

# BURGESS BEDTIME STORIES

By Thornton W. Burgess

## TIMMY SPREADS HIS "WINGS"

With guessing never be content. Make sure for what a thing is meant.

—Old Mother Nature.

"I wish I had wings," said Peter Rabbit.

"That's a foolish wish," said Timmy the Flying Squirrel.

"That's all right for you to say, but you can fly. I wish I could," retorted Peter.

"Who says I can fly?" demanded Timmy.

"Oh, everybody," replied Peter rather sagely. "If you couldn't fly they wouldn't call you a Flying Squirrel!"

"I can't fly," declared Timmy flatly.

"You've got wings, haven't you?" asked Peter.

"No," replied Timmy. "I haven't wings."

"But I've seen them when you were flying!" cried Peter.

"You've seen nothing of the sort," squeaked Timmy. "What is more, you've never seen me fly!"

Peter blinked. "If you were not flying when you came across here clear from the side of the opening in the trees, what were you doing?" asked Peter.

"Just jumping," said the little squirrel, carefully as if it were nothing at all.

"You were doing something more than just jumping. No one could jump that far," declared Peter.

"Well, I was jumping and gliding, sliding down on the air," replied Timmy, then added, "Haven't you noticed I always lump from high up, and always



"Would you like me to show you?" he asked.

slide down to the tree I want to get to? You've never seen me fly up."

"That's so: I never have," said Peter scratching a long ear with a long hind foot.

"Well, if I had wings and could really fly, do you think that I would climb a tree to get to the top? Of course I wouldn't. I would fly up, wouldn't I?" said Timmy.

Peter scratched the other long ear with the other long hind foot. Then he scratched his nose. "I haven't thought of that. I suppose you would. Anyway, I would were I in your place," said he.

"Of course you would, and so would I. So that proves that I haven't any wings," retorted the little squirrel.

"But," began Peter, and stopped.

Timmy waited a moment, then said, "But what?"

"What is it I have thought were

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 THE EFFECT OF A NOTRUMP OPENING

wings?" asked Peter. "What makes you look as if you had wings?"

Timmy chuckled. It was a squeaky little chuckle, for he has a squeaky sort of voice. Most of the smaller folk in the Green Forest have squeaky voices. "Would you like me to show you?" he asked.

"If you please," said Peter. He was trying to be polite.

Now it was a big tree to the trunk of which Timmy was clinging, head down. He was only a little above Peter's head. Now he stretched one front leg out sideways and at the same time forward as far as he could reach. Then he stretched the hind leg on that same side as far out and back as he could reach. He did the same thing with the legs on the other side. Then he seemed to have no legs at all. He looked as if he were nothing more than a flat piece of fur with a head at one end and a tail at the other, and a small foot at each corner. Yes, sir, he looked like a little flat mat with a head and a tail. You see, there is what is called a membrane covered with fur, little more than fur-covered skin, stretched from the ankle of the fore-leg on each side.

"This is the way I stretch myself out flat when I jump," explained Timmy. "If I couldn't stretch myself flat like this, I couldn't slide down on the air the way I do. None of my cousins can do it because they haven't any handy skin between their hind and front legs to stretch out the way I have. Simple, isn't it?"

"Oh," said Peter. Then he repeated it as he stared at his little flattened-out friends.

"What is it I have thought were

When the opening bid is one of a suit and there is an overall, opener's partner needs a substantial hand, including strength in the overall, for a penalty double. But the picture changes radically when the opening bid was one notrump! Now, opener's partner needs very little for the sound double of an overall.

East dealer.  
 Both sides vulnerable.

7  
 QJ652  
 964  
 J1074

AKQ  
 K1074  
 AJ2  
 Q953

AKQ  
 K109843  
 93  
 K108  
 AK

The bidding:  
 East 1NT  
 South 2♠  
 West Pass  
 North Pass

But let's get specific — with the following hand:

West opened the ace of hearts and followed up with the eight — and the outcome was a two-trick defeat of the contract. The defenders, however, had been kind to South to the tune of 300 points, by not doubling.

It was West, of course, who made the gift to the enemy. Evidently, he did not think well of his hand. True, it was "under average" in that he held less than one ace, one king, one queen and one jack. But the term, "average hand," is decidedly relative! The fact that East had guaranteed from 3½ to 4 honor-tricks and a balanced hand, with some strength in each suit, made West's holding a great deal stronger than it seemed. Observe that East did not have a really good notrump opening; indeed, it was pretty much of a minimum; yet, without declarer suffering any conspicuously bad luck in the break of the cards, the contract was easily defeated two tricks.

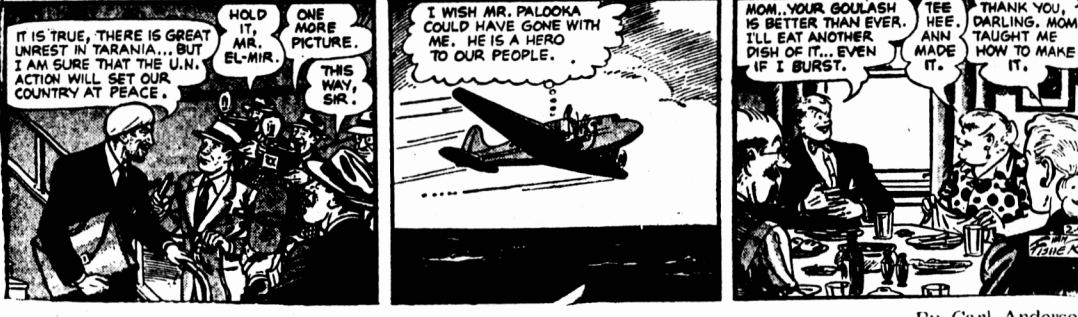
The sum and substance of the situation is just this: after a notrump opening, the partner's honors take on an added value because it can be safely presumed that these honors will be backed up and promoted by corresponding honors in the opening hand. Thus, West's well-guarded spade jack was worth more than a trick because of its length in the suit, and even his diamond queen and

potential value.

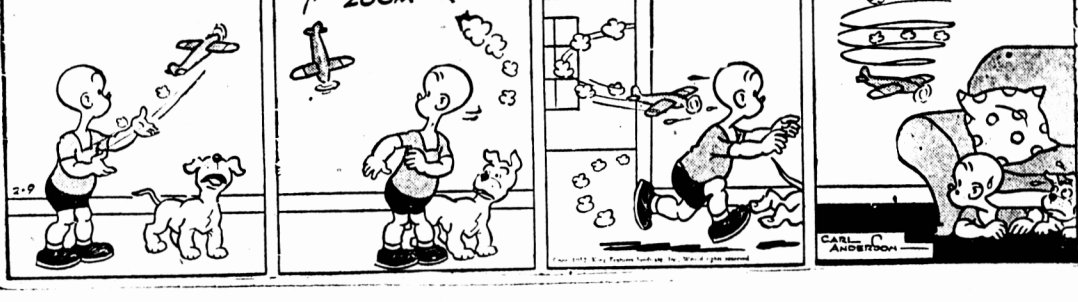
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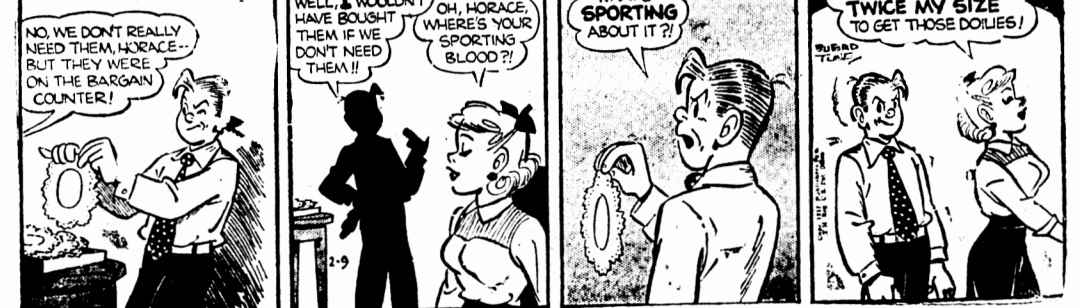
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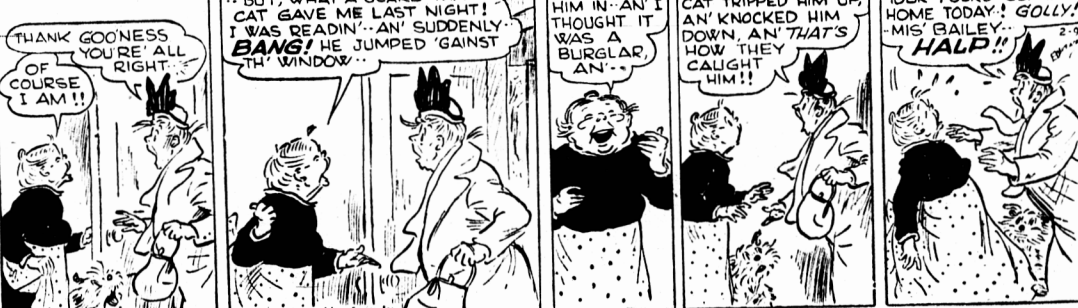
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