

The Ten-Thirty Call

By PERCY WILSON

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Snapper was looking over the yard-master's shoulder when the operator handed the latter the order for an extra. As was not unusual with him on very slight provocation, the yard-master immediately "went off the iron." "Where's that call-boy?" he demanded. "What's become of that red-head? Where is— Oh!" as he turned his head and came afoul of Snapper's smirking countenance, "here you are!"

"Yes, here I am!" mocked Snapper. "Go on, go on—say what you were going to. Don't mind me! Where did you expect to find me—in your lap?" The call-boy was aggrieved.

"What's the earliest you can call this extra for?" was the brisk query. "Ten-thirty?"

With an exasperating affection of indifference, Snapper let his eye wander to the clock, gaped a minute over the crew-board, and gradually came around to the book. "I reckon," he answered. Then, with sudden interest: "Who's to shovel smoke?"

"Oh, you take notice, do you? Now, that's what I want to impress on your Listen."

"Laying a hand to his ear," quoted Snapper from a favorite author, and suiting action to the speech, "he gave close heed to the fiendish disclosure. "Go on."

The yardmaster was too accustomed to these burlesques to honor them with any attention. "Go for Burnside," he directed.

"He was let off."

"I know that. Pay attention. He was to be off until midnight, unless we should need him in some emergency this morning; and this is the emergency. He promised to stay at home till nine o'clock, and not to leave town before ten." He glanced at the clock. "It's only eight-fifty-eight now. You ought to find him easily," winking to the operator.

"Sure!" returned Snapper. "If only I hadn't bent one of me wings! What was it the coal-heaver wanted off for, anyway?"

"To rob bank, maybe. Don't bother me; but go get him."

"Put his name down," said Snapper in disgust. "I'll get him."

The yardmaster entered the name and handed the call-book over. "Now, hustle," he directed.

Snapper thrust the book in his pocket and struck an attitude. "Beware, James Burnside!" he declaimed. "Your doom is knelled, and the avenger—"

The avenger was the yardmaster, and Snapper got through the doorway just in time to escape his foot.

"Hang that kid!" laughed the yardmaster. "He gets on my nerves, with his spouting and fool antics. But he's a good call'er," he observed to the operator; "and, mind my word, he'll come back here with Burnside's signature in his book. Heaven knows where he'll find him, though, for Jim's tricky, and he'll dodge if he can. He did beg hard to be off."

In spite of his unhesitating assertion, the call-boy had very grave doubts about getting Burnside. The promise to remain at his boarding place for a call till nine o'clock made it unlikely that he would be there one minute later, while the additional hour did not give much time for finding him in a town of fifteen thousand people. What Snapper most desired to know was, where was he intending to go at ten? He had a suspicion that it had something to do with Kitty Carnigan.

Being too wise, however, to attempt to get this from the young lady herself, as soon as he had called those two of the crew who lived most conveniently, he moved directly on the engineer, whom, in the usual order of convenience for himself, he would otherwise have called last of all. His information came without his asking for it.

"Who's to fire for me this trip?" the engineer inquired as he took the book.

"Can't you see?" said Snapper, laying a finger on the name.

"Ho!" laughed the engineer. "You'll not get Burnside. He's going out to Maple Park on the ten o'clock car with his girl and her folks to a basket picnic. He's keeping an eye peeled for you."

To lie in wait and take him from his inamorato as they were starting for the car would have suited the call-boy's dramatic longings most, but it was not an impossibility that the fireman had already forestalled this by an arrangement to meet the party somewhere along the line.

In this uncertainty the immediate thing to be done was to get on his quarry's trail. Snapper gritted his teeth and struck across the meadow. At the farther side of the run he stopped and, on a sudden thought, got down and examined both ends of the short plank that spanned it. Without doing anything more, however, he got up again and went on, and soon entered the Carnigan's rear gate. He had kept his eye sharply on the kitchen window, and flattered himself that he had stolen up unnoticed; yet, when he stopped at the kitchen door, Miss Carnigan seemed not surprised to see him.

There was something suspicious in

this. To his inquiry she replied that Mr. Burnside had been there that morning, but had gone into town. Was he wanted?

Oh, no, he wasn't wanted. Snapper had merely noted that he had been looking poorly of late, and stopped to inquire about his health.

He sprinted to the corner just in time to see the fireman turn to the right a block ahead. On an easy trot the call-boy followed after. Overtaking a brakeman, Snapper asked if he had seen Burnside.

"Burnside?" said the man. "Yep; just passed here with throttle wide open and both pops up. Hit the curve and shot up that first alley—pointing—and he was going some. Why, I'll bet he was halfway up the side of that house when he made the turn, and I reckon you'll find his footmarks on the wall."

"He called to me to tell you to hurry up, kid," he said with a grin; "and you want to move lively, or he'll lose you."

Snapper knew this was all gammon. He glanced at his watch. It was almost nine-thirty.

"I'll look for those footmarks some other time," he remarked dryly; "I'm in a hurry now," and he started off fresh at a jog trot in the direction that had been indicated.

"There's that long-legged kid again!" ejaculated Burnside. "If he comes back here to the kitchen, I'll slip out the front door and join you on the car somewhere. If he comes to the front, keep him till I can get to the other side of the run; and after he's gone, I'll come around by the street."

Snapper's schedule took him to the front door. There was no answer to his first ring, so he rang again; and shortly Miss Carnigan answered.

"Oh! it's you, is it?" was her tart greeting. "What do you want now? It's a pity you couldn't have come to the kitchen door."

"That's the fault of me tender heart, Kitty," returned the unabashed Snapper. "I want Jimmy Burnside, and I couldn't bear to break it to him suddenly. You tell him."

"Didn't I tell you he had left here?"

"Aw, quit it, Kitty! Ain't he going on the picnic with you? Sure!"

"Well," was the admission, "he came back after you left, but he's gone again. You might find him at his boarding house."

Snapper struggled to keep a straight face.

"I've been there once," he returned; "and the book of rules says—he held his call book close to his nose and thumbed over some blank pages—" says, here: "Rule 106—In all cases of doubt or uncertainty, see for yourself. I've got to do it, Kitty," and he pushed into the house.

"Oh, very well!" retorted the young lad, and followed through to where her mother and a younger sister were finishing the packing of the picnic baskets in the kitchen. "Now! are you satisfied?"

Snapper made no reply. Something of more immediate interest absorbed all his faculties, for his eyes had lighted on the top layer in one of the baskets. "Are those some of your own pies, Mrs. Carnigan?" he inquired in awed tones.

"Sure!" was the answer. "Whose would they be?"

"But, some that you baked yourself?" he persisted with an air of strong disbelief.

"Of course!"

"Mrs. Carnigan"—he wanted a calm, judicial answer to this quest—"are your pies as good as they used to be?"

"Well, I never!" cried Mrs. Carnigan, flinging up her hands. "If you ain't the blarney!"

Snapper was not a beauty. He was still growing; his joints were too loose, his feet too big, his clothes too small; yet when he opened his mouth to take in the piece of pie that was immediately cut for him, expanding until his freckles ran together and his whole countenance resembled nothing so much as a wedge disappearing through a large, rusty washer, he became for the moment a sight that gave true joy to Mrs. Carnigan's domestic heart.

"That certainly was good," he murmured in heartfelt commendation as he swallowed the last of it. Then he met Miss Carnigan's anxious eye and gave a sudden impish start. "Gee, Kitty!" he exclaimed. "Someone's fell in the creek."

Stopping at the creek merely long enough to pull the plank out of the water and set it roughly in place, he hastened to the boarding house and went softly up to the firemen's room. He snickered to himself at hearing Burnside muttering obtrusions inside and thrashing wet clothes about.

In this dilemma the pie furnished him a hint, for, as it sought a cozy corner of his anatomy in which to dispose itself comfortably, it gave him a gentle internal tweak. In an instant he had doubled up as though taken with a violent cramp and, falling against the door with a horrible groan, seized the knob.

The door was locked, but as he sank on down to the floor he kept up a piteous moaning. In another moment the door opened and he fell half inside.

"You—" began the fireman, then lost speech.

"Aw! sign the book," said Snapper, thrusting it at him. "And be quick about it, too," he added sternly. "I can't be fooling all my time on you."

Burnside mechanically signed.

"I hated to wet you up, Jimmy," said Snapper as he took back the book, "but—"

He slammed the door and raced down the stairs from the fireman.

Top Coats for Spring



STORIES of AMERICAN CITIES

Colorado's "Johnny Appleseed" Kin of Oil King

CANON CITY, COLO.—Capt. B. F. Rockafellow, "the Johnny Appleseed" of the Arkansas valley, has a splendid cottonwood tree, the largest specimen of its kind standing in Canon City, which he has seen grow from a tiny sprout planted in his garden in 1872 to its present proportions of more than 15 feet in circumference. Not long ago government agents took photos and measurements of this tree for the records of the agricultural department, for it is rare that the exact age and conditions of growth of a tree are so accurately known as in this case.

Although Captain Rockafellow has lived to see many shade trees planted by himself grow into magnificent specimens, he is better known as the "father of the apple industry" in the Canon City district.

Since planting the first apple orchard in Canon City in 1870, he has put out thousands of apple and other fruit trees in this section, and now, in spite of his four score and four years, he still gives his personal attention to his 60-acre apple orchard, which bears some 25,000 or 30,000 boxes annually.

It is an interesting fact that many trees in this orchard, although forty to fifty years old, are still as healthy and vigorous as at five years of age, and are apparently good for another half century.

Unlike "Johnny Appleseed," that famous but eccentric character of the old Western Reserve of Ohio, who scattered promiscuously along the highways and water courses, Captain Rockafellow has planted scientifically with order and system, selecting and developing those varieties best suited to the Colorado climate.

Raised in the beautiful Genesee valley in New York, a region famous for its fine apples, he acquired a knowledge of horticulture that has been most useful to him in later years.

Although spelling his name slightly different from that of the oil king, their relationship is fairly close. A few years ago Captain Rockafellow was elected president of the Rockefeller association of the United States.

Policeman Is Nursemaid to Mayor's Pet Spaniel

CHICAGO.—A member of the fourth estate, trekking northward in the gloaming, encountered at Belmont avenue and Broadway a minion of the city law, arrayed in the customary habiliments of his calling—blue uniform, star, revolver, night stick, etc. Policemen, of course, are not unusual at night, but this one was possessed of an adjunct not generally included in their equipment. His right hand was attached to a leather leash at the nether end of which was a dog.

"Ha," soliloquized the fourth estate, "a mystery. There has been skullduggery afoot up here—maybe a bank robbery, maybe a murder—and this conscientious copper is earning his pay by using a bloodhound."

With which he engaged the policeman in conversation and learned that his name was Jens Hansen of the Town Hall station. He also learned that as a dog expert he was a zero. The canine which was leading Mr. Hansen about was a cocker spaniel. And while it was true that Mr. Hansen was on duty he was positively not on the trail of murderer, robber or other evildoer. He was acting in the capacity of nursemaid to the dog.

Mayor William Hale Thompson is the owner of the dog, and Mr. Hansen, detailed from Town Hall to guard the mayor's home in the Chase apartments, 3200 Sheridan road, performs as part of his duties those of wet nurse to "Cocker."

"Well," queried the reporter, "how do you like the job?"

"Oh, all right," said Mr. Hansen. "Cocker's not a bad sort. A bit tempestuous at times, but we get along. I'm taking him out for his nightly constitutional now."

Cocker now manifested a desire to continue his evening stroll and the two departed. The fourth estate resumed his trek, cogitating the happy lot of at least one Chicago dog—a full-grown policeman at \$115 a month for a guardian.

The Police Will Not Catch This Murderer Asleep

LAKE FOREST, ILL.—About midnight Mrs. Cyrus H. Adams, Jr., fanned herself to hear burglars and called out the department, which responded in the person of Chief of Police James Gordon, ably assisted by Policeman William Hensel. Mr. Adams, by the way, is a chicken fancier, and on the night in question had 17 Rhode Island Reds of aristocratic lineage domiciled in the back-yard chicken coop. They were resting peacefully, so far as known, when suddenly their squawks rang out and completely rent the night air. It was then that Mrs. Adams sounded the alarm.

Now when Chief Gordon received the summons he immediately notified Policeman Hensel for the reason that Mr. Hensel is peculiarly embittered against all members of the chicken-coop thief fraternity. Mr. Hensel, himself a chicken fancier, was recently guarding the residence and chicken coop of Mrs. Capt. William A. Moffett when some marauder invaded his own coop and cleaned it. Mr. Hensel has vowed vengeance.

Well, the two officers sped to Mr. Adams' home in an automobile and rushed out to the coop with revolvers drawn and electric flashlight gleaming. They entered the coop. The squawks by now had ceased. The reason was apparent. Each of the 17 Rhode Island Reds was dead. They had squawked their last squawk.

Investigating the surrounding terrain and coop interior for finger prints or footmarks they discovered evidence that the assassin belonged to the ungulate and not the hominidae class of mammal. That is to say, the murderer was committed by a weasel. The police are searching for him.

One of the Unusual Tragedies of the Great War

ALLEN TOWN, PA.—When the wife of Private Miles C. Booth of the One Hundred and Eighth machine gun battalion heard last summer that he had been killed in action during the fighting on the Marne, she mourned for him for a time and then married William George Smith.

Private Booth has now turned up at his home here alive and almost well. It appears that the shell which killed four of his comrades on July 22 only wounded him.

The situation is complicated by the fact that Smith, the second husband, was also a soldier in France. He entered the service after his marriage to Mrs. Smith and reached the front shortly before the armistice was signed. Both Booth and his wife view the mixup with a philosophical air of "mistakes will happen."

Booth says he is going back to the hospital in New York, where army surgeons are still treating his wounds.

"Why should I make trouble for her?" he says. "She is a mighty fine girl, and with me 'dead' as reported, I don't wonder that some other man was attracted to her."

The wife, who is now living with Booth's two children as "Mrs. Smith," at Fullerton, is just as philosophical.

"I heard Miles had been killed and went in mourning for him," she said. "Nobody said anything when I later began to keep company with my second husband, who is also a good man."



Julia Bottomley