

MENU

BEEFBURGERS

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When the sergeant came to the "Alive, alive, O," refrain, Janet joined in. She liked to sing, and she was glad she had always taken Chorus in high school.

MAY Eve

BY M. J. GAFFNEY

Janet started out to win the title of Miss Victory, but her final reward was something quite different

JANET fumbled in her purse. "It's here," she said to the conductor. "I just looked at it a minute ago." It was a very new purse, and the blue leather was stiff. Finally she took out everything, the lipstick the girls had given her for good luck, the flat silver vanity case, dental tape, chewing gum, toilet water from her large bottle but poured now in a tiny mouthwash bottle, aspirin in a cardboard carton for fear she might get a headache from the excitement, her name and address hooked on to the bag by a long string in case she should be in an accident, a comb and an address book for the names of all the new friends she was sure she would make.

"Here it is," she said at last.

"You've got everything but a check for a small beer there," said the conductor. He was jolly and had a large stomach upon which an elk's tooth dangled.

Janet felt a thrill again as she looked at the conductor. She was going to New York. She had been selected as Miss Victory for the Hudson Valley Tool Corporation and she was going to New York with all her expenses paid.

After the conductor had gone, Janet took a piece of gum and adjusted the seam on her right stocking. She was too excited to look at the magazine that her father had bought her, or the movie magazine one of the girls had given her. She wondered idly

what the girls back home in the plant would be doing now. Almost four; they'd have been on their shift for forty minutes or so; the ones with piece work would be killing themselves with that first fresh spurt of energy, the others on a flat rate wouldn't be working so hard.

Kay Sullivan was going to run Stanley for her while she was gone. Her best friend, Margy Williams, ran the drill press next to her, and she called her machine Oliver. They had both been convulsed at the idea of naming their presses after Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

It was Friday and there'd be a dance in the recreation room from twelve until five. Always on Friday nights Janet took a shower in the big lockers after she'd handed in her voucher and punched out. Then she'd get out of her overalls that, no matter how hard she tried, were always covered with black oil from the pressure pump spray on her machine, and into her best green print dress.

Tonight she would miss the dance, but that didn't matter, for she would be in New York. At some of the exciting functions the Miss Victory contest would be sponsoring.

At Poughkeepsie

the train stopped for a few minutes and Janet bought the largest chocolate bar the candy butcher had. She broke off a large piece and gave it to the woman beside her. The woman protested weakly, but Janet said, "It's awfully good. And we've still got quite a long trip ahead of us."

The woman laughed and took the chocolate. "You sound pretty happy," she said to Janet.

"I am." Janet wriggled a little in the seat and moved her blue pump up and down. Pumps always slipped off her because her heels were narrow. Then she had to tell the woman all about being selected as Miss Victory for the Hudson Valley Tool Corporation. "It's not that I'm so pretty," she put in hastily, "but there was a deadlock. There's two terribly pretty girls—one's a switchboard operator and the other's in one of the offices. They've both got relations that are high up in the plant and they were pulling for each of them. It finally got so hot-up around the place they picked me as—well, as a dark horse."

"You don't look like any dark horse to me," said the woman.

Janet had taffy-colored hair that just missed being blond by a photofinish. June

blue eyes. And pink cheeks. But as she and her best friend, Margy Williams, had to admit ruefully, no glamour, no glamour at all.

"Besides, my father's worked a long while in the plant," Janet went on. "He ran a milling machine for almost thirty years, and that's tough work, I'll tell you. Now he has a class showing the young fellows how to run them. And my brothers used to work there too before Fred and Tom went in the army and Jack went in the navy."

"Your mother must be very proud of such a family," the woman said.

"I guess she is," said Janet, her excited little girl's voice husky. "Ma's dead, you see. But she'd be proud of the boys, I know; her little robins she used to call us. That's our name—Robbins. Pa's Scotch. He came from Dundee."

The Edgewood was the official headquarters for the Miss Victory contestants; the eighteenth and nineteenth floors had been set apart for them by the Colin chain of newspapers which was sponsoring the contest. When Janet arrived, the lobby seemed to be overflowing with the most beautiful girls she had ever seen, and all—or so she judged from their V-shaped buttons with *Colin News Syndicate* printed underneath—rivals for the top one-thousand-dollar war-

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HOUSEHOLD

MAY
VOLUME 44

1944
NUMBER 5

MAY 1944

HOUSEHOLD

ARTHUR CAPPER PUBLISHER

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BY M. J. GAFFNEY

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BY E. F. LOUGEE

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