

# THE DANCING MASTER

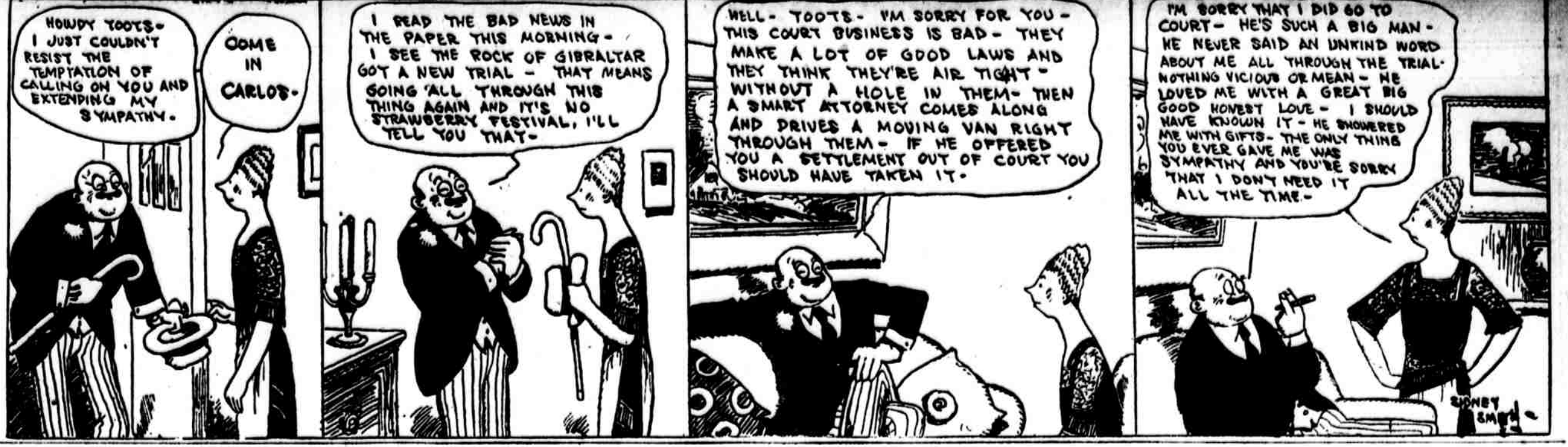
By RUBY AYRES  
Author of "The Phantom Lover," "A Bachelor Husband," "The One Unwanted," etc.

**WHO IN THE STORY**  
**MARY CONYER**, a demure girl, beautiful in spite of her plainness, who, on the death of her father, goes to London to make her living by dancing. She falls in love with Royston.  
**ROYSTON**, a handsome young playboy, who, after the war, turns to dancing to make a living. He had been trained to no profession. In a war romance he has developed into a flashy, sort-of-a-dancer, with whom he cannot live. He also loves him and is jealous of Elizabeth.  
**MRS. MASON**, Elizabeth's snobbish mother, who loves Royston.  
**FARMER**, a rich man about whom she proposes to Elizabeth and whom she leaves with.  
**SENESTIA**, a noted ballet dancer.  
**NEETA**, a country lad, in love with Elizabeth.

"I am your niece," she added hotly, and then quite suddenly she broke down into a storm of tears.  
 Royston walked to the door and opened it; his face was ugly in its anger.  
 "Please go," he said; and without another word Mrs. Mason swept from the room.  
 She was sobbing broken-heartedly, her face hidden on her arms. "Elizabeth," he said hoarsely, "don't cry. I'll do it. It breaks my heart."  
 She seemed not to hear, and he took a quick step toward her. "Elizabeth," she whispered, "I raised her head and for a moment looked at him with tear-drenched eyes.  
 "Oh, go away—please go away!" she whispered, and Royston obeyed without another word.  
 As soon as the door closed Elizabeth rose to her feet and began walking up and down, striving hard for composure.  
 "You fool! You silly little fool!" she kept saying to herself. "Stop crying! Stop crying this minute."  
 She was ashamed of her tears, ashamed that she should have broken down in front of Royston.  
 "Men hate scenes," so Neeta had once said with her cheap cynicism; if "it" went on long enough, and they will frighten them away.  
 It terrified Elizabeth to recall those words, and when presently one of the maids came into the room with some coffee she plucked up sufficient courage to ask if she could lend her some powder. She had not used such a thing half a dozen times in her life, and she remembered how freely Neeta always used it after tears.  
 "I'll get some from the cloak room, miss," the girl said. She looked sympathetically at Elizabeth's wet face. When she came back she said kindly, "Your dance was beautiful, miss; better than Miss Stacey's. I watched you from the balcony."  
 Elizabeth dashed with pleasure. "Did you? I am glad you liked it," she said. She powdered the tearstains vigorously away. "Do I look as if I've been crying?" she asked anxiously. "Not that you would notice, miss," the maid answered not quite truthfully.  
 Elizabeth drank her coffee and felt better; she even managed to greet Royston with a smile when he returned.  
 He looked into the room with some surprise. "What a lovely room," he said. "I don't think you would notice, miss," the maid answered not quite truthfully.  
 Elizabeth drank her coffee and felt better; she even managed to greet Royston with a smile when he returned.

"I don't think I'll ever be happy," she tried not to think of it, but it beat all about her like wings in darkness.  
 It seemed a long time before Royston returned. He was carrying his overcoat and hat.  
 "I've got a taxi," he said. "Will you come?"  
 Elizabeth looked at him silently, and as they crossed the hall Neil Farmer came eagerly toward her.  
 "Are you too tired to say good-night to me?" he asked. "I cannot tell you how much I have enjoyed your dancing with me tonight."  
 Elizabeth answered at random. She did not care if she never saw him again. In the middle of a flattering speech she turned and almost ran from him.  
 She gave a deep sigh of relief as she and Royston drove away.  
 "Glad it's over," he asked casually.  
 He leaned forward and let down the window, then apologized and pulled it up again jerkily.  
 "There's a cold wind, too cold for you."  
 Elizabeth made no answer.  
 Presently, "Am I to go to lunch with Mr. Farmer tomorrow?" she asked.  
 "I believe he has arranged something of the sort with Mrs. Senestia," Royston answered.  
 "And you—are you coming, too?" he asked.  
 He shook his head. "I am afraid not; I have a busy day before me. By the way—he looked at her with a strained little smile—"I have had lots of flattering invitations for you to the success of the great." His voice was sarcastic.  
 "To dance with you?" Elizabeth asked breathlessly.  
 "I suppose so; I had to refuse them, of course."  
 Elizabeth fell again.  
 To Elizabeth's overstrung imagination the cab seemed to be racing them homeward; there was so much she wanted to say; and yet no words would come. At last, when she knew they were quite close to Neeta's rooms, she sat up stiffly and looked at the man beside her.  
 "I want to tell you how—how sorry I am for—my aunt's rudeness to you this evening, Mr. Royston."  
 "That's all right, it was nothing! I took it for what it was worth. It only worried me for your sake," Elizabeth went on as if she had not heard him. "That whatever she or any one ever says about you, I shan't ever believe it."  
 He laughed, rather a rough sort of laugh.  
 "I am afraid it never worries me much what people say or think about me; most people, that is." He leaned forward, peering out into the darkness. "We must be nearly home."  
 His voice sounded as if he were anxious for the drive to end, and Elizabeth shrank back in her corner.  
 Then suddenly his hand sought hers in a close, strong pressure.  
 "I wish you the best of everything; you know that, don't you?" he said. "I hope that your life will be filled with happiness and success."  
 Elizabeth's hand quivered beneath his.  
 "I may have success, perhaps," she said uncertainly. "But—somehow, I don't think I shall ever be very happy."  
 He looked at her for a moment, then he said, "Some day, perhaps, you will be only too anxious to admit

## THE GUMPS—The Console



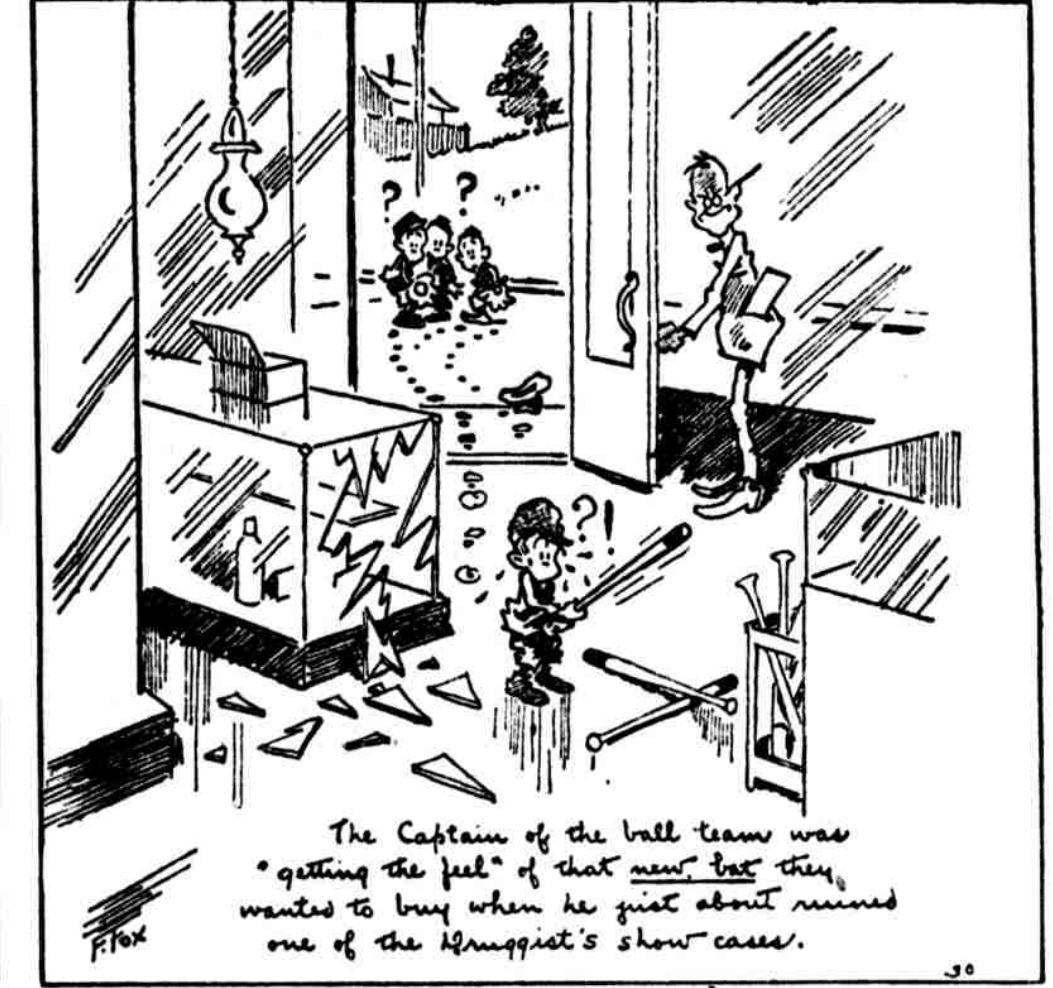
## SOMEBODY'S STENOG—It's to Be in June



## The Young Lady Across the Way



## PATHTIC FIGURES



## SCHOOL DAYS



## PETEY—Bee-Have Yourself



## GASOLINE ALLEY—And Her Name Is Mrs. Blossom



"I shall stay with you," she said. Mrs. Mason flushed crimson. "You are an abandoned girl," she cried. "This man is married, and I am not to be taken home."  
 "I must ask you to go," he said in voice of steel.  
 Mrs. Mason looked at Elizabeth. "And when you find what his pronouns are worth don't come crying to me," she said insultingly. "And furthermore, I forbid you—I absolutely forbid you—to tell any one that I have a misfortune to be related to you."  
 Elizabeth's cheeks flamed.  
 "I am not so proud of it that I want one to know," she said breathlessly. She glanced at Royston and gained courage from the hard look of his face. "Some day, perhaps, you will be only too anxious to admit

Continued Tomorrow