

# GUNLOCK RANCH

by FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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WNU Service

## CHAPTER XII—Continued

"Doctor!" she exclaimed faintly. "He's dead!"

"He died last night."

She hid her face in his arm and broke into tears.

"Jane, your father has lived his life—there was nothing for him to look ahead to."

"This means a great change in your life, girl. I guess I'll show you up to the hospital. Bill must know this. Now I've got good news for you and no fooling. You have a big surprise and a happy one coming at the hospital. I took the bandages off Bill's eyes yesterday to examine them—and his eyes are much better. If we can only hold it now!"

## CHAPTER XIII

**B**ULL PAGE was only a broken cowboy, but Bull was loved at Sleepy Cat.

Yet even resentment at the name of Van Tammel in Sleepy Cat was softened somewhat when men heard of Jane's unremitting attention at Bull's side in the hospital.

To Jane's infinite relief, Bull recovered and went back to Gunlock.

At the ranch there was an air of cheer when Jane was installed; everybody on tiptoe to render service. McCrossen was especially eager to please.

"Well, Jane, I guess you know whatever I can do to take care of things is going to be done, twenty-four hours a day if need be," he said. "All you have to do is to leave it to me."

"I shall depend on you for everything," she returned.

"Everything, Jane?" he echoed.

Jane was not caught. "Everything connected with running the ranch," she said evenly.

But it became increasingly evident as the days went by that the energetic foreman still regarded himself as a sultor.

One morning they were riding together in the hills when McCrossen opened up the subject most on his mind. They had halted in their saddles to discuss some plans for a strip of land below them when McCrossen in his confident manner changed the subject.

"It's a whale of a ranch, Jane. It certainly is, an' with a thousand things to look after. You're left here alone now, girl. Why not take on a mate to help you run it? You an' I have had some little differences, I know, but nothin' to amount to anything. Why couldn't you an' I settle down here to run things together? If you'd say the word, Jane—"

Jane raised her hand. "Oh, I know, Dave, but I've got too much to worry about to think about getting married."

"But I know the big ranch so well. I know how your father ran it. Don't you like me, Jane?"

"Why, Dave, I have only kind feelings for you—but I can't talk personal matters now."

"Look here, Jane," he said aggressively. "Is there another man you've got in your mind?"

She met the onslaught quietly. "I told you I wouldn't talk personal matters now and I won't—so let's go on."

For a fortnight nothing further occurred to break the routine of ranch work, and McCrossen said no more. The general impression in town was that Denison, as far as Jane was concerned, was out of the running.

No excitement occurred in Sleepy Cat until one day John Lefever was reported arrived at Thief River with a herd of cattle for the reservation. Sawdy, who had gone to work at Gunlock when Lefever left for Texas, rode down to Thief River to help Lefever check the herd in at

Gunlock Agency and to give him the big Sleepy Cat news.

But Lefever, too, brought news. The two cronies sat down to compare notes.

"I want to tell you somethin' I ran into nearin' Thief River," said Lefever. "There's a little slaughterin' ranch a mile south of town run by our old friend, Clubfoot, the butcher—remember how he skinned us on the horse race? While our herd was headin' for the river, I stopped for a few minutes where a couple of his boys were loadin' a wagon with hides for shipping. I happened to know one of the boys. He wrangled for us, comin' up once. And I noticed all the hides I saw him tyin' up had a Gunlock brand."

"How's this? I says. Does Van Tammel peddle his steers down this way? He wiked at me an' laughed. 'This bunch,' says he, 'was poker steers.'"

"It looks like McCrossen is runnin' off Gunlock cattle to pay his poker debts," said Sawdy.

When Lefever had made his delivery, he marched with Sawdy up to the hospital to call on their disabled side partner, Denison.

Bill had been promoted from a dark room to a shaded one.

"If I knew I was going to lose my eyes, boys," said he, "that would be one thing. I could end it all or settle down to making

"Now, there's nothing to get excited about," observed Carpy, after he had finished the story, "for it's nothing new. But if I were you I would get rid of McCrossen."

The expression on Jane's face reflected her perplexity. "That's easy to say, doctor, but it's going to be awfully hard to do. I want to be rid of McCrossen, heaven knows—for more reasons than one."

She was glad, when she got home that night, that her foreman was away; it gave her a night to think it over. In the morning he was over early with a report from the pastures and much pep in his manner.

Calmly she told him she would have to dispense with his services.

With a face as black as Gunlock Knob, McCrossen rose slowly from the chair in which he had been facing Jane.

"So you're firin' me?" Looking at her coldly and searchingly, he spoke tensely and harshly.

"I've got to cut down expenses, Dave," she said. "I—"

Before she could speak, he ran on: "Folks don't naturally fire an old hand like me, your father's friend, without giving a reason, do they? What are you turnin' me out for?"

"Dave," she said suddenly, "you've always been paid well—where does all your money go? Why do you have to run steers off the ranch at night?"

"So," he exclaimed savagely, "a few head of steers that belonged to me by rights anyway are stickin' in your crop, eh? Do you know your own dad was the biggest cattle thief in this whole country?"

Jane stamped her foot. "It's not so."

"Did you know he made a thief out of me? The first calves I ever stole in my life, I stole for Gus Van Tammel. Doesn't look very nice 'or you to talk to me about stealin' cattle," he exclaimed scornfully.

"The daughter of a man that stole all he's got."

"Dave," she protested, angrily, "stop that talk. If my father owed you anything, I'll pay it."

He laughed. "All right, kiss an' make up!" He stepped toward her. She sprang to her feet. "Dave, I—"

"Why, girl, don't you know I love you?" He spoke with a queer laugh and, darting forward, caught her. While she struggled, he rained kisses on her face and neck and arms.

Jane, frantic, fought to repel him.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Mr. and Mrs. George Alleman and Mr. and Mrs. F. M. Chapman attended the funeral of Floyd Counts in Cottage Grove Sunday.

Ed Soderstrom of Kathlamet, Wash., visited at the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. A. Soderstrom a few days last week.

Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Mulligan and two children from Springfield spent Sunday with Mr. and Mrs. Marion Miller.

Forest Harris of Smith River, who suffered a fractured wrist six weeks ago while unhitching a trailer, went to Cottage Grove Thursday to have the cast removed. He spent the night at the home of an aunt, Mrs. Walter Robinson.

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. McBee have leased the Pass Creek Service station.

Mr. and Mrs. L. J. Green of Cottage Grove were Sunday dinner guests of a son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bales.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Duffey, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Williams and the

ton and children and Mr. and Mrs. Dan Dugan, parents, brothers and a sister of Mr. Dugan.

Ontario has set the 1937 Owyhee stampede for September 4, 5 and 6 and let the rodeo contract to a Blackfoot, Ida., farm.

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Divide

Mrs. J. A. Mackey

George Alleman started working again Monday morning for the Culp Creek Lumber company after a several days' shutdown due to bad weather.

Mrs. George McReynolds visited Tuesday at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joe Thrasher, of Dorena.

Mr. and Mrs. Dan Dugan attended a surprise birthday dinner Thursday evening given for their oldest son, Lee, at Walden. A roast goose and large birthday cake were features of the dinner.

Many here have been suffering during the last week with influenza.

Mrs. G. L. Turner had a message from a brother, Milton Seward, of Marshfield, saying his little two-year-old son was seriously ill with pneumonia.

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Heck of Cottage Grove were Sunday guests of Mr. and Mrs. George McReynolds.

Mountain View school was closed three days last week due to the bad weather.

Mount View

Mrs. J. W. Fisher.

Crossen myself some day," he repeated slowly, "in my own way."

The two men left the hospital somewhat uneasy. They laid their story before Carpy.

The doctor heard it unmoved. "Well," he commented, "that's not the first bunch of steers McCrossen has stolen—and it won't be the last."

"Not the first," interjected Lefever. "But it's the closest anybody ever came to nailin' it on him."

"Anyway, I don't think he should be left there to rob the girl right along," added Carpy.

"Are you goin' to tell her?" asked Lefever.

"I am; today. She's coming to town and will be in to see me."

They told him of their talk with Denison. "It left us leery, Doc," said Sawdy. "If Bill gets worked up too strong over McCrossen, he's liable to bust out on McCrossen before his eyes are in shape to give him an even break."

Doctor Carpy waved his hand. "Keep your worry for something else, Sawdy. His eyes got scorched; but when I let go of the boy, keep away from the small end of his gun."

"Jane, you'll think I don't bring you anything but troublesome news," the doctor began. "But this isn't really news. I've known for months—two or three years, in fact—that McCrossen was stealing Gunlock steers. But this is what John Lefever brought up from Thief River today. . . ."

"Now, there's nothing to get excited about," observed Carpy, after he had finished the story, "for it's nothing new. But if I were you I would get rid of McCrossen."

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(TO BE CONTINUED)

C. A. King family were among those reported ill with the flu last week.

Mr. Land and family of Cottage Grove have moved into the Ralph Lancaster place.

Mrs. Claude Arne, Mrs. Roy Hands and Mrs. Charles Bales spent Friday helping Mrs. R. B. Powell quilt.

Mrs. Boone Humphrey visited friends in Eugene Friday.

It is reported that Eugene will repeat its old time pageant again this year.

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## New "War Between States" by Boundary Taxes on Motorists

### Eight States Have Entry Or Highway Checking Stations Where Motorists Are Stopped

Washington, Jan. 26—A spread of border conflicts between states, caused mainly by efforts to levy special fees and taxes on motorists who cross state lines, was revealed here today.

Nine states already have established inspection stations similar to those found on European boundaries, according to a report made public by the National Highway Users Conference, following broad-spread protests by motorists against delays and expenditures encountered in crossing state borders.

States which have established ports of entry or highway checking stations along their borders include California, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma.

"The area in which this 'new war between the states' is being waged is expanding because states are forced into reprisals when levies are placed upon their citizens who motor into adjoining states," the report explains.

## Cotton Blossom Singers Coming February Second

The Cotton Blossom singers, a traveling group from the Piney Woods School situated near Jackson, Miss., need no introduction to Cottage Grove music lovers. They have appeared in concert here for several years and fascinated their audiences with varied programs of spirituals and plantation songs, which only negro folk can truly interpret.

The group will present a concert Tuesday evening, February 2, at the Methodist church, who sponsors their stop in the city. The school which they represent depend entirely upon free will offerings and gifts to finance their upkeep. The students are self supporting, coming from poor homes where there is practically no money. However the students give messages in song joyously and gladly accept any contributions in return. Free will offerings will be accepted.

### London School Honor Roll

The London school honor roll for the last six weeks is as follows:

First grade—Lucille Perini, Jean Ritter, Mary Ann Banton, Donna Gale Ems, Barbara Smith, Wesley Taylor, Clyde Gilham.

Second grade—Donna Mae Funk, Barbara Madsen, Joyce LaBlue, Jimmie Means, Delbert Perini.

Fourth grade—Bryce Tower, Ralph Gilham.

Third grade—Richard Currin, Lois Propst, Jack Summers, Nolan Makinson.

Sixth grade—Helen Summers, Lois Bachelder, Lucille Geer.

Seventh grade—Winifred Makinson, Billy Hopman, Earnestine Heaton.

Eighth grade—Geraldine Banton, Lloyd Gilham, Maxine Currin, Bob Propst, Maxine Ewing, Berta Tullar, George Dugan.

Deceptive Names  
The names and reputations of places are sometimes deceptive; thus the Pacific ocean is turbulent; the Blue Danube ocean is green; the Black mountain (Montenegro) is gray, but Germany's Black forest is black.

Life is made up of small duties well done.

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