

Heart Hungry

by LAURA LOU BROOKMAN
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BEGIN HERE TODAY
CELIA MITCHELL, 17, leaves Baltimore where she has lived with her godmothers, mother, Mrs. MARGARET JOHN MITCHELL, in New York. The parents are divorced. Mrs. Mitchell is now following a second marriage.

BARNEY SHIELDS, young newspaper boy, follows Celia. Celia asks Mr. Mitchell to introduce his daughter to Barney.

Mrs. Parsons agreed considering Celia to be a good girl. Barney, a boy of a girl's Celia's age, becomes her loyal friend. Shields comes to New York to look for Celia. She is working and meets Celia. She tells him she has lost her job to Jordan. Celia is quiet at Mrs. Parsons' apartment.

Celia, Lisi and Mrs. Parsons are to see Jordan. Celia is worried. The radio report of a disastrous fire in the building where Shields is working. Celia is worried. Barney, Celia and others follow. Later Celia and Lisi go to the photographic service department. They are unable to get news of Shields.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER FORTY-ONE (Continued)

If Lisi had been in a normal mood she would have laughed. Instead she said soberly: "Celia, I've been thinking. Wouldn't it be better to go to the office where your friend works and try to find out about him there?"

"I know a little about hospitals, and they keep you waiting hours. Don't you think it would be quicker?"

Evelyn burst out angrily: "You're going no place but to take me home!"

"You're wrong," Lisi answered, meeting her gaze evenly. "Can't you see how Celia's suffering? We started out to find this Barney person, and we're going to find him."

There was no disputing Lisi's claim when she spoke in that tone. There was delay in finding the address of the Apex Picture Service, but eventually they reached there.

Celia and Lisi burst into that off-the-shoulder group of men gathered about a desk.

"Have you heard from Barney Shields?" Celia cried.

CHAPTER FORTY-TWO
DOWN in the streets newsboys were shouting extras. The man who had spoken to Celia held a rumpled newspaper in his hand. It bore in huge black type the glaring banner "33 Perish in Flames."

"We're expecting to hear from Shields any minute," the man told Celia. "Waiting for the call now?"

"Then you don't know if he's hurt? Oh, isn't there some way to find out what's happened to him? Maybe he's—?" She could not finish the sentence, but turned away, hiding her face in her hands.

There were two other men in the office besides the one who had spoken. They had been leaning over the desk. At sight of the two girls they straightened and moved back respectfully.

"We've got four men down there," the man with the green eyeshade continued, "and one at the hospital. Half of the injured aren't identified yet. No use to worry, ma'am."

The telephone on the desk jangled shrilly. One of the other men reached for it.

"Apex Picture Service," he said curtly.

Instantly the room was soundless. All eyes were turned on the man at the telephone.

"Yes," he was saying slowly. "Yes, I get you." There was another pause and then "O. K., Ben." He put down the instrument.

"That was Shrauger," he said. "He's sending some plates up. Says he hasn't seen anything of Shields."

The man who had spoken first pushed a chair forward.

"If you're friends of Barney Shields, maybe you'd like to sit down and wait," he said. "Here—have some chairs."

The girls sat down. Lisi murmuring thanks. Celia forced the tears back, but her lips, tightly pressed together, were tremulous. She twisted and untwisted a corner of her coat.

"Let's see what the papers say," Lisi suggested. There were newspapers—all with bold headlines—on a chair nearby. She arose and picked up the one on top.

"Thirty-five Lose Lives in Fire," was the first line across the front page of this one.

There was a list of names headed, "Dead in Fire Tragedy." The list was incomplete.

Celia traced through the names with an unsteady finger. Most of the men were foreign, their names impossible for her to pronounce. Celia felt a tremendous wave of sympathy.

OLD RACKET WORKS
(To Be Continued)

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