

The GIRL From The DOUBLE R

BY BETTY BLOCKLINGER

CHAPTER XII

When Ralph Rowland went to war, his sister, "Rusty," was left in charge of the ranch. Soon black market operators got busy and slaughtered some of her cattle. She called Ladue Decker a neighboring rancher, to come over, but he laughed at the idea of gangsters and proposes to her. Rusty turned him down. She stopped at the home of Dr. Herbert Westmore, a veterinarian for whom she had great admiration, and while there is told that her Uncle Jed has been shot. She hurries to see him in the hospital. Decker proposes to her for the second time and warns Rusty against Dr. Westmore, saying if

she does not call him off he Decker, will have Westmore put in jail. Decker casts suspicion upon Westmore's character and activities.

It was the third day before Rusty found time to embark on her first venture, but not one moment of the preceding days had been given to calling Doctor agreement.

On the afternoon of the third day, she saddled the now recovered babe whistled up Manny's dogs and set forth.

"The idea," she told the dogs, "is to pick up the scent of cattle, just as Manny has taught you to pick up the scent of the milking herd. Then I follow you."

It was late afternoon before the dogs, now far ahead, began a frantic barking. Rusty put Babe into a gallop. The dogs were surrounding something. A Double R strayed?

She rode up, called off the dogs, and for a moment grasped the pomel of her saddle while the cliffs of the Nopocos danced dizzily before her sickened eyes.

It simply couldn't be. Not on her ranch. It could not be, yet it was.

Before her, too weak to rise or even dip horn at the dogs, stood an emaciated steer in the last stages of anthrax.

"Back babe," she ordered. And to the dogs, "Get home with you. Now, steady, girl; we have to do it."

Before her was the drooping head of the mortally sick steer. She drew her revolver.

"Let's go," she said stoutly—and shot.

...seer staggered, then fell to the ground and lay still.

Cautiously, Rusty rode closer, looking down to check the brand. But where a brand had been, there was now the crisscross lines of one deliberately fouled, but which could never have been that of the Double R.

Then cattle not her own were edging run across her land. To where? Or had this steer, so close to another line, wandered astray?

Suddenly she knew the explanation, knew as clearly as though the Nopocos were of crystalline glass. She straightened, looked up.

At that moment, a shower of loose shale rattled down the cliff, and she caught a brief glimpse of a man up there before he ducked behind a rock.

Rusty waited a moment to see whether the man on the cliff

would reappear. But he didn't, quite obviously, he did not want to be seen—was hiding.

Then, she whirled her pony about and raced toward the ranch house. As she rode, she determined she must get in touch with Herb Westmore immediately—tell him what she had seen and what she surmised.

How could she ever have doubted him? She somehow knew now that he was the person to help her.

But how to reach him? To telephone would mean that a dozen or more receivers would be lifted might be disastrous. And yet, she had to act swiftly, before that lookout on the cliff could carry a warning to his superiors.

"Then, ahead," she saw one of her new riders—one of the two she had hired first.

"Lorward," she said, "I need a man I can trust to do an important errand for me."

"You may trust me, Miss Rowland. I am at your service—and the service of my country."

"So that's it! You were placed here for a purpose."

"Now that you have singled me out, I am free to admit it. I know you will reveal this to no one else. What do you want me to do?"

"Drive into town and tell Dr. Westmore I want him to come here in the morning, prepared to make a trip into the Nopocos."

"Herb will be glad to do this," he stated, and Rusty was not surprised.

She told him what she had found and what she expected to find, and he nodded.

Then suddenly, he said, "Play up," and began a loud-mouthed denunciation of her.

For a moment, Rusty's mouth stood open. Then she saw that a them—one of the last three new hands she had hired.

Another rider was approaching. "All I got to say," Dorward concluded, as the other rider came up, "it's the last time I work for a woman."

"It's the last time you'll work for this one!" Rusty flashed back. "You come to the house and I'll give you your time. Then you and that partner of yours get off the place!"

Rusty was deeply asleep when something awakened her. An unshapely paw. Annoyed, she slapped at the cat, then awakened completely, listening.

Fatso was growling, growling like an alarmed dog. She jumped from the bed and went to the window. A moment later, she

jumped down and went to the hall door—and again she growled.

But did cats sense danger? Suddenly, Rusty was cold with fear. The ranch doors were never locked, and inside, this night, were only her mother, Manny, and herself.

Stealthily she went to her door and opened it. For a moment she heard nothing. Then came the telltale creak of the front door, a barely discernible creak.

Swiftly, with Fatso held firmly under her robe, she slipped through the hall to her mother's room. She literally dragged the sleep-stupid woman through her bath to Manny's room.

"Manny"—she laid her hand over his mouth—"not a word out of you. There is someone prowling downstairs—understand!"

They could hear nothing at first. Then, perhaps half an hour after Rusty's first alarm, they heard footsteps padding about Manny's room, and the murmur of men's voices.

"Come on," whispered a voice. "This is the kid's room; we don't want him."

And Rusty knew it was the whom they wanted.

But for what? Rusty, her mother and Manny, huddled in the little attic next to Manny's room, heard the intruders leaving the room. For a while, there was silence.

Then suddenly, there was an explosion sound somewhere within the house—angry voices, scuffling. This went on for some time, to be followed again by silence.

And then, the three in the attic once more heard footsteps in the adjoining room—and the sound of a familiar voice.

"Muz—Sis—Maany! Where are you?"

Ralph. But what in the world was he doing here?

"In here, son," Mrs. Rowland called excitedly. "Just a minute! We've barricaded ourselves in."

Eagerly, they clawed at the heavy play chest, moved it out of the way, and opened the door.

Mrs. Rowland rushed out to fling herself into the arms of her tall son. Manny breathed an awed, "Whiz!" Rusty followed her mother into Ralph's arms, then looked beyond him.

In the doorway stood Herb Westmore.

"But Ralph, what are you doing here?" asked Mrs. Rowland.

"Westmore wangled a furlough for me, and I shot here by plane. I reached Westmore's place last evening just after Dorward had brought Rusty's message. That message made him so sure that Rusty was in danger that we drove right out. And a good thing we did! We sneaked into the house, heard some one prowling around upstairs, and came up to find the intruders in Rusty's room. Dorward and his partner, Cutler, are guarding them downstairs now."

In the living room, the three prisoners sat sullenly, their wrists and ankles bound. Dorward and Cutler stood guard over them.

At first, under Westmore's and Ralph's questioning, the trio refused to talk. But finally one of them weakened.

"We didn't aim to harm Miss Rowland," he said. "We was to keep her hid until we got word to let her go. She'd found out too much."

"You couldn't have got away with it," Rusty put in.

"Reckon we could. We'd made you write a note to your mother, sayin' the hospital had phoned you that your uncle had took a bad turn, and so you'd gone into the city. Then, later, you'd telephoned that everything was okay but that you were goin' to stay in town for a few days until your uncle was better."

"I suppose you know the penalty for kidnapping," Ralph remarked coldly.

"We'll all get sprung," the man bragged. "Letn't think no little towntown justice can send us up. We got protection 'way up."

After a little more questioning, the three would-be kidnapers were taken out and turned over

Successful Parenthood

BUILDING STRONG TEETH

Dentally speaking, the most important event in a child's life is the eruption of the sixth-year molars, one in each half of each jaw, making four in all. Yet unless you are familiar with the normal course of dental development, or through regular trips to the dentist have kept touch with what is taking place in your child's mouth, you may mistake these indispensable first permanent teeth for the last of the baby crop. This is because the sixth-year molars come in without displacing a first tooth; for nature has designed them to accomplish the remarkable engineering feat of holding the arch in place while the foundation deciduous teeth are being shed.

The first sign of the possible advent of these initial permanent teeth is the widening of space between the baby teeth. This is noticeable around the fifth year. The jaws are growing and the first teeth no longer fill them, as nature foresaw when she planned to give us two sets of teeth in one lifetime. The first occupants of this extra space come in just in

front of the two baby molars, making their appearance some time between the ages of 5 1/2 to 6 1/2.

So much for nature's brilliant plan for preserving the lines of the jaw, and thereby the beauty of the face, while these changes are going on. The rest is largely up to the parents. For if any one of the first permanent molars is lost the other three are unable to do successfully the job planned for them. This is because a tooth is never an independent worker, but functions in relation to its antagonist in the jaw above or below, like a carefully meshed machine. Likewise, if a pair of teeth on one side of the face is deprived of its share of chewing and the other side takes over most of this work, the chin may gradually shift out of position and greatly change the whole facial contour and expression.

Dentists have been doing their part by perfecting techniques for saving these priceless molars if they become diseased. But your dentist would far rather cooperate with you in preventive tooth care if you will see that he has the opportunity to examine your child's teeth at least every six months. For even before there is any obvious decay the teeth should be examined for slight imperfections in the enamel which may harbor germs and decayed food, two foes of a healthy mouth.

Of equal importance are the preventive routines you can estab-

lish at home for building strong, healthy teeth. For one thing, proper diet is essential in nourishing the teeth through their cycle of growth. As you know, the permanent tooth grows and hardens within the jaw, beginning long before it pushes out the baby tooth it replaces. Faulty diet at any stage of development is reflected in irregularities of the tooth rings, or, if prolonged, in chippy or pitted enamel. Fortunately, teeth require the same well-balanced diet which produces general health, with perhaps a bit more emphasis on milk and vegetables containing calcium and other minerals.

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It means providing telephones for all who have been waiting for them. This is one of our first jobs! A greatly expanded telephone program for our farmer friends is also in process. Expansion of long distance service is being scheduled too. It will include the installation of coaxial cables to handle more calls with speed and convenience for you, and provide more facilities for that exciting visual art—television. A mass of construction is to be done and a new service to motor vehicles is also in the offing.

These are the high spots. They have been ideas on the drawing board. They will become realities as materials become obtainable. There will be the marshalling of prosperity's Three M's—Men, Money and Materials, the forces that brought North Carolina and the Telephone Company to their present positions, that won them the friendship and confidence of the public.

This expansion program calls for the expenditure of millions of dollars in North Carolina. And telephone people like the idea of putting money for expansion into North Carolina, contributing to the general welfare and prosperity of the state, through its men and women, its wage-earners, its families, its communities.

Our optimism for the future is based on the record of the past. North Carolina and the 3712 men and women of the Telephone Company have grown up together, and watched each other grow. Now, in the days ahead, the same friendly relationship will continue. The future beckons with a busy hand.

E. H. WASSON, Carolina's Manager

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