

GUNLOCK RANCH

by FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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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 Bawdy 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. Unknown to the crowd, Denison is a champion horseman. McCrossen and the young stranger tie in the various events. Then Denison drops a cigarette carelessly. Racing down the track, full tilt, Denison picks up the cigarette. McCrossen refuses to attempt the stunt. Entreated by the crowd, Denison agrees to perform another trick. Jane is asked for her bracelet and throws it on the track. Just as Denison rides to pick it up a yell from Barney Rebstock, a McCrossen henchman, scares the pony, nearly costing the rider his life. Gun play is prevented by the intervention of Dr. Carpy. Back on Gunlock ranch after two years in Chicago, because of her father's illness, Jane gets lost riding in the hills, and meets Denison, now a neighbor, who guides her home. Not knowing her identity, he speaks bitterly of Van Tassel. McCrossen denounces Denison as a cattle thief. Later she asks Dr. Carpy why her father is unpopular and he tells her it is because of Van Tassel's ruthlessness and unscrupulous character. McCrossen tries to woo her, but is sharply rebuffed. Once again Jane loses her way in the hills and meets Denison. On impulse she gives him her bracelet for guiding her home. Their interest in each other grows, she reveals her identity to him. Jane is distressed to learn from Carpy that her father had wronged Denison. The Texan had worked at Gunlock as foreman and been promised a share in the profits. When he quit, Van Tassel reneged. In reprisal Denison had been running cattle off Gunlock ranch.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"No Bill was cussed by your father as a rustler. It made cattlemen laugh, thinking of your father's own reputation in that respect. And the old man brought a lawsuit against Bill to oust him from the little ranch, account bad title. That suit is still pending in the land office at Washington. Now, that's just about the story, Jane."

The shock of the doctor's story so humiliated Jane that she wanted only to get back home and hide what she felt to be the shame of her father from everybody. She had promised to ride back the hill trail with Denison; she felt she just couldn't do it. She took a short cut home across the desert. Her mystified and disappointed admirer, after lingering patiently in the hills till dusk rode into town only to learn at McAlpin's barn that Jane had taken her pony out early in the afternoon.

It was a painful night. She realized why the name she bore was so unpopular in Sleepy Cat.

Her depression bore her down; even Quong saw that something was wrong. He cooked special dishes to tempt Jane's appetite, but her appetite could not be tempted.

"Why don't you get out and ride any more?" asked Bull Page one day. "You haven't been on a horse for two weeks—just sit moping around the house, eating nothing, talking nothing."

"Bull. Just let me alone. I'll be all right."

For another two weeks Bull was worried. Then suddenly Jane relented.

She would take a horseback ride if Bull would ride with her—no otherwise.

They started together. It was afternoon. The air was thick with a

soft haze that tempered the sun's rays. The trail led in and out of the thin pine woods.

She began to think her nervous apprehension of meeting Denison again had been a wasted worry. Indeed, she and her guide were homeward bound within a mile of the ranch house when both heard the clatter of hoofs behind them. Jane would not have looked around for a million dollars. Bull told her there were two men coming up.

"Who are they?"

"Looks like Carpy and Bill Denison."

Jane's heart raced. However, this seemed not so bad. Three men and one woman were better than one man and one woman. Carpy and Denison approached together.

"Where are you riding to today, doctor?" asked Jane.

"Gunlock ranch."

Jane showed surprise. "Who's sick at the ranch?"

"One of the boys," said Carpy.

"That's the first I've heard of it," exclaimed Jane. "Who is it?"

"One of the boys that got cut up last night downtown. I sewed him up and want to see how he is. Nothing serious, I guess," said Carpy.

"Any news in town, doctor?" asked Jane, though not in the least interested in Sleepy Cat news.

"Nothing but the brush fires up North. This whole country's dry as tinder. I hope the winds will keep 'em up North. What do you hear from your father?" asked the doctor in return.

"Oh, he's better," said Jane. "He talks about coming home pretty soon."

"Well, that's news," commented Dr. Carpy, noncommittally. "He's got a wonderful constitution, that man," thinking to himself that it was much too good. "How have you been yourself, girl?"

"Oh, I'm just fine, doctor."

"Rarin' to go, eh? Come on, girl. I'll race you through this pine belt."

Jane saw her chance to escape an uncomfortable situation, for Denison hadn't said a word. She dashed gayly ahead and outran Carpy. But Denison followed her, overtaking her and riding alongside.

The spurt couldn't last forever, though Jane prolonged it to the best of her ability. She wondered whether she had jumped from the frying pan into the fire; she was alone now with Denison.

When she slackened her pace, out of breath, her cheeks were aglow.

"I wouldn't push that pony of yours too hard," suggested Denison incidentally. "He's a nervous critter."

"Oh, he's all right," said Jane lightly, "but it does shake me up, doesn't it?" she exclaimed, panting a little.

"It does," agreed Denison. "But I got my real shakeup when I spied you on the trail. I've been staking myself out alone on this trail every day for a month or so, hoping to get sight of you."

"I haven't felt much like riding lately."

"I was afraid you were sick. I watched for the doctor coming out, but I didn't see him. I used to ride up Gunlock Knob every day or two to see if I could see anything of you."

"I wish you wouldn't do such things. Where is Gunlock Knob?"

"It's that peak over by the spring. It's really on your father's ranch. I guess but I'm always careful not to run into any of your men."

"I'm sorry, but you mustn't look for me any more—please don't," she glanced at him firmly as she spoke. To Denison she had never looked so lovely.

"Why?" he demanded. "Have I—"

"You haven't, but I have—I guess that's the way to put it. I mustn't see you any more. I don't expect to remain in this country very long, anyway."

"What have I done, Jane?"

"Nothing, nothing."

"Somebody's been telling lies about me," he declared with some bitterness.

"No."

"If you'd tell me what they are, I could answer them."

"I said, no! No one has talked about you." His sudden intensity frightened Jane. She burst into tears.

"Now I've made matters worse!" he exclaimed penitently. "I guess my bark's worse'n my bite. But it makes me wild to think I've been lied about to you."

"You haven't," sputtered poor Jane. "Don't you believe me when I say nobody's been talking about you?"

"Please excuse me, then. I do believe you. But if you'd give me a chance to, I'd be willing to tell you every mean thing I've done in my life—and leave it all to you. Don't condemn me without a hearing—that's all I ask."

"Nobody is condemning you. I'm only, if anything, condemning myself."

"For what?" he demanded.

"For ever coming to this country at all, if you must know," she declared in angry desperation.

"But, Jane, that doesn't sound reasonable," protested her companion.

"I can't help that," she said petulantly. "I wish I'd never seen this country. And I'm going to leave it, the very first minute I get a chance. Don't see me any more. I don't want to see anybody till I can leave here."

"Just as you say, Jane. But if I can't see you any more, please remember that wherever you are, I love you."

Jane got home thinking of how wretchedly she had handled the situation with Denison.

It proved to be her foreman, McCrossen, who had been cut up in a gambling quarrel.

Jane kept Dr. Carpy for supper, and that evening she held him so long as she could. She felt down in the depths.

When he started for town, Jane walked out in the moonlight with him, talking and clinging to his hand. When he mounted, she still asked questions to keep him talking and kept his hand in hers.

"Jane," he said, "there's something hurting your mind, not your body. Do you want to tell me, girl?"

"Not tonight, doctor."

"Sometime, maybe—come to me just the same as if I were your father."

Her face fell against his hand. He felt on it the warmth of her tears. "Mustn't worry, my child. And if the load, whatever it is, gets too heavy—you know where to bring it," he added, wheeling away.

She had promised Dr. Carpy to ride every day, and while attending the wounded man he kept close tab on her, but she avoided the main trails and kept to the hills near the ranch house. Carpy brought little news from Sleepy Cat, but he spoke of the forest fires north of town.

"I hope we shan't be bothered here," said Jane.

"No danger here unless they cross the river. You haven't much timber on the east ranch. There's none to speak of over on the range. But you've got a lot scattered around here in the hills. If it should get down into the reservation timber, there would be hell to pay."

"How is McCrossen coming on, doctor?" asked Jane.

"He'll be up in a few days now. The infection is disappearing. How are you? You're the one I'm interested in."

"Following orders like a lamb, doctor. Don't you see how brown I'm getting?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Fairview

Mrs. Fred Kelly

Mr. and Mrs. Bert Dawley of Dorena are taking care of the Otho Van Scholack home while the Van Scholacks are on a vacation trip in eastern Oregon.

Several ladies from here attended the Happy Circle club at Dorena Wednesday of last week.

G. L. Fancher of San Jose, Cal., has recently purchased Mrs. Hattie Van Scholack's place and will take possession soon.

Harvey Kelly returned home Sunday from Portland, where he attended the Pacific International. L. C. Moffitt and the county health nurse of Eugene visited school here one day last week.

Miss Rena Gunter of Junction City came last week for a visit at the home of a sister, Mrs. Noble Elliott.

Mr. and Mrs. Ray Van Scholack had as all-day guests Sunday Mrs. Van Scholack's parents, Mr. and Mrs. William Mayben and daughter Irene of Cottage Grove.

Mrs. Roy England of Rujada was an overnight guest of Mrs. Glen Gillispie Friday.

Lowry England spent Sunday at the home of a sister, Mrs. Marion Lebow of Lyons Hollow.

Several from this neighborhood attended the benefit dance in Cottage Grove given by the Eagles auxiliary for the Bandon fire relief.

Mrs. Hattie Van Scholack and son Glen of Portland were looking after business affairs here one day last week.

Miss Olga Hocker was an all-day visitor Sunday of the Smith girls at Culp Creek.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur Kelly of Cottage Grove were dinner guests Monday at the Fred Kelly home.

Bernice Hart of Eugene and Vernon Hart of Fall Creek visited Sunday with their parents, Mr. and Mrs. S. M. Hart.

The Earl Edgcomb family of California, who recently purchased the old Hamilton Veatch place, moved here last week. A daughter Phyllis entered school Monday.

Mr. and Mrs. P. J. Bush of Marcola visited Tuesday evening at the Bettis home.

The Henry Cooper family of Dorena visited Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Earl Higginbotham.

Clyde McNeil of Oakland spent Monday with Mr. and Mrs. Warren Kelly.

Mongol Nose

The essential feature of the Mongolian is his nose—the low sunken bridge, over which one eye can almost see its neighbor.

Poultry Council to Be Organized.

A State Poultry council will be organized in Oregon under the sponsorship of the Oregon Poultrymen's association, it was decided at the twelfth annual poultrymen's convention held recently at O. S. C. The convention heard the prediction from A. S. Burrier, head of the farm management department at O. S. C., that the Willamette valley would have 40,000 farms by 1940, as compared with 33,000 in 1935.

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Mary's Peak Purchase Approved.
Purchase of 6,500 acres in the Mary's Peak district near Corvallis, to safeguard the water supply of that city was approved for purchase from private owners last week by the national forest reservation commission meeting in Washington, D. C., according to the U. S. forest service.

Six Reasons That Urge a "NO" vote on State Power Bill

- (1) This bill puts the State of Oregon head over heels into the electric power business, sets up a commission of three men, without bond and with no required qualifications, to run this gigantic system.
- (2) \$18,000,000 of tax-supported bonds can be sold, when authorized, to build this state-wide power system. By simple process of amending the bill \$54,000,000 of tax-supported bonds may later be authorized and sold. These bonds must be paid by taxes if the system is unsuccessful.
- (3) How can a complete state power system be built for \$18,000,000 when the State Planning Board advisory committee on power estimated cost of TRANSMISSION SYSTEM ONLY to be

\$29,670,000? (See committee's report to governor of Oregon, Dec. 20, 1935, page 13.)

(4) This bill contains no promise or assurance of lower electric rates; rates may vary and be juggled at the commission's whim.

(5) Cities, counties, and the state will lose millions of taxes now paid by existing utilities, thus forcing higher taxes on remaining property.

(6) This 3-man power commission can buy any property or engage in any business "deemed necessary or convenient." Here is opportunity for vast political activity under control of a NEW STATE COMMISSION. (See Section 9, subsection 10).

The State Power Bill Is Useless Without \$18,000,000 of New State Bonds A Vote for the Bill Commits You to Vote Later for the Bonds

VOTE 313 X NO

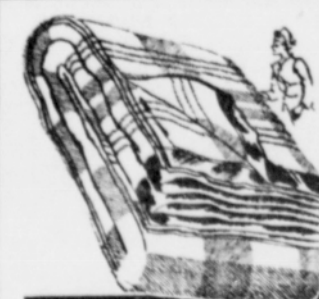
Against the State Power Bill

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