

The ROMANTIC RUNAWAY

KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY

PABLITO, a handsome 17-year-old youth, works at the palatial Florida home of millionaire JIM FIELD.

The son of a titled Englishman and a peasant girl, Pablito knows nothing of his parents. When 8 years old he ran away from ANGELA, the old nurse in whose care he was left, who beat and otherwise mistreated him. Since then he has lived with MORRIS NOYES, a mysterious individual who has seen better days. Their home is a shack on a lonely island.

Field receives word from his estranged wife that she and their daughter, ESTELLE, are on their way to the Florida home.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER III

THREE weeks later the servants gasped in undertones that Norma Field was coming back to her husband after an absence of more than eight years. And she was bringing with her the child, a girl of 15 who, doubtless, remembered little of her home in America.

Workmen came to the camp to redecorate two suites in Field's own cottage. Pablito had not thought he would see the rooms, of which the servants talked with awe, but one day as he was helping one of the gardeners place a window box on a ledge outside the little girl's room Field stroled by. He paused, seeing Pablito.

"Have you seen the royal chambers?" he asked. There were times when Field was very democratic, though the mood was likely to vanish as quickly as it had come.

"Certainly not, sir," Pablito answered. Field liked the answer. It made him smile a little.

"Come in," he invited and Pablito followed him. The lavender, green and silver room which was Mrs. Field's seemed to Pablito suitable for an old lady. He wondered whether Field realized that it looked a retreat for a nun of a stern order atoning for too many sins of the bad world. Age and chill were in the lines and in the colors. He thought no woman could be gay in such a room.

"Like it?" Field questioned.

"I am too young to like lavender," Pablito answered. "I suppose," he added, "it is a very beautiful room."

Field had a moment's reaction to the earlier days. "It cost enough," he said. Then he went on, "What does it make you think of?"

"Old Philadelphia," Pablito answered.

"So you know Philadelphia? You've been there?"

"No sir."

"Philadelphia," Field thought and hung the item upon a nail on the walls of his mind. His eyes narrowed a little.

THEY went into the little girl's room next. Here Pablito smiled.

"This brings your approval, eh?" Field questioned with a little irony.

Pablito nodded, liking the pastel shades and their artful blending.

"Any suggestions?" Field went on, amused at the idea of asking advice from a boy who wore a pair of white cotton trousers, a bathing jersey and nothing else.

"I see no place for books," Pablito stated.

"I haven't begun the work on either sitting room," Field heard himself answer with irritation. He had expected only awe and silence.

"She would enjoy choosing the furnishings herself," Pablito said slowly. He studied the room, smiling. It was a pretty room. He hoped she was a pretty girl.

Field considered Pablito's suggestion and wished he had thought of it himself. Nothing was done to his daughter's sitting room after that but Mrs. Field's sitting room was furnished in cold gray and dull silver.

After Field let Pablito that day he sought Juan Alvarez. "What have you found out about young Smith?" he asked.

"Nothing. He lives alone, as he said. I went there—with a helper—one evening. It is a small island with no more than a shack on it. He was not there. He had gone to Key West to the second hand book shop near the water front.

"I went through his place. There are some good things in it. There is a Winslow Homer hanging—unframed—on one wall and a Pen-sell etching—"

"What else?" Field demanded. He was not interested in these details.

Flapper Fanny Says

THERE were clothes in a cupboard. Some of the shoes I thought looked small for him but I learned from old Tio Oono who followed him to Key West that he sold a pair of old shoes for a few cents before going to the second hand book shop. It may be that he collects old things to sell them. There was a portrait in a silver frame of a woman holding a small boy. I judge it is of his mother and himself years ago. There are a great many books in Latin and Greek and English. He keeps chickens—"

"My God!" Field broke out. "What difference does that make?"

"Shitless squatters never have enough money for chickens or feed," Alvarez pointed out. "This boy comes of more than squatters."

"Oh, all right! Go on!"

"There is not much more to tell. But I found that many whisky bottles had been thrown in the marsh."

Field smiled; he had found a saw in Alvarez and he pleased him. Alvarez should have known that

the Smith boy was not a drinker and that some one else must live in the shack on the small island.

"Alvarez," Field said smoothly, "you are a fool. And if you watch it long enough the kettle will boil. He does not live alone—but he wants us to think so. I want to know why he wants us to think that, for the reason may be more or less, valuable to me."

A few days later Jim Field's wife and daughter arrived at the camp. Norma Field was a drab shadow of a woman with a look of lurking fear in her eyes. Estelle, a lovely slip of a girl, had been well named in being named a star. Pablito, who was on the beach saw their coming and he lost his heart. Rather for the first time he was fully aware of the capacities of his heart, for as he saw Estelle he felt a hard pump under the left-hand side of his sleeveless, cotton shirt and at the same time the sting of hot blood under the tan of his cheeks. He thought she looked at him for a second with a look which blended inquiry and interest but he scoffed at himself later for this thought and called himself a fool. She was an American princess and he was—no body! He worked moodily that day, taking no part in the chatter of the men who worked near him.

FIELD noticed Pablito's startled glance at his daughter and smiled a little but he forgot it promptly in his utter absorption in Estelle who had, as his wife had written, changed remarkably since he had seen her.

"And these are your rooms," he said a moment after Pablito had become aware of how fast and how hard his heart could pound. Field wanted to put his arm around his daughter—a much practised gesture and usually an easy one for him—but he found himself stiffly conscious and afraid. He heard his wife moving around in the next apartment and heard her low-voiced orders to a maid.

"It's lovely," Estelle said softly. "I hadn't dreamed there would be anything so grand in a camp."

She spoke a little haltingly and with the least bit of a foreign accent. Field, who was wont to think of desire and a full table as close companions, wondered with a little chill whether he could make his daughter like him. Making women love him, or pretend to, had been easy. But this was new.

"The color is lovely," she said. "I mean the combination of colors."

He was glad, he told her rather stiffly, that she liked it. "I thought," he explained, "that I would let you furnish the sitting room as you liked."

Her eyes brightened. "Oh," she said warmly, "I would like that, father. 'It will be fun!'"

The "father" made him slip his arm through hers to press her arm to his side. He felt her hand creep into his and the gesture brought an almost forgotten sting to his eyes.

"Mother has told me much of you," he heard her say. "She said you were too busy here to come to see us but she always said I would like you."

That, Field noted mentally, would be Norma's way. To work in order to make him feel small and mean and in the wrong. He frowned a moment. Then he said a little wistfully, "Well I suppose I shall have to leave you now."

She admitted that she felt a little tired. Then suddenly she turned, raising her oval face, and he kissed her. The camp, Field thought, leaving her, had been turned into a convent, but he smiled, thinking it.

(To Be Continued)

Political League Meets on April 24

The Veterans' Political League has announced an important meeting to be held at the court house on Tuesday evening, April 24.

The present political outlook will be discussed, and reports of various committees presented.

All veterans, whether or not they are members of the league, are cordially invited to attend the meeting.

Mattress makers, using Mayo as a trade name, said they never had heard of the famous Minnesota specialists. Caught asleep on their own mattresses!

When girls dress to kill they depend on a little powder.



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



SALESMAN SAM

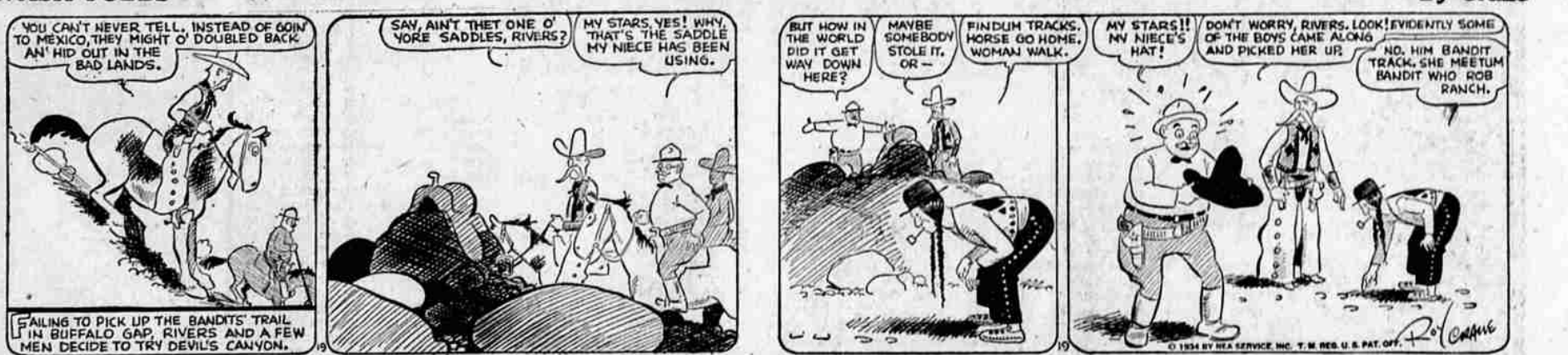


BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES

By Martin



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS

By Blosser



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

By Cowan

