

SPOTLIGHT

H.W. CORLEY
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BEGIN HERE TODAY
SHEILA SHANE, 16, whose parents were well-known vaudeville acts, is a dancer. She has spent almost her entire life on the stage. She and her parents, now dead, and later in her parents' road shows. Sheila lives in MA LOWELL'S theatrical home.

Now go on with the story.

CHAPTER ONE (Continued)

"You have the making of a real dancer. A musical comedy star like Marion Merion. I don't see why you couldn't be as good as she was. All you need is a break. Things can't keep up the way they are forever. They're bound to change." Her voice shook. "I'm old, Sheila. I'm 30, but you're young." She smiled through sudden tears.

"Thirty isn't old," Sheila said uncomfortably. It hurt her to think of Myrt old.

"You had a good time in a small town," Myrt decided after a moment's thought. "You are pretty. You'd have beans. Everybody has beans."

"And the moon—and maybe fireflies."

"And the mosquitoes! And the beans from the local garage! No, Broadway is the place for you, Sheila. Broadway needs you."

Sheila laughed a bit mirthlessly. Certainly Broadway's need for her talent today hardly was apparent.

"I think it's a mistake to marry just to have a home," Sheila went on after a moment.

Myrt looked at her sharply. "You aren't thinking of getting married, are you?"

To whom?"

"Well, I didn't know but what some of your beans had asked you."

"I don't mean marrying any one here, Myrt." Sheila went on, looking off into space. "I mean marrying some one in a little town, where living means something. If I had the chance tomorrow or today I'd do it!"

"You're crazy," commented Myrt. "If you must marry, pick out some rich guy and get a home on Park avenue."

"Those aren't homes, Myrt! The only home I dream about is one on the ground with a porch and grass and clothes lines. A home that is paid for—not rented by the year or month. That's the kind of home I want!"

Myrt's eyes were dreamy. "I've seen homes right here at Ma Lowell's. Third floor back, maybe. Just one room. Love, Sunshine. Funny little duds, chair pillows, bureau scarfs, maybe. And your red geraniums in a pot in the window. A girl fussing around in a little apron cooking something on the gas burner."

Sheila nodded. "Sure, I know. You're thinking about Bee and Walt. But they were exceptions. Did you ever eat at Dean's chop house, Myrt?"

The other's eyes widened. "Dean's was the rendezvous of the successful, the great. 'You're asking me!'" she exclaimed. "Well, no, I haven't."

Sheila had dined at Dean's frequently, always as some one's guest. It was an excellent restaurant just off Broadway, one flight up. There was good food, excellent service. Not flashy but expensive.

"I've been there," Sheila went on. "But I've never seen a couple there who looked happy. Remember Lily Train? I saw her there three times. Each time she was with a different husband. When you see a married couple at Dean's, you can always tell whether the husband or the wife is making the most money. You can tell when they've been quarreling."

And you can tell when they think more of being a success than they do of each other. When I marry I don't want it to be like that! I want a real husband and a real house. I want curtains blowing at the windows, fresh and white. A tea table, out near the lilac bushes. Little tulip-lined walks. Porches—"

Myrt shrugged. "Porches have to be swept. Walks get cluttered."

Sheila's voice was eager. "I've seen 'em! Cluttered with toys and red wagons and doll carriages. Lots of people feel the way I do, Myrt!"

"I know what you mean, kid," Myrt said in a softer tone. "Well, I hope you get it. Only remember this. Love is where you find it. A furnished room or a palace."

"The chances are better, maybe, in the place where you don't have to stumble over each other all the time. Otherwise the place doesn't matter much. Love is anywhere you find it."

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"Lord save us what next?" Myrt gasped. "Fire engines! What was the child saying?"

"Like I told you. Fire engines. For the kids, you know. She wants to get married."

"They all talk that way in the spring," Myrt said comfortingly. "The air gets warm, the flowers in bloom. Flower sellers start hollering their heads off. There's one now."

They were standing on the step, loath to leave the first spring day behind them, loath to exchange it for Ma's comfortable, dark, untidy, cavernous kitchen.

"An' look at her!" Myrt gasped again and grabbed Myrt's arm. "Mind you! There they are waitin' for her at Paris and her buying geraniums from a peddler!"

"Well," asked Myrt as they rose from the table and Sheila paid the checks. They went out into the sunny street again. Far down the block a wagon loaded with potted flowers moved slowly toward them, the hawker shrilly crying his wares, stopping now and then to make a sale.

"Well," asked Myrt as they paused. "Are you going to try the booking offices or are you hitting it straight for the country and a love nest?"

Myrt's own morning was an accepted routine. She would go back to the rooming house and wait for the telephone call which never came. For weeks now Myrt had been taking the course of least resistance.

"Here comes Ma Lowell," Sheila said as her eye caught a figure coming toward them.

"And in a hurry!" Myrt announced. "Well, if it's hurryin', it's a safe bet she's bringin' good news to some one. She wouldn't hurry on her own account."

The rooming house keeper reached them, a shawl caught over

her house dress, her plodding feet still in carpet slippers. "Sheila!" she gasped. "It's a good thing you two have been gossiping over your breakfast. Otherwise—"

Creeping slowly forward, the ape-man finally reached the sheltering shadows just inside the sentry lines. Stealthily he moved from building to building, when suddenly he was discovered by a large dog who came toward him, growling.

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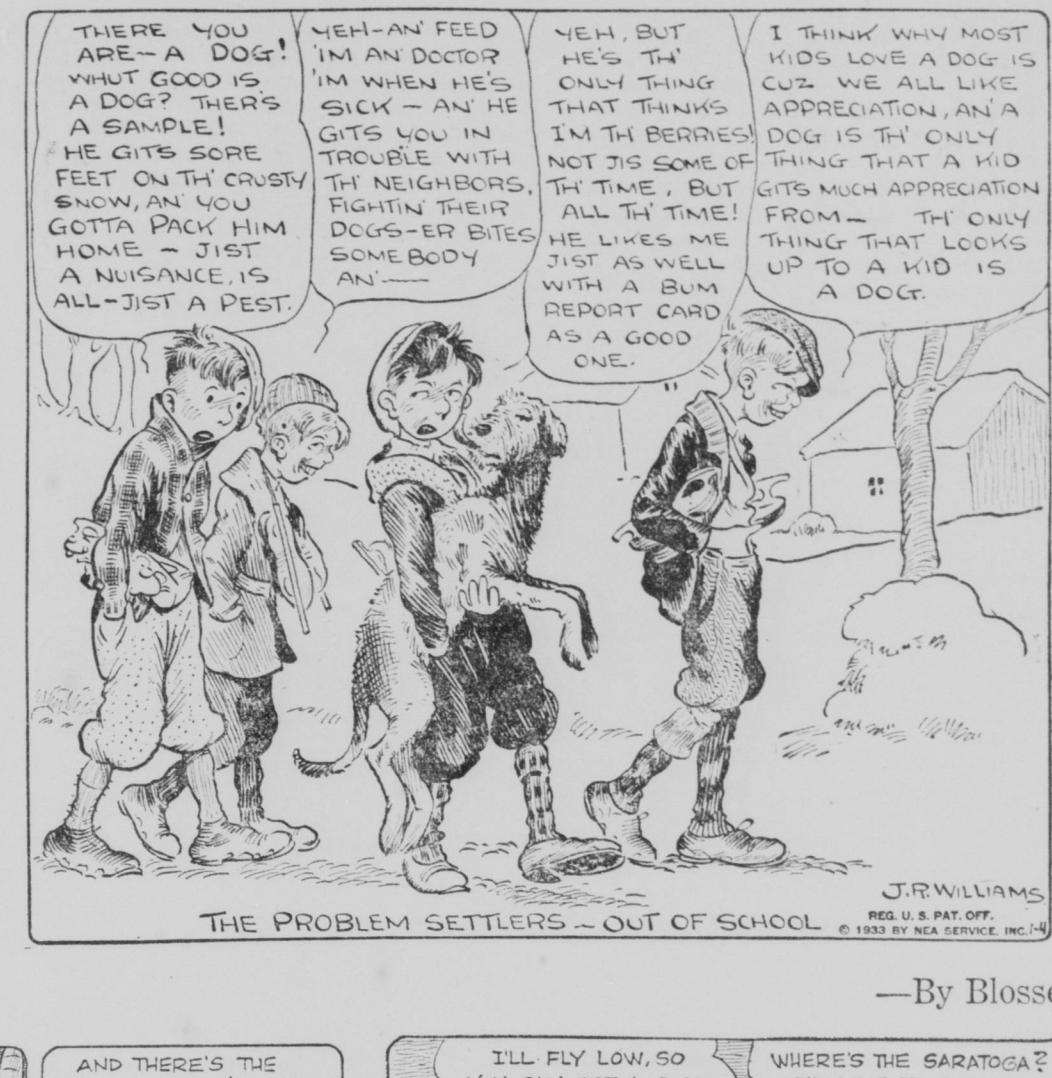
OUR BOARDING HOUSE

—By Ahern



OUT OUR WAY

—By Williams



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

—By Blosser



WASHINGTON TUBBS II

—By Crane



SALESMAN SAM

—By Small



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

—By Martin



TARZAN THE UNTAMED



(To Be Continued.)

