

The Girl a Horse and a Dog

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Under his grandfather's will, Stanford Broughton, victor in a fight for the estate, valued something like a million dollars, and he had a son, a daughter, and a dog. He had a horse, a dog, and a girl. He had a horse, a dog, and a girl. He had a horse, a dog, and a girl.

CHAPTER II.—On his way to Denver, the city nearest the meridian where the Grandfather's will, Stanford Broughton, a fellow traveler, a story having to do with a flooded mine.

CHAPTER III.—Thinking things over, he begins to imagine there may be some thing in his grandfather's bequest worth while, his idea finally centering on the possibility of a mine, as a safe repository for his fortune. He goes to the town of Atropia, where he finds a man, a woman, and a dog. He finds a man, a woman, and a dog.

CHAPTER IV.—On the station platform at Atropia, just as the train pulls out, Stanford sees what appears to be the identical horse and dog described in his grandfather's will. He leaves the train at the next stop, Atropia. He leaves the train at the next stop, Atropia.

CHAPTER V.

The Magic Triad.

To be stopped before I could reach my goal was no part of my plan, so I opened things up and gave the little three-wheeled dinky all the gas it could use, keeping a sharp lookout ahead, and meaning to pull up a little way short of the graveyard city, abandoning the car and making the actual approach on foot.

Judging from the way the scenery was racing backward, I estimated that the little car was doing at least thirty miles to the hour, which meant forty minutes or such a matter, to cover the twenty-mile miles. If opposing train or trains, whatever they might be, could only keep out of my way for those precious forty minutes—

I pushed the small motor to its limit and was getting along beautifully until suddenly, on a grade that was a bit steeper than usual, the popping exhaust quit short, the engine slowed down, and the car, squeaking and grinding, came to a stand on a low embankment between two of the hill cuttings.

There wasn't anything very complicated about the little motor, and I soon discovered that a broken ignition wire was what had killed it. Happily, there was a small toolbox under the seat, and in the kit there was a pair of pliers. But sometimes—and this was one of them—a bit of material as important as the tools to work with, the broken wire was too short to couple up again, and there wasn't an inch of spare wire to be found in the kit.

"They say that necessity is the mother of invention," but I defy anybody to invent a piece of wire in the middle of the Great Sahara desert. Every minute I was expecting to hear the rattle and roar of a train.

In this emergency it was a little desert zephyr that gave me the great idea. A gentle breeze came sighing up the draw from some overhanging area out beyond, and flapping the trees in the barren hills, it sang its little song in the thickly clustering telegraph wires on the poles. Why, sure! I said to myself, here was my wire—miles and miles of it. All I had to do was to climb up and get it.

Gentle reader, I wonder if you've ever tried to climb a telegraph pole without the contrivances that a lineman buckles upon his feet? If you haven't, the advice of this amateur is don't. Half a dozen times I slung up to perhaps the height of a man's head, only to come sliding down again on a run. At last, by a series of inch-ices I contrived to get within arm's-reach of the lowest crosspiece. Pliers in hand, I strained for the nearest wire, propped it, and began to twist it back and forth to break it.

away. And that wasn't all, either. At precisely the same instant, as if it had been timed by the same mechanism that had brought the freight train, here came a wild engine around the curve in the opposite direction, with its whistle valve held open and making a racket to wake the dead. The next instant motor-car riders had found a locomotive somewhere and were chugging me.

One loud, heavy at the stranded gasoline car, a mighty blast that got all but me whistling like a jack-rabbit for the tall timber—only there wasn't a stick of timber nearer than the slopes of the background mountains.

I gave a glance over my shoulder as I did, showed me what I was in for; that the story was to be immediately continued in our next. Both engineers tried to stop; did stop in time to avert the greater catastrophes. Three or four men jumped from the freight and two from the wild engine to come tearing after me. I fancied I could give them their money's worth at that game—being in pretty fair training—so I pitched out to try to turn the hypothetical theory into a conditional.

It was a great race. Through one gap and into another we went, making figure eights around the hills and back again, dodging into new ravines and out of them into others, circling among great sandstone boulders that took all sorts of weird shapes in the passing glimpse.

I don't know just how long the chase lasted, but it was long enough to give me a very considerable degree of respect for the nerve and persistence of those highly indignant railroad men. We must have been miles away from the scene of the disaster when I finally left them behind and lost them.

When I looked back and found myself alone with the solitude I sat down upon a flat rock to jasp and laugh. It had all been so supremely ridiculous, and so beautifully in keeping with the reputation I had left behind me at Atropia, that I felt sure that now nothing less than a verdict of expert alienists would ever serve to convince these Red Desert folk that I was anything but an escaped lunatic.

After the breathing spell I kept on up the valley, heading away from the setting sun, and feeling certain that, sooner or later, I must come out somewhere in the neighborhood of Atropia. Two hours later I came into a sort of an excuse for a road. Being pretty well winded by the stiff climb out of the canyon ravine, I sat down at the roadside to rest a bit and to decide which way I should go, to the right or to the left. Just as I was making up my mind I heard a patter of feet and a dog barked.

A moment later I could see his head, indistinctly. He had been coming up the road and had stopped at the sight or scent of me. Since a dog assayed the possibility of a dog-riding human being, I called coaxingly, "Here, mister, here, come on, old fellow—that's a boy!" and the curious thing about it is that he did it, running up a little way and stopping, and finally coming to squat before me and to lift a paw for me to shake.

I jollied him a bit and let him nose me to his heart's content. Then suddenly, as if he had discovered a long-lost master, he broke away and began to leap and dance around me, barking a furious and hilarious welcome. In the midst of this hubbub I heard hoof-beats and the squeaking of saddle leather, and the dog's owner rode up at first I thought the dimly outlined Stetson-hatted figure in the saddle was that of a boy. But it was a woman's voice, and a mighty pleasant one, that addressed the dog: "Down, Barney, and behave yourself—what's the matter with you, sir!"

I stood up and pulled off my cap. "I'm chiefly the matter," I said. "Four dogs seem to think he knows me, and I'm awfully sorry that his memory is so much better than mine." You'd think anybody would think that a woman riding alone in the dark on a solitary mountain road would be handsomely startled, to say the least, at seeing a man rise up fairly to nose her horse's nose. But if my little lady were scared, she certainly didn't parade her fright.

"Barney is such a foolish dog, sometimes," she said apologetically. "He has a double brain, you know; half of it is good-natured and silly and the other half is—well, it's—"

The dog had come around again wagging his tail and at that magic word "half" I stooped to let him stick his cold nose into my palm. The act brought me near enough to enable me to see him better, and I had to clap a hand over my mouth to keep from shouting out and scaring the entire combination into a wild stampede. For, if you'll believe me, the dog was my dog. One-half of his face was white and the other was so black that it merged and faded harmoniously into the night!

"I know," I said, straightening up, again, "my brain acts that way, too, sometimes." Then: "Pardon me, but would you mind telling me the color of the horse you are riding?" The young woman laughed and her laugh was just as jolly and pleasant as her speaking voice.

"Winkle is what the cow-men call a 'pinto'—a calico horse," she answered promptly. "Sure!" I bellowed. "I knew it!" and the horse shied and the dog barked in sheer sympathy. Then I apologized, to sheer sympathy. Then I apologized, to sheer sympathy. Then I apologized, to sheer sympathy.

"Please forgive the explosion," she said a minute ago, my brain sometimes acts like Barney's; half of it being good-natured and silly and the other half—well, it's—"

scription of the other half for the present, if you'll permit me. May I—er—will you have the goodness to tell me where I am?"

"I—why—dear me! Don't you know where you are?" "Not any more than a harmless, necessary goat, I assure you." I couldn't be certain, but I thought she took a little firmer hold upon her brittle rein.

"Did you—did you come from Atropia?" she asked in a sort of awed little voice. "How did you guess it? I was, indeed—for a very short space of time this very day—a member of the Andover band. And if you should ask me, I might say that I feel as though I had walked most of the way here from Atropia. I—I—my car broke down, you know."

"Yes," she said. "I know—just as if she did. Then: 'I can at least tell you where you are. This is the southern slope of Chamber mountain. This road leads on down to Atropia, about three miles below.'"

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"About five thousand feet. The mine is exactly five thousand three hundred feet below." "I believe." "There it was, you see: THIS MINE! 'Pardon me,' I hurried out; 'but would you mind telling me if your eyes are blue?'"

"Her much was the—of a hot spring water in the middle of a hot summer day; refreshing, you know, like that." "I sup-pup-pose my eyes are blue; people tell me they are."

"Thank you," I returned. "There is only one other little matter and that is very well until we are—er—a bit better acquainted, you know. And we go on, now?"

"She spoke to her pony and we went ahead of us and diagonally up a steep slope I could see the dim shapes of a number of buildings, all dark. Then we came to a great dump, looking as if the mountain had at one time opened to pour out a cataract of broken stone."

Beyond the dump there was another building with a light in it; and as the dog ran ahead of us, barking the figure of a man silhouetted itself in the open doorway.

"Here we are and you are welcome to the Old Cinnabar," said my companion to me. Then she "hoo-hoo-ed" cheerily to the man in the doorway and slipped out of her saddle, letting her pony stand while she led me across to the lighted, log-built cabin.

CHAPTER VI. The Old Cinnabar. "Daddy, here is a man I found down at the head of Antelope gulch; he had lost his way, so I brought him home with me." was the simple manner in which she launched me; and I found myself shaking hands with an elderly man who looked as if he might be a farmer, or a miner, or something of that nature—you will know what I mean—bannet shirt, trousers tucked into boots, iron-gray whiskers all over his face, an eye as mild as a colt's.

"You done plum right, Jeanie," he remarked; and then to me: "Come right on in, stranger, and be at home. If you don't see what you want, ask for it." After which he went to take care of the plesaid pony.

The log cabin proved to be primitive only on the outside. The interior was a dream of cozy homeliness. A hanging lamp lit up, and in its mild glow I had my first real look at the girl.

She wasn't beautiful in any show-girl meaning of the word; she was something far better—pleasant, charming. A round little face, wind-tanned to a tint as delicious as the blush in the heart of an apple-blossom, a jolly bit of a nose, tip-tipped enough to be called a healthy sense of humor, a mouth rather too large for too small upheld by a firm, round chin, and the

chin upheld by an extra pair of ribs, too. As she had admitted, her eyes were blue—the blue that shades into violet—and they were well-set, wide apart, and perfectly fearless; the kind of eyes fit to match the straight-lined brows that usually go with them.

I met before the cheerful blaze chuckling quietly to myself over the mad adventures of the day and their highly romantic, not to say miraculous, outcome. Beyond all manner of doubt I had stumbled upon the three tallisms of Cousin Percy's cryptic letter. By the most marvelous of accidents I had discovered the girl, the horse and the dog; and, if the remainder of Percy's letter, were to be taken at its face value, I should now be in touch with my legacy.

As to the character of that legacy, there could be no further question. Grandfather Jasper had left me a mine; and I was fully prepared to find it the drowned mine of Bullerton's story. What I might be able to make of it was a matter which could well be postponed to another day. Just as I reached this postponing conclusion, the girl's father came in, drew up a chair on the opposite side of the hearth, and began to make me welcome in a mild-mannered way, saying that they didn't have much company, and were always "master" glad to see a new face. He did not ask me any troublesome questions; and beyond telling me his name, which was Byron Twombly, did not volunteer any information about himself or his daughter, nor did he explain how they came to be living in such comparative comfort in such an out-of-the-way place.

A little later the girl returned to set the table, and presently we had supper. It was an amazingly good meal; crisp bacon, fried potatoes, hot biscuits and honey, and coffee that was most delicious in spite of the condensed milk which was made to serve as cream.

After we left the table the blue-eyed maiden got housewifely busy, and the old man and I sat before the fire and smoked. I don't remember just how it was that we finally drifted around to automobiles and motor boats and such things, but we did, and may be I may have bragged a bit about having driven and tinkered pretty nearly all the breeds of go-cart on land and water—as I really had.

"Know about machinery, do you?" said my hearth-mate; and then, with a humorous glint in his mild eyes: "Shouldn't wonder if you could be sort of a Godsend to me, if you want to. To-morrow, if you ain't in too deep to be leavin' us, I'll get you to show me a few things that I don't know 'long them lines, maybe." Of course, I acquiesced, cheerfully. By and by the girl came in and sat

(Continued on Page Three)

DECEMBER POOLED PRICE WAS \$2.39

The Average Price Received By Others Was \$1.85 For Same Quality Milk at Same Shipping Points

Dairymen in the Co-operative Association received from the association on January 25th their checks for December milk. The pooled price after expenses of advertising and administration were deducted is \$2.39. This is for 3 per cent. milk in the 201-210 mile zone. The prices received by organized dairymen for the month of December in sixteen other dairy sections averaged only \$1.85 for the same quality milk the same distance from the market. In other words, dairymen in the Co-operative Association received for their December milk 54 cents a hundred pounds more than the average received by the organized producers elsewhere.

If this difference is multiplied by the total amount of pooled milk for December which was \$178,457.99 pounds, it gives \$963,673.18 which the dairymen in this section received because of the pooling plan. The same or larger differences have been obtained now for several months by the Co-operative Association. These better prices not only mean better conditions for the dairymen of this section but more prosperity to every other business in the whole Dairy-men's League section.

Former Secretary of Agriculture Meredith has just issued a statement in which he shows that although the farmers' costs in 1920 were the same as in 1919 and the volume of products greater, yet the value of those products was \$6,000,000,000 less, and that this great loss in buying power has been the chief factor in slowing up nearly every other business in the country. That the seriousness of this situation is realized is shown by the calling of the Government of the Emergency Agricultural Conference in Washington to consider ways and means of relieving the agricultural panic.

In view of the acute agricultural situation, therefore, and what it means to all other business, the good results being produced by the Co-operative Association in its sales of its producers' milk are remarkable.

Try as hard to make your advertising bigger and better each month as you try to make your store bigger and better each month—for they are twin-tasks.

IF you have to kick her in the rear, so ward.

Andover Chamber of Commerce

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ANDOVER No. 555. Meets 1st and 3rd Mo. of each month at 8 o'clock. Always welcome. W. W. P. H. D. SMITH Secy.

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