

# THE LUXURY HUSBAND

Chapter 35  
EXIT—AN ENGLISHMAN

On the drive home from the ironically futile visit before Rita Gilmore's apartment, Barbara definitely decided to marry Henderson. A sense of bitterly hurt pride drove her to this decision. She decided on telephoning him the first thing in the morning. For the remainder of the night she would try to sleep.

She did try. She tried in a persistent, determined fashion. But, in spite of that, she lay awake until dawn.

Eventually, when she did sleep, a nightmare tormented her. Suddenly she opened her eyes, immediately conscious that her telephone was ringing.

She picked up the receiver.

"That you, Barbara? It's your Uncle Henry. I'm coming right up to the house. Must see you immediately."

She felt more than surprised. Mr. Vandaveer Landon was an exceptionally busy man. It was most unusual for him to honor his niece by a visit during an hour usually reserved strictly for business. So intent was she upon not keeping him waiting that she completely forgot to telephone her decision to Henderson.

Mr. Landon was pacing the sitting room when she finally came down.

"Morning Barbara. Can't say that you're looking well."

"Late night," she explained.

"Been out with that fellow Henderson?"

"Yes. Why?"

Her uncle cleared his throat. Then, in characteristic manner, came directly to the point.

"What's all this I'm hearing about you and him?"

Barbara stiffened and turned slowly to face him.

"Meaning that we've been seen about a good deal together?"

"No. I've just heard that you intend divorcing Ray in order to marry him."

Barbara's eyes widened. Mr. Landon decided that, whatever she intended doing, she didn't look too happy about it.

"Who told you that?" Barbara asked wonderingly. "I only decided myself last night."

"That so?" Mr. Landon paced the carpet once more. "Then there's been some fishy business going on, my dear, and I think you'd better hear of it."

As he spoke he threw himself down into the only rocking-chair.

"It's like this. Yesterday a fellow, name of Freeman, called into my office—he arranges loans for those in need of financial assistance. After he'd hemmed and hawed for several minutes he inquired, as discreetly as possible, what truth there was in the rumor that my niece intended to divorce her present husband and marry Ralph Henderson. Then he told me, after I had bamboozled him into it, that the fellow had been obtaining loans from him on that understanding."

"You mean—that Henny's been borrowing money on the strength of marrying me?" Barbara's voice was one gasp of amazement.

Her uncle nodded.

Barbara didn't feel she could believe it at first. Too absurd it was—judicious almost. Henderson of all men! How contemptible to borrow money with the intention of eventually paying it back out of her!

She remembered how repeatedly he had sneered at Ray for the method he chose to make his livelihood.

How, under the circumstances, had he dared criticize Ray? For

the first time Ray's desire for independence appeared commendable instead of annoying in her eyes.

Mr. Landon awkwardly patted her shoulder.

"There, there, my dear. It must have been a nasty shock to you," his voice was purposely gruff to disguise the tenderness behind it. "Damnably unpleasant business."

"But uncle, surely they wouldn't advance money on such a flimsy proposition?"

"They seem to have. And I've no doubt he made out a good case. There are always gamblers willing to risk money on the chance of some presentable fellow carrying off some heiress with whom he is known to be frequently associated."

Her anger had passed. Her chief emotion was amazement at the effrontery of the man. Suddenly, noticing a vase of mauve orchids, she burst into a mirthless laugh.

"I suppose even those orchids were eventually to be paid for out of my money?" Then, a moment later, "Why did he do it? Ray would have died rather than have done such a thing!"

The last remark had slipped out of her unconsciously. Immediately she regretted it, hoping that her uncle would let it pass without comment. But he didn't.

"Your mention of your husband, Barbara brings me to a point about which I have been meaning to speak to you. You've decided upon getting a divorce?"

She nodded, staring straight ahead of her down at the carpet, as though there was some mystic writing on it she was trying to decipher.

"On what grounds?"

"Incompatibility, I think."

Not even to her uncle could she bring herself to tell of Ray's seeming unfaithfulness.

"Well, that's up to you, Barbara. Can't say that I thought much of Ray myself. No head at all for business and I can't see that he'll ever make much money at that composing of his. I hear he's playing in some night-club orchestra now."

As she didn't speak he brushed the tobacco ash off his waistcoat and rose to his feet.

"Sorry, my dear, but I must be going. Business, you know. Cheer up. You're young yet and remember that line out of the Mikado, 'There are lots of good fish in the sea.' But I'd give that man Henderson a wide berth in future, if I were you."

That precisely was what Barbara did. She was not at home when he telephoned; neither was she at home when he called.

Finally, when he wrote begging an explanation, she told him candidly what she had learned from her uncle and, for further information, referred him to Mr. Landon himself.

The next she heard of Henderson was his name on a passenger list as among those returning to England. She was surprised to find that she was only mildly interested in this item; indeed what amazed her most of the whole affair was how little the discovery of the worthlessness of Henderson had hurt her. It only showed how little she had cared for him.

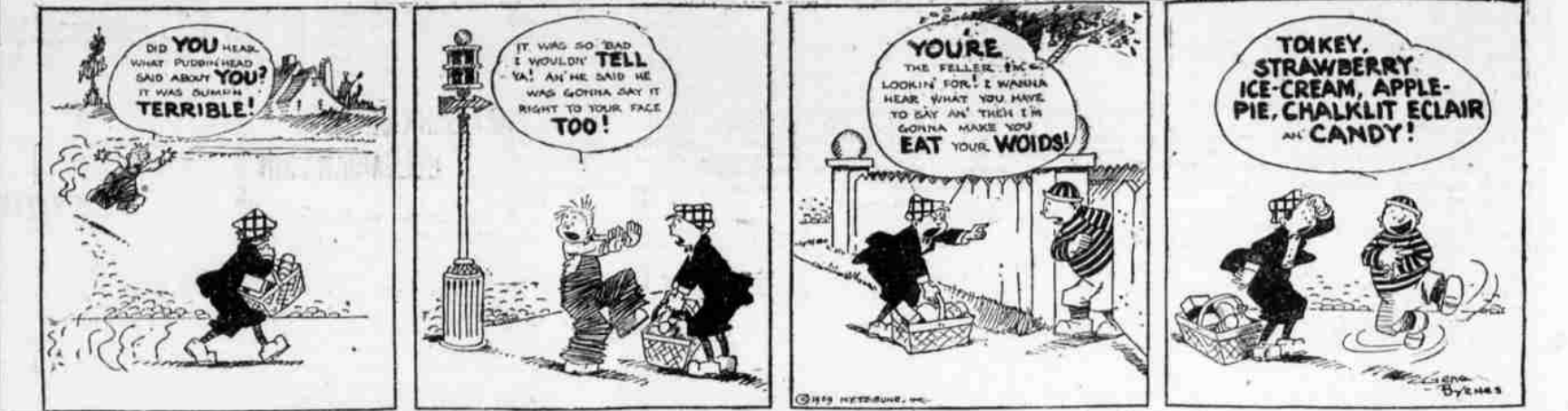
She was beginning to recognize that her liking for him had been little more than the gratification of her own vanity. Slowly she was becoming, in some measure, to realize the colossal selfishness of her outlook in the past—and the guilty though occurred to her. Might Ray have been justified in leaving her as he had?

Some weeks later, upon idly turning the pages of the London Sketch, (Additional Society on Page 7)

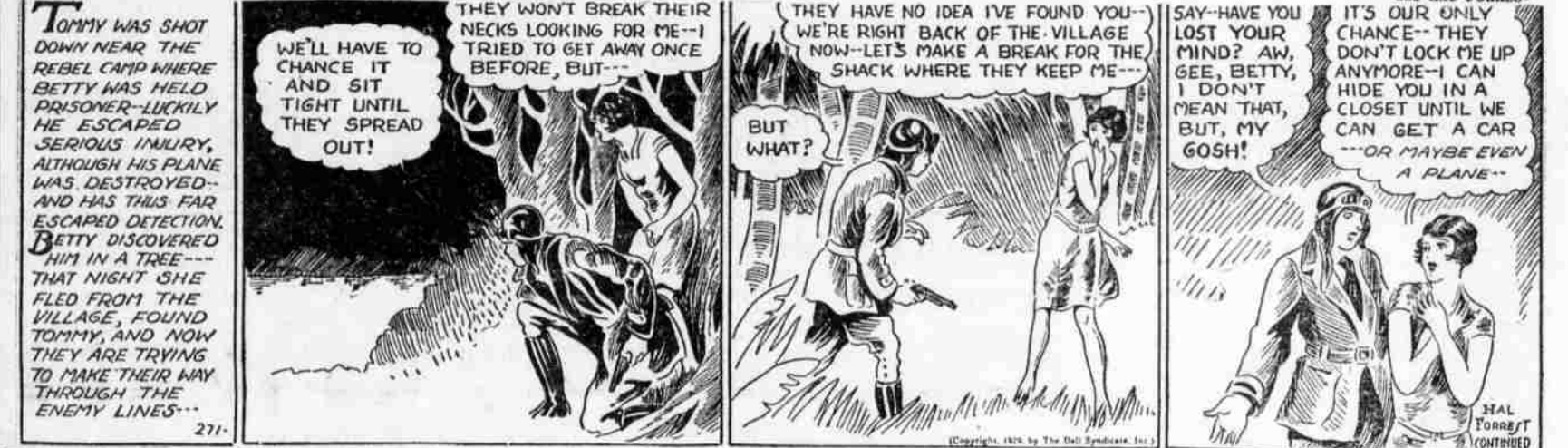
## LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE Just Once More



## REG'LAR FELLERS Worrysome



## TAILSPIN TOMMY Betty Reveals Her Scheme



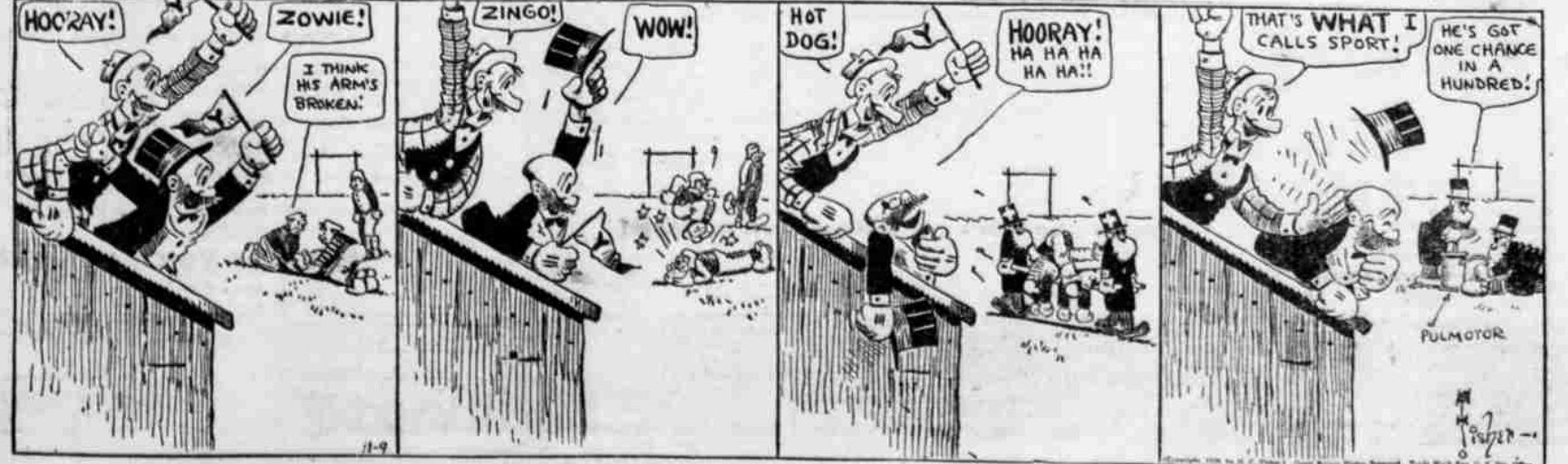
## DUMB DORA A Wise Bird



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## MUTT AND JEFF Premier MacDonald Will Never Stop These Wars



**ACROSS**

- Kind of fish
- Narrow fabric
- Game fish
- Plant that yields medicine
- Equivalent
- Seed covering
- Shakespearean line
- Town in Alabama
- Solemn observation
- Cicero's name
- Swollen
- Habit
- Prophets
- Short song
- For example
- Animal's foot
- Engaged
- Meat
- Like in Italy
- Fall into line
- Native metal
- Hard question
- Mouth abbr.
- Alternate
- Makes a preliminary suggestion
- Ductless
- College degree
- Dinner course
- Book of the Bible
- Silence
- Chinese coin
- Making ready

**Solution of Yesterday's Puzzle**

1. PAREDA 2. REBAR 3. RO 4. IRON 5. GEM 6. VAN 7. ABA 8. BE NOTED 9. FRET 10. ERS 11. NOR 12. LEASE 13. ENOS 14. PECAN 15. SENATE 16. ACCUSE 17. BARED 18. ETON 19. EAGER 20. LED 21. ELD 22. SLUR 23. RATED 24. OS 25. TEN 26. RAITOR 27. ENRUSE 28. ENATE 29. RE ABED 30. REMIT

**DOWN**

- Young cow
- Toward the sheltered side
- Have
- Lasting
- Who latched
- Wonder-stricken
- French city
- Expunge
- Long seats
- Cattle abbr.
- Thing
- Place
- Vehicle on runners
- Keeps from clerical
- Unit of work
- Letter abbr.
- Abyss
- Was ill
- Journalist
- Fruit of the Murchison
- Mail Fresh
- Pastors
- potentia
- Forecast
- Basic money of account
- Take one's way
- Compel
- Adhesive
- Loss by decay or leakage
- Genus of the cow
- Each abbr.
- Depend
- Holmes
- Heart post.
- Knock
- Latin's pen name
- Dispatched
- Wind
- Hone of the arm
- Shallow vessel
- Examination

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