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CHAPTER IX. Shorty Dreams.

“FUNKY you don’t gamble none,” Shorty said to Smoke one night in the Elkhorn. “Ain’t it in your blood?” “It is,” Smoke answered. “But the statistics are in my head. I like an even break for my money.” All about them, in the huge barroom, arose the click and rattle and rumble of a dozen games, at which fur clad, moccasin men tried their luck. Smoke waved his hand to include them all. “Look at them,” he said. “It’s cold mathematics that they will lose more than they win tonight—that the big proportion are losing right now.” “You’re strong on figures,” Shorty murmured admiringly. “An’ in the main, you’re right. But they’re such a thing as facts. An’ one fact is streaks of luck. The only way to win at gambin’ is wait for a bunch that you’ve got a lucky streak comin’ an’ then play it to the roof.” “It sounds simple,” Smoke criticised. “So simple I can’t see how men can lose.” “The trouble is,” Shorty admitted, “that most men get fooled on their hunches. On occasion I sure get fooled on mine. The thing is to try an’ find out.” Smoke shook his head. “That’s a statistic, too, Shorty. Most men prove wrong on their hunches.” “But don’t you ever get one of them streaky feelin’s that all you got to do is put your money down an’ pick a winner?” Smoke laughed. “I’m too scared of the percentage against me. But I’ll tell you what, Shorty, I’ll throw a dollar on the high card, right now, and see if it will buy us a drink.” Smoke was edging his way in to the faro table when Shorty caught his arm. “Hold on! I’m gettin’ one of them hunches now. You put that dollar on roulette.” They went over to a roulette table near the bar. “Wait till I give the word,” Shorty counseled. “What number?” Smoke asked. “Pick it yourself. But wait till I say let her go.” “You don’t mean to say I’ve got an even chance on that table?” Smoke argued. “As good as the next geezer’s.” “But not as good as the bank’s.” “Wait an’ see,” Shorty urged. “Now! Let her go!” The gamekeeper had just sent the little ivory ball whirling around the smooth rim above the revolving, many slotted wheel. Smoke, at the lower end of the table, reached over a player and blindly tossed the dollar. It slid along the smooth green cloth and stopped fairly in the center of “23.” The ball came to a rest, and the gamekeeper announced, “Thirty-four wins!” He swept the table and along side of Smoke’s dollar stacked \$35. Smoke drew the money in, and Shorty slapped him on the shoulder. “Now, that was the real goods of a hunch, Smoke! How’d I know it? There’s no tellin’. I just knew you’d win. Why, if that dollar of yours’d fell on any other number it’d won just the same. When the hunch is right you just can’t help winnin’.” “Suppose it had come double tonight?” Smoke queried as they made their way to the bar. “Then your dollar’d been on double tonight,” was Shorty’s answer. “They’re no gettin’ away from it. A hunch is a hunch. Here’s how. Come on back to the table. I got a hunch, after pickin’ you for a winner, that I can pick some few numbers myself.” “Are you playing a system?” Smoke asked at the end of ten minutes, when his partner had dropped \$100. From his watching Smoke became fascinated, following closely every detail of the game from the whirling of the ball to the making and the paying of the bets. He made no plays, however, merely contenting himself with looking on. Yet so interested was he that Shorty, announcing that he had had enough, with difficulty drew Smoke away from the table. The gamekeeper returned Shorty the gold snuff he had deposited as a credential for playing and with it went a slip of paper on which was scribbled “Out—\$340.” Shorty carried the sack and the paper across the room and handed them to the weigher, who sat behind a large pair of gold scales. Out of Shorty’s sack he weighed \$350, which he poured into the coffer of the house. “That hunch of yours was another one of those statistics,” Smoke jeered. “I had to play it, didn’t I, in order to find out?” Shorty retorted. “Never mind, Shorty,” Smoke laughed. “I’ve got a hunch right now.” Shorty’s eyes sparkled as he cried eagerly: “What is it? Kick in an’ play it pronto.” “It’s not that kind, Shorty. Now,

what I’ve got is a hunch that some day I’ll work out a system that will beat the spots off that table.” “System?” Shorty groaned, then surveyed his partner with a vast pity. “Smoke, listen to your side kicker an’ leave system alone. Systems is sure losers. They ain’t no hunches in systems.” “That’s why I like them,” Smoke answered. “A system is statistical. When you get the right system you can’t lose, and that’s the difference between it and a hunch. You never know when the right hunch is going wrong.” “But I know a lot of systems that went wrong, an’ I never seen a system win.” Shorty paused and sighed. “Look here, Smoke, if you’re gettin’ cracked on systems this ain’t no place for you, an’ it’s about time we hit the trail again.” At last, after long hours and days spent at watching the table, the night came when Smoke proclaimed that he was ready, and Shorty, grim and pessimistic, accompanied his partner to the Elkhorn. Smoke bought a stack of chips and stationed himself at the gamekeeper’s end of the table. Again and again the ball was whirled and the other players won or lost, but Smoke did not venture a chip. Shorty waxed impatient. “Buck in, buck in!” he urged. “Let’s get this funeral over! Got cold feet?” Smoke shook his head and waited. A dozen plays went by, and then suddenly he placed ten one-dollar chips on “26.” The number won, and the keeper paid Smoke \$350. A dozen plays went by, twenty plays and thirty, when Smoke placed \$10 on “32.” Again he received \$350. “It’s a hunch,” Shorty whispered vociferously in his ear. “Ride it; ride it!” Half an hour went by, during which Smoke was inactive; then he placed \$10 on “34” and won. “A hunch!” Shorty whispered. “Nothing of the sort,” Smoke whispered back. “It’s the system. Isn’t she a dandy?” Smoke now altered his play. He bet more frequently, with single chips scattered here and there, and he lost more often than he won. “Quit it,” Shorty advised. “Cash in! You’ve rung the bullseye three times, an’ you’re ahead a thousand. You can’t keep it up.” At this moment the ball started whirling, and Smoke dropped ten chips on “26.” The ball fell into the slot of “26,” and the keeper again paid him \$350. “If you’re plumb crazy an’ got the immortal cinch bet ‘em the limit,” Shorty said. “Put down twenty-five next time.” A quarter of an hour passed, during which Smoke won and lost on small scattering bets. Then, with the abruptness that characterized his big betting, he placed \$25 on “00,” and the keeper paid him \$875. “Wake me up, Smoke; I’m dreamin’,” Shorty moaned. Smoke smiled, consulted his notebook and became absorbed in calculation. He continually drew the notebook from his pocket and from time to time jotted down figures. A crowd had packed densely around the table, while the players themselves were attempting to cover the same numbers he covered. It was then that a change came over his play. Ten times in succession he placed \$10 on “18” and lost. At this stage he was deserted by the hardest. He changed his number, and won another \$350. Immediately the players were back with him, deserting again after a series of losing bets. “Quit it, Smoke; quit it!” Shorty advised. “The longest string of hunches is only so long, an’ your string’s finished. No more bullseyes for you.” “I’m going to ring her once again before I cash in,” Smoke answered. For a few minutes, with varying luck, he played scattering chips over the table and then dropped \$25 on “00.” “I’ll take my slip now,” he said to the dealer as he won. “Oh, you don’t need to show it to me,” Shorty said as they walked to the weigher. “I been keepin’ track. You’re somethin’ like thirty-six hundred to the good. How near am I?” “Thirty-six sixty,” Smoke replied. “Don’t crowd your luck,” Shorty pleaded with Smoke the next night in the cabin as he evidenced preparations to return to the Elkhorn. “You played a mighty long string of hunches, but you played it out. If you go back you’ll sure drop all your winnin’.” “But I tell you it isn’t hunches, Shorty. It’s statistics. It’s a system it can’t lose.” “System the devil. They ain’t no such a thing as system. You got to show me.” “I did show you. Come on with me

now, and I’ll show you again.” When they entered the Elkhorn all eyes centered on Smoke, and those about the table made way for him as he took up his old place at the keeper’s end. His play was quite unlike that of the previous night. In the course of an hour and a half he made only four bets, but each bet was for \$25, and each bet won. He cashed in \$3,500, and Shorty carried the dust home to the cabin. “Now’s the time to jump the game,” Shorty advised as he sat on the edge of his bunk and took off his moccasins. “You’re seven thousand ahead. A man’s a fool that’d crowd his luck harder.” “Shorty, a man would be a blithering lunatic if he didn’t keep on backing a winning system like mine.” “Smoke, you’re a sure bright boy. You know more’n a minute than I could know in forty thousand years. But I’ve been around some an’ seen a few, an’ I tell you straight an’ confidential an’ all assurin’ a system to beat a bankin’ game ain’t possible.” “But I’m showing you this one. It’s a pipe.” “No, you’re not, Smoke. It’s a pipe dream. I’m asleep. Bimeby I’ll wake up an’ build the fire an’ start break fast.” The third night of play as Smoke laid his first bet the gamekeeper shoved \$15 back to him. “Ten’s all you can play,” he said. “The limit’s come down.” “Gettin’ playme,” Shorty sneered. “No one has to play at this table that don’t want to,” the keeper retorted. “And I’m willing to say straight out in meeting that we’d sooner your partner didn’t play at our table.” “Scared of his system, eh?” Shorty challenged as the keeper paid over \$350. Night by night Smoke continued to win. His method of play varied. Expert after expert in the jam about the table scribbled down his bets and numbers in vain attempts to work out his system. They complained of their inability to get a clue to start with and swore that it was pure luck, though the most colossal streak of it they had ever seen. It was Smoke’s varied play that befuddled them. Sometimes, consulting his notebook or engaging in long calculations, an hour elapsed without his staking a chip. At other times he would win three limit bets and clear up a thousand dollars and odd in five or ten minutes. At still other times his tactics would be to scatter single chips prodigally and amazingly over the table. This would continue for from ten to thirty minutes of play, when abruptly, as the



Smoke Became Absorbed in Calculation ball whirled through the last few of its circles, he would play the limit on column, color and number and win all three. Once, to complete confusion in the minds of those that strove to divine his secret, he lost forty straight bets, each at the limit. But each night, play no matter how diversely, Shorty carried home \$3,500 for him. “It ain’t no system,” Shorty expounded at one of their bed going discussions. “I follow you an’ follow you, but they ain’t no figgerin’ it out. You never play twice the same. All you do is pick winners when you want to, an’ when you don’t want to you just on purpose don’t.” “Maybe you’re nearer right than you think, Shorty. I’ve just got to pick losers sometimes. It’s part of the system.” “System the devil! I’ve talked with every gambler in town, an’ the last one is agreed they ain’t no such thing as system.” “Yet I’m showing them one all the time.” (To Be Continued.) FOR SALE—Fine 3-year-old full-blooded short-horn bull. Perfectly gentle. Inquire of G. H. Tams at the county farm. For Sale. Two horses, three and four years old, broke, that were bought at the Robert Shrader sale. Will be sold right if taken at once. H. C. LONG, Murray, Neb.

Local News

From Friday’s Daily. Louis Friedrich of the vicinity of Cedar Creek was here today for a few hours attending to some trading with the merchants. Derwood Lynde and A. L. Anderson of Union were in the city today for a few hours looking after some business matters. George W. Shrader, one of Cass county’s grand old men, came up yesterday afternoon from his home for a visit here with relatives and friends. Walter Moeckenhaupt and wife of near Murock were here yesterday for a few hours looking after some matters of business in the county court. Miss Eda Marquardt, the efficient county superintendent, was among the Omaha visitors today for a few hours to look after some matters of business. George M. Hild came in this morning from his farm west of Mynard to look after some details in regard to his big public sale that will be held in a short time. Fritz Seimonet and wife returned home this afternoon on No. 24 from Florence, Neb., where they had been visiting for a short time with relatives in that place. Mrs. Will Wurga and little daughter were among the passengers this morning for Omaha, where they go to spend a few hours looking after some matters of business. Albert and Otto Schafer returned home this morning on No. 15 from Chariton, Iowa, where they have been for the past few days on some matters of importance. Harve Manners was among the passengers this morning for the metropolis, where he goes to spend a few hours looking after some business matters of importance. E. F. Steinhause, wife and children departed this morning on the early Burlington train for Waterloo, Neb., where they go to visit for a few days with relatives and friends in that place. P. M. Meisinger of Benson was here today for a few hours visiting with his brothers in this city, returning home on No. 23 this afternoon. W. G. and L. A. Meisinger drove in from their farm homes for a visit with their brother. Bert L. Philpot of Weeping Water came up last evening from his home to look after some matters of business and to visit here with his many friends. Mr. Philpot is the automobile dealer of that city, as well as one of its prominent citizens.

From Saturday’s Daily. Miss Mathilde Vallery departed this morning on No. 6 for Glenwood, Iowa, where she goes to look after her class in that city. Adam Fornoff of near Cedar Creek was in the city today for a few hours looking after some matters of business with the merchants. Mrs. Charles F. Guthmann was among the passengers this morning for Omaha, where she will visit for the day with friends in that city. Mrs. P. J. Vallery returned home last evening from a trip through Iowa, where she visited with relatives at different points for several days. Mrs. Georgia Creamer drove up this morning from her home south of this city to spend a few hours looking after some trading with the merchants. Mrs. Jack Patterson of Union was among those going to Omaha this morning on No. 15 to spend the day there looking after some business matters. John R. Pierson and little son came in last evening on No. 2 and will make a short visit with relatives in this city before returning to their home at Union. P. A. Horn and wife of Eight Mile Grove precinct, came in this morning from their home and were passengers on the early Burlington train for Omaha to spend the day. Mrs. C. C. Neff was among the passengers this morning on the early Burlington train for Omaha, where she goes to visit for a few hours looking after some matters of business. G. W. Olson departed this morning for Lincoln, where he will attend a banquet this evening for the agents of the Metropolitan Life Insurance company, given by the superintendent of this district. G. H. Tams, superintendent of the county farm, was a passenger this morning on the early Burlington train for Omaha, where he goes to visit for the day looking after some matters of business. Mrs. Mary B. Allison and Mr. and Mrs. John R. Pierson and little son, of Union, were among the passengers this morning for Omaha, where they go to visit for the day looking after some business matters. John L. Mayfield, wife and little child, who have been here for a short time visiting at the home of Mrs. Mayfield’s parents, Mr. and Mrs. L. H. Peterson, departed this morning for their home at Crofton, Neb. Mrs. L. W. Barger of Davenport, Iowa, who for the past three weeks has been here visiting at the home of her parents, Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Peter-

son, departed this morning for her home. Her brother, Charles Peterson, accompanied her as far as Omaha on her journey. FOR SALE THREE BARGAINS. No. 1—Well improved 160-acre farm, one-half mile from Eagle, Cass county, Nebraska. \$115 per acre. No. 2—Two quarter sections of rich level land in Hamilton county, Nebraska. \$80 per acre. All cash, \$75 per acre. No. 3—Lincoln, near capitol, four-apartment flat, modern, rents \$1,920 per year (some time given). Price, \$16,000. For information, write or phone THAD R. ADAMS, Eagle, Neb. For Sale. A lot of one-half-inch soft cable, good for hay forks and all kinds of farm work, at 1 1/2 cents per foot. Richardson & Doty, Missouri River Ferry. Registered Jersey Bull for service. C. E. Babbitt, Plattsmouth. 1’2-2mos-wkly NOTICE OF ADMINISTRATION. All persons interested in the estate of Agatha Stull, deceased, will take notice that a petition has been filed in the County Court of Cass County, Nebraska, for administration of her estate and that a hearing will be had upon said petition on the 9th day of February, 1915, at 10 o’clock a. m., before the Judge of said Court, and letters of administration of said estate granted at said time. Witness my hand and seal of said Court at Plattsmouth, Nebraska, this 18th day of January, 1915. (Seal) ALLEN J. BEESON, County Judge. D. O. DWYER, Attorney. WM. DUNN, AUCTIONEER - Weeping Water, Neb. - will take charge of your public sale business. Farm sales a specialty. Owners’ interests are always guarded with the best ability, and satisfaction guaranteed. For open dates telephone at my expense to Weeping Water. WM. DUNN.

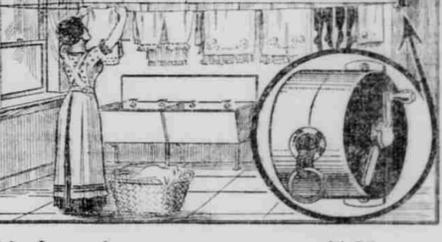
Public Sale!

The undersigned will sell at Public Auction at his home, 5 1-2 miles west and 1 mile south of Mynard, on WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 1915. Sale will commence at 12:30 sharp, the following described property, to-wit: Nine Head of Horses. Two dark bay mares, 3 and 4 year old, weight 2,500. One bay mare 11 years old, with foal, weight 1,300. One sorrel gelding, 5 years old, weight 1,200. One bay mare, 10 years old, with foal, weight 1,450. One bay gelding, 9 years old, weight 1,350. One bay colt, 1 year old. One bay suckling colt. One black suckling colt. Nine Head of Cattle. Five cows, coming 3 years old. One steer, coming 3 years old. One bull, coming 3 years old. Two heifer calves, 6 months old. Farm Implements. Two farm wagons. One steel truck and hayrack, new. One spring wagon. One bob-sled. One manure spreader. One Hoosier drill. One broadcast seeder. One new Deere hay loader. One corn planter. One Marseilles corn elevator and power lift. One 16-inch sulky plow. One 14-inch walking plow. Two 18-inch walking plows. One Western Belle riding lister. One McCormick hay rake. One Deering binder. One two-row machine. One disc; one stalk rake. One two-row stalk cutter. One three-section harrow. 150 hedge posts. And other articles too numerous to mention. TERMS OF SALE. All sums of \$10 and under, cash in hand; on sums over \$10, a credit of six months will be given, purchaser giving note with approved security, bearing 8 per cent interest from date. Sale must commence at 12:30 p. m. sharp, and every article on this bill must be sold to the highest bidder. No by-bidding. All property must be settled for before being removed from the premises. JOHN KRAEGER, Owner. WM. DUNN, Auctioneer. E. G. DOVEY, Clerk.

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