

# Happiness, C. O. D.

By OREN ARNOLD

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**CHAPTER FORTY-FOUR**  
Of the six girls working with Bill and Gayle, only two possessed evening dresses, and theirs were somewhat outdated, Gayle guessed.

"We must all look our nicest for the ball," Gayle told the others. "Fortunately we do not have much changing of costumes to do for the first act in 10 minutes, and I am going to hire six or eight little boys I know to herd the crowd from one place to another that evening. We'll dress them as wood sprites or brownies or something, in keeping with the outdoor setting. But the girls—all of us—must look our prettiest, so we will get evening gowns and charge it to expenses."

The thought was thrilling. Two of the six Merrifield girls had never owned any sort of formal attire. All of them welcomed the opportunity to get new things. They discussed the matter with Gayle and learned, after some investigation, that simple, yet definitely pretty gowns, could be had for about \$35 each. This would include a few essential trimmings. The total cost of about \$250 did seem like a great deal of money to Gayle. She shopped and looked and figured and figured, but she couldn't see any way to cut it down. She knew the girls had to be dressed well that evening; the type of guests coming would make that mandatory, as would the whole tradition of the Oaks. And she did not feel that it was fair to ask the girls to pay \$35 from their own salaries—she herself had no salary to draw from.

Finally she decided to risk it. The girls had a veritable picnic choosing. Most of their selections were based on white—girlish, frilly materials with assorted bits of color. The other six girls all ganged up on Lola Montesa, however, and saw to it that she had a remarkable gown of crimson lace, silk, over a similarly colored slip.

"You do your hair so beautifully, Lola dear," Gayle said, "so that it forms a sort of black frame or background for your face. Use some makeup that matches the slip in tint. And on your nails. But the rest of us will all hate you!"  
Gayle told the girls each to add a hair-do and manicure to the expense list for that day, and inexpensive but pretty new shoes.  
When they were back at the Oaks again, Gayle went immediately upstairs to Mr. Merrifield's study, asked to see him and then told him what she had done. She was quietly apologetic, saying she hoped that he wouldn't think them wasteful, and that they would surely make more than enough money out of the play to pay expenses.  
Old Mr. Merrifield smiled benignly. Then, in an instant his expression changed to the one of mock ferocity he loved to assume. "Mr. Weems!" he bellowed loudly. "Come in here at once! Do you hear me, sir?"  
"Oh, of course, sir!" The elderly secretary hastened in from an adjoining office. He looked mildly alarmed.  
"Mr. Weems, I am ashamed of you. How long, sir, has it been since you purchased flowers for any woman?"  
Mr. Weems' old mouth worked silently, then—"W-woman, sir?"  
"Yes, woman! Of course I said woman! Don't you know what a woman is?"  
"Oh, of course, sir! A woman is—"  
"I thought not. Mr. Weems, confer with Miss Dixon, and order flowers for each of the seven girls in this house. You hear me?" He scowled fiercely. "The best flowers available, Mr. Weems. For the night of the, ah, drama, and the ball. Put cards in each package saying—saying—"From your ad-

mirer, Benjamin W. Merrifield. Fresh, crisp flowers, Mr. Weems. Import them, if necessary. You hear me?"  
"Oh, of course, sir. But the cost of imported—"  
"Mr. Weems! I have some financial assets, sir! You—and your eternal finicky bookkeeping! He records every penny I spend, Miss Dixon! Spend a hundred dollars on each box of flowers, Mr. Weems. You hear?"  
"Oh, of course, sir." Mr. Weems went out, looking bored. This routine was no whit new to him.  
But Gayle Dixon swallowed. And stared. And bit her lip. And only nodded when the old millionaire continued to talk affably with her. She couldn't say anything. She just gazed at the old gentleman in renewed awe. Seven hundred dollars for flowers, when she had come to apologize for budgeting \$250 for clothes! She stood up, reached suddenly to squeeze his old hand in genuine feeling, smiled at him and hastened on back downstairs.

Bill and the seven girls spent most of one morning addressing envelopes. They had only 500 to address and stamp, stuff with neatly printed cards, seal and mail but they made a morning's task of it, laughing and talking and enjoying it. Jeremy Tucker was coerced into helping for a while, but at 11 o'clock he had to leave them and go for a horseback ride with a couple of boy friends who had "taken" to him.  
The envelopes carried invitation to "The Wit to Woo" and its after dance at \$5 per person, R. S. V. P. Ten dollars a couple! Gayle was amazed at the temerity of Bill, setting such a price, and she told him so.  
"Listen, missy," he grinned, "you be the heroine and backstage boss; I'll direct, and blow up the ballyhoo. Look—we got \$1.50 before, and they ate it up. We've had ten times as much attention

for the new event. Everybody's talking. Everybody, I tell you! The social sets of the town like a sensation once in a while, and we're it. We might as well make it pay."  
"Yes, but \$10, Bill—"  
"Don't forget there's a dance afterward. All for charity. Anyhow, its worth 10 smacks to see seven delirious damsels acting—ha!"  
But in spite of his hearty confidence, Bill Bailey had certain private qualms. He wondered what the 500 invitations would produce. He might have sent the full 800 or even more, for 800 couples, but he had a hunch that psychology dictated a little stand-offishness.  
In that hunch he was wholly right.  
Two days after the mailing, the society folk of the city were literally scrambling for the 500.  
"What am I bid? . . . What am I bid? . . . \$25; do I hear \$30? . . . Going . . . going . . ." Cholly Farrington's muchly read column in the Chronicle-Post proclaimed it that way. . . not quite gone, in fact I'm holding out for \$50. But the truth is, I have an invitation to 'The Wit to Woo' and incidental merriment at the Merrifields'. In these parlous times I might as well scalp as the next fellow. And brothers, scalping is being done. 'Not half enough invites were mailed, I have one—keep getting back to that—but have you? . . . Too bad. Maybe you don't rate. Do you know anybody who knows anybody who knows Bill Bailey or that beautiful Gayle, or grandson? Maybe, if you're somebody in finance, you can approach the old gent himself. What am I offered for mine?"  
Cholly was having his fun, and recording society gossip and emotions at the same time. As usual he struck home. Tickets that are talked about and talked about—and that are hard to get—become

(Continued on Page Eleven)

## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

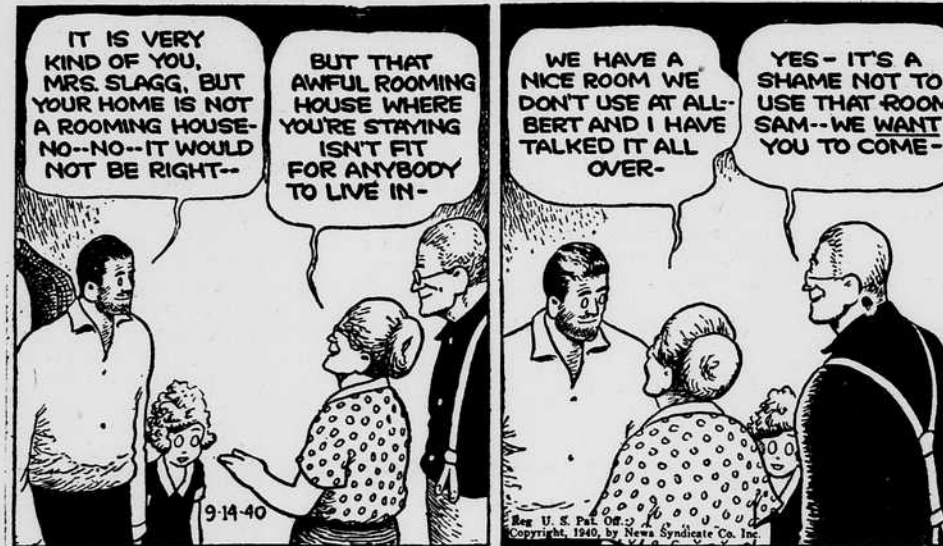


BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON

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



## LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



## THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

**CONTRARY TO POPULAR BELIEF... CROCODILES DO HAVE TONGUES!** THE ORGAN IS FLESHY AND FLAT, AND ATTACHED TO THE FLOOR OF THE MOUTH EXCEPT AT THE EXTREME EDGES.



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**PRAIRIE DOG TOWNS** IN WESTERN U.S. REPORT A POPULATION INCREASE.



**WHICH IS LONGER, FLORIDA'S ATLANTIC OR GULF COASTLINE?**

ANSWER: The Gulf coastline; 674 to 472.

## WASH TUBBS



## A Right Handy Man

By Roy Crane



## GASOLINE ALLEY



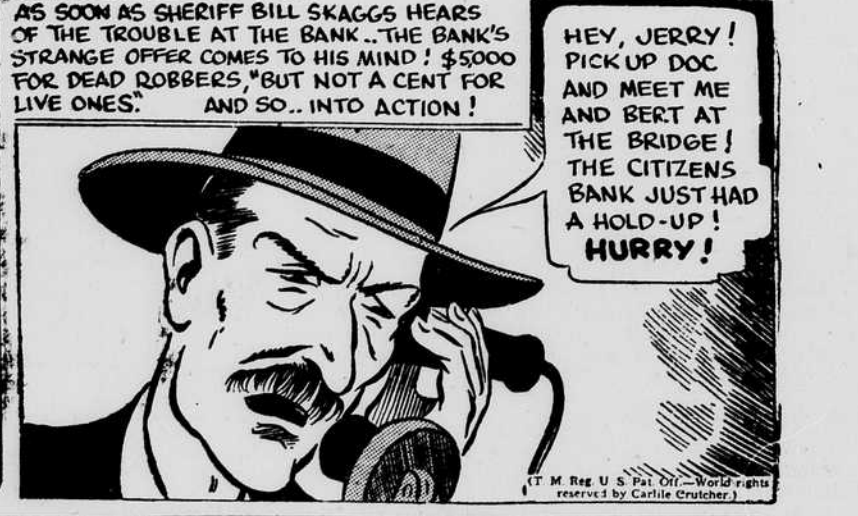
## The Cat's Away



## BELA LANAN—COURT REPORTER

By L. Allen Heine

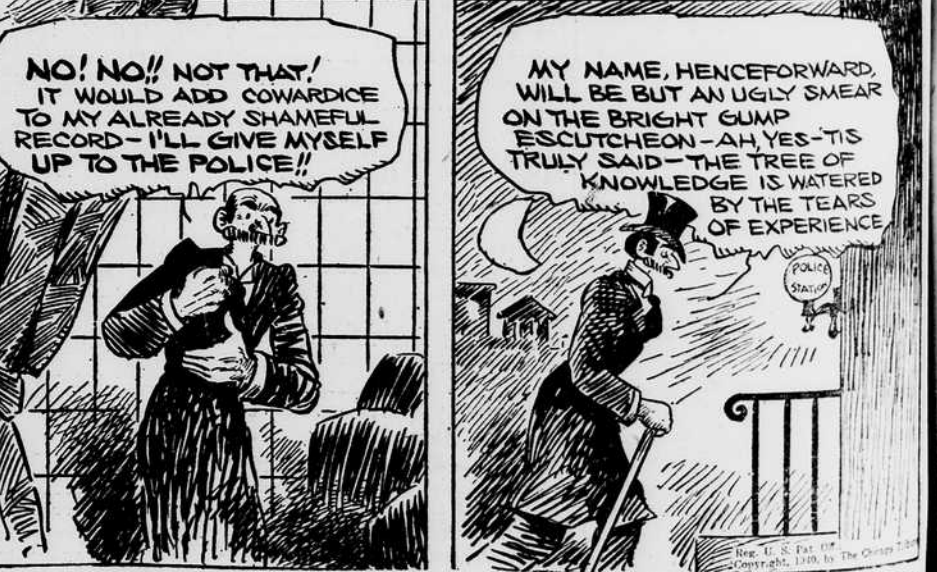
**The Strange Case Entitled WE WANT DEAD ROBBERS**  
50-50K EPISODES  
No. 3



## THE GUMPS



## True Confession Is Good For The Soul



## BRICK BRADFORD—Seeks the Diamond Doll



## By William Ritt and Clarence Gray

