

SPECIAL STAMP FEATURE and EXPERT FREE ADVICE

# The MODERN BOY

2<sup>D</sup>

EVERY SATURDAY  
WEEK ENDING NOV 6<sup>TH</sup> 1937  
N°509 VOL. 20



ESCAPE! — Exciting incident from "Biggles Goes to War!"

to outlawry. Then, like a bolt from the blue  
came the news. There were—

# Rangers on His Track

## Shattering News!

**T**HE Rio Kid!" Mr. Carfax, foreman of the Lazy S Ranch, gave a start as he heard that name, and the color wrenched for a moment in his boyish, sunburnt face.

"Mr. Carfax—better known in other parts of Texas as the "Rio Kid"—had not expected to hear that name uttered on the Lazy S—had hoped, indeed, never to hear it uttered again.

Hunted on both sides of the Rio Grande, the Kid had ridden into the Lariat valley hoping that in that remote corner of Texas he might find his name and fame unknown—hoping, too, that he might have the luck to join up with some range-riding bunch and graze cows, as in the happy old days on the Double-Bar at Frio before an unjust fate had made him an outlaw, and placed the price of a thousand dollars on his head.

And luck had crowded on the Kid. Here he was, cutting down his mustang in the corral of the Lazy S in the bright sunny morning—foreman of the ranch! Morris Hall, boss of the Lazy S, knew him as Mr. Carfax, and trusted him, little dreaming that it was the Rio Kid, whose wild reputation was the talk of every cow town in Texas, that he trusted. And his trust was not misplaced.

When that unexpected news struck on his ears, the Kid's hand slid to a gun. They liked him on the Lazy S. But if they had got wise to the fact that Mr. Carfax was the Rio Kid—

Only for a second the Kid's hand touched the butt in the leeward holster. Even if they had got wise to him, and if the discovery had changed friends into foes, he knew that he would never have powder on the Lazy S bunch. But the cheery look was gone from his face as he looked round at the group of ranchers at the corral gate.

They were not looking towards him. His old name had been uttered by Colorado Jim, the horse-wrangler. He was talking to Pankhandle Pete and Yuba Dan, and they were discussing the Rio Kid without dreaming that the boy outlaw of the Rio Grand—was within hearing.

"The Rio Kid! I'll tell a man!"

Colorado was going on, little guessing with how much keenness his foreman was listening. "I never seen the man—but from what they say, he's a kid, no other, I reckon, than our new foreman. But I'm telling you guys he's some kid—the darndest fire-bug that ever rustled a cow!"

The Kid smiled bitterly as he heard that. Outlaw, with a price on his head, he had never rustled a cow in his life.

"And they're on his trail?" asked Pankhandle Pete.

"I'll say so!" said the horse-wrangler. "There's a troop of the Texas Rangers in Lariat now, and the whole burg is talking about the Rio Kid. I'm telling you, they sent the Kid there. He rode into Lariat on that mustang of his'n, and saw a bill posted on a tree—reward for the Rio Kid—and he shot that bill to small pieces and rode through the town with his guns going."

"And got clear?" asked Yuba Dan.

"You said it!" said the horse-wrangler. "There ain't a cynose in Texas to touch that mustang of his'n for speed. I reckon the news wasn't long in getting to the Rangers—and you can bet they lit the trail for the Lariat valley when they got wise that the Rio Kid had been seen there. He ain't been seen since, but I guess they figure that he's found a hide-out in the country!"

The Kid smiled faintly. He had found a hide-out in the Lariat country. But he reckoned that the Texas Rangers were not likely to guess that his new hide-out was a foreman's job on a ranch! Even his old and bitter enemy, Jim Hall, captain of the Rangers, the man who had sworn to get him alive or dead, was not likely to guess that.

The Kid could have kicked himself for that outbreak in Lariat. But it had got his goat to see that bill posted up in the cow town, and he had let himself go. He had not foreseen, then, the luck that was coming his way—the chance of dropping his wild past and riding a new and lawful trail.

"And where they reckon he's hiding?" asked Pankhandle Pete.

"In the hills the other side of Lariat," answered Colorado. "There was some guys figured that the Kid

they had to think again arter that crowd was wiped out by our foreman, and Scar Face went up on a rope!"

The Kid smiled. Lariat was thirty miles away to the east—the hills some miles farther. The Rangers were welcome to catch them for him till the cows came home. But if they rode the western trail to comb the Lazy S ranges, the Kid reckoned Morris Hall's new foreman would want to watch out!

He reckoned he had heard enough about the Rio Kid, and he called out to the group at the corral gate:

"Say, you-uns, you figure that you're on Mister Hall's pay-roll to show the rag? I guess I want to see you riding!"

Pankhandle Pete and Yuba Dan led their horses from the corral. Colorado came over to the foreman. The Kid resumed his attention to his cynose. No hand but his ever touched Side-Kicker. Foreman as he was, he looked after his horse himself. Side-Kicker did not like the touch of a strange hand, and there was another reason—the grey mustang with the black mane was as well known in Texas as the Kid himself, and the boy outlaw had changed him some in his looks when he hit the Lazy S. Side-Kicker had black "stockings" now, as well as a black mane. But the Kid wanted an eye but his own to fall too closely on these black stockings.

The Kid, too, was changed in his looks. He had grown a silky mustache. And the silver spurs and the band of silver tugs on his steed had never been seen on the Lazy S. Even guys who had seen the Kid and his cynose might have seen them now without recognizing either.

"Say, Mr. Carfax," said Colorado, "I guess you've heard of the freewig I was showing the rag about—the Rio Kid?"

"I've sure heard him speak of more'n once," agreed Mr. Carfax. "They sure do spill a heap about that galoot in the cow camps!"

"I'm telling you, sir," said the horse-wrangler, "he's the darndest fire-bug that ever rustled cows on a dark night!"

"I ain't never heard of the Kid rustling cows!" snapped the foreman of the Lazy S Ranch so sharply that Colorado stared at him.

"I guess if I had all the cows he's rustled, I'd sure start a ranch of my own," declared Colorado. "I'm telling you, that same guy will rustle a cow as soon's he'd up a bank."

"See I ain't never heard of the Kid holding up a bank!" granted the Lazy S foreman.

"Then I guess you ain't heard what the guys say at every round-up and rodeo between the Rio Grande and the Colorado River!" said the horse-wrangler. "I'm telling you, sir! And I guess I want to say that if you have to ride on his trail, every man in the bunch here will jump to ride with you."

"Ride on the Rio Kid's trail?" "You said it!" said Colorado eagerly. "You rounded up the ranchers in the Hatchets, and put 'em to the Scar Face gang. Wish the

..... BY .....  
**RALPH REDWAY**  
.....

guy what rounded up the Scar Face gang is the guy to round up the Rio Kid. And if you say the word, there ain't a guy in the bunch wouldn't jump to ride with you!"

The Kid looked at him, his eyes dancing. The suggestion of riding on his own trail appealed to his sense of humour.

"That sure is a big idea, old-timer," said the foreman of the Lazy S. "But I guess Mr. Hall don't pay his foreman, nor his bunch, either, to do the Rangers' work for them. I'm here to punch cows, not to go gunning after the Rio Kid! Forget it." And the Kid led Side-Kicker out of the corral.

### A Quick Transformation

**T**HE Kid's brow was clouded as he rode the trail to Lariat.

He had no intention of riding into the town, but since he had learned that the Rangers were there, he wanted to get the news. He reckoned he would get posted without entering the town. They were on his trail, and it had brought them within thirty miles of the ranch of which he was foreman. Thirty miles was a long step, even in Texas; and the Kid reckoned that if they came no nearer, he need not worry.

If they struck eastward in search of the Rio Kid, Mr. Carfax could ride the ranges of the Lazy S at his ease. But if they came westward, Mr. Carfax had to watch out—especially if that troop of Texas Rangers was captained by his old enemy, Mule-Kick Hall.

He was still several miles short of Lariat when a station hat bobbing on the trail met his view, and he slackened rein. A Texas Ranger was riding towards him—Austin Jud, on whose broadened cheek was a white scar left by a bullet from the Kid's gun. The foreman of the Lazy S slackened speed to a trot, and shifted his gun-belt a little, to bring a gun nearer to his reach—if wanted.

If Austin Jud recognized him, there was going to be gun-play. Sight of Jud told him, too, what he most wanted to know. It was Jim Hall's troop that was camped in Lariat, for he knew that Jud was Mule-Kick Hall's right-hand man.

Austin Jud's eyes, keen as a hawk's, rested on the Kid's face. Had recognition dawned in them, the Kid's gun would have been out in the twinkling of an eye.

But there was no recognition in the Ranger's glance. The Kid, with his silky, curly mustache, his blood eyes darkened by walnut-juice, was sufficiently changed to pass muster at a casual inspection. And the steady brim of his stetson was low over his face.

The Kid breathed more freely as he saw that Jud had no suspicion. The Ranger never dreamed that he was looking at the guy on whose trail



The Rio Kid threw his weight upon the rope and the captain of the Texas Rangers, helpless, swung into the air.

Mule-Kick and his troop had ridden into the Lariat valley. And the Kid, as he realized it, smiled, and checked his mustang.

"Say, stranger, you hitting for Hatchet?" he called. "I guess you're missing your trail."

Jud shook his head.  
"He for the Lazy S," he said.  
"They told me in Lariat that I'd hit the ranch this-a-way."

"Right in once," said the Kid, "and if it's the foreman of the outfit that you aim to see, you're talking to him now."

Jud raised his eyebrows.  
"You Carfax, foreman of the Lazy S?" he asked.

"You said so?" accused the Kid.  
"They were picked you early for a foreman's job?" said the Ranger, with a grin. "But it ain't the foreman I want—I got a message from my captain for the rancher. So-long, Mr. Baby-Foreman."

He rode on for the distant ranch. The Kid looked after him with intent

eyes, and his brow was deeply thoughtful as he resumed his way.

The Ranger was riding for the Lazy S—why? Scouting, to pick up possible news of the Rio Kid? What else? That did not look as if Mule-Kick was going to comb the eastern hills for the man he wanted. If he hunted him on the western trail, he would soon be combing the ranges of the Lazy S—where Mr. Carfax was foreman! Darker and darker the Kid's brow grew as he thought of it. Danger he cared little for—danger and the Rio Kid were old acquaintances. But to lose all that he had won—to quit the Lazy S and ride once more a lonely outlaw's trail—that came too hard.

The Kid drew rein on a hillock overlooking Lariat—halting his mustang under the branches of a stump of cottonwoods. He stared down at the town, clear in the Texas sunlight. Cabins and shacks and frame-houses, and the timber hotel fronting the plaza, were small in the distance, but picked out clear,

## Rangers on His Track

Horses were hitched to the mill in front of the hotel, and horsemen were riding in the rugged street.

By the timber piazza of the hotel, a man—small, stocky, bow-legged from constant riding—was standing talking to a Ranger who had just pulled in his horse. The Kid's eyes fixed on the stocky man. Toy-like in the distance, the Kid knew him—Mule-Kick Hall, captain of the Texas Rangers; the man who had hunted him hard for his life; the man from whom he had never to fear that from all the sheriffs in Texas.

Long he sat there, his face grim, his thoughts busy. He dismounted at last and led Side-Kicker into the trees—hidden from the sight of any rider on the trail. For many long minutes the Kid remained screened by the cottonwoods—and when he emerged, no man in the Lay 8 bunch would have recognized him as the foreman of Morris Hall's ranch.

### Shooting Up the Town!

MULE-KICK HALL, leaning on the rail of the piazza of the timber hotel in Lariat, gave a sudden start as a shout reached him from up the rugged street of the cow town.

"The Kid!"

"The Rio Kid!"

Mingled with the shouts came the roar of a shotgun, the clatter of wild birds. And the captain of the Rangers stared blankly. Scolden or never taken at a loss, he stood now as if petrified.

Six weeks ago the Rio Kid had ridden through Lariat, shooting up the town from sheer reckless defiance. The news of it had reached Mule-Kick, far away on the banks of the Rio Grande, after the lapse of weeks. But once he learned that the Kid had been seen in the valley of the Lariat river, he had lost no time.

By now he was, the Kid was the only man who had ever defeated Jim Hall. The grim, hard-bitten Ranger, scored by defeat after defeat, failure after failure, had grown to feel something like hatred for the boy outlaw. He was determined to rope him in.

Yet it was with but a faint hope that he had ridden into Lariat weeks after the boy outlaw had been seen there. News of him there was none; after that wild ride through the cow town he had disappeared as if the prairie had opened and swallowed him up.

Where was he now? Mule-Kick Hall was asking himself that question for the hundredth time when that sudden roar came along the street of the cow town. And, staring with unbelieving eyes from the piazza, he saw the boy outlaw of whom he had been thinking!

It was wildly impossible—but there he was! The grey mustang, with the black mane, clattered his hoofs in the rugged street. In the middle sat the well-known figure. Across the

lower part of the face, hiding the upper lip, was a handkerchief. Save for that, the Rio Kid looked exactly as Mule-Kick knew him of old—the blue eyes flashing under the blood eyeballs, the six-guns roaring in his hands as he rode at a wild gallop round the piazza, shooting up the town.

The Rio Kid, who had "shot up" Lariat six weeks ago, had come back to repeat that performance, with the Texas Rangers in the town! It was unbelievable, even in the wild and reckless Kid.

From shack and doily hut, from cabin and hotel and saloon, men rushed, shouting, grabbing at their guns as they rushed. All over Lariat sounded the roar:

"The Rio Kid!"

Mule-Kick Hall came to himself. It was no dream—it was the Rio Kid. He roared to his men as he leaped down the steps into the street and took out a gun.

But the Kid was already riding for the prairie. So sudden, so utterly unexpected, was the outlaw's appearance in Lariat, that he looked like getting by with that reckless defiance of the Rangers who were hunting him.

Mule-Kick Hall fired, and fired again—a score of guns were blazing—but the boy outlaw's swiftness really saved him. Like a lightning-flash he had come and gone, leaving the cow town in a wild roar of excitement and rage.

"Kid!" shrieked Mule-Kick Hall to his men. He holstered his smoking gun, dragged his horse from the hitching-rail, and threw himself into the saddle. "Follow me!"

He thundered down the street in pursuit. Fast after him rode six or seven Rangers, quitting and spurring. And after them twenty or thirty Lariat guys scrambled wildly on their horses and followed.

The Kid looked back. Laughing, he waved his steed on at the hotshen spurring fiercely on his trail.

Side-Kicker had covered thirty miles that day, but he seemed as fresh as paint after his rest in the cottonwoods where "Mr. Carfax" had become the Rio Kid again. Fast as the Rangers rode—so hard and fast that they soon dropped the Lariat men—they did not gain on the Kid. It was the Kid who gained, drawing farther and farther away from his pursuers, closer and closer to the low hills.

Mule-Kick Hall spurred almost like a madman. There was the Kid, galloping for the hills after harling defiance at him by shooting-up Lariat under his eyes. That had meant, that last reckless defiance, was too much. He would get the Kid this time—would get him, alive or dead, if he had to comb every inch of the hills!

The Kid, as he galloped, laughed. It was not, as the Ranger believed, reckless defiance that had led him to shoot up Lariat a second time with the Rangers there. It was the Kid's game to draw pursuit westward, to draw Mule-Kick and his troop into the wild and tangled recesses of the hills, where they could hunt for his hide-out as long as they liked. It was

his game to show Mule-Kick an a fake trail, away from the ranges of the Lay 8. And he was succeeding, for not a man in the pursuing crowd doubted that he was riding for a hide-out in the hills.

On except the Kid at full gallop, Mule-Kick Hall spurring fiercely behind, his men strung out behind him. But the Kid was gaining—the distance between the grey mustang's hoofs and the pursuing Rangers lengthened and lengthened. With bitter rage the captain of the Rangers saw him ride into an opening of the hills, disappearing from sight among wild rocks and pines. He looked back and laughed, and waved his steed on as he disappeared.

### Roped In!

THE white of the horse came like a whisper in the air. The captain of the Rangers heard it too late. The loop dropped over his head, and the drag on the rope plucked him from his saddle. In mad rage he struggled in the riata's grip. He did not need to ask who had cast the rope—he knew that it was the Rio Kid who had roped him in.

He had been on his guard, eye and hand alert, as he rode up that narrow gully.

But he was little to blame. That gully, steep and narrow, was shut in by walls of rock, up which it looked as if a mountain goat could hardly have clambered. Yet it was from a deep crevice, twenty feet up the rocky wall, screened by three or four stunted pines, that the lasso had suddenly dropped.

That the Rio Kid, with thirty foes hunting for his trail, had quitted his mustang, Mule-Kick Hall had not guessed. But he knew it now, for no horse could have scaled that steep wall of rock.

The Ranger's startled horse chattered on up the gully—and a light and active figure came clambering down the rocks.

Left to himself, Hall would have wrenched loose the gripping riata—but the muzzle of a six-gun was pushed almost into his face, with the eyes of the Rio Kid glancing over it like blue flame.

"Quit it, Hall!" said the Kid quietly; and the Ranger captain, ceasing his force efforts to free himself, lay still—his eyes burning at the smouldering face partly hidden by the handkerchief.

"Bug-gone you!" he hissed, between his teeth. "Shoot and be durned to you—I guess my men will sure get you. Shoot!"

But the Rio Kid did not pull trigger. One swift glance he cast down the gully—the direction from which Jim Hall had come. No other of the troop was in sight—but from the distance, coming among rocks and pines, he could hear the clattering of hoofs. Many of the Rangers were not far away. Any minute, one or more of them might push up into the gully, after Hall. But, for the moment, none came.

Hall's face was black and livid, with no sign of fear in it, though he

know that his life was hanging in the balance. The Kid was tempted to shoot. This man hunted him like a wolf, and while Hall lived there was little rest for him.

But to turn powder on a man who could not pull a gun had never been the Kid's way. And there was another reason, of which Male-Kick Hall knew nothing. Since he had been foreman of the Lazy S, the Kid had stood for the law; and never, if he could help it, would he again play the desperate part of an outlaw.

For a long, long moment, the six-gun looked Hall in the face; then the Kid quietly holstered it. He gripped the riata, took another turn of the rope round the helpless Ranger, and knotted it fast. Then he stood looking down at Hall's grim, implacable face.

"I guess I ain't shooting you," said the Kid.

Hall gave a lurch, savage laugh. He had no doubt that it was because his men, so near at hand, would hear the shot, that the Kid refrained from wiping him out. The Kid, reading his thoughts, smiled bitterly.

"You're a hard case, Hall!" he said quietly. "You've hunted me long and hard, and I guess you're asking for yours. But I ain't honing to spill your juice. I guess if I saw your back, and saw it for keeps, that's all I want. I'm asking you, hombre, if I let you loose from that riata, will you ride for the Rio Grande and forget that you was ever after the Rio Kid?"

"Never!" Hall bit off the word. "Shoot if you like, and be damned—tan while I live, I'll hunt you, and I'll get you if I comb Texas from New Mexico to the Gulf. Shoot, you fire-bug—and bring my men here to riddle you with lead."

The blue eyes glared at him. "I ain't shooting none!" said the Kid. "I'll say I ain't honing to see the whole family around. You was hunting me to ride me back to Prio, where the sheriff sure has a rope ready for this baby. What's to stop me from strapping you up over these rocks and leaving you for your guys to find when they come this-a-way?"

Hall's hard face paled a little. The Kid's gun he had faced without flinching. But at this he flinched. But it was only for a second. ■

"Get on with it!" was all he said. "You sure have got gall, and I'll say I admire it," said the Kid. "You ain't the guy I'd like to wipe out, if you'd let us. Listen to me! Six weeks ago, like you've heard, I was shooting up Lariat—but I'm telling you, Hall, that was the last kick of the Rio Kid. I've thrown down the outlaw trail—and if I'm let alone the Rio Kid will never ride the Texas trails again. I'm asking you to leave it at that—ride for the Rio Grande and forget the Rio Kid—and you'll never hear of that guy again. Ain't that good enough?"

The Ranger captain did not answer. His ears were strained to listen to the sound of hoof-beats in the distance. It seemed to him that the sound was nearer—which meant that

some of his men were at hand. The Kid breathed hard.

"Ain't you got a word to say, Hall, when a guy's talking turkey to you, instead of blowing your roof off, or hanging you up like a horse thief?" he asked quietly.

"I got this to say," said Hall. "If I live, I'll get you—and if you wipe me out, my men'll get you. Do as you darned well like—chewing the rag won't buy you anything."

The Kid's hand closed on a gun-butt, and for a moment the Ranger's life hung on a thread. But he did not pull the gun. He stepped closer to the board Ranger, grasped the lasso, and threw the lasso and over a spur of rock that jutted from the gully wall, fifteen feet up. The lasso cut, as it came down, he grasped again, and dragged on it, throwing his weight on the rope, and thus pulling the Ranger to his feet. Jim Hall set his teeth, hard, as he swung clear of the earth.

Harder the Kid dragged on the rope, till the Ranger's riding-boots were a foot clear of the ground. Then he fastened the end of the riata to a boulder. Hall was left swinging.

A full minute the Kid stood there, his eyes on the swinging Ranger; then, without a word, he turned away, and his footsteps died away up the rocky gully.

Male-Kick Hall panted. The Kid was gone to seek his hidden Mustang, to ride clear of pursuit, leaving his enemy, contemptuously spared, to live! Cramped in the rope that gripped his aching arms like steel bands, Hall swung there on the riata from the rocky spur—and shouted, and shouted again, in the hope that his men would hear.

But it was a long hour before a Ranger pushed into the gully and found him. And the Rio Kid was far away.

#### A Snack for the Kid!

"**S**AY, Mr. Cartax," called Colorado. "I guess the boss wants to chew the rag with you a piece, sir!"

"Sure!" and the Kid. He walked away cheerily to the ranch-house, where Morris Hall, boss of the Lazy S, sat in his rocker. The Kid's face was bright and sunny. It was a week since he had led the Rangers on a false trail, far to the eastward—and since then the news that had trickled through told of Male-Kick and his men combing the hills, hunting for the hide-out of the elusive outlaw.

The Kid had not lingered there after he had left Jim Hall. By long and roundabout trails, he had ridden back to the Lazy S—a weary man, with a weary horse, when he hit the ranch at last. All the bunch knew that Mr. Cartax had been on a long ride after lost steers, which he had not found!

In the days that followed, the Kid had picked up all the news he could of the Rangers. But it was always the same: Hall and his men were working eastward through the hills,

still on the false trail where the Kid had led them.

So life seemed good again to the foreman of the Lazy S. He lunched a tune as he walked to the ranch-house, and stepped into the piazza to see what the boss wanted.

Morris Hall gave him a nod. "I guess you've heard about the Rangers," he remarked.

"Sure!" assented the Kid. "I've heard that they're combing the hills the other side of Lariat, for some fire-bug."

"The Rio Kid?" said the rancher. "Yep—I guess that's the name I've heard applied!" assented the foreman of the Lazy S. He smiled. "Have they cinched him?"

"Not in your lifetime," said the rancher. "That fire-bug, from what I've heard, ain't easy to catch, not even by Jim Hall."

"Jim Hall?" repeated Mr. Cartax, as if the name was new to him.

"The captain of the Rangers. You've heard of him?"

"Now I come to think of it, I've sure heard of him, sir! The same name as your own!" remarked the foreman of the Lazy S. "I sure remember it struck me, the same being the same."

"He's my brother."

The foreman of the Lazy S stood very still.

"Your brother, Mr. Hall?"

"Sure." The surname was the same—the Kid had been struck by that. But there were many Halls in the cow country, and he had never thought of any connection between the boss of the Lazy S and the captain of the Texas Rangers. And they were brothers—the rancher who trusted the Kid and had given him his chance to ride a new trail—and the Ranger who hunted him for his life! The Kid stood silent.

"I reckon," went on Mr. Hall, "that I ain't seen Jim for dog's age—he ain't had any business in this part of Texas. But being at Lariat, after that fire-bug, the Rio Kid, he sent a man over to let me know he was around, and that he'd give me a look in before he hit the trail out of the Lariat valley. He's lost the Kid again—and I guess he's ready to ride. But he's coming here first—"

"Coming to the Lazy S!"

"Sure! I guess I want you to fix up quarters for his men, Cartax—and I reckon the bunch will make these welcome on the Lazy S."

"Sure!" agreed the Kid. It was fate, he reckoned as he left the piazza. Male-Kick Hall, at the Lazy S, where the Rio Kid, the outlaw he hunted, was his brother's trusted foreman! Horse-sense told the Kid that it was time to ride—to give up his dream of a new life within the law and seek again the outlaw trail. But the foreman of the Lazy S did not ride!

In next week's story, **NEIGHT ALONE**, a shot from the darkness sends the Rangers leaping to their saddles, riding out on the trail of the Rio Kid!