mean that there is at the moment no one whom I care to make my wife—literally. Neither do I relish the idea of losing approximately two million dollars—though I shall certainly earn enough during my lifetime."

He paused and Diana waited, unable to speak.

"I was impressed by you as a girl of spirit," he went on. "When I came down in the elevator, I was hoping I might overtake you."

He reached in his pocket and drew out a small jeweler's box, troying with it for a moment.

"I've been carrying this about, hoping I might find a solution to my problem," he continued. "Since you need employment, I am offering you a job as my wife for a reasonable length of time—until all conditions of the will have been complied with, and a divorce shall be arranged—say six months at the most." He smiled briefly. "You see, my father failed to stipulate that there should not be a divorce. I assure you it is a job which will place no requirements on you in any way, except your presence in my house with me and my sister, Adela. And of course you'll be free to come and go as you like."

"I hope you won't think I'm uttering out of my mind," he said with a rueful smile, "but if you will wear those rings for a short time and help me out of this difficulty—I will pay you \$10,000 at the conclusion of our contract!"

"Ten thousand dollars! It was the most amazing thing she had ever heard."

"But surely—you're joking!"

"I was never more serious in my life," he said. "Take a moment—get used to the idea. There's really nothing alarming about it. A purely business proposition. We're both civilized products of the 20th century—liked each other on sight." He smiled. "Oh, didn't you?"

"Oh, yes."

"If I had offered you a job as my secretary, you'd have accepted eagerly, wouldn't you?"

"Yes, of course."

"This will be nothing more, really. It will make you feel better, I'll even let you type notes for me."

"Please," said Diana, trembling. "Stop talking!"

He sat quietly then, looking at her, while the dinner cooled between them.

Finally Diana said slowly, "But surely your stepmother doesn't want you to marry—just anyone?"

He smiled. "Decidedly not—she'll have to pass judgment on you, but I'm sure she'll approve."

"You have no way of knowing anything of the sort. Besides, there must be someone you know well—someone you care for—"

Stephen spoke gravely, as if saying the words cost him a great effort. "There is no one. You see, the woman I love is married to another man."

"OH!" So that was it! He had not used the past tense, either. He had said "the woman I love." He was carrying a torch for someone—someone who had loved another more than he.

"I can be safe with a man like that," Diana was thinking, "until I get my bearings. Really establish myself here. It's not selfish to think of my future—he's making all the suggestions. Then—after a few months—10 thousand dollars—a little dress shop of my own perhaps. Security—I could always live here—be independent. It's honorable, too—his loving someone makes it all very safe and sure."

"I—don't know. When would it have to be?"

"Within the month, naturally. Come, my dear, I'll see that you have a very pleasant time."

"Yes, I can see that." She faced him squarely. "When would you want your stepmother to—pass judgment on me?"

"Why not now—tonight?"

"Tonight!" Again she had that breathless feeling of running to keep up with him. Life was certainly rushing her today. To lose one job and one's temper, to meet a fascinatingly brilliant man and have him propose marriage—to be offered a contract calling for payment of \$10,000—any one of these events would have made an exciting day. But to have them all crowded into one! Having the eccentric old woman who controlled the Curt fortune pass judgment on her would perhaps provide the climax of the series.

"Very well," she said steadily. "Let's go."

He looked ruefully at her untouched food. "You were so anxious to dine at the Savola and here I've made you lose your appetite. I was a chump not to wait until you'd finished. Never mind, we'll come again."

They waited in the foyer while Stephen's car was brought around. Then they were on their way to Ellen Curt's apartment.

(To Be Continued)

SLEEPER PLAY
CHICAGO, (AP)—A Maxwell street employer and employe teamed in a perfect passing play to frustrate a holdup and save \$800.

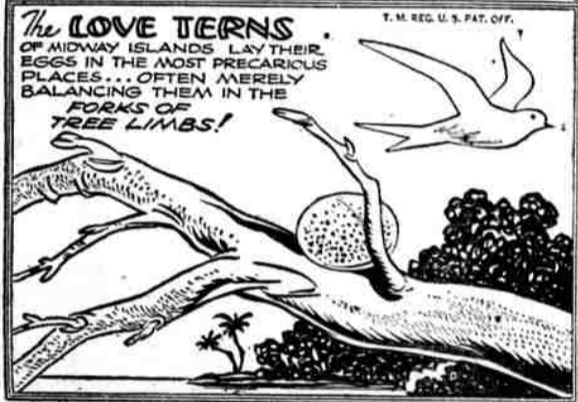
When Phillip Yudkoff, 22, shoe store owner, felt a revolver against his back he tossed a bag containing \$800 over his head to Irving Schwartz, 38, an employe. Schwartz sprinted around a corner to safety; the robber fled.

Read the Classified page.

NEED A SUIT RIGHT NOW? IF YOU DO, REMEMBER THAT YOUR CREDIT IS GOOD HERE! AS LONG AS 90 DAYS TO PAY OREGON WOOLLEN STORE 8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



IT TAKES ABOUT TEN YEARS TO DEVELOP A REALLY SAFE AUTOMOBILE DRIVER. QUIDING ODDS. TO GET UP IN THE WORLD YOU MUST GET DOWN TO EARTH. JOSEPH SWISS BRONX, NEW YORK CITY.

NEXT: Was helium gas used in the first World War?

SOVIET GENERAL

Crossword puzzle grid with clues: HORIZONTAL: 1 Pictured Soviet army commander. 13 Intermediate. 14 Scandinavian coin. 16 Within. 18 Auto. 20 Sutor. 22 Proceed. 23 Afternoon meals. 25 Trinitrotoluene (abbr.). 26 Exclamation. 27 Noun suffix. 28 Music note. 29 Deeply malignant. 33 Ducks. 34 Fasta. 38 Shield. 39 Exist. 40 Calls back. 43 Form of "be." 45 Tree. 47 Populace. 48 Mountain pass. 49 Genus of. Answer to Previous Puzzle: 21 He gives his commands. 24 Gatherings of people. 28 Knots. 31 Register (abbr.). 32 Limit (comb. form). 34 Suppress. 35 Either. 36 Crimson. 37 Title. 41 String instrument. 42 Long (comb. form). 44 Raced. 46 Throw. 48 Scottish Highlander. 50 Gallon (abbr.). 51 Hall. 53 Girl's name. 54 Nothing. 56 For example (abbr.). 58 Out of (prefix).

Crossword puzzle grid with a portrait of a man in the center.

OUT OUR WAY

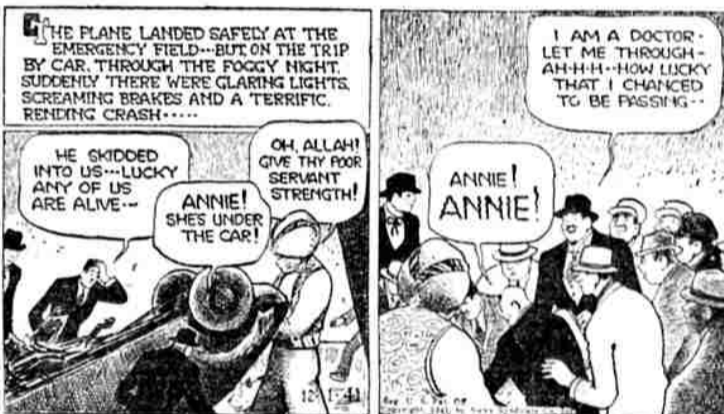
By J. R. Williams



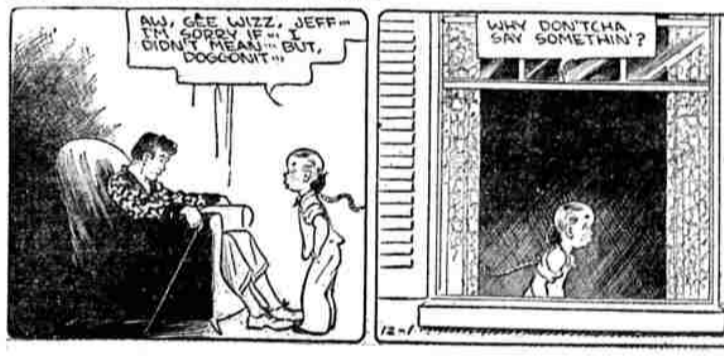
RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



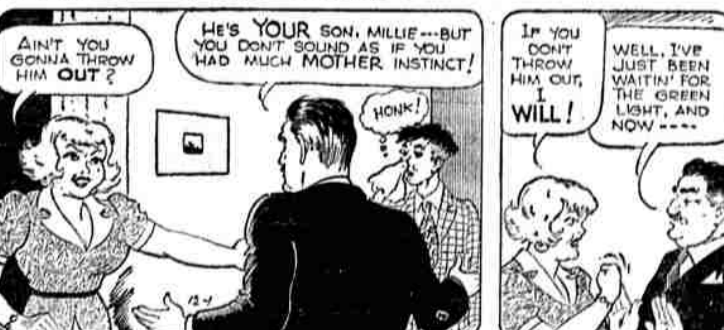
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OOP



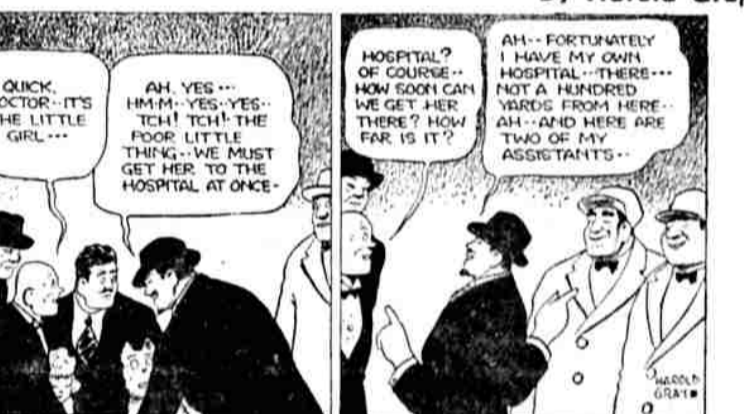
OUR BOARDING HOUSE, with Major Hoople



By Fred Harman



By Harold Gray



By Martii



By Crane



By Blossie



By V. T. Hamlin

