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BROADWAY AND MAIN STREET

Another Kind of Courage Has It All Over Standard Heroics

By BILLY ROSE

Recently, a doctor in Maine sent me a story about a courageous kid and, unless I'm getting soft in the heart, it's the most touching tale of heroism I've come across in a long time . . . .

Some time ago, the medico got a hurry-up telephone call to come out to a small summer camp 20 miles west of Bangor. There, half an hour later, he examined a six-year-old girl and found that one of her legs was broken and that she had lost a lot of blood from a gash in her thigh.

Billy Rose

The story, as he got it from the mother, was that the girl and her brother, aged 7, had gotten into the loft of an abandoned barn and, when a rotted plank gave way, she had fallen, broken her leg and ripped her thigh on a piece of rusty farm machinery.

As the doctor was cauterizing the cut and setting the leg, the boy—his name was Pete—kept watching from the doorway with worried interest.

"Is Molly going to be all right?" he asked when the splints were in place.

"She's lost a lot of blood," said the doctor, "but if she gets past the crisis tonight, everything will be okay."

"What's a crisis?"

"It's—well, I guess it's the time when a person is sickest."

"When people lose a lot of blood, do they die?"

"Sometimes. You see, the heart needs a certain amount to keep going. In a way, it's like the motor of a car—it stops running if it doesn't get gasoline."

"I see," said Pete.

* * *

LATER THAT NIGHT, the little girl's pulse began to slow up.

"I'm afraid your daughter needs an immediate transfusion," the doctor told the father, "but there's a complication. She has an unusual type of blood, and I doubt whether the blood bank in Bangor has it in stock."

"Her brother has the same type," said the father. "I know, because the pediatrician who examined the kids last year told me so . . . ."

Pete looked startled a minute later when his dad asked him if he would give up a cup of blood to help his sister get well.

"How can I?" the boy asked.

"The doctor does it with a little rubber tube."

"Can I think about it?"

"Sure," said the father, "but don't take too long."

Pete went to his room, and his parents heard him close the door. Five minutes later, he was back, looking very earnest. "All right," he said.

* * *

WHEN IT WAS over, the doctor bandaged the boy's arm and told him to lie down and take it easy. But instead, the kid went out on the porch and, when his father found him there at midnight, his face was white and his fingers were clenched.

"What's the matter, Pete?"

"Oh, nothing," said the boy.

"Look here," said his father. "There's something going on in that head of yours. What is it?"

"I was wondering how long it will take."

"How long will what take?"

"How long it will take me to die."

"To do what?"

"To die," repeated the boy. "It's like the doctor said—when there isn't enough blood, the motor stops running."

"I see," said the father. "When you gave your sister a cup of blood, you figured you were going to die yourself."

"Sure," said Pete. "That's why I wanted to think it over."

What Makes Billy Run?

Condensed from Time

A Rose that Rose

Around the corner in the Bronx scuttled a wild-eyed runt. His tiny head was ducked between high, skinny shoulders, his nose was bleeding, and he sobbed as he ran. After him pounded three bigger boys. One by one they gave up the chase; the runt ran too fast. He is running still.

In his 47 years, Billy Rose had sprinted breathlessly from grinding poverty to easeful wealth. He ran first from a career as a speed-champion stenographer to a career as one of the most successful songwriters in Tin Pan Alley history. He ran on to fortune and fame as a night-club proprietor and one of the greatest showmen of his time. As a columnist (at roughly $52,000 a year) he is currently showing impressive stamina and speed in a fiercly competitive branch of journalism. After only nine months of newspaper distribution, his "Pitching Horseshoes" has landed in some 175 papers. He expects to close a deal sewing up 3000 weekly newspapers.

He works at least 14 hours a day. About ten he gets up, bathes, shaves and starts the day's business at his three bedroom phones. He rarely reaches the office before 2 p.m., frequently drifts home from a nightclub after 3 a.m. "My only exercise," he once jeered contentedly, " is a brisk walk to the bathroom."

That is life fashioned for himself by William Samuel Rosenberg, born in 1899 on a kitchen table on Manhattan's Lower East Side. His father was a peddler who would rather have been a poet.

In slum neighborhoods the runt gets picked on. "I had to fight to stay alive," Billy recalls, " and I always lost." But one day he came back with a heavy lock dangling at the end of a strap. He had knocked out two of his attackers and the rest beat it. Billy learned the lesson: plainly, all men are not created equal—but there are equalizers.

Buck Hunt. The greatest equalizer, Billy soon found, was money. Says he: "I spent the first 40 years of my life in the buck hunt." Just before grammar-school graduation, Billy desperately wanted a new suit. Where could he get the $5? While he was wondering, the school offered a $5 prize for the best English composition. Billy won it with a description of the emotions of a boy running. "I realized then," says Billy, " that the only guy this razz-ma-tazz world would pay was a specialist."

A year later young Mr. Rosenberg was a specialist—and making $50 a week after school. By determined practice he had become a crack stenographer. John R. Gregg, whose shorthand system Billy used, gave him a job as a demonstrator. Soon Rose could take 280 words a minute, real champ form. When he quit high school, in his third year, he was making as much as $200 a week from his shorthand.

Way to the Top. When the United States went to war, Billy went to work for Bernard Baruch's War Industries Board at $1800 a year. Soon he began spending nights at Baruch's house, taking dictation from the great man himself. The year in Washington was decisive for Billy's career. " I saw big men. They talked tough, but they talked from information. I decided I wanted to be like them."

Back in New York after the war, Billy met some songwriters. They looked to him like "a buncha dumb-heads"—until he was told they made 40 and 50 grand a year. "Just like that", says Rose, "I decided that this was the grift for me."

Billy picked up the art of songwriting in his own brash but methodical way. He spent three months, nine hours a day, in the New York Public Library dissecting hit songs of the previous 30 years. Of the "silly-syllable" songs, for example, Billy discovered that those built around the double-o sound were the most successful. On this principle he carefully constructed "Barney Google" ('with the goo goo googly eyes'). It was a smash hit. His songs that year made more than $60,000. In the next eight years, following his formulas, he wrote more than 300 songs. Forty were hits. His songs still bring him about $18,000 a year.

Billy now shortened his name and began to gild the Rose. He acquired a fancy flat, a new wardrobe, a valet. In 1927 he met Fanny Brice and wrote her a vaudeville act. Two years later they were married. Fanny had long been Broadway's leading comedienne; to her flock of friends, Billy was just "Mr. Brice". Billy began looking around for an equalizer. In 1930 he decided to become a Broadway producer.

Bantan Barnum. Billy Rose's skyrocket career as a showman began with a miserable fizzle called "Corned Beef & Roses. Desperately he rewrote it, renamed it "Sweet & Low". Though it had Fanny Brice in some of the original Baby Snooks routines, it thudded again. Bill rewrote the show a second time, renamed it "Crazy Quilt" and took it on the road. It played to packed houses and in nine months he made $250,000 clear profit.

During prohibition Billy established the Backstage Club, a little "speak" which his bingo-bango-bungo type of shows made popular. Just after repeal he was hired by an underworld syndicate, backed by some of the Brooklyn Beer Gang, to run a big Broadway night called the Casino de Paree. He revolutionized the night club business with his plan to attract the masses: crowd them together—they'll communicate the excitement through their elbows; keep the prices reasonable, the liquor good and the food edible; make the acts loud enough to outshout the customers and short enough to give them a chance to drink up.

Billy and the Beer Gang "separated in 1934. In parting Billy rashly

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