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Fate plays its cards in many strange ways! Here, a speeding stagecoach makes a turn on the rocky mountain road... and a coach wheel buckles under the strain.

"BLAST THE BLACK RIDER DOWN!"
THERE IS A RENDING CRASH OF SPLINTERING WOOD. THEN SILENCE, AS THE DRIVER OF THE COACH PULLS HIMSELF GROGGILY TO HIS FEET, AND SURVEYS THE WRECKAGE...

PURITY BAD! RECKON I'D BETTER GET HELP, NO TELLIN' HOW BADLY HURT THE PASSENGER IS! GOOD THING WE'RE NOT FAR FROM DOC MASTERS' PLACE!

DOC! DOC! STAGE IS WRECKED... PASSENGER HURT? OUT NEAR WIZARD GULCH!

AND PRECIOUS MINUTES LATER THE DRIVER POUNDS INTO TOWN, RIDING ONE OF THE STAGE HORES BAREBACK! MARIE LATHROP IS AN INTERESTED SPECTATOR

WAIT, DOCTOR! WE'LL BE ABLE TO MAKE IT FASTER IN MY BUCKBOARD! DON'T WASTE THE TIME IT TAKES TO SADDLE YOUR HORSE!

BESIDES, THAT OLD NAG OF YOURS CAN HARDLY WALK, LET ALONE RUN!

GIVING THE HORSES THE REIN, MARIE DRIVES THEM AT FULL SPEED AS THEY'RE FOLLOWED BY A CROWD FROM TOWN! THE FLIMSY BUCKBOARD SWAYS WILDLY FROM SIDE TO SIDE OVER THE ROCKY ROADS...

UH... MISS MARIE... UH... DO YOU THINK IT'S SAFE TO GO THIS RAPIDLY?

DON'T WORRY, DOCTOR. I'LL SEE NO HARM COMES TO YOU!

I ASSURE YOU, MISS MARIE, I WASN'T CONCERNED ABOUT MY OWN WELL-BEING... BUT ABOUT YOURS!

VERY GALLANT, I'M SURE, DOCTOR, BUT YOU'D BETTER GET READY! WE'RE NEAR WIZARD GULCH!

SHORTLY AFTERWARDS DR. MASTERS REACHES HIS PATIENT AND SKILLFULLY GETS TO WORK ON THE INJURED MAN! A BLACK-SHIRTED MAN FROM TOWN WATCHES INTENTLY!

HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT AFTER A FEW DAYS! WE'LL GET HIM BACK TO TOWN! A NURSE'LL BE NECESSARY FOR THE FIRST DAYS!

HMM... JONAS IS GOIN' TO BE MIGHTY INTERESTED WHEN HE HEARS ABOUT THIS!

A LITTLE LATER, THE BLACK-SHIRTED MAN IS IN THE CART-WHEEL SALOON, TALKING TO BEN JONAS...

THE GOVERNMENT MAN'S HERE, BEN... HE WAS HURT IN THE STAGE WRECK! THEY'RE TAKIN' HIM TO THE EAGLE HOTEL. DOC MASTERS SAYS HE'LL BE Laid UP FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS! HE HAS THE BIDS WITH HIM!

UH-HUH! GOOD WORK, HOLLY! I WON'T FORGET YA... WHEN THE PAY-OFF COMES!
NOW ALL WE DO IS WAIT FOR THEM TO BRING HIM HERE! THEN WE SWIPE THE BIDS! YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS FOR US TO GET OUR HANDS ON THOSE BIDS BEFORE THE CONTRACT IS LET, DON'T YA, HOLLY?

I RECKON I DO! IT'LL BE MORE'N A MILLION DOLLAR JOB TO IRRIGATE THIS VALLEY... AN' THE MAN WHO KNOWS WHAT THE OTHER BIDS ARE CAN UNDERBID AND GET THE CONTRACT! YOU'RE GOING TO BE THAT MAN, AREN'T YA, BEN?

YOU BET I AM, HOLLY! WE'LL GET THOSE BIDS... WE'LL GET 'EM!

SEVERAL HOURS LATER, IN THE ROOM OF PETER HENDERSON, THE INJURED MAN, AS THE ADROIT AND SKILLFUL DOCTOR MASTERS FINISHES HIS EXAMINATION...

MR. HENDERSON, I'M AFRAID YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO TRAVEL FOR AT LEAST A WEEK! MISS LATHROP, HERE, HAS VOLUNTEERED TO ACT AS YOUR NURSE!

A WEEK! BUT I'M DUE IN WASHINGTON IN FIVE DAYS! I CAN'T BE LAYED UP LIKE THIS!

NOW, MR. HENDERSON, YOU BE A GOOD BOY, AND DO WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERS! WE'LL SEND A WIRE TO YOUR WASHINGTON OFFICE! YOUR MAIN JOB IS TO REST AND GET WELL!

WELL, I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO DO AS YOU SAY! NOW, THIS BRIEFCASE CONTAINS SOME IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS... SEALED BIDS FOR THE IRRIGATION PROJECT... I'D LIKE TO PUT THEM IN SAFE-KEEPING!

UH... MARIE... THAT IS... UH, MISS LATHROP... THERES A TRAVELING SHOW IN TOWN NEXT WEEK, AND I... UH...

I THINK NOT, DR. MASTERS! AND NOW PERHAPS YOU'LL BETTER GO!

OF COURSE! I'LL LOCK THEM IN MY OFFICE!

AT THAT MOMENT, THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN, AND...

PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER NOT, DOC! PERHAPS YOU'D BETTER STAY AN' HAND OVER THAT BRIEFCASE! NO... NO... I CAN'T! IT ISN'T MINE!
YOU ROTTEN OWLHOOETERS... I'LL... UGH!

THAT'LL SHUT YOU UP PERMANENTLY! NOW HAND ME THAT BRIEFCASE, DOC... OR YOU'LL GET MORE OF THE SAME!

WHY... UH... HERE IT IS... I... UH...

DOCTOR MASTERS, YOU'RE A COWARD! DON'T GIVE UP WITHOUT A FIGHT... LET ME... UGH!

NOSEY DAME, ISN'T SHE? WE'D BETTER LUG HER ALONG WITH US. JUST IN CASE SOMEBODY GETS THE IDEA TO THROW LEAD!

SO LONG, DOC! YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE THAT HAS ANY BRAINS! NO PERCENTAGE IN RISKIN' YOUR NECK, IS THERE? WE'LL KEEP THE GAL AS A HOSTAGE... JUST IN CASE YOU GET IDEAS! 'LONG, AMIGO!

MEANWHILE...

HE'S DEAD, POOR FELLOW! IT'S TIME FOR ME TO GET INTO ACTION! I MUST SAVE MARIE AND GET THE IRRIGATION BIDS BACK!

A FEW DEFT, DECISIVE MOMENTS, A RAPID CHANGE OF COSTLIME, AND IN PLACE OF THE MEEK, MILD-MANNERED DOCTOR MASTERS STANDS THE FIERY, STEEL-MUSCLED, TWO-FISTED NEMESIS OF THE RANGE-LAND...

THE BLACK RIDER!

THE BANDITS MOUNT AND STREAK OUT OF TOWN ON THE OLD GLORY MINE TRAIL!

AT A SIGNAL FROM THE BLACK RIDER, SATAN, HIS HORSE, IS TRANSFORMED FROM A TIRED-LOOKING BROOMIE INTO A PROUD, POWERFUL STALLION WITH ARCHED NECK AND DILATED NOSTRILS. A THOROUGHBRED FIT TO BEAR THE BLACK RIDER!

WITH A GRACEFUL LEAP, THE MAN IN BLACK MOUNTS HIS GALLANT HORSE, THEN THE THRILLING CRY OF THE BLACK RIDER RINGS OUT!

COME ON, SATAN! THERE'S WORK TO DO!

YAHOO, SATAN! ONWARD!
AS THE MIGHTY SATAN RACES FORWARD, GAINING GROUND WITH EACH STRIDE, THE BLACK RIDER SPOTS THE MEN HE IS PURSUING...

GOOD WORK, SATAN! THERE THEY ARE!

LIKE AN AVENGING PANTHER, THE MAN IN BLACK LITHELY SPRINGS FROM HIS SADDLE TO STRIKE WITH ALL THE STRENGTH OF HIS STEEL MUSCLES...

ALL RIGHT, HOMBRE! LET THAT GIRL GO! IT'S... IT'S THE BLACK RIDER!

BLAST THE BLACK RIDER DOWN, BOYS!

IN A WILD SWIRL OF ACTION, THE BLACK RIDER CLASHES WITH THE KIDNAPERS NEAR THE OLD GLORY MINE!

HE'S A BAD ONE TO TANGLE WITH, THAT BLACK RIDER! CAN'T EVEN PUT A SHOT INTO HIM! RECKON I'D BEST GET TO THE MINE SHAFT! I'LL USE THE GAL AS A SHIELD!

YAHOO! YOU DOGS, FIGHT!

THAT MASKED COYOTE IS GETTIN' AWAY AND HE'S TAKIN' MARIE WITH HIM! I'LL HAVE TO FINISH THIS QUICKLY!

GUARD THEM, SATAN! DON'T LET THEM MOVE A FINGER! I'M GOIN' AFTER THE OTHER ONE!
Grimly, the Black Rider pursues his quarry, and braves a hail of lead from the fleeing man...

Can't risk firing back at him... might hit Marie!

Stand where you are, Black Rider, or I'll blast the girl into a million pieces! This mine shack is loaded with all kinds of explosives... and if you take another step, I'll throw a match into it!

Can't let that happen to Marie...

All right, Mister, you win. Just let me get the girl to safety!

Haw! Haw! So you're weak like the rest of 'em, eh, Black Rider? You fall for a pretty face an' a flashin' smile! Well, it doesn't mean a thing to me!

Casually, the man lights the matches and flips the blazing box through the window!

There! In another couple of seconds, the whole place will go up in... Smithereens!

Stop! You low-down, Manny Coyote!

In a supreme effort, the Black Rider makes a desperate attempt to save the girl, as the fugitive turns and runs for the shelter of the mine entrance...

Marie! I must save Marie! An' while he's playin' hero, I'll make my getaway an' watch the fireworks from the mouth of the mine!

Inside the shack, the intrepid Black Rider finds the girl... and with only seconds left, before the hungry flames touch the explosives with their fiery tongues, he takes her up in his arms and prepares to dash for safety...

DANGER
But once outside, he is faced with a new menace, as hot lead sings around him.

There's going to be a grand pay-off around here before I'm through with this hombre!

An' this time I'm not going to be usin' fists... but we'll finish this argument with talking guns!

The man in black drops the limp form of Marie to the ground, then...

Shielding Marie's body with his own, the Black Rider watches the shack explode with a tremendous roar, sending flame and smoke skyrocketing upward... while the whole countryside is rocked with the force of the blast!

BOOM!

The masked man removes his mask and reveals himself as Ben Jonas.

Ha-ha! Well, I guess that rids us of the Black Rider!

Are you all right, Marie Darling?

Yes... Yes... I think so... Oh! Black Rider, it's you! It's not a dream... it's you! You called me Darling!

Black Rider... where are you going?

Black Rider... there's a job to be done... an exterminating job! I have to eliminate a rat!

But the Black Rider and Marie survive the blast.
AND MOMENTS LATER...AT THE MINE MOUTH...

YOU! YOU'RE STILL ALIVE! DON'T COME ANY CLOSER!

GO AHEAD, JONAS... I'LL GIVE YOU YOUR FIRST SHOT!

IN A FRENZY OF FEAR, JONAS FIRES ONE SHOT AFTER ANOTHER, BUT NOW HIS NERVES ARE SHATTERED, AS HE IS FACED WITH THE IMPLACABLE FURY OF THE BLACK-CLAD WARRIOR OF THE RANGE!

RECKON YOU'VE HAD YOUR TURN, JONAS... NOW IT'S MINE!

I DON'T MISS!

BLACK RIDER! BLACK RIDER! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

YES! HE WON'T PULL ANY MORE CROOKED DEALS... OR KILL AN INNOCENT MAN AGAIN...

...AND ONE THING MORE... MARIE... THIS!

OH... OHHH... BLACK RIDER... IT'S... MMM...

HE... HE KISSED ME... BLACK RIDER... BLACK RIDER! HE'S GONE!

HOURS LATER... AFTER MARIE HAS RETURNED TO TOWN AND TURNED THE DOCUMENTS OVER TO THE AUTHORITIES.

MISS MARIE... THERE'S A DANCE TONIGHT... AND... UH... WOULD YOU... UM...

GO AWAY, DOCTOR! OH, BLACK RIDER... WHERE DID YOU GO? WILL I EVER FIND YOU AGAIN?

BLACK RIDER... HE... KISSED... ME

WE'LL SEE IF THAT CAN BE ARRANGED AGAIN, MIGHTY SOON!

THE END
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THE TWO-GUN KID

What would you do if your friend, an honest lawman, was accused of being in cahoots with a killer hardcase? Every bit of evidence seems to prove that Sheriff Delaney has freed a badman so he can kill and kill again. This is the situation that faces the Two-Gun Kid when he rides in to see his old pard the star-toter of Big Bend, and finds he must prove the lawman’s innocence in the old Western way... behind smoking guns, in...

"BIG BEND BADMEN RIDE AGAIN!"

South of the Panhandle country, a singing cowboy rides into a small Texas town...

BIG BEND POP. 750

I have two guns that bark and roar. I have two guns and wish I had four... seems like the same peaceful town, Cyclone?

Wonder if our friend Chuck Delaney’s still sheriff here!
HANGIN' IN BIG BEND! THINGS SURE HAVE CHANGED!

YEP! C'MON, KID! THE JURY SHOULD BE COMIN' IN BY NOW!

THIS COYOTE'S BEEN HOSS-STEALIN'! FINALLY DABBED A LOOP ON HIM!

WHAT'S HIS NAME?

HE CALLS HIMSELF BILL BARNES!

GENTLEMEN OF THE JURY, HAVE YOU REACHED A VERDICT?

WE, THE JURY, FIND THE DEFENDANT... GUILTY!

HOWDY, CHUCK! I WAS JUST PASSING BY AND THOUGHT I'D SAY HELLO!

WELL I'LL BE THE TWO-GUN KID!

HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN A DOG'S AGE! YOU LOOK TIRED, KID!

RECKON MY HOSS AND I COULD USE SOME REST!

STILL KEEPING LAW AND ORDER, CHUCK?

YEP! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO HEAR A JURY BRING IN A HANGIN' VERDICT FOR ME!
BILL BARNES, THE PEOPLE OF BIG BEND HAVE FOUND YOU GUILTY! I SENTENCE YOU TO HANG BY THE NECK UNTIL YOU ARE DEAD!

SEEMS TO ME LIKE I SAW THIS BARNES IN KANSAS, COUPLE OF WEEKS AGO!

NO, KID, YOU'RE MISTAKEN! HE'S BEEN HOSS-STEALIN' ROUND THESE PARTS FOR MONTHS!

ANYTHING YOU HAVE TO SAY, BILL?

YEAH, JUST ONE THING TO THE "GENTLEMEN" OF THE JURY!

NO JAIL'S HOLDIN' ME, GENTS... AND I'M COMIN' AFTER YOU ONE BY ONE... TO KILL YA!

ALL RIGHT, BILL! YOU'VE DONE YOUR LAST TALKING!

YEAH, AND MY PAL SHERIFF DELANEY'S LETTIN' ME OUTTA JAIL T' GET YA... CAUSE HE SPLIT THE HOSS-STEALIN' MONEY WITH ME!

INSTANTLY, BARNES' WORDS THROW THE COURT INTO AN UPROAR!

WHAT'S HE SAYIN'? IT'S A LIE!

HONEST CHUCK DELANEY ISN'T ANY THIEF!

YOU LIE, BILL BARNES! AND EVERY HONEST HOMBRE IN BIG BEND KNOWS IT!

SEEMS TO ME THAT THIS BARNES MIGHT NEED WATCHING BEFORE HE HANGS!
OUTSIDE THE JAILHOUSE...

GOT 'IM UNDER LOCK AND KEY WITH A COUPLE OF DEPUTIES ON GUARD!

RECKON I'LL STAY AROUND TOWN FOR A WHILE!

YOU DON'T BELIEVE I'M IN CAHOOTS WITH THAT VARMINT?

NO! BUT HIS GANG MAY TRY TO SPRING HIM!

AND I WANT TO BE AROUND... JUST IN CASE I'M NEEDED!

LATER, IN THE BIG BEND BARBERSHOP...

AS FOREMAN OF THE JURY, ED, AREN'T YOU AFRAID THAT MAYBE BARNES'LL GET OUT?

NAY! HE WAS JUST TALKIN'!

YOU'D BE FIRST ON HIS KILLIN' LIST, ED...

THE SHERIFF'S GOT HIM BEHIND BARS WHERE HE'LL STAY 'TIL...

SAY YOUR PRAYERS, JURY FOREMAN!

WITH THE STILLNESS OF A SNAKE, THE MAN SENTENCED TO DIE STANDS' BEFORE THEM!

DON'T SHOOT, BILL... AAAGHHH!

IT'S... IT'S...

YEAH, BILL BARNES... COME TO GET YA, LIKE I SAID!

SO LONG, FOREMAN! NOW EVERY FOOL IN BIG BEND WILL KNOW THAT SHERIFF DELANEY SET ME FREE!
THE ANGRY BARK OF GUNFIRE SPEEDS THE TWO-GUN KID TO THE SCENE!

IT'S THE ROAR OF SIX-GUNS... AND UNLESS I'M MISTAKEN, THIS MEANS TROUBLE! EEYEH! LET'S GO, CYCLONE!

BILL BARNES KILLED THE JURY FOREMAN! I SAW HIM WITH MY OWN EYES! HE AND HIS GANG JUST GOT AWAY!

ARE YOU SURE?

HE SAID SHERIFF DELANEY LET HIM OUT!

LET'S GET THE SHERIFF! HOLD ON, MEN! THE SHERIFF'S NOT IN ON THIS! YOU HAVE MY WORD!

YOUR WORD? WHO'RE YOU, STRANGER? THEY CALL ME TWO-GUN KID!

WE'VE HEARD OF YOU, KID! WE'LL TRUST YOU!

I'M GOING TO TALK TO SHERIFF DELANEY AND I AIM TO CLEAR THIS MYSTERY UP, GENTS!

BUT EVEN TWO-GUN KID IS PUZZLED AS HE Listens TO SHERIFF DELANEY EXPLAIN!

YOU HAVE TO BELIEVE ME! BILL BARNES NEVER LEFT THE JAIL! I CAN'T UNDERSTAND IT!

SOMETHING'S MIGHTY FISHY! DOUBLE YOUR GUARD, CHUCK! I'M GOING INTO TOWN... TO WAIT FOR BILL!
WORD OF THE KILLING SPREADS THROUGH BIG BEND, AND THE WHOLE TOWN WAITS WITH A BOILING ANGER FOR THE NEXT MOVE!

CAN'T SAY AS I BLAME YOU FOR BLOWIN' TOWN, RUSTY... SEEIN' AS HOW YOU'RE NEXT ON THE JURY, FOLLOWIN' ME! AND I'M NOT WAITIN'!

BUT THIS TIME, THE MURDERER HAS NOT RECKONED ON A DAUNTLESS COWBOY!

DON'T KNOW HOW YOU'RE BUSTIN' JAIL, BILL, BUT AS SOON AS I FINISH THIS MILK, I AIM TO FIND OUT!

I HEARD YOU WERE IN TOWN! STAY OUTTA THIS, KID!

PLEASE... SAVE ME! DRAW YOUR GUNS, KID!

WITH THE SPEED OF AN ENRAGED PANTHER, A SIX-GUN APPEARS IN THE KID'S HAND, BLASTING THE GANG LEADER'S DEATH WEAPON!

OWW! MY GUN! BURN RUSTY, BOYS, AND HIT THE LEATHER!

AS THE DESPERATE GANG RUSHES TO ESCAPE, ONE OF THEM TURNS AND SHOOTS!

YA GOT SHERIFF DELANEY TO THANK FOR THIS! HA! HA!

HELP! AHHGG... HE GOT ME!
ANOTHER COLD-BLOODED MURDER, AND AGAIN THE NAME OF "SHERIFF DELANEY" IS SCREAMED AT THE VICTIM!

HE'S DEAD! Y'HEARD THE GANG CALL THE SHERIFF'S NAME! LET'S GET 'IM!

I DON'T SAVVY THIS, MEN! BUT I'M TALKING TO THE SHERIFF FIRST!

FASTER, CYCLONE! GOT TO GET TO CHUCK DELANEY FIRST! GOT TO MAKE HIM TALK! AND IF HE IS WORKING WITH BILL, THE MOB CAN HAVE HIM WITH MY BLESSINGS!

THE KID BACKS OUT BEHIND MENACING GUNS HITS THE SADDLE AND SLAMS AWAY!

BUT AS THE TWO-GUN KID R. CES TO THE JAILHOUSE, AN AMAZING SIGHT CONFRONTS HIM!

WHAT IN BLAZES... A MASKED LEADER HELPING BILL BARNES BREAK JAIL! AND SHERIFF DELANEY'S FIGHTING BACK!

MY ARM! I'M WOUNDED! KEEP FIGHTING, MEN!

KID! MY DEPUTIES'LL FOLLOW YOU! YOU'VE GOT TO ROUND UP THAT GANG!

YOU'RE WOUNDED, CHUCK... AND AN ANGRY MOB'S COMING TO GET YOU!

IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO PROVE I'M HONEST... GET BILL AND THAT MASKED MAN!

YOU'RE RIGHT! LET'S GO, MEN!
I REMEMBER A SHORTCUT! WE'LL BUSHWHACK THEM!

IT'S 'SUICIDE LEAP!'

IF YOU VALUE YOUR SHERIFF'S LIFE, YOU'LL FOLLOW ME, MEN!

REALIZING THAT A FALSE JUMP MEANS CERTAIN DEATH, THE GALLOP POSSE, INSPIRED BY THE COURAGE OF THE TWO-GUN KID, FOLLOW ON!

THERE THEY ARE!

THE GAME'S UP, GENTS!

YI-EEE!

GOT TO HURRY YOU TWO BACK TO TOWN! NOW GET!

HE'S UNCOVERING THE MASKED MAN!

WHY... IT'S... HE'S BILL'S TWINS! I TOLD YOU BILL NEVER LEFT JAIL!

I THOUGHT I RECOGNIZED BILL BARNES IN THE COURT-HOUSE! BUT IT WAS BILL'S BROTHER I HAD SEEN BACK IN KANSAS!

YOU SAVED MY LIFE AND MY NAME, KID! I'M MIGHTY THANKFUL!

THE WEST NEEDS HONEST MEN LIKE YOU, SHERIFF! WELL, SO LONG! EEYAH! LET'S GO, CYCLONE!

THE END
HI FRIENDS:

Lately there has been quite a debate about comics raging in the pages of the Saturday Review of Literature, one of America's most respected magazines. In an article, Dr. Wertham discussed the problem of juvenile delinquency in America today, and pinned the blame for some of these cases on comic magazines, simply because many of the delinquent youngsters had read comics.

93% of all young people (from 8 to 16 years of age) read comics. Naturally a few young people get into some kind of trouble...so do a lot of older ones...and of course many of the kids who get into trouble do read comics. But what the article does not state is the fact that 93% of the boys and girls who get into no trouble at all also read comics.

Let us quote a letter from David Pace Wigransky, a 14 year old reader of comics, published in the July 24th issue of the Saturday Review:

"...In none of these cases was it proved that reading comic books was the cause of the delinquency. A good many of the delinquents mentioned happened to be readers of comic magazines, just as are 89,999,375 perfectly healthy, happy, normal American boys and girls, men and women, who also read comics.

"...It appears that his [Dr. Wertham's] S64 question to a child being psychoanalyzed is, 'Do you read COMIC BOOKS, my little man?' Of course the juvenile delinquent, being a normal child in at least that way, will answer 'Yes.'"

In other words, the case is just as we stated it above. Since almost all kids of any kind read comics, naturally some of the delinquents read comics too. But since the same percentage holds true among the millions of youngsters who have committed no offense at all, why not give the comics credit for the good influence they have been on these millions of healthy, normal kids, instead of just blaming them for our handful of delinquents?

Once again let us remind you to show our magazines, or any of the other good comics, to people who criticize this form of entertainment. Show those people that your favorite magazines are not harmful. Let them see Dr. Thompson's endorsement on the first page of every one of our magazines, and prove to one and all that the comics you buy and read are good for you.

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THE SHERIFF was strapping on his six guns when the deputy came in. He said, "The prisoners are ready, sheriff!"

Bill Hooker nodded. "Fine, Red, bring them around the front." His tone was calm, though inside him he felt the nervous excitement that always preceded trouble. Outside the combination office and jail a curious crowd had collected, waiting for the prisoners to appear. More than one face wore a harried expression. Sheriff Hooker saw his deputy leading the manacled prisoners to the waiting stagecoach and locked up his office.

Outside, the four unshaven, mean-looking prisoners who had so recently robbed a series of banks, killing countless unarmed people, waited, seemingly unworried. On their faces were expressions of extreme contempt for the sheriff and his aides who had tracked them down a week ago and were bringing them to trial at the county seat.

They were part of the notorious Collins gang, a money mad group of outlaws that would fight and kill for anything valuable... and who had managed to elude capture until these four men were run to earth, the rest having escaped.

Andy Barlow picked his way through the crowd and came over to the sheriff. "Look, Bill," he told his friend, "we've been talking it over. Maybe you better take some of the boys along in case there's trouble."

The sheriff smiled grimly. "No, Andy, this is my job. I don't want to take any chances on anyone else getting hurt."

But Bill, you know the Collins gang isn't going to let you get through with these guys. It's two hundred miles from here to Bruxton City with a thousand places in between that are perfect spots for an ambush."

"I know."

"Then let us ride along as escort. You're going to need some extra gun hands when the Collins Gang attacks, and you can bet your boots they will!"

A small group had gathered around Andy and the sheriff, and behind them the four outlaws were taking everything in, smiling at what they knew would happen. For them it was a pleasant thought, for they knew that if they ever did go to trial, they were sure to be convicted.

The driver of the stage came out of the express office carrying a shotgun. He nodded to the sheriff and climbed aboard the stage. He called out to the clerk inside and two men dragged out the boxes that were labeled BRUXTON CITY. The outlaws looked at each other and shrugged. As far as anyone could see, this was just a bit of optimism on the part of the sheriff, expecting baggage to get through too. When the baggage was loaded Red handed the sheriff four rifles and a box of ammunition. Once again people looked at each other. Andy said, "You going to handle all those guns at once, Bill?"

This time the sheriff smiled a little differently. "I won't have to, Andy." He let it go there. The prisoners were loaded into the stage and handcuffed to hooks in the side of the seats. Unexpectedly, the sheriff climbed in with them instead of riding beside the driver, gave the signal and the stage went off in a cloud of dust kicked up by the team. Back in front of the office the people shook their heads sadly. Bill Hooker had been a good sheriff, honest and fearless, but now he had stuck his neck out too far. Someone remarked, "Might as well hold an election now, I guess. We'll never see old Bill again."

Andy shook his head. "I don't know about that. I've known Bill a long time, and if I can read
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signs, he's got something up his sleeve!"

In the stagecoach outside of town, the four outlaws were beginning to think the same thing too. Their faces were scowling, and they looked at each other, knowing that every move the stage made would be watched, and before long the expected rescue would come. The sheriff was sitting back calmly, fondling the rifles, loading shells into the chambers.

Then he spoke. "It'll come soon, don't you think?"

One of the outlaws bared his teeth in a grimace. "You're not kidding. And when it does don't expect to walk away from here. This is your last ride!"

"Maybe not," the sheriff told him. "Did you see those boxes we loaded on?" There was a sudden silence. The sheriff went on, "Those boxes are carrying gold. Fifty thousand dollars worth. You know what that means?"

The men leaned forward tensely, half knowing what the answer would be. "What?" The question was sharp, worried.

"I let the word leak out that we were carrying a pay load, mister. You think your friends will be after that gold... or you?"

"They'll get us out of this. They won't let you get through with that dough!" The outlaw's voice was shrill. "You just made it all the more important for them to come after us!"

"That so?" The sheriff gave them a long stare. "They won't be wanting to split with you guys on a deal like that. The more of you out of the way, the more they get. So when they come after us, they'll be shooting at you as well as me. See what I mean?"

They saw all right. It was written plainly on their faces. "What... what are you going to do... you have to protect us! We'll be shot down in cold blood!"

For an answer, the sheriff handed out the rifles with one hand, while he cradled his six shooter in the other. "Take one," he said, "It's your party from now on. The way those handcuffs are made, you have enough play in them to shoot out the windows, but not swing around toward me. Just remember, I have a gun here too! If you want to stand trial, then pick your targets carefully." He nodded toward a hillside. "And do it now, because here they come."

There was a sudden grab for the guns as the horde of bandits came streaking down the hill toward the coach. The driver yelled to the horses and urged them to greater speed. It was evident that a rescue wasn't what the outlaws were after, for they opened fire on the stage at once. Rifles and six guns spat leaden death as the horses moved closer to the coach.

Only when the bandits were well within range was there an answering burst of fire from the stage. A hail of slugs knocked men from their horses as the prisoners in the stage fought for their life. They levered shells into the rifles as the sheriff handed them ammunition, screaming with fury as their erstwhile companions tried to pick them off.

The sheriff did nothing but watch, keeping an eye on his prisoners and one on the outlaws behind them. A withering stream of fire poured from the stage time after time with unerring accuracy, until the ranks of the mounted outlaws had thinned considerably. They couldn't understand it, for never before had a stage been armed with so many sharpshooters.

Buster Collins himself was in the lead, with his kill-crazy brother riding directly behind him. They fanned out and tried to encircle the coach, but the rifle fire picked them off. Buster spurred his horse and crept up on the stage, then a bullet caught him squarely in the chest and he went down screaming. His brother took over, drawing the men in around him, pumping shot after shot at the coach. But their aim wasn't nearly as good as the return fire.

There was but a handful of them left when they decided to call it quits and take to the hills. Inside the stage the sheriff collected the guns and stacked them in a corner. His prisoners were shaken and disgusted at the whole thing, but Bill Hooker was in fine spirits. When he got back home he'd round up a posse and collect the rest of the outlaws... and this time there wouldn't be any attempted rescue. He grinned at his sweating cargo. "You guys make fine deputies," he said.

They gave him a sorry look. "Aw, shut up," one said.

THE END

SL-4219
STAMP NEWS
By KENT B. STILES

At this writing Uncle Sam's stamp-issuing program for 1948 called for a total of thirty postal items, all but one of which have been mentioned in these columns. There have been reports that the Post Office Department was considering adding two—honoring the late General Pershing, the other in memory of the late baseball legend Babe Ruth. But, no official word that such stamps would appear had come from Washington as these lines were being prepared.

A surprise stamp, its printing directed by President Truman, is a 3c purple honoring Harlan Fiske Stone (1872-1946), who was Chief Justice of the United States at the time of his death. This memorial bearing his portrait, received its first-day cover on Sept. 7 at Oxford, Mass., her birthplace. A male Light Brahama rooster and an egg are pictured on a 3c which received its first-day sale at New Haven, Conn., on Sept. 9, to mark the centennial of the American poultry industry. The promise Gold Star Mothers memorial item, a 3c yellow-gold, went on sale at Washington on Sept. 21, the design being a star surrounded by a palm branch. And the 3c marking the centennial of the establishment of Fort Kearney was issued on Sept. 22 at Minn., Neb., the design being a sculptured group of pioneers on the New York State Capitol, with a partial view of Fort Kearney below.

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"THE TOWN RULED BY KILLER COLTS!"

The trail of justice can be narrow... where only one can ride... a lonely trail, fraught with danger... danger even for a man of the steely calibre of Kid Colt, outlaw!

Suddenly... Get outta the way! Hey!

EASY THERE, STEEL, THIS IS STRANGE COUNTRY!
WHY YOU LOW-DOWN BUSH-WHACKERS! I'LL...

WHAT'S THAT YA SAY, COWBOY?

REACH FOR YOUR IRON, MISTER! I'LL TEACH YOU NOT TO CROWD ME!

SUDDENLY, FROM BEHIND, A RIATA SNAKES OUT...

GOOD Toss, PETE! THE STRANGER WAS GETTIN' UNRULY! HAW!

WHY YOU LOW-DOWN COYOTES!

HE NEEDS A LITTLE LESSON IN MANNERS, PETE! GIVE IT TO 'IM! DRAG 'IM TILL HE'S WORN DOWN TO SIZE!

OW...YOU...

THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ONE DAY, CHUCK! WE HAVEN'T GOT TIME TO FOOL WITH 'IM.

YEAH!

THE ROPE IS JERKED LOOSE AND THE TWO HARDCASES SLAM AWAY LEAVING A GROGGY KID COLT IN THE TRAIL!

WE'LL MEET AGAIN, YOU POLECATS! AN' WHEN WE DO, I'LL BURN YOU DOWN FOR THIS!

IF WE EVER SEE YOU AGAIN WE'LL PLANT YA... NOT DRAG YA! LET'S GO!

A FEW MOMENTS LATER, HOOF'S BEAT OUT AND A POSSE ROUNDS THE BEND!

HOLD IT, MEN!

LOOKS LIKE YOU MET UP WITH FAT MAN YAGER'S BOYS! THEY JUST ROBBED THE BANK.

SO THAT'S WHO THE BUZZARDS WERE.
I've got a hankerin' to meet up with those Sidewinders again, Sheriff...

...I'm joining your posse!

Fine! We'll need as many men as we can get!

The posse thunders away on the trail of the fugitives! Then, as they top a rise...

Sheriff! What are we stopping for?

I see you're new around here, stranger!

Look! There they go!

Too late, men! They're safe now!

Yonder is Fat Man Yager's town. Where no law-abiding men dare enter! The only ones living there are outlaws!

The fat man rules with an iron hand! He's tougher than any of 'em and it'll take a small army to move 'em out! This is the end of the trail for us!

Then I'll go alone! I'm gettin' those waddies and I'll bring 'em out by sundown!

Don't, mister... It's sure death!
Too bad! He seemed to be a nice feller.

Well, we’ll stick around awhile. Maybe he’s better now.

Kid Colt trots into the forbidden city, with trouble riding his shoulders.

Where do ya think you’re goin’, baby face?

Wherever I’ve a mind to, you ugly Maverick!

Who ya callin’...

Now you’re speakin’ my language, mister!

His anger like a white flame, Kid Colt blasts into welcome action!

Get that gun-slingin’ critter!

Into ‘em, steel!

Then, from a second story window, a voice booms out...

Stop, you idiots! That’s Kid Colt!

What? And me shootin’ it out with ‘im? Sorry, kid, I didn’t know!

I like your style, kid! Come on up for a pow-wow!

Glad to, Yager!

A few minutes later...

An impregnable one! I’m king here and no man or gun can touch me... not even you! What’re you doin’ in my town?

Quite a layout, Yager!
I WANT TO JOIN UP WITH YOU/ HOW ABOUT IT?

CONSIDER IT DONE, KID! BUT UNDERSTAND ONE THING...

I'M HEAD MAN BECAUSE I'M TOUGHER THAN ALL! MY BACK IS NEVER TURNED TO A GUN AND THIS ROOM IS BULLETPROOF! RIGHT NOW, I COULD KILL YOU!

YEAH, I KNOW/ YOU HAVE ME COVERED WITH DERRINGER IN YOUR VEST POCKETS!

YOU HAVE SHARP EYES, KID/ DROP AROUND THIS EVENING AND WE'LL TALK OVER YOUR FIRST JOB!

GOOD... I GOT BACK HERE WITHOUT BEING SPOTTED/ NOW IF NOBODY MISSES THESE HORSES...

WHO'S THERE?

IT'S ME... KID COLT!

SIT DOWN, KID! I GOT THINGS ALL LINED UP FOR YOU/ SINCE YOU GOT A GOOD REPUTATION, YOU CAN HAVE YOUR PICK OF SIDEKICKS ON THIS JOB!

SWELL/ HOW ABOUT THOSE TWO HANDS THAT PULLED THE BANK JOB TODAY?

GOOD MEN! I'LL CALL 'EM UP HERE!

THE HORSES PLANTED, KID COLT KEEPS HIS RENDEZVOUS WITH THE FAT MAN!
THEN... BOYS, THIS IS KID COLT! HE'S TAKIN' YOU OUT TO... HIM! HE'S THE DRIFTER WE SLAPPED AROUND TODAY! HE'S AFTER US!

REMEMBER WHAT I PROMISED YOU POLECATS... SLAP LEATHER!

THERE'S TWO OF ME, TOO... ONE IN EACH HAND!

TAKE 'IM! THERE'S TWO OF US!

BANG! YEOW!

SWIFTER THAN THE EYE CAN FOLLOW, KID COLT DRAWS AND SHOOTS!

THEN, AS KID COLT SPINS ON THE FAT MAN...

SO YA DIDN'T COME HERE TO JOIN UP? I WARNED YA... YOU'LL NEVER LEAVE HERE ALIVE!

HA! HA! I SAID THIS PLACE WAS BULLETPROOF! THE DESK TOP'S STEEL PLATED!

GOTTA THINK FAST!

UNDER THE DEADLY FIRE OF THE FAT MAN, KID COLT TAKES A CHANCE... A ONE-IN-A-MILLION LONG SHOT...

MAYBE YOU MADE A MISTAKE HAVING STEEL WALLS, FAT MAN!

A STEEL-NOSED BULLET RICOCHEETS FROM THE WALL AND...

BAM!

BAM!

BONG!

BONG!

UGH!
GET DOWN THOSE BACK STAIRS, YOU TWO!

ALL RIGHT, KID... DON'T SHOOT!

AND A MINUTE LATER...

HEY... IT'S THAT NEW GUY! WHAT'S...

OUT OF THE WAY, YOU VARMINTS! GET RIDING, YOU TWO!

SHERIFF... IT'S THE STRANGER! HE'S COMIN' WITH THOSE OUTLAWS!

WELL, I'LL BE!

HERE ARE YOUR PRISONERS, SHERIFF! THE REST ARE BACK IN TOWN! YAGER'S DEAD! WITHOUT YAGER, YOU WON'T HAVE ANY TROUBLE CLEANIN' UP THE TOWN!

IF I HADN'T SEEN THIS, I NEVER WOULD'VE BELIEVED IT!

THERE GOES THE TOUGHEST COWBOY I EVER LAID EYES ON! WHAT A DEPUTY HE'D MAKE!

DEPUTY? WHAT A LAUGH! THAT'S KID COLT, THE FAMOUS OUTLAW!

YOU HEAR THAT, SHERIFF? KID COLT... THERE'S A REWARD OUT FOR HIM! LET'S GET AFTER HIM!

LET'S NOT! I DON'T WANT TO TANGLE WITH ANYBODY AS TOUGH AS KID COLT... OUTLAW OR NOT!

RECKON YOU HAVE SOMETHIN' THERE, SHERIFF! BESIDES... WELL, I CAN'T HELP THINKIN' A WADDY LIKE HIM IS MORE GOOD THAN BAD!

THE END
Let's Go, Pal! I'll prove I can make you an "ALL-AROUND" HE-MAN FAST—or it won't cost you a cent—says George F. Jowett—World's Greatest Body Builder.

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In recent tests made by outstanding licensed Medical Doctors on more than 100 people with the use of Spot Reducer everyone lost pounds and inches in a few short weeks, in HIPS, ABDOMEN, LEGS, ARMS, BUTTOCKS, etc. And the users say: “IT WAS FUN AND THEY ENJOYED IT.” The Spot Reducer worked as well on men as it did on women. The Spot Reducer way controls weight, once down to normal it helps retain your new "SLIM FIGURE" as long as you like. Look and feel better, see bulges disappear within the first weeks. The beauty of this scientifically designed SPOT REDUCER is that the method is so simple and easy, the results quick, sure and harmless. Thousands have lost weight this way in hips, abdomen, legs, arms, buttocks, etc. The same method used by stage, screen and radio personalities and leading reducing salons. The Spot Reducer can be used in the privacy of your own room in your spare time.

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SENT ON APPROVAL

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A large size jar of Special Formula Body Massage Cream will be included FREE with your order for the "Spot Reducer."
NEW!

Jim Prentice, Amazing, Exciting, 1949,

ELECTRIC FOOTBALL

Made and Guaranteed by ELECTRIC GAME CO. 611 Front St., Holyoke, Mass.

BOYS Play FOOTBALL Rain or Shine

NO MORE PRACTICE TODAY — GROUND TOO MESSY! GREATEST RUSH THE FIELD!

OKAY, COACH, OKAY, COACH, MOW-FELLERS! WE CAN PLAY ELECTRIC FOOTBALL NOW!

GEFS DRILL PRACTICE ANYWAY!

GET, FRED, THOSE ELECTRIC KICKS AND LIGHTS ARE KEEN!

WAIT 'TIL YOU SEE HOW IT REALLY PLAYS!

I NICE WORK!

OH, BOY, 13-12! THAT BLOCKED KICK WON THE GAME!

ONLY 5 MINUTE PERIODS!

THAT'S A SWELL GAME, FRED! I'LL PLAY THE WINNER!

THE WAY THE BUTTONS FLASH THE PLAYS IS A MYSTERY TO ME HOW YOU GET SO MANY DIFFERENT PLAYS OUT OF EACH KEY!

IT'S AN ELECTRIC BRAIN IDEA! A MIGHTY CLEVER INVENTION!

SOME BUTTONS BLOCK OUT PLAYS, SOME COMBINATIONS "GO", OTHERS HIT IN BETWEEN!

ELECTRIC FOOTBALL

$2.50

GET SET for Breath-taking ACTION

Hi BOYS!

ELECTRIC FOOTBALL, invented by one hundred per cent football, is a most attractive article. The frame is a piece of wood, lacquered bright yellow. The board, a handsome top is covered with a special non-slip-chocking film that always keeps clean and shiny.

The electric switch keys are color-coded. Each key, when pressed, brings three circuits. No. 12 tạo upper wire is used for base socket dwell, then armadillo. Each of the 19 connections is covered with strips of tape, covered with selection. The lamps (1.35 volts, 34 breaking buds) are beautifully colored. Game, 11 x 14 x inches, comes complete with cardboard, fully instructions. You can start playing the moment you open the box.

BESIDE ELECTRIC FOOTBALL, the HERTZ is a top for thrills.

MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

RUSH TODAY

ELECTRIC GAME CO., INC.

911 Front St., Holyoke, Mass.

$2.50

Electric Football

$2.00

Electric Baseball

$2.00

Electric Bowling

$1.00

Electric Motorball

$1.00

C.O.D. $1 deposit. Postman collects balance.

Full payment with order.

All games postpaid

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

Enclosed

Electric Football

Electric Baseball

Electric Bowling

Electric Motorball

C.O.D. $1 deposit.

Postman collects balance.