

"Ah," says he, just like that— "Ah, I'm glad to know you, Mr. Judson. I'm Jackson Bird, from over at Mired Mule Ranch."

"Just then one of my eyes saw a road-runner skipping down the hill with a young tarantula in his bill, and the other eye noticed a rabbit-hawk sitting on a dead limb in a water-elm. I popped over one after the other with my forty-five, just to show him. 'Two out of three,' says I. 'Birds just naturally seem to draw my fire wherever I go.'

"Nice shooting," says the sheep man, without a flutter. "But don't you sometimes ever miss the third shot? Elegant fine rain that was last week for the young grass, don't you think, Mr. Judson?" says he.

"Willie," says I, riding over close to his palfrey, "your infatuated parents may have denounced you by the name of Jackson, but you sure molted into a twittering Willie—let us slough off this here analysis of rain and the elements, and get down to talk that is outside the vocabulary of parrots. That is a bad habit you have got of riding with young ladies over at Pimienta. I've known birds," says I, "to be served on toast for less than that. Miss Willella," says I, "don't ever want any nest made out of sheep's wool by a tomtit of the Jacksonian branch of ornithology. Now, are you going to quit, or do you wish for to gallop up against this Dead-Moral-Certainty attachment to my name, which is good for two hyphens and at least one set of funeral obsequies?"

"Jackson Bird flushed up some, and then he laughed.

similitude— 'than the desire to procure a copy of the pancake recipe,' he finishes.

"You ain't such a bad little man," says I, trying to be fair. "I was thinking some of making orphans of your sheep, but I'll let you fly away this time. But you stick to pancakes," says I, "as close as the middle one of a stack; and don't go and mistake sentiments for syrup, or there'll be singing at your ranch, and you won't hear it."

"To convince you that I am sincere," says the sheep man, "I'll ask you to help me. Miss Learight and you being closer friends, maybe she would do for you what she wouldn't for me. If you will get me a copy of that pancake recipe, I give you my word that I'll never call upon her again."

"That's fair," I says, and I shook hands with Jackson Bird. "I'll get it for you if I can, and glad to oblige." And he turned off down the big pear flat on the Piedra, in the direction of Mired Mule; and I steered northwest for old Bill Toomey's ranch.

"It was five days afterward when I got another chance to ride over to Pimienta. Miss Willella and me gassed a gratifying evening at Uncle Emsley's. She sang some, and exasperated the piano quite a lot with quotations from the operas. I gave imitations of a rattlesnake, and told her about Snaky McFee's new way of skinning cows, and described the trip I made to Saint Louis once. We was getting along in one another's estimations fine. Thinks I, if Jackson Bird can now be persuaded to migrate, I win. I recollect his promise about the pancake receipt

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"Why, Mr. Judson," says he, "you've got the wrong idea. I've called on Miss Learight a few times; but not for the purpose you imagine. My object is purely a gastronomical one."

"I reached for my gun."

"Any coyote," says I, "that would boast of dishonorable—"

"Wait a minute," says this Bird, "till I explain. What would I do with a wife? If you ever saw that ranch of mine! I do my own cooking and mending. Eating—that's all the pleasure I get out of sheep raising. Mr. Judson, did you ever taste the pancakes that Miss Learight makes?"

"Me? No," I told him. "I never was advised that she was up to any culinary manoeuvres."

"They're golden sunshine," says he; "honey-browned by the ambrosial fires of Epicurus. I'd give two years of my life to get the recipe for making them pancakes. That's what I went to see Miss Learight for," says Jackson Bird, "but I haven't been able to get it from her. It's an old recipe that's been in the family for seventy-five years. They hand it down from one generation to another, but they don't give it away to outsiders. If I could get that recipe, so I could make them pancakes for myself on my ranch, I'd be a happy man," says Bird.

"Are you sure," I says to him, "that it ain't the hand that mixes the pancakes that you're after?"

"Sure," says Jackson. "Miss Learight is a mighty nice girl, but I can assure you my intentions go no further than the gastro—but he seen my hand going down to my holster and he changed his

and I thinks I will persuade it from Miss Willella and give it to him; and then if I catches Birdie off of Mired Mule again, I'll make him hop the twig.

"So, along about ten o'clock, I put on a wheedling smile and says to Miss Willella: 'Now, if there's anything I do like better than the sight of a red steer on green grass, it's the taste of a nice hot pancake smothered in sugar-house molasses.'

"Miss Willella gave a little jump on the piano stool, and looked at me curious.

"Yes," says she, "they're real nice. What did you say was the name of that street in Saint Louis, Mr. Odom, where you lost your hat?"

"Pancake Avenue," says I, with a wink, to show her that I was on about the family receipt and couldn't be side-corralled off of the subject. "Come, now, Miss Willella," I says; "let's hear how you make 'em. Pancakes is just whirling in my head like wagon wheels. Start her off, now—pound of flour, eight dozen eggs, and so on. How does the catalogue of constituents run?"

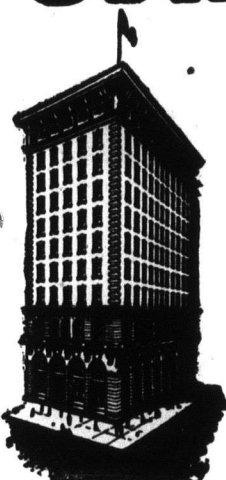
"Excuse me for a moment, please," says Miss Willella, and she gives me a quick kind of sideways look, and slides off the stool. She ambled out into the other room, and directly Uncle Emsley comes in in his shirt sleeves, with a pitcher of water. He turns around to get a glass on the table, and I see a forty-five in his hip pocket. "Great post-holes!" thinks I, "but here's a family thinks a heap of cooking receipts, protecting it with firearms. I've known outfits that wouldn't do that much by a family feud."

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