



THE LAST OF THE DUANES

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

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Buck Duane, quick on the draw, kills Cal Bain in self-defense and finds himself an outlaw. Flying from pursuit, he meets Luke Stevens, another outlaw, and the two become pals. Luke narrowly escapes capture and Duane is shocked to find his brother outlawed.

Duane buries Stevens. Then he goes on to Bland's camp where he gets into a fight with a man called Bosomer and wounds the latter. He makes a friend of an outlaw at Bland's called Euche, who tells him of Mrs. Bland and the girl Jennie.

Duane meets Jennie and promises to try his utmost to get her away from Bland's camp. To avert suspicion, it is planned that he pretend to care for Mrs. Bland. Euche introduces him to the latter and he engages in conversation with her.

Buck plays the game, making Mrs. Bland think he loves her. To avert suspicion, Mrs. Bland pretends to her husband that Buck has come to visit Jennie. Bland urges Buck to become a regular member of his outlaw gang.

A quarrel later develops in which Duane kills Bland and rushes off with Jennie after a terrific struggle with Mrs. Bland. He plans to leave Jennie in good hands until a relative or friend is located, and then go on alone on the trail. He keeps careful guard over her.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

About the middle of the afternoon Jennie awoke. They cooked a meal, and afterward sat beside the little fire. She had never been, in his observation of her, anything but a tragic figure, an unhappy girl, the farthest removed from serenity and peace. That characteristic capacity for agitation struck him as stronger in her this day. He attributed it, however, to the long strain, the suspense nearing an end. Yet sometimes, when her eyes were on him, she did not seem to be thinking of her freedom, of her future.

"This time tomorrow you'll be in Shelbyville," he said.

"Where will you be?" she asked quickly.

"Me? Oh, I'll be making tracks for some lonesome place," he replied.

The girl shuddered.

"I've been brought up in Texas. I remember what a hard lot the men of my family had. But poor as they were, they had a roof over their heads, a hearth with a fire, a warm bed—somebody to love them."

"And you, Duane, oh, my God! What your life must be! You must ride and hide and watch eternally. No decent food, no pillow, no friendly word, no clean clothes, no woman's hand! Horses, guns, trails, rocks, holes—these must be the important things in your life. You must go on riding, hiding, killing until you meet—"

She ended with a sob and dropped her head on her knees. Duane was amazed, deeply touched.

"My girl, thank you for that thought of me," he said, with a tremor in his voice. "You don't know how much that means to me."

She raised her face and it was tear-stained, eloquent, beautiful.

"I've heard tell—the best of men go to the bad out there. You won't promise me you won't. I never knew any man—like you, I—I—we may never see each other again—after today. I'll never forget you, I'll pray for you and I'll never give up trying to—do something."

"Don't despair. It's never too late. It was my hope that kept me alive—out there at Bland's—before you came. I was only a poor weak girl. But if I could hope—so can you. Stay away from men! Be a lone wolf! Fight for your life! Stick out your exile—and maybe—some day—"

Then she lost her voice. Duane clasped her hand, and with feeling as deep as hers promised to remember her words. In her despair for him she had spoken wisdom—pointed out the only course.

Duane's vigilance, momentarily broken by emotion, had no sooner reasserted itself than he discovered the bay horse, the one Jennie rode had broken his halter and gone off. The soft wet earth had deadened the sound of his hoofs. His tracks were plain in the mud. There were clumps of mesquit in sight, among which the horse might have strayed. It turned out, however, that he had not done so.

Duane did not want to leave Jennie alone in the cabin, so near the road. So he put her up on his horse and bade her follow. The rain had ceased for the time being, though evidently the storm was not yet over. The tracks led up a wash to a wide flat where mesquit, prickly pear, and thorn-bush grew so thickly that Jennie could not ride into it.

Duane was thoroughly concerned. He must have her horse. Tight was flying. It would soon be night. He could not expect her to scramble quickly through that brake on foot. Therefore he decided to risk leaving her at the edge of the thicket and go in alone.

Suddenly there came the unmistakable thump of horse's hoofs off somewhere to the fore.

Then a scream rent the air. It ended abruptly. Duane leaped forward and tore his way through the thorny brake. He heard Jennie cry again—an appealing call, quickly hushed. It seemed more to his right, and he plunged that way.

He burst into a glade where a smoldering fire and ground covered with footprints and tracks showed that campers had lately been. Rushing across this, he broke his passage out to the open. But he was too late.

His horse had disappeared. Jennie was gone. There was no rider in sight. There was no sound.

It came to him then like a blow that he loved the girl.

For three long and terrible years Buck Duane rode up and down the Texas border.

His fame grew steadily until he was the most noted and most misrepresented outlaw of his day.

Hundreds of men in the border towns claimed friendship with him. Every honest rancher between Brownsville and El Paso would have been glad to shake his hand and hide him. Every outlaw along the river feared him; every crooked gambler in the monte dens played fair when Duane happened to drop in; every imitation bad man in the southwest of Texas wanted to kill him, bragged on his name, hunted him when fired by drink.

The better half of that widely scattered populace especially in localities Duane had visited, was loath to believe him perpetrator of the crimes laid to him. The ignorant and outlawed class fastened on his name all the rustling, hold-ups, robberies, murders, when direct evidence did not point to someone else.

In a sense, the reputation of every famous outlaw developed by these wild years had suffered more or less from this natural exaggeration and misrepresentation. But no outlaw before him had ever had such a host of admirers and partisans who fiercely gave the lie to any accusation of robbery or crime attributed to him.

It was widely known that he had never earned a dollar in his outlaw career. It was sworn by many and reputable men that he had never stolen one. Few towns or villages on that border had no storekeeper who had not a tale to tell about Duane, the Lone Wolf.

One afternoon, from the top of a long hill, Duane saw the green fields and trees and shining roofs of a town he considered must be Shirley; and at the bottom of the hill he came upon an intersecting road. There was a placard nailed on the cross-road sign-post. Duane drew near it and leaned close to read the faded print:

\$1000 REWARD FOR BUCK DUANE DEAD OR ALIVE.

Peering closer to read the finer, more faded print, Duane learned that he was wanted for the murder of Mrs. Jeff Allen at her ranch near Shirley. The month of September was named, but the date was illegible. The reward was offered by the woman's husband, whose name appeared, with that of a sheriff's, at the bottom of the placard.

Duane read the thing twice. When he straightened he was sick with the horror of his fate, wild with passion at those misguided fools who could believe that he had harmed a woman.

When Duane reached the crossing of the roads the name Fairfield on the sign-post seemed to be the thing that tipped the oscillating balance of decision in favor of that direction. He answered here to unfeignable impulse.

In Duane's state of mind clear reasoning, common sense, or keenness were out of the question. He went because he felt that he was compelled.

Dusk had fallen when he rode into a town which inquiry discovered to be Fairfield. Captain McNelly's camp was stationed just out of the village limits on the other side.

No one except the boy Duane questioned appeared to notice his arrival. Like Shirley, the town of Fairfield was large and prosperous, compared to the innumerable hamlets dotting the vast extent of southwestern Texas. As Duane rode through, being careful to get off the main street, he heard the tolling of a church bell that was a melancholy reminder of his old home.

There did not appear to be any camp on the outskirts of the town. But as Duane sat his horse, peering around and undecided what further move to make, he caught the glint of flickering lights through the darkness.

Heading toward them, he rode perhaps a quarter of a mile to come upon a grove of mesquits. The brightness of several fires made the surrounding darkness all the blacker. Duane saw the moving forms of men and heard horses. He advanced naturally, expecting any moment to be halted.

"Who goes there?" came the sharp call out of the gloom.

Duane pulled his horse. The gloom was impenetrable.

"One man—alone," replied Duane.

"A stranger?"

"Yes."

"What do you want?"

"I'm trying to find the ranger camp."

"You've struck it. What's your errand?"

"I want to see Captain McNelly."

"Get down and advance. Slow. Don't move your hands. It's dark, but I can see."

Duane dismounted and, leading his horse, slowly advanced a few paces. He saw a dully bright object, a gun, before he discerned the man who held it. A few more steps showed a dark figure blocking the trail. Here Duane halted.

"Come closer, stranger. Let's have a look at you," the guard ordered curtly.

Duane advanced again until he stood before the man. Here the ray of light from the fire flickered upon Duane's face fantastically.

"Reckon you're a stranger all right. What's your name and your business with the captain?"

Duane hesitated, pondering what best to say.

"Tell Captain McNelly I'm the man he's been asking to ride into his camp after dark," finally said Duane.

The ranger bent forward to peer hard at this night visitor. His manner had been alert and now it became tense.

"Come here—one of you men—quick," he called without turning in the least toward the camp-fire.

"Hello! What's up, Pickens?" came the swift reply.

It was followed by rapid thud of boots on soft ground. A dark form crossed the gleams from the fire-light. Then a ranger loomed up, to reach the side of the guard.

Duane heard whispering, the purport of which he could not catch. The second ranger swore under his breath. Then he turned away and started back.

"Here, ranger, before you go, understand this. My visit is peaceful—friendly, if you'll let it be. Mind, I was asked to come here after dark."

Duane's clear, penetrating voice carried far. The listening rangers at the camp-fire heard what he said.

"Ho, Pickens—tell that fellow to wait," replied an authoritative voice.

Then a slim figure detached itself

from the dark, moving group at the camp-fire and hurried out.

"Better be foxy, Cap," shouted a ranger in warning.

"Shut up—all of you," was the reply.

This officer, obviously Captain McNelly, soon joined the two rangers who were confronting Duane. He had no fear. He strode straight up to Duane.

"I'm MacNelly," he said. "If you're the man don't mention your name—yet."

All this seemed so strange to Duane, in keeping with much that had happened lately.

"Buck Duane! It's you?" he whispered eagerly.

"Yes."

"If I give my word you'll not be

arrested—you'll be treated fairly—you will come into camp and consult with me?"

"Certainly."

"Duane, I'm sure glad to meet you," went on MacNelly and extended his hand.

Amazed and touched, scarcely realizing this actuality, Duane gave his hand and felt an unmistakable grip of warmth.

"It doesn't seem natural, Captain MacNelly, but I believe I'm glad to meet you," said Duane soberly.

"You will be. Now we'll go back to camp. Keep your identity mum for the present."

He led Duane in the direction of the camp-fire.

(Continued Next Week.)

ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH.
Rev. Thomas J. Brady, pastor.
Third Sunday of Advent, December 16, 1928.

The first mass on next Sunday, December 16, will be in Boardman, and said in Root's hall, just immediately over the postoffice. During the stay of the pastor there he will be the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Peter Farley. The mass in Boardman will be at 7:45 in the morning, so as to give the pastor time to return to Heppner for the mass there at 11 o'clock. Immediately after the 11 o'clock mass in Heppner, there will be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The pastor will preach in

both places upon the Sanctification of the Sunday as the day of the Lord.

Services on Christmas Day will include a midnight high mass in Heppner by the pastor who will also preach upon "The Wherefore of the Birth of Christ." The midnight mass will be followed at 8:30 o'clock by a second mass in Heppner, and a third mass in The Sands at 10:30. For the convenience of the people who live in Heppner, and also for the children, there will be confessions in the afternoon of Christmas-eve at 3 and 7. Confessions will be resumed at 11 at night for the people who live out of town, and continue until 11:30. The pastor kindly urges all to abide by these arrangements. The midnight service will last no longer than an hour and a quarter. All are requested to approach the Sacrament on Christmas day and thus bring home to each one the deep significance of Christ's recurring birthday. It is much to be feared that so-called Christians are adrift from the spiritual meaning of Christmas day and have unfortun-

ately come to consider Christmas as a day for mere pleasure and exchange of social amenities. Christmas day is preeminently a day for all Christians to unite themselves with Christ and to enter into themselves with the idea of emphasizing the importance of a deeper sense of religion.

To Protect Left-Over Paint
To save paint remaining in an opened can, stir thoroughly to dissolve all the oil, then fill the can with water. When ready to use, pour off the water and you'll find the paint as fresh as when first opened.

"The bullet went through Jones and killed Smith. They arrested Jones."

"Why?"

"Well, it was through Jones that Smith was shot, wasn't it?"

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



Would You Rather Lose a Bank Book or a Roll of Bills?

Don't carry large sums of money in your pockets!

Put them in the bank where they are safe.

When you lose your bank book, you are reasonably certain your money is not lost.

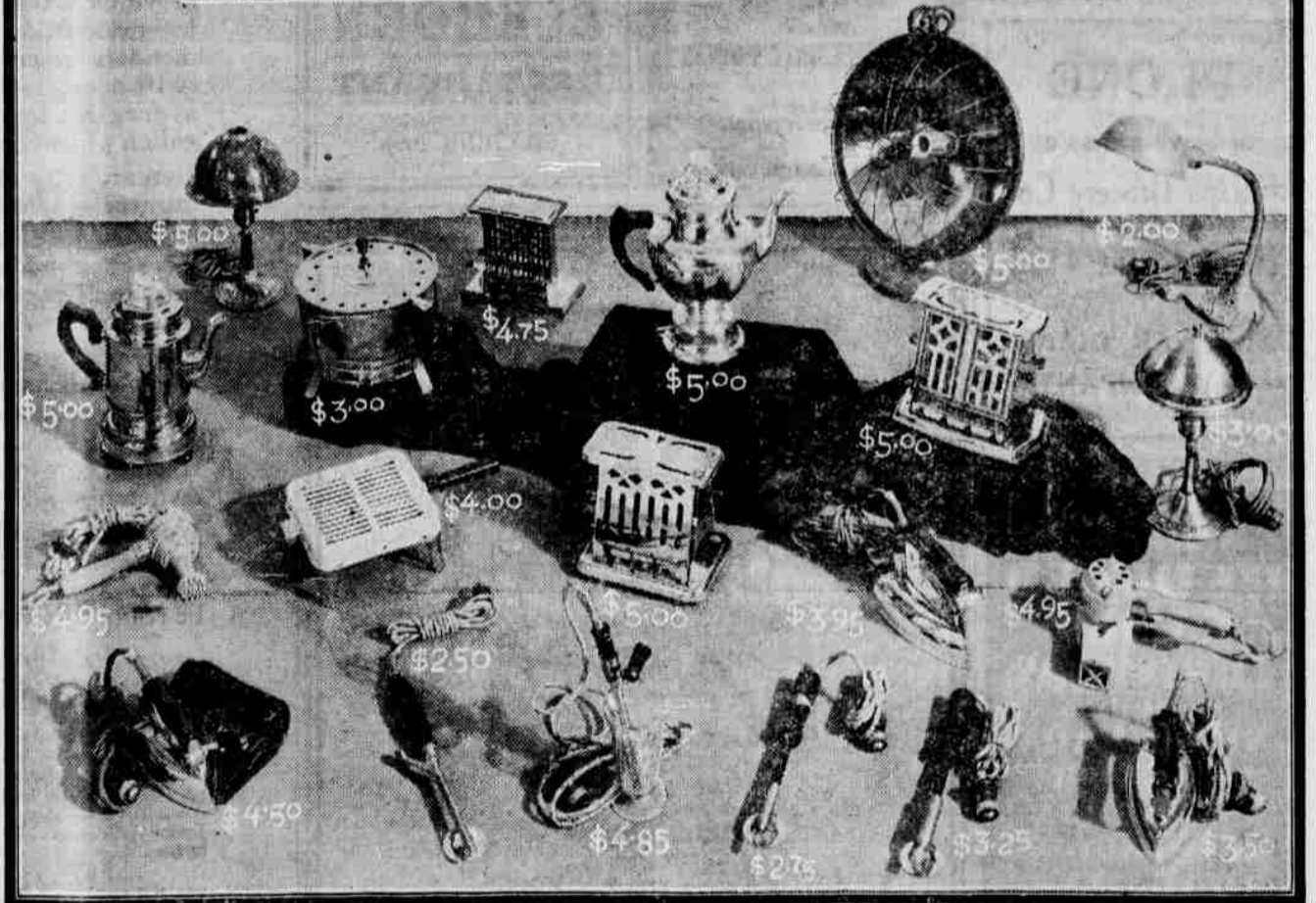
But when you lose a roll of bills, the chances of its being returned are very slim—it IS LOST.

The "Lost and Found" columns are full of ads offering rewards for lost money.

Be safe! Put your money in the bank!

Farmers & Stockgrowers National Heppner Bank Oregon

20 Practical Electrical \$5 gift ideas, none over \$5



Useful gifts at popular prices

Come in and see our complete display!

Photographs here give only a hint....
toasters, lamps, percolators, corn poppers, flat irons, soldering irons, immersion water heaters, warm air heaters, curling irons, vibrators, hair dryers.

Besides the smaller appliances there are also heating pads, electric ranges, rotary clothes irons, vacuum cleaners.. something for everybody. Your Christmas shopping isn't complete until you've made a visit to our store. Come!

Pacific Power & Light Company

Always at your service

Waffles!

The Universal Waffle Iron, - - \$10.50



or **AUTOMATIC TOAST!**
Toastermaster Toaster (automatic) - \$12.50

Give somebody waffles every Sunday morning from Christmas on, or golden brown slices of toast made absolutely without attention. How? A waffle iron, or Toastermaster Toaster. Don't count your shopping well done until you see what splendid electrical things you can give (or receive.) Toastermaster browns slices just as you want them, then turns off the electricity automatically.

No watching, no turning, no burning. Wouldn't you like to have one? Sure! Most likely you know someone else who would enjoy Toastermaster, too.

Pacific Power & Light Company

Always at your service