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## The Honorable Senator Sagebrush

By  
**FRANCIS LYNDE**

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his father's wife, was too happy to care very much. But after a time the summons for which he had been waiting came, and he went—almost reluctantly—to join his father in the room of conference.

"Has Mr. McVickar gone?" he asked, finding his father sitting alone.

"Yes; he's gone—gone to order out his car and go back to Chicago," was the slow spoken reply. Then, with the quizzical smile wrinkling at the eye corners, "How does the political wrestle strike you by this time, son?"

"It strikes me that I haven't been in it—not even in the outer edges of it, dad. Isn't that about the size of it?"

"Oh, no; you've been doing good work—mighty good work, for your company. McVickar recognizes it. You've helped out in the only way that help could come in this campaign. You've worked up a good, healthy public sentiment in favor of a square deal for everybody. McVickar was fixing to lose it all; cooking the registration lists and buying votes and making deals right and left, the same as usual. But it's all off now, and he's gone, and we're going to have one clean, straight up and down election, son. The 'machine' says so."

"The machine?" queried the younger man.

"Yes; you didn't know that a machine organization could be put to any really righteous use, did you, boy? But this is one time when it has gone in to knock out the crookedness, big and little. Listen, son. When you were here I lay awake nights thinking how I'd put you in training and then when the time came I'd help you up into the saddle and make you the boss of the roundup, as I'd been. Want to hear the rest of it?"

Blount nodded.

"Then it came over me all of a sudden that I'd been as crooked as a dog's hind leg; that we'd all been crooked. Not that I'd ever taken a dollar for my personal pocket, for I haven't, but I've bought and sold and dickered and schemed with the best of 'em and the worst of 'em, just as McVickar's been doing for the past two months. Then I asked myself if I'd like to see you wallowing in the same mudhole, and—well, Evan, you may have a son of your own some day, and then you'll know, I thought I'd try you a little at first, and I did—that first day out at Wartrace. When you ripped out at me that day I made up my mind right then and there that I'd put the whole power of the 'machine,' as you call it, into one campaign for a clean election and a square deal."

"My heavens!" ejaculated the son. "And I've been fighting you and your organization at every turn?"

"No, you haven't," was the quick rejoinder. "You've been fighting craft, and that was what you thought you were hired to do. McVickar wasn't playing just fair with you. He gave you your job in the first place to take you away from me, but you've been in the hands of your friends right from the start, Evan. It was the organization that gave you all those chances to preach the new gospel of the square deal. It was the organization that pushed Hathaway up against you, so that you'd know that the railroad people were running around in the same old circles, hollering for justice and doing everything they could to defeat the ends of justice—muddying the spring because, they say, they don't know what else to do."

"Lastly, it's the organization that's going to see to it that your word to the people of this state is made good, son. Maybe we'll never be able to do it again, but this one time we shall do it. Gordon is going in by the biggest majority ever given to a governor of old Sagebrush, and the legislature will be five to one in favor of the square deal."

The younger man left his chair and walked to one of the windows to stand, looking down upon the lights of the busy street. When he turned again it was to say, "I don't see where I am to break in, dad."

"You have already broken in. While the legislature is going to be anti-corruption, it is also going to be fair when it finds out that all the railroad

deals have been called off and canceled. You're the man to show the lawmakers that this has actually been done. McVickar made a hard and fast point of that when he consented to wipe the slate clean and go away and let us run our politics to suit ourselves. He made me promise to put it on to you fair and square, with a handsome increase in salary and an increased agreement to back up every claim you should make when you assert that the railroad company will fire the first man that is caught evading the laws. That's what I've been fighting for in this campaign, Evan, and it's what you must fight for."

The son took the two steps necessary to reach the father's chair and held out his hand.

"I'm with you, dad," he said heartily. "I'll stay, and I'll make Mr. McVickar respect me and my principles before I'm through with it. But I'm still a little bit afraid that you and your kind are a menace to civilization and a free government. You won't mind my saying that, will you?"

"Lawzee gracious, no! Say anything you like, son, or, rather, let me say something else first. How about this 'career' business of Patricia's? Have you fixed that up yet?"

Evan shook his head despondently.

"She's going home with her father in October," he said, then: "Do you know what she did today, dad? She ran the little red car into that tree intentionally so I couldn't get back here in time to use those affidavits which she and I both supposed would incriminate you."

"God bless her loyal little soul!" said the senator. "I hadn't told her what I was trying to do; but, Lord love you, she knew—you trust a woman for knowing, every time, son. And now one more thing. Have you come to know Honoria any better in these last few days?"

"Yes; much better within the last hour, dad."

"Good. That does my old heart a heap of good, son. Let's go and get those two good women and take 'em down to dinner; then we'll drive back to Wartrace and get ready to touch off the fireworks when the returns come in. I tell you, son, tomorrow's election is going to be a regular old-fashioned, heave 'em up and keep 'em a-going landslide!"

Evan Blount was turning to go—back to the inner sitting room, where Patricia was—when he suddenly remembered little Blenkinsop.

"Don't let that worry you for a minute, son," said the man who seemed to be at the heart of everything that was happening. "Half an hour after you left Blenkinsop this morning that stuff that they had stolen from your safe and then garbled up to suit themselves was all killed. When I told Blenkinsop over the phone that there wouldn't be any crooked lists used tomorrow—that he was merely fixing to put himself on record as the biggest liar on two continents—he came down."

### CHAPTER XX. THE LANDSLIDE.

CONTRARY to all expectation, the election proved to be one of the quietest ever known in the Sagebrush State. A few editors there were, like Blenkinsop of the Daily Capital, who later on maintained that it was merely another triumph for the machine, but there was no gainsaying the result. The reform ticket, with or without the help of the machine, was elected by sweeping majorities everywhere, and Gantry, sitting in his office and reading the wire returns as they came in, gasped for breath and swore despairingly over each fresh batch of messages.

At Wartrace Hall the Hon. David turned to his son.

"Well, Evan, are the tangles all straightened out for you now?" he asked gently.

"Just about all of them," laughed Blount. He had spent a very happy evening, chiefly because Patricia had been occupying the other half of the small divan he had dragged out to face the fire. "But I'm still unalterably opposed to the machine in politics," he added.

The senator laughed silently.

"Call it 'organization' instead of 'machine,' son, and you've got the power that moves the civilized world today. You've heard me called the 'boss' from the time Gantry had his first talk with you back yonder in Massachusetts. Call me a man with friends enough to make me a sort of leader in the old home state and you've got it about right. I don't say that I've always used the power justly. The Lord knows I'm no more infallible than other people. But, as I said to you yesterday, son, no matter what you've heard or who said it, I've never used the power to fatten my own pocket-book. I've bought and trafficked and bargained—I don't deny it—but only when it seemed as though the end justified the means."

"But the end never justifies evil means, dad," was the son's steadfast rejoinder. Then he looked up quickly from his place beside Patricia. "Is that the secret of all the invitations I've been getting?"

(Continued next week)

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