

The Blazing Horizon

CHAPTER XLVII
Those gray slits of eyes were Tom Benton's; there was no mistaking them. Tony Harrison had seen them, nine years before, glancing at the lifeless form of a man in a little saloon in Caldwell, and he had not forgotten them.

And now he could hear Benton's voice come faintly through the glass, high-pitched, threatening, as he glared at Morrison in the chair: "All right; I'll give you one more chance to open it. I'll count ten. Then—" and he deliberately broke off and waved the revolver in his hand in a significant gesture.

Outside, Tony Harrison slowly raised his own gun and leveled it. But Benton presented a bad target. There was to begin with, the barred window between them. And Benton was fairly well shielded from an outside foe, partly by his own companion, partly by Morrison.

The young man thought quickly. There was small likelihood, true, of a bullet's being deflected by the window pane—still, there remained the possibility. And if he should hit Benton, Morrison might be the man to take the blame for the other man or by Benton's own convulsive finger pressure.

If Morrison held out in his dogged determination not to open the safe, he would have to fire. If not, he could wait outside for the pair to gather their loot and surprise them as they left.

He heard Benton counting and held his breath, his finger tightening on the trigger of the slender weapon in his hand: "Four . . . six . . ." Benton's eyes narrowed to mere cracks. They gleamed viciously. Suddenly Morrison nodded and gave up.

A smile contorted the scrawled face of the man in front of him. "Come to your senses, did you? Now be quick about it. We're done fooling with you."

From his post at the window, Harrison could see the bank cashier, his face bloodily kneel beside the safe and twist the knob. The heavy door swung open and Benton shoved him roughly out of the way and motioned for the man with the bag to get busy.

Ignoring the silver, the man swept neat little stacks of currency into the bag while Benton kept his six-gun trained on Morrison. The first few pattering drops of rain, heralds of the coming downpour, fell against the face of the watcher outside and a minute later the man beside the safe straightened up with a nod. The job was done.

"I ought to plug you anyway," Benton said savagely to Morrison, "for being so damn stubborn. God—" but his companion with a sudden exclamation, touched his arm and gestured nervously toward the door. "Let him be, Tom; we better hurry."

Benton reluctantly backed away. He growled something at the cashier that Harrison could not hear and swung suddenly around.

The man outside breathed a sigh of relief and glided back into the shadows beside the horses. The man he had struck over the head still lay like a felled tree, but he bent swiftly downward and reassured himself with another brief glance at his face. Then, pulling his hat down over his eyes, he took a position close to the horses and waited.

The door of the bank swung open and two figures ran toward him in the darkness. "All right," came Benton's voice. "Let's get away."

Harrison's eyes narrowed, straining in the dark. His jaw tightened. A moment now and—before him loomed two hulky shapes. "I've still got a good mind to kill that damn cashier," Benton growled. "Everything all right, Pete?"

"Everything stops right here, Benton," Tony said calmly. "You and your friend reach up—high." A voice gasped: "Something's wrong, Tom!" and the two dim figures paused in their advance.

"What the hell!" Benton rapped out. "Ain't that you, Pete? What—"

"No, this isn't Pete," Harrison said coolly. "This is a reception committee here to give you a welcome. Benton's gone to the morgue; he moved intuitively to one side—and a few other things. I'm giving you a chance to surrender, although I'd like nothing better."

He was interrupted by an oath from Benton. A black shadow ducked suddenly and a pistol barrel. A horse screamed in agony and the others bolted in panic.

"You asked for it, Benton," Tony said deliberately and fired. He threw himself to the ground, prone, and fired again and heard Benton groan.

"Now, then," said Harrison, addressing himself to Benton's companion, "if you want the same dose—"

Light sprang suddenly from the side window of the bank, and the faint illumination he saw Benton's companion standing with arms uplifted in a downpour of rain.

"Now, I'd call that real sensible," Tony drawled. He raised his voice and called, "Morrison!" There was an answering cry from the bank and Morrison came running.

"Just relieve that gent of his hardware," Tony ordered. "There's something here I want to look at." He approached the fallen Benton warily, feeling first for the man's hands. Then he felt a sudden nausea and spoke once more to the surprised bank cashier. "You'd better look at him, Morrison; I've changed my mind."

the shade of the cottonwoods along the river's edge he spoke now and then in a confidential tone to his mount. "About fifteen miles to go, Cherokee. We'll be there before sundown without half trying."

As he rode along he thought of many things; the landscape had taken on a familiar aspect and here and there were stretches that were recognizable as scenes of earlier wanderings. "It begins to look like home, Cherokee. Is that what you're trying to tell me?"

His gaze took in the vista of green and rolling land and suddenly he was swept by a wistful regret that he would not behold that land many more times in its present virgin state. Two years, or three, or four, and a mighty avalanche of humanity would sweep across the Cherokee Strip just as he had seen it sweep across Oklahoma in the fierce rush of men for homes that were free.

"It had to come, Cherokee horse. It had to come. It's no use trying to stand up against the tide of civilization. . . . I wonder what Joe Craig will say when I roll up to the Bar K. Of course, I oughtn't to expect him to fall on my neck with joy after the way I treated him, but he ought to be right glad to know that Benton won't bother anybody any more. Am I right, Cherokee?"

The stallion flung up his head and lengthened his strides. "Impatient, now that we're almost there, aren't you?" said Tony Harrison. "Me, now, I feel just the opposite. The closer I come the more nervous I get. I'd sure be upset if Joe Craig decided he was through with me."

The sun slowly swung down toward the point where earth and sky were joined. From a glaring yellow sphere it had turned into a ball of orange and Tony Harrison faced it as he rode.

Presently he cut away from the Salt Fork and swung north up a gentle rise. The horse went up with never a slackening of his pace, but once at the top Tony checked him and faced him around.

"I want to take a good look from here, partner. There won't be many more, I expect." He sighed. "Doggone it, I'm going to kick myself yet for coming back—it's doing things to me, Cherokee. I should've stayed in Guthrie."

He swept his hat from his head and let it dangle carelessly from his hand, after which he sat for several minutes in silent contemplation of the sunset. "Isn't that pretty, old timer?" he said presently. "I've seen the sunset many a time. Quiet, Cherokee!" for the horse had shifted his head suddenly and snorted. "Quiet, I say! Now what the devil—"

There crept over him then the realization that he and Cherokee were not alone. Someone was near. Instinctively he felt who it was, and yet somehow he dared not turn around for fear that he should be wrong.

And then someone spoke. "Did you come all the way out here to see the sunset, Tony?" Rita's voice! Rita! He felt a queer, throttled sensation in his chest and slowly swung around in the saddle, his face as white as the blaze on Cherokee's forehead.

He saw her then, standing beside her horse, the bridle reins dangling in her hand. And he could not speak but sat there and stared at her, the picture of stupefaction.

"I was behind those trees there when I saw you come riding up," she said awkwardly and inclined her head in the direction from which she had come. "So I just stayed where I was. Did I surprise you?" Her voice then was light, casual; but the paleness of her cheeks gave the lie to her carefree manner and apparently she could not control the nervous trembling of the hand that held the bridle reins.

Tony Harrison found words at last but his emotions had slipped beyond lingual reach. "Why—why, Rita, he stammered, "I never thought—"

"To find me here, she finished for him. "And that's why you came. Of course, I know that." She swung here eyes away from him toward the vanishing sun.

"He trembled. Was he mistaken or had there been mistiness in her voice? He strived for expression, floundered, gave up helplessly. "Hain't we better move on?" she asked coolly, after a long pause.

"I guess so. Your father there?" "Yes." "He hesitated awkwardly. "See here, Rita, I've been right ashamed over that affair in Washington."

"Oh that!" She laughed queerly. "I forgave you long ago—I was rather glad it happened." "He stared in surprise. "Glad." "It showed me a picture of someone's character."

GIRLHOOD TO MOTHERHOOD

Iowa Woman Found Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound Always Helpful



Vinton, Iowa.—"When I was seventeen years old I had to stay at home from school. I finally had to quit school. I was so weak I suffered for about two years before I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Then I picked up one of your books and read it. I began taking the medicine. Now I am a housekeeper with six children, and I have taken it before each one was born. I cannot tell you all the good I have received from it. When I am not as well as can be I take it. I have been doing this for over thirteen years and it always helps me. I read all of your little books I can get and I tell everyone I know what the Vegetable Compound does for me."—Mrs. Frank Sellers, 510 7th Avenue, Vinton, Iowa.

Many girls in the fourth generation are learning thru their own personal experiences the beneficial effects of Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. Mothers who took it recommend it to their daughters as a dependable medicine.

loved you—for years and years—and I very nearly did a dreadful thing. She clung to him. "I'm so happy, dear; so happy."

He held her for a long time and then, as if by a common impulse, they straightened and turned in their saddles to watch the rim of the sun dip below the blazing horizon. Neither spoke, and when they swung their horses around to go the shadows had vanished from the earth.

"I have suffered, Tony," she told him as they rode toward the ranch house. "If I could have found you before you left that night I would have told you not to leave me."

He nodded solemnly. "Your father," he said presently—"has he forgiven me?" "My father," she answered, "is considerably wiser than either of us. He will always be proud of you."

"Will he mind if I take you to Guthrie?" "Is that where you live?" He grinned. "I'm almost ashamed to admit it, but I'm a prosperous business man. From the show business I sort of drifted into hardware—wait till Joe Craig hears about that; it'll kill him."

She laughed happily. Out of the darkness ahead a light twinkled and moved along and the sound of someone whistling drifted to their ears.

"That will be one of the boys in the corral," said Tony and puckered his lips and joined the whistler. A man's voice hailed them. "That you, Rita?"

"Yes, Joe; but I'm not alone." The light moved toward them. "Who's with you?" "Someone you'll be glad to see."

The lantern hung motionless and from Craig's quarter there was silence. "See here, Rita," he called presently in a queer voice; "you're not telling me that it's—it's—"

Tony Harrison's answer interrupted him. "Juliana and I got it. It's me, Joe. Here I come!" He touched Cherokee with the spur and made straight for the light.

THE END.

MELROSE MAN ADDS VALUABLE HEIFERS TO JERSEY HERD

Vincent Preschern of Melrose has recently purchased three registered Jersey heifers of excellent blood lines to add to his high grade dairy herd. The heifers are from 18 to 22 months of age and came from the herd of Mrs. Minnie B. Plank of Junction City, Ore.

One of the animals secured by Rena's St. Mawes Evelyn, an outstanding individual with excellent dairy conformation, being bred by St. Mawes Last Duke, a Registrar of Merit bull. Her dam is Evelyn's Silver Chimes Rena, a splendid cow with high production records. Mr. Preschern is milking twenty-one cows at the present time and, with his young animals and bulls, has a herd of thirty-five head.

DEMOCRATS IN HAPPY MOOD AT JACKSON RALLY

Factional Strife of 1924 Succeeded by Show of Good Feeling

HARMONY PLEAS WIN Differences of Opinion on Dry Law Develop; Lack of Enforcement Is Laid to G. O. P.

(Associated Press Leased Wire) WASHINGTON, Jan. 13.—With the fires of Jacksonian Democracy kindled anew, the Democratic party was a square away today for the task of selecting its presidential nominee next June at Houston, Texas.

The picture of a pathway to the White House, illuminated by the principles of Jackson and Jefferson, stands before the party leaders, portrayed to them last night by a parade of contenders for the nomination who voiced pleas for internal accord and a united front for the coming campaign.

All of the prominently mentioned candidates, except Governor Smith of New York, who sent a message, appeared before party leaders.

All of the factional strife that has marked recent party history appeared forgotten at the banquet table, the one suggestion of controversy coming with a triple mention of prohibition. The subject was introduced by Governor Ritchie of Maryland, who urged that prohibition be settled by self-determination and home rule.

That prompted John W. Davis, the 1924 standard bearer and the banquet toastmaster, to voice his opinion that the test of a candidate's fitness should not be based upon his views on prohibition.

The other mention was by Dan Moody, Texas' youthful governor, who said the Republican party must be held responsible for failure to enforce the eighteenth amendment. He added his view that the amendment could be repealed and that the Democratic party should unite for law enforcement.

The assemblage cheered the reading of the message from Governor Smith, who said the press of official business kept him at home. The message counseled the party to adhere to the principles of Jackson and to apply them in its platform to the problems of the day.

While applause shattered the silence that marked the reading of the letter and as the diners rose to their feet William G. McAdoo, Smith's opponent in the 1924 convention deadlock, stood up, smiling.

McAdoo declared he was an ex-candidate, forbearing to give the party advice except to urge unity of purpose and action.

Similar counsel came from other speakers, with some of them interspersing jibes at the Republican party. A lighter side was offered by Will Rogers, the comedian, who wise-cracked his way to continuous applause by poking fun at both Democratic and Republican parties and personalities.

Claude G. Bowers sounded the keynote of the gathering with a plea for a return of the policies of the party founders. He attacked past and present Republican administrations and asserted that the Democratic party had for an issue "equal rights to all and special privilege to none." If it stood with its founders.

The same sentiment was voiced by Senator Reed of Missouri, Evans Woolson of Indiana, Senator Robinson of Arkansas, Representative Garrett of Tennessee, and nearly a score of others.

With a large portrait of Jackson to look upon, the banqueters gathered at the Mayflower Hotel, with Mrs. Woodrow Wilson in the chair as guest of honor.

Before Der Smash Up Arrive Du It

Yust sum soon ve got freezing weather rain snow an so fort. Aye notice dat et bane party dangerous tu run Oatmobile. Last winter lot fallar got car smashed up not tu say nothing but broken nose, yambud up knee on account day got en rut an kant got out. Ve pay lot klaim for dat kind disaster. Now before ye got en mixup, ve suggest ye got yerself en Oatmobile insurance against damage. Ve ville fix ye up.

NOTICE Benson P. T. A. meeting Monday night, Jan. 16, at 7:30. Special program.

MORE RED APPLES

LEGION GIVES SON OF LOCAL VETERAN CHANCE FOR HEALTH

WALLA WALLA, Wash., Jan. 14.—How seven-year-old William White, son of Levi White, a tubercular veteran in the U. S. hospital here, was obtained hospitalization at Edgcliff Sanitarium, Spokane, under the child welfare fund of the American Legion, was told here Saturday by members of Walter Lee Post, American Legion, who took up the case of the lad, also threatened with the disease, at the meeting of December 27 and received authorization Saturday to send the lad, in his mother's custody, to Spokane.

In less than two weeks, with telegraphic communications both to national and state headquarters, William's case was pushed through by local legionnaires, the first of its kind ever to be acted upon favorably here. Out of a national fund of \$5,000,000, William is assured three months' care at Edgcliff with all expense paid. It was said. After three months, if the case continues to be active, the legion probably will extend its aid.

Levi White is the father of three children, the others being in good health. It is said Mrs. White, who plans to go to Spokane to be near her boy, is also said to be in poor health because of a throat ailment.

George Livengood, commander of the post here, was well pleased Saturday with the result of the White case. The father, he said, is not a legion man.

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WILLIAMS Colored Singers AT Junior High School Tuesday, Jan. 17, 7:30 p. m. Program: Plantation Songs, Melodies, Classics. ADMISSION 25c-35c

NOTICE ODD FELLOWS Funeral of our late brother, W. F. Boggs, will be held Sunday afternoon. Please be on hand at hall at 1:30 p. m. A. J. GEDDES, Secy.

Turkeys We will be in the market for turkeys JANUARY 17 AND 18

FOODS FOR WINTER HEALTH

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Before Der Smash Up Arrive Du It