

The Free Press Short Story

DEAD MAN'S GULCH

By MARIANNE C. GAUSS

Of very long after Mickey Temple went away there came one of those wild, gusty afternoons very common in the Rockies during the spring. The blast fore about the mountain cabin he had abandoned, and stiffened the clouds in those fields he left half plowed. His sister, Martha, would plow this year.

Under her blue cotton dress and old sweater, the heart of the tall, good-looking girl surged angrily. As she struggled to operate the corn crusher, her hands—bleed, for the machine was old, and needed oil so much that much of the power of her strong young arms was lost in friction. The iron protested squeakily in very much the tone employed by members of the household when they were asked to do any work. Now and then there was a growl of discontent from its dusty throat, like Mickey's surly grumbling. It was impossible, Martha reflected, to get anything done without a quarrel.

Her brother especially was always grumbling about the state of affairs. Maybe, she reflected resentfully, he had thought she enjoyed her hard work on the farm since father died. Perhaps she thought she liked to give up college, and everything else.

The younger sisters came out while Martha fed the stock. "Say, Martha," piped the curly-haired twin, "I saw that dog of brother's, way over by Dead Man's Gulch."

The indignant color mounted in the older girl's face. It was about Ivan Ivanovich, that she and Mickey had their last quarrel the morning of the day he went away forever. He had paid a price which she thought was too high for the Russian wolfhound, and she had refused to allow the animal to come into the dooryard. Evidently it had not considered the place homelike either, for it had gone away. Martha disturbed her younger sister, sharply. "If Ivan comes around here, I'll shoot him."

The other twin lifted sweet, grave eyes. "Do you hate Ivan, Marfa?" "Why, of course not," rebuked the curly-haired one. "She hates Mickey, for goin' off—that's why she'd kill his dog."

The tall sister turned a startled face. "I don't hate Mickey. What put that in your head, Eva?" "You acted like it when he was home." "Well, I certainly do not hate Mickey. I only—only disapprove of his actions, running off and leaving me with the spring plowing. I'd shoot that dog because he's likely to kill sheep."

The child's words rankled in Martha's mind all day. The older girl thought of a time when Mickey had wanted to make himself a violin, and she threw the wood and other materials into the heap. In the evening when the three went into the kitchen, darkness was beginning to fall. Martha remembered her brother's dislike of burned meat. If some of the bacon was burned, she used to help him to that, because she disliked flinty people.

Mrs. Temple was looking ill to-night, fretting about her son. She thought to believe he had run away from them, despite the note Martha had found tucked away under the few rough clothes in his trunk, saying that the family lived like cats and dogs and he was sick of it.

Bessie, the lame sister, had thought of an explanation. "I do believe Mickey wrote that note months ago, but because he couldn't think about running away, he stayed on. I am afraid something dreadful has happened to him."

The older sister could scarcely listen to this fantastic explanation. When Bessie and mother had worked themselves up to believe that Mickey had met some terrible fate, she snuffed, and turned restlessly in her chair. "I dare say a hawk picked him up, out in the hills or the cat got him, around the barn. We'll never see him again!" she exclaimed sarcastically, "anyhow, not till he gets hungry."

A silence fell on the household. Martha could hear the wind which was hurrying balls of last year's tumble weed at a furious rate across a clearing. The Wasekatchan River looked like blood in the sunset. Far away wound the wild trail toward the peak, along which one descended to Dead Man's Gulch. High on this path the pine trees fought the wind. Martha stole to the window and looked unceasingly toward the gulch. Once, up yonder, a tourist had fallen into a crevice and nobody ever knew what became of him.

The girl watched till the sunset faded. Once the blowing shadow of a tree deceived her into believing she saw a boyish figure coming along the path. "I'm going to bed, I have to be up at four," she said.

After a time Martha fell asleep, but she dreamed of Mickey. She had burned the bacon and he had gone away hungry. She was sorry then when she went up and down the mountain, hunting him in vain. She awoke suddenly, and sat up in bed. From her window she could see the peak, gleaming white under the moon. The wind had gone down, and there was intense stillness over the world. The collie had waked her, barking indignantly as if there was an intruder about. Suddenly the yapping ceased as the animal dived under the barn for shelter.

The girl rose, hurried into her clothes,

and went softly down the kitchen stairs. She opened the door and stood listening into the night. Little, crackling sounds in the bushes greeted her ears and a dying puff of wind blew into her eyes some sweet-smelling petals from the wild cherry-trees.

"Now into the square of light on the ground, whining, and trying to lick her shoes, came the hulking figure of the Russian wolfhound. The girl screamed, half in terror, half in expectation, and the dog whimpered. "Ivan? Ivan Ivanovich? As she pronounced his name, Mickey's dog sprang up to lay his paws on her breast. "Where's Mickey, Ivan? Find Mickey!"

A whine of distress was the answer. "Oh, you bad dog, not to find Mickey!" Ivan leaped about her, excitedly. "Shall I go with you, Ivan? Shall we find Mickey?" The dog bounded against Martha again, almost throwing her to the ground. As she turned toward the house to call one of the twins to accompany her, the dog thought she was not going, and started away. Without further delay, then, the girl ran after him.

She hurried across the ash heap, where old tin cans and rubbish were thrown. There was a little crash as she stepped on a thin piece of wood, whittled into a shape like the sounding board of a violin. Martha breathed hard, but did not stop, for Ivan had leaped the fence, and was off like a bullet toward the high trail.

Moonlight here made the path look as though it were covered with snow. A weed which had just burst into bloom, lifted ghostly white candles of buds in the middle of the trail. The rough shoes of the walker made a loud scuffling sound; but the great dog slipped along as

quietly as a shadow. The girl entered the dark grove where the ground was slippery with pine needles. Ivan was not to be seen anywhere. To the left, a fairly well-beaten trail led toward the peak, which gleamed in its snow above her. The other way, the ground shelved abruptly, and a path which soon lost itself among the rocks, wound downward toward Dead Man's Gulch.

Martha stood trembling, not knowing which way to go. Most likely Mickey had tried to climb the peak. She whistled and called, and the great dog finally returned to her. Two hobcobs flashed, spitting at her, out of sight. Ivan dashed after them, and it was some time before she could get him to return.

Now he led her to a little arroyo, where it was very dark, and there was a drip and tinkle of water. Here he stopped suddenly, whimpering. He was standing beside something in the black shadow of a fallen tree. The girl's heart throbbed until her breath came gaspingly. She felt for matches, but could find none. Could she bear to put out her hand in the dark? What would it touch? She cried out huskily when it fell on something cold—Ivan's nose. He was pointing out a hard, stiff object which Martha now drew into the light. It was the coil of rope Mickey had carried that day when he went out to look for stray cattle.

"Go on, Ivan! Find Mickey!" At this command, the big dog scrambled up into the moonlight, where he stood in tall grass, mariposas, and the painted cup growing around him. "Find Mickey!" she repeated.

The dog scrambled over a difficult slope covered with loose rock, on the left of which was a thorny grove of wild fruit trees. Suddenly Martha following, saw, opening before her, a black, and jagged defile, and knew she stood on the verge of Dead Man's Gulch. The chasm was almost impenetrable to the sight except that far below, through a gash in the rock, moonlight slanted on the dead tops of aspen trees.

"Which way now, Ivan?" begged Martha. The dog merely leaped about her, or whimpered shrilly at the edge of the cliff. She peered over the edge. Moonlight here made the path look as though it were covered with snow. A weed which had just burst into bloom, lifted ghostly white candles of buds in the middle of the trail. The rough shoes of the walker made a loud scuffling sound; but the great dog slipped along as

went over the edge, and came to rest on a ledge not far below. She had not known there were any ledges. She paused again, listening to the lapping she had heard before. Then, suddenly, a great idea came to her. Mickey was at times subject to a kind of quinsy, which used to take his voice. In a flash she had turned back to the brink of Dead Man's Gulch. She leaned far over, and shouted, "Oh, Mickey, are you on a ledge? Three taps for 'Yes.' Are you hurt?" after pausing a moment, and receiving no answer, she called again, "Wait, I'm climbing down to you."

She swung herself carefully to the bough of a cedar. For a moment Martha found herself hanging, poised above a black chasm. Then her body spun around as her foot searched for the trunk of the tree. In a moment she had crawled down the tree far enough to set her foot carefully on a jutting rock. She made her way to the place from which the choking sound was again coming. Mickey lay there unable to move. "Oh, Mickey, Mickey!" sobbed the sister, "you've been here two days with only burned biscuits to eat."

"I was more interested in quantity than quality. You gave me a heap of 'em, Martha." The boy's head fell back, as he was trying to laugh. He had fainted.

The girl rubbed his face with snow until he returned to consciousness. Then she left him to get men who could lift the helpless boy to the top by means of ropes and stretchers. When Martha had seen to this, she rushed home to have beef tea prepared, and blankets warmed.

Mickey was too exhausted to talk when he first arrived home, but later he and his sister had a good long chat together. "I've been thinking, Mart," the former said, "you've had it pretty hard. I think our house has been like a bum machine. We've lost a lot of our power in friction—scrapping."

"I'm hateful, too—" "You've been the best sister in Alberta, and I was wondering, Sis, if we all pulled together, couldn't you go to college? You might start right soon, now, go a term, stay home awhile and do extension work—" "And you could take violin in town!" Brother and sister beamed, and the rift between them was closed forever. Martha graduated at the Normal a few years later with honors and a teacher's certificate. Mickey took his

lessons and joined an orchestra in town. The younger girls carried out their plans, too, and the farm seemed to improve every year.

"I don't see how you folks manage," enviously commented a neighbor boy. "At our house we're always driven to death on account of that lazy Jacob. I scold him all the time, too."

Mickey and Martha, listening, grinned together.

BIOLOGICALLY TESTED FISH OILS IN POULTRY FEEDING

Fish liver and body oils are the most efficient practical sources of Vitamins A and D which are essential to growth and normal bone formation respectively for poultry. In addition the complete absence or serious depletion of the former from the ration of growing or mature birds brings about a condition known as avitaminosis, which may have serious results and will cause loss of health and production and finally death. Similarly, avitaminosis D causes rickets in young chicks with consequent cessation of development and death and in mature fowl less often a ricketic condition, cessation of production and depletion of the skeletal structure. The importance of these vitamins to normal well being and productivity of poultry will be readily appreciated, particularly in view of the demands made upon utility poultry today. It is essential therefore that an adequate source of these vitamins be supplied. The vitamin A and D content of fish oils varies greatly according to the season of the year, the type of food available to the fish from which the oil comes and the care given to the oil in handling and refining. The only accurate method of determining the vitamin content of these oils at the present time is through the biological test, which consists in determining the ability of a representative sample of any oil to support normal growth and bone development at certain levels of feeding to young rats or preferably to chicks. Since these oils represent the most expensive ingredient of the ration, although fed only in small amounts, it may be poor economy to buy oils of uncertain vitamin content if biologically tested poultry oils are available. If biologically tested oils are not used it is recommended that oil be obtained from one or other of the reputable manufacturers of poultry oils, who produce a consistently high grade product.

MAYBE THEY'RE FIVE DAY WEEKERS

A teacher gave the following problem to her pupils: If a woman gathers five eggs a day, how many eggs would she gather in a week?

After studying for a few minutes, William, with a puzzled brow, inquired: "Teacher, do hens lay on Sundays?"

FEELING THE WONDER OF IT ALL

Amelia Earhart was expected to arrive in about half an hour. The police were clearing the plaza before the old City Hall of New York, and captains were stationing their men at strategic places to control the crowds, while professional announcers tested the amplifiers.

"The crowd is not as big as on former, similar occasions," a man remarked to me. Subsequently, I learned that it compared very well with the former receptions, but for the time being I was inclined to agree with my new acquaintance.

"They are getting used to these welcomes to celebrities," I said. "Yes," he nodded, "they are getting used to it. Even a solo flight across the Atlantic. Our curiosity is always on the alert for something new. The more we have the more we want."

"What that we separated, the police becoming very active in our direction, but his last words lingered. "The more we have, the more we want." He did not refer to the amassing of wealth, but to our craving for ever new sensations. If the new thrills fail to arrive, we become bored with

"The more we have, the more we want," because we never really have it. When the first aeroplanes flew over our heads, we stood still and stared. It was amazing. If then we had only taken the time to ponder the miracle until we exclaimed, "How wonderful are the works of man," and in the next breath prayerfully, "How wonderful are thy works, O God," we would have taken a long step toward overcoming the morbid and shallow curiosity that is always eager to skip from thrill to thrill.

That would have deepened our capacity of appreciation, and enabled our hearts to meet the next marvel with God.

DID YOU EVER STOP TO THINK?

By Edson R. Waite, Shawnee, Oklahoma

This city that anguishes to something is the city that makes better business for local concerns its chief industry. It is said that in ancient China, and even in parts of modern China, the head of the family only pays the family physician so long as the household remains in good health. When illness prevails or when a patient dies, there is no payment. Not a bad idea!

Carrying the gospel of your city into new fields, as well as reviving interest in your old ones, is what this newspaper is doing.

When the country was faced with the first chill winds of the Economy wave, it was applying the brakes to the wheels of trade. It is going to take plenty of newspaper advertising to get them into motion again.

Every day we hear over the radio some silver-tongued orator telling us in ringing tones about this and that method of saving our country. When he has exhausted all the words in his vocabulary to describe all the sins being committed by the opposition party against the country, he turns to his stock of fairy tales and, skillfully using thick layers of blarney, exquisitely renders a picture of his side of the question. They make the mistake of not realizing that those who listen to these talks are human; they have ears and minds and they do not forget the near past and present.

The man that likes everybody is usually the man that everybody likes. Opportunities for great savings are found in the advertising columns of this newspaper.

NOT MUCH LOSS

There were two Browns in the village, both fishermen. One lost his wife and the other lost his boat at about the same time. The vicar's wife called, as she supposed, on the widower, but really on the Brown whose boat was lost. "I'm sorry to hear of your great loss," she said. "Oh, it ain't much matter," was the reply. "She wasn't up to much."

"Indeed!" said the surprised lady. "Yes," continued Brown. "She was a rickety old thing. I offered her to my mate, but he wouldn't have her. I've had my eye on old Tom Ross' for some time."

THIS



You save \$42 on this wonderful new Electric Ironer and Presser—Irons everything from lace to bed sheets. Presses clothes like an expert cleaning house. With furnace deal you get it for half price.

Regular Price \$85.00 **\$42.50**
With Furnace

THIS



You save \$57.50 on this Magic Coal Blower. Forced draft allows you to save 50% on coal bills and get thermostat controlled heat. Set it and forget it. You get this blower for half price with furnace deal.

Regular price \$115.00 **\$57.50**
With Furnace

THIS



You save \$67.50 on one of the finest washers ever made. Porcelain tub, large, soft wringer, silent direct power—gem in color and beauty. Get it for half price with this furnace deal.

Regular Price \$135.00 **\$67.50**
With Furnace

OR THIS



You save \$124 on this Snowbird Electric Refrigerator. Interior of beautiful snowy porcelain, extra large capacity, quick freezing control, wonderfully quiet. Realize your wish for an Electric Refrigerator NOW—get one for half price with this furnace deal.

Regular Price \$248.00 **\$124.00**
With Furnace

at HALF PRICE

When ordered with

THIS OR THIS

GILSON FURNACE

Order your furnace now from Gilson, and get a beautiful Snowbird Electric Refrigerator —OR a wonderful new Electric Ironer and Presser —OR a high grade Electric Washer —OR a fuel saving Blower at HALF PRICE. Any one of these at HALF PRICE with a Gilson Furnace.

This is a time when straight thinking pays. This offer carries no profit for us, but it allows us to keep more skilled workmen employed, ready to handle business which is now definitely increasing month by month. Meanwhile, you can take advantage of our special offer, and secure some much desired comforts for your home at half price, while buying the furnace you will ultimately need at the lowest prices in our history.

No Strings to This Offer

Not one cent has been added to the prices of our furnaces for this offer—the Refrigerators, Ironers, Washers and Blowers are from regular stock, first class and fully guaranteed.

Phone our dealer below—or go and see him. This is an opportunity in a thousand for everyone who needs a new furnace. Easiest terms arranged. Satisfaction guaranteed by

This is the Gilson MAGIC warm air heating plant. It is, first—a DUSTLESS furnace, because it is made from electrically welded steel. A solid steel surface, without joints, prevents the smallest speck of dust from getting into your rooms. Second, it is a FUEL SAVING furnace, because it radiates heat 3 times faster than an ordinary furnace, and special grates assure maximum combustion. This is one of the furnaces we are now featuring in our special offer.

The Gilson Mfg. Co. Ltd.
Guelph Ontario

FRANK MOONEY
ACTON, ONTARIO

This is one of the Gilson All-Cast and Semi-Cast warm air heating plants. It is a favorite with many home-owners and builders. Next to the Gilson MAGIC all-steel furnace, this is one of the most efficient heating plants ever made. It gives volumes of clean, warm air, with a uniformly low fuel consumption. This is one of the most efficient heating plants ever made.

Call Your Nearest Gilson Dealer