

The ROMANTIC RUNAWAY

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY
PABLITO, a handsome 17-year-old youth, works at the beautiful Florida home of millionaire JIM FIELD.
The son of a titled Englishman and a servant girl, Pablito knows nothing of his parents. When he was five years old he was taken from ANGELA, the heartless old crone in whose care he was left. Since then he has lived with NORRIS NOYES, a mysterious individual who has seen better days.
Field's estranged wife and their daughter, ESTELLE, arrive at the Florida home to find Pablito and almost at once fall in love with her.

CHAPTER IV

AT the door of his wife's rooms Field paused and knocked. A maid he remembered admitted him and, as she saw him, her face grew hard and chill. He heard her murmur something about seeing if Madame could see him and he waited in the gray and silver sitting room. In a few moments Norma appeared and settled herself in a low chair. Field pulled another close to hers and dropped into it.

"I wanted to tell you, Norma, that I appreciate your attitude to Estelle about me."
She answered in a level undertone, her eyes on the rug at her feet. "I want to preserve for her as long as possible," she said, "all the illusions that make life happier. Then, too, you were not there—and I was. I couldn't very well say anything ill of you."
He did not fully understand this. She saw it and smiled a trifle wily.

"You don't see much logic in that, do you?" she questioned.
"I see what you're getting at all right," he answered honestly, "but I think it's bunk!"
"It is only decent."
He paid no attention to this but went on. "Norma—are you going to tell her now?"

She stiffened, becoming erect and tense. "It would kill all that I have done my best to nurture in her," she answered with the first show of the old warmth and feeling he had heard in her voice. "We will have to pretend a great many things that aren't true and that I know now never were true."
"I'll try to make it easy for you," he promised a trifle thickly. He found himself close to unsteadiness from the relief her words had brought him.

"Jim," she began slowly and less confidently, "will you promise me to be careful about the things, the people—women I mean—whom she sees?"
"My dear Norma, I am less the gallant now. I am 50," he answered bluntly.

She nodded, her head a bit high, her eyes suddenly chill. Then she stood up with the manner of royalty at the moment of a dismissal. Presently Field found himself outside in the glare of the sunlight. The way Norma's head could lift so proudly, had always made him feel himself to be crude and rough. This, with her dislike of scenes and her withdrawals into silence, had made him more crude and rougher.

She was still capable of the same trick, he realized; the trick of making him feel far beneath her. "Damn it!" he thought, blinking in the sunlight. But there was a reason for him to endure it now. The reason was a slender girl who looked much as Norma had when he had married her with the intent to fame her and "bring her down a bit."

AT the end of a dock which stretched long and black in the water Field saw Pablito swabbing out a fishing boat. He saw also the enchanting blue of the white-flecked water and the sway of the tall palms against the sways of an almost cloudless silver-blue sky. Estelle would no doubt delight in such things, as her mother had before her. The camp had amazed her. Well, there was no other like it, he decided complacently.

He followed the dock which smelled of seaweed and salt and was always darkened and damp from spray and when he was near Pablito he spoke to him.

"Nice day, Smith."
Pablito stood erect. "Yes, sir, fine," he agreed.
"Lord, you're a good-looking specimen," Field thought. He said aloud, "You usually run the 'Silver Dart,' don't you? I may go out in it later."
"Yes, sir."
Field turned then to go back to the land. Would Estelle go out with her father, Pablito wondered.

It was a blindly aimed prayer, the only sort she could say now, failing to believe in much of anything. She had cared a great deal for Jim Field in her pitifully young years, she realized. She hoped Estelle would never care for any man quite so much as she cared for herself.

THAT afternoon Pablito took Estelle and Jim Field for the first of their many rides together in the "Silver Dart." Estelle was stirred to silence by the riotous color, the salt languor of the air, the blazing yellow and the utter greenness of the shore.
"I think," she said slowly, "that I have never seen any place so beautiful!" As she spoke her eyes rested upon Pablito and, seeing him, she knew suddenly that she had never seen a young man who was so fine in form and face. She did not mention this. She could only wish, with a new hunger, that they might be friends. She was sure this youth with the blue eyes and straw colored hair would be a friend worth having.

The men in the boat saw her; nothing and no one else. Field watched her steadily with a slight smile lifting and softening his some times cruel lips. Pablito's eyes followed her with a breathless awe. He saw her as a rare mixture of child and woman. She had a dignity, unusual in American girls, which made her at times seem far beyond her years. At other times, with the faint showing of a soft trustfulness, she was sweetly young. Appallingly young, Pablito thought, knowing Field.

"She knows everything of food," he decided tenderly, "and nothing of evil." And for a moment his heart turned cold as he wondered what lay before her.
Estelle's soft brown hair blew and color came into her cheeks and a little thin because she had been growing so fast. He could not help watching her almost steadily. And again and again he found her face turned his way.

The hum of the motor and the swish of water as it broke to a white-churned froth kept Pablito from hearing much that was said, but one question of Field's shook his world for him because it brought her close.
Field said, "I think I'll have a fancy dress party for you here. Would you like that?"
"Oh, yes!" Estelle answered and because she had been so suddenly warmly and vibrantly happy Pablito smiled without knowing it until she answered his smile. No woman or girl had ever smiled on him before unless tendering him, with her lift of lips, the wrong sort of invitation.

A barefoot boy who guards a drunkard does not hold the key that opens doorways into kindness. Now he knew kindness and the difference in smiles and the knowledge was so beautiful that it brought an ache to his breast. He thought, "I love you and it's not puppy stuff. You're beautiful and kind. I love you!"
And so came the love of a lifetime in a land where there is warmth and early ripening.
(To Be Continued)

COLLEGE ATHLETE GETS LO WRATING

CHICAGO, April 20 (AP)—The brawny athlete came in for no praise today as the North Central Association of Colleges and High Schools discussed his report card.

The association, the credit rating bureau of colleges and secondary schools, said it had studied the records which athletes made in 64 middlewestern colleges and found the results no less than "startling."
Eleven colleges—not named—report that it was necessary to flunk out more than 25 per cent of the athletes, in spite of their do-or-die work outside of class rooms. Five others found that an even 25 per cent of the athletic heroes were "below standard" in the scholastic end of things.
The association's committee on the school work of athletes recommended "cracking down," with "greater stress on the academic performance of students participating in athletics."

Flapper Fanny Says



Exercising on the side helps many a girl to put on a presentable front.

OUT OUR WAY



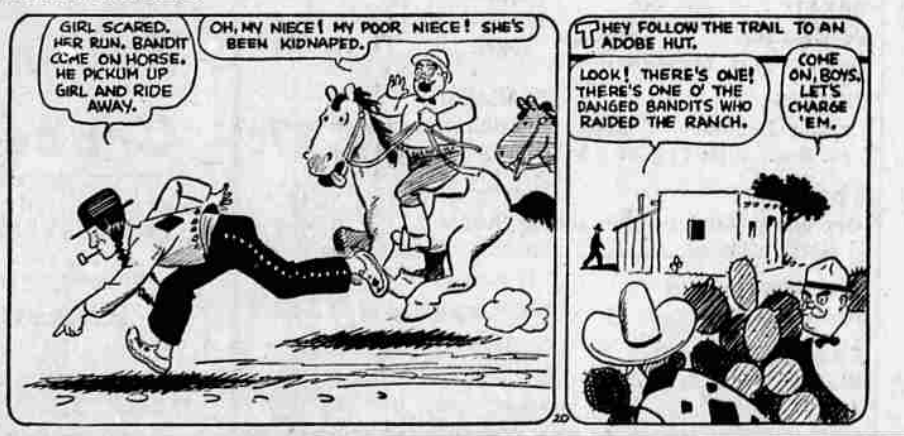
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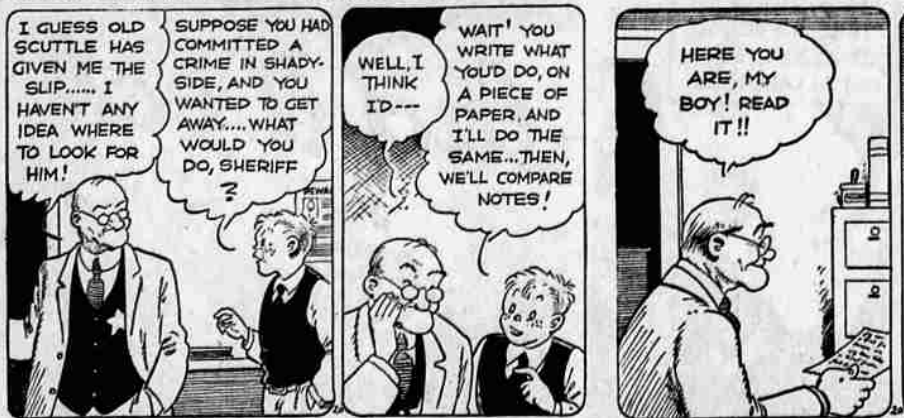
BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



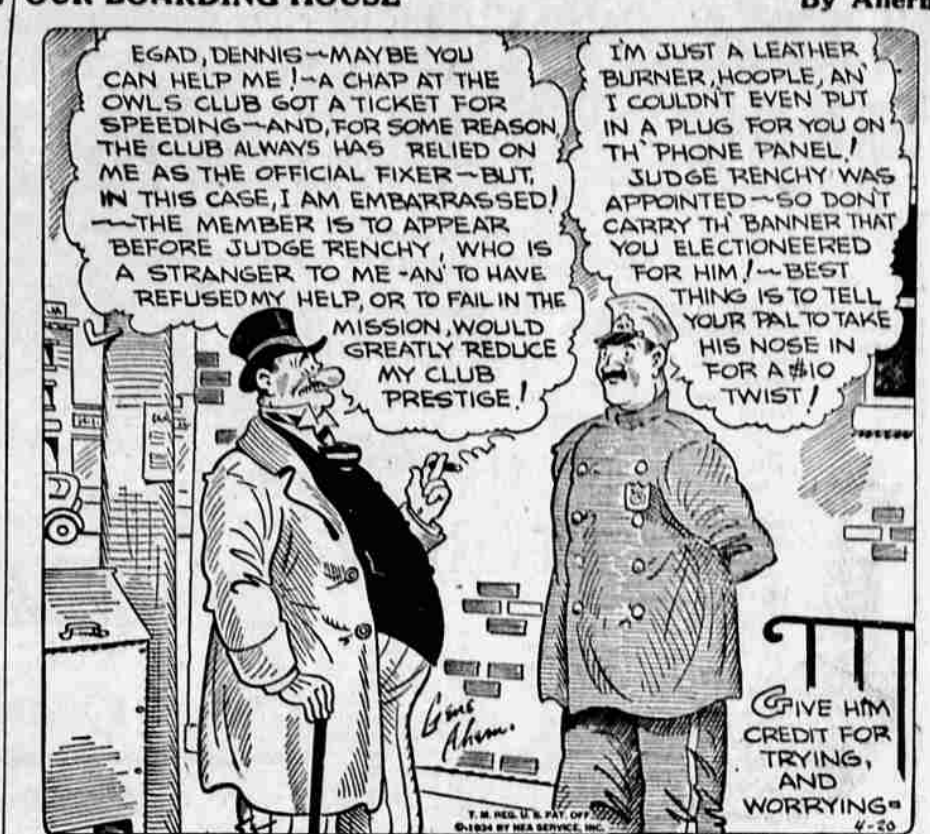
FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE



By Small



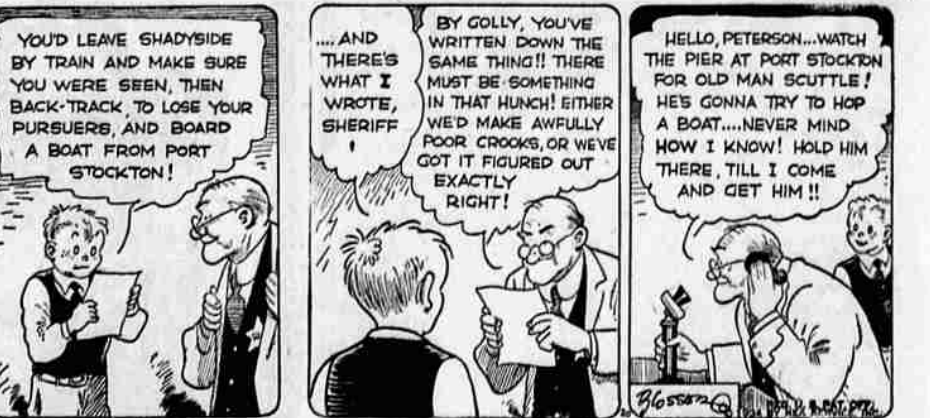
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