

Bargain Bride

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY
 BARRETT COLVIN, back in New York after years abroad, falls in love with Miss Elinor STAFFORD. Barrett is 35, wealthy, and has made a name for himself as an architect.
 LIDA STAFFORD, Elinor's beautiful mother, has kept the attention for herself. Lida is a socialite, a flirt, and a schemer. She is the kind of woman who is always in the center of the party, and she is always getting into the good graces of rich men. Lida is the kind of woman who is always in the center of the party, and she is always getting into the good graces of rich men.
 Years before Barrett's arrival, his half-sister, ALICE, who was a beautiful girl, died mysteriously. Barrett had a son whom he never saw again. Barrett never knew that if he had ever known of the girl he would never have married her.
 Elinor's mother goes to Miami for three weeks. When she returns she overhears Barrett talking to Elinor. Realizing he is about to ask the girl to marry him, Lida interrupts. Cleverly she leads Barrett to believe that Elinor has only been dining with him, and does not really care for him. Barrett leaves. Days pass in which Elinor does not hear from him. She is heart-broken.
NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

CHAPTER XIV
 Elinor refused point blank to go to see Aunt Ella Sexton when her mother asked her to do this. She could not endure the street or the possibility of meeting Barrett there. She shook, refusing, and Lida smiled, noting the girl's show of emotion. "So naïve!" she reflected.

At the end of three long days Elinor telephoned Barrett. She could not keep from doing it. At the telephone she hesitated, choked out the number, had to repeat it and waited, knees growing weak, hands cold and wet. Then came the answer and she gasped, "Is—Mr. Colvin at home, please?"

Higgins did not recognize this new version of the sweet voice that had become familiar to him. "Mr. Colvin is out of town for a few days," he replied. "Is there a message?"

"No, thank you—"

For a moment she sat on the small chair, one hand pressed against her stiffened, dry lips, staring at the telephone, seeing Barrett smiling down at her. She had never dreamed love could hurt in this way. Not that she loved him! She told herself fiercely that she despised him; that she would despise anyone who could so play with another's feelings. Yet she dreamed of seeing him, of meeting him somewhere and having it all magically understood and as it had been. She dreamed thus by day and twice, as she slept fitfully, she dreamed of seeing Barrett looking down at her mother as he had looked at her. She was breathing hard, her hands clenched.

Of course she had to get through it and of course people had been through it again and again; again and again. She knew suddenly that the world was full of people who had loved unwisely and far too well. They had all said, so easily, that Aunt Ella had been "disappointed in love." She herself, Elinor realized, might live to be as old as Miss Ella, now close to 90. Ninety years! Of course the pain would dull but always it would be beneath the covering made by time.

BENTWELL suspected that Lida's white, slender fingers had been in the pie. Lida had not wanted Elinor in the first place. Lida had wanted nothing but the money she felt would be hers through Miss Ella, Bentwell's aunt. Elinor's coming had made a tragedy for Lida and she had never ceased to resent it. What she called Miss Ella's "meanness and obstinacy" had made for Lida another tragedy. Her life, she said, had been "a series of frustrations." Nothing beautiful could endure for her, she stated naively.

Bentwell didn't know what he could do about it or whether anything could be done. And because he was thus harassed, he drank steadily and more than was usual. At the nightly chess games to Elinor's "check!" he would say a thick, "Er—oh—yes" or "no" in his chair. It sometimes seemed to her that she could not stand that, either, but with other tested humans she learned that one endured what one must.

Barrett kept feeling that she might call. If she did, he knew he would go running back, no matter what she did or said. He stiffened when Higgins appeared to say, "The telephone, Mr. Barrett—" then lost interest as he heard who waited to speak with him.

Higgins told him that "a lady" had called during his absence. Barrett paused with his overcoat half way down his arms. "I did not know the voice, sir," Higgins added.

"Oh—" Barrett murmured. He refused an invitation from Miss Ella and considered going with the Hatch Foundation to the Gobi again. They were planning some important excavations. But he must first settle Gerald and he could not seem to find the proper place for the child despite an energetic search.

HE received a note from Lida Stafford, asking that he do her the favor of coming to talk with her about a matter that was important to her and with which she needed his help. He replied saying he would come as soon as

the pressure of business matters gave him the time. Elinor saw the note, directed in his bold hand, to her mother.

"I'm through," she decided. "Through with him. This—ends it."

But of course it did not. It increased, instead, her certainty of his faithfulness and her misery. December was cold and storm-swept. People herded in hot rooms murmuring the unusual amount of snow and ice when they were planning to go south. Miss Ella caught a slight cold. Miss Smythe excused Miss Ella to Bessie Throppe who had come from Brooklyn for the purpose of asking "just a little help until the first." Bessie had not known where to turn. She sat, uncomfortable beneath Miss Smythe's critical scrutiny and sage conjecture about the reason for her call. Bessie tried to smile. Jim, Jr., had been sick again, she confessed. Miss Smythe murmured a remote, "How unfortunate!" and looked pointedly toward the clock. Going down the steps later Bessie wept. She couldn't help it. She didn't know where to turn this time. Elinor, dear child, would help her if she could but Bessie knew that Elinor never had a cent.

For the first time in Bessie's life she let her conscious mind reckon Miss Ella's age and speculate on how much longer Miss Ella could live. "She couldn't leave us out entirely when she knows how we need it," Bessie thought. "And she's fond of Jim—"

Even \$10,000 would make all the difference in the world to them. Jim had been unlucky with everything he'd touched. She smiled, blew her reddened nose and set her chin which had been quivering. She made her payments were treacherously slippery beneath their light coating of snow.

THE news of Miss Ella Sexton's illness traveled swiftly and Lida found a thaw in tradesmen which she immediately took advantage of, buying two new frocks and a hat.

Then Miss Ella grew better and was able to sit up for half a day, to come downstairs for a few hours. At the end of a week of convalescence Miss Smythe telephoned Lida that Miss Ella wished her and Elinor to come to tea in order to thank them for their Christmas remembrances.

The word "remembrances" made Lida smile smugly; she had "begged" herself to get the Shetland shawl and the padded footrest.

"You'll have to go!" she said shortly to Elinor.

"I suppose so," the girl agreed dully. She was standing by a window, staring out and seeing nothing.

"What are you mooning about now?" Lida questioned harshly. "You know as well as I do," Elinor answered, but in her unhappy eyes was no suspicion that her mother knew more of the matter than she did.

"Why can't you have more pride? A woman doesn't wear her heart on her sleeve."

"I know," Elinor admitted slowly, "but I can't seem to help it!" She left the room then, somewhat blindly.

"Little fool!" Lida murmured. She felt a vague compunction and irritation over the situation. Elinor always had been so trying! Barrett had decided he would go to see Miss Ella early that day in order to miss a possible encounter with Elinor or her mother. Seeing either would be vinegar to his wound.

At the very moment he was starting across the street Lida said to her daughter, "Well, let's get it over!" The girl agreed quickly. If Barrett were going to Miss Ella's he would, of course, drop in for tea.

It was a shock to her, therefore, as the butler was taking her coat to hear Barrett Colvin's voice coming from the next room.

(To Be Continued)

The Duke of Wellington is credited with first use of the phrase, "Circumstances over which I have no control." In reference to business complications with which his son was involved in 1835 or 1840.

Washington, Madison, Jackson, Polk, Buchanan and Harding were the only presidents who had no children.

Flapper Fanny Says



You don't have to be a baseball player to knock out a fly.

OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. Williams

OUR BOARDING HOUSE

By Ahern



BORN THIRTY YEARS TOO SOON.



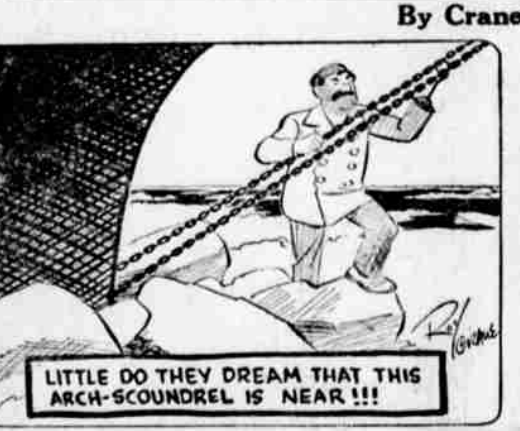
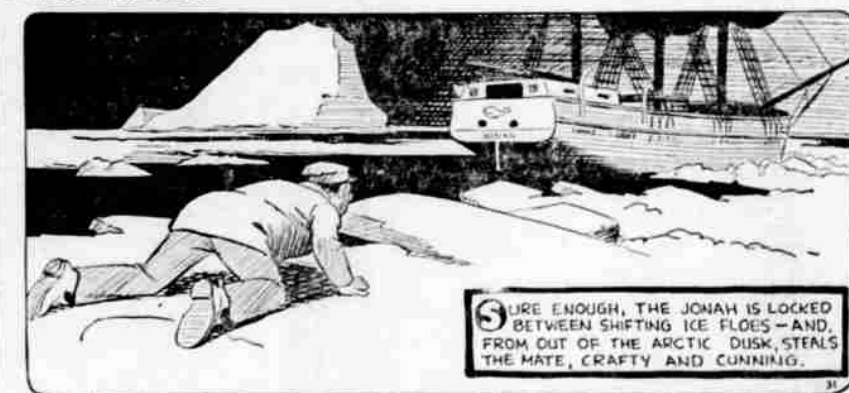
SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

