Summer Sweethearts

By Mabel McElliott

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CHAPTER XLII

he man must be a most horrible ..." Violet said to herself, prod- at the earth about the roots of a hy Perkins. "And yet—he doesn't like one in the least." She was e ashamed of her earlier enthu- for Michael.

whole thing was definitely . First the boy had engaged lf to Sally Moon. That made him er a fortune hunter. Then he had ff with Katharine on what seem- w a most cruel impulse, only to re as though the whole thing had happened at all.

let stood up, brushing her earth- d hands impatiently together. She d to go to see him, ought to find ow he stood in the matter before turned the affair over to Ad- n, their discreet lawyer friend. washed her hands at the sink in leaming small kitchen and called inia who was on the porch, shel- peas for the children's lunch, that was going to walk up the road a Michael's horse had been headed direction of the riding club. And d been alone. It would be a good to talk to him.

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Violet Merser turned into the that ran beside the old shingled e she could see the tall figure of man she sought, standing in the way of the stable. A blue Septem- haze hung over everything. Yellow s here and there drifted down on muddy paths. There were wild rs and goldenrod blazing in the dows. Sumach made a scarlet ta- y on the hills.

"Good morning!"

Michael whirled, his eyes clouded, muscles taut.

"Good morning," he said without ng. These days were difficult ones e got through. Strange people always coming up to him and brisk and hearty. He had to fend off as best he could.

mething in the wariness of his nde put Violet off. All at once she conscious that her errand lacked ity. It was not for her to meddle Katharine's affairs. She said rather ly, "About the horses—for the girl. She hasn't been riding ."

Michael bowed. His tone was for- aloof.

"Do you mind seeing Jerry, my as- nt, about that? I haven't been lately..." He passed his hand his eyes and, with another stiff bow, went into the house.

erry was at her elbow. Somehow managed to say something co- nt to him, to walk away. But her was whirling.

"Good heavens!" she cried to her- "What if that should be the ex- ation of it all? What if he doesn't know what happened?"

heard of such things. To the ky person such a possibility ed far-fetched. But Violet knew s not out of the bounds of reason. e had been struck on the head, ps. The newspaper account had "multiple bruises." Who could tell damage had been done?

walked swiftly toward her own , eager to put through a tele- call to her husband.

"Dan, have you got in touch with nson yet?"

slow, reassuring voice answered "Have an appointment with him n. Why? Anything happen?"

dared not talk over the tele- . Everyone said the exchange tors listened. "Can you postpone she asked. "I think I've hit on thing. It may be a hunch. I don't ."

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don't understand why you want do it so quietly," pouted Sally "Old Ruthie down at the In- k News has been calling up every to see if I've any date to give her. anxious to run the story of the ing, but she doesn't dare say a about it as long as I tell her to off. And probably everyone's g about me. Probably they say thing's off."

have my reasons," Mr. Moon said ly. If Sally weren't so wrapped her own affairs, he thought, she d be able to figure out the prob- for herself. He wanted all the he could get for village trustee the election was next week. With wedding going on and Sally in- on getting all her flowers and ing things from the city instead patronizing the local tradesmen (who were sure to be antagonized), the election would be certain to go against him. He knew Nnnicock. He hadn't been president of the bank for 20 years without learning a good deal about the way the minds of the villagers worked.

He had several reasons for not telling Sally this. The first was that she would not consider the argument weighty enough. She had her own way of over-riding all his objections. The second was that an air of mystery impressed her more than straightforwardness. She was inclined to be a bit mysterious herself. 'Sneaky,' Mr. Moon called it. Like her mother's people. None of the Moons had been sneaky—all open and aboveboard like himself. Still, a man had to protect his interests against the depredations of his womenfolk. Women had no consciences whatever when they wanted their own way.

He wouldn't be sorry to see Sally married. She'd been a bit of a problem since her mother died. Cocktails, flirtations, all kinds of craziness, her father told himself. This young fellow was good with horses. Maybe he'd hold the whip hand over Sally as well. He chuckled at the thought.

"What are you chortling about?" Sally wanted to know rather angrily. Really her father was being too stuffy about this. It made her tired. But since he held the purse strings there was no fighting him. And she wanted a trousseau that would put everyone's eye out.

"Nothing." He changed the subject hastily. "You going into town today to shop?"

That was always a good way to divert her. Her black eyes sparkled at the thought of trying on clothes, of watching mannequins parade (because this time she was going to the really expensive places and have the very best), and of choosing hats and shoes and cobwebby stockings to supplement those already piled in boxes and bags in her room. Whatever you might say about Daddy Moon, Sally reflected, you couldn't accuse him of being stingy.

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She had read in last night's newspaper of Katharine Strykhurst's departure for the west. And she had felt a tiny prick of relief. While Katharine had been around Sally hadn't felt entirely easy about Michael. He had been restive at times. Sally had suspected in the beginning that he was attracted to Katharine, although why anyone would prefer that cool young woman to her own rather buxom self, Sally could not imagine.

Well, Michael was more tractable since he'd been ill. He really seemed to depend on her these days. She bossed him around as she hadn't dared to do before.

Her cousin, Annabel, was coming on from Syracuse for the wedding. And Michael had been so vague about providing a best man that Sally had wired Annabel to bring her fiance (expenses paid) to serve. Annabel's young man was a fledging mining engineer with a brand new diploma. Sally, marrying a title, felt very superior.

Well, Annabel and Joseph would arrive on Tuesday, and they would have a rehearsal Tuesday night. Daddy Moon had agreed to that. The wedding would be on Wednesday, and invitations would go out by hand the day before. It was, Sally told herself, a pretty queer way to do things, but her father had some crazy notion in his mind. It didn't do to argue with him when he was like this.

She longed to shout the news from the housetops. But she didn't dare. Well, all the old cats who had been so nasty to her would know soon enough. Let them gnash their teeth then. See how they liked it.

She'd snub them if she ever met them on the street.

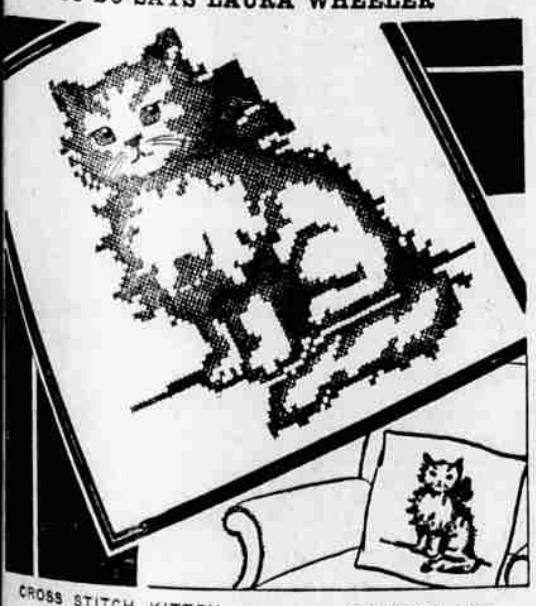
Another thing she had to do today. She had to stop at Tiffany's and choose a platinum band that Michael could pay for later. He didn't want to go into the city, he said. She was having to arrange everything. She had even sent out a tailor who was to measure him for correct morning clothes.

She'd thought of everything. There couldn't possibly be a hitch in the proceedings now. A week from Wednesday she would be Lady Carden.

(To Be Continued)

The only state flower ever to be dethroned is the pink carnation, which lost its place to the blossom of the tulip tree as state flower at Indiana.

THIS KITTEN IN CROSS STITCH IS FUN TO DO SAYS LAURA WHEELER



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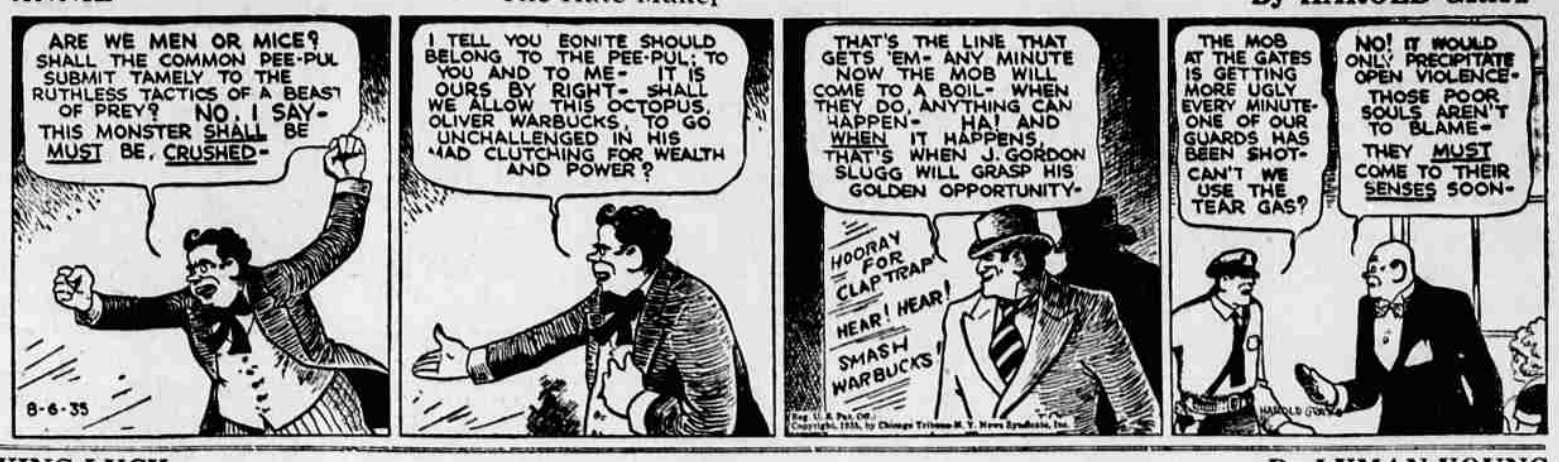

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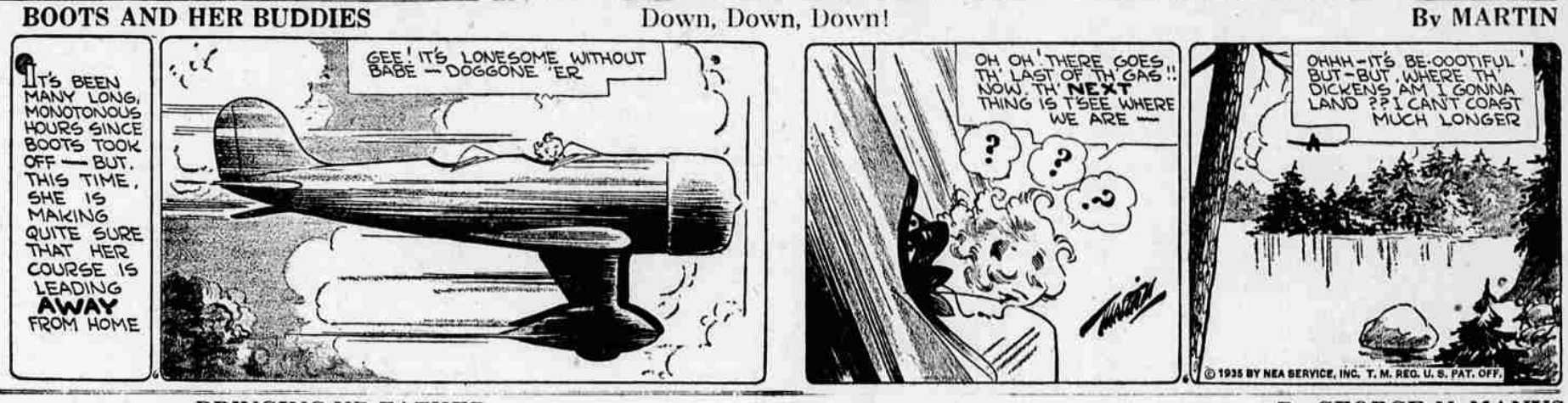

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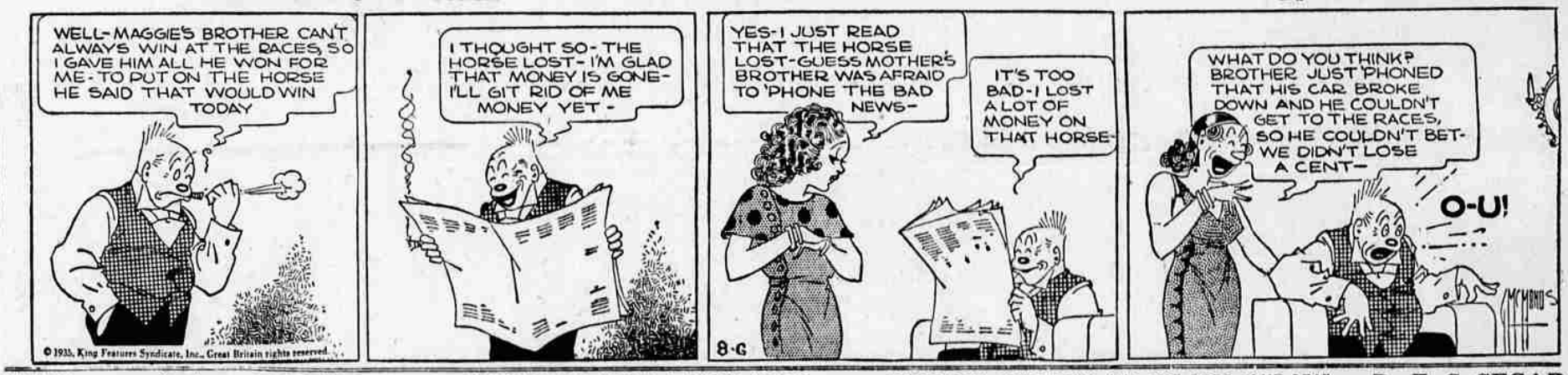

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