



CHAPTER I

High up on the long hill they called the Saddle Back, behind the ranch and the county road, the boy sat his horse, facing east, his eyes dazzled by the rising sun.

The snug, huddled roofs of the ranch house, way below him, began to be red instead of just dark; and the spidery arms of the windmill in the gorge glistened and twinkled. They were smiling back at the sun.

"Good morning, mister!" shouted Ken, swinging his arm in salute; and the chunky brown mare he rode gave a wild leap.

To keep his seat, riding bareback as he was, he clapped his heels into her sides, and she leaped again, this time with her head down. Stiff-legged and with arched back she landed; and then bucked.

Once, twice, three times; and Ken was off, slung under her nose, hanging on to the reins.

She backed away and pulled to get free, braced like a dog tugging at a man's trouser leg.

She jerked her head viciously from side to side. Ken's teeth set in anger. "If you break another bridle—"

This thought made him crafty and his voice fell to a coaxing note. "Now Cigarette—be a good girl—thatsa baby—good girl—"

Ken got warily to his feet and went to her head, still talking soothingly but with insulting words.

"D'you think I'd ever ride a ornery old plug like you if I had a horse of my own like Howard's?"

The frown faded from his face and his eyes took on a dreamy look. "If I had a colt—"

He had been saying that for a long time. Sometimes he said it in his sleep at night. It was the first thing he had thought when he got to the ranch three days ago. He said it or thought it every time he saw his brother riding Highboy. And when he looked at his father, the longing in his eyes was for that—for a colt of his own.

He must get on Cigarette again. First he had an apology to make. In all fairness, he must tell Cigarette that the fault had been his own. He had put his heels into her.

He knew exactly what his father would say if he told him about it. "Cigarette bucked and tossed me."

"What did you do? Put your heels into her?"

"Yes, sir."

He and Howard had to say Yes, sir, and No, sir, to their father because he had been an Army officer before he had the ranch, and believed in respect and discipline.

He took hold of her withers and back, jumped and pulled, landed well up against her, held stiffly there by his arms, then carefully swung his blue-trousered leg over; and slowly, just like his father, straight down to her back, legs hanging settled down.

Cigarette was calm. He tightened his rein, squeezed the calves of his legs a little, and she moved off.

One of the exciting things about coming up from school in Laramie to the summer vacation at the ranch, was the weather. Always something doing. Winds and rainbows and calm sunny days, then an electric storm; or frosts or even blizzards. People said it was because of the eight thousand foot altitude.

He put his head back and sucked in the smell of the cleanness and the greenness and the snow and the windiness—all so sharp and heavenly.

This was what he had been waiting for. All through the last unbearable months of school, the endless classes, the examinations—

At this an uncomfortable feeling gripped him. His and Howard's report cards had arrived in yesterday's mail with a letter from the Principal of the school addressed to their father, Captain McLaughlin.

And McLaughlin had slung them on the desk with some papers and bills to open later. By the time Ken got back to breakfast surely his father would have opened them. There was that examination—Ken knew he hadn't done very well—

He wondered what time it was now. He looked down at the ranch. It wouldn't be long before breakfast. Everybody was awake. Going downstairs, his mother would call, "Time to get up, boys!" His father was sitting up in bed with his hair rumpled, pajamas rumpled, hand reaching out for a cigarette.

Gosh—if his father had read the reports! And that wasn't all, there was the saddle blanket too, the lost saddle blanket.

He turned from looking at the ranch house and let his eyes sweep the hillside. Saddle blanket, saddle blanket—every time he asked his father for a colt, McLaughlin said, "I'll give you one when you deserve one."

A jack rabbit sprang up almost underfoot. Cigarette jumped, but Ken sat tight, and as the rabbit sailed away, he gave a yell and chased after.

Cigarette loved a good run.

Leaning back as Rob McLaughlin had taught his boys to do, feet forward and out, reins free, Ken rode like a steeple chaser.

Rabbit, pony and boy disappeared over the crest of the Saddle Back.

Nell McLaughlin pulled the drop-leaf cherry table out from the corner, opened the leaves so that it would comfortably accommodate four people and flung a red-checked cloth over it.

The roomy kitchen was full of bright sunshine from the windows which opened on the front terrace. It made squares of gold on the painted apple-green floor; and in front of sink and stove and baking table there were hooked oval rugs with gay flower patterns. A little brown cat sat by the stove washing her face.

Neither motherhood nor the hard living at the ranch had deprived Nell of her figure or her maidenliness. At thirty-seven, she looked not much older than when she had won a silver cup, at Bryn Mawr, for being the best all-round athlete of her class.

Of medium height, with a long slender waist, her curves were held where they belonged by trained muscles, and, as she walked, there was a lightness about her which came partly from natural vigor and partly from the way her narrow head lifted from the shoulders to face whatever was to be faced, a danger, a storm, a loved one, a hope or a fear.

Ken was late to breakfast. Coming in, he looked first at his father to see if he had opened the report cards.

Then he said, "Good-morning, Mother, good-morning, Dad," pulled out the one empty chair—a green-painted ladder-back chair with seat woven of rawhide thongs—and sat down. His heart was beating hard.

What's today, Boss?"

Weather always entered into the plans. So before McLaughlin answered, he glanced out the window, noting the clear deep blue of the sky, and that the big white cumulus clouds were sailing across at a rapid pace.

Finally he said as if to himself, not looking at Gus, "A good day to move the horses."

"Ja, Boss. It's time de horses were off de meadows. De grass is growin an we should have water on 'em soon."

Howard couldn't keep still. "Could I help you move 'em this year, Dad?"

Ken didn't ask because he had no hope.

McLaughlin turned to look at Howard, but he wasn't thinking of him and did not answer. He smoked and Gus waited. At last he said, "Yes. We've got a month before Frontier Days. I've got to get four of the older horses in shape to rent for the Rodeo. That means foot proof. And those three-year-olds will have to be broken. I can't let them go any longer."

"Ja, Boss."

"And catch up Shorty and saddle him for me. I'll be up at the stables in a half hour or less."

"Ja, Boss."

Gus went out.

McLaughlin put down his pipe and pulled his coffee cup towards him. There was a moment's silence, then Howard asked Ken, "What horse did you ride this morning, Ken?"

"Cigarette."

McLaughlin looked up. "You've been riding Cigarette?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did you manage to catch her and tie her up without her breaking anything?"

"No, sir."

"What did she break, a bridle?"

"No—that is—not today. She broke a bridle yesterday."

"What did she break today?"

"The metal catch on the halter rope."

McLaughlin paused a moment and looked down at his small son. "You're going to have to buck up, Ken. I don't know what to do with you. You never have your wits about you. Always wool-gathering. You lose a saddle blanket the first time you go riding—"

"But I found it again—"

"Yes, found the blanket and lost your horse. Trouble is, you don't try."

"I do try."

"I'd like to see some proof of it. Come, Howard. You can ride with me as far as the meadows and open the gates."

Nell McLaughlin saw Ken wince as if something had actually hurt him, and his eyes went to the wide-open window with a despairing look.

"Well," said McLaughlin, his voice like the crack of a whip. "Speak up. What have you got to say for yourself?"

"I dunno," answered Ken.

"What were you doing in that English exam? What were the questions you missed?"

"We were supposed to write a composition."

"What did you write?"

"I didn't get started."

"Didn't write a word?"

Ken shook his head.

"Couldn't you think of anything?"

"Yes, I had it all planned. I was going to write the story about how you lost your polo mare. How the Albino stole her from Banner—"

Ken's eyes went to his father's. "We could write anything we wanted, it had to be at least two pages—"

"Well, what happened to you?"

"I—I—got to thinking about it. Thinking about Gypsy and the Albino—and what it was like, when he took her away—where he took her to—and all the wild horses in his band—and where they were all that time. All of that. I thought there was just time, I thought the hour had just begun, and then the bell rang—"

There was a knock at the back door and McLaughlin shouted, "Come in."

Gus, the Swedish foreman, came in, carrying his big felt hat in his hand. His thickest body bent in a sort of bow aimed respectfully at Nell, and he looked first of all at her as he said, "Gude mornin', Missus, and then, "Mornin', Boss."

He did not come clear into the room, but propped himself by a hand on the door jamb, leaning there in his shy manner, a little smile like a child's turning up the corners of his mouth. His round pink face was framed in a mop of tight gray curls.

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Put Health Into Menus With Vitamins Plus



Crisp greens give you plenty of vitamin A, B and C. Assemble them in your salads and get plenty of health insurance—you don't need points to shop for these.

What's the pep appeal of your meals these days? It should be better than ever before with spring vegetables dotting the markets colorfully in greens, yellows and reds.

Many vitamin and mineral laden fruits are just coming into season so you homemakers should have no trouble getting your quota of two fruits, two vegetables and a citrus fruit into your family's diets.

In winter it is sometimes extremely difficult to meet that nutrition requirement because of the scarcity of vegetables and fruits and their consequent high prices. Now, though prices are higher than last year at this time, they are abundant, and most of us can afford to spend the extra money required to buy them.

Perhaps, you have a garden this year. You're probably planning to put up most of the produce, but you always have some crops available for immediate consumption such as lettuce, tender green shoots of onions, etc. In some parts of the country it's a bit early for some of these to make their appearance, but when they do, up and at them!

Homemakers are fortunately becoming more and more conscious of the importance of fruits and vegetables in the diet, and the more so they become, the more healthy will become each generation of Americans. Even those of you who have been deficient in these foods during the growing years will get much benefit from including these foods in your diet. A heavy meal calls for the light, crisp, "just right" feeling which fruits and vegetables supply.

Remember vitamins and minerals work hand in hand to give your body health and to keep it in good workable order. Most vegetables have many of both minerals and vitamins. It is interesting to know that greens (lettuce, parsley, watercress, turnip greens, etc.) are rich not only in iron that makes for good, rich blood, but also in vitamin A which promotes good health of skin, eyes, and keeps you buoyant and full of energy. The greens get a nice big star for being rich in Vitamin C, necessary for health of teeth and bones, and for quick healing of wounds.

Don't be surprised when the greens come in for a nice share of honors for vitamin B, also. That's the vitamin necessary for normal nutrition.

Easiest way to keep most of the vitamins intact is to serve the vegetables raw—as you would in a salad. The same goes for fruits. Don't let either of them soak in water or stand uncovered in the refrigerator—the vitamins seem to evaporate quickly, especially in the case of vitamin C, so easily lost by cooking or leaving exposed to air.

Lynn Says: Fresh as a Day in May: So will be your foods if you keep them properly refrigerated. Desserts to cool you off and keep your appetites unjaded, if they're to be frozen, belong right in the freezer. Meats and fish are safest kept right under the freezer in a meat-keeper if you have one.

Milk, cream and beverages are stored along side the freezer unit. Custards, puddings, butter and staples fill the middle section nicely, are easy to get at.

Leftovers, foods prepared ahead, salads, some fruits and berries are well refrigerated when kept on one of the lower shelves. The humid or crisp means just that for it keeps those fresh fruits and vegetables crisp and well refrigerated.

The storage bin at the bottom of the refrigerator is usually non-refrigerated, and gives splendid storage to cereals, crackers and extra beverages.

- Lynn Chambers' Point-Saving Menu
- Braised Liver and Onions
 - Whipped Potatoes
 - Parsleyed Carrots
 - Green Salad
 - Enriched Bread
 - Butter
 - *Orangeade Refrigerator Pudding
 - *Recipe Given

Keeping vegetables well refrigerated insures at least a good degree of vitamin preservation. Keep them covered, too!

Arrange your crisp raw fruits and vegetables attractively. If you'd like to have some fun, really, then take out the old geometry text, and follow some patterns you find therein—they're fine inspiration for attractive appearing vegetable and fruit dishes.

Cottage Cheese-Vegetable Salad. (Serves 6 to 8)

- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 1 garlic clove (optional)
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons chopped chives or green onion
- 2 tablespoons chopped pimiento
- ¼ cup chopped celery
- Paprika
- 2 cucumbers
- 1 medium sized onion
- 2 large tomatoes
- 2 carrots
- French dressing
- Salad greens

Rub mixing bowl with clove of garlic. Add cottage cheese, salt, and paprika. Fold in chopped chives, pimiento, celery. Turn into a bowl that has been rinsed with cold water. Chill in refrigerator. Unmold on center of large salad plate, surround with watercress, thin cucumber slices, onion rings, carrot flowers, tomato wedges. Serve with french dressing.

A salad bowl that's popping full of health with its tomato slices (vitamin C) lettuce (vitamins A and C) bananas (A, B, C), green peppers (A and very much C).

Here's a vegetable that makes a main dish when combined with macaroni:

- Green Pepper Stuffed With Macaroni. (Serves 6)
- 6 green peppers
 - 1 cup cooked, elbow macaroni
 - ½ pound dried American cheese
 - 1 cup soft bread crumbs
 - ¼ teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
 - ¼ teaspoon salt

Cut a slice from top of green pepper, scoop out, and cook in boiling salted water for 5 minutes. Drain. Mix remaining ingredients, saving ½ of cheese for top. Fill peppers with mixture, stand upright in pan and sprinkle remaining cheese over top. Bake in a moderate oven 25 minutes.

Jaded appetites will respond quickly if you serve this delectable cool pudding:

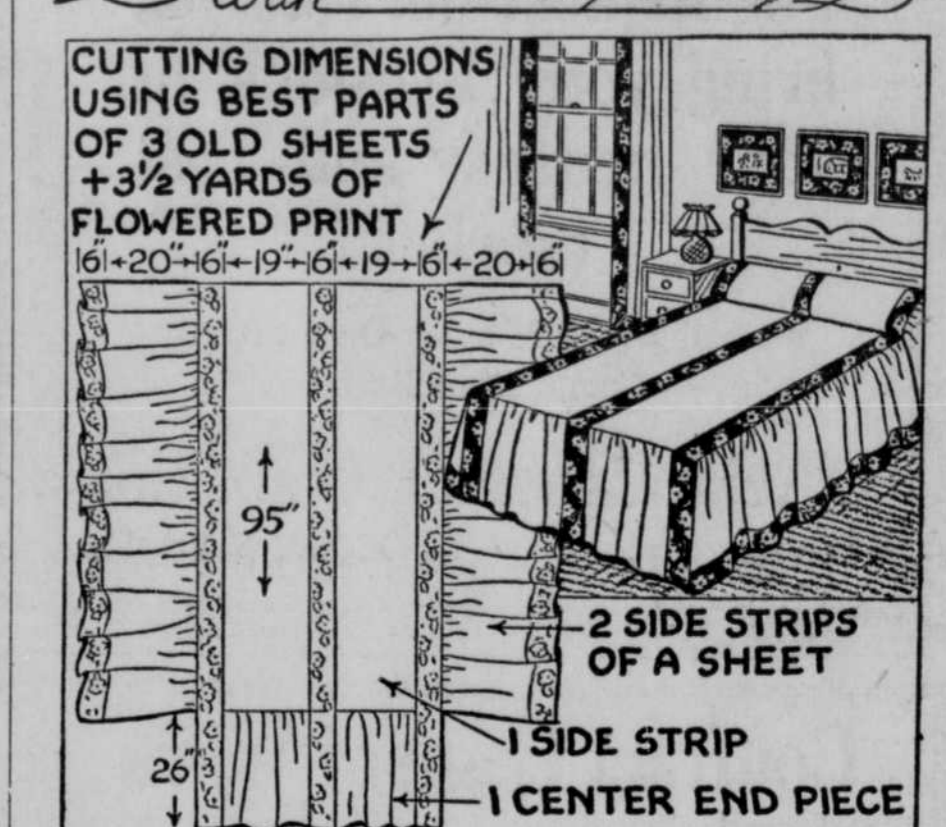
- *Orangeade Refrigerator Pudding. (Serves 9)
- 1 tablespoon gelatin
 - ¼ cup cold water
 - 1½ cups orange juice
 - ¼ cup sugar
 - ¼ teaspoon salt
 - 2 tablespoons lemon juice
 - 2 egg whites
 - ¼ cup sugar
 - 4 cups oven popped rice cereal
 - ½ cup melted butter
 - ¼ cup sugar

Soften gelatin in cold water. Heat orange juice, sugar and salt to boiling point. Add softened gelatin and stir until dissolved. Add lemon juice and cool. When mixture begins to thicken, fold in stiffly beaten egg whites to which sugar has been added.

Crush cereal crumbs fine and mix with melted butter and sugar. Distribute evenly in bottom of a square pan and press down firmly. Pour in orange mixture. Chill in refrigerator. Cut in squares when firm, and serve with whole orange slices and whipped cream, if desired.

Lynn Chambers welcomes you to submit your household queries to her problem clinic. Send your letters to her at Western Newspaper Union, 210 South Desplaines Street, Chicago, Illinois. Don't forget to enclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

ON THE HOME FRONT with RUTH WYETH SPEARS



CUTTING DIMENSIONS USING BEST PARTS OF 3 OLD SHEETS + 3 1/2 YARDS OF FLOWERED PRINT

16'-20" + 6'-19" + 6'-19" + 6'-20" + 6'

95"

26"

2 SIDE STRIPS OF A SHEET

1 SIDE STRIP

1 CENTER END PIECE

ANY pretty flowered print may be combined with the side strips of sheets that are good after the center part has worn out. A good section may be cut from the center bottom too. The diagram at the left gives all the dimensions you need for making a spread for a double bed from the good parts of three old sheets put together with six-inch strips flowered cotton material of about the same weight.

Here, the figured goods is in a pink and white pattern that is especially effective with the white muslin. It is also used to trim the curtains made from old sheets. Another interesting color note is

the mats of the pink and white material used for the row of framed photographs over the bed. It also edges the full white lamp shades.

NOTE—The new book 9 which Mrs. Spears has prepared for readers shows numerous ways to make, repair and remodel things for the home. It contains 32 illustrated pages and costs 15 cents. Please mail requests for booklets direct to:

MRS. RUTH WYETH SPEARS
Bedford Hills New York
Drawer 10
Enclose 15 cents for Book No. 9.
Name
Address

AROUND THE HOUSE

An old pair of curling irons makes an excellent gripper to use in dyeing garments. You can grip the material firmly and swish it about in the dye bath and it will not slip off as it sometimes does when a stick or something of that sort is used.

To remove a stain left by adhesive tape, apply kerosene, then wash the spot with warm suds.

Aluminum pots and pans leave their marks on the surface of sinks and enamel drainboards. Such marks can be prevented by placing a rubber mat on that part of the sink most likely to come in contact with the aluminum, or they can be removed by using a mild cleaner applied with a damp cloth.

Butter will spread more smoothly and go further if a little hot milk is creamed with it.

A variety of play materials is essential for a child's all-around development. Toys are needed for vigorous physical activity, for manipulative and creative play, and for dramatic play.

Mixed with salt, vinegar will clean discolored copper, brass and silver, and remove ink stains from the fingers. Diluted with water, it will clean gilt picture frames.

When washing a coat sweater or cardigan, sew up the buttonholes to prevent stretching.

Cold 'Reduces' Distance

Figuring one rail to 35 feet, engineers of the Canadian Pacific railroad have estimated that the 3,363-mile "rail distance" across Canada was "reduced" two and one-quarter miles during a cold spell last winter.

There is usually one-eighth of an inch distance between rail ends. In cold weather the gap broadens to five-sixteenths of an inch, railroad officials said.

Gas on Stomach

Relieved in 5 minutes or double money back

When excess stomach acid causes painful, suffocating gas, sour stomach and heartburn, doctors usually prescribe the fastest-acting medicine known for symptomatic relief—medicines like those in Bell-sana Tablets. No laxative. Bell-sana brings comfort in a fifty or double your money back on return of bottle to cost 25c at all drug stores.

HOUSEWIVES: ★ ★ ★
Your Waste Kitchen Fats Are Needed for Explosives
TURN 'EM IN! ★ ★ ★

CLABBER GIRL Baking Powder

Now in the New Improved Moisture Proof Container

New Economy ... in war-time baking

Here's a new guarantee against waste of baking powder, against waste of baking ingredients ... Full baking effectiveness in every ounce is now assured by the new, improved, moisture-proof Clabber Girl container ... in all sizes at your grocer's.