

# THE DESERT MOON MYSTERY BY KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

He had, as I guess I've signified, a heap more than his share of masculine good looks. Out side of hat and collar advertisements, I don't know that I've ever seen even pictures of men that were any better looking than John was. The way he lived, and dressed, and rode, made him sort of romantic, too, I suppose. A Santa Fe man, who met him once when he was taking cattle back east for Sam, offered him a surprising salary to come to the Grand Canyon and live around there, in order to impress and delight the eastern lady tourists. John was simple-hearted, and slow spoken; but I guess most women don't mind that in men. Too, he was a good boy, all the way through. And, of course, he had plenty of money, now, and would have a million or more, not counting the ranch, when Sam died.

Gaby made no bones about her feelings for John. I did not do as John did, and set all of her open advances toward him down to sister-in-lawly affection. Still, I didn't believe that she really thought she was in love with John, until I hid in the clothes-closet that evening and heard Danny and her talking together.

The closet arrangement was a fortunate one for my purposes. It was between the girl's rooms, with heavily curtained doorways leading into each room, and a door at the end with a transom for ventilation, leading into the hall. This closet had originally been a part of the wall, going down between the two rooms. But, in 1912, when Sam had had the ranch-house remodeled, inside, they had turned the closet spaces for these rooms into two bath-rooms, necessitating the present arrangement of a double closet.

The dozens of gowns and frocks—nothing so ordinary as mere dresses—that the girls had brought with them, hanging on padded hangers from the long rods, made as good a hiding place as anyone could ask for; especially, since I always took care to unsewer the light globe in the closet when I went in, so that it seemed to be all right, but would not light when the wall switches were pressed.

I had gone in there so many evenings, during the past three weeks, and had heard nothing for my pains that it was a wonder I had decided to try it again that evening. It was not luck, though. Gaby's actions, that evening, toward John had been downright disgusting, sitting on the arm of his chair, and trying to coax him out of the house to see the mountains by moonlight, and hanging herself around his neck when they danced together, and so on—that I had a notion Danny might have a little conversation ready for her when she could get her alone.

I had waited about ten minutes when I heard the door of Gaby's room open. I was so tickled I all but squealed, when I heard that Danny had come in with her, instead of going on down the hall to her own room. Evidently they had begun their conversation in the hall, for Gaby's first words were, "Jealous, by dear Dan?"

"I don't know. But it is silly for you to act as you do. John is in love with me."

"Since you are so certain of that, why do you object to my little efforts?"

"I've told you. Because they are silly. And—not kind. Why should you try to take him away from me, when you don't want him yourself?"

"Are you sure of that, too?"

"Yes, I am. His good looks fascinate you, and so does his sophistication. You'd like

the fortune he is to inherit. But you would never be satisfied to marry him and live right here for the remainder of your life."

"No, I would not. I'd marry him, if he didn't have a penny—it is you who are always thinking about his fortune—but I wouldn't allow him to bury himself, and his beauty, and charm in this God-forsaken country. I'd get him out into the world, and have him take his place there. With his ability and energy, and with me to help him, what a place it might be! For you to have him is—waste. Waste. You don't know anything about love. You'll never learn. I—tell you I can't bear it. It isn't fair—" She began to cry, hollow sounding sobs, that seemed to catch in her throat and wrench free from it.

"Gaby, Gaby, dear. Please don't. I'm sorry—"

"Waste. Waste. Waste. You are not sorry. Don't touch me!"

"I am sorry, Gaby. But what can I do? I couldn't give John to you, if I wished to."

"You could give me a chance."

"No, I couldn't."

"You are a coward."

"Perhaps, I love him. He means to me, too, peace, and security, and decent living—the things I want most for my life. Why should I risk it all?"

"Coward! Coward! Peace and security! He means life to me. All of it; full and complete. Love, and passion, and adventure and attainment, for him and for me, too. Do you think I'll stand by, and allow you to have him, to bury his wonder in your peace, and smother his possibilities with your security and decent living?"

"I think," Danny answered, "that you will have to. John and I love each other; and we are going to keep each other. You, nor anyone, can change that."

"Suppose I should tell John why we came here?"

"You won't do that. You can't harm me without harming yourself. But, if you threaten that, just once more, I will go straight to John and tell him the truth—"

"You promised—"

"I haven't broken my promise I shan't, if you don't. But you must know that I haven't any interest left in the thing."

"What about your desire for revenge?"

"That desire was yours, not mine. I never considered that side of it at all."

"Coward! Quitter! Stool-pigeon—"

"That isn't fair, Gaby. I'll help if I can. I have been helping, haven't I? I won't hinder in any way. But the time is short now. Remember that."

"Danny—" There was a new tone in Gaby's voice, sweet like, and appealing. I did not trust it for a minute; but I think Danny did, for she answered gently, "Yes, dear?"

"Forgive me. Let's be twinnies again. Friends?" I could hear the treachery in that as plainly as I could hear the words. I think Danny did not hear it, for she answered, "I do want to be friends, Gaby. I do, truly. Only—please, dear, won't you leave my man alone?"

"And you'll help me. And you won't tell him—anything?"

"Of course I won't tell Gaby. It is really your secret, now; not mine. And I'll help you all I can."

CHAPTER VII  
Three Rings  
Revenge. Out of all that crazy conversation the one

word kept pestering me like a leaking faucet. No matter what I was doing, or thinking, that word, revenge, kept drip, drip, dripping, until my mind was fairly drenched with it. I got all mixed up about it. Did people revenge other people, or have revenge on them, or—what? I looked it up in the dictionary. "Malicious injuring in return for an injury or offense received."

I got a piece of paper and wrote it down. "The Canneziano girls want to injure, maliciously, some one on the Desert Moon Ranch, in return for an injury or an offense received." I crossed out "The Canneziano girls," and wrote, "Gabielle Canneziano," since Danny had said that she had never considered that side of it at all. It did not help any. It did not make any sense.

Since Sam and I were the only people on the ranch they had known before they came here this time, it seemed as if they had come to injure, maliciously, one of us. I had never done either of them a mite of harm in my life. Sam had never done anything but good for them. Of course, Sam had not been very gentle with their father. But, as I took pains to discover, neither of them had any kind feelings for their father. Gaby said, straight out, that she hated him. Danny, who was too gentle speaking to use such a word as hate, said that she had never liked him, never loved him. Both of them laid their mother's death at Canneziano's door. They thought that his cruelty and his neglect had killed her. It was senseless to suppose that they were harboring any grudge against Sam for anything that he had ever done to Canneziano.

Of course, I see now that all that part of it was as plain as the Roman nose on Hubert Hand's face. How I missed seeing it, even then, I don't know. I was, I guess, like a little boy so busy trying to watch all three rings at the circus at one time that he missed the elephant parade.

The Desert Moon was like that sure enough; like a three ring circus, during the months of May and June. There were the girl's everlastingly searching for something; leaving the house shortly after the men left it, each morning; returning, tired out, just in time for dinner; off again for the afternoon, and coming home just in time to pretty up for supper. After a while, I began to lose interest in that; and, being a woman, I allowed my attention to become distracted by the center ring where all the love interest was going on.

Not that Danny and John were interesting. If there is anything that will make two people duller to all other people than being engaged to each other, I am sure I don't know what it is. Gaby's unceasing efforts to win John away from Danny were interesting enough. I suppose, to folks who can stand to look at that sort of thing. Personally, I shut my eyes to it as much as possible. Most of my attention I gave to the clown in the ring—to Chad.

I can not explain it, now or ever; Chad, from the very first, was head over heels in love with Gaby. He had no more chance of winning her, penniless, funny, kind little fellow that he was, than an amateur has of riding an outlaw pony. I told him that, once, in those very words.

"I know it, Mary," he said. But you are wrong about one thing. I'm not riding for a fall. I'm not even mounted. I know I haven't a chance with her. I know I can't pull one of those stars out of the sky up there with a fishhook. I'm not trying. But I can sit here in the dark and look at the stars, can't I? Stars make all the difference—in the dark. And, maybe, sometime I can serve her in some way. That's all I ask. . . ." So on. If it hadn't been Chad, and therefore heart-

breaking, it would have been downright funny.

She never gave him two looks. He couldn't even make her laugh with his jokes and his songs, as he could the rest of us. Once she did deign to allow him to try to teach her the trick of his ventriloquism. She could not learn it, and she was furious with him, and said that he did not want her to learn it. But he followed her about and waited on her. He brought her pony up to the house, instead of allowing one of the outfit to do it. He brought her desert flowers which she tossed away to wither. If Connie hadn't had a strong constitution he would have worn her out, taking pictures of Gaby. Page after page in his album filled with, "Gaby by the window;" "Gaby on the porch;" "Gaby with Danny starting on a walk;" "Gaby in riding costume;" Gaby here there, and everywhere. And Martha half mad with jealousy.

Right at first, I think that some of the others thought that Martha's jealousy was something of a joke. I never did think so. Before long we all began to feel that it was more than a little serious. Sam talked to Chad, and to Gaby about it. Chad did the best he could, after that, to be as attentive to Martha as he had been before; but, if he so much as opened a door for Gaby, Martha would go into temper fits, and sulking spells.

As for Gaby, Sam's talk with her made things worse. She had never noticed Chad at all, so she had not noticed that Martha was jealous of him. She welcomed the news as another tool she could use to tease and torment the poor girl. All along she had delighted in teasing and tormenting Martha, though she had dared not do it when Sam was present.

The very evening after Sam had talked to her in the morning, Gaby went and sat beside Chad and curled his pretty yellow curls around her finger.

It was a cloudy evening, not chilly; but Sam had lighted the fire as he always does when he has half an excuse, and Martha was sitting in front of it, pretending to read a magazine. She had been pretending to read that same magazine, or the same page, for the last five years. She seemed to get pleasure out of sitting and holding it in her hands. No other magazine would do.

Of a sudden, this evening she thrust the magazine in the flames for an instant, jerked it out, and rushed at Gaby with the burning torch. No harm was done. John snatched it and tossed it back into the fireplace. But all of us, except Gaby, had the good sense to be thoroughly frightened.

Things weren't ever quite the same for Martha after that. No other magazine, or picture book, would take the place of the one she had burned. She would wander about the house evenings, quietly, but restless like a cat who had lost her kittens.

One of Gaby's pleasant little ways was to refer to Martha as an idiot, right before her face. "La-la!" Gaby exclaimed one evening, when Martha was wandering about. "The idiot gets on my nerves. Can't you make her keep still, Mrs Ricker?"

"She isn't harming anyone," I said, since Mrs. Ricker as usual, said nothing. "You leave her alone, and stop talking like that, Miss."

"I'm not harming anyone now," Martha piped up. "But someday I might. I'd like to. I won't though," she walked over close to Gaby. "If you'll give me the gold monkey, I'll be good then, for always."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Beyond Him.  
From Buen Humor, Madrid.  
Wife: When you've had a few whiskies-and-sodas you ought to realize you've had enough, and ask for some harmless drink like—sarsaparilla.

Husband: Yes, my dear, but the difficulty is that when I've had a few whiskies I can't say sarsaparilla.

legislature at that time afforded and it therefore went to "indefinite postponement."

Since this question has been trembling on the lips of both the laymen taxpayers, and the legislators as well, for the last few years, since also the state Chamber of Commerce through the tax commission is making an exhaustive study of the problem, voters of the state may rest assured that when Brooke Howell becomes governor—and there is every indication that he will be—one of his many state building recommendations and measures will be a law providing for equitable and sufficient taxation.

### CONTESTS WILL DRAW STUDENTS

About 700 Expected to Take Part in Six Events at State College

Ames, Ia. — (Special) — Approximately 700 high school students are expected to be on the Iowa State college campus May 8 and 9 to take part in six agricultural contests and to attend the annual meeting of the Iowa Future Farmers, an organization of students in vocational agriculture, which will be held during Velshea, annual college open house.

Livestock and crops judging, farm shop contests, demonstration contests, an open forum contest and a future farmers' chapter contest are scheduled. These contests, with the exception of open forum and future farmers, are open to any high school student who has taken or is enrolled in agriculture, according to Prof. H. M. Hamlin, of the vocational education department.

The open forum contest, open only to future farmers, is a new event in which the boys will discuss important agricultural problems. The award in the future farmer chapter contest will be based on the activities of the chapter during the last year.

A banquet for the entire group will be held on the evening of May 8. Two sessions open to the entire group will be held May 8, and future farmer delegates will hold sessions May 9. At the general sessions representatives of the Farmer Union, Grange and Farm bureau will speak. One of the purposes of the meeting, according to Professor Hamlin, is to work out a harmonious program with all existing agencies since the Future Farmers is an organization within the public schools and expects to work with other groups.

### McKelvie Scheduled to Speak May 8 at Ames

Ames, Ia.—(Special)—S. R. McKelvie, former governor of Nebraska and now representing the wheat growers' interests on the Federal Farm board will speak at Iowa State college the evening of May 8 before high school students and future farmers who attend the high school agricultural contests and the congress of future farmers, May 8 and 9, during the college's Velshea celebration.

Definite arrangements as to whether McKelvie will speak in a meeting open to the general public in the afternoon have not been completed.

Charles E. Hearst, president of the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation and Glenn E. Miller, vice president of the Iowa Farmers' union, will also speak before the high school group.

May 8 will be devoted to general meetings of all high school students attending the high school contests and future farmers' meeting. On May 9 the future farmers, organization of high school students who are taking or have taken vocational agriculture, will hold their annual conference.

### Five Counties Join in 4-H Club Camp This Year

St. Paul, Minn.—(UP)—Minnesota agricultural problems will be discussed May 28 when central Minnesota farm bureau officers meet in St. Paul to attend one of a series of nine district conferences of farm bureau leaders.

The call for the St. Paul conference, issued by J. S. Jones, secretary-treasurer of the Minnesota farm bureau federation has been sent to president, vice presidents, secretaries, home and community chairmen, county agents, home demonstration agents and to township and farm bureau officers of the local farm bureau division.

### Barmecide Economy.

From Cedar Rapids Gazette.  
While Mr. Stimson is entitled to exhibit satisfaction over the partial success of a conference which often was on the brink of total collapse it would appear that he has selected one of the weakest points of the proposed treaty for emphasis when he proclaims that it has effected actual reduction of tonnage and substantial economies for taxpayers.

He reaches this conclusion by comparing tonnages under the pending treaty and tonnages proposed at the Geneva parley. At that conference Great Britain demanded 590,000 tons of cruisers, destroyers and submarines, while, under the present agreement, she accepts 511,700 tons. This he counts as a reduction of 48,000 tons. This is very shadowy economy. It is the same as if a woman would go window shopping and inform her husband on her return that she had economized by refraining from purchasing a seal skin coat.

News of this hypothetical economy may prove interesting to the husband but he will be far more interested in her actual purchases. He is not likely to beam with joy when she announces that although she didn't buy the coat she did purchase an evening gown, a sport outfit and a few little trinkets. Here she is getting down to facts and he doubtless is more interested in the bill than in the hypothetical economy of foregoing the seal skin coat.

### Saskatchewan Pool Boosts Price of Eggs

REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN—Eggs to the number of 1,498,183 dozen, having a cash value of \$400,000, were marketed through the Saskatchewan Egg and Poultry Pool last year. The average price paid was the highest ever returned to the producer by the pool, Mrs. John Holmes, president, says.

She believes that removal of the dumping duty on eggs, permitting American eggs to come into the province freely, might seriously affect egg prices.



### A Sour Stomach

In the same time it takes a dose of soda to bring a little temporary relief of gas and sour stomach, Phillips Milk of Magnesia has acidity completely checked, and the digestive organs all tranquilized. Once you have tried this form of relief you will cease to worry about your diet and experience a new freedom in eating.

This pleasant preparation is just as good for children, too. Use it whenever coated tongue or fetid breath signals need of a sweetener. Physicians will tell you that every spoonful of Phillips Milk of Magnesia neutralizes many times its volume in acid. Get the genuine, the name Phillips is important. Imitations do not act the same!

### PHILLIPS Milk of Magnesia

Left-Handed  
Left-handed children should never be forced to become right-handed. The brain, which controls muscular movements, would be affected, with possible serious results. Tactful training in the use of both hands is all you should do.

### AS FIRST AID

Use Hanford's Balm of Myrrh  
All dealers are authorized to refund your money for the first bottle if not suited.

Drama of Life  
Life is a drama in which all of us are actors, even though our parts are usually small. But we must not neglect our roles, for it is the faithful performance of each small part that contributes to the excellence of the whole.—Grit.

On Your Marks  
Contract bridge tip: When jumping partner's bid, be prepared to dodge if it doesn't turn out right.—Arkansas Gazette.

### Take August Flower

Don't let constipation poison your system. August Flower corrects constipation—even stubborn cases—almost like magic. Sweetens stomach, stimulates aids digestion. GUARANTEED All Druggists.

### CONSTITIATION

Kipling Won Fame Early  
Rudyard Kipling composed his first juvenile work at the age of thirteen. At twenty-six he was acclaimed a genius by the public, and the writer of more best sellers than any other author of the time.

Useful  
"What is a gudget?" inquires a correspondent. A sort of thing that does something which would not have to be done if you hadn't got it.

A ferry or a bridge over the Panama canal is strongly advocated by the governor of the Canal Zone.

### How One Woman Lost 20 Pounds of Fat

Lost Her Double Chin  
Lost Her Prominent Hips  
Lost Her Sluggishness  
Gained Physical Vigor  
Gained in Vivaciousness  
Gained a Shapely Figure

If you're fat—first remove the cause!

KRUSCHEN SALTS contains the 6 mineral salts your body organs, glands and nerves must have to function properly.

When your vital organs fail to perform their work correctly—your bowels and kidneys can't throw off that waste material—before you realize it—you're growing hideously fat!

Try one half teaspoonful of KRUSCHEN SALTS in a glass of hot water every morning—in 3 weeks get on the scales and note how many pounds of fat have vanished.

Notice also that you have gained in energy—your skin is clearer—your eyes sparkle with glorious health—you feel younger in body—keener in mind. KRUSCHEN SALTS will give any fat person a joyous surprise!

Get an 85c bottle of KRUSCHEN SALTS from any leading drugstore anywhere in America. (Lasts 4 weeks). If the first bottle doesn't convince you this is the easiest, safest and surest way to lose fat—if you don't feel a superb improvement in health—so gloriously energetic—vigorously alive—you money gladly returned.

### South Dakota Taxation.

From Aberdeen News.  
It is doubtful if there is a more important question before the people of South Dakota seeking solution than that of assessment and taxation.

At the present time the State Chamber of Commerce is wrestling with the question and making a honest effort to find a way of obtaining revenue for financing the needs of state, county, city and township. Political economists look upon it as a major question and advance theories galore, but the problem is still unsolved.

Brooke Howell, the dirt farmer

candidate for governor at the republican primaries to be held in May who has served five years in the state senate, looks upon it as one of, if not the main, questions demanding solution in statehood. In fact, in the last session of the legislature, he introduced Senate bill 194 for the appointment of a commission to make a study and survey of taxation problems, and to report thereon to the governor.

Section Three of the bill provided "Said interim commission is directed and required to make a thorough study and investigation of the tax system of this state and the laws and statutes relating thereto.

and of the tax systems and laws of the other states in the United States, and to consider the economic needs of the state, and to prepare and present to the governor of the state of South Dakota, not later than January 1, 1930, a report and recommendations for the purpose of providing a new code of tax laws for the state of South Dakota."

Senator Howell made a hard fight for the measure, but in the rush of a 60-day session it was regarded as of such grave importance and far-reaching effect, that members hesitated to pass it without having had more opportunity to consider it than the remaining days of the