

BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial **By Herbert Jensen**

SYNOPSIS: Although Frank Graham, the explorer, is convinced that "Sons of Origen" engineered the abduction of Janice Kent, movie star, which Frank has blocked, Miss Kent refuses to believe him. Frank is in love with Janice and has told her so; now, at a meeting in the office of Myberg, famous movie producer, it has been decided to proceed with a Mexican film for which Origen was negotiating—without Origen. Janice tells of the abduction.

Chapter 14 FRANK'S CALL

"When Paula, my maid, said that he had phoned and asked if I were home, you construed that to mean that Origen wanted to be sure that I was available for abduction—but I don't think so. Perhaps he just wanted to call to say good-bye; but changed his mind."

"When those two men came in, he wasn't with them. They—" She repeated an involuntary shudder. "They held me so I couldn't scream. One of them gave me a hyperdermic. Another man—I never did see his face—was outside. I was conscious that he was there when they put me in the car..."

"Did he have a beakish nose?" asked Frank.

Janice shook her head. "I don't remember," Greene made a little sound. He breathed:

"What a story! What a story! I've got most of it here." He held up a sheaf of paper. "When I break this what a—"

"Giff them here," said Myberg, looking coldly at Greene with his oblique eyes.

Greene passed them over. Myberg grasped them with his pudgy hands and ripped the sheet across. He dropped the torn paper into a wastebasket. Winslow made a small, straggled sound. Greene chuckled.

"Greene," he observed, "considers that vandalism. He is an artist."

"So was Munchausen," granted Myberg. "But the newspapers get nothing of this. The public wouldn't believe it. They would laugh at it for a lie. I don't mind if they laugh at you, Greene, but Miss Kent iss no joke."

Greene looked miserable.

Frank said kindly, "Don't take it so hard, old man. You'll get other chances. You're a good publicity man. Miss Kent told me so herself. She couldn't do without you, really."

At Janice's nod, Greene looked pleased and important.

"I work hard," he said. "In fact, I go to considerable time and expense to develop these stories. I—"

Janice interrupted him with a swift look. "He gets a perfectly stupendous salary for developing these stories, and I couldn't do without him, really. That is, he would be most difficult to replace. Wouldn't you, Mr. Greene?" She smiled at him engagingly.

At the fleeting expression of discontent that arrived and vanished on Greene's face, Winslow laughed aloud.

Myberg drummed his knuckles impatiently on the desk.

"There is nodding to do now except to get on production. We will not try to find out any more whys and wherefors. With the police in it, the newspaper tellers would come out with stories. I will get some men from an agency to watch out for Janice. That... iss all."

THE discussion had been concluded early in the afternoon. Janice had gone home and rested. She had eaten a light dinner, and thought once in a little flurry of agitation that she might run over to a friend's house, and not be at home—actually—when Frank Graham called.

But this device, she realized, would be useless. Sooner or later she must talk with Frank. She suspected also that it would be a little cowardly. She'd see him tonight, since he wanted it and... Her compressed lips relaxed. What would she tell him?

It was nine-fifteen when she entered the drawing room on the lower floor. Frank stood before the log fire that burned cheerily in the grate. His wide shoulders bulged against the glow. He held a newspaper clenched in his hands; he seemed to be hypnotized by the crackling logs, so intense was his concentration.

She spoke his name twice before he seemed to hear her. He turned the fixed, absent stare of the thinker upon her. It was an effort for him to bring his thoughts back to this room.

"Janice, have you read the evening papers?"

"No. I— What is it, Frank? Is it something about last night?... Tell me—"

He shook his head impatiently.

"It's about Bill Langton. The dead flyer. My friend. But perhaps he

lan't dead... See—" He shook the paper. "They've found a bottle paper. Washed ashore on an obscure reef in the Gulf. In Bill's handwriting. If it's not a hoax. Maybe he's alive—after all these months—down in the jungle somewhere. But why—" His brow drew together in a frown, little tanned corrugations. Janice thought that made him look curiously like a boy with a vexing school problem.

"—but why a drift bottle. There are no rivers down there to float a bottle out to sea. None mapped as I remember that coast. I wonder..."

Janice felt an odd sensation of excitement and of unease. Frank, she remembered, was an explorer, familiar with jungle trails. Could it be that he was considering that this story in the evening paper might contain a clue that would induce him to leave Hollywood for the south to search for his lost friend?

Her heart beat a little faster. Perhaps she could suggest that he go. It would be an admirable solution of her problem, or rather the problem he might prove to be.

"But Frank," she said. "He's dead. They proved that months ago. If he was not drowned when his plane went down into the sea, he must have been killed if it crashed in the jungle. This happens months ago. If he survived, surely he could have reported—"

What was the matter with her? This was not what she had intended to say. She wanted to encourage him to go; yet her words would indicate nothing to him except that she did not think there was any use for him to believe Langdon alive—and leave Hollywood to search for his friend.

He smiled and stepped toward her; had her life depended upon it she could not have moved. She stood transfixed, looking at him. His arms were about her. She suffered him to tilt her chin and kiss her.

"Remember last night? I knew you cared. You don't want me to go away, do you? Oh, Janice, I love you so!"

Words tumbled from his lips. Strong words, masculine words. Something about the non-marriage clause in her contract being drivel, that the idea of her working was drivel. He had enough money for both of them.

Love. Love in a cottage. A gay adventure. He would take her to strange places he had been. Where he'd been lonely. Where they could sit under the stars before a campfire... dinner over, and the dishes washed—

She was away from him. The width of the fireplace was between them. Almost hysterically she realized that she had struggled out of his arms and had struck his cheek with her open palm.

She saw the bewildered hurt in his eyes, and the unconscious gesture he made of lifting his hand to touch his cheek. Her palm burned from the slap; her heart pounded with a curious and delicious excitement, her lips still tingled with the firm warmth from his kiss. And she had struck him! She wanted to cry out, "I didn't mean it!" But the words would not come.

Frank said, "Oh... I'm sorry—" Even in the frolic his face looked pale beneath the tan. It was as if a mask had been put upon him, so still were his features. The blue of his eyes had become a deep gray. Only his mouth had a strange twist to it.

She was conscious that he was leaving. She was unable to do or say anything that would prevent him from going. But he was gone before she realized how desperately she had not wanted him to go.

The need for activity descended upon her. She flew upstairs to her boudoir. She dialed a telephone number. There was no answer.

She realized that Frank could not possibly have arrived back in his apartment in this short time. She thought of telephoning the apartment manager, and leaving a message. But she would try again in half an hour. During the interval she walked about the upstairs floor; she descended to the drawing room and hung herself upon the chesterfield. She phoned again. Still there was no answer.

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Tomorrow, Frank is too mope about the "bottle paper."

OUT OUR WAY

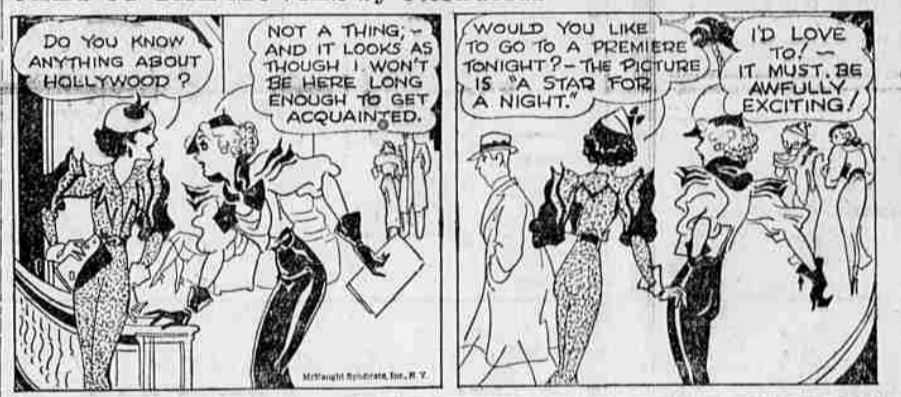
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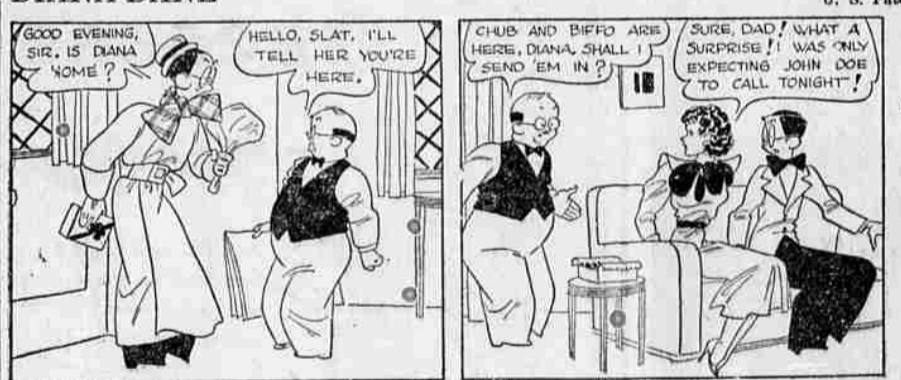
JOE PALOOKA



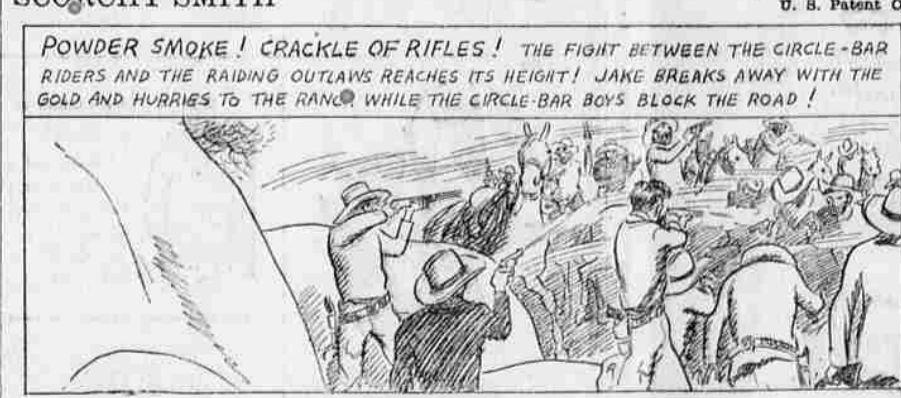
OLLY OF THE MOVIES by Ollendorff



DIANA DANE



SCORCHY SMITH



THE DILLYS



THE NEWFANGLES

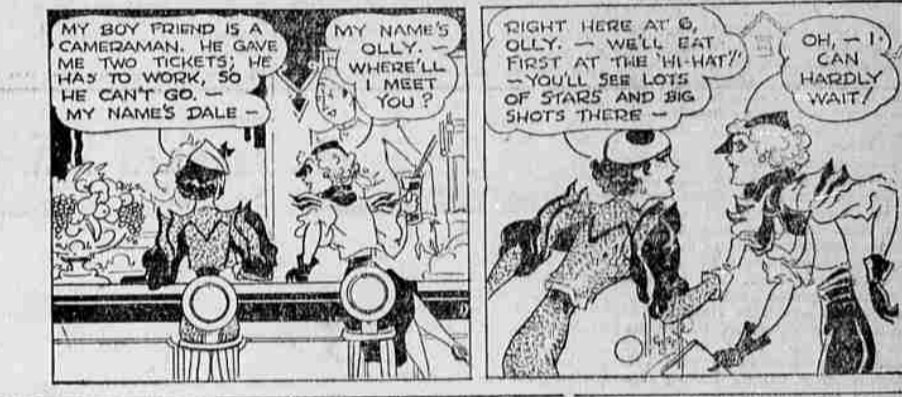
Brainy Puts it Over!



Just Lucky???



Stardust



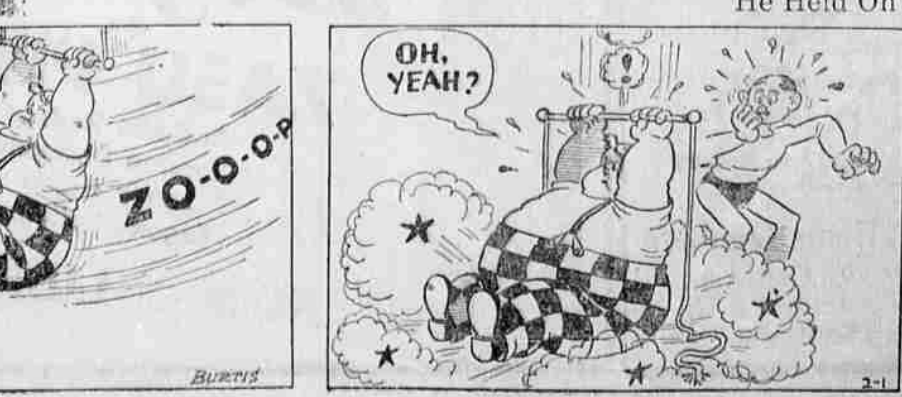
Cupid's Little Helper



The Outlaws Withdraw



He Held On



UNION PERSONALS

Carl Silven, of Baker, member of the state game commission, has been a frequent visitor at the fish hatchery recently, assisting R. H. Bonney in getting the new schedule of work arranged preparatory to the construction of a new hatchery building.

Roll call of members at the Methodist church, brought out a noticeable increase in the various church services Sunday. The attendance at Sunday school came up to the all time record of 192 and a large crowd attended the morning address of Rev. R. C. Lee. A part of next Sunday's program will be to extend invitations to neighbors and friends to attend the various services.

W. L. Teutsch, of Corvallis, assistant county agent leader, who has been assisting in the corn and hog conferences in Eastern Oregon, was a visitor at the experiment station one day last week.

Mrs. Cora Sanderson, who underwent an eye operation recently, returned from La Grande Sunday.

Mrs. G. F. Hall, assisted by her daughters, Mrs. Merion Davis and Mrs. Tex Knight, was hostess to the members of the Carnation club at a delightful bridge luncheon Thursday. Mrs. Walter Cook won first prize and Mrs. S. E. Miller consolation. Mrs. Mae Ward was a guest.

Mr. and Mrs. Nele Morrison entertained the Pinocchio club Thursday evening with four tables at play. Guests in addition to club members were Mr. and Mrs. Grant Tucker, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Moore and Mr. and Mrs. Ray Cole. Mr. and Mrs. Ab Gipson made the high club score. Mr. and Mrs. Tucker, high guest score, and Mr. and Mrs. Clark Martens, the low.

Prices go up faster and higher than wages, it's true, but unless they do there may be no wages.

Trouble with birth control is that it can't be retroactive.

An habitual critic, Borah of Idaho, is one Bill that cannot be amended.