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the World!*

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The POPULAR

EVERY
TUESDAY.

Week Ending
February 11th,
1928.
New Series.
No. 472.

**HANDS
UP**
for the
RIO KID!



FIVE COMPLETE STORIES EVERY WEEK!

CORNERING THE RIO KID!

stand against the oncoming foe. Is it the end of the young outlaw?

Wounded, exhausted, and sorely pressed, the Kid takes up his trail for this daring and big-hearted

The RIO KID!

THE FIRST CHAPTER.

Hitting the Trail!

OUTSIDE the sheriff's office in Frio five horsemen sat in their saddles and waited, and a sixth horse, saddled and bridled, was held by a swarthy peon. Old Man Dawney, riding into town from the Double-Bar ranch, glanced at them as he dismounted, and threw his reins over the hitching-post. He gave a brief nod in acknowledgment of the salutations of the sheriff's posse. The boss of the Double Bar was a man of few words; and those few, as a rule, not pleasant ones. With his heavy tread, he entered the little 'deny building.

Sheriff Watson, of Frio, was seated on the only chair in the office.

His spurred boots rested on the desk before him, and his teeth held a big Mexican cigar.

"Morning, sheriff!"

Watson's spurs shrieked along the desk-top, as he dragged his feet down, and rose from the chair at the rancher's entrance.

"Morning, Mr. Dawney! Waiting

by Ralph Redway

This week:

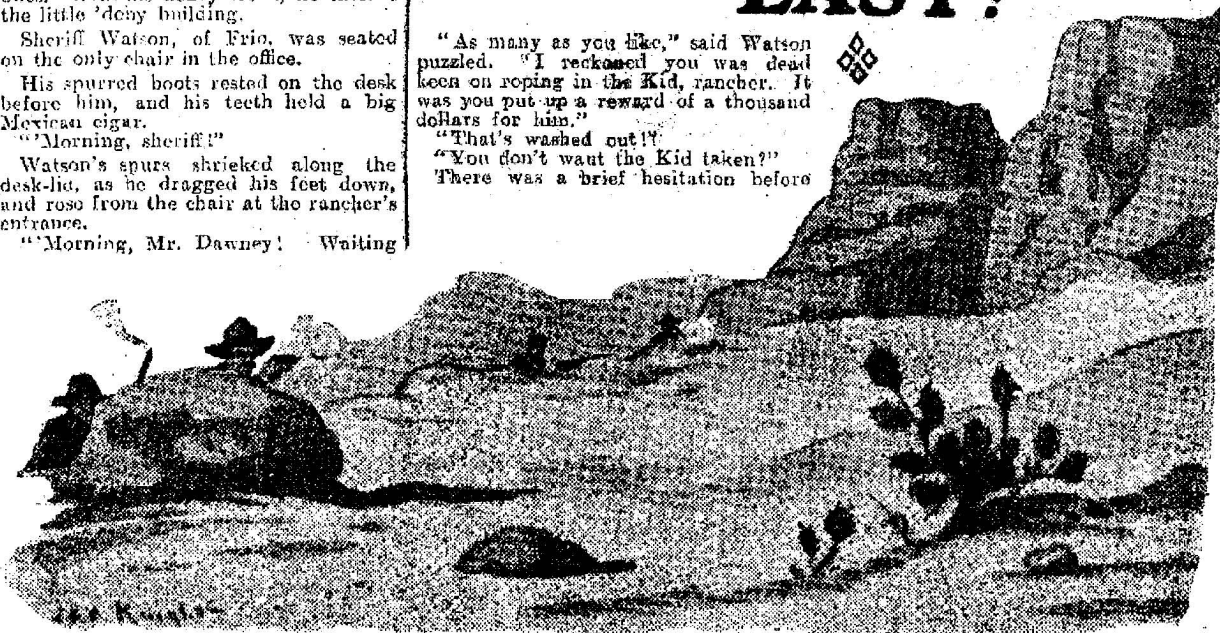
GAME TO THE LAST!

"As many as you like," said Watson puzzled. "I reckoned you was dead keen on roping in the Kid, rancher. It was you put up a reward of a thousand dollars for him."

"That's washed out!"

"You don't want the Kid taken?"

There was a brief hesitation before



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for you-uns!" said the sheriff. "I guess we're ready to start, pronto."

He pitched away the half-smoked cigar.

"You got my message at the Double Bar?"

"Sure!"

"I guess we're enough to handle the Rio Kid," remarked the sheriff, with a grin, as he made a gesture towards the horsemen, visible through the open doorway. "But dealin' with that pesky young cayuse, you can't make too sure. Five or six of your men—"

"I've ridden in alone."

The sheriff looked at him.

"Your outfit don't want to get tog near the Kid?" he asked sarcastically.

"My outfit will ride where I order them," said the rancher coldly. "But—I want a word with you, Watson, before you hit the trail."

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the rancher answered. But the answer came at last.

"No."

"I've sure waited for nothing," said the sheriff, with a frown. "I'd have been glad to tote half a dozen of the Double Bar boys along. But I reckon we can handle the Kid." He made a stride towards the door.

"Hold on, Watson."

"Time's going," granted the sheriff of Frio, but he held on impatiently.

"You're going after the Kid now?"

"Yep!"

"I was dead keen, as you say, to see the Kid roped in, and sent to the pen or strung up on a tree," said Old Man Dawney slowly. "But since then—you know what's happened, sheriff? He chipped in and got me away from the Black Sack crowd—saved my life, I reckon. He was wounded—I believe he was hard hit. May have passed in his

checks already, wounded as he was, out there alone on the Huecas."

"The Kid's tough," said Watson drily. "The law wants him dead or alive. If he's cashed his chips, we'll bring him in dead. If he's still chirping, we'll bring him in alive, to stand his trial for half the hold-ups that have took place in this section since you booted him off the Double Bar."

Old Man Dawney's hard lips tightened.

"I boosted him off the Double Bar," he assented. "I had good reason, though the Kid says he never had a fair show-down. The proof at the time was good enough for me, and he had to hit the trail. But—"

"But he sure got you out of a tight place, and you reckon you'd like to call it square."

"That's so."

"I don't say you're wrong," said the

sheriff, "but I've got my duty to do. The Kid did me a good turn, too, and when I was near to getting him. But that cuts no ice when it's a matter of duty. Anything more?"

"Xce," said the rancher slowly.

not used to taking no for an answer. You won't find your job an easy one with the Double Bar outfit against you. I want you to let up on the Kid." Sheriff Watson eyed him, smiling grimly. Old Man Dawney's word was

and set at naught, as it had never been since the day the Rio Kid had defied him and had been driven off the Double Bar. His brow was black and bitter as he remounted his horse to ride back to the ranch.

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Cornered in the Sierra!

"THE end of the trail!"

The Rio Kid muttered the words.

High up in the lonely Huecas, the Kid, stretched on the rough rock of the mesa, watched the distant riders threading a way up the canyon.

The mesa stood, a great mass of rock, with steep sides a dozen feet high, ten yards across at the top. On the summit of the craggy mesa the Kid had made his camp. There was no foothold for a horse there; his mustang had been left at a distance, unbethered, by a mountain spring where there was a patch of grass and trees. The Kid knew that he would not wander—he would find the black-muzzled mustang waiting, if he returned for him. But he doubted whether he would return.

The Kid was hard hit.

There was a bandage across his brow where a bullet had grazed; another on his shoulder where a ball had struck deeper.

The Kid's face, of old care-free, was white and haggard.

He had made his lonely camp on the summit of the mesa, with little hope that he would leave it alive.

The Kid was hardy, fit in every muscular inch of him. But his wound had sapped his strength. A couple of weeks' rest and he would have hit the trail again, careless of his hurt. But he did not expect that respite to be granted him. It was known that he was in the Huecas, it was known that he was wounded; and those who had hunted him on every trail were not likely to lose the chance.

In one spot, on the summit of the mesa, a bunch of hardy mountain pines grew in a cleft. By the trees the Kid lay on his blanket in the shade. It was the highest point of the mesa. From it he could watch the wide canyon on all sides. His rifle lay beside him. His guns, in their holsters, were ready to his hand. The Kid, in his lonely camp, did not count upon remaining unsuspected and unassailed. But he was prepared to defend himself to the last when his enemies came, so long as his strength lasted and his eyes were clear enough to shoot.

And now they were coming.

It was thirty-six hours since he had rescued Old Man Dawney from the rustlers, and ridden away wounded after the desperate fight with the Black Sack crowd. He had expected pursuit in less time than that. But they were coming at last.

Far in the distance, in the sun blaze, the Kid, as he lay on the rugged top of the mesa, watched the horsemen winding into view. They were afar yet. In the clear mountain air they looked like toy figures in the distance. But he knew the burly man who rode at their head—Sheriff Watson. He knew the rough, red-headed horseman behind him—Hank Hanson, the deputy sheriff. And the others were grim-faced men, armed to the teeth, as they needed to be when they hunted the Rio Kid.

"The end of the trail!" murmured the Kid.

It had been a wild and lawless trail that the Rio Kid had followed since

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"Spill it," said Watson.

"I want you to let up on the Kid."

"Forget it," said the sheriff tersely.

Old Man Dawney's eyes gleamed under his bending brows. The same hot and passionate temper that had worked such trouble for the Rio Kid was rising. The richest rancher of the Pecos Valley was accustomed to having his own way.

"I want you to let up on the Kid!" he repeated.

"Can't be did."

"Can and must!" said Old Man Dawney. "The Kid's done a lot of things that you want him for. But he's wiped out the Black Sack crowd, and that's a set-off, I reckon."

"I guess it may help him at his trial."

"It's not coming to that."

"It's coming to that if I can get him," said the sheriff of Frio coolly.

"You're wasting time, boss."

The rancher's eyes glittered.

"You'd never have been sheriff of Frio without my support, Watson. I'm

law for many a mile of fertile grassland along the Pecos. But he could not dictate to the sheriff of Frio in his own office.

"You've nothing personal against the Kid, sheriff?"

"Nothing!"

"Then let up."

"No can," said the sheriff tersely.

"I tell you—"

"I guess I'm ready to pass out, when the Town of Frio wants a new sheriff," said Watson. "Until then, I've got my duty to do. So long, rancher!"

"Stop!"

But the sheriff did not stop. He tramped out of the office, took the waiting horse from the peon, and swung himself into the saddle.

"Pronto!" he rapped out.

And the horsemen started, a dozen cow-punchers in the street waving hats after them as they went.

Old Man Dawney stepped out, and stood by his claybank, looking after the sheriff's posse with contracted brows. His imperious will had been disregarded

the day he left the Double Bar. And it looked to have reached its end at last.

Where he lay, in the summit of the rugged mesa, he could put up a desperate defence. That was why he had selected the spot for his camp. But he doubted whether his shooting would be sure. He was weak, and at times his senses spun. Once he had caught himself babbling in a fit of delirium. But the weakness seemed to pass as he watched the distant riders winding up the rocky canyon. The Kid pulled himself together hard.

Snaded by the mountain pines from the westerling sun, he lay and watched. In the silence of the hills the sound of hoofs came to his ears at last as the horsemen drew nearer.

Their path lay up the canyon, and they would pass within a dozen yards of the steep, lonely mesa if they came on. The rocks bore no trail, and the Kid was in cover. Flattened on the mesa, he could not be seen from below. But the faintest sign would not escape Sheriff Watson. The horsemen came on slowly, and they watched as they came. The Kid wondered idly whether they would pass by the mesa, and never know that he was there.

He felt no alternation of hope and fear. With the stoicism his hard, wild life had taught him, he waited and watched with indifference.

He saw the horsemen draw into a bunch and halt. The sheriff's hand was raised, pointing to the sky.

The Kid looked up.

Over the mesa, high above, a buzzard was wheeling. The Kid had noted the obscene bird before and forgotten it. But the buzzard was still there.

The Kid smiled bitterly.

The vulture knew that there was a wounded man on the mesa. The bird of prey was waiting to swoop, waiting till the Kid was dead or unconscious.

The horsemen came on again.

Now they were heading directly towards the mesa.

The buzzard was their guide. They knew that a wounded man or a dead man lay on the mesa, or the carrion bird would not have lingered there.

The hoofs clinked on the stony trail. Closer and closer.

Every eye in the sheriff's posse was watchful now. The Kid reached for his rifle and sighted it across the rock before him, and the muzzle bore on the sheriff of Frio.

Crack! The sheriff's Stetson spun with the wind of the bullet as it passed.

"The Kid!"

It was a shout from the whole party. With almost ludicrous haste the Frio men leaped from their horses to take cover. Well they knew the aim of the Rio Kid.

A moment before six horsemen had been in view. Now six riderless horses were plunging free, and the riders had vanished among the boulders of the canyon.

The Kid laughed.

It was like the shifting scene of a theatre before his eyes. He sent a second bullet that spattered on the rocks.

Then he watched and waited.

Here and there, from moment to moment, he caught a glimpse of a hat or a boot as the Frio men, keeping in cover, worked their way among the great boulders towards the mesa.

But he held his fire.

Suddenly, from among the rocks, a gun barrel rose with a dirty white handkerchief fluttering from it.

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The Kid grinned at the flag of truce.

"That goes!" he shouted. "You can show yourself, Watson."

Sheriff Watson rose from cover and strolled towards the mesa. All his bulky form was in view now, and the Kid could have riddled him with lead before he had taken two strides. But the sheriff of Frio knew that the Kid was the slave of his word.

He stopped a dozen paces from the steep side of the mesa and looked up. The Kid rose into view, looking down at him.

"Howdo, sheriff?" he said genially.

"It's you, Kid!" said the sheriff. "I kinder suspicioned it was when I saw that buzzard. You're kenosed now, Kid."

"Quiet sabc?" grinned the Kid.

"I guess you're hurt, Kid," said the sheriff, reading the white, strained face that looked down on him from the mesa—white, haggard, yet with its old mocking smile. "Old Man Dawncy sure told us about your trouble with the Black Sack crowd."

"And set you after me after I'd saved his life!" jeered the Kid.

"Nix. I reckon he wanted me to let up on you, Kid, and was sure mad when I told him it couldn't be did."

The Kid whistled with surprise.

"But we got you now, Kid," said the sheriff. "You're hurt, and I guess we'll treat you fine and tender. Put down your guns, Kid; this ain't no time for gun talk. You're sure cornered, and you may as well throw up the cards."

"Any more?" asked the Kid.

"You'll never get off that mesa, Kid, without cold lead in your slats," said the sheriff.

"Tell me some more!" said the Kid mockingly.

"I'm giving you a chance to do the sensible thing, Kid," urged the sheriff.

"You'll get a fair show-down. I don't stand for a necktie party in Frio. You'll take your trial for what you've done—"

"And for what I haven't done, feller!" grinned the Kid. "They put it all on the Rio Kid. No sugar in mine, sheriff. But go on chowing the rag if you want."

"Come down outa that, Kid! Have a little hoss-sense. There's six of us hyer to talk to you."

"There won't be so many hitting the home trail, sheriff, by the time you're through."

"You're sure loco, Kid. I want to take you in alive," urged Watson.

"Throw it away!" jeered the Kid.

"Then it's shooting?" said the sheriff reluctantly.

"You can hit the trail as soon as you like, sheriff, if you like that better."

"You're sure talking foolish, Kid. We're hyer to get you."

"Not alive, feller," said the Kid pleasantly. "I give you ten seconds to get in out of the dust!"

He raised his gun. Five seconds were enough for the sheriff. He vanished among the rugged boulders.

The Rio Kid sank back into the shadow of the pines. He sank heavily on the blanket, which was stained red. For a moment or two, as his weakness mastered him, the Kid's brain swam.

But the shuffling of spurred boots among the rocks called him back to himself.

Up the rocky slope of the mesa side six men, guns in hand, came in a desperate rush. And the roar of the Rio Kid's .45's awoke every echo of the canyon.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Rio Kid's Last Fight!

CRACK, crack, crack! Had the Rio Kid been his old self, not a man of the Frio sheriff's posse would have lived to tell what had happened up in the Huecas. But the Kid was not himself now. The hand that had never missed was shaking, the eye that had been as clear and keen as an eagle's was dim.

His shooting was wild. Wild as it was, it told on the Frio men, as they rushed up the rocky slope, stumbling, tripping, and rushing on again.

The sheriff felt a bullet sear along his face, and he dropped; the next man collapsed with a ball in his leg. They fired as they came, but their firing was wilder than the Kid's, as they rushed and clambered, and the lead screamed away wide.

Crack, crack, crack!

With a gun in either hand the Kid was pumping out lead.

It was too much for the Frio men.

Half-way up the slope two of them were down, and the bullets from above came like hail.

"Cover!" panted Hank Hanson.

He plunged into a gully behind a boulder.

His comrades scrambled into cover, breathless and enraged. The Kid was not shooting as of old; not a man would have reached the summit of the mesa alive, and they realised it. Four men in cover fired savagely; two wounded lay on the open rocks at the mercy of the Kid. Sheriff Watson raised himself on his elbow, his face streaming crimson. He stared round him dizzily.

A mocking call rang from the top of the mesa.

"Hustle for it, sheriff! My gun's looking at you."

Watson dragged himself to his knees. Slowly, painfully, he crawled into cover, and for minutes he was open to the fire from the Rio Kid had the Kid cared to pump lead at a wounded man. But no bullet struck the Frio sheriff as he crawled.

The man with a disabled leg still lay in the open groaning. It was long before he could crawl to safety, but he crawled unharmed.

The Kid laughed at himself as he reloaded his revolvers.

"You're sure plumb loco, Kid!" he said, in self-mockery. "They'll get you sure after sundown."

But he did not fire on the men who crawled into cover. Many a desperate deed was put down to the account of the Rio Kid, all along the Pecos and the Rio Grande. But there were things that the Kid would not do, even in the valley of the shadow of death.

On the rugged slope of the mesa, the Frio men lay close in cover among the rugged rocks.

The rush had been stopped. The Rio Kid had won the first round. From the Frio men rose a sound of groaning and cursing. But they did not show themselves.

The Kid waited.

There had been a time when this game of life and death would have been sport to him. But now he needed all his strength of will to keep himself up to the mark.

The weakness and dizziness from his uncared-for wound were slowly but surely overcoming him.

He laid his guns ready beside him, and drew a long draught from his water-bottle. It refreshed him, and cleared his dizzy head. He lay back by the pines, resting, idly watching the blue sky above him, where the buzzard

still wheeled and screeched. Another buzzard had joined the first now, and another. They wheeled in long circles high over the mesa, watching, waiting, ready to swoop. The Kid watched them, and watched another and another of the carrion birds winging out of the distant blue. A bitter smile curved his handsome lips as he watched.

But he listened, too.

An hour had passed, with no sound from the cañon, save an occasional impotent shot that whistled over the mesa.

Now there was a scraping on the rock, and the Kid grinned as he knew that one of the Frio men was creeping up the slope—creeping cautiously, but not cautiously enough to deceive the ears of the Kid.

The Kid gripped a gun.

morning to hunt the Rio Kid, only four remained to deal with him. And the Kid was still safe and untouched in his eyrie on the summit of the mesa.

"I guess we'll get him when the sun's gone," the sheriff said, between his teeth.

And the Frio men, loosing off an occasional shot to keep the Kid alert, waited for the sun to dip behind the sierra.

Lower it sank, in purple and gold, towards the distant mountains of New Mexico.

But other thoughts followed in his mind. The wide grasslands of the Double Bar, where he had ridden the ranges in the days before black trouble came; the men he had liked in the outfit, the cheery talk of the bunk-house; Fatty Tick's greasy face looking out of the hot cook-house when the boys came in to grub; it seemed to the Kid that he could see it again, that he could hear the calling of the cowboys, the lowing of the herds on the ranges.

He heard fancied sounds, and he did



CAPTURED AT LAST! With beating hearts the Frio men clambered up the slope to the spot where the Kid lay in the shadow of the rocks. Not a movement or a sound came from the young outlaw, and instantly four guns covered him. "Put 'em up, Kid! Pronto!" rapped out the sheriff. (See Chapter 3.)

He lay still, without a motion then, watching for a Stetson hat to rise over the level of the flat-topped mesa.

It came at last; but the Kid did not fire at the Stetson. He knew from its motion that there was no head in it. It was raised on a gun-barrel to draw his fire.

He grinned and waited, gun in hand, finger on trigger.

The Stetson sank again. Hank Hanson was satisfied that the Kid was caught napping. With a bound he covered the last few feet of the slope, and leaped on top of the mesa.

His gun was in his grip; his eyes stared for the Kid, and stared at a levelled gun.

Crack!

The deputy-sheriff of Frio reeled backwards, and went tumbling down the slope, yelling wildly as he tumbled.

Load and mocking rang the laugh of the Rio Kid.

"Try it again, hombres!" he shouted.

A volley of curses and bullets answered the laugh. On the rocks of the slope Hank Hanson lay groaning, with a ball through his shoulder.

The sheriff of Frio gritted his teeth.

He had bound up his head with a neck-scarf, heedless of the pain of his wound. But two of his men were sorely wounded, and others had scratches. Of the six who had ridden out of Frio that

The shadows of the pines lengthened in the lonely cañon far up the stony Huucas.

The Kid drank from his water-bottle, and munched a hard flapjack. He knew that it was the end of his trail; his only thought was to finish fighting. Never, while he had power to draw a trigger, should the men of Frio see him brought in a prisoner. It should never be said at the Double Bar that the Rio Kid had been taken alive.

He leaned against a pine, watching and waiting, as darkness spread like a velvet cloak over the Huucas.

He was thinking, and his thoughts wore black and bitter.

"Plumb loco!" he muttered, and laughed scornfully.

But for the wound that sapped his strength and brought dizziness to his brain, he would not have feared the sheriff's posse of Frio. It was his wound that tied him down to his camp on the mesa, and robbed him of his pure aim. And he had gauded that wound in defence of Old Man Dawney, the unjust, hot-headed man who had driven him off the Double Bar, driven him to the lawless life that had since been his. All the Peoos valley knew that the Kid had sworn to get back on Old Man Dawney. And this was how he had done it. No wonder the Kid laughed in self-scorn as he thought of it.

not know that delirium was creeping on him. There were other sounds—real sounds—boots scraping on hard rock, hurried, suppressed breathing; he did not hear them. At long last the Rio Kid's iron strength had given in; the gun dropped from his idle hand, unnoticed. His eyes were fixed and glazed as he leaned against the pine in the darkness. He did not see shadows move; he did not know that the enemy wore stealing on him now that he was unconscious and powerless.

Slowly, with beating hearts, the Frio men clambered on the mesa, gun in hand, ready to shoot at a sound. In the darkness they meant to make a rush, to take the Kid alive or dead. But they could not understand the silence; they could not understand why the cornered Kid did not burn powder. Not a sound—not a movement from the shadow of the pines where the Kid lay extended. Deep as the shadow was they could see him now, and he did not stir. Only his fixed, white face glimmered at them.

And four guns were levelled, and the sheriff's hoarse voice rapped out:

"Put 'em up, Kid! Pronto!"

The Kid did not speak or move.

The sheriff, comprehending, stopped closer, still with finger on trigger lest it should prove a trick.

But it was no trick. His hand dropped on the Kid's shoulder, and still the Kid did not move. It was a face almost of death into which the startled eyes of the sheriff peered. "I guess he's got his," muttered Watson.

He shoved his gun back into the holster. It was not wanted now. The Rio Kid had fought his last fight.

Gently enough the sheriff of Frio raised the unconscious Kid to his feet. The others pointed upon the Kid's guns, eager to secure them, scarcely daring to believe that the desperate Rio Kid had fallen so easily into their hands. The Kid's weight hung dead on the sheriff. His eyes were closed now—to open again in the calaboose at Frio.

The burly sheriff's look was compassionate. The white, set face on his shoulder looked strangely boyish. The sheriff remembered how the Kid had spared him, how he had saved him once in the chaparral down by the Rio Grande.

"I swore I'd get you, Kid!" muttered the Frio sheriff. "But, by gum, if you could sit a bronc this minute I sure suspicion I'd set you in a saddle and tell you to ride for it!"

"We've got him, sheriff!" One of the posse stared into the set face of the Kid with gloating satisfaction. "There'll be a jamboree in Frio when we take in the Rio Kid."

"There sure will!" said the sheriff; but there was no satisfaction in his tone.

He carried the Kid in his sinewy arms down the slope of the mesa. He had sworn to get the Kid, alive or dead, and he had got him more dead than alive; but his triumph left a bitter taste in his mouth. But the rest of the posse, at all events, rejoiced. Long had the Rio Kid defied all the cow country in the valley of the Pecos, and he was a prisoner at last.

When the Rio Kid's eyes opened, which was not till some hours later, he

found himself lying on blankets, blinking at the gleam of a campfire. He moved, and discovered that his hands were bound.

He stared dizzily round him. The Frio men had camped in the canyon at the feet of the mesa. Two of them were groaning in their blankets. The sheriff bent over the prisoner. "You've come to, Kid! I sure began to think you'd cashed your chips for keeps."

"My luck's given out," said the Kid faintly and bitterly. "You've got me." The sheriff nodded. "We hit the trail for Frio at sun-up," he said. "You'd pass along with us now. Hyer's your supper when you want."

But the Kid turned his face away.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER. The Prisoner!

Frio was in an uproar. Long before the arrival of the sheriff the news had come in.

The Rio Kid was a prisoner. The Red Dog Saloon buzzed with a swarming, excited crowd. Cowpunchers from all the ranches swarmed in the streets. There was only one topic in Frio that day—the Rio Kid! He was taken at last! The 'doby calaboose in Main Street was ready for him.

"The Kid's roped in!" The news had frown like wildfire. One of the posse had ridden in early with the news. Help had been sent to fetch in badly wounded men. And the sheriff was coming with the prisoner. An excited cowboy came galloping and whooping in from the trail, waving his Stetson.

"They're coming!" "There was a rush out from the Red Dog to see the sheriff ride in—to see the Rio Kid.

Among the crowd stood Old Man Dawney, boss of the Double Bar. Old Man Dawney was a great man in Frio

and all along the river. But he was unnoticed now. All attention was riveted on the riders that came in from the Hitecastrail.

"There he is!" "The Rio Kid!" It was a roar from a hundred throats. Grim-faced and weary, the sheriff rode in, leading a broncho upon which was mounted the Rio Kid.

The Kid was bound to his saddle, his hands were bound down to his sides. His captors were taking no chances with him, wounded as he was. His face was white as chalk; but a mocking smile was on his lips, and he stared coolly at the surging crowd that roared round him as he rode a prisoner into Frio.

Old Man Dawney stepped into the street, and the horsemen stopped. The sheriff nodded to him with a grim grin. But the rancher's eyes were fixed on the Rio Kid.

The Kid's lip curled as he gave the rancher look for look.

"You've got me, feller," he drawled. "Make the most of it!"

The rancher's hard face twitched. "I sure wanted the sheriff to let up on you, Kid, after what you did for me," he said in a low voice.

"Thank you for nothing!" snapped the Kid. "I'm asking no favours from you or from any man in the Double Bar outfit."

"This way to the calaboose," said the sheriff, pulling at the rein. He did not want to make an exhibition of his prisoner.

"One moment," said the rancher coldly.

He looked at the Kid again. "I drove you off the Double Bar, Kid, for good reason. I put a reward on you because you turned to rustling and night-riding. But that's washed out now. You've got a friend in Frio, and that's your old boss George Dawney."

There was a murmur from the surging crowd. Old Man Dawney flashed a grim glance round, and the murmur died away. There were a score of men of the Double Bar in the street, and every gun in the Double Bar outfit would have leaped from its holster at a nod from Old Man Dawney.

"I'm standing by you, Kid," said the rancher coldly. "Chew on that when you're in the calaboose."

The Kid's eyes gleamed. "Stand by when you're asked, feller!" he rapped. "Who's asking favours of you? If you set the door of the calaboose wide open, Old Man Dawney, I sure wouldn't walk out. Chew on that, and leave me alone!"

The sheriff pulled the rein again, the rancher stopped aside, and the prisoner rode on to the calaboose.

Old Man Dawney stood staring after him with contracted brows and a flush in his hard cheeks. A surging, roaring mob followed the Kid to the Frio goal, where the sheriff took him from his horse. As Watson led him in there was a roar.

"Lynch him!" And the crowd surged forward.

The sheriff's gun appeared in his hand as if by magic.

"Outa that, pronto!" he snapped. And the mob surged back.

But the cry rang in the eys of the Rio Kid as he lay behind bars in the calaboose, with all Frio simmering round the walls.

THE END.

(You'll meet the RIO KID again next week in another Roaring Western Tale, entitled: "LYNCH LAW!" Tell all your pals about this grand NEW series of stories, chums! They'll be pleased to read them.)

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