

# BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

**SYNOPSIS:** Although Frank Graham, the editor, is convinced that Paula Ortega engineered the abduction of Janice Kent, movie star, which Frank just has blocked, Miss Kent refuses to believe him. Frank is in love with Janice and has told her so, now, at a meeting in the office of Myberg, famous movie producer, it has been decided to proceed with a sensational film for which Ortega was negotiating—without Ortega. Janice tells of the abduction.

## Chapter 14 FRANK'S CALL

"WHEN Paula, my maid, said that he had phoned and asked if I were home, you construed that to mean that Ortega wanted to be sure that I was available for abduction—but I don't think so. Perhaps he just wanted to call to say good-bye; but changed his mind."

"When those two men came in, he wasn't with them. They—" She repressed an involuntary shudder. "They held me so I couldn't scream. One of them gave me a hypodermic. Another man—I never did see his face—was outside. I was conscious that he was there when they put me in the car..."

"Did he have a beakish nose?" asked Frank. Janice shook her head. "I don't remember." Greene made a little sound. He breathed: "What a story! What a story! I've got most of it here." He held up a sheet of paper. "When I break this what a—"

"Gift them here," said Myberg, looking coldly at Greene with his obsidian eyes. Greene passed them over. Myberg grasped them with his pudgy hands and ripped the sheet across. He dropped the torn paper into a wastebasket. Greene made a small, strangled sound. Winslow chuckled.

"Greene," he observed, "considers that vandalism. He is an artist." "So was Munchausen," grunted Myberg. "But the newspapers get nodding of this. The public wouldn't believe it. They would laugh at it for a lie. I don't mind if they laugh at you, Greene, but Miss Kent is no joke."

Greene looked miserable. Frank said vindly, "Don't take it so hard, old man. You'll get other chances. You're a good publicity man. Miss Kent told me so herself. She couldn't do without you, really." At Janice's nod, Greene looked pleased and important.

"I work hard," he said. "In fact, I go to considerable time and expense to develop these stories. I—" Janice interrupted him with a swift look. "He gets a perfectly stupendous salary for developing these stories, and I couldn't do without him, really. That is, he would be most difficult to replace. Wouldn't you, Mr. Greene?" She smiled at him engagingly.

At the fleeting expression of discontent that arrived and vanished on Greene's face, Winslow laughed aloud. Myberg drummed his knuckles impatiently on the desk. "There is nodding to do now except to get on production. We will not try to find out any more why and wherefore. With the police in it, the newspaper follers would come out with stories, I will get some men from an agency to watch out for Janice. That... is all."

THE discussion had been concluded early in the afternoon. Janice had gone home and rested. She had eaten a light dinner, and thought once in a little flurry of agitation that she might run over to a friend's house, and not be at home—actually—when Frank Graham called.

But this device, she realized, would be useless. Sooner or later she must talk with Frank. She suspected also that it would be a little cowardly. She'd see him tonight, since he wanted it and... Her compressed lips relaxed. What would she tell him?

It was nine-fifteen when she entered the drawing room on the lower floor. Frank stood before the log fire that burned cheerily in the grate. His wide shoulders bulged against the glow. He held a newspaper clutched in his hands; he seemed to be hypnotized by the crackling logs, so intense was his concentration.

She spoke his name twice before he seemed to hear her. He turned the fixed, absent stare of the thinker upon her. It was apparently an effort for him to bring his thoughts back to this room.

"Janice, have you read the evening papers?" "No, I— What is it, Frank? Is it something about last night?... Tell me—"

He shook his head impatiently. "It's about Bill Langton. The dead flyer. My friend. But perhaps he isn't dead..."

... "See—" He shook the paper. "They've found a bottle paper. Washed ashore on an obscure reef in the Gulf. In Bill's handwriting, if it's not a hoax. Maybe he's alive—after all these months—down in the jungle somewhere. But why—" His brow drew together in a frown, little tanned corrugations. Janice thought, that made him look curiously like a boy with a vexing school problem.

"—but why a drift bottle. There are no rivers down there to float a bottle out to sea. None mapped as I remember that coast. I wonder..." Janice felt an odd sensation of excitement and of unease. Frank, she remembered, was an explorer, familiar with jungle trails. Could it be that he was considering that this story in the evening paper might contain a clue that would induce him to leave Hollywood for the south to search for his lost friend?

Her heart beat a little faster. Perhaps she could suggest that he go. It would be an admirable solution of her problem, or rather the problem he might prove to be.

"But Frank," she said. "He's dead. They proved that months ago. If he was not drowned when his plane went down into the sea, he must have been killed if it crashed in the jungle. This happens' months ago. If he survived, surely he could have reported—"

What was the matter with her? This was not what she had intended to say. She wanted to encourage him to go; yet her words would indicate nothing to him except that she did not think there was any use for him to believe Langdon alive—and leave Hollywood to search for his friend.

SHE continued, "Mr. Myberg is having contract drawn for you, I heard. We are about to begin a picture. You are needed now that Mr. Ortega—"

He tossed the paper onto an adjacent chestfield. He said something to the effect that evening paper had just the bare details of the bottle paper—he would know more in the morning.

He smiled and stepped toward her; had her life depended upon it she could not have moved. She stood transfixed, looking at him. His arms were about her. She suffered him to tilt her chin and kiss her.

"Remember last night? I knew you cared. You don't want me to go away, do you? Oh, Janice, I love you so!"

Words tumbled from his lips. Strong words, masculine words. Something about the non-marriage clause in her contract being drilled, that the idea of her working was drilled. He had enough money for both of them.

Love. Love in a cottage. A gay adventure. He would take her to strange places he had been. Where he'd be lonely. Where they could sit under the stars before a campfire... dinner over, and the dishes washed—

She was away from him. The width of the fireplace was between them. Almost hysterically she realized that she had struggled out of his arms and had struck his cheek with her open palm.

She saw the bewildered hurt in his eyes, and the unconscious gesture he made of lifting his hand to touch his cheek. Her palm pounded from the slap; her heart pounded with a curious and delicious excitement; her lips still tingled with the firm warmth from his kiss. And she had struck him! She wanted to cry out, "I didn't mean it!" But the words would not come.

Frank said, "Oh... I'm sorry—" Even in the freight his face looked pale beneath the tan. It was as if a mask had been put upon him, so still were his features. The blue of his eyes had become a deep gray. Only his mouth had a strange twist to it.

She was conscious that he was leaving. She was unable to do or say anything that would prevent him from going. But he was gone before she realized how desperately she had not wanted him to go.

The need for activity descended upon her. She flew upstairs to her boudoir. There was no answer. She realized that Frank could not possibly have arrived back in his apartment in this short time. She thought of telephoning the apartment manager, and leaving a message. But she would try again in half an hour. During the interval she walked about the upstairs floor; she descended to the drawing room and fumed herself upon the chestfield. She phoned again. Still there was no answer.

Tomorrow, Frank learns more about the "bottle paper."

# RUSSIAN WHEAT A MINOR MENACE

LONDON, Jan. 30.—(AP)—The international wheat advisory commission, opening its third meeting today, does not believe that Russia's aloofness from the export quota allowed her will make much difference in the world situation.

A \$7,000,000 bushel quota was offered Russia under the world pact. Russia demanded a quota twice that size.

Delegates representing the big four exporting nations—Canada, Australia, the United States and Argentina—believe that by the time the quotas expire July 31 Russia will hardly have exported the 37,000,000 bushel quota offered her, let alone the double quota demanded. Leaders estimate Russia has not exported more than 25,000,000 bushels already, and her shipping season is virtually over.

# VETERAN YAKIMA EDITOR HONORED

YAKIMA, Jan. 30.—(AP)—One hundred and six employees of the Republic Publishing company, representing 940 years of service in all under W. W. Robertson, gathered last evening for a surprise dinner in honor of the publisher of the Yakima Daily Republic and the Yakima Morning Herald.

Employees at the dinner had service records ranging from 29 years of constant employment to a group of four workers at the plant less than a year.

# THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



WHEN TO AVOID TEARS YOU'VE RELUCTANTLY LET JUNIOR HAVE A TURN WITH THE SHOVEL AND OVERHEAR PASSERS-BY COMMENT DISPARAGINGLY ON BIG STRONG MEN WHO STAND AROUND LOAFING WHILE THEY MAKE THEIR CHILDREN DO THEIR WORK.

# 'S'MATTER POP—

By C. M. PAYNE



# TAILSPIN TOMMY—Skeeter Drops a "Flare"!

By GLENN CHAFFIN and HAL FORREST

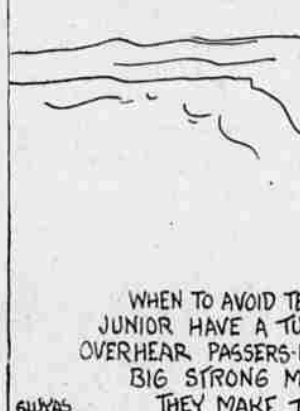


By EDWIN ALGER



# THE NEBBS—His Father's Son

By SOL HESS



# TABLET TO HONOR BURRELL BAUCOM

SALEM, Jan. 30.—(AP)—A bronze memorial tablet in honor of Burrell M. Baucum, of Medford, a member of the state police who was killed in performing his duty July 1, 1933, will be erected at the scene of the tragedy near Bixton mountain on the Pacific highway eight miles north of Grants Pass.

# CROP LOAN CUT IS AGREED UPON

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30.—(AP)—A drop from \$100,000,000 to \$45,000,000 in the amount to be sought for crop production loans next year was agreed upon today between Chairman Smith of the senate agriculture committee and W. I. Myers, governor of the farm credit administration. The larger amount was opposed by the administration.

# BRINGING UP FATHER

By George McManus



# There's No Guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation

There's no guesswork in Tribune A. B. C. Circulation. The circulation figures are based on a complete and accurate audit of the newspaper's circulation records. The audit is conducted by a professional firm of auditors, and the results are published in the newspaper's circulation report. This report provides a detailed breakdown of the newspaper's circulation, including the number of copies printed, the number of copies distributed, and the number of copies sold. The circulation report is a valuable tool for advertisers and for the newspaper's management.