

by William T. Brannon

Art by Lou Peters

If you inquired about the state's bravest woman, many Virginians would promptly name Lela Hudson—and for good reason.

Miss Hudson, 54, of medium height and slender, kept house for her older brother, Crowther, on the comfortable, secluded farm in Charlotte County where they had lived for 37 years. As they sat down to Sunday dinner on Aug. 22, 1948, a stranger suddenly appeared at the edge of a clearing. He stood there staring intently at the farmhouse.

The brother called from the door, "Who are you? What do you want?"

The stranger was a big man with heavy shoulders and long, muscular arms. He said nothing; just stood there. Then he turned and fled into the woods.

Throughout the meal, Crowther Hudson and his sister speculated about the stranger. Was he the unknown prowler who had terrorized the area lately, the man who had brutally beaten and robbed several of their elderly neighbors? Would he return?

Noting her brother's anxiety, Lela suggested the man was some traveler who had lost his way or perhaps a

## Case of the Courageous Sister



"Lela snatched up the shotgun and brought the butt down on his head."



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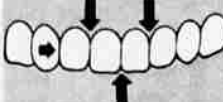
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