

CAL THORN TEXAS RANGER

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CHAPTER ONE

THE ARIVAL

Cal Thorn rode his horse into Abilene, walked him all the way through town.

He stopped and turned him around and looked back the way he came.

He could see people at the windows of the buildings looking out at him.

He then rode back about half way through town and stopped in front of the jail.

He got off and tied his horse to the hitching rail and walked into the Ranger's office.

At the desk sat a man about 50 or 60 years old.

The old man looked up at Jake and said.

“ Howdy stranger, can I help ya?

Cal said, “Are you the Ranger?”

“Yep, for now anyway till the new Ranger gets here, then I'll be gone from this town.”

“ How long you been the law here?”

“ 25 years and I'm ready to get out.”

Cal said, “ Well old timer you can go now, I’m Cal Thorn, Texas Ranger, and I’m here to take over.”

The old man said, “ Well I’ll be damned , Cal Thorn a Texas Ranger, I never would have thought that.”

w“ Well, said Cal, They made me an offer that I couldn’t refuse.”

“ Well it must have been a good one to get you to quit hiring out your gun.

Anyway it don’t matter to me who you are, I thought you would never get here.”

Cal said “ Well I’m here, Is there anything you would like to tell me about this town?”

“ Well yep there is, This town has been wide open for about a year now. I am just too old to do the job anymore and they know it. Some of

these owl hoots here would make even you look like a Preacher man. So you be damn careful and watch your back. Now young fellow that's about the best advice I can give you." The old man got up and got his hat and said good bye and went out the door.

Cal sat down and started going through his desk.

There was a couple of old forty four pistols in a bottom drawer. In a top drawer there was about ten wanted posters. He looked through them and found an old one of him.

He tore it up and threw it into the waste basket.

In the top middle drawer was a deputy's badge and a couple of pencils.

In the other bottom drawer he found a box of forty four caliber shells and some for a Winchester rifle.

He got up and looked around. There wasn't much in the office. Just a desk, a stove and a couple of chairs.

He walked into another room.

This was the cellblock. It had four cells in it and another stove.

He left that room and went to the last room.

This was a living quarters with one bunk bed and a table two chairs and a stove.

CHAPTER TWO

CAL GETS A DEPUTY

At that time he heard the door open and someone came into the office.

“ Anybody here? Hello.”

Cal walked out into the office, looked at the man and said. “ What can I do for you?”

The man was about five feet ten inches tall, about twenty One or Two years old.

He wore his forty four hung low on his left side.

“ Are you the new Ranger?”

“ That’s me.” Said Cal.

“ My name is Dagger, I heard you just got to town.

Are you going to need a Deputy?

Cal said,” Dagger what?”

“ Just Dagger.”

“ Why do they call you that?”

At that time Dagger’s hand went behind his head to the collar of his shirt.

He turned a little and his hand went forward and a dagger stuck in the door going to the cellblock.

He looked at Cal and said.

“ Any Questions.”

“ Nope, reckon not. Said Cal

“Well, said Dagger, are you going to need a Deputy?”

**Cal said," Pays thirty dollars a month,
Interested?"**

Dagger said," Sure ain't much but I'll take it."

**Cal walked to the desk and took out a badge
and turned to Dagger.**

" Say I do."

" I do what? Asked Dagger

" Whatever I tell you to do."

Said Cal

" O K I do."

Cal pinned on the badge.

**Then He walked over to the door and opened it
to go out on the street.**

**Dagger said," What do you want me to do first
boss man?"**

Cal grinned and said, Clean this place up, it's a mess." Then he went out and closed the door.

Dagger looked around the office and said, " This wasn't what I had in mind to do as a Deputy, Oh well it's a living.""

Then he found a broom and started sweeping the floor.

The Railroad had come through Abilene about a year ago, making it one of the largest cattle towns in the west.

The town was growing very fast.

New businesses had moved in.

The town had tripled in the last year.

The drovers that brought the cattle in were a wild breed of men.

After months on the trail they like to let off a lot of steam.

Whisky and guns just don't mix.

Every time they would come into town there would be a killing or two.

Cal closed the door to the Ranger's office and started down the board sidewalk.

CHAPTER THREE

CAL MEETS AN OLD FRIEND

He stopped at the courthouse and went inside.

**He walked up to a desk where a man was sitting
with his back to him.**

Cal said, " Howdy.

The man turned around and said, “ Oh hello, I didn’t hear you come in, can I help you.”

Cal asked,” Yes, Is the Mayer in?”

The man looked down his nose at Cal and said.

Yes, who may I say is calling?”

Cal pointed at the star on his chest and said. “ Texas Ranger.”

The man came to his feet and said, “ Oh yes Sir, I didn’t see your badge, I’ll tell the Mayer you wish to see him.”

“Thank you.” Said Cal.

The man went through a door and returned shortly.

“You may go in now sir

Cal walked to the door, opened it and walked into the Mayer’s office.

The Mayer stood up and walked around his desk and held his hand out.

“How do you do Ranger? I’m Mayer Tom Bradley at your service.”

Cal shook his hand. “I’m Cal Thorn, your new Ranger.”

“ Well I certainly am glad to see you, we have been waiting for you for a long time.”

Cal said “ What seems to be the problem here?”

“ Well a lot of it is a man named Fylow Carson.”

“ Did you say Fylow Carson?”

“ Yes I did Ranger, do you know him?”

“ Yes I think I do but won’t know till I see him.

By the way, What has he done?""

“ You can just about name it and he’s done it.

“ Like what?”

Well he owns the biggest Saloon in town and all of the games are crooked.”

“ Anything else?”

“Every time a heard comes in there is at least two killings and most times its at his place.”

“ I’ll check that place out.”

After he takes all the drovers money they want to shoot up the town.

Ranger I know that we are always going to have a lot of noise with the drovers and all.

I just think we need to do something about that place.”

Cal left the courthouse and walked toward the end of the street where the saloon was at.

He saw the large sign over the front door.

In big bold letters. THE ROUNDUP SALOON.

He pushed open the swinging doors, held them there for a moment, looked around the place, then walked to the bar.

The Bartender came over to him and said.

“What will it be Ranger?”

Cal said, “ Beer, and make it cold.”

The Bartender filled him a mug and brought it to him.

Cal asked, "Where is Fylov Carson?"

" He's in his office."

" Get him out here."

The Bartender pointed at a door and said.

" There's his office, get him yourself."

Cal sat his beer down on the bar, looked at the bartender with the meanest look he could muster and said.

" I won't tell you again."

The Bartender walked over to the door and knocked.

" Who is it?" said a voice through the door.

“ There’s a Ranger out here boss, Wants to see you.”

“ I’ll be right out.”

The man came out of the door and looked around.

When he saw Cal he grinned and walked over to him.

“Hello Cal, what’s it been about five years?”

“Just about Fylow, I see you are still up to your old ways.”

“ well you know Cal it’s hard for an old dog to change its spots.”

“ You have to change with the times Fylow, People are tired of the old ways.”

“ Just the same, Cal Thorn, A Texas Ranger, I can’t believe it.”

“ You can believe it Fylow, and Abilene is my town now.”

“ So what are you saying Cal?”

“ I’m saying I want you to get rid of these crooked tables and run a clean place if you want to stay here.”

“ Cal I have thirty men working for me, you are only one man, so what are you going to do?”

“ I’m only one man but I have two hundred Texas Rangers that will be here if anything happens to me.

They will declare martial law on this town and hang the man who did it.

Now you think about that Fylow, you think about that real hard.”

“ I’ll do that Cal, I surely will.”

CHAPTER FOUR

SOUNDS LIKE A PLAN

Cal turned and walked out of the saloon.

He crossed the street to the livery stable.

As he walked in he saw a big man working on a horse shoe.

“Howdy.” Said Cal

“Howdy.” Said the big man.

“ My name is Cal Thorn, I’m the new Ranger here.”

“ Yes sir I heard you was in town, People round here just call me Smithy.”

“ Ok Smithy what will you charge me to take care of my horse?”

“ Oh you just bring him down when you are ready, the town takes care of that for you and one Deputy.”

“Well that’s real nice of them to go to all that trouble.”

“No trouble Ranger.”

Cal said, “ Well Smithy , you take care now it’s nice to have met you.”

“ You too Ranger, if you ever need help just let me know.”

“Thank you Smithy, I will.”

Cal went on down the street and stopped at every business on that side of the street.

Then he crossed the street and made his way back to His office.

When he entered into his office he could see that everything was very clean. He went and looked in the cell block, they were all the same way.

He walked through to the living quarters.

Dagger was just wiping the table off.

Cal said, " I am surprised, You have done a great job, you must like your work."

Dagger said, " I was brought up by my mother, part of my chores was housework.

But if it's all the same to you we can get a woman to do it from now on."

Cal said, " I think we can do that."

They sat down at the table and rolled a cigarette, Cal lit his and took a big draw and blew out the smoke.

" Dagger, there will be a cattle drive in here in about a week.

That is when our job gets tough and we start earning our money."

“ Yah Cal I was here when the last drive came in, some of the men get pretty crazy.”

“ Well if that’s not bad enough we also have a man like Fylow Carson to worry about.”

“ Isn’t that the man that owns the saloon, do you know him Cal?”

“Yes I do Dagger, we were in the war together. Then we rode together for about three years afterwards.”

“ How come you parted ways Cal?”

“I had to kill his brother.

“ How did that happen?”

“ Well he always thought he was faster than me, He was wrong.”

“Does Fylow know you are in town?”

“ Yes, I went to see him while I was out, he didn’t like what I had to say.”

“ What are we going to do about him?”

“Well if he keeps running the same kind of place we will close it down.”

“ Just like that way.””

“ Yep, just like that.”

CHAPTER FIVE

A SHOWDOWN

Things went well the rest of the day.

It was about ten P M when Cal said,

“ Come on Dagger, Let’s take a walk and get a beer.”

“ Now you’re talking Cal.”

Half way up the street they could see the dancing girls and hear the music.

They went through the swinging doors and up to the bar.

The bartender ask what they wanted. Cal ordered each a beer.

At that time Fylow walked over and stood about six feet from Cal.

“ Is this an official visit Cal or just need a drink.”

“ A little of both Fylow, you have until tomorrow night to get these tables in order.”

“ That’s not enough time Cal.”

There will be a heard in the day after tomorrow.

All your tables will be strait by that time.”

Then Cal turned to leave.

He hadn't taken over two steps when a man bumped into him, knocking him back into the bar.

The man looked at him and growled.

Why don't you watch where the hell you are going."

Cal said Sorry and started to walk away.

The man grabbed Cal by the shirt.

Cal knocked his hand away and stood facing him.

He was a half breed Chinese, a gunslinger known as China Bill.

The man said " Don't you know who I am?"

Cal said, " I don't care who you are but you better be careful or you'll spend the night in jail."

“ I’m China Bill, that’s who I am, the fastest gun there is.”

At that time Fylow came up and said, “ Look I don’t want no gun play in my place. So take it outside if you want to fight.

China Bill said,” It’s dark outside right now, So Ranger I’ll meet you on the street at noon tomorrow. That is if you’re not too much of a coward to face me.”

Then he turned and went back to the bar.

Fylow said,” Well Cal, that’s not a good way to start a new job.”

Cal said,” Fylow I suppose you had nothing to do with that.”

“ Not a thing Cal, as a matter of fact I stopped it, remember.”

“ Sure you did Fylow, but you just remember what I told you about these tables.”

Cal and Dagger left the Saloon and went back to the Ranger’s office.

They rolled and lit a cigarette. Dagger asked,

“ Cal, Do you think China Bill will really want to fight you tomorrow?”

“ I figure he will Dagger, I think Fylow put him up to it.

“ Do you think you can take him, I’ve heard that he is fast as lightning.”

Dagger, until I get beaten I will always think I am the fastest.

Reputations just make every gunslinger there is to be the fastest.”

Shortly thereafter they blew out the lamp and went to bed.

The next morning they awoke and went to breakfast.

It had rained all night but had stopped just before dawn.

The street was one big mud hole but the sun was shining.

They got their meals at the hotel.

Which was a lucky thing because they didn't have to cross the street.

After they ate Cal told Dagger to get his horse and ride out and see how far away that heard was.

and when it would be in town.

Dagger said," Do you think you may need some back up if China calls you out??"

“ If he does, he will be alone so it won’t matter anyway.”

“ Alright Cal, I’ll get back as soon as I can.”

A few minutes later Cal saw Dagger ride out of town.

Cal turned to go back to the Ranger’s office when he heard, “ Mister Ranger, Yoo hoo, Mister Ranger.”

Cal stopped and turned around.

He saw a young lady of about twenty five years of age.

She was very good looking and carried herself well.

When she approached him he tipped his hat and said.

“ Can I help you mam?”

“ I’m sorry Cal Thorn isn’t it? You can’t always get an introduction in a town like this.”

“

Cal Thorn Mam, and you are.”

“My name is Nelly Bradley, you met my father Tom Bradley.”.

“Oh yes, The Mayer, I’m glad to meet you Mam.

“ I am sorry to be so bold Mr. Thorn but I wanted to invite you to our picnic on Sunday afternoon.”

“ Call me Cal Miss Bradley, If my job will allow it I will surely be there.”

Then Cal glanced down the street and saw a single figure moving down the middle of the street.

It wasn't long until Cal could tell that it was China Bill.

Cal told Miss Bradley to go back into the court house and stay away from the windows.

Then he moved over to a step and stepped down with his right foot.

He rolled a cigarette and lit it.

Then He placed his left hand on a post and waited.

When China Bill got about thirty yards from Cal he stopped.

He looked at Cal and said, " O K Ranger get down here in the street."

Cal said, " I don't Waller in the mud China, I leave that to you pigs."

China Bill went for his gun.

He didn't know what hit him.

One shot through the heart and he lay face down in the mud.

It wasn't long until they had him on a wagon and headed for boot hill.

CHAPTER SIX

The Herd

Dagger had rode hard all day and still it was early evening when he found them.

It was just getting dark when Dagger got to the cattle drive.

They were settled in for the night and the drovers were having supper.

He rode into the camp and got off of his horse.

He walked over to the fire and said,

“ Who is the Ramrod here?”

“ That would be me. Said a man in his late forties. Most people just call me Tyler.”

Dagger said, " I'm a Deputy Texas Ranger from Abilene. I was sent out here to see about when you fellows would be coming in."

" Well, said Tyler I would say about three or four days. Hay kooky, get this Ranger a plate and a cup of coffee."

The food tasted good, he hadn't eaten since breakfast.

He said, " How many head you got here Tyler?"

" About twenty thousand head."

" Damn, that's a lotta beef.

Where did you bring em from?"

" New Mexico, and I sure hope we don't have to wait on that damn Trane this time."

"You won't, said Dagger, it's already there."

"Great, that's a load off my mind.

you said the Rangers took over Abilene, who is your boss?"

Dagger said, His name is Cal Thorn."

" Cal Thorn, When did he get to be a Ranger?

" Do you know him?" Said Dagger.

" I ran into him down in the panhandle, He was a hired gun, and a damn good one to.

"Dagger asked, Have you ever heard of China Bill?"

" Yep, sure have, he's a mean one and fast as lightning."

" Do you think He could beat Cal Thorn?"

" Well, I never seen Cal Thorn draw, but I was told that if you had your gun on him and you pulled the trigger and fired your gun.

They say He could draw and kill you before the bullet hit him.

” Now they make up a lot of things about people like him, but you can take it any way you want to.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

“ Well, I’ll be gotten out of you fellows way, thanks for the food and coffee.”

“ You might as well spend the night and have some breakfast before you leave. “

“ Thanks for the offer Mr. Tyler but I was in a stampede once and cows make me nervous.”

“ I hear that, you take care young fellow and we’ll see you in a few days.”

Dagger Said good night to all and mounted his horse and rode off into the night.

After about five miles he found a small canyon.

He unsaddled his horse, made a campfire then lay out his bedroll and went to sleep.

The next morning he awoke and continued his ride into town.

When he got to town he took his horse to the livery and then went to the office

He told Cal what the Ramrod had said and Cal told him about the gunfight.

The next afternoon they were sitting in the Rangers office when they heard shots and someone yelled. “ The bank is being robbed.”

They both ran outside to see five horseman riding past them.

They both began to shoot at them.

Three men fell from their horses and one was hit but held on.

Of the three that were shot, half of the money was recovered.

Two of the men that fell were dead the other one was wounded but would live to hang.

However he had nothing to say about the other two.

Cal said to Dagger, “ Go to the livery and get our horses and I will get supplies.”

Dagger said “ Cal let me go after them, I’m a real good tracker, I’ll bring em back.

You know that you need to be here when that heard comes in.”

“Are you sure you can handle it Dagger?”

“ Well I’ve got to know that I’m worth more than just running Aeron’s and fetching the horses.”

“ Ok Dagger, you bring em back.”

Thanks Cal, I’ll get back as soon as I can.”

Dagger saddled his horse and rode out of town at a gallop.

The ground was soft so the trail was easy to follow.

They had made his job easy by cutting across country.

There's was the only tracks visible.

CHAPTER SEVEN

A JOB WELL DONE

They went into a creek but didn't come out the other side.

It took him about four hours to pick up the trail again.

Then darkness was upon him so he had to stop and make camp for the night.

The next morning at daylight he was back on the trail once more.

About two in the afternoon he saw them far off.

He brought his horse to a gallop for about an hour.

Stopping only at a stream for water.

Shortly after dark he saw a flicker of fire about a mile away.

He moved closer until he could see them well.

They had no idea that he was there.

The one that was wounded looked like he was in bad shape.

The other one was sitting by the fire and looked like he was asleep.

Dagger moved into the camp with his rifle in his hand.

He pointed it at the man and said, " Don't make any sudden moves."

The man razed his head and said, " My little brother is dead."

Dagger said, " Throw away your gun."

The man did as he was told.

" now stand up and turn around."

The man said, "Will you let me burry my brother?"

“ I’ll take him back and they will put him on boot hill with the rest of you.”

They don’t hang people for robbing a bank.”

“ No they don’t, but you killed a clerk in that bank and they do hang you for that.”

The man turned around and Dagger put the cuffs on him.

He looked in their saddle bags and found the bank money.

He sat the man down by a small tree.

Then he checked his brother to make sure he was dead.

He took the cuffs off of one arm, put his arms around a small tree and cuffed him back.

Then he added some wood to the fire and lay down and went to sleep.

He awoke well before dawn.

He started a fire and put some coffee on the fire to boil

He had the man stand up and moved his cuffs around in front of him.

After he finished his coffee he gave the other man a cup.

He told the man," Now don't you give me any trouble.

I'm taking you back either on the saddle or over it, it don't matter to me."

The man said," I ain't gonna try nothing."

He rolled the man's brother up in a blanket and tied him on a horse

He helped the man get on his horse.

then he tied the lead strap of the other horse to the other one's saddle.

He figured it would be daylight in about an hour.

He got on his horse and took the lead strap of the other man's horse.

Then they headed back to Abilene.

Now back in Abilene, in the ranger's office.

" Damn it Ranger are you crazy? You let that kid go off by himself after two bank robbers and seven thousand dollar of the banks money.

" Yes I did Mr. Mayer, give the kid a chance he will come back.

" And if He doesn't? Said the Mayer

" He Will."

“ Well for your sake Ranger, he damn well better.”

Then he went out and slammed the door behind him.

A few minutes later Cal left the office.

Just as he stepped out the door he started to grin.

As he look down the street he saw three horses and two riders

Coming at him.

They stopped in front of the jail and Dagger got off of his horse.

He handed Cal the saddle bags and said. “ Here is the rest of the banks money. “

Cal said “ Take it in to the Mayer.”

Dagger said,” They been giving you a hard time.”

“Nothing I can’t handle. Said Cal. Now you go on and I’ll take care of these two.”

Cal put the one in a cell and had the undertaker take care of the other one.

When Dagger came back Cal said,” You take it easy and I will have the hotel send you and him a tray.”

“Where you going Cal?”

Cal said,” You did your job now I have to do mine, but I’ll be back shortly.”

Dagger said,” I know where you are going Cal, maybe I better come along to back you up.”

Well Dagger, I guess I have to handle this alone, just to see if I’m worth the money they are paying me.

Dagger said “Well if I hear shooting I’m on my way to help.”

Cal said,” that sounds about right .“then he turned and walked away.

CHAPTER EIGHT

IT'S NO BLUFF

He walked back into the office.

He picked up a package from his desk.

He put it under his arm and walked out again.

He turned and walked toward the saloon.

He walked into the saloon and looked all around, then he walked to the bar and laid the package on the bar.

He ordered a beer and took a drink then smiled and look all around the room.

**At that time Fylow came over to him and said,"
What's in the package Cal?**

Cal just smiled and said," It's for you Fylow.

**Fylow looked at the package again and said,"
What are you up to?**

**Cal rolled and lit a cigarette and said if you or
any of your men head for that door my Deputy
will shoot you.**

**Then he pulled a fuse out of the corner of the
package and lit it.**

Fylow said," You're bluffing Cal.

**Cal tore the paper away from it revealing
fifteen sticks of dynamite. " You know I don't
bluff, now get to work on them tables, you
have four minutes.**

**Fylow turned and yelled " You men get them
tables strait. I want them all run honest from
now on.**

In three minutes Fylow ran back to Cal and yelled. “ It’s done Cal it’s done.”

Cal took hold of the fuse with his finger and thumb and pulled it out.

It was only about two inches long.

Cal picked up the package and said, “ Now Fylow you keep it that way.” And walked out.

The heard came in, the cowboys got paid and the town was booming.

Cal had to jail a couple of drunks.

Other than that there was no killing and all went fine.

Later in the week Fylow came to Cal and said, “Cal this is the best week I have had since I’ve been here.”

Cal said,” Then it pays to be honest doesn’t it Fylow.”

Chapter EIGHT

Abilene was starting to grow with leaps and bounds.

Two more hotel's went up.

Another saloon was added at the other end of town.

Two streets were added going the other direction.

All three streets and five miles out of town were covered with crushed rock.

Law and order had come to Abilene.

The railroad had just came through Dodge City and was headed to Abilene next.

