

ed door just as his fatal shot rang out. She had seen the blow struck by the dead rancher; had seen the dull red flush spread over the gambler's face and the dangerous gleam flash in his cold eyes as he reached for his weapon; had seen his nervous fingers turn loose the message of death which lay within the shining barrel and had seen Rawlins fall limply forward to the floor. She had seen, too, the face of the man she loved with all her virgin strength grow tense with fear when he realized how true his aim had been and her woman's mind worked quickly, seeking an avenue of escape from the fate she knew would be meted out to him if caught red-handed.

When the gambler backed away from his gruesome work and edged quickly around the crowd the door to the hallway had suggested to him the shortest way from the house and he had taken it unhesitatingly. The collision in the dark brought forth a startled curse which was hushed on his lips by a whispered "Ralph, this way," in a voice he knew well. Therese, without more words, led him by a rear door out into the still night and then straight up the hill behind the town. On up to the edge of the range she went without a stop, her lithe young limbs setting a hard pace for the unnerved man behind who gasped painfully at every step.

When she reached a thick clump of sage brush, well out of sight from the trail below, she bade the fugitive lie hidden closely till her return and without further words picked her way over a new route down the hillside and reached the house unseen.

Her woman's intention guided her every move. She knew that the search would not spread beyond the town until after daybreak just as well as she knew that the vengeful pack would prepare to draw every trail as soon as the first purple streak of dawn lightened the eastern sky.

Therese wasted no time in putting a hastily-formed plan into execution and while waiting for the excitement to quiet down she ransacked the larder for food, filled a generous flask and packed all securely in a bundle not so large as to be noticeable in the dark.

One by one the crowd drifted back to

the house, when it was realized how useless it was to continue the search at night. The bar was soon filled with groups of excited men, discussing the tragedy and planning the chase for the morrow.

The girl waited until she was sure that even the most persistent had given up the quest and then stole quietly across to the stables where, with the deft hands of a child of the ranges, she quickly saddled her own pony and loosened a horse which stood tied at the corral waiting for some cowpuncher who was doubtless in the crowded bar. She led both horses slowly through the shadow near the river until she was well away from the hotel, then, mounting the little pinto and leading the other, she struck up the hill by a trail which she knew would bring her close to the clump of sage brush where Cousins awaited her coming.

Though the faint light from the star-pierced sky gave her little help and the trail was barely worn through the close-cropped bunch grass, she rode as one who knew every foot of her way, and even by the roundabout route she purposely followed soon reached a point where the ought-for thicket loomed white upon the dark line of the range.

Fastening the strange horse to a nearby pine and throwing the reins over the head of her well-broken cayuse, she walked to the spot where Cousins lay hidden. Her heart stopped for a moment when she found him lying prone with white-set face upturned to the sky and all unheeding her approach. Stooping over him she realized that he was in a swoon, from which she had difficulty in arousing him, and which threatened to return before they reached the horses. Once there, a stiff pull from the flask she had the thoughtfulness to include in the bundle tied to her saddle, put life into the man, and the two were soon mounted and speeding off through the night.

Therese knew the trails as a town-bred woman knows the streets, but she took pains to avoid every semblance of one giving them all as wide a berth as she did the waggon road which wound its dusty way across the range.

Both horses were fresh and their long