



MR. WINKLE GOES TO WAR

By THEODORE PRATT

W.N.U. RELEASE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Forty-four-year-old Wilbert Winkle, who owns a modest general repair shop in the alley back of his home, is notified by his draft board that he is in I-A. He is very much surprised, as he had thought that his many physical handicaps would keep him out. He breaks the bad news to his wife, Amy, who has always dominated him, and goes to work without kissing her goodbye. His picture appears in the paper next day under the headline, "Winkle Proud to Fight." The Pettigrews and other neighbors pay a call in the evening, and shake their heads solemnly. Next day Winkle tucks a "Closed" sign over his place of business and his wife packs his things.

CHAPTER IV

"They will," said Mrs. Winkle, "when they find out how you catch cold right away if you get your feet wet."

Mr. Winkle didn't argue about it, but let her have her way. After all, he was leaving tomorrow, and she would be alone except for Penelope.

He seated himself in an armchair, and Mrs. Winkle came to stand before him. There was a peculiar look on her face. "Wilbert," she whispered.

He glanced up. He didn't understand at first what she wanted, but was prepared for it when he did. By this time he was getting accustomed to almost any surprise.

Shyly, she slipped onto his lap, and sat there. It was a long time



Mrs. Winkle fussed and fretted over him.

since she had done this, and she had put on her plumpness since the last time. Mr. Winkle found her somewhat heavy, but not disagreeably so.

She rested her head on his shoulder, snuggling her face against his neck, and he put one of his arms around her waist. Penelope gazed at them curiously, as if she found the scene not quite proper.

"I didn't mean to say anything about this," she told him, "and I'm thinking of you as much as myself when I do. I've been worrying," she confessed, "about trouble you might get into."

"Trouble?" asked Mr. Winkle. "What kind of trouble?"

"Well," she said, "this is the first time we've ever been separated. Do you realize that?"

Mr. Winkle was bewildered. "I don't see what—"

"I mean," she explained, "that you could be tired of me. I mean—other women." She came out with it in a rush. "You read about it every day. You might—you might—"

Mr. Winkle was startled. He hastened to assure Amy that there was nothing for her to worry about on that score. He told her he wasn't tired of her and that he wasn't interested in any other woman.

She sat bolt upright on his lap. "But you don't know," she stated. "You don't know yourself. You don't know how it will be."

"How," inquired Mr. Winkle, "will it be?" He was suddenly pleased to find her jealous.

"When you've been away from me long enough," she elucidated, "you'll find out."

Mr. Winkle contemplated that. At the prospect of there being something to what she said, he thought he had better deny it with convincing spirit. "Now you look here," he said, "when you catch me with another woman, you take it up then."

"But I won't be there to catch you!" she protested. "I won't know a thing about it. Except," she reflected, "I'll be able to tell when I see you again."

Threatened with this test, Mr. Winkle accused, "All you're doing is putting ideas in my head."

She drew back. "Why, Wilbert Winkle!" she cried angrily, and again there peeped forth the Amy of recent years. "Do you know what you're doing? You're placing the blame on me for your being unfaithful!"

wait till I am," he retorted testily. "I'll send you a postcard. And on it," he said darkly, "I'll also ask why everything you're saying doesn't work on your side of the fence, too."

Instead of the frown between her eyes returning, and the pressing together of her lips, as Mr. Winkle half expected, Amy's blue eyes simply went wide.

Mrs. Winkle's eyes filled with tears and she flung herself at Mr. Winkle, wailing, "Oh, Wilbert, you're going to war and you'll come back without a leg or an arm or— . . . and I haven't been nice to you for a long time, not nice at all . . . and oh, Wilbert, Wilbert!"

She sobbed, letting out all the shame that had been hers since the morning his notice arrived, and all the fear that she, too, had kept hidden during the last days.

Now it was Mr. Winkle who held her, and patted her, and assured her.

This made him feel strong and manly, and almost good about going to war.

In the morning, before they drove downtown, taking Penelope with them because they felt she, too, should see him off, Mrs. Winkle fussed and fretted over him.

"You've got your pills!" she asked. "The big bottle we had made up for you?"

Mr. Winkle patted his pocket and the pills, in their bottle, rattled.

"You haven't taken out your rubbers again?"

Mr. Winkle shook his head.

Mrs. Winkle contemplated, her brow furrowed for a moment, but she could think of nothing else. "I still can't believe you're really going," she said.

"Maybe I'll be back tomorrow."

"Oh, Wilbert, I know it isn't the thing to say, but I hope you will be." Anxiously, she asked, "If you aren't, are you sure you're going to be all right?"

"I don't see why not," he answered stoutly.

Now that the moment of leaving was here, all he could think was: Will I ever return? Will I ever see Maple Avenue and home again?

As he drove away he looked back, to catch a last glimpse of the house. Still craning his neck when he reached the corner, he nearly collided with a truck which wasn't saving its tires, eliciting a shriek from Mrs. Winkle and a protesting yelp from Penelope.

In front of the post office he got out and Mrs. Winkle took over the wheel. She would meet him with his bag at the bus station, to which Mr. Winkle understood he was to march in a parade.

Mr. Winkle negotiated the stairs to the second floor of the post office feeling a little as if he were mounting a scaffold to his doom. When he walked down the hall and into the draft board's room he found that most of the other men were already there.

Three members of the board, including the clerk and the chairman, who was clad in a blue American Legion uniform and made a very official appearance, sat before a table at the front of the room. They shuffled papers with a grave air.

The draftees themselves sat on collapsible chairs and with uneasy expressions alternated between regarding each other and the men at the table.

Mr. Winkle took a seat in the rear row. Some of the men, he saw, recognized him from his picture in the paper. A few of them gave him brief smiles or nods, tentative invitations to being comrades in arms. Or recognition that he was in the same boat with them. Mr. Winkle couldn't decide which it was.

More men came in and seated themselves. Jack Pettigrew arrived and sat gingerly on the edge of a chair; he didn't look around. Mr. Winkle counted, to keep his mind busy, and saw that seventeen were present. All were here except one. Most of them were very young, not much more than half his age.

All heads turned as the last of the draftees appeared.

Mr. Winkle knew Freddie Tindall from having seen him decorating the main street of the town. He was a fixture there, like one of the lamp posts or a traffic sign. He was twenty-eight, handsome, with a thin dark mustache plastered across his lip, and his clothes were too flashy.

Freddie was a prominent member of the depression generation. He had come to maturity when there were no jobs to be had. Once having formed the habit of not working, he made it a career at which he excelled. It was his boast that he had never earned a nickel in his life and never would as long as his family's money held out. Now the war had come along to interfere with the signal success he was making of his ambition.

Freddie eyed the gathering with a superior air. When he agreed to come in and join the group, his eye lighted on Mr. Winkle. He slammed his suitcase on the floor, eased his frame gracefully to a chair in the rear row and greeted Mr. Winkle. "Hello, Pop."

One man tittered nervously. A few smiled without conviction. Jack

Pettigrew, who just then looked around, stared. The others paid no attention.

Mr. Winkle was indignant. It had been bad enough to have certain people laugh at him. But he hadn't expected one of his fellow draftees to make fun of him.

He decided that Freddie Tindall didn't know any better and wasn't worth bothering about. But Freddie was the instrument of something else that really touched him. For the first time Mr. Winkle told himself that he wasn't old. The others were just young.

The chairman of the draft board looked at his watch and then rose. He made a little talk, while the men all listened attentively, except for Freddie Tindall, who gazed indolently out the window.

The chairman explained that they had all been chosen fairly, strictly according to the Selective Service regulations. They were being asked to do a serious thing at a serious time. He knew each would do it to the best of his ability. He wished them good luck. He said that the roll would now be called. Each man, at his name, was to come forward and receive his papers and a small going-away kit furnished by the Women Volunteers.

"A leader," he concluded, "is being appointed for you, and you are required to obey him on the way to your Induction Center. The senior member among you, Mr. Wilbert Winkle, will be your leader."

Mr. Winkle was flattered. He was glad for the responsibility. It would help take his mind off himself.

Freddie Tindall leaned toward him and inquired, "How do you like being a big shot, Pop?"

Mr. Winkle saw that he was going to have trouble with Freddie.

The men began to go up. Mr. Winkle's was the last name called. He received his kit, contained in a brown imitation leather packet. Each of the draft board members shook his hand. He was given his own papers, and then instructions about a number of other documents for the group. The clerk was reading one of these, his warrant of authority, when the American Legion band burst into sound outside on the street. The clerk had to raise his voice to make the rest of the warrant heard.

They all trooped down to the street. Quite a crowd had gathered. The band, which had completed its first rendition, took up another at the sight of the group of draftees. There was a scattering of

applause from the crowd. Mr. Winkle saw that some of the people had little American flags, which they waved.

Those who carried suitcases piled them in the cars of the draft board members. Then the chairman lined up the selectees in a ragged formation, four abreast, in back of the band. Mr. Winkle was placed at their head, out in front all by himself. He didn't care for this distinction, but he couldn't refuse it. The attention thus drawn to him, and the noise and the staring, cheering people, bewildered him.

They marched off behind the blaring band, and Mr. Winkle couldn't get over how the music sent a chill up his spine, stirring him. It hadn't been so long ago that he was firmly convinced martial music was an evil thing, spurring people to war.

Part of the crowd walked along with the procession, keeping pace with it. The sporadic cheering and handclapping kept up as more people were passed along the route. The parade went right through a red traffic light.

Mr. Winkle marched stiffly. He tried to keep in time with the music, but found it difficult, and finally gave it up. He wondered what the other men were doing, but didn't look back to see. Once someone in the crowd on the sidewalk called out: "Hi, Winkle! Grind their Axis for them!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)



FIRST-AID to the AILING HOUSE

By ROGER B. WHITMAN

INSULATING ROOF

Last fall one of my correspondents insulated his roof. His first step was to line the under side of the roof between the rafters with tar paper, and then to put in four inches of rock wool. Before the winter was over, he found that the rock wool was dripping with moisture. He asks how this can be prevented. He seemed to think that the rock wool had the property of absorbing moisture; but this is not the case. The trouble came from the penetration of water vapor in the house air. Passing through the rock wool the water vapor came into contact with the tar paper, which of course, was chilled by the roofing boards. Condensation took place, and as the water that formed could not pass through, it was absorbed by the rock wool. He could prevent this by protecting the rock wool with something through which the water vapor could not pass. For this he could use hard and glossy tar paper, nailed to the exposed edges of the rafters. There would then be no condensation, for this layer of tar paper would be protected against outside temperature by the thickness of the rock wool. As a matter of fact, pads of rock wool and similar materials can be had enclosed in envelopes of tar paper. Had my correspondent protected his roof with these instead of the loose rock wool that he used, his trouble would have been avoided.

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. Who was known as the modern iron man of baseball?
2. Can you name three prominent movie stars with the surname of Powell?
3. The figures carved by Borglum in the Mt. Rushmore memorial are scaled to the proportion of men how tall?
4. How many persons lost their lives in the great Chicago fire?
5. In what year was the Constitution of the United States submitted to the people?
6. What dynasty was in power during the period that China was the foremost civilized power of the world?
7. What is the oldest known toy?
8. What is the vocation of a person who vocally labored under a burden?
9. In what year did Pope Gregory III correct the errors of the Julian calendar and give us the present Gregorian calendar?
10. Can you name five ways in which a baseball player at bat can get on base?

The Answers

1. Lou Gehrig.
2. William Powell, Eleanor Powell and Dick Powell.
3. Of men 465 feet tall.
4. About 300.
5. In 1787.
6. The T'ang dynasty.
7. The doll.
8. A singer. (A burden is a chorus or a refrain.)
9. In 1582.
10. Hit a ball safely, get a base on balls, get hit by a pitched ball, be interfered with by the catcher, and reach first when the catcher drops the ball on the third strike.



STARCH FOR WALLS

Question: I want to paint my ceilings an off-white. Then I would like to starch each year and wash off. How would I go about it in detail?

Answer: The formula is as follows: Soften the lumps of a cup of laundry starch with cool water and add boiling water with constant stir-

ring until the starch is cooked and stiff. After cooling, add cold water to make a thin liquid, stir in one quart of buttermilk, and strain through cheese-cloth. Apply with a whitewash brush. Brush marks can be taken out by patting with a short bristle brush before the starch dries.

Damp House Air

Question: We began building our house last September, and had to move in December 1. Some furniture was put in the attic and the rest in the basement until the main floor rooms were ready about Christmas time. Many of the roofing boards are mildewed and also books, furniture, and household things that stand on the north side of the attic. Who is to blame; the contractor or the roofer? Have the roofing boards been weakened by the mold?

Answer: No one is to blame, except yourselves for having moved into the house before the concrete and plaster had dried out. With your heater going, water from these parts should be drying out very rapidly. But even so, the house air may not be thoroughly dry until some time next winter. I greatly doubt if the mildew has gone far enough to damage the roofing boards.

Paint for Fireplace

Question: We have an all-brick fireplace in our living room that I should like to paint. What kind of paint should I use?

Answer: You can use a cement base paint, which is intended for masonry. It is a powder to be mixed with water, and it can be had in colors as well as in white. Ask for it at a mason material yard. I am presuming the brick never has been painted.

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