

THE SMOKY YEARS

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W.N.U. Release

INSTALLMENT 13 THE STORY SO FAR:

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built up a vast string of ranches. King was killed by his powerful and unscrupulous competitor, Ben Thorpe. Bill Roper, King's adopted son, was determined to avenge his death in spite of the opposi-

tion of his sweetheart, Jody Gordon, and her father. After wiping Thorpe out of Texas, Roper conducted a great raid upon Thorpe's vast herds in Montana. Roper left for Lew Gordon's home when told that Jody had disappeared. Unable

to reconcile her father with Roper, Jody had set out with Shoshone Wilce to find him. They were attacked by some of Thorpe's men hiding in Roper's shack. Wilce escaped but Jody was captured. The men decided to hold her as bait.

CHAPTER XVII—Continued
A shiver ran the length of Jody Gordon's body. Casually, as if they were talking about getting breakfast, these quiet-faced men were speaking of a proposed death—the death of a boy who had once been very close to her, and very dear. Suddenly she was able to glimpse the power and the depth of the animosity behind the mission of these men. No effort and no cost would seem to Ben Thorpe too great if in the end Bill Roper was struck out of existence.

"Jim," the younger rider said soberly, "if Roper's got his wild bunch with him—Jim, it's such a fight as none of us have ever gone into yet! When you stop to think that any time—a minute—a bunch of 'em may land in here—"

"Charley's on lookout," Jim Leathers shrugged. "We'll know in plenty time."
A silence fell, a long silence. Heavy upon Jody Gordon was the panic of an open-space creature held helpless within close walls. Her voice was low and bitter. "You're set on holding me here?"

"No call to put it that way," Jim Leathers said mildly, almost gently. But his eyes denied that mildness, so that behind him Jody sensed again the vast animosity built by the Texas Rustlers' War.

"I want a flat answer," Jody said bravely. "Are you going to give me a horse, or not?"

Once more Jim Leathers' canine teeth showed in his peculiarly unpleasant grin. "Hell, no," he said.

CHAPTER XVIII

Perhaps Lew Gordon should have known that if Bill Roper learned of Jody's disappearance at all, Roper would come directly to him.

And, knowing this, he should have prepared himself. But Lew Gordon had not met Roper face to face in nearly two years; and nothing was farther from his mind than the possibility that Roper would walk in upon him now.

Upon this night Lew Gordon was pacing the main room of his little Miles City house; forty-eight hours had passed since his daughter's disappearance and the old cattleman had lashed himself into a state of repressed fury comparable to that of a trap-baffled mountain lion, or a goaded bear. Everything that could be done to locate his daughter was being done.

He knew that Jody's disappearance was voluntary, and he knew its purpose. The brief but highly informative note that Jody had left him told him that much. It simply said:

"One of you must be made to see reason. I am going to talk to Billy Roper myself."

What this did not tell him was where Roper was, or how Jody expected to find him. Impatient of mystery and delay, he could not understand why his many far-scattered cowboys could dig up no word. For all he knew, his daughter was by this time lost somewhere in the frozen wastes of snow, in immediate desperate need of help.

Lew Gordon sat alone for a little while. For the moment his helpless anger was burned down into a heavy weariness. His mind was full of his daughter, whom he persistently pictured as a little girl, much more of a child than she actually was any more.

Suddenly it struck him how curious it was that in this bare room in which he sat there was no sign of any kind that Jody had ever been here at all. This was partly because she had never lived here nor even been expected here; but it brought home to him sharply how much of his life had been given to cattle, how little to his daughter. It made him realize how little he knew his daughter, and how little he had ever given her of himself.

This was Lew Gordon's state of mind as the door thrust open, letting in a brief lash of wintry wind; and he wheeled in his chair to face the last man on earth he had expected to see.

Bill Roper shook a powdering of dry snow off the roll of his coat collar, then stood looking at Lew Gordon in a cool hard silence as he pulled off his gloves. Once this man had been almost a son to Lew Gordon—the adopted son, in actuality, of Lew Gordon's dead partner. But a definite enemy now replaced what a little while ago had been a friendship as deep and close as the variance in their ages could permit. All the meaning of their association, almost as long as Bill Roper's life, was gone, wiped out by those two smoky years since the death of Dusty King.

For a moment or two Lew Gordon stared at him in utter disbelief. Then he whipped to his feet.

"Where is she?" he demanded intensely, furiously. "What have you done with her?"

Bill Roper no longer looked like the youngster Dusty King had raised on the trail. His gray eyes looked hard and extremely competent, old

beyond his age, in a face so dark and lean-carved it was hard to recognize behind it the face of Dusty King's kid. He made no attempt to answer a question which was necessarily meaningless to him. He finished pulling off his gloves, unbuckled his coat, and hooked his thumbs in his belt before he spoke.

"I heard yesterday that Jody has turned up missing," he said. "I came to Miles hell-for-leather to see if it's so. From what I could find out down in the town, no word has come in on where she is. If that's true, I don't aim to give my time to anything else until she's found."

"You mean to deny you know where she is?" Gordon shouted.

Roper's voice did not change. "You talk like a fool," he said.

Lew Gordon's eyes were savagely intent upon Roper's face; he was trying to discover if this man could be believed.

"You may be lying," he added at last, "and you may not, but I'll tell you this—you sure won't leave here



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till I find out where my girl is. You're wanted anyway, my laddie buck; there's a legal reward on your head, right now—and part of it was put up by me."

"I heard that," Bill Roper said. "When I get ready to leave, I'll leave, all right. My advice to you is to begin using your head. I may be in a kind of funny position. But it puts me where I know things about the Montana range that neither you nor your outfits have got any clue to. If you want your daughter back you better figure to use what I know about the Deep Grass."

Lew Gordon compelled himself to temporize. What he couldn't get around was his own belief that Roper knew something definite, specific, about where Jody had gone—or had started out to go. He must have known also, in spite of the bluff to which anger had prompted him, that he could not hold Roper here when Roper decided to leave, nor force any information from him in any way whatever.

"What is it you want to know?" he asked at last, helpless, and angry in his helplessness.

"In the first place, I want to know what made you think Jody was with me?"

"You swear," Lew Gordon demanded, "you don't know the answer to that?"

"I don't swear anything," Roper said. "I asked you a question, Lew."

Lew Gordon hesitated. It was a good many years since anyone had talked to him in the tone Bill Roper took; but for once the purpose in hand outpowered the violence of his natural reaction. He turned from his litter of papers, and handed Bill Roper the little scrap of Jody's handwriting which was all she had left to indicate where she was gone.

"One of you must be made to see reason. I am going to talk to Billy Roper myself."

When Bill Roper had read that, the eyes of the two men met in hostile question.

"This looks mighty like a false lead, to me," Bill Roper said at last. "Like as if she aimed to cover up where she really went. Don't hardly seem likely she'd start out to come to me."

"I know she went looking for you because she said she did. My girl don't lie."

Roper shrugged. "Why should she do that?"



"It was your own man talked her into it," Gordon said with menace. "My own man? What man?"
"A little sniveler called Shoshone Wilce. Everybody knows he was a scout coyote for you, before Texas ever run you out."

"Nobody run me out of any place," Roper said; but his mind whipped to something else. It was true that he talked to certain men in the town before he had come here. Now suddenly he knew that he had learned what he had come to find out. He buttoned his coat, pulled on his gloves.

Gordon confronted him stubbornly. "I mean you shan't leave here without telling me what you know."

A glint of hard amusement was plain in Bill Roper's eyes. "I know what you've told me. But I'll add this onto it. I think you'll soon have back your girl. I'm walking out of here now, Lew, because it's time for me to look into a couple of things. But I'll be seeing you—if Thorpe don't get you first."

The veins stood out sharply on Lew Gordon's forehead, high-lighted by a faint dampness. "In all fairness I'll tell you this," he said. "It's true I can't lift a gun on you, or on any man who stands with empty hands. But as soon as you're out of that door, all Miles City will be on the jump to see you don't get loose. Twenty thousand hangs over your head, my boy!"

"Quite a tidy little nest egg," Roper agreed. "I'd like to have it myself."

A trick of the wind sent a great whirl of papers across the room as he went out.

He had not come here without providing that the horse which waited under his saddle was fresh and good. He struck westward now out of Miles City, unhurrying. At the half mile he found a broad cross trail where some random band of cattle had trampled the snow into a trackless pavement. He turned north in this, followed it for a mile, then swung northwest over markless snow. Now that this horse was warned a little he settled deep in his saddle and pushed the animal into a steady trot; at that gait, even in the snow, he could expect the tough range-bred pony to last most of the night.

CHAPTER XIX

A tired horse is not much inclined to shy, toward the end of a long day's travel; and when Bill Roper's horse snorted and jumped sideways out of its tracks the rider looked twice, curiously, at the carcass which had spooked his pony. A dead pony on the winter range being a fairly common thing, he was about to ride on, when he noticed something about this particular dead pony which caused him to pull up and dismount for a closer examination.

After leaving Lew Gordon he had ridden deep into the night. Half an hour would bring him within sight of the Fork Creek rendezvous, and he was eager to push on, so that his deduction as to Jody's whereabouts might have a quick answer, one way or the other; but when he had examined the dead pony he was glad that he had checked.

This was no winter-killed pony. The bright trace of frozen blood that had first caught Roper's eye was the result of two gunshot wounds in neck and quarters.

A dark foreboding possessed Roper as he studied the dead pony. Roper himself was short-cutting through the hills, following no trail. The coincidence that he had stumbled upon the carcass in all those snowy wastes could be accounted for only in one way; both Roper and the pony had followed a line of least resistance through the hills—a line that had the Fork Creek rendezvous at its far end. His discovery told him that there had been fighting at Fork Creek within the last forty-eight hours. If he was right in believing that Jody had come to Fork Creek—

He remounted and swung northward, mercilessly whipping up his weary pony, but approaching the Fork Creek camp roundabout, behind masking hills and through hidden ravines. An hour passed before he threw down his reins and crept on hands and knees to the crest of a ridge commanding the valley of the Fork.

He moved a half mile closer and resumed his watch; but for some time he could make out nothing.

Then just as the sun set, three men moved out of the cabin. For a moment or two they stood in the snow close together. One went back into the cabin. The two others disappeared for a moment, to reappear mounted. They separated, and Roper watched them ride in opposite directions up the nearest slopes of the hills. These passed beyond his sight, but in another minute or two their ways were retraced by two other riders.

"Outposts," Roper decided. "Somebody's keeping a hell of a careful watch."

(TO BE CONTINUED)



MILLIONS of those who follow baseball on the field or through the sporting pages of the country have become steamed up over the stretch batting battle between Ted Williams of the Boston Red Sox and Joe DiMaggio of the New York Yankees. Here are the two great modern hitters, the ranking class of 1941 with 400 or thereabouts set as the winning goal.

They deserve all the plaudits and the hoarse huzzas of those who follow the base hit from the single to the home run. But if a few of these millions don't mind I'd like to take them back into a younger country and tell them the story of three major hitting contests that I believe overshadow Williams and DiMaggio.

It may be the encroaching years. It may be the humidity. But I'll stand on the figures and the class, as the multitudes of 1941 stifle a laugh.

Cobb-Jackson—1911

When the American league season of 1911 opened Ty Cobb, the Georgia Peach, had led his league four successive seasons. At the age of 25 he was just coming to his peak.

That same year a tall, lanky caddy from Brandon Mills, S. C., had reported to Cleveland from New Orleans. His name was Shoeless Joe Jackson, "The Carolina Crash-smith," picked by Cobb, Ruth and Speaker as "the greatest natural hitter that ever lived."

"O, the brave song his black bat sung" as Shoeless Joe stepped into the ball Cobb, on his way then to nine straight batting championships and a run of 12 league-leading years out of 13 in a row, kept waiting for the Carolina rookie to break. Cobb started above .400 and he kept above .400. But he couldn't shake off the gangling challenger with the free-wheeling and effective swing.

And those were the days when Ed Walsh was spinning his famous "spitter" through—when they were using emery balls, and every type of fuff to make the ball dip and skid and duck and slide.

About Jackson

Who was this rookie who could neither read nor write, who had gone shoeless in most of his earlier games, to challenge the great Cobb? Connie Mack had turned him back in 1908 and 1909. Cleveland had turned him back to New Orleans in 1910. Why, we'll never know. For his lowest average in those years had been .354.

Even a blind man could sense the lyrical smoothness of his swing. That year Shoeless Joe carried Ty Cobb to the wire. Ty finished at .429. Jackson, the rookie, at .408. Ty needed his greatest year to beat Jackson out.

Was Shoeless Joe merely a one-year fluke?

A year later Cobb found himself down the stretch, again batting above .400, with Jackson now in the lead. Jackson was .420. It was here that Ty, applying winning psychology, refused to speak to Jackson in a Detroit-Cleveland series and Shoeless Joe, wondering what he had done to offend a friend, fell into a brief slump.

At least this is the story of those days. In any event, Ty went on to win with an average of .410 against Jackson's .395.

In those two seasons the Shoeless Swinger had averaged .402 for his first two years in the majors, yet he couldn't lead the league.

Cobb and Speaker

Cobb had run into a close call years before against Larry Lajoie, the most graceful ball player of all time and one of the game's great hitters. But he came to the campaign of 1916 for his tenth consecutive shot at the batting championship. Today they rave about one year at the top.

Here was his chance to lead his league 10 straight years. Cobb went into a tailspin. He batted only .371 as Speaker finished at .386.

He had been facing such pitching stars as Cy Young, Walter Johnson, Ed Walsh, Addie Joss, Rube Waddell, Eddie Plank, Chief Bender, Jack Coombs, Smoky Joe Wood—an amazing galaxy.

Except for this one year interlude, Cobb would have led the big parade 13 straight years. As it was he came back to make it 12 out of 13 and to finish with a 24-year average around .363.

We are removing no credit from the extremely able hitting of Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio. We are merely offering them a target at which they can shoot.

Cobb—Jackson—Lajoie—Speaker—they were "far away and long ago." But they could rather than whirling apple. Don't let anyone tell you differently.



A Bit on the Humorous Side

All or Nothing

Shyly the young man stood before the father of his adored.
"Mr. Jones," he stammered, "I—er—will—er—what I want is to ask you for your daughter's hand."

The old man frowned as he took his pipe from his mouth.

"Can't do that," he growled; "you must take the whole girl or nothing."

The growls of a bear were broadcast the other afternoon from a zoo, and in some homes tiny tots were heard to remark that Daddy had come home early.

Slight Slip

Forced to put on his brakes suddenly, the driver of the sports car found it shooting crabwise across the road, just missing a lamp-post before it stopped.

Up stroled a policeman.

"Well," he remarked genially, "you got a nice skid there, sir."

"Pardon me, officer," was the haughty reply; "this lady is my wife."

Still One

Stranger (watching boy fishing)—How many have you caught, sonny?

Sonny—When I get another, I'll have one.

A man met a friend who owed him \$5. The friend saw it was impossible to escape. "My dear fellow," he said, "I owe you \$5 and an apology. Please accept the apology now."

No Waiting

Kidder—Which end of a cow gets up first?

Chugwater—My experience in buying beef is that both ends of the animal rise at the same time.

ASK ME ANOTHER?

A General Quiz

The Questions

- "Sail on, O Ship of State! Sail on, O Union, strong and great!" is a quotation from what American poet?
- Over what country did the Incas reign?
- Approximately how many miles of railroad are there in the United States?
- How many vestigial organs has man?
- Is sunburn caused by the heat of the sun?
- Where was the Tower of Babel?

The Answers

- Henry W. Longfellow ("The Building of the Ship").
- Peru.
- Approximately 236,000 miles.
- Man possesses no less than 180 vestigial organs that, although probably once of vital importance, are now of little use to him.
- No, sunburn is caused by the ultraviolet rays of the sun.
- Babylon.

The Glutton

"Ladies and gentlemen," shouted the street performer, "in a few moments I will astonish you by eating coal, stones, and nails. I will also swallow a sword which I will come around with the hat, trusting to get enough for a crust of bread."

"What!" came a voice from the crowd. "Still hungry?"

Considerate

Tom—Hi, what's the idea of wearing my raincoat?

Tim—Well, you wouldn't like your new suit to get wet, would you?

NEW EFFECTIVE HAY FEVER RELIEF

Hay fever, which annually causes more sneezes, more inflamed noses and more red, streaming eyes than any other scourge, may have its final big fling this September, all because a Pennsylvania electrical engineer was served a dish of corn meal mush which was entirely too salty.

The engineer, sneezing, and with all other hay fever manifestations, stopped at a hotel where he was served a dish of mush, which he considered sending back as it was much too salty. Finally he ate it, however; the hay fever attack lessened, ultimately ceased. Next day he had three meals, all over-salted, and experienced his most comfortable time in years in the "hay fever season."

His analytical mind quickly grasped the possibility that the saline substance in his food was responsible for his relief.

About this time, Dr. E. E. Selleck, a graduate of Columbia University, met the engineer, made notes, and when he returned to his home, began experiments. Today Dr. Selleck declares he has found a certain means of relief for hay fever and is supported in his contention by other medical experts, and a nationally known chemical manufacturing concern, the Hollings-Smith Company, at Orangeburg, New York, has taken over making the remedy, which is called Nakamo Balm.

Describing the experiments, Dr. Selleck said, "After I was sure I had found a means of quickly relieving hay fever through the chloride group, I tested it in the most practical way I knew. I held a three day clinic, to which many hay fever sufferers responded, from ages ranging from 10 to 60 years. Each person was given two tablets with a little water. Some relief came to all within ten minutes. Reports on these cases during the ensuing weeks showed practically a complete cessation of symptoms."—Adv.

Bearing Reproof

Fear not the anger of the wise to raise; Those best can bear reproof who merit praise.—Pope.



Close Relative
Indecision is a very near relative to unhappiness. — Stanley Mills.

It's A GOOD AMERICAN CUSTOM

SATURDAY NIGHT BATHS have been an American custom since the first settler's wife pointed to the tub and said: "Climb in and wash some of that soil off your hide." Objectors considered such frequent bathing harmful.

SMOKING KING EDWARD Cigars is a truly pleasurable custom, enjoyed by wise smokers everywhere. America's favorite cigar.

2 for 5c

KING EDWARD Cigars
WORLD'S LARGEST SELLER

Benefits to Our Readers

THE PUBLIC nature of advertising benefits everyone it touches. It benefits the public by describing exactly the products that are offered. It benefits employees, because the advertiser must be more fair and just than the employer who has no obligation to the public. These benefits of advertising are quite apart from the obvious benefits which advertising confers—the lower prices, the higher quality, the better service that go with advertised goods and firms.