

Cattle Kingdom

By **ALAN LEMAY**

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WNU Service

CHAPTER XIV

The early sun was upon the broad main street of Inspiration as Billy Wheeler drove Horse Dunn's touring car into the little town. Old Man Coffee was in the back seat, this time without any of his dogs. Marian, who had been dozing against Billy's shoulder, sat up and looked at the vacant street with a detached curiosity. It seemed strange to see the street so empty and silent, where last they had seen it full of knotted groups of men. No stealthy movement in doorways this time, no eyes covertly watching them from under ten-gallon hats—nothing but clean horizontal sunlight on quiet dust, as if nothing lived in this place at all.

Marian said, "You still don't want to tell me what you're going to do?"

"It isn't that I don't want to tell you. It's just that it's—it's got to come to you in another way."

"This is a dramatic thing—rather a terrible thing," Marian said, "this coming to the end of a killer's trail."

"Don't look at it that way. I want you to think of this thing with all the impartiality you can. You know now that our western code is a different code. Not the six-gun code of the old days, nor the wild kind of thing some people have tried to make out of it, such as never existed here or any place else. But just a kind of a way of going about things that is bred into dry country men—the way of each man making his own right and wrong, each man looking only to himself for approval in the end. Maybe—you're only going to learn the story of a kind of—a kind of private execution; maybe by a man who believed with all his heart that he was in the right."

She looked at him wondering for a minute; she had never heard him talk in that way before. "Billy, Billy, don't you trust me to face out anything, even yet? Don't you think I have any courage at all?"

"I trust your courage more than I've ever trusted anything in my life. Or you wouldn't be here now."

Wheeler drove through the town and turned up a side street to the house where Sheriff Walt Amos lived. Leaving Marian and Old Man Coffee in the car he walked around the little house to the back door; there was a smell of breakfast cooking here, and Walt Amos himself was souzing water over his face and hair at a wash bench beside a pump. The young sheriff straightened up and stared at Wheeler for a long moment through dripping water. "Hardly expected to see you here."

"I've come to make a deal with you," Wheeler said.

"Don't hardly seem there's any deal to be made between you and me. Horse Dunn isn't going out on bail. Get it out of your head." Amos began to dry his face and hair.

"This is something else," Wheeler said. "You've wanted me out of this picture. You've wanted me out of it from the start. You know why, and there's no need for you to go into why."

"I got enough troubles on this range," Amos said, "without outside capital pitching in to make things worse for the common run of cowmen."

"In short, you and your gang has been afraid I'd help Dunn save the 94. You tried to railroad me, here in Judge Shafer's court—but you didn't get away with it. Maybe you've got other things in mind to try, to get me out of the way of your plans. I don't know anything about that."

"People from outside, that figure to throw in against the best interests of this range—" Amos began.

"All right. Now you've got a chance to get rid of me. You give me what I want and I'll promise you I'll be out of this killing case within 24 hours."

"You haven't got any official standing in this case to begin with," Amos pointed out.

"You'd like to see me drag my freight, just the same! And here's how you can get it done."

"Well?"

"Old Man Coffee and Horse Dunn's niece are here with me. Give us an hour to talk to Horse Dunn alone. That's the proposition and all of the proposition."

"And if I do that you'll pull out of here?"

"Within 24 hours. I'll stay out until the killing case against Horse Dunn is cleared up, one way or another. After that maybe I'll come back to the 94 and maybe I'll help it with its finance; I don't say one way or the other. But if you want me out of it for the time being, here's your chance."

"There's a hook in this some place," Amos said. "But I'll take a chance. Horse Dunn's in the jail, where he belongs. I'll take you there and I'll give you an hour."

The inspiration jail was tiny, but it was perhaps the most modern thing in the town. It sat by itself on a rise of ground 200 yards be-

hind Walt Amos' house, which was the nearest dwelling.

In structure it was a 20-foot square cube of concrete, with tiny air holes near the roof, and an iron door. Within was an inner cage of steel bars, separated from the outer shell, all the way around, by a corridor four feet wide. The place had no great capacity, but it would have been a double job for a good cracksmen to make his way out.

Old Man Coffee was reluctant to visit Horse Dunn here. "Don't hardly seem fitting."

"There's a special reason I want you to come, for a minute or two."

"Have it your own way."

Sheriff Walt Amos swung wide the outer door. "I'm putting you on your honor not to try any funny business," he said. "But in case of doubt—just remember how easy it would be to cut loose on you from the house!"

"You talk like a child," said Coffee.

It seemed strange, Billy Wheeler thought, that the old king of cattle, the man who could not only dream a cow kingdom but make it live, was to be found standing here in a two-by-four jail. Yet, within the black



Then "Speak Out, Man!" He Said.

shadows of concrete and steel Horse Dunn towered bigger than ever, straighter than ever; he seemed, not an old man at the end of his rope, but a young giant, easy in his strength. The great sense of latent power that radiated from Horse Dunn made it seem that he only waited here within these cramped walls because he wilfully used his own great body as a pawn, laid in hazard while he awaited his advantage.

But there were tears in Marian's eyes.

Horse Dunn grinned upward and about him at the steel and concrete. The walls could not shame him—it was he who shamed the walls. "A thousand miles of range have to be held by money and cows and men—not by a little tin contrivance palmed off on the county by some hardware salesman. You think they can hold me here an hour, once I decide to move out?"

No one answered him. There where the daylight could hardly enter, the silence had a way of descending sharply, like the closing of iron doors. After a little of that quiet no one could forget that a man had been found dead in the Red Sleep, and another at Ace Springs, and still another at the head of a gorge without a name.

Wheeler knew that Old Man Coffee's eyes were watching him, waiting for him to speak. He drew a deep breath and broke the silence.

"Horse," he said, "the whole works has been—kind of stood on its head, since I saw you last."

Horse Dunn's voice rumbled. "Well, that's good!"

Wheeler's voice was very low; he found that he could hardly speak. "No, Horse; it isn't good. This is maybe the worst thing that any of us have come to, ever, in all our long trails."

Held in that sharp, hard silence that could clamp down so suddenly here they could feel the chill of the walls. Wheeler was seeking a way to go on.

Marian was holding her uncle's hand against her cheek, and now Horse drew his hand away. "Billy," he said; and hesitated. Then, "Speak out, man!" he said at last.

"Two-three different things have happened," Wheeler said. "Marian and I found Lon Magoon dead, a little way back in the hills. Coffee, here, he went to Pahranaagat—"

"How'd Magoon die?" Horse Dunn asked.

Wheeler would not be turned aside. "I guess that don't so much matter, Horse, in view of a couple of other things. For one thing, Marian had her horse shot out from under her, in plain light, back in the hills. I've been thinking a while

lot, Horse," he went on, "about how anybody would ever come to take a shot at her. Now—I think I know."

"What are you coming to, boy?" Horse Dunn said.

"Horse—I know who killed Marian's pony last night; and know why."

He saw Horse Dunn's big shaggy head sway and tip a little to one side as the old man sought to peer more closely into Wheeler's eyes. "If you know that—" he began.

Wheeler's voice was flat and relaxed with utter certainty. "You know I do, Horse."

Billy Wheeler could hear his own blood beating in his ears, like a far-off Indian drum; and this time the silence was a terrible silence, unendurable to those gathered there. "Coffee," Horse Dunn said in an unnatural voice, "I'll talk to this boy alone."

Perhaps some faint persistent hope that he was wrong had lasted somewhere in Billy Wheeler's mind. But when Horse Dunn told Old Man Coffee to go out, Wheeler knew that he had not been wrong, but that they were at the end.

Old Man Coffee moved quickly, with the smooth, sliding stride of one of his own lion hounds. He was glad to be out of there. For a moment the young sun splashed through the open door with the brilliance of a powder flare-up; then the half-dark closed again as Coffee let the door swing shut behind him. They heard the crunch of his heels in the dirt as he walked off down the side of the hill.

"You go too, Marian," Horse Dunn said softly. "Billy and I want to—"

"You want her to stay here, Horse, I think."

"Stay here?" The old man's voice was blurred by a strange and unaccustomed uncertainty. "You want her to stay here?"

"It's you that needs her here," Wheeler told him. Then after a moment he said, almost inaudibly—"Tell her, Horse."

An odd back light from one of the high ventilators outlined Dunn's big shaggy head and the sweep of a great shoulder, but his eyes they could not see. As he spoke it seemed that it was not the big old fighter who stood there, but an old man as vaguely bewildered as a child. "Tell her?" he said dimly. "You want me to tell her—"

Once more the silence descended, brutal, complete; it held on endlessly, as if no one of them was ever going to be able to break it again. And still Horse Dunn did not speak nor move, but stood like a frozen man, a great shadowy figure just beyond the bars. Billy Wheeler tried to say something, anything, to break that terrible taut stillness; but he could not.

Suddenly Marian Dunn stumbled forward, against the bars. She reached through, drew Horse Dunn's wrists through the barrier, and hid her face in his two great hands. Her voice came to them choked and smothered.

"I didn't know—I didn't know—"

Horse Dunn's words shuddered as he cried out—"What—what didn't you know?"

"That you—could love me—so much . . ."

Wheeler saw the old fighter sway; but in a moment he was steady again. He spoke across Marian's bent head, and his voice had a hard edge. "You don't know what you're talking about. Old Man Coffee has been loading you with— Look here; is he in on this?"

"I'm virtually certain he knows, though he figured it out different than I did."

"Figured out what? Spit it out, man!"

"Horse," said Wheeler with more sadness in his voice than he had ever known in the world before, "I can name you every step of—"

Horse Dunn's voice blazed up.

Stones Run Back to Roman Occupation; to Be Used in London Transport Memorial

London Transport has decided to erect a memorial to a Roman Procurator, who will be commemorated by two stones built into the wall of the sub-station at Tower Hill.

When the Metropolitan half of the Inner Circle railway was extended to the Tower of London station in 1882, 73 feet of Roman wall were destroyed. The only consolation for the loss, says the London Times, is that the wall was photographed carefully. It is shown by the Commissioners for Historical Monuments in their third volume on Roman London. The link with the District railway at Mansion House was completed in 1884, whereupon the Tower station was closed and Mark Lane station took its place. The site remained undisturbed until recently, when a sub-station was built on the cutting to the east of the old Tower station.

A rich store of Roman remains

breaking restraint. "In God's name, how did you find out?"

"From something Marian said. After the first shot at her, she said, 'I'm glad it happened. I can't tell you why.' I know now what she meant by that. Those shots proved to her that no one who loved her was mixed up in the Short Crick works. And today it suddenly came to me that just to fix that idea in her mind might have been reason enough for dropping those shots near her. Then I remembered the night when you taped up your ankle where it was skinned, and spoke of straightening your spur. Of course, a spur doesn't skin a man's ankle bone. Some boot weapon would have to do that; and a derringer would have fitted in—a derringer carrying a shotgun shell. The shot in the saddle fooled Coffee, for awhile; it looked to him like it came from farther away than the horses had stood apart, and made him think there was a third man. But I just happened to think that the shot could have come from a short, weak gun with the same effect. Well—"

Wheeler finished—"Coffee has been to Pahranaagat; he found out that Flagg came through there like a bum."

"Dear God," Horse Dunn whispered. "It's—the end of the rope." He pulled his hands away, and began to pace the two strides that the cell permitted—back and forth, back and forth.

"Marian," Wheeler begged, "tell him you see—"

Marian raised her face, surprisingly in command of herself again. Her voice was steady. "I do see it! I see it all!"

Dunn's pacing stopped; he raised big shaking hands, pleading hands. "And yet you—you ain't—you don't think—"

Marian cried out to him—and there was pain in her voice, but there was glory in it, too—"I think nobody ever loved anybody so much as you have proved you love me!"

"I—I can't hardly believe"—Horse Dunn sagged down onto the bare steel cot within his cell. "Marian, if you're telling me that you—you know—and yet you're backing me, still—"

The girl was pressed against the bars that kept her from him. "I'm telling you that I believe in you with all my heart!"

Horse Dunn stood up slowly, like a man in a dream.

He said, "How much have you told her, boy?"

"She knows only what she's guessed, I think. The rest of the story has to come from you."

The boss of the 94 appeared to consider for what seemed a long time. "I—I don't know as I can make out to do that. Life hasn't gone easy, or smooth, with me. Other times, long ago, I've faced down other men, more men than these. But I swear I never raised gun to any man, without he got his break! I stood with empty hands, always, until their guns showed."

"She has to know it all," Billy insisted; "from the very beginning."

"I can't hardly expect her to understand how it come up. Those shots I threw so close to her—that's the crazy part, that a man can't hardly explain. I couldn't ever have done it, if I didn't know for certain that I could put a slug into a two-bit piece at a hundred yards—ten out of ten, easy as you'd put your finger on a nail. It seems a wild and crazy thing, even to me. But—I tell you, never a man lived that could throw the fear into me that this kid has always been able to—just on the scare that she'd quit me. And I thought if there was one thing she'd be sure of on earth, it was that I'd give my life to save the least hair of her head from harm. And I took that way; so that she'd always be dead certain, what-ever might happen or be proved later, that it couldn't be true that it was me killed Flagg."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Push Gobbler as National Bird



Los Angeles, Calif.—The American eagle will have to give up his job to the turkey gobbler, if the Northwestern Turkey Growers association gets its way. Senators and congressmen of 14 states were asked to make the turkey the national bird at the next session of congress. It was argued that the turkey, besides being the symbol of Thanksgiving, is native to America. Misses Edith Lawrence (left) and Pat Gergen are pictured above showing how the turkey would look in the eagle's place against the American shield.

Ye Council Eats Right Well After Ye Slick Barter

Deer Is Thanksgiving Meal and Indian Is Goat.

IF AMERICANS this Thanksgiving are well able to appease both their consciences and their appetites, their moral dexterity is no better than that of their forebears on the town council at Danvers, Mass., in the year 1714. Venison, rather than turkey, made up the piece de resistance on a Thanksgiving feast there, but religious complications arose, as recorded by Rev. Lawrence Conant, of that city:

"After ye blessing was craved by Mr. Garrich of Wrentham, word came that ye buck was shot on ye



Mr. Shepard's conscience was tender, and so was poor Pequot's back.

Lord's day by Pequot, an Indian, who came to Mr. Epes with a lye in his mouth like Ananias of old. "Ye council therefore refused to eat ye venison, but it was afterward decided that Pequot should receive forty stripes save one, for lying and profaning ye Lord's day, restore Mr. Epes ye cost of ye deer, and con-

sidering this a just and rightful sentence on ye heathen, and that a blessing had been craved on ye meat, ye council all partook of it but Mr. Shepard, whose conscience was tender on ye point of ye venison."

In nearby Boston a few years later the arrival of autumn with its storing of the winter supply of salt



Bear meat is no longer generally available for the Thanksgiving dinner.

pork brought mingled thanksgiving and chagrin to a boy named Benjamin Franklin, who often became restless during the long graces which accompanied Massachusetts meals. So one day after the pork had been dutifully stored away, he suggested that if his father would only "say grace over the whole cask, once for all, it would be a vast saving of time."

In the latter half of the same century, whenever a feast was in order in the back country of Virginia and the Carolinas, young Daniel Boone or some other hunter would go out to find venison or bear meat to mix with pork in the habitual "great stew" of such a celebration. With it were served roast pork or bear or broiled venison.

Bear and venison are no longer generally available for the Thanksgiving dinner, but turkey is still one of its mainstays.



A Thanksgiving Prayer

For what we have, though small it be,
We thank thee, Lord.
For the simple joys of serenity,
We thank thee, Lord.
For the gentle touch of the friendly hand
Of those who love and understand,
We thank thee, Lord.

Of all thy gifts the greatest three
Are friendship, love and fidelity.
Let others pray for the harvest's yields,
For the golden grains of the fruitful fields,
Humbly our prayer to thee we send
That when we've reached our journey's end,
Someone may say, "Farewell, good friend."



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Men Who Do

When I look at history I see it as man's attempt to solve the practical problem of living. The men who did most to solve it were not those who thought about it or talked about it or impressed their contemporaries, but those who silently and efficiently got on with their work.—J. B. S. Haldane.

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