



TWENTY-SECOND INSTALLMENT

"Mr. Snavelly, look here!" There was nothing aggressive in Ruth's tone, but it was like no tone she had ever used to Snavelly. "Look at this."

Ann stepped to the door of the kitchen and stood silently, her eyes on Ruth.

"Well—" said Snavelly as he read the opening words. He said nothing more until he had finished, then without lifting his head, "Well—well I'll be Grey's alive, after all. Couldn't get a word to nobody 'til jest now. If that don't beat all!" He looked at Ruth, then lowered his eyes to the paper again. "Wants me to come an' git him, Hermosillo—powerful long job getting six days west of there. Must be desolate sure 'nough, else we'd got word of him sooner. Well, things like that happen. But it beats all," he mused.

"We shall start to Harry at once," said Ruth, decidedly; "the Thanes are coming home late tonight and—"

"Thanes? What they got to do with this?" Snavelly's eyes narrowed.

"I think it would be best if Old Charley went with me. I'm sure that under the circumstances he would go, and he knows the country and speaks Spanish better than I."

"You're set on goin' yourself, eh?" Snavelly regarded her quizzically.

"Why, most certainly! Of course I shall go."

"Well, jest the same, I don't see the sense in mixin' the Thanes up with this. If you're a mind to go without me, why don't you take Francisco? But the best thing would be fer you an' me to light out together tomorrow mornin'."

Ruth thought a moment; she might go with Don Francisco—perhaps that would be best. But she certainly would not go alone with Snavelly. She looked at him. "Perhaps Don Francisco and I could manage it," she said.

Again Snavelly studied her intently. There was something in her tone and manner which was quite new. She was no longer afraid. "Look here," he said sharply, "what's the matter of me goin', anyways?"

The girl was suddenly angry; Snavelly could not afford to speak to her like that any longer. She straightened. "Mr. Snavelly, there are several very good reasons why I do not wish you to go with me; and there are reasons why you should respect my wishes. It is for your own good. There are a number of things I must tell my brother when we meet."

Snavelly paled. "What can you tell him?" he asked gruffly.

"I shall tell him about the way you bought my cattle note."

"But Mrs. Warren—I tol' you why I done that," said Snavelly in a relieved voice. "I done it to protect you."

"When I was in town," continued Ruth, "I consulted an attorney about my position on this ranch. I learned that I was not your partner and never had been. And I understand quite plainly that you knew this, and that if I had failed to meet my note you would have been in legal possession of the entire ranch."

"Well, but—" Snavelly paused, helplessly. The guilt and consternation on his face, as well as the letter in her hand, gave the girl courage.

"The whole thing has been placed before my attorney," said Ruth. "The whole—thing?"

"Yes. When I learned that I was not your partner and that you had purchased the note I understood how anxious you were to have me fall to meet it. But let's not say anything more about that."

"But I don't see," replied Snavelly, guardedly, "what call you got to get uppity. Suppose you wasn't a partner—that's your fault."

Ruth's anger mounted. "That sounds very well. But what will my brother think when I tell him about the mysterious disease you called 'liver fever'? What will he think when I tell him how I came to put the wrong powder in the spring troughs that night?"

dead white. Ruth glanced lingeringly toward Ann, then back again. "The night of the storm, Mr. Snavelly," she said quietly.

He faced her in silence; the muscles of his long stringy throat contracted spasmodically. Suddenly he turned and, walking slowly to his room, entered. Almost at once he reappeared, the packet of bank notes in his hand. He held them out. "You best take these here an' go git your brother."

Ruth took the notes. She thought she understood: when she and Harry returned, Snavelly would not be on the Dead Lantern. Perhaps that was the best solution. She turned to Ann. "Ann, I wish you would get the buckboard and take David and me over to Thanes'. I'll have an early supper ready by the time you harness up."

Snavelly had walked toward his room, now he turned and came back. "I don't think you'd best go mixin' the Thanes in this."

In spite of the apparent humbleness of his tone, a twinge of fear caught Ruth's heart. But she answered, "I don't see that it can make any difference to you now, Mr. Snavelly."

"It makes a sight of difference to me!" he said sharply, and his eyes, no longer jerking, bored into hers. Ruth gripped herself. "Do you realize that you are a criminal and that you will face arrest as soon as I bring my brother back?"

To the girl's amazement, Snavelly smiled. "You like fancy words," he said slowly, "so I ask you if you realize where you stand now?" His voice rose shrilly. "Don't you see that your brother bein' alive makes the will no good? The will don't work, by God! You ain't got no rights—you ain't no pardner an' you ain't got no interest in this ranch. D'you get that? I'm boss here now!"

He whirled to Ann. "Git your black face outa here!"

"But my brother—"

"Your brother—how do I know he's your brother? He never told me nothin' about you nor nothin' about any will. 'Cordin' to my way a'thinkin' you come here jest to steal his interest. Who are you, anyways? You're a plumb stanger to me—you ain't got a thing to say about this ranch an' never did have. What about all that truck you was jest a-talkin'—that goin's on about the cattle dyin'? What of it? Fer all anybody knows, I was jest a-doin' my best to keep you from stealin' my pardner blind; that's what I was doin'! An' the law would say the same." Snavelly stepped closer, his face thrust forward and his pale eyes glittering. "You come on this place with a paper you say is a sure 'nough will, but you ain't got nothin' to prove it."

Ruth was against the wall. She was trembling. Tightly she gripped the letter in her hand and summoned all her courage. "But your partner—is my brother—he will be coming back here soon—he may even come today—any time. The letter must have been sent quite a while ago and he was much better—he might have been able to get to the railroad without any help—"

"All right! If he's your brother why don't you go git him? What'er you a-standin' there for? I give you the money. Why don't you git goin'?" He left Ruth contemptuously and stepped to the kitchen door. Ann was still inside. For a minute he spoke rapidly to her in Spanish. Ruth could not catch more than a word or two. While he was still speaking, Ann hurried from the door, passed Ruth without a glance, and

left the house on the way to the barn.

Snavelly turned to the girl. "You're a-goin' jest as soon as Ann's ready. Collect your kid an' your things an' git out! By sundown tonight there ain't goin' to be nobody on this place but me. I'll have that greaser outfit loaded an' started off this place in ten minutes! Then I'm goin' for a mile of a ride. When I come back there ain't goin' to be nobody here! You think you can go a-clutterin' up this place with people an' drive a man outa his mind—I'll show you! Git goin'!" He strode past her and out of the house.

Ruth let him go—there was nothing further to say. But she'd find Harry. She heard the steps of Snavelly's horse, and presently saw him galloping toward the little adobe house where Magda was taking in her washing which had festooned the bushes since early morning. He stopped his horse with a jerk and called. Don Francisco and Alfredo came to the doorway; Magda stood in the yard, her arms full of clothes. Snavelly spoke fiercely. Once, Don Francisco pointed toward the ranch house and asked a question. Snavelly's voice roared in reply. A moment or two later Alfredo was hurrying to find Don Francisco's team and Magda had thrown her wash into the old man's wagon. Snavelly rode away toward the mountains.

The tears welled into Ruth's eyes—those poor people. They had been so happy. Like trusting children, they had accepted her gift of the land and the little house, the gift which was to have been theirs for so long as they lived and worked hard. They had worked hard.

As she entered the house she saw Ann leading two horses through the corral. Ruth went into her room and began to pack.

Before she had finished she could hear the sound of the team and buckboard coming from the barn toward the house. Ann stopped by the small mesquite where Ruth's horse still stood and climbed from the buckboard.

"Ann," said Ruth appealingly, as the glance came toward her, "Ann, please help me!"

"Shorely, Miss Ruth—I'll he'p you

pack."

"Not that, Ann—take me to Thanes'. I must go there at once. We'll put all my things in the buckboard and then drive there. They'll be home some time tonight or tomorrow mornin'."

Ann dropped her eyes and slowly shook her head. "I reckon I dasn't go fer doin' nothin' 'cept what I was tol' to do, Miss Ruth."

Ruth tried to appear surprised. "But Mr. Snavelly knows I wanted to go to Thanes'."

"No'm. He tol' me you'd try to make me do that. He says I got to take you right to the railroad."

"But please, Ann—you'll do it for me. He won't know—please, Ann; I beg you to."

The giantess stood with bowed head and twisted her big hands together. "I wish I could, Miss Ruth, I wish to Gawd I could."

"Ann, listen to me!" Ruth grasped the huge arm. "Listen, Ann, I've discovered the voice in the gulch—it's Snavelly. There's a trick to it—he's been tricking you with it, scaring you so that you would be afraid of him and do as he told you."

CONTINUED NEXT WEEK

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KIWANIS CLUB
B. B. Mangum, President. Meets Monday, 6:30 P. M., in New Hotel Jones.

YOUNG WOMAN'S BUSINESS CLUB
Miss Hazel Price, President. Meets the first and third Tuesday nights, 7:00 P. M., New Hotel Jones.

H. Y. CLUB
Wm. M. Miller, President. Meets Thursday, 7:00 P. M., Basement Long Memorial Church.

PERSON LODGE A. F. & A. M.
No. 113. W. W. Morrell, Worshipful Master. Regular meeting fourth Tuesday in each month, 7:00 P. M., Lodge Hall.

ROXBORO P. T. A.
Mrs. R. D. Hardman, President. Third Monday in each month, 3:30 P. M., Central School auditorium.

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Mrs. G. A. Duncan, President. Second Tuesday in each month, 3:30 P. M. (Place of meeting will be announced later.)

ROXBORO BOY SCOUTS
Troop No. 32
Clyde Swartz, Master. Monday night 7:30 P. M. Basement of Courthouse.
Troop No. 49
W. R. Jones, Master. Friday night, 7:30 P. M. Basement of Courthouse.
Cub Patrol No. 1
C. A. Harris, Master. Clubroom in old Postoffice Bldg. Friday night, 7:00 P. M.
Troop No. 23
Clayton Owen, Master. Tuesday night, 7:30 P. M. Schoolhouse, East Roxboro.
Troop No. 24
C. H. Mason, Master. Thursday Night 7:00 P. M. Schoolhouse, Ca-Vel Village.
Troop No. 9
J. Anderson Timberlake, Master. Saturday afternoon. Cabin, Timberlake, N. C.
Farm Patrol No. 1
Banks Berry, Master. Second and Fourth Tuesday nights 7:00 P. M. Home of Mr. Joe Whitfield, Hurdle Mills.

In Memory

On March 29, 1931, the death angel visited the home of Luther Duke and took from them their loving daughter, Sadie Duke. Her stay on earth was fifteen years, six months and four days. She has departed this life on earth and went to dwell in her heavenly home above where the angels were waiting around the golden throne to welcome her home. Oh, how we miss you and hope you can understand to be ready to meet mother and father in heaven's land. You can't come back to us, but if we try we can meet you some day bye and bye. When in your grave you are peacefully sleeping while here in this world we are a weeping. It was hard to see you die but none adone has the power of Him on high. Your mother and father have missed you so and all of your relatives and friends too. You are gone but not forgotten. We loved you but the Savior loved you more so the Lord sweetly called you to

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J. F. Herbert, Pastor.
Sunday School 9:45 A. M.
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Young Peoples Meetings 6:45 P. M.
Evening Worship 7:30 o'clock.

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Evening Worship 7:30 o'clock.

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Services every Thursday at 4:30 P. M. during Lent.
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Third Sunday 3:00 P. M.
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