

Best-Dressed Woman

BY HELEN WELSHIMER

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CAST OF CHARACTERS
JUDITH IRVING, heroine, America's best-dressed woman.
PHIL IRVING, Judith's estranged husband.
MARTHA ROGERS, Judith's rival.
BRUCE KNIGHT, author, Judith's old classmate.
MILICENT BAYNE, Bruce's protegee.

Yesterday—Judith suffers her first suspicion about Phil and Martha. They are confirmed when Phil telephones. "I'm being detained."

CHAPTER TWO

PROMISING Phil that she would make his apologies, Judith held the receiver of the telephone in a frightened hand. She knew that he had no conference, no client, no business. He was taking Martha Rogers to dinner. She knew it, and yet she wanted to keep that telephone connection which bound her to her husband. When it broke, he would go back to the other woman.

Phil didn't play casually with women. His devotion and fidelity were the talk of their circle. Maybe that very thing left him open to a scheming woman of Martha Rogers' type. She made a hasty decision.

"I'm tired, Phil. I'm skipping the party," she said.

His voice was surprised when he answered. "Tired? You? But she could not tell it was for her because he felt compunction now about carrying out his own plans.

"You're not ill? Judy, I'll skip the whole business and come home as soon as I can. That's what you want, isn't it, dear?"

"Don't come until you're ready," she answered. "I'll be lazy and read."

Phil preferring somebody else—it was preposterous! Of course it would be over in a week, a month. Or—would it? For six years he had preferred her.

Judith Irving, you are acting like a fishwife," she upbraided that still white face in the mirror over the telephone table. Oh, every place she looked today there were mirrors! "No, go walk home. Get so tired that nothing will look as good as a hot bath and a deep chair and a pot of tea. Hurry!"

As she started up the avenue, a pleasant voice spoke at her shoulder. "Maybe we met on a walk somewhere!" She turned to see Bruce Knight. She felt oddly pleased. "I hate teas," he said, smiling disarmingly.

"So do I," she answered. "But I go to hundreds of them."

"Why do we do it?"

She answered, explaining it more to herself than to him.

"My husband likes them . . . the geniality after the day's work. I like people but not in crowds. I feel that my thoughts are being stepped on."

"Have you seen my play yet?" he asked presently.

She shook her head, dark and shining under the simple blue sailor that matched the hyacinth jacket. "It's a sellout. We have to wait until we can get seats."

"I'll send you tickets."

A boy and a girl from Pittsburgh, walking together again. She thanked him as she turned off at the street which led over the East River and her apartment. He would send two seats, of course. She had a premonition that she would be seeing the play alone.

But she didn't call off her engagement. Instead she left a note for Phil and went. He came when the play that followed the dinner was half over.

There were photographers in the lobby during the intermission and Judith smiled and posed while her frock was being photographed. Best-dressed woman! Phil stood near, smiling at her. Suddenly she became aware that the old warmth was missing. He was giving her a courteous gesture. He looked amused, a little critical.

That was the reason for the perplexity in her face in the pictures next day. The dress had photographed perfectly. It was white silk crepe with bands of gold and silver embroidery that edged the cape and the panels and made the belt. She had arisen early to have breakfast with Phil and she smiled as she showed him the paper. He looked at the pictured face, and when his eyes searched her own face they were troubled.

"Are you ill, Judy?"

"No, Phil, dear. Why?"

"Would a trip help you? Paris perhaps?"

"I don't think so." Oh, if you would only tell me about Martha, if there is anything to tell, if you would put the cards on the table and let me help you face it. Please, Phil! Outwardly her face was quiet. "Honey, let's lunch together. I'll pick you up down on Wall Street."

HE looked at her a little sadly. As though there were something she couldn't understand; as though there were something he wished to tell her and couldn't. He was hunting a path to reach her. Impulsively she spoke:

"What is it, Phil?"

He started. "What? Oh—oh nothing at all. I'm ending up a business deal at lunch today. How about tomorrow?"

Tomorrow didn't matter. Not even if she had not made the date with Bruce Knight. She told him about that now and his interest quickened.

When her telephone rang an hour later and she heard Bruce's voice she was glad. Here was someone who wanted to see her; someone without romantic implications; that was over. "Was it today or tomorrow, or both, we're lunching?" he asked. "I honestly forgot."

"It was tomorrow but it can be today," she answered, glad to be taken away from herself.

SEATED with Bruce in the comfortable chintz-draped dining room of the Union Club, busy with iced grapefruit, Judith suddenly put down her spoon. Two familiar figures were approaching. One was a small woman in a leaf green frock with a saucy hint of a hat on yellow curls. The other was a broad-shouldered man, tall and lithe, and he smiled down at the woman as he talked to her.

But Phil smiled at everyone that way! After all, a man couldn't have a set of special gestures for his wife. Judith looked up as Phil looked down. Her gray eyes, steady and dark now, were serious but her lips curved humorously.

There were introductions and no one but the woman who loved him knew that Phil was disturbed. Then he and Martha found a corner table, the grapefruit was replaced by creamed mushrooms, and the conversation went back and forth like a well-trained bouncing ball.

STRANGE how life changes one, Judith was thinking. Ten years ago she would have gone home to cry. Not now, though. At least, she had a background of experience against which to make comparisons, a foundation of courage. So, when the luncheon was over, she flung a smile, gay and devastating, at the two who loitered. She wanted to laugh because they had chosen such a discreet room for their rendezvous. Life was so funny—so terribly funny.

Bruce suggested the matinee of his play when they were on the street and she accepted. She didn't want to go home alone.

So it happened that she spent the afternoon watching the man

who had taken her home that one night, long ago, bring courage and faith and sacrifice to a role. He was a great actor. She knew that now. She wouldn't tell him who she was. She wouldn't see him again. She must just thank him and say goodby.

Voices from his dressing room shut her out, even when the attendant had granted entrance permission.

"I don't want to love you, Bruce. I honestly don't. But I can't help it!" That was Millicent, facing life with the utter candor of the younger generation.

"YOU don't—you mustn't—Millicent, it's madness. I'm 31, you're 19. You'll get over it. Milly. It's nothing, nothing."

Two years older than I was 13 years ago, thought Judith. She would ask the girl to drop by some afternoon. Maybe she could help her. Suddenly she wanted to help her terribly, intensely. She was being hurt, too. Were all women hurt? Hurt but walked on because there was no place to retreat. Millicent had been a popular debutante last year, feted at Princeton, Harvard, Yale. She had a stag line of football stars. Yet she loved Bruce.

That night Phil mentioned Martha. "It's still unfinished business," he said. "We didn't get the bonds chosen."

"Phil," Judith said, after long silence.

"Yes, darling?" His voice was comfortable and relaxed.

"I want to talk. Let's say goodby to the civilized world's Friday night and go out to the lodge and fish this week-end. We're too much surrounded by people. There are guests all the time. Maybe if we thought clearly—"

She had almost voiced something—something quite voiceless.

"Go on, Judy," Phil said quietly.

(To Be Continued)

Daily Short Story

ALARM CLOCKS—By Frank Bennett

ONE hundred and seven alarm clocks sold during the last eight months to one customer. I whistled in amazement and stared at the figures. Unbelievable! The door swung open. I slipped the ledger into a pigeonhole and stood.

Archie Rand, the Sheriff, came in grinning, but I knew by the angle of his cigar that something was wrong.

"Jim," he began, "Cliff Webb has been murdered. His body was found on the footbridge that crosses the lagoon in Forest Park. He'd been shot through the heart—with a steel-tipped arrow!"

Cliff Webb murdered! A steel-tipped arrow! I nearly dropped my pencil, but I managed a grin and said, "So what?"

Archie shifted his cigar and leaned on the showcase. "Jim, you had a grudge against Cliff."

"Yeah," I said, "and so did about 400 others."

"ALSO," he went on, "you're the best archer in the club. I've seen you put four out of five steel-tipped arrows in an eight-inch bullseye at a hundred feet. Cliff was shot from the boat landing. That's below the bridge and only about 30 feet from it."

"Yeah, I could shoot a half-dollar from between my teeth at that distance," I told him. "But there's at least a dozen in the club who could have poked him at 30 feet. Why pick on me?"

"Because I've seen the others, and they've got alibis. I've saved you for the last."

I was peeved. I stuck my chin up within an inch of Archie's cigar and said, "When did this happen? Maybe I've got an alibi, too."

SOMETIME between 8:30 and 10, Archie told me. Cliff Webb had been to the pool hall and played a couple of games of croquet with some of the boys. He left the pool hall at 8:30, and at 10 a young couple, enjoying the moon and a walk, found his body on the footbridge.

It was plain to be seen from the angle of the arrow in Cliff's body that it had been shot from below and from one side of the bridge. The ground was soft around the lagoon, but Archie had been unable to find any footprints. Therefore, he concluded that the murderer had stood on the concrete boat landing.

"Sorry, old man," I grinned, "that I can't claim the honor of doing away with the town's worst character. You see, I've been in the store all evening. You can check with Mark and Eva. They just went home. There's the telephone."

Mark is my watch-repairman and Eva works at the gift counter.

ARCHEIE made no move to use the phone. He just stared at me in a disappointed way and said, "Well, then, who the hell would shoot Cliff Webb with an arrow? You're president of the Creston Archer's Club. You should know everyone in town who shoots with a bow and arrow."

"There are 14 members of the club," I told him. Then I named them for him, and he checked the names off on a slip of paper which he had.

"I've seen 'em all," he growled after I told him. "They've got air-tight, leak-proof alibis."

"Good," I laughed. "Then no one around here did it."

Archie swore. "This is murder, Jim. Raw murder. It's serious. Think hard. Ain't there anyone else in town who can shoot good enough to kill a man at 30 feet?"

IT MAKES Archie mad to be kidded, so I said, "Sure. There's a fellow who dropped out of the club about two years ago. He was one of the best shots, too."

Archie perked up. "Who?"

"Bill Morris," I said, watching for him to blow up. I wasn't disappointed. Archie's face turned sort of purple. He took a long breath and swore beautifully.

"Look here," he shouted at last, "what's the idea of feeding me a line like this? Bill Morris is blind."

"Sure," I shouted back at him. "Sure, he's blind. But think of the motive he's got."

About two years ago Cliff Webb ran off with Bill's youngest sister. Bill idolized her, and his heart was broken. The sister came back six months later and died in less than a month. Bill drowned his sorrow in whisky and drove his car into a freight train. He was hurt pretty badly, and the shock left him blind. Bill swore he'd get Cliff Webb sometime, but no one paid any attention to him. Poor Bill, blind and with both legs in casts, didn't seem very formidable.

ARCHEIE's cigar jerked angrily. "Sure, Bill had a motive," he bellowed. "But Bill can't see. He couldn't have shot Cliff with a bow and arrow. Any fool would know better than that."

Archie was mad, and I was delighted. "Bill does a lot of things without his eyes," I argued. "He gets all around town. He runs his radio shop. He knows his customers and friends by the sound of their voices and footsteps. He told me that he was inventing some kind of a new-fangled alarm clock and—"

I stopped. Alarm clocks!—107 of them. I swallowed, choked, and knew that my face had gone as white as a sheet.

Archie's eyes popped. "What's the matter with you?" he asked suddenly. "You look sick."

"I'm all right," I panted. "Been having a little indigestion. Nothing to worry about."

"You'd better see a doctor," Archie advised. "You look like you had a heart attack. You look like you had a heart attack. You look like you had a heart attack."

A little later I'd figured it out like this: If a fellow got so he could hit an alarm clock with an arrow by aiming at the sound of the ringing alarm, he could hit a man who was walking across a wooden bridge. And Bill Morris had bought 107 alarm clocks during the last eight months!

THE END

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The characters in this story are fictitious

If anyone doubts the healthy condition of the American theater let him ponder on the success of the principal shows on the road last season—Alfred Lunt, stage star.

Women reputedly know the price of everything but the value of nothing. As far as man is concerned, a dollar today is merely an "s" which has been double-crossed.—Prof. R. L. Sackett, Mississippi University.

There is not a vital principle of free government with which this ruthless fascism is not in conflict. It could not survive a fortnight in the atmosphere of free discussion.—Senator Borah (Rep. Ida.).

Frustration is the key to most social maladjustments.—Dr. J. H. Dollard, Yale University sociologist.

OUT OUR WAY

By Williams

FLAPPER FANNY

By Sylvia



L'I' ABNER



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ABBIE AN' SLATS



ASK THE TIMES

Inclose a 3-cent stamp for reply when addressing any question of fact or information to The Indianapolis Times, Washington Service Bureau, 1013 13th St., N. W., Washington, D. C. Legal and medical advice cannot be given, nor can extended research be undertaken.

Q—What is the Federal Fire Council?

A—A Government agency organized in April, 1930, by collective action of Government departments and establishments and created by executive order June 20, 1936, as an official advisory agency in matters relating to fire protection of Federal employees and property.

Q—What is a simple method of preventing eggs from spreading while poaching them?

A—Stir the boiling water in one direction and drop the egg in the middle of the swirl.

Q—How high is Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, Tenn.?

A—It has an elevation above sea level of 2126 feet.

Q—Is there any scheduled passenger airline service in Alaska?

A—Yes. More than 17,000 people traveled by air in Alaska in 1936.

Q—Where are the principal trapping-shooting meets in the United States?

A—At Vandavia, O.

Q—When were the penalty envelopes first used by Government officials and departments?

A—May 1, 1879.

Q—Were any of the Old Testament prophets wealthy?

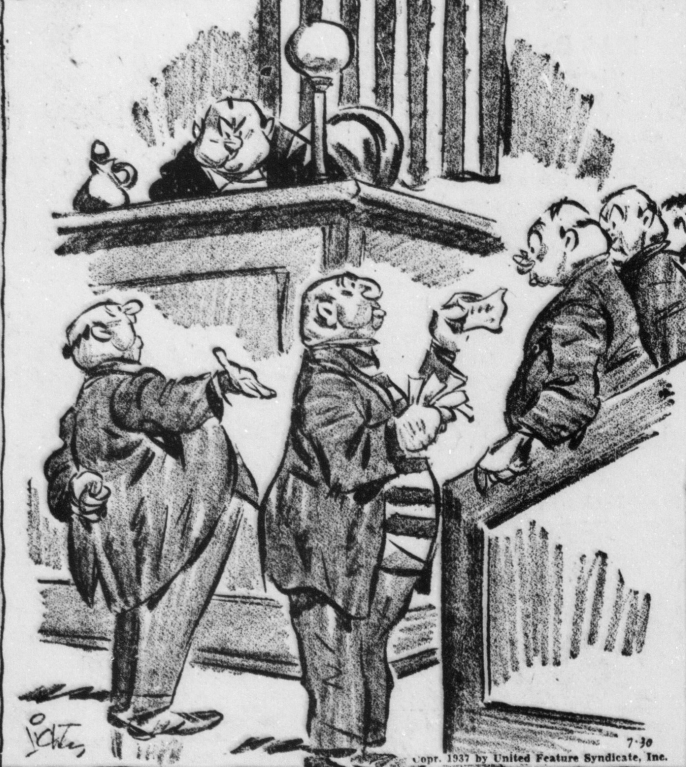
A—Probably Isaiah, who spent much time at the palace in Jerusalem and was an adviser of four successive kings, was a wealthy man.

Q—Is it safe to put canaries in newly painted wire cages?

A—No. It is important to let newly painted wire cages dry

GRIN AND BEAR IT

By Lichty



CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

HORIZONTAL

- 5 Famous Dutch painter.
- To pare.
- A palpus.
- Proprietors.
- Black tea.
- To soak flux.
- Nester pronoun.
- Age.
- Transposed.
- Wood sorrel.
- Rehold.
- Postscript.
- An — of his pictures is being held in Holland (pl.).
- Irish tribal society.
- Breeding place.
- 32 Song for one's voice.
- Singish.
- To weep.
- Mortise tooth.
- Toward.
- Tree fluid.
- To devour.
- Bone.
- To accomplish.
- Disputant.
- Like.

VERTICAL

- 1 Not as many.
- 2 Not as light.
- 3 Beer.
- 4 To support.
- 5 Before.
- 6 Monkey.
- 7 Rods of water.
- 8 Boat.
- 9 He was chiefly a form of "a."
- 10 Tiresome person.
- 11 Stress coal end.
- 12 Inspires with reverence.
- 13 Payment demanded.
- 14 Before.
- 15 Ancient.
- 16 Eye tumor.
- 17 Street.
- 18 Future.
- 19 Wealthy.
- 20 Game played on baroque.
- 21 Strong judges.
- 22 Assault.
- 23 Before.
- 24 Twice.
- 25 Pagan.
- 26 Cask.
- 27 Exist.
- 28 Male child.
- 29 Genus of palms.
- 30 Not as light.
- 31 Small child.
- 32 Sailor.
- 33 House cat.
- 34 Snaky fish.
- 35 Harbinger of the future.

ACROSS

- 1 Molla Mallory.
- 2 FIREARM LOBBIED.
- 3 OLEA MINER ISLE.
- 4 RES USES ELF.
- 5 CR MALLA.
- 6 FAN MALLORY.
- 7 UY IDINIP.
- 8 LO FUR IN SET RD.
- 9 AD SINGLES CO.
- 10 TRAP POSER DOTE.
- 11 O RIMER SAWED M.
- 12 INTERNATIONAL.

DOWN

- 1 Molla Mallory.
- 2 FIREARM LOBBIED.
- 3 OLEA MINER ISLE.
- 4 RES USES ELF.
- 5 CR MALLA.
- 6 FAN MALLORY.
- 7 UY IDINIP.
- 8 LO FUR IN SET RD.
- 9 AD SINGLES CO.
- 10 TRAP POSER DOTE.
- 11 O RIMER SAWED M.
- 12 INTERNATIONAL.

It's the "Refreshing" thing to do—

DRINK

Coca-Cola

ICE COLD IN BOTTLES