

**Gems of Thought**

IF WE give way to our passions we do but gratify ourselves for the present in order to our future disquiet.—Tillotson.

A pause, a hush, a wonder growing; A prophet's vision understood; In that strange spell of his bestowing, They dreamed, with him, of Brotherhood.—HARRISON D. MASON.

Men must know that in this theater of human life it remaineth only to God and the angels to be lookers on.—Francis Bacon.

Duty so soon tires. Love goes all the way.—J. K. Jerome.



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star of "True to Life," a Paramount picture, is one of the many well-groomed, well-informed Hollywood stars who use Calox Tooth Powder. McKesson & Robbins, Inc., Bridgeport, Conn.

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**DUDE WOMAN**  
By PETER B. KYNE  
WNU SERVICE

THE STORY THUS FAR: Mary Sutherland, an eastern girl, is lured to Arizona by the advertisements of the Wagon Wheel dude ranch operated by Ma and Pa Burdan. She is met at the station by Len Henley, rodeo rider, who tells her that the Wagon Wheel has gone out of business. Len takes her to Phoenix. Hearing that the Wagon Wheel is broke, Ham Henley, Len's father, purchases the Burdan notes from the bank. While at Phoenix Len enters the rodeo, driving a bronc known as Mad Hatter, toughest horse in the West. Ham bets Len three to one he won't be able to stay on the horse. Mary learns that Len loves her. She wagers one thousand to three thousand that Len will ride Mad Hatter.

**CHAPTER VIII**

Ham Henley still did not know where to find the Burdans but he suspected they would visit his son as soon as the doctors would permit it; so he had a man sit in a car in front of the hospital with instructions that if an elderly couple should drive up in a station wagon he was to follow them when they emerged and secure their address.

When, at the end of four days the Burdans had not appeared he commenced to be anxious. In order to file foreclosure suits against them he would have to have them served personally with the summons and complaint in action and undue delay in locating the defendants would make it incumbent upon him to petition the court for permission to enter upon the Wagon Wheel ranch to conserve its assets. And, if it could possibly be avoided, he did not wish to enter foreclosure suits; he did not want the Wagon Wheel ranch to be thus advertised as a property upon which a supposedly experienced cowman had failed.

While Hamilton Henley's thoughts were thus engaged, Pa Burdan had kept his promise to uncover the latter's sudden interest in the Wagon Wheel ranch—a task which, it must be confessed, was not remotely complicated. He telephoned the president of the State Bank at Prescott to inquire if payment of the delinquent interest on the loans, the delinquent taxes on the collateral and a payment of say five per cent on the principal of the loans might operate to forestall the filing of suits in foreclosure. He was not surprised when informed that the bank was no longer interested in that matter because Hamilton L. Henley had purchased both mortgages.

So that was how the cat was about to hop! Pa came in to Ma and said proudly: "Well, Ma, I told you I'd ferret out Ham Henley's interest in the Wagon Wheel an' I have. He's bought the mortgages!"

"You through ferretin'?" Ma demanded.

"Ain't nothin' more to ferret," Pa protested virtuously.

"Very well, then, I'll start. Ham Henley wants an assignment of our state land lease to make sure nobody else slips in ahead o' him an' gets it after the state land commissioner cancels our lease for failure to pay the rent."

"I ain't a-goin' to deny that, Ma."

"An' he wants a bill-o'-sale to the cattle an' a quit-claim deed to the home ranch so's he won't have to enter suit in foreclosure an' can enter on the property an' take charge right off. He knows we can't protect ourselves now so he's gone big-hearted an' offered us as a gift just about what it'd cost him to enter suit."

Now that Len was out of danger and permitted a few visitors for a few minutes daily, Mary wondered if he still harbored his plan for acquiring the Wagon Wheel ranch. She suspected he was sufficiently tenacious to cling to the idea; that while unable to attend to the details himself he might engage a lawyer to attend to them for him, for she doubted if he would ask his father to serve him. In order to verify her suspicions, therefore, she asked him about it.

He replied, sadly, that he had abandoned the idea. The Burdans had fled from the Wagon Wheel in panic; when their panic subsided they would, of course, return to pack their few personal belongings, but they would not remain there until legally evicted. Pa had to do something quickly to earn a living for himself and Ma. Hence somebody had to take charge of the ranch at once and the bank would, of course, petition the court for permission to do so in order to avoid waste and spoilage of their collateral prior to securing judgment in foreclosure suits. Consequently, the moment such suits were instituted, competition to secure the Wagon Wheel at an obvious bargain, would be keen; and, of course, a man flat on his back in a hospital, doomed to remain there not less than two months and facing an additional convalescence period of a month or more, could not compete.

When she terminated her brief visit Mary went to the local bank where she had opened an account by depositing Ham Henley's check and asked a bank official to recommend a good local attorney. He suggested a Mr. Henry Buller in the Henley building and to Mr. Henry Buller's office Mary at once repaired. Upon returning to her hotel she visited Ma and Pa Burdan.

"I am thinking seriously of acquiring the Wagon Wheel ranch," she began. "What price will you accept for your equity?"

Ma's acquired sense of leadership bade her answer: "Ten thousand dollars!"

Young as she was Mary realized she was about to be played for a dude, that Ma and Pa were not above employing a modicum of rural cunning. So she decided there should be no temporizing. "For an assignment of your state land lease—for a deed to your home ranch, subject, of course, to the deed of trust held by the bank and for a bill-of-sale of all of your cattle, subject to the mortgage on them held by the bank, I will give you twenty-five hundred dollars and not a penny more."

"Take it," said Ma. "Leave all your papers with me," Mary directed. "I must have a lawyer verify your lease and your right to assign it and approve the title to your real estate. As soon as he has done that I will issue you a check. In the interim let us go to the lawyer's office and sign an option."

The moment the Burdans were back at the home of the relative with whom they were staying Ma picked up the telephone and called Ham Henley's number. Pa put his hand over the mouthpiece. "Aimin' to gloat a mite on Ham Henley, eh?"



For a plaything she had taken the ranch.

he growled, "before the deal is closed final. Ma, you're askin' for it, so as soon as we get the money you take half an' I'll take half an' we'll go our separate ways."

Ma trembled and hung up. That afternoon Buller verified the fact that the Burdans had a land lease, that it was still valid and that they had a legal right to assign it. The following morning the title to the real estate was found to be in order and at two o'clock that afternoon the deal was formally closed—whereupon Ma Burdan picked up Henry Buller's telephone and demanded speech with Hamilton L. Henley. Evidently her request was granted for Mary heard her toss over the line a bit of ancient child-doggerel:

"Smarty gave a party  
And nobody came but a big fat darkey."

Then she put the receiver back in its cradle and smiled happily.

"If Ma hadn't had her gloat over Ham Henley I reckon she'd have busted wide open," Pa opined.

"Why is she gloating?" Mary asked.

"On account Ham Henley's bought our notes from the bank an' was hell-bent on buyin' from us what you've just bought."

"Why didn't you tell me Hamilton Henley had bought those notes?" Mary demanded.

"You never asked," Pa replied, in all innocence, "besides which, if I'd volunteered the information you might have figured we was tryin' to whipsaw you. You offered a thousand more'n Ham Henley so we took it."

Mary sighed. It was one thing to high-pressure a bank but she had a very strong suspicion that to high-pressure Hamilton L. Henley was quite another pair of boots. However, the fat was in the fire now and all she could do was to go to the assault. "I think I'll handle Mr. Henley myself," she told Henry Buller, "while you go over to the state land office, pay that delinquent rental and file with the land commissioner that assignment of lease." She picked up the telephone, called Hamilton L. Henley's office, and asked for an interview.

That morning Ham Henley had dropped in for a minute to visit his son. "Len," he said, "you've wintered for several years on the Wagon Wheel. You sort o' like that property, don't you?"

"It's beautiful," Len sighed. "I've always wanted to own it—and I

would have, too, if I'd gotten off Mad Hatter sooner."

"I been thinkin' maybe you'd be happier with a spread of your own, son," his father went on. "I'm in position to pick up the Wagon Wheel for a song, an' if I thought you'd accept it I'd buy it an' give it to you an' there wouldn't be no strings to the gift, son, except that I'd like you to put up at my house when you come to town an' keep a room for me at the Wagon Wheel so's I can visit you when I come up to Yavapai county."

Len looked up at his father and the latter saw his son's eyes grow moist, saw his one sound arm come up from under the sheets and grope toward him. "I'll be mighty happy to have the gift—now that I know your love goes with it," he said with some difficulty.

Ham Henley laid his big hard hand across his son's eyes to hide the emotion in his own, for he was not given to being soft and it disturbed him. "Why, son," he said gently, "there ain't nothin' I wouldn't do for you if I could. I know I was hard on you when you was in your teens. . . . I—I hurt me—because you accepted your mother's leadership instead o' mine—I got the false notion you wasn't a Henley. . . . When I seen you ride Mad Hatter to a gaspin' finish I knew you'd done somethin' no man o' your mother's clan would have done. . . . I'm right sorry for a lot o' things. . . ."

"You talk too much," his son said. "I don't need a blue-print."

"We'll gather them Burdan scrubs an' culls, an' sell 'em for what they'll bring; then I'll stock you up with high-grade cattle. You visit all my ranches an' help yourself to the best horses in the caballado an' as soon as you're up an' doin' again I'll buy you a car like mine."

"It isn't considered good—medical practice—pappy—to pull the nose—of a fellow with a fractured skull—but keep on—if it pleases you—"

"You keep your tail up," his father roared, and fled from the room. Back in his office he said to Jess Hubbell, "Jess, Mrs. Bill Burdan is out to swindle me on that Wagon Wheel deal. I don't know her scarcely, but Len's fond of her. . . . so let her get away with her swindle. When she calls up again you handle her. She riles me."

"How much?"

"She's asking twenty-five hundred. It's a gift so give it to her. I want the Wagon Wheel for my son and I've got to get the Burdans out of my way so I can send a manager out to look after things."

"Where can I find the Burdans, Mr. Henley?"

"I don't know. But you needn't bother lookin'. She'll be callin' this afternoon to accept my last offer. . . . Poor devils, they got to have some getaway money."

He gazed upon his general-manager a moment, then laid a hand on the latter's shoulder. "Jess," he said, "I pay this crazy government too much income taxes, so I'm a goin' to reduce the inflammation by increasin' deductible expenses. Gimme the office payroll. . . . I aim to whoop salaries, startin' with you."

"I'm glad," said Jess Hubbell, "that the boy's going to live. I'm glad you're happy and thanks for the raise."

"Happy? Jess, I'm happier'n a coyote in a watermelon patch. Jess, my boy's always been right fond of me—an' I didn't know it. Can you beat that?"

"It ain't up to me to tell you how dumb you've been," Jess Hubbell replied diplomatically. "You know somebody by the name o' Miss Mary Sutherland?"

"Yes. What about her?"

"She telephoned to ask for an interview with you at eleven tomorrow morning. I told her I'd call her back at her hotel."

"I'll see her, Jess."

All the remainder of the day he wondered what the object of the interview might be. He felt vaguely disturbed about it after Ma Burdan had telephoned him some cryptic nonsense about a party and a big fat darkey and his perturbation had not abated when Mary was ushered into his office.

"Good mornin', dude," he greeted her. "What's on your mind?"

"Good morning, Don Hamilton. On my mind this morning are two sour loans you purchased from the State Bank of Arizona."

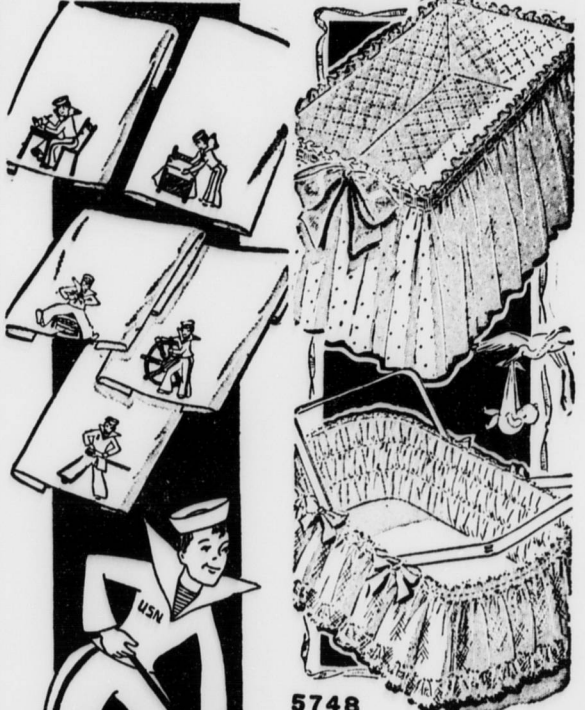
"Hum-in-m!"

"Do it again. I own the Wagon Wheel state land lease and the Burdan equity in the Wagon Wheel home ranch and the cattle."

He blanched and flushed. His face went out of control and as a mark for concealing his emotions he was aware it was no longer of any use to him and this knowledge, combined with the blow below the belt this dude girl had so calmly and forcibly given him, filled him with anger. He thought rather incoherently: She's robbing my son. For a plaything she has taken the ranch here's yearned for years to possess and she's robbing me of the fun of making his dream come true. She dislikes me and now she has come to gloat over me. . . . I must not speak too quickly. If I do I'll say too much. . . . after all my son is in love with her and I've just gotten my son back. . . . I mustn't risk losing him again.

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