

FRANTIC FESTIVAL

BY EDMUND FANCOTT

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ICE GETS WARM

CHAPTER VIII

MYRA set off down the road to the farm with Benny. Every now and then she cast an eye at Benny's wonderful clothes. They were magnificently new and colorful, perfect in every respect, and the only thing that really didn't fit in with them was Benny's face. Luckily a big cigar kept that part of him in a puffing cloud of smoke and eased the contrast.

Myra had hoped Ferdy would be with them but when she had asked Ferdy if he was coming, Ferdy had grinned and said he was going to ski to meet Ross and Fay.

"This is the life for me," said Benny, blowing a cloud of smoke. "Look at it, real snow, real Christmas trees growing all around you, just like it says on the Christmas cards. Did you ever see anything like it? Here it is, the day after Christmas, and I feel as if I'd like to stay until next Christmas."

Myra was thinking of the men who had called at the studio. "You're sure Beano's as dumb as he looks?" she asked.

"Sure!" Benny laughed. "Beano's dumb all right, dumb as they come unless he's got a brain, someone else's brain behind him all the time."

"And you're his brains?" "That's me, when I take the trouble. If there's dough in him, it's me that gets it out."

"I take it there's dough in him right now?" Myra turned to see the result of her shot in the dark. She saw a sudden swift suspicion cross Benny's face. He wondered if Beano had been blabbing about the diamonds.

"He's been talking, eh?" "Talking?" asked Myra innocently. "Sure he's been talking."

"About the snow . . . or about the ice?" Benny's words were cautious. Myra's face revealed nothing to him. It did not seem much to put two and two together. Something in the way he had said snow first and ice afterwards made her realize the emphasis was on the ice and she remembered it was also the word that gangsters always used for jewels.

She wondered. There was just a chance. If it were right, then the whole crazy pattern fitted into something that made sense. Beano up in Canada, placed by Benny in the store as a simple device to avoid suspicion. Beano running from the store, having seen and having been recognized by one of the men who had called at the studio. Then the anxiety to get up north and the men and the police chasing him. It fitted into a very uncomfortable thought. She liked Benny and hoped he hadn't got mixed up in any jewel theft.

Benny had no idea that Myra's shrewd suspicion had pieced so much together on so little but he was worried by the thought that Beano might have spilled too much.

That night after dinner Ferdy and his aunt organized the party for the boys from the farm. Everyone was kept busy except Leona, who showed a distressing tendency to hover around everyone else as if to help, but did nothing.

Beano every now and again turned to catch Leona's eyes and smile at her. Benny noted with concern that, when he did, she responded with a slow and languorous smile.

HE was watching for a chance to get hold of Leona when Beano wasn't around. Myra noted quite casually that there was a play between Leona and Beano. She knew she would get nothing from Leona but she was waiting for a chance to get hold of Beano when Benny wasn't looking. She liked to get things straight in her mind.

The opportunity came when Ferdy asked her to bring some things in from the kitchen and asked Beano to help her. Beano was full of willingness and Benny watched him go out and slipped into the seethe beside Leona.

"Look at it," he said, pointing at the Christmas tree. "Ain't that a beauty? Wait until those kids see that, wait until they get their eyes on that tree. That's the best one I seen yet. And Beano'll make a swell Santa. Great guy, Beano!" He looked at her face but it registered nothing that he could read.

"Say, I know a swell act, if we fixed you up as Queen of the May, no, that's not Christmas. Queen of the Fairies then, with a long nightdress and a stick with a star on it, boy, you'd look swell. Pity to hide them legs though. Say that's a peach of a leg you got there, look at that line." He stroked the line with his second finger delicately, with the other fingers and thumb spread upwards. A delicate tinge of scorn crossed Leona's lovely features. Beano had done the same thing but he had not called it such a common thing as a line.

"That's my facies medialis tibiae," she said. "You don't say!" said Benny. "Now ain't that cute. In show business a leg's a leg, same as in English, but have it your own way. You know with a leg like that and a pan like yours you could go places. Ever thought of going places?"

Leona was on her guard. One

had to be careful of going places.

Benny continued. "You know, if you wanted to come to New York I could get you in a line just like that."

He meant a chorus line and he was trying to play on Leona's vanity. But Beano had got there first with a few more diamonds. She had half of them by now, and Benny's suggestion of a line was very thin, and she was not sure what he meant.

"Nice guy, Beano," said Benny. "Like to get in a chorus?"

Leona shook her lovely head and the mass of blue black hair rippled with reflected lights.

"Better than being up in this country where it's all snow and . . . ice."

His eyes watched her and caught a flicker of warmth in them at the mention of ice. That was all he wanted to know. He slapped her leg affectionately.

"Well, let me know if you're interested."

"My father, he say no," murmured Leona with a faint smile that Benny didn't like at all. Some people who looked dumb weren't so dumb as they looked.

"It ain't your old man that I'm worried about," said Benny. He returned to the Christmas tree but he was watching for Beano's return. Maybe he could slip out and catch him by himself.

Meanwhile the telephone rang and Ferdy called to Myra to answer it.

Myra took up the receiver and then her face registered several varying expressions as she listened.

"No," she said. "No. No one of that name here."

Then she replaced the receiver. "Wrong number," she announced. But she doubted it. There was a McCluskey here and the voice at the other end had sounded like trouble in a big way, but if she

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson

INDIA,
THE LAND OF IMMENSE WEALTH AND HOME OF ONE-FIFTH OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION, WITH NATURAL RESOURCES RIVALING THOSE OF THE UNITED STATES, IS 90 PER CENT ILLITERATE! ONLY 39 PER CENT OF ITS PEOPLE ARE WELL NOURISHED, AND 80,000,000 OF THEM ARE PERPETUALLY HUNGRY.



QUOTING ODDS
COCKROACHES HAVE ONE GOOD TRAIT FROM THE HUMAN VIEWPOINT! THEY KILL BED BUGS.

THE DARKEST HOUR MAY BE IN THE DAYTIME! Says ENOCH DAVIES, Cook's Worrying.

NEXT: Why you shouldn't light matches in a blackout.

ECONOMIC CHIEF

HORIZONTAL

1. Pictured U. S. economic chief.
10. Insect.
11. Present time.
13. Extent.
14. Negative reply.
15. Neglects.
17. Over (poet.).
19. Table utensil.
21. Blot.
22. Doctrine.
23. Primly neat.
24. Compass point.
25. Proceed.
27. Guinea (abbr.).
28. Respond.
31. Exclamation.
34. Tiny.
35. United States of America (abbr.).
36. Tin.
38. Canvas shelter.
40. Cirrus (abbr.).
41. Symbol for sodium.
42. Part of "be."
44. Mineral rocks.
47. Pertaining to

Answer to Previous Puzzle

1. HINDUSTAN
2. INDIAN
3. SETTLED
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had fled she felt it was in the cause of peace and goodwill. What happened later was none of her concern.

(To Be Continued)

Job freezing seems to mean that if you try to switch from one war industry to another you're skating on thin ice.

Russians destroyed 68 German transport planes—the best ferry story we've heard in a long time.

You can still get all you want from the best filling station—your dining room.

Cheer up, girls, the road to thinness is just around the bend!



YOU DON'T NEED CASH AT SEARS-ROEBUCK PURCHASE COUPONS

You go to the Credit Office just once to get a book full of coupons . . . then you spend the coupons just like cash all through the store. There's no fuss or formality, no signing sales slips. Small down payment and monthly repayments. Usual carrying charge.

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HEROES ARE MADE--NOT BORN Out Our Way By J. R. Williams



Red Ryder



Little Orphan Annie



Freckles and His Friends



Wash Tubbs



Boots and Her Buddies



Alley Oop



JAKE WOULD PUT A 2-CENT STAMP ON AN ANVIL--Our Boarding House With Major Hoople



By Fred Harmon



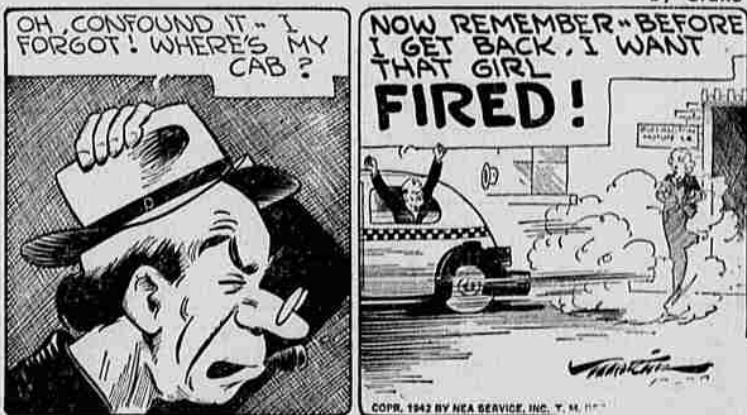
By Harold Gray



By Blosser



By Crane



By Martin



By V. T. Hamlin