

# Floyd Gibbons'

## ADVENTURERS' CLUB

HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES  
OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!



### "Rattlesnake Kate"

By FLOYD GIBBONS  
Famous Headline Hunter

HELLO, EVERYBODY:

Get this one right hot off the waffle iron, members of the Adventurers' club. It's about a brave, hard-fighting, quick-thinking woman.

Lots of people think women aren't brave. But when it comes down to a case of life or death, just watch 'em. And then, throw in the life of a baby to fight for and—well, you'll find that old Rudyard Kipling was right about the female of the species.

Why, this adventure is so absolutely out of the ordinary, that I hardly believed it myself, when Mrs. Kate Slaughterback, Fort Lupton, Colo., told it to me.

This is what happened in 1925, on the twenty-eighth day of October. You know what kind of a day that would be out in Colorado. Animals moving around everywhere, storing up food or making for winter quarters. Little snap in the air—migratory wild fowl coming down from the north bound for the warm waters of the tropics.

Well, early that morning hunters had been banging away before daylight at the mallards and canvasbacks that were stopping over for the night in a lake away out in one corner of the Slaughterback ranch. Kate Slaughterback knew from experience that the hunters wouldn't bother to follow the crippled birds, so she decided to ride out and pick off a few unfortunate stragglers for supper.

#### There Was a Huge Snake Coiled.

She saddled up the old pinto. Got down her .22 Remington, lifted three-year-old Ernest into the saddle and swung up behind him. Off they went, across the fields to the fence that separated a pasture from the boggy lake. Kate hopped off the pony to open the gate. And, right there



Kate Fought Rattlers for Two Solid Hours.

at the gate post, coiled up and ready to fight anything that came along—was a huge rattlesnake.

Didn't bother that Western woman much. She stepped back to the pony, took the rifle out of the saddle and blew the head right off that cocky reptile.

But he had his gang with him. No sooner had that rifle cracked—no sooner had the snake sounded his dying rattle than another angry whir-r-r sounded from the tall, dry grass.

Another warning sounded from the left—still another from a different direction.

Three glistening, thick-bellied rattlers slithered into the open and toward Kate.

The Remington cracked three times in quick succession and three sets of rattles beat out a death-tattoo on the ground.

Mrs. Slaughterback reloaded her rifle. She looked up quickly in the direction of a strange sound—a sound like the rustle of the wind among ripe corn.

First five—then ten—then twenty or thirty rattlesnakes were undulating into the open IN BATTLE FORMATION. Their pointed heads were erect—their fangs darting. They were ready to avenge their companions in the interrupted migration.

Still the nerve of the ranch woman held steady. She realized she could not kill twenty or thirty savage snakes with her little rifle. What she wanted was a stout club. There was only one in sight. Kate chuckled as she saw that the club was stuck into the ground and bore a sign, "No Hunting—Keep Out."

#### Fought Dozens With a Club.

She plucked that stake out of the ground. Smashed off the sign and turned to tackle the serpent army.

Her eyes met a horrible sight. There were no longer twenty or thirty attackers. They were sliding noiselessly in from all directions. Right and left, behind and before—she looked into venomous eyes that blazed green like an endless row of traffic lights. She was surrounded.

The first rattler to reach her coiled to strike. Kate swung the club, barely three feet long, and the dying tail flicked her hand. On came the others. Some circling. Some darting in.

Little Ernest was crying in the saddle. Brownie—the pony—was trembling. If he should rear, the baby would be thrown among the snakes.

Kate was afraid then—afraid for herself and her little boy. She redoubled her blows. A rattler sprang clear of the ground. Kate caught it with her club as a baseball batter would swing on a home run.

Another rattler sprang. It missed her hand by a half inch. She could feel its breath as the jaws snapped. A sound behind her. Coiled and poised for a thrust at her stockinged leg was another foe. She struck backward. The snake uncoiled, its head crushed.

The slithering chain of reptiles seemed endless. They darted and struck from all sides. The club thudded hundreds of times. Dying snakes writhed in piles. Kate, hardly moving from her tracks, fought on—fought for two solid hours before she climbed painfully, nerve wracked, back into the saddle.

#### Her Nickname Well Earned.

Brownie darted for the ranch house. Mrs. Slaughterback tumbled from the saddle, clasping little Ernest. Her hands were raw flesh and blisters—her eyes bloodshot and her face swollen.

Her amazing adventure spread like wildfire through the Colorado country. Down from the cities raced newspaper reporters and photographers.

Then the boys lined her up beside her grisly foes. Cameras told the true story of her kill.

#### ONE HUNDRED AND FORTY RATTLESNAKES.

I said to her, "I hear your friends have a nickname for you now—'Rattlesnake Kate.'"

"Yes," she said. "And I'm proud of it."