

WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE'S

To Ride the River With

COPYRIGHT WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE—WNU SERVICE

CHAPTER I

(In the old Western parlance the commendation, "He's a man to ride the river with," was the highest possible praise. It meant that one could be trusted in all emergencies.)

Sun rays were streaming through the mesquite when Ruth rode out of the arroyo. In the light of morning the dust in the air from the desert sand, finer than powdered sugar, gave the atmosphere a faint rose color.

Ruth Chiswick drew a deep breath, almost a sigh. The desert could show its teeth grimly, but it could be poignantly lovely too. This was her country. It held her by a thousand ties, yet she was beginning to be afraid of the ruthlessness that struck at life so savagely. All plant and animal life had its sting. Nothing survived without a struggle. Always the desert fought to destroy.

Ruth was greatly worried. She had gone such a little way in life, was so inexperienced. At the parting of the ways, she did not know what to do. Her problems were two, though they merged into one. That her father lived in constant danger from the lawless rustlers of Tall Holt she knew. He took no precautions. Instead of biding his time until he could crush them he blunted deeded and threatened. Some day he would be dry-gulched from the brush.

Though at times there was stormy conflict between father and daughter, the tie which bound them together was very close. To Ruth the peril in which he stood had become an obsession. She must save him at any cost, and she believed she had found the way to do it. That fat slug Sherman Howard was the leader of the outlaws, yet kept within the law himself, as far as she knew. If he gave the word for his men to keep their hands off L C stock the rustlers would obey him. No longer would there be cause of strife between these light-fingered riders and Lee Chiswick.

And Sherman Howard had a son who was no fat slug but a dark handsome youth with a merry laugh. Ruth liked Lou Howard very much. He was wild, of course. She did not know him well, and there had been moments when there had flashed out evidence of moral callousness. So it had seemed, but always afterward his warm smile had banished doubts. He had given her to understand that she was the one woman with influence enough to keep him straight, and she was young enough to be attracted by the thought of snatching so good-looking a brand from the burning. There was something romantic about clandestine meetings with the son of the enemy of her house.

She had flirted with a lot of boys in an innocent way, but she did not know anything about love—unless the emotion she felt for Lou Howard came under that category. At times a strange feeling flooded her, almost religious in its intensity, that she had been appointed to save her father by marrying this young man. Lou was in her mind a great deal. She was not sure about him.

The last time they had met he had kissed her. Indignantly she had pushed him away, but afterward—thinking of that ardent embrace alone in her room—she knew her indignation had been a fraud. She had been chary of favors to boys. None of them had ever kissed her like that, with a fire which had stirred in her reluctant response.

A young man rode out of the mesquite and flung up a hand in greeting. She watched him as he cantered forward, flung himself from the saddle, and strode to meet her. A queer little thrill ran through her, and after it a tremor of fear. He was essentially a stranger, as many men are to the girls who marry them, yet it was likely he was going to be the most important person in her life.

"I was afraid you wouldn't come," he said, and kissed her hand.

Ruth took it away, embarrassed. Hand-kissing on the frontier was something alien. "I said I would be here," she reminded him.

"So you did." He looked at her eagerly, boyishly. "Is it going to be yes?"

She nodded. "I think so."

He reached up to help her from the horse, but she shook her head. "No, I can't stay but a minute."

"You can rest yore saddle that minute, can't you, honey?"

The girl knew what he wanted, to take her in his arms and make love to her. She discovered that she did not want him to do that—not yet, at least. Until she knew him better she did not want to be kissed, not with urgent passion.

"No. I slipped away, and I have to get back. They'll miss me." She asked, abruptly, a wave of color in her cheeks, "Are you sure you still . . . want me?"

"Course I do." He frowned up at her, irritated. He had ridden 30 miles to meet her and she held him at arm's length. "But get

down and let us talk, Ruth. If we're going to get married—"

"I don't know you, and you don't know me," she interrupted.

"Course I know you," he denied. "You're the prettiest girl in the county. I know all about you, and you know about me. I'm wild about you. What's the sense in sitting up there like—the Queen of Sheba?"

Very likely he was right. Ruth had been brought up in a household of men without the guidance of a mother. She slipped from the saddle and stood beside him.

He took her in his arms and she submitted, withholding herself. Presently she drew back from his embrace. That he was dissatisfied with her lack of response she knew. "Be patient with me—at first," she begged. "I'm worried, Lou. I



"Some hot on the desert," the storekeeper suggested.

don't know whether what we are going to do is right. I—I—I'm scared."

Promises poured out of him. He would make her happy. He would reconcile their fathers. There would no longer be war or the range. Forgetting all the other girls, he would make her the best husband in the territory. All she had to do was to trust him and he would fix it. She must not worry.

Yet she did worry, even as they made the arrangements for the elopement. The weight was still in her breast as she rode back up the arroyo. The sun was hot in the coppery sky. From the far canyons the mist had vanished. Harsh and forbidding stretched the grim desert, all its sharp teeth showing.

Into Tall Holt, near the close of a hot day, rode a man on a long-barreled roan.

The rider dismounted at a store which carried on the false front a sign, "Yell Sanger, General Merchandise." He dropped the reins at a hitchrack and looked up and down the street to orient himself. Through the hazy amber light of late afternoon he saw Tall Holt drowse in a coma of sunshine. A man was crossing the street from one saloon to another. Otherwise the place appeared to be deserted, except for half a dozen cow-ponies drooping at the hitchrack of Curt Dubbs' Golden Nugget, saloon and gambling-house.

Four saloons, a blacksmith shop, another general store, a Chinese restaurant, a shoemaker's cubby hole, and a public corral were checked off by the stranger. Leisurely he turned and walked with trailing spurs into Sanger's store.

In addition to Sanger, who was a bald-headed little fellow with black gimlet eyes, two cowboys were in the place. They were lounging

against a counter. Conversation ceased at the entrance of the newcomer. All three gazed at him. They saw a crook-nosed man of middle size with a leathery brown face in which were set light gray eyes, from the corners of which radiated many tiny wrinkles. He might be thirty years old, perhaps a year or two less. His movements had a kind of rippling ease and he carried himself with an assurance almost insolent. When he took off his dusty hat he showed a thick head of hair burnt sorrel by a thousand untempered suns. He wore shiny leathers and high-heeled boots, an open vest, no coat. A gun hung low on his thigh, well forward. A tough hombre, it could be guessed, able to take care of himself in any emergency.

From a throat caked with alkali dust the traveler said hoarsely, "Tomato airtight."

Sanger slashed open a can with a hatchet.

"Some hot on the desert," the storekeeper suggested.

The crook-nosed man drank the juice from the can, then fished out a tomato. "Some," he assented. "I got to thinkin' if Tall Holt was any farther off it must be near somewhere."

Experimentally, one of the cowboys murmured, "You come quite a ways?"

The crook-nosed man looked at him. Apparently this did not call for an answer. "Yes, sir, hot and dry," he drawled, after shifting his gaze to Sanger.

"That's right," the second cowboy agreed. He was a long-legged man with a lank lower jaw.

"Sure is," his companion said. "Well, I'll be moseyin', Mile High."

"Yo tambien, Sid," the tall man concurred promptly, unwinding to his full height. "I'll take a plug of Horse-Shoe, Sanger."

He followed Sid from the building.

"Town kinda quiet," the stranger said.

"Liable to liven up later," Sanger told him.

From where he sat on a counter the man with the sorrel-top could see the two cowboys looking at his horse. Words drifted to him.

"Double cinch—Texas man," Mile High hazarded.

"Yep. No tenderfoot." Sid rolled a cigarette.

"Not none. Plenty tough." The tall man said something more, in a low voice.

Sid laughed, harshly. "I wouldn't know."

They bowlegged across the road to the Golden Nugget.

"Tall Holt takes notice of a stran-

ger," the newcomer mentioned dryly. Sanger did not answer. His small black eyes were taking in with a vast surprise two people who had come into the store.

"Evening, Miss Chiswick—Lou," he greeted them.

The man he had called Lou drew the storekeeper aside for a whispered conference. He was wearing new corduroys, fancy top-boots, an expensive sombrero, and a purple silk shirt around the neck of which was tied loosely a polka-dot bandanna. On his dark, handsome face there was just now a sulky look. In one keen glance the crook-nosed man sized him up as a showy, raffish fellow with no bottom.

The girl held a greater interest. She had, he guessed, an exciting personality. In her dark, stormy eyes was the threat of passion.

A snatch of the low-voiced conversation came to the stranger.

" . . . have Spicer meet us at Ma Presnell's boarding-house and do the job . . . want to get to Tough Nut before night."

Gretna Green business, of course. Bad medicine for the girl. Probably she was an undisciplined little devil, but she was too fine of grain for the man with whom she was eloping. Sardonically Crook-nose added a stipulation. Very likely he was letting her glamorous, troubled beauty sway his judgment.

"Are you expecting to spend the day here?" she asked her companion, and her voice had in it the singing sting of a small whiplash.

"I'm fixing things up with Sanger, Ruth," the young man answered irritably. "Can't do it any faster."

The girl did not reply. She brushed back impatiently a tendril that had escaped from the soft waves of dark hair disordered by her long ride.

A fusillade of shots came from the street. The three men moved swiftly to the door. A rider was galloping down the dusty road, revolver in hand, waving a hat in the air.

"Hi-yi! Whoopee! Git outa the way of Wild Jim Pender," he yelled.

"Pender said. 'He's a terror when he has tanglefoot aboard . . . He's headin' back down the street . . . Lordee, he's comin' in!'"

"Hunt cover, Ruth," her young man shouted, and vaulted over a counter. "Back here. Quick."

An arm of the stranger went round the waist of the girl, swept her up the store, and flung her down behind some sacks of potatoes.

The drunken man drove his horse into the store. "Lo, Sanger, you old son-of-a-vinegarcon, where are you? I want cartridges—pronto."

(TO BE CONTINUED)

HOW to SEW

By RUTH WYETH SPEARS



A LETTER comes from a reader enclosing rough sketches of stitches from a silk patchwork quilt. She writes, "I inherited this quilt from a great aunt and it is the final touch of luxury in my guest room. It never occurred to me that I could make one like it until I saw your article about patchwork stitches in the paper. I am following your advice about using an old wool blanket as a foundation—only I am using the best parts of several worn blankets. I plan to join the blanket sections with whipped seams and then arrange my final patches along the joinings."

broinery designing; fabric repairing; novelty gifts and dress accessories. Forty-eight pages of step-by-step directions. Available to readers who will send name and address and enclose 25 cents (coin preferred). Just address Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

FOR BURNS
MOROLINE
Large Jars 5¢ and 10¢
SNOW WHITE PETROLEUM JELLY

Scattered Alumni
There are 71,757 alumni of Harvard university living in eighty-four countries.

Now I Iron the EASY WAY with my Coleman SELF-HEATING Iron
Thousands of women have banished "ironing day blues" with this time-saving, work-saving Coleman Iron. Gentlest, instant-lighting. Entirely self-heating. Entire ironing surface is evenly heated, with a hot point and hot edges. Iron with less effort, in one-third less time. Do your next ironing with the Instant-Lighting Coleman. It's a wonderful time and labor saver. See it at your dealer's.
WRITE! Send post-card for free folder and full details. Address Dept. W-22 THE COLEMAN LAMP AND STOVE CO. Wichita, Kans.; Chicago, Ill.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Los Angeles, Calif. (1935)

CHEW LONG BILL NAVY TOBACCO

Pure as an Ocean Breeze
Half a century of scientific research has made possible a motor oil that's really pure . . . Quaker State. In four great, modern refineries the finest Pennsylvania crude oil is freed of all trace of impurities . . . scientifically purified to overcome the common ailments of sludge, carbon and corrosion. Acid-Free Quaker State makes your car run better, last longer. Retail price, 35¢ a quart. Quaker State Oil Refining Corp., Oil City, Penna.

QUAKER STATE MOTOR OIL

Window Washer's Job Is Risky; Worker Can Clean Ten to Fifteen in an Hour

All skyscraper windows aren't "architect's nightmares," and not all window washing is done in sub-freezing weather. Usually the cleaner climbs out on a reasonably wide sill with a rubber squeegee and a wet chamois, snaps his safety belt hooks into the little steel rings the builders put in the window frames for that purpose, and in a few quick swipes is ready to climb back inside and begin all over on the next one.

To hold his job, says a writer in the Washington Star, a window cleaner must keep moving. A good worker can average 10 windows an hour, or 80 a day; the topnotchers even wash 15 windows every hour! For thus risking his life, he may receive from \$36 to \$45 for a 40-hour week where union wages prevail, and his average age of usefulness in the business runs from about twenty-two to forty.

Dangerous? Yes, though most window cleaners seldom think of

that—or they probably wouldn't be window cleaners! Their employers pay as much as a dollar a day to insure each worker's life, and it is the insurance company which does everything humanly possible to make the cleaner's calling a safer one. Inspectors regularly test the metal rings into which the safety belt hooks are fastened. These rust away in old buildings and result in more falls than any other cause.

Sometimes a near-tragedy in a window cleaner's life turns out to be funny. One worker recently got his name in the papers when his safety belt gave way on a third-story window and he fell to the ground without suffering a scratch. He got up, brushed off his clothes, stopped at the office for a new belt and climbed out to finish the window.

A hero? He'd be the last one to think so. To a window cleaner, taking hazardous risks is all in the day's work.

TO RIDE THE RIVER WITH

A NEW SERIAL BY William MacLeod Raine STARTING IN TODAY'S ISSUE!

Today you'll meet beautiful Ruth Chiswick, living quietly on her father's ranch but destined for the biggest adventure that ever befell a girl! Soon you'll meet the mysterious Jeff Gray, a gallant horseman who appeared from nowhere to become the greatest enigma of modern Arizona. You'll follow Jeff and Ruth with intense interest as they follow an adventure-studded trail to love. You'll be amazed at the undeserved faith Ruth places in this man, a would-be killer, a cattle rustler, an enemy of justice. But in the end, you'll agree "To Ride the River With" is a sensational serial story! START READING IT TODAY!

Only Good Merchandise Can Be CONSISTENTLY Advertised BUY ADVERTISED GOODS