# THE DESERT MOON **MYSTERY** BY KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

"If the folks who read this story," I said, "are downright oining for Nevada atmosphere, let them come out here and get it. There is plenty for all. 'A mile and a half of it, statistics show, for each person how in the state. Nobody ever reads the descriptions in a story, anyway. I've decided that authors put them in for the same reason that a cook, when unexpected company comes, makes a double amount of dressing for the chicken, or serves her creamed canned oysters on toast-to fill up, to make enough to go around.

"Well, Mrs. Magin," he said, "I can only remark that as an author you are an excellent cook."

"When I heard the first variation of that," I said, "years, and years, and years ago, I thought it was a little comical."

"I am sorry," he answered. "I thought that you were the sort of person who would apbreciate sincere criticism, even though it might not be wholly complimentary."

"Job wasn't," I told him, "and I don't set up to be any better than he was. What is more, if you can point to any man or woman in history or out of it, who ever did appreciate sincere, uncomplimentary criticism, I'll pepper this story so full of atmosphere that folks will think they are reading booster club's literature about Florida."

He could not do it. Consequently, I continue this story in my own way, stating that If any more atmosphere is in It, it got there by mistake. My plan is to turn it out so that, from now on, not more than a page of it can be skipped at one time and the rest of it make sense.

> CHAPTER IX The Cabin

backing out of the plan than had appeared on the surface. Gaby had just begun her

dinner. The rest of us had finished; so, according to our custom, we excused ourselves and went our ways. Chad tried to stay with Gaby but Martha fussed and insisted that he come with her.

I had a sure feeling that Danny would return, and that she and Gaby would have something to say to each other. I went into the kitchen and told Belle to clean the stove. Nothing made Belle so angry as to have to clean the stove. The angrier she got, the more she clattered. When I stepped back into the passpantry, and opened the passwindow a crack, the kitchen sounded as if half a dozen women were busy in it.

Just as I opened the window I heard John say, "I thought Danny was in here.

"No," Gaby said. "But won't you come in and talk to me?" 'What about?"

"About-this."

I dared not peek, so I did not know what she meant until she said, " Why don't you kiss me?"

"Shall I say, I don't want to pick flowers in Hubert Hand's yard?"

"I hate you!"

"Don't be sore at me, Gaby," John said. "But I'm telling you, that's a lot nearer the truth than-than what you usually say."

John was one of the poorest talkers ever heard. One of those strong silent men supposed to abound in the west. and who are likewise supposed to make every word that they say count. If John's did, they counted backwards.

"My dear, haven't I proven over and over again that I love you?"

"I don't know how."

"In every way. I have made

to that fools' celebration, with only a day or two left, now?"

"I suppose not, if you don't want me to. I'd love going. I know there is no use in staying here."

"In other words, you would sacrifice my future for a rodeo?'

"That is silly."

"Everything is always silly, with you. I more than half believe that you know-"

"That's sil-I mean, what possible object cculd I have?" "Many my dear. Very many. Though I think that getting rid of me would outweigh the

others." "Gaby, I don't want to get rid of you. I wish you would not be so silly, with John. But you know how eager I was to get you away from the continent. I wish I knew that you were going to stay right here for always."

"Is that your game? Listen to me, Danielle Canneziano, if I thought that you were keeping this from me; in order to bury me alive in this Godforsaken hole, and force me to watch you and John-" "Gaby!"

"I've been a fool! Why can't I learn to take into consideration your damn moralities? Understand this, Dan. Don't fancy for one instant that failure is going to keep me here. Did you think, with a weapon like that in my hands, that I'd stand for anything less than a fifty-fifty proposition? Our original plan would have been bettereasier, simpler. But I'll have my share out of this, anyway. So, if you do know-"

"Gaby, I don't know. I'll swear that I don't. How could I? But surely you wouldn'twouldn't attempt-"

"That is for you to say, darling."

Darling, as she said it then, was as wicked a word as I had ever listened to.

"For me to say?" "Give John to me. I've changed my mind. If you'll do that, I'll stay right here, and settle down, and do an imitation of a moral, model wife that would satisfy even you." "Gaby, you speak as if John were a child's toy, to be passed about. I couldn't give

notice; so my plan was to go up there and raise the lid. On my way, I met the girls coming home.I imagined that they looked at me with suspicion. I passed a remark about the sweet-smelling clover hay, and hurried right

along. Half an hour later, when J was expecting instant death at any minute, I thought about that sweet clover smell and how unappreciative J have been of it, and of the blue sky and fresh air, and of the green things, lighted vellow with sunshine, and ] took that vow that, if I ever did get a chance to enjoy them again, I would spend the remainder of my life in sc doing, and in being gratefu! to the Creator of them. The same as the last time I had had a jumping toothache, ? thought that, if that tooth ever did stop aching, nothing could ever make me unhappy again: I was going to be peacefully happy, always, for the reason that I did not have a toothache. Humar nature, I have since decided is never happy because of negatives. At least, I have never known anyone who was happy, for long, because he did not have a toothache, or was not in a hospital, or not hungry, or not-which brings me back to my story-shut up in a chest with packages of explosives.

In the cabin, I went at once to the kitchen; and removing fish-baskets, fly-books, and reels from the shelf, lifted if back.

I am sure that I had expected to find it empty. Perhaps I had hoped to find 9 small iron box containing a treasure, or a jewel-casket, or maybe an aged leather case containing the missing will, or the plans of some secret fortification—any of the simple, ordinary things generally hunted for and discovered. What I had not expected to find, and what J certainly had never hoped to find, was what was there: any number of neatly wrapped packages, addressed to Mr. Sam Stanley, sent by express, and labeled, variously, "Danger." "Explosives."

"Handle with Care." CHAPTER X A Conversation I am not claiming that I possessed one particle of common sense at that minute, nor for a good many minutes after that. My actions would give the lie, direct, to any such assertion on my part. It did not take any common sense to know, straight off, that sent to him or not, Sam was not mixed up in any business that had to do with explosives, bombs, and Bolshevism. It was easy enough to remember, then, that Sam had not been to Rattail for the past ten days; that Hubert Hand had been making the trips down for the mail, expressage, and supplies. Just as he came into my mind, I heard his voice. It was a startling coincidence; I needed a better excuse than that, for surely no mortal ever did a more, foolish thing than I did then. I climbed into that chest, along with those packages, and lowered the lid down over me If I had any idea, I suppose it must have been a desire not to let him know that I had discovered his secret- his and Gaby's together, undoubtedly-but 1 can't remember having any thought at all until, just as the lid closed, I remembered the sad poem about the bride and the mistletoe chest.



#### **KEEPING HERDS HEALTHY** Interest in the abortion test is

rapidly increasing in spite of the fact relatively few people have had experience with it, and that some lack of confidence in its dependabliity and reliability exists. Those who have worked with the test extensively feel confident, and in fact have demonstrated, that any sort of herd can be freed from the disease. A diagnostic test is indis-pensable in eradicating a disease of ease. this nature and in its satisfactory control as well. The test has revealed that calves are not suspectible to permanent infection if they are not exposed after sexual maturity. By removing calves from infected cattle at or before six months of age they can be raised free from the disease with almost never an excertion. This is the principle which makes eradication so promising, yet it might never have been discovered without the test. A test on an infected herd will nearly always reveal three conditions among the maturing heifers and cows. Some will be negative, the proportion depending upon how severe the herd has suffered in recent years or whether the disease is at the moment spreading. There is no assurance as to which ones will remain negative so long as they are in association with infected animals. In fact, not until they have been away from all infected animals for nearly a year can one feel complete assurance. For this reason the purchase of nonreacting cows from infected herds as now practiced is bound to lead to disappointments in many cases. Some animals in an infected herd will, of course, prove to be full reactors. While such animals occasionally return to negative it is indefensible to leave them with negative animals in any system of eradication in which quick results are sought. Other animals are neither negative nor full reactors but give a partial reaction and are classed as suspicious. These animals must be considered as harboring infection. Some of them will succeed in throwing it off, while others will succumb completely. At any given moment no one can tell which it will be. It is, therefore, the greatest folly to leave these with the nonreacting group. If an attempt is to be made to save them they should be isolated until their definite status is known. Sometimes the is-sue is settled quickly and in other cases the doubtful reaction may linger for months. These conditions seem to complicate the problem for many people. But they are simple facts which must be accepted if one is to succeed in freeing a herd from abortion. By removing the reactors and the suspicious animals from the negative group and by testing every 30 to 40 days most herds can be freed completely within seven or eight months. Once a herd is free -with no reactors appearing for a year-it is easier to keep it free than it is to keep a herd free from tuberculosis under similar surroundings. Very few herds once freed have become re-infected except where one is disposed to take chances in

fected with scours or sore mouth. When pigs are born dead or weak, or litters are small, it is a pretty safe guess that the trouble lies in the handling of the sows prior to breeding and while pregnant. The way to strong, healthy litters is not The experiences of many difficult. successful hog raisers, as well as the experiment station tests, have shown that here in the middle west region, where the bulk of the hogs are produced, corn properly supplemented with minerals and protein is a satisfactory feed. A simple mineral mixture, containing salt, limestone, bone meal. iron oxide and potassium iodide is satisfactory. This along with alfalfa, corn and tankage makes a highly satisfactory ration. A good simple mineral mixture to use may be made as follows: 27 pounds of salt, 40 pounds of finely ground limestone, 37.97 pounds of special steamed bone meal, 2 pounds of iron oxide, and .03 pounds of potassium iodide. This fed along with enough corn to keep the sows in good condition, all of the alfalfa meal or hay the sows care for and a quarter pound of tankage per day a gallon of skim milk or buttermilk will provide the sows with the necessary ingredients to insure strong, healthy litters. A brood sow should gain approximately a pound a day. The foregoing ration is merely suggestive.

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# PORTABLE FENCES

Portable fences are very handy at this season when we are attempting to make separations for the betterment of our rapidly maturing broods, but they are good to have around at any time. They are spe-cially valuable on the farm where the owner sees a fine grassy place for a brood of chicks. He takes a few sections of portable fense and sets it up around a good-sized pert-able brocd coop When it is neces-sary to move them a few simple twists of the wrist and it is done. To make the most convenient type, take strips of 1x4 lumber 12 feet long and make the sections 5 feet high covering them with 2-inch poultry netting. Across one end of the bottom nail a strip 3 feet long hold up one end of a section to while you wire a similar section to the other. Take some baled-hay wire and your pliers and you can scon join four sections at the corners, making a yard 12 feet square. Such a square of fence will stand up of itself, but if you are running longer string it will be necessary to drive down a few stakes as high as the fence, wiring the fence to them. There is usually some shed where the sections can be stored during winter if not in use.

#### FORCE FEEDING CALVES

The most satisfactory way of force-feeding calves for baby beef purposes involves a liberal use of grain and concentrates. By using ground ear corn to get the calves on full feed, one can induce a maximum consumption of grain in a few week's time. Cracked shelled corn can be added then and the mixture gradually made richer. Within 60 days the calves should be consuming a ration composed of 3 parts ground shelled corn and 1 part ground ear corn. This, supplemented with 1 pound of linseed or cottonseed meal per calf, and hay, should produce a satisfactory rate of gain and should tend to produce fat rather than growth. In feeding calves, especially steers, it is much easier to obtain growth than fat.

For three days, beginning with the fourth of July, there was to be a big celebration and rodeo at Telko. Trying to keep cowpunchers on the ranch, when there was a celebration of any sort going on within a distance of a couple of hundred miles, would be about as sensible as trying to keep gunpowder in a hot oven. So all the outfit that was on the ranch-never very many in July- were tinkering with their mounts, and building up their boot-heels, and washing and ironing, and making elaborate preparations to atcend.

Sam suggested at noon on the second of July, while we were at dinner, that maybe all of us would like to go; all. that is, except Martha and himself. Celebrations were never good for Martha.

I spoke right up and said to count me out. I know the deserts in July. But the boys were enthusiastic about it, and Danny was interested. Gaby, coming in late, greeted the idea with the same enthusiasm with which a woman greets moths in the clothes closet.

"Whence the crave for a July celebration?" she asked. "We have never seen a

rodeo," Danny answered. "Go, by all means," Gaby said. "Buy pink lemonade. March in the parade. Ride in the Liberty car. Mrs. Magin would be stunning as the goddess of Liberty, with-"

"Don't let my stunningness stop anything," I said. "I am net going."

"We'll think it over," Danny said. "It would be a long, hot ride. Probably we should all have a pleasanter time,, right here at home."

But there was something in the way way had said it, too quickly in answer to a look from Gaby, that made me think there was more to her

#### Case of Cadet Cagle.

From Omaha World-Herald. Almost any other West Point ca-det would face with dismay the discipline meted out to Christian Keener Cagle, for the last two years the army's outstanding star of the gridiron. To be forced to resign on the eve of graduation from the military academy would ordinarily mean the blasting of a career at its very outset.

But it means nothing of the sort for Cadet Cagle. Instead of blast-ing a career it is just a lucky break for him. Now he won't have to worry along for at least four years on a second lieutenant's pittance.

myself ridiculous, here because I haven't been able to conceal my feelings for you."

"I think," John said, "that most of that stuff you pull is just to spite Danny. It doesn't spite her, though. She knows she's the only girl in the world for me. I wish you'd cut it out-all of that, Gaby. Won't you, and just be good friends?"

"You'd not want me for an enemy, would you?"

"Getting at anything, going any place, Gaby?' "Perhaps. If Danny should

hear that you have made love to me-'

" I have never made love to you. It would be your word against mine. I think Danny would take mine, if it came to a show-down."

"You'd lie about it?"

"Gosh, no, Gaby. A lot worse than that. I'd tell the truth about it. Listen here, child; don't you try to make trouble between Danny and me." "Meaning?"

"Nothing. Except that it wouldn't be healthy for anyone who tried it."

"Boo-oo! Dangerous Dan McGrew stuff? Out where men are men? Killer loose to-night -all that, eh. Johnnie?"

"Nothing like that," he said, and his voice was so gentle that if Gaby had been a puncher she would have reached for her six-gun. "But killing would be too good for the imaginary person we are talking about."

A door opened. "John." came in Danny's voice, "uncle is looking everywhere for you."

"What," Danny questioned, when the door had closed behind John, " made you both look so angry, just now?"

"Nothing important. John had just threatened to kill me, but-"

"Don't be silly." "Never mind. Are you going

He is at liberty now to go out and earn a major general's salary as a football coach. Perhaps no cadet at that historic institution ever took dismissal with a lighter heart. No doubt he is thanking his lucky stars that the spirit of disobedience led im to violate West Point rules by narrying nearly two years ago and mccessfully to lie about it until the time came when he had no partic-ular desire to possess a commission in the United States army and wanted the worst kind of way to get out of his obligation to serve four more years with the colors. The thing goes against all the copy books which teach that hon-

him to you, if I were willing to."

"You could, and you know it. You won't. So, that's that. But keep your righteous fingers out of my life; stop your damn preaching, and meddling. I am going to the cabin now. You would better come with me."

"We've searched that cabin a thousand times."

"All the same, it is the one logical place; far removed, and under cover. Too, I must see whether that Indian nailed those floor boards down again, before I pay him."

The cabin is the one Sam built to live in when he first came to the valley. It is up Boulder Creek, about half a mile from the ranch-house, and, built in a big grove of aspen trees, it is one of the prettiest spots on the place. Sam has kept it in repair, inside and out; owing, I think, to sentimental memories, though he declares it is because he dislikes wreckage on the place. The best fishing on the creek begins just above there; so the men, as a rule, leave their fishing paraphernalia in the cabin's kitchen. That is the only use the place has been put to since John and Martha were little things, and Sam used to hide their Christmas presents up there, under the shelf in the kitchen.

The shelf, about three feet wide, is built across one end of the kitchen. It served Sam for a table, pantry, and sink. Being a man, he built it right handily, like a chest, so that the entire top of it had to be raised to get to the storage place underneath. There was no secret about it. All anyone had to do, was to move everything off the top of it, and lift the lid. But I had read how the hardest problems for detectives always turned out to be something that had been too simple to

esty is the best policy, that the rewards of material success are for the diligent and that disobedience gets you nowhere. Cagle has been dishonest, disobedie at and flashy rather than diligent. And the world is eager to shower upon him the rewards it has in store for those who are fleet of fcot and possess fine muscular a)-ordination. Had he been the copy book kind of student he might have drudged away his life in his country's uniform, climb-ing slowly from one rank to an-other. At the end of 30 or 40 years he might have been in sight of a major general's commission, al-though he might never have at(TO B) CONTINUED)

HOW TO PICK 'EM The bloom on peach and grape if sung.

So why not then, I beg, The bloom that rests upon the shell Of every fresh laid egg? Then hen-fruit that so shinny is And feels all smooth and slick, Avoid, when to the grocery store You go to make your pick. But if the shell looks porous, and Is just a little rough, Then buy, and show the cackling hens

You really know their stuff. For such an egg you'll safely fry, Or boil or even poach; And breakfast eggs, like Caesar's

wife. Should be above reproach. -Sam Page

tained it. Only a limited number of second lieutenants ever reach Now at a bound and that goal. by a single breach of discipline he is the equal from a material standpoint of the gray heads who have worked a lifetime for their reward

> His Way Out. From Tit-Bits.

The pupils had handed in his composition with a long string of dots and dashes at the end of it. "What are those marks for?" asked the teacher.

"Oh, those are the punctuation marks," replied the boy. "Put them in to suit yourself."

herds. **GRAPES FOR EVERY PURPOSE** 

introducing animals from other

In choosing varieties of grapes

for planting, either in the home garden or for commercial purposes, more attention should be given to the uses or adaptabilities of the prospective purchases. Fortunately there are some grape varieties that are adapted for several household uses. The use of grapes in the home may be limited to the manufacture of three or four productsunfermented grape juice, juice slightly fermented, for dessert, jelly, jam and grape spreads, which are sometimes designated as marma-Of all the varieties that are lades. available in the average city mar-ket, Concord is practically the only one from which all of the aforementional products made be made mentional products made be made with some degree of success. Next in order, on account os it many uses, Catawba has proved its worth. It is, however, best suited for juice, jelly and dessert purposes. For those who prefer a light colored, those who prefer a light colored, up unfermented juice, Catawba is un-ercelled. In the varieties Clinton and Lucile, blue and red, we have sorts especially adapted for juice, jam and marmalades. The varieties Ives, Iona and Norton are strictly juicy varieties. The first gives a clear light-red product, while the last named produces a very deep red juice. Of the three, Iona yields the richest and tastlest flavors. Agawam and Ontario are highly prized both for dessert and for jelly pur-poses. The latter makes a light colored jelly that is unsurpassed while the former yields a jelly that is well colored and spicy. Fredonia a new blue sort, serves equally well several uses. It returns a fine fla-vored and highly colored unfer-mented juice. Delaware is best suited for dessert purposes. Yet, grape juice from it when colored with a little Clinton or Norton is hard to beat. Brighton, Niagara, Portland and Worden are essentially dessert varieties. The popularity of Niagare and Portland is rapidly outdistancing supply. Grow-ers who are situated close to large city markets have in the specilization of varieties a field as yet capable of extensive development.

CHECK UP YOUR METHODS The spring pig crop is arriving. The feeding of the pregnant sows is for the most part a matter of history as far as this pig crop is concerned However, this is a good time to analyze the results of the winter feeding and management. A study of 81 western farms over a study of 81 Western farms over a three-year period showed that 32.6 per cent of the pigs farrowed on these farms died before weaning. On 19 of the farms 60 per cent of the pigs were lost, while on 34 farms this loss was reduced to 16.5 per cent. With the larger losses there were larger numbers of dead or weak pigs or pigs that became chilled, were laid on, starved or af-

GRADING EGGS BY COLOR For some unknown reason the consuming public prefers eggs with either chalk white or deep brown shells. Cream colored or pink tinted eggs invariably sell for less, even though they are equally good in all respects. For this reason the creams and pinks should be packed separately. The large associations are well aware of the value of keeping the various colors separate and in their grading rules make distinctions based largely on the difference in shell color. Eggs which do not come up to the color scheme de-manded in the big markets may oft-en be sold at full prices in the smaller nearby markets. Occasion-

#### UNDERFEEDING TABOO.

Underfeeding, or feeding of an incomplete ration, keeps down or wipes out profits in many a dairy herd. One farmer goes so far as to say that dairy cows now are better bred than fed; that starved purebreds are no better than starved scrubs There is still room for improvement along both lines. The point is, every dairy cow should be fed a complete ration, and as much of it as she will turn into profit. It is the wrong way to feed as little as the cow will get along on and still show a profit or just break even. Cow testing rec-ords prove that liberal feeding is not an expense, but an investment.

### MOST DESIRABLE SHEEP

To be fully abreast of the times the sheep producer should be grow ing finished animals in the light and middle classes. Experiment stations have conducted tests showing that light animals are more effi-cient in utilizing feed than older and heavier stock. The 60-pound lamb is a more efficient machine in the corn belt feed lot than the 90-pound lamb. At present there is a deep seated objection to fat. Most housewives regard discernible fat as waste and decline to purchase overfat cuts of meat.

#### A FEEDING HINT

Horses and mules that have been idle all winter are subject to loss of weight when put to work. The only way to keep horses in good shape is to feed them according to the amount of work they are doing. oHrses at steady work must be fed grain liberally. They should be given at least one pound of grain for every 100 pounds of weight and more more grain if they are doing hard work. A horse weighing 1,500 pounds should receive at least 15 pounds of grain daily.

## RATION FOR CALVES

Shelled corn and oats constitute a satisfactory ration for creep feeding. At the outset, cats 3 parts and corn 1 part should suffice. At the calves develop, the corn ration can be increased so that toward the close 3 parts of corn and 1 part of cats are used. A straight corn ration will give very fair results. It is not necessary to grind the grain for calves.

#### GIVE 'EM PLENTY ROOM

The profits from 25 hens are much greater in proportion than from 100, if kept around one barn or farmhouse

ally in late fall or early winter mixed colors sell as high as whites and there is little to be gained by sorting out the creams. But such periods are of short duration. At such times browns will invariably sell higher than mixed colors; so it will pay to remove the pinkish and light browns from the dark browns.

#### RAW FEED BEST.

Little is gained by cooking feed for hogs. In cold weather the slop should be slightly warmed, but never cooked.

Let the plow run shallow and the cultivator deep.

