

The Love Dodger

By VIRGINIA SWAIN

VIOLETTA STARTS SPINNING THE WEB IN WHICH SHE HOPES TO CAPTURE BRUCE'S AFFECTION

BEGIN HERE TODAY
BARBARA HAWLEY, 25, breaks with her father, BRUCE REYNOLDS, and takes a job on the Indianapolis Telephone Co. Her father, a prominent engineer, is a former friend of her mother's. Her father, a prominent engineer, is a former friend of her mother's. Her father, a prominent engineer, is a former friend of her mother's.

CHAPTER XV.

THE call came just as Barbara was ready to leave the office. "What is the name, please?" she heard the switchboard operator say. "No, Miss Hawley is not in. Yes, not till tomorrow morning."

Barbara took a step toward the telephone, and halted. Then she walked away and caught an elevator going down.

THE hall of the Hadley boarding house was quite dark, except for a narrow pencil of light from a transom. Bruce hung up the telephone receiver and turned away wearily. A triangle of light struck across the wall by the staircase. Someone had opened a door upstairs. A girl was standing on the lower steps, suddenly released by the light. He drew back. "I beg your pardon. I did not know there was anyone in the hall."

"Oh, that's all right," came a child-

ish voice. "Guess I scared you more than you did me. I've been standing here for a couple of minutes, trying to figure out who was using the telephone."

"Why, it's Miss Cranby," said Bruce. "The lady that couldn't use the hammer." He smiled a little. "She giggled. 'Aw, now. Don't rub it in. None of us women can. But what are you doing at this hour of the night?—it's after 2 o'clock.'"

Bruce hesitated, then spoke rapidly. "Telephoning a woman who doesn't want to talk to me. That's the kind of a fool I am."

Violetta looked at him sharply. Then she sighed and sat down on the lower step, propping her chin in her hands. "Life's funny," she said. "When you want 'em, you can't have 'em. And when they want you, you can't see 'em for the dust."

Bruce crossed the hall and sat down beside her. "I guess there's nothing to it, anyhow—this love stuff. Better forget it all and go about your business."

Violetta shook her head and shot a sidelong glance at him. "Oh, no, that's not so. Life wouldn't be anything without love. I'd hate to think I had to go through the rest of my life all by my lonesome. Besides, some women aren't like this girl of yours."

Bruce did not see the gleam of malice in Violetta's eyes. "No—they're not," he agreed, hotly. "Some of them really love. He broke off in embarrassment. "But what idiots we are, to sit here in the wee small hours, talking a lot of silly bunk."

Violetta answered him eagerly. "But it isn't bunk. Sometimes it helps lots just to talk about your troubles. I say to myself, the first time I saw you—there's a gent with a secret sorrow. And I wished like anything that I could help you."

Bruce turned. "That was nice of you to bother about me, but really, Miss Cranby, I'm afraid it isn't

worth it. I guess I'll always be a bungler, where women are concerned. I'm made that way." He tried to smile.

Violetta turned her great, shadowy eyes toward him. "How can you say that, Mr.—why, I don't believe I even know your name!"

"Reynolds," said Bruce. "I thought you knew."

"No, I told you mine that day you hung the picture for me, but you didn't tell me yours, and I didn't like to ask. But I knew we'd be good friends."

Bruce smiled rather absently. "It's good of you to say so. But I mustn't keep you sitting here. It must be nearly 3 o'clock."

The girl moved closer. "But I want to talk to you. I can't sleep. I'm not happy, either. Had a lot of trouble in my time. But I've almost got through the woods now. I'm not in love with anybody any more. So I'm not so miserable as I was. But I'm lonely. Nobody in this whole town to talk to. Most of the janes that work at Campbell's aren't my class—not that I feel stuck up—but you know how it is. A girl's got to be careful."

Bruce sat moodily staring into the shadows of the hall. Violetta looked at him. Detachment was still strongly written on his face.

Suddenly she put her face in her arms and began to cry silently. Her shoulders shook. She brought out a wisp of a silk handkerchief. It was some moments before Bruce saw that she was weeping. He sat lost in his own troubles.

"Why, Miss Cranby," he said, bending over her, "don't cry like that. Please don't." And then, as the sobs shook her body still more violently—"Is there anything I can do?"

She shook her head, without lifting her face. "There's nothing anybody can do," she whispered. "I wish I was dead, that's all. And I won't tell you anything more about it. I wish I was dead."

Bruce looked at her helplessly. At last he brought out a fresh, folded handkerchief and proffered it in place of the tiny silk one.

"I'll tell you," he said at last. "You've got the blues from sticking around this old boarding house. Violetta lifted her head, but not too eagerly. Her eyes were dry.

day and go out to Stony Point or take a hike. You need to get outdoors more, and I do, too."

Violetta lifted her head, but not too eagerly. Her eyes were dry.



Bruce hung up the telephone receiver and turned away wearily. A girl was standing on the lower steps.

Violetta smiled, baring white teeth. "All right," she said. "May be it won't be so bad, if there's somebody to talk to sometimes. I have been so lonely I thought I'd bust."

He helped her to her feet and went up the stairs with his arm through hers. At her door they said good night.

Inside his room, Bruce crossed to the window and stared out at the snowy night. The frown had returned to his face.

A picture of Barbara Hawley stood on his dresser. On the study table lay a pile of blueprints, and some architectural plans and models.

Bruce shuffled through the pile, picking out several sketches. On top of these he laid the picture of Barbara. Then he opened the door of the little coal stove that stood in a corner of the room and thrust the whole pile in.

THE snow had stopped falling when Barbara awoke next day. She saw that it was 9 o'clock, three hours later than her usual rising time. But she only turned over and lay still a moment.

Her mother came into the room. "The office called and said you needn't report till noon, Babs," she said. "That's why I let you sleep. You looked so tired when I came in to wake you."

Barbara rolled over again to look at her mother. "Why is it," she asked, "that whenever fate gets me into an awkward situation, it brings Bruce Reynolds around to float over me? Why did Bruce have to be in the Lighthouse Inn last night, when Sinbad Sullivan was making a fool of himself? Oh, I could die, when I think of Bruce sitting there looking at me while the whole crowd laughed."

She hid her face in the pillow. Mrs. Hawley went on stirring up the logs for a fire. "Those things do happen, Babs," she said. "You'll just have to forget it."

"But Bruce had the insolence to tell me I had no right to be in the inn, mother. He tried to tear me away from the place, before I had covered the suicide story. And there wasn't any other man there to take

me home." Then, quickly—"not that I needed one, but it hurt to have Bruce see me without an escort in that place, and Sinbad drunk on the table."

"No use thinking about it, Barbara dear." Her mother came over to the bed and stroked her daughter's hair. "Jump up and I'll give you waffles for breakfast."

The Telegraph office buzzed with the Sinbad Sullivan story that day. "You and Bob certainly do grab all the luck," said Jepson, the feature writer. "Imagine being right on the scene of a story like that. And me at home taking care of a teething baby. I told the wife we ought to break our necks to get to that party."

Wells called Barbara to the desk. "You gave us a good protection last night at the Lighthouse, Miss Hawley. Think we owe you a day off or something for unearthing that clew to the unknown woman companion of the dead man. Added just the touch of color needed to make it an A-1 story."

"McDermott tells me he asked you to see Mrs. Stacy today about her trip to Europe. They tell me she is interested in architecture and such things. Might ask her what she thinks of Vale Acres project of Manners, Stone and Reynolds."

Barbara winced at the name. "Very well," she said, lifelessly. She put on her hat and coat and left the building. An E. Washington car took her to Irvington.

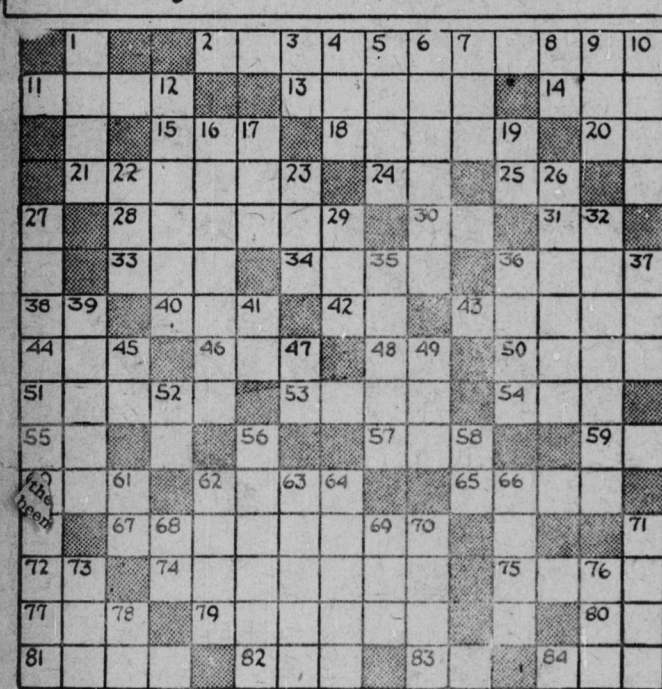
Mrs. Lydia Stacy's house was one of a row that stood among heavily shaded lawns. Barbara found the house and walked up a flagged path. As she went, a motor truck whizzed up the driveway past her, and she turned her head idly, to look at it.

"Farsian Dry Cleaners," said the sign on the back. The driver sprang out and ran up the steps to the servants' door at the side of the house. Barbara watched him. After a moment the door opened and a servant handed her a red garment of some kind loosely wrapped in a sheet.

Barbara went up the front steps and rang the bell.

(To Be Continued)

Today's Cross-Word Puzzle



- HORIZONTAL**
- According to pattern.
 - Sea food.
 - Decree of sultan.
 - To cut off.
 - Native metal.
 - To ignore.
 - Father.
 - Provides food.
 - Sixth note in scale.
 - Third note in scale.
 - To rescind.
 - Toward.
 - Point of compass.
 - Beer.
 - Crown of the head.
 - To knife.
 - Morindin dye.
 - Sorrowful.
 - To depart.
 - Relative pronoun.
 - Fishing bag.
 - Peak.
 - Point of compass.
- VERTICAL**
- Radio dial.
 - 3:1416.
 - Anger.
 - To telephone.
 - To accept as heir.
 - Guided.
 - Delty.
 - To soak up.
 - To reach across.
 - Inns.
 - Says again.
 - Before.
 - Standard type measure.
 - Constellation.
 - Fluid in a tree.
 - To chant.
 - Changes.
 - To loiter.
 - Prodigals.
 - Pertaining to sound.
 - Coarse, woolly hair.
 - Honey gatherer.
 - Rental contract.
 - First note in scale.
 - Seventh note in scale.
 - Italian river.
 - Prophet who trained Samuel.
 - Behold.
 - Marine fish.
 - To accomplish.
 - Part of verb to be.
 - Let it stand.
 - Figure of speech.
 - Troubled.
 - To apportion.
 - Measure of area.
 - Parasol.
 - Not as much.
 - Flower stalk.
 - Garden tool.
 - Female sheep.
 - You and I.

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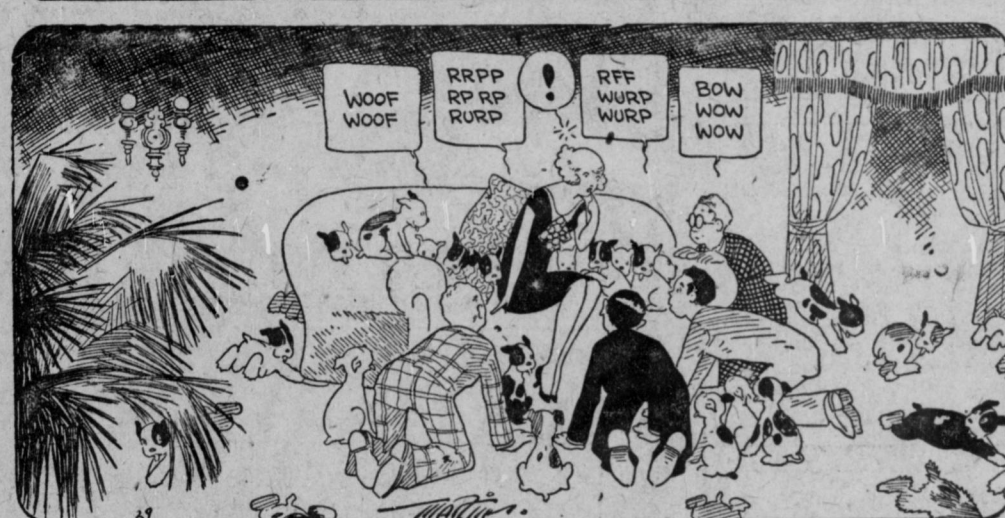
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Answer to Yesterday's Crossword Puzzle:

REPORTS RETURNS
AARIA DOSE P
TO STARTED BO
ADORE STARTED
FORE RUTAS EAST
TRESINATE ARSE
S21 MANE STS
RAZINIBTEREOD
EONE SMUGTRAPA
SOON TORASEWER
TINT CUSTS DENT
IN PASTELS SE
NBLOR OPALR
GREATER STATORS

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES—By Martin



OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER

