

LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. WYE

The Story So Far

Trying to leave his reputation for gun-play behind him, "Blur" Ankrum runs into trouble again when he rescues Lee Trone from a band of thugs. The Trones ranch, the Rafter T is in difficulties, and Ankrum accepts a job there under the name of Abe Streeter. Although Lee attracts him, he remains aloof because of his past. When Colonel Struthers and his daughter Betty arrive to visit the Trones, Ankrum recognizes Struthers as Kelton Dren, cousin of the man he killed to avenge his father's death.

Chapter Nine The Sheriff

BEFORE the Stockmen's Bank in Paso Pinto, at Lee's order, Ankrum shoved down a foot upon the brake and brought the car to a stop. A solid-looking man with a great wide forehead lounged against one of the twin pillars guarding the bank's entrance. He did not raise his head, but his sleepy lids, rolling slowly up, disclosed smoke-gray eyes whose glance brushed past and came to rest upon Ankrum.

He returned the gaze with interest. He saw that the lounge was dressed in range clothes which he guessed to be of expensive make. These clothes, he saw were well-tailored by the heavy-muscled figure of their wearer. The man's cream-colored Stetson was shoved far back from the forehead, disclosing a rebellious tangle of curly black hair.

Abruptly the man's head came up, the gray eyes slid away from Ankrum's glance and fastened on something nearer. A great brown paw came up and removed his hat while across his heavy features flashed a smile. Ankrum's gaze, slightly shifting, saw that Lee Trone had come abreast.

The man bowed with a gallant flourish. "Gosh," he said, "but it's good to see you, gal. Where you been keepin' yourself?"

"Out of your way," she answered coolly. "The big man's while-toothed grin remained. "Shucks," came the lazy drawl, "that ain't no friendly way to talk."

"I wasn't trying to be friendly," Ankrum saw the big man shove free of the pillar in such a way that his bulk presented a barrier between the girl and the door. "Lee, some folks are givin' an old-time dance here on the twelfth. What say you take it in? Been a long time since you an' I have shaken a hoof together."

There was a try smile on Lee's reply that was not wasted on Blur Ankrum: "It will be a long time before we do again—if ever. Let me pass now Tom. I want to go inside."

"Why, shucks, I thought you'd stopped to talk with me," he said, and made no move from where he stood. "Seems like you're awful cool today. An' this is the first time I've seen you since you got back. We used to be good friends. What's the matter? Did that college out bit notions in your head?"

"Times have changed, that's all—people, too," she answered; "my going away to college has had nothing to do with it. You're not the man I used to know. Tom; you've changed. A strange unrest seems to have settled on this range."

"What's all that got to do with you and me?"

"Your father and my father were never friends—"

"But that don't have to make enemies out of you an' me."

"I'm not so sure that my loyalty with my father. Things that you and I once found possible are so no longer. I don't think we had better meet again."

Ankrum could not see Lee's face; her back was to him now. But he could see the big man's features well; could see a look of resentment stir the gray smoke of those sleepy-lidded eyes. "I reckon," the big man said, "someone has been spreadin' lies about me."

"I'm not so sure that they were lies. There was bad blood between your Dad and mine for many years. Can you assure me that all this time you have not brooded on Ed Ratchford's death?"

"Out To Bust The Rafter T"

RATCHFORD'S sleepy lids masked all feeling from his glance. "I didn't think," he said, "you'd ever doubt me. Lee. It's hard to see."

"Ankrum heard his voice trail off. He stood there, hat in hand, his chin sunk down upon his chest, darkly brooding. Abruptly he looked up and his eyes went straight to Lee's."

"This—this talk that's goin' round. The best way to put an end to it an' stop these malicious, wagging tongues. Lee, is for you an' me to be seen together. His lips rolled back in a smile that showed his white teeth. "We better go to that dance."

"I can't," Lee said quietly. "It would be disloyal to my father—you mustn't ask it. Tom." Ankrum saw a tremor shake the big man's chin came up. "Please let me be."

When Lee had gone into the bank, Ratchford came over to Ankrum.

"Who're you? I don't seem to recall seein' your face round here before. Stranger?"

Ankrum's glance was calm. "I don't recall that askin' personal questions ever to be a habit in the cattle country, New Dad?"

Ratchford's lids rolled lower; the eyes stared back unblinkingly. It seemed plain that he was not used to being addressed in just this manner. Yet there was no resentment in his stare, just heightening interest. He suddenly grinned and shoved out his hand. "My name's Ratchford. I run the Straddle Bug brand."

Ankrum, seized by some perverse impulse he could not himself have put in words, ignored the rancher's hand. "I'm Streeter. Now I've answered your question Ratchford, do you know of any reason why this palaver should be dragged out any further?"

Ratchford's forehead puckered. "Glad to know you, Streeter. Wish we had a few more noddin' pelicans like you around this country. Land needs 'em. Can't see no sense in you an' me not hittin' it off, though. How'd you like a good job?"

"I got a job."

"I said a good one. What's wrong with workin' for the Rafter T?"

Ratchford shrugged. "Nothin'—if you're huntin' a quick grave."

"What's the meanin' of that? I never was good on riddles."

"No riddle. You hear what Miss Trone said to me. I reckon. Well, it's true that there's a lotta loose tongues begun to wag. Don't know where the thing started, but there's a rumor loose that I'm out to bust the Rafter T; out to even up with Old Man Trone for the death of my Dad. It all happened years ago. In his younger days, Lee's ol' man was one of the graspin'est, hardest, fightin'est old cocks on this whole range. He made it awful hard on my ol' man, who was runnin' sheep then. Fact is, Trone put me ol' man outa business. Some folks had got the notion I'm figurin' to square things up. Nothin' to it, of course, but there you are," he shrugged.

"Clackin' tongues may start things yet. Be hittin' your wagon to Trouble if you tie up with Rafter."

"Claydell"

"How come? What do you mean?"

"Just this," Ratchford said. "Somebody is out to bust that outfit."

"An' figurin' to make you play the goat, eh?"

"That's about the size of it," Ratchford admitted.

"Why don't you do something about it? Haven't you got any suspicions who's back of it all?"

"I got suspicions, yes," Ratchford answered slowly. "But suspicions don't mean a thing. I got a love proof." "Sarcasm glinted in his eyes as he added, "You see, Streeter, I'm the sheriff of this here county."

Lee Trone came from the bank talking earnestly with a man of striking appearance. A good six feet in his shiny black boots he stood, and carried himself like a Spanish Don. His thick, bushy eyebrows appeared facile at expression; black sideburns, long and curling, together with the black pencil-line moustache gave his smiling face a sharp touch of the Mediterranean.

Ankrum saw Ratchford exchange brief nods with this man. Lee Trone, broke off their conversation and turned to indicate her guests. "Mr. Claydell," she said, "I'd like to make you acquainted with our friends the Strutherses."

As Ankrum watched the snubious Colonel's genial nod he wondered why the sheriff had not been introduced to the Rafter T's guests. Evidently Lee was distinctly hostile to Ratchford.

Betty was saying something to Claydell which brought an admiring grin.

"I certainly can think of no acquaintance I'd rather make than yours, little lady." His eyes were bold as he looked up from a gallant bow. "Are you going to stay at the Rafter T?"

"Harry—that's Dad—and I are going to Dallas. We'll stop off with the Trones for a few days though. Dad and Mr. Trone are old friends. We haven't seen them in years. I'd practically forgotten how they looked. I can see already that I'm going to love it here."

"I can see that you are, too."

"Mr. Claydell, with you around I'm sure I shall."

Ankrum scowled and looked at Lee. But Lee was studying the Colonel's face. She turned as Claydell addressed her. "Tell your Dad I'll be seeing him tonight, Lee."

She nodded. Color brushed the cheeks of Sheriff Ratchford. "Believe I'll stop out at the Rafter T tonight myself," Ratchford said. "Mind giving me a lift?"

Lee's eyes were cold. "I don't believe the Rafter T's hospitality could include you, Mr. Ratchford. I'd stay away if I were you."

He took the insult calmly; his smile never wavered. "I'll take the chance," he said, and climbed into the front with Ankrum.

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Ratchford chats with Ankrum, tomorrow.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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



THE FLOWER TASTER!
JOHN GOUGH—BLIND ENGLISH BOTANIST, COULD IDENTIFY HUNDREDS OF PLANTS MERELY BY TOUCHING HIS TONGUE TO THEM! (1757-1825)



\$10,000 BUTTERFLY!
AN ENGLISH COLLECTOR PAID THAT SUM FOR A SOUTH AFRICAN "CHARAXES FOURNIERAI" BUTTERFLY IN 1938

POLICE CARRIED RATTLES IN ENGLAND BEFORE WHISTLES WERE INTRODUCED!

(Prior to 1885)

SPOT NEWS OF THE MEXICAN WAR WAS CARRIED BY PONY EXPRESS TO THE NEW ORLEANS PICTURE OFFICE, 14 YEARS BEFORE THE PONY EXPRESS WAS USED IN WESTERN U.S.!

The Blind Botanist
Not since the age of three had John Gough, famous English botanist and zoologist, laid eyes on a single plant, yet, strange as it seems, in the 68 years he lived Gough became a leading figure in the field of nature study.

Born in 1759, he was no different from any other lad of his age until he was stricken with smallpox in 1782. Blindness resulted. His parents wisely encouraged him to spend his time out of doors, and he came to love the countless plants he could smell and touch, but not see.

\$10,000 Butterfly
In 1938 an English collector, for reasons best known to himself, bought a butterfly of the family Charaxes fournierei—for \$10,000.

Reason for the high price is the fact that there are but two specimens known to have been captured. Colored in shades of yellow, black, blue, orange, and green, this species makes its home in South Africa, particularly around Durban.

Tomorrow: What is the oldest tax in the world?

garlands of exotic flowers, the modern Balinese girls deck themselves in tight-fitting cotton jackets.

American tourists and American missionaries are considered to be responsible for the changes which are taking place. To preserve peace and maintain native customs, Dutch authorities are now refusing entry permits to all missionaries.

Spinal anesthesia was first suggested by Dr. Leonard Corning of New York in 1885.

GLASS FAILS TO SET BLAZES IN FORESTS
SALEM (UP)—For a fire warden, Dwight Culver of the Coos County Fire Patrol association, has a strange hobby. During the past two years he has been trying to start fires—with bottles.

During the serious season of 1936 it occurred to Culver that some of the fires then raging might have been ignited by the sun's rays passing through bottles and bits of glass. So he began focusing bits of glass on vegetation to test his theory.

So far, he says, he hasn't had any luck.

The only Indian reservation in Texas is near Livingston.

Japan's population increases at the rate of nearly a million a year.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—A Glimpse of Hope!



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER



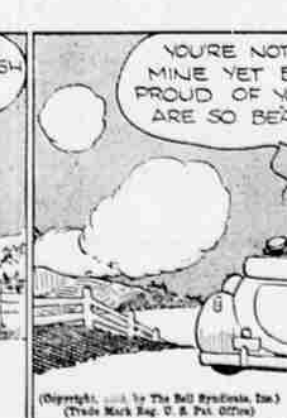
THE NEBBS—Love



BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER



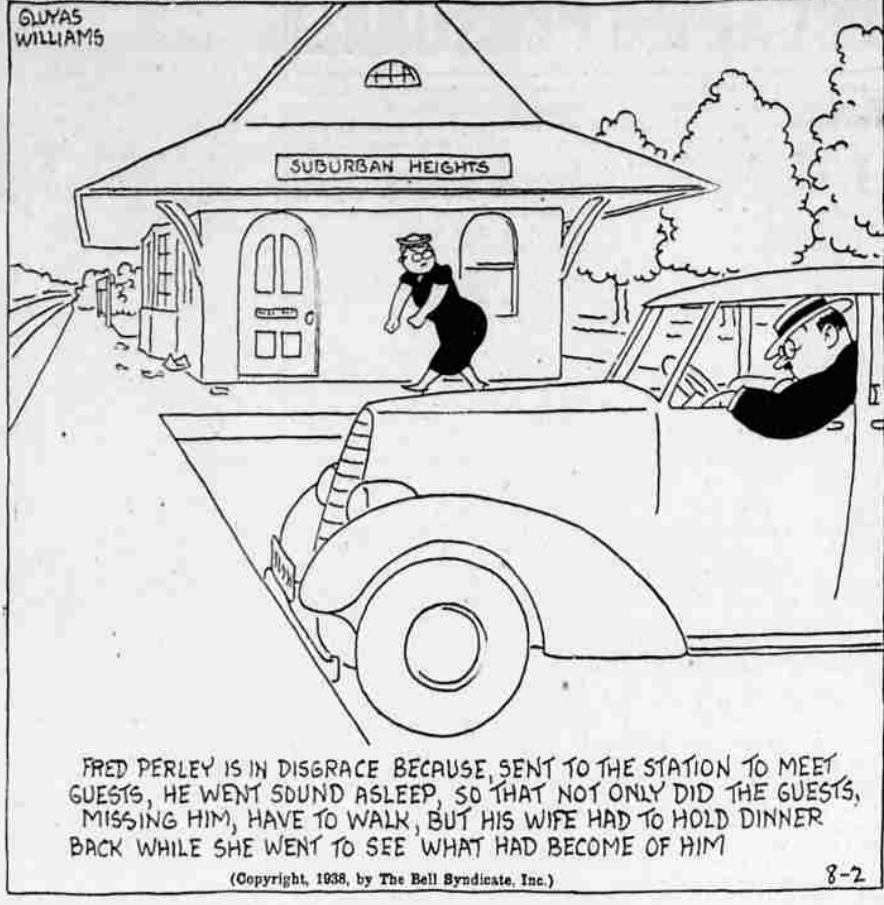
THE NEBBS—Love



SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

GLUYAS WILLIAMS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



FRED PERLEY IS IN DISGRACE BECAUSE, SENT TO THE STATION TO MEET GUESTS, HE WENT SOUND ASLEEP, SO THAT NOT ONLY DID THE GUESTS, MISSING HIM, HAVE TO WALK, BUT HIS WIFE HAD TO HOLD DINNER BACK WHILE SHE WENT TO SEE WHAT HAD BECOME OF HIM

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3 MATTER POI By C. M. PAYNE



By HAL FORRE

Natives Object as Tourists Make Bali 'Paradise' Costly

DEN PASAR, Bali—(AP)—"Paradise no longer pays" is the verdict of young and old Bali natives. They complain they cannot afford the new standards of living now invading this famous island of the Netherlands East Indies which legend and tourist pamphlets call "Paradise Isle."

The lure of "western storeclothes" has gripped Bali, whose natives heretofore dressed only in a multi-colored strip of cloth worn loosely about the hips.

Long-tailed shirts—worn outside the trousers—plus four and reds hats are the coveted articles now of the wardrobe of a young Balinese man-about-town, while in all the larger villages dancing girls and their mothers are beginning to wear hip-length cotton jackets.

When the large round-the-world tour-boats, carrying thousands of American tourists, visit the island each year, special Balinese dances are arranged for the tourists. For these performances, and for those given weekly in Den Pasar, the principal city on the island, the Balinese performers wear their traditional costumes of gorgeously brocaded silks.

But when a group of Balinese youths and maidens gather by themselves in the evening for dancing and songs, "store shirts," plus four and reds hats are the fashionable attire of the man. Instead of covering their bosoms with the traditional