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Sam Kent climbed into the buckboard and picked up the reins. Then he looked down at his two young sons standing alongside the wagon. "Mebbe I ought to stay till Chuck an' Tom get back," he said frowning slightly. "They prob'ly won't show up till after dark."

Dick grinned at his father. "Shucks, Pa, we'll be okay."

Bobby nodded violent agreement. "Besides, if you don't go now, Pa, you won't get to Cascade in time to meet Mom . . . an' she'll maybe think somethin's wrong . . . an' --"

"Aw, dry up!" Dick interrupted, giving his younger brother a half-playful, half-serious push. He looked back at his father. "Don't worry 'bout us, Pa. If anybody was to show up an' start somethin', reckon I'm big enough to give 'em an argument."

A faint smile curved Sam's lips, Dick WAS big. Brawny, too. Looked a heap

sight older than fifteen.

'An' I ain't so AWFUL little," Bobby piped up. "I betcha I could sure do a lotta damage with this li'l ol' beanshooter." He swished the metal tube through the air. "I'm a champeen-"

"Ouiet!!"

This time there was no playfulness in the shove Dick gave Bobby. The tenyear-old went off-balance to sprawl in the dust of the ranch road. Sharp words of reproof rose to Sam's lips, but he held them back when he saw that Bobby was on his feet again almost immediately and was looking at Dick with obvious pride.

"Gosh, Dick, you're stronger'n Pa, I betcha!" Bobby's voice was chockful of admiration.

I ain't—but I'm strong enough to make you toe the mark. An' to look out for the stock an' such, too."

Sam pulled the reins taut. "Sure you are, Dick. I got a heap o' faith in-" he included Bobby in his smile and words-"in both o' you. Tell Chuck and Tom I said for them to sleep in the house tonight. Mom an' I'll be out early tomorrow mornin', She'll need a mite o' restin' after her long trip." He clucked to the roan and the buckboard started to roll. Above the rattle of its wheels, he called a last admonition: "If you spot the Utah Kid, don't try to capture him. Just let him take what he wants an' go on his way."

"Who's the Utah Kid?" Bobby fitted a bean into the shooter and let fly at a distant fence post.

"Gosh, Bobby," Dick said, "I wish you'd lose that darned beanshooter. Ping-spang-bing! All day long."

Bobby shrugged. "I like to shoot beans."

"That shows you're a dumb ox," declared Dick.

"I aint," Bobby frowned. "You are! You didn't tell me who's the Utah Kid."

"The Utah Kid's a plenty bad hombre. He robbed the express company over at Gopher Ridge two days ago an' killed the agent. There's a big reward out for him, an' some talk that he's headed this way."

"You mean he's headed here."

"'Course not. We've got nothin' he'd want."

"We got food," suggested Bobby, "an' horses."

Dick started toward the barn.

Kid'll pick on ours if he gets hungry or needs a fresh mount." But the Utah Kid did just that. Bobby and Dick were finishing supper when he bulked large and dust-stained and belligerent in the back door, the

has every other ranch. There ain't but

one chance in a hundred the Utah

waning sun glinting on an ugly six gun in his right hand. "Don't make no noise," he growled,

coming on into the kitchen. "Nobody'd hear us if we did," said Bobby before Dick could catch his breath, "We're alone here."

The big man lost some of his tenseness. "Wal, ain't that swell? Meet th' Utah Kid, bovs."

"Howdy," said Bobby. "I'm Bobby Kent an' he's Dick an'-"

"Shut up!" snapped Dick. "What do you want, mister?" With his free hand, the Utah Kid pulled out a chair. "Grub!" he barked,

sitting down. "Some tuh eat here an' some more tuh pack with me. Then I'll take that paint horse in th' corral-" "You mean Calico?" interrupted Bobby, giving Dick a sharp, sidelong glance. "That's Dick's horse." He gave Dick another sharp look. This time, Dick caught its meaning. Very slowly, he began to push his chair away from

the table.

Crash! Under cover of Bobby's chattering, Dick had tilted the table toward the outlaw. The Kid was falling backward, but he did not hit the floor. Like a cat, he landed on his feet. His gun came up, but Dick was smashing a hard right into his stomach so he could not pull the trigger. The gun clattered to the floor. The Kid's big fists lashed out as Dick closed in. Bobby crouched against the stove. No use trying to

reach the Kid's gun. But maybe he could do something . . . Two minutes later, Dick was still on his feet but Bobby could see that his legs were wobbling. The outlaw was facing the stove. Bobby slid some beans into the shooter . . . took careful aim.

Sping! The first bean caught the Utah Kid in the right eye. Spang! The second bean found his left eye. He

the big iron skillet from the stove. Bobby rushed forward. "Here, Dick!" he velled. "Smack

yowled with rage and pain. Snatching

him with this!"

When the Utah Kid came to, he was handcuffed and the kitchen was full of possemen. Smiling at Dick and Bobby was a man with a sheriff's star pinned to his coat. He was saving: "I'm sure glad me'n the posse

stopped by to fill up our canteens. Saves you boys from guardin' this polecat till the hands get back."

"Oh, we wouldn't o' minded," said "Your pa an' ma'll be mighty proud

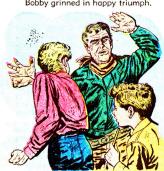
o' you," the sheriff continued, "when they hear how you nabbed the Utah Kid an' earned the reward. I still don't figger how you did it."

Dick winked at Bobby with the eye that wasn't blackened, "Teamwork, Sheriff, Bobby's talkin' threw the Kid off guard so's I could dump the table on him. But the beanshooter an' the skillet really did the trick."

Bobby winked back at Dick, "It's lucky I'm a dumb ox of a beanshooter, ain't it, Dick?"

Dick reddened. "I was wrong about that, Bobby . . . and I'm sorry. It takes brains to learn how to shoot beans like that!"

Bobby grinned in happy triumph.

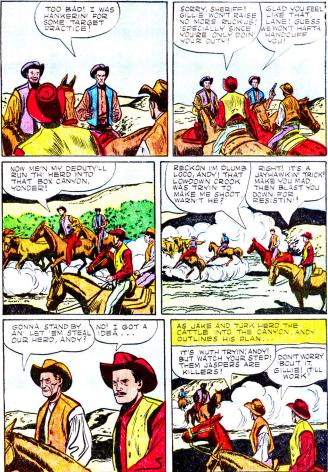


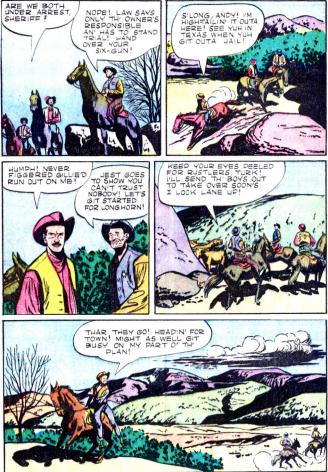




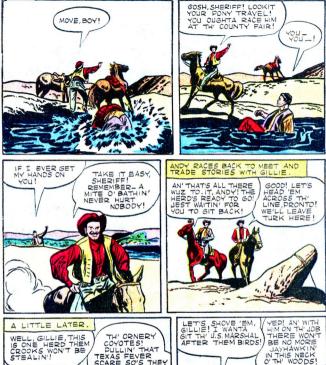












DULLIN' THAT TEXAS FEVER SCARE SO'S THEY COULD STEAL OUR HERD!

