

# The Fighting Tenderfoot

By William MacLeod Raine

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WNU Service

### THE STORY

Garrett O'Hara, young lawyer, on his way to practice at Concho, wild western town, is shot at from ambush by Shep Sanderson, who mistakes him for Judge Warner, whom certain cattle interests wish to prevent holding court. Barbara Steelman, who thought the shot was directed at her, warns Garrett not to go to Concho because of the big cattle war. In town Sanderson picks a fight with Garrett and is getting the worst of it when Ingram, cattle baron, interrupts. Steve Worrall tells Garrett about the cattle war between Ingram and Steelman, father of Barbara. Garrett tells Ingram he desires to remain neutral, but the latter declares there can be no neutrality. Bob Quantrell, young killer for Ingram, saves Garrett and an Englishman, Smith-Beresford, from being shot by Sanderson. The three become friends. Garrett accidentally witnesses a meeting between Barbara and Ingram. They are lovers. Garrett and the Englishman buy a ranch with Steelman as silent partner. Fitch, Steelman man, kills an Ingram follower. A posse starts in pursuit and Fitch stops at the "tenderfoot ranch."

### CHAPTER V

#### Garrett Holds the Fort

From the doorway, where he sat smoking a placid pipe, Smith-Beresford drawled comment.

"Picture of a young man in a hurry," he said. "Study from life."

O'Hara saw a rider coming over the hill. The Britisher had not over-stated the case. If ever a man was in a hurry this one was. An arm moved up and down as he quirted his horse. The animal was jaded, but it stuck to a labored lope.

"Fitch," O'Hara said.

"Right: By Jove, he's not coming down here. He's heading for the clump of timber up there. Wonder what's up, Garrett."

"Some one is after him. Maybe the posse headed him off."

Five minutes later horsemen come into view, a long straggling line of them. O'Hara counted twelve. They rode straight for the cabin. As they came closer he recognized Sanderson, Quantrell, Deever, and a youth known as the Texas Kid.

"We haven't seen anything of Fitch," O'Hara said to his companion.

"We've both been in the cabin and didn't happen to look out as he passed."

"Count on me, Old Top."

"Think I'd better get my revolver. I don't trust Sanderson."

"You're speaking for me, too."

When they returned to the door at the cabin half a dozen members of the posse were dismounting. They were about a hundred yards from the house. Sanderson shouted to them. "We want that bird Fitch an' we're gonna get him."

"Who?" called back O'Hara.

"Fitch. That's who. Send him out to us."

"There's nobody here but us. Come and see for yourself."

The men approached cautiously, keeping the two at the door covered. O'Hara kept an eye on Sanderson. He was of the opinion that the man would take this occasion, if he could find any excuse at all, to settle the grudge he held against him.

The Ingram men moved past them, drooping spurs jingling, and poured into the house. Four or five stayed outside to keep an eye on the tenderfoot. Among these last was Quantrell.

"Who is this fellow and what's he done?" O'Hara asked.

"Fitch, the bird calls himself. He gunned Two-Ace Burke from ambush. I reckon you know all about it," Quantrell answered.

"We don't. Where did it happen? Is Burke badly hurt?"

"He'll never be deader," the lad replied caustically. "We buried him in Boot Hill this mornin'."

Men trooped from the house. "Not there," one of them announced.

"No, but he's been there," the Texas Kid announced. "He had breakfast right in that room. Fitch never was thorough. I know that bird. He didn't wash his cup an' plate."

"Some one had breakfast here. You're right about that," O'Hara admitted. "We just go back from the camp where our boys are branding. Whoever this fellow was he's gone before we got here."

"What's the use of foolin' with these pilgrims?" Sanderson cut in savagely. "They know where Fitch is at. They'll tell us or we'll bump 'em off right now."

"Sure they know." This from a freckle-faced cowboy named Buck Grogan. He was a brother of the man known as the Texas Kid.

"They've thrown in with Steelman and his outfit," spoke up a big rangy fellow whose right cheek bulged from a wad of tobacco. "Been livin' up at his place. Betcha the Old Man's backin' this very ranch."

O'Hara looked around on them, brown competent men, hard-visaged, ruthless. They had ridden hard and

far for vengeance. He realized that they were not going to be particular where the blow fell. If they could not find Fitch they might strike at the men who they thought were protecting him. Any adherent of Wes Steelman would do, given a reasonable excuse. He could not understand the psychology of such people. There was Bob Quantrell, for instance. He had been friendly with Smith-Beresford. He had protected them both. But Garrett knew that now he would not lift a hand to save them if Sanderson or the others moved to strike.

Quantrell spoke. "I'm going up to that bunch of timber an' comb it. Three-four of you fellows come along with me. We'll take care of these gents when we get back."

Three men followed Quantrell to the horses. The four mounted and rode toward the grove.

O'Hara caught the eye of his partner and the two edged back toward the cabin. Very soon the riders would make a discovery, one which might have a disastrous reaction in precipitating trouble.

"We've nothing against any of you," O'Hara explained. "We have started here as peaceable ranchers. If we can we want to be friendly with our neighbors. There's room for all of us, a wide range, plenty of grass."

From the timber above a shot rang out, followed by a puff of smoke.

"Dad gum it, they've got him!" the Texas Kid cried, and he started up the hill on foot.

Three men followed him. The others stayed to watch the partners. Among those who remained was Shep Sanderson.

Garrett flung a glance toward the battle ground and saw that the attackers were drawing closer to their prey. He heard voices in parley. The shots ceased.

A shout came down to them. "He's give up."

Men emerged from the timber. The one who moved in the center of the little group, the prisoner, walked with a limp. Evidently he had been wounded.

Sanderson chose that moment, before his companions above could reach him to object, for his revenge. He fired from the hip. O'Hara felt the shock of the bullet. It had struck his cartridge belt at the buckle and glanced off, though he did not know until later that he was not severely wounded.

What followed came so rapidly that there was no orderly sequence to it in O'Hara's mind. He could hear the roar of guns, his own among them. A flash of flame seared his shoulder. His companion staggered, leaned against the door jamb, and cried, "I'm hit." He moved through lanes of fire. Figures loomed up in the smoke and vanished. Some one pushed close against him, striking with a knife. He pressed the revolver against yielding flesh and pulled the trigger. The man gave way with a groan that was half a scream.

O'Hara's revolver was empty. He was in the doorway now, astride the prostrate body of his partner, though how he had got there he did not know. Out of the fog of smoke a face loomed. He flung the empty weapon at it, stooped, and snatched up the six-shooter of his friend. There was no conscious volition on his part. The .45 began to roar.

One moment the day was filled with the fury of battle. The next the sound of it had died away. O'Hara's enemies were falling back, driven into retreat by the steadiness of his fire.

Once more his revolver hammer clicked on an empty chamber. Garrett dropped the weapon, stooped, and picked up his partner. He carried him into the house and laid him on a bed, then swiftly set about putting the cabin into a state of defense. Bolting the back door, he barricaded it with a trunk. He drew the window curtains. Another trunk he pushed into the front doorway, then dragged a mattress there and propped it up in front of the trunk as a protection against bullets.

All this had taken him scarcely a score of seconds. From a rack he drew rifles, a repeating Winchester for one, and two of Smith-Beresford's hunting guns brought with him from England.

From behind the trunk and mattress O'Hara looked in the situation. Two men were wounded seriously. He could see them lying on the ground where their companions had dragged them. Most of the others were gathered in a group near the horses. Sanderson, waving a bandanna meant for a flag of truce, had stepped a few yards forward from the rest.

Garrett felt, as he had more than once in the past weeks, that odd lift of the spirit that came with danger. He was wounded in two places. His companion lay helpless on the bed. A dozen desperate men, all heavily armed, were ready to swoop down on him. But he had proved his mettle. He had fought them, one against four, and driven them into retreat. These killers could and they probably would destroy him and his friend. But he knew, with an exultant thrill of racing blood, that he was not afraid of them;

and he knew, too, that there would be no safety in surrender. Two of them had been wounded by him, perhaps mortally. The others would have their revenge, Sanderson would see to that.

From the bed came a faint murmur.

"Hold the fort, Old Top."

"No use to give up. Sanderson would never let us get away alive. . . . Badly hurt, Lyulph?"

"About all I can carry, old chap. In the chest."

"Sorry. I'm hit in the shoulder and the stomach, but I feel pretty strong yet. Wonder if they'll rush the place."

Garrett could see the enemy grouped in consultation. Presently the men scattered. They were spreading out to surround the house. A bullet struck the trunk in front of him. Another plowed into the mattress. The Winchester in his hands barked an answer.

Apparently they had settled down to a siege. O'Hara could count at least five foes in the fan-shaped open space in front of him. They were all behind cover, but the flashes of their weapons told him where they lay. Three or



He Moved Through Lanes of Fire.

four were back of the stable with the horses and the prisoner. The others had disappeared. It was an easy guess that they were making a wide circuit to take him in the rear.

The besieged man slipped back from the doorway, leaving the barrel of the rifle showing beside the mattress. He dragged another of his partner's trunks to the back door and piled it on top of the first one. Lifting the table to the window, he put it on a box and nailed the top of it to the frame in such a way as to cover the glass entirely.

He hurried to his place in the doorway, fired two shots, and withdrew again to give his friend water in a dipper. "How're you feeling?" he asked.

His friend grinned feebly. "Boiler damaged. Can't get up steam." From time to time he coughed up blood.

Garrett went back to his post. There was nothing he could do for his companion and he could not leave the doorway for long at a time. He heard the sound of shots from the rear and the spat of the lead against the logs. The enemy had him completely surrounded now.

He waited for the next billow of smoke in front, fired at it, and put down the rifle. Unfastening the belt around his waist, he looked for the stomach wound. There was nothing there but a bruise where the metal

buckle had been driven against the flesh. Undoubtedly the clasp had deflected the bullet and saved his life.

Hour after hour the siege dragged on. Smith-Beresford became delirious. Garrett bathed his face and chest, gave him water to drink, and left a wet cloth on his forehead.

The young lawyer knew that his own fever was mounting. The wound in his shoulder pained a good deal. It was his guess that the bullet had smashed a bone.

Grinly he recognized the fact that the attackers were paying him a compliment by their caution. They might have rushed the cabin and ended the affair in two minutes. Evidently they counted the cost as too great to pay. The men he had wounded were a sufficient object lesson to them.

What were they up to now? A wagon was being pushed from the back of the barn and headed toward the house. Four or five men were behind it. They were using it as a cover for their approach. Snipers from right and left kept up a steady fire to prevent his concentrating on the wagon.

The wheels of the wagon slewed to the right. A man crept forward to straighten them. Garrett drew a bead on him and fired. The man stumbled over his own foot and plunged to the ground. His body twitched and lay still. The others deserted the wagon and fled for the shelter of the barn.

The shot had been a lucky one for Garrett. But it decided the fate of the prisoner Fitch. One of the log rafters of the barn projected from the roof. The unfortunate man was led beneath this, a rope around his neck. The other end was thrown over the rafter. Before Garrett's eyes they hanged the cowboy.

It was a thing horrible to see. This boy they were hanging was no criminal. But he was no weakling. There was in him the stiff hardwood that frontier life begets. The rope already around his throat, he borrowed tobacco, rolled a cigarette, and smoked it. His horse was brought. He was helped into the saddle. As they started to lead the animal away he sprang into the air to make the fall of his body more violent.

Garrett turned away, sick at heart. He had to look again, to see what the enemy was about. They were gathered in a group discussing something heatedly. Plainly they disagreed. But the young man in the cabin knew that his affairs had come to a crisis. He heard a voice raised in sudden anger. A man detached himself from the group. "By cripes, I'll smoke the pilgrim out if I play a lone hand. What you birds need is sand in your craws."

The speaker was Bob Quantrell. He walked to a horse and flung himself into a saddle. He reined the animal around savagely to face the cabin. The bronco went into the air sunfishing, came down, bucked up all humped-backed, and landed with legs as stiff as stakes. The rider had not yet found the stirrups. He lost his balance and shot through the air to the ground. Instantly he was on his feet again, running to catch the bridle.

Before he was in the saddle a second time an interruption occurred. Two riders, a man and a woman, galloped across the open toward the stable. The man was Dave Ingram, the woman Barbara Steelman.

Ingram dragged his pony to a halt and leaped to the ground.

"What's all this?" he demanded.

Deever moved forward. "These pilgrims have done killed Brad Sovers an' wounded three more of us. I don't reckon Pankey will make the grade."

"Who started it?" demanded Ingram.

The Texas Kid answered him. The young fellow had a blood-stained

handkerchief, tied around his arm.

"We got to fannin' smoke all together, looks like."

The leader of the faction turned to Quantrell. "What was you aimin' to do, Bob, when you put on this exhibition of fancy ridin'?"

"Smoke 'em out, by cripes! Show this bunch of quitters a tenderfoot can't bluff me out."

Ingram looked with an impassive face at the swaying body of the dead cowboy. "I see you got Fitch. Don't you reckon that's about enough for one gather? Suppose you leave this for me. Before we go any farther I'd like to know who got on the hook first. An' why?"

"They did," Sanderson blustered. "They fixed Tom Fitch up with breakfast an' then they hid him out on us. Soon as we found him that pilgrim O'Hara began to fan smoke right away."

"How many in the cabin?"

Bob Quantrell answered, jeering at his companion and himself, "You got a surprise comin', Ingram. One live tenderfoot an' one dead one. The live pilgrim shot up considerable. Too much for the boys. They're allowin' to crawl off with their tails between their legs."

Barbara wanted to hear no more. One of her friends was dead and the other wounded. Her place was with them, not here. She touched her pony with the spur and the animal jumped to a canter. Straight toward the house she rode.

Too late Ingram understood her intention. Her horse had covered one-third of the distance before he could make a move.

"Ladies' choice," murmured Quantrell insolently. "Right hands to yore pardners an' brand right an' left. Everybody waltz. I'll be doggoned if I don't begin to like the Hashknife outfit better than the Diamond Tail. No yellow in their stock, looks like."

Ingram looked at the young desperado coldly.

"Perhaps you'd like to join them," he said.

Unexpectedly Quantrell's answer jumped back at him, a sharp acceptance of the challenge. "You're d-d whistlin' I would. No complaints against you, Ingram, but I don't like the company I'm keepin'."

He backed warily toward his horse, rifle in hand. The boy's buck teeth showed in a snarl as he drew up his lip. The cold light blue eyes passed in little stabbing glances from one to another. He was ready at an instant's warning to begin flinging bullets.

No man moved to prevent him from going. They could shoot him down. That was certain. But not without loss. He was as quick, as accurate, and as deadly as a coiled rattlesnake.

"Don't push on the reins," Ingram said quietly. "Think it over awhile."

"No, sir. When I'm through I'm through. Anybody got any objections?" Again his eyes darted from one to another, trying to read and forestall the intentions of these ruffians with whom he was parting company.

If there were any objections none was expressed by anybody except Ingram.

"You're liable to rue this, Quantrell," his employer said.

"Not none," the boy replied curtly.

He reached his horse. Warily he edged behind it, not for one moment lifting his eyes from the group he had left. His hand felt for the bridle, his foot for the stirrup. He swung to the saddle, backed the horse behind the stable, whirled it in its tracks, and dashed for the pines, looking back as he rode.

Garrett O'Hara watched with amazement as Barbara swung her cow pony and put it at a canter toward the cabin. She slipped from the saddle and moved to the door while he dragged aside the mattress to make way for her.

Once inside, she looked at him, eyes dilating with fear.

"Are you hurt—badly?" she asked.

"In the shoulder. I'll be all right. Afraid Lyulph is badly hurt. They hit him in the chest."

She looked at the bed where the delirious man lay tossing. "I'll take care of him. Watch out they don't rush the house. I don't think Mr. Ingram will let them, but I'm not sure."

Barbara made preparations to do what she could for the man on the bed. Once more Garrett lay down back of his rampart and took stock of the enemy. Ingram appeared to be issuing orders to his men. They hitched horses to a wagon, put hay in the bed of it, and lifted the two most seriously wounded of the posse into the wagon, after which the team was driven away, followed by most of the riders. One man stayed with Ingram.

Garrett reported the proceedings to Barbara.

"Wonder what he's up to," she said, moistening a bandage.

"He's coming toward the house—alone."

The girl ran to the door. "He hasn't even drawn a six-shooter. He wants to talk. Let him come in if he wants to."

Garrett drew back and the cattle man pushed his way into the house.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### Two-Dollar Bill Called "Just Darned Nuisance"

The idea that there is something unlucky about the \$2 bill—so that many persons fear the corners of them to avert misfortune—occasionally arouses curiosity.

A number of our readers have written in with suggestions to account for the belief in the unfortunateness of this particular note. One, however, a merchant in Pennsylvania, says from his experience as a retailer that "there is no question of superstition in connection with the \$2 bill, it is just a darned nuisance."

"There is no compartment provided in our cash register for them," he writes, "and when we are handed one by a customer we have to secrete it away somewhere until we get a

chance to pass it on to the bank. We can't very well hand it out to another customer for change, that is if we want to retain their good will."

"The only possible use it has is when some one purchases a 2-cent stamp and hands us a \$20 bill in payment. Then we can get back at him by unloading all the \$2 bills we have on hand."—Literary Digest.

### Somewhat Out of Place

The place was crowded. It wasn't exactly a fashionable wedding, but there was no gainsaying the interest it caused, because both bride and bridegroom had been much in the public eye, she as an actress, he as a conjurer.

Everything went well until they reached the critical stage of the proceedings, and the clergyman asked for the ring.

The bridegroom plunged his hand into his pocket and brought out a rabbit. Then the horrified look in the clergyman's eyes and a startled exclamation from the bride made him realize that something was wrong. He looked down and saw the rabbit.

### "Higher Place" Explained

Jack was the cause of much trouble to his parents. At school he was always at the foot of the class. One day, however, he came flying home.

"Dad—mum, I have got a higher place in the class," he cried.

His father gave him a dollar.

"Now, Jack," he asked, "how did you gain promotion to a higher place?"

"Well, it's like this, dad," said the young hopeful. "My desk is being mended."

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**"English Spoken," of Course**  
The tourist of a few years ago in Paris from England or the United States, desiring to make some purchases, would be likely to be influenced in his visits to the stores by the signs seen at regular intervals—"English Spoken," but these legends have gradually disappeared for the reason that every large store and hotel and many of the smaller ones have some one around who can converse with English people. In fact, one of the few signs of this character to be seen at present, reads: "English Spoken, of Course."

**Not Possible**  
"Do you believe in that old saying, 'marry in haste, repent at leisure'?" quavers a Louisville lad. "Soh," instructed the editor, "that's just an old threadbare platitude. Who ever heard of a fellow who married in haste having any leisure in which to repent?"

Though the horse goes, he leaves behind him the measure of all mechanical energy in that word "horse-power."

**Mother of Four Babies**

"Although I am only 22 years old, I have four babies to care for. Before my first baby was born my mother urged me to take Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound because I was so terribly weak. I had to lie down four or five times a day. After three bottles I could feel a great improvement. I still take the Vegetable Compound whenever I need it for it gives me strength to be a good mother to my family."—Mrs. Vern L. Dennings, 510 Johnson Street, Saginaw, Michigan.

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**W. N. U., BALTIMORE, NO. 50-1920.**