

THE ONE UNWANTED

By RUBY AYRES

Author of "A Bachelor Husband," etc.
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THIS BEGINS THE STORY

Sally—Sarah Elizabeth Slater—was a girl who was only a year or so different from her peculiarly prim aunts, who were at home and dismissed her from boarding school lead to ship her off to a Deacon farm in charge of some pensioned servant. She was a girl who was only a year or so different from her peculiarly prim aunts, who were at home and dismissed her from boarding school lead to ship her off to a Deacon farm in charge of some pensioned servant. She was a girl who was only a year or so different from her peculiarly prim aunts, who were at home and dismissed her from boarding school lead to ship her off to a Deacon farm in charge of some pensioned servant.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

WENT back to the fire and held my hands to its warmth, but when I saw how they were trembling I dragged a chair and, sitting down, folded my hands in my lap.

"Won't you sit down?" I asked politely.

"Thank you," but he remained standing.

"You had visitors this afternoon," he said after a moment.

"Yes. Did you see them?"

"I did. One of them did, not the other of calling at my house."

"Oh, you mean Lionel Champion?"

"Yes, he was here."

"I am flattered," I answered dryly. I shrugged my shoulders.

"Oh, you need not be," I said. "It wasn't at all complimentary when it came to you."

"No, I should imagine."

There was a little silence. Then he looked suddenly, putting a hand on the arm of my chair so that I was surprised.

"Look at me, Sally."

I wanted to refuse—I tried my hardest, but for the life of me I could not and our eyes met.

But I put my hand out and tried to push him away immediately.

"Let me go. How dare you keep me here? Please let me go!" I said.

"In a moment—when you have answered one question."

I drew back as far from him as possible.

"I shall not answer any questions, I think—I think it is—it is the limit of what I can stand—and behaving like this," I said angrily.

He laughed, but he raised himself and moved away, going back to his old position on the rug.

"How long have you known Champion?"

It was on the tip of my tongue to say that I had never seen him in my life until today, but something made me hesitate.

"I don't see what it has to do with you," I said coldly.

He did not reply to that—seemed not to have heard it—for almost immediately he asked another question:

"Are you going to marry him?"

I said "What?" in explicit letters, and for a moment I forgot that we were supposed to be enemies, and I laughed in amazement.

"Whatever do you mean?"

"But he did not enquire."

"I overheard something that was said, that is all," he told me. "You and Champion both came to my house after they left here."

"Lionel Champion is a very charming man," I said. "Oh—what are you doing?"

He had caught my hands in his and was dragging me to my feet.

"Are you going to marry him?" he asked.

I tried to temperize.

"I haven't got anything to do with you. Why do you dare ask me to do all after the way you have behaved?"

"What do you mean—because I asked you?"

"I drew me to him with a suddenness that surprised him, and before I could guess his intention he had kissed me again on my mouth."

"Now perhaps you'll answer," he said, and his voice was quick and breathless.

"Are you going to marry him?"

I felt as if all my strength had oozed through my fingers.

"No," I whispered helplessly.

He put his hand beneath my chin, tilting my face up.

"Then will you marry me?" he asked.

"You!" I spoke the word in a breathless whisper. My heart seemed to stop beating. Then once again I remembered the strange manner in which he had treated me since that day on the boat, and I made a desperate effort to recover my dignity.

"Of course, I won't. I—I don't even like you. Let me go! Oh, let me go! How dare you?"

He took his arms away as suddenly as I almost fell. I was trembling all over, and for a moment neither of us spoke, then he said, in a curiously quiet tone of voice:

"You must not like me, or at least that I'm not rich enough or perhaps not sufficiently a gentleman to suit you?"

My heart cried out: "No, no, no!"

He smiled at my denial of his words. He sounded so hurt, but I would not speak then aloud.

He waited a moment; then he picked up the hat he had hung down on the table.

"Good night!" he said abruptly.

"Oh, are you going?" I faltered.

My voice should have told him a great deal, but if it did he took no notice. He strode across the kitchen, opened the back door, and the next moment I heard his steps retreating across the way, slowly, yard.

I felt as if those invisible hands that had seemed to tug at me before drawing me back to him, were pushing me away, urging me after him, begging me to follow, and before I knew it I was through the slush, splashing my ankles with a skirt with wet, cold mud, calling to Mark:

"Mark! Oh, Mark, come back!"

CHAPTER XIX
False Promises

He must have heard, but he did not waken his face in the least, and he went out in the road, striding away toward his own house before I overtook him.

"You lie—come!" I panted. "You ought have waited for me!" And then, my infinite disgust, I burst into tears.

Mr. Anderson stopped dead. He said "Sally!" in a queer, choked sort of voice, and the next moment I was in his arms.

"Do you love me?"

"You know I do!" I sobbed.

"Will you be my wife?"

"Will you really want me?"

"And that man Champion, he's nothing to you?"

"I shook my head."

"I never saw him in my life until today. He's going to marry my sister."

CHAPTER XX
Dial Unionism Begins

Dear Mrs. Alberts! She was white with anxiety when I walked into the kitchen. She had searched everywhere for me when she came in from her visit across the bridge and had quite made up her mind that some one had entered the house during her absence and carried me away by main force.

"Oh, Miss Sally, where have you been?" she asked, almost in tears.

I laughed; I was so happy I did not care what she said or thought.

"I've been outdoors—with Mr. Anderson."

She threw up her hands in dismay.

"With Mr. Anderson! At this time of night! Oh, what would your mother say! What would she say?"

"It doesn't matter what she says," I answered. "As it is quite all right, because you're engaged to be married."

Mrs. Alberts sat down heavily in the nearest chair. Her plump face was crimson with distress. She broke out indignantly:

"Engaged to be married! A child like you, Miss Sally! Oh, what will your mother say when she finds out for not having looked after you better? And Mr. Mark, without a penny to his name! Oh, dear, oh dear!"

She broke into noisy weeping.

I looked at her angrily. There did not seem to me to be anything to cry about.

"What does money matter?" I asked. "My sister will both marry dukes or millionaires or something. And that will more than make up for anything I may do. Oh, for goodness' sake, stop crying! I thought you liked Mr. Anderson. I thought you'd be pleased."

She sobbed out that she did like him, but that she knew he was not the sort of man my mother would wish me to marry.

I felt a wave of apprehension. Lionel Champion had said something like that, that Mark was not the sort of man I ought to see a great deal of. What did they both mean?

I was too proud to ask.

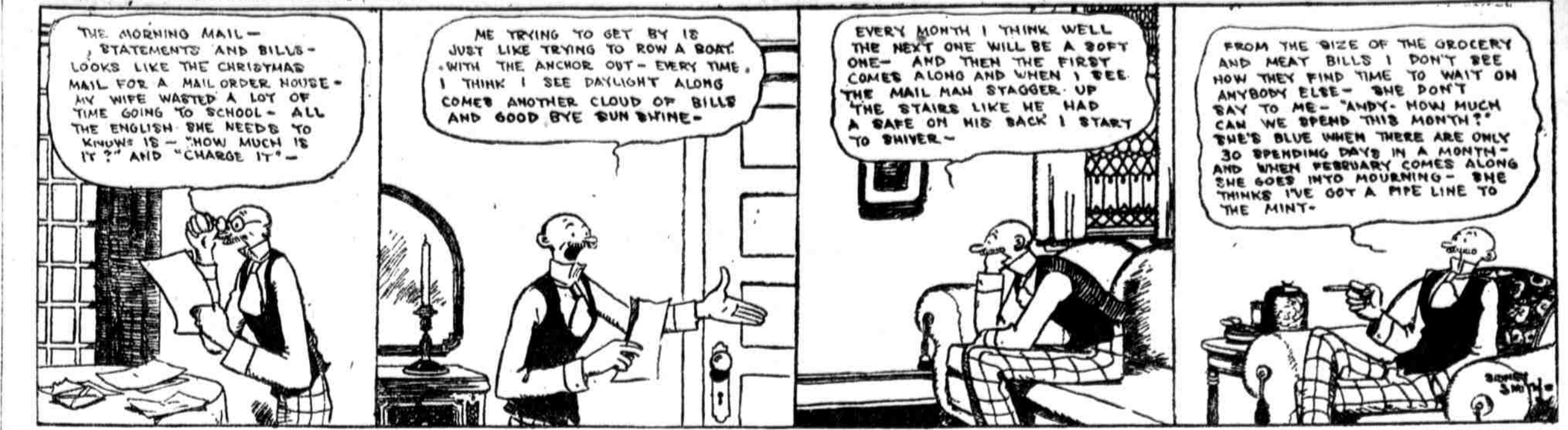
I took up my woollen coat.

"Well, I'm going to bed," I said. "Good night, and, for goodness' sake, do clear up, there's a dear! I'm going to be married, not buried!"

But she sobbed on, and at last I went impatiently away and left her there.

CONTINUED TOMORROW

THE GUMPS—Buyer for A. Gump & Co.



SOMEBODY'S STENOG—Diplomacy



The Young Lady Across the Way



THE ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR



SCHOOL DAYS



The young lady across the way says she does a great deal of serious reading, but she does like to read a posthumous work occasionally.

PETEY—The Heartless Quipper



GASOLINE ALLEY—Powerful Stuff



CONTINUED TOMORROW