

# ROUNDING UP MAGGIE

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I Has the Clutch on Swifty, and Drags Him Along.

SAY, who was tellin' you? Ah, g'wan! Them sea shore press agents is full of fried eels. Disguises nothin'! Them folks I has with me was the real things. The Rev. Doc. Akehead? Not much. That was my little old Bishop. And it wa'n't any slummin' party at all. It was just a little errand of mercy that got switched.

It was this way: The Bishop, he shows up at the studio for his reg'lar medicine ball work, that I'm givin' him so's he can keep his equator from gettin' the best of his longitude. That's all on the quiet, though. It's somethin' I ain't puttin' on the bulletin board, or includin' in my list of referenc-es, understand?

Well, we has had our half-hour session, and the Bishop has just made a break for the cold shower and the dressin' room, while I'm preparin' to shed my workin' clothes for the afternoon; when in pops Swifty Joe, closin' the gym door behind him real soft and mysterious.

"Shorty," says he in that hoarse whisper he gets on when he's excited, "she's—she's come!"

"Who's come?" says I.

"S-s-s-sh!" says he, wavin' his hands. "It's the old girl; and she's got a gun!"

"Ah, say!" says I. "Come out of the trance. What old girl? And what about the gun?"

Maybe you've never seen Swifty when he's real stirred up? He wears a corrugated brow, and his lower jaw hangs loose, leavin' the Mammoth Cave wide open, and his eyes bug out like shoe buttons. His thoughts come faster than he can separate himself from the words; so it's hard gettin' at just what he means to say. But as near as I can come to it there's a wide female party waitin' out in the front office for me, with blood in her eye and a self cockin' section of the unwritten law in her fist.

Course, I knows right off there must be some mistake, or else it's a case of dope, and I says so. But Swifty is plumb sure she knew who she was askin' for when she calls for me, and begs me not to go out. He's for ringin' up the police.

"Ring up nobody!" says I. "S'pose I want this thing gettin' into the papers? If a Lady Bughouse has strayed in here, we got to shoo her out as quiet as possible. She can't shoot if we rush her. Come on!"

I will say for Swifty Joe that, while he ain't got any too much sense, there's no other streak in him. When I pulls open the gym door and gives the word, we went through neck and neck.

"Look out!" he yells, and I sees him makin' a grab at the arm of a broad beamed old party, all done up nicely in gray silk and white lace.

And say, it's lucky I got a good mem'ry for profiles; for if I hadn't seen right away it was Purdy Bligh's Aunt Isabella, and that the gun was nothin' but her silver hearin' tube, we might have been tryin' to explain it to her yet. As it is, I'm just near enough to make a swipe for Swifty's right hand with my left, and I jerks his paw back just as she turns around from lookin' out of the window and gets her lamps on us. Say, we must have looked like a pair of batty ones, standin' there holdin' hands and starin' at her! But it seems that folks as deaf as she is ain't easy surprised. All she does is feel around for her gold eye glasses with one hand and fit the silver hearin' machine to her off ear with the other. It's one

of these pepper box affairs, and I didn't much wonder that Swifty took it for a gun.

"Are you Professor McCabe?" says she.

"Sure!" I hollers; and Swifty, not lookin' for such strenuous conversation, goes up in the air about two feet.

"I beg pardon," says the old girl; "but will you kindly speak into the audiphone."

So I steps up closer, forgettin' that I still has the clutch on Swifty, and drags him along.

"Ahr, chee!" says Swifty. "This ain't no brother act, is it?"

With that I lets him go, and me and Aunt Isabella gets down to business. I was lookin' for some tale about Purdy—you know, the one that had the half brother we shunted back to Bombazoula? But it looks like this was a new deal; for she opens up by askin' if I knew a party by the name of Dennis Whaley.

"Do I?" says I? "I've known Dennis ever since I can remember knowin' anybody. He's runnin' my place out to Primrose Park now."

"I thought so," says Aunt Isabella. "Then perhaps you know a niece of his, Margaret Whaley?"

I didn't; but I'd heard of her. She's Terence Whaley's girl, that come over from Skibbereen four or five years back, after near starvin' to death one wet season when the potato crop was so bad. Well, it seems Maggie has worked a couple of years for Aunt Isabella as kitchen girl. Then she's got ambitious, quit service, and got a flatwork job in a hand laundry—eight per, fourteen hours a day, Saturday sixteen.

I didn't tumble why all this was worth chinnin' about until Aunt Isabella reminds me that she's president and board of directors of the Lady Pot Wrestlers' Improvement Society. She's one of the kind that spends her time tryin' to organize study classes for hired girls who have different plans for spendin' their Thursday afternoons off.

Seems that Aunt Isabella has been keepin' special tabs on Maggie, callin' at the laundry to give her good advice, and leavin' her books to read,—which I got a tintype of her readin', not,—and otherwise doin' the upliftin' act accordin' to rule. But along in the early summer Maggie had quit the laundry without consultin' the old girl about it. Aunt Isabella kept on the trail, though, run down her last boardin' place, and begun writin' her what she called helpful letters. She kept this up until she was handed the ungrateful jolt. The last letter come back to her with a few remarks scribbled across the face, indicatin' that readin' such stuff gave Maggie a pain in the small of her back. But the worst of it all was, accordin' to Aunt Isabella, that Maggie was in Coney Island.

"Think of it!" says she. "That poor, innocent girl, living in that dreadfully wicked place! Isn't it terrible?"

"Oh, I don't know," says I. "It all depends."

"Hey?" says the old girl. "What say?"

Ever try to carry on a debate through a silver salt shaker? It's the limit. Thinkin' it would be

a lot easier to agree with her, I shouts out, "Sure thing!" and nods my head. She nods back and rolls her eyes.

"She must be rescued at once!" says Aunt Isabella. "Her uncle ought to be notified. Can't you send for him?"

As it happens, Dennis had come down that mornin' to see an old friend of his that was due to croak; so I figures it out that the best way would be to get him and the old lady together and let 'em have it out. I chases Swifty down to West 11th-st. to bring Dennis back in a hurry, and invites Aunt Isabella to make herself comfortable until he comes.

She's too excited to sit down, though. She goes pacin' around the front office, now and then lookin' me over suspicious,—me bein' still in my gym suit,—and then sizin' up the sportin' pictures on the wall. My art exhibit is mostly made up of signed photos of Jeff and Fitz and Nelson in their ring costumes, and it was easy to see she's some jarred.

"I hope this is a perfectly respectable place, young man," says she.

"It ain't often pulled by the cops," says I.

Instead of calmin' her down, that seems to stir her up worse'n ever. "I should hope not!" says she. "How long must I wait here?"

"No longer'n you feel like waitin', ma'am," says I.

And just then the gym door opens, and in walks the Bishop that I'd clean forgot all about.

"Why, Bishop!" squeals Aunt Isabella. "You here!"

Say, it didn't need any second sight to see that the Bishop would have rather met most anybody else at that particular minute; but he hands her the neat return. "It appears that I am," says he. "And you?"

Well, it was up to her to do the explainin'. She gives him the whole history of Maggie Whaley, windin' up with how she's been last heard from at Coney Island.

"Isn't it dreadful, Bishop?" says she. "And can't you do something to help rescue her?"

Now I was lookin' for the Bishop to say somethin' soothin'; but hanged if he don't chime in and admit that it's a sad case and he'll do what he can to help.

About then Swifty shows up with Dennis, and Aunt Isabella lays it before him. Now, accordin' to his own account, Dennis and Terence always had it in for each other at home, and he never took much stock in Maggie either. But after he'd listened to Aunt Isabella for a few minutes, hearin' her talk about his duty to the girl, and how she ought to be yanked off the toboggan of sin, he takes it as serious as any of 'em.

"Wurrah, wurrah!" says he, "but this do be a black day for the Whaleys! It's the McGuigan blood comin' out in her. What's to be done, mum?"

Aunt Isabella has a program all mapped out. Her idea is to get up a rescue expedition on the spot, and start for Coney. She says Dennis ought to go; for he's Maggie's uncle and has got some authority; and she wants the Bishop, to do any prayin' over her that may be needed.

"As for me," says she, "I shall do my best to persuade her to leave her wicked companions."

Well, they was all agreed, and ready to start, when it comes out that

not one of the three has ever been to the island in their lives, and don't know how to get there. At that I sees the Bishop lookin' expectant at me.

"Shorty," says he. "I presume you are somewhat familiar with this—er—wicked resort?"

"Not the one you're talkin' about," says I. "I've been goin' to Coney every year since I was old enough to toddle; and I'll admit there has been seasons when some parts of it was kind of tough; but as a general proposition it never looked wicked to me."

That kind of puzzles the Bishop. He says he's always understood that the island was sort of a vent hole for the big sulphur works. Aunt Isabella is dead sure of it too, and hints



The Barkers Takes One Look at Us and Loses Their Voices.