

REDBOOK DRAMAS

This series, based upon short stories originally published in Redbook Magazine, was aired in the year 1932. The United States was then in the grip of the Great Depression, and several of the episodes reflect that phenomenon. "He Knew Women" and "Kiss and Jail," for example, feature families which have been devastated by the stock market crash and its aftermath.

As if to counteract the country's grim circumstances, however, many of the stories offer "love, mystery, adventure, romance" in sometimes exotic settings. Listeners are transported to such places as Yucatan, France, Dalmatia and Manchuria and encounter some remarkable characters and circumstances along the way. These include a surly Army private who gets in trouble when his pet goat butts a brigadier general into a mud puddle; an American schoolteacher who becomes involved in a political intrigue abroad and temporarily represents herself as a collector of coffins; and an intrepid little domestic servant with Holmes-like powers of observation who solves a murder case at a frozen outpost beyond the Arctic Circle. Some of the authors are noteworthy as well.

For example Elaine Carrington, who wrote "The Kid," is well remembered today as creator of the famous radio soap operas *When a Girl Marries* and *Pepper Young's Family*. And Frank R. Adams, whose "A Gent Passes By" delivers a knockout sequence of startling revelations, displays the skill that enabled him to publish dozens of short stories in popular magazines of the day such as *Munsey's* and *The Smart Set*.

These syndicated episodes are all fifteen minutes in length, and some could have benefited from more time to develop plot and character. But the best of them convey to us an intense flavor of their times, often with charming musical interludes and bridges, from a broadcast year that has left us with all too few programs to enjoy.