

LOBO

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In a review.

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This is a story of a young man who grew up on a farm in southern Indiana in the late 1800s. He had a dream of following in his father's footsteps as a lawman.

But when the time came to live his dream, and a gang of killers hung his deputy and best friend. Taking the law into his own hands, he found being a lawman to be more difficult than he had thought.

After the town took his badge he turned in anger to gun fighting, selling his gun to anyone who would pay the price.

Tom Masters stopped his wagon in front of the farmhouse in southern Indiana. He told his wife Melissa, "This is where I was born, and this is where our children will be born."

His father had died five years earlier and left the farm to him. He had been U.S. Marshall in Deadwood for fifteen years.

After he and Melissa were married, he decided to quit being a lawman and go back to farming again. They had a son and named him Thomas Masters Jr.

Eighteen years later.

LOBO

CHAPTER ONE

Becoming a man

His name was Thomas Masters Jr; they called him Tom for short. He was born on a farm in Southern Indiana and had lived there all of his life.

His complexion was very dark, tanned from the long hours in the sun. He had coal black hair that hung down just past his collar. He had worked the farm with his dad as long as he could remember. He was six foot tall and very well built from the hard work on the farm.

He had a colt 45 hanging on his right hip as though it were a part of his body. The holster and belt was all black except for the head of a wolf on the side of the holster which was white, and the belt buckle was silver. The gun was chrome plated and had pearl handles. His dad had given it to him when he turned twelve years old. He had been practicing his fast draw at least four hours a day ever since then.

On his left side was a Bowie knife. It hung at an angle, with the handle pointing toward his right shoulder. This allowed him to pull and throw it with his right hand with deadly speed. The scabbard was also black and had the wolf's head on it. And the knife also had a pearl handle.

Today was his birthday he was 18 years old. He had sat five bottles on a log about 30 feet away, At a speed that was unbelievable, his hand fell upon the gun at his side, it appeared in his hand as if by magic, he fired five shots in the blink of an eye and all five bottles burst into a thousand pieces. He smiled; as if very pleased with his performance. He thought, I am the fastest gun there is, no one can be as fast as me. He had heard about Billy The Kid, Doc Holliday, Johnny Ringo, and The Sundance Kid. He thought, I could out draw any one of them.

All of his life his Father had told him stories about his years as a lawman. He had killed Black Bart in a showdown on the street of Deadwood where he was U.S. Marshall.

It had been Tom's dream to be the fastest gun ever, and he wanted to be a lawman just like his father . He was 18 years old, but he looked at least three or four years older. Now he

was a man, he had waited for this day for a long time. Now he would fulfill his dream. He would be leaving soon to start a life of his own.

His father had told him that he could not wear his gun until he was eighteen years old. Now he is eighteen and he will wear his gun when he rides into town. He turned and mounted his horse, it was an Appaloosa. It was three years old and Tom had raised him from a colt. His father had given him the horse and saddle. The saddle and bridle were black with silver buckles which matched his gun belt.

When his father was a young man and had been a U.S. Marshall in Deadwood, he had the same gun and holster and used the same saddle. He had packed them away and saved them all these years. Tom had spent all of his spare time for the last two weeks cleaning and waxing his saddle ,bridle and holster. He wanted them to be perfect for his ride into town.

For his birthday Tom's mother bought him a new shirt, vest, pants, and boots, all black. He went back to the house, got his new clothes and went to the creek to take a bath.

After bathing he put on his new clothes, strapped on his gun. He had never worn a hat. Then he went back to the house and looked into the mirror. He thought, I need something that stands out.

He looked through his father's drawer and found a white bandanna and tied it around his neck. He then placed a sleeve garter on his left arm just above his elbow. He had seen a picture of his dad when he was young. He had dressed the same way except for the white bandanna, and his father had worn a hat. Looking in the mirror again, he smiled and said, "That's much better". Telling his dad and mother he would be back later, he then mounted his horse and rode off to town.

CHAPTER TWO

The Gunfighter

As he rode into town he could feel the people's eyes on him, they had never seen him dress this way or wear a gun before. It was a new experience for him, and he liked it.

He was through being Tom Master's jr. the farm boy, now he hoped that someday soon he would be Tom Masters the law man. He stopped in front of the saloon, got off of his horse and tied it to the hitching rail and went inside. He stopped just inside the swinging doors, looked around the room. There were three men at the bar, and two more at a table in the corner. He walked up to the bar, put a nickel on the bar and said, "Bartender give me a beer." The bartender walked over and said, "Tom, does your Daddy know you are here"? Tom replied "I'm 18 years old, I'm a man, and I can do what I want.

He pulled a bag of tobacco and papers from his vest pocket, rolled himself a cigarette, took a match from another pocket and lit it. He blew out the match and then took a drink of his beer.

He heard laughter coming from the table in the corner where two men sat drinking. He could see them in the mirror, as they would say something to one another, then turn their heads and look his way and laugh.

He saw one of the men stand up, then walk over to the bar. The man told the bartender to give him two shots of whiskey. He picked up the two shots and walked over to Tom, he sat one down in front of him, then he said, "You say you are a man, well Here is a man's drink."

Tom took another draw from his cigarette, dropped it on the floor and stepped on it. He then laid his finger against the side of the shot glass, moved it back over in front of the man and said, "No thanks, I like beer."

The man said, "Are you refusing my offer to buy you a drink?" Tom answered, "You can buy me a beer, I don't drink whisky. "

The man said, "You said you were a man, but you won't drink a man's drink, I think you are just a wet nosed punk kid, and you have the smell of a sodbuster. "

Then he stepped back about ten feet from Tom and put his hand down to his side. He then said. “Do you know how to use that fancy gun sod buster?” Tom turned to face the man and put his hand down to his side, “Yes, he said I’m the best there is and if you force me to, I will kill you.” At this time Tom saw the other man out of the corner of his eye, as he stood up he faced him also.

At that time the bartender said, “Come on Reed, he’s just a kid.”

The man told the bartender to shut his mouth, then said, “He said he was a man, so lets find out.” Then the man asked Tom, What name will they put on your tombstone, or do we just put stinking sodbuster?”

“My name is Tom Masters, but worry about your own tombstone.” The man said, “Do you know who I am?” Tom replied, “Yes, You’re a man with a big mouth who talks too much.”

This angered the Man, he went for his gun; it had not even come half way out of its holster when Tom put two bullets through his heart.

The man was dead before he hit the floor. The other man had went for his gun also, he had just cleared his holster when all in one motion tom turned, fanning the hammer of his forty five with his left hand putting two bullets into the man's chest. The impact of the bullets knocked him over the table and into the corner.

The Bartender said, "Damn, I didn't know you could even use a gun, that was the fastest draw I have ever seen, they didn't have a chance."

Then he asks, do you know who these men were?

"No, I don't," said Tom while reloading his gun. "They didn't give their names."

That was Reed Wilson and his brother Hardy, said the bartender. Reed has killed ten men in gunfights and he was the fastest gun around, except maybe for Ringo.

Tom said, "I have heard of Reed Wilson, and Ringo too".

The bartender remarked, "Yes, Ringo is a well-known gunfighter in these parts, and he is faster on the draw than

either one of these two were.” And even worse, these two were friends of his”. Tom said, “Well you can tell Ringo when you see him That Tom Masters Is the fastest gun there is anywhere. “

The bartender said, “Son let me tell you something, no matter how fast you are, there is always someone that is a little faster.” Tom just looked at the bartender and smiled and said, “In every game there has to be a winner, I am the fastest gun there is, there is nobody faster than me, and some day everyone will know who I am.”

CHAPTER THREE

Tom leaves home

As he rode back to the farm, he thought about what had just happened. He had just killed his first two men. It had not affected him like he thought it would. There had been no fear; the thought of losing had not entered his mind. He was experiencing feelings that he had never felt before. And he was enjoying every minute of it.

After all Reed had started a fight with him, and had he not also killed ten other men? And he had to kill the other man to keep from being killed, and he felt no remorse for what he had just done, it had been as if he had no control over his gun hand.

When he got home, he told his dad and mother what had happened.

Then he told them, "I will be leaving soon". The word will spread about what happened in town today.

There will be fast guns from all over coming here to challenge me to face them. I will tell them in town that I am leaving so nobody will come here looking for me.

His mother asked, “Where will you go?” Tom replied, “I am going west, I think first I will go to Dodge City. His dad said, I knew this day was coming but I thought it might be a couple of years, what will you do? ”? “I want to be a lawman like you were ;Said Tom.”

His dad took him aside and told him to always protect his back.

He said, Most outlaws will try to bush whack you from behind because they are cowards. And also try to find a good lawman to work for to start with. He also told him many other things to better prepare him for what he was about to venture into.

About two weeks had passed and Tom decided it was time to leave. He fixed a bedroll and supplies, got what money he had saved; it came to about forty five dollars. That would be enough to do him until he got a job. So he said farewell to his mother and dad and started west.

He thought of a time when he was ten years old, his dad had taken him to Dodge City with him. He thought that will be a good place to start looking for work. He did not know what

kind of work he would do. He hoped he could find a job as a lawman somewhere.

One thing is for sure; he never wanted to be a farmer again.

CHAPTER FOUR

Tom meets a friend

In the morning of the second day, Tom came to a little town. It wasn't much of a place, just a saloon, a store and a blacksmith shop. After tying his horse to the hitching rail, Tom went into the saloon to get a drink. He went to the bar and ordered himself a beer, then went to a table and sat down with his back to the wall. He remembered his dad telling him to always protect his back.

Tom had only been there a few minutes when another man walked in. He looked to be about 25 to 30 years old. He had on a tan Stetson hat, a tan shirt, blue jeans and worn out boots. He wore his holster high on his right hip with a 45 in it. He looked like he had been on the trail for a long time. He had a mustache, but needed a shave. He went to the bar and ordered a beer, took a long drink, wiped his mouth on the sleeve of his jacket and then looked around the room. When he saw Tom, he finished his beer, and then ordered another

one and walked over to Tom's table. He said, "Would you care for some conversation friend?"

"Sit down!", Replied Tom.

The man pulled out a chair and sat down.

He said, "My name is Will Curry."

"I'm Tom Masters". Said Tom.

Will asked, "Where are you headed?"

Tom answered, "Dodge city. "

**Are you going there for the big fast draw contest? Will asked.
"**

What fast draw contest?" asked Tom.

Will replied, "They have a fast draw contest there every year at this time, it only pays for first place, the winner gets one

thousand dollars. Tom said, “I didn’t know about it but it looks like that is where I am headed.”

“Are you going to enter the contest,” asked Tom?

Will answered, “Hell No I’m not near fast enough to win there, I just like to watch, and they have fast guns from all over the world”.

“When does it start,” asked Tom?

Will said, “It doesn’t start for two weeks yet”.

Then he asked, “ Do you mind if we ride together?”

Tom said, “It’s a free country.”

Will replied, “Thanks.”

Tom said, “I will be leaving after I get some supplies at the store, you must have your own supplies for the trip. I’m ready when you are, I have supplies, but I just want to get a bath and a shave,” said Will.

That night, just before dark they had stopped and made camp for the night. Tom had noticed that Will kept looking behind them. “ Are you running from the law, ” Tom asked?

Will replied, “No, not from the law.” Tom asked, “ Who are you running from?” I think I should know if you are going to ride with me. Will answered, “Yes, I guess you’re right.”

“There are three men after me; they say I killed a friend of theirs.” And if the truth is known, I guess I did. But it was a fair fight; I have never killed a man that didn’t draw on me first. “

The next morning, they had just finished their coffee and put the fire out. They saw three men coming down the road.

Will said, “Those are the men that are after me, one calls himself Ringo, he is very fast on the draw”.

Tom replied, “Might as well settle it right here Will, I will back you up. ” Will said, “Thanks, but it’s not your fight.” Tom answered, “It’s O K, I have been wanting to meet up with Ringo anyway.”

The three men rode up to them and stopped. One of the men moved ahead a few feet, He sat very tall in the saddle and he also wore black shirt pants and hat.

He had on a black leather vest and had a silver band on his hat, and he wore two guns. He looked at Tom for a moment and said nothing, and then he turned his head and looked at Will and said. “Hello Will, It was not very sociable of you to leave town so suddenly without saying good by. “

Will said, “Well Ringo, I just didn’t feel very sociable at the time.”

Ringo said “you did a bad thing, the man you killed was a friend of mine.” Will replied, “I’m sorry Ringo, but he drew on me first.”

At that time Tom cut in, “Ringo, Are you the one I have heard so much about?”

Ringo turned his attention back to Tom and said, “I’m the only Ringo I know”. Tom was smiling, “Are you really as fast as they say you are?” he asked.

Ringo smiled and said, “I’m Johnny Ringo, I have killed 22 men, what have you heard about me?”

Tom's smile went away and his look was very serious, then He replied, "I heard that most of them were shot in the back?"

Ringo was stunned for a moment, and then he said, "What are you saying?" Tom replied, "I'm saying that your reputation is a lie and you are a back shooter."

Ringo asked, "Who are you?"

"Tom answered, "My name is Tom Masters, and I think you are at the end of your trail. "

Ringo asked, "Did you kill Reed Wilson?"

"Yes," said Tom, "and his brother also. "Ringo said, "They were also friends of mine."

Tom replied, "You seem to be losing a lot of friends lately, but I have a feeling that you will be joining them real soon."

Then he looked at the other two men. One of them was just a little overweight; he looked to be about thirty years old. The third one looked like he could be half Indian, but a few years

younger than the other one and very slim. Neither of them dressed near as good as Ringo.

Tom said, “If you two don’t want to join Ringo’s list of lost friends, you will turn your horses around and get out of here, you can save yourself but Ringo is a dead man.”

Ringo said, “You sound real sure of yourself.”

Tom said, “I am the fastest gun there is anywhere.”

At that time Ringo asked, “Will you let me get off of my horse?”

“Do what you want,” replied Tom.

Ringo stepped off of his horse, drawing his gun as he got off. The other two men went for their guns also, ringo slapped His horse. As the horse jumped, Tom drew his gun and placed a bullet right over the saddle and under his hat brim hitting Ringo right in his left eye.

Fanning the hammer of his gun with his left hand Tom fired two more shots, and the other two men fell to the ground.

Will said, “Damn, I thought I was fast, but I didn’t even get a chance to draw my gun, you are going to be hard to beat in that contest.”

Ringo’s hat was laying on the ground next to him, Tom walked over reached down and picked it up and tried it on, it fit.

He said to Will, “He won’t be needing this where he’s going. “Will laughed.

Tom took Ringo’s boots off and gave them to will and told him to put them on.

Will said, “I guess I need them more than he does. “

They tied the bodies on their horses and turned them over to the sheriff in the next town. One of the men had a five hundred dollar reward on him. Tom and Will split the money between them.

Tom told Will, “Well you won’t have to worry about them anymore.” Will said, “I’m not going to miss them a bit.”

Then they went on their way to Dodge City. That evening as it begin to get dark, They came upon two men camping beside the rode. As they rode up one of the men stood up and greeted them.

He said “Good evening.”

Tom said, “Howdy, my name is Tom Masters and this is Will Curry. We were just looking for a place to stop for the night, we are on our way to Dodge. “

The man said, “I’m Wyatt Erpp, this is Doc Holliday, and we’re headed for Dodge also.”

You are welcome to share our camp if you like. Thank you said Tom, “It would be an honor, and I have heard a lot about both of you

Doc said, “Don’t believe everything you hear Son. “

As they sit down by the fire, Wyatt said, “Tom Masters, I know that name from somewhere, do I know you. “

Tom said, “No, you don’t know me but, My Father was a U.S. Marshal In deadwood about twenty years ago. “

Wyatt said, could be, I knew I had heard the name before. “

Will spoke up and said, “You will hear a lot more of that name as soon as he wins that fast draw contest in Dodge. “

**Then Doc said, “Are you that sure he is going to win? “
yes, said will, He is the fastest gun there is anywhere. “**

Then Doc said, Well Wyatt, I guess there is no use in us even entering that contest. “

Wyatt said it sounds like it, you might be right Doc. “

Then Will told them all about Ringo and the other two men.

Doc spoke up, “I thought that looked like Ringo’s hat, He was pretty fast, but I always thought it would be me that would have to kill him. “

Wyatt said, “I’ll tell you something Tom, The life of a gunfighter is not a good one.”

Tom answered, I don’t want to be a gunfighter; I want to be a lawman.”

Doc spoke up and said, “Hell son, that’s even worse than being a gunslinger. ”They all laughed.

The next morning they all broke camp and continued their journey to Dodge City. That afternoon as they rode along talking, they saw a stage coming down the road at a fast pace, it had no driver. When it passed them they took off after it, Will caught it and brought it to a stop. There were four people in it, two men and two women.

Wyatt told them that he was a U.S. Marshal, and asks them what had happened to the driver.

They told him they were held up and the driver was shot. Wyatt asks the men if one of them could drive the stage. One of them said he could. Wyatt told the man to take the stage on into the next town and tell the sheriff that a U.S Marshal is going after the robbers.

After the stage left them, Wyatt turned to the others and said, “Do you want to be my deputies for awhile? “They all agreed to do so. The people had told them where the stage was held up. It was about three miles to where they found the driver laying in the road.

They stopped and saw that he was dead and moved him out of the road. And then picked up the trail of the ones that did it. They followed the trail until it got to dark to see the tracks. Wyatt told the others to make camp and wait for him there, and then he went off into the dark.

Two hours later he came back and told them that the men they were looking for was about four miles away in the next bally. They rode their horses until Wyatt told them to stop. There they tied the horses and continued on foot.

The men had built a campfire and was dividing the money. Wyatt told Tom and will to stay where they were, and then he and Doc circled around to the other side.

When they got there, Wyatt yelled out, “This is Wyatt Erp U.S Marcel, Don’t anybody move you are surrounded. “

The men in the camp all went for their guns; it was their last mistake. When the shooting stopped all of them was dead. They tied the bodies on their horses and then picked up the drivers body and took them and the money into the next town and turned them over the sheriff there. When they finished at the sheriff's office, Doc said Well Wyatt, I need a drink."

Wyatt said, "Hell Doc, you always need a drink. "

They all went into the saloon. There were three men at a table playing poker. Doc went to the bar and got him a bottle, then walked to the table where the men were playing poker. He said, "Gentleman may I join the game?" They told him to sit down. Wyatt said, "Well fellows, if you want to ride with us, you had better make yourselves comfortable, it looks like we will be around for awhile.

While Doc was giving the three men a lesson at poker, the rest of them went and got something to eat. By the time they got back the game had ended.

Wyatt said, "What happened Doc? "

Doc said, “Hell I don’t know, as soon as I said my name they got up and left. “They spent the night at the hotel, and then the next morning they went on they’re way to dodge City. Just before they got their Doc ask Wyatt, “Do you know the Marcel in Dodge? “

Wyatt said, “I don’t know him personally, but I think his name is Matt something and I hear he is a good man. “

Wyatt and Doc went on into town and Tom and will set up camp just outside of town.

CHAPTER FIVE

Liz Ann

The next day they broke camp and went into town and signed up for the contest. There was a one hundred dollar entry fee. Tom said to Will, “It’s a good thing we got that reward.” Then Will said, “I’ll see you around Tom, good luck in the contest.” Tom remarked, “Luck has nothing to do with it.”

Tom went into the saloon, got him a beer and sat down at a table.

It was only about nine A.M. and the place was empty except for Tom, the bartender and a very pretty young saloon girl. She was about five feet six inches tall; she had long blond hair and was very well built. She had on a pink dress that hung to the floor.

Tom thought, she is without a doubt the most beautiful girl he had ever seen in his life. When she saw tom sit down, she walked over to his table

She said, “Hi handsome,”

Tom said, “Hi.” Would you like me to sit with you and talk awhile?

Tom could not believe she wanted to talk to him. He said, “Yes, he said, laying some money on the table, get us a drink and please sit down.” The girl got them another drink and sat down, and then she said, “My name is Liz Ann, what is yours?”

He said, “My name is Tom Masters. ”

She asked him, “ Are you here for the contest?”

Tom replied, “Yes. ”

She said, “ You must be real fast, Do you think you will win?”

Tom said, “Yes, There is nobody faster than me. ”

Then He said, “ How old are you and why do you work here?”

She answered, “I am seventeen, my parents died of the flu two years ago, I have to work somewhere to make a living.” I just talk to the customers and sing a little. “He said, “You are very beautiful, Are you a good singer?”

She answered, “Yes, there is no one better than I, and then she smiled at him.”

She asked, “ Have you ever killed anyone with that gun?”

Tom said, “Yes.”

“How many?” She asked .

Tom answered, “Five men, but they all drew on me first.”

She said, “All at once?”

Tom said, “Not all at once.” She asked, Who were they?” Tom answered, “One was called Ringo, and two others that he rode with that I do not know.” One of them , I think was called

Cherokee Joe, I don't know the other ones name. The other two were the Wilson Brothers.

Surprised, Liz Ann said, "Ringo is dead? Is that his hat?"

Tom said, yes it is, I didn't figure he needed it anymore.

She said, you must be fast if you beat Ringo, he was very fast?

And Cherokee Jo wasn't slow either. "

Tom said, "They drew first so I had to kill them." " Why, he asked, Did you know them?" Liz Ann said, "Yes, they came in here sometimes, they were very rude, I hated them, I am not sorry that they are dead."

Tom didn't ask her reason, He smiled and said, "Well they won't be coming back anymore."

Tom took the hat off of his head and put it on her head.

He said, you keep it, I don't like a hat anyway. "They both laughed.

They talked for at least two hours, then the place started filling up, Liz Ann said, “I have to sing a song and mingle with the other customers now.”

Would you like to come to my house for dinner tonight?

Tom said, “ Yes I would.”

Liz Ann said, “ Take the south road about one half mile, there is a farm house, that’s where I live, be there about six.” “Tom finished his beer and listened to Liz Ann sing her song. He thought, she is very good.

Then he got up and walked out, got on his horse and rode out of town. He found a good place and started practicing his fast draw and target shooting.

It was about five o’clock when Tom rode up to the farmhouse. Liz Ann was cooking but she saw him come riding up. She came to the door and said, “Your early, but that’s o k, I wasn’t sure you would even come.”

Tom said, “I told you I would be here, I just didn’t want to be late.”

Liz ann. told him, “There is hay in the barn for your horse if you want to feed him.”

Tom took his horse to the barn and took the saddle off, put him in a stall and fed him.

Then he went to the house where Liz Ann was.

He asked her if she lived there alone. She said yes, she had since her parents had died.

He saw Ringo’s hat hanging on the wall.

She saw him looking at it and said, “I will keep it there to remind me that he is dead.

They sat down and ate supper; she was a very good cook.

After supper she gave him more coffee then told him to go sit on the porch while she cleaned the kitchen. After a while she came out and sat with him and they talked for a long time.

Then Tom said, “Well it’s getting late, do you mind if I sleep in your barn?”

Liz Ann said, “You can stay if you like, but why sleep in the barn, Do you like your horse that much?”

Tom was stunned, he didn’t know what to say.

Then he thought, how could I be so cool in a gunfight, and such a damn nervous wreck just talking to this lovely young lady?

His voice was shakey but he managed to get the words out.

I will be leaving as soon as the contest is over.

Smiling at him She said, “Yes I thought you might.”

Then she took him by the hand and led him to a darkened bedroom. The first of many nights with Liz Ann was something Tom would never forget. He had always taken charge of every situation in his life, but at that moment Liz Ann was in complete control. He had never been with a woman before. It was far beyond his imagination.

CHAPTER SIX

The fast draw contest

Tom had just got up and Liz Ann was cooking breakfast. Will rode up and yelled at Tom. Tom opened the door and told him to come in and eat some breakfast. Will got off his horse and came inside.

Will said, “Today is the beginning of the fast draw contest.”

Tom asked, “How do they judge how fast you are?”

Will answered, “They have a new kind of clock that can tell, I don’t know how it works.”

After eating they all went into town. The town was full of people that were either competing in, or watching the fast draw contest.

There was a booth sit up to bet on who you thought would win. Tom counted his money, he had a little over two hundred and thirty dollars left. He bet two hundred dollars on himself to win the contest. No one had ever heard of him, so the odds were twenty to one against him. He thought, that will give me four thousand dollars when I win this contest.

There was a board with all who were in the contest. Tom went up and started reading the names. He saw Wyatt Erp and Doc Holidays name. Then he looked on down the list. There was Bat Masterson, and The Sundance Kid. Sundance had won last years contest. He even saw Calamity Jane's name there. He was surprised to see a woman on the list, but she was a special kind of woman. There was a few others that he recognized, and many that he didn't. He even saw Ringo's name and he thought, well, Ringo wouldn't make it.

Tom's number was 21 on the list; Liz Ann was standing next to him. Finally it came his turn. He walked up to the line, he had to draw and hit four targets about the size of a silver dollar from twenty-five feet away. The fastest time so far was 1.2 seconds, put in by The Sundance Kid. The bell rang, Tom's hand moved with lightning speed. Each bullet found its mark. When the fourth target was hit and the clock stopped, nobody could believe what they were seeing. It read 1.2 seconds also, he was tied with the Sundance Kid.

That afternoon Tom and the Sundance Kid had to break the tie.

Sundance went first, his draw was very fast but one of his shots missed a target and he had to take five shots. His time was one point four seconds.

Tom said, “Too bad Kid, but you gave it a good try.” Sundance said, “Your first try was just luck, you can’t do it again.”

Tom stepped to the line, the bell ring, with almost the same speed as before tom hit his mark all four times. His time was one point three seconds.

Three days later when the contest was over, Tom was declared the winner and received a belt buckle that had his name on it, under his name was a replica of a colt 45. And he got one thousand dollars cash. With the money that he won on the bet he had five thousand dollars. He went to the post office, wrote his father a letter telling them what he had done, and sent them two thousand dollars. Then he went and put two thousand dollars in the bank.

That night the saloon was full. Tom gave the bartender a hundred dollar bill and told him to buy the drinks until it was gone.

During the night there were three shootouts, two men died and one was wounded.

Tom and Will were in the saloon at a table playing poker. At the table with them was Doc Holliday, The Sundance Kid and Bat Masterson. Liz Ann was sitting behind Tom.

After several hours had passed, Tom was well ahead in his winnings and The Sundance Kid was the big loser.

Tom had just won a good pot with four jacks. As he raked in his winnings.

The Sundance Kid stood up and said, “I have seen good poker players, and I have seen lucky players, but I don’t think you are either one of them.”

Tom moved his chair back and stood up and said, “What are you trying to say Kid?”

The Sundance Kid said, “I’m saying I think you are a cheat.”

Tom said, “Kid, you are fast with a gun, and you think you are good at poker, I say you are too fast with your mouth.” You

are a bad poker player, and also a liar. We both knew it would come to this sooner or later, so whenever you are ready you can go for your gun. By this time all had moved away from the table. The Sundance Kid went for his gun, it had just leveled out when two shots rang out.

Tom's bullet hit the Kid right in the heart, the Kid's bullet nicked tom's left shoulder. The Kid fell dead on the floor. Tom said, "Well it looks like this game is over, unless someone else wants to tell me I was cheating." No one said a word.

Tom picked up his money and said to the bartender, "The drinks are on me, buy the house a round."

Then he and Liz Ann went back to her house and she put a bandage on his shoulder.

She said, "That was too close for comfort."

He laughed and said, He was real fast, most of them don't det a shot off. "

CHAPTER SEVEN

On to Abilene

When Tom woke up the next morning, he felt the warm body of Liz Ann next to him.

He thought, I sure hate to leave her, but it is time to move on.

As he turned and sat up in the bed, She turned and asked him, “Are you leaving?”

He said, “Yes, I’m going to Abilene.”

She replied, “I wish you would stay.”

He said, “You knew I would be moving on after the contest.”

“That’s what you told me, but I was hoping you would stay awhile longer,”She replied.

He said, “The longer I stay the harder it will be for me to leave.” “Anyway, I may be coming through this way again soon.”

He got dressed, went out and saddled his horse. He then came back into the house and sat down on the bed beside Liz Ann.

He said, “I want you to know that this time that I spent with you has been very special to me, and I will never forget you.”

She was crying and did not answer him.

He leaned over and kissed her gently, and then he got up, went over and put a hundred dollars on the dresser and left the house. He then got on his horse and headed for Abilene.

He had only gone about five miles when he heard a rider coming up from behind him.

He stopped and turned to see who it was.

It was Will.

Will said, “Liz Ann told me you had just left, you wouldn’t leave a friend behind, would you?”

Tom said, “I thought I had better move on, while I still could.”

Liz Ann is some kind of girl. It was real hard to leave her. I didn’t know if you were ready to move on yet or not.”

Will said, “Liz Ann told me to give you this. “

Then he handed Tom the one hundred dollars that he had left for Liz Ann.

Tom smiled and said, “Yes Sir, She’s some kind of girl. “

Will asked, “ Where are we going?”

Tom answered, “Abilene.”

“What are you going to Abilene for,” Asked Will?

Tom said, “Its as good a place as any.”

Will replied, “I have been there, it is a wide open cow town, a place where a man could get himself killed real easy.”

Tom said, “ Don’t they have a lawman in this town?”

Will answered, “They keep getting killed.”

Tom replied, “That’s the kind of town I’m looking for; I want to be a lawman.”

Will said, “ Are you crazy?” Do you have a death wish?

“No, “said Tom, “I want to be a lawman.” Then Tom said, “I hope you didn’t lose all your money in the contest.”

“Hell no, I saw you draw on Ringo, I bet it all on you.” Said Will. They both laughed.

As they rode into Abilene, they could hear the loud music and singing from the saloon.

They could see the half naked dancing girls through the windows.

There were two men beating the hell out of another man in the street. There was also a drunken man riding back and forth shooting his gun at the upper windows of the buildings.

Tom said to Will, “I see what you mean by wide open.”

When they rode past the saloon Will asked, “Where are we going?”

Tom said, “We are going to the court house to see why there is no law in this town.”

Will said, “You really do want to be a lawman?”

Tom answered, “ Yes, my dad was a U.S. Marshall a long time ago.” Will said, “That’s a little out of my line, I’ll see you a little later, I’ll be in the saloon.”

Tom said, “OK, but try to stay out of trouble and be careful in there.” Will turned and headed for the saloon.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Tom Masters - Sheriff of Abilene

Tom stopped in front of the court house, got off of his horse and went up to the front door,

On the building next to the door was a sign that said, SHERIFF WANTED.

Tom took the sign down and went inside.

A man greeted him, and then asks him what he wanted,

Tom showed him the sign and said, "I'm your new Sheriff."

The man held out his hand and said, "Have you ever been a sheriff before? "

Tom said, "No I haven't, but I can do it. "

Then the man said, "I am Judge Bob Jennings, I have to tell you that the last three sheriffs were murdered, and the two before that were run out of town."

Tom said, "I will be hard to kill and no one will run me out of town."

The Judge was about 55 or 60 years old. Tom shook his hand and said, "My name is Tom Masters."

Judge Jennings said, “Well I’ll be damned, Are you related to a Tom Masters that used to be U.S. Marshall of Deadwood?”

Tom said, “Yes, he is my father.”

Judge Jennings said, “I knew I recognized that gun and holster.”

I knew him well; In fact I married him to his wife Melissa.

“Wasn’t that her name?” “ How are they doing?”

Tom said, “They are fine, they have a farm in Indiana.”

The judge said, “You look a lot like your daddy, but a little young for this job.” “ What makes you think you can handle it?” “ Are you as good as your dad was?” “I’m better, said Tom, and I can handle the job.”

Judge Jennings said, “OK, its your life, It pays eighty dollars a month with room and board.”

Tom said,” I want one hundred a month for me, and seventy-five a month for my deputy, plus half of the back taxes that I collect.”

Judge Jennings laughed and said, “You are Tom’s son alright.” “This town doesn’t have that kind of money, mister Steel gets all the money in this town.”

Tom asked, “Who is mister Steel?” Judge Jennings replied, “He is the self proclaimed Mayor of Abilene, he owns the saloon and the biggest ranch in the territory.” “ His bunch of fast guns backs him up.”

Tom asked, “Does he pay taxes?” Judge Jennings Laughed and said, “He pays no taxes to the town, the town pays taxes to him.” “He owes the town about seven thousand dollars, then he said, If you can collect his back taxes, you have a deal.”

Tom asked, “What kind of man is he and what does he look like?”

The Judge answered, “He is about fifty years old, He’s about your height, but a little heavier than you. He doesn’t wear a gun, he doesn’t have to, he has his hired guns to do his killing for him. He has a big ranch South of town but his ramrod runs it for him.” “He is at the saloon most of the time, he makes his money from the gambling and the whores.”

Tom said, “ Sounds like a real nice fellow.”

The Judge said, “Yes if I had to choose a friend between him and a rattlesnake, I would pick the snake.”

Tom said, “Are you a real Judge?”

Judge Jennings said, “Yes I am.”

Tom Said, “OK swear me in.” The Judge swore Tom in as the sheriff of Abilene.

Afterwards Tom asked the Judge, “Do you know who murdered the other sheriffs?”

The Judge said, “Yes they work for Steel; their names are Ace Turner and Lefty Johnson.”

“They are both fast guns and they are mean as hell.” .

Meanwhile, Will had gone into the saloon, ordered a beer and sat down at a table.

There was about ten girls singing and dancing. As he looked around the room he saw two men sitting on the balcony with rifles. There were about twenty men in the saloon. Some were watching the girls and some were playing poker.

There was a man sitting at a corner table, he was dressed in a suit. He also had two other men sitting with him.

Will thought, He must be the big shot, in here.

Will was surprised when he saw the swinging doors open and Tom walked in.

Tom walked over to the end of the bar; his back was to the wall. The Silver Star on his chest for all to see. He took out his tobacco and papers, Then rolled himself a cigarette and took a draw and blew out the smoke.

Laying his left hand on the edge of the bar, he turned to look at the crowd. Then he said in a loud voice, “Who is Steel, and where is he?” The music stopped , the girls quit dancing and everyone looked at Tom.

The bartender came over and said, “ What are you drinking Sheriff?”

Tom said, "I'll have a beer."

Will put his hand down on his gun and was watching the two men on the balcony.

The man with the suit got up and walked over to Tom, leaned on the bar and said, "Well It looks like we have a new sheriff in town, maybe now we can have some law and order around here."

Everyone laughed, except Tom.

Tom took a last draw from his cigarette then threw it into a spittoon on the floor at his feet.

Then he said, "Are you Steel?" Steel said, "I'm Steel," Tom said, you owe this town seven thousand dollars in back taxes; I am here to collect it."

" Just how do you intend to do that? "Said Steel

Tom said, "If you do not pay the taxes, I will close this place down, and place you under arrest."

Steel asked, "Where is all your help?"

Tom said, "I am all I need."

Steel was no longer smiling, he looked at the men who were sitting with him at the table and nodded to them. They got up and moved to the center of the room-facing Tom.

Tom's hand was at his side, he had not moved.

Steel said, "I would like you to meet two friends of mine, Ace Turner and Lefty Johnson."

"These men are gunfighters, they are the fastest guns around."

Tom looked at the two men and said, "Yes, I have heard of these two men, they are also under arrest for murder, so if they touch their guns I will put a bullet between their eyes." Steel laughed, looked at the two men and said, "Fellows, this is our new sheriff, make him feel welcome."

The two men's hands went down to their guns. In one swift move Tom's gun was in his hand, he kept his word and put a bullet right between the eyes of both men. Before their bodies

hit the floor, he pointed the gun at Steel's left eye with the hammer cocked back.

Then Tom said, "I am here to bring law and order to this town, it would make my job a lot easier to just blow your head off, but that will be up to you." Do you pay your taxes or not?

The two men on the balcony came to their feet, Will drew his gun and fired four shots. One of the men fell back into the wall; the other fell over the rail and behind the bar.

Quickly, Steel told the bartender, "Get me seven thousand dollars out of the safe, NOW." Then he asked Tom, "How are you going to get out of here, I have men all over this town?"

Tom said, "You are going to take me out, if anyone tries anything I will blow your head off."

Steel said, "I believe you would, then he said, nobody try anything, I'll be back later."

Tom told Steel to turn around, then he took him by the collar and put the gun to his head and said, "Tell your bartender to close this place for the day, you and I have some talking to do."

Steel told the bartender to close the place up. and they walked out the door and over to the jail, with Will following along behind them.

Tom took Steel into the jail and locked him in a cell. Judge Jennings came in the door and looked at Steel and said, “Well I’ll be damned, and how did you get him out of there?” Tom said, “He told Ace Turner and Lefty Johnson to kill me, I had to kill them, and the man who will be my deputy killed two more.”

Judge Jennings said, “You beat Ace and Lefty in a show down.” “Damn, You are better then your father was.” Then he turned to Steel and said, “Well Steel it looks like you may have met your match this time.” Steel said, “If you don’t let me out of here, my men will burn this town down.”

Tom said, “If your men try anything, the last thing that I will do is put a bullet in your head.”

There was a knock on the door. Hey Tom! It was Will’s voice. Tom opened the door and told Will to come in.

Tom said, “This is Will Curry, he will be my deputy.”

Will said, “I never said I would be no deputy; I just owed you a favor, now we are even.”

Tom said, “You will be paid seventy five dollars a month and half of what I receive in collecting back taxes, you have already earned one thousand seven hundred and fifty dollars.” “That is if you are my deputy?”

Will said, “I always wanted to be a deputy sheriff, swear me in.”

The Judge swore Will in and gave him a badge.

Tom asked Will, “Did they close the saloon?”

Will said, “Yes, as soon as you left, some of the men left town and there are still some out on the street.”

Tom asked Steel, “Who is your right hand man?”

Steel said, “His name is Joe Kelby.”

Judge Jennings looked out the window and said, “Yes, he and three other men are sitting in front of the saloon.”

Tom said, “Judge, you go over there and tell him to leave his gun there and come over here and talk to his boss.”

Judge Jennings said ok and went out the door.

Tom turned to Steel and said, “I think you are a smart man, your days of running this town are over, but if you want to grow with this town, maybe we can come to an agreement.”

Steel said, “What kind of an agreement are you talking about?”

Tom said, “Starting tomorrow no guns will be allowed in town except for me and my deputy, you will pay off your gunfighters and tell them to leave town.” “You will open your place and run it honest and not cheat anyone.” “ You are no longer the Mayor unless you win by a fair election, you make these changes and we will get along, if you don’t I will see you hang.” “What do you say?”

Steel Said, “What is your cut in all this?”

Tom said, “Just pay your taxes and I will get my pay, do you agree?”

Steel said, “You have a deal, but what if some of my gun hands don’t want to leave town?”

Tom replied, “Then it will be my job to see that they do, and if you don’t keep your word I will kill you.”

Steel said “I will keep that in mind.”

Will spoke up and said, “The Judge and Kelby are coming this way.”

As they walked in through the door, Judge Jennings said, “Tom, this is Jo Kelby.”

Tom told Steel to tell Kelby what they had agreed on.

After he told Kelby everything, Kelby said, “Is this on the level boss?” Steel said, “Yes its on the level so do as I say.”

Kelby turned and went out the door.

Then the judge said to Tom, “This man is guilty of murder, are you sure you know what you are doing?”

Tom said so that Steel could hear him, “Judge it becomes a choice of making a honest man out of him or trying to fight all of his gun hands, I prefer to try it this way if I can.” It takes a smart man to get all that this man has. The railroad will be coming through here soon, and this town will grow in leaps and bounds. A smart man like him, if he were honest could become a very big man, maybe even Governor.”

A little while later they saw the other men leaving town.

Tom told Will, “Have a sign made up for each end of town, NO GUNS PAST THIS POINT, set up checkpoints at both ends and get some men to run them.”

Tom went over and unlocked the cell door and let Steel out.

Steel said, “You know kid, I’m glad you came to town, I like what you are doing.”

Tom said, “Just keep your promises.”

**Steel looked at Tom and said, “Governor, hmmm, yes I will,”
then walked out the door.**

**Judge Jennings said, “Tom I sure hope you know what you are
doing.”**

CHAPTER NINE

Farewell to a friend

Steel paid off all of his gun hands, and they all left town.

Things went real smooth for about two weeks.

Then one day one of his men at the gun check point came into Tom's office and said to Tom, " A man just rode through the check point and wouldn't give up his gun, I think he is a fast gun called, Cass Wade." Tom said, "What the hell is he doing here?" "I don't know, said the man, but he has killed so many men that they have stopped counting them."

Tom said, "Yes, I have heard of him, where did he go?"

"He's in the saloon," said the man.

Tom got up and walked out of his office and headed for the saloon.

As he walked into the saloon he saw a very big man at the bar with a bottle of whiskey in front of him, and he was wearing his gun.

Tom walked to the other end of the bar. There were two other men at the bar between Tom and the man with the gun. As

**soon as they saw Tom, they turned and walked out the door.
Tom told the bartender to bring him a beer.**

**After he got his beer, he took a drink, then turned to the man
and said, “What are you doing in my town wade?”**

**Wade said, “I’m just passing through if it’s any of your
business.”**

**Tom said, “Maybe you don’t know how to read, but we have a
law in this town, you have to turn in your gun when you enter
and pick it up as you leave.” Wade said nothing, he just poured
himself another drink, turned it up and drank it, then he set
the shot glass upright on top of his bottle and put his hands on
the bar.**

**He had still not looked at Tom, and then he said, “Do you
know who I am?”**

**Tom said, “Yes, your a man who is breaking the law, if you
want to stay in this town you must give up your gun.”**

**The man said, “I am Cass Wade, and nobody takes my gun,
not even a little punk sheriff like you.”**

In the blink of an eye Tom drew his gun and fired one shot. The shot glass on top of the whiskey bottle disintegrated, the bottle was not touched.

Then Tom said, “I will see that they bury you with it on.” Cass Wade did not say a word, nor did he ever look at Tom. He just reached down and untied the leg strap, then unbuckled his gun belt and laid it on the bar and slid it toward Tom. Then he said, “Bartender bring me another shot glass.” Tom picked up the gun belt and told Wade he could pick it up on his way out of town. Three days later he left town, he had caused no trouble at all. Six months had passed and Abilene had become a quiet little town. Other than a fistfight once in awhile there was no trouble.

Tom said to Will, “Do you think you can take care of things here for a month?”

Will said, “Yes, Where are you going?” Tom said, “I am going to Dodge city.”

Will said, “Stay as long as you like, then he smiled and said” Tell Liz Ann I said hi.”

Tom said, “I will leave early in the morning.”

As he rode, his mind wondered back to the nights he had spent with Liz Ann.

He even thought about asking her to move to Abilene. But after considering that, he decided not to say anything about it. It seemed like it was taking a lot longer to get to Dodge than he did to get from Dodge to Abilene. He hoped he wasn't in love with her, there was no place in his life for a wife right now.

At last the long trip was over and he rode into Dodge. When he walked into the saloon and up to the bar he ordered a beer. Liz Ann walked over to him and said, “Hello cowboy, are you lost?”

Tom said, “No I just heard that there was a very pretty girl working in here.”

Liz Ann said, “Oh you did.”

Tom said, “Yes can you tell me where she is?” He smiled, and then gave her a hug and kiss.

Liz Ann said, “I heard that you cleaned up Abilene.”

Tom said, “It really wasn’t that bad to start with. “

Tom had been there for about two weeks. He and Liz Ann had just finished supper. Tom was just about to go against his better judgment and ask Liz Ann to marry him and come to Abilene with him. Then he heard a rider coming up to the house. He got up and looked out the door, it was the Judge.

Tom went out to greet him.

The Judge said, “Tom you have to come back to Abilene.”

Tom said, “What is the matter?”

The Judge said, “Will is dead, they hung him.”

Tom said, “Damn, who hung him?”

Then Tom said, “Come into the house and eat, then tell me all about it.”

After the Judge finished eating Liz Ann's great meal he then began telling Tom what had happened.

He said, "A week ago a bunch of young guns, about fifteen of them, rode into town."

"They wouldn't give up their guns."

"A man led them, his name is Luke Fry, and he is very fast."

He said, "He had heard about you and wanted a showdown with you."

Will didn't even have time to touch his gun.

They got the drop on him, then put him on a horse and hung him in front of the blacksmith shop.

Then they took over the town, they killed Kelby and six other people.

"They wouldn't let anyone take Will down, they said, he would hang there until you showed up, he was still hanging there when I left town to come after you."

Tom said, "You rest up here, we will start back in the morning."

The Judge said, "What are you going to do?"

Tom said, "I'm going to kill a man named Luke Fry."

That night Liz Ann begged him not to go back.

She said, “There are fifteen of them, how can you win? “

Tom said, Liz Ann, I am the law there and Will was my best friend, You know I have to go back. “

Liz Ann said, Yes I know you do, but I don’t want to lose you.

“The next morning Tom told Liz Ann farewell and kissed her good by and told her she would see him again soon, then they started back to Abilene.

They pushed their horses to their limit.

Just before they got to Abilene Tom asked the Judge, “Do you think Steel had anything to do with this?”

The Judge said, “No I don’t think so, they took over his saloon and are not paying for anything.”

Tom told the Judge to try to sneak back into town and go to his home and stay there.

Then he left his horse outside of town and slowly moved into check things out.

As he moved up beside the blacksmith shop that sat at the edge of town, he could see Will’s body still hanging there. He could smell the stink of rotting flesh. He thought, they will pay for this old friend.

It was about two in the morning and the street was dark except for the light from the saloon.

He could hear the laughter and music coming from inside.

Tom untied the rope and let Will's body down to the ground, then went into the blacksmith shop, found a blanket and went out and covered Will's body with it. Then he moved around behind the saloon. There was a back door and a boardwalk that led to the outhouse.

There was also a small shed next to it. He looked inside and found a pick handle.

Then he stepped behind the shed and waited.

There was a lot of beer drinking inside, so he did not have to wait long.

Soon the door opened and two drunken young men came out of it, talking and laughing.

When they got just past the shed Tom stepped out behind them.

He hit the first one as hard as he could right above the ear.

The other turned around and Tom hit him between the eyes.

Then he dragged them into the shed and tied them up with some rope that was hanging in the shed. Then he put a gag in their mouth so they could not alert anyone.

This process was repeated three more times. When he was finished he had seven men tied up in the shed.

Well he thought, that's about half of them.

Tom slowly opened the back door to the saloon and went inside.

He moved to Steel's office and opened the door.

Steel was sitting at his desk. Tom went inside and closed the door.

Steel said, "Tom are you crazy they will kill you?"

Tom said, "What are you doing in here?"

Steel said, "They told me to stay in here."

Tom said, "Go out and ask them if you can get a bottle, see how many are in the barroom and how many are upstairs, I have seven of them tied up in the shed."

Steel said, "That leaves seven more, there were fourteen all together."

Steel got up and went to the bar, got him a bottle and came back to his office.

He said, “The two in the bar are either passed out or asleep on the table, the rest are upstairs with the girls.”

Tom said, “Do you want to help me?”

Steel said, “You bet I do.”

Tom put Steel outside the back door with the pick handle and told him to take care of any that may come out that way.

Then he went into the bar room, Two men were lying with their heads on the table. He took their guns out of their holsters, and then he woke them up. He told them to get up and walk out of the front door.

When they got out on the street they ran into the Judge. Tom gave the Judge their guns and told him to take them and lock them up in the jail then come back to the saloon.

Tom then went back into the saloon, got the waste basket from Steel’s office, brought it into the bar room put some rags in it and set it on fire.

He left the saloon and closed the front doors and waited.

The place filled with smoke very quickly, it wasn't long till he heard screaming and yelling from inside

Then the doors flew open and they came running out coughing and choking.

As the girls came out he grabbed their arm and pulled them aside.

When he counted five men he shot his gun in the air and told them all to get their hands up.

They all raised their hands and tom took their guns out of their holsters.

Tom said, "Alright head for the jail."

Then he sent the judge to get Steel and bring the other seven to the jail. The Judge went into the saloon and out the back door.

When the Judge woke up, Steel was putting cold water on his face.

The judge asked, "Why the hell did you hit me?"

Steel said, "I'm very sorry Judge."

Tom told me to stand here and hit anyone who came out that door. Its dark out here and I didn't see that it was you.

Steel tried to help the Judge to his feet.

The Judge told him to get the hell away from him.

Then the Judge said, “Come on lets get these men over to the jail.”

Once they were all locked up in the jail Tom asked the Judge to go get the undertaker to get Will and get him ready for a funeral.

The Judge said, “Yes I will, as soon as I get something for this damn headache.”

Then Tom turned to the men in the cells and said, “I wonder if a town has ever hung fourteen men at one time before.”

CHAPTER TEN

Breakout .

The next day came and it was time to bury Will.

Everyone in town was going to be at the funeral.

The graveyard was about a mile from town. Tom mounted his horse and went to the graveyard.

The prisoners were alone in the jail.

One of the men said to Fry, “Look, he left the keys on the peg.”

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It was about twelve feet away. Fry told some of the men to tear up their shirts and make a rope.

Then Fry took a piece of bedspring and made a hook.

They tied the rope to the hook and started throwing it at the keys.

After about the tenth try the hook went through the keys and hooked them.

Fry gave a hard jerk on the rope and the keys landed next to the bars.

One of the men picked them up and unlocked the door. They all came out and found their guns and left the jail.

Half of the men went and saddled the horses. The rest broke into the store and found some dynamite and blew the safe at the bank.

When he heard the explosion, Tom ran and mounted his horse and headed for town.

By the time he got there they were already gone.

The rest of the people came into town to see what was going on.

Tom went to the jail to see how they got out. He saw the keys in the door and the homemade rope with the hook on it.

The judge came in and asked how they got out.

Tom said, “It’s my own damned fault, I left the keys on the peg.”

The Judge said, “ What are you going to do?”

Tom said, “Get me a posse together, I am going to go after them.”

The Judge said, “I tried to raise a posse but they are all afraid to go, they said that’s what we pay you for.”

Tom said, “They are a bunch of cowards, but I guess they are right, it is my job to go after them, after all it was my fault that they escaped.”

Tom got his bedroll together and went to the store for some supplies for about a week.

He also got five sticks of dynamite, with fuse.

Then he got on his horse and rode out of town.

About five miles out of town he came to a cabin that belonged to an old Indian, people just called him Hawk. He stopped and got off of his horse. Hawk came out of his cabin and said, “Hi sheriff, what’s going on?”

Tom said, “Hawk, I need a bow and some arrows, do you have one that I can use for awhile?”

Hawk said, “I have one sheriff; I use it for hunting deer, it’s yours if you need it.”

Tom said, “Thank you, did a lot of men ride by here not long ago?”

Hawk said, “Yes what did they do?”

Tom said, “They killed Will Curry and seven other people, then they broke out of jail and robbed the bank, I have to go after them.”

Hawk got the bow and arrows and they tied the dynamite to the arrows.

Hawk said, “Where is your posse?”

Tom said, “I live in a town full of cowards.”

Hawk said, “Do you want me to go with you?”

“No,” said Tom, “I can handle it myself.”

After all was done, Tom thanked Hawk for his help and went on his way.

He was a pretty good tracker but he thought even a blind man could track fourteen horses running together.

He followed the tracks all day. Just before dark the tracks left the rode, he knew the place, it was a box canyon. There was an old cabin at the end of the canyon.

He got off and walked his horse and took another trail that led to the top of the cleft overlooking the canyon.

He thought, this is perfect; I can see the whole canyon from here.

He saw where they had the horses tied and could see smoke coming from the chimney.

He watched all night, they only had one guard posted at the mouth of the canyon; they changed about every two hours.

A little after dawn the guard came back to the cabin and went inside. He thought, well it's now or never.

He got his rifle and the bow and arrows from off his horse.

And got a cigar from his saddlebag and lit it.

He took an arrow and put it in the bow then lit the fuse.

He aimed it right in front of their horses and let it fly.

As soon as he let it go he put another arrow in the bow. The first arrow landed about ten feet from the horses. When it went off the horses broke loose and ran out of the canyon.

The door of the cabin opened. Just as the men started to come out He let the other arrow fly.

This one hit right in front of three of the men; they fell to the ground and didn't move. The rest of the men went back into the cabin.

He lit another arrow and let it fly. It landed on the roof of the old cabin and when the dynamite went off half the roof caved in.

He lit another and let it fly, it went through the roof and inside the cabin and went off, setting the old cabin on fire.

He saw a white flag waving from one of the windows.

He lit another arrow and put it right under the window where the white flag was.

Two men came out of the cabin, they had their hands up and had no guns.

He picked up the rifle and shot both of them down.

Then he sat and watched as the cabin burnt to the ground.

There was nothing moving in the canyon.

Then he got on his horse and went down into the canyon to look around. He found a saddlebag with the money in it, but did not find anyone alive, so then he went back to Abilene.

When he got back he went straight to the jail, Went into the back room and lay down and went to sleep.

Later the judge came in and woke him up.

The judge said, “What happened Tom?”

Tom said, “ I got ‘em all Judge, their all dead, and the money is in them saddlebags on the table there. .”

The Judge said, “Did you take the law into your own hands?”

Tom said, “You might say that.”

He told the Judge what he did and where it happened . Then he told him to have some men to ride out there and get the bodies and bury them.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Time to move on .

The Judge sent some men out to the canyon to bury the bodies.

When they got back they said they buried all of them.

But they said that there were only thirteen and Fry was not among them.

The Judge came back in and said, “Tom, I have to ask you something.”

Tom said, “What is it Judge?” The judge said, “Did you have to kill all of them or did some of them try to give up.”

Tom said, “I did what I had to do, they got what they deserved.”

The judge said, “You killed unarmed men, they had a white flag, the two that you shot in front of the cabin had no guns.”

Tom said, “Judge what the hell do you want from me?” They were all guilty of murder; if this town were not full of cowards I could have done it another way.”

The Judge said, “Fry got away, he wasn’t there.”

Tom said, “I will go after him, he won’t get away from me.”

Just then Steel came in the door and said to Tom. “Fry is in the saloon, he wants you to meet him on the street.”

Tom said, “Good, that saves me the trouble of running the Bastard down, tell him to get his ass out there.”

Steel left and went back to the saloon.

The Judge was looking out the window.

He said, There’s Fry on the street.”

Tom stood up, checked his gun and put it back in his holster and walked out the door.

He walked out into the street and stopped about twenty feet from Fry. Fry said, “You killed all my men, you didn’t even give them a chance to surrender, now I am going to kill you. Tom said, “They had a better chance than you gave my deputy.” Now you can drop your gun and I will see you hang, or you can draw leather and you will die right here.

Fry’s gun had just cleared his holster when the bullet from tom’s gun went through his elbow.

Fry’s gun dropped to the ground, he looked at Tom, he was shocked that Tom had beaten him.

Tom fired again, this time hitting him in the other elbow. Fry said, “Don’t shoot me again, I give up,”

Tom said, “I think not, then he put two bullets in Fry’s chest, he then fell to the ground.

Tom put his gun in his holster and walked into the saloon and ordered a beer. Steel came over to tom and said, “What has happened to you Tom?” “ That was cold-blooded murder.”

Tom said, “Don’t get high and mighty with me Steel, what they did to Will was cold blooded murder.”

Steel said, “But you should have let the law hang him.”

Tom said, “Will was my friend, I told the judge I was going to kill Fry, and I damn well meant it.” “I am the law, either way he’s just as dead.”

Just then the Judge came in and walked up to Tom. He said, “I will take that badge Tom.” Tom looked at the Judge and said, “Then what will you do the next time someone wants to take over this town?”

The Judge said, “I don’t know, but if we want this town to grow we can’t have a cold blooded killer for a sheriff.”

Tom said, “You dumb bastard, half of the lawmen in the west are cold blooded killers, don’t you know that?”

Then he said, “ I went after fourteen killers alone, because there was not a man in this town with the guts to go with me, not even you and Steel.” “ I brought back the town’s money, and because I didn’t do things the way you think I should you want to get rid of me.” Tom took off the badge and put it on the bar, and then he said, “I hope you get just what you ask for.” Then he ordered another beer.

The judge said, “You are nothing like your daddy was, I want you to leave town.”

Tom said, “My daddy would have put his boot in your ass, so don’t push your luck, I will leave town when I’m ready, so get the hell out of my face.”

CHAPTER TEN

LOBO.

Three days later, Tom was getting ready to leave Abilene. He had stopped in the saloon to get a beer. While he was drinking his beer, there came the sound of gunfire from outside the saloon. Then someone came running into the saloon and said, “The bank has been robbed.” The bartender came over to Tom and said, “Tom the bank has been robbed.”

Tom said, “Which way did they go?”

“That way,” said the man, pointing to the east.

Tom said, ”Well, too bad, I’m headed west, why don’t you go and tell the Judge.” Then he walked out of the saloon, got on his horse and headed west.

He drifted from town to town.

Each place he went there was someone that wanted to try to beat his hand.

But as with Fry and Ringo they all fell short.

Because of the wolf head on his holster some started calling him Lobo. His money ran out so he started selling his gun to anyone who would pay. He never walked away from a gunfight.

Some said that he had a death wish and others said, he just wanted to prove to the world that he was the fastest gun alive.

His reputation grew, every fast gun around wanted to go up against Lobo, But time after time they fell before his gun, until the name Lobo was known all throughout the west. Back east they even wrote books about him. . Four years had passed since he had left Abilene, He had been in just about every town in the west, then finally His trail had taken him to Santa Fe, he could feel the eyes on him as he slowly moved down the street. It was the same in every town that he had been in, but it didn't excite him any more like it used to.

He rode up to the saloon, got off his horse, and tied it to the rail.

He looked up and down the street, two ladies came out of a store, and they saw him then turned around and went back into the store.

He pushed the swinging doors open and walked inside the saloon.

He stopped just inside the door as he always did, to look the place over.

Then he walked over to the bar and waited for the bartender to come over to him.

The bartender asked what he wanted.

Tom told him to bring him a beer.

Tom picked up the beer, drink about half of it then sit it down on the bar.

A man slowly walked over to the bar and stood about six feet from Tom, looking at him.

Tom said, "Is there something wrong with the way I look?"

"No Sir" answered the man, "Are you the one they call Lobo?"

Tom said, "Some have called me that, My name is Tom Masters."

The man said, “I need a fast gun.”

Tom said, “You are talking to the best there is.”

Just then a young man walked into the saloon and up to the bar. He looked to be about eighteen or nineteen years old. He wore two guns and had on a buckskin jacket that came down to his waist and wore a tan hat.

He looked at the man and said, “I was told you are looking for a fast gun?” The man turned to him and said, “I have already found someone.”

The young man said in a very cocky voice, ”My name is Cherokee Jack, my father was a Black mountain man and my mother was full blooded Cherokee, I am the fastest gun in New Mexico, and I will kill him and you can hire me.”

The man looked at him and then looked at Tom and said, ”Well I do want the best I can get.” Then he moved over to a table that was well out of the way.

Tom said, “Don’t be a fool kid. you don’t have a chance in the world of beating me to the draw.”

The young man turned to face Tom and said, “I know who you are Lobo, and I can beat you.”

Tom said, “Boot hill is full of men who thought they could beat me.”

The Kid dropped both hands to his guns, that’s as far as they got, in one swift motion Tom’s hand went to the bowie knife at his side. With a cross draw he pulled the knife and threw it, It hit its mark, and went deep into the man’s chest.

Shock and surprise appeared on the young man’s face, as he looked down at the knife in his chest. Then he looked at Lobo and fell to the floor, his guns still in their holsters. Tom walked over and pulled the knife from his chest, wiped it off on the buckskin coat he was wearing and returned it to its scabbard.

Then he ordered another beer and said to the man, “Now lets talk about the price.” The man said, “That didn’t prove how fast you are with a gun.”

Tom said, “I don’t have to prove anything to you or anyone.”

Tom sat down with his back to the wall so he could see all of the room.

He said, “Now tell me what you need a hired gun for.”

The man said, “My name is Ron Lovell, I am from El Passo Texas.” Tom said, “Why do you need a fast gun?”

Lovell said, “About six weeks ago a man rode into El Paso, he picked a fight with my brother Dennis; Dennis was no gunfighter, he didn’t have a chance.”

“The man is called H.B. Wilson and he is fast on the draw.

Tom said, “I have heard of him, is he left handed?”

“Yes,” Answered Lovell, “Can you beat him?”

Tom said, “I told you, I am the best there is.”

Lovell said, “I will give you five hundred dollars for the job, half now and the other half when the job is done.”

Tom held out his hand for the money.

Lovell gave him the money and said, “How long will it take you to get there?”

Tom replied, “I don’t know, I will leave when I’m through here.”

About that time the town sheriff came into the saloon to see what the trouble was all about. Lovell and the bartender told him that it was self-defense, so the sheriff had the body taken out of the saloon. Then he told Tom, “You had better leave

town right away, that boy has four brothers, and they are mean as hell.”

Tom said, “Nobody tells me when to come and go, I will leave town when I am ready to go.”

The Sheriff said, “Well it’s your funeral, but don’t look for any help from me, I have to live here in this town.”

The bartender brought Tom another beer and said, “This one is on the house. after you finish it, I hope you will leave my place, I don’t want it all shot up.”

Lovell said, “If you are going to face four men, maybe you had better give my money back until its over?”

Tom said, “You worry too much, you wanted proof didn’t you?” Tom finished the beer and then went outside.

He looked up and down the street. There was not a soul on the street. He saw a chair in front of a store and went over and sat down in it.

His wait was only about an hour. He heard the horses coming into town at a dead run.

They pulled up at where they had taken the kid’s body and went inside. After a short time they came out again and looked

down the street at Tom. Tom stood up, and then walked out into the street. The four men were about one hundred feet from him. They begin walking toward Tom. They were about five feet apart and walking very slowly. When they got about twenty-five feet from him they stopped.

One of the men said, “Your name is Lobo?”

Tom said, “Some call me that.”

The man said, “You killed my brother, he was just a kid.”

Tom said, “Yes he was, but he had on guns and that made him a man, and he drew first, I tried to talk him out of it.” “Now I don’t want to kill any more, so I will ask you fellows to turn around and go bury your brother and forget this, If you don’t then your family will have five to bury.”

For a moment everything was quiet, then one of the men yelled, “Now.” All four went for their guns. In less than a second Tom drew his gun, fanning it with his left hand, fired four shots, all hitting their targets, which was the center of each man’s chest. All four men dropped to the ground and lay still. Two of them had gotten off a shot, one hitting the ground in front of Tom, the other flew past his head just barely missing him.

Tom reloaded his gun and put it back in his holster.

At that time Lovell came out of the saloon and said to Tom, “Well there is no doubt in my mind anymore, you are the best there is, I’ll see you when you get to ElPaso.” Tom walked to his horse and mounted it, and rode out of town. When he left that town, he did not look back.

As he rode he thought about what had just happened, that was the first time that a gunfight had bothered his conches.

Every other man had either come looking for him or he had been paid to use his gun.

He didn’t blame those men; they were only trying to get even for their brother.

No sir, that was one gunfight he could not be proud of.

That night he stopped and made camp. As he sat looking into the fire, He could see the face of the beautiful Liz Ann.

It seamed that she was calling for him to come back to her.

He thought about the nights he had spent with her, and how good it would be to hold her in his arms tonight.

Then he thought, it’s been five years, she’s probably married by now.

But who knows, after this job I may head back to Dodge to see how she is doing.

Four weeks and three gunfights later he entered El Paso. It was just after noon, He took his horse directly to the blacksmith shop.

The blacksmith said, “I know you, you’re Lobo, What can I do for you sir?”

Tom said, “Give him the works, the best you have. ”

The Blacksmith said, “Yes sir Mister Lobo, It will be an honor. “Then he asked, “Are you looking for H.B.Wilson? “

Tom acted as if he didn’t hear the question, Then He walked to the hotel, got a room and a hot bath. Then he went to the barbershop for a shave.

After his shave he stood up, put the white bandana around his neck and looked in the mirror.

Tom said, “Where do I find a man named H B Wilson?”

The barber said, “Most of the time you can find him in the saloon, but if you will just hang around town, I’m sure he will find you.”

Then he said, “You are the one they call Lobo, aren’t you?”

Tom said, “Some call me that,” then walked out.

He rolled and lit him a cigarette, then stood looking at the town.

he stepped off of the board sidewalk, dropped his cigarette then walked across the street to the saloon, walked up to the swinging doors

He could hear loud talking and laughter.

He pushed the doors open and walked inside.

He stopped and looked around, everything got very quiet.

There was about a dozen men and four women.

Tom walked to the end of the bar and ordered a beer.

He took a drink then turned and looked around the room.

He Pointed to one of the girls that was sitting on a man's lap, he had a left-handed gun. Tom motioned for the girl to come here.

The girl turned and looked at the man whose lap she was sitting on.

He nodded for her to go ahead.

She got up and walked over to Tom.

He told the bartender to get her a drink and him another beer.

Then he asks her what her name was.

She told him her name was Candy.

She was only about five two, with brown hair and eyes that sparkled like diamonds in direct sunlight.

And you could see yourself in them, She was very lovely, and he wondered what she was doing in a place like this.

The man with the left handed gun got up and went to the other end of the bar.

Two men that were standing at the bar quickly moved to a table.

He was a very big man. Only about five ten in height but well over three hundred pounds, he would make an easy target. The man said, "Aren't you Lobo?"

Tom looked over at the man and said, "Some call me that."

The man said, "You have a big reputation, I'm H.B. Wilson, he said with a grin."

Tom looked at him, and then looked back at the woman and said, "Are you from Indiana?" "Yes I am," Wilson said, "Why do you ask?"

Tom asked, "Did you know Reed and Hardy Wilson?"

Wilson replied, "Yes, Reed was my Uncle and Hardy was my father." "Why do you ask?"

Tom said, "My name is Tom Masters." The grin was no longer on the mans face. He said, "You killed my father and my uncle, I have been looking for you for a long time."

“I didn’t know that Tom Masters and Lobo were the same man.”

Tom said, “I have not been that hard to find.”

Wilson said, “Now I can avenge my father and get a better reputation too.

Tom said, “A reputation will do you no good on boot hill. “

Wilson said, “They say you’re very fast with that fancy gun.”

Tom said, “Get to the point, you are interrupting my conversation with the lady.”

Wilson said, “My point is, I think I’m faster than you.”

Tom pulled Candy close and kissed her, then told her to move out of the way. She walked back to the table with the others.

Tom turned and put his left hand on the bar, his right hand hung to his side. Wilson stood upright, both hands at his side.

About twenty seconds passed, Tom said, “Are you going to draw, or are you waiting for me to die of old age?”

Just then the swinging doors opened and a man walked in.

The man said, “Hold it right there, both of you, I’m a Texas Ranger, and I will have no gun fighting in my town.”

Tom said, “Looks like you get a reprieve Wilson.”

The ranger said, “I want you out of my town Lobo.”

Tom looked at the ranger and said, “I haven’t broken any laws, and I’ll leave when it pleases me.”

Then he walked over and took Candy by the hand and said. “Come on I’ll buy you some dinner.” Then they walked past the Ranger and out the door.

They walked down the street to the hotel. There was a restaurant next to it. They went inside, found a table in the corner and sat down. A girl came over and asked them what they wanted.

Tom said, “Give us two steaks with all the trimmings and coffee.”

Just then The Ranger came in the door, looked at Tom, then came over to his table and sat down.

He said, “I heard you used to be a lawman in Abilene?”

Tom said, “That’s right, that was a long time ago.”

The Ranger said, “What happened, why did you leave?”

Tom said, “Lets just say, after I cleaned up the town, the good people of that town didn’t like the way I did my job.”

The Ranger said, “What do you mean?”

Tom said, “Most towns are full of cowards, they won’t help you when you need it, and they want you to do it their way, If you get out of line a little, they want to get rid of you.”

The ranger asked, “What did you do?”

Tom told the ranger about Abilene. While I was gone a young gang of killers took over my town. There were fourteen of them; they hung my deputy and good friend, and killed seven other people. I surprised them and locked them up in jail but they escaped and robbed the bank.

The ranger asked, “Did you go after them? ”Yes, but I couldn’t even get up a posse to help me,” said Tom. “And how many did you bring back?”

Tom said, “None.”

The ranger asked, “How many did you kill?”

Tom answered, “All of them.”

The Ranger said, “ That is not the way it’s done when you are a lawman.”

Tom replied, “They gave me no choice.” The Ranger said, “Well just take my warning, I will have no gun fighting in this town, so stay away from Wilson.” “Tom said, “I don’t hide from anyone, I come and go where I want, but I will not draw

first, and if I have to kill him I will not be arrested for it, and if you draw on me I will have to kill you to.”

The Ranger asked, “Who hired you to kill Wilson, was it Lovell?”

Tom said, “I don’t know Wilson, and the name Lovell is not known to me either, I’m just passing through.”

The Ranger got up and said, “I doubt if you ever just pass through any town Lobo.” Then he walked out the door.

After the ranger left, Candy asked Tom, “Are you going to kill Wilson?” “Yes,”said Tom.

She said, “Why?”

Tom said, “Because that’s what I do, and he wouldn’t let me out of town until I fight him, he has to try to get even for me killing his father, and there is no way he can beat me.” They finished their meal and he kissed her and told her to try to find a way to get away from that saloon.

Candy said, “Don’t you want me to stay with you tonight? “

Tom said, that would be nice, but I have other things on my mind right now. “

Then he went to his hotel room. He lay down on the bed and drifted off to sleep. He was awoken by a knock on the door.

He asked who it was.

A voice from outside the door said, “It’s Ron Lovell, let me in.”

Tom got up and opened the door and let him in.

Lovell said, “Are you going to do the job?”

Tom said, “You forgot to tell me about the Ranger, but I will still do the job, it will just cost you another five hundred dollars, and you will pay me off now, I may have to get out of town fast.” Lovell hesitated for a while then finely agreed and gave him seven hundred and fifty dollars.

Tom said, “He will be dead before the night is over.” Then he said, “Now get out, and I don’t want to see you again.”

Tom lay down on the bed but sleep would not return to him.

When he closed his eyes he could see Liz Ann and she would be smiling at him the way he remembered her.

He thought, I think when this job is done I will go back to see her. She has a nice little farm there and a man could do a lot worse than Liz Ann, and being a farmer didn’t seam so bad to him anymore.

When he opened his eyes the room was dark.

He got up and put on his gun belt and went out the door.

The street was dark, as he walked toward the saloon.

He opened the swinging doors and walked through.

Wilson and some other men were playing poker. Tom walked to the bar and ordered a beer.

Wilson finished his hand; got up and walked to the bar, got him a shot of whiskey turned it up and drank it.

Then he said to Tom, “Well, shall we finish what we started?”

Tom said, “Wilson, unless you are in a hurry to die, don’t push me into a fight here, I don’t want to have to kill you.”

Then Wilson turned to face Tom and said, “Who are you trying to kid Lobo, You came here to kill me.

He said, “I thought the Ranger might have ran you out of town?” Tom said, “I don’t run so easy.”

Both men went for their guns; Wilson was very fast for a big man, but just a split second slow.

Tom fired three times, all three of them hit Wilson in the chest, he never knew what hit him. He fell to the floor and didn’t move.

Wilson’s bullet hit the floor at Tom’s feet.

Tom put his gun back in his holster.

Then he asked the others what they saw and heard.

They all said it was self-defense. They said you tried to talk Wilson out of it. He told them to be sure to tell the Ranger the same thing, Then He walked out the door.

He went to the blacksmith shop, the blacksmith was still working. Tom said, "Get my horse ready."

Just then tom heard a voice behind him say. "Drop your gun Lobo."

Tom turned and saw the Ranger standing in the doorway of the blacksmith shop; he had his gun in his hand.

Tom said, "I tried to talk him out of it, if you don't believe me, ask the other people in the saloon."

The ranger said, "You can tell it to the judge, and so can they, I told you there would be no gunfighting in my town."

Tom said, "Ranger I told you he drew first, now that dead man in there , is not worth you dying for, I don't want to kill a lawman, but if you shoot I will kill you before I fall."

The Ranger said, "Nobody is that fast."

Tom said, "I think I am, but, maybe not, but are you willing to take that chance, either way, life doesn't mean that much to me, so I have nothing to lose, I will not hang, now either pull

that trigger and take your chances, or go in there and talk to the witnesses.” “There is no law against self-defense.”

The Ranger’s forehead was starting to sweat; Tom could hear the fear in his voice.

The ranger slowly put his gun back in his holster and said to Tom, “Aw hell, You, or Wilson are not worth taking a chance on dying for, get out of my town and don’t ever come back here.”

Then he turned and walked back to the saloon.

Tom turned to the blacksmith and asked how much he owed him.

The blacksmith said, “Three dollars, I saw you back that ranger down, it was worth three dollars, you don’t owe me a thing.” Then he laughed about what Tom had done.”

Tom thanked the blacksmith, then mounted his horse and started to leave town. He had only gone a little ways when he saw Candy standing there waiting for him.

“You never will come back here will you. ” She asked?

“Never is a long time,”said Tom.

She said, “I was hoping we could get to know each other better.”

Tom said, “Maybe some other time.”

She said, “Good bye Lobo.”

He leaned over and kissed her, then put two hundred dollars in her hand and said, “Do yourself a favor, and get the hell out of that saloon. “

She said, “I will Lobo. “

He told her good bye and rode out of town.

He headed North, He thought the quicker I get out of Texas the better I will feel.

A few miles from town he left the trail and stopped for the night to get some sleep.

The next morning he continued his journey, he rode all day, stopping only to eat and rest and water his horse.

Late that evening he came to a little town.

He rode into town and stopped at the saloon and went in.

There was a young man sitting at a table with a girl on his lap.

Tom walked to the end of the bar as always and told the bartender to bring him a beer.

The young man told the girl to move, then he got up and walked to the bar, as he stopped at the bar he looked at Tom.

He wore a left-handed gunbelt and looked as if he knew how to use it. He was tall and slim and never stopped smiling.

Just then two men came in the door.

The young man turned around and faced them.

One of them said, "Hello Billy, you are a hard man to find."

Tom saw two more men come in the back door and walk over by a table.

The man at the door looked at Tom and said, "Aren't you Lobo?"

Tom said, "Some call me that."

The man said, "Are you a friend of his?"

Tom said, "Never saw him before."

The man said to Tom, "It would be best if you get out."

Tom said, "I'll leave when I am ready."

"Suit yourself," the man said, then turned his attention back to Billy. The man said, "Well I have a wanted poster on you here, It reads William Bonnie, known as Billy the kid, wanted dead or alive, so which way will it be?" "It's four against one, what are you going to do."

Billy made the first move; as soon as he did they all went for their guns, including Tom.

Billy got the two at the door and Tom got the other two.

When it was over Billy looked at Tom, then at the two men he had just shot.

Tom reloaded his gun then put it in his holster.

Then Billy did the same with his.

Billy looked at Tom's holster and said, "So, your the one they call Lobo."

Tom said, "So you're Billy the Kid."

Billy answered, "Yes, Why did you help me?"

"You were between them and me, they could have missed you and hit me, besides I didn't like the odd's," said Tom.

Billy said, "You are as fast as they say you are."

"So are you." Said Tom.

Billy said, "I wonder which one of us is the fastest."

Tom remarked, "That would be me."

Billy looked at Tom and shook his head and laughed, then said "I like you, some day I may have to kill you, but I like you."

Then he asked, "Which way are you going?"

Tom replied, "North."

Billy said, “So am I, this place is dead, lets go to the next town, its got more action, and prettier girls.” Tom said, “Lets go then.”

It was a moonlit night and easy to stay on the trail.

As they rode they talked.

Tom asked, “Why were those men trying to kill you?”

Billy answered, “They were bounty hunters, they wanted to collect the reward.”

Tom asked, “What are you wanted for?” “ Bank robbery,”said

Billy. Tom asked, “How much reward is on your head?”

Billy said, “Five thousand, are you thinking of trying to collect it.”

Tom said, “That’s a lot of money, I thought you were in New Mexico?”

Billy said, “I was but it got real hot there, if you know what I mean.”

Tom said, “I know what you mean.”

When they got to the next town, Billy said, “Lets take care of the horses.”

They left their horses at the stable then walked over to the saloon.

As they entered the saloon, two girls let out a scream and yelled “Billy. ”

When they came running at him, he grabbed both of them around the waist, picked them up swinging them around and put them down again.

Billy said, “Girls this is my new found friend, his name is Tom, they call him Lobo.”

Then he said, “Pick one Lobo, Which one do you want?”

Tom took the one he thought was the prettiest, then they went to a table and sat down.

The girl’s name was Mae, she was only about five foot two inches tall. She had short blond curly hair and was very pretty. She had been brought up on a small ranch in the Texas Panhandle. When she was sixteen she ran off with one of the ranch hands. After six months he took of and left her. When had no way to live or even to get back home, so she went to work in the saloon. Tom stayed in town for three days. He spent most of that time with her. She made him laugh and forget his troubles for awhile. If not for Liz Ann on his mind he might have stayed a lot longer.

Then he decided it was time to move on.

He told her good-bye, and then he gave her enough money to take the stage back home.

And then he found Billy and told him he was leaving.

Billy said, “Well I guess we’ll never know who is the fastest.”

Tom replied, “If it gets to bothering you too much, look me up, I could use the five thousand.”

They laughed about it a little.

And then Tom got on his horse and rode out of town and headed for Dodge City.

That evening Tom had stopped for the night. He had shot a jackrabbit and was cooking it over his campfire. He heard the sound of a rider coming up. Then he heard someone say, “Do you mind if I come into your camp?” Tom told the man to come on in.

The man rode in and got off of his horse. The man said, “Would you share a meal with a hungry man?”

“Sure,” said Tom.

The man said, “My name is Pat Garrett, I am a lawman out of New Mexico, I am on the trail of Billy the Kid.”

Tom said, “My name is Tom Masters and I’m on my way to Dodge City.”

Garret looked at Tom's holster and said, "I have heard of that gun, are you called Lobo?"

"Some call me that," said tom, "If you are going after Billy you had better get some help."

Garret said, "Do you know Billy?"

Tom said, "Yes, I met him about a week ago, he is almost as fast as Me."

Garrett asked, "Do you know where he is now?"

"No," said Tom. Garrett said, "Would you tell me if you did?"

"I don't think so," said Tom.

The next morning they had coffee and each went their own way.

Tom thought, Well that may be the last time anyone ever here's from that lawman.

Some time later Tom heard the news that Pat Garret killed Billy The Kid. Rumor had it that Billy was shot in the back. As Tom rode he thought of all that had happened in the last five years. He thought of the men who had faced him. He couldn't even remember half of them. His trail had been a long one. And it wasn't anything like he had thought it would be when he first left home. You never knew if a bullet had your name on it or not. And there sure as hell wasn't any glamour

in this kind of life. Well, he thought who knows, I may just give it all up and settle down.

It sure would be good to go see my mother and father again.

It had been five years since he had seen them.

He wondered how the farm was doing and if they were well.

CHAPTER 11

Reunion.

It had been almost five years since he saw Liz Ann.

As he rode into town he thought, Dodge sure hasn't changed much.

He got off his horse in front of the saloon. It was about two in the afternoon. He looked down the street both ways.

There wasn't a person on the street, it looked like a ghost town.

He wondered where all the people were.

He went into the saloon, walked to the bar and ordered a beer.

There was no one in the saloon but him and the bartender.

He asks the bartender, "Where the hell is everyone, this town used to be jumping?"

The Bartender said, “It’s always like this after the big contest ends.

These fast guns that come in for the contest. Get to acting crazy, and nobody wants to get out on the street. ”

“Does Liz Ann still work here?” asked Tom.

The Bartender said, “Yes but She only comes in when Rand will let her.”

Tom said, “Who is Rand?”

The Bartender said, “Rand Miller, he’s the fastest gun alive.”

Tom replied, “Who said?”

The bartender said, “He was this years contest winner.”

After the contest he stayed in town

The bartender said, “He has already killed four men, and it’s only been two weeks.”

Tom said, “So what does this have to do with Liz Ann?”

The bartender said, “Right after the contest Rand and three other men got stinking drunk, when they left; Rand took her arm, pulled her out of the saloon, threw her over his horse and rode out of town with her crying and screaming. ”

Tom said, what about the law, wouldn’t he do anything?

He was out of town. Replied the bartender, and when he got back and asked her if there was anything he could do, she told him no. “I think she was just afraid to say anything. No one

tried to stop him, and we hadn't seen her in over a week, then when they did come back she looked like she had been beat up." "She did as he told her to do, I don't think she wants to be with him, but yet I don't think she has a choice." "Rand is very mean to her, she needs help but there is noone here that will go up against him."

Tom said, "There is now."

Tom finished his beer, then he got his horse and took him to the stable and told the man to take real good care of him.

After taking care of his horse he went to the barbershop for a haircut, shave and hot bath.

While taking his bath he sent the barber to the store to get him new pants and shirt.

When he was finished there he went to the restaurant in the hotel and ordered himself something to eat.

After his meal he ordered more coffee and lit a cigarette.

He looked out the window and saw four men ride past.

Behind one of the men sat Liz Ann.

He thought, she sure looks like she has been through some kind of hell.

He couldn't be sure, but it looked like her left eye was black.

They rode past the restaurant and stopped at the saloon.

When the man took her off of his horse he led her up the two steps and pushed her hard through the door.

Liz Ann was crying when she entered the saloon.

She went to the bar and told the bartender to bring her a shot of whiskey.

The men sat down at a table.

The man she was riding with said to Liz Ann. “Bitch, get us a bottle and some glasses.”

The Bartender gave her a bottle and glasses and she took them over to them. Then Rand told her to get the hell away from him.

Liz Ann went back to the bar to drink her whiskey.

The bartender came over to her and said in a very low voice, “Liz Ann, there was someone asking about you a little while ago, He’s a stranger in town.”

Liz Ann looked up at him and said, “Who was it, do you know?”

The Bartender said, “I don’t think I ever met him before, but I am pretty sure he’s the one they call Lobo.”

Liz Ann was shocked, “Was he dressed in black?” “And did he have a wolf head on his holster?”

The bartender said, “ Yes that’s the one, do you know him?”

Liz Ann looked around at the four men playing poker and said, “Oh God, yes I know him very well, and whispered to herself, It would be four to one, I have got to do something, but what?”

As Tom drink his coffee he was thinking about the first time that he met Liz Ann. He thought about how beautiful she was, and about the time he had came back to see her and stayed with her until he had to go back to Abilene. Tom finished his coffee, got up from the table and left the waiter a tip on the table then went out the door.

He looked down at the saloon then took out his gun and put a bullet in the empty chamber and returned it to its holster.

He took out his tobacco and rolled him self a cigarette and lit it. And then He walked down the old wooden sidewalk to the door of the saloon and walked inside.

He saw Liz Ann at the bar and the four men at the table in the corner.

The four men looked at him and then at each other.

Liz Ann saw Tom and quickly turned to look at the other men. Tom walked to the bar, ordered a beer and turned to Liz Ann who had her head down.

Tom put his finger under her chin and raised her head and looked at her, the whole side of her face was bruised.

At that time Rand said to Tom, “Cowboy if you want that girl, you can take her upstairs for two dollars, but she is my bitch so you have to pay me the two dollars.” All four of them laughed. Tom looked at Rand and said, “I’m no cowboy, and your life expectancy is very short, so I wouldn’t push it if I were you.” Rand tried to laugh it off but seemed to be nervous.

Tom told Liz Ann to go upstairs and powder her nose. She turned and went upstairs.

Tom took a drink of beer then said, “Well it looks like we have a woman beater here.”

Everyone was looking at Rand.

Tom said, “Rand, you just sit right where you are, and keep your hands where I can see ‘em.”

Then he asked Rand, “Do you know who I am?”

Rand said, “Yes Lobo, everyone knows who you are.”

Then Tom pointed to one of the men at the table and told him to stand up.

The man stood up and said, “ I’m no fast gun.”

Tom said, “If you like living you will drop your gun belt to the floor.”He did what he was told.

Tom said, “Does anyone else want to lose their guns?”

One more stood up, dropped his gun belt.

Tom said, “Now go out and get on your horses and get out of Dodge and don’t come back.” They both went out the door and left town.

Rand and another man were left.

Tom said, “Well Rand here’s a man that wishes to die with you.”

The last man slowly came to his feet and said, “Sorry Rand, I ain’t no gunfighter.” He then dropped his gun belt to the floor then went out the door and rode out of town.

Tom said, “Well Rand, good friends are hard to come by when the chips are down, it doesn’t look like you have any friends left.”

Rand put his hands on the table and stood up.

He said, “I don’t need them anyway, I am the fastest gun alive.”

Rand walked over and stood at the bar about six feet from Tom. He was a tall thin man about thirty years old. He wore his gun low and on the right side. He was not a good-looking man, his eyes were too close together and his nose was too big for his face.

He had a couple of his front teeth missing. He said, “You have a big reputation Lobo, and I have been wanting to see if you can back it up.”

Tom said, “There have been a lot of men that wanted to kill me, they are all dead now.”

Rand went for his gun, Tom had just touched his gun when he saw Rand’s gun clear its holster. Then he heard two shots.

They were so close together that they almost sounded like one with an echo. For a split second he thought he had been shot.

He saw the bullet

hit Rand just above the right ear and come out the other side, taking the side of his head with it. Rand’s bullet hit the floor at his feet.

Rand fell to the floor; part of his brains lay next to his head.

Tom was stunned. He never thought it was possible, but he had just been beat to the draw.

Then a thought flashed through his mind of what the bartender had told him years before. “No matter how fast on the draw you are, there is always someone who is just a little faster.” Tom looked up at the balcony to see Liz Ann standing there holding a rifle and crying.

Tom went up the stairs and took the rifle from her and picked her up and walked down the stairs and out the door.

He took her to the stable and got his horse.

He put her on his horse and took her home.

He carried her in and laid her on the bed, she was still crying, she had cried all the way home.

He stayed with her till she fell asleep.

Then he went out and took his horse to the barn, took the saddle off of him and gave him food and water and put him in a stall.

He had made up his mind, he was in love with Liz Ann.

He had decided that if she would have him, he was going to marry her and go back to farming.

He started looking around the place to see what needed to be done.

He thought, it will take a lot to get this place in shape, but he had the money to do it and he was still a young man, There was no . reason he couldn't make a real nice place out of it.

Liz Ann had woke and came out of the house looking for Tom. She asked, "What are you doing?"

Tom said, "Just looking to see what needs to be done around here."

She asked, "Does that mean you are going to stay awhile?"

Tom said, "You knew that man had me beat, didn't you?" She said, "Lets just say that I didn't want to take the chance that you might lose." Tom said, "I guess no matter how fast you are, there is always someone faster." "Do you want me to stay?"

Liz Ann said, "Yes, I want you to stay as long as you want to."

Tom said, "I think marriage should be for a lifetime."

The next week Tom and Liz Ann were married. On their honeymoon they went back to Indiana to visit his Mother and Father. They left there with a promise from his parents that they would come and visit them after the birth of their first grandchild.

Tom put away his gun and fixed up the farm.

He was Tom Masters the farmer again; there would be no more Lobo..... OR WOULD THERE?

The following year they had a son, they named him Thomas Masters the third.

His name was Thomas Masters the third; they called him Tom for short. He was born on a farm near Dodge City Kansas, and had lived there all of his life,

His complexion was very dark, tanned from the long hours in the sun. He had Dark brown hair. He had worked the farm with his dad as long as he could remember. He was almost six foot tall and very well built from the hard work on the farm.

He had a colt 45 hanging on his right hip as though it were a part of his body. The holster and belt was all black except for the head of a wolf on the side of the holster was white, and the belt buckle was silver. The gun was chrome plated and had pearl handles. His dad had given it to him when he turned twelve years old. He had been practicing his fast draw at least four hours a day ever since then.

On the left side of his belt was a bowie knife. The scabbard was also black and had the wolf's head on it. And the knife also had a pearl handle.

Today was his birthday, he was 18 years old.

He set five bottles on a log about 30 feet away, at a speed that was unbelievable, his hand fell upon the gun at his side, it appeared in his hand as if by magic, he fired five shots in the blink of an eye and all five bottles burst into a thousand pieces. He smiled, he was very pleased with his performance. He thought, I am the fastest gun there is, noone can be as fast as me.

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THE END.

Even though I knew that most of the old gun fighters were back shooters.

I have always been fascinated by the stories that I have saw and read about them.

**It has been my pleasure to write this one and it is my hope that
you have enjoyed it as much as I have enjoyed writing it.**

THANK YOU

A.R.Kessinger

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