

SERIAL STORY

HIS CHRISTMAS CAROL

BY ADELAIDE HAZELTINE

COPYRIGHT 1941, NEA SERVICE, INC.

THIS STORY: When Andrew Dearborn died of heart attack, his secretary Carol refused to admit to unscrupulous Mr. Dearborn's store, that she knows the whereabouts of the will. Having typed it, however, she knows that she and five other employees are to judge whether or not to playboy son Andy Dearborn, who is in love with Linda Julian, runs the store according to his father's will.

"JUST HIS SECRETARY"

CHAPTER III

THE other five on the jury to judge young Andy were not actually named. The will simply specified that they would be the five who on the day of his death had longest served the store. "These five and Carol Fairfield, whom I trust very much."

She had gone to plead with him. "Name someone else, Mr. Dearborn. I'm not capable of helping make a decision like that."

He smiled across his desk at her. "You're perhaps the most capable of them all, Carol. For you, more than any other, see the store through my eyes. I would feel safe with you alone to decide it. I expect your influence to be felt. Naturally," he hesitated and she noticed a dampness in his eyes. "I hope with all my heart that Andy will carry on. Run the business as I have built it. Where the customer is always right and the employe always happy. If he doesn't," he looked away. "Dearborn's shan't exist. I must make sure of that. Promise me you'll stand by the spirit of the will, Carol, between the people and my son."

She said, in a small voice, "I will." She couldn't say, "I love your son, Mr. Dearborn. Hopelessly, yes. But love just the same. Don't leave me to pass judgment on him."

She couldn't say anything to change his mind. The more she tried to say the firmer he became. "You'll do this one last thing for me, Carol. You'll do it well." He spoke the words he had written in the will. "I trust you very much."

Quickly she ran over the list of the five who were with her in it. Bessie in notions, Methilde in dresses, John in the stock room, Mr. Majors in the merchandising office, Miss Fanny in hosiery. They had been longest in the store.

Suddenly she tensed, glanced at a calendar. December 18. She drew a startled breath. Annual inventory began the Monday after New Year's. Seventeen days away.

Too short a time. Far too short! Yet there it was. Mr. Dearborn had thought inventory the right date to close the store, if close they must. He surely hadn't expected to die within less than three weeks of it!

Every day, every minute was precious.

It was too much for her young shoulders. She dropped down at her desk, flung her head on the typewriter and through sheer bafflement let the tears come.

That's why the masculine feet had stopped beside her before she became aware of them. They stirred impatiently. A pair of women's shoes with ridiculously high heels joined them.

Carol took a quick dab at her eyes, smoothed her hair and looked up.

"Dazedly, she rose and said, 'Oh, you've come!'"

Andy, Dearborn and Linda Julian stood before her.

Andy's voice sounded strained. "I'm sorry your cable didn't reach us sooner, Carol. With the funeral and all—you must have had a lot on your hands."

"We managed. If we'd known you could come so soon—"

"I left within an hour after I got your cable."

"They couldn't find you for two days." Her tone was an accusation.

He noticed it and stiffened. "We were cruising. We didn't hit a port for a week. I had no idea my father was ill." A shadow of pain crossed his face.

Her sympathy went out to him. She knew he had loved his father.

"You must have known he expected an attack any time."

He looked steadily at her. "No, I didn't know. He never mentioned it." After a moment he added, "You probably knew more about him than I did."

"He loved the store. He kept hoping you'd be here more."

"Yes, I know." A one-sided smile embellished the meaning of his words. "Well, you know how we got along, Carol. The time I was here he was always pushing me to settle down—to keep my nose to the desk—" He stopped. "Of course, you're not interested in that."

A cool voice cut in. "Why should she be, darling? After all she was only his stenographer."

Carol drew back. Linda was tall with an amazingly clear skin under her cruise tan. Her eyes were a contemplative yellow-green. Her mouth now wore a derisive smile. "Let's go in the office and get out of this unholy noise," Linda urged.

For the first time Carol realized the footsteps of hundreds of customers might be called noise. She had thought of them as music. It meant business was good at Dearborn's.

Andy's eyes continued to hold Carol's as he said absently to Linda—

"Yes, of course." He turned and touched the knob of his father's office, paused. Then, quickly, he turned it, opened the door and went in.

It was Linda who closed the door behind them.

Carol, busy at her desk, tried not to listen to the rise and fall of their voices or to speculate about the silence between.

She must not let Andy's presence arouse all her old unhappiness. Now, before she had to carry out the terms of the will, she must harden her heart against him. She must stifle her love.

When Linda came out she said to Andy, "You won't be long, will you, darling? You promised me a drive you know. I love to ride in the snow."

"I'm sorry, mame," he said rebelliously. He ducked between the shoppers to retrieve his wet papers. Clutching them in his small brown hands he came to Carol's desk.

"Jimmy-gee, Miss Carol! That dame comin' out of your office hit me like a truck. Then says, 'his boyish voice mocked her. 'You careless boy!'"

Carol glanced at a glance at the inner office and saw Andy stand-

ing in the doorway. He was bound to hear Nicky's words. She shook her head to silence the boy. "She's a friend of Mr. Dearborn's, Nicky," she said desperately. "She came from his office."

Nicky grabbed off his hat. "Jimmy-gee!" he exclaimed. His mouth gaped. His face turned an embarrassed pink.

"Better be more careful, boy," Andy's voice was annoyed. "What are you doing up here anyway? Can't you sell your papers on the street?"

Nicky twisted his cap. "I—you see—" he stammered. "It was his—well, Mr. Dearborn always bought a paper from me and he wanted it in a hurry. He'd be standin' there jus' like you, waitin' for me. Now—well—I jus' keep comin'. In a hurry. I like to think—"

Carol couldn't look at Andy. The boy began to back away. Andy stopped him. "Here, son," he said gently, "how many papers did you spoil?"

"Oh, that's all right. I can lose 'em."

Andy's mouth was firm but his eyes were warm. "How many?" he persisted.

Nicky surveyed his armful. "Bout twelve, maybe. But it's all right. I guess I ought to have come slower—"

Andy fished some coins from his pocket and pushed them into Nicky's hand. "You can count me a regular customer, too, Nicky. Every day."

The boy grinned his thanks. "Jimmy-gee!"

"And Nicky," Andy added quietly as the boy turned to go, "I'll want my paper—in a hurry."

(To Be Continued)

Looking for Bargains? Turn to the Classified page

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



IMMANUEL KANT, GERMAN PHILOSOPHER WHO WROTE OF THE EARTH AND THE HEAVENS, LIVED TO THE ripe age of 81 years and never journeyed more than twenty miles from Konigsberg, the place of his birth.



THE HOPI INDIANS SAY BALDNESS CAN BE CURED BY WASHING THE HEAD WITH YUCCA ROOT AND THEN RUBBING IT WITH DUCK GREASE.

ANSWER: SOS, the call of distress. NEXT: Paradox of the Grand Canyon.

POPULAR ACTRESS

HORIZONTAL

- 1 Pictured motion picture star,
10 Bellef,
11 Giant,
13 Coffey,
14 Burtie,
16 Salient feature,
18 Successful plays,
19 Pillar of stone (arch.),
21 Minute arachnid,
22 Cyprinoid fish,
23 She is a popular mineral rock,
25 Plagues,
26 Revolved,
30 Old Testament (abbr.),
31 Note in Guido's scale,
32 Storehouse,
35 Part of the arm (pl.),
38 Alder tree,
40 Mine,
41 Deep hole.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

- WALTER HUSTON,
AS SAID CHANGE REB SEA SLOW T,
TRAINING PAUL,
WREN GAULS IDEAL RESIN TIDE SH DITA TERRACE ATOM MP SOLACES WASTED TEETES,
42 Sitting place,
44 Sandy tract by the sea,
45 Small vessels for heating liquids,
47 Mongrel,
49 Painful spots,
50 Preparation of fruits or vegetables,
52 Porticoes,
53 She is a well-known (pl.),
VERTICAL
1 Rugged,
14 Attorney (abbr.),
15 Palm leaf,
17 Graze,
18 South Carolina (abbr.),
20 Reverses,
23 Flower,
24 Defile,
27 Spinning toy,
29 Beater used in mixing mortar,
32 Comfort,
33 Weight allowance (pl.),
34 Pineapple,
36 Musical dramas,
37 Beverages fermented from grapes,
38 Female saints (abbr.),
7 Faint,
8 Particle,
9 People connected by ties of blood,
10 Rebuke,
12 Potassium nitrate,
13 Small piece,
31 From,
52 Street (abbr.).

Crossword puzzle grid with a portrait of a woman 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 Martin



By Crane



By Blosser



By V. T. Ham'in

