

10¢
PER COPY

MARCH-APRIL

GENE AUTRY[®] COMICS



GENE AUTRY

and the LAUGHING GUNMAN



READY FOR THE SKY, STRANGER! AN KEEP YOUR HANDS OFF THAT GUN!



DON'T TRY ANY TRICKS! I GOT YOU COVERED!

WHAT'S THE IDEA??



CHOP OUT, SHERIFF! I GOT THE STRANGER UNDER CONTROL!



GREAT GUNS! GENE AUTRY!



JIM WALKER! SURE GOOD TO SEE YOU! MAYBE YOU CAN TALK SOME SENSE TO THIS DEPUTY!

GENE AUTRY!

PUT DOWN YOUR GUN, EVANS!



GENE, MEET HERB EVANS, MY DEPUTY! HERE, MEET THE BEST OUTLAW HUNTER IN THE WEST!



SURE PROUD TO KNOW YOU, AUTRY! HOPE THERE'S NO HARD FEELINGS!

NO HARD FEELINGS, EVANS! BUT I'D LIKE TO KNOW WHY YOU JUMPED ME THIS MORN'!

I'LL EXPLAIN, GENE!



THIS HONOR'S BRUFF WADE... BANDIT, DRY-GULCHER AN' JUST PLAIN KILLER! THEY'RE GOIN' TO HANG HIM NEXT MONTH!



EVANS AN' I ARE TAKIN HIM TO STATE PRISON! WE STOPPED TO DRINK AN' WATER THE HORSES! WE SAW YOU COMIN AN' DUCKED OUT O' SIGHT!



YOU SEE, WE GOT A TIP THAT WADE'S PAID MIGHT TRY TO RESCUE HIM! THAT'S WHY WE'RE SO CAREFUL ABOUT EVERYBODY WE MEET ON THE TRAIL!



THE SHERIFF'S LOOB, AUNT! I UNIT GOT TO PALE! THE L.W GRABBED THE WHOLE GANG THE NIGHT THEY NABBED ME!

MAYBE SO... AN' AGON, MAYBE NOT!



WE BETTER BE MOVIN' ON! TIE HIM UP GOOD AN' TIGHT, EVANS!

YEAH! I SURE WILL!



I'D BE GLAD TO RIDE ALONG WITH YOU, JIM!

NO NEED, GENE! RECKON EVANS AN' I CAN HANDLE THIS MORNIN'!



I'LL BE BACK IN GOLD CITY TOMORROW NIGHT! WHY DON'T YOU STOP BY SO WE CAN HAVE A GOOD SAB, GENE!

I'LL PROBABLY DO THAT, JIM! GOOD LUCK!



I GOT A FUNNY FEELIN' HE OUGHTA TRAIL ALONG WITH 'EM CHAND! THAT HORSE MADE WAS TOO ALL-FIBER ANXIOUS TO MAKE ME BELIEVE HIS WHOLE GANG WAS WIPED OUT!



A FEW MINUTES LATER --

SUNSHOTS! JIM WALKER MUST BE IN TROUBLE!



MORE SUNSHOTS! PICK UP YOUR FEET, BOY!



THERE'S JIM NOW! WONDER WHERE EVANS AN' WADE ARE!



JIM! CAN YOU TALK?

AMBUSHED -- BULLET DRILLED ME -- WADE GOT AWAY -- EVANS AFTER HIM ...



JAMB-BODY'S COMIN'!



EVANS!

ATRY! SURE GLAD TO SEE YOU! IS JIM DEAD?



NO! HE'S ALIVE - JUST UNCONSCIOUS! GOT A HOLE THROUGH HIS SHOULDER! HE GOTTA STOP THE BLEEDIN'!



THERE! THAT'LL HAVE TO DO TILL WE GET HIM TO A DOC! NOW, WHAT HAPPENED?

WE WERE RIDIN' ALONG WHEN, ALL OF A SUDDEN, WADE BEGUN SINGIN' SOME SONG ABOUT BILLY THE KID!



WHILE HE WAS SINGIN', THE CRAZIEST LAUGH CAME FROM BEHIND THAT ROCK UP THERE! THEN THERE WAS A REGULAR HAIL O' BULLETS FROM THE ROCK! JIM WAS HIT AN' WENT DOWN!



WADE TOOK OFF DOWN THE TRAIL AN' I WENT AFTER HIM! I LOST HIM IN THE WOODS DOWN YONDER! I DIDNT DARE TRAIL HIM ANY FARTHER! I HAD TO COME BACK TO SEE ABOUT JIM!



DID YOU GET A LOOK AT THE GUNMAN?

NO! AN' I CANT FIGGER HOW HE HID UP THERE WITHOUT BEEIN' HIN!



THERE'S NO COVER AROUND HIGH ENOUGH FOR A MAN TO HIDE BEHIND!

THERE SURE ISNT! BUT ITS A CINCHE YOU DIDNT IMAGINE THOSE SHOTS!



HE BETTER GET JIM TO TOWN AN' A DOC, FADTTO!



YOU LOOK AFTER JIM, EVANS AND I'LL
TRAIL MADE AN REPORT TO YOU IN
GOLD CITY SOMETIME TOMORROW!

THAT'S SWELL, AUTRY! IF
ANYBODY CAN GET HIM, YOU
CAN!



TAKE GOOD CARE O' JIM, EVANS!

I WILL! GOOD LUCK, AUTRY!



FIRST IN GOIN' TO TAKE A GOOD
LOOK AT THAT ROCK!



THE ONLY WAY A MAN COULD HIDE
HERE WOULD BE TO LIE FLAT ON
THE GROUND!



IF HE DID THAT, HE COULDN'T
SEE RIDERS ON THE TRAIL!
AN HE HAD TO SEE 'EM TO
MAKE HIS SHOTS COUNT!



THE DRY-SULCHER WAS MIGHTY CAREFUL
NOT TO LEAVE ANY TRACKS!



IT'S SURE QUER! ONLY A CHILD
COULD HIDE IN THIS LOW BRUSH!
AT I BET MY SWIRT NO CHILD
AMBUSHED JIM!



WELL, WAD'LL KNOW THE ANSWER --
WHEN I CATCH HIM!



IT'S EASY TO FOLLOW WADE'S TRACKS IN THIS SANDY GROUND!



LOOKS LIKE A ROPE UP THERE AHEAD ON THE GROUND!



IT IS A ROPE!



IT'S BEEN CUT WITH A KNIFE! PROBABLY THE KNIFE THAT TIED WADE!



WOW! THOSE ARE STRANGE-LOOKIN' FOOTPRINTS!



THEY LOOK LIKE THE PRINTS OF A SMALL CHILD'S SHOES! THEY COME IN FROM THE BRUSH AN' END RIGHT HERE!



SOMEBODY MUST BE WORKIN' WITH WADE ... BUT THERE'S ONLY ONE SET OF FOOTPRINTS! PROBABLY WADE AN' HIS PAL ARE RIDIN' DOUBLE!



AFTER AN HOUR'S RIDING ...

THE SAME PLACE WE STARTED, CHAMP! WADE'S SMART! HE DOUBLED BACK TO HIT THIS CREEK AN' WHEN HE COULDN'T TRAIL HIM IN WATER!



HIS TRACKS END HERE ON THE BANK
SO HE WENT INTO THE WATER, ALL
RIGHT!



IT'S AN ALMOST SURE GUESS THAT
HE HEADED DOWNSTREAM -- AWAY
FROM THE STATE PRISON!



WE'LL TAKE TO THE WATER, TOO,
CHAMP! AN WE'LL GO SLOW SO I
CAN WATCH BOTH BANKS FOR
SIGNS OF HIM LEAVIN' THE CREEK!



SOME TIME LATER ...

IT'S ALMOST DARK! RECKON WE'D BETTER
BED DOWN, AN TAKE UP THE TRAIL
AT SUN-UP!



THAT SAME NIGHT ... IN THE WOODS NEAR GOLD CITY ...

WE'LL MAKE SOME GOOD MONEY TOMORROW
WHEN WE PUT ON OUR SHOW FOR THE
YOKELS IN GOLD CITY!



WHAT'S THAT? SOUNDED LIKE
FOOTSTEPS!



TAKE IT EASY OLD-TIMER, AN YOU WON'T
GET HURT!







THEY'LL MAKE SWELL DISGUISES FOR US! SO TOMORRA HE CAN RIDE INTO GOLD CITY... IN BROAD DAYLIGHT!



AT SUN-UP
AUBREY
DROPPS CAMP...

WE BETTER GET MOVIN',
BOY!



WE'LL SCOUT AROUND! MAYBE WE CAN
PICK UP KADE'S TRAIL!



SOME TIME LATER--

WHAT MAKES YOU SO NERVY, CHAMP?
SOMETHING WRONG?



OH! NO WONDER YOU WERE SKITTERY! SO I DIDN'T
IMAGINE THOSE FAINT GUNSHOTS I THOUGHT I
HEARD LAST NIGHT!!



DOOR HORROR! THEY CLEANED HIM OUT!
THERE'S NOTHING LEFT IN HIS POCKETS
TO TELL WHO HE IS!



HE HAD A REASON AN' JUDGIN' FROM THE
GUNS, HE WAS CAMPIN' HERE WHEN
SOMEBODY DRY-BULCHED HIM AN' MADE
OFF WITH HIS DOTTIT!



IT BE BILLY TO GET THAT SOMEBODY WAS GRIFF WADE!



A LITTLE LATER...

GRIFF WASN'T SO SMART, AFTER ALL! THESE WAGON TRACKS ARE HEAVY EASY TO FOLLOW!



STILL LATER...

IT'S ANOTHER BLANK HILL CHAMP! THERE'S NOT A CHANCE OF FOLLOWING A TRAIL IN THOSE ROCKS!



WE'LL HEAD FOR GOLD CITY! MAYBE THE SHERIFF CAN GIVE UP A LEAD WHERE GRIFF MIGHT HIDE OUT!



TOWARD SUNDOWN, GENE RIDES INTO GOLD CITY...

FROM THE SIZE OF THE CROWD, THAT MUST BE A PRETTY GOOD MEDICINE SHOW!



IT'S A VENTRILOQUIST WITH A GUNNY!



NOW TELL ME, SMALL FRY, WHY IS A MAN'S HEAD LIKE THE HEAD OF A PIR?

'CAUSE IT KEEPS HIM FROM GOIN' TOO FAR!





GRIFF! THERE'S A TRY!

SHUT UP NERBY! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A DUMMY!



YOU'RE TOO DARNED SMART FOR ME SHALL SAY!

YEAH! BECKON FOLKS ARE TRYIN' TO FISSER WHY YOU AINT SITTING ON MY KNEE!



HONKY BANGS HITS THE SHERRIF!

OO! CHAY! HE WAS HOON YOU'D BE BRINGIN' GRIFF IN! WHAT HAPPE'ED?



LET'S GO IN AN SEE THE SHERRIF! THAT WAY I'LL ONLY HAVE TO TELL THE STORY ONCE!

HE'S IN HIS BEDROOM, BACK OF THE OFFICE!



AS GENE FINISHED HIS STORY...

AS I SEE IT, THE ONLY CHANCE OF PICKIN' UP GRIFF'S TRAIL IS BY CHECKIN' ALL HIS OLD HANGOUTS!

THAT MIGHT WORK!



LET ME THINK - HE LIKED THE OUTPOST - BUT THAT BURNED DOWN LAST MONTH...



I KNOW! THE CANTINA IN LA MESA! GRIFF WAS PLENTY SWEET ON THE GIRL THAT RUNS IT!

THAT SOUNDS LIKE A REAL LEAD! I'LL START FOR LA MESA AFTER SUPPER!



SO, LATER
THAT NIGHT...

WELL IN THE SHADOWS,
NUBBY? IF YOU'RE SCOTCHY,
THE JIVE'S UP!



AT THE SAME MOMENT...

WHEN DO THAT MEDICINE WAGON HIT
TOWN EVANS?

ABOUT NOON! THE OLD
GEEZER'S GOT A NIFTY
FUNNY ACT! THAT DUMMY
ACTS ALMOST HUMAN!



LOOK, GRIFF! IT'S AUTRY AN THAT DEPUTY
LOOKIN' AT THE WAGON!

I SEE 'EM! AN'Z DON'T LIKE IT!



THAT DEAD MAN I FOUND LOOKED MORE LIKE
THE OWNER OF A MEDICINE SHOW THAN THE
OLD COOGER RUNNIN' THIS ONE!

DO YOU THINK THIS ONE'S A BARE?

I DON'T KNOW! BUT HE'S
WORTH INVESTIGATIN'!



SOUNDS LIKE AUTRY'S BITTIN' SUSPICIOUS
GRIF!

YEAH! RECKON WE'LL HAVE TO
SHUT HIM UP FER GOOD!



THEY MIGHT SEE ME SO I RECKON IT'S
UP TO YOU, NUBBY!

GOOD! I LIKE TO DO THE
SHOOTIN'!





A MOMENT LATER

THE SHOT CAME FROM BEHIND THE WAITRESS TROUGH!

STAY BACK! I'LL GET HIM IF HE'S STILL THERE!



I TOLD YOU NOT TO LAUGH! NOW
AUTREY'S HEARIN' THIS WAY!

WELL, WHAT'DS YOU HEARIN' ME HIDE
FOR? I COULDN'T HIDE HIM FROM THAT
WINDY!



IN THE WHOLE TOWN COULDN'T HIDE
HEARIN' A SECOND SHOT! IT'D BE A
SURE WAY TO BRING IN THE LAW
PRONTO! I'LL HANDLE AUTREY!

MAYBE I'M HANGIN' UP THE WRONG TREE
BUT IT'S WORTH TRYIN'!



PROFESSOR DUBLEY!

WHAT IN BLAZES DO YOU HEAR? HEARIN'
ME UP AT THIS HOUR?



I AINT TALKIN TO NO BODERS
WITH A GUN IN ME HAND!

NOW DO YOU FEEL SAFER?

YEAH! BUT A
MINUTE!



WELL, WHAT DO YOU WANT TO SAY, MISTER JOBBEY?

THE NAME IS AUBREY! AN' WHAT I'VE GOT TO SAY ISN'T FOR THE WHOLE TOWN TO HEAR! COME DOWN HERE WHERE I WON'T HAVE TO HELL!

THIS IS CLOSE ENOUGH! I STILL AIN'T EXACTLY TRUSTIN' HIM!

IT'LL DO FINE! I JUST WANTED TO ..

... TO SEE IF THAT BEARD WAS REAL!

VE-OH!!!

WE'LL GET THE LAW ON YOU FOR THIS ASSAULTIN' AN' OLD MAN!

SORRY PROFESSOR! I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE AN ESCAPED KILLER IN HANTON!

WHY YOU ORNERY SUN-TOWN COYOTE! I'LL TEACH HIM TO CALL ME A KILLER!

OOOPS!

NEXT TIME I KATCH HIM AROUND MY WAGON I'LL SPLASH HIM WITH BUCKSHOT!

LUCKY YOU HAD THAT BEARD GLUED ONTO
YOUR FACE, GRUFF!

I FINGERED SOMEBODY MIGHT
TRY WHAT AUTRY DID! HE WAS
SURE FLABBERGASTED WHEN IT
DIDN'T COME OFF!

WHYRE YOU SITTIN' DOWN? WE AINT
DONE THEM ROBBERY JOBS YET!

AN WE AINT GONNA DO 'EM!
SOON'S THE TOWN'S ASLEEP,
WE'RE HEADIN' OUT! I'M STILL
LEERY O' AUTRY!

AT THAT SAME TIME --

HOW'S THE ARM EVANS?

DOD SAYS I'LL BE
OKAY BY MORNING!
WHAT DID YOU FIND OUT
FROM THE PROFESSOR?

I RECKON HE'S THE PROFESSOR, ALL
RIGHT! HIS BEARD'S REAL, ANYWAY!
AN HE'S A GOOD SHOT WITH A BUCKET
O' WATER!

A FEW MINUTE'S LATER--

I'D LIKE TO BE SEEN YOU DO DAIN! THAT
SUCKER! HERE'S WHERE I LIVE!

GOOD! I'LL BE GLAD TO GET
OUT O' THESE DAMN CLOTHES!

I'M STILL NOT ENTIRELY SATISFIED ABOUT
PROFESSOR DODLEY! WHILE I'M IN LA
MESA, HOW ABOUT YOU KEEPIN' AN EYE
ON HIM?

BUT I'M GON' TO LA MESA, TOO!

NOT WITH THAT WOUND!

MY BRIDE'S HURT WORSEN W' I AM!
I'VE GOT TO GET GRUFF MADE
BACK INTO THE DEN!

I SAVVY, EVANS! WE'LL HEAD FOR
LA MESA AT SUNUP!

—AT SUNUP—

LOOK, EVANS! THE PROFESSOR'S
FILLED UP STAKES!

GUESS HE GOT MAD ABOUT
YOU SUSPICIONIN' HIM, AN'
DECIDED HE DIDN'T LIKE GOLD
CITY!



MAYBE! LET'S STOP A MINUTE! I WANT TO
TAKE A LOOK AROUND!



WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND AROUND?

MAYBE NOTHIN'—MAYBE
PLENTY! HEY! LOOK HERE!



MORE O' THOSE FINGER-PRINTED FOOTPRINTS!

RIGHT! NO WONDER YOU THOUGHT
THAT DUMMY ACTED ALMOST
HUMAN!



IT'S BEGINNIN' TO MAKE SENSE EVANS!
GRIFF'S PAL WHO HELPED HIM ESCAPE
AN SIBBS AT YOU LAST NIGHT IS A
MIDGET!



AN THAT MIDGET IS PRETENDIN'
TO BE A VENTRILOQUIST'S DUMMY!



BUT IF GRIFF IS PRETENDIN' TO BE THE
PROFESSOR, HOW COULD HE GROW THAT
BEARD OVERNIGHT?

HE COULD HAVE
GLED IT TO HIS FACE! I'M
ALMOST SURE THE DEAD MAN IN
THE HODDS WAS THE REAL
PROFESSOR, DUDLEY!



GOT ANY IDEA WHERE TO LOOK FOR THE WAGON?

YES! BRUFF PROBABLY FIGURED HE'S SAFE AFTER BUTTIN' IT OUT OF ME LAST NIGHT



SO PROB'LY LIKELY HE'S ON HIS WAY TO LA MESA TO SEE THAT GIRL HE LIKES!

ALL RIGHT! LET'S GO!



FIRST LET'S PICK UP A COUPLE OF SEBAGS AND SOMBREROS IN THAT SHOP!



IF BRUFF CAN FOOL US WITH A DISGUISE, WE OUGHTA BE ABLE TO FOOL HIM!



LATE THAT AFTERNOON...

THERE'S LA MESA, GENS!

AN' IF I GUESS RIGHT, THAT GROUND DOWN THERE IS WATCHIN' PROFESSOR DUDLEY'S MEDICINE SHOW!



YOU HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD! THAT'S DUDLEY'S WAGON!

THEN HERE'S WHERE WE TIEY OFF THIS ROAD!



WE'LL LEAVE OUR HORSES IN THOSE TREES AN' SLIP INTO TOWN ON FOOT!





QUICKLY BENE DUCKS THE "DUMMY"
BACK WITH THE "SHARP POINT OF THE AXE."



THE DUMMY'S ALIVE!



OOOF! MY HAND!



GRIFF WOULD HATE HE LEAVE HIM
INSIDE THE WAGON!



TAKE CARE O' GRIFF, EVENS! I'LL GET
HIS DAD!



DON'T SHOOT! I'LL GIVE US!







HALF an ALIBI

"Hey, kid! Where's th' Sheriff?"

Young Don Stevens slowly turned in the swivel desk chair until he faced the doorway. He looked with cool, blue eyes at the burly, six-foot figure crossing the office toward him.

"Didn't yuh hear me, Bub? I wanta see th' Sheriff! Pronto!" The burly man spoke again, coming to a halt a few feet from the desk.

Still moving slowly, Don arose from the chair. At his unexpected height and breadth, the other man backed up a step, surprise flickering briefly across his dust-streaked face.

"Sheriff Regan's out of town." Don's voice was slow, like his movements. "I'm his new deputy. Don Stevens is the name."

The burly man's glance raked the lean litheness of Don Stevens. He shifted uneasily. There was something about the deputy's eyes and voice that made him uncertain. Maybe he'd better forget the whole thing till the Sheriff returned. Regan was a good lawman, but a little on the stupid side.

"What did you want to see the Sheriff about?" Don Stevens' quiet drawl cut across his thoughts.

He took a deep breath and decided to go ahead as planned. "That polecat, Will Gray, has fenced in a waterhole that's part mine an' . . ."

"Hold it, mister. Who are you?" Don Stevens interrupted.

"I'm Burt Linder, owner o' th' Rock-in'-L out on th' south road," the burly man answered. "Gray's spread is next to mine. We've been arguin' about that waterhole fer a long time. Yesterday Gray stuck a barbed-wire fence around it. Put a gate in th' fence, too! With a

polecat on it an' . . ."

"This sounds like a case for the civil courts," Don began.

Linder cut him off. "Gray says he'll get me if I go to court! An' that's six-gun talk, in case yuh don't know it, Bub!"

Don moved so quickly, Linder had no chance to step aside. The deputy's hands seized Linder's coat lapels and held him motionless.

"Don't call me 'Bub' again," Don said. "I don't like it!"

As Don released him, Linder backed away. "I didn't mean no harm, Deputy," he whined. "I'm jest kinda upset. It's mighty worrisome to know somebody's out to gun yuh down."

Don nodded. "I savvy that, but I don't see what you expect me to do about it."

"Toss Gray in jail, o' course!"

"On what charge?"

"Threatenin' to commit murder! Stealin' water rights! What more do yuh want?" Linder's scowl was as black as his eyes.

"Have you got witnesses who heard him threaten you?"

The older man's lips curled derisively. This kid was as stupid as Regan. "A man don't make threats so's other folks can hear him. But I ain't gonna rest easy till Gray's in th' calaboose!"

"Then I'm afraid you're in for some sleepless nights," Don told him. "I can't arrest a man without good cause."

"What're yuh gonna do? Stand by till I git killed?"

A fine, white line drew itself around Don's mouth. "Not exactly." His glance moved past Linder to the door

where the twilight shadows were gathering "Tomorrow morning I'll ride out to Gray's ranch. Maybe I can talk him into putting this matter up to the courts."

Linder looked at the floor to hide the triumphant gleam in his eyes. This young deputy was playing right into his hands. "If that's all yuh can do, reckon I'll have to be satisfied."

"After I see Gray, I'll drop over to your place an' give you a report," Don said.

"Thanks." Linder's narrow smile had no mirth in it. "Here's hopin' I'm alive to get it!"

Don sat silently for several minutes after Linder was gone. He was wondering whether he should ride out to Gray's ranch that night. The rumble of distant thunder, followed by a faint flash of lightning, put an end to this uncertainty. A violent storm was blowing up from the south. The narrow, winding road to Gray's ranch would be practically impassable in the storm.

The morning was clear and bright after the rain. Don rode across the range toward the Gray ranch. He decided that he would take a look at the disputed water hole, before he talked to Gray. Finally he reached the barbed-wire enclosure. He stopped abruptly and stared at the crumpled body of a man, lying on the ground near the fence.

A moment later he was bending over the lifeless form, looking at the bullet hole that had spelled death to the fair-haired man. Not far away lay a wide-brimmed hat. Don picked it up. He dropped it again, as he heard the drum of approaching hoofbeats.

"Mornin', Deputy, I . . ." Linder saw the body and pulled up short. "What's that?"

"Murder?" Don answered quietly.

Linder swung out of the saddle. His face paled. "Great guns! It's Will Gray!"

"I figured that."

"But who done it?"

"Don't YOU know?" Don's eyes were cold and blue.

"Me? O'course not! We fixed up our



quarrel last night. He musta been comin' out here to cut down th' fence when . . ."

"What do you mean, fixed up your quarrel?" Don's drawl was gone. His voice cracked like a bull-whip.

Linder did not hesitate. "Gray wuz waitin' fer me when I got home last night. Said he wuz sorry over threatenin' me. Suggested we have our boundary surveyed again. Meantime, we'd both use th' waterhole. That suited me. We shook hands on it an' he rode off."

"What time was that?" Don asked.

"I ain't sure, but 'twas afore th' rain. I wuz talkin' to some o' my boys when th' storm broke. I can prove it!"

"I don't doubt that. But I'm arrestin' you for this murder, anyway, Linder! Reach!" Don's gun flashed in the sunlight.

Linder's hands shot up in the air. His face purpled angrily. "Yuh're loco! Gray wuz killed AFTER it started to rain, wuzn't he? Look! Th' ground's wet under his body. That backs up my alibi!"

Don reached for Linder's gun. "You killed him BEFORE the rain! Then you come out here later an' moved the body so it would look like he'd been shot AFTER the storm began!"

"Yuh can't prove that!"

"Oh, yes, I can!" Don's voice was calm and sure. "You see, Linder, you fixed-up only half an alibi! You forgot to move Gray's hat! The ground under the hat is absolutely dry!"

GENE AUTRY

in "The Gold Bell"



THE KILLER SURE CLEANED OUT HIS
POCKETS! THERE'S NOT EVEN A SCRAP
OF PAPER TO TELL WHO HE WAS!



A RING! IT MUSTA BEEN UNDER
HIM! BUT THERE'S NO IDENTIFYIN'
INITIALS, INSIDE OR OUT!



THERE'S TRACKS OF ONE HORSE DOWN IN
FROM THE SOUTH - AN TRACKS OF TWO
GON' OUT!



THE KILLER MUSTA FIRED FROM THAT
RIDGE! WHEN HIS VICTIM FELL, HE
CAME DOWN TO MAKE SURE IT WASN'T
A TRICK!



THEN HE STOLE THE DEAD MAN'S HORSE
AN RODE AWAY!



HEEDS SOME WRITIN' IN THE SAND!
GOLD BALL... OR IS IT GOLD BELL? IN
DEAD MAN MUSTA TRIED TO LEAVE A
MESSAGE!



HE DEEPLY HAD JUST STRENGTH ENOUGH
TO WRITE THOSE TWO WORDS 'FORE HE
DIED! I'LL WIRE 'EM OUT, IN CASE THE
KILLER COMES BACK THIS WAY!



A LITTLE LATER—

WELL, HESITAL IF ON TO LOST RIVER,
CHARB? MAYBE MARSHAL GREEN'LL
RECOGNIZE THAT RING!



SAY! WHAT'S THAT FLASH OF LIGHT?



THAT'S SOMEBODY SIGNALIN' FROM THE SOUTH
RIDGES -- WITH A MIRROR, MOST LIKELY!



THERE'S AN ANSWER IN FLASH FROM THE
NORTH! LET'S RIDE UP FOR A LOOK-SEE,
BUND!



WE'LL INVESTIGATE THE SOUTH RIDGES!
IT'S CLOSER!



NEAR AS I CAN JUDGE, WHOEVER WAS
SIGNALIN' MUSTA BEEN UP ON THAT LEASE!



NOBODY HERE NOW! BUT HERE'S TRACKS!
FRESH ONES TOO!





LATER - GENE RIDES INTO THE TOWN OF LOST RIVER -

THAT'S A LIGHT IN HIS OFFICE. SO TOM MUST BE WORKIN' LATE!



GENE ATRY! SO YOU DID GET MY MESSAGE, ASKIN' YOU TO RIDE DOWN THIS MORN'

MORNIN', TOM! YES, I GOT IT, AN HERE I AM!



I WOULD'VE BEEN HERE SOONER BUT I RAN INTO SOME TROUBLE!

WHAT?



SO GENE TELLS WHAT HAPPENED IN DEAD MAN'S FLAT..

THAT'S THE STORY TOM! HERE ARE THE RING AN THE BUCKLE!

I DON'T OWN THE BUCKLE, GENE ...



...BUT I KNOW THIS RING! IT BELONGED TO HENRY BECK - ONE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACE UNDERCOVER AGENTS!



I'VE HEARD OF HIM! WAS HE DOWN HERE ON A CASE?

YES! HE WAS ON THE TRAIL OF A SHUGGLIN' RING!



THIS GANG PULLS ROBBERIES IN MEXICO, SHUGGLES THE LOOT ACROSS THE BORDER, AN DISPOSES OF IT HERE IN THE STATES!



HE'VE BEEN WORKIN' WITH THE MEXICAN AUTHORITIES, TRYIN' TO TRACK THEM DOWN! BUT NO LUCK! THAT'S WHY I ASKED YOU TO COME DOWN, GENE! I NEED YOUR HELP!



BECK CALLED ON ME THREE DAYS AGO! SAID HE HAD A HOT LEAD! BUT HE DIDN'T TELL ME WHAT IT WAS!

DID HE SAY ANYTHING ABOUT A GOLD BALL OR GOLD BELL?



NO! BUT I WONDER IF HE MEANT THE LOCAL DANCE HALL - IT'S CALLED THE BELL OF GOLD!



I'LL BET THAT'S WHAT HE MEANT! WHAT KIND OF A PLACE IS THIS BELL OF GOLD?

A BOLD OUTFIT! RUN BY AN ANGRY NAMED DARK WALDEN!



BECK MUST'VE BEEN TRYIN' TO TELL SOMEBODY TO CHECK UP ON WALDEN! ALL MOSLEY EVER ASKED A JACK HOLLAND!

I'LL GO WITH YOU!



BETTER NOT TON! IF THOSE ANGELERS DO HANG OUT OVER THERE - AN' THEY SEE YOU WITH ME -



THEY'LL SAWY' 'EM ON THE LONG SIDE! IS JUST AS SOON THEY DIDN'T KNOW THAT - YET!

BUT IF YOU'RE NOT BACK GREFFY SOON, I'LL BE OVER TO FIND OUT WHY!



AT THAT SAME MOMENT, IN THE BELL OF GOLD, DIRK WALDEN IS TALKING TO A GIRL NAMED BENA VOLK.

NOW TELL EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED TODAY IN DEAD MAN'S FLAT, BENA?

ALL RIGHT!

JUST AFTER JACK FINISHED BEER, THIS STRANGE COWBOY CAME ALONG! HE SAW BECK'S BODY AND THEN HE STARTED UP THE SOUTH RIDGE!

I WAS ON THE NORTH RIDGE! I SIGNALLED JACK TO TAKE CARE OF THE COWBOY LIKE HE DID BECK--

SHHH! NOT SO LOUD!

DON'T SH- THAT NAME! IF ANYBODY HEARS YOU--

DON'T WORRY! NOBODY'LL HEAR US! BESIDES, NOBODY CAN CONNECT US WITH THE KILLING!

LOOK! THAT COWBOY! HE'S THE ONE--

ZEDIE! YOU WERE IN FOR IT!

DO YOU KNOW HIM?

YEAH! AN I KNOW HE ISN'T HERE BY ACCIDENT!

THAT'S BENA AUSTRY, THE OUTLAW HUNTER! IM GON' TO FINISH HIM OFF BEFORE HE--

DON'T BE A FOOL, DINK! EVEN IN LOST RIVER YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A REASON FOR SHOOTIN' A MAN!

BUT IF AUTRY GETS NICE TO US--



WELL, MAKE SURE HE DOESN'T TALK TO HIM AND GIVE YOU A REASON FOR PICKING A QUARREL WITH HIM! UNDERSTAND?



I'LL PRETEND I'M A MEXICAN GIRL! NOW REMEMBER - MY NAME'S RENA VELEZ - NOT RENA VOLK! NOW GET READY TO MOVE FAST, DINK!

I WILL! GET GOIN'!



GOOD EVENING, SEÑOR! YOU ARE STRANGER HERE! WOULD YOU LIKE TO DANCE?

GOOD EVENING, MRS. -



MY NAME'S RENA VELEZ! I LIVE HERE IN LOST RIVER -- BUT MY REAL HOME'S ACROSS THE BORDER IN MEXICO!

I SEE MRS. VELEZ! MY NAME'S AUTRY!



I AM HAPPY TO KNOW YOU, SEÑOR AUTRY! SINCE WE ARE BOTH AWAY FROM HOME, WE SHALL BE FRIENDS, EH?



SAY, FELLA, WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY TALKIN' TO MY GIRL?

I'M SORRY! I DIDN'T KNOW--







WIND UP I GO WITH YOU, MARSHAL? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO YOU FOR A MINUTE!

STUPID! THE MARSHAL DIDN'T KNOW ANYBODY!

WE KNOW HIM, ALL RIGHT! THEY'RE PUTTIN' ON AN ACT!



LOOK TOM! DO YOU KNOW THAT HORSE? THAT'S JUST RIDIN' UP!

SURE! THAT'S MACK DALY, ONE O' DICK WALDEN'S CREW, WY?



MR HORSE LOOKS KINDA FAMILIAR! I WONDER...

GENE! ONE O' MACK'S SUSPENDER BUCKLES IS BROKEN!



IF SURE 'NOUGH IS, TOM!



ILL BET MY LAST DOLLAR THAT YOU SPOOKED UP THE BROKEN PIECE O' THAT BUCKLE!

IM SURE I DID! THAT MEANS MACK MUST BE THE HORSE WHO SHOT AT ME!



GIV THE WORD, GENE, AN' I'LL THROW WALDEN BACK, AN' THE GALS IN JAIL!

THEN WED NEVER PROVE ANYTHING ON 'EM! HE GOT A MARCH THEY'RE GUILTY O' FLENTY!



DO YOU FIGURE THEY KILLED BEN?

MOBEN LIKELY! IF THEY DID KILL HIM THEN IT'S SURE THEY'RE MIXED UP IN THE SHARLING KING HE WAS INVESTIGATIN'!



DO YOU THINK THE SUTRY KNOWS ANYTHING ABOUT US?

NOT YET! WE'LL BRING OVER THE LEAD TONIGHT! THEN WE'LL SAY HEY! TILL HE GETS OUT O' TOWN!



NOW YOU BETTER GET STARTED FOR THE BORDER, BENA! HUCK AN' I'LL FOLLOW AN' WAIT IN THE REGULAR PLACE!



GENE HURRIES TO THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE...

WALDEN AN' THE GIRL ARE PART O' THE SNUBBIN' GANG, ALL RIGHT, TOM!



THEY'RE RIPPIN' A LOAD O' ORDS OUT THE LINE TONIGHT! I'D LIKE TO FOLLOW THE GIRL AN' SEE HER CONFEDERATE! HIS NAME IS JOSE!



I'LL GIVE YOU A MESSAGE TO WALSON AT THE BORDER STATION! HE'LL LET YOU CROSS WITHOUT ANY DELAY!



THANKS! I'LL GET CHAMP AN' TRAIL THE GIRL!

AN' I'LL WAIT IN' FOLLOW WALDEN!



SO... A SHORT TIME LATER...

THERE SHE GOES—HEADIN' STRAIGHT FOR THE BORDER! SO EASY, CHAMP! WE DON'T WANT HER TO KNOW WE'RE TRAILIN' HER!



AND STILL LATER - RENA STOPS AT THE BORDER STATION—

HERE'S YOUR SPECIAL PERMIT MISS YELLS!
BE SURE YOU GET BACK BEFORE SUN
IN THE MORNING!

I WISH, SORRY! IF MY MOTHER WAS NOT
SICK, I WOULD NOT ASK THESE GUYS
SAYO!



IT'S FUNNY THAT GAL ALWAYS VISITS HER
SICK MOTHER AT NIGHT!

SHE SAYS SHE WORKS IN DAY AND
CANNOT GO!



HOWDY! IS ONE OF YOU JIM WILSON?

YEP! AM!



MY NAME'S ATRY'S. I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR
YOU FROM MARSHAL GREEN IN LOST RIVER!
WOULD LIKE A SPECIAL PERMIT TO CROSS
THE BORDER TONIGHT!



A FEW MINUTES LATER—

THANKS! I'LL BE BACK BEFORE
SUN O'CLOCK!

GOOD BYE!



GONE TRAILS RENA UNTIL—

WE BETTER STOP HERE, CHAMPY SHE'S HEADIN FOR
THAT SHACK! I'LL GO THE REST O' THE WAY
ON FOOT!



Hi, Joe! Is the stuff ready?

Yeah! We got a real haul this time!
Cash inside ready!



Is sure down a left of shadow-
peekin tonight? But is sure
know out things!



They're beauties all right! But is
scared of Opals Joe!

Don't be a fool! They can't
hurt you! Well all betins if
we do a few more jobs like
this!



So the horrors thing is Joe? Well
the girl are masqueradin' as
Mexicans! They're as American
as I am!



Ill go back to the border station
an wait for Rena! I haven't an
right to make arrests down here!



The border officers can send
word to the Mexican police to
pick up Joe - alias Jose!



At 5:00 - Gene White in the border
station -

It's almost six! I hope nothings
happened to the girl!

Here she comes
now!



Not far away Dick Walden and
Jack Watt, too -

There's Rena ridin' up to the station
now!



LOOK DICK! SOMETHING'S WRONG! THEY'VE STOPPED RAN! THERE'S THREE MEN INSTEAD O' TWO!

THE THIRD ONE'S A UTILITY HE'LL HAVE TO SHOOT IT OUT O' EM!



DROP THOSE GUNS AND LIFT YOUR HANDS! I'VE BEEN WAITIN' ALL NIGHT FOR THIS MINUTE!

THE MARSHAL...



MEANTIME - AT THE BORDER STATION -

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST, MISS VELAZ! HAND OVER THOSE JEWELS!

YOU ARE CHASING SEBAST? I HAVE NOTHING! I GO ONCE TO VISIT MY DEER MOTHER!



YOU WILL BE COARSE FOR THESE SEBAST!

WE'LL FIND THE JEWELS!

WHEN WE GET YOU TO WEST RIVER! AN YOU CAN CUT OUT THE PONY HEADS IN TALK THE GANGS OVER!



LATER - AT THE MARSHAL'S OFFICE IN WEST RIVER

THE MEXICAN POLICE NABBED JOE AT THE SNACK! HIDDEN BACK IN THE GIRL ARE IN JAIL HERE! SO WE GOT THE WHOLE SHAGGLING GANG!

MY WIFE IS SEARCHING THE GIRL NOW! SHE MUST HAVE THE JEWELS ON HER!



DID YOU FIND THE JEWELS, MISSUS GIBBY?

NO! AS I SEARCHED HER THOROUGHLY! THE ONLY JEWELRY SHE HAS IS THIS NECKLACE WITH THE GOLD BALL!



A GOLD BALL! LET ME SEE IT, PLEASE!

LOOK! I PRESSED THAT LITTLE KNOB ON THE BALL ONCE! HERE ARE THE JEWELS, TOM!



I SAID THOSE GIRLS WERE BAD LUCK!

WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHETHER BOOB BECK WROTE GOLD BELL OR GOLD BALL IN THE SAND TON! BOTH WERE MIGHTY IMPORTANT WORDS!



75 The THS of Old Mexico



THE TERRAZAS RANCH OF OLD MEXICO WAS AT ONE TIME CONSIDERED TO BE THE LARGEST COW-OUTFIT IN THE WORLD. IT COVERED MORE THAN SIX MILLION ACRES AND RAN ALMOST A HALF MILLION HEAD OF CATTLE. THE STORY IS TOLD OF A TEXAS COW-MAN WHO WENT DOWN TO THE TERRAZAS OUTFIT TO BUY SOME CATTLE. HE ASKED SEÑOR TERRAZAS IF HE COULD SUPPLY HIM WITH FIVE THOUSAND HEAD OF YEARLING HEIFERS. SEÑOR TERRAZAS' REPLY WAS, "WHAT COLOR?" THIS GREAT CATTLE EMPIRE IS NOW BROKEN UP INTO SMALL PARCELS OF APPROXIMATELY ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND ACRES AND IS OWNED BY THE TERRAZAS HEIRS.



101 The 101 of Oklahoma

THE ONE-O-ONE RANCH WAS HEADQUARTERS FOR THE GREAT 101 RANCH WILD WEST SHOW WHICH TOURED THE UNITED STATES AND EUROPE ABOUT THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO. SOME OF THE GREATEST BRONC-RIDERS, TRICK-RIDERS AND ROPERS IN THE WORLD WORKED FOR THIS OUTFIT AS WELL AS A LARGE BAND OF INDIANS. COL. ZACK MILLER, OWNER OF THE SHOW, COMBED THE COUNTRY FOR TOP RIDERS AND HARD BUCKING HORSES. WHEN THE OUTFIT WAS FINALLY DISBANDED, MANY OF THE COWBOYS AND INDIANS WENT TO HOLLYWOOD TO WORK IN MOTION PICTURES.



¢

The Lightning C of Texas



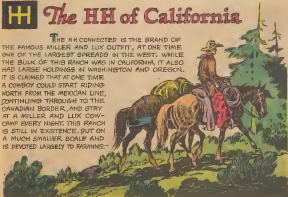
THE LIGHTNING-C RANCH OF DUBLIN, TEXAS, IS DEVOTED ENTIRELY TO THE RAISING OF LIVESTOCK FOR USE IN RODEOS. IN ADDITION TO HAVING ONE OF THE FINEST STRINGS OF BUCKING HORSES IN THE WORLD, THIS RANCH RAISES BRAHMA BULLS FOR BULL RIDING EVENTS, MEXICAN STEERS FOR BULL-DOGGING, AND FINE COWHORSES FOR GENERAL ARENA WORK. THE LIGHTNING-C HAS ONE OF THE LARGEST REMAINING HERDS OF LONGHORN CATTLE IN THE COUNTRY. THESE ANIMALS MAY BE SEEN IN ACTION IN SUCH FAMOUS RODEOS AS MADISON SQUARE GARDEN, BOSTON, HOUSTON, TEXAS, AND MANY OTHERS. GENE AUTRY IS PART OWNER OF THIS OUTFIT AND APPEARS IN MOST OF THE RODEOS.



HH

The HH of California

THE HH CONNECTED IS THE BRAND OF THE FAMOUS MILLER AND LUX OUTFIT, AT ONE TIME ONE OF THE LARGEST SPREADS IN THE WEST. WHILE THE BULK OF THIS RANCH WAS IN CALIFORNIA, IT ALSO HAD LARGE HOLDINGS IN WASHINGTON AND OREGON. IT IS CLAIMED THAT AT ONE TIME A COWBOY COULD START RIDING NORTH FROM THE MEXICAN LINE, CONTINUING THROUGH TO THE CANADIAN BORDER, AND STAY AT A MILLER AND LUX COW-CAMP EVERY NIGHT. THIS RANCH IS STILL IN EXISTENCE, BUT ON A MUCH SMALLER SCALE AND IS DEVOTED LARGELY TO FARMING.



The WONDER HORSE

IT IS EARLY MORNING AT THE C-BAR RANCH...



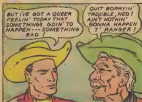
I SURE HOPE HE GETS HIS SHARE OF THEM! I COULD USE THE CASH! MY HORSE'S DUE AT THE BANK NEXT WEEK!

KUMPH! AFTER TH' HOPEO, YOU WON'T NEED T' WORRY UP HORSE, NED!



THAT AIN'T A HOSS IN TH' TERRITORY YOU HOLD A CANDLE T' RANGER!

I'VE FELT THAT WAY ABOUT HIM EVER SINCE HE WAS BORN THAT'S WHY I WORKED SO HARD TRAININ' HIM!



BUT I'VE GOT A QUERER FEELIN' TODAY THAT SOMETHING'S GOIN' TO HAPPEN--- SOMETHING BAD!

QUIT BORNIN' TROUBLE, NED! AIN'T NOthin' BORNVA HAPPEN T' RANGER!



AS GOOD I'M ANNOYED WITH TH' HOPEO JO HEAR! YOU KEEP YOUR EYE ON HIM, POP!

I SHORE WILL! FROM NOW ON, I'LL ANNY SIX GUN ARE LETTIN' UP NIGHTS WITH THIS HOSS!

THAT NIGHT TWO MEN
RIDE STEALTHLY TOWARD
THE C-SAB RANCH BARN.



WAIT HERE, DODD,
TILL I COME OUTA
TY' BARN! THEN
COME FLYIN'!

I GOT IT,
BFF!

DOSE NED CLYMER'S
GOT A GUARD POSTED!



IF WE HAS, IT'LL
PROBLY BE' OLD POP
BUTLER, OR THAT COP-
SORE, OLIM'AN' I CAN
HANDLE EITHER O'
THEM EASY!



THERE'S POP BUTLER!
AN' THE OLD
COOT'S SOUNDIN'
ASLEEP!



IT'S LIKE
TAKIN' CANDY
FROM A KID!



EASY, BOY..
EASY...



HUNT WUZ YUH
TALKIN' T' ME,
NED? WHAT...?



YUH LOWDOWN COYOTE!
OH BACK HERE, ER... I'LL...
... MY GUN! IT'S GONE!



DO YOU THINK THEY STOLE RANGER TO TRY FOR THEM GOOD PRIZES, THEMSELVES?

NO! THEY CAN'T SHOW HIM IN PUBLIC! HE'S TOO WELL-KNOWN AROUND HERE!



IT'S MY GUESS THEY'RE PLANNIN' TO HOLD RANGER FOR RANSOM! IN THAT CASE, WE'LL BE HEARIN' FROM THEM MIGHTY SOON!



THE NEXT MORNING

LOOKIT THIS, NED! IT HUZ ON TH' BARR DOOR! YOU HUZ RIGHT! THEM VARMINTS WANT TWO THOUSAND CASH... PER A RANSOM!



YOU GOTTA LEAVE TH' MONEY AT TH' FOOT O' THE COLLECTED-ON-ON RANGERS TRAIL...

OR THEY'LL KILL RANGER!



BY ANYONE TAKIN' A DOOR CALL IN THE LAW OR BOUND ANYBODY WITH YOU IF YOU WANT DANGER TO GO ON BOUND

SETTIN' TOGETHER THAT MUCH CASH'LL BE SOME JOB! BUT I'LL HAVE TO DO IT! I GOTTA SAVE RANGER!



LEMME GO UP THAR I'FRIGHT, NED! I'LL FIX 'EM AFTER ALL THIS HULL THING'S MY FAULT!

NO, POP! YOU STAY OUT OF THIS! I'LL HANDLE IT!



I BETWA I HAV FISSER A WAY TO CATCH THEM BOUNDWILES AN' GIT RANGER BACK AN' SAVE NED'S CASH, TOO!





YOU'D BETTER STAY OUTA IT, POP! ONE FALSE MOVE, AN' THOSE COYOTES'LL KILL RANDEY!

IF I MAKE ANY MOVES, SLIM ... THEY HONT BE FALSE DRES! YUN HIR BANK ON THAT!



LATE THAT NIGHT ...

WHEN POP SHOWS UP, SLIM, TELL HIM I'M PRETTY MAD AT HIM FOR SON'-A-JAW WITHOUT SON'-ANYTHING!

IT'S SURE PUSLIN' WHERE HE WENT! I AINT SEEN HIM SINCE EARLY AFTERNOON!



I WISH YOU'D LET ME GO WITH YOU, NED!

RECKON THE THEERES HONT FORT ME! THEERES AFTER CASH! LUCKY I WAS ABLE TO RAISE IT!



KEEP YOUR EYES ON THINGS, SLIM! I'LL BE BACK SOON'S I CAN!

HERE'S HORN! YOU BRING RANDEY WITH YOU!



SOMEWHAT LATER

LOOKS LIKE WE GOT HERE JES! IN TIME, BIFF! THERE'S A RIDER COMIN' UP THE TRAIL!

RECKON IT'S HED CLOYNER WITH TH' CASH!



IT'S HED, ALL BRIGHT BIFF!

OH-HUH! WEEP YOUR HORN BANGS IN CASE O' TRICKS!



I SURE WISH THOSE HORNERS WOULD SHOW THEM-SELVES SO'S I COULD GET A LINE ON WHO THEY ARE!



THERE HE GOES, BIFF!

YEAH! I'LL SWEAR
DOWN ABOUT TH'
CASH! KEEP ME
COVERED... JUST
IN CASE!



THIS IS SURE
A GOOD NIGHT'S
WORK!



SEARCH FOR TH'
BAY YUH VAN-
HUNT! MY GUNS
GOT A BEAD ON
YORE BLACK
HEART! IF
YUH MAKE
A WRONG MOVE
I'LL BLAST
YUH!



FEEL TO YORE
PRONER TO
GIV' DOWN HERE
FAST!

DOWD!
COME HERE!
STEP ON IT!



WHAT'S UP, BIFF?
AIN'T TH' CASH..

PUT UP YORE
HANDS, YUH
PIECE O' CROW-
BART! I GOT
YUH COVERED!



POP AND
DANDED!

YEP! I GOT
TH' TWO BUZZARDS
AN' YORE CASH
TOD!



I SLIPPED OUT TO TH'
TREE VESTIDBY AFTER-
NOON! I WID INSIDE IT
AN' WAITED FOR YOH AN'
TH' WARMINTS!

SO THAT'S WHERE
YOH WERE
VESTIDBY
WHEN ME
COOLON'T
FIND YOH?



I DON'T KNOW HOW TO THANK YOU,
POP! YOU SURE TOOK A BIG
RISK!

RISKS AIN'T NOTHIN'.
NEB, WHEN IT MEANS
SAVIN' OUR WONDER
HORSE!

