By Thornton W. Burgess

A FRIGHTFUL THING HAPPENS

One thing is always crystal clear:
The unexpected doubles fear.
—Old Mother Nature.

Sister Hooty was living high. There was no doubt about that. She was living high. She was having chicken dinners every day. She had been living high for more than a week. From near the top of a tall pine tree at the edge of the Green Forest she overlooked a big poultry farm where very many chickens were raised for market. Nothing could be easier than flying over there when no one was around to see her, catch a chicken, and fly back to that tree. Hidden among its branches she could and did eat it, and slept the rest of the day.

At first the Man to whom those Chickens belonged didn't miss those taken. This was because he had so many. When he did suspect that he was losing some he jumped to a conclusion. That means he guessed what had happened. He guessed with nothing to prove that he was right in his guessing. He guessed that Reddy Fox or Shadow the Weasel or Jimmy Skunk had somehow been getting into one of the Chicken houses at night and carrying off those missing Chickens.

He would have to do something about that. He did. He set a trap. But every morning the trap was empty and unsprung. Could it be that someone was stealing those chickens in the daytime when they were outside running about. Perhaps Reddy Fox or Gray Fox sneaked out and caught one when no one was watching. But there was no hole in the wire fence big enough for a Fox to get through, and he made sure that no hole had been dug under the fence. That fence was too high for any one to jump over it. Could it be that someone climbed over that fence?

Then one morning when he was feeding the chickens he looked up and saw what at that great distance looked like a speck sailing round and round high in the sky. He knew at once what that speck sailing round and round really was.

"A Chicken Hawk!" he exclaimed, and watched it disappear over toward the Great Mountain. To him all Hawks were Chicken Hawks, as they are to all too many people who should know better.

"Probably that is the fellow who has taken my Chickens. Probably he watches from a distance until he sees that I am nowhere about. Then he comes over and sits on top of that telephone pole until he sees a good chance to drop down and grab a chicken. I'll fix him for that," he said to himself as he fed the chickens.

Later he climbed that pole and for a few minutes was busy at the top. "Now we will see if I am a good guesser," thought he as he climbed down.

From time to time through the rest of that day he looked over to that telephone pole but there was no Hawk there. Nor did he get a glimpse of one circling high in the sky in the far distance.

The next morning the chickens were let out extra early, fed and watered, for the farmer had to go to the village. Sister Hooty, the young Owl watching from the tall tree on the edge of the Green Forest, saw him go. She waited a while just to make sure he really had gone. Then she flew straight over to that telephone pole. She had discovered that that was the very best place possible from which to look down and choose the Chicken she wanted, and then to swoop down and catch it. Standing straight on top of that pole she looked to be a part of it and never was noticed. It was a perfect hunting stand for Owl or Hawk. This is what the farmer had thought and he was right.

Sister Hooty, her eyes fixed hungrily on those Chickens running about below, paid no real attention to the top of that pole. She stretched her legs down to land on it is usual. Something frightful happened! Yes, sir, something wholly unexpected, and the more frightful for that, happened. A pair of dreadful jaws leaped up and grabbed her by one leg! It hurt terribly and it frightened her more. She was a prisoner held fast in those dreadful crushing jaws.

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Contract Bridge

By Josephine Culbertson

CAUSE FOR DEMOTION

East's defense in the following deal was so bad that it seems incredible that he should have been ranked as a "master," but that was the case. The hand occurred in a recent master pairs tournament.

North dealer.
Neither side vulnerable

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

This was the bidding at one table:

North	East	South	West
1 ♥	Pass	1 N T	Dble.
Pass	Pass	Pass	

In view of the enterprise shown by East-West — West, by making a rather risky double of the notrump, and East, by making an even riskier penalty pass — it was too bad that the defense should have gone so far astray.

An opening diamond lead by West would have been an inspired choice, but West could scarcely be that second-sighted — he led the deuce of spades. Dummy ducked and South won with the ten. Now South led a low club to the jack — and East took the trick! After that, the defenders might as well have tossed their cards face-up on the table. East could have saved something from the wreck by shifting to diamonds, but on his actual spade return. West put up the ace and, in desperation, shifted to a low heart, thinking that his partner had to have the queen for his leave-in of the double. The consequence was that South took two heart tricks, two spades, four clubs and one diamond, and his 380-point score was top on the board.

If East had been a novice it would not have been surprising to see him "grab" the first club lead — beginners have a habit of rushing to take tricks. However, to see this same play made by a participant in a master event is astonishing indeed! East might have stopped to think that, with the bidding as it was, South could not have a large number of high cards, but he could have a club suit headed by the king. It is obvious that if East had properly held up the club ace, South would never have gotten back to his own hand, and defeat of the contract would have been automatic.

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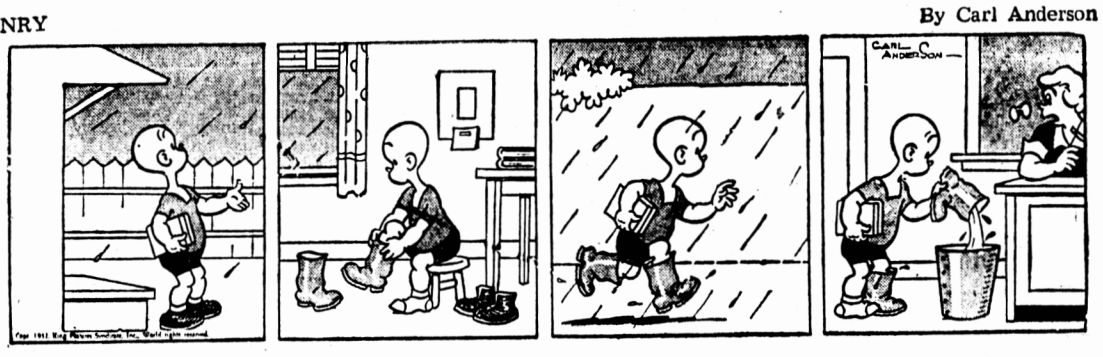
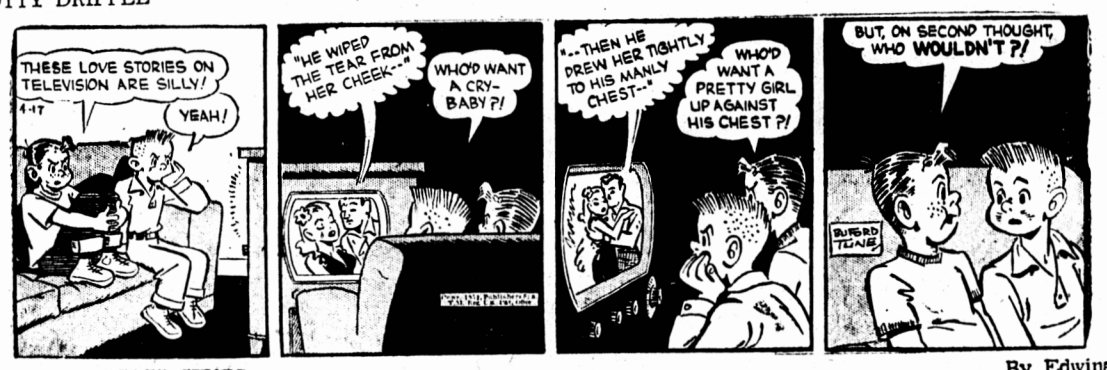


DOTTY DRIPPLE — By Ruford



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