

WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE'S

# To Ride the River With

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### CHAPTER X—Continued

Jeff fired—missed. A bullet zipped past his ear. He shot again, knocking the revolver from the hands of the bandit into the creek. Norris made a rush to recover the weapon, his arm fishing the water for it. As he pulled the Colt's out of the current, Gray was upon him. The barrel of Jeff's revolver crashed down on his head and knocked him over. He lay motionless, his forty-four again in the brook.

The red-headed man made sure the outlaw did not have another gun on his person. To Ruth he gave crisp commands.

"Get the gun out of the creek, girl. And pick up that rifle over there. Then step behind me out of the way."

Ruth did as she was told. Her face was chalk-white, but she moved lightly on her feet.

Norris groaned and sat up, hands pressing against his bleeding head. "You aimin' to kill me?" he snarled defiantly.

"I'm going to drag you back with a rope round your neck," Gray answered. "Lee Chiswick will hang you to a cottonwood."

The eyes in the swarthy face of the trapped man slid away from Gray, to take in the tethered horses and the brush that came close to the camp. What he was thinking could be easily guessed.

Ruth moved close to the man who had rescued her.

"Let him go," she begged in a low, broken voice. "I—I can't stand any more."

Jeff did not look at her. His gaze held fast to the prisoner. "No chance," he said. "He's going back with us to yore father. Go bring me a rope from that saddle."

"I'm afraid of him," the girl pleaded. "He's—horrible. You don't know."

"I can guess. Don't worry about him," Jeff added, grimly. "He'll be rubbed out plenty soon."

The slitted eyes of Norris had come back to them. He watched the man and the woman warily.

"Without a gun and without a horse he couldn't do us any harm," Ruth urged.

"You don't turn rattlesnakes loose because you're afraid of them," Gray told her coldly. "You stomp them out."

"Yes, but—"

Norris dived for the brush, his lithe body moving fast as a streak of light. The gun in Gray's hand roared, and the bullet plowed into the ground. For Ruth had struck down his forearm and was clinging to it with both hands. He tried to free himself—flung the girl roughly away. The escaping man was in the willows. Jeff could see and hear the violent agitation of the young sprouts. He fired at the place twice, then plunged into the thicket after the bandit.

For a hundred yards he followed the fugitive. Abruptly he gave up the chase. He could no longer hear the rustling of foliage. Better get back to the camp. The fellow might hide, wait till he had passed, and slip back to the horses.

Anger grew in Jeff Gray as he swished back to the camp through the willows. By golden luck he had found this villain's camp and saved Ruth from disaster. For some fool woman's reason she had interfered to help him escape. With Sorley he had ridden fifty miles to save her, and for reward she made a fool of him out of sheer caprice.

Pat Sorley burst out of the brush just as Jeff reached the camp.

"I heard shots," the line-rider cried, then caught sight of Ruth and stopped abruptly, staring at her. "Glorious, he found you."

"Yes," Ruth answered, and bit her lip to keep down a sob.

Gray strode up to her. "What do you mean by knocking down my arm and hanging on to me?" he demanded, a cold, contained rage in his voice.

She swallowed a lump in her throat. "I—couldn't help it," she said meekly.

"Couldn't help it. Don't be a fool."

"I couldn't have you kill him, after—what I saw him do this afternoon." She shuddered, seeing for a moment the slack body of Kansas crumpling down to the ground.

"I don't get this," Sorley said, looking from one to the other. "You never in the wor-rid kept Gray from killin' this devil when he had a chance?"

"That's just what she did—grabbed my arm and hung on while he was making a break to get away," Jeff said bitterly. "It seems he had become her dear friend during the day. Probably we butted in where we weren't wanted, Pat."

"Don't say that!" Ruth cried. "He's an awful man—inhuman. I never saw anyone like him. His face—when he killed the other man—was like that of a devil. If you hadn't come—"

Her big eyes met those of Gray and shrank away.

"You hated him so much you couldn't bear to have him rubbed

out," Gray said with a curl of the lip.

"I didn't want you or Father to kill him in cold blood while he was unarmed," she explained in a low voice. "I saw him do that today—shoot down a poor man trying to escape from him. Would I want my friends to be like him?"

"So you were thinking of us," Gray said, his drawl derisively insulting. "On our account you turned him loose to kill eight or ten more men. Nice the way you manage our business. I hope Lee Chiswick is as grateful to you as I am."

He turned his back on the girl and spoke to Sorley. "Reckon we'd better get back to our own camp, Pat, eat supper, and move down the creek a ways. He might meet some more wolves and come back to howl at us."

"Not likely, with him afoot and unarmed. Still, it's possible."

"I'll walk to camp," Gray told him. "Better saddle those broncs and ride down."

Without another word to Ruth, he picked up the weapons of Norris and departed.

Pat had stopped supper preparations when he heard the shots farther up the creek, but presently he had the coffee boiling and the ham fried. Ruth sat near Pat, at a little distance from Gray, whose face still showed no friendliness. Her shoulders sagged. She felt very

tired, was under a reaction from great fear and excitement that left her a rag.

While they ate their food and drank their coffee the line-rider did the talking for all three. He was garrulously happy at the termination of the adventure. Against all likelihood their luck had stood up. Eagerly he asked questions, and got monosyllabic answers. After a time he protested.

"Begorry, you'd think this was a wake and not the luckiest hour of the year," he snorted. "We ought to be thanking God you're safe again."

"I am," Ruth answered wearily. "I don't look like it," he retorted.

"I'm—tired out," she said, in a lifeless voice.

Looking at her shadowed eyes and white haggard face, Sorley felt remorse at his sharpness. "You'll have a good sleep tonight and be rested tomorrow," he said gently.

They packed, saddled, and rode down the creek for a few miles. Sorley chose for a campground a little mesa three or four hundred yards from the stream. No fire was lit, and the night was cold, as Arizona nights in the high hills are likely to be. Pat made a bed of pine boughs for Ruth and tucked her up snugly in two blankets.

"One of us will be on guard all night," he explained to her. "Don't worry about a thing, but let go of yoreself and slip off to slape like a good gir-rl."

She promised that she would, adding with a smile, "You've been awfully good to me, Pat."

Sherm Howard was alone in the house. He had spent the evening at the Golden Nugget and had come home to sleep, but he knew that was not going to be possible for many hours yet. He sat at a table, a small coal-oil lamp at one corner of it, looking down savagely at the solitary layout in front of him. There was no pleasure for him in the game. While he dealt and played automatically, the undercurrent of his mind was absorbed by the difficulties confronting him.

A heavy gloom lay on his spirits. He was in a jam and knew it. Fifty times he had gone over the facts anxiously looking for an out, and he had not been able to find one. Until the situation had resolved itself one way or another he could be sure of nothing.

Howard came to an impasse in the game, gathered up the cards, and shuffled them. He started to deal, but stopped with a card poised. The outside door of the house had opened a few inches. Through the crack a pair of eyes gleamed. Very little more of the face could be seen, for the hat was well pulled down and a bandanna handkerchief covered the nose and mouth.

Sherm Howard had time for a moment of fervent regret. How had he happened to forget to bolt the door, with his forty-four lying in the cupboard a long five yards away from him?

The door opened farther and a lithe body slid through the widened crack into the room. The eyes of the self-invited guest did not lift from his host while a brown hand closed the door and pushed home the bolt.

Howard's stomach sagged as if from a weight of ice-cold lead. His mouth went dry. The man standing with his back to the door was Morgan Norris.

Norris grinned evilly. "Didn't expect me, did you, Sherm? Figured some of yore boys had dry-gulched me up in the hills. But I'll bet you are real pleased to see yore old friend."

The fat man pulled himself together. "What you doing here, Morg?" he asked. "Don't you know this whole county is out lookin' for you?"

"Including all Sherm Howard's willing lads. Sure I know it." The desperado limped forward. "But I dropped in because I knew you'd hate for me to pass through without thanking you for sickin' the boys on me."

The man was in bad physical condition. A blood-stained handkerchief was tied around his head. Another served as a bandage for his arm. He looked travel-worn and haggard.

But he was undaunted. Never in his wicked, ribald lifetime had he seemed more master of the situation. Howard expected that the fellow had come to kill him. Morg must have met one of the boys and learned that Howard had thrown in with his hunters.

"What's all this crazy talk about me sickin' the boys on you?" Howard asked. "You ought to know better than that. Fact is, you've played the devil, Morg. I thought you had more sense than to pull the dumb thing you did. This country won't stand for doing harm to women. You ought to know that too."

"Don't preach at me," Norris snarled out of the corner of his mouth. "Get me food, and water to wash my wounds. But first off, I want a drink."

The heart of the big man lifted. "Sure," he said. "Surest thing you know."

He heaved himself out of the chair and waddled across to the cupboard. Beside the bottle lay the forty-four he had unwarily separated himself from when he reached the house. This he pushed down between his trouser-belt and shirt. The bottle and a glass he brought back to the man at the table.

Norris poured a large drink into a tumbler. He held it in his hand and slid a menacing look at his host.

"I saw you get that gun," he said, lifting his upper lip in a jeer. "Fixin' to gun me if you get a chance, you damned double-crosser. Well, you don't get it." Norris raised the glass. "Here's to a short life and a smoky end for traitors, Sherm."

He poured the liquor down at a gulp.

Coldly Howard defended himself. "Your information is not straight,

Morg. Where did you hear I had turned against you?"

"I heard it from a ledge back of Coal Creek," Norris told him harshly. "Yore boys were camped just below. I heard 'em talk. Didn't know who they were at first. I found out you'd sent them out to get me, by crikes."

"Why don't you use your bean to think with, Morg? Of course I sent them after you. After you had gone crazy, I had to make a bluff, didn't I? I had to make out we were all hunting you to save our own bacon. Talk about me throwing down on you. What have you done but throw down on every last one of us?"

Howard spoke impatiently, irritably. He wanted to talk the young killer into a frame of mind less deadly, and the best way to do this was to put him in the wrong.

"What you mean, throw down on you?" the fugitive asked sulkily.

"You know what I mean, Morg. When you took that girl with you to the hills you set this whole district ablaze against us as well as you because we are your friends."

"Lou ran off with her first," Norris said.

"With her own consent. That's different. Where is the girl, Morg? What did you do with her?"

"I didn't do a thing," Norris growled. "Are you aiming to fix me up some food? Or ain't you?"

"Don't push on the reins, Morg. I asked you a question."

Norris gave information, very reluctantly, for what he had to tell hurt his inordinate vanity. "I turned her over to that double-crossin' son-of-a-gun who calls himself Jeff Gray," he said.

The opaque eyes of the big man rested on him. "Tell it to me, Morg," he ordered.

"I'll tell it while you make me some supper," Norris told him. "Me, I could eat a government mail-sack. Haven't seen grub for nearly two days."

The young desperado helped himself to a second drink, then sat down and pulled off his boots. He was careful not to turn his back to Howard. Sherm began to knock together some food, always with his eye on the other.

Norris told the story of what had occurred, edited in such a way as to protect his self-conceit. He said that three men had attacked him at his camp in Wild Horse basin and that he had fought them until the revolver was shot from his hand. He had made his getaway on foot.

"You didn't walk all the way from Wild Horse," Howard said, after he had broken a fourth egg into a frying-pan.

"Most of the way." The outlaw looked down at his swollen feet. High-heeled cowboy boots are not made for walking, and he had been tortured cruelly during the long hours of tramping. "I roped a bronc at Walker's in the night and found a saddle in the stable. Most of the day I lay holed up in the rocks."

"What with yore wounds and all you must have had a hell of a time," Howard suggested.

The young man looked at him, fury in his eyes. "I'm sayin' so."

"If they shot yore gun from yore hand, I reckon you're not armed," Sherm said, very casually.

The killer watched him through slitted lids. "Don't you bank on that, Sherm," he drawled, his words dripping warning.

Howard said lightly, "I was thinking I'd have to fix you up with a gun if you had lost yore own." What he had been thinking was that if Norris was unarmed, he could pump lead into him and take the credit for killing the man.

(TO BE CONTINUED)



"Don't push on the reins, Morg."

## Designs for Sheer Cottons

THESE pretty styles will make you and your daughter feel fresh and cool, and look smart and charming, when you go out to tea parties or dinner, these midsummer, dressy effect, and yet they are not tussy. Make them yourself, and

pattern that you and your little girl will both like so well that you'll make many times over. It will be nice for school in fall fabrics, too.

**The Patterns.**  
1505 is designed for sizes 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 years. Size 6 requires 2 3/4 yards of 35 inch material for dress alone. Three-eighths yard for bolero; 1/4 yard for contrasting collar, if desired. Two and three-eighths yards is required for trimming bolero and collar.

1545 is designed for sizes 12, 14, 16, 18 and 20. Size 14 requires 4 3/4 yards of 35 inch material. Three yards of lace edging for neckline and sleeves. One and one-fourth yards ribbon for belt.

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have something very individual as well as fashion-right. It's so easy; a detailed sew chart comes with each pattern. And you can wear much prettier materials when you sew your own—at big savings, too.

### Afternoon Dress With Shirring.

Shirring is one of the smartest details you can choose—it's used just this way in new and expensive models—on the shoulders, to give fullness over the bust, and at the sides only of the skirt. Thus your dress has animation and grace, and yet the front and back are plain and won't crush and muss when you sit down. In dimity, voile, organdy, handkerchief lawn or mull, with a youthful tie belt and frills of lace, this will be the most flattering frock you own.

### Bolero Frock for Little Girls.

With or without the sleeveless bolero, this dress is a perfect darling for little girls! It's so simple and yet it has loads of style, with its very puffed sleeves, very full skirt, and little round collar. Notice how short the bolero is—that's the smart new kind. Make this up in dotted swiss, dimity, organdy or batiste, and trim it with ricrac, irish edging, or linen lace. It's a

### Czechoslovakia

The republic of Czechoslovakia is composed of two branches of the same Slav nation: the Czechs of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, and the Slovaks of Slovakia.

The state came into existence on October 28, 1918, when the national council took over the government of the Czechoslovak countries, which had formerly belonged to the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. The Czechoslovak national assembly met in Prague on November 14, 1918, and formally declared the Czechoslovak state to be a republic.

For the sake of brevity the Czechoslovak republic is designated Czechoslovakia.

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## Chinese Elm Is Good for Rapid Growth; Tree Thrives Throughout United States

Whenever a tree is to be set out, the careful gardener takes plenty of time for thought. For there is something permanent about this type of planting in which mistakes are intensified rather than obliterated by time, states a writer in the Philadelphia Record.

Need often is felt for something fast-growing to relate a new house to its location or to give quick shade, screening or protection from wind. Too often poplars are selected because they come along quickly. Time, however, soon reveals their undesirably vast and greedy root systems, while a row rarely gets established before one or another of the trees dies, spoiling the looks of the whole.

The Chinese elm (Ulmus parvifolia) has none of those drawbacks, but it does grow quickly. Indeed, it is a matter of record that one young tree grew to 28 feet in 3 years, that a 4-foot specimen reached 40 feet in 5 years and a 6-footer in 4 years attained 30 feet.

Although native to northern and central China, Korea and Japan, the Chinese elm thrives throughout the United States, eventually growing to 45 feet. It develops a broad,

round head and in maturity is as graceful as a cutleaf birch and quite as hardy as the oak. It is good not only for the suburban lawn, but for street planting in the city as well, since it can withstand soot and gas.

Drouth resistance was revealed as another attribute during the severe dry spell of 1936. Where newly planted weeping willows, Lombardy poplars and cutleaf birches succumbed, the Chinese elm came through triumphantly.

To obtain maximum speed and development and a deep green color in the foliage, feed the tree yearly with a well-balanced plant food. Either early spring or late summer is a good season.

### Chauvinism

Chauvinism, the word used to express exaggerated patriotism or jingoism, is derived from a soldier of the French republic and of the First empire, says the Standard American Encyclopedia. Nicholas Chauvin's name became a synonym for a passionate admirer of Napoleon, and the word Chauvinism was formed to signify the almost idolatrous respect entertained by many for the first emperor.