Molly A TALE of the

FRONTIER

RANDALL PARRISH Author of "Keith of the Border," "My Lady of Doubt," "My Lady of the North," etc., etc.

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hto one of the tribes?"

as I was sayin', Gene caught on to what I wanted to know out o' him." this yere Injun war last spring-I "Well, go on, Hughes, you are makmethon of Koleta, his Injun father-in- ing a long story out of it." law likely told him what wus brewin' "The rest is short 'nough. It seems

"And brand a few outsiders." He grinned.

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let us sittin' thar out on the prairie They hogged hosses an' all." He wiped his face, and spat into is fre, while Hamlin sat silent, gun

in hand. Treckon now as how Le Fevre put Koleta wise to that game, but I us plum innocent then," he went on metfully. "Wall, we,-thar wus iddn't take me long, stranger, to a mover thar wa'n't no herd to locate. It I struck their trail, whar Le and disguised himself wonderfully by the months hopin' ter ketch up with nate girl. but I never did. I heerd tell o' Where were they taking her, monet or twice, an' caught on he Hughes do you know?"

thet's as much as I ever did find out. Fer camp down yonder on the Canadi-Finally, up in Independence I wus so an-Black Kettle's outfit. Onc't thar, durn near broke I reckoned I'd better all hell couldn't pry her loose." put what I hed left in a grub stake, an' drift back yere. I figgered that Among those hostiles?" maybe I could pick up some o' those Injun cattle again, and maybe some "Why, he's hand in glove with the mavericks, an' so start 'nuther herd. whole bunch. He's raided with 'em, Anyhow I could lie low fer a while, decked out in feathers an' war-paint." believin' Le Fevre was sure ter come The sergeant thought rapidly and wus clear. I knew then he an' Koleta was in cahoots an' he'd be headin' this way after the stock. So I come down yere quiet, an' laid fer him to show

"What then?" "Nuthin' much, till yisterday. I got tergether some cows, herded down river a ways, out o' sight in the bluffs, but hev hed ter keep mighty quiet ter save my hair. Them Cheyennes are sure pisen this year, an' raisin' Cain. I never see 'em so rambunctious afore. But I hung on yere, hidin' out, cause I didn't hev nowhar else ter go. - What!" interrupted the other An' yisterday, just ahead o' the bliz-

sharply. "Do you mean he married zard, a Kiowa buck drifted in yere. Slipped down the bluff, an' caught me Sorter left-handed—yep; a Chey 'fore ever I saw him. Never laid eyes weman. Little thing like that on the red afore but he was friendly don't faze Gene none, if he did have 'nough, natch'ally mistakin' me fer awhite wife—a blamed good-looker one o' Le Fevre's herders. His name the was too. She was out here onc't, was Black Smoke, an' he couldn't three years ago, 'bout a week maybe, talk no English worth mentionin', but three years she didn't know nothin' 'bout we made out to understan' each other the squaw, an' the Injuns was all in Mex. He wus too darn hungry and antin' down in the Wichitas. But tired to talk much anyhow. But I got

-he's sorter a war-chief. Anyhow he he an' ol' Koleta, an' a young Cheyhew that hell was to pay, an' so we enne buck, had been hangin' 'round when you shot us up?" mich'ally gathered up our long-horns across the river from Dodge fer quite midrove 'em east whar they wouldn't a while waitin' fer Le Fevre to pull got a friend o' yourn, I'm powerful be mided. We didn't git all the crit off some sorter stunt. Maybe I didn't sorry." is rounded up, as we wus in a get just the straight o' it, but anyhow inny, an' they wus scattered some they held up a paymaster, er somebasse of a hard winter. So I come thing like that, fer a big boodle. They bek yere to round up the rest o' expected to do it quiet like, hold the off cer a day er so out in the desert,

an' then turn him loose to howl. But them plans didn't just exactly work. fully. "Maybe I wasn't over-particular, The fellow's daughter was with him, ht anyhow I got a thousand head when the pinch was made, an' they ed, an', I reckon, if yer was to plug besther by the last o' June, an' hit hed to take her 'long too. Then the me right yere it wouldn't more'n even the trail with 'em. Then hell sure officer man got ugly, an' had to be matters up. But yer listen furst afore brite loose. 'Fore we'd got that shot, an' Le Fevre quarrelled with the yer shoot. Thet Kiowa Klack Smoke buch o' cattle twenty mile down other white man in the outfit, an' was sent on ahead, an' got yere afore the Cimarron we wus rounded up by killed him. That left the gal on their the storm. He said them other wus igng o' Cheyenne Injuns, headed by hands, an' them all in a hell of a fix 'bout four hours behind, an' headin' the ornery Koleta, and every horn of if they wus ever caught. The young fer this yere cabin to make camp. 'm drove off. Thar wa'n't no fight; Injuns wanted to kill the gal too, an' | They wa'n't hurryin' none, fer they the damn bucks just laughed at us. an' shet her mouth, but somehow Le didn't suspect they wus bein' tracked. Fevre an' Koleta wouldn't hear to it- Well, thet was my chance; what I'd said she'd be worth more alive than been campin' out yere months a-waitdead, an' that they could hide her in' fer. I didn't expect ter git nuthin' whar she'd never be heard of ag'in back v' understand; all I wanted was

ing the speaker intently, and it seem- I was in the kintry; all I hed to do ed to him his heart had stopped beat- was lay out in the hills, an' take a pol ing. This story had the semblance shot at him afore he saw me." tur o' us,-hoofed it east till we of truth; it was the truth. So Dupont and Le Fevre were one and the same. might the loan o' some ponies. Then He could believe this now, could per- thought 'bout thet. I jest wanted ter ceive the resemblance, although the man had grown older, taken on flesh,

Isre had driven 'em up into Missouri growing that black beard. Yet, at the ni cashed in fer a pot o' money. moment, he scarcely considered the In the damn cuss just natch'ally man at all; his whole interest conmished. I plugged 'bout fer two er centrated on the fate of the unfortu-

travelin' under 'nuther name "Wa'n't but one place fer 'em to

w durn French contraction-but take her-the Cheyennes hev got win-

"And Le Fevre dared go there?"

leaped to a sudden conclusion.



"Yes, Make It Short Now; All I want Is Facts."

"And you were trying to kill him

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Snowbound. The gleam in Hamlin's eyes impelled the other to go on, and explain

unless her friends put up money to ter kill that damn skunk, an' squar accounts. It looked ter me then like Hamlin was leaning forward, watch- I hed him on the hip. He didn't know

"And get the girl and the money." plug him. I know it sounds sorter cowardly, but that fellow 's a gun-fighter an' he hed two Injuns with him. Any how that wus my notion, an' as soon as Black Smoke went lopin' up the valley, I loaded up, an' climbed them bluffs, to whar I hed a good look-out erlong the north trail. I laid out than all night. The storm come up, an' mighty nigh froze, but snuggled down inter ther snow an' stuck. When yer onc't get a killin' freak on. yer goin'

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through heir an' high water ter get | the same. I reckon they're under the over, an' ther storm blowin' the snow Thet's my guess, mister." in my face, I couldn't see much-nuthlookin' fer no one else, an' soon as I likely spot for them to be hiding in. dared, I let drive. He flopped over They would have drifted beyond dead as a door nail, an' then I popped doubt, farther than Hughes supposed, away a couple o' times at the others. probably, as he had been sheltered One fell down, an' I thought I got from the real violence of the wind as him, but didn't wait to make sure; it raged on the open plain. They just turned and hoofed it fer cover, might be fifteen, even twenty miles knowin' the storm would hide my away, and so completely drifted in as trail. I'd got the men I went after, an' just natch'ally didn't give er whoop what became o' the rest. As I went down the bank I heard 'em shootin', so I knowed some wus alive yet an' it would be better fer me to crawl inter

my hole an' lie still." Hamlin sat motionless, staring at the man, not quite able to compre hend his character. Killing was part of the western code, and he could ap preciate Hughes' eagerness for revenge, but the underlying cowardice in the man was almost bewildering Finally he got up, swept the revolve: on the bench into his pocket, walked over, and picked up the gun.

"Now, Hughes," he said quietly "I'll talk, and you listen. In my judg ment you are a miserable sneaking cur, and I am going to trust you jus: so far as I can watch you. I suppose I ought to shoot you where you are that he was personally safe, seemed on approved joint notes, on all sums of the best men who ever lived, a friend of mine, Sam Wasson-" "Who?"

"Sam Wasson, a government scout." Hughes dropped his face into his

"Good Lord! I knew him!" The Sergeant drew a deep breath and into his face there came a lool almost of sympathy.

"Then you begin to realize the sor of fool you are," he went on soberly "They don't make better men out here: his little finger was worth more than your whole body. But killing you won't bring Sam back, and besides ? reckon you've told me the straight story, an' his shooting was an acci dent in a way. Then you're more use ful to me just now alive than you would be dead. My name is Hamlin sergeant Seventh Cavalry, and I am here after that man Le Fevre. We trailed his outfit from Dodge until the storm struck us, and then came straight through traveling by compass. I did not know the man's name was Le Fevre until you told me; uj in Kansas he is known as Dupont."

"That's it; that's the name he took when he sold the cattle." "The officer robbed and killed was Major McDonald, and it is his daughter they hold. The fellow Dupont

quarreled with and shot was a deserter named Connors. We found the body. Now where do you suppose Le Fevre is?"

Hughes stared into the fire, nervously pulling his beard.

"Wall, I'd say in west yere some whar along the Cimarron. 'Tain't likely he had a compass, an' the wind wus from the nor'east. Best they could do, the ponies would drift. The Injuns would keep the gineral direction, o' course, storm 'er no storm, an' Gene is some plainsman himself, but thet blizzard would sheer 'em off all

ONE BIG DAY

yer man. Thet's how I felt. Well, banks ten mile, er more, up thar. An' just 'long 'bout daylight an outfit soon as there's a change in weather, showed up. With my eyes half froze they'll ride fer Black Kettle's camp.

Hamlin turned the situation over in' but outlines o' hosses an' men. deliberately in his mind, satisfied that the use? You couldn't hit the side But thar was four o' 'em, an' a big | Hughes had reviewed the possibilities fellow ahead breakin' trail. Course correctly. If Le Fevre's party had got thought it was Le Fevre; I wa'n't through at all, then that was the most

to be undiscoverable except through accident. What course then was best to pursue? The storm was likely to continue violent for a day, perhaps I whole herd of Ayrshire cows. two days longer. His horses were ex- 35 heifers, young feeders, steers and hausted, and Carroll helpless. It might not even be safe to leave the 20 horses, workers and drivers. could be left in the hut to take care of himself and the ponies, would there be any hope of success in an effort to 1 chestnut mare, general purpose. could make Hughes go-that wasn't 1 aged horse, worker and true. the difficulty-but probably they couldn't cover five miles a day through the snowdrifts. And, even if they did succeed in getting through in time to intercept the fugitives, the others 3 dozen horse blankets. would possess every advantage-both 3 dozen surcingles, etc. position for defense, and horses on which to escape. Hughes, lighting his

"I reckon I know this kentry well 'nough," he said lazily, "ter give yer a pointer er two. I've rounded up long. amounts. horns west o' yere. Them fellers



Her Face Was in His Memory.

ain't goin' to strike out fer the Canadian till after the storm quits. By thet time yer ponies is rested up in better shape than theirs will be, and we kin strike 'cross to the sou'west. We're bound either to hit 'em, or ride 'cross thar trail.'

"But the woman!" protested Hamlin, striding across the floor. "What may happen to her in the meanwhile? She is an Eastern girl unaccustomed to this life-a-a lady."

"Yer don't need worry none 'bout thet. Ef she's the right kind she'll stan' more'n a man when she has to. I recken it won't be none too pleasant 'long with Gene an' them Cheyenne bucks, but if she's pulled through so far, thar ain't nuthin' special goin' ter happen till they git to the Injun

"You mean her fate will be decided

"Sure; thet's Cheyenne law. Le Fevre knows it, an' ol' Koleta would knife him in a minute if he got gay. He's a devil all right-thet ol' buckbut he's afraid of Black Kettle, an' thar won't be no harm done to the

The Sergeant walked over to the fire, and stared down into the red embers, striving to control himself. He realized the truth of all Hughes said, and yet had to fight flercely his inclination to hasten to her rescue. The very thought of her alone in those ruthless hands was torture. There was no selfishness in the man't heart, no hope of winning this girl for himself, yet he knew now that he loved her; that for him she was the one woman in all the world. Her face was in his memory; the very soughing of the wind seemed her voice calling him. But the real man in him-the plainsman instinct-conquered the impetuosity 75 of the lover. There must be no mistake made-no rash, hopeless effort. Better delay, than ultimate failure, and Hughes' plan was the more practical way.

"You're right, old man. We'll wait," he said sternly. "Now to get ready. 75 Have you a corral?"

The other made a gesture with his

"Twenty rod b'low, under the bluff." "We'll drive the horses down, feed Single driver, 151 hands and under (farmers only) \$5.00 3.00 2.00 and water them. But first come with Single driver, over 151 hands (farmers only 5.00 3.00 2.00 me; there is a half-frozen man up yon-Single driver, 151 kqnds and under (open to all) 5.00 3.00 2.00

Single driver over 151 hands (open to all) 5.00 3.00 2.00 They plowed through the snow together, choking and coughing in the thick swirl of flakes that beat against their faces. The three horses, powdered white, stood tails to the storm, with head to the bluff, while General purpose team in harness 6.00 4.00 2.00 the drifts completely covered Carroll. He was sleeping, warm in the blankets, and the two men picked him up and stumbled along with their burden to the shelter of the cabin. Then Hughes faced the blizzard again, leading the horses to the corral, while Hamlin ministered to the semi-conscious soldier, laying him out upon a to be continued.

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