• SERIAL STORY

PLAY BY PLAY

BY PAUL DAVID PRESTON

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BLY GETS A PRESENT

CHAPTER XX

THERE are axioms about opportunity, Blythe Miller reflected.

Some say it knocks only once, and the implication is that there's the devil to pay if you don't open the door. Blythe was ready to believe it.

Yesterday just after lunch, chance had given her a perfect opportunity to tell her father and Duane Hogan all about Nancy Hale's heart-breaking treachery. There had been a tender moment between the three of them, a privacy there in the Miller living room, when almost surely the two men would have understood her, and together they might have worked out a plan.

"But then," Blythe sighed now, thinking, "everybody had just been praising Nancy. And—and in effect, comparing her and me. I couldn't have told that awful thing about her, there! Anyway I"—she actually whispered the last of it—"I simply don't want to tell! With her calling me a friend—and with baby Scooter—!"

Remembrance of baby Scooter Hale had perhaps been the deciding factor again. Scooter's father had been slain trying valiantly to defend Pearl Harbor. Nancy was all he had left. If she were—imprisoned—or anything, it would just about wreck his innocent life.

And, too, Blythe had persisted in her little-girl belief that she could work out something alone, if the matter didn't solve itself in some miraculous way. But here it was Wednesday morning, and she had done nothing and no miracle had occurred. Right now she sat in solitude in Pop's office. Remembering the gamblers, she didn't much like being here alone, but on this day before the State U. game she couldn't be really alone or lonely for long. Too many people kept calling or telephoning.

There was the press to answer, the passes to be issued, the laundered football suits being returned, the long distance from State U. officials 300 miles away, the colored trainer's request for more rubbing alcohol and ointments, the repaired cleats on Duane Hogan's shoes, the anxiety about the weather tomorrow, the increasing stream of "pests" who just wanted to chin about the game prospects. But here was a little moment, even so, when Nancy Hale had gone downtown to cash a check for Pop and Pop himself was out with a committee inspecting Municipal Stadium.

SHE was glad Pop didn't have to be alone. Pop was in danger, and this was another gnawing fact inside Blythe. Yesterday, Duane Hogan had offered his help, without knowing much about the trouble. Pop had been touched by it, but had merely said he would surely call Duane if needed.

Good old Pop had suddenly put on an act of light-heartedness, scoffing at the matter of the pistol as "a bit of private fun, lad, thanks just the same; a little fun I'm having." Blythe knew why. Knew that Pop's main duty and effort here was to keep his football players on an even keel emotionally. Heavy Underwood, star center, was already out of tomorrow's lineup, injured when his plane was mysteriously sabotaged. Pop couldn't afford to have his main back, Duane Hogan, carrying any new worry on his mind.

"But that doesn't mean Pop is out of danger!" Blythe breathed now. "Those gamblers—they'll do anything!"

She had reason to hope they would not be able to approach Pop now until after Thursday. For one thing, the papers had proclaimed him sick in bed with a cold on Sunday and Monday, and since then he was almost constantly in a crowd. That amounted to protection. And the same gamblers, she realized, would make their showing again tonight in Nancy Hale's apartment upstairs. By then, Blythe felt she would have worked out a plan to trap them. Some kind of plan.

"I've just got to get right down to it!" she told herself harshly now, sitting here at Pop's desk. "As quick as I can. I'll think out every move. I guess I—I'll have to—"

The phone rang, and took 10 minutes. Elmer Summers on the Journal wanting to chin about stuff and things. Blythe liked him, a genial, sincere sports editor crusading for decency and for the Lincoln team.

Then 12 cadets crowded in for their passes and instructions as ushers tomorrow in the stadium. They lingered to talk small talk just because Blythe was the coach's daughter and a dark-haired, violet-eyed girl. The moment they left she heard someone outside calling.

"By! . . . By! By-y-y-y-y."

"Yes, darling!"

She had to go out and help baby Scooter Hale, mature gentleman going on 25—months. It seemed that the bathroom doors had all blown shut and were too heavy even for his maturity. Also, his mittens needed readjusting, his sweater was unbuttoned, and his puppy Link was shivering in the November cold. She brought them both inside to play soldier and stand guard over the radiator. Scooter was faithful, but Link, the pup, shamelessly went to sleep on duty.

THERE was a moment's interval again for planning. Tonight—this very night!—Nancy was to lure Duane and Norman to her apartment and drug them, as carefully planned. Indeed, the "luring" had already been accomplished. It had been done yesterday under Blythe's own eyes at the Miller home. Recalling that fact infuriated Blythe now—and she rather grasped at the sense of fury. It helped offset the love and sympathy for the little boy nearby. Nancy's little boy. It would be easier if she could only hate Nancy Hale!

She might have made a cold-blooded plan for getting the goods on Nancy and the gamblers, except that she heard a flurry of feet and laughter and talking outside, and Norman Dana came in with Nancy herself. They held packages.

"Heigh ho, Bly!" Norman hailed her. "Oughta be out, it's beginning to snow!"

"Norman has leave from flying field until after the game!" Nancy put in. "Isn't that wonderful?"

Everything was in a stir. Scooter shrieking happily, Link the pup demanding attention from everyone, good-looking Norman talking and laughing and opening packages as Nancy directed. It was altogether a gay moment—except for Bly. She had to bite her lips to keep from showing the pressure within her soul. It hurt, hurt terribly, to know the treachery of this sweet-looking Nancy Hale.

All at once there was one special-looking package which Nancy brought to Blythe unopened. She spoke to Blythe in a tone as perfect as if it had been genuine and sincere.

Blythe opened the package mechanically, saying nothing. She took out a handsome hand-tooled leather purse. Blythe knew it cost $25 if it cost a dime.

"Whew!" breathed Norman, impressed.

"I had my pay check," Nancy was saying, gently, "and I wanted to get this for you, dear. You've been so awfully kind to Scooter and me. Norman, if I ever had a sister, I'd want it to be Blythe!"

(To Be Continued)

HOLD EVERYTHING!

"One of them turned himself in for scrap!"

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* No Carrying Charge
* No Red Tape
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THIS CURIOUS WORLD — By William Ferguson

NEW ZEALAND COMMANDER

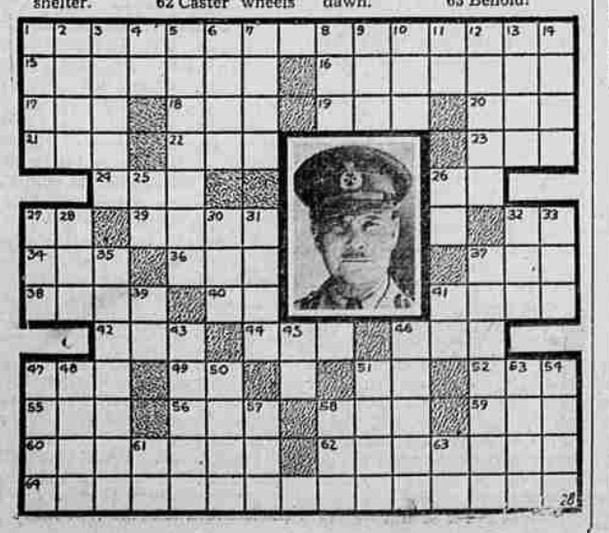
HORIZONTAL

1 Pictured commander of the Anzacs, — —.
15 Non-professional.
16 One who hoards.
17 Convent worker.
18 Lyric poem.
19 Snake.
20 Like (suffix).
21 Inquire.
22 Negative (abbr.).
23 Plaything.
24 Capuchin monkey.
26 Like.
27 On account (abbr.).
29 Sweet potatoes.
32 Street (abbr.).
34 Influenza (colloq.).
36 Novel.
37 Certified public accountant (abbr.).
38 Canvas shelter.
40 Sodium (symbol).
41 Humbug.
42 Soil.
44 Entangle.
46 Ocean.
47 Part of circle.
49 Print measure
51 Phenyl (symbol).
52 Royal Military College (abbr.).
55 Lorenzo (abbr.).
56 Whim.
58 Rubber tree.
59 Goat's bleat.
60 Glandular tumor.
62 Caster wheels
64 He is commander of a — — — —.

VERTICAL

1 Hindu mythological giant.
2 Australian birds.
3 Rows.
4 New Testament (abbr.).
5 Everlasting.
6 Impolite.
7 Residue.
8 Royal Horse Artillery (abbr.).
9 Goddess of dawn.
10 Japanese island.
11 British (abbr.).
12 Redacts.
13 Nevada city.
14 Hoary.
25 Affirmative vote.
26 Paid notice.
27 Often (poet.).
28 Beverage
30 Males.
31 Went swimming.
32 Health resort.
33 Beret.
35 Loosen by turning.
37 Enchanter.
39 Toward.
41 Compass point
43 English author
45 Forenoon (abbr.).
46 Ledge.
47 Man's name.
48 Was carried.
50 Mother.
51 Walk heavily.
53 Grape refuse.
54 Box.
57 Split pulse.
58 Vase.
61 New Zealand (abbr.).
63 Behold!

Answer to Previous Puzzle



Out Our Way — By J. R. Williams — THE AWAKENING

Our Boarding House With Major Hoople

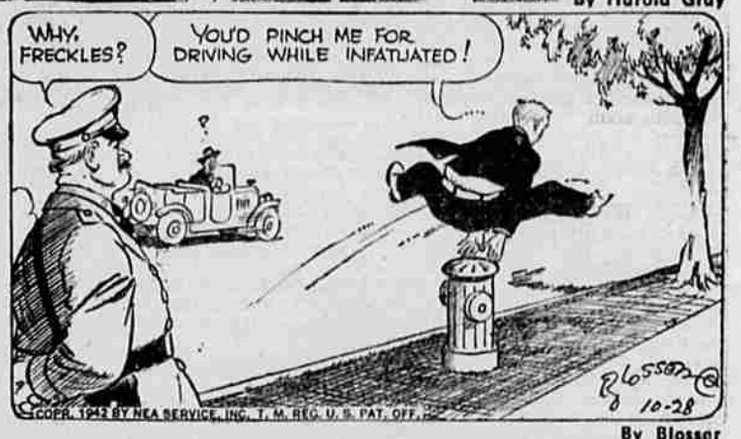
Red Ryder

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