

# FRANTIC FESTIVAL

BY EDMUND FANCOTT

COPYRIGHT, 1942, NEA SERVICE, INC.

**CHAPTER XII**  
 BEANO'S nerve was gone. Little things one after another had worn it down and now he panicked. He grabbed Leona's hand and pulled her through a side door. For a moment no one realized what was happening and then it dawned on the boys that Santa was fleeing before he had finished the job. Like a pack of hounds they were after him with a bedlam of noise.

After them poured Ferd, his aunt, Fay and Ross to herd them back. They were pouring outside without any of their coats and rubbers and they would catch their deaths of cold.

Beano swept Leona into his arms and dashed to the garage. The front door was shut behind the two men now inside and he reached the garage before the hounds emerged from the house. Dismay smote him as he rounded the corner. There, standing before the doors, was a farmer's sleigh with two horses. There was no time for maneuvers, there was only time for action.

He dropped Leona on to the pile of rugs in the sleigh, jumped in and snatched the whip.

As the pursuit piled around the corner they saw a wonderful and traditional sight, Santa Claus in his sleigh driving through the snow with the Queen of the Fairies with him. At the gallop it was spectacular and no one noticed the disgruntled appearance of the Queen of the Fairies or her disgruntled expression. The cold was biting through the nightgown and she was swaying in a struggle to disentangle the rugs amidst the frantic career of the horses and sleigh down the steep drive.

The pursuit stopped dead in its tracks. Even the most hard-bitten cynic among the boys was shaken to the core by the realization that Santa Claus was behaving as if he were real after all.

Ferd's aunt herded them back into the house. Only Fay and Ross were missing when the others came back to the unhappy Benny, who was now the man in the middle, detectives in the hallway and Beano gone, leaving him to face the music.

"Well, boys?" she asked. "Trouble?"

They nodded. "We'd have been here before but the car stuck in a drift way back and we had to rent a sleigh from a farmer."

"Looking for someone?"

"Fellow named McCluskey up here?"

"He's gone."

"Gone?"

"Yes," said Myra. "Listen." They listened. They heard the unmistakable jangle of sleigh bells tinkling furiously.

"That's your sleigh," she said calmly.

With one accord both men turned to dash to the door. Myra stopped them.

"Wait," she said. "Maybe I can help you. Maybe you don't want him."

"What do you mean?" said one of them.

"Diamonds interest you?" she asked.

"What do you know about it?" said the other suspiciously.

"Everything," she said. "I'm a bit of a detective myself and..." she whispered this, "... Mr. Morton, who owns this place, works for the R. C. M. P. Intelligence Department as a plain-clothes man, strictly between ourselves."

They were impressed but not convinced.

"Now listen," she said. "Do you want the ice or the man?"

"WERE from the insurance company. We want the diamonds. If we were in the States we'd take the man as well. But this is Canada and it'd be more trouble to get him out than he's worth."

The other man added his piece. "The diamonds are worth \$50,000. McCluskey's worth nothing."

"O. K. What about Benny Brien?"

"What about him?" said one man. "Don't know him. Only know this fellow left a mailing address care of Brien."

"O. K.," said Myra. "Bygones are bygones if you get the diamonds? Right?"

"You bet."

"Then come and meet the boys and don't say a word when you get a present."

She led them back to the room where the boys were seated. Benny seemed pale and slightly shrunk, but the two men took no notice of him.

Introductions were completed with whispered asides to Ferd and his aunt to leave it all to her and then Myra took charge of the proceedings from the ailing Benny, but she kept him in the sole of Santa Claus.

"Now, boys," said Myra. "Owing to the unexpected departure of Santa Claus to parts unknown we will ask Mr. Benny Brien to substitute and I'll substitute for the Queen of the Fairies. A bit of an anticlimax if you get the joke but if you get the presents it's all the same to you."

She began to pull parcels from the tree and hand them to the unsuspecting Benny. He read the names of the recipients and passed them over. Then Myra casually in the stream of presents leaned down at the base of the tree and took a small red parcel.

"Whv," she said. "If this isn't

lucky. We thought our two guests were going to be disappointed but here I find a little gift they can share between them."

She passed it to Benny who felt it, read the inscription and gulped. It read, exactly like the other, "To Leona, with love from you know who." He fingered it nervously, feeling the unmistakable hardness of the diamonds.

He passed it to the two detectives as though it were red hot. One of them took it, pressed it, and nodded to the other and passed it over to him. The other felt it also and tucked it in his pocket.

A feeling of great relief suddenly came over Benny.

He was voluble now, the words pouring out in a hurried stream. "I use to handle all McCluskey's bookings when he was in the big time wrestling. He was good then, but he fell to pieces. Used to

come to me to help him, and I would, just for old times sake and to keep him straight. But who'd have thought he'd do a thing like that. I wouldn't have touched him if I'd known he was in on any funny business."

Benny was all smiles now. "Well, it's a good job I made him leave a forwarding address at my place and I hope you didn't bust up anything when you went through my office. Still, the reward will fix that up. They put a high reward on ice like that, and seeing it was me that put you boys on the right track I guess you'll be seeing I get fixed up all right. What was that? There ain't no reward? Well what do you think of that? That's life. That's justice. That's..." Benny noticed the menace in the detectives' eyes. "All right. All right. Don't get tough," he finished, lamely.

(To Be Continued)

SACRAMENTO, Calif.—It's to save thinning automobile tires explained Police Chief Alex McAllister.

He ordered police cars to carry dustpans and brooms. The officers will sweep up all the broken glass they see.

## THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



**THE AEPYORNIS, EXTINCT BIRD GIANT OF MADAGASCAR, LAID EGGS THAT HAD A CAPACITY OF 10 1/2 QUARTS.**

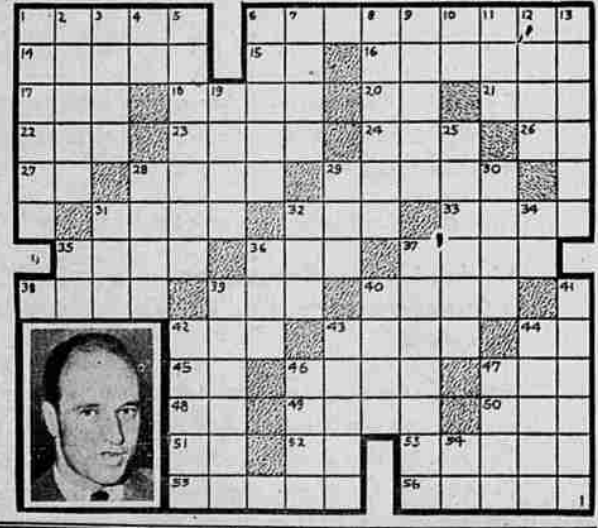
**THE SOLOMON ISLANDS WERE NAMED AFTER KING SOLOMON, BECAUSE OF THE NATURAL RICHES THEY WERE BELIEVED TO CONTAIN.**

**BOOK ENDS ARE USED AT THE SIDES," Says C. E. WICKES, Memphis, Tennessee.**

Next: Death in the Antarctic.

## PRESIDENT'S FIGHTING SON

- HORIZONTAL**
- 1,6 Pictured son of U. S. President.
  - 14 Angry.
  - 15 Epistle (abbr.).
  - 16 Wander.
  - 17 Beverage.
  - 18 Content with.
  - 20 Court (abbr.).
  - 21 Atmosphere.
  - 22 Merry.
  - 23 Legal claim.
  - 24 Steal.
  - 26 District Attorney (abbr.).
  - 27 Half an em.
  - 28 Saturated.
  - 29 Railroad station.
  - 31 Cushions.
  - 32 Adapted.
  - 33 Hue.
  - 35 Alms.
  - 36 Vigor (colloq.).
  - 37 Fun.
  - 38 Labor.
  - 39 Remote.
  - 40 Forfeiture.
  - 42 Corpulent.
- ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE**
- BARBARAHUTTON  
 AARATPLEASE  
 EVERLAST  
 FINEARTS  
 REBIDIGRESSIT  
 GARYGRANTITALL  
 LIERNETOTALS  
 PENNIESPIROITS  
 ERRENIS  
 AISESEC  
 STONE  
 STREN  
 ALERT
- VERTICAL**
- 11 Age.
  - 12 Placed.
  - 13 Oppressor.
  - 19 Lubricants.
  - 25 Plant science.
  - 28 Autumn.
  - 29 Obscure.
  - 30 Particular period.
  - 31 Hawaiian food.
  - 32 Evergreen tree.
  - 34 Compass point.
  - 35 Accomplish.
  - 36 Huge tub.
  - 37 He took part in the Islands raid.
  - 39 His — is U. S. President.
  - 40 Level.
  - 41 He is a U. S. — officer.
  - 42 Narrow sea inlet.
  - 43 Fragrance.
  - 44 Energy.
  - 46 First man.
  - 47 Bird.
  - 10 "Green Mountain State" of surprise.



**Clearance Boys' Suits**  
 A Real Chance to Save  
 Boys' Dark Suits - Sizes 4 to 7—Now  
**\$4.49 to \$5.98**  
**MONTGOMERY WARD**

