

MAD MARRIAGE

by LAURA LOU BROOKMAN Author of "HEART HUNGRY," etc.

Chapter Forty-Six (Continued)

SHE had no idea how long she lay there. Exhaustion had laid her down. Moonlight fell across the bed when she finally sat up, white-faced, and cried her eyes.

Gypsy heard a sound outside and went to the window. She saw the roadster, long dark and purring softly, slide down the driveway.

Perhaps Jim was going for Marcia. No, she knew instantly that the thought was unworthy. However Jim had wounded her, he still was the honest, dependable, straightforward man she loved. He was not engaged in a cheap intrigue with Marcia Phillips.

Gypsy sat on the window sill and looked out across the lawn. There was a square patch of bright moonlight bordered by the shadow from the hedge. It looked peaceful, quiet down there. The girl drew back farther into the shadow of the room.

It was strange that she should not feel angry at Marcia. She was not angry at any one. There was no room in her heart for anything except the aching misery of losing Jim. Losing? How could she lose what she had never really had?

She would love Jim always. She was sure of that. The thought of long days of bitter loneliness stretching out ahead frightened her. Gypsy hid her face in her arms and wept silently.

PRESENTLY she raised her head. She remembered the evening when she had said to Jim, "If you ever regret our marriage I want you to tell me about it." And he had promised that he would. Little had she realized then what she was bargaining for.

She told herself that she should be making plans, deciding about her future. That would have to wait. What did she care about the future now?

She heard the roadster come back up the drive, but did not look out the window. A little later she heard Jim's footsteps on the stairs.

Gypsy clasped her two hands tightly, pressing into the knuckles ached as the footsteps neared her door and then passed on. There had been one breathless instant when she thought Jim might knock on the door.

The house became quiet, Gypsy at last undressed. The lowered chifton which she had put on because Jim admired it was now limp with tears.

As she wrenched it to get it over her shoulders, she heard the fabric tear. She threw the dress on a chair and left it there, a wrinkled heap, instead of hanging it away. Very weary, she drew down the covers and got into her bed.

Over and over she tried to tell herself that some time this knife-like pain would cease. She would get used to it. Others had suffered broken hearts and learned to endure it. How literally true the phrase was! A broken heart. Her heart felt as though it were crushed and bleeding.

Pride carried her through the ordeal of the next morning's breakfast, saying "Good morning" to Jim as though he had not suddenly become a stranger, pouring his coffee, trying to drink her own steaming cup while he sat buried in his newspaper.

The might have been rehearsing parts in a play. Jim said good-by and added that he would have more information about "that matter" when he returned in the evening. Gypsy nodded instead of trusting herself to reply.

She went about her customary household tasks, so long as she was busy with her hands she could fight off thoughts she did not have the courage to face.

She avoided Matilda and Cora, afraid they would notice her rimmed and swollen eyes.

By mid-afternoon Gypsy was trying to find comfort in the thought that out of the ruin of her own dreams Jim would find happiness. Jim's happiness should mean more to her than her own. Then she thought about Alan. Was Alan as miserable as she, now that she had sent him away?

On sudden inspiration she went to the telephone. Crosby had told her he was stopping at the Howard, an inexpensive hotel. Gypsy found the number in the directory and called it.

"May I speak to Mr. Alan Crosby?" she said.

CHAPTER FORTY-SEVEN

EVIDENTLY the man at the other end of the telephone connection had not understood. "Who is it you wish to speak to, madam?" he asked.

"Mr. Crosby—Alan Crosby," Gypsy repeated the name.

There was a pause. Then the voice came back crisply. "Mr. Crosby checked out last night." Gypsy put down the telephone. After all, did it matter greatly? It would be kinder to Alan not even to write. Let him forget her as quickly as possible.

Two days passed in which Gypsy moved about the house as though she was living in a daze. She saw Jim each morning and evening. Meals were the most difficult part of the day.

As much as possible she remained alone. Then there was no need to keep up pretenses. She did not weep. Except for a daily aching with Pat, she never was out of the house.

Jim had told her that he had written to a lawyer in Reno. Within a week or ten days, he said, arrangements would be complete. Everything would be taken care of for her.

It would be necessary for her to establish three months' residence in the Nevada city. Jim talked about all this as impersonally as though she were any client who came to his office instead of his wife.

Even for that she could not hate him. Gypsy tried to tell herself she hoped he would be happy with Marcia. The wish was only partly sincere. She wanted Jim to be happy—not with Marcia.

She was upstairs in the guest room Friday afternoon when she heard a car coming up the drive. It was too early for Jim to be arriving.

Gypsy glanced out the window. The car was a dark blue coupe and it looked as though it had been traveling a long while. Curiously the girl watched as the car halted and a man stepped out.

He was a large man. His suit was gray tweed and he wore a straw hat. He opened the other door of the coupe and a woman appeared.

Excitedly Gypsy ran down the stairs. Anne and Phil Trowbridge! Reached the porch when she heard the door open.

"Anne!" Gypsy cried, rushing toward her cousin. "How glad to see you! How did you get here? Hello, Phil. What a wonderful surprise!"

"We weren't quite sure this was the house," Trowbridge said.

"Quite a place you've got here. You're looking fine, Gypsy."

She wasn't and Anne Trowbridge had noted the fact, but she echoed her husband's words, kissed Gypsy and told her they had run over to Forest City especially to see her on their way back from a trip to the lakes.

"Always told Jim that if I ever came anywhere near here we'd drop in to see him," Trowbridge said. "It's the first time we've driven this far west."

"Jim will be delighted. Why don't you telephone him?"

"That's an idea. Think I will."

SHE directed Anne to the most comfortable chair in the living room, showed Phil where to find the telephone and went to the kitchen to tell Matilda to prepare cool refreshments. Then she came back to the living room.

"What a wonderful old house this is!" Anne said. "And your furniture's beautiful."

"Do you like it? The house is ages old. Jim's grandfather built it. This room was part of the original farm house and that's the same fireplace. If you like the house, wait until you see my garden."

Phil Trowbridge entered the room then and Anne turned so that she did not see how Gypsy flushed as she said the words "my garden."

It would be just as well to tell Phil and Anne at once that the marriage had been a failure. Better than to try to keep up false pretenses.

"Jim's coming right out," Phil announced cheerily. "Say, Gypsy, I certainly do like this place! This is a real home. Mind if I look around?"

"Of course not. That's the library across the hall. Jim has his desk there and keeps all sorts of old things around. There are some books that belonged to his grandfather and some old pictures."

Anne talked about the week they had spent at a fashionable resort. She mentioned names of other guests that to Gypsy meant nothing.

ing, but she knew they must have social prominence or Anne would not have been interested.

The other girl was wearing a gray silk one-piece frock and gray felt hat pulled down over her head. Gypsy noticed that in spite of the vacation trip, Anne's skin was not browned.

Her pink and white fairness seemed as fresh as ever. There was a decided air of Parisian fashion correctness about Anne. Here in Forest City it was more pronounced than ever.

"Thanks. I'm really fagged to death. Honest, Gypsy, you haven't minded being buried in a little town like this, have you?"

No, she hadn't minded it. She said this without so much as a flicker of her lips. Again she knew that she should make things plain about the divorce, but Matilda interrupted, entering with the tray.

There were tall glasses with ice cubes clinking enticingly and a cool mint-flavored beverage. Phil returned, enthusiastic about a first experience he had found on the book shelves.

"Of course, you'll stay with us tonight," Gypsy found herself saying, thoroughly aware that this was no time for entertaining. "I know Jim will insist upon it."

Jim did insist when he arrived fifteen minutes later. He young Phil's hand and greeted Anne eagerly. He assured them they could not think of starting on until the next day.

"Why not stay over Sunday?" he asked. "Little touch of this rural life would be good for you. Show you how much you're missing in New York."

They could not stop over the week-end, Trowbridge told him, but if there was room for them and it would not be an inconvenience they would be glad to spend the night and drive on next day.

At that it was settled. Gypsy had a hasty conference with Matilda. Life was suddenly stirring in the house again.

There was no time to think of anything except the demands of hospitality. Dinner, with the exacting Anne as a guest, must display Matilda's art as a cook.

Gypsy, as she got out the fine old silverware, told herself that she might be a failure as Jim's wife, but she would show him she knew her duties as a hostess.

She took Anne upstairs to the little jewel-box of a guest bedroom and was pleased when the other girl praised it.

"You know, Anne," she said, "I was thinking of you when we planned this room."

"Oh, you did it over?"

"The whole house. Of course, I didn't really do it myself. I found a decorator and we worked together."

"You made a splendid job of it. I'm going to copy those curtains in my room at home. Does your decorator ever come to New York?"

"I suppose so. I can find out."

"Tell her to come to see me the next time. I might give her a commission."

Gypsy went to her own room to dress. It had been decided that after the dinner they would drive out to the Golf and Tennis Club, where there was dancing on Thursdays. Jim was eager for his guests to see that here and there Forest City had a metropolitan touch.

(To Be Continued)

STICKERS



Four pups and three kittens weighed 37 pounds. Another lot of three pups and four kittens weighed 33 pounds. If all the pups weighed the same and all the kittens weighed the same, what is the respective weight of each pup and each kitten?

Answer for Yesterday



Dad had 42 cents to begin with. Jim got one cent more than half, or 22 cents. Sally got two cents more than half of the remainder, or 12 cents, and Billy got three cents more than half of the remainder, or 7 cents. This left dad one cent of his original 42 cents.

TARZAN AND THE GOLDEN LION



"At last!" cried the High Priest. "This time, O, Tarzan of the Apes, you shall know the fury not of the Flaming God, but of Cadj, the man. And that, immediately." He raised the sacrificial knife above his head. Beyond the point of the knife Tarzan saw the summit of the courtyard wall. Just surmounting it was the head and shoulders of a mighty, black-maned lion. "Jad-bal-ja," shouted Tarzan, "KILL! KILL!"

Cadj hesitated, his knife poised on high. He noted the direction of the ape-man's glance and followed it. In that instant the golden lion leaped to the pavement and, with two mighty bounds, was upon the High Priest of Opar. The knife clattered to the floor and the great jaws closed upon the horrid face. The lesser priests, who had seized Tarzan and had remained to witness his death, fled screaming from the scene.

Now remained only Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja and the body of Cadj within the sacrificial chamber. "Come, Jad-bal-ja," commanded the ape-man, "let no one harm Tarzan." . . . An hour later the victorious forces of La were overrunning the ancient palace and temple of Opar. The priests and warriors who had survived eagerly surrendered. Now at La's command, the city was searched for Tarzan and Cadj.

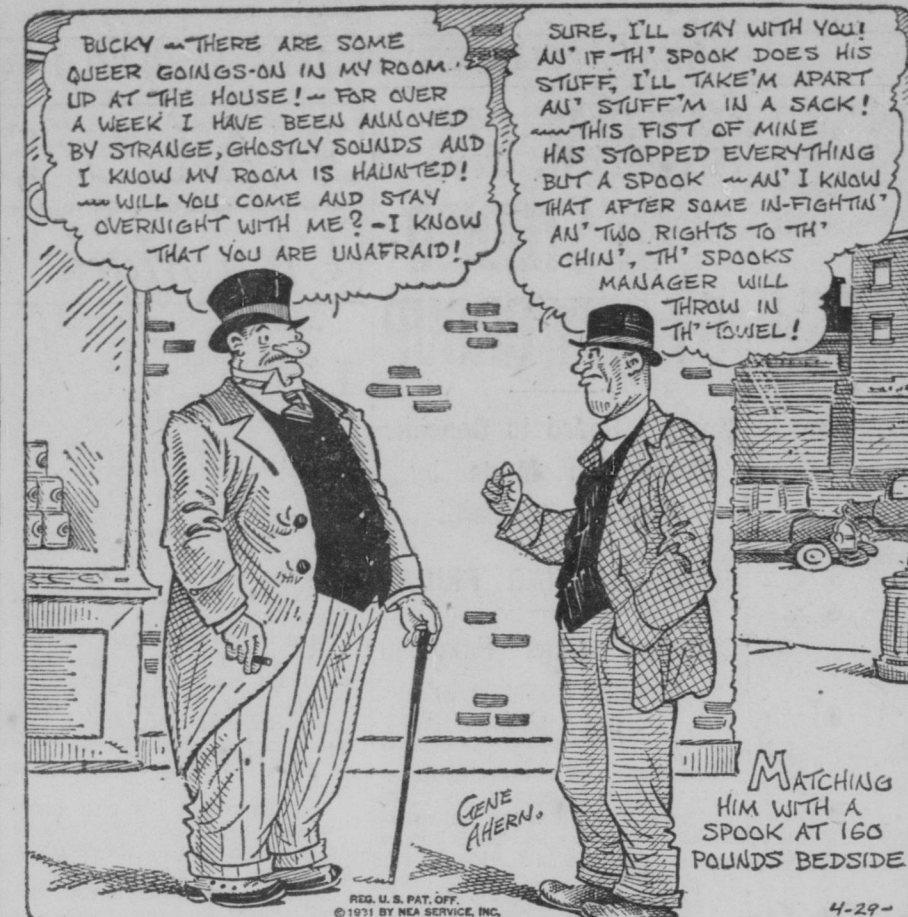
Thus La, herself, leading a searching party, entered the sacrificial courtyard. The sight that met her eyes brought her to a sudden stop. For there, bound upon the altar, lay Tarzan of the Apes. Standing above him, his snarling face and gleaming eyes glaring directly at her, was Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion. "TARZANI!" shrieked La, running toward the altar. "Cadj has had his way at last. Tarzan is dead!"

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

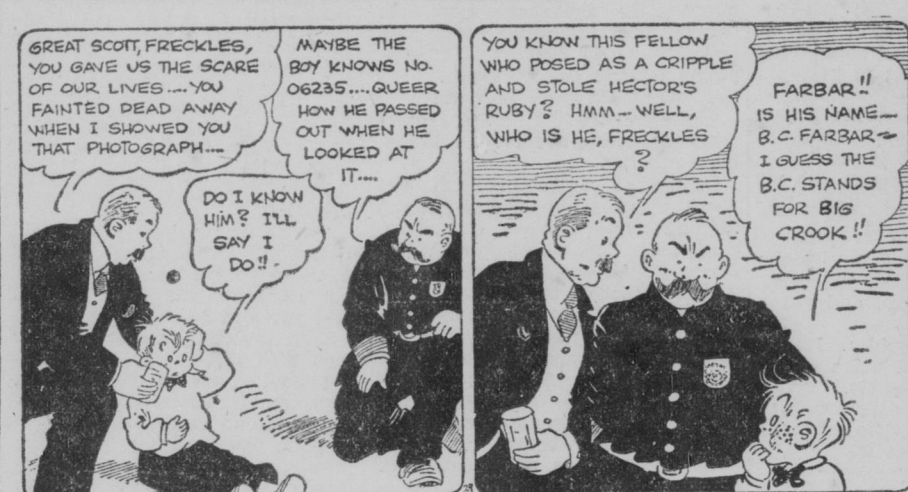
—By Ahern

OUT OUR WAY

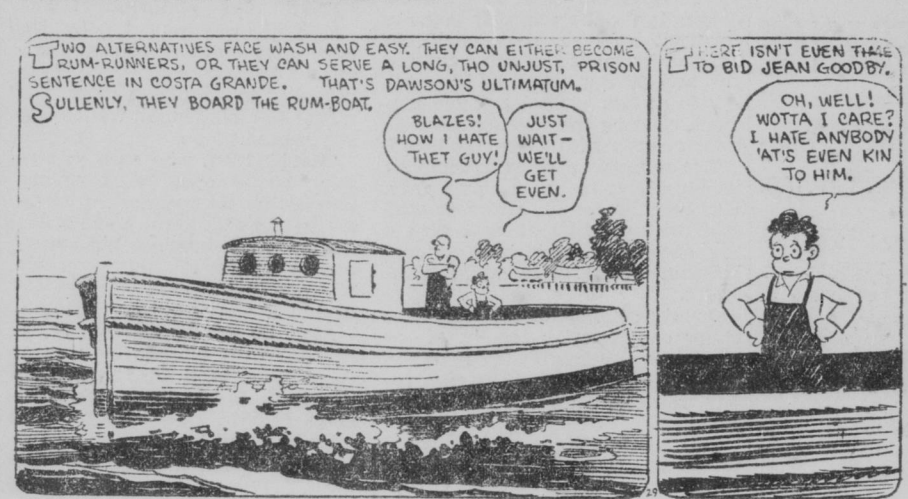
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FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



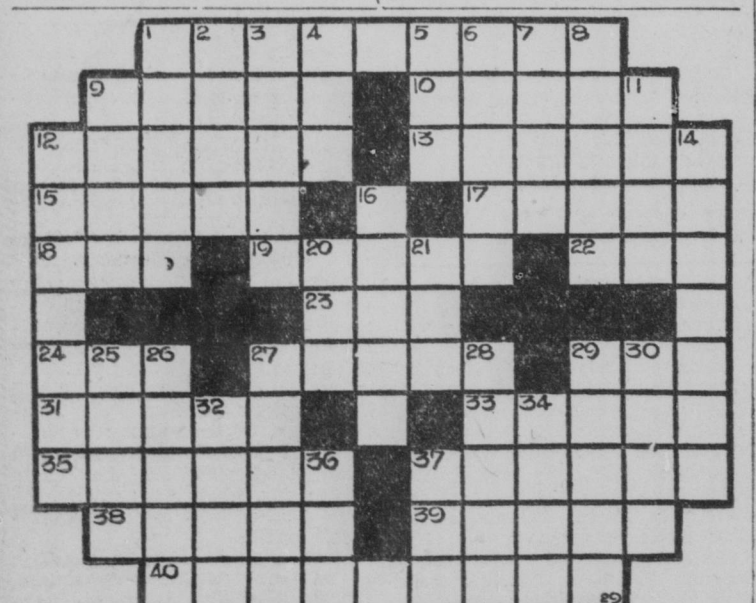
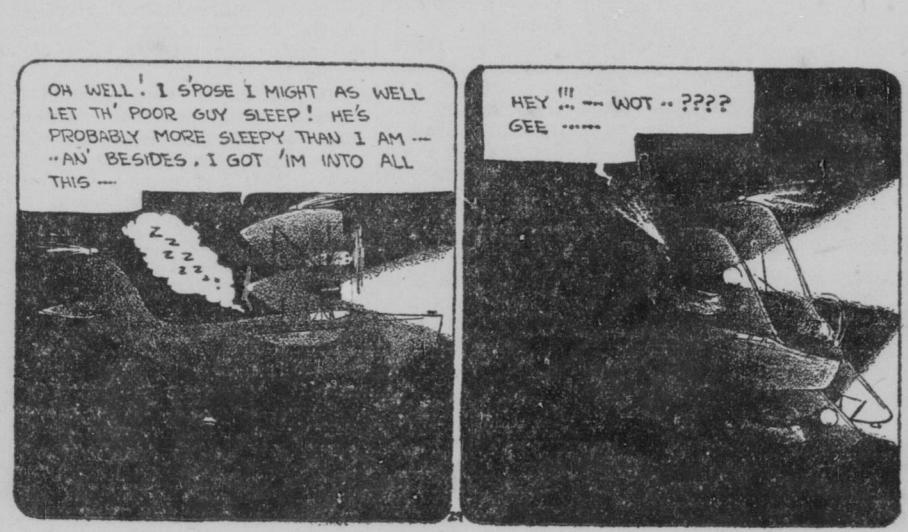
WASHINGTON TUBBS II



SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



HORIZONTAL
1 Violent
2 To possess.
3 To have again.
4 Scarcely.
5 To have again.
6 Images.
7 Short letter.
8 To propel an auto.
9 Stalk of.
10 To decorate.
11 Relinquished.
12 Idea.
13 To inhume.
14 Quay.
15 Born.
16 Hatchets.
17 Tree.
18 Part of the foot.
19 To sink.
20 Chooses by ballot.
21 Right of precedence.
22 To deem.
23 Excuse.
24 Large gully.
25 Makes.

VERTICAL
1 To happen again.
2 Incorporated.
3 Diplomatic agents.
4 To inscribe.
5 To possess.
6 To have again.
7 Scarcely.
8 To have again.
9 Images.
10 Short letter.
11 To propel an auto.
12 Stalk of.
13 To inhume.
14 Quay.
15 Born.
16 Hatchets.
17 Tree.
18 Part of the foot.
19 To sink.
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YESTERDAY'S ANSWER
JOSLIN VIRGIN
AKA OBIADO
SET BOONS BET
O BENNETT E
NAPES E AIDED
LIVID SPRIG
A LEGATES A
GAD SAVES ILK
ERE MAN NEE
STANCE TURNED