

HAVE YOU JOINED the BIRTHDAY GIFT CLUB? *See page 14.*

# The POPULAR

Week Ending  
May 25th,  
1929.  
New Series.  
No. 539.

Complete Story Weekly

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Half the trouble that comes the way of the Rio Kid is through trying to help other people out of their difficulties. And this week is no exception!



# The MAN from SAN ANTONIO!

ANOTHER ROARING LONG COMPLETE WESTERN YARN, STARRING THE RIO KID, BOY OUTLAW OF TEXAS.

By RALPH REDWAY.

## THE FIRST CHAPTER.

### A Meeting on the Sierra.

EL OJO DEL ORO was spread out like a map under the eyes of the Rio Kid, as he rode down the slanting path on the hillside into the valley. Across the valley, on the opposite slope, were the mine workings, and the noise of busy machinery was wafted on the wind to the Kid's ears. Nearer was the river, gleaming golden in the afternoon sun, with adobe houses, jacals, and shacks bunched on the banks, joined by a wooden plank bridge. Figures, tiny in the distance, in serapes and sombreros, moved in the street and the plaza of the little Mexican aldea. The Kid rode the powerful grey mustang at a walk, for the path down the hillside was a perilous one and he had to pick his way. It followed a rocky ledge not more than six feet wide, with a steep cliff rising on the right, and a sheer drop of hundreds of feet into the valley on the left.

The Kid was far from Texas now.

Strangers from the northern side of the Rio Grande were few and far between, in that remote Mexican sierra. For days, as he rode on his way westward, the Kid had seen only dusky Mexican faces. Often he was saluted politely as a stranger; sometimes scowled at as a "Gringo"; and, in either case, the Kid rode cheerily on his way, unperturbed. The Kid was finding it rather agreeable to ride in a country where no one had heard of the boy outlaw of the Rio Grande, and where,

if a hand was lifted against him, it was at all events a lawless one. Texas sheriffs were far away, and Mexican alcaldes were not interested in him.

The Kid had no special business at El Ojo del Oro. But he had heard that the mine there was managed by an American, and he had a hunch to hear English spoken again. Coldouter, the manager of the mine, would surely be glad to see a man from Texas, as he lived wholly among Mexicans, and would surely be hospitable to a pilgrim from afar. Anyhow, there was a posada at El Ojo, if the Kid did not find the mine manager to his liking. And the Kid's time was his own. He was looking for some sort of an opening in Mexico for a galoot who was tired of riding an outlaw trail in Texas; but he was in no hurry, and he was not likely to stop long anywhere until he reached cow country. The Kid, as he rode down the mountain trail, the broad brim of his Stetson shading his face from the glare of the sinking sun, was thinking chiefly of food and rest after a long ride, when he was startled by the sound of a crash ahead of him on the trail.

"Gee!" ejaculated the Kid.

From a little distance ahead, round a curve of the winding ledge, came the sound of a voice swearing in fluent Anglo-Saxon. The Kid grinned. For long days he had heard only Spanish, and it did him good to hear English again, especially as the voice had the low, slow drawl that told of his own country of Texas.

He rode on round the bend, and came

in sight of the pilgrim, who was addressing space in emphatic tones and terms.

A young man stood on the rocky ledge, staring down into the gulf that yawned beside the trail. He was booted and spurred, and had evidently been riding, but there was no horse to be seen.

He looked round quickly at the Kid. "What's the trouble, feller?" asked the Kid good-naturedly.

"Oh, search me!" exclaimed the stranger savagely. "I guess my cayuse missed his footing and went over."

"You sure was lucky not to go over with him," remarked the Kid.

"I guess I hopped off in time; and I've high sprained my ankle on these pesky donicks," growled the other. "Say, what's a galoot to do without a hoss, with a game leg?"

"You can search me," answered the Kid.

"You wise to it how far it is to El Ojo now?"

"Half a mile, the way your critter's gone," answered the Kid, with a grin. "Five or six if you follow the trail. She sure winds a lot."

The young man uttered a few remarks, such as are heard at rodeos, and places where they swear. Then he eyed the Kid's mustang.

"Say, you want to sell that hoss?" he asked.

"Not any," answered the Kid. "Five or six miles on a rocky trail like this with a game laig. Say, are you going to El Ojo?"

"Sure."  
"I guess I'll sit on a rock here, then, and nurse my laig, if you'll ask them to send up a cayuse here."

The Kid nodded. He was more than willing to do that good turn for a fellow-countryman in distress.

"Who'll I ask?" he inquired.

"Ever heard of a galoot named Coldcutter?"

"Yep. He manages the mine down yonder for the owner, a Texas man at San Antonio, so I've heard," said the Kid.

"You've got it right," said the young Texan, with a grin. "You see, I'm the Texas man at San Antonio."

"You?" exclaimed the Kid.

"Just that. It belonged to my uncle, and he left it to me," explained the Texan. "I'm Charley Calhoun, and I guess Coldcutter will know that name. I've never seen him, but he will know the name, as he's expecting me at the mine to-day. You see, I'm going to El Ojo to take over managing the mine on my own. You know him?"

"Not yet," grinned the Kid. "But I

sure aim to know him, as I guessed I'd hit him for a night's lodging."

"That's all right; you'll get your night's lodgings, and as many more as you want," said Calhoun. "I guess you're from Texas?"

"You've said it," agreed the Kid. "Cow country?" said Calhoun, with a glance at the Kid's goatskin chaps.

"Yep. Frio country. Name's Carfax."

"I guess I'm glad to meet up with you, Mr. Carfax," said the young owner of the El Ojo mine. "I'll sure be glad to see you around, specially as there's only Greasers in the place, excepting Coldcutter, and I ain't banking on Coldcutter being glad to see me."

"Nope?" said the Kid.

"He's managed the mine for ten years, and I guess he ain't going to do a song and dance when I come to take over," said Calhoun. "But it sure does want looking into; it's paid every year worse for five or six years now. And I guess I want that mine to carry me; I ain't aiming to carry the mine. I ain't expecting Coldcutter to entuse a whole

lot over seeing me here. Say, you won't be losing a lot of time on the trail down, Mr. Carfax?"

"I guess I'll beat it lively," said the Kid. "I'll hit straight for the mine, and see Coldcutter, and tell him how you're fixed."

"Good enough."

Calhoun sat on a boulder, his bruised leg stretched out, and lighted a cigarette, as the Rio Kid rode down the winding trail. In a few minutes he lost sight of the Kid.

The mustang, sure-footed as a mountain goat, trotted, rugged and dizzy as the trail was. In a direct line it was hardly half a mile to the Mexican aldea, but the trail wound like a corkscrew down the steep side of the mountain. A mile passed under the rattling hoofs of the mustang, and another mile.

And then even the sure-footed cowpony slowed down, on a three-foot ledge that sloped to the abyss, winding round a steep cliff. The Kid had to proceed at a walk again. But, dangerous as the ledge was, all of a sudden, as a loose stone fell on his Stetson hat, the Kid

(Continued on opposite page.)

# The POPULAR BIRTHDAY GIFT CLUB!

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spurred his mustang and dashed on at a gallop.

The startled mustang leaped forward, clattering, slipping, scrambling on the dangerous footing; and a few seconds later, behind the Kid, sounded the crash of a great rock that rolled down the cliff and thundered on the rocky path.

**THE SECOND CHAPTER.**  
**A Close Call!**

“GEE-WHIZ!”

The Rio Kid breathed hard. He slowed down his mustang, and drew rein, and looked round.

He had escaped the crash of the rolling rock by a few seconds, and only because of the falling stone that gave him warning of the landslide that was coming. Stones and earth had been loosened from their place as the huge rock got into motion. Promptness had saved the Kid and his horse from being crushed under the rock.

So swift had been his rush to escape that he was a score of yards from the spot before he could pull in his mustang, and look round.

The great rock had smashed down on the path, rebounded from it, and plunged over the edge into the deep abyss. Echoes of its crashing through pine branches far down the mountain, floated up to his ears.

The Kid's face was grim.

Landslides and falling rocks were not uncommon in the sierra, and a rider on a mountain path had to keep his eyes and ears peeled for such happenings. But the Kid did not believe that the fall, in this instance, was an accidental occurrence. He had heard vague sounds on the hillside over the path, with the rushing of the rolling mass, which hinted of human presence there; and the fall of the rock had been timed exactly for the moment when any horseman must have slowed down to a walk.

It looked to the Kid as if that rock must have been unloosed from its bed on the sloping face of the cliff, on purpose to fall on the passing horseman, which meant that the Kid had ridden into an ambush. And the Kid wanted to know. Nobody who knew him and had a grout against him, could have been laying for him there. Nobody had known of his coming.

The Kid could only surmise that some Greaser, with too strong an allowance of the national hatred for Gringos, had seen the opportunity of springing this surprise on him, and taken advantage of it. And if that was the case, the Kid intended to interview that Greaser, and make it plain to him that he did not stand for attentions of this sort.

He dismounted, and, leaving the mustang against the cliff, stepped back along the ledge, his revolver in his hand, and a glint in his eyes.

His gaze swept the upward, sloping face of the cliff above the path, and fixed on two dusky Mexicans in gaudy sashes and big sombreros, who were looking down from a point about twenty yards up. One of them had a miner's

pick in his hand; the implement, evidently, with which the big boulder had been levered from its bed and sent thundering down just as the Kid passed below. The Mexicans were staring at the spot on the ledge where the rock had struck before it plunged over the edge into the gulf. But their startled eyes turned on the Kid as he came running back along the path.

“El Gringo!” came a shout from both of them.

The Kid's hand swept up, the six-gun in it, and his eyes gleamed over the



**A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE!** As the Kid reached the narrowest part of the track, there came a thunderous sound, and looking up he caught a swift glimpse of a huge falling rock. With a shout the young outlaw spurred his horse to a mad gallop, and a second later the great rock crashed a few feet in his rear.

(See Chapter 1.)

gun. There was no doubt now. The two Greasers, stranger to him, had sent that rock hurtling down to destroy him, and he had had one of the closest calls in his life. The Kid began shooting while the Mexicans were still staring.

One of the Mexican snatched a revolver from his sash, and the Kid's first bullet struck him as he was lifting it. There was a yell from the bravo, and he came rolling down the cliff, crashing on the path where the rock had crashed, and pitching over the edge into space. The other bravo scrambled away up the cliff with a yell of terror, the Kid's Colt spraying bullets after him as he scrambled. The Kid saw the ruffian clap a hand to his cheek, where a bullet had gone close and gashed deep. But the man disappeared the next moment among rugged rocks, and the Kid's bullets splattered round him in vain.

“You dog-goned cuss!” roared the Kid. “You pesky scallywag, I guess

it's you for the long jump, if you show your buzzard's face!”

But the bravo did not show his face. He crouched low among rugged rocks, in safe cover, while bullets splattered round him.

The Kid stared up savagely.

Climbing the steep cliff to get at the Mexican, twenty yards or more above, did not appeal to him. The slope was so steep that a climber must have used both hands and feet, and would have been at the mercy of the man above. The Kid gave it up, and walked back to his horse. One of the bravos had gone to his account, and the other had the mark of the Kid's bullet on his face, and the Kid reckoned he would let it go at that. He remounted the black-muzzled mustang, and rode on down the trail, his eye well about him now, watchful for new dangers.

He had left the spot more than a mile



behind, and was riding down into a canyon that led into the valley, when the sound of hoof-beats came echoing from the silence of the sierra.

From a higher path over the mountain, a horseman rode down into the canyon, and a few minutes after the Kid heard the hoof-strokes the rider came in sight.

It was a Mexican, mounted on a wiry broncho, and his face was bound up in his sash, used as a bandage.

"Great snakes!" ejaculated the Kid.

The bandaged face was enough to tell him that this was the man whose cheek he had gashed with a bullet. Evidently the bravos had had horses hidden somewhere on the mountain above, and the one who had survived was riding back to El Ojo.

The Kid reached for a gun.

The Mexican sighted him at the same moment, and dragged in his broncho, whirled the animal round, and dashed back the way he had come.

The Kid fired twice after him, not, however, with the intention of bringing him down. He was content to scare him. And in that he succeeded; the horseman was yelling with terror as he pounded away, and disappeared up the canyon.

The Kid laughed, and rode on his way.

But his face became more serious as he cantered down the canyon into the valley, where the Mexican town lay by the river.

If these two bravos were specimens of the inhabitants of El Ojo del Oro, it looked as if the puncher from Texas was riding into a hornets' nest. And that they belonged to the aldea was clear from the fact that the bandaged man had been riding down to it when the Kid intercepted him. The Kid looked carefully to his guns, and his sunburnt face was grim, his eyes watchful, as he rode out of the canyon into a road across the valley.

He was more wary than ever as he passed a group of Mexican peons. But they saluted him civilly as he passed, and the Kid returned the salute. Not all the inhabitants of the valley, evidently, were of the same calibre as the two bravos he had encountered on the mountain. And when he rode into the aldea, and drew rein before the fonda that stood facing the plaza, a fat and greasy, good-tempered Mexican landlord greeted him with bowing politeness, plainly pleased to welcome a Gringo to his inn.

The Kid was relieved, for he certainly had not come to El Ojo looking for trouble, and he was only too glad to leave the walnut-butted guns in their holsters. He stayed at the fonda, however, only for a cooling drink, and to inquire his way to the house of the mine-manager.

The landlord pointed across the river with a greasy finger to a 'doby house at half a mile's distance, which he said was the Casa Coldcutter. And the Kid, anxious to deliver Calhoun's message to the mine-manager, rode on across the bridge, and galloped towards the mine.

### THE THIRD CHAPTER.

#### A Startling Reception!

WORK at the mine was over for the day as the Rio Kid rode up from the aldea. Fifty or sixty dusky Mexican workmen were leaving the mine, and all of them stared curiously at the Kid as they passed him on the road, and several times he heard the word "Gringo"; but

that was natural enough in a part of Mexico where Gringos seldom penetrated. The Kid stopped one of them, to ask whether the *Senor Coldcutter* was at home. And the man pointed out the mine office, close by the shaft, at a distance from the adobe house.

The Kid rode on to the mine office, and as his mustang hoofs clattered towards it, a man appeared at the open window.

The Kid glanced at him. He knew that this must be Coldcutter, as it was not a Mexican. It was a hard, tanned, lean face that he saw, with sharp nose, thin, tight lips, and close-set eyes under knitted brows. It was not a face that the Kid liked; but what struck him most was the expression on it—a strange mingling of astonishment and rage, as if the sight of the Kid riding up to the office both startled and infuriated the mine manager. The Kid had never seen the man before, and the man had certainly never seen him; but it was the face of an enemy that glared at him from the window, and what the Kid read in the cold, hard, ruthless eyes was more than enough to put him on his guard.

"Shucks!" ejaculated the Kid, as he reached for a gun.

He knew what was coming. More than once had the Kid owed his life to the accuracy with which he had read an enemy's intentions in his eyes. The man at the mine office window, after that one stare of amazement and fury, tore a revolver from his hip, and threw it up to shoot, but the Kid's shot came first.

Bang!

The revolver was smashed from the mine manager's hand and went flying before he could pull trigger. There was a howl of agony from Coldcutter, as he clasped his numbed right hand with his left. The Kid leaped from his horse, dashed round to the door, and strode into the office, gun in hand. He levelled the Colt at the infuriated man, who was still claspng his numbed hand.

"Say, what's this kinder game?" drawled the Kid.

"Dog-gone you!" gasped Coldcutter. His left hand dropped to his belt, and the Kid's eyes sparkled over his six-gun.

"Don't!" he said.

And the mine manager, reading death in the eyes that gleamed over the gun, lifted his hand again.

"Dog-gone you!" he repeated, in a voice thick with fury. "You've made the grade after all, durn you."

The Kid smiled.

"I guess you've got me beat, Mr. Coldcutter," he said, "I'm sure a stranger here, and I've no grouch agin you, and if you've got one agin me, you've got it mighty sudden. What the thunder d'you want to pull a gun on me for?"

Coldcutter cursed savagely.

"I guess you're wise to it!" he snarled.

"You can search me," answered the Kid. "I guess you've mistook me for some other galoot. If I reckoned you'd pulled a gun to let daylight through a galoot you'd never seen before, I'd have to figure you was plumb loco. Who'd you take me for, hombre?"

"Aw, cut it out!" snarled Coldcutter. "You've got the drop, durn you, and that's enough."

"I've sure got the drop, and I'm keeping it unless you want to talk turkey," smiled the Kid. "You've taken me for some other hombre, feller. I guess you don't make a habit of shooting up a stranger who moseys in with a message from your boss."

"What?" stammered the mine manager.

"Don't I speak plain?" asked the Kid. "I guess I got a message from your boss, a galoot named Calhoun."

Coldcutter stared at him blankly. The amazement in his face perplexed the Kid.

"What you giving me?" demanded the mine manager, at last, hoarsely. "Who are you, if you ain't—I mean, who are you?"

"Kid Carfax, when I'm at home," said the Kid cheerily.

"Carfax?" repeated the mine manager. "Your name's Carfax?"

"Sure!"

"Thunder! What you doing here in El Ojo, then? Nobody from the States ever comes to El Ojo? I thought—I mean, what the thunder are you doing here?"

"Jest moseying along," answered the Kid pleasantly. "Say, was you gunning for a galoot named Carfax?"

"Of course not," growled the mine manager. "I've never heard of you before. You can put up your gun, it was all a mistake! I guess I took you for a gun-man; this mine has been held up more'n once, and I figured that you was at the game again."

"Do I look like a gun-man?" demanded the Kid indignantly.

"I ain't saying you do," answered Coldcutter more civilly, "but I tell you there ain't no galoot except Mexicans within a hundred miles of El Ojo, except that gunman I've mentioned, and so I made a mistake. I'll say I'm sorry." He rubbed his numbed hand. "I guess I'm real sorry I pulled on you, but it was a mistake; and I'm glad you beat me to it, Mr. Carfax. Come to that, I'm glad to see you here, or any man from the other side of the Rio Grande. But what was you saying about a message from my boss?"

"Young Calhoun," answered the Kid, "he's lost his horse on the trail, five or six miles back; the critter slipped and went over the edge. He's bruised his leg too bad to walk the distance, and he wants you to send him a hoss. That's the message."

"Carry me home to die!" ejaculated Coldcutter.

The Kid returned his gun to his holster, though he kept a wary eye open. He believed that the mine manager had mistaken him for someone else when he pulled; yet he did not quite believe the story of a gunman in the vicinity. There was something in this that the Kid did not understand, and he was very much on his guard. Even had the mine manager mistaken him for a dangerous gunman, the attempted shooting had been treacherous enough, and the Kid had no hesitation in setting down Mr. Coldcutter as one of the hardest cases he had ever struck.

"How fur off you say you left Mr. Calhoun?" asked the mine manager. There was no hostility in his manner now, and whether his story of a dreaded gunman was true or false, there was no doubt that he had mistaken the Kid for some entirely different person.

"Five or six miles," answered the Kid.

"Sho! You meet up with anybody on the trail after you left him?"

"I sure did," answered the Kid. "Two durned dagoes heaved a big rock down on me on the narrowest part of the path, and I guess it was a close call for this infant."

"They don't like Gringos in these parts," remarked Coldcutter. "They're used to me—I've been here years—but strangers are apt to get into a rookus."

"I guess most of the hombres I've

seen seem civil enough," said the Kid, "but them two on the sierra was sure pizen. I guess one of them won't never heave a rock agin; he's got his ticket for soup. And the other has sure got my brand on him. But we're losing time, Mr. Coldcutter— Young Calhoun is waiting for that boss."

"I guess I'll take him a cayuse, pronto," said Coldcutter. "And I reckon he's offered me to bed down in the house," said the Kid. "Any objections so far as you're concerned, feller? I guess you've been master here so long that I ain't keen on hornin' in if you don't like the idea."

"If the galoot you met was really Mr. Calhoun, I guess he's a right to ask you," said Coldcutter. "You sure he was the goods?"

The Kid laughed. "Well, he said so, that's all I'm wise to, but he sure looked straight."

"I guess I'll go and see him, anyhow!"

"I'll ride back with you, if you like," said the Kid. "You can't miss him; but if you like—"

"Not necessary; I know that trail like a book. You're sure welcome to the house," said Coldcutter. "Come with me, and I'll tell the peons to look after you and your horse while I'm gone for Mr. Calhoun."

"You've said it," agreed the Kid.

Coldcutter locked up the office and walked across to the house, the Kid following, his reins over his arm. He turned the mustang into the corral, and followed the mine manager into the house. There, with a civility that rather surprised the Kid, Coldcutter gave instructions to the peon servants to look after the guest, excused himself, and hurried away. A minute later, the Kid heard the clatter of a horse's hoofs departing.

The Kid, who had no intention of leaving his mustang to the care of the peons, went out to the corral to tend the horse himself. But he paused at the corral gate and stood looking after Coldcutter, with a puzzled frown on his brow.

The mine manager had already reached the wooden bridge, and he rode over it, and galloped on through the aldea, evidently heading for the path up the mountain-side, where Calhoun had been left.

But he was riding alone, and he was leading no horse. There were seven or eight horses in the corral, yet the mine manager had not taken one for the man from Texas. The Kid was puzzled. Coldcutter could not be intending to ride his own horse double-loaded down that steep mountain path, when he found Charley Calhoun. It was not the Kid's business. He had delivered the message of the San Antone man, and the rest was up to Coldcutter. But he watched the mine manager with a puzzled frown. He lost sight of him in the village, and surmised that Coldcutter intended to pick up a horse there, to lead with him. But the Kid continued to watch, and presently he saw the horseman emerge on the opposite side of the aldea, spurring away towards the mountain—still alone, still with no led horse. The Kid's eyes, keen as an eagle's, followed the mine manager into the far distance, till the spurring horseman vanished at last into the canyon that led up to the mountain trail.

"Search me!" the Kid muttered; and quite puzzled and perplexed, he went into the corral to tend the mustang.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.  
On Time!

"THUNDER!" The Rio Kid almost shouted. The black-muzzled mustang started at his voice, and looked round. The Kid had been combing the glossy hide of the mustang, and thinking. He was puzzled, he was perplexed, and it got his goat. And suddenly it flashed into his mind.

nest, while he reported a constant falling off of output to his employer, saw his whole game spoiled by the arrival of the mine owner. Coldcutter had posted the two Mexican bravos on the mountain to watch for him, and hurl him to death under the falling rock—a matter to be explained easily as an accident. And seeing the Kid arrive, and taking him for Calhoun as the bravos had done, Coldcutter had



**FOUL PLAY!** The Kid rounded the last bend of the cliff, and came suddenly upon the mine manager. Coldcutter, standing close to the rocky wall, had a revolver in his hand, and was taking aim. The Texan was leaning on the cliff a few yards away, unconscious of his deadly peril. (See Chapter 4.)

"You dog-goned gink!" hooted the Kid angrily. He was addressing himself. "You locoed boob, you!"

He had not seen—till this moment—what was clear as daylight. Clear as the sun at noon it seemed now—now that he had thought of it.

That ambush on the dangerous path on the hill, it had puzzled him; but it did not puzzle him now. The inexplicable attack Coldcutter had made on him at sight, that had perplexed him; but now it did not perplex him. He understood. By sheer chance the Kid had ridden into El Ojo del Oro that day, a place where Gringos seldom or never came. But that day a Gringo was expected—Charley Calhoun, the owner of the mine, who was coming to take over, after Coldcutter had been in charge for long years during his uncle's lifetime. Calhoun was the Gringo for whom the two bravos had been watching on the mountain-side, and it was Calhoun for whom the mine manager had taken the Kid when he pulled on him at the office window.

The Kid could have kicked himself for not seeing it all sooner. Coldcutter, so long master of the mine, likely enough, from his looks, feathering his

resorted to his gun. In that lonely recess of the Mexican sierra, the mine manager would have got away with it had he succeeded in killing Calhoun. He had managed the mine for years, and who was to guess that the dead man was the mine owner—for obviously Coldcutter had said no word of his expected arrival.

The Kid's eyes blazed. But for the accident to Calhoun's horse, he would have ridden into the death-trap prepared for him; and had he escaped it, he would have fallen under the mine manager's gun. And because Calhoun had been left behind on the trail, the Kid had ridden into the trap in his place, and only his quickness on the draw had saved him from Coldcutter's revolver. He knew now why the mine manager had taken no horse with him for the Texan waiting on the mountain path. He did not need a mount for the dismounted man. It was not help, but death that he intended for the man from San Antone.

Hurriedly the Kid saddled up and led the mustang out of the corral. He knew, as clearly as if he could read the man's thoughts, what Coldcutter intended; what he aimed to do

as soon as he met up with Charley Calhoun on the mountain trail. Calhoun would have no suspicion; he would be taken completely off his guard, never dreaming that the mine manager sought his life, and he would be shot down as ruthlessly as Coldcutter had sought to shoot down the Rio Kid from the mine office window.

The Kid rode away at a breakneck speed. Mexicans on the road stared at him, and scattered out of his way as he stretched the mustang to a furious gallop. If there was time to overtake the mine manager before he reached Calhoun, the man from Texas would yet be saved. But he well knew that there was not a minute to be lost. Coldcutter had a long start, and was not likely to linger on the way.

The Rio Kid seldom used the spurs; but he spurred the mustang now, and the road raced under his feet. He clattered over the bridge, and through the Mexican aldea, amid startled exclamations from lounging Greasers, while frightened dogs and chickens scuttled out of the way of the galloping hoofs. Shouts and Spanish oaths followed him, but the Kid did not heed. He dashed furiously through the aldea and burst out of the village on the other

side, still riding his hardest. On the rough trail beyond, the mustang fairly flew.

Clatter, clatter, clatter! rang the beating hoofs into the rocky canyon, and up the steep way that led to the mountain path. Miles yet to the spot where he had left Calhoun, and the assassin far ahead on his way! And one of the most perilous trails in Mexico to ride!

But the Kid was the man to ride it at speed, and the mustang was the steed to carry him faithfully and fast. By sloping ledges, zigzag turns, rugged windings, the Kid rode on and on, up and up.

At a turn of the winding path the Kid came suddenly on a horse tethered to a rock. It was the mine manager's horse, and evidently Coldcutter had dismounted at that point, and gone forward on foot. The Kid pictured him stalking the man from San Antone, coming on him silently, with no warning hoof-beat to put the intended victim on his guard. With glinting eyes, the Kid slid from the saddle, his gun in his hand, and ran on, swiftly and almost silently. He figured that he was close on the mine manager now. He knew that he was near the spot where he had left the Texan. He rounded the last bend of

the cliff, and came suddenly on the two of them.

Coldcutter, standing close to the cliff, had a revolver in his hand, and was taking aim. The Texan was leaning against the cliff, a dozen yards away, rolling a cigarette, and evidently he had not heard the mine manager's approach, for he did not look up from his idle occupation. Coldcutter was taking a slow and deliberate aim, dwelling upon it, and even as the Kid lifted his gun to intervene, Calhoun finished rolling the cigarette, and looked up and saw the mine manager's gun levelled to shoot him down.

Bang! It was the Kid's gun that roared. The bullet struck Coldcutter in the shoulder, and he gave a wild yell, his gun-arm sagging down, his bullet, as he pulled trigger, spattering on the rock at his feet.

He staggered on the narrow path. "Look out!" yelled the Kid. The mine manager was staggering on the ledge, where it was only a few feet wide. Next instant he reeled on the verge of the precipice and plunged over. A shriek floated up from space, followed by the crashing of a body in the pine branches far below.

The Kid shrugged his shoulders and holstered his gun. The mine manager of El Ojo del Oro had gone to his account, and the Kid had little pity to waste on him.

He walked on to where Calhoun stood, staring, his face pale. "Say, I reckon you chipped in on time, Carfax!" said the Texan, and he held out his hand to the Kid.

"That's a cinch, I guess." "I reckon I was surprised some, when I saw that galoot drawing a bead on me. Who was he?"

The Kid smiled grimly. "You've met your mine manager now," he answered. "Not Coldcutter?" ejaculated the man from San Antone.

"Sure!" "Search me!" ejaculated Calhoun. "He left his cayuse a piece back, on the path," drawled the Kid. "I guess you can ride him down to El Ojo, feller. That galoot sure won't never want him again."

"Search me!" repeated Calhoun, dazedly. "I reckoned Coldcutter wouldn't be mighty pleased by my morning in to look at things here, but I never reckoned on this. I sure suspected him of rustling some of the gold from the mine, and I guess there ain't much doubt about it now. You've saved my life."

"I'll say I have," agreed the Kid, with a smile, "and I guess I rode hell-for-leather to do it, after I got wise to that pizen covote's game. Say, you want to hit the trail. This here path ain't as easy as pie after dark."

"Sure!" agreed Calhoun. The Kid led the way to the horses, and in the last light of the setting sun they rode down into El Ojo del Oro, and on to the mine.

"Say," remarked Calhoun, as they turned their horses into the corral, "it sure was lucky for me that you rode this trail to-day, Carfax, and I guess I ain't anxious for you to ride on. I want you to stop around a piece. Jest as long as you can fix it."

The Kid nodded. "I'll sure stop around a piece," he agreed.

And the "piece" proved to be longer than the Rio Kid anticipated.

THE END. ("THE GRAFTER!" is the title of next week's rousing yarn of the Rio Kid. It's the goods!)

**THIS WEEK'S LIST OF BIRTHDAY DATES!**

Readers who were registered in the POPULAR Birthday Gift Club before May 18th, 1929, may claim one of the following gifts:

- Fountain Pen.
- Penknife.
- Table Tennis Set.
- Combined Compass and Magnifying Glass.
- Conjuring Outfit.
- Drawing Set.
- Electric Torch and Battery.
- Leather Pocket Wallet.
- Hobby Annual.
- Holiday Annual.

—if the date of their birth is the same as a date in the following list—

Jan. 2nd, 1915.	August 30th, 1919.
April 26th, 1917.	July 3rd, 1912.
Dec. 12th, 1914.	June 6th, 1917.
March 5th, 1914.	Oct. 5th, 1915.
May 8th, 1913.	Dec. 4th, 1915.
July 13th, 1916.	Nov. 8th, 1918.
August 19th, 1911.	Sept. 18th, 1916.
April 4th, 1915.	Oct. 13th, 1912.
May 4th, 1908.	Nov. 23rd, 1910.
Jan. 29th, 1916.	Sept. 11th, 1914.
July 31st, 1909.	Feb. 12th, 1918.

If you were BORN on any of these dates, fill in the CLAIMS COUPON provided on this page and send it to:

The Editor,  
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5, Carmelite Street,  
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No reader may claim a Gift unless he or she has already been registered as a member of our Birthday Gift Club.

A published date must be exactly the same in day, month, and year as that given on your registration coupon.

You CANNOT claim and register AT THE SAME TIME. Should your birth date happen to be published in this list, and you are not already registered, YOU WILL NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR A GIFT.

ANOTHER LIST OF BIRTHDAY DATES WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE.

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Name .....

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I declare myself to have registered in your Birthday Gift Club, before Saturday,

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