



By ALAN LE MAY

## INSTALLMENT 2

## THE STORY SO FAR:

Dusty King and Lew Gordon were joint owners of the vast King-Gordon range which stretched from Texas to Montana. When building up this string of ranches, they continually had to fight the unscrupulous Ben Thorpe. Thorpe announced the auctioning of the Crying Wolf.

## CHAPTER II

An hour spent in the Wells Fargo office with the deputy commissioner, filling out forms, signing papers, ended as Dusty King and Bill Roper stood with Lew Gordon on the board walk. It was the first time the three had had a word alone since the Crying Wolf had passed into the hands of King-Gordon.

"Well," said Dusty King, "we got her."

"Maybe," Gordon said, "this is our chance. Maybe now we can get the cow business on a sound basis, here in the north, and have some order, and decent law."

"You'll never get a 'sound basis' until Ben Thorpe is bust," Dusty said. "What law enforcement we got in the West is rotten through and through with office holders that Thorpe owns."

"Some day," Gordon said slowly, "Ben Thorpe has got to go."

"Some day? Lew, we've got him beat!"

King's exuberant mood of victory was not to be dampened. "You want law and order?" he chortled. "We'll show 'em law and order!"

"That puts me in mind," said Gordon. "A feller passed me this here to give to you." He handed Dusty King a little twisted scrap of paper, torn off the corner of something else. Dusty untangled it, looked at it a moment, showed it to the others. Five words were penciled on it in sprawling black letters:

## IN GOD'S NAME LOOK OUT

"Who's this from, Lew?"

Gordon's lips moved almost soundlessly. "Dry Camp Pierce."

Roper knew that name, without knowing what lengths of outlawry had brought Dry Camp Pierce to where he was today. Rewards backed by Ben Thorpe were on Dry Camp's scalp over half the West; probably it was as much as his life was worth to show himself in Ogallala now.

"This note—" Dusty King tossed it off with a shrug. "Oh—I suppose Thorpe is getting drunk some place and spouting off about what all he's going to do to me, when he catches up." Dusty's teeth showed in his infectious grin. "I suppose Dry Camp thought I ought to know about it."

"He's right, Dusty," Lew Gordon said. "We do want to look out, all of us, all the time."

"We always had to look out," Dusty scoffed.

"It'll be the more so now. There isn't anything in the world Ben Thorpe's people will stop at, Dusty."

"Let 'em come on."

"We want to look out," Gordon said again.

"If you feel that way about it," said Dusty, "what was the idea of your working through that law we can't wear guns in town?"

Bill Roper said, "We could have brought it to an open shoot-out, five years ago—ten years ago. Better if we had."

Gordon shook his head. "Nothing ever gets fixed up with guns."

Dusty King pulled his hat a little more on one side so that he could wink at Bill Roper unobserved. But he said, "He's partly right, Bill. Ben Thorpe isn't just one man any more. Walk Lasham—Cleve Tanner—any one of a dozen others could step into his shoes. It's a whole rotten organization has to be busted up."

"Ben Thorpe downed, and they'll quit," Bill Roper thought.

"Ben Thorpe downed, and it's only begun," Dusty countered. "Get it out of your head that you can fix anything up by downing Ben Thorpe. Not while this organization stands in one piece. Might be a good idea for you to remember that, Bill, in case anything happens."

"Dusty," Bill said, "if ever they get you, by God, I'll get Ben Thorpe if it's the last—"

"No," said Dusty. "You hear me? No. If they get me—you'll remember what I said. You remember you're fighting a thing, and a big one; not just one man." His face crinkled in that familiar, contagious grin. "Forget it! Dry Camp's spooky, that's all."

He hooked an arm through his partner's, and went swaggering off. Ten paces down the walk he stopped, turned, and came back. He leaned close to Roper. "If anything should happen, kid—remember what I said."

## CHAPTER III

That Lew Gordon had a daughter was not so surprising as that he had only one. Single-minded, he clung all his life to the memory of the wife he had lost when their first child was born.

Jody Gordon was twenty now. She didn't exactly run Lew Gordon; nobody did that. But it was fairly apparent that his stubborn bid for supremacy in western cattle was intended in her behalf, and without her would have been meaningless to him.

Because Gordon hadn't wanted his girl filtering around through the



W.N.U. Release

## Flower-Edged Hats, Parasols, Latest Wedding Innovations

By CHERIE NICHOLAS



PROSPECTIVE brides and bridegrooms usually plan the floral color schemes for the wedding party together, since the groom is responsible for the bouquets carried by the bride and her attendants.

Fashions in fresh flower arrangements promise brides of summer 1941 the utmost in beauty. White iris combined with white gaudoli in a bridal bouquet tied with lace will be a favorite for the early summer wedding and orchids, lilies, roses, stock and sweet peas in modern or old-fashioned bouquets will be in demand for bridal parties throughout the summer.

Whether a wedding emulates one of the periods of past history or anticipates next year's styles, there are enchanting headresses and bouquets that any bride will delight in selecting. Corsages of lilies, fragrant carnations and roses with rose geranium leaves as a background are quaint looking. Carnations, used in modern scroll arrangements, make a bouquet that even the most budget-minded bride can afford.

There was a long, motionless silence; he kept his eyes on the far sand hills as presently she leaned forward to look up into his face.

"You really mean it, don't you?" Jody said.

Jody's words came very faint, and a little breathless.

"Why didn't you say so before?"

He looked at her then, and she wasn't laughing. In her eyes was a new, grave light, such as he had never seen; a warm light, a beloved light, better than sunset to a weary day-rider who has worked leather since before dawn. Timorously, but very willingly, she came into his arms; and he held her as if she were not only a very precious but a very fragile thing. For a little while it seemed that one trail, a trail longer than the Long Trail itself, had come to its end.

"Can't believe," he said at last, his lips in her hair, "you're sure enough mine."

"All yours—all, all."

They had one hour, there in the prairie lookout tower, discovering each other, getting acquainted as if for the first time. The sun went down in a gorgeous welter of color.

Jody shivered a little. "I wish Dad and Dusty would come. Especially Dusty."

"Why?"

He has so many enemies. Some of them are dangerous as diamond-backs. It worries me when he's due and doesn't get back."

"Dusty'll take care of himself." Bill Roper chuckled, and held her closer.

One half hour more . . .

Up from the town came a crazily ridden horse, splashing mud everywhere under the urge of spur and quirt.

"He'll lame his pony if he goes down in that slick," Bill commented. "Now what do you suppose—"

The rider tried to pull up in front of the house, and the frantic pony swerved and slid, mouth wide open to the sky. Its shoulder crashed the fence, taking down a dozen feet of pickets. The rider tumbled off, ran up the steps to hammer on the door.

Roper went clattering down the stairs, pulled open the door. "Now listen, you—"

"Bill—Dusty—Mr. King—he—"

Bill Roper froze, and there was a long moment of paralyzed silence.

"Sip it out, man!" Roper shouted at him.

"Bill—he's daid!"

"Who—who—"

Dusty King's daid Bill, they gunned him — they gunned him down!"

"Who did?"

"Tain't known. Mr. Gordon's there; he—"

Bill Roper walked out past the cowboy stiffly, like a man gone blind. Without knowing what he did he walked down to the gate, and stood gripping the pickets with his two hands.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

White with a splash of daring color is an important style message for summer. The white flannel outfit here pictured tallies perfectly with this idea. The white skirt has a red and white polka dot blouse, topped with a white flannel jacket, belted at the waistline. White pig-skin bag, doeskin gloves and chic white hat complete the ensemble.

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