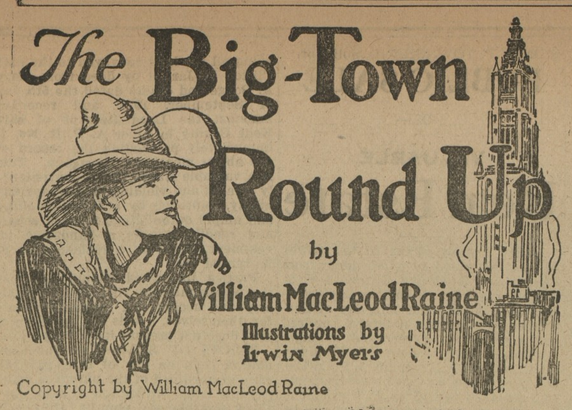

The Big-Town Round Up

by

William MacLeod Raine

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

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SYNOPSIS

FOREWORD.—Motoring through Arizona, a party of easterners, father and daughter and a male companion, stop to witness a cattle round up. The girl leaves the car and is attacked by a wild steer. A masterpiece of riding on the part of one of the cowboys saves her life.

CHAPTER I.—Clay Lindsay, range-rider on an Arizona ranch, announces his intention to visit the "big town," New York.

CHAPTER II.—On the train Lindsay becomes interested in a young woman, Kitty Mason, on her way to New York to become a motion-picture actress. She is marked as fair prey by a fellow traveler, Jerry Durand, gang politician and ex-prize fighter. Perceiving his intention, Lindsay provokes a quarrel and throws Durand from the train.

CHAPTER III.—On his first day in New York Lindsay is splashed with water by a janitor. That individual the range-rider punishes summarily and leaves tied to a fire hydrant. A young woman who sees the occurrence invites Clay into her house and hides him from the police.

CHAPTER IV.—Clay's "rescuer" introduces herself as Beatrice Whitford. Lindsay meets her father, Colin Whitford, and is invited to visit them again. He meets Kitty Mason by accident. She has been disappointed in her stage aspirations, and to support herself is selling cigarettes in a cabaret. Clay visits her there.

CHAPTER V.—Kitty is insulted by a customer. Clay punishes the annoyer. After a lively mixup Lindsay escapes. Outside, he is attacked by Jerry Durand and a companion and beaten insensible.

CHAPTER VI.—Lindsay's acquaintance with Beatrice Whitford ripens. Through her he is introduced into "society." His "side partner" on the Arizona ranch, Johnnie Green, comes to the "big town."

CHAPTER VII.—The two take an apartment together, Johnnie securing employment at the Whitford's as "handy man." An advertisement signed "Kitty M." conveys the information that she is in trouble and implores Lindsay to come to a certain house where she is imprisoned. Clay is dubious as to its authenticity, but finally decides to go. He makes his way into what he supposes is the right house and finds himself in a young woman's bedroom.

CHAPTER VIII.—Naturally indignant, the girl is reassured when Clay tells her the reason for his unmeant intrusion. She shows him how to enter the house he is after, through the roof. In the place he comes on a party of "gunmen," obviously waiting for his appearance. Lindsay "gets the drop" on the thugs, locks them in a room, and escapes.

CHAPTER IX.—With a theater party, which includes the Whitfords, Lindsay meets Kitty Mason, friendless and penniless. He leaves the party to take the girl to his apartment, there seemingly being no other place available and Kitty in dire need of immediate food and warmth.

CHAPTER X.—Beatrice resents Lindsay's interest in Kitty. Though not admitting it even to herself, she is becoming attached to the Arizonan, as he is to her. The two part in anger.

CHAPTER XI.—Hurt and indignant, Beatrice practically proposes marriage to an old admirer, Clarence Bromfield, wealthy man-about-town, and the third member of the party which we met at the beginning of the story. Their engagement is announced. Durand's gang kidnaps Kitty. Clay appeals to the girl he had met the night he escaped the trap Durand had set for him. She tells him where the girl is likely to be found.

The clear eyes in the brown face told of a soul indomitable in a perfectly synchronized body.

Durand lashed out with a swinging left, all the weight of his body behind the blow. Clay stepped back, shot a hard straight right to the cheek and ducked the counter. Jerry rushed him, flailing at his foe blow on blow, intending to wear him out by sheer hard hammering. He butted with his head and knee, used every foul trick he had learned in his rotten trade of prize-fighting. Active as a wild cat, the Arizonan side-stepped, scored a left on the eye, ducked again and fought back the furious attack.

The gangman came out of the rally winded, perplexed and disturbed. His cheek was bleeding, one eye was in distress, and he had hardly touched his agile opponent.

He rushed again. Nothing but his temper, the lack of self-control that made him see red and had once put him at the mercy of a first-class ring general with stamina and a punch, had kept Jerry out of a world championship. He had everything else needed, but he was the victim of his own passion. It betrayed him now. His fighting was that of a wild cave man, blind, furious, damaging. He

He Threw Away His Science and His Skill in Order to Destroy the Man He Hated.

threw away his science and his skill in order to destroy the man he hated. He rained blows on him—fought with head and knee and fist, was on top of him every moment, controlled by one dominating purpose to make that dancing figure take the dust.

Clay was cool, quite master of himself. Before the fight had gone three minutes he knew that, barring a chance blow, some foul play, or a bit of bad luck, he would win. He was covering up, letting the pugilist wear himself out, and taking only the punishment he must. But he was getting home some heavy body blows that were playing the mischief with Jerry's wind.

The New Yorker, puffing like a sea lion, came out of a rally winded and spent. Instantly Clay took the offensive. He was a trained boxer as well as a fighter, and he had been taught how to make every ounce of his weight count. Ripping in a body blow as a feint, he brought down Durand's guard. A straight left crashed home between the eyes and a heavy solar plexus shook the man to the heels.

Durand tried to close with him. An uppercut jolted him back. He plunged forward again. They grappled, knocking over chairs as they threshed across the room. When they went down Clay was underneath, but as they struck the floor he whirled and landed on top.

The man below fought furiously to regain his feet. Clay's arm worked like a piston rod with short-arm jolts against the battered face. Gasping for breath, Durand suddenly collapsed.

Clay got to his feet and waited for him to rise. His enemy rolled over and groaned.

"Had enough?" demanded the westerner.

No answer came, except the heavy, irregular breathing of the man on the floor, who was clawing for air in his lungs.

"I'll ask you once more where Kitty Mason is. And you'll tell me unless you want me to begin on you all over again."

The beaten pugilist sat up, leaning against the wall. He felt ashamed and disgraced by his defeat. Life for him had lost its savor, for he had met his master.

"She—got away."

"How?"

"They turned her loose, to duck the bulls," came the slow, sullen answer.

"Where?"

"In Central park."

Probably this was the truth, Clay reflected. He could take the man's word or not as he pleased. There was no way to disprove it now.

He recovered his revolver, threw the automatic out of the window and walked to the door.

"Joe's tied up in a back room," he said over his shoulder.

Thirty seconds later Clay stepped into the street. He walked across to a subway station and took an uptown train.

Men looked at him curiously. His face was bruised and bleeding, his clothes disheveled, his hat torn. Clay grinned and thought of the old answer:

"They'd ought to see the other man."

One young fellow, apparently a college boy, who had looked upon the wine when it was red, was moved to come over and offer condolence.

"Say, I don't want to butt in or anything, but—he didn't do a thing to you, did he?"

"I hit the edge of a door in the dark," explained Clay solemnly.

"That door must have had several edges." The youth made a confidential admission. "I've got an edge on myself, sort of."

"Not really?" murmured Clay politely.

"Surest thing you know. Say, was it a good scrap?"

"I'd hate to mix in a better one."

"Wish I'd been there." The student fumbled for a card. "Didn't catch your name?"

Clay had no intention of giving his name just now to any casual stranger. He laughed and hummed the chorus of an old range ditty.

CHAPTER XIII

Johnnie Comes Into His Own.

When Clay shot off at a tangent from the car and ceased to function as a passenger, Johnnie made an effort to descend and join his friend, but already the taxi was traveling at a speed that made this dangerous. He leaned out of the open door and shouted to the driver.

"Say, lemme out, doggone you. I wantta get out right here."

The chauffeur paid not the least attention to him. He skidded round a corner, grazing the curb, and put his foot on the accelerator. The car jumped forward, sweeping down the wet street, now and again skidding dangerously. It swung into Fourth avenue, slowing to take the curve. At the widest sweep of the arc Johnnie stepped down. His feet slid from under him and he rolled to the curb across the wet asphalt. Slowly he got up and tested himself for broken bones. He was sure he had dislocated a few hips and it took him some time to persuade himself he was all right, except for some bruises.

But Johnnie, free, had no idea what to do. He was as helpless as Johnnie imprisoned in the flying cab. Of what Clay's plan had been he had not the remotest idea. Yet he could not go home and do nothing. He must keep searching. But where? One thing stuck in his mind. His friend had mentioned that he would like to get a chance to call the police to find out whether Kitty had been rescued. He was anxious on that point himself. At the first cigar store he stopped and was put on the wire with headquarters. He learned that a car supposed to be the one wanted had been driven into Central park by the police a few minutes earlier.

Johnnie's mind carried him on a straight line to the simplest decision. He ran across to Fifth avenue and climbed into a bus going uptown. At the Seventy-second street entrance Johnnie left the bus and plunged into the park. The impish gods who delight in turning upside down the best-laid plans of mice and men were working overtime tonight. They arranged it that a girl cowering among the wet bushes bordering an unfrequented path heard the "Hi—yi—yi" of Arizona and gave a faint cry for help. That call reached Johnnie and brought him on the run.

A man beside the girl jumped up with a snarl, gun in hand.

But the Runt had caught a sight of Kitty. A file of fixed bayonets could not have kept him from trying to rescue her. He dived through the brush like a football tackler.

A gun barked. The little man did not even know it. He and the thug went down together, rolled over, clawed furiously at each other, and got to their feet simultaneously. But the cowpuncher held the gun now. The crook glared at him for a moment, and bolted for the safety of the bushes in wild flight.

Johnnie fired once, then forgot all about the private little war he had started. For his arms were full of a sobbing Kitty, who clung to him while she wept and talked and exclaimed all in a breath.

"I knew you'd come, Johnnie. I knew you would—you or Clay. They left me here with him while they got away from the police. . . . Oh, I've been so scared. I didn't know—I thought—"

"'S all right. 'S all right, li'l' girl. Don't you cry, Kitty. Me 'n' Clay won't let 'em hurt you none. We sure won't."

She nestled closer, and Johnnie's heart lost a beat. He had become aware of a dull pain in the shoulder and of something wet trickling down his shoulder. But what is one little bullet in your geography when the sweetest girl in the world is in your arms?

"I ain't nothin' but a hammered-down li'l' haysed of a cowpuncher," he told her, his voice trembling, "an' you're awful pretty an'—an'—"

A flag of color fluttered to her soft cheeks. The silken lashes fell shyly. "I think you're fine and dandy, the bravest man that ever was."

"Do you—figure you could—? I—I—I don't reckon you could ever—"

He stopped, abashed. To him this creature of soft curves was of heaven-sent charm. All the beauty and vitality of her youth called to him. It seemed to Johnnie that God spoke through her. Which is another way of saying that he was in love with her.

She made a rustling little stir in his arms and lifted a flushed face very tender and appealing. In the darkness her lips slowly turned to his.

Johnnie chose that inopportune moment to get sick at the stomach.

"I—I'm goin' to faint," he announced, and did.

When he returned to his love-story Johnnie's head was in Kitty's lap and a mounted policeman was in the foreground of the scene. His face was wet from the mist of fine rain falling.

"Don't move. Some one went for a car," she whispered, bending over him so that flying tendrils of her hair brushed his cheek. "Are you—badly hurt?"

He snorted. "I'm a false alarm. Nothin' a-tall. He jes' creased me."

"You're so brave," she cried, admiringly.

He had never been told this before. He suspected it was not true, but to hear her say it was manna to his hungry soul.

The cab stopped at the house of a doctor and the shoulder was dressed. The doctor made one pardonable mistake.

"Get your wife to give you this sleeping powder if you find you can't sleep," he said.

"Y'betcha," answered Johnnie cheerfully.

Kitty looked at him reproachfully and blushed. She scolded him about it after they reached the apartment where they lived.

Her new fiance defended himself. "He's only a day or two prema-chure, honey. It wasn't hardly worth while explainin'," he claimed.

"A day or two. Oh, Johnnie!"

"Sure. I ain't gonna wait. Wha's the matter with tomorrow?"

"I haven't any clothes made," she evaded, and added by way of diversion. "I always liked that kinda golden down on your cheeks."

"The stores are full of 'em. An' we ain't talkin' about my whiskers—not right now."

"You're a nice old thing," she whispered, flashing into unexpected dimples, and she rewarded him for his niceness in a way he thought altogether desirable.

A crisp, strong step sounded outside. The door opened and Clay came into the room.

He looked at Kitty. "Thank heaven, you're safe," he said.

"Johnnie rescued me," she cried. "He got shot—in the shoulder."

The men looked at each other.

"Bad, Johnnie?"

"Nope. A plumb li'l scratch. Wha's the matter with you?"

A gleam of humor flitted into the eyes of the cattleman. "I ran into a door."

"Say, Clay," Johnnie burst out, "I betcha can't guess."

His friend laughed in ambiable derision. "Oh, you kids in the woods. I knew it soon as I opened the door."

He walked up to the girl and took her hand. "You got a good man, Kitty. I'm wishin' you all the joy in the world."

Her eyes flashed softly. "Don't I know I've got a good man, and I'm going to be happier than I deserve."

* * * * * * * *

Tim Muldoon, in his shirt-sleeves, was busy over a late breakfast when his mother opened the door of the flat to let in Clay Lindsay.

The policeman took one look at the damaged face and forgot the plate of ham and eggs that had just been put before him.

"Yuh've been at it again!" he cried, his Irish eyes lighting up with anticipatory enjoyment.

"I had a little set-to with friend Jerry last night," the westerner explained.

"Another? What's the trouble now?"

"You heard about the girl abducted in an auto from the Bronx?"

"Uh-huh! Was Jerry in that?"

"He was. I'll tell you the whole story, Tim."

"Meet my mother first. Mother—Mr. Lindsay. Yuh've heard me talk av him."

Mrs. Muldoon's blue Irish eyes twinkled. She was a plump and ample woman, and her handshake was firm and strong.

"I have that. Tim thinks yuh a wonder, Mr. Lindsay."

Clay told the story of his encounter with Durand on the train and of his subsequent meetings with him at the

"You Bate Him! I can see it in Your Eye!" Cried Muldoon, Pounding the Table So That the Dishes Jumped.

Sea Siren and on the night of the poker party. He made elisions and emendations that removed the bedroom scene from the tale.

"So that's when yuh met Annie Millikan," Tim said. "I was wonderin' how yuh knew her."

"That's when I met her. She's one fine girl, Tim, a sure-enough thoroughbred. She has fought against heavy odds all her life to keep good and honest. And she's done it."

"She has that," agreed Mrs. Muldoon, heartily. "Annie is a good girl. I always liked her."

To Be Continued

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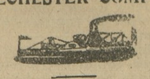

FALL SCHEDULE

(Weather Permitting)
(Operating On Standard Time)

SASSAFRAS RIVER LINE

(In Effect 2.45 p. m. Sept. 5, 1922)

Mondays and Wednesdays, steamer will leave Fredericktown at 6.30 a. m., Betterton 7.45 a. m., Worton Manor 8.45 a. m., Tolchester 9.45 a. m.

Tuesdays and Saturdays, steamer will leave Baltimore at 2.45 p. m. for all the above landings. (Does not stop at Tolchester on Saturdays.)

Saturdays (effective Sept. 9) steamer leaves Tolchester at 9.00 a. m. and 4.45 p. m. Leaves Baltimore 7.00 a. m. and 2.45 p. m.

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(In Effect 2.45 p. m. September 6, 1922. Express Service.)

Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays, steamer will leave Port Deposit at 6.30 a. m., Havre de Grace at 7.00 a. m., Betterton 8.15 a. m., Tolchester (except Saturdays) 9.45 a. m.

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W. BRADFORD COPPER, Trustee.
SIDNEY P. TOWNSHEND, Solicitor.

In the Matter of the Joint Trust Estate of Milton P. Crew and Hettie H. Crew.

In the Circuit Court for Kent County. In Equity No. 2190.

Ordered, this twenty-first day of August in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-two, by the Circuit Court for Kent County, in Equity, and by the authority of said Court, that joint creditors of Milton P. Crew and Hettie H. Crew, and all others claiming any interest in the Joint Estate and property or the proceeds of the sale thereof, granted and assigned by the Joint Deed of Trust of the said Milton P. Crew and Hettie H. Crew to W. Bradford Copper, Trustee, for the purposes in said Joint Deed stated and declared, be and they are hereby directed and required to file their said claims, with the proper vouchers atached thereto, with the Clerk of the Circuit Court for Kent County, in Equity, on or before the twenty-sixth day of December, in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-two; provided a copy of this order be published in some newspaper published in Kent County, Maryland, once in each of four successive weeks before the twenty-sixth day of October in the year nineteen hundred and twenty-two.

PHILEMON B. HOPPER.

True Copy, Test:—
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