

SALUTE TO Love

BEGIN HERE TODAY
Kate and Caroline Meed live on a farm, Mead Meadow, with their kind, lovable grandfather, Major Sam and their two old Negro servants, Althy and Zake. Kate is engaged to Morgan Prentiss, who neglects her for Eve Ewell, beautiful and wealthy.

Major Meed loses the farm to Jeff Howard, a bitter young mountaineer. Kate has to face the truth, however, but in spite of her innocent treatment, finds himself in love with her.

Kate decides to give up Morgan, just as he is on the point of killing her for Eve. Needing money, Kate and Caroline work up a cottage cheese route, but soon after Kate's plan is discovered, she finds Caroline crying. Questioning her, she learns Morgan is preparing to marry Mr. Grayson, a well-to-do widower whom she does not love. Kate protests against this sacrifice.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XXIII

CAROLINE hesitated, then burst out breathlessly, "Mr. Grayson promised me \$1000 a year for Grand-dad! For the house here. He says he's always admired Grand-dad and would consider it an honor to give it, through me. He's a kind man, Kate!"

Kate was too surprised to answer for a moment. Then she said, "Yes, he is kind—but he's even smarter than he's kind, Caroline. He's buying you. You're 30 years younger than he is. You're other desirable things, too—pretty and feminine and easily managed. Aren't you worth a thousand a year bonus, over and above your board and keep?"

"You've no right to put it like that," Caroline protested. "I've got to right to discuss the bargain when my sister sells herself. You can't stop me. She asked you last night, of course. I thought you looked queer when you came upstairs. When's he coming for his answer? Plenty soon. I'll bet."

"Tonight," Caroline admitted. "I don't mind it, Kate. Really, honey! I don't know what made me cry. Just nerves, I suppose."

Kate asked, "Do you mind being poor so dreadfully? I mean, is it getting you down?"

Caroline twisted her hands together, like a child in distress. "It's not the work I mind. Kate. Or this dinky little house. Or even the doing without things. It's—it's the fear!"

Kate could not pretend to mis-understand. She, too, had felt it. Fear of debt and failure and family dissolution. Fear of sickness, even death, without money to carry it through.

CAROLINE said in a gentle, tired voice, "We'll not be able to pay out, Kate. Every week we go in debt a little deeper. Winter's coming on. We'll need coal and food, and warmer clothes."

"We can make our old clothes do!" Kate answered sharply. "Are you too proud to wear patches? We can eat plainer food! Caroline, we haven't begun to economize yet! We won't have to burn coal till the dead of winter. There are old trees on the place that Zeke can cut. We'll get a man to help him on shares. There's our fuel! And we've still got the order for Jeff Howard's baked goods. There's several dollars cleared a week, right there!"

In excited staccato phrases she tried to show Caroline that they could weather the winter. "Be sides," she said, "I've a scheme that'll bring us in a few hundred! It's as good as done—only don't ask me about it yet. Oh, Caroline, promise me you won't throw yourself away like that! Promise me you'll tell him 'No'!"

Caroline was looking at her younger sister in bright relief. "You're wonderful, Kate! I thought I had to do it. I thought I was being noble, but I was just being a spineless fool. I'll tell him what-ever you say."

KATE replied grimly. "I'll not trust you to tell him anything. I'll make you write it. The man over-persuaded you last night. I'll give him another chance at you. You're sort of weak-willed, and yet you have an enormous capacity for self-sacrifice!"

Caroline had reached for pen and paper. "I'm ready to write. Can you stop scolding long enough to dictate?"

"Yes," said Kate. "Write this. Dear Mr. Grayson: My answer to your proposal must be 'no.' I appreciate the compliment you paid me, and I shall always be deeply grateful for your inclination to help my grandfather, but those feelings are not enough for marriage! Are you keeping up, Caroline?"

"Yes, and I changed 'compliment' to 'honor.' That's kind. Go ahead."

"All right. . . . Thirty years is too great a difference in age. Somewhere, I am sure, there is a woman more suited to you and a man more suited to me. Let me try to find them. Sincerely, Caroline Meed."

"I think it's a very good letter," Caroline remarked when she had written her name. "It's much plainer than I could have said it."

Kate was getting into her riding clothes. "Now lick the flap," she instructed, "and I'll deliver it at once."

KATE lost no time. In half an hour she was leaning from her horse, putting the letter into Mr. Grayson's hand. "It's from my sister, Mr. Grayson. . . . No, thank you. I won't stop. I'm in quite a hurry."

She rode away and left him fuming the envelope in surprise. She thought, "I hope he doesn't read it till I'm out of sight. I hope he isn't too much bothered over it."

She could not feel entirely content for Mr. Grayson because he had brought all this on himself. He needn't have gone out of his way to pick out Caroline, 30 years his junior. There was Miss Alice Fenwick, who'd been in love with him for goodness knows how long. Even before his first marriage, people said. Miss Alice was a handsome woman not much past 40 with a cheery disposition and many excellent traits of character. If Mr. Grayson had any sense at all he'd appreciate her.

No, Kate decided, she would not distract herself over Mr. Grayson. She had rescued Caroline from a ghastly mistake and that closed the chapter. Something else must be done now. Something that required more courage than tossing a letter at Mr. Grayson.

SHE touched Brown Boy with her crop and turned his head toward home, but when they reached

OUT OUR WAY

By Williams



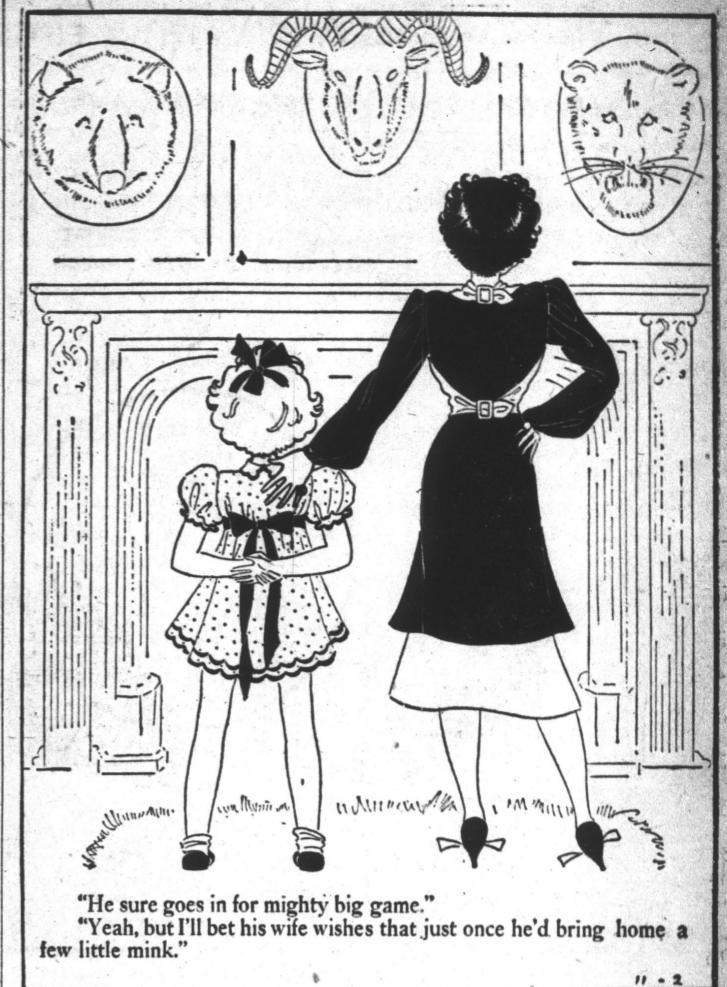
THE WORRY WART.

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J.R. WILLIAMS

FLAPPER FANNY By Sylvia



"He sure goes in for mighty big game."

"Yeah, but I'll bet his wife wishes that just once he'd bring home a few little mink."

"By Al Capp

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