• SERIAL STORY

PLAY BY PLAY

BY PAUL DAVID PRESTON

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THE STORY: Only feminine passenger in the bus bringing the Lincoln Field cadet football team back to camp is Blythe Miller, 19-year-old daughter of Coach Pop Miller. Blythe has her troubles. For one thing, she's in love with Duane Hogan, who treats her like his little sister. And for another, she's not in love with Norman Dana, who's always proposing. That's what he is doing when the bus crashes into another car, sending both of them headlong.

• • •

RESCUE

CHAPTER II

WHEN Blythe Miller's mind really focused again she was holding childishly onto the tail of big Duane Hogan's coat while he pumped a fire extinguisher. She never really knew how she or the others got out of the bus and came to be standing here in the rain beside the wrecked coupe.

On quick impulse she moved forward.

"Bly! No, no! Wait till the flames—!"

The voice didn't finish. It was Norman Dana, also at her side. He had restrained her. Suddenly then she remembered Pop and the football team that had been in the bus. But when she swung around frantic for them, she saw that the bus was intact, the men all anxiously ready. Pop's bald top with the grayish fringe of hair all around at the ear level made him most visible of all. He was nearest to her and he spoke calmly now.

"Steady, sweetheart, steady!"

That was like Pop. Steady. Wise. In spite of his aggressive spirit. It was why people loved him, why he made a great football coach. Already he was opening the team's first aid kit. The bus driver held a flashlight high, and next moment Blythe herself was helping Duane and Norman lift a human form out of the coupe.

"This is a woman, a girl," Norman stated, quite unnecessarily.

The screams that had first frozen everybody's blood had ceased, but the baby was still wailing. And yet—the woman was not unconscious.

"T-thank—thank you!" she managed tremulously. "Scooter is—Scooter—!"

"Just be quiet," Blythe counseled. "We'll lift you."

Big Duane seconded that, "Yes, ma'am. It'll be easier if you do."

"Scooter! I must have Scooter!"

They reached for Scooter. Tenderly, quietly, he was lifted through the twisted coupe door, past the teeth of broken glass and metal. Murmurs rumbled through the football players as they crowded up.

"Way he was fixed, I don't believe there's a scratch on him," Duane Hogan drawled. "Scooter, eh?"

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THE mother was crying. Sobbing in relief more than anything else. Pop made a to-do about both them. There were scratches on the woman, a broken finger, a lot of bruises, a thump on the forehead which Pop assured her was not concussion but would soon be "an egg to laugh about."

Scooter ceased yelling and developed an interest in the whole proceedings here, eventually even to smiling and trying to talk. He sat in Blythe's loving arms. He rode there when big Duane again lifted the mother and the group led a little procession through the front door of the bus. Norman guided, half lifted Blythe, staying at her elbow.

"The back seat," Blythe directed. "It's long enough for her to lie down on. Careful, oh careful, Duane!"

Duane put her down tenderly and the stranger smiled pale thanks. Pop Miller came to finish his work. Blythe piled on blankets and even produced hot coffee from a vacuum bottle.

"Cold now?" Blythe asked.

"Shaking. Nerves, I guess. You're all so kind to us. Is Scooter—?"

"Scooter is sitting happily in Mr. Norman Dana's lap—there, see?—holding a football. Norman is All-America quarterback from State U., but currently of the Pilot Replacement Center, Lincoln Field, like the rest of us." Blythe tried to say all that casually. Never let hysteria creep into your voice, Pop had often counseled.

In a little while Blythe shooed all the others away. Mostly, the men were busy outside. The wrecked coupe had to be moved off the pavement. It had skidded, leaped, struck hard. But the bus could still run safely. The night storm held more sleet than rain now, and the hour was drifting on past midnight.

Relaxed at last, the strange girl tried again to thank them. Blythe thought it best to let her talk, for nobody could sleep now anyway. There was yet a two-hour run back to Lincoln Field.

"This is the end of everything," the injured woman sighed. Then she added, rather spunkily, "But I—I can start all over. I will!"

Blythe waited, then said, "You haven't told us who you are."

"I'm Nancy Hale. Mrs. James Wesley Hale."

"How nice. You were riding to see him, maybe? You and Scooter?"

"No."

Again Blythe waited. It was half a minute before Nancy went on.

"I am a widow. Wesley died at Pearl Harbor. He—the car—Scooter's all I have! Absolutely all! Even the suitcase is borrowed, and the—the—"

• • •

SHE was about to break down, but Duane came near and he and Blythe made over her, pretending to re-do her bed, asking about Scooter to divert her attention. Blythe looked sideways at Duane's face. The big Texan, she realized, was as tender and understanding as he was strong. It tightened Blythe's throat again; she, who had so often felt a lump in her throat and a quickening in her heart whenever Duane Hogan was near. For two years she had loved him, as silently as time itself. And for two years the impression she, the football coach's daughter, had made on Duane Hogan amounted to nothing at all.

Tactfully now, he went away again, and took Scooter to hold and help back to sleep in the rocking motion of the bus. Blythe sat on the floor to be near Nancy Hale and talk low-tone with her if she wished.

"You are all so sweet," Nancy murmured, over and over. "We might have been killed."

"Hush, dear. Everything's okay."

"Scooter's asleep." She raised up to look at her son, three seats forward now.

"He's a darling baby."

"Yes. I love him so. He's 2 years old now. Look at them! That's the way Wesley used to hold him. The very way!"

Blythe said nothing. It was a tender moment, requiring no words.

"That man—is he married?" Nancy asked then. "Does he have a child?"

Blythe smiled. "No, dear! That's Duane Hogan. He's another football star. From A. and M. The Aggies. He's—he's scared to death of girls, much less married!"

Nancy did not smile. She was still trembling a little from shock. And perhaps from memory, too. She lay back now, gazed up at nothing.

"He's—he's wonderful," she murmured to Blythe. "The way he holds a baby. The way he lifted me out of that wrecked car and carried me here. The—well, just the way he—he is!"

She said the "is" with so much emphasis that Blythe wholly understood her. Understood—and felt a quick premonition that amounted to a literal chill!

(To Be Continued)

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THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

GERMAN POLICE CHIEF

HORIZONTAL

1 Pictured Nazi police chief, Heinrich ——.
7 He heads the German ——.
13 Near.
14 Ratio.
15 Vex.
16 Part of "be."
17 Smallest
19 Since.
21 Combine.
23 Ostrich-like bird.
24 Wed.
26 Lair.
27 Toward.
29 Negative
30 Myself.
31 Portal.
33 Forceful.
37 Exclamation.
38 Either.
39 Company (abbr.).
40 Girl's name.
42 Scorched.
45 Half an em.
46 Cloth measure
47 Him.
48 Literary collection.
50 Written.
54 Knock.
57 Insanity.
59 Dress edge.
60 Aroused.
62 Ounces (abbr.).
63 Unclothed.
65 Genus of cetaceans.
67 Symbol for iridium.
68 Realm.
69 Touching.

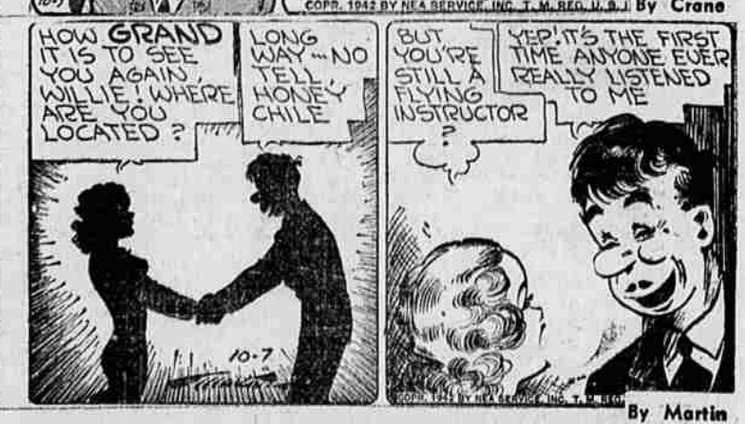
Answer to Previous Puzzle

W	I	L	L	I	A	M	S	T	A	N	D	L	E	Y
R	O	A	D	■	D	O	T	A	L	■	R	A	T	E
I	N	N	■	M	■	B	A	N	■	N	■	S	A	L
T	■	D	O	O	M	■	■	G	U	S	T	■	L	■
E	L	■	A	T	O	M	■	R	E	I	N	■	M	S
■	A	A	■	O	■	S	A	M	I	N	S	■	A	I
A	D	M	I	R	A	L	■	M	E	A	N	D	E	R
■	S	I	■	B	I	T	T	E	R	N	■	E	N	■
■	■	■	■	O	C	A	■	R	A	C	K	■	S	W
■	■	■	■	A	S	■	■	L	E	N	A	■	A	■
■	■	■	■	T	O	P	E	■	S	E	L	L	S	■
■	■	■	■	P	R	O	S	E	■	A	I	T	O	P
■	■	■	■	A	M	B	A	I	S	S	A	D	O	R	S

ADMIRAL WILLIAM H. STANDLEY

Instrument.

30 Measured walk.
31 Female deer.
32 Electrical unit.
34 Neither.
35 Frozen water.
36 Fish.
41 Average.
42 Allow.
43 Wing.
44 Demigod.
48 Malayan malady.
49 He is a ——.
50 Praise.
51 Those.
52 Electrical engineer (abbr.).
53 Has been extended.
55 Of the same kin.
56 Saucy.
58 Low pasture.
61 Oscillate.
64 Perform.
66 North America (abbr.)

VERTICAL

1 Healthy.
2 Article.
3 Written form of Mistress.
4 Tardy.
5 And (Latin).
6 Gather.
7 Fix firmly.
8 East Indies (abbr.).
9 Twist about.
10 Two fives.
11 Head.
12 Sign.
18 Car.
20 Proceed.
22 Same (Latin).
25 Chinese sauce.
28 Musical