

# The CLAN CALL

By Hapsburg Liebe

Illustrations by Irwin Myers

SYNOPSIS

CHAPTER I—Young Carlisle Whitworth Dale, of the "Black Adam" clan, is elected to be a member of the "Black Adam" clan, a group of young men who are known for their lawlessness and violence. Dale is a young man of noble birth, but he is drawn into the life of the clan through a series of unfortunate events. He meets a girl named "Babe" who is also a member of the clan, and they become close friends. Dale is eventually elected to a position of leadership within the clan, and he is faced with the difficult task of maintaining order and discipline among the members.

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outer wall of stone. Dale shuddered in spite of himself. He put up one hand and turned on a small light, which dissipated the murky shadows and showed him a line from Dante's "Inferno" that to him seemed very miserable; some former occupant of that cell had written it with charcoal on the whitewashed outer wall.

Then Dale sat wearily down on the narrow bed, leaned his head upon his hands, and began to think. He had always wanted difficulties to overcome, barriers to surmount, a work to do, a fight to fight for himself. In full measure he had found them every one. He did not doubt his ability to overcome the difficulties, surmount the barriers, do his work well and fight his fight as a good man fights, and win—if it were not for the charge of having shot and killed Black Adam Ball. It seemed to him now that that must end all that was worth while for him. For that was more than a difficulty, more than a barrier.

He finally believed that it had been a mistake that had finished the earthly existence of the great hillman. He had been so convinced a jury that he had been an accident? Would the jury take his word for it? The jury would not, of course.

The mysterious third shot, that had come from a little distance—but he could not reasonably expect deliverance from that source. If only he had held down his abominable, savage temper; if only he had—

Major Bradley interrupted his unpleasant train of thought. "No brooding there, my boy!" Dale looked up. The old attorney, as usual in appearance as though he had not even seen a middle that day, was standing just outside the door at the door of the cell. He had a white tray of steaming food on one hand and a tray of steaming coffee in the other.

The jailer came and unlocked the door, also he very considerably brought another stool and fresh water. The major entered the cell, and the negro followed.

An amused twinkle appeared in Dale's eyes as Bradley put the tray down on the bench. There was enough for five thrashing-machine hands! The black boy was sent to the front door to wait.

"I thought you'd be as hungry as I am, and I'm as hungry as poor old By Heck ever was!" laughed the major, as he sat down and began to eat. "You're a good fellow, Dale. Try that one, won't you? I told Massengale I'd cause his behavior if these steaks weren't perfect. Massengale," he added, "runs the hotel here, the Eureka Hotel, and the One-Price Clothing Emporium."

"Wonder," smiled Bill Dale, "what he does with his spare time?" Bradley laughed, his eyes twinkling merrily. Dale found that he too was hungry, saw that savory orders had lavished his appetite. A minute later, he had pronounced his steak delicious.

"Massengale shall not suffer his lieutenant," said the major; and he began to carve his own steak.

He did not feel anything like a confident concerning the outcome of his trial as Major Bradley evidently felt. Then he became even more dejected, and he told himself that the major had spoken so reassuringly merely to help him keep up heart.

The night passed, and another bright summer day dawned, and in the Carterville jail there was one prisoner who had not slept at all. Each of those long and heavy black hours had been an age to this prisoner to whom jail was no new thing.

At noon a furious windstorm, accompanied by such vivid lightning and blinding rain, struck out of the west and began to sweep the countryside and out of the lowering wet gloom there came one to deliver Bill Dale, and his eyes were still twinkling. "I reckon I won't do no more talkin' just now. Yes, I reckon the proper place for me to do my big talkin' is in the courtroom at my trial. Lock me up will ye Tom?"

"Well, sheriff, when I see Bill Dale go off toward the trouble by himself and alone, I knowed right then he was in danger of bein' laywaded by some of them that lowdown Balls and Cherokee Torres. So I decides to feller after him and guard him, without him a-knowin' anything about it, what came I done. When he met Adam Ball—"

"Go on," urged Flowers.

"I reckon I won't," smiled Caleb, and his eyes were still twinkling. "I reckon I won't do no more talkin' just now. Yes, I reckon the proper place for me to do my big talkin' is in the courtroom at my trial. Lock me up will ye Tom?"

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