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NO. 9 JAN.

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Buster Crabbe

& The EMPRESS OF AFRICA



A GREAT PUBLICITY STUNT? A DELICIOUS HOAX? OR THE MOST FANTASTIC KIDNAPING AND GEM THEFT IN THE ANNALS OF CRIME? BUSTER CRABBE AND WHISKERS FIND THE ANSWER 4000 MILES AWAY -- AND FIND THEMSELVES IN THE MOST DANGEROUS PREDICAMENT OF THEIR DANGER-PACKED CAREER...

The Gulf of Mexico unexpectedly delivers an amazing sight to the people of Galveston, Texas...



WHAT TH' BLAZES IS THAT?

DO YOU SEE WHAT I SEE?

AS IF FLYING SAGGERS AIN'T ENOUGH! NOW WE HAVE TO HAVE THIS!

MUST BE A PUBLICITY STUNT!

The wind craft is docked, and its weird occupant's march through the streets of Galveston...

OH! THE CIRCUS HAS COME TO TOWN!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS-- BUT IS IT LEGAL? MAYBE WE SHOULD FIND OUT IF THEY'VE GOT A PARADE PERMIT?

THEY DON'T NEED A PARADE PERMIT TO WALK ON THE SIDEWALK... MAYBE WE COULD GIVE THEM A SUMMONS FOR INDECENT EXPOSURE?

ANOTHER MEDICINE SHOW?

The procession of last reaches its destination-- a jewelry store!

G. S. GRAY'S DECIDED TO GET SOME PUBLICITY!

YEAH! EVERYONE COMES TO GRAY'S!

GRAY CO. JEWELERS EVERYONE COMES TO

WE KING MWARD-UNSO OF IWAKAKA. COME SEE GEORGE GRAHAM GRAY.

HUH--???

I-I'LL TELL HIM YOU'RE HERE...

SIR-- A BUNCH OF PAINTED-UP NATIVES-- ONE CLAIMING TO BE A KING FROM SOMEWHERE?

SEND THE GENTLEMAN IN. YOU KNOW IT'S ALWAYS BEEN MY POLICY TO SEE ANYONE-- EVEN PRACTICAL JOKERS.

And so... YOU ARE POSSESSOR OF THE EMPRESS OF AFRICA-- THE SACRED STONE THAT CONTAINS THE SOUL OF IWAKAKA-- THAT WAS ~~STOLEN~~ FROM US MANY HUNDRED YEARS AGO.

BUT I OWN IT LAWFULLY. I PAID HALF A MILLION DOLLARS FOR IT!



FOR CENTURIES MY PEOPLE HAVE WORKED TO EARN MUCH WHITE MAN'S MONEY! HERE IS 500,000 DOLLARS! GIVE ME THE SACRED STONE!

IS THIS, REALLY ON THE LEVEL??



THIS IS *GENUINE* MONEY!

YOU ARE PAID. GIVE ME THE SACRED STONE.



I SELL MERCHANDISE AT A PROFIT—NOT AT COST! YOU CAN HAVE IT FOR A MILLION DOLLARS!

BUT IT WOULD TAKE US ANOTHER HUNDRED YEARS TO RAISE THAT AMOUNT! 500,000 IS ALL WE HAVE!



I'M SORRY, BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO RAISE ANOTHER HALF BILLION IF YOU WANT THE DIAMOND.

THEN, MAY WE BUY THE PRIVILEGE OF *SEEKING* OUR SACRED STONE SO THAT WE MAY PAY HOMAGE TO IT?



I KEEP IT IN MY HOME VAULT. IF YOU WILL VISIT ME THIS EVENING, I'LL GLADLY SHOW IT TO YOU.

THANK YOU.



I'LL CALL ALL THE NEWSPAPERS! WHAT A STORY! AFRICAN SAVAGES GRACE OCEAN TO PAY HOMAGE TO OLD HEIRLOOM!

And so, that evening, an historic event takes place at the Gray mansion...

AND NOW—NOT ONLY PRICELESS JEWEL,
BUT *THE* FABULOUS "EMPERESS OF
AFRICA" AND MY DAUGHTER, MISS
PAMELA GRAY!"

THE SACRED STONE!
TOUCHING MORTAL
FLESH!"

FEEL! KNEEL!
TO THE SACRED STONE
AND OUR DIVINE GODDESS!"



THIS IS SO PHONEY
IT'S NEWS!

GRAY'S GOT
HIMSELF A
PUBLICITY MAN
THAT'S A JOKE!



PLEASE EXCUSE MY DAUGHTER'S ABRUPT
DEPARTURE! SHE WAS RELUCTANT TO DISPLAY
THE DIAMOND. I WANTED THE WORLD'S MOST
BEAUTIFUL GEM TO BE SEEN IN AN EQUALLY
BEAUTIFUL "SETTING!"



But as Pamela Gray rebukes her room—

OH—!!! WHAT
ARE YOU DOING
HERE???

WE ARE HERE
TO GET THAT
WHICH IS
OURS...

THE SACRED
STONE ---
AND YOU!



Meanwhile, downstairs, new arrivals add
further interest to the proceedings!

WE'RE FROM THE IMMIGRATION
BUREAU! IF YOU'RE FOREIGNERS
YOU'LL HAVE TO PRODUCE
PASSPORTS OR BE HELD
FOR ILLEGAL ENTRY!

HERE'S WHERE
THE PUBLICITY
BALLOON
GOES BANG!





"WE'RE AMERICANS-- WHEN THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMPANY HIRED US, THEY DIDN'T TELL US TO CARRY CREDENTIALS, SO WE CAN'T PROVE IT."

"YOU DON'T HAVE TO-- WE KNEW IT WAS A FUGLIGITY STUNT!"



Later...

"COME ON, MR. GRAY, GIVE US THE LOW-DOWN!"

"BUT I TELL YOU, I THOUGHT IT WAS ALL TRUE!"

That night under cover of darkness, the strange craft slips out to sea...



"IT IS A GREAT DAY FOR ZWAKAKA!"

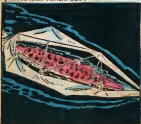
And the next day, Mr. Gray discovers his daughter and his diamond missing...



"YEAR, I KNOW... YOU WANT THE POLICE DEPARTMENT TO HELP YOU GET SOME MORE FUGLIGITY?"

"BUT I TELL YOU SHE'S BEEN KIDNAPPED!"

Meanwhile, the light of day finds the dugout converted into a reasonable facsimile of a floating iceberg! The Zwakakas had planned their venture well!



As the days turn into weeks and months...



"MISTER GRAY, YOU MUST HELP ME! IT'S AS THOUGH MY DAUGHTER VANISHED INTO THIN AIR!"

"WE'LL DO ALL WE CAN, MISTER GRAY! GIVE US ALL THE DETAILS!"

A few days later, at Yaoundé, capital of Cameroon

THE ZWARAKAS? THAT TRIBE MOVED INTO THE JUNGLE VALLEYS BETWEEN THE MONGA-MA-LOMA MOUNTAINS—AN ALMOST INACCESSIBLE REGION!



I'M PARACHUTING INTO THE ZWARAKA COUNTRY! YOU ORGANIZE A SAFARI AND GET THERE ON FOOT!

AWFUL... 'TAINT NO USE TRYIN' TO ARGUE WITH A CRAZY MAN...



AND SO... WHISKERS IS RIGHT. IT'S CRAZY TO THINK THAT ZWARAKAS ACTUALLY PADDOLED A BUS-OUT TO TEXAS AND BACK AGAIN...



He lands in a tree, much to the consternation of its tenants...



GUN-GUN! GUN-GUN-GUN!

KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON, LADY—I'M LEAVING...

But below—poor gorilla prepares to defend his family...



I'M JUST AS ANXIOUS TO BE RID OF YOU AS YOU ARE OF ME!

GUN-GUN-GUN-GUN!



OH-OH!!!



Despite their tremendous size and strength, gorillas are just as susceptible to a punch in the jaw as any human!



After many miles, Doctor Creative finally finds the Zwebaku village . . .

THIS IS IT! EITHER THE END OF THE KIDNAP TRAIL, OR THE END OF A WILD-GOOSE CHASE. . .



I COME IN PEACE! I WISH AN AUDIENCE WITH YOUR KING!

WE WELCOME YOU! I SHALL BRING YOU TO KING MWANGU-UNGO!



A WHITE MAN HAS COME TO SPEAK WITH YOU.

BRING HIM TO ME.

A WHITE MAN!



PANELA GREAT! I'VE FOUND YOU!

THANK GOD! I'D ALMOST GIVEN UP ALL HOPE!

SILENCE!



YOU DARE ADDRESS THE QUEEN-GODDESS OF ZWAKAKI-- WITHOUT KNEELING??

I MEANT NO DISRESPECT-- I AM IGNORANT OF YOUR CUSTOMS.



I WOULD PARDON YOU FOR THAT-- BUT YOUR MISSION HERE WAS TO FIND OUR SACRED STONE! GUARDS! KILL THIS MAN!





IF I DIE,
YOU'LL DIE
WITH ME!

GUARDS—
3-STOP!



ALL RIGHT,
PAMELA, LET'S
GO! THE KING
WILL ESCORT
US!

MY PEOPLE WILL
KILL US BOTH BEFORE
THEY LET THE QUEEN-
GODDESS LEAVE THE
VILLAGE!



KILLING US
WOULD HELP! AN
ARMED SAFARI IS ON
THE WAY TO DO THE
JOB IF I FAIL!...

THEY'LL
KILL
US
ANYWAY!



Then...

ERIE!
THE
SACRED
STONE!

THE SOUL
OF
ZWARAKA!



RUN! THAT DIAMOND
IS THEIR GOAL, AND
THEY'LL THINK OF
NOTHING UNTIL THEY
FIND IT!

GRAY, KING,
HERE'S WHERE
WE PART COMPANY!



THAT WAS QUICK
THINKING! I CAME
HERE TO SAVE YOU,
AND YOU SAVED
ME!

I'M AFRAID I'VE DOOMED
US BOTH! THEY'LL BE
AFTER US LIKE A PACK
OF HOUND DOGS AFTER
THEY RETRIEVE THAT
STONE!



THEY WON'T HARM YOU—YOU'RE THE QUEEN—GODDESS!

NOT ANY LONGER WHOEVER ONE OF 'EM TOUCHES THE STONE FIRST BECOMES KING—GOD!



THEN WHY GON'T YOU GET RID OF IT BEFORE NOW?

BECAUSE IT PROTECTED ME. THE KING SUGGESTED I GIVE IT TO SOMEONE ELSE SO I COULD BECOME ONE OF HIS WIVES. I PREFERRED TO REMAIN A "GODDESS"!

For days Buster and the girl ran from the searching Zvakokas, but as they tried to cross the mountains, a chasm trapped them.



HERE THEY COME... WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE NOW... BUT I'LL SAVE THE LAST BULLET FOR YOU!

THANKS!



But then...

IT'S GOOD OLD WISERS!

The doctor and Zvakokas hurried in panic.



BUSTER! YOU A WRIGHT?

WHISKERS—EVERYTHING'S ALL RIGHT, THANKS TO YOU!



And so...

THANK HEAVEN MY DAUGHTER WAS SAVED! BUT WHERE IS MY DIAMOND?

WHERE YOUR DAUGHTER IS—SAFE AT HOME! WHERE IT BELONGS!

YEP, WE DON'T PICK SIDES... WE WORK TO SATISFY EVERYBODY!

THE END

WEEPING WILLIE

The
HAPPY WARRIOR

WILLIE--- GO INTO
THE FOREST AND
GATHER SOME FIRE
WOOD--- BUT BE
CAREFUL! IT'S
HAUNTED!

OHAY--- BUT
ME NO AFFRAID
OF AN OLD GHOST.
NOT ME!



Hours later...



WHISKERS *The BOY SCOUT*

WE'LL CAMP HERE TONIGHT! GET A FIRE GOING TO KEEP AWAY THE GHOUSTES!

OKAY? YOU FEED THE HORSES, AND TIE THEM UP TO THE TREES UP YONDER!



15 minutes later and still NO fire...

WHEW! THIS DRAG HEAT IT'S DRIVING ME MAD!



I'M ON FIRE, BUT NOT THE STICKS!

I GIVE UP! THE BOY SCOUTS CAN KEEP THAT IDEA!



NO NO NO

WELL I'LL BE A HORNYDAD LIZZARD!

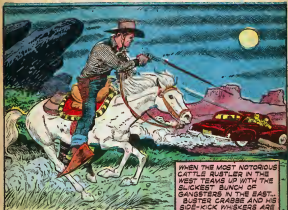


I SEE THAT YOU GOT THE FIRE STARTED.



YEAH!

BUSTER CRABBE in EAST meets WEST



WHEN THE MOST NOTORIOUS CATTLE RUSTLER IN THE WEST TEAMS UP WITH THE SLICKEST BUNCH OF GANGSTERS IN THE EAST.. BUSTER CRABBE AND HIS SIDE-KICK WHISKERS ARE FACED WITH A TOUGH COMBINATION TO BEAT..

Our story opens in a saloon on New York City's lower east side when...



HEY, YOU LUGS, DON'T YA KNOW ME--IT'S ME--
NITRO! NITRO NORVIK!

NITRO? WELL, I'LL BE--!!!



NITRO! IT SURE IS GOOD TO SEE YA!

YER A SIGHT FER SOME EYES! WHEN'D YA GIT OUTTA TH' STATE!

YESTERDAY! AN' AFTER THAT LONG EXCORTION I'M ITCHIN' TO GET BACK TO WORK!

WORK? GOIN' WHAT? YOU BEEN IN THE CLINK 20 YEARS, NITRO-- THINGS AIN'T LIKE THEY WAS. ONLY WAY FOR A GUY TO MAKE A BUCK TODAY IS BY GETTIN' AN HONESTY JOB.

HUH??



I KNOW YR BOOZ-LEGGIN' DAYS ARE OVER, BUT THERE'S PLENTY *STUFF* RACKETEYS!

NAME ONE, THE DOPE RACKET'S ON IT'S LAST LEGS. YA NEED AN ATOM BOMB TO OPEN TH' NEW BANK VAULTS. A GUY CAN'T EVEN BOOZ BETS ANYMORE!



AN THERE'S ALWAYS *SOMETHIN'* A SMART GUY CAN CAPITALIZE ON! YOU HUGS JUST AIN'T SMART! I'LL THINK OF SOMETHIN'! BUT FIRST I GOTTA EAT!

I'LL FIX YA UP A THICK BIRDIN STEAK, NITRO!



WELL--LONG THING AIN'T CHANGED. YA STEEL SERVE A *GOOD STEAK!* HERE'S A BUCK MAG--KEEP TH' CHANGE!

A BUCK? THAT'S FIVE BUCKS, NITRO. WITH OUT CHANGE!



FIVE BUCKS! WHY, YA LOUZY GYP ARTIST, IF YA THINK YA CAN OLIP ME---

CLIP BATT? I'M GIVEN YA A *BREAK!* DON'T YA KNOW TH' PRICE OF BEEF??



THAT STEAK COST ME FIVE BUCKS. AN' I WAS LUCKY TO GET IT!

KEEPS THAT RIGHT THEN THAT'S *IT!* WELL--SO INTO TH' BEEF BUSINESS!



And so, a few weeks later...

SO THIS IS THE CATTLE COUNTRY? GET A LOAD OF TH' DOPPEL-LOOKIN' HICKS! WHAT A SET-UP!

WE BOUGHT YOU A LITTLE PRESENT, SHERIFF!

MART SMITH? BOY, THAT IS A PRESENT, BUSTER!



THE LAW'S BEEN TRYIN' TO CATCH UP WITH THAT HOMME FER A LONG TIME!

WE GAUGHT HIM RED-HANDED CHANGING BRANDS ON PETERSON'S STEERS.



YA HEAR THAT? THERE'S A GUY THAT KNOWS TH' MEAT RACKET? WE COULD USE A GUY LIKE HIM...

YEAR... WE'LL HAVE TO BAIL HIM OUT!



HEY, SHERIFF? WHAT TH' LEE GO, ANYWAY?

DO? THIS HERE VARMINT'S MART SMITH - OLDEST HOSS THIEF AN' CATTLE RUSTLER IN TH' COUNTRY! RECKON NOBODY BUT BUSTER CHASE COULD'VE SAJORT UP WITH HIM!



Later that night—the would-be beef barons return to town and—



I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU HONNERS ARE BUT I SHORE 'PREGIATES THIS!

WE'RE FOR NEW BUSINESS ASSOCIATES, PAL! YOU'RE MOVIN' INTO TH' BIG TIME!

WE'RE MUSSLIN' IN ON TH' CATTLE RUSTLIN' RACKET—AN' NEED A GUY WITH YER EXPERIENCE!

THAT FIGURE-YOU HONNERS LOOK LIKE YUH DON'T KNOW A LONG HORN FROM A TROMBONE!



Some hours later...

WE BOUGHT THIS OLD RANCH FROM AN AD IN TH' TIMES, SO'S WE'VE HAD SOMEPLACE TO OPERATE FROM. THINK IT'S OKAY, SMITH?

OKAY, IT'S PERFECT. I'VE USED THIS SNEAK FOR A HIDE-OUT MYSELF.



YOU EASTERNERS IS A DAMN SIGHT SMARTER'N I FIGGURED! THIS OL' RANCH COULDN'T SUPPORT A BRUSH GOR, BUT IT BORDERS ON PETERSON'S LAND—AN' THE BIGGEST HOLD IN TH' STATE!



IF WE GET RID OF 'EM FAST, WE COULD SNEAK A WHOLE HERD OUT OF THIS HERD WITHOUT EVEN MISSIN' 'EM!

A HUNDRED? BROTHER WE'RE GONNA TAKE TH' WHOLE HERD. WE GOT A FREIGHT TRAIN OF CATTLE CARS READY AN' WAITIN'!



Next morning... THERE THEY ARE. WE COULD ROUND 'EM UP AN' MOVE 'EM OUT AT RIGHT. BUT WHAT ABOUT TH' RE-BRANDIN'?

WE GOT A SLAUGHTERHOUSE SET UP. THAT CATTLE WILL BE CUT UP AN' GOVERNMENT STAMPED BEFORE THE LOCAL YOKALS OYR FUR TH' COPS!







IF THAT'S THE CASE I'LL JUST HAVE TO ELIMINATE TH' LUG!

WAIT! YUH WANT TO GIT YORSELF KILLED? NOBODY GIT'S TH' DROP ON BUSTER! BESIDES, HIS SIDE-KICK, WHISKERS, IS PERCHED SOMEWHERE JUST WAITIN' FER TROUBLE TO START.



GRAY, SO WE'LL SET RID OF 'EM A DIFFERENT WAY! IF YA CAN'T OUTGUN 'EM YA CAN ALWAYS OUT-SMART 'EM! I GOT MORE TRICKS UP MY SLEEVE THAN A CARD SHARK'S GOT ACES!



WAL, WHAT YA MAKE OF IT, BUSTERS?

I CAN'T FIGURE MART SMITH HAVING EASTERN COMPANIES, BUT SOMETHING'S FISHY ABOUT THAT SET-UP—WE'LL WAIT AND WATCH!

The next few days passed without incident and with no indication of the trouble brewing. But then one evening as Buster enters Whiskers' room at the Springville Hotel...



IT'S MIDNIGHT, WHISKERS—TIME TO HIDE TO PETERSON'S RANGE IN CASE MART SMITH'S—HEY, WHERE ARE YOU?



THERE'S A NOTE PINNED TO THE PILLOW! WHAT DOES ON HERE?

To Buster Crable.
I told you I wood
git even an now I hes
you will not see Whiskers
alive agin less you dig
up \$10,000 cash I will
let you no wese to bring
the money later
Yours truly
Muel Smith

Meanwhile...

AWRIGHT, SO WE KID-
NAPPED WHISKERS? HOW
DOES THAT GET RID
OF RUSTER CRABBE?

HE'S SUSPICIOUS OF
US, AIN'T HE? SO TH'
FIRST PLACE HE'LL
LOOK IS HERE.
AIN'T IT?...



WHEN CRABBE OPENS TH'
DOOR, HE'LL FALL
DOWN THAT BOTTLE! THAT BOTTLE'S FILLED
WITH ENOUGH NITRO-GLYCERINE TO BLOW
THIS RANCH RIGHT OFF TH' MAP!



And inside...

"AIN'T NO... NO... USE... I CAN'T
RUBBER! SHORE HOD-TIED
ME GOOD. RECKON ME AN'
RUSTER GOME TO TH'
END OF TH' TRAIL!"



SHORE! TH' FIRST
PLACE HE'LL LOOK
IS HERE— AN' WE'LL
BE A BUNCH OF DEAD
DUCKS!

IT'LL BE HIM AN' HIS
SHOCKER WHO'LL BE
TH' DEAD DUCKS, SMITH!
THEY'LL VANISH
WITHOUT A TRACE!



AN' NOW LET'S ROUND UP TH'
STEERS AND GET 'EM IN TH'
HICK-UP! HA—BEFORE
PETERSON EVER MISSES
'EM, THEY'LL BE BEEF-
STEAKS! -

FOR A
TENDERFOOT
YUN SHORE
KNOW YER
STUFF, NITRO!



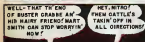
A little
later...

I DON'T THINK THEY'D BE FOOLS
ENOUGH TO HOLD WHISKERS HERE,
BUT I'VE GOT TO BE SURE!





Meanwhile, on the range!



WELL, YOU'RE TH' GUNBOY!
WHAT DO WE DO NOW? AN'
IF BETTER BE GOOD, OR
I'LL FINE YA--WITH THIS!

SIMMER DOWN!
IF WE WORK FAST
MAYBE WE KIN
GIT 'BOUT HALF
OF 'EM INTO TH'
CATTLE CARS
AFORE SUN-UP!



Suddenly,

HEY--WHAT
TH'--??

IT'S GRABBE...
GUSTER GRABBE.



BUT THEM GUY'S
ARE DEAD! THEY
GOTTA BE DEAD!

YOU KIN STAY AN
ANGLE WITH 'EM 'BOUT
IT IF YUH WANT--I'M
HIGH-TAILIN' IT FOR
TH' HILLS!



YOU GO AFTER MART SMITH.
WHISKERS? I'LL TAKE CARE
OF TH' CAR!

RIGHT!



HE MAY BE A SHARP-
SHOOTER--BUT WE GOT
A ROLLET-PROOF CAR!

THAT GUY MUST BE
NUTS! TRYIN' TO
RUN DOWN A 100
MILE-AN-HOUR CAR
WITH A RIFLE!



WHAT IN
BLAZES??

HE'S SHOOTIN'
OUT TH' TIRES!!





THE KIND-HEARTED KILLER

THERE was one thing all the famous gun-fighters of the old West had in common, whether they went on the right or wrong side of the law—they'd shoot a man dead without a moment's hesitation, and without regret.

One possible exception was Wild Bill Hickok. After he'd killed one man and then whirled about to kill another walking up behind him, he noticed, too late, that this second victim was a good friend of his.

It is said that on that occasion, Hickok did express regret over the incident, but he also pointed out that the unfortunate accident would not have happened if the fool hadn't walked up behind him like that.

Clay Allison, that deadly gun-fighter of the Southwest, was like them all in his complete indifference to human life. He'd kill a man for any unreasonable reason. But, nevertheless, he was also entirely different from the others of his calling. For one thing the others took their stand either on the side of the law or against the law. Allison did both.

The law, as such, meant nothing to him. The thing that interested was whether the law happened to be right or wrong in his opinion. Usually it was right, but Allison was no highwayman or claim-jumper.

Another big difference between Clay Allison and his fellow-killers was that he did not depend entirely on his six-shooters. Unlike the others, he was quite willing to risk his life without them.

Once, in Colfax County, New Mexico, in the year 1871, he and another gentleman got into an argument about something—probably the weather, or something equally important. Since differences were more quickly settled with bullets than words, Allison politely suggested they draw for it.

In a case like that, the challenged party either accepted the invitation, and got himself killed, or declined, and got himself branded a yellow coward not fit to live with other people—other people who had never enjoyed the opportunity to make this choice between death or respectability.

But the challenged man refused to be limited to these two alternatives—neither of which appealed to him very much.

"Mr. Allison," the man pointed out, "you are unusually adept in the art of drawing, aiming and firing a revolver—so adept that I, being an ordinary gun, haven't a chance against you. Is that right?"

"That's right," Allison concurred happily.

"That being so, why should I place myself at such a disadvantage? And why should you, if you are not a coward, take such advantage over me?"

It was a good question. But it didn't impress

those who heard it. These were days of action, not talk.

Allison shrugged. "What do you propose we do?" he asked.

"Fight it out on equal terms. Say, knives?"

Had Allison shot him dead then and there, chances are the citizens would have approved the action wholeheartedly. Not only was the man upsetting all traditions, he was hitting below the belt! Allison could kill him and claim self-defense!

But Allison was a different breed of gunman.

"All right," he agreed, smiling, "with knives. And to the death."

"To the death," repeated his enemy solemnly.

"The winner to bury the loser," added Allison. "A duel with knives and shovels."

"So be it."

And so it was. The two men dug a grave six feet deep, eight feet long, and three feet wide, a few miles outside the town. When it was finished, they climbed in at either end, each equipped to the waist and armed with a case-sharp knife. When the referee called "Go," the two men advanced upon each other.

The battle was bloody but brief. It was Allison that climbed out of the grave.

He was bleeding from a number of deep wounds, but when a man rushed over to assist him, he pushed him away. He picked up a shovel and started filling the grave.

"That can wait," said the man. "We've got to get you to a doctor!"

Allison continued shovelling. "The agreement was that the winner would bury the loser."

Clay Allison didn't leave until the grave was filled. He had to be carried back to town.

A year later, Allison got into another argument—the time with a young contender named Bill Chark who was trying hard to acquire a gun-fighter reputation for himself. Bill Chark had killed a lot of people but never anybody of much importance, and he didn't intend to pass up this opportunity to get into the big time. When he met Allison, he started an argument.

Allison slapped him across the face.

The other occupants of the saloon in which this drama was taking place made room for the two men who stood there, glaring at one another. Bill Chark's voice was hard, cold. "You know what this means, Clay?"

"The next street is yours, Bill."

Bill Chark stood there as Allison waited for him to draw—but somehow, saw that he had accor-

plished his purpose, he wasn't so sure anymore that he wanted to go through with it. *Thinking* about beating Clay Allison to the draw was one thing—*doing* it was something else again.

Bill Chank realized he'd bitten off a bigger chunk than he cared to chew. But there was no way out now. He sucked in a deep breath, steadied himself for a lightning lunge at his gun—and found himself paralyzed. He couldn't move.

Allison made it easy for him. "Tell you what," he drawled. "Let's make it a little different for a change. Let's get on our horses and charge each other as we shoot. Let's give the folks a show."

Grateful for even that slight respite, Bill Chank quickly agreed. He was even more grateful when Allison suggested they have dinner first. A man about to be chastised every minute he has left to live, and Chank was no exception.

They went into the Clifton House, the best hotel in Eaton, New Mexico, at that time, and seated themselves in the dining room. They ordered the best meal in the house, for it would be the last meal for one of them.

Bill Chank decided he enjoyed eating too much to call it quits now. He shifted his fork to his left hand. As his left hand brought the forkful of food to his mouth, his right hand brought his weapon out of his holster.

That's the way he died. A fork in his mouth, his gun on the table, and a bullet between his eyes.

The difference between Clay Allison and the other famous gun-fighters of the old West didn't stop with these discrepancies. Unlike the others, he looked like the Hollywood version of a Western hero. He stood well over six feet, lean and supple. His hair was chestnut-color and shoulder-length. The moustache he wore did little to disguise his almost too handsome face.

He was a strange man for a killer. He consistently broke the *first rule* of the gun-fighter, which was always to *shoot first and ask questions later*.

And he consistently broke the *second rule*, which was to stand one's *own business*.

For example, in July, 1871, he was in the rough mining town of Trinidad, Colorado, when a wagon arrived with an old white-haired man at the reins and a young lady beside him on the driver's seat—a beautiful girl with yellow hair and big blue eyes.

All eyes were upon the girl. The citizens of Trinidad had not seen such a sight in many a year. They all fell silent, looking at her.

Brigida Cordova was the law of the town. As Marshal, he felt it his duty to welcome the newcomers into town—a chore he had neglected with other newcomers. But then, there had never been a newcomer like *she*.

He started toward the wagon, but a soft voice from behind made him stop in his tracks. The

voice said, "Leave her alone, Cordova. They look like decent folk."

The Marshal turned to face Clay Allison. He was the law, but Allison was a bigger law as far as the Marshal was concerned. "Sure, Clay . . ." he said. "Sure . . ."

The girl and her father—Susan Shaw was her name—settled down in the region. Marshal Cordova kept his distance for weeks but couldn't get the girl off his mind. When Allison seemed to have forgotten the fact that the girl even existed—he didn't want her for himself, as Cordova had thought—the Marshal went to call on the Shaws and become better acquainted.

He courted the girl in earnest thereafter, until the father learned that Cordova was married and had a family elsewhere. The father ordered him away. Cordova refused to go and threatened to arrest the old man for obstructing the *law*—which was *him*. The old man shot him dead.

Cordova, being town marshal, had a lot of friends. Being the sort of marshal he was, he had the kind of friends he had. The friends converged upon the Shaw residence with a rope.

Old man Shaw, however, refused to do the right thing by the mob and come out to be lynched. He wanted to shoot it out first. The mob solved the problem by setting fire to his house.

Susan Shaw and her father were in a tight spot—but not quite as tight as they thought. Clay Allison, hearing about this business, rode up and addressed the mob of lynchers thusly: "I'm on the Shaws' side."

The lynch mob stood and stared at him for a long moment, and then, suddenly, it was every man for himself. An old man and a young girl was one thing—Clay Allison was something else. They didn't want to mess with him.

And here again is where Allison is different. If he had a personal interest in the pretty girl (after all, he was human, or was he?) his business would make sense. It might even make a nice appropriate ending to his story—what with Susan Shaw in the arms of our hero, and they lived happily ever after—but Allison just rode back to his camp and never went out of his way to see the Shaws again!

Maybe he knew there was no room for romance in his danger-packed life—or maybe he just wasn't interested. One game is as good as another.

As a gun-fighter, it was inevitable that Allison go the way of all gun-fighters—a bullet through his heart, a slug in his hand—but here again he was different! He loved to hang up his guns in retirement. He was killed, not by a gun, but by a wagon he was riding when he fell from the seat in the path of the heavy wheels. . . . A strange end to a strange man. . . .

Whiskers

Fabulous Fish of Felton Lake

WOWIE! ANOTHER BITE! AIN'T NEVER CATCHED SO MANY FISH IN ALL MY BORNED DAYS!

FELTON LAKE'S FAMOUS PER FISHIN'--BUT I NEVER SEED IT LIKE THIS!

WHISKERS OUGHTA WIN A PRIZE! HE'S TH' ONLY ONE OF US WHO AIN'T CAUGHT ONE YET!

OH, IS THAT SO? WHY YOU NUMSKULLS CAN THANK ME FOR EVERY FISH YOU'RE CATCHIN'! IF IT WAN'T FOR ME, THERE'D BE ONLY ONE FISH IN THIS LAKE!



HOW'S THAT AGIN'?

WHUT KIND OF LIE YUH COOKED UP NOW?

TAIN'T NO LIE--'TIS THE GOSSEN FEL TROTH! YUH RIN LOOK UP TH' STATE RECORDS IF YUH DON'T BELIEVE ME.

FELTON LAKE WUZ CALLED "FISHERMAN'S FOLLY" BACK IN TH' OL' DAYS. THERE WUZ ONLY ONE FISH IN IT-- TOO BIG TO CATCH--AND HE ATE UP ALL THE LITTLE FISHES AS SOON AS THEY WERE HATCHED!



In th' beginnin' this fish wuz just a baby an' th' fishermen sort of bring it up, so's to speak... WAMMY! DUCK!

LIL' BETSY'S GROWN BIG ENOUGH TO EAT! THAT FISH AIN'T NOBODY GOING TO EAT BETSY! WITHOUT BETSY THERE'D BE NOTHIN' TO FISH FER.



Well, so, that Betsy wuz so well cared fer that pretty soon she grewed so big it wuz a real foot tuh land her.

WHEN ' PULIN' IN A ROPED BULL'S A GANGED SIGHT EASIER!



How long the wuz so big it wuz impossible to catch 'er!

DR-ON! HERE! BAD-BLASTED WE GO AGIN! FISH—SHE COULD AT LEAST LET US CATCH HER ONCE IN A WHILE FOR 'A' TIMES SARD!



All the fishermen wuz plumb disgusted! That's when they decided to stock th' lake with more fish...



The settlers spend a fortune transportin' fish into the region. But they didn't care! All they cared 'bout wuz bein' able tuh go fishin'...

KEEP YORE EYES PEELED FOR FISH-BUSTLERS! IF YEH SEE ANYBODY CARRYIN' A BUCKET, SHOOT FIRST AND ASK QUESTIONS LATER!



But it wasn't the lake that got stocked—it wuz Of Betsy...

SIX TANKFULS OF FISH AND SHE'S STILL HUNGRY, SHE AIN'T EVEN GONNA LEAVE US ONE!



THE SETTLERS TRIED BRIMIN' IN FISH BOATS,
BUT NO SOONER DID THEY HATCH OUT THAN
BETSY'D POLISH THEM OFF!



Yup, Ol' Betsy was a regular sea monster! It
got so she mistook rowboats for castin' plugs...



Somethin' had to be done...

FELLOW CITIZENS OF FELTON COUNTY,
SHALL WE WHO TAMED THE WILDERNESS
BE VANQUISHED BY A FISH???



AS MAYOR OF FELTON CITY I
HAVE JUST MET WITH THE
CITY COUNCIL...WE HAVE
DECLARED A STATE
OF WAR!



IT'S EITHER BETSY
OR US!



They tried dynamite. No sooner
wuz it tossed in than Betty
swallowed it and ran—taking
the wire and defenator with
her...



As th' years passed and more modern weapons were brought into the battle...

THIS IS ONE TIME OL' BETSY'LL
TAKE OFF MORE'N SHE CAN
CHEW!



But while mechanical science wuz developin',
Ol' Betsy had been developin' too!

YOW! RUN FOR
YORE LIVES!

SWOOSH!



BUT THAT FISH KINDA PAID
ITS WAY, BY TURNIN' FELTON
CITY INTO A REAL BOOM TOWN!
YUH SEE, THE CITY OFFERED A
MILLION DOLLARS TO ANYONE
WHO COULD KILL THAT FISH...

It wuz 100 money that brought me to Felton City—along
with 'bout everybody else in th' world...

ONLY A *STANDS* KIN CATCHER THAT FISH,
THAT'S WHY I *KNOW* I GOT A
GOOD CHANCE!



So, while others wuz tryin' everythin' to
catch Ol' Betsy, I wuz usin' my brain.

GOT HER? TANKO,
THEY'LL BE A FISH-
FRY TONIGHT!



Yup it wuz gonna take *brain* not
brawn to get th' best of Betsy!

DRIVEN ME
TIMBERS!

VIPES!!



You boys — ah! That was one thing I got plenty of...

HEY, I'LL GIVE YUH A HUNDRED DUCKS PER THAT GAS TANK!

YOU BOY YOURSELF A GAS TANK!



Then I got me a parachute and lit out for the lake...

HEY WHISKERS, WHAT IN Tarnation YOU UP TO NOW?

I'M AGON' TO GIT OL' SETSY!



LEARN' LIZARDS, TH' POOR GALLOOT'S SOME CRAFT!

HE'S COMMITTIN' SUICIDE!



But I know what I wuz doin'! I wanted to be gobbled up by that fish!

HERE'S WHERE OL' WHISKERS EARNED HIMSELF A MILLION SWACKEROODS!



TWON'T BE LONG NOW!



HEY, WHAT'S TH' MATTER WITH SETSY?

SWALLOW' WHISKERS MUST'VE GIVEN HER INDIGESTION!





THE END

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THIS GUY'S NEVER BEEN TO TEXAS!

I USED TO BE IN VAUDEVILLE!

WHAT ARE YOU MONKEYING WITH NOW?

HE'S THE DUMBEST FISH IN THAT SCHOOL!

CAN WILLIE COME OUT AND PLAY?

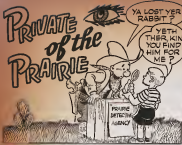


PRIVATE of the PRAIRIE



YA LOST YER RABBIT ?

YETH THER, KIN YOU FIND HIM FOR ME ?





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