

SERIAL STORY

PLAY BY PLAY

BY PAUL DAVID PRESTON

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THE STORY: Blythe Miller, 19, is in a predicament. She's in love with Duane Hogan, star back of the Lincoln Field cadet football team, which her dad coaches. But Duane doesn't know it. Neither does Nancy Hale, Nancy is a young widow of a soldier who has been given work and a place to live at the field after Duane from an auto wreck. And now the grateful, adoring Nancy wants Blythe to help her "make Duane see me, and love me in return!"

FIGHTING STOCK

CHAPTER V

FOR three days after their frightening conversation, Blythe didn't see Nancy Hale. In fact she deliberately avoided Nancy, afraid of what she herself might say or do.

"You look like a string of shad, Bly honey," Pop Miller told her that third day "You don't eat, you don't laugh and talk, and last night at 2 I heard you crying."

That startled Bly. She looked wide-eyed at her father.

"Anh hanh!" said he wisely. "Will you tell me or won't you? If it is a worry, oughtn't I to know?"

Good old Pop. Of course he ought to know. Blythe burst out at nothing, yearning to tell him as she had told him practically everything else now for 19 years. But this time—

"Don't be silly!" She forced a smile. "I've just been busy."

"It is a love affair," he adjudged. "Isn't it, sweetheart?"

Bly nodded. "I could go tell him what a fool he is if he doesn't love you. I could make him sit up and—"

"Pop Miller, don't you dare!" Blythe was suddenly alarmed. He just might try so reckless a thing! Then she saw he was grinning, trying to ease the heart pain. Next moment she was sobbing against his shoulder and hearing him murmur to her as if she were a tiny little girl.

Even so, there was nothing she could tell him. Nothing that she would. This new thing that confronted her was an adult consideration, not a whimsy for laps and tears and tears.

She tried to interest herself in the afternoon football practice. Duane Hogan himself stood back on the 20-yard line and booted a ball over the distant goal. Pop's teams were famous for punting. In scrimmage then Duane blasted holes in the heaviest lines the coach could devise against him.

"Dynamite Hogan!" some admiring cadet yelled, after a 12-yard push.

SHE saw him drag one tackler over the practice goal before a knee touched ground. She saw his tanned face beam after each play. Duane loved football second only to flying, or to ranching.

But Blythe couldn't watch him any longer, he was out of the field house yonder she saw Nancy Hale coming. Blythe had kept her bicycle near at hand. She pretended not to see Nancy, but waved a friendly hello-and-good-by at the cadets near her and pedaled away.

At dinner she forced herself to eat. Pop nodded, approvingly.

"But it isn't all right, eh, sweetheart?" he said to her.

"No," Bly agreed. Mother Miller was not then in the room. "Go in! Go in! Dance in the U. S. O. hall."

"Norman asked me. Norman Dana."

"Mmm. . . But it isn't him, is it?"

"No, Pop."

"Mmm. . ."

"Pop, am I so terrible-looking? Ugly?"

Pop stopped chewing, bread in hand. He gazed at her and frowned. "You are the second prettiest girl God ever created," he swore, "and I will personally choke the man who denies it! Except for your Mom, you—"

"Yes, but—but—am I desirable! Oh, Pop, you know what I mean!"

It wasn't funny and it wasn't meant to be. Pop Miller wiped his mouth, his hands. But as he lectured Blythe he gestured with his bread.

"Honey, there's something you want, and you don't want to tell me. I don't blame you. I'd rather you wouldn't unless you wish. But I can say this—the Millers come from fighting stock! Do you understand me?" He almost roared that, and she did not answer.

"So did the McLeandons, your mama's blood!" he went on, scowling, challenging. "If we want something we git it! What do you see me teach the lads of an afternoon? To sit back and wait for the ball or the runner? What do Hogan and Dana do? They tear ahead! They go! They drive! They drive fair, but they tackle or they carry, and every coach in the country would give his soul to have my two men! They're go-getters, honey!" His tone dropped when, back to tenderness. "Aw, Boney girl, if you—you—"

BLY was finished eating. She got up, ruffled his hair fringe by way of thank you, and went off to her room. She wanted to be alone now.

For five minutes she stared at nothing, thinking. Then she turned to the mirror on the closet door. The Blythe Miller facing her there was—as Pop had assured her—quite as pretty as a girl need be. Blythe allowed herself no false belittlement of that fact.

She thought then of Nancy Hale.

Mrs. Wesley Hale, the char-r-ming widow! No, she couldn't even say it sarcastically. Nancy really was charming. Nancy had no money but she had that finer something of aristocracy or "class." Some people just seem endowed with it; others never have it at all, Blythe reflected. Do I have it? . . . She turned right and left, rear and front. . . . What's more, Nancy is unselfish and kind, and has been through so much misery!

Blythe pushed that thought aside instantly. It would never do! Fight for your rights, Pop had said. Fight for what you want. She, Blythe, had done the decent thing toward the attractive widow whom chance had thrown so dramatically onto the Lincoln Field football team. She had helped rescue Nancy and baby Scooter.

She had given—yes, even friendship, when Nancy needed that in its deeper, subtler forms. But now in the name of that friendship, Nancy had asked Blythe for help in winning a man that Blythe herself loved! True, Nancy didn't know about Blythe's feelings. And yet—

"It wouldn't matter!" Blythe whispered, to herself. "I know it wouldn't for she—she's a fighter too!—she wants something—and anyway, she's a woman . . . just as I am."

That, Blythe reasoned, was the sum of it all.

Nancy is a woman. So am I. Since time began women have gone after the things they wanted—their men—scrapping if need be, tooth and toenail! Friendships! Fair play! Ethics? Fine concepts for the school mottoes, but in real life—

Blythe felt something elemental stirring within her. Her dainty chin went up, and

through clenched teeth she whispered, "I'll give Nancy Hale the damndest fight she ever heard off!" (To Be Continued)

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U. S. COMMANDER IN EUROPE

HORIZONTAL

1 Pictured U. S. Army commander in Europe, Maj. Gen. Dwight

10 Tree angle.

13 Limited (abbr.).

14 Tomb.

16 Proceed.

17 Purpose.

19 Years (abbr.).

20 Noise.

21 Hostelry.

22 Ode.

24 Flaxen cloth.

26 Dry.

27 South Carolina (abbr.).

28 Biblical pronoun.

30 Because.

31 Within.

32 Toward.

33 Organ of sight.

35 Beat down.

37 Courtesy title.

39 Marsh.

40 Lively dance.

41 Den.

42 Organ of

Answer to Previous Puzzle

JAMES BRADDOCK
MOA EARS OCA
BLET PADRE TRAP
EON TAV ANT ELA
ER DISTANCES PR
RAT STINGER ASK
OD FOE AC
BROOKLYN DODGERS
ROTTIE IO EI
APE NE IO OST
NEATS FATE
SAC HOT
TENET ERSE

VERTICAL

1 Slip away.

2 Imbecility.

3 Type measure.

4 No.

5 Throw.

6 Change into bone.

7 War office (abbr.).

8 Ancestors.

9 Bridle strap.

10 Part of "be."

11 Set on fire.

12 His headquarter

15 Not (prefix).

18 Myself.

21 Symbol for iridium.

23 Mine.

25 Negative.

26 Any.

29 Sultanic decree.

34 Make a mistake.

36 Wing.

38 Sick.

39 Cook in fat.

42 He is U. S. Army chief in

