

20 Trails to Two Moons

Dominating the whole clutter of Two Moons was the new courthouse and jail at the far end of Main Street, a prideful extravagance of brick hauled at untold dollars of tax money by freight wagons from Lost Soldiers, on the railroad.

Old Man Ring jogged down Main Street straight to the courthouse. Tying Christian to the horse rail, he entered and blundered his way to the door marked Sheriff. Within the bearer of tidings found Sheriff Red Agnew, a Viking with a flaming beard cascading down to the charm on his watch chain; a man of fearsome mien, whose eye seemed constantly searching the waistcoat of a quondam visitor to select the tidiest place to put a bullet. Red Agnew had been elected to the shrievalty of Broken Horn largely on his looks; he seemed designed of nature to be a sheriff. Moreover, he was the sheepmen's candidate; sheep money had financed his campaign, the cattle clan said.

Without preliminaries Old Man Ring launched into the mission which had brought him thirty miles from his home ranch on Teapot Creek. He spoke with a burring of the gutturals which thirty years away from his native Denmark had not sufficed to erase: