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Name

Address

City Zone State
Rocky Lane undercover marshal, finds himself accused of murder, and all because he's a hero in the eyes of a young boy!

But behind Rocky's furious fists the truth is freed and the youngster learns that even the most well-intended lie leads down TROUBLE TRAIL!

ONE DAY, ROCKY ARRIVES FOR A VISIT AT THE RANCH OF SOME OLD FRIENDS...

IT'S MIGHTY NICE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, FRED!

THAT GOES FOR US, TOO, ROCKY! HERE COMES TIMMY! HE PLUMB NEAR WENT LOCO WITH JOY WHEN HE HEARD YOU WERE COMING TO VISIT!

OF COURSE, TIM! SADDLE YOUR PONY RIGHT AFTER LUNCH! I WANT TO VISIT WITH YOUR DAD FIRST!

SURE, ROCKY! I'LL BE WAITING BY THE CORRAL!

ROCKY! I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU TO COME BACK! YOU'RE GOING TO SHOW ME MORE RIDING TRICKS! YOU PROMISED LAST TIME...
RECKON YOU'RE HERE TO SEE ABOUT THE SHOOTING AND ROBBERIES THAT'VE BEEN HITTING ALL OVER, EH, ROCKY?

RIGHT, FREDDIE! THE VARMINTS HAVE BEEN MIGHTY ACTIVE, AND MOST ALWAYS IN TOWNS—AT THE GENERAL STORES! I AIM TO STOP THEM!

AND, LATER THAT DAY...

THAT'S IT, TIM—STAY CLOSE TO HIM! GOOD—THAT'S THE BOY! YOU'VE GOT HIM!

NICE GOING, TIM! NOW WELL PRACTISE A LITTLE TARGET SHOOTING!

SOON—

AIM LOWER, TIMMY—THAT'S THE STUFF!

BANG! BANG! BANG!

FINALLY, AT THE AFTERNOON'S END...

GEE, THAT WAS SWELL, ROCKY! THANKS A LOT!

I RECKON THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY, TIM! TIME TO WASH NOW! DINNER'S ABOUT READY, I'LL SAY.

I'LL STABLE BLACK JACK FIRST! SEE YOU AT DINNER, TIM!

GEE—ROCKY! WONDERFUL! HE'S THE BEST COWBOY IN THE WHOLE WEST; AND HE'S MY GOOD FRIEND!

THAT NIGHT AFTER DINNER, TIMMY IS READY FOR BED, WHEN...

SEE YOU TOMORROW, FREDDIE! I'M GOING TO TOWN; THOSE VARMINTS MIGHT SHOW UP! IT'S A NICE, CHILLY NIGHT; I RECKON I'LL WEAR MY RIDING GLOVES!

GOOD IDEA, ROCKY! YOU CAN'T DRAW FAST WITH COLD FINGERS!
ROCKY MIGHT NEED HELP! THOSE OUTLAWES ARE MEAN! I COULD HELP HIM! HE'S MY FRIEND!

MINUTES LATER, A YOUNGSTER'S ENTHUSIASM IS HARD AT WORK AS...

ALL THE RIDING AND SHOOTING TRICKS ROCKY TAUGHT ME WILL COME IN HANDY NOW! HE'LL BE SURPRISED AND PROUD WHEN I COME TO HIS AID!

MEANWHILE, ROCKY HAS REACHED THE STILL-DARK TOWN WHEN SUDDENLY...

SHOTS! FROM THE GENERAL STORE! I GOT HER JUST IN TIME! BUT THEY SOUND MUFFLED! I'LL FIND OUT WHY PRONTO!

DROP THAT GUN, YOU DRYGULCHERS!

WHAA...?

CRASH!

I RECKON THIS IS THE ONLY KIND OF TALK YOU COYOTES SAVVY?

OWDD!

BAM!

I'LL GIT HIM!

THIS IS ALL YOU'RE GETTING!

YUH-OW!

LET'S GIT!—THIS VARMINT'S TOO MUCH!

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE!
But as Rocky enters on the floor covered with spilled oranges—

Oooops! Chon! Now's our chance! Out the side door, the way he came!

They're high-tailing it, the varmints!

There they go! I'd better see if the storekeeper can be helped first! Then I'll try to pick up their trail.

But Rocky finds the merchant is beyond aid—

He's done for, and here's the gun used to shoot him! No wonder the shots were muffled! They wrapped this burlap sack around the gun.

There's a name on the sack—3 Valley Flour! Those hombres could have picked up this sack in the store, but I wonder...

But, just then, Timmy has reached town and—

Gee...! That man looks dead! And Rocky's standing over him with a gun!
AND AT THAT MOMENT —

YOU SAY YOU HEARD SHOTS, McGEE — FROM CY BELL'S STORE! WELL, WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT RIGHT NOW!

BARELY HEARD 'EM, SHERIFF! I FIGURED I'D BETTER GET YOU PRONTO!

GEE —! THE SHERIFF! ROCKY IS IN TROUBLE!

THE SHERIFF'S TALKING TO HIM, BUT I CAN'T HEAR THEM THROUGH THE GLASS! ROCKY'S IN LOTS OF TROUBLE!

THEN, A YOUNG BOY'S LOYALTY AND ADMIRATION LEAD HIM DOWN A WRONG TRAIL —

I KNOW THIS! WHATEVER ROCKY DID, HE MUST'VE HAD A GOOD REASON! I'VE GOT TO HELP HIM! HE'S MY FRIEND — MY PARTNER!

I KNOW WHAT I'LL DO! I'LL TELL THE SHERIFF IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE! I'LL TELL HIM I SAW THAT STORE-KEEPER ATTACK ROCKY!

YES — THAT'LL CLEAR HIM!

SHERIFF — WAIT! I SAW IT ALL: ROCKY LANE'S NOT TO BLAME! HE COULDN'T HELP IT! — HONESTLY HE COULDN'T!

WHY...?

TIMMY!

TIMMY... WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE? WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

ROCKY LANE ISN'T TO BLAME! THAT MAN ATTACKED HIM. I SAW IT ALL THROUGH THE WINDOW!

WAIT — LET THE BOY TALK, LANE!
ROCKY LANEBY WESTERN

ROCKY AND THAT MAN ARGUED! THE MAN GOT ANGRY AND TRIED TO KILL ROCKY! ROCKY HAD TO SHOOT! IT WAS IN SELF-DEFENSE, SHERIFF! HMMM...!

WE DID FIND HIM STANDING OVER BELL, SHERIFF, HOLDING THE GUN THAT KILLED BELL! YEP! AND WEARING RIDING GLOVES--TOO, SO'S NOT TO LEAVE FINGERPRINTS! YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME? I TOLD YOU WHAT HAPPENED? I FOUND SOME BANDITS KILLING HIM!

MAYBE, BUT I'LL TAKE THE YOUNGSTER'S STORY! YOU AND SY BELL HAD AN ARGUMENT, CAME TO BLOWS AND YOU SHOT HIM! 'Fraid I'll have to take you in, LANE! Sorry--A MAN WITH YOUR WONDERFUL RECORD!

I UNDERSTAND, SHERIFF! I CAN'T TAKE CARE OF THE BOY, SEE THAT HE GETS HOME!

WELL... I WAS WITH ROCKY! WE STOPPED HERE AND HE TOLD ME TO WAIT OUTSIDE! THAT'S WHEN YOU HEARD THE ARGUMENT EH? WELL, COME ON--I'LL TAKE YOU HOME NOW!

ROCKY WILL BE ALL RIGHT NOW, WON'T HE? I TOLD THE SHERIFF I SAW IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE!

WELL, IF HE CAN PROVE AT HIS TRIAL IT WAS SELF-DEFENSE, HE'LL GO FREE! YOUR TESTIMONY WILL MEAN PLenty! BY THE WAY, HOW COME YOU'RE UP SO LATE ALONE?
LATER, IN A CELL...

It looks as if I'm plenty deep in trouble! And poor Timmy -- he's only trying to protect me in his own way!

But he doesn't realize his lies are making things worse! He doesn't know I can't prove real self-defense because the storekeeper was unarmed!

The sheriff said those varmints didn't steal anything! Maybe they weren't bandits after all! But the only clue I have is the words on that flour sack around the gun! That's sure not much to go on!

But I can't find out more from in here! I've got to get out! I'll get a message to Timmy telling him he must tell the truth! I'll show him that lying makes things worse -- never better!

But the next day...

Rocky -- pssst!
It's Timmy! I came to see you!
Everything'll be all right!

Timmy!
No, it won't be, unless you do as I say! You must tell the sheriff the truth, Timmy! Your story has made things worse for me! I was telling the sheriff the truth!

They were bandits, Timmy! Besides, the storekeeper was unarmed! I can't claim self-defense! You must tell the sheriff you made up your story!

G gee, Rocky? Yes -- yes, I'll do it!

But just then...

Hey, there, son! Get off that roof! No talking to prisoners without permission!

The sheriff! All right, sir! I'm coming!
ROCKY LANE WESTERN

SHERIFF, I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU! I LIED LAST NIGHT! I DIDN'T SEE ROCKY ARGUE WITH THE STORE-KEEPER! THEY WERE BANDITS! ROCKY TOLD YOU THE TRUE STORY!

YOU'RE TUNE, EH, SON? GUESS LANE TOLD YOU WHAT HE WANTED YOU TO SAY! YOU SURE LIKE HIM, DON'T YOU?

changed

YOU MUST BELIEVE ME, SHERIFF! ROCKY DIDN'T FIGHT WITH THE STORE-KEEPER! I MADE THAT UP ABOUT SEEING IT!

Sorry son! Lane's your pal! You can't be blamed for trying!

BUT HOW TIMMY SEES HOW ONE LIE LEAVES AN IRONIC TRAIL NOT EVEN THE TRUTH CAN GET STRAIGHT!

AND NOW TIMMY SEES HOW ONE LIE LEAVES AN IRONIC TRAIL NOT EVEN THE TRUTH CAN GET STRAIGHT!

DESERATE, JIMMY TRIES TO MAKE ONE LIE WIP OUT ANOTHER...

I'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM BELIEVE ME! MAYBE, IF I TELL HIM I SAW THE BANDITS, HE'LL BELIEVE ME!

I'M TELLING THE TRUTH THIS TIME SHERIFF! I SAW THE BANDITS!

WHERE WERE THEY, IF YOU SAW THEM, SON? GIVE ME A DESCRIPTION OF THEM!

...ER... I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY WERE! BUT I'D RECOGNIZE THEM IF I SAW THEM AGAIN! I'D KNOW THEM ANYWHERE!

WILL YOU HAVE TO DO BETTER IN THAT, SON? NOW GO ON HOME AND STAY AWAY FROM ROCKY LANE UNTIL HIS TRIAL COMES UP!

I'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM BELIEVE ME! I'LL TELL EVERYONE I SAW THE BANDITS, THAT I'D RECOGNIZE THEM! IF I CAN GET OTHERS TO BELIEVE ME, THE SHERIFF WILL LISTEN!

TIMMY BEGINS TO SPREAD HIS LATEST FALSENOOD!

AND... I HEARD THAT TIMMY'S PLAYING WITH YOUNGSTER'S GOING ALL OVER TOWN TELLING THAT LATEST STORY ABOUT HAVING SEEN THE BANDITS!

WHAT, Mcgee? Timmy's missing? That kid's a heap of trouble! Now what's he up to?

THAT NIGHT...

IT'S HAPPENED! THEY'VE GOTTEN TO HIM!
Sheriff—Sheriff! Listen! I've got to get out of here!

What's going on, Lane? What is it?

Timmy's been dynamite by the varmints who killed Cy Bell! They believe his story about seeing them and they're taking no chances! We've got to save that boy!

I sure want to save the boy if he's in danger, Lane! But, Tarnation, I don't know what to believe now!

Sheriff, I have one slim lead! Do the words 3-Valley Flour mean anything to you? They were on the sack around the gun!

3-Valley Flour? That's the name of a flour mill in Redleg Valley! It's owned by three brothers!

Tarnation, Lane!—I'll play along with you! You've done enough fine things in the past to deserve a chance to prove your story.

You won't regret it, Sheriff! Come on—we've got to get to that flour mill.

Soon after, at the flour mill in the valley---I've seen enough, Rocky! Let's go in!

It's the Sheriff!

And the varmint from the store!

There they are! We'll nab them for good now!

Crash!

You varmints have a head of explaining to do!

Not to you, we ain't... OW!
GUESS AGAIN, YOU DRYGULCHING CAYUSE!

I'LL -- OOOF!

THUD!

DON'T LOOK NOW, BUT YOU'VE GOT SOMETHING IN YOUR EYES!

JUST LET ME GIT MUN -- OOFH! (CHOKES!)

HERE'S A SPECIAL ONE FOR TIMMY!

UH-HUH!

I'VE GOT THIS ONE, ROCKY! RECKON THEY'LL TALK NOW?

Y-YES, I'LL TALK! WE WANTED TO TRIPLE THE PRICE O' FLOUR! WE WENT TO THE GENERAL STORES ALL OVER, TOLD 'EM WE'D GIVE A CUT OF THE NEW PRICES IF THEY'D CHARGE THE PEOPLE THREE TIMES AS MUCH!

I SEE! AND YOU SHOT THOSE STOREKEEPERS YOU COULDN'T BULLY INTO YOUR SCHEME!

FOLKS IN THESE PARTS BAKE THEIR OWN BREAD AND ROLLS, SO FLOUR IS A NECESSITY! THESE VARMINTS FIGURED TO SQUEEZE THE PEOPLE AND MAKE MONEY QUICKLY!

I'LL SEE THAT THEY WORK IN THE BAKERY IN THE COUNTY PRISON! UNTIL THE YOUNGSTER AND I'LL TAKE CARE OF THESE SAGE RATS, ROCKY!

THE NEXT DAY --

WELL, TIMMY, I RECKON YOU'LL NEVER TELL ANOTHER LIE, WILL YOU?

NEVER AGAIN, ROCKY! I SURE LEARNED A LIE, EVEN TO HELP A FRIEND, BRINGS ONLY TROUBLE!

GOOD BOY! I'LL BE GOING NOW, TIMMY! TILL I COME AGAIN, LET'S SHAKE ON THAT!

RIGHT, ROCKY? YOU'RE STILL THE GREATEST COWBOY IN THE WEST -- AND THAT'S SURE THE TRUTH!
Hello, Buck! If I hadn’t made a mistake, I wouldn’t have been knocked out in the first round!

The only mistake you made, Dee Dickens, was showing up!

Dee Dickens versus the Golden Champ. 20 rounds today.

Did yuh see the fight? It was so fast I missed it!

If yuh were there, how could you miss it?

I sneezed and it was all over! Yuh were a real flop!

That’s not so! Why, when I entered the ring I got a big hand!

Yeah—right across the mouth!

The only trouble with me in that fight was that I couldn’t use my hands much!

How could yuh? The referee was always stepping on them!
OH YEAH! WELL, I’LL HAVE YEH KNOW WHEN I HIT ANYONE THEY REMEMBER IT!

THE TROUBLE WAS THAT WHEN THE COWBOY CHAMP HIT YEH, YEH WERE THROUGH REMEMBERING ANYTHING!

WELL, I REALLY SHOULDN’T HAVE Fought TODAY! THE DOCTOR SAID I WASN’T WELL.

WHY’S THE MATTER WITH YEH?

I’VE GOT THE “CLOTHING” SICKNESS!

“CLOTHING” SICKNESS? WHAT’S THAT?

I’VE GOT A GOAT ON MY TONGUE AND MY BREATH COMES IN SHORT PANTS!

WHAT CAUSES THAT?

I GOT A COLD IN MY HEAD.

WELL, DION’T YOUR MANAGER TRY TO BREAK IT UP BEFORE THE FIGHT?

HE DID! BUT I DON’T LIKE HIS METHOD OF BREAKING UP A COLD IN THE HEAD!

WHY, WHAT DID HE DO?

HE USED A HAMMER!

THAT WAS STUPID! WHAT YEH NEEDED WAS PLENTY OF SUNSHINE!

OldWaynes #386
I realized that and since I had no time to go out in the sun, I painted a picture of the sun on my ceiling in the bedroom.

What good was that?

Yuh should have seen the sunburn I had when I woke up!

I think yuh’ve had one fight too many! You’re punch drunk!

I may be punch drunk but it’s not from fighting.

Every time I have an argument with my brother, he takes one of my suits and throws it out the window.

Why should that make yuh slap happy?

He leaves me in the suit!

Yore brother sounds like a regular roughneck!

Oh no! He’s a real gentleman! He always takes the spoon out of his cup before he throws it at me!

Well, all this isn’t helping yuh get rid of yore cold? Maybe yuh ought to take some aspirins!

That’s what the doctor told me. He said to take two aspirins and to follow with a hot bath!

Well, did yuh do it?

General Store
I took the aspirins all right, but I had trouble drinking that whole tub of hot water.

Yuh drank it! Yuh fool, he meant yuh should take a hot bath!

Gosh, I sure am sorry I didn't know that before! I drank so much water my stomach went in and out with the tide.

You're lucky to have a tub! I can't take a bath because I have a miniature tub!

What's a miniature tub?

It's got a leak! The miniature put water in it; it leaks out.

Well, I guess I'd better say so long now! It's time I got back to my job in the general store!

I used to work there before yuh did, but I left when the boss accused me of stealing ten dollars!

That was a terrible accusation! Yuh should have made him prove it!

He did—That's why I left!

Before I go in, do I look presentable?

I could stay up all night, get hit by a stagecoach and still look better than yuh do!

Not if I was driving the stagecoach!

That's telling him, Dee!
Hey Gang!
Let's build these electric motor powered models! It's easy with Mechanix Illustrated full size plans!

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GREAT SUNS!
A NECKTIE PARTY!
WE'LL CALL A HALT
TO THAT PRONTO!

BANG!

WHAT'S THE
IDEA, YEH?
DUN'T GO FOR
ROPE JUSTICE.
THAT ISN'T THE
WAY TO SETTLE
ANYTHING!

MAYBE YOU'RE A FRIEND
OF HIS, EH? THIS'LL TEACH
YOU TO KEEP OUT OF
OUR BUSINESS!

I'LL TELL
YOU WHO I--
UH-HUH!

INJUSTICE IS MY BUSINESS.
PARTNER! ROCKY LANE'S
THE NAME, AND SINCE YOU
WANT TO PLAY ROUGH,
HERE'S MY CARD!

OWOOG!

POW!
ROCKY LANE WESTERN

ROCKY LANE! HOLD IT, LEM'! YOU DON'T WANT TO SHOOT A UNITED STATES MARSHAL!

HE'D BETTER NOT TRY, PARTNER! WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

I'M BEN THORPE... THORPE REAL ESTATE COMPANY! YOU'LL HAVE TO PARDON MY HELPER, LEM! HE'S A MITE HOTHEADED! WE'RE ALL MIGHTY ANGRY AT THOSE GYPSIES AND THE FOLKS GOT OUT OF HAND WHEN WE NABBED THIS ONE!

GYPSIES? OUT HERE IN THE WEST?

YES! A BAND OF 'EM ARE CAMPED RIGHT OUTSIDE OF TOWN. THEY WERE LEFT STRANDED BY A TRAVELING CIRCUS THAT COLLAPSED! EVER SINCE, THEY'VE BEEN STEALING AND ROBBING FROM THE WHOLE COMMUNITY! NO, NO! WE DO NOT STEAL AND ROB!

WHY, YOU-- THAT RED BANDANNA OF YOURS TRIPPED YOU UP! LAST NIGHT A PACK OF THESE VARMINTS RANSACKED THE TOWN AND PLOWED FOLKS SAW THIS HOMBRE'S RED BANDANNA AS THEY RODE OFF!

THAT'S RIGHT, MARSHAL! THEY ROBBERD OLD HOSKINS JEWELRY STORE! WE NABBED THIS ONE WHEN HE HAD THE NERVE TO COME TO TOWN TODAY!

AND INSTEAD OF TURNING HIM OVER TO THE SHERIFF FOR A TRIAL, YOU WERE MEASURING OUT YOUR OWN BRAND OF JUSTICE! WELL, I'M TAKING THIS MAN TO JAIL! YOU CAN PRESENT PROOF OF YOUR ACCUSATIONS AT A TRIAL IN A FEW DAYS!

AS YOU WISH, MARSHAL! BUT THESE GYPSIES MUST BE STOPPED! EVERYONE KNOWS GYPSIES ARE THIEVES! THEY BROUGHT ALL THIS BANDITRY HERE!

I'LL SEE ABOUT THAT, THORPE! I'LL VISIT THE GYPSY CAMP AND HAVE A LOOK AROUND!

LATER THAT DAY, AT THE GYPSY CAMP OUTSIDE OF TOWN....

BUT WE ARE NOT TO BLAME FOR ALL THESE ROBBERIES! ON OUR HONOR WE SWEAR THIS!

BELIEVE US! YOU ARE A FAIR MAN! WE HEARD HOW YOU RESCUED OUR BROTHER, TORRE, FROM THE MOB!
WE ARE BUT TELLERS OF FORTUNES, WANDERERS, DANCERS AND ENTERTAINERS! WE ARE NOT THIEVES AS OTHERS ACCUSE!

THANK YOU FOR SHOWING ME THROUGH YOUR CAMP! I MUST GO NOW! BE WISE AND STAY OUT OF TOWN TILL THIS MATTER IS CLEARED UP!

SOON...

I DIDN'T GET ANY KIND OF LEAD FROM THE GYPSY CAMP! I'LL RIDE TO TOWN AND SEE THE SHERIFF! I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT WHAT PLACES HAVE BEEN ROBBED!

LATER, AT THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE...

THAT'S A LIST OF THE PLACES ROBBED AND WHAT THE VARMINTS TOOK! YOU'LL NOTICE THEY MADE SOME GOOD-SIZED HAULS! THANKS, SHERIFF. NOW LET'S SEE WHAT'S HERE!

TOWN BANK... 3 BAGS OF SILVER DOLLAR JEWELRY STORE -- CASH AND JEWELS
STAGE DEPOT -- $1,000 CASH FROM SAFE
ASSAYER'S OFFICE -- TWO THOUSAND SHORES OF MINING STOCK; TWO HUNDRED GILT-EDGED BONDS; RED KEEN'S PLACE -- $500 CASH FROM SAFE

IF THE GYPSIES ARE BEHIND THIS, I CAN UNDERSTAND THEM STEALING ALL EXCEPT ONE ITEM ON THIS LIST -- THOSE STOCKS AND BONDS! GYPSIES ARE NOMADIC PEOPLE, CAREFREE WANDERERS! THEY'D NEITHER WANT NOR HAVE USE FOR STOCKS AND BONDS!

YET SO MANY PEOPLE CLAIM THEY RECOGNIZED THE GYPSIES BY THEIR COSTUMES DURING THE ROBBERIES! I'LL JUST WAIT AROUND TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS NEXT! SOMETHING'S WRONG HERE!

A FEW NIGHTS LATER IN TOWN

SHOTS -- FROM THE HOTEL! THERE ARE NO HORSES OUT FRONT! THAT MEANS THE VARMINTS WILL BE LEAVING THE BACK WAY! I'LL CUT THROUGH THE ALLEY AND HEAD THEM OFF!
Seconds later...
Hold on, you ornery gunslingers!

WHA -- UH!

Sock!

You broomtails aren't going anywhere!

Ooow!

I'll get him!

Get to the horses, quick! This'll slow him down a spell!

Ooowoh!

And moments later...
Oooh -- my head! The varmints plumb got away, but what's this here on the ground?

Part of a silk blouse! Reckon it was torn from one of the varmints during the fight! It's a piece of the collar! It sure seems the folks here were right about those gypsies!

But then...
This blouse has a store label on it! High Acres is a little town a few miles from here!

Hmm. No store in these parts would be selling gypsy costumes. Reckon I'll mosey over there and ask a few questions.
CONVINCED NOW, LANE? THE TOWNSPEOPLE DEMAND YOU RUN THOSE GYPSIES OUT OF HERE! OR MUST WE TAKE MATTERS INTO OUR OWN HANDS?

I KNOW MY JOB, THORPE, AND I'LL DO IT AS SOON AS I'M CERTAIN AND THERE'LL BE NO HANGINGS WHILE I'M AROUND!

THE NEXT DAY, IN THE NEARBY TOWN OF HIGH ACRES...

YEP, THAT'S MY LABEL! I'M THE ONLY DRY GOODS STORE IN HIGH ACRES, AND THIS PIECE O' SILK IS FROM ONE OF MY BETTER BLouses!

SINCE WHEN DOES A STORE LIKE THIS STOCK GYPSY BLouses, MILLER?

GYPSY BLouses? I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN! THIS IS FROM A WOMAN'S BLouse! IN FACT, IT WAS ONE O' THE GROUP THAT BEN THORPE FROM DAWSON BOUGHT LAST WEEK!

WHAT? BEN THORPE HAS BEEN HERE BUYING WOMEN'S BLouses?

SURE! HE BUYS LOTS O' THINGS FROM ME FOR HIS SISTER. HE SAYS SHE LIVES HIGH IN THE MOUNTAINS, AND HE Has TO SEND HER THINGS. I'VE JUST ABOUT PACKED THIS BOX TO SEND TO HIS RANCH THIS AFTERNOON!

SILk BLouses, SASHES, KERCHIEFS—EVERYTHING! SEND THIS ON TO THORPE, BUT SAY NOTHING ABOUT MY VISIT! THAT'S AN ORDER FROM MARSHAL ROCKY LANE!

MARSHAL ROCKY LANE! I WON'T SAY A WORD!

GOOD! TONIGHT I'LL VISIT BEN THORPE'S RANCH HOUSE! I'VE A HUNCH I'LL FIND SOMETHING MIGHTY INTERESTING THERE!

THAT NIGHT, IN A ROOM AT BEN THORPE'S RANCH HOUSE......

THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR! IT'S PLAIN THAT IF THORPE HAS A SISTER, HE'S NOT SENDING HER THESE THINGS! HMM! SOME OF THESE ARE PRETTY SQUELCH AND USED LOOKING!

JUST THEN......

STEP LIVELY, WE AIN'T GOT ALL NIGHT! LET'S GET INTO THEM DUDS!

THAT'S THORPE'S VOICE! I'LL DUCK INTO THIS NEXT ROOM!
Rocky Lane Western

And now, at the edge of town...

I'm just in time! There they go rushing into the post office! This is my chance! I'll rush in behind them! When they discover me, it'll be too late -- for them!

Minites after...

Now remember, after we crash the post office, some of you stand guard while the rest of us'll blast the safe open!

I've got to stop those varmints! But the only way I'll be able to is to take them by surprise! I think I'll give them a taste of their own tricks!

Dressed as they are, I can slip up close enough to blast into them before they realize I'm there!

Hurry it up, boys! Use the new stuff I had delivered today and leave the town things aside!

Right, boss!

I understand now! In the dark, wearing women's loose blouses and sashes and kerchiefs, they easily look like the real gypsies! No wonder the townspeople were fooled!
NOW BLAST THE SAFE AND-- HUH??

HOLD IT, THORPE! THIS GYPSY HAS SOMETHING FOR YOU!

RIGHT, AND I'M TELLING YOUR FORTUNE FOR YOU. YOU'RE GOING TO SEE A LOT OF IRON BARS!

SURPRISED, YOU COYOTES? WE GYPSIES GET AROUND!

SLAM!

Quick-- sit the jughead! The rest of you are coming at me at one time, eh?

Well, here's something for all of you to share while I go get the sheriff!

SOON AFTER....

I'm sure indebted to you, Rocky! So Thorpe was the brains behind it all! He figured this was the time to cash in and blame it on those poor gypsies.

Right, Sheriff! Dressing in those outfits threw the blame just where he wanted it, and no one suspected him!

But he made a mistake when he forgot to take the label out of those blouses he bought, and to steal those stocks and bonds. Something which the gypsies wouldn't have stolen!

His main mistake was being on the wrong side of the law! Well, I'll be moving on now, so long, sheriff! We may meet again!
Undercover Marshal Rocky Lane rides through a newly-settled territory one day when suddenly---

"Great guns, Black Jack! That house -- it's starting to collapse! Giddap!"

CA-RASH!

"The whole place is falling! I've got to see if anyone's inside!"

When newly-built houses suddenly collapse, Lane decides to look into the strange puzzle and finds the answers where death ---- THE LAST PLANK.
HELP... HELP ME! MY HUSBAND!

RUN... I'LL GET HIM OUT!
GO ON BEFORE THE REST
OF THE PLACE FALLS!

I'LL HAVE YOU OUTSIDE IN A
MINUTE, PARTNER. FIRST
WE'LL GET THIS TWO-BY-
FOUR BEAM OFF YOU!

NOW TO REACH FRESH AIR
BEFORE THE WHOLE PLACE
COMES DOWN!

MOMENTS LATER...
OH... YOU DID IT... YOU GOT
OUT!

CAROOM!

SOON, IN TOWN...

TAKE... TAKE THE MONEY WE'VE SAVED,
JENNY... BUY MORE LUMBER FROM
MR. TANNER! WE-WE'VE GOT TO
BUILD A NEW HOUSE!

YES, TOO I
WILL! I'LL STAY WITH THE
HAGENS TILL YOU'RE
BETTER. NOW YOU REST,
TOO... THE DOC SAID
YOU MUST!

ANYTHING I
CAN DO, MAM? YOU'VE DONE
PLENTY SAVING
TOO'S LIFE! WE'LL
HAVE TO USE OUR LITTLE
SAVINGS FOR NEW
LUMBER AND BUILD
AGAIN!

THANK YOU BUT
I'M NOT THE ONLY
ONES WHO HAD TROUBLE!
LOTS OF OTHER SETTLERS IN
THE REGION HAVE HAD THEIR
HOUSES COLLAPSE ON THEM!
WE'RE LUCKIER THAN SOME —
WE'RE BOTH ALIVE!

HUM!

I WAS GOING TO ASK
YOU WHY A NEW HOUSE
LIKE YOURS SUDDENLY
COLLAPSED!
ROCKY LANE WESTERN

PERHAPS THIS FELLOW, TANNER, I HEARD YOUR HUSBAND MENTION DOES A POOR JOB OF BUILDING.

NO, ALL THE SETTLERS HAVE BUILT THEIR OWN HOUSES, WE JUST BUY FROM HIM! HE OWNS THE MILL NEAR HERE -- THE ONLY ONE! RIDE BACK WITH ME, IF YOU LIKE, MARSHAL, AND HAVE A LOOK AT THE HOUSE!

AND SOON AFTER ---

SEE -- THE WOOD SEEMS TO HAVE ROTTED AWAY SUDDENLY, AND IT WAS FINE-LOOKING WOOD WHEN WE BOUGHT IT!

IT'S STRANGE, ALL RIGHT! GOOD WOOD DOESN'T ROTT AWAY IN SO SHORT A TIME!

SOON, ROCKY REACHES ED WRIGHT'S LAND AND --

I WON'T PAY IT, TANNER -- Y'VE HEARD? YOU'RE DERY CHARGING EVERYBODY FOR YOUR LUMBER! IT'S HIGHWAY ROBBERY!

YOU PAY IT WRIGHT, OR YOU WON'T GET ANY LUMBER -- AND YOU CAN'T BUILD!

YOU MIGHT SEE ED WRIGHT DOWN THE ROAD A PIECE, MARSHAL! HIS HOUSE COLLAPSED A FEW DAYS AGO! HE WAS OUTSIDE IT, LUCKILY!

THANKS, TANNER -- I'M GOIN' JUST THAT! THIS SURE HAS ME PUZZLED!

AS THE LUMBER MILL OWNER STRIDES OFF, ROCKY INTRODUCES HIMSELF AND --

ROCKY LANE! IT'S A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU! I RECKON EVERYONE'S HEARD OF YOU -- SURE, BE GLAD TO HAVE YOU LOOK AT WHAT'S LEFT OF MY HOUSE!

 Moments after --

THIS WOOD HAS ROTTED AWAY, JUST AS AT TJD THOMPSON'S HOUSE! AND YOU SAY IT WAS FINE WOOD WHEN YOU BOUGHT IT A MONTH AGO! I RECKON I'LL JUST LOOK INTO THIS A LITTLE MORE -- IT'S SURE A PUZZLE!

THANKS, MARSHAL! EVERYONE IN THIS REGION WILL APPRECIATE IT!

NOW, LISTEN, I'M WARNING YOU, WRIGHT! TRY THAT AND YOU'LL BE TALKING TO ANGELS! YOU'LL BUY FROM ME AT MY PRICES .... OR ELSE!

YOU OWN THE ONLY LUMBER MILL AND CONTROL THE ONLY FOREST WHERE THE GOOD TREES ARE NEARBY, BUT I'D RATHER CHOP MY OWN TREES FOR MY OWN LUMBER THAN BE ROBBED!
AND SOON, ROCKY RIDES OFF

I'll ride into the woods where the trees are that furnish the lumber for these houses. The pieces I examined didn't look as if termites were at them, but I can't be sure. If the trees in the woods show signs of rotting, maybe it is some new tiny termite.

But suddenly...

A shot! It came from just ahead. I'll take a look pronto.

BANG

HOLD ON, THERE... WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

SOMEBODY'S COMING!

NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS WHAT WE'RE DOING!

WELL, I'M GONNA MAKE IT MY BUSINESS RIGHT QUICK.

I DON'T HANKER TO HAVE LEAD THROWN AT ME, RANNY!

UUGH!

BAM!
A Second Later —

Yes, it's Ed Wright, the young rancher. He's unconscious, but it's only a shoulder wound. It's plan he'd come into the woods to chop down some trees and get his own lumber. But he was stopped.

This tree was about chopped through — just ready to be toppled! Why, that must mean— hold everything! I'd better look at that homer shot by those varmints!

That gave the critters a chance to get away.

The ground's covered with these chips of wood made by his axe as he chopped away at the tree trunk! And this afternoon I heard Tanner, the mill owner, warn him not to try to get his own lumber!

Just then, Rocky's keen eyes detect another kind of wood chip on the ground —

By Jiminy, there are some curled wood shavings on the ground, too!
They're different from the chips made by Ed's axe; they're curled--made by a wood-plane, the kind used at a lumber mill, to smooth the lumber after it's cut. They're apt to stick to the clothing of men who work at a lumber mill.

First I'll get Ed Wright to the doctor. Then I'll visit Tanner's lumber mill. It's a sure thing those wood shavings didn't fall from Ed's clothing. He hasn't any new lumber yet to be using a plane.

Later at Tanner's Lumber Mill:

So you took care of Ed Wright eh? Good!

We'd have taken care of him better but some varmint barged in on us.

And Inside the Mill--

Well now let's treat this lumber we cut today! Make sure you soak every piece with our preparation!

Right boss.

Then suddenly--

I reckon I'm going to interrupt you brooms-tails again! I've heard enough for now! I'll learn the details later.

Wha--?

Crash!

You collapse just like the lumber you sell to trusting settlers!

Oooo!

Wham!

Get him! He can't battle the three of us at once!

I can try!
THIS HAD BETTER WORK OR I'M IN FOR TROUBLE.

BAM!  BAM!

I'LL SEPARATE YOU FROM THAT SMART HEAD OF YOURS.

YOU'RE TRYING, I'LL ADMIT!

ALL RIGHT--IF YOU INSIST, I RECKON YOU'LL KEEP NOW TILL I GET YOU AND YOUR PAL'S TO THE SHERIFF!

AAAOW!

BONG-G-G

AND THE NEXT DAY A'H, TANNER AND THE OTHERS ARE SAFE IN JAIL.

SO TANNER HAD DEVELOPED A KIND OF ACID WHICH HE POURED OVER ALL THE LUMBER HE SAWD, EH, ROCKY? IT SOAKED THROUGH THE WOOD AND COULDN'T BE DETECTED!

RIGHT, ED; BUT ONCE IN THE WOOD THE ACID SLOWLY EAT AWAY THE LUMBER FROM INSIDE UNTIL THE HOUSE COLLAPSE SOME CAVED IN BEFORE OTHERS BECAUSE THE ACID TOOK MORE TIME TO EAT SOME KINDS OF WOOD.

IT WAS A CLEVER SCHEME FOR MAKING MONEY! HE'D WAIT TILL A HOUSE FALL, SELL MORE TREATED LUMBER AND WAIT FOR THE SAME RESULTS! BUT THANKS TO YOU, ROCKY, HIS PLANS FAILED!

THAT KIND ALWAYS FAIL, ED. YOU CAN BUILD YOUR HOUSE NOW--AND IT'LL STAY UP! SO LONG, ED!

BUT ROCKY'S TRIGGER CALCULATING GUN WORKED AND--

SUCCESS, THAT'LL HOLD THE COYOTES!

LOOK OUT--UUUH!

OOW!

CONK

CONK
Gopher Face

Did you take a lot of medicine?

And how I took so much medicine...

I wuz sick a long time after I got well!

(Whew!!!)

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC. REQUIRED BY SECTION 3687 OF ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912 AND MARCH 3, 1933, OF ROCKY LANE WESTERN, Published Monthly at Greenwich, Conn. 1st October, 1912.

Miles of Connecticut 140

COUNTY OF Fairfield

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid personally appeared Duncan Pawlett, who having been duly sworn according to Law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of ROCKY LANE WESTERN, and that the foregoing is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management, circulation, etc. required by the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of ROCKY LANE WESTERN, published Monthly at Greenwich, Conn.

2. I, Duncan Pawlett, do hereby certify that the publication enters in the following newspapers:

- The Greenwich News
- The Greenwich Times
- The Greenwich Post
- The Greenwich Journal
- The Greenwich Telegram

3. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is sold and distributed by the following wholesalers:

- The Thompson Company, 70 Main Street, Greenwich, Conn.
- The Birmingham Publishing Company, 120 Pearl Street, New York, N.Y.

4. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is sold and distributed as follows:

- Sold by subscription only
- Distributed by mail and through news dealers

5. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is printed in the city of Greenwich, Connecticut.

6. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is not published in any other language than English.

7. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is published once a week, on Saturday.

8. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is not now, nor has it ever been, published under any other title than ROCKY LANE WESTERN.

9. I, Duncan Pawlett, certify that the publication is in conformity with the provisions of the Act of Congress of August 24, 1912, and March 3, 1933, of ROCKY LANE WESTERN, published Monthly at Greenwich, Conn.

I, Lillian M. Bussley, a Notary Public in and for the State of Connecticut, do hereby certify that the foregoing statement is true and correct.

My commission expires April 1, 1935.
Howdy, Pards,

The other morning I was out in the back corral, currying Black Jack, when I heard the mailman's buckboard come rumbling up the trail toward my place and I dropped the brush and went out to meet him. He had a whole sack full of letters for me, and I toted them back to the corral and picked up the curry-brush and got back to the chore at hand, feeling mighty good and plumb itching to get the currying over with and start reading all those letters from you pards of ours.

Now Black Jack likes plenty of elbow grease mixed in with his currying in the morning and it seems he wasn't getting it. My mind wasn't on what I was doing, I reckon it was on those letters I was chafing at the bit to read. What did Black Jack do? He just turned his head and gave me a long look and then threw his weight against the brush. I took the hint pronto and couldn't help busting out in a grin as I put my mind back on what I was doing and while I was currying Black Jack down with the long, powerful strokes he likes, I got to thinking about how plumb full of hoss sense Black Jack is and how a heap of folks could profit by taking a page out of his book.

When some things don't go just the way they should to suit a lot of us, some folks sit back and grumble about the breaks and such being dead against them. Black Jack doesn't pay any mind to such foolish notions. No, sir! Not Black Jack. He believes in doing something about it—pronto! And that, pards, is what counts. So, just remember that, pards, when things aren't going just the way they should. Shucks! I just remembered it's time to curry Black Jack again and this time he's going to get a currying.

So long for now, pards, and till our trails cross here again next month, be good to one another.

Your pards,

Allan "Rocky" Lane

And Black Jack
"CRIES UNCLE"

"GOSH, THE SHORE IS A HIGH CLIFF, SAGEBRUSH!"

"YUH SAID IT, BUSTER! IT'S A LONG WAY 'TILL THE BOTTOM!!"

"SAY, THAT REMINDS ME OF SOMETHING I RECKON YUH WON'T BELIEVE! I'LL BET YUH A KICK IN THE PANTS THAT SOMETIMES AN UNCLE CAN LOOK LIKE AN AUNT!"

"HUH? G'WAN, THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!"

"IF YUH WAS STANDING AT THE TOP OF A VERY HIGH MOUNTAIN LIKE THIS AND YUH LOOKED DOWN AT YORE UNCLE, WHO WAS STANDING ALL THE WAY DOWN AT THE BOTTOM --"

"-- YORE UNCLE WOULD BE SO FAR DOWN, HE'D LOOK LIKE AN ANT! HA HA, I WIN THE BET!"

"(GULP) OUCH!"

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A COMIC MAGAZINE!

DIRECTLY FROM TELEVISION!

CAPTAIN VIDEO

TO: SOON TO APPEAR ON NEWSSTANDS ACROSS THE NATION.
MATT SLOANE nudged his partner Cass Hardin. Cass spurred his horse forward as Matt pointed.

"Down there?" he asked in his harsh, grating voice, eying the town that lay sleeping in the cold, clear light of western stars. "Doesn't look like much," he concluded.

Sloane grunted. "There's at least twenty thousand in cash in old Jud Cadge's safe!"

"You figuring to blow that house?" Cass Hardin was doubtful.

Matt spurred his horse down the slope toward the village impatiently. "We'll make Cadge open it for us!"

Cass looked at his partner with admiration as they cantered noislessly down into the little Nevada valley town.

"You know, Matt, I've got to hand it to you. You're a clever hombre."

Matt glanced at his companion, a strange glint of deadly humor gleaming behind his eyes. "Stick with me, Cass, and you'll wind up a rich man!"

Cass chuckled. "I'm sticking, Matt! I'm sticking."

They eyed the twinkling lights of the village's lone saloon.

"We'll skirt the beer joint," Matt remarked, pushing his cayuse against Cass's. The two mounts passed quietly behind the saloon as they passed, merry voices roared out a chorus of As I Walked Out in the Streets of Laredo. They heard the tinny sound of a tuneless piano.

The horses jogged on, their hoofs clapping almost soundlessly on the fine powder of the side street.

"Sey, Matt." Cass began curiously.

"Yes?"

"How'd you ever hear of this old Jud Cadge? Ever see him?"

"Can't say I have," Matt replied. "A pal in Dodge City gave me a tip on Jud. He was heading north fast with a pilla of greenbacks and didn't have the time. That's why I called you in on the job!"

Cass smiled, pleased. He was a small-time operator and to be picked as a partner by the well-known Matt Sloane was a compliment.

"There it is," Matt said suddenly, as they came in sight of a house at a street intersection.

At the house they dismounted, tethered their mounts and slid quietly into the alley between the house and a big stable. Matt led the way. They came to a rear door. It was locked, but Matt was well-prepared for such emergencies. He took a small strip of steel from his pocket and inserted it between the door jamb and the jamb flange.

Matt grunted with the effort. He bore down on the strip of steel and suddenly there was a muffled cracking sound. Matt stepped back nonchalantly.

"Push it in," he remarked laconically.

Cass laid a hand on the door, expecting some resistance. The door slid open noiselessly.

Matt took one look and sprang inside. At the end of the passage stood an old man dressed in a nightshirt and sleeping cap. A gun appeared in Matt's hand magically, levitated at the tub, spare figure in white.

"Okay, Pop," Matt said quietly. "It's a stickup! Don't try any tricks!"

The old man, startled at first, smiled quietly. "I heard the hammer cocking on that hogleg," he said. "I don't aim to buy a one-way ticket to Boot Hill just yet."

"That's sensible, Pop," Matt rejoined. "You know where your safe is—take the lead, Pop."

The old man hesitated for just an instant. Then, gravely, he was moved into a room off the corridor.

"Your office, eh?" asked Matt, following with Cass Hardin.

"That's the place to usually keep the safe," Jud said. "You going to blow her?"

"Come on, Pop, get some sense!" Matt snorted. "We're not going to open it. You are!"

Jud Cadge shrugged his shoulders helplessly. He moved forward, bumping into Cass Hardin, who jerked back, alarmed.

"What's the matter, Pop?" demanded Hardin, his harsh voice rasping through the silence.

"Nothing, nothing. You just got in my way, that's all!"

"Open that safe, Pop! I'll growl Cass.

For answer, Jud Cadge bant bown before the big steel safe, feeling its top fondly. His gnarled old hand closed smoothly over the dial end it began to spin.

Matt and Cass watched the old man.

"Hurry up!" Cass ordered, feeling a strange tenon prickle his skin.

"I'm getting there," Jud replied.

The door fell open. Shoving the old man aside, Matt Sloane and Cass Hardin emptied the contents. They counted the cash quickly.

"Twenty-five thousand!" Matt remarked. Then he banged the safe shut, stowing the cash.
in his position.

"Let's knock him off," Cass suggested, twirling the cylinder of his gun.

"I never murdered a man yet," Matt Sloane remarked dryly. "And I'm not aiming to now.

Tie him up in that chair!"

"Thanks," said Jud Cadge quietly.

Cass found a length of rope in the kitchen. Together, he and Matt Sloane secured the old man to a small rocking chair. When they had finished, they stepped back.

"So long. Pop," Matt said

"Yes, take it easy," rasped Cass.

"Enjoy yourselves," Jud said. He chuckled.

Cass glanced at Matt meaningfully.

"You're making a big mistake," he said.

"My advice is to plug him!"

"You got any objections, Cass?" Matt asked silkily. "Or am I still the boss?"

"You're the boss," Cass said sullenly.

They went out, closing doors behind them. Under the cold, clear moonlight, they mounted their horses and rode back the way they came. Cass waited until they had passed the saloon. Then he began to feel safer, and he also began to think. He had begun his association with Matt Sloane with enormous respect, born largely of Matt's reputation. But what he had seen clearly indicated Matt had lost his touch. Leaving a man alive who had laid eyes on both of them was fatal. Involuntarily his hand stole toward his holster and six-gun and he smiled.

About a mile out of the village, Matt Sloane relined his horse southward. He rode on for a few paces, then noticed that Cass Hardin wasn't following.

"This is the trail, Cass," he began.

Cass had already drawn. He fired twiis with a steady, determined hand. Matt pitched out of his saddle and hit the ground with a dull thud—dead.

Cass wasted no time. He tossed Matt's guns into the brush, kicked his cayuse down the thickly wooded trail and emptied Matt's pockets of the loot. Leaving the body burned under a pile of brush where it wouldn't be found for at least several days, Cass rode back to the village.

The saloon was still wide open when he passed it, his horse jogging quietly down the side street Matt had shown him. Cass dismounted, thinking to approach Jud Cadge's house on foot. He tied his horse at a random post. His intention being to throttle the bound old man and then hit the south trail out of town. With Jud Cadge and Matt Sloane dead, no one would possibly know who had committed the robbery. He would be absolutely safe, because he wasn't known in the region and his arrangements with Matt Sloane being undercover had been, of course, private between them.

Cass took one step toward Jud Cadge's hoosa and froze solid as a figure in flapping white, the ends of ropes trailing behind it, came out into the night and fired a Bogleg heavenward. Instantly, the singing in the saloon behind him ceased and about fifty men rushed out and enveloped him in their rush toward old Jud Cadge who came stumbling down the street. Cass cursed the hastily-tied knots that had allowed the old man to escape.

Jud quickly explained the matter to the men. Cass Hardin, caught in the crowd that surrounded Jud, was pressed close to the old man. He tried to slip quietly away, and trod heavily on a man's boot. The man remonstrated and Jud said, "Sorry, stranger, my fault. Guess I didn't look where I was going!"

"What did it, Jud?" asked one of the men. Jud, whose attention had been suddenly arrested, was listening, bird-like. He swung a hand and pointed a firm finger straight at Cass Hardin.

"Ha, did," Jud said. "That's the homers! I'd recognize that voice anywhere. But there were two of them!"

Cass made one convulsive effort to escape, but he was quickly seized. The men who laid hands on him found the stolen money and then it all came out about Matt Sloane. Cass seemed to feel that by throwing the blame on Matt Sloane he could take the curse off himself. But the sheriff who had been routed out of bed didn't take it that way.

Cass brooded. "I'd have been all right," he said. "If I hadn't come back into town to get rid of Jud. I never thought he'd get loose and see me!"

"See you?" chuckled the sheriff as he clapped handcuffs on Cass. "Jud didn't see you. He just recognized your voice because his sense of hearing is mighty sharp! Jud's been stoners blind for thirty years!"

THE END
LOCKE and JOARE

HOLD ON, JOARE; I'VE BEEN WANTING TO SEE YUH FOR A LONG TIME! WHAT'S MUH WATCH?

ER, OH, DON'T WORRY LOCKE, I HAVE IT!

I KNOW YUH HAVE IT! WHAT I WANT TO KNOW IS WHEN IM AGONNA GET IT BACK!

ER, WHATS YORE HURRY? I'VE ONLY HAD IT A FEW DAYS!

EIGHT MONTHS IS NO SHORT SPELL TUiH ME! I WANT IT BACK NOW!

JEPPERS, THE WAY YUH TALK YUH'D THINK I STOLE IT!

I DIDNT SAY YUH STOLE IT! ALL I SAY IS THAT YUH BORROWED IT EIGHT MONTHS AGO AND NEVER RETURNED IT! ER, DON'T WORRY, YUH'LL GET IT BACK! IM NOT RUNNING AWAY!

I KNOW BUT IF YUH DON'T MIND, I'D LIKE IT BACK NOW!

(GULP) OKAY, IF YUH WANT TUiH GET NASTY 'BOUT IT?

HYAH IT IS!

HUH? (GULP)
This is such a watch? That's right.

(Groan) It's ruined! You broke it!

Take it easy! All the parts are there.

---All you have to do is put them together, that's all!

(Gasp)

And jest hold on a second! As long as you were so nasty about the watch, I want back that expensive volume of ten books you borrowed from my sister yesterday.

The whole volume? All ten books? You want them right now?

I shore do! I want them all right now.

All right, Hyar, yuh are!

Huh? What are you talking about? This isn't that volume of ten books! This is only a dictionary!

So what---

---All the words of the ten books are in that---all you have to do is put them together, that's all!

(Gasp)
The racehorse is a thoroughbred and gets the very best of attention and care. His food is carefully prepared—good mash, bluejoint grass and plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit. Racehorses aren't broken as mustangs are. They are trained.

They go to school where they are taught to break past and hug the rail so they'll have ground in a race. The racehorse is a specialist; he is trained to do one thing—win races.

But the mustang picks up his savvy differently. He's plumb willing to meet a rider's challenge on an even footing, and may the best man or bronc win, and no matter who wins he's still plumb independent.

The mustang doesn't need special food. It's plumb able to take care of itself.

The mustang is no specialist! He can run all day and half the night—cut out cattle in a close herd—throw a big ornery steer and do most anything a cowboy can think of.

The mustang is an all around hand and that's the highest compliment you can pay anyone on the range, I reckon!
When merrymaking and happiness should hold sway, but instead there is only silent anger and fear, when hearts that should laugh can only cry. Rocky Lane finds the answer to set things right when he uncovers the ——— TRADERS IN DECEIT!

UNDERCOVER MARSHAL ROCKY LANE RIDES THROUGH FRIENDLY INDIAN COUNTRY ONE DAY———

SOMETHING'S WRONG! IT'S HARVEST TIME AND THIS REGION IS USUALLY FILLED WITH JOYOUS INDIANS, PREPARING FOR FEASTING AND CELEBRATING.

BUT I'VE MET NO ONE, FOUND ONLY A STRANGE, OMinous SILENCE! THE OSAYECA HAVE A LINE CAMP NEAR HERE, I RECKON I'LL PAY A VISIT THERE!

WHAT...?!
AN ARROW— AND THERE’S A NOTE ATTACHED! LET’S HAVE A LOOK AT IT, BLACK JACK!

Leave the forest get out of territory much danger soon if you stay.

Now I know something’s wrong. Let’s go, Black Jack! The sooner we visit the Osawega line camp, the better! Maybe they can explain this note!

Later, at the Indian camp—-

There’s no one here — the whole camp has moved with all its belongings — and suddenly too, from the looks of things — but why at this time for dancing and celebrating?

Just then, Rocky sees a shadow move in the gathering dusk land—

I can’t figure it out. If I — wait! Someone’s behind that tree — I can see his shadow moving! I’ll find out who it is.

Hold on, partner!

Ugh!

What’s old long tree? Old warrior of the Osawega! You know who I am! I often have visited your people! What is happening? Speak!

Huh?— You Rocky Lane! I shoot arrow before — to warn you! I cannot tell more!
But why are you sneaking back here? And where have your people gone?

I come for favorite spear. I forgot to take one of the others. I cannot speak! My lips are sealed! I go now! You leave woods... hear my words!

Hmmm! Only the war council puts the how of sealed lips upon the tribe! And if there's been a war council, it means only one thing... trouble!

Now I know where the camp has gone! They've moved to the main tribal camp in the foothills. I'll go there and see the chief, Red Sky. I don't like the looks of this at all!

Later, after dark, Rocky reaches the Osawega tribal headquarters and...

Long have I been a friend, chief Red Sky! I ask only to know why your people gather here, why there is war in the air instead of peace and happiness!

Yes, you friend, Rocky Lane. There is trouble, but this is Indian affair.

You leave hills... soon no one safe here!

I know that will be so once trouble starts! Many an innocent traveler will suffer! But if you won't talk, I may as well move on! Farewell, Red Sky!

I've got to find out what's up! I'll go visit the Nadowa tribe! They live near here. Maybe they'll know something of this!

But as Rocky starts to leave the Osawega camp...

You weep, maiden of the Osawegas! Can I help you?

(Boys) -- no... no... -- (Boys)
MY... (Sobs) ...MY LIFE ARE SEALED, TOO!

NO. AGAINST THE NADOWA TRIBE! IT IS AN AFFAIR OF HONOR BETWEEN THE TRIBES -- THAT'S WHY IT WAS FORBIDDEN TO SPEAK OF IT TO OUTSIDERS! ONLY IN BATTLE CAN IT BE SETTLED. THE COUNCIL HAS SAID MANY FURS WERE STOLEN FROM OUR STOREHOUSE. EVIDENCE SHOWS IT WAS THE NADOWAS!

I AM CALLED LITTLE STAR, AND I WAS TO MARRY A FINE YOUNG BRAVE SOON; A GREAT LOVE IS OURS! BUT NOW THERE WILL BE WAR MANY WILL DIE AND I FEAR FOR LITTLE STAR! NO. AGAINST THE SETTLERS?

WHOA! BLACK JACK! IT'S THE INDIAN GIRL WHO WAS CRYING!

WAIT-- WAIT! PLEASE! I WILL SPEAK TO YOU... MY HEART IS TOO FULL!

WE ACCUSED THEM OF THE CRIME! THEN THEY ACCUSED US OF STEALING FURS FROM THEIR STOREHOUSE! MANY WILL DIE BECAUSE TRADERS HAVE BEEN SELLING GUNS TO BOTH TRIBES!

BUT NO ONE IS SUPPOSED TO SELL GUNS TO THE TRIBES! GUNS HELP BRING WAR!

I AM CALLED LITTLE STAR; I WAS TO MARRY A FINE YOUNG BRAVE SOON; A GREAT LOVE IS OURS! BUT NOW THERE WILL BE WAR MANY WILL DIE AND I FEAR FOR LITTLE STAR! NO. AGAINST THE SETTLERS?

BUT TRADERS HAVE BROUGHT MANY GUNS! I FEAR I-- (CHOKE) -- WILL NEVER SEE THE WARRIORS MEET IN BATTLE ON HIGH PLAIN AT NOON TOMORROW!

NOON, EH? GO BACK TO CAMP, TELL NO ONE YOU SPOKE TO ME. I'LL TRY TO STOP THIS FOOLISH WAR! BLOOD NEED NOT SPILL TO SETTLE EVEN A QUARREL OF HONOR!

LITTLE STAR RUNS OFF AND ROCKY TURNS TO MOUNT BLACK JACK WHEN SUDDENLY...

GOT HIM, BOSS! LUCKY WE WERE BRINGING THE LAST SHIPMENT TONIGHT!

OOOH!
That wagon----rifles! So you're the varmint bringing rifles to and the tribes.

Right! These are for the Osawega's! We got some for the Nadowas, too! And you're not going to stop this war----we're seeing to that! It's going to take place noon tomorrow.

Now I see! You varmints want the Indians to war on each other, you're selling them guns so they'll kill each other.

Pretty smart thinking! But enough talk! We've guns to load. Craig, take care of this man----we'll meet us at the cabin.

Start walking! I'm taking you far away from here! We don't want the Osawega's to hear of this and start asking questions.

We sure don't----we're just traders helping them out----hah-hah! Take him to the river! It's a long walk but he'll enjoy it since it'll be his last.

At last! This is the last down you'll see.

There's one chance! This river bank is filled with soft clams. I can see the holes in the mud. They send a stream of water into the air when the mud near them is stepped on.

That varmint is close behind me and it might work. I'll step down hard beside the nearest soft clam hole and----

Instantly the soft clam squirts a funnel of water from the mud----wha... uulph!

It worked! It gave me the moment I needed, you drygulcher!

CRACK

OW!
This will knock enough wind out of you to hold you while I shred my wrist ropes on a sharp rock!

And minutes later—

Now to pick up Black Jack and tell the tribal chiefs the truth! Your pals won't be expecting you right away any way.

Shortly after Rocky came to Red Sky—

No, Rocky Lane—you make up the story only because you want peace! Your heart is good but our honor is at stake!

But Chief Red Sky, you've got to believe me! The traders who sell guns—They want this war! They're behind it and they alone will be the final victors.

Your efforts win our appreciation, but now for your safety, go! When battle is joined, I can promise no one safety.

I can't make him believe me telling the truth! He is sure the other tribe is at fault! I reckon I'll get the same reaction from the Nadowas! I've got to find a way to convince them of the truth.

I haven't much time; either! I heard them tell the varmint, Craig, to meet them at the cabin! It can't be too far from here! Come on Black Jack—we've some searching to do.

Finally, after hours of searching—

At last—Black Jack—this is the cabin! There is their wagon!

And inside the cabin—

Wonder what's keeping Craig? He ought to be back here by now!

He's always a slow one, boss. Anyway, soon them Indians will be killing each other just as we planned! We can't lose now!
ROCKY LANE WESTERN

GUESS AGAIN! YOU NOT ONLY CAN LOSE, BUT YOURE GOING TO!

HUM—YOU! BUT IT CANT BE!

BUT IT IS! MAYBE THIS WILL PROVE IT TO YOU!

OWOO!

Sock.

C'MON—LET'S HIT HIM!

ALL AT ONCE? ALL RIGHT, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU THAT WAY!

UHPPH!

I--OOG! PARDOON MY TABLE MANNERS! NEXT, I'LL TIE YOU RODEO UP GOOD AND TIGHT WITH MY LARIAT!

MINUTES LATER---

IT'S ALMOST NOON! I'VE GOT TO GET TO HIGH PLAINS PRONTO AND A FEW OF THESE PELTS SHOULD CONVINCE THEM I'M TELLING THE TRUTH!

AND SOON, AS THE NOONDAY SUN IS HIGH, THE PLAINS RESOND TO THE TRIBAL WAR CRIES---

YEEEEEH!! YI-Y-YEOW!
Suddenly, a lone rider races in between the opponents...

STOP--STOP! Here are your missing pelts!

Soon after--Yes, these men stole the furs from both of you, left evidence to make you blame each other; then they sold you the guns for a war. Selling the guns brought them gold and after the war ended, they knew there'd be so few of you left that they'd have the fur trapping all to themselves.

I'll take them down to jail now. I've one more to pick up down by the river!

We owe you so much, Rocky Lane! You've shown us what wrongs rash temper can bring. It is a lesson we shall never forget!

And later, as Rocky leaves the Osawega tribe--

Goodbye, Little Star! Happiness may be yours now!

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