

# A PATH TO PARADISE

by Coningsby DAWSON

**SYNOPSIS:** Having crushed Clive's spirit by becoming engaged to Dicky, 21 years her senior, Santa rushes to the boat to bid Clive farewell as he sails to become European representative of his firm. There she promises Clive to break her engagement and meet him in Europe. Then, in the car, she tells Dicky. The couple is so happy because, long before, Clive's mother and Santa's father had been engaged, and Eric Down had been killed. When his mother, on her deathbed, asked Santa to care for Clive, Mrs. Down was furious. She had Santa to Europe, permitted her to become an expert in protecting men's attentions.

## Chapter 8

### "WOMAN IS PICKLE"

SANTA glanced up quickly. Dicky looked so strong. His protecting arm tightened. So he wasn't going to punish her. She leaned more heavily against him. Through the great white lights of Broadway they sped in silence. At Columbus Circle the chauffeur glanced back for instructions. Dicky signed to him to enter the Park.

Feverishness was left behind. Shadowy vistas, black ramparts filled with starry loo-loos.

He stooped his lips to her way hair.

"Don't tell anything, unless—"

"Dicky," she protested, "it concerns you. I even promised to follow him."

He laughed quietly.

"You haven't."

"You don't realize." She wrung her hands. "I'm asking your advice. I'm in a most frightful mess."

"You're asking whether you should jack me in favor of Clive. The answer depends on your happiness."

"But I'm considering your happiness."

"There's only one person to consider—yourself. Let's be terrifically honest. What are Clive's superior attractions, in spite of which you chose me?"

"I chose you," she stared into the darkness, "because I was sick of boys. They're so bossy—must have everything their own way. They get sore. Take Clive. If I'd done to him what I've done to you, he'd have sulked and made me miserable. Certainly he wouldn't have been driving me round the Park all friendly and comfortable."

"But Clive, since he's your example, must have his good points."

"Heaps," she granted enthusiastically. "I'm his only girl. He adores me."

"And now for my qualities. Let's start with the good ones."

"You're friends with so many people. You take no places," she faltered.

"Losing your nerve!" he challenged.

"I'm proud to be seen with you. Her voice strengthened. "You're so blond and handsome. You speak languages like a foreigner. It's fun to chatter with waiters in queer little restaurants. Life with you becomes an adventure. And then you're so well groomed—so absolutely right for every occasion. You mayn't know it, but you give me confidence. Clive's sometimes a little shabby and not quite sure of himself. And then again, you're agreeable—always the same. Not untidily demonstrative one moment and all bottled up the next. What I mean is, you don't upset me—don't expect me to be perfect."

"Can't you state something positively to my credit?"

"She thought deeply.

"Yes. Because I'm young, you're flattered. When I'm prettier than usual, you notice. And then on my side, because you're older, I'm flattered, too."

"Fourteen years older," he reminded. "You've said nothing about being fond of me or the way I feel toward you."

"She took his hand between her two small ones and drew it beneath her opera-coat.

"I couldn't deceive you. I love Clive. But—"

"Go on."

"I prefer you for your gentleness. I'm so safe with you."

Their lips met.

Next morning she announced to her parents that she wished her marriage to be hurried forward. She was afraid of her own indecision. Forgetting Clive wasn't easy. Her thoughts returned to him in every idle moment. Unfortunately loving Dicky was an effort. Through fear of what she might do if left to her own devices, she scarcely permitted him out of her sight.

The quality which had recommended him had been his sportiness. She now cashed in on it to prevent herself from thinking. From morning till past midnight she was with him in the high-

powered runabout which he drove so recklessly.

She forced him to take her to night clubs. After giving a mystic signal, one burst from a gloomy street into the glow of an Aladdin's cave. The life they led seemed a chapter from the Arabian Nights. They had no leisure for conversation.

Meanwhile her father, wishing to learn more about his future son-in-law, pursued enquiries. He discovered nothing to his discredit, if anything distinctly favorable.

Dicky's pedigree, at all events, was traceable. He derived from a race of speculators in Chicago, who in the second generation had quieted down to philanthropy and church-going. Previously to that they'd cornered wheat, land, railroads—there was precious little they hadn't cornered.

Their women had specialized in European titles. Dicky's father was worth several millions. Unfortunately the father didn't approve of the son. Why was hidden in obscurity. Probably they weren't sympathetic. Most of Dicky's education had been obtained at foreign schools. Since becoming a man he'd lived chiefly in France and Austria. Again the answer to "What was he doing there?" was blank. An inheritance from an aunt was his only visible means of livelihood.

From a social point of view the wedding was a huge success. For weeks costly presents from eminent persons had been arriving. The news leaked out, via the press, that the best man was worth twelve millions. To have a multi-millionaire for a best man, Dicky also must have money.

The first night of the honeymoon was spent in New York. Before sailing for Havana, Santa telephoned her parents that she'd married the finest and most considerate of husbands.

At the start of the voyage she was too seakick to enquire or care what he was doing. On the third day, when she became convalescent, she discovered that he'd been grabbed by a bunch of poker-players. Late that night, since he had not come to bed, she dressed and went to the smoking-room to reclaim him.

She was greeted with loud shouts, "Here comes the bride."

When she tried to coax him from his chair he showed temper. Later, when she was sleeping soundly in her berth, she was roused by clumsy movements. Hot hands caressed her.

"You there, Lou-Lou!"

In panic she switched on the light.

Dicky blinked his surprise.

"Not Lou-Lou!" He was half seas over. "Gee! You must be the gal I married."

At breakfast next morning his attitude was repentant. He wasn't certain what had been his conduct.

"Hope I didn't disturb you." He introduced the subject. "To tell the truth I drank too much last night."

"Who's Lou-Lou?" she asked quietly.

"How should I know, darling? I expect she's a name you've invented."

"She isn't." Santa shook her curly head. "She's a woman whom you loved before me."

"I never pretended there weren't women I loved before you," he owned gravely. "I fessed up that evening when you planned to run off with Clive."

"Dicky, dear, by loved I thought you meant liked."

"I'm not to blame for what you thought, I told you."

"So there were other women," tears filled her eyes, "whom you loved in the same way that you loved Lou-Lou?"

"Regular detective, aren't you?" she chaffed her. "What do you suppose I was doing all those years till I met you? I'm human."

"One more question, Dicky. I'm not the third or even the fourth—just the end of a procession? You couldn't get me cheaply—so you made me your wife."

"This is what comes of playing poker." He assumed a mock injured expression. "Who said anything about a procession?"

"Do you get drunk often?" she insisted. "This is only our honeymoon. I know nothing about you."

He attempted to fold her in his arms. She turned her face aside.

"My getting drunk was an accident. The other women meant nothing."

"Don't lie, Dicky. They're all memorized there." She touched his forehead. "My place is a long way down the line."

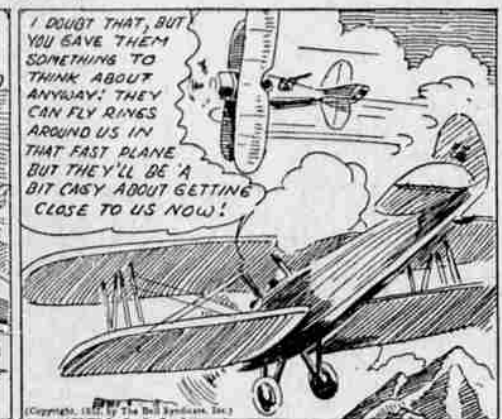
(Copyright 1931-1932, Coningsby Dawson)

Santa, in her luxurious apartment in Chicago, searches tomorrow for the key to her unhappiness.

## LEWIS, MANAGER HOME LAND BANK

PORTLAND, Oct. 26.—(AP)—Organization details of the district No. 11 federal home loan bank in Portland were completed at a meeting of the directors here today following the election Monday of J. T. S. Lyle of Tacoma as manager of the institution.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—An Uneven Dog Fight!



By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

## BOUND TO WIN—The Departure



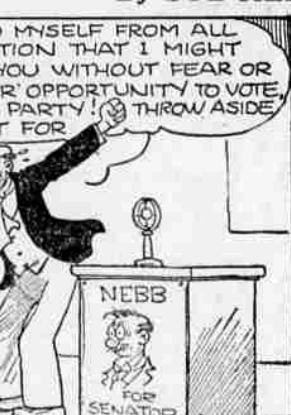
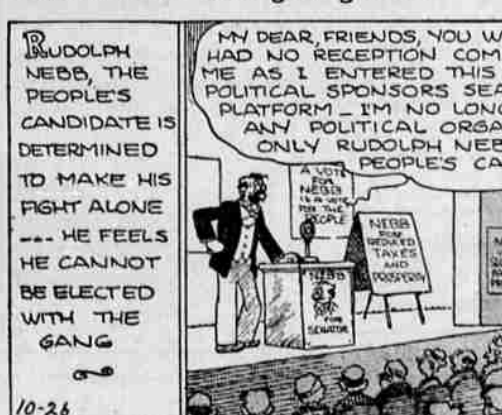
By EDWIN ALGER

## S'MATTER POP—The Money Lender Gets Stuck



By C. M. PAYNE

## THE NEBBS—A Fighting Fool



By SOL HESS

## MUTT AND JEFF—Entertainment For The Customers



By BUD FISHER

## SNOW IN CRATER SECTION MELTING

Snow at Crater Lake national park is now only four inches in depth, according to reports received this morning by Ernest Route of the park service. Although the white blanket was about four to six inches deep Sunday, much of it melted the early part of the week.

Mr. Route reported the roads in good condition, and urged that those wishing to view the lake in a snow setting should make the trip while the roads are still open.

## PAROLED SLAYER KILLS BENEFACTOR

COLUMBUS, O., Oct. 26.—(AP)—An ex-convict, paroled from one murder conviction, confessed to Prosecutor Donald J. Hoskins today the slaying of a second victim, Mrs. Daniel J. Bonzo, 44, wife of the chief record clerk at Ohio penitentiary.

Mrs. Bonzo, beaten to death at her home here yesterday, had befriended the former convict, John Downing, 44, and his confession, as related by Hoskins, said, "Bonzo's been like a mother to me. I don't know why I did it."

## BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus