

# The Girl a Horse and a Dog

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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### SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Under his grandfather's will, Stanton, a miserly, cunning, old man, finds his share of the estate, valued at something like \$100,000, lies in a safe repository, latitude and longitude described, and that is all. It may be identified by the presence nearby of a brown-haired, blue-eyed girl, a roan-colored horse, and a dog with a white face, half black and half white. Stanton at first regards the bequest as a joke, but after consideration sets out to find his legacy.

CHAPTER II.—On his way to Denver, the city nearest the meridian described in his grandfather's will, Stanton hears from a fellow traveler a story having to do with a flooded mine.

CHAPTER III.—Thinking things over, he begins to imagine there may be something in his grandfather's bequest. While he is so busy, a messenger brings him the possibility of a mine, as a "safe repository." Recalling the narrative on the train, he ascertains that his fellow traveler was a mining engineer, Charles Bullerton, Bullerton refuses him information, but from other sources he eventually learns enough to make him proceed to Placerville, in this red desert.

CHAPTER IV.—On the station platform at Atropia, just as the train pulls out, Stanton sees what appears to be the identical horse and dog described in his grandfather's will. Impressed, he leaves the train at the next stop, Angelo. There he finds that Atropia was originally Placerville, his destination. Unable to secure a conveyance to take him to Placerville, Bullerton seeks a construction car and escapes, leaving the train to its fate.

CHAPTER V.—Pursued, he abandons the car, which is wrecked, and escapes on foot. He is nearly captured by a girl on horseback, and THE DOG. After he explains his presence, she informs him that the old Cinnabar mine, to meet her father.

CHAPTER VI.—Broughton's hosts are Hiram, a pompous, creature of the mine, and his daughter Jennie. Seeing the girl, Stanton is satisfied he has located his property, but does not reveal his identity.

CHAPTER VII.—Next morning, with Hiram, he visits the mine. Hiram asks him to look over the machinery, and he does so, finding what appears to be the identical horse and dog. He becomes interested, and he engages in the first real work he has ever done.

CHAPTER VIII.—Broughton and Hiram get the pumps started, but are unable to make an impression on the water. Bullerton, apparently an old friend of the mine, visits the mine, and offers to drain it in consideration of Broughton's giving him fifty-one per cent of the property. Stanton refuses. Broughton offers to buy the mine outright for \$20,000. It had cost Broughton's grandfather more than that a million. Broughton again refuses.

CHAPTER IX.—Jennie cautions Broughton against selling the mine, under any circumstances, and, apparently in a spirit of mischief, allows him to kiss her. After a conversation with Daddy Hiram, Broughton decides he will stick to the property.

CHAPTER X.—Next day, during Stanton's temporary absence from the mine, an enemy, without doubt Bullerton, wrecks the pumping machinery. Broughton decides to have it out with him next day.

CHAPTER XI.—In the morning he finds Bullerton and Jennie have disappeared, apparently eloped. He also discovers that he had no right to the mine, but that as it has not been recorded, he has no proof of ownership. He is in a state of despair, and he is about to give up when the dog cause Hiram and Broughton to take the trail in search of Jennie.

CHAPTER XII.—They find Jennie's pony abandoned, but no trace of the girl. When they get back to the cabin, Bullerton is there, apparently awaiting their return.

CHAPTER XIII.—Believing Jennie to have gone with Bullerton, the eight of the man is too much for Broughton, and he uses him roughly. Bullerton, knowing the whereabouts of Jennie, Broughton orders him off the property. Bullerton means mischief. Broughton and Hiram, in a state of desperation, prepare for a siege. Bullerton comes with a crowd of desperadoes, and a "siege" is declared. Broughton's men attack.

CHAPTER XIV.

Applied Hydraulics.

"They've skipped," I reported to Daddy, as I climbed down from the earth sack the hummock and tried the earth with Bullerton stuff we have to deal with. Bullerton will never get that much to rush us in the open."

"That's something gained, anyway," said the old man, "and ever 'till bit helps. But if they ain't ever 'till bit helps, up we got to look out for injin' doins'; the snake-in-the-grass kind. Charley Bullerton ain't goin' to quit none so easy."

Nevertheless, for an hour or more, it looked as if the jumpers had quit. In the time the cooking fire in the little globe burned out, and no one came to rekindle it. Around and about the solemn silence of the mountain wilderness raged us in, and it was hard to realize that the siege had not been abandoned—though we knew well enough it hadn't.

We put in the time as best we could, tinkering up our defenses and trying to provide for all the contingencies. For one thing, Daddy found a big auger and used it to bore loopholes at various places through the wall, by means of which we could command the approaches to the shaft-house on two of the three exposed sides. Eastward by the blacksmith shop intervened between us and the boiler shed—it was built as a lean-to against that side of the shaft-house—and in that direction we were necessarily blind. The fourth side we have said faced an abrupt slope of the mountain, a rocky wall that maybe twice the height of the buildings and almost overhang-

ing them. At its summit this cliff tapered off into a steep upward slope, bare of timber; hence we were comparatively secure from attack in that quarter.

As to provisioning we were not so badly off. Daddy Hiram, well used in his long experience as a prospector to figuring upon the longevity of "grub-shakes," estimated that what with the canned stuff, part of a sack of flour, and another of cornmeal, we could live for a week, though the cooking was going to be rather inconvenient. For a fire we should have to resort to the forge in the blacksmith shop, and the shop was nothing but an open-cracked shed, as I have described it, entirely inadvisable if the ratters should condescend to rush it.

In the fullness of time the period of suspense came to an end, and we were given a good proof that Bullerton had finally made his dispositions, "as an army man would say. The announcement came in the form of a rifle bullet ripping through the roof of the shaft-house as if the stout iron roofing had been so much paper.

"The fun's a-berushin'," said Daddy, and the words were hardly out of his mouth before another bullet came, this time from the opposite direction, and it, also, tore through the roof.

"Got us surrounded," Daddy grimaced, when a third shot came from still another point of the compass; and within the next fifteen minutes Bullerton's demonstration was made complete. The shots, fired one at a time, and at intervals of a minute or so, came from all three of the exposed sides of the building, and the time elapsing between the ripping crashes on the roof and the crack of the guns told us that the marksmen were all well beyond the range of our Winchester, even if we could have seen them—which we couldn't.

Bullerton had evidently given his men orders to aim at the roof, for it was only a stray bullet now and then that came through the walls. After a time the purpose of the bombardment became obvious. Bullerton seemed to have absorbed the idea that he could break our nerve—wear us out. After the first fusillade the shots came at intervals of maybe five minutes; just often enough to keep us on the strain; and I don't mind admitting that the object was handsomely gained. I can't speak for Daddy Hiram or the dog, but at the end of the first hour I was little better than a bunch of raw nerves.

As all-day must, this wearisome first day came to an end at last, and with the coming dusk the bombardment stopped—with our roof looking like a sieve.

But after darkness had settled down we were made to feel in another way how acutely helpless we were. We could see nothing, hear nothing, though we knew we were surrounded, the silence and solitude were unbroken, and the strain was greater than that of a pitched battle. If we were to get any sleep at all, a night watch could be maintained by only one of us at a time; and with our utmost vigilance a surprise attack would be the easiest thing in the world for Bullerton to pull off.

There are no night noises in the high altitudes, unless the wind happens to be blowing; no frogs or tree-toads, no insects; and the silence was fairly deafening—and maddening.

Not wishing to strike a match to determine the exact end of my watch period, I stuck it out, meaning to give Daddy good measure. So I think it must have been somewhere around ten o'clock when the colts woke with a start, jumped up, took the links out of his back with a little whining yawn, and trotted to the door—the one opening toward the cabin across the dump head. Screwing an eye to one of Daddy's sugar-bored loopholes, I tried to fathom the outer darkness, which was only a degree or so less Egyptian than that of the shaft-house interior.

Though I could see nothing, suspicious it was very evident that the dog could hear something. He had his nose to the crack under the door and was growling. I quieted him and listened. Something was going on, either inside of the cabin or back of it; in the dead silence I could distinguish a low murmur of voices and, a moment later, a sound like that which would be made by the cautious opening of one of the sliding windows. While I still had my eye to the peep-hole a jet of flame spurred from the dark bulk of the cabin and simultaneously a bullet tore through the shaft-house roof. The visitors had captured our outworks.

The report and the bullet clatter aroused Daddy Hiram, and when I turned he was at my elbow.

"Done crop up on us, have they, son?" he said in his usual untruffled manner. Then: "Maybe this is just a sort of false notion over here. S'pose you try and get a squirt at things over on the blacksmith-shop side, Stannie."

I stumbled across to the other door, taking the colts with me. I could see nothing in that direction; less than nothing, since the lean-to shop building cut off what little light the stars gave. But the black darkness didn't hamper Barney's ears or his nose, and his eagerness to get back to the rear battle front was a good proof that there was as yet nothing stirring on our side of things.

Groping my way back to Daddy I found that he had one of the Winchester and seemed to be trying to fit a ramrod to the barrel. When I finally made out what he was doing I found that he had thrust a piece of heavy wire into the gun-barrel and was jamming one of the dynamite cartridges on its projecting end.

"Lift skrocket," he cried; "they with quiet hummer."

with a match, Stannie, and let's see what-all's goin' to happen. When I say the word, you stick your match to the fuse."

Heaven! maybe I didn't enjoy a delightful little spasm as I got a flash light mental picture of that old man fumbling around with a lighted cartridge at the muzzle of his gun, trying to poke cartridge and gun-barrel through a hole in the door that couldn't possibly have been over two and a half inches in diameter—and in the dark, at that! What if he shouldn't be able to find the hole in time? Or if he should succeed in finding it and the rifle bullet should jam on the wire? Or any one of a dozen "ifs" that might fall to rid us of the deadly thing before it should go off and blow us to kingdom come?

But there was no time to boggle about it, and the whole of my mind high-powered outlet on the iron roof over our heads speeded things up.

"Go on, you do," Daddy muttered, and I struck a match, splintered the tiny flame in my hollowed hands until it got going good, and then, with a silent prayer that Daddy might not miss the hole, struck the blaze to the frayed end of the powder string.

Coming all three together as it seemed to me, there were sniffling like those of an angry cat, snuff of choking powder smoke, and the crack of the rifle. For just about three seconds nothing further happened; but at the fourth second or thereabouts—oh, boy! The cabin was stoutly and solidly built of logs, as I may have mentioned,

out of the shaft ahead of the advancing water flood and put under shelter in a corner of the boiler shed. As I was passing my tin cup for more of Daddy's excellent coffee the rattle and clank of a pump began to make itself heard, together with the coughing chugging of the steam engine therefrom.

"That's that low-level pump!" I exclaimed. "They must have connected it up with the boiler."

Wishful that was just as far as I got. In the middle midst of the word "boilers" a two-inch jet of muddy water came—crawling up through one of the window openings to arch over and fall, splash, all over us as we sat lurching our dinner. Everlastingly ruined the dinner, put out the fire, upset the coffee pot, and made drowned rats of both of us in less time than it takes to tell it—much less.

"So much for that. Of course, we ran and ducked and dodged, like the drowned rats I speak of hunting for a hole. But now Bullerton's devilish engineering ingenuity came into play. By some means as yet unknown to us, he had contrived a movable nozzle to his squirt-gun, and in another minute there wasn't a single-dry spot left in that shaft-house. I venture to say that Daddy and I and the dog ran a full mile trying to get out of range of that demoniacal sozzle-machine, but there wasn't a corner of the place that it couldn't, and didn't, reach.

During the night the scoundrels had laid a pipe line from the pump in the boiler shed alongside of our prison fortress; this with an upright extension on the business end of it. At the top of the sandpipe-stem there was an elbow with a short joint of pipe screwed into it to point our way; and on the end of this nozzle there was a piece of rubber hose. Under the jerky impulses of the pump strokes this flexible extension of the nozzle flopped up and down and around and sidewise, like the nose of a patent lawn sprinkler, and there you are—there we were.

"Gosh-to-Solomon!" Daddy spluttered, "we ain't on the water wagon—we're spunk inside of it! Are you remembering, Stannie, that they can keep this gosh-dum thing up forever? All in the world they've got to do is to put a stick of wood on the fire now and then! Say, son, they got us goin' and comin', we can't get out, and we can't sleep no more—whataveer!"

"By heavens, I own these boilers, and if I could get a stick of dynamite

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