

Bargain Bride

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY
BARRETT COLVIN, back in New York after four years, finds himself much attracted by 20-year-old ELINOR STAFFORD. Barrett is 35, wealthy and has made a name for himself as an archeologist. Elinor's mother, LIDA STAFFORD, is beautiful and, because she wants attention for herself, has always forced her daughter to wear unbecoming clothes and keep in the background. Lida schemes constantly to keep in the good graces of her husband's wealthy aunt, MISS ELLA SEXTON, in order to inherit a share of the Sexton fortune.

Barrett's half-sister, MARCIA RADNOR, tells him she is terrified for her husband will learn of an unfortunate episode in her past. Years before Barrett's arrival, Marcia was a youthful striation ended disaster. Marcia had a son whom Barrett adopted. The boy is nine years old now and his tutor, HAROLD DEXTER, has threatened Marcia with blackmail, the demand that if her husband learns the truth he will never forgive her.

Barrett goes to visit nine-year-old GERALD, his ward. He has decided to discontinue the tutor and had a new home for the boy. He calls on Miss Ella Sexton who tells him she can not decide to whom to leave her money. Barrett refuses to advise her. As he is leaving he meets Lida Stafford, Elinor's mother. She suspects his interest in Elinor and determines to get a step to it.

Lida goes on to meet VANCE CARTER who is in love with her. NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER VII

VANCE went on smoothly, "Carra and Hal Woodbridge want you to go down with them to Miami for a week or so. They spoke of it last night. You will, won't you? Then I'll come later."

"I don't know—Vance," Lida Stafford said the words hesitantly, her eyes averted.

"Please, dearest!"

Lida protracted the moment, although she knew she would go if Carra and Hal went down in their plane, "La Paloma." Protracted the moment because Vance, begging, was so really satisfying. This was the adulation and attention she craved.

A waitress wearing a black dress, rather worn and in need of pressing, stood by the table, pencil tapping on her pad, waiting to take their order.

Vance had completely forgotten that they were to have tea. He exclaimed, "Oh—I see—what do you want, Lida?"

"I don't know, dear. Won't you order?"

"English muffins?" He frowned at the card.

"No, they're horrible here." The waitress sniffed at this drawn comment. Lida continued, "And they're a bit heavy, too. It's rather late, you know."

"Well, how about thin, dry toast and guava jelly?"

"We haven't any guava jelly," the waitress put in wearily.

"Oh—I!" Vance scanned the card again, heavily lidded eyes moving swiftly up and down. His emotional starvation was taking from him any ability to deal with foods. And this tea room, which Lida had selected because none of their set ever came there, was a sadly mismanaged place with inefficient service, no selection of foods and mediocre cooking. All this was distasteful to Vance.

And yet—Lida was beside him, his arm ever so lightly touching hers. Vance set teeth on his lower lip.

A LITTLE later the order was given and the waitress, on twisted high heels, made her way toward the kitchen. Lida had deliberately asked for every variety of tea that she knew she would not find in the place, enjoying the waitress' discomfiture. Lida always found satisfaction in disconcerting others, no matter how unimportant the others might be.

"Sorry it's such a loathsome mess," Vance said as the waitress returned and put the food down before them. Again the girl sniffed, plainly indicating her disapproval.

"Lida," Vance went on, "about this Miami trip—I don't want to nag but you will, won't you?"

"I don't know, Vance!"

"Please, dearest!"

"But you see, Vance—"

"Darling, I'd have some chance to see you there! I can't stand much more of this sort of thing. I mean it!"

Bessie Throps who had come puffing into the tea room with a string bag full of purchases, including tooth paste, hand soap, a bag of caramels, handkerchiefs for Jim and a 10-cent vase for the dining room, settled herself at a table and looked around.

She was glad she had come in, although she knew she shouldn't spend even the few pennies her refreshment would cost. She was going to be short again at the end of the month. And she simply couldn't ask Aunt Ella to help her out again. Aunt Ella had a fixed idea that Bessie didn't manage well.

She scanned the menu, then looked across the room to see her cousin, Lida Stafford, with "that Carter man."

BESSIE, usually so gentle, bated Lida for her slender elegance and her scorn of the things Bessie felt every woman should do to help her husband get along. Yes, it was Lida and the way she

was acting was shameful. No wonder Bentwell drank! Bessie decided to move so that Lida and her escort would not see her. Aunt Ella ought to know about this but to gain by tale-bearing was so unbecomingly low! Neither Bessie nor her husband, Jim, despite their real need, wanted their sons to have money gained in that way.

She stopped wearily to pick up the string bag and moved. No, Lida had not seen her.

Bessie knew Lida had told Aunt Ella about Bessie's throwing away the mushrooms that had been half gone when delivered. Lida had followed Bessie to her kitchen, raising her beautifully arched brows after a look at Maggie. Maggie never did look quite neat. And the next time at Aunt Ella's Bessie heard, "Mushrooms for a large family. Bessie, are a very expensive form of food. The idea of throwing them out, quite frankly, amazes me!"

She would take not chocolate with whipped cream and try not to brood upon things, Bessie decided. It didn't do any good but just the same things weren't always fair.

Meantime, in another part of the city, Barrett Colvin had returned home from Miss Ella Sexton's to telephone to Marcia.

"I have only a few moments to talk," Marcia said with nervous haste. "I don't know when Dick will come in. I didn't get to meet him. I've felt miserable all day. Barry—"

"Yes, dear?"

"That Dexter person called again!"

"For what purpose?" Barrett almost barked the question.

"I don't know. I wasn't here. I left his card and wrote on it—wait, I have it here somewhere. Here it is. Barry—"

"Yes, dear."

"He wrote, 'I have a matter of importance to discuss with you. I will come back and wish to see you.' I thought, Barry, that if you knew where he was you could talk to him. Do you know where he is?"

"I don't," Barrett admitted, "but you mustn't worry. I'll find him somewhere and, Marcia, don't have him admitted again. Tell him to come to see me."

"Oh, thank you, darling!"

"Never mind about that. I hope you'll feel better soon."

"I will—I do already! All this has worried me so."

"But you're not to worry!" he told her grimly.

HE left the telephone to stride down the floor, smoking determinedly. When he had a chance to deal with young Dexter he would end this persecution of Marcia. It was outrageous! Dick Radnor, Barrett thought, was the sort who could care deeply enough to forgive a lot. He had seen Dick to chat with him for a short half hour in Dick's office. On the other hand, he knew Dick's family and their reputation for almost brutal honesty. Whatever happened, Marcia must not be subjected to any more of these disagreeable situations. Barrett decided, until she was in completely good health again.

He ran his hands through his sandy hair. Life could be so damnable difficult!

And what had Lida Stafford meant by saying that her daughter, Elinor, liked the wrong sort of young men? He would have been willing to wager his last cent on that girl. Barrett wished Elinor's mother hadn't said that. The whole day had been a succession of irritations. First the visit to Gerald and the problem of getting the youngster a new and better sort of home. Then Miss Ella and her miserable suggestion that Barrett spy on her relatives. Well, he'd quelled that, he felt sure. And now Dexter!

"You're dining in, sir?" Higgins asked from the doorway after his usual hesitant cough.

Of course he was dining in. Barrett realized, but the thought for some reason was irksome. He didn't want to talk with men this evening and he knew no woman who would be agreeable company either. He had a quick flash of Elinor Stafford's face and knew that if he could he would have hurried eagerly to fetch her and settle her across a table from him.

What could her mother have meant by saying Elinor was fond of the wrong sort of young men? The thought bothered him more and more.

"Yes, Higgins," Barrett answered wearily. "I'm dining in—"

(To Be Continued)

The origin of white in England is obscure, but under its old name of Triumph, it was well known as early as 1529, when Bishop Latimer preached a Christmas sermon at Cambridge and based the allegories on the game.

The coldest room in the world is at the Cambridge Low Temperature Research station, England, where 100 degrees of frost can be reached; scientists engaged in the work never remain in the room more than ten minutes at a time.

Five of America's great wars began in April: Revolutionary on the 19th, Mexican on the 24th, Civil on the 12th, Spanish-American on the 19th and the World War on the 6th.

Boston terriers were first produced by crossing the English bulldog with the English terrier, but the crossing was done in America by Americans.

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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 TUBBS



By Crane

FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



By Blosser

THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP



By Cowan