

# BLOND GODDESS

A New Serial by Herbert Jensen

**SYNOPSIS:** Death by drowning seems to be the fate of a curiously assorted quartet caught in a valley in interior Pugetia that is rapidly filling with water. Frank Graham, the explorer, has taken the great chance of his life in order to save the others. Janice Kent, the movie star, whom Frank loves; Bill Langton, the aviator, crippled trying to get out of the valley, and the injured high priest of a savage tribe that has tried to kill the other three. Frank is floating down an underground river, trying to reach the coast.

boiling of muddy water marked its disappearance into the cenote. Graham repressed a slight shudder. He knew alligators: sometimes they attacked a man, but usually not. Although his knowledge was practical and jungle-bred and did not conform to popular belief, nevertheless the sight of the reptiles always gave him that avulsive sensation of skin crawling upon his back.

## Chapter 43 DARK HORROR

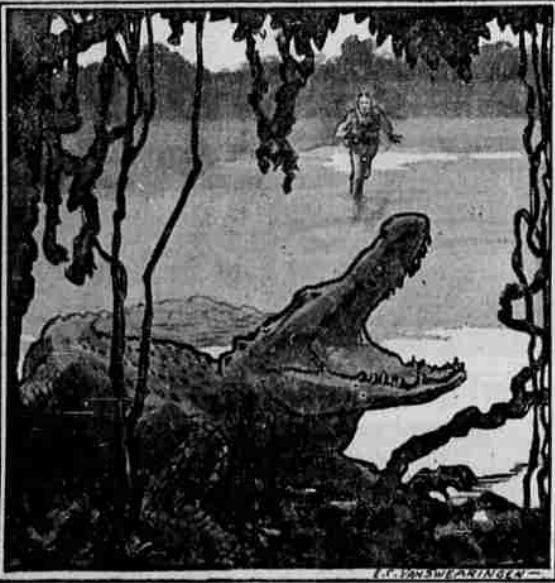
DESPITE himself, Frank's teeth began to chatter. He had estimated eight to ten hours immersion; would his resistance bear it? Then suddenly the phosphorescent glow disappeared. The water seemed quieter; then apparently the current became a scarcely perceived flow.

He touched the side-wall. His senses had not deceived him. The current had indeed diminished. A sudden fear contracted his heart. He believed that he was at least halfway to the coast—perhaps a little more. Despite the probable inaccuracy of his estimate of time elapsed, he was sure that he had been adrift at least five hours.

It was then that he realized that it was raining. Raining with the insistent steady downpour that told him that the rainy season was indeed upon them. It would be only a matter of days now—perhaps hours—before the caverns and cenotes would be flooded.

He looked about him. The dim jungle pressed upon him from all sides. Only vaguely could he estimate the points of the compass. Swiftly he analyzed the alternatives confronting him.

He could attempt a return to Janice and Billy. But even with compass, supplies, machete, and firearms it would take him days to reach them even supposing he might find their cenote valley readily—a chance as remote as finding the proverbial needle.



Alligator!

Supposing that from this point on the current flowed sluggishly! A chill that was not from the water swept him.

As he splashed forward, hoping to assist with the effort his down stream progress, he began to be aware that ahead of him there glowed a light that was not the greenish yellow of phosphorus.

He could not let himself believe that grayish dimness that suffused the blackness ahead of him was the end of the cavern. His disappointment, he knew, would be too keen. The clumsy life belt impeded his progress; yet he dared not dispense with it lest some weakness overcome him, or some mishap occur.

A vagrant eddy caught him and hurried him forward. He was whirled dizzying for an instant. He bumped against a buttress of rock projecting into the channel. The stream made a twist to the left; then to the right.

Suddenly he floated into day light! Sudden pain stabbed his eyes. He shut them tightly for an instant; then slit them against the unaccustomed light.

He was in a cenote. It was not so large as the one below the pyramid, nor so high-walled as the extensive one where he had left Langton and Janice Kent.

It seemed, however, deeper. The water flooded within it to a high level on the cliffs. At one edge the cliff had broken down; shrubbery and creepers grew upon it. With an ejaculation of hope he paddled toward it. Perhaps from here he could gain the level above.

Instantaneously the thought came to him that could he somehow get word to Billy and Janice that they could drift down to here on the raft and once above ground, could chop through the jungle to the coast.

HE splashed into the shallows. As he did so there was a sluggish movement in the tangle of water plants between him and the slope ahead. Golden, black-slitted eyes observed him; a wide tooth-fringed maw yawned.

Alligator! He stood still. The reptile did not attack. Instead it slid to one side and away from him. A

To attempt the coast on foot would doubtless end with more success—for himself. It might take him days to accomplish that; it would be too late, then, to rescue his companions supposing the rain continued and they were unable to get out of the valley.

A sudden thought struck him at this point: Langton hinted that the high-priest knew a way to get out. Perhaps the ahkin had been but bidding his time until he had but a crippled man and a helpless girl to put some sinister plan of his own into operation.

FRANK wiped the dripping rain from his face. He thought with a slight bitterness that it was a trick of life to give a man not two alternatives, but three or more. It increased the odds against his being right in the one he chose.

He looked down at the pool of the cenote. He saw the break in the wall from whence he had floated. On the other side he observed that the roof of the continuing cavern was a scant three feet above the water level.

Doubtless driftwood had dammed that exit causing the water in the pool to rise. However it would not be long before that dam would crack through and the whole system of the underground river would be gorged with a turmoil of floating brush, logs and debris.

He descended to the pool and waded in. He gave no thought to the reptiles that might be lurking in its depths, nor to the possibility that the cavern might be choked at the farther end in which case he would never see daylight again.

He had taken those chances deliberately that morning when he had left Janice; the situation had not been altered. He splashed toward the exit where the water swirled under the three foot arch.

Just before he made the plunge beneath the arch he saw the alligator again. He was lying on the bank, his malevolent little eyes fixed on Frank.

Then there was only darkness.

Frank falls tomorrow, into the maw of death.

## WEDDING GOWN TEA POSTER PRIZES ARE ANNOUNCED BY P-T A

Prizes in the poster contest, sponsored by the Parent-Teacher association in connection with the "Wedding Gown" tea held Saturday at the Colonial club, were awarded Louise Cowden in Junior high school and Wanita Edwards in the grade schools. The latter is in the sixth grade. Second prizes were also given Eva Hedrick, third grade, Washington, and Ruth Garlock, Junior high.

The posters were judged by Miss Louise Hollenback, supervisor of art in the Medford schools and prizes were awarded Saturday.

The committees arranging the tea extended their appreciation today to the many people of the valley, who supported the tea, and to the merchants, who displayed posters and towns, prior to the event, among them Adrienne's, Mann's and the Craterian theatre. Also to J. Verpe Shangle, who displayed pictures of pioneer brides and who photographed the models appearing at the tea Saturday, and rushed the films through to return the photographs to the tea guests before the close of the afternoon.

Brophy's jewelry store and Montgomery Ward's were also thanked for displays and the loan of articles used.

The owners of the beautiful dresses loaned for the event were also thanked for making the affair possible and the success, which it proved to be, with approximately 400 guests attending.

## SHIFTS MADE IN CCC PERSONNEL

With the formation of a headquarters detachment in the Medford CCC district, a number of the personnel are being transferred back to various camps, and some have joined the new detachment.

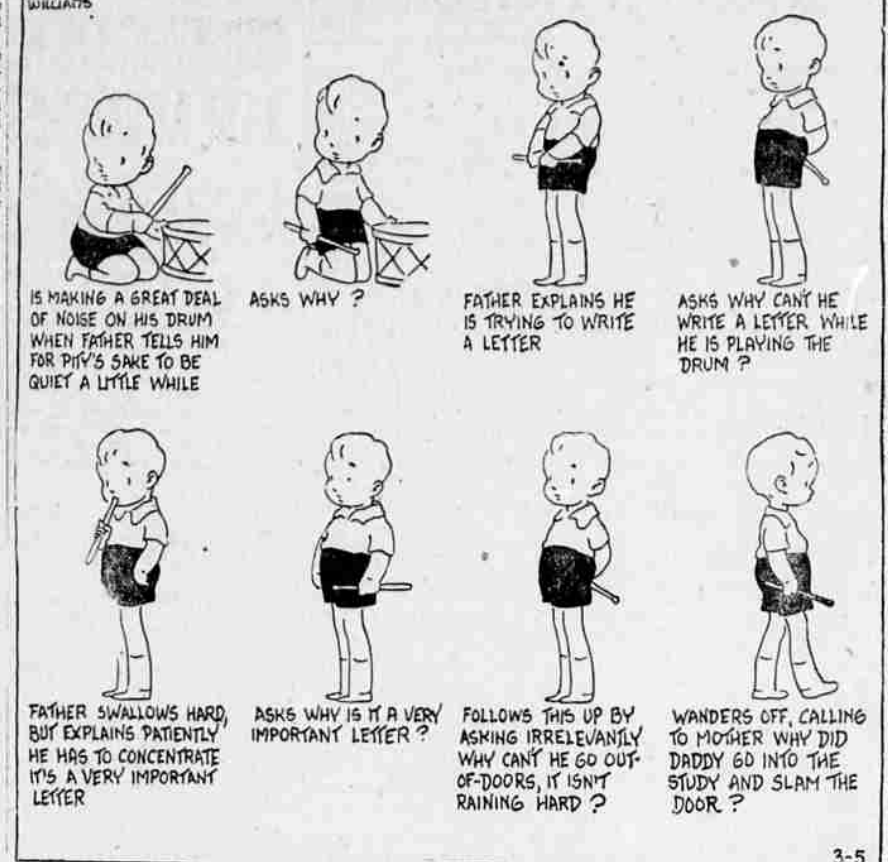
Returning to camps from headquarters were Leader Harold P. Prindle to Camp Carberry; Leader A. J. Tittinger to Lower Pistol river; Leader Bruce B. Bolden, Camp Cape Sebastian; Assistant Leader Richard H. Wilson to Camp Applegate.

Joining headquarters group were John T. Shurtliff from Camp Applegate; George E. Babb and Earl Killita from Camp Carberry creek; Ed C. Nelson of Camp Evans creek and Harvey Miller of Camp Kerby.

Higher prices for wool have made the economic outlook in New Zealand seem brighter now than at any time in the last three years.



## WHY? BY GLUYAS WILLIAMS



## SMATTER POP-



TAILSPIN TOMMY—Searing in Everything—but Love!



## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Ben's Great Anxiety



## THE NEBBS—The Fresh Guy



## BRINGING UP FATHER



## By C. M. Payne



By Hal Forrest



By Edwin Alger



By Sol Hess



By George McManus



**THE FLAVOR L-A-S-T-S**  
WRIGLEY'S SPEARMINT THE PERFECT GUM  
5¢ EVERYWHERE