

# BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

By Thornton W. Burgess

## THE FIERCE ONES IN DESPAIR

The fiercest ones, who all things dare, At times are victims of despair. —Hooty the Owl.

Of all the feathered folk in the Green Forest none is more fierce than Hooty the Great Horned Owl. He is fierce and he is fearless. All his neighbors his own size and smaller and some who are bigger, are afraid of him. They have the greatest respect for his big, sharp, curved claws and his wicked-looking hooked bill. But big and fierce as he is he knows what it is to despair. He was in despair now and so was Mrs. Hooty, who is just as fierce and bold and daring. It was all because of Prickly Porky the Porcupine. He was climbing the tree in which was their nest, and in that nest were the two most precious babies in all the Great World. Every baby is the most precious baby. Just ask the mother of any baby.



"I don't know," he confessed, "you tell."

him and it. Also the moonlight did not touch that nest. So it is no wonder he knew nothing about it. Just why those silly birds were making such a fuss and saying that this was their tree he had no idea. And he didn't really care. All he wanted was to be left alone. But he was obstinate. He wasn't going to be driven away from that tree. No, sir!

Up on the edge of the nest Hooty and Mrs. Hooty talked things over. "Perhaps he doesn't really care anything about our babies. I've never heard of him stealing anybody's babies," said Hooty.

"That doesn't mean that he never will," snapped Mrs. Hooty. "If it isn't for our babies why has he started to climb this tree? There are plenty of other trees in any one of which he could find plenty of good eating of the kind or food he is supposed to eat. But

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he didn't find a tree to suit him until he came to this one. Right away he began to climb it. Why? I ask you, why?"

Hooty shook his head. "I don't know," he confessed. "You tell." But Mrs. Hooty couldn't tell. She could only guess, and there is nothing in the world more misleading than guessing. Guessing is ignorance pretending to be knowledge. Don't guess. Just say you don't know.

Mrs. Hooty was guessing. "We know that when Bobby Coon climbed this tree he was after our darlings. If Prickly Porky isn't in this tree for the same purpose why didn't he climb one of the other trees? He isn't here for any good purpose, you may just make up your mind to that," she declared.

"What is he doing now?" asked Hooty. Both leaned over to see. Prickly Porky was as far out on that first limb, as far as he could get. He was reaching out and pulling in to him the slender twigs and stripping them of their green leaves which with pine trees and spruce trees and fir trees are called needles. He was eating these and also the tenderest twigs and the bark of the main part of the branch on which he was sitting.

"You see," said Hooty. "Of course I see," retorted Mrs. Hooty. "But just because he has stopped to get a bite to eat we can't be sure that that is all he is after. He may climb up here later."

Just then the babies who, having full stomachs had been taking a nap, awoke and began to cry. Prickly Porky lifted his head and listened. He grinned. The two Owls didn't see that grin. If they had they would have been still more worried and uneasy.

So that is what is the matter with Hooty and Mrs. Hooty. The silly things think I am after their babies. By this time they should know that I never touch babies of any kind. I didn't know their nest was in this tree," thought he. And then he did something that made Hooty and Mrs. Hooty more worried than ever. He crawled back to the trunk of the tree and began to climb higher.

Once more the big Owls looked their fiercest as they flew about

## Contract Bridge

By Josephine Culbertson

### "COURTESY" RESPONDES

The old practice of holding the bidding open for partner, almost regardless of how weak respondent's hand may be, has been abandoned by every player of expert standing. It is all very well to "conceal weakness from the enemy," but the dangers inherent in a bid on a near-Yarborough are so numerous and extreme that other considerations become relatively unimportant.

Let's look at the effect of one of these "weakness-concealment" bids in a team-of-four match.

West dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

♠ K Q 10 5	♥ A K Q 8 4 3	♦ A 6	♣ 9
♠ A 6	♥ J 9	♦ K Q 7 3	♣ 10 8 6 5
♠ J 9 8 7 3	♥ 10 7 6	♦ A K J 4	♣ 2

At Table 1, South was not afraid to pass his partner's opening heart bid, and the auction proceeded quite simply:

West Pass	North 1♥	East Pass	South Pass (!)
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass

So North played the hand at one heart, and made four-odd! Naturally, he and partner were a little apprehensive about the lost game—but they need not have been! For, as it happened, this was the auction at Table 2:

West Pass	North 1♥	East Pass	South Pass
Pass	4♥	Pass	5♣
Pass	5♣	Pass	Pass

When North heard his partner's one-spade response, even though he was familiar with South's style, he still could not well afford to lose the chance to investigate the possibility of a slam, and so he used the Blackwood four notrump. From North's point of view, this seemed safe, because even if South had no ace, the partnership figured to be safe at the five-level. This was not the case, however—and so North-South at Table 1 did better, even though they missed the game!

### ANCIENT NAME

The village of Gimil, first Icelandic settlement in Manitoba, was named after the legendary residence of Odin.

him hissing and snapping their bills. The truth is Hooty and Mrs. Hooty were in despair.

By Walt Kelly

## KING OF THE ROYAL MOUNTED



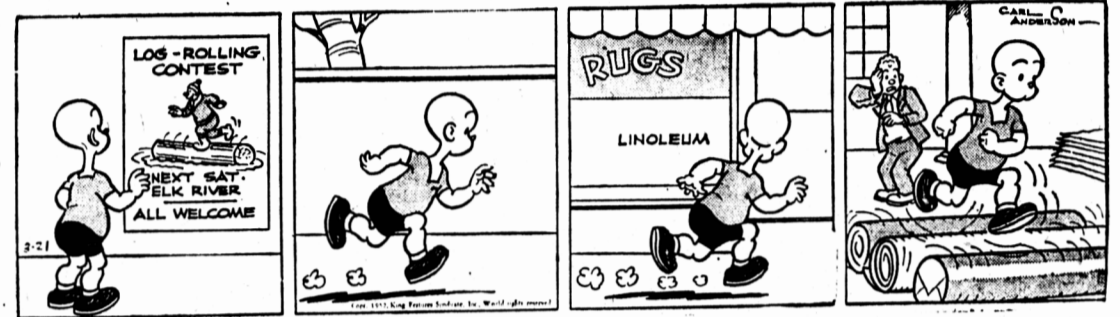
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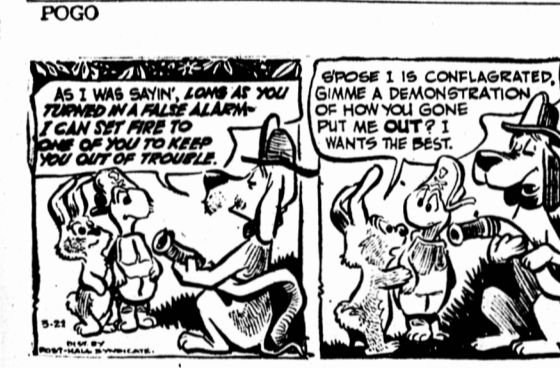
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