

# INTO THE SUNSET

BY JACKSON GREGORY



## FIFTH INSTALLMENT

**Synopsis**  
 Barry Haveril leaves his Texas home to see the country, meets a man who has just been shot who turns out to be a cousin of his, Jesse Conroy. Barry helps take care of his wounds and Jesse gives Barry his gun, a very unusual one. When they part Barry leaves for home but finds the family is no longer there. When he is leaving he suddenly comes across a dead man who turns out to be his brother Robert. Barry starts searching for the murderer and goes into the mountains to find gold to use for continuing his search. He finds a good prospect, gets gold and goes to Tylersville to get money for it. There he meets Judge Blue and his daughter, Lucy, who help him to get \$450 for his gold. Judge Blue also tells him that the gun Jesse gave him is the gun of a murderer known as the Laredo Kid. The Judge invites Barry up to his place and there Barry discovers the horse and saddle which was stolen from his brother Robert when he was killed. He finds out that it belongs to a cowboy who will return that night. He waits outside the stable and finally a rider comes up who turns out to be Jesse Conroy. He accuses Jesse of killing his brother and of being the Laredo Kid. Judge Blue comes up behind, knocks Barry unconscious and tells Jesse (Laredo) that Barry knows where there is gold and he's keeping him until he finds out where it is. Barry escapes, however, and as he is riding through the mountains a shot whizzes past his ear. The man who fired the shot explains that he thought Barry was the Laredo Kid.

"If I was only shore," complained the invisible man. Then he said more brightly: "Step out where I can see yuh good. If yuh ain't Laredo I won't drill yuh."

Barry stirred ever so slightly, still crouching in the hollow, and thus at last was able to make out the form of the other man, standing close to a pine. He lifted his gun and covered that dim form steadily. Then he answered with quiet emphasis:

"I've got you covered! Wiggle your ears and I'll be the one who's drilling you! Up with 'em! High up and quick about it!"

A moment later the two, standing fronting each other in the open, amply satisfied themselves that neither was the Laredo Kid. Barry found himself looking down into the upturned face of a dried-up little old man.

"No, yuh ain't Laredo, dang it," admitted the little gray man, and sounded more disgusted than ever. In the same querulous voice he growled: "Dang it, I dunno how I come to miss yuh like that, nuther. I ought to've got yuh dead center."

"What have you got against Laredo?"

"Aplenty! An' if I never do another deed o' kindness, long's I live, I'm goin' to let the bad blood out'n him, an' that'll be all the blood he's got. That's a vow, stranger; hear me? Mebbe it'll be a long chase, with him on the jump like he is—"

"Where'd he go? When?" demanded Barry. "What happened?"

"Wait till I go get me my gun." He picked it up, dusted it off against a pair of ragged old overalls.



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"Come along over to my camp. It's only a short piece back up in the gully. We'll squat an' git acquainted."

"Anybody else at your camp?" "Jus' Arabella."

Arabella was as small and tough and dried up for a burro as the little gray man for a human being.

The old man by his own account was a shiftless prospector. What his real name was he never revealed; he conceded that men called him Baldy or Dad or Timberline, and that long ago he had come from Georgia.

Yep, he knew Laredo well, and he'd knowed him a long while. Likewise he knowed Judge Parker Blue, an' knowed him a lot better'n most!

He refused to discuss the Judge, save generally, and beyond hinting broadly that he had a fund of secret knowledge about Judge Blue's past. In the Laredo Kid's case, however, the gates were wide open.

The Kid, said he, had managed to get himself into such a mess that there was nothing left for him but to skeddadle, which he did with bullets pesterin' him like a swarm of hornets. Laredo had busted square into the Jamboree Saloon, and killed two men. But he did ever more than that. One killed was Jake Hammond, a man that folks liked real well. And Jake's kid Jackie, only nine years old, happened in there, sent over by his mama to bring Jake home; and Jackie saw it all and went crazy over it and ran and grabbed Laredo by the legs. And Laredo said, "Yuh want some too, do yuh, yuh little—" and shot him through the head. He went out laughing, the boys said, but he went fast.

"Laredo, he crossed my trail close to six months ago; I was out on a desert stretch a considerable ways from here, south-west. I don't do much talkin' about what happened—but I been after him ever since."

Presently Barry said, thinking about his plan for tomorrow:

"You seem to know a good many folks around here, Timberline. Happen to know anybody out at the Judge's new ranch about thirty miles from Tylersville?"

It was out that way recent, prospectin' them little hills with the red gullies in 'em. There was some new folks out there, a man name of Haveril an' his wife. A real purty little woman she was, too." He pulled at his mustache. "I was goin' back to see her some time, but she's gone now."

"Gone? Why, they were there only three or four days ago."

"Gone now though. "Ysee, young feller, whatever happens in this country gets talked about in Tylers, an' whatever gets talked about in Tylers, I find out when I drop in. Three-four days ago the Judge busted out o' here headed somewhere else. Some folks says he went East an' some says West; it's my bet he's headed Californy-way. Anyhow, he took his gal Lucy with him; an' he took his new hired hand, that Zack Blount, an' his purty young wife along—they say she's a Haveril, too. An' he stopped off at the New Branch, an' told 'em there he'd sold it, an' he chased them Haverils off; an' folks say they for shore headed to Californy." He cocked a blue eye at Barry. "What yuh askin' fur?"

"I wanted to know."

"They're my folks," said Barry. "Father and mother and brother; and Zack Blount's wife is my sister."

"So yuh are a Haveril too, huh? Shake, Haveril."

Absently Barry shook as directed, feeling his hand gripped by a small one that seemed old leather on the outside, spring steel within.

First Barry returned to Tylersville. He went openly, in broad daylight, but he was watchful at every step. No one molested him; none seemed to have any memory of him.

Before Barry left Tylersville he drew heavily upon his pocket money and bought the first horse he had owned. He purchased the best to be had on short notice, and rode out of town that evening well equipped, his carbine in saddle holster, conveniently at hand. He struck out for his own place, at the head of Sun Creek Valley.

Barry stopped at his own creek and wends soberly to work. Day after day he labored all day long with sand and gravel, washing his gold in a deep frying pan. Encountering one pocket after another during three consecutive days, each as rich as the one he had come upon the first day, he accepted his good fortune quite as a matter of course.

"Must be more than two thousand dollars already! That's more than I'm going to need. I'll get started tomorrow morning."

When he departed at daylight, still heading north and west, but beginning to swing a bit more westwardly, he carried his gold inside his bed roll.

Down in a long valley at the head of a vast, rippling, grassy plain—cow country, this was—he tarried at the boisterous little town of Five Springs. Some days before, a young man answering Laredo's description, three others of his stamp with him, had stormed into town, paid his wild way in gold dust, had gotten into

He saw her whirl and start back toward the valley. He heard a man's voice shouting; he saw one of the three forcing his horse after her; he saw the widening noose of the man's rope circling above his head—and heard the girl's scream.

Barry Haveril shot down that steep trail.

The two men holding her were so utterly taken by surprise that they stood stupidly and gawked; the third, slightly behind them and bleak-eyed, whipped out his gun and fired, and his first bullet struck Barry's saddle horn and whined off into the forest like an angry bee. His second bullet went almost straight down into the ground as he was toppling from the saddle, for Barry had fired as he saw the other's gun flash out, and found its target unerringly.

The fallen man's horse bolted down trail and crashed into the little knot, human and equine, blocking the way. In a moment of utmost confusion, with the girl almost breaking free, Barry saw the two men reaching for their guns. One of the two jammed the muzzle of his gun between her shoulders.

"You shoot, damn you, an' I shoot!" he called out.

"Call it a draw then, so you clear out," Barry retorted.

This girl with the wind-blown hair and violet-gray eyes and the lines of her that fitted into his ideals like a beloved one in a lover's arms, was the loveliest thing he had ever seen. At that instant Lucy Blue, like a little willful, vanishing ghost, began fading out of his life.

"I do thank you!" she cried out then, unnerved. "You, one man against those three devils! And 'I'm going to see you again, and—"

"You know," said Barry. She pointed.

"I live down there. You can't see the house; it's hidden by the pines. Yes. You will come to see me."

She spurred off down the trail. He went on his way, headed for his lonely cabin and thinking of her.

Then at last he came into a country where nothing had changed.

And then he saw a little trickle of bluish-gray smoke making its thin wisps upward from his chimney! He rode up to the cabin and dismounted, throwing open the door violently.

Squatting before his fire-place, busied with frying pan and coffee pot, was old Timberline.

"Eowdy," said Timber, as though they'd parted yesterday. "Jus' in time for supper."

When Barry went straight to his bunk and threw himself down and laughed, and kept on laughing, Timberline could only suppose that he was drunk.

(Continued Next Week)

a brawl and had stormed out of Five Springs again, headed west. Barry followed on.

Whenever he heard of depre-dations, of lawlessness and cruelty and wanton killing—and these were not uncommon—he sought his Cousin Jesse in the neighborhood. But Cousin Jesse rode on, ever westward.

Both Barry Haveril and the home country back into which he rode had changed during three years. Barry was a good two inches taller; his was a sinewy, slim figure, swaying gracefull in an accustomed saddle; he jingled spurs with the best; he used a revolver as though it were a part of his own body, as much so as his hand.

He passed on, and found that this was rapidly becoming cattle country; looking down into the lower lands he was always seeing herds, and occasional cowboys.

Within half a day's ride from the creek where he had found gold, he came upon a brawling, squalling, lusty, raw brat of a town.

This was Red Rock when first Barry saw it one late summer noonday.

Everything was commotion and dust and excitement, with the hum of cross-cut saws, the thud of hammers and the raucous voices of impatient, sweating men.

Barry tarried twenty-four hours in this bedlam and was glad to get the noise of hammering and sawing and cursing out of his ears, the smell of the place out of his nostrils.

He began to see landmarks on every hand that he knew as well as he knew his own boots. But over the first ridge, looking down into Pleasant Valley, he encountered the unfamiliar again. Down a winding trail, riding like a man in some sort of new-fangled riding habit, a girl with hair flying like the waving water-manes was the final note.

The trail was steep and crooked, he high above, she far below. Almost as soon as he saw her he lost sight of her around a bend. Once he heard her horse's hoofs clanging against the rocks, though he could not see her. Then he did glimpse her at the exact instant when she pulled her horse in so sharply that it slid on four bunched feet. That was because three men had suddenly appeared before her in a little open place, the three abreast, blocking the way.

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