Bedtime Stories

A Bold Move.

BY THORNTON W. BURGESS.

Boldness when 'tis least expected
Often wins before detected.
—Hooty the Owl.

DESPERATE from hunger, Hooty the Owl sat on the edge of the window shelf, where Farmer Brown's Boy fed his feathered friends and glared this way and that. So hungry was he that he was considering an attack of Flip the Terrier, although he well knew that Flip was much too big for him. Yes, sir, he was doing just that. Then a door slammed and, turning his head half way around, Hooty saw Farmer Brown's Boy just leaving the house. It was broad daylight, but it was still fairly early in the day. Farmer Brown's Boy was on his way to the hen house.

He opened the gate to the yard, entered and closed the gate behind him. He crossed to the door of the hen house and opened this. He disappeared inside, leaving the door open. Hooty heard the clucking of the hens. He flew over and alighted on one of the posts of the hen yard. From this he could look into that house. Farmer Brown's Boy didn't hear Hooty when he flew over there. You know, Hooty flies without making a sound.

Now, though Farmer Brown's Boy didn't see Hooty alight on that post, some one else did. That some one was Peter Rabbit. Peter had been hiding under the barn. He had come out just in time to see Hooty alight. Instantly Peter crouched close to the barn and froze. That means that he became motionless. He didn't want Hooty so see him. The very thought of such a thing made him shiver and shake with fright.

But Hooty was too intent on the inside of that hen house to look anywhere else. Seeing this, Peter felt better. He knew that the wise thing for him to do was to run back under the barn and stay there until there was no chance that Hooty would be about. He knew this, but he didn't do it. He didn't do it because curiosity wouldn't let him. There was Hooty. There, just inside the hen house was Farmer Brown's Boy. What would happen if he should turn and see Hooty sitting on that post? Peter just had to stay in case such a thing should happen.

Now it was quite unlike Hooty to be so bold as to appear in broad daylight, where he could be so readily seen, and Peter knew this. "I wonder what he will do if Farmer Brown's Boy turns," thought Peter.

And then Peter gasped. Yes, sir, Peter gasped. Hooty the Owl had spread his wings and launched himself into the air. Peter thought Hooty was about to fly away. Instead, he disappeared in that hen house! Yes, sir, Hooty flew straight into that hen house where Farmer Brown's Boy was. Do you wonder that for just a moment Peter doubted his own eyes?

Then there was a great racket in that hen house and a few of the hens came running out. The hens squawked and Farmer Brown's Boy yelled. A great dark bird came out. It was Hooty. He carried something in his great claws. It was a hen. Farmer Brown's Boy appeared in the doorway. He shouted twice at Hooty, trying to make him drop that hen. Hooty didn't. No, indeed, Hooty didn't. He would have fought any one who had tried to take that prize away from him. He flew straight for the Green Forest.

Farmer Brown's Boy watched Hooty out of sight. He shook his head and started to drive back the hens that had run out of the house.

"My goodness, that fellow was bold," he exclaimed. "I've known

HE FLEW OVER AND ALIGHTED ON ONE OF THE POSTS OF THE HEN YARD.

Hooty a long time, but never before has he done such a bold thing. He actually brushed my face with one of his wings. He must have been desperate. He must have been so hungry that he was driven to taking any chance that offered. Yes, sir, he must have been mighty desperate to do such a bold thing as that. Weather like this is pretty tough on the birds and animals. To me it is one of the marvels of nature that they manage to live through a Winter. Snow is hard enough on some of them, but ice like this is worse. I wonder if Hooty will come back for another pullet."

Meanwhile Hooty was flying swiftly to get out of sight, to a place where he could eat that pullet he had so daringly captured.

Retail trade in New Zealand is at its highest since 1929.

Winning Contract

BY THE FOUR ACES

(David Burnstine, Merwin D. Maier, Oswald Jacoby, Howard Schenken, world's leading team-of-four, inventors of the system that has beaten every other system in existence.)

Opening Two-Bid.

IN THE FOUR ACES' system there are two requirements for the opening two-bid: (a) A high-card holding of at least 13, except in the case of extremely freakish hands, in which it may be reduced to 11; (b) a probable playing strength of within one trick of game. At the same time when we make a two-bid we expect our partner to investigate slam possibilities thoroughly, and accordingly our hand must show such possibilities even though our partner may have very little strength.

While we open with two more often than most players, nevertheless even we have few two-bids, and when one comes along in a duplicate game, we are always gratified when our own theories work out well, as they did with the following hand:

South dealer. Both sides vulnerable.

North: ♠ A Q 10 7 4 ♥ K 10 8 5 2 ♦ 8 7 ♣ 9

West: ♠ K 9 5 ♥ 9 6 3 ♦ J 4 2 ♣ Q 10 6 4

East: ♠ J 8 6 3 2 ♥ A J 7 4 ♦ Q 5 ♣ 7 3

South: ♠ — ♥ Q ♦ A K 10 9 6 3 ♣ A K J 8 5 2

The south hand, with a high-card value of *11½ and two six-card suits, clearly qualifies as an opening two-bid under the Four Aces' system, and accordingly at most tables it was opened with a bid of two diamonds. North invariably responded with two spades. South bid three clubs, North three hearts, South four clubs, North four hearts, South five clubs, North five diamonds—and there the bidding died.

However, when the South player opened with one only, the bidding invariably went something like the following (the opponents always passing):

South—	North—
One diamond	One spade
Three clubs	Three hearts
Four clubs	Four hearts
Six clubs	Six diamonds

In other words, the players who opened with only one now felt they had to bid the slam themselves, since otherwise they would not have shown their strength. The players who opened with two were content to stop at five only.

While the heart lead would actually defeat a game contract, five-odd was made at practically every table. But no one was able to make six. Hence, those players who failed to open with two, as they should have, were properly penalized.

The Four Aces will be pleased to answer letters from readers if a stamped (3-cent), self-addressed envelope is inclosed with each communication. If you desire the pocket outline of the Four Aces' system of contract bridge, send with your request a stamped (3-cent), self-addressed, large-size envelope to the Four Aces, Inc., 130 West Forty-second street, New York City, and you will receive an outline without any charge. The next article in this series will appear Friday.

Tidiness Jails Two.

Because they could not help being tidy two youths were arrested at Wolverhampton, England, as burglars. They were seized when they returned to the scene of the crime. Harry Leighton and Arthur Nicholls told the police that they had returned to "clear up a bit of the mess, so that it will not look so bad when the owners come home."