

THE LUXURY HUSBAND

Chapter 1
MEMORIES

The girl in the copper red evening dress stumbled twice over her partner's feet and then stood still in the middle of the deck space that had been cleared for dancing.

The man, to whom she had been talking animatedly as they swung in and out among the dancers, looked down at her in surprise.

Barbara Landon was reputed to be the ship's best dancer and besides being expert in the ballroom she had acquired a reputation for amateur solo dancing as well. He wondered what could have come over her and prepared to continue the dance.

But the girl didn't move; she seemed to have lost all consciousness of his presence, for she remained standing still, her eyes, bright with excitement, fixed upon the face of the lean young saxophonist.

The music ceased and Ralph Henderson spoke.

"I'm awfully sorry," he said, "I seem to have bungled that."

But she did not seem aware that he had spoken, for, with an impulsive gesture, she laid a hand upon his arm and murmured, "I'll be back in a moment," and immediately she was making her way towards the little raised dais where the ship's orchestra was sitting.

Watching her go, Ralph Henderson's surprise gave place to anger. He felt a fool at being deserted in the middle of the dance floor, and it was especially galling that it should have been Barbara Landon who had done it, because of all girls on that ship she was the one he was most anxious to impress.

When the Englishman had first stepped on board he had surveyed the girl critically, wondering which of them managed to combine beauty and wealth. Barbara, it appeared, was the only one who possessed both these requirements; so, from the first day out, he was her devoted attendant.

She had not appeared to object to his monopoly. In fact, she had seemed to encourage it. Certainly, at lunch that day, when she had discovered that he had tipped the steward to alter his place so that he might sit beside her, she had only smiled up at him and murmured that she hoped a close-up of her profile would prove worth the \$10 he had paid for it.

The couples were rapidly leaving the dance floor. Young Henderson glanced uncertainly towards Barbara, wondering how much longer she intended conversing with the fellow who played the saxophone.

She looked very small, he thought, as she stood there, almost elfinlike, her red brown hair gleaming pure copper under the electric light as though it had taken on a reflector from the vivid copper red dress. He considered her very attractive.

Presently, as she showed no signs of rejoining him, Henderson moved over to where her chaplain, Mrs. Trenton-Jones, sat placidly in her deck chair, feeding herself on candy.

He hoped that he would find an ally in Cora Trenton-Jones. She had herself married an Englishman and had lived several years in London. Since her husband's fairly recent death she had returned to the United States, where she had been comfortably vegetating in a small apartment until Barbara had forcibly pulled her up by the roots and transplanted her onto the steamship *Vendena*, bound on a Mediterranean cruise.

"How Barbara deserted you again?" she asked tactlessly. "She seems to have been smitten with a sudden enthusiasm for the chap who plays the saxophone," he remarked tartly. "She's been talking to him for the last 10 minutes."

Mrs. Trenton-Jones smiled. "That's like Barbara. We nearly missed this ship because at the last moment she discovered that the taxi driver, a terrible-looking fellow, was a Russian bolshevik with original views on most everything."

"The Englishman smiled, but it was a wintry effort. He did not approve of women who made themselves noticeable in public and he was beginning to realize that an American wife, even with Barbara's wealth, might have certain disadvantages.

Still, he reflected, it should be easy to check her impulsiveness after the ceremony. A wife, with several million dollars in her own right and no parents to handicap her in her spending it, was not to be lost for a trifle. One he could not resist saying:

"Surely, Mrs. Trenton-Jones, you might suggest to Miss Landon that it hardly seems correct, even to young Americans, that she should be standing for so long conversing with one of the ship's employees."

But at that the older woman laughed outright.

"Our girls don't think so much of social distinctions as you do, and I'm sure that if what you've been saying were even intimated to Barbara her only reaction could be to have a violent love affair with one of the stokers. That's Barbara."

Ralph Henderson was silent as he lit a cigarette.

"It is a pose?"

Mrs. Trenton-Jones frowned. She was remarkably fond of Barbara, and his remark annoyed her.

"Of course it's not a pose. Barbara's the most spontaneous person I know. Sometimes she's a wild kid of 16 and at others she's older than I am. But whatever she is, she's natural."

Barbara obeyed an uncontrollable impulse when she left Ralph Henderson stranded in the middle of the dance floor. One moment she was dancing down the deck, and the next moment, glancing idly towards the orchestra, she found herself staring into the face of Ray Lowther.

She thought at first that she must be dreaming. It could not possibly be Ray Lowther, the one-time stroke of the Yale crew, the heir of oil millions.

She looked again, and remained staring this time. Most certainly it was Ray. There could be no mistaking his tall lean figure that had hardly a spare ounce of flesh upon it, nor his face that might have been handsome had it not been for a slightly flattened nose and the overlarge mouth that took a crooked twist when he smiled.

The young saxophonist did not see her coming until she was almost at his elbow, and when he did, he merely said in the most natural voice in the world:

"Hello, Barbara."

His tone nonplussed her. It would seem as though they were mere acquaintances; as though the old relationship had never existed.

"I didn't know you were on board," she said at last, feeling very small and very foolish, which was a new experience for Barbara.

"No? That's not surprising; I went down with the 'flu' directly we called and tonight is my first appearance, professional or otherwise."

And he smiled that odd twisted smile of his that Barbara remembered so well.

"I'm sorry," she said lamely. To herself she was saying, "This (Continued on Page 12)

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE

Strange!

By Harold Gray



REG'LAR FELLERS

It Can't Last

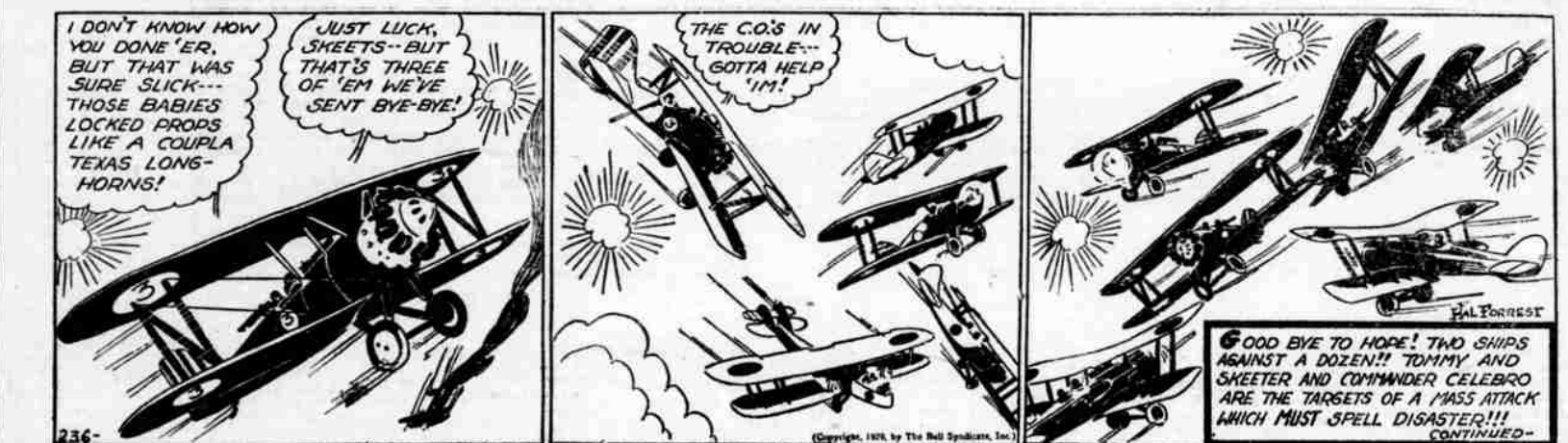
By Gene Byrnes



TAILSPIN TOMMY

Against Terrific Odds

By GLEN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



DUMB DORA

By Chick Young



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



MUTT AND JEFF

One Left Turn Deserves Another

By Bud Fisher



Solution of Yesterday's Puzzle

ACROSS

- Shellfish
- The honeybee
- Narrow piece of leather
- Concept
- Talk, meddle
- The brother
- Hunt
- Hosts
- Referring to a suit
- Agree
- Pilot
- Thoroughfare
- A tribe of Israeli war.
- Walters
- Extended journey
- Aged
- Accord
- Amulet
- Ice
- Trick
- Have track
- Upstart
- Head metrically
- Lytic poem
- Cit in Florida
- Burns
- Merry
- Toward the shattered side
- Optical glass
- Lame deer
- Part
- Entertain whimsically
- Prone
- Feet

DOWN

- Liquors
- Short for a man's name
- Laughing
- Announced
- Inset
- Concedes as true
- Has hard
- Small island
- Heaven rigid
- Excursion on horseback
- The maple tree
- Go by
- Flies out
- South
- Before
- Great artery
- Decorating now and then
- Reverent
- In a row
- Unmannered
- Arrives
- Loquacious
- Identical
- Highest
- Dry, as wine
- Abate
- Consumer
- Short for a man's name
- Egg-shaped
- Distress by name
- Political excretions
- Arjor
- Marriage
- comb. term
- Newspaper paragraph
- Life's name
- Wing

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 | 39 |
| 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 | 51 | 52 |
| 53 | 54 | 55 | 56 | 57 | 58 | 59 | 60 | 61 | 62 | 63 | 64 | 65 |
| 66 | 67 | 68 | 69 | 70 | 71 | 72 | 73 | 74 | 75 | 76 | 77 | 78 |
| 79 | 80 | 81 | 82 | 83 | 84 | 85 | 86 | 87 | 88 | 89 | 90 | 91 |
| 92 | 93 | 94 | 95 | 96 | 97 | 98 | 99 | 100 | 101 | 102 | 103 | 104 |
| 105 | 106 | 107 | 108 | 109 | 110 | 111 | 112 | 113 | 114 | 115 | 116 | 117 |
| 118 | 119 | 120 | 121 | 122 | 123 | 124 | 125 | 126 | 127 | 128 | 129 | 130 |
| 131 | 132 | 133 | 134 | 135 | 136 | 137 | 138 | 139 | 140 | 141 | 142 | 143 |
| 144 | 145 | 146 | 147 | 148 | 149 | 150 | 151 | 152 | 153 | 154 | 155 | 156 |
| 157 | 158 | 159 | 160 | 161 | 162 | 163 | 164 | 165 | 166 | 167 | 168 | 169 |
| 170 | 171 | 172 | 173 | 174 | 175 | 176 | 177 | 178 | 179 | 180 | 181 | 182 |
| 183 | 184 | 185 | 186 | 187 | 188 | 189 | 190 | 191 | 192 | 193 | 194 | 195 |
| 196 | 197 | 198 | 199 | 200 | 201 | 202 | 203 | 204 | 205 | 206 | 207 | 208 |
| 209 | 210 | 211 | 212 | 213 | 214 | 215 | 216 | 217 | 218 | 219 | 220 | 221 |
| 222 | 223 | 224 | 225 | 226 | 227 | 228 | 229 | 230 | 231 | 232 | 233 | 234 |
| 235 | 236 | 237 | 238 | 239 | 240 | 241 | 242 | 243 | 244 | 245 | 246 | 247 |
| 248 | 249 | 250 | 251 | 252 | 253 | 254 | 255 | 256 | 257 | 258 | 259 | 260 |
| 261 | 262 | 263 | 264 | 265 | 266 | 267 | 268 | 269 | 270 | 271 | 272 | 273 |
| 274 | 275 | 276 | 277 | 278 | 279 | 280 | 281 | 282 | 283 | 284 | 285 | 286 |
| 287 | 288 | 289 | 290 | 291 | 292 | 293 | 294 | 295 | 296 | 297 | 298 | 299 |
| 300 | 301 | 302 | 303 | 304 | 305 | 306 | 307 | 308 | 309 | 310 | 311 | 312 |