ROUNDING UP MAGGIE

by Sewell Ford

UNEXPECTED AND LIVELY EXPERIENCE ON CONEY ISLAND OF THE BISHOP, AUNT ISABELLA AND PROFESSOR SHORTY McCABE

SAY, who was tellin' you? Ah, g'wan! Them sea shore press agents is full of fried eels. Disguises nothin'! Them folks I has with me was the real things. The Rev. Doc. Akehead? Not much. That was my little old bishop. And it wa'n't any slummin' party at all. It was just a little errand of mercy that got switched.

It was this way: The bishop, he shows up at the studio for his reg'lar medicine ball work, that I'm givin' him so's he can keep his equator from gettin' the best of his longitude. That's all on the quiet, though. It's somethin' I ain't puttin' on the bulletin board, or includin' in my list of references, understand?

Well, we has had our half-hour session, and the bishop has just made a break for the cold shower and the dressin' room, while I'm preparin' to shed my workin' clothes for the afternoon; when in pops Swifty Joe, closin' the gym. door behind him real soft and mysterious.

"Shorty," says he in that hoarse whisper he gets on when he's excited, "she's—she's come!"

"Who's come?" says I.

"S-s-s-sh!" says he, wavin' his hands. "It's the old girl; and she's got a gun!"

"Ah, say!" says I. "Come out of the trance. What old girl? And what about the gun?"

Maybe you've never seen Swifty when he's real stirred up? He wears a corrugated brow, and his lower jaw hangs loose, leavin' the Mammoth Cave wide open, and his eyes bug out like shoe buttons. His thoughts come faster than he can separate himself from the words; so it's hard gettin' at just what he means to say. But as near as I can come to it there's a wide female party waitin' out in the front office for me, with blood in her eye and a self cockin' section of the unwritten law in her fist.

Course, I knows right off there must be some mistake, or else it's a case of dope, and I says so. But Swifty is plumb sure she knew who she was askin' for when she calls for me, and begs me not to go out. He's for ringin' up the police.

"Ring up nobody!" says I. "S'pose I want this thing gettin' into the papers? If a Lady Bughouse has strayed in here, we got to shoo her out as quiet as possible. She can't shoot if we rush her. Come on!"

I will say for Swifty Joe that, while he ain't got any too much sense, there's no ocher streak in him. When I pulls open the gym. door and gives the word, we went through neck and neck.

"Look out!" he yells, and I sees him makin' a grab at the arm of a broad beamed old party, all done up nicely in gray silk and white lace.

And say, it's lucky I got a good mem'ry for profiles; for if I hadn't seen right away it was Purdy Bligh's Aunt Isabella, and that the gun was nothin' but her silver hearin' tube, we might have been tryin' to explain it to her yet. As it is, I'm just near enough to make a swipe for Swifty's right hand with my left, and I jerks his paw back just as she turns around from lookin' out of the window and gets her lamps on us. Say, we must have looked like a pair of batty ones, standin' there holdin' hands and starin' at her! But it seems that folks as deaf as she is aint easy surprised. All she does is feel around for her gold eye glasses with one hand and fit the silver hearin' machine to her off ear with the other. It's one of these pepper box affairs, and I didn't much wonder that Swifty took it for a gun.

"Are you Professor McCabe?" says she.

"Sure!" I hollers; and Swifty, not lookin' for such strenuous conversation, goes up in the air about two feet.

"I beg pardon," says the old girl; "but will you kindly speak into the andiphone."

So I steps up closer, forgettin' that I still has the clutch on Swifty, and drags him along.

"Ahr, chee!" says Swifty. "This ain't no brother act, is it?"

With that I lets him go, and me and Aunt Isabella gets down to business. I was lookin' wor some tale about Purdy—you know, the one that had the half brother we shunted back to Bombaxoula? But it looks like this was a new deal; for she opens up by askin' if I knew a party by the name of Dennis Whaley.

"Do I?" says I? "I've known Dennis ever since I can remember knowin' anybody. He's runnin' my place out to Primrose Park now.

"I thought so," says Aunt Isabella. "Then perhaps you know a niece of his, Margaret Whaley?"

I didn't; but I'd heard of her. She's Terence Whaley's girl, that come over from Skibbereen four or five years back, after near starvin' to death one wet season when the potato crop was so bad. Well, it seems Maggie has worked a couple of years for Aunt Isabella as kitchen girl. Then she's got ambitious, quit service, and got a flatwork job in a hand laundry—eight per, 14 hours a day, Saturday 16 hours.

I didn't tumble why all this was worth chinnin' about until Aunt Isabella reminds me that she's president and board of directors of the Lady Pot Wrestlers' Improvement Society. She's one of the kind that spends her time tryin' to organize study classes for hired girls who have different plans for spendin' their Thursday afternoons off.

Seems that Aunt Isabella has been keepin' special tabs on Maggie, callin' at the laundry to give her good advice, and leavin' her books to read,—which I got a tintype of her readin', not,—and otherwise doin' the upliftin' act accordin' to rule. But along in the early Summer Maggie had quit the laundry without consultin' the old girl about it. Aunt Isabella kept on the trail, though, run down her last boardin' place, and begun writin' her what she called helpful letters. She kept this up until she was handed the ungrateful jolt. The last letter come back to her with a few remarks scribbled across the face, indicatin' that readin' such stuff gave Maggie a pain in the small of her back. But the worst of it all was, accordin' to Aunt Isabella, that Maggie was in Coney Island.

"Think of it!" says she. "That poor, innocent girl, living in that dreadfully wicked place! Isn't it terrible?"

"Oh, I don't know," says I. "It all depends."

"Hey?" says the old girl. "What say?"

Ever try to carry on a debate through a silver salt shaker? It's the limit. Thinkin' it would be a lot easier to agree with her, I shouts out, "Sure thing!" and nods my head. She nods back and rolls her eyes.

"She must be rescued at once!" says Aunt Isabella. "Her uncle ought to be notified. Can't you send for him?"

As it happens, Dennis had come down that mornin' to see an old friend of his that was due to croak; so I figures it say, we was a sporty lookin' bunch—I don't guess. There was the bishop, in his little flat hat and white choker—you couldn't mistake what he was—and Aunt Isabella, with her gray hair and her gray and white costume, lookin' about as giddy as a marble angel on a tombstone. Then there's Dennis, who has rescue business before all you good folks is soggy with sin."

Then it turns out she ain't got any address at all. The most she knows is that Maggie's somewhere on the Island.

"Well," I shouts into the tube, "Coney's something of a place, you see! What's your idea of findin' her?"

THE RESCUE EXPEDITION GOES OUT OF BUSINESS WITH A LOW, HOLLO WPLUNK.

out that the best way would be to get him and the old lady together and let 'em have it out. I chases Swifty down to West Eleventh street to bring Dennis back in a hurry, and invites Aunt Isabella to make herself comfortable until he comes.

She's too excited to sit down, though. She goes pacin' around the front office, now and then lookin' me over suspicious, —bein' still in my gym. suit,—and then sizin' up the sportin' pictures on the wall. My art exhibit is mostly made up of signed photos of Jeff and Fitz and Nelson in their ring costumes, and it was easy to see she's some jarred.

"I hope this is a perfectly respectable place, young man," says she.

"It ain't often pulled by the cops," says I.

Instead of calmin' her down, that seems to stir her up worse'n ever. "I should hope not!" says she. "How long must I wait here?"

"No longer'n you feel like waitin', ma'am," says I.

And just then the gym. door opens, and in walks the bishop that I'd clean forgot all about.

"Why, bishop!" squeals Aunt Isabella. "You here!"

Say, it didn't need any second sight to see that the bishop would have rather met most anybody else at that particular minute; but he hands her the neat return. "It appears that I am," says he. "And you?"

Well, it was up to her to do the explainin'. She gives him the whole history of Maggie Whaley, windin' up with how she's been last heard from at Coney Island.

"Isn't it dreadful, bishop?" says she. "And can't you do something to help rescue her?"

Now I was lookin' for the bishop to say somethin' soothin'; but hanged if he don't chime in and admit that it's a sad case and he'll do what he can to help.

About then Swifty shows up with Dennis, and Aunt Isabella lays it before him. Now, accordin' to his own account, Dennis and Terence always had it in for each other at home, and he never took much stock in Maggie either. But after he'd listened to Aunt Isabella for a few minutes, hearin' her talk about his duty to the girl, and how she ought to be yanked off the toboggin of sin, he takes it as serious as any of 'em.

"Wurrah, wurrah!" says he, "but this do be a black day for the Whaleys! It's the McGuigan blood comin' out in her. What's to be done, mum?"

Aunt Isabella has a programme all mapped out. Her idea is to get up a rescue expedition on the spot and start for Coney. She says Dennis ought to go, for he's Maggie's uncle and has got some authority; and she wants the bishop to do any prayin' over her that may be needed.

"As for me," says she, "I shall do my best to persuade her to leave her wicked companions."

Well, they was all agreed, and ready to start, when it comes out that not one of the three has ever been to the island in their lives, and don't know how to get there. At that I sees the Bishop lookin' expectant at me.

"Shorty," says he, "I presume you are somewhat familiar with this—er—wicked resort."

"Not the one you're talkin' about," says I. "I've been goin' to Coney every year since I was old enough to toddle, and I'll admit there has been seasons when some parts of it was kind of tough; but as a general proposition it never looked wicked to me."

That kind of puzzles the bishop. He says he's always understood that the island was sort of a vent hole for the big sulphur works. Aunt Isabella is dead sure of it, too, and hints that maybe I ain't much of a judge. Anyway, she thinks I'd be a good guide for a place of that kind, and prods the bishop on to urge me to go.

"Well," says I, "just for a flier, I will."

So, as soon as I've changed my clothes, we starts for the iron steamboats, and plants ourselves on the upper deck. And, while a glimpse of a young couple snugglin' up against each other along the rail almost gives her a spasm.

"Such brazen depravity!" says she to the bishop.

By the time we lands at the iron pier she has knocked Coney so much that I has worked up a first-class grouch.

"Come on!" says I. "Let's have Maggie's address and get through with this put on the black whipcord Prince Albert he always wears when he's visitin' sick friends or attendin' funerals. The only festive-lookin' point about him was the russet-colored throat hedge he wears in place of a necktie.

Honest, I felt sorry for them suds slingers that travels round the deck singin' out, "Who wants the waiter?"

"We must search," says Aunt Isabella, prompt and decided.

"Mean to throw out a regular drag net?" says I.

She does. Well, say, if you've ever been to Coney on a good day, when there was from 50 to 100,000 folks circulatin' about, you've got some notion of what a proposition of that kind means. Course,

I HAS THE CLUTCH ON SWIFTY AND DRAGS HIM ALONG.

Every time one would come our way he'd get as far as "Who wants—" and then he'd switch off with an "Ah, chee!" and go away disgusted.

All the way down the old girl has her eye out for wickedness. The sight of Adolph, the grocery clerk, dippin' his beak into a mug of froth moves her to sit up and give him the stony glare; I wa'n't goin' to tackle the job with any hope of gettin' away with it; but right there I'm struck with a pleasin' thought.

"Do I gather that I'm to be the Commander Peary of this expedition?" says I.

It was a unanimous vote that I was.

"Well," says I, "you know you can't carry it through on hot air. It takes coin to get past the gates in this place."

Aunt Isabella says she's prepared to stand all the expense. And what do you suppose she passes out? A green five!

"Ah, say, this ain't any Sunday school excursion," says I. "Why, that wouldn't last us a block. Guess you'll have to dig deeper or call it off."

She was game, though. She brings up a couple of tens next dip, the bishop adds two more, and I heaves in one on my own hook.

"Now understand," says I, "if I'm headin' this procession there mustn't be any hangin' back or arguin' about the course. Coney's no place for a quitter, and there's some queer corners in it; but we're lookin' for a particular party, so we can't skip any. Follow close, don't ask me fool questions, and everybody keep their eye skinned for Maggie. Is that clear?"

They said it was.

"Then we're off in a bunch. This way!" says I.

Say, it was almost too good to be true. I hadn't more'n got 'em inside of Dreamland before they has their mouths open and their eyes popped, and they was so rattled they didn't know whether they was goin' up or comin' down. The bishop grabs me by the elbow, Aunt Isabella gets a desperate grip on his coat tails, and Dennis hooks two fingers into the back of her belt. When we lines up like that we has the fat woman takin' her first camel ride pushed behind the screen. The barkers out in front of the dime attractions takes one look at us and loses their voices for a whole minute —and it takes a good deal to choke up one of them human cyclones. I gives 'em back the merry grin and blazes ahead.

First thing I sees that looks good is the wiggle-waggle brass staircase, where half of the steps goes up as the other comes down.

"Now, altogether!" says I, feedin' the coupons to the ticket man, and I runs 'em up against the liver restorer at top speed. Say, that exhibition must have done the rubbernecks good! First we was all jolted up in a heap, then we was strung out like a yard of frankfurters; but I kept 'em at it until we gets to the top. Aunt Isabella has lost her breath and her bonnet has slid over one ear, the bishop is red in the face, and Dennis is puffin' like a freight engine.

"No Maggie here," says I. "We'll try somewhere else."

No. 2 on the event card was the water chutes, and while we was slidin' up on the escalater they has a chance to catch their wind. They didn't get any more'n they needed though; for just as Aunt Isabella has started to ask the platform man if he'd seen anything of Maggie Whaley, a boat comes up on the cogs, and I yells for 'em to jump in quick. The next thing they knew we was scootin' down that slide at the rate of 100 miles an hour, with three of us holdin' onto our hats, and one lettin' out 40 squeals to the minute.

"O-o-o o-o-o!" says Aunt Isabella, as we hits the water and does the bounding bounce.

"That's right," says I; "let 'em know you're here. It's the style."

Before they've recovered from the chute ride I've hustled 'em over to one of them scenic railroads, where you're yanked up feet first 100 feet or so, and then shot down through painted canvas mountains for about a mile. Say, it was a hummer, too! I don't know what there is about travelin' fast; but it always warms up my blood, and about the third trip I feels like sendin' out yelps of joy.

Course, I didn't expect it would have any such effect on the bishop; but as we went slammin' around a sharp corner I gets a look at his face. And would you believe it, he's wearin' a reg'lar breakfast food grin! Next plunge we takes I hears a whoop from the back seat, and I knows that Dennis has caught it too.

I was afraid maybe the old girl has fainted; but when we brings up at the bottom and I has a chance to turn around, I finds her still grippin' the car seat, her feet planted firm, and a kind of wild, reckless look in her eyes.

"We did that last lap a little rapid," says I. "Maybe we ought to cover the ground again, just to be sure we didn't miss Maggie. How about repeatin', eh?"

"I—I wouldn't mind," says she.

"Good!" says I. "Percy, send her off for another spiel."

And we encores the performance, with Dennis givin' the Donnybrook call, and the smile on the bishop's face growin' wider and wider. Fun? I've done them same stunts with a gang of real sporting men, and never had the half of it.

After that my crowd was ready for anything. They forgets all about the original proposition, and tackles anything I leads them up to, from bumpin' the bumps to ridin' down in the tubs on the stucco and gold leaf and electric light, with the blue sky beyond. But say, first glimpse you get, don't it knock your eye out?

"Whist!" says Dennis, gawpin' up at the front like he meant to swallow it. "Is ut the Blessed Gates we're comin' to?"

By the Time We're Down They're Ready for the Repeat.

"Magnificent!" says the Bishop.

And just then Aunt Isabella gives a gasp and sings out, "Maggie!"

Well, as Dennis says afterwards, in tellin' Mother Whaley about it, "Glory be, would yez think ut? I hears her spake thot name, and up I looks, and as I'm a breathin' man there sits Maggie Whaley in a solid goold chariot all stuck with jools, her hair puffed out like a crown, and the very neck of her blazin' with pearls and di'monds. Maggie Whaley, mind ye, the own daughter of Terence, that's me brother; and her the boss of a place as big as the houses of Parli'ment and finer than Windsor Castle on the King's birthday!"

It was Maggie all right. She was sittin' in a chariot, too—you've seen them fancy ticket booths they has down to Luna. And she has had her hair done up by an upholsterer, and put through a crimpin' machine. That and the Brazilian near-gem necklace she wears does give her a kind of a rich and fancy look, providin' you don't get too close.

She wasn't exactly bossin' the show. She was sellin' combination tickets, that let you in on so many rackets for a dollar. She'd chucked the laundry job for this, and she was lookin' like she was glad she'd made the shift. But here was four of us who'd come to rescue her and lead her back to the ironin' board.

Aunt Isabella makes the first break. She tells Maggie who she is and why she's come. "Margaret," says she, "I do hope you will consent to leave this wicked life. Please say you will, Margaret!"

"Ah, turn it off!" says Maggie. Me back to the sweat box at eight per when I'm gettin' fourteen for this? Not on your pingpongs! Fade, Aunty, fade!"

Then the Bishop is pushed up to take his turn. He says he is glad to meet Maggie, and hopes she likes her new job. Maggie says she does. She lets out too that she's engaged to the gentleman what does a refined acrobatic specialty in the third attraction on the left, and that when they close in the Fall he's goin' to coach her up so's they can do a double turn in the continuous houses next Winter, at from sixty to seventy-five per, each. So if she ever irons another shirt, it'll be just to show that she ain't proud.

And that's where the rescue expedition goes out of business with a low, hollow plunk. Among the three of 'em not one has a word left to say.

"Well, folks," says I, "what are we here for? Shall we finish the evenin' like we begun? We're only alive once, you know, and this is the only Coney there is. How about it?"

Did we? Inside of two minutes Maggie has sold us four entrance tickets, and we're headed for the biggest and wooziest thriller to be found in the lot.

"Shorty," says the Bishop, as we settles ourselves for a ride home on the last boat, "I trust I have done nothing unseemly this evening."

"What! You?" says I. "Why, Bishop, you're a reg'lar ripe old sport; and any time you feel like cuttin' loose again, with Aunt Isabella or without, just send in a call for me."

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I HAS THE CLUTCH ON SWIFTY AND DRAGS HIM ALONG.

THE BARKERS TAKES ONE LOOK AT US AND LOSES THEIR VOICES.

Fighters' Fads and Fancies

"WHAT are the fads of pugilists?" This question was put to a veteran follower of the ring at a local sporting resort recently with the result that he let loose a lot of interesting talk, says the New York Sun. He began with Big Jim Jeffries and went right through the whole bunch. He said:

"Jeffries, for example, would rather 'talk dog' than any other subject. With a few of his cronies he will sit up hours and discuss the fine points and merits of the dog family. He owns a number of fine dogs on his farm near Los Angeles. He likes game fighting dogs the best and enjoys reciting many wonderful tales relating to his adventures with his pets while hunting wild game and animals. The big fellow would rather follow the trail of a bear or a mountain lion with his favorite dogs than attend the grandest feast in the world. Jeff does not care about matching his dogs to fight in the pit but he expects them to make good in the forest against wild animals. Most of his dogs are of the bull terrier breed, and he says they cannot be excelled.

"Then Jim Corbett's fad is acting before the footlights. He is really stuck on the theatrical profession and devotes all of his spare time to trying to improve in the art. Corbett thinks the day is not far distant when he'll be hailed as a leading man. Jim Corbett says that no writer of plays has yet been able to produce a play that would enable him to show theater-goers just how clever he really is. You couldn't get Jim back in the ring with a team of horses, because he thinks that such a move would lessen his prospects before the limelight. If Corbett has any other hobby it is baseball. He is a pretty fair player himself, and he enjoys rooting, too.

"Joe Gans, the ex-lightweight champion, is a born gambler. He has lost probably $100,000 on games of chance, and that's going some. He loves to shoot craps for high stakes and also puts down good stiff bets on the horses. Gans is also very fond of game chickens, and has quite a few choice birds at his Baltimore home. In fact, he has fought his strain of birds in some big mains for many thousands of dollars. If Gans hadn't been such a redhot sport he could have retired with a comfortable fortune.

"Old Jem Mace, the oldest ex-champion alive today—he is 78 and is well preserved—is quite a musician, and can play the violin with the skill of a professor. Mace, who has gypsy blood in his veins, followed the county fairs in England while a boy and without any lessons he got acquainted with the mysteries of the fiddle. Just at present he is showing in the music halls on the other side and plays the violin as part of his vaudeville act.

"Tommy Burns' fad is money and clothes. He has the financial bee in his bonnet for fair. He has made a close study of investments and banking systems. He handles his money like an experienced financier, speculating in stocks with some success. Clothes! You ought to see him all togged out in the finest suits made by the swellest tailors. When he was in England he cut such a stylish figure over there that the ordinary pugs looked upon him as a millionaire.

"John L. Sullivan's pet fancy is telling comic or alleged comic stories. He considers himself one of the best reciters of humorous incidents in the world, and there's usually trouble for the man who does not laugh good and plenty at the proper time. Sullivan has a wonderful memory, and having been all over the world he has picked up a fine collection of yarns. Besides story-telling, Sullivan enjoys discussing any or all of the leading topics in his own convincing way. A few years ago John wanted to be sent to Congress from his home district in Boston, but just at that time John Barleycorn stepped in and monopolized all of Sullivan's spare time, so that his grand scheme fell through. It was Sullivan's plan to fight the Republicans to a finish on the floor of the House, without gloves. 'I'll show these silk stocking guys in Washington something about tariff reform that'll knock 'em dead,' said Sullivan at the time as he pounded a Broadway cafe bar until a hundred glasses were smashed into a million pieces. John had some great ideas that might be for the good of the country, but the booze soon drove them out of his head and the Nation lost a remarkable statesman. Sullivan, however, has been on the water cart for three years now, and still wants to go to Congress.

"Joe Walcott, the once great Giant Killer, is a pianist. You'd hardly believe that, but it's a fact. He owns a house over in Boston, and when he gets busy with ragtime music the neighborhood is up in arms. But you can bet that nobody goes to Joe's door and makes a kick, 'cause they all know what the Barbadoes man has done in the prizering. One of his neighbors says that Joe can make more real noise on a piano than a dozen men in a boiler shop.

"Bob Fitzsimmons' fads are cooking and the taming of wild animals. Just now he doesn't know whether he'll join a circus as a lion-tamer or apply for the position of chef at one of the big hotels in town. Fitz does all the catering and cooking at his Jersey farm. Robert says, too, that he can cook anything from soup to nuts. When he was actively engaged in the ring Fitz never trained for a mill without having some wild animal as his pet. He has been bitten and torn by the untamed beasts but this has never discouraged him at all for Bob thinks he has some hypnotic power over them.

"Terry McGovern outside of the ring considers himself a great baseball player. He went South with the Giants last Spring and practiced regularly with them. He is always in uniform at the Polo grounds and thinks he will get a chance to play second base some of these days for one of the big league teams.

"Jack McAuliffe is a crank on card playing. He will sit in a game of hearts at sundown and keep it up until sunrise, night after night, invariably quitting a loser. As a matter of fact Jack is a very poor card player, but he likes the game so much that it has cost him thousands of good dollars. It's his hobby. By the way, it's a very strange fact that few of the noted fighters of the present day are successful gamblers, especially with cards or at playing the bank. John L. Sullivan never gambled to any extent, nor did Jeffries, Corbett, Sharkey, Fitzsimmons, Ruhlin, Burns, Britt or Maher. The greatest of the gambling fighters is Johnny Van Heest, who fought around here ten years ago. He could not keep away from the green cloth and at present is dealing bank in a far Western town.

"Kid McCoy has all kinds of fads and fancies. He's a promoter of various schemes. Just now he is interested in a detective agency, real estate speculations, automobiles and racehorses. Besides he's trying to butt into society. He's a swell dresser and as he strolls along the Great White Way nobody would dare to believe that this immaculate fellow was an ex-prizefighter.

"Sailor Tom Sharkey is fond of trotting horses. He has a stock farm over in Jersey and is something of a breeder. He can be seen on the speedway almost any afternoon behind a fast horse. Sharkey is a wise fellow in regard to money matters and knows how to hang on to his dollars. The roadhouse keepers make no effort to get Tom's trade, as he rarely drinks and is not a spender.

"Mutty Matthews, whose head is all banged up from hard fights, is an expert swimmer and high diver and is also a good horseman. He has been engaged at the Hippodrome and at Luna Park in the tank dramas for several years. I guess that's about all I know about fighters' fads, but it ought to hold you fellows for a while at least."

Hopelessly Old-Fashioned.

New York World:

Only just plain, homely folks,
Working on from day to day,
Doing any good we can,
In an unobtrusive way.
Fashionable? Not a bit!
Never send for unpaid bills;
Never have affinities;
Keep no motor car that kills.
Don't get famous through divorce;
Break no markets, take no lives.
Just keep toiling, humdrum, dull—
For our children and our wives.