

LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. HAY

The Story So Far

Someone is trying to smash the Rafter T by every means possible. Going by the name of Streeter "Blat" Ankrum takes a job there to help lovely Lee Trone. Betty Struthers sets on the ranch under false pretenses. She makes a play for Ankrum which put him in a bad with Lee. Ratchford, the sheriff, is Ankrum's ally. Claydell, a neighboring rancher, wants the Trone's land because a railroad is going through.

Chapter 21

The Net Tightens

ANKRUM'S glance beat against Ratchford speculatively. A blur of motion off to one side caught his attention. It was Betty walking hurriedly toward the house. He turned his glance back on the sheriff and caught the tag end of a scowl being ironed from the beefy cheeks. "What are you figuring to do about it?"

"Do? There ain't nothin' that I can do—yet. I've got to wait till Claydell comes out into the open. He's a slick one; he'll be right careful not to tip his hand."

"Must have tipped it already. You got onto him?"

"I got onto him, yeah. But from another angle. Claydell ain't tipped nothin' an' likely won't. Trone's due to have his hair lifted."

Ankrum's brows raised slightly. "If you think that why don't you do something? Ain't that what you're packing that star for?"

"Listen," Ratchford said. "A sheriff can't act until a crime's been committed. When Claydell grabs this ranch I'll have him, an' believe me, I'll see that he gets the limit. I'm bettin' he's the damn back-biter that's spreadin' these yarns about me bein' out to even up with Trone!"

"What have you done about that Dreen killing? Found the fellow that fired the shot yet?"

"The sheriff's heavy lips curled grimly. "I won't have to go very far to put my hands on him!"

"That's interesting," Ankrum said. "I never did cotton to the sort of hombre that start their smokin' when a fellow isn't lookin' when you're ready to go after him. Let me know, I'd like to lend a hand."

Ratchford's eyes stared back unblinkingly. "I'll see that you're around."

"By the way, have you heard any more about that gun man, Bandera, you was tellin' me about?" Ankrum asked.

Ratchford nodded with what seemed to Ankrum an odd reluctance. "Yeah. He's not only arrived. Streeter, but he's bedded down snug as an old houn' dog with Claydell."

Ankrum's muscles stiffened. If this were true it would account in part for Ratchford's thinking Claydell the power behind the things that were happenin' here. In fact, if this were true it might well be that the sheriff was right in thinkin' Claydell the man who was out to smash the Rafter T. And if Claydell fell now the man, it was high time something was done to put a halt to his activities; it was time steps were taken to bring him into the open. Plainly here was something to think about!

"What did you say gave you the idea Claydell is figurin' on a railroad coming through here?"

Ratchford grinned. "I didn't say. But I don't mind tellin' you I got a couple of his men—higher-ups. He's not only figurin' on a road som'n' through here, but aims to build a town not half a mile out side this valley. His idea is that a railroad will make it boom. He plans to have a bank, two or three good-sized saloons, ten or twelve stores, corrals and shipping pens shutes and squeeze. With a place like that takin' his orders he'll be good as a king in this section. He's got vision an' a hell of a lot of nerve. He'll smash Trone fatter'n a pancake—he's got to have this ranch."

Feeling of Resentment

"YOU tell it good."

"I'm tellin' you the truth!"

"What's he want the valley for?"

"I never said he did. I said he was after the ranch, an' I mean entire."

"Yeah. He'll be wantin' this valley though, as much if not more than any other part."

Ratchford's heavy features wrinkled in a scowl; there was perplexity in his glance. "Why?"

"It was Ankrum's turn to smile. "Because if Claydell's aim is to build a town when—and if—the railroad builds through this ranch, he'll be smart enough to see that this valley here will control one hell of a big section of this range."

"How do you figure that?"

Ankrum's teeth flashed wider. "Water!" he said it coldly.

The sheriff put a hand to his forehead and sent a roving glance out over the valley from rim to distant rim. There was a strange light in his smoky eyes when he turned them back on Ankrum. "You're right," he admitted softly. "I hadn't thought of that."

Ankrum, looking toward the house, saw Trone and Lee come out upon the veranda. Trone beckoned him curtly. Ankrum left the sheriff

and strode out into the sun that filled the yard. He saw Lee wave and knew the gesture was for Ratchford and saw her coming toward him. They passed in the center of the yard. Ankrum would have attempted to make some explanation of the scene she had witnessed in the bunkhouse, but she passed him with lifted head and eyes that were filled with scorn.

A feeling of resentment welled up within him; not at Lee, but at the tricks of fate. At Ratchford too, for he was remembering now that Ratchford and Lee had once been friendly. As he strode to the veranda, a passionate hatred of Tom Ratchford tightened its grip on Ankrum. He wished that it were Ratchford instead of Claydell who was out to smash the Rafter T; a wicked desire was surging through him to cross guns with the burly sheriff. Nothing, he felt, would give him so much pleasure as a fight with that heavy figure pitching forward in the dust!

He caused at the veranda steps looking up at Trone expectantly. "You wanted me?"

"I did," Trone's voice was curt. "What have you done about findin' them rustlers?"

"Nothing I can do, now. They've got your beef and they've vanished. I told you how they were working. There's nothing more that I can do unless they strike again."

"Well, you can't be hangin' around wastin' your time. When I hire a man I expect him to get results."

Ankrum stared at Trone in silence. Trone's eyes glared at him in his cheeks. "When a man hires me he gets results. Any time you don't like my style you know what you can do. An' if you got any notions about handin' me my time, why I'll tell you right now I'll be well pleased to get off this range."

Trone stepped back a pace before the suppressed fury that he read in Ankrum's look. "Why—why, no, I wasn't figurin' on handin' you your time," he stammered. "This rustlin' has got me rattled. I reckon maybe I spoke a bit hasty-like. Streeter. Forget it. Will you?"

Galloping Hoofs

BEFORE Ankrum could answer the sudden sound of galloping hoofs rang out. He turned and his eyes flashed upward quickly, toward the valley rim. They caught a horseman driving a staggering bronc. Like a madman the howling rider drove his pony down the treacherous ditch to the valley floor, and out across that floor on a reeling line for the buildings clustered at its center.

"What now?" Trone's husky voice growled wearily. "Don't the fool know better than to ride a horse like that in this heat?"

Ankrum's glance stayed with the horse and rider; the horse's hoofs struck out more floundering with every nearing yard, and forty yards away it dropped. The rider lit on springing lears and kept on coming. He reached the veranda platform. Hot wrath blazed from his eyes.

Trone grabbed the puncher by the shoulders; shook him. "What in blazes," he hissed, "has happened now?"

The man gulped panting, striving to catch his breath. He looked appealingly to Ankrum.

"Take your time," Ankrum told him.

Trone glared, but held his temper. Ankrum studied the rider. The man was known upon the pay roll as Ring-Legs. He was a bald-headed fellow with big buck teeth and squinty eyes. Just now those eyes were wide and filled with anger. Ankrum had assigned him to the southwest line camp with orders to keep his glance upon the cattle ranging there. Plainly something had gone amiss or the man would not be here; equal plain was the fact that this was no ordinary trouble, or the man would not have come in the manner in which he had.

"I wasn't sure I'd make it!" said the man, still breathing fast. "What's happened?" Trone demanded.

"Plenty! There was surveyors all up an' down our tank this mornin'. They was peerin' through them little telescopes they carries an' wavin' their hands an' all. I asked 'em what was the big idea, but all they'd say was that they was county surveyors follerin' orders."

While the man paused for breath Ankrum glanced at Trone. The rancher's face looked gray and drawn. Ankrum looked back at Ring-Legs.

Ring-Legs said: "Them fellas cleared out a little fore noon 'Bout two o'clock a bunch of gents drove up in a couple wagons an' began unloadin' wire an' posts. I asked 'em what was the big idea, but all they'd say was that they was county surveyors follerin' orders."

"They said there's been a mistake in boundary lines. That tank don't belong to us. Boone Heffle has give 'em orders to string a fence!"

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Ratchford interfered again, tomorrow.

STRANGE AS IT SEEMS—By JOHN HIX

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THE WAR DOG!
A CURIOUS BRONZE CANNON SHAPED LIKE A BULLDOG, IN THE TOWER OF LONDON, England...

CHARLIE FERGUSON, Phillies third baseman, MADE 88 ERRORS IN 85 GAMES! -1883-

ROGER SHERMAN
American legislator and jurist,
WAS THE ONLY MAN TO SIGN THE 4 FUNDAMENTAL DOCUMENTS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT—
THE ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION, 1774;
THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, 1776;
THE ARTICLES OF CONFEDERATION, 1778;
AND THE FEDERAL CONSTITUTION, 1787



THE "WIND STACKER" USED ON MODERN THRESHING MACHINES WAS PROVED FEASIBLE BY JAMES BUCHANAN, inventor, BY RUNNING 5 TO 10 BILLS THROUGH IT! THEY WERE NOT BLOWN AWAY WITH THE STRAW... (Indianapolis Fair, 1884)

Roger Sherman, a self-educated man, Roger Sherman, early American legislator and jurist, personally had more to do with the creation of the United States governmental system than any other one man. Strange as it seems, Sherman alone signed the four great documents of America's formative history—the Articles of Association, in 1774, the Declaration of Independence in 1776, the Articles of Confederation in 1778, and the Federal Constitution in 1787. Similarly, Benjamin Franklin was the only signer of another set of four important documents in early American history. Like Sherman, he had the honor of affixing his signature to the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution and he also signed the Treaty of Alliance with France and the Treaty of Peace with England. No other man signed all four of these documents.

Tru-Dollar Demonstration. James Buchanan, inventor of an automatic straw stacker, had so much confidence in his machine that he actually ran a handful of \$10 bills through it to prove its efficiency. In 1884 he had a model on exhibit at the Indianapolis state fair. His machine was supposed to solve the old problem of stacking threshed straw after separating it from the grain—without wasting grain. Farmers were skeptical of Buchanan's claims. They feared some of the grain would be blown away through the conveyor tube. Buchanan started his machine and threw into it a handful of \$10 bills. Not one was blown out of the tube by the draft. Farmers were convinced; today Buchanan's blower is a familiar sight throughout the west.

Tomorrow: Is the Everglades region of Florida a swampland?

Miniature Twister. EUGENE, Aug. 17.—(AP)—A whirlwind demolished a new chicken house on the farm of Elwyn Bales last Friday, wind received here today revealed. The wind lifted the building and carried it 20 feet, killing eight chickens and stripping two trees.

John Anderson of Central Point Grange, who had just returned from a trip to his native Sweden, gave a most interesting talk on his trip and conditions in that country. Here are a few facts he gave: Sweden has an abundance of water power, all under government control. There are no private electric utility companies in Sweden, all distributed of electric energy being done cooperatively by the people.

under the control of the government. Electricity costs the people of the country \$1 per year. There are no extremely rich or extremely poor people in Sweden, as in this country. Laborers get \$4 to \$8 per day, for common labor, and \$8 to \$16 for skilled.

Many motor cars are being operated, practically all of American make. The poorer people ride bicycles as gasoline costs 60 cents a gallon. Everything is done cooperatively in Sweden; less machines are used and more man power. There is absolutely no waste in manufacture.

TAILSPIN TOMMY—An Interruption!

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—The Meeting

THE NEBBS—Always Something

SUBURBAN HEIGHTS

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



THE GUESTS AT THE PERLEYS' LAWN PARTY WENT HUNGRY, BECAUSE FRED MAINTAINED STOUTLY THAT THE STORM WOULDN'T BREAK AND WHEN THE DELUGE CAME THERE WASN'T TIME TO GET THE FOOD IN

GLUYAS WILLIAMS (Copyright, 1938, by The Bell Syndicate, Inc.) 8-16

SMATTER POI

By C M PAYNE



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By HAL FORREST



By EDWIN ALGER



By SOL HESS



SIZE INCREASE AIM FOR TRUCKS

PORTLAND, Aug. 17.—(AP)—James Morrell, executive representative of the Oregon highway users' conference, said yesterday that the Oregon legislature, with those of 10 other western states would be asked to adopt uniform regulations on state highways.

Morrell returned with the plan from the annual convention of the Western States Highway Officials' association at Reno, Nev. He said the recommendation would be for a slight increase in gross load limit, length and width of trucks and would promote safety by removing hazardous vehicles from highways.

Pomona Grange

By Gertrude Haak

Pomona Grange met in special session at Upper Applegate Grange hall August 13 to confer the degree of Pomona.

This session followed a regular session of the Upper Applegate Grange.

A large group of Grangers attended and Pomona degree was conferred on 21 candidates. Seventeen were from Upper Applegate, three from Applegate and one from Talent Grange.

Mr. Pattison, secretary of the Grange Mutual Fire Insurance association, gave an interesting talk

