

THE BOOMERANG CLUE

BY AGATHA CHRISTIE

**Chapter Eight
BIG OFFER**

ON THE Wednesday of that week Bobby received another letter. It was addressed in a foreign, slanting handwriting. Its contents were somewhat surprising to the young man.

It was from the firm of Henriquez & Dallo in Buenos Aires and, to put it concisely, it offered Bobby a job in the firm with a salary of a thousand pounds a year.

For the first minute or two the young man thought he must be dreaming. A thousand a year. He read the letter more carefully. There was mention of an ex-Naval man's being preferred, a suggestion that Bobby's name had been put forward by someone (not named), and acceptance must be immediate, and Bobby must be prepared to start for Buenos Aires within a week.

"Well, I'm damned," said Bobby, giving vent to his feelings in a somewhat unfortunate manner.

"Bobby!"

"Sorry, Dad. Forgot you were there."

Mr. Jones cleared his throat. "I should like to point out to you—"

Bobby felt that this process—usually a long one—must at all costs be avoided. He achieved this by a simple statement.

"Someone's offered me a thousand a year."

The Vicar remained open-mouthed, unable for the moment to make any comment.

"That's put him off his drive all right," thought Bobby with satisfaction.

"My dear Bobby, did I understand you to say that someone has offered you a thousand a year?"

"Hold it in one, Dad," said Bobby.

"It's impossible," said the Vicar.

Bobby was not hurt by this frank incredulity. His estimate of his own monetary value differed little from that of his father.

"They must be complete nutts," he agreed heartily.

"Who—are these people?"

Bobby handed him the letter. The Vicar, fumbling for his pince-nez, peered at it suspiciously. Finally he read it twice.

"Most remarkable," he said at last.

"Lunatics," said Bobby.

"Ah, my boy," said the Vicar. "It is, after all, a great thing to be an Englishman. Honesty. That's what we stand for. The Navy has carried that ideal all over the world. An Englishman's word! This South American firm realizes the value of a young man whose integrity will be unshaken and of whose fidelity his employers will be assured. You can always depend on an Englishman to play the game—"

"And keep a straight bat," said Bobby.

THE Vicar looked at his son doubtfully. The phrase, an excellent one, had actually been on the tip of his tongue, but there was something in Bobby's tone that struck him as not quite sincere.

The young man, however, appeared to be perfectly serious. "All the same, Dad," he said, "why me?"

"What do you mean—why you?"

"There are a lot of Englishmen in England," said Bobby. "Hearty fellows, full of ericketing qualities. Why pick on me?"

"Probably your late commanding officer may have recommended you."

"Yes, I suppose that's true," said Bobby doubtfully. "It doesn't matter anyway since I can't take the job."

"Can't take it? My dear boy, what do you mean?"

"Well, I'm fixed up, you see. With Badger."

"Badger? Badger Heaton? Nonsense, my dear Bobby. This is serious."

"It's a bit hard, I own," said Bobby with a sigh.

"Any childish arrangement you have made with young Heaton cannot count for a moment."

"It counts with me."

"Young Heaton is completely irresponsible. I've already, I understand, been a source of considerable trouble and expense to his parents."

"He's not had much luck. Badger's infernally trusting."

"Luck—luck! I should say that

young man had never done a hand's turn in his life."

"Nonsense, Dad. Why, he used to get up at five in the morning to feed those heastly chickens. It wasn't his fault they all got the roup or croup or whatever it was."

"I have never approved of this garage project. Mere folly. You must give it up."

"Can't, sir. I've promised. I can't let the old Badger down. He's counting on me."

The discussion proceeded. The Vicar, biased by his views on the subject of Badger, was quite unable to regard any promise made to that young man as binding. He looked on Bobby as obstinate and determined at all costs to lead an idle life in company with one of the worst possible companions.

Bobby, on the other hand, stolidly repeated without originality that he "couldn't let old Badger down."

The Vicar finally left the room in anger, and Bobby then and there sat down to write the firm of Henriquez & Dallo refusing their offer.

He sighed as he did so. He was letting a chance go here which was never likely to occur again. But he saw no alternative.

Later, on the links, he put the problem to Frankie. She listened attentively.

"You'd have had to go to South America?"

"Yes."

"Would you have liked that?"

"Yes, why not?"

Frankie sighed. "Anyway," she said with decision, "I think you did quite right."

"About Badger, you mean?"

"Yes."

"I couldn't let the old bird down, could I?"

"No, but be careful that the old bird, as you call him, doesn't let you in."

"Oh! I shall be careful. Anyway I shall be all right. I haven't got any assets."

"That must be rather fun," said Frankie.

"Why?"

"I don't know why. It just sounded nice and free and irresponsible. I suppose, though, when I come to think of it, that I haven't got many assets either. I mean, Father gives me an allowance, and I've got lots of houses to live in and clothes and maids and some hideous family jewels and a good deal of credit at shops—but that's all the family really it's not me."

"No, but all the same—" Bobby paused.

"Oh, it's quite different, I know."

"Yes," said Bobby. "It's quite different." He felt suddenly very depressed.

They walked in silence to the next tee.

"I'm going up to town to-morrow," said Frankie as Bobby teed up his ball.

"To-morrow. Oh—and I was going to suggest you should come for a picnic."

"I'd have liked to. However, it's arranged. You see, Father got the gout again."

"You ought to stay and minister to him," said Bobby.

"He doesn't like being ministered to. It annoys him frightfully. He likes the second footman best. He's sympathetic and doesn't mind having things thrown at him and being called a damned fool."

Bobby topped his drive and it trickled into the bunker.

"Hard lines," said Frankie and drove a nice straight ball that sailed over it.

"By the way," she remarked, "we might do something together in London. You'll be up soon?"

"On Monday. But—well—it's no good, is it?"

"What do you mean—no good?"

"Well, I mean I shall be working as a mechanic most of the time. I mean—"

"Even then," said Frankie, "I suppose you're just as capable of coming to a cocktail party and getting tight as any other of my friends."

Bobby merely shook his head.

"I'll give a beer-and-sausage party if you prefer it," said Frankie encouragingly.

"Oh, look here, Frankie, what's the good? I mean, you can't mix your crowds. Your crowd's a different crowd from mine."

"I assure you," said Frankie, "that my crowd is a very mixed one."

"You can bring Badger if you like. There's friendship for you."

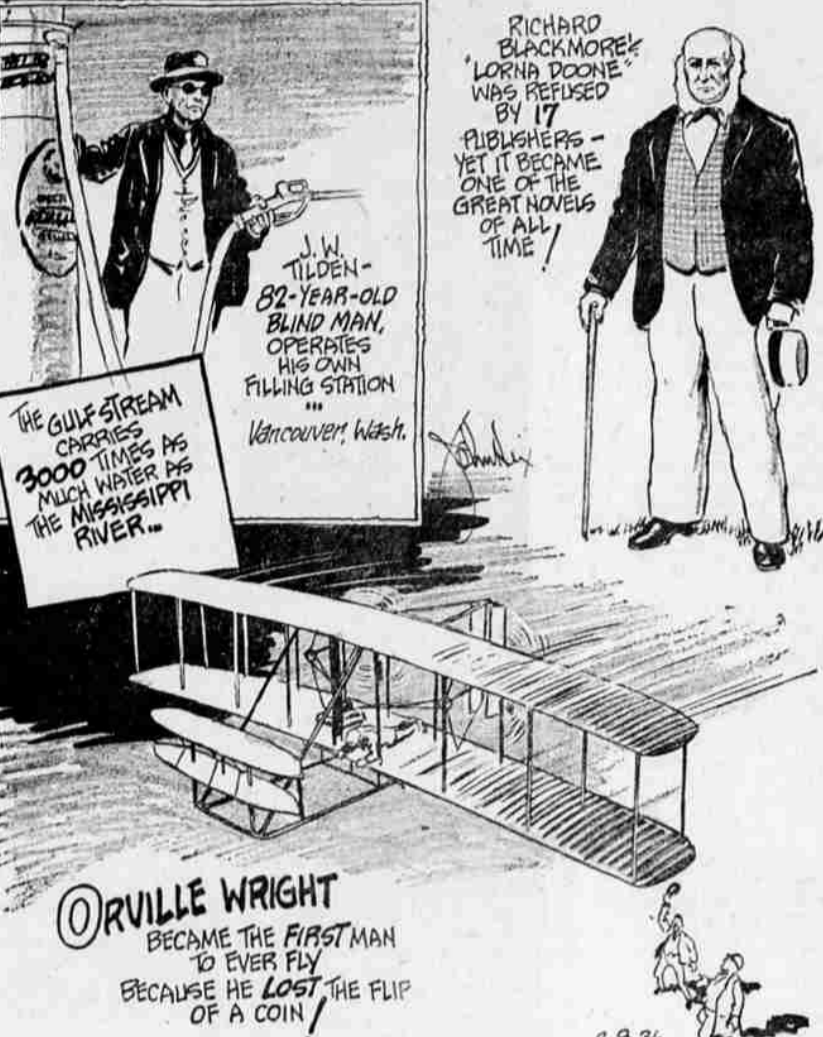
"You've got some sort of prejudice against Badger."

(Copyright 1935-36, Agatha Christie)

Bobby goes picnicing alone, to-morrow.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



J. W. TILDEN—82-YEAR-OLD BLIND MAN, OPERATES HIS OWN FILLING STATION
Vancouver, Wash.

RICHARD BLACKMORE & LORNA DOONE
WAS REFUSED BY 17 PUBLISHERS—YET IT BECAME ONE OF THE GREAT NOVELS OF ALL TIME!

ORVILLE WRIGHT BECAME THE FIRST MAN TO EVER FLY BECAUSE HE LOST THE FLIP OF A COIN!

J. W. Tilden, 82-year old filling station operator, has been blind five years and in that time has schooled himself to operate his filling station with only occasional help from his customers. He guides himself around by ingeniously placed wires, and makes change by the feel of coins which he carries in different pockets of his best. Now that he is blind, he says, nobody ever tries to cheat him—and he feels perfectly safe in letting customers tell him how much gas has run out of the pump. Before blindness, he had to keep a sharp eye on would-be cheats.

Mr. Tilden was blinded five years ago by robbers who, while holding him up, beat him over the head and left him for dead. Beginning again, surrounded by total darkness, he has been able to successfully operate his own place of business.

Because he wrongly called the flip of a coin, Orville Wright won the right to everlasting fame as the first man who successfully flew an airplane. When the Wright brothers, Orville and Wilbur, were ready with their first crude airplane, they agreed to flip a coin to determine who would first try the take-off. Orville called the coin incorrectly, so Wilbur won the right to fly first.

Strange as it seems, however, the first attempt was unsuccessful because of some minor trouble. They made the necessary repairs and three days later made their next attempt. This time it was Orville's turn—he took off for a 12-second hop during which he covered 120 feet. It was man's first flight, made on December 17, 1903.

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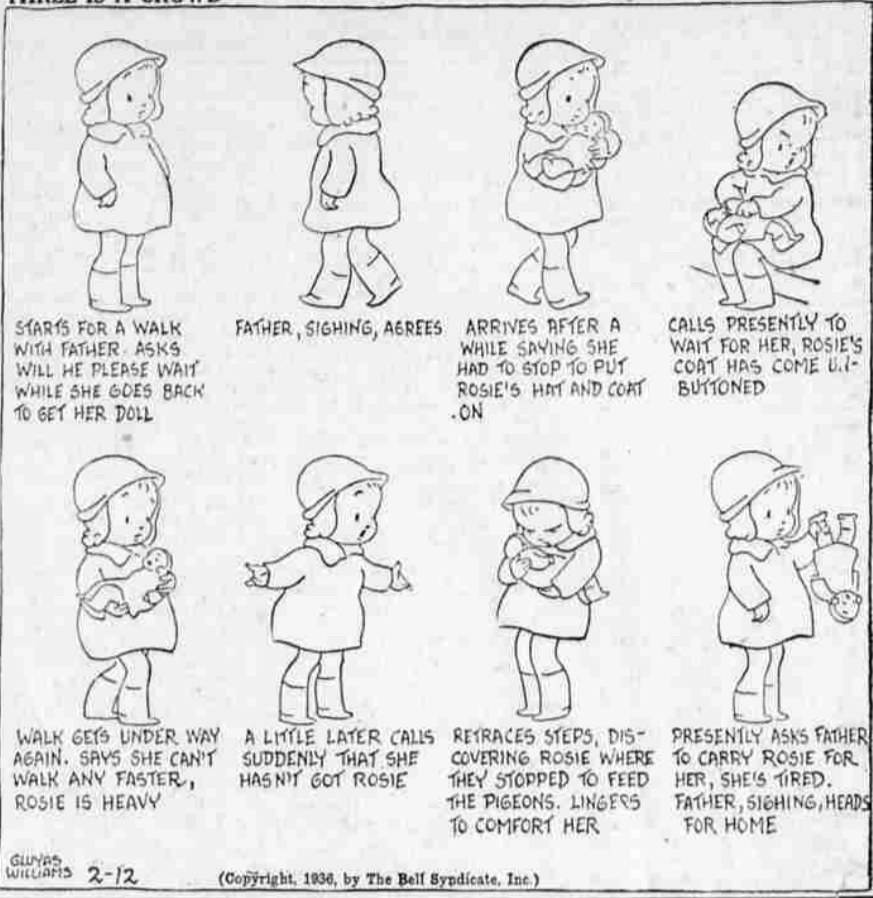
NOW—! I WANT SOME WRIGLEY'S

WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT
THE PERFECT GUM
THE FLAVOR LASTS

THE STANDARD OF QUALITY

THREE IS A CROWD

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



GLUYAS WILLIAMS 2-12 (Copyright, 1936, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



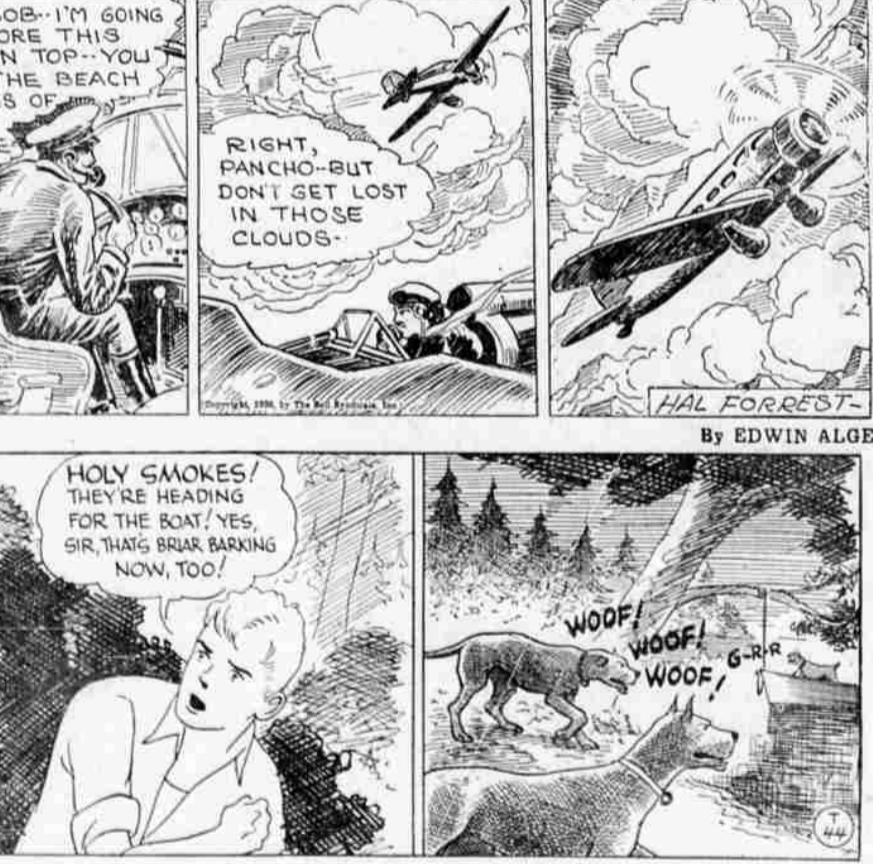
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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Pancho on a 'Hot' Trail!



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BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Briar's Found Too!



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THE NEBBES—Coming Up!



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GOLD SPELL HIKES VALUE OF MEATS

CHICAGO, Feb. 12.—(AP)—Livestock and meat prices were sharply higher again today as supplies were cut drastically because of snow and cold weather which crippled transportation.

The uptick was most pronounced in hogs and pork, with swine receipts this week reduced to the lowest volume in many years. Packers bid 25 to 26 cents higher for the small run of 5000 hogs today and the top soared to \$11.15 per hundredweight in early rounds.

This was the highest paid for hogs in February in six years. The market has advanced 60 cents to \$1 and more so far this week.

OLD AGE PENSION GOING ON BALLOT

SALEM, Feb. 12.—(AP)—The referendum petition on the old age pension measure was successful. A check of voter file names by the secretary of state's office showed 12,973 names, or more than a thousand over the required amount to place the measure on the November ballot.

The referendum was sponsored by the Oregon Old Age Pension Defense League. The present law, it sustained would divert old age money to general relief.

BUCKINGHAM'S Ice Cream Candy and Party Specials. The Great, 236 So. Central.

By SOL HESS