

BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

SYNOPSIS: Janice Kent, the movie star, has disappeared, and a man named Ortega, ostensibly in Hollywood to negotiate for a picture with the producer, has been seen in the desert. Frank Graham, explorer and stunt man, believes Ortega has abducted Janice, and follows what they hope is the right trail to a battered old airplane. At Caliente they find a party answering the proper description has taken the Rutledge road, and again take the air. But the plane cracks up; they drop into the sea—and Spin cannot swim.

Chapter 11 THE BLOCKADE

GRAHAME, bending over the prostrate flyer high up on the little shelving beach, saw Winslow's eyes open. For an instant the eyes were blank; whereupon consciousness flooded them. He smiled uncertainly. "Spin Winslow," he murmured, "once Consolidated's stunt man; now does bathing beauty bits. Thanks, Frank."

"Shut up, you idiot, and lie still. Here—"

But Winslow had rolled over on his chest, and drawing his knees under him strove to rise. Encircling his waist with his arm, Frank pulled him to his feet.

"I'm all right," Spin gasped, "arm's still on the fritz but I can walk. Let's get up to the road."

Facing the sea, between them and the road-level above, was a short cliff. Graham pushed his companion before him. They made slow progress, Winslow hooking his sound elbow and knees into crevices in the sandstone wall, and Frank supporting him with his shoulder from behind. Finally they sprawled over the top of the cliff.

It was a scant two hundred yards to the road. They stumbled over loose rock until they stood upon the stony and muddy unevenness that was called the road to Encinada.

Winslow said, "Well, here we are. Once when the road was dry I made it from Caliente to Encinada—that's seventy miles—in two hours. But nearly tore the tires off doing it. Our friends won't go so fast. Even with their boots' start, I think we're ahead of them."

"Hope so," commented Graham briefly.

He strode to the side of the highway and began pulling rocks into the middle of the road.

"That's the stuff, Frank. Get a few of those bables festooned across and they'll stop a tractor."

Frank completed his barricade. It was not elaborate but it would serve. There was the possibility that a car other than the one they awaited would come first. In that case he would commandeer it—if he could—to take them into the town ahead.

Winslow's arm—it was a break or a dislocation—would need prompt attention. And doubtless it was more practical to wait the arrival of Janice Kent and her abductors flanked by local authority. It was the saner performance, and safer perhaps for Jan.

There was always the possibility that he would fail to stop the car. The car contained, he knew, three determined men. They would be armed, doubtless. Well, so would he, but three against one, with Janice's presence jeopardizing his efficiency, were odds that gave him some little thought.

HE took out his arroy automatic, slipped out the clip and shook it free of water; he slid back the cocking mechanism and with his handkerchief wiped the arm as free of moisture as he could. Winslow, watching from the roadside, whistled.

"Haven't seen one of those for years," he said. "If the cops back in town caught you with that they'd write you a letter."

Frank grinned. "Just an ounce of prevention, Spin. Hope I won't have to use it."

"Another of the famous last words," chuckled Spin.

300,000 READY TO ERECT RESIDENCES

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26.—(AP)—The National Lumber Manufacturers' association said today 300,000 persons in this country are awaiting only adequate and conservative financing to start construction on new small homes.

The association based its statement on a survey made by 1,743 lumber dealers in every state. The report included as "live prospects" only persons who have sufficient cash or a lot on which they intend to build.

Lewis Carlisle, youthful East Islip, N. Y., schoolboy, was the leading American outdoor driver for 1933, noting out Don Frazier of Rantoul, Ill., by 283 points.

The survey also said that moderate financing will release a demand for 250,000 farm buildings, 35,000 small business structures and innumerable remodeling and repair jobs.

As the driver suspected he was being stopped he might make the attempt; it did not matter whether the car was the one he awaited or some stranger. The driver's reaction—seeing an armed man waiting on the other side of the barricade—would be the same.

He withdrew to the side and crouched behind a larger boulder. Headlights glared from behind the nearest turn. The engine roared spasmodically as the car lurched over the uneven road-bed.

Frank could not discover the car's make or condition behind the dazzling light. The automobile approached the rocks strung across the road; he heard the springs squeak their protest at the jouncing. Brakes squealed. A car within the car called something, unintelligible. He heard the ratchet of the hand-brake click.

As the driver's door opened he saw suddenly that this was the tan car that had crashed Janice Kent's motor at the Hollywood intersection three nights before. Now, however, the top was up and the side-curtains fastened. He arose from behind his boulder and leaped forward.

A MAN stepped out of the open door. Startled recognition leaped into his eyes as he saw Graham. Over his shoulder Frank was conscious of a gleam of metal. Instinctively he averted.

Flame stabbed from within the car—a gun crashed. Frank felt the tug of the passing bullet at the side of his coat. The driver's hand was thrust within his coat lapel. Before he could withdraw it, Frank swung his pistol forward.

The heavy barrel met the forehead of the other. The driver lurched backward against a fender. Graham swung and dropped to his knees. Again the gun from within the car roared.

Frank threw up the muzzle of his weapon and fired at the flash. A man cried out; there was the clang of metal. A door struck tinnily against the side of the car.

Springing to his feet, Frank tore at the rear door of the car. He jerked it open, twisted sideways and thrust his gun within. Instantly he saw that the two opposite doors were open. Through the other rear door he saw two men clawing up the short embankment.

The one to the left thrust up his hand gripping at a road post. It was black-spotted with blood. As he watched, the other, a smaller man, drew himself erect upon the top of the bank. His face was in profile.

The nose was disproportionately large, a hooked beak of a nose, predatory and vulturelike. Frank's gun lifted; his trigger finger contracted slightly. He did not fire, but shook his head to throw off the confusing mist the flash had induced. He dropped his arm; he peered into the dark recesses of the tonneau.

Janice Kent was there. Her face was vague, her eyes round and staring. He saw that she was gagged. Fumblingly he worked at the knot at the back of her neck. He was conscious of a curious combination of odors—the acrid tang of exploded gunpowder and a fragrance that was Janice Kent's hair. His hands shook a little.

"The cloth about her mouth dropped. He lowered his arms and encircled her. He lifted her from the seat and backed through the door. Setting her upon the ground he saw that her hands were tied. It took him but an instant to loosen the knots.

She averted toward him. For a distressing instant he thought that she was about to faint. He put his arms about her to hold her upright; curiously she did not fall, but pressed against him; her hands gripped the cloth of his coat tightly.

"Janice!" he muttered a little hoarsely. "... you all right?" Her cheek seemed to press his lapel. She murmured, "I don't know. I think so."

Nearly a masculine voice spoke anxiously. "She's all right, Frank! They haven't—"

Sharply Janice Kent withdrew from Frank's support. They looked toward the voice. Winslow stood in the light of the car's headlights.

"Sorry, folks, I just came to didn't mean to interrupt—Fella nearly kicked my face in a minute ago on his way over the hill. He was certainly going places."

KIDNAP THREATS MAILED TO MANY

PHILADELPHIA, Pa., Jan. 26.—(AP)—R. George Harvey of the bureau

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

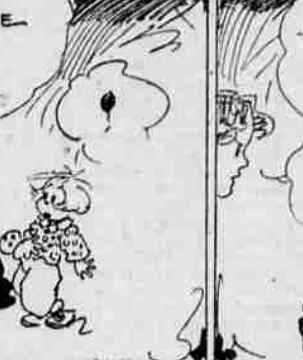
S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Added Danger!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST



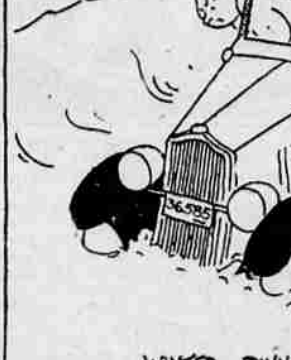
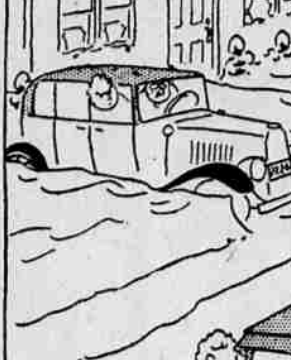
BOUND TO WIN—The Voice Of Dan Jeppard!

By EDWIN ALGER



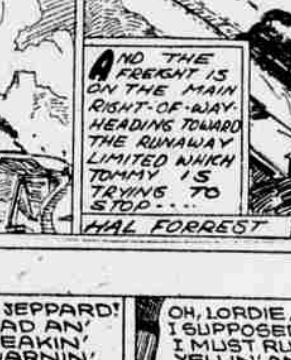
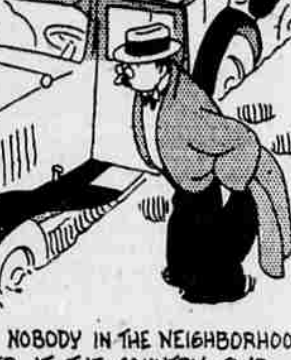
THE NEBBES—Can't You Take A Joke?

By SOL HESS



BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



VEATCH ASSUMES DUTY AS ATTORNEY FOR HOLC

PORTLAND, Jan. 26.—(AP) John C. Veatch, member of the legal firm of Joseph, Haney & Veatch, today assumed his new duties as Oregon attorney for the Home Owners' Loan corporation, succeeding Edgar Freed, recently designated state director of the national emergency council.

Veatch is a democrat. The appointment of Veatch was announced Wednesday by J. P. Lipscomb, Oregon HOLC manager.

YEAR AFTER YEAR

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