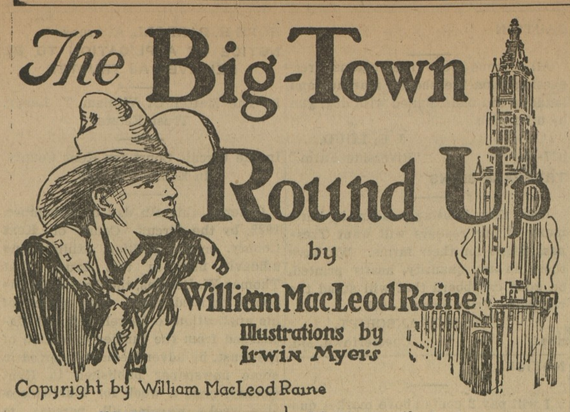
The Big-Town Round Up



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.

CHAPTER XII.—At the place, Clay conceals himself to await the arrival of Durand, probably with Kitty. He gets the thug alone, and in a fist fight worsts the professional bruiser.

CHAPTER XIII.—Kitty is rescued from her abductors by Johnnie Green, who has long admired the girl. He makes a declaration of his love and the wedding day is promptly set.

CHAPTER XIV.—Beatrice has long since repented her treatment of Clay and sends him a note of apology. Their friendship is resumed. Riding through the park, Beatrice's horse runs away with her. The beast is halted by Clay, and in the excitement the girl reveals the fact that she is the one whom he had saved from the steer in Arizona. Of course, Lindsay had known it all the time, but he had not supposed she remembered him. Clarence Bromfield is annoyed at the friendship between his fiancee and the Arizonan, and plans to discredit him.

CHAPTER XV.—Bromfield pays Durand to "frame up" a meeting between Lindsay and a woman of evil reputation. The thug arranges to have Lindsay killed in a gambling house to which Bromfield is to take him. With the latter, Lindsay is present when the police raid the place. In the melee "Slim Jim" Collins, a follower of Durand, is hit with a chair, and killed. Bromfield escapes, but Lindsay is captured and accused of the killing.

CHAPTER XV

"No Violence."

The ex-pugilist sat back in the chair chewing an unlighted black cigar, his fishy eyes fixed on Bromfield. Scars still decorated the colorless face, souvenirs of a battle in which he had been bested by a man he hated. Durand had a capacity for silence. He waited now for this exquisite from the upper world to tell his business.

Clarendon discovered that he had an unexpected repugnance to doing this. A fastidious sense of the obligations of class served him for a soul and the thing he was about to do could not be justified even in his loose code of ethics. He examined the ferule of his Malacca cane nervously.

"I've come to you, Mr. Durand, about—about a fellow called Lindsay."

The bulbous eyes of the other narrowed. He distrusted on principle all kid gloves. Those he had met were mostly ambitious reformers. Furthermore, any stranger who mentioned the name of the Arizonan became instantly an object of suspicion.

"What about him?"

"I understand that you and he are not on friendly terms. I've gathered that from what's been told me. Am I correct?"

Durand thrust out his salient chin. "Say! Who the h—l are you? What's eatin' you? Whatta you want?"

"I'd rather not tell my name."

"Nothin' doin'. No name, no business. That goes."

"Very well. My name is Bromfield. This fellow Lindsay—gets in my way. I want to—eliminate him."

"Are you askin' me to croak him?"

"Good G—d, no! I don't want him hurt—physically," cried Bromfield, alarmed.

"Whatta you want, then?" The tight-lipped mouth and the harsh voice called for a showdown.

"I want him discredited—disgraced."

"Some friends of mine are infatuated by him. I want to unmask him in a public way so as to disgust them with him."

"I'm hep. It's a girl."

"We'll not discuss that," said the clubman with a touch of hauteur.



"Say! Who the H—l Are You? What's Eatin' You? Whatta You Want?"

"As to the price, if you can arrange the thing as I want it done, I'll not haggle over terms."

The ex-pugilist listened sourly to Bromfield's proposition. He watched narrowly this fashionably dressed visitor. His suspicions still stirred, but not so actively. He was inclined to believe in the sincerity of the fellow's hatred of the westerner. Jealousy over a girl could easily account for it. Jerry did not intend to involve himself until he had made ——

"Whatta you want me to do? Come clean."

"Could we get him into a gambling-house, arrange some disgraceful mixup with a woman, get the place raided by the police, and have the whole thing come out in the papers?"

Jerry's slitted eyes went off into space. The thing could be arranged. The trouble in getting Lindsay was to draw him into a trap he could not break through. If Bromfield could deliver his enemy into his hands, Durand thought he would be a fool not to make the most of the chance. As for this soft-fingered swell's stipulation against physical injury, that could be ignored if the opportunity offered.

"Can you bring this Lindsay to a gambling-dump? Will he come with you?" demanded the gang politician.

"I think so. I'm not sure. But if I do that, can you fix the rest?"

"It'll cost money."

"How much will you need?"

"A coupla thousand to start with. More before I've finished. I've got to salve the cops."

Bromfield had prepared for this contingency. He counted out a thousand dollars in bills of large denominations.

"I'll cut that figure in two. Understand. He's not to be hurt. I won't have any rough work."

"Leave that to me."

"And you've got to arrange it so that when the house is raided I escape without being known."

"I'll do that, too. Leave your address and I'll send a man up later to wise you as to the scheme when I get one fixed up."

On a sheet torn from his memorandum book Bromfield wrote the name of the club which he most frequented.

"Don't forget the newspapers. I want them to get the story," said the clubman, rising.

"I'll see they cover the raid."

Bromfield, massaging a glove onto his long fingers, added another word of caution. "Don't slip up on this thing. Lindsay's a long way from being a soft mark."

"Don't I know it?" snapped Durand viciously. "There'll be no slip-up this time if you do your part. We'll get him, and we'll get him right."

"Without any violence, of course."

"Oh, of course."

Was there a covert but derisive jeer concealed in that smooth assent? Bromfield did not know, but he took away with him an unease that disturbed his sleep that night.

Before the clubman was out of the hotel, Jerry was snapping instructions at one of his satellites.

"Trail that fellow. Find where he goes, who he is, what girl he's mashed on, all about him. See if he's hooked up with Lindsay. And how? Hop to it! Did you get a slant at him as he went out?"

"Sure I did. He's my meat."

The trailer vanished.

Jerry stood at the window, still sullenly chewing his unlighted cigar, and watched his late visitor and the trailer lose themselves in the hurrying crowds.

"White-livered simp. 'No violence, Mr. Durand.' Hmp! Different here."

An evil grin broke through on the thin-lipped, cruel face.

* * * * * * *

When Bromfield suggested to Clay with a touch of stiffness that he would be glad to show him a side of New York night life probably still unfamiliar to him, the cattleman felt a surprise he carefully concealed. He guessed that this was a belated attempt on the part of Miss Whitford's fiance to overcome the palpable dislike he had for her friend. If so, the impulse that inspired the offer was a creditable one. Lindsay had no desire to take in any of the plague spots of the city with Bromfield. Something about the society man set his back up, to use his own phrase. But because this was true he did not intend to be outdone in generosity by a successful rival. Promptly and heartily he accepted the invitation. If he had known that a note and a card from Jerry Durand lay in the vest pocket of his cynical host while he was holding out the olive branch, it is probable the Arizonan would have said, "No, thank you, kind sir."

The note mentioned no names. It said, "Wednesday, at Maddock's, 11 p. m. Show this card."

And to Maddock's, on Wednesday, at an hour something earlier than 11, the New Yorker led his guest after a call at one or two clubs.

Even from the outside the place had a dilapidated look that surprised Lindsay. The bell was of that brand you keep pulling till you discover it is out of order. Decayed gentility marked the neighborhood, though the blank front of the houses looked impeccably respectable.

As a feeble camouflage of its real reason for being, Maddock's called itself the "Omnium club." But when Clay found how particular the doorkeeper was as to those who entered he guessed at once it was a gambling house.

From behind a grating the man peered at them doubtfully. Bromfield showed a card, and after some hesitation on the part of his inquisitor, passed the examination. Toward Clay the doorkeeper jerked his head inquiringly.

"He's all right," the clubman vouched.

Again there was a suspicious and lengthy scrutiny.

The door opened far enough to let them slide into a scantily furnished hall. On the landing was another guard, a heavy, brutal-looking fellow who was no doubt the "chucker-out." He, too, looked them over closely, but after a glance at the card drew aside to let them pass.

Through a door near the head of the stairs they moved into a large room, evidently made from several smaller ones with the partitions torn down and the ceilings pillared at intervals.

Clay had read about the magnificence of Canfield's in the old days, and he was surprised that one so fastidious as Bromfield should patronize a place so dingy and so rough as this. At the end of one room was a marble mantelpiece above which there was a defaced, gilt-frame mirror. The chandeliers, the chairs, the wallpaper, all suggested the same note of one-time opulence worn to shabbiness.

A game of Klondike was going. There were two roulette wheels, a faro table, and one circle of poker players.

The cold eyes of a sleek, slippery man sliding cards out of a faro-box looked at the westerner curiously. Among the suckers who came to this den of thieves to be robbed were none of Clay's stamp. Lindsay watched the white, dexterous hands of the dealer with an honest distaste. All along the border from Juarez to Calexico he had seen just such soft, skilled fingers fleecing those who toiled. He knew the bloodless, impassive face of the



All Told, There Were Not a Dozen Respectable-Looking People in the Room.

professional gambler as well as he knew the anxious, reckless ones of his victims. His knowledge had told him little good of this breed of parasites who preyed upon a credulous public.

The traffic of this room was crooked business by day as well as by night. A partition ran across the rear of the back parlor which showed no opening but two small holes with narrow shelves at the bottom. Back of that was the paraphernalia of the pool-room, another device to separate customers from their money by playing the "ponies."

As Clay looked around it struck him that the personnel of this gambling-den's patrons was a singularly depressing one. All told, there were not a dozen respectable-looking people in the room. Most of those present were derelicts of life, the failures of a great city washed up by the tide. Some were pallid, haggard wretches clinging to the vestiges of a prosperity that had once been theirs. Others were hard-faced ruffians from the underworld. Not a few bore the marks of the drug victim. All of those playing had a manner of furtive suspicion. They knew that if they risked their money the house would rob them. Yet they played.

Bromfield bought a small stack of chips at the roulette table.

"Won't you take a whirl at the wheel?" he asked Lindsay.

"Thanks, no, I believe not," his guest answered.

The westerner was a bit disgusted at his host's lack of discrimination. "Does he think I'm a soft mark too?" he wondered. "If this is what he calls high life I've had more than enough already."

His disgust was shared by the clubman. Bromfield had never been in such a dive before. His gambling had been done in gilded luxury. While he touched shoulders with this motley crew his nostrils twitched with fastidious disdain. He played, but his interest was not in the wheel. Durand had promised that there would be women and that one of them should be bribed to make a claim upon Clay at the proper moment. He had an unhappy feeling that the gang politician had thrown him down in this. If so, what did that mean? Had Durand some card up his sleeve? Was he using him as a catspaw to rake in his own chestnuts?

Clarendon Bromfield began to weaken. He and Clay were the only two men in the room in evening clothes. His questing eye fell on tough, scarred faces that offered his fears no reassurance. Any one or all of them might be agents of Durand.

He shoved all of his chips out, putting half of them on number eight and the rest on seventeen. His object was to lose his stack immediately and be free to go. To his annoyance the whirling ball dropped into the pocket labeled eight.

"Let's get out of this hole," he said to Lindsay in a low voice. "I don't like it."

"Suits me," agreed the other.

As Bromfield was cashing his chips Clay came rigidly to attention. Two men had just come into the room. One of them was "Slim" Jim Collins, the other Gorilla Dave. As yet they had not seen him He did not look at them, but at his host. There was a question in his mind he wanted solved. The clubman's gaze passed over both the newcomers without the least sign of recognition.

"I didn't know what this joint was like or I'd never have brought you," apologized Clarendon. "A friend of mine told me about it. He's got a queer fancy if he likes this frazzled dive."

Clay acquitted Bromfield of conspiracy. He must have been tailed here by Durand's men. His host had nothing to do with it. What for? They could not openly attack him.

"Slim" Jim's eyes fell on him. He nudged Dave. Both of them, standing near the entrance, watched Lindsay steadily.

Some one outside the door raised the cry, "The bulls are comin'."

Instantly the room leaped to frenzied excitement. Men dived for the doors, bets forgotten and chips scattered over the floor. Chairs were smashed as they charged over them, tables overturned. The unwary were trodden underfoot.

Bromfield went into a panic. Why had he been fool enough to trust Durand? No doubt the fellow would ruin him as willingly as he would Lindsay. The raid was fifteen minutes ahead of schedule time. The ward politician had betrayed him. He felt sure of it. All the carefully prepared plans agreed upon he jettisoned promptly. His sole thought was to save himself, not to trap his rival.

Lindsay caught him by the arm. "Let's try the back room."

He followed Clay, Durand's gangmen at his heels.

The lights went out.

The westerner tried the window. It was heavily barred outside. He turned to search for a door.

Brought up by the partition, Bromfield was whimpering with fear as he too groped for a way of escape. A pale moon shone through the window upon his evening clothes.

In the dim light Clay knew that tragedy impended. "Slim" Jim had his automatic out.

"I've got you good," the chauffeur snarled.

The gun cracked. Bromfield bleated in frenzied terror as Clay dashed forward. A chair swung round in a sweeping arc. As it descended the spitting of the gun slashed through the darkness a second time.

"Slim" Jim went down, rolled over, lay like a log.

Some one dived for Lindsay and drove him against the wall, pinning him by the waist. A second figure joined the first and caught the cattleman's wrist.

Then the lights flashed on again. Clay saw that the man who had flung him against the partition was Gorilla Dave. A plain-clothes man with a star had twisted his wrist and was clinging to it. Bromfield was nowhere to be seen, but an open door to the left showed that he had found at least a temporary escape.

A policeman came forward and stooped over the figure of the prostrate man.

"Some one's croaked a guy," he said.

Gorilla Dave spoke up quickly. "This fellow did it. With a chair. I seen him."

There was a moment before Lindsay answered quietly. "He shot twice. The gun must be lying under him where he fell."

Already men had crowded forward to the scene of the tragedy, moved by the morbid curiosity a crowd has in such sights. Two policemen pushed them back and turned the still body over. No revolver was to be seen.

"Anybody know who this is?" one of the officers asked.

"Collins—'Slim' Jim," answered big Dave.

"Well, he's got his this time," the policeman said. "Skull smashed."

Clay's heart sank. In that noise of struggling men and crashing furniture very likely the sound of the shots had been muffled. The revolver gone, false testimony against him, proof that he had threatened Collins available, Clay knew that he was in desperate straits.

"There was another guy here with him in them glad rags," volunteered one of the gamblers captured in the raid.

"Who was he?" asked the plain-clothes man of his prisoner.

Clay was silent. He was thinking rapidly. His enemies had him trapped at last with the help of circumstance. Why bring Bromfield into it? It would mean trouble and worry for Beatrice.

"Better speak up, young fellow, me lad," advised the detective. "It won't help you any to be sulky. You're up against the electric chair sure."

The Arizonan looked at him with the level, unafraid eyes of the hills.

"I reckon I'll not talk till I'm ready," he said in his slow drawl.

The handcuffs clicked on his wrists.

To Be Continued

—Subscription to The Transcript $1.50 per year.

DERIVATION OF GRASS WIDOW

Term Probably Is Corruption of Grace and Comes From Middle Age Usage.

How did the term "grass widow" arise? The most popular derivation, according to Pearson's Weekly, is that "grass" is a corruption of grace, the pronounciation of which, in the Latin, is grahse.

In the Middle Ages widows were said to be "under God's grace" for a year after their husband's death, at the end of which period they might properly, if they wished, remarry, and so a widow in grace meant a new widow.

About the same time the wives of the marriages that were, in exceptional cases, annulled by the church, began also to be spoken of as widows of grace, in the rather different sense that they owed their virtual widowhood to the "grace" or favor of the church. So, then, a grace—pronounced grass—widow came to mean a wife, called a widow by courtesy.

Another explanation is that, exactly as we now refer to a sham party in a business transaction as a "man of straw," so an unmarried woman with a child who explained her condition by mention of a supposedly dead husband, was contemptuously spoken of as a "widow of grass."

It is in this sense that the phrase is commonly used on the continent, whereas in this country the term generally means a real wife temporarily living away from her husband.

KNEW HOW TO RUN HIS CAR

Motorman Resented the Help of the Truck Driver, and Then Repented.

A street car approached a busy downtown corner, the motorman clanging his gong. A truck driver stepped from in front of his machine parked near the track. He waved reassuringly at the motorman and measured with his hands to signal sufficient clearance.

The motorman resented the truckman's role of traffic director. He growled his resentment to a platform passenger.

"I don't need nobody to show me how to run a car. I been runnin' one long enough to know when I can get by."

He clanged angrily toward the next corner where other trucks were parked.

"I suppose some fool will step out here to tell me how to run my car," he snapped. He glanced contemptuously at a truck as his car glided toward it. But there was no "fool to give directions this time and, to the very great astonishment and chagrin of the motorman who knew "how to run 'em," his car sideswiped the truck.—Kansas City Star.

A Kind Wish.

When Jean went to her little neighbor's to visit she often talked to the grandmother of the house. "I have a grandmother, too," she would say, "but she's in heaven."

And she and the grandmother of the house were good friends until one day the grandmother was cross. She scolded the two little girls for leaving the screen door open, for walking in a flower bed and dropping crumbs on the floor.

The two youngsters sought refuge on the porch. Grandmother started to follow them there a little later, to try to make up. She realized the necessity of doing so, for when she reached the door she heard Jean say, "Ruth, I wish your grandmother was visitin' my grandmother today."—Indianapolis News.

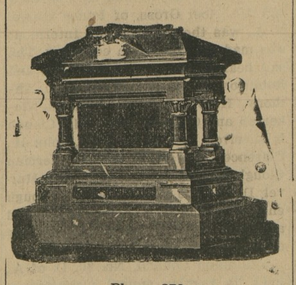
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