

Copyright 1924 by Joseph J. Guinn

WOLF MOON

A ROMANCE OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST

BY JOSEPH J. GUINN

CHAPTER X.—CONTINUED

At second thought Louise realized the peril. Suppose Pemella or Nava should see her. It might mean death. Then gypsy revenge is bitter and relentless. There was no telling what it might cost her. Yet if she failed to accept this opportunity to view the camp there might not come another. The Trichells and Jack had warned her a hundred times to be careful, never to approach the Gulch or ride off down the southern mesa of sage. But this was Roundtop. She had never been warned of Roundtop yet she felt that this would be the approval of her visit, especially with a band of gypsies camped at its base. But the storm was a God-send. Who would see her when she could not see an object one hundred yards away?

Louise raced down the village streets. The windows of the houses were closed to keep out the sifting sand but she could see faces pressed close to panes as she rode by. It was ever thus. A hundred persons passed by each day. It meant a hundred trips to the window. Who was in town? How long did they stay?

Without once drawing rein Louise came to the point where the Trichell section cuts away from the main road. She spurred Thunderbird up the slope and was greeted by the wide brown plains. Veritable showers of fast-moving sand hung suspended in the air. The dust and dirt gritted in one's mouth seeped down one's shirt, galled the horse's back and crept anywhere and everywhere that air could go.

Thunderbird bent lower and leaped into the brown swirling wind cylinders that caught up the loose sand into wheeling cones. Louise knew where Roundtop lay, yet it was not in sight. Shaking her ears, snorting, blowing the dust from her nostrils, Thunderbird moved until Roundtop loomed brown and spectral before her. It was just as Mrs Trichell had said, Roundtop did have a menacing look. She had not realized it until this moment. In other words Louise had believed it beautiful, especially in the morning sunlight or at sundown when it boldly stood higher to peep down at the retreating sun rolling off the horizon to its sleep beyond. Twenty feet away from the base of the mountain a small growth of underbrush girdled the entire base of the slope. Louise thought it best not to advance further. She was afraid Thunderbird might whinny if she saw a horse. Beside there would be less chance for detection on foot. Louise threw the reins over Thunderbird's head. The latter turned her back to the wind and with head lowered saw her mistress disappear among the trees.

Louise slipped through the underbrush as lightly as a fawn. Above her the mountain reared its top into the brown clouds of sand. It stood there like a huge boulder with maddened seas moiling about its crest. Not a sound was heard save the sifting of the sand, a gentle rustle against the leaves burned dry by the hot suns of preceding weeks. Then broke out the voices of children, a shriek, a wild response of free souls at play. After that followed silence, the sad, lonesome silence of the forest. Louise clambored over fallen trees, between which she observed a path which her eye followed up the steep sides of the hill. There was a depression in the sand. In fact it had been used recently, for there before her eyes were foot-prints of boots, the big sole, the small high heel and the unmistakable mark of the spur. Some of the gypsies were using it perhaps to get water farther up the slope. Louise followed the trail away from the hill and down into a small ravine. A few steps farther it spread sharply into a deep depression or valley, one hundred feet wide. There before her lay the canvas-covered wagons. Some were newly painted in red and yellow. Others painted and weather-beaten. A group of children was beating against a pan with sticks. Two wrestled furiously, biting and pulling as puppies at play. Outside of the youngsters the camp seemed deserted of human beings. A large lead mongrel dog moved from under one of the vans and looked up toward Louise. In a moment the camp echoed with walls and long howls. Three other bounds joined in on the alarm. Gypsies rushed to the tent flaps and gazed about. Louise slipped back to cover behind foliage and waited, her heart beating in jarring strokes.

When the pandemonium ceased Louise peered out from her hiding place. The camp again seemed deserted. Brown tents stood silently like corn shocks in November fields. A faint hissing sound from overhead was made by the sand pouring against the leaves. Louise straightened up. She was almost certain she recognized one of the horses, a pinto called "Tom" remembered as a bitter. And there before her was Nava's varicolored blanket as violent-hued as ever. Louise was stunned. This was the

band from which she had escaped. Her proximity to the camp startled her as consciousness of peril rushed in to displace her courage. What brought them back here so close to the ranch if they hadn't discovered that she was in Terlon? It was too early in the summer for gypsies to cut through Oklahoma on their journey southward for the winter. An ocean of fear swept her up bodily and shook her frame. Blood rushed to her face in the quickening alarm. She was picturing herself back again under the tyranny of Nava. Quivering, her heart pounding in repitiation, she stood with feet anchored in the midst of the grinding gulf of fright. In her paroxysm of fear she failed to hear behind her footsteps muffled in the sand. Like a tigress at bay she scented danger and turned. There in the path behind her crouched Pemella.

CHAPTER XI. VISIONS OF TRAGEDY

"You here?" hissed Pemella. The gypsy humped himself into a brutal posture and let the words come high and tense between his teeth. Louise's throat was caught in a hideous paralysis. Her knees grew weak, then rigid.

"You little spy, answer me. You ran from camp and hid for a couple of years. I've hunted you through every state in the west but I knew I'd get you. What you doing here?"

"I—I just came to look," Louise broke out stammered. "Yes, to look if I was here. I knew the old love would come back. It's too strong. It got you when you were young and its holding you tight, tight. You can't lose it. It's gypsy marry gypsy, that's what brought you here. The old gypsy blood in your veins is coming out, it's got to meet gypsy."

"I'm not a gypsy," Louise found strength to shriek. "You're not, eh? Then Lodhka was not a gypsy. She was your mother."

"Lodhka was a gypsy but I'm not. You know it. You know that I was stolen. I see it all now. They lie who told you. Your father was white but your mother was Lodhka."

"It's a lie, a lie. I haven't a drop of gypsy blood in me. Nava and you have lied, you've—"

"Stop! Since you ran from camp like a thief you have become as the eagle, proud. Who filled your ears with this wind—you an American, hah! Nava has been waiting for you and when she touches your curse will bind your tongue. She has killed men in the desert; she has blinded them from afar until they walked around in the woods like bears. She'll put it on you unless—unless you come with me to camp. She won't harm you then. I will make you camp queen and Pemella stepped forward.

"If you touch me I'll shout for the boys," Louise turned toward the protecting underbrush. "For the boys, eh? Hah, I watched you come. The gypsy eye never fails. I've already chased your pony away. But put your gun where I can see it. You wouldn't come to camp without one. Letting me get the drop on someone's pose."

Louise made capital of the suggestion. Her gun was home in her dresser drawer. "Not until you move another step and then I'll shoot," she challenged him with firmness.

"Oh, there's no use of gun play in this bargain. We'll talk business without it. Let's get a move on. Some of your friends will be back soon when they see your pinto trotting home. Maybe that tall slick friend of yours that I was talking to last night. He's the one who put me wise to you. Told me where you were and all about you."

"You lie," she shouted. "Lie, eh? Well I told him everything. Just sort of straightened things out for him. He made out he didn't know anything about you so I ups and told him all, that you were a gypsy and—"

"You lied, lied, lied," she cried furiously. "I'll go back and tell him the truth."

"Ah hah, you'll tell him the truth will you? Well, you won't get a chance to see him again, young gal. You're going with me to the camp and then—"

"I'll die first before I'd ever go back," interrupted Louise with fire. "You'll never take me back alive as long as I have this gun." Her hand slipped nervously into her bosom. "Yes you'd rather live with that ornery Easterner or Tulane." "Tulane!" gasped Louise. She was amazed at what Pemella knew. "Yes Alsak, or Tulane as you call him. He's the man. He thinks he's going to marry you, but by Heaven, he never will." Liquid fire poured out of his eyes. "Don't back up there little girl because I've got you now. I'll follow you until Hell freezes over. You belong to me. Alsak's love is only as a wasp's compared to mine. And that Easterner, I'll kill him for the coyotes. You may be loving 'em both, but they've got you in their grasp, laughing at your willingness. I know those smart furniers, powdered, pretty nice words. But they mean nothing. I love you; I want you to come with me to camp. Let's talk it over there. We'll just slip away tonight and when the sun comes up tomorrow those two will

be like foxes without eyes. I'm mighty glad you came so handy. I've been waiting for you for weeks and weeks and here you walk right into my arms. But it's the old love coming out. You always did love me. You ran away because you didn't know yourself. But I'll forgive you even now if you did let my brother—"

Louise gasped and reeled back. "Your brother!" she repeated. "Sure, Alsak's my brother. He left us when you were like this—a weed. Brothers don't pull weed together at times. He left the band and he's been drifting ever since. He's mad because he's not chief and he won't be until I go under. Then it's his job. But we're wasting time. Besides the storm's over. It's your move."

"Don't dare come a step closer. I'll shoot to kill. I've seen enough of you and when I tell the boys you're here they'll clear you out." The insult from the girl was too much for him to bear. His face grew hot, passionate bulging under a rush of blood. He was a volcano of outraged vanity. He strode forward with eyes gleaming like red coals.

Louise had failed to hold him off. She stepped backward, wheeled and darted under the brush. Almost on top of her followed the huge form of Pemella. Screaming, tearing at the bushes in front of her, she dodged, turned and slipped from tree to tree. She could almost feel the burning breath of the man upon her back. The large opening into the plains could not be found. She cut back sharply at an angle to see Pemella plunge past her with arms open. Leaping over trees, breaking the dead wood underfoot, Louise fought the greatest battle of her life. Like a maddened, infuriated bear, Pemella came crashing after her, cursing, muttering, the blood boiling behind his throbbing forehead. Her fleeing form set his brain into a frenzy.

TO BE CONTINUED

"TO THE LEAST OF MY BRETHREN" A TRUE STORY OF SOUTHERN CHARITY

Joe Kelly, watchman for the Clark Textile Co., in a small manufacturing town of the South, had a long walk before him in the early morning after his night watch. His home was on the outskirts of the town, as his large family and small salary obliged him to seek a locality where rents were cheap.

Here, too, more ground could be had for the planting of gardens, and during the summer this would lessen the expense of feeding so many mouths. By shortening his daily rest hours, he was able to cultivate this patch and the older children kept it free from weeds and enjoyed the responsibility of growing their own vegetables; it kept them busy at home during vacation days and out of mischief.

This morning a bitter wind was blowing and the darkness seemed impenetrable. Force of habit kept him straight in the path. He felt depressed, very tired and particularly disheartened and gave himself up to foreboding thoughts. The burden of keeping up with daily expenditures had increased as the children grew to school age.

To this had been added the expense of sickness which decreased the savings of the early years of married life. A doctor's bill was looming up and that would take the small balance which had already been depleted by the purchase of necessary medicine and dainties required for the invalid. He and his wife Sarah had felt so thankful to win the grim fight with death that nothing else mattered. Not one of their nine little ones could be spared; each had a place all its own. But now! Pay day was here!

His wife's health too, never robust, had suffered from the strain and he could see how the daily tasks and effort of keeping up with the needs of the growing children were sapping her strength and vitality. She was full of mother love! The daily grind did not daunt her spirits, though it weakened and aged her body. She was making such a brave fight. What could and should he do? How better his condition and make things easier and safer for all? Daily necessities were increasing in volume and cost. More lucrative work had been sought in vain. There were plenty of good men to step into his job and there was no prospect of a better one.

He had been silent at home about these forebodings. There was always such an atmosphere of peace, joy and brightness there, and even when trouble came, Sarah faced it so pluckily that he had not the heart to trouble her with these matters.

He told himself he was extra tired, the wind was piercing, the way lonely and this part without houses was particularly gloomy. He quickened his steps, whistled, shook himself as though to throw off the burden oppressing him. He thought of the picture awaiting him at home and saw before him, at the kitchen stove, his wife, neat and cheerful. She was always so, no matter how early the rising hour might be, or how restless the children had been at night.

A wall of terror and pain broke in upon his thoughts. He gave a start. It was unmistakably an infant's cry. But here? At this time? In this deserted spot? He searched in the dark and a second piercing cry guided him to his find. There,

a few paces ahead, in the path where he would have stepped on it, was a child. The heart of the parent made him gather it up quickly and to try to find out if it was hurt. It was uninjured, except that the little hands were like chunks of ice, the feet likewise. Removing his coat, he bundled the child in it and quickening his steps, he tried to warm and soothe it, till gradually the sobs and wails ceased.

Arriving home, he hurried into the kitchen to find his wife, who was preparing his breakfast. Without turning from the stove, she greeted him cheerily, upon hearing his steps.

"Well, Joe, how goes everything? I suppose you are as hungry as usual?" "Yes, dear, I am, besides I have a visitor here claiming hospital-ity."

She turned quickly to see him unwrapping a large bundle. He held the baby, who, being awakened suddenly and startled by the bright gas light of the kitchen, was yelling lustily. Great was her amazement, but in spite of her curiosity the mother-instinct and charity made her seize the little one and try to comfort it.

Telling her husband to help himself from the stove where the breakfast was ready, she dropped into a low chair close to the stove, the better to warm it. Crooning to the baby, who was soothed by the warmth, she rocked it to sleep as she listened to his account. How her heart thrilled to hold another baby close in her arms! Before Joe went to rest, she had him get the discarded cradle from the attic while she rummaged in an old trunk for baby clothes. Soon the little stranger was soundly sleeping while the two discussed his fate.

"Joe, it is a dear little one, a boy of about a year, uninjured except for the cold, but one leg is shriveled and smaller and may cause lameness. If you are willing, we will keep him until some one claims him."

"Small chance of that!" answered her husband. "I think he was abandoned, but we will see what Father Blake can do to help us."

After a week's search the orphanage seemed to be the only home for the child who by that time had entwined himself around their hearts. They were loath to send him there.

The mother of this large family of nine earnestly pleaded for the little stranger. Joe looked at his wife, her face showed the fatigue of home duties and the daily grind of homely tasks ended long after the children were sleeping, yet the brave and dauntless spirit was ready to meet and overcome all obstacles. He always knew he would have to yield before her force of character even when he tried to protect her from making too many sacrifices.

She seemed to face the sorrows of their married life as readily as the joys. In all the "ups and downs" he had found her "true blue." He felt ashamed now that he had been hiding his doubts and forebodings, and partly because he felt it due to would have to yield before her force of character even when he tried to protect her from making too many sacrifices.

"Sarah, I want to tell you what was ailing me when I found the youngster. It seemed such a strange answer to the question I was asking myself. It looks, too, as if the finding of one so down and out and abandoned would make me feel ashamed of myself. He was a human being too, tiny as he was, and in such a shape! But still our living problem is unsolved, the children's needs increase with their growing years. Besides, your strength and health are being overtaxed in the raising and caring of them—the boys especially—and my small wages are insufficient to meet expenses. We have a crowd, dear, God bless them all—I wouldn't wish less, but see here! honestly, now shall we add another?"

"Yes Joe!" Sarah answered quickly and without hesitation, adding, "We can easily slip him into the family and I won't feel any extra trouble and will try not to worry you too much. Besides, look at the Brown Jim Brown doesn't make as much as you and they have taken that new baby left by the neighbor who just moved in and took sick and died, and Mollie Brown waited on her and did all she could to save her life. I believe this babe will bring a blessing to us, especially as it will not be as strong as the rest on account of its small legs. Just think of anyone leaving a helpless baby to freeze!"

He went into more details but she had ready answers. "Well, Sarah, we will keep him as our own. We must have him baptized at once. What shall we name him? I like Frank. There is too little of truth in the world today and our boy will have a reminder in the name of what we want him to be."

"Good! I agree, Joe, and it is close to the feast of St. Francis. We will ask him to watch over our Francis."

"It is the next best name to my own. I would not change my patron, St. Joseph, for any other. He had household worries and must help me out!"

And St. Joseph did. It was not long after the step of legal adoption was taken before the fortunes of the Kelly family changed. Sarah Kelly predicted truly—the boy brought a

Miss Irene Wagner Tells How Cuticura Healed Pimples

"I was troubled with pimples from the time I was twelve years of age. Some of the pimples were large and some were small. They were hard and red at first but after the second or third day they usually came to a head and gradually disappeared. They looked so badly that I was disgusted and did not want to go anywhere. One day I read an advertisement for Cuticura Soap and Ointment and decided I would send for a free sample. I purchased more and in two or three months the pimples disappeared." (Signed) Miss Irene Wagner, Box 881, Havre, Mont., Aug. 27, 1923.

For every purpose of the toilet and bath, Cuticura Soap, Ointment and Talcum are excellent. Sample each free by Mail. Address: Canadian Agents, J. G. Ross & Co., Montreal, P. Q. Telephone 25 and 100. Telegrams: Ross, Montreal. Get it at your drug store. Try our new shaving stick.

The Polish that will clean sheet iron satisfactorily use it on your Gas or Electric Range Nonsuch LIQUID STOVE POLISH

BANG! When the hammer misses the nail and hits your finger, when the saw jumps off the hand, when the keen chisel slips and cuts you—Then is the time when you should use Absorbine J.

Absorbine J. To give ready relief to the bruise or to cleanse the wound, fill any germ, prevent infection and to promote rapid healing.

Mortgage To The "Party of the First Part" A mortgage is a poor asset to leave a wife and family.

Let Us Buy Your EGGS and POULTRY Our prices are right and our settlements prompt.

PRIESTS' COLLARS and STOCKS Cassocks, Surplices Clerical Suits, Etc.

SHOREHAM HOTEL In Washington, D. C. The Shoreham Hotel is located in the very center of this city of year-round attractions.

Buy a Copy Now OF... "Some of the Pastor's Problems" BY REV. M. V. KELLY

Nursery Products Fruit and Flowers Buy direct from the grower and save money.

Canada Church Goods Company 149 Church St. Limited Toronto, Canada

ARCHITECTS Randolph 7887 Kenwood 1080 J. M. COWAN Architect

WATT & BLACKWELL Members Ontario Association of Architects ARCHITECTS

W. G. MURRAY ARCHITECT Churches and Schools a Specialty

JOHN M. MOORE & CO. ARCHITECTS 489 RICHMOND STREET LONDON, ONT.

J. C. PENNINGTON JOHN R. BOYDE Architects and Engineers

BARTLET BLDG. WINDSOR, ONT. LONDON Diocesan Architects

J. F. DOYLE CARPENTER ALTERATIONS AND REPAIRS

F. E. LUKE OPTOMETRIST AND OPTICIAN 187 YONGE ST. TORONTO

BROWN OPTICAL CO. Physical Eye Specialists 223 Dundas St. London

London Optical Co. Eyesight Specialists A. M. DAMBRA, Optometrist

Wright Teale Co. Plumbing and Heating Jobbing a Specialty

THE DARRAGH STUDIO SPECIALISTS IN PORTRAITURE 214 Dundas St. Phone 444

Geo. Winterbottom & Son Sheet Metal Workers Agents Peace Furnaces

"PERFECT" Bicycles The Bicycle of Quality 3 STORES

HEXTER TAXI (Formerly Mackay-Hexter) Phone 2859

Let Us Buy Your EGGS and POULTRY Our prices are right and our settlements prompt.

DR. REBECCA HARKINS DR. MARIE H. HARKINS OSTEOPATHIC PHYSICIANS

DR. LEROY V. HILES SPECIALIST IN ALL FOOT AILMENTS

BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS MURPHY, GUNN & MURPHY

FOY, KNOX & MONAHAN BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES, ETC.

DAY, FERGUSON & WALSH BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, ETC.

LUNNEY & LANNAN BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES

JOHN H. McELDERRY BARRISTER, SOLICITOR, NOTARY PUBLIC

KELLY, PORTER & KELLY BARRISTERS, SOLICITORS, NOTARIES

MICHAEL J. MULVIHILL L. D. S., D. D. S.

Dr. W. S. Westland L. D. S., D. D. S. DENTIST

Beddome, Brown, Grony and Pocock INSURANCE

James R. Haslett Sanitary & Heating Engineer

UPHOLSTERING Or All Kinds Chesterfields Made to Order

The West Floral Co. 249 Dundas St. London, Ont.

St. Jerome's College Founded 1864 KITCHENER, ONT.

Casavant Freres CHURCH LITERE Organ Builders

BENJAMIN BLONDE General Contractor CHURCHES

Lightning Battery Service 294 York St. Opp. C. N. R. Freight Sheds

REGO RADIATOR REPAIR "WE KNOW HOW"

ELEONARD & SONS LONDON CANADA LTD.