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# THE TAIKING TYPEWRITER



LOTHROP, LEE & SHEPARD CO.
BOSTON NEW YORK

219-37

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FIRST EDITION

40-372

Printed in the United States of America

RECEIVED

OCT 1 1 1940

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For

MARK FLANIGAN

Author and Illustrator

of

MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS



THE TALKING TYPEWRITER



Jiminy Cricket," said Johnny Hopkins the first time he saw his shiny new typewriter. "Won't I make that old thing go!"

He jumped up on a chair and sat with his two legs tucked under him so he could reach the keys better.

He looked carefully for the letters that spelled his name and then, with his first finger, banged each key as hard as he could.



There were some funny looking keys at each end of the machine's keyboard and Johnny tried them all. At last he pressed one that stayed down and refused to come up.

Then Johnny saw a key with a Star on it and he struck it with three mighty bangs.

Suddenly a great roaring noise came from inside the typewriter and stars, periods, commas, hyphens, parentheses, apostrophes, exclamation points, and question marks appeared all over the paper. They whirled and danced for a few seconds and then they took the shape of a funny, fierce-looking little man.





He had a square, lantern-like face; his arms and legs were long and thin, and his elbows and knees had big, bulging joints.

His eyes were two round O's with periods in the center, his nose was a large V, and his mouth was a long, straight line of hyphens.

"SHATTER MY STARS," he shouted, "no wonder you're the best batter on your baseball team, if you hit balls the way you've been striking these keys."

If Johnny had been astonished before when the figure of the little man had appeared, he was a thousand times more surprised now to hear the voice, which seemed to come from somewhere inside the typewriter.



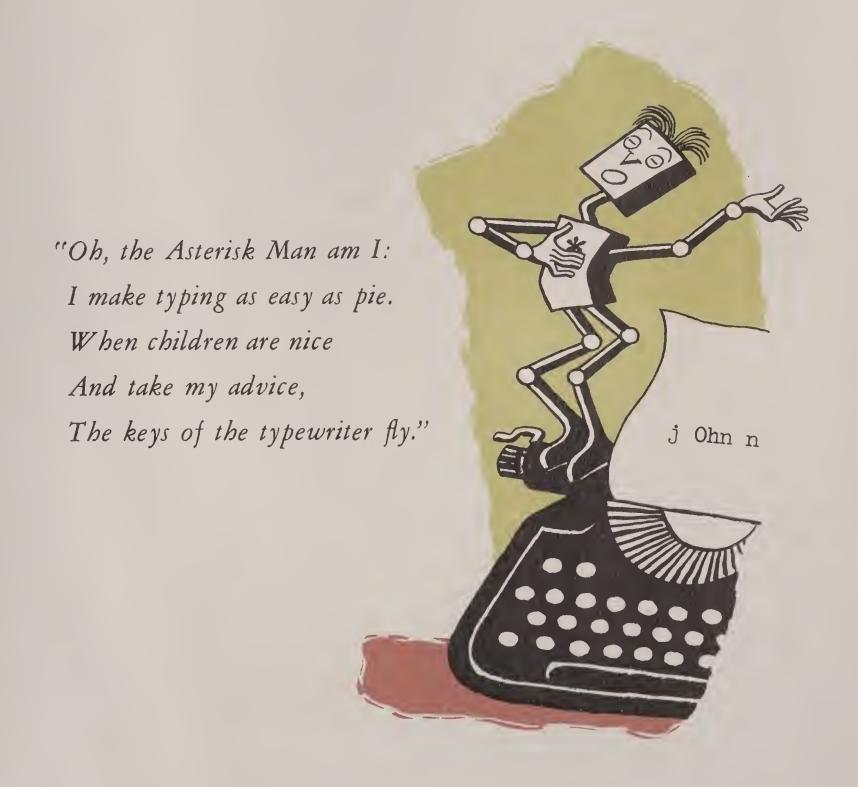
Johnny blinked.

"Who are you?" he asked.

The little man leaped lightly off the paper and perched on the typewriter roller.

"Who am I?" he roared. "Why, I'm the Asterisk Man!"

He made a sweeping bow and with his hand over his heart began to sing in a most unmusical, clacking voice:





"I'll take your advice, all right," said Johnny. "I need to know how to typewrite." Then he added, confidentially, "I love to write stories and I want to be an Author!"

The Asterisk Man leaned forward and thoughtfully cupped his chin in his hands.

"You mean you don't want to join the Giants or the Yankees when you grow up?" he asked in amazement.

"No," said Johnny. "I'd rather just watch them play. I'm nine now, but I've been writing ever since I was young and, honest, I'm going to be an Author."

"Fine," said the Asterisk Man. "Getting an early start in your profession has many advantages. I'm ready to help you whenever you call upon me."

"How can I do that?" asked Johnny.

"Oh," said the Asterisk Man, "I shall make up a Secret Signal. Whenever you give that signal exactly, I shall appear. Listen!"

"Tap five times upon the star And I will come from near or far."

"Oh, that's easy," said Johnny.

"Not so easy, Mr. Johnny Hunt-and-pecker-slam-and-banger Hop-kins," said the Asterisk Man. "Remember, I said that the signal must be given *exactly.*"

The Asterisk Man stood up and, with another deep bow, began to march across the keys. With his long thin feet he tapped each key lightly and squarely in the center, and the typewriter went clack-clack-clack in even time.



# As he marched, the Asterisk Man sang to Johnny:

"You must tap the stars
Exactly right,
Square in the center,
Sharp and light;
And when that's done,
You must look to see
If the printed stars
Shine perfectly.
For, if around them
Shadows fall,
Our secret code
Won't work at all."

When the Asterisk Man finished his song, Johnny heard the tinkling of a little bell. The Asterisk Man touched his forehead in salute and said, "I hear the Magic Bell—my visit's ended—and, now, Farewell!"

And before Johnny could say "Jack Robinson" he had vanished.



Before Johnny went to sleep that night, he read over all the stories he had ever written. Most of them were pretty good, he thought, but MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS was the best, so that was the first story he would choose to typewrite.

The next day was Saturday, and Johnny never had any trouble waking up on that day. He jumped up and bolted his breakfast. Soon he was seated at the typewriter with his story beside him.

He decided not to call the Asterisk Man until after he had written a couple of pages, and then he'd give the Secret Signal and show the old fellow how smart he was.

So Johnny pecked away with two fingers and, when he made a mistake, he didn't worry much about it. He just crossed it out with a row of deeply cut, black hyphens. It took longer than he thought to find the letters and, when he had finished with the first two pages, he sighed with satisfaction and looked at them admiringly.

MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS was beginning to look like a real book!

This is how the title page and the list of chapters looked:

M)-MWAMA--M-IM-

MONTANA JIM

AND

HIS PALS

型王-

JOHN NY H)OPKI N S COPYRIGHT I(940

-th--\* THE BL ACK HAWK PR ESS

OH- CH APTERS

IRIDE TH OROUGH THE NIGHT

II FOLLOWING T HE CL UE

III REDSKINS BITE THE DU ST

IV ARRIVLE AT KNI GHT COUNTY

V SURPRISE'.

VI C'MON C A LICO'.

-44-

Now Johnny was ready to show his work to the Asterisk Man. He remembered the Secret Signal:

"Tap five times upon the star

And I will come from near or far."

Slowly and firmly Johnny pressed down the Star five times and, after each stroke, he allowed his finger to remain a few seconds on the key. Then he waited expectantly.

But no Asterisk Man appeared.

Johnny looked to see if the Stars were registered on the paper and, sure enough, there they were.



They weren't clear though; there were smudgy shadows around them. The Asterisk Man had said that, unless they shone perfectly, the signal wouldn't work.

Johnny decided that he'd better try again. He'd tap the Star key "square in the center, sharp and light."

So he did just that, taking his finger off quickly after each stroke, as though the key were hot, and he had no sooner glanced to see that the Stars were perfectly clear, like this:

\* \* \* \* \*

than a great clacking arose within the typewriter and this time the Asterisk Man jumped right out from behind the paper and calmly sat himself down on Johnny's left wrist.



"so HELP MY HYPHENS," he groaned, "the way you've been pounding on my Punctuation Marks this morning has just about wrecked me for the day."

"I didn't hit them any harder than the regular letters, did I?" asked Johnny.

The Asterisk Man rubbed his stomach very gently and squinted his eyes as if in pain.

"No, young fellow, I guess you didn't," he said, "but, you see, they're my tender spots. When I get hard bangs on my Hyphens and Underlines, I feel as if my innards were being torn apart—and my Periods and Commas give me no end of trouble."



"From now on I'll be awful careful of your Weak Spots," said Johnny, and the Asterisk Man bowed his thanks.

Then the Asterisk Man stood up on Johnny's wrist and leaned over to examine the two pages of the story that Johnny had typed.

When he finished reading the list of chapters, the Asterisk Man clapped his hands and shouted, "DRAT MY DIAGONALS, if it doesn't look as if it might be a real good yarn. Tell me the end!"

But Johnny said no, for that was going to be his secret, and no one—not even the Asterisk Man—could see it until it was all typewritten.

The Asterisk Man looked disappointed, but he said, "I'll help you edit those pages you just typed."

"Edit," said Johnny. "What does that mean?"

"It means that every writer, before he takes a page of his typewriting out of the machine, must read over what he has written and correct his mistakes," said the Asterisk Man. "Oh, sure," said Johnny, pleased to think of himself as a real editor, "I can do that easy as pie."

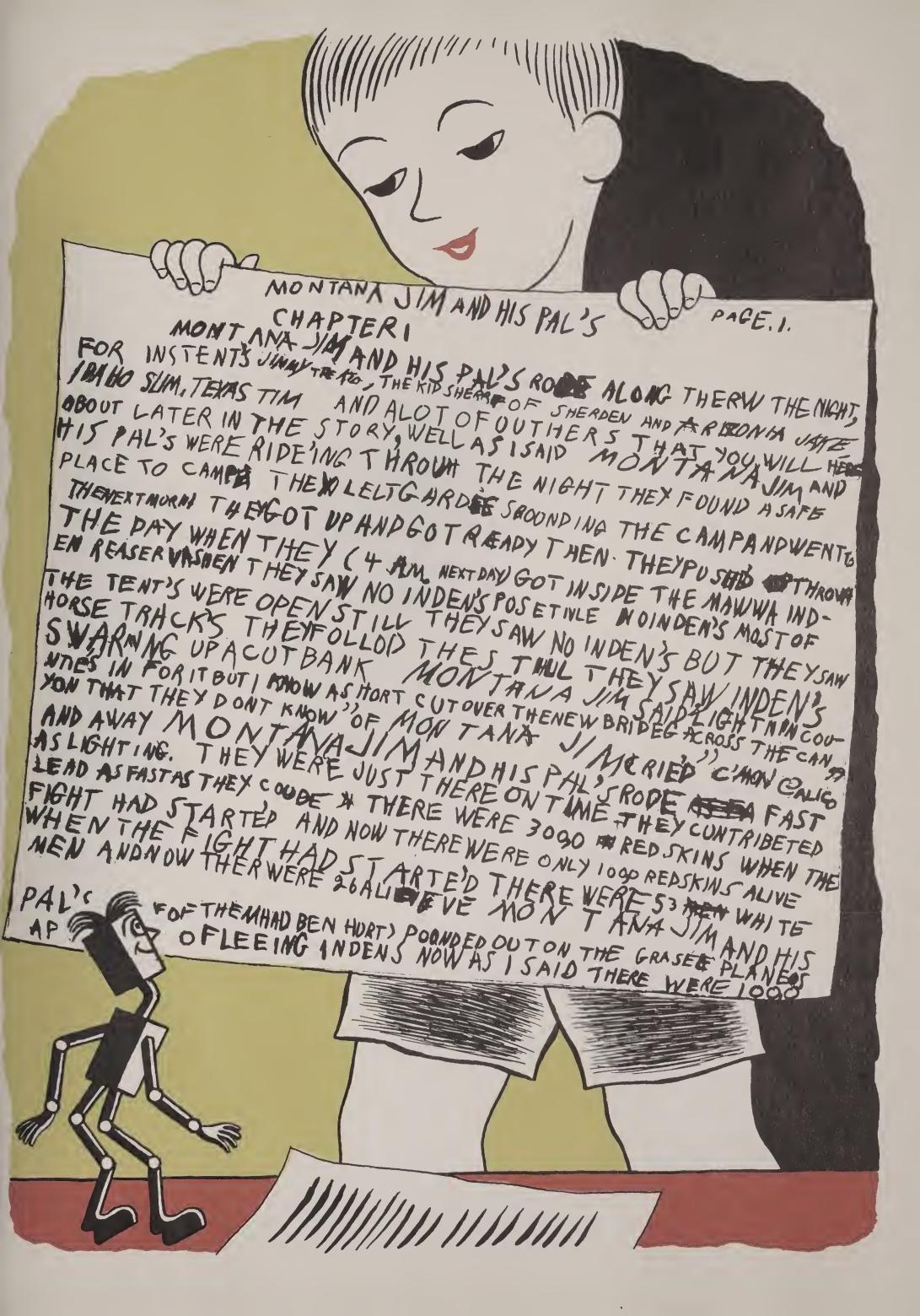
The Asterisk Man pointed to "arrivle". "That's wrong," he said and sang,

"I couldn't spell so well when I was young," Johnny admitted, but I never make mistakes any more—that is, practically never."

"Let's see," said the Asterisk Man, "you're nine now. How old were you when you made up this Indian story?"

"It was so long ago, I can hardly remember," said Johnny. "I guess I must have been six. Look how funny I used to spell then!"

He fished under a pile of papers for a sample of his early writing and held it up for the Asterisk Man to see.



"DASH MY DITTO MARKS," shouted the Asterisk Man. "It makes me dizzy just to look at it. Is that whole page all one sentence?"

"Of course not," said Johnny. "What makes you think so?"

"Because I don't see a Period anywhere on it," said the Asterisk Man. "Now, look here, young fellow, I want you to be a *little gentle* with my Periods, but you don't have to leave them out entirely."

"I didn't know all about Punctuation when I was only six," Johnny said.

"That's true," said the Asterisk Man thoughtfully. "Say," he added, "I almost forgot to tell you that when you're typing, you always skip one space after a Comma and two spaces after a Period."

"Two spaces," said Johnny. "Why?"

"Oh," said the Asterisk Man, "just because it gives both of us time to catch our breath before we begin a new sentence." "Oh, I see," said Johnny. "I'll remember. But what do I do when I have to write fast and the old keys stick together and pile up?"

"Just learn to type in even time," said the Asterisk Man. He took a short pencil and a huge notebook from his back pocket and scribbled something.



"Jiminy," said Johnny. "Are you writing a story too?"

"Just a memorandum—so I won't forget to mention ways to keep the keys from sticking and the machine from skipping when I make up our Secret Treaty," said the Asterisk Man carelessly.

"Secret Treaty," gasped Johnny. "Are we really going to have a Secret Treaty?"

"Certainly," answered the Asterisk Man, "and if you do your best to live up to it, our Friendship will last forever and ever." He rose suddenly and stepped nimbly off Johnny's wrist and on to the keyboard where he began to dance and sing slowly and clearly. The words were new to Johnny, but the tune, "Marching Through Georgia" was one of his favorites.



"Watch me as I'm dancing, lad,
I'm tapping on the keys;
Striking each one evenly
Right through from A's to Z's—
Oh, typing tales is lots of fun
And you can write with ease—
When you are typing to rhythm."

Then the Asterisk Man did some funny, fancy steps, while he sang gayly:

"Watch me as I'm dancing, lad,
As slowly as can be,
Strike the keys the way I do
And very soon you'll see
That twenty words a minute
Sound just about like three—
When you are typing to rhythm."



The Asterisk Man stopped dancing and stepped up to the left ribbon spool where he sat down a little wearily. His long, thin legs dangled over the left side of the keyboard.

"Well," he said, "there's our Secret Treaty. Read it, please."

"Secret Treaty," said Johnny. "Where?"

The Asterisk Man turned a little and airily pointed back to the paper in the typewriter.

"Jiminy Cricket," shouted Johnny, "when did you write that?"

"Oh, I tapped it out during my dance," replied the Asterisk Man.

So Johnny quickly rolled the long paper out of the machine. He was thrilled to see how much it looked like some papers he'd seen in his father's law office. He read it aloud, and the Asterisk Man helped him pronounce the hard words.

## SECRET TREATY

### BETWEEN

THE PARTY OF THE FIRST PART,
KNOWN AS "THE ASTERISK MAN"
AND
THE PARTY OF THE SECOND PART,
KNOWN AS JOHNNY HOPKINS

### KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS

That the said Johnny Hopkins, while writing on his typewriter, shall

### FIRST:

Sit erect and tall on a straight chair, with both feet resting on the floor.

### SECOND:

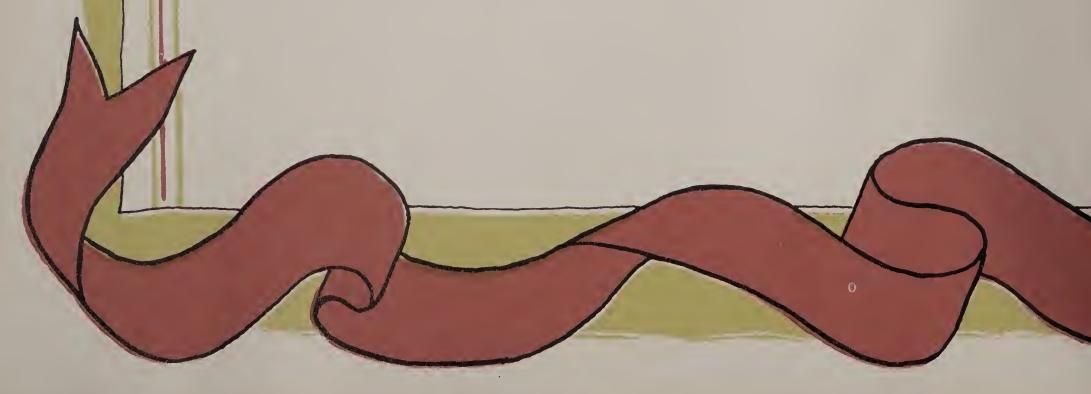
The arms of the said Johnny Hopkins shall be held close to his sides; the four fingers of his left hand shall rest over the letters A S D F and the four fingers of his right hand over; L K J, said letters being known as HOME KEYS.

### THIRD:

The thumbs of the said Johnny Hopkins shall rest on the Space Bar, but the right thumb only shall be used to make spaces.

### FOURTH:

The wrists of the said Johnny Hopkins shall not touch any object whatsoever.



### FIFTH:

The said Johnny Hopkins shall strike the keys lightly and squarely in the center, just hard enough to drive them home.

### SIXTH:

The said Johnny Hopkins shall strike the keys evenly, in perfect time, so that they will not stick, jam or pile.

IN CONSIDERATION OF OBEYING THESE COMMANDS,

THE PARTY OF THE FIRST PART, OTHERWISE KNOWN

AS "THE ASTERISK MAN"

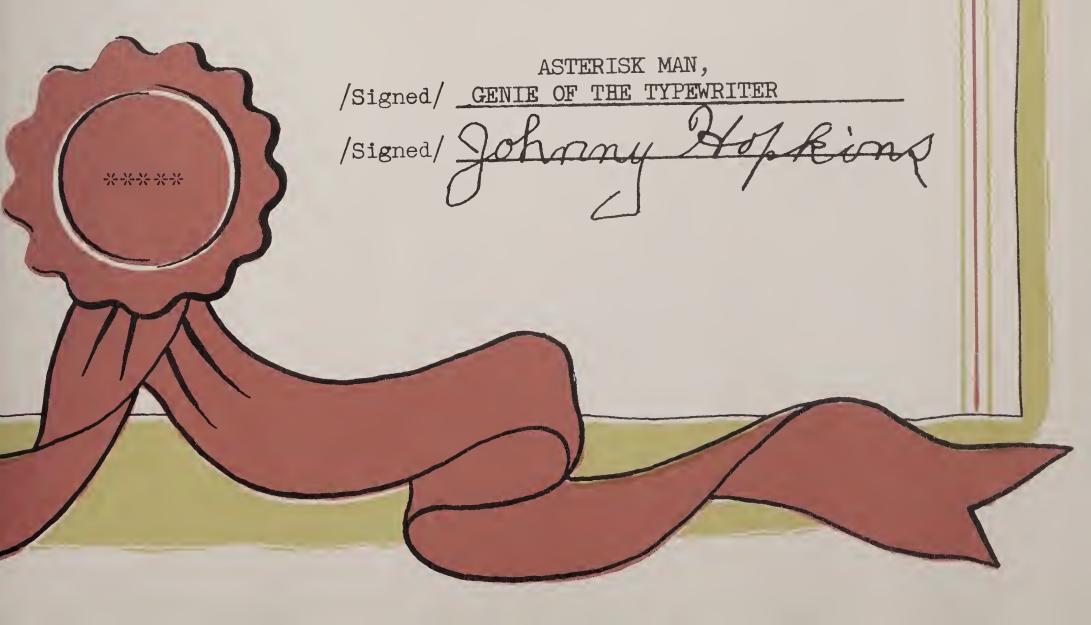
agrees to help, aid and abet the said Johnny Hopkins to become a fine Author and Typist and shall, at the signal of

FIVE TAPS UPON THE STAR

\* \* \* \* \*

ALWAYS AND FOREVER RUSH TO HIS AID.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunto interchange - ably set their hands and seals.



When Johnny finished reading, he gave a long sigh. "Well," he said, "it sounds like a lot to do."

"It is, at first," said the Asterisk Man, "but are you willing to try?"
"You bet I am," Johnny said.

"Fine," answered the Asterisk Man. "Sign here, please," and he pointed to the line below his name. So Johnny wrote his name below the Asterisk Man's.

Suddenly a little bell tinkled gently and the Asterisk Man touched his forehead in salute. "The Magic Bell," he said, as he bowed to Johnny, "and now, Farewell!"

And before Johnny could say "Jack Robinson," he had vanished.

It was funny how lonesome Johnny felt after the Asterisk Man had gone. He carefully thumbtacked the Secret Treaty on the wall over his typewriter and read it through once more.

It was going to be hard to learn to do all those things, but he had given his promise.



Bright and early every morning during the next two weeks Johnny worked away typing MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS.

The first day he sat squarely in front of the typewriter in the exact position demanded by the Secret Treaty and copied Chapter I.

### RIDE THROUGH THE NIGHT.

"M)ONTANS JIM AND HIS PALS RODE ALONG THERW THE NIGHT, FOR INSTENTS, TEXAS TIM, AND WYOMING JEFF, THE KID SHERFF OF SHERIDEN AND A LOT OF OTHERS THAT YOU WILL)HERE) HEAR ABOUT LATER IN THE SOTRY, WELL, AS I SIAD, MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS WERE RIDING THROUGH THE NIGHT. THEY FOUND A SAFE PLACE TO CAMP AND THEY LEFT G ARDES SROUNDING THE CAMP AND WENT TO BED."

Johnny found it pretty hard to keep his feet on the floor, his back straight and his wrists up, while he looked for the letters and kept his mind on the story, but each day at least one of the Asterisk Man's rules became easier to follow.

By the end of the fifth day, Johnny had made MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS follow the horse tracks left by the Indians until they finally caught up with them and killed five Indians. But by that time Johnny was tired of typing so he stopped and drew some pictures to illustrate his story.



MON TANAJIM CRIED "C'MON CALICO"



It took MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS only forty-eight hours to pound out over the grassy plains and shoot the fleeing Indians until all but ninety-seven of them had been killed, but, alas, Johnny had to spend nine or ten days typewriting before he could sit at his machine and keep his wrists up without thinking all the time about his position. He noticed, though, that each day the letters were easier to find. On the tenth day he typed the climax of his story:

## SURPRISE!

IT WAS GETTING DARK AND GESSE WHAT? MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS HAD CHASED THE INDIANS CLEAN BACK (INFACT INSIDE)
TO THE RESERVASHUN. AFTER THAT THEY RODE OVER TO ASK THE SHERFF WHY THE INDIANS WERE ON THE WAR PATH AND THE SHERFF SAID THEY HAD BEEN ON THE WAR PATH BECAUSE THEY WERE SCARED OF THE NEW TRAIN DOWN BY LIGHNING CANYON.

Typing in rhythm was hardest of all to do, because Johnny had to write very slowly in order to strike every key in even time, but the print

was showing up sharp and clear, and finally he began his last chapter.

## C'MON CALICO

THEN THE SHERFF SAID TO MONTANA JIM "HOW COME YOU WEAR A MASK, HUH?" BUT HE SAID IT TOO LATE. MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS HAD JUMPED ON THEIR HORSES AND AS THEY PASSED THE SHERFF'S OFFICE, MONTANA JIM YELLED "C (MON SALICO".

THE SHERFF SAID "WHY DID YOU HEAR WHAT HE CALLED HIS HORSE?" HE'S MONTANE HIM'. BUT MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS WERE ALREADY RIDING OFF INTO THE NIGHT.

## THE END

When Johnny finished the last sentence, he typed over the pages that had lots of mistakes. Then he fastened the sheets together and put on the book cover he had drawn. MONTANA JIM AND HIS PALS certainly looked like a real book!

"There," said Johnny, as he fixed the cover in place, "I hope the Asterisk Man likes this."

Then he began reading the story aloud.

He had just finished his reading when he heard a familiar, unmusical shout of laughter and there, sitting on the roller, with his back resting against the typewriter's name plate, was the Asterisk Man.

"C'MON CALICO," he roared. "Montana Jim sure gave those Indians a merry chase," he said, as he shook with laughter.

"Jiminy Cricket," said Johnny, "were you here all the time I was writing?"

"Of course," said the Asterisk Man. "Wasn't that in our Secret Treaty and didn't I tell you I'm the Genie of the Typewriter?"

"That's so," said Johnny, "but will you always be around when I'm typewriting—even when I'm an old man of—say—twenty?"

"Most certainly," the Asterisk Man answered. "Isn't our Friendship forever and ever?"

## MONTANAJIM



ANDHIS PALS BY Johnny? Hopkins "But if I can't always see you, then how . . ." Johnny began.
"You never see Friendship," said the Asterisk Man. "You just know it's there."

Johnny thought about that for a minute and then he nodded.

"I know what you mean," he said.

"Thought you would!" the Asterisk Man remarked.

He stood up on the roller and stretched himself.

"Ho Hum," he said, "I have five more calls to make today, so I must be going—but maybe we'll have time for a song before I leave." He jumped down on the keys and began dancing and singing his old song. Johnny joined him this time and they both sang gayly:

"Oh, the Asterisk Man am I:

I make typing as easy as pie.

When children are nice

And take my advice,

The keys of the typewriter fly."



Just as they finished, a faint tinkling sound came from within the typewriter.

The Asterisk Man saluted sharply. "The Magic Bell," he said to Johnny, as a look of understanding passed between them.

And before Johnny could say "Jack Robinson," the Asterisk Man had vanished!



THE END



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