## PAGE EIGHT

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To Ride the River With

## CHAPTER IX-Continued

-15-"What has Lou got to do with it?" Howard asked.

"He's one of the gang that did this. We caught him. He's our prisoner now. A hostage, you might say. If anything happens to Miss Ruth, it's all off with him."

"What d'you mean, he's one of the gang that did this? Lou doesn't go around carrying girls up into the hills, if that's what happened, though so far I can't make head or tail of it." Howard looked reproachfully at the L C man. "You hadn't ought to talk that wild, lawless way, Dan. About stringing up Lou, and crazy talk like that. Be reasonable. First off, tell us the story. Begin at the beginning. Let's hear what happened . . . Will you have a drink?" He pushed the bottle toward Brand.

"I will not," Brand said curtly. "No need to begin at the first of it, Sherm. You know that better than I do. Through yore spies you found out some Mexican smugglers were going to run silver through Live Oak canyon to Tough Nut. You sent five of yore gang out to waylay them."

"Wa-ait a minute, Dan." Howard raised a fat hand to stop him. "No such a thing. Some of the boys headed for Tough Nut to see the elephant. They may have gone by way of Live Oak canyon. I wouldn't know about that."

"It isn't more than 40 miles off the direct route to Tough Nut," Brand said contemptuously. "Don't try to load me, Sherm. I know what that outlaw bunch went to Live Oak for. We found two Mexicans they had rubbed out and the packmule with the silver. Yore crowd was still shootin' when we took a hand."

"The Mexicans must have at tacked them," Howard protested. "That would be the way of it."

"Sure. When a brush rabbit gets nerve enough to spit in the eye of a rattlesnake. Like I said, Lou is our prisoner. That boy hasn't any sand in his craw. He wilted right off and blabbed all he knew. Don't waste my time trying to lie. Here's the nub of it. Two of yore men slipped away from us up a side canyon. They cut across to the L C ranch-house and picked up Miss Ruth. After she had rustled grub for them, they took her with them into the hills."

"What two men?"

"Morg Norris and Kansas." "I'm not responsible for what that killer Morg Norris does," the fat man burst out. "You know that, Dan. He's a bad hombre. Long ago. soon as I saw what he was, I washed

my hands of him." "Lee holds you responsible. So do the rest of us. You can't get away with that, Sherm. Every deman in this cour against you in this thing. If that devil Norris hurts Miss Ruth, you'll be in a jam. Don't think anything else for a minute." was pallid. The reverse at Live Oak was bad enough. Not much chance to play innocent with Lou a prisoner. But this crazy adventure of Morgan Norris was ruinous. Sherm did not know which way to turn. Lee Chiswick hated him, any how. The oldest son of the L C ranchman had been a private in the Texas Rangers and had been killed while on duty. The father of the dead boy had always suspected Howard of betraying the youngster to his death, though he had never been able to prove it. If this girl was injured, Lee would go hog His revenge would never stop at Norris-not even at Lou Howard 'We want to be reasonable. Dar.' he said. "I wouldn't have had this happen for all the money in the world-if it has happened. I can't believe it. Morg is a good-looking fellow. Maybe he just persuaded her to ride along a ways. If it was Morg. We want to be sure of that." "Morg left a note," Brand said quietly. "Besides, the girl who works at the ranch got away and told us. What's the sense in trying to fool yoreself? If it is yoreself and not me you're trying to load. I'm here to tell you to get busy. Send some of yore scalawags out to shoot down Norris. Get Miss Ruth back somehow safely. If you don't, you're out of luck, Sherm." The face of the foreman was harsh and grim. Howard mopped his perspiring face with a bandanna. He made up his mind to sacrifice Norris. It was too bad Mile High was present, since it would be fatal for the idea to get out that he would not stand by any of his gang in trouble. But even Mile High must see they had to throw Morg to the lions after doing such a thing. "We'd better talk turkey," he admitted. "First thing is to get Miss Chiswick back. I can promise to put 30 men to combing the hills inside of two hours, Dan. I'll go the limit on this thing."

more than you do," Howard cut back sharply. "And I won't have you saying I do, Dan. There's one thing more I'll say. My boy Lou isn't in this. If you-or Lee-or any of his riders-do that boy any harm, I'll never quit till I've cleaned up the whole Chiswick nest. You can put that in your pipe and smoke it.'

WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE'S

"All I'm saying is that you'd better find Miss Ruth and get her home," Brand replied, frowning at him.

The foreman turned and strode out of the room.

Mile High said to Howard angrily, "Is it yore idea to throw down on Morg?

round to meet those of the other. 'Don't always be a lunkhead. Mile High. What has this fellow done but throw down on you and me and all of us? You know this country won't stand for such stuff as he has just pulled off. He'd know it, too, if he wasn't crazy. We've got to play our hands to save ourselves. When Morg Norris took this girl with him against her will, he signed his death-warrant. Don't you go signing yours. We're going after



He pushed through the brush for half a mile.

Morg to get him. You had better get you a horse and trail along with one of the posses. You'll find it's doggoned good insurance against a few years in the pen at Yuma."

CHAPTER X

and cold. "One of them stayed | lifting its crest into a sky of violet here." He pointed at the still body. | haze. Behind a crotch of the hills A pulse of excitement hammered in the scrawny throat of the linerider. "Begorry, you're right. There has been a fight, and one of them got killed."

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The younger man differed. "Not a fight, but a murder. For some reason Norris made up his mind to get rid of Kansas. He did so, and then lit out. I'm going down." "Look out for a trap," the oldtimer advised.

"Don't think it's that. Two of the horses have gone."

But Gray did not take any un-necessary chances. His rifle was across the saddle as he rode down into the park. He made sure nobody was in the house before he took a close look at the dead man. "Kansas, like you said." Sorley looked at his companion and then

looked away. Both of them were thinking of what this meant to Ruth. "They can't be far ahead of us, if we knew which way they had gone. It would be possible to find in

what direction they had started, but both the men knew there was little chance of running down Norris in hundreds of miles of rough mountain terrain.

Sorley began to quarter over the park looking for sign. "He shot Kansas in the back of

the head, from off to one side," Gray mentioned. "The horses headed up toward

that patch of little pines near the ridge," Sorley called to him. "Two of them. Morg was in a sweat to get away." "Yes." Gray's voice raised in sud-den excitement. "Come here, Pat.

Someone left a message for us.' Sorley ran to him. He pointed to some writing scratched in the sand.

The old man read it aloud slowly. "Wild Horse basin." "It's meant for us," Gray said.

"Either the girl wrote it-or Norris did. It's signed with her initial, but that doesn't mean a thing. The scoundrel may have left it to fool The letters are done kinda shaky, as if she had made them in a hurry, on the sly." His eyes were back again on the writing. "That's right," agreed the line-

rider. "If Norris had done it, he would have fixed the letters deeper, so we wouldn't miss seeing them. I'd say Miss Ruth wrote it."

"Where is Wild Horse basin?" Sorley pointed to the north. "Up in the high hills, back thataway. Say, how would the girl know where he was heading for?"

"She might have heard him sayor Kansas may have told her be-fore he was killed. Likely Kansas made some move to help her. Morg wouldn't have shot him if he hadn't figured the other fellow was turning

against him. Let's get going." "For Wild Horse basin?

the sun was setting. Already dusk had softened the vivid tints of orange and scarlet to a faint pink glow. Night soon would sift down upon the highlands.

The pursuers dropped down into the basin, came to a little stream tumbling down through the rocks. Sorley pulled up his horse.

"No use going any farther," he said. "Got to wait till we can see. All we'd do is get lost if we kept traveling."

Gray read the despondency in the old line-rider's voice. He understood it because his own heart was sick. What Pat said was true. They might as well throw off and make camp. "There's one thing," he said. "If they came here, Norris would camp on a creek. Maybe on this one, since it's the first he would come to in the basin. You fix up something to eat while I drift up along the bank for a ways." "Sure," Pat answered hopelessly.

'Won't do any harm."

The younger man swung from the saddle and turned his horse over to Sorley. "Reckon I'll make better time on foot," he decided.

The stars were pricking out of the sky. Black, shadowy outlines marked where the hill boundaries had been. In the vast emptiness Jeff had an acute sense of insignificance. He was an atom in an immense universe. His will to do held no more potency than that of one of the trout in this rippling stream. He pushed through the brush for a half a mile or more. Abruptly he stopped. In front of him, two or three hundred yards distant, was a light which he knew must come from a campfire. A hot gladness poured through his blood.

Swiftly, with as little rustling as possible, he moved toward the camp. It was in an open place, close to the bank of the stream. On the edge of the clearing, as Jeff drew near, he made out the vague shadow of horses. Two figures were seated by the fire. He heard the murmur of a voice.

Gray crept forward with more care. There was no immediate hurry. Norris sat cross-legged at his ease. He had no faintest suspicion that there was any friend of Ruth Chiswick within a score of miles. He was talking. The slur of his mocking speech came to Jeff before the words.

"I sure picked a fine spot for our honeymoon, sweetheart," he jeered. "A million candles in yore bedroom, honey. I'd say you were in luck I picked you up. Some break for you to get me instead of that pink-ear Lou Howard."

The girl's head was low. Jeff could see she was sobbing. Her courage had washed out. There could be no help in heaven or on

"Keep yore arms right up where

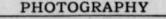
The figure of the outlaw grew rig-

"Don't make any mistake," Gray

Fragments of thoughts raced cha-

(TO BE CONTINUED)





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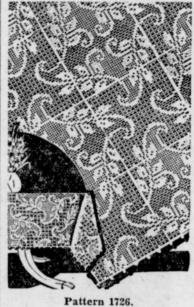
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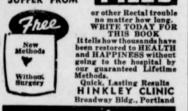
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The lifeless eyes of Howard slid





#### Too Involved

Snooks (flercely)-Do you mean to call me a liar, sir?

Brooks-That is the construction which suggests itself in connection with the observation I addressed to you.

Snooks (mollified)-All right. I accept your apology. But I allow no man to insult me.

#### Ahem!

The vicar had just returned from a visit abroad, and a big crowd of his parishioners had collected to welcome him. Beaming with pleasure, the vicar got up to speak. "My dear friends," he started,

"I will not call you ladies and gentlemen, because I know you too well."

### THE MODERN KID

A rude woman, sitting in a tram with a little boy next to her, was asked for her fare by the conductor. "Tuppenny," she said brusquely. "And 'ow about little Lord Fauntleroy?" asked the conductor, pointing to the child. "You'll need . ticket fer 'im as well."

"No, I won't." "Yus you will. 'Ow old is 'e?" "Dunno,"

"Well, I do. 'E's six if 'e's a day. That'll be another penny."

The woman flatly refused to pay and a heated argument began. Suddenly the child spoke up.

"Aw, shut up, will yer?" he exclaimed. "Here's yer penny. And anyway, she ain't my ma. Never seen the old girl in me life!"-Pearson's London Weekly.

GETS HIS TURN



Missionary (establishing pleasant relations)-And may I expect to be present at dinner?

"Good, if you send them to the right place," Brand made blunt answer.

"I don't know where he is any

Jeff Gray had to fight down an impulse to hurry. It would be folly wear out the horses getting to to The big moon face of Howard that Kansas had sent them on a wild-goose chase. After all, the man was one of the gang. What more likely than that, under instruction of Norris, he had been trying to direct the pursuit in the wrong direction when he freed Nelly?

With a heavy heart Jeff admitted to himself that this was very likely a job that could not be done in a hurry. He might have to sleep on Norris' trail for a week. The fellow knew every pocket in these hills. If Kansas were false-carding, they might not find the outlaws at all.

The two men traveled steadily, Sorley in the lead. The little Irish man was a good guide. He had an instinct for short cuts, and he held his horse to the fastest gait that would not sap its strength. They flung the miles behind them, moving always deeper and deeper into the hills.

"Much farther?" Gray asked once, his mouth set to a grim straight slit.

"Not so far," Sorley answered. "That's Crowfoot over to the left. We're swingin' round it now."

They circled back of the mountain, dropped into a gulch, and clambered up its stony bed. Near the top of the canyon Sorley stopped his horse.

"The cabin is in a little park just over the ridge," he said. "What do we do? Bust right down on them? Or wait till it's dark?"

"Better have a look first from the ridge," Gray suggested.

They left their horses just below the lip of the park, climbed up to the ledge, and looked down. No smoke rose from the house. There were no horses in the corral, but one saddled bronco was grazing near the spring.

"They sure have been here," Sor-ley said. "But they have done gone, and in some hurry, looks like. Didn't even take time to unsaddle. Whyfor did they leave one of the horses here?"

ciation ice covered one-fourth to Gray was looking down at someone-fifth of the present area of contithing sprawled out in front of the cabin. "They didn't need but two horses," he said, his voice harsh and he moved south ahead of the

"Yes. I have a hunch the girl did that writing. Morg never would have thought of it." earth for her now, she must be thinking. Sorley looked down at the dead Norris rose, stretched himself,

"I hate not to bury him beand yawned, his arms above his man. head. The man's evil smile looked fore we go, even if he was a scalawag. But we've got to jump. It down on her. He opened his mouth will be night soon." to speak, but words were frozen on They carried the body into the his lips. From out of the brush came a chill crisp order. cabin and covered it with two gun-

nysacks. The riders followed the trail left they are, Norris." by Norris and his prisoner. Once out of the park, Sorley waited only to make sure of the direction taken id. A man was coming out of the scrub, revolver in hand. by those in front of them. He struck into the hills, dipping across gulches ordered, "or it will be yore last. and winding round the shoulders He moved toward the outlaw slowly. of elephant humps. The country grew wilder and more rugged. Sometimes they were in a region of otically through the brain of the bad man. He yielded to a desperate stunted pines. More often the hills impulse and dived back of the fire, were dry and scarred with rock outcroppings. From the summits dragging at his gun.

they could see a saw-toothed range

years Sweden has risen about eight

inches, while similar measurements

in Finland show that that country

even a portion of a continent by

approximately 600 feet lowers the

annual average temperature by one

a decrease in the present tempera-

ture of Scandinavia by about three

degrees centigrade would start a

glaciation in Europe as big as that

of the Quarternary, in which period

"During the last period of gla-

the last ice age took place.

"An increase in the altitude of a

has risen 10 inches in 34 years.

continent," declared Schaffer,

## Geologist Sees Third Ice Age in Next Two Thousand Years' Period

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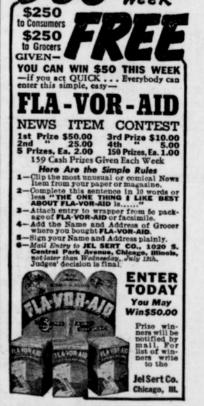
A new ice age, the third, in geooncoming ice until he reached Aflogic history, is being indicated by rica, where he was secure. measured risings of parts of the

"A study of the deposits left by eastern hemisphere, according to Prof. F. X. Schaffer of the Univerglaciers in Sweden shows that the flow started northward some 12,000 sity of Vienna, writes a Berkeley, years ago. In other words, it took Calif., United Press correspondent. the ice 5,000 years to recede to its Dr. Schaffer, who is an internapresent limits in the polar areas, tionally known geologist, said that where it has remained for 7,000 exhaustive measurements taken at years. Stockholm show that in the last 50

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