

# LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. NYE

## The Story So Far

Under the name of Abe Street, "Blur" Ankrom accepts a job at the Trone's Rafter. After rescuing Lee Trone from a band of thugs, she has concealed the adventure from her father and tells him that Ankrom knows friends of theirs, the Strutherses. Then she hears the Strutherses are coming for a visit.

## Chapter 5

### Lies Are Dangerous

ANKROM looked up and found Lee Trone's glance upon him. The laughter now had left her eyes and in its stead he saw a tiny cloud. As plainly as though she had spoken aloud, he realized that she was now recalling the lie in which she had involved him. Malicious satisfaction stirred him as he saw how the possibilities of the situation were coming home to her.

He said goodnight to her father and with a nod to her passed down the hall. She caught up with him among the shadows of the veranda and placed a hand upon his arm.

"Abe! What will I do? Those people are coming here tomorrow."

"Didn't you think they might when you told your Dad I was a friend of theirs?"

"Of course not! I had no idea they were coming." She bit her lip in vexation. "This is not going to be exactly comfortable for any of us."

"I expect not. I shouldn't wonder but we'll manage to live through it, though. The mockery in his voice was plain. "Why didn't you tell your Dad about that affair in Paso Pinto? Lies are dangerous things—especially when they come home to roost."

"But I never dreamed... I couldn't have told Dad about that business in town. You don't understand. He has troubles enough of his own without my bringing him any of mine."

"Well," he said roughly, "I might be able to understand better if you gave me a hint as to what this is all about. You can't expect me to be much help while I'm going blind."

He could see the vague outline of her face among the shadows and knew that she was trying to read his expression; knew, too, that she could not. Had it been daylight now she still would have been unable to come to any conclusion by the sight of his features, for his face was inscrutable.

### A Volcano

"YOU—you don't understand," she began when he cut in.

"You said that before. We're wastin' time. I'll say goodnight to you, ma'am."

Her grip tightened on his arm and stopped him. "I'll trust you, Abe," her voice came huskily. "Let's get in the car. You can drive it into the stable. We can talk there without anyone seeing us."

He helped her into the machine, climbed in behind the wheel and drove the car into the stable. He shut off the motor and the lights.

"Well," he said, a perverse mood upon him. "Let's hear the yarn. Her breath was withdrawn sharply. He felt a twinge of conscience. "I'm sorry—"

But she cut him off: "I know—you think I'm a little liar! Go on and say it!"

He could not see her face in this darkness, but he knew that she was mad—mad at herself for the position into which she had lied them both, and mad at him for taunting her. He changed the subject.

"Are these troubles of your Dad's connected with the ranch?" "I think so."

"Don't you know?" "I'm not sure. He never confides in me. These last few months he's become very reticent. He's grown moody. It's so difficult to explain; it's nothing you can put your finger on, but there's a feeling about this place that never used to be here. It's like sitting on a volcano and waiting for it to erupt."

A silence fell between them. "Perhaps," Ankrom suggested, "it's money matters that's botherin' him. This has been a tough year, water holes dryin' up, springs peterin' out, an' grass burned to a crisp. You've got better water here than your neighbors. I expect they might let their resentment spurt 'em into something that would end in powder smoke. No tellin' what a fella'll do when he sees his cow-brutes droppin' like flies."

"Maybe your Dad's sort of anticipatin' what might start to pop round here if we don't get some rain dang soon."

### It's Uncanny!

"I DON'T think that is it," she said slowly. "It might aggravate the trouble, like this rustling effort to trap these cattle thieves. Don't you think perhaps you're letting your personal feelings toward Hackett warp your judgment of the man? After all, you don't really know him. You two seem to have taken a dislike to each other on sight. I was watching that scene before the bunk house this evening. I couldn't catch much of the conversation. What was it about? What started it?"

"Well, I expect maybe there wasn't any start to it, ma'am. We just sort of fell out before we'd had time to get acquainted. Hackett sort of made it plain he wasn't aimin' to hire any help. He was mad mainly I reckon because I didn't pay much attention to him. He's the sort of gent that has to have attention, if you get what I mean. He wasn't built for the background."

"Well," Lee decided, "he certainly wasn't cut out to be a cow thief, either. He's much too smart—"

Ankrom chuckled. "Smart ma'am? Shucks, I'd say he was not so much smart as foxy. Cunning and sly he even has a heavy leaning toward the coyote side."

that's been going on—we seem to be losing more than anyone else. But Dad's been acting odd for months. This rustling is something new around here. One night the boys notice a little tad of critters in a certain spot—say twenty or thirty prime beeves. Next morning those critters have disappeared—vanished. The range boss says there's not a sign to show where they went or how. It's uncanny!"

"And you think maybe this Hackett gent might be sort of on the make?"

"I—I don't know what to think, Abe. It seems so fantastic to connect him with this rustling or with this other thing that's been botherin' Dad. Hackett's been with us over two years. Dad swears by him—and at him, sometimes. He has been trying all sorts of things in an

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# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

For further proof address the author, inclosing a stamped envelope for reply. Reg. U. S. Pat. Off.



**Adventurous Author**  
A man who lived as he wrote and wrote as he lived was Edward Zane Carrall Judson... better known as Ned Buntline. First of the dime novelists, he invented and perfected that technique 12 years before it was popularized by the firm of Beadle & Adams.  
Born in New York state in 1823, Ned Buntline ran away to sea when a youngster and became a cabin boy.  
At 16 he won a midshipman's commission in the U. S. navy for heroism displayed when a boat capsized in the East River on February 10, 1838. Four years later he resigned to serve in the Seminole Indian war.  
Singlehanded, Buntline once captured two murderers and was rewarded \$600. In 1846 at Nashville, Tenn., he was arraigned for the shooting of one Robert Porterfield, with whose wife Buntline was alleged to have flirted.  
Porterfield's brother opened fire on him in the court room; after a wild cross-town chase he was netted, jailed... then lynched. His neck was broken, but he lived; someone cut him down and smuggled him back to jail. He was not indicted.  
Buntline later served in the Mexican War; was jailed one year for starting a riot in New York's Astor Place theater; started an election riot in St. Louis, 1852, but escaped by jumping bail. Buntline it was who nicknamed William F. Cody "Buffalo Bill" and made a national hero of him in his dime novels.  
After many more eventual escapades, Buntline settled in his "Adirondack home" and devoted himself to his writing. During his life he produced the equivalent of 200 volumes of dime novels, and once wrote a 610-page book in 62 hours.

**BRITISH TRANSFER GOLD BARS OPENLY**  
LONDON.—(P)—American gangsters who are used to seeing gold transported in armored cars watched over by guards with drawn pistols will weep at this news of how the British do it.  
Three men in an open horse-drawn van pulled up in front of the London branch of a New York bank recently with 50 bars of gold, worth \$15,000 each.  
A messenger greeted them with three cups of tea. The men set the cups on the bars. It took ten minutes later they took the empty cups into the bank and casually unloaded the \$750,000 worth of gold.

**TAILSPIN TOMMY—Snoot "Gets in Tommy's Hair!"**



**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Rusty Leaves!**

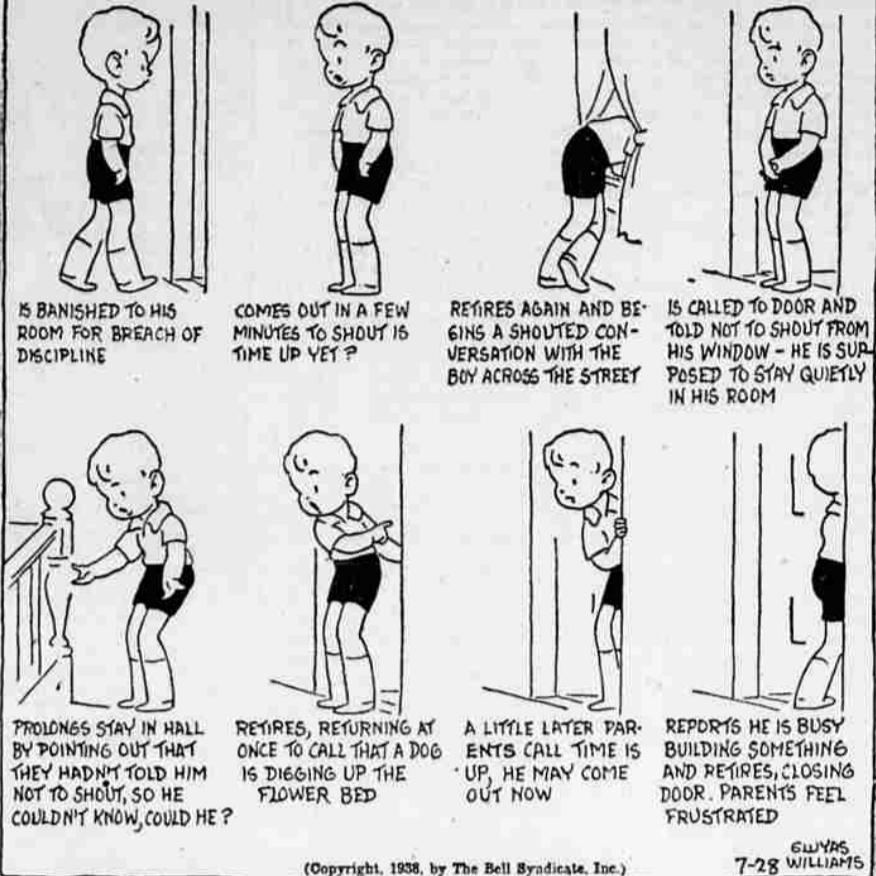


**BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Wilfred's Luck!**



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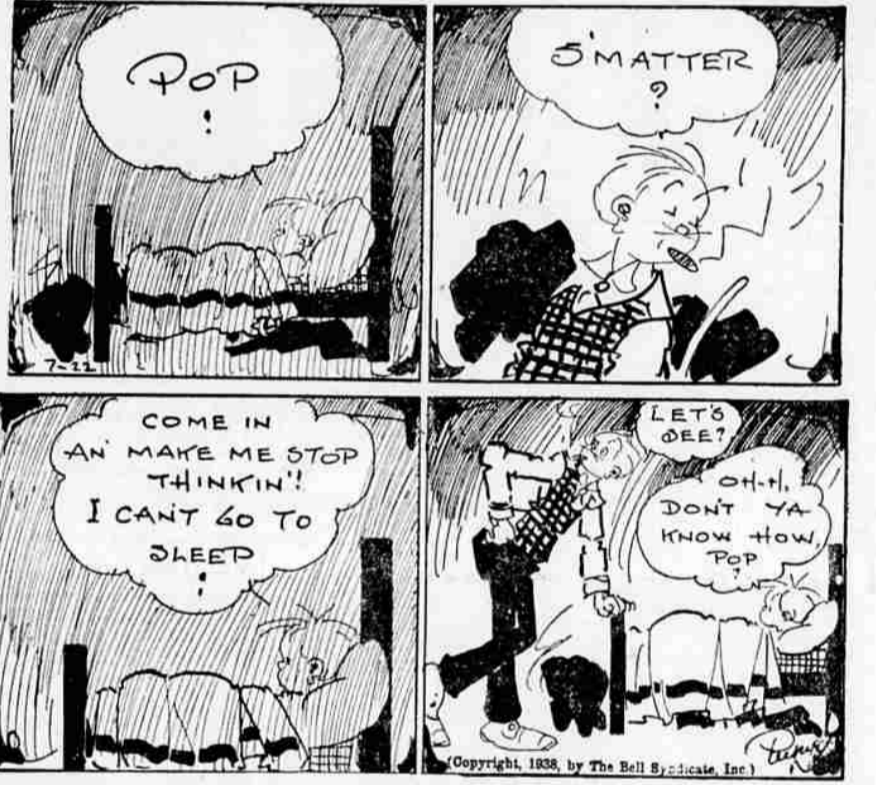
By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



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# MOST OF RANGES IN OREGON GOOD

SALEM (UP)—All of the Oregon ranges, with the exception of portions in the Willamette valley and the southwestern area, are in good condition, according to a report by the bureau of agricultural economics. In the Willamette valley range feed is fairly good but is getting dry because of a scarcity of rain during the past six weeks. Lower ranges in the southwestern area are dried up and the hay and grain crops have also been damaged.

Range conditions in the southeastern area are the best in many years, and range conditions in the north eastern area are "excellent." The conditions of ranges in the Columbia river area is "very good."

**Gets Ace**  
PORTERVILLE, Cal. (UP)—Clarence Fiehrty, who lost his right arm 10 years ago, was nevertheless able to make a hole-in-one on the Sierra Heights golf course. It was a 124-yard drive, by a one-armed driver.

**Hold College Degrees**  
TOLEDO (UP)—More than half the number of 20 new city police have college degrees.

Closing time for Two Late to Classy Ads is 1:20 p. m.

THE MAIL TRIBUNE WANT ADS.