

# BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

**SYNOPSIS:** Frank Grahame, explorer in the Mexican jungle on a search for the lost city of Atlantis, is accompanied by his companion, Juan, back to the coast and determined to try to rescue the missing star, Janice Kent. Through his binoculars he has seen her led up the steps of a Mayan pyramid with a companion, he realizes that she has come to Mexico "on location" and has been betrayed into the hands of the "sublimos," a dangerous band in the Yucatan jungle.

### Chapter 27

#### FRANK EXPLORES

THE FRANK HAD SUNK below the horizon. Cautiously he slid into the open outside the ruin. Ahead, where the column of pursuers had gone, he made out a white object above the tree tops.

He drew forth his binoculars and adjusted them. It was the house atop the pyramid reflecting from its altitude the sun. He was closer to the city than he thought—not more than a mile or two.

He heard a rustle behind him. He whirled, gun in hand. The shadows had lengthened, and semi-obscurity shrouded the ground. The sound was not repeated, but he believed he saw a shadow fade and disappear at the jungle's edge.

An iguana, as large as a cat, drifted across the rocks ahead of him. Doubtfully he hoisted his pistol, and withdrew into the ruin. Time enough to enter the city after dark; meanwhile he would get some badly needed sleep.

The squeaking of bats and the soft whispering of their wings awakened Frank. He glanced at the illuminated dial of his watch; it was a little after midnight. He stretched the stiffness from his limbs. He adjusted his clothing as best he could in the darkness, and tightened his belt. He was very hungry.

He stepped into the open and followed in the tracks of the party that had passed the ruin during the afternoon. As he approached the city the trees thinned and gave him scanty cover.

Ahead, he saw a light, a dull glow that he guessed from its height to be a fire of some kind atop the big pyramid. This was confirmed as he approached the huge mass. He wondered at the lack of edifice on this side.

Doubtfully he gauged the height of the moon, speculating if the two hours light remaining were likely to be more of a help than a hindrance. He was grateful for the dim illumination a few minutes later when he stepped into the shadow of the pyramid.

He stopped, rigid with astonishment. There, ahead of him, almost at his feet was the white disk of the moon! It took a few seconds for an explanation of this eerie phenomenon to penetrate his mind. It was the moon, reflected in a pool of water. As his gaze adjusted itself to the correct focus, he made out the dim bulk of the pyramid reflected below the lopsided shield that was the moon.

It was a canoe! One of those huge cavernous openings that abound throughout the Yucatan peninsula, where the roof of rock, ages ago, had fallen into a natural subterranean reservoir.

Graham dropped to his hands and knees and crawled to the edge. The brink was sharp and the sides almost perpendicular. It made a sort of lake sunk scores of feet below the surface of the surrounding terrain. The canoe was a rough oval, a hundred yards long, with a breadth-span of about two-thirds that distance.

The pyramid abutted against the farther end, looming like a grim sentinel of past ages.

HE stepped away from the edge and progressed with infinite caution to the base of the structure. The moon was somewhat behind him, shining upon the massed stone. He saw to his surprise that the pyramid had been constructed so that this side reared itself in a smooth perpendicular line from the lip of the canoe.

It would be a terrible fall, thought the American, from the truncated top of the pyramid. An object hurled from that height would have an uninterrupted plunge to the surface of the water.

He rounded the corner away from the pool, and guiding himself with one hand touching the masonry, approached the center of the sharply sloping side. He was in deep shadow. At the center the bawnstone steps began.

He climbed a little way, and reeled, listening for sounds of human beings. He progressed slowly but assured himself that no one was about. At the top he peered over the edge.

The stage was flanked with huge blocks of stone, and in the center stood the temple-house, built squarely. It was much larger than it had seemed from the plain below. There was no opening at the side facing Graham, but he observed that a glow came from around a corner,—the exposure facing the sheer drop to the cenote.

He knew that there was a doorway facing eastward, toward the small ruined pyramid at the edge of the city, from which point he had made his observations of the previous day.

In the center of the light from the western door, and standing halfway toward the edge, was a huge slab of stone supported as a pedestal, waist-high, by four smaller stones at the corners. It was evidently an altar of some sort. Even in the dim light Graham saw that it was covered with elaborate carvings. The surface of the slab seemed to slope toward the brink.

With swift certainty he covered the space between the stair's top and the shadowy corner of the house. A glance assured him that the altar side of the house was unoccupied. He slipped within the doorway. There was a corridor ahead, and at the end of it there showed a glimpse of star-studded sky,—the eastern door.

SEEMINGLY there was no one about. He penetrated farther into the place. At the middle he found that another corridor, blind at both ends, bisected the other. At the intersection a stone brazier burned, throwing smoky shadows about.

He turned to the left, and proceeded toward the end. On each side were doorways, evidently the entrances to the rooms that lined this pyramid-house.

He paused. Dark lumps lay before two of the doorways. He heard the sound of human beings breathing evenly. The red light from the central urn threw stabbing flashes about the walls and he caught glimpses of reflected light upon the metallic equipment of the sleeping guards.

He retreated softly, and stole down the corridor to the opposite end. There were no guards before the doorway.

He nodded his head and compressed his lips. He returned into the left corridor and approached the end until he stood over the sleepers. He reached under his arm. His automatic gleamed dully in the fitful light.

Silently, like a cat compressing itself for a spring, he beat over. His left hand closed accurately upon a throat. A whisper died with the pressure of his finger muscles; he brought the barrel of the gun down upon the spot over the ear.

Graham made an unintelligible sound in his throat and reached for the other's neck. There was a whistling of the guard's breath as he essayed a shout and he writhed within the sudden grasp. His back bowed and he pounded at the American's face with his fist.

Graham threw his leg forward and pressed the man's arm to his side. Again he chopped down the barrel of his pistol, and the figure collapsed to the stone.

He paused, holding his breath. There was no sound but the spluttering of the central urn.

A glance at his watch told him that it was nearing three o'clock. It would be getting light soon and there was little time to lose if he were to find Janice, and get down the pyramid into his hiding place.

He was feeling faint from lack of food, and his imagination was beginning to play tricks with his senses of smell. He would have sworn that he smelled food, ever since he had topped the pyramid.

He found that the doors of these side rooms were casually fastened,—rough wooden pegs pinning a metal latch. The doors were wooden. He lifted the peg and pushing open the nearer one he entered. There was a lamp burning dimly in the room he entered.

At the farther end he made out a pallet and a figure reclining upon it. He approached the figure; his shadow bounded about the stone walls like a huge misshapen phantom. He bent over the couch; almost he exclaimed aloud.

The wide-open eyes of Janice Kent, their blue irises glowing with a dark contempt, stared at him. He watched them widen in astonishment. Her lips parted, as if she were about to speak, but his palm swiftly covered her mouth.

"Don't speak," he cautioned in the barest of whispers.

Tomorrow, Janice complicates their escape.

## TRADE BOOSTERS RACKET EXPOSED

The chamber of commerce was asked by National Recovery Administrator Hugh S. Johnson today to issue the following statement:

"Information has reached the NRA that certain individuals and corporations, operating for private profit, are going about the county organizing trade stimulation campaigns in various communities, soliciting funds from citizens and merchants, ostensibly to be used to cover the expenses of trade stimulation campaigns in those communities.

"The arguments employed by these promoters in the solicitation of funds, so closely parallel the 'Buy Now' appeals of the government, employed in the recovery campaign, that strong implication is created that these efforts are made under the auspices of the government.

"It should be known that the government has not delegated to any individuals or corporations authority to promote such campaigns under the auspices of the recovery movement."

## SUCCESSOR TO HOSS ARRIVES WITH AIDE

BALEM, Feb. 14.—(AP)—Miss Cecilia Gavin, city attorney of The Dalles, arrived here today with P. J. Stadelman, secretary of state, to assist the new official for a short time, she said.

Miss Gavin stated she did not contemplate a permanent position here. It was previously reported she would be Stadelman's private secretary.

## CODE ADJUSTING MEMBERS NAMED

PORTLAND, Feb. 14.—(AP)—Three Portland men were appointed Monday to membership on a "state adjustment board" which will assist in adjustment of controversies over NRA code compliance.

Ben T. Osborne, executive secretary

of the Oregon State Federation of Labor, will represent the workers; Herbert H. Clark of Portland will represent employers; Dr. G. B. Noble, professor of political science at Reed college, will be chairman of the committee appointed by Edgar Freed, Oregon director of the national emergency council.

HARRISBURG, Ky.—(AP)—Kentuckians are hopeful President Roosevelt will come here May 6 to dedicate a \$100,000 federal monument to the memory of George Rogers Clark, "pathfinder of the west."

## THE WORLD AT ITS WORST

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YOU THINK YOUR HUSBAND HAS SENT YOU A VALENTINE THE WAY HE USED TO DO, AND ON TEARING OPEN THE LARGE ENVELOPE FIND AN ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE SHOWING OF THE 1934 MODEL OF THE SUPERBA VACUUM CLEANER

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS

2-14

## GIVE IT A WHIRL



SIR! THIS INVENTION WILL REVOLUTIONIZE THE AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY! IT PRACTICALLY ELIMINATES GEAR-SHIFTING!

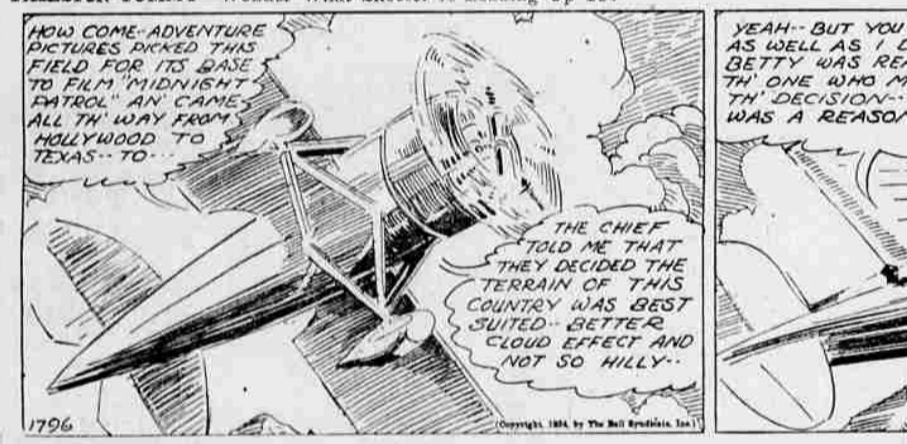
SON! YOU'RE TOO LATE - THEY'VE DONE THAT ALREADY - STANDARD GASOLINE WITH TETRAETHYL UNSURPASSED!

## 'MATTER POP-



By C. M. Payne

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Wonder What Skeeter Is Leading Up To?



By Hal Forrest

## BOUND TO WIN—The "Betsy Dugan" Arrives



By Edwin Alger

## THE NEBBS—Discard



By Sol Hess

## BRINGING UP FATHER



By George McManus

## CONNECTICUT, WYOMING GET LEAST RELIEF AID

WASHINGTON, Feb. 14.—(AP) Figures showing Connecticut and Wyoming led the entire country in percentage of their 1931 relief burdens borne by state and local agencies

with the minimum of federal aid were inserted in the congressional record today by Senator Hayden (D, Ariz.)

Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Utah, Colorado, Arizona, Washington and Oregon received between 73.9 per cent and 86 per cent of their money from the government.

