

BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

SYNOPSIS: Frank Grahame has come into the Yucatan jungle to look for his missing aviator friend, Bill Langton. Janice Kent has come to the same place to star in a Mayan picture, accompanied by Greene, her press agent, and a party. Now Frank, Janice and Greene are prisoners of the dangerous auto-soldiers. Greene finds a message scratched on the window sill of the cell he shares with Frank—and it is signed by Janice!

Chapter 31 ORTEGA

WONDER how Bill got that bottle into the sea," said Frank. "I wonder... I have it!" he exclaimed. "That canoe is part of an underground river. He dropped the bottle in there, and it floated out to sea. I guess they killed Billy all right. Maybe the bottle was on him when they threw his body over the pyramid. What a way to die!"

He threw himself upon one of the stone benches. Their situation looked hopeless. If a man resourceful as Billy Langton could not survive in this place, there seemed small chance of their getting out alive. His throat ached as he thought of Janice. He clenched his fists in frenzy as he realized how impotent he was to help her.

The cell was dark with evening when their guard returned. There were others with him. The cell door swung open. Two armed natives stepped within; a third followed bearing a tray of tortillas and a jug of water.

Grahame stood erect with anger as he saw the next man to enter. Clad in white European garments, a cruel smile on his lips, stood Don Raoul Ortega.

He smiled suavely. "Good afternoon, my friend. We meet again in more favorable circumstances."

Grahame smiled coldly. "I trust your arm is better."

"You—" Ortega spoke a word that caused the American to flush deeply, and step forward.

The big man's hand dropped to his gun's butt.

"No!" exclaimed a voice from the doorway.

The tone was quiet, but Ortega seemed to shrink visibly. He muttered under his breath and stepped behind one of the guards.

With some surprise Frank peered toward the doorway. The figure of an Indian stood there, simply clad, and armed only with a knife. His dark face, made darker by the obscurity, was not completely visible. As he stepped forward Frank drew in his breath sharply. Those falcon eyes, that vulture nose, were those of the man he had last seen running from the car on that lonely Encicla road. It was the face that he'd seen profiled on the frosted glass windows of Myberg's studio office.

FRANK observe him closely, watchfully. The man was not tall, but his erect carriage gave him the appearance of having a singular stature. His semi-nude body was almost emaciated, but like muscles rippled across his chest and abdomen. The shoulders bespoke a smooth power. A nasty man to handle in a scrap.

His face was queerly fascinating, arrogant with a lofty imperiousness; the lips were finely moulded. The eyes contained within their depths a glitter of fanatic fire, an impersonal cruelty, the savagery of a zealot.

He made a gesture with his hand, and Ortega stepped forward. The big man licked his lips, smiling slightly. "I am to tell you," Don Raoul began. "What is in store for you." He eyed Grahame maliciously, and pointed to the Indian who had commanded him to speak.

"He is Ahkin, the head priest, and is the living representative of Camasota, the Bat God, who serves Yum Chao the rain God and the most important of all. The Bat tears off the heads of living men and devours the torn-out heart and blood of his victims. A pleasant custom that has survived the centuries in this country."

"Tomorrow, before the temple on the pyramid, you and your friend will assist in this rite. You will feed the god. He wants me to ask you which is of higher rank in your land; there is a matter of precedence involved, you know." He paused and looked expectantly at Grahame.

Grahame drew a deep breath. Since he had heard Greene read Langton's last message, he appreciated most keenly the hopelessness of their situation. He knew that nothing short of a miracle would prevent their being taken to the pyramid

slaughtered as Ortega had promised. To prolong the span of his life but a few minutes at best, was begging the question of the inevitable. It was a small enough gesture to make, but he would give Greene the faint advantage it involved.

"YOU may tell Ahkin that I am of the higher rank," he replied. "It would cause me great offence, if I am not murdered first." He smiled sardonically.

"Where do you get that stuff?" cried Greene.



There seemed small chance of escape.

Ortega's smile broadened. "Thank you," he said. "Only you misapprehend the precedence. Your importance makes you the last. I would like it better that way myself, for you. You will die, surely, but first you will see your friend on the cutting stone."

"Damn you!" whispered Frank. Don Raoul's teeth gleamed in amusement.

"What of Janice?" asked Greene. "The lady?" Ortega lighted one of his black cigars. Blowing out a cloud of smoke he expanded quite gently. "She will be treated quite well. She has—ab—elaborate plans for her... entertainment. Miss Kent has been brought here to play the most important role of her career. Here she will be the Daughter of Ich-Kin, the Sun God."

"Will they hurt her?" Greene whispered.

Smoke from his cigar trickled from his nostrils. He shook his head. No. Fortunately her blind hair makes her a most important person. Ahkin here— His shoulder twitched toward his Indian companion.

"—saw her picture some months ago in some old newspaper wrappings I had put around a shipment I made him."

His dull eyes held a little spark of amusement as he looked at Greene.

"The power of publicity. You should be grateful, Mr. Greene. To think that here, in the heart of Yucatan—"

Grahame made an inarticulate sound. He threw himself toward Ortega, who retreated as a guard roughly thrust the little man back.

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Tomorrow, Grahame learns more of Janice's fate.

VALLEY HOLINESS CONVENTION WILL OPEN ON TUESDAY

The program for this week of the Rogue Valley Holiness association, with Dr. C. W. Butler, minister, was announced today. The convention will be held in the Free Methodist church on Tenth and Ivy streets, February 20 to 25. Dr. Butler is president of the National Holiness association and of the Cleveland Bible Institute and during this convention will deliver a series of messages of interest to all.

The complete program includes:

Tuesday Evening—7:30
Devotions—R. T. Holmes, Ashland
Welcome—Rev. E. N. Long
Response—Pres. R. T. Holmes
Special Music.

Wednesday Afternoon—2:30
Devotions—Rev. Geo. Gelwin, Rogue River
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Wednesday Evening—7:30
Devotions—Rev. R. J. Milton, Grants Pass
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler

Thursday Afternoon—2:30
Devotions—Rev. A. M. Hamey, Ashland
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Thursday Evening—7:30
Devotions—Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler

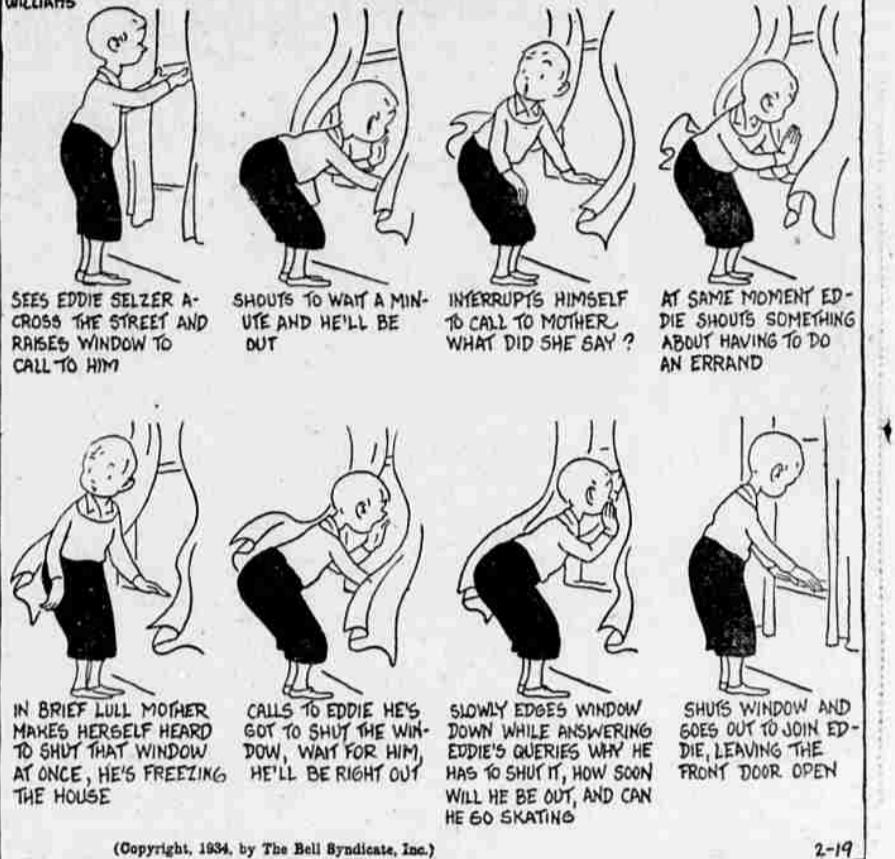
Friday Morning—10:00
Devotions—Rev. R. T. Holmes, Ashland
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Friday Afternoon—2:00
Devotions—Rev. R. T. Holmes, Ashland
Round Table Discussion.
Dr. C. W. Butler
Friday Evening—7:30
Song Service.
Prayer.
Special Music.
Message—Dr. C. W. Butler
Saturday Afternoon—2:00
Devotions—Rev. E. N. Long, Medford
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Saturday Evening—7:30
Devotions—Rev. C. Edwin Cox, Medford
Special Music.
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Sunday Morning—11:00
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Sunday Afternoon—2:30
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler
Sunday Evening—7:30
Song Service.
Prayer
Sermon—Dr. C. W. Butler



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FRESH AIR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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S'MATTER POP



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TAILSPIN TOMMY

Introducing—Mlle. Yvonne L'Vrille!



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BOUND TO WIN

Too Late!



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THE NEBBES

Just Absolutate



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BRINGING UP FATHER



(Copyright, 1934, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.)

BY HAL FORREST



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