

Bargain Bride

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY

BARRETT COLVIN, back in New York after a year's absence in love with 20-year-old **ELINOR STAFFORD**, Barrett is a wealthy, and has won fame for himself as an archeologist.

LIDA STAFFORD, Elinor's beautiful sister, has been a girl in the background, wanting attention for herself. Lida is **VANCE CARTER** and constantly scheming to have the good fortune of her husband's name, in order to inherit a share of the vast fortune.

Years before Barrett attended the college, **MARCO**, when a political romance ended disastrously, Marco had a son whom Barrett adopted. She tells Barrett that if her husband ever learns of the affair he will never forgive her.

Elinor's mother goes to Miami for three weeks. When she returns she deliberately tries to break up the romance between Barrett and Elinor and succeeds. The girl is heart-broken because she does not hear from him.

Barrett and Elinor are unexpectedly at Miss Ella Sexton's. He offers Lida a check and she refuses, declaring she does not smoke. Rebellious at her mother's hypocrisy, Elinor takes a cigarette, thereby offending her aunt who once more decides to revise her will.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY CHAPTER XVI

ELINOR had never had such a season with her mother as that on the drive home from Miss Ella's. She said again and again, "Mother, people are staring!" but it made no impression.

The chauffeur's face reddened from the stare of most and Lida's voice was so loud and high-pitched it could be heard through the glass. "I pity that girl!" the chauffeur thought. The thought was an old one that frequently became a chant when the servants were together.

Now Lida was laughing—a shrill, sneering, hysterical laugh. So far as the chauffeur could hear there had been no reply at all from Miss Elinor.

He sympathized with the girl even more deeply as he opened the door of the car a little later. Lida went into the building, brittle and strong from her flaming anger. Elinor stood after her, her face paper-white.

"For a moment," the chauffeur told the butler later, "I thought she was going to fall—poor kid!"

Elinor's reactions were divided. In one way she was glad she had done what she had. For another reason she deeply regretted it. Lida had said, eyes narrowing and glittering, "Think of your father! The way he has slaved all his life. And now you—with a cigarette—have burned every chance he ever had for rest and independence!"

Elinor would even have lied to give her father all that he desired. She would have lied gladly and as well as she could. But it was too late.

Barrett Colvin had not once looked at her. This realization crept between every separate recollection of the afternoon. She had stolen side glances at him, unable to help it. Each time he had seemed coldly composed, entirely unaware of her.

Two long days and longer nights stretched ahead. Elinor could not seem to sleep. On the morning following the second night Lida awoke to find the girl standing by her bed.

"Well, what is it?" Lida said petulantly. She loathed being disturbed so early.

"Aunt Ella's gone—" Elinor said. Lida sat up. She laughed shrilly. "A pretty time you chose—" she began. "It was the old story Elinor had heard so often during those two dreary days. A story of her having ruined her parents' future."

Lida punctuated her diatribe with questions. "And you know perfectly well how she felt—who telephoned?"

"Craven. Miss Smythe is prostrated—"

"Miss Smythe prostrated! How delicious! Your father can't go to the office? He knows that?"

"Yes."

"He'll probably be cut off without a cent—as you know. And of course you know why too but, even though he gets nothing, he must keep up appearances. I haven't a decent black dress. Has Bessie telephoned?"

"No."

"That's odd. I suppose she thinks since they will be the heirs that we are beneath notice. No doubt she's heard of your part in what happened. Hand me my negligee! Another thing—"

Celeste, whom Lida had summoned a moment before, appeared then and Lida exclaimed, "I've been waiting 10 minutes."

Elinor went to her own, much smaller room. She sat on the edge of her narrow bed and stared at a worn rug. Perhaps she had—ruined all hope of rest for her father.

vin sitting stiff and cold in Miss Ella's drawing room haunted the girl.

There followed another sleepless night; another day of much the same wretched pattern. The third day was perhaps the most miserable, with Lida, nervous and flaring up angrily or becoming sullenly morbid. Everyone knew that at four they would go into the late Miss Sexton's drawing room and there a little later the will would be read.

At length the long stretch was ended.

The funeral was gloomily correct. No one wept except Craven, who was old, and Bessie Thrope, looking a little more dejected than usual in her shabby black. Lida was aware of the smartness of her own black attire. She studied Barrett Colvin who was staring at his hands, gripped between knees. It was amazing, Lida thought, to realize how easily he had been managed. She supposed she was in for a bad half hour with Vance Carter who would remind her of that promise to divorce Bentwell—a thing she intended to do in time but only when the right man appeared. How white Elinor looked! And how stuffy Bentwell was! Sentimental fool—he was actually blinking!

What a perfect old dodo the clergyman was! Well, Lida knew her share would be diminished by him, who, despite Miss Ella's stern disapproval, had had candles placed upon the altar.

The clergyman was droning. "We brought nothing into this world and it is certain we carry nothing out. The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away!"

Lida looked extremely pensive because she wanted to smile. So terribly apt, that remark!

Just an hour or two more and they'd all hear the will. Thank God, that suspense would be over. She had heard Mr. Grotrner speak to Barrett Colvin before the opening of the service to ask him to stay for the reading of the will.

The drive to the burial ground was long and cold, despite the heat in the car. The snow that had lain for several days had a coating of soot. The open grave and the damp earth was depressing. Even Lida felt the dreariness in such passing. She saw Elinor and saw Barrett Colvin's anxious eyes on the girl.

Then the coffin was lowered. There was the thud of earth on its lid—and the gloomy affair was over.

An hour later Mr. Grotrner stood, his fingers tapping the chenille cover of the library table. They were all there before him—Bessie, Jim, Bentwell, Lida, Barrett Colvin, Miss Smythe, and the servants.

Lida, assured and half-smiling, was thinking that she might take a house at Cannes for the remainder of the winter with her share. Bessie was hoping there would be enough to make things easier for Jim. Jim was considering a house with more room around it. The children needed space in which to play. Barrett Colvin thought of nothing but the fact that he must not show what he felt, must not even look at Elinor, sitting beside her father who reeked of Scotch and swayed a little, walking.

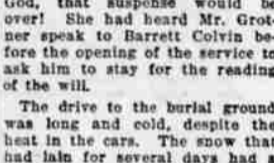
Mr. Grotrner cleared his throat. The rustling and motion ceased; tension was in the air. Mr. Grotrner began reading a long preamble in which Miss Ella rendered to God her gratitude for being all that she had been.

Then the servants were mentioned. "So stuffy!" Lida decided, twisting her gloves which she had taken off, knowing how her hands looked against the black she wore. She heard the amounts which had been left the servants with, growing resentful. So pointless, Lida reflected. Such people were happier working. Imagine \$20,000 for Craven! And the interest from a soundly invested \$100,000 for Miss Smythe for life. It was amazing.

The lawyer cleared his throat again. Ah—now they would hear the rest!

Flapper Fanny Says

A girl has to have a good line to make a substantial catch.



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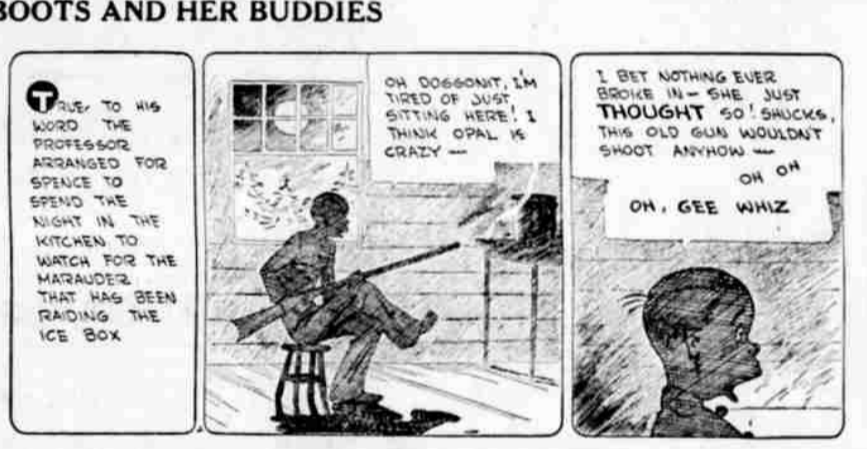
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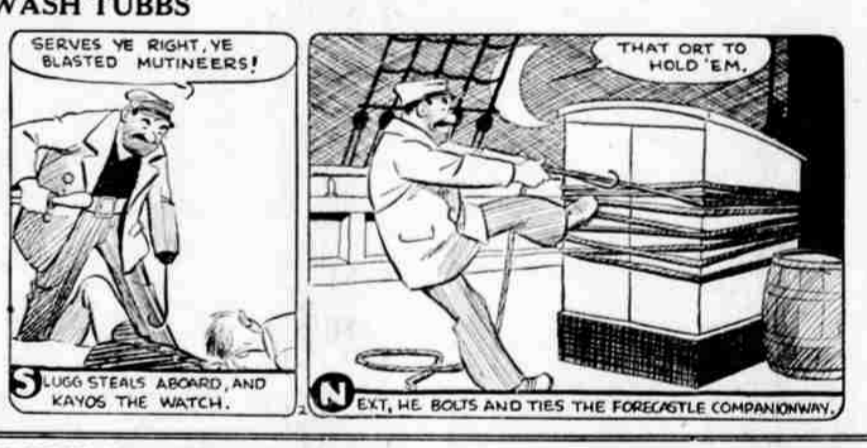
SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM 'N POP



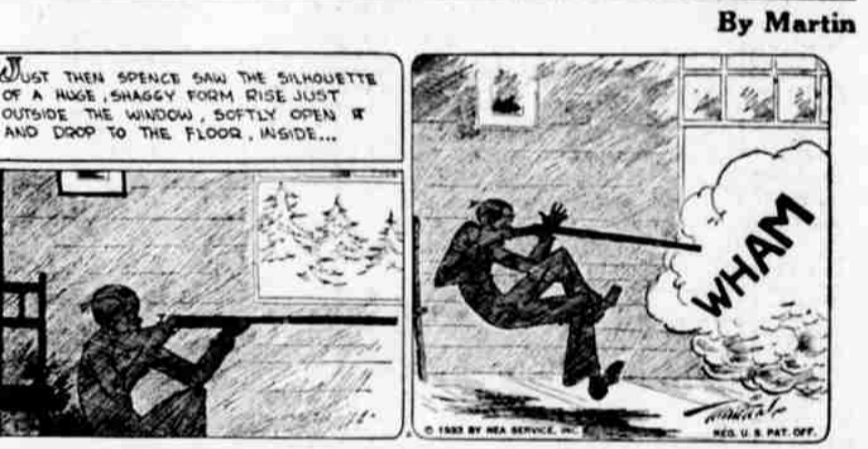
OUR BOARDING HOUSE



By Small



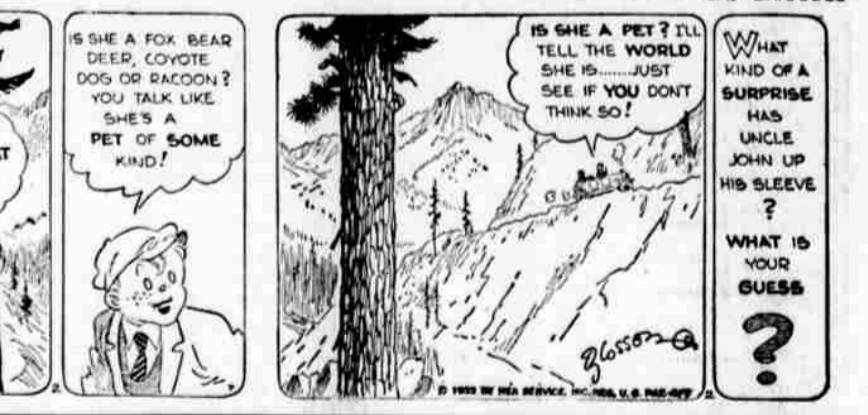
By Martin



By Crane



By Blosser



By Cowan

