

# INTO THE SUNSET

BY JACKSON GREGORY



**SEVENTH 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. When they part, Barry leaves for home and comes across the murdered body of his brother, Robert. Barry starts searching for the murderer and is befriended by Judge Blue and his daughter, Lucy. Judge Blue tells him that a gun Jesse gave him is the gun of a murderer known as the Laredo Kid. The Judge invites Barry up to visit him and there Barry meets Jesse. He accuses Jesse of killing his brother and of being the Laredo Kid. Judge Blue comes up from behind, knocks Barry unconscious. Barry escapes, however, and meets an old man named Timberline, who also is gunning for the Laredo Kid. Barry finally goes to Red Rock where, going through a valley, he sees three men attempting to capture a beautiful girl. Barry rescues her and finds she is Lucy Blue. At the house he meets a man called Tom Haveril whom he suspects may be his cousin Jesse. He accuses him of it but proves nothing and is himself accused of being the Laredo Kid. Barry says his sister Lucy, in town, whom they all know, will identify him. They stop in a barroom in town and several of those present start to go to see his sister.

"She isn't at the lunch counter now," said Barry.  
 The Judge looked astonished. "No? That's funny; she's always there this time of night; I usually run in, pretending it's coffee I want when I'm in town. Where is she?"

"I don't know," said Barry. Then he let his hand down to his side, close to his gun. For it flashed on him that he was in some sort of trap.

The Judge looked at him a moment, then downed his drink without a word. He moved as though to leave the room, turning his back on Barry. Barry, grown watchful, noted that every man in the room was looking his way. The Judge's voice boomed out sonorously:  
 "Watch him, boys! It's my bet

and it's Tom Haveril's that he's the Laredo Kid! Don't kill him unless you have to—but don't let him get away!"  
 Barry sprang back, to get the wall behind him, and snapped his gun out of its holster. But as he did so he saw the lamplight glisten on some two score other guns, and every unwavering barrel was turned upon him.

"Go slow, Laredo, if that's who you are!" called the Judge, resonant and commanding. "Make a wrong move and you're dead forty times! Steady does it, and you've got a chance."

Barry did not stir.  
 "You boys can get me if you want to," he said steadily, "but I'm betting drinks for the crowd that I'll get two of you, and that's twice as many as you'll get of me—and those two will be the Judge and the man who says he's Tom Haveril."

"If you're the Laredo Kid," said the Judge sternly, "you won't last until morning. If you're Barry Haveril, no one's going to lift a hand against you."

Barry said drily: "I don't hanker to peg out tonight. You see, boys, I've got a couple of jobs I'd like first to finish. One is to nail a certain hombre's hide to my barn door—and I haven't any barn yet!—Now keep inside your shirts! I'll have the barn and a few other things when I get through with my second job; that's to develop a gold mine that's been waiting for me more than two years."

"You're doing a lot of talking," said the Judge.  
 Barry said, and not even the elegant Tom Haveril was ever more drawing: "Give me a fair trial, with every one of these men in on it, and I'm with you."

A young fellow, big and blond, came shouldering forward.  
 "He's right and he's playing his hand straight out," he announced in a deep bass voice. "Until we find out the rights of it, I'm chipping in on his side."

"Better go slow, Ken," said Tom Haveril, speaking up for the first time. Barry didn't fail to catch the name. This blond young giant might be Ken March, the new partner whom old Timber was taking on.

"Why should I go slow, Tom?" demanded Ken March. "I've already said I like the way this lone wolf plays his hand. Then,"

and a slow, good-humored grin played across his heavy features. "There's something else. You heard him say he's got his pick into a mine? Well, I believe it, and what's more, maybe he and I are pardners!" He turned to Barry. "You're the fellow Timberline told me about?"  
 "That's so," nodded Barry.  
 "You haven't asked me to chip in," said March, "and from the look of you, you're not given to yelling for help. Just the same it seems you're a stranger here—and I'd be glad to line up alongside the Judge in seeing you get a square deal."

Instantly Barry made up his mind. He grinned back at March.  
 "Thanks — pardner," was all that he said.

Then he recklessly played a high card win or lose. He suddenly shoved his gun back into its holster, ignored the many guns trained on him and stepped to the bar. From his pocket he jerked the small buckskin bag containing the major part of his golden gleanings of two years ago; he poured the little dully gleaming heap out on the bar.

"There's more where that came from, boys," he called out cheerily. "No reason we should all go dry; step up, it's on me."  
 This he strove to center their interest on his gold, knowing well enough that in any case a few hours would spread talk of it. But Tom Haveril, still leaning lazily against the bar, was single-purposed. He said:  
 "A while ago you said you had a sister her, Lucy Blount, and that she could settle this."

"Why, so she can!" cried Barry.  
 "Buono," nodded Tom Haveril. He glanced about the room. "Suppose a committee of you boys goes and puts it up to her? I reckon we'll take her word."

Ken March looked at Barry, and Barry nodded. But he had to add: "The only trouble is that I don't know where she is. She doesn't seem to be anywhere in town."

Another man spoke up sharply. "I seen her just a little while ago, when it was hardly more'n dark. She was ridin' out of town. A couple o' boys was with her. One of 'em was Dick Longo, that Johnny-come-lately that's been ridin' with Sarboe."

Sarboe! The name rang bells in Barry's brain, and thoughts clicked away like mad. Tom Haveril had tacitly accused Barry of setting those wolves on Lucy; if Tom Haveril were Laredo, what more likely than that he himself had been at the bottom of the thing? What next? Tom Haveril—Laredo—had heard Barry say that Lucy Blount was the one person here who could identify him!

"This fool trial is postponed," Barry shouted aloud. "If you want me I won't be hard to find. If you think you can stop me now, try it! I'm on my way to find Lucy Blount!"  
 For once in his life Judge Blue was uncertain. He started to speak, then held his peace. A swift glance passed between him and Tom Haveril; the younger man permitted a shadowy smile to touch his lips, then shrugged.  
 Barry went straight to his horse. "A man gets where he's going all the faster when he rides alone," he grunted to himself, but was nonetheless piqued at March's loss.

Barry rode slowly, striking into the North Road.  
 He came to the first clearly defined off-shooting trail, all but passing it in the dark.  
 He had scarcely sat there pondering five minutes when he heard a furious pounding of hoofs, and a rider came racing out of Red Rock.

"Now, who the devil's that?" he wondered.  
 The one way to find out was to follow. Barry dipped his spurs and sped after him.

He forced his horse at a run up a steep hill, came for a moment into a clear space among the pines and of a sudden saw a light ahead.  
 It was but a dim yellowish glow, and he lost it almost as soon as he saw it, but he knew it for the window of a cabin lighted by a lamp or candle. He saw the man scurry across a little clearing, heard startled voices, a rapping at the door and voices again, sharper now.

The answering voice gave Barry Haveril a distinct start. Why, this was not Tom Haveril at all! It was the booming voice of Ken March saying commandingly:  
 "Open up, Longo!"  
 And then, when he was almost at the door himself, he heard a roar of rage—that was Ken March's thunderous voice for none to mistake!—and after that inarticulate roar there came the crash of pistol shots.

Barry hit the ground running and burst into the room, gun in hand. He saw in that one photographic instant a place of feeble light festooned in powder smoke, with Ken March against one wall, firing as fast as he could pull trigger, with two men he recognized from yesterday on the trail, Longo and Pannel no doubt, against another wall, pumping hot lead at March—with Sarboe on a bunk, propped up, blazing away at March—with Lucy crouching in a corner.

"I'm with you, Ken!" roared

Barry, and cut down on both Pannel and Longo.

With five men fighting in a room not above fifteen feet square, the thing was of necessity over almost as soon as it started. Barry was the slightest wounded, taking a bullet grazingly along his outer thigh while a second carried his hat off his head.

Lucy, shaking pitifully and as white as death, her eyes enormous with horror, stood staring up and swayed a little and at first could not speak. Then she cried chokingly, "Barry!" And then she ran and went down on her knees over Ken March, and put her arms about him, calling desperately, "Oh, Ken! Dear, dear Ken! Look at me, Ken!"

"Ken's going to be all right, Lucy," he said, "He's too good a man for these polecats to kill."  
 They were still trying to find all of Ken March's wounds, to see which were the worst, when again a rattle of hoof beats rang out.

They were Red Rock men who had followed Ken March when with sudden inspiration he had stormed out of the saloon, calling back to them where he was going. At their fore rode Judge Blue and Tom Haveril.

"What's going on here?" demanded the Judge, peering at Barry through the dark. "What's happened?"  
 "A good deal has happened. We've got Lucy back, but I'm afraid Ken is pretty bad hurt."

By this time Ken March was propped up against the wall, and Lucy's young arms were supporting him. He tried to tell what had happened; Lucy finished the tale for him. She said Pannel and Longo had tricked her out of town, making her think that Ken March had been shot.

Men looked at one another, then at the three who had fought it out with Barry and Ken March.  
 Someone called from just outside, near a corner of the cabin: "Here's a good tree. We want another rope."

Longo was dead, yet they hanged him up by the neck just the same. Pannel was dying, fast, too, yet he kicked his life out alongside Dick Longo's limp, gently swaying body. As for Sarboe, as they dragged him, he fell to screaming with terror, begging for his life.

Barry watched Sarboe's face, hung on his words as men dragged him out to the tree.  
 Sarboe screamed: "Save me! You save me, Tom!"  
 Tom Haveril struck him in the face. But Sarboe screamed the louder and a new note got into his voice, like the snarl of a coyote, and Barry heard his words bubbling out:  
 "I'll talk! I'll talk!"

Barry leaped forward, shouting: "Let Sarboe talk! Give him a show to tell what he knows. There's somebody else in this—"

A man dropped a noose over Sarboe's head; it was Tom Haveril's hand that jerked it tight, stopping short Sarboe's words and his breath along with them.  
 "Looks to me like you were in an almighty hurry to shut Sarboe's mouth," said Barry hotly.  
 Men took their departure. Last to go was Barry Haveril.

The cabin was dark; someone had taken the trouble to blow out the light.  
 With scant hope of finding anything, Barry began ransacking the place. He stared at the two benches. "Just alike. One's nailed to the wall, the other free. Why?"

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