

LIBEL LADY

Adapted by **LEBBEUS MITCHELL**
from the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture

SYNOPSIS — Bill Chandler, engaged by the New York Star to quash a \$5,000,000 libel suit brought against it by Connie Allenbury, wealthy girl it had accused of husband stealing, sails to London to return by the boat that brings Connie and her father home. Pretending to be a fisherman, he wins Allenbury's friendship and is invited to his Adirondack Lodge, but Connie believes him a fortune hunter. At the lodge, Bill wins her regard and falls for her. He prevents the Star's editor, and Gladys Benton, whom he had married merely that she might bring suit for alienation of affections against Connie, from reaching the lodge.

Chapter Three LOVE — WITH COMPLICATIONS

Bill succeeded in preventing Haggerty and Gladys from reaching the Allenbury lodge, but, back at his New York hotel, had to defend himself vigorously as a winner of feminine hearts. As a Romeo, Gladys told him, he was a cluck. Haggerty wanted to go ahead and file the alienation suit on the basis that Bill had told his loving wife that he was going to Washington and, instead, had hid himself off to the Allenbury lodge.

"The set-up's crazy — we haven't a chance," declared Bill. "Her father was there. They'd throw the suit out of court anywhere. I'm getting a real 'in' with the family — it's a cinch to get an invitation to his Long Island mansion."

"Not a chance, Bill! She walked out on you twice. I'm printing the story of the alienation suit."

Left alone with Gladys, Bill said: "If he goes through with this we'll all be in jail by tonight."

"But that's the plan we've had right along."

"We haven't enough evidence. The Allenburys will smell a frame-up. And to think Haggerty would do this to a beautiful girl like you. You've put up with a kid. You're one girl in a million!"

"And you don't know the tenth of it!" responded Gladys, feeling sorry for herself. "You won't believe all the things I've stood for."

"I want to hear all about it," said Bill.

Later, long after dinner, as they were dancing to the radio, he said: "I hope Warren won't mind — our dancing this way."

Her eyes had been closed as she danced dreamily — for Bill was a good dancer — but now she opened them. "Who? Oh, him! A girl can certainly dance with her husband! And you are my husband!"

Bill blinked. "Oh yes. Quite. After all it's our last night — I'll have to move out if you file that suit. I'm going to miss you."

"And I'll miss you, too. You don't want to bring that suit, do you?"

"For your own sake — no, I don't."

"Then I won't! A girl should listen to her husband!"

He pretended a headache — and she wanted to rub it! Then he pleaded an insomnia that only the sound of horses' feet beating on the pavement could cure, and made his escape from the apartment.

Bill didn't return to the apartment for several days and Gladys phoned the Star, fearing she had offended him and wishing to apologize; asking Haggerty's secretary to try the morgue. Haggerty was amazed at Gladys' interest in Bill and when his secretary suggested that perhaps Bill was working on the wrong girl, he went up in the air entirely and was in a quarrelsome mood when Bill at last put in an appearance.

"Pretty soft for you!" he growled. "You haven't seen Connie Allenbury for days. You talked me out of the alienation suit so the paper would pay the bill while you concentrated on the wrong girl — on my girl! I want to know what's been going on between you."

Scenting an "out" from the suit against Connie, Bill played up Haggerty's jealousy. "What did you expect? No man could be around a beautiful girl like Gladys and not fall in love."

Haggerty raged: "She may be your wife, but she's engaged to me!"

She'll divorce you — in Yucatan, by mail, as she did Joe Simpson."

Smarting, feeling double-crossed, Haggerty went direct to Connie to induce her to drop the suit against the Star. He humbly assumed all blame for the offending libelous article. He pleaded with her: "If you go through with this case, it will throw 500 employees out of work — men and women, jobless, walking the street, hungry, tired and cold. It was my mistake. All my life I'll be faced with the knowledge that I wrecked 500 lives."

"You're right," said Connie. "They shouldn't suffer for your mistake. They must be taken care of."

In his relief, he seized her hand. "Heaven bless you, Miss Allenbury!"

"I'll see to it," she added with a twinkle, "that the entire five million goes into a trust fund for the Star's employees."

"But . . . but . . . You mean you're going ahead with the case?"

"I must — to take care of those poor men and women."

His dismay was turned to surprise

ty. "Not four hours ago I heard your two-timing Romeo cooing sweet nothings into Connie Allenbury's ears!"

"Bill told me about that," replied Gladys sweetly. "It was technique — but, of course, you wouldn't know about that."

"Believe me, Warren," pleaded Bill. "I'm taking the best way. The Allenburys are giving a party tomorrow night, and I'll be there and get Connie to drop the suit — unless you decide to break in again as you did tonight."

"You're too obvious, Warren," commented Gladys. "Bill knows best."

But Haggerty, enflamed by jealousy, fearing the paper would lose the libel suit and that he was about to lose his girl, set himself to out-smart and out-think Bill. He had printed at the head of the society column in a single issue of the Star an item to the effect that J. B. Allenbury and his daughter had bought steamship tickets for an around-the-world trip following their charity bazaar, and that Con-

He saw how troubled she was. "What's wrong, Connie?"

"It's just . . . I don't know where to begin . . . It's just a question — don't explain . . . Bill has you been proposed to much?"

"Have I been — what?"

"Proposed to — your hand asked in marriage. I'm asking . . . Bill, will you marry me? Now? Tonight?"

"Tonight!" he gasped; then shouted: "Is there a preacher in the house?"

Haggerty and Gladys found them after hours of search in a hotel apartment where the clerk said they had registered not twenty minutes before.

"I hate to bust in on your little party," Miss Connie Allenbury raged Gladys, bursting into their rooms, "but that man happens to be my husband."

"I'm afraid there's been a mistake," said Bill. "This is Mrs. Chandler."

"We were just married in Greenwich, Connecticut," said Connie. "Bill has our marriage certificate."



"You double-crossed me for the sake of a newspaper!" stormed Gladys. "Well, marry the newspaper and be the proud father of headlines!"

as Bill Chandler entered without noticing him. Bill went straight to Connie, his arms out, saying, "My sweet!" They pretended not to know each other as Connie introduced them. It came out inadvertently that Connie had been seeing Bill once, sometimes twice, a day. Haggerty's troubles took wing: Bill was there in the Allenbury home with Connie. He phoned Gladys and a detective, get them there and then file the alienation suit. Professing himself entirely satisfied with Connie's plan for caring for the Star's workers, he made a hurried exit.

Bill, knowing exactly what was in Haggerty's mind and what he planned to do, made up a tale of having to dine with his publisher who was sailing that night and in turn beat a hasty retreat.

Haggerty phoned to Gladys and the detective and then beat it to the Star's office to write the story of the alienation suit and have it set up in type. He was gloating over the scarehead he had written over the story when Bill and Gladys, their arms entwined, entered the office.

He exploded at once. "Where have you been, Gladys?"

"Dancing — with Bill!" She smiled fondly at Bill.

"Do you mean to say you didn't go to the Allenburys?"

"No, we decided against it."

"Well, what have you got to say for yourselves? What happened?"

"What would you say, Haggerty, if I told you I've practically gotten Connie Allenbury to agree to drop the suit?"

"I'd say you were a dirty, double-crossing liar!"

Gladys took Bill's arm. "Come, William. I won't stay here to hear you insulted!"

"Listen to me!" shouted Haggerty.

nie's latest favorite, William Chandler, would be in the party. "Do we hear wedding bells?" concluded that completely false item. He showed it to Gladys in a beauty parlor booth where she was getting a permanent wave. He beat a hasty retreat as Gladys' face became flushed with anger as she read the item.

The night of the bazaar, Bill tried to get Connie to give him a promise to drop the suit against the Star. "You'll get my answer when the last guest leaves," she told him.

"You're a hard woman, Connie Allenbury," said Bill.

"Only when I'm crossed."

They had their fortunes told and Bill was paying a photographer who had snapped their portraits when Mr. Allenbury came up and led his daughter aside. "Connie, I must see you. Never mind Bill; he'll keep."

"What is it, Dad? I haven't seen you look this worried in years."

"How much does Chandler mean to you, Connie? Are you in love with him?"

"Terribly in love with him. More than I ever dreamed I could care for anyone. Why, Dad? You like him, don't you?"

"Of course."

"Then stop being mysterious. Tell me what's worrying you?"

"The Van Arsdale says he's married. I've just seen them."

"I don't believe it. . . Yet it would explain so much: Why we always met alone. . . Oh, it's hideous suspecting him!"

"We've got to know — ask him point-blank —"

"Let me ask him — in my way. Please go now, darling. . ."

She was on the terrace when Bill at last found her. When she could get the courage, she said: "Bill, there's . . . I've got something to ask you."

"They're married all right!" said Haggerty, looking at the certificate. "That's bigamy! What a story!" and started for the door.

"You publish that and you'll have another libel suit on your hands!" threatened Bill. "Gladys is Mrs. Joseph Simpson. All Yucatan divorces were declared illegal three years ago."

"I found that out too," said Gladys, "and divorced Joe Simpson again in Reno. So now where do we stand? Well, my husband isn't worth much to me but with all your money, Connie Allenbury, you couldn't buy him at any price! I've just been something to kick around — something to protect a newspaper and another woman's good name. There was some excuse for Bill — he was in love with another woman, but you Warren Haggerty, are ten times worse than he is! You double-crossed me for the sake of a newspaper! Well, marry the newspaper and be the proud father of headlines!"

She flounced from the room, but mistook the door, and entered the bedroom. Connie followed her, and at once Haggerty and Bill came to blows.

A sound of the fight, Gladys called wildly: "Warren! Warren!"

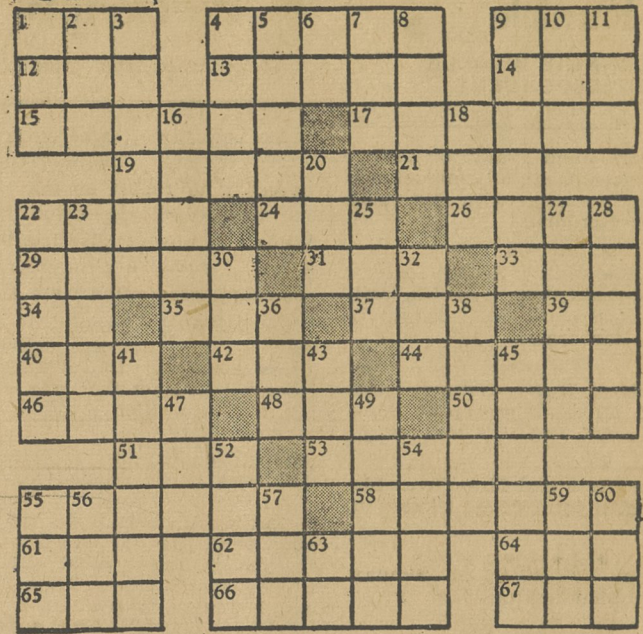
"Gladys ran into the room, got her arms around Haggerty. "Warren, darling, are you hurt?" She turned furiously upon Bill. "You must have hit him when his back was turned!" She gave Bill a blow that bloodied his nose.

A joyous laugh burst from Bill's lips as he advanced, hands out, to Connie. "A second trip to Reno for Gladys, then for our interrupted honeymoon!"

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THE END.

CROSS-WORD PUZZLE

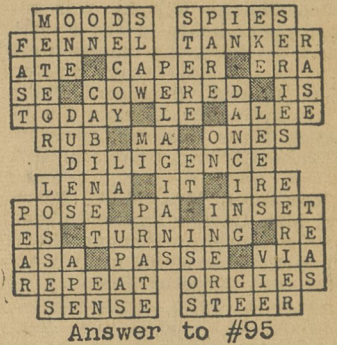


HORIZONTAL

- 1—Pin.
- 4—Indigenous plants.
- 9—Turt.
- 12—Cup.
- 13—Ghastly.
- 14—Automobile.
- 15—Extra levy.
- 17—To make small.
- 19—Plump.
- 21—Likewise.
- 22—Uncovered.
- 24—Rodent.
- 26—Small fly.
- 28—Root.
- 31—Swamp.
- 32—To petition.
- 34—Article.
- 35—Vehicle.
- 37—Cap.
- 39—French article.
- 40—Nervous disease.
- 42—Upper part.
- 44—European city.
- 45—Mountain nymph.
- 48—To capture.
- 50—Lineage.
- 51—Part of to be.
- 53—Runway.
- 55—Groups in zoology.
- 58—Producing pain.
- 61—Unit of work.
- 62—Region from which Solomon got gold.
- 64—Large wave.
- 65—Golf mound.
- 66—Rock.
- 67—Pronoun.

VERTICAL

- 2—Dance step.
- 3—Australian bird.
- 5—Attired.
- 6—Lined.
- 7—Egyptian city.
- 8—Conjunction.
- 10—Fish.
- 11—To wither.
- 16—Garment.
- 18—Small pot.
- 20—Fairy queen.
- 22—To speak.
- 23—Universal fear.
- 25—Child.
- 27—Pertaining to royal court.
- 28—To plague.
- 30—N. A. Indian memorial post.
- 32—Opening.
- 36—To cut.
- 38—Frontier.
- 41—To alter.
- 43—To stroke.
- 45—Jaunty.
- 47—Mineral.
- 49—Small weight.
- 52—God.
- 54—Land measure.
- 55—To obtain.
- 56—Before.
- 57—Likely.
- 59—By birth.
- 60—Fish.
- 63—Exclamation.



Answer to #95

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Answer To Last Week's Puzzle Corner

No. 95 Crossword Puzzle:
Across: 1 par, 4 latin, 6 van, 7 dot, 9 tis, 10 tea, 11 ash, 12 wed, 15 oiled, 16 got. Down: 1 bat, 2 pan, 3 rid, 5 noted, 6 via, 8 Ted, 12 wet, 13 pig, 14 low, 4 lasso.

DOTS—Horse on Steeplechase.
"S" objects: snow, storm, scarf, shoveller, shovel, stem, signboard, stove, stave, smoke, sewing, sky, snout, stripes.

Goofygraph: Man with one eyebrow-no mouth-cigar in air-flower in vest pocket-tie-sleeve-vest colored on one sidelegs of trousers-shoes-sleeve on right-hat.

FIBBER MCGEE SAYS:



In women's styles the trend is back toward curves—"Hippy days are here again."

OUR PUZZLE CORNER

FIND 10 'B' OBJECTS IN THIS SCENE...

POP HAS BEEN SHOPPING... REARRANGE THE LETTERS ON EACH PARCEL AND SEE WHAT HE HAS BOUGHT...

THERE SEEMS TO BE A GAME OF 'RING ROUND ROSIE' GOING ON HERE. DRAW A LINE FROM 1 TO 37.

THERE ARE AT LEAST TEN THINGS WRONG IN THIS GOOFYGRAPH. CAN YOU SEE THEM?