

THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY W.N.U. Release

INSTALLMENT 9
THE STORY SO FAR:

Dusty King and Lew Gordon had built up a vast string of ranches in the West. King was killed by his powerful and unscrupulous competitor, Ben Thorpe. Bill Roper, King's adopted son, was determined to avenge his death in spite of

CHAPTER XII—Continued
Jody Gordon's eyes had darkened in the dusk, making her face seem very pale. "What do you want me to do?"

Shoshone Wilce shrugged. "That ain't hardly up to me, Miss Gordon. But I'll tell you this: many's the time I've seen your father go stomping down the board walk right here in Ogallala, alone, and not even armed. That won't do, Miss Gordon. If I was in your place, I wouldn't never let him out of the house without his gumbel is strapped on, and the iron free in its leather. And wherever he goes, there ought to be three or four good hard-shooting cowboys with him; because, if I know Ben Thorpe, he isn't going into any gunfight alone!"

Jody peered at him intently. "What made you bring this word to me?"

"I'm a Bill Roper man," Shoshone Wilce said. "God knows, Miss Gordon, striding with Bill Roper has never done anything for me. But—well, I just thought Bill Roper would want you to know. I kind of got the idea he thinks a heap of you, Miss Gordon."

And now another pony came slashing up to the corral. One of the leading foremen had come in.

"I got to be getting along," Shoshone Wilce said quickly.

She turned away, but instantly turned back again, and gripped Shoshone's arm just as he was sliding out of sight.

"Stay around," she ordered him. "Stay here until—"

"Miss Gordon," came the quick whisper, "I've got to get on to Miles City. I—"

"I thought so. Bill Roper's somewhere up there, isn't he? Yes. Well, I'm going to join my father there. I'll ride with you in the morning."

"Four hundred miles! And no coach until—"

"Don't worry about that. It takes saddle ponies to make time."

"But—I'm afraid your Paw might think—"

"I don't know how Bill Roper ever used you," Jody said with contempt. Shoshone winced. "I—I'll be around."

He faded into the shadows as Jody walked out of the stable, her eyes hard and bright in the dusk.

CHAPTER XIII

Bill Roper sat alone at a rear table in the Palace Bar, in Miles City—the young, turbulent center of a vast, raw range, the possibilities of which were still unknown.

For three months Roper had ridden through the bitter Montana winter. It had been no trouble for him to sweep together a dozen malcontent cowboys who hated Lasham or Thorpe, or both. Already they knew Bill Roper's name.

Against their common enemy these youngsters could be led, wild, reckless and crazy for raid; and Roper had led them as Texas had taught him.

His new northern wild bunch faced conditions in many ways bitterly adverse. Here in the north were no ousted cattlemen, no established population to which he could look for help. The Canadian border was far away, and no market awaited the hard-pushed herds on the other side.

What Montana had that Texas did not have was a concentration of Indian tribes, principally Sioux and Cheyenne, deprived of their hunting grounds, and dependent for food upon beef which the government was pledged to supply. It was to this circumstance that Roper had turned.

The giant beef contracts which the government threw upon the market had inevitably attracted more than one kind of graft. The result was famine—pitiful, relentless. Starvation stalked through the lodges of the Sioux, the Cheyenne, the Crow—and with it, Roper's opportunity.

Scouring the country, Roper turned up four Indian agents who were already badly scared. They had overplayed their hands, and were now faced with a loss of life among their charges about which they could do nothing without revealing their own corrupt inefficiency. These men had connived with Lasham in bringing about a condition of tribal starvation; they were willing to connive with Bill Roper to cover up their position in any way they could.

By delivering beef to the reservations under these highly irregular conditions, Roper's wild bunch could little more than make expenses. But the advantage was this—a beef herd delivered to an Indian tribe disappeared over night, leaving little trace. A thousand hands skinned out the beef, destroying the portions of the hides containing the brands. Constantly changing horses, perpetually in the saddle, Roper's saddle hawks swung across Montana. They first struck at Muddy Bend, picking up four hundred head of steers in the breaks of the Yellowstone. Three days' hard driving delivered these to a village of Assiniboine. Only four days later they

were on the flats of the Little Thunder, far away. Here, struggling through a soft blinding snow, they ran off five hundred head, and a few days later three hundred more. They Christmased in company with a herd of lifted steers somewhere between Three Sleep and the Little Powder; and New Year's found them sifting the pick of Lasham's cattle out of his Lost Soldier range.

By the end of January they had moved three thousand head—the very cream of the wintering stock. Repeatedly they had driven cattle incredible distances in impossible time.

Yet he knew his work had only begun. All their hard riding would fail of effect unless he could strike such a smashing blow as would cause a split between Lasham and Ben Thorpe.

And Roper had a plan—rash in scope and method, but savage in effect if it could be fulfilled. Already he had enough riders in sight to strike this last desperate blow. But the men available to his purpose were wild-eyed fighting kids who could not be driven and could scarcely be led; Roper could not captain his campaign alone. So now he fretted in Miles City, seeking three or four outlaw leaders who would make his preparations complete.

Still studying everyone who came into the bar, Roper broke open a



They first struck at Muddy Bend.

deck of cards and laid out a hand of solitaire.

Now one of the dance hall girls came to his table, slipping uninvited into a chair. This was a girl whose attention bothered and embarrassed Roper every time he came here. Her name was Marquita.

He didn't know what attracted her to him; he didn't know what attracted any particular woman to any particular man. It may be that his very disinterest was what caught her attention first, and later gave him the desirability of the unobtainable.

She spoke to him now in a quiet, lifeless voice. "Why don't you like me?"

"I like you all right," he said. "No, you don't. You don't even see me at all."

He noticed now that she looked different tonight; and after a moment he recognized that this was because there was no paint on her face. That would be because he disliked paint—though he had no idea how she had found that out. Her washed face was a perfectly symmetrical oval set with black eyes a little slanted, and her black hair, parted in the middle, was drawn back severely, in the fashion of the mestizo girls of the Texas border.

She leaned toward him now, and spoke rapidly, her voice low and compelling. "Listen—I hate Walk Lasham, too."

"Listen," she insisted, "You have to listen to me. Walk Lasham's in town. He came in this afternoon."

So, Roper thought, the time had come to move on again, with his work undone. He didn't like it, much.

"Well, thanks," he said; "I'm glad to know."

"He knows you're here—and what you're here for."

"I suppose he does," Roper said. "You're waiting here for Lasham," she accused him. "You know he'll come here. You're going to try shooting it out—"

Roper shrugged and was silent.

"Bill, it's hopeless! Walk Lasham is the fastest gunfighter in the north!"

and gunman. His determination unchanged, he now turned his attention toward Thorpe's ranches in Montana. Jody was secretly visited by Shoshone Wilce, one of Roper's men, who warned that her father's life was in danger.

Roper shrugged again. "Walk wants no fight with me."

"You're going to force the fight yourself! That's what you've been waiting here for, ever since you came to Miles City. Any moment Lasham may walk in that door—"

Marquita sat staring at him helplessly, in her eyes a fixity of devotion which his taciturnity seemed to increase. Against his will he was becoming something that was happening to Marquita.

He remained silent; and, in a little while, she went away.

An hour passed, while Roper, drinking slowly, played his solitaire and watched the door.

Then suddenly Marquita was back. She came behind his chair to speak close to his ear in a panicky whisper. "He's coming! He's coming along the walk—"

"All right."

"Walk has two of his men with him," she said rapidly. "You haven't a chance, not a ghost of a chance. I can't bear to see you killed! I know you don't care anything about me. If you did I'd go anywhere in the world with you. But now you have to come out of here—quick—by the back way. I'll do anything—"

Roper turned his head to look up into her face, very close to his. There was more to this girl than there was to the rest of her kind. Even now he was unable to recognize that Marquita was capable of a sincerity of purpose, and a passionate preoccupation in her purpose, not to be expected here. "I wouldn't step aside two feet," he told her, "to pass Walk or any man. I tell you, Walk won't fight!"

Suddenly she whimpered. Bill Roper saw that three men had come into the front of the Palace Bar.

The first of the three, a dark, lean man with wide, bowed shoulders, was Walk Lasham.

Marquita caught Bill's head in her arms, forced up his chin, and kissed him. He was surprised at the unexpected softness of her lips, hot against his mouth. Then abruptly Marquita stooped, and as she sprang away from him he felt the weight of his gumbel ease. She flung over her shoulder, "It's for your own sake!" Her face was white, frightened.

He half started up, in instant anger, but the girl was running down the room. He saw her put something under the bar, and he knew it was his gun.

Roper rang his whiskey glass upon the table, trying to catch a bartender's eye. If Lasham had not seen what the girl had done, one of them could bring him his gun before it was too late. But the bar was thronged; the bartenders were working fast, in the thick of the evening rush.

The bar-dies had made room for Walk Lasham at the end of the bar, and Lasham and his two cowboys had their heads together now, consulting.

One of the cowboys, a man with a scar across his face that distorted his mouth in the manner of a hare lip, went quickly behind the bar, hunted beneath it, and returned to Walk. Roper saw Lasham's long face set. He said to himself, "Walk knows . . ."

Walk Lasham was fiddling with his empty glass on the bar, and the scar-mouthed man was watching Roper covertly with one eye from under the brim of his hat. Lasham reached for a bottle, filled his glass, tossed it off. Then he turned squarely toward Roper, and came walking back through the big room.

Roper played his cards, his hands visible upon the table. It seemed to take Lasham a long time to walk the length of the room. Roper glanced at the lookout chair, where a salaried gun-fighter usually sat. It was empty now.

Walk Lasham was standing in front of him.

"So you," he said, "are the tough gunman that killed Cleve Tanner." Bill Roper raised his eyes to Walk Lasham's face. "And you," he said, "are one of the dirty cowards that murdered Dusty King."

A hush had fallen upon the room, unbroken by the clink of a glass or the rattle of a chip. Lasham and Roper looked at each other through a moment of silence.

He dropped his eyes to Roper's hands, and his own right hand started a tentative movement toward the butt of his gun. His spread fingers shook a little as his hand crept down. But he was grinning now, sure of his ground.

"Looks a little different to you now, huh?"

"A coyote always looks like a coyote to me."

The smile dropped from Lasham's face. "I'm going to give you every chance," he said. His voice swung in even rhythms, low and sing-song. "I'm going to count five. Draw and fire any time you want to; because on five I'm going to kill you where you sit."

"I don't think you are."

"One; two—" Lasham said. (TO BE CONTINUED)

Slacks and Shorts Outfits Styled for Every Occasion

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



THE vogue for slacks and shorts outfits has developed into one of the most significant, outstanding movements in the field of modern costume design. Beginning some

few seasons ago as a mere experiment, the new mode of costume today finds a challenge to designers to give their best to a movement that is advancing in leaps and bounds to unqualified acceptance by women everywhere, women who recognize the chic, the comfort and the ease that slacks costumes offer.

A few seasons ago the wearing of slacks was restricted to certain time, place and occasion and if you ventured beyond a prescribed program you were made to feel conspicuous. Nowadays slacks costumes are so generally worn, nothing less than a whole wardrobe of slacks is required in order to keep up with the social and fashion demands of the times.

Impetus has also been given to the slacks costume movement owing to the spreading of interest in civilian defense works which is creating a new and most exciting demand for slacks outfits, because of the need of durable workaday clothes. Among college girls who are taking courses in "emergency mechanics," there is a call for trouser costumes and coveralls made of denim, gabardine and other sturdy materials that will be increased as the fall school terms begin.

However, the workaday idea is but a single phase and a very recent development of the slacks-trousers costume theme, and there will be much to say later in this regard. Just now a most fascinating story is being unfolded at vacation resorts and amid home environs, a story so

thrilling in interest and so wide in scope it carries through from sun-up to sun-up all through the 24 hours of a calendar day and night.

And so, while the vacation spirit is going strong throughout the nation, fancy turns to cool sleek streamline types such as the trim suit pictured to the right. Tailored with precision and cut to give the style-correct streamline silhouette, this is a type that makes instant appeal to best-dressed women. Over this smart outfit the wearer tosses one of those short wool jackets, the rage at resorts this summer.

In the same category as this "classy" slacks suit are the exquisitely tailored jacket and slacks suits. Fashioned of gabardine for the most part in fetching pastel greens, violet shades, soft blues and dusky pinks. There is a nicety and finesse about these suits that indicate genuine refinement and appealing femininity. See the pert little play suit pictured above to the right. The entire outfit is made of waffle pique with large stars in red and white.

Shown to the left in the background is a slacks suit that answers the call of both chic and comfort. It is a navy blue gabardine with a white boxy jacket, falling loosely over the slacks.

On a hot midseason day, it's butcherboy pajamas in checked percale (pictured to the left). They will give you much comfort and ease. (Released by Western Newspaper Union.)

Button-On-Vestee



Soon the time will come when college and back-to-school wardrobes will be the paramount theme in every household where school-faring daughters live. Why not look ahead and, in idle vacation days, make up a simple basic wool dress and brief jacket which will serve as a suit for a "starter" on the fall clothes program. The costume pictured will prove ideal as a many-purpose outfit.

Button-on vestee is in crisp white pique and really very easy to copy. Bright metal buttons make a smart trim for the dress when the vestee is removed. To give your costume a final flipp, knit a smart turban in white sports yarn.

Quills and Feathers To Feature Fall Hats

There is much novelty in the new hat arrivals. The tendency is to manipulate fabrics in intriguing and original ways. Among the fabrics used often is jersey, with an angora finish and milliners are creating draped turbans and toques of long scarf effects in lacy feather-weight woolknit manufactured especially for millinery purposes. These scarfed novelties will also be worked into snoods and apron drapes at the back of hats.

Look for quills and feathers galore, for they are "on the way." Not one quill but several, will appear dramatically posed on a beret or turban or novelty shape. Feather-adorned felt hats will be very popular this fall.

Bretons still maintain as a favorite type in the simpler and wider-brim felts. Sometimes these will have a crocheted edge instead of a ribbon binding.

Belts Cleverly Handled Reduce Waistline Span

In the march toward smooth silhouettes designers are manipulating belts in subtle ways. The latest move is to inset the belt in a svelte graceful midriff treatments. When shopping for the new gown take note of this, for it is surprising how this technique takes away inches from the waistline span.

Much braiding is appearing throughout late summer fashions. It is said this matter of using braided trimmings will be accentuated throughout fall fashions. An interesting reaction to the call for braided effects will be hats with braided-work on off-face brims that corresponds with braiding on jacket or frock.

PATTERNS SEWING CIRCLE



ice, tight girdle waistband, girl-ish puffed sleeves and billowy gathered skirt. Wear it with a choker necklace of bright colored beads!

Pattern No. 8968 is in sizes 12 to 20. Size 14 requires 3 1/2 yards 36-inch fabric without nap; 7 1/2 yards ric rac to trim it as sketched. For this attractive pattern, send your order to:

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Sensibility would be a good por-
tress if she had but one hand; with her right she opens the door to pleasure, but with her left to pain.—Colton.

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