

Lassoed by a Girl.

AN ADVENTURE IN TEXAS.

Oldo John Diorn owns a ranch and several thousand head of cattle. The ranch is located on the western plains of Texas, about the headwaters of the tributaries of the Guadaloupe. He has three daughters, who have been looking after his herd for several years. It is the boast of these girls that no mustang has ever been able to shake one of them from his back. They are fearless riders, and can hurl a lariat with a precision that many a cowboy envies. Since the death of their only brother, Julius Diorn, who was killed by cattle thieves a few years ago, these young women have ridden after cattle, repaired windmills, killed wolves, and frequently branded calves. They have experienced many exciting adventures, one of which is told as follows.

One Sunday morning not long ago Norma, who is the oldest of the three, started out on her pony to "ride" the wire fence of a small pasture, a couple of miles from the house. "Riding a wire fence" is making a tour of inspection to see that the wires are all up and the posts solid. As the girl started out she swung the belt of her Winchester over the gate post, remarking that she was not going far and would not need a gun. She was hardly out of sight before an immense Mexican lion sprang out in the road in front of the pony. The beast gave a few loud roars, and then disappeared in the direction of a small bunch of cows and calves.

Starting her pony at full speed and yelling at the lion as if she possessed the power in her voice to paralyse all wild beasts, she rode straight towards the terror-stricken cattle, coming up with them just as the lion sprang upon the neck of a calf, crushing it to the earth.

The old cows instantly charged the lion, and the mother of the calf gave him such an ugly thrust with her sharp horns that he was forced to relinquish his hold on his prey. The sight of the trembling, frightened little calf aroused the girl's ire, and, swinging her rope over her head, she rode at the lion.

The girl screamed at the lion and urged her pony to pursue him. The beast frequently looked back and snarled threateningly, but he failed to find courage enough to offer battle. Suddenly it occurred to the girl that there was no reason why she could not choke the lion to death. She swung her lariat over her head, and as the trained pony sprang forward dropped the noose about the lion's neck. The pony instantly braced himself on his haunches, digging his fore feet into the ground, and the lion turned a somersault, striking the earth with his head towards his pursuers. The girl hoped she had broken the beast's neck, but he was only badly stunned, and the pain that he suffered seemed to increase his rage and courage.

Crouching and emitting a roar, he sprang into the air with all his strength, expecting to land on the pony's neck and tear his pursuers to fragments. The agile little horse turned just in time to feel the claws of the lion grazing his haunches.

All Western horses entertain a horror of those lions, for one of their tricks is to lie in ambush on the limb of a tree near where the horses are in the habit of drinking. From these hiding places they fall upon young colts and devour them. The Texas pony knows the Mexican lion, and he fears him more than all other enemies.

So, instantly as the lion sprang forward, the pony began to run. The rope was tense, and, if she had wished to do it, the girl could not have unfastened the lariat from the saddle horn. Moreover, she knew the chances were that if the lion were released in his state of rage he would tear the pony and herself to bits. She leaned forward and urged her frightened mustang to do his best.

She reached the ranch gates at her home just as her sisters, accompanied by two young men of the neighbourhood, were about to pass through it on their way to church. "There now!" she shouted. "I have roped and dragged a lion to death." Her speech of triumph was cut short by a warning scream from one of her sisters, who noticed that the lion was about to regain his feet and renew the battle. One of the Texans sent a bullet through the animal's brain and ended his career.



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