

# LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. BYE

## The Story So Far

Trying to leave his reputation for gun-play behind him, "Blur" Ankrom heroics crumpled in trouble again when he rescued Lee Trone from a band of thugs. The Trone ranch, the Rafter T, is in difficulties, and Ankrom accepts a job there under the name of Abe Streeter. Lee tells her father, Ankrom's former friend and trainer, Colonel and Betty Struthers. Thus the Struthers come for a visit.

## Chapter Eight Masquerade

WHILE Lee Trone went off to meet her friends and to take them to luncheon, Blur Ankrom took himself to a small restaurant on a side street labeled, "Greasy Spoon," and out some grub under his own belt. It was, therefore, in a fairly cheerful frame of mind, considering the prospect of trouble that lay before him, that he returned to the car and gave himself up to speculation concerning the appearance, habits and characters of those old friends of his—the Struthers.

Colonel Struthers would be a stuffed shirt, he mused—a pompous old belligerent with horsey notions and little depth. The thought brought an amused grin to Ankrom's lips. Should the Colonel be such a character, Lee Trone would find her work cut out attempting to get around the lie that Abe Streeter was an old friend of Struthers.

A man whose emotions had long been controlled by an iron will, he could not understand his feelings toward the girl who had come so precipitously into his life. That he was drawn to her he realized, and the knowledge irritated him, made short his temper. He strove to fight against her charm. There could never be anything between them; to push their acquaintance deeper could only mean sorrow and heart-break for one or both. This frame of mind had been one reason for his reticence during the drive this morning.

There was another cause. He had headed for this country in an effort to leave his past behind him—to live as other men had the right and freedom to live. But already the promise of further turmoil was driving black thoughts across his mind. Nowhere, it seemed, could he find the peace he craved. Where his reputation failed to follow, he found himself embroiled in new difficulties; new trouble enmeshed his steps. So he had always found it in the past.

His father, a frontier marshal until checked in mid-career by dry-gulch lead, had in his time made many enemies, some of whom survived him. One of these, two years ago, had found occasion to stir the marshal's memory. With gun smoke young Ankrom had purged the insult. That incident had started Ankrom on the trail of No-Return.

In many ways it had been a lucky shot with which he had toward Storm Dream that day. The town had been a former rustler, a man whose draw was speedy as a striking snake. He had that day got in the first shot, yet only Ankrom had lived to tell about it. For Ankrom's fire had been a memory. Since that day a constant flood of trouble had forced the marshal's son to become a past master in the art of draw-and-shoot; had forced him also from the trodden trails in self-defence.

Because of these things, Ankrom long since had resolved to live his life alone. The life of a gun man's wife was in his opinion no fit lot for any woman. There should be no place for sentiment in Ankrom's mind; the dictates of his heart should be discounted.

But though he had made these decisions firmly, and lived up to them as well, never before had he encountered anyone like Lee Trone. Despite the shortness of their acquaintance he could recall her features vividly; her vision was before him during all his waking hours. He could not get her out of his mind.

Voices drove in upon his consciousness and he looked up. There came Lee now, and with her a man and girl. The girl got but a glance from him; it was the man that drew his eyes.

He was well dressed this fellow was, and short, pale and handsome. Around forty-eight in years. There was laughter in his eyes, gaudy, mocking laughter, though his lips were grave and closed.

Lee said, "Colonel Struthers, this is Abe Streeter, the friend I told you of. Abe, shake hands with Colonel Struthers."

"Howdy," Ankrom nodded, and guessed the gods were chucking. For the owner of that hand stretched out to him was the cousin of Storm Dream!

Why? ANKROM read amusement into the faint smile with which the fellow said, "Glad to meet up with you—Streeter."

"You're going to find I don't improve with age, or time—Struthers." Ankrom said it coldly and, reaching back across the seat, pulled open one of the car's rear doors for them. In Lee's green eyes that were fixed puzzledly upon

him he read wonder and speculation and knew that she had not missed entirely the significance of those low-spoken words.

"This is the Colonel's daughter, Betty," she said.

For the first time Ankrom let his glance play over the girl. She was little and pretty and golden. Her bare head in the rays of the past-noon sun was a tumbled mass of fine-sown gold. She thrust her hand toward him almost timidly, as though fearful lest his own much larger one might crush her tiny, well-manicured fingers.

"Pleased to know you, ma'am," Ankrom said, and dropping her hand, turned back to stare across the wheel as the girls climbed in. The Colonel got in last. When settled, he said, "Let's go, fellow."

Ankrom pressed down on the starter. He let the clutch in gently and sent the car forward.

"By way of Paso Pinto, Abe," Lee called, and Ankrom nodded. Once clear of the town Ankrom opened up the motor. Scant were the scraps of conversation reaching him from the back seat. But Ankrom felt no interest in their talk. His mind was busy with things which meant more to him than a general lack of water and the condition of other people's thirsty steers. The situation in which he found himself was not at all to his liking and had been complicated enough before Lee had told her father that crazy lie. But now, with the supposed Struthers proving to be a cousin of the man whose death had placed Blur Ankrom's youthful feet on the trail to gunhawk glory, immediate prospects for that hoped-for peace looked dark.

Why had Kelson Dream come here masquerading as Colonel Struthers, an old friend of the Trone's? Not because he'd guessed that here at last he would find Ankrom. No—that veiled pleasure and gleam of amusement in his glance on seeing Ankrom disapproved at once that theory. Why, then, had he come? It bothered Ankrom.

**Puzzled And Apprehensive**  
THE girl who was posing as his daughter also bothered Ankrom. Who was this glowing creature introduced by Lee as Betty? Not Dream's daughter, certainly! Dream had no daughter. Was this girl the real Colonel's daughter? "But no," he thought, "she would never lend herself to such a deception."

Where then did she fit into this web of conspiracy that was spinning about the Rafter T? Was she merely an accomplice of Dream—Or was she more—Dream's wife or—

Behind the wheel Ankrom's form went tense, his hands clutched a rubber circle. He had seen this girl before. She was the one who had leaped from between the red drapes of that second-story window in Paso Pinto the other night and cried, "Up here, cowboy! Quick!"

For long seconds as the road flashed across his mind was a whirl of wild conjecture, then as the rush of blood receded from his brain he forced himself to think more coolly. Dream, he reasoned, had not come here unprepared. He must have known that the real Struthers had not been seen by Trone for many years, else he would not have dared this impersonation. That he had now committed himself to the role, showing that he had every intention of bluffing it out.

Why? What was he expecting to get out of it? Ankrom knew the Dream breed pretty well, both from experience and reputation. He must have known that Dream would never risk his neck if there was not money, and good money, to be forthcoming. The man, he reasoned, must be working under orders.

Whose? Ankrom was puzzled and apprehensive young man as he sent the car across the miles toward Paso Pinto. And it was not for himself, just now, or for his own future that he felt apprehensive—it was for Lee Trone and the gaunt old man who rodded the Rafter T.

For any possible danger this mystery might hold for himself, Blur Ankrom was not concerned. Even his object in coming to this country was momentarily thrust into the background of his mind by the nature of current events and a sudden interest and absorption in the riddle set up by them.

He did not believe that Dream would give away the Streeter masquerade. The man could not afford to—yet. Nor could he immediately afford to bring his quarrel with Ankrom into the open. The chances were that Dream would bide his time, would wait until this sinister business that was bringing him to the Rafter T was finished before calling Ankrom to account.

Was there some connection between Lee Trone's adventure in Paso Pinto and the sudden arrival of the spurious Colonel? To Ankrom it seemed likely that there was, but its nature he could not surmise. One thing only seemed certain—there was trouble ahead for Old Man Trone and all who sided with him!

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New acquaintances, Monday.

and John Huddleston, newly elected district commander of the V. F. W. of district No. 8.

A large delegation was present from Pelican post and auxiliary of Klama Falls and Grants Pass, Medford and Ashland were also well represented. Much credit for the success of this picnic is given to Comrade William Ludwig of Crater Lake post, Medford, V. F. W., who arranged the program of games and races enjoyed by all and which were held throughout the day and for which suitable prizes were awarded winners.

## FIVE DIE ON CROSSING AS TRAIN, AUTO COLLIDE

HOBBART, Ind., Aug. 2—(AP)—Five persons motoring from Maywood, Ill., to Cleveland, Ohio, were killed today as their car crashed into the locomotive of the Pennsylvania railroad's Broadway Limited at a crossing here.

The victims were identified by Deputy Coroner Lowell T. Dupes as

# STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



**Deepest Dive**  
Four hundred and twenty feet below the waves of Lake Michigan, a shadowy figure moved slowly over a muddy bottom. Max Gene Nohl, deep-sea diver, had made a new world's record descent—in a lake! The day was December 1, 1937, and cold. There was nothing to see, so Nohl quickly rose to the surface. He was prevented from getting the "bends" because of a helium-oxygen mixture that eliminated nitrogen. A former student at Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Nohl had himself designed this self-contained suit for deep-water work.

"When I was walking on a 420-foot bottom," Nohl says, "my body was subjected to a pressure of approximately 100 pounds per square inch. The surface of my body was actually supporting a weight of over 800,000 pounds of water."

"This pressure is transmitted to every point in the body. It is because of this that we are free to work, use tools, walk, etc. . . . we are under the same pressure as the water we are in."

Nohl's dive of last December surpassed in depth by 114 feet that of

Frank Crilley made off Pearl Harbor, Honolulu, in 1915, which stood for 22 years as the world's record descent at 306 feet.

"Two men have gone deeper than I," Nohl explains. "Dr. William Beebe descended 3028 feet in a steel ball, the 'Bathysphere,' and recently an Italian diver in a steel shell went down 800 feet. These men, however, were not under the pressure of the water, and could do nothing but look out of a window."

Tomorrow: What is the highest price ever paid for a butterfly?

**ROAD QUARRY PLANT DESTROYED BY FIRE**  
BAKER, Aug. 2—(AP)—Damage estimated at \$40,000 was caused Saturday night when fire destroyed the quarry plant of the Roy L. Houck company of Salem, which is re-con-

structing six miles of the Old Oregon trail between North Powder and Haines.

The equipment destroyed included two diesel power units, a large compressor, new electric welding outfit and light plant. Numerous tools owned by engineers were also lost.

**Logging to Resume.**  
CARLTON, Aug. 2—(AP)—The Flora Logging company, closed since May 20, will resume operations Monday. Simultaneously with the company's announcement, a logging

union meeting was called to determine whether loggers would sanction return to work at reduced wages.

**Sights School of Whales.**  
ASTORIA, Aug. 2—(AP)—T. B. Cook, Astoria yachtman, reported today he had sighted more than 50 whales sporting 25 miles off the Oregon coast between the Columbia river and Nehalem City. He said one whale appeared three times near the boat, once only six feet off the port side.

## TAILSPIN TOMMY—Tommy Breaks the Bad News!



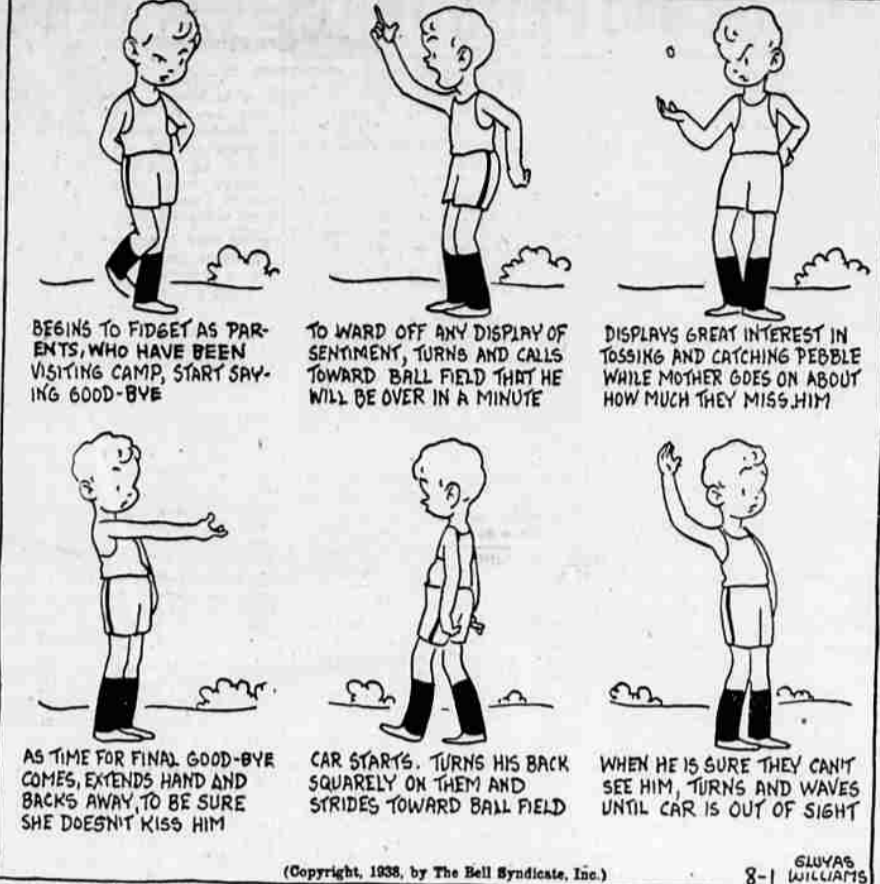
## BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—False Directions!



## THE NEBBS—Good Advice



## VISIT AT CAMP By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



## 'S MATTER POP By O M PAYNE



## By HAL FORREST



## By EDWIN ALGER



## By SOL HESS



## 200 ATTEND PICNIC OF V.F.W. AND D.V.A. IN PARK AT ASHLAND

About two hundred veterans and their wives and families attended the district picnic of the Veterans of Foreign Wars in Lathia park at Ashland Sunday. Members of the Disabled American Veterans chapters and their auxiliaries of Grants Pass and Medford were special guests. Comrade Dover, junior vice commander of the state department of the D. A. V., was present and the state department commander, Mollie Dover of the D. A. V. auxiliary, also J. D. Croft, newly elected junior vice commander of the department of Oregon, V. F. W.