

The Free Press Short Story

THE LONG CHANCE

By ARCHIE JOSELYN

WADDELL & COMPANY, dealers in hardware, was an old, reliable, and thoroughly conservative firm. There had not been anything mighty about it since Hiram Waddell I, had founded the business as a twelve by twenty store ninety years ago. Now Hiram Waddell IV, and his brother, both middle-aged men, kept up the conservative tradition, even though the business had grown, the through printed advertising, but by sheer good-will advertising, to an imposing something.

Stanton knew exactly how conservative Waddell & Company was. At any rate, having been for over a year in the employ, he should have known it. He knew that the owners disliked advertising. He knew, too, that they disliked innovations, that they never handled any line of goods save those that had been established for many years, and were therefore well and favorably known to the public. Added to all this, he knew that they would not handle anything that was not strictly hardware. The business might expand, but old and valued customers might also glean the idea that Waddell & Company were becoming speculators, and therefore unworthy of further confidence should they make an addition of this kind.

In fact, only three months before, Waddell & Company had refused to consider handling Portland cement on the grounds that they never had sold it, and that it should more properly be sold by the Great Eastern Lumber Company of their city. The cement offered for their consideration had been the Seven Star, well known to the trade for twenty-seven years.

It was an oversight, of course, that Stanton, being a young man and with possibly progressive notions, should be left in charge of the business for even two days. Both Hiram IV and Henry II had left for their annual vacation in the mountains. Everything being apparently stable and sold, Green, the manager, had left on Friday for the week-end. Blumfield had been in charge, and then he had been taken ill.

When the offer of new business came, Stanton tried to get the Waddells and Green on the wire, and failed. Blumfield was too sick to be consulted, and there was a time limit, Saturday noon.

The Rock Cement Company had called upon long distance. They were a new Portland cement company in the west, and their product was practically unknown. They had fifty carloads ready for shipment, a surplus, which had to be disposed of in a hurry. Stanton, by a little quick figuring, discovered that, with the ready facilities of handling it and disposal which the Waddell Company had, there would be a sure and safe profit of between six thousand dollars on the shipment, all pure velvet. A few hours of waiting, for a report from a Government agency, assured him that the Rock cement was as good as any on the market.

Stanton closed the deal, and by Saturday night a big train of fifty cars was rolling eastward. Stanton would be blamed by most firms if he let a six thousand dollar profit that was safe and sure slip past.

The blow fell on Monday, however. Hiram Waddell had received a message and decided to return. He acted promptly, upon learning of the state of affairs. He called Stanton in the office. From behind a huge pair of gold-rimmed spectacles, the manager frowned upon the younger man much in the way that a scientist might view a new and surprising specimen of insect.

"You have been with us for about a year, Mr. Stanton, and I had supposed that you were familiar with our way of doing business. It seems that I was in error. You have taken a step that stands to ruin the reputation of Waddell & Company. We cannot afford to accept the order. The order was not valid without the signature of Waddell & Company. None the less, it is apt to cost us some little money if we refuse the shipment.

"You are responsible. Since you acted on your initiative in the first place, I am going to leave the matter in your hands. I cannot afford to have my vacation spoiled. We can, of course, refuse the shipment and pay a forfeit of five thousand dollars. If necessary, you may do so. If you do, you will automatically sever your connection with Waddell & Company with that act. If you succeed in disposing of the shipment without cost to the company in either cash or reputation, your mistake will be overlooked."

Having delivered his ultimatum, Hiram IV did a strange thing. Overlooking the fact that Green had not returned, he left again, and Stanton was once more in charge of the firm of Waddell & Company.

When the offices opened Tuesday morning, the representative of the Rock Cement Company arrived. Stanton had spent a restless night, trying to figure a way out of the dilemma. Work was hard to get now at best, and if he had to leave Waddell & Company, without a recommendation, he would be up against it. On the other hand, he had studied the situation existing in the state quite thoroughly. Why not take a chance? He could not be any worse off. "Shoot your fifty carloads along," he told the representative of the Rock Cement Company which he called. "We'll take them

as soon as the shipment arrives. That won't be long now."

"It will hustle me," confessed Stanton, "but I think I can make all of it."

"I think you can," agreed Richards; "but there's one other item that I haven't mentioned. You'll have to pay the freight, or at least a good part of it; on thirty cars when it gets here. And that before you get any profits; otherwise there are apt to be complications."

Stanton was silent a moment, while Richards watched him keenly; then he flung his head up. "I had forgotten that complication," he admitted, "and it's a big one; but I'll fight through for the top some way. I'll need about two thousand, I suppose. But I'm not going to quit and lose four for the want of two."

"Money's hard to get. The banks are unusually cautious, even where things look gilt-edged. I have some saved up, and I'll write you out a check for it. It'll be the best way."

"Why, that's mighty good of you, but I—I don't like to take it. It's a long chance I'm taking, as it is, and if I lose, and there's a good many chances to do just that, why—"

"Reckon there's not much chance of losing. The way you told me about it, it looks like a good proposition, and I'll be glad to help you out a bit. Yvonne wouldn't like it if I wouldn't, would you?" to his sister.

"I certainly would not," that young lady agreed staunchly.

Stanton thought deeply. He had known both Yvonne and her brother long enough to understand that neither of them had a "head for business." Well, the stuff sold easily, and there was a sure market. It seemed. He would need the money. "All right," he agreed, "but if I win out, you'll get a third of the profits as interest." Though the third should be as much as the capital advanced, he would not sign the contract on any other basis.

Business was discouraging the next morning. By noon Stanton had disposed of one carload. Most of his new prospective purchasers, though they listened with interest, and considered the Government report as satisfactory, did not display a great enthusiasm. It was all right to buy a bargain from a firm with the reputation of Waddell & Company. Once its name was mentioned, all possible doubts were quelled. They were safe, and they were getting a bargain; but the Stanton Cement Company was another proposition. Most of the firms had stocked up already, from other companies, with various brands of cement; and they were not interested; yet they had taken a bargain from Waddell & Company. Why? The bargain had attracted them, and the name had clinched it. Evidently they were interested in bargains, but only when they were convinced that they were bargains.

Suddenly he stood still, thinking. Presently he smiled. Why not? Long chances were getting to be his portion. Might as well take another. If it did not work one way, it might another.

Hiram Waddell, IV, Henry Waddell, II, and Mr. Green were sitting in the big office, discussing nothing in particular. None of them was particularly inclined to grant an audience to Mr. Stanton, of the Stanton Cement Company, but it seemed that the gentleman had followed close upon the heels of the office boy, and would not be denied. "Well?" barked Hiram IV.

"Very well, thank you," smiled Stanton. "My health has never better. I have come on business. I have been in conversation with the presidents of the Clayton Products Store and the Quality Hardware Company, also certain other well known customers of Waddell & Company. I have here signed orders from those firms, requesting, in the total, ten carloads of Rock Portland cement a month, at regular prices, for the next six months. A total of sixty cars. Kindly read the letters."

Hiram IV read in silence, and passed the letters on to Henry II and Mr. Green. Then he blew his nose loudly and glared at Stanton. "Well?" he barked again, but not so fiercely.

"I represent the Stanton Cement Company," Stanton went on calmly. "I have thirty carloads of Rock cement which I wish to sell you at a bargain price, immediately."

"We'll take 'em," nodded Hiram IV. Henry II and Mr. Green nodded their heads, slowly, in unison. "I think it is a wise move for Waddell & Company to add cement to the list of products which it handles," stated Henry II, judiciously. "These letters state great confidence in Waddell & Company, and seem to feel that we should handle such allied products." That it would be a convenience which they would appreciate.

"Exactly," snorted Hiram IV. "Young man, I want you to handle that end of the business for us. Twice your former salary."

FROM THE JAM CUPBOARD

By Barbara B. Brooks

One of our favorite sports at this time of year is working miracles with the glasses and jars of preserves which have been longest in the cupboard. It is fun to pick out a dark, rainy day to clean the shelves and while doing so take inventory, and set out everything which should be used. There may be a jar or two of pickles, the last of their kind; some jam which is slightly sugared; jelly which is "weeping"; fruit which has lost some of its color; relishes which have not been popular with the members of the family. Get them all out in the front row, make a list of what you have, then plan menus to include them.

How can pickles be used other than as they come from the jar? One way is to chop them and add to mayonnaise for a fish sauce. This is especially good on fish prepared by the Spencer Method.

BAKED FISH

(Spencer Method)

Cut fish into pieces for serving. Dip in salted milk, using a tablespoon of salt for each cup of milk. Evaporated milk may be used. Dip into finely ground or rolled corn flakes. Arrange on well oiled baking sheet and sprinkle liberally with oil.

Bake in a very hot oven (500 degrees F.) for about ten minutes.

Note: About 1/4 pound of fish necessary for each serving.

Serve with pickle-mayonnaise. This same pickle-mayonnaise can be mixed with chopped hard cooked eggs, celery, grated carrot, ground ham or beef for a sandwich spread.

Jam which has sugared may be used in muffins. Prepare your muffin recipe, put the batter into the pans and place a teaspoon of jam on top of each one. Bake as usual. Bran muffins are good this way.

JAM BRAN MUFFINS

- 2 tablespoons shortening
- 4 cup sugar
- 1 egg (well beaten)
- 1 cup sour milk
- 1 cup all-bran
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Jam

Cream the shortening and sugar, add egg and sour milk. Add all-bran and let soak until most of the moisture is taken up. Sift flour with baking powder, soda and salt and add to first mixture, stirring only until flour disappears. Fill greased muffin tins two-thirds full. Put a teaspoon of jam on top of each one. Bake in a moderate oven (400 degrees F.) for 20 to 25 minutes.

Yield: 8 large or 12 small muffins.

Jelly which has begun to weep can be sauced with a fork and served as a sauce for meat. A tart jelly is best for this purpose. Any flavor of jelly can be melted over hot water and served with cottage pudding.

Peaches or pears are delicious au gratin. Drain the fruit and save the juice. Roll the fruit in fine corn flake crumbs. Place in buttered baking dish, cut side up. Dot with butter. Bake in a hot oven (400 degrees F.-425 degrees F.) until crumbs are brown. Serve with sauce made from the juice.

LEMON SPICE SAUCE

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1 cup boiling juice drained from fruit (If necessary add water to make one cup)
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice
- Nutmeg
- Salt

Mix sugar and cornstarch in top of double boiler. Add fruit juice gradually, stirring constantly. Cook five minutes after mixture begins to thicken. Add butter, lemon juice, nutmeg and salt.

A welcome luncheon dish in cool weather is griddle cakes. Bake large cakes, spread with butter and jelly or jam. Roll up, sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve as dessert. If you have not had fruit cobbler recently, add it to your list. Cherries, peaches, raspberries, strawberries or pears are all good in this recipe.

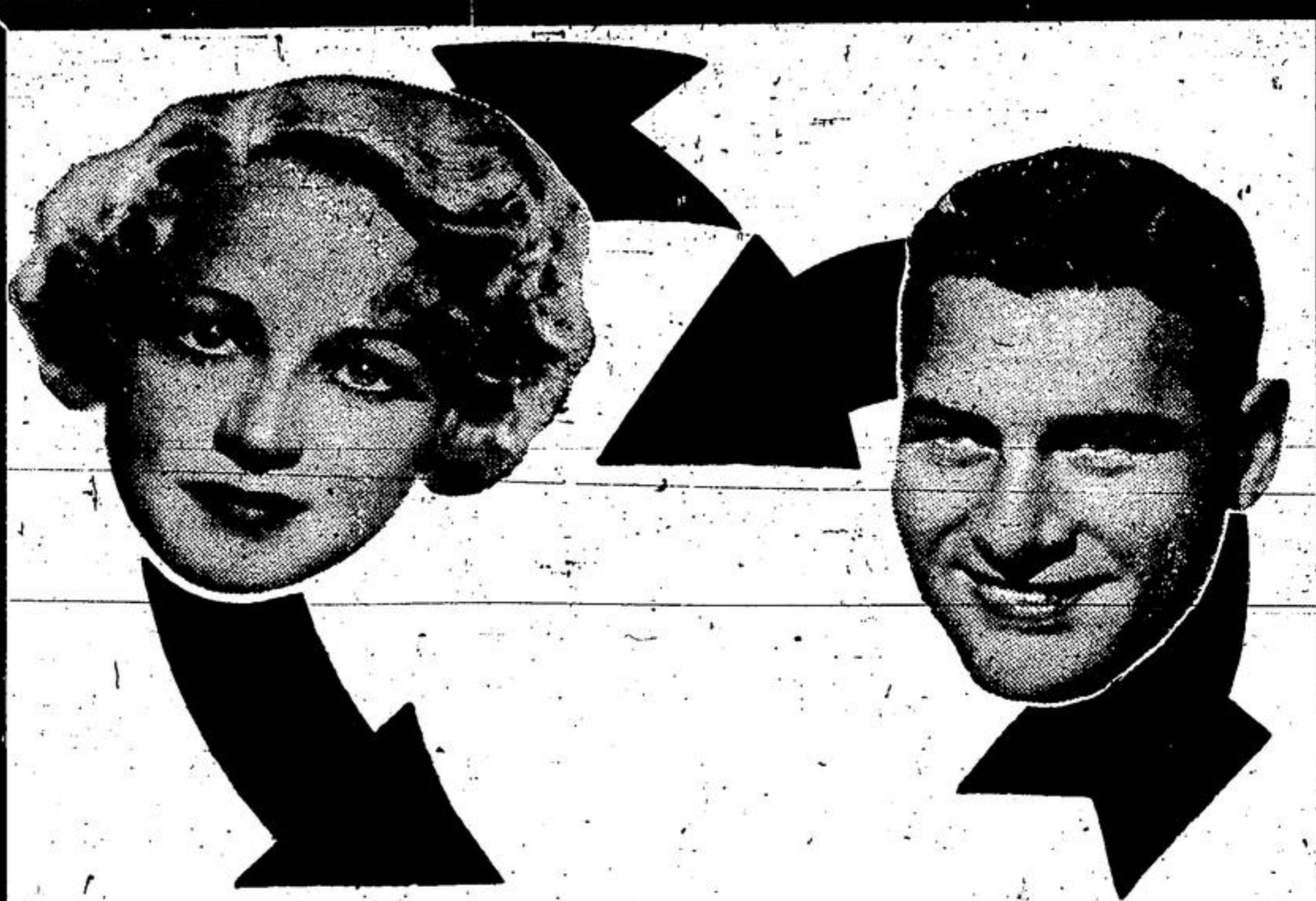
Have you ever beaten jam into hard sauce to serve on a pudding? It looks pretty and is delicious. Folded into whipped cream, jam makes a nice topping for cream pie or cake.

It is fun to take stock of the preserve cupboard and to use up the less popular contents in such a way that they seem like new and miraculous products.

AN AID TO EFFICIENCY

Thomas L. Masson, the famous American humorist, gives two hours a day to reading the Bible. When people ask him how he can find time for this, he explains that he began by reading fifteen minutes daily. He found that his efficiency was increasing because of this practice so he increased his time of reading to an hour. He soon realized that instead of losing time, he was gaining it, and he added another hour. This proved so satisfactory that he is continuing the programme.

Some of you have found that there are certain ways of using time that save it. Every now and then a young fellow tries to save time by cutting his hours of sleep down to four or five, but generally he finds that it takes eight hours of sleep to make the other sixteen efficient. Mr. Masson has proved to his satisfaction that two hours a day spent in reading the Bible saves him time, for it adds to his efficiency in his working hours. Might it not be worth while for some of you young people to try the experiment?



WYNNE GIBSON - Paramount Star

RICHARD ARLEN - Paramount Star

The Characters

In The Free Press Local Contest

Commencing Next Week

Will not be such well-known movie stars as Wynne Gibson or Richard Arlen, but folks you meet every day about Acton.

Ask at the Stores after March 23 for Coupons—Get in on the Cash Prizes of \$10.00

Next week the first Silhouette Sketch of a local character, drawn by our local artist, Jas. K. Gardiner, will appear in THE FREE PRESS. Next Thursday the stores having coupons will hand them out with every fifty cent purchase of Advertised Goods. Here are the Simple Rules--

Your part will be to guess who this character is and to also guess his weight. That is simple enough and for six tries you may win \$7.00.

The coupons for the guessing will be furnished you by the stores that advertise that week in THE FREE PRESS. With every fifty cent (50c) purchase of goods selected from advertisements appearing in the issue of THE FREE PRESS of the same date as the sketch appears, the merchant where the goods are purchased will furnish you with a guessing coupon. Fill in your guesses and name and deposit it with the merchant at any time before the next picture appears.

To the person guessing the nearest correct on name and weights on all six sketches an award of \$7.00 in cash will be made. The second nearest estimate will receive \$3.00 in cash. You may register as many guesses as your purchases allow that week on the sketch.

A Committee of Three Judges will be announced before the close of the campaign, whose decision in the awards will be final.

No member of THE FREE PRESS staff or family is permitted to enter this Contest. Neither is any local Merchant permitted to deposit an estimate in his own store.

In case of cases of a tie, the Judges have the right to choose the method for deciding which will be the winner, and their award will be final.

THE FREE PRESS cannot enter into any controversy on the decisions or engage in any correspondence concerning the Contest. It is just a local event for local amusement of local folks.

Only guesses on the dated coupons furnished the Merchants will be considered.



He May Look Like This

Since it's Spring time and this is a characteristic sketch of some local men, or again he may be one whose characteristic pose may be drawn while tripping the light fantastic. There's no telling just how J. K. Gardiner will depict his characters.



Then again it may not resemble any of these. Just be ready when the first sketch appears next week.

Follow the Ads—Make Your Guesses—You Win Both Ways

The Acton Free Press

SERVING ACTON AND DISTRICT SINCE 1875