

# NEW BOOKS

FROM SOONERS  
AND THE O.U. PRESS

Reviewer—Dick Smith

*Bu/falo Gold*, by R. G. Choate, Doubleday.

THE lights will be burning late in the bunkhouse tonight. R. G. Choate (maiden name, Gwen Peterson) put aside her broom and kids long enough to write a yarn which makes the Old West look about as good as a royalty check. And that's exactly what this book does look like—one royalty check for Mrs. Choate.

Such injustice! What's she got that makes her a money-earning novelist whereas the rest of you are plain ole, common, ordinary everyday housewives? (This article is dedicated to The Women of America.)

I'll tell you what she's got: She's got the pattern. And once you've got the pattern all you need is the time . . .

What housewife, may I ask, does not have time and time thrice time to write at least three westerns a year?

You—yes, You can write and sell a western, much to the everlasting admiration of unsuspecting cowpokes (I shudder to think of our cowpokes learning that many of their revered westerns are whipped up like pre-mixed pound cakes in the perfumed dens of authoresses).

Today, Ladies, I should be most happy to disclose the western pattern—free of charge—and to help you on your way to fame and fortune within the confines of the home. It's simple, really. So simple that I'm a little embarrassed to be making all this to-do about it. However, let that be your first lesson: it's an author's business to make a big to-do about things, especially simple things.

Take Mrs. Choate's major characters for instance. The hero she named Matt, and naturally his hair is matted. The villain lusts for gold, and of course his last name is Golden. The book's haughty coquette is Lisette, and need I add?—she comes from rather aristocratic and proud stock in the ante-bellum South.

These, I assure you, are simple matters—and revealing hints of what effort it takes to become a housewife novelist.

If you'd be interested we can begin now to select our own major characters for our own housewife's western. First, a hero . . .

Our hero let's call Blu. Because heroes have flint blue eyes (they must be *flint* blue); because heroes look wind-blown; because heroes always are rather sad and hulu looking.

Only two other characters are necessary—the villain and the heroine. I list the villain first, because although today's literature must be steeped in sex and violence the province of the western—TV notwithstanding—is violence.

How about a villain named Chesley? which is the first name of my Uncle Courtney who was the last person to spank me (I skip over my age at the time). You notice Chesley is much like the word "chisler"—a sounds-like which is *de rigueur* for villain names. Also, Chesley sounds like a dude looks like: all villains are lily-white palmists.

All villains (next point) are heroine terrors. Otherwise the hero and the heroine would never get together. Satisfied that the last word on sex was said in the barnyard, western types are a reluctant bunch on Valentine's Day. The hero *must* have occasion to rescue the heroine from the villain in order that the heroine may trap the hero.

Name the heroine Daisy. All heroines should be D something-or-other. Such names give you opportunity for many alliterations which will please your male audience: dumb as a daisy; dopey Dora; his duped Delilah . . . (another reason women western writers use pseudonyms; westerns sack their sex.)

Now that we're provisioned with hero, villain, and heroine, please take note of this important fact: You are writing for Men—men who can't read.

PERHAPS it's too discouraging to write for men who can't read. So say, rather, that you are writing for men who don't think. That's easier—and more pertinent. Your readers—and therefore your characters—are primarily men who act. Acting is never to be confused with thinking.

You might write this down on the grocery list: Men act, Women think. Memorize it—no matter how much it may differ from your own conclusions. To write westerns you must comprehend Men act, Women think.

Now we are ready for the western pattern . . .

It's baldest exposition was in a quote I vaguely remember which came from a

Hollywood director whom I have forgotten completely. He said, more or less, that the secret of a successful western was to start with an earthquake and build up to a climax.

Less baldly, the secret is to dump your hero into hot water right off and then to keep adding more fuel to the flames.

To make your pattern perfect the hero must have some goal, some ambition he's attempting to fulfill. If his skin's not too weatherbeaten, it's quite likely that his only goal will be to try and get out of the hot water. But he has to have a goal.

Finally, near the last page, you've got to work it so the hero finds himself in such a lousy position that he is forced to make one of two decisions:

- a.) he can perform a selfish act which will assure him of his goal, or . . .
- b.) he can perform an unselfish act or an act of honor which will assure him of nothing as far as he can see except he's unselfish.

AND, BUT here's the twist. As soon as he performs this unselfish act, he obtains his goal after all! Who would have guessed? How strange fate can be! Or westerns, at least . . .

Permit me to demonstrate:

Blu, our flintblueeyedstranger, rides into Glue City on a sorry mangy sorrel. He doesn't actually ride in. He rather hurries in, with about 1,000 Indian trotting hot in pursuit.

Blu's about as welcome as Madame Chiang Kai-Shek during an Asian flu scare, but the Indians don't give the town-folk much time to protest. Everybody including Blu is shot up and all the buildings are burned down. Only rich, dumb Daisy and that chisler Chesley are unscathed.

Daisy Chesley had lured to a risqué picnic on the pretense of his taking her to the side of an ailing calf (Daisy is founder of the Western division of the S.P.C.A. in deference to the tradition of making western novelists appear as though they had attempted some historical research. The lurid fact is, that in taking Daisy out of town, Chesley had no calf in mind except Daisy's.

Furious at being duped, Daisy hightails it to town just in time for the shanty raid. She and her scalp are kept together thanks to Blu who finds himself fighting off Indians in her vicinity thanks to his mangy sorrel who thanks his lucky stars that there's an S.P.C.A. chapter in town.

Blu is wounded (always in the shoulder). He faints from the loss of blood and Daisy



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United States to help realize their ambitions (this year's team also found itself U.S.-less).

All they did have was exceptional talent and some luck in finding small-college opponents. Within the next three years they won all their games except one, which was tied. It's talent and luck of which the athletic department is beginning to be cognizant.

This year, it looks as though the polyglot peg of O.U. athletics might finally be fitted into the right hole. The athletic department furnished them with O.U. uniforms and with transportation for out-of-town engagements (trips were made to Tabor College in Kansas, O.S.U., and Tulsa University). What the team is most ambitious for, however, is a coach who can coordinate their individual brilliance. Chances are they'll have one by next season.

Trying to manage some of the coordination duties of a coach this year were Foreign Student Counselor Gene Russell, who has taken the soccer team's left-field battle to administrative circles; and team captain Jorge Pacheco, who has spent as many hours on the phone as on the soccer field trying to recruit unorganized Europeans, Asians, and New World Latins for weekend games. (Jorge is pictured on Page 9 with his Ohio-born steady, Ruth Walter.

These two men, together with the appeal a fast moving soccer game has for the team's increasing number of Sooner fans, are beginning to get the ball past the goalie of indifference.

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faints from the sight of it. So they are taken to Daisy's house and put to bed (Remember now, No Funny Business; violence, not sex, is our message).

Since cowboys never stay in bed if conscious, and often like horses sleep standing, it is necessary that Blu become delirious; this not only assures his recovery, but it gives Daisy Blu's own story from his own tight lips.

Blu's own story is simply that he is a broke cowpoke and has vowed unto-death fidelity to his mangy sorrel (said sorrel jerked him from a lye tub when he was three). Blu won't trade his horse in for something better no matter what the financial inconveniences. And there are plenty. Hiring yourself out with a two MPH horse is no cinch.

**T**HIS babbling affects Daisy deeply. She's an animal lover too. In time, caring for Blu, and gazing as she does at his delirious, unshaven face, Daisy comes to love Blue as deeply as she ever loved anything: cows, dogs, pigs, you name it.

But violence, remember, not sex, is our message.

While Blu deliriously sups soup, we have an opportunity of rekindling the fire which was initially tended by the Indians.

The townsfolk, connecting Blu's appearance with disaster, convince themselves that he's a ne'er-do-well and needs his neck stretched. Chesley, of course, being a little piqued about a stranger staying a week in his sweetheart's bed, is behind all this rabblechatter. Also, Chesley owns the only glue factory in town, and he for sure wants Blu's sorry mangy sorrel as quick and as cheap as he can get him.

Since nearly everybody works for Chesley at the glue factory, his chisling will is law; and his ambition one Sunday afternoon is to do Blu a dirty lick by plopping Blu's sorrel in the glue pot. Whoops, cheers, and hussas from the potley mob.

There it is: your basic complication. Daisy loves Blu; Blu loves his horse; Chesley desires Daisy and detests Blu. From here on the idea is to make your complication more complicated . . .

Chesley convinces Daisy that Blu is cruel to his sorry mangy sorrel by not putting it out of its misery; Daisy decides to marry Chesley; Blu begins to love Daisy; and

meanwhile, back at the bar, the sorrel disgusts everyone by becoming an alcoholic; et cetera . . .

What we need now is a fast way to get Blu into a position where he must provide glue for dough. As in most instances, liquor is quicker. If Blu takes the money and turns over his horse he can pay off the sorrel's liquor debt, rid the community of a rummy, and have a little left over with which to impress Daisy. That way everybody is happy—except the sorrel, of course.

Now you, me and everybody would sell the damn sorrel for glue. But Blu must not sell for glue. It's the code of the western.

What we need now is the selfless act which I mentioned previously. This act must:

- a.) get the townsfolk on Blu's side;
- b.) dupe Daisy into loving Blu again; and
- c.) defeat Chesley.

In formulating such an act you need never worry about the townsfolk. Any act will win them over just so long as it entertains them.

Don't worry much about Daisy either. Even though she's about to marry Chesley, she still loves Blu and is only marrying Chesley to teach Blu a lesson. Like I said—Men act, Women think. Which just goes to show where women and thinking will get you.

Chesley, however, is another matter. His villainy must be outmatched by heroism. Villains are not to be placated like women and townsfolk; they have to be defeated.

Chesley's defeat we can accomplish with a supreme sacrifice . . .

Rather than break his vows to his horse, Blu insists that he, and not his horse, be made into glue to pay off the liquor debts; and that anything left over from the 98 cents should go to a fund for buying an Old Horsie pasture.

Blu makes sure to say as much in public. Chesley is shocked to learn what he's stuck with, but his calm returns and he announces plans to market new glue.

One man's paste, however, is another man's waste. The townsfolk are so completely entertained that they run Chesley out of town; and Daisy, like any girl with only one suitor, declares she loves Blu.

As for the sorrel, he drops dead in gratitude.

Blu is mighty ba-lu with this horseless carriage and an upcoming marriage, but it ends the book.

Simple? I haven't sold a western yet, you understand—but I'm sure you can. Just follow the pattern, pardner.

RECOMMENDED: They went that-a-way.