

THE LUXURY HUSBAND

Chapter 24
THE LAND OF JAZZ

The wailing of Ray's saxophone echoed in Barbara's ears as she picked up the telephone receiver. "Mrs. Ray Lawther there? Boston calling."

Henderson, of course. Could she be bothered speaking to him? As she hesitated, faintly, clearly she heard again the notes of the saxophone.

Her eyes were thunder dark, lit by a sudden flash of fury.

"Mrs. Ray Lawther is speaking." A moment's silence and then Henderson's voice.

"Barbara, dear, I'm rottenly miserable away from you. What do you say to my coming back to New York?"

A pause, then in a rush:

"Yes, come, Hendy. I want you."

She dropped the receiver. Straightening herself she listened mechanically. It seemed the sound of jazz completely filled the room.

Suddenly she felt that she must get away from it. She ran breathlessly out of the apartment and a moment later she found herself in the wide entrance hall demanding a taxi. The porter whistled for one and when it arrived she gave the driver Cora Trenton-Jones' address.

The cab rattled on down the avenue while outside the wind howled. She had passed almost into a state of coma when suddenly she leaned forward, fear in her eyes. For she had fancied she had heard faintly the wail of a saxophone.

Ray took off his mask and wiped his forehead. It was a golden mask, designed especially for the Golden Symphony Eight, the jazz band of the Golden Dollar club, latest and smartest of New York's night clubs.

"These things are hot," he grumbled. "If we didn't come out here every now and then for a breath of air, I'd suffocate."

"You're right there," said Bill Foster, looking unusually plump in an evening suit of metal cloth with purple satin facings, "but you've got to admit this crazy stunt has been a success, rigging us up in these golden tuxedos with masks to hide our fatal beauty from the public gaze. Every one's crazy to learn who we are, whereas, if there were no mystery about us, not a soul would care."

"Boy, you've said it," the saxophonist, a large, portly man, broke in. "There are the cruelest stories circulating. I heard, the other night, that we were all sons of prominent society folks—millionaires mostly—and that we wore masks to save old family names from eternal disgrace!"

"They laughed at that, as they sat in a little anteroom during an interval."

"How long do you think we will be able to keep it up?" asked the violinist.

"Can't say," said Drums. "Personally, I don't care how long they keep it up. Suits me fine."

"Same here," muttered Ray under his breath.

As a matter of fact one of the chief inducements to his taking this particular job had lain in the fact that they were to be masked. A fashionable club was bound to be frequented by Barbara's set; it was likely that Barbara herself might drop in occasionally and he preferred to remain incognito.

Three months now since the night he had told Barbara of his determination to leave her—three months since he had last set eyes upon her. A hundred times had he been on the point of phoning her; a hundred times had he passed by her home—fearful, yet eager, that she might suddenly appear.

Those were the days when he felt desperately lonely for her—when he doubted whether any record-

tion in sacrificing her love. But there were compensations.

Standing with the boys on the platform, Bill Foster would lean across and whisper, "Come on, Ray, lead us in one of your own, we'll follow you."

And when, at the end, the dancers would applaud, often uproariously—for Ray's tunes were sure-fire jazz—he would be repaid by that thrill which comes from acclaimed recognition of something you have created.

Ray had been sharing Bill Foster's apartment since the break with Barbara.

Now Bill arose from the lounge, threw his cigarette on the floor. "Come on, fellows, we'd best be getting back."

Bill led the way and as they tramped back onto the stage they made a truly extraordinary and impressive sight. Their metal evening suits glittered like beaten gold under the brilliant electric lights; their golden masks were comic and bizarre, and their music was guaranteed to make a paralyzed man get up and wiggle! Small wonder the Golden Dollar was packed from theater closing time till dawn.

As for the club itself, it was one gasp of wonderment. Vivid golden trimmings were set against a background of rich royal purple; thousands of golden dollars were plastered everywhere, on the ceiling, on walls, on the backs of chairs.

Of course there was a cabaret performance, twice nightly, the artists being the foremost stars of the day.

Ray did not usually pay much attention to the performers but he noticed one particular girl, who for the past week had brought down the biggest hand, was curiously striking. Tall and willowy, her features were set in a lovely oval face; her hair was magnificent, like that of a thoroughbred, falling in dark clouds on either side of her face and caught up in a huge knot behind. Her suppleness, length of limb and rounded slimness would have fascinated the heart of a sculptor. Ray found her an undeniable pleasure. That is, from afar.

It had never occurred to him to cultivate her acquaintance, although the other fellows were toppling over each other to meet her before she had been on the bill a day. But he remained strangely aloof.

Therefore, he was not a little surprised when, early one morning, she approached him.

"Mr. Lawther," she smiled with engaging charm, "would you think me forward if I asked you to have supper with me?"

"Not at all, I'd be delighted," Ray replied.

"I want to talk with you and thought we might have a bite together somewhere. That is, if you haven't a date or a wife waiting for you."

(To be Continued)

LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE The Intor-upted Conference



By Harold Gray

REG'LAR FELLERS

He Didn't Forget



By Gene Byrnes

TAILSPIN TOMMY

Littleville Entertains Hopes



By Glenn Chaffin and Hal Forrest

DUMB DORA

"Don't Annoy The Animals."



By Chick Young

SEATTLE FINANCIER COMMITS SUICIDE

Seattle (AP)—Arthur Bastheim, secretary-treasurer of the North Pacific Finance company, shot himself to death in his office on Second avenue here Saturday. Friends believed he was temporarily deranged because of worry over the slump on the New York stock market.

His company is a member of the Seattle stock exchange but efforts Saturday to find proof that he was "playing" the market were futile. Friends said that he told them he had "cleaned up" before the market break on Thursday.

Bastheim was about 50 years old and was married.

BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



By George McManus

MUTT AND JEFF

Jeff Taps A Gusher At 22 Cents A Gallon

By Bud Fisher



ACROSS

1. Floorboards
2. Arm covering
3. Beetle in moans
4. Pertaining to a fast period
5. Gulf mound
6. Nodules
7. Literary fragments
8. Abraham's birthplace
9. Atrous
10. Hebrew plural ending
11. Name
12. Branding the maiden name
13. Concert
14. Poems appropriate for song
15. Irish money of account
16. Piece of cloth
17. West Point students
18. Take up again
19. Articles
20. Assault memorial
21. Synonymous force
22. Crowd

Solution of Saturday's Puzzle

ALPS	ADITS	FIRS
LORE	TIONAL	ANOW
ABBOTTORS	EARWIG	
SED	INSTEPS	ALE
ABLE	ANTLER	
METRE	ELD	EIDER
AREA	SALUTED	VE
INDITER	REPOSES	
NE	SHELLED	LENT
ECTER	EAR	BOATS
ADOPTS	CONS	
ALL	WASTERS	NEQ
PALEST	APOSTILS	
EVEN	ELGIN	EPOS
SARD	REISE	LENA

DOWN

1. Form of sorcery
2. Power
3. Deceased
4. Name of the scale
5. Wife of Geraint
6. Fortifications
7. Form of sorcery
8. Mians
9. Type measure
10. Greek letter
11. Order to appear for jury duty
12. Counting of the teeth
13. Rather than
14. Dehaka
15. Fathers
16. Very stupid
17. Polina
18. Native metal
19. Helming
20. Impulsive
21. Snake owl's name
22. Direct
23. House away secretly
24. Tronous
25. Skin
26. Chair
27. Double house
28. Hold god
29. Habi
30. Russian people
31. The Greek M

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