WESTERN CRIME BUSTERS

OCT. 10¢ No. 7

GUNSLINGING GALOOTS!

featuring:
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K-BAR-KATE
SIX-GUN SMITH
WILMA WEST

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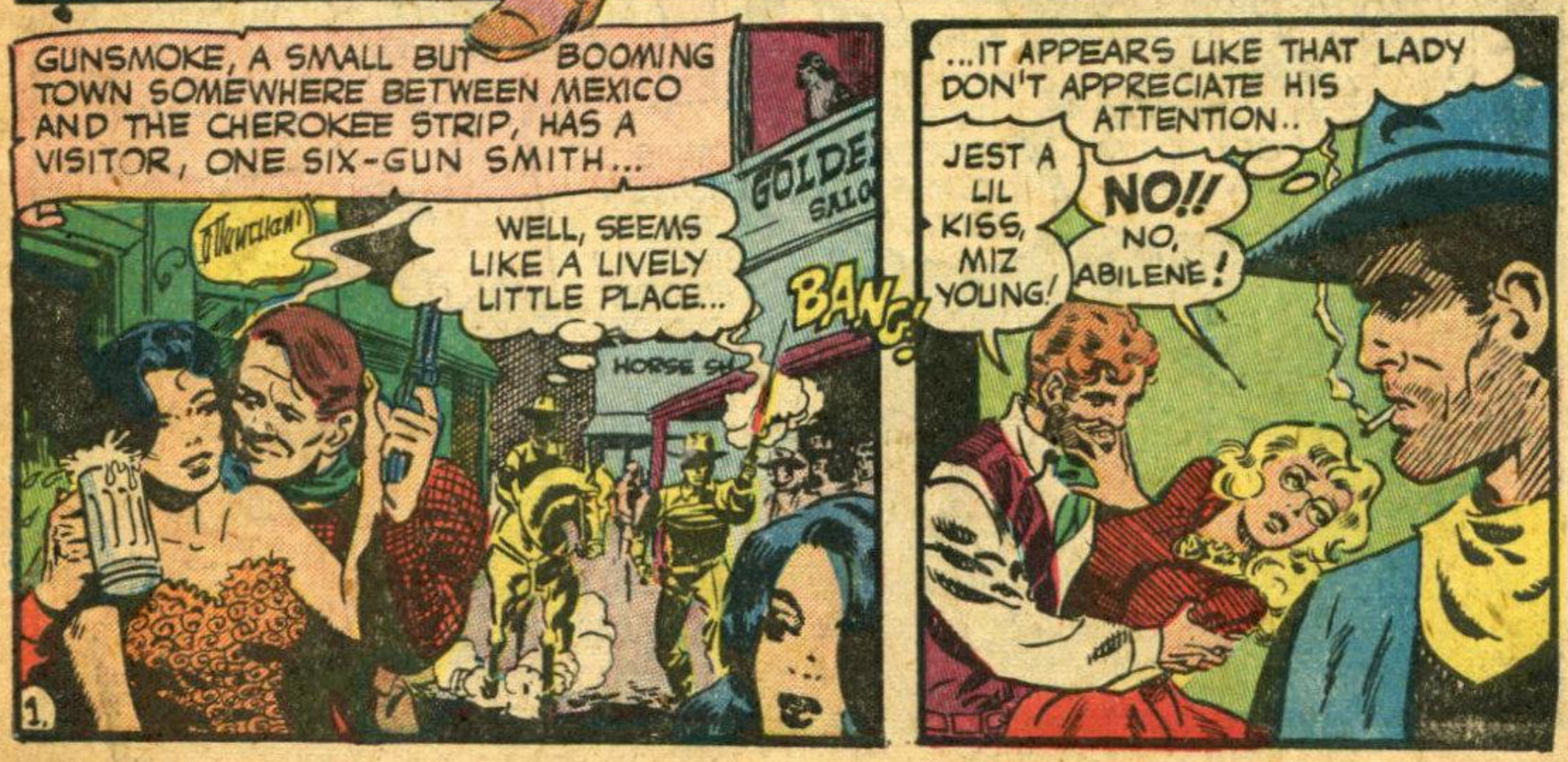
SIX-GUN SMITH

An air of menace hovers over the cowtown of Gunsmoke as Six-Gun Smith rides into the adventure of the "GUNSMOKE GOLD STRIKE!"

NOW, GET THIS, YOU MANGY COYOTES.. OL' MAN BATES GOT GOLD IN THE DESERTED MINE ON HIS RANCH, BUT HE DON'T KNOW IT. **I WANT THAT RANCH!**

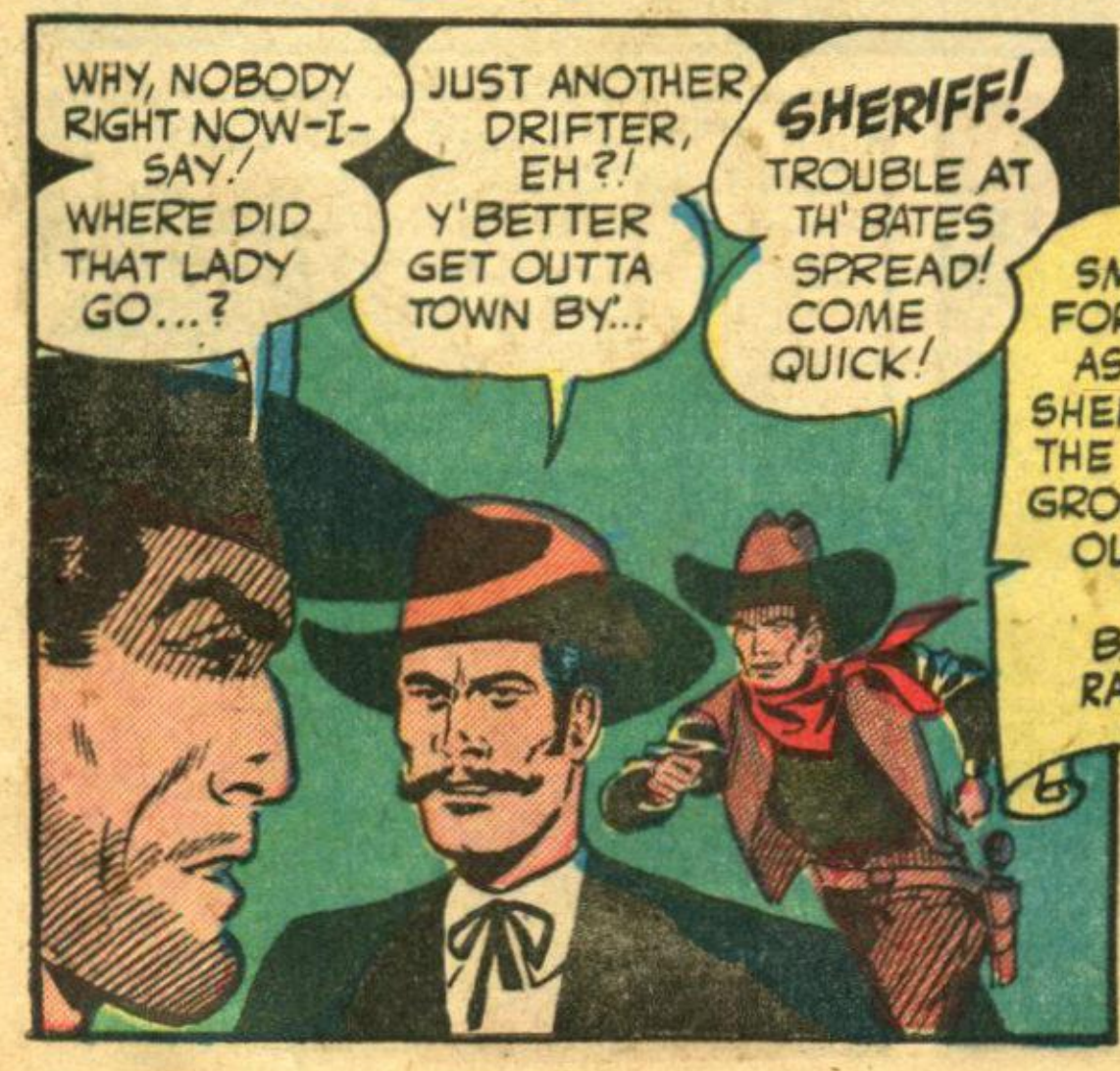


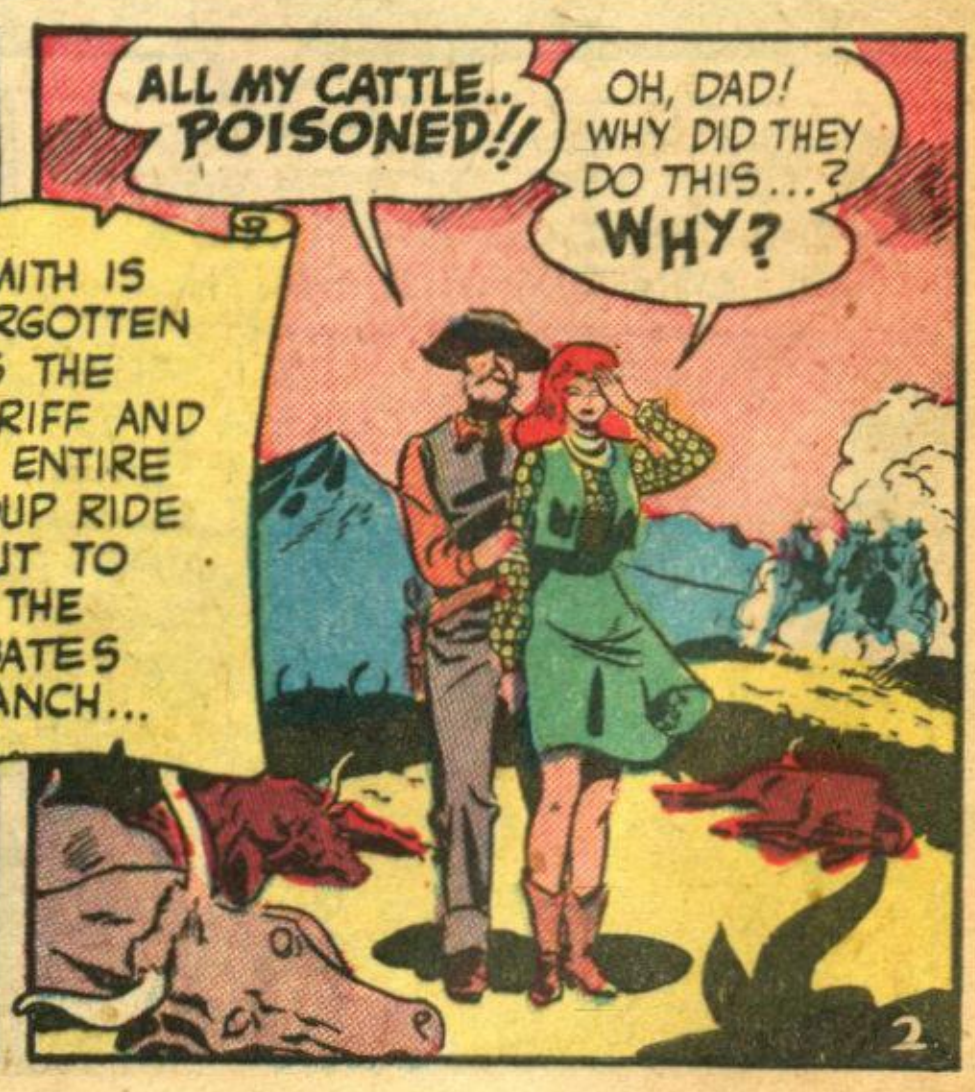
THE LADY DON'T SEEM T'ENJOY YORE COMPANY, FRIEND!
YOU GOT TOO LONG A NOSE, STRANGER!

...AND I THINK I'LL SHORTEN IT A MITE!

-NOT THAT WAY YOU WON'T!
SPLAT!

OH-OH! THE SHERIFF!
SHERIFF... THIS DRIFTER IS CAUSIN' TROUBLE!
SO! WHO D'YUH WORK FER, STRANGER?


WHY, NOBODY RIGHT NOW-I-SAY! WHERE DID THAT LADY GO...?
JUST ANOTHER DRIFTER, EH?! Y'BETTER GET OUTTA TOWN BY...
SHERIFF! TROUBLE AT TH' BATES SPREAD! COME QUICK!
SMITH IS FORGOTTEN AS THE SHERIFF AND THE ENTIRE GROUP RIDE OUT TO THE BATES RANCH...


ALL MY CATTLE.. POISONED!!
OH, DAD! WHY DID THEY DO THIS...? WHY?

I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT, SHERIFF! IF THEY'D RUSTLED OUR STOCK IT'D BE DIFFERENT- BUT THIS-!
MM-GOT ANY SERIOUS ENEMIES, MIZ ROSEMARY ?
MAYBE SOMEONE'S TRYING TO RUIN YOU. HAS ANYONE TRIED TO BUY YOU OUT ?

SO! THE TROUBLESOME TRAMP AGIN ! NOW, LOOK HERE..
WAIT, SHERIFF! WHAT'S YORE HANDLE, STRANGER?
SMITH, MA'AM.. THEY CALL ME SIX-GUN SMITH!

SIX-GUN SMITH? SAY-I'VE HEARD OF YOU! YOU CAN STAY IN GUNSMOKE AS LONG AS Y'LIKE, SMITH!
THANKS, SHERIFF!

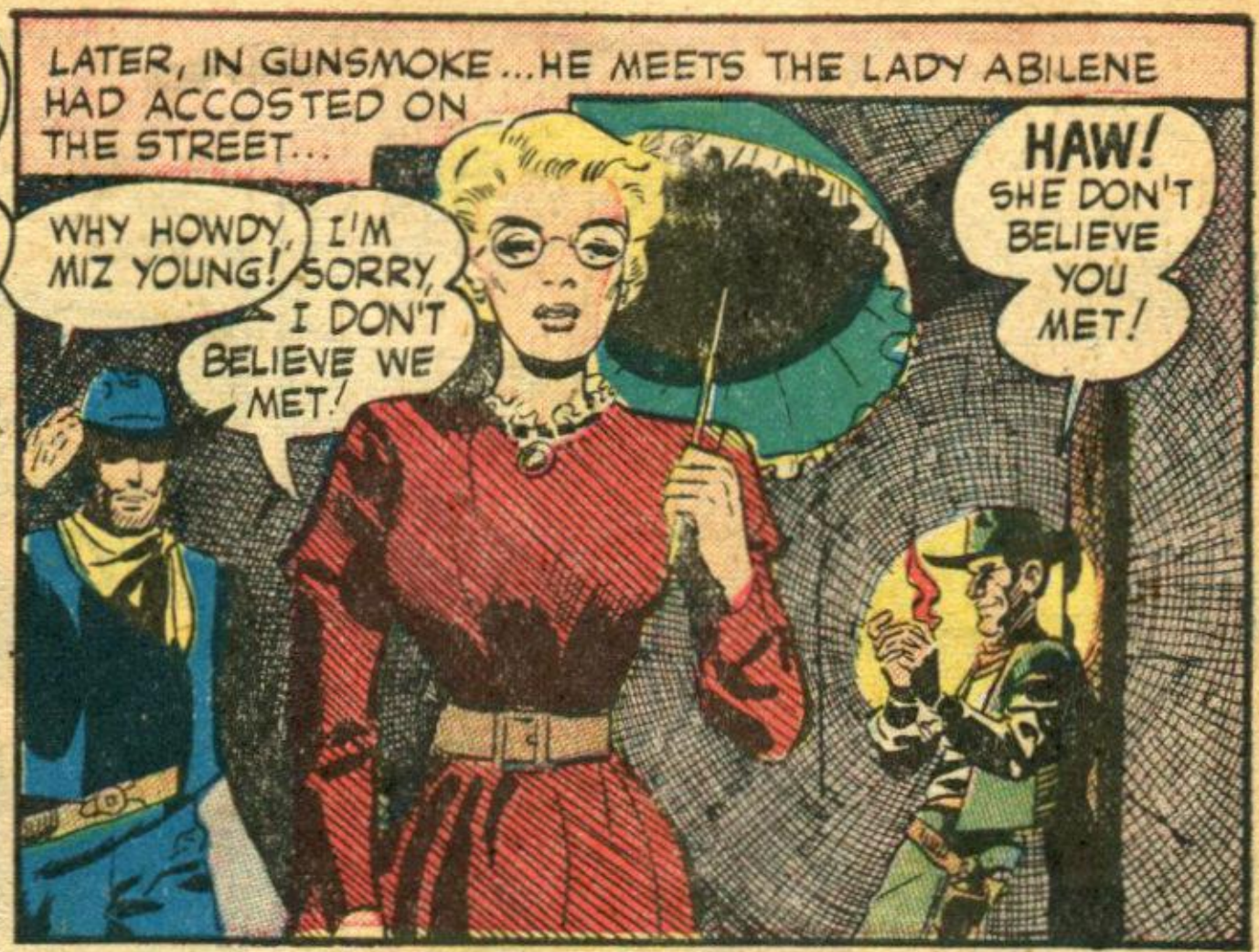
...AND SIX-GUN SMITH DECIDES HE WILL STAY IN GUNSMOKE AWHILE..AND ESPECIALLY AROUND THE BATES RANCH..
ONE NIGHT HIS VIGILANCE IS REWARDED..
AH! I BEEN EXPECTIN' YOU, MY FRIEND!
THAT'S MIGHTY INCONSIDERATE OF YOU, SETTIN' FIRE T'MR. BATES BARN, ABILENE! 'PEARS LIKE I GOT TO BRUISE YOU UP SOME MORE!

STAMPING OUT THE FIRE, SMITH DRAGS ABILENE TO THE RANCH HOUSE...
MR. BATES, I CAUGHT ONE OF THE VARMINTS SETTIN' FIRE TO YORE BARN. COULD YOU SEND YORE DAUGHTER AWAY FOR A SPELL?

WHY SHORE... ROSEMARY! WILL Y'RIDE OVER T'THE ELM RANCH AN' SEE IF OL' MAN McLEAN IS FEELIN' BETTER!
ALL RIGHT, PA!

ABILENE PROVES TO BE VERY CO-OPERATIVE....
...AND THE CHIEF KNOWS THE OL' BATES MINE HAS STILL GOT A FORTUNE IN IT...THAT'S WHY WE BEEN TRYIN' T'FORCE Y'OUT...
WHO IS THE "CHIEF"?

I DON'T KNOW- THERE'S A MEETIN' TONIGHT AT THE ROOM ABOVE THE GOLDEN LILY- THE CHIEF'LL BE THERE!
..AND SO WILL I! BATES, YOU WATCH THIS HOMBRE UNTIL I GET BACK!


LATER, IN GUNSMOKE...HE MEETS THE LADY ABILENE HAD ACCOSTED ON THE STREET...
WHY HOWDY, MIZ YOUNG!
I'M SORRY, I DON'T BELIEVE WE MET!
HAW! SHE DON'T BELIEVE YOU MET!

WHO ARE YOU ?
NAME'S RED... RED HARRISON AN' ANY @#★%!!#!! C'N LICK OL' ABILENE IS A FREN' OF MINE!

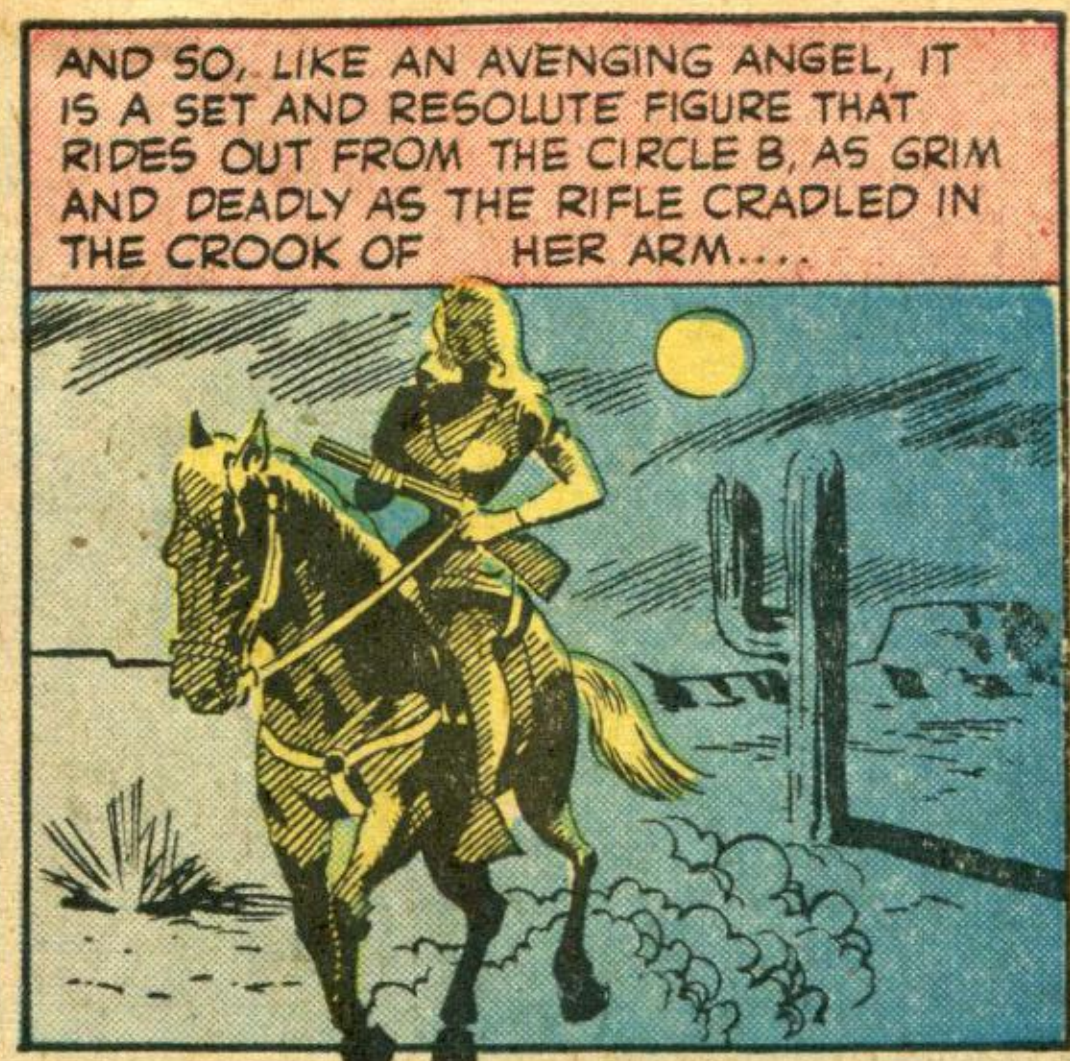
IMMEDIATELY, SMITH REALIZES THAT RED MUST BE A MEMBER..HE CULTIVATES HIS NEW ACQUAINTANCE...AND...
TWO WHISKIES, PLEASE! WHO IS THIS GAL, RED? THE ONE ABILENE MADE A PASS AT?
HIC SHE'S MIZ YOUNG, TH' NEW SEAMSTRESS. SHE SHORE IS HIGH 'N' MIGHTY, AIN'T SHE?
I LIKE YUH, SMITH! HIC I'M GONNA TAKE YUH T'MEET THE CHIEF..HIC

THE NIGHT HOURS DRAG BY AND BATES FIGHTS TO STAY AWAKE...
SIT STILL! YOU AN' ME IS GONNA WAIT TILL SMITH GETS BACK!
JUST WAIT TILL YUH DOZE OFF, BATES!

PRESENTLY HIS EYELIDS DROOP AND...
ZZZZ

DAD!

OH, DAD, DAD! IT WAS THAT SMITH! HE DID IT! I'LL AVENGE YOU...I'LL KILL HIM :SOB: I'LL KILL HIM!


AND SO, LIKE AN AVENGING ANGEL, IT IS A SET AND RESOLUTE FIGURE THAT RIDES OUT FROM THE CIRCLE B, AS GRIM AND DEADLY AS THE RIFLE CRADLED IN THE CROOK OF HER ARM....

MEANWHILE
SO THIS IS THE GAME, EH? WHERE'S THE CHIEF?
HERE SHE COMES NOW!

HELLO-? WHO'S THE STRANGER, RED?
THIS IS SIX-GUN SMITH, CHIEF..HE-
NOW, HOLD IT, FRIEND! DON'T NONE OF YOU MOVE..I'LL DO ALL THE TALKIN' IF Y'ALL DON'T MIND!

JUST THEN, ABILENE ARRIVES...
YOU ARE ALL GOIN' TO HAVE A CHAT WITH THE SHERIFF...

DROP IT, SMITH!!!
.. AND BY CHANCE, ROSEMARY RIDES BY IN HER SEARCH FOR SMITH AND SEES HIM FROM THE STREET...

TAKE THAT -- YUH SIDEWINDER!
BLAM!
CRASH!

AS THE LAMP FLICKERS OUT, THE PLACE ECHOES WITH GUNFIRE...THE SOUND OF RUNNING FEET AND THE HOARSE SHOUTS OF MEN...
GET HIM-!
CURSE YOU, TAKE THAT!
UGGH!!
BANG! BANG

CRASH!

HIT LEATHER! HE KNOWS TOO MUCH! HE MUSTN'T GET AWAY!
BANG
BANG

ROSEMARY RACES UP TO THE ROOM TO FIND...
ABILENE!
...AIN'T... GOT MUCH TIME LEFT, GAL... GOT T' TELL YUH...WE WAS AFTER...GOLD ..IN THE..OLD.. MINE..IT WAS ME THAT KILLED YORE PA..I... UGHH!

SHERIFF! GET UP A POSSE! THE GANG THAT TRIED TO RUIN US IS OUT AFTER SMITH! THEY'LL KILL HIM! HURRY!
WH-?? ALL RIGHT.., MIZ BATES- I'LL GO GET THE BOYS!

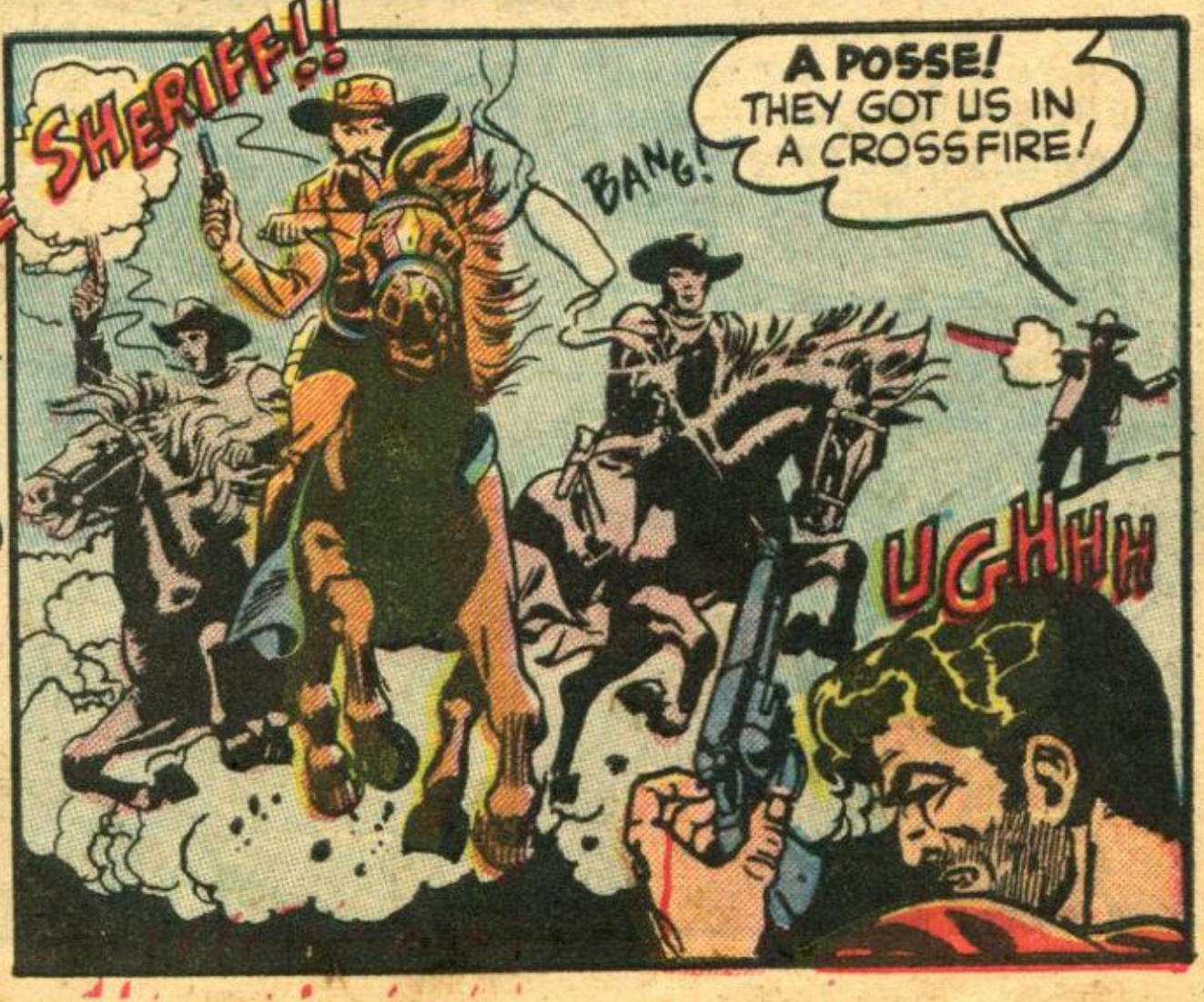
SPREAD OUT! SLADE, YOU TAKE LUKE AND SHORTY AND CUT HIM OFF AROUND THE PLATEAU!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

BANG!
OH! OH! THEY'VE GOT ME SURROUNDED! LOOKS LIKE SMITH'S LAST STAND!
BANG!
BANG!
BANG!

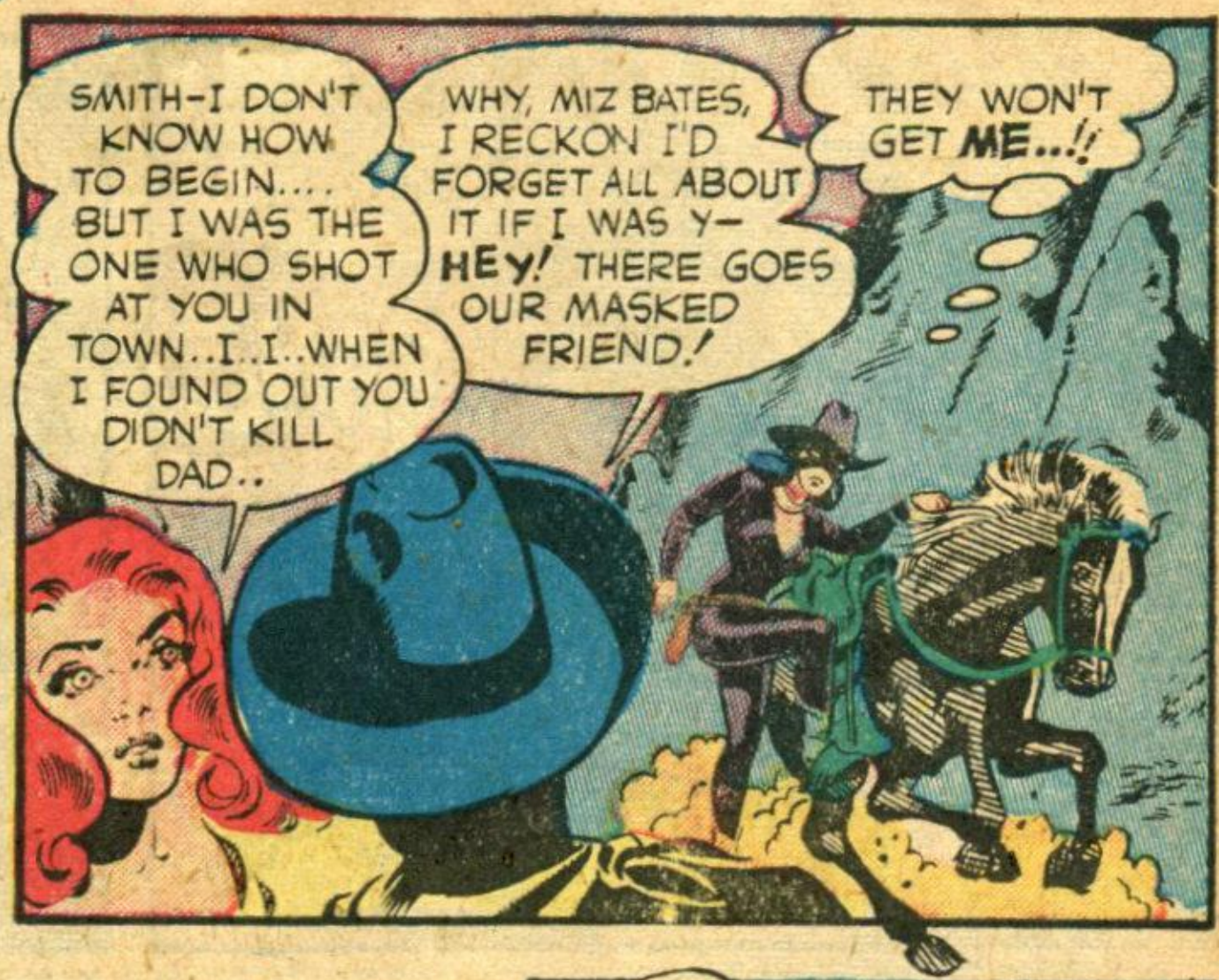
SO THIS IS THE OLD BATES MINE! WELL, IT'S AS GOOD COVER AS ANY!
BANG
BANG
BANG

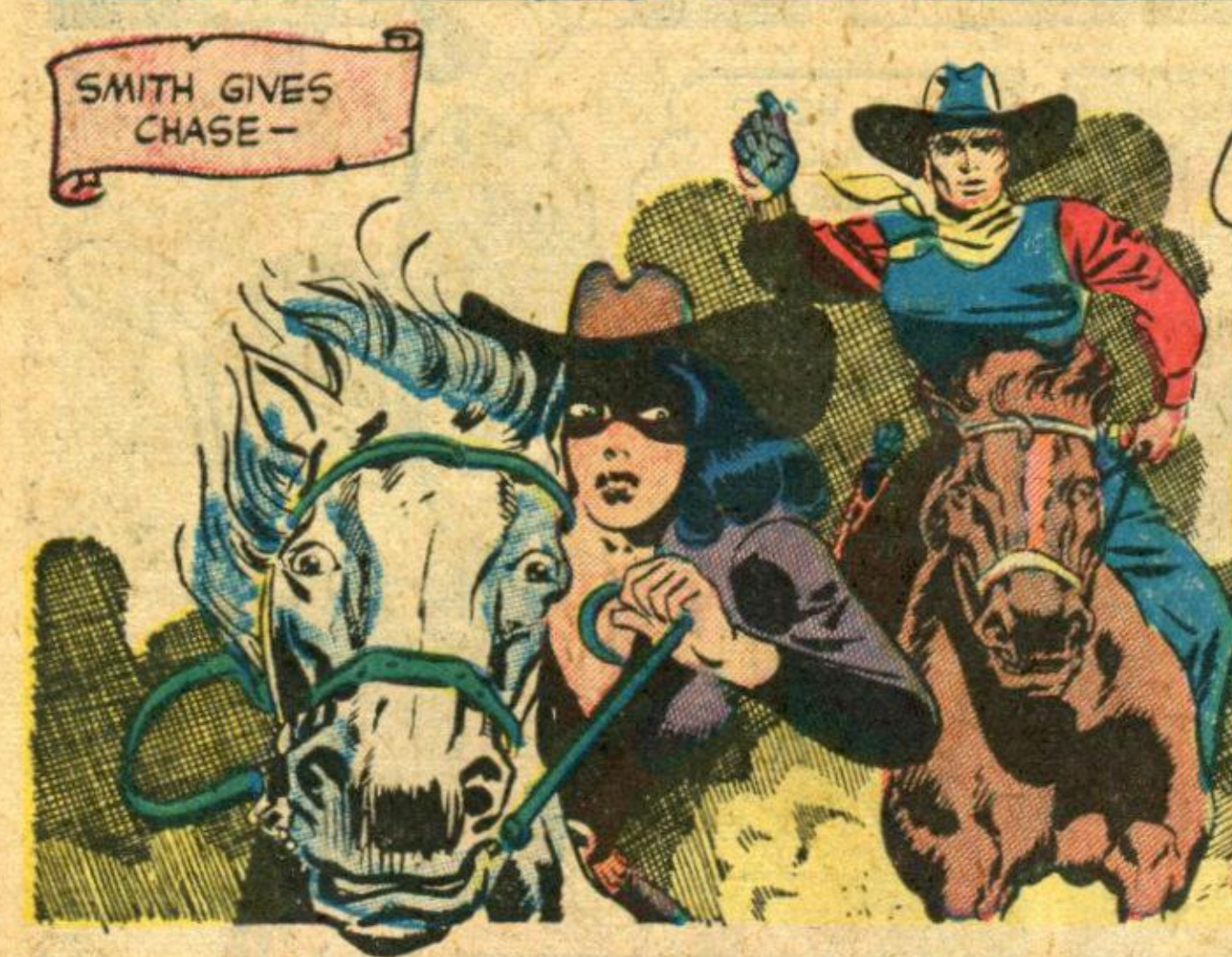
CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER... I'LL BE OUT OF AMMUNITION SOON...
WHANG
BAM!

OW! THEY'RE GITTIN' CLOSE!
ZOWEEEEE!
THE SHERIFF!!


A POSSE! THEY GOT US IN A CROSSFIRE!
BANG!
UGHHH

THE SURVIVING CROOKS DECIDE THEY HAVE HAD ENOUGH...
HOLD YORE FIRE— WE'RE COMIN' OUT!


SMITH—I DON'T KNOW HOW TO BEGIN.... BUT I WAS THE ONE WHO SHOT AT YOU IN TOWN..I..I..WHEN I FOUND OUT YOU DIDN'T KILL DAD..
WHY, MIZ BATES, I RECKON I'D FORGET ALL ABOUT IT IF I WAS Y— HEY! THERE GOES OUR MASKED FRIEND!
THEY WON'T GET ME...!!


SMITH GIVES CHASE—

OOF!

WELL, EF'N IT AIN'T THE HIGH 'N' MIGHTY MIZ YOUNG! MEBBE YORE DRESS-MAKIN WASN'T GETTIN' YUH RICH FAST ENOUGH!
SMITH, I'M SORRY.. I..I THOUGHT YOU- WON'T YOU STAY NOW THAT DAD'S DEAD..I..I NEED A MAN TO HELP RUN THE RANCH...
CAN'T, MA'AM—I GUESS I'D JUST SHRIVEL UP AND BLOW AWAY IF I EVER SETTLED DOWN!

THE END
GIT ALONG LIL DOGIES...

FIGHTING BOB DALE

in "THE OWLHOOT TRAIL"

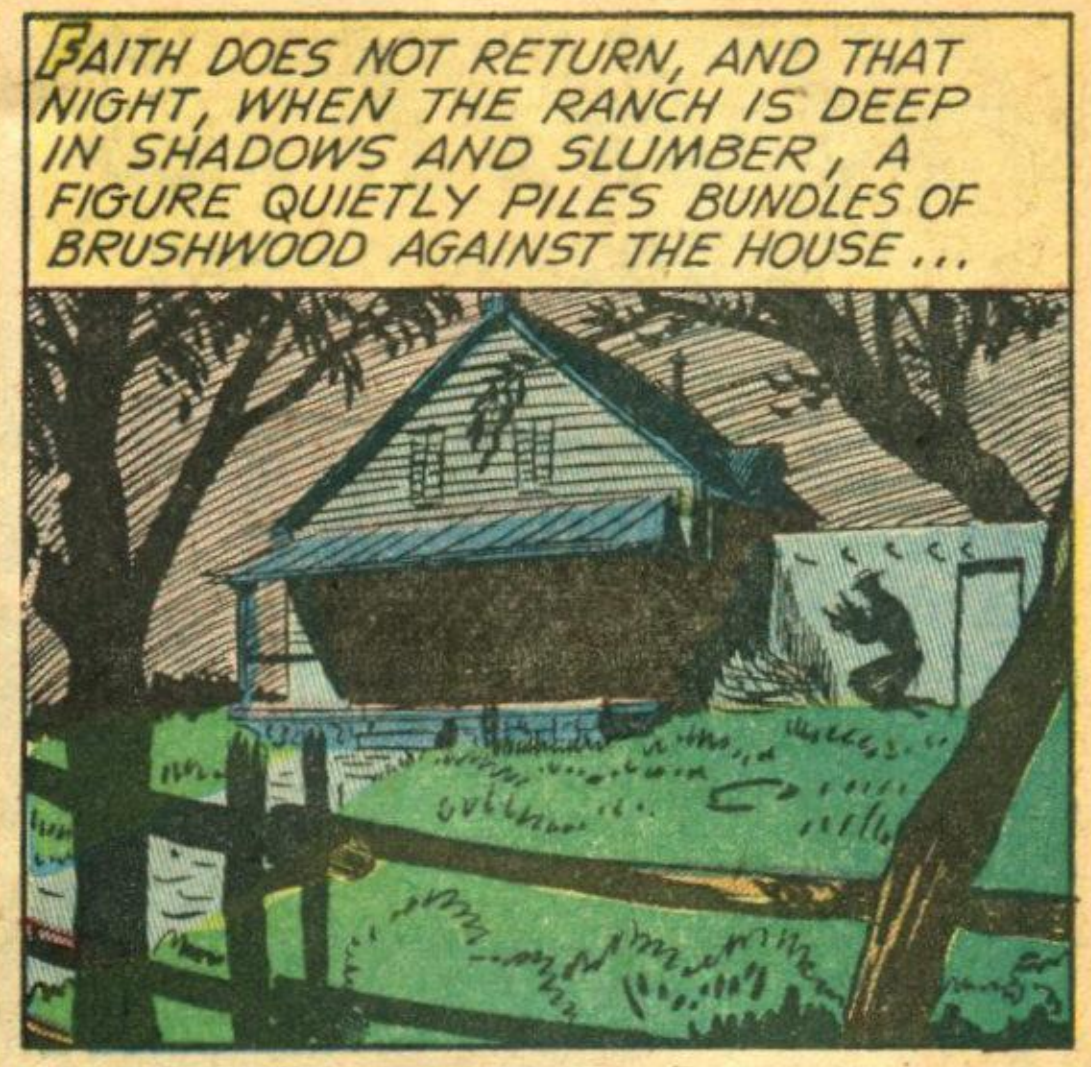
by Bill Zeller

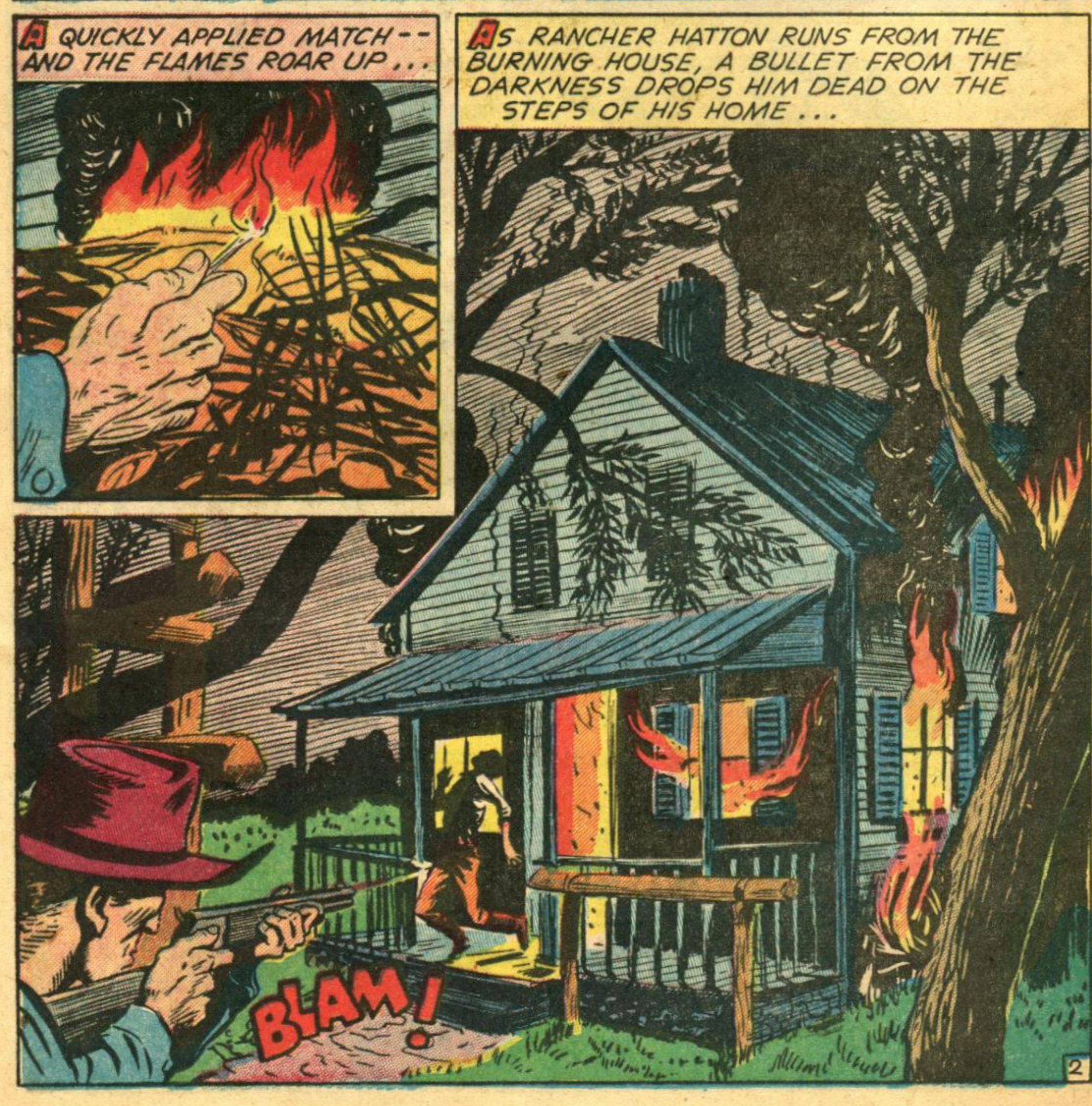
RANCH OWNER, JOEL HATTON, ORDINARILY A VERY KIND MAN, UNFORTUNATELY POSSESSES A VIOLENT AND UNCONTROLLABLE TEMPER. ONE DAY, ONE OF THE COWHANDS, DIZ GORMAN, IS UNLUCKY ENOUGH TO INCUR HIS DISPLEASURE...

OOF!

GIT OUT! YUH LAZY, DRUNKEN, SON OF A PRAIRIE DOG - GIT OFF THIS SPREAD AN' DON'T LET ME LAY MY EYES ON YUH AGAIN!!

THE NEXT DAY...
DAD, I'M GOING INTO TOWN. IF I STAY LATE, I'LL STAY OVERNIGHT WITH AUNT HATTIE.
ALL RIGHT, HONEY. GIVE HATTIE MY BEST.


FAITH DOES NOT RETURN, AND THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE RANCH IS DEEP IN SHADOWS AND SLUMBER, A FIGURE QUIETLY PILES BUNDLES OF BRUSHWOOD AGAINST THE HOUSE...


A QUICKLY APPLIED MATCH -- AND THE FLAMES ROAR UP...
AS RANCHER HATTON RUNS FROM THE BURNING HOUSE, A BULLET FROM THE DARKNESS DROPS HIM DEAD ON THE STEPS OF HIS HOME...
BLAM!

AS COWPOKES FROM THE BUNKHOUSE RUN UP AND FIND THE RANCHER'S BODY, MORE BULLETS FROM THE CLUMP OF COTTONWOODS CUT THEM DOWN TOO...
AGH!
ARRG!

SEEING WHAT IS HAPPENING, CHANG, THE CHINESE COOK, MOUNTS A HORSE BEHIND THE HOUSE...
ME GO QUICK - TELL MISSEE FAIT' -

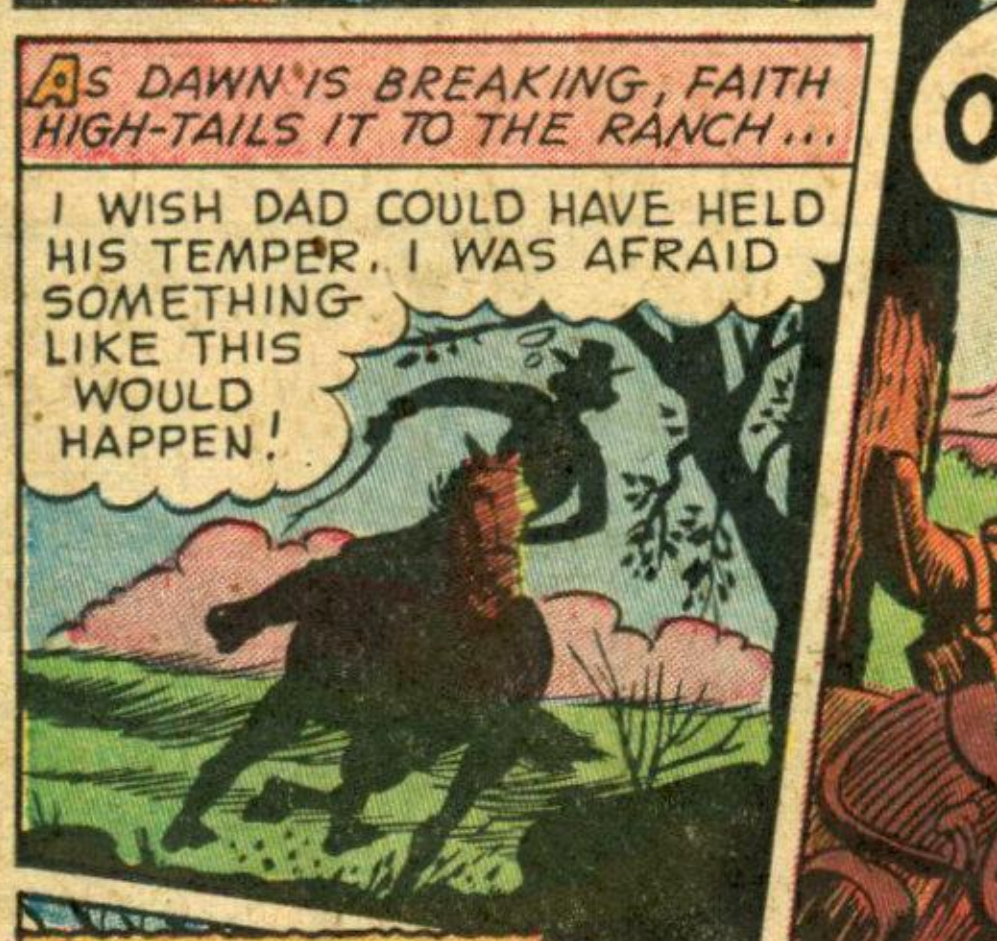
SOME TIME LATER, AN UNEARTHLY BANGING SOUNDS ON THE DOOR OF AUNT HATTIE'S HOUSE IN TOWN...
WAKEE UP! ME WANT SEE MISSEE FAIT' QUICK!!

WHY, CHANG - WHAT'S THE MATTER?
RANCH HOUSE BURN. YOUR FADDER, HE GET SHOT DEAD. COWHANDS KILLED TOO! ME COME HERE QUICK!
3

WHAT? POOR DAD! I'M GOING RIGHT THERE! CHANG, YOU GO OVER AND TELL THE SHERIFF.

FAITH, YOU'D BETTER WAIT FOR SHERIFF BOB –
NO, AUNT HATTIE. I'M GETTING HOME FAST AS I CAN. THE SHERIFF WILL BE RIGHT BEHIND ME.

SUDDENLY, AS FAITH RIDES UNDER THE SPREADING BRANCHES OF A LARGE TREE, A FIGURE SWIFTLY DROPS UPON HER ...
OHH!


AS DAWN IS BREAKING, FAITH HIGH-TAILS IT TO THE RANCH...
I WISH DAD COULD HAVE HELD HIS TEMPER. I WAS AFRAID SOMETHING LIKE THIS WOULD HAPPEN!

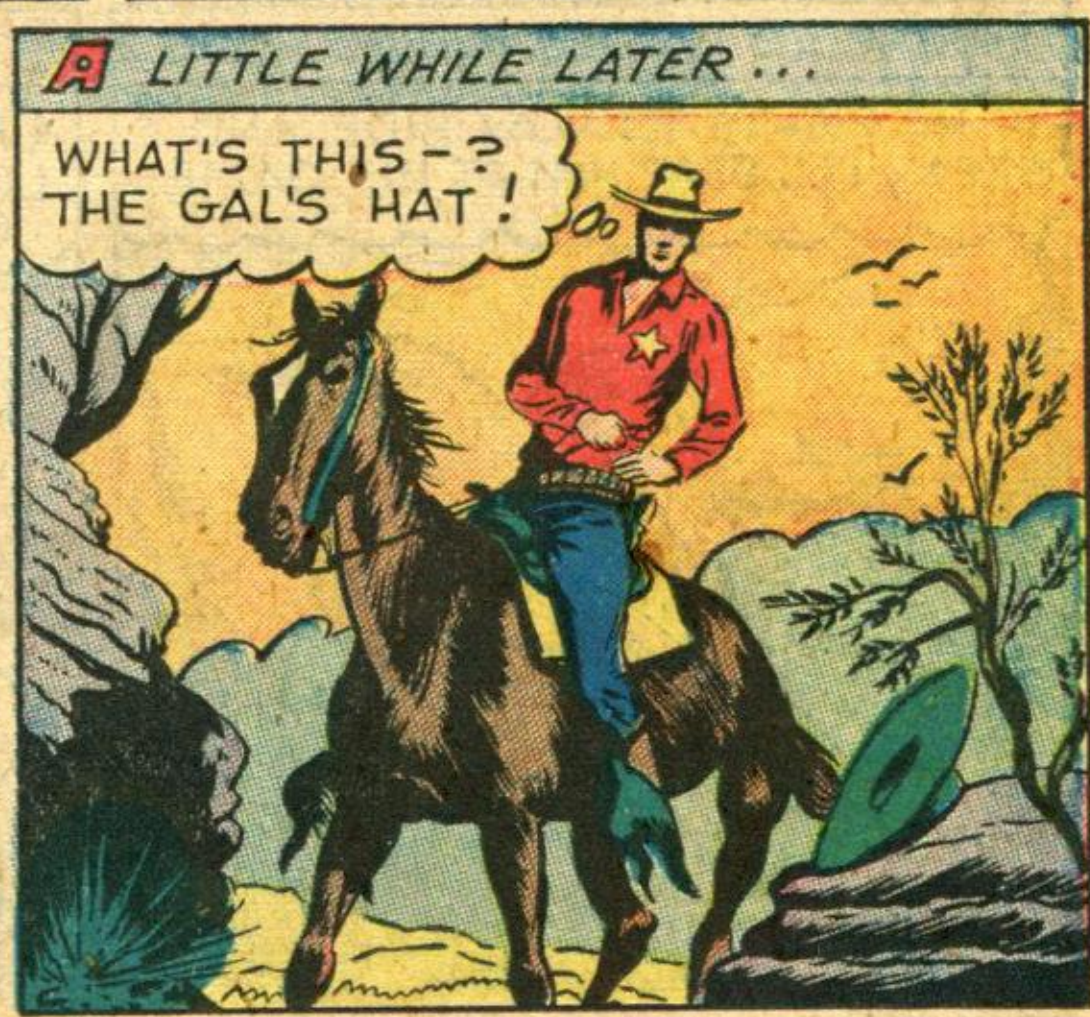
SHE IS DRAGGED TO THE GROUND...

MEANWHILE, CHANG THE COOK HAS ROUSED SHERIFF BOB DALE...
THAT GIRL SHOULD NEVER HAVE GONE BACK THERE ALONE. I'M RIDING AFTER HER. YOU GO OVER AND WAKE MY TWO DEPUTIES – TELL THEM TO COME ALONG PRONTO!

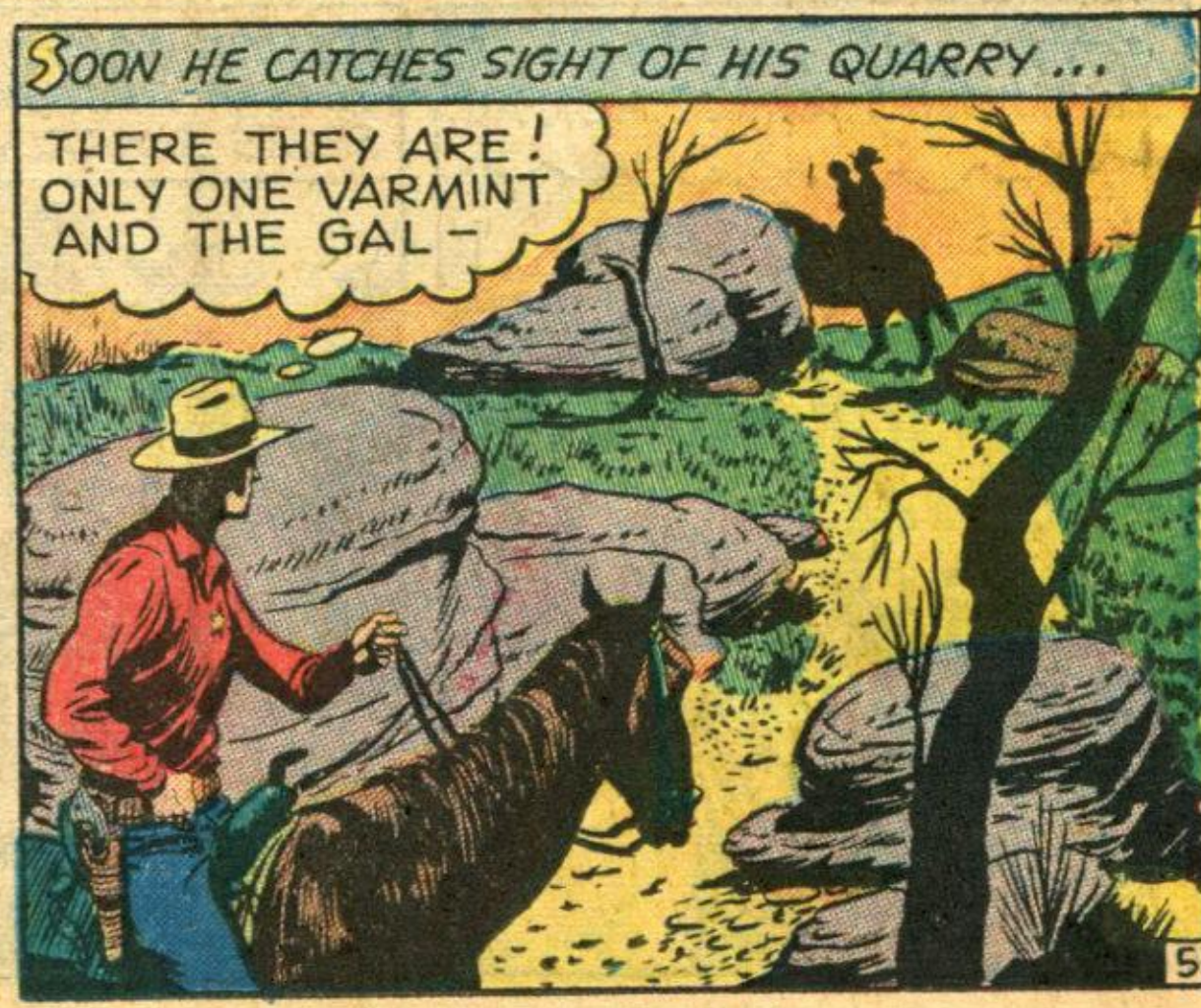
HE REACHES THE OVERHANGING TREE...
SAY-! THAT'S THE GIRL'S HORSE, SHE MUST BE IN TROUBLE!

LOOKS LIKE SIGNS OF A STRUGGLE HERE, SHE'S BEEN CARRIED OFF -
5

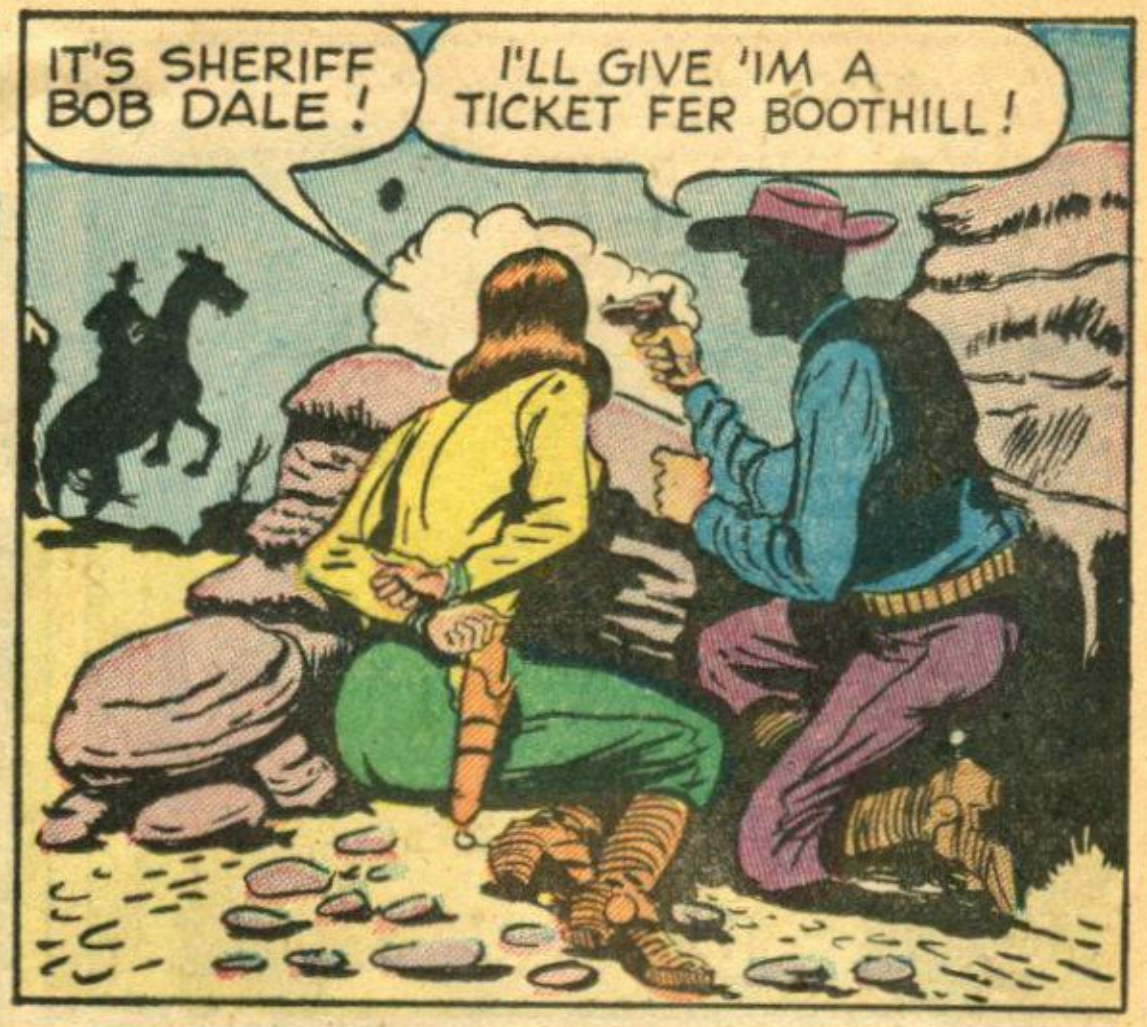
IN DESPERATION, FAITH MANAGES TO DROP HER HAT ON THE TRAIL...


A LITTLE WHILE LATER...
WHAT'S THIS-? THE GAL'S HAT!

GIDDAP, BEAUTY! THEY MUST BE RIGHT AHEAD-!

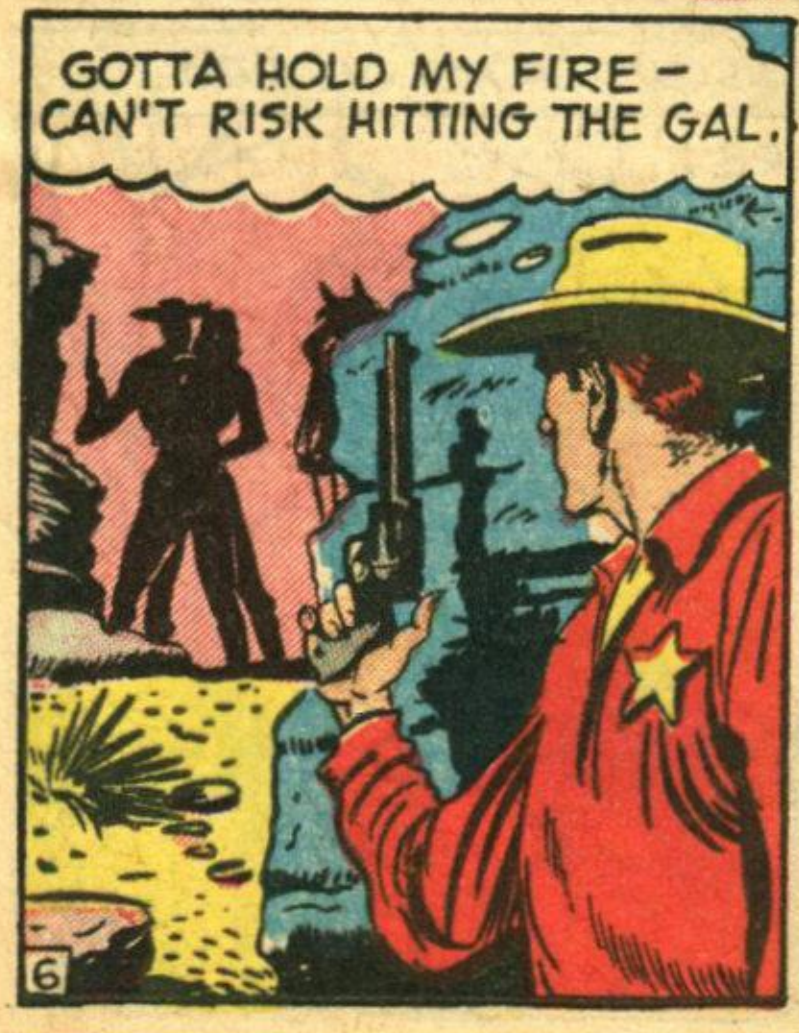

SOON HE CATCHES SIGHT OF HIS QUARRY...
THERE THEY ARE! ONLY ONE VARMINT AND THE GAL -
5

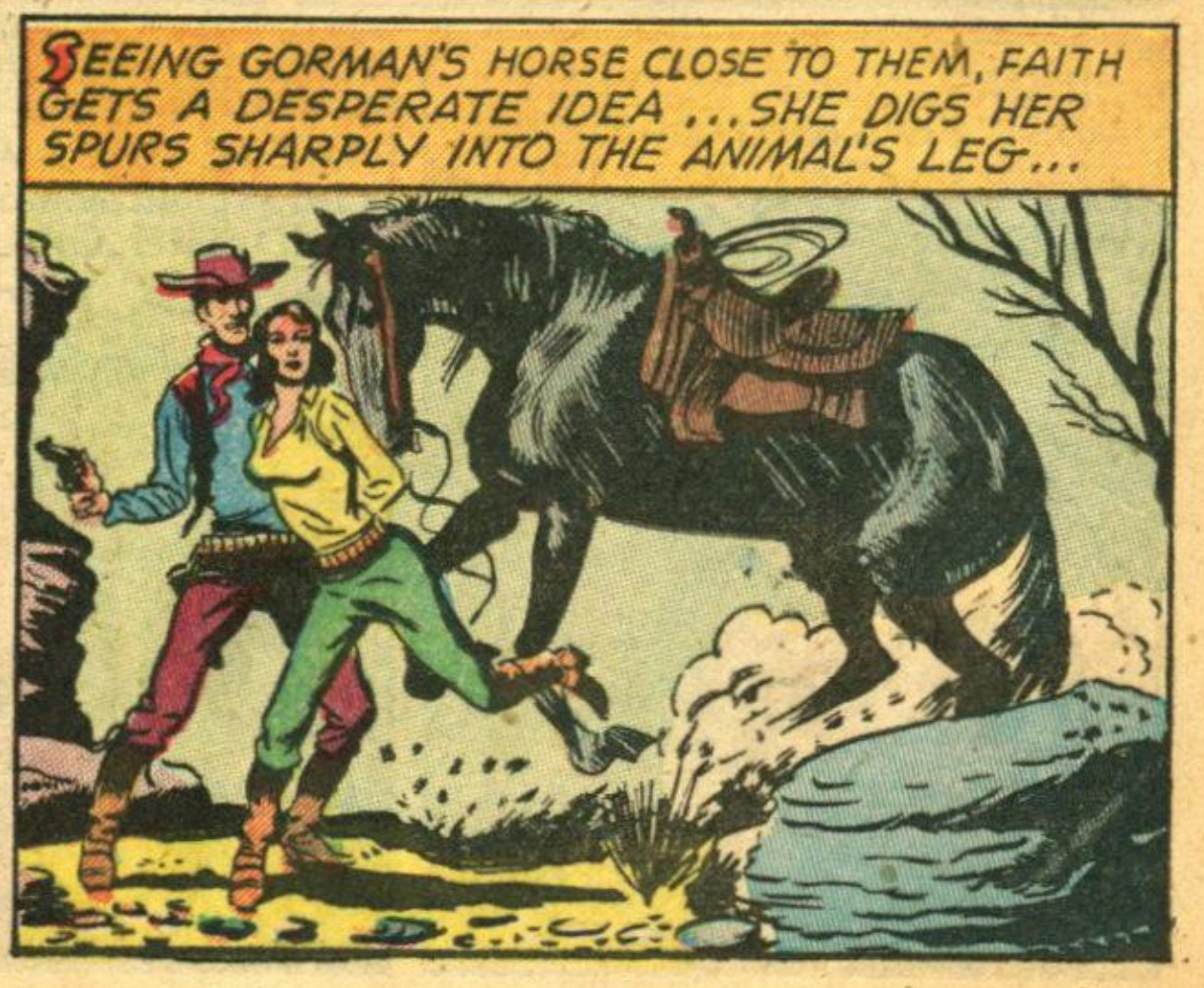
GORMAN, CATCHING SIGHT OF THE SHERIFF, DISMOUNTS AND TIES FAITH'S HANDS...
THIS'LL HOLD YUH TIL I GET RID OF THAT HOMBRE.

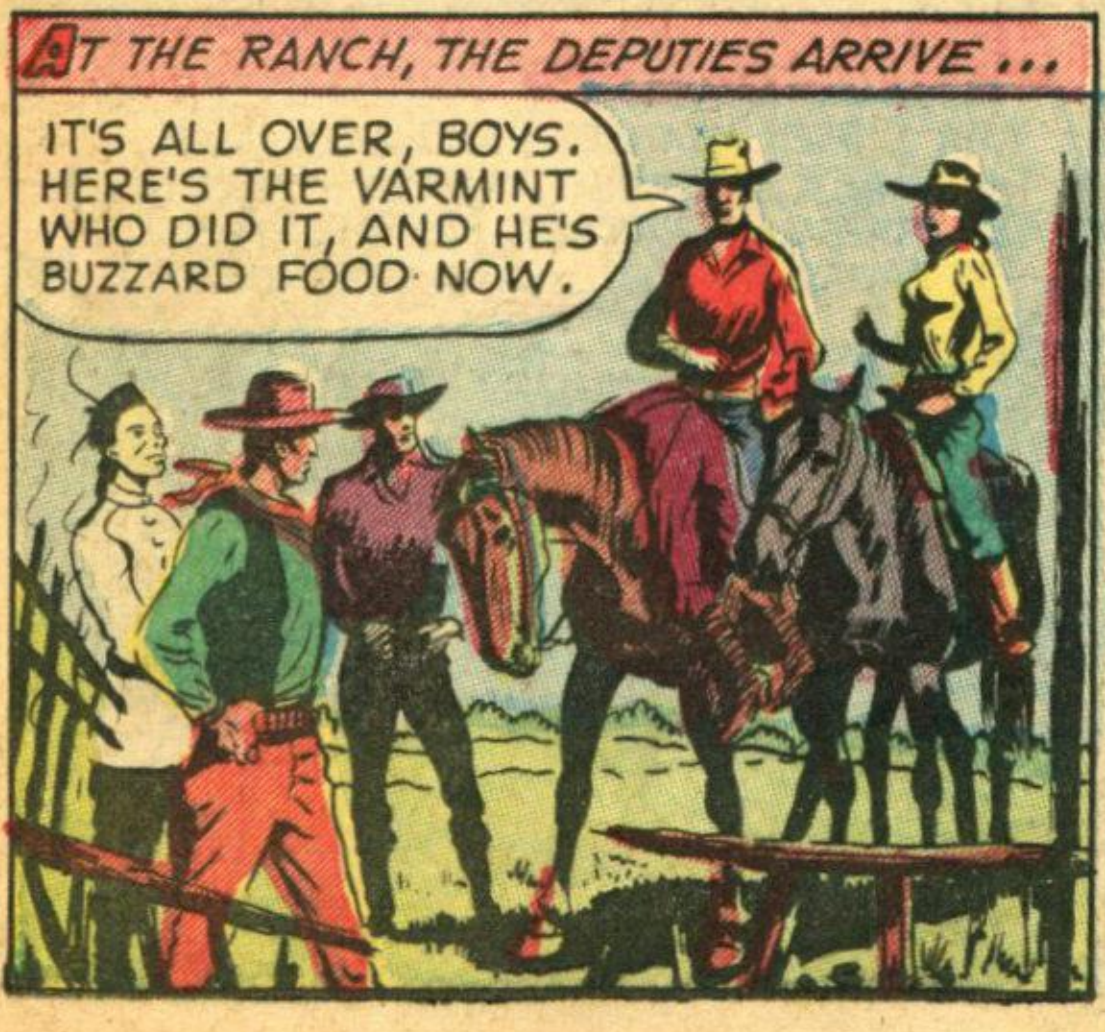

IT'S SHERIFF BOB DALE!
I'LL GIVE 'IM A TICKET FER BOOTHILL!

SHERIFF BOB CIRCLES AROUND ROCKS...
IF HE WANTS TO PLAY HIDE AND SEEK, I'LL BEAT HIM AT HIS GAME.

GORMAN USES FAITH AS A SHIELD...
OOH! LET ME GO!
EF HE WANTS TUH SHOOT IT OUT, YUH KIN CATCH HIS SLUGS.


GOTTA HOLD MY FIRE - CAN'T RISK HITTING THE GAL.


SEEING GORMAN'S HORSE CLOSE TO THEM, FAITH GETS A DESPERATE IDEA ...SHE DIGS HER SPURS SHARPLY INTO THE ANIMAL'S LEG...



FIGHTING BOB'S IN OUR NEXT ISSUE, TOO

K-BAR KATE

RANCH of HATE

by R. HAYDEN

IN A DIM CORNER OF THE PALACE SALOON "MA" JENKS' FOREMAN, JAKE, TALKS TO AN EVIL-LOOKING STRANGER.

I'M HIDIN' OUT, JAKE ----- WHY DID YOU SEND FOR ME?

I KNOW YOU'RE WANTED FOR MURDER, JOE, AND I CAN HELP YOU! --- "MA" JENKS IS OUT AT THE RANCH ALONE --- "MA" DON'T TRUST BANKS AND THERE'S A THOUSAND DOLLARS IN A BOX UNDER HER BED **RIGHT NOW** --- IF YOU WAS TO **SHOOT** HER AND TAKE THE MONEY YOU CAN BE **RICH** IN **MEXICO** AND I'LL GET THE **RANCH** --- I'M **NEXT OF KIN**!

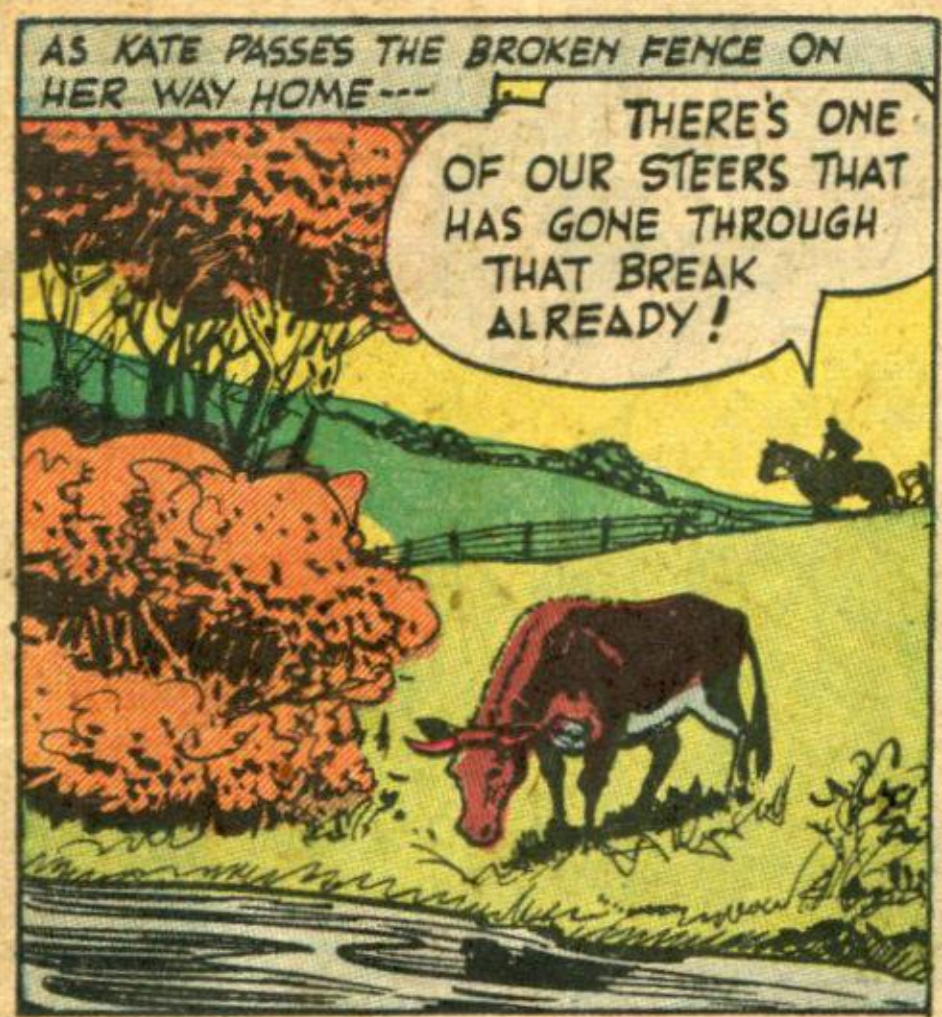
MEANWHILE, AT THE K-BAR RANCH, KATE FINDS A BROKEN FENCE...

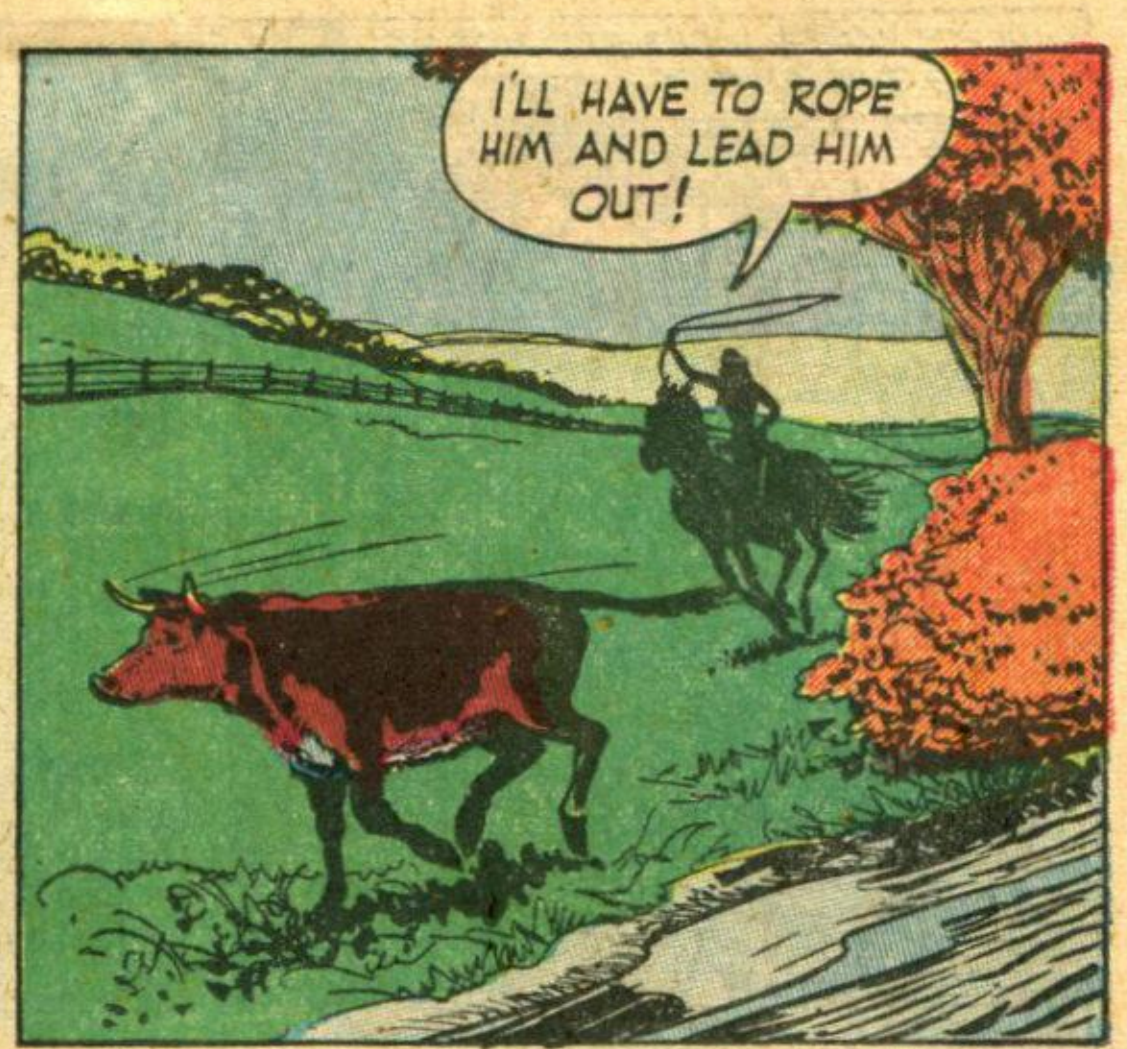
THIS IS SOME OF "MA" JENKS' WORK! **THIS** TIME I'M RIDING OVER AND TELLING HER OFF!

BUT ON THE WAY KATE MEETS HER SWEETHEART, DEPUTY DON...

"MA"'S BEEN MEANER THAN **EVER**, SINCE THAT NEW FOREMAN, **FINCHER**, IS THERE!

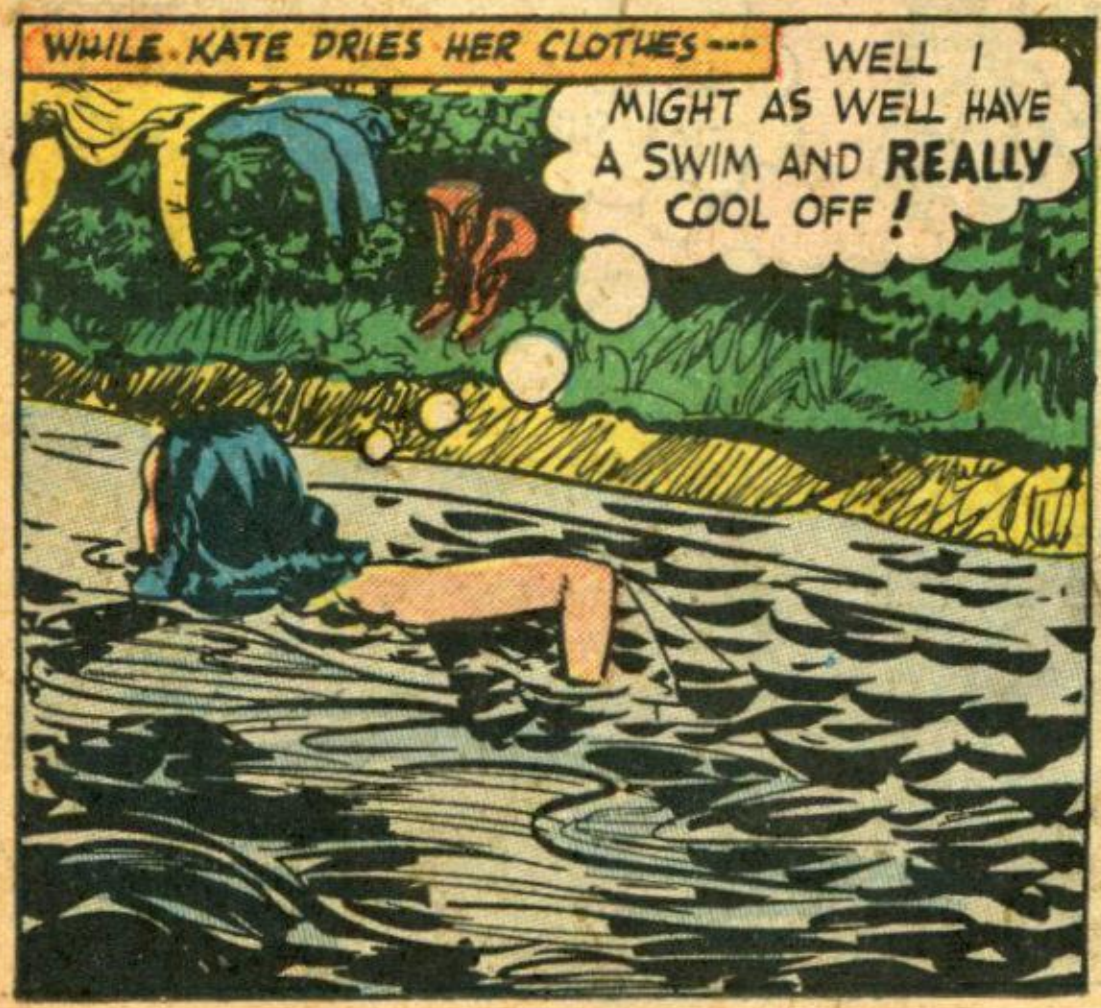
YOU'D BETTER GO AND **COOL OFF**, KATE --- I'LL TALK TO "MA" THIS AFTERNOON!


AS KATE PASSES THE BROKEN FENCE ON HER WAY HOME---
THERE'S ONE OF OUR STEERS THAT HAS GONE THROUGH THAT BREAK ALREADY!

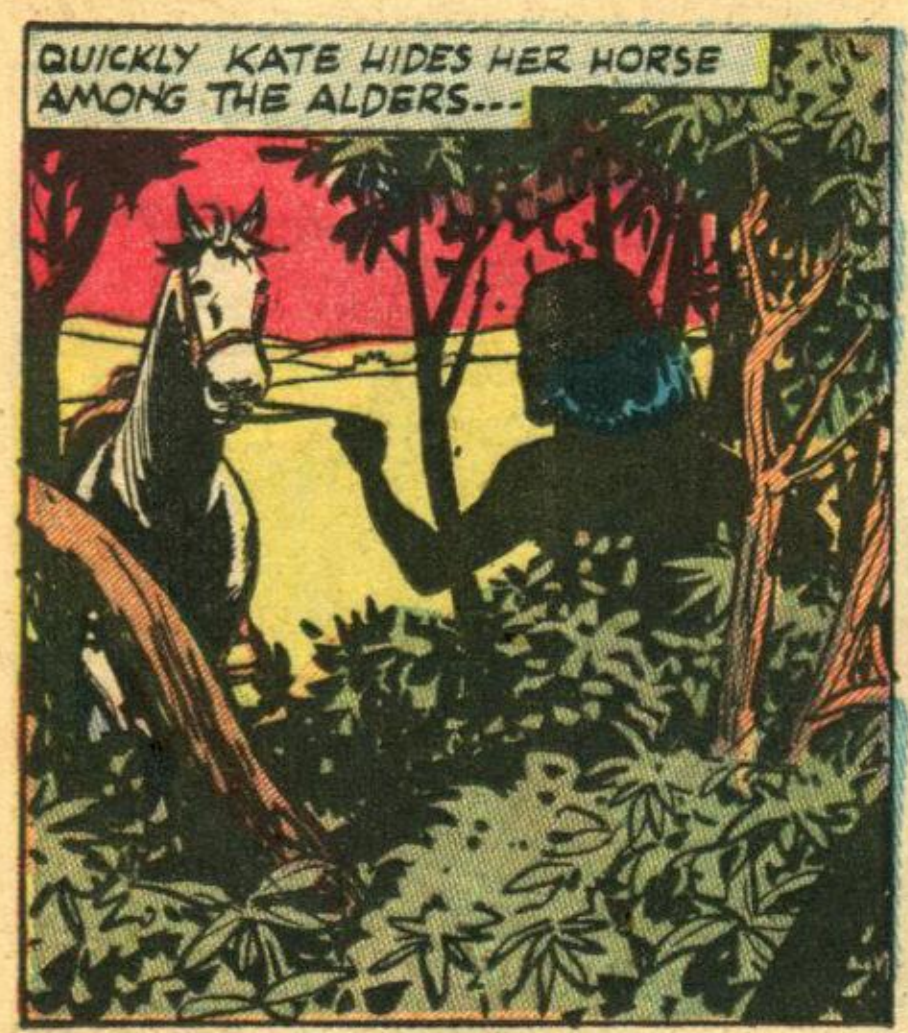

I'LL HAVE TO ROPE HIM AND LEAD HIM OUT!

BUT, AS KATE'S HORSE BRACES, HIS FEET SLIP----

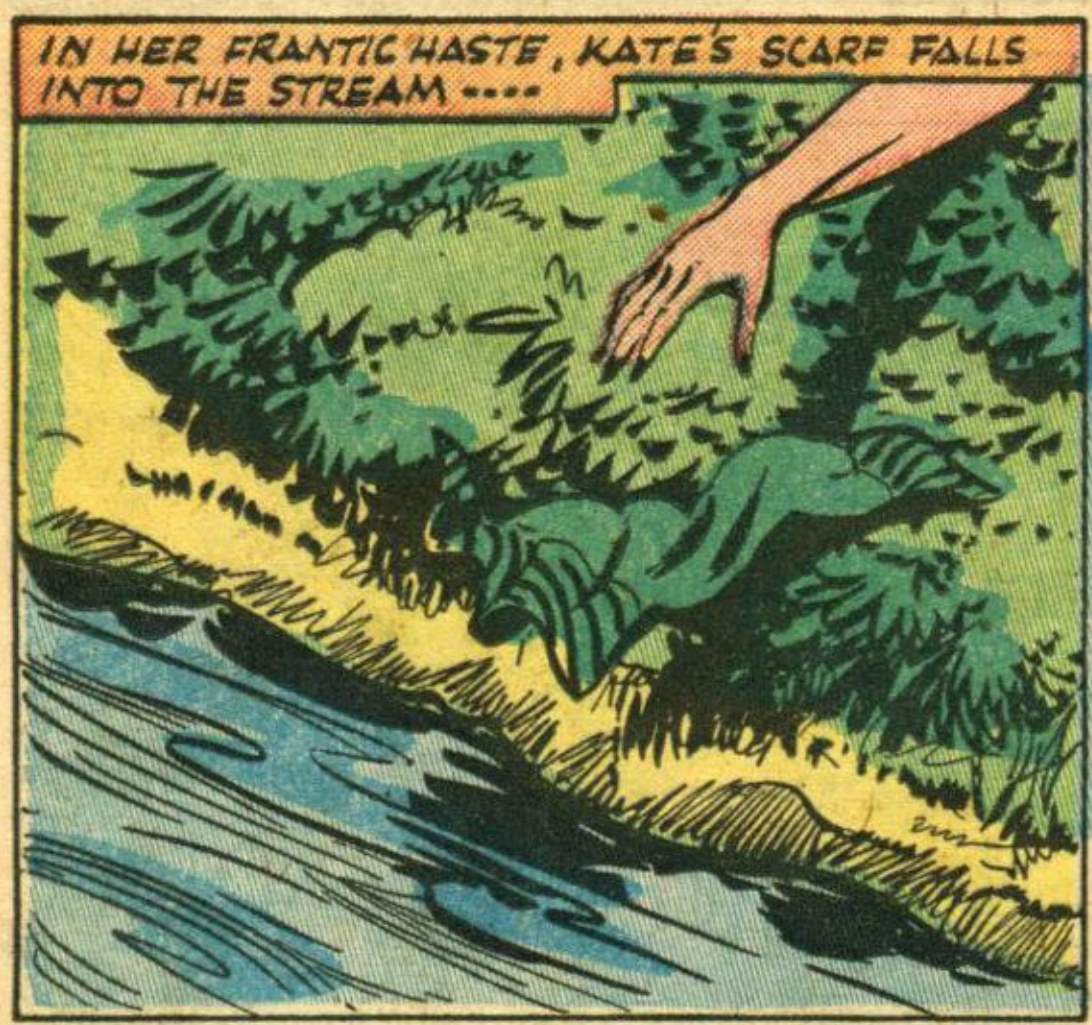
---AND KATE LANDS IN THE WATER.

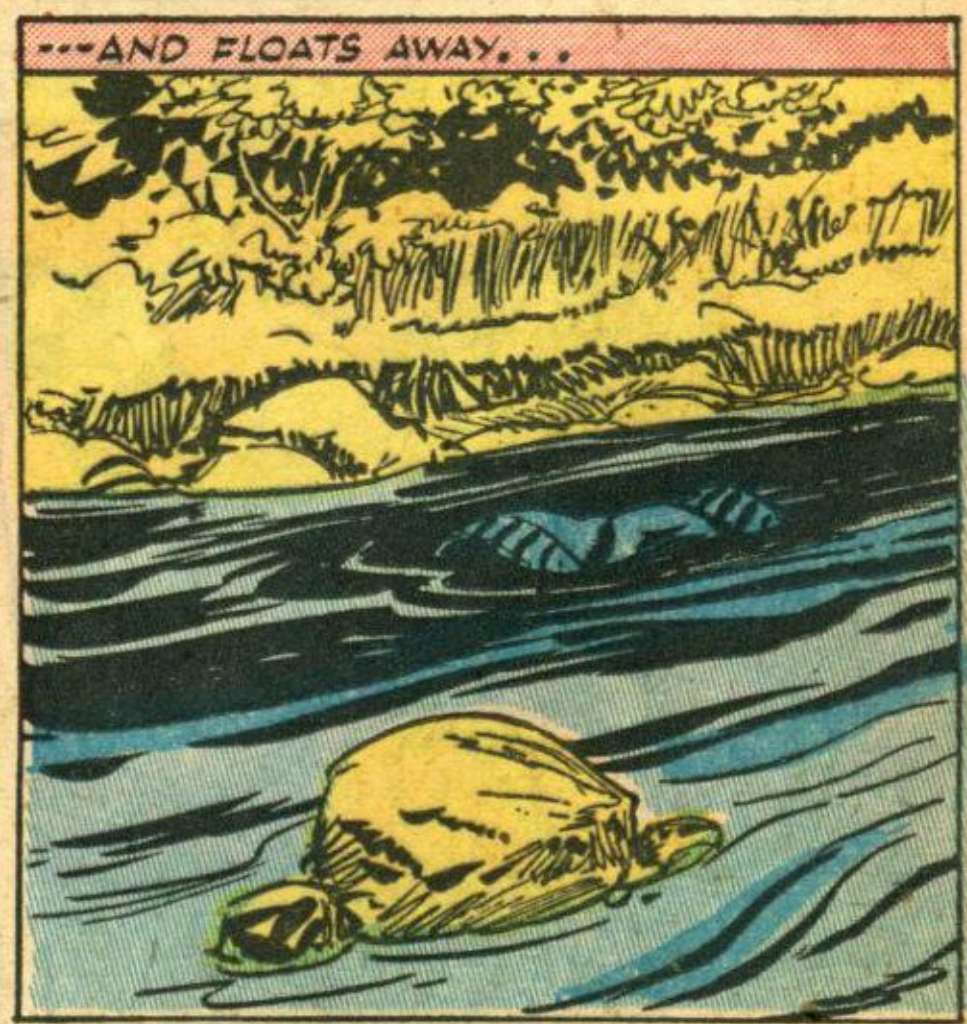

WHILE KATE DRIES HER CLOTHES---
WELL I MIGHT AS WELL HAVE A SWIM AND REALLY COOL OFF!

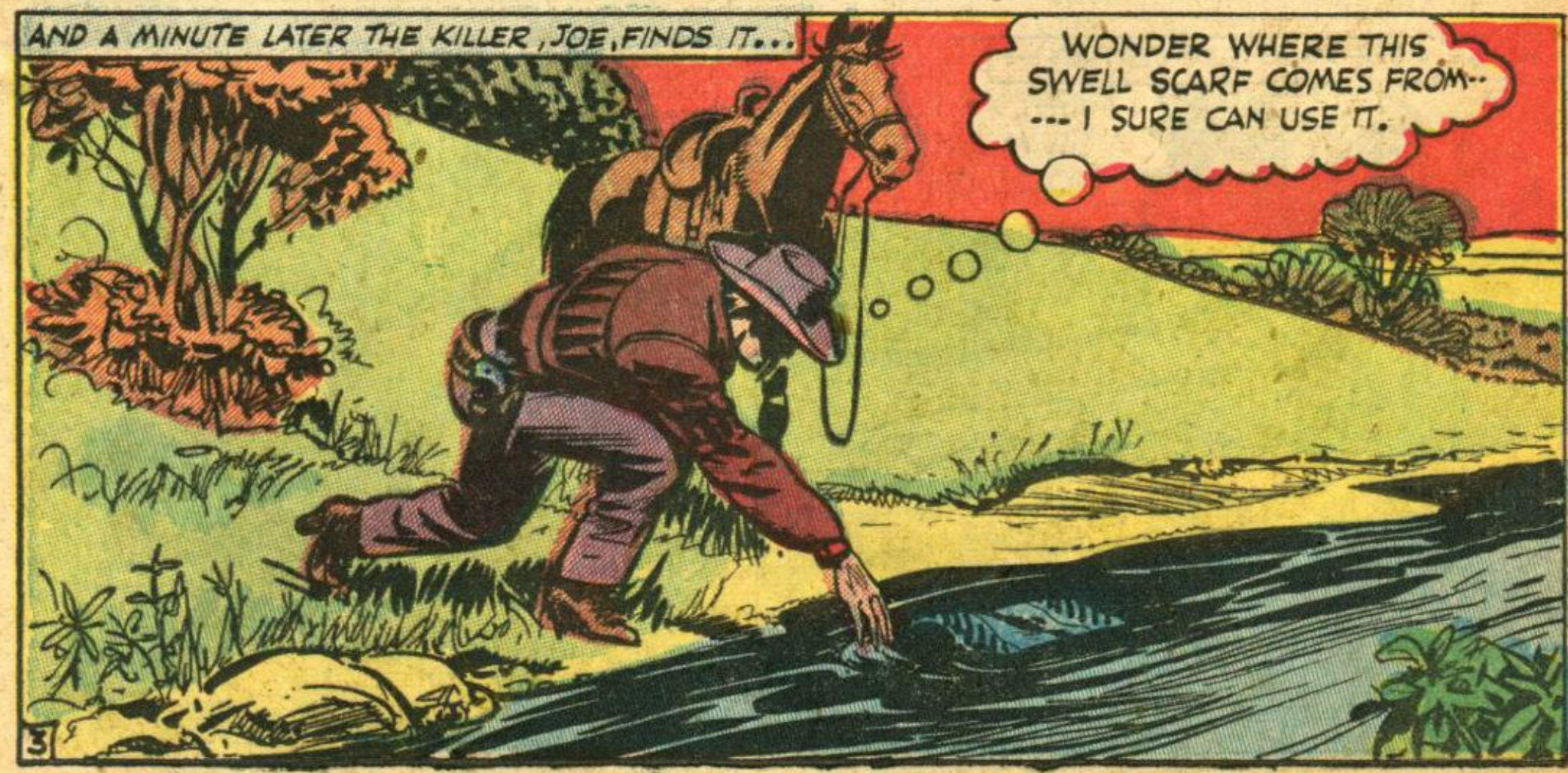
---SUDDENLY KATE HEARS HOOFBEATS AROUND THE BEND...

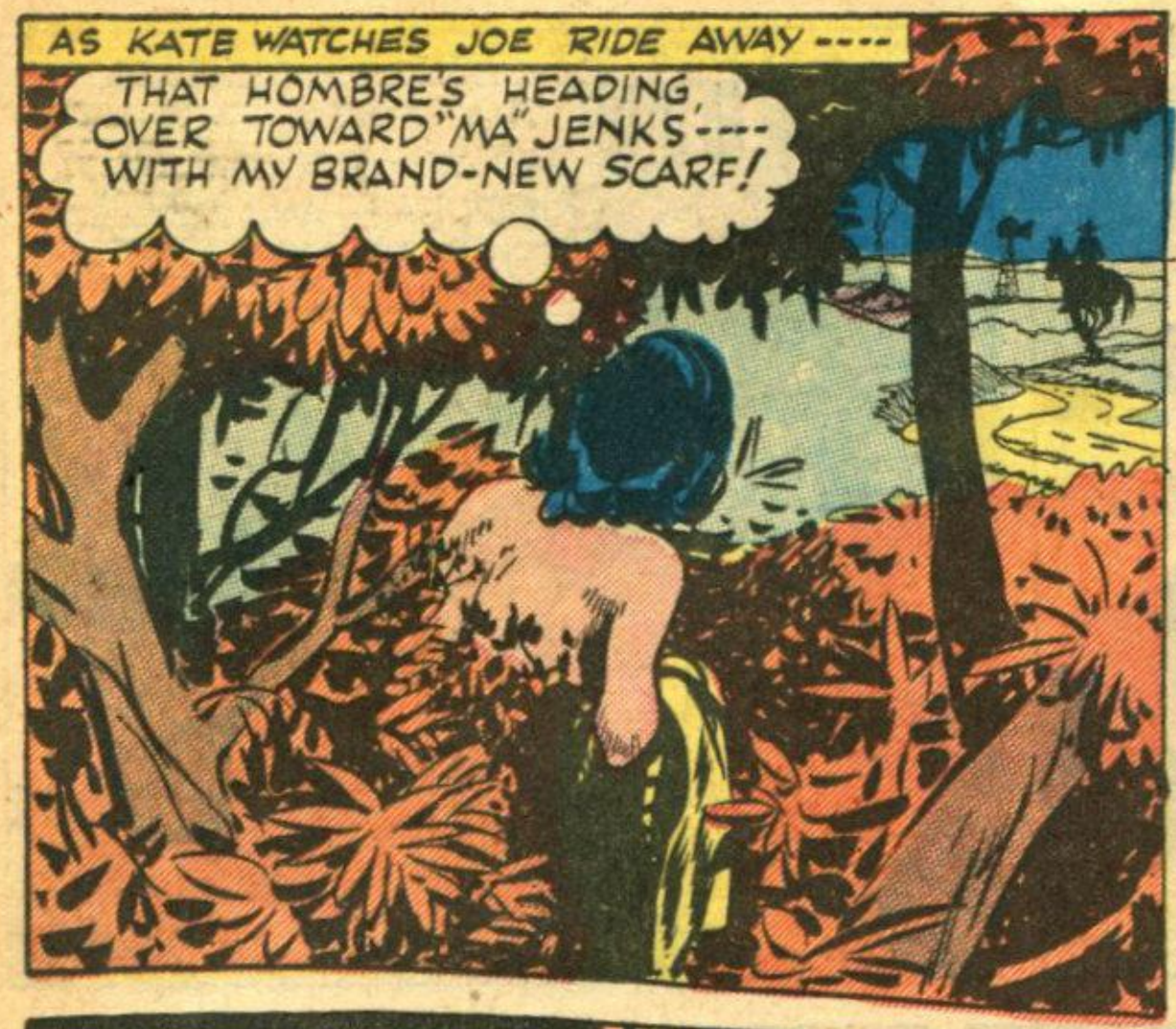

QUICKLY KATE HIDES HER HORSE AMONG THE ALDERS...

---AND THEN GRABS FOR HER CLOTHES...


IN HER FRANTIC HASTE, KATE'S SCARF FALLS INTO THE STREAM....


---AND FLOATS AWAY...


AND A MINUTE LATER THE KILLER, JOE, FINDS IT...
WONDER WHERE THIS SWELL SCARF COMES FROM-- --- I SURE CAN USE IT.


AS KATE WATCHES JOE RIDE AWAY ----
THAT HOMBRE'S HEADING OVER TOWARD "MA" JENKS ---- WITH MY BRAND-NEW SCARF!

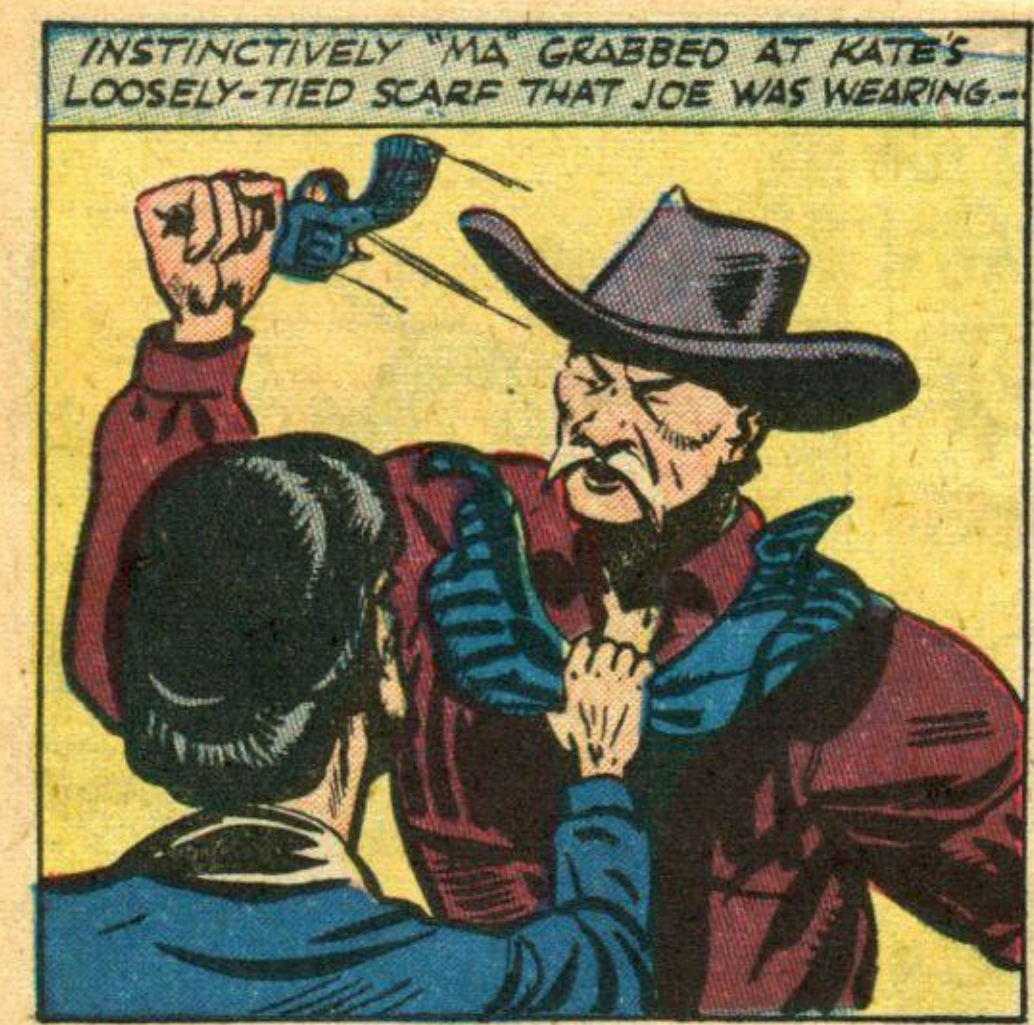
---THEN HURRIEDLY DRESSES...
NOW, THAT I'M COOLED DOWN, I'LL RIDE OVER AND CLAIM IT!

MEANWHILE, AT "MA'S ---
WONDER WHY THAT STRANGER'S SNEAKIN' UP HERE!

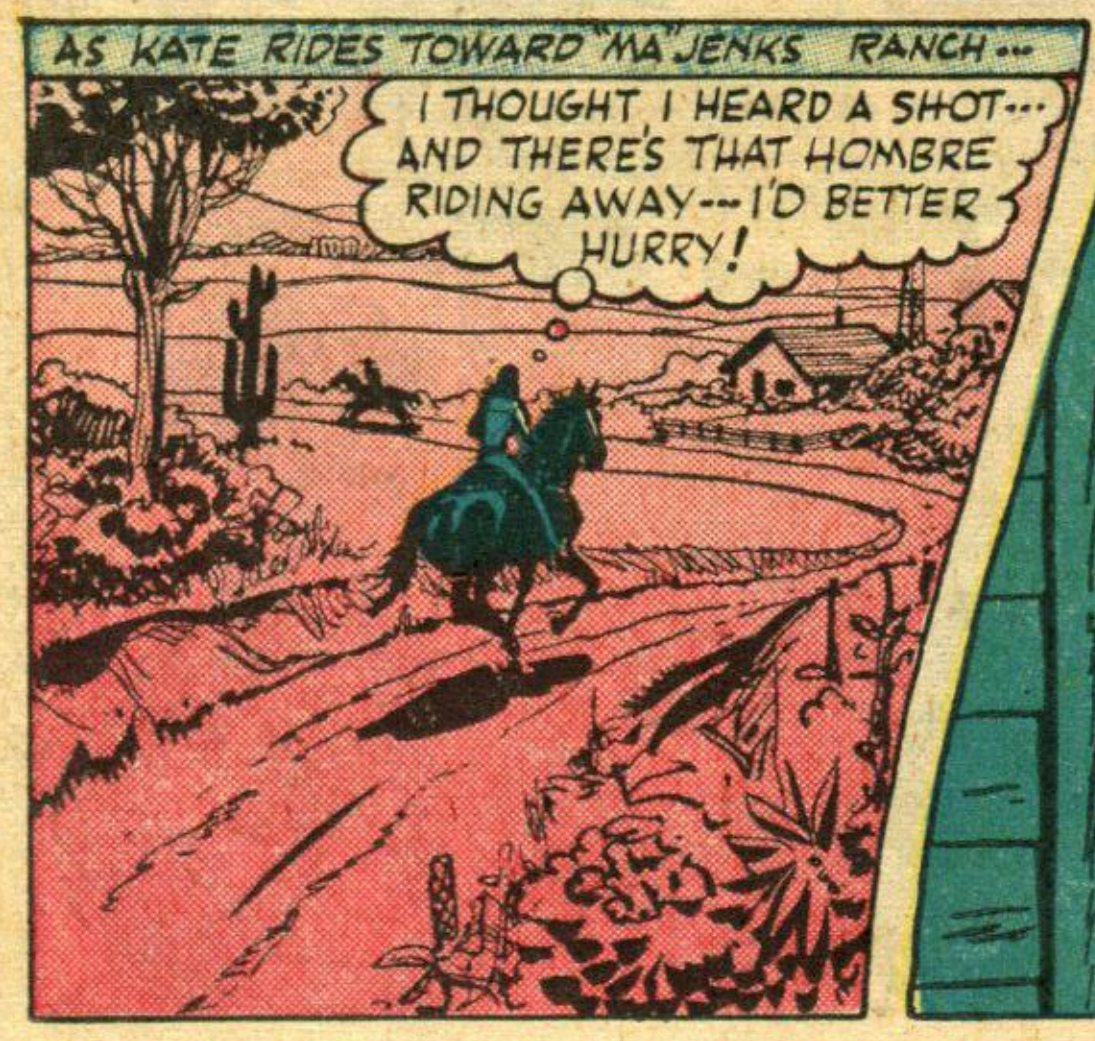
REACH, MISTER --- AND I'LL TROUBLE YOU FOR YOUR GUN --- --- BUTT FIRST!

BUT AS JOE HANDS "MA" HIS GUN ---
O.K!

HERE IT IS ---- BUTT FIRST --- JUST LIKE YOU SAID!

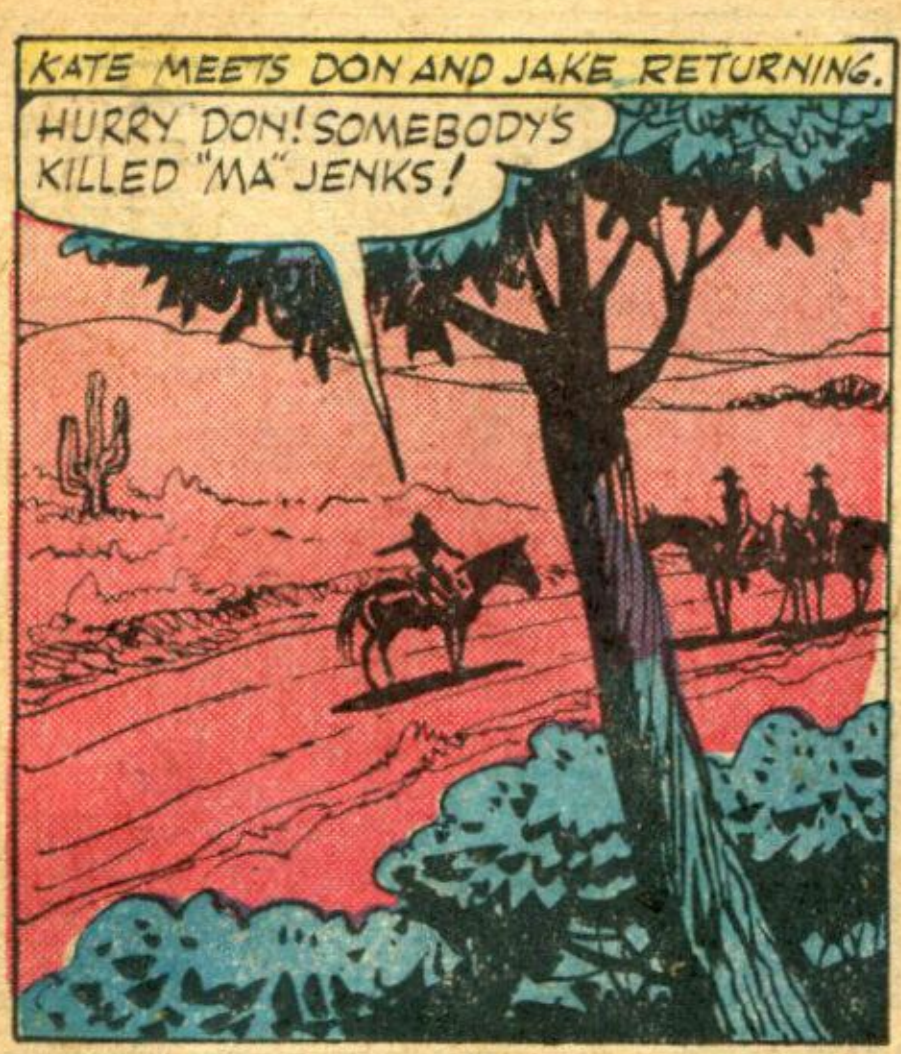

INSTINCTIVELY "MA" GRABBED AT KATE'S LOOSELY-TIED SCARF THAT JOE WAS WEARING.--

--AND FELL WITH IT CLUTCHED BENEATH HER. . .
THAT FINISHES HER--- AND NOW FOR THE DOUGH---AND THEN VAMOOSE!

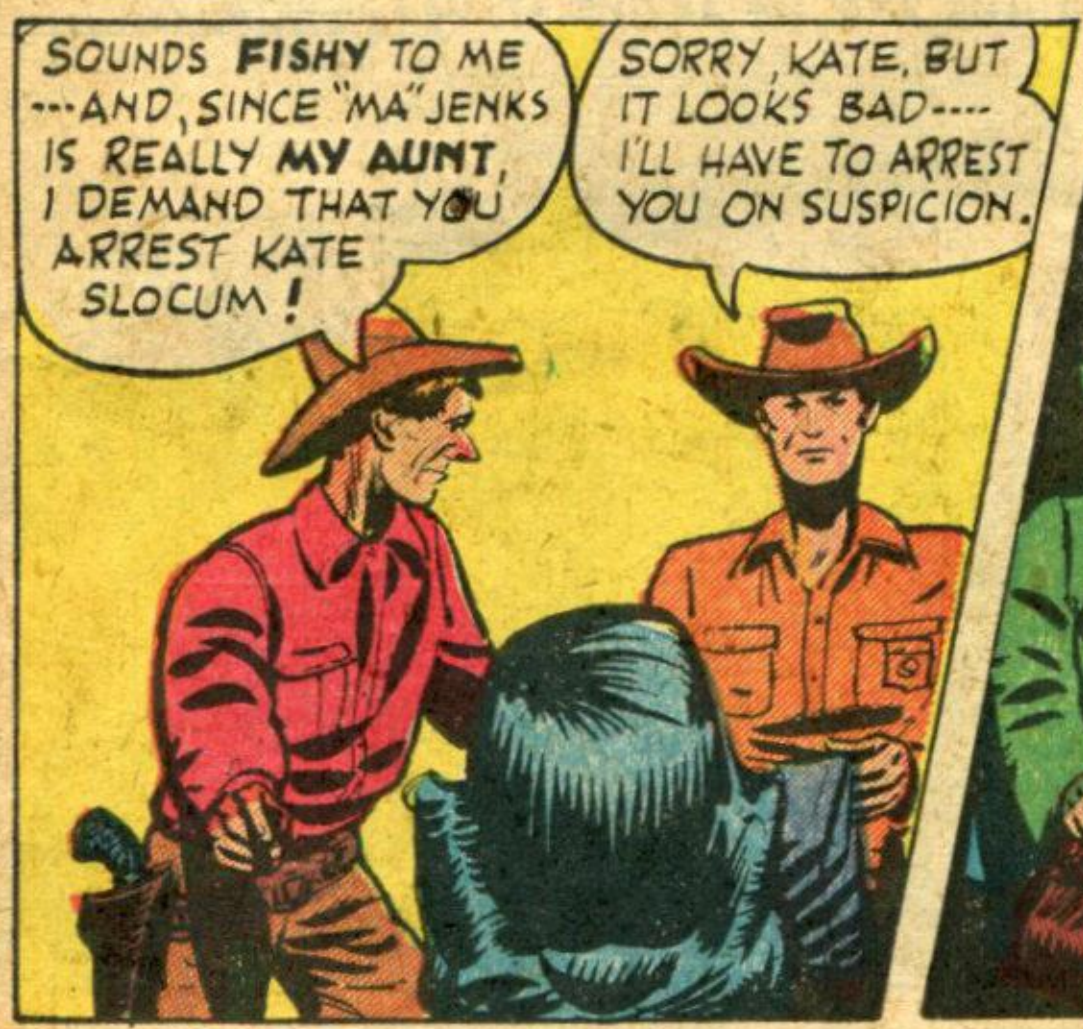

AS KATE RIDES TOWARD "MA" JENKS RANCH--
I THOUGHT I HEARD A SHOT--- AND THERE'S THAT HOMBRE RIDING AWAY---I'D BETTER HURRY!

A MINUTE LATER---
"MA" JENKS HAS BEEN KILLED! I'LL HAVE TO NOTIFY DON!

MEANWHILE, DON, STARTING FOR THE JENKS RANCH, SEES JAKE LEAVING THE PALACE SALOON. . .
I WAS JUST STARTING OUT TO THE RANCH TO SEE "MA" JENKS.
I BETTER GO ALONG ---BEEN HERE ALL MORNING.


KATE MEETS DON AND JAKE RETURNING.
HURRY DON! SOMEBODY'S KILLED "MA" JENKS!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
SHE'S NOT DEAD YET BUT SHE CAN'T LAST LONG--- I'LL CALL THE DOCTOR--- WHAT'S THIS?
THAT'S MY SCARF--- --A STRANGER FOUND IT---HE MUST HAVE DROPPED IT HERE WHEN HE KILLED HER!


SOUNDS FISHY TO ME ---AND, SINCE "MA" JENKS IS REALLY MY AUNT, I DEMAND THAT YOU ARREST KATE SLOCUM!
SORRY, KATE, BUT IT LOOKS BAD---- I'LL HAVE TO ARREST YOU ON SUSPICION.

THAT NIGHT AT THE JAIL THE DOCTOR REPORTS.
WELL, DON, "MA" WILL LIVE. HER HEAVY MOP OF HAIR SAVED HER AND SHE'S RESTING COMFORTABLY-- -- SHE SAYS IT WAS A MAN!

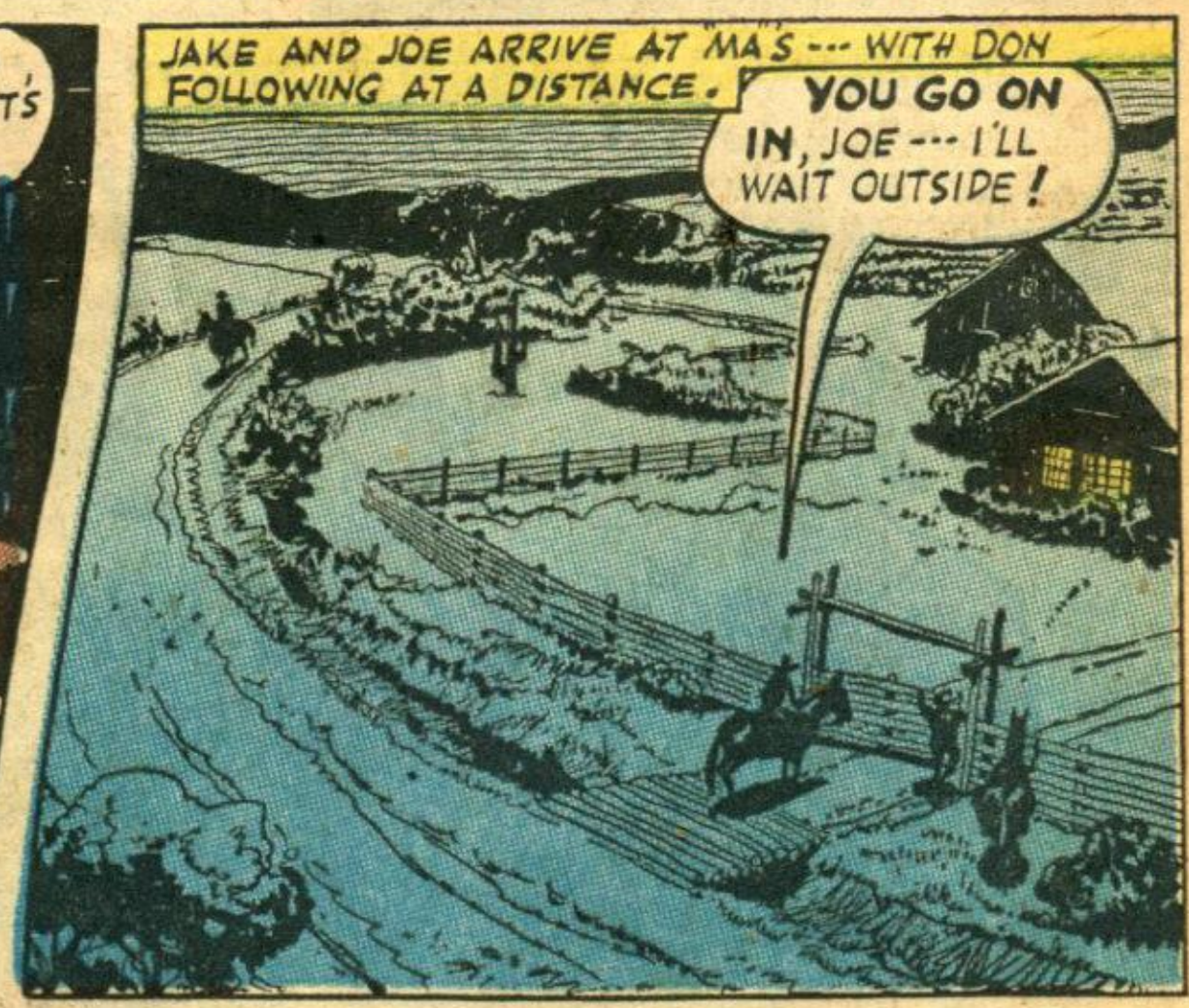
WELL I GUESS I'LL BE GOIN'.
I WONDER WHY JAKE LOOKS SO DISAPPOINTED ---AND SCARED!

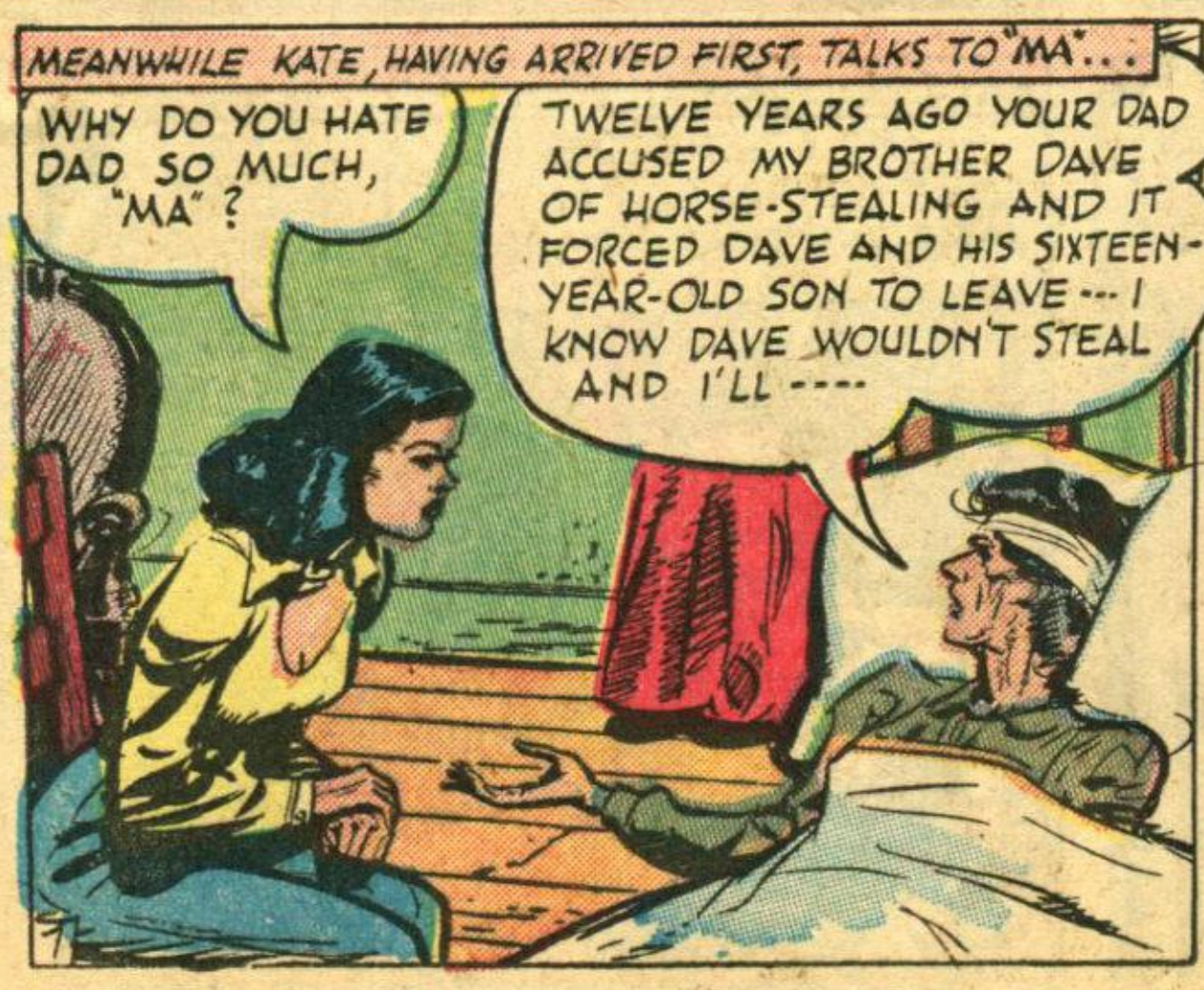
KATE TELLS DON ALL ABOUT THE STRANGER...
----AND I THINK THERE'S SOME CONNECTION BETWEEN JAKE AND THAT HOMBRE!
WELL, I'LL FOLLOW JAKE --- AND YOU HURRY OUT TO "MA'S AND WAIT FOR ME!

MEANWHILE, AT THE PALACE SALOON, JAKE CALLS JOE OUTSIDE...

GIVE ME BACK THAT DOUGH, PRONTO ...AND EITHER YOU GO BACK AND AND FINISH THE JOB OR I TURN YOU IN FOR ROBBERY!

I'LL GO BACK AND FINISH HER OFF!
YEAH! AND I GO ALONG TO SEE IT'S DONE RIGHT!

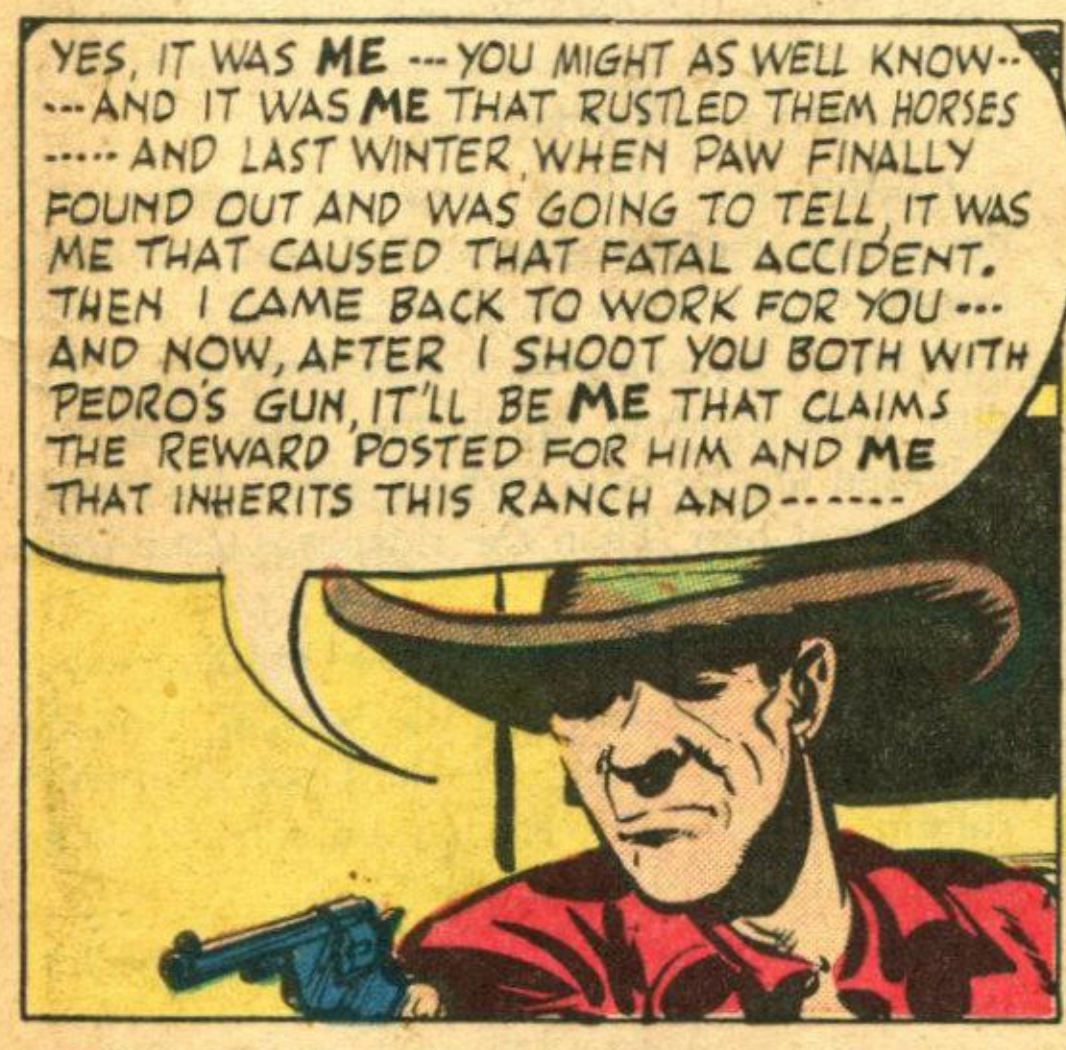

JAKE AND JOE ARRIVE AT "MA'S --- WITH DON FOLLOWING AT A DISTANCE.
YOU GO ON IN, JOE --- I'LL WAIT OUTSIDE!


MEANWHILE KATE, HAVING ARRIVED FIRST, TALKS TO "MA"...
WHY DO YOU HATE DAD SO MUCH, "MA"?
TWELVE YEARS AGO YOUR DAD ACCUSED MY BROTHER DAVE OF HORSE-STEALING AND IT FORCED DAVE AND HIS SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD SON TO LEAVE --- I KNOW DAVE WOULDN'T STEAL AND I'LL ----

JUST A MINUTE, "MA" --- I THOUGHT I HEARD HORSES ON THE ROAD.
GET BEHIND THAT CURTAIN --- QUICK!

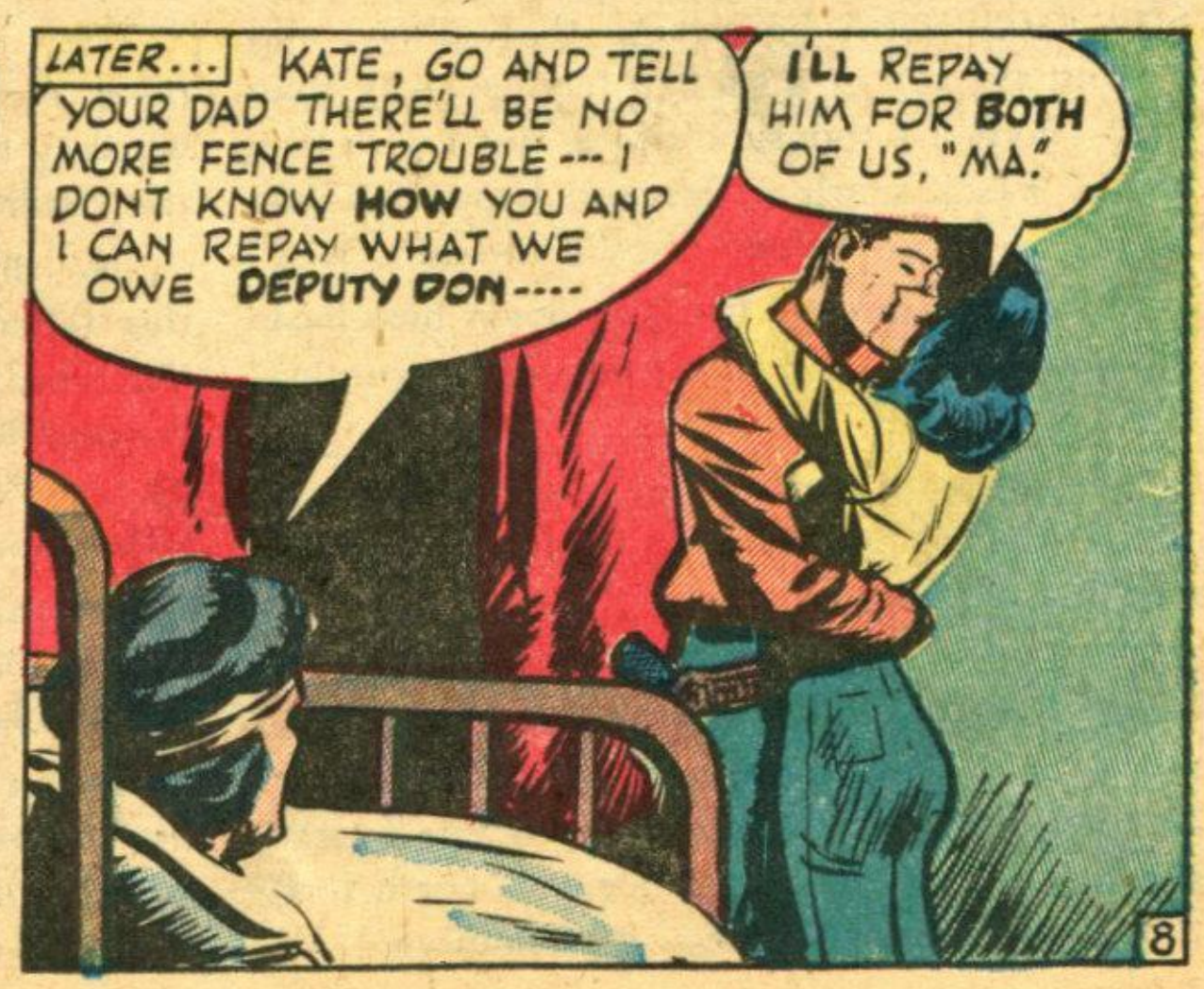
A MINUTE LATER...
I SEE WHY "MA" SENT ME IN HERE --- HERE'S HER RIFLE!
STOP! RIGHT THERE, MISTER!

THAT'S THE MAN THAT TRIED TO KILL ME!
IT WASN'T MY IDEA --- IT WAS JAKE'S AND HE WAS GOING TO--ARGHHH---!
---AND NOW DROP THAT GUN, KATE SLOCUM, OR YOU'LL FOLLOW THAT YELLOW COYOTE!


YES, IT WAS ME --- YOU MIGHT AS WELL KNOW-- ---AND IT WAS ME THAT RUSTLED THEM HORSES ----- AND LAST WINTER, WHEN PAW FINALLY FOUND OUT AND WAS GOING TO TELL, IT WAS ME THAT CAUSED THAT FATAL ACCIDENT. THEN I CAME BACK TO WORK FOR YOU --- AND NOW, AFTER I SHOOT YOU BOTH WITH PEDRO'S GUN, IT'LL BE ME THAT CLAIMS THE REWARD POSTED FOR HIM AND ME THAT INHERITS THIS RANCH AND------

GUESS AGAIN!, SIDEWINDER,--- --AND REACH!
OH, YEAH?

YEAH! --- IN SPADES!
AGGHHH---!


LATER...
KATE, GO AND TELL YOUR DAD THERE'LL BE NO MORE FENCE TROUBLE --- I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU AND I CAN REPAY WHAT WE OWE DEPUTY DON----
I'LL REPAY HIM FOR BOTH OF US, "MA."

DRY-GULCH DEATH TRAP

By RALPH SEDGWICK DOUGLAS

THE whiskered man flat on his stomach behind the mica-gleaming rock squinted again through his rifle sights. For the dozenth time, he shifted the gun slightly, making certain it commanded the sharp elbow of the canyon shelf trail. Turning his head, he squirted a gob of tobacco juice at a weed, and saw his horse and Lance Fleck's waiting ten yards back between two high rocks. He could see the saddlebag on each horse that held nearly twenty thousand dollars worth of gold dust.

Red Keston faced front. There was a bitter, icy gleam in his eyes that always shimmered there when he was waiting to do a murder. His crooked-jawed companion stirred two feet away. He also was flat on his stomach; also was watching the trail over his rifle resting in a niche of their rock breastwork. Keston's thin lips moved in a confident sneer.

"We'll pump lead through that lousy express dick! The two of us can't miss. S'posed to be so foxy nobody ever got him 'tween gun sights. But this time's different, eh, Lance? He'll come ridin' along that there trail. He won't close this case—but *we* will!"

Lance Fleck nodded as he drew a pint whiskey flask from his pocket and laid it beside him. "We'll blast Callahan to kingdom come. We got to, or he'll foller us clear to Mexico." He stared at the trail below. "Tain't fifty yards when he gits to that elbow, and I've hit the top of a tin can farther away than that—done it a thousand times. But I wish he'd come," Fleck snarled. "Reckon Brad Callahan wasn't so close behind as we thought, Red."

"After two days o' breakin' down hoss-flesh, did you think he had us within a quarter-mile?" Keston retorted.

They lay a moment in silence. The sky above was a pale blue field behind a noon-day sun that beat down fiercely.

"The devil himself wouldn't suspect us here," Keston gloated. "Wait till he's in that elbow below. I'll count three so we both shoot at once. We *got* to cut him down," he agreed, snarling. "Don't forget, Lance, it's worth forty thousand to us to smear this hombre!"

THEY waited five hours in this elevated, craggy spot of the canyon. The tedium of it in the boiling heat of the sun, the utter silence, and the pressure of waiting for Brad Callahan, ace of Wells Fargo detectives, was making both outlaws nervous.

The wide, colorfully-walled canyon twisted and writhed out of sight to the north. Its flat bottom, three hundred feet below, showed a glinting creek with grass and trees along its banks. Against the west wall of the canyon, forty feet from its top prairie edge, ran a shelf along which the narrow trail curled. The two men were in a turn just above this shelf, commanding the trail-elbow perfectly.

Keston and Fleck breathed deeply—for down the canyon where the trail revealed briefly, they spied a horseman. A dot of yellow and black, he came at a slow trot, with tiny dust puffs floating up in his wake. The sun flickered on the blue carbine across his saddle in front of him. Then the rider was gone from sight.

"See that yella shirt?" Lance notified excitedly. "When we ran out the back o' that express office in Eagle Creek, I saw Callahan runnin' and shootin'. He had on a bright yella shirt. This is sure him, Red!"

"Yeah. It'll be a minute yet before he hits this last curve."

They waited. Keston, as his pardner had done a moment ago, drew a pint bottle of whiskey from his pocket. Fleck's hand gripped the other's forearm.

"No drinkin' now, Red. Remember, killin' this feller means forty thousand for us, just like you said. And either we git him or the buzzards'll git us for sure. He's got that kind of rep! You ain't shaky, are you, Red?" he added anxiously.

Keston replaced the cork. "Naw, I ain't shaky. I'll pour that whole bottle down my gullet when we've finished Callahan."

He felt a little shaky, though. Gun butcher that he was, Red Keston always got to quivering as the showdown-moment neared.

"Don't think of his record. Spoil your shoot-

in'," Fleck sought to encourage his companion.

"Shut your big mouth! I'll do my part, and you do yours!" Red spat.

"Watch your rifle now, Red. And I'll wait till you count three. We'll— There he comes!" Fleck whispered.

Their granite-hard eyes gleamed down the sights of their rifles. The dappled grey horse came ambling from the last twist of the canyon shelf trail, holding its head down oddly. Both men noted the vivid yellow shirt of the rider, saw that his sombrero and trousers were black. They couldn't see his face, a blank of hat shadow as the express company detective came on.

It was harder—harder for Keston and Fleck to keep from squeezing their triggers. Two murders during that express station holdup had set a price on their heads. It meant that if Brad Callahan took them back to Eagle Creek for trial, there would be a double hanging to follow under the orange-shot sky at the next daybreak. Their lives and the forty thousand dollars of loot hung on accurate shooting now. The killing of Brad Callahan meant that the only law-vengeance they need really fear would be obliterated.

EACH man cocked the hammer of his rifle. Each noted the way the dappled horse carried its nose down to its chest. The wait seemed an eternity as the horse came on.

"One," Red Keston whispered.

Their eyes narrowed to mere slits. Their forefingers crooked around their triggers.

"Two!"

The horseman reached the sharp elbow of the trail.

"Three!"

Their guns roared together. The reverberations whacked from one canyon wall to the other, lessening as they dribbled into the distance.

The rider swayed backward drunkenly. His carbine plopped into the trail dust as the horse reared up. The beast struck hard on all four and bolted with a jerk that lurched its rider out of leather. He pitched splashing into grey dust—lay face down, motionless.

"Got him!" Fleck shouted. "Square 'tween the eyes!"

The two men looked at each other as triumph wreathed their sweaty faces. Each flung down his rifle and snatched up his flask of whiskey. The fiery alcohol was pouring down their gullets when a grimly calm voice behind them said:

"Claw clouds! Quick, you dry-gulchers!"

Fleck and Keston leaped to their feet, spilling their whiskey bottles. The killers spun around as if on pivots, their hands slashing to forty-fives in low-cut holsters. They saw a tall, youngish man, hatless, barefoot and in his underwear.

"Don't touch those guns!" Brad Callahan yelled.

But already the two outlaws were drawing with speed that was magical. Callahan, with his gun already trained on them, was forced to shoot. He drove lead into Lance Fleck's wrist to shatter bone and bulge skin. Keston's bullet burned Callahan's bare shoulder. The lawman's gun bucked twice in answer. An ugly spot appeared in Red's throat and became larger as he pitched on his face without a sound.

With a wild scream, Fleck threw both arms in the air, his right hand dangling and smeared with blood. Callahan kept him covered while he backed to pick up the double lariat with which he had lowered himself from the top of the canyon wall. Then he went to Fleck and in a moment had him securely bound.

"Hope you didn't plug my hoss," he said softly. "Hope my clothes ain't too much bullet-cut." Finishing, he stepped away to look at the dead Keston, then at the outlaws' horses nearby with their saddlebags bulging with loot.

"How—how'd you—" Fleck stammered helplessly.

"Eh? Oh, just made up a dummy. Strapped a little sack o' oats on my hoss's chest, which keeps him goin' forward slow. But it took me quite a bother to hoist up to range level, run along it a piece, then slip down in the canyon again. 'Specially barefoot," he explained, looking ruefully at his scratched and bleeding feet. "You see, not knowin' which hairpin turn you hombres would try to ambush me on, I pulled this same stunt three other places in the last eight miles."

Then he added sardonically: "Sorry to make you wait so long for a showdown, wise guys!"

WILMA WEST

in "POWDERSMOKE PARTY"

G. ALTMAN

ONE DAY, SONORA SAM, FOREMAN OF THE W-W SPREAD, COMES IN FROM THE RANGE TO FIND HIS YOUNG BOSS, WILMA WEST, BUSY ARRANGING FOR FESTIVITIES IN THE BARN. HE DISAGREES WITH HER ABOUT HER PLANS FOR A JAMBOREE...

HELLO, SAM. YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO HELP ME STRING UP THESE LANTERNS. I'VE INVITED ALL OUR NEIGHBORS FOR MILES AROUND TO OUR BARN DANCE TONIGHT.

I DON'T LIKE THIS IDEA A-TALL, MISS WILMA. I'M THINKIN' YORE MAKIN' A BIG MISTAKE, ASKIN' EVERYBODY.

BUT, SAM, I FEEL IT'S ONLY RIGHT TO BE FRIENDLY WITH ALL THE PEOPLE HEREABOUTS. WE'LL ALL GET ALONG BETTER THAT WAY.

JEST THE SAME, THERE ARE SOME VARMINTS AROUND HERE THAT WE OUGHTA WELCOME WITH A DOSE OF HOT LEAD!

LATER THAT DAY, SAM FINDS A SECTION OF THE W-W FENCE TORN DOWN -

GOL-DURN IT, THET'S THE THIRD TIME THIS MONTH! BET SOME MORE O' OUR CATTLE GOT THROUGH THAR - I'LL SEE --

ON THE OTHER SIDE, SAM SEES THEIR NEIGHBOR, LEN MACKEY, LOADING FRESHLY KILLED BEEF IN A WAGON...

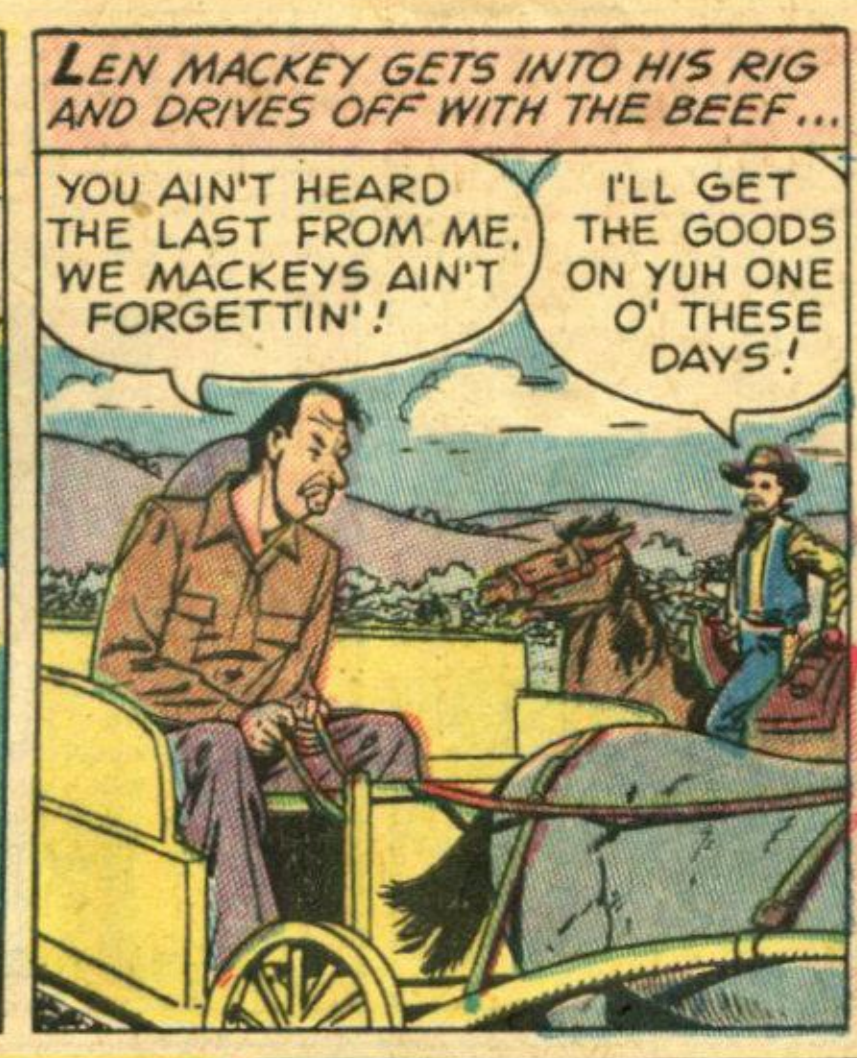
HEY, MACKEY, WHAR'D YUH GIT THET CRITTER? EF IT'S ONE O' OURS -!

MIND YORE OWN BUSINESS. YUH CAIN'T PROVE IT.

NO? WAAL, I'M GOIN' TER MAKE A GOOD TRY. I'VE BEEN SUSPECTIN' YOU MACKEYS FER A LONG TIME. OUR CATTLE DON'T TRAMPLE DOWN THET FENCE BY THEMSELVES!

OW!

SAM EXAMINES THE CAST-OFF HIDE OF THE SLAIN COW...
NO SIGN OF THE BRAND. MACKEY MUSTA CUT IT OUT AN' HID IT -

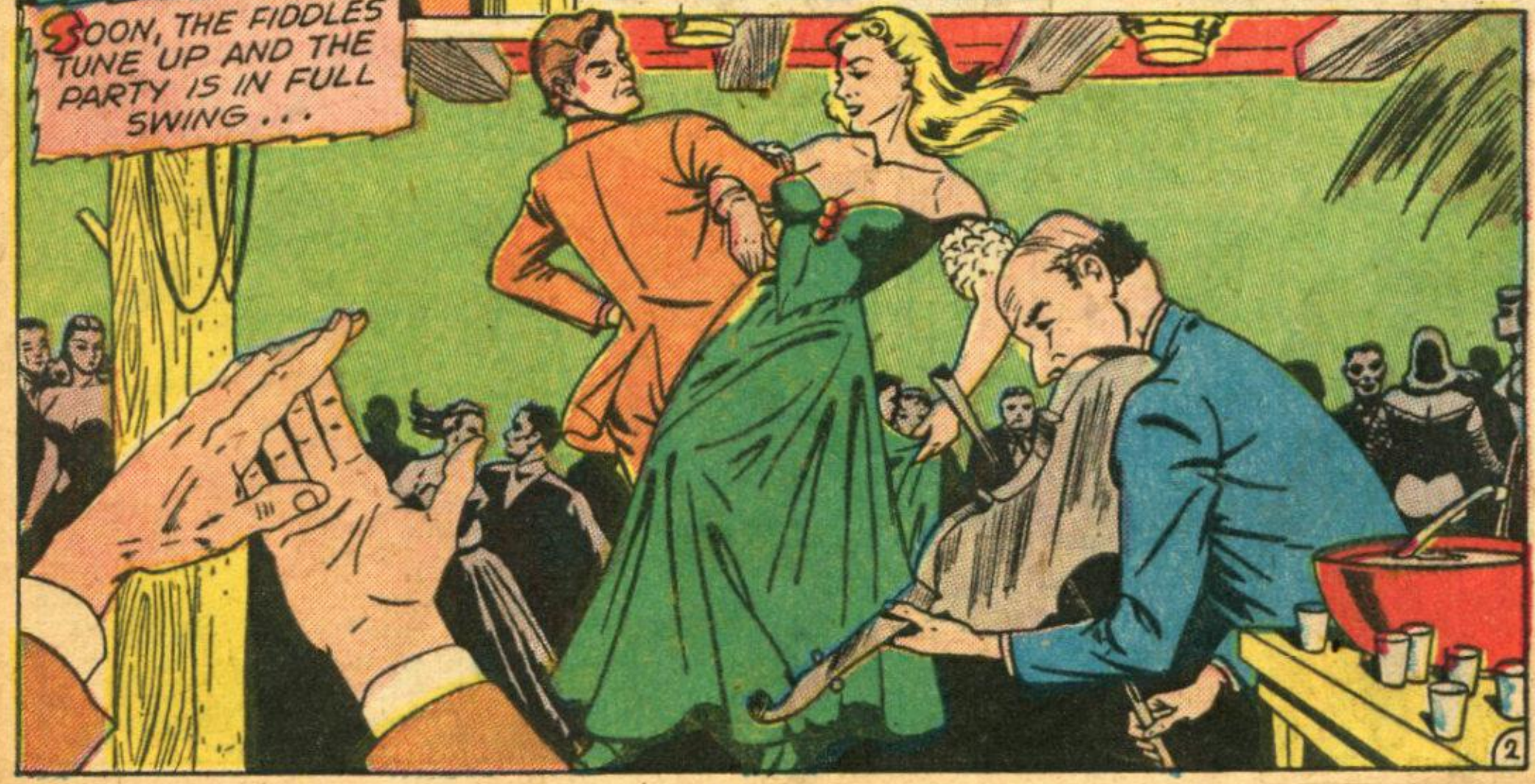

LEN MACKEY GETS INTO HIS RIG AND DRIVES OFF WITH THE BEEF...
YOU AIN'T HEARD THE LAST FROM ME. WE MACKEYS AIN'T FORGETTIN'!
I'LL GET THE GOODS ON YUH ONE O' THESE DAYS!

SONORA SAM TELLS WILMA ABOUT THE INCIDENT...
I'M SURE THEM MACKEYS ARE STEALIN' OUR COWS AN' SELLIN' THE BEEF.
BUT WE'RE NOT SURE. MEANWHILE, WE MUST BE FRIENDLY WITH ALL OUR NEIGHBORS.

THAT EVENING, THE GUESTS BEGIN TO ARRIVE FOR THE BARN DANCE AT THE W-W...
HELLO, FOLKS. GLAD TO SEE YOU ALL.
HELLO, WILMA.
GLAD TER BE HERE, MISS WILMA.

...INCLUDING THE MACKEY BROTHERS, LEN AND BUCK...

...AND THEIR COUSIN, JIM HOGAN...


SOON, THE FIDDLES TUNE UP AND THE PARTY IS IN FULL SWING...

SONORA SAM, WORRIED ABOUT THE POSSIBILITIES OF THE SITUATION, STAYS OUTSIDE, MUTTERING TO HIMSELF...

WILMA DON'T KNOW ALL THESE PEOPLE LIKE I DO, SHE AIN'T USIN' HER HEAD...

HE GOES TO THE BUNKHOUSE AND DEALS HIMSELF A HAND OF SOLITAIRE...

WE'VE GOT SNAKES AROUND HERE WHO'D CUT OUR THROATS EF THEY GOT THE CHANCE.

A FIGURE SILENTLY SLIPS INTO THE DOOR BEHIND SAM AND COVERS HIM WITH A SIX-SHOOTER...

PUT UP YORE HANDS - YO'RE TAKIN' A LITTLE WALK!

BUCK MACKEY! WHUT'S THE MATTER WITH YORE BROTHER LEN? TOO YALLER TUH COME HISSELF?

NEVER MIND THAT. LEN'S GOT SOMETHING ELSE TO DO!

NICE OF YORE BOSS WILMA TO MAKE IT SO EASY FOR US. NOBODY'LL BLAME US IF ONE O' THOSE LANTERNS SPILLS IN THAT BARN HAY. NICE BREEZE BLOWIN' TONIGHT. WHEN THE BARN GOES, SO WILL THE OTHER HOUSES. WE'LL HELP THE FIRE ALONG.

YOU SKUNK!

A RANCH WITHOUT BUILDINGS WOULD BE NO RANCH AT ALL, AN' WE'LL TAKE ALL THE W-W BEEF WE WANT. YOU'LL BE OUT OF THE WAY BY THEN!

WITH AGILITY SURPRISING FOR A MAN OF HIS AGE, SAM KICKS THE GUN FROM MACKEY'S HAND!...

THAT'S WHUT YOU THINK!

A SWIFT FIST CRASHES TO BUCK MACKEY'S JAW...
HERE'S ONE LIKE I GAVE YORE THIEVIN' BROTHER!

BUT BEFORE SAM CAN DRAW HIS OWN GUN, JIM HOGAN ENTERS BEHIND HIM...
FORGOT ABOUT ME, EH?

THE TWO MEN DISARM SAM AND HERD HIM TOWARD A CLUMP OF TREES OUTSIDE...
JIM, YUH KEEP YORE GUN ON THIS OLD GALOOT WHILE I GIT THAT CAN OF COAL OIL FROM OUR RIG AN' HELP LEN TO GIT A GOOD BLAZE UNDER WAY.
GIT ALONG!

AT THE PARTY, WILMA IS UNAWARE OF EVENTS IN THE BUNKHOUSE...
I WONDER WHERE SAM IS? HE SHOULD COME IN AND JOIN IN THE FUN.

OUTSIDE, SHE HEARS SOUNDS NEAR THE TREES, SO SHE HEADS THAT WAY...
SAM! - SAM, DON'T BE AN OLD SOREHEAD. STOP SULKING OUT THERE. ANSWER ME!

HOGAN'S ATTENTION IS DISTRACTED BY THE GIRL...
THAT GAL! SHE'D BETTER NOT --

SEIZING HIS CHANCE, SAM SOCKS HIS CAPTOR AND THE GUN GOES OFF...
WHAT'S THAT?!!
BANG

SAM GRABS THE GUN AND WHACKS HOGAN AS WILMA RUNS UP...
SAM! WHAT'S WRONG? IF YOU'RE CAUSING TROUBLE WITH MY GUESTS-!

THAR'S TROUBLE A-PLENTY, BUT I'M NOT CAUSIN' IT. SOME O' YORE PRECIOUS GUESTS ARE TRYIN' TUH BURN THE RANCH DOWN!

MEANWHILE, IN THE SHADOW OF THE BIG HOUSE, BUCK MACKEY SPLASHES OIL AGAINST THE WALL...

...AND STRIKES A MATCH...
LEN OUGHTA GIT THE FIRE IN THE BARN STARTED JEST ABOUT NOW--

SEEING BUCK SILHOUETTED IN THE FLARE OF THE MATCH, SAM DROPS HIM WITH A SLUG...
THAR'S THE SECOND O' THEM DOGS!
ARRGH!

BUT THE DROPPED MATCH HAS IGNITED THE OIL!...

WILMA AND SONORA SAM RUSH TO THE SPOT...
OH, SAM, YOU WERE SO RIGHT! I HOPE WE'RE NOT TOO LATE!

SAM RIPS OFF HIS VEST AND WILMA HER SKIRT. TOGETHER, THEY FRANTICALLY STRIVE TO SUBDUE THE FIRE AS IT LICKS THE DRY WOODEN BOARDS OF THE HOUSE...

JUST THEN, PEOPLE RUSH FROM THE BARN...
FIRE!
FIRE!
GIT OUT-QUICK!

THEIR FIRE OUT, WILMA AND SAM RUSH TO THE BURNING BARN. THEY SEE LEN MACKEY CLIMBING DOWN, BACK OF THE STRUCTURE. SAM FIRES ...

THAT ACCOUNTS FER THE THIRD ONE O' THEM VARMINTS!

BANG

ALL THE MENFOLK PITCH IN AND, USING WATER AND SAND, KEEP THE FLAMES CONFINED. THE BARN BURNS DOWN, BUT THE OTHER RANCH BUILDINGS ARE SAVED...

SAM-WE FORGOT ABOUT JIM HOGAN!

MAYBE HE'S STILL OUT - MAYBE NOT. **LOOK** - THERE HE GOES!

HOGAN RACES TO THE BUCKBOARD AND REACHES IN THE SEAT FOR A GUN ...

I'M NOT THROUGH WITH YOU YET, YOU -

WE'LL SEE ABOUT THAT!

AN UNERRING SHOT FROM SONORA SAM DROPS JIM HOGAN IN HIS TRACKS...

LATER, AFTER ALL HAVE LEFT AND THE SHERIFF HAS REMOVED THE BODIES...

NOW I HOPE YOU SEE, MISS WILMA, WHY I DIDN'T WANT YUH TUH ASK EVERYBODY TUH YORE PARTY.

YOU WERE PERFECTLY RIGHT, SAM. THOSE MACKEYS WERE NO FRIENDS OF OURS. BUT ALL THE OTHER FOLKS ARE, AND AS SOON AS WE BUILD A NEW BARN, I'M GOING TO ASK THEM ALL TO ANOTHER PARTY!

WELL, DEAR READERS, WE HOPE THAT YOU HAVE ENJOYED **WESTERN CRIME BUSTERS.** WRITE US AND LET US KNOW WHICH FEATURE YOU LIKED BEST ...

Meet The Man...

Who Can Tell You How To Lick

PIMPLES

ACNE AND ALL OTHER EXTERNALLY CAUSED SKIN BLEMISHES And Make Them

DISAPPEAR FROM SIGHT... *instantly!*

Here is Mr. John A. Rubine, Ph.G. — a well-known pharmacist who has spent almost 20 years trying to solve one of the most vexing problems of youth — and adults too — unsightly, acne pimples, blackheads and similar externally caused skin conditions.

They are indeed a serious problem, for nothing can do more to ruin your chances of success and popularity than a face made ugly with pimples and blackheads. And, if neglected, acne pimples may leave permanent scars and pits.

Mr. Rubine, after much experimenting and research in cooperation with doctors and chemists, found what he was seeking — a formula that would lick acne pimples and other externally caused skin blemishes. He succeeded beyond his fondest expectations and he was so proud of his treatment that he gave it his own name — **RUBIN-EX**.

HE BLESSES RUBIN-EX! No one can realize the humiliation — almost disgrace — of a face marred by pimples and blackheads. I had them so bad that I felt no one wanted to look at me. Today my pimples are gone — and I bless Rubin-Ex — that did it.— Mr. Bob I.R., Long Island.

LUCKY DAY FOR HER! For years I was embarrassed and ashamed of my pimply face and blotchey complexion. It was a lucky day for me when I was told about Rubin-Ex. My pimples disappeared from sight instantly and my complexion improved 100%.—Miss Jane G.L., Bronx.

DOUBLE ACTION! DOUBLE QUICK RESULTS!

The sensational Rubin-Ex treatment works two ways:
A. Makes acne pimples and all other skin blemishes INSTANTLY DISAPPEAR FROM SIGHT.
B. Its medication cleans up pimples, blackheads.
When thousands of tiny oil glands discharge more oil than your skin can absorb, the excess oil picks up and holds tiny particles of dust, dirt, grime, grit, bacteria. This foreign matter soon clogs up and enlarges your pores, form blackheads, cause infection and soon you have a fine crop of ugly, red acne pimples.
Rubin-Ex FORMULA #1 is a special cleaning agent that really gets down in the skin pores and thoroughly cleans them out as no soap can. It also removes excess oil thus correcting excessive oiliness in your skin, one of the principal causes of pimples and blackheads.

Rubin-Ex FORMULA #2 is great news. When applied to your face it makes pimples and other unsightly blemishes **disappear from sight instantly.**
And while it is hiding your ugly blemishes from critical eyes, its medication is actually at work to clean them up. It contains an ingredient that relieves the fiery itching, another to soothe and heal the irritation, and still another which gently and harmlessly flakes off the dead, hard outer skin, leaving your face and complexion much smoother and clearer. You can use Rubin-Ex day and night, for it is neutral when applied and does not interfere with make-up. Makes an excellent powder base.

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