

Best-Dressed Woman

BY HELEN WELSHIMER

CART OF CHARACTERS
JUDITH IRVING, heroine,
America's best dressed woman.
PHILIP IRVING, Judith's es-
tranged husband.
MARTA ROGERS, Judith's
rival.
BRUCE KNIGHT, author. Ju-
dith's old classmate.
MILICENT BAYNE, Bruce's
protégé.

Yesterday Judith arrives back
in New York, arouses Phil's ire
because of her reported romance
with Bruce, she agrees to meet
Phil the next day. Her Maria is
on hand, too.

CHAPTER XI

JUDITH nodded and spoke to
Marta who had so patiently
come to the couturier's to guard
against any privacy that she might
possibly share with Phil at lunch-
time. She realized that Marta was
not subtle, not diplomatic. She
thrust herself on Phil at times
when her absence would have
pleaded her case far more elo-
quently.

The attendants were hurrying
with new designs, new models,
and Judith surrendered herself to
their allurements. She ordered
recklessly, lavishly. Hardly had
she finished, when an attendant
rapped on the door. In response
to Judith's "Come in," she opened
it to admit a tall figure in gray
tweeds.

"Phil!" Judith said. It was idio-
tic for her heart to bounce like
a rubber ball. She tried to quiet
it by saying, lamely: "You're
looking well."

He wasn't looking well. His face
was thinner, tired, and his eyes
were baffled.

"You're gorgeous!" he said. He
did not look at the dress, though.
"Oh, Judy, it's good to have you
back." For a moment he had for-
gotten that their meetings, now,
were only transient affairs, Judith
realized. "Ready?" He smiled
down at her. "Where shall we
lunch?"

JUDITH named a favorite lunch-
place, one where they had
gone many times in the past. She
wondered how Phil had evaded
Marta. Perhaps he had begun to
realize the futility of any lasting
happiness with Marta. His next
words banished the entire idea.

"Mind if Marta goes, too? I
asked her last night. She's out-
side."

"Marta? No, not at all."
So Phil, rather than escaping,
was so deeply enmeshed in his
devotion or love or infatuation
that he would commit an act,
clearly of bad taste, to please
Marta! Judith decided to have
soup and coffee and escape
quickly. She kept the conversa-
tion moving swiftly in a light vein.
She realized that Marta had been

defeated in some purpose which
she sought.
The next days were crowded,
and finally came the night of the
style show. Mark Price had not
mentioned her identity to Judith,
though she was sure that he must
know who she was. Judith had
been present at a private dress
rehearsal, asking that she be per-
mitted to miss the general one.
No one but Mark Price and his
fitters knew that she was appear-
ing.

Her first ensemble was a blue
dinner gown, simple and close-
fitting, made of hundreds of plaits
that were sharp and definite. Now,
at the verge of the stage, her cour-
age left her. How could she have
accepted such a role? What imp
had possessed her to do this? The
music repeated its cue. She must
go on!

SHE knew that the silence, at
first, was a tribute to the crea-
tion. It lasted a little too long.
Amazement threaded it. Some-
body gasped. A sound like a
breath in a field stirred the audi-
ence. Then there was applause,
wild and tumultuous and approv-
ing.

"Damn, she's got nerve!" Judith
heard a man's voice say.
"Mighty good publicity. Why
didn't I think of it?" she heard a
woman's voice, and her eyes
flickered, ever so briefly, in the
direction of the sound. The words
came from a woman who had been
a clothes rival last year.

She wondered if Marta had
come. And Phil. She mustn't
think. Walk to music, she com-
manded herself. This is your job.

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Down the ramp, down, down,
turn, open the jacket, slip it off,
slowly—
The show was over at last.
Photographers were everywhere.
She was asked to pose in this and
that. She was asked if she had
done the job for charity. There
was a suggestion that she had.
Mark Price's eyes were incredu-
lous.

"How in this world did I keep
from recognizing you?" he asked.
"You didn't know?" she gasped.
"No. Once or twice, lately, I've
thought you knew clothes."
"My picture—the papers..."
"I haven't read a thing since I
returned—only glanced at the
headlines." "I feel very honored
and I thank you. Will you forgive
me for being so presumptuous as
to think you might work with me
in the salon I'm opening? To
voice it now looks as though I
want to capitalize on your reputa-
tion. I'm sorry."

"Don't be," Judith answered
steadily. "Let's talk about it later.
I'm going away day after to-mor-
row for a while. My other trip
was interrupted by the airplane
catastrophe. This time I must see
it through. When I come back—"
She paused.

"I'll be waiting," he answered.

LATE the next afternoon, she
returned from a fitting and
tea with Anne. Because they day
was warm she was wearing a sim-
ple two-piece frock of blue linen,
with a natural lined bolero, wide
hat, and sandals and gloves of the
same material.

"There are callers," her maid,
who had now returned to her, told
her.

"Yes?" she asked. "Who are
they?"

The maid shook her head
slightly. Because she had been
with Judith so long, she ventured:
"Mrs. Rogers—THAT Mrs. Rogers
—and Mr. Irving."

Judith walked into the hotel sit-
ting room, greeted Marta and
Philip.

Marta's dress was black linen
and her jacket, beret, slippers,
gloves and bag were as pure white
as country snow. She looked
young, sweet, eager, and a little
frightened. Only a woman could
find the hardness in her eyes.

A storm was coming. Jagged
flashes of lightning ran down the
sky, across the park, disappeared
far over the distant river. Judith
remembered that it had stormed
in such a manner the day that
she had been frightened, first, about
Marta. It thundered and Marta
shrank closer to Phil.

"Will you lower the shades and
draw the curtains?" Judith asked
him. "It shuts away the storm."
"Judith, we came to ask you if
you would accommodate your
plans to ours a little," he said.

"I'm going to China this autumn
and I'd like to take Marta. I can
combine a world cruise with the
business end of the venture."

Singapore, Bagdad, Hongkong,
Rome—once she and Phil had
planned to travel the world's far
rim together!

"I'm leaving tomorrow night,"
Judith answered. "It will be a
matter of only a few weeks, Phil,
until you are quite free."

They rose to go but the storm
was too fierce. They sat down
again. There was a silence. Into
that silence came a man's heavy,
drawing voice, as he refused to
let the maid announce him and
approached the sitting room.

Judith looked up. The man
who had been Marta's husband
looked down on them.

(To Be Concluded)

I think the press should tell
wage earners that hen minor-
ity, monopolistic groups (labor
unions) obtain higher wages
through ability to organize, what
they get comes out of the pockets
of those who are not in a posi-
tion to organize—James H. R.
Cromwell, New York, husband of
Doris Duke.

A contribution in 1811, during
the Madison administration,
from some anonymous person
whose conscience hurt him,
started a "conscience fund" in
the U. S. treasury which today
totals more than \$626,000.

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia

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"Fanny's diary says you're stern and elemental, like the Old West. You
think that means she likes you, Buck?"

OUT OUR WAY

BY J. R. WILLIAMS OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE

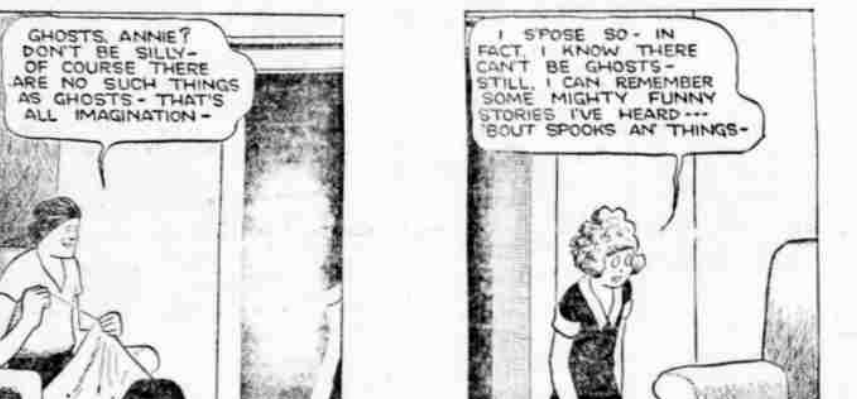


BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON.

MYRA NORTH, SPECIAL NURSE



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



WASH TUBS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

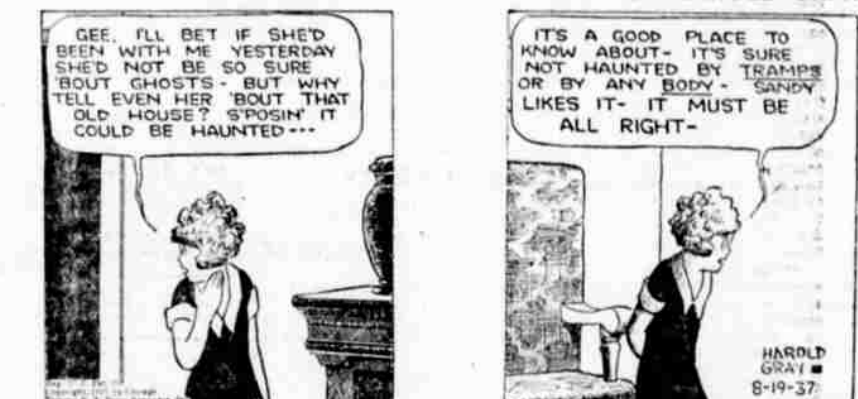


WHEN HOOPLE TAKES THE WHEEL

BY THOMPSON AND COLL



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY BLOSSER



BY CRANE



BY MARTIN

