



CAMEO KIRBY

BY BOOTH TARKINGTON AND HARRY LEON WILSON
NOVELIZED FROM THE PLAY BY W.B.M. FERGUSON



Subtle humor, tear impelling pathos, dactyl, lynch law, suicide, attempted murder, gambling, heart entanglement and realistic character drawing combine to make "Cameo Kirby" an unusual play and an unusual novel—a cameo of modern fiction finely graven, richly set; a word cameo by those master craftsmen Booth Tarkington and Harry Leon Wilson, wherein are shifting pictures of the old days along the Mississippi when the Natchez and the Robert E. Lee raced to New Orleans with fortunes at stake; old days when gamblers, amateur and professional, won and lost almost unbelievable sums on the river steamers; days when Mark Twain was a pilot and when the real life prototype of Jim Bludso of the Prairie Belle held "her nose ag'in the bank till the last galoot" was ashore. A well born, well intentioned young man through association with bad companions becomes an accomplished gambler. Falsely accused of murder, he meets a young girl, with whom he falls in love. How vital complications baffle him, how conspiracy places his life in the balance, how the love of a pure woman may work wonders in the regeneration of a man—these themes and others give "Cameo Kirby" its thrill, its fascination, its powerful heart interest.

strove to keep the sudden exultation from his eyes. But as Moreau spread out his draw, disclosing trash, the planter lost his momentary self control.

"Drew to an inside straight and filled it, by gad!" he cried excitedly. "There's the turn in the tide, colonel! It rarely ever goes back on me. That's what I've been waiting for. Let me draw to a four card inside straight and I'll bet my immortal soul that I fill her. Yes, sub."

A satiric gleam flickered in Moreau's black eyes as he indifferently shoved his lost bet across the table.

"One thousand to yoh, sub," he said courteously, stifling a yawn—"a most remarkable example of good fortune



A SATIRIC GLEAM FLICKERED IN MOREAU'S BLACK EYES.

and one that was a-coming to yoh. Allow me, sub, to drink to the turn in the tide." And, filling the other's glass, he bowed with the most admirable courtesy and good feeling.

"Yoh health, colonel," replied the other thickly, mopping his face with an immense silk handkerchief, "and my compliments for the sentiment, sub. I can return them by adding that the tide had already turned even before I had the pleasure and good fortune of making yoh acquaintance, sub. I reckon that, all in all, my trip to New Orleans this year has been very lucky—very lucky, sub—foh I have sold my sugar crop foh ten thousand, a much higher figure than I reckoned, considering the poh price of cane. And my luck still follows me by permitting this indulgence of my favorite game with a gentleman, sub, of yoh standing. My plantation is at Plaquemine, and"



CAMEO KIRBY EXUDED A DEBONAIR AND RAKISH ATMOSPHERE.

river foh over fifty years. I recognize that yoh professional gamblers are an institution; but, bless me, I don't take my son Tom's ciew of them. They gamble foh a living, yes, but I believe they do so honestly, as yoh or I. We are a gambling nation, sub, foh we are young, red hooded and prosperous, but our country is incapable of giving birth to a man who deals of the bottom of the pack, who is afraid to meet fortune eye to eye. Yoh agree with me, sub?"

"As a fellow patriot, yes—as a sane man, no," replied the other, the satiric gleam again smoldering in the dead slag of his eyes. "Yoh have yet to be picked by a brace of these river vultures—they generally travel in pairs—but as a man of the world, of co'se, yoh would instantly recognize them."

"Of co'se, sub," heartily agreed the other. "Aside from all else, yoh professional gambler may be remarked foh his lavish display of diamonds."

"Yoh pardon, sub, but not always. I calculate that as a man of the world yoh have heard of Cameo Kirby?" smiled Moreau, again paying attention to his companion's glass.

"Kirby? That's an old and honored name in Plaquemine, sub," replied Mr. Randall, opening his coat and

fanning inflamed cheeks with his huge slouch hat. "Kirby was my neighbor, sub, and I knew his folks well. I had the honor to be of some slight assistance when he went under during the panic years. Crops failed, banks went to smash, but yoh remember, I reckon. Well, sub, Mr. Kirby's son, Eugene, came home from school to find his poh father dead and a bankrupt—everything swept away. That was a hard homecoming, sub. Very sad case. I have often wondered what became of the boy, foh he had all his father's pride and refused to let me exert my privilege of an old neighbor and friend. That was twenty years ago, and since then I have heard in a roundabout way that he had become wild, drifted in with bad companions and taken to the river for a livelihood. In fact, become a common gambler. But of co'se I don't believe it, for no Kirby could ever do that, sub—fall so low. Yet the name is uncommon. Have yoh ever met this gentleman of whom yoh spoke?"

"Not socially, sub," replied the other dryly. "I calculate he is no relative of the folks yoh mentioned, foh his reputation, sub, is the worst on the river; known from New Orleans to St. Louis and back again. He and his side partner, sub—a dam carpetbagging Yankee by the name of Bunce—are the most reckless characters on the river. It is scum like them, sub, who give our fair Mississippi her evil name. Yoh speak of no man dealing off the bottom of the pack. Why, sub, I assure yoh on my honor they're so crooked they have to sleep in a roundhouse. I merely mentioned Kirby's name because of the fact that, man of the world as yoh are, sub, yoh would never pick him foh a professional gambler. Never wore a diamond in his life. The cameo is his favorite stone, foh they say it once saved his worthless life, and from it he gets his name, sub. But shall we continue the game? I am still five hundred yoh master, and we have foh hours to kill before we make yoh landing."

Randall accepted the cards with unsteady hands. "I assure yoh, sub, yoh are betting against a foregone conclusion," he said. "foh there is no stemming the turn in the tide. I'll bet yoh five hundred on this showdown, and then we'll pull stakes, sub, all square, foh further play would be sheer robbery. Yoh can't beat the Randall luck when once it has turned."

"I never believed in luck," replied Moreau. "foh life has demonstrated to me that there is no such abstract. Foh instance, if a colt falls head ten times out of ten it is still an even bet foh heads or tails on the next toss. That is the law, sub, and all the superstition in the world cannot revoke or change it."

"My dear sub," replied the planter, waving an impatient hand, "that is all nonsense, for I hold that our entire existence is greatly controlled by luck and not law. I believe in a Supreme Being, sub, and I attend church regularly, but I do not believe, sub, that our poh mundane affairs are regulated by a celestial corporation, especially such affairs as card games. Yoh know yohself, colonel, that the best playing in the world can't stand against a run of blind luck, and as a man of the world I've seen mah fortunes lost on high hands—foh barmaids topped by foh kings every trip—just because their holders hadn't sense enough to realize that the tide had set in against them. And I give yoh my word, sub, be finished, thumping the table, "that when I fill a foh card inside straight the Randall luck is sitting into the game right with me, and yoh simply can't win. Oh, yoh may get one or two little pots, but yoh'll finish dead broke. Call it what yoh like—luck or the shuffling of the devil."

"Now, sub, yoh've bucking right against my pet hobby," replied Moreau, leaning across the table and growing as earnest as his companion. "Of co'se I accept yoh word foh past experiences, but it is the old case of the colt. Though yoh may have turned heads a hundred times in succession, as I said, the chance of it being tails is still an even bet. Yoh luck may have changed, but I'm willing to lay ten thousand that I hold the best hands in two out of three. There's a sporting offer, sub, that will test yoh theory."

Randall blinked at his glass. Again he was momentarily sobered.

"No, sub," he said decidedly, plucking at his frilled shirt. "Those are high stakes, colonel, for, as wealth goes nowadays, I am not a very rich man, and I cannot afford to jeopardize the welfare of my children for the sake of proving my point. Again, sub, I consider it would be taking an unfair advantage of yoh."

"Come, Yoh statements don't agree, Mr. Randall," laughed the other. "What do yoh jeopardize, sub, if yoh consider the advantage entirely with yohself? However," he finished, with some coldness, "this is but a game, sub, and I had no idea that yoh were at all imperiling yoh welfare."

"The Randalls, sub, never incur an obligation which they cannot meet," hotly interrupted the other, the drink showing in his eyes. "Yoh pardon, sub, if I have touched on personal

matters. It is not my custom, I assure yoh, to do so with strangers"—

"Now, now, Mr. Randall, sub," interrupted the other, putting the planter's arm. "Yoh pardon, sub, if I have offended. I am an old soldier," twirling his mustaches, "and perhaps own an exaggerated and touchy sense of honor. When yoh mentioned imperiling yoh welfare it seemed as if we were no longer indulging in a gentleman's game merely foh the sake of passing the time. I have a very delicate sense of honor, sub, and perhaps I am too ready to back my opinions with sums which I consider mere trifles. I hope this difference of opinion will not impair our but newly formed friendship, Mr. Randall."

"I was too hasty, colonel," replied the other. "foh I reckon my pride is as touchy as yoh own. Come, fill up yoh glass, sub. Yoh're a good fellow, and I'm a good fellow. We're both good fellows, sub. A Randall never yet refused to back his opinion, and ten thousand is as much a playyune affair to me as to yoh. If yoh persist in going broke, I'll take yoh bet, sub. The best two out of three. My cards, I reckon. There's my money, sub." And he thumped a buckskin bag on the table.

"Covered, sub," replied Moreau, carefully peeling off ten \$1,000 bills.

By now the unconcern which Mr. Randall displayed was entirely authentic, for his incessant attention to his glass had lent him a bibulous courage and defiance of the future, in which lurked no wholesome leaven of caution. Moreover, his pride had been delicately touched to the quick, and rather than appear a "piker" before this magnificent acquaintance he would readily have hazarded his entire estate. Pride of family was his fetish, and a Randall, he considered, was an Admirable Crichton, who could be beaten at nothing. All this was quite aside from his desire to uphold his self bestowed reputation of man of the world and the immutable conviction that his luck had turned. There was no doubt that if he had not sold his sugar crop for such an unexpectedly high figure he would not have embarked on his subsequent gentle carouse, nor, although of a jovial nature, so quickly formed a friendship with the magnificent and highly estimable Colonel Moreau, owner of the very delicate sense of honor. Although in that period, a decade or so before the war which severed the country, but to ultimately knit it the more firmly together, the punch bowl was an institution in every southern household. Mr. Randall was not what is termed a drinking man, and it was solely on his yearly business trips to the Crescent City that he permitted himself any latitude in that direction.

"Gentlemen, your servant, and my humble apologies," he said, with an elaborate bow. "I trust this is not an untimely intrusion."

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is Colonel Jacques Gaspard Deschamps Moreau, and very much at yoh service, sub."

He stopped and whirled about, the pen extended in his hand, as the door of the private stateroom opened, giving admittance to a man of perhaps thirty-five, who exuded a certain debonaire and rakish atmosphere. At the neck of this gentleman's elaborately frilled shirt there gleamed a huge cameo, and companion stones fastened the cuffs at his wrists.

"Gentlemen, your servant, and my humble apologies," he said, with an elaborate bow. "I trust this is not an untimely intrusion."

that I beat yoh foh out of six. That's the way I play, sub. Now, do you take me, Colonel Moreau?"

A momentary astonishment flickered in the other's eyes, for it seemed as if the bird had not been picked so cleanly as he had supposed. "I reckoned yoh cleaned out, sub," he said cautiously. "If yoh're serious, of co'se I take yoh."

"Mr. Randall, swaying unsteadily, promptly slammed a green morocco wallet on the table. "That and a deed to my plantation, colonel, against yoh winnings and fohby thousand. I am about to show yoh, sub, how a Randall plays poker. I stake everything I own on the fact that yoh leave this table dead broke, sub. Here's to the Randall luck, and to the devil, sub, with everything else!" And, drinking to this admirable sentiment, he raised his glass, drained it at a draft and sent it crashing to the floor.

A lupine twist came to the other's lips as he produced pen, ink and paper. "Yoh just make out that deed now, sub," he said suavely. "My name



"I TRUST THIS IS NOT AN UNTIMELY INTERUSION."

CHAPTER I

"NE card," said John Randall quietly, extending a hand as firm as was his voice.

For the first time in twenty-four hours the debt of intoxication was paid solely by his eyes. Perhaps the pile of double eagles strewn before him on the green baize table conveyed a fugitive and sobering realization of the present; drove home the fact, as only hard earned money can, that this delightful levitation of the senses, this genial warmth of body and soul, this impression that he was a nabob who might hazard with a care free hand, was purely fictitious and that the morning would find him a sepulcher filled with the decaying bones of dead emotions and the living worm of remorse. That pile of gold twinkling under the oil lamps in a private stateroom of the John W. Shotwell represented one-tenth of his yearly income, and yet he was blithely staking it on the turn of a single card at poker, for that was the game that was being played—staking it as indifferently as he had staked and lost its predecessors.

He pulled himself together with the air of one who, guilty of a false start, is but the more confident of the future, while he reflected with some pride that his extended hand was as steady as that of his impressive opponent. As the cards lay he was beaten, but luck must eventually change, and a four card "inside straight" was his weakness—weakness and strength, for when he drew to one he "filled."

"Here's luck!" said Colonel Moreau heartily, extending the pasteboard. "It's bound to change some time, sub, and even a niggab could beat a measly pair of deuces. I'll take three."

Randall glanced at his card and as he laid it face down on the table

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ATTORNEY-AT-LAW
Office first door south of New Fraternal Bldg., Enterprise, Ore.

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ATTORNEYS-AT-LAW
Practice in all State Courts and Interior Department. Careful attention to all business.

D. W. SHEAHAN
LAWYER - ENTERPRISE
Practice in State and Federal Courts and Interior Department.

J. W. McCarmak of Walla, Walla, after a few days spent in Enterprise, returned to his home Friday morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lewis returned Tuesday evening from an extended visit to several Washington cities. They came home direct from Yakima.

John Beggs, formerly mayor of Chico, but recently of Westbridge, British Columbia, is here visiting friends and old time acquaintances for a week or ten days. Friday he went to Lostine to visit the mineral prospects. Mr. Beggs was mining up in British Columbia.

CHARLES THOMAS
LAWYER - ENTERPRISE, ORE.
Practice in State and Federal Courts and Int. Dept. Abstract Bldg., opposite court house.

W. C. KETCHUM
DENTIST - ENTERPRISE
Office Berland Building. Home Independent Phone.

C. T. HOCKETT, M. D.
PHYSICIAN AND SURGEON
Office upstairs in Bank Building. Ind. Home phone in office and residence.

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"CAMEO KIRBY—THE WORST ONE ON THE RIVER."

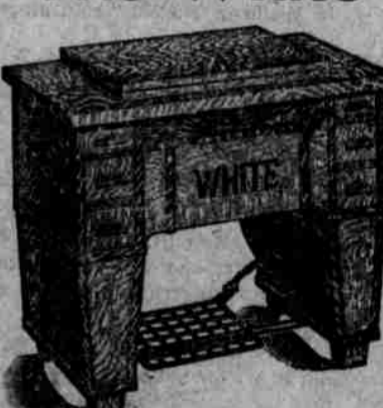
ded. Dealt and lost the first showdown. The next, however, he won, only to lose the third and last.

"I calculate," observed Moreau, carelessly sweeping toward him the buckskin bag, "that I have proved my theory, sub. Yoh tide has not turned, except foh the worse. An even bet that yoh lose the best out of the next six hands. We'll make it that number in order to give yoh Randall luck a chance to come in, foh it really seems as if it was very hashful, sub. Do yoh take me? Of co'se yoh are the doctor, sub, as I am the winner."

The bird being plucked, the vulture was no longer scrupulously careful regarding its department, and, in fact, if Mr. Randall had been himself he could not have noted the contempt and decision in the estimable colonel's voice and eyes.

"Yes, I am the doctor, sub," replied the planter thickly, "and a Randall never quits. Never, sub! I take yoh, and I raise yoh bet. Fifty thousand

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