

LOVE ON THE RANGE

BY NELSON C. NYE

The Story So Far
A plot is on foot to smash the Rafter T, and "Blur" Ankrum takes a job there to help lovely Lee Trone. She saves his life by shooting an impostor, Kelton Dreen, but he learns this only after Dreen's accomplice Betty causes trouble between them. Rafterford the sheriff tells Ankrum that Claydell, a neighboring rancher, is after the Trone land because a railroad is going through. Ankrum accuses Claydell.

Chapter 20

Claydell's Answer

CLAYDELL'S bushy eyebrows drew sharply down above his yellow stare. The six-foot figure in his shiny black boots drew erect. "Is this meant to be a joke?" he asked.

"Does it sound like a joke to you?"
"It sounds to me like the raving of a crazy man," Claydell said contemptuously. "Do you think I'd be fool enough to do such things for the sake of a paltry railroad right-of-way? Use your head!"

"I'm usin' it. Want to hear the rest?"
"If it will give you any relief to elaborate further, by all means spin ahead."

Ankrum nodded. "The railroad right-of-way is not the only thing you're after. You would indeed be a fool to risk so much for that. But that ain't all. You plan to build a town alongside the proposed tracks about half a mile from the valley housing Trone's home ranch. Your ultimate object is to dam Trone's valley in an attempt to boom Rafter T land to the bunch of home-seekers the railroad is going to entice in for you!"

"So!" Claydell expelled a cloud of smoke from his nostrils. "A likely yarn," he leered. "The only difficulty is in getting people round here to swallow it. I think that's where you're going to run up against a snag, mister. A calculating gleam shone from the yellow eyes. "Mind telling me where you gathered all these notions? Did Rafterford unload them on you?"

"Why Rafterford?" Ankrum countered. "What's he got to do with it?"
"That's something I'd give a deal to know," Claydell replied deeply, held silent for some time while he regarded Ankrum through the smoke.

"I'll tell you something," he said at last. "Tom Rafterford's got it in for me. He'd like nothing better than to catch me napping on the wrong side of trouble. You see the point?"

"What point?"
Claydell took a turn about the room. He stopped to face Ankrum squarely. "Rafterford gave you the notions to focus your interest."

"Why would he want to do that?"
"How do I know? I told you he didn't like me. He's been laying for me for years. The Rafterfords are a breed who don't forget."

"Don't forget what?" Ankrum cut in swiftly.
Claydell snorted. "Don't forget anything! Years ago there was a sort of range war in this country. The ranchers here were trying to keep out nesters, squatters, homesteaders. They succeeded till Trone came in. He was a hell-bender, and he brought a tough crowd with him. We couldn't budge 'em. I'm a sensible man, I hope. I saw the way things were going. I was losing money hand over fist. The fight was at a de-flock. I recognized that Trone would never be licked." He paused to search Ankrum's face with his yellow eyes, then said, "I threw in with Trone."

"An' come out on the winner's side, eh?" There was a scornful curl to Ankrum's lips as he put the question.
"Rafterford's the One!"
"YES," he said. "Trone and I won out. Old Rafterford—Tom's father—tried to break us by bringing in sheep. He was the one that got broke—him and the other homesteaders. But he took the biggest loss. Not long after the thing was finished he went out back of the house one day an' blew his brains out. Do you understand now why Rafterford's got it in for me?"

"What happened to Rafterford's sheep?"
"They were found one morning at the bottom of a canyon."
"Slick. Who had been in charge of 'em?"
"Sheepman named Boone Heffle. A surely devil, still in the country, by the way."

"Not any longer he isn't," Ankrum said, and watched Claydell's face intently. "I killed him this afternoon."
Claydell showed surprise. But not more than anyone else would have shown under the circumstances. "Is that so? Why?"

"He was trying to jump the water at our southwest line camp. I mentioned it before."
"So you did. I take it then the Rafter T still controls that water. If you need any more men to hold it, let me know. I've sided Trone

too long to let him down now. I'd— He broke off abruptly, snapped his fingers.

"Say!" he exclaimed with more than usual enthusiasm. "I believe you've solved it!"
"What are you talking about?"
"Those sheep! Heffle would never take it on himself to try jumping your water. A man who can be bought once can be bought again—an outfit that'll use sheep once will try 'em out again!"

"You mean—"
"Rafterford. Tom Rafterford, the sheriff, is the man you're looking for!"

Ankrum, as he sent the buckskin leisurely across the darkening range toward the Rafter T, was not convinced. Like his own accusations of Claydell, the rancher's case against Rafterford had a number of loopholes.

Both the sheriff and the boss of the Swinging J undoubtedly hated each other. But whether the reasons given by Claydell were the correct ones, Ankrum could not decide. It was quite possible that neither the sheriff nor Claydell were behind these things which were happening. Each, in their enmity, would naturally suspect the other.

Ankrum's thoughts shifted to Betty Struthers. It was plain to him now that her words to him concerning Lee and concerning the killing of Kelton Dreen were deliberate lies. She had been seeking to prejudice him in her favor; to drive, if she could not lure him away from Lee.

He recalled now Rafterford's statement that Dreen had been killed by a slug from a forty-five caliber pistol. The one the golden girl had forced upon him had been a short-barreled thirty-two. How could he have missed the significance of this these many days? Why the girl had said herself under the sheriff's questioning that Dreen used a thirty-two—she had forced upon Ankrum Dreen's own gun!

He laughed shortly. "An artful baggage if I ever saw one—she'd ought to have taken up the stage!"

"What Happened?"

IT WAS nearly time for the moon to rise when he reached the Rafter T. He stripped the gear from his buckskin, rubbed the moisture from the animal's coat. Turning the horse into the big corral he hung his saddle on the fence and went striding toward the lighted window that marked Trone's office in the house.

Trone was up from some papers with a scowl as Ankrum entered. Ankrum saw that the gaunt old man had been drinking, for there was a bottle almost empty beside his elbow and his eyes were red and surly.

"Well, Trone grunted. "What happened? What's the matter with your ear? Did you 'rive them off?"
This was not the reception Ankrum had been expecting. He squared his shoulders. "Isn't Lee here?"

"Of course she's here! What's that got to do with what I asked you? What's the matter with your ear?"
"A bullet nipped it."

"Did you have a corpse an' a cartridge occasion at the camp? What happened to the other fellow?"
"There was a little shootin'." Ankrum admitted. "What other fellow are you talkin' about?"

"The fellow that knocked that slice from your ear."
"I didn't see it. I was busy that particular time."
"Well, what happened?" Trone growled. "Say something! Do I have to get a rope an' drag it from you?"

"I shot up two or three gents an' the rest cleared out."
Trone swore. "You tell it like a tea-party! Is that all you got to say? Wasn't Heffle there? If he was I'm bettin' strong there was some action!"

"He was there. Ankrum's draw was bitter. "His light was the first I blowed."
Trone's glance flashed excitement. "Good! I'd have give a year of my life to have seen that! I'm glad you cashed his chips. What else happened?"

"Nothing much. I wounded a couple other birds. The rest threw down their guns. I warned them off the Rafter. T an' told 'em the next one caught would be shot on sight."
"Nothin' much happened, eh? You're a sight too modest."

"I'm not proud of this afternoon's work. Do you think I like to have folks pointin' me out on the street an' sayin' 'There goes that killer Ankrum?'"
Trone's stare was intent. "Ankrum?" he said. "I thought your name was Streeter."

Ankrum laughed mirthlessly. "It doesn't matter. I'm Ankrum all right. One of them gun-slicks with Heffle's outfit recognized me—fellow named Banda, a Mex renegade. I guess you'll be wantin' to pay me off."

"So you're Ankrum. I've heard a lot about you." Trone thrust his hand across the desk. "I'm glad to meet up with you. Why didn't you tell me who you were at the start?"
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Ankrum goes to Betty's rescue, Monday.

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 TURKS ISLANDS, British West Indies, ARE NAMED AFTER THE ODD TURK'S CAP CACTUS WHICH GROWS THERE



COLONEL RICHARD MENTOR JOHNSON, WHO KILLED TECUMSEH, famous Indian chief, WAS THE ONLY U.S. VICE-PRESIDENT VOTED INTO OFFICE BY THE SENATE

CAN FINGERPRINTS BE ALTERED?
(Answer tomorrow)



SWEARERS WERE FINED IN LA GUAIIRA, Venezuela, TO RAISE MONEY TO BUILD A CHURCH!
(La Iglesia de la Santissima Caramba)

McClure Syndicate, Inc. 8-23-38

Swearers Church
La Guaira, Venezuelan seaport founded in 1688, for years teemed with the general run of sailors and fortune seekers to be found in any frontier city in the western world.

Sacked by filibusters under Amias Preston in 1805 and by the French under Grammont in 1690, La Guaira's history has been anything but peaceful.

When one day a storm drove ashore a heavily-laden pirate craft, city officials raffled off the loot it carried and used the money thus raised to build one of La Guaira's two leading churches.

Another large temple of worship was needed, but there were no more stranded pirate ships loaded with treasure. Finally the local priest adopted a novel plan to finance the project.

Every time one of his parishioners was caught uttering an oath—and the times were plenty—he was fined according to the strength of his imprecation. The zealous priest lovingly dedicated his church to the men who had so nobly sworn to build it. He named it "La Iglesia de la Santissima Caramba"—The Church of the most Holy Damn.

List of books banned by the South African Union censor now includes works of Honor de Balzac and Francois Rabelais, because "sex plays too conspicuous a part in them."

also are presidents of the senate, although unable to vote with that body unless the members are evenly divided.

Yet, only once in history has the senate been granted the opportunity of electing its own president, when at the election of Martin Van Buren to presidency of the United States, Colonel Richard Mentor Johnson, a member of the lower house, was picked by the senate, no choice having been made by the electoral college.

Gold Piece Rush On BOONVILLE, Cal.—(UP)—A \$20 gold piece was dug up here in what has been pasture land for the past 50 years. In the gold rush that followed, surrounding ground for a goodly distance was dug up by gold seekers, but no more \$20 gold pieces were found.

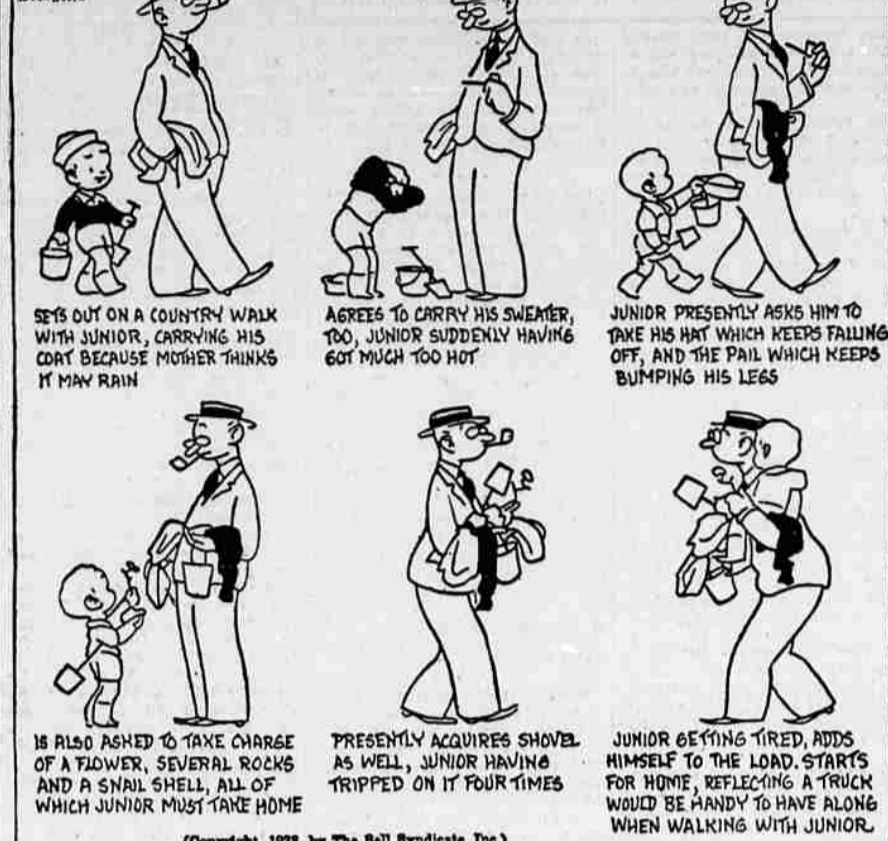
Baby "Strong Man" MOUND BAYOU, Miss.—(UP)—Negro residents today claimed the title of "the world's strongest baby" for 4-year-old Sam Mitchell, Jr., whom they describe as a second Joe Louis. The child carries a 24-pound sack of flour or two 10-pound gallon buckets of molasses with equal ease.

Closing time for Too Late to Classify Ads is 1:30 p. m.

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FULL LOAD

By GLUYAS WILLIAMS



SETS OUT ON A COUNTRY WALK WITH JUNIOR, CARRYING HIS COAT BECAUSE MOTHER THINKS IT MAY RAIN

AGREES TO CARRY HIS SWEATER, TOO, JUNIOR SUDDENLY HAVING GOT MUCH TOO HOT

JUNIOR PRESENTLY ASKS HIM TO TAKE HIS HAT WHICH KEEPS FALLING OFF, AND THE PAUL WHICH KEEPS BUMPING HIS LEGS

IS ALSO ASKED TO TAKE CHARGE OF A FLOWER, SEVERAL ROCKS AND A SNAIL SHELL, ALL OF WHICH JUNIOR MUST TAKE HOME

PRESENTLY ACQUIRES SHOVEL AS WELL, JUNIOR HAVING TRIPPED ON IT FOUR TIMES

JUNIOR GETTING TIRED, ADDS HIMSELF TO THE LOAD, STARTS FOR HOME, REFLECTING A TRUCK WOULD BE HANDY TO HAVE ALONG WHEN WALKING WITH JUNIOR.

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S'MATTER POP

By O. M. PAYNE



PUT AWAY THAT LADDER?

YOU'RE FIXIN' TO BREAK YOUR NECK!

WHY-Y-Y?

THAT'S ALL RIGHT, POP, I'LL PUT IT BACK AS SOON AS I'M THROUGH

S'MATTER, POP?

AWK!

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TAILSPIN TOMMY—Not on the Program!



SKEET'S CLOWN ACT WENT OVER BIG WITH THE SPECTATORS AT THE AIR MEET UNTIL THE RUBBER SHOT GUN'S MUZZLE, BENDING BACK, DISCHARGED A CLOUD OF FLOUR INTO SKEET'S FACE, WHICH TEMPORARILY BLINDED HIM, AND HE PROMPTLY WENT INTO A SIDE-SLIP TOWARD THE GRANDSTAND.

HE'S CRASHING INTO THE GRANDSTAND!

LOOK OUT!

WE'LL ALL BE KILLED!

3209

BEN WEBSTER'S CAREER—Mystery Solved!



HERE COMES THE EXPRESSMAN NOW—DR. KILEY SAID HE'D SEND OUT IN TIME TO REACH HERE THIS MORNING—

YOU'RE BEN WEBSTER, AREN'T YOU? WILL YOU SIGN FOR THESE?

YOU BET!

DID THE MYSTERY ARRIVE, BEN?

GRAB THAT OTHER PACKAGE AND FOLLOW ME—I DON'T WANT ANYONE TO SEE US—

HOLY SMOKES! WILL YOU LOOK AT THE SIZE O' THAT CHICKEN!

THAT'S THE ONE FED WITH THE SUNSHINE PELLETS—THE OTHER WASN'T!

5-18

THE NEBBS—Congratulations



STEVE, I'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO YOU—YOU DO THINGS IN A BIG WAY

YOU JUST STEP IN AND MARRY A READY-MADE FAMILY... DIDN'T HAVE TO CARRY THEM AROUND WHEN THEY HAD THE COLIC OR CRAMPS... THAT BOY OF YOURS COULD GIVE YOU PRIZE ADVICE RIGHT NOW

YOU KNOW, OBIE, I CAN DETECT A BIT OF SARCASM IN THOSE REMARKS—YOU EVIDENTLY HAVE MET THE CHILDREN!

8-20

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Cave Hermit Untroubled By Vicissitudes Of Life

PHILADELPHIA (UP)—Frank Krowl, 41-year old "Hermit of Woodlane," who lives submissively alone in a tiny dugout along a railroad track has never heard a radio or ridden in an automobile and does not know who is president of the United States.

Maintaining a complete indifference to everything that goes on in the world about him, Krowl, who served with the American army during the World War, sums up his philosophy of life with:

"What does it matter?"

A tall man, with solid blue eyes beneath heavy brows, Krowl's raiment consists of a faded khaki shirt, corduroy trousers and a pair of rubber overshoes. For nearly 10 years he never has shaved or cut his hair. It hangs down to his waist in long, matted disarray.

Krowl was born in Poland and came to America in 1913. After his army service in the war, he worked at odd jobs in Seattle, Wash., and then came to Philadelphia to begin his life as a hermit.

"What difference where you live?" he said. "All land is the same."

He eats anything he can find, searching for food with a long stick which he pokes into rubbish cans and trash heaps. He has no money, for, as he says, money means little to him.

Krowl did not collect his soldier's bonus because when he went to the

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By SOL HESS



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