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## Crooked Trails Straight

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I - Airenturous and reckless, rather than crimmal, and excited by
liquor. Curly Flandran and his chum.
Mac both practically mere buys, become
fivolved in a horse-stealing adventure.
Disposing of the stolen stock in the town
of Saguache. Ariz, the band separates,
Curly and his partner staying in town.
They are awakened and told/a posse is
in town in pursuit of them. They slude
in town in pursuit of them. They slude
in town in pursuit of them. They slude
is tilled by the prime and Curly made
captive, after he has shot one and himself been wounded. The man shot is
Luck Cuilison. Part L

CHAPTER II -Cullison's friends, all cattlemen, determine to lyn h Corly as an example to cattle theres. With the rope around his near he is saved by the intervention of Kate Cullison, Luck's description.

Luck Cuiltson-

CHAPTER III.-His wound dreued, CHAPTER III.—His wound dremed, and further violence not apprehended. Curis is went for by Cullison lie quasitions the not concerning a notorious outlews. Boapy Stone, real leader of the rusities who had been Curis's undeing Flandrau learns that Boapy Stone is Cullison's inter enemy and exercises a half-ful influence over the ex-sheriff's son Sam, who has quarreled with his father Cullison goes ball for Curis. Cultison goes half for Curty.

CHAPTER IV -Curly rescues Fondy Stone from a bear trap into which he has stumbled, and discovers that the outlaw is young Same rival for the hand of Lan-ra London. She gives Chriy a note to deliver to Sam, and Flandrou and Stone set out for the latter's ranch

CHAPTER V.-There Curly meets his companions of the rustling expedition and delivers Laura's note to Eam. Young Cullison believes Stone is his friend and says he will suck by him. Flandrau sees some move is being planned and becomes convinced it is traif robbery. Ham leaves the ranch to go to Saguache. Curly accompanies him.

CHAPTER VI. - Eavesdropping at a meeting place, Curly hears Stone and his Heutenant, Lute Blackwell, arrange to hold up the train at a crossing known as Tin Cup, and after the robbery shoot young Cullison and leave his body on the scene. Stone thus glutting his revenge on the system of through his sorp's death and scene. Stone thus glutting his revenge on the ex-sheriff through his son's death and disgrace. Curly is accused by Stine of being a spy of Luck Cullison's. They are separated, but part with the understand-ing that their next meeting will mean a fight to the death. Curly makes a con-fidant of Dick Maloney, cattleman, and they inform Luck Cullison of Stone's plot against his son. against his son

Part II.

CHAPTER L-After an all-night sea-sion at the Roundup club, in which Culli-son has lost heavily, there is an exchange of sharp words between Luck and a sheepman, Cass Fendrick, with whom Cullison has a feud.

CHAPTER II.—Sagnache is electrified by the news of the holdup of express messengers, the bandits securing \$20,000. Cullison pays his poker debts and shortly afterward Mack-nais and Alex Flandran, his closest friends, learn he is sustented of the express robbery, his hat having found on the scene and he being missing

CHAPTER III - Kate goes to Saguache for a consultation with Mackenzie Alex Flandrau and Curiy. All are convinced of Luck's innovence. The sheriff reveals that besides the during of Cullison's hat, and his payment of his debts, thas Fendrick had seen the robber and has almost certain it was lock. Cullison is about to enter a homestead datin which will practically put Fendrick out of business.

CHAPTER IV.—Kate's shrewdness reveals how Cullison had taken Fendrick's bat when he left the Roundup club, and suspicion points strongly to a frameup on Fendrick's part and to his being responsive for Luck's disappearance. The sierliff receives a series of notes turning on the "Jack of licarts" Curly finds a cigar store by that name and secures evidence that the proprietiess, Mrs. Wylis. knows what happened to Luck.

CHAPTER V-In the cellar of the ci-gar store Flandrau finds a cipher mea-sage left by Cullison, and follows the scent Luck is held prisoner by Fendrick and Biackwell in a sheep herder's cabin in the mountains. Fendrick wants him to sign a relinquishment of his homestead rights, conditional to his release.

CHAPTER VI.—Uneasy over the pos-sible results of his kidnaping of the cat-tieman. Fendrick tells Kate Cullison enough of the story to induce her to ac-company him to her father. Cullison, fearing for his daughter's safety should she be left at the mercy of Blackwell, signs the relinquishment and accumpanies

"Maybe so. I'm not Luck Cullison's keeper."

Bucky thought he understood. In veturn for the relinquishment Cullison had been released. Knowing Luck as he did, it was hard for him to see how pressure enough had been brought to bear to move him.

"May I use your 'phone?" he saked.

"Help yourself." O'Couner got the Circle C on long distance. It was the clear contraito of a woman that answered his "Hello!"

"Is this Miss Cullison?" he asked. Ainost at bace he added : 'O'Couner of the rangers is speaking. I've heard your father is home again. Is that true?"

An interval following during which the ranger officer was put into the role of a listener. His occasional "Yes-Yes-Yes" punctuated the rapid murmur that reached Fendrick.

Presently Bucky asked a question. "On his way to town new?"

Again the rapid murmur. "I'll attend to that, Miss Cullison, I am in Fendrick's room now, Make your mind casy,"

Bucky hung up and turned to the sheepman, "Cullison is headed for town and his daughter is afraid be is on the warpath against you. You and Luck musto't meet yet. Get out of here and hunt cover in the hills for a few days. You know why better than I do."

"How can I when I'm under arrest?" Fendrick mocked.

"Yod're not under arrest. Miss Culll-on says her father has no charge to bring against you. So you can light a sluck soon as you want to."

"Which won't be in any hurry."

"Dou't make any mistake. Luck Cullison is a dangerous man when he is roused,"

The sheepman looked at the ranger with opaque stony eyes. "If Luck Cullison is looking for me he is liable to find me, and he won't have to go to the hills to hunt me either."

Bucky understood perfectly, According to the code of the frontier no man could let himself be driven from town by the knowledge that another man was looking for him with a gun. There are in the Southwest now many thousands who do not live by the old sinndard, who are anchored to law ad civilization as a protection against rimitive passions. But Fendrick was ot one of these. He was an aspirant o leadership among the tough harditted denizens of the sunbaked desert. that being so, he had to see his feud ut to a fighting finish if need be.

"There are points about this case on have overlooked Bucky told him. "Maybe so. But the important one but sticks out like a sore thumb is hat no man living can serve notice n me to get out of town because he s coming on the shoot."

"Luck didn't serve any such notice. All his daughter knows is that he is not under the collar. Look at things reasonably, Cass. You've caused that young lady a beap of trouble already. Are you going to unload a lot more on her just because you want to be pigheaded? Only a kid struts around and hollers 'Who's afraid?' No, it's up to you to puil out, not because of Luck Cullison but on account of his daughter. Seems to me a white man wouldn't make her any more worry."

"It's because I am a white non that I can't dodge a fight when it's stacked up for me, Bucky. I tell you straight I'm going to see it out,"

Bucky's jaw clamped. "Not if I know it. You're under arrest." Fendrick set up in surprise. "What

for?" he demanded angrity. "For robbing the W. & S. Express company."

"H-, Bucky. You don't believe thirt."

"Never mind what I believe. There's some evidence against you-enough to justify me,"

"I won't stand for it. That ain't "You'll stand for it, my friend. gave you a chance to clear out and

you wouldn't take it." There came a knock on the door. It opened to admit Luck Cullison. He shut it and put his back to it, while his eyes, hard as hammered fron. swept past the officer to fix on Fendrick.

The latter rose quickly from the bed, but O'Connor flung him back.

"Don't forget you're my prisoner." "He's your prisoner, is he?" This was a turn of affair for which Luck was manifestly unprepared: "Well. I've come to have a little settlement with him."

Fendrick, tense as a coiled spring watched him warlly, "Can't be any too soon to suit me."

Clear cut as a pair of scissors, through paper Bucky snapped out his "Nothing stirring, gentlewarning. men. I'll shoot the first man that makes a move."

"Are you in this Bucky?" asked Cultison evenly.

"You're right I am. He's my prisoner."

"What for?" "For robbing the W. & S."

Luck's face lit. "Have you evidence

enough to cinch him?" "Not enough yet. But I'll take no chances on his getting away."

The cattleman's countenance reflected his thoughts as his decision hung in the balance. He longed to pay his debt an the spot, But on the other hand he had been a sheriff himself. As an outsider he had no right to interfere between an officer and his captive. Resides, if there was a chance to send Femiciak over the road that wauld be better than killing. It would clear up his own reputation, to some

extent under a cloud. "All right, Bucky. If the law wants bim I'll step uside for the time,"

The sheepman laughed in his iconic fashion. His amusembent mocked them both. "Most as good as a play of the movies, ain't it? But we'd aught all to have our guns out to make it realistic."

Bucky O'Connor and his prisoner swung down the street side by side and turned in at the headquarters of the rangers. The officer switched on the light, shut the door, and indicated

Relaxed in his chair, Fendrick spoke with rather elaborate indolence,

"What's your evidence, Bucky? What have you got that the me to the W. A S robbery?"

"Why, that hat play, Cass. You leton you had shot Cuilison's hat off his head while he was making his getaway. Come to find out you lind his hat in your possession all the time." "Does that prove I did it myself?"

"Looks funny you happened to be right there while the robbery was taking place and that you had Luck's hat with you."

The sleepy tiger took lay warily in the sheepman's eyes. "That's what the dictionaries call coincidence, Bucky."

"I've a notion it will take some ex-

plaining." "Confidentially?"

"Confidentially what?" "The explanation. You won't use it

against me?" "Not if you weren't in the hold-

"I wasn't. This is the way it happened: You know Cullison was going to prove up on that Del Oro claim on Thursday. He had me beat. I couldn't see any way out but to cat crow and offer a compromise. It was up to me to hunt Luck up and see what he would do. His hat gave me an excuse to call. So I started out and came round the corner of San Mateo street just in time to see the robber pull out. Honest, the fellow did shape up a little like Luck. Right then I got the darned fool notion of mixing him up in it. I threw his hat down and shot a hole in it, then unlocked the door of the express office carrying the hat in my hand. Thee's all there was to it."

"Pretty low-down trick, wasn't it, to play on an innocent man?"

"He was figuring to do me up. I don't say it was exactly on the square, but I was sore at him clear through. I wanted to get him into trouble,"

Bucky reflected, looking at the long ash on his cigar. "The man that made the raid of the W. & S. shaped up like Luck, you say?"

"In a general way."

The ranger looked quietly at Fendrick. "Who was the man, Cass?" "I thought I told you-"

"You did. But you fied. It was a moonlight night. And there's an arc light at that corner. By your own story, the fellow took his mask off as he swing to his horse. You saw his face last as distinctly as I see yours now."

"No. 1 reckon not." Fendrick grinned.

"Meaning you won't tell?" "That's not how I put it. Bucky. You're the one that says I recognized him. Come to think of it. I'm not sure the fellow didn't wear his mask till he

was our of sight." "I am The mask was found just outside the office where the man dropped it before he got into the sad-

die. 115/12

"That's not all. Curly and I found something else, too-the old shirt from



"Who Was the Man, Cass?"

which the cloth was cut. And I have a witness who saw a man shove that old shirt down in the barrel after tear ing a piece off."

Your witness got a name, Bucky?" "I'll not mention the name now. If it became too well-known something might happen to my witness."

Eendrick nodded. "You're wise there. She wouldn't be safe, not if a certain man happened to hear what you've just told me," "I didn't say .'she.' Cass."

'No. I said it. Your witness is Mrs. Wylle," "Maybe, then, you can guess the criminal, too. I'll ask you a question. Can you tell me where I can find a pa-

roled convict named Blackwell?" Fendrick shook his head. "Don't know the gentleman. A friend of

The officer rose, not one whit less amiable. "I didn't expect you to tell me. That's all right. I'll find him. But in the meantime I'll have to lock

you up till this thing is settled." From his inside coat pocket, Fendrick drew a sealed envelope, wrote the date across the front, and handed

it to O'Connor. Keep this, Bucky, and remember that I gave it to you. Put it in a safe place, but don't open the envelope till

I give the word. Understand?" "What's back of it?" "It isn't intended that you should know yet. I'm protecting myself. That's

all." Fendrick rose, and the two men passed into the street.

CHAPTER VIII.

A Touch of the Third Degree.

It was Bucky that caught the convict. The two men met at the top of a mountain pass. Blackwell, headed south, was slipping down toward Stone's horse ranch when they came face to face. Before the bad man had his revolver out, he found himself looking down the barrel of the ranger's leveled rifle.

"I wouldn't," Bucky murmured geninfly.

"What you want me for?" Blackwell demanded sulkity. "For the W. & S. robbery,"

"I'm not the man you want, My name's Johnson,"

"I'll put up with you till I find the man I do want, Mr. Johnson," Bucky told him cheerfully, "Climb down from that horse. No, I wouldn't try that. Keep your bands up."

Early took his prisoner straight to the . amer's office and telephoned to Cullison.

The lieutenant did not know anything about book psychology, but he had observed that hunger and weariness try out the stuff that is in a man, Under the sag of them many a will snaps that would have held fast if sustained by a good dinner and a sound night's sleep. This is why so many "bad men," gun fighters with a reputation for gameness, wilt on occasion like whipped curs. In the old days this came to nearly every terror of the border. Some day when he had a jumping toothache, or when his nerves were frayed from a debauch, a silent stranger walked into his presence, looked long and steadily into his eyes and ended forever his reign of lawlessness. Sometimes the two-gun man was "planted," sometimes he subsided

into innocuous peace henceforth. The ranger had a shrewd instinct that the hour had come to batter down this fellow's dogged resistance. Therefore he sent for Cullison, the man whom the convict most feared.

The very look of the cattleman, with that grim, hard, capable aspect, shook Blackwell's nerve.

"So you've got him, Bucky?" Luck looked the man over as he sat handcuffed beside the lable and read his face both terror and a sly, dogged cunning. Once before the fellow had been put through the third de gree. Something of the sort he fear fully expected now. Vittainy is usually not consistent. This hulking bully should have been a hardy rutlian. - Instead, he shrank like a schoolgirl from

the thought of physical pain. "Stand up," ordered Cullison, quiet-

Blackwell got to his feet at once.

"Don't hit me," he whined. Luck knew the man sweated under the punishment his imagination called up, and he understood human nature too well to end the suspense by mak-



"Den't Hit Me," He Whined.

ing real the vision. For then the worst would be past, since the actual is never equal to what is expected.

"Well?" Luck watched him with the look of tempered steel in his hard

"I-I-Mr. Cullison, I want to explain. Every man is liable to make a mistake go off half cocked. I didn't do right. That's a fac'. I can explain all that, but I'm sick now-awful

Cullison faughed harshly, "You'll be sicker soon."

"You promised you wouldn't do anything if we turned you loose," the man plucked up courage to remind him.\*

"I promised the law wouldn't do anything. You'll understand the distinction presently."

"Mr. Cullison, please-I admit I done wrong. I hadn't ought to have gone in with Cass Fendrick. He wanted me to kill you, but I wouldn't."

Bucky had let Cullison take the center of the stage. He had observed a growing distress mount and ride the victim. Now he stepped in to save the man with an alternative at which Blackwell might be expected not to snatch eagerly perhaps, but at least to be driven toward.

"This man is my prisoner, Mr. Cultison. From what I can make out you ought to strip his hide off and haug it out to dry. But I've got first call on him. If he comes through with the truth about the W. & S. robbery T've got to protect him."

Luck understood the ranger. They were both working toward the same end. The immediate punishment of this criminal was not the important issue. It was merely a club with which to beat him into submission, and at that a moral rather than a physical one. But the owner of the Circle C knew better than to yield to Bucky too easily. He fought the point out with him at length, and finally yielded reluctantly, in such a way as to aggravate rather than relieve the anxiety of the convict.

"All right. You take him first," be

finally conceded harshly. Bucky kept up the comedy. "I'll take him, Mr. Cullison. But if he tells me the truth-and if I find out it's the whole truth+there'll be nothing doing on your part. He's my prisoner. Understand that."

Metaphorically Blackwell licked the hand of his protector. "I aim to do what's right, Captain O'Connor. Whatever's right. You ask me any questions."

"I want to know all about the W. & S. robbery, everything, from start to finish."

"Honest, I wish I could tell you. But I don't know a thing about it. Cross my heart, I don't." "No use, Blackwell. If I'm going to stand by you against Mr. Cullison,

you'll have to tell the truth. Why, man, I've even got the mask you wore and the cloth you cut it from." "I reckon it must a-been some one

else, major. Wisht I could help you, but I can't." Bucky rose, "All right. If you can't help me, I can't help you. Mr. Cultison, I reckon I'll run out and have some supper. Do you mind staying

here with this man till I get back?" "No. That's all right, Bucky. Don't hurry. I'll keep him estertained. Perhaps it was not by chance that his eve wandered to a blacksnake whip

hanging on the wall, O'Connor sauntered to the door. The frightened gaze of the prisoner clung to him as if for safety.

"Major-Colonel-you ain't a-going." he pleaded. "Only for an hour or two. I'll be back. I wouldn't think of saying good-

by-not till we reach Yuma." With that the door closed behind him. Blackwell cried out, hurriedly, eagerly: "Mister O'Connor! I-I'll tell you everything-every last thing. Mr. Cullison-he's aiming to kill me soon

as you've gone." "I've got no time to foel away. Blackwell. I'm hungry. If you mean business get to it. But regiember that whatever you say will be used against

"I'll tell you any dog-goned thing you want to know. You've got me beat. I'm plumb wore out-sick. A

man can't stand everything." "Sit down. There's a good dinner waiting for you at Clune's when you

get through." His story was that he had found on the street a letter that had inadvertently been dropped. It was to Jordan of the Cattleman's National bank, and it notified him that \$20,000 was to be shipped to him by the W. & S. Express company on the night of the robbery. Blackwell resolved to have a try for it. He hung around the office until the manager and the grard arrived from the train, made, his raid upon them, locked the door, and threw away his mask. He dived with the satchel into the nearest alley, and came face to face with the stranger whom he later learned to be Fendrick.

(To be continued.)

Why That Hezdache?

When you know the cause of a dis-ease a cure may often be effected. This is particularly true of headache. Headache often results from constipation or a disordered condition of the stomach which may; be corrected by taking a dose or two of Chamberlain's Tablets. Try it. These tableta are easy to take and mild and gentla in effect.