

The Yellowjacket Feud

By Zane Grey

The stirring romance of an Eastern girl and a Western girl—and a thrilling war of the cattle country

The Story Thus Far: For years the Hash Knife Outfit, a daring gang of cattle rustlers, has been stealing cattle from old Jim Traft's Yellowjacket ranch and disposing of them through one Bambridge, a crooked ranchman. Feeling that to continue operations may be dangerous, Jed Stone, noted outlaw who leads the gang, asks his men to vote on the question of whether to leave the country or stay and face the trouble. The gang votes to stay.

At this juncture, "Young Jim" Traft, old Jim's nephew from the East, who is boss of his men—the Diamond Outfit—has a serious talk with his uncle. He has no proof, but he strongly suspects the truth, feels sure that Bambridge is receiving and selling his uncle's cattle; he proposes to get to the bottom of the matter.

Stone's men are well-armed, fearless dead-shots. Trouble with them is sure to mean bloodshed. But Young Jim, too, has a courageous, straight-shooting crew—Slinger Dunn, a hardy backwoodsman, Curly Prentis, Ring Locke, and a number of others, all of whom can give a good account of themselves in a fight. With their loyal support, he can "clean up" the Yellowjacket. And, once cleared of outlaws, the ranch will be his and Slinger Dunn's—in accordance with a promise made by the wise old owner!

As the war clouds gather, Jim receives an unexpected letter from his eighteen-year-old sister, Gloriana. He reads it with mingled emotions. She has, it appears, developed a weak lung. The doctors have told her she must leave the East and go to a high, dry climate. She is coming West—to her Uncle Jim's!

Wondering, Jim reads the letter over. "Sounds like Glory, yet somehow it doesn't," he says. "I wonder if she is really ill. . . . Or in any kind of trouble. . . . It was Glory's affairs with boys that stuck in my craw."

And then he thinks of Molly, Slinger Dunn's thoroughly Western sister! A lovely girl, Molly, but far different from that suave, sophisticated sister of his. He wonders how she'll receive the news. He hopes gladly, for once Molly had saved his life; and he, chivalrous gentleman that he is, can't bear the thought of having her suffer through contrast with a girl like Gloriana.

II

THE difficulty, it seemed to Jim, would be serious. Glory was bright and clever. She had graduated from high school at seventeen. She could do most anything well, and had a genius for designing and making modish dresses and bonnets. Molly, on the other hand, was a shy little wood-mouse. She had never had any advantages. Two years at a backwoods school had been all the opportunity for education that had ever come to her. She was exceedingly sensitive about her lack of knowledge and her crudeness. The situation would be a delicate one, for Molly in her way was quite as proud as Gloriana was in hers. "I'll trust to Molly's generous heart and the Western bigness of her," soliloquized Jim. "In the end Glory will love her. That I'll gamble on."

Jim lay in bed longer than usual next morning and when he finally rolled out, a white glistening world of snow greeted him from his window. The storm had gone and a clear blue sky and bright sun smiled coldly down upon the white-fringed pines and peaks. He did not take more than a glance, however, because his room seemed full of zero weather. He had to break the ice in his bucket to get water to wash, and he was far from lethargic about it. "I don't know about this high, dry altitude," he soliloquized. "It'd freeze the nose off a polar bear."

The halls of the big ranch-house were like a barn. Jim rushed to the living room. A fine fire blazed in the wide fireplace.

"Mawnin', Jim," came in Molly's

slow, drawling voice from somewhere.

"Hello. . . . Oh, there you are," exclaimed Jim, gladly, as he espied her at the corner window, gazing out upon the wintry scene. "I was sure you'd be snug in bed. Come here, darling."

Molly had not yet grown used to the impelling power of that word and she seemed irresistibly drawn. She wore a red coat over her blouse, the color of which matched her cheeks. In the few weeks since her arrival at the ranch she had lost some of the brown tan of the backwoods, which only added to her attractiveness. The gold glints in her dark curly hair caught the sunshine, as it streamed through the window. Her eyes had that dark, shy, glad light that always thrilled Jim. And her lips, like red ripe cherries, were infinitely provocative.

"OH—Jim—" she gasped, "someone might come in."

"Kiss me, Molly Dunn," he replied, giving her a little shake. "Don't you love me this morning?"

"Why, Jim—of course."

"Then?"

Molly's kisses were rather few and far between, which made them so much more precious. She was strong and sweet, this little girl of the Cibique, and she had earned Jim's worship.

"There!" she whispered shyly, and slipped out of his arms. "Gee, your hands are cold. An' your nose like ice."

"Molly, I've news for you," he said, thinking it wise to broach the subject in mind.

"Yes?"



"Gloriana, this is Curly Prentis, one of my cowboys—and quite a cattleman in

"My sister is coming out West. She'll get here Monday."

"Oh, how lovely! Gloriana May! You told me about her—how pretty she is an' what a little devil. . . . Jim, thet'll be nice for you to have her heah. I'm glad."

Jim hugged her quite out of all reason. "Lord, but you're a sweet, fine, square kid! I just love you to death."

"J-Jim—let me go. . . . I see no call for rastlin' me."

"No, I daresay you don't. Please excuse my violence. . . . Molly, my sister is in poor health, so Mother writes. And she's sending Glory out to get well."

"I'm sorry. What ails her, Jim?"

"Weak lung, Mother said."

"Jim, suppose she doesn't like me?" "Molly! She can't help but adore you."

"I hope so, Jim. But I shore wish I had a little more time to study—to improve myself. I'd hate to have her ashamed of me," replied Molly, plaintively.

Jim could only assure her by tender word and argument that she was making a mountain out of a molehill, with the result that Molly's heart seemed

satisfied if her mind was not. They went out to breakfast, and Jim hugged her disgracefully in the dark cold corridor. When Molly escaped into the dining room a less keen eye than that of the old rancher, who stood back to the blazing fire, could have made amusing deductions.

"Mawnin', Uncle Jim. I—I been chased by a bear," laughed Molly.

"Good mornin', lass. Shore I seen thet. . . . Howdy, son. What do you think of Arizona weather?"

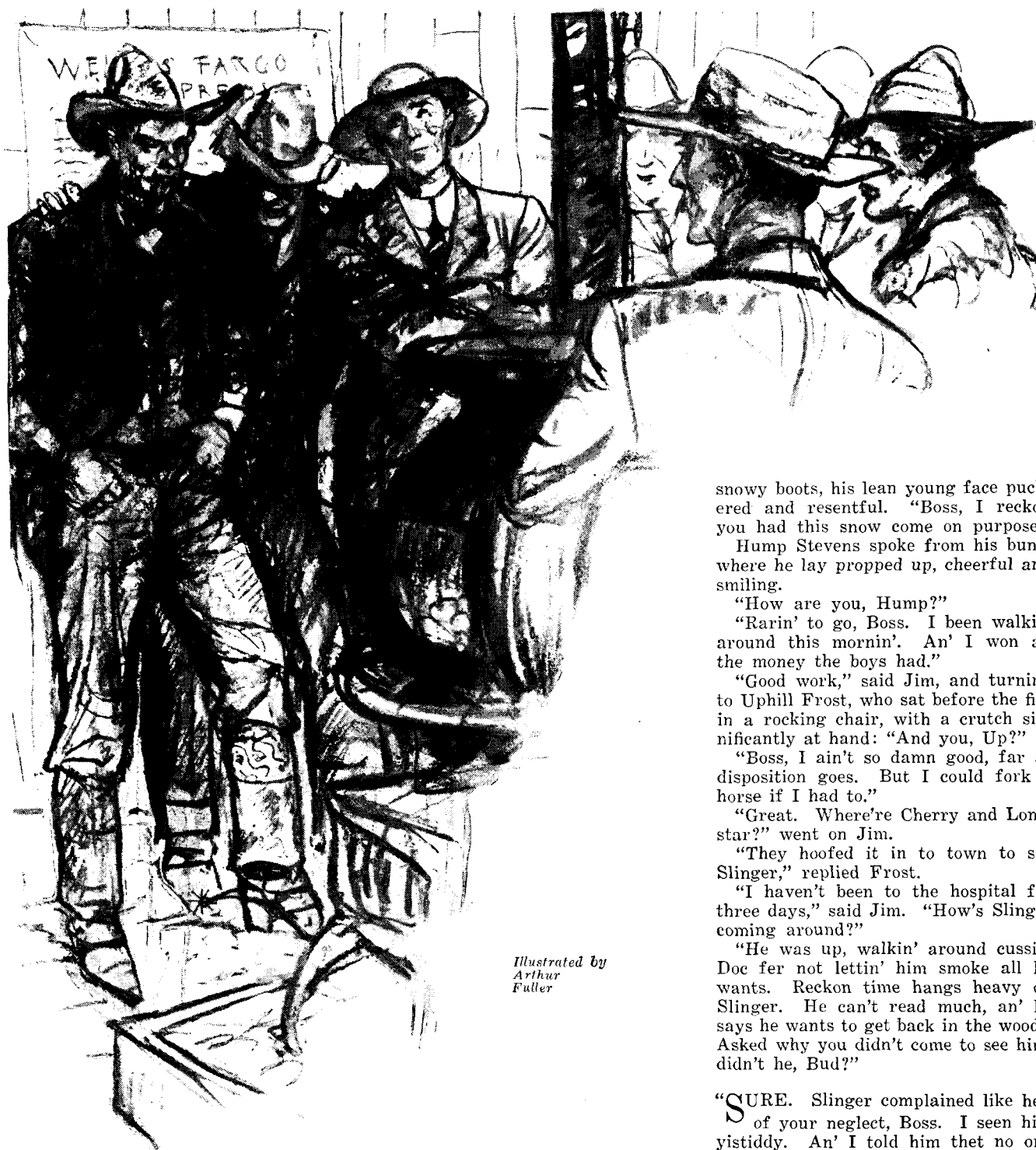
"Terrible. And you're sending me to camp out after Thanksgiving!" protested Jim. It seemed to him there was going to be good reason for him to stay in Flagerstown.

"WAL, Yellowjacket is five or six thousand feet lower, an' if it snows it melts right off. . . . Son, have you told the little lady your news?"

"Yes. And there's further proof she's an angel."

"Oh, Jim, such nonsense!" she protested. "Bein' glad with you don't—doesn't make me no angel. I keep tellin' you thet I'm shore not related to no angel yet."

"Haw! Haw! I'll bet he finds thet



his own right," introduced Jim. "Curly—my sister." Curly doffed his sombrero

out, Molly," put in the rancher, heartily. "Reckon if I'd ever been keen on girls I'd have wanted one that would scratch an' bite."

Molly blushed. "Uncle, I hope I've not got that much cat in me," she said, anxiously.

JIM made good his promise, and when he had Molly bundled in the sleigh beside him, her cheeks like roses and her dark curls flying, he was as proud as she was delighted. Much to his satisfaction all the young people of Flagers-town appeared to be out sleigh riding also; and many a girl who had made Jim uncomfortable when he was a tenderfoot saw him now with Molly.

They had lunch at the hotel and drove home in the brilliant sunshine, with the white world so glaring that they could hardly face it. All too soon they arrived at the ranch.

"Thet was glorious," said Molly, breathing deeply. "Jim, I'm shore a lucky girl. I'm so—so happy it hurts. I'm afraid it won't last."

"Sure it'll last," replied Jim, laughing. "Unless you're a fickle little jade."

"Jim Traft, I'm as—as true as steel,"

she retorted, vehemently. "It's only you may tire of me—or—or your family won't accept me."

"Say, you're not marrying my family."

The word marriage or any allusion to it always silenced Molly. She betrayed that she saw the days fleeting by toward the inevitable, and her joy submerged any doubts.

Jim drove around to the barn. As they went by the big bunk-house Bud Chalfack poked his ruddy cherub face out of the door and yelled: "Hey, Boss, thet ain't fair."

Jim yelled back: "Get yourself a girl, you cowboy."

At the barn he handed the reins to a Mexican stable boy, helped Molly out, and escorted her to the ranch-house.

Then he walked down to the bunk-house, opened the door and went in. The big room was cheerful with its crackling fire, and amazingly clean, considering it harbored the hardest cowboy outfit in Arizona.

"Howdy, boys," he sang out. "You needn't come an' crow over us," answered Bud. "Sleigh ridin' with Molly Dunn!"

Jackson Way looked askance at Jim's

snowy boots, his lean young face puckered and resentful. "Boss, I reckon you had this snow come on purpose."

Hump Stevens spoke from his bunk, where he lay propped up, cheerful and smiling.

"How are you, Hump?"

"Rarin' to go, Boss. I been walkin' around this mornin'. An' I won all the money the boys had."

"Good work," said Jim, and turning to Uphill Frost, who sat before the fire in a rocking chair, with a crutch significantly at hand: "And you, Up?"

"Boss, I ain't so damn good, far as disposition goes. But I could fork a horse if I had to."

"Great. Where're Cherry and Lone-star?" went on Jim.

"They hoofed it in to town to see Slinger," replied Frost.

"I haven't been to the hospital for three days," said Jim. "How's Slinger coming around?"

"He was up, walkin' around cussin' Doc fer not lettin' him smoke all he wants. Reckon time hangs heavy on Slinger. He can't read much, an' he says he wants to get back in the woods. Asked why you didn't come to see him, didn't he, Bud?"

SURE. Slinger complained like hell of your neglect, Boss. I seen him yistiddy. An' I told him thet no one never seen you no more. Then he cussed Molly fer not fetchin' you."

"I'm sorry. I'll see him tomorrow," replied Jim, contritely.

Curly Prentis, the handsome blond young giant of the Diamond Outfit, sat at a table writing with absorbed violence. He alone had not appeared to note Jim's entrance.

"Curly, I've news for you."

But Curly gave no sign that he heard. Whereupon Jim addressed Bud. "What ails Curly?"

"Same old sickness, Boss. I've seen Curly doubled up with thet fer five years, about every few months. Mebbe it's a little wuss than usual, fer his gurl chucked him an' married Wess Stebbins."

"No!"

"Sure's a fack. They run off to Winslow. You see Curly come the high an' mighty once too often. Caroline bucked. An' they had it hot an' heavy. Curly told her to go where it was hot—so she says—an' he marched off with his haid up. . . . Wal, Carrie took him at his word. Thet is—he'd unhooked her bridle. Wess always was looney over her, an' she married him, which we all reckon was a darned good thing. Now Curly is writin' his funeral letter, after which he aims to get turrible drunk."

"Curly," spoke up Jim, kindly.

"Cain't you leave me alone heah?" appealed the cowboy.

"Yes, in a minute. Sorry to disturb

you, old man. But I've news about Yellowjacket, Jed Stone and his Hash Knife Outfit."

"To hell with them! I'm a ruined cowboy. Soon as I get this document written I'm goin' to town an' look at red licker."

"Nope," said Jim, laconically.

"Wal, I jest am. Who says I cain't?"

"I do, Curly."

BUT you're not my boss. I've quit the Diamond. I'll never fork a hoss again."

"Curly, you wouldn't let us tackle that Hash Knife gang without you?"

"Jim, I cain't care about nothin'. My heart's broke. I could see you all shot. I could see Bud Chalfack hung on a tree an' laugh."

"Curly, didn't you and I get to be good friends?"

"Shore. An' I was durn proud of it. But friendship's nuthin' to love. Aw, Boss, I'm ashamed to face you with it. . . . Caroline has turned out to be false. Chucked me fer thet bowlegged Stebbins puncher! Who'd ever thought I'd come to sech disgrace?"

"Curly, it's no disgrace. Wess is a good chap. He'll make Caroline happy. You didn't really love her."

"What-at!" roared Curly. And when his hearers all greeted this with a laugh he sank back crestfallen.

"Curly, there're some good reasons why you can't throw down the Diamond at this stage," said Jim, seriously, and placed a kindly hand on the cowboy's shoulder.

"Jest you give me one, Jim Traft," blustered Curly, and he laid down his pencil.

Jim knew perfectly well that this wonderful young Westerner could not be untrue to anyone. "First, then, Curly. You've already got a few head of stock on the range. In a few years you'll be a rancher on your own account."

"No reason at all. I don't want those cattle. I gave 'em to Hump heah."

"Well, Hump can give them back. . . . Another reason is Uncle Jim is throwing us plumb against the Hash Knife Outfit. Listen, all of you. This is a secret and not to be spoken of except among yourselves. Uncle Jim is sure Bambridge is crooked. Making deals with the Hash Knife."

All the cowboys except Curly expressed themselves in different degrees of exclamation.

At length Curly spoke.

"Jim, you haven't given me any argument why I shouldn't go out an' drown my grief in the bottle—an' shoot up the town—an' kill somebody or get put in jail."

"No? All right. Here's another reason," replied Jim, and he drew a photograph out of his pocket and laid it on the table in front of Curly.

"My Gawd, Boss, who is this?" asked Curly.

"My sister, Gloriana May Traft."

YOUR sister? Jim, I shore ought to have seen the resemblance, though she's ten million times better lookin' than you. . . . But how is she a reason for my not goin' to the bad?"

"Curly, it's as simple as pie," said Jim. "Gloriana is a sick girl. She's coming West for her health. She'll arrive on Monday, on the Western Special. Now, I ask you, have you the heart to bust up the Diamond—to get drunk and worry me to death—when I've this new trouble on my hands?"

Curly took another long look at the photograph, and then he turned to Jim with all the clouds vanished from eyes and face. To see Curly thus was to love him.

"Boss, I haven't got the heart to throw you (Continued on page 42)

Any Ice Today Lady?

By Ring Lardner

What will all this out-of-season barrow-pushing, car-conducting, baggage-smashing do to score-board statistics this fall? Ask Dr. Lardner. He forgets his inherent modesty long enough to advise our grid heroes on all subjects from tackling to tatting—and back

AS THE editor of Collier's thinks it is a couple of weeks too soon for me to select the All-America football team for 1929 and prefers anyway, for some childish reason, to leave that amiable task to Grantland ("Carve Dat Possum") Rice, I will have to confine myself in this article to a few items of personal intelligence concerning athletes who seemed destined to make gridiron history from the broken-ribbed coast of Maine to the outboard adenoids of Hollywood.

If Big Bill Edwards, whom I saw the other day in the Pennsylvania Station, were still alive, he would marvel at the football heroes of the present, at the serious way in which they prepare themselves for what, after all, is merely a game. In his time, candidates for the eleven (nine, as they called it) reported to the head coachman in laughable condition, many of them scarcely able to drag bodies weighted down and bulged out with chocolates and bonbons and all the latest magazines, short of breath from cubebs and soft after months of lying in a hammock while fair adorers read them to sleep and drove off venturesome field mice with a shrug of the shoulder.

We've Changed All That

The potential Hinkeys and Hestons of today show up for practice in perfect shape, their "vacations" having been spent in hard manual labor, and their stomachs keyed to the highest point of efficiency by a rigid diet of cooked cereals, wolf eggs and fresh gin.

You probably saw in the papers the story of John Law's summer training. John plays a guard with one of Notre

Dame's road companies. He is to be captain of his team, but this is not as much of an honor as at most other schools, for Mr. Rockne uses a new team every chukker with a different captain for each. It is almost impossible not to be elected captain at Notre Dame if you've got a football suit.

Well, anyway, John lives in Yonkers, and all summer long he has been hardening his arteries by pushing a wheelbarrow loaded with bricks through the perpendicular streets of that fashionable spa. People who have never been in Yonkers cannot appreciate the arduousness of this chore. Just driving a light car around the place has sent many a poor devil to a rest cure, while walking anywhere, even with an empty wheelbarrow or no wheelbarrow at all, is an exercise recommended only to Swiss goats. These old arches still writhe when I recall a forced (by mine host) march from the suburban station next north of the regular Yonkers depot to the home of Mr. John N. ("Steeple-jack") Wheeler, a mile and a half from the tracks as the squirrel flies, and yet considered merely a knoll by seasoned Yonkerites.

Two members of the Marquette University squad have been working as motorman and conductor in Milwaukee, where they still have street cars. A star sophomore back at Michigan has put in the "off-season" felling giant trees. A Stanford tackle has prepared himself for the strenuous fall campaign by firing a locomotive. And a University of Georgia end has taken care of all three lawns in his home town, Americus.

The spirit that prompts this sort of voluntary training is heartily encour-

aged by coaches, who, a few years since, were obliged to go easy with the football men for the first fortnight or so, until the latter had got their wind and rid themselves of superfluous flesh by long cross-country runs and gymnasium exercises. Nowadays the boys are in the pink when they show up for practice and the mentor can start them scrimmaging as soon as he wants to.

But it is a question in my mind whether the young athletes couldn't choose more appropriate, more relevant methods of conditioning themselves. The illustrious Red Grange made a great record at Illinois, and unintelligent critics attributed his success to the fact that he peddled ice in the summer time.

I believe he would have got quicker starts and gained more ground if he had spent his summers delivering milk or some other commodity that isn't sold by the pound. When Red received the ball from the center, he always hesitated a moment; he wanted to hang it



Candidates spent months lying in a hammock

These old arches still writhe when I recall a forced (by mine host) march from the suburban station



on the scales and see how much it weighed. This hesitation, brief though it was, permitted the defensive linemen to break through and stop him before he had advanced eighty yards.

Subsequent Confusion

A strong Illinois tackle, Mr. Nowack or something, drove mules in a mine. While it may have toughened his hands and arms, it also had a tendency to slow him up; he was never able to charge his man without first saying, "Come on, Jenny! You lazy old so-and-so!" The famous Four Horsemen of Notre Dame hustled baggage and thereby strengthened their backs and shoulder muscles and their legs, but there were countless times when Layden or Stuhldreher purposely grounded a pass, thinking he was still a baggageman and it was a trunk and would break open and spill hamamelis if you dropped it hard enough.

Unless the rules committee holds an extraordinary session, Mr. John Law will not be allowed to bring his wheelbarrow on the field; even if he were, the opponents might insist on the privilege of unloading the bricks and piling them on Mr. Law's head. Anyway, he wouldn't know (Continued on page 63)



The two Milwaukee boys have laughed all summer at the silly look of would-be passengers. The laugh will be on the other foot when they signal an opposing half-back

Illustrated by
Guyas
Williams

