

# BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

**SYNOPSIS:** By a curious fate, Frank Grahame, the explorer, Janice Kent, movie star; Billy Langton, mining aviator, and the high priest of a savage tribe in Yucatan which has tried to kill Grahame and Janice, all are caught in a Mexican valley from which they can not escape. The badly wounded ahkin maintains a comatose calm, but the other three pressure means of surviving the rainy season, which will, they fear, fill their valley with water.

## Chapter 41 NEW PROBLEMS

BUT Langton had developed a cunning in the hunt. With a long fiber rope, his club and his stone sling he brought them quantities of game which Frank dissected and put in the sun to dry. Their meat diet was augmented by fruits from a variety of trees.

Here the ahkin helped them. He spurned their offerings of meat, but once after he had expressed a willingness to Frank to help them to the discovery of fruits and roots, they varied a diet of saltless meat that daily was becoming more repugnant to them.

One day Frank suggested to Langton that the high-priest might become a problem to them when once they decided they were able to leave the valley.

"He's physically helpless. Supposing we did get him to the top of the cliff, we could never take him with us through the jungle. We'd have all we could do to get through ourselves without any such hindrance. If we decided to use the raft and float downstream—then what? We might be taking him to his death."

"If we leave him he dies anyway," muttered Langton. "I'm damned if I'm so concerned about him. He's crazy as a loon. Remember I tried to kill him once. If I had it would have been good riddance."

"But you wouldn't leave a dog here if you saw a chance to get out." "If it were a mad dog, I'd kill it," said Langton significantly.

"But not a mad man." "No," replied Langton soberly. "Not a mad man. At that he might prove useful to us. I have a funny hunch that he knows how to get out of here."

Frank passed a hand over his streaming brow. "I hope not," he muttered. "I hope not. That would mean he'd get to his friends and then we'd—"

"Be out of the frying pan," completed Langton. "A pleasant thought. I'm working on a jacket of balsam wood. I'll have it finished in a day or two, and then—"

"I hope it fits me," said Frank significantly. Langton replied grimly, "It is not intended to fit you."

Frank put his hand on the arm of the other. "Billy, once or twice you got a little bitter with me. Said you're half a man, and all that, and it didn't matter whether or not you made the trip successfully through the caverns."

"That's the bunk, and you know it, old man. A good bone doctor back home would have you straightened out in a jiffy. You've got people back home; I haven't any. You've got lots to live for; I wonder a little about myself."

"I've been paid to take chances all my life. One more won't matter much. If I survive this one and get to the coast, I'll get down to Cozumel where the mailplanes stop and have you both out of here within a week after I start."

"It's a good gamble, Billy. This stream runs from four to six miles an hour—more than we could make in a day in the jungle. We're not more than eight or ten hours from the coast by way of the stream."

"I'm going to try it. There may be a lot of swimming to do; you couldn't do that, Billy, it's my gamble. I tell you, you've got to let me do it."

"And Janice Kent?" queried Langton softly. Grahame looked a little set-faced. "It is very important to me that she gets out of this somehow."

"And isn't it important to her that you come out all right?" Frank laughed shortly. "Not any, Billy. Oh, don't misunderstand me, she's not that callous. I just sensed in your question that you suspected a romance, and answered it as if you implied that she had more than an ordinary interest in me other than seeing a fellow companion in difficulty get out of his jam. Truly, Billy—"

"You gabble too much, Frank. Me thinks the lady—or rather the gentleman—doth protest too much," he quoted.

As they talked Janice came up from the stream's edge with a bundle of wet cactus fibers. She smiled gaily as she passed them.

Her shirt, her jacket, her breeches—were beginning to show the ravages of daily toil. They looked torn and scuffed. Her hands were swollen and red from the unaccustomed severity of working with the coarse fiber.

Only her face looked serene and fit, that and the minted-gold glory of her hair.

Langton said softly, "Frank, a girl of her courage deserves taking chances for."

Frank turned away. He suspected that his old friend had discerned that he, Grahame, was in love with Janice. The kindly fellow, however, had not hinted at it; but certain little tactful gestures when none were necessary made Frank realize that he was conscious that perhaps at least one of his two visitors from civilization might be aware of a sentiment that was deeper than mere comradeship.

The thought was painful to Frank. To him Janice's decision in Hollywood had been uncompromising; there was no further appeal to be made. Any thought or speculation upon what might have been served only to stir unpleasant memories.

Langton had said that she was a girl of courage; to Frank this enforced intimacy had given him a greater opportunity to judge; she was magnificent—miraculous.

That night he helped Langton complete the balsam-wood jacket. It was a clumsy affair made of two foot lengths of this curious wood that is lighter than cork.

It was tied together with twisted strands of cactus fiber; shoulder straps were made of the same material. Frank tried it on. He resolved that in a day or two he would put it to use.

LATER that night, sleeping soundly, they were awakened by the crashing of thunder. Sheet-lightning flared about the skies. Huddled in the doorway of the shack that screened the entrance of the cave, they stood until the sky opened its ducts and drove them away from under the flimsy roof.

Within the cave, dank with un-evaporated water from the last floods and musty with bat offal, Grahame and Langton stared at each other soberly.

Resonant torches provided in an anticipation of this emergency had been lighted. The thunderous booming without precluded any possibility of sleep.

"The rains are here," muttered Grahame. "It won't be long now," replied Langton lightly. Frank noticed that his friend's face looked queerly pale on the patches his beard did not cover.

In the morning, it was Janice who told them about the curious behavior of the ahkin. The girl had insisted, despite the protest of the men, that she be the high-priest's attendant.

She had, however, been determined; therefore they had constructed a pallet in a corner of the inner cave for the ahkin and one nearby for the girl. When the two white men, who usually slept in the outer shack, had entered the cave and lighted the torches, Janice had looked to the welfare of her charge.

She had found him, his back supported upright against the cave's wall, rigid in a state approaching catatony.

She had shaken his shoulder thinking him in the midst of a dream, but he had not awakened. Usually, she knew, he slept lightly. His limbs and his body were marble-stiff. His face was frozen although his eyes were open but opaque.

Janice reported that it sounded like a quiet droning so imperceptible was his voice, but by concentrating she was aware that words were issuing from his parted lips; strange words that held the cadence of mystic ceremony.

"He was asleep and dreaming," Frank suggested. Langton looked thoughtful. The two men did not press her with further comment or question, but as of one accord they made their way to the stream's edge.

The sky was sullen overhead; it held more than a hint of rain—it was a threat. The stream undoubtedly was higher, tawny with the discoloration of vegetation.

It ran swiftly, definitely, and disappeared into the maw of the lower cavern leaving little sponges of yellow foam clinging to the rocky portals.

"With luck," stated Grahame staring speculatively at the stream, "we have about a week on dry ground here. After that—"

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Frank begins, Monday, his greatest trial.

## OREGON INDUSTRY USING MORE MEN SURVEY REVEALS

SAN FRANCISCO, March 2.—(AP)—A survey of 120 Oregon industrial establishments showed employment considerably higher in all lines than a year ago. The survey was made by the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, and reported today.

The index of employment for the state was 99 in January—that is, for every 100 men employed in 1926, there were 99 at work in the first month of this year. This index compared with 49 a year ago, and 68 in December. Payrolls stood at 46, against 30 in January, 1933 and 45 in December.

There was a sharp decrease from the December level of employment. All groups except textiles shared in this decline. The greatest contraction was in the lumber industry.

Studies made by the bank's statistical staff to show net changes after allowing for seasonal influences produced the following set of employment indicators:

The seasonally adjusted index stood at 71 in January, with payrolls at 49. This compared with 77 for employment and 52 for payrolls in December, and with 59 for employment and 37 for payrolls in January last year.

The manufacture of hand-made rugs has become an industry of some importance at the mountain village of Mary Hill, N. C., and 100 mountaineers skilled in weaving have found permanent employment.

## COAST LUMBERMEN CALL CODE CONFAB

SEATTLE, March 2.—(AP)—Stockholders of the West Coast Lumbermen's association will hold their annual meeting at the Winthrop hotel, Tacoma, Wednesday, March 7. W. B. Greeley, association secretary-manager, announced today.

The entire lumber industry has been invited to attend and participate in a discussion on the lumber code.

Reports will be given by west coast representatives on the lumber code authority and by west coast lumbermen who have attended as delegates of various sessions of the authority and its committees.

Used car dealers in southern textile centers have enjoyed a thriving business since the textile code increased wages of cotton mill workers and gave them more leisure.

## GIVE IT A WHIRL by Hatlo



## THE MINUTE THAT SEEMS A YEAR

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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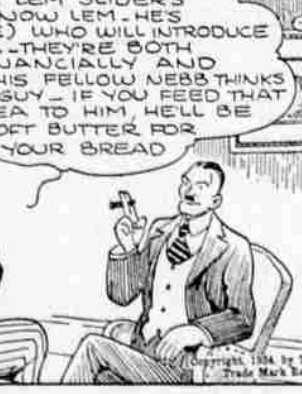
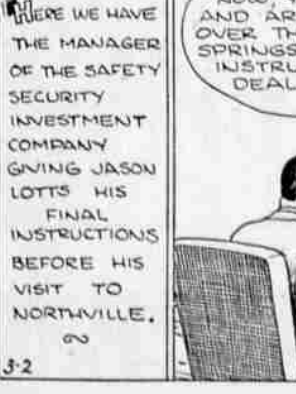
## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Gilbert M. Rankin—A. J. Larson!



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Misunderstood!



## THE NEBBS—Just Leave It To Me



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## SECRETARY STATE AIDE ASSUMES NEW DUTIES

SALEM, March 2.—(AP)—George H. Flagg, deputy secretary of state, appointed to that position by P. J. Stedman, secretary, effective March 1, arrived here from his home in the

Dallas today to assume his new duties. Flagg will succeed C. N. Laughridge who was given a three months leave of absence because of ill health.

Missouri cotton ginned in 1933 showed a decrease of 20 per cent from 1932.

## THE FLAVOR L-A-S-T-S

