

Thunderhead

MARY O'HARA
W.N.U. FEATURES

THE STORY THUS FAR: A white colt is born on the Goose Bar ranch in Wyoming. His color indicates that he is a throwback to the Albino, a wild stallion. Otherwise his ancestors are all thoroughbreds. Thunderhead, or the Goblin as he is commonly known, grows from a sturdy and ill-fated foal to a sturdy yearling. One day he wanders southward into the mountains. He reaches a river and follows it ever higher. Suddenly an eagle darts at him, ripping his flesh. Goblin rights it off, but is badly frightened and runs home. A week later, however, he returns to the river, and finds a valley, accessible by only one small opening in high cliffs. Goblin's nose tells him that horses live within the valley.

CHAPTER X

Goblin stood motionless, his eyes scanning the valley, his muzzle lifted to suck in and savor and read all the messages it flung at him. He knew much about it already. This was the country that had called him and he had answered the call. Those horses over there, the big, loosely-flung herd, grazing quietly, were the horses he had been hunting.

Mares! His nostrils quivered. He neighed loudly. The mares raised their heads, the foals faced around. What magnificent animals—big, smooth, glossy—the very smell of them was sweet and strong with health and power. The mares were black and bays and sorrels, and the colts were the same, except for a few piebalds.

Nickering, they lifted their heads and trotted toward the newcomer. Goblin rushed happily to meet them. He was at home with mares. Most of his life had been spent with them.

They milled around him, thrilled and excited by the advent of a stranger. He lost all thought of fear or caution in the happiness of having arrived. He met and smelled and talked to them one by one. The squeals and whinnies, the jumps and snorts and playful kickings were all delightful fun. Some of them tried to drive the intruder out, but their bites and kicks were half-hearted.

On the summit of a near-by hill stood a great white stallion.

He was upwind from his mares, which was fortunate for the Goblin. As it was, the Albino noticed the commotion in his harem and lifted his head to observe it.

This animal stood sixteen and a half hands high. He was pure white. His body had power and strength rather than gracefulness. He was not smooth. He was gnarled like an old oak tree. His coat was marred by many scars. His great age showed in the hollows of his flanks and shoulders and face. Behind the dark glare of his eye, a blazing fire burned and on this flame was projected an irresistible will-power, and a personality that was like the core of a hurricane.

He looked over his kingdom. He had stood there for years, looking over his kingdom. And—if horses think—wondering who would take over when his end came. He had no heir. How could he have? He permitted no colt older than a year to remain in the band of mares, nor any stallion older than a two-year-old to be in the valley. Here and there, in the deep grass, were the polished bones of those who had challenged him. And if any attempted to return after he had driven them forth—they did not try a second time.

When Goblin caught the unmistakable strong scent of the stallion he trotted out from the herd to find him. He saw him up there on a hill—just where Banner would have been—and with a joyful nicker, started toward him.

The Albino came down to meet him.

Goblin, a creature of fire and magnetism himself, felt the oncoming stallion in terms of voltage, and it was almost too much to be borne. Goblin came to a stop. It occurred to him that he was going in the wrong direction. But he held his ground.

He watched. He had never seen or felt anything like that before. The stallion was so contained, his power was so gathered and held within him that he was all curves. His great neck was so arched that his chin was drawn in and under, the crest of his head was high and rounded with long ears cocked like spear-points. His face was terrifying—that ferocious expression! Those fiery eyes! And his huge, heavily-muscled legs curving high, flung forward so that the great body floated through the air—then the massive hoofs striking and bounding up from the earth with sledge-hammer blows that made the hills tremble and echoed like thunder in the valley! The Goblin still held his ground. The Albino slowed his pace, came closer—stopped. Their noses were about two feet apart.

For as long as a minute they faced and eyed each other.

They were the same. Trunk and branch of the same tree. And from that confusing identity—each seeing himself as in a distorted mirror—there flamed terror and fury.

No self-respecting stallion would deign to attack a mere yearling, or even to take him seriously enough to administer heavy punishment. But suddenly the Albino raised his right hoof and gave one terrible pawing stroke accompanied by a short grunting snarl of unreasoning fury. And in so doing, he both acknowl-

edged and attempted to destroy his heir.

The stroke was delivered with lightning speed. From his great height, if the blow had come down on Goblin's head, as was intended, it would have killed him instantly.

But Goblin was endowed with the same speed, and reflexes that acted quicker than thought. He swerved. The great hoof glanced down his neck, ripping the flesh at the shoulder, and sent him rolling.

To complete the attack, the stallion dropped nose to earth, turned and lashed with hind feet to catch the body of the colt as he fell from the blow and finish him off.

But the Goblin rolled too far and too fast, landed on his feet, and whirled to face his antagonist.

The stallion plunged toward him—head stretched out like a lethal missile, the twisted mouth open and reaching to bite—the great teeth, like slabs of yellow stone—bared—and in the wild and terrible face, two eyes blazing like fire-opals.

The Goblin whirled and streaked toward the band of mares. They were bunched, watching, fascinated. They opened their ranks and let him in.

They scattered at the impact of the Albino's head-on rush. Goblin dodged. He felt the rake of the Albino's teeth down his haunch—a chunk bitten out—he squealed and doubled behind another mare. The Albino's charge knocked her off her feet and Goblin went down under her. He felt a burning pain in his

ear and tore it loose. He was up again, shoudering into a group of mares and foals. When he came out the other side, the Albino had lost him for the moment. It was his chance. He fled toward the keyhole in the rampart, Albino in thundering pursuit. Entering the passageway, the Goblin followed the zigzag path which led through it, and here his smaller size gave him an advantage. Emerging on the other side, the Albino was some distance behind, but still coming fast.

It was a long chase.

Goblin's youth and his quickness at dodging and doubling—and the cover given to him by the rocks and clumps of trees—saved him. Six miles down the river, he was alone at last, as the afternoon light began to fade. He was limping from the painful wound in his shoulder. He carried his head on one side, favoring the torn ear, now and then giving it a little shake to shake the pain away, scattering drops of blood. He ached all over. To move, now that he had stopped running, was an agony. He stood under a tree, twisted and quivering. He ate nothing all night.

The memory of all that had happened was graven in him. He faced the rampart, cocked his one good ear, turned his head until he caught the wind, and stood straining, listening, smelling, bringing to his consciousness—almost as strongly as if he could see him—the terrible monster that had terrified and bested him. He had the impulse to neigh and challenge him—but not the strength nor the courage. Never mind—there would be another day. Wait. He had wounds to heal.

Goblin grazed until he had filled his belly and renewed his strength, then took the way home.

Fortitude was demanded of Ken next day when Flicka went unexpectedly into labor and Rob said she was going to have a bad time and they would need the vet.

Driving over to the telegraph station with his mother, Ken's face was white and furious. "God made the world, didn't He?" he asked suddenly. "Well, I don't think much of the way He made it. I could have done it better. I can think up awful nice worlds."

Neil glanced down at him. What could she say? Goblin—now Flicka—

it was a pretty big dose of trouble for him.

"Why do all the horrible things have to happen?" he asked passionately.

She must answer him. "We can't understand entirely, Ken—"

"Why not?"

"You can't understand something that's so much bigger than you are. Not wholly understand. You can't even wholly understand your father or me—only one side of us. And even less, your Heavenly Father, the Father of all of us. It would be as if a small circle, like a nut, could get outside a big circle, like an orange."

Ken was silent, composing an important prayer. "Please God, make me have fortitude. And don't let me lose my grip. But if you could manage it to have the Goblin come back, and Flicka get through this foaling all right, that would be just ken. For Jesus Christ's sake, Amen."

There was a flash of radiance on his face as he looked up at his mother.

Arrived at the railroad station, Nell entered the telegraph office, and Ken stood listening to the mysterious dots and dashes which asked the telegraph agent at Laramie if he would be so kind as to do Captain McLaughlin of the Goose Bar ranch a favor, and telephone the veterinarian, Dr. Hicks, and find out if he could start to the ranch immediately to deliver a foal?

Within five minutes the message came back that Dr. Hicks would come.

On the Goose Bar ranch the weather was hot—really hot—for only two or three weeks in midsummer. On this day the thermometer stood at a hundred and one with a burning, dry heat which lay on the land in shimmering waves, reminder that it was not far removed from the desert.

Inside the barn, in spite of wide open doors and windows, everyone was soaked with perspiration and Dr. Hicks had constantly to turn aside and shake the water from his forehead. Rob and the boys were naked from the waist up.

Flicka, exhausted by hours of unavailing labor, lay on her side. It was a dry birth. For a long time before the veterinarian's arrival one of the foal's forelegs had been protruding.

"Which means," said Dr. Hicks when he arrived, "that the other leg is curled back and makes birth impossible. The foal is in the wrong position, it will have to be straightened out." He asked for a gunny sack, cut holes in the corners for his arms and one in the middle for his head, removed shirt and undershirt, donned the gunny sack, greased his arm and went to work.

Ken watched him, vowing to himself that never again should Flicka be allowed to have another foal.

The doctor puffed as, holding the tiny yellow foreleg, he slowly forced it back into the mare. Ken saw it vanish with a strange sensation. Could the foal still be alive after being handled like that? At length the doctor's hand and wrist disappeared too, and Ken, watching his heavy brown face with its humorous expression, as if at any moment he was going to crack a joke, tried to read on it just what was going on inside there. Lucky, thought he, that Doc was so big and husky. To be able to straighten out a foal inside of its mother took strength!

While Doc worked he talked in short grunts. "This mare'll never foal again—that infection she had when she was a yearling injured her—scar tissue—it's a wonder she's as good as she is. All right for saddle—ah, there, I've got it now—"

"Got what?" breathed Ken.

"The other hoof. Both of them. This isn't going to be so bad, after all."

Nell was kneeling at Flicka's head, sponging her face and mouth with cold water. Now and then the mare gave a spasmodic heave.

Presently Doc was pulling on something. Flicka groaned and labored mightily. Ken groaned and strained too, but Howard watched every move the doctor made, keenly interested. Two tiny hoofs and a muzzle appeared and the doctor got to his feet and mopped the sweat from his face.

"She may be able to manage the rest herself now I've got it in the right position," he said.

But Flicka couldn't. Most of her strength was gone and it seemed that something still impeded the delivery.

McLaughlin looked at his watch. "It's been going on three hours now." He and Doc talked together in low voices. It frightened Ken to hear them—so casual and fatalistic. Ken touched the protruding hoofs. They were not hard yet and were covered with rubber-like pads. He tried to pull on them and was dumbfounded to find that it was like trying to pull a bough from a tree.

McLaughlin sent Gus for ropes. They tied a rope to the foal's legs and Doc and his assistant put all their weight on it. The foal moved a little, the head was nearly out. Then it stuck, and when they continued to pull the only result was that Flicka's whole body slid across the floor. They tied her forelegs to a post and pulled again. Flicka's body stretched out straight and taught, ropes at each end of her, but the foal did not budge.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

By HAROLD L. LUNDQUIST, D. D. Of The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. Released by Western Newspaper Union.

Lesson for July 29

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GOD'S PROMISE OF A NATION

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 17:1-18. GOLDEN TEXT—I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.—Genesis 17:7.

God keeps His promises. It may have appeared that God had forgotten, but He had not, and in our lesson we find Him ready to fulfill His promise.

We need to learn the lesson of patience, of awaiting God's time for the carrying out of His purpose. He is not in any hurry, but He always arrives on time. If we travel life's way with Him, all will be well.

Abram found the fullness of God's blessing because he sought His will for life and service. We find him

I. Walking in God's Plan (vv. 1, 2).

The place of blessing is not in some cloistered refuge where the circumstances of life and its problems cannot disturb us. It is out in the daily walk with God, in the home, the office, the shop.

What is God's plan for the life of the believer? Just what He told Abram: "Be thou perfect." Nothing less will do, for He is a perfect God. His law is perfect (Pa. 19:7). He requires a perfect obedience to the perfect law (James 2:10). This was His standard for Abram, and it can be no less for us.

How shall we attain to it? Only in Christ can we meet and fulfill God's plan of perfection.

That means that as followers of the Lord we are to seek His power for the outworking of His grace in our lives. We are not to be content with a Christian life on a low standard or lacking any of the graces which God can give us.

We, too, must recognize that if God is to give us His full measure of blessing, we must walk in accord with His will, walking in the light as He is in the light (1 John 1:7). Much of the failure and impotence of present day spiritual life is explained by the willingness of Christians to live imperfect lives.

II. Talking of God's Purpose (vv. 3-8).

Abram fell on his face in adoration and worship. Inevitably and humbly, he put himself in the place of subjection and service.

What happened? "God talked with him" (v. 3). This man was ready for a holy conversation with the Lord. His attitude of body was only the outward expression of an attitude of heart which was right. So God and he talked about the purpose of the Lord for Abram's life.

He had been Abram, which means, "exalted father," that is, of a family or a tribe; now he became Abraham, "the father of a multitude."

This is the first of many instances in Scripture where a name was changed by God to mark an important event, or a change of heart. For example, Jacob "the supplanter" became Israel, "a prince with God" (Gen. 32:28); Simon became Peter, "a rock" (Matt. 16:17, 18).

The letter to the church at Pergamos speaks of the one who overcomes in Christ's name as having a new name written which no man knows save he that receives it (Rev. 2:17). The believer on Christ is a changed man, a new creature, whether his name be changed or not. God wants to change men—has He changed you?

The promise is renewed to Abraham. It was to his "seed," that is, his descendants. He took the blessing from God's hand, accepting things that as yet were not, as though they were. God is able to make them come to pass (cf. Rom. 4:16-18).

III. Trusting God's Promise (vv. 9, 10).

Down through the ages every man in the great host to descend from Abraham was to bear the outward token that he belonged to the covenant people. This was to be a symbol of and to lead the recipient into that attitude of heart which would bring outward rite into fulfillment as an inward reality.

Observe that after Abraham, it was always the parent who thus brought the son into the covenant. This speaks of the parental responsibility to bring the little children to the Lord, and it also gives us the precious assurance that God is interested in the children and ready to receive them at the hands of parents, taking them into His own tender care.

Thus down through the generations, Israel was to show their faith in God, their assurance that He would keep His promises to them, and their consequent eagerness that their families should be counted into the covenant with God.

Christ is ready and eager to undertake for our children. His grace is sufficient, not only for us, but also for those who come after us. His promise is to our "children's children" (Ps. 103:17, 18), "of such as keep His covenant." Let us trust Him, and put ourselves and our children in that place of obedience where He may bless us and them.

The HOME TOWN REPORTER in Washington

WALTER A. SHEED, W.N.U. Correspondent

New Agriculture Secretary

W.N.U. Washington Bureau 421 Union Trust Building

FARMERS, ranchers, dairymen and all others in the agricultural industry, both in the production and processing fields, must have confidence in their government. . . must have faith that their government will stand by every commitment made to them in full. . . and go ahead for the fullest production of food-stuffs possible.

This is the message to agriculture from Clinton P. Anderson, tall, lanky westerner, and new secretary of agriculture in the administration of President Truman.

The new secretary, a rancher-farmer-business man, is determined that farmers will not suffer in their patriotic efforts for all-out production. . . that support prices will be sufficient and over-all to insure adequate prices. . . that there will be no huge surplus which will bog down prices. . . that consumer subsidies will gradually be eliminated

as upward pressures on prices relax. . . that agreed requirements from agriculture represent obligations which must be carried through. . . that adequate manpower and machinery for the farm must be given priority. . . and that the government must take necessary steps to provide adequate transportation facilities to move groups and foodstuffs, perishables and livestock, and the movement of manpower to areas where there is an acute labor shortage.

This, briefly, is the program which this new, dynamic figure in the department of agriculture has set for himself and the agricultural industry for the immediate months ahead. He is no novice at the job he has undertaken. As chairman of the special committee of the house to investigate food shortages, he traveled the country from coast to coast, heard innumerable witnesses on all sides of every question and after weeks of consideration, he and his committee came up with a set of recommendations, most of which have now been enacted into law.

Long Range Program Too

And while Anderson is immediately concerned with the production of foodstuffs for the war period, he has not lost sight of the long-range program to which the farmer is looking for the postwar years. Mr. Anderson will be secretary of agriculture for the next 3 1/2 years. There is a probability that 2 1/2 and maybe more, of those years will be postwar years. At any rate, with his characteristic thoroughness, he already has a committee of agricultural experts at work studying basic agricultural problems with the idea of bringing forth a set of recommendations for the postwar period.

This reporter would say, after an interview with Mr. Anderson, and a study of his work in congress, that the new secretary has his feet solidly on the ground, that he is not given to going off half-cocked, that he studies every side of a question and that once his mind is made up he will use every resource and all his ability to carry through his program.

While he would not commit himself as to the Triple A program, he did say that the Triple A program, with the exception of soil conservation, had been pretty well laid on the shelf during these war years and for the postwar period he indicated that the crop adjustment program would have to be analyzed thoroughly and that he already had a committee at work doing just that.

Interested in Parity

By congressional action, however, farmers have been guaranteed a price for their products, or most of them, at 90 per cent of parity for two years after the end of the war and Mr. Anderson is particularly interested in adequate support prices to maintain this price. Furthermore, support prices are not costing the government anything at this time, since prices of commodities are well above the prices set. It is only when commodity prices start falling for any reason, that the support price will hold the farmer up from ruinous prices.

Anderson is not anticipating any huge surpluses, but nevertheless he is taking no chances on the so-called reconversion period when army and other huge government buyers start cut-backs in food purchases. For this reason he is now starting conversations seeking to taper off, rather than cut-off, army purchases, and end lease.

Consumer subsidies, he looks upon as temporary expediences, and very temporary at that. He is not in favor of such subsidies as a governmental policy in peacetime.

Portlight of GRANTLAND RICE

WHO have been the best comedians baseball has known in the last 40 or 50 years? This thought came bounding along after reading Al Schacht's merry and interesting tome known as "G I Had Fun."

Al Schacht is certainly one of the members of the king pin row. One of the first of these was Crazy Schmidt, an unconscious humorist, who pitched for Cincinnati several decades back. Others include Arlie Latham, Rube Waddell, Tacks Parrott, Ping Bodie, Germany Schaefer, Nick Altrock, Sherry Magee, O'Neil of the Cardinals and Dizzy Dean. There

have been many others but these are the ones who still remain longer in memory.

Crazy Schmidt went out to pitch with a glove, a baseball and a notebook he carried in his hip pocket. The contents of this book noted the weakness of every man he had pitched against—a high one or a low one—a curve or a fast one. As the batter came to the plate Schmidt would take out the notebook containing some 100 names to check on his weakness.

"What have you got written against Hans Wagner's name?" one of his teammates once asked.

"A base on balls," Schmidt said.

Germany Schaefer was one of the stars in this field. He was then playing second base for Detroit. I recall a game years ago where Schaefer was playing in Cleveland. Around the third inning it began to rain. During the fourth inning it poured. Tommy Connolly was umpiring and Germany kept squawking to have the game called. Connolly refused.

When the fifth inning opened Connolly looked around and found Schaefer playing second base with high rubber boots, a raincoat, a Gloucester fisherman's hat and holding a big umbrella over his head. Connolly charged Schaefer with a roar and told him to remove his deep sea make-up. Schaefer refused.

"I have a very bad cold," he told Connolly, "which is now bordering on pneumonia. If I get rid of my rubber boots, my raincoat and my umbrella I will be in the hospital in less than two hours and I will certainly sue you and the league." Connolly called the game.

Schaefer had a keen, quick wit and could always draw a laugh.

Waddell had the Athletics goofy by buying a mockingbird owned by the proprietor of a popcorn and peanut stand that had a whistle attached. All the mockingbird could do was wake up the entire floor shortly after daybreak by singing his only song—the song of the peanut whistle, with an added screech.

Ping Bodie and Dizzy Dean

It was the immortal Ping Bodie with the Yankees who bought a parrot and spent weeks teaching said parrot to keep saying over and over—"Ping made good"—"Ping made good."

But after all, Dizzy Dean in many different ways was the top of them—outside of Schacht. Dizzy was loaded with pranks, as well as pretty homely wit.

There was the time in Florida when Dean had reported as a rookie from the Texas league. Jimmy Wilson, the veteran catcher, began missing his silk shirts. Finally Jimmy caught Dean bedecked in one of these garments and the idea of a raw rookie wearing his silk shirts was too much to stand. He started in to bawl out Dizzy when the rookie stopped him cold with this comeback:

"Now wait just a minute, Jimmy." Dizzy said, "you wouldn't want the greatest pitcher baseball has ever known to go around a month wearing a single shirt, would you?"

Jimmy let him have the shirt. I was walking with Dizzy by a hotel in Bradenton one day when he said he had a phone call to make. He was gone some time. He finally came out wearing a wide grin.

"Well," he said, "I just called up Sam Bredon in St. Louis. I told him I had changed my mind about signing for any \$20,000. We had a long hot argument. He threatened to have me thrown out of baseball. We musta argued 20 minutes. Then I finally told Sam I had already signed and sent my contract in."

"What was the idea in doing that?" I asked.

Dizzy grinned, "I had the charges reversed and it cost Sam \$43."

There was also the time on a blistering day in St. Louis, temperature 112, the crowd melting, when suddenly a wisp of smoke came up in front of the Cardinal bench. There sat Dizzy decked out in a heavy overcoat, warming his hands in front of a fire he had just built.

And I still recall his classic remark after his arm was about gone when he was warming up for the Cubs to pitch a world series game against the Yankees.

"How you feeling, Diz," I asked.

"Well," he said, "I ain't what I used to be. But who in hell is?"

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