



THEIR NAME WAS LEGION!

by Courtney Ryley Cooper

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(Continued)

CHAPTER X

The Sway of Justice

"It was very evident what had happened," resumed Mrs. Jordan, "drunk, he had wandered home, they had quarreled and he had killed her. Jim staggered forth, gave himself up to the first policeman he met—and confessed."

"It seems that after the arrest, Bartholomew came forward as Jim's friend and took charge of the baby, stating to the court that he was sending it out West to be adopted by a childless family. Then one night, in the darkness of the jail someone slipped a packet into his cell. It contained saws, money and an address—the name of Franniston out here in Wyoming. He saved his way out of the comparatively flimsy jail and escaped. A week later he presented himself to Franniston here in Bellaine and asked for a job. He was given one without question. Nothing was said to indicate that Franniston knew his real identity, nothing done to show that Franniston had the slightest idea that this man was the father of the girl to whom Franniston had given his own name, but whom he had not adopted. So the relationship began. Then, a year later, the truth dawned on Jim. Bartholomew showed up in Bellaine, under the name of Barrows. Franniston could reveal the true identity of the girl, and she would be stained with the blackness of being the daughter of a man who had killed his wife. So he had Jim in his power."

"But was anything ever said to indicate that? Was—"

"Nothing."

Bart Rogers stared at the carpet. "It was strange that the officials back East should learn of Jim's whereabouts so quickly—especially when they had been unable to find him for years. I wonder if—"

"Jim says that Graham was the jailer back in Alkonla. I suppose he was bribed to sneak the saws into the cell. Anyway, there was an investigation afterward and he lost his job. Then he came out here. So there—" concluded Mrs. Jordan, "is the story."

For a moment Bart stood uncertain, looking dully out the window, at the casket-like boxes which had been piled on the front veranda. Then, with a sudden resolve, he hurried up the stairway and to the doorway of the room Anita was in.

"It's Bart," he announced when her faint answer had come to his knock. "Bart Rogers. May I talk to you a moment?"

Assent came from within. Bart opened the door, and walked impulsively to the quiet, white-faced girl by the window.

"I just wanted to tell you that I've heard—the whole thing," he blurted.



"I've Heard—the Whole Thing," He Blurted.

"And that I don't care who your father is or what he's done or—anything of the kind! That I'll help you in any way you say and that I—I'm proud to know you as if you were—were a queen!"

Then just as suddenly as he had spoken, he was silent again, with a strange, boyish bashfulness. A second more and he had closed the door behind him and was hurrying down the hall, peering inwardly at his cowardice for Bart, as he had hurried up the stairs, had intended to tell her

of "Bull" Franniston's office. The ancient bolt broke under the pressure; an instant later Bart tumbled into the room, to rush toward the writing, flame-wrapped being which struggled against the wall on the other side of the room. Barrows was gone—a glance toward an open window leading to a lower roof told Bart the method of exit.

He finally succeeded in enveloping Bull's head and shoulders in the heavy cloth. A second more and steps sounded on the stairs. Bart, struggling to evade and fight the flames at the same time, turned excitedly.

"Quick, men!" he shouted, "hold that stuff in front of you—and rush him!"

They finally succeeded in smothering the flames and the parts of the room that were ablaze. Then Bart turned to the injured man. His face was swollen and distorted, his hands clutched and grasped in agony. Mumbling words came disjointedly from his blackened lips.

"He's got the combination—he's got the combination—" Then, slowly, gaspingly, "Bull" Franniston lapsed into unconsciousness. Bart Rogers rose. "Try to make some sort of a stretcher out of these blankets," he

died him, both hands prying at the tight, clenched jaws, to free the paper enclosed there. A moment later he gained his objective and rose.

"Help me get him to the hotel," he ordered. "It'll be easier if we do it before he regains consciousness." The aide obeyed. Ten minutes later, stretched upon a bed of the hotel, Leon Barrows opened his eyes to find a doctor, summoned from the room of "Bull" Franniston, examining the bullet-fractured ankle. At the other end of the room Bart Rogers was reading

a crumpled paper: "AGREEMENT 'Bellaine, Wyo., July 8, 1921.' 'In consideration and in payment for the transfer of certain oil properties, rights and privileges underlying the land contained in the northwest quarter of section 64, township 8, range 74, said land known as the Rogers ranch, the undersigned, Leon Barrows, does hereby agree and promise to pay Egbert Franniston of Bellaine, Wyo., the sum of \$100,000.00 (one hundred thousand dollars) upon the satisfactory evidences of the presence of oil, and agrees also, in consideration of the transfer of these rights, to deliver to the said Egbert Franniston any and all letters, papers and incriminating evidence of whatsoever sort implicating him in the deaths of Martha O. Morrison of Springfield, Ohio, and Franklin Rogers of Bellaine, Wyo.' 'What's this mean?' Bart asked in a voice suddenly hoarse. 'What's—' 'It's all a lie. He made me sign that thing—I don't even know what it's all about I—' 'Stop that talking!' For Bart's steady gaze had again centered upon the crumpled lines of typewriting:

"As a guarantee of the above, I, Leon Barrows, at one time known as Mason Bartholomew, hereby declare and affirm that I am equally guilty with Egbert Franniston in the deaths of the persons above stated, and that this statement is made to assure the said Egbert Franniston that the information in my possession shall not be used against him for the purpose of defrauding him of the rights and privileges of the above-mentioned lands to be obtained under the will of Franklin Rogers, or to avoid payment of the guaranteed \$100,000.00 as above stated. 'Signed, this 8th day of July, 1921. 'LEON BARROWS.' 'You killed my father!' Bart's voice was hoarse, unnatural. The thin hands of Leon Barrows writhed in terror. 'I did not, I'm telling you! I did not! He made me sign that thing—I was afraid of him—I—' 'I'll see about that myself. Give me the combination of that safe. Be quick about it—otherwise I'll go through it with an acetylene torch!' The teeth of Leon Barrows suddenly began to chatter. 'It's—it's all a lie.' 'Very well, then, prove it. Are you going to give me the combination of that safe?' 'Six—the man was staring at the ceiling and talking between dry, white lips—"one turn to the left to four, then twice around—" 'Wait a minute. Mark that down, will you, doctor?' 'I've already gotten it.' 'Good. Go ahead.' When he had the combination Bart ran out, and over to the office of Leon Barrows. It was locked, but the shoulder of Bart Rogers was strong with a new strength. One lunge and the door yielded. He went to the safe. An hour later—

The room of "Bull" Franniston was dim with its shielded light—and with approaching death. "Bull," he said quietly, "I've gotten hold of your confession." "My what?" "Your confession to the murder of old Jim's wife back in Illinois and to the killing of my father. I caught Barrows stealing it out of your safe." "He worked the combination, eh?" The whisper came with a great effort—an effort that was heightened by a sudden hate. "What's—what's—he say?" "That you forced him into making that agreement with you; that you threatened to kill him, and—"

"Did he say anything about the cyanide—" The man strove to rise, and

dropped panting back to his pillow—"the cyanide that he bought for me to give—to give to Rogers? Eh? Look it up. Make 'em show you the poison book at the White Cross store in Cheyenne. That's where he got it—he'd have to sign for it. You'll know his writing—even if he used a false name—Did he say anything about—" "Cyanide?" Bart had motioned the doctor closer that he might serve as a witness. "What was it for?" "For—Rogers, I told you." "You killed him, then?" "Barrows—and I—yes. I did it actually. But he was the man who—" "When?" "The afternoon the oil came in. I telephoned—telephoned Barrows. He—he said you were in town and to go—to go ahead. I hurried to the house—and—and made him swallow a five-grain capsule. He—he hardly moved." Bart Rogers, white, trembling with the surprise of the confession, rubbed a hand slowly over his eyes. "Then—you'd planned for this—this oil?" "Yes—Barrows. He knew the geologist." "And you tricked my father into making that will?" "He thought—he thought it was a mortgage. We got him to sign it just after he had his first stroke, and then dated it back three weeks. He could still use his right hand then—and we held it for him to sign. His eyes were bad. He could hardly see. We cut off a mortgage blank an inch from the bottom and magnetized—magnetized the paper with the will on—with the will on it—on the other—other side. It's easier'n it sounds. Friction, you—you know. Any—any kid can do it. He thought he was signing—signing the mortgage. He signed the will. His eyes—his eyes you know. Barrows did it all—he framed—he framed every bit of it." "Then it was trickery?" "What else—what else do you suppose?" "There was a copy of it in his safety box." "Ransom—Ransom the clerk—was in on the deal. I stole the old man's key long enough for him to open the box. He used—used to work for Barrows. It cost—cost \$1,000." "And the signatures—?" "Graham's been—been one of our bunch—ever—ever since he came out here after the—after the Morrison trouble." "Send—send for the district attorney!" Bull ordered. "Send—send for him. I'll tell the truth!" It was late the next morning that Bart Rogers, tired, yet strong, with a nervous energy which recognized neither fatigue nor sleeplessness, stood in the living room of the Jordan home anxiously awaiting a step on the stair. He had won. The town of Bellaine was a town once more, and not a bedlam. Those of its unwelcome population who were not in the stockade had departed, poorer and wiser—to spread the word that the rifles and bayonets of the American Legion, in time of need, would protect the good name and cleanliness of a model oil town, Bellaine. Locked in the bank was some forty thousand, garnered in fines which had run all the way from a hundred to a thousand dollars, depending upon the viciousness of the human coyotes who, at last, had found their way into the trap of the law. It meant a new City hall, a new jail—and more worth-while appropriation to support the city police force which would succeed Bart Rogers. His work was done now—besides, out where he once had labored, on the ranch, a fortune awaited him, returned to its rightful owner through the confession of a dying murderer. Over in Mannington, a sheriff's chair was vacant, as was the post of a safety-box clerk in the bank. Both now reposed in the stockade, their first stop on the long journey that was to end—in company with the lean-faced Barrows—when the heavy gates clanged behind them upon their entrance to Rawlins penitentiary. And it was with this knowledge, this security of thought that Bart Rogers awaited the sound of the step on the stair. A moment later he moved toward the door, his hands extended, his eyes beaming. "I've got a bit of good news for you, Anita. They've—let Jim go. This dis-

CHAPTER XI

"Bull" Confesses

A muttered curse came from the shadowy figure that had entered, then, consulting a memorandum, he resumed his task of robbery. The flashlight was laid on the floor of the safe, as both hands were occupied in holding, for the moment, the desired thing, found at last. After that, the paper was folded and jammed into a pocket, the flashlight was extinguished; the man rose and—

"Up with your hands!" Bart had leaped from the closet and was covering the shadowy form with his revolver. From the other corner of the room the aide came forth, his rifle leveled. "Up with 'em, Barrows!"

The man in the shadows whirled. He dodged and twisted, then with one writhing leap made for the window. Bart's finger cramped on the trigger. There was a flash of yellow flame and then the wriggling form of a man on the floor. Across the room the legionnaire had lowered his rifle, and his bayonet ready for action, had raced to a position in front of the wounded man.

"Stop that crawling or I'll run you through with this bayonet! Mr. Rogers! Come here, quick! He's trying to stuff something into his mouth! He's trying to swallow something!" Quickly Bart went forward, clubbing his revolver and stunning the fallen man with a sharp blow. Leon Barrows sank motionless and Bart straddled him, both hands prying at the tight, clenched jaws, to free the paper enclosed there. A moment later he gained his objective and rose.

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died him, both hands prying at the tight, clenched jaws, to free the paper enclosed there. A moment later he gained his objective and rose.

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dropped panting back to his pillow—"the cyanide that he bought for me to give—to give to Rogers? Eh? Look it up. Make 'em show you the poison book at the White Cross store in Cheyenne. That's where he got it—he'd have to sign for it. You'll know his writing—even if he used a false name—Did he say anything about—" "Cyanide?" Bart had motioned the doctor closer that he might serve as a witness. "What was it for?" "For—Rogers, I told you." "You killed him, then?" "Barrows—and I—yes. I did it actually. But he was the man who—" "When?" "The afternoon the oil came in. I telephoned—telephoned Barrows. He—he said you were in town and to go—to go ahead. I hurried to the house—and—and made him swallow a five-grain capsule. He—he hardly moved." Bart Rogers, white, trembling with the surprise of the confession, rubbed a hand slowly over his eyes. "Then—you'd planned for this—this oil?" "Yes—Barrows. He knew the geologist." "And you tricked my father into making that will?" "He thought—he thought it was a mortgage. We got him to sign it just after he had his first stroke, and then dated it back three weeks. He could still use his right hand then—and we held it for him to sign. His eyes were bad. He could hardly see. We cut off a mortgage blank an inch from the bottom and magnetized—magnetized the paper with the will on—with the will on it—on the other—other side. It's easier'n it sounds. Friction, you—you know. Any—any kid can do it. He thought he was signing—signing the mortgage. He signed the will. His eyes—his eyes you know. Barrows did it all—he framed—he framed every bit of it." "Then it was trickery?" "What else—what else do you suppose?" "There was a copy of it in his safety box." "Ransom—Ransom the clerk—was in on the deal. I stole the old man's key long enough for him to open the box. He used—used to work for Barrows. It cost—cost \$1,000." "And the signatures—?" "Graham's been—been one of our bunch—ever—ever since he came out here after the—after the Morrison trouble." "Send—send for the district attorney!" Bull ordered. "Send—send for him. I'll tell the truth!" It was late the next morning that Bart Rogers, tired, yet strong, with a nervous energy which recognized neither fatigue nor sleeplessness, stood in the living room of the Jordan home anxiously awaiting a step on the stair. He had won. The town of Bellaine was a town once more, and not a bedlam. Those of its unwelcome population who were not in the stockade had departed, poorer and wiser—to spread the word that the rifles and bayonets of the American Legion, in time of need, would protect the good name and cleanliness of a model oil town, Bellaine. Locked in the bank was some forty thousand, garnered in fines which had run all the way from a hundred to a thousand dollars, depending upon the viciousness of the human coyotes who, at last, had found their way into the trap of the law. It meant a new City hall, a new jail—and more worth-while appropriation to support the city police force which would succeed Bart Rogers. His work was done now—besides, out where he once had labored, on the ranch, a fortune awaited him, returned to its rightful owner through the confession of a dying murderer. Over in Mannington, a sheriff's chair was vacant, as was the post of a safety-box clerk in the bank. Both now reposed in the stockade, their first stop on the long journey that was to end—in company with the lean-faced Barrows—when the heavy gates clanged behind them upon their entrance to Rawlins penitentiary. And it was with this knowledge, this security of thought that Bart Rogers awaited the sound of the step on the stair. A moment later he moved toward the door, his hands extended, his eyes beaming. "I've got a bit of good news for you, Anita. They've—let Jim go. This dis-



"Did He Say Anything About the Cyanide—?"

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trict attorney just telephoned me that he'd quashed a frame-up charge against Tarko and that he'd gotten a telegram from Illinois that the old indictment against your father had been destroyed. He wasn't gully."

The girl sighed—the quiet, heartfelt sigh of a woman from whose shoulders had fallen a tremendous, galling load. Bart went on.

"Barrows confessed, too, about an hour ago. There wasn't anything else for him to do after the district attorney had read him 'Bull's' statement. It's rather a nephiast-like story in revenge. He was your mother's suitor—Bartholomew."

"Yes, Mr. Jordan—"

"His apparent friendship had been a mask. When—when you were born, he thought that he saw a chance to cause trouble and sent that anonymous letter. He hadn't looked for anything more than to disrupt the happiness of your father and mother. Then, that afternoon he heard your father was drinking and that he had bought a revolver. Then the whole, growsome, horrible scheme came into his head—and it worked!"

"You mean—"

"Franniston was a gangster, an ex-convict whom Bartholomew had been protecting. He got into communication with him and bribed him. Then he inveigled your father to his house—and the drinks which he gave him, contained chloral. Your father went to sleep in the house of Bartholomew, not to awaken until he found himself in a half-stupor in his own home, with his revolver clutched in his hand, one chamber empty, and your mother still in death. 'Bull' Franniston had taken him there—and 'Bull' Franniston had fired the shot. Into the sleeping man's hand he put the revolver and thereby condemned a man to the belief that he was a murderer."

"The fiend!"

"No"—Bart shook his head—"he was only a brute. The fiend was the man who worked on your father's fears and your father's imagination until he instilled into his mind the desire to escape. The fiend was the man who arranged the jail break, then who saw that your father was transported to the place where 'Bull' Franniston had taken refuge, out here in Wyoming. The fiend was the man who followed, who changed his name, who leered and sneered at a man who was forced to go through life, believing himself a murderer, unable to reveal his own identity to his own daughter, even while he watched that daughter, mistreated, insulted, beaten by a brute, knowing that the moment he objected, the moment he rebelled against the earthly inferno into which he would be thrust, not only would he be condemned as a wife-slayer, but his daughter branded as the child of a murderer. And that fiend was Bartholomew, better known as Attorney Leon Barrows!"

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