

Aunt Prue and Uncle Si

By JANE OSBORN

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"OF COURSE I haven't the most remote idea what a godmother is supposed to do," said Prudence Denning, "but if it isn't any worse than being said of honor, I think I can do it."

"Only, in this case, I think you have to hold the baby—and he's pretty sure to scream. They always do. But we won't be happy with anyone else. Tom has asked his Uncle Si to be the godfather, and he's coming out for the West. You are both to come the night before, to dinner, and stay for the night. Then we'll have the christening at the church in the morning, when there aren't a lot of people looking on. You've never met Uncle Si, have you? He was in China when we were married."

Meantime Tom Loomis, father of the most important baby in the world, had made his way past telephone operators and private secretaries to the inner sanctum of Silas Granger, a young and genial-looking man of thirty-two or so, sitting at a very important-looking desk in a large office. "We want you out for dinner Friday night," said Tom. "The baby's going to be christened Saturday and you're to be the best man—no, the godfather. I mean, you must manage it somehow—no one else will do; and, Si, Prue is asking her Aunt True to come out and be godmother. You've heard of her."

"Hum-hum," said Si, and had visions of a much-wrinkled little old woman like Prue's mother.

Two days later when Silas Granger was sitting deep in thoughts of business his telephone said in his ear, "This is Prue Denning. You've heard Peggy and Tom speak of me, perhaps."

"Yes, indeed," said Silas with his most respectful tone—the tone he used when he gave his seat to a very old lady. "I believe I shall have the pleasure of meeting you at the Loomises' very shortly."

"That's just what I wanted to talk about," came the voice at the other end of the telephone. "Frankly, I wanted to know what I ought to do. You know Tom hasn't anything to do what he makes, and Peggy hasn't a penny of her own and never will have. So I was thinking that instead of spending a lot of money on a perfectly useless candle cup I'd just give some money. I've decided on five hundred dollars and if you want to put it in it that will be a thousand. We might get some sort of bonds—if you say so."

Prue said she supposed she wasn't so busy as he, so she volunteered to bring her check to the office, so that he might buy the bonds, and that afternoon she was announced by his private secretary.

For a moment, while he waited for her, Silas thought that she was a rather troublesome old lady, to come to his office at such a busy time, but when an office boy showed in the real Prue Denning he forgot even that he was in the least busy. She was really beautiful—but, more than that, she was very young.

"But I thought it was Aunt Prue," he said.

"And I thought it was Uncle Si," she said, and at the same time each said, "I am." Then Prue explained that she was the youngest child of Prue's grandfather, by a second wife—and wasn't really as old as Peggy; and Uncle Si explained that he was the youngest son of Tom Loomis' grandfather, also by a second marriage. They called him Uncle Si as a sort of joke. In fact to all their mutual friends he was known as "uncle." He had always heard them speak of Aunt Prue but never dreamed that she bore her title much the same as he did his.

"You must have thought I was very impertinent," said Prudence, "coming down to your office. But I thought, of course, you were a nice old man. I'll just leave my check, and run away."

Silas had sprung to his feet when Prudence rose from her chair in his office and hurried round the room to bathe the way.

"I don't want you to run away so soon," he said looking down upon her short, straight little nose, and the long lashes that shaded eyes that seemed to glow with violet. "Let's go out to ten somewhere—and maybe dance afterward."

The day before the dinner at the Loomises, Peggy telephoned to Prue. "I forgot to tell you that if you wanted to bring a Swallow out with you to dinner you might. You're always engaged to someone or other and if there's anyone now, bring him along."

"That's sweet," said Prudence, "because I really am engaged. Really, and truly this time, and I am going to come out in his car and I'd love to have him for dinner."

So it was that Peggy had to call up Sally Crane, a pretty young neighbor, and ask her to come to dinner. "Aunt Prue is bringing a suitor," she said, "and I need someone for Uncle Si." Then when Prudence came with Uncle Si and three her arms around Peggy's neck and told her that she was going to marry Silas, Peggy felt that her plans had again been upset. So she hurried to the telephone and called up Randolph Kirk, a bachelor of the neighborhood, to come for Sally Crane. And the funny thing about it was that it was at that dinner that Randolph Kirk fell in love with Sally. Perhaps he caught the fine fever from Silas.

Devices That Reduce

Dangers of Aviation

Plans have been submitted to the air ministry by Capt. Frank T. Courtney, well known racing and test pilot, of a scheme to overcome the difficulties of flying in fog and to make regular services possible by night and day in practically any weather.

Captain Courtney points out that at certain times of the year aircraft transport is a farce, and much of its value is also lost because it is not possible to fly at night. The scheme now being put up, which has been evolved as a result of two years' work, is based on practical experience and is a combination of wireless and an adaptation of those modern instruments with which present-day planes are equipped.

Instead of flying by eye—which means that, when visibility is bad, a landing is necessary—pilots would fly entirely by instruments, and at Croydon there would be an aerial signal-box, from which instructions would be flashed across space by wireless. Pilots would be able to follow these instructions by means of their adapted instruments.—London Tit-Bits.

Tiger Holds Its Own as Enemy of Mankind

The Indian tiger is the most successful member of the jungle in the contest with man, for, unlike its brethren it inflicts nearly as many casualties as it suffers. This is brought out by a return of the government of India, showing the voracity from wild animals and venomous snakes, writes a Calcutta correspondent of the London Post. Last year the total number of persons killed by wild animals in British India amounted to 2,587, as against 3,005 in the previous year. Tigers were responsible for 1,174 deaths, leopards for 406, wolves for 419, bears for 82, elephants for 41, and hyenas for 19. Deaths from snake bite fell from 19,990 to 19,867.

During the year 21,032 wild animals were reported to have been destroyed, of which 1,706 were tigers, 5,202 leopards, 2,799 bears and 1,743 wolves. A sum of 171,170 rupees was paid in rewards, against 165,367, rupees in the previous year.

Wonderful Woman

"Women succeed their husbands nowadays as governors, as senators, as mayors, and as traveling salesmen," said President Loeb of the Traveling Salesmen's National council at a dinner in New York.

"It reminds me of a story about a famous basso," he went on. "The basso had just died, and a tourist, visiting his native village in Tuscany, said to a peasant: 'So, your father basso is dead. What a loss! He was so good.' 'Yeh,' said the peasant, 'it is too bad, but I suppose his wife'll carry on the business all right.'"

Money in Oil Wells

Of the 21,713 oil wells completed in the United States in 1924, it is said 2,250 turned out to be gas wells, while 5,182 were dry and did not produce oil in paying quantities. The cost of drilling the smallest of these wells was around \$30,000 and in some instances the drilling ran as much as \$175,000. A fair estimate of the money put into drilling oil wells in the United States places the total at \$12,000,000,000, and the value of all oil recovered since the first well was sunk in 1859 has been placed at about \$8,000,000,000.

Bear's Speed Stunt Fatal

Two large black bears put on a speed stunt with a fast train for a pace near Rimfret Junction, province of Quebec. Loping along the track in front of the train, the bears zig-zagged back and forth for a long distance. The train slowed down to 28 miles an hour to give the bears a sporting chance, but the erratic running of one of them resulted in his death before the engineer could stop.

Hardly Qualified Jurors

With only nine jurors, the court instructed the bailiff, at Toledo, Ohio, to pick up three more. The latter saw three men sitting in the rear of the courthouse. "Get into the jury box," he commanded. Spectators began to grin. So did the three men. They had just pleaded guilty to the charge of burglary. The court noticed the mistake in time and three other talsmen were selected before the trial began.

Three Pine Trees

By RUBY DOUGLAS

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MILDRED came back from the telephone with a troubled expression on her eyes.

"What is it, dear?" her mother asked.

"Selling a tree is like selling a child—to me," she said.

"Who is, selling either one?" her mother questioned further.

Then Mildred explained that the telephone call had been from Mrs. Cullen, secretary of the Babies' Welfare Country home. The property of the home adjoined the Thompson property and Mildred had always kept an eye on the grounds during the winter for the block of directors. Now the secretary was telephoning to ask her if she would mind going over to show the representative of a nursery company where a certain group of three trees were. The board had sold these trees—and the home needed extra funds for more dormitories next summer—and they were to be removed this week.

"I just can't see those lovely pines dug up and taken away," cried Mildred, throwing herself on the couch. "I think it is doubtfully wicked to uproot them and sell them. I know they won't grow anywhere else," she declared vehemently.

Her mother did not quite sympathize with Mildred's viewpoint, although she was mildly sorry to see the trees being sold.

"I know you think I'm foolish, mother," Mildred went on. "And perhaps I am. I have always been sentimental about nature."

There was much more that she might have told her mother, but she realized that her parent, being of an entirely different temperament, would not understand.

How could she divulge the wonderful secrets those sturdy pines shared with her—and another? And now—Someday, she hoped that she had persuaded that Rob would return to her as was once. They had quarreled as heartily as very young lovers quarrel before they learn the beauty of harmony. I Rob had gone away and she had heard from him for two years. She did not even know what he was doing.

When she had been lonely, it was his kindly fragrance of these pines she sought, the cool shade it summer, the protection from the winds in winter. And now they were sold. They were to be dug up.

It was in a belligerent mood that she walked on the following morning for the nursery company's representative.

When the bell rang she could not bring herself to open the door, but let the maid answer it.

When she stepped into the library where the maid had shown the caller, she found herself Mildred stepped back with a cry.

"Rob—Rob—you of all people! I thought it was the tax man."

"So it is," he admitted, coming forward and extending both hands to her. "But you—"

"Yes, I have been employed by Lewis & Volzing in their southern nurseries for two years. You know I had a fondness for out-of-door things," he said not quite knowing what to tell her.

"But they have bought our three pine trees—Rob," she said, her eyes filling, in spite of heretofore, with tears.

Rob nodded. "I know they have—and I have come to superintend the job of moving them, Mildred."

"You—you don't care?" she could not help crying.

"Ah, but I do. Listen, dear," he began, taking her to the big couch where they had sat so often together. "I have come into the family properties by the death of my grandfather. Among other parcels of land is a lovely bit overlooking the lake you and I used to row on and skate on and—"

"Yes—I know," Mildred interrupted. "I have built a home up there and I wanted those three trees in the garden just below my windows so that I might be less lonely—in this home," he added.

Mildred did not utter a sound. "The company does not know it is myself I have had those trees negotiated for with the board of the Babies' home. I thought it need not interest them. I find I shall have to come back here. My work in the South is finished and I want to go home. The trees—our trying place—would mean so much to me."

"And—what of me?"

"Oh, they're not on your property. I didn't suppose you ever gave them a thought."

And then for a few moments it looked as if there would be another quarrel to separate the lovers.

"Come on over with me. The man will be waiting, dear. I knew all the time the way you felt. Forgive me. And you won't mind now?"

"N—no—of course not. If you think transplanting won't do any harm."

"I think they will know—those blessed pine trees—that they are only progressing into a further realm of usefulness—to us, dear," whispered Rob as he put Mildred's cloak about her shoulders.

"They know more than some folks," laughed Mildred. "And I think they will see how happy I am—for the first time in two years," she admitted as she went out the door with her lover.

CHEAPER IN LOTS



Lover—Willie, you saw me take a kiss from your sister—what will you take not to tell?

Willie—Fifty cents for a single kiss—but it's much cheaper if you take more.

Doubting Doubt

"Ministers used to vie with one another in their professions of faith. Now they vie with one another—at least the Modernists do—in their professions of doubt."

The speaker was Gov. Charles W. Bryan of Nebraska. He went on: "We need to doubt a man's faith sometimes. Soon we'll be doubting his doubt. He'll be a regular Uncle Eb to us."

"George Washington White said to Calhoun Clay:

"Uncle Eb done told me dis afternoon he's a hundred and twenty-five years old."

"What—a hundred and twenty-five?" said Calhoun Clay. "Why, Uncle Eb told me yesterday he was only ninety."

"Yes," said Washington White, "but he done hear dis mavin' about an Irishman vot's a hundred and twenty-five."

Patience Pays

"There are only a few investors," says John Moody in the Forbes Magazine, "who seem to have the patience and the courage to resist the temptation of investing their money at the wrong time. They appear to think that if one waits before investing, worthwhile opportunities will surely slip by and that they will have lost their chance to get the best out of their capital."

"The investment market will always be with us, and new oppor-

tunities for wise investment come along just as fast as old opportunities disappear."

Rheumatic Cat

Little Alfred, age three, was visiting his next-door neighbors one day. He had expressed great interest in a large Angora cat owned by them. The cat did not prove to be very friendly or playful, however, and the neighbor woman told Alfred that poor Teddie had the rheumatism and did not feel well.

"My goodness," said Alfred, "is he going to have his teeth out?"

New Wrapping Twine

A southern paper company is making a new kind of string that is said to be as strong as that made from hemp. The pulp of pine trees is used, the long fibers of the wood; three times the length of spruce fiber, being well adapted for making into cordage.

England Is Planting Trees by the Million

Between now and next spring more than 39,000,000 trees will have been planted in Great Britain. This is the program arranged for the planting season by the forestry commission, which has already been engaged for five years in the work of restoring the forests of England, Wales and Scotland.

Since it began its work, the commission has planted 52,500 acres and assisted local authorities and private owners to plant another 50,000 acres. This has resulted in 184,000,000 trees being planted.

The program, spread over ten years, provides for the planting of 250,000,000 acres with 450,000,000 trees.

Most of the trees planted consist of different varieties of fir and spruce and twenty years from the first planting they will begin to show returns. At present Britain imports 50,000,000 pounds worth of timber each year.—From the Continental Edition of the London Mail.

Knowledge Is Better

Woman's intuition doesn't seem so impressive when she is trying to order a meal.

Early Politician

The Buckeye Blacksmith was the nickname of John W. Bear of Zaner, Ohio. He came into prominence during the campaign of 1840, and was a sensational orator of the Whigs. His nickname was derived from the fact that at his initial appearance at the ratification meeting at Columbus he appeared in his blacksmith's clothes.

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