

CATTLE KINGDOM

By ALAN LEMAY

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WNU Service

SYNOPSIS

Billy Wheeler, wealthy young cattleman, arrives at the 94 ranch, summoned by his friend Horse Dunn, its 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 Trapper, 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 bloodstained ground, stamp out all the traces. 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, also that he recently sold his own ranch in Arizona and that his partner, Bob Flagg, is en route with the money. Billy accompanies Marian on a ride to Short Creek. "Kid" Bender, now a deputy, rides up. They have an argument, and by a trick Bender tries to shoot him. Billy saves himself by plunging against Bender's pony and "the Kid" is injured. Coffee returns to the ranch with the saddle and reveals that Cayuse Cayetano is on the trail for Sheriff Amos. The saddle belonged to Lon Magoon, a small-time cattle thief. Billy learns he is to be arrested for assaulting "Kid" Bender. On the sheriff's orders, Billy and the ranchmen drive into Inspiration. On the way, Coffee tells him that the murder victim was not shot by the man riding with him.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"Why" the sheriff demanded, "haven't you turned that saddle in to the authorities—to me?"

"Oh," said Horse Dunn with false innocence, "did you want that saddle?"

The sheriff hesitated, unexpectedly at a fading of the trail. For a moment he had undoubtedly believed he had trapped Horse; but this hope was now trampled out by doubts.

"One more question," said the sheriff. "I want to know where all your riders were, last Monday—the day of the killing."

"Val Douglas and Gil Baker were on Yellow Medicine Flats; Steve Hurley and Tulare Callahan were riding Slinkard's Hole. That's all the riders I've got right now."

"One thing more," said the sheriff. "I questioned Hurley and Callahan when they were in town; but I still got to talk to Baker and Douglas. Stay here a minute."

At the door he turned and met Horse Dunn's eye squarely. "I don't mind telling you this," he said. "This case is nearly washed up. I figure to pick up the killer within 60 hours." He went out, jerking the door shut behind him.

Old Man Coffee's eyes showed an inward smile. "That last seemed kind of forced in," he said.

Gil Baker now lounged in, taking his time. The sheriff was impatient at his heels.

"Baker, where were you Monday?" he demanded.

Gil Baker, young and hawk-faced, glanced at Horse Dunn and rolled his quid of tobacco over his tongue. "Rode a scope of ground, last Monday," he offered.

"Mostly where?"

Baker watched the sheriff narrowly. "Mostly Slinkard's Hole."

"Anybody with you?"

"Part of the time."

The sheriff caught at this. "Douglas was with you only part of the time, huh?"

Gil Baker studied him, snake-eyed. "All the time," he changed his answer.

"You just said 'part of the time!'"

"My mistake," said Baker. The young sheriff jerked open the door. "Val Douglas! Come in here!"

Val Douglas was suddenly motionless, in order not to joggle the cigarette he was making. He stood on spread legs, and across the cigarette as he licked it shut he looked at the others with an innocent gravity.

"Douglas," Sheriff Amos demanded, "where was you riding last Monday?"

"I reckon I was in Nine-Mile Valley," Douglas said.

"How far is that from Slinkard's Hole?"

"About 15 mile."

"And you and Baker covered both Nine-Mile Valley and Slinkard's Hole in one day?"

Val Douglas was suddenly motionless. He had started to light up, and now his hands stopped with the match half way to his cigarette. Without moving his head he glanced at Dunn, then at Gil Baker, who tried to signal him something by the narrowing of an eye. The match went out, unguarded.

The 94 wagon boss relaxed. "Me and Gil split off, about three miles from the home corral," he said.

"Yet," said the sheriff, "you never told your boss where you'd been, or why you changed your plans!"

Douglas struck a fresh match. "I'm wagon boss," he said shortly. "When Dunn says count cows, we count cows. But nobody tells me where to ride—they ask me where to ride."

The sheriff stared at him; then he grinned, wholeheartedly, without pretense. "We'll go over to Judge Shafer's office now," he said. "But take my advice. Talk over your story—and try to get together on it!"

CHAPTER VI

Outside, Horse Dunn turned to Billy Wheeler. "Guess you better get Marian. This here's the part I want her to see."

Marian was waiting in the side street to which Horse Dunn had sent her with his car; and to the grim weariness of Billy Wheeler, Val Douglas was there, helping her wait. Wheeler walked to the door of the car, a tall, narrow-hipped figure, with a deceptively lazy stride.

"We're starting now," he said.

"You run on, Val," Marian said. "I want to talk to Billy."

"Sure, hon." The wagon boss shot Wheeler a glance like a straight



"Billy, Don't! Can't We Be Friends?"

left, and went his way, leisurely swaggering.

She looked at him sadly.

"Billy, there's something I want to say, too."

Wheeler looked at her. The blue of her eyes seemed strikingly fresh and cool in the dusty heat.

"It's just this: I'd give anything in the world if I could testify for you. But I just didn't see it the way—the way it seemed to you."

"I didn't ask you to speak for me," he reminded her.

"Billy, don't! Can't we be friends? Can't we?"

"No," he said.

"But why? Can't you see—"

He looked her in the eyes, and said slowly, "If I can't have all of you, then I don't want any of you at all. Do you understand that?"

He thought she colored, very faintly. "Suppose I don't choose to understand that?"

"Then swing wide," he heard himself say. "Swing wide and stay clear! And I shouldn't have to tell you that again."

There was a peculiar gleam in her cool, amazingly clear eyes. "I don't think you're so dangerous," she said.

"I don't know what you mean."

She dropped her voice into a drawl, mocking his own. "I mean—if you and I were left afoot, on some far mountain, at night, all alone with only one blanket between us—I shouldn't be afraid of anything happening, not anything at all."

He turned on her, low-voiced. "Then," he said, "you're a fool!"

He snapped the car door open.

Marian Dunn hesitated a moment more; then stepped out of the car and walked ahead of him up the street.

Henry Shafer, justice of what peace was left, was a limited little man, mild and watery of eye. He had spent all his life in this one town, and he had never made any enemies because he had never taken sides. So finally he had got himself elected to office.

His office, in which they now gathered, was an exceedingly small frame structure; three or four wooden steps led up from the sidewalk to the door, and upon the window were painted the words "Real Estate, Insurance, and Justice of the Peace."

Horse Dunn—his great size made the room suddenly seem even smaller than it was—shouldered in

without greeting to anyone. He shot a contemptuous glance about the walls, which were decorated with a parcel post map, a calendar advertising tick dip, and stains from leaks in the roof; then planted himself facing the door with his back against the wall—an instinctive provision. Shafer jumped up and hustled around the table to place a chair for Marian at the end opposite himself, and when this was done the remainder of the room filled rapidly with sombreroed men.

Link Bender was there, looking hard-bitten and taciturn, and so was Rufe Deane, a green-eyed man with heavy sorrel eyebrows and a storm-carved face; the lanky Pinto Halliday took up an uncomfortable position in the corner by the door. And there were other cattlemen, and some of the cowboys and line riders from the outfits of these men, cramming what little space was left.

Horse Dunn growled into Wheeler's ear, "Wish Bob Flagg could see this. Anything like this always tickled him."

"I take it this is the case against William Wheeler," said Shafer unnecessarily. "Who's prosecuting this case?"

The sheriff said, "I am, Judge. The district attorney's gone up-state to sit in on the Democratic committee, like you know."

"I see here," said Shafer, fussing with papers, "you got him charged with resisting an officer; bearing arms against authority; assault; assault with intent to kill."

"What about assault on horseback?" said Billy Wheeler.

"Never heard of it," said Shafer. Sheriff Amos looked disgusted.

"Let's get on with it."

"William Wheeler, do you plead guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty."

"What seems to have gone on here?" Shafer asked Amos.

"Judge," said Walt Amos, "since this ruckus on Short Creek there's been a lot of people trampling around there, gumming up the evidence. So we made deputies of Pinto Halliday and Kid Bender, and we sent 'em to Short Creek to keep fellers out of there. Now yesterday this Wheeler come prowling around there, and when the Kid told him to beat it, he wouldn't go. The Kid tried to argue with him, but this feller got tough, and they had words. The upshot was, Wheeler drew his gun and fired. He—"

Wheeler broke in. "Well, of all the infernal—"

"Keep quiet," said Shafer. The 94 men exchanged glances.

"Well," the sheriff went on, "he didn't hit anything, but the flash of the gun was right under the nose of the Kid's horse, and she reared over backwards on him. The Kid come out of it with concussion of the brain, fracture of the leg and two busted ribs. I got his sworn statement here."

"Now, now! You can't put that in," Wheeler objected. "Either you have to let me cross-examine him, or you can't put in his statement at all."

"Well, we'll see what it says, anyway," Shafer decided. "Justice is what we're after here!"

Amos now produced and read aloud Kid Bender's statement—a repetition of his own.

"You got any questions, Wheeler?"

Wheeler was appalled. It had not occurred to them that Bender's people would attempt so bald-faced a lie. What had started out as a sample of irritable officiousness had suddenly taken on unknown possibilities. Angering, Wheeler promised himself that once Horse Dunn was extricated he would clean house in this county if it took half of all he had.

"The Kid isn't here to be questioned," he snapped.

"I'll call Pinto Halliday," Amos said.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Fountain Pens Affected by Altitude, According to an Official of Airline

Old Man Altitude still holds a decided edge over the fountain pen manufacturers, according to an official of an airline corporation.

The challenge of high altitudes has been accepted by at least two of the largest pen designers in the world, and to date the decision has always gone to the rarefied air. Despite the best efforts of pen manufacturers over a period of several years, fountain pens still insist on discharging ink on people who are careless in opening them above 5,000 feet.

In the early days of air transportation, when the problem was still new to the fountain pen industry, a fountain pen could be depended upon to act as a real fountain and provide the writer with a spurt. Since those days most manufacturers have succeeded in improving their product so the actual spurt is eliminated but no one has been entirely successful in eliminating profuse leakage.

The reason for this is that the fountain pen, filled at normal altitudes on the ground, has pressure

within a sac equal to the pressure outside the case. As the pen is carried aloft the outside air pressure decreases while that within the pen remains the same. The result is constant pressure within the pen tending to force the ink out—in spurts whenever the passage is imperfect.

Aggravating the situation is the fact that present day transport planes operate at altitudes almost invariably above 8,000 feet whereas the old-time transports seldom exceeded 5,000 feet except in unusual weather or wind conditions.

Many people have thrown away perfectly good pens under these circumstances, convinced they had in some way been ruined, but it's only altitude.

Trinidad Gold

The famous Sir Walter Raleigh explored Trinidad for gold unsuccessfully in the year 1595. Three hundred years later gold was found in large quantities in Trinidad quite close to the scene of his digging operations.

Clothes Due for a College Course

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



Pattern 1470

FOR going-away-to-school daughters the hectic days have come that are tense with the excitement of assembling a voguish, and as practical as voguish, wardrobe that will carry them through with sartorial honors on campus, in classroom and at college "prom."

Thinking in terms of the college girl who must rank high in swank and at the same time look to the practical in clothes, we are reminded of the stunning costume suits and the smart sports outfits and the glamorous evening gowns displayed recently at the jubilee fashion pageant presented in the open-air lagoon theater on the lake front by the Apparel Style Creators of the wholesale district of Chicago. A full-length cape costume was featured that represents exactly what a college girl should have in way of an outfit that will serve faithfully and dramatically through the months to come.

See this good-looking cape costume pictured to the left in the illustration. The newest thing in suits or in costume ensemble is the long-cape model. Very practical are these types since the long cape may be worn all through the autumn as a separate wrap with other outfits and with one-piece frocks. The ensemble here shown is fashioned of handsome black woolen with deep yoke collar of black Persian on the cape and a pocket of matching fur on the dress. So well thought of are long cape types many jacket suits add full-length capes, thus achieving an interchangeable outfit that will vary the dress program according to the mood of its wearer. The costume ensemble that can be given varied personality via accessories and interchangeable items is well worth considering when assembling a college wardrobe.

And here's another hint on fashion trends that leads to style supremacy for the college girl. It pertains to the lavish use of fur on the new fall suits and coats. Full-length plastron or tuxedo fronts of fur will immediately class your coat as being distinctly of this year's vintage. The same applies to suits. See the model centered in the group. It is indicative of the new fur opulence decreed for fall and winter.

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"By the time I came out of the cut I was closer—not over a hundred yards."

"How long after the shot was that?"

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"What'll you take for the horse?"

"Huh?"

"If that horse went 200 yards and climbed out of a draw in five seconds, he sure must be a streak of light!"

"Well, maybe it was ten or fifteen seconds."

"And what did you say I had smoking in my hand, all this time?"

"A gun, by God!"

Shafer looked doubtful. "Well—what you got to say, Wheeler?"

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"The only thing I resisted was getting shot."

"Well, call your witnesses."

"I'm not calling any."

Shafer looked surprised; he glanced at Marian Dunn. "I thought—"

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"A gun, by God!"

Shafer looked doubtful. "Well—what you got to say, Wheeler?"

"I plead self defense, Judge," said Wheeler. "Kid Bender made a surprise draw; I grabbed his bit and raised his horse up to make him miss. But it was his own gun going off that made his horse go over. I pulled my gun and stood ready in case he took another shot at me; but I didn't fire, then or any time."

"What was the idea resisting an officer in the first place?" Shafer said.

"The only thing I resisted was getting shot."

"Well, call your witnesses."

"I'm not calling any."

Shafer looked surprised; he glanced at Marian Dunn. "I thought—"

"I move this case be dismissed," said Wheeler.

"You move what?" Shafer demanded. "You know darn well I can't dismiss it! What becomes of this country if—"

"This is a mighty serious offense, Judge," Amos said. "The law calls for as high as five years for a thing like this. We got to bind him over to district court, naturally. But what we want is to hold him without bail. We—"

Wheeler ignored him. "Halliday," he said, "how far away were you when you heard the shot fired?"

"I'd say about 300 yards."

"Yet right away you saw this smoke from my gun—three hundred yards away? That gun sure must have sent up a smudge!"

"By the time I came out of the cut I was closer—not over a hundred yards."

"How long after the shot was that?"

"I'd say about five seconds."

"What'll you take for the horse?"

"Huh?"

"If that horse went 200 yards and climbed out of a draw in five seconds, he sure must be a streak of light!"

"Well, maybe it was ten or fifteen seconds."

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"I move