

July 1947 Arkay News

From the
Erma Bombeck
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FANCY with **erma**
FISTE

Dear Boss:

Remember me?

I'm the one that occupies the desk adjoining yours. I used to be your girl Friday . . . you said so yourself. Recall if you will that day just before you went on your vacation. "Do you think you can handle the Arkay News Office alone?" you said, and I laughed as I playfully put rubber cement on the doorknobs and later absent-mindedly filed the halltree. Ah carefree days!

But you said you would take your chances and gave me the following instructions: Keep the pothus vine watered, get in touch with the printers, distribute the paper throughout the store, write some snappy copy for the next issue, answer the correspondence, get some pictures underway, don't invite the gang up for cokes, keep the door shut, don't talk with strangers, and write a decent column this time." The door slammed. And you were gone!

Honest, Boss, I meant to carry your instructions out to the last dangling participle if I had to split an infinitive to do it. But I didn't count on the unforeseen. The printer called. "Do you want this head set in 17-point Goudy bold?" he said. (I never could tell the difference between Goudy bold and a muskrat in June.) The engraver dropped in. "Say, should we make this pix a half tone of copper?" (That's an engraver for you—always getting personal.) And so it went. My nerves began to jangle with the fortitude and regularity of the telephone.

The world was against me . . . the typewriter keys locked, the 80-watt light bulb in the ceiling burnt out, the key got locked in the files, the pencil sharpener ran over . . . even the water on the pothus vine evaporated when I didn't water it in 10 days. Ingratitude, that's what I call it.

But I wrote some snappy copy all right, boss. Yesiree. The best ever, and if it hadn't been for the fire . . . oh, just a small one. That didn't worry me as much as your book-ends that I broke . . . well, it really all started when I tried to answer the phone and found I had stapled my left hand to the bulletin I was supposed to have delivered three days ago . . . No, I guess it really started after I fired your favorite photographer. I really couldn't help it. He insisted on using flash bulbs and I told him this was a conservative paper and we'd have no flashy prints in our sheet . . . oh, but you really don't want to bear about those unimportant things.

Really and truly, Boss, I hope you had a nice vacation and . . . (Excuse me a minute . . . well, well, some nice man just returned the business correspondence I dropped down the elevator shaft this morn-

(Continued next column)

ing) and . . . oh yes, I hope you didn't worry about a thing cause . . . (That telephone again . . . hmmm, the new photographer is upset because I arranged a picture on Rike's roof ledge . . . says he's lost three salespeople already and wants to know what to do). Now where was I? Oh yes, cause everything is in safe hands and (knock on the door) No! No! I can't go on. I don't really want to work on a newspaper. I don't really want to be famous. I just want to go to an engine room where it's peaceful and quiet. Where there are no typewriters to trip over, no proofs to turn your eyeballs into sharp points, no staff to bribe for copy . . . that's all . . . and you can put that in your pothus vine and smoke it!