

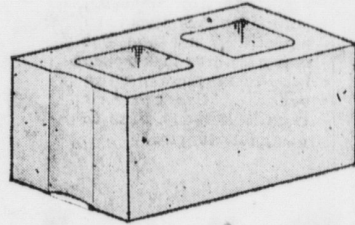
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## SHORT STORY

### Just a Sottie

By LILLIACE MITCHELL

Milly Kenyon pulled her last year's hat closer over her right eye and pushed ahead through the rain. Milly was old enough to know that wet feet would give her a red nose and a cold in her head and also that a hat worn in the rain never looks like much in its later life.

"There's Fran Kord and there's Daisy Ledoyt. They've both bought stories from me. Both of 'em. Fran Kord, good old scout! Many's the time her checks have come just in the nick of time to replenish the empty larder."

Milly peered near-sightedly at the street sign and turned the corner. The switchboard girl dressed in tomorrow's frock smiled at her brilliantly. Yes, Miss Kord was in. Yes, the name? Yes, just a moment, please. Yes, if you will go in, Miss Kenyon. And Milly was standing abashedly in a swanky inner office glittering with chromium and glass.

Fran Kord looked up. She almost sniffed at the newcomer. "H'mph, so you're Milly Kenyon, eh? Glad to meet you."

"SIT DOWN. I hope you aren't bringing me any hard luck tale. Plea-for-sympathy stuff. I've had three writers in here today begging me to buy a story because two kids are dependent on selling a story or Junior has to have a tonsil operation or the grocer refuses further credit. I hope you're not going to be Number Four."

"Oh, I'm not," Milly said swiftly. "I—"

"Good!" cut in Fran Kord. "I used to be a sottie and fall flat-ter'n a banana skin for that sympathy plea but not now. No, sir, I was left a widow myself with three youngsters to raise and I sure was a sottie after they gave me this editorial job. But papers aren't run for charity."

"Of course not," said Milly warmly. "I stopped in to—"

"Not that I ever bought a poor story, you understand," Fran Kord hastened to say. "I was spending the paper's money and I never forgot that fact. But when there are fifty good stories for every one we purchase, I bought because of my hot heart time and time again."

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"Yes, it's the head has to turn business. Not the heart," Fran remarked, her eyes on the soft globe of silver light above Milly's head.

"Well, I mustn't keep you. I know you're busy," said Milly rising. "I just stopped in to ask you—"

"Glad you stopped, Miss Kenyon."



"Not that I ever bought a poor story, you understand," Fran Kord hastened to say.

I'm always glad to meet the writers."

Fran Kord dropped her eyes almost immediately to her tablet of paper upon which she had been writing when Mildred entered.

Milly looked in at the coffee shop but resolutely continued along the corridor to the telegraph office. There she wrote a telegram to Daisy Ledoyt, Editor, Garden and Palace Magazine:

"As winner of the \$20,000 prize for a novel on the American home, I am asked to choose manager of bureau to consult sympathetically with promising writers who fail to make the grade. Salary twice your present salary. Wire me if I may present your name."

Mildred Kenyon. "I kind of favored Fran Kord, somehow," Milly said to herself as she went back towards the coffee shop. "Both editors have been wonderful to me but she is cold as ice."

"No sympathy whatever. And writers who don't make the grade need sympathy and a lot of it."

Fran Kord relaxed at her desk. "Hettie," she called sharply to her secretary. "Hettie, send upstairs and have them put through a check for—lemme see—there's the camel story and this one—and this one—make the check for four stories, Hettie. Bring the check down yourself and here's pennies. Put a special delivery stamp on it for Mildred Kenyon. Poor old gal—she's certainly down on her luck, if ever a writer was! Broken shoes and that hat! Well, just call me a sottie."

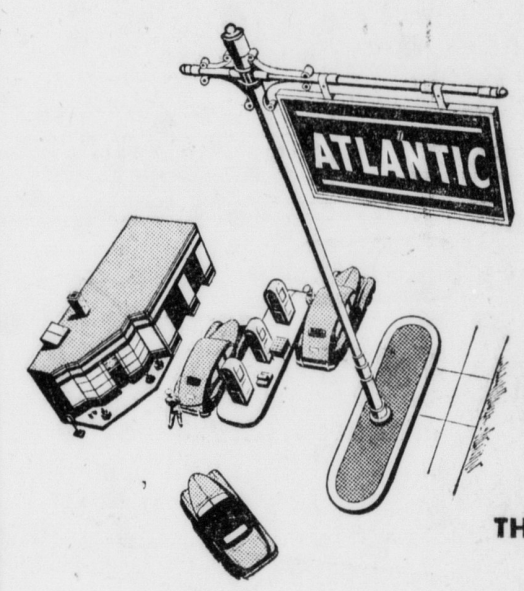
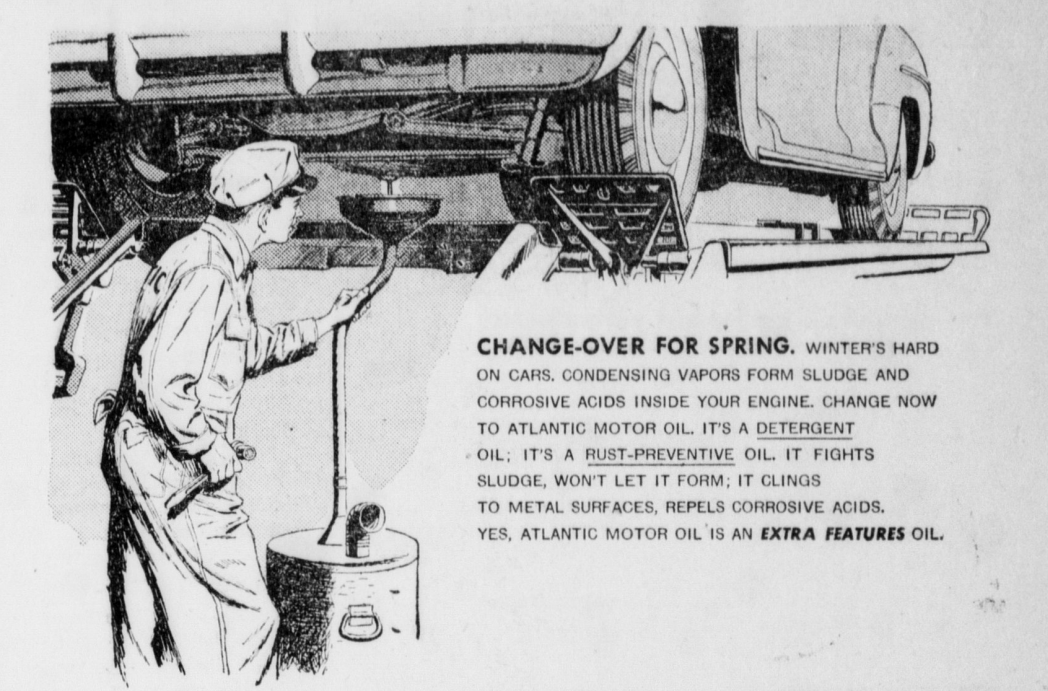
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