

WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE'S

To Ride the River With

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CHAPTER XI—Continued

The marshal put him through an exhaustive quiz. As Gray had already suspected, Curly and one or two others were rustlers but not bandits.

Gray nodded to Frank. "That's all," he said. Young Chiswick took his prisoner away. The officer stood before the table absorbed in thought.

"You're not going to Tail Holt—alone!" she broke out. He frowned at her, slowly dragging back his thoughts to meet the interruption.

"Father told me so. You can't do that. Don't you see you can't? Sperm Howard knows it was you who told Father about the Live Oak expedition.

"That will be fine. By and by I'll need them, but not yet." "You haven't any right to throw your life away. Haven't you a mother—or sisters?"

"No. I'm a lone wolf." "There must be a woman somewhere who—cares."

He flung away discretion and caught her in his arms. "I wonder about that," he said, and looked into her deep, lustrous eyes.

They told him, plainer far than words, that she was sealed to him for all time.

He kissed her lips, pushed her away abruptly, and strode out of the room.

CHAPTER XII

"Now why did I do that?" Gray asked himself reproachfully as he rode to town. "Here I've watched my step all these years so as not to get tied up with a girl, and then I go to acting like a kid because she is pretty as a painted wagon and is made to be loved.

"No harm her any, did he?" "No," Gray asked a question. "Know where Norris is, Curly?"

The black-haired man shook his head. "If I knew I'd tell you. Maybe he's clear out the country. While he was in town he held up Sperm Howard and took five hundred dollars from him."

"That distresses me," Jeff said dryly. Curly grinned. "I thought it might. The scalawag was just lighting out when we bumped into him."

"Sperm done any talking about me?" Gray asked casually. The man in the bed looked at him. "You're sure a cool cuss. Yes, he's talked considerable, and that's all I aim to tell you—except that Tail Holt is a good place for you to be an absentee from."

The face of Curly had taken on a stiff harshness. "I'm no sidekick of yours, fellow. I'll throw in with you or anyone else to stomp out that villain Morg Norris. Then I'm through. Understand? I've got no information for you—or any other government man. You came here to us with a lie, claiming to be Clint Duke. That washes you up with me."

"How do you know I'm not Clint Duke?" the officer queried. "Because Clint Duke—"

Abruptly Connor broke off what he had started to say. He remembered that he was talking to a man said to be a deputy United States marshal. "Don't get excited, Curly. You wouldn't want to start a fever. If

ing he waited a moment listening for sounds to guide him. Two of the rooms had someone in them probably, since it was not usual to leave without blowing out the lamp.

Out of one of the rooms a man walked. There was no light in the hall. The man walked toward the front stairs. Jeff called a question after him.

"Say, which is Curly's room?" The lodger stopped. "The one on yore right," he said.

"Obliged," Gray told him, and watched the other go downstairs. Again the officer listened. There was no murmur of voices inside the room indicated. He opened the door, walked in, and pushed the bolt home.

Curly was in bed reading by the light of a lamp beside him. He looked up, marking with a finger the place in the book where he had been interrupted. His eyes gleamed.

"Mr. Jeff Gray made a short visit to Tail Holt Tuesday," he said in the singsong voice of an uneducated man reading from a newspaper.

"The boys were certainly glad to see him and gave him a warm welcome. The obsequies will be at Boot Hill this afternoon."

"Which one of the boys are you interring?" Gray asked. "I wouldn't know who else beside you," Curly answered. "You're



The man circled the house.

a cool customer, Jeff. Don't you know this town is mighty unhealthy for you?"

"It doesn't seem to have been healthy for you either, Curly. How's yore wound getting along?"

"Fine and dandy. Morg was in some hurry when he handed me this pill, and didn't plant it where he wanted."

"He sent one to my address, too, a few days earlier, but I wasn't where he mailed it."

"How come you to let the rattlesnake get away when you had him under yore heel?" Curly asked.

Gray told him the circumstances. The wounded man meditated over the strange ways of women.

"Funny the way they act," he said. "All day she had been scared to death of the hell-hound, don't you reckon? Yet she butts in and prevents you from killing him."

"Yes. She couldn't stand any more bloodshed."

"He didn't harm her any, did he?" "No," Gray asked a question. "Know where Norris is, Curly?"

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I'm a government man, as you say, I didn't come here to get you."

"There's nothing you can get me for," Curly answered hardily. "What you came to see me for was to get me to throw down my friends. Nothing doing. I'll tell you another thing. Some of the boys usually drop in during the evening. Better not let them find you here."

"That's good medicine," Gray said, and reached for his hat. "Only you're wrong about why I came. I thought there was a chance you might tell me where Morgan Norris is hiding, if he hasn't slipped across the border yet. I had another reason too. Sperm Howard's day is over. Don't let him draw you into any of his schemes deeper than you are now. He's coming to the end of the trail."

Footsteps sounded in the hall. Someone tried the door-handle and found the door bolted.

Curly drew a long blue-nosed revolver from beneath his pillow. He looked at Gray. The narrowed eyes of the detective were like half-scabbarded steel. In them shone a cold, fierce wariness. His lithe body was crouched, the tense muscles catlike.

"Don't start anything," Curly warned, a rasp to his low command. "Better tell yore friends that," Gray said, almost in a murmur, his gaze fixed on the door.

A fist thumped on a panel. "Do we get in—or don't we?" a cheerful voice demanded. "What's the idea of bolting us out, unless—?"

Through the door came a jovial chuckle. "Who's with you, Mile High?" Curly asked.

"Sperm Howard. Let us in, fellow, and give us a knockdown to her."

"Might as well let them in," Gray said quietly. "All right, but don't you go reaching for yore gun. I'll be watching you every minute."

Gray trotted softly to the door and drew back the bolt, then stepped across to a far corner.

"Come in," Curly said. Howard waddled in, Mile High at his heels. They stared blankly at Gray. The fingers of Mile High's right hand closed spasmodically, but his arm did not move toward the weapon at his side. It was not time for that yet. Gray had not drawn a gun.

"Keep yore shirts on, boys," Curly snapped. "I don't aim for you to have any Fourth of July in here." One of his hands was under the sheet.

The opaque eyes of Howard shifted to the man in the bed. "What does this mean, Curly? You throwing in with this spy?"

"No, Sperm. He says he drapped in to ask me where is Morg. And don't make any more cracks like that. There's dynamite in them. It's liable to go off and blow someone up. It might be you." Curly spoke softly, but his mouth was a thin straight line not reassuring.

"Don't get on the prod, Curly," answered Howard crustily. "When I find you locked in a room with this fellow who is here trying to make us trouble, I'm entitled to ask questions."

"Sure, but ask 'em gentle, Sperm."

The lank cowpuncher flung out abrupt inquiries. "When did this bird come to town, Curly? What's he doing here? I'll say he can't get away with any such shenanigan. He tipped off Lee Chiswick about the Live Oak business, and he can't tell me anything different."

"Blame yoreself and Sperm and Morg for that, Mile High," said Curly. "You rode out asking for trouble."

The blank eyes of Howard rested on the marshal. "Nothing to that, Curly. The boys were attacked by

these smugglers while riding peacefully through the canyon. I don't know whether Lee Chiswick incited that or not, but he was right there to cut off the retreat of our friends. Looks to me like he was in with the greasers to fix up the ambush. This fellow Gray too. We don't know a thing about him even now. He has lied about himself and abused our kindness from the start. But we're not looking for trouble. Come on, Mile High. We'll go where we are welcome. I'm disappointed in Curly."

His manner of reproachful resignation annoyed the wounded man. "Don't pull that line, Sperm. You knew all along where I stood about these holdups. I stayed out of them, and I'm still doing that. I'm not throwin' in with this fellow here, whoever he is, but I'm not going to let Uncle Sam jump me for what I didn't do. You nor nobody else can pass the buck to me."

"There's no buck to pass, Curly, and if there was you ought to know me better than that," Howard said, shaking his head sadly, a picture of a good man misunderstood. "Let's go, Mile High."

He reached for the doorknob. "One moment, Howard," interposed the crook-nosed man. "Get this right. I'm here on a little visit, and yore son Lou is at the L C on one. Think that over carefully."

The fat hand of Sperm Howard made a gesture repudiating any lawless intent. "I'm not lookin' for trouble," he said again mildly.

But for an instant, before he vanished from sight, the curtain lifted in front of the blank eyes, to show a venomous glare behind which the lust of murder lay crouched.

Gray laughed mockingly. "Too bad to misjudge such a fine up-standing citizen."

Curly did not laugh. "Fellow, you're in a tight," he said acridly. "Don't let him fool you."

"He's not foolin' me a minute," the officer replied. "Mr. Howard means to blast me soon as it is safe."

Gray said good-by to Curly and walked out of the room. He tipped down the same back stairway up which he had come a short time earlier. Slipping round the corner, he crossed the road to the cottonwood grove opposite. At the other side of the clump of trees was a path which angled back to a small adobe house built on the edge of a creek. Through a window he saw a man in his stocking feet sitting at a table reading a newspaper. The man wore spectacles. He was past fifty, a heavy-set, tough-looking customer whose arm muscles bulged beneath the shirt-sleeves.

The man outside circled the house and knocked on the front door.

"Evening, Hank," he said a moment later, smiling at the blacksmith. "Can I stay with you for a while?"

Ransom stared at him in surprise. "Lord love ye, man, where did you blow from?" the old soldier asked. "Come in and rest your weary bones."

Gray walked in and closed the door. "I came from having a talk with Sperm Howard, Mile High, and Curly," he said.

"And they didn't shoot you into a rag doll? Man, don't you know Tail Holt is plain poison for you?"

"So Curly says. Sperm doesn't want any trouble, he claims."

"Where did you leave your horse?"

"In Mack Willard's pasture."

"I'd better rope it and turn it loose outside, so they won't know you haven't left town."

Gray told him where he had left the saddle, and Ransom left to recover it and free the horse.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Frosting a Cake for Judges to Sample

By C. HOUSTON GOUDISS

NATURALLY, I am accustomed to seeing exhibits of delicious and interesting foods in the Experimental Kitchen Laboratory that I maintain in New York City. But in all the years of its existence, it has never been a busier nor a more inviting place than during the last few weeks when the home economists on my staff have been busily testing and judging the many fine cake recipes submitted by readers of this paper in our recent Cake Recipe Contest.

Imagine, if you can, a big cheerful and colorful kitchen filled with long tables upon which row after row of handsome cakes were arranged—proudly testifying to the skill of the homemakers



A professional cake baker, frosting one of the hundreds of cakes which were made up in the Experimental Kitchen Laboratory, maintained by C. Houston Goudiss in New York City, in the course of selecting the winners in his recent Cake Recipe Contest.

who cherish the recipes from which they were made.

Every Type of Cake Entered.

A whole tableful of white cakes, with and without icing. Chocolate and cocoa cakes of every possible type. All manner of cakes, fragrant and delicious—spice, ice cream, honey, caramel, maple syrup, nut, date, pineapple, orange, lemon, butterscotch, jam, banana, raisin, oatmeal, coconut and marble cakes. Cakes baked in long sheets, square cakes, round cakes, layer cakes. Old-fashioned cakes from grandmothers' recipe books. Very modern and up-to-date cakes. And even one that was said to have been a favorite with General Robert E. Lee. I've never seen anything to compare with the collection, even at the biggest State Fair!

Do you wonder that the home economists on my staff required several weeks to pick the winners? For with such a wealth of exceptional cakes from which to choose, selecting those for top honors, was indeed difficult.

The cake bakers were trained for their work. They followed the recipes precisely. They measured accurately. They checked oven temperatures.

The scoring system was highly scientific. And we can say with conviction that no matter how close the race, the winners definitely outpointed even their closest rivals.

First Prize Winner.

The first prize of \$25.00 went to Mrs. D. F. Kelly, 1004 Charles St., Whitewater, Wis.

Second Prize Winners.

The five second prizes were awarded to Mrs. H. Harshbarger of 2427 Fifth Ave., Altoona, Pa.; R. A. Williams, 12075 Rosemary Ave., Detroit, Mich.; Mrs. C. A. Burns, Box 788, Oakland, Miss.; Miss Sadie Cunningham, Avonmore, Pa.; and Mrs. Laura Meyer, 107 Pleasant St., Plymouth, Wis.

Third Prize Winners.

Mrs. T. H. Fjone, Flaxville, Mont.; Mrs. Lester Ralston, 127 South Judd St., Sioux City, Iowa; Mrs. Harry A. Kramer, 16 Marin Road, Manor, Calif.; Mrs. F. D. McDonald, Route 1, Amherst, Texas; Vera Tygar, Commodore, Pa.; Mrs. George Ahlborn, R. D. No. 1, Mt. Pleasant, Pa.; Mrs. B. A. Robinson, Box 578, Emmett,

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ville, Iowa; Mrs. B. F. Herman, Box 1118, Crosby, Miss.; Mrs. Paul Lorenz, P. O. Box 225, Strathmore, Calif.; Mrs. S. S. Ardent, Simpson, Nev.; Mrs. Vida Hilger, Box 257, Rockland, Mich.; Mrs. Grace H. Peterson, Box 335, Amherst, Wis.; Mrs. Cecil Skinner, Bedford, Wyo.; Mrs. Joe Furnace, 317 West Twentieth St., South Sioux City, Neb.

My thanks and my compliments to every homemaker who submitted a recipe. I only regret that everyone who submitted a recipe could not win a prize.

Making Friends

Blessed are they who have the gift of making friends, for it is one of God's best gifts. It involves many things, but above all, the power of going out of one's self, and appreciating whatever is noble and loving in another.—Thomas Hughes.

Never Return

There are some things that never come back—the arrow that is frown, the word that is spoken, the life that is gone.—Dalrymple.

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