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SHOT AT HIS AUNT

Allan Park Lad in Playful Mood Points Gun which goes off at His Aunt


About as narrow an escape from a fatality as could possibly be imagined occurred at the home of Mr. Jacob Eberth, Allan Park, on Saturday afternoon last, Elmer Eberth, the 12 year-old son, picked up a double-barrelled shot gun and not thinking it was loaded, went into the parlor where his aunt was sitting and in a playful mood started to frighten her. Swinging gun to his shoulder he let fly, and the charge went into the wall, just missing his aunt's head by a narrow margin. The lady was prostrated by the event, although fortunately she was not shot, and medical aid had to be called in for her. People cannot be too careful with guns, loaded or unloaded. An escape such as this should be a lesson for other boys handling guns.—Post.

DAD'S ADVICE

"Father, dear," said Amaranth. "Willie Snatchers is going to call at your office this morning to ask you for my hand. Isn't there some little hint I can give him before he goes so as to make it easier for him?"

"Yes," said Mr. Blinks, "tell him to take ether before he comes. It will save him much pain."

KEITH OF THE BORDER
A TALE OF THE PLAINS
By RANDALL PARRISH
AUTHOR OF MY LADY OF THE SOUTH
WHEN WILDERNESS WAS KING, ETC., ETC.
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DEARBORN MELVILL.



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CHAPTER VI.
The Escape.

It was dark enough for their purpose in half an hour, the only gleam of remaining color being the red glow of the negro's pipe, even the opening in



"Land's Sake, You Doan Mean to Steal Dem Hosses?"

the iron grating being blotted from sight. Keith, staring in that direction, failed to perceive any distant glimmer of star, and decided the night must be cloudy, and that time for action had come. Guided by Neb's pipe bowl, he touched the boy on the shoulder.

"Knock out your ashes, and shut the about lively with your feet, while I pry up the board."

In spite of his slenderness, Keith possessed unusual strength, yet no exertion on his part served to start the loosened plank sufficiently for their purpose. Ripping a strip from the bench he managed to pry the hole somewhat larger, arranging the bench itself so as to afford the necessary leverage, but even then his entire weight failed to either start the spikes, or crack the plank. Some altercation began in the other room, the sound of angry voices and snuffing feet being plainly audible. It was clear to Keith that they must take the chance of a noise, and no better than than this could be chosen.

"Here, Neb, take hold with me, and bear down—put your whole weight on it, boy."

The two flung themselves upon the end of the bench, leaping up and down so as to add weight to power. Something had to give, either the stout wood of their improvised lever or else the holding of the plank. For an instant it seemed likely to be the former; then, with a shrill screech, the long spikes yielded and the board suddenly gave. With shoulders inserted beneath, the two men heaved it still higher, ramming the bench below so as to leave the opening clear. This was now sufficiently ample for the passage of a man's body, and Keith, lowering himself, discovered the earth to be fully four feet below. The negro instantly joined him, and they began creeping about in the darkness, seeking some way out. A rudely laid foundation of limestone along obstructed their path to the open air. This had been laid in mortar, but of inferior quality, so that little difficulty was experienced in detaching sufficient to obtain hand hold. Working silently, not knowing what watchers might be already stationed without, they succeeded in loosening enough of the rock to allow them to crawl through, lying breathless in the open. Accustomed as they were to the darkness, they could yet see little. They were upon the opposite side from the town, with no gleam of lights visible, prairie and sky blending together into spectral dimness, with no sound audible but the continued quarrel in the front room of the jail. Keith crept along to the end of the building from where he could perceive the lights of the town twinkling dimly through the intense blackness. Evidently the regular evening saturnalia had not yet begun, although there was already semblance of life about the numerous saloons, and an occasional shout punctured the stillness. A dog howled in the distance, and the pounding of swift hoofs along the trail told of fresh arrivals. An hour later and the single street of Carson City would be alive with humanity, eager for any excitement, ready for any wild orgy, if only once turned loose. That it would be turned loose, and also directed, the man lying on his face in the grass felt fully assured. He smiled grimly, wishing he might behold "Black Bart's" face when he should discover the fight of his intended victims. But there was no time to lose; every moment gained, added to their chance of safety.

"Are those horses tied there by the blacksmith's shop?" he asked, pointing.

The negro stared in the direction indicated, confused by the shadows

thrown by the dim lights. "I reckon dey am, Massa Jack; I done make out fo'."

"Then two of them must belong to us; come on, boy."

He ran forward, crouching behind every chance cover, and keeping well back behind the line of shacks. A slight depression in the prairie helped conceal their movements, and neither spoke until they were crouching together beside the wall of the shop. Then Neb, teeth chattering, managed to blurt out:

"Fo' de Lawd's sake, yer don't actually mean ter steal dem hosses?"

Keith glanced about at the other's dim, black shadow.

"Sure not; just borrow 'em."

"But dat's a hangin' job in dis yere country, Massa Jack."

"Sure it is if they catch us. But we'd be hung twice. Besides there is a chance for us with the ponies, and none at all without. An hour's start in the saddle, Neb, and this bunch back here will never even find our trail; I pledge you that. Come, boy, stay close with me."

It was the quiet, confident voice of assured command, of one satisfied with his plans, and the obedient negro, breathing hard, never dreamed of opposition; all instinct of slavery held him to the dominion of this white master. Keith leaned forward, staring at the string of deserted ponies tied to the rail. Success depended on his choice, and he could judge very little in that darkness. Men were straggling in along the street to their right, on foot and horseback, and the saloon on the corner was being well patronized. A glow of light streamed forth from its windows, and there was the sound of many voices. But this narrow alley was deserted, and black. The fugitive stepped boldly forward, afraid that otherwise he might startle the ponies and thus create an alarm. Guided by a horseman's instinct he swiftly ran his hands over the animals and made quick selection.

"Here, Neb, take this fellow; lead him quietly down the bank," and he thrust the loosened rein into the black's hand.

An instant later he had chosen his own mount, and was silently moving in the same direction, although the night there was so black that the obedient negro had already entirely vanished. The slope of the land not only helped cover their movements, but also rendered it easy for them to find one another. Fully a hundred yards westward they met, where a gully led directly down toward the river. There was no longer need for remaining on foot, as they were a sufficient distance away from the little town to feel no fear of being discovered, unless by some drunken straggler. At Keith's command the negro climbed into his saddle. Both ponies were restive, but not vicious, and after a plunge or two, to test their new masters, came easily under control. Keith led the way, moving straight down the gully, which gradually deepened, burying them in its black heart, until it finally debouched onto the river sands. The riotous noises of the drunken town died slowly away behind, the night silent and dark. The two riders could scarcely distinguish one another as they drew rein at the edge of the water. To the southward there gleamed a cluster of lights, marking the position of the camp of regulars. Keith drove his horse deeper into the stream and headed northward, the negro following like a shadow.

There was a ford directly opposite the cantonment, and another, more dangerous, and known to only a few, three miles farther up stream. Keeping well within the water's edge, so as to thus completely obscure their trail, yet not daring to venture deep for fear of striking quicksand, the plainsman set his pony struggling forward, until the dim outline of the bank at his right rendered him confident that they had attained the proper point for crossing. He had been that way only once before, and realized the danger of attempting passage in such darkness, but urgent need drove him forward.

"Follow me just as close as you can, boy," he said sternly, "and keep both your feet out of the stirrups. If your horse goes down hang to his tail, and let him swim out."

There was little enough to guide by, merely a single faint star peering out from a rift of the clouds, but Keith's remembrance was that the ford led straight out to the center of the stream, and then veered slightly toward the right. He knew the sand ridge was only used by horsemen, not being wide enough for the safe passage of wagons, but the depth of the water on either side was entirely problematical. He was taking a big chance, yet dare not wait for daylight. Summoning all his nerve and alertness, he urged his horse slowly forward, the intelligent animal seemingly comprehending the situation, and feeling carefully for footing. The actions of the animal gave the rider greater confidence, and he loosened his grip on the rein, leaving the pony's



"Do You See That Straight Ahead of You?"

instinct to control. The latter fairly crept forward, testing the sand before resting any weight upon the hoof, the negro's mount following closely. The water was unusually high, and as they advanced it bore down against them in considerable volume; then, as they veered to the right, they were compelled to push directly against its weight in struggling toward shore. The men could see nothing but this solid sheet of water rushing down toward them from out the black void, and then vanishing below. Once Keith's horse half fell, plunging nose under, yet gaining foothold again before the rider had deserted his saddle. A dim darkness ahead already revealed the nearness of the southern bank, when Neb's pony went down suddenly, swept fairly off its legs by some fierce eddy in the stream. Keith heard the negro's guttural cry, and caught a glimpse of him as the two were sent whirling down. The coiled rope of the lariat, grasped in his right hand, was hurled forth like a shot, but came back empty. Not another sound reached him; his own horse went steadily on, feeling his way, until he was nose against the bank, with water merely rippling about his ankles. Keith driving feet again into the stirrups headed him down stream, wading close in toward the shore, leaning forward over the pommel striving to see through the gloom.

He had no doubt about Neb's pony making land, unless struck by some driftwood, or borne to the center of the stream by the shifting force of the current. But if Neb had failed to retain his grip he might have been sucked under by the surge of waters. A hundred yards below he found them, dripping and weak from the struggle, yet otherwise unhurt. There were no words spoken, but the black and white hands clasped silently, and then Neb crept back into the saddle, shivering in his wet clothes as the cool night wind swept against him. Keeping close in toward shore, yet far enough out so that the water would hide their trail, the fugitives toiled steadily up stream, guided only by the black outline of the low bank upon their left.

CHAPTER VII.
In the Sand Desert.

Suddenly Keith halted, bringing his pony's head sharply about, so that the two faced one another. The wind was rising, hurling clouds of sand into their eyes, and the plainsman held one hand before his face.

"There's no need of keeping up a water trail any longer," he said quietly. "By all the signs we're in for a sand storm by daylight, and that will cover our tracks so the devil himself couldn't follow them. Got a water bag on your saddle."

"I reckon dis am one, sah."

Keith felt of the object Neb held forth.

"Yes, and a big one, too; fill it and strap it on tight; we've got a long, dry ride ahead."

"Whar 'yo' propose goin', Massa Jack?"

"To the 'Bar X' on the Canadian. I've worked with that outfit. They'll give us whatever we need, and ask no questions; I don't know of anything in between. It's going to be a hard ride, boy, and mighty little to eat except what I saved from supper."

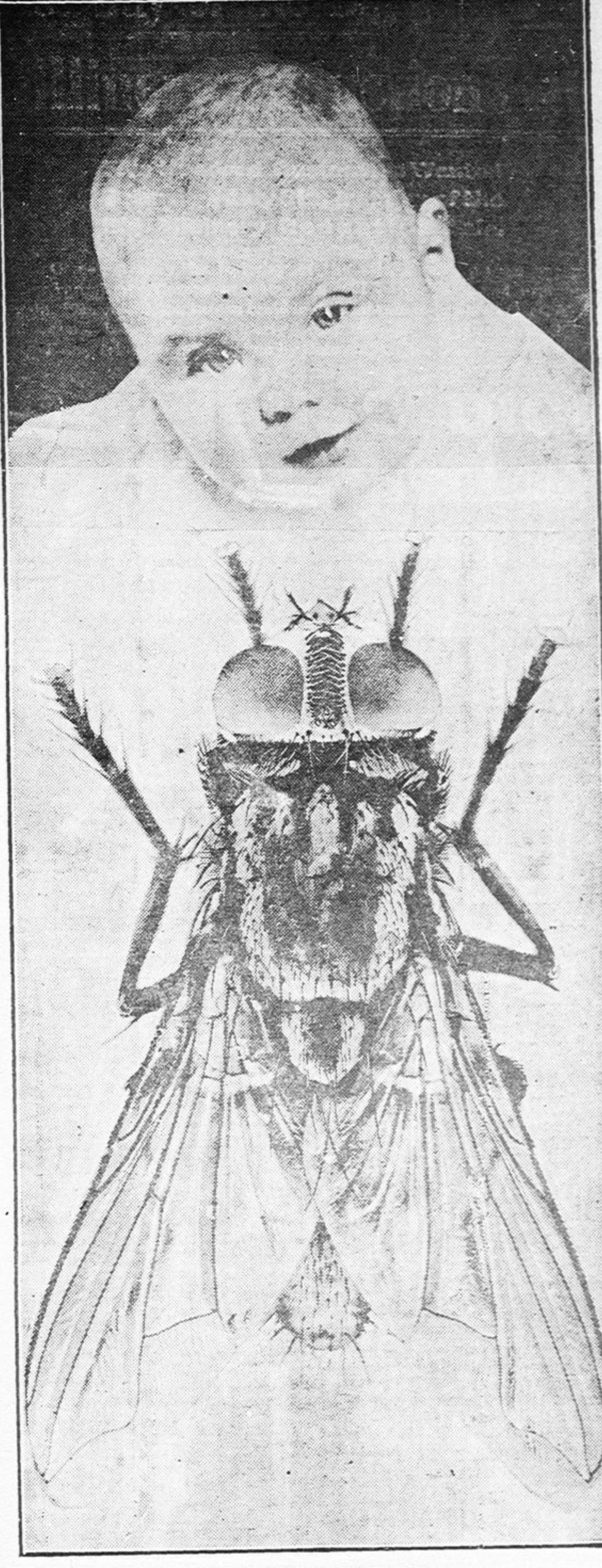
"How far am it to dis yere 'Bar X'?"

"A hundred and fifty miles as the crow flies, and sand all the way, except for the valley of Salt Fork. Come on now, and keep close, for it's easy to get lost in these sand hills."

Keith had ridden that hundred and fifty miles of sandy desolation before, but had never been called upon to make such a journey as this proved to be. He knew there was little to fear from human enemies, for they were riding far enough east of the Santa Fe trail to be out of the path of raiding parties, while this desert country was shunned by Indian hunters. It consisted of sand hill after sand hill, a drear waterless waste, where nothing grew, and mid the dread sameness of which a traveler could only find passage by the guidance of stars at night or the blazing sun by day. To the eye mile after mile appeared exactly alike, with nothing whatever to distinguish either distance or direction—the same drifting ridges of sand stretching forth in every direction, no summit higher than another, no semblance of green shrubbery, or silver sheen of running water anywhere to break the dull monotony—a vast sandy plain, devoid of life, extending to the horizon, overhung by a barren sky.

They had covered ten miles of it by daybreak, their ponies traveling heavily, fetlock deep, but could advance no farther. With the first tint of rose in the east the brooding storm burst

Kill the Fly and Save the Baby



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Summer complaint, which causes the death of many young children every season, is nearly always the result of germs in food. THESE ARE OFTEN CARRIED TO FOODS BY FLIES. **KILL THE FLIES!**

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TWO MEN ADRIPT SIXTY HOURS ON LAKE HURON

Warton, Ont., July 5. — At seven o'clock on Monday evening, Mr. H. F. Murphy, lumberman of Tobermory, in company with a friend, left Southampton for the Sauble, where they intended to remain for the night. Mr. Murphy had just purchased a gasoline launch and was on his way home. Having reached the Sauble, the party decided to push on to Stokes Bay, but well out in the lake the engine gave out and they were not sufficiently experienced to repair it. They had neither oars nor sail and were therefore helplessly adrift. A good breeze was blowing off shore and they were carried out into the lake toward the American side and even within sight of that shore. One of the party had a revolver and when a tug passed at some distance, he fired several shots but failed to attract attention. As the little boat neared the American shore the wind shifted to the exact opposite point of the compass and it was driven back to the Canadian side. On Thursday morning, after having been out sixty hours without food, they were blown ashore on the islands at Oilphant and made their way to Warton. They were in a very exhausted condition, but as the weather was warm they did not suffer from exposure.

INDIAN MAIDEN SPREADS TERROR AMONG HER TRIBE

Tense excitement prevails at the little Indian village of St. Regis, near Prescott, where the people are living in terror of Lola Razor, a native girl of 15, who is believed to possess an evil eye. To her powers of witchery are already attributed the madness of a dog and the death of live stock.

The Indians declare that Lola is a "black witch" and that wherever she appears, children get sick, dogs go mad, animals die, and the lives of the residents are made hideous. The medicine men have been unable to dispose of the evil spirit. The squaws tell their children to shun the "witch" girl and warnings have been given out not to let her shadow fall on any member of the tribe or on their horses, cattle or hogs.

The chiefs decided in council that the girl must leave the tribe at once and she has gone to Luzerne Mountain, where an uncle is engaged in basket making. Lola is described as a bright, pretty girl, who cherishes an ambition to become a teacher to her tribe. It is believed that a few clever tricks performed by her at a school entertainment gave rise to the idea that she is in league with the evil spirits.