

THE DESERT MOON MYSTERY

BY KAY CLEAVER STRAHAN

As I have written, she spent the following week in efforts to get that evidence; at last, fearing that she was suspected, she detailed the task to me.

You have seen how I failed. How Gabrielle at once saw through my trick of attempting to disable my right hand by burning it; and how, realizing that she was trapped, she had run upstairs, first to satisfy her longing to be herself again, even for a few brief minutes, then to taunt John, and, finally to take her own life.

For I think, in spite of her denials to John, that she killed herself because she knew that she was trapped, though her vanity and her audacity held to the end.

"I knew I should have no trouble in making you believe that silly doll story," she said. "It was the truth, I knew, too, that the dick would read the gods letter. She was so slow about it, that I had to steal it to make her do it. It was time, you see, for the gentle Danielle's story to be verified. I knew that the dick had a copy of it—she's been baiting me with the thing. I have kept a step or two ahead of her lumbering pace, all the time.

"Don't fancy that I have overlooked the matter of the handwriting. I'm not a fool. I thought of it before I killed the girl. There were a dozen ways I could have gotten around it—could yet get around it. If necessary, I could even have disabled my own right hand. I had rather planned, at first to do that. But, later, I found that I loved my pretty little white hand better than I had supposed. Just as I have discovered that I loved the gay Gaby better than I had supposed—so well, indeed, that I have decided that death as Gaby is infinitely preferable to life as the shiny nosed Danielle. I have seen this coming. I have not cared.

"I got rid of that cur, Canneziano, not because I was afraid of him, but because he tried to double cross me. I had promised to do much for him, after you and I were married; and he would have sold me out for a few thousand dollars. He came here, hoping that Danny might pay him a pretty sum for his silence about my past. He knew his muttons. She would have been fool enough to have done it; poor slain sister stuff; more to be pitied than blamed—all that, you know. He should have played with me, instead of against me. I had a few old scores to settle with him. Most of my rage about the money was because I had thought it would be such good fun to get the best of him. And I did—so that is all right. I hid in his room early that evening. It was frightfully amusing to watch him locking his door and his windows to make his sleep a safe one. It was. I did the job so neatly that he never woke at all.

"For that matter, it has all been amusing. You have all been such utter fools. But I am tired of it now. Oh, very tired. Particularly, I am tired of my cruel plan to destroy the gay Gaby by burying her alive. I am going now to do it in a swifter, kinder way."

Sam insists that her success, even for so short a time, is an indictment against all of us; that it shows that none of us was "capable" of looking deeper than clothes and face paint. I do not agree with him. Gabrielle was a professional actress. She had lived with Danny long enough to learn all her ways, her mannerisms, her habits in conversation. She did not dupe Chad, who loved her, and who

was an expert in voices. She did not dupe Canneziano, who had known both of the girls all their lives.

The murder itself, by stupefying us all with horror, with fear, with suspicion, did much to help her. But without that dulling of our perceptions, I think that the imposture would have been successful. At the time of the murder, the two girls had been on the ranch with us less than two months. Strangers never get much deeper than surfaces in so short a time. There was nothing remarkable, it seems to me, about her being able, quite easily, to deceive all of us, with the single glaring exception of John.

John is one of a large class of people who could all be filed under the recipe for simple acceptors. It is a necessary class; a class that acts as an oil to the hinges of the world, making it move smoothly: the gentle, thoroughly honest class that by quietly believing what it is told to believe, keeps us out of revolutions, and rebellions, and the like. I am not saying that the doubters and the rebels are not necessary (as Sam would say, "It takes that sort to make all sorts"), but Heaven help us if they predominated.

When John came home from Rattail, on the fourth of July, he was faced with the apparent fact that Danny, in the course of a few hours, had changed essentially. That was what had bothered him so; what had made him jerk his head, and blink his eyes, and complain of a touch of sun. John had never recognized, much less admitted to himself, that there was the slightest similarity between the two girls. Consequently, in spite of a change, Danny must be Danny; she looked like Danny, she talked like Danny, and we all said that she was Danny. John believed.

Very shortly after that, John was faced with another apparent fact. Gaby had been murdered. He could see that, with his own eyes, as we all could see it.

He at once set the fact of Danny's change against the fact of Gaby's murder—and there he stuck fast; too loyal to go further; too dismayed to retreat. He did not believe that Danny had killed Gabrielle. He had known Danny too well to harbor such a belief. He was forced to believe that she knew who had done it. Consequently, her accusation of Sam could be nothing but a wicked accusation. Only—Danny could not be wicked.

The mystery was a torture which Danny's presence intensified unbearably; so he avoided her; and, unable to blame her for anything, blamed himself and hated himself for his suspicions and for his failing loyalty. I'll venture, though it can be only a venture, that the realization of his interest in Miss MacDonald, and his inability to be rid of it, was another cause for John's befuddlement.

That interest, of course, has all disappeared for the present. Though he despised himself for it, John might have been untrue to a changed, living Danny; might, in the end, have jilted her meanly. John is male. But to a Danny who is no longer living, John, now, must always be true. John is young. I reckon he has fine honest plans for being faithful to her memory for the remainder of his life. Miss MacDonald is also young, and lovely, and heart whole. She has promised to come and visit us for a month next June.

Just now, with our ther-

mometers at fifty below zero, and our chibblains burning, and the coyotes piercing the nights with their lank, long, frozen screeches, and the cold old owls always grieving forth their mournful "chuck-a-loo, whoo, whoo, whoo's" June looks mighty far away.

But, five fingers and a thumb, and she will be here, smelling of sunshine and tasting like smiles; painting our deserts with rainbow colors for as far as the eyes can see; spreading sunsets that catch you right up into their midsts; offering dawns that share their youth with you and make you believe all over again in things which you had long ago stopped believing. Now I don't know shucks about romance; but I have a notion that June, in our northeastern Nevada, stirs up whole batches of the stuff. I am counting on her to serve it, fresh and sweet, this year.

It isn't June, though, and it isn't romance that I am trusting for the final chore; it is something more lasting than either, something sturdier, something for which I can not find a name. But I know that it is induced by a mixture of long years of right living, and clean thinking, and sanity, and courage; so I am expecting it to clear away the shadows from the Desert Moon and leave it, riding high as it used to ride, high and proud, a brave, shining thing in our valley.

THE END

Finds Uses for Honey



When it comes to sweets, Malitta Fisher is the real "honey" girl. She's a honey expert of the American Honey Institute, Indianapolis. In experimenting, Malitta has found many uses for honey. Honey, used in baking, preserves moisture and prevents staleness, she says.

BUSINESS IS GOOD

New York—Business must be good in the thriving profession, at least that's the impression one gets from the story of William Parkas, warehouse proprietor. While he was getting a payroy of \$3,200 ready recently, three strangers immaculately dressed in the latest of fashions, including white spats, stepped out of an expensive limousine and entered his office. They proceeded to make off with the payroll.

Wins Soil Program



E. R. MORRISON

E. R. Morrison, county agricultural agent of Kossuth county, Iowa, whose plan of soil improvement was named one of the winners in the contest conducted for the purpose of encouraging the development of broad and sound county soil-building programs. Mr. Morrison attended the annual meetings of the American Society of Agronomy at Washington, as a guest of the National Fertilizer association, sponsor of the contest. He received a gold medal and a framed certificate of award.

remains that the pretzel is not, as had been supposed, dependent on a liberal supply of brewed beverages, or that brewing is more general than those who disapprove of it imagine.

FEAR PARALYZED VOICE

Hartford, Conn.—(UP)—Fear paralyzed the vocal cords of Thomas Kusinsky when he looked from a window of his home and saw his wife crossing a track in the path of an express train. Unable to warn her, he saw her struck and killed by the train.

CHAFFEE

ROARING HORSE

BY ERNEST HAYCOX

Horse and rider had reached a fence. Five feet beyond the fence the desert dropped into the black and profound gorge of the Roaring Horse. It was not wide, this gorge. Fifty yards would have covered the entire width. But except at nooning the sun never touched the buried water. And the sound of its booming, turbulent progress was all but lost in the depths. Jim Chaffee got down and crawled through the fence, advancing to the edge of the rim. He had no particular reason for doing this, but there was something about the Roaring Horse that always struck a responsive chord in his nature. The same lure lay in the distance peaks, or in the soft smell of sage carrying across the desert, or in the sight of a fire gleaming like a crimson bomb over the plain at night. So he stood watching the river boiling away its terrific temper far below. Presently he was asaddle and riding off.

"That gives me a thought," he mused. "I'll be buckin' old lady fortune again. I'll be tryin' to make a go of something else. But why not take a little vacation? Why not lay in the sun like a snake and soak up a heap of laziness? I've been countin' the pennies till I ain't hardly a white man any more. I've been worryin' and schemin' and muckin' till I'm all shrivled up inside like a last year's potato. I ain't had a drink, I ain't gambled, I ain't danced, I ain't grinned—since when? Good gravy, I dunno how long. Way too long, anyhow I'm the original old man from the hills. Nobody knows me any more; nobody remembers what I used to be. I'm in the habit of talkin' to myself; I can see a sort of glassy look in my eyes when I shave. If that keeps up I'll bite somebody and be put in the dog pound. It's time to relax."

He traveled faster, aiming away from the rim of the canyon. He had a chore to perform before hustling into town; he had to see Miz Satterlee at the Stirrup S and give back the blue mush bowl. Once upon a time she had sent it to him filled with homemade fudge. So he drawled soberly at the dun horse and left the miles behind him. All this was Stirrup S soil—Satterlee range. The sun swung up, the air was racy with autumn decay; and he laid his course by a remote windmill. Once upon a time he had been a Stirrup S rider and mighty proud of it. Maybe he'd tackle it again, after he had taken his justly earned rest. Thinking thus he at last came to the sprawling home quarters of the ranch, threaded a series of corrals, skirted the enormous bunkhouse—Stirrup S was a large outfit—and drew rein before the porch of the big house. Miz Satterlee rocked herself thereon, as she had been doing for thirty years. She looked up at him, smiling briskly.

Miz Satterlee was a character in the land—a small and sprightly woman with snapping black eyes and a head of hair that even now showed no gray. She spoke with a terrific frankness when the spirit moved her, and her charities were numberless. It was a mark of Dad Satterlee's character that Miz Satterlee had publicly said her husband was smart enough to be governor. She was smart enough to be governor herself, and she knew a good man when she saw one—even if it was her own husband.

"Hello, Jim. When were you away from your ranch last?"

"Couple-three months I guess, Miz Satterlee," drawled

Jim, hooking a leg over his saddle horn.

"I bet you're down to bacon rind and bran biscuits. Most men are foolish like that."

He bent over and laid the mush bowl on the porch. "I'm returnin' it with thanks," said he. "I won't be eatin' out of it for some time."

She bit a thread and raked him with a birdlike glance. "Times a little bit hard up your way, Jim?"

"Oh, so so. Guess we're all in the same boat this year."

She spoke with an admirably offhand air. "I was telling Dad last night he ought to get you to do the wood haulin' this fall. Somebody's got to do it and you know how high spirited these young hands of ours get when anybody mentions manual labor. Haul wood—it'd insult 'em."

For no reason at all he grinned, and it changed his looks so completely that even Miz Satterlee marked the transformation. It took five years from his face and added a quality of good-humored handsomeness. Don't worry none about me, Miz Satterlee. I locked my door a little while back. I'm deliverin' the key to Josiah Craib at the bank. What's left out of the wreck you see on the humble person before you."

"Jim Chaffee! Busted? Why, you darn fool, didn't Dad Satterlee make it a point to say he was behind you any time?"

"A keg without a bottom ain't much of a keg at all," said he.

"Fiddlesticks! Men are darn fools. Always were, always will be. Satterlee's the only one I ever met that wasn't. She abandoned her sewing and rocked vigorously. "Now what are you aimin' to do?"

"Not sure."

"I know," decided Miz Satterlee. "You go put yourself back in circulation awhile. Play some cards, drink some. Not too much, but some. Go back to some of that devilment you used to worry the county with. Let the girls see you again, Chaffee. They'll fall head over heels to invite you around to eat, and you'll get some decent cookin' for a spell. You need it—pulled down terrible. Maybe some of them won't mind bein' kissed a couple times. Scandalous advice, but it'll make you feel a heap better."

"Sage words," murmured Jim Chaffee. "All except the kissin' part of it. I'm pretty bashful, Miz Satterlee. Who'll I start with?"

"Go 'long, don't you try to fool me. Start with the girl you kissed last."

"She's married," said Jim cheerfully.

"Whoever she is," countered Miz Satterlee with promptness, "you could of married her first. Bashful! Don't tell me that. I know your reputation. There's six or seven girls who'd have been tickled to death to've kept house over on your place. You made a mistake, Chaffee, in not takin' one of them. Any one. You wouldn't be broke now if you had."

"I wouldn't ask any girl to work that hard," said he, not so cheerfully. And the shadow of his long battle settled in his eyes for a little while.

"What's a woman for, Chaffee? You're just as foolish as the rest of the men. You all seem to want some frilly little picture of a female. You get one with a good sound head and a good sound body, and then make her pay for her keep."

He changed the subject. "Where's Dad?"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Roast from 2 Year Old Steer Is Judged Best

Ames, Ia.—It isn't the youngest steer that produces the best roast beef. The 2-year-old may console himself, before his end, with the thought that his young rivals in the yearling and baby beef classes are his inferiors in this respect.

He can point to the findings of experimenters at Iowa State college, who have made a careful comparison of the tenderness, flavor, juiciness and other characteristics

of beef roasts from baby beefs, yearlings and 2-year-olds.

They found, contrary to popular opinion, that cuts from calves averaging 8 months of age were toughest, because they were deficient in marbling, or fat, in the muscles. Roasts from yearlings, 20 months of age, were tenderest. The 2-year-olds ranked highest in flavor and juiciness.

Roasts from the calves were lightest in color and those from the 2-year-olds darkest, which indicates that the housewife who thinks that lightness of color means tenderness is being fooled.

DOPE WRECKS "MODEL ARMY"

Opium Habit Disrupts Forces of Wellknown Chinese General

Peiping.—(UP)—The "model army" of Shansi has been completely disrupted by the opium habit according to a foreign missionary at Tsangchow, Hopei.

For 14 years after the overthrow of the Manchus, Gen. Yen Hsihuan, "president of North China," confined his attention to his native province of Shansi, and admittedly did a better job than any other provincial ruler.

But General Yen was dragged into the country's civil wars in 1926, and the deterioration of Shansi began.

The Shansi armies, after some success in Shantung province, crumbled before Nanking's attack, and fell back north of the Yellow river.

The missionary who has observed the troop movements, reported that the use of opium is one of the chief factors of demoralization.

"Doped cigarettes are used on an extensive scale," he wrote, "and the sale of drugs and the powerful narcotic known everywhere as 'white powder,' has reached astonishing proportions. The authorities are powerless, or unwilling, to interfere with a trade enormously lucrative for all concerned."

The fact that some of the army officers are engaging in opium traffic has been confirmed by several foreign observers. Opium grown in the Suiyuan district, under Shansi's control, is escorted to Peiping and Tientsin by Shansi troops. The line of march from Suiyuan is guarded by Shansi soldiers, to protect opium shipments from bandits in Inner Mongolia.

Opium is the chief source of revenue for many independent generals now operating in China, and armies in Yunnan, Szechwan, Shansi and Kwangsi are maintained to a large extent by the growth and sale of opium. Military movements often may be explained by the desire to escort large opium shipments to cities where it can be sold.

Lourage Phase of Business.

From the Business Week.

The important thing in this depression is not the temporary losses to business or the hardships to labor which it brings in its train; it is the consequence of these things upon men's minds. It is one thing for men to lose their jobs; another for them to lose their faith.

In that light, this depression is more than a passing circumstance in our history; it is a crucial turning point in industrial civilization, not only for the United States, but for the world. Because of the circumstances in which it takes place—far more universal in their scope and far different in their character from any in the depressions of our past—it presents the first and perhaps final challenge to the economic and political systems under which the western world has lived for more than a century and a half. It is not too much to say the philosophy of individual and organized private initiative upon which our business system is founded and operated under the leadership of business men, economists and engineers who have replaced the kings and statesmen of the past, is definitely on trial today, more decisively than it ever has been before. And because of the dominant position of the United States in world economic affairs and the leadership it has assumed in world progress, this philosophy is meeting its crucial test here for all the world.

Unless this business system, founded on private individual and organized effort, can demonstrate its ability and unless our business and financial leaders developed by this system can demonstrate their intelligence and determination to sustain stable progress in this country and maintain and advance American standards of living, vast masses of people in this and other countries are going to consider seriously the possibility of achieving these ends under some other social philosophy and system of economic control. All of Europe has already gone a long way toward state socialism in one form or another; Russia the whole way. Unless the United States can effectively resume its leadership in world economic affairs and demonstrate by its own success in meeting this crisis the superiority of the philosophy of which it now stands as practically the sole exponent, outright communism will be knocking at the gates of Berlin and London within the next decade, and the echoes of that summons will be heard across the wide seas.

WINDOWLESS AGE

Richman, Va.—It is possible that in the future we will live in windowless buildings, according to the Illuminating Engineering society which convened here recently. This is because dirt is allowed to accumulate on glass windows and thus eliminate from 20 to 35 per cent of the light which would filter through. The society is urging people to clean their windows more often.

Police! Police!

From Answers.
Pitt: Her father is a director in the city.
Pott: You don't say!
Pitt: He directs traffic on the square.

PREPAREDNESS

Evanson, Ill.—Whether it is fear of an invasion of Chicago gangsters is problematical, but this city, suburb of the Windy City, is organizing the Business men's and Women's Pistol Club to combat crime. It is expected that more than 200 will be enrolled in the organization. The club will hold regular pistol practice on the police pistol range.

Such An Appetite.

Judge: Why did you steal that \$250,000.
Accused: I was so hungry.

The Pretzel Comes Back.

From Philadelphia Bulletin.
Historic association of beer with pretzels leads to the inference that when prohibition became effective in 1920 the industry of pretzel-baking went into a decline. But this is merely an inference, because prior to 1920 the census bureau, from which alone authentic facts as to volume of production are obtainable, classified pretzels with "bakery products" other than biscuits and crackers, and thus obscured their identity in the enrollment of industrial fame.

But if the pretzel was eclipsed when means of slaking the thirst it renders were curtailed, it has

staged a comeback in recent years. Between 1925 and 1929 the national shipments of pretzels increased from 27,596,000 to 35,796,000 pounds. In the latter year 108 establishments were engaged primarily in the manufacture of this product, employing 1,500 persons and paying out \$1,350,000 in wages.

No genius for figures will rise to tell us how far the annual output of pretzels would reach if laid end to end, because the pretzel has no end and there would instantly be controversy as to whether the computation could justly be made on the basis of the length of a pretzel in its raw and unbaked state because of the shrinkage in baking. The fact