

RANCH MYSTERY

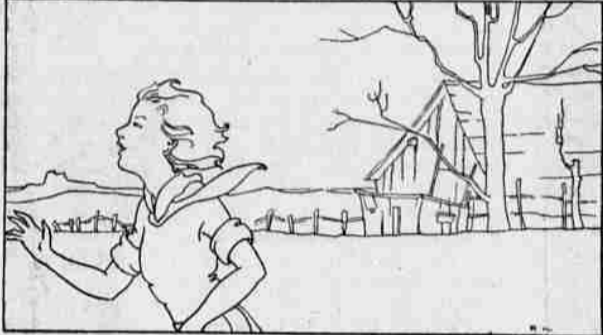
A STORY FOR CHILDREN

By Paula Norton

Uncle Walter, Ron, Tim, and Aunt Mary live on a cattle ranch in Nevada. There is trouble there and many cattle have been stolen. Uncle Walter is not sure who is back of this situation, but he feels sure it is a plan to drive him from the land. Beth, a niece from the East, comes out to make her home at the ranch. She learns of the thieving and that her uncle was shot in the shoulder during the last raid. Ron and Tim try to keep Beth from worrying about their affairs, but Beth is determined to do what she can to solve the mystery. She has already talked to Claude, the mail-carrier, who told her he had an idea who was back of the plot.

Chapter 6

BETH stood by the mail-box and watched Claude and the rattly old rig disappear in a cloud of yellow dust. She was amazed at what he had said. "He has an



idea who led the cattle thieves to Uncle's corral!" she murmured. Slowly she turned and walked up to the porch. She was silent when she handed the Carson City paper to her uncle.

"What'd Claude have to say for himself, honey?"

Beth found to her surprise she did not want to tell what Claude had said. A plan all her own was racing through her mind.

"He asked me if you knew who took the horses."

Uncle Walter smiled, "Claude always was a nosy fellow. I guess that's natural when you drive around the country by yourself all day."

Beth hurried with preparations for lunch. Tim and Ron had promised to give her a riding lesson in the afternoon and she was anxious to begin. Doing the cooking for the family was all right, but she had looked forward to the joy of tearing across the country on a horse, like riders she'd seen in the movies back home. That was the way Tim and Ron rode—as if they were a part of the horse, and it looked like such fun.

At lunch the boys, try as they would, could not help but speak about the things uppermost in their minds.

"Jerry did a little trailin' this morning early, Dad," said Ron. "He found a pretty good lead of hoof-prints near the corral. He followed 'em far in the dry-wash, there they got lost in the stubble on the other side."

"Yea?" the man replied.

Beth felt that her presence there kept them from discussing the subject further. She wanted to say "go on and talk, I know about it and I'm not afraid. I want to help in some way. I'm part of this family now, so I want to share your troubles. Don't think of me as a girl—a girl from the city who is sissy and afraid." She thought these things, but, naturally, did not say them. Instead she asked Tim:

"Do I get that riding lesson this afternoon? Can you spare the time?"

Before the boys could answer, her uncle spoke up. "Better put her on old Daisy, boys. After all, we've had one accident this week. That's enough."

"Yea," grinned Ron, "besides she's a heck of a good cook and we need her."

Beth hurried into her room and surprised them all when she returned dressed in a boy's shirt and new blue jeans. It was fun to see the look of admiration on their faces.

"Boy, is that swell? Where'd you get 'em? They look creakin' new."

"That's a mighty good idea," smiled her uncle.

"You look like a boy," said Tim, "well, that is, kinda like a sissy boy."

Beth walked about the room in long strides with her hands in her pockets. This was fun—she'd always wanted to wear boy's trousers,

but back home there'd been no excuse.

"Mother bought them for me. She said they'd be just the thing if I learned to ride."

"If you learn? Say, I could teach—why I could teach Claude to ride a three-legged camel," Ron boasted.

"That's one thing about you, Ron," said Uncle Walter, "you sure don't brag much—very much!"

Ron's remark about Claude reminded Beth of another reason why she wanted to learn to ride.

"Come on," she called, and without a thought for the lunch dishes to be washed she raced the boys to the barn. How gay she felt, how glad she was to be here in the grand, wide world. She was going to ride! She was going to wear boy's jeans and go tearing across the country, free as the wind! And she was going to have a very private talk with Claude. She was going to find out just



what he thought he knew about the man who stole her uncle's horses, and why!

The boys saddled old Daisy (Beth was a little disappointed at the sight of this patient-looking animal. She did not look very much like the horses one dashes around on).

Ron said, "Daisy isn't exactly a bronc, but you'd better start with her. If you get the hang of it right away though, we'll put Daisy right back on her pension, an' you can have Bob to ride tomorrow."

That was encouraging and Beth meant to "get the hang of it" right away.

The children rode for two hours across the big fenced pasture beyond the barns. Then around and around the enclosure. Once Tim said, "why don't we get out of here and ride up the wash?"

"Because," Ron explained, "because, one of us'd have to get down and open a gate." Beth laughed, "I'll do it if you two are as lazy as all that." Before they could stop her she slid from the round back of Daisy and ran toward the fence.

The boys spurred their horses to head her off. But Beth ran like the wind. Suddenly she stopped and walked back a few steps. She picked up a tiny silver wheel.

The boys had beaten her to the gate and held it open, waiting for Daisy to amble through.

"Come on Beth, your fiery steed is about to get away."

"What are ya doin' pickin' wild flowers?"

Beth slipped the little wheel into her pocket and walked down to the gate. She did not answer because she had decided there was something about that bright little wheel. It was not the kind of toy one found in a rough field, at least not anything so polished. It looked as if it had not laid there long.

As the trio rode down into the dry bed of the stream Beth listened to the boys' rambling speech. Once they both got down and looked for signs of hoof-prints in the sand among the boulders.

Beth did not talk. She was thinking about the little silver wheel in her pocket. What was it? Where had she seen one before? Should she show it to the boys? Better not, they might laugh at her for being curious about something very unimportant.

It was late in the afternoon when the three riders turned the horses into the corral. While she waited for the boys to unsaddle the three horses, she realized for the first time that walking wasn't so easy now, and she wondered if sitting was going to be difficult, too, for awhile.

Ron glanced at her, "Wanta eat your dinner standin' up tonight, Beth?"

Dinner? Oh, she hadn't even washed the lunch dishes. What would Uncle Walter think of her?

Painfully she stepped down from the barn door into the yard. Then she noticed a rig driving away from the front of the house.

"Ron, Tim, come here," she called.

The two boys came to the door. A "yip" went up, and both boys dashed toward the house. "Come

Not Superstitious, But —! *



Washington Had Interesting Boyhood; Became Full-Fledged Surveyor at 16

I CANNOT tell a lie, Pa; I chopped the cherry tree."

According to a certain Reverend Weems, the little boy who was later to become the Father of his Country, made this brave confession to his irate father.

Whether the youthful George uttered those exact words, no one really knows. But such bravery and honesty easily could have been perfectly natural in a boy who was later to show such strength of character as did George Washington.

George's childhood was very different from that of our other great



champion of freedom, Abraham Lincoln. Yet both boys grew to have the same great hopes and to fight for the same great cause, freedom.

The first garments of Lincoln were no doubt just the simplest, rough clothes. But the child George was christened in a robe of silk and lace. Yet both men rose through struggle to the greatest position any man can achieve in America, the presidency.

George's education was limited, as would be expected in a day when teachers were few and far between. The person who taught George his first lessons in reading, writing and arithmetic, was "a convict-servant, whom his father bought for a schoolmaster."

There were many luxuries in the boy's childhood (he even had his own personal servant), but these were luxuries imported from England, and a wilderness of a sparsely populated America bordered the Virginia plantation.

Since George grew to be a man six feet three inches tall and 220 pounds in weight, he must indeed have been a large boy for his years. He loved games of all sorts, but his greatest enthusiasm was for horses. He was an excellent horseman and even as a little boy was a fearless rider.

George's father died when the son Beth, mom's come home!"

Beth tried to hurry, too, a little ashamed to remember the lunch dishes that she had left. Her Aunt Mary would think her a mighty untidy housekeeper. She slowed down to a stiff-legged walk.

The boys banged into the house shouting back, "Come on Beth, hurry!"

She couldn't hurry—she could just barely walk!

(Continued next week)

boy was 11 years old. He left the bulk of his fortune to two sons by a former marriage. These young men were generous with their step-mother and with their half-brother George.

The half-brother Lawrence took an interest in George and the boy spent a great deal of his time at Mt. Vernon, which was then the estate of Lawrence Washington. In these beautiful surroundings of culture, the boy acquired the social and political background that was so apparent in his later life.

At Mt. Vernon George met many heroes of the navy, and at that time he cherished a great desire to follow a naval career. It was arranged that he should have a midshipman's place, and he was assigned a place aboard a man-of-war. At the last moment his mother changed her mind and decided she could not give up her eldest son. Instead he was sent to school to study mathematics and military tactics.

It is said George was a really bashful boy, though he liked the companionship of girls. Like so many other lads of tender years, he was secretly yearning for the notice of some fair young lady. He even wrote long passages in his boyhood diary about his troubled heart, "Ah, woe is me, that I should love and conceal, Long have I wished and never dared to reveal."

Such expressions prove George to be very much like any other boy in the throes of "puppy-love."

When he was 16 years old he was learned enough to undertake the work of surveyor for the estates of a Lord Fairfax, a neighbor at Mt. Vernon. With this new and very serious undertaking, the sentimental verses to the fair sex disappeared from his diary, and George was grown up.

While he was still little more than a big boy he was made official surveyor for the government. Then a life of "roughing it" began. He spent many hours in the wilderness and unknowingly fitted himself for the years of soldiering that were to come.

George Washington was no great scholar, no sissy, and yet he studied diligently on the subjects that interested him most. And when he was but 22 years of age, he was commander of all the troops of Virginia.

THE FAIR ARAB

THOMAS Edward Lawrence was born in England, went to the great Oxford University, but he could not enter the British army because he was too small in stature. At the beginning of the war he went to Arabia. He adopted their dress and manners, and won the confidence of their leaders.

He was a brave and clever man, and so modest that he declined many honors that were due him. Using another name, he joined the Royal Air Force. He died while trying to avoid hitting a child, who got into the path of his speeding motorcycle.

Fresh Print

THE VELVETEEN RABBIT
By Margery Williams (Bianco)

THIS is not a new book, but it is one no small child should miss, because it is indeed a story to rank with all the children's classics.

The Velveteen Rabbit was first seen by the little boy on Christmas morning, and it was sticking out of the top of the boy's stocking.

Since he was only a velveteen rabbit, he had little attention from the other nursery toys. As a matter of fact, the only toy who was friendly to him at all was the Skin Horse. The horse was REAL because so many, many children who had shared the nursery before the boy was born, had loved him enough to make him REAL.

The Velveteen Rabbit wanted to be real, too, and . . . But I must not tell you how that miracle came about. You must read the book for yourself, or have it read to you, if you are a little fellow.

How you are going to love the thrilling part where the toy rabbit met the REALLY ALIVE rabbits in the field. He tried to run and leap about, but alas, he had hind legs like a pin cushion and he could only SIT. Dear me, I'm telling the story again, and I only wanted you to hear a little part of it.

George H. Doran, New York, published the book.

MOZART, BOY WONDER
By Opal Wheeler and Sybil Deucher

ALL you little boys and girls who do or do NOT like to practice your piano lessons should read and know about the boy Mozart.

When he was but three years old his parents were amazed to see him trying to play the piano. When he was but four years old, he learned a minuet perfectly in half an hour.

When Wolfgang Mozart was five years old, he composed his very own minuet. A child of rare talent indeed was this little boy born many years ago in an Austrian town.

The illustrations in this entertaining book are a real part of the story.

E. F. Dutton and Co., Inc., Publishers.

DEAF KITTY

WHITE persian cats are deaf. That is, all of them that are bred from pure white cats.

DARK HOUSES

RABBITS grow much faster if kept in light-colored pens. This goes for many other animals, too.

LONG JUMP

WHEN a kangaroo wants to show his ability as a jumper, he can make a leap that will carry him from 10 to 12 feet.

BRAVE FATHER

THE father gorilla sleeps on the ground to guard his family in the tree, from leopards.



IN the year 1606 business in Europe was in rather a bad state, and those who had money in invest wanted to be pretty sure of a return.

In England a group of people got together and formed the London company. They gathered together all the people who were willing, and sent them off to America to settle and produce saleable articles there. Then the people who had invested in them would reap a goodly portion of the profits.

Well, they came, they hoped, and they got discouraged. Many of them died. In six months those that were able to plan at all started planning to get away.

But the courageous John Smith, who was a member of the London company, kept them cheered until help could come to them from England.

The people in England, who had invested their money in that little band of settlers in America, were pretty anxious. So much so, in fact, they stole people right off the streets and shipped them to become members of the London company. Convicts, and even children out of orphanages, were sent. But, alas, even that didn't help.

Now, about this time along came one John Rolfe, an English gentleman, who was very much interested in tobacco. And he had sampled some of the "weed", which a sailor had brought over

from America. John Rolfe thought it was pretty good, but not half so good as it would be were it properly cured. Over he went to America.

As soon as this enterprising gentleman arrived, he got the London company to work on the tobacco. They planted it everywhere, and everyone was very busy. The money started rolling in.

In fact, there was so much to be done, that there was a great need for laboring people. The business of tobacco raising was booming, and all of Europe was smoking like a factory chimney. This great question of labor started something. Hundreds of strong, healthy, happy Negroes were brought over from Africa and sold as slaves to work the tobacco fields. This shameful year was 1619.

There was, at this time, a Stuart king on the throne of England, and he didn't like it a little bit that a company of English investors owned all the profits of that tobacco spot in America. The Scotch king felt that HE should be getting some of that money, so he put an end to the London company.

Next he made Virginia a colony and appointed a royal Governor to run things and to see that the king got his share.

Thus tobacco smoking, played a great role in the pageant of America, moving on and on!

NAMES, WHY?

ALASKA, comes from the Eskimo language and really says, "Great country."

ARIZONA, means "Dry-belt" in Indian speech.

COLORADO, is a name taken from the Spanish, meaning "Red." Ponce de Leon named FLORIDA "Feast of the Flowers."

GEORGIA, was named for a king—George the Second of England.

IDAHO, is really two words in Indian language: "Edah Hoe," and it means "Light on the mountains."

IOWA, is believed to be a Sioux tribal word meaning "Sleepy ones."

KANSAS, is a Sioux name meaning "People of the south wind."

VIRGINIA, was named by Sir Walter Raleigh, and he named it in honor of "the Virgin Queen" of England.

ALABAMA, is an Indian name and means "I clear the thicket."



BUSTER, A PUP

BUSTER was a little white bull-dog . . . well, he was PART bull-dog anyway. Bobby found Buster in his stocking on Christmas morning.

Now Buster didn't have very polite manners and he was forever chewing shoes, and corners of the furniture, and the fringe of the rug.

Bobby's father said, "That pup had better stay out-of-doors until he learns how to behave."

The pup heard these dreadful words and he went and hid under Bobby's bed. You see, he WANTED to be a good puppy, but the fringe and shoes tasted so GOOD.

That night Bobby dragged Buster out from under the bed and made a cozy place for him in the garage. Of course, he told the pup how sorry he was to leave him there.

At first Buster thought it was a game Bob was playing with him, and he waited quietly for a long time. But Bob did not come back and Buster started to howl. How he moaned and groaned and yipped.

Bobby heard him and was near tears. Bob's father heard him too and he was very uncomfortable. So uncomfortable in fact that he called in to Bob and said "I give up. Go get him, Bob, but put the shoes out of his reach."

After that, Buster slept on Bob's bed and everybody was happy . . . especially Buster.

PINE CATERPILLAR

THE caterpillars living in the pine trees (which they eat in the dark), are fellows of strange instincts. They work down from their nests in the top of the tree and eat the pine needles as they go. While they travel in a head like a little army they leave a silken path or carpet behind them. The more caterpillars there are traveling along, the wider the carpet.

Since these little fellows have no eyes to speak of, they NEED this little carpet so they can find their way back to the nest at the top of the tree.

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