

GUNLOCK RANCH

by FRANK H. SPEARMAN

Copyright Frank H. Spearman WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Sleepy Cat, desert town of the Southwest, is celebrating the Fourth of July. Jane Van Tassel, beautiful daughter of Gus Van Tassel, hated owner of Gunlock ranch, has arrived from the East for the first time. She watches the Frontier Day celebration in company with Dr. Carpy, crusty, tender-hearted friend of the community. Henry Sawdy of the Circle Dot ranch, tricked in a fake horse race the day before by Dave McCrossen, foreman at Gunlock, plans revenge. He enters Bill Denison, a handsome young Texas wrangler, in the rodeo which McCrossen is favored to win, and lays heavy bets on him with Harry Bolland, saloonkeeper and enemy of McCrossen. Unknown to the crowd, Denison is a champion horseman. McCrossen and the young stranger tie in the various events. They are then asked to propose their own stunts. McCrossen winning the toss, picks up a handkerchief from the ground riding full speed, facing backward. Denison easily follows a cigarette casually, and it is proposed that he try to pick it up riding full tilt. Racing down the track, Denison picks up the cigarette. McCrossen refuses to attempt the stunt. Entreated by the crowd, Denison agrees to perform another trick. Jane Van Tassel is asked for her bracelet and throws it on the track. Just as Denison rides to pick it up a yell from Barney Hebstock, a McCrossen henchman, scares the pony, nearly costing the rider his life. Gun play is prevented by the intervention of Dr. Carpy.

CHAPTER II—Continued

"Two years ago last winter," "It was done there that winter, I understand," said the Texan evenly. "Of course, it was under artificial light, so they had to use white paper."

"You been in New York, then?" "Once or twice, sir."

"You've seen it done, then?" "I have, sir. And I'm mighty glad I met you," drawled the Texan, cutting the interview short. He was not ungracious, but was somewhat fatigued.

"The boy can ride," said Tenison, rejoicing Sawdy. "I told him I saw that cigarette act done in Madison Square Garden, two years ago. He said he saw it at the same time. I guess that's where he picked it up."

"Picked what up, the cigarette?" "The act. He said they used a white-paper cigarette there on account of the artificial light—so he must have seen it."

"Who's they?" asked Sawdy bluntly.

"I suppose he meant the rider."

"I wonder if he meant himself. Why, Harry, he's the man that introduced that act at the garden, two years ago last winter."

CHAPTER III

TWO years later, back on her old father's ranch after two years in Chicago, Jane was riding the possessions one day to be hers. Wandering on her pony far in the Gunlock hills, she had lost her way toward the close of the day and had stopped to ask directions from a man standing at the door of a poor-looking cabin.

"Why, isn't this Gunlock Ranch?" "Not yet." The man answered the question firmly, Jane thought.

"When I left the house this morning," she said indignantly, "they told me I could ride all day without getting off Gunlock Ranch. I must have ridden about a hundred miles. What did you mean by saying, 'not yet'?" she asked suspiciously.

Bill Denison, before whose door she had halted, looked at Jane with curiosity. "Oh, nothing special," he said casually. "Only, that old man Van Tassel has stolen everything in the hills except this ranch."

At this outburst Jane first stopped breathing—then she breathed furiously. Her features hardened.

"Why, how outrageous!" she exclaimed. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

The young man held his ground. "Let me ask a question. Are you any kin of old man Van Tassel's?" he asked composedly.

"I don't care to discuss that question with you," was her defiant reply.

"I admit, if you are, I was kind of rough, speaking as I did," he went on. "I didn't know he had any relations. I worked for him a year once, and I never heard him tell of any. So I guess I have to apologize."

"I should think you would apologize," declared Jane, scandalized.

"But," he countered, and the "but" was emphatic, "to tell you the truth, lady, I can't take everything back. You living over at the ranch?" he asked.

"I live in Chicago."

"And you're lost?"

"If I were not, I shouldn't be here."

"Now no matter how you and I may differ on some subjects," he said, "I'll start you on your way home, providing you want me. Will you wait a minute while I saddle up?"

"I won't wait a second. I'll find my own way." So saying, Jane jerked her horse around.

"Well, I like your spunk, anyway," Tenison called out to her, "and I'll catch you in a couple of minutes."

"You can stay right where you are," she shot back. "I don't want you near me, anyhow."

As she rode away, Jane heard in an incredibly short time the clatter of hoofs beside her. She bristled inside.

"What are you chasing me for?" she demanded as Tenison rode up.

"I was afraid you'd fall off your horse," he retorted dryly. "Now skip the hard words," he countered easily as Jane angrily objected to his taunt and to his company.

"You know you're used up; you don't know how to ride. You've used up your horse, and you don't know the country, and I've got to get you home, so turn around and follow me—do you know where you're heading for?"

She was too exasperated to speak.

"You're headed for the desert, and that's a poor place for a stranger to sleep in, night or day."

The fell warning checked Jane. She had heard stories about that awful desert; she had been warned to keep away from it. A revulsion of feeling swept over her. She was tired, tired enough to drop off her horse. Oppressed by a sense of loneliness, helplessness, and resentment at being ridiculed by a disagreeable stranger, her eyes filled with angry tears. She began to cry as she turned her horse's head to follow him.

"Hold on," he said kindly, "hold on. Nothing to cry about, not a thing. You're as safe as if you were in your bed at the ranch. I guess I'm pretty rough-spoken; but my bark's worse'n my bite. So you're from Chicago?"

"Yes."

"That's quite a burg. I understand."

"How far have we got to go to get home?"

"Considerable ways. If we could go as the crow flies, it wouldn't be so far. How long have you been out here?"

"Six weeks."

He was too polite to comment, though he had hardly need to ask the question—Jane was so evidently a tenderfoot.

"What's your name?" she asked in turn.

"Bill Denison."

"How long have you lived here?"

"Here and in the Panhandle most of my life."

"And how many years is that?"

There were lights everywhere when Jane knocked, very late, at the ranchhouse door. Kindly old Bull Page, one of the ranch hands greeted her in the kitchen.

The girl was jaded to death "Where's everybody, Bull?" she asked, dropping into a chair.

"Why, Miss Jane, they're all out lookin' for you."

"Looking for me?" exclaimed Jane scornfully. "Well, they must be loafing on the job. Where's Quong?"

"Quong's gone to bed, but I'll get some bacon and fried potatoes for you in no time," declared Bull "Coffee?"

"Yes, and strong."

"Same as I take it. Well, well how'd you manage to find your way home?"

"I didn't find it. I found a man and a cabin about a hundred miles from nowhere, and he brought me home. That coffee smells grand, Bull," sighed Jane. "Hurry up with the bacon!"

As she said the words, in stalked the ranch foreman, Dave McCrossen.

At the sight of the missing girl he struck an attitude of resentful astonishment. "Hell's bells, Jane!" he exclaimed. "Here you are home and we've been riding all over creation!"

"You must have been trying not to find me," said Jane coldly. Without much reason she resented the fact that she had got lost and not been promptly found.

"Where were you?" asked the foreman, sitting down.

"In the hills. You've always been telling me to ride where I pleased and that there was no danger because you'd pick me up. I guess your formula didn't work."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

"Nigh onto thirty years, I figure it to be."

"What are you so sore for on everybody at Gunlock ranch?"

"Lady," returned her companion, "if I told you, you wouldn't believe it. But I don't say I'm sore at everybody. And I'm not sore at you, I'm glad there's one decent person now at Gunlock."

Jane bridled again. "One decent person! I like that!"

"Hang it, I didn't mean to make another break. Please excuse, and I'll hog-tie my troublesome tongue."

"Is it very much farther?" asked Jane, alarmed now by approaching darkness.

"Not a whole lot. But maybe you'd better mount off and rest a little if you need it. It's rough going from here on, for I'm trying to take a short cut."

"You're not lost, are you?" she demanded suspiciously.

"Not yet."

"But you might get lost?"

"Not tonight. And if you'll stick to the saddle a little ways farther, you can have a drink at a spring to freshen you up."

"How can you find it?"

"If you'd drunk from it as many times as I have, you could find it in a sandstorm, blindfolded—so could these horses, either of 'em."

The two were silent for a while. Presently Denison checked his horse. "Here's your spring, lady. Are you thirsty?"

"Choked. If you hadn't been so mean, I'd have asked you for a drink at your house—if it is your house."

"It's mine so far, but there's a hang-over lawsuit of Van Tassel's on it. Can you get down, lady?"

"I don't know whether I can or not. I've been in this saddle so long."

Her companion eased her to the ground. Jane refused to drink without a cup till he told her to cup her hands. Then she would not drink until she could see there were no snakes in the water.

"Nothing gets into that water; it would freeze a snake to death. But I can strike a light so you can see the water in your hands."

"I'd have offered you a drink at my house if I'd thought of it," he said, helping her to remount. "I didn't aim to be mean. You kind of took me by surprise."

grange will be August 20. Mrs. Leslie Wilks will have charge during the lecturer hour.

Iowa Corn Challenged.

Iowa corn will have to look to its laurels, or else—judging from some Oregon corn grown a mile east of Cottage Grove on the Frank Garoutte place by O. Dickey.

Mr. Dickey has on display at the Hall & Johnston Real Estate office a stalk of corn picked at random from a 5-acre field that measures

10 feet and 10 inches in height. Mr. Dickey had a field of corn last year that averaged 65 bushels to the acre. He believes the field on the Garoutte place will make at least 50 bushels per acre this year.

Portland Grove Picnic.

The sixteenth annual Cottage Grove picnic will be held at Peninsula park in Portland Sunday, August 30. Dinner at 1 p. m. Coffee and ice cream will be furnished. All present and former Cottage Grove residents are cordially invited to attend. It is understood that Elbert Bede, former editor of The Sentinel, will be the speaker

of the day.

Real "Blue-Bloods"

The real "blue-bloods" of the world are the blond, blue-eyed beauties of brunette Seville in Spain, who are the descendants of the Visi-Goths.



PHONE 53 or 54 Two Free City Deliveries Daily

We do not sacrifice quality for price. Don't forget, we guarantee satisfaction

Krispy Crackers.....2-lb. box 25c



Marshmallows 1-lb. pkg. 12c

Pineapple Tidbits...4 cans 25c

Pork & Beans.....3 for 25c
VAN CAMPS LARGE 2 1/2 OUNCE CAN

Royal Club Coffee.....3-lb. can 69c

Wheaties 2 Packages 23c	Jello ASSORTED FLAVORS YOUR CHOICE 5c pkg.	Candy Bars Hersheys, Milky Ways, Uno or Baffle Bars 3 for 10c
Crisco3-lb. can 55c	6 lbs. \$1.00	
Purex 1/2 GALLON JUG 18c	Ivory Soap THE LARGE BAR 10c	Northern Tissue 3 rolls 19c

Vanilla Cookies.....4 doz. 19c

Sweet Pickles QUART JAR 25c	Shrimp Otter, Fancy, Large 2 cans 29c	Catsup S—W Large Bottles 2 for 29c
-----------------------------------	---	--

Economy Jar Caps.....2 doz. 35c

BALL MASON JARS Pints...59c Quarts 69c	ECLIPSE JARS Wide Mouth, Glass Top Pints...75c Quarts 89c	Jar Rubbers RED DOUBLE LIP 3 doz...10c
---	---	--

Potato Chips 10c pkg. 2 for 15c

WHERE THE THRIFTY THRIVE

MEAT DEPARTMENT

Picnic Meats— Bacon Squares lb. 19c
An assortment of nine delicious sandwich meats. Liver Sausage lb. 19c
Sweet Pickles pt. 13c Bologna.....lb. 19c

Dorena Grange Plans To Hold Public Sale In Near Future

Dorena, Aug. 12.—(Special.)—The Dorena grange met last Thursday in the Ladies' club hall. Joe Schneider occupied the master's chair as Lee Smith, the master, was absent. There was an average attendance. The hall was made attractive with bouquets of flowers which the ladies brought and arranged.

The third and fourth degrees were conferred on Robert Vaughn.

The regular business meeting was held. Henry Snauer gave a report for the agricultural committee and Claude Arne reported for the legislative committee. There was a discussion of the public sale which the grange is to hold in the near future.

Following the business meeting there was a short program. "Safety First" being the subject. Robert Wagoner read an essay entitled "Drive Safe;" Mrs. Henry Snauer

gave several demonstrations on first aid; Mrs. Lot Wagner sang a solo and Alice Nash and Clifford Van Schoelack gave a surprise number. There was community singing also. The rest of the evening was spent socially and in the enjoyment of a watermelon feed.

August 16 the Creswell grange and Dorena grange are to have a picnic in the Layng grange. A short program is to be given after the lunch hour.

The next meeting of the Dorena

THERE'S A REASON FOR MOBIL OIL
Being the Largest Selling Motor Oil in the World—See us for your next oil change and you'll know why!
Have you tried Mobil Door-Ease? Stops squeaky Doors. Yes, we have it.

SHIELDS and WARD
General Petroleum Station—Fifth and Main
Free Parking on Lot at Any Time