

THE LAST OF THE DUANES

by Zane Grey

Illustrated by Verne C. Christy

WHAT HAPPENED BEFORE

Buck Duane, quick on the draw, kills Cal Blain in self-defense and becomes an outlaw. After adventures on the road he goes to Bland's camp. There he wounds a man named Bosmer and becomes a bosom friend of another named Euclure. He meets Mrs. Bland and also a girl Jennie, held prisoner by Bland, whom he rescues after a series of intrigues in which he is forced to deceive Mrs. Bland.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"The Governor got mad and flayed us alive. Most rangers were lazy, useless gun-fighting chysters! Reed lost his temper. He's hot for the service. But I kept cool, and told the Governor straight out that if he'd pardon you I'd break up Cheseldine's gang on the river. That sort of floored the Governor. He got interested."

"I talked to him for an hour, explained how there were only two ways to exterminate Cheseldine and the like. Either with an army or with the ranger service, employing such a scout as you. The army idea wasn't possible. But he was impressed by the other. He said: 'Set an outlaw to catch an outlaw, eh?'"

"Then he pondered a while and at last rang for his secretary. 'My political enemies say I'm not liberal-minded,' he went on. 'Now, I'm going to make this a test case of the ranger service. I'll pardon this gun-sharp Duane on condition you make him a ranger. That is, he'll not be pardoned until he is a ranger. Then we'll see how the scheme works out.'"

"MacNelly, I want to see this Miss Lee," said Duane.

"I was thinking of that. It's a good chance. Maybe there'll never be another one." He paused a moment, chewing his cigar. "All right, I see no reason against your meeting her," he went on. "But let me arrange the matter as suits me. Tomorrow I'll send a ranger over to Shirley. There's a train and stage, too. Now, let's turn in, Duane. We've talked a deal. And I was tired before we began. Make yourself a bed there. Good night."

Duane stepped upon the porch and rang the bell. After what appeared to be a long time a negro maid opened the door.

"A—caller to see Miss Lee," said Duane.

The maid asked him in and led him to a parlor. It was a large room, light enough, yet full of unfamiliar shapes. He stood there uncertain, waiting. The maid returned to say that Miss Lee would be right in.

Whoever Miss Lee was, she must have connection with wealthy people. Duane felt long-absent associations become vivid in his mind.

Slowly he turned. A slender woman in white stood in the door, one hand clinging to the curtains, the other at her breast. She was whiter than her dress—as white as a flower. Her eyes were dark, strained, staring, beautiful. The look of them Duane had seen before.

Duane's lips uttered her name, yet he had a vague sense of not hearing his own voice. The movement of his lips, his hand, seemed to animate her. She had been as still as a statue, and now she was as if shot through and through with life. That supporting hand upon the curtain appeared to uphold her quivering form.

"Oh, Duane, don't you—know me?"

She moved, she swept out her hands and the wonder of her eyes dimmed in a flood of tears. She stepped blindly. Duane's sight, straining with all the abnormal keenness of stunned faculties leaping back to power, caught a slight but unmistakable limp in her step.

In a flash all that had been strange about her vanished. He was back in another world—one he had seared over in his heart and closed forever.

"My God! Who are you?" he cried hoarsely.

Then she met him, arms outstretched.

"Jennie! Jennie! Jennie!" she sobbed.

Swift as light Duane caught her up and held her crushed to his breast. The past, like deadening scales, fell from him. He stood holding her tight, with the feel of her warm, throbbing breast and the clasp of her clinging arms as flesh and blood realities to fight a terrible fear that this was only another and the worst of those moments haunted by phantoms.

Despite a stunned consciousness, he never lost the true sense of the exquisite life of that moment. He felt her and the might of it was stronger than all the demons of his unhappy years. Jennie was not dead. She was alive—alive! And he held her as if she had been his soul—his strength on earth—his hope of heaven—against his life.

derer, a gunman, a victim of circumstances—he had loved and lost and suffered worse than death in that loss—he had gone down the endless bloody trail, a killer of men, a fugitive whose mind slowly and inevitably closed to all except the instinct to survive and a black despair.

And now, with this woman in his arms, her swelling breast against his, in this moment almost of resurrection, he bent under a storm of passion and joy possible only to him who had endured so much.

"Jennie! Jennie!" he whispered unsteadily. "No dream—no ghost—but you! I didn't know you!"

"Yes, Jennie. And you never knew me!" She stirred and lifted her face from his breast. Her hands unclasped from his neck, fell to his shoulders, and caught there. A stain of red came into her white face.

"Have I changed—so much—from that time over the Rim-Rock?"

"Changed! You're not the same girl! You've only that old look in your eyes. I saw you limp—that told me."

"I'm still a little lame."

"It was that. How everything rushed back! I saw you as on that first day in the cabin. It's all clearer than the thousand times I've dreamed it. Euclure and Bland and that fierce woman, his wife, and Alloway! The little shack where you hid and nursed me. Jennie, I went back there—lived there a whole year with dreams and ghosts."

He shuddered and looked out of the window, far beyond, in cold and sick fancy, to the wilds of desert gorge. Jennie lifted a hand and touched his cheek with ineffable tenderness.

"I lived there alone—alone like a crippled wolf. Oh, the lonely nights—the black nights with their faces. But, Jennie, I found one thing—my salvation then."

He bent over her, looking deep into her dark, wet eyes.

"What?" she whispered.

"I found I loved you, and one of my bitterest regrets was that you never knew it. Hear it now! I love you! I've always loved you! I learned to love you there in Bland's cabin when we planned to save you. But it never came to me till I'd lost you."

"Then the memory was all that kept my mind from going. Your eye used to haunt me, Jennie. I could see them dark and sad and watchful as you peered through the window at me with that woman, Kate Bland. It all comes back."

"Jennie, you must have much to tell me; and I have much to tell you. Can you tell me—you care for me? When I think of what you must have done! Jennie, haven't you loved me—a little?"

She uttered a low laugh that was half sob and her arms slipped up to his neck again.

"A little! I nearly died of love for you," she whispered. "I've never lived a wakeful hour without loving you, longing for you, praying for you. Oh, Duane, Duane, I love you!"

Their lips met in their first kiss. The sweetness, the fire, of her mouth seemed so new, so strange, so irresistible to Duane. His sore and hungry heart throbbed with thick and heavy beats. He felt the outcast's need of love and he gave up to the entrancing moment.

She met him half-way, returned kiss for kiss, clasp for clasp, her face scarlet, her eyes closed, till, her passion and strength spent, she fell back upon his shoulder.

Duane suddenly thought she was going to faint. He divined then that she had understood him, would have denied him nothing, not even her life, in that moment. But she was overcome, and he suffered a pang of regret at his unrestrained.

"Jennie—don't mind it—I'm rough—I was carried away," he said. "I never knew life could be so sweet."

"I don't mind—I'm glad," she replied, slipping out of his arms. "But my breath went—and—and—Come, let's sit down here by the window."

BAYNARD SAGER

TEACHER OF VIOLIN

Terms \$5.00 Monthly.

Box 521, Pendleton.

Cummings & Wittercraft

U. S. L. BATTERY SALES

Complete Battery Service—

Recharge — Rental — Repair

Satisfaction Guaranteed

PHONE

or leave orders at

Phelps Grocery Co.

Home Phone 1102

HEPPNER TRANS-

FER COMPANY

She led him to a sofa and they sat down. It seemed then that each looked at the other with different eyes, hers dark and sad, troubled, his glowing and soft, full of wonder.

Jennie slipped to her knees and trembling hands reached up to Duane.

"Don't tell me that McNelly has made you a ranger?" she implored.

"That's it," replied Duane and brought himself to face her. He feared a breakdown or at least a storm of weeping. But apparently she grew calmer now, that the truth was out.

"He didn't make you a ranger just for an excuse for the pardon?"

"No. It's secret special service."

"Ah! What is it, Duane?"

"I'm to make my way west, find where Cheseldine hides out with his picked men, get in with them, and when they're ready to ride out on another raid or bank robbery I'm to plan a trap so McNelly can kill them or capture them."

"Oh, Heaven! Duane, was it for that McNelly got your pardon? He might as well have killed you. To send you on a mission like that! Duane, it's impossible. With your reputation, your known hatred of border criminals—with the death of Bland, Alloway, Hardin, all those outlaws against you, why, it would be utterly hopeless—impossible."

International Beauties Here on Tour



Among girls picked by their respective countries as outstanding beauties, in the United States on a theatrical tour, are, standing left to right: Marcy, Spanish dancer; Jacqueline Cobra, Miss Spain; Ginette Gaudet, Miss Paris; Angel Joyce, Miss England; Elsie Korin, Miss Austria; Marguerite du France, Miss France. In ovals, left to right: Nita Smoleski, Miss Poland; Nathalie Barr, Miss Russia; Kate Reiter, Miss Germany; Joy Ashley, Miss London.

ARE YOU SHIPPING TURKEYS?

Get our rates for dressed poultry of all kinds before you ship. We will pick them up any place on our route.

John Day Valley Freight Line

(Incorporated)
Operating between Heppner and Portland and John Day Highway Points.
CITY GARAGE, Local Agent, Phone 172



When you build, we are ready to serve you

WHEN you build it is always a comforting thing to know that the building materials you buy are going to be up to specifications. Cheap, flimsy construction usually goes hand in hand with poor quality materials. Safeguard your building by letting us know what you require and we will work with you to see that your interests are well protected. We are headquarters for all dependable building materials and can also help you select a good, reliable contractor. Tell us what you plan to do—we can and will give you helpful advice.

TUM-A-LUM LUMBER COMPANY

Yards at Heppner, Lexington and Ione

Faint red spots appeared in her white cheeks. Her bosom rose and fell with deep, hurried breaths. Duane saw in her the fighting spirit of Texas and sensed a bursting storm.

"Dear Jennie, look at it this way," he said persuasively. "Thank Heaven I'm a free man now! Think how glad my mother will be. I've a hard job on hand. But you know I'm pretty well able to tackle it. I'll break up Cheseldine's band. There's a chance. Can't you imagine what I'll do with that chance—when all the time I'll know you love me—are waiting for me?"

For all the effect this speech produced he might as well have kept silent. Her eyes, black now and blazing, were on him.

"Duane, return the pardon to MacNelly and go back to the Nueces. Be an outlaw again. I'll go with you."

(Continued Next Week.)

Blacksmith Inventor

Frank Wilson Lambert, 73, a blacksmith of Omaha, has invented a propeller with curved ends which he claims will revolutionize aviation. Lambert is building an airplane in which he hopes to make a flight to Paris next year.

"What for?"

"To entreat him to release you."

"Why, he wouldn't. He's keen to do this thing. And I don't blame him. MacNelly's a fine fellow; he's not wanting in sympathy. But he's got a man's job, and you couldn't move him."

"Yes, I could. At least, if I could persuade him, I could buy your release. The ranger service is poorly paid. They need money. He could do much with money. I'll pay him ten thousand dollars to release you."

"Jennie! Oh, you mustn't think of such a thing! He wouldn't consent. Remember, I'm practically bound to Governor Stone as well as Captain MacNelly."

"What Governor Stone would never know wouldn't hurt him," muttered Jennie.

The fire in her eyes had spread.



May peace and prosperity attend 1929, and may that year be generous to your projects as you have made 1928 generous to ours. Our greetings are heartfelt.

ELKHORN RESTAURANT

ED CHINN, Prop.

Central Market

HENRY SCHWARZ & SON



Before another grain of sand goes to the bottom of the hour-glass, we want you to know that we are wishing you "A Happy New Year" in all sincerity and gratitude. Your constant friendship during 1928 has meant more to us than we can say.

PHELPS Grocery Co.

THE HOME OF GOOD EATS
Phone Main 53 We Deliver

STONE'S MODERN FOOD STORES

OREGON, WASHINGTON, CALIFORNIA, IDAHO—HEPPNER HOTEL BLDG., HEPPNER, ORE.

START THE NEW YEAR RIGHT

Form the habit of paying cash for your groceries. The savings you make during the course of the next year will surprise and delight you.

PAY CASH AND PAY LESS

CRANBERRIES Large, fresh berries 2 Quarts 45c	BANANAS Yellow Fruit 3 Lbs. 33c	MINCE MEAT EXTRA FANCY— KERR'S BEST 2 Lbs. 39c
Nalley's Mayonnaise Pints 33c Quarts 60c	PRINCE ALBERT IN GLASS HUMIDOR 1 Lb. \$1.39 An Ideal Present For Him	CHEESE MEADOW GROVE Per Pound 29c
SPERRY'S FLOUR WHITE DOWN 49 lbs. \$1.85 Barrel \$7.25	HAMS MILD CURE 29c lb.	BULK LARD 2 lbs. 39c 4 lbs. 75c 3 lbs. \$1.45
CRYSTAL WHITE SOAP 20 Bars 85c	STONE'S SYRUP CANE AND MAPLE 1-2 Gallon 89c 1 Gallon \$1.59	

We Deliver Orders Over \$3.00—FREE—in the City Limits

SWEET POTATOES Fancy 4 Lbs. 29c	STONE'S COFFEE Supreme Blend 1 lb. 49c 3 lbs. \$1.45 Special Blend 1 lb. 39c 3 lbs. \$1.10	PINEAPPLE Broken Slices 4 Cans 79c No. 2 1/2 Cans.
--	---	---