

SERIAL STORY

LOVE ON THE LINE

BY PAUL FRIGGENS

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YESTERDAY, Mark rode Ed Taylor at the black, inasmuch as Carrie had come to the Taylor's. But with the fire across the creek, both men realize Mrs. Taylor and Carrie face new danger. Mark rushes to Taylor's, hoping that the women have taken the wagon to town. He finds the wagon overturned, the horses in their stalls.

CHAPTER XI

TERROR froze Mark Deuel's heart as he stood in Taylor's yard, watching the fire licking closer, listening to the shrieking wind, and knowing Carrie and Mrs. Taylor had not escaped in the wagon.

For a long moment he seemed stunned, stood looking in at the horses through the gaping hole the wind had torn in the corner of Ed Taylor's barn. He was clammy with the thought of what might have happened to the women. A cyclone had ripped through Taylor's, raked the roof off one side of the barn, upset the wagon.

The wagon! The wagon! That was it.

Mark remembered the overturned wagon by the dugout. With the first fury of that storm Carrie and Mrs. Taylor would have rushed for the shelter of Ed's shallow cellar. The wagon had overturned on the heavy door, pinning them in. Mark saw it all clearly now.

With a cry, he ran from the barn to the dugout, calling, "Carrie—Carrie—Mrs. Taylor! Are you in there? Are you all right?" But the wind swept his words away.

He reached the cellar, saw the storm had overturned only the light wagon box and that the door was free of the wheels. Almost frantically then, Mark tugged at the box, pulling it away.

"Carrie! Mrs. Taylor!" he shouted as he jerked the heavy box.

"Mark—Mark!" It was Carrie. "That you, Ed?" came a second voice.

With one final heave, Mark cleared the door, pulled it open. Carrie and Mrs. Taylor, white and disheveled, stood before him.

EXACTLY what happened after that Mark never knew except that Mrs. Taylor was inquiring anxiously about Ed, he was reassuring her, and Carrie, crying softly, was close in his arms. It seemed an eternity they stood there, before he remembered that they were in greater danger than ever. The fire was burning straight toward the soddy. No crew of fighters could stop it now. He ordered the women to go to the house, grab whatever they could while he hitched Ed's team.

In the semi-darkness Mark felt his way through the barn door, into the stalls. The horses, seeing the danger, their nostrils irritated by the smoke, pawed nervously, backed off quickly when he untied them. He led them to the wagon, hoisted the box back on the wheelbase. Then he looked the traces, whirled around the little farmyard and rattled up to the soddy.

He jumped down, yelled, "Carrie, Mrs. Taylor! Stop! Stop! as it shot IT WAS RAINING!"

It came like that, the rain that night at Rock Creek. The air charged, suffocating one minute; purged, cooling the next. Mark remembered that he'd felt the first warning drops on his face as he rode through the burning bottom-lands from Carrie's to Taylor's, but in the anxiety of the moment he had dismissed them. The fire, setting its way steadily toward the homesteads, had seemed infinitely closer.

They were discussing all this, the fire, the cyclone, the experience of corn, cakes and salt pork the next morning at Taylor's. The rain that had started the storm Mark drove the wagon up in front of the soddy had continued all night, had completely drowned out the fire. Big Ed, black, soaking wet but happy, had come home in the midst of it. So the breakfast was a celebration extraordinary.

Ed, looking out of the window at the black, water-soaked bottom-lands, which had been so fiercely a few hours earlier, began chuckling, turned to Carrie.

"Carrie," he said, winking at Mark, "think you can stick it out now? About everything's happened out here that can happen."

"I'm staying!" Carrie replied, and Mark, looking at her defiant chin, was infinitely proud.

Mrs. Taylor broke in on the conversation.

"Mark, I don't think we can thank you enough for what you did last night. You'd make a mighty fine neighbor."

"Say," Ed cut in, "that reminds me. Did you ever die on that piece of land you went looking after last time you rode out here, Mark?"

Mark reddened. "Why, yes and no, Ed. I liked that homestead, but you got your plans changed for you once in a while, you know."

Carrie, listening closely, looked up suddenly, a bit startled. Mark knew he had said too much.

"Change plans? Who's a-change in plans on a young buck like you?" Ed asked bluntly. "Only time a fellow gets plans changed on him is when he gets married."

Mark knew he was in a corner and squirmed to get out of it.

"I mean," he said, avoiding Carrie's intense glance and deliberately lying, "another homesteader bent me to it. But," he recovered quickly, "I may have news for you sooner than you expect."

LATER, Mark was to recall how prophetic that statement was, Carrie had flushed a bit, he imag-

ined, when he said it and Taylor hadn't helped any, deliberately interpreting it in his own fashion. "Well, it's about time," Ed said, "you had news for us. Good looking young cuss like you ought to be married and settled down long before this."

Mark had risen from the table, saying he had to start back to town, and the conversation had ended. Now, riding back to Sioux Springs in the hot midday sun, he recalled Carrie's sudden interest in his words and the thought left him infinitely happy.

He was thinking of her and the blunt way in which Ed Taylor had reached conclusions for both of them, when he looked up to see a man riding hard, out of Sioux Springs, toward him. Instantly, Mark was alert, spurred his own horse.

The figure drew closer—a tall rider on a fast sorrel. Mark recognized the horse. It was Newt Gale's. A second later he knew the man. It was Ashton Oaks.

Instinctively, Mark stiffened in his saddle, leaned forward, pressing hard on his stirrups. Oaks rode straight down on him, 30 yards, 20 yards, 10 yards—and then Oaks died.

Like that it happened: without a word, a single dash of warning. With a shout, Mark raised high in his saddle, lurched toward the left. His own gun roared twice in the prairie stillness. Oaks' horse went down, and simultaneously Mark crumpled from his saddle.

It was over quickly. Oaks, kicking himself free of an entangling stirrup, abandoned his dead horse, rushed over to Mark, knelt down.

Mark's eyes were closed, he scarcely breathed. "Dead!" Hoarsely Ashton Oaks whispered the single word. And then he looked back. Other riders, two, three, five, were now sending up a cloud of dust straight behind him. With a single bound Oaks reached Mark's horse, vaulted into the saddle. He glanced at the ground. Mark was stirring. (To Be Concluded)

Apparently there is much in common, psychologically, between breaking away from faith in the traditional economic order and breaking away from faith in the traditional religion.—Prof. Goodwin Watson, Columbia.



HEADACHE—Hollywood hasn't half the grief American-born Marlon Baldwin had, helping him movies in England. Her woes included bomb raids, drills, enlistments.

THIS CURIOUS WORLD

By William Ferguson



ANSWER: Wrong. An old belief, but gelatine actually is made from the hard bone and connective tissues of food animals.

ORIENTAL RULER

HORIZONTAL		Answer to Previous Puzzle		17 Price.	
1 The royal ruler of Japan.	SOUL	10 OLIVE	DAVE	18 Palm Lily.	
13 Helmet	IDE	11 IDE	IDE	19 His legislative body, the Diet.	
14 Grain.	EDENIE	12 IDE	IDE	20 Shiny, greedy things.	
15 Drive.	NOTION	13 IDE	IDE	21 Statue document.	
16 Tiny particle.	ION	14 IDE	IDE	22 Ringworm.	
17 Heavenly body.	ION	15 IDE	IDE	23 Stranger.	
18 Imaginary being.	ION	16 IDE	IDE	24 Soft broom.	
19 Ribbon ornament.	ION	17 IDE	IDE	25 Night before.	
20 Pertaining to a totem.	ION	18 IDE	IDE	26 Surgical instrument.	
21 Dutch measure.	ION	19 IDE	IDE	27 Fireplace.	
22 Senior (abbr.).	ION	20 IDE	IDE	28 Loops.	
23 It is (contr.).	ION	21 IDE	IDE	29 Stocking mar.	
24 Laughter sound.	ION	22 IDE	IDE	30 Sick.	
25 Spanish (abbr.).	ION	23 IDE	IDE	31 Animal.	
26 Money factory.	ION	24 IDE	IDE	32 Silk-worm's cocoon.	
27 Malt drink.	ION	25 IDE	IDE	33 Paradise.	
28 Diving birds.	ION	26 IDE	IDE	34 Epilepsy symptom.	
29 Stream.	ION	27 IDE	IDE	35 Custom.	
30 Skin.	ION	28 IDE	IDE	36 Label.	
31 Start of a golf hole.	ION	29 IDE	IDE	37 Measure of area.	
32 Musical term.	ION	30 IDE	IDE	38 For that reason.	
33 Room recon.	ION	31 IDE	IDE		
34 Half an em.	ION	32 IDE	IDE		



OUT OUR WAY

By J. R. WILLIAMS



RED RYDER



LITTLE ORPHAN ANNIE



WASH TUBBS



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS



BOOTS AND HER BUDDIES



ALLEY OOP



OUR BOARDING HOUSE, With MAJOR HOOPLE



BY FRED HARMAN



BY HAROLD GRAY



BY CRANE



BY BLOSSER



BY MARTIN



BY V. T. HAMLIN

