

SERIAL STORY

DUDE COLLEGE

BY OREN ARNOLD

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YESTERDAY, Andre also sent a report to his chief. He is visiting Mr. Bailey when Army bombing planes arrive, and Bailey welcomes him into the line of duty. Explaining the officers are to test the new bomb sight. He surprises Andre by announcing he would like to have him for a son-in-law, and is even making plans to include him in the firm.

LONA KEEPS A RENDEZVOUS

CHAPTER XV

RAINBOW CANYON was aptly named; its strata of reds and yellows and blues and browns stretched out for miles like gigantic ribbons. Also it was far off the usual paths used by dude riders. Sitting high in the ancient cliff dwelling there, Wesley York drew Ronica a map on his note pad.

"Now here is Pueblo and the university," said he, pointing with his pencil, "and this line is the approximate route we took in riding out. Here is the upper end of the canyon. It is not far above this cliff house. But the lower end extends on down across the international line, about there, into Mexico itself."

"I see," said Ronnie. "Rainfall is negligible here. Four, five inches a year at most. No irrigation possibilities. Hence there are not even any ranches in this area, no people at all. Very few have ever seen the Canyon, even."

"Then what in the world is Lona Montoya doing out here?" Ronica asked, turning to look at Wesley. The young professor licked his lips and showed just a ghost of a smile.

"I don't know. But I imagine she might ask us the same question." "We have a logical reason," Ronica insisted. "And I didn't come alone. I came with an escort. I wouldn't have ridden away out here alone. Lona had a sprained ankle just a few days ago, too."

"That's so. I'll admit it is peculiar."

He took up his binoculars again, studied the distant rider with care. "These glasses are powerful," said he. "I can see her very well. She appears to have saddle bags loaded so probably she is ready for any chance trouble. I mean, she doubtless has water and food and such."

"Is your pistol in your shoulder pack, Wes?"

"Yes."

"Then we could shoot and make her see us, maybe."

"The sound and echoes might carry down the canyon, although I doubt it. Anyway, it would seem that the girl wants solitude. Perhaps she is, uh, distracted mentally; seeking repose."

Ronica considered that. "I don't think so."

"Why?"

"I don't know, just a hunch. She's not the type for it."

"I confess that we of the faculty have found her a little, uh, difficult to classify. She is a fair student. But there is an air of mystery about her. Intensified now, in my mind."

"She's awfully pretty," Ronica said. "Attractive to men."

"Yes." "You like her, don't you, Wes? I could tell you did that night at the dance. And—she talked to me on the campus later."

"Talked to you about—me?" Ronica smiled, staring off down the canyon. "You'd be surprised, Wes!"

"Oh!" "She was quite angry because I took you away that night. Remember? But you really did have the date with me, and—I didn't like being stood up any more than she did, so—"

"Please, Ronica, all that was most embarrassing. I regret all of it. Things were—mixed up!"

"I'll say! But what about now? Here we are and there she is. Won't she see our horses, maybe?" "No. I tied them in shade on the floor of the canyon; you can see them from here, but she could never discover them. Remember, we are nearly 700 feet above them and her. And anyway—look, Ronica, she is not alone, after all!"

RONICA took the glasses then. She stared out intently, telling what she saw in little half-whispered tones as if afraid Lona might hear.

"Sure enough... Wes... there's a... man!" She tightened the focus a bit. "Wes, it really is a man, but he is not on a horse."

"No, I saw that." "Strange! Who is it, I wonder?" "Possibly it is none of our—of our—"

"None of our business," she supplied. "But I'm too human to let that interfere, Wes! You're the one who must be dignified."

"Quite so." "Stop saying that, I told you! You're a swell egg, really." Her manner pleased him. Swell egg. It is good to have a pretty girl tell you that you are a swell egg. It means more than a citation from the dean of the college.

"In a way," said he, "it is my business, too. For I am a faculty member, on second thought. And she a student."

"I want to know what's going on."

"Uh—so do I!"

"I can't identify the man, Wes. You try."

He took the binoculars back and used them. "It is no man I know."

"You don't suppose she is in danger? Does she see the man?"

"She must. In fact I think she has hailed him... Yes... What in the world would a man be out here for soot? Of course he may have a horse tied somewhere. But—"

"He just seemed to appear out

of the side of the slope, Wes. From that rocky west wall of the canyon. Of course, there are boulders and scrubby trees and things. He could have been hiking up."

They watched for 10 minutes more. Wes using the glasses. Ronica could see them only as tiny moving dots away off, but to Wes their motions were distinct even in detail.

"My curiosity is giving me the tingles," said Ronica. "And anyway—have you noticed that it's late? The sun is already out of sight over that west wall, and we have quite a ride back to Pueblo."

"That's true, but—don't be afraid. He seemed more intent than ever."

"I am never afraid. I just mentioned it... Can you see them now?"

"No. No, Ronica, I can't! You said the man just seemed to appear out of the mountain side. Well, by George, the mountain has swallowed both of them again!"

"Huh!" He lowered his binoculars to stare at her. "Yes! She rode to a sort of natural rock enclosure, dismounted near the man, and together they just walked into the side of the rock hill!"

(To Be Continued)

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OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



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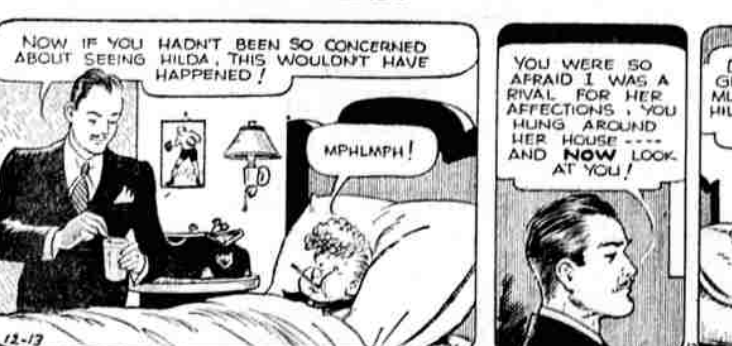
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WASH TUBBS



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BY V. T. HAMLIN

Calvin's Christmas necktie was a nightmare in disguise. He cried, "How nice!" And wore it twice... With spots before his eyes!

While Donald's dream combined the scheme Of barber-poles and rainbows. "My sweet," he said, "I'm going to bed... At least, until the pain goes!"

But Ralph reflects the smart effects A tasteful tie affords! (He shouts, each Yule. One simple rule:—"No Ties... EXCEPT FROM WARDS")

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