

Thrilling Tales of Love and Adventure

Fresh From Noo Yawk

By Annette Angert



At the time of this tale I was operatin' a stagecoach between the railroad and a little main' camp called Y. e. l. o. v. Creek, which was at the lower end of the Catalinas yonder, and on the edge o' the desert.

I hardly ever had a full load of passengers, and on this particular trip I had but one. He climbed up on the seat with me. He was a slim little fellow, pink of cheek and blue of eye; his gray clothin' was fine and cut to fit, and he had one o' them there little go-to-hell college hats on his head. He was mighty quiet until we'd got well away from the railroad, and then he opens up sudden with this:

"Have you any bad men in this section?"

"We've got one," says I, which was the truth. "His name's Bill King; but we've took to callin' him King Bill on account of his ways. Big man, he is, with a King of England beard and hairin'; perfect shot; has never killed anybody, but has lots o' holdups to his discredit. And, I adds, 'he's got a notch in the upper part o' each ear to prove that he's been shot at pretty hard."

"A notch in each ear!" cries the boy, settin' up as straight as a prairie dog. "By Henry, the first crack!"

"What's that?" says I.

"Well, in them days there was in Yellow Creek a saloon and hotel combined under the headin', 'The Dew Drop Inn.' It was run by a fat, bald-headed man named Elversett; and it had the faithful patronage of over a hundred miners and cowmen—at least, the saloon half did. Robert Selford got a room in the hotel half. After he'd had his supper, he walks into the saloon, which was crowded, as usual. He goes here and there among the little poker tables, lookin' for a man he don't find, a man with each ear notched.

"Of course, he drew attention. A big miner by the name o' Shanks Martin finally throws down his poker hand, rises, and takes the boy by one arm.

"You've give nurse the slip," says he; and a big, whoopin' laugh goes up from the other fellows. "Don't you think you'd better get back home?"

"Now, does little Selford begin to tremble and whine? He don't, believe me! He flicks that little popgun from his coat, and jabs its nose against Martin's ribs, and says with his teeth together:

"You can't poke fun at me—d'ye understand, you big beef? Keep quiet! If you don't, I'll send you howlin' to the great majority."

"Martin watched the hammer of the popgun. He saw that it lacked a good deal o' 'bein' at the dangerous point. He knocked the weapon down with one hand, and grabbed it with the other.

"Son," says he, 'you ain't got no sense; but you have got some nerve. So I'll forgive you, and give your popgun back, but first, like a gentleman, three squalls, boys, for the Popgun Kid!'"

"Then and there, in a baptism of noise and powder smoke from a few dozen forty-fives, the kid got a name that stuck to him as long as he lived in that corner of the globe.

"Robert Selford got behind a bunch o' cowmen who was throwin' dice on one o' the rear tables, and commenced to watch the door. Fate answered his prayer short off. In walks a big, bearded man with his broad-brimmed hat pushed up in front and a pair o' the biggest forty-fives on earth at his hips—and his right hand rested ready on the butt of his right-hand gun. He keeps his eye on the crowd, backs up to the bar, and with his left hand tosses a little silver coin across.

"'A bag of o'bacco,' he growls.

"Then the Popgun Kid steps from behind the dice throwers; and I've never seen another such a look on a human's face as I see on the face o' Bill King when he sees Robert Selford. Robert Selford begins to shoot as fast as he can work the trigger—Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bill King, man of steel nerves and a brother to the devil himself for Jarin', done a thing that almost knocked us down with surprise; he broke out at the door, jumped on his horse, and burst up the wind gettin' away from Yellow Creek! His pistol empty, young Selford borrowed two forty-fives from convenient holsters without askin' for 'em, run to the door, and stood there blazin' away until they, too, were empty!

"Everybody recovered quick. It wasn't good polley to inquire into another man's affairs in them days. The miners and cowmen simply set the little Easterner on the bar and gave him

three big cheers for havin' the sand in his gizzard to shoot seventeen times at King Bill of the Catalinas.

"A few minutes later Robert Selford, as white as a ghost, climbed down from the bar and went off to bed.

"That night after I'd hit the hay in my little shackhouse, I says to myself: 'Bill King has got a conscience yet. The only murder he's ever committed is still on his mind. He knowed Thornton Selford was an Easterner. When he seen Robert Selford, dressed in Eastern clothes, he knowed an avenger had come. And he was so upset about it that he didn't take into consideration, the fact that the avenger was a tenderfoot, and just a boy at that.'

"You'll see how near right I was in my reasonin' after I get a little farther along with the tale.

"The next mornin' while I was waterin' my stock, Robert comes to me and says like he means it:

"I must have one o' your hosses, Mr. Callahan."

"Hosses?" says I, foolish-like.

"'Yes,' says he—'and a couple of them things you carry water in.'"

"'Canteens,' I explains. 'But most of all you want a real gun.'"

"'No,' he objects. 'As I've already told you, I've practiced with this little fellow, and I'm used to it; I can hit a dinner-plate at fifteen yards with it, every crack.'

"He rode straight for the Catalinas, belted by their peaks, which loomed up gain' and black in the dim starlight. His rashness was all gone now, and in its place had come the cunning shrewdness of a red man; daylight found him hidin' his hoss in a big gully filled with greasewood and mesquite. Then he crawled out of the gully, and began to stray up a ridge that afforded a fine view of the rollin' country and one side of the Catalinas.

"When he had reached the top o' the ridge, he hid himself in a nest o' boulders, and began to watch all points o' the compass for a lone man on a hoss.

"He lost himself in the night a dozen times. The clumps o' desert scrub and the big boulders, the ridges and the hollows, tangled him up bad. It wasn't until midnight that he came in sight of a little pile o' live coals, the remnants of a cookin' fire, which laid in front of a little hangout under an overhangin' ledge o' rock. He smiled with his teeth shut, and his right hand tightened its grip on the popgun. He knowed that he had found Bill King.

"He crept on his hands and knees, as slow as a snail, but without makin' the least bit o' noise, to where the bad man laid asleep. Bill was on his side, with his head on his saddle and his hat over his face. A big gun laid handy on the ground close by, and another big gun was in the holster that was turned up. The boy confiscated both o' these weapons, and with one o' 'em struck Bill on the forehead and laid him out for a while.

"'Now, by Henry!' he jubiliates, his eyes on an ear with a notch in it. 'Now, by Henry!'"

"'Again Bill King asks the bad man, 'You want to see my ears?'"

"'The boy tears the one o' the devil's ears in sight o' 'em, and says 'plate-like.'"

"'Once more Bill King asks the bad man, 'You want to see my ears?'"

"'Robert Selford shows the boy his ears, and says 'plate-like.'"

"'That's enough, says King, 'to take two more ears. I'll like very much to see you when you get 'em. You ain't shot me right, replies the bad man. 'Of course not, says King, 'how about it—will you say?'"

His And Hers

By Walt Gregg



THE two women had discovered a nest of berries and were sipping their juice, when a young farmer observed them from behind a clump of bushes.

"Heh, you," showing himself to the surprised mother and daughter. "Can't you read the signs around here, they say. 'No Trespassing!'"

might make a few dollars picking the berries."

The man had been scanning her face, which seemed familiar to him, and when she spoke his name, he too, recognized her. "Mollie, I've been wonderin' if it might be you."

"With head tossed high, Mollie answered, 'Very well, I can ill afford the expense, but I will have the title examined. Until then I will pick the berries, and if I find the place is rightfully yours, I will refund the money to you.'"

comfort that she received from her short married life. When the daughter was only five years old, Joe Lane answered the call beyond this world, and Mollie and Mary took up a struggling existence. They found the road one of many hardships, and when Mollie's uncle died they thought that picking berries in the beautiful country might benefit the health of them both.

"'Come, Mary, our pails are full, we must get to the barn with them,' and little Mary was hastened along before she could give any answer.

"The woman looked at her a trifle curiously.

"'I certainly do,'" said their hostess.

"'As it happens, I'm the agent for that house. It was put in my care.'"

"'Then it is unoccupied!'" cried Betty, eagerly.

that she would accept them.

Mollie, too, had for years held the face of Joe Newell close to her heart, and almost hoped that when visiting the old home town she might find him unmarried. But when he had yelled at her in such a rough manner she resolved to go her way alone.

"'Well, they both owned it,'" the lawyer scratched his head, "and they both had a right to give it."

Home And Happiness

By Joe Busche



At that darling nook in the hill-side—and what a lovely view it must have! And such roses! Oh, Dick, I wonder if it's occupied!"

The woman looked at her a trifle curiously.

"'I certainly do,'" said their hostess.

"'Then it is unoccupied!'" cried Betty, eagerly.

"'You're a well-known name. 'But they are both dead.' And her lips quivered. But the woman had gathered her in to her arms and was weeping passionately while Dick leaned forward in amazement.

"'My dears, forgive me, but it is so sudden. Listen, while I tell you all.'"

"'That's enough, says King, 'to take two more ears. I'll like very much to see you when you get 'em. You ain't shot me right, replies the bad man. 'Of course not, says King, 'how about it—will you say?'"