

The Big-Town Round Up

by
William MacLeod Raine
Illustrations by
Irwin Myers

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SYNOPSIS

FOREWORD—Motoring through Arizona a party of easterners, father and daughter and a male companion, stop to witness a cattle round up. The girl leaves the car and is attacked by a wild steer. A masterpiece of riding on the part of one of the cowboys saves her life.

CHAPTER I—Clay Lindsay, range-rider on an Arizona ranch, announces his intention to visit the "big town," New York.

CHAPTER II—On the train Lindsay becomes interested in a young woman, Kitty Mason, on her way to New York to become a motion-picture actress. She is marked as fair prey by a fellow traveler, Jerry Durand, gang politician and prize fighter. Perceiving his intention, Lindsay provoked a quarrel and throws Durand from the train.

CHAPTER III—On his first day in New York Lindsay is splashed with water by a janitor. That individual the range-rider punishes summarily and leaves tied to a fire hydrant. A young woman who sees the occurrence invites Clay into her house and hides him from the police.

CHAPTER IV—Clay's "rescuer" introduces herself as Beatrice Whitford. Lindsay meets her father, Colin Whitford, and is invited to visit them again. He meets Kitty Mason by accident. She has been disappointed in her stage aspirations, and to support herself is selling cigarettes in a saloon. Clay visits her there.

CHAPTER V—Kitty is insulted by a customer. Clay punishes the annoyance. After a lively mixup Lindsay escapes. Outside, he is attacked by Jerry Durand and a companion and beaten insensibly.

CHAPTER VI—Lindsay's acquaintance with Beatrice Whitford. Through her he is introduced into "society." His "side partner" on the Arizona ranch, Johnnie Green, comes to the "big town."

CHAPTER VII—The two take an apartment together, Johnnie securing employment at the Whitford's as "handy man." An advertisement signed "Kitty M." conveys the information that she is in trouble and implores Lindsay to come to a certain house where she is imprisoned. Clay is dubious as to its authenticity, but finally decides to go. He makes his way into what he supposes is the right house and finds himself in a young woman's bedroom.

CHAPTER XII Continued

"Honest, I ain't," Johnnie whispered a secret across the rose bushes. "Say, if you work it right I believe you can get him."

The girl sparkled. Here was a new slant on matrimonial desirability. Clearly the view of the little cowpuncher was that Clay had only to crook his fingers to summon any girl in the world that he desired.

"What would you advise me to do?" she dimpled.

"Sho! I dunno." He shyly unburdened himself of the warning he had been leading up to. "But I'd tie a can to that dude fellow that hangs around—the Bronsfeld guy. O' course I know he ain't one, two, three with you while Clay's on earth, but I don't reckon I'd take any chances, as the old sayin' is. Better get shot of the dude."

Miss Whitford bit her lip to keep from exploding in a sudden gale of mirth. But the sight of her self-appointed chaperon set her off into peals of laughter in spite of herself. Every time she looked at Johnnie she went off into renewed chirrups. He was so homely and so dead earnest. The little wail was staring at her in perplexed surprise, mouth open, and chin fallen. He could see no occasion for gaiety at his suggestion. There was nothing subtle about the Runt. In his social code wealth did not figure. A forty-dollar-a-month bronco buster was free to offer advice to the daughter of a millionaire about her matrimonial prospects if it seemed best.

"Clay ain't one of the common run of cowpunchers, ma'am. You bet you, by Jollies, he ain't. Clay he owns a half-interest in the B-in-a-Box. O' course it ain't what he's got, but what he is that counts. He's the best darned pilgrim ever I did see."

"He's all right, Johnnie," the girl admitted with an odd smile. "Do you want me to tell him that I'll be glad to drop our family friends to meet his approval? I don't suppose he asked you to speak to me about it, did he?"

The little range-rider missed the irony of this. "No, ma'am, I jest butted 'in. Mebbe I hadn' ought to of spoke."

"You needn't feel bad, Johnnie. There's no harm done—if you don't say anything about it to Mr. Lindsay. But I don't think you were intended for a match-maker. That takes quite a little finesse, doesn't it?"

The word "finesse" was not in Johnnie's dictionary, but he acquiesced in her verdict.

"I reckon, ma'am, you're right."

Clay was waiting for lunch at a restaurant on Sixth avenue, and in order to lose no time—of which he had more just now than he knew what to do with—was meanwhile reading a newspaper propped against a water-bottle. From the personal column there popped out at him three lines that caught his attention:

"If this meets the eye of C. L. of Arizona please write me, Box M-21, The Herald. Am in trouble. Kitty M."

He read it again. There could be no doubt in the world, it was addressed to him, and from Kitty. He

remembered that on the bus he had casually mentioned to her that he usually read the Herald.

After he had eaten, Clay walked down Broadway and left a note at the office of the Herald for Kitty.

The thought of her was in his mind all day. He had worried a good deal over her disappearance. It was not alone that he felt responsible for the loss of her place as cigarette girl. One disturbing phase of the situation was that Jerry Durand must have seen her. What more likely than that he had arranged to have her spirited away?

Lindsay had read that hundreds of girls disappeared every year in the city. If they ever came to the surface again it was as dwellers in that underworld in the current of which they had been caught.

He had an engagement that afternoon to walk with Beatrice Whitford. They crossed to Morningside park and moved through it to the northern end where the remains of Fort Laight, built to protect the approach to the city during the War of 1812, can still be seen and traced.

Beatrice had read the story of the earthworks. In the midst of the telling of it she stopped to turn upon him with swift accusation, "You're not listening."

"That's right, I wasn't," he admitted.

"Have you heard something about your cigarette girl?"

Clay was amazed at the accuracy of her center shot.

"Yes," He showed her the newspaper.

She read. The golden head nodded triumphantly. "I told you she could look out for herself. You see when she had lost you she knew enough to advertise."

Was there or was there not a faint note of malice in the girl's voice?



Was There or Was There Not a Faint Note of Malice in the Girl's Voice?

Clay did not know. But it would have neither surprised nor displeased him. He had long since discovered that his imperious little friend was far from an angel.

At his rooms he found a note awaiting him.

"Come tonight after eleven. I am locked in the west rear room of the second story. Climb up over the back porch. Don't make any noise. The window will be unbolted. A friend is miffing this. For God's sake, don't fail me."

The note was signed "Kitty." Below were given the house and street number. Was it genuine? Or did it lead to a trap? He could not tell. It might be a plant or it might be a walk of real distress. There was only one way to find out unless he went to the police. That way was to go through with the adventure. He decided to play a lone hand except for such help as Johnnie could give him.

Clay took a downtown car and rode to the cross-street mentioned in the letter for a preliminary tour of investigation. The street designated was one of plain brownstone fronts with iron-grilled doors. The blank faces of the houses invited no confidence. It struck him that there was something sinister about the neighborhood, but perhaps the thought was born of the fear. Number 121 had windows barred with ornamental grilles. This might be to keep burglars out. It would serve equally well to keep prisoners in.

The cattleman did not linger in that street lined with houses of sinister faces. He did not care to call attention to his presence by staying too long. Besides, he had some arrangements to make for the night at his rooms.

These were simple and few. He oiled and loaded his revolver carefully, leaving the hammer on the one chamber left empty to prevent accidents, after the custom of all careful gunmen. He changed into the wrinkled suit he had worn when he reached the city, and substituted for his shoes a pair of felt-soled gymnasium ones.

The bowlegged little puncher watched his friend, just as a faithful dog does his master. He asked no questions. In good time he knew he would be told all it was necessary for him to know.

As they rode from the Bronx, Clay outlined the situation and told his plans so far as he had any.

"So I'm goin' to take a whirl at it, Johnnie. Mebbe they're lyin' low up in that house to get me. Mebbe the note's the real thing. You can search me which it is. The only way to find out is to go through with the thing. Yore job is to stick around in front of the hacienda and wait for me. If I don't show up inside of thirty minutes, get the police busy right away breakin' into the place. Do you get me, Johnnie?"

"Lemme go with you into the house, Clay," the little man pleaded.

"Nothin' doin', old-timer. This is my job, and I don't reckon I'll let anybody else tackle it. Much obliged, just the same. You're one sure-enough white man, Johnnie."

The little fellow knew that the matter was settled. Clay had decided and what he said was final. But Johnnie worried about it all the way. At the last moment, when they separated at the street corner, he added one last word.

"Don't you be too venturesome, son. If them guys got you it sure would break me all up."

Clay smiled cheerfully. "They're not goin' to get me, Johnnie. Don't forget to remember not to forget yore part. Keep under cover for thirty minutes; then if I haven't shown up, holler yore head off for the cops."

They were passing an alley as Clay finished speaking. He slipped into its friendly darkness and was presently lost to sight. It ran into an inner court which was the center of tortuous passages. The cattleman stopped to get his bearings, selected the likeliest exit, and brought up in the shelter of a small porch. This, he felt sure, must be the rear of the house he wanted.

A strip of lattice work ran up the side of the entrance. Very carefully, testing every slat with his weight before trusting himself to it, he climbed up and edged forward noiselessly upon the roof. On hands and knees he crawled to the window and tried to peer in.

The blind was down, but he could see that the room was dark. What danger lurked behind the drawn blind he could not guess, but after a moment, to make sure that the revolver beneath his belt was ready for instant use, he put his hand gently on the sash.

His motions were soundless as the fall of snowflakes. The window moved slowly, almost imperceptibly, under the pressure of his hands. Warily he lifted one leg into the room. His head followed, then the rest of his body. He waited, every nerve tensed.

There came to him a sound that sent cold finger-tips playing a tattoo up and down his spine. It was the intake of some one's cautious breathing.

His hand crept to the butt of the revolver. He crouched, poised for either attack or retreat.

A bath of light flooded the room and swallowed the darkness. Instantly Clay's revolver leaped to the air.

CHAPTER VIII

A Late Evening Call.

A young woman in an open-neck nightgown sat up in bed, a cascade of black hair fallen over her white shoulders. Eyes like jet beads were fastened on him. In them he read indignation struggling with fear.

"Say, what are you anyhow—a moll buzzer? If you're a porch-climber out for the pros you've sure come to the 'wrong dump. I got nothin' but bum rocks."

This was Greek to Clay. He did not know that she had asked him if he were a man who robs women, and that she had told him he could get no diamonds there since hers were false.

The Arizona man guessed at once that he was not in the room mentioned in the letter. He slipped his revolver back into its place between shirt and trousers.

"Is this house number 121?" he asked.

"No, it's 123. What of it?"

"It's the wrong house. I'm certainly one chump."

The black eyes lit with sardonic mockery. "Say, do I look like one of them born-every-minute kind?" she asked easily. "Go ahead, and spring that old one on me about how you got tanked at the club and come in at the window on account of your wife havin' a temper somethin' fierce."

"No, I—I was lookin' for some one else. I'm awful sorry I scared you. I'd eat dirt if it would do any good, but it won't. I'm just a plumb idiot. I reckon I'll be pushin' on my reins." He turned toward the window.

"Step right there where you're at," she ordered sharply. "Take a step to that window and I'll holler for a harness bull like a Bowery bride gettin' a wallop from friend husband. I gotta have an explanation. And who told you I was scared? Forget that stuff. Take it from Annie that she ain't the kind that scares."

"I came to see some one else, but I got in the wrong house," he explained again lamely.

TO BE CONTINUED



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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Estate No. 1593 of Rhoda A. Edmiston, deceased in the County Court of Lincoln County, Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska, ss. Creditors of said estate will take notice that the time limited for presentation and filing of claims against said Estate is Nov. 11, 1922 and for settlement of said Estate is June 30, 1923; that I will sit at the county court room in said County August 11th, 1922, at 10 o'clock a. m. and on November 11th, 1922 at 10 o'clock a. m., to receive, examine, hear, allow, or adjust all claims and objections duly filed.

Dated June 30, 1922.

Wm. H. C. Woodhurst

(SEAL) County Judge

NOTICE OF PAVING ASSESSMENT

Notice is hereby given that the Mayor and City Council of the city of North Platte, Nebraska, will on the 15th day of August, 1922, between the hours of 8 and 9 o'clock p. m. of said day and so much longer as may be necessary to transact said business, sit as a board of Equalization for the purpose of equalizing and assessing against abutting and adjacent property owners, the cost of paving in Paving Districts No. 3 and 6 as the same are now organized. And all persons interested are hereby notified to appear and show cause, if any why said equalization and assessment should not be made, on or before the 15th day of August, 1922 at eight o'clock p. m.

Witness my hand and the seal of said city this 24th day of July, 1922.

O. E. ELDER

(SEAL) City Clerk

ROAD NO. 422.

To whom it may concern:—

The special Commissioner appointed to locate a public road as follows: Commencing at the corner to Section 4, 5, 8 and 9 township 13 north range 30 west of the 6th p. m., running thence west on section line between sections 5 and 8, and 6 and 7 two miles to connect with extension to Road No. 42 has reported in favor there of anyone having objections thereto or claims for damages by reason of the establishment of described road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 16th day of September, 1922.

Witness my hand and official seal this 8th day of July, 1922.

A. S. ALLEN

(SEAL) County Clerk

EXTENSION ROAD NO. 107.

To whom it may concern:—

The special commissioners appointed to locate a public road as follows: Commencing at a point on the section line between sections 9 and 16, where Public Road No. 11 intersects said section line, running thence west on the section line between sections 9 and 16 and 8 and 17 to the intersection with Road No. 77 all in township 14 range 30, said road to be 66 feet wide, has reported in favor of the establishment of the same. All objections thereto, or claims for damages by reason of the establishment of the above described road must be filed in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln county Nebraska, on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 9th day of October, 1922 or said Road will be allowed without reference thereto.

Witness my hand and official seal this 27th day of July, 1922.

A. S. ALLEN

(SEAL) County Clerk

EXTENSION ROAD NO. 61

To whom it may concern:—

The special Commissioner appointed to locate a public road as follows: Commencing at the corner to Sections 13, 14, 23 and 24 T. 13 N. R. 30 W. running thence north on line between Sections. 13 and 14 one mile, thence north westerly through secs. 11, 10 and 9 said township and range following the south bank of the Channel of the Platte River to the intersection with Road No. 6 ending there said road to be 66 feet wide has reported in favor thereof anyone having objections thereto or claims for damages by reason of the establishment of the above road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 18th day of September, 1922 or the above road will be allowed without reference thereto.

Witness my hand and official seal this 8th day of July, 1922.

A. S. ALLEN

(SEAL) County Clerk

ROAD NO. 426

To whom it may concern:—

The special Commissioner appointed to locate a public road as follows: Commencing at the corner to Sections 5, 6, 7, and 8 town 12 N. R. 30 W. running thence north one mile to the NE corner of Sec. 6 said township and range. Also commencing at the SE corner of section 32 T. 13 N. R. 30 W. running thence on line between sec. 32 and 33 one mile, thence Northwest and Northeast through the East 1/2 of Secs. 29 and 20 to connect with Road No. 8 about 9 chains west of the NE corner of said Section 20, following said section between Secs. 20 and 21 T. 13 N. R. 30 W. for about one half mile has reported in favor thereof anyone having objections hereto or claims for damages by reason of the establishment of the above road must file same in the office of the County Clerk of Lincoln County, Nebraska or said road will be allowed without reference thereto, on or before 12 o'clock noon of the 16th day of September, 1922.

Witness my hand and official seal this 8th day of July, 1922.

A. S. ALLEN

(SEAL) County Clerk

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