

# Second Time West

by  
T. C. BRIDGES

CHAPTER XXIX  
OUT OF THE AIR

Sam Loy interrupted.  
"Missee Joan, she write letter," he said in his flat voice.

"Then why didn't you give it to me?" growled Dave, as he tore it open.

"She ain't gone to Loomis, Ward—she's gone to Piedra." Ward's eyes widened.

"What for?"

"She don't say," Dave frowned. "It's a long ride, Ward."

"Joan's range bred. She'll do it all right. But I'd like to know what notion she's got in that pretty head of hers."

"Well know to-morrow," Dave told him. "She's coming back right away."

"But where'll she stay?" Ward wanted to know.

"With my nephew, Mark Logan and his wife. I gave her a letter to 'em this morning." He lowered his voice. "She didn't want to stay here when she thought Jim was coming back." Ward nodded.

"It's a dirty shame, Dave! She and Jim is just made for one another."

"That's a fact," Dave said simply.

"But you know how Jim's fixed."

"I know all about that," Ward answered, "but it don't look like any girl will get him if he don't do something about it."

"Farne won't give him up very easy, ward. I reckon they got that gaol well guarded."

"And the trials," Ward added. "Do you reckon it's any use writing to the Governor of the State, Dave?" Dave shook his head.

"He can't interfere with a regular trial, Ward. And seeing as Farne has given Joan a week it looks like he was going to stage this business to make it seem legal. And him and that snide sheriff will fix it. They got plenty evidence to hang Jim for shooting Wesley Garritt," Ward shrugged.

"Likely you're right, Dave. Then all we got to do is hire every good man we can find and make a fight for it."

"We'll start right away," Dave agreed. "All I hopes is that Farne ain't lying when he says he'll give Joan a week."

"He ain't," said Ward. "I just remembered that the tax sale is Friday next. That's week to-morrow. Farne wants that off his mind before he starts anything else. With Jim in prison and us kept out of Loomis, he reckons there won't be no competition."

It was not till late next day that Joan returned. She was tired, and, no wonder, for in all she had ridden more than seventy miles. Dave waited to hear what she had to say, but all she told him was that she had seen Mark Logan and his wife, and liked them both, and that Mark had promised to find work for her. Yet there was about her an air of subdued excitement which puzzled Dave. He, however, was too busy to think much of anything else. They couldn't do much. All the country to the south was desert, and the few small ranchers to the north and west were too scared of Farne to come in against him. The whole force that Dave and Ward could raise between them was only a score, while Farne had

double that number of gunmen, say nothing to his hangers-on in Loomis.

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Ward suggested that they raid the town on Thursday night, but, to his surprise, Joan was against it. For some reason of her own she wanted to wait until Morales arrived. Ward and Dave both noticed that Joan's excitement had increased. She ate little and slept badly.

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