

"THE GOLDEN BED"

By WALLACE IRWIN.

Produced as a Paramount Picture by Cecile B. DeMille From a Screen Adaptation by Jeanie Macpherson.

(Copyright, 1924)

(Continued from Yesterday.)

He wasn't to be outdone in manners. Yet he had an uneasy sensation in the back of his dinner jacket as if all the eyes in the room were burning glasses. Still talking, the Marquessa fluttered back and took up her cards. Again the game settled into the monosyllabic state. . . . Admah sat reticent as a boy. . . .

"You've trumped my ace, Madam," he heard O'Neill say very distinctly. "Shut up!" commanded Flora Lee, and the game went on.

Admah looked hungrily toward the outer door, longing to go home; but like many another shy person, he headed the excuses and protestations which his sudden departure would necessitate. Under the lamp he found a pile of magazines, also several paper-bound books which gave him nothing for the simple reason that they were French.

Linda brought in a drink in a tall glass. It had the turpentine flavor of home-made gin. He gulped feverishly, appraising the Peakes in their changed estate. Quite a difference, he thought, from the spacious interior of the Innes Street house. The wallpaper was of a poisonous green and the woodwork a silly, glossy yellow like badly pulled taffy. The chairs and sofa, covered with faded machine-made tapestry, had the impudent look which cheap counterfeits usually wear.

His eyes missed no detail, having plenty of leisure to observe. He took in the coarse portieres and wondered about the scratched sliding doors, half closed at his elbow. Through the aperture he got a glimpse of imitation Wedgewood platters on a greasily varnished plate rail. A shadow moved against the edge of a dining room table; then he saw Margaret Peake, a drawing board propped against her knees, sketching under the ugly overhead light. Her chestnut hair gleamed red, and in that unseemly moment her face held the severe beauty of a Sybil. An instant later she reached out toward a bottle of India ink on the table and in looking up her eyes met Admah's. "It's lovely to see you again," she cried, giving him her hand as he came in. "I was so up to my ears that I didn't know where I was."

She showed a confusion at odds with her usual calm. "I just dropped in," he began lamely, catching embarrassment from embarrassment as bashful men usually do. "Sit down, won't you? You'll have time to talk to me?"

"I reckon I will," he confessed. "I

sort of thought I'd find your sister at home, so I called."

Margaret drew in a corner of her mouth and said with one of her dry smiles: "Many call, but few are chosen."

"He didn't like that in her; it showed a tendency to be disloyal. Rage as he might at Flora Lee, he resented any criticism of her. Margaret might have been jealous."

He looked over her shoulder and saw what she was doing. She was faking in a fashion drawing; it presented a lady with pointed fingers, pointed toes, pointed hat; her angles, affectedly twisted, showed between pointed skirts; her mouth was a little round dot, her eyes, idiotically wide apart, were represented by two larger dots.

"Oh, That's for the Fashion Page," he ventured.

"My stars!" She drew in a corner of her mouth, but didn't look up. "You don't mean to say you read the Fashion Page?"

"Everybody does, I reckon," said Admah inadequately.

"I do two a day like this. I can do them in my sleep. You put in dot for the eyes and one hand up and one hand down and one foot twisted around like a rooster's. I'm going to write some blurb about Real Lace for Real Ladies. But I mustn't be too darned superior or people won't read me."

"I heard you were on the Evening Democrat," he said.

"Who told you?" She gave him a quick, keen glance.

"Mr. Wilder, I think it was."

"Oh!" She resumed her drawing, and presently said, "I was mighty glad to read about your success."

"It ain't that, yet," he replied, but was pleased.

"I think it will be. I haven't forgotten what you said about the duck on the edge of the ditch. Now, I really love to paddle. Only it's queer, rather. Just as I'm beginning to learn how, here you are up on the lawn, spreading your feathers. He's frightened you, isn't he?"

"I've often wanted to talk to you," he admitted.

"About what?"

"Well, I'm in a business I had to learn overnight. I took it on a bet, you might say. And I've often wanted to come around and talk to you."

"Me? I've never made a play in my life," she laughed.

"I reckon you could," said Admah, full of cool admiration for this admirable woman.

"If you want my advice—" she waited until she had brushed in a wing, affected shadow before resuming—"this is what I'd like to say. Don't fool with the rainbows. If you want to conquer, keep your mind on your army. Caesar was all right, you know, till he went to Egypt and got to playing round with—"

The sliding door came back, a thunderous racket, and Flora Lee stood on the sill.

"Oh, Pek!" she cried, confronting them both, a vivacious figure, a flip-toe in her little high-heeled slippers short hair swirling, a sidereal glory. "You've stolen him right under my nose!"

"Yes," Margaret smiled at her drawing. "He was going home."

"You weren't so, were you?" Mr. Holtz asked, then to Margaret, as though he were not there, "He promised to stick it till we played out the rubber. Do come help me, Mr. Holtz. Huntie O'Neill's mad and we're all in a perfectly delightful rage."

Margaret did not look up as he slid out of the room, obediently following her sister.

"To run away like this," Flora Lee was saying to the Ballingers, who had put on their coats. "You ought to stick around and get revenge. I'll coax Mr. Holtz to take a hand! He's frightfully lucky, aren't you, Mr. Holtz?"

"Sometimes," Admah never felt unfortunate when Flora Lee smiled on him.

"I wish we could," dimpled the peasant Hebe. "But if you give Dan another of those synthetic rickies heaven knows how I'll manage him."

"You've studied it out before," intimated Dan, his kindly brown eyes swimming.

"And, Huntie! What are you doing?" Flora Lee made a pretty play at taking off his overcoat.

"Just lemme be," commanded Hunter, drawing back with an uncouth gesture. Ballinger and his wife exchanged swift glances.

"We've promised to take Huntie home and show him the new radio," explained Ballinger gallantly.

"One excuse good as another," O'Neill's swollen eyelids came together like bags and his mouth was unpleasant as he leered at Flora Lee. In Admah the look aroused old blood.

THE NEBBIS



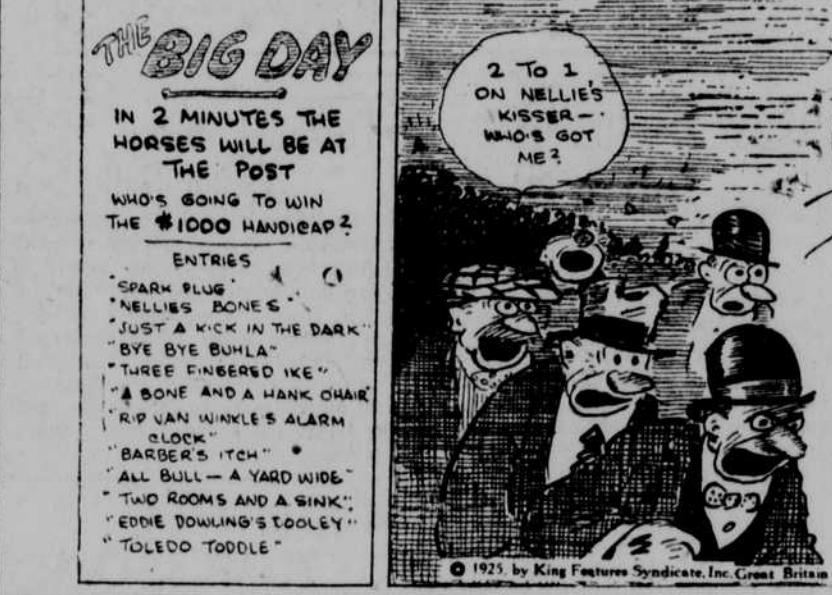
OH, LET IT BE SOON.



Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



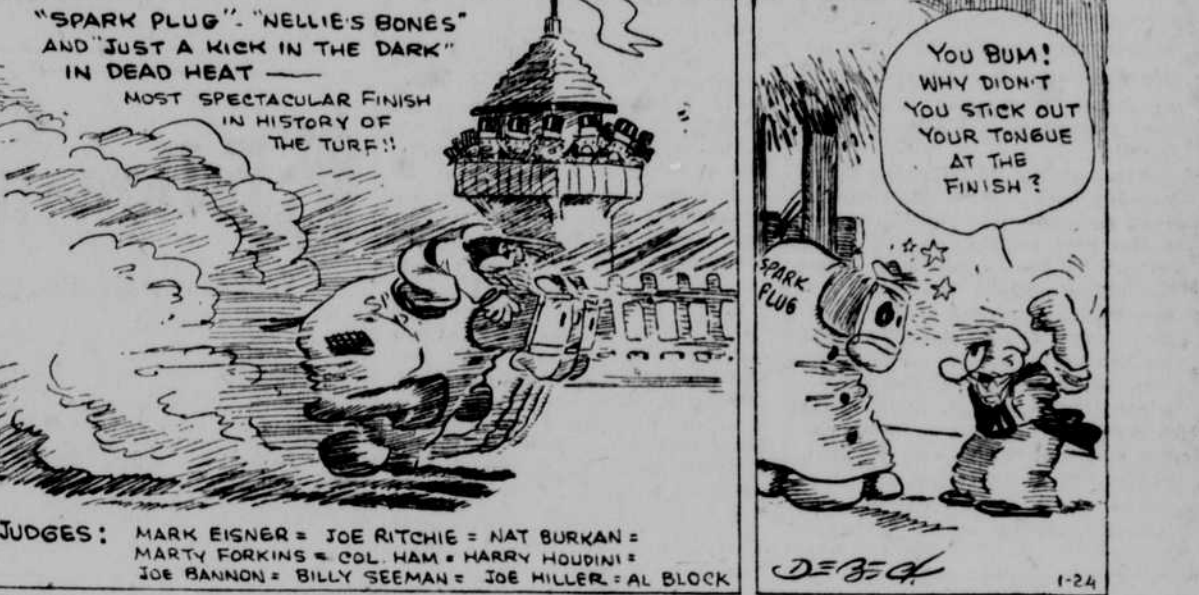
Barney Google and Spark Plug



MAYBE SPARKY'S TONGUE-TIED.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck



BRINGING UP FATHER



SEE JIGGS AND MAGGIE IN FULL PAGE OF COLORS IN THE SUNDAY BEE



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus



JERRY ON THE JOB



MILITARY OBEDIENCE.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



There's at Least One in Every Office



By Briggs ABIE THE AGENT



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hershfield

