

SERIAL STORY

LOVE ON THE LINE

BY PAUL FRIGGENS

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YESTERDAY, Carrie began Mark's new job. But back in town, the agent looks up Mark, tries to start a fight. Deuel ignores him. There is a shot.

CHAPTER IV

CARRIE was standing there, white-faced, tense, clinging to Mrs. Taylor's arm, when Mark elbowed his way through the excited crowd and into the darkening street. Mark stopped, lifted his hat to her and to Mrs. Taylor, greeted Ed Taylor.

"Anything serious?" Taylor asked. "We just got in town when we heard the rumpus."

"Nothing much," Mark answered, and knew instantly that his explanation didn't satisfy Carrie Lane.

"Mr. Deuel," she broke in, "it was trouble with Mr. Oaks, wasn't it?" For a moment Mark thought he read accusation in her eyes.

"Miss Lane, I'm sorry," he said, "but it was."

Mark found it difficult to answer her while she looked so pale, frightened, and the homesteaders pressed around them, hanging on every word. Mark reddened, searched for an excuse to change the subject.

Ed Taylor suggested they walk back to the hotel and Mark readily agreed. On the way Mark told them what had happened.

IT was Newt Gale who had seen trouble coming—or thought he had. Mark explained. Newt was with Mark when Ashton Oaks started his quarrel. He had heard Mark tell the agent he was drunk and walk away. And Newt had seen Oaks reach for his inside coat pocket as Mark neared the door.

"That was too much for Newt, I guess," Mark laughed. "He just couldn't wait. He grabbed Oaks' arm, and, sure enough, the agent did have a gun. It went off. The bullet shattered the glass over the bar, and first thing Newt knew, everybody was piled up on the floor."

Carrie was breathless. "Didn't he mean to shoot you?" "No, don't think he did," Mark was still trying to pass off the matter lightly. "He was just drunk and pretty sore and Newt was over-cautious. I don't think Oaks ever intended to have it turn out the way it did." He laughed again. "You ought to see what he looked like after dusting off that floor."

Ed Taylor laughed, too, and Mrs. Taylor put in with the observation that people shouldn't reach for guns they didn't intend

to shoot. But Mark, looking suddenly at Carrie, noticed she wasn't laughing. Her fingers clenched and unclenched on her handkerchief and Mark was sure she was ready to cry.

AFTERWARD, at the hotel, he learned how near to crying she really was—this courageous little girl who had dared come to Sioux Springs to settle on a prairie homestead along with the stoutest of them.

It was late when the Taylors left Mark and Carrie alone. They were getting up early. Taylor explained, to get a good start with supplies to the claim on Rock Creek. Mark was glad Carrie did not go upstairs with them.

A dim kerosene lamp shed feeble rays through the window of Sioux Springs House. Carrie and Mark stood outside in the shadows. It was oppressively hot.

"Mark—" Carrie began, but caught herself quickly and went on, "Mr. Deuel, is it always like this out here?"

"Why, yes," Mark searched for an answer, then added: "That is, you mean the hot summers and all?"

"I mean," Carrie said, "is everything always so—so rough and—well—ruthless? Tonight, I mean—you might have been killed!"

Mark grinned, a quiet, disarming grin, but it was lost on Carrie. "Oh, I don't think it was as serious as all that, Miss Lane. You stay around this country long enough and you'll see all kinds of fellows like Oaks. Can't all be like Taylor and Newt Gale and Ma Parmley, you know?"

"Or Mark Deuels," she smiled, then went on, sober again. "I know, I know. Everything is so big and so—so lonesome out here and there are so many new people. You're so far away from anyone you know, and you can't be sure of the people you meet."

"Now just how am I to take that?" Mark feigned offense, tried to make a joke of Carrie's words. But his effort failed utterly.

"Mark," Carrie said, and suddenly her lip quivered. "Mark, I'm afraid out here, terribly afraid."

It was her first admission of the thing Mark knew the moment he had seen her that day at Ma Parmley's. And she had called him Mark! Suddenly, he wanted to take her in his arms, to kiss the tears out of her wide, blue eyes, to press his lips on hers. But he couldn't. Something inside Mark Deuel told him that he would not have kissed Carrie Lane then had she asked him.

Instead, he made a rather clumsy job of comforting this girl who suddenly seemed to have changed the whole outlook of his life.

"Carrie," he started to reply, but choked on the name and began all over again. "Miss Lane—this thing's going to work out all right now. There's a lot of women come out here and stick it out and make good and like it. Now take Ma Parmley, for instance. Wasn't even a town here when she came!"

"Oh, she told me all about that," Carrie smiled and seemed

almost to have unbundled herself. "Said she 'et' on the grass, slept in the wagon—when the wagon wasn't being used."

They laughed and Mark noted Carrie's chin tilted at a bit more determined angle again.

"I guess—I guess that affair at the saloon frightened me, that's all," Carrie went on. "That, and the trip to the claim today. It was so quiet, so far out and lonesome there today. The closest neighbor's a mile away. I almost wanted to give it up when I first saw it."

"Well, you aren't going to give it up now," Mark declared. "Not if the Taylors and Ma Parmley and the rest of us have anything to say about it."

He wanted to say he couldn't give up Carrie now, not if Mark Deuel had anything to say about it, but somehow the words stuck in his throat. A moment ago he had wanted to take her in his arms. But some fear held him back. Never had Mark experienced anything like this.

"I guess it's getting pretty late, isn't it?" Carrie looked through the window into the dingy hotel lobby, now almost empty. "If I'm going out with the Taylors in the morning I'd better get some sleep, too." Mark, grinning, agreed, and they said good night. He watched her disappear into the hotel and then swung off down the street.

NEWT GALE hailed him as he passed the saloon where he'd found Carrie, white-faced, waiting outside, two hours earlier. "Mark," Newt said, "I don't know as this amounts to anything. But this agent, Oaks, is inside again and pretty mean. He's bragging he's going to get you

next time. Think I'd play safe, Mark. Just don't get careless with him, that's all. I can't be around every time he reaches for that coat pocket, Mark."

Newt laughed at his own joke and said good night, but Mark Deuel knew Newt Gale wasn't joking.

(To Be Continued)

SPEED CONSUMES OIL

Cars which are driven at sustained high speed for a long distance require more attention to lubrication than those driven the same distance at moderate speed or with occasional stops, according to the emergency road service of the Oregon State Motor association. Sustained high speed generates considerable heat in all moving parts and this heat consumes lubricant at a rapid pace.

LEAVE MOTOR COOL

An extremely hot motor should be allowed to cool for at least 15 minutes before adding water to the radiator if the supply has become low, according to the emergency road service of the Oregon State Motor association. The sudden change in temperature caused by cold water may crack the motor block or cylinder head.

CARBON IN MOTOR

An excessive amount of carbon in an automobile engine actually increases the compression ratio because carbon is not compressible, according to the emergency road service of the Oregon State Motor association. This condition causes a ping or spark knock to occur.

What is the use of having money if you cannot get it?—The Aga Khan, Indian potentate stranded in Geneva by the war.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ANSWER (A) Stalactites, (B) Stalagmites, (C) Columns. The last-named are the result of the first two uniting.

SHAKESPEAREAN ACTRESS

HORIZONTAL

1. Shakespearean actress.

11 Red flower.

12 Range.

14 Not as much.

16 Pieced out.

17 Harvest.

18 Spar.

19 To scatter.

20 Plaything.

21 Aurora.

23 Parrot.

24 Paroxysm.

25 Less common.

27 Bast fiber.

30 Parts of theater floors.

31 Enthusiasm.

32 Specks.

33 Considered.

36 Pertaining to a set.

37 Liliaceous plant.

38 To arrest.

41 Almond.

42 Female fowl.

43 Company.

45 Mellow.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

MICHELANGELO LULUS

ANCA ACOP BRAVE

DENT TRET ECU

FODDER MAWS FLE

RE SEPARATORS ARE

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OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE

With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

