

Happiness, C. O. D.

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SYNOPSIS
THE CHARACTERS: BENJAMIN MERRIFIELD, aged capitalist, hires JAYLE DIXON to make love to his grandson. JEREMY TUCKER, a shy student of archeology, while BILL BAILEY and six pretty girls are employed to help bring life and youth to the Merrifield mansion.

YESTERDAY: During a phone call Mr. Merrifield explains to Gayle's mother what he is trying to do for his grandson.

CHAPTER SIX

"First and most important point to remember is—our being here must be made entirely logical to Jeremy Tucker." Bill said that for the fourth time. He was in a huddle again with Gayle.

"All right, Bill. But we've admitted that. We've talked for hours. It's nearly dinner time. The girls will be coming back. And we are all bound to meet Jeremy again tonight. We must have a good story and stick to it. We ought to tell it to Mr. Merrifield in advance."

"Lordy!" said Bill, stumped for once. "You played football in college. What else did you do?"

"Dramatics. Besides studies, I mean." Bill spoke as if his college career had, therefore, been wasted. He gazed glumly at nothing.

"Amateur dramatics? Little theater work, Bill?"
"Yep. Great fun, but—well, Gayle, I had a lot of ideals about being a stage director, or maybe a movie director some day. So far I haven't found or made even a crack where I could crawl into that profession."

"But you aren't liked?"
"No. Certainly not. Nobody ever liked a Bailey. Coach used to say that I—"

"I understand. You were a grand halfback, I've heard. Now listen to me—Mr. Merrifield ordered you to take charge of the six girls you and he hired. You are to be their boss. You have to think up something constructive for them to do. Naturally you must draw on your best talents and experiences, and since football seems to be beyond our consideration, I suggest dramatics."

Gayle was talking ever so seriously.
"You mean—"
"I mean, Bill, don't girls sometimes act in plays? Or work around amateur productions? Wouldn't it be entirely logical for a crowd of young people to—"

"SA-A-A-Y!"
Bill suddenly jabbed a finger at her. An idea had struck him. Gayle's idea.

"Gayle, you're wonderful! Sure! We can pretend that Mr. Merrifield, already given to philanthropy, is sponsoring a new Little Theater. I've been wracking my brains for a way to use this big mansion and its grounds. Those two huge rooms downstairs that open together will make a swell theater! Put a stage at that east end. Ballyhoo it all. We'll have Jeremy surrounded by fun and excitement before he knows it!"

There was another 10 minutes of hurried talk—mostly exultant monologue by Bill Bailey, who could be morose and worried one moment and in the figurative clouds the next. Gayle was happy for having solved his problem for him. Or at least having given him a start.

Graham, the butler, had been told to expect the six young ladies back for dinner and, surprisingly enough, Mr. Weems came to Gayle at 5:10 p.m. with a written menu.

"We have had no feminine guests here in so many years, Miss

Dixon," he apologized, "that I—that we are not at all sure you will approve of the selections. When we ventured to ask Mr. Merrifield, he said that you were now in complete charge of the household, and—"

"He did?"
"Oh, of course, miss. The news has quite upset the staff. I mean, in a decidedly pleasant way. The cook—and Graham—you see, we have had no—ah, life, and gaiety, here in so long, and this morning you ventured to say that happiness could—"

"Oh, Mr. Weems, certainly! We must all be very, very happy. Please tell the servants to go right ahead, using their own discretion. I—I am to act as hostess then?"
"Yes, my dear. Mr. Merrifield wishes it."

"Oh, gee!"
The menu was complete. Wallace, the Merrifield cook, knew his business. Even the gardener had been told and had responded, so that the dining table was already lovely with flowers when Gayle inspected it. She had but few suggestions to make and she found two kitchen helpers, besides Wallace and Graham and the gardeners, anxious to carry them out at once. Graham begged a moment to introduce a new maid-servant, Celeste, who had been thoughtfully added to the staff that afternoon.

"If you approve of her," Graham said, "she is to be your personal maid, miss."

Gayle took a deep breath, and nodded. She was afraid to speak for a long moment, lest she explode.

She stayed in a sort of cloud-like daze for the ensuing hour. The six girls came back, as ordered. Gayle asked Tempe to help her "think." Together they planned seats at the table. There would be four men—Mr. Merrifield, Jeremy, Mr. Weems and Bill. And seven girls, picked for

loveliness and apparent intelligence. Gayle backed the girls up into a quiet corner and almost growled at them.

"For Pete's sake, kids, be bright and cheerful tonight!" she commanded. "Understand? No solemn faces."

"But what are we to do? What is our work, and who—"
"Sh-h-h-h! You'll learn. Just be glad."

Graham had no chance to announce formally to everybody that dinner was served. He had to round up Mr. Merrifield from the third floor. Mr. Weems from the second, Bill Bailey from a far wing, and finally Jeremy from the deep recesses of the library. When he reported to Gayle, that flustered miss decided this meal perhaps should progress informally.

It was a happy decision. Mr. Merrifield came in beaming. He hadn't eaten in the big dining room since a group of mining men dined there with him last winter, and the assembly of young people brought an invisible spark of something to it now. The flowers, and the somehow brighter lights in the great crystal chandelier, and the brilliantly dusted furniture, and the floor that shone, and the contagious giggling of little Tempe Hyde. Even the quietest of the six girls, a Latin beauty named Lola Montesa, was visibly elated.

The old millionaire paused at the big double door to look on for a moment, beaming.

"Glory, what a sight!" he exclaimed, and meant it. "Everything but music!"
"Oh!" Gayle spoke quickly. "I can play the piano. Jeremy hasn't come down yet. Shall we sing one song before dinner?"

The grand piano was in a conservatory off the dining room. Only old-time tune Gayle could remember at the moment was one that

(Continued on Page Nine)

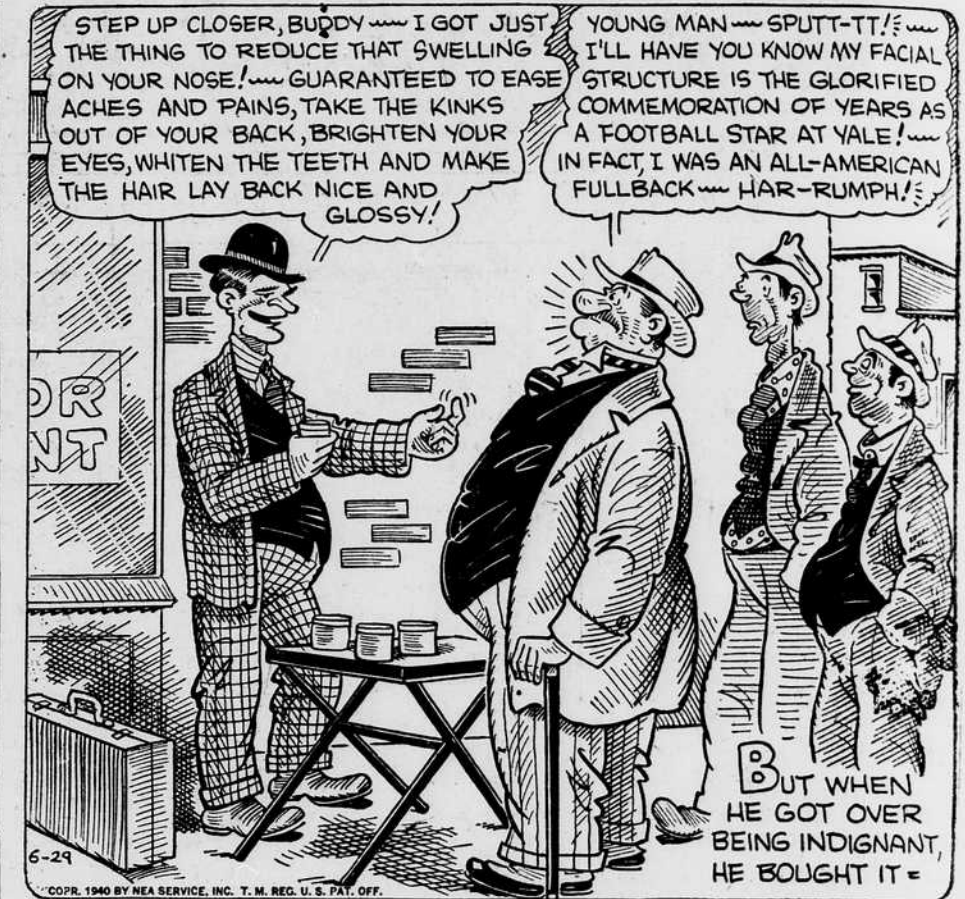
OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



WHY MOTHERS GET GRAY

OUR BOARDING HOUSE . . . with . . . Major Hoople



BUT WHEN HE GOT OVER BEING INDIGNANT, HE BOUGHT IT

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



7-1-40



Typhoon

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ABRINE SHRIMP
IN THE EMBRYO STAGE SURVIVED SIX MONTHS IN A SEALED GLASS TUBE, WITHOUT AIR.

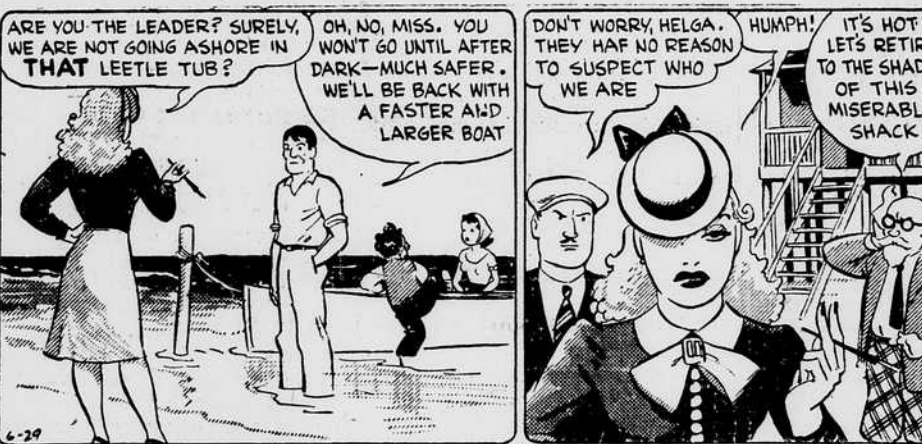
KWIKKORNER
IS THIS MOON WAXING OR WANING?

ANSWER: Waxing. In the northern hemisphere, a moon with the lighted portion to the right is said to be waxing, or approaching the full phase.

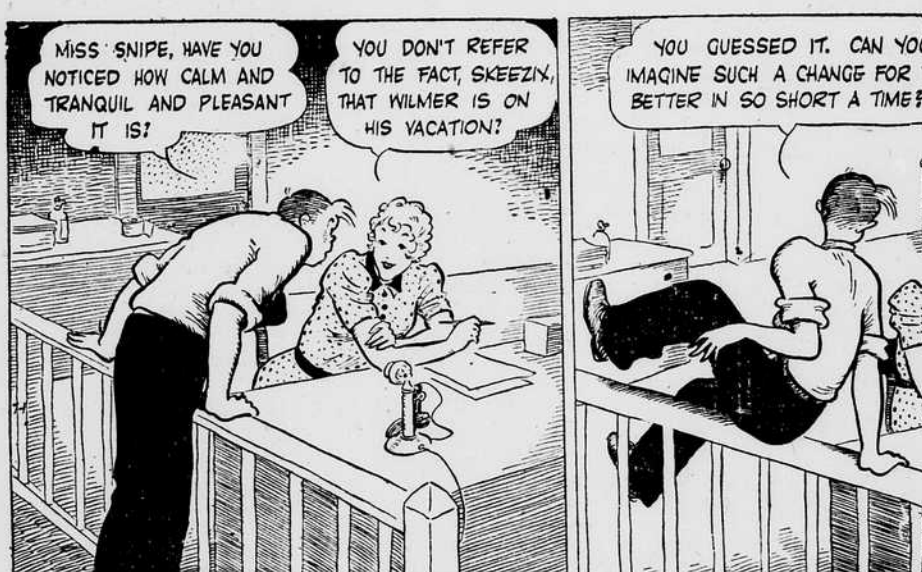
WASH TUBS

Now She Knows

By Roy Crane

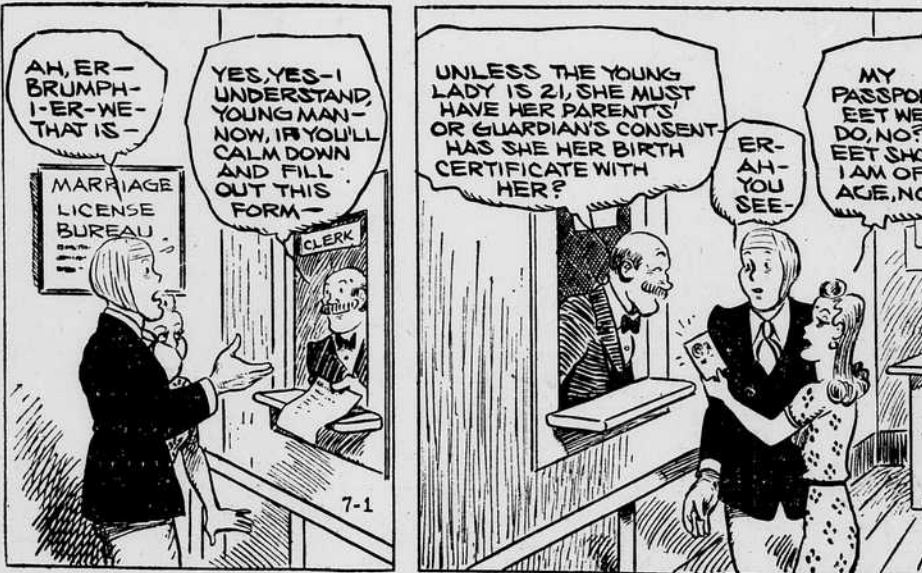


GASOLINE ALLEY



THE GUMPS

Police On The Trail



BRICK BRADFORD—Seeks the Diamond Doll

By William Ritt and Clarence Gray



VELA LANAN—COURT REPORTER

By L. Allen Heine

Founded on Actual Court Records and You Can Be the Judge

The Strange Case Where MONTEZUMA TAKES A HAND IN SIX EPISODES No. 1

