

OAKY DOAKS



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SCORCHY SMITH



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OH, DIANA!



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HARLOWE

Mrs. David Beveridge, of Beaufort, were here Friday afternoon to see Miss Betty Jane Mason. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Davis, of Statesville, visited their parents, Mr. and Mrs. Joel Davis. Mr. and Mrs. Davis were married August 14 in Asheville. Mrs. Davis before her marriage was Miss Thelma Ball.

Mr. William Ingram motored here Sunday to bring his wife and daughter to visit Mrs. W. T. Cheek and other relatives. Mrs. Will Messick, who had been visiting Mrs. W. C. Williams, returned to Riverdale Monday morning.

Mrs. William Noe and Miss Elizabeth Morton were in New Bern Monday. Miss Della Frances Taylor, Thomas and A. G. Taylor motored to Yanceyville Saturday to their aunt, Mrs. Charles P. Cheek. The Taylors also visited relatives at Danville and Norfolk, Virginia. Ashby B. Morton and A. B. Jr. were in New Bern Monday morning on business.

Mrs. Augustine Piner, of New Bern, visited Mrs. Carl H. Morton and family during the weekend. Mr. and Mrs. Bob Jones, of Cherry Point, were here Sunday to see Mr. and Mrs. Earl Creech. Mr. and Mrs. William Valelais and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Parker, of New Bern, were here Sunday, visiting Mr. and Mrs. Carl Taylor.

Mr. and Mrs. Wade Taylor and Mr. and Mrs. Ike Stephens and daughter, Linda of Wilmington, spent Sunday with Mrs. Pearl Olund and family. John W. Ives, Jr., of Raleigh, came Friday afternoon to join his wife at Mr. and Mrs. Carlton Taylor's. Miss Beverly Witherington, of Vanceboro, came Monday to visit Mrs. W. C. Williams. Mr. and Mrs. William J. Adams, of Fort Pierce, Florida, are visiting their sister, Mrs. Clyde S. Taylor, and family.

Claude Taylor, of Bachelor, spent Saturday afternoon with Mrs. Ashby B. Morton. Mr. and Mrs. Roy Mason and Miss Betty Jane Mason were in Beaufort Saturday morning. Mrs. Percy Barnes and daughter, Betsy, of Smithfield, passed through enroute to Bachelor to visit Mrs. Claude Taylor and family. Mrs. Harry Davis and Mrs. Emma Oglesby visited Mrs. Carl H. Morton Sunday afternoon. Mrs. William Noe, Misses Catherine Noe and Elizabeth Morton motored to Morehead City Monday evening to see Joe Morton, a patient at the hospital. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ball, of Bachelor, were here Saturday afternoon to see Mrs. Ashley B. Morton.

Mrs. Willie Gutrie and sons, Tommie and David, of Fernandina, Fla., visited her brother and family, Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Willis, here last week. Mrs. Guy Dan'ls and son Bett ram left Monday to take her daughter, Julia T. Duke Hospital for medical treatment. Mrs. Julia Pake and daughter, Mrs. Dallas Willis visited at Cherry Point last Friday. Mrs. Nancy Barker and children, of Oriental, are spending the week here with her mother, Mrs. Luther Pittman. Mrs. William Willis and children visited relatives here Monday. Mr. Elbert Gilikin, who was spending the week end with relatives at Otway visited friends here Sunday afternoon. Mr. and Mrs. Monroe Simpson and family motored to Davis Sp.



Chapter 1 IN a fenced-off clearing on the fringe of a grove of tall cottonwood trees, eleven men with bowed heads stood looking down upon a freshly heaped grave. There was no movement among them, no sound. Standing on the opposite side of the mound was a tall, lean youth with steady, bitter eyes and a tightened mouth framed in a sun-bronzed face that was topped by a boyishly tousled head of blond hair. He towered above the other men. When he squared his shoulders and straightened up and hitched up his belt it was an indication that the simple service was over. They walked off without a word.

It was only when a slim girl appeared and stepped toward the grave that the bitter-eyed youth fellow exhibited any interest. She knelt at the side of the mound and he saw her lips move in prayer. Presently she arose, turned away without a word or even a glance in his direction, and marched off. He followed her with his eyes... there was another grave a short distance away. The girl stopped beside it, knelt down. When she came erect a minute later, she turned her head and their eyes met. "I'm Cathy Ballard," she said simply. "I'm terribly sorry about your father."

"My stepfather, y'mean," he said curtly. "Yes, I meant to say your stepfather," she said. "He told me all about you. I think I'd have known you from his description if you even if I had never seen those rodeo posters or heard someone say you were George Akers." His mouth seemed to tighten even more than before. "He knew all about your work with the rodeo. He was awfully proud of your reputation as a trick rider and expert roper."

"You seem t' know lots about 'im," he said. "That's more'n he was t' me," he answered. His eyes halted on the grave with the white cross above it. "Whose is that?" "My father's. He was foreman of the Circle-A," she explained. "He was killed about four months ago."

"Where d'you live? Here? By y'self?" "Yes... in the cottage behind the big house. I've always lived there. I was born there."

"I suppose," she continued presently, "I should tell you that I'm going to be your first problem, Nettie Martin..."

"But the Circle-A is yours now," she said protestingly. "You can't just leave it to me and go off again. You can't..." "Look, sister," he said curtly. "I'm free, white and over twenty-one. I do's I please and no buts about it. Get it?" He hitched up his belt, a bit more viciously than was necessary, turned on his heel and stalked off.

"HEY, George!" a voice called and the angry youth stopped and looked back over his shoulder. It was Phil Martin who had hailed him. "Got a minute?" "Yes, sure," George replied. The foreman, a pleasant-faced six-footer, came striding up to him. "I know this ain't the time t' start talkin' business," Martin said apologetically. "But there are a couple o' things that c'n stand tendin' to, so soon's you feel up to it, you holler fr me, will you?"

"You'd better get hold o' Judge Scott. He c'n tell you what t' do." Martin looked surprised. "I ain't takin' anything over. I'm leavin' here t'morrow." "Oh!" the foreman said for want of something better to say. "How'd Tex get it?" "O-h, it was down in Corbin's place in town, y'know. Seems Tex was standin' at the bar when an argument come up. Two fellers caught slugs in their shoulders, another feller got nicked on the jaw and Tex was sprawled out on the floor with a bullet right smack in 'is heart."

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