

MAGGIE WAS A LADY

By Ruel McDaniel and John H. Latham

POP GLEASON is the mild-mannered old gent who owns and manages the Sanderson Shebas, and right now he has more worries than a bubble-dancer at a cigar-makers' convention.

We are snagging Java in Danny's Cafe while I try to worm out a story that folks will read, instead of the taffy-drivel that Jimmy Fandler, Pop's assistant manager and press agent, tries to hand out, and I see at a glance that both Pop and Jimmy are in the dumps up to their ears.

"Here's the pay-off," Pop mumbles finally, lifting the visor of his old baseball cap up from his mild blue eyes and bushy white brows. "My regular first baseman has been benched for some time now and is laid up in the hospital with a case of twins. But that ain't enough trouble. Oh, no! Bubbles Benson, my regular catcher, is throwing a fit because she swears she caught Rosita Pete Patterson, the best shortstop I ever owned, making passes at her husband.

"And to top it off," Pop moans, "the crucial game of the remainder of the season—between me and the Cherokee Chicks—comes up tomorrow and Lita Hay, the Blonde Bomber from Bastrop, as you have seen fit to tag her, has gone as sour as a dill-pickle."

"Managing a farm of fillies ain't so bad," I tell him brightly. "You know danged well Pop's got to win this game against the Cherokee Chicks to get into the series play-off; and if he don't win the play-off and the pennant—well, not only will it break Pop to pay off the gals but it may mean his finish. If he wins, he not only makes a fat pot from his part of the gate in the final games, but he gets that two grand pennant money." That's good-looking Jimmy's contribution to the groanin' department.

THE saucer that sails past Pop's head seems oddly out of place in a peaceful beanyery like Danny's Cafe. I look up then and see a gangling, freckle-nosed blonde with skinny gams and a front tooth missing. She's standing up behind the counter near the front of the cafe, and she's tossing dishes the length of the joint through a little cubby-hole into the kitchen, where the dishwasher catches them.

"No need bein' scared, Mister," the gal remarks, still tossing the crockery. "I ain't missed that hole but once in 11 months. That time, I laid a traveling salesman out cold."

"Young lady," Pop says with dignified politeness, "What is your name?"

The girl looked at him with a hard glint in her eyes. "I don't give my name to strange fellers," she says pointedly, "especially old men."

Pop choked on his coffee. "But you got me wrong, young woman. You see, I'm Pop Gleason. I own the Sanderson Shebas—the girl baseball team."

The girl relented slightly. "Well, I'm Maggie Suggs from

Goose Creek. And let me tell you something, mister, if you think for a minute I'm going to trot around in public with less than a good set of harness on, you're loco. It ain't decent. Them girls of yours are hussies!"

Pop is despairing by now. So Jimmy takes a hand. His voice is as soothing to troubled fillies as his face. He's ironed out plenty rough spots before for Pop.

"Did you ever play baseball, Maggie?" he asks, friendly-like. She grinned and blushed. "Yes, sir," she said, "I used to play with the boys back home. That's how I lost my tooth."

"How would you like to make \$50 a week?"

Maggie misses a chew on her gum, then she puts her tongue in one cheek as if meditating. "Well, lemme see. Danny pays me \$8 and I get my meals free. You offering meals, too?"

"No; no meals," Jimmy says. "Then I better stay with Danny," Maggie decides, and goes on mopping the counter.

Pop takes up the argument, but he doesn't get anywhere. Finally he pulls the old baseball cap down over his left eye and stalks out, wearing an air of utter exasperation. Jimmy and I follow. Jimmy halts at the door and flashes a farewell smile; and the last time I see Maggie, she's leaning her elbows on the counter and staring after Jimmy.

For no reason, I picture Maggie in shorts, and shudder.

NEXT day, there's a regular carnival crowd at Cherokee Park. The girls have attracted good crowds generally all over the circuit, and this being a crucial game, it looks like about everybody turns out.

As sports editors of the Sanderson Sun, I naturally go up to the press box and sit down by Mike Goldbaum, Bronx-voiced announcer for Station KTSX, and by the end of the third inning, Mike's having a time trying to make it sound like a real ball game.

By the end of the fifth inning, the Chicks are leading 8 to 0, and the Cherokee rooters are yelling for more. I can see poor old Pop over in the Sanderson dugout, holding his face in his hands and weeping back and forth. At this point, even Ted Husing couldn't make it sound like a contest, but Mike was doing his best. The Sheba rooters are fast turning to looters.

"Last half of the sixth," Mike tells his air audience. "and Lita, the Blonde Bomber, looks like she might be headed back to Bastrop—permanently. She tosses. It's wide. WOW! Carrot-Top Ramsey swung. It's a homer, folks! It's the third homer hit off the Blonde Bomber this afternoon!"

Mike chokes on a coke. "Ye gods!" he mutters, right into the microphone. I groan a little myself, on account of feeling so sorry for Pop. I look for Jimmy again and I still can't see him anywhere. I silently cuss him for leaving Pop at a time like this.

The Sanderson Shebas come up to bat, but you can see their hearts aren't in the game any longer. Except for a scratch hit by Minnie-the-Moocher Micks, the Shebas don't get to first. The sixth ends with the Shebas trail-



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ing 9-0. The old man is in a jam. Pop hasn't any relief pitcher, so Lita goes back to the box and the first Chick batter taps her for a single. The crowd roars louder, and over in the dugout I see Pop Gleason ringing his cap like it was a wet dishrag. I'm trying to figure out a headline for my sports page that will let Pop down as easy as possible.

THEN suddenly I hear Mike gasp. "Wow!" he yells. "Something is happening, folks. Let me rub my eyes. I must be seeing things! Jimmy Fandler, assistant manager of the Sanderson Shebas, is leading something onto the field that looks like a cross between an old maid and a careerer. Whatever it is Jimmy's leading has on baggy red bloomers. Yes, I said RED BLOOMERS!"

I have a strange feeling at the bottom of my vest. Even at this distance, I can see that the apparition has a front tooth missing and it is chewing gum.

Yep, it's Maggie Suggs, all right. Jimmy motions Lita out of the box and escorts Maggie to the spot. He holds up his hat for attention. "Folks!" he bawls, "Maggie Suggs pitching for Lita Hay."

The roar of the crowd drowns his further words. "Where'd you get the flannels, girlie?" several men yell.

Maggie just stands there, with one leg resting and chewing her gum, till the crowd runs out of wind. "Play ball!" the umpire

yells. Slugger Sue Smith is first up for the Cherokee Chicks.

Maggie coolly takes Slugger Sue's measure. She slowly winds up and she lifts one red-bloomered leg above her head. Everything suddenly goes silent. You could nearly hear a peanut rattle. Maggie's leg suddenly drops, and you can almost hear the ball sizzle across the plate. Slugger Sue just stands there. The grin is off her face.

"Strike one!" Sue tries at the next one, but if it had been a crate of oranges, she'd still have missed it. The gal in bloomers has more on the ball than Bob Feller and more backfield motion than Notre Dame. By the time she strikes out Slugger Sue, Mike is blubbering into my hat instead of the microphone.

Then Maggie, warming up to the game, sits down in the box and pulls off her shoes. She spits on her hands, rubs them in the snuff-colored dust, stands and works her toes up and down in the silt.

Roadhouse Ruth is up now, and Maggie hitches at her red bloomers and eyes Roadhouse. The crowd goes silent again, and boos and insults have changed to a sort of hushed wonder. Maggie winds up into a contortion that would be the envy of a circus performer, unlimbers and shoots a vast curve that even the catcher can't snag. Roadhouse Ruth just stands there, petrified.

She finally lays down the timber without even hitting at

the ball, and the Shebas come to bat.

Maggie's performance has electrified the Shebas. Bubbles Benson, first up, gets a single. Right after that, Tequila Resita Peterson walks. Then Maggie strolls up to the plate.

SHE spits on her hands, rubs 'em in the dust and squares off like a wrestler. There is an audible snicker from the snoot section. The first one is a little high and Maggie just stands there. The second one is a little high, but Maggie manages to connect. It sails out of the park, and they never do find the pellet.

The Chicks never reach first again that day, and the Shebas gradually pile up enough runs to win 14-0. A hysterical mob overturns the diamond and carries Maggie, bloomers and all, off the field.

After the game, I'm sitting in Danny's Cafe wrapping myself around some ham and eggs and Maggie eases up and sits on the stool next to me. She gives me a scared grin and says, "Mister Chizzleton, you're a newspaper feller and know all the answers. I need your advice."

I first start to laugh; but I see how serious her face is, so I say, "Oke, Maggie. What's the beef?"

She looks embarrassed. "It's Jimmy, Mr. Chizzleton. I got it bad. I can't sleep; I don't want to eat even. The only reason I agreed to play ball in the first place was for him. Now I guess because I wore them red bloom-

ers he thinks I'm an old-fashioned droop." She looks up in my eyes, pleading-like. "What can I do, Mister Chizzleton, to win him?"

Well, it floors me. I know how slick Jimmy Fandler is with the women, and I can't help feeling sorry for Maggie. Naturally, I figure Jimmy's put on the old salve to get Maggie to pitch and save Pop and the Shebas, and Maggie's fallen for it. I can see very plain why Jimmy couldn't be interested in Maggie beyond a straight business deal.

"Maggie," I tell her, straight from the shoulder, "you're just a plain skinny kid with freckles on your nose and a tooth missing. A lot of glamor gals have their eyes on Jimmy. The way things stand, I think you ought to just forget him."

"But I tried that, Mister Chizzleton. It won't work. He bobs up in my mind all the time."

"Well," I say, "your chassis ain't bad; and a dentist might be able to fill that gap in your teeth. Go to a beauty shop and buy the works. Get you some rouge and lipstick and learn how to apply them. Then read up on the methods of Scarlett O'Hara and Madame Du Barry. I don't know. Stranger things have happened."

"Mr. Chizzleton," she bubbles, "you're the berries!" She plants a sudden kiss on my pan and vanishes.

POP rests Maggie for a couple of days and then pitches her against the Clairmont Canaries. The results are substantially the same. Maggie breezes through 'em like a Kansas norther. Then Pop, sure of a spot in the play-off for the pennant, tells Maggie to take it easy till the play-off. I go on back to Sanderson and wait for the series.

All the papers on the circuit have given Maggie nearly as big a play as I have, and there's a record turnout at Sanderson Park for the first of the three-game series. I'm in the press-box with Mike Goldbaum and he is describing the crowd as the players warm up.

"The Sanderson Shebas are taking the field, folks," Mike says. "As yet, we can't spot the Shebas' star twirler, Maggie Suggs. Wait a minute, folks. There's a strange, tall, good-looking blonde walking out on the mound. It's—WOW!"

I take a gander at this nifty bit of baggage in silken shorts, walking across the diamond like a mink-coat model, with her nose a-tit, and finally I figure it out as Maggie.

For reasons that still puzzle me, Maggie's gams are no longer skinny. They're pleasingly slender and shapely, with the curves in just the right places. She ain't freckle-nosed any more, and a blamed good dentist has supplied that missing molar and given her a very kissable smile.

I take a quick gander at the dugout and Jimmy's jaw is sagging like a broken farm gate. About this time the crowd recognizes Maggie and greets her with an approving roar that jars the foundations of the grandstand. Maggie waves with a slight hauteur, then eyes the first batter with cold disapproval.

A chill takes charge of my vertebrae. Instead of winding up the way she did when she wore the red bloomers, Maggie strikes a glamorous pose and looks over an easy one that a blind woman could have hit with a knitting needle. The batter

shoves it out of the park. Maggie looks surprised. Rose of San Antonio comes up next, and Maggie strikes that pose again. Rose hits for a single. Well, the slaughter goes on till the end of the seventh. The Shebas are hitting and bringing in the runs, but not enough. The Cherokee Chicks are about out of wind, they trot around the bags so much.

I keep looking over at Pop and I can see he's in terrible agony. It looked like the pennant and that two grand were in the bag—and now Maggie goes softie on him. Pangs of guilt begin gnawing at me, and finally I can't stand it any longer. I talked Maggie into this transformation, and now it's up to me to save the day for Pop Gleason if possible.

I rush down to the dugout and pull Maggie off to one side. "Look here, girlie," I say, dead-serious. "You're wonderful in that new get-up, and I can see you got Jimmy bleary-eyed. But if you lose this ball game, you practically ruin poor old Pop and your Jimmy'll be out of a job next year."

"Well, Mister Chizzleton, I just done what you said," Maggie yammered, her wide blue eyes turned up at me. "And Jimmy sure has been nice to me since I got fixed up."

"But," I plead, "if you lose this game and the series, and cost Jimmy his job, he might change his ideas about you. Now you put on the red bloomers, forget this glamor-puss business for the rest of the game and get out there and pitch. I'll take care of Jimmy for you!"

WELL, you can read the results of that game and the series in the records. Maggie wins that game and the third, to clinch the pennant and the two grand. Jimmy kisses her right out there on the field, red flannels and all. Pop pays her a \$500 bonus and the team is held practically intact for the next season.

I do so well reporting the series that the Star-Telegram gives me a job as copy-reader. I buckle down on my new-fangled position and don't hear much from Sanderson all winter. I get my vacation that summer at the peak of the baseball season, so I can visit with Pop and watch the Shebas in action.

The Shebas are playing the Frankston Felines at Sanderson the day I arrive and I'm just in time to go over to the dugout with Pop and Jimmy. Maggie, still wearing those red bloomers or a reasonable facsimile.

I soon get the idea that Maggie's not what she used to be. She ain't got the form, and she's gazing around with an angelic smile on her lips and paying a mighty little attention to the game. The Felines knock her all over the park, and finally Pop gives her the old bye-bye as Fancy Fanny Prentice gets the nod for relief.

"I can't get it," I remark, shaking my head. "It's been going on that way for two weeks," Pop moans. "Thanks to my master-mind, Jimmy!"

I'm thinking about the crush Maggie had on Jimmy last summer. So I say to Jimmy, trying to be smart, "Why don't you marry the girl?"

Pop Gleason spat. "That's the trouble!" he groaned. "He has. And now she's knitting little things!"

Yesterday's Headliners 1906

IN 1906 MARGARET ANGLIN and HENRY MILLER SUPERBLY ACTED "THE GREAT DIVIDE," A DRAMA OF THE SOUTHWEST...



MISS RUTH SEDENIS, ONE OF THE MOST CHARMING DANCERS ON THE AMERICAN STAGE, IS DELIGHTING HER AUDIENCES WITH HER "HINDOO DANCES," INCLUDING "THE SPIRIT OF NCEASE" AND "THE SNAKE CHARMER"...



IN 1906 UPTON SINCLAIR, A YOUNG WRITER OF REALISTIC LITERATURE ON EXPERIMENTAL SOCIALISM, INTRODUCED A NOVEL, "THE JUNGLE," WHICH CAUSED THE READING PUBLIC TO PAY STARTLED ATTENTION TO THE MEAT PACKING INDUSTRY OF OUR COUNTRY...



IN 1906 HENRY MILLER...

SONG-HITS IN 1906... RUFUS RAGUS JOHNSON BROWN, WHAT YOU GOIN' TO DO WHEN THE RENT COMES AROUND? "THE BIRD ON NELLIE'S HAT"

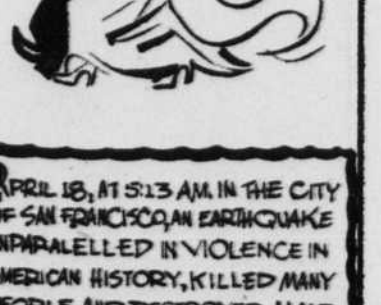


in the HEADLINE-1906

FEB. 17, LITERALLY WORLD-WIDE ATTENTION WAS FOCUSED UPON THE WEDDING OF ALICE LEE ROOSEVELT, ELDEST DAUGHTER OF PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT, TO NICHOLAS LONGWORTH, CONGRESSMAN FROM CINCINNATI, OHIO...



APRIL 18, AT 5:13 AM IN THE CITY OF SAN FRANCISCO AN EARTHQUAKE UNPARALLELED IN VIOLENCE IN AMERICAN HISTORY, KILLED MANY PEOPLE AND DESTROYED HALF OF THE CITY...



NOV. 15, PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT VISITED THE CITY OF PANAMA, THE FIRST OCCASION OF AN AMERICAN PRESIDENT SETTING FOOT ON FOREIGN SOIL...

