

# Love without Music

Helen Welshimer

## CHAPTER THIRTY-EIGHT

Even as Linda mentioned the comforting fact to Ronald that Sarah probably had not reached the marriage place, she knew, better. In her heart she was afraid that Sarah had been there and had gone. Had gone away as Mrs. Somebody or Other when all the time she wanted a tall young man with bright, rough hair and blue, candid eyes.

It was Linda, not Ronald, who asked the minister's assistant if Miss Markley had been there. "Markley, Markley," he mused. "No, I can't say that she's been here."

"Is there any place else that she could have gone?" Linda asked. Her eyes moved restlessly over these people. This was not the way to be married. Marriage was sacred, and it should come to organ strains, to white blossoms, and to prayers. Yet the couples were passing into a small room and coming out—married.

"I don't think Sarah could stand this," she said to Ronald. "It's not worthy of her."

His face was stern. "Sarah could stand anything. We had some words this afternoon and she threatened to make me sorry. Well if she's not here, we might as well get going."

They went out of the door. The night air was sweet and cool. Cars were driving in and driving away. Ronald would have missed a blue car, long and low-slung, if Linda's eyes hadn't sighted it.

"Quick, Ronnie, isn't that Sarah?" she asked.

He was gone before she could finish the question, and she followed. Sarah was wearing a hat that was a cluster of sweet peas, caught with a blue velvet ribbon around her yellow hair and her slim silken dress was yellow. A brief silver fox jacket was over her shoulders and her hands were clasped around a great black bag.

Instinctively Linda knew that the bag was big enough to carry a toothbrush and powder, a silken night gown, anything else Sarah might need.

Evidently she had not been able to carry out a bag without being seen by her family or servants.

When she raised her eyes, Linda caught her breath. They were dark with pain and fatigue. She said something to a young man at her side, a young man with football shoulders and a weak chin. He smiled and nodded.

Then she saw Ronald. The dark eyes widened, met his gaze, asked a question.

He went toward the car, opened the door, reached for her hands. Linda heard his words.

"You aren't going through with it Sarah. You are marrying me!" Now the eyes became glowing, alive. "Marrying you? Oh, no, Ronnie. You have a girl. You can't. I'm not important to you!"

"Don't be a nutmeg," Ronald said, but his voice was tender in its gruffness. "I love you, Sally. I've known it for a long time, but it took Linda to point it out to me tonight."

The producer's daughter looked beyond him, then, at Linda, and her stern features relaxed. Suddenly she was crying and Ronnie was comforting her.

Linda walked around the car to the young saxophonist who was, about to interrupt. Her hand was impelling and authoritative as she laid it on his arm.

"This is where you and I do a fade-out," she said. "There's a bus stopping at the corner. Go on!" The man demurred, but she would not remove that clutching hand from his arm. Ronnie and Sarah were talking, forgetful of the world. At last the saxophonist shrugged his shoulders and followed Linda.

The bus had gone a mile when he removed something from his coat pocket, tore it into pieces, and scattered them broadcast. "The license," he said. "It's useless now."

I might have known my luck would not hold.

"You didn't really love her, did you?" Linda queried, watching the towns slip past.

"That didn't matter. She wanted a husband pronto and I was engaged. There was to be fifty grand in it, but well—" He laughed carelessly.

"You mean you were being paid for this little act?" Linda asked furiously.

"Why not? She needed my help and I needed the money. Oh, she'll cough up some of it. She's a good sport. But I'm sort of glad this other thing happened. She's been carrying a torch for the guy all winter."

They didn't talk then, and Linda took a taxi cab when she left the bus. Her suite was dark when she entered it, and the one lamp at the door burned dimly. So much had happened since she had come through that door, she mused, fitting her key into the heavy outer door. Upstairs Robert was sleeping now.

She must try to see him tomorrow, to tell him that she and Ronnie had discovered that they had mistaken an old affection for love. Or maybe she would not have to see him, for he would find the story of Sarah and Ronnie in the papers. But the story was—in the papers, or the engagement was not announced. Now that Sarah and Ronald were sure of their romance, there was not much need to hurry. They could wait, happily, in peace.

Sarah called Linda to tell her, and the wealthy girl's voice was so soothing, so breathless, so starstruck that it brought quick tears to Linda's eyes. Ronald called a little later, thanking her, trying to gain assurance that she understood.

So it happened that when a story broke connecting Sarah with the gun, despite her alibi that she had been no place near the shooting, no one was particularly afraid.

In Linda's mind a certain wonder began to grow. She remembered the night on the boat when

Mina had been found wandering through the cabinways. Quite easily she could have located Sarah's stateroom, found the gun, and taken it away.

But Mina could not have performed that murder because she was on a radio program, some distance away, at the hour that the death occurred.

The day was cooler than the one before it had been, so Linda wore a simple suit of soft black material and a ruffled rose blouse. All day she thought about Robert. She wondered what he would say when he knew that she was free. And even more, she wondered why she had not understood this thing that was happening to her.

Seated at her desk during a late afternoon lull, she reflected that her broken engagement to Ronald might not lead to anything. After all, Robert did not know that she cared for him anyway. And then—there was Billie Anne Trent.

She felt a little cold and shivered. Billie Anne Trent, maybe, Robert was already committed. Well, life was a road and it went somewhere and you had to hold your head high and go on.

This thought was still in her mind when she reached her apartment that afternoon. A knock at the door sent it away. At the sight of her visitor she drew a long breath, half of fright, half of amazement.

(To Be Continued)

## Travelers' Aid Opens Annual Campaign Today

The annual funds campaign of the Travelers' Aid society will be launched here today, with a "minimum" of \$1,000 being asked in public subscriptions for the support of the society's work here during the coming year.

Canvassers will report at campaign headquarters in the Chamber of Commerce offices. Headquarters will be open from 9 a. m. to 5 p. m. today and Thursday.

## OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



## LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



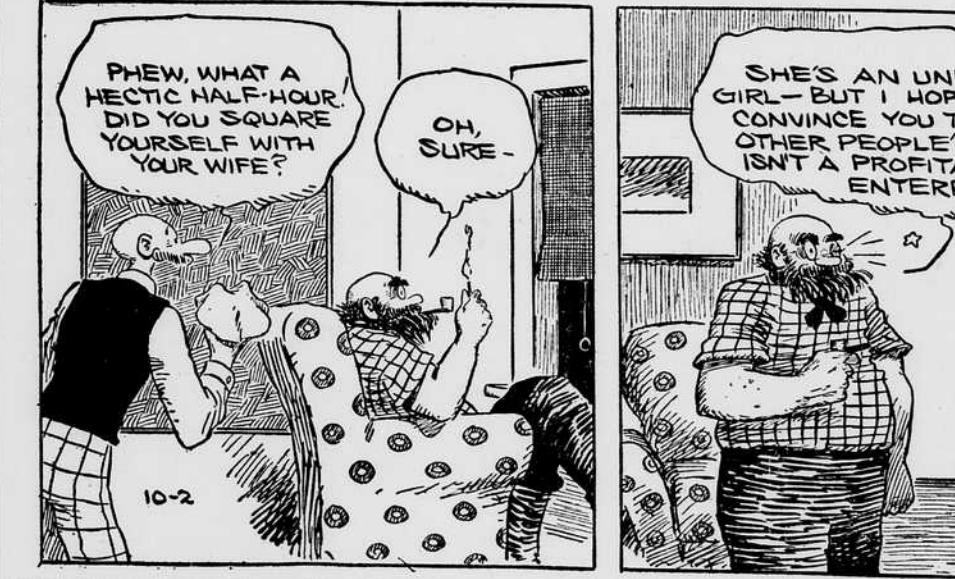
## WASH TUBS



## GASOLINE ALLEY



## THE GUMPS



## BRICK BRADFORD—Seeks the Diamond Doll



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



## Good Companions



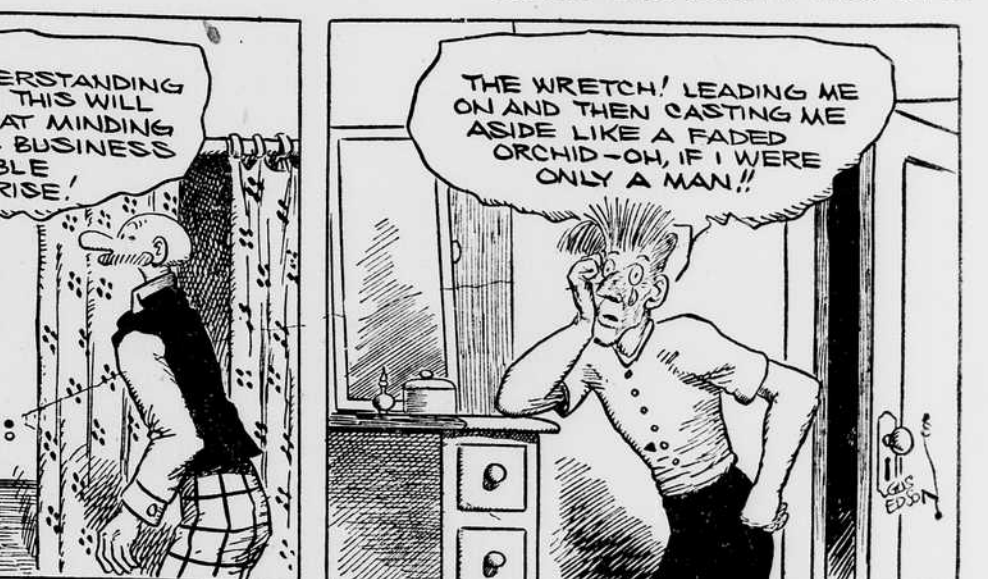
## Oh, Yeah?



## Undress Rehearsal



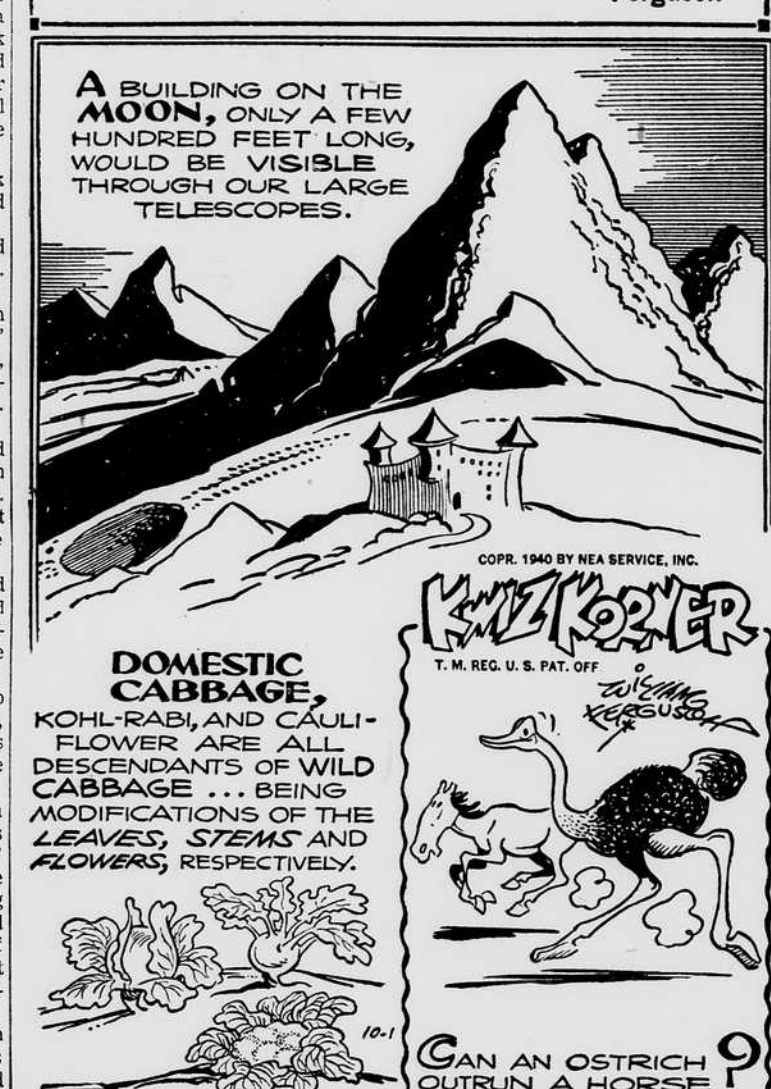
## After The Brawl Was Over



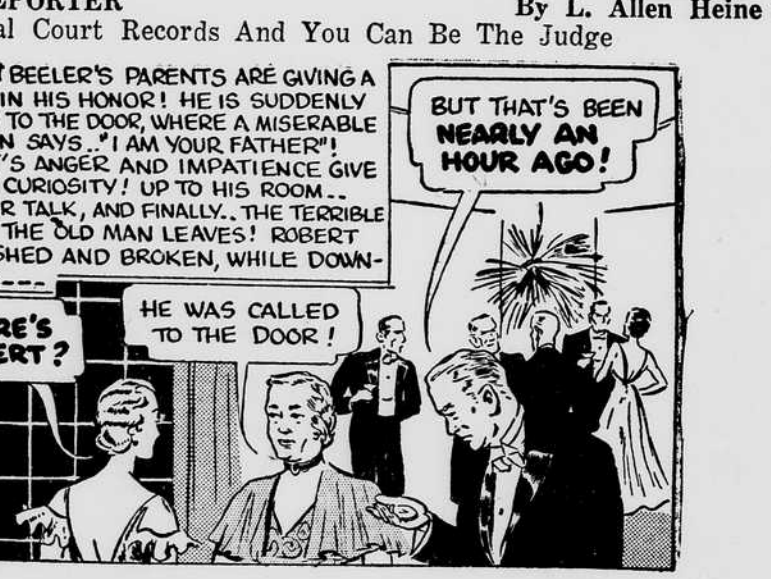
## By William Ritt and Clarence Gray



## THIS CURIOUS WORLD



## BELA LANAN—COURT REPORTER



## By L. Allen Heine



## The Strange Case of BLOOD AND WATER



## By L. Allen Heine

