

MOLLY McDONALD

A TALE OF THE FRONTIER



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

Illustrations by
V. L. Barnes

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SYNOPSIS.

Major McDonald, commanding an army post near Fort Dodge, seeks a man to intercept his daughter, Molly, who is being lured to the west. An Indian outbreak is threatening. Molly, having a great deal of money, had just arrived with her father and was about to start on a trip to the west. Molly arrived at Fort Dodge two days ahead of schedule.

CHAPTER III—Continued.

"Good Lord, miss," he exclaimed, "do you mean to say you're going to make that trip alone?"
"Oh, not to Santa Fe, only as far as the stage station at the Arkansas crossing," she exclaimed hastily. "I am going to join my father, he commands a post on the Cimarron—Major McDonald."

"Well, I'll be damned," said the man slowly, so surprised that he forgot himself. "Babes in the wilderness, what in Heaven's name, ever induced yer dad to let yer come on such a fool trip? Isn't that no one to meet yer here, or at Dodge?"

"I—I don't know," she confessed. "Father was going to come, or else send one of his officers, but I have seen no one. I am here two days earlier than was expected, and I haven't heard from my father since last month. See, this is his last letter, won't you read it, please, and tell me what I ought to do?"

The man took the letter, and read the three pages carefully, and then turned back to note the date before handing the sheets across the table.

"The Major sure made his instructions plain enough," he said slowly. "And yer haven't heard from him since, or seen any one he sent to meet yer?"

The girl shook her head slowly. "Well, that ain't to be wondered at, either," he went on. "Times has changed some out yere since that letter was wrote. I reckon yer know we're havin' a bit of Injun trouble, an' yer dad is shore to be pretty busy out thar on the Cimarron."

"I—I do not think I do. I have seen no papers since leaving St. Louis. Is the situation really serious? Is it unsafe for me to go farther?"

The man rubbed his chin, as though undecided what was best to say. But the girl's face was full of character, and he answered frankly.

"It's serious 'nough, I reckon, an' I certainly wish I was safe through to Fort Marcy, but I don't know no reason now why you couldn't push up your trip all right. I was out to the fort last evening gettin' the latest news, an' that hasn't been no trouble to speak of east of old Bent's Fort. Between thar and Union, thar's a bunch of Mesquite Apaches raisin' ruckus, one lot got as far as the Chaches, an' burned a wagon train, but were run back into the mountains. Troops are out along both sides the Valley, an' thar ain't been no stage hold up, nor station attacked along the Arkansas. I reckon yer pa'll have an escort waitin' at the crossin'."

"Of course he will, what I am most afraid of is that I might miss him or his messenger on the route."

"Not likely, there's only two stages a week each way, an' they have regular meeting points."

She sat quiet, eyes lowered to the table, thinking. She liked the man, and trusted him; he seemed kindly and deferential. Finally she looked up.

"When do you go?"
"Today. I was goin' to wait 'bout yere a week longer, but am gittin' skeered they might quit runnin' their coaches. To tell the truth, miss, it looks some to me like thar was a big Injun war comin', an' I'd like ter git home whar I belong afore it breaks loose."

"Will you take me with you?"
He moistened his lips, his hands clasping and unclasping on the table.
"Sure, if yer bound ter go. I'll do the best I kin for yer, an' I reckon yer sooner yer start the better chance yer'll have o' gittin' through safe." He hesitated. "If we should get bad news at Dodge, is there anybody thar, at the fort, you could stop with?"
"Colonel Carver."
"He's not thar now; been transferred to Wallace, but, I reckon, any of those army people would look after yer. Yer've really made up yer mind to try it, then?"
"Yes, yes; I positively cannot stay here. I shall go as far as Dodge at least. If—if we are going to travel together, I ought to know your name."
"Sure yer had," with a laugh. "I forgot all 'bout that—it's Moylan, miss; William Moylan; 'Sutler Bill' they call me mostly, west o' the river. Let's go out an' see 'bout that stage."

As he rounded the table, Molly rose to her feet, and held out her hand.
"I am so glad I spoke to you, Mr. Moylan," she said simply. "I am not at all afraid now. If you will wait until I get my hat, I'll be down in a minute."
"Sutler Bill" stood in the narrow hall watching her run swiftly upstairs, twirling his hat in his hands, his good-natured face flushed. Once he glanced in the direction of the bar-room, wiping his lips with his cuff, and his feet shuffled. But he resisted the temptation, and was still there when Miss McDonald came down.

CHAPTER IV.

The Attack.

Slightly more than sixty miles, as the route ran, stretched between old Fort Dodge and the ford crossing the Arkansas leading down to the Cimarron; another sixty miles distant, across a desert of alkali and sand, lay Bevers. The main Santa Fe trail, broad and deeply rutted by the innumerable wheels of early spring caravans, followed the general course of the river, occasionally touching the higher level plains, but mostly keeping close beneath the protection of the northern bluffs, or else skirting the edge of the water. Night or day the route was easily followed, and in other years the traveler was seldom for long out of sight of tolling wagons. Now scarcely a wheel turned in all that lonely distance.

The west-bound stage left the station at Deer Creek at four o'clock in the afternoon with no intimation of danger ahead. Its occupants had out on dinner in company with those of the east-bound coach, eighteen miles down the river at Canon Bluff, and the incoming driver had reported an open road, and no unusual trouble. No Indian signs had been observed, not even signal fires during the night, and the conductor, who had come straight from Santa Fe, reported that troops from Fort Union had driven the only known bunch of raiders back from the neighborhood of the trail, and had them already safely corralled in the mountains. This report, seemingly authentic and official, served to relax the nerves, and the west-bound driver came to himself as he guided the four horses forward, while the conductor, a sawed-off gun planted between his knees, nodded drowsily. Inside there were but three passengers, jerking back and forth, as the wheels struck the deep ruts of the trail, occasionally exchanging a word or two, but usually staring gloomily forth at the monotonous scene. Miss McDonald red Moylan occupied the back seat, some baggage wedged tightly between to keep them more secure on the slippery cushion, while facing them, and clinging to his support with both hands, was a peck-marked Mexican, with rather villainous face and ornate

dress, and excessively polite manners. He had joined the little party at Dodge, smiling happily at sight of Miss Molly's face when she unveiled, although his small knowledge of English prevented any extended effort at conversation. Moylan, however, after careful scrutiny, engaged him shortly in Spanish, and later explained to the girl, in low tones, that the man was a Santa Fe gambler known as Gonzales, with a reputation to be hinted at but not openly discussed.

They were some six miles to the



"The Major Sure Made His Instructions Plain Enough," He Said.

near the table which he used as a palette, an old Georgian looking glass, so arranged that he could see his canvas and model reflected in it. Those who use such a mirror (as he did constantly) will know that it is most merciless of critics. I marveled then at his extraordinary activity, as he darted backward and forward to look at both painting and model from his point of view at the extreme end of the long studio. He always used brushes of large size, with very long handles, three feet in length, and held

them from the end with his arms stretched to their full extent. Each touch was laid on with great firmness, and his physical strength enabled him to do without the assistance of a mahlstick, while the distance at which he stood from the canvas allowed him to have the whole of a large picture in sight and so judge the correct drawing of each touch.—Way's "Memories of Whistler."

The man who is untrue to his friends can never trust himself.

west of Deer Creek, the horses stiff moving with spirit, the driver's foot on the brake, when the stage took a sudden plunge down a sloping bank where the valley perceptibly narrowed. To the left, beyond a flat expanse of brown, sun-scorched grass, flowed the widely spreading waters of the Arkansas, barely covering the treacherous sandy bottom, and from the other side came the more distant gleam of alkali plains; to the right arose the bluffs, here both steep and rugged, completely shutting off the view, barren of vegetation except for a few scattered patches of grass. Suddenly a man rode out of a rift in the bank, directly in front, and held up his hand. Surprised, startled, the driver instantaneously clamped on his brake, and brought his horses to a quick stop; the conductor, nearly flung from his seat, yanked his gun forward.

"None of that now," called out the man in saddle quickly, both hands up-lifted to show their emptiness. "This is no hold-up. I've got news."
He spurred his pony forward slowly, the animal seemingly barely able to move, and swung out of the saddle beside the front wheel, staggering a bit as though his limbs were cramped as his feet felt the ground.
"I'm from Fort Union," he said. "Seventh Cavalry, sent through by way of Cimarron Springs. There is hell to pay west of here; the stations at Arkansas Crossing and Low Water were burned last night."
"The devil you say," burst out the driver hoarsely. His startled eyes sweeping the horizon. "Injuns?"
"Sure, plenty of signs, but I haven't seen any bucks myself. As soon as I discovered what had happened at the Crossing I struck out on to the plateau, and came around that way to warn those fellows at Low Water. But when I got sight of that station from off the bluffs yonder it had been wiped out. Then I thought about this stage going west today, and came on to meet you. Must have ridden a hundred or twenty miles since yesterday; the mustang is all in."

Moylan stuck his head out the nearest window.
"Look like they had much of a fight at the Crossing?" he asked.
"Not much, more like a night raid; two whites killed, and scalped. The third man either was taken away, or his body got burnt in the building. Horses all gone."

"What tribe?"
"Arapahoes, from the way they scalped; that's what made it so serious. If those Northern Indians have broken loose there is going to be war this time for sure."

The men on the box looked at each other questioningly.
"I don't see no use tryin' to go on, Jake, do you?" asked the driver soberly. "Even if we do git through, that ain't no hosses to be had."

The other shook his head, rubbing his gun-stock.
"Most likely those same red devils are layin' fer us now somewhere between yere and Low Water; whar the trail runs in between them two big rocks, most probable," he concluded. "Not harn' no har to lose, I'm fer coin back."

With an oath of relief the driver released his brake and skillfully swung the leaders around, the coach groaning as it took the sharp turn. The man on the ground caught a swiftly passing glimpse of the young woman's face within, and strode hurriedly forward as the coach started.

"Hold on there, pardner," he commanded sternly. "This poor bronc won't travel another mile. There's plenty of room for me inside, and I'll turn the tired dexti loose. Hold on, I say!"

The driver once again slipped on the brake, growling and reluctant, his anxious eyes searching the trail in both directions. Hamlin quailed, uncinched his saddle, flung it to the coach roof, the bridle followed, and then, with a slap on the hunch of the released animal, he strode to the stage door, thrust his Henry rifle within, and took the vacant seat beside Gonzales. With a sudden crack of the driver's whip the four horses leaped forward, and the coach careened on the slope of the trail, causing the passengers to clutch wildly to keep from being precipitated into a mass on the floor. As the traces straightened, Miss Molly, clinging desperately to a strap, caught her first fair glance at the newcomer. His hat was tilted back, the light revealing lines of weariness and a coating of the gray, powdery dust of the alkali desert, but beneath it appeared the brown, sun-scorched skin, while the gray eyes looking straight at her, were resolute and smiling. His rough shirt, open at the throat, might have been the product of any sutler's counter; he wore no jacket, and the broad yellow stripe down the leg of the faded blue trousers alone proclaimed him a soldier. He smiled across at her, and she lowered her eyes, while his glance wandered on toward the others.

"Don't seem to be very crowded today," he began, genially addressing Moylan. "Not an extremely popular route at present, I reckon. Mining, pardner?"

"No; post-trader at Fort Marcy."
"Oh, that's it," his eyebrows lifting slightly. "This Indian business is a

bad job for you then." His eyes fell on his seatmate. "Well, if this ain't little Gonzales!—You've got a good ways from home."
"Si, senor!" returned the Mexican brokenly. "I tink I not remem."
"No, I reckon not. I'm not one of your class; cards and I never did agree. I shot up your game once down at Union; night Hassinger was killed. Remember now, don't you?"
"Si, senor," spreading his hands. "It was mos' unfortunate."
"Would have been more so, if the boys had got hold of you—Saint Anno! but that fellow on the box is driving some."

The thud of the horses' feet under the lash, coupled with the reckless lurching of the coach, ended all further attempt at conversation, and the four passengers held on grimly, and stared out of the windows, as if expecting every instant that some accident would hurl them headlong. The frightened driver was apparently sparing neither whip nor tongue, the galloping teams jerking the stage after them in a mad race up the trail. Hamlin thrust his head out of the nearest window, but a sudden lurch hurled him back, the coach taking a sharp curve on two wheels, and coming down level once again with a bump which brought the whole four together. The little Mexican started to scream out a Spanish oath, but Hamlin gripped his throat before it was half uttered, while Moylan pressed the girl back into her seat, bracing himself to hold her firm.

"What the devil—" he began angrily, and then the careening coach stopped as suddenly as though it had

struck the bank, again tearing loose their handhold on the seats and flinging them headlong. They heard the creaking clump of the brakes, the dancing of frightened horses, a perfect volley of oaths, the crunch of feet as men leaped from the top to the ground; then all at once the stage lurched forward, swerving sharply to the left, and struck out across the flat directly toward the bluff.
Hamlin struggled to the nearest window, and grasping the sill to hold himself upright, leaped out. He caught a momentary glimpse of two men riding swiftly up the trail, the box above was empty, the wheelers, none remained in harness, and they were rattling uncontrolled.
"By God!" he muttered. "Those two damn cowards have cut loose and left us!"
Even as the unexpressed words leaped from his lips he realized the only hope—the reins still dangled, caught securely in the brake lever, inch by inch loosened by foot, he wrenched out. Moylan, comprehending, caught his legs, holding him steady against the mad pitching. His fingers gripped the iron top rail and exerting all his strength, he slowly pulled his body up until he fell forward into the driver's seat. Swift as he had been, the action was not quickly enough conceived to avert disaster. He had the reins in his grip when the swinging pole struck the steep side of the bluff, snapping off with a sharp crack, and flinging down the frightened animals, the wheels crashing against them, as the coach came to a sudden halt. Hamlin hung on grimly, flung forward to the footboard by the force of the shock, his body heaved and aching. One horse lay motionless head under, apparently instantly killed, his mate struggled to his feet, rose frantically loose from the traces, and went flying madly down the slope, the broken harness dangling at his heels. The sergeant on up and stared about, sweeping the blood from a slight gash out of his eyes. Then he came to himself with a gasp—understanding instantly what it all meant, why those men had cut loose the horses and ridden away, why the wheelers had plunged forward in that mad run-away race—between the bluffs and the river a swarm of Indians were lashing their ponies, spreading out like the sticks of a fan.



"There is Hell to Pay West of Here."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Sometimes Tempting Fate.
Many a man who would give a dollar to know what people think of him ought to be willing to give \$2 not to.

Change of Bill.
Leading Man in Traveling Company—We play "Hamlet" tonight, laddie, do we not?
Sub-Manager—Yes, Mr. Montgomery.
Leading Man—Then I must borrow the sum of two pence!
Sub-Manager—Why?
Leading Man—I have four days' growth upon my chin. One cannot play Hamlet in a beard!
Sub-Manager—Um—well—we'll put on Macbeth!—Punch.

Wins Office by Flip of Coin.
Hannibal—The flip of a coin by Mayor C. T. Hays made Levi Walters, Republican, alderman of the Fourth ward, settling a tie at the election between Walters and H. J. Rowe, Democrat.

Feeter a Normal School Regent.
Jefferson City.—G. M. Foster of Warrensburg was appointed a member of the board of regents of the normal school at that place, to succeed C. J. Jones of Kansas City, whose term has expired.

Green to Edit College Paper.
Pulton.—The publication board of Westminster college elected the following heads of college publications: Editor in chief of Westminster Monthly, J. R. Green of St. Louis, manager of Westminster Monthly, A. R. Dillmeyer of Jefferson City, editor in chief of Bluejay, Hood Cunningham of Williamsburg; manager of Bluejay, L. V. Buschmann of California. Mr. Abbott six associate editors and assistants will be named by the heads of both publications.

Girl Wins State Essay Contest.
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Moore Denies Ax Slaughter.
Jefferson City.—Henry Lee Moore, convicted in Columbia several months ago of having killed his mother and grandmother with an ax and who is now serving a 99-year sentence in the penitentiary here, denies vehemently that he ever killed anyone in his life. He denied all knowledge of any families that were killed with an ax in Iowa, Kansas and Colorado.

Major Parole Two Convicts.
Jefferson City.—Upon the recommendation of the board of pardons and paroles, Gov. Major granted parole to the following convicts: Preston Cooper, convicted in Holt county of perjury and sentenced to seven years, and John Briggs, convicted in St. Francois county of grand larceny, and sentenced to seven years.

Dean C. N. Jackson Resigns.
Columbia.—Dean C. N. Jackson of the school of medicine at the University of Missouri has resigned to become professor of anatomy at the University of Minnesota next September. Dean Jackson has for 14 years been a member of the University of Missouri faculty.

Old Missouri Pilot Dies.
Jefferson City.—Rep. Adams, an old river man, who piloted at different periods a number of the large steam boats which formerly plied between Jefferson City and Fort Union, died here. Adams was the last of the old type of rivermen in this section.

Brakeman Blown Fifty Feet.
Tipton.—Missouri Pacific Railway engine 81 blew out a crown sheet, scalding brakeman Benson and Fireman Elliott. Benson was blown from the cab, landing against a fence 50 feet away. Elliott escaped serious hurts by jumping.

Displays \$5,000, Is Slain.
Joffet.—Michael Kane, barber, displayed in a saloon \$5,000 he had inherited from his father's estate. The next day his body, with the skull crushed as by a stone, was taken from the Desplaine river.

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Pulton.—Sivera Thirkield of Pulton has given William Woods college of this city \$20,000 and the gift is duplicated by Dr. W. S. Woods of Kansas City, creating the Thirkield trust fund of \$40,000.

NEWS OF MISSOURI

Business Men Defend Mine Manager.
Bonne Terre.—Business men of Bonne Terre, Mo., the seat of the mines of the St. Joseph Lead company, plunged into the fight being waged by certain stockholders in the company to discount the present management of the company. The fight will reach its climax at the annual meeting of the company May 15 in New York City. The business men passed a resolution defending Roscoe R. S. Parsons, general manager of the mines, and deploring an attack made on him recently.

Utilities Reports Asked For.
Jefferson City.—The public service commission called upon the county clerks of the state to furnish the commission with the names of all utility corporations doing business within their respective counties. Every utility company in Missouri is subject to the regulation of the commission. When the information is received the commission will ask the utilities which have not previously reported for their schedule of rates. When these are filed it can begin its comparisons of charges.

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Practical Fashions

SMART STREET DRESS.



The simple style has taken the field for the street and it is well for it is always in better taste. The use of figured materials has much to do with this fact, for plain outlines show fabrics to best advantage. The frock illustrated here with offers a new model cut on plain lines. The waist has a plastron effect in front and is plain in the back. Below the belt are popular sections which add much to the style of the design. The neck is low and is finished with a wide collar. The sleeves may be either long or short. The skirt is a four gore design with a panel back and the closing may be placed at either side of this panel. The dress pattern (6174) is cut in sizes 34 to 42 inches bust measure. Medium size requires 4 1/2 yards of 44 inch material.

To procure this pattern send 10 cents to "Pattern Department," of this paper. Write name and address plainly, and be sure to give size and number of pattern.

NO. 6174. SIZE.....
NAME.....
TOWN.....
STREET AND NO.....
STATE.....

LADY'S SHIRT WAIST.



This pretty bodice offers us a distinct novelty in the yoke, which is entirely seamless. It is square along the lower edge and here the lower portion is attached. It is gathered in front and plain in the back. The front closing laps in a square tongue over one side and here a jabot of lace makes an effective and modish finish. It also gives an opportunity for the employment of fancy buttons one of the fads of the moment. The sleeves are plain at the shoulder, but slightly full at the wrist.

The waist pattern (6189) is cut in sizes 34 to 42 inches, bust measure. Medium size requires 2 1/4 yards of 36 inch material.

NO. 6189. SIZE.....
NAME.....
TOWN.....
STREET AND NO.....
STATE.....

Sure Enough.
Frank and Fred, aged 6 and 4, respectively, were discussing a little sister who had died before the latter was born, and Fred said: "When I go to heaven I'll go right up to her and say, 'Hello! this is Freddy.'" "Why," said Frank, "she won't know you, because when she was, you wasn't."

When Greek Meets Greek.
In these days of cautious avoidance of "sure things" can stock market gambling survive the competition of racetrack investment?