

JO ELLEN

By ALEXANDER BLACK. Copyright, 1924.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

There was something expectant about the appearance of the kitchenette. She lit the gas stove, and put on water to boil. A cup of coffee would be a brace. The morning ritual of the dumb waiter had been explained by the janitor, who had something wrong with his larynx and spoke in a husky treble. How queer the voice was and how oddly the janitor walked, occurred to Jo Ellen as she investigated the dumb-waiter for the milk bottle. The dumb-waiter was empty. It was too early for everything. However, there was the condensed milk, of which two cans stood side by side on one of the pantry shelves. Marty had laughed at her way of dramatizing each of the shelves.

If there had been a near sound she would have turned swiftly—oh, yes, with an exultant swiftness, that would express the secret hope of the night—ready to comfort Marty, shuffling in his pajamas and telling her that he was all right. But there was no sound except that faint intonation as from a whispered chorus of streets—the muffled but distinct mutter of loneliness audible. Very likely there were thousands of people in thousands of shut-in corners of the city. . . . Of course. Everything was multiplied in a city. Yet not quite this. . . . She drank a cup of coffee, and sat staring into the staggling green of the yards and particularly, perhaps, at a fire escape on which there was a bird cage. The bird was hopping about with an early morning enterprise. It had no discernible note, but it gave an impression of being pleasantly occupied within its wired world. From a window directly opposite a girl in her night dress, with her hair pinned in a tight knot, thrust out her head to look at him. Sometimes the sky was very important. Sometimes it didn't matter. Yet Jo Ellen was glad that it wasn't raining at the moment. In fact, it would have seemed particularly pitiful to have it rain.

Suddenly she felt impelled to go to the door of the bedroom. . . . Marty was sitting up. His legs dangled over the side of the bed and he was clutching at them with inept hands. Before she saw her she heard him muttering. "My God! My God!"

New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE

New York, July 30.—It has been a year ago since our great and lasting grief came to our little household. It was the rustling of the wings of death, Junior, a faithful eight-year-old Boston dog, was struck down and killed by an automobile while crossing Fifth avenue.

Junior was a thoroughbred in life just as he was in death and the memory of him brings freshets of tears. His tiny little mound in Hartsdale is marked with a marble slab reading: "Junior—Faithful to the End." Not once in his remarkable life did he betray his trust.

In memory of Junior—due to magazine and newspaper articles—more than 100 stray and friendless dogs have found cheerful homes. So we who loved him are comforted by the fact that he did not die in vain. The great soul of him goes marching on. I wonder if people generally realize what a big part dogs play in the lives of mankind. In the past few weeks I have received letters of two remarkable instances of the influence of the love and loyal homage of the dog.

One is from a prisoner in a Jersey prison. He made a false step and is paying the price. Four weeks after his incarceration he received word that his dog waited patiently for him at the gate of his home—refusing to leave, finally refusing to eat, and then he died.

"When my time is up here," he writes, "I am going to pay the debt I owe that dog. I was forsaken by everyone but him. No matter what my inclinations are, and they are not the best because I am embittered, the faith that dog had in me will keep me straight."

The other is from a woman who nightly patrolled Broadway her lips framing the suggestive question: "I am back in a little town in Wisconsin," she writes. "A dog sent me here to reshape a wasted life. He taught me something the world did not—humility."

Hugh Fullerton, the sport writer, sent a newspaper the following announcement: "Mr. and Mrs. Hugh Fullerton desire to announce that after six years of seeking from Danbury, Conn., to Toms River, N. J., and from Tarrytown, N. Y., to Hempstead, L. I., they have at last found a home in New York City at Englewood, N. J."

This is a story going the rounds—a veiled reference to it having appeared in a social weekly and in a Broadway play. Several years ago the wife of a devoted husband disappeared. He combed the earth for her and always struck a false trail. He was inconsolable and finally gave up his business and is now living in Egypt. On the day she disappeared there was a fire in a questionable hotel. It was a resort that did not require the formality of registering. Three people were burned to death—one of the bodies was charred beyond recognition. He never knew.

Special guards have put a stop to the juvenile vandevillians who make a show house of the big subway stations. They were street urchins who sang tender ballads, did tumbling tricks and clog dancing for pitched pennies of hurrying passengers. Most of the youngsters came from the East side and some helped to support parents.

In the early morning my telephone rang. "Standard Oil company speaking," said the voice. I had visions of lunching with John D. or an invitation to share in some melon cutting. "Yes, yes, go on!" I said breathlessly.

"We are calling in all our oil cans," continued the voice, "and want your correct address."

Waiting a few moments I decided to pass the joke along and called up a friend.

"Standard Oil company speaking," I said.

"Don't be a sap, you sap," replied the voice and the phone clicked in my ear. It must be an old one. But you can't blame a guy for trying (Copyright, 1924.)

There was to be no reprieve. "O Jo Ellen!"

He held out his hands to her as she hurried forward. The sight of her hurried the disaster, and as he grasped her he was repeating, "O my God!"

She had meant not to cry again, but there was something in his misery that caught her up. It was as if, after all, he were surprised, as if he, too, had thought there might be some softening of the stroke. He tried to tell her that when he first opened his eyes he thought it might have been a dream. It was just the sort of thing you might dream, just exactly. There was nothing about it that was like anything real. . . . And then—at the first movement—he knew that it was real, that there had been the stairs, and the doctor, and the telling him to be still at the very time when he had wanted to tell her. . . .

She began at the morning and told him how she had been careful not to be noisy. She wanted to make the perfect as she could, thinking that maybe. . . . Yes, she had hoped that when he awakened it would be better, that whatever the doctor meant might be the wrong meaning. Doctors often had everything all wrong. She drew away from him, her hands on his shoulders.

"Look here, Marty. We've got to get to work. You've had a shock—a little thing, you might say, but a shock to the hurt place in your back. It may pass off, don't you see? If you're just careful. Just careful. We'll fool the doctors yet. Fool them. We've got to be patient for a little while. When he comes—"

His eyes were holding intently as she spoke, noting that there was poor teamwork between her eyes and her lips.

"We're fooling each other, aren't we?" he said wistfully. "We both know it's all up—"

"I don't know any such thing!" cried Jo Ellen. "And you don't either. Nobody can know yet. Wait until we have a special look you ever. You may need a little mending. Other people have been mended, and have walked—"

"You're a game sport, aren't you Jo Ellen?" He had one of her hands and was patting the round white forearm that emerged from the short-sleeved house dress. "A game sport."

"In a man's wife," she said, standing before him, "and a man's wife, under these circumstances, ought to be hustling to get him a cup of coffee. Meanwhile friend husband isn't to be too fresh about moving around until the doctor has another look-in."

His eyes followed her as she flashed kitchenward.

VII.

The day after the wedding. It was to be Sunday they had made plans for that day, plans implying that Marty was to be back to work on Monday morning. Jo Ellen's vacation stretched forward as a spacious vista. Right there at the beginning, and belonging to both, was this first day that was to be wholly their own. There were a great number of points about the apartment that could not be considered correctly until they were actually living there. When you were actually in a place you could stretch forward as a spacious vista. You could snuggle into it and reach the state of utter comfort by experiment. In the afternoon they were to have called out, not upon any number of points upon some special private adventure, just as they might have done if they were in a strange city. Marty had emphasized the fact that going forth in their married state would mean an imaginable place with a peculiar and superlative wonder.

The day as it came was extraordinarily different. When it was over it had the effect of tumult, of clattering excitement. No shred of the original picture remained; not a line or spot. Where there was to have been peace there was suspense. Where there was to have been privacy there was the effect of a crowd, of hearts laid bare to the sky.

Doctors seemed to populate the place. Only one doctor was physically present—he came soon after nine o'clock, with his searching look and electronic gestures of investigation. But talk turned again and again to doctors. It sounded on the phone when Jo Ellen began the wired confession that brought, early in the day, Uncle Ben and her mother, and Marty's mother and father. The reasonable inference was that somebody should find the real doctor who would do something at once. Mrs. Simms gave the impression of being astounded that Jo Ellen should have picked up any old doctor in such a crisis. Marty's father, however, pointed out that Jo Ellen had naturally grabbed the first one she could find. Very likely the only thing remained to be done was something profound. It might take time. It wasn't like a broken ankle.

"I'd like Dr. Parker to see him," said Ben Bogert.

VIII.

Don't be silly, daddy, bobbed hair is all the fashion.

What do I care about fashion? Do you have to look like a Zulu to be stylish?

Oh, it's done now, why talk about it?

You're right, I'm wastin' time talkin' to you.

I'll tell your mother, she'll tell you where you git off!

Maggie!

How do you like my bobbed hair?

Bogert looked crushed. He never ceased watching for the sign in Jo Ellen, as if the true meaning, the definite prophecy, were to be read somehow, in her face. He saw that she was fighting to keep the weight of this intrusion from breaking her stride, that she had her chin set, not hysterically, nor defiantly, but as he read it in a kind of plucky patience that stood for a thing or didn't, and that could bid its time. He knew that he was not seeing her first mood, that she had already made some sort of terms with the calamity. He knew, too, that she was not looking so far forward as her elders were inclined to look, and he was glad of it. The young couldn't see. . . . If they could see, they would already be old. They wouldn't, like Jo Ellen, be able to cheer up and start to put up with the situation. They wouldn't have that wavering look that

Marty had, a wavering between excited hope and clammy desperation. Marty wanted to sit up. He felt all right except for the stupid legs. But the doctor had ordered him to remain quiet until such time as "the family" might decide on the personnel of a consultation.

"I should think an army surgeon would naturally come into the game," said Bogert, standing with Marty's father at the bedside. "The United States is concerned in this." Marty looked up sharply. "I'm sick of the United States," he said. "The army surgeons dismissed me. That was that. Besides, the surgeon who knew all about it was killed in a smash-up—two cars—head on, and then into a ditch. He was a rough brute, and he got his. What's the good of going back? Let's begin right here." (To Be Continued Tomorrow.)

Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess

THE NEBBES



Barney Google and Spark Plug



All Isn't Moose That Barney Shoots at.

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck (Copyright 1924)

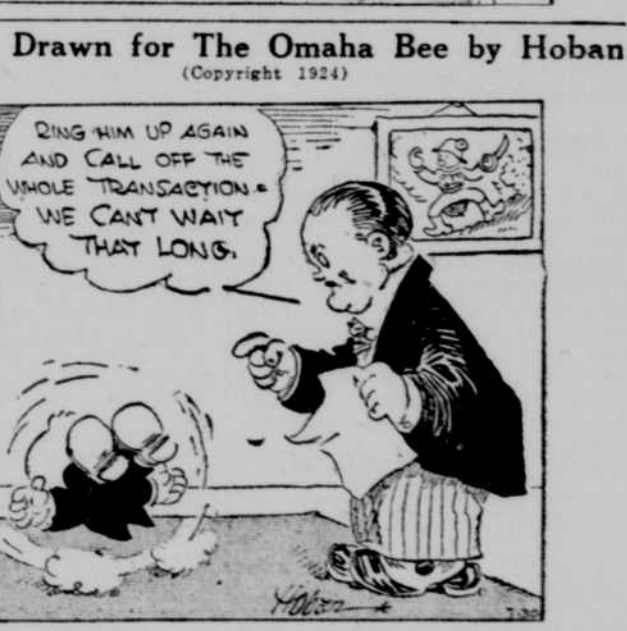
BRINGING UP FATHER



Registered U. S. Patent Office SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus (Copyright 1924)

JERRY ON THE JOB



THE START AND FINISH OF A FINANCIAL DEAL

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban (Copyright 1924)

The Solitaire Fiend's Bride.



ABIE THE AGENT

Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

