

SERIAL STORY

PLAY BY PLAY

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CHAPTER XXIV

BLYTHER discovered that physical action in the matter- action of any sort—was infinitely better than the inaction and indecision of the past few days.

This duty before her was not easy to do, but she moved up the stairway to Nancy Hale's loft apartment with a feeling of satisfaction at last. The stair hall was almost dark.

"It's just a gray day, is all!" She whispered that by way of self-comfort. It was indeed gray, with autumn snow sitting down at intervals. The snow wasn't enough to be pretty. Its grayness was just enough to cast a kind of pall, at least over her strained nerves and feelings.

The 10th step creaked. Blythe jumped, almost comically. But it was not amusing to her. She stood there for minutes, or so it seemed, her heart pounding. She had to force herself to remember that there was no actual cause—yet—for alarm.

Nancy was out. Indeed, gone to her own mother's, to get baby Scooter Hale who was a guest this afternoon of Mom. And there was at least 20 minutes' time before the gamblers were due to arrive. On the other hand, she couldn't afford to be caught here in the hallway for that would disrupt all of her plans.

At the upper landing she silently tried the door. "Oh—h-h, darn!" It was locked. Of course it would be. Should be, in fact. Rather desperately she looked and felt around there in the gloom. She couldn't locate a light switch, and finally remembered there wasn't any. This apartment had been made over from a literal loft at one time. But her foot did touch something that gave a merry "Tinkle-tankie-tink."

This was a pull toy she herself had given baby Scooter, and she remembered its long handle of twisted wire. It just slipped into notches of the toy by spring action. In a moment Blythe had it free in her hand.

WITH the sharp end she dug at the door lock. It was an old-fashioned square thing, and by hooking the wire end between it and the door jamb, the latch was easily slid back. "N-n-n-n-n!" Her sigh of surprise and relief was audible. She walked into Nancy's living room and reclosed the door.

It was light enough to see well in here, but still gray enough to be depressing. She stood there a moment, thinking, holding Pop's stubby gun. Suddenly she was glad the cartridges were blanks. "I'd do something terrible! I'd kill someone!"

This way, she could bluff with it and accomplish her ends without having to carry a personal fear of the gun.

She smelled delicious food cooking, and saw that Nancy had already set her tiny dining table with places for four. Food was in an electric cooker loaned to Nancy by Mom Miller weeks ago. It would be something tangy and good. The table was lovely. It held, dominant, a vase of flowers, rather expensive-looking ones. Blythe leaned close to see a card dropped nearby. It had a florist's heading, and handwritten in ink it said:

Flower cheer for Nancy and Scoots! (Be sure you cook ENOUGH!) Norman.

Norman! He, not Duane, had sent them to Nancy! Even his note held his breezy, cocky air. Blythe moistened her lips. Odd that the flowers, or rather the note with them, should give her such satisfaction in this strained moment. But she had to admit that it did. She leaned to read the dainty homemade place cards. Each was a little football sketched in Scooter's color crayons. They read Duane, Scooter, Norman, Muv. Muv was Scooter's own name for his mother, and so Nancy obviously had printed it in whimsy there. The whole table was intimate, cozy, nice. Blythe felt a quick little lump of yearning in her throat, then a horrid feeling that she was about to destroy a beautiful thing.

Why in the old Nick, she asked herself, did life have to do people this way? Why was it inescapable for her thus to expose Nancy Hale? She didn't hate Nancy. She couldn't! Not even when knowing that Nancy wanted to marry Duane.

"I ought to hate her! I loved him first, and I still do!" A re- phrasing of that salient fact still didn't make her course easy. Here before her was a cozy table for four friends—quarterback, full-back, beloved mascot, adorable girl. Why couldn't it all have been as perfect as it looked! Blythe wanted to rail out wildly at fate or something.

even though it did no actual harm. "Here's what I'll do," she promised herself, standing there in the twilight. "I'll hide away back in the closet behind Nancy's clothes. Fortunately it's a big one. The two gamblers said they'd come there, but they'll have to be near the door to peek out. It—it'll be a long wait, but I can do it! Half an hour at most. They won't enter the closet, surely, until they hear Duane and Norman coming. And when the boys are in the room I can take command. I'll have all the proof I need, then, to convince them. And—maybe—maybe we can work out a way to turn the gamblers in to the police... without letting Nancy get too involved... Nancy... and Scooter."

It was wishful thinking again, but it was genuine. Knowing that Nancy had agreed to drug the two football stars in order to get \$1000 from the gamblers was the cause of lingering, gnawing pain. Nancy who had been an adorable friend. But, too—Nancy who had fallen for the man Blythe herself loved! It was still a tragic, almost sickening situation for pretty Blythe Miller, a situation that kept her emotions more and more confused. There is no conflict like that within oneself.

"I've got to do it!" she whispered now. "And I better start. It won't do to get caught here or be rushed at the last second. Nancy'll be coming any moment. She—she will have to be here ahead of the gamblers."

Determinedly, then, with a heightened sense of adventure and alarm, she went to the clothes closet door. It opened without noise. She stepped more confidently into its darkness—it was almost as if she were hiding from trouble here, at least for a short

respite and rest. She pulled the door closed again. "Okay, sister, who are you?" A man at her side said that! Blythe seemed literally to freeze with terror, and a strong hand grasped her arm. (To Be Continued)

HOLD EVERYTHING!



That's a very clever camouflage, Private Drip, but not very practical!

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



BIGHORN SHEEP

DO NOT ALWAYS BATTLE BY CRASHING HEAD ON, HORN TO HORN! THEY SOMETIMES STAND CLOSE AND STRIKE UPWARD BLOWS AT THE OPPONENT'S STOMACH WITH THEIR HOOPS.

It's NOT ONLY the MALE DOVE THAT COOS... AS POPULARLY SUPPOSED... FOR THE FEMALE COOS RIGHT BACK!

STATESMAN'S WIFE

Crossword puzzle grid with clues for horizontal and vertical words. Horizontal clues include: 1. Dictated, 2. Bride of U. S. statesman, Mrs., 3. Hopkins, 4. Church holiday, 5. 4840 square yards, 6. Rushed, 7. Genus of palms, 8. Town, 9. Prohibits, 10. Shilling (abbr.), 11. Enemy, 12. Carpet, 13. Engraved stone, 14. Half an em, 15. Exclamation of wonder, 16. Tear, 17. Short sleep, 18. Mineral rock, 19. Each (abbr.), 20. Pantry, 21. Bustle, 22. Crafty, 23. Father, 24. Sleep. Vertical clues include: 1. Meadow, 2. Paddle, 3. Employ, 4. Skin irritation, 5. Ocean (abbr.), 6. Erich (abbr.), 7. Indian corn, 8. Movement, 9. Weep, 10. Biblical pronoun, 11. Boast, 12. Hearing organ, 13. Existence, 14. Tent ground, 15. Biscuit, 16. Water nymph, 17. Refunds, 18. Originate, 19. Mountain nymph, 20. Crowds, 21. Permit, 22. Unusual, 23. Parentless child, 24. Bot, 25. Eat away, 26. Characteristic spirit, 27. Her husband is a presidential (abbr.), 28. Company (abbr.), 29. Lubricates, 30. Talent, 31. Driving command, 32. Observe, 33. Sorrow, 34. Neckwear (abbr.), 35. Long fish, 36. Leased line (abbr.), 37. Common version (abbr.).

A portrait of a woman's face, likely related to the crossword puzzle or a nearby article.

Cartoon by J. R. Williams titled 'Out Our Way'. A woman is washing her stockings in a tub. A man enters and says, 'OH—I COULD CR-HY! THEY COME RIGHT UP WITH MY STOCKING AND LOOK AS THOUGH I HAD BLOOMERS ON!' She replies, 'THEY FIT NICE AT THE ANKLES RIGHT AFTER THEY'RE WASHED, BUT THEY SOON GET JUST LIKE A SAILOR'S PANTS AT THE BOTTOM, AFTER THAT PUTTING YOUR STOCKING ON IS AS BAD AS PUTTING A CAT IN A MITTEN.'

Cartoon by Fred Harman titled 'Red Ryder'. A man in a cowboy hat says, 'I THINK WE BETTER TAKE FORTUNE TELLER'S ADVICE AND LEAVE PRONTO!' A woman replies, 'PROBABLES A HOUND, LITTLE PEANER! RUN ONCE AND YOU'RE A RABBIT FROM THEN ON.'

Cartoon by Harold Gray titled 'Little Orphan Annie'. Annie says, 'SA-A-AY! YOU'RE GETTIN' AROUND AGAIN, SPRY AS A SPRING CHICKEN SHANGHAI!' A man replies, 'AYE! THAT YOUNG CHAP DOG BILLY, SURE SFLICED ME TOGETHER STRONG AS A HAWSER.' Another man says, 'LOOK AT THAT! OUT O' PRACTICE A BIT, BUT NOT TOO BAD FOR AN OLD FELLER, AND WITH HIS PORT FLIPPER BESIDES—' A woman replies, 'GEE! WITH A KNIFE TRICK LIKE THAT YOU COULD KILL A GUY.'

Cartoon by Blosser titled 'Freckles and His Friends'. Freckles says, 'I HOPE THE VAUDEVILLE IS AS GOOD AS THE MOVIE WAS!' A woman replies, 'THAT PICTURE INSPIRED ME TO WRITE A SUPER LOVE LETTER!' Another woman says, 'HEY, HILDA, I THINK I JUST SAW YOUR DAD SNEAKING OUT!' A man replies, 'POP WOULDN'T COME HERE LARD!' A woman says, 'YOU HEARD WHAT HE SAID ABOUT SILLY LOVE LETTERS! JUST THE SAME, I BET HE'S SCRAMMED SO NO ONE WOULD SEE HIM WHILE THE LIGHTS ARE ON!' A man says, 'DEAREST SNOOKY-OOKUMS—MY HEART GOES PITTY-PAT WHEN YOU ARE NEAR! I WISH YOU WERE ———' A woman replies, 'CAREFUL, POP! THIS IS THE LAST WARNING!'

Cartoon by Crane titled 'Boots and Her Buddies'. A man says, 'HIGH TIME WE'RE TURNING ON THE STEAM, OLIVANT. GETTING OUT O' TOWN NOW... SEVEN MILES TO GO BEFORE DAYLIGHT. WISH TO BLAZES YOU UNDERSTOOD ENGLISH. FEEL LIKE TALKING... ELATED, SORT OF Wash Tubbs.'

Cartoon by Martin titled 'Boots and Her Buddies'. A man says, 'BILLY—IS EVERYTHING ALL RIGHT?' A woman replies, 'OH SURE! EVERY- THING WILL BE SWELL.' A man says, 'WELL SKIPPER... I HATE TO BE LEAVING SO ABRUPTLY, BUT I MUST BE ON MY WAY.' A woman replies, 'YOU'RE LEAVING NOW?' A man says, 'YEP! A PLANE IS WAITING FOR ME OUT AT THE AIR- PORT THIS VERY MINUTE.' A woman replies, 'OH—BUT WE'VE HARDLY HAD ANY TIME TOGETHER.' A man says, 'NO BUT WE CAN'T THINK OF OURSELVES NOW, HONEY.' A woman replies, 'NO! GOODBYE, DARLING... GOODBYE.' A man says, 'WHAT'S HE GOT THAT I AIN'T?' A woman replies, 'HER.'

Cartoon by V. T. Hamlin titled 'Alley Oop'. A man says, 'WELL, IT'S BEEN A LONG HARD DAY... WHAT SAY WE TURN IN?' A woman replies, 'YEH, BUT DON'TCHA THINK WE BETTER POST A HEAVY PICKET LINE FIRST, GENERAL OOP?' A man says, 'NAN... AFTER TH' PASTIN' WE HANDED EENY TODAY, SHE AIN'T GONNA PULL NOTHIN' OFF TONIGHT.' A woman replies, '...SO LATE THAT NIGHT HZZZZZZ ZZZZ.'

Cartoon by J. R. Williams titled 'Our Boarding House With Major Hoopie'. A man says, 'YOU LOOK AS JOLLY AS A NAZI ENJOYING THE WINTER SPORTS IN RUSSIA, MAJOR!—WHAT DID THAT BEAR SCOUT GIVE YOU FOR THE GREAT MFLUG BESIDES A 10-POINT INCREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE?' A woman replies, 'HMPF! WITH YOUR KEENLY INQUISITIVE MIND, WHY DON'T YOU RUN FOR SOME CIVIC JOB SUCH AS GARBAGE INSPECTOR?—WHEN I RECEIVE A CHECK RUNNING INTO FOUR FIGURES YOU'LL CHIRP A DIFFERENT TUNE!' A man says, 'SO THAT'S WHY HE'S BEEN HAUNTING THE MAILBOX LIKE A SAILOR'S SWEETHEART!—I'LL ORGANIZE A WELCOMING COMMITTEE OF ONE FOR THE MAILMAN MYSELF.'

Cartoon by Fred Harman titled 'Red Ryder'. A man says, 'MEBBE SO, BUT THERE MORE RABBITS THAN RED RYDERS, YOU PETCHUM!' A woman replies, 'I STILL WOULD RATHER—OH-OH! LOOK PINNED TO MY SADDLE BLANKET!' A man says, 'It might be worth your while to ride out to the Flying W tonight.'

Cartoon by Harold Gray titled 'Little Orphan Annie'. Annie says, 'RECKON SO—IT'S BEEN DONE—KILLIN' IS REAL FASHIONABLE NOW—DAYS—KILLIN' NASTY AND JAPS—WELL, I'LL BE SAILIN' AGAIN, IN A FEW DAYS—' A man replies, 'WHERE'LL YOU GO THIS TIME, DO YOU THINK, SHANGHAI? BACK TO TH' CHINA COAST?' A woman says, 'LIKE AS NOT, ANNE—THERE'S ACTION WATTIN' THERE FOR FIGHTIN' MEN—MIGHT BE I'LL RUN ACROSS YOUR DADDY WARBUCKS AGAIN, FORE LONG—' A man replies, 'YES—I WAS THINKING OF THAT—'

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