

● STOP! ● STEADY! ● GO AND BUY
The RANGER!

The RANGER

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EVERY SATURDAY.

No. 17.—June 6th, 1931.



"Come
on,
Steve!"

The OUTLAW KID!

SMASHING
TALE OF THE
WILD WEST.



The Kid's Secret!

THE Rio Kid's hand slid to the walnut butt of a gun, and he gripped it hard, his fingers clenching on it almost convulsively. The long-barrelled Colt was half-drawn.

But the grip on the butt unclenched, and the gun slid back into the holster. The Kid muttered impatiently.

Standing in the doorway of the foreman's cabin on the Bar-T ranch, the Kid stared out in the glimmer of the stars.

It was not yet dawn.

In the bunkhouse, the Bar-T outfit slept, never dreaming that their foreman was awake and watching with sleepless eyes. Faintly from the dusky prairie came a sound of hoofs, from some puncher who was riding the range.

The Kid's eyes were fixed on the store-hut at a little distance, a black shadow in the gloom. In the store-hut lay Cactus Pete, a prisoner, with his hands bound.

Long had the Bar-T foreman stood in his doorway, looking across to the hut where the road-agent lay a prisoner.

The Kid's eyes turned on a puncher who emerged and went to the corral. Texas, the puncher, came from the corral with his broncho's reins looped over his arm, and he started a little at the sight of the Bar-T foreman in his doorway.

"Say, you're up airy, Santa Fe!" called out Texas.

The Kid nodded.

Santa Fe Smith he was called on the Bar-T, and not a man on the ranch guessed or dreamed that he had ever been called the Rio Kid. But they would know soon, when the prisoner in the store hut had opened his mouth. Cactus

Pete knew the Kid, and the Kid figured that Cactus aimed to shout out what he knew, for all the Red Dog country to hear. And he wondered what the bunch would say when they knew that their foreman, not long ago, had been the outlaw of the Rio Grande.

Texas came over towards the Kid, peering at him in the deep dusk.

"I guess I'm hitting the Red Dog trail, Santa Fe," he said. "I allow I'll tote that bulldozer along, and hand him over to the marshal. The marshal sure will be pleased some to get a holt on the road-agent who stopped the Saddlebag stage yesterday."

"I reckon!" assented the Kid. "But I guess I ain't sending that galoot along with you, Texas. You can sure tell the marshal he's here, and he can come for him if he wants."

The Rio Kid saves his enemy from certain death although it spells his own ruin.

"It's your say-so!" agreed the puncher, and he walked his horse down to the gate, mounted and rode away.

The Kid's brow knitted more blackly, and he thought long and hard. What was he going to do?

He stirred at last from his cabin.

He went into the corral and led out Side-Kicker and another horse. He saddled and bridled them both, and tethered them at the gate. Then he strode to the store-hut and unbarred the door.

"Say, you lobo-wolf!"

He rapped out the words as he threw the door open.

From the dark interior of the hut a face with burning eyes looked at the foreman of the Bar-T. Cactus Pete was not sleeping.

With his arms bound behind him, the horse-thief of Frio lurched towards the door.

"You've come up to time?" He grinned savagely at the Kid. "You

got a horse for me, durn you? I reckoned you'd chew on it, Kid, and make up your mind to let me ride! Doggone you! You're sure wise to it that if I go to the sheriff, you go along with me! Cut me loose."

The Kid eyed him grimly.

"I guess I'm taking you on a little pasear," said the Kid. "Step out of this shebang and step quick and quiet."

The horse-thief's face paled suddenly.

Only his worthless life stood between the Rio Kid and safety. Well the ruffian knew what he would have aimed to do in the Kid's place. He backed into the hut. The fear was in his heart that it was in the Kid's mind to shoot him out of hand, and so seal his lips for ever.

The Kid's eyes gleamed at him.

"I'm telling you to step out, Cactus, quick and quiet!" he said. His hand dropped on a gun and half-drew it. "You let out one yap for the boys to hear, and it will be the last thing you'll do this side of Jordan! You doggoned trail-thief, I'll let lead through you, and jump at the chance, if you worry me any. Step out."

Cactus Pete's lips opened—and shut again. The Kid was not the man to shoot him up, unarmed, out on the lonely prairie. But he was the man to keep his word; and the horse-thief knew that if he gave a call for the Bar-T outfit to hear, he was a dead man.

He stepped from the store-hut.

The Kid led him to the saddled broncho at the gate. He helped the bound man to mount. Then he mounted Side-Kicker and, taking the reins of Cactus Pete's broncho in his hand, he rode away from the ranch, leading the prisoner. The hoof-beats echoed on the lonely plain. The Kid was heading northwards, towards the low line of the Mesquite hills that barred the prairie in the far distance.

When the dawn flushed up over the grassy plains, the Bar-T ranch was many a long mile behind.

Man to Man!

CLATTER, clatter, rang the hoof-beats on hard rock.

The grassy prairie was left behind; the Kid was riding into the hills through a rocky canyon.

Not a word had he spoken since the Bar-T ranch had been left. Again and again Cactus Pete muttered and cursed, but the Kid paid him no heed.

He kept a grip on the broncho's reins, and the bound man rode by his side; but the Kid seemed as if he had forgotten that the horse-thief was there.

Not a word, not a look, at the man who rode by his side. And terror was growing in Cactus' breast. The sweat thickened on his brow.

The Bar-T punchers had rounded him up, after a hold-up on the trail. He had counted on safety when he recognised the Kid in the foreman of the Bar-T ranch. He had figured that the Kid would cut him loose in the night, and give him a horse and let him ride, glad to see the last of him. But that was clearly not the Kid's intention. What was his intention?

The Kid halted at last, threw the reins of the horses over a pecan, and jerked Cactus Pete from the saddle.

His bowie-knife glimmered in the rising sunlight, and Cactus Pete felt a spasm of fear.

"Kid!" he panted.

"Aw, can it!" snapped the Kid.

The keen edge of the knife glided over Cactus Pete's bonds. The horse-thief of Frio stood a free man.

He breathed hard and deep, the sweat

trickling down his stubby face. The Kid thrust the knife back into his belt.

Something of assurance came back to the trail-thief. The Kid was not the man to shoot him up unarmed. He had known it.

"Say, Kid, what's this game? You brought me here to let me ride?"

"You got another guess coming!" snapped the Kid.

"What's the game, then?" muttered Cactus. "You ain't totting me into Red Dog to hand me over. You ain't letting me shout out to all the burg that the foreman of the Bar-T ranch is the fire-bug of the Rio Grande, with a reward of a thousand dollars on his head."

"Sure thing!" said the Kid. "Then I guess you got to let me ride, Kid."

"Guess again!" said the Kid. "I guess you wouldn't keep your bully-beef trap shut if I was to let you ride. Nope! Now you know where to get the Rio Kid, I reckon you'd be honing to get your fingers on the reward that's out for me in Frio. Mehbe you ain't fixed to horn in for the reward, seeing that you're wanted in Frio for horse stealing, and in half the towns in Texas for hold-ups and rustling cows. But you sure would tell all Texas where the Rio Kid was to be found."

Cactus' eyes glittered at him.

The Kid read him easily enough. Once he was safe from the walnut-butted guns, revenge was in the hands of the horse-thief of Frio. He had only to shout out the Kid's secret, and Texas sheriffs would soon be riding for the Bar-T ranch to cinch Judge Pindex's foreman.

"I guess I wouldn't spill anything, Kid," muttered Cactus. But the glitter in his eyes belied his words.

The Kid made an impatient gesture.

"You figure that I'm trusting an all-fired lobo-wolf like you, Cactus?" he said.

He drew from his holsters the two walnut-butted guns and laid one on a rock.

"I guess I'm walking twenty paces, Cactus," he said quietly. "When I stop, you pick up that gun."

Cactus caught his breath.

"It's man to man," said the Kid, in the same quiet tone. "If you get me, you can sure ride, and ride lively. If I get you, I reckon there'll be a durned

and then he came to a halt. His clear voice rang across to the horse-thief.

"Pick up that gun!"

Cactus drew a throbbing breath. The Kid was giving him every chance. But his heart failed him now. He could not face the Kid, gun in hand.

He made a movement, as if to step towards the gun that lay on the rock. The next instant he turned and with a desperate bound, leaped for the chaparral. Wary as the Kid was, that sudden action surprised him.

Crash went the burly horse-thief into the thickets, and he threw himself on his face as the Kid's gun roared.

A bullet smashed through the thickets over him.

Panting, Cactus plunged on through the scrubs. He was in cover now: if the Kid fired again, he had to fire at random. He heard the sound of running feet; the Kid was coming. Swiftly, desperately the escaping horse-thief plunged on. The voice of the Rio Kid rang in his ears.

"You doggoned pesky scallywag!"

Bang! roared the six-gun again, the bullet tearing leaves and twigs round the escaping ruffian.

The Kid's eyes glittered with rage as he rushed in pursuit.

Cactus tore desperately on through the thickets. Bang! A bullet whizzed only a foot from him. There was a stirring in the scrub, a low, hoarse growl that sent a spasm of terror to the heart of the horse-thief of Frio, and a huge, shaggy, grey form reared itself over him.

With a scream of terror the horse-thief stopped. He would have turned back—he would have faced even the Kid, rather than the grizzly bear that had been roused from his lair in the chaparral, wounded and enraged by a bullet that had struck him as he lay in his covert. But it was too late. The huge claws were upon him, and Cactus Pete, screaming with terror, went to the ground in the fearful grip of the grizzly.

For Life or Death!

"SEARCH me!" gasped the Kid. He panted to a halt in the tangled thickets. The deep, savage growl of the grizzly came to his ears.

Sharper rang the terrified shriek of Cactus Pete.

Through tangled tendrils and twigs the Kid could see them; the man with

white, desperate face, eyes starting with terror, struggling madly in the claws of the bear.

The great jaws were opened; the little savage eyes of the grizzly gleaming with rage. There was a crimson splash on the fur where the Kid's bullet had struck.

For a split-second, the Kid stood—its still.

Then he leapt forward.

Bang! bang! roared the six-gun; but Cactus Pete was not the target of the Kid's shooting now. The lead crashed in at the red, open jaws, that in another moment would have snapped on the writhing, screaming man from Frio.

The huge, shaggy head, the gleaming eyes, turned on the Kid, and Cactus writhed away from the grizzly's clutches, reeled over in the tangled roots and vines, and fell. He lay within the grizzly's reach, blood streaming down where the claws had torn him. The shrieks choked in his husky throat. The terrible claws were reaching at him, when the Kid leaped in, his bowie-knife in his right hand.

To the very hilt the long knife was driven in the grizzly's shaggy throat. With a hoarse, gurgling growl, the giant brute staggered over and fell.

The knife was still in the shaggy throat. Eluding the clutching, tearing claws, the Kid leaped in, grasped the handle of the bowie and dragged it out. The next moment it was driven into the heart of the grizzly.

A shuddering growl, and the huge form lay still.

The Rio Kid stood, panting, his face white, his heart beating in great throbs. He had saved the horse-thief; the grizzly lay dead at his feet; the hideous growling had died away and the kid was the victor. He threw the crimsoned bowie aside and shivered.

"Carry me home to die!" murmured the Kid.

He stepped towards the man from Frio. Cactus Pete raised himself on his elbow, staring at him with dizzy eyes. His left arm was torn, and streaming with blood.

The Kid gave him a grim look.

"I guess you sure woke up bad trouble, Cactus!" he said. "Say, you doggoned scallywag, I reckon you wouldn't have troubled me a whole lot if I'd left you to that grizzly. But I'll tell all Texas that I always was a doggoned gink!"

Cactus did not answer. The terror of

(Continued on page 466.)



trail-thief the less in Texas, and I don't figure that anybody will mourn a whole lot. You get me?"

Cactus understood at last.

It was to be gun-play—man to man and gun to gun. It was to be an even break. The Kid was not the man to shoot him out of hand. He was the man to give him an even break, and leave the rest to fortune.

Cactus was a good man with a gun. But he did not hone for gun-play with the Kid. Well he knew how swift and deadly was the Kid, with a six-gun in his grip.

Cactus gritted his teeth.

"I guess I'm your antelope, Kid! Get going."

The Kid, with his hand down at his side, holding the gun, backed away, step by step.

Cactus watched him.

Twenty paces backwards the Kid took,

As the gunman made a sudden dash for the shrubs, the Rio Kid swung round, his gun belching flame and lead.

The CHIEF RANGER CHATS!

Your Editor's mighty keen to get to know all his new pals. Drop him a line to "The Chief Ranger," The Fleetway House, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.4.



RETURN OF WALLY!

CHEER, boys; he's coming back, and what a come-back it is, too! Wally, that fascinating imp of mischief, has designs on a place among the Big Five up at Scotland Yard, so some of the 'tecs will have to look to their laurels.

WALLY, THE BOY 'TEC.

is some sleuth-hound! He adopts a police-station as a "home from home," and certainly brightens up the existence of the men in blue with his abundant Cockney wit and ready tongue. His first experience as a detective, which you will read about next week, is one long thrill. No RANGER reader who took a liking to Wally, the boy gangster, should miss the irrepressible Wally in his new role. Don't forget, lads, he'll be with you all again next week! There's another surprise-packet in store for you, too, in next week's number.

VENTRILOQUIST VAL,

the boy with the marvellous gift of "voice throwing," entertains you with a hundred per cent laughs story that will bring tears of merriment to your eyes. Sticking to our great programme of unlimited thrills, laughs, and real entertainment, next week's RANGER—which you should order NOW—is well up to bargain standard. See you next week, boys,

The Chief Ranger

THE TANGO COWBOYS.

Living practically in the saddle, rivaling the expert native Indians in superb and daring horsemanship, the Gauchos of the Argentine lead a wild life as cowboys on the great open prairies. On the few occasions that they tear themselves apart from their horses they indulge in the favourite native dance which we have borrowed and call the Tango! With Spanish and Indian blood in their veins they have a natural love of finery, and a Gaucho out of the saddle and dressed in his best is something to look at. With knee boots and silver ornaments and gay silken scarves, plus the stiletto without which the Gaucho is seldom seen, he is the living counterpart of those wild cow-

boy figures which flit so frequently across the cinema screens.

THE STAMFORD BRIDGE HERO.

There are plenty of popular heroes now goughing up the cinders on our busy dirt-tracks, but none more popular than wonderful Frank Arthur. He has been called one of the three greatest riders in the world. Certainly he has shown 'em startlingly in Australia what can be done with two wheels and a stretch of loose cinders! Thrills? He has had so many he has forgotten most of them. But probably one narrow escape will never slip his memory. That was when, to avoid another rider who had come a

THE OUTLAW KID!

(Continued from page 451.)

the grizzly's clutch was still on him, and he could scarcely believe that he was still living.

The Kid bent over him.

"I guess this lets me out!" grunted the Kid. "You sure ain't fixed for gun-play now, Cactus! I'll tell a man!"

The horse-thief groaned.

"You've saved me, Kid! Carry me home to die! I guessed I was a gone coon! You've sure saved me, Kid."

"I reckon there ain't no two ways about that, doggone you!" answered the Kid.

The man was his enemy; a treacherous enemy. But the Kid, who had saved his life, bound up the bleeding arm where the grizzly's claws had torn. Cactus staggered to his feet.

The Kid eyed him.

"I guess you can sit a brone, Cactus!"

The RANGER No. 17—6/6/31.

cropper on the Warrington track and lay sprawled over the course, Arthur set his bike at the safety fence, tore a whole length of it up, and shot ten feet into the air, with the result that both elbows were dislocated, and several cuts adorned his face, which was smiling cheerfully.

THE PRIDE OF THE CLYDE.

Proudly flaunting the colours of the Canadian Pacific Railway fleet of liners are some of the finest vessels in all the world. The latest C.P.R. liner to be launched, the 43,000-ton Empress of Britain—"the pride of the Clyde" as her builders dubbed her—is another challenge flung down by Britain to the shipbuilders of other countries. With snow-white sides, emerald green water-line, and three colossal yellow funnels, she will be an object of admiration and curiosity wherever she goes—first on the Transatlantic service, then on a cruise round the world next November. Swimming pools, tennis courts, gymnasiums, Turkish baths—everything is aboard to make passengers imagine themselves in a tip-top hotel ashore. And in one of the great funnels is a 21-valve radio set!

THE GOLDEN ARROW.

Think what a speed of nearly four miles a minute means, then imagine yourself steering the motor-car which came very, very close to reaching that amazing speed—the wonderful Golden Arrow. The late Sir Henry Segrave drove (though that word scarcely fits it!) this speed monster at Daytona Beach, Florida, on March 11th, 1929, at something over 231 miles an hour, thus capturing for Britain the world's land-speed record. This 1,000 horse-power racer, built like a gilded projectile, has an enormous tail shaped like that of an aeroplane, and the stream-lined cowling to the mighty engine is another aeroplane idea which the designer so successfully adopted.

AN ELECTRIC BATTLESHIP.

A first-line battleship of the U.S. Fleet, the West Virginia, is so well equipped with electric power that not only are the colossal guns electrically operated, but the potato-peelers in the cooks' galley, and the ice-cream freezers, are worked the same way. And every loaf of bread consumed aboard has been baked by electricity! This 33,590 ton (full load displacement) battleship can carry a crew of 1,486 men and officers when acting as the fleet flagship. Her full length is 624 feet, width over 97 feet, horse power 28,900, and her armour in some places is 16 inches thick. She carries eight 16-inch guns, twenty 5-inch guns, and numerous lesser ones, and two 21-inch submerged torpedo tubes. Everything aboard such an up-to-date craft must work strictly to time-table—hence the great clock which you see at the masthead in the picture.

he said. "I brought you here for gun-play, but you sure did not want an even break, you all-fired scallywag."

"You aim to tote me into Red Dog, Kid?" asked Cactus in a low faint voice.

The Bar-T foreman shook his head. "Nops! Get on that brone, and hit the trail! Tell all Texas where to find the Rio Kid, but watch out for my gun when I see you again, for I'll sure shoot on sight, Cactus! Git!"

The horse-thief clambered into the saddle.

"Kid," breathed Cactus Pete. "I reckon I'm a bad man from Badtown, but you got me where you want me, Kid! I'm sure forgetting that I ever saw the Rio Kid in this section—I'm sure forgetting that I ever saw the Rio Kid at all! You get me, Kid? You're seeing the last of me, Kid, and I ain't chewing the rag none! No sheriff in Texas will ever hear from me where to look for the Rio Kid."

The Kid stared. The stubbly face of the horse-thief was earnest. The horror of the death from which the Kid had saved him was still strong on Cactus.

The Kid had faced the claws of the grizzly to save him, and Cactus, bad as he was, was not all bad. There was deep earnestness in his look and tone.

"You get me, Kid? You're Santa Fe Smith, foreman of the Bar-T, and I don't know any different!"

With a clatter of hoofs the horse-thief rode up the canyon. The Kid's eyes followed him as he rode.

He stood quite still, a strange look on his face. He knew that Cactus meant what he said. He was done with Cactus Pete, and his secret was still his own.

Far up the canyon, Cactus Pete looked back. He lifted his sound arm, and waved a hand to the Rio Kid in farewell. The Kid swept off his Stetson, and waved back.

Cactus Pete rode on, and disappeared. "Sho!" murmured the Kid.

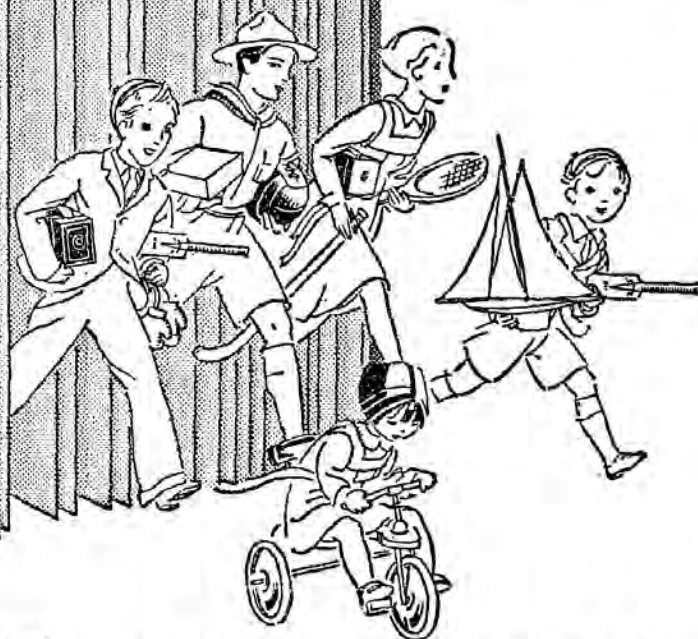
And his brow was clear as he mounted Side-Kicker to ride back to the Bar-T ranch.

THE END.

(Meet "Ventriloquist Val," the merry mirth-maker, next week in a Great New Series of Tales.)

NEW FREE GIFTS!

FOR BOYS



Engines, yachts, cameras, electric torches, sheath knives, wallets, racquets, boxing gloves. Boys all over the country are getting these things—free! Mobs of other useful gifts as well. They're sending for this wonderful new Nestlé's Free Gift Book. The widest choice ever offered of things you really want. Every Nestlé's packet carries Free Gift Coupons. Even a 2d. wrapped bar carries one. Send for this Book and start collecting now. With it comes a voucher for five coupons, just to give you a start. Write to-day!

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