



TIM
HOLT

NO. 35



TIM HOLT

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TIM HOLT

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THE GUN WAS ACCUSED. IT HAS A PET OF THE GRAYLY THING THAT MEN CALLED DEATH! WHEN THE GUN BROKE, MEN FELL AND DIED! AND FROM BUREAU TO BUREAU, IT FOLLOWED A BLOODY TRAIL FROM THE BULLET COUNTRY WHERE ~~REDAKED~~ ROPE, UNHAPPY THAT HE WAS NEXT ON THE GRAY LIST OF THE VICTIMS OF THE —

"GUN OF DEATH!"

DEADWOOD, SOUTH DAKOTA, IS A WILD TOWN. IN ONE OF ITS SALOONS MEN GOT PLAYING POKER, WHEN —



IT'S WILD BILL AVENGE! DEAD!

JACK McCALL SHOT HIM IN THE BACK WITHOUT GIVING HIM A CHANCE! LET'S GO GET HIM, BOYS — AND STRIKE HIM UP!



TIM HOLT

KILLER JACK MCCALL RUNS FOR HIS LIFE—

MESSES IF I THROW AWAY THE GUN... DON'T LET 'EM FIND IT ON ME ... I'LL GET AWAY WITH IT...



FOR DAYS, THE GUN LIES UNDER THE HOT DAKOTA SUN. THEN ONE MORNING...

A COLT PEACOCKER! THIS IS LUCK! I'VE SLAYED BEFORE—BUT WITH THIS GUN— I KNOW WHERE TO MAKE SOME MONEY, BROTT!



A LITTLE LATER, ON THE STAGECOACH TRAIL TO THE BLACK HILLS...

DON'T TRY ANY TRICKS, AND YOU'LL GET FURT!



I'LL HIT SOUTH FROM THE DAKOTAS INTO WISSA WOODS COUNTRY! NO FOLKS WILL CHASE ME THAT FAR!



THE TUG OF ROUNDING HOOPS DROWNS OUT THE SUDDEN TYPING OF A CHEYENNE BOWSTRING! A HORSE GALLOPS FAST—BUT NOT AS FAST AS THE FLIGHT OF AN INDIAN ARROW!



AAAAAAGH!

TIM HOLT

DOUBLE-BARRELL "KNOCK-OUT" GUN!
SHOOT-MANY-TIMES-GUN KILL
ALL WHITE BIRD'S ENEMIES!



THE TRAIL OF DEATH AND MURDER
MOVES SOUTH, ACROSS THE SAN
JUAN AND INTO ARIZONA COUNTRY.



THIS IS "TRAIL SOUTH" LAND FOR THE
CHEYENNE WAR PARTY! THEIR LOOK-
OUTS ARE ALERT, BUT AN AVENGING
ROBEE OF LEANER ARE READY BY
BEDWASK—



CHEYENNE KILLERS SOON WILL LEARN THE
LAW OF ARIZONA! DEATH TO THEM WHO
GIVE DEATH!



A LITTLE LATER, ONLY A FEW SHAPES REMAINING IN
THE OLD BARREN REVEAL THE LOCATION OF THE
DEATH GUN.



TWO WEEKS LATER, A STUBBLE-BEARDED OUTLAW,
MOUND AND ALONG, FLEES INTO THE ROCKY
BURRS WHERE THE GUN LIES...



TIM HOLT



I JUST KILLED AN TWO PARDS—
AFTER ROBBING THEM OF THIS
LOOT WE STOLE FROM CACTUS
CITY! I DOUBLE-CROSSED 'EM,
AND THEY CAME AFTER ME TO
KILL ME, BUT—HA! HA! I WAS
TOO SMART FOR 'EM!



AND I WAS LUCKY,
TOO — I FOUND THIS
GUY!

IT IS DARK IN THE LITTLE COW TOWN
OF BULLET BONE DAYS LATER, AS A
FRESHLY SHAVED STRANGER WALKS
THE STREET.



MIGHT AS WELL TRY MY
LUCK AT CARDS, IT'S BLUING
STRONG IN EVERY OTHER
DIRECTION!

MEANWHILE, IN A LITTLE HOUSE A FEW STEPS DOWN THE STREET...



WILL HE LIVE,
DOC?

I DON'T KNOW! HE TOOK TWO BULLETS
IN HIS MIDDLE. IT'S A LONG SHOT, BUT I'LL
KEEP WORKING ON HIM!



HE'S BEEN IN
THAT CORN EVER
SINCE I FOUND
HIM, REDNECK!

ALL WE
CAN DO
IS HOPE!

TIM HOLT

LATER THAT NIGHT IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, JIM KELLAN PUTS THE DEATH SIGN BAWY-

YES, SIR! I'VE GOT MY FILE! NO NEED TO TAKE MORE RISKS. I'LL SETTLE DOWN HERE AS A RESPECTABLE CITIZEN, AND NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW ME AS A KILLER. I'LL EVEN PUT THE SIGN HERE AND NEVER USE IT AGAIN!



FOR SOME WEEKS JIM KELLAN LIVES AS AN HONEST MAN. HE MAKES FRIENDS, AND HIS SECRET BEGINS TO FADE... THEN, ONE DAY—

NEVER SAW THAT GUY WITH THE SHIRT? WHO IS HE?

SOME HONORABLE THE SHERIFF FOUND SHOT AND DYING. HE ALMOST DID DIE, BUT STARTS TO RECOVER THE NIGHT YOU CAME INTO TOWN! FUNNY, ISN'T IT?



SHERIFF BARK — THAT MAN THERE? HE WAS ONE OF THE THREE BANDITS WHO HELP UP THE CACTUS CITY TRAIN AND ROBBED IT, KILLING MY ENGINEER AND WOUNDING ME!

HUM?



KELLAN, I'M ARRESTING YOU FOR—**BOOM!**

NOBODY ARRESTS ME! SHERIFF! GET OUT OF MY WAY!



GET TO GET MY GUN—SHOOT MY WAY OUT OF THIS! I WAS A FOOL TO TAKE IT OFF! THAT GUN KNEW ME! HE'S GOT ME DEAD TO RIGHTS—BUT IT WON'T DO ME ANY GOOD!



RIPPING HIS PEACEMAKER COLT FROM HIS BAG, JIM KELLAN RUSHES TO THE DOOR.

THEY'LL NEVER GET ME! I'LL DROP INTO THE CORRAL AND BEAT A BRAWN! ANYBODY TRIES TO STOP ME—**BOOM!**



UNAWARE THAT HE IS DEFYING THE CURSE OF DEATH ON THE MURDER GUN, BOWMAN CLIMBS A ROPE TO THE ROOFTOP...



TIM HOLT

IN THE SILVER DOLLAR SALOON, JIM KELLAM PROVES THAT HIS LUCK IS STILL RUNNING—



TIM HOLT



MOMENTS LATER—

TWO MORNINGS LATER, JOE KELLAM, WHO OWNED THE DEATH GUN FOR A LITTLE WHILE, DIES IN THE HANGMAN'S NOOSE...

AND SO THE GUN GOES IN THE STORE WINDOW OF BULLET'S GUNSMITH. IT DRAWS VICTIMS FOR A WHILE, AND THEN IS FORGOTTEN...



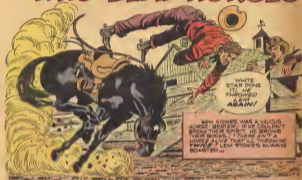
THE GUN MOVES ON, BUT THE CURSE ON IT IS NOT FORGOTTEN...



THE END

TALES *of the* GHOST RIDER

THE MAN WHO BEAT HORSES



LEM STOKES WAS A VILIOUS HORSE BEATER. IF HE COULDN'T BREAK THEM SURETY, HE BROKE THEM BONES. 'I THREW AN'T A HORSE ALIVE THAT'LL THROWIN' TWICE.' LEM STOKES ALWAYS BOASTED ...





WHAT'RE YUH STANDIN' AROUND FER? DRAG THAT CARCASS OUT TO TWIN DESERT — IT'LL MAKE A GOOD MEAL FOR SOME BUZZARD!

THUS WAY YUH TREAT HORSES IS SONNA CATCH UP WITH YUH SOME DAY, LEM STONES!



BUT TIME GOES BY... AND LEM STONES DOES NOT CHANGE...

WHAP!
SLAP!
WHAP!
WHAP!
SLAP!
WHAP!
WHAP!
WHAP!



HOWDY, LEM STONES! LOOKIN' FER A GOOD HORSE — TRADE?

WHARD' YOU SPEND FROM? I SWEAR I DON'T SEE YUH A SECOND AGO!



YUH GOT AN EYE FOR HORSES, LEM STONES — WHAT D'YUH THINK OF THE ONE —?

HOW'D HE KNOW MY NAME?

THAT'S A TOL'RABLE HUNK OF HORSE — FLESH — WHAT'RE YUH ASKIN'?



TOL'RABLE? YUH'RE LYIN' IN YUHRE TESTIN' YUH DON'T SAY THAT! IN THE BEST SET-UP HORSE YUH'VE EVER SEEN — TELL YUH WHAT I'LL DO — TELL T' BLOOD LEM AWAY FER THAT SCRAWNY MULE YUH'RE RIDIN' RIGHT NOW!

YUH MUST BE LOCO! IT'S A DEAL, STAMBOY!

SO A FEW MINUTES LATER, LEM STONES RIDES THE WHITE HORSE OUT OF TOWN...



THIS SHORE IS MY LUCKY DAY! THIS HORSE IS A BEAUTY — AND HE RIDES BARY — LIKE TOO...



BETTER HEAD RIGHT BACK FER THUR RANCH. BIG STORM BREWIN' UP...

TIM HOLT



HE KEEPS VEERING AWAY FROM THE ROAD— MUST BE SENSIBLE OF LIGHTNING!

LEM IS SO BUSY TURNING DEH THAT AT FIRST HE DOES NOT SEE HOW HE HAS TRIPPED HIS MOUNT IS BEING WASHED OUT THE MELTING RAIN!

BUT THEN—!

The Teacher COLLAPSES BACKED OFF / **AAAGH!** IT'S WHITE STAR— THUN HORSE I SWOT, AN' HE'S HEADED FOR THAT CLIFF!



THE HORSE-BEATER SCREAMS / BUT WHITE STAR KEEPS GALLOPING FORWARD / THEY PLUNGE DOWN...

...DOWN... DOWN... TALL...!



I CAN'T LET GO OF YOUR REINS / STOP! STOP!



THE NEXT DAY

LEM— HOW'D YUH GO DOWN HERE? WHAM'S YOUR HORSE?

THUN TRADER... IN TOWN YESTERDAY... THEN IT STARTED TO RAIN... WHITE STAR... HE TRIPPED ME WHITE— AAAGH!



HE'S DEAD!

HE MUST'VE JUMPED DOWN HIMSELF— THERE'S NO SIGN OF A HORSE ANYMORE— DID YUH HEAR THAT NUTTY BEFORE HE WENT AWAY? ABOUT A STORM YESTERDAY AND A HORSE TRADER IN TOWN— I REMEMBER SEE CLEAR HIGHLIGHT FROM SKY UP TO SKY-DOWN— AN' THAT HADN'T BEEN A HORSE TRADER AT TOWN FOR OVER TEN YEARS...



The End

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TIM HOLT

ALONE AND UNARMED TIM HOLTS DEPUTY SHERIFF OF THE TOWN OF BULLET-HOLE AND BROWNE, AN OUTLAW TOWN! HE HAS LEFT HIS GUN BEHIND HIM, FOR HE HAS COME TO SAVE HIS LIFE TO THESE HARDENED GILLESPIE! WHAT STRANGE REASON DOES TIM HAVE FOR HIS SACRIFICE? & THERE ARE HOPE AT ALL FOR—

**"THE MAN
WHO
CAME BACK!"**



THE THROTTLED WHOOPS OF GUY FRANK SOUND LOUD IN THE STILLNESS THAT SETTLES IN THE LITTLE TOWN AS TIM HOLTS WALKS HIS BOMB DOWN THE SQUARE MAIN STREET...



WHY DOES TIM HOLT STARE ALONE AND WITHOUT HIS GLASS INTO THE TOWN OF SPOCKHOLE? WHY THE BOSS HEATH SWART HAS AT THE HEADS OF THESE HARDWARE SELLERS? LET'S TURN BACK THE PAGES OF THE CALIFORNIA OF THIS, TO A MOMENT SOME DAYS AGO, WHEN THE FIRST WALKER SWIRL DANCED DOWN THE MAIN STREET OF SPOCKHOLE... BUT THE TIME HE CAME AGAIN...



"I'M LOOKING FOR JOHNNY BROWN! I'VE HEARD HE'S HUNG UP HERE IN SPOCKHOLE!"

"I'M BROWN! AND I KNOW WHO YOU ARE— THE HOLT, DEPUTY SHERIFF OF SPOCKHOLE? YOU AREN'T TAKING ME BACK TO GET HAD?"

"I'M NOT HERE AS A LAWMAN, JOHNNY. I'M HERE AS A HUMAN BEING..."

"YOUR MOTHER'S TRYING HER LAST TRICK! IS TO SEE YOU BEFORE SHE PASSES ON! THAT'S WHY I'M HERE! TO BRING YOU BACK HERE! THEN BRING YOU BACK HERE! —SAFE AND UNHARMED!"

As JOHNNY BROWN STARTED FORWARD IN RAGE, HIS TROUSER POCKET TIGHTENED—



"IT'S A CHEAP SCHEME! —SPOCK!"

"YOU'RE SLOW, JOHNNY! NOW LISTEN TO ME..."



"IF I WERE WALKING TO YOU, I'D BRING YOU ALL UP AND TAKE YOU IN MY CATTIE-JOHNNY TO HIS FATHER AND SAVE HER LIFE. THAT'S WHY I'M ACTING AS I AM! NOW... COULD WE GO DOWN HERE?"



"SURE HE DOES—IF NOW! YOU PROMISE TO COME BACK AND GET YOURSELF UP TO US IF JOHNNY BROWN'S HARRASSED BY THE LAW?"

"YOU MAKE MY VOICE ON THAT!"

TIM HOLT

TO PROVE I WILL, I'LL LEAVE THESE BOTTLES! WHEN JOHNNY BROGAN COMES BACK WITH ME ALIVE AND UNHARMED—WE'LL DRINK TO OUR SUCCESS!



AND SO THE TWO BOTTLES WERE PUT IN A PLACE OF HONOR BEHIND THE BARHOLE SALOON BAR—



—AND TIM HOLT AND THE MAN HE HAD COME TO GET CAPTURED SLONELY OUT OF TOWN...

THE BOYS WOULDN'T LET US GO ON ANYONE'S SAY—SO BUT TOLD, TELL THEY KNOW YOU'RE A MAN OF YOUR WORD! AND TALKING OF THAT—

I GIVE YOU ANY WORD THAT I'M INVOLVED? RICK RANDALL OF BULLET SAID I WAS THE MAN WHO SHOT THE DRIVER AND ROBBED THAT STAGECOACH—BUT I HESIT!



TRUST ME, I HAD NO AID FOR THE TIME THAT ROBBERY AND MURDER HAPPENED! I WAS OUT ON THE RANGE ALONE, DICK TOLD HIS STORY, I WAS JUMPED BY A SHERIFF'S posse, AND JUST DID MANAGE TO GET AWAY!



HOURS LATER, AT THE LITTLE BROGAN RANCHHOUSE AT THE FOOT OF BLACK MOUNTAIN...



YOU GOT HERE JUST IN TIME, TIM! TAKE JOHNNY BROGAN QUICKLY! SHE'S GIVING FAST!

OUTSIDE THE HOUSE—



GOT TO RIDE LIKE SITT, AND TELL RICK RANDALL THAT JOHNNY BROGAN IS BACK! WELL, THROW HIM IN JAIL SO FAST IT'LL MAKE BROGAN'S HEAD SPIN...!

TIM HOLT

SOME HOURS LATER—

HERE THEY COME NOW! REMEMBER, I DON'T WANT HOLT HURT BAD. I JUST WANT TO GET BROGAN, AND THROW HIM IN JAIL!



BROGAN—LOOK GOAT! YOU DON'T POOL ME WITH THAT WARNING, HOLT! YOU AND RICK RANDALL ARRANGED THE TRAP TO GET ME! I WAS A FOOL TO LISTEN TO YOU!



TOO MANY TO HANDLE! GUESS I'LL WRAP UP IN A MOORE, AFTER ALL!



RANDALL, LISTEN TO ME! YOU'RE MAKING A MISTAKE!

SAVE YOUR BREATH, HOLT! WON'T DO NO GOOD!



I KNOW YOU HONORABLES THINK YOU'RE DOING YOUR DUTY, BUT I'VE A FEELING BROGAN IS INNOCENT AND—



HOLD EVERYTHING, HOLT! I KNOW YOU'RE DEPUTY SHERIFF, BUT BROGAN'S BEEN LYING TO YOU! I SAW HIM KILL THAT SPARKCOACH DRIVER DURING THE ROBBERY! I GOT WITNESSES TO IT! SO JUST RELAX—BEFORE I SHOOT!



BECKON BACK RANDALL MEANS WELL—BUT HE'S JUST SENTENCING ME TO DEATH BY HANGING! I PROMISED THOSE ORPHANS IN SINKHOLE I'D COME BACK ALONE AND UNHARMED IF THEY CAPTURED BROGAN—AND I KEEP MY PROMISES!



TIM HOLT

AND SO TIM HOLT ROSE BACK TO THE OUTLAW TOWN WITH A REASON TO DEFEND HIMSELF. A GUY IS PUSHED INTO HIS BACK. A VOICE WHISPERS HARSHLY IN HIS EAR...



KEEP RIGHT ON HOLDING HOLT INTO THE BACK ROOM. WE GOT A SURPRISE WAITIN' FOR YOU!



WELL, EXCUSE ME WITH FORMALITIES, YOU TOOK JOHNNY BROGAN IN TO TOWN, YOU DON'T BRING HIM BACK THEY'LL HANG AWAY! SO WE'RE GOING TO HANG YOU!



BEFORE YOU START KICKIN' AND I'D LIKE TO TELL YOU THAT JOHNNY BROGAN IS AN INNOCENT OF THOSE CRIMES OF MURDER AND ROBBERY AS YOU ARE! DRAWING HIM WAS RICK RANDALL'S IDEA! SURE! RICK IS OUR ENGINEER!



"MATTER OF FACT, IT WAS RANDALL HIMSELF WHO SHOT THAT PRISONER WHEN WE HELD UP THE STAGE."

I TOLD YOU TO KEEP YOUR PANTS OFF THAT SHOTGUN!



"HE RODE AWAY FAST FROM THAT STAGE. MURDER IS NOTHING TO FOLK ABOUT, AND RICK WAS PLENTY WORRIED."

BREFFY GAVE AND TIM HOLT WILL BE CHECKIN' FOR CLUES! I GOT TO THINK OF SOMETHIN'!



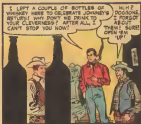
"WHEN WE SAW JOHNNY BROGAN RICK GOT HIS BIG OVA..."

LOOK! BROGAN'S BEEN OUT HERE TWO DAYS! WE'LL BRING HIM IN WITH SOME LOOT ON HIM—AND SHEAR HIS WIG! THE GUY WHO KILLED THE DRIVER! WE SAW HIM DO IT. UNDERSTAND? THE REST OF HIS GANG GOT AWAY— BUT WE CAUGHT HIM! COME ON!



SO YOU'RE GOING TO HANG, AND JOHNNY BROGAN IS GOING TO HANG, AND WE'LL KEEP RIDING AND ROBBING ALL WE LIKE!

WHA! BOYS, YOU'RE FORGOTTEN SOMETHING!



I LEFT A COUPLE OF BOTTLES OF WHISKEY HERE TO CELEBRATE JOHNNY'S BIRTHDAY! WHY DON'T WE DRINK TO YOUR CLEVERNESS? AFTER ALL, I CAN'T STOP YOU NOW!

WHA? POSSIBLY. I FORGOT ABOUT THEM! SURE! OPEN 'EM UP!

THE GREAT HUMOR OF THE OUTLAWS IS TOUCHED BY THE FACT THAT THEY WILL SOON TASTE THEIR OWN SCHEMES...

SUDDENLY...

FROM THE BEEREN BOTTLES AND POOLS OF LIQUID PAINT WERE EISE LIVED!



HA! HA! SEEMS A SHAME TO HANG HIM AFTER HE BROUGHT IN THAT LIQUOR!

HA! HA! MOST EXPENSIVE DRINK IN HISTORY! HE'S GONNA PAY FOR IT WITH HIS LIFE! HA! HA!



AND IN A MOMENT THE OUTLAWS ARE COVERED WITH WILD HILARITY!



HA! HA! HA!

HAW! HAW!



MANAGED TO HOLD MY BREATH LONG ENOUGH TO GET OUT! THE NITROUS OXIDE THAT I BOTTLED IN THOSE OLD WHISKEY CONTAINERS, AGAINST JUST SUCH AN EMERGENCY IS FILLING THAT LITTLE ROOM! AND NITROUS OXIDE IS LAUGHING GAS!



HOURS LATER, IN A SALOON IN BULLY-

YOU REMEMBER GOING TO LET JOHNNY BROGAN FREE SO FREE? IF A LAWYER COULD PROVE HIM GUILTY OF SHOOTIN' DOWN THAT STAGS DRIVER IN COLD BLOOD?



THEN COME ON! WE CAN SAVE THE TOWN SOME MONEY BY DOING THIS JOB OURSELVES! LET'S JERKY HIM!



WOLF IT, RANDALL! YOUR OUTLAW PARTS HERE HAVE CONSPICED TO THEIR PART IN THAT STAGS ROBBERY! THEY SAY IT WAS YOU WHO KILLED THAT DRIVER!



FRIGHT BAWD IN RICK RANDALL'S EYES. WITH AN OATH, HE GRABS A GUN AND LEAPS FORWARD! BUT HE TRIPS—



FIRST THE MOOSE TRIPPED YOU! NEXT, IT'LL HANG YOU, RANDALL! TAKE HIM AWAY, BOYS — AND SET JOHNNY BROGAN FREE!



THE MULE AND THE WAGON-TRAIN

IT WAS spring in the year 1828. All along the Santa Fe trail the wagons creaked and rolled, chained casks swinging under the jangling tail-gates, the whips of the bearded drivers snapping, the oxen ploughing ahead across the dun wastes of southwestern Kansas. Part of a continent was on the march, sunlight glistening on the long rifles of the buckskin-clad trappers, and on the pistols in the holsters of the drivers.

Job Norwood stood in a clump of mesquite, fighting back the tears. Behind him was a charred cabin and three graves that he had dug himself. Paw was back there, and Maw, and little Cloan. He had buried them, with his Paw's shovel, and now he was alone—twelve years old, with only a gun and Paw's loo-sared mule, Temper, to call his own.

"Maybe they'll give me a place with 'em," he muttered to the big gray mule, staring at the outgoing wagon. "I can heat water an' chop wood. Maybe even I could get 'em some meat, if they'd give me some powder."

He was ragged and dirty, but there were muscles under his tanned skin, and his eyes were gray and direct. He walked like an Indian, with back straight and his long legs bent and sliding. The rifle hung, muscle down-ward, over his arm.

A bearded driver saw him first and sent a stream of brown tobacco spewing beyond the rounded rump of his off wheel ox. He jerked a thumb back over his shoulder at the boy's question.

"The wagon boss is five teams back, son," said the driver. "If'n he lets yuh stay with us, yuh kin sit up here with me. Gits plumb lonesome with only these dumb oxen to palaver with."

The wagon boss was a lean man, big in the shoulders, with long yellow hair and blue eyes. He wore two pistols strapped around his middle, with a Queen River hunting knife in a bead-decorated sheath. Job heard the men address him as Charley. His face was grave

as Job told what had happened to his folks. "Of course, son. We'll be glad to have yuh. Especially since yuh own a mule."

One or two of the men looked blank. The others seemed indifferent. But Job knew what the tall, lean man meant. He licked his lips, then asked, "I could stand some powder an' ball. Paw shot most of his away—against them Indians."

A bearded man with a crosslike knife scar on his cheek grinned derisively. "Like dumplin' it get on the sand, Charley! What's a skinny young 'un like him know 'bout shootin' a gun?"

Job felt the red flush tinge his cheeks, but he drew himself up stiffly. "I got me two Comanches yesterday. Only had two bullets, too."

Charley laughed softly. He said, "All right, boy. You find yourself a wagon to latch onto, an' see me tomorrow."

Job found his driver friend and lashed the load-oring of the mule to a tailgate abut. Then he swung up onto the big beaded seat of the Dearborn beside the tobacco-chewing teamster. The man nodded at him, and grinned. "Glad to see that well-eyed mule o' yours, youngster. Them new-fangled oxen can pull a loaded wagon, but when it comes to—"

The driver shook his head and let his words trail off. From him, Job learned that this was one of a Bent, St. Vrain Company caravan, bound for Santa Fe. Its great vans and wagons were loaded with silks and metalware, guns and powder, glassware and silver. Every eye was on the lookout for Comanches or Kiowas, for they raided the wagons for tin calabeds, or horse herd.

"Seems they take a fancy to them knives we're packin', too," growled the driver, whose name was Brad. "An' beads, an' colored cloth! Huh! Reckon they'd plumb take everything that ain't nailed down tight!"

At night, young Job slept behind the shallow tail-gate, his small body packed into the narrow space under some bolts of silk. He would stare up at the stars and blink his eyes hard, remembering his mother's soft voice, and his father's hearty shout, and the happy laughter of his little sister.

And then, four nights after Job Norwood joined the caravan, he froze to silent immobility, as voices floated out of the night air near the tail-gate of Brad's wagon, where he lay stretched out.

"I tell ye, the time is now," said an excited voice. "They've come so far toward Santa Fe, they hasn't thinkin' on Indians no more! Why, man alive! There bein' no more guards posted of nights, Charley Bent is sleepin' right now, 'stead of worryin' 'bout any redskins!"

Job remembered that hoarse voice. His memory called up a bearded face marked with

a crosslike knife scar on the cheek. It was the man who had trusted him about shooting his rifle! Now another force joined her. "But are we sure these Comanches will split with us?"

Scorn dripped from the scarred-face man. "All they want is them beads an' cheap knives, an' some blankets. What use they got for silverware or silk? Can they use gold candlesticks? I tell ya, the loss of this rich wagon train be ours, if we do this right!"

The men moved off, their voices fading. Job sat bolt upright, shaking with excitement. Carefully he peered over the side of the wagon, lifting the canvas hood. Then he loosened the tail-gate, lowered it, and dropped to the ground. He ran swiftly as his legs could move to Charley Bent's wagon.

The tall, lean man was sitting with his back propped to a big wheel, smoking his last pipe for the night. He looked up curiously at Job, then grew ominously silent as Job talked. "So," smiled Bent coldly. "Blackie Logan figures to side th' Injuns ag'in us, does he? Young un, yuh did right to come to me. How's that mule o' your'n?"

Job grinned. "Gertie! He's an' savvy, loadin' along behind that wagon."

Bent laughed. "I'm givin' yuh a saddle. Put it on him. Take him ridin' out in front of the train from now on. Yuh savvy?"

His heart thudding excitedly, Job nodded. The big man stooped and lifted a small parfleche bag. "There's powder an' ball by here for yuh rifle. I'll be keepin' an eye on yuh, son." Job grinned faintly, and his head closed slightly over the beaded parfleche bag. His heart thumped excitedly. It was a good feeling to be needed, Job thought.

He walked to Brad's wagon and unhitched the rope backmore that was tied to the end-gate. Leading Temper, Job walked through the starlight between the clumps of coral and ocotillo. His rifle hung, barrel downward across an arm. His young eyes squinted the horizon.

Job walked steadily through the dawn. A

mile or two behind him, the big wags were rumbling. And he, Job, was being trusted to be lookout for all that wealth back there! A proud tingle went through his veins—

Then Temper lifted his head and bayed!

Job froze in his tracks. He had heard Temper bay like that before! It had been when the redskins were shooting at his Maw and Paw—

Job lifted his gun and fired three times, quickly. As fast as he could trigger his rifle. Three shots in rapid succession was the warning of the plains. Now the wagon train moving slowly behind him a mile or more away would know that there were Kiowas and Comanches somewhere up ahead. The oxen would begin their slow swing, the huge wagons would sway as they were drawn into a tight circle!

Bent had known, so Job had, that a smart mule like Temper was worth his weight in golden wagon trails. There was some instinct in mules that made them smell out Injuns from miles away. That was why Bent had sent young Job out ahead to ride point.

Job choked. A feathered warbonnet rose up against the red horizon. He could see the bear-claw necklaces, the metal armbands. A war-painted face opened a wide mouth that shrieked a war-cry. An arrow chattered into the dust some feet beyond Job.

Job raised his gun and fired. He saw the Indian slip back over the ramp of his pony and drop lifeless to the ground. Job grinned. "He! Maybe now that man with the scar wouldn't laugh at th' idea of me an' my rifle!"

There were other Indians now racing toward young Job. He jumped on Temper and turned him, kicking his ribs with drumming heels. "Git a move on, ther, Temper! We got to beat them Injuns back to the wagons!"

Job turned on the mule and fired his rifle, again and again. Once he saw a white man riding among the Indians throw up his arms and topple to the ground. "Bevvs him right, ah' yaller minkus," Job growled.

Now the wagon train in front of him, the parties woad bellying their big canvas coverings. Sunlight glimmered on long ribs, barrels poked out from behind wagon wheels and tail-gates. Job could see Charley Bent standing with his hands in his hands. Bent shouted, "Yuh've there, young 'un? Maybe yuh'd better turn in—see if yuh can get some shayevs while we drive off them varmints."

But Job shook his head and his eyes were shining. "No sir, Reckon I ain't sleepy yet. I recognized one or two of these redskins. They finished off my Paw. I'll want to settle with them!"

And with head held high Job walked on to find a battle station. Knowing that whenever his Paw was he would be looking at least, proud of him. . . .

THE END

THE NEXT ISSUE
of **TIM HOLT**
GOES ON SALE
MAY 29th



The
RETRIEVER

A COWBOY — LOOKING FOR BRASSER LAND FOR HIS CATTLE ...



A SHEEPHERDER — WITH HIS FLOCK AND DOG, BLOCKS, NESTLED PEACEFULLY ON THE HILLSIDE ...



A BEE WAVE OF HATE COATS THE COWBOY'S SPIRIT — HE SWARS, SEEING THAT SHEEPHERDER AND HIS BROTHER ON THE GRASSY LANDS ...



HE'D BRUSH HIM BEFORE HE'D BRIBE THE GRASSY LAND WITH A JOYFUL ...



— HE'D BRIBE HIM FIRST!





TIM HOLT





TIM HOLT

HE RODE THE NIGHT WINDS LIKE THE BLACK HORNET HE WAS! HIS SWORD WAS EVER AT THE THROATS OF THE WEAK AND HELPLESS! LIKE THE WOLF AFTER WHICH HE IS NAMED HE FEEDS ON THOSE UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES! AND WHEN REDMASK OF THE RED GRANGES GETS ON HIS TRAIL, EL LORD BEGINS TO BRAND REDMASK WITH—

"The MARK of the WOLF!"



THE BRIGHT MOON FALLS ON A SCORE OF PERSONS SHUFFLING ALONG THE COBBLESTONED STREETS OF SALOMA...

EAGER HANDS STRETCH FORTH GOLD AND SILVER BALLETS TO A WOODEN STALL SET IN A NICHE ON A STUNED WALL...



TIM HOLT

THERE ARE SOME WHO BURY THEIR TREASURES IN THE MEXICAN FIELDS BEYOND THE CITY...

"HIDE ME HERE! THE SWORD OF EL LOBO!"



THE TATTOO OF HIS HORSE'S HOOF BEATS A THUNDER IN THE DARKNESS! A KNIFE FLASHES!



AND SO THE DARK HORSE HOLDS SALOMA IN HIS HAND! HIS SWORD KILLS! HIS STEED BRINGS DEATH SWIFTLY TO ANY WHO OFFEND HIM!



HERE AND THERE IN COUNTRY FIELDS OR CITY STREET, THOSE WHO DEFTY THE MONSTER OF THE NIGHT LIKE DEAD BRANDED BY THE MARK OF THE WOLF!



BUT ONE NIGHT, AFTER THE MESSAGE-CARRIER THIPS INTO A LITTLE DOOR...



TIM HOLT

IN THE MOONLIGHT, IT IS EASY TO FOLLOW HIS TRAIL!



WHO COMES RIDING THROUGH THE NIGHT ON THE TRAIL OF EL LOBO? HA! HE WEARS A CRIMSON MASK— AND RIDES A GREAT ROAN STALLION! HA! IT IS — **REDMASK!**



REDMASK DIES BY THE SWORD OF EL LOBO?

EL LOBO COUNTS HIS CHICKENS BEFORE THEY ARE HATCHED!



YOU'VE PROVED ON THE HELPLESS LONG ENOUGH!



ACROSS THE ROCK-SHATTERED TOP OF AN OLD TOWER, TINKLING FIGURES SWIRL...



THE BATTLE IS BLOODY DESPERATE...



AND THEN A STRAINING FOOT SLIPS IN A POOL OF TORRID RAIN WATER...



TIM HOLT

A CRIMINAL FIGURE TURTLES DOWNWARD THROUGH THE NIGHT—



I WAS LUCKY! HE ALMOST HAD ME! BUT I'M ALIVE— ALIVE TO WRECK VENGEANCE ON THOSE WHO SURVIVED REDMAK!



HE CAME FROM CHISLITA'S HOUSE! SHE HAS BEEN TALKING OVERBUSH OF THE SEAGR REDMAK— AND NOW HER COONIN, WEX LOLLPOOBA, KNOWS HIM! FOR THAT, SHE SHALL PAY!

IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF SALOMA, SOMEWHAT LATER...



Wow!

YES, I—EL LOBO! I COME TO TAKE YOU AND YOUR RATHER TO YOUR GRAVES...



SCREAM IF YOU WANT! THOSE WHO HEAR YOU WILL KNOW THAT **EL LOBO** HAS COME TO SALOMA TO SETTLE A SCORE— AND WILL BE DEAR TO YOUR CALL....!

THROUGH THE NIGHT, EL LOBO DRAGS HIS TREMBLING VICTIMS TO AN OLD WELL, DEEP IN THE STONE HEART OF THE ANCIENT RUINS...



COME, PRETTY CHISLITA! COME AND SEE THE PLAYMATES OF EL LOBO... AH! AH! AH!



TIM HOLT

WITH A FRENCH TWIST OF HIS BODY, REDMASK LEAPS ASIDE...



BUT I WON'T MISS YOU!

USSH!



HOW DID YOU ESCAPE DEATH? ARE YOU REALLY THE GHOST OF THE FACED OF REDMASK OF THE RED GRAPES...?

I ESCAPED DEATH VERY SIMPLY.



"AS I FELL OUTWARD, MY FOOT HAVING SLIPPED IN THE SPILL OF RAIN WATER, I DREW MY KNIFE..."

ONLY CHANCE TO SURVIVE THIS FALL IS, BY SLIPPING A KNOT OVER MY KNIFE-HANDLE...



—AND BY HURLING MY CURVED DAGGER— THAT ACTS AS A JOLLYGOLLIWIG— INTO THAT STONE WINDOW...

THE KNIFE WHIPPED AROUND THE STONE POST! THE CORD HELD FOR A MOMENT, SWINGING ME AGAINST THE ROCKY WALL...



THE CORD BROKE... BUT IT STOPPED MY FALL... AND FROM HERE I CAN GO DOWN THE WALL, HAND OVER HAND!

INTENT ON THE STORY HE TELLS REDMASK DOES NOT NOTICE THAT EL LOBO HAS BEEN GATHERING HIS MUSCLES FOR ONE LAST DIRM EFFORT. THEN—



A CLEVER ESCAPE, REDMASK! BUT NOT CLEVER ENOUGH! YOU SEE— I, TOO, HAVE A TRICK UP MY SLEEVE...



NEED ONE MOVE AND CHIGUITS DIES! YIELD TO ME, EDMARK! DROP YOUR WEAPONS SO THE OLD MAN CAN TIE YOU UP!

I DARE NOT RISK HER LIFE!



IN A MOMENT, EDMARK IS BOUND AND LAMED FOREVER!

I WILL SEND YOU OUT OVER THE PIT OF MY SHAMES! DATE DRYAN IN THEM, EDMARK! SEE HOW YOU WILL FEEL HELPLESS AGAINST THEIR POISONED FANGS!



EDMARK BRINGS UP HIS LEGS! HIS LONG SPURS ARE CUT VICARIOUSLY...



NO!

HOOKED BY THOSE SILVER SPURS, EL LOBO IS DRAGGED TO THE EDGE OF THE REPTILE PIT— AND OVER!



FOR A MOMENT, A HAND REARS UPWARD AS A SCREAM OF AGONY SENDS THE NIGHT...



A MOMENT LATER...



NO MAN NEED FEAR EL LOBO AGAIN! HE HAS BEEN SURPRISED BY HIS OWN EVIL-FANGED PITS...!

THE END

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