



KEITH OF THE BORDER

A TALE OF THE PLAINS BY RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER XXI.

The Marshal of Sheridan. It was called a depot merely through courtesy...

and greeting the alighting passengers with free and easy badinage. Stranger or acquaintance made no difference...

Hope paused on the step, even as Dr. Fairbain grasped her hand, dined by the melody of discordant sounds...

"Hey, there," he said shortly, grabbing a shirt-sleeved individual by the arm. "Where's Charlie?"

The fellow looked at him wonderingly. "Charlie? Oh, you mean the 'Kid'?"

Fairbain swore discreetly under his breath, and cast an uncertain glance at the slender figure shrinking beside him.

"Only back in town is somewhere else, Miss," he explained briefly. "I reckon you and I will have to hoof it."

"The boys are a little noisy, but it's just their way—don't mean anything—you hang on to me, an' keep the veil down—we'll be there in the shake of a dog's tail."

He helped her over the muddy crossing, and as they reached a stretch of board walk, began expatiating on the various places lining the way.

"That's the 'Mammoth' over there—dance hall back of it—biggest thing west of the Missouri—three men killed there last week—what for? Oh, they got too fresh—that's the 'Casino,' and the one beyond is 'Pony Joe's Place'—cut his leg off since I've been here—fight over a girl. Ain't there any stores?—sure; they're farther back—you see the saloons got in first—that's 'Sheeny Mike's' gambling joint you're looking at—like to go over and see 'em play? All right, just thought I'd ask you—it's early anyhow, and things wouldn't be going very lively yet. Say, there, you red head, what are you trying to do?"

The fellow had lurched out of the crowd in such a manner as to brush partially aside the girl's veil, permitting the glare of "Sheeny Mike's" lights to fall full upon her revealed face. It was accomplished so openly as to appear planned, but before he could reel away again, Fairbain struck out, and the man went down. With an oath he was on his feet, and Hope covered back against her protector.

"And don't you pick it up until I tell you, Scott," he said quietly. "If you do you've got to fight me."

Without apparently giving the fellow another thought, he wheeled and faced the others.

"Oh, it's you, is it, Doctor? The drunken fool won't make any more trouble. Where were you taking the lady?"

"To the hotel, Bill."

"I'll walk along with you. I reckon the boys will give us plenty of room." He glanced over the crowd, and then more directly at Scott.

"Pick up your gun!" the brief words snapping out. "This is the second time I've caught you hunting trouble. The next time you are going to find it. I saw you run into this lady—what did you do it for?"

"I only wanted to see who she was, Bill."

"You needn't call me Bill. I don't trot in your class. My name is Hickock to you. Was it any of your

affair who she was?"

"I reckoned I know'd her, and I did."

The marshal turned his eyes toward Hope, and then back upon Scott, evidently slightly interested.

"So? Recognized an old friend, I suppose?"

The slight sneer in "Wild Bill's" soft voice caused Scott to flame up in sudden passion.

"No, I didn't! but I called the turn just the same—she's Christie MacLaire."

The marshal smiled. "All right, little boy," he said soberly. "Now you trot straight along to bed. Don't let me catch you on the street again to-night, and I'd advise you not to pull another gun—you're too slow on the trigger for this town. Come along, Doctor, and we'll get Miss MacLaire to her hotel."

He shouldered his way through the collected crowd, the other following. Hope endeavored to speak, to explain to Fairbain who she actually was, realizing then, for the first time, that she had not previously given him her name.

Amidst the incessant noise and confusion, the blaring of brass, and the jangle of voices, she found it impossible to make the man comprehend. She pressed closer to him, holding more tightly to his arm, stunned and confused by the fierce uproar. The stranger steadily nudged ahead of them, and opening a path for their passage, fascinated her, and her eyes watched him curiously. His name was an oddly familiar one, associated in vague memory with some of the most desperate deeds ever witnessed in the West, yet always found on the side of law and order; it was difficult to conceive that this quiet-spoken, mild-eyed, gently smiling man could indeed be the most famous gun fighter on the border, hated, feared, yet thoroughly respected, by every desperado between the Platte and the Canadiana.

Beyond the glare and glitter of the Metropolitan Dance Hall the noisy crowd thinned away somewhat, and the marshal ventured to drop back beside Fairbain, yet vigilantly watched every approaching face.

"Town appears unusually lively to-night, Bill," observed the latter gravely. "and the boys have got an early start."

"West end grader's just paid off," was the reply. "They have been whoopin' it up ever since noon, and are beginning to get ugly. Now the rest of the outfit are showing up, and there will probably be something interesting happening before morning. Wouldn't mind it so much if I had a single deputy worth his salt."

"What's the matter with Bain?"

"Nothing, while he was on the job, but 'Red' Haggerty got him in 'Pony Joe's' shebang two hours ago; shot him in the back across the bar. Ned never even pulled his gun."

"I'm sorry to hear that; what became of Haggerty?"

The marshal let his eyes rest questioningly on the doctor's face for an instant.

"Well, I happened to be just behind Ned when he went," he said gently, "and 'Red' will be buried on 'Boots Hill' to-morrow. I'm afraid I don't give you much chance to show your skill, Doc, with a smile."

"If they all shot like you do, my profession would be useless. What's the matter with your other deputies?"

"Lack of nerve, principally, I reckon; ain't one of 'em worth the powder to blow him up. I'd give something just now for a fellow I had down at Dodge—he was a man. Never had to tell him when to go in; good judgment too; wasn't out hunting for trouble, but always ready enough to take his share. Old soldier in our army, Captain, I heard, though he never talked much about himself; maybe you knew him—Jack Keith."

"Well, I reckon," in quick surprise, "and what's more to the point, he's here—slept in my room last night."

"Keith here? In Sheridan? And hasn't even hunted me up yet? That's like him, all right, but I honestly want to see the boy. Here's your hotel. Shall you need me any longer?"

"Better step in with us, Bill," the doctor advised, "your moral influence might aid in procuring the lady a decent room."

"I reckon it might."

They passed together up the three rickety steps leading into the front hall, which latter opened directly into the cramped office; to the left was the wide-open bar-room, clamorous and throbbing with life. A narrow bench stood against the wall, with a couple of half-drunken men lounging upon it. The marshal routed them out with a single, expressive gesture.

"Wait here with the lady, Fairbain," he said shortly, "and I'll arrange for the room."

They watched him glance in at the bar, vigilant and cautious, and then move directly across to the desk.

"Tommy," he said genially to the clerk, "I've just escorted a lady here from the train—Miss MacLaire—and want you to give her the best room in your old shebang."

The other looked at him doubtfully.

"Hell, Bill, I don't know how I'm going to do that," he acknowledged. "She wrote in here to the boss for a room; said she'd be along yesterday. Well, she didn't show up, an' so to-night we let a fellow have it. He's up there now."

"Well, he'll have to vamoose—who is he?"

"Englishman—'Walter Spotteswood Montgomery,'" consulting his book. "Hell of a pompous duck; the boys call him 'Juke Montgomery.'"

"All right; send some one up to rout his lordship out lively."

Tommy shuffled his feet, and looked again at the marshal; he had received positive orders about that room, and was fully convinced that Montgomery would not take kindly to eviction. But Hickock's quiet gray eyes were insistent.

"Here, 'Red,'" he finally called to the burly porter, "hustle up to '15,' an' tell that fellow Montgomery he's got to get out; tell him we want the room for a lady."

Hickock watched the man disappear up the stairs, helped himself carefully to a cigar out of the stand, tossing a coin to the clerk and then deliberately lighting up.

"Think Montgomery will be pleased?" he asked shortly.

"No; he'll probably throw 'Red' down stairs."

The marshal smiled, his glance turning expectantly in that direction.

"Then perhaps I had better remain, Tommy." And he strolled nonchalantly over to the open window, and stood there looking quietly out, a spiral of blue smoke rising from his cigar.

They could distinctly hear the pounding on the door above, and occasionally the sound of the porter's voice, but the straight, erect figure at the window remained motionless. Finally "Red" came down, nursing his knuckles.

"Says he'll be damned if he will—says he's gone to bed, an' that there ain't a cussed female in this blasted country he'd git up for," he reported circumstantially to the clerk. "He told me to tell you to go plumb to hell, an' that if any one else 'come poundin' round' there to-night, he'd take a pot shot at 'em through the door. 'Fifteen' seemed a bit peevish, sir, an' I reckoned if he was riled up much more, he might git rambunctious; his language was sure fierce."

"Wild Bill" turned slowly around, still calmly smoking, his eyes exhibiting mild amusement.

"Did you clearly inform Mr.—ah—Montgomery that we desired the room for the use of a lady?" he questioned gently, apparently both pained and shocked.

"I did, sir."

"It surprises me to find one in our city with so little regard for the ordinary courtesies of life, Tommy. Perhaps I can persuade the gentleman."

He disappeared up the stairs, taking them deliberately step by step, the cigar still smoking between his lips. "Red" called after him.

"Keep away from in front of the door, Bill; he'll shoot sure, for he cocked his gun when I was up there." Hickock glanced back, waved his hand.

"Don't worry—the room occupied by Mr.—ah—Montgomery was '15,' I believe you said?"

Whatever occurred above, it was over with very shortly. Those listening at the foot of the stairs heard the first gentle rap on the door, an outburst of profanity, followed almost instantly by a sharp snap, as if a lock had given way, then brief scuffling mingled with the loud creaking of a bed. Scarcely a minute later the marshal appeared on the landing above, one hand firmly gripped in the neck-band of an undershirt, thus securely holding the writhing, helpless figure of a man, who swore violently every time he could catch his breath.

"Any other room you could conveniently assign Mr.—ah—Montgomery to, Tommy?" he asked pleasantly.

"If he doesn't like it in the morning, he could be changed, you know."

"Give—give him '47.'"

"All right, I'm the bell-boy temporarily, Montgomery; easy now, my man, easy, or I'll be compelled to use both hands. 'Red,' carry the gentleman's luggage to '47—he has kindly consented to give up his old room to a lady—come along, Montgomery."

It was possibly five minutes later when he came down, still smoking, his face not even flushed.

"Montgomery is feeling so badly we were obliged to lock him in," he reported to the clerk. "Seems to be of a somewhat nervous disposition. Well, good-night, Doctor," he lifted his hat. "And to you, Miss, pleasant

dreams."

Hope watched him as he stepped outside, pausing a moment in the shadows to glance keenly up and down the long street before venturing down the steps. This quiet man had enemies, hundreds of them, desperate and reckless; ceaseless vigilance alone protected him. Yet her eyes only, and not her thoughts, were riveted to Fairbain, who had risen to his feet.

"I wish I might see him, also," she said, as though continuing an interrupted conversation.

"See him? Who?"

"Mr. Keith. I—I knew him once, and—and, Doctor, won't you tell him I should like to have him come and see me just—just as soon as he can."

A FARM AT PUBLIC SALE!

I have decided to leave the country and will sell my farm to the highest bidder, on the premises.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 23, Commencing at 10 o'clock.

Farm consists of 80 acres more or less, two miles and a half west and a mile south of Pacific Junction, Iowa, adjoining the Andrew Graham farm.

The farm is all under fence—about 4 acres of hog pasture, 40 acres of prairie hay, timothy and clover, balance in orchard and cultivation. About 1,000 peach trees, 20 apple trees, 25 cherry trees and some small fruit. The buildings include a 5-room house, 2 hay sheds of about 40 tons capacity, milk house and corn crib. There are two good wells.

Will also sell about 100 oak fence posts, 25 tons of prairie hay in stock, 12 tons of timothy and clover, and some alfalfa in shed; 10 tons Kafir corn, 10 bushels potatoes. A No. 1 fresh milk cow, about 30 head hogs, some farm machinery, one new feather bed, some household goods and other articles too numerous to mention.

Terms on Farm—Cash or good security for \$1,000; balance arranged at 5 per cent. On other items—Under \$10, cash; over \$10, ten months' time on approved note at 8 per cent.

SOLOMON ROWE, T. G. Byers, Auctioneer.

HALLOWEEN AND WHAT GENERALLY OCCURS

Will Be Well for Our Citizens to Be on the Alert for Depredations.

The Halloween festival, which used to be celebrated largely by maidens anxious to learn their future husbands, and by bobbing for apples and other games suited to the kiddies, has of late been seized upon by the small boy as an excuse for various depredations.

In many places conservative citizens find it prudent to place gates and other movable property under lock and key.

The ordinary pater familias looks abroad at the growing tendency to crime in high and low places. He often feels that his offspring has achieved something rather glorious if the boy avoids committing any crime on account of which the community finds it more economical to board him at public expense than to permit him to remain at large. Hence he often makes light of these minor ravages by the cub element of his family.

To Young America the man who objects to the burning of gates and chicken coops and the stealing of signs, seems terribly deficient in humor. Still it does seem as if one ought to be able to lodge a protest against the destruction of things that cost time, thought and money, without being considered to lack sympathy with the young people and to be growing old.

Finishing Touches Going On. Major Creamer of Council Bluffs arrived this morning to look over the progress of the work on the government building.

The sub-contractor, Mr. Benedict, who is putting down the concrete walks, has made considerable progress on the east walk. The government rule of adhering to the eight-hour law, prevents the work from proceeding as fast as it otherwise would, although there is nothing in the law to prevent the contractor from putting on another shift of laborers. The work of placing the inside fixtures is progressing nicely, but it will be some time before all are in place.

Has Eyes Operated On. Mrs. Annie Richter has been troubled of late with granulated eyelids. Yesterday she went to Omaha and consulted Dr. Gifford, who advised an operation, which was had. Mrs. Richter returned last evening and it will be some days before she can use her eyes.

First Ice of Winter. From Saturday's Daily. The first ice of the winter was formed last night. Yesterday afternoon a message was received at the Burlington shops notifying them of a lively snow storm at Sheridan, Wyo., and to rush the side curtains for engines.

Mrs. Will Shera of Rock Bluffs was in the city yesterday looking after the week-end shopping.

Receive City Certificates. The city teachers' certificates under the new law enacted at the last session of the legislature have begun to arrive and will be placed in the possession of the teachers as fast as they arrive. This is a new departure in school affairs and will in future do away with the examinations by the school boards of the cities of the state.

The quarterly examinations will be held Wednesday, November 1. Pupils will be passed on making a grade of 85, and no grade below 80 will be accepted by the teachers. Those who have a record of not to exceed six half-days' absence and good daily average will be excused from the quarterly examinations.

The schools will be closed for the balance of the week, commencing Wednesday, November 8, to allow the teachers to attend the State Teachers' association at Omaha, which convenes November 8. The first day will be for superintendents and principals. Professors Abbott and Larson will attend from the first. The session lasts for three days.

Superintendent Abbott received from E. C. Wescott this week a copy of the Los Angeles Times, which gives an account of the kindergarten department of the schools of that city, and the introduction of "a nap period" in this department, which is being tried for the first time. The kindergartens at this period are allowed to "duck their tiny heads and sleep for a few minutes" each day.

Superintendent Abbott has just received a letter from Superintendent Baird of the Burlington shops requesting him to keep a record of the young men graduating from the school, with a view of furnishing Mr. Baird a list of the names of the proficient ones, that he may select therefrom young men for positions in the Burlington service.

John P. Healy of Omaha is in the city, a guest of Charles McGuire and family.

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Under side stress and strain the resilient Hinged Joint yields to pressure and quickly returns to its old form without bending or breaking the stay wires, the strain being taken up by the heavy horizontal bars.

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