● SERIAL STORY

PLAY BY PLAY

BY PAUL DAVID PRESTON

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THE STORY: Nancy Hale is ruining Blythe Miller's happiness. And Nancy's 2-year-old son, Scooter, has all but ruined a football game for the Lincoln Field cadet pilots' team. Nancy, a pretty young widow, seems to have captivated Duane Hogan, cadet football star whom Blythe loves. And Scooter upset Duane, on the way to a touchdown in a scoreless game, by running out on the field and causing Duane to fall in avoiding him. The cadets win the game through the generous act of conceited Quarterback Norman Dana, who grabs the ball, fools the opposition, and then passes it to Duane for another try. This sends his stock up only slightly with Blythe, whom he wants to marry.

CHAPTER X

NANCY certainly is beautiful. . . . Nancy certainly is beautiful.

That sentence, uttered in the theater by Norman Dana, kept moving through Blythe Miller's mind. Norman had to be back at Lincoln Field on duty at 6 p. m., so he had been forced to leave her rather hurriedly downtown.

She slipped in a place called the Ship's Anchor and ate shrimp cocktail and salad and ham patties for Sunday supper; then because she would almost surely be recognized here soon if she lingered, she slipped back out again. Two blocks up she found a branch library open.

The book she held had come from a nearby shelf labeled "Essays and Poems; Miscellany." She read one tidbit:

"I built a chimney for a comrade old,
And Love's great wages were my only hire.
Then I traveled on in winter's cold,
Yet all the day I glowed before the fire."

The beauty of it turned Blythe's mood into something a little mellower. Edwin Markham's poem. Edwin Markham, who must have achieved somehow the perfect philosophy of life. Blythe wondered about him. At 19, she couldn't know much about the love that grows from old companionship. But, she wondered, had this poet ever fallen in love, as she was in love with Duane Hogan?

She didn't know, and she wasn't interested now in hunting his biography. She grew pensive, introspective. A chimney for a friend . . . and I glowed before his fire . . . even though out in winter's cold. Well, she could understand that. She had built a chimney for Nancy Hale, hadn't she? Nancy, the widow, who had so sadly needed friendship and gotten it from Blythe. And, truly, Blythe had glowed before that heart fire. It was all very poetic and perfect just like Edwin Markham—that far. But then Nancy had fallen in love with the boy Blythe herself had wanted. That "other" kind of love.

"I wish he had written a sequel," Blythe whispered. "I wonder if he—if he could have continued glowing, even if that friend had stolen his sweetheart."

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SHE supposed he could have. Philosophers like Markham were, she conceded, far above her; almost divine. She herself felt human and little and narrow; she, Blythe Miller, wanted to do what the gashouse jennies would have done—jump on her rival and scratch out her eyes. But—no.

Her attention skipped over to a longer poem by one Hugh C. Cave, and the last stanza read:

"We go from friend to sweetheart, dear,
Without a touch of pain.
But—sweetheart—do you know there is
No pathway back again?"

That simple quatrain suddenly frightened her. No pathway back again.

Duane Hogan, big Duane of the kind heart, had also seen Nancy Hale's frantic grasping for help and friendship, and of course he had responded. It had been Duane who lifted Nancy out of the wrecked coupe that night in the storm. It had been Duane who captivated baby Scooter, who gave him the puppy, who almost single-handed had remodeled the loft apartment in which Nancy and baby and puppy now lived. Of course big Duane, the sentimental Texan, had tendered friendship, and of course Nancy would have been a fool not to have succumbed. Blythe could understand all of that. But—"no pathway back again!"

The newspapers, the popular talk, even the radios, had hinted broadly that Duane and Nancy were lovers indeed. And tonight even the movie screen had seemed to verify it.

On the other hand, Pop Miller himself had lectured her on fighting for your rights, scrapping for what you want, for what is rightfully yours. Neither Pop nor his daughter Blythe liked a person who just "took" life's blows; they believed you could and should fight back. But, with brains. And Norman Dana had said in the theater that "Nancy certainly is beautiful."

"All right," Bly whispered to the book of poems now, "if he thinks she is beautiful, he could be made to do something about it! She really is beautiful, and he's good-looking himself. If only they—they!—had struck it off together! . . . Duane liked me once. . . . I know he did; I'm sure of it. I guess I was too slow about encouraging him. Too—too prideful, waiting for him to make the open moves. . . . Duane is girlshy. . . . But Norman isn't. Norman isn't shy of anything. He's aggressive to a fault. If he would only start rushing Nancy, he would flatter her even more than Duane's friendship did. . . . Maybe I . . . could do them all a favor . . . and myself as well! . . ."

THE book disappeared before her eyes and Blythe was living, planning, rehearsing a campaign out in life. There's always something zestful about playing Cupid even when you yourself are involved, and she felt a definite enthusiasm now. In the theater this evening, Norman had admitted his conceit, admitted it as a fault and tacitly said he yearned to overcome it. It had raised him high in her estimation—this new, deeper understanding of a cocky young man. It hadn't made her love him as he thought he wished her to—not that; but it made her know that some girl, somewhere, would be extremely lucky to get him. Just as any girl would be lucky to win Duane.

"The truth is, Norman is lonely!"

That thought struck her all at once. It bore out some things wise old Pop had said. She was almost whispering her thoughts again.

"Norman is lonely, inside, and trying to hide his loneliness with smart talk and conceit. Hide it from himself! Pop said . . . Pop said it is a common way for lonely people to act. . . . He said we had to forgive them . . . and help them.

"Norman knows she is pretty; he said so. He at least likes her. It was he who suggested that the team adopt her and baby Scooter. If she—if her—her charms . . . could be dangled before Norman . . . in just the right way. . . . He has money, and money is important in Nancy's life; money and glamor and comradeship. Now if only they. . . . If only I could bring them together in such a way that. . . ."

Three muted notes of a gong interrupted Blythe; the library clock announcing closing time. But she didn't care. Her eyes were bright now. Bright with a new hope. A new kind of inspiration. A new plan.

(To Be Continued)

HOLD EVERYTHING!

"Is that you, Junior? And what did my little man learn in school today?"

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* No Carrying Charge
* No Red Tape
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8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

GENERALISSIMO'S WIFE

HORIZONTAL

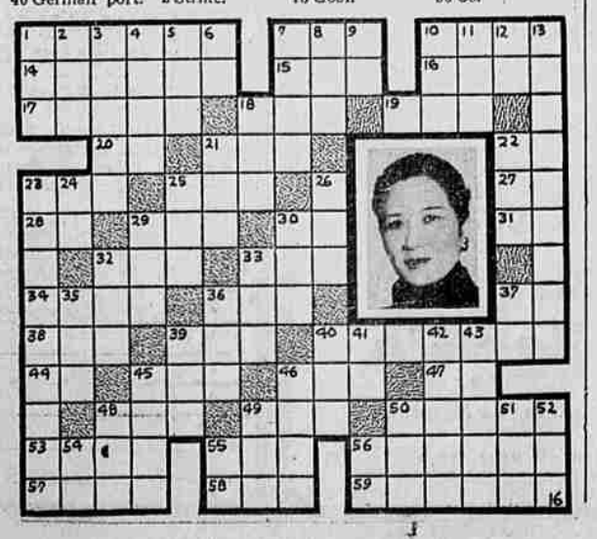
1,7,10 Pictured Chinese leader, Madame
14 Gas derived from oil (2 words).
15 Frozen water.
16 Flat-bottomed boat.
17 Macerate.
18 Dined.
19 American Expeditionary Forces (abbr.)
20 You and I.
21 Twice.
22 Promissory note (abbr.).
23 Machine part.
25 Edge.
27 Egypt (abbr.).
28 Him.
29 Obese.
30 Rough lava.
31 Near.
32 Beverage.
33 Peer.
34 Part of speech
36 Meat.
37 Within.
38 Weapon.
39 Inlet.
40 German port.
44 Carat (abbr.).
45 Shack.
46 Obscure.
47 Any.
48 Entangle.
49 Jump.
50 Her native land is —
53 Close.
55 Also.
56 Dispenser of food.
57 Unit of weight
58 Over (poet.).
59 Obliterator.

VERTICAL

1 Cosine (abbr.)
2 Strike.
3 Intestinal division.
4 Eras.
5 Short sleep.
6 Guineas (abbr.).
7 Packs.
8 High card.
9 Id est (abbr.).
10 Compass point
11 Highest common factor (abbr.).
12 Dawn (comb. form).
13 Province in China.
18 Goal.
21 Small piece.
22 Vegetable.
23 She lives in the capital city of China, ——.
24 One (Scot.).
25 Male sheep.
26 Assert.
29 Sport.
30 Limb.
32 Hasten.
33 Compensate.
35 Not in.
36 Head covering
37 Iridium (symbol).
39 Except.
40 Haunch.
41 Forenoon (abbr.).
42 Brazilian state
43 Ones.
45 Hurt.
46 Portal.
48 Sheep's call.
49 Farm tool.
50 Vehicle.
51 Born.
52 Arrived (abbr.).
54 Erbium (symbol).
55 Toward.
56 Us.

Answer to Previous Puzzle

R	U	T	H	E	R	F	O	R	D	H	A	Y	E	S
E	T	H	O	S		E	P	I		A	P	E	R	U
B	I	E	R	S		D	E	N		S	P	A	S	M
U	L	N	A		T	E	N	S	E		L	A		M
S	I	C	E		A	R		I	D		E	N	T	E
	T	E		R	I	A		N	O	D		S	E	R
A	I		M	O	L	L		G	N	A	T		R	S
B	E	G		E	O	S		S	I	N		P	R	
I	S	L	E		R	U	T	H	E	R	F	O	R	D
L		I	X		S		B					L	I	F	E
I	N	N	E	R			H					P	A	N	I	C
T	E	T	R	A	D		A					O	T	T	E	R
Y	E	S	T	E	R		Y	E	S	S		M	E	S	S	Y

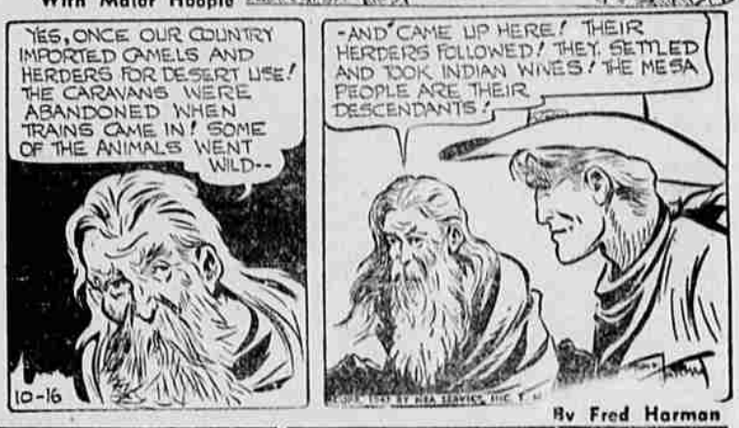


HOLD EVERYTHING!

Out Our Way
By J. R. Williams

Our Boarding House
With Major Hoople

Red Ryder



By Fred Harman

Little Orphan Annie

By Harold Gray

Freckles and His Friends

By Blosser

Wash Tubbs

By Crane

Boots and Her Buddies

By Martin

Alley Oop

By V. T. Hamlin