

Cimarron

By EDNA FERBER

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THE STORY

CHAPTER I—It was 1899. Yancey Cravat just returned from the newly opened Indian territory where he had participated in the Run over the border. In describing his adventure to a large family gathering at the Venables, the Venables, ruled by the Civil war, had left Mississippi and settled in Wichita, Kan. Five years before Yancey Cravat had appeared in Wichita and won as his bride sixteen-year-old Sabra Venable. Gossip said that Yancey Cravat had been an Indian blood in him. He is a clever criminal lawyer and editor of the Wichita Wagon. A born orator, he combines something of the charisma of the actor and a dash of the fanatic. When the Run started, Yancey had raced his own against the thoroughbred mount of a girl. When her horse fell and broke both forelegs, he stepped to shoot the crippled animal. The girl leaped on his mustang, galloped to the quarter section and got the land by right of claim. Yancey announces he is going back to the Oklahoma country to start a newspaper in one of the new towns. Sabra, defying her mother, says she will go too.

CHAPTER II—They make the journey in two covered wagons. In a little negro servant of the Venables, Sabra is found when they make camp the first night, hidden in a roll of carpet. The travelers find the dark youngster almost invaluable in his care and protection of Cimarron, the four-year-old son of the Cravats.

CHAPTER III—At Osage Yancey immediately begins trying to learn who had murdered a man named Fogarty who had been shot after the first edition of his paper, called the New Day, appeared in Osage. He had been too truthful in calling attention to conditions in the territory. Preparations for the publication of Yancey's paper, the Oklahoma Wagon, are about completed. Inaiah becomes a member of the Cravat household.

CHAPTER IV—Yancey is asked to conduct church services on Sunday and Arkansas Great Catch leads the singing tent, which is packed, the novelty of a church service and a sermon by Yancey Cravat being impossible to resist.

CHAPTER V—Before he starts his sermon Yancey announces he has learned who killed Jack Pegler. He stoops just in time to escape a bullet fired by Lon Gossard. Still, however, Yancey shoots and kills Yountie, then announces that Yountie had shot Fogarty in the back. Yancey's rivals at the tent services is a handsome young woman, known as Dixie Lee, whom Yancey has tricked into coming to the tent section. With her are six highly rouged girls, whom she has brought with her to Osage.

CHAPTER VI—Sabra's second child, named Donna, is born. Yancey is on when she returns to Wichita for her first visit. She finds she has grown away from him, and he is glad to get back to Osage.

CHAPTER VII—Yancey frustrates a bank robbery in Osage, killing the "kidd" and another desperado, and becoming a hero in the territory. Sabra's energy and intuition win women readers for the paper. Yancey, always eager for adventure, urges Sabra to join him in the coming of the Indians at the opening of the Cherokee strip. She refuses. He leaves her, and is gone five years.

CHAPTER VIII—Dixie Lee becomes a town institution. The wives and mothers of the best Indian boys in the territory are heard of only through rumors. Sabra conducting the paper successfully. An Osage Indian girl, Arta, becomes the mother of Yancey's child. Among the Osage Indians, misadventure, or marriage, with a negro, is a capital offense. Inaiah, and his child, are kidnapped and tortured to death.

CHAPTER IX—The war with Spain begins. Yancey returns to Osage in a Rough Rider outfit. Sabra, despite his desertion, welcomes him. He is in Alaska, he says. The good woman of Osage, led by Sabra, conspires to rid the town of Dixie Lee. Her trial as a vice monger, comes up on the day Yancey comes back. He defends her and she is acquitted. Yancey leaves to join his regiment.

CHAPTER X—Yancey returns from the war broken in health, but still a popular idol. The newspaper prospers as the town settles down. An Osage Indian girl, Ruby Big Elk, is Sabra's house servant. Cimarron, the Cravat's first born, now five years old, appears to Sabra's horror, to be interested in her.

CHAPTER XI—The girl, Donna, at fifteen, is sent to a New York "finishing" school. Sabra becomes the town's society leader. Cimarron accompanies Ruby Big Elk to an Indian ceremony, despite his mother's remonstrances. Yancey, the wanderlust upon him, again leaves Osage. That night Sabra, alarmed at Cimarron's absence, seeks and finds him at the Indian ceremonial, having actually taken part in it. She brings him home.

CHAPTER XII—The "oil boom" convulses Oklahoma. Donna, ultra-sophisticated, comes home, determined, she tells her astonished mother, to marry "the richest man in the state." Yancey returns, aroused by the news that oil has been struck on the Indian reservation, and determined to defend their rights. In the newspaper, though he antagonizes public sentiment, Cimarron's open friendship with the Indians stirs Donna to indignation.

CHAPTER XIII—Big Elk, Osage Indian chief, and his wife, formally notify the Cravats of the marriage that morning of the daughter, Ruby, to Cimarron. The monstrous announcement staggers Sabra, though Yancey is unmoved. With her husband, Sabra attends the wedding festivities, though she feels that, for her, life is over. Crazy Yancey, the former lawyer, is easily the richest man in Oklahoma. Divorcing his wife, he marries Donna. Her ambition is fulfilled. For Yancey, again, Sabra hears nothing from Yancey, who had disappeared soon after Cimarron's marriage. Sabra is elected congresswoman, and Donna and her husband, and Cimarron's Indian wife, electify Washington with their display of wealth.

CHAPTER XIV—With congressional party, and some leading operators, Sabra is making a tour of investigation into conditions in the Oklahoma oil districts. At the town of Bowlegs she finds Yancey, outcast and bum, dying, a hero, with the last magnificent gesture of an empire builder, in the mud of the oil fields, but she is in time to be recognized by him and to close his eyes in happiness and peace.

Shea's Kensington

The riotous Charles Ruggie comedy *The Girl Habit* is showing at Shea's Kensington Thursday evening with Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy comedy *Our Wife*. Friday and Saturday, August 21 and 22, *The Silent Call*, great political drama, co-starring Richard Arlen and Sylvia Sydney will head the program. An *Our Gang* Bar, in Day is included in the program and the extra features for Saturday matinee *Seven Days Leave* with Gary Cooper and Beryl Mercer and a new episode of *Heroes of the Flames*. One of the greatest mystery stories to reach the talking screen will be presented Sunday and Monday, August 23 and 24 in *The Murder by the Clock*. Bill Boyd, Lilyan Tashman, Victor Rietz and stars of stage and screen portray the principal roles in this tense drama. *Women Love Once*, a drama of man, woman and marriage, with Paul Lukas, Geoffrey Kerr and Eleanor Boardman, is *Opposites Attract*, August 25 and 26, followed on Thursday and Friday evening by *Son of India*, based on Marion Crawford's novel. Mr. Isaacs, starring Ramon Novarro will head the program.

CONVICTS BUY WAY TO EASIER TASKS

Charges of Bribery Are Being Investigated.

New York.—An investigation into a system of bribery whereby well-to-do convicts sentenced to federal penitentiaries at Atlanta and Leavenworth, especially for liquor law violations and stock frauds, have been able to get themselves transferred to less onerous confinement in army detention camps, such as those at Fort Wadsworth here, and Camp Meade, Md., has been under way by the Department of Justice for several weeks.

The first intimation of the existence of such a system was obtained by federal authorities here some months ago with the discovery of a letter in the pocket of Paul Rubkin, a convicted watch smuggler, in the Manhattan federal building. Rubkin, with Solomon Rubman, secretary of the company, and Joseph Y. Pearlman, was sentenced to the Atlanta penitentiary in July, 1930.

Rubkin Gets Two Years. The trio had pleaded guilty to charges of smuggling watch movements valued at \$950,000 into this port from Switzerland and defrauding the government out of \$300,000 in duties. Rubkin and Pearlman got two years each and Rubman was sentenced for 18 months.

Some time later, however, when the federal authorities wanted Rubkin to confront a new suspect and they sent to Atlanta for him, it was found that he was at Fort Wadsworth. He was brought to the courthouse here. Afterwards when he was taken back to Fort Wadsworth and searched it was discovered that some one had given him a letter while in New York.

The letter was from a convict at Atlanta. It disclosed that the writer had obtained the necessary funds and wanted to follow Rubkin's example in obtaining a transfer to Fort Wadsworth. Questioned by federal authorities, Rubkin admitted that he had bought a transfer for himself for \$1,000 and that his two associates had also bought transfers, the prices being \$1,000 and \$500 each.

Learn of Transfers. Department of Justice agents, under John Edgar Hoover, chief investigator at Washington, began an investigation. They learned that other transfers had been made under similar conditions. However, it was not always easy to ascertain whether the transfers had been paid for. Because of the overcrowded condition of the penitentiaries at Atlanta and Leavenworth, federal prison authorities have made it a practice recently to transfer as many prisoners as possible to army detention camps. Nearly 1,500 prisoners have been scattered through these camps.

Among other notorious prisoners who are said to have obtained transfers from Atlanta to army detention camps is Harry Goldhurst, operator of a Manhattan bucket shop and financial adviser of Bishop Cannon and friend of Samuel Radlow, once an intimate of the late Vivian Gordon. Goldhurst was sentenced to five years in Atlanta for his bucket shop operations.

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straightened. The querulous voice took on a note of defiance. "From now on I'm goin' to have the washin' done out."

In those first few frenzied weeks there was no time for scientific methods. That came later. Now, in the rush of it, they all but burrowed in the red clay with their finger nails. Men prowled the plains with divining rods, with absurd things called witch sticks, hoping thus to detect the precious stuff beneath the earth's surface.

For years the meandering red clay roads that were little more than trails had seen only occasional buggies, farm wagons, horsemen, an Indian family creeping along in a miserable cart or rarely—an automobile making perfunctory progress through the thick dust in the dry season or the slippery dough in the wet. Now those same roads were choked, impassable. The frail wooden one-way bridges over creeks and draws sagged and splintered with the stream of traffic, but no one took the time to repair them. A torrent of vehicles of every description flowed without ceasing, night and day. Frequently the torrent choked itself with its own volume, and then the thousands were piled there, locked, cursing, writhing, battling, on their way to the oil fields. From the Crook Nose field to Wahoo was a scant four miles; it sometimes took half a day to cover it in a motor car. Trucks, drays, wagons, rigs, flivvers, buckboards. Every day was like the day of the Opening back in '80. Millionaire promoters from the East, engineers, prospectors, drillers, tool dressers, shooters, pumpers, roustabouts, Indians. Men in London-tailored suits and shirts from Charvet's. Only the ruthless and desperate survived. In the days of the covered wagon scarcely twenty years earlier those roads had been trails over the hot, dry plains marked by the bleaching skull of a steer or the carcass of a horse, picked clean by the desert scavengers and turned white and desolate to the blazing sky. A wagon wheel, a rusted rim, a split wagon tongue lay at the side of the trail, mute evidence of a traveler laboriously crawling his way across the prairie. Now the ditches by the side of these same roads were strewn with the bodies of wrecked and abandoned automobiles, their skeletons stripped and rotting, their lamps staring up at the sky like sightless eyes, testimony to the passing of the modern ravisher of that tortured region. Up and down the dust-choked roads, fenders ripped off like flies' wings, wheels interlocking, trucks overturned, loads sunk in the mud, plank bridges splitting beneath the strain. Devil take the hindmost. It was like an army push, but without an army's morale or discipline. Bear Creek boasted a killing a day and not a jail nor a courthouse for miles around. Men and women, manacled to a common chain, were marched like slave convicts down the road to the nearest temple of justice, a rough pine shack in a town that had sprung overnight on the prairie. There were no railroads where there had been no towns.

Boilers loaded on two wagons were hauled by twenty-mule-team outfits. Stuck in the mud as they inevitably were, only mules could have pulled the load out. Long lines of them choked the already impassable road. Wagons were heaped with the plpas through which the oil must be led; with lumber, hardware, the rigs, portable houses—all the vast paraphernalia of sudden wealth and growth in a frontier community.

Tough careless young boys drove the nitro-glycerin cars, a deadly job on those rough and crowded roads. It was this precious and dreadful stuff that shot the oil up out of the earth. Hurd lads in corduros took their chances and pocketed their high pay, driving the death-dealing wagons, singing as they drove, a red shirt tied to a pole flaunting its warning at the back of the load. Often an expected wagon would fall to appear. The workers on the field never took the trouble to trace it or the time to wait for it. They knew that somewhere along the road was a great gaping hole, with never a sizable fragment of wood or steel or bone or flesh anywhere for yards around to tell the tale they already knew.

Acres that had been carefully tended so that they might yield their scanty crop of cabbages, onions, potatoes were abandoned to oil, the garden truck rotting in the ground. Rawboned farmers and their scrawny wives and piddling brats, grown spectacularly rich overnight, walking out of their houses without taking the trouble to move the furniture or lock the door. It was not worth while. They left the sleazy curtains on the windows, the pots on the stove. The oil crew, clanking in, did not bother to wreck the house unless they found it necessary. In the midst of an inferno of oil rigs, drills, smoke, steam, and seeping oil itself the passer-by would often see a weather-beaten farmhouse, its windows broken, its front askew, like a beldame gone mad, gray hair streaming about her crazed face as she stared out at the pandemonium of oil hell about her.

The farmers moved into Osage, or Oklahoma City, or Wahoo. They bought automobiles and silk shirts, and gew-gaws, like children. The men sat on the front porch in shirt sleeves and stocking feet and spat tobacco juice into the fresh young grass.

Mile on mile, as far as the eye could see, were the skeleton frames of oil rigs outlined against the sky like giant Martian figures stalking across the landscape. Horrible new towns—Bret Harle wooden-front towns—sprang up overnight on the heels of an oil strike; towns inhabited by people who never meant to stay in them; stark and hideous houses—thrown up by dwellers

who never intended to remain in them; rude frontier crossroad stores stuffed with the necessities of frontier life and the luxuries of sudden wealth all jumbled together in a sort of mercantile miscegenation. The thump and clank of the pump and drill; curses, shouts; the clatter of thick dishes, the clink of glasses, the shrill laughter of women; fly-infested shanties. Oil, sneering itself over the prairies like a plague, killing the grass, blighting the trees, spreading over the surface of the creeks and rivers. Signs tacked to tree stumps or posts; For Ambulance Call 487. Sim Neeley, Undertaker. Call 549. Call Doctor Keogh 735.

Oklahoma—the Red People's country—lay heaving under the hot summer sun, a scarred and dreadful thing with the oil drooling down its face a viscid stream.

Tracy Wyatt, who used to drive the bus and dray line between Wahoo and Osage, standing up to the reins like a good-natured red-faced chauffeur as the wagon bumped over the rough roads, was one of the richest men in Oklahoma—in the whole of the United States, for that matter. Wyatt, the Wyatt Oil company. In another five years the Wyatt Oil companies. You were to see their signs all over the world. The "Big Boys" from the East were to come to him, hat in hand, to ask his advice about this; to seek his favor for that. The sum of his daily income was fantastic. The mind simply did not grasp it. Tracy himself was, by now, a portly and not undignified looking man of a little more than fifty. His good-natured, ruficund face wore the grave slightly astonished look of a commonplace man who suddenly finds himself a personage.

Mrs. Wyatt, plainer, more horse-faced than ever in her expensive New York clothes, tried to patronize Sabra Cravat, but the Whipple blood was no match for the Marcy. The new money affected Mrs. Wyatt queerly. She became nervous, full of spleen, and the eastern doctors spoke to her of high blood pressure.

Sabra frankly envied these lucky ones. A letter from the adder-tongued Felice Venable to her daughter was characteristic of that awesome old matriarch. Sabra still dreaded to open her mother's letters. They always contained a sting.

"All this talk of oil and millions and every one in Oklahoma rolling in it. I'll be bound that you and that husband of yours haven't so much as enough to fill a lamp. Trust Yancey Cravat to get hold of the wrong piece of land. Well, at least you can't be disappointed. It has been like that from the day you married him, though you can't say your mother didn't warn you. I hope Donna will show more sense."

Donna, home after two years at Miss Dignum's on the Hudson, seemed indeed to be a granddaughter after Felice Venable's own heart. She was, in coloring, contour, manner, and outlook, so unlike the other Oklahoma girls—Cezarina McKee, Gazelle Slaughter, Jewel Riggs, Maurine Turker—as to make that tortured, wind-deviled day of her birth on the Oklahoma prairie almost nineteen years ago seem impossible. Even during her homecomings in the summer vacations she had about her an air of cool disdain together with a kind of disillusioned calculation very disconcerting to her former intimates, not to speak of her own family.

The other girls living in Osage and Oklahoma City and Guthrie and Wahoo were true products of the new raw Southwest country. They liked to dress in crude high colors—glaring pinks, cerise, yellow, red, vivid orange, magenta. They made up naively with white powder and big daubs of carmine on either cheek. The daughters of more wealthy parents drove their own cars in a day when this was considered rather daring for a woman. Donna came home tall, thin to the

point of scrawnliness in their opinion; sallow, unrouged, drawing, mysterious. She talked with an eastern accent, ignored the letter r, said eyether and nyether and rihally and altogether made herself poisonously unpopular with the girls and undeniably stirring to the boys. She paid very little heed to the clumsy attentions of the Oklahoma home-town lads, adopting toward them a serpent-of-the-Nile attitude very baffling to these frank and open-faced prairie products.

(Continued Next Week)

"What a Rotten Deal You've Had, Sabra, Dear."

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Trains on Two-Thirds of Nation's Railroads Dispatched by Telephone

Main Roads in State Transmit Nearly All Orders Governing Train Movements by Voice—Insures Speed and Safety

Trains on nearly two-thirds of the total rail mileage of this country are now being handled by telephone, according to a recent announcement of the American Railway Association. These latest available figures show that telephones are used for the transmission of the orders over 154,000 miles of road compared with 101,000 miles which use other types of communication facilities.

Progress measured in terms of speed, efficiency and safety attained in the operation of the railroads of the nation during recent years has undoubtedly been due in large measure to constant improvements in the rapid communication facilities of the roads, railway experts say. These facilities for

centralized control section which usually includes from fifty to more than a hundred miles of railroad. This line is not only connected with the various stations, but also with points where there are switches and signals along this section, so train crews may get fast communication with the dispatcher if the signals are against them, or if the switches or signals for any reason fail to function.

In this development of railroad telephone equipment for speeding the handling of traffic and safeguarding against accidents, the loud speaking type of telephone has been quite extensively used during recent years. In metropolitan sections particularly these loud speaking instruments are frequently used. They are usually lo-



A modern leviathan of the rails. Upper left: The telephone box is now a familiar object along the right of way. Upper right: Dispatching trains by telephone.

coordinating the operations of the vast network of rail lines spread over the country include the telephone and the telegraph and special adaptations of these great inventions.

Not only because of the speed but also the completeness of conversation by telephone, this instrument has been used for the dispatching of an increasing number of orders affecting train movements and also to an ever greater extent in general railway communications.

In New York State and in other parts of the East, where there are numerous railway centers closely knit by communication lines, the telephone is used most extensively. Approximately nine-tenths of the orders affecting train movements on the largest roads operating through the state are handled by telephone. In fact, a good share of the vast telephone plant devoted to the railroads of the nation is located in this state, where the terminals and stations are linked by nearly 9,000 telephones, served by more than 250 switchboards.

Within the past few years, in the state and elsewhere, great progress has been made in the development and installation of centralized train control systems utilizing the telephone. In such a system it is the practice to have a telephone line from the dispatcher's office extend over the entire

located in the dispatcher's office with connections to similar apparatus installed at stations and important switching points within his territory. With this sort of hook-up the railroad men along the line may be easily notified of the progress of a train. Thus when one man speaks, all the rest along the line simultaneously benefit from the information he gives or obtains, and thus many unnecessary calls are eliminated. This type of apparatus is especially effective whenever it is necessary for the railroad men to issue a warning of danger at a particular point along the road.

One of the most important yet least known services of the telephone is in connection with railroad yard operations, where trains are made up. Not many years ago men known as "riders" personally had to bear orders from one end of the railroad yard to the other. But today railroad yard men direct this work by telephone. Their equipment is frequently connected with loud speaking apparatus located at various switching points in the yard. Thus an order can be understood immediately by all concerned in its execution and trains are assembled in a fraction of the time formerly required. Even the charging of batteries for lighting a train is directed by telephone from the distant source of power supply to the yards.

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