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MISS PUTTY FACE By Vingie E. Roe

Blue Sage Flat's Infant Terrible Helps the New Schoolma'am to Find Her Heart Under Strange Circumstances.

The brand new schoolma'am of Blue Sage Fint was in tears, frank, ignoble tears. The 11 "upils-they had always been "scholars" before -were straggling down across the gray, gentle slopes in different directions, calling boisterousby to each other in the exuberance of young spirits released from the first day's bondage in the little house on the flat. The new school. ma'am watched them through the miserable blur that was threatening to blot out the world in general, and wondered how on earth she was ever going to stand nine months of them-and this.

A horrible panic was all inside her.

Those youngsters had tooked at her in blank amaze when she put the first orthographical test to the primary class, which consisted of the youngest two Bailies, and openly and without permission told her that kuh-ah-tuh did not spell cat! The eldest Crawford boy informed her patiently (and with condescension) that that feat was accomplished by see-al-tee. They were a colossal wall raised against her and bound together by that quickest of all contempts, that of a child for a teacher whom it thinks is incompetent. How on earth was one going to break through that with the newer methods? How was she going to pierce the fog of ignorance let loose upon them by their former teachers who had, without a doubt, grounded them in spelling by letter instead of sound!

It was incredible! And they wiped their little noses frankly on their sleeves. They drank from a community dipper in the pall on the porch without regard for hygiene. They stared at her open mouthed when she told them, early in the day, that it was not sanitary to borrow each other's chewing gum.

So you can see, dear reader, that the new schoolma'am of Blue Sage Flat was 19, that she was a product of normal, that she was far-very far-away from her native heath on this forsaken flat, and that this was the first day of the first term of her first school.

Therefore it is to be hoped you will excuse her when I tell you that the last straggler-the fat, square, bland faced Dinklemeir in its hood and heavy stockings, though the time was only Indian summer-had hardly disappeared down over the slope into'the fringe of sycamores about. the prairie stream that hedged the Flat, when he said, 'an' this bunch's pretty all fired she laid her head down on her unpainted, ancient desk and cried.

It was a pretty head, covered with thick, brown hair that had just enough curl in it to make it stand up and fluff, and there was a pinky white neck below the fluff. There were the tips of pink ears showing, too, for this schoolma'am did not believe in hiding those necessary adornments entirely. Neither were her sensible dark skirts quite so short as those she had seen back at home, nor her neat blouse quite so low at the neck as those one met every day on the streets of the towns.

Score one for the new teacher.

But now she had reached the jumping off place of her courage and endurance, right now, at the first getaway of her race in the new life! It had been coming all the nightmare week she had been at Tom Atkins' house across the stream and down a mile. It had been started when she left her mother and all her friends in the little Kansas town so far-so frightfully far-away.

"You notice too darn much." answered the rider pointedly. "Ain't there any other place to ride in that direction of Blue Sage Flat?" "Um," mused Cuff, rubbing his chin, "proved, ch?"

He turned and raised a stentorian call, "Boys," he yelled. "here's Babe, come in from th' Blue Sage Flat with a grouch stacked

up a mile high. Come see." A half dozen cowboys, all washed up for supper, came promptly with simlet eyes ready to

search Babe's "innerds" shamelessly. But they had their trouble for their pains. He unsaddled and turned the pony into the corral, grinning with assumed good nature, "What folks don't know won't hurt 'em."

healthy."

Babe Cutler rode no more toward the Blue Sage Flat, and he paid his bet to Cuff and Sid Carroll with a pensive readiness that did not escape the Argus eyes of those worthies and which roused in them a desire to know its rcason

But if Babe had ill luck in his initial attempt to meet the schoolma'am, there were others who were more fortunate. Sid, for instance, who came home one day a week later grinning fatuously and full of the schoolma'am's praises.

"Gray eyes," he stated pensively, "gray for sure-gray as smoke. An' hair! Say, mamma! It's brown and curly an' thick as Silver's mane!" "Look here," interrupted Charlie Spikes, "why will you compare a lady to that flea-bitten skate of yours?'

At another time such reference to Silver, slim, willing, tough and pretty enough for any edwman to straddle, would have brought instant fight out of his master. Now

land sakes, there's a run in one of her stockin's. Babe made some rambling remark, but her reply was so cool that he did not repeat -there's one in th' other one, too!" silence

umphed and when t... music struck up Babe found himself drifting out with the little figure in his arms, its silken feel a new intoxicant.

"No one noticed the Crawford boy. He was playing round the blackboard with a piece of chalk-innocent childhood amusing itself."

craceful and his blue shirt set off his dark eyes and the hair that shone black beneath the tipped sombrero's rim.

Nobody was looking, however. They stopped respectfully and the hat came

off. "Howdy, Miss Ransome," smiled Babe as if there had never been a thought of coldness be-

That was it. He was a goner-he, poor fish. who only offended her every time he opened his fool mouth!

He rode far that day on the boss' business but the boas' business suffered. He passed three unbranded calves in Deep Coules and never saw them.

For the next two weeks the boy was genuinely miserable. Then came the electric word flashing round the ranches that Miss Ransome. still keen on the uplift, was going to give a box supper at the schoolhouse on Blue Sage Flat for the express purpose of providing a library for the use of all the country!

They all do this along in their first or second

terms. Now, there was nothing in that good news to plunge him into the nethermost depths of gloom, but it did so plunge him.

"Geewhillikins!" acclaimed Cuff, sparkling eyed, "imagine th' little girl on that there platform sellin' th' boxes: Mistress of ceremonies! An' won't her box come high?' Say, boy! If th' rest feel like I do about it, she'll just have to move a whole Carnegie right out here, she'll have so much money to spend!"

Babe rode far again, and his head felt like the cook's scrambled brains from overmuch thinking.

Could he go to that box supper?

Why not? He did certainly want to go.

Nope. He recalled too vividly those widening gray eyes that day by the winding creek. They were sure cold and fightin' mad. She just wouldn't see him if he did go-and could he stand that? To see those grinning monkeys, Cuff and Sid, hoppin' about her-darn! Prebably have her box spotted, too.

No, sir! He dug his spurs into Pronto needlessly and gasped at his sudden leap. No, sir! He'd stay at home again. Regular old hermit. The night of the box supper was cold and

clear. There were stars above the rangeland, the creak of coming wagons, a fire in the schoolhouse stove, and not room enough by half.

However, every door and window was full of faces, the compact benches that replaced the seats a solid pack of humanity. There was the pleasant hum of expectancy. There were neatly combed and gala clad children in conspicuous evidence. The 11 had been drilled to a man, for there was to be a program.

There was a mountain of paper covered boxes on the platform.

What flutter of feminine finery along the benches!

What edging in of prospective purchasers! What scanning of fair faces, as this or that box went up, to catch a betraying blush!

It was all simple, genuine, happy.

Sid and Cuff and all the rest of the Lazy X boys were there and on tiptoe, all, that is, but

Out in the cold night, like a pariah beyond the feast, sat that erstwhile careless knight. that most confident Lothario, Babe Cutler, his leg over his saddle horn and his black eyes pensive with that sadness which ever attends the sickness of the heart called unrequited love.

In his left breast pocket reposed something which filled him alternately with pride and misgiving, which had caused him laborious days and sleepless nights-namely, a real, true love letter, and the best thing of its kind he could produce.

It was five drawn, like a draftsman's elevation, on good paper, done with a Spencerian pen. It had been copied and recopied, changed, abridged, and amplified, a good 15 times.

It was poetic, with that subtle insinuation and reference dear to a woman's heart, so thought its author; it was firm and strong with a man's undying passion. Once read it must find its mark in the heart behind the soft brown dress, or there was no truth in the old adage of the brave and fair. "he who hesitates,

Babe and opportunity sat in the dark and

waited-and they were not be denied. Just be-

fore the pile of boxes was entirely gone one of

the Bailies, puffed with oratory, came out to

take a breath of air. Him Babe shamelessly

whistled off the step and man and boy held a

whispered confab which ended with the magic

stand alone went to the least thickly fringed

window to watch the stealthy progress of his

rounded arms unlifted to the better display of

the box she held. What adorable little wrists!

What pink-tipped fingers! Babe's hungry black

He saw the Baily boy edge up, innocently im-

portant, and stand in the crowd, the tell-tale bit

cheeks flushed, her gray eyes sparkling, "the

biggest box yet! It has paper lace and one-two-

"Gone!" she said and reached for the mone,

as she leaned down to deliver. Just here the

oldest Crawford boy's gimlet eyes caught the

glint of a letter in his mate's small hand and

"And this!" called the schoolma'am, "pink

"Five dollars!" cried Sid Carroll, with

"Ten!" doubled Cuff and instantly a murmun

Soon Miss Ransome was all blushes, for this

Outside in the night Babe Cutler clenched

The plain pink bex with the ribbon on top

was the last and sold to Sid Carroll for \$37.

Partners were finding each other and settling

on the benches for that most delectable event,

No one noticed the Crawford boy. He was

But presently a cowboy at the back of the

playing round the blackboard with a piece of

house with his mouth full of cake stopped chew-

ing to look. Some one noticed his absorbed face

and turned to look also. To look was to start

and soon the chattering mass on the benches

became quiet, a sea of faces all turned one way,

for this is what they saw appearing in large.

round, childish script on the broad face of the

to speak. No longu can I keep silent. It ain't

in the heait of man. Your tupping feet have

walked on my beait, and I aint like I was. I

"I am as dust beneath those little feet,

The painstaking scribe was never to finish

the packed benches, scattering cake and con-

fusion, and swept him aside. A panting, sweat-

ing, wild-eyed whiriwind whose face was tragic

and who turned at bay by the blackboard to

Foremost in the surge was Sid Carroll, his

"If you're meanin' Miss Ransome by that

A blow follewed the words, and in 20 sec-

(Tum to Pass Baras B.)

there asper-a-sion," gritted Sid, "you've got t'

onds there was such a howling, indignant free-

BABE.

Faithfully and obediently,

meet the general uprising of insult.

erstwhile mate, red with anger.

fight, an' that right now."

"Miss Putty Face, Dear Madam. I beg leave,

chalk-innocent childhood amusing itself.

the "lap supper." The murmuring voices rose

ran like fire among the bidders that this was

box threatened to insult every one sold previous.

his fists and swallowed-he was past swearing-

for he saw that little archfiend, the Crawford

boy, disappear in the crowd with the epistle!

with the sweep of the bully snatched for it.

and plain, with a ribbon on top?"

ly by its arrogant expensiveness

prophetic foreknowledge.

three-five roses! What am I offered for this

"See!" cried Miss Ransome laughing, her

Babe wet his lips, and leaving Pronto to

Miss Ransome was on the platform, her

passing of silver, the satin slip of paper.

The die was cast.

eyes caressed them.

"Two dollars!"

"Two fifty!"

"Three!"

of white in his pudgy fingers.

of the rest.

pian.

one?"

hers.

blackboard:

love you.

Please answu.

8-B

True, Mrs. Tom was kind and sympathetic, not without a certain tact, and the mile and a half walk through the tall trees that spread along the stream was more than delightful! True, also, Blue Sage Flat paid the princely salary of \$120 a month for a teacher from "back These were assets. But the awful hun-Past. ger of loneliness and the face of the 11 whom she feared utterly were liabilities that appalled her

So she clinched her hands on the desk's edge and cried as she had longed to cry all that long week, with wailing sobs that cut the silences unashamed.

She was occupied completely and did not hear the soft thud of a horse's hoofs on the untrodden earth without, so that the rider who approached came abreast of the open door with an unobstructed view up the mean little aisle between the desks to that young brown head.

The rider, too, was young, and he had a cocksure face, ready to laugh at a moment's notice. Also he had a bet with two others of his lik to meet the schoolma'am first. He was alert and a triffe overconfident as he rode in across the sage, for he knew good and well that he had a way with women, but that first glance inth the house sobered him completely.

He drew rein and leaned sidewise in his sad dle, and his merry, dark eyes became distressedly grave. This was a pretty how-de-do. He had heard all about Miss Ransome. All cow lads thereabouts had. He knew she had brown hair. that her eyes were not blue but gray, that she had worn a brown tailored suit with low shoes and silk stockings, all topped off by a saucy brown hat turned back from her face and lined with brown stitched pink.

He knew she was a pippin and a peach and that Mrs. Tom had told Slim Acres that she was fond of dancing and that she could play the plano and sing all the latest songs.

So you can see it was somewhat of a poser to be handed a wallop like the spectacle here be. fore him of tears and honest to goodness sobs.

But it is to the credit of the newcomer that he forgot the disappointment in true anxiety and wondered what on earth he could do to turn off the shower. He removed his wide hat -it was his best one, reserved for his trips to town, and decorated by a fancy spotted bandas a preliminary precaution, and cleared his throat

In just about two seconds he got the pep all right.

The brown head lifted with a jerk and a convulsed face, sireaked with salt water, confronted him.

Two beautiful wide, gray eyes-beautiful even in their swollen and discolored lids behind their swimming tears-stared at him in halfscared astonishment. A trembling mouth was parted over genuine pearly teeth.

"Of all things!" snapped Miss Esther Ran-"Do you spy on people's privacy out some. here? Go away from that door!"

Now it is one thing to go troubadouring gayly up to a brand new interest with a weather eye out for future friendships, and quite an. other to be sat upon like a toad and a caterpillar and a worm. The fairly good looking mouth of the young man in the saddle shut with a snap of its own and an imitation sunset drowned out his tan.

With slow insolence he brushed the rim of the expensive sombrero, set it back on his head at careful angle, straightened up on his horse and rode away. When he was well out of sight beyond the poplar trees he spread an expressive hand palm down and delivered himself softly of some choice and carefully selected oaths.

"Not for mine!" he finished decisively. "Goodnight, nurse! Get along home, Pronto. Though dam'f I know what I'll tell those longlegged popinjays at th' bunkhouse."

Pronto, eager-eyed and shuffling, told off the iles that lay between the Blue Sage Flat and the Lazy X in all too short a time.

"Well, Lothario, did yuh meet th' little priness?" inquired Cuff Benson, stopping halfway to the water trough with a wash basin in his ain't it. Lizzie? Curly-'tis so." hand. "I notice you come from that direction."

Sid was too full of his subject and passed the insult over.

"An' th' little neck under th' hair is white, like a candle when it comes out uh th' box-"Yuh make me tired!" said Babe disgustedly.

"There's a shade of pink in her skin, A great and sudden silence fell on the group. They regarded the speaker gravely. Sid

put both hands on his hips and leaned forward. "Is-that-so?" he inquired drawingly. "An where, and when, Lothario, did you find that

out? I thought you'd never met her?" "Paid that bet pretty prompt, too, didn't ?" some one else wanted to know. "Seemed

indifferent, sort of." Babe snapped the ash from his cigaret and walked away, but the back of his neck was red. Every one of the bunch behind him saw it. Each one laid it up as suspicious evidence of something untoward to be unraveled in future -to the chagrin and discomfort, if possible, of their mate.

And in the meantime Miss Esther Ransome had, metaphorically, shaken her slim shoulders and gathered up the reins of her new life as if that first terrible nanic had never been. She was built of good stuff and had soon rallied her spiritual resources.

She was already fitted into Mrs. Tom's modest household as one of the family, and the beautiful walk through the trees along the stream had cast its spell upon her. She had conquered the youngest Dinkelmeir positively, had coldly informed the Crawford boy of his colossal ignorance in regard to the antiquated value of letters as compared to sounds, and had battered down their wall of opposition like a soldier. Therefore she was cool and collected and was already feeling herself mistress of her destiny.

She had also relegated the bucket from the back stoop to a shelf and instituted a system of individual drinking cups by means of some thick paper, scissors and a bit of glue, sitting up half a night at Mrs. Tom's to accomplish that end. She was feeling that virtuous self-satisfaction that comes with all uplift movements when we are the uplifters.

Those thus elevated don't seem to get the same effect.

At any rate she was that most delectable product of the whole world, a young girl just beginning a life work, for the first time self-supporting, interested in her particular sphere, and the only que of her peculiar kind within a radius of many man-infested miles.

It was odd how many male riders found it mperative to seek straying cattle in Blue Sage Flat-how unaccountably thirsty they became just about the time they reached the seat of learning. Half the rangeland knew about those individual, collapsible, brown paper drinking cups before two weeks. The Lazy X knew all about them-except Babe.

He displayed a cold, not to say frozen, indifference to everything connected with mental improvement, a state of affairs entirely foreign to his former habit.

When Miss Ransome had been a month at the Flat, cowland felt a sudden desire to dance. Dances were few and far between, but the urge to shake a foot seemed to take the outfits simultaneously, and word went scurrying about the ranches that they were to "come one, come all" to the store at Biller's Crossroads, the time-honoxed scene of all festivities for 40 years.

Esther rode beside Mrs. Tom, and her gray eyes were bright as the stars themselves. And you may well believe that there were masked batteries on every side as she entered the long room of the store. Comely matrons with their offspring in rows beside them, buxom girls in ruffles and ribbons, their natural cheeks a triffe too bright, their figures a bit too sturdy for exreme grace, but young and sweet withal, viewed her with eyes as sharp as needles.

"She's got on brown again," they opined 'It's crepe de chine, ain't it? An' it's trimmed with coral. My, aint it a swell combination! "She does her hair like a bob-rolled under.

"Yes, an' her slippers are brown satin, an',

"No, Lizzie, are you sure? Ain't it one of them clock things they're puttin' in the stockin's now-there's a little arrowhead at top."

A sigh of relief followed as it was discovered that the damning runs were clocks and no mistake.

Taken altogether the new schoolma'am was as different from 'the general run of her sex present as an exquisite autumn leaf is different from a plush covered platform rocker,

At first glance she seemed disappointingly plain in her slim, trim dress of brown with its slight touches of coral, her little sleek head with its rolled-under hair. Then, as lively masculine eves took her in avidly, there was something different about her-yes, that was it, different. They didn't know what, but it was there, a difference.

And how sweet and approachable she was!

Those who had nonchalantly passed through the Blue Sage Flat and "knew her well," presented themselves with bows and scrapes, to be accepted one and all for a waltz or one-step. The girl found herself swamped with partners. The Lazy X was large and prominent on the list-there almost to a man.

"Great Scott, Babe, if you don't hurry." warned Sid, "you won't get a chance before morning!"

"Why," drawled Babe, coolly, "I don't know's I care a-whole lot."

"Eh? Say, wise boy, you losin' your mind? Ain't no one died an' left yuh a legacy, have they?"

But Babe was already bowing elaborately before a bunch of blushes and pink ribbons and didn't seem to hear.

This was a great dance. Lights and lanterns glowed in rivalry to the youthful faces, the spaces of the raftered roof gave back the "shuff shuff" of the gliding feet, and young hearts beat high.

"Dearie," beamed Mrs. Tom, "you've got th' whole bunch locoed! How many times has Sid Carroll ast you?"

"Five," said the schoolma'am modestly. "He dances well."

"An' Babe Cutler?" "I don't know."

Now, she knew well that the tallest, straightest, handsomest boy in the house-the one with the blackest eyes and hair, the most indefatigable dancer-was Babe Cutler. Sid had seen to that-and that he did not ask her for a single step. She knew also that he had looked down the aisle of the Blue Sage schoolhouse once to behold her in ignoble tears. There had been, on sober second thought, nothing criminal in that. Any one might ride by the Flat-in fact, how many of these youngsters hadn't? But there in her consciousness an uncomfortable sense of shame for her own hot words, and that was sufficient to make her hold her head a triffe higher when she passed him on the floor, to give her an added air of superiority toward him.

As far as Babe was concerned, there might have been no new girl in the country. He just didn't see her, so to speak. But you can bet his comrades did, and took in all the signs.

"There's somethin' happened," Cuff told a couple of the Lazy X boys in whispered confab when the night was half over. "Never saw his nibs so plumb cold storaged in my life. Can't tell me he ain't seen her before." And they went in solemn file to find him.

"Babe," said Sid, "we're wise. You're scared to ask her for a dance. Bet you Silver against your Pronto you don't dare."

Now what healthy male of 24 ever took anything like that? Babe flushed and scowled

"If you're so all-fired smart," he said, "introduce me."

There was a crowd about Miss Ransome, as sual, but it fell apart for the boys from the Lazy X and when the girl looked up she met the same dark eyes she had seen before, though they were as distant as moons. For one heady moment she meant to refuse

his stiff invitation. Then her good sense tri-

and they danced out the number in a strained

"What one earth's th' matter with Babe Cutler?" Mrs. Tom wanted to know as they rode home in the chilly dawn. "He only ast you once-an' him th' greatest lady's man in all the

country." But the schoolma'am was half asleep and did not answer.

She was not so far gone in dreamy slumber. however, that she could not catch Mrs. Tom's guileless meaning, of Babe's intentional slight, and her inward soul stiffened with embarrassment. She wished violently that she had refused him, as she had at first intended.

Why on earth hadn't she? Just why hadn't she?

Wait until the next opportunity-just so. But no such mortification was going on in

the breast of the cowboy. His grandiloquent renunciation of the downward spread palm that day at the Flat seemed. since the dance, somehow vague and unimpor-

The feel of the little, sleek, brown-clad body coldly. in the bend of his arm had filled him with fatuous comparisons. Wasn't a "skirt" in the country that felt so-kind of light and straight and soft underneath. They were more solid, those other girls; you could grip them good and hearty and swing them wide on the corners. But this girl, now-holy smoke, you couldn't pull no gling! rough stuff like that on her. Why, those little feet of hers would simply fly off the floor if you meanswung her hard. You had to kind of loosen up. let her turn herself, and follow after-all sort ct respectful and at your distance. And that wonderful soft, slippy feel of her-

The openly sung praises of the new schoolma'am which greeted his ears at the Lazy X and the tall boy standing bareheaded beside it made him weary. He who was supposed to be a connoisseur on feminine charm smoked in pained aloofness and had no comment to make.

thario." they jeered. "Regular frozen face party. Tah!" I bet you said 'Good floor' an' she said 'Very'--and you said-

there nothin' inside you poor boobs' heads but wind? I'd tell a fella.

tumn livery. The high skles of this prairie anyway?" country were blue and clear. She felt peppy, brisk, and businesslike as she stepped along. Life was on tiptoe now. No more tears, no panic. The letters she wrote home to that Kansas town were full of references to her work and her methods, to her new friends and her ideas of uplift as applied to the outlying districts. The eldest Crawford boy trudged beside her. He did not have to come so far out of his way, but there was a devilish pertinacity of antagonism in him that still sent him arguing upon any subject she tried to instill in him. Today it had been the stuck to his query, "How can you talk on a wire if there ain't no wire? Huh!"

"I do wish, Henry, that you would go home row. You are far past the turnoff," she told him gently, but Henry persisted. He hung behind mumbling at intervals about "no wire" and "numbskulls."

The teacher was busily thinking of her arivel to Babe, yet exquisitely interesting. monthly examinations and almost forgot him. She was recalled violently by the boy's shrill squeak, "-ain't it?"

"'Isn't,' Henry not 'ain't,' Isn't what?' "Cowboy from Lazy X. Babe, 'At's Babe,

sure's shootin'! What's he comin' this way for ?" The schoolma'am blushed furiously, She could have shaken the child. Little pest! Anger rose in her like a tide. She glanced ahead down the magic vista of leafy floor beneath the trees acknowledged his defeat in the lists of love. He and beheld a common little range horse, caparisoned heavily in saddle and rider.

However, this was Pronto, good as gold and favorably spoken of wherever cow horses were entioned hereabouts, and he carried his dearly beloved master gayly forward at a canter. They kind that took sudden; just a look, maybe, or a handclasp-not to mention a whole long dance for-all as the cow country had not staged for did make a gallant picture had any cared to look for beauty in them, for Babe was lean and number-and wowie! you were a goner,

tween them. "How do you do, Mr .- er-what did they

say your name was?" asked Miss Ransame innocently. "I-think I met you, didn't I? So many, you know-excuse me."

"See here, Miss Ransome," he said frankly, 'you're so sweet and friendly with everybody clse. Why won't you be friends with me?"

There was open and boyish yearning in Baba's voice.

The schoolma'am, being 19 and feminine, caught the note and in spite of herself thrilled to it. That thrill made her more angry with herself.

"Friends," she said with dignity, "are people one can trust." though how the remark applied to the situation she did not specify.

"You could trust me," swore Eabe eagerly, somewhat diffidently; "if you want someone to trust, why, I'm a shinin' mark in that line. Cuff and Sid, why, when they want someone to trust-really trust-they come to me. On sec-

rets I'm a Maxim silencer-----"I have no secrets," said Miss Ransome

"No," hastened Babe, "of course not. No really nice girl has-

"Ah!" the gray eyes widened and shone balefully. "And yet you suggest them to me?" The cowboy groaned. Could you beat it? Wasn't he the poor fish proper, always bun-

"I beg your pardon," he said stiffly, "I didn't

"Goodnight,' said the schoolma'am, and if there was the slightest possible inflection on the second word she was innocent of intentional slang.

As she stepped out to pass the little horse there was a patter of feet in the dry leaves and a derisive voice behind.

"Yah!' it jeered, "Babe Cutler an' teacher! "A fine stab you made th' other night, Lo- Teacher an' Babe. Babe's stuck on teacher!

Miss Ransome turned furiously.

"Henry,' she called in cold anger, "if you "Oh, hell!" said Babe disgustedly. "Ain't don't go straight home I shall punish you tomorrow, very severely!"

"Gosh darn my luck !" said Babe savagely as Miss Ransome walked along the stream's the swung back on Pronto and left that place on edge. All the trees were flaming in their au. a run. "What do I want to hang around for,

But that was more than he could answer. What youth has ever been able to answer to happy bedlam. that question when inamorata frowns?

He would put out of his mind all memory of light little feet and a slender, silken form. At the very next dance a miracle happened.

Babe Cutler stayed at home! For the first time since he had appeared on the horizon of that particular rangeland some seven years back as a stripling boy the best dancer in the region was not present

And it must be said in justice that if the new subject of wireless-and the lad had doggedly sirl noticed his absence she gave no visible sign. She nailed down her former advantage with more smiles, more democratic kindliness, and by daylight she could have had just about anything she asked for in that part of the countryfrom the male half of the population.

The Lazy X was loud in its adoration and lifted up its voice and sang. This eulogy was He smoked and listened.

White this time her dress was." offered Sid. "all softy like an' fine, and she had a bow of that damning superscription. A whirlwind in ribbon, goldy colored, somewhere underneath sombrero and boots leaped spectacularly over in front. Shone through."

Babe's right arm felt suddenly bereft. He was jealous of that "soft feel," could have smit-

ten Sid for noticing it Right there Babe Cutler met his Waterloo. turned sickly green around the lips and got up and left the idiotic group.

He knew it for truth! He'd heard of this

Yes, sir, he was in love Honest to goodness in love!