

Bargain Bride

by KATHARINE HAVILAND-TAYLOR

BEGIN HERE TODAY

ELINOR STAFFORD, 23, falls in love with Barrett Colvin, 25, but her jealous, scheming mother breaks up the romance by convincing Barrett that Elinor is a heartless flirt.

When Elinor's aunt, wealthy Miss Ella Sexton, dies, she leaves her fortune to Barrett. Then drunken Vance Currier shoots Bennett Stafford, Elinor's father. Barrett tells Elinor that if she will marry him and live in his home as a guest for a year he will give her the entire Sexton fortune to divide among her relatives. Knowing the money may save her father's life, Elinor agrees.

The marriage takes place. Barrett, in spite of the lies Ella told him, finds himself more in love with Elinor than ever. He has a ward, nine-year-old GERALD MOORE, who is the son of his half-sister, MARCIA HANCOCK. Barrett has promised Marcia never to reveal the boy's true story.

Elinor's father dies. Her mother discovers the existence of Barrett's ward and tells Elinor the boy is Barrett's son. When she asks him Barrett cannot explain because of his promise to Marcia. Misunderstandings between Barrett and Elinor increase. They take a house in the country and Gerald comes to live with them. Both Elinor and Barrett are miserable but seem powerless to straighten out the situation.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

her various ways. Her father adored Elinor but he had his weaknesses and she knew all about them. That's not so nice for a decent girl. And you know now he drank—stewed to the gills every night, burling all over the place.

"Yes," Barrett conceded not quite steadily.

"Then there's Philip Sexton. After Elinor settled that \$100,000 on him he was whining all the time for more."

Barrett was all attention. Philip Sexton! So that was where the \$100,000 had gone! He had thought Elinor kept the money for herself after pretending such scorn for Miss Ella's money.

"I met her one day last winter at Phil's," Bob went on. "I've sort of kept in touch with Phil because I did think he had a raw deal. Elinor used to go to see him often. Philip was sick and whenever she came all he did was to talk of how much you and she had and how little he had. He's a bum for there ever was one."

"I didn't know he was in New York," Barrett heard himself say.

"That was Phil's secret. He didn't want anyone to know. He was awfully sensitive about that scandal he was mixed up in. Forging Miss Sexton's check, you know. You did know about that, didn't you?"

"Yes, I know that."

Bob considered the matter in his slow way. "Look here," he said abruptly, "I'm afraid I've let the cat out of the bag. I supposed of course you know Elinor went to see Philip and that he was in town—"

"I didn't, but I'm very glad to know it now."

"I'll have to confess to Elinor," Bob said. "But I guess she'll forgive me."

ELINOR was waiting for them on the terrace that ran before the house.

"Here's our friend," Barrett called as he put on the brakes. Elinor didn't understand Barrett's eyes—the reverent, humble apology that was written in them.

"Bob!" she said, looking up and smiling.

"He brought me a present," Gerald reminded, his eyes on the luggage and boxes.

At dinner that night Bob was pleasantly reassured of Elinor's happiness. She glowed. Barrett's heart went down anew. To see such a change in her made by another man! He breathed deeply, reminded himself that her happiness was the one thing he wanted, and was able to force a smile.

Bob made his confession about "spilling the beans" concerning Philip.

"I didn't know that Barrett didn't know about it, Elinor," Bob said sheepishly.

"It doesn't matter," she assured him. "I didn't tell him because Philip was so insistent that no one must know. And he was so good to me when I was a child that I felt I had to respect his wishes. He didn't want anyone to know he was in New York or that I had given him the money. Philip has no much pride—not the right kind of pride, either. It's the kind that exists so long as facts are kept hidden, so long as he can pretend that no one helps him. It's difficult to explain but I felt I owed him a good deal. And so I promised. I've often thought it was a mistake. Am I forgiven, Barry?" she finished.

"My dear!" Barrett stammered. "You know you are!"

Bob Telfare glanced from one to the other and reflected. "They're crazy about each other." Actually there had been tears in Barrett's eyes, brought there by Elinor's question. Well, Bob could understand that. If things had been different he, too, would have been able to feel a smart beneath the eyelids, with her showing need of his approval.

But things weren't different and perhaps some day he'd meet another girl. Meantime he'd keep in practice for the golf tournaments and get as many cups as he could.

(To Be Continued)

CHAPTER XLVI

BOB TELFARE arrived on the following Friday afternoon. He was loaded down with a golf bag, tennis racket, his luggage, and a deck tennis set he had brought for Gerald. Barrett, meeting him at the station, felt for the first time an impulse of friendliness toward the younger man.

"Hi!" Bob sang out heartily. He'd heard the gossip about Barrett's ward and refused to believe a word of it. Bob would admit that Barrett Colvin might be "dumb" but he wasn't the sort to be involved in such an affair as the conspiracy inferred.

"It was good of you to come down, Bob," said Barrett. There was an atmosphere of outdoors, hot sun, wind-swept links and baking courts about Bob Telfare that was extremely appealing.

"Good of me? Say, how do you get that way? It was swell of you to ask me if I was the younger in the rumble seat of your car?"

"Yes, I suppose there's been some talk about him?"

"Oh, sure. You know how people are! But as I figure it out, it doesn't matter much what people say so long as you know the truth yourself. There are some people in the world who always have to have something to talk about. And they're not worth considering!"

They were almost beside the car now and Gerald had climbed out. Barrett introduced him. "This is my adopted son, Gerald Colvin, Mr. Telfare." Gerald's own name, Moore, had of course been abandoned.

"How do you do?" Gerald stammered, grinning and revealing thus the missing front tooth that seems to make a certain type of small boy so much more appealing.

They settled themselves in the car and Bob told Gerald about the present he had brought for him.

"Gee!" said the youngster. And then, "I'll have a lot of fun with it, Mr. Telfare. Will you play with me?"

Bob assured him that he would. "Nice kid!" he said to Barrett after they were on their way.

"Yes, he is," Barrett agreed.

"I was awfully sorry to hear about Marcia's and Dick's loss—"

"Must have been a blow."

THE car, reaching the top of a hill, presented a view of the Sound. It was a view Barrett had come to like, giving a suggestion, as it did, of English downs and their tranquility. Bob murmured that it would be a "swell place for a golf course."

Barrett laughed at that. "I like you, Bob!" he announced.

"Why not?" the other asked, adding, "It's easier to like people. I do generally, having a weakness for peace and comfort."

"It's not always easy," Barrett said, "for an older man to like a young man—whom his wife likes!"

"How do you get that way?" Bob asked indignantly. Then he turned, grinning. "Say, was that your old complaint at Alken?"

"Yes," Barrett admitted.

"But, good Lord—why, Elinor never would look at me if you were in the same room! And she didn't before you stopped into the picture either. I guess I used to make myself pretty much of a pest. You see, I was crazy over her and I still am, but it needn't trouble you, nor her either. She never gave me the slightest encouragement. You know how Elinor is. Square as they make 'em. I remember one time I lost my head and kissed her—Gosh!"

The boy was speaking the truth, Barrett knew. And he also knew that he was seeing the world mistily, that he had never been so happy nor felt so humble, and that he must be on guard lest he give himself away completely.

Bob went on. "Speaking frankly," he said, "—and as an old friend of Elinor's, I hope you'll forgive me for saying this—I have often wondered how she could be the kind of a girl she is. Her mother's the biggest liar this side of hell. By the way, can the kid back there hear what I'm saying?"

Barrett assured him that he could not.

"Aside from the Thorpeas," Bob went on, "they're all bad eggs in

Many a cake falls before it gets in the oven

Flapper Fanny Says

OUT OUR WAY



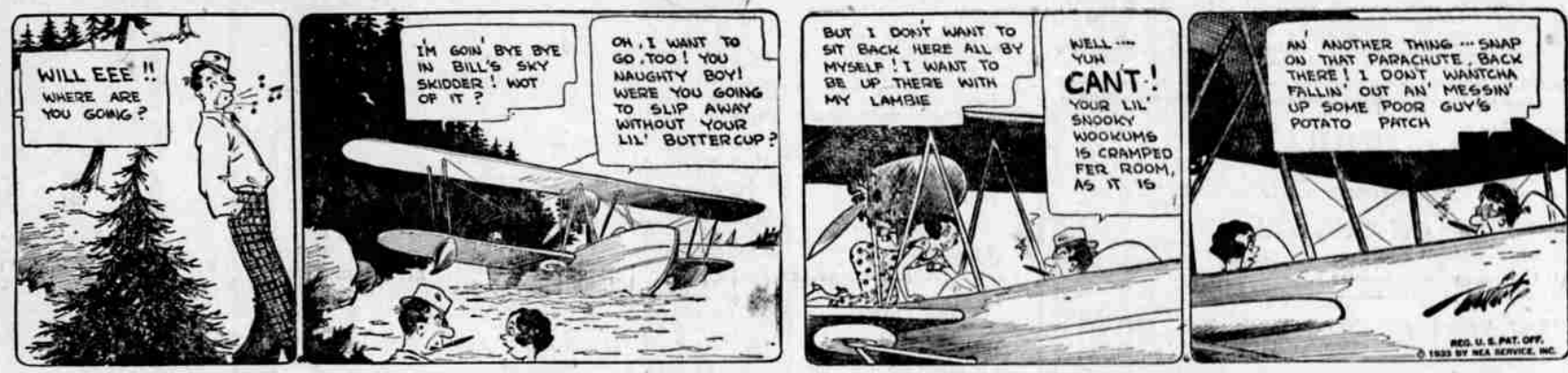
OUR BOARDING HOUSE



SALESMAN SAM



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



THE NEWFANGLES—MOM'N POP

