



Leathered Guns
by Perry Westbrook

SIXTH INSTALLMENT
SYNOPSIS: Slim Loyale is in the clearing a fire glowing and over it crouched a tall, leathery-faced old timer.

Slim Loyale was trembling as he left the prison behind him. paroled from prison after serving 18 months for a crime he did not commit. He returns to his Circle L ranch to find his father dead and sinister forces at work, trying to make him vibrate his parole so that he can again be railroaded to prison.

The Brockwell's and their gang are plotting to gain possession of Circle L ranch and the property of Mona Hall, a neighbor and lifelong friend of Slim Loyale.

Slim discovers that Sheriff Starbuck has joined that plot against him. With the help of Dakota Blue and his cowboys, Slim Loyale defies the land-grabbers to do their worst.

"But why can't we both ride a circle home?" demanded Slim.

"Because of this devil of a light-colored hoss an' hat of yores. Yuh loom up likht a lighthouse, lad. Do as yo're told. Or does old Roy have to muscle yuh down an' make yuh?"

At last Slim was beginning to realize what was up. Somewhere along the home trail men were hidden out, waiting to throw a slug through him as he rode by. Roy had fought it out, and the faithful Irishman was going to take Slim's risk upon his own willing shoulders.

"Damn it all, Roy, I can't let yuh do it," objected Slim huskily. "They'll plug yuh for me sure."

"Not if I sing loud enough," stated Roy. "I sing like nothin' else in the wide world. Besides I've got my guns an' I can use 'em without worryin' about bustin' no parole. Now do as I say like a good lad. Yo're wastin' time arguin'."

The irony of his position dug deep into Slim. It was maddening to be placed always thus, on the defensive with no way of fighting back. His pride was quick and fierce, more so perhaps because of the wrong which had been done him by the miscarriage of justice.

Blind primal fury pricked at his brain. He did not want to run. He wanted to stand and fight to rip and tear to pour hot lead into the vitals of those who were persecuting him. Yet his hands were tied. Once involved in a gunfight regardless of whose making it might be. Slim knew that it would mean going back to that hell on earth.

It meant being enclosed between drab, gray walls of stone way from the sky, from the warm stars, away from everything worth while. Realization of this steadied him, and drove the fungus of rage from his mind.

"Okay, Roy," he said, his voice steady once more. "Some day mebbe I'll be able to pay yuh boys back for stickin' with me life yo're doin'."

Roy snorted. "'Tis nothin' at all that we do, lad, exceptin' to be shore yuh git a square deal from now on out. Off with yuh."

"Don't take any fool chances, Roy," said Slim over his shoulder as he reined away. "Should they get yuh, I'm comin' after 'em with hot lead, parole or no parole."

up at the corrals and dismantled a dark, figure sauntered over from the bunkhouse. It was Dakota Blue again.

"Hoy," Dakota called out tersely. "Where's Slim? Why—what the hell! Is that yuh Slim? How come yo're ridin' Hoy's bronc?"

Slim told him of meeting Hoy and the subsequent changing of mounts and hats. Dakota grunted with approval. "Roy's usin' his haid all the time," he added.

"But I'm gettin' to the narrow edge, Dakota," said Slim wearily. "This ain't life; this is hell, pure an' unsweetened. It's almost as bad as bein' in prison. On the dodge all the time, afraid to call my soul my own; hidin' behind yuh fellers—it makes me feel like a damn-ed worm. For all I know, Roy may be takin' a bullet right now that was meant for me."

Dakota's speculative gaze held a queer light in it. "I reckon I savvy just how yuh feel, Slim. Shore, it's a fight an' a tough one. It takes a lot more nerve to handle this kind of a ruckus than it does to hit the ground with a gun in each fist an' talk it out through smoke. That-away yuh can let yoreself go—jest be darn good and mad an' let that mad run loose."



He stopped me with a gun pointed at my middle.

"Yuh can't do that. Yuh gotta keep yore feelin's bottled up an' sidestep trouble every time yuh meet it. That takes spine an' plenty of it. Any dang-ed fool can fight. It takes a real man to hold in when he's plumb wild an' achin' to bust the halter rope an' cut loose. We fellers appreciate how tough it is, Slim. But if we're willin' to see yuh through, yuh oughta be willin' to do yore part."

Slim put his hand on Dakota's arm. "I savvy, ole-timer. I promise yuh I won't go muf-fin' around any more. It's my fight an' I gotta make it. One thing, I got some of the poison outa me tonight."

"Leo Brockwell was at the Dot H. Dot, talkin' over a cattle deal with Abe Fornachon. He butted into my visitin' with Mona an' got nasty. I saw red an' beat the daylight outa him. I don't reckon he dares make a complaint to Jigger Starbuck about that. Brockwell had a gun an' me only my fists. But men, what a satisfaction it was to feel that polecat's jaw under my knuckles!"

Dakota stared gravely into the darkness. "If young Brockwell was half a man, I'd say he'd be ashamed to go to Starbuck with that yarn. But he's low enough to do anythin' to gain his ends, Slim. Trouble's liable to come of that."

"Don't think so" murmured Slim. "Abe Fornachon told Leo if he went to Starbuck about it he'd swear he did the fist-slingin' himself."

Dakota chuckled with relief. "Abe's plumb white. Looks like Starbuck is gonna have a very devil of a time tryin' anythin' against yuh, Slim, bad as I figger he'd like to. I savvy now why Roy ran into them dry-guthers along the trail. Leo Brockwell evidently skinned out fast from the Dot H. Dot an' rounded up some of his crowd to

ambush yuh on yore way home. Well, he'll be disappointed a gain."

Slim turned the bronco into the corrals, then rolled and lit a cigarette. He squatted on his heels beside the gate. "No use me goin' to bed until Roy gets back," he announced "I couldn't sleep anyhow."

Dakota nodded, manipulated the makings himself and hunched down beside Slim. "Mona say anythin' to yuh about losin' cattle?" he inquired presently.

Slim nodded. "Uh-huh. Said Flash Courtney an' his gang had been workin' on her herd. I didn't tell her so but that don't sound reasonable to me. Far as I know Courtney has allus hung out around Battle Mountain, an' that's fifty-sixty miles from here."

"No call for him to come clear over here to rustle stock when he's got all of Murgatrody Valley right at his front door to operate in. I aim to find out of course but somethin' tells me the real rustlers are a lot closer to home than Battle Mountain."

Dakota Blue frowned thoughtfully. "Think yo're shootin' close, Slim," he agreed. "There's been a wild hunch workin' for me some time. An' the more I think an' figure, the more shore I get that it's a good one. Funny, don't yuh think, that of all the spreads in these parts, the Circle L, an' the Dot H. Dot are the only ones that have been mixed in trouble?"

"Here yuh got railroad on a frame-up. Mona's been losin' a lot of stock she can't afford to. Was I crooked an' wantin' to

get my hooks on these two spreads, like as not I'd use the same tactics to get hold of 'em."

"I always will think that the real purpose of George Arthur on that visit to yore daddy was to put the proposition up to him of sellin'. But ole Bart blew an' gave him the run before he could get far."

Slim shrugged. "May be logic to what yuh say, Dakota. But why should anybody want the Circle L an' the Dot H. Dot especially? There's plenty of other good outfits in this neck of the woods."

"Don't savvy quite yet," admitted Dakota "but I aim to find out one of these days. An' when I do, I'll shore be in on the ground floor. I'll have somebody on my hip that I'll shore pile up."

Slim did not answer. He was staring off into the night towards the Dot H. Dot. He stirred restlessly. "Dammit," he snapped, "I wish Roy would show up."

As if in answer to the wish, the low thump of jogging hoofs sounded, and presently the pale shape of Slim's gray bronco showed through the darkness. Slim stood up with a sigh of relief. "Roy," he exclaimed. "Thank heavens."

"Roy it be," came the jaunty answer. "Slim yuh'll have to be after buyin' a new hat, begorra. This 'un has got a hole through it. But the spalpeen who ruined it paid plenty, my lad. He'll never need a hat ag'in himself."

Roy reined in and dismounted. Slim caught him by the arm. "Yuh mean there was shootin' Roy?"

Roy laughed. "A little. Three shots, to be exact, lad. When I left yuh, Slim, I eased along slow for a time givin' yuh a chance to get well on yore way. Then I struck straight for home, singin' with all my lung power. I guess the liquid purity of my voice musta charmed most of

them polecats hidin' along the trail, fer I got by all but the last one. He stopped me, with a gun pointed at me middle.

"I asked him, polite-like, what the hell he wanted an' what he meant by holdin' up a pore harmless cow-pupch who was after lurin' of his soul with song. He called me a low-down, tricky sidewinder. So I thanked him like a real gentleman an' told him the same to him. He wanted to know what had become of yuh, Slim. I told him yuh'd decided to go home another way an' was safe in yore little downy by that time."

"Shore, that made him mad. He cussed pore old Roy plumb outrageous. Then he up an' shot at me. I saw it comin' an' ducked my head, at the same time throwin' my own gun. We shot almost together the second time, an' I got him. An' then—yuh can believe me—I came away from there."

"D'yuh know who it was?" demanded Dakota.

"I can't be positive, seein' as how he was masked. But shore he talked an' acted a lot like that long-legged Half Diamond B foreman, Hango Deale."

"Yuh shore yuh rocked him off?"

"Well," drawled Roy, running his fingers through his hair, "if he ain't broke entirely, he's real bad bent. He folded up like a sack."

Dakota shrugged. "Looks like the lid's off," he grunted. "Stoney Sheard was right when he said hell was gonna pop on this range. Slim, lad, it's beginnin' to look like they won't pass up nothin' in gettin' yuh. There's a hefty purpose behind all this an' gonna find out what it is."

The next morning, not long after sunrise, Slim and Dakota Blue rode into Pinnacle. Slim had confided to Dakota his plan of taking up the mortgage on Mona Hall's spread, at which Dakota had shrugged.

"I know yore bank balance is plenty big enough to cover the note, Slim," Dakota had observed. "But whether George Arthur will deal with yuh is another proposition. Me, I don't think he will. I don't believe he wants the five thousand dollars. What he wants is the Dot H. Dot Ranch."

Slim had avowed that he would tackle the lawyer just the same, so Dakota rode into town with him. The lawyer's office, a dusty, unkempt little cubby, three doors up from the Wild Horse Saloon, was still locked when they arrived. So Slim and Dakota went into the saloon where Joe Rooney was swamping out and fat Spud Dillon was yawning behind the bar, while poring over a tattered newspaper.

"Hi, gents," hailed Spud. "What brings yuh to our fair city so early this fine mornin'?"

"Little business deal," answered Slim with a grin. "No thanks; too early in the day for spirituous liquor, Spud," he added, as Dillon began setting out a bottle and glasses. "What's new?"

(Continued Next Feek)

Sixteen Randolph farmers recently received 58,400 pounds of TVA triple-superphosphate to use in demonstrations with soil improving crops and pasture grasses.

Three Hoke County ginners will install new equipment and improve the old to give cotton farmers a better quality of lint this fall, reports he farm agent.

Hog shipments from New Bern last week amounted to 585 animals weighing 120,746 pounds and bringing \$11,449.88 in cash to the producers from the five counties.

Health-Wrecking Functional PAINS
Severe functional pains of menstruation, cramping spell and tangled nerves soon rob woman of her natural, youthful freshness. PAIN lines in a woman's face too often grow into AGE lines!
Thousands of women have found it helpful to take Cardui. They say it seemed to ease their pains and they noticed an increase in their appetites and finally a strengthened resistance to the discomfort of monthly periods.
Try Cardui. Of course if it doesn't help you, see your doctor.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By Rev. Charles E. Dunn

Abraham a Man of Prayer.
Lesson for May 9th. Genesis 18:17-32.

Golden Text: James 5:16.
The age in which we live is not enthusiastic about prayer. Yet we all recognize its necessity. Everyone prays in a time of grave emergency. When Dr. Grenfell, the famous Labrador physician, was trapped on an ice-pan nearly 30 years ago, and found himself drifting toward the open sea, with death from exposure as his apparent fate, he kept reciting to himself the words of a familiar hymn, "My God and father, while I stray far from my home in life's rough way, O teach me from my heart to say, 'Thy will be done.'"

Few are reminded too of the ease of prayer. One can talk to God at any time in any place. "The Practice of the Presence of God" contains the conversations and letters of Nicholas Herman of Lorraine, a humble, unlearned man, who was known as Brother Lawrence, and served in the kitchen of a monastic community. Brother Lawrence found God as he fulfilled the menial tasks of a scullion. He did all his disagreeable duties there with prayer. And God answered his prayer, inspiring him with the contagion of a good courage during the fifteen years of his hard service in the monastery.

The Family Doctor

SUGAR IMPORTANT TO HEALTH
An authority from Vienna attributes "strikingly favorable results" in the treatment of heart disease and stomach ulcers, with table sugar. If I had these sort of complaints, I'd consult my doctor as to how to use the sweet. You know, sugar is one of our staples.

The value of sugar "in relieving fatigue and supplying quick energy," also has scientific endorsement. The Vienna authority is believed to be the first to suggest the use of sugar in the treatment of certain, widely prevalent disease. He, (Dr. Roehl) claims to have used sugar in the treatment of stomach and duodenal ulcers, with good success. He noticed increase of appetite, with better food-tolerance an increased supply of mucous, favored by the sugar.

He saw improvement in the habitual constipation in such cases, with notable gain in weight. Too, remarkable increase in nerve-force, less melancholia, and more happy disposition in the gloomy victims.

The relief was not immediate but gradual and lasting. He says, "sugar is the most important nutritional element of the heart, in that it lowers blood-pressure and stimulates the liver and kidneys." Dr. Donald A. Laird, of Colgate University, contributes to a scientific symposium on sugar; he states that sugar contributes to restful sleep. This argues, almost, for a chocolate at bedtime, doesn't it?

Dr. Laird also declares it to be valuable in curing "vague feelings of fatigue, so common among physicians' patients." A remedy for "that tired feeling," so commonly met. I short, if sugar helps relieve mental and physical tire, and favors restful sleep, then it certainly is among our most valued foods.

To My Mother On Mother's Day

I have no flowers or gifts to bring
I have no tender songs to sing,
I have no wish as others do
To bring material things to you.

I'd bring a gift of joy, not gold
The fragile flowers of love untold,
I'd bring the knowledge of this to you
Of all your fondest dreams come true.

I'd bring the hope that I have in part
Fulfilled my image that's in your heart
And pray that I in turn may be
The kind of mother you've been to me.
— Theresa M. Thomas

But we must never forget that true prayer is not a superficial gesture. He always answers the sincere, earnest petitions of the soul. Our lesson is a case in point. Abraham genuinely concerned over the plight of the righteous remnant saved.



The Odds are against you

● Some people enjoy putting money on horse races—but it's no fun to risk good money on unknown razor blades! Buy a known quality blade—made by the world's largest blade maker—and play safe. Probak Jr., selling at 4 for 10¢, is automatically ground, honed and stropped to make short work of the toughest beard, without smart or irritation. Buy a package of Probak Jr. today.

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I USED TO SUFFER THE SAME WAY UNTIL I FOUND QUICK RELIEF IN AN ANTI-PAIN PILL

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