

Today's Short Story

WHOLE LOAF

By Alma and Paul Ellerbe



ARTHUR LYTLE

MARGOT TEALE sat at her desk in the old-fashioned two-room kitchen and bath walk-up apartment on W. 10th-st that had been home to her during the whole of the brief period of her business life.

She felt uneasy about the most important thing in all her world—her relationship with Philip Wayne. She hadn't seen him for 10 days, but she knew perfectly well that something ought to be done about it.

It was, however, airplane time in Margot Teal's career as a publicity woman, and her desire to do something about that was an itch, a frenzy, an obsession, of the kind that had already, in a mild sort of way, made her famous.

Her feeling about even Philip Wayne was, just now, as a 16-candle power bulb to the sun to her feeling about the publicity potentialities of the Ariel airplane, the just-out, \$600 beauty whose hope into the public consciousness it was her newest job to superintend.

She knew it shouldn't have been, but it was. In fact, at that very moment, when Phil heaved himself up so extraneously out of her subconscious mind or somewhere, she was up to the eyebrows in line drawings, cuts, paintings, newspaper spreads and pamphlets, all about the Ariel.

"I'll phone him," she resolved, "the moment I come up for air," and found Phil Wayne, time, space and her own identity in her work.

Among the things she forgot was Mrs. Henschel's coming from some place in the van West Forties to clean house, as she did once a week and had done once a week until she almost faded now for Margot into the wallpaper.

Margot pondered, scribbled, telephoned, figured, read copy and corrected it, and Mrs. Henschel was telling about a vacation trip her husband was making, solo, to California.

"And—er—didn't you want to go too?" Margot inquired, a little dazed from the jerk back from imaginary coastings down the long savannahs of the blue in the Ariel.

"Oh, I don't know. It would have been very nice, no doubt. But I never crave what others get and I don't."

It's probably true, Margot thought. An elderly woman, as remote and still and impersonal as the attraction of gravitation. An odd instrument for Fate to choose for the stabbing awake of Margot Teal.

"I never craved but one thing in my life, and that was the man I didn't marry."

"Yes?" Margot said. She forgot the Ariel.

"I began to crave him the night I married my husband. I don't know why I didn't listen to him when I kept asking me to marry him. I guess it was because I was so young, and—pretty—and green here in America. I thought I could have the world. I thought everybody got rich here."

"Yes?" Margot said. She forgot the Ariel.

"I began to crave him the night I married my husband. I don't know what—made me laugh and put my fingers in my ears and run whenever he tried to talk to me. One day he cried, and I called him a big dumbhead. After that he didn't come any more. I thought he would, of course. I thought so for a long time. But he always went somewhere, I never heard where. I don't know how it was I began to crave him the night I married my husband. That was seven years afterward. My husband is a good man. I had respect for him. He said he would give me a home. The brother I had lived with was married my that time and I needed a place to go to..."

Mrs. Henschel's words lingered in the air—"a place to go to..."

"There's only one place for me to go to," Margot said, "and that's you, Phil Wayne," and reached for the telephone.

"But he had gone, the switchboard operator at his apartment house told her, to dine at the Kentucky Cardinal on Eighth-st."

Dining alone, Margot thought, putting on her coat and hat to join him there, at the place where they used to dine together at least three times a week. Poor old boy! She'd given him a raw deal! "Phil, darling," she said to him, in her thoughts, "how did we get like this?"

As she went into the tenderness

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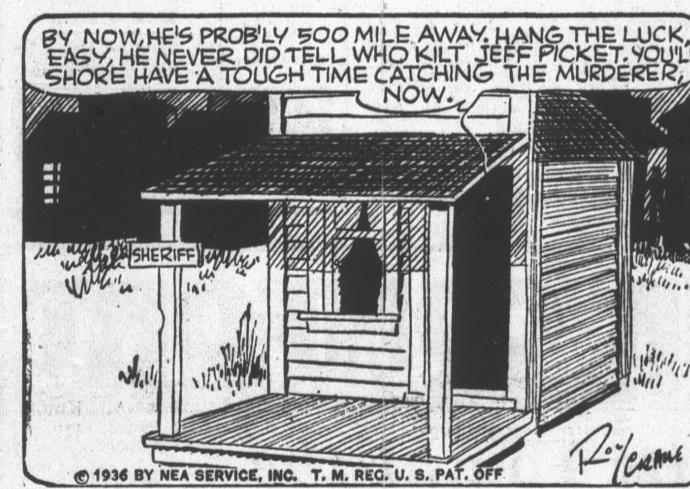
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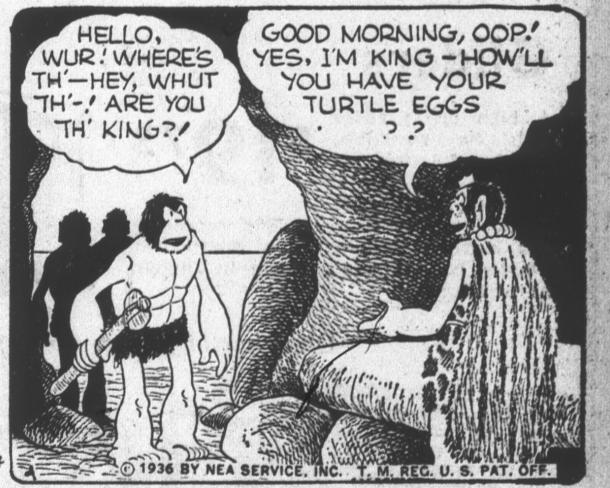
—By Williams



—By Blosser



—By Crane



—By Hamlin



—By Martin



—By Edgar Rice Burroughs

Tarzan rushed fiercely upon the four Leopard Men who had leaped from ambush to attack Orando. Since Orando was suffering from a wound, the Jungle Lord expected little aid from him. Tarzan was virtually alone against the four steel-tailed felines.

When the girl was led before Lulimi, the wily high priest concealed his surprise and took quick advantage of the situation. "Behold!" he cried; "the Leopard god looks with favor upon me, and all the horrible rituals which welded his ruthless followers into a vast secret brotherhood of blood and iron.

He seemed destined to establish an invisible empire of greed and crime. In more civilized realms he would have been known as the "big shot." There was only one man in all Africa who would challenge his power; but that man had already run afoul of his cohorts...