DARLING FOOL

by MABEL McELLIOTT

CHAPTER XXXVI

The maid who opened the door
him told him his father was at
eakfast. The older man looked up,
rprised, as Dan breezed in.
"Where'd you drop from, son?"
Dan grinned. "Thought I'd loafed
long. The rest of them will be
y day after tomorrow. I got rest-
."
"Well, well!" Dan thought his
ther looked older, more tired. There
re two deep lines between his
s.
"How're things?"
"Oh, fair." Mr. Cardigan drank
coffee. "The bank renewed that
e of mine—90 days. Hope to see
way clear after January first.
od of you, son, to do as I asked
out this trip. It meant a lot to
."

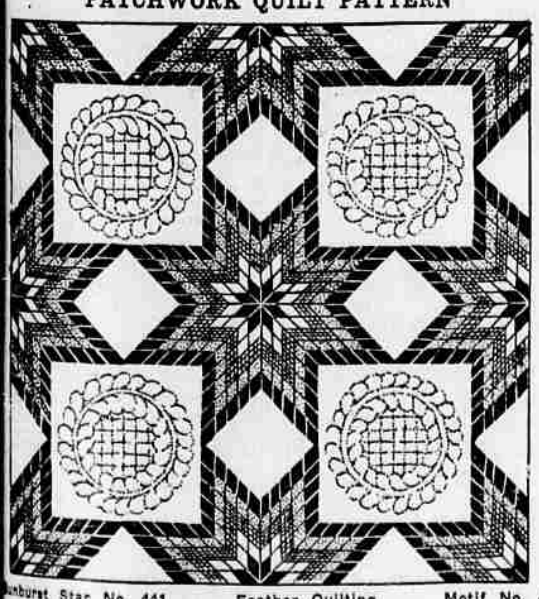
• • •

Dan smiled. "I had a fine time,
. Only I thought I ought to
back here with you."
"It's going to be all right. I feel
re of it now." And yet his father
n't look as if he meant it. He
t up heavily. Dan thought he'd aged
the past few weeks.
"How are your mother and the
ls?"
"Oh, rarin' to go! They're fine,"
n said lightly.
"Sandra better?"
"She's great. She snapped out of
and had a good time."
"I'm glad to hear it. Lawrence
s anxious about her."
Dan was impatient now to be up
d away. "Guess I'll clean up and
down at the office later."
His father put his arm across
shoulder. "Fine. We can have
ch together."
"Yes. Uh—maybe."
He broke away. He had an irre-
tible temptation to telephone to
nnie. Let's see — it was nine
clock. She would be at the store
this time.
He gave the number, sat drum-
ng on the table, waiting. "Miss
Dare?" His face went blank.
Where d'you say? Oh, I see. I see!"
He stood up, looking dazed. There
s something queer here. That boy
d said Monnie had gone away. It
unded like "abroad." But that was
zy. She was right here in town.
mebody was playing a practical
e on him. After he'd washed up
'd run around and see her mother.
k her what it was all about.
Kay O'Dare met him at the door,
artly dressed in blue. She stared
hen she saw him. "Oh, hello."
"Some idiot down at the store said
onnie'd gone away," Dan blurted
t. "It isn't true, is it?"
Kay gave him a cool glance. "She's
iling for Europe with Miss Corey
morrow," she told him. "They left
r New York this morning on the
:30."
DAN'S voice was flat and colorless.
"She's gone! For—for how
ng?"
Kay smiled. "Several months. Per-
ps they'll be back by Christmas,
rhaps not."
"I see." The man stood for an in-
nt, hands plunged deep in his over-
at pockets. "I see," he repeated
gnely. "She didn't leave any mes-
ge for me?"
"Monnie?" Kay's voice tinkled. "No,
deed." Into her eyes came a sparkle
malice. "She was wearing Charles
stace's flowers when she left. Or-
ids." Kay made the word vastly
nificant.
Dan gave her a comprehending look; then, without another word, he lifted his hat and withdrew.
"There!" Kay congratulated herself. "Guess I gave him something to think about—the conceited thing!" She felt not the slightest compunction though she remembered Monnie's voice, saying clearly that morning, "If Dan calls give him my address."
Well, Kay wouldn't. Anyhow he hadn't asked for it. He'd looked as though Monnie's departure really was a blow. That seemed queer too when he'd been at Sandra Lawrence's beck and call for so long. Kay clicked her tongue against her teeth, reflecting that men were really the limit! It was high time that Monnie stopped this nonsense about Dan and discovered there were other men in the world.

• • •

She set off for the "News" office quite gaily, feeling serene and capable and alert. It was good to have this thrilling new job, to have a place in the world. Kay wasn't at all nervous about doing Miss Anstice's work. It was simple, really, and she knew just how it should be done. You could, thought Kay coolly, do it with your eyes shut. Life was different for Kay this year. The old sullenness and impatience had slipped from her like a cloak. She no longer thought longingly of New York, of going on the stage. She had noticed since she had been helping Miss Anstice that people were nicer to her. Even stiff people like Mrs. John Blair, Mrs. Blair had called up last week to remind Kay of the big bazaar at St. Thomas' and to hope she could drop in for lunch one of the days when the Ladies' Aid was serving.
"We're counting on you, Miss O'Dare," the lady had cooed. Kay had tried to keep from smiling, remembering how Mrs. Blair had snubbed her at the high school dance where Linda Blair, here daughter — clumsy and unattractive in an expensive frock —had tried to be the belle.
Kay hummed a little tune, stepping along at what Charles called her "race-horse" gait. Belvedere wasn't such a bad place after all. It was really nice, especially on crisp October days such as this when the maples on Denny street seemed to have turned to pure gold and the air was clear and spicy. Kay didn't envy Monnie even, enroute to New York and later England. She took a deep breath. The trip would be good for Monnie. She needed to be shaken out of herself. Monnie had been unhappy this past year. Kay set her lips ,thinking of the Cardigans. Horrid woman, Dan's mother! It was she, of course, who had made the difficulty between Dan and Monnie. Well, Monnie would forget all about Dan. She would have a marvelous time and perhaps come home with a foreign prince in tow. You never could tell. Monnie was beautiful enough to be a princess.
Kay was half way through a day dream in which she saw herself presiding over a reception to "my sister, the Countess de B——" when she reached the dingy office of the newspaper.
Meanwhile Monnie, speeding eastward in the drawing room which Miss Anstice had insisted extravagantly upon reserving, felt herself living in a dream. The narrow glass reflected a glowing girl wrapped in brown fur, a small hat atilt over her right eyebrow.
"You look awfully smart in that coat," Miss Anstice told her critically, "It's just your style. I am very proud of my traveling companion."

PATCHWORK QUILT PATTERN



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By LAURA WHEELER

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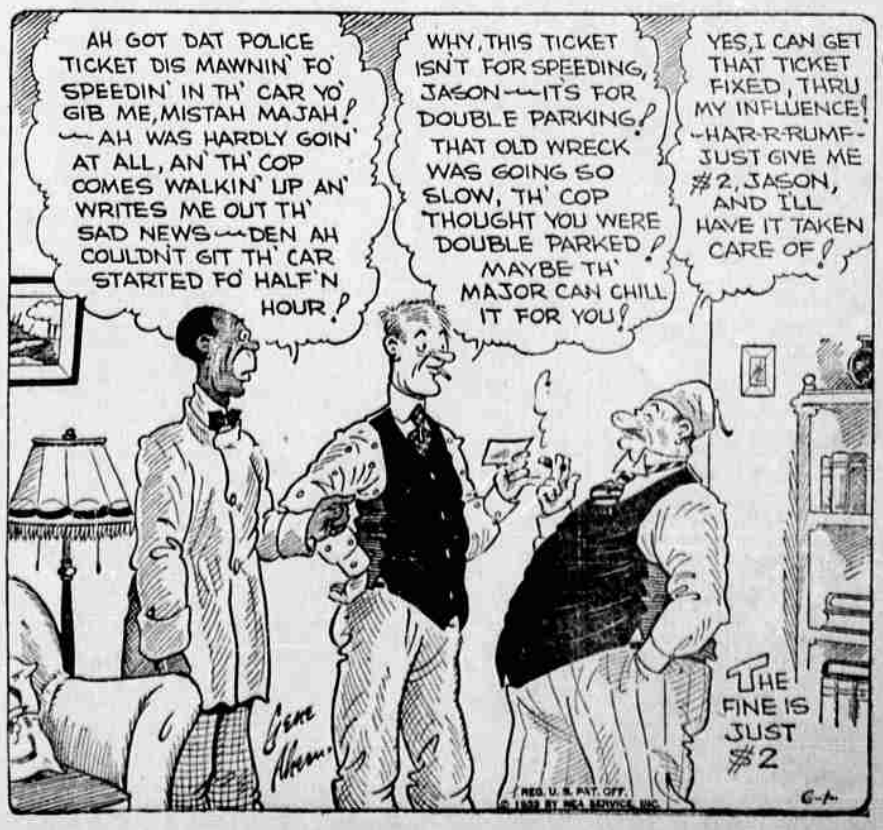
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