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KEY

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THE RIFLEMAN

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"The Rifleman"

A FACE TO REMEMBER

ON THE STAGE ROAD A FEW MILES FROM NORTH FORK, A ROBBERY IS ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE...

THAT STAGE IS MORE THAN AN HOUR LATE!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE, AS LONG AS WE GET WHAT WE CAME AFTER! MOVE!



INSIDE THE STAGE...

WY, THIS ROAD CERTAINLY IS ROUGH!

WE'RE ALMOST TO NORTH FORK, MRS. LOSAN... JUST ANOTHER COUPLE MILES!



DO YOU TRAVEL ALONE LIKE THIS OFTEN, YOUNG MAN?

ONLY ONCE A YEAR... WHEN I VISIT FRIENDS IN RIDGE CITY... BUT I'M ALWAYS GLAD TO GET HOME AND BACK TO PA!



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CHANGE OF ADDRESS should reach us five weeks in advance of the next issue date. Give both your old and new address, enclosing if possible your old address label.

PULL
UP THOSE
HORSES!



TOSS
DOWN
THAT BANK
SATCHEL!
WE'RE IN A
HURRY!

YOU'RE NOT TAKING
THIS SATCHEL...



BLAM



NO SENSE IN BEIN' A
FOOL, MISTER! YOUR
LIFE'S WORTH MORE'N
A MESS OF CASH THAT
DON'T EVEN BELONGS
TO YOU!



YOU TWO...YOU
CARRYIN' ANY
VALUABLES?

WE HAVEN'T GOT
ANY MONEY, MISTER.
HONEST!



THIS MIGHT
BE WORTH
SOMETHING!

AGH!



AT THAT MOMENT...

I'M SURE
MARK'S
ALL
RIGHT,
LUCAS...

JUST THE SAME, THAT
STAGE IS OVERDUE...
I'LL FEEL BETTER
RIDIN' OUT TO MEET IT!



MICAH!
LOOK!

A ROBBERY!



RIDE, LONI!
WE GOT
COMPANY!

BLAM!
BLAM!



PAI

YOU ALL RIGHT, MARK?



SURE, PA... BUT
THE DRIVER IS
WOUNDED AND
THE LADY
PASSENGER...
...I THINK
SHE PAINTED!

I'VE GOT TO HELP
MICAH! CAN YOU
TAKE OVER, HERE?



SURE! I CAN
GET THE STAGE
BACK TO TOWN
ALL RIGHT!

YOU JUS' CATCH
THOSE OUTLAWS,
LUCAS... THEY GOT
A SATCHEL OF
THE BANK'S
MONEY!

JUST HOLD THE REINS EASY, BOY...
DRIVING A STAGE IS NOT MUCH
DIFFERENT FROM DRIVING A
BUCKBOARD!

YESSIR!



A ROCK-
SLIDE!
HO, BOY! HO!

MY... MY LEG!



LUCAS ARRIVES A MOMENT LATER...

DOGGONE, LUCAS!
I WAS CLOSIN' IN
ON 'EM WHEN THE
GROUND GAVE WAY
UP ABOVE!



EASY DOES IT...
HOW DOES IT
FEEL, MICAH?

NUMB... MIGHT
BE BROKEN...



WE'D BEST
GET YOU
BACK INTO
TOWN TO
A DOCTOR!

JUST WHEN I
ABOUT HAD THOSE
TWO IN MY SIGHTS!
ANOTHER MINUTE...



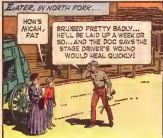
STOP WORRYIN', MICAH!
WASN'T YOUR FAULT!
WE'LL GET A DESCRIPTION
OF THOSE TWO
FROM MARK AND THE
WOMAN PASSENGER!
WE'LL FIND THEM!



LATER, IN NORTH FORK...

HOW'S
MICAH,
PAT?

BRUISED PRETTY BADLY...
HE'LL BE LAID UP A WEEK OR
SO... AND THE DOC SAYS THE
STAGE DRIVER'S WOUND
WOULD HEAL QUICKLY!



IT WAS TERRIBLE...
IT ALL HAPPENED
SO FAST AND...

DID YOU
GET A GOOD
LOOK AT
EITHER OF
THE MEN?



THE ONE THAT TOOK MY BROOCH... I THINK HE WAS TALL AND HAD A RED SHIRT AND...

IT WAS A *BROUVE* SHIRT, PA!



PERHAPS IT WAS ...BUT HIS HAIR WAS BLOND ...

IT WAS *BLACK*, PA!



SEEMS YOU TWO DISAGREE ON JUST WHAT HE *DID* LOOK LIKE!

I-I'M SORRY, MR. MCCAIN... I WAS SO UPSET!



THE ONE WHO TOOK MRS. LOSAN'S JEWELRY WAS CALLED 'ZOW!' I HEARD THE OTHER FELLA CALL HIM THAT JUST BEFORE THEY RODE OFF!

THAT'S A GOOD MEMORY YOU HAVE, MARK!

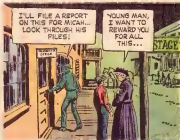


MY TEACHER'S BEEN TRYING TO TEACH ME TO MEMORIZE A POEM FOR SCHOOL... I GUESS I WAS JUST IN PRACTICE LATELY!



I'LL FILE A REPORT ON THIS FOR MICAH... LOCK THROUGH HIS FILES!

YOUNG MAN, I WANT TO REWARD YOU FOR ALL THIS...





REWARD ME?
BUT I DIDN'T
DO ANYTHING,
MA'AM!

YOU DROVE THAT STAGE
BACK TO TOWN... AND
YOU DESCRIBED THOSE
OUTLAWS SO THEY COULD
BE IDENTIFIED!



BUT THEY
HAVEN'T
BEEN CAUGHT
YET, MRS.
LOGAN, AND
I...

THEY **WILL** BE, MARK!
AND MY BROOCH WILL
BE RETURNED! I'M
SURE OF IT!



NOW YOU
TAKE THIS! I
INSIST!

**TEN SILVER
DOLLARS!**



I'LL BE AT THE HOTEL!
WHEN THEY CATCH THOSE
TWO TERRIBLE MEN, YOU
CAN BRING MY BROOCH
OVER TO ME!

YES! I'M...
THANK
YOU!




GOSH! TEN DOLLARS...WE
JUST GOT TO FIND THOSE
MEN WHO ROBBED THE STAGE!



A FEW DAYS LATER...

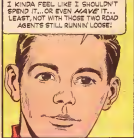
ANY NEWS YET, PA?
ABOUT THOSE
OUTLAWS THAT ROBBED
THE STAGE?

NOT A WORD, MARK... BUT NEAR
AS WE CAN FIGURE, THEY COULD BE
THE RIGG BROTHERS! THEY'RE
WANTED IN SIX COUNTIES!



WHAT MAKES YOU SO ANXIOUS ABOUT CATCHING THEM?

IT'S THE MONEY MRS. LOGAN GAVE ME!



I KINDA FEEL LIKE I SHOULDN'T SPEND IT... OR EVEN HAVE IT... LEAST, NOT WITH THOSE TWO ROAD AGENTS STILL RUNNIN' LOOSE!



I'M SURE THERE WERE NO STRINGS ATTACHED WHEN THE LADY GAVE YOU THE MONEY, SON... IT'S YOURS TO DO WITH AS YOU LIKE!

WELL, MAYBE I'LL JUST KIND OF BROWSE-A-SHOP...



I CAN GET SOME IDEAS ABOUT WHAT I *ANSWY* BUY... AN' THEN IF THOSE TWO OUTLAWS GET CAUGHT I CAN *DO* THE BUYIN'!

THE NEXT DAY...



THINKIN' OF BUYIN' SOME NEW BOOTS, MARK?

JUST LOOKIN', MR. SLASLE!



WELL, YOU JUST LOOK AROUND ALL YOU WANT, BOY! WHEN YOU GET READY TO BUY, JUST LET ME KNOW!



MORNIN', MARK!
WY, YOU SURE DO
LOOK WORRIED
FOR SUCH A
YOUNG MAN!

MRS. LOSAN,
YOU HAVE TO
HELP ME! IT'S
IMPORTANT!



I SAW ONE OF THOSE
STAGE ROBBERS!
I HAVE TO FOLLOW
HIM OR HE MIGHT
GET AWAY!

GOODNESS!
YOU CAN'T GO
AFTER HIM BY
YOURSELF!



GET WORD TO MY
PA! TELL HIM I'M
HEADING SOUTH
OUT OF TOWN...
TELL HIM TO
HURRY!

WAIT,
MARK!
COME
BACK!



AS MARK RIDES OUT OF TOWN...

HOW I WANT
YOU TO TAKE ME
TO THE MCCAIN
PLACE!

LUCAS MCCAIN? BUT I
JUST CAME FROM OUT
THAT WAY... I GOT
'SHOPPIN' TO DO, AND...



YOUR SHOPPING WILL HAVE TO WAIT!
NOW GET THIS CONTRAPTION MOVING,
AND FAST! A BOY'S LIFE IS IN
DANGER!



*ON THE TRAIL, MARK KEEPS A
SAFE DISTANCE BEHIND THE
OUTLAW...*

HE'S HEADIN' OUT
TOWARD NORTH
FORK RIVER...



THESE SILVER DOLLARS
ARE ALL I HAVE, BUT PA'S
GOING TO NEED A TRAIL
TO FOLLOW!



I JUST HOPE PA SEES MY TRAIL!
SURE WOULD HATE TO LOSE THIS MONEY!



AT THE MCCAIN RANCH...

...AND I TRIED TO STOP HIM, MR. MCCAIN,
BUT HE RODE OFF AFTER THAT MAN! HE
SAID HE WAS RIDING SOUTH!



I DO HOPE
YOU CATCH
UP TO HIM,
MR. MCCAIN!

I'LL FIND HIM,
MRS. LOGAN... I
JUST HOPE I
FIND HIM *IN*
TIME!



ON THE TRAIL OF THE OUTLAW...

I JUST HAVE THREE MORE
SILVER DOLLARS LEFT! PA
HAD BETTER GET HERE SOON!



SOME MILES BEHIND...

A SILVER
DOLLAR!
MARK'S
LEAVING
A TRAIL!



AND SOON...

ANOTHER ONE! IT LOOKS LIKE THEY'RE HEADING TOWARD NORTH FORK RIVER!



ON A LEDGE OVERLOOKING THE NORTH FORK RIVER...

HE RODE DOWN TOWARD THE RIVER!



MARK RIDES CLOSE TO THE LEDGE TO GET A BETTER LOOK...

THEY'VE GOT A CAMPSITE DOWN THERE!

GACK!



YOU HEAR THAT?

SOMEONE'S ON THAT LEDGE UP THERE! YOU'VE BEEN FOLLOWED!



BLAM!



ZING!

PLEASE, PA! HURRY!



SHORTLY...

MARK!

DOWN BELOW,
PA! THEY'RE
DOWN BY
THE RIVER!



LUCAS AIMS HIS RIFLE AT
THE CAMPSITE BELOW...

CRACK!



LET'S GET
ACROSS
THE RIVER!



THE CURRENT'S
TOO STRONG!

SWIM HARD!
WE CAN
MAKE IT!



THAT LOG IN THE RIVER!
IF I CAN JUST BREAK
IT LOOSE...

CRACK!





THAT LOG!
IT'S HEADIN'
TOWARD US!

IT'S GOING TO
PIN US DOWN!



NICE SHOOTING, PA!
THAT LOG HAS THEM
HELD TIGHT!

HELP US...SET US
OUT OF HERE!
WE'RE DROWNING!



LUCAS MOVES THE HEAVY LOG, THEN
HE AND MARK PULL THE TWO HARLESS
OUTLAWS FROM THE RIVER...

C'MON, YOU TWO!
YOU'RE GOING TO
JAIL!

THAT'S RIGHT...
FROM COLD
WATER INTO
HOT WATER!



GOOD WORK, LUCAS
... WISH I'D BEEN
THERE TO SEE IT!

HERE'S YOUR BROOCH,
MRS. LOGAN! SURE GLAD
YOU GOT IT BACK!

MARSHAL'S
OFFICE

AND MARK'S GLAD HE
GOT HIS TEN SILVER
DOLLARS BACK! reckon
HE THOUGHT THAT WAS
ABOUT THE MOST
EXPENSIVE TRAIL
ANYBODY
EVER LEFT!

THE END!

THE FORK IN THE ROAD



I'LL TOSS A COIN AND LET FATE
DECIDE, BOY! HEADS...WE TAKE THE
RIGHT FORK! TAILS...THE LEFT!

"ONE MORNING,
WHEN I WAS RIDING
THROUGH STRANGE
COUNTRY TOWARD
MY BROTHER HAL'S
RANCH, I STOPPED
AT AN UNMARKED
FORK IN THE ROAD,
NOT KNOWING
WHICH WAY TO GO..."

HEADS! THAT SETTLES
IT! WE TAKE THE RIGHT
FORK! LET'S HOPE IT'S
THE ROAD TO MESA CITY
AND HAL'S RANCH!



"THE ROAD DWINDLED INTO A NARROW TRAIL
THAT FINALLY ENDED IN THE FOOTHILLS!"



LOOKS LIKE A
SETTLEMENT!
WE'LL RIDE
DOWN AND ASK
DIRECTIONS TO
MESA CITY!

"AS I RODE DOWN THE HILLSIDE, A RIFLE
CRACKED AND A BULLET KICKED UP THE
GROUND!"



STOP!!
WHERE
YOU GOIN',
STRANGER?

TO THE
SETTLEMENT
TO ASK
DIRECTIONS!

BLAM!

I'M LOOKING FOR HAL
MERRILL'S RANCH; HE'S
MY BROTHER!



WE DON'T
TAKE KINDLY
TO MERRILLS...
BUT PA'LL
WANT TO SEE
MOM! C'MON!

"THE BIG MAN LED ME DOWN INTO THE SETTLEMENT, WHERE WE WERE MET BY THREE EQUALLY TALL AND BRAWNY MEN!"

I CAUGHT HIM PROWLIN' THE HILLSIDE, PA!
HE SAYS HE'S HAL MERRILL'S BROTHER RON!

PLAIN TO SEE HE'S KIN TO HAL!
I'M ELDO HART, YOUNG FELLOW!
MY SONS... ARNE, BURT, AND CURT!



YOU'D BETTER STAY HERE
TONIGHT, BOY! GET DOWN
AND COME INSIDE!



"I FOLLOWED ELDO HART INTO THE HOUSE!"

THIS IS FAMILY HEAD-
QUARTERS! I SLEEP HERE!
THE BOYS HAVE THEIR OWN
CASINGS!

WHAT ARE YOU GONNA
DO WITH HIM, PA? YOU
KNOW HAL SENT HIM TO
SPY ON US!



WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT? I'VE
COME FROM CHIC! I HAVEN'T SEEN
HAL FOR FIVE YEARS!

DON'T BELIEVE HIM, PA!

BUT I DO! HAL'S EXPECTING
THIS BOY AND HE'S GONNA
GET TO SEE HIM! SON, YOU RIDE
FAST AND TELL HAL TO GET
OVER HERE... IF HE WANTS TO
SEE HIS BROTHER ALIVE!





WE LIKE THIS VALLEY AND WE MEAN TO KEEP IT AT ANY COST, MERRILL! SO MAKE UP YOUR MIND!

YOU DON'T LEAVE ME ANY CHOICE! RON AND I WILL GO!



"AS ELDO HART STEPPED FORWARD, I SAW MY CHANCE! I GRABBED HIS GUN HAND AND SWUNG ON IT, TWISTING HIS ARM BACKWARD!"

DROP YOUR GUNS, BOYS, OR YOUR FATHER'S PISTOL GOES OFF!



DO WHAT HE SAYS, BOYS! I DON'T WANT TO DIE!

THE MERRILLS HAVE THE WHIPHAND NOW! IF ONE HART MOVES THIS GUN FIRES!



"HAL COLLECTED THE DROPPED GUNS OF ELDO'S SONS!"

GOOD WORK, RON! WE'LL TIE THEM UP AND TAKE A GOOD LOOK AROUND!

YOU WON'T HAVE TO LOOK FAR TO FIND THEIR CATTLE RUSTLERS!



"LATER, AFTER I'D SHOWN HAL AND THE SHERIFF THE STOLEN CATTLE, AND THE HARTS WERE TAKEN TO JAIL, HAL AND I ROODE TOWARD HIS RANCH!"

I WAS THINKING, RON... IF YOU'D TAKEN THE LEFT FORK IN THE ROAD, THOSE THIEVING HARTS WOULD STILL BE FREE!

I GUESS FATE WAS ON OUR SIDE, HAL!



BIG MEDICINE



"Go West, Professor Darby?" The dean of the college stared at him. "You . . . ?"

The pudgy little man nodded. "Think of the Indian knowledge I'll bring back!"

"I don't want an eyewitness report in return for your scalp," said the dean. "Not!" he thundered. "I absolutely forbid it!"

Professor Darby smiled ruefully, remembering those words as he sat on the hard ground, lashed to a stake in the camp of the fierce Indian Chief, Six Wars.

Six Wars was the leader of the Dakota Poncas, and a formidable figure.

"Small Fat Man," the Chief solemnly began, "it has been decided. You were found digging in our tribal burial grounds. For this, you must die!"

Six Wars raised his arm to the sky. "When the red fire of dawn rises from behind the mountain," intoned the Chief, "then it will be." He turned slowly and strode majestically into the darkness of the night.

The professor's scientific mind was torn. How wonderful, he thought, to be able to see the Ponca death rites. But not so wonderful, he reminded himself, if the ceremonies were for him. Escape was the thing—science be hanged!

He knew that black magic would impress a superstitious people like this. Medicine was what he needed. Big medicine! But all he had to make medicine with was himself. Not much, it seemed.

The professor sighed hopelessly, looking

at the night sky, bright with stars.

"If I were back East right now," he observed to his guard who couldn't understand English, "I'd be in the university observatory, watching the stars." Astronomy was his second love.

He gazed at the sky. "My," he thought, "there's a falling star . . . and another!"

Darby's mind began buzzing with activity. It seemed to him he'd read an observatory bulletin awhile back. Something about . . .

Then the thought hit him. "Great heavens!" he exclaimed. "Great heavens, indeed!"

"Six Wars!" the professor commanded his guard. "Bring him to me." The guard may not have understood English, but the words "Six Wars" were clear enough.

Moments later, the Chief stood towering over the little scholar. Darby looked up. "Great Chief Six Wars," he spoke. "I have medicine in my power. Big medicine!"

Six Wars merely granted,

"I would bargain with you," the professor continued.

The Indian was furious. "No man bargains with Six Wars!" was his angry answer.

Darby smiled. "The heavens," he commended. "Look up, great Chief. See what I can do! I summon the stars from above!"

Eyes narrowed, the Chief looked skyward. Then he gasped. Stars were falling. Everywhere . . . shooting across the night sky!

Six weeks later, Professor Darby stood before the dean of the college, presenting the astonished man with a large sheaf of papers, research notes on Six Wars' Poncas.

"How did you do it?" gasped the dean.

"Thank the University observatory," smiled the professor.

"The observatory!" exploded the dean. "Why, it was a thousand miles away!"

The professor chuckled. "Ah, but it was with me in spirit. Why, only just before my expedition, I recall a bulletin it published about a shower of meteors."

"Meteors?" blinked the dean.

"That's right," the professor said. "The observatory made a prediction, based on scientific calculations, that on a certain night, not long ago, an unusually large shower of meteors would appear in the sky. And that," smiled the professor happily, "was my 'big medicine'!"

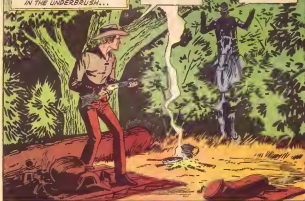
"The
Rifleman."

THE TRAIL HAWK

LUCAS MCCAIN IS MAKING A TWO-DAY RIDE TO THE STARR RANCH IN CLEARWATER VALLEY! AS HE COOKS HIS SUPPER, HE HEARS A STEALTHY RUSTLING IN THE UNDERBRUSH...

WHO'S THERE?
MOVE OUT
WHERE I CAN
SEE YOU!!

SURE, MISTER!
I'M COMING
OUT! DON'T
SHOOT!



WHAT'S THE
IDEA OF
SNEAKING
UP ON ME?

I WASN'T SNEAKING,
MISTER! I WAS JUST
BEING CAUTIOUS!
NEVER KNOW WHO OR
WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN
THIS COUNTRY!

I FOLLOWED THE SMELL
OF YOUR FIRE AND COFFEE!
I'VE TRAVELED A LONG WAY,
AND I'M CLEAN OUT OF
GRUB!

YOU'RE WELCOME
TO SHARE
WHAT I
HAVE!
CLIMB
DOWN!



BETTER TAKE CARE OF YOUR HORSE BEFORE YOU EAT! HE LOOKS BEAT OUT!

OH, SURE! I GUESS THE SIGHT OF FOOD DROVE EVERYTHING ELSE OUT OF MY MIND!



A FEW MINUTES LATER...

YOU SURE WERE HUNGRY! DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHERE YOU CAME FROM?

I CAME FROM THE NORTH... MONTANA! AND I'M HEADIN' SOUTH! LON DALY'S THE NAME!



HOW ABOUT YOU, FRIEND?

I'M HEADING SOUTH, TOO! GOING TO CLEARWATER VALLEY! AIM TO BUY A STALLION AND ONE OR TWO MARES!



MY SON MARK AND I HAVE A RANCH OUTSIDE NORTH FORK! WE'RE PLANNING TO START OUR OWN HORSE HERD! YES, SIR... THE McCAIN! LUCK IS FINALLY LOOKING UP!

THEN I WISH YOU LOTS OF IT, McCAIN!



SUDDENLY, DALY JUMPS TO HIS FEET AND MOVES WITH CAT-LIKE SPEED TO THE EDGE OF THE WOODS...

WHAT'S WRONG, DALY?

I THOUGHT I HEARD SOMETHING MOVING IN THE UNDERBRUSH! GUESS IT MUST'VE BEEN SOME SMALL ANIMAL!





WHAT MAKES YOU SO JUMPY, DALY? ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY FROM SOMETHING...OR SOMEONE?

NO! I'M RUNNING AFTER SOMEONE! I'M A BOUNTY HUNTER! I'VE TRACKED A KILLER NAMED CAL CLAY ALL THE WAY FROM MONTANA! I CAUGHT HIM ONCE... BUT HE GOT AWAY! I AIM TO COLLECT THE THOUSAND-DOLLAR REWARD FOR HIM... DEAD OR ALIVE!



I'LL BE HONEST, DALY! I DON'T LIKE BOUNTY HUNTERS! THEY'RE TRAIL HAWKS... SCAVENGERS... HUNTING AND KILLING FOR MONEY!

THERE ARE GOOD BOUNTY HUNTERS... AND BAD ONES, MCCAIN!



I SUPPOSE YOU'RE A GOOD ONE!

THAT'S RIGHT! I HELP THE LAW BY BRINGIN' IN VARMINTS THE REG'LAR LAWYEN CAN'T CATCH! AND I ONLY KILL IN SELF-DEFENSE!



THEN, SUDDENLY...

HOLD IT... BOTH OF YOU! MAKE ONE MOVE... AND IT'LL BE YOUR LAST! IT'S TAKEN A LONG TIME... BUT I'VE FINALLY CAUGHT UP WITH YOU, DALY!

WHAT DOES HE MEAN... CAUGHT UP WITH YOU?

HE'S TRYING TO PULL A FAST TRICK! HE'S CAL CLAY... THE MAN I'M AFTER!

WHO ARE YOU, MISTER?

CAL CLAY! I'M A BOUNTY HUNTER, TRAILING LON DALY! I DON'T KNOW WHO YOU ARE... BUT ALL DALY'S PALS ARE BAD UNDS!... STAND UP, BOTH OF YOU!

UNBUCKLE YOUR GUNBELT AND LET IT FALL, DALY! WHERE'S YOUR GUN, MISTER?

I DON'T CARRY A HANDGUN! I ONLY USE A RIFLE!



KICK YOUR GUNBELT THIS WAY, DALY! AND YOU, MISTER, KICK THOSE RIFLES OVER TO ME! NO TRICKS!

KICK YOUR RIFLES TO ME! MOVE!



HERE'S ONE!! CATCH IT!

AS THE KICKED RIFLE STRIKES CLAY, STABBING HIM, LUCAS LEAPS TOWARD HIM...

I'LL GET HIM, DALY! GRAB THE GUNS, FAST!!

S-SURE!



LUCAS MEETS HIS MATCH IN THE BRAVNY CLAY, AND THEY LOCK IN A DEEPERATE STRUGGLE...

D-DROP THAT G-GUN!

I'LL PUT A HOLE IN YOU, FIRST!!



WITH UNCERTAIN AIM, DALY FIRES...



ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MCGAIN? I TRIED TO HIT CLAY... WITHOUT STRIKING YOU!

YOU DID FINE, DALY! THE BULLET JUST GRATED MY ARM, AND STRUCK HIS SHOULDER! THANKS FOR STOPPING HIM BEFORE HE SHOT ME!



YOU'RE MAKING A BIG MISTAKE, MCGAIN! ...LETTIN' DALY FOOL YOU WITH HIS LIES!

HAVE YOU GOT ANY PAPERS TO PROVE WHO YOU ARE?

I *DID* HAVE 'EM! DALY TOOK 'EM AWAY FROM ME, WHEN HE GOT THE DROP ON ME A MONTH AGO!



HOLD STILL...WHILE I STOP THE BLEEDING! THE BULLET WENT CLEAN THROUGH YOUR SHOULDER!



HE'S LYING! HE STOLE
MY PAPERS FROM ME
...THEN HE LOST THEM
IN THE WATER WHEN
WE FOUGHT IN A
RIVER!

**DON'T
BELIEVE
AMM, MCCAIN!
HE'S TWISTING
THE STORY
BACKWARD!**



SHUT UP, CLAY!
YOUR LIES WON'T
HELP YOU NOW!

DALY'S RIGHT, CLAY!
YOU WOULD HAVE
SHOT ME...IF HE HADN'T
STOPPED YOU! THAT'S
ALL I NEED TO KNOW!



SOFTLY...

WE'LL START FOR CLEARWATER AT
SUNUP! WE'LL TAKE TURNS STANDING
GUARD, DALY! I'LL TAKE FIRST WATCH!

YOU'D BETTER TAKE BOTH
WATCHES, MCCAIN! THAT
BOUNTY HUNTER IS NOT
TO BE TRUSTED!



**LATER THAT NIGHT, DALY TAKES HIS
TURN AT GUARD DUTY...**

KEEP CLOSE
WATCH OF
HIM, DALY!

I WILL! IF I'D
FINISHED HIM OFF A
WHILE AGO, MY JOB
WOULD BE OVER, BUT
I COULDN'T RISK
HITTING YOU!



IT'LL SOON BE
MORNING! SO
YOU'D BETTER
GET SOME
SLEEP, MCCAIN!

I SURE
WILL! I'M
HALF
ASLEEP
NOW!



**A SHORT TIME LATER, WHEN LUCAS
IS SOUNDLY SLEEPING...**

I'LL FIX YOU SO YOU CAN'T
YELL, BOUNTY HUNTER! YOU
THOUGHT YOU HAD ME, DIDN'T
YOU? BUT I'VE OUTSMARTED
YOU AGAIN!



**LUCAS WAKENS
WITH A START
AT THE FIRST
LIGHT OF DAWN!
THE LITTLE CAMP
IS QUIET!**

**DALY! WHERE ARE YOU?
ANSWER ME!! WAKE UP,
CLAY! WHERE'S DALY?**



**HE'S NOT ASLEEP! HE'S
BEEN HIT ON THE HEAD!
BUT HE'S STILL ALIVE!**



**LUCAS
FINALLY
REVIVES
CLAY..**

**WHAT
HAPPENED?
WHERE'S
DALY?**

**D-DALY HIT ME...
GUESS HE
THOUGHT HE'D
KILLED ME! HE
MUST'VE TAKEN
THE HORSE'S..!**



**I TOLD YOU THE
TRUTH, MCCAIN!
I'M THE BOUNTY
HUNTER! DALY'S
THE KILLER I'VE
BEEN TRAILING!
I GUESS YOU'LL
BELIEVE ME NOW!**

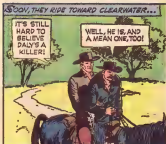
**I SURE DO! NO
BOUNTY HUNTER
WOULD LEAVE
HIS MAN
BEHIND LIKE
THIS!**



**I DIDN'T WANT TO
FIGHT YOU, MCCAIN!
BUT WHEN YOU
JUMPED ME I
THOUGHT YOU WERE
DALY'S PAL!**

**I UNDER-
STAND! YOU
DID WHAT
YOU HAD TO
DO, CLAY!**





CLAY TAKES TIME FOR A QUICK MEAL, THEN...

I'M TRUSTING YOU TO REPAY WHAT I LOANED YOU! YOU KNOW WHERE MY RANCH IS!

I WON'T FAIL YOU! THANKS AGAIN!



I'LL START HOME TOMORROW MORNING! I'LL PROBABLY MAKE NIGHT CAMP WHERE I DID BEFORE! IT'S THE HALFWAY MARK!

HOPE I FIND DALY'S TRAIL STILL FRESH AT THE CAMP! SO LONG, MCCAIN!



LATE THE NEXT DAY... LUCAS IS HEADING FOR HOME WITH THREE HANDSOME NEW HORSES...

IT'LL SOON BE DARK, BOY... SO WE'D BETTER MAKE CAMP NOW... I WANT YOU WATERED AND FED BEFORE DARK!



SO LUCAS MAKES CAMP IN THE FAMILIAR PLACE...

DON'T MOVE, MCCAIN! IT'S ME... LON DALY! I KNEW YOU'D HAVE TO COME BACK THIS WAY, SO I'VE BEEN WAITING!



I THOUGHT YOU'D BE FAR AWAY, DALY! I KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU, NOW!

PICK UP YOUR RIFLE BY ITS BARREL AND HAND IT TO ME, MCCAIN! THEN WE CAN TALK FRIENDLY-LIKE!



I'M RIDING WITH YOU TO YOUR RANCH, MCCAIN!

SO YOU'RE PLANNING TO COVER YOUR TRAIL BY RIDING WITH FOUR OTHER HORSES! I WON'T HELP YOU!

THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT, MCCAIN! I'VE GOT YOUR GUN! AND YOU'VE GOT THREE LIVELY HORSES TO HANDLE! SO WE'LL TRAVEL *MY* WAY!



WE'LL HAVE A CUP OF YOUR COFFEE, THEN MOVE OUT! BY THE WAY, HOW'S CLAY?

HE'S ALIVE AND ON YOUR TRAIL! HE WON'T GIVE UP TILL HE CATCHES YOU!

DON'T TRY ANYTHING, MCCAIN! I'M RIGHT BEHIND YOU! I'D HATE TO HAVE TO SHOOT THAT FINE STALLION!

MY TURN WILL COME, DALY!



THEY ARRIVE AT THE MCCAIN RANCH LATE THE NEXT AFTER-NOON...

PA! I'M SURE GLAD YOU'RE HOME! I'VE BEEN ANFUL WORRIED! I THOUGHT YOU WOULD BE BACK MUCH SOONER!

THE TRIP TOOK LONGER THAN I EXPECTED, SON! BUT I'VE BOUGHT THREE FINE HORSES! MEET LON DALY...HE'S BEEN RIDING WITH ME!

HELLO, MARK! FINE HORSES YOUR PA'S BOUGHT!



WE'LL TAKE CARE OF THE HORSES BEFORE I TELL YOU ABOUT THE TRIP! THE STALLION'S A WILD ONE, SO BE CAREFUL!

THE STALLS ARE READY! SAY! IS THAT PAW RIFLE YOU'RE CARRYING, MR. DALY?



IT SURE IS! IT'S A MIGHTY FINE GUN! THANKS, MCCAIN, FOR LETTING ME TRY IT OUT!



ARE YOU GOING TO STAY HERE ANWHILE?

WISH I COULD! BUT I HAVE TO PULL OUT TONIGHT! I'VE GOT A LONG RIDE AHEAD OF ME!

BETTER GIVE YOUR HORSE A REST, DALY! YOU MIGHT AS WELL STAY FOR SUPPER! NO NEED PUSHING ON ALONE TONIGHT!



THEY TAKE CARE OF THE HORSES, AND...

CAL CLAY!
WHERE DID YOU GO?

LIFT YOUR ARMS, DALY!
I TRACKED YOU AWAY FROM THE CAMP AND BACK AGAIN! AND I FOUND YOUR MESSAGE, MCCAIN!



MESSAGE?
WHAT'S HE TALKING ABOUT?

I TOLD YOU I WOULDN'T HELP YOU ESCAPE, DALY!
I LEFT THE COFFEE POT AND OUR TWO CLIPS IN CAMP! I HOPED CLAY'D FIND THEM AND FIGURE YOU WERE WITH ME!



DALY MOVES WITH SUDDEN, STARTLING SPEED...

THROW DOWN YOUR GUNS...BOTH OF YOU...IF YOU WANT MARK TO STAY ALIVE! THEN GET ME A FRESH HORSE AND A CANTEEN OF WATER, MCCAIN! *MOVE FAST!!*

BETTER DO WHAT HE SAYS, MCCAIN!

I WILL! BUT I'M WARNING YOU, DALY...IF YOU HURT MARK...!

LUCAS HURRIES INTO THE BARN TO SADDLE A HORSE...

YOU WON'T GET FAR, DALY!

I'LL TAKE THE BOY ALONG TO MAKE SURE I DO!

HERE'S YOUR HORSE, DALY! NOW, LET MARK GO!

NOT YET! HE'S RIDING WITH ME! IF YOU DON'T FOLLOW ME, I'LL DROP HIM OFF ON THE ROAD!

CLIMB UP, MARK! YOU FORGOT THE CANTEEN, MCCAIN!

I'LL GET IT! DO AS HE SAYS, MARK...

LUCAS GOES BACK INTO THE BARN, AND A MOMENT LATER...

LOOK OUT!! THE STALLION'S BROKEN LOOSE!!

HELP! SOMEBODY
HELP ME!! STOP
MY HORSE!! MY
FOOT'S CAUGHT!



I'LL
STOP
HIM!

HOLD ON,
MARK!



YOUR RUNNING DAYS
ARE OVER, DALY! STAND
UP! ARE YOU ALL
RIGHT, MARK?

I'M FINE, PA!
JUST A LITTLE
SHAKEN UP,
THAT'S ALL!



I'LL TURN DALY OVER TO THE MARSHAL
IN NORTH FORK! HE'LL HOLD HIM TILL
THEY TAKE HIM BACK TO MONTANA! WE'LL
SPLIT THE BOUNTY, MCCAIN!

NO! I ONLY
WANT WHAT I
LOANED YOU!



**AFTER DALY
LEAVES
WITH HIS
PRISONER,
LUCAS AND
MARK GO
AFTER THEIR
RUNAWAY
STALLION...**

THERE HE IS, PA! YOU WERE
SURE SMART TO TURN HIM
LOOSE AND STOP DALY!

IT WAS A LONG
CHANGE, BUT IT
WORKED! NOW
LET'S CATCH
HIM AND TAKE
HIM HOME! HE'S
EARNED A
RUBDOWN AND
ALL THE OATS
HE CAN EAT!



THE END

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