

MARY/JEFF #1

Place: The street.

(Jeff enters briskly. Mary enters.)

Mary: Hey, wait up will ya'. What's the hurry? Where's the fire?

Jeff: Listen lady, the sooner we get this over with, the sooner you'll be out of my hair for good. Savvy?

Mary: Oh you think I'm gonna lose, do ya'?

Jeff: You know it, sister.

Mary: Well, you've got another think comin', ya big palooka. I plan on turnin' in the better story and gettin' that job.

Jeff: But why? What do you want to be a reporter for, huh? The newspaper game is for men. Women don't belong in it.

Mary: Oh yeah? Well, they said flying was a man's game too, and then Amelia Earhart came along. And how about Edith Wharton? The first woman to win a Pulitzer Prize for fiction. Or Mary Davenport-Engberg, the first woman to conduct a symphony orchestra? What about them?

Jeff: Ah, you're talkin' out of your hat.

Mary: I am not. Besides, the newspaper game is in my blood. My grandfather was a sportswriter and a darned good one at that.

Jeff: You're grandfather huh? And who's he when he's home.

Mary: Charlie Hayes.

Jeff: Charlie Hayes? Your grandfather was Charlie Hayes?

Mary: He sure was.

Jeff: Why Charlie Hayes was the best.

Mary: He was tops.

Jeff: Yeah, well that still doesn't mean you've got the goods.

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Mary: Oh, I've got the goods all right. Don't you worry.

Jeff: Yeah, we'll see about that.

Mary: You're just afraid of being beaten by a woman.

Jeff: Hey, I ain't afraid of being beaten by no woman, ya' hear? Why there ain't a woman alive who could write a better story than Jeff Kincaid. There ain't a man alive who could do it either.

Mary: Is that so?

Jeff: I'm the top of the heap, just as sure as I'm standin' here.

Mary: Boy, how does that hat fit on the swollen head of yours?

Jeff: Knock it off.

Mary: You're not married are you?

Jeff: Married? Not on your life, baby doll. I don't want to get tied down to no ball and chain.

Mary: Yeah, I figured. You've only got enough love in your heart for one person. You.

Jeff: Hey, what's the big idea?

Mary: It's true.

Jeff: Ahhh!

Mary: Ahhh!

Jeff: So, what's your story anyway?

Mary: What d'ya mean?

Jeff: What's the scoop? Gimme the skinny? What have ya' got goin' for you besides those gorgeous gams of yours?

Mary: Well, I was working at Shunkleton's Department Store...thank you by the way.

Jeff: For what?

Mary: The gorgeous gams comment.

Jeff: Oh. You're welcome.

Mary: So I was working at Shunkleton's Department Store as a perfumier but then I got...

Jeff: As a what?

Mary: A perfumier. I sold

perfume. Jeff: Well why didn't

you say so?

Mary: But then I got laid off because of budget cutbacks. That's always the way, isn't it? Whenever a store has to cut back, the perfumier is the first to go.

Jeff: Is that a fact?

Mary: Oh, yes. The perfumier and the trombone

salesman. Jeff: Trombone salesman?

Mary: That's right.

Jeff: Shunkleton's has got a guy who does nothin' but sell trombones?

Mary: Not anymore. They let him go. So after I got laid off I decided to go back to my first love. Reporting. I've always thought I had a nose for news. And so I hit the bricks and started banging on newspaper doors and before you know it, here I am. And I really need this job too because my rent is coming due. And I'm living hand to mouth as it is. I never know where my next meal is coming from. This is the only outfit I own. These aren't even my shoes. I found them.

(Jeff looks at Mary.)

Too much?

Jeff: You should've stopped at the rent.