

MISS TROUBLE AND THE LAW



MARIELLA STARR



Published by Blushing Books
An Imprint of
ABCD Graphics and Design, Inc.
A Virginia Corporation
977 Seminole Trail #233
Charlottesville, VA 22901

©2019
All rights reserved.

No part of the book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. The trademark Blushing Books is pending in the US Patent and Trademark Office.

Mariella Starr
Miss Trouble and the Law

EBook ISBN: 978-1-64563-099-9

v1

Cover Art by ABCD Graphics & Design

This book contains fantasy themes appropriate for mature readers only. Nothing in this book should be interpreted as Blushing Books' or the author's advocating any non-consensual sexual activity.

CHAPTER 1



1885 VIRGINIA CITY, MONTANA

Deputy Clay Montgomery had seen a lot in his twenty-nine years. He'd never seen anything like the parade that was marching toward the jail. He'd been tilted backward in his chair, waiting for the sun to set before venturing into *Sin Alley*. Virginia City had twenty saloons and eight bawdy houses. Saturday nights were big business. He expected to have a cell full of rowdies by morning.

The legs of his chair hit the dirt. He stood taking a defensive stance with his hand close to the handle of his gun, as he was approached by the growing crowd. Two rough looking men in handcuffs were being marched ahead of the parade, although he couldn't see behind them to know who was doing the prodding. He could see the laughing, jeering miners, and cowmen who were following.

He held his hands up to stop the crowd, as the handcuffed men were moved forward. A small girl stepped from behind the two men, holding a Colt 45 in her hand.

“Sheriff Plummer?” the girl questioned.

“No, Deputy Montgomery,” he responded.

“This is Frank Lambert and George Dumont. Both are wanted in Montana Territory for murder and robbery. If I may, I would like to use your jail cell to hold them, until I can send a telegram to Ft. Missoula, for their disposition.”

“Uh,” Clay stuttered, and then realized there was a lot of town folk watching him. “Bring your prisoners in.” He looked to the crowd. “Y’all go on, this ain’t no side show!” He pulled his gun, stepping behind the prisoners, and prodding them inside into the jail cell and locking the door.

He turned around to the little girl as she was pulling off a ruffled bonnet. She shook a mass of long dark curls around her shoulders. “What the hell are you doing girl?”

She offered her hand to shake as a man would. “Marigold O’Rourke, sir.” She motioned with her hand at her outfit. “This is a disguise. I am a member of the Bearmouth Sheriff’s Office.”

“The hell you are!” Clay growled.

“I can assure you I am,” Marigold said. “When word of these two being in Virginia City came, there was no one available to retrieve them, so I took the assignment. Considering the caliber of men I was dealing with, I either had to dress as a prostitute or a child. I opted for a child, hoping it would prevail upon the chivalry of most men. Now that I have delivered these men in your custody, sir, I will go to the telegraph office and send a wire to the proper authorities.”

“Now, wait a minute!”

Marigold looked down at her dress of childish bows and ruffles. “Excuse me, Deputy; I need to change from this disguise before I go any further on this assignment.” She turned to leave, stopped and tossed him a key. “Here is the key to the handcuffs.”

Clay was left with his mouth hanging open as the girl strolled from the jail with no further explanation.

“Well, hell and damnation,” he growled as the door swung shut

behind her. His boss, Sheriff Henry Plummer came stomping into the jail.

“Since when are you going for the young ones?” Plummer demanded.

“She brought in two men wanted for murder. She says she’s a deputy for the Bearmouth Sheriff’s Office.”

“Well that’s a load of bull,” Sheriff Plummer snorted. “No self-respecting sheriff is going to hire a girl, especially not one as young as that one!” He looked over to the men in the jail cells. “Well, howdy, George. Is that Frank? What are you doing in my jail?”

Clay tossed the handcuff key on the desk. “It’s time I scouted Sin Alley for trouble.” He walked away from his job with a rising feeling of disgust in his gut.

It was time for him to move on. He’d known it for a while; he just hadn’t done anything about it. He didn’t like or trust Henry Plummer. The man was corrupt. If there was one thing Clay Montgomery wasn’t—it was crooked. He believed in right and wrong, he believed in the law. He wanted to believe that the law would prevail, good over evil, although he knew from experience, it didn’t always work that way.

Clay didn’t go to Sin Alley. He hiked over to the telegraph office and sent a telegram to the sheriff of Bearmouth. He told the telegraph operator to deliver the response to him, and only him, if one came in.

He was in the Gold Strike Saloon when he got word Fred Peabody was at the bar. He was busy trying to break up a fight between a saloon girl and a miner who had tried to stiff her of the dollar and a half she charged. Big Girdy didn’t need Clay’s help. The miner was getting the snot beat out of him by the large and very angry bride of the multitudes. Clay was trying to keep Big Girdy from bashing in the miner’s head when the miner got loose and skedaddled. The hapless miner didn’t get away unscathed. Big Girdy got her hands on his gold bag, tore it from his belt. The gold dust and nuggets scattered across the floor. When Clay left, Girdy

was sweeping the gold dust into a small pile, pleased with her payment.

When Clay went to the bar, Fred Peabody, the telegraph operator's nineteen-year-old son was waiting for him. He looked scared to death among the scantily clad ladies who were trying to lure him into temptation.

"A telegram came for you," Fred said following Clay from the saloon, and handing it to him.

"Thanks, Fred, I appreciate your discretion," Clay said unfolding the telegram. He wasn't altogether surprised by the words. He wasn't exactly sure what to do about it either. He figured he was going to need to talk to the female in question.

He walked to the Spur Hotel and inquired at the desk if Miss O'Rourke was there. He was told she had left to return to the jail. Everyone thought it was hysterical that she had captured two killers dressed as a little girl.

Clay headed for the jail at a run. He burst into the jail in time to see Miss O'Rourke slam her hands onto the desk, and go face-to-face with Sheriff Henry Plummer. It was no contest as Plummer was six-foot, six-inches tall. Miss O'Rourke was a foot and a half shorter.

"What do you mean you let them go?" she yelled.

"I didn't have no reason to keep 'em locked up," Plummer said nastily. "I might have reason to lock you in a cell if you don't mind your tongue!"

"You let two killers; with bounties on them go free!" Marigold yelled. "What kind of an incompetent are you?"

"That does it," Plummer snarled. "I don't have to take that kind of sass from a little chit like you!"

"Whoa," Clay said, taking Miss O'Rourke by the shoulders and shoving her through the door. He yanked off his badge and tossed it onto the desk. "I quit!"

He met the girl at the door, as she was trying to storm in, and

blocked her. When she punched him in the stomach and kicked him in the shin, he tossed her over his shoulder.

"Let go of me, you brute!" Marigold yelled, punching him in the ribs. She snatched his hat off his head, and threw it into the dirt.

Clay bent to retrieve it, stuck it on his head, and when his hand was free, he gave her a hard swat across her bottom.

"Oh!" she screamed in rage.

"Got yerself a wild one there," Old Homer Gates cackled from his place on the bench in front of the hardware store.

Clay carried Marigold around the side of the building, and into a small stable. He closed the door and set her on her feet.

Marigold punched him in the stomach again. "How dare you!"

"Well, I guess I do," Clay said, catching her fist in his hand. "If you punch me again, little Miss Trouble, I'm going to set your fanny on fire. Calm yourself and start behaving like a lady!"

"That idiot sheriff let Lambert and Dumont go! Why didn't you stop him?"

"I wasn't there," Clay said.

"Well, he's going to have to deputize a posse of men and go after them!"

"That's not likely to happen!"

"Damn it!" Marigold exclaimed. "I tracked them, and I arrested them. This is so unfair! Why did he let them go?"

"Probably because they bribed him, or because they are friends of his," Clay said honestly. "You didn't have any authority to arrest them in the first place."

"Yes, I did!"

"No, you didn't," Clay said. "According to this telegram you don't work for the Bearmouth Sheriff's Office."

"I do so," Marigold exclaimed.

"As a deputized lawman?"

Her anger seemed to deflate a bit, and she shifted her eyes, so she wasn't looking at him directly. "Not exactly."

“What exactly?” Clay demanded, moving around her, so she had to face him.

“I work in an office at the jail. I operate a typewriter and a small printing press for posters. That’s my job because they won’t give me a chance to prove I can be a deputy. I thought when I took this assignment I could prove myself. I did too, and now that idiot has let them go!”

“Being a deputy is not a job for a girl!”

“If men would stop telling women we can’t do things, and then do stupid things themselves like letting the bad guys go, women would do fine! Now I have to recapture them!” Marigold whirled around to leave. She didn’t get far as he caught a handful of the fabric of her dress where it flared outward for her rump. “Excuse me!”

“No, I won’t,” Clay said, stopping her in her tracks. “You’re not going anywhere near those two outlaws. You are going home.”

“Not until I recapture the men I’m after.”

“I have my orders,” Clay said.

“From who?”

“From your father!”

“What?”

“It’s right here in this telegram,” Clay said giving her dress a yank and pulling her closer to him. “It reads, Marigold O’Rourke, daughter not deputy. Reward for safe return, by any means. Sheriff William O’Rourke.”

“Oh, that’s not true!” Marigold huffed. “Bill is my uncle, not my father!”

“It doesn’t make any difference to me,” Clay said. “A little gal like you shouldn’t be running around pretending to be an officer of the law. It’s too dangerous, and I’m taking you home!”

“No!” Marigold exclaimed squirming and batting at his hand, trying to make him let loose of her dress. “I’m a grown woman of twenty-one. I can do as I damn well please!”

“Not according to your daddy, you can’t,” Clay said.

"What about your job as a deputy here!" Marigold demanded.

"I don't have it anymore. I quit," Clay said. "There's no reason I can't take you home where you belong."

"No one asked you to stick your nose in my business," Marigold exclaimed somewhat desperate to remove his hand from the fabric at the back of her skirt. He was being very inappropriate hanging onto her backside! "Would you stop manhandling my person! Let me go!"

"I don't think so," Clay said. "I have a new job. It's taking you home where you belong. You read the telegram. I have permission to use any means to get you there. You might as well stop giving me a hard time because you're going home to your folks."

Marigold pulled her dress from his grasp, taking a few steps before he had a grip on her again. "Let me go!" she screamed furiously, and she punched out at him blindly. She made a direct hit on his nose, and blood spurted.

Clay saw stars for a few seconds—then he saw red. It wasn't from his bleeding nose, either. It was from his temper. He pulled his handkerchief and held it to his face. He had one hand at his nose squeezing his nostrils, and the other was now fisted in the material of Marigold's skirt.

"I'm sorry," she squeaked. "I didn't mean to hit you in the nose."

"Well, that's too bad, because I've had enough of your sass," Clay growled. He scooped her under one arm and carried her to a tack trunk, propped his foot on it, and tossed her across his knee.

"Nooo!" Marigold screamed. "You can't do this! I'm sorry!"

"Too little, too late, Miss Trouble!"

"No!" Marigold tried to wiggle and fight her way off of his bent knee. He wasn't having any of it and he held on tighter. Then he tossed her skirt and a series of petticoats over her head. She screamed and bucked at his audacity, and started punching, and trying to bite him again.

Smack! Clay landed his first wallop, and Marigold gasped as she lost her breath. He was spanking her on her bottom with only the

fabric of her bloomers separating his hand from her bare skin! It was unseemly for him to touch her like that! Then Marigold forgot about propriety when a second wallop, a third, and a continuing battering brought a stinging heat to her bottom.

“Ow! Ow!” Marigold found her hands caught in one of his larger ones at the small of her back. She was kicking and squirming, although it wasn’t doing her any good. His grip on her was too tight for her to wiggle loose.

The deputy shocked her with a half dozen more spanks, each one landing exactly where the last one had hit. The heat and sting were building.

“Oh, you can’t do this,” Marigold wailed.

“Wrong, your daddy may let you get away with wayward behavior, I won’t,” Clay growled.

“Ow! Ow! Please, can’t we come to an agreement? We can capture them together! I’ll share the reward with you! Ow! Ow! You don’t have the right!” she cried.

“Yes, I do—*by any means*,” Clay crowed. “If that means you go home with a blistered hind end, so be it!”

Marigold chewed on her lower lip, as she tried to stop her tears. Her bottom was on fire and stinging. Holding her tears at bay wasn’t possible, when her bottom was aching so much!

Clay shifted her slightly and started whacking her where he hadn’t spanked her before. He was spanking the underside of her buttocks and then he returned to her cute little rounds of a bottom encased in ruffled bloomers. She howled, cried, and squirmed. All it accomplished was to make him more determined. When he was finished with Marigold O’Rourke, she would know who was in charge.

“Ow! Ouch! Stop!” Marigold screamed. The deputy’s hand continued to hammer blistering spanks upon her bottom.

“Are you going to listen to reason?” Clay demanded.

“Yes,” Marigold agreed, although she had no intention of ever doing anything the deputy wanted her to do.

Clay had a good idea that her acquiescence was more about stopping the spanking than agreeing to go home.

"Don't think you're fooling me for a second, little Miss Trouble!" He continued spanking her bottom. He wanted to be sure she would still feel it in the morning.

More hard spansks landed exactly where Marigold's bottom was stinging the worst. She fought crying, but when she started, she couldn't seem to stop herself. When he continued to spank her, she progressed to sobbing, and again she couldn't stop. Her backside was aching and stinging.

When he did stop spanking her, Marigold expected to be dumped off his lap. She didn't expect him to take a seat on the trunk, pull her into his lap, and let her cry on his shoulder.

Something happened to Clay when Marigold was sobbing on his shoulder. He had been feeling a twinge of guilt for setting her bottom on fire. He stopped that guilt in its tracks. He stiffened his spine and patted her on the shoulder ineffectually. He was not going to feel sorry for her.

Montana Territory was wild and dangerous. It was more lawless than not, and a young woman running around on her own was plain foolishness. She needed to be with her family, and under the protection of her father or uncle whichever was the case. He wasn't sure who to believe.

All the same, he was going to take pretty Miss Marigold O'Rourke home where she belonged. Maybe he would be able to find work there. Bearmouth had a long history of being a rough town.

Bearmouth was a trading post for the mining towns nearby. It also had a ferry crossing the Clark Fork River. Even he had heard of the fancy Grand Hotel that had been built to provide shelter for travelers heading west. William 'Bill' O'Rourke was a legend for making Bearmouth a decent place to live.

Once the tears had been mopped dry, Clay marched Marigold to the Virginia City Hotel. He told Mr. Erwin, the owner of the

hotel, that the young woman was under house arrest. He asked Mr. Erwin to stand guard on her door until Clay collected his belongings and returned.

He went to his boarding house, packed the few things he owned, and took his bedroll with him to the hotel. He explained that he would be sleeping in the hallway outside of Miss O'Rourke's room. He was her protection against the men she had arrested in case they decided on revenge for being humiliated. The hotel proprietor didn't like it, although he reluctantly agreed the young woman should be protected.

Clay dropped his bedroll in the hallway and knocked on Miss O'Rourke's hotel room door.



MARIGOLD OPENED THE DOOR, heard what Deputy Clay Montgomery had to say, and slammed the door in his face. She cursed him under her breath. She was furious. She was still trying to rub the sting from her sore bottom, and now he had decided to play sentry when she didn't need anyone acting as her chaperone.

What she needed was to find an exit from the hotel room. She needed to follow the trail of her two escaped prisoners. She would have rather taken them into custody in town, with witnesses as she had done earlier in the day. According to Deputy Montgomery, the law in Virginia City was corrupt. Sheriff Plummer had ruined her plans.

She wasn't ready to surrender to defeat. At least not yet. She was determined to prove to her uncle that she could be a deputy. She could shoot better than most men, ride better and faster than most, too. What she didn't have in size, since she'd stopped growing at five feet and one lousy inch, she accounted for in grit and determination. She wasn't about to let a nosy, interfering man get in her way.

Marigold squinted her eyes together. What she needed was a new plan.

She decided she would have to wait for nightfall. There was only one exit from the room, and Clay Montgomery was blocking it, or so he thought. She waited impatiently as the streets below filled with rough talking men, loud laughter, and harsh giggling women she wouldn't qualify with a name.

She climbed inside the chifferobe so no one could hear and began to tear the bed sheet into wide strips. She very quietly, twisted and tied the long pieces of cloth together. She bided her time as the town eventually quieted as even the rowdiest of men and women had nowhere to go after the saloons closed.

She listened at the door of her room and heard light snores on the other side. Not daring to go to sleep, she waited for the first few streaks of dawn to brighten the skies. She tied one end of her makeshift rope to the brass bed frame and tossed the rest of it out the window. She tossed her valise to the ground below. Wearing trousers, a boy's shirt and boots, she backed out of the window, and shimmied down the knotted sheets to make her escape.