THIS IS MY FIFTH BOOK PUBLISHED ABOUT WESTERN PIONEERS WHO FIGHT AND WORK TOGETHER AND ALWAYS KEEP GOD IN THEIR HEARTS AS THEY STRUGGLE

TO MAKE A LIVE FOR THEIR SELFS AND THEIR LOVED ONES IN A HARD BUT SOMEWHAT BEAUTIFUL LAND WITH THEIR BLOOD SWEAT AND TEARS

PICTURE

ABOUT THE AUTHOR I STILL LOVE THE OUTDOORS I AM 74 YEARS OLD

AND HAVE BEEN MARRIED FOR 55 YEARS I LOVE GOD LIFE AND MY FAMILY

I HOPE EVERYONE GETS A CHANCE TO READ MY BOOKS AND IF THEY DO I HOPE

THEY ENJOY THEM I STILL BELIEVE IN MIRACLES I WANT TO THANK YOU AGAIN

FOR READING MY BOOKS AND IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO REACH ME YOU CAN CONTACT ME THOUGH FACEBOOK @BOB SELF COLLINSVILLE AUTHOR

KEEP GOD IN YOUR HEARTS AND MINDS

YOUR FRIEND, BOB SELF 2023

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BREWSTER RIDES BACK TO WACO

CHAPTER 1

The Marshall had just crossed the street and was about to step into his office off the boardwalk when he seen Brewster riding into town so he waited and Brewster pulled his horse up to where the marshal was standing and said hi Ed and the marshal said did you lose Dutch on the trail Brewster? No Ed Dutch decided to stay in Sweetwater and Ed said I wonder why Dutch would decide to stay in a town like Sweetwater.

Brewster said marshal if you offer me some coffee I will be happy to tell you why Dutch stayed in Sweetwater plus what all took place in the last month I was gone and the marshal said come on in I just made fresh coffee and Brewster said as long as it is hot and has some color to it I will drink it because I ran out of coffee two or three days ago.

As the marshal poured the coffee Brewster sat down and said well first Dutch met a girl and asked the girl to marry him you see Bart William the marshal of sweet-water handed his badge to Dutch and said the job was his if he wanted it because he was getting up in age and his daughter has been trying to get him to move to Tennessee and live with her for the last couple of years.

The marshal said what about this girl that Dutch asked to marry him and Brewster said I will fill you in on that but first it took me and Dutch three weeks to catch up to all six of the killers the first two gunmen stood in front of me and Dutch and when they went for their guns we left them face first in the dirt.

After that there was a man yelling from the saloon saying those two men were friends of mine and Ed this guy was even bigger than Dutch but Dutch whipped the large man Ed because Dutch is fast and he sure hits hard but then the outlaw went for a gun and I had to kill him so that made three killers buried in a shadow grave on the hill

Then as we were getting ready to leave town a girl came up and told Dutch the other three men headed east out of town towards the hills so we turn our horses east and as we were leaving town Dutch told me the girls name was Goldie Harp then Dutch said Goldie sure was pretty wasn’t she and I said she ain’t ugly

After we were on the trail for a little over three hours we stopped at a stream to give our horses a drink and to fill our canteens when we heard someone yelling can anyone help me and the yelling was coming from a cave so we stepped inside the cave and there was a man who fell and broke his leg.

After talking to the guy for a short time we knew the man was one of the killers so when he fell he had lost his gun so I picked it up and unloaded all but one cartridge then handed the gun to the killer and he said maybe I will kill you and I said go ahead but you are lying in a rats den and they will eat you while you are alive or you can take your life and not feel them stripping you to the bone so it is your choice.

So me and Dutch turned and when we stepped from the cave we heard the shot ringing threw the cave then so we mounted our horses saddles and rode away from the cave and maybe two hours later we hear some shooting and we seen that some renegades had two men pinned down behind some large boulders.

We rode in and shot a couple renegades off their horses and the others headed for cover of the trees then two killers stepped out and after a few words the two went for their guns but they were too slow so we threw a little dirt over their dead bodies and headed for Sweetwater

Just off the trail we came across a wagon that had been burnt and there was a dead man and woman and it was easy to see they died a terrible death at the hands of some renegades so as Dutch climbed into the wagon to get a shovel we seen he came across a small strong box that the renegades had over looked and we took it with us to Sweetwater.

When we rode into Sweetwater Dutch seen Goldie and asked if I would go see the marshal and he would catch up to me after he talked to Goldie so I said I would and Dutch said thanks pal and called to Goldie as I pulled up to where the marshal was sitting and I asked if I could have a little of his time.

The marshal Bart William said lets step in to my office I have some coffee on the stove and it should be hot so you can tell me what is on your mind while we have a cup of coffee and after the marshal handed me a cup of coffee I handed him the small strong box and told him the story that I just told you.

The marshal opened the box and there was a lot of folded money and gold double eagle coins plus three letters which two was opened and the third was not so the marshal read the first two then opened the third letter and read it then said it looks like this money belongs to Dutch because there is no other living relatives and the third letter said whoever finds the box can keep it because the last owners were now in heaven with God.

Dutch had walked in and Bart Williams asked Dutch where Goldie was and Dutch said I told her I had nothing to offer her but if I did I would ask her to be my wife and Goldie said I had better not wait too long because she was not getting any younger Then Bart Williams handed Dutch his badge and said the job was his if he wanted it plus all the money in the strong box and Dutch bolted out the door.

By the time me and Bart Williams reached the door Dutch had seen Goldie and

He yelled Goldie I have something to offer you so Goldie Harp will you marry me? Then Brewster stopped and did not say anything and Ed said go on Brewster what did Goldie say, then Brewster said Goldie yelled yes Dutch Montana I will marry you so Ed I am thinking Dutch is Wes Montana’s brother.

He could be I know Kid Montana has a brother and has also said he hasn’t seen his brother for some time so I will ask Kid next time I see him

THE END

WES (KID) MONTANA TELLS HIS STORY

CHAPTER 2

Shermon McBay was on the boardwalk in front of the large 2 story ranch house looking over the lake like he did so often when the marshal of Waco rode up to where Shermon was standing and Shermon said Ed come on up and have a cup of coffee with me and the marshal said coffee sounds good then Shermon asked what brings you out here to Autumns Crossing?

The marshal took a drink of his coffee then asked Shermon if Kid Montana has a brother named Dutch and Shermon said I believe so Ed, I have heard Kid mention it before but he did say he hasn’t seen him in a long time but why are you asking Ed and the marshal said well Shermon Kid also had a brother named Granger and Shermon said had what happened Ed?

Granger was killed maybe a month and a half ago and Brewster and Dutch trailed the killers and buried them all in shallow graves then Shermon said hold on a minute and Shermon called to Dakota and asked Dakota to go down to the lake and ask Kid to come up to the ranch when he got a chance.

Dakota pulled up to where Kid Montana was and said well Kid it looks like the law finally caught up to you and Kid said did they tell you why they wanted me and Dakota said no they just said bring you in dead or alive then Dakota laughed and said Kid Shermon said he just wanted ask if you knew someone.

So Wes Montana said well Dakota at lease you won’t have to shoot me and throw me over my horses saddle and then he laughed then Wes Montana handed Dakota the A/C branding iron and said don’t burn yourself the one end is hot and they both laughed and Wes Montana said I will be back and headed up to the ranch house to see Shermon and the marshal.

When Wes Montana pulled his horse Black Jack up to the boardwalk he said hi Ed and asked Shermon what was up and Shermon said come on up in the shade and have a cup of coffee Kid and as Shermon poured Wes Montana a cup of hot black coffee Shermon said Kid I knew you had a brother and I believe his name was Dutch but I wasn’t aware that you had another brother named Granger.

Wes Montana said those are two names I haven’t heard in awhile is there something that I should know Sherm, is there problem with them?

I mean are they in jail and Shermon said no Kid they are not in jail but your brother Grainger is dead and Wes Montana said dead how did it happen? And Shermon said I will let Ed tell you.

Kid Brewster’s place was burnt and his hired man was killed then Dutch’s place was burnt to the ground and your brother Granger was killed so Dutch and Brewster trailed the six killers and planted them all in shallow graves then Wes Montana said Ed I have not seen Dutch in a long time and as for as Granger that is a story in its self.

Shermon said we are not trying to pry into your business but me and Ed thought you would want to know that Granger was murdered and Dutch took a job in Sweetwater and Wes Montana said Sweetwater that is a town that I was through once and I thought then Sweetwater seemed like a good town to avoid so why would Dutch want to stay in Sweetwater?

Kid Dutch met a girl in Sweetwater and Dutch asked her to marry him and the marshal told Dutch he was hanging up his gun and offered Dutch his badge and Dutch is now the marshal of the rough cow town of Sweetwater.

Shermon I guess I owe you my story so first we will start with my old man you see my old man was a drunk he drank and played cards every night he would stay out all night drinking and playing cards then come home and him and my mom would argue until my old man fell asleep but then the next morning my mom would fix him something to eat.

When my dad was done eating he would talk my mom into giving him more of the money she made by selling eggs or mending other peoples clothes and he would then head back to town but the worst part was my old man was seeing a saloon girl that my mom called a Harlot and one night my old man came home drunk and he had a young boy with him.

My mom yelled at my old man way past dawn until he crawled out of bed and then left and he never came back my mom told us the boy’s name was Granger and he was our brother but because of all the pain and suffering that my old man and the saloon girl caused my mom she died a death of sorrow and unhappiness.

I was seventeen and Dutch was sixteen when we got in a bad fist fight and I might have won the fight but I lost a brother that day because Dutch promised me he would never lose another fight and someday if we ever fought again he would win the fight also Dutch said I was dead to him and him and Granger said he would leave the farm if I stayed so I packed up the few belonging I had and left.

Shermon that is my story and I put that day behind me and until now I never thought of it again but I will say if Dutch ever called for my help Sherm I would do what I could to help him

THE END

WES (KID) MONTANA RECIEVES A WIRE FROM GOLDIE HARP

CHAPTER 3

Tim Gates rode into Autumns Crossing and handed Shermon a wire and asked if Shermon could see that Wes Montana received it and Shermon said he would see that it got to Wes Montana then Shermon said Tim I heard you have your telegraph office up for sale and Tim said yes I do.

I have a young couple that is interested in it and they want to incorporate a newspaper with the telegraph office and Shermon said a newspaper sounded good to him but also Sherm said he hated that when Tim Gates sold the telegraph office he would be leaving Waco

Tim said Shermon Waco is growing and that is good but he had a sister in Tennessee and he hadn’t seen her in years so he was going to see her and maybe be back later for a visit then shook hands with Shermon and Shermon said he would make sure Kid got the wire and Tim said sherm the wire is from a girl and she would like to hear back from Wes Montana a.s.a.p.

Shermon looked towards the lake and when Wes Montana looked his way Shermon waved to him and motioned to him so Wes stepped up into Black jacks saddle and pulled up to where Shermon was and Shermon said Kid you have a wire from a girl and Wes Montana said a girl who is it?

Shermon said I don’t know who it is Tim Gates said it was a girl so Wes Montana opened the telegraph and read it out loud.

Wes Montana you don’t know me yet but I am Goldie Harp

And your brother needs your help Dutch told me years ago you and him had a fight and you and him was very young and it should have never happened but it did and he was sorry it ever happened but, WES YOUR BROTHER IS IN A FIGHT AND IT COULD COST HIM HIS LIFE p.s. Dutch does not know I sent this wire but believe me he needs your help Goldie Harp

So after Wes Montana read the telegram Shermon asked what are you going to do Kid and Wes Montana said he is my brother and I am sure Goldie Harp would not have sent this wire to me if she wasn’t worried so I guess I need to see if I can help my brother Dutch but I don’t know how long it will take so will Autumns Crossing be okay without me until I get back Shem?

Kid he is your brother and I am glad you want to help him plus I will go with you if you like and Wes Montana said Sherm I know you can’t leave now because of the Calvary coming in a couple days to look at horses so if it is okay I will ask Harry Austin if he wants to ride with me.

Sherm after I talk with Harry I will go to town and send a wire to Goldie and I think I need to leave for Sweetwater in the morning and Sherm said Kid I will have Captain George put together some coffee and a cloth sack of food for the trail and I will see before you leave in the morning and Wes Montana said thanks Sherm.

The next morning Shermon shook Wes Montana’s hand and said he wished he could do more and Wes Montana said Sherm you have done plenty and I am grateful for all you have done and our ride is not over yet Then Shermon shook Harry Austin hand and said you two come back when this is over and if it takes for me to get rid of the Calvary and then come to Sweetwater I will.

Then Wes Montana and Harry Austin turned their horses and headed for Sweet-water and after they cleared Autumn Crossing Harry Asked Kid what are you going to say to Dutch when you see him and Wes Montana said he wasn’t sure he would have to wait and see how it played out and maybe it would depend on Dutch when they met.

After on the trail for most of the day Wes Montana said there was a good place up ahead where they could stay for the night then ride into Sweetwater at first light. They pulled their horses up under a large cotton wood tree and gathered some dead wood for a small fire to make coffee and dug through the cloth sack that Captain George had sent with them.

While the coffee was brewing Wes Montana looked at Harry Austin and said Harry we have rode a lot of miles together and I thank you for riding on this one but I don’t know what we will be up against and I hope we make it back to Autumn’s Crossing alive and Harry said kid if we don’t we will go out together.

After eating the food Captain George sent with them and drinking their fill of hot black coffee Harry threw his bedroll down and said I will see you in the morning partner and Wes Montana threw his bedroll down and his horse Black Jack walked over and Wes said you are a great horse Black Jack let us know if we get any company then he said yea Harry I will see you in the morning.

The next morning when Wes Montana and Harry Austin rode into Sweetwater they hadn’t got there any to soon because Dutch Montana was in the middle of the street holding a double barrel shot gun and there was six gunslingers in front of him then one of the gunslingers said marshal there are six of us and more coming so you don’t have a chance.

Dutch said big mouth you will be the first one killed and then after that does it matter who lives or who dies but then another gunslinger yelled marshal after you pull that first trigger I will kill you and the outlaw put his hand on his gun and Wes Montana and Harry Austin rode up and stepped to the ground with one standing on each side of Dutch.

Wes said if you feel lucky go ahead and pull that gun and Dutch took the double barrel shot gun he was holding and spilt the skull of the big mouth man in front of him then Wes shot the guy that drew his gun who already had his hand on his gun and Harry shot a guy who was taking aim at them from a alley

Then Dutch hit a young man across the face with the butt of the shot gun as Wes and Harry both fired and hit two other outlaws that drew their guns and the gunslingers laid face first in the dirt and there was only one other young man standing in front of Dutch and Dutch said Utah don’t make me kill you and about that time eight more men rode into town and as they got close to where the young man was one yelled Utah don’t pull that gun.

Dutch said Utah listen to your brother plus look around you because you are lucky you could be lying dead in the street with your friends and Utah started to say something and then looked at his brother and his brother said marshal thanks for not killing Utah and the other young man that Dutch hit in the face was holding his face and whining and Utah’s big brother told him to shut up and to pick up his pay and to get out.

Then Utah’s big brother looked at Wes and Harry and said marshal you have my word there won’t be any more trouble from my outfit or any others because you could have killed my brother Utah and you didn’t then he shook Dutch’s hand and said if you ever need anything I am in your debt and all you have to do is send for me.

As the men rode out of town Dutch had some townspeople pick up the dead and then he looked at Wes Montana and at first he just looked then Dutch said thanks brother and shook his hand then Dutch shook hands with Harry and said thanks pal.

Goldie ran up and hugged Dutch then she hugged Wes and she even hugged Harry then she said thanks for being here to help Dutch and Wes said we are brothers and that is what brothers do they help one in another.

Dutch said Wes me and Goldie are getting married tomorrow and I am hopping you will be my best man and Wes said yes I will brother and then Dutch said thanks pal

THE END

MATT NICK AND JORDAN ARMSTRONG THE BOUNDY HUNTERS

CHAPTER 4

Matt stepped off the boardwalk and into the marshal’s office and said what are you doing sitting at your desk marshal don’t you have bad guys to catch? And Ed the marshal said yes I do and that why I asked you to come and see me.

I heard you and your two brothers were in town .yea Matt said we were picking up some supplies because we are planning a little fishing trip and you are welcome to come if you want, then the marshal handed matt the wire he had received from the sheriff in Laredo.

But as the marshal handed the wire to Matt, Nick and Jordan stepped in off the boardwalk and Matt read the wire out loud.

To the marshal

Five men held up our bank and got away with$20,000.00 dollars in gold also they killed my deputy and the bank teller but as they were heading out of the bank they kidnapped the dead bank tellers wife. During the holdup I was shot twice so I am laid up but I did manage to wing one of the outlaws as they raced out of town to the East. Need your help A.S.A.P.

Sheriff Logan

Matt looked over where the coffee sat on the stove and said Ed is there any coffee in that pot or is it just for looks and Ed said it is fresh, help yourself so as Matt was pouring a cup of coffee Matt said wonder why they had so much gold in there safe and why they kidnapped the tellers wife?

I guess they took the bank tellers wife for a hostage and as far as the gold the bank had just received the shipment of gold earlier that morning and I guess the outlaws thought the gold would be easier to spend then a bag full of folding money but like I said I am not sure.

Then Matt said I guess there will be a nice reward for the banks gold and the marshal said plus I am sure there are wanted posters on all five of the outlaws.

Jordan said well it looks like our fishing trip just got postponed Nick. Then Matt said if you two would rather not split the rewards I can go without you and keep all the reward money to myself and Nick and Jordan said no at the same time.

The marshal said Matt if they are held up at that old ghost town you know there will be other outlaws there as well as the bank robbers that hit Laredo so you might think about me deputizing a few men to go with you and Matt said thanks Ed but we will bring them back without outside help .

The sun was just starting to peak threw the clouds as the marshal stepped out on the boardwalk in front of his office and the three Armstrong brother were sitting there saddles. Matt said I thought you were going to sleep all day Ed.

Then Matt said to his horse Lou lets go find us some bank robbers and Lou brought his head up and down like he understood so Matt said see you when we get back Ed, then Matt said daylight is a wasting lets but some miles behind us.

Sometime later Nick said the weather looks like it could change up ahead but for now that breeze feels real good and Jordan said he had been hearing some thunder for awhile and he notice some black clouds ahead of them then Matt said thanks for the weather forecast we will start looking for some cover when we get a little closer to them dark clouds.

It wasn’t much longer and the Armstrong brothers felt some light rain and the clouds were getting dark then Matt noticed a cave and said lets head for that cave and maybe we can stay dry tonight then as they entered the cave Nick said this cave looks like a bear cave.

Matt said well if it is a bear cave and he is in there we will ask him to leave and Jordan said well if there is a bear in here Matt, I am sure you will run him out big brother and all three Armstrong brothers laughed but they searched the cave as they entered it.

I could use some coffee Matt said and started to gather some dead wood that was already in the cave Jordan went through one of their cloth sacks and dug out a coffee pot and coffee grounds as Nick straighten the large rocks that had been used before by other cowboys building a fire in the cave.

After adding water and coffee grounds to the pot he sat the pot on a large flat rock to boil the coffee and Nick said how about some beans and smoked bacon to go with that coffee as he pulled a large can of beans and some smoked bacon from a cloth food sack and it wasn’t long and all three Armstrong brothers ate their full. Matt threw out the last swallow of coffee that was in cup and rolled out his bed roll.

Then after Nick and Jordan threw their bedrolls down Matt sad the morning will be here before we know it and we need to get an early start if we want to catch up to the bank robbers and I would really like to catch them before ghost town.

Jordan said see you guys in the morning and nick said yes you will but Matt did not say anything so Nick and Jordan both turned their back to the small fire as Matt said to himself goodnight my brothers and smiled then fell asleep.

As Matt had say, the morning came too soon and when Nick and Jordan opened their eyes Matt was already sitting on his heels at the fire drinking coffee then when he heard his brothers stir he said I thought you two were going to sleep all day. Matt said throw some of this coffee down and let’s hit the trail, we have bank robbers to catch.

When all three Armstrong brothers were sitting in their horses saddles Nick asked Matt what his plans were and Matt said I guess we will ride all day and try to catch them before they reach ghost town and Jordan said, that is your plan and Matt said unless you have a better one.

Then it wasn’t very long and as they climbed a small ridge they seen a good size creek or river, but then while they were looking to see the best way to cross the river they heard someone yelling can you cowboys help me and there was a guy holding on to a limb and the limb was breaking as he was calling to them.

Jordan said the water is not that swift just swim over to us and the guy said I would if I knew how to swim. Matt said it looks like you are about to learn because that limb you are holding onto is breaking and as Matt said it, the limb broke and the guy was being carried down the river.

All three Armstrong brothers tried throwing a rope to the guy and somehow the guy managed to get one of the ropes around him and under his arm then Matt Nick and Jordan pulled the guy from the cold water. Matt said we had better build a fire and try to get something warm down him.

I don’t know how long he was in that water but I would guess he was in there longer than he should have been as cold as that water is and the guy passed out for awhile but when he opened his eyes again he started talking, first the guy said my name is Justin Carter and you three saved my life.

Nick said you were lucky you did not drown then Nick asked how did you land in that river.Justin Carter was so happy to be alive that he started to spill his guts and said I was riding with four other men and a woman we had started out with five men and a woman but Rusty was hit hard with a bullet and died a little ways back down the trail then Justin Carter closed his eyes and drifted back off.

Matt said while he is sleeping I will follow their back trail and see if there is a horse back there and Jordan why don’t you see if Carters horse is close by a then Nick said I will stay with Carter and Matt said good idea Nick.

It wasn’t very long and Matt was back with a horse trailing his horse Lou and there was a man rolled up in a blanket ,then Jordan came riding up with Carters horse trailing his. Justin Carter said that is my horse and as he said it he looked at the other horse and noticed the body rolled up in the blanket and thrown over the saddle.

Matt said we are bounty hunters and you have already confessed we know who you are and what you did by robbing the bank and kidnapping the bank teller’s wife. Carter moved his hand to his holster and his gun wasn’t there and Matt held up Carters gun and said, you looking for this.

Carter watched Matt unload his gun then Matt handed the colt 44 back to Carter and said now you will lead us to your friends. Carter said why would I do that and Matt said your poster said dead or alive and you have one minute to decide if you want to lead us to your friends or I will shoot you and throw your dead body over your horses saddle.

Matt put his hand on his own Colt 44 and Carter said okay I will help you then you can help me, you see the woman was in on the holdup she opened the door for us. Matt said so she was in on the hold up and carter said yea she was and you are willing to turn on your friends to save your own hide and Carter said that is right.

Okay Carter ride next to me, Matt said and when we reach your friends and you don’t let on about us you can ride away when it is all over, then Matt seen Nick and Jordan look at one in another and he was glad they didn’t question him about Carter riding away.

Then about two hours later Jordan said do you see the smoke and Matt said yea he did then he said Carter it will be up to you how you ride your horses saddle when this is over either sitting in the saddle or thrown over it in a blanket and I will be watching you very close.

Matt yelled hello in the camp and Justin Carter yelled don’t shoot it’s me Carter and as they rode into the bank robbers camp there was three men with their guns drawn and Carter said put your guns away they are friends of mine.

One bank robber asked do they know about the gold and Matt said we know about it but we are not here for a share.

That coffee smells good and Justin Carter stepped down from his horse saddle and said I sure could use a cup of that coffee and the three bank robbers slipped their guns back in there holsters. One of the outlaws said to Jordan be care full with that shot gun son because it could go off.

Jordan said I am not your son and the only way that this gun will go off is when I want it too, and that is when I pull the trigger.

Matt wanted to change the subject about Jordan’s shot gun so he said, that guy lying over there next to the fire does not look like he is feeling very well and one of the bank robbers said he is dying so now we only have to split the gold four ways.

Nick said don’t you mean three ways and the woman spoke up for the first time and said he said it right because I am the one that planned the holdup and if I wouldn’t have unlocked the banks door they would not have been able to just walk in and take the gold.

Well if it wasn’t for Carter here me and my two brothers would have been miles away from here searching a old ghost town, then Matt pulled his vest back and reviled a large badge and smiled and said we will take that gold and then take you all back to Waco where you will probably be hanged for murder.

Two of the bank robbers went for their guns but Nick shot the one on his right with his double barrel and Jordan shot the one on the left side of the fire with his double barrel and the woman pulled a small revolver and put two bullets in Carters heart at close range and then Matt struck the woman hard in the back of her head and she fell to the ground out cold with the gun still in her hand.

Jordan stepped down from his horse’s saddle and checked on the outlaw by the fire and said the guy was dead. Nick checked the woman and said you hit her pretty hard big brother, did you mean to kill her? Matt reached down and picked up the small gun the woman had and said there are three more unfired shells in this gun and she had hoped to shoot us also.

Matt said lets tie these four across their horse saddles and as they were finishing the woman sat up rubbing her head and said who hit me. Matt said I did so now we have five men dead and thrown across their horse saddles and it is up to you rather you want to ride back to Laredo upright or thrown across your horse saddle and the woman said I will ride upright.

Okay Matt said but you better know that if you give me any trouble or try to run you will be tied the same as your friends over your saddle and rather dead or alive it does not matter to me and the woman looked at Matt and said I believe you and Matt said you had better.

Then Matt said let’s put a few miles behind us because it is looking like rain and maybe we can make it to that cave we stayed in on the way here then head back to Laredo in the morning, but before they reached the cave it had already started to rain so they stopped at the opening of the cave and let their horses drink some water before entering the cave. Matt said let’s make a small fire and maybe dry off before we call it a night.

Inside the cave the woman asked Matt where the gold was and Matt said for her not worry about the gold, it was going back to Laredo the same as them then Matt handed the woman a piece of beef jerky and a couple of corn dodgers and a cup of coffee and the woman said this is it, this is supper?

Matt said eat it or don’t we are here because of you and the other bank robbers and this time tomorrow you will be in jail and eating jail food and the woman said it will be better than this and threw it on the ground then she laid down and turned her back to him.

After Matt, Nick and Jordan had all rolled out their bed rolls and laid down Matt seen the woman reach out and pick up the beef jerky but Matt acted like he was sleeping and did not say anything but he heard her chewing on the jerky.

The next morning when the woman opened her eyes she seen Matt sitting on his heels by the small fire drinking coffee ,he had his back to her but he asked her if she wanted any coffee and the woman said how did you know I was awake and Matt said I make it my business to know these things and the woman asked again but how and Matt said when people are awake their breathing changes and it is never the same as when they are sleeping.

Then the woman asked Matt if he ever slept and Matt said there will be plenty of time for me to sleep when I am dead, so here is some beef jerky and a couple more corn dodgers and they are better if you don’t throw them on the ground before eating them so let’s get ready to pull out.

So after a couple hours on the trail the woman complained about being thirsty and Matt handed her a canteen and after the women drank her fill she turned the canteen over and let all the water run out and then laugh. Matt said I have another full canteen but you just dumped your water out so you have no more.

Lets ride we will stop to rest the horses in a couple of hours then we will try to make it to Laredo before dark so when they stopped to rest the horses Matt offered the woman some beef jerky but no water and the woman said what would it take for you to let me ride the other way and Matt said my job is to take you in and I will take you in, alive or dead.

The woman said you like your job don’t you and Matt I am good at my job so yea I guess you could say I am a bounty hunter because it is a job that not everyone can do but someone has too, so why not me then Matt said we will make it to Laredo in about three hours and if we leave now we will get there before dark then the woman said it sounds like you might be afraid of the dark and Matt said lady the only thing I am afraid of is fear itself then Matt said lets ride.

The sheriff had just stepped off the board walk when he seen the line off horses riding his way, there was nine horses four with riders sitting in their horses saddles and five with their riders thrown over their saddles wrapped in blankets.

The sheriff said I was told you Armstrong brothers were the best and it looks like you have all five of the bank robbers plus I see you brought Mrs. Varner back and hopefully also the $20.000 dollars of gold. Matt said Sheriff we have the $20.000 dollars of gold, then as Matt looked at the woman he said and there is five bank robbers dead and tied over their horses saddle and the leader, MRS VARNER decided she would ride sitting in her saddle.

The sheriff looked at the woman and said Mrs. Varner was the leader well what do you know, so that explains why the door was unlocked, give me a chance to lock her in a jail cell then we will check wanted posters on the others for reward money and get you the reward money for the returned gold after we get the$20.000.00 dollars back locked in the banks vault.

The sheriff asked about the bank robber’s horses and saddles and Matt said sheriff use them to bury the bank robbers in a shallow grave on the hill. After the sheriff found wanted posters on all five outlaws, he signed vouchers for the rewards Matt said lets knock some of this dust off then go across the street and get three large steaks and some hot black coffee.

THE END

THE ROUNDUP AT JADES WAY

CHAPTER 5

Flint Starr and Bart Mason sat at a table with Wade Harper as their four new cowboys signed their names in the ledger book

CLIFT EVERETTE

SCOTT THOMAS

BODIE TATE

ROB CURTIS

After the four cowboys Signed their names, Wade turned the ledger around and as he looked at the names he said you four have been hired to ride for the brand J/W

You will be paid $40.00 a month plus found, we have a nice bunkhouse where you can sleep and store your gear plus there is a good cook working for our ranch and all you have to do to eat is be at the chow table when the dinner bell is rang.

Wade Harper then said we have a young lady that lives on this ranch and she is my daughter and I won’t cotton to anyone being rude to her and I hope I have made myself clear about this.

Not only branding but there is fences to mend and horses to saddle break and a trail drive to get ready for. Flint Starr is the ramrod and you will take your orders from him and me, so now after you store you gear in the bunkhouse we will walk down by the lake.

Tomorrow we will start being cowboys but today I would like to see you four on a horse plus throw a rode and then we will do a little target shooting so Flint if you will bring them down to the lake after they store their gear.

Flint said come with me there is eight bunks, one is Bart’s and one is mind, so your four can pick one from the other six bunks and when the four cowboys stepped off the boardwalk and into the bunkhouse they were impressed.

Cliff said look at this fireplace and large table, Bodie said he like the way the bunks were placed in the bunkhouse with the shelves and storage at the ends of the bunks plus under the bunks and the other cowboys agreed, then all four cow-boys threw their gear on a bunk and Flint said let’s head down to the lake because the boss is waiting on us.

Then on the way down to the lake Flint said there is 640 acres here at Jades Way plus not only the covered porch at the front of the bunkhouse there is a make shift shower house at the back of the bunkhouse for your use.

Flint looked at rob and said I have not seen too many working cowboys wearing two guns strapped down and rob said, Wade Harper said we were going to do some target shooting and I always tie my guns before I pull them so is there a problem and Flint said we just want to make sure we hired cowboys not gun hands

Wade Harper and his daughter Jade was sitting on the top rail of the three rail fence watching the targets being set up to shoot at. Flint walked toward them and said if it is okay we will shoot a few targets than do some roping boss. Wade Harper said he noticed Rob’s two guns and when Rob had signed the ledger he was wearing only one.

Flint said yea I mentioned it to him and Rob said he only wears the two guns when he wants to empress someone, normally he wears his other gun and I told him we want cowboys that are good with a gun but not gun hands so let’s see how it plays out and Wade Harper said Flint do what you have to do.

Clift, Scott and Bodie all took turns shooting at the targets then Rob stepped up and looked at Flint and said are you ready boss.Flint said we are waiting to see you shoot and as Flint said it Rob turned and pulled both his shinny colt 44s and shot 4 small limbs then as Rob holstered his two colts Flint pulled his colt and cut the four limbs even shorter than Rob had cut them and said you don’t have to call me boss because Flint will do.

While the other cowboys were throwing ropes Flint asked Rob to take a walk with him and as they walked away from the others Flint said Rob you can shoot and that is good to know but have you ever shot at a man that was shooting at you?

And Rob said yes there was one time that there was a guy hunting trouble.

I tried to walk away but he kept pushing and I had no choice so I left him in the street face down in the dirt because it was either him or me but then I started thinking if it was because I was wearing the two guns and if that could have had anything to do with it so that is why I normally wear the one gun.

Flint looked at Rob for a minute then said you are right Rob wearing two guns makes a person look like a gun hand and there is always someone looking to make a reputation but I think you have learned that the hard way and Rob said yes I guess I did boss and if it’s okay I will call you boss for now and maybe change it to Flint later.

Flint said boss or Flint will be okay so let’s walk back and see how the other cowboys are doing and as they walked up Bodie called out to Rob and said show us how you can throw that pig sticker and Rob pulled a throwing knife he had and stuck it in a small circle that Bodie had drawn on a stump post.

Rob looked at Flint. Flint said that was a good throw and Rob said boss Bodie is also very good with a knife and Flint said well we have time Bodie if you would like to show us and Rob threw a rope over a small limb then tied a block of wood to it then as the small piece of wood was swinging by the rope Bodie pulled his knife and stuck it deep in the board.

Flint said that was good throwing Bodie. Rob and you all can handle a gun and rope so after breakfast we will start branding beefs plus saddle break a few horses to take with us on the trail and also mend the fence where needed.

The morning will come early so let’s get a little sleep and after we have a little to eat we will become working cowboys on this ranch, then as Bart and the other four stepped into the bunkhouse Wade Harper called to Flint and asked him if he could come up and see him a minute. Flint said he would be right there.

When Flint stepped up on the boardwalk Flint said what’s up boss and Wade Harper said so what do you think about our four cowboys and Flint said Wade I don’t think we could have did any better, they are good with guns if needed and they can ride and rope plus Rob and Bodie can really throw a knife.

Wade Harper said Flint if you say so and they want to ride for the brand then I do believe we have us a working ranch and I am ready for a little sleep and I will see you in the morning. Flint said goodnight to Wade Harper and then smiled at Jade and asked her if she wanted to take a short walk before turning in and Jade said yes.

Wade Harper looked up to the heavens and said thank you GOD then Wade Harper stepped into the ranch house and after Flint kissed Jade the second time Flint said he would see Jade in the morning.

So there first day after a full day of branding beefs the cowboys were knocking off dust and washing up when the cook rang the dinner bell and calling come and get it, so the cowboys all took a seat at the large table and first they passed the coffee pot around the table then they each put a nice size steak on their plate with thick sliced potatoes and some greens.

There was hardly a word said while the cowboys ate their meal but while they were drinking their second cup of coffee they were all talking ,but then Flint spoke up and said the branding is going good but tomorrow we will saddle break a few horses for our remuda then brand more beefs the next day.

Then after branding a few more beefs the next day we will start mending the fence where needed, we will skip every other day where we will brand one day then skip one day of branding, then brand the next day because we have a couple large gates to build where three of us will build one gate then the other three will build the second gate.

We have barb wire fencing to string gates to build plus a three rail fence to mend and at lease twelve horses to saddle break, so what I am saying we will work that in with the beef we brand with the J/W iron.

Flint said you all did good today so get some shut eye and we will start again tomorrow after breakfast then, Wade Harper said Flint are you going after wild horses sometime this week and Flint said I thought maybe Friday and Wade Harper said this being our first week let’s not work Saturday or Sunday then go to six days next week.

Flint said you are the boss and Wade Harper said that way if our cowboys want to go to town or just have a extra day to rest up they will be able to and then Wade Harper said there will be no pay deduction for not working Saturday and if any of you need a advance on your pay let me or Flint know then Wade Harper said goodnight and stepped off the boardwalk and into his ranch home.

The next morning after a good breakfast Flint said lets work on some fencing today then we will brand a few beefs tomorrow and then Friday we will go round up some mustangs to saddle break the start of next week.

Flint said today we reset some poles and replace all the boards on the three rail fence that needed to be replaced and by the time we reach Jays Way we will have time to knock some dust off before the cook rings the dinner bell so let’s head back and call it a day.

After dinner Flint said Wade the fence wasn’t quite as bad as we first thought and other than a couple gates we will be able to string the barb wire strands next week is what I am thinking so we might be ready for the trail drive but there is something else and Wade Harper said what is it Flint.

While working on the fence we noticed there had been some repairs made within the last couple of days, there was a couple new post and a few boards replaced so I stepped from Apache saddle and I was wondering who worked on the fence when we noticed smoke drifting from the line shack chimney.

There were three young boys that run towards the line shack as we pulled up and they closed the door, but the door reopened and a young Mexican man stepped out with his young wife and I asked them if they knew they had move into our line shack?

The Mexican man spoke with broken English but explained his wife was heavy with child and they came across the small house in the winter and there was no one there and the house was empty so they moved in.

The Mexican man showed me the garden they planted and the work he did to the line shack plus he said he did the repairs to the fence and he was also afraid that some day they would have to move on because he had told his wife Rosa one day the owner would show up and maybe make them move on.

Flint said boss the place looks good, the Mexican did a good job with the repairs to the line shack which does look like a small house, plus he saved them maybe a couple days of work with the repairs that had been made on the fence but I also told the Mexican I would see you and then tell you about them living in the line shack then I was sure we would be back to see them.

Then Flint said Wade also if you noticed we did not eat as much as normal because the Mexican hooves name is Hector had Rosa fix us some-thing to eat so when we finished the meal Rosa had made for us, before we left we gave Rosa the food we had in our saddle bags in our food cloths.

Wade we had smoked deer, cut potatoes, corn, onions and other greens plus Rosa had made tea from roots which wasn’t bad but I prefer the coffee that we left with Hector and as we were leaving Rosa asked if we were going to throw them out in the morning and I told her it was up to you but I would tell you of all the hard work that they did Flint said.

Wade asked Flint how many Mexicans were living in the line shack and about how long they had been there plus, I wonder why or how they happened to be in this area.

Well Wade there is Hector then his Senorita who is Hectors wife, Rosa plus their three Chava’s or children the oldest son’s name is Antonio then the middle son’s name is Fernando and the youngest son’s name is Pablo which means small one.

Jade said you sure know a lot about them and now you also know Spanish? And Flint said Hector talks a lot and I guess I am a quick learner because I also will tell you Hector said he was no Ratero which means thief plus he has no Varo’ s or Pesos which means, but before Flint finished Jade said no money but then he aspects to stay anyway.

Hector also said if he had to move his family he would but he would be sad but No Hay Bronco which means no problem because they are young and strong and before anything else was said Wade Harper said this Hector sounds like a good man to me.

Then Wade Harper said I would like to meet Hector and his family so let’s ride out to the line shack in the morning because we have not used it and I have even thought about tearing it down but maybe this could work out for all of us.

Flint how about me you and Jade go see Hector and his family in the morning while the other cowboys brand a few beefs .Wade Harper said We will go after breakfast and Jade said she would like to see what they did to the line shack plus the garden they planted.

After breakfast Flint saddled his horse Apache then Wades horse Luke and Jades horse Ginger, then they headed to the line shack to see Hector and his family.

Flint showed Wade Harper some of the fence post and railings that Hector had repaired then Wade notice the line shack and the well maintain garden as they pulled up to the line shack or as he was told the small house then Hector stepped out and called Rosa and his boys to come out and meet the Harpers.

After everyone said hi, Wade inspected the line shack inside and out and then walked over to the garden and said Hector I am impressed then cleared what he had said , he liked it very much and Jade had brought some soda pops and asked Hector if it would be okay to give it to the boys and Hector said Refresco to his sons and they ran over saying Refresco Refresco which meant soda of any kind. Then Jade pulled out the pepper-mint sticks and the boys were yelling Neta Neta which Hector told Jade they were yelling Neta which meant for real. The boys all three hugged Jade and Jade was saying Neta and hugged the boys then, Jade hugged Rosa and Rosa smiled and Hector said in broken English Rosa is trying real hard to understand but can’t quite understand.

Jade said she would be happy to help Rosa and them all to be able to talk more English and to understand it. Wade Harper said Hector like I said you have did real good here and this place would be standing empty if you and family did not move in so, I am thinking as long as you keep the fence mended I will supply you with the material needed there, plus I am thinking of other ways for you to make a good living where I will supply you with the seed you need to produce a good size garden and maybe you could raise some chickens.

Hector kept saying NO HAY BRONCA which means everything is fine, plus Hector kept shaking Wade Harpers hand and saying, GRACIAS,GRACIAS, which means thank you. Wade Harper said there will be material here in a couple days then next week when you are ready we will bring a couple dozen chickens and feed and when the time comes you can sell eggs plus vegetables on a small wagon that we have that we don’t use.

Wade Harper said I have a horse and a wagon plus seed and the chickens for you, so all you have to do is a little work to make this work for your family and again Hector was saying, GRACIAS ,GRACIAS. Wade Harper said we will be back in a couple days then Flint, Jade and Wade headed back to their ranch.

Back at the ranch Jade hugged Wade Harper and said thanks dad, then said how proud she was of him for the way he was helping Hector and his family. Wade said he was happy that he could with all that God has done for him he wanted to pass it along.

The next morning Flint and the other five cowboys with two pack horses loaded with supplies for the roundup of the wild Mustang horses that they were going to bring back to Jades Way, Wade Harper asked Flint to take the small wagon and Josie a eight year old mare horse with them and leave the wagon and horse with Hector and also to tell Hector when he was ready bring Josie and the wagon to Jades Way for material.

After Flint and the five cowboys stayed the night at the small house which up to now had been called the line shack,a beautiful morning came and the sun was peaking thought the clouds and Flint said to Hector and his cowboys it looks like it is going to be a beautiful day, then Flint told Hector him and the cowboys would be back in five days with wild Mustang horses.

When the cowboys were out of sight Hector said to his wife Rosa and his three sons, let’s go see Mr. Wade Harper and Miss Jade and the three boys were thinking Refresco(soda pop)and peppermint candy so they were jumping for joy.

Then when Hector and his family reached the ranch called Jades Way, the boys got what they were hoping for soda pop and peppermint candy while Wade Harper helped Hector load up some fence post, some boards and some barbed wire plus a roll of chicken wire. Wade Harper put two shovels and a hand saw and a hammer in the back of the wagon with u staples and nails.

As Hector and his family pulled the loaded wagon back towards their small home that no longer was being called the line shack both Hector and Rosa were wiping tears while they were thanking God for their new friends and home.

Five days later just like Flint had said Hector opened the gate when he heard the cowboys and horses coming and Rosa called to her three boys to get to a safe area while the horses went by, so all three boys climbed up in a small tree and watched the horses run by.

After Hector latched the gate he said to Flint so many horses and Flint said yea they were there for the taking so we took them and Flint said Hector on a working ranch you need manly horses and saddle broke horses are easy to sell so the ones we don’t keep we will sell, which will make my boss Wade happy then Flint looked around and noticed all the work that Hector had did in the five days and Flint said you have been busy my friend.

Hector said Mister Flint we wanted to be ready for your horses and we need to get the chickens that Mr. Wade gave us so we have worked hard but good and we will pick up our chickens in the morning. Flint said see you in the morning then said he needed to catch up to his cowboys and he headed towards the dust from the horses.

Flint yelled slow them horses down a little but keep pushing them towards the ranch and as the cowboys came into sight Wade Harper and Jade was standing on the boardwalk in front of the ranch house because they heard the horses coming even before they seen them.

Wade Harper said Jade there must be at least 50 to 60 Mustangs there but I am glad there is that many and Jade said she had never seen such pretty horses before and as the cowboys push the horses towards the corral, Wade opened the gate and told Flint he was glad to see him and said it looks like the roundup was better than we had hoped for.

Yea it was Wade, Flint yelled over the horses and Wade said knock off some of that dust, there is a pot of coffee on and I will see to it that dinner is ready when you are ready. Flint said bring on the grub because it was early this morning when we were sitting in our horses saddles, chewing on beef jerky so I guess you could say I could eat the south end of a north bound mule and then Flint laughed.

After knocking off some dust, Flint washed up a bit and put on a clean shirt then met Jade on the boardwalk and while Jade was still in Flints arms, Wade Harper sat down at the large table and said Flint I would like to hear about the round up after we have a bite to eat. Flint gave Jade a kiss and said I will be back for another kiss after I eat and Jade said she would hold him to it.

Flint started to reach for the coffee pot but Jade picked it up and said let me and smiled and as Jade and Flint smiled at one and another Wade smiled and said Flint as you can see Jade missed you and Flint said yea I missed her and then said Jade after I have this coffee and tell you and your dad about the round up how about we go for a walkabout and Jade said then get on with your story.

As you can see we bought back a few more horses than needed but I figured what we don’t keep we can saddle break and sell as we want, plus not only is there 63 mares there is two stallions and we left one back a ways because he is a yearling and the stallion in the corral with the mares would kill him if he was put in the corral but when the time comes we will keep one stallion and sell the other one.

Wade said Flint it all sounds good to me and you and your cowboys did a great job. Flint said boss it was all in a day’s work then smiled and Wade said more like five days work and there will be a small added bonus in all six of your paydays this month for your extra hours spent on the round up then Wade shook hands with all six cowboys and asked Flint to have another cup of coffee with him.

During their conversation Wade asked Flint about Hector and Flint said Hector and his family had been real busy, because not only was the gate repaired there was other repairs plus even a small smoker that Hector had build and Hector said he would be at the ranch in the morning for the chickens that had been given to him and his family.

Flint then said boss if there is nothing else I would like to spend a little time with Jade then get some shut eye because there is plenty of work to be done tomorrow and the days to come preparing for the trail drive. Wade shook Flint hand and said thanks and Flint said thank you Wade, then Flint said come on Jade let’s take a little walk in the moon light. Wade smiled and said thank you lord as he looked up into a beautiful night.

It wasn’t but a few minutes later when Flint heard Rob, Bodie and Scott plus Clift all four were picking either a guitar or a banjo and a couple of them was singing and so was Jade. Flint said life is good and Jade said it sure is then Flint kissed Jade and they both said goodnight then Jade watched Flint walk to the bunk house and then she stepped off the boardwalk and into the large ranch house.

The next morning wade said Flint you know you sure surprised me when I seen all those horses and Flint said I wanted too and you know we will take six to eight horses with us, that we will saddle break, then we can saddle break more as we need to but I don’t think we need to hurry on selling any do you? And Wade said he did not see any hurry.

JADES WAY ----- THE TRAIL DRIVE

Part 2

CHAPTER 6

Wade said Flint I was talking to Shermon McBay and he heard about our trail drive and said something that I think we should consider Flint said so what did Shermon have in mind Wade.

Shermon said that a trail drive to Kansas City Kansas would be a little better than 700 miles and he was thinking the more beefs we took the better and if we let him send some cows with us he would also supply four or five cowboys to trail the beefs to Kansas City along with you and your cowboys, but Flint I told him if we agreed to it you would be the ramrod in charge.

Flint said Wade I know me and the cowboys could handle our 300 beefs plus a few more, Did Shermon said how many beefs he wanted us to take to Kansas City with ours and Wade said yea Shermon said he was looking to send 250 beefs to market and he would give us the use of his chuck wagon and four or five men plus he would only take $25.00 a head for the beefs that we took to market with the A/C brand on them.

Well Flint said let’s say we trail 350 beefs with the J/W brand and then250 beefs with the A/C brand that would be 600 head plus a remuda of horses and we would have the use of Shermon’s chuck wagon and I think it wouldn’t hurt to have a couple extra cowboys, then there would be ten cow punchers pushing the beefs and whatever the A/C beefs bring over $ 25.00 would be Jades way profit.

Flint waited a minute and then said Wade it sounds too good to pass up so did Shermon say who he was thinking about sending with us? Yea Shermon said he wasn’t going to send Captain George but he had a young man who has worked with Captain George and who Captain George said he knew the young man could handle the chuck wagon plus he was also good with a gun and horse.

Then Shermon said he would ask around Autumns Crossing and he knew there would be cowboys biting the at the bit to go on a trail drive Wade said, then Wade asked have you gave the trail drive any thought Flint as far as time needed to make the drive and Flint said if we plan on 700 miles and we trail 20 miles a day we would be looking at 35 days one way give or take ,then Wade said Flint it looks like you have did your homework and I have did mine and Wade pulled a couple pieces of paper from his shirt pocket.

Wade said I wrote some numbers down and it looks like the going price of beefs is $32.00 a head so if we trail 350 of ours that would make $11.200 then 250 head at $7.00 each would be $1,750 which would bring the total to $12,950 but still I know the market could change for the good or bad.

Flint said Wade the profit over $25.00 a head then the use of the chuck wagon and the cowboys I don’t see how we could refuse the offer do you? Wade said Shermon said he has a couple cowboys learning to hit a trail and his chuck wagon is not being used at this time and you know Shermon he is a very smart man and when you are on the right side of Shermon you are in a good place.

Yea Flint said I have seen people on the wrong side of Shermon and that is a place that I hope never to be on, so I know what you are saying about being on the right side, so I think we should take Shermon up on his offer.

Wade if you want to finalize the deal with shermon me and the boys will get to branding the rest of the beefs for the trail drive plus we need to saddle break a few more horses for the remuda Flint said.

Well I will go see Shermon in the morning but Flint I think you should go with me when I go. Flint said we can go right after breakfast. I will get the cowboys branding then we will go see Shermon.

I will pick out a few horses to be saddle broke and talk with our cowboys about our plans for the trail drive then see you at dinner Flint said. Wade said thanks Flint and Flint smiled and said thank you Wade, then Flint stepped up in Apaches saddle and turned him towards the lake to talk with his cowboys.

A few hours later the dinner bell was ringing and the cowboys were knocking off dust and washing at the water trough and Flint said lets go eat then after dinner I have a couple things to go over about our upcoming trail drive

After the cowboys ate their fill of sliced beef plus potatoes and greens plus drank a large pot of hot black coffee Flint said me and Wade is going over to see

Shermon in the morning about us trailing some of his beefs with ours, also he has offered the use of his chuck wagon and a couple of cowboys to help with the beefs.

Flint asked if anyone had any questions, but there wasn’t any so Flint said he was going to go for a little walk with Jade and the cowboys walked towards the bunkhouse. Wade seen the cowboys with their guitars and banjos so he sat back down to enjoy the music before calling it a night.

Jade asked Flint if he was happy and Flint said he would always be happy as long as Jade was happy and then Flint asked Jade if she was happy and Jade said she was but she was wondering about their future.

Flint said he was hopping there would be one, but he wanted to have more than just his horse and making more than a cowboys pay before he could think about marriage or their future and Jade said don’t wait too long Flint because I want a marriage and kids .then Jade turned and walked towards where her dad Wade was sitting.

As Flint walked towards the bunkhouse Wade asked his daughter if there was a problem and Jade said she asked Flint if there was going to be a future for them and Flint said he needed more than his horse and saddle and a cowboys pay before he could plan a future for them.

The next morning after breakfast as Flint and Wade was ridding towards Autumns Crossing, Wade asked Flint if there was anything wrong and Flint said he hopped not but he had a feeling that Jade might want to see a different cowboy and she might not be happy with him.

Wade said Flint I know Jade love’s you and she is thinking of the future she wants to have with you so try not to worry because I have a plan for you and her after this first trail drive then Wade said there is Shermon on the boardwalk.

When Wade and Flint pulled up to the boardwalk where Shermon was Shermon said come on up in the shade and have a cup of coffee while we discuss the trail drive and how we can help one in another.

As Shermon poured coffee in the three cups Shermon said have you two talked about our partnership? I can put it in writing if needed and Wade said Shermon we have did business before and I truss you to do what is good for both sides so I don’t need it in writing and the deal we discussed is fine with me and Flint.

Okay Shermon said I will send 250 beefs with you Flint plus you will have the use of my chuck wagon and Flint I believe you know Luther Green and Nevada Smith plus there is a young man that has worked with Captain George He is good at making meals on the trail and also he is good with a rifle if needed.

Luther and Nevada has been standing still for too long they haven’t said it in so many words but I know they need the dust and smell of the drive and Flint they have always rode for the brand and they will follow your lead plus if you ask them you will see they have been on many trail drives and I don’t believe there is any better cowboys anywhere.

Shermon shook Wades hand then Flints and ask Flint when he was planning on pulling out and Flint said he still had a few beefs to brand but he thought two weeks from today and Shermon said the 250 beefs the chuck wagon and three cowboys would be at Jades way in the morning two weeks from today.

Shermon asked Wade and Flint if there was anything else needed and Flint said he could not think of anything else, and Shermon said he would have some smoked bacon plus beans and flour stored in the chuck wagon and then Shermon asked about ammo and Wade said he would be sending a couple extra guns and ammo that he hopes would not be needed but it would be there if was needed.

Shermon asked have you saddle broke horses for a remuda and Flint said there would be enough extra horses for all nine cowboys because they had brought in some wild Mustangs and maybe 50 more than they needed but they are at Jades Way and they had started to saddle break some for the trail drive.

Good Shermon said it is always good to have more horses than you need, you can always sell a few anytime you decided too because there are always buyers for good horses.

Flint swung up in his saddle and Wade mounted his horses saddle then they headed out the large gate at Autumns Crossing back towards Jades Way and Flint said Shermon is a good man and Wade said Flint so are we and because Shermon knows he can depend on us we can depend on his help.

The next two weeks went by fast and Flint told Wade he was ready to trail the 600 beefs to Kansas City Kansas and Wade said in the morning we will add our grub with the grub that Shermon sent plus the extra guns and ammo and there is two large sacks with the coffee pot plus tin cups and plates in one then a sack of four, coffee grounds and beans in the other one.

After a good breakfast there were eight cowboys sitting tall in their saddles with the young cook and bottle washer sitting in the seat of the chuck wagon and he had a double barrel shot gun across the wagon seat next to a repeating rifle and he said MR. Harper if I have to use them I know how and I will use them.

Wade Harper said there will be nine cowboys all good with guns and I pray that the guns won’t be needed but I do feel better knowing that if needed you know how to use them, then Wade said Flint you are the ramrod and I will be praying that all nine of you come back safe and when you get to Kansas City Kansas send me a wire after you make the deal.

Flint was looking around for Jade then he seen her coming from the lake and she handed Flint a chain and locket and then Jade turned and as she stepped into the ranch house off the boardwalk she looked back and said you come back and bring me that locket back Flint Starr. Flint opened the locket and there was a picture of Jade and then Flint put the chain around his neck and said to himself I will come back to you and one day I will make you my wife.

Flint shook Wades hand then yelled lets push these beefs to Kansas and Wade watched the cowboys and beefs until the dust was gone then he stepped into the ranch house and wiped his daughter’s eyes and said Jade, Flint is a good man and when he gets back I am sure he will ask you to marry him.

Hector heard the noise and seen the dust of the beefs and gathered his three boys to safety then Hector and his family watched as the cowboys and beefs went through the large gate that Hector had opened for them then after waving until all beefs and cowboys were well on their way Hector closed the gate.

Late in the day Flint said we have made better than 20 miles and the sun is starting to set so let’s stop on that tall buffalo grass up ahead for the night because there is water and some dead wood from those three cottonwood trees were we can make a fire and after the beefs drink some water they will be contempt with the buffalo grass for the night.

By the time Flint rubbed his horse Apache down the young cook said my name is Logan as he handed Flint a cup of hot black coffee and Flint said thanks Logan

Logan said there is smoked ham and beans plus bread then Logan asked do you want anything else boss and Flint said that and coffee will be good plus you don’t have to call me boss because Flint will do and Logan said okay thanks Flint and Flint said I am glad you are here Logan thanks for coming on the trail drive.

Logan walked up to the chuck wagon and tapped a large spoon on the pot of beans and said come and get it and as soon as he said it, there was eight cowboys standing in line and Logan handed them a plate full of beans with a large piece of smoked ham and a thick slice of bread and said the coffee is hot and on the fire.

Logan made himself a plate then sat down on the extra step off the chuck wagon that Shermon had added for Captain George then Flint said Logan I would like for you to keep the coffee on all night so whoever is on night watch can get coffee and then after we drink coffee in the morning you can store it away for the day

Then Flint said Logan I have a question if you don’t mind and Logan said ask away Flint and Flint said I was wondering if you liked to ride horses or you ratter you rather ride in the wagon and Logan said it was my uncle Sherm that first new I was not that found of horses and he said it was okay because it was okay with him and not everyone liked horses.

While we are talking my family also knows that I would like to leave the ranch and become a full time barber some day and Flint said everyone has to be something and people need their hair cut so I guess someone has to be a barber so are you any good at cutting hair?

Yea I think so because I had a good teacher you see Captain George has been cutting hair for a long time and he has gave me his best pair of scissors and showed me how to cut hair. Flint asked how much do you charge for a hair- cut and Logan said until I hang my shingle I won’t charge you anything so would you like a hair cut Flint?

Flint said let’s do it tomorrow night after chow because I have a couple things to go over with the cowboys tonight. Flint first said there are nine of us here and I hope for no trouble but if it comes I want us to be ready at all times.

Logan will always stay in camp with his shot gun and rifle plus he will keep the coffee hot and the other eight will take their turn at night watch and what I mean by that is there will be two night hawks talking or singing to the beefs threw out the night and two cowboys relieving two cowboys every two hours.

This should be smooth without any trouble but we will see how it works and if we need to make any changes we will and remember I am always open for subjections and like I was told there is nothing stupid about a question unless you don’t ask the question in the first place.

Flint said you all have been on trail drives before this one and you all know what to watch out for, but I would like everyone to team up and watch out for one and another because I would like all of us to get back alive and with God’s help this should be a good trail drive.

Rob me and you will take the first watch then the six of you can split up with two of you every two hours pulling night watch, there is no signs of trouble now but keep your eyes open and your powder dry.

As Flint stepped up into his horse Apaches saddle Rob rode up on his horse and said I am ready boss and Flint looked at the colt 44 in the worn holster on Rob one hip plus the large knife on Robs other hip and the repeating rifle he had lying across his lap and Flint said Rob it does look like you are ready.

The next morning when Flint walked up to the fire Logan handed Flint a cup of hot black coffee and said if we have time I gathered some duck eggs down by the water and I can have the eggs, smoked bacon and bread ready in no time.

Sure Logan we have time for breakfast so I would say we should because we might not be able to down the trail if we start seeing signs of trouble and after breakfast we can put some miles behind us until night camp.

After the big breakfast Flint said let’s break camp and make sure your canteen is full of water and grab some beef jerky because we might make good time today and maybe better than the twenty miles we made yesterday.

The weather was good with a light breeze and the beefs seemed to be happy with the miles so flint said lets go for a couple more miles then look for a night camp where there is good grass and close to the stream and while Flint flanked the beefs on the left side he crossed some tracks.

Flint yelled to Logan to pull his chuck wagon to the right and stop it under the only large cotton wood tree up ahead on a small knoll then Flint and his cowboys pushed their beef towards the same knoll and there was a small stream of water where they let the beefs drink.

While sitting his horse Flint was checking their back trail when Rob, Luther and Nevada rode up to Flint and they all had seen the unshod horses so they knew there was Indians up ahead because of no horse shoes but they weren’t sure about their back trail.

While we are setting up night camp I would like to check our back trail and also scout up ahead a ways and we might sleep better knowing what is ahead of us and not be surprised in the morning Flint said so Luther you and Nevada go back a ways on our back trail and me and Rob will scout up ahead.

Be careful and back trail maybe a mile then meet us at camp but don’t get caught out in the open and me and Rob will follow that ridge for maybe a mile unless we see something sooner and before I leave here I will make sure the five cowboys in camp are ready for trouble if it comes.

It was close to an hour when Luther and Nevada rode into camp and reported not seeing anything on their back trail and Flint said good then told Luther and Nevada to get a plate of beans while he told them about the small band of Indians up ahead on the trail so after filing their plate with beans plus a large piece of smoked ham and a thick slice of bread Luther and Nevada sat down on a large boulder next to where Flint was.

Flint said there is some old Indians plus a couple braves and the old Indians are hungry the same as the braves and I am afraid if we feed them once we will have to keep feeding them plus the braves have bows and arrows but don’t hunt.

They have already ate one of their horses and they are wanting one of our cows but I still don’t like feeding the braves but I do feel we should give the old some-thing to eat so I guess we will take a vote to feed them or not to feed them.

Luther said I heard that Shermon feed some old Indians once but not the braves that was old enough to hunt and had no more trouble with them but maybe we can give them something other than a beef and I have seen deer maybe we can shoot them a deer and Flint said we will sleep on it tonight and decide in the morning.

The next morning Flint seen the two braves leading off a cow and he stop them, then a idea came to him and he asked Luther and Nevada to take the young braves and find a deer but to make sure the braves shoot the deer with their bow and arrows then if needed show them how to prepare it then catch up to the herd down the trail.

About two hour later Flint seen Luther and Nevada working their way through the beefs towards him so he pulled his horse Apache to a stop and then asked Luther and Nevada if his plan had worked and they both said it could not have been any better and the Indians were eating deer and enjoying it.

Flint said that was good because he knew the Indians were a proud people and now he knew the young braves would supply for the older ones plus their selves and not starve then Flint said thanks, then Luther flanked the beefs on the left and Nevada fell in and flanked the beefs on the right side.

Flint said to his horse Apache the breeze feels good so let’s stay ahead of the beefs and dust and watch the trail up ahead and Apache brought his head up and back down like he knew what Flint had just said to him and maybe he did Flint thought.

After putting more than another twenty miles behind them Flint waved for Logan to pull the chuck wagon over to a small clump of trees off to the right so they could set up night camp and Flint said let them beefs drink there full then we will bed them down in that valley for the night.

As Flint rode up to the chuck wagon Logan handed Flint a cup of hot black coffee and Logan said the chow will be ready when you are Flint, so after Flint rubbed Apache down with a old towel he looked at Logan and said let’s eat then we will set up a couple night hawks.

Flint said it looks like we are deep in Indian country because I have seen a lot of tracks and we have been lucky so far and I hope our luck holds but I have seen Braves standing and sitting their horses high on the canyon walls watching us and Logan said do you think they will attack us?

Flint said I would be lying if I said I knew because I don’t, but I have seen plenty of game so I don’t think they are hungry and I pray they let us travel threw their land then Logan said the Navajos attacked them on the way to Waco and the Apache’s had saved them all from being killed because his uncle Shermon was friends with Geronimo.

Nevada said he had also seen the Indians and he was sure they were Apaches but telling them they were friends with shermon McBay if they did get the chance probably would not be enough then Logan showed the cowboys the large chain and charm that he had around his neck that Shermon had sent with him.

Geronimo the big Apache chief called my uncle Shermon a great white chief and made him a blood brother and said no harm would ever come to Shermon or his family so my uncle Shermon said I should wear it and show it only if I needed to.

Then Flint said I believe we will find out at day break if the charm still has power but for tonight we will double the guard duty and then I hope we will be able to pull out at first light but before Flint finished his coffee there were Indians on four sides of them and the future of the cowboys did not look good.

Flint said Logan you might have big medicine around your neck and I hope you do because they are planning on taking the beefs and I am afraid leaving us for dead because of buffalo hunters in which the Indians had to drive from their land and now they are talking of doing the same with us.

Logan put his hand up as he walked toward an Indian who he thought might be a chief and then showed his necklace that his uncle shermon had gave him to take with him on the trail drive and when the Indian seen the large charm he knew it came from Geronimo the chief of all Apaches and he was speechless at first then he waved his arms and the Indians took steps back then they swung up on their ponies and were gone as fast as they came.

The cowboys were still unsure what had just happened, but Flint was saying Logan it looks like your uncle Shermon just saved our bacon and then Flint said let’s move these beefs before they change their minds and the cowboys flanked the beefs and started them back on the trail.

After on the trail for three hours or more the cowboys noticed Indians watching them but they also seen their Apache friends run the other Indians out of sight. Flint said Logan I was already glad you came, but now we are also glad your uncle Shermon sent the necklace with you.

Then after they had made more than twenty miles Flint waved to Logan to pull the chuck wagon over to where there was a shady area under a very large cotton wood tree on a knoll with good grass and running water. Flint said let them drink then they should be content chewing on the tall grass while we make camp for the night so Logan started a fire for coffee under the cotton wood tree where the smoke would drift up through the limbs of the large tree.

Logan said if you are hungry come and get it and then as the cowboys stepped up to Logan he handed them a plate heavy with beans and rice with a thick slice of smoked ham plus a slice of bread.

Flint said after eating we will set up night guard I have seen a band of Indians flanking us and I expect them to approach us soon and maybe in the morning so stay ready but I am pretty sure they won’t try anything before daylight.

Logan said uncle Shermon told me that Indians won’t attack at night and then Luther said I believe that is right because I also have heard that Indians are afraid if they are killed at night there spirit will wonder from that night forward and never rest or go to the happy hunting grounds and it seems to be the case.

Okay then every man will keep their gun ready and sleep in the shadow away from the light of the fire and don’t walk out of camp without someone watching your back, then we will go on with the herd in the morning plus I believe we are just about out of Indian country then we will be able to relax a little.

The sun was just starting to peak through the clouds and Flint plus Luther and Rob were all three sitting on their heels drinking a cup of coffee at the fire and talking about the small band of Indians and Rob said they are up to something but I am not sure what and Flint said I think the three of us will ride out and ask them.

As the three cowboy’s road up to the Indians Flint raised his hand the same as one of the five braves and the Indians that raised his hand said you have many cows and we are hungry so you will give us five cows and we will let you pass through our lands.

Flint said you have bows and arrows and there is game, you can hunt so we will not give you any cows and the Brave said then we will take them. Flint said if you try you will die and the Indians looked toward the cowboys camp and seen six rifles pointed at them besides the rifles Flint, Rob and Luther had laying across their laps.

The brave said we go and then Flint, Rob and Luther made their way back to camp without taking their eyes off the five Indians, then back at camp Flint said let’s break camp and by tonight we will be clear of all Indian territory and that much closer to Kansas City Kansas.

Late in the day Logan seen Flint waving him to the right and Logan did not have to look long before he seen the place where Flint was wanting to make camp and as Logan made his way to the spot he noticed the water and the grass and shaded area from the large trees and when Logan climbed from the wagon he started a camp fire and put on coffee to boil.

Flint said he hadn’t seen any signs of trouble for some time and he thought they all could breathe a little easier but they would still keep up the night guards and he was sure they would make it to Kansas City Kansas in less than ten days.

Early in the morning the cowboys were woke by thunder and there was lighten strikes off to the east and also there was a light rain but the coffee was hot and ready so Flint said throw a cup of hot coffee down and let’s break camp.

All the cowboys threw on their rain gear and flanked the beefs on all sides and the rain was coming down hard but the beefs and cowboys pushed on in the almost dark from the rain and dark clouds and the going was slow but they made what miles they could and a few hours later the rain had let up Flint was looking for a place to make night camp.

Eight days later Flint was feeling the stress of the trail drive the same as the other eight cowboys and that evening after dinner Flint was just about to throw his bed roll out when he and the other cowboy heard movement and sounds of horses coming towards them in the dark.

Then someone yelled hello in the camp and Flint said show yourself. Who are you and what do you want Flint asked and someone said we want to talk to you about the beefs and Flint said there is guns pointed at you so come into the light and show yourself now.

As two men in suits walked into the light and one of the men said we are bankers and we heard of the beefs you are trailing so we came out to find you and make a deal on the beefs the man said, I am Heath Clay and this is Harley Hogan.

Flint then said you should know better than to walk up to a camp at night don’t you know you could have been shot and why would you ride out here when you knew we were coming to town?

Heath Clay said we seen your fire and we sure could use a cup of coffee and Harley Hogan said and maybe something to eat and we have money, we can pay and Flint said the coffee is hot then Flint asked Logan if he could throw something together for the two bankers while they told him the reason they left town to meet with them.

As Logan brought two plates with beans and bread over to the two bankers Flint handed the two a couple tin cups and again said the coffee is hot and so is the pot and as the two bankers ate the beans one of them said I never thought beans could taste so good and Flint said beans are always good when you are pushing cows.

Flint said you two are brave, plus stupid to ride out here with no supplies and then to walk into a dark camp and Heath Clay said sir we are not that brave and I don’t feel we are stupid, but maybe we should have planned better, but because of wanting to be the ones to purchase your beefs is the reason why we are here.

Then Flint said it looks like the price of beef has just went up because the reason you came out here is because there are other buyers in town isn’t that right and Heath Clay said you are right but we will offer you a fair price for your beefs and more than the other buyers and we are not wanting buy them to sell them to other buyers for profit.

Flint said you have not seen the beefs plus you don’t know our count either and you want to make a offer so what is the hurry. Harley Hogan said because the need we have for your beefs is for the good of the people and the other buyer wants to purchase then to sell them for a much higher price that would give them the beef market for their profit when there is no other beef to be had.

So let me think on this a minute you are saying the other buyer is wanting to profit by being the only one with beefs so he can sell at a much higher price well I know what Wade would want me to do, so what is the price you two have in mind because our count is 600 beefs and there is maybe 20 to 30 that is close to calving.

Heath Clay said we are offering to pay $36.00 a head where the other buyer will offer a dollar a head more and then like I said who knows where he would stop with his price of profit, then while Flint was thinking about the $4.00 a head more and Heath Clay said plus there will be a steak dinner for you and your cowboys with all the trimmings paid for by us.

Flint said you can sleep in camp with us tonight and then after chow in the morning you can trail the beefs to town with us and you have my word if you are telling me the truth, we will eat the steak dinners after we finalize our deal of the 600 beefs for $36.00 a head, then Flint shook hands with both bankers.

Okay Heath and Harley my name is Flint Starr but call me Flint because if we are going to do business I think we should be on first name bases then Flint handed both bankers a extra bed roll from the chuck wagon and said it is warn so throw your bed row in the shadow away from the fires light and get some shut eye.

The next morning when Heath Clay and Harley Hogan opened their eyes Flint was at the fire sitting on his heels drinking coffee and said are you ready for some coffee. Heath said don’t you ever sleep and Flint said there will be time to sleep when I am dead, then Harley asked how did you know we were awake?

Flint said you mean because I had my back to you. I heard you stop talking and Heath said were we both talking and Flint said yea but don’t worry a lot of people talk in their sleep when they are not sleeping well.

Harley asked what were we saying and Flint said Harley you were talking about your wife being worried about you and Heath you were saying how you needed to buy the beefs so you could keep the price affordable, but now it is time to eat then we will put some miles behind us and we should make Kansas before the sun sets.

Logan said come and get it and Heath Clay and Harley Hogan stepped in line behind Flint then Logan put a spoon full of beans and a slab of smoked bacon and a thick slice of bread on their plates and handed them a couple of tin coffee cups. Flint said you better eat up because we won’t be stopping until we reach Kansas.

While eating Heath Clay said to Flint I am sure you know Harley and I have never been on a trail drive before, but now I know how tuff a man has to be to be a cowboy on a cattle trail and Flint said Heath I am afraid you will even appreciate it more when we reach Kansas and then Flint smiled.

Logan came around and was gathering plates so Heath Clay and Harley Logan gave up their plates after grapping their bread and piece of smoked bacon off their plates and Heath Clay said, now we know when you have a chance to eat you had better eat and then talk later and again Flint just smiled and handed Logan his empty plate and said let’s break camp.

Flint said we are losing daylight and the beefs will be leaving without us, so Heath Clay and Harley Hogan both scramble to get their saddles on their horses then followed the cowboys towards the herd and Flint told the two bankers to flank the beefs closer to the front of the herd then they won’t eat as much dust.

It wasn’t very long and the two bankers knew what Flint meant because they were covered with dust and they were coughing and clearing their throats when Flint handing them both a large bandana to cover their mouth and nose. Then a little later Harley Hogan took a drink from his canteen and spit and said he thought he had just drank mud.

Heath Clay told Harley Hogan they would laugh about this later when they reach Kansas and Harley Hogan said yes if we reach Kansas. Heath Clay said they have had a rough day but they were getting close and they will have something to tell their grandkids about the trail drive they helped with.

Flint yelled there is the town so do you want us to stop the beefs before we get to town and both bankers said drive them through town there is corrals on the far end of town and we can push them trough the large gates of the corrals.

As the cowboys push the beefs down the main street of town with Heath Clay and Harley Hogan flanking the beefs the town people were clapping their hands and cheering on the two bankers and as the beefs went through the large gate there were four people counting the beefs.

Even Flint was surprised there was not one beef lost when the count showed 600 beefs and the two bankers said let’s go get you a bank draft, then we will order 11 steaks with all the trimmings and Flint looked at the bank draft of $21,600.00 dollars and knew Wade Harper would be happy for the $36.00 a head.

Flint said order the steaks while I send a wire to Waco for Wade Harper my boss then I will be there before my medium rare steak hits the table and Flint walked towards the telegraph office then stepped in off the boardwalk and said he needed to send a wire and then said here is what I want it to say.

Wade we made it safe to Kansas City Kansas and I made a super good deal on the beefs of $36.00 a head for 600 beefs plus a steak with all the trimmings for all nine of us paid for by the bankers.

See you soon oh P.S.say hi to Jade for me

Flint Starr

Flint was making his way to the steak house when he was stopped by three men and the larger one said we want to buy your beefs andFlint said I have already sold them and again the larger of the three men said we want to buy your beefs and we will give you a dollar a head more for them.

Flint said the sale is done and so is this conversation, because my steak is going to get cold and that would make me very unhappy. Flint step into the steak house off the boardwalk and heard the town clapping for the cowboys and the two bankers that help with the beefs.

After the steak dinner Logan told Flint he wanted to send a wire to his uncle Shermon and if it was alright he would meet Flint at the general store after he sent his letter to his uncle Shermon and Flint said he would see him after he sent his wire.

After the wire was sent Logan went to see Flint at the General store so they could get grub and a couple other items needed for the return trip and while the items were being put into the chuck wagon Flint shook hands with the two bankers then Logan told Flint he would like for him to read the letter that he had sent to his uncle Shermon and Flint said if he wanted him to he would.

The wire read

Uncle Sherm you were right I have enjoyed the trail drive and my time with the cowboys plus Flint has been very understanding about me wanting to be a barber and I even cut Flint’s hair and three other cowboys hair while on the trail drive. I am sure I would rather be a barber than a cowboy so thanks for giving me the chance to be sure.

Also I think your necklace that Geronimo gave you might have saved our bacon or our cows and our lives as well and I will explain when I get back

Thanks uncle Sherm see you soon

Logan

Flint said that is a good telegram Logan and you have made your uncle proud and when I see him, I will tell him so, are you ready to get back to Waco and Logan said he was and then Heath Clay shook Flint hand again and said now every time I eat a steak I will remember the trail drive I was on.

Flint said we will have another one next year if you want to sign on now and Heath Clay said thanks, but he would leave it to real cowboys, but he would never forget the time he had spend on his one and only trail drive.

Then as Flint and the other eight cowboys were ready to leave the large man that had stopped Flint earlier put out his hand to Flint and said I hope there’s no hard feelings my name is Victor James and Flint said my name is Flint Starr and there is none.

Victor James then said you have some fine looking ponies there are any of them for sale and Flint said they could be for the right price and Victor James said I will give you $50.00 each for the 12 unsaddled horses if they are saddle broke.

They are saddle broke and I will sell all 12 to you for $600.00and I will be happy to give you a bill of sale, and then I won’t have to trail them back to Waco so Victor James handed Flint $600.00 dollars and Flint turned the 12 mustangs over to Victor James with a bill of sale.

Victor James notice the other cowboys and it looked like the cowboys had Flint and him circled between them and Victor James said looks like some concerned cowboys. Flint said they are good men that rides for the brand and Victor James said, well if you are any of your cowboys ever need a job come and see me.

Then as Flint and his eight cowboys headed out of town all the towns people was there to wave to them and say thanks for their hard work getting the beefs to them. Flint said let’s put some miles behind us and make our way home.

Flint said the weather is good and the trail is ahead of us so if we make good time we will be home in a lot less time than it took us to get here and I want to thank all of you for the good work and Rob said Flint I am glad to know you and to call you my boss and my friend.

Flint was surprised by Rob calling him Flint for the first time, but Flint said thank you Rob and I am glad you feel that way because I also think of you and all the others as my friends.

Then a few days later the nine cowboys pulled into Jades Way and Logan said he would go the rest of the way to Autumns Crossing with Luther and Nevada and shook Flint’s hand. Logan said thanks for letting me go with you and Flint said Logan I am the one who needs to be thanking you.

Jade ran up to Flint with tears in her eyes they kissed and hugged then as Logan was pulling away Flint said tell shermon that Wade and me will drop by tomorrow with his money, then Wade walked up to Flint and said I am glad to see you Flint, but I still would like to know how you got $36.00 a head for the beefs.

Flint said as he told Wade the story, he said I knew you would do the same thing because we did get $4.00 a head more than we were hoping for and we made a lot of people happy. Wade Harper pulled out the piece of paper he had in his pocket and checked the figures.

Wade said $36.00 for 350 head is$12,600.00 then $11.00 for 250 head is $2,700.00 so that is $15,300.00 and that is $2,350.00 more that we had hoped for so I would said it was a good day, then Flint said oh Wade I almost forgot I also sold the 12 horses we had with us for $50.00 each, so I have $600.00 here in my pocket for you.

Wade said that was another good decision partner, so keep the $600.00 dollars for a wedding present that is as long as you want to marry my daughter Jade. Flint said partner. Marry Jade, and Flint stood there with his mouth open then said yes, I want to marry your daughter.

Jade said you want to marry me, and Flint said if you will have me and Jade said Flint Starr I thought you would never ask and Flint said I am asking you now. Jade will you marry me and Jade jumped from the boardwalk and into Flints arms and they kissed for seemed like forever to Wade Harper.

Then Flint tried to hand the $600.00 dollars to Wade again and Wade said like I said keep it for a wedding present SON.

THE END

TIM GATES SELLS HIS TELEGRAPH OFFICE

CHAPTER 7

Tim was going to Potters café for lunch but first he hung a sign saying he would be back in one hour and then when Tim stepped off the boardwalk and into Potters café the banks president of Waco, Arthur Travis called to him and said hey Tim come and join me then as soon as Tim Gates sat down Arthur Travis said I heard you have received a wire about your telegraph office.

Tim Gates said that is right Arthur and the young couple would like to incorporate a newspaper with the telegraph office and Arthur Travis said Waco first newspaper I think that would be a great idea.

Yea Art I think it would be good for Waco as well but there will be a lot of long hours and twice the work, but the porters are a young couple and I will spend a week with them, then I will go to Tennessee to visit my sister because she needs my help but who knows maybe I will be back one day.

Then Arthur Travis said you know Tim you will be missed and Tim Gates said and I will miss Waco and the people here, but my sister really could use my help and a person needs to help his family when he can and I am sure the porters will fit in good here at Waco.

Arthur Travis said the lunch is on me. Tim said he would like Arthur to witness the selling and buying of the telegraph office when the Porters arrive plus draw of some papers and Arthur Travis said he would be happy to anytime after lunch.

And no sooner than they had finished lunch and Arthur Travis was paying the tally they heard the stage coach pulling up and by the time Tim Gates and Arthur Travis had reached the door to the Potter’s café the porters were standing on the boardwalk in front of the telegraph office and Arthur Travis said I will be at the bank Tim when you are ready.

Tim Gates yelled to the young couple and said hello I am Tim Gates and I bet you two are the Porters and the young man said yes we are. I am Lance Porter and this pretty lady is my wife Rebecca .After shaking Lance’s hand Tim Gates shook Rebecca’s hand and said Lance you sure are right about your wife being pretty.

Then Lance ask how the Porters stage coach ride was and Lance said the ride was a little dusty and also a little bumpy at times but he was sure it could have been worst and Rebecca said they had seen some Indians on top of a ridge but they just watch the stage coach pass and nothing else.

Tim said most of the Indians were friendly now but there were some renegades to the east, but the trail from the west was mostly safe now with very pretty country to see if a person looked and the Porters agreed they had seen some pretty country on their way to Waco.

Rebecca then asked will we be able to see the telegraph office, because I can hardly wait to see it and Tim Gates said well come on in and as Rebecca stepped into the telegraph office she said there is more room in here than I had hoped for.

Well I am sure this place could use a woman’s touch and some cleaning plus Tim said I bought some paint some time back but it is still in the back room on a shelve but it will go with the place when it is sold.

After Lance and Rebecca seen the large down stairs Tim showed them the two rooms upstairs and Rebecca was already sold but then Tim Gates opened the back door to a sitting area with a white picket fence fencing a nice size yard.

Rebecca looked at her husband Lance and said she loved it and Lance said Mr. Gates we will take it and Tim said let’s go see Arthur Travis at the bank and make the arrangements for the sell ,then as Tim Gates stepped out onto the boardwalk he pulled down the four sale sign and they walked towards the bank.

As they walked towards the bank Rebecca Porter asked Tim Gates how soon they would be able to take procession of the telegraph office and Tim Gates said once the paper work is completed and the money for the sale was in his bank account he would give them the keys.

Tim Gates called to Arthur Travis who was sweeping the boardwalk in front of the bank and said Arthur this is Lance Porter and his pretty wife Rebecca and they are here to buy the telegraph office and as Arthur shook hands with the Porters he asked them to step into the bank.

Arthur Travis took the bank note that Lance porter handed him for the full asking price and after all the papers were finalized and the telegraph was the Porters Lance handed the bank president another bank note for$6000.00 to open a account in the name of Porters Telegraph office and Waco’s first newspaper.

Then Arthur Travis said it looks like you have the capital to make your telegraph office and newspaper get up and running with a little hard work and Lance said Mr. Travis you will see that I am not afraid of a little hard work.

Arthur Travis said Waco’s first newspaper and I do believe Waco could use a newspaper then Lance said Mr. Gates, Rebecca and I will take a room at Jill’s rooms for rent and if it is okay we will meet you at nine tomorrow morning and Tim Gates said nine in the morning would be fine.

Lance and Rebecca Porter walked in Jill’s rooms for rent and Lance told Jill they were Lance and Rebecca Porter and they had purchased the telegraph office and they would like to rent a large room for a week until they could take over the upstairs at the telegraph office.

After Jill had rented the Porters a large room with a joining sitting room Lance said let’s go across the street and get something to eat at Potters café and see if the food is as good as we have heard and Rebecca said she was hungry and she would be ready in five minutes.

On the way back to their room Lance said the food was really good and we sure did meet a lot of nice people and they all seemed like a newspaper in Waco would be a good idea but now I think I could use some sleep and Rebecca said she could also because it has been a long but good day.

Rebecca told Lance the next morning she had been laying awake all night thinking about meeting Tim Gates at nine and in an hour it would be nine. Lance said lets go to the front room and see Jill and have a cup of coffee and in no time it was nine o’clock and time to meet Tim Gates at the telegraph office.

As Lance and Rebecca cross the street Rebecca said she had a plan for the newspaper and Lance said and what would that be and Rebecca said I will sell my ads to all the business after I give them the first one free.

Lance said you want to give a free ad and Rebecca said after I show them how good placing ads will be for their business they won’t want to wait for another week to place their ads.

Then you will have your working telegraph office plus we will have a working newspaper and then we will profit from both our telegraph office and the newspaper in a couple of weeks and Lance said it sounds good to me.

Tim Gates called to them from the boardwalk and said right on time because it is nine o’clock and I just unlocked the door then Tim said how did you sleep and Rebecca said she thought she was awake most of the night thinking about this morning.

Rebecca asked Tim if there was someone in town that could sew some half curtains for the front windows and Tim Gates said next to the general store, Hannah Swanson did all kind of alterations and he has seen her work and it looked good.

Rebecca said I will go see her later today then she will have time to sew them while I am painting using the paint on the shelve in the back room and Tim said it will lighting the room with new white painted walls that is for sure.

Lance said Tim the room looks fine but you already have bought the paint and Rebecca wants to use it so it is a win, win and Tim gates said Rebecca I have paint brushes, rollers and a drop cloth that I bought at the same time as I bought the paint and Rebecca said good and I am glad you bought semi gloss paint.

Then Tim Gates said Lance would you like to go over some codes and Lance said yes sir, I am ready plus I need to send a couple wires, one for our furniture and one for the large safe and then one to our banker and Tim Gates said good then he reached in the desk draw and pulled out a couple cards.

Lance was looking at the dots and dashes and noticed the short ones plus the long ones and there was singles, doubles and even triples and Tim Gates said don’t let all this worry you Lance because it is not as bad as it looks and you will get the hang of it fast, I am sure.

Well I need to send a wire to the bank and the freight company so let’s give it a try and Lance found out, Tim was right, he caught on real fast and was enjoying sending wires and using the Morse code on the cards that Tim Gates had.

Tim said I think we can put these cards back in the draw because I think you are a natural at this Morse code, but the cards will be there if you ever need them and Lance said and you are a very good teacher and I thank you and Tim smiled.

Then a couple days later Tim gates said will you look at this the walls, ceiling and even the window sills are all painted but how and Rebecca said I worked around you two and you two were so busy you didn’t notice, I guess.

Lance said he was sorry that he had not helped her paint and Rebecca said you were busy and when all the printing equipment arrives you will be very busy and I wanted to be ready for the curtains that Hannah Swanson would be bringing over later today then they heard a scream outside.

When Lance, Rebecca and Tim Gates reached the door and window they seen Hannah Swanson crouched down behind a water trough and a young man swinging a pick handle and they stood there and watched the young man swing the pick handle.

Tim said that is Buddy and he has hit all three of those men with the pick handle then one of them pulled a gun on Buddy and was about to shoot buddy when Ringo Starr, the deputy struck the guy in the back of his head with the butt of his Colt 44, then he marched the other two to the jail house as two of the town people carried the third one.

As Lance and Rebecca plus Tim Gates crossed the street Hannah said buddy thanks but you could have been killed and Buddy said maybe so, but I won’t cotton for anyone being rude to a lady then buddy picked up the curtains and handed them to Hannah Swanson.

Tim said Buddy that was really brave of you to help Hannah and Buddy said I had to help her because they were disrespecting her and she needed my help because she is my friend and I didn’t get shot and Rebecca said and now I have my first story for the newspaper.

Ringo Starr came back and said Buddy you did good but I am glad you weren’t shot and Buddy said me too, than Hannah Swanson said thanks Buddy and kissed Buddy on his cheek and Buddy turned red and said I have to go now and Rebecca asked is it okay if I stop by later Buddy and Buddy said sure if you want to.

Lance shook Tim Gates hand and said thanks I feel good about sending and receiving wires with all you have shown me and Tim said you and Rebecca are going to do real good because Rebecca has never met a stranger and you both are not afraid of a little work, because you two have already proud that to me.

Lance asked Rebecca to hand him a screwdriver and said Rebecca this printing press is close to being complete so you can start pedaling your newspaper as early as tomorrow morning if you would like to and Rebecca kiss her husband Lance and thank him for all his hard work.

The next morning Rebecca stepped out of the Telegraph office onto the boardwalk and said it is a beautiful morning as she headed across the street to the general store to see Micka and Daniel Grant.

Rebecca stepped into the general store and Micka called Daniel and said Rebecca Porter is here Daniel as he shook Rebecca’s hand and then as Daniel shook Rebecca’s hand she said welcome to Waco and Rebecca said thanks and I would like to talk to you about a ad to be put in Waco’s first newspaper.

Micka said I didn’t know Waco had a newspaper and Rebecca said it does now and the first add is free and Daniel said free ads and Rebecca said the first ad is free just to prove the ad will works then after the first ad it will be 15cents for a quarter ad and 30cents for a haft page then 60cents for a full page ad.

Micka asked how will we know if the ad works and Rebecca said that will be easy as she looked around and seen some boot wax and asked Micka how much of this wax have you sold and Micka counted the six cans and said ,they haven’t sold any.

Rebecca said let’s put the wax in the newspaper at no cost to you and leave the price the same as it is and if I am right you will be taking back orders for the water proofing boot wax.

Both Micka and Daniel said why not because what did they have to lose and Rebecca said they had nothing to lose and she already had a couple ads and then theirs would the first ad inside the paper then Rebecca said the newspapers will be 10cents each after this week’s free paper, then Rebecca said thanks as she stepped out onto the boardwalk.

Rebecca’s next stop was the Waco’s bank and to talk with Arthur Travis then after making her rounds around town Rebecca returned to the telegraph office/Waco’s newspaper to show Lance the ads she had for their first paper.

Lance looked at the outlined ads that Rebecca had in front of him and There was a ad for the general store plus one for the bank and a large ad for Potters Café plus the marshal asked if she could advertize for another deputy he was needing and then of course there was the ads she already had in mind for the first Waco’s newspaper.

When the proof of the first paper came off the printing press Lance said it might be thin but he knew it would grow thicker and as they looked at the paper Rebecca said she wanted to start distributing the papers as soon as she could.

The ads read

First page Waco’s Telegraph Office and Newspaper

Owners LANCE and REBECCA PORTER

Second page was a ½ page on Buddy

RICK BURNSTIEN (BUDDY) said he would not cotton too

Anyone being rude or disrespecting Hannah Swanson or any other friend

Of his and that is the reason he whipped three cowboys with a pick handle

Third page The General Store owners MICKA and DANIEL GRANT

Waterproofing boot wax only 60cents a can while supply last

Fourth page The Bank of Waco President ARTHUR TRAVIS

Small safe deposit boxes 50c and large ones $1.00 a month

Fifth page and final page on the now small paper Rebecca came up

With a little news of her own

POPULATION OF WACO 206 AND GROWING A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

AND RAISE A FLAMILY

The Marshal BIG ED JONES

IS LOOKING FOR ANOTHER DEPUTY TO HELP HIM AN

AND RINGO STARR if interested please see the marshal

CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY

Sunday school 10:00a.m

Church 11:00a.m

BIG YACH the preacher man

POTERS CAFÉ BREAKFAST ALL DAY PLUS DAILY SPEAILS

Then Rebecca said I have distribute papers all over town today at no cost

So now I guess we just wait and Lance said you have delivered all but one copy that I have saved to post in our office and we should hear something soon and see how our hard work has paid off.

Rebecca said Lance it has been three days now and I haven’t heard a thing and Lance said he hadn’t either but maybe Rebecca you should replace your steps and Rebecca said what do you mean and Lance said maybe they are waiting for you to return and that might be the reason we have not heard anything and Rebecca said I will go, and I hope you are right.

The first place Rebecca stopped was the general store and Rebecca was surprised how happy the Grants were to see her and Daniel said we sold all six cans of the wax and we have ordered 12 more cans she said to Rebecca.

Micka said we would like to buy two ads or a half page in next week’s paper plus we want to buy six papers and Rebecca collected 90cents and said thanks and the Grants said they were glad there was a paper to advertise in and they would need the same half page to advertise products every week.

The next place Rebecca went to visit was the bank and the same as the Grants Arthur Travis was very happy to see her and said I hope you have saved room in your paper because I was waiting for you and if you didn’t stop by today I would have came to you tomorrow.

Arthur Travis said I hope you don’t mind me calling you Rebecca and I have rented five small safety boxes and four of the large ones because of your paper and Rebecca said that is great Mr. Travis and Arthur Travis said you can call me Arthur like the rest of my friend do and Arthur Travis handed Rebecca a quarter and said the quarter was for next week’s ad and a paper.

Then Rebecca went to Potters café and as she stepped up on the boardwalk the Marshal called her and said he hired another deputy and he would stop by every Friday for his newspaper, if that would be okay and Rebecca said we will have one for you every Friday and was smiling from ear to ear as she stepped into Potters café

Rebecca seen Lisa and Lisa said I love how all my customers are saying I will have the special and said she would like to order a full page in the Waco’s paper every Friday listing the breakfast specials and lunch special plus the dinner specials and she would use it as her menu so not only she wanted the full page add every week but also she wanted a dozen newspapers so Lisa handed Rebecca a dollar and 20cent and said thanks.

Rebecca said we will have to work all night to have our newspaper ready for Friday and then showed lance the orders she had and the money she had collected and she said there was also people asking for them to make sure there was a paper that they could buy every Friday from now on.

Lance said Rebecca you have made me proud and I knew this newspaper would be a big hit, but I have to say you have over did yourself and we will have five times the papers this coming Friday compared to what we printed for our first paper which is a good thing but while we are looking up and thanking God for all he has helped us with and saying how good he has been to us, we know we will have to hire help soon

THE END

NEVADA SMITH GETS GANGRENE

CHAPTER 8

Elrod pulled his horse up to the boardwalk where Shermon MaBay was having coffee and Elrod asked Shermon if he could talk to him about Nevada Smith and Shermon said come on up Elrod and have a cup of coffee while you tell me what is on your mind.

After taking a drink of his coffee Elrod said Shermon I don’t think I should wait any longer to tell you about Nevada, even thought I was told not to say anything and Shermon said is Nevada in some kind of trouble and Elrod said I guess you could say he is, but again I was asked not to say anything so I am not sure what to do Shermon, Elrod said.

Well Elrod if Nevada needs my help I believe you should say something even if you were told not to so I can help because I can see you are really concerned about Nevada and he would tell me if there was something that he felt I should know about you or anyone else on this ranch.

Then Elrod said Sherm I am afraid that Nevada will lose his leg if something is not done real soon and Shermond said lose his leg why, what has happened to Nevada that you think he is going to lose his leg?

Shermon I am not sure how many days has went by since Nevada tore his pants leg on some nasty barb wire and the barb wire cut Nevada’s leg up bad and I seen it when it first happened but Nevada said it was nothing and now he can barely walk and you won’t believe how bad he is limping.

I made Nevada show me his leg and he said he would as long as I did not say anything to anyone but Sherm, I got sick to my stomach when I seen Nevada’s leg and I have never seen anything look as bad.

Shermon said I seen Nevada ride into Autumn’s crossing a few days ago and he never said anything but I also remember he never stepped out of his horses saddle either and he road back towards the line shack and I never thought any more about it.

But Elrod if Nevada’s leg is bad as you say it is, I am going to have to say something to him about it and make sure he sees Doctor Cain before it is too late so let’s me and you, plus Captain George ride to the line sack to see Nevada.

Elrod said Sherm when Nevada finds out I told you he is going to be real mad and Shermon said and you tell him you told me because you are his friend and that is what friends do and I will tell him about people I have known who has died because of wounds they have received and did nothing.

When Shermon told Captain George about Nevada, Captain George told Shermon he had to grab a couple things then he would be ready to leave and go see Nevada at the line shack.

Wes Montana and Elrod rode up to where Shermon and Captain George was and they had Shermons horse Buck plus Captain Georges horse Pepper and Wes Montana said Shermon Elrod told me that Nevada’s leg is really bad and Shermon said yea Kid and if you want you can ride out to the line shack with us.

Wes Montana said I think I will Sherm so the four of them headed out to the line shack to help Nevada and maybe talk him into seeing Dr. Cain and as they rode Shermon ask Captain George what he had in his bag he brought with him.

Captain George said Shermon I have things in this bag that I hope I won’t have to use but if Nevada’s leg is as bad as Elrod said then I might have to in order to save Nedava’s life and then Shermon did not say anything else because he knew what Captain George had brought with him in the large bag.

Then Wes Montana said Sherm I told Nevada three weeks ago he needed to see Dr. Cain and I thought he had but I guess I should have drug him in to see the Doctor but I didn’t and Shermon said Kid let’s hope Nevada’s leg is not as bad as we all are thinking it might be.

When the four cowboys reached the line shack they saw Nevada’s horse Lee with a saddle on but no rider then they seen Nevada lying on the boardwalk. Shermon said let’s get Nevada in side and they laid Nevada on one of the bunks inside, then they all notice the stained pants leg of what looked like blood and who knew what else.

Captain George said let me look at that leg as he pulled off Nevada’s boots and said Nevada you look like you feel pretty bad and Nevada struggled saying I probability need some rest and when Captain George cut Nevada’s pants leg to revile Nevada’s leg Nevada seen the look on Shermons face and Captain George looked at the floor and said Nevada it looks like you are going to get a lot of rest.

Captain George Said Nevada your leg is Gangrene and then Captain Georg said shermon there is no time this leg has to come off, because it will be too late to save Nevada if we wait very long and Nevada yelled you aren’t taking my leg and Shermon said Nevada I have seen people die from legs that looked nowhere near as bad as your leg does right now.

Nevada had passed out after Captain George gave him a half bottle of what he called firewater to drink, then Captain George said is the hot water ready and Elrod said it was then Captain George said tear this sheet into small strips then bring me the water and then Captain George said hold him down because when I start cutting on him they will hear him back at Autumns Crossing.

Shermon slid Nevada’s gun from his hostler and said I don’t want him shooting one of us or himself when he comes too ,then Captain George pulled out a sharp knife and a bone saw from his bag and Elrod asked if Captain George had ever cut a man’s leg off before and Captain George looked at Elrod and said I have seen it done once or twice so prepare yourself because it ain’t going to be none to pretty.

Then Captain George stuck the knife in Nevada’s bad leg and Nevada about come off the bed and was screaming to the top of his lungs and Captain George yelled, pour some more of that rot gut down him and hole him down then Nevada passed out again and Captain George said we need to hurry before he comes too again.

Captain looked at Elrod and seen Elrod looked green from what was taking place and the Captain said Elrod if you will go Get Doctor Cain and tell him we took Nevada’s leg and we need him here as soon as he can make it and Elrod was happy to be leaving for the Doctor.

Doctor Cain arrived and started working on Nevada right where Captain George left off and the doctor said Captain I can see this not your first time at removing a leg and Captain George admitted he had did it before but at his age it was a lot harder than when he was younger.

Nevada was starting to come around but Doctor Cain had gave Nevada some shots for pain plus had the stump almost completely wrapped when Nevada yelled, YOU TOOK MY LEG and then Doctor Cain slapped Nevada real hard and said Nevada you would have died before I got here if Captain George did not cut off your leg .

Then Nevada looked at Captain George and yelled you should have let me died because who wants a one legged cowboy and Captain George said Nevada I had to do it to save your life and Nevada said get away from me and if I ever see you again I will kill you right before I kill myself.

Captain George was feeling real bad about what Nevada had just said to him so he looked at Shermon and said I am still glad I helped save Nevada’s life but I am heading back to Autumn’s Crossing and Shermon said one day Nevada will thank you Capt.

Shermon said wait a minute and let’s drink a cup of coffee and Captain George said I will be outside and stepped out on the boardwalk and then Shermon stepped out with two cups of hot black coffee and said Cap give Nevada a little time and he will be glad that it wasn’t a undertaker working on him instead of you.

You remember me saying when you were sewing me up after a fight how many times I said Cap not only are you a good cook and a barber you are a great doctor and friend then Captain George said thanks boss and now I pray that Nevada recovers and some day he understand it had to be done and I did it because of being his friend.

Still inside the line shack Shermon and Captain George heard Dr. Cain saying to Nevada your leg was diseased and the Gangrene was spreading and you were dying and Nevada Captain George saved your life and there are reasons to live even if you only have one leg.

Captain George shook Shermons hand and headed towards Autumns Crossing and Shermon stepped back off the boardwalk and back into the line shack then walked up to where Nevada was lying in bed and Shermon said you know you could have saved your leg if you would have seen the doctor when you first hurt your leg.

Then Shermon said Nevada there is plenty of things you can do around the ranch with one leg and I have seen people with wood legs and they got around will good with one leg, so I think you give it a try then tell Cap thanks for saving your life.

Nevada said Sermon no disrespect but I don’t what pity from you are anyone else so just hand me my gun then walk away, because I will never forgive him for cutting my leg off, because a cowboy would rather die with two legs than to live with one.

Doctor Cain said Shermon I will stay here tonight with Nevada then we need to get him to my office tomorrow, because the hard part is done and now we have to make sure he stays off of it for awhile and the leg heels.

Shermon said Kid I would like for you and Elrod to stay here tonight also and I will bring a wagon in the morning to take Nevada to Doctor Cain’s office, there is coffee grounds and grub to eat and you have plenty of dead wood so I will be back after breakfast then Shermon shook hands with Wes Montana and Elrod plus Doctor Cain then Shermon extended his hand to Nevada and Nevada closed his eyes and shook his head no, then looked at the wall.

Doctor Cain stepped outside with Shermon and said give Nevada some time and he will come around and he will know that his life was saved by his leg being amputated and I am sure he will adjust, plus I will talk to him about an artificial leg when the right time comes.

The next morning as Shermon was getting ready to head towards the line shack Luther Green asked Shermon if he could go with him and maybe talk with Nevada and Shermon said Luther you have known Nevada longer than anyone else, so maybe you should come with us.

When they reached the line shack and Luther stepped off the boardwalk and into the line Shack he was trying to think of something to say to Nevada when Nevada looked up at Luther and said I don’t want to see you either as Nevada turn and looked at the wall, so just give me my gun and ride out.

Shermon said Luther maybe Nevada will feel more like talking after we get him to town and Doctor Cain tells Nevada what Hannah Swanson has to say about her dad having an artificial leg and how she has been attracted to Nevada from the first time she saw him.

As the cowboys pulled up to doctor Cain’s office Hannah Swanson was on the boardwalk and asked Nevada how he was but before Hannah finished her question Nevada said, what are you doing here did you come to see the freaking one legged cowboy, then Nevada said go away because I don’t want your pity either and then before Nevada could say anymore Shermon stopped him.

Hannah had turned away and was trying to hide her tears and said Nevada I will be here if you ever want to talk or if I can ever do anything for you and Nevada said if you want to help me, give me a gun.

Doctor Cain said let’s get Nevada off the street and into my office and Nevada was yelling to the townspeople get a good look at the one legged cowboy because I won’t be around very long for you to stare at me, then Nevada said get me inside.

Shermon and Wes Montana and Luther Green plus Elrod carried Nevada into Doctor Cain’s office and Nevada said so are you four going to carry me around from now on until I can get my hands on a gun.

Doctor Cain said Nevada you need to give it some time because when you are ready you can be fitted for an artificial leg after your stump heals, and Nevada said STUMP now that is a word that I don’t ever want to hear again and like I said once I get a gun I will end my live, my useless life and it can’t be any too soon.

We’ll I think you were mean to Hannah Swanson and she has always had a crush on you from the first time she seen you. Nevada said the first time she seen me I had two legs and now I don’t want her pity and Doctor Cain said she is not wanting to give you pity she loves you and Nevada said how could she love a one legged cowboy.

Nevada Hannah’s dad only had one leg and she loved him and was proud of him until the day he died and she will feel no less for you with one or two legs even if one leg is artificial.

Then Rebecca Porter stepped into Doctor Cain’s office and asked if she could talk to Nevada and Nevada said he did not have anything to say to her and Rebecca Porter said then you can listen and she would do all the talking.

AT first Rebecca could see Nevada was trying to block her out but she kept talking and she knew Nevada was hearing her by his expression’s and changes on his face so she said Nevada, you did this to yourself and you know when you cut up your leg on that nasty barb wire and hid the deceasing leg from your friends you caused the need for the amputation.

These are your friends trying to help you and they aren’t offering pity they are truly concerned like Hannah Swanson, who has lived through this once before with her father who like you, she also loved her dad.

Nevada finely looked at Rebecca and said I don’t understand how anyone yet alone someone as pretty as Hannah Swanson would want to be tied down with me and love me you say ,well I never even though she liked me that much yet alone love me.

I am or was just a cowboy and I don’t have anything to offer her and Rebecca said all she ever wanted was you to notice her and if I know it and most of this town knows it then maybe you should know how she feels about you.

Rebecca had Nevada talking now and Nevada said Rebecca still Hannah hardly knows me and Rebecca said she knows you are a good man she has taken a liking to you and has tried to get you to notice her, but she has told me she felt like you always looked right threw her and not at her.

Nevada said do you know why Hannah’s dad only had one leg and Rebecca said Hannah told me that her dad was shot in his leg with an arrow when he was very young and it stayed there for a few days until he could get help and by that time it had gangrene set in so I would say Hannah has a good idea what a person with only one leg is going through.

Hannah wants to love you and help you if she can and she is not going to give you any kind of pity because you can also help her, she is young and so are you and Nevada said what about a job and what kind of job can I do because I cannot and will not sit on my rear and live off Hannah’s kindness or charity.

Rebecca said Nevada as you know my husband Lance and I have bought the telegraph office and we have started a newspaper and we need office help and you would be perfect for the job because you wouldn’t need to leave the office unless you wanted too.

Our customers would come in and they will want to place ad’ and buy newspapers and your job would be selling ads from the office the same as selling newspapers and you would collect the set price and I know you would do a great job

Nevada said Rebecca you have convinced me of an artificial leg and me working for the Porter’s telegraph office and newspaper but first I have to talk to Hannah who I have always thought was the pretty’s girl I have ever seen.

Then when Nevada looked up he seen Hannah Swanson standing in the doorway and Hannah said Nevada you said you think I am pretty and Nevada forced the words yes Hannah I have always thought you were the pretty’s girl I have ever seen and that is why I avoided looking at you .

Okay Nevada then you will have to get better so you can wear an artificial leg to our marriage and the Porter’s need help. Nevada said our marriage and Hannah said yea if we are going to have kids then we will have to be married.

Nevada said don’t you think we need to think about kids, before we have them and Hannah said Nevada I have thought about us having kids for some time so after we get married and you get settled at the newspaper we should start having our children .

Hannah said you can kiss me Nevada and after Nevada kissed Hannah she said that was good and I am glad that I have saved all my kisses for you and as Nevada looked around the room not only Hannah and Rebecca was there Shermon was there and so was doctor Cain and they were all smiling.

Nevada said Shermon will tell Captain George thanks for saving my life and when he gets a chance I would like him to stop by, so I can ask him to be the best man at my wedding, then Nevada looked at Doctor Cain and said Doctor I guess you had better get me that leg and Smiled then they all looked up and with their eyes closed they all thanked God.

THE END

LOGAN MCBAY FOLLOWS HIS DREAM

CHAPTER 9

Logan stepped out onto the boardwalk and asked his uncle Shermon if he could talk to him and Shermon said Logan you can always talk to me, sit down and tell me what’s on mind and pour you a cup of coffee.

That is another thing about me uncle Sherm,I don’t like coffee either, so I don’t know what is wrong with me and Shermon said Logan there is nothing wrong with you everyone does not like the same things.

Then Shermon said Logan most cowboys take to drinking coffee at a very early age but there is nothing in the rule books that says a cowboy has to drink coffee and Logan said a cowboy ,there is something else that I am not sure of.

Shermon said Logan what do you feel in your heart and Logan said uncle Sherm I like to cook but mostly I want to be a barber and no disrespect but I also would like to live in town and only come out to Autumns Crossing to visit.

Well Logan good barbers are needed and I do believe a person needs to follow their dream so how can I help you Shermon asked? Have you thought this threw and Logan said yes I have did my research and after I open my shop I would like for you and the rest my family plus the real cowboys to come to my shop for a haircut and to visit.

Shermon said Logan, Captain George has mentioned his hands were hurting and he was ready to hang up his scissors and he once said to me ,that someday you would be a good barber so you can bet your family and all the cowboys will come to you for a haircut.

Then Shermon asked have you thought about a shop and Logan said yes there are two different places in town that would make a good shop plus in the Waco’s newspaper they have listed items like a barber chair plus other items that I would need.

So when do we start Shermon asked and Logan said uncle Shermon I hope you understand but this is something that I would like to do myself but believe me I will ask for help when the time comes, but not for money but maybe a cosigner might be needed when I go see Mr.Travis at the bank to my finalize my business.

Shermon said Logan you are a McBay and I am proud of you and I am sure you know your family will help you always, plus Logan, God will also help as long as you remember to pray to him and it looks like you have gave this a lot of though.

Yes uncle Sherm I have talked with the two owners of the two places that I am interested in plus Mr.Travis and I have sent a wire about the barber equipment that I would want to purchase plus I told Mr.Travis that I would like to draw the full amount for the place I buy for my shop plus all equipment needed and even a small amount of working cash.

I would sign a note to repay the bank back a monthly amount to my account like a payment account for the loan and pay for myself. Shermon said Logan you have done your homework and you have made me very proud to call you my nephew and Logan said I have been taught well and thank you uncle Sherm.

Then Shermon thought he noticed a tear in Logan’s eye and Shermon asked if there was anything else bothering him and Logan said he was torn about leaving Autumns Crossing and Shermon said you can always come back or visit and you will always have your fair share in Autumn’s crossing.

Logan got too his feet and said uncle Sherm I need to go to town and start the paper work plus decide which place would suit me the best, then send a wire to Laredo and in the morning I would like to go after the barber shop equipment but if it is okay I will need to borrow a small wagon and a horse.

Shermon said Logan the wagon and horse will be ready for you right after breakfast and you can leave anytime you want plus if you like you can take someone with you. Logan said thanks but I can do this and you will know when I need help I promise.

Logan then said uncle Shermon I am going to go talk with my mom and dad plus see Dakota and then go to town and then after breakfast tomorrow I will borrow your horse and wagon and maybe ask Captain George to send a little food with me, then Shermon put his hand out to Logan and not only did Logan shake his uncles hand but he also hugged him then stepped into the two story ranch home.

Shermon stood on the boardwalk and looked to up to Heaven and said thank you God for giving Logan the courage to follow his dream and God also if you will help Logan’s mom and dad understand why Logan has to do this, then Shermon poured himself a cup of hot black coffee and said Logan does not like coffee and that is okay with me.

After Logan talked with his mom and dad he walked down to the lake where Dakota was rubbing down his horse Grim with a blanket and Logan said your horse is a lucky horse and Dakota said why would you say he is lucky?

Logan said Dakota you are very good to him and also you are a very likable person and Dakota said what’s up you act like you are leaving or something and Logan said yes and no and what I mean by that is I am going to open a barber shop in town and hope you will stop by for a hair cut plus stop and visit when you have time.

Dakota said last time you cut it you cut it too short and Logan said sorry about that but Wes Montana gave me five dollars to cut it above your ears and I did but believe me I am sorry and your next haircut will be free.

Then Dakota said if I give you five bucks will you cut one of Kid Montana’s ears off for me and Logan and Dakota laugh and Logan said if I did that might be bad for business and Dakota said yea, I am sure you are right about that then Dakota said Logan we are blood and if you ever need me I am here and the two shook hands and Dakota said we will always be family.

Then Logan went to the stable to saddle his horse Grey which he had named Grey because he thought it would be a good name for a horse which was completely Grey and Logan said Grey I will board you in the large horse stable in town and come to see you every night plus we will go ridding often.

After finalizing the paper work with Arthur Travis the banks president for the building next to the general store that Hannah Swanson had lived in before she married Nevada Smith, because they had bought a place across the street that was next to the telegraph office/newspaper where Nevada worked now.

The next thing Logan thought to himself was he needed to go over and have Lance Porter send a wire to William Raintree in Laredo for the barber chair and the barber pole plus the other chairs and items that William Raintree had and he wanted to sell them. So then Logan waited for a return wire.

The wire came and Logan read the telegram out loud

Mr.Logan thank you for inquiring about the equipment for your barber shop

I look forward to your visit and I will be happy to give you one price for the barber chair plus the barber pole and six waiting chairs plus I have other items that you might be interested in.

Thank you

William Raintree

Then Logan went to see Larry McNally about a sign to hang in front of his barber shop

The sign would read

LOGAN MCBAYS BARBER SHOP

HAIR CUTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

TUESDAY THREW SATUDAY 9:00TO5:00

Then Logan when to the horse barn to get his horse Grey and Murphy Edwards who run the stable said I gave him a good rub down and some grain and he seems to like it here and Logan handed Murphy Edwards a silver dollar and said thanks

And then Logan said he would like to rent a stall by the month because he was opening a barber shop.

Murphy Edwards said he would rent Logan a nice cleaned stall for ten dollars a month and he would take good care of Grey and talk to him every day and Logan said he would stable Grey there and thanks.

That eve after dinner Shermon said Logan has something he would like to say for those who don’t already know, so Logan looked around the large table at his family and friends and said I have bought a place in town and it will be my barber shop and it will be open soon and I hope to see you there because you can visit me or get a haircut or both.

Logan said this is my dream and with God’s help it is coming too and Logan smiled from ear to ear and everyone hugged him and shook his hand, then Logan said I am going to Laredo in the morning so I am going to turn in now because it has really been a big day and Thanks for understanding this is something that I want to do.

The next morning after a large breakfast the horse and wagon was at the boardwalk and Captain George handed Logan a food sack full of food and two extra canteens full of cold creek water. Captain George said Logan there will always be an extra plate here and you can fill it up anytime.

Logan shook hands with Captain George and Logan said thanks Cap for taking me under your wing and helping me find my future and Captain George said a man only has to try and also ask God for his help and God is a good God.

Logan said I should be back in four days then I hope you will come to see me and my barber shop and then Logon asked Dakota, will you tend to Grey while I am gone and Dakota said no problem Mr. barber.

Logan climbed up into the wagon seat with his rifle plus a large sack of food and two canteens of spring water then a small duffel bag of clothes but then as he pulled away from the boardwalk he felt a little emptiness in his stomach but also a great inner feeling because he was following his dream.

Logan was saying to himself he knew he was doing the right thing but still he had the ache in his lower stomach but he so wanted to be away from the smells of the horses and sweaty cowboys even though he would miss his family and friends but maybe he would see Tammy more.

Logan was talking to Cotton the horse that was pulling the small wagon and Logan said me and Tammy only went on two buggy rides but both were enjoyable and Tammy had said I needed to get to town more often because she was lonely and wanted my company.

Logan said Cotton next time I take Tammy for a ride I will kiss her then if she likes it I will kiss her again and then Logan smile from ear to ear and Logan said Cotton we have made real good time and thanks for listing to me ramble on but I bet you could use a cool drink from that stream and maybe munch on some of that green grass as Logan pulled over under a large cottonwood tree to take a break.

Let’s see what Cap put in this cloth sack and as Logan looked into his food sack he said Cotton Cap put enough food in for a good week there is corn dodgers plus beef jerky and smoked ham plus biscuits and a water bag full of tea so after Logan sat down to eat a bite he was looking around because he was sure he heard a bark.

Logan stood up and said Cotton did you hear a bark and as he was looking around he seen a small little dog, then he seen another one so Logan said Cotton there is a couple little pups up there and I don’t know how they got there but I am going up there to see if they need my help.

As Logan started up to where the pups were, the two little pups ran into a hole in the side of the hillside but Logan had no trouble coaching the pups out with the food he was offering them but Logan was shocked to see not only was there two small yellow pups but there was four pups and their mother.

It was easy to see the mother dog was very thin with no more milk for the pups but was not going to leave her pups and she would die there and so would her pups, so Logan let the mother dog and the pups drink water from his hands and he gave them corn dodgers plus biscuits and even smoked ham and Logan thanked God for leading him to this stop.

Logan gave the mother dog and the pup’s food and let them lap up water from his hand and told the dogs they would stay tonight and all feel better tomorrow.

As Logan lay down on his bed roll all four pups plus the mother came over to where Logan was and the pups laid next to Logan and the mother dog laid her head on Logan’s leg and Logan said you are safe and I will take you with me when I leave in the morning.

Logan laid on his bedroll under the stars and said goodnight to the five yellow dogs and then in his prayers he thanked God for putting him here to help save the yellow dogs and although he would love to keep them he was sure there was someone missing the large yellow dog and he would try to find him or her.

As Logan rode into Laredo the four small pups were playing in the back of the wagon and the yellow mother dog was sitting on the wagon seat next to Logan and Logan said there sure are a lot of people on the street but maybe we should go see the marshal to see if he knows of someone who is looking for great wonderful dog.

But before Logan reached the marshal’s office he heard a young girl yelling Rain that is my dog Rain and the yellow dog jumped from the wagon and ran to the young girl and the young girl sat on the boardwalk crying with joy as the yellow dog licked the little girl’s face.

Logan said well girl it looks like we have found your owner and then there was a young woman and man that ran up and they were as happy as the little girl to see the yellow dog and the man asked where did you find our dog Rain?

Logan walked over to the back of the wagon and said about five miles from here, she had four pups and they were all close to dead when I came across them as I was making camp under a cottonwood tree, you see I heard one pup bark than another one so I went up to a small cave and there they were.

They were starving and she had no more milk because she had nothing to drink or eat herself for some time and the pups did not leave their mom and their mom would not leave her pups so I am happy that God put me in the right place at the right time.

I was wondering how your dog Rain ended up five miles or more from town and as Logan asked the question the little girl climbed up into the back of the wagon with the four small pups and the man said my name is Rob Raintree and this pretty young lady is my wife Amanda Raintree Mr.? And Logan said my name is Logan McBay and you can call me Logan.

Rob Raintree said we own the general store here in Laredo and the little girl in your wagon playing with the pups is our daughter Rita and she named her dog Rain because of our last name Raintree

So then as her being five miles from here one morning Rain came up missing and we looked everywhere for her and for better than two weeks we looked and then one of the townspeople told us that there was a young boy playing with her and we knew that when the young boy left town he had to of taken Rain with him.

We knew Rain was pregnant and now I am sure Rain somehow got away from the young boy then she must have had her pups and then stayed with them until you came along and brought her back to Laredo with her pups.

My brother William has the father dog to the pups Rob said and Logan said William Raintree, that is who I came to see about equipment for my barber shop and I bet you can tell me where I can find your brother William and Rob said I am sure he is at the barber shop.

Amanda said Logan it looks like you like animals and I was wondering do you have a dog and Logan said no I do not and Amanda said we would like to give you one of the pups if you would like one and Logan said I would love to have one.

Logan said if it is okay I would like to have the large male one and I will name him Rainy after his mom and as Logan picked up the pup he named Rainy a man walked up and said I believe you are Logan McBay well I am William Raintree. My brother Rob told me you are the man that save Rain and her pups then shook Logan’s hand, then said plus you are here to buy equipment for your barber shop.

Logan said that is right on all accounts Mister Raintree I found Rain by being at the right place at the right time and I am here to buy equipment for my barber shop and William Raintree said Logan call me William and if you are ready come down the street to my shop I will make you a great price on everything that you will need to open your shop.

As Logan and William walked towards Williams barber shop Logan said is that yellow dog the father to Rains pups and Williams said yes he is and his name is Sonny and he is a golden retriever the same as Rain and he is very friendly like all retrievers and Logan pated Sonny’s head.

When Logan and William stepped off the boardwalk and into Williams shop William said there is the barber chair and those six stackable chairs plus that barber pole still in the box and I have this large plate glass mirror and all nine items is yours for the price of $250.00 that I had mentioned in the newspaper.

Logan said this barber chair plus the six chairs and the large mirror all looks new the same as the barber pole and that is a great price and I have a bank draft here for that amount and William Raintree said good plus I have something else.

The nine items for the $250.00 you need and they were taking up to much space here but I have something else that I want to give you and William handed Logan a carved wooden box and Logan opened the box and he was speechless.

In the box there was a pair of clippers and two pair of real barber scissors plus a pack of long combs in a comb jar and a hand held mirror all new and never been used and William said I have items. I have never used them so this is a gift for you and you can call it a reward for finding Rain and her pups.

Logan said William, Amanda has already gave me a pup and William said that was from Rob and Amanda and this set in the carved wood box is from me because of all the joy you have brought my family and William shook Logan’s hand and said let me help you load your items in your wagon Logan.

William and Logan loaded the barber chair plus the six stackable chairs and the barber pole in the back of the wagon then they double wrap the large plate glass mirror and loaded it between the other items and Logan said I will set this box under the wagon seat because I am going to display it but never use it and I hope you don’t mind.

Logan my late wife gave me that carved wooden box and its contents many years ago William said and I felt the same way as you,that it was too nice to use. Then it sat in the back room for all these years until I came across it the other day so it is your and I think it will make a real good display in your barber shop.

Logan patted the large golden retriever’s head and said I hope rainy gets as big as you and as smart as you Sonny, then Logan started out of town with his barber equipment and rainy was sitting as close to Logan as he could without being on his lap then Logan called to Amanda plus Rob and Rita as he rode pass them and Logan was smiling from ear to ear the same as the Raintree’s were.

Late that day Logan was surprised how close they were to Waco and Logan said Rainy I can’t wait till my family sees you and I can show you off as my dog and then Logan and Rainy was pulling down the main street of Waco which was the only real street in Waco, without counting the side streets or alleys

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When Logan pulled his wagon up in front of the place he had bought next to the general store he notice Dakota and Kid plus Mario and they were stalling Logan and asking him all kind of questions and Logan didn’t know what to think but then to Logan’s surprise Dakota said well Logan are you going to show us the place you bought?

Logan said sure, I would love to but let me grab my dog Rainy and Logan held Rainy up high to show him off and said it is a long story and I will be happy to tell you the story later but let’s go inside first.

Dakota said we will help you bring in your equipment after we see your place and as Logan stepped off the boardwalk and into his just bought place he first noticed the white walls and ceilings which was still drying then he looked at the half curtains at both large front windows.

Logan was looking at Dakota when he seen his uncle shermon plus his mom and dad and other family members step out from the back room and they all had some white paint on them and Shermon said Logan it was her idea and then Tammy stepped into the room and she also had white paint on her.

Tammy said it looks like we finished just in time Logan and Logan said I don’t know how to thank you all and Tammy said as far as me a buggy ride every week would be fine then she noticed the yellow pup and said where did you get him Logan and Logan said he was a present I guess you could say.

And Logan told the story about Rainy because now everyone wanted to know and after Logan told how Rainy’s mom Rain had been stolen while she was pregnant and him fining her and her pups and bringing them all to Laredo. Amanda Raintree gave him the choice of the pups and picked the large male and named him Rainy after his mom.

Then Tammy McCord said Rainy will make us a great dog and he will be able to go on buggy rides with us after church on Sunday’s then without saying anything else Logan took Tammy McCord in him arms and said I have wanted to do this ever since I met you and he kissed her as his family stood still and smiled and Tammy said it is about time Logan McBay.

THE END

DUTCH MONTANA COMES TO WACO

CHAPTER 10

Shermon was standing on the boardwalk looking out over the lake when he seen Elrod and Elrod asked Shermon if he knew where Captain George might be because he wanted him to look at Luther and Shermon asked is Luther sick.

No Shermon but Luther got beat up in town and said it was nothing but he looks pretty bad so I thought maybe Captain George could take a look at him. Shermon said I will get Cap and we will meet you at the bunkhouse.

When Shermon stepped off the boardwalk and into the bunkhouse Shermon said does the other guy look worse and Luther said I don’t think so because I’m not sure I even hit him and before Shermon could say anything else Captain George plus Elrod and kid Montana was there and Captain George said Luther you don’t look so good.

Captain George said Luther you need some stitches for sure then Captain George said let’s take a look at you Luther, do you think anything is broke? And Luther said only my pride, because I took a whipping like I never have before but I am also sure it could have been avoided.

Captain George pressed on Luther’s stomach and ribs and it was easy to see Luther had at least two broken ribs and Captain said we will wrap your ribs and then after I sew you up you will feel better but you do look like you have been run over by a team of horses.

Luther said I feel like I have and Shermon asked where you push into fighting and Luther said I guess I stuck my nose where I should not have and I paid for it and Kid Montana said Shermon there is a large man who is a bare knuckle fighter and has been in town for a couple of weeks and has whipped a couple other cowboys but I don’t believe he has push anyone into fighting him.

Luther said Sherm he did not force me to fight him and he did say he wasn’t looking to hurt anyone but he would and the marshal questioned him and told him if he caused any trouble he would lock him up in jail and Shermon said well I guess it is the marshal’s job and I am sure Ed will either lock him up or run him out of town.

Captain George said, Luther is going to be sore for a couple weeks shermon and I don’t think he should be riding a horse for awhile either and Shermon said Luther I want you to take it easy for at least two weeks and Luther said we have horses to brand and Shermon stopped him and said.

Luther you have earned some time off and if I catch you trying to ride your horse Cody I will have Ed lock you up in a jail cell until Doctor Cain says you can return to work branding and saddle breaking horses so I want you to take the time to heal and Luther said two weeks is a long time to do nothing Sherm, but I will do what you say and you can dock my pay and Shermon said it will be time off with pay, because you have deserved it,so get some rest then Shermon and Wes Montana stepped out of the bunkhouse and onto the boardwalk.

Shermon said Kid it still seems a little strange Luther getting into a fight and then with a professional bare knuckle fighter and Kid said Shermon I believe there might have been a girl involved, but still it is not like Luther like you know.

Then Shermon said we are down another man so how is the branding and saddle breaking going Kid and Kid said well this week we stuck an iron on at least 50 more horses and saddle broke them so the count is something like 400 and we are less than half way and Shermon said Kid maybe we should hire couple more cowboys and we will if we need to because we will need them later on the drive.

Kid said I will let you know about the three in town that will be looking for work soon, plus I heard there was two more in Laredo that was on the same cattle drive.

Then Kid said Dutch said he was tying a few things up in Laredo then he was going to pay me a visit on his way through and that is all he said but the wire surprised me that he did not mention Goldie. Shermon said did it sound like Dutch might be leaving Laredo for good and Kid said it did sound that way Sherm.

Shermon had just stepped out onto the boardwalk when the marshal pulled up to the hitching rail and shermon said come on up in the shade Ed and have a cup of coffee and the marshal said thanks Sherm how are you doing and Shermon said I guess not to bad for a older brokedown cowboy so how are doing Ed?

The marshal said I don’t think you are ready for the rocking chair yet Sherm but maybe I am, anyway Jill is pushing me to marry her and hang my gun up. Shermon said it looks like you are still earning your pay Ed ,but maybe you should think about it and retire with your boots on. Ed that has to be your own choice, do you think you getting married will change how you do your job?

Well Shermon being the marshal of any town can be demanding but being the marshal and being married, I think would put a strand on both if you know what I mean and Shermon said I think I do know what you mean Ed.

Ed said thanks for listening Sherm and I guess if Ringo was ready it would be easier but he has talked about giving up his deputy badge to spend more time will Dawn Marie and hang around the school house as a janitor or something.

Then the marshal asked about Luther and said I was out of town when the fight took place if I had been in town maybe I could have kept it from happening but the way I see it Luther could have not said to Burl Farris I am not afraid of anyone let alone a left hander.

Shermon said, Ed Luther told me he was not sure why he felt the need to fight a man as big as Burl Farris but Luther said now he knows why Burl Farris has the title of a bare knuckle fighter,because not only he hits hard but he is a very good fighter, but Ed still if I though this Burl Farris made Luther fight his next fight would have been me.

Well Sherm I know Burl Farris is a trained fighter and I know you would maybe whip him if you though he needed it, because of the tuff fights you have been in but still like we were saying a few years have crept up on us and I know I don’t heal as fast as I use to so maybe we should leave it to the younger men when we can.

Sherm Burl Farris has not been in a fight since he whipped Luther and I hope he leaves town on his own, but if I have to I will run him out of town and I will be keeping a close eye on him so I am sure he knows that so thanks for the talk and the coffee Sherm but I need to head back to town.

A week had went by and because everyone was busy branding horses or saddle breaking horses they had not thought of big Burl Farris or Dutch Montana coming to town but then Shermon noticed a horse pulling up to the hitching post and it was Dutch Montana.

Shermon said hi Dutch I will send for Kid to come up here. How about a cup of coffee and Dutch said thanks pal, I like mine hot and black and Shermon said that is good because that is all we serve here at Autumns Crossing.

As Dutch took a drink of his coffee Wes Montana stepped up on the boardwalk and shook hands with Dutch and said how is Goldie and Dutch said Goldie is DEAD and both Shermon and Wes said, DEAD and Wes said how?.

Dutch said I guess you could say Goldie took a bullet meant for me, because I was shot at while I was riding down main street. The bullet hit my rifle just right and my rifle was useless, so I dove behind a water trough with no working gun.

Goldie ran out to the street with a rifle from my office and I YELLED at her to get back but as she ran out to help me she was shot, but she still got the gun to me and after I shot and killed the shooter GOLDIE DIED IN MY ARMS

There was nothing said for more than a minute and then Dutch said Sweetwater is a good town now, because that was the last of the two gunslingers and I turned the town over to my two deputies, there is good people in Sweetwater and either deputy would make a good marshal.

Shermon and Wes Montana both said they were sorry that Goldie had been killed as they shook Dutch’s hand and Shermon said Dutch you can stay here at Autumns Crossing for as long as you like, store your gear in the bunk house and take an empty bunk.

Dutch said thanks pal, but I will pay for staying and Shermon said Dutch you are family and there is no charge for family then Dutch said Shermon you are a good man and I will only stay until I know if I am leaving to the east or west.

Shermon said kid take Dutch to the bunkhouse to store his gear then he can stable his horse in one of the stalls in the barn and then I would say for you two to knock off some dust because the dinner bell will ring soon and Dutch I bet it has been a day or two since you ate and Dutch said I could eat a bite and thanks pal.

Then the dinner bell rang as Wes Montana and his brother stepped up onto the boardwalk and Wes said, this large guy is my brother Dutch and he will be staying here at Autumns Crossing for awhile, so go ahead and eat if you are hungry and Wes smiled, but everyone there shook hands with Dutch and made him feel more comfortable at the ranch before they started to eat.

After a great meal and another cup of hot black coffee and shaking hands with Shermon, Wes and Dutch Montana plus Harry Austin walked towards the bunk house and Harry said how sorry he was about Goldie being shot and Dutch said thanks Pal, but he was afraid it might happen with her always being to close during the gun battles that he had in town.

Dutch said Wes I am happy for you and I can’t help but notice what a great place Shermon has here and Wes and Harry both said Shermon has put his heart and soul in Autumns Crossing making it what it is today and Shermon is a God fearing man that will do anything for anyone if he feels he should.

Then Harry said Dutch ,Kid will tell you Shermon is a fair man but he will fight for what he has and he will stand up for any man he feels is right and needs his help, which you will see if you stay here for any time and Dutch said I believe you Pal.

After a good breakfast Shermon said he was going into town and if anyone else wanted go, to saddle their horse, but as he said it the marshal of Waco pulled his horse up to the hitching rail and Shermon said come on up Ed and Shermon asked have you ate Ed and Ed said he had but he would like a cup of coffee and Captain George fill a tin coffee cup with coffee for the marshal.

Shermon then said Ed you know Dutch don’t you as Wes and Dutch stepped back op on the boardwalk. The Marshal said yea I met him a while back then shook hands with Dutch and then Ed said Brewster told me you took a marshals job in Sweetwater and you were going to get married.

Dutch said yea Sweetwater was a tuff cattle town with more bad people than good but I met Goldie and she asked me to stay, so I did and then as Sweetwater became a good place to live I had a shoot out with the last of the bad guys and Goldie got in the cross fire and was killed in the streets of Sweetwater.

The marshal told Ed he was sorry to hear about Goldie being killed then asked if Dutch left Sweetwater for good and Dutch said he left for good because there is good people moving in now that the gunslingers are gone, so he turned the town over too his two deputies and wanted to move on but was not sure if he would go East or West yet.

Dutch said he was going to walk down by the lake and then when Shermon went to town, he would like to go because there were a couple items that he would like to pick up. Shermon said it would be in a short time and then he would saddle his horse Buck then they would go and Dutch said he would be ready.

After Dutch left the boardwalk and headed toward the lake Shermon said Ed are you still thinking about taking your badge off and Ed said yea because Jill was making plans for the two of them and then Ed said and I know what you are thinking Shermon and Shermon said Ed we both know Dutch would be the right man for the job and Ed said Sherm maybe I will ask him later.

Oh that Burl Farris has whipped another man but I stopped the fight before Farris beat the guy to bad and then Farris said me being the marshal was the only thing keeping him from whipping me and I told him I could pull my badge off an Farris said maybe but I would still be the marshal so I told him if there was a next time I would run him out of town.

What did Farris say to that Shermon asked? Ed said he said he would leave when he was ready and no sooner because he was not breaking any laws, but Sherm I know the whole town is uneasy with Farris so it won’t be long and something will have to done and I told him, I would be keeping a close eye on him.

The marshal got up and shook Shermon hand and said Sherm you know if I retire there is a good chance that I will be out here more often and Shermon said I will look forward to that Ed then the marshal said Sherm I will talk with Jill when I get back to town and Shermon said I will see you in town in a little while Ed. I will ask Dutch if he is interested and let you know but I am sure he would be.

Shermon said whoever wants to ride into town we me, I will be leaving in a few minutes as he was putting his saddle on his horse Buck. Captain George said he would like to go to town and Shermon asked Kid Montana to put a saddle on Caps horse Pepper, then Shermon and Captain George plus Wes and Dutch Montana rode to town.

On the way to town Shermon mentioned that Ed was going to take his badge off and Shermon asked Dutch if he might be interested in the marshal’s job. Dutch said he would think about it and Shermon did not say anymore about it.

In town Captain George headed to the general store and Wes took his brother Dutch to meet Mitchell St.Clair. Shermon wanted to talk to the marshal so they agreed to meet at the marshal’s office in one hour.

Right at one hour later Wes and Dutch Montana stepped off the boardwalk and into the marshal’s office as Captain George was getting ready to leave the general store after putting a list together to leave with Daniel Grant and the Marshal had just asked Dutch about becoming the Marshal of Waco, but before Dutch could answer Mika Grant ran into the marshal’s office.

Mika said Marshal you and Shermon had better hurry, Burl Farris is prodding Captain George into fighting him and both Ed and Shermon jumped up and as they started out the door Dutch said Shermon if you don’t mind I will come with you and Shermon said let’s go because this bully Farris has to be taught a lesson.

As the marshal and Shermon crossed the street with Wes and Dutch Montana Burl Farris had just hit Captain George and the Captain went down hard but Captain George was struggling to get back up when Burl Farris drew back to hit Captain George again and Shermon stepped up and hit Burl with a smashing left.

Burl Farris shook it off and said okay big man you just hit the wrong person, because I am bigger than you and a better fighter than you. Dutch said you talk too much big mouth and then Dutch said it seems to me that you pick fights with men smaller than you and I am in line.

Then Burl Farris said and who are you, you think because you are maybe as big as me you should fight me, we’ll I don’t think you should but I will whip you then the other two because I am a bare knuckle champ and Dutch said I am going to take your title then run you out of town then Dutch slapped Burl Farris in the face hard with his open hand.

Burl Farris turned red then smiled and said I will whip you then I will whip every man in this town and Dutch hit Burl Farris with a hard straight punch and said like I said you talk too much and then the two large men brought their fists up and the fight was on.

Dutch ducked a right then got hit with a left then Burl Farris was swinging with both hands and he was hitting hard but Dutch was also swinging fast and hard and both men were connected with punches, but then Burl Farris hit Dutch with four hard punches to his face and laughed as Dutch went down .

Ed said Shermon maybe we should stop this and Dutch spit a mouthful of blood and said nobody stops this fight because now it is my turn. Dutch blocked a punch then ducked under a hard punch that Burl Farris threw which put Farris off balanced and Dutch moved in.

First Dutch threw a straight left followed by a hard right hook and they both hit their mark then Dutch dug two punches to Farris’s stomach and as Burl Farris was fighting for air and Dutch threw four solid punches to Farris’s head and all four punches connected, one broke Farris’s nose and one opened a nasty cut above his eye and then another broke Farris jaw and the fourth one hit on top of Farris’s already broken nose and bleeding lips.

Burl Farris threw a half hearted punch that caught air. Dutch stepped to right and threw a punch then stepped to the left and threw a punch which both connected to the already beat Burl Farris and Farris dropped to his knees and the fight was over because, Farris held his hands up in defeat, because he wanted no more of the beating that Dutch Montana was giving him.

Then Dutch took the badge that Ed handed him and after Dutch pinned on the badge, Dutch said Farris you have Whipped you last man in this town and you have 30 minutes to ride your horse out of town and if I ever see you again and I will give you your second lesson and the whole town was there and was yelling way to go marshal and Burl Farris rode out of town with his head down but also with a broken nose and busted jaw and a face that would not heal for a long time.

THE END

MARSHAL DUTCH MOMTANA

CHAPTER 11

After Doctor Cain put a couple stitches in Dutch’s face the doctor said marshal that was some fight. You took it to him ,then Wes Montana stepped into the Doctors office off the boardwalk and said yea and maybe you should have took over the fight sooner, because you look you have been run over by a stage coach.

Dutch said pal, you should have seen the other guy and Wes Montana said I did and he did look worst than you do and I will say brother I am glad we are on the same side and then Dutch showed Wes his badge.

When Dutch and Wes stepped out onto the boardwalk, the whole town was there to shake hands with Dutch and congratulate him on the fight and Wes said you know Dutch you shouldn’t go around beating people up because you have a badge. Dutch said now you tell pal and they both shook hands and smiled.

Shermon shook hands with Dutch and said I don’t believe Burl Farris will want a rematch, so then I don’t guess he will be back Marshal but then Shermon said Dutch there was only three people that was wanting you too lose that fight. They at the Rusty spur now and they look like gun hands and Dutch said well Sherm maybe they will leave on their own but if they cause trouble I will be ready.

Dutch said I could use a cup of coffee and Shermon said coffee sounds good and Wes said he could also use a cup plus maybe a bite to eat so they headed to Potter’s café and as the three took a table, Ringo the deputy came in and shook Dutch’s hand and said he enjoyed the beating that Dutch gave Farris.

Then Dutch said it had to be done and Ringo said as he sat down it looks like three men are leaving town and all three had their guns tied down and I was sure they were looking for trouble and as the three men rode by the large window in Potters café, Dutch said yea they do look like gunslingers.

Well looks like they are leaving town but Ringo I want to say I was told you were a good deputy and I am glad you noticed those three and I will rely on you to help me protect this town and the people in this town, but as the marshal said it they heard a gunshot and all four men went for the door in Potter’s café.

When Dutch, Shermon, Wes and Ringo stepped onto the boardwalk there was a guy next to the hitching post rolling a cigarette looking at a guy that was holding a gun on him and it was easy to see the man standing at the hitching rail showed no fear, he was dark skinned from wind and sun and he wore two guns tied down.

He finished rolling his cigarette then lighted it and he took a long slow drag on the rolled cigarette and the cigarette showed red as the sun was setting in the skies and then he took the cigarette from his mouth and flipped it at the guy holding the gun on him.

As the man holding the gun waved his hand at the cigarette, the second man drew both his guns and put two holes in the first man’s heart, then slid his two guns back in their worn holsters as the first man knees buckled he fell face first in the dirt with his gun still in his hand.

Dutch said Ringo, let’s walk over and see what this shooting was all about and Ringo said it looked like it was a fair fight and then as Dutch and Ringo stepped up to the man the man said Marshal he said he was going to kill me so I had no choice but to take the fight to him.

It did look like, You were right about him pushing you into the fight but why did he want to kill you and who are you Dutch asked? And the young man said my name is Utah and I never seen him before then Dutch said Utah, don’t leave town until I can find out why he came hunting you and where did you say you were from?

I didn’t say Utah said but if you send a wire to St.Louis there are people there that knows me, then Utah asked where do I get a good meal in this town marshal.

Dutch said if you don’t shoot anyone else I would say Potter’s café would be a good choice, as long as your story is correct but if it isn’t you could be eating from a jail cell. Then Dutch turn and walked towards the telegraph office and Utah Stepped into Potter’s café.

Dutch sent a wire to St.Louis Mo. And told Ringo he wanted to find out why Utah was in town and why the other man wanted to kill him and then Dutch asked Ringo to keep an eye on Utah, but not to prod him to tight because he had a feeling that Utah was a hired gun.

Dutch received a wire back from the marshal in St.Louis that read

Utah is a deadly fast hired gun and if he is there it is because someone has paid him a great deal of money to kill someone, but from what I know he always lets the other man draw first before he kills him because he is that fast.

Dutch walked into his office and sat down at his desk for the first time and looked around then smelled the coffee so he got up and was pouring himself a cup of coffee when a young man stepped off the boardwalk and into the marshal’s office.

Marshal my name is Chuck Morgan and my brother Seth Morgan was just shot and killed by Utah. We trailed Utah here after he shot and killed our brother Levi Morgan. Dutch asked why did Utah kill your brother Levi?

The three of us have or had a small ranch just south of here with good water and grass and the big ranchers tried to run us off but when we wouldn’t leave they brought Utah in and Utah forced my brother Levi to draw on him and they said it was a fair fight, but we are not gunslingers Marshal.

Now both my brothers are dead and killed by Utah and Marshal I have brought a shot gun with me to kill Utah with. Dutch said Chuck I am afraid if you go up against Utah even with a shot gun, he will kill you the same as your two brothers and Chuck Morgan said I have watched Utah and he always flips a cigarette butt first before he pulls his guns.

Dutch said if he doesn’t draw it will be murder and if he does you might die like your two brothers did Chuck, so let the law handle this, he will make a mistake and I will be there because I will be watching him real close. Chuck said he would bury his two brothers then be back tomorrow.

Dutch was leaving his office and heading towards Potters café when someone in a loud voice yelled Marshal Montana. Before Dutch turned to look Dutch already knew it was Utah and he seen the look Utah had in his eyes and Dutch then knew Utah was hired to kill him.

The marshal waved a couple people off the street and asked Utah who had hired him to kill him. Utah asked does it really matter Marshal and Dutch said I would like to know before I kill you and Utah said kill me marshal and Utah said you are the one who is going to die marshal.

But the marshal heard Utah’s voice crack a little because Utah knew he was standing in front of a man who didn’t care if he lived or died, he wasn’t sure why the marshal didn’t care, but he knew he didn’t.

So Utah started talking and said I was paid to kill you because I was told you were the reason Goldie Harp was dead and Dutch said I loved Goldie and maybe Goldie took a bullet that had been meant for me but I didn’t want it to happen. Utah said well it does not really matter marshal because I have already been paid and Utah pulled the makings out to roll a cigarette.

Dutch said Utah don’t roll that cigarette and Utah said are you going to tell me smoking is bad for my health Marshal and the marshal said no Utah but I will tell you when you flip it and pull your guns I might take some lead, but I will kill you before I died.

Utah said you know Marshal, I like you and I believe you loved Goldie but I have been paid good to kill you Marshal and Dutch said Utah this is not my first gun fight and I promise you, I won’t die easy, plus if I do or don’t you will, so flip that smoke.

Utah smiled and flipped the cigarette butt and as he did he drew his guns and fired as Dutch moved and fired back but Dutch was hit hard and then felt the sting of another bullet that he felt wasn’t a kill shot, but Dutch was going down but he was still pulling his trigger as fast as he could.

Dutch went to his knees first then he felt the wet ground on his face and Dutch knew he had been hit hard at least a couple of times then the cold dirt was the last thing he felt.

But Dutch had said he would not die easy and Dutch woke up in bed and as he looked around he seen his brother walking the floor and Doctor Cain was at his bed tending to dressings on Dutch’s bullet wounds when Dutch asked did I kill him pal and smiled at his brother Wes.

Wes Montana smiled and blinked his eyes a couple times and said yea Dutch you hit him four times and the last bullet you put threw his heart. He was buried a week ago and Dutch said a week ago no wonder I am so thirsty for hot black coffee pal and Wes handed Dutch a cup and said hear you go marshal you deserve it and welcome to the living.

THE END

WACO’S BANK IS HELD UP

CHAPTER 12

Shermon was standing on the boardwalk in front of his two story ranch house looking out over the lake when he heard the shots and they were coming from town and it sounded like a war was taking place so first he rang the large Kansas City bell then he headed for the stable to get his horse Buck.

Wes Montana and Harry Austin rode up from the lake with their guns in their hands the same as Dakota and Elrod did as they came from the barn and as Shermon saddled Buck and swung up on the saddle he said you four come with me then, yelled to Remington who was standing on the boardwalk with a rifle.

Shermon said we are going to town break out some guns and be ready if trouble comes to Autumns Crossing he said to Remington and then the five cowboys raced towards town and as they did Shane Madison was racing towards them and yelled they are robbing the bank then looked over at Wes Montana and YELLED Kid, Mitchell St.Clair is in the bank.

As they were moving towards town Shane said Shermon Dawn Marie is also in the bank, plus Ringo and three other people have been shot and they are lying in the street and I believe they are dead.

When they rode into town and took cover the Marshal told Shermon that, he and his deputy Scotty Nelson shot one bank robber and have one in jail, who was waiting with the horses and now the robbers are trapped inside the bank with hostages. Shermon asked how many outlaws were still in the bank and Dutch said he believed there were still six bank robbers.

Wes Montana said Dutch we have to get Mitchell and Dawn Marie out of there and Dutch said, Wes they are planning on taking the two women with them as hostages and they want an hour head start and then they won’t hurt the two women and Wes was shaking his head no way.

Dutch yelled BRADY O’NEAL THROW YOUR GUNS OUT THEN FOLLOW THEM WITH YOUR HANDS IN THE AIR then Brady O’Neal laugh and said you throw your hands up marshal, because we are holding all the winning cards.

Dutch said, O’Neal you know we can’t let you leave town with them two women and all the towns money and O’Neal said Marshal you have ten minutes then we will shoot our way out and I am sure that the two women will die so marshal you now have 9 minutes then Dutch looked at Shermon and Wes and said he means it. I have seen his kind and I know if we don’t give them an hour head start, they will kill both women and try shooing their way out.

Then Brady O’Neal yelled 8 minutes marshal and Dutch said okay, you will have one hour head start, but O’Neal if you hurt either lady we will hunt you down like the dogs you are and we won’t stop until you all are dead do you understand?

Marshal you hurt my feelings calling me and my boys dogs, but we are coming out Marshal with the two pretty women so don’t shoot and then Dutch plus Wes and Shermon and everyone else watched the 7th bank robber cross the street to where the other six outlaws were then they watched all seven outlaws plus Mitchell and Dawn Marie ride out of town.

Dutch looked at his brother Wes Montana and Shermon then he looked at Dakota, Harry plus Elrod and said you all are deputized and we have a job to do as Doctor Cain came up and told Dutch that Ringo was still in a very bad way and having trouble breathing, but he would try to save him and that Arthur Travis the bank’s president was also in a bad way.

Dutch then asked about the three town’s people that got caught in the cross fire and the doctor told Dutch that two were dead but one would make it. Dutch asked doctor Cain to tell him, plus Ringo and Arthur Travis that the outlaws would get what they had coming to them and he was sorry that the three of them got hurt.

Shermon was checking the time and asked Dakota and Elrod to get Mitchell and Dawn Maries horse and have Captain George throw together a food sack for five or six days and too bring back four extra full canteens as soon as possible because they were leaving very soon.

It was no time and Shermon seen Captain George, Cheyenne, Dakota and Elrod following close behind them and Shermon checked the time again and kissed Cheyenne. Dakota said we got what you asked for plus we brought some extra ammo and Shermon said good job code man.

Shermon said it’s been an hour and Dutch said let’s go get the bank robbers and bring the two women home with the town’s money and as they were leaving Dakota wondered why shermon wanted the two extra horses but didn’t ask but he was praying that Mitchell and Dawn Maria was okay the same as everyone else.

There was six brave men who was all thinking alike about the two women and the towns money plus the seven bank robbers .The money being stolen could make the town dry up and the two women were their friends and the other seven outlaws was the reason they would not stop until things were right again.

The marshal said we will keep this pace and watch for the women and Dutch and Shermon was riding the front line with Wes and Harry right behind them and then Dakota and Elrod was riding in the back but they were also spread out some and not riding to close to each other either.

It was a little better than an hour and Dakota yelled there is Mitchell and Dawn Maria .Shermon said we need to go in slow and watchful and Dutch said yea they might have left them and they might be in those rocks so they can catch us in the open, but Mitchell said they had us to get off the horses we were riding and then they took off in a hurry.

Shermon said Kid check on Mitchell and Dawn Maria and Wes Montana

swung down out of his saddle as everyone else watched the rocks, then shermon said it looks like they have run off then asked Mitchell and Dawn Marie if they were okay and both women said they were because of Brady O’Neal

Shermon said you mean O’Neal thought as long as we got the two of you back unharmed and he took the two horses you were riding we would take you back to Waco and they would have a better chance and Mitchell said that what the leader O’Neal said to his men.

Good Shermon said I was hoping he would think that then Shermon said Dakota would you see to it that Mitchell and Dawn Marie makes it home safe. Dakota said uncle Sherm now I know why you wanted their horses and that was good thinking, so be careful and get the money and bank robbers then handed Mitchell and Dawn Maria a canteen full of water and said, ladies lets go home.

Wes Montana said shermon like Dakota said that was smart to bring their horses plus it was also smart how you got Dakota to take the women home and to keep him from going with us. Shermon said Kid I thought it would be better that way and Wes Montana said you are always thinking boss and smiled.

Dutch said they don’t look to be in a hurry and Shermon said yea that could be because they might be planning on ambushing us up ahead and Dutch said you could be right Shermon and with that canyon up ahead we would be like sitting ducks pal.

Shermon said we know the bank robbers rode out of town without thinking and they did not have much water, I am sure and I also know the water up in those hills is bad and is salty, so I say we should wait them out.

Dutch said let’s make camp over in the shade of that cottonwood tree and watch for them to come our way, after they have had their full of salt water and Shermon said that sounds good Dutch because I have been up there in those hills and there is nothing but cracked mud and dried up water holes all except one deep bottled up salt pool.

Then Wes said yea like Shermon said the animals won’t drink from that salt hole but for some reason a man always thinks he can and then when he does and even if he only drank a very little of it, he will start praying to die, and if they do drink the bad water it is going to make our job a lot easier so let’s hope they do.

Shermon said it sounds like they are moving this way and it also sounds like they have drank the water because they are moaning and complaining about their stomachs hurting them. Dutch said be ready because I am going to call out to them and they might still have some fight in them.

Dutch and the other good cowboys watch the bank robbers make their way down the steep rugged slope and three were walking because their bellies hurt so much that they could not sit in their horse’s saddles, but they were all surprised when Dutch yelled throw your guns down and put your hands in the air because I am arresting you for robbing Waco’s bank plus murder.

Brady O’Neal and one other bank robber yelled back you aren’t taking me in to hang and pulled their handguns but the two were shot from their saddles. Dutch yelled who else does not want to go back to town and there was one other outlaw with his hand on his gun.

Dutch said go ahead and pull that six shooter and I will sent you to a early grave and the gunslingers lips were held tight and his black eyes were starring at the marshal then he went for his gun and his gun did not clear his holster because he was too slow and his dark eyes went wide and the sun was shining threw two small holes in the outlaws chest as he tumbled to the ground.

Then Dutch said who else, you four can go back to Waco sitting in your saddles or wrapped in a blanket and thrown over your horse’s saddles, but either way you are going back and one of the outlaws said it is three or four hours back to town and it will be dark soon.

Wes Montana said Dutch there is a good place to make night camp about one half mile from here and Dutch said maybe we should pal and head back in the morning and we will tie these four up and hang them in a tree if they give us any trouble and the same outlaw said what do you mean tie us up.

Dutch said we will tie them up after we have a bite to eat then if they give us any trouble we will shoot them and throw them across their horse’s saddle and the one bank robber said that would be murder and Dutch said who are you going to tell if you are dead then winked at his brother Wes.

Dutch said let’s have a bite to eat then after a little shut eye we will head back to Waco in the morning, the coffee was hot and black and with that they had beans and Smoked bacon plus biscuits all except the four bank robbers because Dutch said give them a biscuit and a drink of water then tie them good.

Wes said all four all tied tight and Dutch said good pal, get some sleep and I will wake you in a couple hours and Shermon said Dutch I will sit up with you then Harry can sit up with Kid in as couple hours and Dutch said good pal and I want to thank you for your help.

Shermon said Dutch Waco is my town also and the town would be in a bad way if we did not bring back the money that they stole and the people that they shot was my friends plus Mitchell and Dawn Maria is family, so I am glad you asked me to go because I would not have had it any other way.

The four bank robbers were complaining about being hog tied and only having a biscuit to eat and Dutch said make your self’s comfortable, because I don’t want to hear about it and then Wes threw is bedroll down and his horse Blackjack walked over and stood next to where Wes had threw his bedroll.

The sun was peeking throw the clouds and Shermon and Dutch were both sitting on their heels at the small fire drinking coffee. Wes and Harry plus Elrod walked up, Elrod said did you save us any coffee and Shermon said the pot is almost full and when the five good guys had their fill of it Dutch said Wes dump it out on the fire as he looked at the bank robbers.

Dutch said let’s get these four back to Waco and the youngest of the four bank robbers said are they going to hang us and Dutch said it will be up to the judge and the young outlaw said but I didn’t shoot anyone, I just rode with them and Dutch said tell your story to the judge.

Wes Montana said that breeze feels good but there are some dark clouds to the East that I don’t like and Shermon said I think we should mount up and we might make it back to town before the rain comes so then they headed to town and about three hours later they were riding down main street and all the towns people was there to greet them.

The deputy was there and Dutch said lock these four in cells Scotty and Scotty Nelson said they don’t look to good Marshal and Dutch said the water did not agree with them pal and smiled.

Dakota and Cheyenne plus Captain George was also there to meet Shermon and the five other good guys and Shermon hugged and kissed Cheyenne then shook Dakotas hand.

Dakota said uncle Shermon the doctor said Ringo was going to heal and would be back on the street soon and Dawn Maria said no he won’t and told Ringo to set a date because she was not getting any younger..

Shermon said we’ll Dutch it looks like you will be placing an ad in the Waco’s paper for another deputy and Shermon shook Dutch’s hand and said Dutch you did a real good out there and if you ever need my help again I will be there.

Dutch said thanks pal and I am glad you are on my side then Shermon shook Kid Montana’s hand plus Harry Austin’s hand and Elrod’s hand and then Shermon looked up to Heaven and said thank you God and when Shermon said Amen so did most of the town.

THE END

THE STONES BUY THE MILLERS HOMESTEAD

CHAPTER 13

The marshal Dutch Montana and his brother Wes Montana was standing on the boardwalk in front of Dutch Montana’s office when a large wagon pulled up to where they were and a man called to them from the wagon and said good day marshal my name is Russell Stone.

Then Russell Stone said and this pretty lady is my wife Amanda and Amanda said how do you do marshal and Dutch said I would have to be twins to be any better then smiled and said my name is Dutch Montana and this not so pretty hombre is my brother Wes and smiled again, then asked what can I do for you?

But before Russell stone could answer three younger stones stuck their heads threw the slit in the bonnet that was covering the large wagon and said hi and Russell Stone said and these three young ones are Jacob and Rebecca plus Joel so marshal we have bought a place just east of town and wanted to meet you and pick up a few supplies at the general store be before we headed to our new homestead.

Wes Montana asked which homestead did you buy and Russell Stone said we have purchased the Miller homestead sight unseen but the way they described it sounds like the home for us and Wes Montana said the Miller homestead would make a great homestead and he knew it was for the Millers made it a great place.

Amanda said they said the place was too much work for them and it needed a younger family to keep the homestead looking like it should and Amanda said Mrs. Miller said they were going to buy a place on the edge of town.

Dutch said the homestead has plenty of water and good land but the Millers are getting up in age and I would say they are very nice people who wants someone to prosper on that homestead, but they have been on that piece of land for near to forty years is what I was told so I can understand them moving to town because of all the work that a person would need to do to keep the place looking as good as it does.

Russell Stone said that would be us because we would like to have a few cows some chickens and grow a flied of corn plus plant some potatoes and other vegetable and my two sons are young but strong and will work hard beside me and my daughter will work with her mother canning and making pies and bear claws which some people call donuts.

Dutch said Russell it sounds like you and your family will do real good plus bear claws it has been awhile since I have had any bear claws and Amanda said marshal I will see that you get some from the first batch and you also Wes.

Then the marshal and Wes shook hands with the stones and Dutch and Wes both said to let them know if they could help them with anything then the Stones headed for the general store.

Dutch said Russell Stone sure was right about his wife Amanda being pretty pal plus there three kids seems to have been raised right and Wes said yea she sure was pretty but also I can’t help but think about the bear claws she mention.

Then Dutch offered his brother a cup of coffee and the two of them sat in a couple of chairs on the boardwalk and Dutch said I can see us having bear claws with our coffee soon and Wes said wait till the word is out, because I believe that they will have a line for some good bear claws and Dutch said I know you are right pal.

After shaking hands with Micka and Daniel Grant, Russell and Amanda stone with their three kids started picking up items that they needed and taking them to the counter and Daniel was putting a tally sheet together of all the items.

Russell said we have purchased the Miller homestead and after today’s purchase’s we would like to set up a 30 day account and you will be able to check with Mr. Travis at the bank about our finance records and Daniel Grant said welcome to Waco and if there is something you would like and you don’t see it please let me know.

The stones bought garden and flower seeds plus coffee, flour, sugar, beans and other items and Amanda said that they would be growing what they could in the large garden but they would be back in a couple days after they made a list of other items needed.

Russell asked Micka who would be the person to see about a few head of cows and maybe some chickens and also five good horses and Micka said that person would be Shermon McBay at Autumns Crossing and Russell said they would see him in the morning.

Micka and Buddy helped Russell and his boys load the wagon with all the items the Stones purchased and then the Stones headed to their new homestead but as they road through town they waved and talked to everyone they seen and their excitement was over flowing as they rode out of town.

Russell said Amanda I almost passed our turn because they were looking at the beautiful ranch home that sat in between tall trees and running water from a stream that came down from hills and Russell said would you look at all that open rolling ground but all Amanda could see was that beautiful log home and the white picket fence.

As they pulled up to the freshly white panted fence Amanda and all three kids bailed from the wagon and ran towards the log home and Russell followed saying slow down and when Russell stepped inside off the boardwalk, Amanda had tears running down her face and Russell asked is there something wrong.

Amanda said Russell I love it but after seeing it I know how the Millers must feel about leaving this place and Russell said and to think we bought this place without seeing it first, because this place is a lot more than we had hoped for and then the five stones held hands and thanked God for their beautiful homestead.

Russell said let’s only unload what we need to and have lunch and then unload the rest after we eat, but first I will unhook the two mules from the wagon and turn them loose in that large corral and as the Stones set to unhooking their mules they were all smiling.

You know Amanda I thought I would have to build some furniture but this table and chairs plus the beds and other furniture are all build so well that I will be able to start planting potatoes and corn plus the other vegetables and not have to worry about furniture so that is another plus.

After lunch Russell said I will carry the violin and guitar in then the guns in but Jacob you and Joel unload the shovels and picks plus other items that you can and then we unload the plow and heavier items and Rebecca you can help your mother, then while Russell and his two sons were unloading the wagon Russell spotted two Indians sitting their ponies on a ridge not far from them.

Amanda seen Russell looking towards the ridge then seen the two Indians that Russell had seen and Russell said for everyone to continue what they were doing and Russell set two rifles next to the wagon and told Jacob not to worry because he was told the Indians were friendly enough but the guns would be there if needed.

Harry Austin and Luther Green passed by the Stones homestead a couple days later and Russell offered them a cup of coffee after they told Russell who they were, then Amanda brought out a plate of bear claws and Harry and Luther ate until the bear claws were gone and Russell mention the two Indians in conversation and both cowboys said the Indians are friendly they were sure.

Five days later Russell said he was going to see Shermon McBay the next morning about some stock and for Amanda and the two boys to stay close to the log home and maybe keep a gun handy, but if he thought there would be any trouble he would not be leaving them.

After a good breakfast and a third cup of coffee Russell swung up on one of his mules and said all the cowboys rode horses and his saddle would be on a horse when he returned, then he kissed his pretty wife Amanda and his daughter Rebecca then shook hands with both Jacob and Joel and said he would be back soon as possible, then headed towards Autumns Crossing.

Then about an hour later Russell Stone pulled up to where Shermon McBay sat drinking coffee on the boardwalk in front of the large two story ranch house and Russell Stone said Mr. McBay, I am Russell Stone and I am here to see if you have a little stock that I could buy.

Shermon said come on up in the shade and have a cup of coffee and even though Russell felt he had had enough coffee he did not want to refuse Shermons offer so Russell shook hands with shermon and said thanks Mr.McBay.

Call me Shermon and tell me about the stock you have in mind Shermon said so Russell said as I said my name is Russell Stone and me and my family just bought the Miller homestead and I was thinking I could use five good horses a milk cow and 15 or 20 beefs and even a bull if you have one, plus a few chickens and I was told you were the man to see.

And Shermon said Russell I think you came to see me at the right time because I am sure, I have the stock that you have mentioned and Shermon asked is there anything else that would help you and Russell said I noticed the gun shop and what looked like a leather shop. Shermon said we have a place that we call gun world and a complete saddle shop with stirrups plus bridle’s and all the leather you might need.

Russell said with the stock I would like to buy three saddles and bridles plus I could use maybe 100 rounds of 44 longs and I would sign a note for it all and if I could, I would take the five horses with me today and arrange to come back for the rest, plus Russell asked about the Indians he had seen on the ridge.

Shermon said I am sure the two Indians are friendly Navajos. I will work up a price for the stock and if it is agreed on you can take five gentle saddle broke horses with you when you leave, so we will walk down to the corral of the saddle broke horses and pick out five horses and they walked down pass the lake to the one corral with the horses that Shermon wanted to show Russell.

Russell left Autumns Crossing with a tall spirited Buckskin that he picked out for himself plus two black horses with different marks and then two brown or chestnut horses, one with four white stockings and one with a white chest and he saddled the two chestnuts and then the saddle he had on his mule he put on the tall Buckskin and lead the mule and four horses behind the Buckskin back to his family.

When Russell pulled up with the horses his family came to meet him and as Russell thought the two boys wanted the two black horses and his Daughter liked the chestnut with the white chest and his wife Amanda fell in love with her horse the chestnut with the four white stockings.

Russell said him and Shermon had made a good deal on the stock and Jacob asked Joel which horse he wanted and as Joel was looking at the black horses, one of the black horses walked up to Joel and Joel said my horse picked me and this is the one I want and Russell said it looks like we all have a horse and if we take care of our horse it will take care of us.

Amanda said look at that dust over there and Russell said that dust will be our stock that I purchased from Shermon McBay and then Russell run over to the three rail gate and as he opened the gate Russell told his family to get clear of the stock, they would be here in a minute.

As the cows and the young bull came through the gate Joel asked his dad why he got the one fat cow and Russell told his son that cow is a milk cow and it will give us plenty of milk and you do like milk don’t you and Joel said you know I do and smiled as his dad lead the large milk cow over to a stall with a covered roof and Joel said look milk cow you get your own place.

Then Russell looked at the two cowboys and said Harry and Luther right and Harry said that is right and it looks like you have a start to a real nice herd here then Amanda asked about the Indians they had seen and Harry said when they put their hand up they are saying hi and he was sure there was no need to worry because the Indians were friendly.

So then Amanda said if you cowboys want to have lunch with us it is ready and Luther could not help but ask will there be bear claws and Amanda said so you heard about my bear claws and Harry said everyone is talking about them. Let us knock off some of this dust and we will be in.

When Harry and Luther stepped into the cabin off the boardwalk they stepped back out and Amanda said come on in because it is time to eat and the table was set with smoked ham and potatoes plus beans and corn and there was a large pot of black coffee and Russell said eat up there is plenty.

Harry and Luther said how good the meal was but they needed to get back to Autumn’s Crossing and Amanda sat a large plate of donuts on the table and said you don’t want any bear claws first. Harry said they would eat a couple bear claws first then head back to Autumns Crossing and after cleaning off the plate of bear claws and two more cups of coffee Harry said he did not know if his horse Rusty would let him ride back to Autumns Crossing he might make him walk.

And Joel said you will walk all the way home and Harry laughed and said I might have to if Rusty won’t let me ride him then both cowboys and the stone family all laughed out loud then as Harry and Luther stepped off the boardwalk, Harrys horse Rusty stepped back from Harry and they all laughed again.

The next morning as Russell stepped out onto the boardwalk he seen lighting and heard thunder to the east so he told Amanda he was going to try and get the last two rows planted before the rain reached them, then as he stepped off the boardwalk he looked over his shoulder and said he hopped the rain held off because he was worried about his new crop fields.

It stayed dark to the east and there was heavy thunder and many lighting flashed and Russell kept saying he hopped the heavy rain stayed to the east then it would not hurt them and Russell stayed in his field planting his two last rows until he had finished then he washed off a little and ate his supper sitting on the boardwalk and even said who cares if it floods to the east as long as they were having good weather for his crops.

Russell stood up after eating his supper and before he stepped inside off the boardwalk he thanked God for keeping the bad weather to the east and away from his crops and for the great weather he was having.

Morning came and Russell was having his third cup of coffee and said well it looks like it is going to be a beautiful day and I need to check on my crops and Amanda said I am sure your crops are fine and that is all you talk about and Russell said sorry but my crops are the only thing that matters right now.

Then Joel busted threw the door yelling Rebecca fell into the river and Russell said what river as he and Amanda headed for the door and when then stepped onto the boardwalk the nice creek that they loved had turned into a raging river that was wide and deep and Russell said where is Jacob and how did Rebecca fall in the water?

Joel said we were all playing next to the water when Rebecca slipped and fell in then Jacob jumped in to help her and then they both were gone and Russell seen that Amanda had tears running down her face and was saying you and that field, now my kids are in the river and Russell forgot about his crops.

Russell said stay close to the house I will bring our kids back safe and ran towards the raging water but then a little later Russell was back but did not have Jacob or Rebecca and Amanda was with Joel and they both were crying and Russell hugged his wife and son and said he was getting his horse then he would find Jacob and Rebecca.

Then as Russell saddled his buckskin horse Amanda came from the cabin with a cloth sack of food and an extra canteen of water and then Russell plus Amanda and Joel bowed their heads and prayed for God to keep Jacob and Rebecca safe then Russell slid a rifle into the rifle sling and Amanda said Russell bring my kids back and you know they are hungry and scared, then Amanda run towards the cabin with Joel by her side.

Russell turned his Buckskin horse and as he left he said Amanda I will bring Jacob and Rebecca back safe and as Russell left Russell was praying to God saying God that field is not important but my son and daughter is the same as my other son and wife and I am sorry for telling you to keep the storm to the east.

After a few hours trailing the water the skies where turning dark again and Russell was praying hard and Russell was begging God to save his son and daughter and that Jacob was with Rebecca and hopefully Rebecca was not to afraid of the dark, because she was with her big brother, but Russell was also afraid his son and daughter might still be in the water and either way they would be wet and cold.

As Russell watched the sun go down he felt helpless as he sat in the dark and all he could think about was his family that Jacob and Rebecca was in the dark wet and cold plus Joel and his wife Amanda was at home worried about Jacob and Rebecca and then Russell thought about the two Indians .

He remembered the Indians holding their hand up pointing to the Heavens and him just staring at them until they rode their ponies out of sight and he thought of how God had turned their pretty creek into a raging river and how that raging river had changed their lives and how sorry he was as, he felt the tears running down his face, as he sat in the dark.

Then as Russell was looking up he noticed the moon was shinning threw the clouds and the clouds were moving away, so Russell stepped up into his horses saddle and said lets go find Jacob and Rebecca in this light that God has gave us and Russell followed the water that was turning back into a creek from the river it was earlier and more and more stars were hanging in the skies with the bright light of the moon.

Russell followed the water’s edge all night and as he did he prayed for his family and he prayed for the people to the east from where the great waters came, plus he was surprised when he prayed for the two Indians that he now knew wanted to be his friends.

The sun was up and all the clouds were gone then Russell knew as he struggled to stay in his horses saddle, he knew he had rode all day then all night without eating or drinking anything plus he had no sleep but he had to go on and then Russell bated his eyes and was sure he was looking at Jacob and Rebecca and then he dreamt he fell from his horse to the ground.

Russell lied on the ground knowing that he had died and that he would never find Jacob and Rebecca plus he would never see his wife Amanda or his son Joel again but as he laid there he heard voices and he strained to hear the voices and he felt he was being shaken by someone.

Then Russell opened his eyes squinted his eyes and was batting them trying to focus, then Russell knew it was Jacob and Rebecca sitting on the ground talking to him and they both were putting water to his lips and at first he thought he was dreaming ,then he seen the two Indians standing off to one side.

The two Indians raised their right hand towards the sky and Russell did the same as he laid on the ground and Rebecca was holding her dad tight. Jacob was asking if his dad was okay and Russell said he was but he had not ate or drank anything since he left yesterday morning to find them, after they went in the water.

Russell said he knew Jacob and Rebecca was in the dark last night and after they landed in the water, he followed the water to where they are now and Jacob told his dad they were gone two nights but the Indians pulled them from the water the first night and they started back the next morning which was yesterday.

So Russell said two nights and then said, he must have been in the saddle for the whole time and lost all track of time but after drinking some water he felt a little better, so they should head back because Amanda and Joel would be worried and the one Indian said, be dark soon we leave in morning and as Russell started to raise he felt very weak and said we leave in morning.

The sun was peeking through some light clouds when Russell stirred early but he smell coffee as he sat up. Jacob handed his dad a cup of coffee and Rebecca handed her dad some smoked ham and biscuits and as Russell drank the coffee and ate the smoked ham he hugged his son and daughter and thanked God and the Indians for saving his son and daughter.

Jacob said the Indians names were Red Fox and Flying Crow and after they pulled him and Rebecca from the water they gave them blankets so they could get warm and then they built a fire both nights, like they had last night and they drank water from the creek and ate berries and Red Fox shot a small deer with his bow and arrow and they roasted it over the fire.

Then Jacob said I am sorry that you almost died looking for us and how bad you and mom had to feel when me and Rebecca left in the water dad, but when Rebecca fell in I had to jump in and I sent Joel to tell you I would be with Rebecca until you found us, where ever it was and I love you dad.

So with tears in his eyes Russell hugged Jacob and Rebecca and then to the Indians surprise Russell hugged both them and said let’s go home, but first Russell asked Red Fox and Flying Crow why they just sat their horses and looked and both Red Fox and Flying Crow said because we did not know if you were friendly and smiled and Russell smiled and shook his head.

Russell said he understood and then said let’s get back because there is two other people who will want to thank you and as Russell said it he heard someone say there they are and there was five cowboys sitting in their saddles.

Then after Russell shook Shermon McBays hand he shook Dutch and Wes Montana’s hand and then Harry Austin’s and Luther Green’s hand and said how grateful he was and then Russell said we have a long way to go, back along this wide stream, but Red Fox and Flying Crow said we go this way and we will be back before sun goes down.

Russell reached down and lifted Rebecca up and sat her down sharing his saddle and then Jacob asked Harry if he could ride with him and as soon as Harry said sure, Jacob was sitting in front of Harry and they started over the small knoll and before they knew it, the Stones place was ahead of them and both Amanda and Joel was running towards them.

Both Jacob and Rebecca was down on the ground and running towards their mom, Amanda and their brother Joel with their dad Russell right behind them and there was five cowboys sniffing and rubbing their eyes and starting to turn their horses the same as the two Indians when Amanda said there is a large pot of coffee ready and a platter of donuts or bear claws and you are all staying.

Then Shermon said we can’t past up bear claws, so they stood at the cabin and thanked God for Jacob and Rebecca being safe and then they thanked Amanda for the bear claws and everyone said Amen.

THE END

THE STONE FAMILY PART 2

CHAPTER 14

Six weeks after Russell Stone brought Jacob and Rebecca home from their almost fatal water ride in the creek, that had turned into a raging river Russell was saying to his wife Amanda the crops are tall and there is 6 more calves in the corral so our stock count is 22 beefs, plus 1 bull and I milk cow and 5 horses plus two mules.

Russell said he knew there were 8 more cows impregnated by their young bull so their stock was growing faster than he had hope for and their crops were almost ready for market and Russell told Amanda about his plans for converting their large wagon into a produce wagon.

Jacob is 14 and Joel is big for his age, the same as Jacob,Russell said and I have mentioned to them about selling produce in town and they both thought it would be a great business adventure so he asked Amanda what she thought. Amanda said she thought it was a good ideal and she also had talked to Rebecca about selling eggs once they got their chickens.

Amanda said why not make a day of it, Sunday after church we can have lunch at Potters café then go see Shermon McBay about a rooster and some laying hens because I would also like to see his horse ranch and meet the women of Autumns Crossing and Russell said it will be a great day.

The next morning after a great breakfast and a third cup of coffee Russell said he was going to run some chicken wire in the back half of their wagon for the chickens they would bring back from Autumns Crossing and also he was going to incorporate a chicken coop with a chicken yard were they would keep their chickens safe from predators after bringing them to their new home.

Then while working on the chicken coop Jacob said to his dad,Thank’s and Russell said for what and Jacob said for everything you do for us like putting me and Joel in the produce business and Rebecca in the egg business and always being there for our family and Russell whipped a tear from his face and said thanks son and told Jacob the tear was sweat then Russell said how proud he was of his three children.

We will reuse this chicken wire after we are threw bringing the chickens back because it will work good in the produce wagon for you and Joel, Russell told Jacob and then Jacob smiled the same as his dad Russell.

Amanda called to Russell and Jacob and said if you are ready for a sandwich lunch is ready and Russell said lets knock off some of this dust and have some lunch and Jacob called back to his mom and said we will be there right after we knock off some of this dust and again Russell smiled at his son.

Then Russell smiled again as he looked at his wives pretty face and Russell said thank you God for this meal and my great life with this great family and five Stones said Amen.

Amanda asked Russell if he planned on stopping at the general store while they were in town and Russell said he would like to get some cracked corn for the chickens and a sack of grain for the horses and Amanda said that was good because she had a list of things she needed.

Russell said besides the cracked corn and grain he could use another shovel and a large sledge hammer and a handle for the shovel and sledge that he already has then looked at Jacob and smiled and Jacob said the old ones were probably weak and Russell said he was sure they were then smiled again.

Amanda said why don’t we bring out the guitar and violin this even and play a little plus sing a couple songs and then the first song they sung was the rolling stones which Amanda wrote the words to while they were making their way on the trail to their new homestead.

After the stones had played and sang a few songs, Russell said he was ready to call it a night because they were going to have a big and busy day tomorrow and they stepped into their beautiful log home cabin to get some sleep.

In the morning they had a small breakfast because they wanted to have lunch at Potters café then the Stones were ready for church and town and Russell was in his only, but nice suit and Amanda was in a very pretty red dress and Rebecca was in a red dress that matched her moms and both Jacob plus Joel were in there Sunday clothes.

Amanda and Russell said at the same time maybe we should stop back by here and change clothes before going to Autumns Crossing and they all agreed that they should, so there Sunday clothes would not get torn and or dirty.

So their first stop was Waco’s church and Big Yack the preacher man was there to greet and welcome them to church as they stepped through the double doors and then after church as they were heading to the general store Amanda said we sure did meet some nice folks at church and I will have to say the preacher won’t have to worry about anyone sleeping during church and smiled.

Russell said Big Yack does preach a sermon and you are right that no one could sleep while he is preaching I am sure of that but it was a good church service and as the Stones reached the general store Mika was turning his closed sign to open and said for Russell and his family to come on in.

Micka asked how they liked Waco and there homestead so far and Russell and Amanda said they thank God every day and then Daniel said she heard about Rebecca falling in the water and then Jacob jumping in after her and she was so thankful when she heard they were safe.

Amanda said it was really scary and she was thankful they weren’t hurt or worst like they did not make it back to her alive but Amanda said God was with them and their two Indian friends pulled Jacob and Rebecca from the water and was bringing them back when Russell found them and then other good men showed up to help which she will always be great full for them.

Russell told Micka he had some cash on him but he would like to set up an account to be paid every month and Micka said the Stones were on a open talley and I always bill on the first Saturday every month he told Russell and Russell said his bill would be paid the first Sunday of every month after church or he could come to town and pay on the first Saturday.

Micka said there was a five day grace period on the bill and Sunday would be fine and not to worry because he always opens after church and that the general store was open seven days a week then Micka introduced his helper Buddy and said if him or Daniel wasn’t there Buddy would be, plus if they ever needed their items delivered it would be no problem.

Then Buddy helped load the items on the wagon and Micka asked about the chicken wire covering the back halve of the wagon and Russell said after going home first and changing clothes they were going to go see Shermon McBay about some laying hens but first we are going to Potters café for lunch and Micka said Potters café has fried chicken on their special with all the sides and drinks for only $2.75 cent each and Amanda said that was a great price and that is what she wanted.

After all five sat down and they all agreed on fried chicken Russell ordered five fried chicken dinners with two black coffees and three with sun tea but Jacob said he would like black coffee the same as his mom and dad and Russell said make it three coffees and two sun teas and smiled then the Stones all agreed the fried chicken was a great choice and they would do it again.

Then Ruby the lady running Potters café said she could always use a few dozen eggs plus the donuts or bear claws would also be something she would buy to serve at the café. She would like eggs and bear claws whenever she could get them plus clean vegetables were always in demand at the café.

Amanda said she and Rebecca would bring Ruby eggs and bear claws every Monday morning and that Jacob and Joel would have fresh vegetables for sale in their vegetable wagon every Monday morning and she could purchase whatever she needed at that time and Rudy was delighted and thanked Amanda.

So after Russell paid their talley at Potters café and Amanda and Ruby had made their plans for eggs and bear claws plus her buying the vegetables off the vegetable wagon, the Stones headed home to change clothes and then go to see Shermon McBay.

As the Stones rode through the large double gate at Autumns Crossing, Amanda was saying wow this is some ranch but don’t get me wrong, I will always love our homestead the best, then they seen Shermon standing on the boardwalk looking out over the lake like he did so often but then Shermon seen the stones and said hello Russell and I am glad you brought your family with you.

Shermon said come on up in the shade and we will have a cup of coffee while we talk and as Russell and Amanda climbed down from the wagon, Jacob and Rebecca plus Joel jumped from the back of the wagon as Cheyenne and Kasandra stepped out onto the boardwalk, then after everyone shook hands Shermon asked who all wanted coffee or sun tea.

Jacob said I would like a cup of coffee Mr.McBAY and thank you and Shermon looked at Russell then back at Jacob and said that is three cups of coffee anyone else want coffee and Rebecca and Joel both asked for sun tea, then Cheyenne asked Amanda if she would like to see the chickens and Amanda said she would.

Shermon asked Jacob how old he was and Jacob said he would be 15 his next birthday Mr.McBay and Shermon said Jacob why don’t you call me shermon or Sherm you have earned it, the way you jumped in that cold water to safe your sister and other things that I have heard about you like starting your own vegetable sales and you drink hot black coffee. You are a good young man but I also hope you enjoy yourself and life, plus your family.

Jacob said I do enjoy my life and family plus good friends like you Sherm and I also like to help my mom and dad because they have did so much for me and Shermon said Jacob, you are wise before your years but that is a good thing and Jacob said and so are you Shermon and thanks and Shermon said wow, you are welcome and said lets decide on some chickens.

Cheyenne told Amanda that she thought Amanda should get a few brown chickens and then white chickens and said because the brown chickens will lay brown eggs and the white chickens would lay white eggs but the brown eggs would maybe be a little larger than the white eggs.

Kasandra said as your chicken get older they will start laying less eggs then when they were younger, but then the older chickens will be good Sunday dinners or if you have more than you need you can sell them to the Potters café because the Potters café sell a lot of chicken dinners and not only on Sundays.

Cheyenne said you will want a rooster or maybe two depending on how many chickens you have because one chicken will lay 250 eggs a year and maybe more for the first 4or 5 years then they will slow down on the eggs they lay so, after five years you need to look at them as chicken dinners.

But remember no rooster no baby chicks and you want to collect your eggs daily so they don’t develop into chicks which takes about 20 to 25 days and those chicks will be laying eggs in about 4 and a half months so then you will be in the egg business plus chicken business, so what eggs you don’t need you can sell the same as older chickens that quit laying.

Russell was telling Shermon that they build a chicken coop with nesting boxes and water containers plus feeders plus then enclosed or fenced in a good size chicken pen so now all they needed was chickens and a rooster.

Shermon said Russell we are not really in the chicken business but we consume a lot of eggs and quite a few older chickens for suppers etc. but we always have extra chickens and eggs because of the amount we have so you mentioned the crop fields and vegetables, so I would like to help you and you can help me.

Russell asked Shermon what he had in mind and shermon said we will always have more chickens then needed so how about a trade chickens for vegetables and I will give you all the young chickens now and later with one or two roosters so your family can be in the egg and chicken business and you will give me some vegetables when you can.

Russell said it sounded good to him so they loaded up 30 laying hens plus 30 young chicks that would be laying eggs very soon plus a young rooster. Russell said he would return tomorrow with a sack of roosting ears plus a sack of potatoes and some greens and Shermon said he thought it was a good trade plus once a week Autumns Crossing would like to purchase vegetable from the vegetable wagon and that Jacob could pick the day to come to Autumns Crossing with the Vegetable wagon.

After hand shacks and hugs the McBAYS and the Stones loaded 60 chickens and one strong young rooster in the wagon. Russell said let’s get our chickens home and told Shermon he would be back tomorrow morning and thanks.

Then on the way home Russell said Jacob you and Joel are in the produce business and Rebecca you are in the egg business and Amanda it sounds like you could sell all the bear claws that you could make then Russell asked and what business am I in? Amanda said Russell you are the one that makes it happen and we could not have what we have if it wasn’t for you,but you are also in the cattle business and Russell said that right I am in the cattle business.

Then the Stones climbed down from their wagon and held hands as they looked to the Heavens and Russell said thank you God for all we have and all that you are going to give us, in Jesus name we pray AMEN

THE END

THE RUSTLERS

CHAPTER 15

Dakota was at the large gate and called to Mario and Elrod to come over to where he was and showed them some tracks and said it looks like someone has led a few horse’s away .Elrod plus Mario both agreed it looked like two horses with riders and 8 without riders.

Dakota said it has to be rustlers so I think we should follow their trail and catch them red handed with our horses. Elrod said the tracks are not very old and Mario said let’s see where these tracks lead.

Then about two hours later Dakota held his hand up and pointed to a guard that was posted on top of a canyon wall but he had his eyes closed so Dakota said let’s leave our horses and make our way over to that canyon and see what’s down there.

When the three cowboys made their way over to the canyon wall and looked in the canyon, they were shocked and Dakota said this canyon is full of horses and beefs that these rustlers have held here and there are four rustlers that I can see plus two more leading beefs to the opening and the one sleeping makes seven

Elrod said we will need more guns plus Shermon needs to know about this so you two be real careful and I will be back with help and as Elrod headed for more guns Dakota said he would like to sneak down and check brands and Mario said you know some of the brands are A/C and I am sure the rest will have other brands, but if you have to go down there be very careful.

One rustler spit a mouth full of tobacco juice then wiped his mouth with the back of his hand, then dismounted his horse and walked over to where the four rustlers were and after a minute he said to one of the outlaws, you could talk a coyote and a rabbit into being friend as much as you talk.

Mario was close enough to hear one of the rustlers say maybe, but he could not talk his way out of the beating and Mario noticed the bruises and cuts on the man’s face, then Mario knew he was looking at the man that gave the beating, because the rustler that just stepped out in the open, looked seven feet tall and had a thick chest and shoulders wider than any Mario had ever seen before.

The tall rustler’s eyes were cold black and he was starring at the guy who was talking then with a very large hand he smacked him so hard he went down but as he stood up again he pulled the makings and started to roll a cigarette and then he said as he rolled the cigarette, Tallman you will get your someday and I would pay to see it.

Then the Tallman said if you keep talking you won’t see the sun come up in the morning and then a rustler who you knew was the boss and the leader of the gang said that is enough Spicer and he had his hand resting on his Colt 44 when he said it, but Spicer said Reed maybe I need to whip you and Reed said you try it and I will fill you full of holes.

Spicer said you would like that wouldn’t you Duncan and so would you Oliver but don’t hold your breath, because I am no fool but someday I might catch Reed without his gun and until then I can wait, then Reed said whenever you are ready to die try it then walked away and sat on his heels at the small fire and poured himself a cup of coffee.

Mario seen Dakota making his way back, then when Dakota came up to where Mario was Dakota said there is quite a few A/C brands, some J/W brands which are Jays Way and then 5/S which would be the five stones brand who had just bought the Millers homestead plus there are two other brands.

Mario said I know the J/W brand but not the 5/S brand and Dakota said I was there when Russell stone asked Remington to make him the branding iron 5/S because there is five people in the Stone family Russell and his wife Amanda and then two boys and one girl .

Dakota asked Mario if he recognized any of the rustlers and Mario said he did not, but he said they are a bad salty lot and it seems like none of them get along then Mario asked Dakota if he knew any of them and Dakota said Reed was at Autumns Crossing maybe two weeks ago.

Reed came up to where me and uncle Sherm was on the boardwalk, he kept looking around and now I believe he was looking at the horses and who know what else, he started to dismount his horse when uncle Sherm said, stay in your horses saddle and when uncle Sherm does not say get down and have a cup of coffee you know there is a reason.

Reed said you aren’t very friendly and uncle Sherm said that is because I don’t like you and I know your kind, so just turn your horse around and leave the way you came and Reed said you have many horses and uncle Sherm said and we have a lot of guns and then uncle Sherm had his Colt 44 in his hand and told Reed to leave.

Then as Reed left he kept looking over his back and uncle Sherm said Codeman that is not a man that you can trust and that was all he said but I felt the same way as uncle sherm.

Mario said Sherm was right because here he is with his gang of rustlers and it looks like they are steeling horses and beefs and are planning to trail them to Mexico because I heard Reed say they were heading for the boarder at first light.

Dakota said we know they are heading to Mexico and there will be a lot of dust but Mario I think you need to back trail and find Shermon and let him know because we have to stop them before they get to Mexico.

Mario shook hands with Dakota and said be careful Dakota and don’t get to close because I am sure they would kill you then ask questions and then Marico said for Dakota to watch his backside and he would be back with help then Mario swung up in his horses saddle and lead his horse Trigger down the trail away from the canyon.

It was almost four hours before Marico seen dust up ahead and was hoping it was Shermon and Marico was glad to see it was Shermon and Dutch Montana the marshal in front then Kid Montana and Luther Green plus Elrod and when Mario road up to the posy the first thing Shermon asked was were Dakota was and if he was okay.

Mario said he was when I left him about 4 hours ago, then Mario said the rustlers was ready to trail the horses and beefs to Mexico and Dakota is trailing them probably about 10miles back from here and said for us to look for their dust.

Shermon said I wish Dakota would have came back with you, but I know Dakota would not leave the rustlers so we had better rest these horses, then get after them because they won’t be moving very fast with all the stock they are pushing but we don’t want them to get to Mexico either.

While we rest these horses we could have some beef jerky and a cup of coffee but as soon as these horses are rested, I what to get back on their trail so Kid Montana and Luther Green gathered a little dead wood for a small fire and Mario and Elrod lead the horses down to the creek to let them drink some water then left them to graze on some green grass.

Dutch Montana the marshal asked Mario if they got close enough to hear any of the rustler’s names or see their faces and Mario said he sure did and the leaders name was Reed and there was a Duncan and a Oliver plus a very large man that’s name was Spicer.

Then Mario said they argue all the time and Spicer wants to fight everybody and has beat one guy pretty bad and Reed threatened to shoot Spicer full of holes. Shermon said men like that don’t get along with anyone plus they can’t be trusted

Shermon said the horses should be rested so let’s get back on the rustlers trail because not only we have rustlers to deal with and stock to recover, Dakota is out there and if we don’t run our horses to hard we should still catch up to Dakota in a short time.

After a couple hours the posy seen a cloud of dust, then they spotted Dakota waving his arms and Dutch said they must be up ahead but the sun is going down so they will more than likely be stopping for the night and then as they pulled up to where Dakota was Dakota confirmed the rustlers had stopped for the night.

Dutch said let’s give them a little time to fall asleep then we will go in, so after waiting a little more than an hour Dutch was standing in the light of the camp fire and all the sleeping rustlers woke up with a gun being held to their heads when Dutch said you did not post a guard and now it is time to wake up.

Tie them tight and take their guns, then we will take them back in the morning Dutch said with all the stolen stock. Reed said Marshal you won’t make it back because I will get this rope off before the sun comes up and Dutch said tie him twice then let’s post a couple night guards threw out the night.

Dutch said you all have a choice how you ride back to town because it will be up to you weather you ride sitting in your horses saddle or wrapped in a blanket and thrown over your saddle, because horse sealing is a hanging offends and I promise you if I have any trouble with any one of you, we have enough rope and you will be hung for horse sealing.

The rustlers looked at one another but did not say anything because they knew Dutch mend what he said and they also knew, they hung people for stealing horses so it was a quite night and a quite ride all the way to town.

Late that day there was 14 horses riding into town and there were 7 riders which were rustlers and 7 brave cowboys and with them and they were pushing 40 beefs and 32 horses with 4 different brands, then they put the stock in the towns corral and locked the 7 rustlers in jail cells.

Then Shermon shook the marshal hand and said Dutch you did a real good job and it is hard to believe there was no gun play and we all made it back and with the stock and then 7 cowboys bowed their heads and thanked god and 7 cowboys said Amen.

THE END

LAREDO

CHAPTER 16

Laredo walked his horse up to the water trough and said take a good drink lucky then I will turn you lose so you can chew on some of that buffalo grass, but as he said it he heard a woman say have a drink then move on before my husband returns and Laredo turned to see who he was talking to.

Laredo first thought was she was way to pretty to be left out here alone but then as he looked past her he could see the roof needed mended and a shutter was hanging by one hinge and Laredo said madam it looks like you could use some help and the woman said I don’t need any help and there is another gun pointed at you threw that window.

Then Laredo said I see that gun barrel and I am not here to cause you any trouble, but like I said it looks like this place could use my help and again the woman said when my husband returns he will take care of the repairs.

So Laredo said I am a retired lawman and I don’t know how long your husband has been gone, but madam I don’t think he is coming back and I have the time to help you, if you let me and you can call me Laredo and I believe I smell coffee. I would sit on the porch and drink it if you offered me a cup.

Then the lady said my name is Brandie and my son’s name is Scotty and we were getting ready to eat, so you can drink your coffee inside while you eat because I will not turn a retired lawman away. Laredo said thank you Brandie but let me knock off some of this dust first then I will be in.

Laredo stepped inside the cabin off the boardwalk and was impressed with what he seen, because the cabin was neat and very clean and also the cabin had a wood floor and not a dirt floor, plus there was a large fireplace with a pot of beef stew cooking and it smell good, because Laredo had been eating beans and beef jerky for some time.

Brandie set the pot of stew on the table with a platter of thick sliced bread and said Scotty this is Laredo. Scotty said hi but was still holding the rifle and Laredo said hi Scotty and you don’t need the rifle because I am your friend or I will be if you let me

Scotty said Laredo there is no bullets in this rifle and Laredo said Scotty have you ever shot that rifle and Scotty said no, but I am 8 years old and I could if my mom would let me. Laredo said Scotty I think everyone that lives out here and is old enough to pick up a gun should know how to shoot.

Then Scotty said mom I need to be able to shoot my rifle in case you need my help one day and Laredo said Scotty if it is okay with your mom I will show you how to use that rifle after we eat. Scotty looked at his mom and his mom said after we eat and do the dishes you can and Scotty said thanks mom and was grinning from ear to ear.

After eating his full of beef stew and two large slices of bread that had whipped butter spread thick on them, Laredo said this was one of the best meals that I have had in a long time, but I could use another cup of that coffee Brandie because it also is better than any coffee that I have drank out on the trail.

Brandie poured Laredo and herself a cup of coffee and then asked how long have you been on this trail as you called it and Laredo said he kind of loss time but it has been awhile then Scotty said when can we shoot the rifles and Laredo said after we do the dishes.

Then Brandie said Laredo you and Scotty can load the rifles and she handed Laredo a box of 44longs and said you can set up some target’s on the corral’s top boards to shoot at if you want and I will be right out, so Laredo picked up the two rifles and the box of44 longs and said to Scotty come on and I will show you how to load these rifles, then we will set up some targets to shoot at.

No sooner than the rifles were loading and Laredo had set up eight cans on the top board of the corral, Brandie stepped out on to the boardwalk and Laredo was showing Scotty how to hold the rifle then pull the trigger slow as he aim the rifle. Scotty’s first shot missed but his second and third hit the cans.

Then Laredo asked Brandie if she would want to try and hit a can and Brandie said she would and Laredo handed Brandie a rifle and said be careful it is loaded and asked Brandie if she wanted to walk down towards the corral and Brandie said I will shoot from here and shot twice and knocked two cans off the fence and into the air and Laredo said that was good shooting.

Scotty said my mom and dad used to shoot cans when I was younger and my dad said the same as you did, a person needs to be able to use a gun if they were going to live on this land and Laredo said Scotty I am sorry your dad was not here to show you, but he sounds like a good man and Scotty looked down at his feet wiped his face and said he was, but I don’t think he is ever coming back.

Laredo said your dad has been gone for awhile and this beautiful land can be a hard land at times and Scotty I believe your mom knows your dad is not coming back and I am not your dad but like I told your mom, I will be happy to stay on and help you both because all I have is time on my hands.

Then Brandie said I have something to show you and Laredo figured Brandie wanted to drop the subject about Scotty’s dad so he said what do have to show me and Brandie said besides the two rifles and this double barrel shot gun I have this.

Then Brandie handed Laredo a carved wood box and Laredo opened it and there was the most beautiful hand gun Laredo had ever seen and Brandie said her husband had bought it and never fired it and she thought one day she would give it to Scotty and Laredo said he thought that was a good ideal and then when she was ready he would show Scotty how to handle the beautiful Colt 44.

Then Scotty said Laredo it’s your turn to shoot and Laredo tuned towards the cans and as he did he drew his Colt and knocked a can into the air then hit it again as it falling and Scotty’s eyes were as big as the cans on the corral top rail and Scotty said now that is shooting.

Scotty said I guess you need to be able to shoot to be a lawman and Laredo said Brandie, I was a marshal in some of the worst cow towns for more than 20 years plus I guided the largest known wagon train threw Indian territory and spent a couple years as the only gun on the Tumbleweed prison wagon but now I am older and it is time to let the younger men make the law work plus, my real name is Lee Morgan but I took the name as Laredo because I thought it would be safer.

Brandie said Lee Morgan or Laredo it sounds like you have lived some kind of life and I would like to hear more about the live you have lived and Laredo said Brandie I will be happy to tell you before I die. Scotty said you are dying and Laredo said Scotty we all die someday but I have no plans of dying just let.

Scotty you need to wash up Brandie said because time has flew by and it is about bed time and then she looked at Laredo and Laredo said I will wash up and throw my bedroll down in the loft in that barn and see you in the morning and Brandie smiled and said goodnight Laredo and stepped inside.

As Brandie walked by Scotty’s room she heard him saying his prayers and stopped to listen and heard Scotty say thank you God for sending Laredo to us and if you will help my mom get use to the idea of my dad never coming back then she heard Scotty softly crying as he said Amen and she stepped away from his door as she wiped tears from her eyes and she said, yes God thank you for Laredo (Lee Morgan) and my son Amen.

The next morning Scotty woke up to the sound of wood being chopped and Scotty looked out his window and seen Laredo set the ax down and take the cup of coffee that his mom handed him and Scotty was amazed at the pile of wood already copped.

Scotty pushed up his window and said Laredo I am glad that you are still here and Laredo said, Scotty I promise you i will never leave and not say good bye first and Scotty said I will be right there to help as he grabbed his clothes and pulled them on and then when Scotty stepped out onto the boardwalk he started helping Laredo stack the fire wood..

Then Brandie came to the door and said it was time to eat so Laredo and Scotty dusted off and headed for the door and as they stepped in Brandy said Laredo it has been awhile since me and Scotty has went to town, but I need coffee and a few other things and Laredo said, then after breakfast we will go to town, because I need some cut nails and another hammer would be nice to have.

After breakfast Laredo said he would hitch the wagon up to his horse and after he did Brandy and Scotty were standing on the boardwalk and Laredo could not help from saying how pretty Brandie looked and then Brandie felt her face get red and so did Laredo feel that his face might be getting a little red, so he said, Scotty look at you all dressed up.

Scotty smiled and said my dad gave me this hat and someday I will get me another one and hang this one up in my room and Laredo said that sounds like a good idea Scotty and asked if he was ready to go to town and Scotty climbed in the back of the wagon and Laredo helped Brandie up in the wagon seat.

Laredo climbed up and as he sat down he sad let’s go to town Lucky and Scotty asked Laredo why his horses name was Lucky and Laredo said lucky was very young when two wolves tried to sneak up on him, and his mom got between him and the two wolves and they took his mom down but she saved him from the wolves. I shot the two wolves, but I was too late to save Luckys mom.

But you saved lucky so I would say he is lucky and that is a good name for him and then Laredo said, that didn’t take long because we are in town and Laredo climbed down and threw the rains over the hitching rail and told Lucky to stay, then he stepped around the wagon and helped Brandie down.

Scotty jumped from the back of the wagon and almost stepped in front of a horse and rider and the rider yelled at Scotty but continued down the street and tied his horse to the hitching rail then stepped into the saloon.

Brandie had seen Laredo give the rider a hard look and the rider starred back at Laredo for what seem like a full minute, before he stepped in the saloon and Brandie was glad there was nothing else said.

Laredo said let’s see what this general store has to offer and him and Brandie plus Scotty entered the store and Laredo was picking out a hammer and Brandie was picking up a sack of coffee when the clerk handed Scotty a large peppermint stick and Scotty stepped outside and as Brandy and Laredo was paying the talley they heard Scotty yell leave me alone.

So Brandie and Laredo both ran for the front door of the general store and they seen two cowboys and one was the cowboy who almost ran over Scotty and he had Scotty by the arm and Brandie said let go of my son and the second cowboy then said why don’t you make us pretty lady and the first cowboy said you ran out in front my horse and he almost threw me off and he shook Scotty.

Scotty said you are hurting my arm. Laredo hit the cowboy in his face with the hammer that he had just bought and the second cowboy started to draw his gun and Laredo hit the cowboy with the hammer and broke his hand and the gun slid back in the cowboy’s holster, then the first cowboy that Laredo hit in the face with the new hammer went for his gun and Laredo shot the gun out of the cowboy’s hand.

There was two other cowboys standing close and they were looking down the barrel of Laredo gun and Laredo said you were laughing, so I guess you were in on this and they both threw up their hands and said no way then one of the two said did you see how fast his gun was in his hand? You know he’s no tinhorn.

Lee it looks like you have everything under control here, the marshal said as he walked up and then the marshal told the four cowboys they were lucky because Lee could have sent them all to an early grave it he wanted too.

Then Laredo said Matt I have gone by the name of Laredo ever since I left ST. LOUEY and Matt said Lee you can go by whatever name you want to, because you know if people knew who you really were they might want to avoid you and it might save you some trouble, but then again if the gunslingers new you were here they might show up and try to put a notch in their gun.

Brandie said Marshal Laredo will be at my place because he has offered to help me and Scotty and Laredo already has and I said he could stay and Brandie said is there anything else and Laredo said there is and reached behind him and said Scotty I got this cowboy hat for you and I hope you like it and Scotty said he did and as he said thanks he hugged Laredo and Brandie smiled and whipped a tear.

Then Brandie said I have accepted that my husband Tom is never coming back and weather he was killed on the trail or decided to leave me and Scotty I don’t know but we can use Laredo’s help and he needs a place to stay and then the marshal said Brandie I have known Lee for some time and I will say he is a good man and I think you know it.

So the marshal told the town’s people go on about their own business because there was nothing else to see here and he Shook Laredo’s hand and tipped his hat to Brandie then walked back to his office as Laredo and Brandie plus Scotty headed out of town and back to Brandie’s place.

The next few days Laredo fixed the porch roof and repaired all the shutters and worked on the 3 rail corral and chopped a lot of fire wood then Brandie said Laredo thanks for all your hard work, but tomorrow I would like you to take a break and the three of us to go down to the lake and we will have a picnic and Scotty can fish or play in the water and Laredo said that sounded good.

When the sun came up Brandie was busy putting their lunch together for the picnic they were going on at the lake and Laredo had a couple poles he made with line and wire hooks and as Laredo started to reach for the door Brandie came out through the door so fast that Brandie stumbled into Laredo and he caught her in his arms then Laredo held Brandie for a full minute then released her and said he was sorry and Brandie said it was her fault.

Laredo showed Brandie the poles he had made and Brandie was telling Laredo about the lunch she had made, but they both were thinking of what had just happened and then they both smiled to their self’s, but did not mention it out loud and Brandie asked Laredo if he wanted a cup of coffee now while they were waiting on Scotty and Laredo said he would like a cup.

Then as Laredo and Brandie was drinking their coffee Brandie said Laredo when you are ready I would like to hear more about you and why you chose to live the life you lived. Laredo said it was a long story and he did not know where to start and Brandie said start at the beginning, when you were a kid like Scotty then Scotty stepped out of the cabin on to the boardwalk.

Scotty had on cowboy boots and short pants plus his new cowboy hat and both Brandie and Laredo smiled and Scotty asked is there something wrong with what I am wearing, because I have never been on a picnic before and Laredo said Scotty you look find and people can wear whatever they want on a picnic, so are you ready and Scotty said he was born ready and smiled.

The three of them walked towards the lake and they picked a nice spot under a large cotton wood tree on a small knoll close to the lake and Brandie said lets spread this blanket on the ground and I have biscuits and gravy for us now and we will have a sandwich later.

After eating the biscuits and gravy and pouring a second cup of coffee Laredo said Scotty we can fish now or after I tell my story of when I was a kid like you and why I picked to be a lawman when I got older and Scotty said lets fish later Laredo because like my mom I would like to hear your story.

Laredo said okay my name is Lee Morgan but I took the name of Laredo a couple years back because I did not want tin horns trying to make a name for their self’s at my expense and what I mean by that is, Scotty there are people out there that will track a fast gun so they can maybe shoot it out with the fast gun and with luck but a notch in their gun which is a tin horns way.

Scotty said you mean they would try to kill you Laredo and Laredo said that is right Scotty because they have way too much free time on their hands and most don’t have the brains to fill a small coffee cup, but that is just the way it is and by going by the name of Laredo maybe it won’t happen.

So when I was six years old and two years younger than you Scotty I used to go to the state prison every Sunday to see my dad and Scotty asked was your dad a guard at the prison and Laredo said no Scotty my dad was in prison for killing my mom then Laredo looked at Brandie who said nothing.

Scotty said for killing your mom. WHY did your dad kill your mom and Brandie said Scotty let Laredo tell his story and Laredo looked at Brandie and said I want you both to know the whole story of my past so anyway after two full years of going to the state prison to see my dad for a short visit the day came where I was told I could stay and visit with my dad the whole day and Scotty said that’s good, the whole day.

We’ll all the other times I visited my dad we were in two separate rooms with a small glass window between us but this time when I arrived at the prison, the guard opened the large heavy door and we walked down a long hallway to another steel door and then when he unlocked the door the guard said for me to go inside.

I stepped inside and my dad was there and there was a small window high on the wall where light was coming through and then there were two chairs and a table and my dad was sitting in one of the chairs and asked me to sit in the other one, so I did and then my dad was asking me a lot of questions.

My dad asked how I was doing and if I had any plans and then said whatever you do Lee, me and your mom will be proud of you no matter what you chose to do with your life, but I hope you stay on the right side of the law and somehow my dad looked different and he was talking fast and I thought a little silly, but he kept talking even when I didn’t say anything.

I was eight years old and I had no plans and I was starring at the floor, but then I guess I fell asleep, because when I raised my head off my arm there was bright light shinning threw the small window and my dad was in leg shackles and had his hands tied behind him and the guard said it is time Mister Morgan and as the guard led my dad away.

My dad was saying I love you son and we know this is for the best and I don’t want you to blame yourself because it was not your fault and Brandie noticed a tear in Laredo’s eye and said you don’t have to say anything more Laredo. Laredo said I have never talked to anyone about this before and I feel I need to tell you the hold story.

Brandie said if you are sure you want to and Laredo said I am sure so, my dad was saying I am sorry that I won’t be there to watch you grown into a good man and I won’t be able to help you with any problems that you might have but remember I love you son.

Then as my dad kept walking up the wood steps he was saying don’t blame

Yourself Lee, I love you son then when they slipped a black cloth over my dad’s head I guess I lost it because I was yelling, I love you dad and when you were shooting at the bad guys and I ran towards you and mom stepped in front of me and took the bullet that I would have took, because I tried to help, but couldn’t and I was in the way and you shot mom because of me.

So then I heard the floor dropped from under my dad and my dad’s neck was snapped from the rope around it and I cried and I said I hope you heard me say I LOVE YOU DAD and Laredo was holding back his tears as both Brandie and Scotty was hugging him and they both had tears running down their faces and Laredo said hey I didn’t mean to make you cry.

So Laredo said I learned to shoot and I learned good and maybe to good but I still became a marshal and like I said I was a marshal in some of the meanest cow towns were I got shot from time to time but most of the time it was in the back or from a coward standing in the shadows and then some sawbones would dig it out and sometimes I used gun powder to cauterize the wounds after I took the bullet out myself when there was no one else to do it.

Then Laredo said and before becoming a marshal a number of times, I did trail the largest wagon train through Indian country heading west even when there was no trail to trail until we made one of our own and there is a story there in itself and my last two years before I started to drift I was a one man gun on a prison wagon called the tumbleweed and that was probably the worst job I ever took.

And if you both want me to stay, I will and I will tell you the rest of my lives story but if you would rather me leave I would hate to, but I would and Brandie and Scotty said Laredo this where God wants you to be and we love you and you are not going anywhere because our home is your home.

THE END

SHORT STORIES OF WESTERN PIONEERS #2

BY: BOB SELF

BOOKS BY BOB SELF

THE MCBAYS

THE MCBAYS AT AUTUMNS CROSSING

THE MCBAYS ACE ANGEL COMES TO TOWN

SHORT STORIES OF WESTERN PIONEERS

SHORT STORIES OF WESTERN PIONEERS BOOK 2

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK TO MY WIFE KAREN OF 50 PLUS YEARS

WHO HAS ALWAYS STOOD BY MY SIDE AND BELIEVED IN ME

PLUS MY DAUGHTER AUTUMN WHO HAS BEEN THERE FOR

ME AND HAS BEEN A LARGE PART IN MY FIVE BOOKS

THEN ALSO MY GRANDSON DAKOTA WHO I COULD NOT BE

MORE PROUD OF AND I THANK MY WIFE MY DAUGHTER MY

GRANDSON PLUS GOD FOR THE LIFE I HAVE LIVED AND I WANT

TO THANK YOU BOB SELF THE COLLINSVILLE AURTHOR

WATCH FOR MY JOKE BOOK