

# 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 headed for the post. An Indian outbreak is threatened. "Brick" Hamlin, a sergeant who had just arrived with messages to McDonald, volunteers for the mission and starts alone. Molly arrives at Fort Ripley two days ahead of schedule.

### CHAPTER III.—Continued.

"Good Lord, miss," he exclaimed swiftly. "Do yer mean to say ye're goin' 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—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—and I haven't heard from my father since last month. See, this is his last letter; won't yer 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. "Things has changed some out yere since that letter was wrote. I reckon yer know we're havin' a bit o' 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 yer couldn't finish up yer trip all right. I was out to the fort last evenin' gettin' the latest news, an' thar hasn't been no trouble to speak of east of old Bent's Fort. Between thar and Union, thar's a bunch o' Mesquite Apaches raisin' thunder. One lot got as far as the Caches, an' burned a wagon train, but were run back into the moun'tns. Troops are out along both sides the Valley, an' thar ain't been no stage held 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 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—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 fer yer, an' I reckon ther sooner yer start the better chance ye'll have o' gittin' through safe."

He hesitated. "If we should git 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 o' those army people would look after yer. Ye'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 yer 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 Devere. 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 eaten dinner in company with those of the east-bound coach, eighteen miles down the river to Canon Bluff, and the in-coming 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 sang 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 and 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 pock-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 west of Deer Creek, the horses still 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, thar ain't no hosses to be had."

The other shook his head, rubbing his gun-stock.

"Most likely those same red devils are layin' for us now somewhar between yere an' Low Water; whar the trail runs in between them two big rocks, most probable," he concluded. "Not havin' no ha'r to lose, I'm fer goin' 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 brone' won't travel another mile. There's plenty of room for me inside, and I'll turn the tired devil loose. Hold on, I say!"

The driver once again slapped on the brake, growling and reluctant, his anxious eyes searching the trail in both directions. Hamlin quietly uncinched his saddle, flinging it to the coach roof; the bridle followed, and then, with a slap on the haunch 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 looked 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

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"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 isn'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 Anne! 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, but 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 creaking 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, leaned out. He caught a momentary glimpse of two men riding swiftly up the trail; the box above was empty, the wheelers alone remained in harness, and they were running uncontrolled.

"By God!" he muttered. "Those two damn cowards have cut loose and left us!"

Even as the unrestrained words leaped from his lips he realized the only hope—the reins still dangled, caught securely in the brake lever. Inch by inch, foot by foot, he wiggled 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 footrail by the force of the shock, his body bruised and aching. One horse lay motionless, head under, apparently instantly killed; his mate struggled to his feet, tore frantically loose from the traces, and went flying madly down the slope, the broken harness dangling at his heels. The Sergeant sat 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.

(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 Travelling 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.

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## CHAMPION GOTCH'S FAMOUS TOE HOLD



Gotch Demonstrates Toe Hold.

"I HAVE often been asked," says Gotch, "how and when I discovered the toe hold. That is a pretty hard question to answer. Farmer Burns and I worked out the problem of the toe hold wrestling in Iowa. I think I used it first on Scott Miller in 1902. I pulled the foot over the leg and applied the leverage. The other toe hold, and the one I employ the most, was worked out later."

"There are several varieties of toe holds and locks, but the one I use most and the one which writers call 'the famous toe hold,' consists of getting the opponent's foot in a vise in which the toes and ankle are the points of attack. It is often confused with the toe hold over the leg, but the two grips are distinct."

"It is important first of all to have one's opponent in the proper position to begin the preliminary moves for the toe hold. When an opponent is on the mat, suppose the attacker is on the right side. The wrestler who is the 'under dog' must be on his hands and knees for the attacker to make the shift that traps his opponent's further foot."

"The attacker from this position holds his opponent to the mat by grasping the right leg high up with both hands, working well to the side. With his right hand the attacker reaches inside the crotch from the front, grasping his opponent's left ankle. With the left hand he grasps his opponent's foot near the toes, almost simultaneously straddling the near leg of his opponent and pulling up on the imprisoned foot. The opponent's right leg in this way is trapped and his left foot is 'out of commission.' When the left leg has been imprisoned in this way for a few seconds, the muscles relax and the member becomes powerless. The attacker then pulls up and may apply the twist to the toe hold. His head may be used as an instrument of attack in forcing an opponent's shoulders to the mat."

"Since the left leg of the defensive wrestler has become ineffective by being imprisoned in this way, the ankle hold may be released and the toe hold easily retained. The free right hand of the attacker then may be used in forcing the shoulders of

the defensive wrestler to the mat. Since the under wrestler has turned on his side, the half-nelson may be applied and the opponent pinned with the half-nelson and toe hold or the toe hold released and the crotch and half-nelson applied. The toe hold may be used alone."

"While I have won many matches with the toe hold, it is a mistake to imagine I have depended upon this grip. In fact, I have won more matches with other holds. I probably have won most of my matches with the half-nelson and crotch, but fear of the toe hold has helped in securing this and other combinations."

"I defeated Dinnie in England with this form of the toe hold. I think I put the hold on Dinnie more quickly than on any other opponent I ever met. Dinnie had angered me by contending he was not down in the first fall, and I gave him another chance. As he came toward me I dove for his legs and put him down. As he fell I came down on his right leg and since he was in the proper position for the toe hold I had his leg and foot trapped. In a few seconds, I had it on Dinnie so quick that it made him a convert to our style of wrestling. He was one of the best boosters we had in England after that experience."

"I think Hackenschmidt mortally feared the toe hold in both our matches. He quit when I went after the hold in our first match. He pleaded that he had enough as soon as I secured the grip in our last meeting."

"I doubt the wisdom of barring the toe hold. Once this grip is under the ban the game will degenerate in the direction of the Greco-Roman style, which at best is only half wrestling. Then the hammerlock, which is just as dangerous, would have to go and the game would be reduced to a test of mere brute strength."

"Although I have had many wrestlers at my mercy with the toe hold, I have never injured an opponent without cause. In 1900 at the Brookers' casino in Chicago I injured Pardoello, the Italian, but had cause, for he had pulled a whole handful of hair from my head. It is just as easy to injure an opponent with the hammerlock or the headlock."

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## CHASE IS VERSATILE PLAYER

Mack Says New Yorker Can Play Any Position on Diamond, With Exception of Battery.

It is not at all surprising that there should be a big difference of opinion among all players and wise baseball managers as to whether a left hander can play second base. The debate has been going on for some time. In fact, since Hal Chase expressed his desire to play that bag, and now that Chase has said that he is going to put Chase on second base if he can get in the game, and he says he will, the debate has become all the warmer.

Connie Mack, Willie Keeler, Clark Griffith and many other ball players declare that Chase will have no trou-

ble in playing that sack, while there are some who were of the opinion that a second baseman could not make the plays which came around that cushion if he had to throw with his left hand.

"I think Hal Chase can play any position on the diamond with the exception of the battery work," says Connie Mack, manager of the Athletics. "The reason he will be able to play second base is that he is the quickest

man with his hands I have seen on the ball field in my time. He may be a trifle weak in that position, but then, again, he will make some plays down there that a right hander can not make."

"I think that he would be much better than some of the right handed second basemen we have in the game right now. I saw him play that bag in Philadelphia, and my players said that they thought he could play anything on the ball lot. There have not been many men who have made a success of playing the infield who have been left handers. But then, again, there have been exceptions. I think Chase is one of them. He will shift with the players, and I think he can touch base runners."

"If Chase finds that he can play there is no doubt in my mind that he will have another good infielder and will not have to worry about his second base trouble. Chase could not go through the country and pick up a man who could play as well as Chase at second base, could he? If Chase finds that he cannot play, why Chase could do just as well in the outfield, but I look for him to be the regular second-sacker."

Hal Chase.

Southpaw Pitching Staff.

Manager Joe Birmingham at Cleveland is going to depend on a south paw pitching staff. Birmingham believes that Gregg, Cullop, Mitchell and James will be regulars next season.

Des Moines Gets Brewer.