

RANCH MYSTERY

A STORY FOR CHILDREN

By Paula Norton

Chapter I.

BETH sat curled up by the window of the dusty Pullman coach and looked out at the darkening landscape. She was tired. This was the last of a three-day journey.

"Last call to the diner," the girl reached with slim arms to the baggage rack and lifted down a cardboard box—her lunch, it was the remains of

that might have been homesick

"The school nurse back home told my mother I was too thin and too tired. She said I should not spend another winter in the east. I have an uncle out here on a cattle ranch, and mother wrote to him and told him what the nurse said. He sent for me to come out."

"And do you think you'll like that?"

Well, it's kinda exciting to



the food her mother packed for her the day she left the little industrial town in Illinois that was her home.

It was a pretty bad looking lunch now... limp boiled eggs, a dryish piece of fried chicken, and two pickles. She put the lid back on the box and curled up against the window. She was a thin child for her height, quiet and thoughtful.

The elderly lady across the aisle had been watching her. "I'm going into the diner for dinner. I don't like to eat alone, won't you come with me?"

Beth smiled. The lady had loaned her a magazine and a little book that day. "Won't you come with me?" she coaxed.

"Well, thank you," she HAD wanted to see that eating-car. She found it a little difficult to decide what to order, everything was so expensive. The lady suggested.

She was so friendly, the girl sat back now and enjoyed her surroundings. This was grand! She wished the girls back home could see her.

"WELL, in an hour or so you'll be leaving us. Will there be someone to meet you? That is a pretty lonely little station where you get off."

"Yes, my uncle will come to meet me." The black man set a steaming plate before her. Gee, this was surely better than that box-lunch.

"Are you going to stay out here in Nevada very long?"

"I guess I'll be staying here quite a long time," and a shadow

come this far from home alone.

"Will there be any girls on the ranch?"

"Oh no, my uncle just has two boys. I hope they'll let me ride horseback to school. I've never been NEAR a horse, but I think I'd like to ride one. Mother says I'm just to stay out doors lots and get well and strong."

Beth glanced down at her empty plate. "I guess this is the biggest meal I've ever eaten. Maybe I've started getting strong already."

THEY left the dining car in a gay mood.

"Plint Junction," the brakeman shouted. The girl gathered her packages and as the train slowed down she pressed her face against the dark pane to see into the night, as if she would like to have a glimpse of this strange country that was to be her new home.

The train had stopped. She turned to the lady who had been so friendly, and bade her a polite "good-bye."

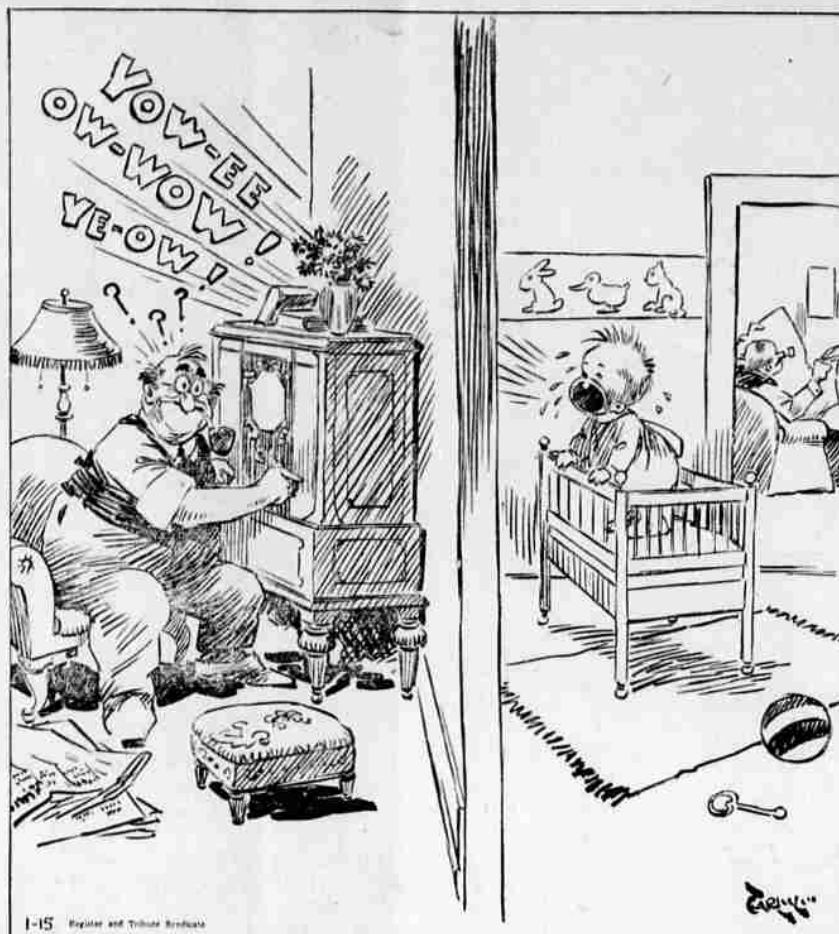
After Beth climbed down the car steps, the porter stacked her bundles around her. The train started moving steadily away.

She looked anxiously about. The little station was dark. The faint moonlight showed her it was not more than a shack. There was no other building in sight. The wind rattled a tin sign.

The lights of the train were swallowed by the darkness. Suddenly a feeling of panic seized the girl. She was ALONE! There was NO ONE to meet her!

(Continued next week.)

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YOUR editor and friend,

PAULA NORTON.

ALFRED THE GREAT

ALFRED the Great was only twenty-two years old when he became king of England. He ran the Danes from his land, for they were invaders. Then England really came into her own. Alfred is given credit for founding the English navy.

PEPPERMINT CANDY

FREDDY was four years old and he had two pennies. Freddy loved peppermint candy (maybe YOU don't, but Fred DID).

He took his two pennies and started out to find a store where you got more candy for two pennies than anywhere else.

On the way he passed a bakery shop window and he saw a little colored boy standing there with his round nose pressed tight against the window.

Freddy noticed that the little colored boy was wearing very ragged clothes. He went up and stood beside him.

ARE you looking at the bus?" said Fred.

"Yes, I am. I'm hungry," said the ragged boy.

Fred thought about the candy he was going to buy. Then he thought a lot about the hungry boy. He handed the boy the penny.

"Go buy two of them for yourself," he said.

Then he walked slowly back home. He missed not getting the candy, but what do you think happened when he got home?

THE FIRE ENGINE

TOMMY was four years old the first time he ran away to follow the fire engine. He ran a long way before he came to the fire and all the crowds of people. It was fun watching the blaze and seeing the firemen running around.

But soon the fire was out and Tommy started home. After a while he realized that he was lost. He just couldn't find his way back. At last he sat down on the curb and started to cry.

People came by and looked at him, but no one spoke to the unhappy boy. Then along the street came a policeman and he lifted Tom to his feet and Tom told him he was lost.

After the kindly policeman found where Tom lived and took him home, he stopped to chat awhile with the boy's mother.

"Well," he said, "the little fellow was surely scared. I guess you need not worry about him running after fire-engines any more."

And the big policeman asked, "What are you going to be when you grow up Tom?"

"A fireman," was the ready reply.

THE TRAMP

ONCE a tramp came through a busy city. His clothes were ragged, and he carried all his worldly goods in a small bundle on a stick. At his heels came a dog, nothing more than a mongrel, and his appearance was as ragged as that of his master.

On one of the busiest corners the tramp stopped for the signal. When the green light flashed "go," the hobo stooped down and carefully picked the little mongrel up. The dog certainly must have appreciated his master's kindness, for when the two got safely to the other side, he licked the tramp's face as if to say, "Thanks for being so kind."

BATHING THE PUP

You mustn't bathe the new pup while he is still under six weeks of age. There are many good medicated soaps on the market, and be sure the water is just warm enough (like the baby bears' porridge, not too hot and not too cold).

Bathe the little fellow in a warm room and don't take too long at it. After he is all clean and silky, dry him with a rough towel and wrap him up snug.

FOOD FOR YOUR PET

No matter what kind of pet you choose, be sure his food is fresh and clean. Serve it in a pan or bowl.

Small dogs, that live pretty much in the house, do not require a great deal of food. Don't overdo it.



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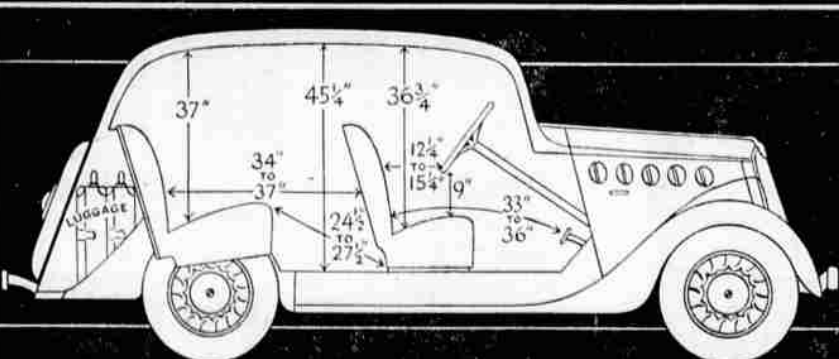
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