

# Bargain Bride

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

**BEGIN HERE TODAY**

**BARRITT COLVIN**, back in New York after years abroad, fails to love with ELINOR STAFFORD. He is 35 and she is 20. Elinor returns his affection but her jealous scheming mother, LIDA STAFFORD, breaks up the romance by convincing Barritt that Elinor was only flirting with him.

With **MISS ELLA SEXTON**, Elinor's aunt, dies and, in the despite of the relatives, leaves her entire fortune to Barritt. Lida Stafford has been flitting with **VANCE CARVER**. When Vance learns she will not divorce her husband, **HENRY W. STAFFORD**, he shoots himself. It is uncertain whether the wounded man will live or die.

Barritt does not want Miss Ella's money but can not give it back to the rightful inheritors because of the trust. Suddenly a plan comes to him. He tells Elinor that if she will marry him and live in his honor for a year he will give her the entire sum to divide between her relatives. The ceremony is set for next day. With her mother, Elinor goes to the church.

**HOW GO ON WITH THE STORY**

## CHAPTER XXIV

In the vestibule Barritt waited with Dick Radnor. Dick was nervous, having left Marcia in tears. She wept so easily these days, wept when nothing at all had happened to make her unhappy.

Barritt looked as if he would gladly have given \$1000 for a deep puff of a cigaret. He had never been, he realized, more shaken or uncertain of himself. But when he saw Elinor he forgot himself. She had lost color and her smile was forced yet she was lovely, as always. Truly and beautifully lovely.

He moved toward her quickly to draw her away from the group to a small, dimly lit arm of the vestibule running across the front of the church.

"It will be all over in no time now," he promised as lightly as he could. "Palmer said it was only a matter of a few minutes and then done for life."

Lord, why had he said that—about it being done for life?

She looked her gratitude. "I can't think why I'm so nervous!" she confessed.

"We'll go home," he said, "and have a decent luncheon and forget the whole business. Meantime, Elinor, you'll have to look a little happier. Can you manage it?"

She tried to smile. "How's that?" he heard her whisper.

"A bit better."

"I'll do my best. I want you to know—I'll try to do my best—always."

"I know that!" he answered almost harshly and, for the moment, he did. Lida drew near to say crisply, "Doctor Palmer is waiting. I think—"

They were married in one of the small chapels where Dick, after a word from the verger, led the small group nervously. The blended lights from a stained-glass window shone down on Elinor.

Bessie whispered, with a catch of breath, "Did you ever see anyone so sweet and lovely?" as she mopped her eyes with an already moist handkerchief.

LIDA remembered her own marriage to Bentwell and how she had had to remind herself not to show her scorn of him. She had thought, of course, that Miss Ella Sexton would immediately settle "something decent" on Bentwell, her nephew. She had, Lida knew been a fool. All the years of lying to the old woman had gone for naught. But of course now things would be different.

"I will," Elinor whispered, head bent.

"I will," came strangely, if not quite steadily, from Barritt. Then it was over! Barritt stooped to kiss his wife. Arthur Palmer gave his stole to an acolyte and stepped from the chancel as a friend and not a clergyman.

Elinor, oddly dizzy, clung to Barritt. He felt her dependence, flushed more deeply.

"Of course we'll all have lunch together," said Lida.

Barritt smiled quite naturally "Sorry to bear out the old theory of mothers and sons-in-law," he said, "but of course we won't. We're going to skip. Aren't we?" he ended with a tenderness that was not misquered, as he turned his head toward Elinor.

"I think—considering everything—" she answered with an effort—"that Barry and I will run on—now. I'll look in to see father this afternoon," she added.

"And we'll make up for it by having a real party for you all some day when we can celebrate," Barritt added.

He put his hand over Elinor's and pressed it reassuringly. She was so very young, he realized with a rise of tenderness. Dimly he heard the good wishes that were theirs. With stolid stiffening he suffered Lida's dramatically delirious cries. And at last they were alone in his car, piloted by Hutten.

"Well!" Barritt murmured after a sigh, turning toward her. "Feeling better?"

"Yes," shyly. "Are you?"

"I'm a new man. Will you smoke?"

"Yes."

HE found cigarets and held his lighter to hers, laughing suddenly to see how her hand shook. "Still badly knocked," he said "you're trembling."

She nodded. "But I'm not uncomfortable," she stated. "I'm—abruptly at ease—considering."

He also was at ease, he realized. He said slowly, "Odd, isn't it? I feel the same way."

They were silent for a space. Then Barritt asked, "Your bags were sent to my—our home?"

"Yes. There are a few trunks on the way, too. I hope I won't be a great bother."

"Oh, no! And you'll remember my promise to make it as easy for you as possible?"

"Yes, thank you."

The car came to a standstill. They were at home. Barritt opened the door before Hutten could reach it. Higgins admitted them, bowing low and trembling from excitement. Elinor smiled and, rather shyly, spoke a few words to the butler. His eyes brimmed as he murmured, "Thank you, Mrs. Colvin—"

He was going to be able to love her, he saw, as he had hoped he might.

"We're home," said Barritt.

"Oh, I like it!" A sudden sweep of consciousness made Elinor speak in an undertone.

"Even that hat rack?"

"Yes," she insisted. "It makes me think of New Year's calls and people getting ready to go to Saratoga."

"That's exactly the reason I've kept it," he said, wondering at her understanding and warmed by it. "But anything," he added quickly, "that you don't like can be changed."

"But I think everything looks so pleasant," she stated. Some day she would tell him that it was a relief to get away from Lida's self-conscious "modern" furnishings into the solidness of the old and the feeling that a family had lived happily among things they knew.

"I THINK," Barritt said now, "that Higgins has had your bags taken upstairs. May I show you the way?"

"I think you'd better, don't you?" she answered as she looked after Higgins who was well down the long hall.

"There's a landing and an extra step at the head of the stairs. I want you to be careful to remember it. I can't have my balustrade all chipped up by your falling around!"

He couldn't remember when he had felt so young, so inclined to foolish jest, so happy.

She laughed. He had the power, she was learning, to take from her all feeling of restraint.

"I do like your house," she said over her shoulder, mounting upward.

"It's your house also," he reminded her. "Your room opens into mine as well as into the hall," he told her stiffly as they reached the upper hall. "The door has a key on your side—but during the day I think it would be best to keep it open. I don't want even the servants—"

"I understand. I—I don't need the key."

"Thank you," he answered low. He pushed the door open and she stepped into the room—the prettiest room, she thought, that she had ever seen. It was gay with soft, rose chintzes and comfortable with deep chairs. There were two capacious empty bookshelves on either side of a fireplace, a padded-top English fire guard around the hearth, small tables, a desk, a telephone guarded by a Florentine cabinet, long mirrors, soft net at the windows, a chaise longue.

"When did you do this?" she asked wonderingly. "Or have it done?" It was obviously new, entrancingly fresh. The rug was so soft beneath her feet. There were pillows, many pillows and all so pretty.

"Last night," he answered. "Or rather since yesterday noon. It was a rush order so you may—I suppose you must—find many things missing."

She said with childish wonder and pleasure, "It's lovely!"

He had not meant to but he could not help taking her hand to hold between his. "I want you to be as happy as you can be—here with me," he said soberly.

(To Be Continued)

IF YOU have something to sell, have changed your place of business or have farm products or have anything to sell the most economical and surest way of getting results is through the classified page in 1938 or write to the News-Herald.

Flapper Fanny Says

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## OUT OUR WAY



THE WORRY WART.

## OUR BOARDING HOUSE



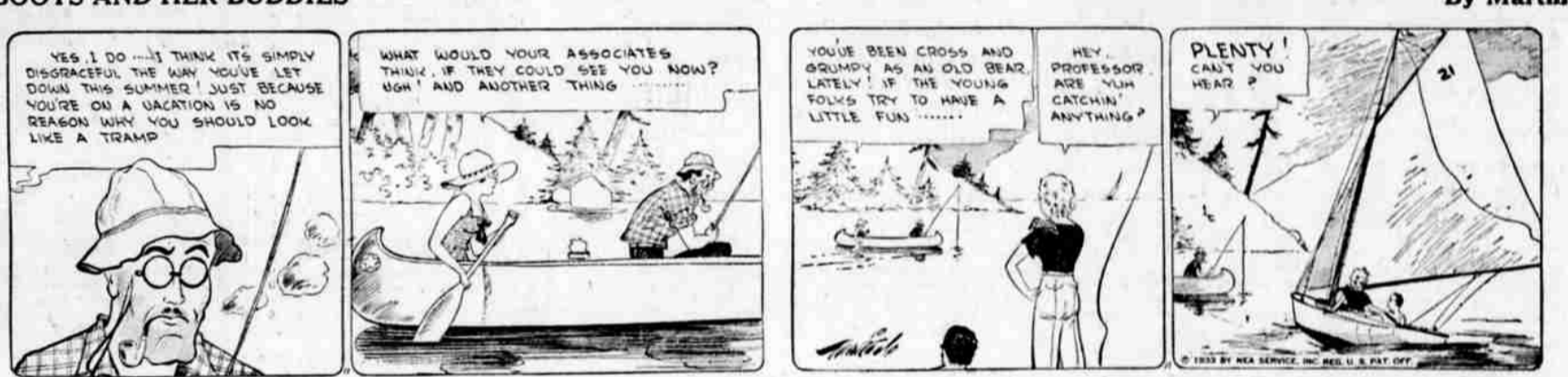
THE MAJOR IS CONTAGIOUS

## 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

