

Colonel Stonewall

“No Ma’am That’s not Jesse James. Jesse was killed almost a year ago. Shot in the back by that dirty coward Bob Ford.” The lady screamed , “ No!, No! That’s the murderer Jesse James! He’s got a rifle! He killed my husband. Help! Help! Get the Sheriff. It’s Jesse James, he’ll kill us all. Help! Help! Help!”. The lady was still screaming for the Sheriff when the man she accused jumped on his horse and quickly left town. Jeff Bowdrie , Texas outlaw and gunfighter, was that man. He was not Jesse James but he couldn’t afford to be questioned by the Sheriff of Hunt County . A studied look at Wanted Posters and he wouldn’t resemble Jesse, but he might be identified as the killer outlaw Jeff Bowdrie that had escaped jail and a hanging in Waco.

Jeff was still kicking himself for having a drink with his former outlaw Gang members and being accused of shooting a man in the back. He knew that he wasn’t so far gone that he couldn’t see that it was a setup cold blooded murder. The setup made by Black Henry’s Gang to kill a young witness to Bank robbery and blame it on him. You just don’t quit Black Henry and live. It wasn’t the whiskey, they had drugged and beaten him into unconsciousness.

The Sheriff of Waco had to threaten a mob with shotguns to prevent him being hung. Later that night his deputy had connived a phony Jail brake to allow the hanging mob to take him. He was sat on a saddled horse with hands tied. The horse was skittish with all the noise confusion and men yelling to hang the murderer. Three men had quickly gone to get a rope over the hay loading rail at the livery stable. It was the best place in town for a hanging. One of the three had been leading the hanging horse and tossed the lead rope to another man. The rope hit the dirt and Jeff slammed his spurs into the horse and bolted outta town on a scared runaway horse. Shots were fired at him but he was quickly out of pistol range. Townsman immediately ran for saddle mounts , but that late at night there were few with saddles.

Jeff was thanking his lucky stars that he was a very good rider and that lead rope was flying in the breeze. It was a couple of miles

down the road that the horse slowed and Jeff slid outta the saddle . The horse stood like it was trained to do. He was able to get his tied hands on the lead rope and walked the horse off the road way and returned to the road fifty feet or so walking back towards town, shortly going off the road on the opposite side. Unless the town mob included an Indian tracker his trail pointed south west to the border, not the north east way he needed to go. He was thinking, “ As an outlaw, you learn many things, some that he was going to really need over the next few months.”

Jeff held up in a rocky bluff and rock sawed the ropes loose on his hands. Using the lead rope to make an Indian bridal , mounted and rode north. No food, no weapons and just the clothes on his back The horse was a Mustang and carried a number of Mexican brands . “ Well, at least I won’t be accused of horse stealing. “ he was thinking.

First thing he needed was food. He hadn’t had a meal since he was arrested. He was thinking, “ What is my best bet to get a meal. I’ll try a round up crew or a Ranch out station. It’s not summer yet and branding and cutting should be going on right now.” It was a day later that he saw a huge dust cloud in the distance and ten miles out there was a big gather of cattle. Riding in to this group, he knew he’d be safe. They couldn’t possibly know who he was or that he was wanted for murder.

Riding in , he devised a story that would be creditable. He would claim that he, Jeff Calvert, was robbed beaten and set afoot by the Black Henry Gang of outlaws. That he had found this mustang still tied in the brush following the hold up . One of the Gang had been killed. This Mustang probably belonged to him. Jeff was thinking, “ It won’t all be a lie. My real name is Jeff Rogers, Calvert. I don’t ever want the Calvert family to know I was the outlaw, Jeff Bowdrie.”

He was met by a young ranch hand herding their cavy of horses. He was taken to the Ramrod Red James and there told his story finally saying to Red, “ I need to get to Fort Worth where my family lives, but I have done a lot of cattle work over the years, I’d be glad to lend a hand for my keep If you’ll have me.” Red replied, ‘ I’m full

up with crew. But we're three days behind time. Had a stampede a few days back . Been out rounding up ever since with a dead tired crew. Yeah, Calvert If you can throw a rope I can use you. Go over and see what Cookie has left from Breakfast, then get a rope. You know what has to be done. Just get in there and do what you can" Red was amazed at just what Jeff could do. It was shortly after he began roping that Red said, 'Hey George bring this man a horse. His mustang is worn out. Give him a couple more ropes. Calvert just heel those calves and drag 'em over here and hand the rope to the ground men. Mister I'd say you were a damn good hand with that rope. Where'd you learn to rope like that?"

Jeff replied, " An old Mexican Ricardo , that worked for my Dad taught me . He was a real roper. I'm just passable compared to him." Red said Mister, you might be just passable , but if you keep roping like that, we'll pick up one of those days we're behind. Feller I'll make sure ol'cookie treats you right. Oh, and steer clear of Matt Bolder, he's the big long haired feller riding that piebald horse. He's a real pain always picking fights. He can't stand losing anything. Thinks he's the top hand on this gather. Your fancy roping might just set him off."

At sundown the crew came in and soon some of the hands were talking about Jeff's roping. Some were saying he's the best they'd ever seen at heeling and dragging to the ground crew. True to James figuring, Matt got his tail in a crack with all the hands talking about Jeff Calvert and approached him just after supper. He said, " Mister whattta you do besides ride grub line looking for a free meal. They all say you're pretty handy with a rope. I sure gotta see that. How about you and me do a little roping to see who's the best."

Jeff replied, " Mister I'll be glad to throw a rope or two for you in the morning. Right now I've gotta get some rest.' Matt exclaimed , " No! Feller I mean right now. There's still plenty of light left for a roping if you're as good as everyone seems to think. Mike bring this guy his horse. I wanna see what he can do." Jeff said , " No, I'll give it a go in the morning, if that's what you like." Matt blew up saying, " Mister,

maybe you don't know who I am, but I don't take No from a saddle bum like you. Get you damn horse and rope or get outta camp. I heard the cock and bull story you told James. I say you're yellor and you're a liar." Everything stopped! The only sound came from the lowing cattle. Everyone held their breaths waiting for Jeff's answer. Calling someone a liar were shooting words.

As no one said a word, Red James walked up saying, " What the Hell is going on here? Matt, I heard you yelling from down by my wagon. What's your problem?" Matt exclaimed, " It's this yellor bellied saddle bum. He's a liar Red, nothing but a damn grub line rider. I want you to run him outta camp." Red said, " Now, now Matt just settle down, that kinda hard language can get a man killed. Sleep on it, things will look different in the morning." Matt yelled , "No, I want him outta here tonight!"

Jeff turned to him and said , "' Feller I wish you wouldn't push this any further. I'll be glad to over look your comments as hard working anger. Hands always get a little edgy on round up. Let's just let things lie as they are. I'm not looking for a fight. I just got out of the last one alive. Don't need no more." This was more brush to the fire for Matt as he said. " Now the real color is beginning to show. Look at him men , he's a yellor bellied coward! Red if you won't throw him out, I'll do it for you."

With that he reached to grab Jeff's arm. Big mistake! Jeff had all he could take. The one thing he'd learned well as an outlaw in Black Henry's Gang was how to fight bare handed and fight to kill . The heel of his hand caught Matt across the nose breaking it and in two more moves, he put a figure four hold around Matt's neck . Within seconds Matt was unconscious falling limply to the ground. Jeff said, "I hope I didn't kill him Red. I tried to quit in time."

Everyone was in shock! Never had they seen this kind of fighting. Two of the hands helped Red bring Matt to his senses The pain in his nose was so bad, he was crying out in agony. Everyone looked at Jeff as if he were some kind of demon. All were afraid to get near him. Red knew there would be no more fight left in Matt after tonight. He had

definitely crossed the wrong man and Damn lucky to live though it. He went to Jeff and said, “ Friend, I know none of this was your fault and Matt brought this on himself. I hate to tell you, but Jeff you’ll have to leave. I think you know that. Look I’ll have Cookie fix you a bag of grub and I’ve got an old Spencer rifle and some shells I’ll let you have. The Indians are still raiding north of here. I know it ain’t much and I hate to see you go, but Jeff that’s the best I can do. If you stayed around in a week every hand would hate you for what you did to one of their own. We’d never get his roundup finished.” Jeff said, Thanks Red, I’m sorry it happened , you know that, but when you’ve been trained to kill things happen automatically. Yeah, I understand how cowhands are. I’ll leave in the morning. A little grub and that rifle are far more than just wages Red. Maybe some day I can even the score.”

At daybreak , Jeff was gone and Red said to himself, “ I said things would look different to Matt this morning. I never knew what a true statement that was. He can’t hardly see anything.” Jeff rode north for Fort Worth and a family of Calvert’s he never was a part of. Taken in as an orphan of ten , he only carried the name. he had no intention of staying in Texas, but he knew his way around the town and where he might get a job as Jeff Calvert. Without his Black Henry beard, he wouldn’t be recognized as the outlaw, Bowdrie. His plan was working out just fine until he asked for a job at the railroad station in Greenville. Without a beard; yes, he looked a whole lot like Jesse James. The last thing he heard was that lady still screaming as he bolted outta town and headed north for El Paso.

Unknown to him, there were no sketches of him on the Bowdrie Wanted posters and it would be weeks before the news of his escape would reach Fort Worth. He was his own worst enemy when it came to his Wanted Outlaw status. His guilt and desire to escape the law immediately classed him as a wanted man. Two Deputies were sent to trail and question him, if he could be found. The Sheriff of Hunt County thought he might be a member of the James Gang since the lady was so certain she recognized him as the man that killed her husband. It wouldn’t hurt to catch him and ask a few questions. The Sheriff figured there couldn’t be any harm in that. Wrong!

Jeff pushed on North, riding most of the night. The two Deputies following, confirmed in their own minds that his action in running branded him an Outlaw. It was time to get help from local Sheriffs and Marshals to catch this outlaw member of the infamous James Dalton Gang. Within two days Jeff Had a six man well armed posse after him and he had long since ran outta food. The dust trail following him was his first indication that he was in trouble. His ol'Mustang horse was getting slower and weaker. Jeff couldn't stop long enough for the horse to get a full belly grazing. He knew it was just a matter of one more day and he would be walking. Once again in the evening light he attempted the same ruse he used on the posse in Waco only this time he had the Rio Grande River a days ride west. Both he and the posse knew that once across the river , he was safe.

Jeff left a plain trail due west for the posse and left the trail in a rocky area. Many times the previous day he had seen wild horse tracks every now and then. Knowing the nature of his horse, every mustang born had to travel hard and rocky ground without shoes. He wanted to pull his Mustangs shoes and confuse the posse, but he had no tools. In the process of looking at the feet he noted the very worn condition of all four shoes. A sharp pointed rock served to loosen a badly worn front shoe and this shoe he used as a tool to pry the other three off. The shoes, he buried. Following the trail back a short distance he entered with other wild horse tracks and shortly left the trail riding east. That night Jeff and his Mustang rested through the night. Jeff was thinking, " Mustang. You've got a full belly and all I've got is a rawhide saddle string to chew on. There's gotta be some berries I can get. That'll help a little and if I lose those following me , I can try something else. Folks in Texas eat a lotta pork. Bacon would be mighty tasty right now."

The posse followed Jeff's tracks to the rocky area and couldn't find where his horse came out. Their guess was the Rio Grande direction. They headed west . Unfortunately, the posse interrupted Mexican Raiders pushing fifty some head of stolen cattle across the Rio. Two of the deputies were injured before they realized what was happening and the posse fell back from Raider's gun fire. This brought

to an end the chase to capture a member of the dreaded James, Dalton Gang.

Jeff had no knowledge of the events on the river. He was aware that he had no dust trail following him and took the main trail to El Paso. He hoped to lose himself in the wagons and rider traffic going to town.

At the One Day train station outside of El Paso. Jeff saw an older couple parked near the water tank. From the looks of their wagon, they needed help. The front left wheel was missing and a pile of rocks were holding up the front end. Jeff rode over to see if they needed help to put the wheel on. Giving his "Howdy, Looks like you folks might need a little help. I don't mean to interfere. My names Jeff Calvert, headed for town , but glad to lend a hand with that wheel, if I can. The man said, "Thanks Mister, but we're stuck here until Lib gets back. Broke a wheel and Lib took it to town for fixin. Should be back any time. It's been three days. Lib took both horses one to ride and the other to carry the wheel. Hell of a note trying to tie a wheel on a horse when you ain't got no pack saddle." Jeff said, "Thought I'd ask. I know what it is to be broke down, but if your son has things under control, I'll get along."

The Lady spoke saying, "Lib ain't our son, she's our daughter and yes, mister I thank you for stopping . Russ ain't tellin you, but he can't ride a horse. Lib had to go and we're worried sick. She shoulda been back yesterday. I just know something has happened to her. I don't know what to do. We're stuck here and sir if you could help us in any way. We'd be forever grateful. Jeff said, " I'd like to do what I can. If I could hit you up for something to eat, I'll ride on in and locate her. There's only two liveryies in town that fix wheels.' Russ exclaimed, " Feed the man Marge! Mister, we've got plenty of flour and bacon if flap jacks will do. Mister, we are what's left of the Hopkins family from Del Rio. There's been a family feud going on down there for six years. And we weren't involved, but we have the name. Time for us to get out I don't know how to thank you for stopping. Prayer is all we could do and weather you know it or not, you were God sent." Jeff laughed

saying, “ If that’s true for a man like me he’s awful forgiving. You just don’t know what brought me here.”

Jeff asked for a description of their daughter Libby. Aside from tall dark haired and pretty, she was man size when it came to work. Her one outstanding feature was , she carried a gun and knew how to use it. Jeff figured on hitting the livery where he would be recognized as a Calvert. He could get answers there and maybe find Libby.

Ol’Mustang was better after having rested for two days with plenty of grass. Jeff pushed him along and rode into El Paso in the early afternoon. Roy White the owner at Main Street Livery gave him the story that Libby Hopkins had come to them for a wheel repair and when her name was mentioned, a Deputy Sheriff at the livery had attempted to arrest her. Claimed she was wanted in Del Rio for killing Johnny Caruthers in a feuding gun fight. Libby claimed she was innocent and refused to be arrested claiming her Mom and Dad were stranded at One Day Station and she would give herself up to the law as soon as she rescued her folks.

The Deputy was young and too much into himself threatening her with a shotgun. She pleaded with them but they arrested her taking her guns and leaving them here. The Marshal is checking out her story, but really hasn’t done a thing to help her. As far as he knew they hadn’t sent a man to find her parents. They all seemed to think she was lying.

Jeff said, “ I’ll just bet this Marshal and his school boy deputy don’t even care about folks. Roy, you’ve been a friend for a long time. I don’t wanna get you in trouble , but let me have her guns and deliver this message to that Marshal for me. Here I’ll write it out , gimme a minute and some paper. I’ll try a demand like I’ve seen used to get instant attention.” Jeff carefully printed a note to the Marshall, which said, “ Marshal, your schoolboy Deputy has arrested my wife Libby Hopkins and charging her with some God awful killing. My wife has never shot anyone in her life , but I’m damn sure gonna do some

shooting if she isn't released right damn now!" Signed Colonel Jeffery Stonewall Hopkins.

Jeff read the note for Roy and laughed saying, "Stonewall Jackson said to mystify, mislead and surprise the enemy whenever possible. Lay it on thick, I'm well armed and mad as Hell! That you were trying to calm me down and volunteered to deliver the message before someone got shot. I'm gonna go out on the street where I can be seen, I don't think they'll wanna talk to me." Roy laughed and hustled outta the livery.

Jeff put Libby's gun belt on and carried both rifles as he walked towards the Mercantile Store across from the Jail. Roy entered the Jail and asked the young Deputy for the Marshall. The Deputy was insistent that he would take the message, but Roy said, "No Deputy, I think you better get the Marshal and get him quick before bullets start flying as he pointed out the well armed Jeff in the street." Within the minutes the Marshal came in and read the note, then cursing, he said, "Damn you Deputy, you'll get me shot yet. Get that woman out here and be damn quick about it. Please Roy, tell Colonel Hopkins it was a terrible mistake. We were misinformed and sorry for such a horrible error."

Libby was surprised when they released her and the Marshal saying, Mrs. Hopkins, we're terribly sorry for our mistake our Office was misinformed, you're free to go.' Libby said, "Misinformed and I spend two stinking nights in your Jail. Tell that snotty nosed Deputy of yours, I'll do some shooting if I ever have to deal with him again. Big bad lawman, needed his diaper changed after arresting me." Roy hustled her outta the Marshal's office before she could say too much, Lucky she didn't know what was in that note.

At the livery stable she met Jeff and he said, "Miss Lib, I'm a friend though you don't know me. Your Mom and Dad asked me to find you and help you get back to them with a good wheel for the wagon. My real name is Jeff Calvert. I had to use a little trickery to get you outta Jail.' Roy exclaimed, "Boy did he ever Miss Libby, His note worked like a miracle." Libby looking confused said, "The Marshal

was mighty different to me tonight, called me a Mrs. and apologized for the misunderstanding. What caused them to let me go? That Hopkins –Caruther’s Feud is even making trouble for us way up here in El Paso. Anyway Roy, I need to get my horses and load up. I’ve gotta get back to Mom and Dad. They’re probably thinking I got shot or something.” Roy said , “ Your horses are already packed up for the trail. Thank Jeff here for getting you outta Jail. He’s quite the man. Slicker than anyone I ever met.” As Lib looked at Jeff he said, “ Mrs Hopkins I want to introduce myself as your very upset and blood thirsty Husband, Colonel Jeffery Stonewall Hopkins who was threatening to shoot up the town if his wife was not immediately released. It worked and we should be riding. Thanks Roy for all the help. Someday I’ll make it up. Libby exclaimed, “ Wait a minute. I can’t just take off over night with some total stranger. Mister Calvert, I appreciate what you’ve done for me but what will folks think?” Jeff laughed saying, “ They’ll think nothing of it Lib, After all we’re married , right?” Libby shook her head, she had to laugh too, saying, “ Ok Colonel Stonewall lead off.”

Midnight came and went Jeff and Libby pushed on hoping they’d get there by daylight. Talk was light between them. Horse back riding is hard on conversation. Arriving at One Day station, Russ and Marge were thrilled and relieved to have Libby home and safe. Jeff was still concerned about his safety. This layover helping the Hopkins was not something he wanted to think about. Libby noticed his concern for every rider or wagon passing. She asked kiddingly, “Colonel Stonewall , you seem a bit anxious, what are you worried about?”

Jeff replied, “ I’ve got a deputy or two following me. They think I look like Jesse James. It was all a big mistake, but these folks are shootin serious, even though Jesse was killed a year ago. Mistake it is, but I don’t want to bring trouble down on you folks. I’ve got to get outta Texas. I’d love to stay and lay over a few days. Ol’ Mustang can use the rest.” Marge exclaimed, “ Jeff, are you telling us you were running from the law and risked getting caught just to help us. There ain’t ten men in Texas that would do that!” Jeff replied. “ Mrs Hopkins I think you’re wrong. I’ve met a number of real outlaws that would do the same. With a daughter as pretty as Lib, I’d think you’d have all the

help you would need.” Libby was boiling upset when Russ said, “ Yeah, you would be right most times, but Lib don’t cotton to the young men of today. Says they’re still school kids, she’s kinda waitin for a real man to come along.”

Libby said, “ Yes. Dad you’re right. They all wanna get married and haven’t got a penny to their name. How about you Jeff. What have you made of your life? I’d say you own a Ranch or something.”

Jeff replied, “ No Libby , I’m worse off than those school boys you’re talking about. What you see is all I own. No money, no home and running from the law. I was trying to get away from outlaw ways when I got into trouble. I’d like to get a job with one of the ranches. I’m a pretty fair hand with cattle, but I can’t stay in Texas. I’m heading for New Mexico Territory, back to where I came from before the Calvert’s of El Paso took me in as an orphan.

I was ten at the time and I can still remember Mom and Dad fighting off Indians. I’ve had my share of killing. Even at ten I could handle a gun. Some where around Santa Fe Springs, I’ve still got family. I could hook up with the Calverts, but I was too wild for that family and I’d still be in Texas. No, I’ll pull out tomorrow and see if I can get a loan from friends in town to get food for the trail. Ol’ mustang has probably forgot what corn tastes like.”

Libby said, “ Jeff, I can’t tell you how grateful I am for the rescue. I was worried sick for Mom and Dad. Mom said, you were God sent to help us. We are going to Santa Fe to live with my Uncle Robert. I’m normally not a forward girl, but I do want to see you again .” Jeff replied, ‘ You’re a special girl yourself Lib. Lotta guts to make that trip alone to fix a broken wheel. I’d love to hope our trails will cross in Santa Fe.” Libby laughing replied, “ Colonel Stonewall Jeff, I’m gonna make sure of it. I sold my working horse when we left Del Rio. I’m gonna make you a friends loan of two double eagles. You need the money and we don’t . You helped me when I needed it the most. It’s the least I can do, even if we never meet again. Some day Jeff you’re gonna be what I took you for, a rancher.”

Jeff exclaimed. “ Libby, I had no idea of borrowing from you folks! Damnit I just don’t feel right taking your money, but I will. I’m kinda desperate right now . If I live, you’ll get it back. That’s about all I can promise.”

The next morning Jeff saddled up and gave each a Goodbye hug. A special thank you to Libby and she said , “ Mom and Dad you heard the whole story of what happened in El Paso so I want you to hear this. Colonel Jeffery Stonewall Hopkins is just like all no good men, running off and leaving his wife at the first chance he gets.” Jeff rode away shaking his head while he joined the laughter following him.

Jeff was thinking, “ Yeah, I know Lib and I will meet again. There’s gotta be a power stronger than us that guided me to help them. Sure , I was hungry and looking for any chance to get a meal, but how was it that I had the idea for getting Lib’s release. Had to be my heathen outlaw thinking, but it worked! As Lib would say, “ God has a strange way of making things happen.”

Weeks later Jeff Rogers, without the Calvert name was working for the Walking “L” Ranch in Santa Fe Springs for Jim Longstreet. Jim had often told Jeff that he had known the Rogers family. Told him that his Dad ,Shorty Rogers was the best horse trainer and horse Ranch owner he’d ever met. That it was a dirty shame that Shorty’s brother had let the Ranch go to hell . He had heard years back that Shorty’s brother had the ranch up for sale. He had no idea who owned it now. Jeff said, “I remember Uncle Don. Mom always called him a drunk, but he’s the one that taught me to use a gun. Can’t say it’s helped me any unless you’re talking about gunfights with outlaws. I’m not proud that I’m not a member of Boot Hill. Should have been there a dozen times. Jim this is a new life for me, I’ll do my best to earn my wages and steer clear of trouble. Do you have any idea where I might find Uncle Don?” Jim replied , if he ain’t in prison or Boot Hill, he’s probably still lookin for gold in the Mongolls west of here. Heard tell, he has a cabin up there. First break we have after Spring gather, you might take a few days and look him up if that’s where he is.”

Jeff was looking forward to a few days off. For weeks he had been thinking of Libby and he had saved what wages he could and had one double eagle for her. He wished many times that he had gotten an idea just where he might find them in Santa Fe. He couldn't remember what they had said about a Hopkins Ranch or something. Disappointed in his search, Jeff kept asking. Someone had to know a Hopkins, but every trail ended without an answer. Libby's Uncle Robert was Robert Caldwell, not Hopkins and he ran the local livery and feed store.

Libby , on the other hand spent a lot of her time working at the feed store and asking if anyone knew of a Jeff Calvert in Santa Fe Springs. It looked like fate was against them ever meeting. Libby , though, had developed a strong desire to see Jeff again. He was the kind of man she was looking for even if he was poor and had nothing. She was persistent in her search and tried every angle she could think of to locate him Often she laughed thinking of that ruse of a marriage and wondered what it would be like to be really married to Colonel Stonewall. Her Mom and Dad encouraged her to consider some of the young men of Santa Fe. There were a good number wanting to come sparking her, but she had her mind set on a Wanted outlaw. She continued her search.

Jeff finding no trace of a Robert Hopkins in Santa Fe began asking for a pretty girl named Libby Hopkins. Once again no luck, he decided to find his Uncle Don. Knowing his Uncle's drinking problem, he enquired at every saloon and soon found that Don usually spent most of the winter at the old horse ranch and over the years had sold off everything of value to buy whiskey. The ranch had been up for sale, but Don couldn't sell. There was something wrong with his title. Don , he was told had taken off for the Mongolls looking for gold. No one knew his location and there were no maps. Every year , it was said that Don came back with enough gold to hold him through the winter, and this winter he had shown far more gold than normal. A Bartender at the Red Bird Saloon, Joe Maynard, warned him to be careful. Don's every move was being watched. He had shown too much gold and the local Band of thieves was after him. Don had disappeared a month earlier than normal. The Mongolls were still snowed in. Something funny was going on, Don was not a cold weather person.

Three weeks had gone by before Jeff could once again talk to that Bartender. This time he tried to get any information that would be useful. Joe said, "Jeff, it looks pretty bad. Don's dog was found roaming the streets looking for food. My wife has been throwing him a few scraps and he hangs around my place. No one has seen Don in over a month now." Jeff said, "Joe I'll take the dog and see to it he's taken care of until we can find Don. I've heard his favorite whiskey was Old Bourbon. Where can I get some, I'd like to try it."

The store keep at Mercantile Bar said, " Yeah I gotta thank Joe for sending you here. I've sold a lotta old Bourbon to Don. He always paid in gold and really stocked up before going to the Mongolls. It's kinda funny I've been selling a lot of things lately to folks buying with gold. The last couple of weeks I've taken in over nineteen ounces Mostly from Jim Hardy and his partner Toad Fellon. Haven't seen anything of Don, must be hanging out at his old horse ranch. He usually winters there." A cold feeling came over Jeff. It was looking more and more like his uncle Don had been killed for his gold. He asked. Where can I find Hardy and Fallon, I'm looking for some gold."

The store keep said, "Probably that old burned out livery stable by the rail road. They used to work there and the owner hasn't got his barn finished yet." Jeff checked his belt gun and walked toward the Livery. Two out of work stable hands were just not the kind that would have any gold to speak of . A slow anger was building, and Jeff reminded himself that he was no longer in Texas with Black Henry. The two he was looking for had better have a good story., but using a gun would get him in trouble. He didn't need to call attention to himself in Santa Fe.

A big surprise greeted him as he walked into the fierier shop ; there sat what was left of his Uncle Don. Jeff was shocked; this was just the shadow of the man he remembered as a kid. Two rough looking men jumped to their feet as he boldly walked in. One man exclaimed, "'Who the hell do you think you are Mister; coming in here without asking? He grabbed up a rifle"

Jeff sharply said, “ Don Rogers here is my Uncle. Who the hell are you?’ he answered, “ I’m Toad Fallon mister and he’s Jim Hardy. We been taking care of Don. He sorta got drunk and messed himself up pretty bad. Fell off a cliff or something. He’s kinda outta his mind sometimes. You may not wanna believe everything he says. Thinks we robbed him, but look at him; where would he get anything to rob, he’s almost blind. Never knew he had any family that anybody knew of.”

Jeff said, “ Well I’m his family and I’ll be taking him over to the Doc’s place. You two I’ll wanna talk to and settle with later.” Jim Hardy spoke up, “ Mister we ain’t done nothing wrong and you ain’t the law. I don’t know you from Adam”. Jeff replied, “If you two thieves have done what I think you’ve done with uncle Don’s gold, you’ll damn sure wish I was the law. I’ve had to kill a dozen like you and two more won’t hurt my feelings one Damn bit.”

Later that day after seeing to his Uncle, Jeff went back to the fierier shop. Hardy and Fallon had cleared out. Wishing he’d been a little more hard on them , Jeff realized his main concern had been for Uncle Don, the man he’d loved as a kid. Don didn’t recognize him. Doc said he’d taken a hard hit on the head. It might be days before he recovered, but his whole condition was very poor. With his age there was just no telling. Jeff said , Take care of him Doc. I’ve gotta get back to the Ranch, but I’ll do what ever I have to for him. He’s all the family I have left.’ Doc said, “Don’t worry, Don is an old drinking partner and friend. We’ve had many an evening together. He has mentioned his brother’s boy Jeffery a number of times. Never knew what happened to him. You must be that boy.”

“ Yeah that’s me,” Jeff replied, “ it’s a long story and not one I’m too proud of. I should have come to Santa Fe years ago, but young and wild looking for easy money is all I can say. Folks say he still has the old Ranch. What happened there Doc? Why didn’t he sell it?” Doc said, “ He couldn’t sell. The Ranch was in Shorty’s name and Jeff that makes you the Ranch owner.” Jeff exclaimed, “Oh my God! was Libby right? I own the ranch you say.” Doc replied , “ Yeah, she’s all yours but Jeff, there ain’t nothing left but the house that’s in any condition. Don drank everything up until he found some gold in the Mongolls. For

the last four years he's been living off of that gold and drinking heavier than ever. A lot of folks have tried to find his mine, but he's outsmarted them all. No one but him knows where it is. All he ever said was he could lose anyone on the Calloway trail; never been there but I hear she's rough and twists around a lot."

Jeff took Don's dog Dobie back to the ranch and brought Jim up to date with his latest news. Longstreet said , "Jeff, it looks to me like you'll be needing some time off. Take what ever time you need, we'll square wages during fall round up. It's not everyone that just found their family. Just turn the dog loose with mine. He's big enough to handle them." Jeff gave his thanks and began making plans. Maybe he 'd take a look at the old ranch the next day or so.

While Jeff was busy with his problems. Libby was trying to find him if he was anywhere in the county. She was laughing and thinking, ' How he ever dreamed up that scheme to get her out of jail took a bold and brash person. Taking on that horrible name Colonel Stonewall was a joke she couldn't get over." It was at this time she decided that maybe he was using a different name. After all the law was after him, it would be natural for him to use another name than Calvert. He had also said he had family in Santa Fe Springs, that he had helped his Mom and Dad fight Indians when he was a kid. So his family name would not be Calvert anyway. Ok , he also said he was a good hand with cattle. He only had the money she'd loaned him so he probably hired on at one of the ranches around Santa Fe Springs.

She talked her Dad into going with her in search of Jeff. "Looking for a cowhand named Jeff", was their question to every one they spoke to. No luck anywhere. The only Jeff's were long time residents or well known cow hands. Disappointed Libby and her Dad were driving past the town Mercantile, when a fight erupted in the Red Bird Saloon across the street. Two shots were fired and some one yelled "Get Doc Evans!" Libby said," Dad hold on , I wanna ask the Doc if he knows Jeff. I'll wait until he's not busy. Sounds like some one was shot. I never thought of asking the local doctors" Russ said, " Probably another wild goose chase Lib. Most of these small town doctors are former horse and cow Docs, but we'll hang on for a little

while.” The little while tuned into an hour of pleading on Libby’s part to get her Dad to stay.

Finally the Doc was finished and headed for the Saloon for a drink and Libby trying to catch him was too late. Women were not allowed in a Saloon unless they worked there. Libby boldly walked in. A howl went up from the Bartender Joe. He exclaimed, “Miss get out of here! I don’t permit women. Libby said, “I didn’t come in here to see you. I need to talk to the Doc. I’ll leave when I’m ready.” Doc Evans spun around saying, ‘Miss let’s go outside . This is no place for a descent girl.’ Libby replied ‘ You’re absolutely right Doc. This place is dirty and it stinks, but I need to know if you know of a cow hand named Jeff that may be new around here.” The Doc said , “ I might, but why are you looking for him?” Libby was stumped, what could she tell him? Quick thinking came to her aid and she said, “He owes me two double eagles.’ Doc said , “Oh I see. The only recent Jeff in Santa Fe Springs is Jeff Rogers and he probably hasn’t got a quarter eagle to his name. I’d be doing him a favor if I didn’t tell you where he’s working.’

Libby said “ Please Doc I need to find him and it’s not just the money. We’re very special friends.” Once again the Doc said, “Oh, I see, when is the baby due?’ At this Libby blew up saying, “ No Damnit Doc, there is no baby. He’s the only real man I know and I don’t wanna lose him.” Doc said, “ Why didn’t you tell me you were sweet on him. He has lots of problems right now and he’s working for Jim Longstreet, the Walkin “L” down by Cedar Creek. He could probably use some help right about now.” Joyfully Libby thanked the Doc and ran back to her Dad giving him the story of Jeff. Russ wanted to get back to Santa Fe and refused to drive to the Walkin “L” ranch. It was much too late in the day. Libby would have to find Jeff on another day.

Now knowing Jeff’s real name, by the end of the week she knew more about his family than he did. The wait and delay with going to find him was causing her anxiety which was getting worse each day. Neither Russ or her mom could understand her thinking that she had to see Jeff. Russ said to Marge, “ I can’t understand her. Hell, she only knew the man for one day. You’d think she was married to him the way she’s acting.” Marge said, “Russel, she’s in love and doesn’t even

know it yet. Can't you get a day off to take her to that Ranch where he's working." Russ refused, this was no time to be off running around. Too much work piled up already.

Libby had waited as long as she was going to. Packing her saddle bags and strapping on her gun she told her Dad, " I'm riding to the Walkin "L" and I'll be back tomorrow. I'm sure Mister Longstreet will put me up . He's invited me to come out a number of times to meet his wife. They're wonderful people and I've been wanting to get away anyhow.

She said her GoodBye to her concerned parents, but they realized Lib could take care of herself. Russ laughing said, " Don't wind up in Jail. Oh but I forgot you're in Colonel Stonewall country." Libby rode at a fast pace to get to the Walking "L" and Jim was pleased to see her and introduce Libby to his wife Alice . The two women hit it off really well. Libby was anxious to see Jeff, but felt that he would be working. She enjoyed Alice but Jim could see that she was worried about something else. He asked . "Libby you seem worried . Is there something wrong?" Libby embarrassed said, " Yes. I'm trying to find Jeff Rogers. I was told that he was working for you." Alice exclaimed, "You know Jeff? He's a wonderful young man. He's only been here a short time .Jim can tell you much more than I can. You must know him from Texas. We know he came from there. How did you meet him?" Russ said , "Alice don't pressure our guest.' Libby interrupted him with, " No Jim, you and Alice have to hear the story. It's not something that happens to young girls, but I was in Jail. Don't look shocked; let me tell you the whole story."

Later Alice and Jim were still laughing about the Colonel Stonewall story when Alice said, "Dear Libby, you're in love with him. I can see it in your eyes and hear it in your voice. Yes, you deny it but it's there weather you believe it or not." Jim spoke up saying, "Libby, Jeff's not here today. He's out at his old home place, the Rogers Ranch. How this came about , none of us are sure. He was taken at ten years old by the Calverts of El Paso, They were wanting a son to raise . No one had seen or heard of him for fifteen or twenty years. He must know someone around Santa Fe ; been asking all over for the Hopkins

family. Can't seem to locate them.” Libby was thrilled to hear that and said, “ Oh Jim , how can I get to the Rogers ranch. I've gotta see him.” Jim said, “It's kinda late to make it today , you'd be riding back in the dark.” Libby said . “ Jim I rode all night with him. I'll do it again if I have to. Which way do I go?”

A little later Alice said, “ Well Jim , it looks like we've lost our guest. What do you think people will say when they hear Libby went to see Jeff without an escort.” Russ laughed, saying “ I reckon Colonel Stonewall and Libby must be married; didn't he just get her out of Jail. Takes a real concerned husband to do that don't you think?” Alice laughed and almost hit him.

Libby wasted no time in riding to the Roger's Ranch. She was asking herself , “What I can say to him, I don't know He'll probably think I'm crazy riding over here alone. I'll just not worry; it'll be wonderful to see him again.” She had no idea what was ahead of her and the danger she was riding into.

Jeff's arrival at the old ranch house was a sad visit for him. The house was a lot smaller than he remembered and the whole place was an abandoned mess. The barn was falling in on the roof line and the other sheds were already down. It was noon and hot so before going to the house, he visited his Mother and Father's graves under the cotton wood trees nearby. Jeff remembered how lost and lonely he was at their burial. Dismounting he sat and told them of his life since they died. He knew they couldn't hear him, but it made him feel better just to talk. Standing up to go to the house, suddenly ; shots were fired and a bullet caught him in the side knocking him to the ground. Drawing his pistol was almost automatic and rolling over probably saved his life as more bullets peppered the grave mounds and stone markers around him. His old outlaw ways came to his aid and he blindly fired at the window in the house where a rifle barrel was showing. The rifle fell to the ground; there was no more shooting.

Jeff knew he was in desperate trouble. His side was bleeding and he had no idea of what damage the bullet had done. The pain was almost more than he could stand, but he saw two horses now moving

in the old broken down barn. The shooting had scared them and Jeff realized there were two and maybe more in the Ranch house. His first worry was to try and stay in a sheltered position where he couldn't be seen from the house. Knowing that he had to stop the bleeding, he tried to remove his shirt, but the pain was too severe . Finally getting to his pocket knife, he cut the buttons loose and tightly wrapped the whole shirt around his middle making a crude compress from parts he cut off .He was hopeful this would help, but for how long he had no idea.

He was thinking, “ Maybe it's fate. I came home to die and rest with Mom and Dad.” The pain persisted and actually seemed to get worse. It wouldn't let him die and Jeff knew that this was a good sign. The initial shock of injury was over and now the real pain came. Maybe it was just a flesh wound, he hoped, but the shock had knocked him down. His lower ribs had taken the bullet. The bleeding continued but had slowed some. His arms and hands still worked Ok and he reloaded his pistol, there was no way he could move without terrible pain. He had no choice but to lay there and try to endure the pain, hoping the killers would show themselves. If he was going to Boot Hill he wanted them for company. He had no idea who was trying to kill him, only Jim Longstreet knew he was at the ranch.

When Jeff had threatened Hardy and Fallon at the old Livery, they decided to get out before Don was able to accuse them. They were done, it was high time to get out before the law came after them. Hardy said, “ Toad we've got to get outta Santa Fe and the Territory. We were too free with Don's gold and that Jeff Rogers strikes me as bad medicine. I'm wishing we had some of that gold right now. We're about outta grub and my bottle's empty. We're gonna have to steal something to get a little money. I know you like to eat , so you got any ideas?” Toad replied, “Jim you're not thinkin. Rogers is in Doc's sick room. We'll just help ourselves from his Ranch house and while we're at it, look for his map to that gold mine. You remember he said he had a sketch of the trail. Boy we'd be sittin pretty if we had that. Probably got it hid somewhere at his house.”

Unfortunately for them, Don had few supplies at the Ranch. Toad and Jim were angry. Very little food and only a couple of drinks left in an Old Bourbon bottle. Two days they had searched ripping the place apart. On their third day they shot and butchered a young steer of Longstreet's for food. They ate good for awhile, but still no sign of a trail map anywhere. Looking to kill and waste another steer, they were ready to go looking when Jeff rode into the yard. Toad was ready to shoot him when he opened the front door, but Jeff abruptly turned going to the cottonwoods. Toad scrambled to a front bedroom window but couldn't get a shot, Jeff had sat down. Toad waited as Jim argued with him about shooting Jeff, "Toad you can't do that. You'll get us both hung. Put the gun up and let's make a run for it. The horses are saddled and ready to go. Come on, let's get outta here." Toad angrily exclaimed, "Damnit Jim we haven't got a thing and we're already facing a hanging for what we done to Don Rogers. One more killin won't matter and we need more time to find that gold mine trail. Killin this bad medicine Jeff Rogers will be a pleasure. He won't be threatening me again."

Suddenly Jeff stood up and Toad began shooting and yelling to Jim, "I got him! I got him Jim!" Just as suddenly Toad screamed dropping his rifle out the window. Jim ran in grabbing Toad before he too fell out the window. His left arm and shoulder were covered in blood. Toad began cursing with the pain. Jeff's bullet had caught his forearm and torn his shoulder badly. Jim had no rifle and hustled Toad out to their horses leaving a bloody trail to the back door. Jim stopped out of sight of the ranch house and tried to put a bandage on Toad's shoulder and arm. His dirty blanket torn into strips was all he had. The bleeding slowed but on horse back, the jolting kept the wound open. Toad was pleading with Jim to get him to a doctor. Jim said, "No Toad, I'm not going back to Santa Fe to face a hanging. Jeff Rogers is probably dead by now. You're just gonna have to tough it out. I'm heading for the Border."

Jeff was hurting bad; blood loss and shock numbed his senses. He saw no movement from the house and had rolled over some to ease his pain. He didn't see or hear them leave. His only chance was to wait until they showed and his side pain eased. He hoped that it was only a

flesh wound that would allow him to shoot his way out and ride his horse back to Longstreet's. These were his thoughts as he passed out.

Libby rode into the yard before sundown and knocked on the house door. She still had no idea what to say to Jeff. She finally called his name. Still no answer. Opening the door she called again. Right away she saw the bloody trail to the back door. Fearing that he was injured , she quickly searched the yard and barn, but no Jeff. Really alarmed and worried, he first thoughts were to race back to Longstreet for help. Fortunately Jeff's horse tied in the cotton woods nickered at her. It was feeding time.

Finding Jeff and horrified, by his condition, she immediately got water to try and revive him. He came to looking up at her concerned face and thought he had lost his mind or he had died. He said, " Oh Libby, Sweet beautiful Libby, I found you. I've only got one double eagle. I'm sorry." Libby couldn't help but cry and said , "Oh God! Take it easy Jeff, I'm gonna try and put a better bandage on your side . You've lost a bit of blood and it looks like broken ribs I can see, so try to breathe easy. That'll help reduce the pain." Jeff said in wonder ; " Libby! It really is you. I thought I was dreaming. Somebody shot me from the house." Libby said, " Jeff don't talk. It'll be best if you don't. We can catch up later. Right now I'm gonna get you some blankets outta the house and make you comfortable right here. It's plenty warm out here and I'll leave you my canteen . I've gotta get back to Longstreet's and get some help to get you to Doc Evans. My Bandage will stop the bleeding and hopefully there's no internal damage. Jeff I'd love to stay with you , but you know I can't, you might die without help." Jeff said, ' Libby I love you girl. I'll be just fine right here, but be careful and take my horse, he's rested all afternoon and should give you a quick trip."

Libby lost no time and raced Jeff's Mustang back to Longstreet's. Shocked and concerned Jim sent a rider to town for Doc Evans and quickly hooked up a team to his buckboard to go pick up Jeff. Hopefully the Doc would be there when they brought Jeff in. Libby saddled a fresh horse and raced back for the Rogers ranch. After Libby left Alice said, " Jim you're not thinking, you get some food and

blankets and make Jeff comfortable when you get there. A ride in your buckboard will kill an injured man. You go ahead, and drive back to town and catch Doc. Then get him to Jeff's ranch. That would be best." Jim agreed.

Jeff had no idea of time and his wound stopped him from any movement. He wished that he had paper and pencil to write Libby a note of love and thanks if he didn't live. The moon was new and high in the sky when Libby rode in, jumped off her horse and ran to Jeff's side. Her saddle bags were packed with new bandage material and cotton for Jeff's wound. "Thank God !" she said as she knelt by his side and realized that he was still alive. Thankfully Jeff's wound was not bleeding. She didn't change his bandage. She asked, "Jeff is there anything I can do for you? Jim is on his way with a wagon and the Doc has been sent for. I'm gonna get a fire going so we have light, but all we can do now is wait." Jeff said, "You're wonderful Libby. Have you got a pencil and paper?" Libby replied, "No for God's sake. What do you need that for?" Jeff said, "I want to tell everyone you're my wife and if I don't live, this Ranch is yours." Libby, trying to humor him, said, "What if I don't wanna be your wife?" Jeff said, "Too late ! there's a Marshal in El Paso that'll swear you are my wife or lose his job." Libby said, "Of all the idiots Jeff you are the worse; maybe dying and you're joking about marriage." Jeff replied, "It's no joke Libby. I've been looking for you ever since I got to Santa Fe. Will you marry me ?" Libby exclaimed, "Jeff are you crazy? I've been racing horses for the last seven hours to be with you. Of course I'll marry you. Now be quiet. I hear someone coming with a wagon." Jim had a great lucky break. He ran into Doc Evans two miles from his place and made things much easier and quicker getting to Jeff.

Though wounded in the bottom of his ribs, the Doc found no blood in Jeff's spittle saying. "Didn't touch the lungs Jeff. you're lucky. A few stitches and bandages is all I can do for the wound. You'll be quite a while healing those ribs. I don't think you can work for six weeks unless its pretty light work. I'd suggest taking up knitting. I'm kidding, but you know what I mean." Jim asked, "What about moving him to my place Doc?" "No way!" was the reply, "He needs to stay here at this house and let that wound heal, but he'll need

someone here with him to tend his needs and change that bandage. Jim maybe you could send one of your hands over.” Libby exclaimed, “ I’ll stay, just send over some food and Doc , let my Mom and Dad know what has happened. They can get some of my things together and bring them out.” Jim said , “ Libby that’s a wonderful thing to do, but you know how people are. You’ll be the biggest gossip thing in town.” Jeff said , “ Yeah Lib, I’d love to have you stay, but Jim’s right.” Libby exclaimed, “ No! it’s right for me and the gossip be damned. Jim, my reputation is not important to me but Jeff’s life is. As soon as I can get him on his feet we’re gonna get married. Now how’s that for gossip?”

Doc and Jim were both shocked at this news, but wished them the best and insisted on being invited . Jim said, “ Alice knew this was gonna happen, That woman is an angel.” Doc said, “ I’m looking forward to a grand party Jeff. You get well. I’ll be back out here in two days to see how things are going. I’m gonna get back to town . Jim will see that you get what ever you might need and I’d say you couldn’t be in better hands than Libby’s. We’ll get a couple more blankets for you. Best if you stay right here until tomorrow. As big as you are , we’d have a tough time getting you in the house without breaking open that wound.”

A short while later, Libby sat there between the graves as Jeff slept ,and marveled at what this day had brought, she gave thanks and asked God for his help in healing Jeff. Smiling she thought, “I found my man and I couldn’t ask for more . He wants us to get married. I wonder what the town gossips would say, if I told them he had proposed at his parents graves and I had accepted. One whirlwind of a day, but Oh what a day!”

The next day was a rough one for Jeff, but the Laudanum that Doc had given him eased his pain and thankfully he slept most of the day. Libby spent most of her time sitting near him and offering him water or keeping a cool towel on his forehead.

Bad news awaited Doc upon his return to town. After shocking Libby’s parents with the shooting story and then the amazing ride that Libby made to maybe save his life, he really floored them with the

news of a wedding. Russ was dumbfounded, but Marge was thrilled by the news, saying, “ I told you . I knew she was in love with him. I just hope and pray that he heals and we can plan for a wonderful wedding. Russ, I’m so thrilled!” They were concerned for her and immediately made plans to take Libby clothes and personal things.

Doc , on the other hand, found Don Rogers dead . His ol’heart had given up after seventy years. He was thinking, “This will be bad news for Jeff. The only family he has and him bedridden. I’ll have to give him the bad news, even in his condition.”

Two days later Doc gave Jeff the news of Don’s death. Jim had brought help to move Jeff into his house and a bed. Jeff said, “ Doc, he didn’t know me. I can’t tell you how I’ve felt since I saw him and realized he might not pull outta that brain damage. Even if he lived, it would be as a shell of the man that was Don Rogers and he’d rather be dead than dependent on some one else. It broke my heart to see him the way he was. Doc, he would want to be buried right out there with Mom and Dad.”

Libby hugged Jeff saying, “ I know you loved him Jeff and I know you feel terrible at just finding him before he died, but we must go on. Your Uncle Don would want that. I’ll do for you what I can. Doc says , “ He’ll bring the coffin out here and my Dad will help with the burial.” Are there any special words you’d like said for him at that time?” Jeff replied. “ Libby, You’re wonderful, I don’t deserve you. Yes I’d like it said, “ Uncle Don I know that you’re the reason I’m still alive. I’ll never forget you. I promise you that I’ll try to be everything that you, Mom and Dad wanted me to be.” Libby ,Honey I know I won’t be able to get out of bed for the burial so write it down and you read it for me.”

The next ten days were a drag for Jeff, but he said to Libby, “ Libby Hon, I feel trapped in this bed, but girl I need to get healthy. I know you don’t need a sick husband. You are the best company I ever had and I can’t wait for the Parson to make our marriage proper. I know your Mom and Dad have planned a big affair and I sure don’t want to disappoint them, but girl we’re already married. I think it

happened when we first met. You know it and I know it. This ceremony is just to let everyone else know it and share some of our happiness ."

Libby laughed saying, " Ok Colonel Stonewall. Is that who I'm marrying or do I get the real Jeff Rogers?" Jeff laughed saying, " Mrs Stonewall, you get the real Jeff Rogers, poor but planning on doing much better. I can't let you know that as a Ranch owner, I'm lucky if there's one cow left. Libby Hon as soon as I can get on my feet we'll start rebuilding if I can get some kind of a loan." Libby replied smiling, " Well Colonel, you did pretty good with the double eagles I loaned you. You've got a ranch, but I hear what you're saying. There's not a lot here that the Bank will make a loan on. Did your Uncle Don leave anything at all. Everyone says he had a rich gold mine in the Mongolls.

Jeff said , " Yes he did. He left the gold mine but no one knows where it is. Folks say he had a map, but Uncle Don couldn't hardly make his mark on paper. I know for a fact that if he had drawn up a map, there wouldn't be any directions on it, because he couldn't write his own name. No his gold mine is probably lost forever."

A month had gone by and the wedding went off with a lotta pleasure for everyone. Libby's Mom and Dad were overjoyed for their daughter's happiness. Jeff on the other had was distressed that he had nothing to offer Libby. She had more than he did in everything. Libby made light of his concern saying, "Jeff we had nothing to give each other, but the love between us is a good beginning. Take my word for it Colonel , things are gonna get a whole lot better." Jeff said, " Libby, things began getting better when I got you outta Jail. You were the thing that was always missing in my life. You're right , things will get better. I can't work for awhile yet so let's talk to Doc and the bartenders in town. Maybe we could get a clue where Uncle Don may have found his gold. Any little thing would help."

Unfortunately there was nothing more than what they had already told him. The Calloway Trail was the only clue he had. Libby said, "Jeff, Hon, we can make it. I've got my job and you'll be back working in a month. Your Uncle Don did keep the house up . It just

needs a good cleaning. We can borrow from Dad enough to buy food stuff.' Then laughing she said, "I know you'd like to go looking , but that Calloway Trail is twenty five miles of twists and turns and even your Colonel Stonewall , couldn't solve that mystery" Jeff replied, " Well I found out who shot me, that rifle belonged to Toad Fellon so this Colonel ain't doing too bad."

Jeff and Libby began their house cleaning . This job wore them both out , but they were happy that things were looking better. Working by the front porch, Libby asked, "Hon did Uncle Don have a dog? There's a dog house over by the cellar door.' Jeff exclaimed , " Damn, I forgot his Dobie is at Jim's place. We'll ride over and trail him back with us. Don loved that dog. We can give him a good home." That evening they rode to Jim's and after a visit Jeff called Dobie out and they rode back to their place. After putting the horses up Jeff said, " Hon how long will it take to pack up food for a couple of days? We're going to Uncle Don's gold mine."

Libby exclaimed " Jeff I thought you'd given up on finding that gold mine?" Jeff replied, " I had until Dobie led us home tonight. If he knows his way to this house in the dark, he also knows the way to Uncle Don's cabin up in the Mongolls. Hon all we have to do is follow him. I'll just bet he led Uncle Don to that cabin on a number of times when he drank a little too much. Yes, nobody knows where the mine is, but ol'Dobie does!" Libby jumped at Jeff grabbing him in a bear hug, kissing him and saying, " Oh God, Hon, you're right ! I love you. We'll make this a wonderful Ranch and you've finally convinced me. You really are Colonel Stonewall !

The End

