

# A Man in the Open

by Roger Roock

Illustrations by Ellsworth Young



### SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with Jesse Smith relating the story of his birth, early life in Labrador and of the death of his father. Jesse becomes a sailor. His mother marries the master of the ship and both are lost in the wreck of the vessel. Jesse becomes a cowboy in Texas. He marries Polly, a singer of questionable morals, who later is reported to have committed suicide. Jesse becomes a rancher and moves to British Columbia. Kate Trevor takes up the narrative. Unhappily married she contemplates suicide, but changes her mind after meeting Jesse. Jesse rescues Kate from her drink-maddened husband who attempts to kill her. Trevor loses his life in the rapids. Kate rejects offers of grand opera managers to return to the stage and marries Jesse. Their married life starts out happily. Kate succumbs to the pleadings of a composer to return to the stage and runs away with him. She rescues Widow O'Flynn from her burning house, is badly burned herself and returns home where Jesse receives her with open arms. Cattle thieves appear in the neighborhood. Jesse asks Kate to go to a place of safety. To his joy she refuses. Jesse resumes the narrative. He calls on neighbors and plans to capture the robbers. Kate is rescued from the hands of the bandits.

**CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.**  
Seems to be scratches on the smooth side of this paper, sort of reminding me that Bull has a fountain-pen sticking out of his vest pocket. If he's been writing with milk, I'd warn the paper—but no, we use canned milk, s'—haven't got any either. I've heard faintly somewhere of things wrote in spittle, so I pours on a bottle of ink, and rinses the paper in the water-butt. Yes, there's the message plain as print.

"Gun to hand, but cartridges wrong size, no good. Get 45. Billy to wait with ponies under nearest pine N. of cave, when plough above N. Star. Send more gum for chief's wound.—Bull."

Billy was mounting at the door to put out for solitude, but since he knows I can't miss under two hundred yards, he was persuaded to come into the cabin. There I read him some of the etiquette about keeping his temper and not using coarse language. Also I told him politely what I thought of him, and where he'll go when he dies. He waited, stroking the little fur on his muzzle, till I got through, looking so damned patient with me that I came near hating him one in the eye.

"You invited these robbers to my dress?"  
He nodded.  
"Thanks to you, my wife had a gun muzzle screwed around in her ear."  
"Bet she squinted!" said Billy.  
"If I lose my temper, I can't shoot, and Billy knew that well. "She's up again it good and hard," said he.  
"Agin what?"  
"Making a silk purse out of a sow's ear."  
"You lop-eared, mangy, pig-faced, herring-gutted son of a—"  
"From the 'Etiquette'?" asked Billy. "I don't think much of you, anyway. Mother ain't got no use for you either, or any of the neighbors, you old cow thief!"

Now if Billy talked so big as all that, it must be to astonish his mother. So she must be at the keyhole, and sure enough I heard her grind her stump with the backache from stooping down. Happens Mrs. Smith has a garden squirt which it holds a gallon, so while I keep young Billy interested with patches of etiquette, I took off the hose, filled the squirt, and led drive through the key-hole into the widow's ar. At that she lifted up her voice ad wept.

Feeling better, I resumed the conversation. "Billy," sez I, smooth as cream, while I filed the squirt, "on the shelf there you'll find a little small bottle."

"Drink, or I'll splash your brains on the floor."  
"In my dim way I aimed to get him excited, and talkative, divulging secrets with all his heart. Then afterward I'd like him asleep, out of mischief."

"Get your bottle yourself," says he, sort of defiant, so I let drive at him with the squirt.  
"If you please," said I, and he got the bottle all right.  
"If you don't mind," said I, "will you draw the cork?"  
"And if I won't?"  
I took my squirt and watched him draw the cork.

"Thank you," sez I, seeing how beautiful is the use of true politeness. Now may I trouble you to spill what's in the bottle into that there goblet. Now be so kind."

"I refuse!"  
The squirt won't scare any more Billy, so I exhibits my gun.  
"I regret to remark, Mr. O'Flynn, that this gun acts sort of sudden."  
"Shoot, and you go to jail!"  
"But first, my dear young friend, I've time to lop off a few fingers, one at a time—won't miss them all at once. May I request you to pour out the medicine? No—not on the floor, please, but into the goblet, while I observe that your right thumb seems tender after that cut, and ought to be treated. So, a little more. That's right. Now honor me by adding a little water from the pitcher. Thank you. Thumb feeling easier? Well, that there laudanum soothes the fractious infant, and causes a whole lot of repose. Quite sweet without sugar. Yes, please, you'll lift the goblet to your mouth while I watch that nothing goes wrong with your pug nose. You want to throw back your head, you treacherous swine. Drink, or I'll splash your brains on the floor!"

"I daren't! It's poison!"  
"It's bullets—you'd better! Drink, or I'll kill you! Drink! One—two—much obliged, I'm sure. Hope you'll sleep well."  
"Curse you!" he shrieked, and flung the glass at my head.

Then down came the widow like a landslide. She scratched my face, confessed my sins, sobbed over her darling Billy avick, prescribed for my future, wrung her wet frock, and made a soap emetic for her offspring all at once. It's a sure fact that widow was plenty busy, and what with slinging that emetic at the patient, and gently introducing the lady to the kitchen cupboard, wall, I declare I didn't have a dull moment. Then distant shouts brought us all up standing.

"At last!" Billy shouted, "they're off!"  
"Who's off?"  
"Father and his men—escaped while I kept you in talk. Fooled, Jesse! Fooled! I fooled you to the eyes! My father's Larry O'Flynn, Captain Larry O'Flynn, captain of the outlaws!" My, there was pride in that lad! He sat on the table in the dusk, fighting to keep awake, rubbing his eyes with his sleeve. "He's give me leave to join, and I'm hitting the trail tonight—hitting the trail, d'ye hear?" His eyes closed, his voice trailing off to a whisper.

Outside I could hear a rider coming swift, and Dale's voice halting, "Jesse! Jesse!"  
"Jesse," the lad was muttering, "lift his stock, and his woman, burn his ranch, and put his fires out—that's the way to—"  
Dale had stepped from his horse, and stood in the doorway, making it dark inside. "Where in blazes are you?"

"Look," said I, and Dale watched, for the boy, dead pale, was lurching from side to side, his eyes closed, his lips still moving.  
"Only drugged," said I. "Who let them robbers escape?"  
"Ransome Pollock," said Dale. "Who else?"  
"Dave."  
"How's his poor tooth?" says I, and Dale explained he'd been clubbed.

Young O'Flynn rolled over, and went down smash, so that I had to kneel, and try if his heart was all right. It thumped along steady and give no sign of quitting.  
"I had to," said I, "old Whiskers yonder is the widow's husband, and father to this boy. He's clear grit, iron."

"Where's the widow?"  
"Resting." I heard horses come thundering out of the dusk. "Robbers broke south?"  
"Yep."  
"Hav they grow'd wings?"  
"Nope."  
"Can't swim the Fraser?"  
"Bottled!" said he, cheering up.  
"Some," says I. "Not corked yet. You want to make a line here quick, from the foot of the upper cliff to the edge of the river, and each man make three big fires. Then post half your men to tend fires, and the best shots to hold that line with rifles. Them robbers has got to break through when they knows they're cornered. Here's your boys, Iron. Git a move on!"

"That's so," says Dale, and in two shakes of a duck's tail he was throwing his men into line. Meanwhile the widow, wild and lone, had flew; so that left Kate without help, her job being coffee to keep the boys awake till we'd daylight to corner the robbers.

Men watching on a strain like that get scary as cats, so by moonset some of our warriors would loose off guns at stumps, trees, rocks, or just because they felt lonesome. After the moon went down, dry fuel got scant, so that the fires waned, and some of our young men must have seen millions of outlaws. When at last something actually happened, it was natural that Ransome should have adventures. He wasn't built for solitude, and when he seen a flag wave from behind a bush he called the boys from left and right to bunch in and corroborate. The flag kep' waving, and pre-

ently two more of our men had to join the bunch because they couldn't shoot their good advice, lest the robbers hear every word. I was away to Apex Rock, Iron down in the canyon, and these blasted idiots talked.

Of course old Whiskers knew that antelope will always creep up to inspect any waving rag. Before the excitement was properly begun he and his robbers slipped through our broken line.

If Ransome has time to aim he's dangerous to the neighbors, but since the odds were a thousand to one the gun would kick him as far as next Thursday, I'd have bet my debts he wouldn't hit the party with that flag. Yet that's what happened. He got the widow O'Flynn.

With one heart-rending, devastating howl she went to grass, and she did surely shriek as if there was no hereafter. Murdered in the limb she was, and as I left to follow the sounds of them escaping robbers, I didn't have time to send a carpenter.

**CHAPTER IX.**  
The Untruthful Prisoner.  
Jesse's Narrative.

With creditors, women, robbers, and everything dangerous, you want to be chuck full of deportment and a whole lot tactful. Anything distractful or screeching disturbs one's peace of



mind, and sends one's aplomb to blazes, just when a bear trap may happen at any moment. I traveled for all I was worth to put that widow behind me, and compose my mind.

Maybe I'd gone a mile before remorse gnawed Whiskers because he'd abandoned the widow. He paused, and as I come surging along, he lammed me over the head with a gun.

Yes, I was captured. They got my gun, too, and marched me along between them. Old man Brown was away, but as I'd left the scow on the near bank, the robbers were able to cross, and put the Fraser between me and rescue. That ought to have cheered him up, since it gave them a start of several hours toward safety, but instead of skinning out of British Columbia, as I advised them with powerful strong talk, they'd got to stop for breakfast on old Brown's beans and saw-belly, cussing most pious because he wasn't there to cook hot biscuits.

After breakfast they wasted an hour dressing his paw for old Whiskers, and wondering whether they'd waste one of my cartridges on me, or keep them all for my friends. On that I divulged a lot of etiquette out of my book. I told these misbegotten offspring they'd been brung up all wrong, or they'd have enough deportment to make tracks. "Now," says I, "in the land of the free and the home of the brave you been appreciated, whereas if you linger here till sunup you'll be shot."

That made poor Whiskers still more suspicious, wondering what sort of beartraps gulfert Smith was projecting. "Wants to get us up on the bench," says he, "that means ware traps. We'll stay right here, boys, for daylight, when we'll be able to see ourselves, how to save them cattle."  
"You're dead right, Whiskers!" says I. "Hair on you!"  
But he being fretful with his wound, orders his men to disable Brown's fiddle, and lash me up with catgut. Moreover, when I was trussed, this Bull seen fit to kick me on the off chance, a part which ain't referred to in polite society, especially with a boot.

"Brave man!" says I, and the rest of them robbers was so ashamed they got me a gag.  
"Sorry," says I, "pity I won't be able to guide you to Brown's cigars. He keeps a bottle, too."  
"Where are they?" says Bull.  
"Gag Brooke," said I, for Bull went by that name, "and I'll divulge the drinks."  
"Gag Brooke," says Whiskers, cheering up a little, "pity so weren't born gagged."

So they gagged Mr. Brooke, and mounted him on sentry white they had Brown's bottle of whisky and cigars. I got some, too.

Of course there ornary, no-account, range wolves reckoned my friends would wait for day before they attempted tracking. Whereas Dale got the lantern, found my paper trail, and guessed at the ferry. Before we entered the cabin, I'd seen the glint of that lantern behind the rim of the bench, and I knew our boys trusted me to keep the robbers somehow down at the ferry-house. Whiskers, since the liquor made his wound worse, lurched groaning around the shack. At the first glint of dawn, he ordered Bull to take out the gag and lie down, then went to the door himself.

It's a pity that Dale, our leader, a sure fine shot, has a slight cast in his near eye, which throws his lead a little to the right. That's why, when Whiskers went to the door, Dale's bullet only whipped off his left ear. Instead of being grateful, Whiskers skipped around holding the side of his face, with remarks which for a poor man was extravagant. The shot made Bull bolt courageous behind the stove, to look for a bandage, he said, while Ginger and the greaser sat up on their tails looking sort of depressed. Not one of the four was happy on finding that they'd bottled themselves in the cabin instead of taking my advice and clearing for the States.

"Prisoner," said Whiskers, dolesome, holding his poor ear, "you can talk to your friends across the river?"  
"Why, certainly, Captain."  
"What way?"  
"Signaling."  
"Cut the catgut, Colonel."  
So Ginger cut me free.

"Show a white flag, General," said I. So Ginger waved a paper on a stick, and Dale replied with a white scarf from his neck.

When I walked out, the boys across the river gave three cheers, but I was halted from behind before I'd got far sideways. "Now," says Whiskers, "signal, and pray that you won't be tempted to send erroneous messages."  
"Remember," Bull shouts, "I can read Morse. No fooling."  
"All right, Mr. Brooke," I called back, "then I'll use semaphore."

I heard Whiskers in tears directing his two youngsters to put Mr. Brooke's head in the meak sack, and sit hard on top. So I began to signal, explaining each word to Whiskers.

Swim. "That," says I, "means 'Dale.'"  
"Fool. "That's 'fool,'" says I, "because he don't give the answer."  
Below. "That's 'Hello.'"  
Rapids. "That's 'Hello' again."  
"You lie," says Whiskers, miserable, through his teeth. "You made six letters."  
"Sorry," says I, "it got spelt wrong first time."  
Float. "That's 'skunk,'" says I, "because he's a polecat not to answer me."  
Guns.

"What's that?" asked Whiskers, heeps suspicious because I couldn't think of another word of four letters. "Hell!" says I.  
"Quite right," sighed Whiskers, "to think of your future home."  
Dale signaled, Coming.

"Tell Dale," says Whiskers, and his bereaved voice kind of jarred me now, "we're just goin' to keep a gun at your ear-hole while we march up the trail. If Dale's men fire, your wife will be a widow, Mr. Smith."

At that I wagged my arms and signaled. "No call to get wet. Hold-ups marching to Georgia. Kill man with gun. If you miss, ware Widow Smith." You see if Dale equated and missed, my widow was apt to reproach. So I added, "Allow windage for squirt."

**TOOK GHOST'S WORD FOR IT**  
New York Woman Declares Father's Spirit Told Her That Friend Had Purloined Ring.

Through the proxy of Mrs. Ida Shapiro of Brooklyn, the ghost of her father appeared as a witness before Magistrate Miller in the New Jersey Avenue police court of that borough, alleging that Mrs. Clara Steiner, who occupies an apartment on the same floor with Mrs. Shapiro, had stolen a \$150 ring belonging to her.

Mrs. Shapiro charged that Mrs. Steiner had visited her on July 3, and was upward of an hour in her bedroom, which Mrs. Shapiro had occasion to leave once or twice. In a drawer of the dresser reposed the ring. On July 4, when Mrs. Shapiro missed her ring she went looking for Mrs. Steiner, and learned she had gone to Paterson, N. J.

"But sure as I am here, your honor," said Mrs. Shapiro, "the figure of my departed father appeared to me. I could see him as plainly as you yourself sitting before me. He spoke slowly. He said: 'Mrs. Steiner has your ring. She took it from a drawer in your dressing table. Take her into

court and recover your property.'"  
Whether Magistrate Miller pinned faith in the evidence of the astral father of Mrs. Shapiro or was unsatisfied with the answers made by Mrs. Steiner, who, among other things, declared most earnestly she did not steal the ring, does not appear as a matter of record, but he held her in \$500 bail for the grand jury.

**Mayor's Pleasant Duty.**  
A pretty ceremony took place at Newcastle, England, recently, when the customs of "Barge Day" were observed, and the mayor and corporation sailed up the river to "claim the soil" of the Tyne. The great moment of the ceremony is the landing, when the mayor has the delightful, if invidious, privilege of selecting any young lady he places from the assembled crowd and giving her a kiss and a sovereign. The sheriff also chooses a fair lady on whom to bestow a kiss and a gift, and the mayores is expected to make some useful present to the damsel kissed by his worship.

**Make Children Glad.**  
Let us make children glad with things which they long for and cannot obtain.—John MacLara.

**Troublesome Tower.**  
She was a good servant, was Jennie, and Mrs. Wanderratt never wished for better. But in the matter of pictures Jennie was weak. There was one in particular, which showed the leaning tower of Pisa. Every day Mrs. W. hung it straight, and every morning Jennie put it crooked.

So Mrs. W. watched.  
"Now, look here, Jennie," she said, "you've hung that picture of the tower crooked again! Just look at it!"  
"That's just what I say, mum," returned the domestic dolefully. "Look at it! The only way you can get that silly tower to hang straight is to hang the picture crooked."

**Crops on Same Land Far Between.**  
Though tobacco is the chief product of North Borneo, the land produces but one crop of the product in seven or nine years, with the result that new fields must be cleared every year. After the jungle is cut and burned an army of Chinese coolies is turned on the land with hoes to dig it and prepare it for planting. No plows are used. The young tobacco plants are set out by hand and kept clean with hoes. It is necessary for a tobacco planter to possess thousands of acres of uncultivated land in reserve, and to employ 500 to 1,000 coolies.

**Chinese Artist.**  
In the fourth century A. D. there lived in China an artist, who was also a poet. His name was Ku K'ai-chih. In London there is a painting, a long scroll, which for at least a thousand years has been treasured as his work; and though that cannot be proved, it is in all probability a painting by his hand. One day, we are told, he entrusted to a friend a chest full of paintings which he had collected. For better security he fastened the lid of the chest and sealed the fastening with a seal. The friend, however, coveted the paintings, and hit on the simple expedient of removing the bottom of the box and so abstracting them. When the box was restored to Ku K'ai-chih, he broke the seal and found it empty. But he suspected no theft and expressed no surprise. Beautiful paintings, he said, communicate with supernatural beings; they have changed their form and flown away, like men when they join the immortals.—Laurence Binyon, in the Atlantic.

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**A GOOD REMEDY FOR THE GRIP.**  
**PE-RU-NA FOR COUGHS AND COLDS**

**35 Bushels Per Acre**  
Was the yield of wheat on many farms in Western Canada in 1913, some yields being reported as high as fifty bushels per acre.  
As high as one hundred bushels were recorded in some districts for oats, fifty bushels for barley, and from ten to twenty bushels for flax.  
J. Keys arrived in the country five years ago from Denmark, homesteaded, worked hard, is now the owner of 320 acres of land, in 1913 had a crop of 230 acres, which will realize him about four thousand dollars. His wheat weighed 68 pounds to the bushel and averaged over 35 bushels to the acre.  
Thousands of similar instances might be related of the homesteaders in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.  
The crop of 1913 was an abundant one everywhere in Western Canada.  
Ask for descriptive literature and reduced railway rates of Superintendent of Immigration, Ottawa, Canada, or  
**W. E. BLACK**  
CANADIAN GOVERNMENT AGENT, CLIFFORD BLOCK, GRAND FORGE, SO. DAK.

**The Wretchedness of Constipation**  
Can quickly be overcome by **CARTER'S LITTLE LIVER PILLS**.  
Purely vegetable—act surely and gently on the liver. Cure Biliousness, Headache, Dizziness, and Indigestion. They do their duty. **SMALL PILL, SMALL DOSE, SMALL PRICE.**  
Genuine must bear Signature  
*W. E. Black*

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**Pain in Back and Rheumatism**  
are the daily torment of thousands. To effectually cure these troubles you must remove the cause. Foley Kidney Pills begin to work for you from the first dose, and exert so direct and beneficial an action in the kidneys and bladder that the pain and torment of kidney trouble soon disappears.

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**O. M. ROBINSON**  
Let us make children glad with things which they long for and cannot obtain.—John MacLara.