

Riders of Buck River

by WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINES

THE STORY SO FAR: Ellen Carey seems interested in Jeff Brand, dashing rustler, and Calhoun Terry, ranch manager. Four rustlers are mysteriously killed. Suspicion fastens on Terry and his associates. But Jeff kills Jack Turley.

CHAPTER XXVIII

"Better lie there on the bed," Terry said, without looking round. "Let Larry have your rifle."

Jeff looked at Terry's flat, strong back with cold dislike. This was a nice pickle to be in. Without knowing it, he had come to rescue an enemy, and by another queer topsyturvy quirk the man had saved him.

"How soon will your friends get here?" Larry asked. "I reckon they are gathering quick as they can."

"I sent Lee Hart out to pass the word. My guess would be, in another hour and a half."

After a pause, "We can't stand them off another hour and a half," Terry said.

A sinister light quickened Jeff's face. He said ironically: "You'll be able to make a nice deal for yourselves now. They won't have two to hang, but one is better than none."

Terry did not answer. Larry flushed angrily.

"You have a fine way of making friends, Jeff," he said.

"I'm particular about who my friends are," Brand jeered.

"I've noticed that. A scoundrel like Lee Hart who shoots from back of a wall at a man not expecting it. A bullpuss ruffian like Jack Turley. A scallawag like—"

"Don't talk about Turley being my friend," Jeff interrupted. "I killed him this morning."

Larry stared at him. "How come you to kill Turley?"

"We found out he was the traitor who shot Jim Tetlow and the other boys. I gave him an even-Stephen break, which was more than the skunk deserved. We found the blood money in his cabin."

"They've stopped the wagon," Larry interrupted. "Someone has brought in a horse without a rider. Looks like the roan you were on. Bet a dollar they have recognized the horse and are having a pow-wow about it."

"It looks like only one of us may be dead in ten minutes," Jeff snarled. "I'll take that rifle now, Larry. I aim to go out in smoke."

Larry looked at the Diamond Reverse B manager.

"Give it to him," Terry said, his gaze fixed on the outlaw. "But don't make a mistake, Brand. I wouldn't have chosen it that way, but we're all in this tight together. We all come out of it alive or none of us do. Let me do the talking; that is, if any of us get a chance to do any with these fellows."

"We're getting a chance, all right," Larry cried. "Someone is running out a white flag from back of the barn."

Terry walked to the door, unbolted it, and waved the flour sack. Ellison and Sunday Brown came out of the barn and walked toward the house. When they were about forty yards distant the No. By Jo manager shouted a question.

"What made you run away, Terry?" he demanded irritably. "You might have got killed."

The Diamond Reverse B man waited until they were nearer. "So we might," he agreed, sarcasm riding his voice. "Whether we ran or whether we stayed. Your hired killers are too ready with their guns, Ellison. I told you it would be that way."

Into Larry's face beneath the tan dark blood swept. "Your hired killers have been plugging at us for a couple of hours. You're no better than that dead wolf Turley you were telling us about. The sooner you are run out of the country the better."

Larry had made a slip, and Ellison pounced on it. "Did I mention Turley? How do you know he was the man?"

"Never mind how I know. He has nothing to do with our complaint against you. I'm going to see that it gets into the Denver papers that you attacked us."

Sunday Brown spoke for the first time. "Who is the man that slipped into the cabin a little while ago?"

Terry looked at him bleakly. "You wounded the man, whoever he is. That's enough for one day. I advise you all to mount your horses and get out of here while you can."

"Don't try the high and mighty with me, Terry," the No. By Jo manager advised, restraining his temper with difficulty. "I'm asking you two questions, and I don't intend to leave till I get answers. The first is, how do you know Turley was killed, unless you were in on the job? The second is, who did you call into the cabin a little while ago?"

INSTALLMENT FOURTEEN

ley, who turns out to be a spy for the big ranchers. The latter bring a lot of Texas ex-peace officers to wipe out the rustlers by actually killing them off. Calhoun protests and persuades the owner of his ranch to sell it in small parcels to small ranchers. Terry and his foreman, Larry, are fired upon by the big owners' invading army and they find cover in a small cabin. There, too, Jeff goes. Wounded, he is dragged into the cabin by Terry.

"You're out of luck in your questions, Ellison," drawled Terry. "We won't answer either of them."

A man appeared in the doorway of the house. He leaned against the jamb for support, but the rifle in his hands was quite steady.

"You've got me so plumb scared that I expect I'd better answer yore questions, Ellison," he said, not raising his voice. "I'm the guy in the cabin, and I'm the one who told them about Turley. I knew about it because I shot him this morning. Maybe I'm one of the men you're looking for."

The color slowly drained from Ellison's gray face. His guess was that Brand meant to kill him now.

CHAPTER XXIX

Sunday Brown said: "I don't know who you are, young fellow, but yore own words convict you and I'm arresting you."

"I'm standing in the doorway waiting for you to try it," Brand answered.

"Just a moment," Terry said. "To avoid any mistakes, Larry and I are declaring ourselves. All three of us are in this tight together. You're not taking one without the others."

"I'll do the talking for our side, Sunday," Ellison told the Texan. "No need for guns to smoke here."

"It's been such a nice, friendly afternoon Mr. Ellison would hate to have trouble start now," jeered Jeff.

"Tell your crowd to get the hell out of here before the boys come



His guess was that Brand meant to kill him now.

to help Jeff, unless you want a real war on yore hands," said Larry.

Brand offered a suggestion. "Why drag anybody else into this, Mr. Ellison? You don't like my way of life, and not a thing about you pleases me. We can settle this right here in three seconds with six-guns. If you feel lucky, start smoking."

"I don't fight duels with outlaws," Ellison replied curtly.

"No, you hire killers to shoot 'em down from ambush. You go raiding their homes with sixty gunmen at yore back." Brand's voice was heavy with scorn. "When you open the pot you have a pat hand, and you sure play it close to the belly."

Ellison stood stiff and straight. "I don't explain my conduct to thieves," he said shortly.

"Meaning me, Mr. Ellison?" Jeff asked gently, his light, blank eyes very steadily fixed on the No. By Jo manager.

Terry stepped in front of the leader of the regulators, to prevent the rustler from getting a shot at him.

The three defenders moved back into the house and watched. They had not long to wait. The invaders ran out the white rag again to indicate the battle was over. Men and horses poured out of the barn and from the creek bed into the open.

Cal gave Brand a wet towel with which to bathe his hot face while he unfastened the bandage around the ankle and washed the wound. He tied another handkerchief around the leg.

The rescuers arrived about an hour later.

Terry and Richards rode with the party as far as the Box 55. They

were not very welcome. The members of the rescue posse made that clear. Wild rumors circulated.

Lane Carey and his daughter came out of the ranch house to get the news. From a little distance Terry watched Ellen's face as the men eased Brand from the saddle so that he would not have to put any weight on his wounded leg. He could see her breath catch and the intent fear in her eyes.

"We had better have him carried upstairs," Ellen said to her father. "He can have the spare room."

Jeff shook his head. "Sorry, but I have to say 'No, thanks,' lady. If I stay here these Texas wolves would be liable to collect the only scalp I have. The boys are going to take me to Round Top in your wagon."

Ellen had Jim bring down a mattress and put it on the porch. The wounded man lay down on it, protesting that there was no sense in babying him. The girl made him a pitcher of cool lemonade and he drank several glasses of it. She waved a good-bye at him as the guarded wagon rolled down the road.

Watching her, Terry thought there was a kind of light, flying grace in the girl's movements.

"Will you tell me all about it—just what happened?" she asked.

Larry described their adventure in detail.

"I expect they hated to let Jeff go," Larry concluded. "The blamed idiot stood in the doorway and told Ellison he was the man who had killed his spy Turley."

Ellen gave a little groan. "Did you say that Jeff . . . killed Turley?" she asked.

"Yes."

The color had washed out of Ellen's face. "I'm responsible for Turley's death," she said in a low monotone. "I . . . told Jeff the man might be Turley, and I said the writing on the note left by the killer looked like his."

"Then you did a service to this district," Terry told her bluntly. "Don't worry about that. The fellow had to be killed."

"Yes, but—why did I do it? I might have known what Jeff would do. And I wasn't sure. Maybe—maybe—maybe Turley wasn't the right man."

"They found the money in his cabin. He was the right man," Larry nodded reassurance. "He's better dead. Don't waste any pity on him."

"You're so sure about that, aren't you?" the girl cried in passionate protest. "Only God can make a life, but it's all right to cut one off if you take a fancy to play at being His agent."

Terry explained gently: "When a mad dog is loose it has to be shot to protect people."

"Calhoun is right, Ellen," Carey agreed.

"Why did Mr. Ellison start so crazy a thing?" Ellen cried. "Isn't there any way to stop it? Can't you do something, Mr. Terry?"

Calhoun shook his head. "How can I, since both sides distrust me and I have influence with neither? I have thought of one thing—to ask the government to send troops from Fort Garfield to stop the war. I have no influence at Washington. Mr. Powers probably has, if I could get word to him. Larry and I are going to town. I'll see Horace Garvey and try to get him to join me in a wire."

"Good. I'll come to town as soon as I can get off. That will be after the down stage passes," said Carey.

Larry went with Carey to saddle fresh horses from the Box 55 corral. Terry started with them but was detained by Ellen's voice, smaller in volume than usual.

"One minute, please, Mr. Terry."

"I didn't like you," she admitted. "I thought you were horrid. And I was wrong. In all this dreadful business nobody has been as right as you." The color in her eyes deepened as she looked at him. Her heart was fluttering against her ribs, and she told herself not to be a fool. "It was splendid, the way you ran out of the cabin to get Jeff. I know you don't like him. But you went just the same."

"I like him as well as he does me," Calhoun said wryly.

The girl was in love with Brand, of course. He had no doubt of that.

He nodded good-bye to her stiffly and walked away to join her father and Larry at the corral.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

ASK ME ? ANOTHER ?

A quiz with answers offering information on various subjects

The Questions

1. In navy slang, what is known as an "ash can"?
2. Which of the following is not both in Europe and Asia—Russia, Turkey and Iran.
3. Which, Plato, Aristotle or Socrates first expounded his philosophy?
4. Where is the original Bridge of Sighs?
5. The projectile called shrapnel is named after a general who served in what country's army?

6. What are Kiushiu, Shikoku and Riukiu?
7. What is Polaris?

The Answers

1. A depth bomb.
2. Iran.
3. Socrates.
4. Venice (connecting the palace of the doge with the prison).
5. Britain (Henry Shrapnel, 1761-1842).
6. Islands of Japan.
7. The North star.

Wasn't Asking for Trouble That Early in the Morning

Two travelers had just met. One was doing most of the talking.

"Yes," he said, "I arrived home one morning after midnight and, as I opened the door, I saw a stranger kissing my wife. I closed the door softly and hurried downstairs. At 1 a. m. I came back. I opened the door softly—and there was the stranger, still kissing my wife. So I went downstairs again. At 1:15—"

"Just a minute," interrupted the other man. "Why did you keep galloping downstairs? Why didn't you walk right into the room?"

"What?" cried the talkative man. "And have my wife catch me coming home at that hour?"

Your Situation

Despise not your situation. In it you must act, suffer, and conquer. From every point on earth we are equally near to Heaven and the Infinite.—Amiel.

Coward and Hero

This creature man, who in his own selfish affairs is a coward to the backbone, will fight for an idea like a hero.—George Bernard Shaw.

For Your Labor Day Picnic



Van Camp's
PORK and BEANS

Feast-for-the-Least

As One Heart

Men are tattooed with their special beliefs like so many South Sea Islanders; but a real human heart

with divine love in it beats with the same glow under all the patterns of all earth's thousand tribes.—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

It's A GOOD
AMERICAN
CUSTOM

TROTTING RACES

are distinctly American. They began early in the 19th Century and since 1850 have been the most popular sport at county fairs. Sulkies are unknown in Europe.



ANOTHER GRAND American custom is daily enjoyment of mild, fragrant King Edward cigars. For a real winner in smoking pleasure, try King Edward today.

KING EDWARD
WORLD'S LARGEST SELLER Cigars

2
for
5c

HIGH PRICES

Do Not Go WITH ADVERTISING

Advertising and high prices do not go together at all. They are extremely incompatible to each other. It is only the product which is unadvertised, which has no established market, that costs more than you can afford to pay.

Whenever you go into a store and buy an item of advertised merchandise, it doesn't make any difference what, you are getting more for your money—more in quality and service—than you would get if you spent the same amount for something which was not advertised.