

WILLIAM MACLEOD RAINE'S

To Ride the River With

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CHAPTER VII—Continued

"He can't be all bad," Ruth broke in, her eyes shining like stars. "I knew it all the time, only all the evidence was against him. I don't believe he is the man who shot at Father at Tail Holt. He may be bad. That is, he may have done bad things. But he isn't mean. He wouldn't lie about it. He'd come straight out, with that defiant, mocking smile of his."

"That's all very well, daughter," Lee assented. "I'll grant you he isn't a villain like that killer Morg Norris. Fact is, I never could quite get myself to think so, spite of all the proof. We sure owe him a lot on account of what he did for Frank. But very likely he's that train robber they want in Texas. Must be some reason he's hiding here. You don't want to get too sympathetic to him."

"No, if we get a chance we might arrest him and send him back to Texas," Ruth suggested scornfully. "There must be a reward for him."

"Now—now! No use getting high-tighty, Miss. He can come and stay at the L C long as he wants. We'll do all we can for him, since we don't know he is an outlaw," her father said.

"And if we find he is we can kick him out," the girl added. "All he has done is save most of our lives." Her father grinned ruefully. "You're sure a gaddy, Missy. You talk like I was starting right out to hunt this fellow down. No sense in getting all steamed up about it. If we get a chance to help him we will. That's all I can promise."

Ruth nodded. She knew her father would pay the family debt if he were given a chance. For herself, she felt a great lift of relief at what her brother had told them.

She desperately wanted to believe in Jeff Gray, to get assurance at least that he was not mean and treacherous. A queer joy flooded her heart.

Jeff Gray fitted himself easily into the life of Tail Holt. Frequently he dropped into the blacksmith shop of Hank Ransom and listened to tall stories of the days when Hank had campaigned against the Apaches under Generals Crook and Miles. He struck up an acquaintance with the cobbler, little Ed Godfrey.

He showed no curiosity about those he met. When they came and went, where they lived, what their ostensible occupations were, held no visible interest for him. He accepted each man for what he gave himself out to be. The riders drifting in and out of Tail Holt no longer looked at him suspiciously. Curly Connor liked him, and Curly was a leader. The only man who seemed to resent his presence was Morg Norris, and this was discounted by the fact that the surly youth was friendly to few.

Sensitive to atmosphere, Gray deduced one day that something unusual was in the air. He saw Norris in momentary furtive talk with Sherman Howard. The big man was giving the other instructions. Norris picked up Kansas and took him out of the Golden Nugget with him. Mile High came in, sauntered over to Howard, held a low-voiced conversation with him, and departed.

Presently Gray announced, with a yawn, "Tired of poker," and cashed in his chips. He strolled down to the Alamo corral. Sid Hunt and Kansas were saddling their horses. One of them tied back of the saddle a gunnysack containing oats.

"What about that lame sorrel, Sid?" asked Reynolds. "You be back tonight?"

"You look after it, Jim," Hunt said. "Don't look for us till you see our dust coming up the road."

"We got a hen on down Live Oak canyon way," Kansas said with a grin.

Back of the horse Hunt kicked him on the ankle.

Kansas added a rider to his indiscreet remark: "Or somewhere else."

Each of the men had a rifle strapped beside his saddle.

Gray watched them ride out of town. They took the road to the west, the one Lee Chiswick and his daughter had followed the night of their adventure in front of Sanger's store. Half an hour later, Norris, Mile High, and young Howard left Tail Holt headed in the same direction.

Darkness was falling when Jeff Gray rode out of town. He had never been in Live Oak canyon, but he knew from Pat Sorley that it was on the L C range, not more than three or four miles southwest of the line-cabin.

Were the night riders out to make a raid on L C cattle? That was possible. But why cross 20 miles of Chiswick's range into hill country when plenty of stock could be picked up in the Sweet Spring valley with a much shorter drive to safety?

As he rode through the darkness, mind focused on the problem, another likelihood flashed upon Gray. Occasionally smugglers from Sonora brought silver to Tough Nut to

buy goods for consumption in Mexico, thus escaping the Mexican export duty on silver and the import duty on merchandise. In such illicit trading there was a fat profit. Between El Paso and Nogales there was no port of entry. The only custom-house was a shack on the San Pedro river at the point where it runs into the United States. One of the routes followed by smugglers wound through Live Oak canyon. From it the descent to Tough Nut was by an easy grade.

The longer he thought of it the more convinced he was that the raid was against smugglers. A pack-horse had accompanied the Norris party, probably to carry back the silver. Moreover, the personnel of the group pointed to something other than cattle-stealing. Neither young Howard nor Kansas were top hands with cows. Why bring them along and leave an expert like Curly at home?

From chance remarks Gray had gathered that Curly was the leader of the rustler group. But Curly was no wanton killer.

Gray did not ride straight for the canyon, but took the road that led to the L C ranch-house. The Chiswicks would know much better than he what to do, since they were fa-



Finally they drew rein.

miliar with the terrain. If he played a lone hand he might miss the smugglers and let them ride on to destruction.

It was in the small hours when he reached the ranch. At his approach to the house a dog barked furiously. Presently someone opened the front door and came out on the porch.

A voice demanded, "Who's there?"

"Tell Lee Chiswick that Jeff Gray wants to see him," the night visitor answered, at the same time swinging from the saddle on the far side of the horse.

There was a moment of silence. "What you want with him?" Bob Chiswick asked.

"I'll tell him that when I see him," Gray said dryly. "You run along in and tell him I'm here."

A head was thrust out of an upper window. "Who is it, Bob?"

"Says he is Jeff Gray, Father" Bob called up.

"Wait a minute." The head was withdrawn.

Five minutes later Lee Chiswick stepped out on the porch.

Gray told him why he was there. To his son Lee said, "Light a lamp in my office, Bob." To Gray, "Tie your horse and come in."

Gray followed the cattleman into his office and took the chair to which his host waved him. Lee sat across the table from him. Young Chiswick remained standing.

"First off, Mr. Jeff Gray, if that's your name, let's get it clear where you stand. I'll ask you to come clean, sir. Are you one of Sherman Howard's scoundrels?"

"Would I be here if I were?" Gray asked.

Ruth stood in the doorway, her dark eyes dilated with surprise. She had flung a wrap over her nightgown and she held it caught close to her slender, gracious body. Above the slippers into which her feet had been thrust there was a glimpse of white ankle.

"I'm not asking for a Yankee answer, sir," Lee said impatiently.

"I'm not giving you one," Gray told him curtly. "I've been in the saddle all night to bring you the tip-off. Take it or leave it."

"There's a story in Tail Holt that you are Clint Duke, the fellow who robbed the Texas and Southern," persisted Lee.

"Not much time for gossip right now if we aim to head off those scalawags," Gray said.

Ruth broke into the talk. "I don't believe it. I don't think Mr. Gray is a train robber or a rustler, Father. And I know he isn't one of

Sherman Howard's men. Look what he did for Frank."

Her father turned in his chair. "Might have known you'd be butting in," he scolded, "seeing it's none of your business."

"I heard voices," she explained, "and I came down to see who it was."

"Now you know, you can go back to bed," Lee told her crustily.

"Not just yet, please," Gray smiled blandly. "I'm gaunt as a pined steer after a long drive. Since you're so sure I'm innocent, Miss Chiswick, how about a cup of coffee and some ham and eggs? I'll have just time for them before we start if you move lively."

"Start where?" she asked.

The red-headed man waved a hand debonairly at his host. "Ask Mr. Chiswick. I wouldn't know where."

Lee said: "Go ahead, girl. Fix him up some food." He added to his son: "Rout Frank and Dan Brand and Buck Conrad out of their beds. See they get horses saddled."

Before she left to make breakfast, Ruth fung a question at Gray.

"You are innocent, aren't you?"

"I never blocked a brand or ran one over. I never bought or sold a wet horse."

"Did you hear me tell you to rustle some grub, Ruth?" her father asked harshly. "Better fix breakfast for all of us. No telling when we'll eat again."

Ruth vanished. Presently they could hear the rattling of stove-lids and the crackling of wood.

"I don't know how to take you," Lee complained. "You certainly came through for Frank when he needed a friend. You claim you're not one of Howard's thieves, but you were with them when they ran that bunch of L C stuff up Box canyon. Pat Sorley checked up on your horse's hoofs."

"He didn't check up well enough. I went up the gulch after the thieves, not with them. They passed close to the line-camp in the night. I heard them and went out to see who they were. Pat hadn't been feeling well the night before, so I didn't wake him, but followed the rustlers alone."

"You're a detective for the Cattlemen's association. That what you mean?"

"You can do yore own guessing. Right now I'm giving no information."

Chiswick threw out a hand in a gesture of defeat. "All right. Have it your own way. I'll take a chance on you. If you're right about it and this bunch you followed are headed for Live Oak canyon, it is a cinch they are not figuring on running off any of my stock. My guess is the same as yours. They have heard word of some silver smugglers on their way to Tough Nut. At least, that would look reasonable to me. Probably they will lie in wait for them at the rock slide. A thousand big boulders crashed down a million years ago, and filled up the trail so a traveler has to wind around among them. It's a fine spot for an ambush. Question is, can we get to the smugglers before they reach the canyon?"

"If not, they will probably be wiped out. You know that killer Morg Norris. He'll figure dead men tell no tales."

"Yes. Three smugglers were dry-gulched and killed last year. In Skeleton canyon, not in Live Oak. Norris was in that, they say."

"Unless the Mexicans fool them and come up some other way," Gray said, thinking aloud.

"Through Live Oak would be the nearest for them."

"Howard must have a spy in Mexico who is in with the smugglers."

"Looks like," Chiswick agreed.

Presently Frank Chiswick came into the room. He told his father that the horses were being caught

and saddled. "Tony Flores stayed at the bunk-house last night. Do you want him to go?" the young man asked.

"I reckon so. How many rifles all told?"

"Four, counting the buffalo gun." The other men trooped into the house for breakfast. They ate by the light of lamps, Ruth and Nelly waiting on them. Plate after plate of biscuits vanished before them. Platters of fried eggs appeared and disappeared. Nelly poured great quantities of coffee. The men ate with the lusty, hearty appetites of hard riders who did not know when they would see food again. During the meal there was little conversation.

After breakfast Gray drew Lee Chiswick aside.

"Maybe we're figuring this thing out wrong," he said. "Maybe when Kansas let slip Live Oak canyon, that was just bait for me. Don't you reckon you had better leave a guard at the ranch to look after the women?"

Lee considered this. "No. Men in this country don't make war on women, not even a fox like Sherman Howard."

Gray rode with Lee Chiswick at the head of the little cavalcade.

They came into rough country, a wild jumble of hills and draws which made for slow and hard going. In the darkness the horses felt their own way. From the summit of one of the hills Chiswick pointed down to a gash in the rock wall facing them.

"Canyon Diablo," he said. "That was the Spanish name. We call it Live Oak now."

Chiswick left the rest of his party in a mesquite draw while he and Gray rode forward to reconnoiter. The younger man carried Dan Brand's rifle, since he had not one of his own. They rode cautiously, searching the darkness in front of them with their eyes as they moved forward. Of the two Chiswick was the more uneasy. He could not be sure that his companion was not leading him into a trap from which he would never come out alive.

Neither of them saw any sign of another party. Finally they drew rein and dismounted. Back of a small elevation 50 yards from the mouth of Live Oak canyon they tied their mounts. Very carefully they covered the remaining distance. Within rifle range were a hundred boulders behind which enemies could find cover.

Safely they reached the trail. "They're ahead of us," Gray pointed to fresh tracks.

They examined the footprints, striking matches as they stooped to make out the impressions. One horse had a broken front hoof. Another wore very large shoes and stepped a long way.

"I've seen both of those tracks before," Chiswick said.

"The horses that made them belong to Morg Norris and Mile High," Gray replied. "Where do we go from here? My idea is to follow them into the canyon or along the rim."

Chiswick called to the rest of his posse and the others joined them. Brand recovered his rifle from the red-headed man.

"Norris and his crowd are in the canyon, boys," Lee said. "We are going in after them. But get this right. We have no evidence as to why they are here. So we can't cut loose at them promiscuously. Maybe they'll show their hand before we reach them. Anyhow, till I give the word there isn't to be any gunplay. We're law-abiding citizens."

"How many of them are there?" asked Buck Conrad, chewing tobacco stolidly. He was a short, thick, bowlegged man with an imperturbable face.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Post Office Department Aids Bureau of Identification in Finding People

Consciously and unconsciously, post office departments the world over perform odd non-postal services.

The United States post office gets into banking with its postal savings work. In rare emergencies, it aids the federal bureau of investigation in identification by turning over to G-men fingerprints taken of each person who opens a postal savings account.

Occasionally, says a writer in the Washington Post, our post office delves into the business of locating missing people. Here's how its fanciest bit of service works. You pay 3 cents postage; plus 15 cents minimum registration fee; plus 10 cents restricted delivery charge (the letter is then delivered to the addressee only); plus 23 cents for a return receipt showing the address where the letter was delivered and the signature of the addressee! That's 51 cents on one letter!

Thus the post office turns detective, finds your friend even if he has moved, tells you where he's

living. The idea came from outside the department and was made law by congress.

As for postal savings, Canada, Germany and other countries run banking branches. German post offices, in addition, arrange excursion trips, collect license fees from every radio owner in Germany, maintain buses which serve as traveling post offices. Likewise, traveling post offices are used in Switzerland, Russia and elsewhere.

Back in 1900 Belgium offered an odd service. It was a 10-centime stamp. The detachable tag on the bottom reads in French and Flemish: "Do not deliver on Sunday."

If the tag was left on the stamp, the letter wasn't delivered on Sunday. But if you didn't care and tore the tag off, the letter was delivered any day of the week.

"Name Writ in Water"

Poet Keats asked that the following inscription be placed on his grave: "Here lies one whose name was writ in water."

Cool Fashions for Mother, Daughter



IT'S the simple things that look prettiest in hot weather—dresses like these, with slim skirts, puff sleeves and v-neck lines. They're easily made at home, in colors and fabrics that suit you best. The patterns include detailed sew charts so that you can easily do it, and you'll save enough for that extra frock you always want in summertime.

Dress With Fitted Waistline.

This dress has a beautifully expensive, exclusive look—and it's so easy to do! Only six steps in the making. The fitted waistline is topped by soft gathers that fill out the bosom. Darts at the side make the waist hug your figure, and the sash bow in back adds a touch of youthful charm. Linen, silk crepe, dotted Swiss or georgette are pretty fabrics for this dress.

All-Day-Long House Dress.

Made on modified shirtwaist lines, this dress is simple enough to put on first thing in the morning, and pretty enough to wear all day long. Ricrac braid on the collar, sleeves and pockets makes it especially colorful and flattering. Make up in percale, pique, gingham or linen.

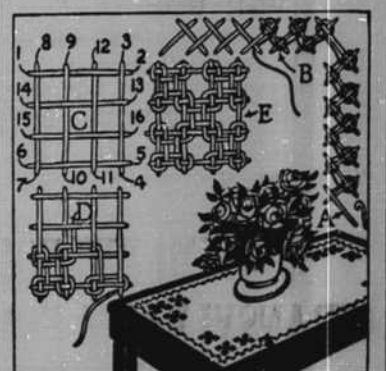
The Patterns.

1481 is designed for sizes 14, 16, 18, 20, 40 and 42. Size 16 requires 3 1/2 yards of 35-inch material.

1529 is designed for sizes 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46. Size 36 requires 4 1/2 yards of 35-inch material; 2 1/2 yards ricrac braid to trim.

Send your order to The Sewing Circle Pattern Dept., Room 1020, 211 W. Wacker Dr., Chicago, Ill. Price of patterns, 15 cents (in coins) each.

Interlaced Stitches in Tones of Pink



PINK is the newest color in decoration. It is charming for embroidered mats and table scarves. The runner shown is palest pink linen embroidered in darker pink and deep rose. A pearl cotton embroidery thread, size 5, is used.

Cut the mat or runner the desired size allowing 1 1/2 inches all around for hems. Turn the hems and sew them by hand at the corners. Now, embroider around the top of the hem with plain catch-stitching in pink as at A. Next, interlace these stitches with the rose as at B.

Three 1 1/2-inch squares are embroidered in each corner. Mark each square with a pencil. The method of laying the pink foundation threads is shown in diagram C. Bring the needle out at 1, place it in the material again at 2, and bring it out again at 3. Continue, following the numbers and weaving the stitches over and under as shown. Next, interlace these stitches with rose. Start at D and follow the diagrams until all stitches are interlaced as at E.

NOTE: Mrs. Spears' latest book fully illustrates ninety other embroidery stitches; also fabric repairing; table settings; and many things to make for yourself and the children. The directions in the book are complete—no patterns to buy. Price 25 cents postpaid (coin preferred). Ask for Book 2 and address Mrs. Spears, 210 S. Desplaines St., Chicago, Ill.

Calculating Rewards

The man who stops to calculate how much good will come to him out of the good he does, he will never do any good.—W. J. Bryan.

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Do You Want to Learn How to Plan a Laxative Diet?

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READERS of this newspaper are invited to write to C. Houston Goudis, 6 East 29th Street, New York City, for a free copy of his bulletin, "Helpful Hints on Planning a Laxative Diet."

The bulletin gives concrete suggestions for combating faulty elimination through correct eating and proper habits of hygiene. It gives a list of laxative foods and contains a full week's sample menus. A postcard is sufficient to carry your request.

Emperor Refused Advice

The former emperor of Germany, as a youth, did almost everything in the hope of strengthening his withered arm. Once, learning how to scull, his teacher cautioned him about getting into the light boat, explaining how he must use extreme care and get exactly in the center. But William of Hohenzollern, who had never taken advice from any one in his life and was always convinced that he himself knew best, answered the advice by jumping into the boat from the wharf, capsizing it, of course, and throwing him and his instructor into the water.

NERVOUS?

Do you feel so nervous you want to scream? Are you cross and irritable? Do you acid those dearest to you?

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Burning, scanty or too frequent urination may be a warning of some kidney or bladder disturbance. You may suffer nagging backache, persistent headache, attacks of dizziness, getting up at night, swelling, puffiness under the eyes—feel weak, nervous; all played out.

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