

Cattle Kingdom

By
**ALAN
LE MAY**

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WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Billy Wheeler, wealthy young cattleman, arrives at the 94 ranch, summoned by his friend Horse Dunn, his elderly and quick-tempered owner, because of a mysterious murder. Billy is in love with Dunn's niece Marian, whom he has not seen for two years. She had rejected his suit and is still aloof. Dunn's ranch is surrounded by enemies, including Link Bender, Pinto Halliday and Sam Caldwell, whom he has defeated in his efforts to build a cattle kingdom. Dunn directs his cow hands, Val Douglas, Tulare Callahan and others to search for the killer's horse. He explains to Billy that the morning before he had come upon bloodstained ground at Short Creek and found the trail of a shod and unshod horse. The shod horse's rider had been killed. The body had disappeared. Link Bender had arrived at the scene and read the signs the way he had. Dunn reveals that because of a financial crisis the ranch may be in jeopardy; his enemies may make trouble since Sheriff Walt Amos is friendly with them. He says he has asked Old Man Coffee, the country's best trailer, to join them. Dunn and Billy meet Amos, Link Bender, his son "the Kid" and Cayuse Cayetano, an Indian trailer, at Short Creek. Bender has found the slain man's horse, but the saddle is missing. Almost supernaturally, cattle attracted to the scene by the blood-stained ground, stamp out all the tracks. Dunn is angered when Amos tells him not to leave the county. Following an argument, Bender draws his gun, but Dunn wounds him in the arm. Back at the ranch Old Man Coffee arrives, with a pack of hounds. Coffee goes in search of the dead man's saddle. Dunn tells Billy that Marian is incensed at him for trying to settle disputes by bloodshed. He reveals that the ranch is really hers.

CHAPTER II—Continued

Wheeler was silent. He could not altogether agree with Horse Dunn. He had seen range quarrels settled by gunfire—but never to the advantage of either winner or loser. However, he wasn't going to argue with the Old Man.

"What if she ties my hands?" Dunn demanded. "I've got to fight this thing my own way. For myself I wouldn't so much mind. But ain't the outfit hers, to begin with?"

"Hers?" Wheeler repeated.

"Sure, it's hers. Didn't you know that?"

Wheeler had not known it. "But look here! You've run this brand ever since I can remember. You must at least have some part interest here."

"Not a penny or a head of stock," Dunn told him.

"But I happen to know," Wheeler declared, "that you've always had an outfit, another outfit, down in Arizona. Yet your Arizona outfit hasn't seen you four times in a dozen years."

"I've had my hands full here," Dunn said.

"You mean," Billy Wheeler said, "you spent the last twelve-thirteen years neglecting your own outfit to build up a brand that don't belong to you?"

Dunn shrugged. "Somebody had to take hold. My brother died—sudden. He didn't leave the 94 in very good shape. For two years it was run by different bosses I hired. But this same Link Bender—he had a big outfit then—he was stealing the 94 blind. Pretty soon there wouldn't have been any 94. And it was all the kid and her mother had."

Billy Wheeler stared at Horse Dunn. Once he had heard it rumored that Horse Dunn had loved Marian's mother, long ago.

"Marian's mother always hated and feared this country. She brought up Marian to feel some similar. That's why the kid can't stand gunsmoke, or anything done by force. You see—my brother died with a gun in his hand."

Wheeler, unable to endorse the Old Man's leaning toward violence, expressed a belief that there ought to be some way to avoid smoking up the range. "If we can hold the 94 steady on the finance side," he said, "what can Link Bender's crowd do?"

"God knows I've took all the steps I know to steady the finance side," Horse Dunn said. "A minute ago you spoke of my having an outfit in Arizona. Well, I had an outfit in Arizona. Six weeks ago I sent word to Bob Flagg, my partner there, to sell her out. She's sold. For the last ten days I've been looking for Bob Flagg. He's supposed to show here with \$50,000, as good as in cash; another \$50,000 in different obligations and notes. Everything I've got goes to the bracing of the 94."

Horse stared out the open doorway toward the corral; and now Billy Wheeler saw Horse Dunn's rocky face slowly relax, and soften. Out at the far corral Marian had caught the quiet old pony that Horse had given her, and was preparing to saddle. Horse Dunn watched her, his eyes gentle. There was always a shy humility about that strapping big old man when he looked at this girl, this daughter of his dead brother. It was almost as if he might have been looking at his own daughter, who had grown up away from him. After all, she might have been his daughter, if things had broken differently once.

"You go ride with her," Dunn said with a certain awkwardness. "You talk to her. Try to make her see that—that this is a different country, kind of."

"She doesn't take any stock in me, Horse."

"You go, anyway," Dunn insisted.

ed. "I don't like to have her riding this big range alone."

With a curious reluctance Wheeler picked up his hat and walked out to the stable where his saddle was.

CHAPTER III

A rise of dust was going up on the Inspiration road as Wheeler saddled; he knew the approaching car must be driven by Steve Hurley. For a moment he hesitated, for he would have liked to hear the latest word from the camp of Horse Dunn's enemies. Marian Dunn, however, was looking eastward along an old trail not far off the Inspiration road. Steve Hurley would be able to signal to him from road to trail if any new word concerned him. He let his pony lunge out and caught up with Marian within the mile.

"Do you mind if I ride your way?"

"Maybe," Marian said, "you'll show me where Short Creek is."

Wheeler was startled. "Short Creek?"

"Sometimes," the girl said, "it's easier to look at a thing than to imagine it."

"I was thinking some of riding over that way," he conceded. "Only—I wish you'd let somebody know when you set off to ride a distance like that, so somebody could go with you."

She looked at him sidelong for a minute. "Sometimes it seems to me you people do everything you can to make this into an unfriendly country."

"I don't know what you mean."

"These Red Hills, with the sun on them, are the background of the



"Wait Here," Wheeler Said to the Girl.

very earliest memories I have. When I came here again it was as if I were coming home. I felt free and natural, here—at first. And Horse Dunn is almost exactly like my father, what little I can remember of him—so nearly like my father that I can't remember my father's face any more; because my uncle's face comes in between."

"He worships the ground you walk on," Wheeler said.

"I know." A little shiver ran across her shoulders, anomalous in the blaze of the sun. "Then he turns and does some wild, awful thing—like yesterday; and it gives me the strangest feeling of being completely lost in a country I don't understand."

"Yesterday? What awful thing?"

"He—he shot Link Bender."

"It was kind of unfortunate, sure. But I don't know what else he could do. Link drew on him. And all your uncle did was to nick him in the arm, so that he dropped the gun."

Marian's tone was curiously detached, unfeeling. "He admitted he set out to goad Link Bender into fighting."

That was not exactly what Horse Dunn had said, but essentially the girl was right. It was like Horse Dunn too that he could in no part lie to this girl, but would put himself conscientiously into the worst possible light.

"He said more," Marian added. "He said that if it hadn't been for me he would have killed Link Bender there at Chuck Box Wash."

Billy Wheeler started to say, "Oh, I don't think—" It was no use. It was futile to try to hide from this girl certain things which she was in no way equipped to understand, yet was sure to see clearly. "This is a different country than you're used to, Marian. Dry country men learned long ago to depend on themselves; they've lived that way for a long time."

The car that had been an approaching funnel of dust upon the Inspiration road now came careening around a rutty bend 200 yards below them. Steve Hurley leaped from behind his dusty windshield to wave at them, then brought his car

to a long-rolling stop. He signaled Wheeler to ride to him.

"Wait here," Wheeler said to the girl. He wheeled his horse, then hesitated to say over his shoulder, "Don't worry; we'll work everything out all right."

He put his horse down to the road, jumping it through the red rocks. From behind the wheel Steve Hurley thrust a big square hand at him, and Steve's big beefy face flashed a quick grin. "Glad to see you, Billy; the Old Man said he figured you'd sit in. As soon as I see who it was, I pulled up."

Wheeler glanced at the boiling radiator. "What's broke in Inspiration, Steve?"

"The Old Man may be wanting to call his riders in. Thought I'd stop and tell you what it was, so's you could signal in any of the boys you might see while you're out."

"I'm listening."

"It's all over Inspiration that Sheriff Walt Amos will make an arrest within three days. They're saying the sheriff knows who's dead; that it's a man Dunn swore to kill if ever he found him on 94 range."

Steve Hurley's sun-squinted eyes rested steadily and keenly on Billy Wheeler.

"Steve," said Wheeler, "will Horse Dunn submit to arrest?"

Steve Hurley looked away a moment before he answered. "I don't know," he said at last. "But I guess maybe. Am I right he'll want his riders in?"

"I'd sure think so. This thing is coming faster than I figured it would, Steve."

The girl's eyes were questioning as Billy Wheeler returned to her side. "Don't worry," he said; "it's all going to work out."

They turned off, no longer paralleling the Inspiration road; and for a long while as the miles slowly unrolled under the fox-trotting hoofs of the ponies neither had anything to say.

They were near Short Creek when the girl spoke unexpectedly. "I'm glad you came. You make things seem straighter and smoother, just the way you pace your horse along, without any worry or fret."

"There isn't anything to worry about."

"You've changed since two years ago," the girl told him. "Somehow you're nicer to ride with—quieter, more restful."

He glanced at her but didn't answer.

"You used to be a stampede sort of person," she explained, "always rushing your horse at things. Whatever you went at, you always went at it by the same way—thunder of hoofs, taking all obstacles by storm. I think I used to be afraid of you."

For a moment he wondered if things would have gone differently between them if he had been less eager, less turbulent. When you wanted a thing too much you overplayed your hand and lost out altogether. Maybe you could love a girl too much, too soon, and defeat yourself the same way. Perhaps it—

A quarter of a mile away within the sharp-cut bed of Short Creek something moved, held steady a moment, then disappeared. It was a rider there, who was watching them; but it was not a rider who meant to rise in his stirrups and hail.

"Well," he said briskly, "this is Short Creek."

"You see," he said, pulling up his horse at the spot the cattle had trampled, "this is nothing but a place where it just happened that somebody took a shot at somebody. What is there to see? Nothing. I want you to think of this place as just a crick where horses come to drink."

Marian Dunn sat very quiet, staring at the shallow water. He wondered what things, terrible to her, she might be picturing.

"I'm glad I came," Marian said. "But especially I'm glad you came. You—"

"Listen," he said. A horse as yet unseen was coming fast down the cut. Its unshod hoofs padded quietly in the sand at the margin of the water, so that its thudding lope was sensed less by sound than by shock—the faint distant tremor of the ground.

"What is it?" the girl asked.

"Don't you hear? A horse is coming up."

"I don't—" She started to say that she didn't hear anything; but just then the unseen rider cut through the shallows with a sudden sharp sound of thrown water and the ring of hoofs on stone.

"Who is it?"

"Quien sabe? Turn and ride back the way we've come," he told her without emphasis. "I'll be along in a minute."

Without a word Marian turned her horse; she was at the two hundred yards as a hard-run horse surged up over the lip of the cut. The rider was Kid Bender.

The Kid half wheeled his pony, drove close to Billy Wheeler's horse; his lean figure swayed backwards as he brought his pony to a sliding stop, very close. Across the back of his right hand showed the heavy purple welt that Wheeler's quirt had laid there; and in his face was the joyous anger of a man who takes payment for a past humiliation.

"What you doing here?"

Wheeler ignored the question. "You're a little off your range, Kid," he said. "This range comes under the head of the 94. Maybe I'll be ordering you off it pretty quick. I haven't decided yet."

"No," said Kid Bender. "I don't think you will. You're dealing with a peace officer—patrolling the scene of a crime."

"Peace officer?"

Kid Bender flipped over the tail end of his neckerchief to reveal a nickel-plated shield. It was cheap and it was new; but as it flashed in the sun Wheeler felt his scalp stir oddly, as if he had glimpsed fire behind smoke. Horse Dunn's view of the situation was shaping up faster than Horse himself had imagined.

"Yesterday," said the Kid, "you knocked a gun out of my hand."

Billy Wheeler said distinctly, "With a quirt. I whipped it out of your hand with a quirt."

Kid Bender's face darkened for an instant but the hard gleam of a joyous anticipation immediately returned to his eye. "I have orders," he said, "to see that the hired men of the 94 don't trample over the scene of this crime any more. I'm starting with you; I'll give you fellows something to remember orders by. I'm taking your horse and your gun. Maybe your girl there will give you a lift after you're afoot. Or maybe I'll send her on home—I haven't decided that yet."

"No," said Wheeler, "you're not taking either horse or gun."

"You're against an officer of the law. You know what that means?"

"I know," Billy Wheeler said, "what I hope it means."

For a moment Kid Bender hesitated; they sat watching each other, two men in a situation from which neither could withdraw. One of them had sought this meeting—the other welcomed it. Both knew that something peculiarly personal had to be settled here, now, between the two of them alone.

"I see your girl has stopped a little way up here," the Kid said; "seems like she sets watching from the hill."

Wheeler suppressed in time an impulse to glance over his shoulder. Instead his eyes never left Kid Bender as he jerked his chin sharply toward his shoulder as if he glanced away.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Fish, Not Monkey, Man's Ancestor, Is Claim of Professor of Neuro-Anatomy

This may come as something of a disappointment to monkeys, but it now appears that the human race did not descend from an ape, but from a fish, writes a New York United Press correspondent.

And if all goes well, man's own descendants will not be man as he is today, but gnome-like creatures with undershot jaws, probably spindly legs and an enormous dome-like head.

This information was conveyed to a gathering of 150 learned men at Columbia university, by Dr. Frederick Tilney, professor of neuro-anatomy and an expert on the evolution of the shape of a man's head.

It all goes back to a "crossopterian"—a kind of fish that did its thinking with its feet. If the crossopterian had not come along, man might still be a fish, according to the professor.

"Fish," he explained, "possess a

limited power to withhold their reactions. They are highly impulsive."

One day millions of years ago an impulsive fish—the crossopterian—"managed to crawl out of the water," and that was the beginning of brain structure, and ultimately of the human race.

Dr. Tilney advised evolutionary students to study the brain as the real organ of evolution, and he said this would lead back to the "walking fish."

"No scientist today believes that any living monkeys or apes are ancestral to man," he said. "These animals belong to families totally divergent from the human family. Whatever interest there is in evolution therefore should not center in the ape."

"The true line of our ancestry reaches millions of years farther back. Evolution of the human race leads from fish to man."

what
Irvin S. Cobb
thinks
about:

Advertising's Value.

VERNALIS, CALIF.—On the train a charming young woman said: "I always read the advertisements whether I want to buy anything or not. Do you think I'm crazy?"

I told her she was the smartest young woman I knew. If I were asked to describe the race in any bygone period since printer's ink came into common use, I'd turn to the advertising in the papers and periodicals of that particular age. For then I'd know what people wore and what they ate and what their sports were and their tastes and their habits; know what they did when they were healthy and what they took when they were sick and of what they died and how they were buried and where they expected to go after they left here—in short, I'd get a picture of humanity as it was and not as some prejudiced historian, writing then or later, would have me believe it conceivably might have been.



Irvin S. Cobb

I'd rather be able to decipher the want ad on the back side of a Chaldean brick than the king's edict on the front—that is, if I craved to get an authentic glimpse at ancient Chaldaea.

Running a Hotel.

I'VE just been a guest at one of the best small-town hotels in America. I should know about good hotels because, in bygone days, I stopped at all the bad ones.

The worst was one back East—built over a jungle of side tracks. I wrote a piece about that hotel. It had hot and cold running cockroaches on every floor and all-night switch-engine service; the room towels only needed buttons on them to be peekaboo waists, but the roller towel in the public washroom had, through the years, so solidified that if the house burned down it surely would have been left standing. The cook labored under the delusion that a fly was something to cook with.

Everybody who'd ever registered there recognized the establishment. So the citizens raised funds and tore down their old hotel, thereby making homeless wanderers of half a million resident bedbugs; and they put up a fine new hotel which paid a profit, whereas the old one had been losing money ever since the fall of Richmond.

A good hotel is the best advertisement any town can have, but a bad one is just the same as an extra pesthouse where the patients have to pay.

Poor Lo's Knowledge.

SOMETIMES I wonder whether we, the perfected flower of civilization—and if you don't believe we are, just ask us—can really be as smart as we let on.

Lately, out on the high seas, I met an educated Hopi, who said to me:

"White people get wrong and stay wrong when right before their eyes is proof to show how wrong they are. For instance, take your delusion that there are only four direction points—an error which you've persisted in ever since you invented the compass, a thing our people never needed. Every Indian knows better than that."

"Well then," I said, "how many are there, since you know so much?"

"Seven," he said, "seven in all." "Name 'em," I demanded.

"With pleasure," he said. "Here they are: north, east, south, west, up, down and here."

Of course, there's a catch in it somewhere, but, to date, I haven't figured it out.

The Russian Puzzle.

UNDER the present beneficent regime, no prominent figure in Russia's government, whether military or civil, is pestered by the cackling fear which besets an official in some less favored land, namely, that he'll wear out in harness and wither in obscurity.

All General So-and-Soski or Commissar Whatyoumaycalllovtich has to do is let suspicion get about that he's not in entire accord with administration policies and promptly he commits suicide—by request; or is invited out to be shot at sunrise.

To be sure, the notion isn't new. The late Emperor Nero had numerous well-wishers, including family relatives, that he felt he could spare and he just up and spared them. And, in our own time, Al Capone built quite an organization for taking care of such associates as seemed lacking in the faith. 'Twas a great boon to the floral design business, too, while it lasted.

But in Russia where they really do things—there no job-holder need ever worry about old age. Brer Stalin's boys will attend to all necessary details, except the one, formerly so popular in Chicago, of sending flowers to the funeral.

IRVIN S. COBB.

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Floyd Gibbons' ADVENTURERS' CLUB



HEADLINES FROM THE LIVES OF PEOPLE LIKE YOURSELF!

"Terror in Old Mexico"

By FLOYD GIBBONS
Famous Headline Hunter

HERE'S a yarn from Emil Berg of Brooklyn, N. Y.—the story of how, in November, 1927, he faced one of the most terrible fates any man can imagine. You know, in Russia the worst sentence a man can be given is a stretch in the horrible salt mines of Siberia.

Most prisoners in the salt mines die from the hardships. Those who do return come back gaunt and wasted—mere shadows of the men they were when they went in. But down in Mexico they have salt-mine prisons which, I'm told, are even worse than the ones in Siberia. They say that no gaunt and wasted men return from those mines. In fact, they say that the men who go down in them never come back at all.

And that's where they were going to send Emil Berg! It happened while Emil was in the army down on the border. He was stationed in Laredo, Texas, with the "Fourth Field" and he says the boys used to go across the river to get a drink of Mexican beer now and then, because in those days we had prohibition in the states, and beer was harder to get this side of the border.

Emil Laid Out a Bad Mexican.

On the night of November 1, Emil was in Nuevo Laredo, over on the Mexican side, having a drink or two. About eight o'clock he started for camp again, but on his way to the international bridge across the Rio Grande an ominous looking individual stepped out of the bushes at a deserted spot and asked Emil what his name was.

Emil had been doing some boxing in the Fort McIntosh bowl and was pretty well known in Laredo. At first he thought that this fellow had recognized him and—well—just wanted to talk.

But suddenly the Mexican reached for his hip and Emil found himself looking into the business end of a forty-five.

He started to put up his hands, but the Mexican chose that moment to turn his head and take a quick glance down the street. It only took a second, but Emil saw his chance. He put his whole hundred and fifty-eight pounds behind a well-timed haymaker. It caught the Mexican on the chin and he slumped to the ground. Emil bent down and picked up his gun, tossed it into the bushes and continued on his way.

He walked on toward the international bridge, strolling along in a leisurely fashion—taking his time about it. But when he got there he wished he had hurried. For there was his friend the Mexican, who had taken a short cut and beaten him to the bridge, talking to the Mexican



It caught the Mexican on the chin and he slumped.

soldiers guarding the Mexican end of the span. They grabbed Emil. Emil yelled for the American sentry on the Texas side, but the sentry didn't hear him. The soldiers hustled him off to the local jail and threw him into a cell.

Sentenced to the Salt Mines.

The next morning they hauled Emil into court, and there he learned that his Mexican friend was accusing him of hitting him for no reason whatever. What made matters worse was that Emil had broken the Mexican's jaw with his haymaker. He told his side of the story, but the Mexicans refused to believe it because they couldn't find the gun where Emil said he had tossed it.

They took him back to his cell and tried to make him sign some papers written in Spanish, which Emil couldn't read. For three days they urged and coaxed and threatened him to get him to sign those papers. They refused to let him communicate with his officers at Fort McIntosh, but Emil had one consolation. Soldiers in the United States army don't go across the border and just disappear without anything being done about it. They'd be looking for him by this time—and maybe they'd find him.

Emil was right. On the third day the American consul came to see him. Then Emil got the shock of his life. The consul told him he had been tried and sentenced to two years in the salt mines inland—the mines from which, people said, you never came back alive!

The consul had obtained a writ which would prevent the Mexicans taking Emil out of Laredo for a while, but he wasn't sure even then that he could save Emil from the mines. They put Emil back in the cell—and then began a period of waiting.

Tough Days in the Prison Cell.

Day after day went by. The uncertainty was driving Emil half crazy, but the prison itself was even worse. "There were ten of us in the cell I was in," he says, "and we were never let out for exercise, for we were considered dangerous. There were no beds. We slept on the floor. I didn't even have a blanket, but I shared my cigarettes with the Mexican prisoners and they shared their rags and blankets with me. I was getting along fine with those fellows until one night a new arrival was thrown into our dungeon."

"This newcomer was all hopped up with marihuana, and he lost no time in telling us in broken English that he hated all gringos in general and gringo soldiers in particular. So that night I had to sleep in a sitting position with my back to the wall to make sure I'd be alive the next day."

"One day there was some shooting outside the prison wall and I saw the guards carry in a colored man. They took me out to talk to him as none of the guards spoke English. He had been serving a ten-day sentence for having imbibed too much tequila, and on his third day, while working in a prison gang in the street, he had made a break for the river. But one of the guards brought him down with a rifle bullet. He died as I was talking to him."

A few minutes later the American consul came rushing in to see if Emil was all right. He had heard that someone had been shot. But that was the end of Emil's troubles, and a couple of days later he was released. The consul took him home, gave him a big feed to sort of make up for the short jail rations he had been on, and drove him back to the post. And that time no one tried to high-jack them on their way across the international bridge.

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Notary Public's Oath

A notary public is a public officer who takes acknowledgement of, or otherwise attests or certifies, deeds and other writings, or copies of them, usually under his official seal, to make them authentic, and takes affidavits, depositions, and protests of negotiable paper. In the United States appointments are made by the governors of the states. The oath is as follows: "I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the state of (name of state) and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge the duty of notary public for name of (county), according to the best of my skill and ability; so help me God."

Voice Reveals Character