

Death at Dawn

by James Stevens

"I WON'T miss a five-spot so much," said Smoky Noon, "and you need it bad. Just why won't you take it, kid?"



The girl beside him, in the roadster seat of the flivver, did not answer for a moment. They looked at each other, faces blurred in the shadows that clouded the tourist-camp grove. Dawn was an hour away. The spring was yet young and they had found an empty camp when they drove in. The night was windless. The trees were very still.

"You don't owe me anything, logger," the girl said at last. "And you are strangers, really. I couldn't take your money."

He growled. "You talk like a society movie. Listen, Mary; people like us are never strangers. I'm an out-of-luck logger. You're a berry-knocker hitch-hiking for the spring crop camps. We were old friends as soon as we met. Coupla bums. Both at the bottom of life's luck. Don't get snooty with me, Mary Martin."

"I'm not," she protested. "It's just that I know what five bucks means to you. Two days of slugging big timber with an ax. It's enough that you've given me a ride and been so decent. So now I'll just say so long, and drift. I'll be all right."

"If I was half a man," he said. "I'd hold on to you. Somehow these two hours we've bumped along together have made me feel that way—I've never felt before. But I know my luck. I wouldn't want you in it any."

"If you did, you'd soon be sorry," Mary Martin said. "You're careless with your talk, logger, and of course you don't mean it. Men never do. Let's make it good-while we're still friends."

"I do mean it," he insisted, looking at her. "I mean it so much I'd never leave you, if it wasn't that every play I make goes wrong."

She had opened the door at her right, but she paused now and met his gaze in the shadows. She said: "I just thought of something that I once read. It was a line about luck being one four-letter word in the crossword puzzle of life, just one small part of it. You can never beat the puzzle by playing on only a single word logger."

"But the puzzle can beat you with just one," he retorted. "The odds are all against you. Don't I know it?"

"Maybe," she pushed open the door. "Luck can be licked, though."

"Not mine. Not even by a regiment of marines." She stepped out. "I'll hike over and look for the usual all-night restaurant. Thanks, logger, and so long."

Smoky Noon knew that car. He was sure of the identity of the man at the wheel. And he was even more certain that the vault of the Polewater bank had been blasted and that he was facing the getaway.

He felt the power to block it, to wreck the bandit car. For a second or so he poised the five-pound ax for a whirling throw. Then a slackness went through him. He fought off the feeling, but then it was too late. The car roared past, and he started dejectedly back for his flivver.

Mary Martin had perched herself on the running board to await Smoky's return. It would soon be dawn . . . and then another day . . . hitchhiking on . . .

Her days had been mostly like that ever since she could remember. Her people were crop-campers, belonging to the meandering million of west coast workers who live by seasonal labor and whose habitations roost precariously on the tattered tires of ancient cars. Mary did not belong.

Even as a small child she had dreamed of a home such as she saw endlessly along the highways. When she was old enough she had tried to realize the dream by turning out for housework. But she was an outsider, and lonely. This was the third time she had returned to the gypsy trail of the crop camps.

"And it's no good," she mused. "Nothing is any good for me. Might be, though, if I had a home of my own."

That was a familiar thought with Mary. But a home of her own meant marriage, and of that she was afraid. She had seen too much of his dark and seamy side, in the camps, in sawmill shanties, in the hills, and in the slums. Her hopes had never ventured higher. Crop-camp girl Hitchhiker. Men took so much for granted.

Not this Smoky Noon, though. She wondered about his home. Back there in the mountains, he had said. Deep in the big woods, toward the dawn. From the logger's talk Mary could imagine the small hewn-log house, the stumped clearing, the huckleberry bushes on the hillside, the singing cascades of the creek, the grey loam of the bottom, hungry for crops. A refuge hedged by soaring trees and mountain rims.

"Wake up," she abjured herself, "and don't be silly."

IT was Smoky's returning footfalls that had aroused her. They dragged heavily through the gravel. She waited where she was, asking nothing, until he had thrown the ax back into the box bed. Then he told her what had happened, and more.

Smoky was listening, hard. His ears had caught the nicker of a horse from the dim clump of buildings on the creek bank. And faint and far away, a rhythmic beat through the wind surged in the trees.

"She called the turn," he thought, in a sudden fever. "My play—wonder can I make it like she thinks I can." Aloud he said, "I'll scout around. You just wait. I won't be long."

His tone was easy and low. Mary Martin hardly seemed to hear him. He slipped out of the seat and hooked the ax from the box bed. Then, from the rear of the car, he struck down through the timber and bush. He was soon on the creek bottom and at the small log stable.

Three horses were tied at the manger, with saddle rigs on the pegs behind them. Smoky went on swiftly to his house. After a short look inside he struck down the creek bank. He was sure now that Dirty Dog Dunnagan had been using his place as a headquarters for a week or more. And he was fairly certain that the robbery and getaway had been planned to put the blame on him. While the law was looking Smoky Noon up, Dirty Dog and his pals could get in the clear . . .

THE three men in the high-bodied touring car leaned forward with the tension of jockeys riding a neck-and-neck race down the home stretch. Yet this was a slow crawl.

It had to be so slow because the drive was over ties of a trestle, with a 40-foot drop to the bottom of a rock canyon. But it was also necessary to hold enough speed to keep the front wheels from shimmying over the ties and jerking out of control. No one seemed to breathe until the tires were rolling on solid earth again. Then all mutually relaxed, cursed hoarsely, and swabbed cold sweat from their brows.

They argued, as the car picked up speed and pounded on over the rough roadbed. There was one more trestle to cross, where the old road leaped the gorge below Smoky Noon's ranch. Now it loomed ahead in the clearing dawn, curving over the black depths of the gorge. Dirty Dog shifted gears. The old car ground in second.

SMOKY NOON faced death at dawn. There was no other way out, he knew, once he stepped from behind the black snag that the trestle's end.

The huge black stump stood just below the roadbed. From Smoky's position he could see the fall of the creek from the valley into the gorge, and the ranch buildings on above. He could hear Dunnagan's car grinding and bumping over the trestle ties. He gripped up his ax and eased out, tense and uncertain.

The car ground on, looming clearly in the rising light and above the black gorge. The logger still stood in irresolution. It would be murder, he thought—but murder too for himself if Dunnagan trapped him here. And for—

As he thought of Mary Martin he glanced up the creek. And he saw her, standing by the log house, watching. He swore, and started out from the snag. In the instant he was seen from the car, a gunshot roared, and lead whacked the dead wood of the snag. Another bang, and as the bullet fanned his hair, Smoky Noon flung the ax from his shoulder. The whirling steel bits flashed in a sudden red gray of sunrise that struck from the mountain rim. Then, a crash through the windshield just as Dirty Dog Dunnagan bore down on the brake.

For him the ax was a second too soon and his foot was a second too late. The front wheels jerked, twisted, and the big car lurched into a dive for the canyon bottom. A steely crash echoed thunderously from the rocks as three bank robbers quickly died. Dawn broke into full sunrise. The logger faced the young fire of the morning and swung along the hillside trail to meet the crop-camp girl. What he must say to her was a throbbing beat in his head— "A four-letter word that means having somebody to fight for. That's luck, my luck now, Mary Martin." And that was what he said.

Farms Change Owners Here

Indication of the movement of new residents into this section of the state is seen in the report of five new families who purchased farms in the county within the last 10 days. Sales were made by W. G. Ide, Hillsboro real estate dealer.

Mr. and Mrs. N. A. Davis of New Jersey purchased 60 acres at Midway, Lewis, Richiester, Iowa. They purchased a deal for 23 acres near Grabel school. A. R. Nelson, Nebraska, purchased 20 acres two and a half miles east of Hillsboro. Karl T. Lewis, Illinois, has completed arrangements for 40 acres at Scholls, and R. D. Halvorson of the Halvorson Motor company of Hillsboro, has purchased 14 acres north of Hillsboro on the old North Plains road. Halvorson recently came to the coast from North Dakota.

All places sold, Ide reported, were improved and substantial payments made on each.

Funeral Today for Mrs. James Ogg

Funeral services for Mrs. Jessie Ogg, 64, resident on Cornelia route 2 for the last five months, will be held this afternoon (Thursday) at 2 o'clock from the Donelson & Sewell chapel. Rev. Henry Haller will conduct the rites. Mrs. Ogg died Monday night.

She is survived by the widower, James Ogg; two sons, William Natherman, Cornelius, and Claude Ebb, Kamela, Ore.; four daughters, Mrs. Lillian Vorisen, Conrad, Mont.; Mrs. Bessie Skeels, Hammond, Ore.; Mrs. R. D. Johnson, San Jose, Cal.; and Mrs. Freda Hoffman, Pendleton.

Nicky, of Radio Cast, Visits County

"One Man's Family" fans of this county, might be interested in a tip that Nicky, friendly Englishman and husband of Claudia, instead of sailing for the coronation in England, is visiting in Forest Grove. Nicky is Walter Patterson and he is visiting his uncle, George G. Patterson. Walter is a former resident and native American, but picked up his British accent in Rhodesia, Africa, where he was brought up, and later in England where he received his schooling. Another point of interest, too, is that Mrs. Patterson is not Claudia, but a girl he met through other members of the "One Man's Family" cast.

Too Late to Classify

WANTED to Buy—Old cows, fresh eggs (cases) and hides. Must be reasonable—Write 10780 Argus. 6th FOR SALE—2 cows, Jersey and Swiss—G. W. Sheppard, Rt. 1, Cornelius, Pumpkin Ridge. 6-7

MARRIED man wants dairy farm on shares, 1st class B-grade dairy.

Anniversary Month Sale

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When our Spring flower prints are only \$6.95 This Week. GOAR'S Woman's Shop E. M. BARNES, Prop.

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Striking is Olivia de Havilland in this evening gown made of crepe printed in one of the new splashy designs so important for the coming season. Chic, new, it catches the spirit of the 1937 fashion creations.

man. Best references—W. H. Fuller, Box 185, Rt. 3, Vancouver, Wash. p

FOR SALE—Alfalfa and vetch hay, \$12 and \$14—Joe Werre, 3 miles southwest of Hillsboro.

SEVEN-room house, garage, \$1100, \$150 down.

FIVE-room house, fully furnished, \$1275.

SEVEN-room house, plastered, garage, \$1400.

SIX-room house, plastered, fire-place, old sewer, \$1800.

FOUR-room house, plastered, garage, large lot, some furniture, \$2000.

FIVE-room house, shakes, garage, \$2550.

SEVEN-room house, large lot, close in, \$2500.

FOUR-room house, brand new, basement, furnace, \$2500.

FIVE-room house, modern, garage, \$2550.

SEVEN-room house, garage, 1/2 acre, lots of fruit, \$3200.

SIX-room modern house, garage, \$4000.

ALL THE above places can be bought on reasonable terms.

E. A. GRIFFITH Hillsboro Second Ave.

WHITE Saanen milk goat, to freshen April 16, for sale. Also wood

range with coils; and Airway vacuum cleaner.—Bernice Vandenberg, east of county hospital.

PRICED TO SELL. That used car you've been looking for:

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Attention Farmers DARRELL W. MILTON investigating all foreclosures, contracts and dealings of the Federal Land Banks in the United States had with

farmers, for purpose of presenting information to United States Congress for their consideration and action.—Darrell W. Milton, 511 Stock Exchange Bldg., Portland, Oregon.



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Action Favors Pin Ball Machines Here

(Continued from page 1) the opinion that such an appeal would be fatal to the machines as the supreme court would be expected to uphold the Crawford decision.

Amend Ordinance The council also amended the ordinance permitting condemnation of old buildings as fire hazards to allow serving notices on owners, whose addresses are unknown, by publication in the Hillsboro Argus.

Four hundred feet of new hose also was authorized, although a shortage in fire department budget forced the purchase of cheaper hose than the fire department requested.

Schedule of rates for use of the city auditorium, prepared by the city park commission, was adopted. The rates are \$12.50 by day and \$25 by night plus cost of preparing the auditorium for use. Pioneer society was allowed use of the building free of charge.

Must File Schedule The schedule also directed that all baseball teams wishing to use the park file application and schedule of games. A request for the

News Highlights for Wednesday

Wednesday, April 7 Federal agents arrested one man at Los Angeles and seeking an accomplice in connection with Rose City Branch of First National bank in Portland March 29. Third man commits suicide when approached by agents.

Portland taxicab drivers' union to extend strike in effort to unionize all companies. U. S. senate by vote of 75 to 3 votes to condemn both sit-down strikes and company unions or "any

Japanese Berrymen Acquire Big Tracts

Chelalem mountain, west of Laurier, long devoted to hops, walnuts and blackcaps, seems now well on the way to becoming the strawberry center of Washington county.

With every available farm on the higher levels under lease of Japanese gardeners, mostly from the Banks area, large crews are being assembled and a huge acreage of

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