

INSTALLMENT 18

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built tion of his sweetheart, Jody Gordon, 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-

CHAPTER XXIII-Continued Jody stood up. She felt suddenly

tired and numb.

"I still think a world can be made where decency can live," she said. "Some day, decent things will live Thorpe!" on this prairie, whatever happens to us. But meantime-I guess he belongs to you."

She held Marquita's stare for a moment, then turned and walked to as dead, the minute he walks in the door. Opening it, she saw that there!" the first forlorn cold gray of the winter dawn was coming into the sky east of Montana.

The black hulk of the horse whose neck she had broken lay at her feet. She pulled from under it the coat with which she had blinded it when she charged the door, and pulled it on; the bitter cold of the dawn was enough to penetrate to the bones.

Slowly she uncinched and worked and rode into the little town. the saddle free, then the bridle. She staggered a little as she shouldered the saddle, and walked out toward the corral where other, living ponies stood, dark humped - up shapes against the snow.

CHAPTER XXIV

Bill Roper and Bob Stokes-the King-Gordon cowboy whom Roper had not known-had finished their makeshift dressing of Old Joe's wound, and were working on Jim Leathers. Jim Leathers lay perfectly still; only his eyes seemed alive. "How's she feeling?" Bill Roper asked.

"The Gordon girl? She's all right.

She went out to look over the horses or something." "Bob, you better go see nothing's

happened to Jody."

"I'll go in a minute, soon as we're through here."

But Jody came in of her own accord, before that. She went straight to Old Joe.

"Are you terribly uncomfortable, Joe?" "I feel great," Joe said with spir-

it. "I been hunting for a vacation for fifteen years, and this is my first excuse!" "I'm sorry, Joe. You'll never

know how sorry I am. I tangled things up pretty badly, I guess." "You done wonderful," Joe told "You saved Bill's neck, all

right. They had him hog-tied like a mosshorn, and the girl, too, when we busted in." Jody shot Marquita a glance in which the only light was a faint con-

tempt, but she did not comment. "I'm riding back to Miles," she told Joe. "On the way I'll send help back, and everything you'll need. And I'll see that you're moved in a spring wagon, soon as you feel like moving. I appreciate what you've done, Joe."

"Hey, look," Bob Stokes began, "You can't be riding off like this in the middle of the night!"

"It's coming daylight, fast. I'll be all right." Outside, in the gray light that

seemed colder than the air. Jody Gordon had mounted as Bill Roper came to her stirrup.

"You mustn't go yet," he told her gently. "These boys are fixed as comfortable as they can be; there's no hurry to get help. You'll be wanting some coffee; and I have to talk to you, Jody."

"I'm not interested in talking to you," Jody said without expression. "Why, Jody-look here-"

"I got you into this," Jody said. "I got you into this because I was a fool. So I had to get you out. That's all over now. I don't want to talk to you, now, or any time."

She whirled her horse sharply, so that its hoofs sent up a scurry of dry snow; then she was gone, her retreat covered by the cabin as she swung toward the trail.

For a moment Roper stood looking after her. Then he stepped in-

"You'll stay here, Bob," he said. "I'll saddle and ride after her; I'll see that she gets to Miles."

"Wait a minute," Old Joe said. "You got to wait a minute! There's something else you got to know." "There's nothing else I need to know."

"Lew Gordon ain't in Miles!" "Then where the devil is he? His daughter-"

"Somebody - Jim Leathers, guess-sent a note to Lew Gordon Gordon walked like a younger man that his daughter was all right, but couldn't be sent home just yet. Nobody signed that note. But it was plain to be seen from it that some war party of Ben Thorpe's was holding her some place. So Lew Gordon-"

"You mean that Lew Gordon is going on the warpath himself? Hunting for Jody?"

"He's going after it straighter than that. Everybody knows Ben Thorpe is at Sundance. Lew Gordon has gone to Sundance to tie into Ben Thorpe, and his old gun is

hammering away at his side." "He figures to fight Thorpe?" "Bill, it sure looks that way to me. What's strange about that? Thorpe has punished away at Lew Gordon all his life. He's stole his cattle and killed his trail bosses, and fought THE STORY SO FAR

and her father. Roper conducted a great raid upon Thorpe's vast herds in Montana. He was captured by Leathers and Kane, two of Thorpe's men. Leathers' girl, pretty Marquita, loved Roper and

both, and finally he kills Lew's partner, and still he keeps on." "Joe," Bill Roper said, "Joe-

Walk Lasham himself is with Ben "Well-I ain't surprised."

"But God Almighty, Joe, if he walks into a fight with those two,

"That," said Old Joe, "is what I figured you ought to know."

CHAPTER XXV

It was very early; the sun was only just breaking over the winterstarved prairie, that Sunday morning as Bill Roper splashed through the creek that runs by Sundance,

Overhead the sky was such a clear not seen since he left Texas, and underfoot his tired pony was sinking fetlock deep in thawed mud. The bly young, younger than Bill Roper mud itself was predicting a spring which Roper believed now he would never see.

Without sign from the rider, Roper's pony drew up before the Palace Hotel and Livery. With some difficulty Bill Roper

roused a sleepy and resentful individual. "Feed this pony, and feed him

well." Casually Roper strolled along the corral where stood the loose horses



Bill Roper splashed through the creek that runs by Sundance.

which were being boarded here. He was chewing a straw as he came back to the sleepy man who was now shaking down hay.

"I see you have a 9B horse therea good one.'

"Yeah?" "I figure Lew Gordon rode that

norse in?" "And supposin' he did?"

"Where is he stopping?" "How should I know? This dump

is good enough for his horse, but it ain't good enough for him. He went to sleep with some friend or something, out at the edge of town." "I'll take a room facing on this street," he said.

A little while later Roper sat at last with his heels caught in the window sill, resting as he regarded the empty street.

That Ben Thorpe was here was known to every cattleman in the north country. Ben Thorpe had been here many weeks; it was to Thorpe that Bill Roper was to have been delivered, here, if a kid horse wrangler following Jody Gordon had not shot Jim Leathers down. But, by the fine, hard-ridden 9B horse which Lew Gordon had ridden in, Bill Roper knew that Gordon had not been here long. He judged that he had got here in time.

Bill Roper sat there a long time Seven o'clock passed, and eight, and nine, while he smoked and waited. Ten o'clock passed, and ten-thirty.

Then upon the quiet main street of Sundance appeared a figure-the one he had been waiting for.

It seemed to Bill Roper that Lew than Roper had remembered. Bill Roper knew Lew Gordon by the flash of silver in his short beard, by the old hat, curiously like Dusty King's, which Lew Gordon had never changed. But he had to look twice to be sure that this man with the springy stride and erect bearing was the Lew Gordon he had known.

When he was sure, Bill Roper stood up and stretched; he filled his deliberately, then dropped the gun; lungs with air, and at last let it go again, with a whoof like that of a



made a desperate but vain attempt to save him. Thorpe's men were attacked by some of Roper's cowboys, led by Jody. Her joy at finding him was short lived, because Marquita told her that Marquita, not Jody, was Roper's girl.

him in the market fit to break them | pony which knows that it has come to the end of the long trail.

He drew a last drag from his cigarette, and strapped on the gunbelt which he had laid aside. Unhurriedly, he three or four times drew the iron from its leather, to be sure that it was running free. Then, with a purely unconscious motion, he all hell can't save him! He's as good | cocked his hat over one eye and went down into the street.

He knew that Lew Gordon had gone into the Red Dog Saloon, and he walked toward it now.

For a moment Bill Roper, raider, night-rider, gunfighter - dreaded name of the Long Trail-experienced a twist of the heart, terrible, unbelievably acute. Then he shrugged, and walked into the Red Dog Bar.

Lew Gordon stood at the bar of the Red Dog Saloon. The hard line of his jaw was blurred by a silver crystalline blue as Bill Roper had shag of whisker now, and his mustache was silver, and his hair; but the clear blue eyes were unbelievahad ever seen them before. His hands were folded quietly, one elbow on the bar; and so greatly did this silver-haired man dominate the space in which he stood that it was minutes before Roper realized that there was a bartender there at all.

"So you came," Lew Gordon said. "Of course, Lew. Didn't you know would come?"

"In one way," Lew Gordon said. 'I'm glad you came. I want to say a couple of things to you, Billy, my I done something wrong, Billy." "You was right and I was wrong. You fought him; I tried to smooth things out. I'm glad I've lived to tell you this: you was right and I was wrong!" "Lew-" Bill began.

"I should have killed him, Billy," Lew Gordon said.

"Lew! What are you telling me?" "I know I was wrong." Lew Gordon said. Yet, somehow he did not seem unhappy. "Always I stood for law, for order-the decent thing, the thing that would build this country into something my kid could live in. But-I guess it wasn't meant to be. I should have swung with you when you tied into him in Texas, and again when you tied into him in the north! But I aim to square it all up today!"

"You mean-?" said Bill Roper. "He's coming to meet me here." "With how many men?" Roper asked again.

"What does it matter?" Lew poured himself a drink.

Outside, on the board walk of Sundance, were sounding the heels of approaching men

"I can kill him," Bill Roper said, "I can kill him even if I die."

Lew Gordon's face changed swiftly. Suddenly he was the indomitable old man whom Bill Roper had always known.

"Ben Thorpe is for me." Lew Gordon said, "to make up for the quiet years

And Bill Roper, looking deep into the young eyes of that ageing man, finally said, "Okay."

And then the door darkened, and the approaching heels on the board walk were silent because they had arrived. The man Lew Gordon had sent for had come

It was Ben Thorpe who stepped quickly through the door, and one pace to the left, so that his gun, already drawn, swept the bar. It was Walk Lasham who followed him through the door, stepping one pace to the right, so that the door was clear for the three unknown gunfighters who tried to enter all at

"Draw, Ben," Lew Gordon said; and then all guns spoke at once.

In the blast of gunfire that followed, no man could tell what happened-but Roper knew that all guns seemed to converge upon Lew Gordon, and frantically he threw the lash of his fire at Thorpe, at Lasham, at the unknown men at the door.

For a moment the guns spoke in a smashing roar, and the powder smoke stung Bill Roper's nostrils; and then suddenly there was silence

Thorpe and Lasham both were down as that gunsmoke cleared, and those other strangers in the doorway had disappeared, except for a boot heel that dragged almost out of sight, and then was still.

Beside the bar of the Red Dog Saloon Lew Gordon still stood. Perhaps it was his bullet in the heart of Ben Thorpe-no man would ever know.

He turned now, slowly, elbow upon the bar, and looked at Bill Roper.

"Thanks, son," he said. The hand that held the heavy forty-five sagged it made a strange clatter upon the unswept boards of the floor. Then Lew Gordon's knees broke and he went down, and Bill Roper caught him as he fell.

Thin and tinny across the squalid town, across the thawing prairie, the church bell was ringing-a makeshift church bell ringing, on Sunday morning, as Lew Gordon died.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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Brown Was Starting Early

To Get Along With the Cook

midst of a torrent of rain, when

the conductor put his head inside and inquired: "Will any gentle-

man get out and oblige a lady?"

on my knee, if she likes," said a

passenger, jocularly, and, to his

great surprise, in bounced a

buxom woman, who forthwith ap-

After a time the man, Brown,

by name, got into conversation

with his burden, and asked her

where she was going. On hearing

her destination, he exclaimed,

blushing, "I'm your new cook."

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"Well, then," replied the woman,

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could lead of his workers-

WHAT a parade Uncle Sam

workers of every kind. You may

have often wondered if there is

a place for you in that parade.

What chance would you have in

New tests are being given all

the time and there are literally

the United States Civil Service?

propriated the offered knee.

"Why, that's my house!"

"She can come inside and sit

The bus was starting in the

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Ask Me Another

A General Quiz

The Questions

1. How many tablets of stone held the Ten Commandments as given to Moses?

2. The average amount of blood the human body is about what proportion of the body weight? 3. "Double, double, toil and

trouble; fire burn and cauldron bubble" is a quotation from what? 4. What is a binnacle?

5. In Greek legend, who sowed the dragon's teeth? 6. What country named its cap-

you should apply, see our new 32-page booklet. Lists several U. S. Civil Service ital after an American President? 7. What is meant by 0:15 a. m.? 8. Who were Egbert, Ethelwulf, Ethelbald, Ethelbert, and Ethel-

The Answers

Two. One twentieth.

tory of the island.

"Macbeth."

4. A box containing a ship's compass. 5. Jason.

6. Liberia (Monrovia, named for President Monroe). 7. Fifteen minutes after midnight. The zero is used to denote

that the first hour of the day has not elapsed. the rich early Saxon-Danish his-

8. The first five rulers of England, reigning 12, 19, 2, 8, and 5 years respectively, from 827 to

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Friendship is like rivers, and the strand of seas, and the air, common to all the world; but tyrants, and evil customs, wars, 873. Their conquest formed part of and want of love, have made them proper and peculiar. - Jeremy Taylor.

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Film Fashions

An American film producer asked an English friend to watch the "shooting" of one of his "society" films to see that it was all right.

After a time the Englishman asked: "Why does that man keep his hat on when he's talking to the lady in the drawing room?"

"Sure," said the producer, "he can't take it off-another lady's coming in presently, and he's got to raise his hat to her."

Quick wooings seem to be the fashion. Sort of blisskriegs.

Much to Learn

"How does Charlie make love?" "Well, I should describe it as unskilled labor."

He'd Been Told Sergeant-Now take that rifle and

find out how to use it. Draftee—Tell me one thing. Is it true that the harder I pull the trigger the farther the bullet will go?

No Accompanist

"What is your occupation?" "An organist." "Organist, eh? And why did you give it up?"

"The monkey died."



No Halfway

I hate to see a thing done by halves; if it be right, do it wholly; if it be wrong, leave it undone .-

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Unless what occupies your mind be useful, the pride you derive from thence is foolish.-Phaed.

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