

THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY W.N.U. Release

INSTALLMENT V THE STORY SO FAR:

Dusty King and Lew Gordon were joint owners of the vast King-Gordon range which stretched from Texas to Montana. When building up this string of ranches, they continually had to fight the unscrupulous Ben Thorpe. He ri-

valed King-Gordon in wealth and power, but had gained his position through wholesale cattle rustling and gunplay. One afternoon King was killed by Thorpe and his two assistants, Cleve Tanner and Walk Lasham. King's adopted son,

Bill Roper, decided to start a cattle war against Thorpe in Texas. He made this decision against the strong opposition of Lew Gordon. Bill's sweetheart, Jody Gordon, pleaded with him, but could not change his grim determination.

CHAPTER VII

These men whom Roper now gathered about him hated a particular man, not only as lawless as themselves, but a man who was more than one man. Ben Thorpe was a thousand men; operating under Cleve Tanner in the south, and Walk Lasham in the north, his innumerable retainers flattered the plains from the Rio Grande to the Big Horn. That Roper's men hated Ben Thorpe was no coincidence; Roper had picked men of personal grudge. Most of them had first been outlawed because they had not suited a single organization—the organization of Ben Thorpe.

Up and down and across half of Texas, constantly in the saddle, Bill Roper threaded his new organization. Sometimes Dry Camp Pierce was with him; more often he traveled alone. These famous gunfighters and outlawed men whom Roper gathered were just youngsters, mostly. Some of them were true killers; some merely reckless kids who had got off on the wrong foot. All of them were badly wanted by what little law there was.

One night in early June, Dry Camp Pierce and Bill Roper sat in the back room of a saloon, deep in Texas.

"Look," Dry Camp Pierce said. "I've stole cows until I could pave my way to hell with their hides. But—I don't know—to steal cows for Dusty's kid—"

Bill Roper's teeth flashed clean in his grin. "Whose cows?"

"I've stole cows—"

"You're going to steal cows that belong to me, now."

"Figure you own these cows?"

"I'm half of King-Gordon, now split. I've taken, out of King-Gordon, seven camps without cows; now I'm claiming the cows that Thorpe took from Dusty King. And from some other men that we're going to lend a hand to, pretty soon."

Dry Camp Pierce—he was called that because he hated to camp too near to water—went to work for Bill Roper as he had never worked before; and thus the king of cow thieves, the brand changer extraordinary, for once aligned on the side of the law that was not.

Ten rustlers' camps hooked into Thorpe-Tanner territory. . . . But Dry Camp also helped in other ways.

A hot June dusk, five days after the meeting at Whipper Forks, found Bill Roper at the Dry Saddle Crossing, where he was to meet Lee Harnish; and this meeting, too, was arranged by Dry Camp Pierce, though by this time Pierce was already far away.

Here ran the broad, many-channeled river, dividing two countries—a river whose split wanderings made two miles of intermittent shallows. At his border of a vast, imperceptibly rolling prairie stood a narrow string of adobe shacks. That was the Dry Saddle Crossing.

Two men—Bill Roper and Lee Harnish—sat in front of one of those abandoned shacks, and tried to get together.

"I've always understood," Roper said, "that you were acquainted some, below the line."

Harnish's hard eyes studied Roper, and for a little while nothing could be heard except the mourning of doves in the willow scrub by the water. Next to Dry Camp Pierce, Lee Harnish was the oldest of those to join Roper; he was twenty-eight. He was tall and lank, sun-baked almost to the color of an Indian; his green eyes were curiously blank, impenetrable, and he liked to look his man in the eye with the peculiar fixity seen in the gaze of hawks.

"I've been down there some," he admitted. "I've made a few drives into Chihuahua; one drive to Mexico City."

"If you had a big wet herd run to you just below the line, would you know how to get rid of it?"

"I can't make out your hand," Harnish said. "King-Gordon never swung the long rope yet, that I heard of."

"I'm not King-Gordon now. My stunt is to smash Cleve Tanner; and I don't care what it costs."

"What's wrong with backing him into a shoot-out, if that's what you want?"

"That comes later. If I bust Tanner I can bust Thorpe. But if Tanner is gunned before he's busted, Thorpe will take over in Texas, and the chance to break up his Texas layout will be gone."

"You ain't going to bust him by running off a few head of cattle. This river crossing is slow work, kid."

"I figure to cross five thousand head within the next three months," Roper told him.

"Five thousand head won't even scratch the hide of Thorpe and Tanner, son."

"I know that as well as you. What it will do, it'll draw Tanner to throw his warriors onto the border. That's what I want. Because by then I'll be working somewhere else."

"And you want me to take 'em on the other side—is that the idea?"

"I want three dollars a head, American gold, paid off as the cattle come out of the water. . . ."

Roper's ways of gathering his wild bunch were diverse, as diverse as the saddle men he gathered. One way or another, picking up a man here, three more there, he got all he needed, and more.

But certain other things had to be done, in order that the wild bunch would have work to do, planned in such a way that something would be accomplished that would stay accomplished.

On a steamy afternoon early in July, Bill Roper sat in Fred Maxim's San Antonio law office. Maxim was an attorney who, some thought, had worked under a different name, somewhere before; but here, assuredly he was in no one's pay.

"I'm not asking the likes of you what's what," Bill Roper said. "I



Roper's ways of gathering his wild bunch were diverse.

want to know who actually owns range rights on the Graham stand."

The hard-bitten little man across the desk from Roper was still cadgy. "When it comes to ousting a man from possession—"

"You know who 'outed' Bob Graham and his family from possession. Cleve Tanner took over that outfit by main horse-and-gun power, without decent cause or reason. Everybody knows that. I'm asking you now—"

"Taylor and Graves are already doing everything that can be done to regain possession of Graham's outfit," Maxim said, smiling.

It was the smile that Roper liked. "Suppose I hold the Bob Graham lands, and Bob Graham's family are living on it."

"Bob Graham hasn't got possession," Maxim said.

"Suppose he did have?"

"Never could happen. Ben Thorpe—"

"Shut up a minute," Roper said. "I'm not asking you to put Graham back in possession of his range. I'm not asking you to save him from being put off again in the way he was before. What I want to know is, can you head off some cooked-up legal interference with Graham, after he's in possession again?"

Fred Maxim thought it over. "I can only promise you that I can cause considerable delay," he said.

"Months of delay?"

"Providing you can show possession—I'll keep you clear until hell freezes."

"That's all I want. . . ."

Still July, at Willow Creek— A barren range of hills, sand hills; golden in the dawn, purple in the twilight, barren always. Beneath them, what had been the Willow Creek camp of the old King-Gordon. In the bunkhouse nearest the river, five men lounging around a little room.

"All right, you hard guys," Bill Roper said; "you know who told you to come here. Dry Camp Pierce told you to come here. Maybe he told you what you could look for here, huh?"

These four gunfighters who met Roper here were none of them older than Bill; yet each was famous as a killer in his own right. Of them all Bill Roper alone had no name, no reputation. Yet, in respect for the name of Dusty King, they had come to hear him out.

Nate Liggett, a round-faced kid with eyelashes that looked as if they had been powdered with white dust, said, "Well, what seems to be your offer?"

"I guess you already know Bob Graham," Roper said. "You know how a warrior gang of Cleve Tanner's jumped down on him, on some thin excuse, and run him off his range. They even took over his house and his windmill and his corals. Now, I aim to hand back that range to Bob Graham; he's waiting in Bigspring for the word. Your part of the job is simple enough—you just go and take it away from the Tanner bunch."

"Simple, huh? Just how do you figure this simple trick is to be done?"

"A lawyer in San Antonio kept the Rangers off when Tanner jumped Graham. Now we've got another better lawyer in San Antonio to keep them off when Graham jumps Tanner. The only question is, who's got enough salt to grab that range—and then hang onto it?"

"And what do we get out of all this?"

"Graham takes over the outfit and runs it. You hang around and help him, and see that he doesn't get run off again. For that you get a half interest in the outfit. You split it among you any way you see fit. I'll back Graham with cattle, and what other stuff he needs."

Nate Liggett said, "Bill, I don't see where we come in for no advantage."

"If you're satisfied with the lone wolf stuff you've been pulling, I haven't got anything to offer you," Roper admitted. "But I'll tell you this—the boys that string with me now will see the day when they'll run Texas; and Cleve Tanner, and Ben Thorpe, too, will be busted up and forgot!"

"It's a hefty order!"

"Maybe it is. This Graham business is a kind of experiment; it'll work if you make it work. But if it goes through okay—it's only the beginning, you hear me? You string with me a little while; and maybe, by God, we'll show a couple of people something. . . ."

CHAPTER VIII

Hot, dry days of early August— As the first sun struck with a red heat across the plains, the Tanner men who held the Graham ranch were already saddling. All over Texas, cowmen were throwing together the last trail herds of the year; it was time for these Tanner men to roll their chuck wagons again, to round up the last of the trail-fit stock that remained in the herds which had belonged to Bob Graham.

Out from what had been the Graham corral, three riders swept through the dusty dawn; but they had hardly left the pole fences behind when six other riders confronted them, rising into their saddles like Comanches, out of the brush. The strangers closed in a semi-circle, unhesitatingly, their carbines in their hands. In another minute or two the three Tanner riders were grouped in a defensive knot, while from the semi-circle of the raiders Nate Liggett jogged forward to talk it over.

"I don't think you want to go on" he said. "I don't even think you want to work for this outfit any more."

Two nights later, one hundred and fifty miles away—

With the approach of dusk, a peculiar light lay upon the valley of the Potreros. In a reach of open grass a herd of five hundred head bunched loosely—tame, heavy cattle, already well removed by breeding from the old, wild, long-horn strain. But they had not bunched voluntarily. The shuffled restlessness, watching the brush! something was happening around them that they did not understand.

As the light failed, the figures of horsemen emerged from the brush, cutting mile-long shadows into the flat rays of sunset; the huge, heavy-shouldered man who signaled to his spread-out cowboys by turning his horse this way or that, in Indian horse language, was Dave Shannon.

They did not harass the cattle. Only, between sunset and the next daylight, no cow took a step other than in the direction of the Mexican border. . . .

Dry-grass season; Texas scorched by the hot winds—

All across the southern ranges a peculiar thing was happening. As word spread from twenty points of disturbance, certain of the older cattlemen began to sense that there was a curious, almost systematic order to what in itself seemed a widespread disruption. All over the Big Bend country, eastward almost to the well settled Nueces, westward beyond the barren Pecos, northward to the fever line, was breaking a spotty wave of raids of an unparalleled boldness. Far apart, but almost simultaneously, hell had busted loose in a great number of places, covering more than half of Texas.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Household News

by Lynn Chambers



SOUPS FOR EVERY OCCASION . . . (See Recipes Below)

SOUP'S ON!

Soups may be a substantial addition to a rather lean menu, or a distinctive touch to a dinner de luxe, for they vary all the way from the thin, clear, delicate consommés and bouillons to the hearty chowders and satisfying cream soups.

Economical, tasty, nutritious—what more could you ask of a dish so versatile? Make soup the mainstay of a family lunch or supper or the perfect beginning for a "company" dinner.

A little "dressing up" can play fairy godmother to the plainest dish—yes, even soup. Most people eat with their eyes, first of all. So, if you wish your soups to take on a party air, garnish them enticingly. Try sprinkling with buttered croutons, chopped parsley, a few grains of popcorn, toasted puffed cereals, minced chives, a dash of paprika, or a few tiny round crackers; or place a spoonful of whipped cream in the center.

For extra goodness, why not try cheese in soup? It will draw a big stamp of approval, as you will see if you try Potato Cheese Soup. Here's the recipe:

*Potato Cheese Soup.

(See picture at top of column) 3 medium sized potatoes 2 cups boiling water 2 to 3 cups milk 3 tablespoons butter 1/2 small onion 1 teaspoon salt 2 tablespoons flour Pepper, cayenne 1 tablespoon parsley 1 cup cheese, grated

Cook potatoes in boiling salted water until tender. Put through a strainer. Measure the liquid and add enough milk to make four cups. Scald. Melt the butter, add the finely chopped onion and simmer five minutes. Add the flour and seasonings and combine with the potato mixture. Cook three minutes and strain, if desired. Add cheese and beat until smooth. Add chopped parsley, top with buttered croutons.

Manhattan Clam Chowder.

1/2 cup diced salt pork 2 cups diced potatoes 1 dry onion, diced 1 cup water 2 cups milk 1 can minced clams (about 1 cup) Salt and pepper

Cook the diced pork and onion, stirring constantly 'til they are tender but not browned. Add the potatoes and water and simmer until the potatoes are tender. If the one cup of water is not sufficient to cover the potatoes, more should be added. When the potatoes are tender, add the milk and clams and seasonings and heat thoroughly. Serve with crisp, salted crackers.

One Dish Supper Soup.

3/4 cup rice 1 cup chopped celery 2 small onions 1 green pepper 1 pint tomatoes 6 eggs 1/2 cup cheese 3 cups water Salt

Add chopped celery and onions to a kettle of boiling water. Add chopped green pepper. Cook slowly 15 minutes. Add tomatoes. Just before serving, break the eggs into the hot soup. Sprinkle with cheese. Cover. Keep in warm place 5 min-

LYNN SAYS:

The water in which vegetables have been cooked, and left-over cooked vegetables may often be utilized in making excellent soups.

Minute tapioca, because of its thickening quality and attractive translucence, makes an excellent thickener.

Once thickened to the desired consistency, cream soups should be kept warm over hot water. Evaporation caused by additional cooking may make them thick and pasty.

THIS WEEK'S MENU

SUNDAY-NITE SUPPER

- *Potato Cheese Soup
- Apple-Celery Salad With Sour Cream Dressing
- Nut Bread
- Apricot Jam Beverage
- *Recipe given.

utes. Pour over a mound of hot boiled rice placed in individual soup dishes. Yield: 6 servings.

Duchess Soup.

- 2 tablespoons minute tapioca
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 tablespoon onion, finely chopped
- 4 cups milk
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 cup grated cheese
- 2 tablespoons parsley, chopped

Combine dry ingredients, onion, and milk in top of double boiler. Place over rapidly boiling water, bring to scalding point (allow 5 to 7 minutes), cook 5 minutes, stirring frequently. Add remaining ingredients; cook until cheese is melted. Serves 6.

Old-Fashioned Vegetable Soup.

- 2 quarts soup stock (see directions)
- 1 1/2 cups potatoes, diced
- 1/2 cup celery, cut in strips
- 2 small onions, sliced
- 1/2 cup peas
- 1 1/2 cups carrots, cut in strips
- 1 1/2 cups canned tomatoes
- Salt and pepper
- 2 tablespoons parsley finely chopped

Heat stock, add vegetables and seasonings, and cook gently until vegetables are tender. Add chopped parsley and serve. Makes 8 portions.

Cream of Onion Soup.

- 2 tablespoons rice
- 2 medium-sized onions
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 cup water
- 1 teaspoon meat extract or a bouillon cube
- 3 cups milk
- Salt and pepper

Chop the onions and cook in the fat until slightly yellow. Add the water, rice and meat extract or bouillon cube, and cook until the rice and onions are tender. Add the milk, reheat, and season with salt and pepper. Yield: 4 cups.

Russian Borsch.

- 1 pound soup meat
- 6 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 cups potatoes, large cubes
- 1/2 cup grated raw beets
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1 large onion
- 1 large carrot
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 cups medium-chopped cabbage
- 1 cup beets cut in 1/4-inch strips
- 6 tablespoons sour cream

Cover meat with water, add salt and pepper and boil for 10 minutes. Cut onion and carrot in strips and brown in butter. Add to soup and boil for 1 hour, replacing water as it boils away. Add cabbage and beet strips to soup and cook until beets are tender, about 30 minutes. Add potatoes and cook until tender, or about 15 minutes. Just before serving, add grated raw beets and pour immediately into serving dishes. Place 1 spoon of sour cream in center of each serving and sprinkle with parsley. Makes 6 servings.

Soup Stock.

- 3 pounds shin of beef
- 3 quarts cold water

Cut meat in pieces free from fat, and place in kettle. Add water, partly cover, and heat slowly to boiling point. Simmer gently five hours, removing scum as it forms. Keep meat well covered with water. Then remove meat and set broth aside to cool. Skim fat from broth. Strain liquor carefully through fine sieve or cheesecloth. Chill. This gives a clear broth, free from fat, to be used as basis for soups. Makes about 2 quarts stock (Released by Western News-Service, Inc.)

Things to do



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While at Peace

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