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The BLUE DOOR

By Rachel Mack © 1935 NEA Service, Inc.

BEGIN HERE TODAY RUTH WOODSON, a pretty, high-spirited girl of 19, an orphan, lives with relatives, the LAWRENCEs. Feeling herself hated by her cousin, LETTY LAWRENCE, Ruth impulsively takes a bus for the mid-west in hope of finding work. Running out of money, she is put off the bus in a small town just as a storm is breaking. She seeks refuge in a big, gloomy stone house with a blue door, and faints from hunger. She is carried upstairs by the old housekeeper and a young man, JOHN McNEILL. The old housekeeper has mistaken Ruth for ELAINE CHALMERS, whose grandfather built the house. Elaine Chalmers, meanwhile, at Graycastle College, vows in a sorority meeting to win the love of her first sweetheart, John McNeill.

Ruth resolves to quit the old house next morning before "PENNY," the caretaker, awakes but oversleeps. John McNeill calls and asks if he may come to dinner that night. Ruth likes him, decides to carry on the deception a day longer. She discovers that the old woman is mentally queer, and that there is some mystery attached to the blue door. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER IX After a bath in the big, old-fashioned bathroom that opened off her bedroom, Ruth dressed herself with great care. She put on the white linen blouse she had bought en route and set her naturally curly, short hair with the aid of a comb and few hairpins. She thought hopefully, "If a strange man admired me while I was sitting on a park bench looking dejected, why shouldn't John McNeill admire me when I'm sitting across the table from him looking happy."

For she was happy. Even though her future was as obscure and unpromising as a young woman's future can very well be Ruth was happy in the midst of this strange and piquant adventure which had befallen her. For a few fleeting hours she was playing the role—and playing it convincingly—of a girl who has everything. "No matter how drab and commonplace life is for me after today," she reminded herself, "I'll always have this funny little in-

to the big room at the left of the wide entrance hall. A fire blazed on the hearth, throwing a warm, ruddy glow over the room. The brass fender, the tongs and the quaint old coal scuttle gleamed brightly in the flickering light.

"Well!" John's exclamation held surprise. "How'd you ever get Penny to shine up the old room and start a fire?"

"I did it myself," Ruth told him. "I found a bottle of furniture polish, too, and a funny contrivance called a 'curtain brush.' I used both. The effect's very nice. I think." She pointed with pardonable pride to the burgundy velvet curtains at the long windows and to the carved mahogany furniture which she had brightened.

"Gosh, yes!" agreed John looking around. Then he looked at the girl herself. "But imagine Elaine Chalmers doing the family housecleaning! Who'd have thought it."

It was the second time he'd spoken that name "Chalmers." Ruth pigeon-holed it in her mind before replying "Why not? I used to go to girls' camps, you know." It seemed a safe answer.

"As I recall you," said John McNeill, "you weren't a very useful child. Ornamental, though. When you'd come back for one of your little summer visits all the kids in town would hang around to see what you were up to."

"And what was I up to, generally?" Ruth questioned. "Plenty," he assured her. "Showing off for the little natives. Inviting them to parties and bossing them. Dashing around town in that chauffered car with a foreign name—the typical little rich girl coming back to her mother's home town."

"What a conceited young idiot I must have been in those days," Ruth remarked, enjoying herself thoroughly. "Can you recall anything at all nice about me?"

"Yes," nodded John McNeill. "You were always as game as the devil. They say you were never known to take a dare. You could outstride and outswim any kid in town."

"The advantages of wealth!" Ruth pointed out. "Swimming and horseback riding come easy to children who've been provided with beaches and horses and bridle paths." She realized that she was speaking a little bitterly. Back in her own dreary childhood there'd been a little girl in her town who owned a spotted pony, and who'd refused to let the shabby little Woodson girl ride it. She found herself disliking Elaine Chalmers as the symbol of all those selfish, pampered children who have more

of this world's plums than they need. Then she recalled that tonight she was Elaine herself and must remain in character. "But you were just old enough to be scornful," she bantered. "You treated me like dirt."

"I kissed you once," he remarked, as if it had become suddenly important. "I suppose I did it just to tease you. Have you forgotten?"

Ruth said, "A girl never forgets her first kiss." Again she felt a thrust of dislike for the girl she was supposed to be. "Let's go help Penny," she suggested. Penny gave them aprons and let them do as they liked. Ruth set the table while John and Penny argued about the steak. The silver and china which the old woman had given her to use were cheap and ordinary.

"I guess they've taken away all the fine old Chalmers things," she thought. Then she paused in her tracks to figure something out. This was not a Chalmers house, and in other cases "Duncan" pre-

ceded the name Hunter. Hunter house," Ruth said self softly. The knowledge be useful. She did not know how stood there drinking in, wondering about the and the people who be it. She only knew that John McNeill opened the crossed the room to her, looking flushed and gl

He held out his hand went to meet him, for past in the contentment present. When he took her arms and kissed her lips, that did not surprise her. This was a dream dreams should be happy. He released her and called you, and you did I had the feeling you left as suddenly as you a rotten feeling. I've day—"

"Forget it tonight," with a shy little smile (Continued on page 3)

FLOOD CONTROL

THE people of the Lower Rio Grande Valley will no doubt welcome the news that the flood control program recently approved by the federal government is about to start.

Within the past few days, floods on the Rio Grande have laid waste thousands of acres of land and evacuated whole towns.

Over \$4,000,000 is to be spent by the American government and 1,800,000 pesos by the Mexican government, to make these disastrous floods a thing of the past.

ADULT CLASSES

OUR people are glad to learn that the adult classes are to be begun again in this county this week.

No movement has met a more hearty response than this, which gives the average citizen an outlet for his surplus energy, consumes otherwise wasted time.

The classes have always enjoyed a good attendance here, and this will no doubt be true of the new term.

COMMUNITY CENTER

THE more we ponder the project for converting the old East Ward school building into a Community Center, the more we wonder why someone didn't think of it long ago.

With a perfectly good building save a few minor repairs, and a commodious ground space, it will make an ideal place for the purpose, and will soon become the very center of all club and student organization activities.

It will fill a long felt want in this city, and the sponsors are to be congratulated on this fine project.

C. C. C.

LOCAL boys who have enlisted in the Civilian Conservation Corps, according to their letters back home, are well pleased with their new life. They like the work, they like the associations, and they like the eats.

The C.C.C. is about the best place we know of for a young man who is unemployed.

One thing the United States and Japan seem to agree upon is strenuous objections to Soviet activities.

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



ALLEY OPP



THE NEWFANGS (Mom 'n POP)



OUT OUR WAY



Sept. 9, 1935... The PU... KLAN... FAIR... ma Ci... e Mec... housan... MA CIT... to at... equal O... Septemb... ed to Te... lph T. H... ger, of t... ing the i... that... have a... Oklahor... are prim... produce a... m pro... bank of s... their stu... ma Stat... is a me... Associa... also secr... hat capa... Its p... of \$1,000... of th... day and... as "Te... us cliche... to attend... big show... Mr. I... the larger... rainment... at the Ol... named fo... Hem... held eve... the grat... bet bet... one of t... al sho... outdoor... grandstand... it will be... "Feast... wait sear... with b... snectac... of the col... ed Shew... by the m... lean and... to confo... the fair as... aral, lives... homecraft... rest in... officials... the larg... a Bi... yes... United P... BOW, C... rs of tur... William... y, Okla... governor... for peace... a life."... proud c... used wit... m his s... as a go... of th... which... thing, r... comforts... Bill," wh... attempt... on emp... "I" and... "One-Mu... and of h... se mule... an ob... ment -... tnesses -... of his... and d... his lon... the "eluc... Prevading... rurray to... core of t... ch had... left unon... not let... the farm... ear to th... intens... dozens... write hin... "is" kee... rrible... national... of presi... to a... president... flicker... he lookit... 1935 set... hold... T. P. Go... rent sus... y as gov... gone... borly."... a warm... akes, tall... stus, and... he is

