Rex Beach Short Stories

This newspaper has been able to secure the exclusive rights in this territory to a series of short stories by Rex Beach, an author whose name is a guarantee of excellence in fiction. His stories of the far north are masterpieces.

He has traveled in the wildernesses where heroisms are everyday occurrences. He has made an intimate study of the sturdy characters that abound there. His descriptive touch in these short stories is beautiful and the humor quaint beyond measure.

In "Arms and the Woman," the first of the series, there is introduced a romance which is unique in its setting. Each story teems with human interest and heart throbs. Don't miss them. After you read the first you'll watch for the second. The titles of the stories to follow "Arms and the Woman," are:

"The Strategy of Shorty."
"The Verdict of Faro Mountain."
"The Vengeance of Big George."
"When the Trail Came In."
"Out of the Night."
"The Stampede."
"Guthrie Boyd of the 'Shootin' Star.'"
"McGill."

Arms and the Woman

By REX BEACH

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"H[illegible] the point," said Hofmeister. "If you send a message they'll know there's treasure aboard. The stage has been stuck up so often its habitual. We've got to use legerdity. I've wired to Horn for two Wells Fargo men. They'll meet you at the second relay, so you will not start, as usual, and pick 'em up here."

Shorty nodded acquiescence.

"All the same, I ain't weighed down with gits at takin' dusums for $30,000, even for twenty miles—don't want to get in the clothes of this neighborhood."

"Oh, there's no danger this soon. No. 2. Isn't on the Big Grade if it's anywhere."

"Let me impress on you most and foremost that there ain't no danger to me in getting through the dense Black Bear country. Last time I was held up in that country I was on the box with the driver, and the passengers were all locked inside. This time I'll be inside, and the driver will be on the box. Get me?"

"Sure!"

"Now, I'm going to take a couple of thousand dollars in gold with me, and I'll have a pair of guns on my person. I'll be ready for anything that comes, and I'll be prepared to shoot my way out of any trouble. Savvy?"

"Sure!"

"Very well, then. Good-by, and good luck to you."

Hofmeister and his companion drank, the latter nigh wetting the bottom of his glass with the vitriol and tossing it off wryly, the other filling his to the brim and rolling it in his mouth like a toothwash. He swallowed lingeringly, with lazy enjoyment, breathing the fumes through his nostrils. One felt that a struck match would ignite him into the likeness of a dragon or a blue flamed cigar lighter.

"I suppose," said the superintendent, having coughed the paralysis from his throat, "you saw the girl that came up yesterday with Newcomb?"

"What! Girl here? In this camp?" Shorty suppressed his nervousness. "Why, I come off up here on purpose to get shed of 'em."

"Yes, I only caught a glimpse of her myself, but what I saw looked mighty pretty."

The driver grunted. "It'll be just my infernal luck to run slap into her, an' if I do I'll stampede like a buffalo calf, see if I don't. Like as not I'll gallop clean over the bluff into the river. I got tore on fierce once back at the Bar X; the foreman's wife come up on me unexpected, an' I run through a barb wire fence."

"What's the matter with you?"

"Well, it's this way. The minute I see skirts I go plumb dippy. My eyes

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hang out like hose pipes, all them little saleratus ginnys in my mouth grow dry till my throat feels like I was hauling carpets in a closet. My speech splinters up and sticks in my neck like I was eatin' corn pervk. Talk about 'suspended animation,' mine's hung up so high I couldn't reach it with a boat hook."

A man lowered his head through the door and yelled "All aboard!"

That was an exemplary Forest Hills mild proof, for very rarely did passengers ride with Shorty, now that the winter season was on, and only such as had urgent business left the train at Auburn to toil back up the rugged divide to the camp at the head of the Kimanka river.

Two men carried the messenger box from the rear room, lifting it on to the boot. The postmaster tested a disreputable mail bag in the stage body, and the driver scrambled to his throne and, after lighting a plug of tobacco, he let a long farewell half round, thereby rolling the quid into his cheek for companionship. Then as he gathered the ribbons and the whip, he turned, and, with a wink at Hofmeister, said:

"Well, I'm a minute. Passengers for Forks, Shorty!"

There was a rustle and scurry, and the jehu's whipping arm held a struggling bundle of trembling femininity, which deposited itself upon the seat beside him, and settled its ruffled plumage with a pleasant sigh of relief.

"Oh, I want to ride up there!" she said laughingly, and Shorty's heart leaped exultingly within him, as she daintily clung to it to preserve the equilibrium, while she seated herself. Then he gathered the reins in his left hand, and with his right he gave the signal to start. Not so with the team. As Shorty gained the seat with the superintendent's air of frigid unconcern, settled himself on the seat, and got control of the reins, four mules and a horse were standing hopelessly, ill-tempered, and unwilling. Then the whip cracked like a pistol shot, and the leaders lunged forward, the swingers followed suit, and the wheelers, with their long traces, would have started, likewise, in a stampede. Not so with the lead