

**A Demonstration of First Novel Software**

**The Hunt for Lester Gorney: A Peter Ott  
Western**

by

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This novelette (17,000 words) was written using First Novel software in less than one week. For a full length novel the chapters would have to be fleshed out, but the power of the software is demonstrated. A novel has over 50,000 words (up to about 400,000). Normal is about 150-200,000.

The Software lets you choose a genre (mystery, detective, western, romance, terror, history, or what have you). Then you dress out your characters as you go, and the places, objects, research, etc. Everything is right in front of you at all times. Can't remember if Mary Cobb stutters. Just click on her name and see if she is the one or add the fact that she stutters. I researched as I went on this novelette. I used the Internet to check on historical points for example. I used the writing guidelines for each chapter. If I took the chapters in this novel and fleshed them out in a few weeks, I would have a publishable novel rather than a novelette.

The Software is very inexpensive and is delivered rapidly by mail if you don't want to download the software or that option is not available. To order the software go to <http://tinyurl.com/ypp9wc>

# Chapter One

Roy "Bull" Davis, President and founder of the Rigel Corporation, the Denver-based mining and agriculture conglomerate, faced the office window of his ranch office. He was leaning back in his swivel chair and his boots were on the window sill. A teenage girl was playing with the twins in the yard. He puffed on his cigar and said, "Drag, find Peter Ott!"

Drag Harper, who had just arrived from Denver, sat on an old straight-backed chair reading a week-old copy of the Rocky Mountain News, a sight that Bull could not get used to. Drag's wife, Eliza, taught him to read starting the day after they were married. She also taught Drag to take a bath at least once a week and to wear clean cloths. Bull always said that Eliza had tamed Drag, turning him from a filthy bounty hunter into an almost clean one. Actually, Drag was retired from bounty hunting. He mainly did what Bull Davis told him to do.

Drag looked up from his newspaper and said, "Who do you want dead now, Bull? Somebody piss in your flowerbed?"

Bull ignored the remark from his old friend. Without looking at Drag, Bull reached back and knocked the ashes of his cigar into the ash tray on his desk. "None of your damned business, Drag. Find him!"

"You're sticking your nose into that girl killer thing, aren't you, Bull Davis? It's here in the paper. One of these days your going to get that nose of yours bent like a bull's hind leg. You should keep your nose in your own business. What the hell, that killer isn't hurting you. You only kill people who threaten you."

Drag scratched behind his ear like he did. "Well, you are getting too old for that, Bull. You have Peter Ott do your killing. You can't stomach killing them yourself anymore, but you still have them killed."

Bull turned from the window. "Since Old Ned died, I have had to rely more on you, Drag. You and Eliza still have that suite in my hotel don't you? Do this right and I'll put you in the top of my new hotel."

Old Ned was Bull's mentor who had raised him since the day Bull's parents and an unborn brother were killed by two drunken Camanche teenagers. Old Ned was a prospector and miner and he had made Bull Davis rich. Drag could see his grave through the window. The tombstone was large and had Old Ned's figure chipping with his prospecting axe into a rock face.

Drag thought how Happy Davis, Bull's wife, would die if Bull did anything that even looked dangerous. She would always say, "I've been widowed thrice, Bull Davis, and I'm not going to do the same for you." Then she would cry.

Neither Bull nor Drag could stand to see a woman cry, especially the beautiful Happy, so Bull became very cautious after they were married and the twin boys were born. The boys were sired by Happy's last husband who was killed before they were born by a killer named Corn, a death avenged by Bull himself in the high Sierras.

Jasper was named after his father.

Drag said, "You didn't tell me about your new hotel, Bull? Denver's got more hotels than they need right now. There must be two rooms for every—"

"In San Francisco, Drag."

Drag stood up slowly. He was getting crinkly in his old age. "San Francisco! Can we keep our suite in Denver too? You know how Eliza likes to gab with her friends. But we could spend the winter months in Frisco if we had a place to stay."

Bull stood up. Drag was big but Bull towered over him. "You haven't done anything yet, Drag. I don't pay in advance—as you damn well know. So are you going to find Peter Ott or not? Make up that confounded thing you call a mind."

"Only if you tell me why, Bull."

Bull said softly, "It's Happy. She's adopted a teenage girl. She lives with us now on the ranch. Happy has this crazy idea that that freak will ride up here and kill her."

Drag rolled a cigarette and said out of the side of his mouth while he was lighting it, "What are your odds on that, Bull?"

"About the same as a piss ant winning the bull riding event in the rodeo. But you know, Happy. You know how she is."

Drag knew how Happy fretted about damn near everything, especially her twin boys. Drag leaned back his head to stretch his always sore neck, caused when a panicky buffalo calf stepped on him years ago during a hunt in Wyoming.

Drag said, "Eliza says the word is *paranoid*. Now is there anyone else, perhaps in this room, who is paranoid? I suspect that Happy knows something that you're not telling me."

"Get the hell out of here, Drag Harper! Do what I tell you!"

Drag looked out the window and said, "What's her name?"

"Wendy. Came from a Denver orphanage."

Drag puffed on his cigarette. "It looks like she can take care of herself. She has Jasper on his back with his arms pinned by her knees and she's got a firm grip on young Roy's leg and he ain't about to get away."

"You going to get Peter Ott or not, Drag?"

Drag turned to Bull. "How about Jason. Doesn't Jason need the experience?"

"I've given up on Jason. He lost his desire after that West Texas thing. Besides, he's running the ranch now until our manager get back from his surgery. You know that."

Drag remembered the gory West Texas shootout. "Jason was just a kid. He's over that now, Bull. Besides, he stood tall in Texas."

"Yes he did. He stood there while you plugged those thugs with that elephant gun of yours."

"I want to know why?"

"Why what?"

"Get Peter Ott?"

"If Jason wants to go with him to hunt down that girl killer, then that is okay with me. But I want Peter Ott for now."

Drag stood with his hands on his hips.

Bull said, "The girl lost a friend to the killer and she thinks she saw the man before the killing and that he saw her."

Drag said, "I'll telegraph Eliza telling her I'll be gone for a while and then I'll be out of here."

Bull said, "Aren't you going to have lunch first?"

When Drag stepped out of the door of the office, Happy was there. She said, "Your lunch is on your pack horse, Drag. I've telegraphed Eliza. Now please be careful."

She kissed him hard on the cheek. Drag hugged Happy for a long time. He always liked the feel of her in his arms and her sweet smell. Lucky Bull!

He finally let her go, mounted up, and rode off at a slow gallop.

## Chapter Two

Drag learned from the Pinkerton National Detective Agency—established in 1850 after Allan Pinkerton became famous for foiling a plot to kill President-Elect Abraham Lincoln—that Peter was working in a railroad town east of Flagstaff. It was the end-of-the-rail town at Canyon Diablo. Peter was working for the railroad, guarding railroad property. The Pinkerton man said that Drag had better catch the next train out because Peter would soon disappear with the town.

"Now, why will the town go away?" Drag was hot and tired and was not in the mood for games.

The Pinkerton man said, "Bull Davis wired us and told us you would be here. One of the clerks from habit checked the list of railroad employees. He thought he might me a bad character—this Peter Ott—so he checked the list."

Drag spit and missed the spittoon in the corner. The Pinkerton man frowned. Drag said, "And the answer to my question—"

"Oh, yes. The trestles were too short and the railroad has been waiting for them for months. Soon as they get there, the train will cross with as many of the town people as it can get on the thing."

Drag asked, "Which one of these brilliant clerks made the connection to the railroad?"

"Why, Henry here did." A shy thin man stood at his desk.

"How long did it take you to do that, Henry?"

"Well, Mr. Harper, it took most of yesterday to do it."

Drag said, "Good work, Henry. Bull always likes to know how much work he is paying for."

A frown came on the face of the Pinkerton man. He would have to change the billing invoice. Drag said, "Now don't you worry, Henry. Bull Davis doesn't like it if people get hurt because of our operations."

The Pinkerton man said, "Henry is a good employee and we do not mistreat our employees at Pinkerton, especially when they do what they are asked."

Drag knew that Henry could possibly be fired for telling the truth costing the company money. He said, "You may hear from Bull Davis, Henry. He likes to reward people for doing a good job. In fact, he may offer you a job. Who knows?"

Henry gave a polite smile and said, "I'm very happy being here at Pinkertons, Mr Harper."

Drag sneered. "Being a two bit clerk must be very fulfilling, Henry."

Drag headed for the train knowing that Henry wouldn't be able to sleep until he heard from Bull Davis, which Drag knew was a sure thing. Bull liked to do things for people. He called it *casting your bread upon the waters*. Bull was right. He always seemed to get back a lot more than he gave.

The town of Canyon Diablo was full of thugs, killers, and whores. There would have been no town at Canyon Diablo if the trestles to span the canyon had not been too short. And like the Pinkerton man said, the town would disappear as soon as the right trestles were finished.

There was much joy in the town because the first replacement trestles had arrived that day on the other side of the canyon. Drag was thirsty and went into a tent that had a sign that said "BAR" in front of it. The whiskey was rot gut and Drag asked for a beer. When he heard the inflated price, he said, "WHAT?"

The bartender said, "Take it or leave it, Mister. It is all the same to me."

Drag said, "It is not all the same to me."

The bartender saw the anger in Drag's eyes. He noted to a couple of thugs in the back of the tent. Drag stepped back where he could see both the thugs and the bartender. He said, "You will be first."

The bartender waved the men to stand down. He said, "In celebration of the new Trestles, the price of drinks are now at half price."

The bar scum cheered and the beer flowed. Later the barkeeper said, "Hell, I took all the business from my neighbors, thanks to you. You will never have to pay for a beer in here."

Drag said, "You know a man named Peter Ott?"

The bartender said, "Yeah, I know him. He gets free beer too. You'll find him drinking coffee in the guard shack."

When Drag left the bar he watched the tent from the street. Sure enough, the two thugs came after him. It was too dark to see their faces but he knew it was them. When they passed him, he said, "Lookin' for me?"

The first, a pock-marked man in a Texas hat, said, "Hell no. Why would we look for a flea bag like you?"

The second, a strong ox, said, "Why don't you just get out of this town while you can?"

Drag said, "I hear that sometimes the dead are left lying on the street here for hours or even days."

From the dark a voice said, "I heard that to, Drag."

It was Peter Ott. The two thugs took off running down the street. Peter fired twice.

"Damn it Peter! Do you have to kill everything in site?"

"Some, gratitude! Those two would have been one pain in the ass to you, Drag. The other night they burned a tent bar killing seventeen people. Dead rats are the best kind."

"Where in the hell is the law in this town? Why were they on the loose?"

"The sheriff got shot. He got tangled up in his coat."

"What?"

"The bar dregs will tell you. A tall Texan. A good fellow that liked talk. Just got tangled in his coat. His guns got tangled at the wrong time. What does Bull want this time?"

Drag said, "All of a sudden I'm starvin'."

Peter Ott said, "I was looking for those two piss ants all day after what they did last night. Where were you hiding them and what does Bull want?"

Drag spit like he does and said, "Food first, talk next."

The night air was getting cold even though it was July. Peter Ott rubbed his hands together, then put them in the pockets of his long coat. "I've got a place where we'll be staying tonight."

"What's the lady's name, Peter?"

"What lady? Who said there was a woman?"

"There is always a woman, Peter. I didn't just guess."

"She owns a bar and cafe in a real building, not a tent. I met her after the Texan got shot. Been stayin' with her ever since. Good food, good bed, no cost to me."

There was nothing fancy about Gretchen Brinyard except her chestnut eyes, same shape and color. Her hair was long and black but put back in a

bob. She said, "Look what the cat dragged in. Where you been Peter Ott? Haven't seen you all day. Where did you go for lunch? I'll bet you had lunch with that bitch—"

Peter said, "Why don't you shut up and bring us something to eat. Haven't eatin' all day."

Gretchen said, "Did you get those two bastards?"

Peter said, "You've got too foul a mouth. There is some soap in that kitchen somewhere, isn't there? Stick a bar in that trap of yours."

Gretchen looked at Drag. "You don't look like an hombre with tender ears."

Drag said, "Can we sit down somewhere or are we going to block the doorway all night?"

Gretchen yelled across the dining room. "Shelly, sit these mutts that the cat dragged in and bring them something awful to eat." She hustled off to the kitchen saying, "I can't stand here all night talking to you two. Well, did you get 'em?"

Peter gave an affirmative nod. "She's a talker, Drag, but she does have some good features under that drab dress she wears when she's working."

Drag smiled. "I could see that when she sashayed out of here. God, I'm hungry."

Shelly finally worked her way over to Peter and Drag. She was just a teenager, slim but showing that a woman was in there somewhere and would soon be appearing in the open. Her hair hung over her shoulders, not quite blond, not quite brown. She said, "Hi, Mr. Ott. I found a couple of chairs over by the kitchen." She looked at Drag and said, "I'm Shelly."

Drag said, "Well, I'm a mighty glad to meet you, Missy, and I hope you got something for me to eat."

Shelly, smiled, "Well, I hope you like stew, Mister, 'cause that is all we got tonight. There is only one thing that is wrong with it. Chang put cabbage, corn, turnips, and parsnips in it, none of which belong in beef stew. Not one soul has asked for a second bowl tonight."

Peter said, "See if Chang will cook us up some bacon and eggs. I'm not going to eat that stew of his. Not tonight."

The table was long and full of other patrons. Peter leaned across the table and said, "Are you going to answer my question or do you have to eat first."

Drag rolled a cigarette and offered the makins to Peter Ott. Peter shook his head. "You know I gave up smoking. That's what killed my old man."

Drag said, "You're always givin' up smokin' Your old man was killed in the Civil War."

Peter said, "Yes, he lit a cigarette at night and a Yankee sniper trimmed his clock."

Drag said, "You never told me that before."

"Well, I got a letter from my brother in Fort Worth and he told me that he came upon some of my pop's old war buddies, all Texans. One of them told him how it happened."

Drag said, "You never told me that either, Peter Ott."

"What?"

"That you had a brother. What else have you got that you haven't told me about, crabs?"

Shelly brought the bacon and eggs along with a big platter of fried potatoes. Drag mumbled that it looked mighty good and asked for a few more eggs to go with all those potatoes.

When he was finished eating Drag said, "Bull wants you to hunt down a guy that rapes and kills teenage girls."

Peter said, "Drag, Can't you see I'm still eating?"

Drag said, "Happy adopted a teenage girl. The girl saw the killer before he killed her friend. But the killer saw her too. Happy is afraid the killer will come after her new daughter and all."

"Let's see now," said Peter. "Has this new daughter got a name?"

Drag thought a minute. "It's either Windy or Wendy. That's it, Wendy."

"And Wendy saw a man before her friend was killed, right?"

"Yep! She saw the killer."

"Drag, how in the hell did she know it was the killer that she saw?"

"I guess I didn't ask that question?"

"Shit, Drag! This is a bunch of crap. Wendy could just be imagining things. I could track down the guy she saw and shoot him and then the killings could go on because I shot an innocent man. Piss on this, Drag."

They sat quietly, Drag puffing on a cigarette. Peter said, "How did you find me, Drag? Pinkerton National Detective Agency, right?"

"A clerk named, Henry, looked you up on the railroad list of employees. There you were, protecting the Railroad's property and all."

"Nobody here give a hoot in hell about the railroads property unless it is to protect it so that they can get that damned bridge across Canyon Diablo. I haven't had to work a lick."

"I guess that gave you plenty of time to stick your nose into everybody's business. Like shootin' those two punks that followed me. I can handle my own affairs, Peter Ott. And I don't shoot folks in the back."

"I guess you're right, Drag. I should have yelled, 'Fellows! Please stop and turn around. I don't ever shoot punks in the back.' Now, Drag, in all of those days of bounty hunting you never shot a man in the back, right?"

"Well, I guess there were a few that were trying to get away and me not getting any bounty made me mad as hell so I shot them with—"

"That buffalo gun of yours that makes a great big hole in a man on its way out."

Drag said nothing. He was in thought.

When Wendy came back to the table, Peter said, "Wendy, you want to get out of this place, right?"

"Wow! Do I! I'll be packed in a minute." She headed for the kitchen. Peter stopped her and said, "In the morning, Wendy, not tonight. and don't tell Gretchen that we're leaving or I'll leave you behind in this god forsaken place."

Peter looked at Drag and said, "Get me that Henry guy at Pinkertons. I'm going to need him."

Drag said, "The girl is bait, right?"

## Chapter Three

The next morning, Drag, Peter, and Wendy boarded the same train on which Drag had arrived. It was returning to the east, the only way it could go. There were few passengers because finally the bridge would soon be finished and they could go west as they had planned in the first place.

Drag dozed off as soon as he got to his seat and Peter knew that he would sleep all the way to Denver except when they changed trains. Peter said, "Well, Wendy, this is going to be a long ride. Tell me about yourself and how you got into that hell hole of Canyon Diablo."

"You want me to tell me the story of my life. Is that it, Mr. Ott? Why?"

"Why not? We've got the time."

"Okay then. But when I get finished, I want to hear your life story."

Peter laughed, "Fare enough. We'll see."

Wendy understood the statement. She thought, *He isn't going to tell me anything. A man that kills people has things to hide.* She said, "I was born near Durango on my father's ranch. He died of influenza. I was five years old. My mother died last year of pneumonia. That's when I moved to the northeast of here to my Aunt Rita's place. She had married twice because the Navajos killed her first husband. My second uncle was Uncle Thomas. he raised horses and cattle to sell to the army. When my Aunt Rita died last spring, she had a heart attack in the kitchen, I lived alone with Uncle Thomas. That's when the trouble began."

"What trouble was that, Wendy?" Peter looked like he *knew* what happened to Wendy. She decided to tell him.

She remembered the scene vividly. What she didn't tell Peter was that she peeked in the keyhole of her aunt's bedroom when she heard strange noises in there. Sometimes it was even during the day. Uncle Thomas was not unlike, Billy, her young stallion, chasing anything that looked like a mare.

When Aunt Rita Died, he had the same urges. He tried to hold and kiss Wendy often. She usually was able to push him off. Then one day while she was cooking in the kitchen, Uncle Thomas came in stark naked. Wendy knew what he was after and he told her that he was a man and that she was old enough to be a woman and that they may as well get things going. She was terrified. She swung the fry pan around throwing hot bacon grease into Uncle Thomas' face. He screamed in pain but still came after her. That is when she hit him with the heavy iron pan square on the forehead as hard as she could.

Uncle Thomas laid on the floor very still. She put her ear against his chest. The chest did not move nor could she hear his heart. Now her only protector was dead and she was alone in the territory of the Navahos. The word would get around that she was alone. It wouldn't be long before they would come after her and do more to her than what Uncle Thomas had planned. She thought, *I should have let him do it. It would be better than him dead.*

Uncle Thomas was a big man. She tied a rope to him and let Billy pull him out to where Aunt Rita was buried. She dug the grave and Billy pulled Uncle Thomas into the grave. He laid on his back and his *thing* was sticking up in the air. She tossed his hat over it and shoveled the dirt into the grave and patted it down with the shovel.

That is when her Cousin, only by marriage, rode up. His name was Roland. He had lived with her at the ranch and she had done with him what she had not done with Uncle Thomas because she was curious to know more about what Aunt Rita and Uncle Thomas loved to do so much.

When the Navahos came snooping around, stealing Uncle Thomas's horses, Roland said that they would have to leave. They took what stock they could and rode to Canyon Diablo. There they sold a few head of cattle and horses. Roland said that he had to get back to his father's ranch and he left her there with Martha saying that he would be back after the fall roundup to get her.

Wendy looked at Peter and said, "I knew he would not come after me. He didn't love me. I didn't love him. What we did just happened."

Peter said, "Maybe you are too young for that thing they call *true love*. Was there some reason for Roland to come to your Aunt's place?"

"He was wondering why my Aunt had not written. His mother sent him. That is why he was there, to see if everything was all right."

Peter said, "When we get to Denver you might telegraph your aunt and tell her that you are all right and where you are living."

"Where will that be, Peter Ott? You're not thinking like Roland and Uncle Thomas are you?"

Peter didn't answer her second question. He said, "You will be staying in Drag's suite at the Rigel Hotel. His wife is named, Eliza. She will be taking care of you until I need you."

"Need me? For what? I know what you are thinking. All men are—"

"Not for that, Wendy. We need to catch a killer who rapes young women of your age."

"Like HELL!"

"You'll be safe. Nobody is going to lay one finger on you."

"How about ten fingers? I'm not going to be your guinea pig, Peter Ott."

"I said, nobody is going to hurt you or even touch you, Wendy."

"You will have to pay me. I'm not risking my neck for nothing."

"Don't worry, Bull Davis always pays."



## Chapter Four

Peter Ott walked into the Pinkerton National Detective Agency in Denver. He was greeted by Henry Silverton who Bull Davis had decided would be the Pinkerton contact for Peter Ott. Henry had been promoted from clerk to detective. The detective appointment was temporary. If Henry did a good job, he would be made a permanent detective.

Peter said, "I don't want to talk out here. Is there a room we can go to?"

Henry wiped his long slender nose with a big red bandanna and said, "I've got a room. It's my boss' office. All my stuff is in there. He's in Albuquerque on business."

Henry told Peter about the killer. "He's a stalker. He never kills on impulse. He will stock a girl for days, even weeks. He always kills the same way. He comes up behind her and gets her in a neck lock, choking off her windpipe so she can not yell. He then drags her off to rape her, choking her to death as he— "

"I've read the *Rocky Mountain News*, Henry. We are not paying you for that. Besides, he sometimes uses a garrote of some kind."

Henry flushed. He was already in trouble on his first real case. He said, "Sorry, Mr. Ott. Just had to start somewhere."

"Well, now if you will tell me where to start, I've got a decoy."

"A decoy?"

"Yes, a decoy. I have a young girl who wants to help us get this killer before he kills some other teenage girl. So where do I start?"

"River Front Park. Two of the girls were killed there. There is no other spot where more than one girl was killed."

"How many girls are we talking about for God's sake?"

Henry said, self cautiously rubbing one of his big ears, "Seventeen."

Peter stood up and said, "Let's go!"

Henry put his folder away and joined Peter. "Where we going, Mr. Ott?"

"To that park of yours."

"There won't be any more murders there, Mr. Ott. The Denver police have it staked out and our agents have combed the place. I don't know—"

"Well, I'm goin' and you can sit on your ass here while I'm gone."

"I didn't mean— I'm coming, Mr. Ott."

The Platte River was low in late summer but two boys were fishing a pool. One had a lunker trout on his line. The other boy, a chubby kid, yelled, "Don't horse it, Billy! Don't horse it. Let that fish tire itself out good before you try to land him. Don't horse it!"

Billy horsed the fish up over the bank, it flapping away in the grass tangling up the line."

Peter Ott said, "That's a good one, Billy."

The boy looked up, his freckled face glistening in the sun, and said, "How do you know my name, Mister? I'll sell you this fish if you want it. I like to catch fish but I don't like to eat 'em."

Peter said, "Well, I'm not in the market for such a fine fish but I'm sure Mr. Silverton here is. You do like fish don't you Henry?"

"Well—"

"Then pay the boy, Henry. We ain't got all day here. Billy, did you know either of the two girls that were killed here?"

Billy, without looking up from trying to untangle the fish said, "I didn't know them, Mister, but my sister did. They were her friends, not mine. I hate girls."

Peter Ott said, "Billy, what did your sister tell the police?"

Billy looked up at Peter Ott with a confused look. "The police? She didn't tell them anything. They didn't talk to her as far as I know. Why should they? She didn't kill nobody."

"Did she see the man who killed the girls?"

"She wouldn't go in this park after Irene Hendricks was killed. She never went here with Matilda Taggett as far as I know."

"Where is your sister now, Billy?"

"She lookin' after our neighbor's brats. See that girl in the yellow dress swinging that kid? That's her. She won't talk to you, Mister."

Peter looked at Henry. "Talk to that girl and see if she remembers anyone who talked to Irene or Matilda."

Henry said, "She won't be talking to strangers, Mr. Ott. There is not a girl in this town who will talk to a stranger because of the article in the Rocky Mountain News telling them not to."

"Show her that new badge of yours. Pay her when you are done. Then make sure that your agents have talked to members and friends of all the girls killed. Get on it, Henry. I'm gettin' tired of you bein' so damned uncooperative."

"No, no, Mr. Ott. I'll make sure that what you said gets done and gets done in a hurry too. You can bet on that Mr. Ott. The Pinkerton National—"

"My God, Henry, will you shut your big trap and get to work on this thing."

"Yes, yes I will. Right now!"

"And Henry, don't forget your fish. And don't forget to pay these two young fellers for what they did for us."

"What they did for us?"

"Damn it, Henry. Just pay them. Temporary detective my ass."

"Where will you be, Mr. Ott?"

"Where ever Bull Davis is, that's where I'll be for now."

## Chapter Five

Peter Ott went to Drag's suite in the Rigel Hotel. Eliza got out the cherry pie she had just baked. Drag was already at the table with a fork in his hand. Eliza called Shelly from her bedroom and the three of them joined Drag at the table. Eliza cut the pie into quarters and placed the pieces on fancy plates from Stoke-on-Trent made by Wedgwood. Eliza said, "If you are going to the ranch, we would like to join you. This is the hottest spell I've seen in Denver. Oh, I'll get the lemonade."

"Join me?"

Eliza said, "I've told them to hook up the surrey. Bull just bought it and it holds four. It is covered and has red leather seats, pretty fancy. It has a team hitch and those beautiful grey Percherons with their black manes flashing in the sun will be one pretty site. And Shelly wants to get out of this stuffy hotel. She's never been confined like this."

"Confined in luxury," said Peter Ott. "Poor girl! Where is Bull anyway? Is he at Happy's ranch or his parent's place?"

Drag looked up from his pie. "Up where he was born. He burned down the cabin with its horrible memories and built a new ranch house. I helped him do it."

"What did you do, Drag, sit on your ass drinking lemonade?"

Eliza said, "Peter, there are ladies present."

"Sorry, Eliza. Sorry, Shelly. Well, we had better get off our arses and get on our way. You two ladies have your undies packed?"

"Peter Ott!"

The ranch where bull was born was on the western slope of the Rockies between Pikes Peak and Denver. As the Percherons easily pulled the surrey off the main road and onto the rough road to the ranch, Drag said, "Shelly,

don't ask nothin' about Bull's childhood. He has bad memories. Two drunken Comanche boys killed his parents. He would have been killed too but Old Ned happened to show up at just the right moment. He killed the Comanche boys and raised Bull. Old Ned decided to get young Roy out of here. They traveled north for a while but Old Ned could not make a livin' at trappin' anymore so he took up prospecting. Old Ned is the reason that Bull Davis is rich, that and Bull's confounded conniving."

Eliza said, "Poor young Roy, seeing his mother's tummy cut open by the Comanches so they could look at the baby. It was a boy."

There were tears in Shelly's eyes. "That poor man. Living with all of that. I thought I had bad memories, killing my uncle when he tried to rape me. Wish I had never hit him with that fry pan like I did, putting him in his grave next to my Aunt Rita with that hat of his over his thing."

Drag said, "Better not to think about that thar, Shelly. You didn't do it a purpose. Forget it."

Eliza put her arm around Shelly, "Drag's right, Sweetheart. Best to put those things behind you. Now cheer up now. We'll be at the ranch in an hour or sooner."

Peter Ott said, "I'm not going to let Bull see me riding in this thing. I'll never live it down." He pulled up the Percherons and dropped to the ground. he stretched his shoulders. The others got down too and the ladies disappeared into the brush along the road. Drag walked around the other side of the carriage. When everybody had adjusted their clothing and climbed back into the surrey, Peter Ott mounted Polly who was on the right and they rode off.

Soon they rode up the road between pines and then into an open valley where the new ranch house stood. Drag said, "This ranch is bigger than at first. Bull bought up the Mason ranch which itself was made up of the ranches of the early settlers here. The Mason boys still run the operations here but they work for Bull. In the old days, Bull thought that Bart Mason was his enemy, but old Bart held the family ranch for Bull until he was old enough to manage it himself, that is if Bull ever came back from roaming

with Old Ned. The ranch was left to Bull in Bart Mason's last will and testament."

Eliza said, "Old Bart was a wonderful man and he raised some fine boys all on his own after his wife died of consumption. That was a long time ago. But I never knew the man. Drag told me about Bart Mason and, of course, we know the boys."

Drag said, "Here comes one of Bart's grandsons now. It's Thad. He'll be checkin' to see who we are."

The boy rode up in seeing range, waved his hat, reined his horse, and rode back towards the ranch house. Eliza said, "Bull is the most cautious man I know."

Bull's twin boys followed by Wendy, ran up to the surrey when they pulled up. The boys jabbered with Peter Ott and reached high to pat the two Percherons on the snout. The great animals accommodated the boys by snorting, shaking, and lowering their heads. Peter lifted the boys upon the horses. Drag said, "Let's get down out of here. My butt is as sore as an about to burst boil."

Eliza said, "You must be Wendy. I'm Eliza and this is Shelly. You two are about the same age."

While the girls were chatting, Happy came out and said to Peter Ott, "You'd better get in there Peter, Bull has got some news for you."

Peter Ott said, "Well, are you, Happy? It's nice to see you, Happy. It's been some time, hasn't it?"

Happy laughed, "Oh, I'm sorry, Peter. Of course I'm glad to see you. It's only that Bull—"

Peter said, "I know. I'll get in there right after you give me something to eat and something cool to drink. I also have to look after these critters. Hauling that fat ass Drag up here wasn't easy."

Drag spit. "They didn't even break a sweat."

Happy said, "You don't have to worry about the horses or your things. Just come in. Juanita has enchiladas, tamales, rice, and beans for dinner and they are ready now. I'm so glad to see you again Eliza and what is your name, honey?"

"Shelly is my name, Madam. I'm pleased to meet you too, Mrs. Davis."

"Don't call me, Madam. It has unpleasant connotations."

Eliza, to keep Happy's past secrets, said quickly, "Happy was a school teacher."

Happy gave Eliza that look she had and said, "Well, let's not stand around here gabbing. Chuck is on!"

The ranch house was a large rambling affair on one level. There were two large patios, one on the shady side of the house and one on the south side. Bull joined the party for lunch on the shady side of the house. After hearing Shelly's story, Bull said, "Wendy, wouldn't you like to have a sister?"

Wendy said, "I didn't know Happy, I mean, Mother, was with child. I'm very excited to hear it."

Bull knew that Happy would not be getting pregnant. Of all the women he had know, not one was ever with child by him. He said, "I was thinking of Shelly. She has no folks just like you."

Happy smiled and said, "Bull, you could have discussed—"

Bull said, "Well, you and Shelly and Wendy would have to think it over. I was just asking a question."

Shelly said, "I've enjoyed staying with Eliza but I don't like Denver and the hotel, not that the hotel isn't very nice. I just like to be outdoors. So I'm

going to go back to Durango and see if I can make a go of it there. I could open a café because I know how to run one now."

Bull gave Happy that *now look what you have done* look. He said, "If you decide that is what you want to do, I'll make sure it happens. But why don't you stay up here for a while until the heat dissipates. You're welcome here, girl!"

Happy said, "Yes do that. You can help Juanita in the kitchen just in case you do start that café. Do you know how to cook Mexican?"

Shelly held up her fork, "Not like she does!"

Peter got Shelly aside. Talk to Wendy about her friends in Denver. Have her tell you everything she was thinking when she saw the man she thinks is the killer. She'll talk a lot better to you than to me and I won't get in trouble with Bull."

"What do you mean by that, Peter Ott? Never mind, I know. You are quite the lady's man. Heh, you never even looked at me."

Peter said, "Maybe I did look at you once or twice. Will you talk to her?"

Shelly said, "Well, I've got to get to know her first or she won't tell me anything."

"Okay, I've got to talk to Bull now."

When Peter walked into Bull's office, Bull was opening the windows. "It get damn hot in here in the afternoon. After eating Juanita's cooking, I would just go to sleep. She's bringing in some coffee. Now, Peter Ott, Juanita has a boy friend named Fernando and Fernando carries a big knife with a curved blade and Fernando is very jealous."

"So what?" Peter plopped down on a sofa and put his feet over the sofa arm because it was too short for his length. "Tell Juanita I won't be needing any coffee. I'll be snoozing here."

Juanita brought the coffee in and Peter looked at her closely. He said, "Juanita, haven't we met? Santa Fe, Taos, or some such place. I remember those—"

Bull said, "That's enough, Peter Ott. Juanita, thanks for the coffee."

Juanita, obviously flustered left the room.

"Peter, you can't just let up, can you? You don't know that girl from nothing. She was raised right here on Bart Mason's ranch where her mother cooked."

Peter said, "Oh, that's it. I remember her mother and she look one heck of a lot like her. Where does she sleep?"

"Peter!"

Peter Ott laughed. "Okay, Bull Davis, what is the news?"

"The killer. The Denver police know who it is. They tried to catch him at his house but he rode north out of Denver and alluded a posse they sent after him. He was not seen in Cheyenne or Laramie but he had to go that way. He could have headed into the Mountains until things cool down. I've sent a message to some of the Ute Indians to watch for him and that if they find him and eat him for dinner, I'll feed them when times get hard."

"Since when were the Utes cannibals? And you always feed them when things get tough. Who is the guy anyway?"

Later, Peter looked over Bull's stock and chose a young bay stallion, a gray gelding, and what Bull said was a reliable pack horse. I got that critter when I came down out of the Sierras some years back. Just a colt then. Needed a pack horse because mine was dead tired so I made a trade there."

"I know, Bull. The unconverted wife of a Mormon horse trader who was in jail for polygamy. You seem to forget—"

"Okay, Peter Ott. But she was not his legal wife. He didn't tell her he was a polygamist. She didn't even have to get a divorce from the creep. Had her name changed back. What has this got to do with anything? You've got to find that killer before Happy goes out of her mind. That is one fine animal."

Peter Ott said, "I'll be heading out of here as soon as they get my stuff out here and I can get it on that marvelous pack horse of yours."

Drag came out to the barn and said, "I'm comin' along, Peter Ott."

Bull said, "I need you here, Drag. Peter can handle this." He walked back to the ranch house.

Peter Ott pulled a red bandanna from his saddlebag and tied it around his neck. "You're too old for this, Drag. Stay home and eat some more of that cherry pie that Eliza cooks for you."

Drag didn't look disappointed. Peter was right. He spit in the dirt and said, "You want to take my fifty caliber rifle?"

Peter knew how much Drag loved that old Sharps rifle, the buffalo gun he had used to kill both men and buffalo. He didn't want to offend Drag. He said, "Remember West Texas, Drag? Remember what that rifle did to those poor saps? Thanks, Drag, but I won't be taking your rifle."

"You always were squeamish, Peter Ott. When you get to Wyoming, send me a telegram. I'll tell you what I know."

"Yeah, keep in contact with Harry Silverton at Pinkerton. I'll be riding out of here now, Drag."

Drag said, "If that's the way you want it. You can get bushwhacked following a man. Be careful, Peter Ott."



## Chapter Six

While Peter Ott was riding north, Lester Gorney was riding west.

He thought, *I never would have been found if it wasn't for my own stupidity. I made that old hag of a landlady suspicious.*

The landlady, Mrs. Green, was cleaning his room when she found a pendent and a glove.

Actually, she was suspicious of Lester Gorney, knew he had spent six months in prison, thought he was *up to something* because he seemed *different* when the boarding house guest talked about the murders at supper.

Mrs. Green was actually doing more snooping than cleaning. She found the glove and pendent which were in Lester Gorney's coat pocket hanging in his wardrobe. The glove was taken from Sandra Harper when he had raped and murdered her in the early spring. So was the pendent. Mrs. Green knew the girl and he knew that the glove and pendent were Sandra's. She had seen her wear them to church several times over the winter.

The landlady put everything back where she found them. Then she went to the police.

Later, Lester Gorney sat shivering in a dirt cellar. A bullet had grazed him and it had left a burning sore on his right buttock. He thought, *I damned near got out of there before the police got there. I should have moved faster when I learned she had been snooping in my stuff.*

Gorney had been watching the window of his room in the upper story of the three-story boarding house. He knew Mrs. Green was suspicious so he told her he was going out for some pipe tobacco. Then he watched the window. When she hurriedly left the house, Gorney went to his room and knew that things had been moved around. Then he went to his wardrobe. The edge of the playing card he had put in the door, was not showing. When he opened the doors of the wardrobe, no card fell to the bottom because it was already there.

Gorney put his stuff in a duffel bag and headed down the stairs. When he saw the police coming in the front of the house, he ran back to the kitchen, out the kitchen door, and ran across the backyard to the alley. It was when he was running down the alley that a policeman ordered him to stop. He didn't stop and the policeman fired his revolver. Gorney felt the sting but kept going.

Lester Gorney jumped in the back of an ice wagon. Shivering in the back, the iceman finally came out of the house he was serving, hung the ice tongs on the side of the wagon and drove on down the street. After a short distance, Lester Gorney hopped out of the wagon and ran into a hardware store. He bought a box of 44 caliber shells for his revolver and looked out the window to the street. He couldn't see the police so he walked around to the back of the hardware store and sat on a tree stump thinking about what he should do.

When a delivery man arrived at the back of the store and went inside, Gorney unhitched one of the horses and was ready to ride out of there when he saw the police. He left the horse and hid in a cellar. He stayed there until the wee hours of the next morning. Shivering from his stay in the cold cellar, Gorney longed for his warm room at the boardinghouse but going back there was impossible. He tried to think where he could hide out during the day. He decided to find a building that was not used during the day or was abandoned. He decided that a theater might be a good place if he could sneak in. Approaching the Palace Theater on Blake Street, Gorney saw a worker throwing trash out the door of the theater. He waited for a few minutes, then cautiously opened the door. He hid under the stage until all was quiet late that afternoon. Later, he left the theater for a few minutes to buy something to eat. He had eaten carrots and potatoes in the cellar but now he was hungry. There was a policeman outside the store he planned to visit so he went into a bar and helped himself to the eggs and pickles. The bartender said, "You don't eat if you don't drink, Mister." Gorney gave him money for a beer, quickly drank it and headed back to the theater. There was no show that night and Gorney had a cold but safe night.

In the morning, Lester Gorney counted his money and decided he would be okay if he could get out of Denver. The problem was how to do that. He

thought, *This damned red hair doesn't help.* He went to the dressing room and shaved his head bald. He found a wig amongst the props, decided it would make the cops suspicious, and decided that a hat would serve best. He looked at the clothing available and found a suit that fit him. Finding a Bowler hat, he walked out on the street. Nobody paid any attention to him even though the suit was an English suit not common in Denver. He went back to the theater and decided what he could do next. He counted his money again. He decided to move into a hotel for a day or two. Maybe he could figure out how to get more money so he could get out of town. He decided one of the better hotels would be best. He chose the Rigel Hotel owned by Bull Davis. He made no connection between Bull and himself, nor did he think there would be any connection. Bull Davis was rich and powerful and he was poor and weak.

He checked into the hotel at the same time Peter Ott did. In fact he almost bumped into Peter Ott, a mean and lean cowboy type that looked more like a gunfighter than a cowpuncher. He paid him no mind. In his room, he thought of things he might do. He went to the bar and had conversation with an older woman who after a few hours of drinking and talking invited him up to her room. In bed she said, "You have hardly anything down there but I like you. Nice hands." Would you like to stay the night." Gorney went to the desk and checked out. The clerk said, "Did you mess the bed or anything?" Gorney said that he didn't and the clerk refunded his money.

Gorney thought, *My luck seems to be changing for the good.* He went back to the lady's room and she had ordered supper from the hotel's room service. He ate heartily, mashed potatoes, corn on the cob, and best of all, pork chops. There was cherry pie for dessert. The lady said, "Looks like you were hungry. Must have been all that recent activity." Lester was upset, suspecting she knew something, but she said, "In bed."

Her name was Samantha Hardy. She was widowed and wealthy. She said she was going to Colorado Springs the next day would Lester like to come along. She called him, Harold, because he told her his name was Harold Smithers, the name of one of his boyhood friends who had died at age fourteen when he fell off a horse and cracked his skull on a rock. He knew he would not make a mistake with that name.

To Lester's surprise, the lady owned a home in Colorado Springs. It was a two story mansion in fact. There were several servants that maintained the place. Lester sat in a big lawn chair and drank lemonade while Samantha went shopping. She came home with new clothes for Lester because he said that he had lost his on the train. Lester would stay there until the lady decided to return to Denver, then he would head for California.

## Chapter Seven

Peter Ott rode into Denver and put his horses in the livery owned by Bull Davis near the Rigel Hotel. He walked into the hotel, swerved around a guy in a bowler hat, and checked in. The clerk said, "We didn't expect you, Mr. Ott. Let's see. Yes we have a room that was just cancelled. The gentleman checked in and then right out again."

Peter said, "Why did he do that?"

"He didn't say, Mr. Ott. I didn't ask of course. But I think he is still in the hotel. I saw him go up the stairs. Maybe he is sharing a room with... Well, I shouldn't say that. He hadn't mussed the bed so I gave him his money back."

"With a woman? What woman would that be, Mr. Desk Clerk?"

"Well, I can't say."

"A rich widow?"

"Maybe. I'm not sure."

"Will you send a boy over to the Pinkerton National Detective Agency and tell Henry Silverton to get on over here?"

"Yes, Mr. Ott. Here is your key. Oh, how long will you be staying?"

"Not sure, but not too long. It depends on Henry."

The desk clerk looked at his pocket watch. Pinkerton's might be closed for the day. I'll have my boy check but if they are closed, I'll have him there when the agency opens in the morning.

Ott talked to the bartender before he went to his room.

The next morning, he was reading the Rocky Mountain News when Henry knocked on his hotel room door. Peter Ott answered the door and said, "What you got for me?"

Henry gave a summary of the murders and the witness of a ten-year-old boy that he saw a man ride north out of town.

Henry said, "Like I said, the man rode north out of town when the police were about to arrest him."

"What man would that be, Henry?"

"Well, it was Lester Gorney, of course."

"Who said he rode out of town?"

"The police said it was a boy that told them."

Peter gestured for Henry to sit down. "Want a cold beer?"

"Why, yes. That would be nice on a hot day like this."

Peter said, "What reports have you from the north?"

"None whatsoever. We think he headed for the mountains...stayed off the main roads."

Peter lit a cigar. "Want one?"

Henry shook his head. Peter Ott said, "Does Pinkerton get all of its information from the Rocky Mountain News or is it the other way around?"

Henry Silverton squirmed in his chair. "No! We get our own information. So do they?"

"Henry, what did the boy tell you when you talked to him?"

"I never talked to the boy. No one else at the agency did either. We believed the police report."

"The Rocky Mountain News said the boy saw a man ride out of town. He didn't say, *I saw Lester Gorney ride north out of town*. Some man was riding out of town but who was it. I want to know."

"Yes, Mr. Ott, I'll interview the boy myself." He got up to leave.

"Where you going? You haven't finished your beer. Besides, I want you to check on something for me. There was guy in here dressed in a kind of suit yesterday. One I hadn't see anywhere except in a play I saw once in the theater down the street. He wore a bowler hat. He checked into this hotel and then checked out. The desk clerk refunded his money because he didn't stay overnight. He was with an older woman in the bar and I think he stayed last night with her. That's why he checked out. Now they are both gone. They left this morning."

Henry got up. I think I'll talk to that bartender. He might know who the woman is."

Peter Ott said, "Samantha Hardy is her name. Do you know her?"

"No, but I know who she is. She has a mansion in Colorado Springs. She comes up here to break the boredom. She always stays in this hotel because Bull Davis gives her the room for free. Her husband was a good friend of Bull Davis and they shared business interest."

Peter said, "Would that be Fat Strike Hardy? Bull mentioned him a time or two. Silver I think."

"I never heard him called that but that is the man."

Peter said, "Do you have an office in Colorado Springs?"

"Pinkerton?"

"Yes, Pinkerton! Did you think I was talking about a bank or a—"

"Sorry, Mr. Davis. I'll get right on it." He got up to leave.

"Hold your horses. I want you to find out if that lady is harboring a lover. If the man is still there, have the police arrest him and hold him until you guys can talk to him and make damn sure it is Lester Gorney. If the man is gone, find out where he was headed. Talk to this Mrs. Hardy and to her servants if she has any. I don't want to go on some wild goose chase up north until I know damn well that Lester Gorney went north."

Again, Henry Silverton got up to leave. Peter said, "You never answered my question."

"What question, Mr. Ott?"

Peter said, "Do you have an office in Colorado Springs?"

Henry said, "Oh, yes. We have an agent there. I'll send him a telegram right away."

"Where, Henry?"

"Where what, Mr. Ott?"

"Are you going to send the wire from your office?"

"Yes, right away, Mr. Ott."

"No, Henry. That is not soon enough. Send it from the hotel and keep me informed. I want to get out of here tomorrow if I can."



## Chapter Eight

Lester Gorney woke at the break of dawn. Nervous, he looked out the window of the bedroom. Mrs. Hardy was softly snoring and did not stir. He watched carefully and listened too as the window was open to let in cool air. Then he heard the whinny of a horse, perhaps more of a muffled snort than a whinney, but there was horse out there somewhere. He quietly put on his clothes, took some of Samantha Hardy's jewelry from the vanity and put it into his pocket, then crept down the stairs. When he got to the bottom of the stairs, a maid said, "Need something, Mr. Smithers?"

Startled, he said, "What are you doing up, Ching?"

The diminutive Chinese maid said, "Sometimes Mrs. Hardy have sick. You know. Attack? No breath good. Very scary. She okay? I heard noise."

"Go back to bed, Ching. She is okay."

"You come to bed with me again, Mr. Smithers? Okay if you no scare me one more time. Okay you have tiny little—"

"Just go to bed, Ching. I'm just getting some lemonade."

"Oh, no have lemonade. Mrs. Hardy no like old. Me throw away. I make some now okay."

"Just go back to bed, Ching. I'll be right there."

"Okay, bring magic fingers, Mr. Smithers."

Lester looked in the ice box and pulled out a chicken thigh from supper the night before. He chewed on it as he looked out the kitchen window. Nobody was in site but he knew that someone was out there. He crept out through the garden, his hand on his Colt hidden by his coat jacket. There were horses, one tied to Mrs. Hardy's fence both towards the mountains and another to the east. He was just turning to head south when a voice said, "Put your hands up, Mr. Gorney. You are under arrest."

Lester Gorney said, "Okay, Officer. No problem with me. What do you want?" As he turned to look at the Pinkerton agent, he fired through the coat. The detective fell coughing up blood. His last words were, "I should have been more careful. I thought you only killed children."

A rider came pounding down the road. Lester fired twice. The first shot hit the horse. It reared and tossed the rider on the road. The man did not move.

Lester walked up to the man and saw that his neck was broken. The man was still alive. The man said, "Please don't!" Lester Gorney shot him between the eyes. He then got the other horse and rode south. He thought, *They would still be alive if they weren't so damned nosey.*

Lester rode until he found the railroad tracks. He followed the tracks west until he could hear and then see the train coming from the east. He hid from the train and then saw what he wanted. He said, "Just what I thought. Wrong train. I don't want to go to Leadville." He would have to ride further south to find the rail line to the west. He eventually reached the tracks and turned the horse loose. He hopped a freight car and headed west.

In Flagstaff, he watched out the car door as the train was pulling into the station. He saw a deputy grab a man about his own height and build. He got off the train on the other side of the car and walked into town. He decided to find a room at a boarding house. He asked around and learned that Mrs. Greens Boarding House had the best food and lodging for the money. However, Mrs. Green looked at him suspiciously. He noticed a flyer from Pinkerton on her desk. It had a rough sketch on it that look too much like him. He said, "That looks just like the guy that deputy just grabbed and paraded down the street. I think he got him coming off the train. What is that all about, anyway?"

He could see from her eyes that she didn't believe him. He grabbed her neck and pushed her against the wall. She kicked at his groin but he was wise and had turned his hip to her using it to push her harder to the wall. She tried to scratch him but his grip only tightened. She finally slumped to the floor. Just to be sure, he choked her again until all of life had left her as he could

smell the odor from discharging fetus and urine. He felt a since of glee as he had many times before.

Lester Gorney walked out of town through the pines but following the road. When he saw some good horses in a field he found the owners house and bought a bay gelding and a saddle and bridle. It took almost all of his money. He rode south, using the chuck line when he was hungry. When he got to the Mogollon Rim, he found a sheepherder that would feed him and put up with him just for the company—which meant sleeping with the sheep herder to stay out of the cold and rain. The sheepherder snored and smelled bad and Lester Gorney choked him to death but without the glee. He stripped the sheepherder of his clothing and dropped him over the rim. He figured the wolves, cougars, and bears would eat him to the bone and then the buzzards would do the final polishing. He checked the body every morning and learned that he was right. The bones were scattered in the bushes and the sheepherder was gone for good.

One day a rider stop outside the sheep wagon and yelled, "Heh, in there! Come out!"

Lester Gorney was scared stiff. Through the window he had watched the rider approach the camp. He though, *Looks like a cowhand. He might have know that sheepherder. If he sees that I've replaced him, he might shoot first and ask questions later.* Lester decided to warn him once. "Get out of here. I don't want what you got. Scram!"

The cowboy said, "Your sheep are scattered. You better get your dogs out and go round them off. There's some bad hombres around here and they just as soon run your sheep off the rim as look at 'em. Are you sure you're okay? Not sick? Can't take care of 'em?"

Lester said, "I've been sick but I'm feeling better. I'll take care of them. Thanks! Need chuck?"

The cowboy said, "I've got some lost cattle so I can't stay to talk. See you again maybe."

Lester lowered his pistol. That's when the cowboy turned and fired. The slug whizzed past Lester's ear and barely missed him. Charlie didn't miss. The cowboy was bent over his saddle, blood pumping from his carotid artery. He said, "I knew you were not Juan. He can't speak English." Then he died. Lester led the horse to the Rim, stripped the cowboy of his clothing, and rolled him off the Rim. He kept the cowboy's horse, rifle, and bedroll. There were a few gold nuggets in the saddle bag along with a small bag of gold dust.

Lester decided that the air was getting cold at night and that the snow could come at anytime even though it was only September. At any rate, somebody would be looking for that cowhand. The next morning he would try to find the trail that led down from the Rim.

Lester Gorney started packing for the trip the next day. He now had three good horses and the sheep herder's supplies which included a small telescope. That night, he could see a fire far to the west. He decided to leave at first light the next morning. In the morning, he mounted up and rode off, leaving it up to the dogs whether they followed him off the Rim or stayed at the wagon. They chose staying with the wagon. He thought, *Not even dogs like me.*

Lester kept looking back over his shoulder. He stopped several times and looked back with his telescope. Nothing! When the sun was high in the sky, he stopped again. He could see a rider on a big gray. He had a second riding horse and a packhorse. He figured the rider was a lawman and that he would be tracking him.

On a high knoll, Lester hid the horses in the Ponderosa Pines and took a good rifle position behind a boulder. When the rider was in the open at a range that Lester guessed was about three hundred yards, Lester fired. The rider dismounted and ran for cover. Before he got there, Lester fired again. The rider went down. Lester looked through his telescope. The man was strapping his belt around his leg. Peter thought, *That should keep him busy for a while if he doesn't bleed to death first.*

Lester headed down the Rim Trail and stopped on the chuck line at Star Valley. He spent the next two days in Payson, After resting and selling the two stolen horses along with the cowboys personal gear, Lester headed for Mesa. He wondered, *What are the girls like there?*

## Chapter Nine

Peter Ott lay bleeding on the Mogollon Rim. He had got the bleeding down to a trickle but he was in pain. He said, "Why in the hell did he have to shoot me in the damned leg that got hit in that shootout in Durango? He remembered how he was in his first gunfight working as a deputy. After the shooting, he felt real smug. That's when one of the downed men decided to fire one more time.

A civil war doctor and the sheriff's wife had nursed him back to health. He was still sore when the sheriff sent him to Santa Fe to learn the art of shooting and killing from a professional. One thing he learned there was not to ride into an ambush.

Peter thought said to himself or his horses or to ever would listen, "I should have known better. But I didn't think Lester Gorney would shoot from ambush. I thought he would just run. But I have learned something about that man. He is a killer and he can shoot. Now he's done shot me and I'm bleeding."

Peter Ott decided not to try to get back to Flagstaff. He decided to go to people he knew below the Rim from when he worked as a deputy out of

Globe some years back. He got to the Major's place and the Major got him settled. The major said, "Well, what happened to you, Peter Ott? You usually do the hurtin'."

"I got bushwhacked by a child killer; a rapist that has killed two police officers in Colorado Springs and an old lady in Flagstaff."

The Major said, "Well, my girls have gone off and got married but the cook will take care of you and your leg until you get back to your old mean self. Do you want something for that pain?"

Peter remembered the old days at the Major's place. It was during the big war between the sheep men and the cowmen with a horse trader in between. The Major was in the middle of that war, the Pleasant Valley War, and he warned Peter Ott to stay out of it, which he did.

Peter liked the area and told Bull Davis about the ranching in the area. Bull invested in the area both in farmland and mining. Peter's father had also moved there too to get down out of the cold of Colorado. His father had married again, and despite having been burned out by the Apaches, he had hung on and finished his life there.

Peter stayed with the Major for three weeks. The evenings were not the same as when his daughters were home except for one night when they showed up to see Peter Ott. Then it was like the good old days with feasting, music, dancing, and having fun in general. The Major had not forgotten how to play his violin.

Before Peter left, the Major said that range cowboys had found the sheep wagon and the bones of two men that Lester Gorney had shot. Also there was news from Payson. The cowboy's horse had been identified. The old blacksmith in Payson said that the man who called himself, Helmut Unsiker, spoke with what may have been a German accent and that he said that he was riding to Globe to work in the mines.

Peter Scratched his head. "I figure that was Lester Gorney all right. He could speak some German according to Pinkerton. He used an alias in

Denver and Colorado Springs. I'd bet four bits that he headed down to Mesa. I think he is going West. His landlady in Denver said that he was always saying how much he wanted to go to California."

The Major said, "They got telegraph in Payson now. The sheriff telegraphed Globe and the Globe sheriff telegraphed back that they had been looking not only for Lester Gorney but also for you. They hadn't see either of you."

Peter Ott said, "When I get down to Payson, I'll send Bull a wire so he'll know that I'm still out doing his dirty work."

The Major lit a cigar and said, "Why Payson? It's out of the way."

Peter Ott said, "I guess you're right. Just wanted to see what the place looks like now."

"Looks the same as the last time you saw it."

"Well, I'll follow the Salt River down to Mesa."

The Major said, "We heard that they will be building a dam on the Salt in a few years. Not sure where but the surveyors and engineers are studying the river. The plan on keeping every drop of water here in the territory. Don't shoot any of those guys. We want to be a state someday just like Idaho and Montana."

Peter Ott said, "I don't suppose there is any hope of Utah being a state. Not as long as the Mormons are marrying like they do. They will be surrounded by states but will still be a territory."

"I was up in Snow Flake buying cattle from the Mormons. The leaders up there told me that there will be no more plural marriages. Their president signed a manifesto to that extent. The government was about to take all of the assets of the church and disenfranchise the people. I say that Utah will be a state long before Arizona."

Peter said, "Polygamy is in their blood and some of them will always be doin' it. I doubt that they will be a state before Arizona."

The Major said, "Peter, be careful with that leg of yours. You were lucky but there is some muscle damage. Be glad it wasn't a fifty caliber that hit you. We'd have had to cut that leg off. I think you would be wise just to stay here another week or two."

Peter said, "Okay, a few more days. Then I'm out of here."

A few days later, Peter Ott headed south. At Young, he was joined by a cowboy headed for Globe. They rode through the Sierra Anchas and talked about roping, bull fights, branding, and riding the chuck line. When the cowboy headed east to Globe, Peter followed the Salt south. He saw a few surveyors as the Major had told him. Peter decided where the first dam would be built. He said, "It should make some good fishing" to no one in particular.

He camped with an old prospector who knew how to make good biscuits and peach cobbler from canned peaches. Peter supplied the meat, shooting a couple of rabbits. Peter told the prospector how he had come upon a snake-bit prospector some years back who had died during the night. The prospector said, "I knowed the man. So that was you that tried to save him. What ever happened to his gold?"

In Mesa, Peter learned from the sheriff that no man of Lester Gorney's description had passed through Mesa. He telegraphed Yuma and got this reply: *A man was arrested last week of that description. We don't know his real name because he is lying but he fits the bill. If Ott comes to Yuma, he can have the critter because we sure as hell are sick of him. Tell Ott to hurry because we are holding him on vagrancy instead of what he might have done to a teenage girl here. The girl got away because some of the Mexican girls carry knives. I'm pleased to say that this fellow, who says his name is Harold Smithers has a deep slash on his face from Margarita Gonzales."*

Peter's leg was sore so he decided to stay in Mesa for couple of days. After all, Lester Gorney was locked up where nobody ever escapes. The couple of day became a week because Peter's leg became infected. The doctor in Mesa warned him that he could not only lose his leg but his life if he didn't stay for treatment. That required the doctor to open up the wound and cauterize the infection, a process so painful that even the tough Peter Ott screamed when the hot iron hit the wound.

In a few days, Peter was able to travel again. He joined an Army unit headed for Yuma. He spent part of the journey laying in an army ambulance. An army medic took care of his wound. As they approached Yuma, Peter Ott was filling good again and was back on his horse. When he arrived at the Yuma jail he would be in high spirits, ready to meet the man that had shot him on the Mogollon Rim.

## Chapter Ten

The first think Peter wanted to do when he got to Yuma was to get a bath and some good Mexican food. The army food went from bad to worse as they rode west. They had fresh meat to start, but that situation changed when they ran out of ice. They cooked up all the meat and ate it before it spoiled. From then on the rations were skimpy and distasteful in the real sense of the word.

Peter's saddlebags were covered with dust just like Peter. He had been bitten by ants, wasps, scorpions, and god knows what; and almost by a nasty rattlesnake that crawled under the ambulance during the night and had not cooled off. Well, that snake did become fresh meat.

He stopped by the Yuma jail to tell the warden that he was in town and would be back later to get Lester Gorney or Helmut Unsiker or Harold Smithers or what ever in hell Gorney was calling himself these days.

The warden, a slim leather-faced man said, "The Man is not here. The judge released the bastard. He paid a fine and rode out of here."

Peter said, "My God! Do you know how many people that man has killed. I'm not limping because I stumbled on a rock. He ambushed me on the Rim and I'll be gimpy for the rest of my life."

The warden said, "I told all of that to the judge, but the sweet talkin' SOB told the judge that he had the wrong man, that the girl had misunderstood his intentions when she attacked him, that he was just an actor who was on his way to California."

Peter spit and hit the spittoon. "And the judge believed him?"

"The judge believed him."

"Where is that judge?" asked Peter Ott.

"He goes home for lunch. You might catch him there."

Peter noted the directions and rode to the judge's home. His name was Clinton Barnaby as the sign said in front of his house. The sign said, *Clinton Barnaby, Attorney at Law*. Peter knocked on the door and a short chubby man with smile on his face answered. "Can I help you, Mister. At your service."

Peter did not return the smile. He said, "Are you a judge or an attorney or can't you make up your mind?"

Clinton Barnaby laughed and said, "Just an acting judge until the judge gets better or dies. Too much contact with those prisoners over at the jail, I guess. He's got tuberculosis."

"So, what was Lester's Gorney's fee for you helping him."

The judge stammered.

"He did pay you, didn't he? Why else would you let a murderer like that go free?"

"Now, listen, Young Man—"

"No, you listen! Bull Davis is going to be pissed. I'd suggest you find a new vocation in a new location."

"Bull Davis? What has he got to do with that prisoner? Okay, he dropped by and paid me a fee but not because of any arrangement we had. He was just grateful. I decided that the man was telling the truth, that he was not Lester Gorney. I looked at the poster and it was not a good likeness of the man. I had to let him go."

"And you couldn't wait for me to get here?"

"Nobody told me that Bull Davis was sending a lawman to pick him up. You are a lawman, aren't you."

"I carry a badge if I need it. Did Lester Gorney say where he was heading when he paid you his little visit?"

"California. He's an actor."

"He is that. Did you really think he was heading that way, to California?"

"Not now, I don't believe anything he told me. What have I done?"

"What you've probably done is caused more raping and killing of young girls. If you had been a threat to him, he would have killed you too. I hope you can live with all that."

"My God!"

"You'll probably be out of work, Judge Clinton Barnaby."

The judge in a frenzy went to the sheriff and told him that he had made a big mistake and they had to find Lester Gorney before Bull Davis found him. The sheriff sent out deputies and the report came back that Lester Gorney had headed south into Mexico.

Peter Ott was hot and tired. He decided that he was not going to go tramping off with no information to guide him. He found a small home that he could rent that had thick walls, not quite like the three-foot thick granite of the prison, but they helped keep the place cool at least in the morning hours. He hired a young Mexican woman to drop by and do the cooking and washing for him. Her name was Juanita Mendez. After a few days, she said, "Puedo permanecer aquí con usted si usted quiere, Sr. Peter Ott."

He agreed, and she moved in.

Peter Ott said to Juanita Mendez, *¿Por qué iría él a México? Estuve seguro que él iría a California.*

She smiled and said, *¿Podría ser que él agarrará un barco y la vela a Los Angeles?*

Peter thought, *He's sailing to Los Angeles from the Sea of Cortez.* He asked Juanita, *¿De dónde navegaría él llegar a Los Angeles?*

She answered, *Quizá donde el agua es profunda. Probablemente Guaymas.*

So Peter Ott decided that somewhere along the shores of the Sea of Cortez, Lester Gorney had caught a ship to California. He may have gone as far south as Guaymas but a fishing boat could have taken him to a ship from shallower waters. Peter said *adios* to Juanita and was about to leave when she said, *Amaría ir a Los Ángeles contigo Peter Ott. Tengo deseé siempre ir allí y tengo deseé siempre montar en un tren. ¿Así pues, por qué déjeme aquí? ¿Quién cocinará para ti, algún extranjero? No, me toma contigo. No seré ningún apuro para ti.*

Peter Ott decided that if she wanted to ride the train to Los Angeles and clean and cook for him, that was okay with him. He sent a telegram to Bull Davis and didn't wait for a reply.

Lester Gorney sailed on a freighter out of Guaymas as Juanita had predicted. He had spent a few days fishing and even decided that he might stay in Mexico, but the urge to go to California was overpowering. He thought of warm winters and no snow and a bevy of young girls to please him in every way and there was really only one way they could please him and that was to die.

He loved the sea life and loved to watch it from the ship. There were always dolphins, whales, and even the great Manta Ray. No body bothered him on the ship, nor even talked to him. He spoke no Spanish to speak of and those that spoke English never wasted it on him. He didn't mind. Most tough men did not like him. He didn't know why, but it was instinctive. He was *persona non grata*.

He slept little. At night he would watch the stars. When the moon was bright, he could see sea life at night. He took an interest in the birds but had no book to identify them. At night he would look up at the bulkheads, trying to keep his eyes open so that he would not have hideous memories crowding his mind.

But the nightmares always came. One time it would be his cruel whore of a mother molesting his sister or his brainless father tormenting the both of them at the same time. When he heard his sister cry at night, even in her sleep, He decided to ran away and take is sister with him.

The police caught them the next day, heard their story of abuse, and took them to a judge. The judge had their parents arrested and he and his sister were put into an orphanage. They escaped from the orphanage because they were never safe from molestation from other kids or even the workers who ran the orphanage for the city. He stayed free but his sister was caught. He learned that she went crazy and was sent to an asylum. He found her and they escaped again, this time for good. His sister eventually became a prostitute like her mother and still lived in Denver. still avoiding the police.

*I should have got her and brought her with me.*

He decided that he would send for her when he was settled in California.

## Chapter Eleven

Peter watched the ships coming in from Mexican ports every day. The Pinkerton National Detective Agency was watching California ports too. One morning a telegram from Bull Davis informed Peter that the ship was probably the Santa Gabrielle arriving at the Port of Los Angeles the next morning. A man of Lester Gorney's description had boarded the ship at Guaymas. The ship had no stops so Lester Gorney should still be aboard.

Peter Ott waited for the ship the next morning. The ship didn't come in at the scheduled time so Peter Ott went to the Harbor Master's office to see if he had any information. A clerk, a tall woman, very attractive with glasses, answered his question. She said, "The Gabrielle hit an unknown object off Ensenada. She is having a prop repaired but the sea is rough over that way this morning and the tug is having a hard time. As for the prop, it is on the way by a freight company. I figure that if she has any passengers, which she seldom does, they will disembark at Ensenada and come this way by land."

She gave Peter Ott a how-about-lunch smile.

Peter took up on the look, "Any place to grab something to eat around here?"

She said, "That's where I'm headed. Would you like to join me?"

Peter said, "Only if I'm paying."

"Sounds good to me," she said. Let me get my purse. I don't like to leave my valuables around here as little as they are."

Her name was Elizabeth Bentley. She was from New England, born in Vermont, and she had traveled the world by sea. She was very bright and talked a bit fast for Peter Ott.

As they walked to the café, she said, "I'm talking your head off. What about you?"

"What about me?"

"Well, you are in a suit but somehow I can tell that you hate the thing."

"I'm in disguise."

"You are looking for a man that is on the Gabrielle, right? Who is he and why are you after him?"

"I just wanted to welcome him home."

"You're a lawman in a suit, right?"

"You're too smart, Elizabeth Bentley. I'm working for a man that has an interest in a guy on that ship. I've got a badge in my pocket, if that is what you want to know."

She smiled and said, "And what did this man do, steal a cow?"

"He rapes and kills teenage girls."

"Oh, my god!"

"The man that pays my salary adopted a girl who thinks she saw the man before he killed her friend. My employer is paranoid. He protects his interest."

"His adopted daughter. Noble! May I ask the name of this fine gentleman?"

"Bull Davis."

"Oh!"

Over lunch, Peter Ott asked Elizabeth Bentley, "How much do you know about ports, ships, and importing and exporting stuff?"

"Stuff?"

"Yes, stuff. Whatever Bull Davis has his fingers in. He likes me to check on business opportunities as I do his dirty work— which he use to do for himself before he became so paranoid. Marriage is what did it. He doesn't want to risk his neck any more."

"Your neck is okay?"

"Yep! If you know of a business where Bull Davis could take advantage of a situation, he would be grateful to you."

"To me?"

"Trust me. Bull Davis can be very generous."

She said, "How's the soup?"

The Pinkerton men checked the port at Ensenada and they were there when the ship was towed into port. Lester Gorney slipped by again.

Peter Ott stayed in Los Angeles and waited until the ship was repaired and had sailed from Ensenada to the Port of Los Angeles. On arrival he talked to some of the crew. He decided that Lester Gorney had slipped by the Pinkerton men by dressing as a crew member.

Peter knew that one of the crew members he interviewed was Manuel Colon, a man Pinkerton had put aboard the ship at Ensenada. He was there to get to know the crew, to see if Lester Gorney had left any personal belongings, and to gather any other information that could be useful in the investigation. His name was Manuel Colon.

Manuel Colon was fluent in Spanish and was trusted by the Mexican crew members because he was a Mexican. As a joke, he let Peter Ott interview him. At the end of the interview he gave a wink and slipped a note into Peter's hand.

When Peter disembarked, he read the note. It said, *I'm tired of the ships food. How about lunch?*

Peter looked up and there was Colon saying *goodbye* to the crew. He waited for him to come down the gangplank.

Colon was of average height for a Mexican. He was heavy, maybe one-eighty, but it wasn't fat.

Colon walked right past Peter Ott like he didn't know him. When Peter caught up with him he said, "Really, Colon, were you afraid to blow your cover when your cover didn't mean crap anymore?"

Colon said, "I've got my orders. If those guys knew I was an agent for Pinky, they would tell every body from here to Guaymas. I wouldn't be able to work anymore and I have three kids."

"Not a wife and three kids?"

"I'm away a lot. My wife left my kids with my mother and ran off with my cousin to Veracruz."

"It was nice to share your wife with your family."

"¡Bese mi asno!"

"Did you really mean *kiss my donkey*?"

¡Usted sabe lo que signifíco!

Peter said, "I think I have something special for you, Manuel Colon. Something I brought from Yuma but I don't need anymore."

Manuel looked suspicious. "What would that be, syphilis?"

"Well, maybe not, Manuel."

Manuel said, "Crap! I screwed that up."

Peter laughed. "Well, I've got to pick up a lady if you don't mind her having lunch with us."

"Ladies are always welcome," said Colon. "I know what you have been doing while I've been working my *asno* off on that ship."

"You have such a nasty little mind, Manuel Colon. I said that I have something for you. Her name is Juanita."

"Juanita. I she *hermosa*?"

"You better believe it, Manuel Colon."

After lunch, Manuel said, "I think I know where we might find Señor Gorney."

Peter Ott lit a cigarette and said, "Now, where would that be?"

"One of the crew members told me that he wanted to see the La Brea tar pits."

"Why would he want to do that?"

"Bones. They said he was nuts about dinosaur bones. He said that he heard there were strange bones at La Brea. He thinks that if he can see them and say what they are, that he will become famous. One bone that was found there is said to be from an ancient tiger *con dientes muy grandes*."

"If he becomes famous, he will become dead. He knows that."

"Well, he is still obsessed with old bones. At least that is what the crew told me."

"From what I heard from the crew, he wasn't liked and they did not talk to him all that much."

"Well, at first they talked to him, later they ignored him. They say that he board them to death with his talk. Some of the men thought he was crazy and that he was dangerous too."

Peter Ott puffed on his cigarette and then stepped on it. "They were right about that. I'll tell you what, Manuel, someone has to stay here and keep an eye on Elizabeth and someone has to watch those tar pits at La Brea. Should we flip a coin?"

Peter flipped a coin in the air and said, "You lose, Manuel!"

*"Asno!"*

Manuel went to La Brea and got a job working with the asphalt which was sold locally as a sealant for roofs. He learned that the Indians had used it to seal their canoes. Manuel hated the job. After working all day in the black gunk, he had to spend half the night trying to get the stuff off his hands. He cursed Peter Ott daily. The only think he liked was that, as when he was on the crew of the Gabrielle, he got double pay because Pinkerton paid him a daily fee whether he was working at another job or not.

Peter Ott got a telegram from Bull Davis that Pinkerton thought that Gorney had not stayed in Ensenada for even one night. There was no trace of him in San Diego either. He must have moved on to Los Angeles.

Peter tossed the telegram in the waste basket, then decide to burn it since he was staying with Elizabeth. But he knew where Lester Cortney was. The newspaper had just been delivered and the headline said, *Los Angeles Teenage Girl Raped and Murdered.*

## Chapter Twelve

Peter Ott went to the Los Angeles Police and asked to see the investigating detective on the teenage murder case. He was directed to Theodore Crabtree, a middle aged man with streaks of gray in his hair. He was tall and heavier than Peter Ott but not as big as Bull Davis. He said, "Your name, Mister?"

"Peter Ott."

The detective jotted down the name on a pad. "And how can I help you, Mr. Peter Ott?"

"I'm working on a case for Bull Davis in Colorado. We have the Pinkerton National Detective Agency working on the case too. It involves the murder of teenage girls, Detective Theodore Crabtree."

The detective laughed. "You can call me, Ted, Peter Ott."

"Well, Ted, we've been chasing this guy from hell to breakfast. We lost him in Mexico but we knew that he had boarded a ship for Los Angeles. The ship lost a propeller and had to be towed into Ensenada for repairs. That's when we lost him again."

"So what have you been doing?"

"We didn't have much. We've got a man over at the La Brea tar pits. The crew of the ship said that he wanted to go there and become famous by explaining some old bones that seem to pop up in the tar."

"Is the man you are chasing, Lester Gorney?"

"Yes. Did the Denver Police tell you about the man."

"Yes, we had it on file. So you think it is the same man?"

"That depends. Can you tell me how the girl was murdered and if anything was missing from her belongings?"

Peter Ott leaned forward, his blue eyes squinting in the sun from the window. He said, "She was strangled. She was raped but there was little evidence of the rape because of only minor penetration. The man has a penis the size—"

"It must be the man. Do you want to see the body? I was going to take a look at it again when you came in."

"As they walked to the morgue, Detective Crabtree said, "What's it like to work for Bull Davis. He is very rich and very famous. How did he get so rich?"

Peter Ott explained Bull Davis.

At the morgue, the girl was laid out stark naked on a table. She was not over fourteen. Her eyes were brown with only a thin trace of an eyelash as if she had over-trimmed them. Her hair was long and brown. Her mouth was twisted a bit as if in pain. Her breasts were what Peter Ott thought were medium in size for a fourteen-year-old. One had been bitten hard. There was the faint odor of urine and feces. Her left foot was bruised as if the assailant had stepped on it hard. Looking at the face again, there was a trace of blood in her nose and in her eyes were bloodshot. The strangulation looked like it had come from behind with a perhaps a leather strap, not a rope. The detective asked her private parts be shown. There was little sign of rape but the examiner said that she was raped and that he could prove it. He showed some hairs from the assailant. He also showed them semen under a microscope.

After discussing what they saw, Peter said, "Where are her belongings?"

The attendant had them displayed on another table. Detective Crabtree said, "Her foot was stepped on all right. Look at the shoe."

Peter said, "Who is she?"

The detective said, "I wish we knew. But we know who killed her, thanks to you, Peter Ott."

A police officer came into the morgue and said, "We have a hysterical woman out here. She says her daughter didn't come home last night and that she is a good girl."

Detective said, "Oh, shit. Can you come back later, Peter Ott? I've got to take care of this."

Peter Ott said, "Can you meet me at Elysian Park?"

"It's a big place. I'll get you a policeman to give you a ride over there."

"Great!"

The policeman assigned was Sergeant Whitley. He said, "We can take a buggy or we can take a couple of horses. Any preference?"

Peter said, "Your choice, Sergeant."

They took a buggy drawn by a black mare. The sergeant said, "Elysian may mean *paradise* but it was not for that poor child."

There were several mounted policemen in the park. They had no witnesses. Whatever evidence was at the crime scene had been taken to police headquarters. Detective Crabtree arrived and said the hysterical woman was not the girl's mother. The girl was still unidentified.

Detective Crabtree said, "She could have been living here alone. Some girls run away even at fourteen or fifteen years old. They come here because of the climate."

Sergeant Whitley said, "Maybe she was from the Midwest, moving here with her rich parents but not going home with them. We have several reports on missing daughters from Hollywood where those rich

Midwesterners have their winter mansions. We can look at the photographs."

Detective Crabtree said, "Good idea. We don't want to be searching for this girl's parents if they are not here."

That evening, Peter Ott found Elizabeth leaving her office. He said, "I got a telegraph from Bull Davis. He wants you to work for him. Go to that bank of yours and you will find that he sent you enough money to set up an office here in Los Angeles. If you take the money, you are working for Bull Davis. I would think twice before you do that."

"I'm going nowhere here, Peter. I'm taking the money. All I have to do is find a building where I can set up an office."

"You, won't have to do that, Elizabeth. Bull bought a building that I suggested. That is where you will set up your office. There is an apartment in the building if you want to move in there. No rent."

"Wow! I think I like that Bull Davis all ready."

"Listen, Elizabeth, if you take that apartment you will be right next to your work. Bull knows that. He doesn't give without receiving several fold. That is his theory on getting rich. You will be working day and night."

"I like to work. I'm moving in. I'm going to call it *Import / Export Associates*."

"Well, you are wrong all ready. The sign is up! It's *Rigel Shipping, Inc., Importers and Exporters*."

She smiled and said, shaking her long auburn hair, "One more thing I don't have to think about."

The next day, Peter went to La Brea to talk to Manuel. Manuel was very excited and said, "*Pienso que eso asesinando a violador de chicas adolescentes está aquí.*"

"¿Dónde está él?"

Manuel pointed to a man kneeling on a board digging down into the tar. Peter Ott thought, *He's digging for a bone. I guess I'll give him a hand or rather, a foot.* Peter walked slowly upon Lester Gorney and kicked him in the rump as hard as he could. Gorney went flying into the tar. He thrashed and tried to get out but Peter wouldn't let him. Manuel came up and Peter said, "Is anyone looking?" Manuel said, "Just us chickens." Peter put his foot on Gorney's head and pushed it down under the tar. Manuel said, "You're one mean *bastardo*, Peter Ott."

Peter said, "One bad deed deserves another."

The murdered girl in Los Angeles was not identified. She was buried in style and the funeral was well attended with the Rigel Shipping, Inc., Importers and Exporters paying all cost.

Juanita liked Manuel Colon. They were married and the two of them and the kids moved to manage one of Bull's ranch operations.

Elizabeth Bentley loved working for Bull Davis. She loved sailing the seas and made a big money for Bull Davis with her always getting her cut. She would like to have married Peter Ott but she knew she could never break him into her life style. They stayed friends.

Henry Silverton never made detective but he was good at detailed work at a desk. He was promoted to office manager. He is still at Pinkerton to this day.

Peter had always wanted Rigel to buy his Dad's ranch in Durango. He didn't want to live there but he wanted to be able to go there and find a place to sleep. Bull's bank took care of the details. The owner decided to sell for the same reason that Peter Ott's dad had, he wanted to get out of the cold. Bull offered to trade him a ranch further south but the man decided to take the money.

That is where Manuel and Juanita Colon raised Manuel's kids plus two of their own.

Peter Ott did Bull's bidding until he got tired of doing it. The last time he was heard from he was in Buenos Aires. Elizabeth Bentley had visited him there.

The End

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