

cowboy, "and if you kill him, there'll be those that'll sympathize with you. But perhaps you'd better go back to Virginia to your sister.

To say so was to ease his mind of a hard duty. Bill Davies felt much easier after it.

"I'm going back soon," said Jeff.

And he rode through the moonlight to the town. He sent the pony back as soon as he found his father's body, which lay in the back store of the man they usually dealt with. And the funeral was next day. Walker did not pay for it, for Jeff sent him a message. "He looked tolerably wicked," said the man who took it to the slayer.

"Did he", sneered Walker. "You can tell him to keep out of my way. See?"

Walker felt an injured man.

"Good God!" said Walker; "shall I have to kill a boy?"

But Jeff went back to his place on Double Mountain Creek, and the memories of men in the West being short, the death of old Jefferson Dexter was a thing forgotten in a week. But the young one didn't forget. And perhaps Walker did not, for the pride of a man who kills and is not tried, or who is tried and acquitted, is something strange to see. He glories in his strength and in his quickness, and takes up attitudes in the little world in which he shines. And quiet men said to themselves that Windy Walker would not die in bed. But the trouble is that quiet men do not kill unless they are obliged to, and some men who looked Walker in the eyes with a savage challenge found him loth to take offence.

"I put up with a mighty lot now," said Walker; "a man with my record should. I want peace."

He still held his own at the American House, where the trouble with old Dexter had begun, and he lost a few dollars regularly to the gamblers who ran the faro and keno tables. They sneered at him, but found him, a paying streak in bad times. If he gassed a little they let him gas. And the citizens of the city endured him. There were some (quiet men who did not talk) who wondered when his end would come. For Bill Davies said a thing or two to friends of his.

"The boy has a right to kill him," said Bill. "and the right to get the drop unseen. He's a boy." Jeff sometimes came into town, but he came in mostly by night and no one knew of his being there at all. He used to tie up the old pinto outside the town and come in quietly. He mostly lay about the empty town lots that were at the back of the American House and the Green Front, the chief saloons in Colorado Street. The gambling saloons of both houses were at the back, and the windows looked upon a waste of old boots, old kerosine cans and empty tomato cans. But the blinds were usually drawn. In such a "city" even though law and order were gradually and with great difficulty establishing themselves, there were many who had a deeply rooted objection to standing in a bright light visible to those who were in darkness. There was never any knowing who might be outside.

And very often Jeff was outside. Sometimes he heard the voices of men he knew Bill Davies was in there at least once a week. He heard Simon Keats, to whose store his father's body had been taken; for Simon, though a respectable store-keeper by day, had a passion for faro which bloomed after sundown. And sometimes he heard Walker. But the window was shut and the blind was down.

That year as it happened, September opened with a blaze of heat that the most hardened old-timer felt. They only came out at night, and then the saloons filled.

"By gosh, it's hot!" said Davies, who had been taking three days in town. "By Gosh, it's hot! Sam, don't you reckon it might be a trifle cooler if that window was open!"

The bar-tender, down whose face the moisture ran in streams, admitted that the experiment might be worth trying. "though whether it's better here or outside, or in hell I can't say," he answered.

"Who's afraid of hell in this weather?" asked Windy Walker, crossly. "Open the window, Sam and let me have a John Collins. I've a thirst on me as if a prairie fire was raging down my throat. I dunno' what foolishness brought men to Texas."