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BIG NEWS FOR YOU! *See Inside*

The **MODERN BOY** ^{2D}

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This
GRAND
48 PAGE
PHOTOGRAVURE
ALBUM

(8x10 1/2 inches)

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with the

BIG NEW

MODERN BOY

Full Particulars on Centre Pages



Hollywood Show-Down

The Rio Kid's secret was out. There was nothing for him to do but mount and ride for his life . . . but he had a debt to settle first!

***** By *****

Swift Action!
"LEAVING me out?" exclaimed Brian Bennett.
"You said it!" agreed Cyrus Pook.

Bennett stood leaning an elbow on the corner of Mr. Pook's desk, in the film director's office at Booking Franco. Cyrus Pook, sitting in the swivel chair, made nothing gestures, almost as if he were dealing with a fractious child. There was, in fact, something infantile in the film star's petulant and sensitive vanity. Any man in the Gorgona Picture Company could have told Bennett that what he was getting was what he had asked for. But the handsome face in California was pale with passionate resentment as the star listened to Cyrus Pook.

"You want to be reasonable?" urged Cyrus. "You're the big draw of the picture. I allow that guy, Carlos, who plays the Rio Kid in the picture, ain't in the same street with you. He's a good-looker, but he ain't got your looks, and he ain't got your style, and he can't act like you. But he's got the sand, and you ain't!"

"What's the good of feeling, Brian? Didn't I map out the biggest punch ever—you and that guy riding down Pedro's Ride; and what did you do? That Texas puncher made the grade, but you threw it down, and rode off—and ain't you been sulking down at Hollywood for a week since? I'm asking you!"

Bennett made no answer to that, but his handsome brow grew blacker and more bitter.

"Now I get another big punch coming!" went on Cyrus. "The cut-law in the picture—jumps the Devil's Gap on his Mustang. I'd care sit up and crow if you'd jump it after him on your photo, Brian. But you won't. You know you won't stand for it. What's the good of bunk?"

"No man living could jump the Devil's Gap!" said Bennett.

"That Texas puncher has took it on," said Cyrus. "He allows he's made a bigger jump, home in Texas. Will you jump it after him?"

"No!"
"Then where's your kick?" demanded the director. "You want me to cut out every punch in the picture,

RALPH REDWAY

because you're so fond of that neck of yours? I get a man going over the scenario now—it's got to be cut to suit."

"Leaving me out?"
"Aw, dog-gone my cats!" exclaimed Cyrus. "If you won't stand for it, what's a guy to do but to leave you out? You come in on all the pretty scenes—that's where you live! But when there's risk—and I allow there's some risk at the Devil's Gap—that Texas puncher has got to fill the bill. He sure rides like the Rio Kid himself."

"Perhaps he is the Rio Kid himself!" sneered Bennett. "Who is he—this wandering puncher from Texas—?"

"Aw, pack it up!" said Cyrus. "You don't cotton to him; but he's the goods. He's standing for the jump—and you ain't! What do you want me to do, then?"

"Cut the scene!" snapped Bennett. "You're starring me in this picture, not that nameless gunman from nowhere. He came into the picture to back my play—now you're giving him more and more fat, and making a side-show of the man who draws in the dollars for you. I'll ride wherever a man with any horse-sense would ride—but I won't break my neck for your stunts."

"Cut the scene!" repeated Cyrus. "Cut the scene, when I've got the only guy in this outfit who will ride it! Forget that!"

"Then cut me!" snarled Bennett.
Cyrus Pook gave the angry star a steady look.

"I ain't keen to cut you, Brian," he said quietly. "You're worth every dollar that Gorgona pays you. You can ride, when there ain't a heap of risk—and your face 'gets' every flapper in the You-nited States. But I'll tell you this—I can get another guy to look pretty, but I can't get another guy to jump the Devil's Gap! I'll cut you, sooner than cut the puncher."

Bennett made no answer to that. His fury choked him. This was now

language from the Gorgona director, who was bent to hear with the arrogant star's airs and graces. But there was a limit to Mr. Pook's patience, and Brian had reached it. Since he had faked the ride in which he had been scheduled to appear, Cyrus' views had changed. The man who had a reputation as a daring and desperate rider had failed him—and Mr. Pook, like the practical man he was, looked at the facts. He was not running Gorgona Pictures simply to gratify the film star's conceit.

There was a knock at the door, and Chick Chew, the assistant director, looked in.

"Here's the puncher, Mr. Pook," he said.

Cyrus whirled round on his swivel chair.

"Send him in! I guess you want to take a walk, Brian—I get to chew the rag a piece with Carlos, about that scene."

Bennett did not speak, but his eyes turned, with a bias of uncontrollable rage in them, on the Rio Kid as he stepped in.

The Kid glanced at him, and at the director.

"I guess I can wait, Mr. Pook," he said, and made to step back. The Kid had had trouble enough with the Handsome Hombre, and was not looking for more.

"You come right in!" snapped Mr. Pook. "I'm through with Brian!"

Brian Bennett detached himself from the desk on which he was leaning. He stepped towards the door, and the Kid stood aside for him to pass.

As he passed, the film star's hand shot up and struck the Texas puncher full in the embarras face.

The blow took the Rio Kid by surprise. He staggered across the office, and brought up against the wall. For a second he braced on the wall painting—then, with his eyes like blue haze, he came at Bennett.

Cyrus Pook bounded from the swivel chair, and leaped between the two just in time.

"Hold off!" he spluttered. "Hold off!"

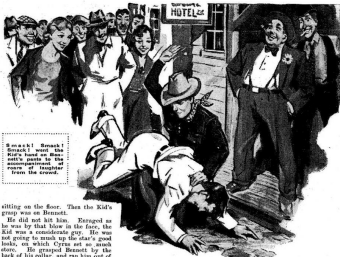
"You ride clear, feller!" roared the Kid. "I guess—"

"Guess again!" yelled Cyrus. "You figure you're going to muck up Brian's good looks. He ain't got anything else, dog-gone you! You figure he can go on the screen with his face mucked up! Hold off!"

Chick Chew grasped Bennett by the arm, and drew him into the outer office, while Cyrus barred the enraged Kid's way. Bennett was not unwilling to be drawn. It was not the first time that he had asked for more trouble than he dared face, with that puncher from Texas.

"I guess, Mr. Pook," said the Kid, breathing hard, "that I won't muck up your pretty star's good looks, as you're so pucky particular about 'em. But that guy ain't going to hand me a sock on the frontispiece, and get by with it! Nope! You sit this one out, Mr. Pook!"

A hefty shove from the Kid tottered Cyrus back to his swivel chair, and the Kid strode through into the outer office. Chick, making an attempt to intervene, suddenly found himself



Smack! Smack! Smack! went the Kid's hand on Bennett's pants in the unaccompanied, of course, of laughter from the crowd.

sitting on the floor. Then the Kid's grasp was on Bennett.

He did not hit him. Enraged as he was by that blow in the face, the Kid was a considerate guy. He was not going to crush up the star's good looks, on which Cyrus set so much store. He grasped Bennett by the back of his collar, and ran him out of the office into the street.

Fifty pairs of eyes at least fastened on them, as they emerged into the brilliant sunshine. Movie men and girls stared from all sides. The Kid did not heed them. Bennett was unable to heed them.

The Kid dropped on one knee. Over the other knee Brian Bennett was twisted, face down.

Smack—smack—smack! came the Kid's heavy hand.

From the crowd came a yell of laughter. From the doorway of Cyrus Fook's office two faces stared—Chick's lean one and Cyrus' fat one. They stared blankly at what they saw—the Handsome Hombre of the film stretched over the Texas puncher's knee, and the Kid smacking him on the pants. The wrath died out of Cyrus' fat face.

"How, how, how!" he roared. "Brian, you've asked for that! How, how, how!"

Bennett was yelling with rage and pain. At last the Kid pitched him aside and rose to his feet. Bennett sprawled, gasping for breath, in the dusty roadway, too angry to speak.

"I guess," said the Kid grimly, "that that lets you out, Mr. Bennett. I've pulled a gun on a guy for less'n you did! You got off easy! Maybe you'll ride clear of this baby in future, Mr. Bennett. It's your best guess."

With that the Kid walked back into the office. Bennett picked himself up, gave one glare round at a circle of laughing faces, then hurried away to hide his rage and shame and humiliation within the walls of his bungalow.

The Kid's Peril!

In the darkened room, the Kid smiled as he looked at the picture. It entertained him to see himself on the screen.

He had had nothing to do with making pictures before he joined up with the Gorgeous bunch, but he seemed to have fallen into the way of it. Neither in acting nor looks was he in the same straits as Bennett. But when it came to riding, he had Bennett beaten to a frazzle.

When the Kid was riding he and the horse were one. Cyrus, with his keenness for realism on the film, congratulated himself on having roped in the Texas puncher to play the part of the Rio Kid in the big outlaw film. The Kid often smiled to wonder what Cyrus would have thought had he known that he had roped in the Rio Kid himself to play that part! But that was the Kid's own secret.

The "shot" at the Devil's Gap had been taken, and the picture was being thrown for Cyrus to judge the result. Sitting next to the Kid, the director was grinning with satisfaction. Back of them sat one who did not smile—whose face was dark with bitterness. The Kid did not even know that Brian Bennett was in the room.

The Kid was thinking that it was lucky that he was so many hundreds of miles from his old stamping-ground. Any guy who had known him in Texas, or seen the pictures of the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande posted up in the cow-camps, with the offer of a thousand dollars reward for his capture, would have known him on the screen at a glance. Male-Kick

Hall, captain of the Texas Rangers, was hunting him all over Texas; sheriffs from the Staked Plain to the Gulf had wary eyes open for him; but the Kid reckoned that none of them would be likely to guess where he was, and what he was doing.

Cyrus was planning more pictures, with that wonderful rider from Texas playing a big part in them. But the Kid reckoned that Cyrus was missing his guess. Likely enough, Male-Kick Hall himself would see that picture when it was released—and the ringer would burn the wind for Hollywood! It was no good as telling the world where he was once it was released. When that time came, the Kid reckoned he would have to mount Side-Kicker and ride!

But for the present it was O.K.—not a guy in Southern California had heard even the Kid, though most had heard of him. To the Gorgeous Company he was "Boy Casius"—a puncher from Texas. It entertained the Kid to play himself in a picture, but he did not reckon that it spelled danger until the film was released.

He would have had another guess coming had he looked round at the man sitting behind, and could he have read the thoughts in the handsome, bitter face.

As a rule, Bennett was little interested in scenes in which his own handsome face did not figure. But he had a keen and deadly interest in these "shots"—for his own reasons. There were strange thoughts in the mind of the film star.

It was more than a week since that poskas at Cyrus' office, and Bennett

Hollywood Show-Down

had acted with the Kid before the cameras, banking down his hostility.

In every way since the Kid had joined the Garganon Company Bennett had lost face—and there was little at which he would have hesitated to get back on the puncher from Texas. Yet there seemed no way.

His anger, to Cyrus in his office, that perhaps the puncher who played the part of the Rio Kid was the Kid himself had been dictated simply by bitter enmity. But his own words, uttered in idle mused, had started a new idea in his mind. After all, who was Carfax?

A puncher from Texas—a two-gun man! From all Bennett had heard of the celebrated outlaw of the Rio Grande, the Kid had been a puncher, and was a two-gun man. He was said to be little more than a boy in years—and this puncher had been nicknamed "Boy Carfax" in the Garganon Company. He was known to be the most daring rider in a band of daring riders—and it was in riding that Carfax had pushed Bennett out of the picture. He was well known to ride a Mustang with a black mane—and Carfax's horse was a Mustang with a black mane.

The thing seemed at first unlikely, but the more Bennett thought of it the more possible it seemed. He had made a few inquiries, and learned that of late nothing had been seen or heard of the Rio Kid in his own country. Had he found a hide-out so far from his native country as Los Angeles?

Looking at the daring rider on the screen, Bennett felt more and more assured of it. And if that was so, he had his enemy in the hollow of his hand!

"I'll say this will knock the film law, and then some!" he heard Cyrus' voice. "I'll tell the world, Check!"

"You said it, Mr. Fork," agreed Check.

"They allow that that Texas fire-bag, the Rio Kid, can ride a few," went on Cyrus. "But I'll say that the guy we got playing him can put it across the Rio Kid!"

"Surest thing you know," agreed Check.

The Kid smiled as he heard. Brian Bennett smiled, too—a bitter, malignant smile! He was sure of it now, and he wondered that it had never occurred even to Cyrus.

After the picture was through the Kid snarled back to the frame-house where he had his quarters. Brian Bennett passed him a little later in his car.

The Kid glanced carelessly at the handsome man and caught Bennett's eyes on him, with a strange look in them—a look that puzzled the Kid at the moment, but which he remembered afterwards. Secure as he believed he was at the film company's location in the Santa Monica mountains, even the wary Kid did not think of guessing what was in his mind, or why he was driving down to Los Angeles that afternoon.

Bennett drove by winding ways till he struck the motor road from Santa Monica to Los Angeles, and then he

let the car out. Under the setting sun he drove into Hollywood and past the Garganon studio, with the thought that the Kid would never enter it again. The Kid's destination, when he came back, would be quite a different one.

He stopped the car, at last, before a big building in Los Angeles. It was the police depot. In a few minutes he was in the superintendent's office. That official gave him a nod and a smile.

"We got it through, Mr. Bennett," he said.

"The Rio Kid's picture?" breathed Bennett.

"Sure!"

Bennett looked at the pictured face—peered often enough in cow-towns in Texas, never before seen in California. Feature for feature, it was the face of "Boy Carfax." Bennett breathed hard and deep.

"It's the man!" he said.

"Sure!"

"Any man would recognize him from this! It's the Rio Kid who's playing at being a film actor! Sure thing!"

"I guess we can act on that, Mr. Bennett! I'll put it in Colledge's hands—he's seen the guy often enough, through the trouble with Spanish John. If that guy's the Rio Kid, he's going back to Texas with iron on."

Brian Bennett drove away with a smile on his face. Under the stars, he covered the long miles to Bucking Bronco, longing for the moment when he would see the Texas puncher led away a prisoner, with the iron clinking on his hands.

A Debt Repaid!

"EVENING, feller!" drawled the Rio Kid.

Under the glittering stars of Southern California, the Kid was strolling, breathing in the keen air from the mountains—thinking of a far-off land, with rolling rivers and wide-stretching grass-lands.

Except for his trouble with Brian Bennett, the Kid pulled well with the Garganon Company—he liked most of them, and they liked him. On the whole he had rather enjoyed the episode of acting for the films. Still, it was only an episode. Every week that passed the Kid thought more and more of the prairie of Texas, with a nostalgia that grew stronger.

He had told Cyrus not to count on him for further riding stunts, after the outlaw film was finished. Cyrus had brushed that aside. Mr. Fork did not reckon that any guy could be willing to go back to punching cows when he had a chance of acting for the films. But the Kid was feeling more and more the urge to mount and ride—and, anyhow, he had to ride when that picture was released. He was leaving it till then—at any rate, that was his idea. He did not know how soon, and how suddenly, his stay at Bucking Bronco was to be cut short.

That evening, he had seen Cyrus and chewed the rag with him—little dreaming, at the time, that it was

his last interview with the director of Garganon. He had chatted with Chick Chew on the street, never guessing that he would never see him again. Snarling under the stars the Kid was thinking of his home country—but not in the least thinking of how soon he was scheduled to hit the trail. And when Colledge learned it he gave him a nod and a cheery greeting, never guessing why the Los Angeles detective had come up to Bucking Bronco.

He had seen Colledge a good many times, owing to the trouble with the gangsters, and had shipped in to save him from the death-shot.

Mr. Colledge returned his nod and greeting, and dropped into step by the Kid's side.

"I guess I come up special to see you, Mr. Carfax," said the detective abruptly.

"I'm sure on view, if you want me, Mr. Colledge," said the Kid. "More trouble with Spanish John's gang?"

"Naps! I guess that gang is all to pieces since John got his ticket for soap! But—"

The detective paused—a long pause. The Kid glanced at him, keenly and curiously. Something that he sensed, rather than saw, made him drop his head, in a careless way, on his gun-belt—within reach of a waistcoat butt. The Rio Kid's wild life had given him a sixth sense, when there was danger in the atmosphere.

Colledge's head face relaxed into a momentary grin, and he shook his head slightly.

"Leave it there!" he said. He had read the Kid's thoughts. "If you needed that gun, puncher, you wouldn't have time to pull it. There'd be heap plenty guns on you this minute—if you needed 'em! You don't!"

The Rio Kid came to a sharp halt, and swung to face the detective. His eyes were glittering, his breath sharp-drawn. On the starlit road, barred by the black shadows of branches, he looked at the man long and hard.

"Meaning?" he asked, very quietly.

"Meaning," said Colledge, "that it's a fine night for a ride."

"Says you!" remarked the Kid.

"I hear you're through—or nearly—with that big picture," said Colledge casually. "You won't be throwing Mr. Fork down any. Five weeks ago, puncher, that gal-darned scallawag, Spanish John, had me under his gun—it was me for the long jump if a guy about your size hadn't horned in. I've seen you since, and you've helped round up them gangsters. And—" He broke off. "You nose-headed nut, what made you stand for acting the Rio Kid on the pictures? Didn't you figure that it would throw you down?"

The Kid understood, then! He was known! That was why the detective had come up to Bucking Bronco. But he smiled.

"Mr. Fork sure roped me in for the part, seeing me side!" he answered. "I guess I filled the bill O.K."

"I'll say so!" agreed Colledge. "And I guess there's heap plenty sheriffs in Texas will sit up and take

notice, when they see that film! What you figure?"

"Mebbe!" said the Kid.
"I'll come clean," said Coldidge. "Brian Bennett's got on to it that you're the Rio Kid—and I guess he ain't missing the ballgame a whole lot. My superintendent's got a picture of the Kid from Texas—and I'll tell the world that it's a ringer for you, Mr. Carlos."

The Kid stood very still.
"That guy Bennett sure is a pizen case!" he said quietly. "I got him away from the gangsters—and he hated me for it! He put them up to catch me—and I let him go easy! I knowed that when Spanish John laid for me with a rifle, and I got him first, that it was Bennett behind it—and I let him run! He handled me a cork to the face in Pook's office—and I only smacked his pants instead of breaking him up! Now he figures on getting the goods on me this-a-way! He sure does get my goat a lot."

"You're the Rio Kid?"
"You're asking me a whole heap, feller!"

"Nops—and I walk back to my car and let things run!" said Coldidge. "Yep—and I see you through. You saved my life—I owe you as much."

"Yep!" said the Kid quietly.
"Well, I know, after seeing that picture in the superintendent's office," said the detective. "I've got six men on the road out of this valley, Kid—and if you hadn't saved my life they'd be all around you now, ready to rifle you if you touched a gun."

"I guess I'd put in some shooting!" said the Kid. "But I should sure hate to spill your juice, Mr. Coldidge, and you such a polite guy."

Coldidge grinned.
"I'm here to make sure of you, Mr. Carlos, before I call my men up to get the cinch on you," he said. "The superintendent's placed this job in my hands, me knowing you so well. I guess I ain't getting any cinch on the guy that saved my life, big boy; I'm postponing that duty till dawn. If you ain't at Bucking Bronco, then I guess I won't stand much chance of catching you. Of course, it'll be a pity, but it can't be helped—"

"I guess," said the Kid, "that my Mustang will be beating the wind a good step from Bucking Bronco when the sun comes up, Mr. Coldidge."

"I'm keeping watch on the lower road, but I guess you've ridden mountain tracks before!" remarked the detective. "I'll say you know all the ways out of Bucking Bronco if you're the Rio Kid."

The Kid grinned.
"I guess I can give you four hours," said Coldidge. "After that, I ain't the man you saved from Spanish John—I'm Detective Coldidge after his man like grins death. You get me?"

"I sure get you, feller!" said the Kid.

"I reckon I've spilled the whole hill-fall!" said Coldidge. "Hole, and ride hard!"

He paused a moment, and then held out his hand.

The Kid gripped it. Coldidge disappeared the next moment along the

shadowy road. The Rio Kid stood for a moment or two in deep thought, then strode back to the location.

Hitting the Trail!

BRIAN BENNETT stood at the window of his bungalow, looking out into the starlight, waiting, watching. It was past midnight. Before this the detectives should have been on the spot—the Texas outlaw scold. Yet there had been no sound of alarm—no shot had rung out, waking the echoes of the sleeping valley. Had they taken him by surprise, before he could reach a gun? Or were they gathered round the frame-house in the darkness, watching? Bennett was feverishly anxious to know. Every now and then he stepped out at the open french

placé plank!" said the Kid. "You've put them wise down at Los, and I saw got to hit the trail. You know more than I reckoned about the Rio Kid, Mr. Bennett, but you sure never learned that the Rio Kid was a bad man to crowd. You've crowded me good and hard, I guess."

"I—"

The film star tried to speak, but his voice died huskily away. He was looking death in the face.

"You figured the detective guys had me safe stretched?" jeered the Kid. "You was waiting to hear the glad news, I guess! Waal, you won't see this baby walked away with the iron on, Mr. Bennett. I guess I've packed my slobber, and got my horse out of town, waiting for me—and I'm only hanging on to see you again, feller, afore I beat it."

MORE STORIES FEATURES

IN THE

New MODERN BOY!

windows, and took a turn in the clear, calm, balmy night, listening, listening.

Once, he was sure, he heard the sound of a horse in the silence—not of a galloping steed, but of a horse led quietly, cautiously. But he heard nothing more—no sound save the rough of the wind in the pines on the steep hillside round Bucking Bronco.

The night was growing old, and nothing had happened. Surely they would not leave it till daylight, giving the outlaw of the Rio Grande a chance with his guns! Surely they would cinch him in the dark hour—had cinched him already! But the silence told him nothing.

He turned from the window at last, gritting his teeth. He filled a glass from a decanter, and was about to raise it to his lips when there was a footstep at the french windows. He turned, the glass in his hand, and the next moment it went with a crash to the floor, breaking into a hundred fragments, as he saw a figure in post-skin chaps, gun-belt, and sixteen hat, standing in the open window.

There was a six-gun in the hand of the Rio Kid. His eyes glommed over it as the film star.

"Put 'em up, Mr. Bennett!" said the Kid.

Slowly, staring at him like a man in a dream, Bennett raised his hands above his head.

"I guess," went on the Kid quietly, "that I don't rightly know why I don't let head through your cabern right now, you pizen pollock."

Bennett's face was white.

"You got the goods on me, you

Bennett could not speak—he could only gaze in dumb terror.

"You got a big gun!" said the Kid. "Where's your kick, you cyster? I put you away from them gangsters that was holding you up for fifty thousand dollars. But you sure got the goods on me at the finish. But I guess you won't live long enough to see the iron put on the Rio Kid, Mr. Bennett."

He made a gesture with the six-gun.

"You're taking a little walk with me, Mr. Bennett! Step out of the window, and step lively. I guess you can put them gears down."

Almost tottering, the film star stepped out into the starlit, scented garden, the Rio Kid at his side. Again and again the film star's dilated eyes turned on the sunburned face of the Texas parache, reading nothing in that grim face. What the Kid intended, he did not know, and could not guess.

Somehow, the outlaw had escaped the snare. Minutes were precious to him now that he was known, hunted in California as he had been hunted on the Texas prairie. Only a prompt getaway could save him, but he had stayed for vengeance on the man who had betrayed him.

In silence the Kid led the way. If Bennett thought of escape, of calling for help, he gave up the idea—the gun was ready in the preacher's hand. They tramped on, leaving Bucking Bronco far behind.

There was a soft whinny as the Kid at last came to a halt. Bennett

(Continued on page 22)

the trouble, you? We have many honourable guns."

"And we have many honourable men," Don murmured. "Little half dozen honourable torpedoes. But would be the most unfortunate accident, captain, if those Japanese warships were lost by honourable mines sown in that channel leading to the island's harbour."

"The Jap opened his almost-shaped eyes."

"You have sown delayed mines?" "Honourable mines," Don corrected blandly. "But they have deepachable knobs on 'em that'll set them off with a delayed bang if bumped against."

"He was playing for time, and succeeded in his object."

"Lights on the starboard beam, sir!" hailed the look-out.

Captain Sako returned to his ship. Three British destroyers were racing under full steam for Shark Island, and the Japanese decided that their bluff had been called. Rather than risk a fight and further international complications, they turned away and steamed into the northern darkness. The Vulcan and destroyers between them made short work of the pirates'

defence. The guns on the cliffs and junks were quickly put out of action, and the British warships steamed through to round-up numerous prisoners. It appeared that Yong had unloaded the four aeroplanes and hoped to use them for a get-away in case of serious intervention. But the Vulcan's exploit in capturing him and guarding the channel had proved his undoing.

Don, Barry, and Sandzger landed on Shark Island to aid the hapless Chinese fugitives. With them went Sam Woo, in the robe of interpreter.

The captives emerged fearfully from caves near the harbour. Then, understanding that the British had come to release them, they became delicious with delight. The chains were melted by Chinese men, women, and children.

As the rescued were being taken off to the destroyers, Sandzger found

himself assailed by a further mob, this time led by Sam Woo.

"Avast, you heathens!" gasped Sandzger. "What d'you think this is—a game o' snakes?"

Woo waved a hand over the wrinkled Chinese woman who was embracing the P.O., and his other hand over a grimy Chinaman who was attempting to rub noses.

"Mother heilogram me! Two Mother heilogram me!" he explained gleefully. "All sisters and brothers heilogram me, too. Debauched Yong catches when they run away from Shanghai."

The excited Mrs. Woo thrust a grubby infant into Sandzger's arms, and it burst out howling.

"Teeth heilogram baby wancher come, Missa Sandzger-Sassa," explained the excited Sam Woo. "Me makes you honourable godfather for this fellow baby?"

Sanzdger inserted a horny thumb into the baby's mouth, and the infant gnawed it contentedly.

"If you do, me lad," he granted, "I'll chop you in little pieces and make you into 'meas story'!"

THE END

SEE CENTRE PAGES FOR NEXT WEEK'S TOP-OF-THE-BILL PROGRAMME OF STORIES!

Hollywood Show-Down

(Continued from page 9)

discovered a tethered horse in the shadows. It was the Kid's mounting. The Kid smoothed Sade-Eicher's glossy mane with his left hand, the gun still in his right. Bennett felt his knees sagging as he stared round at the lonely rocks and pines, glimmering in the stars, far from all help.

"Now, Mr. Bennett," said the Kid quietly, "I guess you pack a gun in them pants of yours. Pull it, you copiate, pull it, and stand for what you done! I guess if never was my way to shoot up a guy with his hands empty. Pull, you double-crossing gack! I'm giving you an even break, which is sure more than you aimed to give me, humber!" added the Kid. "I'm packing my gun!" He jammed it into the low-slung holster, and stood facing the film star with empty hands. "You got me, feller?"

The film star understood now. He knew why he was there, alone with the Kid, on that solitary hillside. He cast a wild glance round him. Away in the valley, a light burned here and there in Bucking Brocca. All the rest was shadow.

It was an even break—man to man, gun to gun! He would not have given his enemy a chance, but the Kid was giving him one.

"You got me?" repeated the Kid. "I guess I ain't got a lot of time to waste, Mr. Bennett. If I pull through this, I got to burn the wind. Those detective gags of yours ain't for all, and I guess they'll soon be getting a move on. I'm ready for you, Mr. Bennett. You ready, feller?"

Bennett did not speak—he could not. Again his hunted eyes swept round, then rested on the Rio Kid again.

"You got to walk fifteen paces, Mr. Bennett, and turn," said the Kid quietly. "Pull your gun as soon's

you like! I ain't touching a gun till you turn! That suit you?"

"I—I—" Bennett muttered thickly.

"I guess I've told you that I'm waiting!" said the Kid grimly. "And I ain't waiting long! You getting to it?"

The film star scolded. He turned and paced away, the Kid counting the paces as he went.

"Halt right there!" rapped the Kid. "Why—" His voice rose to a roar of rage and astonishment. "You dog-gone gack, halt!"

Bennett did not halt. At the word, he broke into a desperate run, and flew down the hillside like a frightened deer. The Rio Kid stared after him blankly, then grabbed a gun from his holster.

"Halt!" he roared. "You place yellow pebbles, ain't I giving you an even break? Halt, or I'll see three lead!"

Bennett raced. The Kid's gun lifted, his face grim over it.

But that grim look relaxed. It broke into a grin—and the grin became a laugh. The Kid had been on the trail of vengeance, but it passed from his thoughts now—changed into laughing scorn.

The gun rased! The bullet flew over Bennett's head, knocking up splinters of rock yards in front of him. A yell of terror came back from the Bushbone Hombre.

Bang, bang, bang! The Kid, laughing, barred powder fast, throwing the load over the film star's head. With any of the shots, had he chosen, he could have knocked over the running man, and rolled him dead on the rocks. The Kid did not choose. He rased with laughter as he threw lead into the air,

till Brian Bennett, panting and desperate, vanished into the shadows.

The Kid turned to his horse.

"I guess it's you and me for the trail now, old-timer," he said. "We're sure through with Hollywood, and through with pictures—and I'll tell a man I'll be glad to be riding Texas prairies again. We got to burn the wind to-night, old horse."

The Rio Kid mounted, and rode by a wild track over the mountains. The rising sun saw him far from Bucking Brocca.

"Search me!" gasped Cyrus Pook. There was wild excitement at Bucking Brocca that morning.

Brian Bennett was not there. His car had vanished with him, down the road to Hollywood, before dawn. But every other member of the Gorgeous Company was chewing the rag at a great rate.

There was a posse of detectives at the location, led by Mr. Coldidge, in search of Roy Carfax—now known to be the Rio Kid. And Cyrus Pook gasped, and gasped, and gasped again to learn that the Texas puncher whom he had picked to play the part of the Rio Kid was no other than the celebrated outlaw of the Rio Grande himself.

But when he got it down, Cyrus grinned with glee over it. He was sorry to lose the puncher, but he reckoned that in the picture he had the biggest snoop ever. The Rio Kid played by the Kid himself! If that did not get the film fans, Cyrus would have liked to know what would.

They liked "Roy Carfax" in the Gorgeous Company, and everyone hoped that he would ride alone. And he did! Hollywood saw him as never!

The Kid was on the home trail, and by the time the outlaw film was released he was back on his old stamping-ground, riding the rolling prairies of Texas.

THE END