

I, THE KING

By WAYLAND WELLS WILLIAMS.

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(Continued from Yesterday.)

"No," said Jack, "I'm embarrassed. You tell me about you."

"Well, I'm a perfectly normal and convention person. I've always lived in a brick and brownstone house on Park avenue, and my family were invited, conservative, conventional people such as foreigners don't believe exist in this country. Not much education, but plenty of cultivation. . . . We're of New England stock. My grandfather moved to New York."

"And you?"

"As a kid I was spoiled, but I think I got over that. For the rest, I'm a Hilltopian; I believe that about says it. I'm absolutely conventional. There's nothing interesting about me." Jack said nothing. "Now you go on."

Jack leaned back against Kit's shoulder, staring at the fire. "I'm a Californian, and I don't like California. I'm in that unfortunate position. Oh, I grant it a lot. You can't live there without admitting it's great. But I'm not in the least interested in whether Los Angeles is a better place than San Francisco. I'm not interested in ranch life, or riding out in those dusty mountains. I don't care about movie queens or country clubs or automobiles or horses. . . . The one thing I've always loved about California is the little quail that fly out of the road in front of you. They're so small and neat and un-Californian they're like England. The Californians don't care for them, because they're small. . . .

"This isn't about yourself," Kit remarked.

"But it is, it's the whole thing! I've lived mostly in Oakland, which as you know is a dump across the bay from San Francisco. And I went to a bunch of little schools in the mountains. It was supposed to be a healthy outdoor life, and God it was. Every Saturday we strapped our damned packs on our horses and went off on a trip. Oh, those camping trips! You know I never could tighten a cinch properly. I never could clean a saucapan so that it didn't taste of the tin the next time. Every minute I could take off I was reading H. G. Wells or meditating on the nature of beauty. That didn't go big on those trips either. . . .

"They laughed. 'Go on,' said Kit.

"Well, there wasn't enough money to send me to school in the east, but Father's Yale man and he always intended to send me here. And when I came it was like a release. I thought I was going to be in my element for once in my life. But. . . . A long pause. "It didn't work out that way."

"Kit got up. 'I mean,' said Jack, 'I have eastern longings, but my upbringing and manners are western. You see? I'm a misfit in both places. And people know it—oh, they know it."

"That isn't true," said Kit, impatient and somewhat worried. "You know a nice lot of fellows. I met you with Freddy Drake and Crownshield and that bunch."

"Tagging on. We eat at the same joint, and I tagged on one night after dinner. They don't like me."

"They would if they knew you."

"They'd know me if they liked me."

The tone was bitter. Kit hesitated; the talk had got into deeper water than he liked. He wondered if he hadn't better get back to the shallows. Wiser perhaps—had something in the sight of Jack made him go on.

"See here, Sheltenham. . . . If you call me New Kittle I can call you Cheltenham, can't I?" Jack grinned slightly. "I don't know what I'm blundering into, but here. . . . See here, aren't you a happy man?"

"I'm telling you," said Jack in a low harsh voice, his hand over his eyes. "I expected a lot of this place. The very name of New Haven used to send thrills through me. Then I got here, and found I couldn't get on here any better than in the west. And it was hell, simple hell. Then you came."

"And hell became hotter?"

Jack jerked one hand angrily. "How's one to say these things? It was like. . . . rain in the desert. I don't believe I've ever been really liked before. And when you asked me to come here here, Kit, if we don't get on together. . . . I'll go back to California!"

"We shall get on," said Kit, very blunt, bent on receding.

The speech seemed to arouse Jack. He got up and stood facing Kit with one elbow on the mantel. "You don't understand. I hadn't thought of anything of this sort. I thought I'd at least have the time till you found out for yourself, but. . . . See here, I'm not the kind of man you want to room with. Your friends all think it's a shame you tried it. I'm not your kind. I'm cheap, bum. I'm going to be the kind that never gets on in the class, a sort of pariah."

"Well," said Kit.

"Well, don't be disappointed when you find out."

"I won't," said Kit. He liked the courage of Jack's speech so immensely that he disregarded the import of it. He held Jack's eyes avidly. "Now tell me, what's all this got to do with the price of put?"

Caslon dropped his eyes and walked quickly off. He aligned his knee caps under the window seat and stared out the window. "All right. There isn't anything one can say. . . . Yes, there is, though, one more thing. I may as well say it, now that we've gone so far. If I had a hope it was yours. If you begin this thing, for God's sake finish. Give me up now. If you're not sure you can. I can stand it now. But not later. It would be simply. . . ."

His voice died, and then the panic really came. Kit knew that this was Jack. Affection had palliated them, but had not made him blind. When affection died, what then? Hadn't he accepted honorable withdrawal, now that it was offered?

But affection was not going to die, less than ever since Jack had spoken like this. "I'll go on," he heard himself saying, "and I'll stay on. See?"

Jack's voice came hoarsely: "I believe you will. He inhaled deeply and moved away, jingling the change in his pocket. "Well, that's that. Tomorrow we'll be gassing about as usual. You'll be calling me Cheltenham Bold, and I'll be extending the order you round. Well, never come back to this. Only, don't forget. Kit, don't forget."

"I won't forget," said Kit, apparently bored. "It's after twelve. Let's get to bed."

THE NEBBS



THE TWO CRUSTS OF SOCIETY.



Directed for The Omaha Bee by Sol Hess



Barney Google and Spark Plug



Sunshine Can't See Anything Go to Waste.



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Billy DeBeck



New York --Day by Day--

By O. O. McINTYRE.

New York, Oct. 16.—Thoughts while strolling around New York. Manhattan rushing home for the day—scurrying and colliding like ants. Errand boys turning handspins. Automobile flirts scanning the curbs for conquests. Police platoons marching to posts.

There's Howard Chandler Christy. Sign: "Dogs Electrically Clipped." Bobbed and half-clothed "jazz babies." Gay little basement cafes make ready for night. Unmannerly cubs teasing bewhiskered, old garment workers.

Why do delicatessen dealers wear linen dusters? And the sleeves are always too long. The thin patches of shrubbery in front of the Union League club. And the ghostly shuttered house across the way. The whirr of the burglar alarm tests.

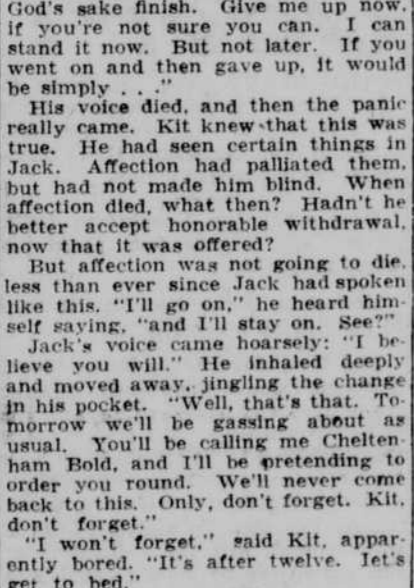
Comic supplement idea: A wife carrying two babies and a husband a bird cage. That's 50-50 stuff. Race track followers returning from the roar of thundering hoofs and cheering crowds. And nearly all go to Beefsteak Charlie's.

Clerks wearing polo helmets. Clubmen in windows adjusting the pincenez for the evening paper. A famous reformed criminal. Pale face. Dreamy eyes. And the hint of spiritual pallor. Fifteen years ago he used to crack safes in country banks.

Idle taxi drivers spinning long-winded tales. The Broadway razzle dazzle begins. The allowance of a burlesque theater. Low clowns practicing kicking each other in the pants. Thunder of tom-toms and the wall of trumpets and trombones.

Soon be time for breakfast sausages. Hot dog! The melange of cheap perfumes. Drooping huckster wagon horses. Blondes, brunettes and red-heads. Or to hear a mocking bird sing in the eucalyptus tree. Or the gr-rump of a bullfrog!

BRINGING UP FATHER



JERRY ON THE JOB



NEVER HIM TO GAMBLE.



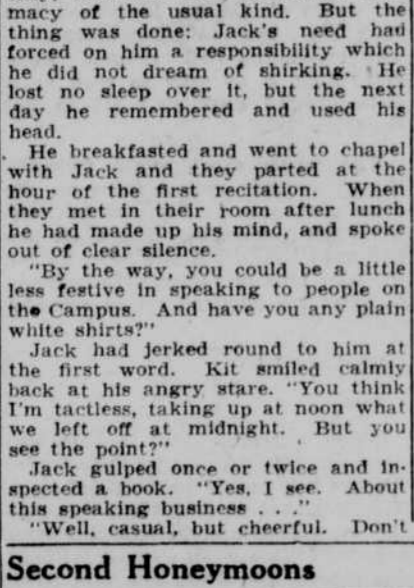
ABIE THE AGENT



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by McManus



Second Honeymoons



ABIE THE AGENT



ABIE THE AGENT



Drawn for The Omaha Bee by Hoban



There are about 20 women along Fashion Row—the dressing style center on Fifty-seventh street—who make from \$15,000 to \$20,000 a year stealing styles. They are known as Fashion Pirates. They make four trips to Paris a year and beat the so-called legitimate dressmakers back with the latest frocks. Their pirating is peddled to the cheaper manufacturers and designers in the Fifth avenue exclusiveness are flooding Broadway and Grand street almost over night. They haul the capitals of the world in search of the beautiful. Some fashion pirates resort to bribery, but as a rule they depend on friendships with the mannikins. Fashion piracy is looked upon as dishonorable by exclusive importers, but there is nothing they can do about it. It is one of the perils of the business.

In the beginning theatrical producers sneered at the movie. It was considered a catchpenny device for peep shows. Today they see a movie as the biggest competitor. But now the theater and the movie man see their greatest danger in the radio. Many secret conclaves have been held along the Rialto. The radio has made a deep inroad into the earnings of the theatrical and movie moguls.

Three of the smartest hotels in New York have discharged all house detectives. They have come to the conclusion they are an affront to the hotel. House detectives have made their bumbles by their prying and lack of tact that have not only lost patronage but resulted in heavy lawsuits. "We are taking the position," said one of the hotel men, "that the surest, best way to conduct himself orderly and that he realizes that he has as much to lose as we have by lack of proper conduct." There has never been any reason for a hotel to assume that every arrival was a crook.

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