

Start This Week -- A New Serial by a Famous Author. Read It!



THE LAST OF THE DUANES

by **Zane Grey**
Illustrated by **Verne C. Christy**

Cast of Principal Characters in This Thrilling Story by Zane Grey
Buck Duane Last of the Duanes
Cal Bain A Texas "Bad Man"
Luke Stevens An Outlaw
Bland Leader of Outlaw Group
Mrs. Bland His Wife
Jennie Girl at Bland's Camp
Capt. McNelly ... Captain of Rangers
Cheseldine Dangerous Outlaw

So it was in him then—an inherited fighting instinct—a blood lust—a driving intensity to kill. He was the last of the Duanes—that old fighting stock of Texas.

But not the memory of his dead father, nor the pleading of his soft-voiced mother, nor the warning of this uncle who stood before him now had brought so much to Duane realization of the dark passionate strain in his blood. It was the recurrence, a hundredfold increased in power, of a strange emotion that for the last three years had taken possession of him.

"Yes, Cal Bain's in town, full of bad whisky, an' huntin' for you," repeated the elder man gravely.

"It's the second time," muttered Duane, as if to himself.

"Son, you can't avoid a meetin'. Leave town till Cal sobers up. He ain't got it in for you when he's not drinkin'."

"But what's he want me for?" demanded Duane. "To insult me again? I won't stand for that twice."

"He's got a fever that's rampant in Texas these days, my boy. He wants gunplay. If he meets you he'll try to kill you."

Here it stirred Duane again—that bursting gush of blood, like a wind of flame shaking all his inner being, and subsiding to leave him strangely chilled.

As towns go, Wellston was small enough, but important in that unsettled part of the great State because it was the trading center of several hundred miles of territory. On the main street there were perhaps fifty buildings, some brick, some frame, mostly adobe, and one-third of the lot, by far the most prosperous, were saloons. From the road Duane turned into the street.

It was a wide thoroughfare, lined by hitching rails, and saddled horses, and vehicles of various kinds. Duane's eye ranged down the street, taking in all at a glance, particularly persons moving leisurely up and down. Not a cowboy in sight.

When he came to within fifty paces of a saloon he swerved out into the middle of the street, stood there for a moment, then went ahead and back to the sidewalk. He passed on in this way the length of the block.

Sol White was standing in the door of his saloon.

"Buck, I'm a-tippin' you off," he said, quick and low-voiced, "Cal Bain's over at Everall's. If he's a huntin' you bad as he brags he'll show there."

Duane knew himself to be cold, steady. He was conscious of a strange fury that made him want to leap ahead. He seemed to long for this encounter more than anything he had ever wanted. But vivid as were his sensations, he felt as if in a dream. Before he reached Everall's he heard loud voices, one of which was raised high. Then the short door swung outward as if impelled by a vigorous hand. A bow-legged cowboy, wearing woolly chaps, burst out upon the sidewalk. At sight of Duane he seemed to bound into the air and he let out a savage roar.

If Bain was drunk he did not show it in his movements. Red, sweaty, and disheveled, his face distorted and expressive of the most malignant intent, he seemed a wild and sinister figure. He had already killed a man, and this appeared manifest in his demeanor. "Won't nothin' make you draw, you?" he shouted.

"I'm waitin' on you, Cal," replied Duane.

Bain's right hand stiffened—moved. Duane threw his guns as a boy throws a ball underhand—a draw his father had taught him. He pulled twice, his shots almost as one.

Bain's big coil boomed while it was pointed downward and he was falling. His bullet scattered dust and gravel at Duane's feet. Bain fell loosely without contortion.

When he came to the gate of his home and saw his uncle there with a restless horse, saddled, with canteen, rope, and bags all in place, a

subtle shock pervaded Buck's spirit. It had slipped his mind the consequence of his act.

But the sight of the horse, the look of his uncle recalled the fact that he must now become a fugitive.

"I am a murderer," said Duane, shuddering.

"No, son, you're not. An' you never will be. But you've got to be an outlaw till time makes it safe for you to come home."

Duane, with blurred sight and contracting throat, gripped his uncle's hand and bade him a wordless farewell. Then he leaped astride the black and road out of town.

When the heat of the day began to be oppressive, and hunger and thirst made themselves manifest, Duane began to look about him for a place to halt for the noon hours. The trail led into a road which was hard-packed and smooth from the tracks of cattle. He doubted not that he had come across one of the roads used by border raiders.

He headed into it, and had scarcely traveled a mile when turning a curve, he came point-blank upon a single horseman riding toward him.

"Maw'nin', stranger," called the man, dropping his hand from his hip.

"Howdy," replied Duane hotly.

"I seen you ain't no ranger," called the rider, "an' shore I ain't none."

He laughed loudly as if he had made a joke.

He was small and wiry, slouchy of attire, and armed to the teeth, and he bestrode a fine bay horse. He had quick, dancing brown eyes, at once frank and bold, and a course bronzed face. Evidently he was a good-natured ruffian.

"My name's Luke Stevens, an' I hail from the river. Who're you?" said this stranger.

Duane was silent.

"I reckon you're Buck Duane," went on Stevens. "I heerd you was a bad man wit a gun."

This time Duane laughed, not at the doubtful compliment, but at the idea that the first outlaw he met should know him.

"Wal, Buck," said Stevens, in a friendly manner, "I ain't presumin' on your time or company. I see you're headin' for the river. But will you stop long enough to stake a feller to a bite of grub?"

"I'm out of grub, and pretty hungry myself," admitted Duane.

"Been pushin' your hoss, I see. Wal, I reckon you better stock up before you hit that stretch of county."

He made a wide sweep of his right arm, indicating the southwest, and there was that in his action which seemed significant of a vast and barren region.

"Stock up?" quired Duane thoughtfully.

"Shore. A feller has jest got to eat. I can rustle along without whisky, but not without grub. That's what makes it so embarrassin' travelin' these parts dodgin' your shadow. Now I'm on my way to Mercer. It's a little two-bit town up the river a ways. I'm goin' to pack out some grub."

"Stranger, in this here country two's a crowd. It's safer. I never was much on this lone wolf dodgin', though I've done it of necessity. It takes a good man to travel alone any length of time. Why, I've been that sick I was jest achin' fer some ranger to come along an' plug me. Give me a pardner any day. Now mebbe you're not that kind of a feller, an' I'm shore not presumin' to ask. But I jest declares myself sufficient."

"You mean you'd like me to go with you?" asked Duane.

Stevens grinned.

"Wal, I should smile. I'd be particular proud to be braced with a man of your reputation."

"See here my good fellow, that's all nonsense," declared Duane in some haste.

"Shore I think modesty becomin' to a youngster," replied Stevens. "I hate a brag."

man I'll gamble on that. It's the land of in this county. An' the safest, too, the draw! I see you're only a boy, though you're sure a strappin', husky one. Now, Buck, I'm not a spring chicken, an' I've been long on the dodge. Mebbe a little of my society won't hurt you none. You'll need to learn the country."

There was something sincere and likeable about this outlaw.

"I dare say you're right," replied Duane quietly, "and I'll go to Mercer with you."

Next moment he was riding down the road with Stevens.

"Stevens, have you got any money?" asked Duane.

"Money!" exclaimed Luke blankly. "Say, I haven't owned a two-bit since—wal, fer some time."

"I'll furnish money for grub," returned Duane. "And for whisky, too, providing you hurry back here—with out making trouble."

"Shore you're a downright good pard," declared Stevens in admiration as he took the money. "I give my word, Buck, an' I'm here to say I never broke it yet. Lay low an' look for me back quick."

Presently Stevens rode out of sight into the town. Duane waited, hoping the outlaw would make good his word.

Probably not a quarter of an hour had elapsed before Duane heard the clear report of a rifle, the clatter of rapid hoofbeats, and yells unmistakably the kind to mean danger for a man like Stevens. Duane mounted and rode to the edge of the mesquite.

He saw a cloud of dust down the road and a bay horse running fast. Stevens apparently had not been wounded by any of the shots, for he had a steady seat in his saddle, and his riding struck Duane as admirable. He carried a large pack over the pommel and he kept looking back.

The shots had ceased but the yells increased. Duane saw several men running and waving their arms. Then he spurred his horse and got into a swift stride so Stevens would not pass him. Presently the outlaw caught up with him.

"Was jest comin' out of the store," yelled Stevens. "Run plumb into a rancher who knowed me. He opened up with a rifle. Think they'll chase us."

They covered several miles before there was any signs of pursuit, and when horsemen did move into sight out of the cottonwoods, Duane and his companion steadily drew farther away.

Stevens was pale and his face bore beads of sweat. The whole front of his shirt was soaked with blood.

"You're shot!" cried Duane.

"Wal, who'n hell said I wasn't? Would you mind givin' me a lift—on this here pack?"

Duane lifted the heavy pack down

and then helped Stevens to dismount. The outlaw had a bloody foam on his lips and he was spitting blood.

"Oh, why didn't you say so?" cried Duane. "I never thought. You seemed all right."

"Wal, Luke Stevens may be as gabby as an old woman—but sometimes—he doesn't say anythin'. It wouldn't have done no good."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Santa Working Hard



Santa Claus has drifted into Seattle, Wash., and opened a workshop there where he is busy manufacturing toys for his young friends, who often come in to watch him.

FARMERS TO GET TREES FROM FOREST NURSERY

About half a million little forest trees at the Oregon Forest Nursery are ready for distribution among the farmers of Oregon, according to O. S. Fletcher, County Agent, who has received announcement from Dean Geo. W. Peavy of the School of Forestry, Oregon Agricultural College.

The following species are available: Black locust, green ash, box elder, Russian mulberry, western yellow pine, Douglas fir, and Western red cedar. Any of these trees should do well west of the Cascades.

The Oregon Forest Nursery is maintained jointly by the State Board of Forestry and the Federal Forest Service. The planting stock, under the law, is for use among the ranchers of the state for shelterbelt and woodlot planting and cannot be used for ornamental planting. The stuff is now one and two years old. Consequently it is small but on that account is easy to handle and inexpensive to transport. West of the Cascades the little trees can be planted at any time during the winter or spring when the ground can be worked. East of the mountains the material should go in the ground as early as the soil can be worked in the spring.

Those interested should write to the Oregon Forest Nursery, School of Forestry, Corvallis, Oregon.

Eating From the Hard Boiled Egg Tree



Isabel Broden, left, eating her first mouthful of egg from a tree at Miami, Fla., while H. W. Johnston, tropical plant expert, holds the "hen" steady. The tree is the Canistel, from Latin America. The fruit is soft and when cut has almost the identical appearance of a hard-boiled egg. It has no juice and when put into a sandwich tastes just like a delicious egg sandwich.

"Very Latest"

By CECILE



black velvet with green tips are the trimming motifs used.

And of course a hat of emerald felt is worn over Titan locks. Almost any girl's wardrobe would welcome a costume so practical and colorful and, withal, so charming.

The Vogue for Astrakan

Each year has its Fashionable Fur. This season it's astrakan—either black or grey—astrakan collars, cuff bands, strips of astrakan edging skirts, the tips of pockets—astrakan in every conceivable way. Blue, gray, purple and green are colors that lend themselves particularly well to the use of this modish fur. And many of the smartest coats employing it are in various weaves of Oxford gray.

Muffs Return to Favor

When the first biting days appeared, then was seen the muff in all its glory, staging a triumphant comeback after an absence of many years. As to shape—the newest version is the round muff, made soft, and just large enough to be comfortable for the two hands.

Hat Brims are Anything But Even

It may be longer on one side than the other, short in front, turned up here and down there—almost any irregularity you want—but the smart hat of the season must NOT have an even brim.

Mrs. Morgan III—Mrs. A. J. Morgan was reported early this week as ill with the influenza.

Mrs. Hays Here—Mrs. Bob Hays of Wendling was in Springfield Monday.

Wendling Folks Here—Mr. and Mrs. Beryl Crow of Wendling were in town Monday.

Here from Jasper—Mr. and Mrs. Loran James of Jasper were in Springfield Monday.

First Senior—What in the deuce did you get your hair cut so short for? Second Do—Wanted to get it off my mind as much as possible.

Little Jimmy was peculiar. Stuck a pin in Sister Julia: Sister yelled like bloody murder. "Gee," said he, "I must have stirred her."

"Did the widow who was after Sam, marry him?" "No, he escaped her." "What did he die of?"

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