

LIBELED LADY

ADAPTED BY LEONARD MITCHELL

From the METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER Picture

Chapter One

THE BRIDEROOM IS DELAYED.

High above the roaring of the gigantic presses, turning out the second edition of the New York Evening Star, shrilled the insistent clang of a gong. The press room gang stiffened into surprised attention. The electric power was instantly shut off, but the presses continued to operate with a slowing rhythm.

With extreme deliberation the last copy of the Star dropped from the dying press neatly folded once, displaying a three-column picture of Connie Allenbury, a socialite young woman whose name and portrait had a habit of getting frequently into print.

As the machinery came to a standstill, the foreman of the delivery room, thrust his head through the door, yelling: "Hey, step on it! We haven't got all day! What's wrong?"

At the same instant a wild-eyed young man rushed in from the editorial rooms, barked a sharp order to the pressroom foreman.

"Hold everything for a new front page! We're killing the Allenbury yarn!" and dashed to the delivery room. "Hey, Mac, any papers gone out yet?"

"I'll get the checker." Mac, the Irishman in charge of loading the trucks, ordered his men to stop their work, called the checker. "Have any trucks gone, Joe?"

"Yeah, number seven."

"Call him back!" ordered the Irishman, looking worriedly at the editorial office. "Unload all papers! We're killing a story!"

"But he's gone! Times Square and Columbus Circle."

"Bunk! A motorcycle after him! We've got to get those papers back!"

Mac gave the order, got on the phone to call all newdealers on that route and tell them to sell no



beamed Haggerty. "Good old Governor! Good old office! Hustle over to the church, Ching, and tell Miss Benton I've been delayed. Tell her to call me at the office." When the Chinese had departed, shaking his head dubiously, Haggerty asked the boy what had happened.

"It's awful to bust up your wedding, but there was a story they had to kill and —"

"What story?" Haggerty became all attention.

"The London correspondent cabled last night a swell story on the Allenbury girl —"

"Connie Allenbury! What kind of a story?" Haggerty was plainly worried.

"Jackson cabled she was mixed up in some scrape at a garden party — tried to steal another dame's husband —"

"Not Connie Allenbury?" cried Haggerty incredulously.

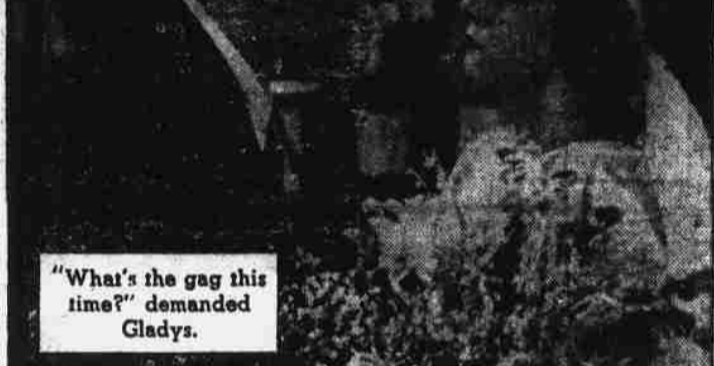
"Yes, sir," replied the office boy.

"All right; then what?"

"Jackson cabled this morning it was all a mistake. It was somebody else. She wasn't even at the party."

"And we printed it! Good jumping —!" He buttoned his coat and vest rapidly, and started to rush out, calling: "Come on!"

"Wait a minute, Mr. Haggerty."



"What's the gag this time?" demanded Gladys.

papers. As the motorcycle plutted out of the building in pursuit of number seven, Allen, the wild-eyed young man, rushed back into the city room, stopped at the desk of Walden, the city editor, who was yelling into a telephone: "Are you ringing Haggerty? Try him again! Hey, boy! Hup the subway to Haggerty's apartment Fifty-second Street and —"

"Yes, sir, I know!" said the office boy, shooting for the door.

Allen looked worriedly at his watch. "But he's to be married at noon! Won't he be at the church?"

Walden, thin, bespectacled, ran a hand through his hair, pulling at it. "You go grab a taxi and beat it to the church! Tell him what's happened. Bring him here!"

"I can't bust up his wedding!" the dismayed Allen almost shrieked.

"I don't, it's our funeral!" Walden jabbed the receiver against his ear, yelled into the mouthpiece: "Are you ringing Haggerty? Keep on ringing him!"

Allen disappeared into the elevator.

Haggerty in B.V.D.'s and a shirt, stood before the mirror, adjusting his tie. Ching, his Chinese houseboy, was ecstatically washing a high silk hat. The telephone on the right table rang. Instantly Ching started to pick it up.

"No!" commanded Haggerty. "The good-looking young man, wearing thirty, 'I've had enough gags pulled on me this time!"

"Miss Benton again," suggested Ching diffidently. "I afraid she —"

"She afraid?" interrupted Haggerty grimly. "I'm marrying her, and you're afraid! Now, that's what I call loyalty!" He took the receiver off the hook, shoved it under a pillow on the bed.

"She say before, if you late, she tear down church," said Ching dubiously.

"Even that won't stop it! Oh, it's no use, Ching. I said I'd meet her at the altar at the stroke of twelve. There'll be no reprieve from the Governor this time."

"I hope you be velly happy," said Ching mournfully. He watched Haggerty put on the high hat and consult the mirror again. "Velly plitty."

"Pretty! I'm supposed to be the bridegroom, not the bride! Take my advice, Ching, don't ever marry."

"Maybe not so bad, Mr. Haggerty. My mother and father they get married . . ."

Haggerty poured himself a drink. "To the last mile," he said, lifting the glass.

"A mally marriage and many happy comebacks."

The door bell started to ring, kept on ringing, and Ching, after one startled glance, went into the living-room. As he opened the door the office boy Walden had despatched, ran past him to Haggerty who appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Mr. Haggerty, come quick!" panted the boy. "You're wanted at the office!"

"Ching, I'm wanted at the office!"

They said not to do anything, but you gotta have your pants!" Haggerty pulled on the gray-striped trousers that went with his formal attire and made a run for the elevator.

Reporters, re-write men, copy-readers all pretended to be busy at work as Haggerty strode up to the city editor's desk, but they cast covert glances at Walden, some in sympathy, some in pleasure that he was going to catch it from the managing editor.

Haggerty began to shout twenty feet from Walden's desk: "Can't I stay away from here for a day without someone pulling a boner? You call yourself a newspaper man! Your nose should have told you better! Why, the story fairly reeks of alcohol — Jackson was drunk."

"I knew this boss hated her father," began Walden, eager to clear himself.

"And her father hates me," said Haggerty grimly. "He'd give his right eye to blow us up, and you hand him the dynamite! The one girl in the world we must handle with gloves you smear clear across the front page!"

The ringing of a phone on his desk spared Walden the rest of his railing out, but his relief was short, for he began almost at once to utter humble "Yes, sir" and "No, sir" into the mouthpiece.

"The boss is here, Haggerty. He wants to see you right away."

"Does he want me — or my job? Got a dish?"

Allen, Haggerty's assistant, came back from his trip to the church, said: "There's a fresh bottle on your desk. I thought you'd need it."

"And how?" Haggerty strode into his office, had poured a stiff drink, and was raising it to his lips when the door flew open and Gladys Benton, a strikingly handsome blonde, in conventional satin wedding gown with train, carrying a huge bouquet of orchids and lilies, came wrathfully in.

"I knew I'd find you with a glass in your hand!"

"What are you doing here?" demanded Haggerty, putting down the glass. "Didn't Ching tell you?"

"Sure, Ching told me, and I told Mom, and now I'm telling you — I won't stand for it! You can't do this to me! The first time it was that fire at sea, next time the kidnapping . . . She kicked the train of her gown out of the way, glared at him, hands on hips. "What's the gag this time?"

"It's not a gag. The paper's made a terrible mistake."

"So has little Gladys! Engaged to a newspaper man! Joe Simpson never treated me like this!"

Haggerty was stung. "Then why did you divorce him?"

"I've asked myself that plenty of times! First you said a trip to Bermuda. Then you said Europe. If I wait another year it'll be Little America —"

The door opened again and Mr. Bane, the managing editor, appeared.

"Get rid of that woman and come to my office!"

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Romantic Leads In Football Thriller



Here's a team that calls for action from the cheering section of motion picture audiences. Beautiful June Travis and Philip Huston, the latter making his screen debut, provide the romance in rapid-fire drama of the gridiron, "The Big Game." Huston is considered by Producer Pandro S. Berman as one of the most promising "finds" of recent years. Miss Travis is a former Chicago socialite who began her screen career barely a year ago. Nine All-American football heroes go into action on the checkered field in "The Big Game," which comes to the State Theatre, Hertford, next Wednesday, February 17.

IN WASHINGTON

WHAT IS TAKING PLACE BY

Pitt R. Rynolds

UNITED STATES SENATOR

Perhaps no legislation in American history has aroused such universal interest and affects so many individuals as the Social Security Act passed by the last Congress. From the very first it was, and is now, an experiment in meeting one of the most pressing problems of the age—the problem of enabling workers to build annuities toward the day when they are beyond the age of profitable employment, unemployment insurance and equally as important, to extend aid to the needy aged, to the blind and to dependent children.

Obviously, no legislation of such scope could be perfect in all its details. Actual administration has developed loopholes and weaknesses. More will be found and corrected. Legal battles may be anticipated, particular with regard to those phases of the act pertaining to retirement annuities and unemployment insurance. Out of it all will come a stronger and better plan for the future.

But the public assistance features of the Act, aid for the needy aged, the blind and dependent children are already firmly established. These features are based on the long-standing principle of Federal aid to the states. The Federal Government is giving the machinery and funds to help the states aid their needy. The states themselves, through state laws, must put the machinery in motion. The state of North Carolina is at the moment engaged in the effort to write its law, in accord with minimum Federal requirements, and raise the necessary state funds to match Federal moneys.

In the brief space of this article, I shall endeavor to answer a few of the many questions that have come to me with regard to one phase of the act, that which relates to assistance for aged persons who are needy. One question stands out. Why must we have at this late date some form of Federal assistance for aged persons in dire circumstances? The answer is simple. In bygone days families were a compact unit, with sometimes as many as three or four generations living together or at close call. Family resources were pooled and the younger generations cared for those belonging to the older. Today families are scattered. Responsibilities are heavier. Modern life has become more complex. As a result, many responsible persons, millions in fact, through no fault of their own are, at the twilight of life, in dire circumstances. States cannot solve the problem alone.

What is meant by aid for the aged needy? Cash payments by the state to aged persons who are in need, and whose applications for assistance are approved by the state.

What is the basis of Federal participation? When a state has written into law an approved plan for aid to the aged needy, the Federal Government makes grants equal to one-half of the total expenditures of the state or its subdivisions. However, Federal contributions may not apply to any monthly payments exceeding \$30.00. Thus if the state of North Carolina provides \$15.00 per month for example, the Federal Government adds another

ficiary receives \$30.00. Federal grants may not be used in making payments to persons under 65 or to inmates of public institutions.

Who is eligible? All persons who meet the requirements fixed by the state law.

What are the requirements as to age, citizenship and residence? Until January 1, 1940, a state law may require that an applicant be as much as 70 years of age; after that date no state law may impose an age requirement in excess of 65 years, which is the generally approved minimum age. No citizen of the United States may be excluded on the grounds that his or her citizenship is not of long enough standing. No one who has been a resident of a state for five out of the nine years preceding application, and who has lived in the state continuously for the year immediately before applying, may be denied assistance on the ground that they have not lived in the state long enough.

What provisions with reference to property held by a beneficiary? States usually provide that persons with property not assessed above a certain value may receive old-age assistance, provided they do not have sufficient income for their own support. This provision makes it possible for the aged to continue living in their own homes. If there are a husband and wife, the home may, as a rule, remain in their possession until the death of both. Many states make some provision for collecting from a beneficiary's estate after his death, any amount up to the total of assistance payments made to him during his lifetime. To repay the Federal Government for its share in the assistance payments, one-half of all such collections made with respect to assistance furnished under an approved plan is deposited in the United States Treasury to the credit of Federal old-age assistance appropriations.

\$37,894,929 Spent In N. C. For Relief Work

Thirty-seven million, eight hundred ninety-four thousand, nine hundred and twenty-seven dollars was expended in North Carolina in 1936 to provide relief and work relief, according

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to Robert M. Gantt, State Director for the National Emergency Council. Mr. Gantt based his statements on an official report by the President of the United States to Congress regarding expenditures under the Emergency Relief Appropriation acts of 1935 and 1936. From April 8, 1935 to December 31, 1936, Works Program expenditures of \$61,159,047 in North Carolina were reported. Total allocations by the President to

North Carolina during the period were \$76,880,776. During the week ended December 12, 1936, employment was provided on the Works Program for 45,463 residents of North Carolina of which 28,594 were employed by the Works Progress Administration, 9,223 by the Civilian Conservation Corps and 7,645 by other Federal agencies.

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