

**THEIR FRIENDLY
ENEMY**

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Their Friendly Enemy by Gardner Hunting

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GARDNER HUNTING

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BY

GARDNER HUNTING

Author of

"Touchdown and After," "Sandsy's Pal," etc.

New York

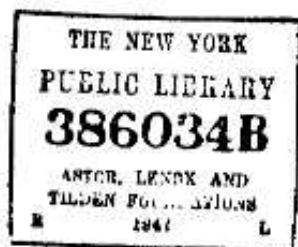
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THEIR FRIENDLY ENEMY

CHAPTER I

A HARD NUT TO CRACK

MARAH, it's done!"

"It's done, Hallie!"

"I never quite believed it would be. Even when Mr. Wiles called us up and asked to talk to us, and when your aunt—oh Marah, wasn't she a dear?—when your aunt offered to put in the money. I haven't believed in it at all—till now!"

Hallie Rector's seventeen-year-old head was small and dark, and it had a way of tilting itself on one side like a listening robin's, when its owner was carried out of herself with interest in something else. It was tilted now, as her bright dark eyes held her chum's, across the wide, paper-littered desk between them.

"It's my really big ambition, Marah, and I can hardly believe in its realization. I've al-

ways wanted to—to have a desk, with a lot of fresh white paper on it—and a fat, soft pencil like this—and to write about things and see my own words come out in nice clean black print next day. That isn't a lofty literary ambition, is it? But that's what I really feel—just a love for the white, white paper and the black, black ink—and my own words."

Marah Whittlesey laughed. "That's the creative instinct, my dear. It begins with love of the tools—at least, it does with many people."

"But how *can* you be so calm about it, Marah? It feels like—oh, like Christmas trees and surprise parties to me! It's my orange-skin coach and my glass slipper! Just think, this is our newspaper—yours and mine! And it's a career! And I'll never have to go away from Pentwater and teach! I'll never have to stand behind a counter and measure and sell! And I can have *you* with me all the time and we can *do* things together!"

"It's a very great satisfaction to me."

"Oh, don't the noises and the smells and the feels of things excite you? It's so benziney, and