

BARGAIN BRIDE

KATHARINE HAYLAND-TAYLOR © 1935 NEA SERVICE, INC.

CHAPTER LIII
"I don't matter," she assured him. "I didn't tell him because I was so insistent that no one know. And he was so good when I was a child that I didn't want anyone to know he was the New York or that I had the money. Phillip has a right to know the kind of girl he's married. It's the kind that ex- long as facts are kept hidden, he can pretend that he doesn't know. I felt I owed him a good one. And so I promised. I've often thought it was a mistake. Am I wrong, Barry?" Barrett stammered. "Dear! Barrett stammered. 'I know you are!'"

Tell me, please, from one to ten, how much you love me. They're about each other. Actually Barrett had been there by Elinor's ques- Well, Bob could understand it. He had been different if things had been able to a smart beneath the eyelids, her showing need of the ap- things weren't different and some day he'd meet an- girl. Meantime he'd keep in for the golf tournaments as many cups as he could. There was a moon and after din- Elinor led the way to the Barrett and Bob Telfare themselves beside her, watch- the yellow disc rise in the sky. They brought their coffee to them. Barrett and Jim Thrope their boys arrived. who was the youngest and able to forget old times, was about a motor boat. The boys spoke eagerly of college. The fall. Bessie listened hap- knew that something she had to Elinor that day had made a difference. Bessie had the changed light in the girl's a little trembling of her lips. Elinor who was so young, with each of life to learn. "I must be going now," Bessie when the clock indoors struck

the Thrope had gone, sing- their way down the hill like a traveling minstrel. Elinor's upstairs. For a long while stood by the window of her room looking over the world below. Afternoon Bessie had nodded Gerald, playing on the beach. Bessie said, "Elinor, that you're misinterpreting thing and Jim's forbidden me to more. He says Barrett would if he dared and I must not— Barrett won't. But, dear, even the situation were as it seems, how a woman's job is to help make his future worth while. It's right to brood over the past. Elinor Barrett can become in hands. What he was before knew him—"

had begun to tremble. She wanted to talk about that to Bessie. Nevertheless Bessie said, "It's natural enough for to be jealous about what has but you don't really love, my until you want to help the you love to cover old wounds forget them. If Gerald is Bar- son you'll never regret mak- Barrett as happy as he can be it. And when you're as old as you'll realize that the only you've been hurt were when made others downcast by show- ing that they hurt you. Bar- loves you. Anyone can see

"(To Be Continued)

Barrett had begun to cry. "I do love him, Aunt Bessie," she whim- pered. "But—" They had talked for an hour and Bessie was sure that in some way Elinor had begun to understand the things she longed to tell her and could not.

It was half past 10 when Barrett mounted the stairs. Bob Telfare had gone to his room half an hour ear- lier. There was a telegram for Eli- nor and Barrett, not wishing to dis- turb her, decided to poke it beneath her door. He had writing to do and he knew that he could not sleep. Long training had made it possible for him to concentrate and thereby gain a sort of relief. He worked but his mind was not really on his work. Again and again, as he sat writing, his pen would slow and the objects he was describing—objects he had unearthed after centuries of hiding in the earth—would fade to be replaced by Elinor's face.

Hard moments those; moments when it was all he could do to stay at his desk. Often they left him spent and aching. It was the fu- tility of the situation that troubled him, the fact that it was all so un- necessary and was making Elinor so miserable.

He tapped on her door and to his surprise heard her say, "Come in!" "It's I—Barrett," he explained. "Come in," she repeated.

He opened the door. She was sit- ting up in bed, the light from a lamp beside her shining down on her hair. "Have you a moment to spare?" she asked.

"Of course," He didn't under- stand this. "I brought up a tele- gram that came for you," he said. Elinor took it and he sat down in a chair that was near her. She tore open the envelope with its small transparent window. Then, "Mother's married!" she gasped.

She gave him the message and he read it with a certain grim amusement. Lida had married a Chicago merchant whose reputation Barrett knew well—a Bluebeard Crossing with a string of discarded wives in his cupboard. He would, Barrett reflected, be a match even for Lida.

"Well!" he said, and could think of no more suitable comment. "I expected that—or something like it," Elinor admitted, "but not quite so soon." She grew silent then. Barrett felt she was trying to say something more and that it was not easy for her to begin.

He had his own speech to make and he wanted to get it over. "Eli- nor," he said, and then hesitated. "Yes?" Why was she looking at him in that way? It was dangerous for both of them.

"Elinor, I want to tell you that I respect you wholly and in every way. I haven't always. I had an idea—a rather fixed idea—that you were carrying on some sort of af- fair with Bob Telfare. I'm thor- oughly ashamed of that now and I hope you can forgive me. I know how fine you are in every way and have always been. I—" he paused, balked.

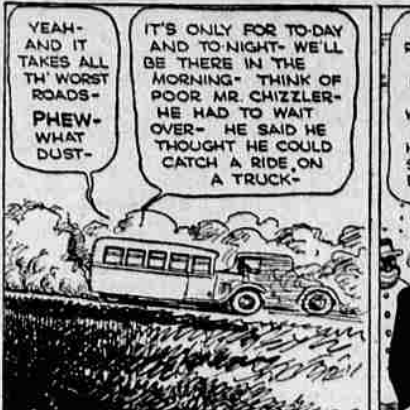
"But, Barrett! I couldn't do a thing like that!" she said quickly. "I couldn't! I've seen too much of it to be able to indulge in it myself. I've been square—that way, but not in others. I've been—small, Barrett! I know I have." He saw that her lips were trem- bling. "I don't see that—" he dis- agreed.

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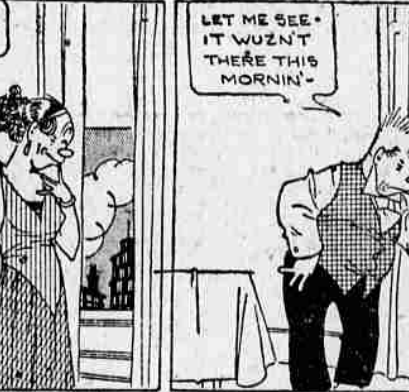
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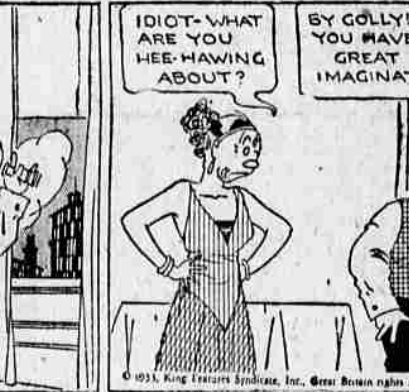
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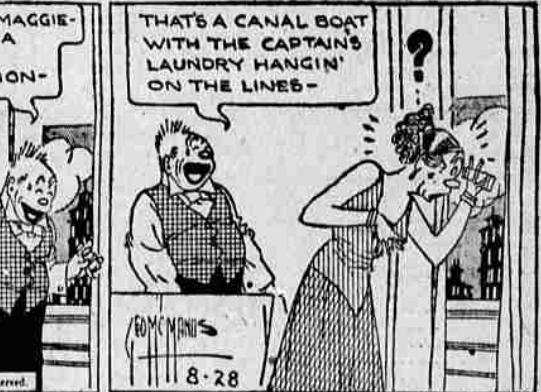
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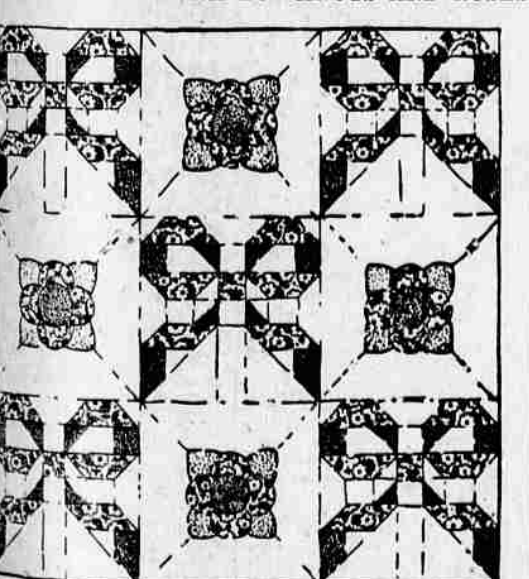
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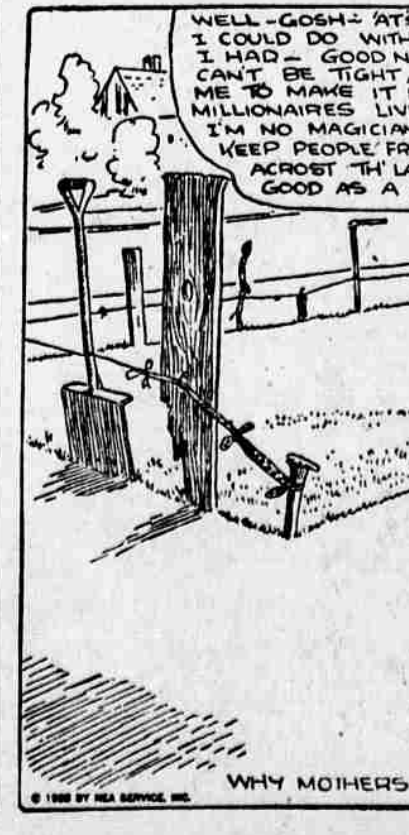
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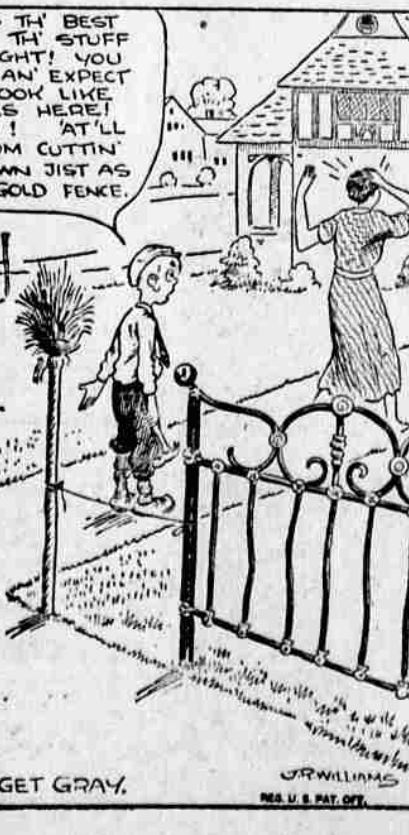
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