



Gunlock Ranch By FRANK H. SPEARMAN

SYNOPSIS

Sleepy Cat, desert town of the Southwest, is celebrating the Fourth of July. Jane Van Tassel, beautiful daughter of Gus Van Tassel, hated owner of Gunlock ranch, has arrived from the East for the first time. She watches the Frontier Day celebration in company with Dr. Carpy, crusty, tender-hearted friend of the community. Henry Sawdy of the Circle Dot ranch, tricked in a fake horse race the day before by Dave McCrossen, foreman at Gunlock, plans revenge. He enters Bill Denison, a handsome young Texas wrangler, in the rodeo which McCrossen is favored to win, and lays heavy bets on him. Unknown to the crowd, Denison is a champion horseman, McCrossen and the young stranger tie in the various events. Denison drops a cigarette carelessly. Racing down the track full tilt, he picks up the cigarette. The verdict goes to Denison when McCrossen refuses to attempt the stunt. Entranced by the crowd, Denison agrees to perform another trick. Jane is asked for her bracelet, and throws it on the track. Just as Denison rides to pick it up a yell from Barney Rebotock, a McCrossen henchman, scares the pony, nearly costing the rider his life. Gun play is prevented by the intervention of Dr. Carpy. Back on Gunlock ranch after two years in Chicago, because of her father's illness, Jane gets lost riding in the hills and meets Denison, now a neighbor, who guides her home. Not knowing her identity, he speaks bitterly of Van Tassel. She tells McCrossen who brought her home and she denounces Denison as a cattle thief. Later she asks Dr. Carpy why her father is unpopular and he tells her it is because of Van Tassel's ruthless and unscrupulous character. Later McCrossen tries to woo Jane, but is sharply rebuffed. Once again she loses her way in the hills and meets Denison. On impulse she gives him her bracelet for guiding her home.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

"Well, it happened I was just thinking about the other times we met, and wondering whether I'd ever see you again, when you dropped down out of the sky on me just now. It took my breath. On your way to town? So am I. Do you mind if I ride along with you?" "I might mind if you didn't. In fact, if you don't mind a confession, I hurried a little to catch up. You were so kind before—" "Nothing at all—" "—and you gave me such good advice that I haven't been lost since. But I do feel safer, riding with company. So thank you again—if you're not terribly tired of being thanked." "Just as much as you like, if you'll remember you're thanking me for nothing. I was afraid you'd gone back to Chicago." "Where have you been all this time? I certainly couldn't have missed you, if you ride this trail as often as I do." "I've been away—down at Medicine Bend. How long is it since that day?" "Oh, I haven't an idea. It was an awfully hot day, as I remember. Wasn't it?" "I can't remember a thing about the weather. If I measured the time by my feelings, it would be about three years." "How perfectly ridiculous!" pouted Jane. "What I was afraid of was, you'd gone back to Chicago and I'd never see you again. Then I figured that if you went back to Chicago, I'd look there next winter for a circus job and try to get into the same show with you." She looked at him, frankly amused. "Now wasn't that nice of you? Really, Mr. Denison, you make me perfectly ashamed of myself. Will you get mad now if I confess again? No, you mustn't. I just won't have it. But—I was kidding about being a circus rider." "He repressed a smile. She saw it. "What amused you?" she asked. "Nothing at all." "Oh, yes it was. What?" "You won't get mad?" "Oh," she responded airily, "I never get mad." "Well, I knew you were kidding because that time you rode up to Spring Ranch, I happened to see you come down the valley. It was after I'd heard these stories about circus riding. I said to myself, 'If that young lady ever rode in a circus, they'd have to tie her on.'" Jane didn't like it—no girl could. But it gave her precisely the opening she wanted. "Now," she said with an attempted laugh, "it's my turn, and I hope you won't get mad." "Try me—nothing'd make me mad." Then, "You mustn't hate me because I am not some one you might have thought I was. I am Jane Van Tassel. My name is Jane—not Marie. I know you and Father haven't got along."

CHAPTER V

TWO days passed. Jane ordered up her pony. "What's takin' you into town today?" asked McCrossen suspiciously. Bull came up with the pony. Jane tossed the question: "I forgot some errands the other day. I shan't be gone long." "Who's goin' with you?" "No one. The boys are busy. I shall not need the wagon today." She had ridden some two miles toward town, when a turn in the trail brought in sight a man riding out of the woods. He checked his horse and waited for Jane. His face was expectant. Jane's cheeks flushed in spite of herself. "I hope I haven't kept you waiting long," she stammered. He smiled and shook his head as if perfectly satisfied. "I came early," he confessed. "But I'd have hung around all night for this and not thought it long. Are we going up in the hills?" "Not today. We—at least I—am going into town." Jane had private feelings of reserve about riding into the hills with Bill Denison. "In the hills we might get lost," she suggested, naively. "I might; but not in the way you mean. I'm lost right now. I've been lost for two days. Something came into my life two days ago that I hope will keep me dreaming the rest of my life." "Don't talk nonsense." "You don't dare ask what I was dreaming about?" "Was it about another dreamer?" "It was." "I know who, then." He looked at her with pathetic hope. "It was about McCrossen," she added heartlessly. "Never! It was—" "Let's gallop," she exclaimed, cutting him squarely off. "I feel just like riding fast. I can beat you to that big pine!" When she pulled up after a brisk run, her face was flushed, her eyes dancing, her lips parted in laughter. Denison was just behind her. "Why, you didn't race at all," she complained, looking around at him. "Why didn't you try to pass me instead of sticking at my heels all the time?" "If I passed you, how in the world could I see you? I wish it was fifty miles more to Sleepy Cat—don't you?" "No." "Well, don't you wish it was just a few miles farther?" "No." "Not even two miles?" "What a persistent tease! Well—two, then. And no more." "We could make it two by riding a little farther into the hills." "You might ride up that way by yourself." "I'm just a groom. I have to follow my mistress." "Oh, no! We mustn't ride into town together. You gallop ahead." Jane lunched that day at Dr. Carpy's hotel, hoping she might see Carpy himself. Fortune favored her. The doctor was in the office when she came. "By the way, Doctor," she said, "I rode into town, part of the way, this morning with a neighbor of ours who doesn't bear a very favorable reputation at Gunlock, but—" "What's his name?" "Bill Denison." Carpy laughed his dry little laugh. "Well!" he exclaimed benevolently. "You did pick a real outsider, didn't you? What did you think of the brute?" In her confusion, Jane hesitated. "Why—I thought him not bad at all," she declared with spirit. "What do you think of him?" "Why, to speak just offhand, Jane, I'd say Bill Denison had his enemies; but I think he's about as square and open-and-above-board as a young fellow as lives in the hills. I don't suppose any of your father's following would agree with me." "He struck me, too, Doctor, as just such a man," interposed Jane impulsively. "What do you know about things like that?" asked Carpy jocularly. "You're just a kid! He might be a horse thief for all you could tell, girl." Jane drew herself up. "Don't be so sure about every girl's being a fool—some of them might fool you! He told me he used to work at Gunlock. What was the quarrel between him and Father?" Dr. Carpy laid his cigar on the edge of the table and braced himself. "It's a kind of long story," he began, not knowing exactly how to tackle a delicate subject. "I've lots of time," remarked Jane disconcertingly. "To begin with, your father was

always a grabber, Jane. Probably couldn't help it—just built that way. I suppose that hurts your feelings?" The girl winced a little. "Whether it does or does not, Doctor, I want to hear both sides." Her appeal was not unheeded. "You're a kind of surprise, Jane," continued the doctor slowly, "for in spite of the fact that the family name is not very popular in this country, everybody is talking about you." "Just to show you, Jane, how feeling has been: we've got an ex-sheeriff out here, one of the best and biggest-hearted men in the mountains. He's a character. He happened in to the hotel the other day, and we got to talking about you—now don't blush or get confused, girl—you're entitled to a good send-off, and I gave you a good one." "Old Bill Pardaloe set where you're setting, with his feet on the table, chewing tobacco, listening to every word and never, all the time, saying one word himself. When I got through, I told him about you, and that you had an aunt in Chicago who'd been out here—a regular sport and no fancy airs because she had a rich brother." "Pardaloe—now I'm telling you this, Jane, only to show you how some of us felt—Pardaloe shifted his hard and says, 'Doc, it's kind of hard for me to believe there's one decent Van Tassel in the world; I'm damned if I'll ever believe there's two.'" "Oh, Doctor!" "Bill Denison worked awhile for your father; he was foreman at Gunlock. Your father thought Denison was just about right. He could do everything—and do it well. He made so much money for your father that he gave him a share in the cattle, a tenth, I believe it was. When he quit, Denison asked for a settlement on his share. Your father told him he didn't have no share. They went to law about it. Denison got beat—he didn't have anything but a verbal contract. So Bill went back to live on his own ranch next to the Reservation. It's small but has plenty of good water from a big spring that makes it valuable. Then he began running off enough Gunlock cattle in small bunches—anyway—he claimed belonged to him, anyway—to pay what your father owed him." "So Bill was cussed by your father as a rustler. It made cattlemen laugh, thinking of your father's own reputation in that respect. And the old man brought a lawsuit against Bill to oust him from the little ranch, account bad title. That suit is still pending in the land office at Washington. Now, that's just about the story, Jane." The shock of the doctor's story so humiliated Jane that she wanted only to get back home and hide what she felt to be the shame of her father from everybody. She had promised to ride back the hill trail with Denison; she felt she just couldn't do it. She took a short cut home across the desert. Her mysterious and disappointed admirer, after lingering patiently in the hills till dusk rode into town only to learn at McAlpin's barn that Jane had taken her pony out early in the afternoon. It was a painful night. She realized why the name she bore was so unpopular in Sleepy Cat. Her depression bore her down; even Quong saw that something was wrong. He cooked special dishes to tempt Jane's appetite, but her appetite could not be tempted. "Why don't you get out and ride any more?" asked Bull Page one day. "You haven't been on a horse for two weeks—just sit moping around the house, eating nothing, talking nothing." "Bull, just let me alone. I'll be all right." For another two weeks Bull was worried. Then suddenly Jane relented. She would take a horseback ride if Bull would ride with her—not otherwise. They started together. It was afternoon. The air was thick with a soft haze that tempered the sun's rays. The trail led in and out of the thin pine woods. She began to think her nervous apprehension of meeting Denison again had been a wasted worry. Indeed, she and her guide were home-



"What Did You Think of the Brute?"

bound within a mile of the ranch house when both heard the clatter of hoofs behind them. Jane would not have looked around for a million dollars. Bull told her there were two men coming up. "Who are they?" "Looks like Carpy and Bill Denison." Jane's heart raced. However, this seemed not so bad. Three men and one woman were better than one man and one woman. Carpy and Denison approached together. "Where are you riding to today, doctor?" asked Jane. "Gunlock ranch." Jane showed surprise. "Who's sick at the ranch?" "One of the boys," said Carpy. "That's the first I've heard of it," exclaimed Jane. "Who is it?" "One of the boys that got cut up last night downtown. I sewed him up and want to see how he is. Nothing serious, I guess," said Carpy. "Any news in town, doctor?" asked Jane, though not in the least interested in Sleepy Cat news. "Nothing but the brush fires up North. This whole country's dry as a tinder. I hope the winds will keep 'em up North. What do you hear from your father?" asked the doctor in return. "Oh, he's better," said Jane. "He talks about coming home pretty soon." "Well, that's news," commented Dr. Carpy, noncommittally. "He's got a wonderful constitution, that man," thinking to himself that it was much too good. "How have you been yourself, girl?" "Oh, I'm just fine, doctor." "Rarin' to go, eh? Come on, girl, I'll race you through this pine belt." Jane saw her chance to escape an uncomfortable situation, for Denison hadn't said a word. She dashed gayly ahead and outran Carpy. But Denison followed her, overtaking her and riding alongside. The spurt couldn't last forever, though Jane prolonged it to the best of her ability. She wondered whether she had jumped from the frying pan into the fire; she was alone now with Denison. When she slackened her pace, out of breath, her cheeks were aglow. "I wouldn't push that pony of yours too hard," suggested Denison incidentally. "He's a nervous critter." "Oh, he's all right," said Jane lightly, "but it does shake one up, doesn't it?" she exclaimed, panting a little. "It does," agreed Denison. "But I got my real shakeup when I spied you on the trail. I've been staking myself out alone on this trail every day for a month or so, hoping to get sight of you." "I haven't felt much like riding lately." "I was afraid you were sick. I watched for the doctor coming out, but I didn't see him. I used to ride up Gunlock Knob every day or two to see if I could see anything of you." "I wish you wouldn't do such things. Where is Gunlock Knob?" "It's that peak over by the spring. It's really on your father's ranch, I guess, but I'm always careful not to run into any of your men." "I'm sorry, but you mustn't look for me any more—please don't." She glanced at him firmly as she spoke. To Denison she had never looked so lovely. "Why?" he demanded. "Have I—?" "You haven't, but I have—I guess that's the way to put it. I mustn't see you any more. I don't expect to remain in this country very long, anyway." "What have I done, Jane?" "Nothing, nothing." "Somebody's been telling lies about me," he declared with some bitterness. "No." "If you'd tell me what they are, I could answer them." "I said, no! No one has talked about you." His sudden intensity frightened Jane. She burst into tears. "Now I've made matters worse!" he exclaimed penitently. "I guess my bark's worse'n my bite. But it makes me wild to think I've been lied about to you." "You haven't," sputtered poor Jane. "Don't you believe me when I say nobody's been talking about you?" "Please excuse me, then. I do believe you. But if you'd give me a chance to, I'd be willing to tell you every mean thing I've done in my life—and leave it all to you. Don't condemn me without a hearing—that's all I ask." "Nobody is condemning you. I'm only, if anything, condemning myself." "For what?" he demanded. (TO BE CONTINUED)

STAR DUST Movie • Radio By VIRGINIA VALE

YOU may think that it would be all too easy to break into the movies if you were related to a star. But—well, just see what Florence Eldridge has to say about it.

In private life she is Mrs. Fredric March. In public life she has been a well known actress on the stage for some years before they were married. When he decided on movies instead of the stage, she went along to Hollywood, because being a good wife is more important to her than having a career of her own.

Came the time when RKO was casting "Mary of Scotland," in which Katherine Hepburn and Fredric March are co-starred (and a swell picture it is!). Miss Eldridge wanted the role of Queen Elizabeth.

"I was selected only after every other candidate for the part had been tested and rejected for one reason or another," says she. She finally got it, of course, and turned in an excellent performance.

Gertrude Michael was the target for a lot of reconstituting when she left Paramount; there were people who said she'd find that free-lancing was a lot worse than sticking with a big company, even though that company didn't seem to be doing a great deal for you. Some of them predicted that she'd be completely out of pictures, first thing she knew.

Whereupon she signed up with RKO and now she's headed straight for the top.

That brand new motion picture company, Grand National, has just signed up a young man who looks like big star material. His name is Brillhart Chapman, and he's a dancer—has appeared in solo numbers for the past four years with the Boston Symphony Orchestra. Recently he has been dancing at a night club in New York, and now he's off to Europe on a vacation, before he starts work before the camera.

Lily Pons is all set to begin picture work again, although she has said that she doesn't care too much about it. She spent her vacation in Connecticut, its climax being the arrival of her mother from France.

John McCormack, the famous Irish tenor, sang "Killarney" and "Believe Me, If All Those Endearing Young Charms" in England the other day for 20th Century-Fox's "Wings of the Morning"—and if you see the picture you'll see the famous singer in natural color—it's the first Technicolor picture produced in England.

The football broadcasts are being lined up, so that all of us who don't want to go to games, or can't make it, can sit at home this fall and hear what's happening on the gridiron. An oil company is acting as sponsor for the broadcasts of one hundred major games, over thirty-six stations on the coast. Don Wilson, whom you've heard doing another sort of announcements with Jack Benny, will do some of the announcing.

If you listen to the Music Hall of the Air, on the radio, you probably feel that you know Ted Hammerstein; he is the grandson of the late Oscar Hammerstein, one of America's most illustrious theatrical figures.

Ted tells this story about himself. He broke into the theatrical business by working for a Broadway booking agent.

This theatrical agent was one of the important ones, and his waiting room was usually filled with people clamoring for work. Keeping them from storming the inner office was Hammerstein's main duty. He did his job as bouncer very effectively—and some of the people he threw out later made good—among them Richard Dix, Chester Morris and Ben Lyons!

ODDS AND ENDS... Her admirers are declaring that Norma Shearer's performance in "Romeo and Juliet" makes her the greatest American actress, bar none, on stage or screen... Marlene Dietrich says she'll never return to Germany, not because of troubles with the government, but because the German people don't like her in pictures... Now it's Donald Woods who has gone on strike on the Warner Brothers lot... Wonder what is causing that epidemic... Bette Davis must be glad that she walked out on "God's Country and the Woman"; the company has been having a run of accidents on location.

What Irvin S. Cobb Thinks about Woes of French Hotelkeepers.

SANTA MONICA, CALIF. —As he gazes forth on a boulevard full of rampaging Reds and thinks about his empty bedrooms, I'll bet there isn't a hotel keeper in Paris who wouldn't trade a great gross of assorted French communists, including all the standardized grades, such as the comparatively rare slick type, the partly haired-over hybrid and the common fur-bearing variety, for just one old-fashioned easy-going American visitor—the kind that was too care-free to check up the weekly bill!

Private Olympic Games.

ORIGINALLY these Olympic games were based upon the ideal of strengthening inter-racial friendships through competitive sport.

But when, in dispatches from Berlin, a fellow reads of disputed decisions, questioned reversals, alleged discriminations against some winning contestants on account of color, and the unnecessarily brutal publicity, or so it appeared at long distance, that was given to the disciplining of an indiscreet woman athlete, and then the threatened withdrawals of aggrieved teams from certain Latin countries, he gets to thinking, the reader does, that maybe it would be better if each national group held its own little private Olympic show on the home grounds and barred out the foreigners.

Uncle Sam's Alien Burdens.

NO MATTER which party controls congress, watch at the next term for this: A campaign for legislation opening the doors to millions of aliens now barred out under the quota laws, which also would legalize the presence here of a great mass of the foreign-born, some of them criminals, some misfits and malcontents, some avowed enemies of our government, some paupers on Federal relief, who already are bidding amongst us through wholesale smuggling-in, through fraudulent immigration papers, through carelessness—to use a gentle term—on the part of public servants charged with the duty of guarding at the gate.

In the years before us, it will be a sufficiently heavy burden to care for such of our own worthy home-folks, whether native or naturalized, as otherwise would go destitute.

Cleverness of the Chinese.

ONCE, long ago, I, being a reporter, was detailed to accompany to police headquarters in New York a Chinese prince who'd come over to study our police methods. We were in the Bertillon bureau, presided over by the famous inspector Faurot.

"Ah, yes," said the courtly visitor in faultless English, "this same system has been in vogue in my land since time immemorial, except that we use fingerprinting in addition to legal signatures and official seals, for further validating important documents."

"Don't you also use it for recording habitual criminals?" "I do not think so."

"Well, then," asked Faurot, "how do you identify them?" "Very simple," said the prince and smiled a gentle smile. "When we catch a chronic offender we immediately cut off his head, and then anyone may recognize him at a glance."

The Spanish Extravaganza.

A FELLOW picks up the paper and reads in the news dispatches from Spain that the Royalists licked the Royalists, or vice-versa; and the Leftists tied into the Nationalists again—or maybe they're both the same.

Whereas the insurgents walloped the radicals, but elsewhere the government forces drove back the rebels; and meanwhile the Reds or the Centrists or somebody did something unpleasant to the Republican outfit, as opposed to the monarchial group; and at all points south and west the anti-clericals and the church, the Agrarian party, the Fascists and the Communists, the besiegers and the defenders, the peasants and the townspeople, the laboring classes and the aristocrats, the land-owners and the tenants, etc., etc., were snarled into various hard knots. So what?

If, after all, there are but two main sides engaged—only I wouldn't know about that—the correspondents could confer a great boon by just naming one set the Hatfields and the other set the McCoy's. Or would you prefer calling them the Callahans and the Murphys?

IRVIN S. COBB

Smiles

Modest Miss

A girl returned home from a party and told her father a young man had kissed her. "How many times did he kiss you?" asked her father. Looking up into his face, the girl replied: "Father, I came to confess, not to boast."

Found Impossible

"It can't be done," said the young woman, despondently. "What can't be done?" asked the policeman who was pulling her out of her wrecked car. "Lighting a cigarette, using a lipstick, powdering my nose, and steering the car at the same time," she sighed.

THOROUGH JOB

Sue—How did the Fritter's marriage turn out? You know she married him to reform him. Jim—She succeeded so well that now he gets shocked at everything she does.

Perfect Faith

"Smith's wife thinks the world of her husband." "Does she?" "Yes, she even believes the parrot taught him to swear."

Heavy to Sink It

"Money is round and made to roll," said a spendthrift to the miser. "That's your way of looking at it," replied the latter. "I say that money is flat and made to pile up."

A Gentle Hint

Sailor (to Benign Old Gentleman)—An adventurous life I've led. Had an operation a little while ago. After I'd come to, the doctor told me he'd left a sponge inside me. "Let it be," I said, and there it is to this day. "Does it pain you?" his listener inquired. "No pain at all, but—I do get terribly thirsty!"

Dad in Soak?

"Yes, I know that book is a best-seller. But is it pure and clean?" "Well, ma'am, the hero's a white hope, the girl works at a soap factory, and her mother takes in washing. What more d'ye want?"

Follow Up

"He barked his shin on a chair." "Then what?" "Then he howled."

Round About

"What's the hurry—training for a race?" "No, racing for a train!"—Pearson's Weekly.

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