

# THE SMOKY YEARS

By ALAN LE MAY W.N.U. Release

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 ri-

**CHAPTER V—Continued**  
Bill glanced at Jody, and her startled face was very lovely, high-lighted by the little fire. He laced his hands together to stop their shaking. "Toni, I told you father what I'm going to do. My idea is to give Thorpe his own medicine, and force it down him until he's finished; a wild bunch of our own, tougher than his, made up of men that hate him to the ground."

"And then—?"  
"Raid and counter-raid, and what he's taken, take back! Until his credit busts, and his varmints drop from around him, and he's just one man, so that another man can walk against him with a six-gun, and know that when that's done he's finished for sure . . ."

"Bill, are you crazy? You can't— you can't—"  
His voice was bleak; it could hardly be heard. He was looking at his hands. "We've talked too many years of what couldn't be done, or how. Until now, Dusty's out there tonight, under that stone pile—and still nothing to be done. I reckon it's my turn to ride, now."

"But—all his outfits—his sheriffs, his men—"  
"They'll quit, as he breaks. I'm going after Cleve Tanner first, in the Big Bend; and when I'm through with him, Thorpe won't be able to throw a feeder herd on the trail. Then Walk Lasham, in the north, where they're already hurt for lack of the Crying Wolf—until—"

His words were monotonous, but Jody Gordon, bred and born to the gaunt Texan plains, knew what a wild bunch was, and what it meant to go against Ben Thorpe by his own means.

Jody said, "And—what about us?"  
"Jody, I was hoping—I was hoping you'd swing with me."

"What way is there for me to swing with you?"

"This may take a long time; but it won't take forever. Some day all these war clouds will be cleared away. And—if you could see it my way, maybe you'd let me come back to you then."

There seemed to be no breath in Jody's voice. "I'm supposed to wait around, and think well of you, while you gang with the wild bunch in a crazy, useless feud that you can't win?"

In the uncertain light of the fire Bill Roper's eyes could not be seen; his face was a mask painted by the embers. He found nothing that he could say.

Suddenly Jody flared up. Her eyes blazed, and her hair streamed back from her face as she sat up, as if she rode in the wind.

"You can't, you can't! I won't let you—it isn't fair, nor right, nor decent—"

"It's what I have to do."  
Jody stopped as if she had been struck. When she spoke again her voice was low and even, and so stony hard that he would not have recognized it.

"I don't believe you. I think tomorrow you'll be telling me that all this isn't so. But if you do mean it—if you go on and do as you say—then you and I are through, and I don't want to see you again, or hear your voice. We—we had everything, and you're throwing it all away . . ."

The freight caught the glint of her tears, and she turned away, head up, with a toss of her hair so that its brown mist hid her face from him.

Bill didn't say anything. He had turned gray-faced, and he stared into the coals. Presently, as he watched the fire, he saw again a rift of brush, in which a little boy hid like a rabbit; and a gently grinning face, that was through with grinning now. He thought of Dry Camp's story: "Seemed like he'd never fall . . ."

Roper got up silently, and went out of the house.

Lew Gordon was playing solitaire when Bill Roper got back to the little shack by the loading pens. Roper took off his hat, tossed it aside, and sat down.

"We can just as well figure up the terms of the split."

"What did Jody say?"

"She's quitting me, Lew."

"What the devil else can you expect her to do, if you go on with this wild, stubborn—"

"I couldn't expect anything else."

Lew Gordon looked baffled; obviously he had counted on Jody to turn back Bill Roper.

"You ready to draw up the terms?"

"Hardly seems it can be done in a minute. It'll take a few days to—"

"I'm leaving in the morning. My terms are few and simple. You can work out the details any way that suits yourself."

"Let's hear your idea of it."

"I don't figure to take much with me," Roper said. "But there are some things I need. First thing, I want seven of our camps in Texas."

Lew Gordon stared at the table, picked up a pencil, fidgeted with it. "Which ones?"

"I want the Pot Hook camp; and the winter camp of the Three Bar,

## INSTALLMENT IV THE STORY SO FAR:

valued King-Gordon in power and wealth, but he had gained his position through wholesale cattle rustling and gunplay. King outbid Thorpe in an auction of valuable grasslands; the same afternoon he was killed. Bill Roper, King's adopt-

ed son, found out that he had been shot down by Thorpe and two aides. Against the strong opposition of Gordon, Bill decided to start a cattle war against Thorpe. Bill went to tell his sweetheart, pretty Jody Gordon, about his plans.

and the southwest outpost of the old Bar-Circle. I want two of the border camps; Willow Crick will do for one, and the Dry Saddle Crossing will do for the other. I want the new Bull Wagon camp, and the K-G horse ranch at Stillwater."

"The brands are going to be terrible mixed up," Gordon said.

"I'm only taking such cattle as are running under odd brands; all our regular brands stay with you. I've placed my camps so that your stock can be worked as before. Except maybe the Pot Hook, and we'll come to some special deal—"

Gordon threw his pencil down. "You're not getting anything out of this that anybody can use," he declared.

"I think I'll know how to use it. Later on I'll send you a list of the northern camps I want; they'll amount to about the same as the ones I want in Texas."

"It sure sounds to me like you're wanting me to buy you out in cash," Gordon said. "And if that's what's

in your mind—I can't do it, Bill. There just ain't the money."

"There won't be any trouble about that. In Texas I may need up to fifty thousand dollars; but I don't have to have it all at once. It'll work out easy enough, Lew."

Even the rough provisional terms that they were noting here provided innumerable complications. In the next few hours, as they worked it out, many a consideration came up that Bill Roper hadn't thought of. It was near morning before Roper left to seek out Dry Camp Pierce to complete his plans.

**CHAPTER VI**

Bill Roper headed south shortly after sunrise. Today Dry Camp would be going east by railroad, beginning the long roundabout way which would bring him to Texas long before Bill. With his camps as a secure base, Pierce was to begin the missionary work which would lay the foundations for Bill Roper's wild bunch.

Lew Gordon had shaken hands with him gravely at his departure; an uncomfortable job for Bill, which he was glad to get over with. But Jody Gordon—he had not seen her again at all. He was thinking of her now as she had flared up at him the night before, warlike as a little eagle, but very lovely still, with the fire in her eyes.

Watchful always, he knew when, two miles off, a horseman dropped from a lookout just at the crest of a rise; and he knew that the rider had seen him and was moving to intercept his trail.

He did not have so long to wait as he had thought. No more than ten minutes had passed when the unknown rider came dusting around the shoulder of a sand hill and headed toward him at the dead run. Roper turned his horse backside to the approach and waited.

The rider was Jody Gordon.

She appeared to have taken to the saddle in a hurry, for she wasn't wearing chaps, or anything else she should have been riding in. What distance she had come she had come fast, for her pony's flanks were heaving.

"You sure punish that horse," he said.

"I've got no call to save him. I'm not going any place."

There was a little silence, awkward for Bill Roper, as she sat and looked at him. The lower lids of her eyes were violet, so that he knew she had not slept; but he could not read her faintly smoky eyes.

"Which ones?"

"I want the Pot Hook camp; and the winter camp of the Three Bar,

ed son, found out that he had been shot down by Thorpe and two aides. Against the strong opposition of Gordon, Bill decided to start a cattle war against Thorpe. Bill went to tell his sweetheart, pretty Jody Gordon, about his plans.

She was more pale than he had ever seen her, and the passivity of her face made her look like a little girl again.

"Sure sorry," he said, "that I didn't get to say good-by to you. Didn't seem like you were any place around."

"For a second or two the familiar twinkle seemed about to come into her eyes. 'Did you hunt real hard?'"

"Well—maybe I didn't. I guess it kind of seemed like we'd already said everything there was to be said."

"Maybe," she said slowly, "I didn't say everything I ought to have said. I want you to know this: When you ride out of my life there isn't going to be anything left in it."

"Jody," he said, "are you trying to turn me back now?"

Her only answer was a little hopeless motion of her hands.

"Your father and I put in four hours last night, roughing out the terms of my split from King-Gordon. Think back yourself—did you ever see me turned back from something I figured I ought to do?"

She shook her head, and her face had even less color than before.

"What did you say to my father?"

"That I—quit you."

"Well—didn't you?"

"Don't you know," she said crazily, "I wouldn't ever do that?"

He was silent, his eyes on his buckskin gloves as he adjusted his rope, the buckle of his rifle boot.

"I don't care anything about King-Gordon," Jody said. "I don't care whether you stay in King-Gordon, or get out, or where you go, or what you do. I'd go with you if you wanted me to go; and if you don't know that you don't know anything at all"

"Jody—you mean that?"

"In King-Gordon you were on the way to big things. But I don't care anything about that. Let the break-up with my father go through. Quit King-Gordon without two bits to your name. Take the least outpost camp there is under the brand, and let him have the rest. I'll go with you, and stay with you; and I'll help you in every way I can to build something of our own."

He wanted to say something, anything; but he found he could not speak at all.

Jody said, almost hysterically, "Aren't you ever going to say anything?"

Bill Roper mumbled to his saddle horn. "Didn't know you felt that way . . . Wouldn't ever be any call—any reason—for you to let go all holts like that."

She was leaning toward him now, her voice gentle, coaxing, very tender. "Our own little old outfit—any outfit, any place—don't you see what a happy place we could make that be? A place where we could plant trees near the water, and watch them grow into big trees; and we'd be there together—"

Roper shot a quick glance at Jody, and immediately sent his eyes away again, as far as they could reach. If he had looked at her again, perhaps he would have kicked his pony stirrup to stirrup with hers and picked her out of the saddle and kissed her mouth, and kept her close to him—then, and forever. But he sat motionless on his waiting pony.

"Look," he said at last—"Look—if you mean that, come with me. Come with me, now."

He could hardly hear her as she said, "Don't you think you ought to tell me where you're going?"

"Dry Camp Pierce is on his way, by a quicker way than mine is. If he don't fall down there'll be the start of a wild bunch waiting for me when I land in the Big Bend Country. I figure to take that bunch, and build to it, and add on. After that—well, you know what comes after that."

"And now, you're asking me to swing with that?"

"Jody, I've already told you what I've got to do."

The silence stretched out until you could have hung a saddle on it, and this time Bill's eyes were on Jody, and hers were on the saddle horn.

Slowly she shook her head.

After a minute he said, "I guess that settles it, doesn't it?"

"I guess it does."

Her face seemed blind, and she was like a ghost of Jody Gordon. Suddenly Bill Roper knew that if he did not take the trail he had chosen now, he would never take it at all.

"You sure, Jody? You won't come?"

Again she shook her head.

A long, loose end of Bill's rope was in his hand, though he never remembered taking it down. Hardly knowing what he did, he struck the spurs into the buckskin pony. The snap of the rope's end knocked a flying gout of fur from the rump of the black pack mule, and they were on the trail—the long trail, the dry trail, the trail of a hopeless war.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## FARM TOPICS

### PROTECT HORSES IN HOT WEATHER

Plenty of Water, Rest Help Prevent Overheating.

By J. L. EDMONDS  
(Chief, Horse Husbandry at University of Illinois, College of Agriculture.)

"Be kind to and as considerate of your horses as you would want to be treated yourself," is a safe rule to follow in handling work stock during hot weather.

Essentially the same rules which apply to the human being in hot weather also apply to the farm horse. Plenty of water and the proper feed, careful driving, sufficient rest and the prevention of overheating are the principal precautions to observe in caring for the hard-working horse in summer.

When horses are doing hard field work during hot weather, a barrel of water and a pail should be taken to the field so the horses can be watered once an hour.

Since the freely perspiring work horse has a high salt requirement, he will stand the heat better when liberally supplied with salt.

In extremely hot weather it may be necessary to reduce working hours and lighten the load. The noon rest period may be lengthened or work begun very early and stopped before noon. Some farmers have successfully worked their horses at night.

Like human beings, horses that are "off feed" should not be expected to do a hard day's work in summer, since it is too risky. Instead, such horses should be kept in the barn or on pasture where there is shade.

When the sweat "dries in," and the horse starts to pant and gets "wobbly" in his gait, he has been overworked. The careful horseman will stop and rest his team before this stage is reached. An overheated horse should be put into the shade, and cold water or ice bags applied to his head, spine and legs.

Serious cases of overheating are even difficult for experienced veterinarians to handle. Prevention is therefore especially important. Once the horse is overheated, even though he recovers, he is seldom able to do hard work during high temperatures.

### Veterinarians Urge 'War' Against Swine Diseases

The government's recent appeal for increased swine production as an aid to national defense has had one quick result in most rural communities—farmers are exerting new vigilance to guard against prevalent swine diseases which annually take a toll of nearly 30 per cent of the nation's hog population.

Hog cholera is being looked upon as "public enemy No. 1" in the current drive to reduce swine losses, because cholera kills more hogs than any other single disease.

Veterinarians and livestock officials are urging utmost possible vigilance against fresh epizootics this season, and prompt control measures wherever cholera may make its appearance. Symptoms of the disease include sluggishness, a tendency to pile up, partial or total prostration, fever, and scours. At the first signs of such symptoms a veterinarian should be called.

"The best insurance against this No. 1 swine killer is to have pigs vaccinated against cholera around weaning time," says the American Foundation for Animal Health report. "When pigs are young they require less serum and virus, and the immunization generally lasts until they are ready for market. Cholera generally strikes so swiftly and kills so quickly that there is little that a farmer can do, once his hogs are down with the disease. That is why immunization is the best insurance against cholera losses."

### Farm Notes

A silage crop can be grown, harvested and put in the silo for about \$2 a ton.

A cow must eat 100 pounds or more of grass daily to produce 20 to 25 pounds of milk.

Since the beginning of 4-H club work on a nation-wide basis, it has reached over 8,000,000 rural young people.

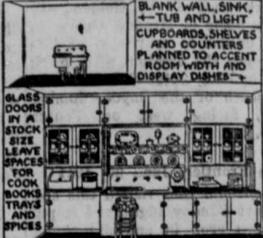
Hens lay about as many eggs during March, April, May and June as they do all the other eight months of the year.

Cows graze only 8 hours a day, no matter how luxuriant the pasturage, and spend 12 hours lying down, and 4 hours standing or walking around.

Bulls should be confined in pens as a safety measure, but to insure their value as herd sires, they should be fed hay and silage of as good quality as is available on the farm. The weight of the bull should be controlled by regulating the quantity of grain and roughage not by supplying feed of poor quality.

## NEW IDEAS for Home-makers

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



boards are 1 by 12-inch boards. These rest on the lower cupboards and are placed far enough apart to accommodate the glass doors. The 1 by 12-inch board across the room makes the top of the glass cupboards and the bottom of the upper cupboards. The ruffle trimmed shelf between the glass cupboards is 6 inches wide and the plate rail below it is made of two moulding strips.

NOTE: If you are fixing up your kitchen you will find complete directions for fascinating new curtains on page 16 of your copy of Book 3, containing reprints of this series by Mrs. Spears. It also contains directions for a space-saving pantry door pocket. In Book 4 there is a cook book shelf to be made for a kitchen table; also a twine bag that you will find useful. These booklets may be secured by writing direct to:

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## Uncle Phil Says:

With Doers in Minority  
The world is divided into people who do things, and people who take the credit.

So far, no navigator has made a reliable chart of the Sea of Matrimony.

A little pull will get you most places—but not through a door marked "push."

Monkeys Look On Seriously  
Men laugh at the behavior of monkeys, but the monkeys are more polite.

When a man pays his taxes his patriotism is at its lowest ebb.

A chairman spends 20 minutes introducing the man "who needs no introduction."

Many a man is put in the shade because he stands in his own light.

A Blessing Possible  
Peace can be made perpetual if nations will agree not to make new wars until they have paid for the old ones.

Of the two, I'd rather listen to the boaster than the alibiist.  
There are three kinds of men who do not understand women: young men, old men, and middle-aged men.



# Firestone

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