

DUDE WOMAN

By PETER B. KYNE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Mary Sutherland, an Eastern girl, is lured to Arizona by the advertisements of the Wagon Wheel dude ranch operated by Ma and Pa Burdan. She is met at the station by Len Henley, rodeo rider, who tells her that the Wagon Wheel has gone out of business. While at Phoenix Len enters the rodeo, drawing a bronc known as Mad Hatter. Mary learns that Len loves her and that his father disapproves the match. She wagers one thousand to three thousand that Len will ride Mad Hatter. He succeeds, but is injured. Mary buys the Burdan equity in Wagon Wheel, outbidding Ham Henley. Ham, feeling the ranch is his, offers it to his son.

CHAPTER X

A long silence. Then, "And, of course, Mary, there is your family to consider."

"I have a feeling the champion cowboy of the world would not strike their fancy as hard as he struck mine." She came back to the bedside, took his hand and held it. "I suppose you and your father have seen enough exhibits A in blue overalls, cowboy boots and big hats to support his thesis?"

He nodded lugubriously. "Len, do you really and truly love me?"

"So much I think I shall never get over wanting you. What I feel for you is something I have never felt for any woman—and I have had my little romances and dreamed a few silly dreams that faded long before I got back to the inspiration for them. But you were different. I have never before met—a girl like you! You're the first specimen of your world that I have ever known—it's the grand passion, I suppose. It is said to come once to every man." He looked up at her and she saw misery in his eyes. "Your going will leave a scar," he whispered. "You think I ought to go, Don Leonardo?"

"It would be safer to retreat. Mine is a small world, yours a large one . . . you have many opportunities to forget . . . love isn't enough for a happy life, my dear one. You would have to have congenial surroundings and congenial friends—I wouldn't be enough for you."

"I'll not put you up against such a grim decision," she promised.

Two minutes later his father walked into the room. "Passed your dude girl friend down in the lower hall," he announced. "She didn't see me. She was cryin'. You two been puttin' on the gloves, son?"

"We will not be seeing each other again, sir."

"Maybe that's just as well, Len. Mind tellin' the old man what the ruckus was about?"

"There was no ruckus. We're both civilized. It was a mistake—we both recognized it—and faced it. I'd been thinking about what you said and decided you were right, so when she came in here about five minutes ago I let her have it. There was no sparring. I had to get it off my chest."

"That took guts," his father murmured. "At your age I lacked 'em." "Don't bother buying the Wagon Wheel for me, father," his son went on wearily. "I had a day dream about it once—and the dream faded—I wouldn't be too happy there now, so forget it." He reached out a hand groping for his father's.

"When I get well you might give me a job, pappy. I know you better than I used to . . ."

"All right, we'll forget the Wagon Wheel," his father said, happy because there existed now no reason why they should ever mention it again. Apparently she hadn't told him and she wouldn't now . . .

"I reckon maybe you'd like to be alone just now," he said, and went out.

In the privacy of her room Mary distilled her cargo of woe in tears which did not last long, for hers was a resilient nature and she had a normal, healthy contempt for women who wept unless their honest emotions have been sacrificed. And there was a question before her now—she had to find an answer to it. If she returned to New York it would be to a home deserted save for their butler and his wife, the cook—and there would be Joe Blanding, ready to pounce on her. She had fled to Arizona to escape Joe Blanding and his constant pleading with her to marry him. She despised Joe Blanding, although her mother had done all in her power to forward a marriage between them. He was the typical rich man's son—idle, selfish, prodigal where his own comfort was concerned, but parsimonious otherwise; a play-boy who, not knowing how to live, drank to conceal his boredom. How she shrank from seeing Joe Blanding again—and of course she wouldn't be back in town a week before he would know it and come whining around! The man was impervious to rebuffs; a dozen times she had refused to marry him, but still he persisted, apparently in the belief that he would, eventually, wear down her resistance. And he was such a whimpering weakling about it. He had no compunction about descending to the unutterable vulgarity of tears in his efforts to impress her with the depth of his love. He seemed to think the profundity of his passion was a rare and holy thing with which no sane woman could fail to be impressed.

Why not spend the next three

months on the Wagon Wheel? she thought. She had a feeling that solitude might be good for her in her present mood. The Burdons, she knew, planned to return to the ranch in a day or two to gather up a few personal belongings and they had no plans for the future. It might be possible to engage them to live at the Wagon Wheel with her. Ma could cook and keep house for her and Pa could furnish protection. She would buy a cheap horse and ride around the country, look it over and wonder how she'd like to live in it. Margaret Maxwell might like to make her a visit there.

She telephoned the Burdons and outlined her proposition. Both, regarding her as the new and, presumably, active owner of the ranch, had been hugging the hope she would engage them, for they found it heart-breaking to separate themselves from a spot grown immeasurably dear to them.

"Cook?" Ma shrieked. "Miss Sutherland, I don't lay down my skillet to nobody. I'm one o' these here old-time home-cookin' bodies an' I'm here to tell you the big mistake we made in our dude business was me not doin' the cookin'. But we got the



"Len, do you really and truly love me?"

notion dudes on a real cow outfit wanted life the way the cowboys lived it so we had 'em eat with the help an' a round-up cook prepared the grub and served it. You give us seventy-five a month an' one o' them dude cottages to live in an' I'll cook and Pa'll putter."

"Let's go out tomorrow," Mary suggested. "Have you room for my two trunks, a suit-case and a bag in your station wagon?"

"Certainly have," Ma replied happily, "but we got to lay in some grub before we start. The commissary was low when we left."

When the Burdan station wagon crossed the bridge over the Hassyampa River, Mary cast a swift glance down on the sand-bar where she had knelt to learn the wishes of the Spirit. That had been a delightful little fiction then, but today she wasn't so certain, for she was sensible of more than a visitor's interest in Arizona! They stopped at Congress Junction, which she knew would be her postoffice address, and Ma went in for the mail; then they rolled on west to Sughuaro, following a narrow gravelly road through the desert. They crossed a dry wash at the bottom of a canyon and climbed out of the wash to a mesa. A coyote loped across the road in front of them and the red-crested Gambrel's quail appeared in small flocks in the open. And here, for the first time, Mary saw cattle wearing the Wagon Wheel brand, which wasn't really a wagon wheel, but a circle equally divided into eight parts. They came to a crest presently and Ma stopped and pointed:

"There she is, Miss Sutherland. There's your Wagon Wheel headquarters." Ma threw the distant scene a kiss. "Honey," she said with deep feeling, "I certainly never expected to get back to you again."

In a valley a few hundred feet below them a cluster of buildings stood, surrounded by trees. Stretching southwest from these buildings a white boulder-strewn wash about a hundred yards wide wound away out of sight. This wash was the Santa Maria River, although in summer it shrank to a mere trickle and a few pools among the boulders. Far beyond, a flat-topped mountain probably six or seven thousand feet high towered against the cerulean sky. West and north low hills stretched away into infinity; they were gray close at hand and a deepening blue as they receded. A silence lay upon the land and Mary thought she had

never beheld a scene of greater solitude and loneliness.

"Ain't it beautiful?" Ma asked huskily.

The Wagon Wheel, Mary thought, was beautiful in the sense that a snarling tiger is beautiful; it had a quality she found sinister under the harsh noon light; all around her was the armed desert growth, with little open spaces between. She didn't see anything a cow should find edible, yet, to her amazement, the cattle they passed looked sleek.

"You'll love it," Ma assured her. "It may take time but you'll love it. At first maybe it'll frighten you but pretty soon it'll begin to get under your skin. It's just that Arizona's different an' sort o' shocks an' easterner when he meets her in a state o' nature, like a gal caught in the bathtub."

Ma let in the clutch. "Come to think of it, I got a settin' hen due to hatch today or tomorrow. Glory be, I'll be home in time."

She rolled down the grade, sounding the siren, pulled into the ranch yard and shrieked. "Whoop-e-e-e!" She climbed out and hurried into the house of which she was still, at heart, the mistress. "You got five bedrooms in this ranch-house to choose from, Miss Mary," she announced, "an' don't go into the patio until I scout it first. There was a rattlesnake hummin' his love song there the mornin' I left. We used to have a she cat here that kept the place free o' rattlers—she'd jump around 'em an' tease 'em to strike at her an' miss, an' when they got tired an' slowed up she'd sneak on 'em from the rear an' ketch 'em by the back o' the neck an' then her an' her kittens et the brute. But she got old an' slowed up herself an' one day she didn't jump fast enough an' the snake got her. Now we'll be more or less snake-ridden around headquarters until Pa can break in a new she. She's the best because a she's always out to protect her young an' rustle 'em up some grub."

Mary left her setting about the preparation of luncheon in a nice large kitchen, modern in every respect. Beyond the kitchen was a butler's pantry that accommodated a small bar. The dining room was beyond that and opened on a large living room that stretched across the front of the building. The living room, in turn, gave to a gun and trophy room. The building was in the form of a U, with the open end facing southeast, and five bedrooms, with baths formed the other side of it with French windows opening on a large patio. A half-hearted effort had been made once to plant a garden here, but evidently Pa had gotten tired or disgusted. There was a fountain in the center, surmounted by a very good bronze of a bronco buster on a bucking horse and a scarlet fly-catcher sat on the buster's outflung arm.

Mary liked the furniture. It was all unstained oak and custom-made and the mattresses were excellent, the bedding of the best. The floors were laid with Navajo rugs and the light fixtures were of hammered bronze. She saw the Wagon Wheel had its own little independent lighting plant. There was a huge fireplace in the living room and a smaller one in the gun room and each bedroom; lithographs of paintings by Frederick Remington and Charles Russell adorned the walls; on each side of the living room fireplace there were built-in bookcases containing reprint editions of western novels. A cheap piano that could be played manually or mechanically gave an air of elegance and there was a combination radio and phonograph. To Mary's amazement the house furnishings proclaimed comfort and good taste. Every room had doors that could be opened on both sides and Mary was to learn that this was to provide a cooling draft during the hot summer.

This main ranch-house was of adobe brick with a wide colonnade around the outside of it; the roof was of red tile, and Virginia creeper and Cape jasmine ran up the pillars of the colonnade and crept over the roof of it. The floor of this colonnade was of large square red tiles and there were benches set at intervals. Surrounding the main house, but at some little distance from it, were four small guest cottages, also of adobe, and furnished for housekeeping in the event a dude preferred his own cooking and greater privacy. A neglected lawn of Dutch clover surrounded all the living quarters; west of them was the bunkhouse, help's mess hall and kitchen, the blacksmith shop, garage, a large barn and a corral in which about twenty nondescript horses, some mules and two Guernsey cows stood listlessly.

Large pecan trees gave a promise of shade in the summer and there was a grove of grapefruit trees, some avocados and an open patch of ground that evidently would be a vegetable garden in the spring. There was a wooden tower with a small tank on it, over a well from which the water was lifted by a small windmill. A friendly shepherd dog and two cats followed the new owner on her tour of inspection of the grounds.

(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 August 27

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ISRAEL'S FIRST KING

LESSON TEXT—1 Samuel 9:15-21; 10:25-27; 11:12-15.

GOLDEN TEXT—Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. —1 Peter 2:17.

"Well begun is half done," says the old proverb, reminding us of the importance of a good beginning. While it does not guarantee success (see next week's lesson), it is eminently desirable, and truly helpful. Israel had foolishly tired of being a God-ruled nation and had begun to demand a king.

Samuel was directed of God to the man of His choice, Saul, in a very remarkable way. He entered upon his service as king as an obedient and earnest ruler. (Would God that he had continued in that way!)

We note a number of favorable elements which indicated the possibility of a successful reign. He was—

I. Wanted by the People (9:15, 16).

A ruler forced upon a nation is sure of opposition, but here the people were clamoring for a king to rule over them. The way was wide open to the interest and the affection of their hearts. Saul was just the type to please them. Physically he was head and shoulders above the people—a desired thing in a ruler (see 10:23). He was mentally fitted (10:25)—humble (9:21), spiritually right (10:6-9), tolerant and kindly (11:13), and a good military leader (ch. 11).

II. Chosen by God (9:17).

All these qualities commended Saul to God as well as to the people. In fact, he was God's choice. A man could not enter upon high office with any more auspicious token for good.

Observe that what looked like a purely chance visit to Samuel, when Saul was on business for his father, was the occasion for the making known of God's choice. Out of a simple experience in daily life came an event which changed his entire destiny.

III. Anointed by the Prophet (9:18-20).

The man of God's choice had met God's man, Samuel, who proceeded to instruct him, and to privately anoint him as king. It was a tender scene. The aged prophet, rejected by the people as God's ruler over them, quietly and sweetly obeyed God's command to anoint the young man to be king.

Public recognition, which came later, was important, but, with Saul as with every servant of the Lord, the personal anointing of God, in the hidden place of communion with Him, was the matter of highest importance.

IV. Humble in Attitude (9:21).

That pride, which was ultimately to be Saul's downfall, was beautifully absent at the beginning of his reign. Although of good family, and well-equipped, he saw himself as poor and insignificant, not ready for such an honor.

That is the right attitude for one who is to serve God. Pride and self-assurance do not befit the man who stands in the presence of the Almighty.

V. Guided by Principle (10:25).

Saul did not enter upon his office, new as it was to both him and to Israel, without a Constitution, that is, without principles of action. Samuel, the Lord's prophet, wrote down "the manner of the kingdom" in a book. How interesting, and how important.

Rulers who imagine themselves so wise that they need no controlling laws, and so powerful that the law may not question their decisions, are certainly not rulers after God's plan. Knowing the heart of man, his weakness and pride, God has provided true principles by which the ruler is to be guided, yes and controlled.

VI. Forgiving in Spirit (10:26-27; 11:12, 13).

Some "worthless fellows" despised Saul and would not recognize him as king. The urge of the flesh was to destroy them, and especially did that seem proper because of their worthless nature. But Saul, in true kingly spirit, said that there was to be no revenge, just rejoicing.

To be of the right spirit toward one's enemies is the hall mark of Christian character.

VII. Established in Office (11:14, 15).

While there is the secret whisper of God in the heart, and the personal anointing by the Lord's servant, there should be the public recognition which establishes the Lord's servant in the eyes of all people. Saul had this at Gilgal. It placed him among the kings of the earth, and prepared the way for his dealing with other nations as well as with his own people.

Applying that truth to those who serve Christ, we say that there is upon the church the obligation to recognize God's call and anointing by giving that official recognition which sets the testimony and service of the individual free to exercise itself among men in general.

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