The Free Bress Short Storn

"My Efficient Cousin Ann"

FRANK PARRINGTON

Fire brakes sereconed as Nicholas, Warren shoved the pedal clost to the floor board. The rear end of the sedan)he was driving skid- he was in the habit of putting lots ded to the left as the tires peased rolling money into valuable jewellery.

come out of that street The collision had damaged a fender board somewhere," said Benjamin, with on each car, but neither driver was hurt interest and no other harm was done. The girl, Ann Grady, hopped from her car and "took worldn't have condents like.

Nicholds. "I stopped before I got to the stop sign, didn't Try

"Yes, you stopped but your brakes switched to the left and that's what of the church choir, or I do." caused the accident."

"The lady is right," declared an officer who had arrived on the scene: 'Do you want to make a complaint against while Benjamin went on home. this young man?"

"No, he's only my cousin Nick," Ann you on the telephone," said Mrs. Warreplied, "He'll pay for having my fen- ren as Nicholas went in. "I think it's der fixed, and that's all there'll be to it. something about some anthem for Sun He may be short of spending money for day." a while, but it will be good for him.

"If that's a joke, it's a lousy one," mid Nicholas irritably. "You know I telephone. - Soon he returned. "She -haven't a cent and just have to hang wants me to come right over and bring around and live on my father. His car Ann," he said. "Why did she have to is changed just as much as yours, and if give Arn a duet with me? Well, I'll get be his I'd pay for."

"Tut, tut Nick! What a way to talk to your coundn!" Ann climbed back into her roadster and a group of spectators stood around, writing at the incident and obviously siding with the girl.

"Yeah my officient cousin Ann." Nicholas put a world of saronsm into the word efficient. "She knows all about everything, from a full floating axle to a Neanderthal man. Good night!"

Ann smiled as she kicked her starter pedal and rolled away, leaving Nicholas trying to start his engine after flooding she met him-at the river a few minutes the carburetor. He was further irritat- later ed by the unsympathetic comments from the crowd, and from Benjamin Floyd his replied Nicholas. "Never mind, I'll use companion, who had stayed in the sedan, this pole". He picked up a pole lying observing proceedings without taking there.

"Ann's a corking fine girl," said Ben- the middle," Ann warned him. jamin. "I don't see why you're always so sore at everything she says and does," declared. "Hop in and sit down and "She's too efficient, that's what's the cut out the back seat driving." matter," returned Nicholas, "She knows Ann took her seat demurchy and how to do everything.'. She gives me a Nicholas pushed off. "All right," she

red with self-consciousness as the crowd gers crossed. This water's deep and cold applanded when his engine started. "I'don't care; I think you're lucky to have a cousin like Ann," continued Ben- retorted Nicholas, with brutal frankriess. jamin. "I could fall for her any old Ann.made no reply to the discourteous

cousin, and she doesn't bob up always his balante as he stood poling their at just the time to make you teel like a craft across. To brace himself, he put dunce. Now dyou know the latest thing one foot against the side of the boat, she's doing? She's singing in our choir, and tried to free the pole from the log Good night! Ann singing! Why, she under which it was caught. It stuck never sang a note till last winter."

she'll be good," declared Benjamin. "If ped, bumped down on the gunwale, and she's laken up singing, believe me, she'll went overboard into the black water. " be a singer."

note in the book and have 'em all so could not swim. He came to the surface they'll come and eat out of her hand, some yards away, plunging and thresh-But she gives me a pain. If she's a ling about helplessly, validly trying to singer, I'm a millionaire and I haven't keep affoat. Ann snatched off her two nickels to rub together."

"You'll go, on, getting sorer and sorer, Yew strokes she resched the helpless Nick, till you'll be trying to get her out of the chair."

"I might at that. I'm about fed up with having Ann tell 'me how to do everything, from adjusting brakes to dinging the tenor | part in an anthem. Either she gets out of the choir or I do. and I'm telling you, it win't be me that

Ann and Mcholas, were not only cousins, but they were equal heirs to whatever catate their grandfather, old Hiram Grady, had left. The old man had been supposed to, be said althy, but at his death little of value, had been found. save the old homestead and its furnish-

Thus far that had notted the two heirs only the income from their respective shares since the principal sun; would not be paid to them until the following sear. when both came of age.

Ann's father was well to do and could give Ann the things she wanted. Nicholas father was loss fortimate and it took all he could scrape together to keep Nicholas in the home-town college where both he and Ann were completing their educations. Part of Nicholas' resentment toward Ann was due to tealousy of her ability and advantages.

Nicholas now drove the sedan into the family garage and he and Benjamin got / out. "Well, the next thing is to explain to Dad," said Nicholas. "The worst of it to that the best excuse I have to hest -what Arin said- It's always like that. She's always right. Do you know, she more money or valuables that belonged

"Don't ask me. Ask Ann. We know and alld along the concrete. A clash of thought diamonds were fust about the metal on metal rent was dr. His car best investment. But what became of had "side-swiped" a roadster driven by all of 'em, nobody knows... We couldn't a bretty girl who had turned into the find a sign of 'em, and we've searched side street just as Nicholas was about to high and low."

Why, there must be a secret cup-

walked around the sedan. "If you'd keep as big as a gnat's car that we haven't your brakes properly adjusted, Nick," she looked into, -- Either somebody robbed before he died. 'It's gone and nobody "My" brakes are all right," retorted but Ann claims we'll over see it." "Well, Ann is always right. You say

"Yeah, she's always right, but this don't full evenly. 'The rear of your car time she's wrong. Anyway, she goes out

> Benjamin was not aimid to sax "Maybe so, and maybe not. Walt and see," and Nicholas, started for the house, of the family car the next morning in every direction for fear the boller "Your choir leader was just calling

For the moment even the damaged

fender was forgotten. He went to the -I was going to pay for either, it would Ann and we'll go across the river in the

> The Gradys and the Warrens lived in adjoining houses and their lots reached back to the river. The choir leader lived straight across the river in a suburb called Brooklyn. It took but a few minutes to row across, while it was a mile around by the bridge, through traf-

Nicholas ran through the hedge between the two lots and called to Ann. "Where are the oars?" she maked as

"I supposed they were down here."

"It's too short to reach bottom out in "I can get along with it all right," he

said, "but don't be long because I'm At last Nicholas rolled away, his face holding my breath and keeping my finand you know you can't swim a note." "And you can't hardly sing a note."

"Yeah, you would, but you 'aren't her hit a floating log and threw Nicholas off and he put his weight into the pull. Sud-"All the same, you can count on it denly the pole come free and he slip-

The current was deep and swift. Noth-"She'd get away with murder," said ing was left with which Ann could "She'll know every manage the boat, and she knew Nicholas sweater and dove from the boat. With'a

grasp hold of her, but she fought-him fender?" asked Benjamin. off until he lost consciousness. It was many minutes before she finally brought to take care of both cars and fix em him to the shore. They had drifted far up." Nicholas replied.

where the town maintained a dumping ground for trash. Here Arin worked victorously over her cousin for

Pinally he was able to sit up. He and Ann sat there on an old, discarded kitchen range botter. "Do you recognize this boiler?" asked Ann.

"Nicholas looked at the old walvanized from range cylinder without misolatinger-"Yeah, I guess it's the or that was in Grandfather's house," he replied "It has that painted eye on it."

"That eye means something never figured out," declared Ann. been thinking about it and some day the explanation will come to me." and there the possible meaning of cabalistic signs. He sat hummed over on the

boiler while Ann went out to the highway and signaled a passing truck driver to stop and take them home. Ann's house and-Nicholas had not yet was the smiling reply. "Nick, you know You see, they took out the old boller Ann had done for him. He tried to figured out what that means." voice a thank you as they parted but it

was a failure. Well, I kept her from one rehearsal. "Come along and we'll go down to the anyway." said Nicholas grimly to him-"If that's so, my guess is that you go," self as he went to his room to put on cut into it. We always thought that are just naturally a little stubborn."

youth just as no was slipping under shot when Benjamin Bloyd came sountaring might be turned around. realizing what he was doing, he tried to into the garage. "How's the busted

"Oh, the insurance company is going

"How about Ann? You still out to out something over on her to get her out of the choir, and all that bunk?" "It isn't bunk," answered Nicholas. She added one more reason yesterday why I should get even. She saved me from drowning." He related the incid-

"It's just that she can do everything thing there," declared Nicholas. "Let and do it so efficiently. All our relatives go." think I'm dumb-and-she's the world's

"I come a lot nearer agreeing with your relatives than with you." Benjamin

"Is it so bild to be Ann's cousin?" asked a laughing voice, and Ann came in Nicholas felt little like discussing then the door. "What are you two concecting filled with jewellery and precious stones.

> Nick's waiting for- you to de smartest cousin in town," said Benjam-"Maybe I can do that little thing,"

said anything in appreciation of all that range boiler with the eye on it. I've and put in the new one without ever "Is that so?" asked Nicholas, skeptic-

> dump-pile, where we saw-it yesterday and responded, "and you aren't dumb. You eye meant to look in the direction it

thinking it might mean to look inside "A dumb idea," returned Micholes.

"But you'll come along, won't you?" peralster Ann. "Oh, I'll toome along and be gifd to

and one time when little efficiency Ani lips up. Coming, Ben?" "Burs I'm coming," said Benjamin, Arrived at the dumping ground, it took but a short time to locate the old botter and out one side out of it. Nicholas and Benjamin examined it carefully They shook it, rolled it, and turned end for old but it was empty. "Not

"That's queer," said Ann: "Twee L knew where to find that jeweffery." The trio returned to the car, Any seeming far from discomfitted. Before getting in, she lifted the seat cushion pulled out a candy box, and handed it to

Nicholas took the box and opened it to cry out in amazement as he found ! Ann laughed ... Just exactly two quarts." Nicholas sat down on the running board. "You win," he said. "I might ave known. Where'd you find them? ."The standard the boiler stood bn was

moving the standard." "Ann" said Nicholas, "you're a wonder and I've been a dumb idiot." "Nick, you're my favorite cousin," Ann

"You're probably right," laughed He was sitting on the running board was looking. We did that and we looked Nicholas, as they climbed into the car. "I'm not even going to confess how right you are, but as soon as we get back, let's go in and start working up on that new anthem I'm away off on the tenor." "So you're going to let me stay in the

choir?" asekd Ann provokingly. Nisholas looked at her and then at the grinning Benjamin. "Benjamin Floyd, you gave me away!" he exclaimed BAD-FAIRY POOL TO DO GOOD

In a spot which many believe is the haunt of a bad fairy, the greatest artificial lake in the Irish Free State is to be built to provide Dublin with additional water, power and light. In the wilds of the Wicklow mountains the River Liffey runs over a fall and down a slope into a pool, which lerend has called Poulaphouce. The slope is to be cut away so that the sheer drop of the water will be doubled to provide the power. A realley is to be dammed and flooded to make an artificial lake 8,000 acres in extent. One of the best mountain roads in Ireland running from Poulaphouce across Wicklow Gap to Glendalough, is to be rebuilt for 100 miles. The project

will cost about \$15,000,000 and will bein

about four years to complete.





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