

NOW! Give Yourself a \$168-a-Month Raise!

We'll start you in a proven money-earning spare-time business at no cost to you!

SEND FOR FREE BUSINESS KIT!

Here's a business for you that will be as much fun as it is profitable... and you don't have to invest one cent ... ever! We've helped thousands of men succeed in this unique business ... and we'd like to do it for you, too. Just 2 orders a day from friends, neighbors, relatives, in "off hours" earns you \$168 EXTRA a month! James Kelly of Ohio took so many orders for these Nationally-Advertised shoes that he made \$93.55 in just ONE evening! Fred Mapes of California regularly makes \$5 to \$10 every hour he devotes to his Mason Shoe business! There is no limit on what vou can earn!

It's easy with our way of selling shoes. We set you up in a complete "shoe store" business you can run from your home. We carry the stock and ship the shoes. All you do is show the styles to your family, friends, people where you work, etc....and take orders. You have a profitable business with no rent, light bill, clerk hire or other costs to worry you. You keep 100% of your profit!

Here's why you'll make money!

 You offer 170 comfortable fast-selling styles... far more than a store! You have an amazing range of sizes (21/2 to 14) and widths (AAAA to EEEE). Even hard-to-fit people can buy from you! . Because we carry over 200,000 pairs in stock, your customers get exactly what they want ... no misfits or substitutions! • You feature exclusive Velvet-eez shoes with foamy-soft air-cushion innersoles that let you "walk on air." Built for supreme comfort, Mason shoes also feature built-in strong steel shanks, Air-Cushion longitudinal support, Nylon stitching. Advertised in Esquire, Good Housekeeping and on TV, they'll be available only from you-not sold in stores! • You save your customers money, and the time they would waste "shopping around" shoe stores.



30 kinds of work shoes!

Smart dress, sport styles! The last word in styling Salisty almost every tastel Many fine, unusual leathers. Many comfort features, moccasins, 2-tones and clush-N-Cepe soled shoet set styles!

No wonder you'll have the biggest and best "shoe store" business in town!

Desk MA 605, Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin



You'll get a Starting Kit FREE!

As soon as we receive the coupon below we'll send you a complete Business Outfit FREE and postpaid! It features the entire Mason Collection in full color; contains 10-second Air Cushion demonstrator, valuable Booklet chock full of how-to-make-money hints, special Measuring Board, advertising reprints ... everything else you need to start making cash profits from the first hour! We'll also show you how to earn monthly Bonus Checks and win costly prizes Free!

Mason Shoes will be available ONLY from You!

Because Mason Shoes are not sold in stores, you get repeat orders from delighted customers almost automatically! Steady cash profits every month! Since everyone you know wears shoes...EVERYBODY IS A PROSPECT! No wonder this is the perfect "off-hours" busiwonder this is the perfect off-nours business: a quality product everybody needs... backed by the famous Good Housekeeping Guarantee Seal...one you can take orders for 12 months of the year. Want to see how much money you can make? For a 2¢ postcard you can try it NOW...start your exciting business right away!

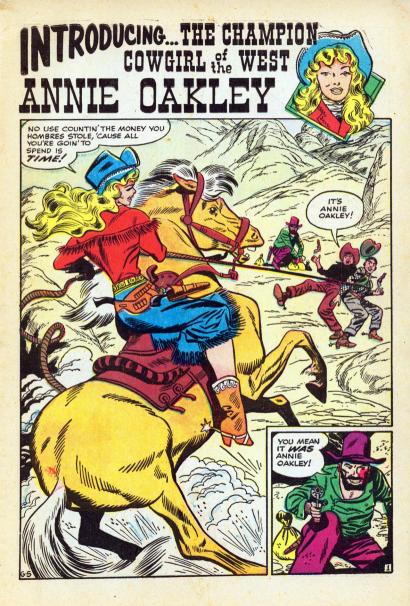
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Yes, I'd like to give myself a \$168 a month raise! Please set me up as your man in my community by rushing my Complete Starting Shoe Business Outhit FREE and postpoid so I can start making extra money from my

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ANNE OAKLEY is published by CURENT DETECTIVE STORIES, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION, 255 MAUSON AVENUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. APPLICATION FOR SECOND-CLASS-ENGY PENDING AT THE POST OFFICE AT NEW YORK, NY, UNIDEN THE ACCT DAMACH 3, 1879. Additional entry of MEIN DEN, CONN. Published bi-monthly. Copyright 1955 by CURENT DETECTIVE STORIES, INC., 455 Modition. MACH 3, 1879. Additional to the Control of Medical Control of Me



QUICKER THAN THE SQUEEZE OF A TRIGGER, ANNIE OAKLEY UNHOLSTERS HER PEARL-GRIP COLT AND SENDS A ,38-CALIBER BULLET TO SNATCH THE GUN OUT OF THE BANDITO'S



I'M GONNA JINGLE MY SPURS OUTA HERE WHILE ANNIE'S BUSY TAMIN' BLACKIE!

Annie slides out of her saddle and gives her golden palomino a message!



NUGGET ANSWERS WITH A SNORT, TURNS AND GALLOPS AFTER THE FLEEING OUTLAW...



AND WHEN THE TWO HORSES ARE NECK AND NECK, NUGGET SLAMS THE RIDER WITH HIS HEAD...



NICE WORK, NIGOTI NOW THIS WOULD BE WE'LL HERD EASY WITHOUT THESE HOMBRES DACK INTO BURNA VISTA, TOWN!

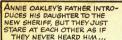
AND IN THE SMALL VALLEY TOWN OF BUENA VISTA, THERE IS GREAT EXCITEMENT, AS THE NEW SHERIFF ARRIVES...

WELCOME, IDAHO SMITH! THIS TOWN'S BEEN WITHOUT A SHERIFF TOO LONG! 1/M BEN OAKLEY AN'
TO LIKE TO HAVE YOU AND YOUR DEPUTY OVER FOR SUPPER TO MEET MY DAUGHTER ANNIE!

YUCCA AND I'LL BE THERE, MR.OAKLEY! NOTHING WE LIKE BETTER THAN A GOOD HOME-COOKED MEAL BY A GAL WHO KNOWS











I DIDN'T

JUST THE KIND

IF SHE'D SPEND HE'S THE RUGGED,
MORE TIME AT OUTDOOR TYPE,
A NITCHEN AND I'M SURE
RANGE THAN ON HE'LL LIKE ME
THE OPEN MORE WHEN HE
RANGE, I MIGHT | FINDS OUT HOW
ASK HER TO GOOD I CAN
MARRY ME! RIDE AND SHOOT!



THAT EVENING, AT THE OAKLEY RANCH, WHEN THE SHERIFF SEES ANNIE IN A FANCY DRESS, HE'S CONVINCED ANNIE IS THE GIRL FOR HIM...



AN'ANNIE CAN SEW I'M MIGHTY
AN' KNIT AN KEEP PLEASED TO HEAR
HOUSE BETTER'N
ANY GIRL IN
TO BE SELING A
THE WHOLE LOTO OF YOUR
DAUGHTER,
G(LIP)
TOO!

HE'S A FINE MAN, ANNIE...
THE KIND I'D LIKE TO SEE
YOU MARRY! NOW AREN'T
YOU GLAD I MADE YOU
WEAR THAT DRESS?

HE WAS JUST BEING POLITE, PAD! MIS KIND OF MAN ISN'T INTERESTED IN A WOMAN WITH APRON STRINGS! HE'S A LAWMAN! HE LIVES AN EXCITING LIFE, AND HE WANTS AN EXCITING



AND AFTER HE SEES ME RIDE, ROPE AND SHOOT AT THE RODEO NEXT WEEK, HE'LL KNOW I'M THE **RIGHT** KIND OF GIRL FOR HIM!



A WEEK LATER, AT THE ANNUAL BUENA VISTA RODEO, THE CROWD EXPLODES INTO CHEERS AS THE ANNOUNCER INTRO-DUCES THE NEXT CONTESTANT IN THE BULLDOGGING CONTEST...





THE STARTER'S RED FLAG DROPS, AND OUT OF THE CHUTE CHARGES A STEER, FOLLOWED BY ANNIE OAKLEY!

WHEN NUGGET CATCHES UP WITH THE STEER, ANNIE DROPS OFF... SHE GETS AN ARM AROUND THE STEER'S NECK, THE OTHER AROUND A HORN, AND SHE TWISTS...







THE NEXT EVENT IS BRONG-BUSTING! A RIDER MUST STAY ON THE HORSE FOR TEN SECONDS! NO CHANGING OF REINS, AND REIN HAND MUST BE HELD ABOVE THE HORSE'S NECK! THE RIDER MUST LEAVE THE CHITE WITH BOTH FEET IN THE STIRRUPS AND SPURS AGAINST THE HORSE'S SHOULDERS! THE RIDER IS DISQUALIFIED IF HE LOSES A STIRRUP, IF HE TOUCHES, LEATHER WITH EITHER HAND, OR IF HE HITS THE HORSE WITH HAT OR HAND...





RIFLE SHOOTING IS THE NEXT EVENT, AND IT NARROWS DOWN TO A CONTEST BETWEEN THE SHERIFF

AND ANNIE OAKLEY ...







AFTER THAT EVENT ANNIE OAKLEY WINS THE SAPOLE BRONC CONTEST THE CALF-ROPING AND THE BAREBACK RIDING HONORS!

AND IT GIVES ME I KNEW IDAHO I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! GREAT PLEASURE TO (WOULD BE I THOUGHT SHE WAS COMBINE CHANTES ANNIE SEES OFF ME! ANNOLINCE THAT THE IMPRESSED! HE MY KIND OF GIRL .. THE KIND WHO'D STAY HOME AND COOK AND BE MY DEVOTED OAKLEY! WIFE!





COME ON, ANNIE AND SHERIFF SMITH!

WE'LL GET ANNIE'S FIRST PRIZE MONEY





AS THE BANDITS LEAVE ... ANNIE FOLLOWING AFTER THE BANDITS, NUGGET REACHES THEM, THEN WHIRLS OAKLEY SUMMONS NUGGET AND AND HIS TWO HIND LEGS ARE LIKE TWIN BOLTS OF LIGHTNING, AS THEY
STRIKE OUT AT THE TWO BANDITS... WHISPERS IN HIS EAR! THE PALOMINO ROLLS A RUMBLE DEEP IN HIS CHEST TO SHOW THAT HE UNDERSTANDS ... B-Z-Z-Z-Z B-Z-Z-Z-Z GUESS WE AND THAT GIVES ANNIE OAKLEY AND IT HITS YES, YOU DESERVE A CHANCE TO GET INTO THE SHOULD'A MADE YOU SHERIFF REWARD FOR ANNIE! WHAT YOU'VE THIS SACK OF DONE! SILVER IS AIGHTY HEAVY AND I'M HERE ... AND NOW WHAT'S WRONG WITH AM? I WON THE RIDING CONTEST, THE ROPING YOU DIDN'T WIN READY ANNIE DEAR AND SHOOTING EVENTS...AND I CAUGHT THE BANDITS AND SAVED HIS LIFE! WHAT ELSE DOES A MAN EXPECT FROM A TO GET MISS YOU LOST? IT! HM-M-M! OAKLEY CHAMPION COWGIRL! GIRL ? I WON EVERYTHING, DIDN'T I?

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Friends. 'I amazed
myself and my friends,
too, Now do jobs that
stumped me before.''

Michael Balicsky,
Newark, M. J.



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THE CHAMPION COWGIRL OF THE WILD WEST! ANNIE OAKLEY

IT IS SATURDAY MORNING IN BUENA VISTA, AND COLONEL AVERY THROCKENBERRY, THE POLITICAL POTENTATE OF THE TOWN, HAS RALLIED A CROWD AROUND HIM, ON WHAT HE INFORMS THEM IS A MATTER OF GRAVE IMPORTANCE...

MAD I FEEL IT IS MY
SOLEMN DUTY AS A LOYAL
FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE TO
CALL TO YOUR ATTENTION
THIS GREAT SHAME!

WE MUST EVICT THE ONE WHO HAS BLEMISHED THE FAIR NAME OF OUR TOWN! AND WE MUST DO IT NOW!











STOP THE SPEECH-

AKING, COLONEL



AT THE ANNUAL RODEO



EVERY RANCHER HAS PRIZE BLACK ANGUS BULLS DISAPPEARING FROM THEIR RANCHES EVER SINCE THE NEW SHERIFF AND HIS DEPUTY CAME TO BUENA VISTA!

YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE FANCY AT FIGURES, ANNIE, TO SEE THAT THOSE FACTS ADD UP TO... IDAHO SMITH, CATTLE
THIEF! THAT'S WHY WE
WANT YOU TO BE
SHERIFF!

NOTHING!

I'LL TAKE THE JOB!







ANNIE OAKLEY HOLDS BACK THE

I'LL AGK HIM POINT-BLANK...AND I'LL KNOW WHETHER HE'S LYING OR NOT!



THE OFFICE IS EMPTY, BUT ON SHERIFF SMITH'S DESK, ANNIE FINDS A FAMILIAR OBJECT, AND HER TEARS FINALLY FLOW...

IT'S TRUE! THE MAN I LOVE IS A CATTLE THIEF! THIS IS A BULL'S-EYE EAR BRAND FROM ONE OF DAD'S PRIZE ANGUS



CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAG

GAIN WEIGHT IN 7 DAYS OR DON'T PAY!

Amazing New Easy Way Quickly
Puts Appealing Pounds and Inches on
Your SKINNY Body, Chest, Arms, Legs!

NOT A MEDICINE! NOT JUST VITAMINS! BUT A BRAND NEW CONCENTRATED FOOD WITH EASY TO DIGEST WONDER CALORIES

You, too, can start putting weight on the first day with the POUNDS PLUS plan!
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POUNDS PLUS is entirely safe, no drugs, no fish oils . . . is not merely vitamins . . . Instead it's a delicious pleasant-tasting tablet jam-packed with wonder calories . . . a secret new concentrated food formula that also aids digestion, starts putting weight on the very first day. POUNDS PLUS plan also stimulates the appetite, supplies quick pep and energy, the magic glow of health . . . for men, women, children, convalescents. Don't be skinny, underweight or pepless. Mail the coupon today!

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| Put X here if you want 3 for \$6.00. |
| Cl angless normant. You stand showers |







"YES YOUR FATHER, YUCCA AND I! IT WAS TO ME! HE FOUND IT IN THE POTBELLY STOVE IN PEABODY'S OFFICE, DURING AN ELECTION MEETING ...

... AND I ASSURE YOU, GENTLEMEN, THAT YOU WILL HAVE NO REGRETS IF YOU VOTE FOR MY CANDIDATE FOR MAYOR! PASS THE CIGARS, ROGER!

I'LL HAVE ONE SOON AS I PIPE, AND ...

GREAT JASPERS!



THIS EAR-BRAND SEAL WITH YOUR FATHER'S

BULL'S-EYE BRAND

ON IT WAS WHAT

TONIGHT, WHILE YOUR FATHER AND YUCCA WENT TO GET ALL THE STOLEN BULLS FROM PEABODY'S CORRAL, I WENT AFTER PEABODY, BUT HE WAS READY FOR ME..."

SURE I STOLE THE PRIZE BULLS AND CHANGED THEIR EAR-BRANDS! AND I TRICKED THE PEOPLE INTO BELIEVING THAT YOU WERE THE THIEF!









AND WHEN ANNIE MEETS THE MORNING ... WELL, COLONEL TROCKENBERRY... WORDS FAIL WHAT DO YOU THINK ME,







under their own JET power, climb 500 feet, loop, circle, stunt - and then go into a long glide and come to a smooth 3-point landing. Yes, they're the fastest, hottest planes you've ever seen ... each SIL-O-JET a 14 inches of greased lightning that actually files at a scale speed of 600 m.p.h.

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GOLD STRIKE

66 OLD!" The cry rang out through Dead Cactus's deserted streets like the sound of a siren. "Gold . . . out in Oak Creek!"

The prospector ran from one door to another, brandishing his pan in one hand and his pickax in the other. "Wake up, yuh varmints. I tell ya I found gold right in your own back yards."

Within a few seconds, doors opened and men and women gathered around the old sourdough. "Whadja say, Ben?" old Mr. Picket asked.

"I said Gold, ya coyote! This town's gonna be in the middle of a gold rush."

"Now wait just a minute, Ben,"
Sheriff Olsen pushed aside the
crowd. "Did I hear somebody
mention gold?"

"Ya sure 'nuff did, Sheriff. I just panned a couple o' dozen ounces right out in Oak Creek. All ya have to do is take a pan an' go out and get it," and Ben held out a sample of the golden gravel to the sheriff for his examination.

After a moment of close looking, the sheriff passed the handful to the man standing next to him. "Looks like the real thing to me, Jeff. As the government assayer, what do you think of it?"

Jeff Holden took his jeweler's glass out of his pocket and everyone held his breath while the man appraised the gravel. Finally Jeff gave his verdict. "It's gold, all right. And a pretty good yield at that. Where did you say you found it, Ben?"

"Right up there about twelve miles or so up Oak Creek."

die cette

"Twelve miles, you say," the Sheriff answered anxiously. "Which way?"

"That way," Ben answered.
"Up near Centertown. You want to come out with me and have me show ya? I already filed my claim to the land in Centertown, but ain't nobody knows it up there yet."

The Sheriff silenced the onrushing shouting from the crowd by a gesture and then looked at Ben silently.

"Well, we're all mighty grateful, Ben, but that land up there all belongs to Centertown . . . lock, stock and barrel. There just isn't anything we here in Dead Cactus can do about it."

"Ya mean," Ben stared, "that you folks can't take advantage of this gold strike?"

"That's right, Ben," the Sheriff answered sadly. "Many thanks to you anyway, but you might as well go right back to Centertown, 'cause they're the only ones to benefit by it."

It didn't take long for all the newspapers all over the country to shout in headlines, "Gold discovered in Centertown!" All the people from East and West flocked to the little town in search of a quick fortune and easy money. There's no doubt that the citizens of Centertown were overjoyed by their town's sudden wealth, but the poor settlers in Dead Cactus received none of the profits of the sudden immigration of workers and tourists.

"It sure does seem a shame, Sheriff," Jeff Holden confided one day, "that all the people from

here are leaving and going to Centertown for better jobs."

"They were all doing all right here before this," the Sheriff answered. "I can't help thinking that there must be some way to keep them here."

"I'd like to ... watch out!" yelled Jeff. The two men were nearly knocked off their feet by a speeding wagon careening down the street. As the Sheriff brushed the dust off his clothes, he pointed angrily after the disappearing rig. "That's what I mean, right there."

"That's just old Bob Kittredge leaving town with his wife and family to settle in Centertown," Jeff answered.

The Sheriff shouted, "But that's the trouble with everybody here. They're all deserting the sinking ship of Dead Cactus to go over to a boom town."

"Can't say I blame 'em, Sheriff," Jeff sympathized. "I'd go myself if my job didn't keep me here."

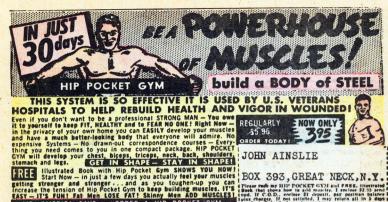
"Their whole past and future are here," the Sheriff replied. "This town could have been good for everybody, if they'd only stay here and build it up."

"It does seem a shame," Jeff added. "The school was just built and the library was just getting started. But what can we do?"

"I've got an idea, Jeff. Just listen..." and when the sheriff finished outlining his idea, Jeff was filled with eagerness to start.

"Well, if this doesn't bring flocks of people here, I don't know what will!" he said.

"I've got faith in the future of



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Zone-State.

THE DEPUT



AND SOMETIMES, KEEPING LAW AND ORDER WAS ALMOST TOO MUCH OF A JOB FOR ANY ONE MAN TO HANDLE!



IT WAS PART OF THE CODE OF THE WEST.
NO MATTER HOW DANGEROUS THE
ASSIGNMENT, THE SHERIFF COULDN'T
SHIRK HIS DUTY!



IT WAS THREE AGAINST ONE! BUT THE SHERIFF OF



THE SHERIFF STOOD HIS GROUND TOOK A SECOND TO AIM CAREFULLY, AND HIS COLT BARKED ONCE IN THE DIRECTION OF THE BADMAN...KNOCKING THE GUN FROM HIS HAND?



IT WAS LIKE TRYIN' TO HOG-TIE A MADDENED STEER...
IT TOOK TWO MEN TO CONVINCE HIM. BUT FINALLY
THEY PERSUADED THE SHERIFF TO TAKE TO HIS BED
FOR A WEEK UNTIL HIS WOUND HEALED...



LIKE COWED COYOTES, TWO OF THE YAEGER BROTHERS DROPPED THEIR IRONS! BUT THE THIRD NERVOUS AND SCARED, FIRED POINT-BLANK AT THE MAN WITH THE BADGE...HIS HAND TREMBLING LIKE A JITTERY COLT!





AND 50, ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS EVENTS CAME
TO PASS IN THE TOWN OF ELDORO... FOR ONE WEEK,
IT WAS TO BE A TOWN WITHOUT A LAWMAN! THE LAWABIDING CHIZERRY SEEMED TO BE HOLDING THISE
BREATH... WAITING FOR TROUBLE TO STRIKE!



AND THE TROUBLE WASN'T LONG IN COMING! FIST-FIGHTS BECAME COMMON ON THE FORMERLY QUIET STREETS OF



EVEN GUN-FIGHTS BECAME MORE AND MORE FREQUENT! GUN-FIGHTS WHICH THE SHERIFF WOULDN'T HAVE TOLERATED FOR A MINUTE!



AND FROM HIS SICKBED, THE SHERIFF COULD HEAR THE SOUND OF GUN-FIRE! FINALLY AN IDEA STRUCK HIM!



THE SHERIFF'S SENDIN' FER A WHO'S THE SHERIFF WRITIN' JOE GREY, THE FASTEST DRAW EAST OF THE ROCKIES...THE SHERIFF'S SENDIN' FOR TO, SLIM? GUN-SLINGER! HIM!

BUTTE FALLS WAS ONLY 25 MILES AWAY! THE NEXT DAY A SILENT STRANGER RODE INTO TOWN! HE WAS SMALL THIN, AND PALE, BUT THERE WAS A DETERMINED LOOK IN HIS COLD, BILUE EYES!



GREY WORE HIS GUN-BELT LOW AND CARRIED A LONG, THIN PACKAGE JUST THE SIZE OF A WINCHESTER...



THE NEWS SPREAD LIKE TUMBLEWEED IN A STORM...JOE GREY HAD COME TO REPORT TO THE SHERIFF...SOMETHING WAS IN THE WIND!



WHEN GREY WALKED OUT OF THE SHERIFF'S OFFICE, HE WAS WEARING A DEPUTY SHERIFF'S BADGE...AND THE SAME GRIM LOOK ON HIS FACE!





STANDING IN THE CENTER OF THE SALOON, LOOKING SMALL AND UNIMPOSING AMONGST ALL THE BIG RANGY, ROUGH COMPOKES IN THE ROOM...JOBE GREY SPOKE... SOFTLY... SLOWLY...



LISTEM ALL
YOU
GIRANGERS!
T'M GIVIN!
YUH ONE HOUR
TO CLEAR
OUTA ELDORO!
THAT MEANS
SALL OF
YUH?

YUH?

THE MEN COULDN'T BELIEVE THEIR EARS, IT TOOK AN UNBEATABLE FIGHTING MAN TO FACE ODDS LIKE THAT AND ISSUE SUCH AN ORDER! AND YET, JOE GREY HAD SAID IT!



ONE STRANGER, BIGGER AND MORE RECKLESS THAN THE OTHERS, DARED TO CHALLENGE THE GRIM LITTLE MAN!



JOE GREY SAID NOTHING, HE MERELY LIFTED THE LONG, THIN PACKAGE HE WAS CARRYING AND SLOWLY STARTED TO UNWRAP IT...





IT ONLY TAKES ONE TO START A STAMPEDE! IN LESS THAN 45 MINUTES, THERE WASN'T A STRANGER LEFT IN TOWN...EXCEPT JOE GREY!



JOE GREY REMAINED IN TOWN UNTIL THE SHERIFF WAS ON HIS FEET AGAIN... AND DURING THAT TIME, ELDORO WAS A MODEL OF LAW AND ORDER! AND THEN, FINALLY...







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Dead Cactus," the Sheriff observed, "and I'm not going to see it spoiled by a gold strike in the next town." So that evening, Jeff and the Sheriff set to work with the start of their plan.

That evening, they both strode through the once-crowded little town with paint and paint brushes, brooms and buckets. The next day, they were busy cutting boards and hammering. All the next day and night, they were busy putting their newly-made signs up all over town.

After a few more days, they left their mark on all the deserted houses and ranches as well as in all the forgotten stores down the main street. The Sheriff looked at Jeff with a glow in his eye. "Well, I think we're just about ready to start on the publicity, Jeff."

Jeff winked and loaded all the signs and posters into the buckboard, and with the Sheriff beside him, they rode into Centertown. There, Jeff opened the can of paste and they put up their first poster. "Come one ... Come all," it read. "See the genuine, authentic Ghost Town!" As people gathered around the unusual sign, they began to question the two men.

"You say it's a real Ghost

"Yep," the Sheriff replied.
"Only twelve miles from here."

"Nobody in it at all?"
"Nope," Jeff answered.

"Say, I'm gonna have to bring the wife and kids over for a sight of this," one of the onlookers

"Sure, c'mon over," Sheriff Olsen said. "I think it'll be real educational."

The men spent a busy day putting up all their signs and posters everywhere in Centertown that people might see. Along toward dusk, they piled into the empty buckboard and started on the deserted road back to their lone- by one they all took long looks at

Almost as soon as the sun rose the next morning, the crowd started to gather at Dead Cactus's city limits.

"Look at this sign, Maw," a child's voice cried. "It says that this was going to be the site of the new railroad comin' through."

"Hey, look everybody," another voice called. "This was the spot where Lemuel Stanley kept a store. The fastest-growing dry goods store in the state, the sign says."

"And it was, too," a sad voice from behind reminded them.



"Why, Lem Stanley," the Sheriff shouted, walking toward the downcast man standing on the fringes of the crowd. "What are you doing back here in Dead Cactus?"

"Well, me and the boys came over to sort of see what the old place looked like. It's been a long time since we've been back."

"Look, there's old Pop Picket looking at his old barber shop," the Sheriff discovered. The two men walked over and were soon engaged in conversation.

dusk, they piled into the empty One by one of the old citizens buckboard and started on the de-came drifting back that day. One

by one they all took long looks at their stores or homes or ranches. They saw spots where they had laughed and done business with old friends. Toward the evening, when everyone had gone again, the sheriff admitted to Jeff, "I thought it might work, but I guess it hasn't. Nobody wants to come back to Dead Cactus any more, not even the way we've fixed it up so pretty."

The sound of horses' hoofs stirred the air, and Jeff and the Sheriff turned to see Lem Stanley and Pop Picket and Bob Kittredge and a score of other old neighbors dismount and step over, smiling.

"We're the new citizens committee of Dead Cactus, and we just thought we'd come over ahead of our families to make sure everything was law-abidin' before we moved back in again."

"Moved back in," the Sheriff repeated.

"Yep, that's what we said, Sheriff. We just took one look at the places we knew and loved, and we all decided that leavin' this place wasn't worth ten bags of gold. We started to build up a future here once, and we were all doin' pretty well ...we can come back and do it again."

"That's right," the crowd echoed. "We're comin' back and take up where we left off."

The Sheriff was almost speechless, but he smiled and was just about to say something, when a lone rider galloped into town from the East and inquired, "Say, pardners, where's this Ghost Town I heard so much about?"

"I reckon that there just isn't any Ghost Town any more, stranger," Jeff answered. "But if you're looking for a thrivin' community to settle down in, it looks like you've come to the right place."

THE END G-148

THE CHAMPION COWGIRL OF THE WILD WEST!

























YOU'RE RIGHT, YOUNGSTER... AND BRING SICK! I'LL RIDE BACK SOME NOTO TOWN AND GET FOOD, IDAHO! THEY DON'T COME OUT! I HAVE A THING!



BILLY WATCHES THE SHERIFF'S STALLION GALLOP AWAY IN MIGHTY STRIDES, AND ANNIE IS AWARE OF A FAINT GLEAM OF ENVY AND JOY BREAKING THRU THE SADNESS IN THE BOY'S EYES...



BY THE TIME IDAHO COMES BACK WITH THE DOCTOR AND FOOD, ANNIE GETS TO KNOW ALL ABOUT BILLY'S LONELY LIFE...

SHE'S VERY SICK AND I'VE

DONE ALL I CAN/SHE MIGHT

PULL THRU IF SHE HAS SOMEONE

BAILEY/

WATCH OVER HER DAY AND

NIGHT!

ME WHAT



FOR THREE DAYS ANNIE SITS AT MRS. GORDON'S BEDSIDE, NURSING AND FEEDING. HER...



FOR THREE NIGHTS ANNIE WAITS AND WATCHES AND PRAYS...















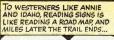














GET ON YOUR HORSE, MARTY!
YOU'RE GOING TO FILL THAT
EMPTY JAIL CELL I'VE BEEN
SAVING, AFTER WE
RETURN STORMY!

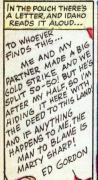


WHEN BILLY HEARS THE APPROACHING HOOF-BEATS, HE CAN'T CONTROL HIS ANXIETY ANY LONGER! THE GREAT LOVE HE FEELS FOR STORMY SURGES THRU HIS ENTIRE BODY, AND HE RUMS TO MEET HIM...



EVERYBODY EXCEPT MARTY SHARP IS HAPPY AT THE GREAT MIRACLE OF LOVE! AND THEN STORMY ADDS MORE MISERY TO THE REAL-ESTATE MANS TROUBLES...







NO, ANNIE! I WANT RECKON YOU'LL BE TO BE NEAR MY GOING HUSBAND, SO WE'LL BACK TO STAY IN BUENA MISSOURI VISTA! IT'LL BE A MRS. GORDON NEW LIFE FOR BILLY AND ME THANKS TO YOU! NOW KNOW WHAT PEOPLE MEAN WHEN THEY SAY YOU'RE A CHAMPION





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