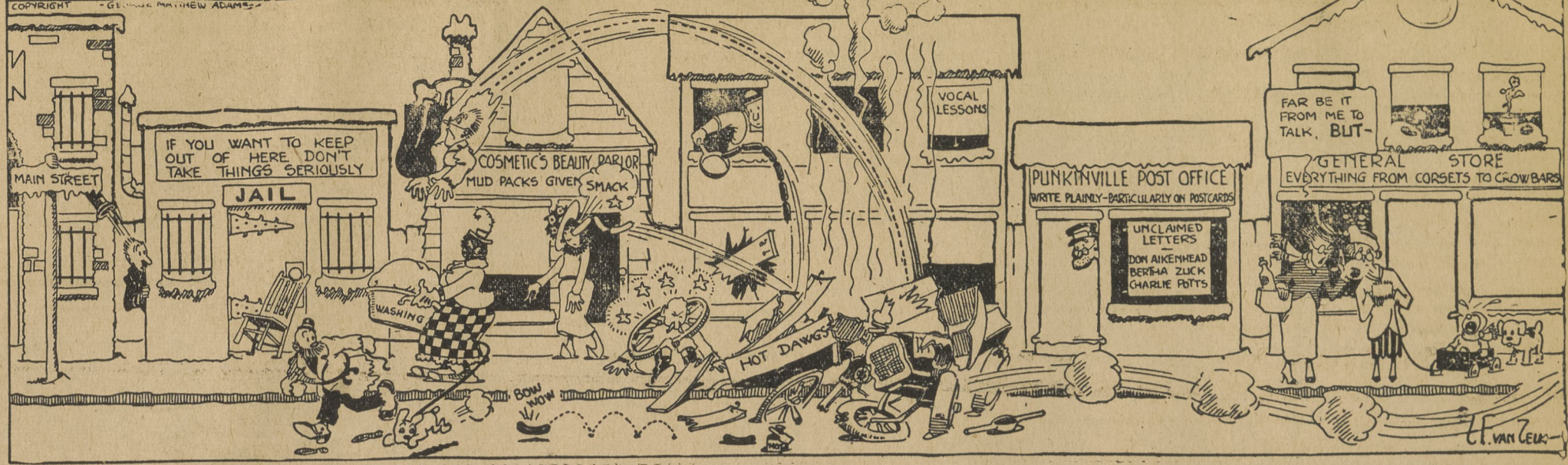


"THE MAIN THING ON MAIN STREET"

By L. F. Van Zelm

**Daily Buzz**  
PUNKINVILLE'S  
LEADING NEWSPAPER  
MEMBER OF N.Y. 2  
**FIRST SNOWFALL  
CAUSES SKID**  
WHILE ROUNDING  
INTO MAIN STREET  
WITH HIS NEW CAR,  
GEORGE OVADRAFT,  
THE BANK CLERK,  
SKIDDED ON THE  
NEWLY FALLEN SNOW  
& SMASHED INTO A  
HOT DOG WAGON  
CAUSING QUITE SOME  
EXCITEMENT.  
**LOCAL AFFAIRS -**  
DOG OWNERS WHO  
HAVE NOT LICENSES MAY  
FIND THEIR DOG-GONE.



**SOULS FOR SALE**  
by RUPERT HUGHES  
ILLUSTRATED BY DONALD RILEY

SOULS FOR SALE . . . . GAL ONE  
**WHAT'S GONE BEFORE**  
Remember Steddon, a pretty, unsophisticated girl, is the daughter of a kindly but narrow-minded minister in a small mid-western town. Her father,  
The Rev. Dr. Steddon, a clergyman of kind heart but narrow mind who attributes much of the evil of the world to the "movies" and constantly inveighs against them. Mem, her lover, her lover, Elwood Farnaby, having died in an accident, at the advice of Dr. Bretherick, gives her bad cough as an excuse to get to Arizona and from there writes home that she has met and married "Mr. Woodville," a wholly imaginary person. Later she writes to say that her "husband" has died in the desert. She takes a job as a domestic to avoid being a burden on her parents. A fall prevents her becoming a mother. In Arizona she had met  
Tom Holby, a leading man in a motion picture company, and through him gets the opportunity to play a part in a desert drama. With the company is Robina Teele, a star, fond of Holby and  
**NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY**

Every time she made the beginning her hands flinched from the lying pen. But one night in a frantic fit of histrionic enthusiasm she dashed off her fable, sealed it in an envelope, and dropped it after dark in the mail box.  
Darling Mamma and Papa:  
How can I write the terrible news? I can hardly bear to think of it, let alone write about it. But my darling husband passed away in the desert. I cannot write you the particulars now, for I am too agitated and grief-stricken and I do not want to harrow you with details. I know your poor hearts will ache for me, but I beg you not to feel too deeply because I am trying to be brave. And I remember what you taught me, that the Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away . . . I cannot write you more now. I am in no need of money and I will come home when I get a little stronger. All the love in the world from  
Your loving  
MEM.

expressed the utmost sympathy and prayed that her beauty had not been marred. She added:  
"But if it has, you can still find something to do in the movies. I've given up trying to be an actress and taken a position in the laboratory projection room, correcting the films. It's cool and dark and interesting. I think I can get you a place, if you'll come up. There's no excuse for a woman of your education and charm wasting your sweetness on the desert air. Do come. I've sent my three children out to their uncle's ranch. You could live here with me and my friends."  
The thought of working in the dark and the cool was a hint of Paradise to Mem.  
She told Mrs. Dack and Mrs. Red-dick that she had received a call to go

to Los Angeles at once. Terry was out of danger, but his arms around Mem's neck were withes she could hardly break. The soft hands, the dewy cheeks, the lonely eyes of the child were fetters cruelly tyrannous, but a few days later a taxi deposited her before a tiny place of four or five rooms. This was Leva's home. A servant who opened the door said that "she would not get back from the studio before six or hapsast." She was glad to relieve Mem's loneliness with chatter. She explained that Miss Lemaire lived there with three other ladies, all of them in the movies, but none of them getting their pictures took.  
They lived here with no more thought of chaperonage than a crowd of bachelors.  
When Leva and her friends came in at dinner time they came like young business men home from offices, tired of shop, yet full if its talk; eager for amusement, knowing no law except their own self-respect for health or reputation or efficiency.  
The next morning Mem acquired on tick the brief trousseau of a little business bride. Then she went to the studio with Leva and was assigned to the laboratory projection room at twenty-five dollars a week.  
A hundred pretty actresses got no jobs at all, for they were seeking glory

and wealth.  
All day she sat in a dark room and ran a little projecting machine that poured forth moving pictures before her on a little private screen. She must watch out for typographical errors, a "to" for a "too," a slip of grammar, a mistake in an actor's or a character's name.  
Her common-school education was good enough for this, though it was by no means so marvelous as Leva had told her employers it was.  
The artistic beauties of the pictures made her inarticulately happy. For a time she was in a heaven of tumultuous ecstasies. But gradually the delight turned to torture, the torture of envy.  
She was young and she had been told that she was beautiful. If God made her pretty it was because He delighted in beauty and wanted it known. He did not grow flowers in cellars. He was not afraid to squander sunshine.  
If the art of mimicry was a God-given gift, it must be meant for use. She has acted once before a camera, there in the desert. She had brought tears to the eyes of strangers. She was an actress by divine intention.  
She sat in a dark room and watched other people's pictures flow by. It  
(Continued on last page)

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She felt herself bewitched, benumbed, yet mystically alive to a thousand tragedies. Her eyes rolled around the staring throng, and made out Tom Holby gazing down at her from his camel and pouring sympathy from his own soul into hers.  
Then she flung her head from side to side in a torment of woe, cast her head back, and heaved her big eyes up into the cruel brazier of the skies, seemed to see God pouring down upon the little multitude and moved her lips in supplication.  
She felt the words and the anguish wringing her throat and the tears came trooping from her eyes, ran shining into her mouth, and she swallowed them and found them bitter-sweet with an exultation of agony.  
There was such weird reality in her grief that the director's glasses were blurred with his own tears, the camera men were gulping hard.  
As her upward stare again encountered Tom Holby's eyes she saw that tears were dripping from his lashes and that his mouth was quivering.  
The sight of his tears sent through her a strange pang of triumphant sympathy, and she broke down sobbing, would have fallen to the sand, if Leva Lemaire had not caught her and drawn her into her arms, kissing her and whispering: "Wonderful! Wonderful!"  
She felt a hand on her arm and was drawn from Leva's arms into a man's. Her shoulders were squeezed hard by big hands and she heard a voice that identified her captor as the director. He was saying:  
"God bless you! That was the real stuff! You're a good girl! The real thing!"  
Then she began to laugh and choke, became an utter fool.  
This was her first experience of the passion of mimicry. She was as ashamed as glorified, as drained yet as exultant, as if a god had seized her and embraced her fiercely for a moment, then left her aching, an ember in the ashes.  
The director was already calling the mob to the next task. She could not help glancing toward Tom Holby. His camel was moving off with the crowd, but he was turning back to gaze at her. He was nodding his head in approval and he raised his hand in a salute of profound respect.  
Mem's sin had led to the edge of paradise, and then drawn her back by the hair.  
She was doomed to spend a certain time in increasing heaviness, and then to die or to go about thenceforth with a nameless child holding on to her hand anchoring her to obscurity.  
She found a place as maid in the home of a storekeeper at such wages as he could afford. She began the sordid routine of her tasks, but contrasting them with the glamour of playing tragic roles, she felt herself entombed.  
Then the summer heat began and grew so fierce that her employer and his family went to the seashore.  
She spent much thought upon the letter home that she had not yet written, that she must write if ever she were to go home again. The whole purpose of this long, long journey into loneliness was to be able to write that letter; and it had not yet come.

After she had slipped the letter irrevocably into the mail box she realized that the postmark of Palm Springs would be stamped on the envelope. Her place of concealment would be disclosed.  
Still, it would not matter. She was a widow now in the minds of her people and she could go back to them and face the future in calm.  
The mountains had a beckoning look always, and on this afternoon, when a clouded sky gave a little shelter from the sun, she set out to obey an impulse to climb as far as her strength would take her.  
The exertion of climbing was more than Mem had bargained for. The steep that looked so inviting from a distance were ragged and forbidding. The burnt-almond mountains were hot and sharp-edged gridirons to her feet. The sun came blazing forth and seemed to spill upon her a yellow hot mass of metal that slashed her about the head and rolled over her shoulders in blistering ingots.  
A stone rolled under her foot and shook her from her balance. She wavered, clutched at nothing, whirled, struck, bounded from the hard rock, fell and fell, and then—a smashing blow, blackness, silence.  
A young Indian girl, chasing her stray pony about the sand had seen Mem stumble, then fall; had heard the thump of her body on cushioning sand; had run to the nearest house and told what she had seen. Mem was taken home. The village doctor did all that his skill could do.  
Though she had never dared to visit him, he knew of her, and knew her as a widow. When she was strong enough to be talked to he prepared her for bad news.  
"Am I to be crippled for life?" she cried?  
"No," he sighed. "You will bear no marks of your accident. But you will not—but your other hopes and expectations—will not be realized."  
She was dazed and he was timid, and he had some difficulty in making her understand his bad news; that she would not be a mother.  
She bore this blow with a fortitude that surprised him.  
And now Mem was weak and woe-begone, at the bottom of the cliff of life. She had never climbed very far, but she had fallen far enough to give both soul and body an almost fatal shock. She was a drudge in a poor family in a scorched settlement abandoned by all that could get away.  
The only inferiors she could see were a young widow named Dack and her five-year-old boy, Terry. Mrs. Dack took in washing.  
The boy Terry was of the Arfel breed. His fancy gilded the earth in forty minutes. He mimicked birds and animals and often covered his mother with terror and amused chagrin by imitating her clients with uncanny skill.  
Once the child caught cold—in all that heat!—and Mem sat by his bedside through several smothering nights while the back-broken mother slept. Mem exercised her skill in making up little dramas to while away the tedium of the long nights and to keep the wakeful child's mind from his cough.  
During his illness Mem received a letter from Leva Lemaire, saying that she had just seen in an old paper a paragraph describing "Mrs. Woodville's fall from the mountain and her miraculous escape from death. Leva

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