

**THE FICTION CORNER**  
**Lucky Punch**  
By ELOISE STONE

The stage for Benson's Gulch was ready to leave Tucson. Gilbert Bradley hurried up the dusty street and climbed aboard just as the driver whipped the horses and the coach lurched forward.

Once settled comfortably in his seat, he casually took inventory of his fellow passengers. Besides himself, the coach contained two people—a girl and a man.

The girl's eyes reflected the color of the violets which trimmed her bonnet. Her dress was of gray linen. Beneath the brim of the bonnet, several curls of auburn hair escaped to flutter in the draft from the partly open window.

The first thing Gil noticed about the man was his agate-hard yellow eyes. They were set close together under thick black eyebrows. The man was heavily built, with huge shoulders and hands. He wore twin gun belts crossed at his waist and the black handles of his six-guns protruded from open holsters.

"Since we're all going to Benson's Gulch, we'd just as well make ourselves acquainted," he said, flicking his yellow eyes over Gil and then resting them on the girl. "I'm Mort Cass, mayor of Benson's Gulch."

The girl's pale face turned even whiter. Her lips quivered ever so slightly as she looked with loathing straight into the yellow eyes.

"I'm Virginia Holmes. My brother wrote me about you shortly before he died."

The two had forgotten Gil's presence.

"I was mighty sorry, ma'am, when your brother met his untimely end," said Cass.

"Sorry," the girl flashed. "William was fighting you and your corrupt friends with his newspaper. He more than hinted that if an accident befell him, you would be behind it. I haven't the slightest doubt that you killed my brother."

The yellow eyes narrowed grimly. "Some of those words are mighty harsh, ma'am."

"I shall print some just as harsh," said Virginia. "You see, you didn't stop his paper. I am going to Benson's Gulch to publish it."

Virginia Holmes settled back into her seat, turning her body to face the window.

Gilbert Bradley had been about to introduce himself, but he saw that neither of his companions was interested. Gil would have been the first to admit that he wasn't an impressive figure. He was slight, barely five and a half feet tall. His gray eyes were mild and his clothes marked him as a newcomer to the desert country.

The trio rode in silence to Benson's Gulch.

Arrival of the stage was evidently an event in the town. The group of men gathered for the occasion

reminded Gil of a similar band which assembled each evening to watch the train go through the Ohio village where he had spent his youth.

A nearby cafe beckoned and Gil went in to have a cup of coffee before going to a hotel. The waiter had barely slid his brimming cup down the counter, when one of the onlookers from the stage depot took the next stool. He, too, ordered coffee and took a deep drink before turning to Gil.

"Haven't I seen you some place before?" he asked. "You look real familiar to me."

"I don't recall meeting you," answered Gil. "I'm new to this section of the country."

"It's a good country, but I can't say too much for this town."

"Don't discourage me like that, when I've only been in town ten minutes," smiled Gil. "What's wrong with the town?"

The other grunted. "You've met

Cass was proud of his record as a gunman and a fighter. He often boasted that whoever could lick him, either on the draw or with fists, could be the next mayor. Mort Cass wouldn't stay in a town where he had been whipped.

Two men he had bested at gunplay were asleep on Boot Hill, at the edge of town. The only man who had ever fought him barehanded might as well have joined them. His broken bones had not mended properly after the beating he had received and his six-foot body was shrunken and misshapen.

Virginia and Gil were making their way across the street one day to dine at the Western hotel. Cass swaggered out and moved toward them.

"Well, if it ain't the pretty schoolmarm turned editor and her pasty faced Don John."

Anger seethed through Gil, but he couldn't quite help being amused at the flagrant mispronunciation. He



"Sorry," the girl flashed. "William was fighting you and your corrupt friends with his newspaper."

our mayor. If you don't already know, you'll soon find out."

By the time Gil had been in town two weeks he had made friends with Virginia Holmes and incurred the enmity of Mort Cass for that reason. Cass had learned that Gil was in Arizona because of his health and he never failed to make a remark about "lungers" when he was certain to be overheard by the smaller man. Gil found that not many of the townspeople liked Cass; but, one and all, they feared and obeyed him.

It was common gossip in Benson's Gulch that Cass had either fired the shot that killed William Holmes, or ordered it fired. The body of the young editor had been found in his shop one morning. A group of wild cowboys from a Cass-controlled ranch had been drinking the night before and done a lot of wild shooting in the town's main street. One of the bullets had broken the glass window of the newspaper office and lodged in the owner. The coroner had given a verdict of accidental death. As Cass was all-powerful in Benson's Gulch, no one openly questioned the verdict.

could smell liquor on Cass' breath. The man had been drinking heavily, but was far from drunk. He pushed between Gil and Virginia.

"Run along, tenderfoot," he said. "I'll take Virginia to dinner and see if I can't change her opinion of me a bit."

He started to take the girl's arm. She drew back and slapped him full across the face. He started menacingly toward her.

"I'll learn you to slap Mort Cass," he said.

Gil tapped him on the right shoulder. As Cass turned, Gil drove a hard left into his face. The crowd, which was beginning to gather, gave a startled gasp. Cass charged at Gil and for a moment it looked as if he would pummel him into the ground. Gil's rapid foot work saved him. His weaving body made a poor target for the larger man's bear-like blows.

Cass soon realized that this fight was not going to result in the easy victory he had expected. He stepped back and warily eyed his adversary. Then again he charged at Gil, who eluded him.

Wild cheers rang from the crowd later, when Gil stood with wide-spread legs over the sprawled figure of Mort Cass.

"Oh, what a lucky punch," someone roared, as bystanders rushed to congratulate Gil.

"Lucky punch, nothing," cried a deep voice.

Gil turned to face the man who had drunk coffee with him soon after his arrival in Benson's Gulch.

"I remember you now," he said, taking Gil's hand in a firm grasp. "I saw you fight once in Chicago. Recall the night you knocked out Motzi in the third round. You're Bradley, once holder of the world's lightweight boxing crown."



**Don't Live a Self-Centered Life**

Nine times in ten when you find a person who isn't getting as much out of his life as he should, who wants more friends than he has, who isn't altogether happy with his existence, you'll find, if you probe deeply enough, that that person is too self-centered.

Although they don't know it, usually this condition of being self-centered starts in childhood.

As a child the person was babied by his parents. He received so much notice that when he left home he felt letdown, neglected, disillusioned when the world didn't treat him as his parents had. So he retired in a shell.

In one office I know there was a girl who didn't have a friend. For three months she had worked there. Not one of the other girls had paid the slightest attention to her. One day she came to me, broke down, cried, said she was miserable. "They don't pay any attention to me," she sobbed. "Do you pay any attention to them?" I asked.

"No—no, I don't."

"Then that's the trouble. If you want to be friendly with these girls you have to show them that you are friendly with them."

If you are living a self-centered life now, the best thing for you to do is live more with other people and show them that they are important to you.

**Jenny Lind's Concert Tour Created Greatest Furor**

America's greatest furor was that created by Jenny Lind, the Swedish singer, during her concert tour (1850-1852) says Collier's.

Its extent is indicated by a collection of Lindiana owned by the New York Historical society which contains, among its thousands of items, scores of the countless articles on which her name and portrait were used as a trademark or decoration, such as bonnets, beds, whiskies, wallpapers and even men's fancy vest buttons.

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**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

**Horizontal**

- 1 Large serpent
- 4 Since
- 6 Aspect
- 11 Still in existence
- 13 Migratory winged insect
- 15 Earth goddess
- 16 Girl's name
- 18 To ascend
- 19 Nahoor sheep
- 21 Carnivorous quadruped
- 22 French for "and"
- 23 Mixed together
- 26 Lizard
- 29 Mirth
- 31 Short jacket
- 33 Conjunction
- 34 Note of scale
- 35 Back
- 38 Ocean
- 39 Tree-toed sloth
- 40 Four
- 41 Excels
- 43 Material for paper making
- 45 Sheep's cry
- 47 Six-legged mite
- 50 French article
- 52 Iniquity
- 53 Negative
- 56 Father of Cain
- 58 Former French politician
- 60 To perform
- 61 Third sign of the zodiac
- 63 Newspaperman
- 65 Water-raising apparatus
- 66 Compass point
- 67 Wrath

Solution in Next Issue.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11			12			13			14
15		16		17			18		
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61			62		63		64		
	65				66		67		

**No. 33**

- 3 By
- 4 Feeble-minded
- 5 Blot
- 6 Heavenly bodies
- 7 Stop!
- 8 Land measure
- 9 Retinue
- 10 Worm
- 12 Colloquial: paid notice
- 14 Symbol for tellurium
- 17 Knob
- 20 "Honest . . ."
- 24 Abandoned
- 25 Female deer
- 27 Young horse
- 28 Journey
- 29 Fluent
- 30 Molten rock
- 32 Back of the neck
- 36 Fabulous bird
- 37 Character in "Hamlet"
- 42 Hindu deity
- 44 Vase
- 46 "Remember the . . .!"
- 48 Proffers
- 49 Open space in a wood
- 51 Turkish title
- 54 Scent
- 55 Ripped
- 56 Symbol for silver
- 57 Lair
- 59 Chinese measure
- 62 Symbol for nickel
- 64 Note of scale

**Answer to Puzzle Number 32**

B	R	A	E	T	R	U	S	T												
R	E	G	E	N	T	O	R	A	T	O	R									
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S	T	E	R	N																

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