

The ROMANTIC RUNAWAY

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY

PABLO, a handsome youth, became a fugitive when he fled from Key West to Havana with BEAU and LOTTIE, two thieves. Pablo has been accused of a murder he did not commit. MARIA TREADWELL, who could prove him innocent, fears scandal and remains silent.

Pablo is in love with ESTELLE FIELD, daughter of rich JIM FIELD. In Havana, under the name "Juanita," he became celebrated as a boxer and he had been open a gymnasium.

ESTELLE, a noted Englishman and Pablo's father, became a search for his son, employing BILLINGS, New York detective. Billings, convinced Pablo is the son of the man and innocent of the charge against him, sets to work to prove this.

Three years pass and Pablo sees Estelle again. They meet secretly until her father takes her away on a yacht cruise. Pablo, believing Estelle faithless, leaves Cuba. Months later, in France, he reads of her engagement to ALICE DAVID. He decides to return to Cuba.

Field loses his fortune in a financial crash. He and Estelle, too, decide to go to Havana.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XL

JIM FIELD went on, speaking slowly. "I've been feeling the cold here and I thought a few weeks in Havana might pick me up."

What he was thinking was, "At least I have the Havana house. I can sell it and with Estelle's income—" His vague reverie pictured the two of them managing on a reduced income, trying to save expenses. The big place in Havana would be too large for them to keep anyhow. It had always taken a horde of servants to run it. Now they would have to get along with only a cook and second maid. There would be no others—no maid for Estelle or valet for himself.

He gave Estelle's hand—grown limp in his clasp—a hard squeeze and again moved toward the table. She watched him down another stiff drink with a splutter and a gulp. Something was wrong, she knew. One of the few vices Jim Field had never acquired was over-drinking. Of course, she concluded wearily, with a blunt, matter-of-fact frankness that contrasted unpleasantly with her earlier moment of sympathy, it must be some woman. He had usually had his way with women but in a long lifetime of pursuit there was sure to be one desired one who would evade, perhaps with a cruel and mocking laugh.

"I hope Havana will make you feel much better," she said gently. Field thought of Estelle as she had been a few years earlier. She had always spoken gently then. Again his eyes stung.

"Well," he answered, "we'll have a try at it—"

His attempt at jauntyness was not convincing. She felt herself thawing and fought against this. She did not want to feel again the old pain that always followed whenever she gave way to real feeling, hoping or caring—all those pitiable, beautiful and fragile emotions that go with youth.

A soft-footed servant announced dinner from the broad doorway. Jim Field got to his feet and, passing the servant, saw in the main hall that he had seen the evening's newspapers and was wondering about his wages.

PABLO was glad to find Lottie and Beau where he had left them. And with Lottie's arms clinging about his neck and her tear-wet face raised to his he felt a faint glow of warmth. Lottie had always cared and he was grateful. No one else had always cared.

"Oh, my God, it's good to see you, Pablo!" she whispered unthinkingly. "We thought sometimes you was never coming back! Where was you, any way?"

She didn't wait for him to answer. "Beau and I have kept the place going," she went on quickly. "It ain't so popular as it was but if you'll start fighting again—"

"I'm not going to."

"Say, you don't need to! Beau and I cleaned up good on a strip of land we bought. And you have enough anyhow. Say, Pablo, you haven't been sick, have you? You're not lookin' so terrible good, Lottie."

"Oh, Lord—grammar again! Just mean you makes me excited and here you start in on that grammar. I mean you ain't lookin' any too well. But we'll fix you up! You ain't married?" she ended with a gulp that told of her fright.

"Heavens, no! Do I look it?"

"I didn't know. Beau's married. The girl was a dirty, sneakin' little crook and he hadn't no notion of marryin' her—but she managed that. You oughta hear her bawlin' him out—but then you will! When she gets started you could hear her to Key West on a clear day. Honey—"

"Yes."

"I got your room. I moved outa mine so they—Beau and her—could have the other side of the house. I didn't want to hear 'em fightin' all the time! But I'll move to the next one if you'd rather I wasn't around—in your room—"

SHE ended with a hard flush but her eyes, lifted to his, were brave in their offer. Lottie had not changed. Pablo saw miserably.

"Aren't you over that yet, Lottie?" he asked bluntly, but gently as he looked down at her.

She shook her head, set her teeth on her lower lip and her eyes dimmed. "I never will be," she assured him in a high shrill voice that trembled a little. "I even took to sayin' my prayers that you'd come back. I never done that before. Well, it worked."

"Never mind!" he broke in a little abruptly. Then he smiled down at her, as convincingly as he could. Hands on her shoulders, he shook her gently and then looked around the big, bare room that had given him the feeling of returning home.

He found little change in the surroundings and this added to his feeling of home-coming. In the stretch of ground at the rear of the building the heap of empty tin cans had grown higher—their gaudy pictures of tomatoes, pears, peaches and apricots dimmed by the hard rains. The grocer had a new son who crawled among the barrels and the tin boxes, wearing little more than he had worn at his arrival, and the grocer's oldest daughter was to marry the young man who had sung beneath her window before Pablo left. Lottie's hair had become an autumn brown—an improvement over the flaming auburn, he thought.

ON the roof, looking down upon La Senora Parra who stood on a lower roof hanging out a wash line, Pablo enjoyed a brief interval of peace. Above him was the bluest sky on earth. Below some one was singing a love song of old Spain. The singer had a good voice—clear and sweet-toned. Pablo looked across a stretch of vivid green dotted with tall palms and saw a hibiscus hedge, definitely scarlet. Down the road an ox cart came slowly toward him. It was heavily laden with sugar cane. On the morrow at some corner shop where corrugated iron blinds are rolled high by day some little daughters of Havana would, no doubt, buy a stick of the cane to nibble as they skipped homeward.

The morning would see him strolling Obispo and O'Reilly and walking through the park, stopping at the Cosmopolita for luncheon or going to La Union. He would be eating the dust of the street on his food and knowing the life of the street as he ate. Then, he decided, he would ride in a wildly lurching taxicab down to the docks and along the wall-guarded waterfront where the glare from the narrow bay causes blue eyes, unshielded by dark pigment, to squint and lower lids for protection.

He would ride through the smart Vedada where trimly dressed nurse maids may be seen accompanying elaborately clothed little children; on out to Cerra where life is lived almost entirely in the open; and then on to the Vibora where lived his mother—his mother whom he had never seen.

He would order the driver to go slowly along in calle San Anastasia and at a certain door he would look long. For a moment Pablo's bitterness came back to him. Then again the wonder of the picturesque land swept over him. Cuba was home to him; it was gorgeous and wonderful.

A moment more and this mood died away—to know no reviving. Pablo had dreamed so often of sharing the beauties of Havana with Estelle, who had lived it, too.

(To Be Continued)

Telephone Groups Awarded Plaques

Credited with skill, courage and devotion in remaining at switchboards, test desks and repair jobs during the southern California earthquake last year, thousands of men and women of two telephone companies have been voted group Vail plaques.

One group plaque was awarded by a national committee to employees of the Southern California Telephone Co., and the other to employees of the Associated Telephone Co. of Long Beach, according to word received by A. G. Goshing, local telephone manager.

Pool Proprietor At Alturas Has Display

ALTURAS, Calif., June 1.—Amos Hoyt, local beer garden proprietor and former manager of a large pool hall here has cashed many checks during the past decade or so. Some of these checks were of the rubber variety and Hoyt has had a lot of them put in a large frame. In the center of the frame is an inscription, "This is why we cannot cash personal checks."

Flapper Fanny Says

"I got your room. I moved outa mine so they—Beau and her—could have the other side of the house. I didn't want to hear 'em fightin' all the time! But I'll move to the next one if you'd rather I wasn't around—in your room—"

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OUT OUR WAY



BY J. R. WILLIAMS

OUR BOARDING HOUSE



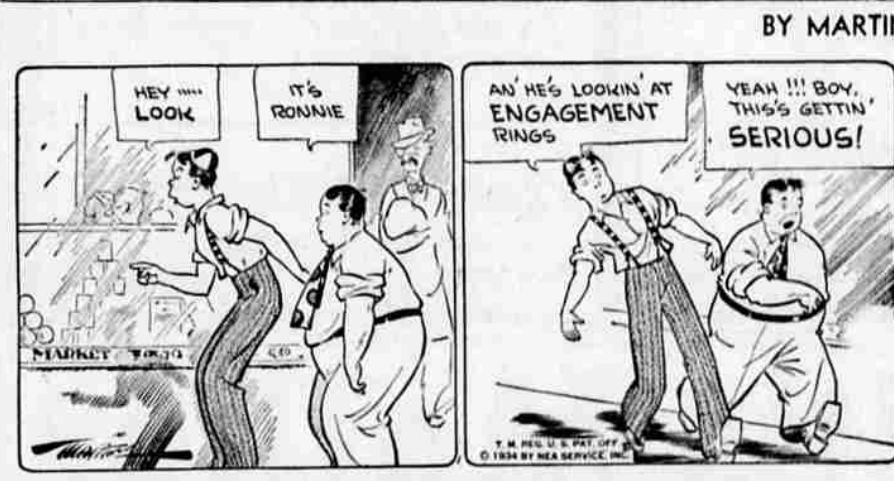
BY AHERN

SALESMAN SAM



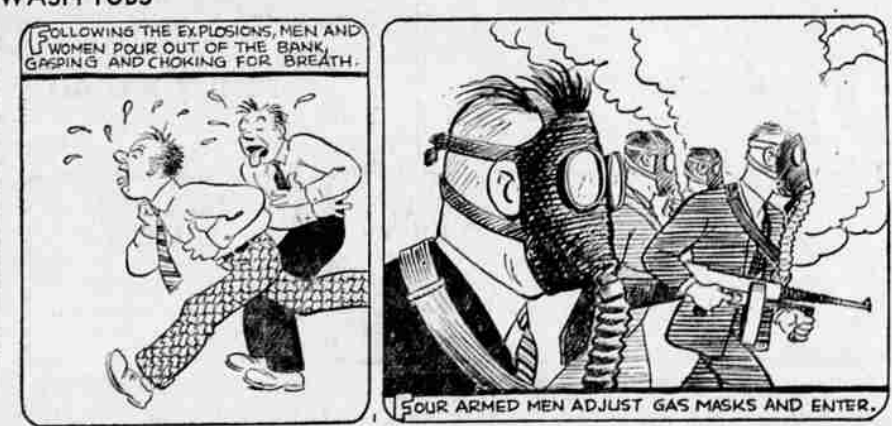
BY SMALL

BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



BY MARTIN

WASH TUBS



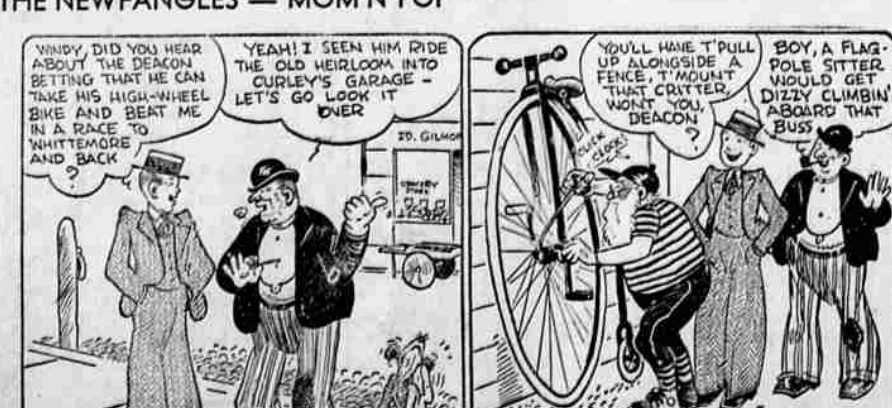
BY CRANE

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BY BLOSSER

THE NEWFANGLES — MOM'N POP



BY COWAN