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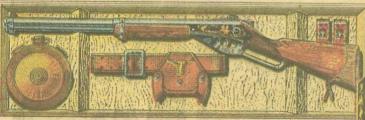
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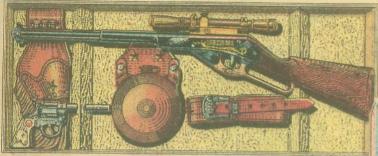
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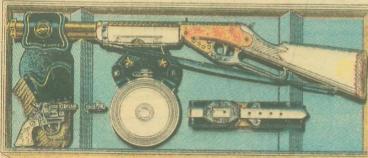
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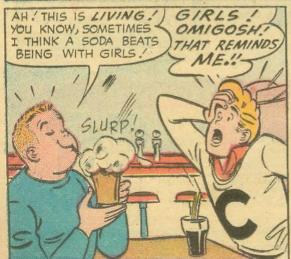


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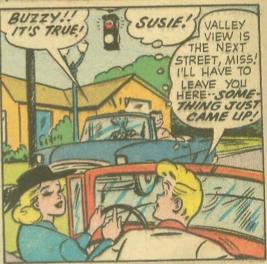






























# RADIOACTIVE JUDY



OGIE never even had a chance to ring the bell before Judy had opened the front door and greeted him with a very positive, "I can't go, Oogie! Something very important has come up! We'll have to postpone our soda date for another time! I'm going prospecting!"

"Prospecting—?" echoed Oogie. "You mean you're going to be a modern version of the old forty-niner?"

"Sort of," said Judy. "Only I'm not going prospecting for gold—it's uranium I'm after! Look—I even have a Geiger counter! I borrowed it from Mr. Morris over at the college lab!" She showed Oogie a boxlike affair reposing on the hall chair. "I promised him I'd take very good care of it—also to give him a percentage of the profits when I strike it rich!"

"You don't really think you're going to find uranium, do you, Judy?" asked Randy, ambling in from the kitchen, munching an apple. "That's kid stuff! A complete waste of time!"

"Randolph Foster!" exploded Judy. "You may be my brother, but there's certainly no resemblance between your brain and mine! Kid stuff, indeed! Why, do you know that uranium is practically the most precious element in the world? And one of the rarest? And one of the very best ways of becoming exeruciatingly rich FAST?"

Oogie and Randy burst into unanimous guffaws of laughter. "You're kidding!" said Oogie. "She's kidding!" said Randy.

"I most certainly am NOT kidding!" said

Judy. "As you will see for yourselves when I start SPENDING all that money I'm going to get! I'm going to buy a mink coat for Mother—and a Cadillac for Father—and an ermine evening jacket for myself—BUT I'M NOT GOING TO BUY A SINGLE, SOLITARY THING FOR EITHER ONE OF YOU! SO THERE!"

Oogie winked at Randy and Randy winked at Oogie. "Guess we really talked ourselves out of that windfall, eh, Randy?" "Right, Oogie! And we have only our big, fat mouths to blame!" Judy sniffed in haughty disdain. "You'll be sorry! You two'll be sorry, all right! You wait and see!"

"And that's just what we're going to do
—WAIT—!" grinned Randy, settling himself in the depths of the sofa. "RIGHT
HERE! You go ahead and prospect to your
heart's content, Judy, old dear, and we'll
keep a light burning in the window for you!
Have some candy, Oogie!" He pushed a box
of chocolates across the coffee table toward
Oogie, who had meanwhile slumped into an
armchair, obviously prepared to spend some
time there. "Thanks, Randy! But before
Judy leaves, I think we ought to give her a
little advice about where to look for the
uranium she's after. Now—"

"Don't bother—I don't NEED any advice!" interrupted Judy. "I'm going to look everywhere, that's all, and I certainly don't need any armchair advice from either of you to do that!"

"Tut-tut!" chided Randy. "Take all the help you can get, my girl! You are embarked on a demanding expedition! Now, I feel that the wilds of Mr. Benson's pastures at the south end of town might be a good place to look!"

"And how about the rugged depths of Mrs. Willoughby's raspberry patch at the north end of town?" suggested Oogie.

"And we mustn't forget the churning rapids of Turtle Creek!" said Randy. "Provided that a Geiger counter can penetrate through all that sticky mud, of course!"

"Oh, it can, it can!" Oogie assured him.
"It can even go through mountains! Which reminds me, Judy—don't forget to try Grandma Alcott's rock garden!"

"And then of course there's always your own backyard!" said Randy. "And—"

"THAT WILL DO, BOTH OF YOU!" interrupted Judy sternly. "You won't think you're so funny when I come back with my bonanza!" She picked up the Geiger counter and stalked out of the house, leaving the two boys rocking with laughter and preparing to spend a very smug and snug afternoon at home.

It was a full five hours later that they were both roused from their science fiction magazines by the sound of tired footsteps dragging up the front walk toward the house. They looked at each other expectantly, knowingly, as a hand fumbled with the doorknob until the door pushed wearily open. It was Judy—tired, tattered, hungry—and very, very disappointed.

"Any luck?" asked Oogie, as politely as he could, considering the fact that he was torn between genuine sympathy and outright laughter. Judy never even bothered to answer.

"Wait until she catches her breath," advised Randy. "Then she can tell us about the uranium that got away!"

Judy put the Geiger counter down on the hall chair and then stumbled wearily into the living room. "I should be mad at you for that, Randy," she said at last, falling into an empty chair like a stiff floor mop. "But I'm too worn out to make the effort. Besides—I've got to admit—you two were right—there just isn't any uranium in this neck of the woods!"

"No?" asked Oogie and Randy simultaneously, both very, very solicitous.

"No!" sighed Judy. "I ought to know-I've been everywhere and that stupid little box never clicked once! But that's not the worst of it! I'm lucky I got home in one piece! I practically broke all my limbs stumbling into those horrid gopher holes all over Mr. Benson's pastures! And-and I'm just full of brambles from Mrs. Willoughby's raspberry patch! And I'm covered with mud from slipping into Turtle Creek because of that stupid, slimy bank! And in my desperation, I even tried Grandma Alcott's rock garden, and wouldn't you know I had to go and fall and practically skin my knees alive! Oh, I feel awful-just awful-and I only wish I had taken your advice and stayed at home!" She looked mournfully at Oogie and Randy for a moment. "What I'd like to know," she sighed, "is how you two were so smart as to know it was a hopeless project from the very beginning!"

Oogie coughed embarrassedly and glanced at Randy. "We—er—have a slight confession to make, Judy," he said. "Randy and I borrowed Mr. Morris' Geiger counter and went out uranium hunting the day you were visiting in Cartersville last week—and we found, out the same way you did that there isn't any uranium around here!"

"Well, as I said," replied Judy, "I'm too weary to get mad. Anyway, I've decided I don't really care about finding any precious element and getting rich—I'm just glad to be home!"

"I know how you feel!" agreed Oogie. "Besides, I have recently discovered a fundamental and inescapable truth . . ."

"What's that, Oogie?" asked Judy.

"That YOU'RE the most precious element of all!"

"Oh, Oogie—what a lovely thing to say! And I must confess that you're the rarest!"

"And I can see," said Randy, grinning and getting to his feet, "that I'M the element that's definitely NOT WANTED in this particular situation! Pardon me while I go prospecting for doughnuts in the wastelands of the kitchen!"





















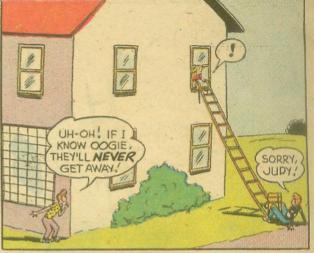




















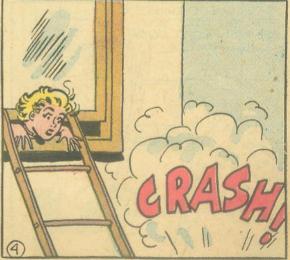








































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