

SERIAL STORY
PLAY BY PLAY
BY PAUL DAVID PRESTON

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LUNCHEON PARTY

CHAPTER XVIII
WHEN Nancy Hale came in at 10 this Tuesday morning, Blythe prepared at once to leave. She couldn't trust herself to stay here and face the other girl, even with Pop.

"I'll let go of myself and say something before I'm ready!" she half-whispered, ducking into a sweater.

"Leaving, darling?" Nancy asked, sweetly.

"Yes. Bly avoided her eyes.

"I'm sorry you must. Seems like I hardly ever see you much now."

Blythe let that pass unanswered. She looked out a window. Pop spoke up heartily.

"Why'n't you two girls take off this afternoon and go to a movie, mmhm?"

"Doggone Pop! It was just like him, Blythe knew; trying to be generous, cordial, kind. But he didn't know the score here.

"We'll all be together at noon anyway," he went on, genially. "Mom's having us all for lunch."

"She is?" Blythe hadn't known that.

"Oh, yes!" Nancy appeared happy about it. "Mrs. Miller phoned. With Norman and Duane!"

That really messed up things, to Blythe's thinking. But she'd have to go through with it. Have to sit there in her own home, entertaining Nancy Hale and feeling like a hypocrite all the while!

But, then, on second thought, it might be just as well to stay near Nancy as much as she could. She might learn something further, if Nancy had promised the gang-bangers to drug Norman and Duane on Wednesday night, the more she stayed with them now—

"I'll scoot home and help Mom," she announced, and departed.

OUT in the cold air, waiting for the trolley, she thought it all over again. Since Heavy Underwood is out of Thursday's game, and the team president by that, I must do everything I can not only to trap Nancy but to keep Norman and Duane in fighting spirits. They've got to work harder than ever against State U. Just got to!

She had to swallow down a tightness in her throat. Every time she thought of Nancy, she wanted to cry. Cry for the sheer shame of it. Her first quick hatred of Nancy, her first surging desire for revenge, had long since passed; all she felt now was an abiding sense of tragedy and shame. Shame for the pretty widow, and sympathy for her baby son.

"I'll go get him and take him with me," Blythe suddenly whispered. "Bless his heart!"

She went back to the office and told Nancy, then ran upstairs to gather in baby Scooter and his coat and his beloved puppy, Link.

At home, later, Mom Miller baked a special little "private pie" for Scooter alone at luncheon.

While the family and the four guests ate their luncheon, Blythe noted that Nancy seemed utterly without regret or worry. She marvelled that the other girl could be so wholly brazen about her plotting.

"I would be jumpy as heck," Bly told herself, watching Nancy closely. Norman was watching Nancy, too, she noted. Well, that much was all right. Undeniably Nancy was pretty. And usually Norman Dana made a pest of himself paying attention to Blythe. Big Duane just smiled all the while and said little.

Maybe—yes!—Blythe suddenly felt that she understood. Tomorrow night, Wednesday, Nancy would have to have both Norman and Duane as dinner guests in her own cute upstairs apartment. This was essential to her scheme. And so, Nancy was "playing up" to Norman now! Laughing and talking with him in pretended friendliness, just to be sure he was flattered sufficiently to come. She would already feel sure of Duane. . . . Blythe was appalled more than ever at the widow's calculating, conscienceless nerve.

"It's just like some of the early troubles the Japs and Germans handed us." Pop was saying, between forkfuls. "We have to expect the unexpected, the setbacks. We have to weave with 'em, and come back scrapper than ever before, lads. It's the only way to triumph in the end. The only way."

Blythe understood that. Good old Pop, softening the psychological blow of losing Heavy Underwood from the line-up Thursday. Putting new confidence and assurance in the two stars' minds. Norman especially was given to quick flareups, emotional tirades and such. In addition to what people thought was conceit in him. She, Blythe Miller, knew now that Norman wasn't as conceited as he sometimes appeared. On one memorable occasion he had proved it. She would always respect him for that.

"Anybody tell you how cute you look in a red dress, Nancy?" Norman himself said that, beaming. "Why—no! How nice!"

"Sure do. People say blonds shouldn't wear red. You corrected that. Mind if I stare?"

Mom Miller put in genially, "I'm sure Nancy is sweet in any color, boys. I have never seen a prettier girl."

"Umph," Pop grunted, mouth full, nodding.

Blythe said nothing. She might have said that the red dress was once her own. Given to Nancy after the car wreck, when Nancy was penniless in the hospital. Oh, to be sure, Nancy had since re-

membered to pay the asked-for \$10 for all that big suitcase of clothes, but that was only a token to save pride; the dress was still a hand-me-down.

Suddenly ashamed of her thoughts again, then, Blythe forced a cordial smile. "You take all the men's eyes, Nancy. Makes me horribly jealous!"

"They all laughed at that—and only Blythe herself knew that it stung a little. Her sally hadn't been wholly untrue!"

"Imagine!" said big Duane. "You, being jealous! Or anything else not . . . well, not perfect!"

Blythe was astonished. Duane Hogan didn't say such things; it amounted to an epic, from him! Never, never in their two years of rather close friendship, had he said so much of her and to her. He had called her, Blythe, perfect! True, he had gone right on eating, just as if it were casual and therefore inconsequential and soon to be forgotten. But he had said it, even so. He had!

"You know," Norman was teasing again, "this business of inviting cadets to eat is a wonderful invention. Great institution! Why don't more ladies do it? Why don't you, for instance, Nancy, take lessons in it from Mom Miller, hmhm? Or maybe I should talk to her myself. Look, Missus Hale, as a hint to get some of your home cooking later, will you and Scooter go to dinner downtown with me tonight?"

Nancy jumped at the chance. "If you'll come to pollock with me tomorrow evening, Norman! You and Duane. I can feed home-sick soldier boys! We'll have a little dinner party, just we three!"

Blythe felt her pulse leap. There it was, exactly as planned.

But, then—she had a new whirling sensation, too. Nancy had been openly dated by Norman—

but it was Duane who had complimented her, Blythe! Big, bashful, handsome Duane! (To Be Continued)

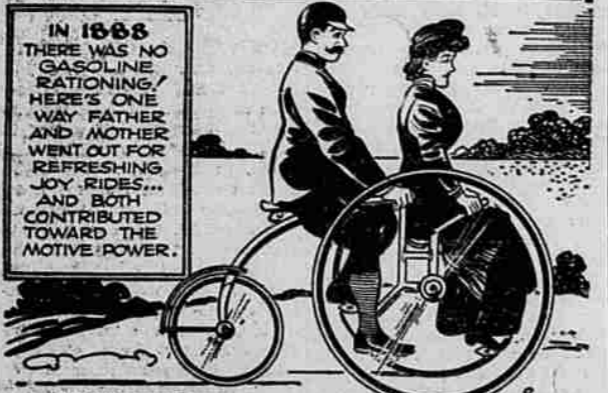
HOLD EVERYTHING!



"Come on! You can knock off a few Japs and get 'em for nothing!"

CREDIT
AT CASH PRICES!
YOU DON'T PAY 1c EXTRA
* No Interest
* No Carrying Charge
* No Red Tape
* As Long as 90 Days to Pay
KLAMATH'S CREDIT
Clothiers
OREGON
WOOLEN STORE
8TH AND MAIN

THIS CURIOUS WORLD By William Ferguson



IN 1868 THERE WAS NO GASOLINE RATIONING! HERE'S ONE WAY FATHER AND MOTHER WENT OUT FOR REFRESHING JOY RIDES... AND BOTH CONTRIBUTED TOWARD THE MOTIVE POWER.



PUTTING UP BIRD HOUSES IS NOT A MODERN IDEA. THE INDIANS HUNG UP GOURDS FOR NESTING MARTINS.

IN WINTER A STOVE IS ALL RIGHT, BUT IN SUMMER IT'S NOT SO HOT. Says FELTON O. FREEMAN, *Reno, Georgia*.

FORMER SPANISH MINISTER

HORIZONTAL
1,6 Pictured former member of Franco's cabinet, Ramon
10 Iridium (symbol)
11 Animal
12 Receptacle
13 Depart
14 Any
15 Mental faculties
16 Great-Lake
18 Myself
20 National Guard (abbr.)
21 Cloth measure
22 Make lace
24 Upon
25 Editor (abbr.)
28 Snaky fish
28 Maintain
30 Exist
31 Song bird
33 Presently
34 At present
36 Backward
37 Stuffed
40 Command
43 Donkey
44 Doctor (abbr.)

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE
15 You and I
17 Half an em.
19 Paradise
23 Near
27 Loans
29 We
30 Positive pole
32 Bow, slightly (abbr.)
33 Arrives (abbr.)
35 Marriage ceremony
36 He was Spain's minister.
37 Couple
38 Agree
39 Male bees
41 Make wealthy
42 Peruse
47 Paid notice (abbr.)
49 Doctor of Medicine (abbr.)
53 Electrical engineer (abbr.)
54 High mountain
55 Goat's bleat
58 Dawn (comb. form)
61 Like

VERTICAL
1 Songster
2 Erbium (symbol)
3 Railroad tracks
4 Likely
5 Bird's homes
6 Courtesy title
7 League
8 Egypt (abbr.)
9 Pilot fish
12 Greek letter
14 Afresh
45 Compass point
46 Exists
47 Stir
48 Print measure
50 Sun god
51 Music note
52 Eat
54 Among
56 Fish
57 Neon (symbol)
59 Born
60 Fall behind
61 Symbol for acetyl
62 Grasping device

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19
20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30
31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42
43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64



Out Our Way By J. R. Williams **WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY**



Red Ryder



Our Boarding House With Maier Hoanle **MIDGET PLAYS AS IF HE MEANT IT!**



By Fred Harman



Little Oration 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. Hamill