

# Thunderhead

MARY O'HARA  
W.N.U. FEATURES

THE STORY THUS FAR: Thunderhead is the only white horse ever foaled on the Goose Bar ranch in Wyoming. He resembles his great grand sire, a wild stallion called the Albino. His 13-year-old owner, Ken McLaughlin, hopes his horse will develop into a racer because of his remarkable speed. Thunderhead, however, is difficult to handle, and plans for entering him in a fall race meet are uncertain. Rob McLaughlin, Ken's father, needing ready cash for Ken and Howard's tuition and other bills, takes 14 horses to an auction in Denver. He gets poor prices, and is depressed, until he meets Gypsy, an eastern horse buyer. Gypsy's attention is drawn to the high class of the McLaughlin animals.

## CHAPTER XVII

"I don't know."  
"He in de stall?"  
"No. In Laramie."  
"Laramie! Ven he get back?"  
"I don't know exactly. But it was in the paper about a week ago."  
Gus leaned to brush up a few more imaginary ashes. "You come down in kitchen, Missus. I'm getting some lunch."

"All right, Gus. Is it lunch time?"  
In the warm kitchen Gus moved about efficiently and set a cup of hot strong tea on the red-checked tablecloth before her, some baked beans, well-flavored, topped with crisp browned salt pork, and some of her own bread, toasted on top of the stove.

Sitting opposite her, stirring his tea, his pale blue eyes studied her thoughtfully. "You sick, Missus?"  
"No, Gus."  
"You going to ride dis afternoon?"  
"I don't know." She looked at the food before her and took her fork in her hand, then felt her stomach shrink and close. Her belts had grown very loose these days; her slacks hung on her hips.

Gus appeared to be giving thought to nothing but the demolishing of the great pile of beans on his plate. "If you cud get a jackrabbit—de chickens needs meat—"

Nell drank a little of her tea and set the cup down. "Well—I might. Later in the afternoon."

"I saddle Gypsy for you, Missus." Nell stirred her tea, staring a hole through the tablecloth.

"Dot Gypsy—she's wid foal."  
"Yes, I know."

"Und de boss, he don't want she should have no more foals."

"She must have been bred before he took her away from Banner last spring—early."

"Ya. Und dot mean she's foal dis winter."

Nell buttered a small piece of toast, made herself eat it.

"You don't like de beans, Missus?"  
"I like them, Gus, but I'm not hungry."

She went upstairs again and slowly tidied her room, with many pauses to stand at the window. The bleak skies and the colorless world looked back at her balefully.

Later in the afternoon she put on her black woolen jodhpurs and her warm gray tweed jacket. A few strokes of the comb through her hair drew it back and she fastened it in a little bun, brushing her bang smooth and drew on her small black visored cap. As she picked up her felt-lined gloves and the red scarf for her throat she suddenly wanted to hurry and get out of that house.

Galloping along the county road, Gypsy pricked her ears and turned her head toward the Saddle Back.

"No, you don't, old girl—we're not going up there."

Gypsy whinnied, getting the wind from the band of brood mares beyond the crest, but Nell pressed her spur against her and held her in the road.

She counted the time since Rob had left on September tenth. It was nearly a month. Figuring four days for the trip to Pennsylvania, then a week or ten days for the sale, and two days for the trip back—that would have brought it to September twenty-sixth. Where had he been since then? Laramie, apparently, just twenty-five miles away. And hadn't come home. Hadn't even written. And here it was the second week in October.

Reaching the bank of Deer Creek, Gypsy was belly deep in dried brown grass. She grunted softly and turned her head toward the water. Nell sat relaxed in the saddle while the mare waded into the stream, her feet sinking deep in the soft gravel, and the fresh and delicious smell of water and damp earth and autumn leaves wafted up and made Nell wonder why, now, everything that was sweet sent a sharp pain through her heart.

Long wheezing sucks came from Gypsy. Two maples were quarreling in a tree overhead. And a little way off there was frantic yipping from Kim as he chased a rabbit. The cocker never yipped nor would he let a rabbit draw him into a hopeless chase. He knew in advance where the rabbit would go and intercepted it.

Nell lifted Gypsy's head, turned her, and the mare scrambled up the bank, scattering water from her hoofs and her mouth. And as she resumed her canter, Nell resumed the argument. Rob had been in Laramie about two weeks and hadn't let her know. Why? Didn't he want to see her?

The dogs had vanished completely. Often they started out on a ride with her, were led off by rabbits or exciting scents and disappeared. She wouldn't see them again until

she got home and found them panting on the terrace.

At the thought that Rob did not want to come home her mind spun around to his point of view. How was he thinking and feeling? Was he suffering too? Oh, I hope so, I hope so, for if he loves me he couldn't help it. But does he? He could come to me, but I couldn't go to him. Or could I? She thought of herself driving down to Laramie, going about hunting for her husband—No. No! She tingled with shame. She had to wait here, but how long? Yes—how long? Until he decided to come back. She was entirely helpless.

As these thoughts chased each other through her mind, her body and her nerves were played upon as if by little whips. Alternately hot and cold—weak, or strengthened by a wave of pride. Again and again there went through her heart and stomach a rush of sinking emptiness, and each time she recovered from it as from a shock, slowly, and weakly; a difficult comeback. It was that which prevented her from eating, for it came often just as



His eyes met hers for a split second.

she had prepared food for herself and sat down and looked at it.

She wondered at those mysterious physical activities, probably governed by the endocrine glands, which are the reactions to violent emotions. What, really, was going on in her body? Was it a sort of shell shock? Was it destroying her health and strength and youth? She could not bear to look at the face that peered back at her from the mirror.

In the timber of number sixteen the dogs appeared again, madly chasing a rabbit. Up here the shaded depressions amongst the trees held snow left from a recent storm. The rabbit was in the snow, struggling toward a pile of rocks and Kim was bearing down on it, yipping hysterically.

Nell drew rein and watched the chase, quieted by a feeling of fatalism. What chance did the rabbit have? It was like her mind—doubting and dodging, trying to find a hole in which to hide, or a path of escape, but cornered every time.

The rabbit doubled on its tracks and Kim, who always went too fast, shot past it. The rabbit was struggling to reach the rocks. No doubt he had a safe hideaway underneath them. Would he make it? Kim was almost upon him, and again the rabbit turned and dodged, and again Kim shot past and had to brake and turn and in those few seconds the rabbit reached his haven. But ah—Chaps was there too. The canny black cocker emerged from ambush at the last moment and seized his prey.

And then the kill. The tiny squeals of the rabbit—the sharp nosings of the dogs—the sudden jerks of their heads and snappings of their jaws. No blame to them, thought Nell, as she galloped toward them and called to them to stand back. Wagging their tails proudly they stood off and looked up at her. They were panting, and their long red tongues hung, dripping, out of the sides of their mouths.

Nell picked up the big jack—it must have weighed six pounds—and asked Gypsy's consent to hang it on the saddle. Gypsy pricked her ears and drew in her chin, snorting. Nell offered it to her to smell. Gypsy sniffed the rabbit gingerly, and after that, permitted Nell to fasten it to the saddle.

The dogs watched her, well satisfied. They knew that later, when Gus skinned it, they would get their share.

The hunt and the killing of the rabbit had added to Nell's depression. She could not bear to go home. If she could ride until it was completely dark, and there would be nothing to do but pull off her clothes and fall into bed! If she could ride until she was so tired that she would be sure to sleep!

Occasionally she glanced upward to see if there were any stars, or if the moon was rising, but the sky was a solid gray lid, not low or stormy, but withdrawn and bitterly cold. It made her shiver. If there was beauty and life in Nature, where had it gone? When the skies were like this they put a blight on the world, and on the human soul.

They galloped along in the gathering darkness, the dead rabbit thudding against the mare's side.

Nell reached the stables from the south pasture. She had expected Gus to be watching for her, but no one was there, not even the dogs. She fed Gypsy, unsaddled her and turned her out. She hung the dead rabbit in the meat house and walked slowly and unwillingly down through the gorge. Physically, she was near collapse, and she walked slowly and unsteadily.

As she approached the house she suddenly stopped walking. Lights shone in all the windows and a row of cars stood behind it.

It was one of those uproarious gatherings which occur when town people descend on their country friends with all the "makings." The house was bursting with food and drink, lights and roaring fires and human noise and movement. Rob had brought T-bone steaks. Potatoes were already baking and Genevieve Scott was just putting the finishing touches to two big pumpkin pies.

When Nell stood in the kitchen door, dazed and almost unbelieving, and exclaimed, "Rob!" she was promptly enveloped in a rowdy bear hug by her husband, and thereafter by Rodney Scott and Charley Sargent. She was told to sit down and rest herself and let her guests do the cooking and set the table. Morton Harris brought her an old-fashioned cocktail. There would be nothing for Nell to do, they assured her, but make her famous dressing for the lettuce.

"And the mustard and coffee sauce for the steaks!" exclaimed Rob.

Gus was concocting the potent Swedish punch called glogg.

"And I hope," said Bess Gifford, "that there'll be room in the oven for these biscuits."

"And we'll be ready to eat at about eight-thirty," said Rob, "and until then there's nothing to do but drink up and enjoy yourself!"

Nell ran upstairs to her room. Rob is home. He kissed me. He is here! This very night they would be together in this room and all would be explained and forgotten. That dreadful loneliness—that desolation—it was all over. An easy breathing lifted her breast and it was new and pleasant and free and a great change—as if, all these weeks, a painful thing had bound her lungs.

She stood on the threshold of their bedroom, wondering if he had been there already, if there would be some sign, his coat thrown across the pillow, or his boots standing argumentatively in the middle of the floor. Instead, she saw the bed piled high with feminine wraps. Of course. The girls, and their things. Well—it would all wait.

Moving lightly and excitedly, she brushed and groomed and freshened herself and ran downstairs again. Rob offered her another cocktail. "How's about another?" he asked jovially. "You've got to catch up to the rest of us, you know."

"Have you been here long?" she asked, raising her eyes to his as she took the glass. It was like speaking to a man she hardly knew but was desperately in love with.

His eyes met hers for a split second and then fell to the glass he was handing her. "Oh, a couple of hours!" he said.

"And I'm watching you make your salad dressing!" said Morton Harris. "I've got all the things out on this table for you!"

The radio was roaring. Bess Gifford and Charley Sargent were dancing in the middle of the living room. It seemed to Nell she was floating on the surface of a river of sound and sensation, that lifted her higher and higher. Her body was warm and quick and pliant, the pupils of her eyes dilated, her laugh rippled. She sat at the head of the table and carved the steaks, putting a lump of butter and mustard in each slice, and a dash of black coffee and then spooning the gravy over the meat until all was blended. When, now and then, the memory of the afternoon of all the days gone before—came back to her, she put her fork down and leaned her head back and wondered if she was drunk—so unbearably sweet was the pang of the present laid against the desolation of the past. It was over. He was here. He had kissed her. He would kiss her again tonight.

"Maybe you'll tell us, Nell!" shrieked Bess Gifford from the other end of the table. "Why is it that Rob and Charley are never so happy as when they can put their heads together and talk about how much money they lose on horses?"

"Lose on horses?" said Nell doubtfully, her eyes going to Rob's.

"Don't believe him," said Rodney Scott. "Come on now, Rob—give us the low-down. You made a mint on this sale, didn't you?"

"You don't have to ask him," shouted Stacy Gifford. "Take a look at him! See that smug grin! He busted the bank!"

(TO BE CONTINUED)

## IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL Lesson

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

### Lesson for September 16

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#### JUDAH'S CONCERN FOR HIS FAMILY

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 44:18-34.  
GOLDEN TEXT—How shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me?—Genesis 44:34.

The family is the fundamental unit of society, and is therefore of more importance than the church, the state, or the social order of which it is a vital part. Every force which encourages the breakdown of the sacred relationships of the home and family is set for the destruction of society itself.

Men have too often chosen to go the way of the flesh, and therefore they have disregarded God's plan and purpose. But the home is just as sacred as ever in His sight, and brotherly love still finds a high place among the virtues of real men.

The family comes before us as we continue the study of Joseph's life. As we study it, we bear in mind Joseph's dealings with his brethren, who as yet did not recognize him as the one they had sold into captivity. He was bringing them kindly but definitely to the point of real repentance, so that he could show himself gracious to them.

To do so he had brought disaster upon them. Being happily on their way homeward with a new supply of food, they were overtaken and proved to be thieves, and Benjamin, the beloved of their father Jacob, stood condemned to death by their own words.

In that crisis the mouths of the others seemed closed, but Judah, who had really saved Joseph's life (Gen. 37:26, 27), and who had apparently finally come to himself as a man of essential goodness, pleaded for Benjamin's life.

That plea presented a truly sacrificial brotherly love, as he manifested.

I. Courage (v. 18).

Easy rests the yoke of family life as long as all is joyful and prosperous. But when adversity strikes, when sorrow comes, or sickness, or sin, then the true test of devotion is at hand.

It was a brave and manly thing for Judah to stand before the one whom he knew only as the man who was "even as Pharaoh." The circumstances were all against him. He expected the flaming anger of the offended ruler. His brethren had collapsed in despair. It was one of those dark hours which come to every family when someone must demonstrate true love by being strong-hearted and fearless.

II. Intelligence (vv. 19-29).

We have become so accustomed to accomplishing things by the use of words that we are in danger of substituting speech for action. Even in times of sorrow or need we send a well-versed card or telegram, and regard our mission as accomplished.

Words have their place, but there comes a time when they must be coupled with intelligent action. Crises call for more than a cheerful smile or an encouraging word, much as they may mean in such an hour. We must be prepared by our close contact with our loved ones to speak and act with vigor and assurance.

III. Self-denial (vv. 30-33).

One step deeper goes the devotion of this man to his father and his brother. He had done no wrong that merited punishment, but evidently his brother Benjamin had been guilty. Had he been of the spirit of Cain he would have said, "Am I my brother's keeper?" and let him answer for himself. Why should Judah suffer for another? Why should he allow himself to be imprisoned in a strange land to save his father from sorrow and his brother from what seemed to be the just reward for his deeds?

Thus reasons the man of the world, but such is not the language of the true brother. He says, "Let thy servant abide instead of the lad as a bondman." Well and courageously spoken!

IV. Love (v. 34).

Love for father and brother underlies all of the courage, conviction and self-sacrifice of a man like Judah. In his younger years, and possibly under the influence of his brothers, he had failed in that respect, but now his real devotion to his brother was evident.

That affection was a real, powerful and beautiful thing, and yet it is but a faint prefiguring of the affection of the One who "sticketh closer than a brother," who "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich" (Prov. 18:24, II Cor. 8:9).

Let us improve the opportunity to review our relations with our own family, to determine whether there is aught that we in intelligent and courageous self-sacrifice should do for our own. Concern for family will pay rich dividends, especially in these days of broken homes and disturbed personal relationships. Love will do more than anything else to hold us together.

## GRASSROOTS

by  
WRIGHT A.  
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Released by Western Newspaper Union.

### FEDERAL PAYROLLS CONTINUE TO INCREASE

THE POPULATION of the United States consists of just about 135,000,000 men, women and children, representing approximately 27,000,000 families. The government—local, state and federal—civilian employees in April, of 1945, totaled 6,763,000. Deducting those, and the families they represent, and the total is about 110,000,000 people, 22,000,000 families, who are supporting not only themselves, but also those government employees and their families.

It all means that the head of each average sized family—less than five people—is providing food, shelter, heat, clothing and other needs for more than one outsider. Providing for that outsider represents the most expensive and most extravagant item in each family's ever-increasing cost of living.

Of the 6,763,000 government civilian employees, 3,589,000 are on federal government payrolls, and 3,183,000 are on municipal, county and state payrolls. These include all police officers and school teachers.

Washington bureaus have found ways to circumvent every effort of Senator Byrd, and his committee, to reduce the federal civilian payrolls. Instead the number of federal employees shows a steady increase, an increase amounting to 270,000 between April of 1944 and April of 1945. The number continues to increase despite the year-by-year increases in taxes; despite the mounting government indebtedness, and the need for economy.

What is to be the end? How many extra mouths must be heavily burdened head of a family feed? The cost of bureaucratic government has run far beyond any semblance of reason. The American people are long suffering and patient, but there is a breaking limit. That applies to both federal, local and state employment. It is time to reduce, rather than increase, all government payrolls. Those who do the providing do not appreciate that uninvited guest at the family dinner table.

### JAPS WILL HAVE HARD TIME TO SHOW REFORM

THE JAP SURRENDER is unprecedented in all history. The pill the Shinto deity emperor had to swallow was exceedingly bitter, and it took some hours to get it down. Now that it is over, now that the Son of Heaven is merely the mouthpiece of General MacArthur as American commander, what the future result will be is anybody's guess. Before the Jap can become an acceptable world citizen he must change the ways that have been bred into him through many centuries. That will take years, years that will be hard for the Japs, to effect such a change. The people of the Allied nations are not concerned with the religion of any people, but in the case of the Japs, Shintoism must go before the Jap can become an acceptable world citizen. With the passing of Shintoism will pass the emperor, should he surmount other difficulties.

The Greeks, Romans, Tartars, Goths, Turks, and, at a more recent period, Napoleon and his French legions, attempted what the Germans, Italians and Japs attempted, resulting in the conflict just ended. Each such try has led in time, to another. Let us hope the world, for the future, has learned to curb such malfeasances before they become dangerous and set the entire world aflame.

POOR JOHNNY! He is a victim of the death of the old jalopy. Dad has commandeered Johnny's bike as a means of transportation until a new car can be obtained. It recalls the days of the 90s when bikes for the poor and carriages for the rich represented transportation. The price of a bike ran anywhere from \$125 to \$175. You had a choice between high wheels or "safeties." To get on a high wheel took some practice and many a tumble. The "safety" was considered a "sissy." Both had solid tires, no air to soften the jar, and you loosened your back teeth when riding over the cobble stone pavements of city streets. A part of each daily stunt was peddling a bike from home to the office and back again, in my case a distance of six miles each way. That was considered the pleasurable part of working.

GOSSIP IS THE BLOCK buster that destroys community unity.

GENERAL MACARTHUR should set an early hour for reveille for Hirohito.

THE AMERICAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE system made winning the war possible. It supplied not only our own war needs, but the needs of our Allies. Its continuance here will be a beacon light to those nations now turning to that collectivism that failed.

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### Sideways Through Canal

Although the larger floating dry-docks of the U. S. navy are too wide to enter the locks of the Panama canal, the job of towing one through this waterway was accomplished recently by filling one of its hollow side walls with water and tilting the huge craft on its side.

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