

GUNLOCK RANCH

by
FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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CHAPTER I

It was the Fourth of July, and Sleepy Cat—that sunswept little desert town bordering on the Very Bad Lands of the arid Southwest—was dusty.

Dust was not unusual in Sleepy Cat; to be dusty was its normal condition; when not dusty, Sleepy Cat was dead. "But you needn't be scared of this kind of dust," explained Dr. Carpy, who, sitting with his feet up against the porch handrail of his Sleepy Cat Hotel, was talking to Jane Van Tarnel. "It's not dirt, this dust—not like your Chicago dust. It's clean volcanic ash that drifts up from the Spanish Sinks."

"But toward sundown when the ash settles over the Superstition Range and the sun shines through it, the air shows every color of the rainbow. That snow on Music Mountain,"—Dr. Carpy pointed—"looks pink and red and purple. You'll like it out here."

Jane disagreed vigorously. "Oh, no! It's going to be awfully lonesome after city life," she declared positively.

"You'll never be lonesome in Sleepy Cat—unless you're good," observed the doctor cynically. "Otherwise you'll find things generally hum in Sleepy Cat."

"It certainly is lively today," conceded the dissatisfied city girl.

It was, horsemen, not a few of them, clattered up and down Front Street and River street, chiefly to hear their own noise. And a mob of miners and prospectors from Thief River had come up for the celebration and the horse races.

"Been out on the Fairgrounds yet?" asked the doctor, continuing his chat with Jane. "Seen any of the races?"

"I saw the Indian races this morning—such yipping and yelling! And those Texans that rode into town yesterday—they yelled louder than the Indians."

"That outfit has just delivered four thousand head of cattle to the Gunlock Agency. They checked them in yesterday. Some old-time Sleepy Caters in that bunch—Henry Sawdy and John Lefever made the drive with the outfit—all the way up from the Rio Grande. Hello," exclaimed the doctor lazily, "here comes Sawdy now."

A rather tall man, well rounded out, somewhat bow-legged, strongly built and confident, if not aggressive, in manner, was coming up the wooden steps leading from the sidewalk to the hotel office. Carpy halted him. Sawdy, poised under an overwhelming sombrero, turned and walked toward the doctor and his guest.

"Henry!" exclaimed the doctor. "You blamed old longhorn, I never looked to see you back in Sleepy Cat."

"Ain't no warrants out agin me, are there?" asked Sawdy in calm, blunt, but spirited fashion.

"There must be one or more agin you down along the Rio Grande, Henry," retorted the doctor, "or you wouldn't be so far from the tinkle of the guitar with winter coming on. Meet Miss Van Tarnel—newcomer since you went south. Mr. Sawdy, Miss Jane."

Hat in hand, Sawdy stared: "Miss Van Tarnel?" he echoed. "Did I get the name right?" he asked as Jane nodded to his greeting.

"You got it right," remarked Carpy dryly.

"Well," returned Sawdy, swallowing, "if you could get a few more newcomers like this, Doc, you'd have a live town. She's no relation to—"

"Gus Van Tarnel? Yes," nodded Carpy, easily anticipative. "She's his daughter—only daughter; only child, in fact."

Sawdy swallowed again. "Well, I'll say any man might be proud to claim her. I used to work for your father. Is he alive yet?"

"Alive, yes," interposed Carpy, "but a sick man. Have you had a horse race this morning, Henry?" asked Carpy in teasing fashion.

Sawdy snorted. "Hintin' at that sell yesterday, eh? No horse race at all," he went on angrily. "It was just a plain steal, Doc—beggin' your pardon, miss—a steal put up by this saloon keeper, Boland, and a crooked cowman, McCrossen, and that Thief River butcher, Clubfoot."

Jane started. McCrossen was the Van Tarnel foreman at Gunlock Ranch.

"But what about this race?" persisted Carpy. "Sit down, Henry."

"Why keep ropin' at a dead corpse, Doc?" protested Sawdy. And turning to Jane: "Do you know this man?" he asked, nodding toward the doctor.

"Slightly," smiled Jane. "I hope to know him better."

"Don't get too well acquainted," advised Sawdy. "He's got a trick of diggin' into your sore spots."

"Tell us about that race," interrupted Carpy.

"Well," began the cowman reluctantly, "night before last we bedded the herd down about three miles below Thief River town. About sundown Clubfoot rode into camp on a good-lookin' bay mare. I didn't see him, I was on guard. He said he was on his way up to Sleepy Cat, John Lefever, our foreman, invited him to take supper and bunk for the night."

"He said he was a prospector goin' out on the Gunlock range. He started talkin' horses and said he wanted to sell his pony—claimed he had the fastest mare along the Sinks. He bluffed about that pony until John got touchy about his own little chestnut gelding, and John finally promised him a race when we got to Sleepy Cat. Nobody in our bunch not havin' seen the fellow's horse run, John waited till everybody got to sleep and takes Clubfoot's mare off her picket rope for a tryout. Shucks! She had no speed at all."

"Next day they arranged the race, and we boys put up our dough—every dollar in the outfit. What do you think of us for suckers? When the race started, that cussed prospector—beggin' your pardon, miss—run in a ringer on us—another bay mare, looked exactly like the one he rode into camp. That mare run like a streak—covered five hundred yards before John's gelding got his feet picked up. Then we got the story."

"Clubfoot turned out to be a side-swipe for this saloon keeper Boland here. So we smashed up Boland's glass-ware and lookin'-glass last night, proper."

"That wasn't right, Henry," expostulated Carpy with perfect gravity.

"That bird's got five hundred of our dough," continued Sawdy grimly.

"Henry, I thought you and John were too wise to get stung like that. How you going to get even? Smashing glass-ware won't do it."

"I don't know, Doc, I don't know."

"Henry," observed Carpy, "what you mean is you know but you won't tell."

"The races ain't all over yet. Then there's the ropin' and throwin'—"

Carpy nodded.

"—nd' the trick ridin'. All I'll say is—"

Sawdy hesitated.

"Say all you want to before this young lady. She won't spill. I'll guarantee her," said Carpy.

"Well, if that's so, miss—and you certainly look up to the brag—I'll say McCrossen, that new foreman of yours, was in on that skinnin' we took—at least, we think so. That's nothin' in the world against you."

Jane spoke frankly: "Oh, I'm glad, Mr. Sawdy, you don't bring me into it, for I really don't know any more about it than a babe unborn."

"I hear McCrossen is quite a rider," observed Sawdy tentatively.

"That's what everybody says," returned Jane. "He certainly is wonderful in the saddle."

Sawdy nodded wisely, as if merely to say, "It is well."

"Sawdy," demanded Carpy, "what you got up your sleeve?"

"Nothin' at all, Doc—not a thing in the world."

"You can't fool me, you old desert rat," persisted Carpy.

"Well, Doc, since you're so smart, will you back what I've got up my sleeve for fifty dollars? Will you do it, Doc? I've just come from Jake Spotts' place. He lent me five—"

Carpy reached into his trousers pocket and drew out a roll of bills. "Go along, you critter!" he exclaimed indignantly. "I might have known your long-winded story would cost me

money. But I didn't look for it to be fifty dollars."

"Make it a hundred, Doc," ventured Sawdy in his rich, persuasive voice.

"Not on your life, Henry. You'll lose this, anyway."

"We get paid tomorrow—cough up for me."

"Go hang! I haven't got it to spare. Want to do some betting myself."

Jane held out her purse. "Why, here, Mr. Sawdy. There's over fifty in this that I'm sure I don't need. Take it."

Sawdy stared dumbfounded. "I couldn't do that, young miss. I couldn't."

Jane, still smiling, had opened her purse, taken from it five gold eagles, and held them out. "If you refuse to let me accommodate you, it won't be much of a compliment to me," she protested. But it was the light in her eyes and her lips parted over two even rows of white teeth that staggered Sawdy. He was groggy, but though going down he fought on.

"I know blamed well I ought not to do it," muttered the big fellow. "Doc—what shall I do?"

"Take it!" said Carpy gruffly. "You'll lose it—then you can work it out for Jane on the ranch this summer—she's running things out there while her father's sick."

Sawdy reluctantly let the trim young lady drop the gold pieces into his horny hand—she laughing, he serious, Dr. Carpy vastly amused. "If the worst comes to the worst, I could work it out," repeated Sawdy soberly.

"But if you go to work at Gunlock," remarked the doctor, "make no mistake. Keep off the grass. Don't aspire to the hand of this young princess. I've got a bid in there myself."

"Why, Doctor!" exclaimed Jane, all rosy in protest and rising to go.

"Just the same, girl, any man that bids for you has got to face a major operation at my hands. Will you be back for dinner?" he asked of Jane as she made ready to leave. "We're having watermelon today."

"I'm not going to miss that. But I must go over to Rubido's to order some supplies. By the way, I forgot to ask: What shall I do with that medicine you gave me last time?"

"Throw it out the window and ride horseback. You're coming along wonderful for six weeks out here."

"Hold on, miss, just a minute, please," begged Sawdy as the party broke up. "You'll be at the Fairgrounds this afternoon for the races?"

"Of course I'll be there," responded Jane pertly.

"You've done me a kind, good turn. I want to do you a good one. This goes for this old medicine man, too." Sawdy nodded toward the doctor.

"What is it?" asked Jane coolly. Sawdy was solemn.

"You won't neither of you spill it? All right. Don't bet no money on the trick ridin' this afternoon."

By two o'clock that day the Fairgrounds were sizzling hot and tremendously crowded. Frontier Day celebration was combined with the national holiday and the county fair of a county bigger than most eastern states. A gathering of horsemen, cowmen, miners, railroad men, gamblers, prospectors, desert rats, and frontier adventurers milled about the rickety little grandstand and what, under more sophisticated circumstances, would be called the paddock.

A sprinkling of Indians from the Reservation added color to the scene—elderly bucks, dignified and taciturn; young men with their ponies; fat, swarthy squaws bright in Navajo blankets; and attractive Indian girls rigged in gaudy fashions.

On an occasion such as this, when a local celebration combined with the arrival of a goodly outfit of cowmen, there was reason to look forward to a lively round-up by proprietors of thirst parloirs, gamblers, clothiers, merchants, and barbers. On this particular Fourth of July there was every reason but one for such a hope—the cow outfit had been thoroughly skinned by the advance guard of Sleepy Cat sharpshooters in the person of Harry Boland and Clubfoot and Company.

In consequence the Circle Dot boys, as Sawdy's outfit was known, made no especial contribution to the Fairgrounds festivities; they were present but not betting.

Sawdy, long-faced and solesan, neglected to pull at his sweeping mustaches—a sure sign of mental depression. John Lefever, rotund and naturally jolly, Circle Dot foreman, only whistled softly.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Vogue of Black or Dark Silk Sheers

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



AS to foremost fashions for summer, costumes of black or dark sheers such as silk chiffons, marisettes, organza and handsome nets are carrying first honors.

Your wardrobe may be as you supposed replete with chic, but if it be sans one of the beguilingly styled dark sheers better send an immediate S. O. S. call in to your dressmaker or to your smartest store in town or to whoever caters to your sartorial needs. Telling you, we are, that without a suit or a dress of some one or other of these silk sheers or nets in black or in brown, navy or dubonnet red or deep purple dye your summer dress program will be sadly lacking indeed. We might add that black is the favorite of them all.

Especially are fascinating things being done with redingote fashions made of silk sheers that are thin to the point of transparency since they are designed to be worn over either a dress or slip in a solid bright color or of gay print. See the charming and chic ensemble to the right in the picture. It conveys the idea most eloquently. Here a black silk chiffon redingote with the new circular-cut hemline is posed over a pink silk moire slip. Very French in feeling is this most winsome 1936 afternoon dress. Note the black silk taffeta applique of roses on the redingote. The corsage of huge twin roses accurately repeats the pink-tone of the silk slip. Narrow velvet ribbons ties about the waist and trims the very lovely pink panama hat worn with this costume.

While we are on the subject of black silk chiffon and its importance in the summer style picture it might be well to mention the new skirts of black chiffon which are the smartest ever for evening, worn with a tunic or jacket-blouse done in flamboyantly colorful flowered print. These skirts are cut full circular and

their hemline measures yards. Yet with all this fullness you are not made aware of the fact as the skirt is styled to fit about the hips in slenderizing sleekness gradually and gracefully leading into soft undulations about the hemline. You will find a skirt of this description to be a real asset in your summer clothes collection. Have in reserve a shirtwaist blouse of black net, also a décolleté bodice of self black chiffon—an economical way to acquire a wardrobe of smart formals for varied occasion.

If you have an urge for color you will find joy in a costume that poses a redingote of dubonnet red silk chiffon or organza over a slip of gorgeous flower print. The color effect is beyond the telling in word or picture. It requires the evening lights to glorify it.

Could anything in the way of a daytime costume be smarter and more to be coveted than the jacket-and-dress twosome to the left in the illustration! If so we have not discovered it. You may be interested in knowing that this ensemble is a creation by no less a noted designer than the personal dressmaker to Queen Mary. It came over on the R. M. S. Queen Mary as did a whole fashion load of stunning modes. The dress is perfect for afternoon wear on warm summer days, made as it is of cool Tudor-brown twytext net. The finely pleated and tucked jabot is of white silk net, and the loose coat is of brown crossbar twytext.

The story of net as it unfolds in the summer style program is proving a most fascinating one. Nothing smarter or more practical has centered the style stage than the jacket dresses tailored of cool and comfortable and chic looking nets either in black or the stunning new rich dark colors.

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DINNER SUIT

By **CHERIE NICHOLAS**



The vogue for tailored clothes goes into the evening. Very stylish indeed is the young woman in the picture who wears a strictly tailored dinner suit with its 1890 jacket and buttoned skirt. It is fashioned of creamy white Mt. Airy cloth.

QUILTED COATS FOR BEACH WEAR LATEST

A coat which looks as though it were made from the family's heirloom quilt will go a long way toward creating a sensation on the beaches. Dressier versions that have intricate quilting patterns are destined for wear over summer formals.

Large floral motifs which have bright colors on white or pastel backgrounds are the most fashionable for beach wear. Some of these coats are made of printed cottons which have the designs outlined with quilting, while others are pieced together in the regulation quilt manner.

The quilted coat of plaid woolen, very light of weight and quite gay in its color combinations, is shown for vacation wear, while the taffeta and hand-blocked linen versions are evening favorites.

Flowers Are Dramatic

White flowers on a black gown are dramatic; and on a white gown they emphasize an effect of simplicity. A spot of brilliant scarlet on a white gown is gorgeous. Color harmony may be achieved by wearing flowers that blend into the general tone of the costume, or with a contrasting complementary color.

Flowers Deck Shoes

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by
FRANK H. SPEARMAN

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