

New Gun for Marines



Marine paratrooper takes aim with new Reising submachine gun. This gun, recently adopted by the U. S. marines, is reported to have been used in their attack on the Solomon islands. Note the pistol grip and steel frame stock which folds out of the way when not in use.

BLACK DAWN by Victor Roussec

CHAPTER IX SYNOPSIS

Dave Bruce, out of a job, arrives at Wilbur Ferris' Cross-Bar ranch. Curran, the foreman, promises him a job if he can break a horse called Black Dawn. When he succeeds, he discovers Curran expected the horse to kill him. A girl named Lois rides up, angry with Dave for breaking "her" horse. She refuses to speak to Dave even when he uses his savings to pay off the mortgage on the small ranch she shares with her foster father, a man named Hooker. But when Hooker is shot and Dave is charged with murder, Lois saves him from being lynched. Wounded, she guides him to a mountain cave where she thinks they will be safe from Curran and the sheriff's posse. Meanwhile, a quarrel between Ferris and Judge Lonerger reveals that Ferris had killed his partner, Blaine Rowland, many years before.

Lonerger ushered Ferris out into the street, closed the door, and strode briskly in the direction of the court house, outside which a knot of men was already milling. Ferris got on his horse and rode slowly back toward his ranch, taking the opposite direction till he got clear of the town.

Suddenly blind rage filled Ferris' heart. And, according to the nature of the man, it did not show itself upon his face, which became a mask. Stupidly, blindly trying to find reality in this new confusion, Ferris rode back towards his ranch house with a sudden resolution formed.

Weak, irresolute, he was following the traditional line of least resistance in seeking a confidant. And Curran, the foreman, was the man he sought. He was arrowing himself upon the mercy of the man between whom and himself there had been unexplained enmity ever since Lonerger made Curran foreman of the Cross-Bar outfit.

"Want to see you in the office," he told Curran, who was taking it easy in the bunk house after his night's ride. And when they reached the office, he said, "Curran, I reckon you and me haven't pulled together as well as we might have done, I'm in a jam now. Maybe us two could get together."

Curran's eyes narrowed. "I never bore yuh no ill feelin's, Mr. Ferris," he answered. "Course I knew yuh didn't exactly like Judge Lonerger's puttin' me in here, but I done my best for yers spread."

"Lonerger's got me by the throat," said the ranchman bitterly, and recounted their conversation of that morning.

"But so far as I understood, you've kept up the mortgage interest," said Curran. "And the mortgage has got another eighteen months to run."

"Damn him, he's got something on me!" exploded Ferris. "Something that happened before I came into the valley, that he could put me behind the bars for. He's aiming to treat me the way he was going to treat old Hooker. When he's cleaned up on my ranch, how long d'you think your job will last?"

"Yeah, I been thinkin' about that myself," Curran confessed.

Ferris asked the question that he had asked Lonerger: "Why was Lonerger so interested in that Hooker girl?"

Curran grinned. "Most folks think she's his daughter," he said. "Don't bear no resemblance to him, of course, but she may take arter her mother, I never seen Mrs. Hooker; she died before I come here."

"I've heard that story, but I don't believe it."

"You think the sheriff will get Bruce and that girl?" he asked in the meanwhile.

"I dunno," said Curran. "Lois Hooker, she knows the mountains like that herd of broncs she trails arter her. If they got fool enough they kin hide up till all int'rest in the affair has died out, so far as the sheriff's concerned. But I'll tell yuh something, I'm goin' to git her."

Curran knew his man. "I dunno what Lonerger's got on yuh, Ferris," he said, but I ain't trustin' that feller further than I kin see him. And I guess there's plenty of folks in Mescal who wouldn't cry their eyes out if anything happened to him."

The ranchman's eyes met Curran's. "You mean—you n'ean—?" he stammered.

"I could do with a share in the Cross-Bar," said Curran bluntly. "I ain't the kind who'd ride yuh down the way Lonerger's doin'. And what I had on yuh, have on me, I guess. A third share's all I'd ask."

"Suppose—suppose Blaine Rowland ever come back?" the ranchman quavered. "He's still half owner, if he hadn't made that mad break when he thought the Cross-Bar was goin' to smash—"

"Yuh needn't worry about him," grinned Curran. "He won't come back. First place, he'd be facin' a long term in the pen, and second place, he'd have to make restitution of that money he stole, which represents purty nigh half the value of this ranch."

"What's your proposal?"

"I ain't makin' none, Ferris. It come from you. I was only sayin' if anything happened to Lonerger,



"Yuh ain't—ain't cryin', girl?"

nobody's goin' to lay roses on his grave."

"When—how—what's your plan? whispered Ferris, spilling a trail of whiskey over the floor as he tried to refill his drink.

"Just leave it to me, and I'll keep yuh posted, Ferris," answered Curran.

"I've got to give Lonerger his answer within the next two days," the ranchman protested.

"Sual him off," said the foreman. "String him along a day or two more, and if he insists tell him to go plumb to hell. All you need to do is to keep a stiff upper lip, I'm glad you and me had this talk. It clears up things considerable. Yuh won't see much of me the next day or two, because I'll be on a lone wolf hunt in the mountains. But I'll let yuh know when the trap's sprung."

He went out of the office, reeling slightly, humming a song Ferris watched him with new, dawning hope.

In the few days that followed Lois regained her strength rapidly. Apart from the quantity of blood she had lost, the wound was a superficial one, and youth and the pure mountain air contributed alike to a quick recovery.

They never spoke about the future. It seemed sufficient to both of them to enjoy the perfect comradeship that had sprung up between them. The only shadow over the girl's mind appeared to be her inability to attend Hooker's funeral in Mescal.

"Of course I knew I wasn't his daughter—at least, I knew Mrs. Hooker was not my mother, after I found this."

She detached a little, battered gold locket from a cord about her neck, opened it, and handed it to Dave, inside was the faded photograph of a young woman. It was a pretty face, but rather a hard one, and there was a marked resemblance to Lois.

"I remembered her after I found this locket," said the girl.

"You say you found this?" asked Dave, handing her back the locket. "Where did you find it?"

"Not a hundred yards away from here, lying on a ledge under a heap of dead leaves."

"It's queer," said Dave. "You got no idea how it could have got here?"

"I've racked my brains trying to imagine. Unless my mother was some relative of Mr. Lonerger's, and gave him the locket, and he dropped it here. You see, Mr. Lonerger made the Hookers adopt me and bring me here. But why should he have come here? He's never been here since, nor anyone I'm sure nobody in Mescal knows of its existence."

"Well," said Dave, "things have a way of comin' to light. Some day we'll know. You sure had a tough break, girl, not even knowin' in' who yore dad was, and livin' up in these mountains. Did yuh ever figure on what yuh were goin' to do in life?"

"I never figured on getting away, Dave, till Mr. Hooker died. Nor till you came," said Lois. "I hated the men who used to come around me when I was in Mescal or over to the Cross-Bar."

Dave tried to keep back the words, but they seemed to come spontaneously from his lips: "Just before Mr. Hooker died he made me promise to look out for yuh, Lois. I told him ofcourse I would. When I first see yuh, all worked up over Black Dawn, and madder at me than a hornet, I knew just the same you were the only girl I'd ever want."

"I wanted to ride away with you and have you with me for the rest of our lives. Do you think—do you think yuh'd take a chance on me when we get away from here?"

Then, suddenly, looking into the girl's luminous eyes, Dave knew that she loved him, and that every thing was going to be well with them, no matter what trials might still lie ahead of them.

He drew her into his arms, and she laid her head upon his shoulder, face upturned to his.

"Yuh ain't—ain't cryin', girl?"

"I reckon I am," she answered. "I'm so happy, Dave, I didn't know I could be happy like this. I never cried for anybody else, and I've cried twice for you."

"Twice? I made yuh cry?"

"The first time was when I was sure you hadn't killed Mr. Hooker. And both times have made me happy. I don't want to leave you ever."

After a while he heard her breathing deeply and regularly, and found that she had fallen asleep. He sat there, holding her lightly, till the pale light of dawn came creeping into the cave.

"There's a mesa in the mountains about a mile away, that I don't think anyone except myself has ever seen," said Lois that afternoon. "I think we'll take the horses there, the grass is pretty well gone from here, and they'll need some good feed before we start."

"You'll be able to ride in about a coupla days more, honey," said Dave. "Is there a trail through the mountains to the other side?"

Lois nodded. "I found it, too," she said. "It runs right through across the border, Dave. We'll never have to go back to Mescal, and nobody will dream we've come through the mountains."

Dave didn't relish the idea of flight. But for Lois, he would probably have scouted about the Mescal district by night, in the hope of unearthing the clue to Hooker's murdered. He was pretty well convinced that whoever had killed the old man would return to the cabin or betray himself in some manner, and he had more than a suspicion that Sheriff Coggswell was convinced of his own innocence.

But Lois' welfare came first, and Dave realized that the first task which lay before him was to get her through the mountains to some place of safety. So he said nothing to the girl's suggestion, and they mounted the two horses, riding bareback and guiding them with halters. Lois led the way along the trail beyond the cave. Finally it ran upon to a long stretch of grass-covered land between the ravine and the heights.

Releasing the horses, they watched them start grazing eagerly, seated side by side in the warm sunlight.

"What do yuh say to our startin' the day after tomorrow, honey?" asked Dave.

"I'm ready, Dave," answered the girl shyly.

"And yuh'll marry me, soon as we hit the other side of the mountains and find us a minister?"

Lois nodded, her face aglow, then hid it in Dave's shoulder. The golden minutes ran by unheeded. At last, when the sun was dipping toward the west, they rose to get the horses. Both came cantering to Lois at her whistle, and the two remounted and rode back to their cave.

"If we're startin' tomorrow, what yuh think of restin' up today and lettin' me take the horses to the mesa?" asked Dave next morning. "Maybe I'll leave them there over night and walk back this evenin'. There's no place they could stray to, is there?"

"No, they'll be quite safe there," answered Lois.

"I'll be back around midday to see how you're gettin' along," he told her and then rode away on Hooker's horse.

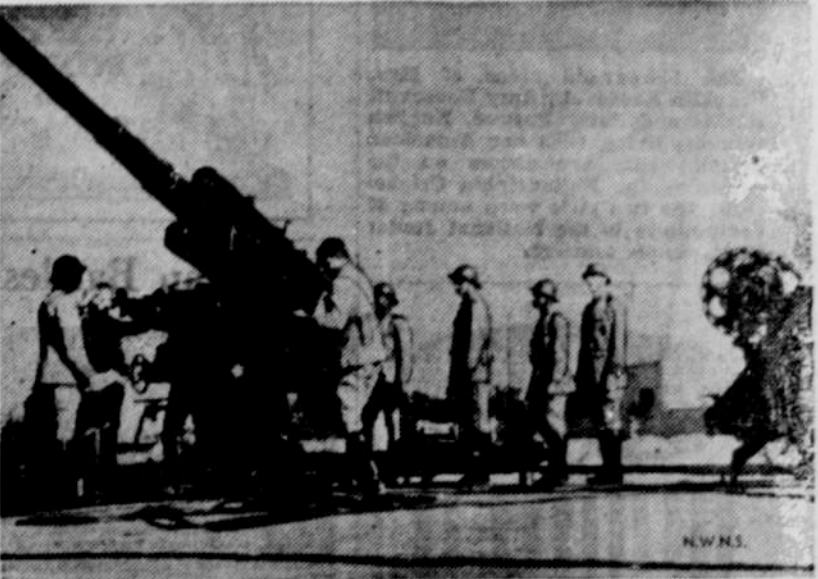
Arriving at the grazing ground, Dave flung himself down, rolled and lit a cigarette, and then lost himself in roscate dreams of the future.

For a half hour after his departure Curran, lying behind a boulder, watched Dave's course through the pair of field glasses that he had slung about his neck. He guessed pretty shrewdly the purpose of Dave's departure, but he wanted to satisfy himself that he wanted to satisfy himself that he wasn't coming back immediately.

(To Be Continued)

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Brazilian Anti-Aircraft Gun Crew at Alert



The republic of Brazil is now at war with Germany and Italy. Brazil was the first South American nation to go to war against the Axis partners and the only South American country to go to war on the Allied side in World War I. Formal declaration of war was prompted by attacks on 17 Brazilian ships since January, and the more recent sinking of six ships off their coast by Axis submarines. Picture shows a Brazilian anti-aircraft gun crew standing at alert as a result of their nation declaring war.

Flying Minister



First Lieut. Harold C. Theus, 26, is shown in the cockpit of his plane. He is an ordained minister and former army chaplain at Fort Sill, Okla. The minister's heart told him he should be in the thick of the fight, and he has always practiced what he preached—so here he is.

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