

SERIAL STORY SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR

BY BLANCHE ROBERTS

CHAPTER I

JUDITH pressed the cocky little hat over her red curls and reached for her purse. It was 12 o'clock and she was in a hurry to be off, but as she turned to leave the office, the buzzer on her desk rang. Reluctantly she flipped the button with a perfectly manicured finger.

"Yes, Mr. Watson?"

"I want to see you at once, Miss Kingsley," said the president of the Watson Airplane Corp. His voice was crisp and urgent.

"Yes, sir," she replied, her tone lacking its usual enthusiasm.

She could have removed her hat and put down her purse but she did not. It was her lunch hour and he might as well know she expected to eat. She picked up her note pad and pencil and started for his office. When she entered the spacious room, Watson looked up, a deep frown between his eyes.

"Sit down, Miss Kingsley," he instructed, and motioned her to the chair on the other side of the flat-topped mahogany desk.

She hesitated, thinking if she sat down the interview might be too long. He smiled, relaxing his soberness for the moment.

"I know—it's 12 o'clock and you have a date for lunch."

"Not a date, Mr. Watson," she answered smilingly and dropped her slim and graceful figure to the chair, "but I am disgustingly hungry for a girl who has to watch her diet and count her calories."

He chuckled.

"I won't keep you long and you will have no use for that," he informed, indicating the note pad. He leaned back in his chair and studied her intently with his dark eyes. "How would you like a trip to California?"

Judith straightened her shoulders and looked at him questioningly.

"I think there is a leak in this organization somewhere and to put my fears at rest, I am sending you to San Diego. I want a check-up on the office force out at the factory. Do you want to go?"

Judith's eyes sparkled and she beamed forward eagerly.

"Of course, I want to go." Her voice was swift with decision.

"It might prove to be a dangerous assignment," Watson informed her gravely. "You understand that? There is time to back out and it isn't compulsory, you know. It won't mean your job if you do not wish to go."

"But I want to go, and I love danger and excitement," she told him, and there was a brightness to her tone that gave truth to her statement.

"I know." He smiled with understanding. "That is why I thought of you immediately. You have never seemed to be afraid of anything or anybody." There was admiration in his eyes. Judith was valuable to the company and he knew it. "You're cool-headed and not easily excited when you get in a tight spot. And you have plenty of determination to see a thing through. I've had my eye on you for a long time, young lady."

"Thank you for the nice compliments, Mr. Watson," Judith said, blushing. "But when do I start for California?" Eagerness trailed her words. "I'm terribly excited."

"At exactly 3 o'clock." He glanced quickly at his watch. "You haven't too much time. You will take the plane for San Diego, and no one here is to know you are going. Just walk out to lunch without a word and don't come back. I'll say you phoned in you were sick. A place will be reserved for you on the liner, and you can pick up the ticket at the field office."

He leaned over the desk and his voice was suddenly very low.

"The plans for that new bomber are being carried out to the west coast factory on the same plane. It's a secret. So keep your eyes open."

"How am I to know who has the plans?" she asked. With her red hair peeking saucily from beneath her hat she looked more like a debutante than an investigator. "After all I don't want to protect the wrong man."

"Talk, dark and handsome, I would say," smiled Watson. "Nice, quiet sort of fellow. The name is Tom Burke."

"Tom Burke!" echoed Judith, startled, and color rose to her cheeks. She looked away quickly. Even if she had fussed with Tom and they had parted ways in anger, the mere mention of his name still had the power to send her heart racing. But that was no reason why she should let Watson suspect anything existed between them.

WATSON nodded his head.

"I thought you would recognize the fellow. Seen you two together on occasions. What do you think of him?"

A deeper flush burned her cheeks and made her furious with embarrassment. She answered a bit curtly.

"Nice on the eyes but concealed

and stubborn as a mule." He smiled as if from some inner knowledge and stood up. "Keep your eyes open. I want to nick any sabotage in the bud that might be developing in this company. By the way, Burke is remaining on the coast as consulting engineer for the plant." He let that bit of information sink in, then reached for her hand and pressed it. "I am depending on you to carry through for the company."

"Then I'll be on my way, Mr. Watson." Her red mouth curled in a mischievous grin. "I shall have a very good time and spend the company's money freely."

"You have a free hand on expenses. And happy landing."

Judith fairly raced from the building and did not stop to eat lunch. She hailed a taxi and rushed to her apartment to pack a hasty bag.

As she walked through the airport gates, the loudspeaker announced the approaching departure of the westbound plane. The afternoon sun sifted through her red hair, and the light of adventure glowed in her eyes. She hurried aboard the big silver ship and took a seat in the rear. She did not have time to look around at her fellow-travelers for a few minutes. There was the task of adjusting the safety belt and making herself comfortable.

But once in the air, she settled down and let her eager eyes rove the ship in search of Tom Burke. In a moment she saw him, up one seat and across the aisle. She studied what little of his head she could see, wondering if he would sense her presence. But he did not turn. A little sigh passed her lips. She knew in her heart that she still loved him, regardless of what had happened or been said.

With an effort, she pulled her gaze from him and looked around at the others she had seen. The man in front of her had his head turned to the side. His eyes

seemed to be focused on Burke, but she could not be sure from where she sat. The man across the aisle from her was either very frightened or very interested. His stare was glued to the back of Tom's seat. She studied the man for a long time from veiled eyes. Just as she settled down to read a magazine, a sudden alarming thought came to her.

"Those men are watching Tom. They must know he has the plans for the bomber."

(To Be Continued)

100 PER CENT

RALEIGH, N. C., (AP)—James S. Burch, state highway commission statistics engineer, after a series of complicated calculations, forecast back in February that North Carolina highway traffic would decrease 29 per cent in May.

The May survey just completed shows a drop of exactly 29 per cent.

We do not need less criticism in time of war, but more.—Woodrow Wilson, as quoted by George Creel.

Fluorescent Lamps and Starters Available!

Also All Shapes and Sizes G. E. Mazda Lamps

UHLIG'S

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

"IN MEMORIAM"

JAMES JOHNSON, IN 1861, LEFT HIS HOME NEAR GENEVA, NEW YORK, AND WENT AWAY TO WAR. HE HUNG UP HIS SCYTHE IN THE CROTCH OF A TREE WITH INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO REMOVE IT UNTIL HE RETURNED, BUT HE NEVER CAME BACK, AND THE TREE GREW AROUND THE SCYTHE, HOLDING IT SAFE AND SECURE.

SENDING ODDS

SEND US AN "ODD" TO QUOTE.

"WE WASH OUR CLOTHES TO WEAR THEM OUT," SAYS MRS. RENA D. FARR, SUGAR CITY, COLORADO.

MILK THAT IS TAINTED WITH WILD GARLIC CANNOT BE FREED OF THE FLAVOR, NO MATTER HOW IT IS TREATED, OR WHAT IS MADE FROM IT.

NEXT: Insects and battleships.

U. S. ARMY SUPPLY CHIEF

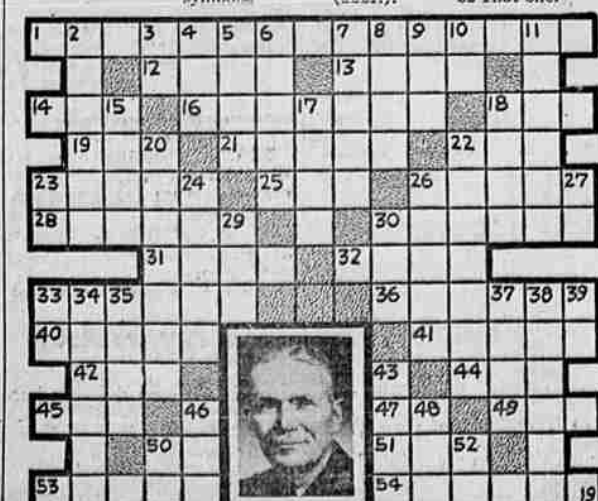
HORIZONTAL
1 Pictured U. S. Army supply chief, General

12 Revise.
13 Lily plant.
14 Recede.
15 Self-concerned person.
16 Trinitrotoluene (abbr.).
19 Evil.
21 Great number.
22 Gazelle.
23 Deserve.
24 Dance step.
25 Bed on train.
26 Directions.
27 Poem.
31 Tight.
32 Walking stick.
33 Military display.
36 Cleanliness.
40 Bellow.
41 He carries a

Answer to Previous Puzzle

WALTER NASH
1 WALTER NASH
2 DESTITUTE
3 SMILING GAY
4 LAP RAGE
5 ANAS SEMI
6 FULMINIC DARE
7 BARE ATTAR NONE
8 GAPS SARABAND
9 T NEPA REBATE
10 AH RANA SITE PL
11 LAD RIBE DO ALE
12 OLEASTERS NEVER
13 NEWZEALAND HEAT

VERTICAL
1 Rationed item.
2 Him.
3 Lyric poem.
4 Near.
5 Bend over.
6 Female servants.
7 Other than.
8 Decay.
9 Votre Eminence (abbr.).
10 That one.



Out Our Way
By J. R. Williams



Red Ryder



Little Orphan Annie



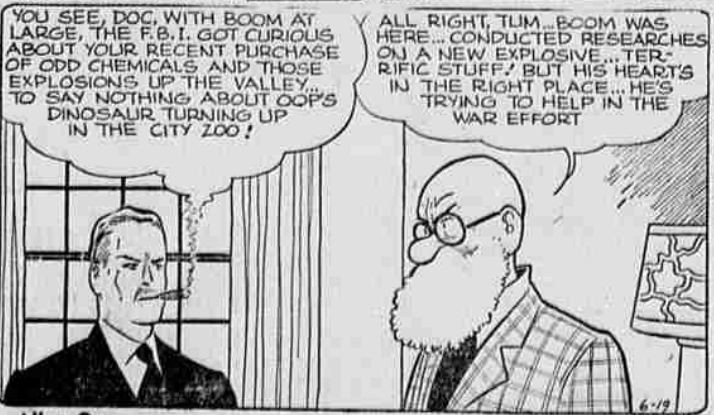
Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Alley Oop



Our Boarding House
With Major Hooole



Harold Gray



Harold Gray



Harold Gray



Harold Gray



Harold Gray



Harold Gray

By V. T. Hamlin