



Jim Foreman

Copyright © 1997

## CHAPTER ONE

The Panhandle of Texas sticks up out of the rest of the state like a prairie dog poking its head from his den to see if there are any hungry coyotes lurking around, waiting to pounce on him. Come to think of it, the people of the Panhandle still have to do the same thing as the prairie dog, except that the hungry coyotes are now known as Austin politicians.

The politicians are not alone when it comes to trying to do away with the Panhandle. Pick up most any road map and you will find that, in an effort to make the odd shape of Texas fit onto a square piece of paper, they have lopped off the Panhandle and moved it over somewhere near Albuquerque. At times, they even go so far as to print the Panhandle on the back side of the paper, along with mileage charts, uninteresting facts about the state and a picture of whoever might be governor at the time when the map was printed.

Even though Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836 and formally joined the union as a state in 1845, the politicians down in Austin would just as soon have given that part of the state to Oklahoma, New Mexico or back to the Indians as to have bothered with it. Most of them believed the report of an early explorer who said, "The El Llano Estacado is a high plains, devoid of trees and has little rainfall. Its only practical use is as a home for Indians and buffalo, both of which flourish there in great numbers." The politicians became interested in the Panhandle only when oil was discovered in 1926 and they saw it as a new source of taxes.

Giving the Panhandle back to the Indians may have been more nearly true than most people would like to believe, because the last recorded Indian attack on white settlers in Texas occurred in the Panhandle at a place known as Adobe Walls.

In 1874 the only two towns in the entire Panhandle were Mobeetie near the eastern edge and Tascosa some one hundred miles to the west. The only people living in the Panhandle, other than those who resided in the two towns, were a few ranch managers and Mexican vaqueros hired to look after cattle grazing on the open range. There was also a group of professional buffalo hunters who were doing their best to wipe out the few remaining herds of those beasts which still roamed the plains. There were several reasons for wanting the buffalo killed; first for their hides to be turned into leather and secondly, to leave more grass for the cattle. The plains Indians had been rounded up some time before and driven across the border to reservations in the Oklahoma Territory.

One of the buffalo hunters by the name of Billy Dixon decided that since the supply of buffalo to kill was rapidly disappearing, he would change his lifestyle and become a shopkeeper. He selected a location on a large meadow about half way between Mobeetie and Tascosa and hired a bunch of Mexicans to construct buildings and corrals. Since there was very little in the way of trees large enough to be used for building purposes, he decided to build the walls from adobe, a mixture of soil, manure and straw. They erected the adobe walls for the buildings in short order, but had been able to get roofs on only a couple of them when it came time to open for business.

Dixon brought in four wagons loaded with supplies, which included several kegs of whisky. News of the new trading post spread across the Panhandle like a range fire and soon everyone around knew about it, including a band of Indians camped just across the border in Oklahoma Territory. Dixon invited all of his buffalo hunting buddies to a big party to celebrate the opening of his new trading post, but as is the case with many private affairs, there came a group of party crashers in the form of a band of renegade Indians, led by a young brave named Ishatai.

The tribal chief, Quanah Parker, had been able to keep the Indians under his control and on relatively

peaceful terms with the whites for some time but Ishatai had other ideas. He had been trying to wrest leadership from the old chief for several months and the opening of the new trading post offered a rare opportunity for him to demonstrate his leadership ability to the rest of the tribe.

When Ishatai heard about the impending party at the trading post, he called all the young braves aside and told them that he had a vision in which he was told to take the best braves and attack the hunters who had come to kill off their buffalo. He said that he had also seen in the vision that they would be victorious and would capture a great amounts of supplies, guns and whiskey. It's hard to tell whether the vision of a quick victory or the vision of all of that whisky was the greater force in getting the braves to violate the chief's orders and follow Ishatai into battle.

Twenty-six buffalo hunters had gathered at the trading post and the party was going at full tilt while Ishatai, with something over a hundred braves, massed a short distance away. At dawn, they attacked the stronghold, but their limited weapons proved to be totally ineffective against the powerful Sharps and Henry rifles of the hunters. Shooting from behind yard-thick adobe walls, the buffalo hunters mowed the Indians down each time that they charged. By the end of the second day, nearly half of the Indians lay dead on the meadow and their attacks had become more of a sport for the drunken hunters than any real threat.

On the morning of the third day, the Indians gathered on a small hill about a mile to the east of Adobe Walls, and this is where details of the story gets a bit fuzzy, depending on which version of it you might be hearing. According to the version made popular by historians and Hollywood writers, Billy Dixon rested his big 50 Caliber Sharps over one of the walls and dropped Ishatai off his horse with a single shot. The Indian's side of the story holds that the remaining braves were so put out with Ishatai's inability to lead them to victory that they shot him and rode back to join the rest of the tribe in Oklahoma without ever knowing that Dixon had fired a shot at them. The Indian's side of the story seems more believable because the Sharps 50 would do well to hurl the massive lead bullet a quarter mile, much less to the top of a hill a mile away.

The hunters killed off the remaining buffalo and left the Panhandle. Without the trade and support of the buffalo hunters, Dixon's business failed and he went off to do other things, leaving the unfinished adobe walls to melt and crumble away.

All that remains today of the last Indian battle in Texas is a small monument, few mounds of dirt and the legend of how Billy Dixon killed an Indian a mile away with a rifle which had an absolute maximum effective range of about five hundred yards.

Surveyors for the Kansas and Southern Railroad, later to become the Santa Fe, and the Fort Worth and Denver were checking out possible routes for their lines through the Panhandle. It was obvious that these two lines would meet and cross someplace in the Panhandle and both Mobeetie and Tascosa envisioned that this would occur at their town, making them the hub of commerce for the area. The surveyors were looking for the easiest way to get across the area and bypassed both towns, sounding their death knell with the driving of the route stakes.

Even after fifty years of independence and later, statehood, the Panhandle remained more or less unpopulated except for an occasional homesteader clinging to his 160 acre claim and a few Mexican families who ran some sheep in spite of strong opposition from the cattlemen. There was a constant battle between the big ranchers, the sheep men and the homesteaders, with the ranchers holding a decisive advantage.

When barbed wire came to the Panhandle, sounding the end of the open ranges, the cattlemen began to stake out and claim vast areas of land for their ranches. Most of the land came to them through grants from the politicians down in Austin, and those with the most political pull were awarded the most land. The land which had long been under the rule of the Indians, was now firmly controlled by the big ranchers, who had no intention of allowing anyone else to come in and threaten their little monarchy.

In many ways, the Panhandle was built on hate. The Indians hated the cattlemen, the cattlemen hated

the sheep herders and the sheep raisers hated the homesteaders. The whole bunch of them hated the thought of the developers who would be coming in to build cities. Finally, when oil was discovered in the Panhandle, everyone hated the men who became rich overnight from it. This was because for the most part, the least deserving were the ones who profited the most from the oil.

The Fort Worth and Denver Railroad was being built northward from Fort Worth and at the same time, it was being built southward from Denver with a goal of the two sections joining at the village Des Moines, New Mexico. They were in a race with the Kansas and Southern to see who would be first to cross the Panhandle where a fortune was waiting to be made from hauling cattle to market. From the Fort Worth end, the railroad meandered its way toward the Panhandle, always taking the easiest route as it headed toward what was known as the Buffalo Crossing of the Canadian River, some five miles to the west of the town of Tascosa.

The State of Texas, which owned most of the land over which the railroad was being built, not only gave the railroad the right of way on which to lay the tracks, but in addition, they gave them a section of land for a townsite about every ten miles along the way. The railroad was supposed to establish towns on these sections of land; however they were permitted to sell the property if they decided not to establish a town at that particular point.

About forty miles before the railroad reached the Buffalo Crossing on the Canadian, they came to a small problem called the Brewster Ranch and Wild Horse Lake. This lake was nearly three miles across and one of the few Playa Lakes which held water even during the dry seasons. If they ran the railroad to the south of the lake, they had to cross the Brewster Ranch and if they went to the north, they would have to build several bridges across dozens of streams which flowed northward into the Canadian River.

Lloyd Brewster didn't really want the railroad cutting across his ranch, especially where his land extended out into Wild Horse Lake and decided to make them pay through the nose for the right. He demanded that the railroad pay him fifty thousand dollars for permission to cross his land. The railroad countered that they could have the state take the land from him for the right of way under the laws of Eminent Domain and he would get only one dollar per acre for the land that they actually used.

Threats of law suits went back and forth until a compromise was finally struck in which the railroad would be allowed to pass to the south of the lake and across the Brewster Ranch. In return, the railroad would locate a townsite there and construct a siding with cattle loading facilities, which would then become the property of the Brewster Ranch. This gave Brewster control over the only shipping point with a constant supply of water within a hundred miles in either direction. By charging a fee of twenty cents for each day a cow was kept in his pens, plus another ten cents as a loading fee, Brewster was destined to become the richest and most powerful rancher in the Panhandle.

The route of the railroad was changed slightly to make it run straight westward for four or five miles over state land to where it entered the Brewster property at the south edge of the lake. It would then follow the shore of the lake for about a mile before leaving the Brewster Ranch and heading toward Buffalo Crossing again.

With more than a million head of cattle grazing on the Panhandle's open range, the shipping business grew so rapidly that Brewster decided to turn the operation of the cattle pens over to his son, Warren, who had just turned twenty years of age. Realizing his son's total lack of business sense, he kept a tight rein on him and hired much more qualified men to keep things running profitably.

It soon became apparent that housing would be needed for all of the cowboys required to run the pens. Rather than trying to have the cowboys stay at the ranch headquarters some twenty miles to the west or building a bunkhouse near the pens, streets were laid out on the land next to the tracks and building lots were offered for sale to Brewster's employees. Within a short time, a number of shacks popped up on the lots.

To help the town get started, Lloyd Brewster built a house for his son about half a mile to the south of the pens. Along what was called Front Street, which paralleled the railroad tracks, he opened a store, a

blacksmith shop and a combination eating and drinking establishment called the Wild Horse Saloon. A livery stable and three or four more saloons followed shortly thereafter. Brewster named the new town San Jacinto, in honor of the location of the battle which won independence for Texas.

## CHAPTER TWO

Joe Armitage had just recently graduated from the University of Texas and returned to work for his father, one of the richest and most powerful men around. Edward Armitage sat on the boards of several corporations and was chairman of the board of the Kansas and Southern Railroad. He owned two banks and at least half the downtown buildings in Dallas. If he didn't own a building outright, he probably held a first mortgage on it. His power reached all the way from Dallas to Austin where, after having served as a senator for more than thirty years, he was the undisputed leader of the Senate and many who would agree that Senator Armitage wielded more power than did the Governor. In fact, endorsement by Senator Armitage considered to be an absolute necessity for anyone who expected to occupy the governor's mansion.

Shortly after Joe returned to Dallas his father called him into his office and told him, "Up in the Panhandle, a small town by the name of San Jacinto is springing up along the Fort Worth and Denver. I have a feeling that area will become the trade and banking center for the whole Panhandle of Texas and a man can become very rich if he's in a position to control and manage its growth to his advantage."

"But father," protested Joe, who had intended to return to Dallas and lead the pampered life of the rich and indolent. "We studied about the Panhandle area in college and there is absolutely nothing there except open ranges and cattle, and we both know how much you despise crude cattlemen."

"True," replied Edward. "Even though it will probably become just another rough and smelly cowtown like Fort Worth, it will still be the hub city of the Panhandle. Your money will come from development of a town, not from cows. Land which you can buy for a dollar an acre today will be bringing a dollar a square foot in years to come. Once you have extracted the quick and easy profits to be made there, you can return to Dallas."

"What do you want me to do?" asked Joe. "Should I start by building business buildings in San Jacinto or stick to land sales?"

"Neither, San Jacinto is on the Brewster Ranch and it would be difficult for you to make very much money there. You will buy vacant grass land and establish a completely new town on it."

"What about San Jacinto? It is already established and has a foothold. Won't the competition between the two towns ultimately reduce our profit?"

"If San Jacinto becomes a problem, then you will just have to destroy it. The same goes for anyone who gets in your way."

"I realize that you are a very rich and powerful man, but you can't simply destroy an existing town," replied Joe.

"Why not? Small men have small ideas and they should never be allowed to stand in the way of progress. Actually, you are going to build a new town which will be so much more attractive than what is already there that the old one will simply die. The first thing that you will do when you get to the Panhandle is to buy the four sections of land adjoining the Brewster ranch to the east. You should be able to buy most of this land for somewhere around a dollar an acre, but even if you have to go as high as ten an acre to obtain some of the smaller parcels to complete the four sections, do so. Buy up the land as quietly as you can so people don't get wise and start raising their prices. Just don't spend money foolishly. You know my rule for getting rich; never spend a dollar unless it will return ten. Here is a map of the area with the sections to buy marked," said the elder Armitage as he handed Joe the map.

A week later, Joe caught the northbound Fort Worth and Denver train with maps and letters of credit tucked away in his brief case. Thick coal smoke belched from the stack on the engine and rolled through

the open windows of the passenger cars. The heat during this particular summer was so intense that the passengers would endure the smoke in order to obtain a measure of relief from the moving air. The train huffed and puffed and lurched its way along the single tracks which led through towns such as Rhome, Decatur and Bowie. The further Joe got from Dallas, the more disgusted that he became with his assignment. By the time that he reached Wichita Falls, Joe was ready to catch the first train back.

Every half hour, which translated into about ten miles of travel, the train would shudder to a stop at a siding. At some of these stops, there would be a few cracker box houses standing beside the tracks, while at others, Joe could see nothing more than a pattern of streets which had been scraped into the parched, dry soil. At each third or fourth stop, the train would be delayed for an hour or more while it took on water and coal. Darkness finally came, offering Joe not only relief from the oppressing heat, but also from having to look at the depressing landscape. Joe leaned his head into the corner of the seat, pulled his hat over his eyes and tried to sleep.

"Wild Horse Siding. San Jacinto, end of the line," shouted the conductor as he made his way through the car.

When the train came to a gasping stop, Joe straightened his stiff legs and stepped to the ground. The air was thick with clouds of dust and the pungent odor of cow manure. Cowboys whistled and yelled as they prodded the bellowing animals into cattle cars to be taken to the packing houses in Fort Worth.

Joe located the station agent who was sitting in a shack which had been hammered together from shipping crates. His desk was illuminated by the yellow glow of a kerosene lamp and cluttered with piles of papers. A telegraph clacked away on its wooden sounder box. It seemed that everything and everyone around the place was coated with a layer of fine dust. "Excuse me," Joe asked the agent. "Could you tell me the direction to the hotel?"

"Ain't got no hotel in this here town, Mister," replied the agent as he surveyed Joe's unusual appearance. Joe was dressed in a pinchback tweed suit and wore a derby hat. "Widder Ellis serves meals and takes in a few boarders, but I know for a fact that she is full up and ain't got no room at her place."

"Are you telling me that there is no place for me to sleep in this God-forsaken place?" asked Joe.

"Well, the train that you came in on ain't going back till about daybreak, so I'd suggest that you get back on it and sleep in your seat."

Hunched in the corner of the seat and using his rolled-up suit coat as a pillow, Joe tried to sleep. However, it seemed that every time he dozed off, the train would be moved for one reason or another. First, it was to shuttle the flat cars of rails and ties that it had brought from Fort Worth to a place where they could be taken on to the construction site at the end of the line. After that, it was turned around for the return trip. Just when Joe figured that all of the banging and moving had ended, it was time to use the engine to move the full cattle cars away from the loading chutes and spot empty ones to be filled. With all of the beating, banging and slamming of the train, Joe got very little sleep that night.

When daylight came and the train was hooked to the loaded cattle cars in preparation for the return trip to Fort Worth, Joe walked to the Ellis house for breakfast. It was a small house with two bedrooms, a parlor and a lean-to kitchen across the back. A folding cot leaned against the wall of the kitchen, indicating that Mrs. Ellis had to sleep in the kitchen. The table was so small that only four people could be seated at a time. Each of the two bedrooms contained two double beds and in addition to a couch and a few chairs, there were two single beds in the parlor. Mrs. Ellis could accommodate up to a dozen boarders at a time, depending on how many of them shared the double beds.

While he ate his breakfast, Joe asked Mrs. Ellis if she had any room for him. She replied that since one of her boarders had left that morning to attend his father's funeral and would be gone for a week, Joe could have his bed in the parlor until he returned.

"I see that there are lots of vacant lots around, what does one cost?" Joe asked Mrs. Ellis.

"My husband paid twenty dollars each for these two lots," she replied. "Lots here are only thirty feet wide and ninety feet deep, so we had to buy two of them to have enough room for a house and a garden."

You planning to build yourself a place here?"

"Looks like I'll have to if I want somewhere to sleep," Joe replied.

As soon as Joe left the Ellis place, he went directly to the station agent to send a telegram to his father. It read, "No place to sleep in San Jacinto STOP Ship lumber and carpenters to build hotel STOP Will have location bought when material arrives STOP."

As soon as the agent had finished tapping out the message on the telegraph, Joe asked him, "Who do I see to buy land to build a hotel on?"

"Mr. Lloyd Brewster owns this town and all the vacant land in it, so he would be the one to see if you want to buy a lot. His son, Warren runs things for him. His house is about half a mile over that way," he replied, pointing off to the southwest with his thumb.

Joe walked to the Brewster place, which was far from being as impressive as he had anticipated that it would be. The main house was a simple, square, frame house with a peaked roof and four rooms. There were a couple smaller out buildings and an open barn inside a small corral. Three saddled horses were tied to the rail along the front porch of the house. Joe's knock on the door was answered by a gruff little man about fifty years of age.

"Joe Armitage," said Joe, extending his hand.

"Lloyd Brewster," he replied, shaking Joe's hand. "Come in and have a seat."

Joe entered the small living room where three other men were seated. Brewster introduced the men to him, "This here is my son, Warren Brewster. The son appeared to be about the same age as Joe and was dressed in the same manner as was his father and most of the cowboys Joe had seen around the town. Everyone there seemed to wear cowboy boots, Levi pants and a leather vest.

"Nice to meet you," replied Joe, shaking hands with Warren.

"This fellow here is Emmitt Knox, my ranch foreman and this man is Roger Bates, bookkeeper for the cattle pens. Warren runs the town for me and I take it that you are the rich young squirt from Dallas who wants to build a hotel in my town."

Joe had just learned his first lesson about how fast news can travel in a small town. "I'll have to admit that I am young and from Dallas, but as far as being rich, that's a rather rash assumption. To answer the other question, yes, I am interested in building a hotel in your town."

"Don't try to snow me, boy. I know who Senator Edward Armitage is and that he owns about half of Dallas, so let's get down to the nut-cuttin'. Warren will tell you how much a lot for your hotel is going to cost you."

"How big a place do you want to build?" asked Warren.

"Well, I had something in mind which would be about thirty feet wide and seventy or eighty feet from front to back. Two story with lobby and restaurant down stairs and about a dozen small rooms up stairs," replied Joe.

"Well now," said the younger Brewster, obviously already coached by his father, "That will be just the right size to fit on one lot, and a lot for a big hotel like you are planning to build will cost you ten thousand dollars."

"That's a pretty steep price for just one lot. I'd heard that most of the lots around here went for about twenty dollars," replied Joe.

"It all depends on how much money you will be making off what you plan to put on the lot," broke in the elder Brewster when Warren shot him a questioning look. "Twenty dollars is the price of a lot for one of my employees to build a house on to live in. Commercial property cost a lot more. Five thousand for a store, ten thousand for a hotel and fifty thousand for a bank," Brewster replied with a grin, knowing that the Armitage family was also involved in banking.

"I'm afraid that I'll have to pass on buying a lot at that price," replied Joe as he rose to leave. "I didn't plan to spend more than about ten thousand on the whole thing, and certainly not that much just for the land to put it on."

"Take it or leave it," replied Warren. "We got the land and you have lumber for a hotel on the way, so you can pay our price or go to hell."

"Looks as if I'm going to have to do without," Joe said as he rose to leave.

"I'm a sporting man," Lloyd Brewster spoke up. "I'll make you a deal. I'll give you a three-year lease on the lot for a dollar a year, and you put up a hotel on it that costs at least ten thousand dollars to build. At the end of the three-year lease, ownership of the hotel reverts back to me. After that, you can lease the hotel from me on a year by year basis."

"I can imagine what the lease payments would be after it reverts to you," said Joe.

"I can tell you right now how much the lease payments would be, fifty percent of the gross that the hotel takes in," said Warren. "That's what the other businessmen pay to set up shop in my town."

"I wanted to build a hotel in this town, Mr. Brewster, but I'm far from being stupid," replied Joe.

"I didn't take you for a stupid man, Mr. Armitage," interrupted the elder Brewster. "It is simply the fact that you have lumber for a hotel on the way and I own the land that you need to build it on. If you want to build a hotel in my town, you will have to pay my price."

"I'll still have to pass on your offer, Mr. Brewster," Joe replied as he rose to leave.

"You'd better take my offer while I'm in a generous mood. Who knows, as popular as land is around here, I might want twenty thousand for a lot tomorrow," Lloyd Brewster said as Joe walked toward the door.

Joe left the Brewster place and Lloyd turned to Warren, "That's how you handle rich bastards like him. Make them pay through the nose for anything that they want. If they want it badly enough, they will pay whatever you ask, just like the railroad did."

Joe thought to himself as he walked back into the Ellis place, "Those are two men who I am going to cut down to size."

As soon as Joe entered the boarding house, he asked, "Mrs. Ellis, how would you like to go into the hotel business?"

"Why, Mr. Armitage, I'm just a poor widow woman who can barely make ends meet by renting out beds in my house. Where on earth could I come up with the money to build a hotel?"

"You own your land free and clear, so this is what we will do. I'll furnish the money to build a two story hotel and restaurant on the vacant lot where you have your garden. Ownership of the hotel will be listed in your name and you will run it. You and I will split the profits down the middle. If we ever decide to sell the place, we will also split what it brings."

When the Fort Worth and Denver train pulled into the station a week later, among the cars that it was pulling were two flat cars stacked high with lumber and a box car filled with furniture and restaurant equipment. A dozen carpenters and helpers got off, carrying their tool boxes with them.

Joe met with the job foreman and looked at the blueprints which he had brought with him. The building wasn't quite as large as Joe had envisioned, but it would be adequate for a beginning. It was only 24 feet wide by 72 feet in length, but it did have two stories. On the lower floor was the lobby, restaurant, kitchen and a small apartment for the manager. The upper floor was divided into fourteen rooms, six rooms, each measuring about eight by ten feet, were situated along either side of the hall and two larger rooms across the front facing out over the porch. There was a back stairs which could be used as a fire escape or to sneak women in or out of the rooms at night without their having to go through the lobby.

Several local workers were hired to help the carpenters from Dallas and the Ellis property became a beehive of activity. Every piece of lumber on the flat cars had been precut to the proper length and numbered. By the end of the first day of construction, the foundation blocks had been laid, the floor built and walls for the first floor were in place. By the end of the second day, the walls of the second floor were up and the roof was being nailed in place when darkness forced the workers to stop.

The hotel was really taking shape when Warren Brewster appeared. He surveyed the building for a few minutes and approached Mrs. Ellis. "Is a fellow from Dallas by the name of Armitage building this

hotel?" he asked her.

"No, Mr. Brewster. This is the Ellis Hotel and I am having it built," she replied. "Why do you ask?"

"Your husband bought these lots to build a house on, Mrs. Ellis, not a hotel," he replied.

"We paid cash money for these two lots and I have a deed in my name. I don't see what difference it makes what I build on them," she replied.

"Well, I don't like what you are building on this property and I'm going to put a stop to it," replied Brewster as he walked away.

When Joe arrived for dinner that night, Mrs. Ellis told him of Warren's visit and what he had said.

"Let him try to stop us," said Joe. "I can have the best lawyer in Dallas here on the next train to defend our rights."

The following morning Warren Brewster and Emmitt Knox traveled to the court house at Tascosa, where they got Judge Osborne, Warren's uncle, to issue an injunction to stop construction on the hotel. While they were in the Judge's office on the second floor, Joe Armitage was in the basement, having a visit with the sheriff, who just happened to be coming up for re-election in the near future.

"I have looked into your record and would like to make a contribution to help you in your race," Joe told him.

"Well, it is a tight race and I could certainly use a few more dollars," replied the sheriff.

"I would normally write a check but since I happen to have some cash on me, I'll just make the contribution that way," said Joe as he laid a pair of hundred dollar bills on the desk.

For a sheriff who was making fifty dollars a month, and had run his previous campaigns on less than thirty dollars, this was a lot of money. "For a total stranger, this is an awfully big contribution," said the sheriff as he stuffed the money into his pocket. "Someone might think that you were trying to buy me or something."

"Nothing like that, I just want you to consider me to be your friend. No one ever had too many friends."

"A man can buy himself a lot of friendship for that kind of money," replied the sheriff.

Three weeks later, the Ellis Hotel held its grand opening and on that same day, the sheriff got around to serving the injunction papers to stop its construction. Since the hotel was already finished, the injunction was a moot question and nothing more was ever heard about it.

From the day that the Ellis Hotel opened its doors for business, it was difficult to find an empty chair in the restaurant and there was always a waiting list for rooms. Joe Armitage rented the two rooms across the front of the second floor, living in one and using the other as his office. As far as anyone else in the town knew, the hotel belonged to Mrs. Ellis.

Buying three sections of the land was relatively simple as they all belonged to one person who was ready and willing to sell. Joe bought this land, including the mineral rights beneath it, for sixty cents an acre. The forth and most important section, since it was the one which joined the town of San Jacinto on the east, proved to be far more difficult to purchase in its entirety. Over the years, it had been divided into several plots, some of which were as small as twenty acres. Joe was able to pick up a piece here and a piece there until he had title to all except for an old homestead.

Several years before, a man by the name of Polk had proven a homestead on this 160 acre parcel. Later, he died without a will and the courts divided the land among his heirs. His wife received title to the west half of the homestead where the small house was located. This land joined the Brewster Ranch property. The other 80 acres were divided equally among the four children. The wife and two of the sons sold their land to Joe for two dollars an acre. The daughter, Mary and the youngest boy John, who had just turned twenty-one years of age, held out, refusing to consider any offer that Joe made. The boy seemed to be the main stumbling block as he kept telling his sister that the rest of the family had sold out for too little money and that they could get at least two thousand dollars each for their twenty acres if they just held out long enough. It was most frustrating to Joe that his whole project was being held up by the

owners of a mere forty acres.

Knowing that a copy of any telegram which he sent to Dallas would go straight to Brewster, he and his father began to use the mail for all correspondence. They sent everything by registered mail to prevent any chance of its falling into the wrong hands. It took very little longer for letters to go back and forth because the train make round trips to the Panhandle three times each week. He wrote to his father, "Send forty brand new double-eagle gold pieces on the next train."

When the gold coins arrived, Joe dropped ten of them into his pocket to use as a last ditch measure, leaving thirty in the leather bag in which they were sent. Then he contacted the brother and sister who had been holding out on selling their land. They arrived at his office, along with Mary's husband, Walter Scott, who worked as the clerk at the post office which had just opened there. Joe seated them in three chairs in front of his desk. John on one side, Mary on the other and her husband in the middle. Joe silently observed that the bulge under Mary's dress indicated that a baby was on the way.

"I've asked you to come here so I can make you one last and final offer for those two little pieces of land out east of town," Joe told them.

"That sounds like a threat to me," said John. "I've told you that our land is not for sale at any price, at least not at any price that you have offered."

"That's right," echoed Mary. "Whatever John says goes for me."

"I assure you that it is no threat, but I must warn you again that this is absolutely my last and final offer for the land," Joe replied as he opened his desk drawer and removed a small leather bag which was held closed by a leather thong. He hefted its weight in his hand, slowly opened the bag and removed two of the new gold coins. He placed one on the desk in front of the John and one on front of Mary.

"You don't expect us to sell our land to you for a dollar an acre, do you?" asked the brother. "You've already offered us five dollars an acre and we turned you down flat."

Without answering him, Joe took out two more gold pieces, carefully stacking one on top of each of the ones on his desk. With the greatest deliberation, he continued placing gold coins, one at a time, on the two stacks until each was ten coins high.

"Those are twenty dollar gold coins, but the government is paying twenty-four dollars each to buy them back and get them out of circulation," Mary's husband whispered to her.

"He ain't stealing my land for no ten bucks an acre," said John. "Its worth at least a hundred an acre."

Slowly, Joe continued to place one coin after another on the stacks, carefully adjusting each one to perfect alignment with those below it. When he laid the final two coins in place, bringing each stack to fifteen shiny gold coins high, he carefully folded the empty leather bag and laid it on the desk and sat in silence.

As the clerk at the post office, Walter was paid a salary of five dollars a week and just one of those gold coins represented a month's wages. Fifteen of them was a fortune.

Like the neighborhood bully waiting to knock down a snowman that kids were building, John Polk stared straight at Joe with a smug smile on his face, waiting for him to put more coins on the stack so he could refuse the offer. He knew that he had something that Joe wanted very badly and felt that he could get whatever he demanded for his land.

Mary and her husband weren't looking at Joe, but they were looking into one another's eyes. Joe could almost read the silent conversation flowing between them. That stack of gold coins represented nearly two full years of working at the post office and all that they had to do was sign over twenty worthless acres of land to get it.

As they swung their gaze to Joe, he said, "Folks, that represents my last and final offer for your two parcels of land."

"We'll take it for our twenty acres," said Mary as she began to inch her hand toward the stack of gold coins.

"The only way that I will buy either piece of land is if I can buy all forty acres. If I can't buy both

pieces, then I don't care to buy either. There will never be another offer made by me for this land nor will this offer remain in effect if you leave this office without accepting it."

"Well, Mr. Armitage. You know what you can do with your final offer," said John. "You couldn't buy my land if you offered me both of those stacks of gold coins for it."

"I think we should talk this over," said Walter. "That's nearly twenty dollars an acre and you know that grassland out there won't bring more than a dollar or two at the most."

"You keep out of this," said John. "This is between Mary and me."

"I'm Mary's husband, so that makes me a part of any decision she makes," replied the husband. "We both want to sell."

"It doesn't matter what you and Mary want to do, I'm not selling," replied John.

"But if you won't sell yours, then he won't buy ours, and we need the money," protested Mary.

Joe spoke up, "I have a feeling that you people need to talk this over before you make a final decision, so I'll step into the next room and give you some privacy." He walked into his bedroom, leaving the two stacks of gold coins on his desk in front of them. By standing next to the door, Joe had no problem in hearing what was being said in the next room.

"Do you realize just how much money is right there in front of us? At twenty-four dollars each, there's three hundred sixty dollars worth of gold coins in each of those stacks," said the husband.

"I don't give a damn if there is a thousand dollars in each stack. I say that we hang on to our land and make that bastard pay through the nose if he wants it. Warren Brewster says that we can get any amount of money that we want if we just hold out long enough. Hess already bought all the land around us and we have him right where we want him. I figure that we can get as much as ten thousand for each piece if we hold out long enough."

"Warren Brewster is stupid," said Walter. "If he didn't have his pappy behind him, he couldn't pour piss out of a boot."

"Warren Brewster will be a rich man some day," replied John. "He said that if I stuck with him, I'll be rich too."

"The only thing that you will get by sticking with the Brewsters is screwed. They use people. The only people that they will ever make rich is themselves."

"The were smart enough to put Armitage in his place when he wanted to build a hotel. Mrs. Ellis was the one who got to build a hotel and now Armitage has to rent rooms from her."

"Who the hell do you think really owns this building?" replied Walter. "Widder Ellis couldn't afford to build an outhouse."

"I still ain't selling now. Some of these days he will be glad to hand over ten thousand dollars for a deed to my land."

"But he said that this was his last offer and there would never be another one," said Mary.

"That's nothing but talk," said John. "See how much he has already come up from his first offer. He wants our land and he'll pay more if we just hold out."

"But he never said that any of those offers were his final one before," replied Mary. "I have a feeling that he means what he says this time."

"He'll go higher," said John. "I hear down at the saloon that he knows some kind of a secret and is buying up all the land in the Panhandle. Word is that he is paying as high as a thousand an acre if he has to."

"That's nothing but wild talk by a bunch of drunks who don't have two nickels to rub together," said Walter. "Armitage is just another spoiled rich Dallas sop who wants to come out here and play cowboy. His rich old daddy down in Dallas is putting up the money for him to buy a ranch to blow money on, but he will go just so high. He'll get tired of this place and be gone in a year. Look at how he dresses; he'll never be a cowboy."

"Old man Brewster said that he'd give me twelve dollars an acre just to keep Armitage from getting

it. If that old skinflint offered that much, it's bound to be worth a lot more."

"All that Brewster wants that land for is to spite Armitage after what he did to him over the land for his hotel. Besides, Mr. Armitage has nearly doubled Brewster's offer, so let's take it while we can it," replied Mary.

"That's nothing but old woman's gossip," said John. "Mrs. Ellis built this hotel, not Armitage. He just rents a couple rooms here. Let's play him and Brewster against each other. We might get as much as a hundred an acre if we play our cards right."

"But he said that we had to take his offer right now or lose it," said Mary. "Suppose we turn him down and Mr. Brewster won't pay more, or even worse, suppose he won't even give us the twelve that he offered."

"Let me find out just how serious Mr. Armitage really is about this being his final offer," said Walter.

Joe stepped back from the door and sat on the bed. "Come in," he answered to the light knock.

Walter opened the door and asked, "Mr. Armitage, what will you do with the rest of your land if we don't sell ours to you?"

"Even without your forty acres, and I'll still have over twenty-five hundred, which is probably much more than I will ever need to run some horses and a small herd of registered cattle. I don't really need the land, and only reason that I want to buy it is so that my ranch will be a perfect four sections. I'll just build a fence around your land and forget that it is there," replied Joe.

"What do you mean when you say that you will build a fence around ours?" asked Mary from her seat in front of the desk.

"I'll have to fence it in with a nice, strong six wire fence without any gates. You'll forced to do that in order to prevent some bull that you might put on your land from getting onto mine and ruining my registered herd," replied Joe.

"If you build a fence like that around our property, then we will be land locked. How will we get to it?" asked Mary.

"Getting to your little pieces of land will be your problem, not mine. Just don't expect me to let you cross my property to get there," replied Joe.

The door closed and the voices from the other room became more vocal. "What good will land do us if we can't get to it?" shouted Mary. "If he fences us off, then it won't be worth a plugged nickel to anybody. His land will be all the way around us and nobody will buy land that they can't get to."

"I keep trying to tell you that we can hold his feet to the fire. He will have to buy that land of ours some day and then we can make him pay our price," said John.

"You may be able to hold out for a year or so until the time comes for him to decide to pay more, but we can't. We have a baby on the way and that stack of gold coins will come in handy when it arrives," said Mary.

"A year or so," snorted her husband. "With more than two thousand acres already in his name, it might be fifty years before he decides to make us another offer, if ever."

"I still say it will take more than that stack of gold coins to get my signature on a deed," said John. "I have too much in that land to let him steal it from me like that."

"You don't have a damn dime in that land. It was given to you by that crooked old judge," shouted Mary. "You never done a lick of work around the place and didn't deserve to get any of it. Pa should have chased your ass off that time when you got arrested for robbing that drummer and he had to use every cent of his savings and sell half of his cows to keep you out of the pen. You don't even deserve to share Pass name, much less his land."

"Yeah, but the judge gave me an even share with you and the other two kids," said John. "And my share is going to make me rich."

"Daddy always said that you were nothing but a bum and if he had made out a will before he got killed, he'd have cut you off without a cent," shouted Mary, who was now standing and shaking her finger

in his face. "You've never done a day's work in your life and probably never will. Even now, you are living with us and don't pay a cent toward your keep. Now you are trying to keep us from getting a good price for our land."

"I still ain't made up my mind to sell," said John.

"Then how do you feel about a mouth full of knuckles to help you make up your mind," demanded the husband. "You are screwing up our lives with your stupid ideas of getting more than that land is worth. You have no right to do this to your sister."

"That's right," shouted Mary. "The only reason why this man is offering so much money for our land is just to fill out his section, not because it's worth it. If we don't take this offer, we'll never see a red cent out of it. Either sign the deed or get your ass out of our house and never show your greedy face at our door again."

"Tell you what, Sis," said John. "Since you are in such a stampede to get hold of some money from your land, and you said that it wasn't worth more than a couple dollars an acre anyway, how about you taking two dollars an acre for yours and letting me have the rest for mine."

"Why, you bastard," shouted Walter. "You not only stole from your dead Pa, but now you are trying to steal from your sister. I think that I'll just beat hell out of you for the fun of it."

"OK, I'll sell," said John. "But, I'm telling you right here and now that we will be sorry that we did, and within two or three years. Mark my words."

Joe stepped to the top of the stairs and called to the Notary Public whom he had waiting in the lobby, "Mr. Bagley, would you please come up to my office and witness some signatures."

## CHAPTER THREE

The Texas Legislature had just divided the Panhandle, which had originally consisted of only two counties, into twenty new ones. Prior to the division, there were only two counties for the entire Panhandle, Wheeler for the eastern half and Oldham for the west. Each of the new counties was 35 miles square except for the four western ones, which measured 35 by 50 miles in order to fill out the width of the Panhandle. The town of San Jacinto was situated two miles from southern edge of Potter County and the southern boundary of the Armitage property rested exactly along the Potter and Randall county line.

As a last act before the counties were split away from Oldham County, Judge Osborne appointed county officials who would serve until official elections could be held in the newly formed counties. He named Lloyd Brewster as Judge of Potter County and his son, Warren, as sheriff. Warren deputized Emmitt Knox, Roger Bates and John Polk to help him keep the peace. Other Brewster relatives, business associates and close friends were named to various county offices such as Treasurer, Clerk, Auditor and Tax Collector. In these capacities, most of them drew monthly checks from the county even though there was no court house and they never did anything in the way of official duties.

John Polk was the only one of the deputies who didn't already have a regular job, so keeping the peace was usually left to him. In this capacity, he spent most of his time in the Wild Horse Saloon with cards in one hand and a drink in the other. It was said that the only way that someone would be arrested for drunk and disorderly, was to be drunker than the deputy. They had very few arrests for drunkenness.

With the deeds to the four sections of land properly filed and recorded with the County Clerk who operated out of a small frame building which Brewster had built in San Jacinto and leased to the county, Joe returned to Dallas.

"The beauty of working with virgin land is that one can design an ideal city without having to contend with existing buildings, streets or property owners," said the elder Armitage as he unrolled a large sheet of paper with a layout of streets, alleys and lots drawn in.

Joe looked at the drawing. The north-south streets were named for the presidents, beginning with Washington next to the Brewster property on the west and extending for twenty-two streets to the east. The east-west streets, which ran parallel to the railroad tracks were numbered, beginning with first street on the north side next to the tracks and numbers through 20th Street to the south.

"Under my plan, Polk Street becomes the middle of town and will be the location for all of the primary businesses such as banks, newspapers and office buildings will be located. Secondary businesses will be on the streets to either side of Polk and the residential areas will be on streets further out. There will be deed restrictions which require that any building which fronts on Polk Street between First and Tenth streets, be at least two stories high and be built of brick, stone or concrete. The same construction will be required for buildings on Harrison and Fillmore, but they can be one story high. I don't want any tarpaper shacks popping up in that area."

"The present road which runs north and south through town will be aligned to follow Filmore Street to keep traffic off main street and the east-west road will go along Tenth Street. The major intersection for the Panhandle of Texas will be the exact center of our city, at Filmore and Tenth Streets."

"It all looks very nice, but what is this area along first street, marked Railroad Station?" asked Joe. "The railroad station is nearly a mile west, next to Wild Horse Lake."

"The Fort Worth and Denver station can stay where it is for all I care. They are nothing more than a little nickel and dime railroad, good for nothing better than hauling cattle. That space is for the Santa Fe Railroad station," replied the father.

"Santa Fe?" asked Joe. "I've never heard of such a railroad."

"It is known as the Kansas and Southern right now, but at the next board meeting, it will become the Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad," replied Edward. "The route of their tracks will be moved a few miles to the north of the present survey and will run next to the Fort Worth and Denver through our property. At the present rate of building, the tracks should reach our town within six months. You will also notice that the whole block on the west side of Polk, between Ninth and Tenth is blocked off. That land has been reserved for the main offices of the Santa Fe. When completed, it will be a brick building ten stories high and the tallest building in Texas, outside of Dallas."

"That's quite an undertaking, Father. Do you think that you can pull it off?"

"As Chairman of the Board of the railroad, I already have more than enough votes in my pocket to cover that. In addition, when the rails reach there, the state will give the railroad the next section of land to the north of our town. As soon as the railroad gets title to the land, they will trade it to us for the railroad station space which is shown on the map."

Joe began to laugh as he looked at the drawings. "Would you believe that Polk Street runs right through the middle of the twenty acres that I was finally able to buy from a guy by the name of John Polk. He said that his land would be worth a lot of money some day, and it appears that he was right."

"How much did you have to pay him for that land?" asked Edward.

"A little under twenty dollars an acre. That's what I needed those double eagles for. Actually, I only had to give each of them fifteen gold pieces instead of the twenty that I was ready to offer if I had to," replied Joe.

"Santa Fe will be paying us twenty thousand dollars for half an acre of it for their building," laughed the elder Armitage.

"When poor old drunken John Polk finds out that we made a thousand to one profit off just a small piece of his land, he'll have a fit," said Joe. "Every town in the Panhandle has come about because of a railroad, but this is the first time that a railroad has come because there was a town already there."

"You will also notice that land has been set aside for a court house, city hall, two schools and four churches. We will give that land away, but its value will be returned ten-fold when the people begin to buy our lots."

"But, the Potter County court house is already established in San Jacinto," Joe said.

"That is only a temporary situation which will be taken care of in due time. As soon as we have the voting power, it will be moved."

"When do we start all of this?" asked Joe.

"It's already started, Joe. The surveying parties left on the train this morning and you will hire people to start marking and grading the streets as soon as the stakes are driven. Water is the life-blood of any town and I have already issued contracts in the city's name for drilling three water wells on our southeast section. Another contractor will begin laying water and sewer lines down the alleys. The water lines will be connected to the storage tank which they will erect just south of tenth street and the sewers will drain into Amarillo Creek which flows away to the north."

"I take it that this new town will be known as Armitage," said Joe.

"Not on your life, Joe," replied the elder Armitage. "I've sold nearly half a million dollars in city bonds to pay for all of those utility improvements and if anything goes wrong, I don't want our names connected with it in any way."

"If it is not going to be called Armitage, then what will be the name of this town?" asked Joe.

"When I offered the bonds for sale, I suddenly realized that we didn't have a name for the town, so I decided that the city would be called Amarillo. I named it after the creek where we will dump the sewer. I felt that was rather poetic since down the sewer is where Brewster's town of San Jacinto will be going."

"I find the whole thing rather hard to believe," replied Joe. "We have a town without a single soul living in it and it is already half a million dollars in debt."

"You'd better believe it, Joe. According to the incorporation papers filed in Austin a week ago, you are the mayor of Amarillo."

The town of Amarillo began to take shape, or at least the streets and alleys were taking shape. A silver water storage tank stood atop a steel tower in the middle of open grassland. As soon as it was up, workmen painted AMARILLO on the sides. When the water lines were laid and could be connected, it would be filled from the wells which had been drilled and were waiting.

"You will need to catch the next train back to the Panhandle, Joe. As president of the Armitage Development Company and the mayor of Amarillo, you have a lot of work to do," said the elder Armitage.

## CHAPTER FOUR

Joe was having his breakfast in the dining room of the Ellis Hotel when Warren Brewster walked in and sat down across the table from him. "I rode out by your place this morning," he said. "Those are some water wells that you have and that big tank. Why go to all the expense of drilling wells when Wild Horse lake has all the water anyone will ever need?"

"Most people had rather drink fresh well water than water from a lake which is half cow piss," replied Joe. "It will be hooked up to houses."

"Well, I suppose that you are right. There are plenty people right here who would like to have fresh water. There are at least forty homes and several businesses here in San Jacinto which will be glad to hook up to it," said Brewster.

"I'd really like to let them have water, but it wouldn't be fair," replied Joe.

"What do you mean that it wouldn't be fair?" asked Brewster.

"I'd just have to cut the people off over here as soon as houses start being built in Amarillo. The water system belongs to the City of Amarillo and the people who live in Amarillo will be paying for it. It's only fair that they should be the only ones who benefit from it."

"Amarillo, what do you mean Amarillo?" blustered Brewster. "That ain't nothin' but a dry creek out north."

"Amarillo is the name of the new town that is being built just east of here," replied Joe. "Surely you've seen the streets, alleys and water lines going in."

"I've seen all that dirt being stirred up over there and the name on that water tower, but there ain't a single house there and never will be," said Brewster. "Just what the hell do you think you're doing anyway?"

"Right now, I'm trying to have my breakfast," Joe replied.

Brewster stormed out the door, swearing a blue streak as it slammed shut behind him. Two hours later, posters appeared all over town, "Land Owners of San Jacinto. Trade Your Lot in San Jacinto for Two Lots in The New City of Amarillo. Running Water and Sewer Available to all Lots. For Details, Contact the Armitage Development Company, Second Floor of the Ellis Hotel."

The first person to appear at Joe's door was Roger Bates. "What kind of joke is this that you will trade two lots over there for one lot here in San Jacinto?"

"There is no joke, Mr. Bates," replied Joe, knowing that anything that he said would go directly to Lloyd and Warren Brewster. "If you have a deeded residential lot here in San Jacinto with a house already on it, you can trade it, title for title, for two lots of your choice in the residential section of Amarillo. If you own a business here in San Jacinto, you can trade it straight across for one on the business streets. The only provision is that you move your house or business to the new location in Amarillo within thirty days and agree not to sell the new lots for a period of three years."

"What's the catch? How much are you going to charge me for moving my house?"

"There is no catch. I'm not in the house moving business, so I have no idea how much it will cost to get some mule skinner to put your house on skids and move it a mile, but it can't be very much."

"Can I have any lots that I want?" asked Bates.

"The two lots have to be side by side facing Washington, Adams or Jefferson Streets between second and ninth streets. You can choose any lots you like," replied Joe. "Those are residential streets and all of the lots are 60 feet wide by 90 feet deep. Since you are the first person wanting to take advantage of my offer, you can have your choice of any location you'd like on those three streets."

"And it don't cost me a cent? Even-Steven trade, deed for deed," asked Bates.

"Nothing except the fifty cent fee for filing the new deed at the clerk's office, Mr. Bates. I'll trade two of the larger lots in Amarillo for one San Jacinto lot, no matter how small it is. The only requirement is that the person already owns his lot here and is either living on it or running a business in a building which is on it. We write up an agreement, then when the house is moved, we simply trade deeds on the two pieces of property. Naturally, this offer does not apply to vacant lots here in San Jacinto nor to any lot bought after I made my offer this morning. If you want to hook up to the city water and sewer after your house is moved, there will be a connection fee of \$20.00 plus a monthly bill of \$2.00 to cover all the water you can to use."

"How much would it cost if I wanted to buy one of your lots outright and not trade?" asked Bates.

"Residential lots are \$200 each, which includes the utility connections," replied Joe.

"Why in hell are you doing this?" asked Bates. "Something like this is bound to cost a real bundle. Your lots are twice as big as these here in San Jacinto and will have running water to them."

"I like the people around here and I know most of them will want to move to Amarillo. There is no reason why they should have to pay a penalty for having bought a lot here first. I can afford to take the loss better than they can," replied Joe. "That's the only reason."

"Well I'll be dipped," said Bates as he left the office.

Joe looked out the window of his second floor office as Bates met Warren Brewster in front of the Wild Horse Saloon. As they talked, a crowd began to gather around them. Bates was a rather animated talker, waving his hands and pointing, as he told of Joe's offer to trade lots. Within a few minutes, several people had mounted their horses and galloped off in the direction of the new town.

Less than half a hour had passed since Bates left Joe's office when a man came racing up the stairs, taking the steps three at a time. He was completely out of breath when he burst through the door, waving a deed in his hand. "Here's the deed to my San Jacinto lot and I've claimed the two lots that I want in Amarillo. I left my horse standing in the middle of them to hold my claim," he gasped. "I'll move my house today!"

"Have a seat, sir," said Joe. "There is no reason for you to rush like this. I assure you that there will be plenty free lots so every person in San Jacinto can trade if they want to. If you will show me on this map which lots you'd like, I'll make out the agreement."

"It's those lots right there," shouted the man as he jabbed a finger at the map. "I want the two lots right there on the corner next to the railroad."

"You made a good choice, sir," said Joe as he wrote the man's name across the two block on the map. "That will be Lots Number One and Two in Block Number One. I want to welcome as the first resident of the new town of Amarillo. Your street address will be 100 Washington Street."

"100 Washington Street," said the man. "I ain't never had no real address before, but it sounds real good."

"Sign this agreement, come back after your house has been moved and we will complete the deal."

"You sure no body is going to cheat me out of that lots," said the man.

"I personally assure you that the two lots you picked are yours and no one else will get either of them," replied Joe.

"I ain't taking no chances," said the man as he rushed out the door. "I'm going to take a load of stuff over there right now and leave my woman to guard it with a shotgun. Ain't no body going to beat me out of my land like them damn Sooners did to my Pa down in the Oklahoma Territory."

By the time Joe had finished with his first trader, there was a crowd of at least twenty people pushing and shoving to get in line in front of Joe's door. Joe walked to the door and said, "If you already know which lots you want, come in one at a time and I'll write your name on the lots that you selected, then you can return later with your deed and we will fill out the agreements."

By sunset that day, a total of 56 owners of residences and six business establishments had selected the lots where they wanted to move. About the only residents of San Jacinto who had failed to make their selections were Emmitt Knox and Roger Bates, both of whom were employees of Warren Brewster.

Joe sat at his desk, looking at the map of Amarillo with the names of the new residents lettered in on the various lots. Most of the owners of private homes had selected lots along the north ends of Washington and Adams streets, while the business owners had selected lots as near as possible to where the railroad station would be located. Since none of the existing buildings qualified for a location on the main business streets, that area was still vacant.

Joe looked at the map for some time and, after considerable deliberation, wrote the name of the Ellis Hotel in on the corner of Second and Johnson Streets, several blocks east of any other business locations which had been selected. "A hotel at that location will attract other places of business," he thought to himself.

It was barely dawn when Joe was awakened by the cracking of whips and the swearing of mule skinnners. He looked out the window of his bedroom and saw a hitch of a dozen mules, dragging a house along the street. It was making slow progress in the direction of Amarillo. It was being rolled along on telegraph poles which had been shoved under it to act as rollers. As soon as one pole emerged from beneath the back end of the house, the men would drag it to the front where it would keep supporting the building as it moved. He looked off to the east and saw the tents and wagons of several people who had spent the night on their lots, fearing that someone might try to wrest them away. Fires built from dry cow chips smoked under skilletts of frying bacon and coffee bubbled in pots. He stretched, yawned and said, "Good Morning, Amarillo."

Lloyd Brewster burst into the Ellis Hotel restaurant, "Warren, arrest that dirty sumbitch," he shouted, pointing at Joe.

"On what charge, Pa?" asked Warren, who was sitting at another table with his deputies, Polk, Knox and Bates.

"Lying and stealing, that's what! I want him arrested on account of he is trying to steal my town," he stormed.

"But Pa, according to Judge Osborne, he ain't breaking no laws, so I can't arrest him," protested Warren.

"I don't give a damn about laws. I'm the appointed Judge in this county and that makes me the law around here. I say that he is as guilty as sin and I'm telling you to arrest his ass."

Roger Bates got up from the table where they were eating and walked over to Lloyd Brewster. "Judge, I really think you ought to talk this over with Judge Osborne before you do anything rash," he said. "He's a lawyer and has been a judge for a long time and knows what you can and can't do."

"I ought to go home and get my gun and shoot the bastard and get him out of my hair for once and all; that's what I ought to do," shouted the elder Brewster. "He comes strutting in here from Dallas, wearing those sissy suits, and thinks his old man's money will buy him anything he wants. I'll show him that he can't steal my town right out from under me."

Warren Brewster was by his father's side by this time and told him, "Pa, I think that you'd better go back out to the ranch and cool off a bit before you get yourself into real trouble. You may be my Pa, but I'm the sheriff here and I can't let you carry on in public like this."

"Why you pissy-assed little fart, I ought to hide you with a wet rope for standing up to me," shouted the elder Brewster as he was led out the door. "You don't deserve to wear that star and carry a gun."

Roger Bates hung around the restaurant after the others had left, then he came to Joe's table. "How long would you allow a man to move his house after he took you up on your offer to trade lots?" he asked.

"Under the terms of my offer, everyone must have their houses moved within thirty days, but considering your special situation, I'll let you pick your lots and I'll hold them for six months," replied Joe. "In fact, I'll just put an X on your lots and fill you name in later, to prevent anyone who might be looking at

the map from knowing that you are planning to move too."

"Thanks," said Roger. "I appreciate your consideration of the situation that I face, working for the Brewsters and all. I'll meet you up in your office as soon as you have finished eating."

Ten days later, the Ellis Hotel was jacked up and placed on skids for the slow trip to its new home on the corner of Second and Johnson Streets. When the hotel was gone, about all that was left of the town of San Jacinto was two or three small houses, the shack at the loading pens and the Wild Horse Saloon, which belonged to the Brewsters. Even the Fort Worth and Denver train had begun to stop to let its passengers get on or off in front of the Ellis Hotel.

## CHAPTER FIVE

Joe couldn't remember the last time the vacancy sign had been hung in the window of the Ellis Hotel, so it was a very difficult decision to convert one of the rooms into a pair of bathrooms. He occupied the two largest and most desirable rooms at the front of the hotel and the loss of another would reduce the number of available rooms to only eleven. However, since Amarillo was to be a modern city, the residents of its only hotel should be able to enjoy the benefits of indoor plumbing.

By moving the existing door and adding another in one of the rooms nearest the middle of the building, it could be divided to make two bathrooms. The plumbers installed bathtubs, flush toilets and lavatories. A small, corner type wash basin was installed in each of the remaining rooms by running the drain pipes through exterior walls and along the outside of the building. Hot water, supplied by a steam boiler located in a room built on the back of the hotel, was piped into the kitchen and the bathrooms, however the wash basins in the rooms were plumbed for nothing but cold. Even so, this was a considerable step upward from the outdoor privy which served the Ellis Hotel when it was located in San Jacinto.

Joe had just finished a steaming hot bath and stepped into the hall to return to his room when he saw John Polk. Polk was having a great deal of difficulty in climbing the stairs due to his obviously drunken condition. He hadn't seen Joe come out of the bathroom because his back was turned toward him. When he finally stumbled to the top of the stairs, Joe could see that he was carrying a double barrel shotgun.

Polk staggered to Joe's office door and began to pound on it, shouting, "Come out of there you thieving sumbitch. You stole my land from me and I'm going to kill you."

Joe, who was wearing nothing but a bathrobe, knew the futility of trying to reason with a drunk man with a gun, so he went quietly down the back stairs and into the kitchen. "Mrs. Ellis, John Polk is up stairs with a gun," he told her. "He is drunk and threatening to kill me. Would you see if you can find one of the other deputies and get them to come down here and take care of him."

"Both Knox and Bates are drinking coffee in the dining room right now," said Mrs. Ellis. "I'll get them for you."

Just as the deputies stepped into the kitchen, two blasts of the shotgun were heard from the second floor. "That's John Polk shooting up the place up there," said Joe. "You'd better get him before he kills someone." A few minutes later, the two deputies came down the stairs, carrying the shotgun and supporting Polk between them.

"We'll take him home where he can sleep it off," said Knox. "When he sobers up from his toot, we will tell him that he ought to pay for the door to your office."

"Aren't you going to throw him in jail and charge him with something?" asked Joe. "After all, he came in here to kill me."

"Gee whiz, Mr. Armitage," said Knox. "I don't think he would have really shot you, that was just drunk-talk. Deputy Polk is a pretty nice sort of fellow when he's sober. It wouldn't look good for us to throw a fellow law officer in jail and, besides, Judge Brewster would just find him not guilty and turn him back out."

When Joe reached the top of the stairs, he found the door to his office was missing a huge chunk of wood where the knob and lock had been blown away. Papers and records were scattered from one end of the place to the other. After he dressed and cleaned up the mess in his office, he returned to the dining room for breakfast.

Just as he was finishing his meal, Roger Bates walked in and sat down across from him. "I probably shouldn't be telling you this," he said. "But last night Emmitt Knox, Lloyd and Warren Brewster were

sitting with John Polk and buying him drinks in the Wild Horse Saloon. Polk was already pretty drunk and he was asking the judge what he could do to get the land back that he sold to you. I heard the judge tell him that the deeds were proper and there was nothing that could be legally done for him. Then Judge Brewster said that the only way that he was ever going to get even with you was to shoot you."

"Do you mean to tell me that a Judge actually suggested to a drunk man that he go out and shoot someone?" asked Joe.

"Not only did he tell him that," said Bates. "But the Judge also told John that he would be doing the town a favor if he killed you. Then the Judge said that if someone did shoot you, he would see to it that the person who did it would get off by pleading self defense. Then, he told Knox to give Polk a shotgun and then stick with him. He also told Knox to take a pistol along to put in your hand after Polk had shot you."

"Brewster is only a County Judge and he couldn't hear a murder trial. Only a District Judge can do that."

"I know that, but John Polk didn't. As drunk as he was, he'd believe anything," replied Bates.

"Would you swear to what you just told me before a Grand Jury?" asked Joe.

"Joe, I don't like working for Mr. Brewster, but running his business and being a deputy are the best paying jobs that I've ever had, and if anyone should ever ask me about this conversation, I'll deny every word of it."

"I can appreciate your position, Mr. Bates, and I thank you for the information," said Joe. "You can rest assured that things are going to change around here and I won't forget what you have done for me."

"I took an oath to uphold the law when I was sworn in as a deputy, and this is the only way that I can do so right now without placing myself in jeopardy."

Joe sat down at his desk and began to make a list of names. The first name on Joe's list was that of Roger Bates. Joe had looked into his background and found that he was born in Columbus, Ohio and lived in an orphanage from the time that he was five years of age. He had worked his way through the University of Ohio, where he received a degree in Business Administration. He married the daughter of a rancher who had a small spread over near Tascosa but had to go to work for Brewster because two families couldn't make a living on the small ranch and there simply were no other jobs around.

The second name on Joe's list was that of Edward Masterson. Ed was around thirty years of age and a cousin of the Bat Masterson of Dodge City fame. Ed had been a Deputy Texas Ranger for several years, but since they would call a Deputy Ranger up for a month or so when he was needed and then let him go until they needed him again forced him to look for something a little more stable. He signed on with the Pinkerton Agency but was discharged less than a year later because trains weren't being robbed as often any more. Ed was now trying to prove up a homesteader down in the breaks of the Canadian River and run a few cattle. He was a board member of the Panhandle Cattlemen's Association and received a small salary each month for serving as a Texas State Brand Inspector.

The last name on Joe's list was Clayton Edwards. Clayton was the son of Congressman Edwards, who had just been elected for his tenth term in Washington. Clayton, like Joe, was a graduate of the University of Texas and was now serving as an Assistant District Attorney in Dallas.

Joe was having dinner in the dining room of the Ellis Hotel a couple days later when Roger Bates walked in. Joe reached under the table with his foot and pushed a chair out in front of him. "Got time to sit and talk a minute?" he asked.

"Actually, I'm busy right now, Mr. Armitage, perhaps later?"

"I'll be riding out to the Masterson place on the river tomorrow and will probably stay the night," said Joe. "Any chance that you could ride along?"

"Ed is the State Brand Inspector and it just happens that I need to take some legal papers to him to be signed," said Roger. "I take it you will leave about daylight?"

"It might not look too good for us to be seen riding out of town together," said Joe. "First one to the gate onto the Lazy J Ranch will wait there for the other."

As they rode together across the rolling grassland the following morning, Joe asked him, "If I'm not being too personal, how much does Brewster pay you as his business manager?"

"Thirty a month," replied Bates.

"That's cowboy's pay," said Joe. "With your education and ability, you should be worth a lot more than that to him?"

"I certainly feel that I am. He was originally paying me forty until he made me a deputy," said Bates. "He said that since I would be spending some of my time being a deputy and getting twenty a month from the county, he would have to dock me ten dollars a month."

"I thought that deputies were paid thirty a month," said Joe.

"The county check is made out to me for thirty dollars, but I have to give ten of it back to Mr. Brewster for what he calls office expense. All the deputies have to pay it in order to keep their jobs," replied Bates.

"So, the total that you get from both jobs is fifty a month," said Joe.

"Not actually. Mr. Brewster holds out another five dollars a month from each deputy for keeping the horse that he rents to the county for use by the sheriff's department. To my knowledge, nobody except John Polk has ever ridden the county horse and that's only because he doesn't have one of his own. Also, I have to hand over another five dollars each month to his son, Warren."

"What are you having to pay Warren for?" asked Joe.

"Mr. Brewster said that the sheriff gets fifty a month, which isn't enough, considering the amount of responsibility associated with the position. He said that the deputies get paid too much for no more than they do, so each one of them has to kick back five dollars a month to even things out. He made it very plain that we would have to do it if we expected to keep our jobs."

"In other words, you get only forty dollars a month after you pay all the kickbacks?" asked Joe.

"Yes Sir, that's all that is left out of the seventy that I should be getting," replied Roger.

"How would you like quit both of those jobs, go to work for me and actually be paid seventy a month?" asked Joe.

"Doing what?" asked Roger.

"To start with, you will take over as sales manager for the Armitage Development Company," replied Joe.

"You have just hired yourself a man, Mr. Armitage," said Roger. "But what did you mean by saying, To start with?"

"I have bigger plans for you, as well as several other people," said Joe. "One of them is Ed Masterson, the man whom we are going to see."

They topped a small rise about a mile from the Masterson place, which was nothing more than a ten acre catch pasture with three horses in it, a half dugout soddy and a tent. The place was situated on a rocky point of land jutting out into the river bed.

The Canadian River ran water most of the year, but was known to dry up if there had been a particularly dry season at its headwaters in New Mexico. This was evidently the present situation because the river was bone dry. They could see Masterson, who was digging a well with a hand auger.

When Masterson saw riders approaching, he went to the tent and returned a few seconds later, wearing his pistol and carrying a Winchester. His wife scurried from the tent to the soddy and disappeared down the steps, pulling the door closed behind her. Facing toward the approaching men, Ed continued to turn the auger.

When the riders came close enough for him to recognize who they were, he stopped work on the well, waved and yelled to them, "Howdy Mr. Armitage, and good to see you too, deputy. What brings you two fellows way out here?"

"Roger has some legal papers for you to sign, and since I hadn't seen you in a couple months, I thought that I'd ride along," replied Joe. "How are things going with you and the misses?"

"Been a mighty rough year, Joe. River quit running a month back. There are still a few holes with enough water for my cattle but they won't last much longer. I've been trying to dig a well, but every time I get down about twenty feet, I hit rock and have to move and start all over again."

"You got a tough row to hoe here," said Joe. "Just you and the wife with no kids to help out."

"You're sure right about that. If it wasn't for that ten dollar check from the state each month for being the brand inspector, we couldn't keep beans on the table. Get down and sit a spell."

His wife had returned from the soddy and he said to her, "Maudie, think that you could put something together for supper for these fellows tonight?"

She looked at him with a pained expression and said, "I have a pot of beans cooking on the fire and I can make some cornbread. Ain't got no meat less you can shoot a deer or something down by one of the water holes."

"Mrs. Masterson," said Joe. "I figured that you might not have been to town for a while, so I brought a few things along for you." He opened his saddle bags and handed her some packages wrapped in white paper and tied with twine. "Here's bacon, lard, flour, sugar, coffee and a few other things that I thought you might be needing."

Her eyes glistened as she reached for the packages but stepped back without taking them. "I'm much obliged to you for bringing this out to us, Mr. Armitage, but we can't take it. We ain't got no money to pay you for it," she replied.

"Go ahead and take it," said Joe. "We will just call it an advance."

"Advance on what?" asked Ed. "What have I got that you could need?"

"Your gun, Ed. Due to certain circumstances, I feel that I need someone like yourself to be around in case you are needed. I want you to move to Amarillo and go to work for me."

"I ain't no hired gun, Joe. I'll never strap on a gun for pay unless it is a legal job."

"I assure you that it is a legal office, Ed. You will be the Amarillo City Marshal, which pays fifty a month, the same as what the Potter County Sheriff gets. You can also keep your job as brand inspector if you like," said Joe. "But as the Marshal, I would expect you would to step in if one man was going after another with a gun."

"You could depend on that," said Ed. "Who do I see about this job?"

"You've already seen him. I'm the Mayor of Amarillo and you have just been hired. Your pay starts as of today and I'd like to see you in Amarillo as soon as possible."

"Ed, you and I both got new jobs today and I think that this calls for a celebration," said Roger as he got to his feet and walked to his horse. He reached into his saddle bag and returned with a bottle.

After a supper of bacon and beans, along with big flaky biscuits and lots of gravy, they sat around a bull fire that Ed built several yards away from the cook fire in front of the tent. As they sipped from the bottle, Joe outlined his plans for the city of Amarillo.

"The following morning, as Joe and Roger saddled their horses to leave, Ed and Maude were gathering their belongings in preparation for the move to Amarillo. "See you in Amarillo in about three days," shouted Ed as they rode away.

"I'll have a place for you to live as soon as you get there," replied Joe.

Roger went by the court house to turn in his badge and tell the sheriff that he was resigning as a deputy. Judge Brewster, who had heard the conversation, came into the office and said, "Well, Bates, so you are quitting as a deputy. That will give you more time to do your job for me. If you work hard, I might give you a raise back to forty a month."

"Not really, Mr. Brewster. I'm quitting that job too," he replied.

"Life around here too tough for you and you leaving Texas?" he asked.

"No sir, I'm not leaving. I'm going to work for Mr. Armitage," replied Roger.

"You're going to do what?" shouted Brewster. "You had better stick with the good job that you have, because I can promise you that Armitage ain't going to be around here much longer."

"I suppose that is just a chance that I'll have to take," replied Roger as he walked out the door.

Two weeks had passed since Roger had changed jobs when Joe told him, "Roger, I'm catching the train to Dallas tomorrow and will be gone for about a week. You have your feet on the ground pretty well, so take charge of things until I return. If any real problems come up, get Ed Masterson to give you a hand."

As soon as Joe arrived in Dallas, he went directly to see Clayton Edwards. "You have been wanting to get into private practice and I have an ideal opportunity for you," he told him. "There's not a single lawyer in all of Potter County and only three in the entire Panhandle. One is the judge over in Oldham County and the other two are down in Childress where all of the felony cases are tried. One is the District Attorney and the other defends people who are brought to trial. Open a law office in Amarillo and within a month, you'll have more work than you can handle. In fact, as a starter, I'll give you a retainer and promise you enough title work to keep you going until you build your practice."

They talked for a while and Edwards agreed to come to Amarillo and open a law office. After that was settled, Joe asked him, "Know of any doctors who would like to move there too?"

"Not right off hand, but with all the new doctors coming out of school here, it shouldn't be too hard to find one," replied Edwards.

"Would you take care of finding a doctor who would be willing to move to Amarillo?" asked Joe. "I still have a few more people to see before I return."

When Joe boarded the train for Amarillo a week later, he had not only recruited Edwards to come to Amarillo, but he was bringing another young lawyer with him. He had also found both a doctor and a dentist who would arrive within the month.

The one thing that Joe had wanted most to bring to Amarillo was a newspaper, but getting one which was already established in a large town to move was all but impossible. The next best thing to do is hire away their best man and open your own. This is exactly what Joe did. He went over to see Buck Henry, who was the City Editor for the Dallas Morning News, and made him an offer. "I'll put up the money for publishing a newspaper in Amarillo and you will be the editor. You will be paid the same amount of money that you are getting here plus a share of the profit."

Buck was not only a good editor, but he was also a good businessman and recognized the potential of such an offer. He accepted on the spot and began to arrange to buy a press, linotype machine and other equipment. "The first edition of the Amarillo Times will be published within the month."

The final, and by far the best piece of news that Joe was bringing with him, was that a group of Dallas businessmen had agreed to fund and open a new bank in Amarillo. Eldon Farris, Vice President of the First State Bank of Dallas, would move to Amarillo as president and major stockholder in the new bank.

When Joe walked into his office, Roger also had some news for him. He turned the map of the city around for Joe to see. There had been at least ten new residential lots sold while he was gone, but the big news was that five different business establishments had bought property either on Polk or Filmore Streets. There was a hardware store, a large grocery store, a barber shop and a bakery.

Roger saved the best news for last. "See this whole block marked off here," he said as he pointed to an area just south of the Ellis Hotel. "In our safe is a certified check for \$24,000 dollars for those eight lots, and I'll give you three guesses who it is from."

"I'm not much for guessing games," replied Joe. "Who is it?"

"None other than the Foxworth and Galbraith Lumber Company. Not only that, they have taken a one year option to buy the other half block across the alley behind them."

The Foxworth and Galbraith Company was the largest and most conservative lumber company in the world. When they decided to open a lumber yard in a town, it was a definite vote of confidence in that city's future.

"It just happens that I also have some news," said Joe as he picked up a pen and wrote "Amarillo

Bank" across the two vacant lots on the corner directly across the street from the space reserved for the Santa Fe Building. "They will begin construction on a three story building within a month."

"It appears that Amarillo is off and running," said Roger as he surveyed the map.

"Any other news that I should know about?" asked Joe.

"One thing, but I can't see any logical reason why he did it," said Roger. "The day after you left, Old Man Brewster built a fence along the entire two miles where his property joins yours. There is a big gate across the road and he put armed guards on the gate and every quarter mile up and down the fence. They refused to let anyone who lives in Amarillo go through the gate."

"I can't understand what he is trying to prove," said Joe.

"Well, he seems that he thought that he could close the whole town of Amarillo down if we couldn't get to the court house and post office which are on his land."

"That would pose a problem, but I don't think that he can get away with it, legally speaking," said Joe.

"He hasn't really gotten away with it completely," said Roger. "The day after Brewster closed the road, Walter Scott loaded all the post office equipment into a wagon and brought around the end of the fence to get here. He rented space in the back of the grocery store for a temporary office until the postal officials can get here and arrange for a permanent location. I already have plans for a new post office building. We will own the building and lease it to them. Scott says that he is sure that they will take our offer."

"I hadn't really thought about us building and leasing a building to the government, but it sounds like a good idea."

"The only problem remaining is how are people going to file deeds on land that they buy from us if Brewster has cut off access to the court house?" asked Roger.

"Pass the word that we will open an orphan clerk's office in Amarillo and file papers free for anyone needing to do so until this situation is settled," said Joe. "The next thing that must be done is to circulate petitions to hold a general election to pick new county officials. Once a Board of Commissioners has been elected, they can do whatever is necessary to gain access to the court house and its records. Clayton Edwards will be here within a week and can advise us on how to go about it."

## CHAPTER SIX

The elections were scheduled for Tuesday, the third day of November, and the candidates were working every angle in order to gain votes for themselves. Lloyd Brewster was running to retain his seat as the County Judge, but was being opposed by the new lawyer in town, Clayton Edwards. Warren Brewster and Edward Masterson were running against one another for the office of sheriff.

For the election of the Board of County Commissioners to run the business of the county, Potter County had been divided into three precincts with one commissioner to be elected from each. The north precinct, where only a couple dozen people lived, covered all of the county situated north of the Canadian River. Ten of those people were members of the Freer family and the remainder worked for them, so the election of Oscar Freer to represent that area was an assumed fact. The other two precincts to the south of the river were divided along the fence which separated the Brewster Ranch from the City of Amarillo. Three people signed up, one of whom was John Polk, to run for the office commissioner from the western precinct. However, the other two dropped out after Lloyd Brewster had a talk with them, leaving Polk to run unopposed. Roger Bates was running for election in the eastern precinct, opposed by two cowboys who worked for Brewster but had moved across the fence into Amarillo in order to qualify as residents of that precinct. If Brewster was behind them, it was a bad political move because they would simply split any votes coming from his supporters.

Two or three people were running for each of the other elected offices in the county, but the real surprise was when Walter Scott, the postal clerk, announced that he was tossing his hat into the ring for the office of County Tax Assessors and Collector.

Roger and Joe were looking over the list of candidates for the various offices. "I wonder if Brewster is behind Scott in his bid for the Tax Collector's job," said Roger.

"It's hard to tell but I doubt it," replied Joe. "Harkins, the man who Brewster put in the office when the county was formed, is also running."

"Yeah, but Brewster and John Polk stick together like day-old hotcakes and Scott is married to Polk's sister," said Roger. "Polk is living in the bunkhouse at Brewster's place now that he is down and out broke again. He got into a poker game over at the Wild Horse Saloon and lost nearly two hundred dollars. It was every cent that he had left out of the money you gave him for his land."

"The Old Man Brewster ought to put him up. I hear that he was the one who walked away with most of Polk's money," said Joe.

"Polk was drinking with Knox and was already pretty well gone when Lloyd and Warren Brewster walked in. Knox suggested that they play some poker and the game started. There is talk that the three of them ganged up to cheat Polk out of his money, but he was too drunk to realize what was going on."

"You notice that Polk didn't move back in with Mary and Walter when he lost his money; he went to Brewster's place. When I bought the land from Mary and John, I got the feeling that Scott is his own man and isn't especially fond of Polk, even though he is married to his sister."

"I'll see if I can arrange a meeting with Scott to see which direction his wind is blowing," said Roger. "Since he is running against Brewster's hand-picked man, he might deserve our support."

The meeting was arranged and Walter came to Joe's office after the post office closed for the day. "I understand that you wanted to see me, Mr. Armitage," he said.

"Yes, I was interested in the fact that you have announced that you are running for the office of County Tax Assessors and Collector. I must say that it came as a surprise since you would have to give up your job at the post office if you win."

"I decided to run because the Tax Collector makes more than twice the money I get from the post office, but after what I saw today, I will be running because I want to do something about the unfair tax situation which exists in this county," replied Walter.

"Just what do you mean about the unfair tax situation?" asked Joe.

"The county taxes will be ten dollars a year on that little house and one lot that I own here in Amarillo while the house next door, which belongs to a man who works for Brewster, will pay only a dollar. In fact, Brewster will be paying only one dollar in county taxes on the entire sixty sections of land he owns," replied Walter. "Incidentally, the highest taxed piece of property in the county is this hotel, which will be paying over two hundred dollars."

"How do you come by all of this information?" asked Joe.

"Simple, the tax notices were dropped off at the post office today. They were sent out on penny post cards to save postage. All that I had to do was sit there and read how much each person's property was assessed and how much he would be paying in taxes. The longer that I looked at those tax bills, the madder that I got and just decided to run and straighten things out if I was elected."

"Are these isolated situations or do they cover just about everyone in the county?" asked Joe.

"Brewster and all of his friends will be paying a token amount of one dollar each, no matter how much land that they own. The rest of the people in the county will be paying more, and anyone whom he doesn't like will be paying a whole bunch more."

"How about other ranchers, especially those in the eastern part of the county?" asked Joe.

"As I said, those which are buddies of Brewster will be paying one dollar and the others a lot more," he replied.

"Can you afford to run a successful campaign?" asked Joe.

"Mary still has a little of the money that you gave us for the land and she said that I could use that," replied Walter. "It just means that we won't be able to build another bedroom onto the house like we had planned."

"I'd hate to see you use your house money to run for an office which will benefit everyone if you are elected, so I'll see what I can do to help you," said Joe.

"I'm sorry Mr. Armitage, but I can't accept anything from you. If I did, you might come back and want me to do exactly what Brewster is doing to the people now. If I win, I don't want to have any strings that someone can pull."

"First of all, Mr. Scott. I am offering to help because I have faith in the future of Amarillo and Potter County, and I want to do what I feel is in their best interest. Second, you have my word that I would never ask any man to compromise his position or values, whether he had accepted help from me or not," said Joe.

"As a man who has worked for both sides in this matter, I can truthfully say that the difference between Mr. Armitage and Mr. Brewster is like daylight and dark," said Roger. "Mr. Armitage may hold his cards close to his chest, but he will never mark one."

"Tell you what, Walter," said Joe. "Go by the newspaper and talk with Buck Henry. Tell him just what you have told me about the tax situation and say that you'd appreciate it very much if he could run something about you in his paper. He's an honest editor and I have a feeling that he will throw the support of the newspaper behind you. Can you accept help like that?"

"I'd never given the newspaper any thought," replied Walter. "I could accept support from a newspaper, but I would feel badly about accepting actual money from anyone."

"I'm glad that you are running, Walter, and I can assure you that you have my support and my vote. I hope that you win," said Joe.

"Same goes for me," replied Roger.

After he had left, Joe told Roger, "Tell Buck to send any of Walter's bills for printing or advertising to me."

Three weeks before the elections, several of the races were too close to call, especially the one for County Judge. Everyone in the Panhandle knew Lloyd Brewster and many of them owed him a favor in one way or the other. At the same time, if they should find out how he had abused the office, things might be a lot different. The other candidate, Clayton Edwards was a skilled attorney who had served under the Dallas District Attorney. As far as they knew, he was honest. To Joe, his only problem was being a newcomer, something which the long-time residents tended to distrust. Joe still felt that the more conservative voters from the outlying areas would pick Edwards over Brewster when they got to the ballot box, but he wanted to make sure.

Joe went to see Buck Henry. "Would it be possible for you to run the entire county tax rolls in your paper?" he asked.

"It would require a special edition, but it could be done," replied Buck. "Walter Scott told me about the present situation in tax valuations. Tax assessments are public record and I feel that the public should be told about what is going on. The special will run three days before the elections."

The race between Warren Brewster and Edward Masterson was another one which might go down to the wire. Warren rode on the coat tails of his father and would probably receive vote for vote along with him. The name of Masterson was well known to everyone, although not all of them regarded it in a favorable manner. Many of the cowboys around the Panhandle had been on cattle drives to Dodge City at one time or another and several of them had visited the Dodge City jail as a result of meeting up with his cousin. The two biggest things that he had going for him was his job as brand inspector and the fact that he had served with the Texas Rangers.

"The way that I see it," Joe said one morning. "Is that the outcome of this whole election rests on just how many of the people that live on ranches outside of town we can get to come to town and vote on election day. Generally speaking, the cowboys will vote the same as the man whom they work for. Do you have any ideas about what can be done to bring them in?"

"There are three things which will bring people out when everything else fails," said Roger. "Cowboys will leave their dying mothers to go to a rodeo and women will do just about anything to go to a county fair. If the women come, so will their husbands. Finally, if all else fails, almost every person alive will drop whatever they are doing if they are offered free food."

"In other words, we could bring just about every person in Potter County into town if we had a county fair, rodeo and free barbecue," asked Joe.

"That's a fact," replied Roger. "But how in the world can we get something of that magnitude together in the short time that we have left?"

"God created heaven and earth and all its animals in six days, so we should be able to put together a little county fair and rodeo in three times that long. Let's you and me see who can sign up the most sponsors in a single day," replied Joe.

By the time darkness fell, every business in town had agreed to donate time, money or materials for the new fair and rodeo facilities. The Armitage Development Company donated five acres of land out east of town as a location and the Foxworth Galbraith Lumber Company had agreed to erect a large building in which the fair would be held if they could use it the rest of the year for storage purposes.

The Fort Worth and Denver Railroad offered to send the lumber and a crew to build the corrals and chutes for the rodeo. Finally, the Lazy L and Flying T Ranches each offered to butcher half a dozen yearlings and have their cooks barbecue them. Various other ranches agreed to furnish livestock for the rodeo.

The special edition of the newspaper ran two full pages promoting the First Annual Potter County Fair, Rodeo and Free Barbecue, but the big thing was the entire county tax rolls. On the morning after the paper hit the streets, Lloyd Brewster was in Buck Henry's office. "I'm going to throw your ass in jail," he screamed. "You published secret county records in the newspaper."

"If they were all that secret, Mr. Brewster, then how was I able spend five hours in the tax office

making a copy of them?" Buck asked.

"I talked with Harkins and he said that you lied to him about why you were wanting to see the tax rolls, and that is perjury," replied Lloyd.

"Perjury is lying under oath," said Buck. "I had been there four nearly four hours when he came in and asked what I was doing. I simply told him that I was checking the tax records. At any rate, county tax rolls are public documents and available for anyone who wishes to see."

"You ain't heard the last from me and you can bet your ass on that!" shouted Brewster as he stormed out the door.

Joe and Roger lined up the schedule of events for the fair. On Saturday, the things like quilts, cakes, pies and canned goods would go on display with judging to be held on Sunday, just after special church services and before a big covered dish picnic. Nothing will bring women out faster than a chance to show off their handiwork and cooking abilities.

A parade down Polk street would kick off the festivities on Monday morning, followed by speeches by everyone who was running for office. Monday afternoon was devoted to the preliminary rodeo events. Tuesday morning was set aside for voting, and since every voter in the county was expected to already be in town, the polls would close at two in the afternoon to leave time for the election judges to count the votes.

The main events of the rodeo, such as bull and bareback bronc riding, bulldogging and calf roping would begin as soon as the polls closed. The results of the election would be announced at five sharp, along with awarding the prizes for the fair and rodeo. Last but certainly not the least, the free barbecue would begin.

"One thing bothers me," said Roger. "The official voting location is in the court house, and if Brewster decides to lock the gate and keep everyone out, how will the election be held?"

"I've already considered that problem and Ed Masterson has taken care of it," replied Joe.

People began to arrive as early as the Wednesday before the fair in order to get a good spot for their wagons and buggies. Some people set up tents while others planned to stay in the wagons. Since there was little else to do after their camps were set up, most of them took the opportunity to visit the dozen or more new stores in Amarillo. Not realizing the number of people who would come to town for the fair, few of the storekeepers stocked up and as a result, most of them had completely sold out by noon on Saturday.

Monday morning came and everyone was gathered at the rodeo grounds after the parade. A small platform had been placed in front of the bleachers and most of the candidates were seated on it. Buck Henry, the editor of the newspaper, stepped to the podium and said, "Good Morning, folks. I have been asked to be the moderator for the speeches which you hear this morning. I have set a five minute limit for all speeches and I expect all speakers to limit themselves to that length of time."

At that moment, a lone rider came through the gates of the rodeo grounds. He was covered head to toe with the dust of several days in the saddle and had the hard looks of a man who could eat nails for breakfast. He couldn't have been an inch over five feet tall and the huge roan horse he was riding made him look even smaller. He was dressed completely in buckskin and wore a huge hat made from rawhide. Around his neck hung two bandoleers of ammunition, a pistol swung from each hip and the handle of a Bowie knife stuck out of his right boot. A rolling block 45-90 rifle was stuck into a boot on one side of the saddle and a sawed-off double barrel shotgun swung on a leather strap on the other.

As he rode toward the speaker's platform, he pulled up where Ed. Masterson was standing off to one side. He nodded and stuck his hand out to him and said, "Mornin' Ed, ain't seen you in a spell."

"It has been a while, Oscar. Nice you could come," replied Ed, shaking his hand.

He rode to the front of the speaker's stand on his big horse and looked at the assembled candidates with those cold blue eyes, never saying a word. Every person was so quiet that you could have heard a pin drop. Finally, he reached into his saddle bag, pulled out a folded paper and spoke in a voice which was

almost a whisper, "My name is Oscar Short and I am a Texas Ranger. I have an order signed by the Governor of the State of Texas, which places this county and all of the people in it, under my jurisdiction until the elections have been completed. I am also ordered to see to it that the elections are carried out in a proper and legal manner and to impound the ballots after they have been counted."

A few whispers ran through the crowd, as Warren and his deputies strode up to the ranger. "I'm the sheriff here and you will have to work through me." said Warren.

Oscar looked down at Warren and his toadies, "And not only will I shoot any person who attempts to interfere in any way with the legal process of this election, but I'll shoot his dog and then I'll shoot the horse that he came on." He folded the paper and returned it to the saddle bag, reined his horse around and rode slowly along the front row of people. He picked out four men and asked them to step forward. He pointed to the first man in line and said, "You will be the election judge and the rest will be the election officials. You will report the results to me when it is over."

Once the crowd had recovered from the shock of the arrival of the Texas Ranger, Buck introduced Judge Lloyd Brewster, who was the first candidate to speak.

He strutted to the podium, looked around and began, "Friends and neighbors. Most of you people have known me for as long as you have lived in this area, because I was one of the first people here. I built the vast Brewster Ranch and brought in the railroad for you. I have given you jobs when you needed them and loaned you money when you were broke. Now I expect you to repay those debts by re-electing me so I can continue to help my friends." He received scattered applause as he turned to leave the podium.

"How come my ranch isn't a tenth as big as yours and I'm paying a lot more taxes than you?" shouted someone from the back of the crowd.

"You will have to take that up with the tax assessors," replied Brewster as he sat down.

"He's your kinfolks and you're the County Judge, so I'm asking you," he shouted back.

"Why don't you just answer the question?" shouted someone else.

Knowing that he could never win a shouting contest with the crowd, Judge Brewster lowered his head and refused to answer.

Clayton Edwards was introduced and he came to the speaker's platform. "Ladies and Gentlemen, and fellow citizens of the great state of Texas. I have been a resident of Potter County for only a short length of time, but I'm sure that each of you is interested enough in this election to learn of my qualifications and background, so I will not bore you with a personal history. One of the benefits of having lived here for such a short time is that I haven't formed any close friendships nor have I created any enemies, so I feel that I can judge any case which may come before me and render decisions based on the law and merits of the case, not on any debts which may be owed in either direction. I thank you and ask for your vote tomorrow." At least two hundred people jumped to their feet, clapping and yelling.

Joe whispered to Roger, "One down and one to go."

Warren Brewster came to the stand, "I'm sure all of you know that I am the sheriff of Potter County and plan to keep on being the sheriff. Me and Pa, I mean Judge Brewster, run this county according to what is right and we don't get all bogged down by a bunch of silly laws that sissy lawyers down in Austin make up. One thing that you can say about us Brewsters is that we know right from wrong and you know that the right thing to do is keep us in office." From the best that Joe could count, three people clapped as he returned to his seat while Lloyd Brewster sat there scowling at him.

Joe never realized just how eloquent Ed Masterson could be as a speaker. He stepped easily to the podium, stood straight as a rail, smiled and held the crowd in his hand as he spoke to them. "Ladies and gentlemen. Our country was founded on the constitution, which in its own way, is a very simple set of laws by which we all must live if we hope to make our land grow and prosper. It says that each man is equal to all others and no one person should be subservient to another. By the same token, no man is above nor beneath the laws which were written to apply equally to all of us. As your sheriff, I will enforce the laws to the letter, because any person who violates a law, not only harms our country and the

constitution, but also causes injury to each and every one of us. I thank you for your attention and would appreciate your vote tomorrow." The crowd shouted and stamped their feet until Joe feared that the bleachers might come crashing down under the force.

Tuesday morning came and Oscar Short, who had spent the night with his horse in the livery stable, rode off toward the court house in San Jacinto. The gate through the Brewster fence was open and tossed aside. He dismounted, dropped the reins to the ground and walked to the door of the court house.

Warren Brewster, John Polk and Emmitt Knox were standing sullenly in the door, but they moved aside barely enough to allow him to enter. Since the court room was the largest in the building, it was set up for the election. Tables and chairs usually used by lawyers during trials were turned around to be used by the election officials that Oscar had picked the day before. Judge Brewster was sitting at his desk behind them.

"Where are the boundary markers?" Oscar asked the election judge.

"What boundary markers?" he answered.

"Buy law, you are required to erect boundary markers at least one hundred feet from the door of the place where the election is being held."

"What kind of sign does it have to be?" asked the judge.

"Just a sign of any sort that says Election Boundary, no electioneering beyond this point. It must be at least 100 feet from the door of the court house," replied Oscar. "After it is up, you may open the polls and once that they are open, no one other than the election officials and people who are actually in the process of voting will be allowed inside the markers. That goes for you too, Judge."

"Are you telling me that I can't stay in my own court room?" asked Brewster. "I'm the County Judge and I own this damn building, so I can stay any damn place that I choose."

"Not only do you have to go outside of the election boundary the same as everyone else, but I'm also ordering the sheriff and his deputies to leave the area because their presence might tend to influence the voters," replied Oscar.

"The sheriff and his deputies are here to prevent any disturbances," replied Brewster. "And they are going to stay."

"If there is any sort of disturbance, I'll handle it," replied Oscar.

"Suppose we refuse to go?" said Brewster.

"Then I will do whatever is necessary to remove you," answered Oscar "And I'm sure you don't want to force me to do that, Mr. Brewster."

"I demand that I be allowed to vote before I leave," shouted Brewster.

"When the signs have been erected, the polls may open and you can cast your vote, just like any other citizen of this county."

When the signs were up and the polls officially opened, a long line of people were waiting to get in. Oscar watched while the Brewsters and the deputies voted, then he walked with them to the back door. As they left, he pulled a chair up against the door and sat down. Even though he was out of the sight of the voters, everyone was well aware of his presence. Voting went along very smoothly and by noon, all but three of the registered voters of the county had cast their ballots. Since those people were out of town and would not be back in time to vote, the election judge asked Oscar if he could close the polls and count the votes. Oscar told him, "You are the election judge and if you feel that all votes are cast, you may declare the polls closed and count the votes."

After the election judge locked the doors, Oscar returned and sat across the room from where the tabulating was taking place. He watched as each ballot was counted and placed in a pile to one side. When the last one had been tabulated, he came to the table and handed a leather folder to the election judge, saying, "Place the ballots and counting sheets inside of this pouch and we will both seal it. I am instructed to deliver them to the State Attorney General and I hope for your sake, that the totals are correct."

With Oscar looking on, the counting had progressed much faster than had been anticipated and only the wild bulls had been ridden when they were ready to announce the results. Oscar and the election judge came to the arena to deliver the results.

The election judge stood in the middle of the rodeo arena and read the results, "For Judge of Potter County; Brewster, 21 votes; Edwards 216."

Shouts and cheers erupted from the bleachers. When the crowd had quieted, the judge continued. For Sheriff of Potter County; Brewster, 6 votes; Masterson, 231." The shouting and cheering broke out again.

Emmitt Knox, who was standing next to Warren, whispered, "As unpopular as you seem to be, perhaps it's a good thing that you are wearing a gun."

"Go to hell!" replied Warren as he stalked away in pursuit of the elder Brewster who was headed for his horse.

The judge continued; "For County Assessors and Tax Collector; Harkins, 3; Scott, 234."

"It looks as if we held the fair to bring in the voters for nothing," said Bates.

"When the people are able to vote their feelings without any outside influences, they usually make the correct decision," replied Joe. "Also, I wouldn't say that, except for bringing in the voters, the fair was a failure by any means. Look at all of the happy merchants, and I hope you haven't forgotten that we sold 36 lots to future residents of Amarillo."

## CHAPTER SEVEN

It was Wednesday morning and Joe paused in the middle of a letter he was writing and looked out the window of his office as the Fort Worth and Denver train puffed and chugged into town, screeching to a stop next to the wooden platform that served as the station. Today it was more or less on time for its tri-weekly trip to Amarillo. Most people insisted that it should be called the Try Weakly Railroad. The Santa Fe tracks had yet to reach Albuquerque where they would tie in with the Denver, Rio Grande and Western. When that happened, there would be several trains through each day. Joe thought to himself, "When the Santa Fe gets in full operation, they will run on time every day and we will have a real depot."

The door to the baggage car slid open and the train crew began unloading various bundles, boxes and crates, followed by two steamer trunks plastered with steamship stickers. Finally they began to bring out several pieces of expensive leather luggage, placing them carefully on a freight cart. Joe took an added interest when the man in the baggage car handed down five round hat boxes. "So the passenger is a woman. That's what we need here in Amarillo to make it more like a real city, more women."

Joe was now twenty-seven years of age but was still single. He had been far too busy building the town during the past four years to think about getting married, besides, the few eligible women who did live around there fell into two categories. They were either colorless, dowdy frumps who ducked out of sight and peeked around doors whenever a man came close or else were the rough and tumble ranch types who drank beer, wore pants, smelled like a branding corral and could whip any cowboy up to twice their size.

The conductor emerged from the passenger car, placed the step in front of the door and extended his hand to assist the passenger down the steps. Holding her skirt just high enough to expose shapely ankles and prevent tripping, she stepped lively to the platform. She had a certain bounce and enthusiasm to her step, nothing like the dirge of most of the arriving women when they got their first look at the town which was to be their new home. Joe's eyes moved upward from the exposed ankles, along the skirt which flowed smoothly over rounded hips, gathered closely around a small waist and expanded quickly to hold the most beautiful pair of breasts that he had ever seen. They didn't simply fill the dress, they struggled against it as if attempting to escape.

She wore a hat, but her long hair flowed from beneath it and cascaded over her shoulders, flashing like polished copper in the early sunlight. She turned toward the hotel, as if looking for someone, then Joe saw her face. He had seen some beautiful women in his time, but not a single one of them could hold a candle to this lady.

Never before had a woman cast such an instant spell over Joe. His heartbeat quickened, sweat popped from his palms and a primeval urge, which began in his throat, plunged straight to his groin. Driven by forces as old as mankind, he knew he had to meet this woman.

Without even pausing to replace the cap on his fountain pen, Joe dropped it on his desk and bounded down the stairs, taking them three at a time. His heart pounded with excitement, lest someone else should come along to meet the lady before he could reach her. He stepped from the porch of the hotel and walked quickly across the dirt street to where she was standing. "Good morning," he said. "I am Joseph Armitage, Mayor of Amarillo, and you look as though you could use some assistance."

She looked up at Joe and he could have drowned in those big, brown eyes. "Thank you Mr. Armitage," she replied. "But my father is meeting me."

Joe was never a person to give up quickly, and her curt reply wasn't about to deter him in his quest to become acquainted with such a beautiful woman. "Who is your father?" he asked. "I probably know him."

"I'm sure you do. He is Eldon Farris, President of the bank."

"Oh yes, I know Mr. Farris very well," replied Joe. "Since you are his daughter, you must be from Dallas. I find it rather strange that we have never met before because I'm also from there."

"Not really all that strange," Mr. Armitage. "I haven't been around Dallas or seen my parents in more than six years. I spent four years at a private boarding college in Vermont and went directly from there to France, where I studied art for the past two years."

"It is good to finally see some culture coming to Amarillo, Miss Farris. I take it that it is Miss Farris," he said, stressing the title of a single woman.

"Yes, I am single, and since I have cured your agony of wondering about my marital status, would you like to buy me a cup of good coffee?" she replied with a smile. "That stuff on the train was simply awful."

Her answer and offer came as a shock Joe, but he found her somewhat brazen attitude to be extremely exciting. They walked into the dining room of the Ellis Hotel and Joe pulled out a chair for her. "Mrs. Ellis, I'd like for you to meet Miss Farris. She's the daughter of Eldon Farris and just arrived on this morning's train."

"It is a pleasure to meet you Miss Ellis. I am Margaret Farris, but my friends call me Maggie."

Maggie! Joe had found out her first name without the embarrassment of having to ask. "Would you care for some breakfast, Maggie?" he asked.

"Just coffee, thank you," she replied.

"France!" said Joe. "I would like to go there some day. What is it like?"

"Mainly, the culture is totally different from anything that you can find here in Texas," she replied as she took a sip of the steaming coffee. "Mmmm, that is good coffee. In fact, strong black coffee is one of the things I missed the most while I was in France. They are always mixing chicory, chocolate, vanilla or something else with their coffee and simply ruining it."

"I see your father's car across the street," said Joe, wishing that he hadn't arrived so soon. "He just bought the first car to come to Amarillo. Enjoy your coffee and I'll tell him that you are here."

As Joe and Eldon Farris stepped through the door, Maggie squealed and grabbed her father around the neck, crying and kissing him. "Oh, Daddy. it has been such a long time," she sobbed. "How is Mother?"

Joe knew that they wanted to be alone for their reunion, so he went to the platform to load her smaller pieces of luggage into the car, then he told the man at the docks to deliver the trunks to the Farris house. She was drying her tears when he returned.

"I was in a meeting and the time simply got away from me," said Farris. "Thanks for taking care of my little girl until I got here."

"It was my pleasure," replied Joe. "In fact Miss Farris, there will be a dance at the fair grounds this Saturday night. May I escort you?"

"That is only three days away," she replied. "Let me get settled first and I'll let you know."

"Let's go!" said Eldon, as he spun the crank on his new car. For some reason, Joe had the feeling that Eldon Farris was being unusually cool to him.

Thursday was pure misery for Joe because he didn't hear a word from Maggie. "Is this her way of saying that she doesn't care to go with me?" thought Joe. "Or perhaps she feels that a Texas dance is too crude for her to attend."

On Friday morning, Joe dropped by the site on Polk Street where the new bank was being built. Farris was conducting business in a temporary building next door until the new building was finished. Across the street, civil engineers were drilling sample holes in the ground to test the stability of the soil in preparation for beginning construction on the new Santa Fe Building, which was destined to become the landmark for the city. Several other brick buildings were going up along Polk Street between Third and Tenth Streets. Joe looked at the busy construction and thought to himself, "Soon this street will be paved with bricks and an electric trolley will run between Tenth Street and the Railroad Station." A public service

company had been formed to build an electric generating plant just north of town.

"Joe," Farris called from the door of the temporary bank, "Drop by my office before you leave."

Joe entered the bank, greeted the teller who was taking care of a half-dozen people waiting in line to deposit money. As he passed, he nodded to the bookkeeper who was wearing a green eyeshade as he hunched over his desk, carefully entering neat rows of figures into the ledger. The door was open, so Joe walked into the President's office without knocking.

"I was going to send this over to you, but since you are here, I'll deliver it in person," said Farris as he handed Joe a small white envelope.

"Mr. Armitage," was all that it said on the front in precise script. Over the tip of the flap was a dab of red wax imprinted with some sort of seal. It was so clean and neat that Joe hesitated to break it.

Joe slipped his finger under the tab of the envelope and lifted gently, popping the seal loose without breaking it. A faint hint of perfume wafted from the paper. Joe didn't recognize the aroma, but it smelled expensive and French. He withdrew the folded note and opened it. Carefully lettered in the most beautiful handwriting he had ever seen, was the message, "Dear Joseph, I would consider it an honor to accompany you to the dance Saturday night. Margaret."

Joe sent his best suit to be cleaned and pressed, then he went to the livery stable where he rented a special buggy which was usually reserved for weddings and parades. It had a glossy black frame and body with yellow wheels. The black leather seats and harness were buffed to a Sunday shoe shine and the silver buckles and fittings were polished until they sparkled like new money.

On Saturday morning, Joe stopped by the barber shop where he got a haircut and shave, had his shoes shined and asked the barber to put on a little extra tonic. "Hear that you are sparking the banker's daughter," said the barber.

"Where did you hear that?" asked Joe.

"Emmitt Knox was in here this morning, said that Warren Brewster was after her to go to the dance Saturday night, but she told him that she had already accepted an invitation from you."

"Where did Warren meet her?" asked Joe.

"The Brewsters threw a big party for her out at the ranch last night, cooked a steer and had a band. Lots of people there, figured that you would have been there too," replied the barber.

"About the only thing that the Brewsters would invite me to would be a hanging with me being the guest of honor," replied Joe.

Joe hadn't felt like this since he was sixteen years of age and going to pick up his first date for the annual Cotillion in Dallas. He knocked on the door of the Farris home at exactly seven and Margaret opened it to greet him. She was dressed in a forest green dress which made her look even more beautiful than he had remembered. The gown clung to her shoulders with an open neck plunging deeply past those beautiful breasts. "You are beautiful tonight," he stammered.

"Why, thank you Joseph," she said easily. "Would you care for a brandy with Father before we leave?"

Joe couldn't remember whether he had actually answered her or not, but he soon found himself holding a small glass of amber liquid and trying to make small talk with her parents.

Joe extended his hand to assist her into the buggy. Her hand was warm and soft as she gripped his, lifting the hem of her dress with the other in order to step aboard. The same perfume which had been on the note, drifted in the night air. She sat straight and proper, with her hands folded in her lap as they rode to the dance. Joe formulated words in his mind but was never able to speak them, fearing that they would come out awkward or foolish.

The dance had been under way for some time when they arrived and they could hear the music coming from the big building long before they reached it. A screeching fiddle, two guitars and a banjo were pounding out square dance music while the caller chanted his spiel. The music ended and the squares broke up as they entered the door and looked around to see if they could find two empty chairs.

The band struck up a different type of music and pairs of dancers began to follow the lively rhythm.

"What kind of dance is that?" she asked.

"They call it a Texas two-step or cowboy dancing," replied Joe. "It seems to be something known only to cowboys because I'd never seen it before coming to the Panhandle."

"I much prefer a waltz to something like this," she replied. "I don't know if I could ever learn to dance like that."

"Me too," replied Joe. "But that seems to be the only kind of dancing that these ranch hands know. I suppose that we can just show up for a few minutes and then leave quietly if you like."

As they walked across the room to an empty table, the musicians stopped playing and everyone turned to look at them. Joe found the unusual amount of attention they were attracting to be rather disconcerting, but Maggie seemed to take it in stride. Perhaps, because of her unusual beauty, she was accustomed to having people stop and stare at her. They sat at the table and the dance continued.

After a few dances, Warren Brewster walked up, bowed and said, "Good evening, Maggie. Just because your escort doesn't seem able to dance is no reason why you should have to sit and watch. May I have this dance?"

Maggie turned to Joe, "May I dance this one with Mr. Brewster?"

When one is placed in a situation such as this, there is very little that he can do other than to accept it gracefully. Joe rose to his feet, smiled and said, "Of course, If that is your wish, Miss Farris."

As she stood and joined hands with Warren, the musicians suddenly changed from the raunchy western music that they had been playing to a lilting waltz. All that Joe could do was to sit there and watch while Warren whirled Maggie across the dance floor.

A few dances later, when the band began to play another waltz. Joe asked, "Would you like to dance this one?"

"Of course," she replied, taking his hand. As they walked onto the dance floor, the musicians suddenly broke into foot-stomping, cowboy music again.

"I know when I'm licked," said Joe. "Shall we go?"

As they rode back to her house, she said, "There seems to have been a conspiracy to keep us from dancing."

"I'm positive that there was and I know who was behind it," replied Joe.

"Who in the world would want to do a thing like that?" she asked.

"Your friend, Warren Brewster," replied Joe. "We have never gotten along very well."

"That's hard for me to believe," she replied. "My father speaks so highly of him and he seems to be such a nice man."

Although Joe asked Maggie for a date at least a dozen times during the next two months, she accepted only two of his requests. One was to attend the grand opening of her father's new bank and the other was a special reception given in his honor when he was named President of the newly formed Amarillo Social Club. Joe had the feeling that her father had more to do with her accepting these invitations than she did.

While Joe didn't travel in the same circles as Warren Brewster, it was no secret that he and Maggie were seeing a lot of one another. Joe planned and plotted ways which would bring Maggie and him together, if for no more than a few seconds, but few of them worked. On the rare occasions when he and Maggie happened to meet, his heart would pound and his hands would become wet and sticky. Then, one day he picked up the weekly newspaper and on the front page was the announcement, "Mr. and Mrs. Eldon Farris take pleasure in announcing the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Margaret Ann, to Warren Eugene Brewster...." Joe couldn't read any further.

In every instance before, when there had been a contest of wills or wits between Joe Armitage and Warren Brewster, Joe had always won easily. It was very difficult for him to accept this defeat, especially when the prize was a woman of such class and beauty and one whom Joe had loved since the first instant

that he had laid eyes on her. Joe simply could not understand why she would prefer Warren over him. Warren was crude, uneducated and unskilled in social customs. He, on the other hand, was polished and far more her social equal, both in background and education. What would possess a woman of such obvious charm and class to saddle herself with someone who was nothing more than an ordinary cowboy who happened to come into enough money to enable him to hire others to do the dirty work around the ranch.

Joe secretly hoped that she would come to her senses and not marry Warren, but that was not to be. On the appointed date, she and Warren were wed and his last hope faded. Joe resigned himself to her loss and threw himself into the task of making Amarillo the biggest and best city in Texas.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Amarillo was growing by leaps and bounds, far surpassing anything that Joe or his father had ever imagined. The population now stood at nearly four thousand people and more were coming every day. The new federal building and post office had just opened and a new court house was being built on the land which Joe had set aside and sold to the county for one dollar.

There had been a pitched battle over where to build the court house. Originally, Warren Brewster, who was then the county commissioner from the western area after having beaten John Polk for the position, was able to get the commissioner from the north to vote with him to keep it in San Jacinto. Their decision was finally overturned by a vote of the people which not only authorized the county to build its own court house instead of continuing to lease one from Brewster, but to build it in on the block of land in downtown Amarillo.

At least sixty percent of the available space on Polk Street between Third and Tenth had buildings already standing or else under construction. The Santa Fe Building now stood ten stories high, eleven if you counted the top floor where the heating equipment and devator equipment were housed. It was claimed that one could see the Santa Fe Building from as far as twenty miles away.

Joe stood at the corner of Third and Polk, surveying his new Amarillo Building, which was almost ready for tenants to occupy. It was a modern, fireproof brick office building which would be the prestigious address for the top lawyers, doctors and other professionals of Amarillo. It was only four stories high, but was designed to allow up to six an additional floors to be added when they were needed. Sixty percent of the space, enough to bring the income past the break-even point, had been leased before the first drop of cement was poured. It and the Santa Fe Building at the other end of Polk Street would act as bookends, holding the rest of the business part of town in a tight group.

Roger Bates walked up, "Joe, I have some good news. Those three lots over there," he said, pointing across Polk Street from the Amarillo Building, "Have just been sold. The same company also bought two lots facing Polk Street, just across Tenth Street, south of the Santa Fe Building."

"Who bought them?" asked Joe.

"They were bought by a company called the Llano Estacado Land and Cattle Company," replied Roger. "Their address is in care of Arnold Dobbins, the lawyer."

"Do you know what they plan to build on them?" asked Joe.

"Haven't the slightest idea," replied Roger. "I asked Lawyer Dobbins when we were making the deal on the land, but he was awfully closed-mouth about it. He said that they hadn't decided what they were going to use it for, but I suspect that he knows a lot more than he is telling."

"I'd like to know more about this company," said Joe. "I never heard of such an outfit, but they must be pretty big to afford two prime pieces of land like those, especially this one here at Third and Polk. How much money did they put down on the note?"

"There is no note on the land," replied Roger. "The lawyer signed a draft to cover every cent of the money for buying both properties. I took it right to the bank and Mr. Farris personally approved the payment. The money is already in your account."

"I wonder if Farris knows, or would tell us anything about them," suggested Joe.

"I casually asked Mr. Farris who was behind the deal when he approved the draft. All that he would say was that the company had a letter of credit from a bank in Fort Worth which was far more than ample to cover the draft. I got the feeling that either he didn't know any more about the buyers than we do, or else didn't want to discuss it, so I didn't press the issue."

"I wonder why all the great secrecy," said Joe. "Most companies want the world to know all about it when they make a deal like that."

Construction began almost immediately on the land across the street from the Amarillo Building. A basement was dug and the foundation poured. It covered every inch of the property, extending from sidewalk to the alley and property line to property line. As the building rose above the third floor, it became obvious from the number and placement of the windows that the structure was destined to be a hotel. Higher and higher the building rose until it stood more than twice as high as the Amarillo Building. It was a most impressive place, the same height as the Santa Fe building and built of almost identical brick and design.

The massive bronze front doors opened into a huge lobby with the registration desk across the back. Behind the desk were twin elevators with heavy bronze doors. To either side of the lobby, doors opened into spacious ground floor offices.

The tile setters came in and began to finish the floor of the lobby, laying one small square of tile at a time and carefully tapping it into perfect alignment. Directly between the front doors and the registration desk, they formed the great seal of the State of Texas in the tile floor. Between the seal and the registration desk was set the head of a longhorn bull, with horns stretched a full thirty feet from tip to tip. Around the border of the lobby floor, were placed the brands of all the larger ranches in the Panhandle.

When the floors had been ground and polished to a high luster, the lobby furniture was brought in. There were a few overstuffed chairs with genuine leather covers, but for the most part, the chairs were fashioned from steer horns and covered with rawhide with the hair still in place. A mounted longhorn steer head was hung above the registration desk.

"You can almost smell the cow shit in here already," Joe told Roger as they walked through the hotel a few days before it was scheduled to open. But the thing which interested them the most was who would be occupying the offices around the lobby. To the right as one entered the doors, was a branch office of the Chicago Cattle Exchange and next to it were the offices of The Morris, Smith, Fennel and Ford Stock Exchange. Joe had tried in vain to get that firm to lease space in the Amarillo Building, but had failed. There was also a jewelry store and two law offices opening there.

The day arrived for the grand opening of the new Amarillo Hotel and all the city dignitaries, with the exception of Joe, were present in the reviewing stand. For some reason which he did not immediately understand, Joe had not been included in the list of people invited to sit in the stand. After all, he was the Mayor, and had served continuously since the day that Amarillo was founded.

A wide, red ribbon hung across the bronze doors of the hotel and a band played in the street. The city's new fire engine was parked across the street, just in case anyone would like to inspect it. The crowd began to gather and by the scheduled time for the big ceremony, more than five hundred people stood on the sidewalks and in the street. Joe, Ed Masterson and Roger Bates watched from their vantage point in a second story window of the Amarillo Building.

Arnold Dobbins stepped to the front of the platform and began speaking, "Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to be associated with the dedication of this great building. This fine hotel was built by a man of great vision and faith in the future of our city; a man who places service to the people above his own interests; a man who is willing to risk his fortunes and future on a monument to the cattle industry, which is the backbone of the Panhandle. It gives me great pleasure to introduce to you, the man who made this building possible, Mister Lloyd Brewster."

"Well, Ed, now I understand why you and I weren't invited to be a part of the dedication of the new hotel. We also know who is behind the Llano Estacado Land and Cattle Company," said Joe.

Lloyd stepped to the podium amid thunderous applause. "Thank you ladies and gentlemen. While I am merely a simple cowboy and not a public figure with vast experience as a speaker, I will do my best to tell you why I wanted to build such a great hotel as this. First, I feel that the honest and hard working ranchers who built the Panhandle by the sweat of their brows and muscles in their backs deserve a suitable place to

stay when they come to our fair city. They deserve something better than being forced to spend the night with drunks and prostitutes in Joe Armitage's whorehouse down at deuce and Johnson. Second, I wanted to show the people of Amarillo that I am willing to risk much of the money which I have been fortunate enough to accumulate from honest work as a rancher, by investing it back into this city rather than sending it off to grow moldy in some obscure bank down in Dallas. Finally, I want to take this opportunity to announce my candidacy for election to the office of Senator of this great State of Texas, a position from which I feel that I can better serve my friends than by hiding away in some insignificant city or county office."

Amid thunderous applause, Lloyd stepped to the bronze doors where he was handed a red-hot branding iron. He touched the iron to the ribbon and it fell away in a puff of smoke.

At that instant, a pistol shot rang out and the bullet slammed into the bronze door, where it dropped harmlessly to the steps after leaving a small dent. There was quite a bit of yelling in the crowd as someone was being wrestled to the ground.

"Shouldn't you be down there, Ed," said Joe.

"I see a couple of my deputies in the crowd, as well as several city policemen. I'm sure they can handle it without me," he replied.

"Can you see who took the shot at Old Man Brewster?" asked Roger.

"Looks poor old drunken John Polk," replied Ed.

"Why is he mad at Brewster," Joe asked. "I thought that I was the only one who he wanted to kill."

"He claims that Lloyd helped Warren cheat him out of the election to the county commission," replied Ed. "It's probably true, but who cares. Also, do you realize that the hotel over there is sitting on the corner of the twenty acres that Polk sold you?"

They watched while John Polk was handcuffed and hauled away toward the jail, screaming that he would kill both Brewsters if it was the last thing that he ever did.

"It seems that Polk has never been able to do anything right," said Roger. "He can't even hit a man from ten feet away."

"He might have done better if he had used the shotgun that he came after me with," replied Joe.

As they walked away from the window, Masterson asked Joe, "Are you going to let that bastard get away with direct insults and attacks on your character?"

"Not if I can help it," replied Joe. "One thing that I can say for Mr. Brewster is that he has improved his public speaking ability considerably since the time when he ran for County Judge."

"Why don't you run against him for that seat in the Senate?" asked Masterson. "You can easily whip his ass in any election."

I have far too many business interests going here to spend the time that such an office would require," replied Joe. "Besides, my father is the senior senator and Texas doesn't need two of us."

Two weeks later, Joe was meeting with architects to discuss the building of another hotel in Amarillo. "I want it to be at least twelve stories high, cover an entire city block and be the most impressive building anywhere west of Dallas," said Joe. "It must be more than just a place for people to spend the night. It must be able to handle conventions and large business meetings. I want a huge ballroom, several meeting rooms and a lobby that will make the one in the Amarillo Hotel look like the inside of an outhouse."

The Amarillo Hotel had been open for less than a month when Warren Brewster began construction on the other piece of property he had bought just south of Tenth Street. The half-basement foundation indicated that the building was going to be a fairly large one in comparison to anything else that far south in town.

Joe sent Roger out to see if he could find out what was being built there. It wasn't that Joe wanted to do anything about it, but it was simply out of curiosity. Roger bought a few drinks for the foreman on the job and returned with the cover sheet from a set of the blueprints. "The foreman said that the owner selected the design for the exterior but he did the interior," he reported.

The drawing showed a building with two stories above the half basement and looked as if it was destined to become some sort of business or office building, perhaps a funeral home. It was an odd combination of at least half a dozen different styles of design. Across the front of the building was a high porch with an arched roof supported by four tall columns. The window shapes suggested Greek influence but the roof resembled something right out of ancient England with battlements all around and towers at each corner.

"You've studied architecture, what style would you call this design?" asked Roger.

"I'd say that the best description that I could come up with would be early courthouse," replied Joe. "You can see bits and pieces of just about every old building style known to man."

"I'd call it basis ugly, myself," said Roger. "But here's the big surprise, Warren Brewster isn't building it for any sort of a business, it's going to be a home for him and Maggie."

The mere mention of Maggie's name brought a quick rush of pain to Joe's heart. "You've got to be kidding. Maggie studied art in France for two years and would never stand still for such an awful design for her home."

"From what I've seen, Maggie doesn't have much to say about what Warren does. Given a choice of living in that drafty shack next to the cattle pens in San Jacinto or in a big house, no matter how ugly, I'm sure that it was easy for her to accept this," Roger said.

Are you ready for another surprise about Warren Brewster?" Joe asked.

"What's that? Did he decide to do something honest for a change?" asked Roger.

"I don't know whether it is honest or not, but Warren Brewster just filed papers to run for State Representative from the Panhandle district."

"Do you mean it's entirely possible that we could have one Brewster in the senate and another in the house? I'd hate to think what would happen to the Panhandle if it was represented in both state houses by nothing but Brewsters."

"I've been giving that possibility a considerable amount of thought," Joe said. "In fact, I'm going to throw my support behind both of them."

"I never thought that I'd see the day when you would want to promote a Brewster for anything, with the possible exception of a hanging."

"You might say that if they are both elected, it will be a hanging of sorts. The way that I figure it, sending both of them down to Austin and leaving a thief like Knox to run their business will cause them far more damage than anything I could ever do."

Three months later, ground was broken for the Armitage Hotel. Not only would the main structure of the building be twelve stories high, but it would also have a penthouse on the roof, complete with swimming pool and tennis court. Joe planned to use the penthouse as his residence as well as the Presidential Suite should one ever come to Amarillo.

The penthouse would have a huge central room for entertaining. Three sets of large glass doors along one wall opened out onto the terrace and swimming pool. There was a library for privacy when Joe needed it and a small but fully electric kitchen opposite the main room. If Joe was entertaining a group of people, he could always order food up from the hotel kitchen. The master bedroom was more like a small apartment with its own sitting area and a combination bath and dressing room. In one corner of the bathroom was a huge sunken tub fitted with special jets that could be turned on to provide a combination of water and air to provide a whirlpool effect. Next to it was a walk-in shower with four spray heads which could be controlled individually for both temperature and pressure. There was a ten foot dressing table with two carved marble lavatories into which water flowed from the beaks of a pair of golden swans. The toilet was in a separate room next to the huge closet.

Each of the two smaller bedrooms had its own bathroom, and while they weren't as lavish as the larger one, they did have gold plated fixtures and sunken tubs. Only one of the four hotel elevators would serve the penthouse, and to get there, one must insert a special key to get the elevator to go past the

twelfth floor.

Even though most of Joe's time was devoted to supervising the construction of the hotel, he did take time off now and then to make speeches supporting both Lloyd and Warren Brewster in their election bids. When the elections were held, they both won easily.

"I hope you have done the right thing by getting the Brewsters elected," said Roger. "Neither of them is above taking a bribe now and then and there is no telling how they will vote when it comes to bills which will effect the Panhandle."

"There's no reason to be concerned. With my father running the senate, there is little that Lloyd Brewster can do to hurt us. Warren is a junior representative and not on any committees which will effect us. Besides, if they become a problem, we can render them politically impotent."

"How would you do that?" asked Roger.

"Scandal." Replied Joe. "There is nothing that will take a politician down faster than good old scandal and I know just how to go about laying some on them."

## CHAPTER NINE

The elections were held and as Joe had predicted, both Lloyd and Warren were elected. A few words to the right people by Joe had helped both of them considerably. The newspapers carried big headlines announcing that for the first time in the history of Texas, a father and son would be serving in Austin. The event even drew reporters from the big newspapers back east.

"Well, now that the Brewsters are both safely elected," Joe told Roger. "It's time for us to render them politically impotent. Go down the hall, wake up Charity and Crissy and as them to come see me."

"Are you into seeing prostitutes two at a time now?" asked Robert with a sly grin.

"Not really, I just have a little job for them."

Charity and Crissy had been living at the Elkins Hotel for some time and were known to entertain men in the rooms for fifteen minutes at a time, but they never caused any problems and always paid their rent on time.

Roger closed the door as they entered, glancing nervously at one another.

"Have a seat ladies," said Joe, motioning them to the couch against the wall.

"You wanted to see us, Mr. Armitage?" asked Crissy in a guarded voice. "Is there a problem of some sort?"

"Not at all. In fact, I have a little job that only ladies with your special talents could do. I'd like for you to move your business to the Amarillo Hotel for a few weeks. Keep your rooms here and I'll pay your rent while you are living there."

## CHAPTER TEN

"Gentlemen," said Joe to the City Commissioners at their monthly meeting. "I have some great news for the city of Amarillo. In my capacity as Mayor, I have been working behind the scenes and have obtained signed agreements from two airlines to begin service to Amarillo."

"That's great, when does it begin?" asked one.

"What is it going to cost us?" asked Eldon Farris, who was a member of the commission at that time and the self-appointed watchdog over the city's spending. He approached all expenditures as if any money that the city spent came out of his own pockets. In a way, one might say that it did because the city deposited all their money in his bank and he had the use of it while it was there.

"We will have to have a Municipal Airport for them to use, but with two airlines, each landing airplanes here twice each day, gasoline sales alone will repay our investment in short order," said Joe.

"What's wrong with them using the strip where Howard Irving and the airmail planes land?" asked another.

"The Army is going to stop flying the airmail very shortly and it will be turned back over to the airlines to haul. That runway is far too short for big airplanes like the airlines will be using and if we want to keep airmail service, we will have to have a adequate place for them to land," replied Joe.

"Just where did you have in mind to put this airport?" asked one of the commissioners.

"There is a section of land east of town which the operations people for both airlines have looked at and they feel would be a perfect location for an airport. It is level, right on the highway and most of all, it is properly aligned with the new weather station and radio navigation facility that is going to be build two miles to the east," replied Joe.

"What do you mean by a radio navigation facility?"

"It's a new thing called a radio range station which sends out radio beams that the pilots use to guide themselves at night or when they have to fly in or over clouds," replied Joe. "They are designating airways all over the nation and two of them will cross right here at Amarillo. One runs from Kansas City to Wichita to here and then extends on to Clovis, New Mexico and finally to Phoenix. An airline called Western Air Express will be flying big, ten passenger Fokker Tri-motor airplanes along that route. They will have one flight going west and one going east each day. The other airway begins in Los Angeles and runs east to Albuquerque, Amarillo, Oklahoma City and finally ends in Washington DC. The Transcontinental and Western Airline will be flying Tri-motor Ford airplanes along that route. They will also have one flight in each direction each day."

"What is all this going to cost?" asked Eldon Farris.

"I haven't gone as far as approaching the owner of the land which we will need for the airport because if he gets wind of what we want it for, the price will jump considerably," replied Joe.

"Is that all we have to do to have an airport, just buy a section of land?"

"Naturally, we would have to put in a few facilities such as gasoline tanks and pumps, along with a rotating beacon which is required for all airports where airliners land."

"I still haven't received a single answer to my questions," said Eldon Farris. "Just what in hell is all this going to cost?"

"Mr. Farris has a good question, but at this point in time, I am unable to give him an exact answer because I don't know what the land can be bought for," said Joe. "If the commission would like to give me the authority to explore the cost of the land and authorize something like a couple thousand dollars with which to purchase an option if an agreeable price can be reached, I will have an answer by the next

meeting."

"I move that we authorize a maximum amount of one dollar per acre for buying a one year option on land for the airport," said Farris.

The motion was seconded and carried.

In the meantime, Howard Irving had located a small piece of land a mile north of the new zinc smelter, which he leased for use as an airport. After a whirlwind romance, he had also married Grace Hammond, who it turned out was not as much an actress as most had thought. She had been given walk-on spots in a couple movies because her father had been the financial backer for them. Actually, she was basically a rich, spoiled brat who was accustomed to having her own way. Even after she married Irving, her father continued to send her a thousand dollar a month allowance because he realized that Irving's total worth was less than a month of Grace's allowance. He figured that this marriage wouldn't last any longer than most of her other whims and she would dump Irving as soon as the excitement of flying wore off.

At the next monthly meeting of the city commission, Joe told them, "Gentlemen, I am sorry to report that the piece of land which I had in mind was sold about two months ago and the new owner won't give us an option on it."

"Who owns it now?" asked Eldon Farris.

"I contacted the lawyer who is the administrator for the estate of Mr. Bergin and he told me that the land had already been sold. Then I asked him to see if the new owner would be interested in giving us an option on it. When he got back to me, he said that the new owner was considering some other offers and would not tie it up with an option."

"Who owns it now?" asked Farris, repeating his question.

"It looks as if Roger Bates beat us to it," replied Joe. "It now belongs to the Bates Land Company."

"What are you trying to feed to us?" asked Farris. "Bates is your man, isn't he?"

"Roger worked for me several years ago, but he now has his own company."

"Who else would be interested in that land except for us?" asked one of the commissioners.

"It would be simply a wild guess, but I have heard that some of the airlines are buying their own airports in cities where no municipal airport exists. Once that they own the field, they refuse to allow any other carrier to land there, thereby eliminating the competition," replied Joe.

"Amarillo would be in one hell of a shape if either of those two airlines opened their own airport," said Farris. "We would instantly lose half of our airline service to some place like that new town of Lubbock."

"Or even worse, suppose that little cotton patch town down south was able to grab both airlines away from us," said Joe. "They already have a municipal airport and it probably wouldn't be too much out of the way for the airplanes to stop there instead of here."

"I move that we adjourn long enough to get Bates in here to talk to," said Farris.

"I second that motion, said several others in unison."

An hour later, the meeting was re-convened with Roger Bates present. "I understand that you own the old Bergin place now," said Farris.

"That is correct," replied Roger. "I bought it a couple months ago."

"Do you want to sell it?" asked Farris.

"Anything that I own is for sale, with the possible exception of my wife, and at times, I would even consider offers for her," replied Roger with a laugh.

"The city of Amarillo might be interested in that section of grass. What would you take for it?" asked Farris, who had assumed the position of price negotiator for the city. This pleased Joe to no end since he had considered Farris to be the main stumbling block when it came to the city getting an airport.

"Fifty an acre, for the whole thing or eighty an acre for either half of it," replied Roger.

"That's outrageous!" shouted Farris. "That grass isn't worth more than ten dollars an acre."

"True, it isn't worth much for the grass that is on it, but as a potential airport, it's worth a lot more."

"Where in hell did you ever get such an idea as that?" stormed Farris.

"You gentlemen seem to have forgotten that I was a Potter County Commissioner up until last election when I decided not to run again because there might become a conflict of interest if I remained," replied Roger.

"Is the county is considering that land for an airport?" asked Farris.

"Mr. Farris, you know that it would not be ethical for me to discuss confidential county business which transpired while I was in office," replied Roger.

"Mr. Bates," said Joe. "Would you please step outside for a few minutes so we can discuss this matter in private."

"We can't allow Potter County to jump in and grab the airport right out from under our noses," said Farris. "If they got control of the airport, they could rob us every way except Sunday."

"Could we build an airport on half of that section?" asked one of the other commissioners. "Bates offered to sell half."

"With the prevailing wind from the southwest, half of the section would be adequate, but half will cost us almost as much as we can get the whole thing for," replied Joe.

"I move that we use our emergency powers and authorize \$32,000 to buy the whole section of land today while we still can," said Farris.

Joe spoke up before the motion could be seconded and said, "Let's not be hasty, gentlemen...."

"Hasty, my ass!" shouted Farris. "We have to act now or the county will have the airport."

"Please allow me to finish my statement, Mr. Farris," said Joe. "I was going to say that we should not be hasty in voting only enough money to buy the land when we will obviously need some more for building adequate facilities. I was going to suggest that Mr. Farris amend that motion to \$60,000. We would look awfully silly if we had to tell the citizens of Amarillo that we had bought a piece of land for an airport but didn't authorize the money needed to make it work."

"That's a good suggestion," said Farris. "I amend my motion to \$60,000."

"The motion was seconded and passed by a vote of four to three without Joe having to enter into the fray. He stepped to the door and said, "Roger, would you please step back inside."

"Mr. Bates," said Farris. "We have discussed buying that section of land but considering the financial condition of the city, we can pay only twenty-five thousand dollars for it."

"I'm sorry Mr. Farris, but I have an offer to buy half of it at eighty dollars an acre and that is more than what you are offering for the whole section," replied Roger.

"You are an astute businessman, Mr. Bates and I'll not try to play games with you any longer. We could go as high as thirty thousand for the whole section but that will be stripping the city treasury to the bone. I'm sorry, but that is all the money that is available at this time. I'm sure that you can see our point and are not going to let a mere two thousand dollars stand in the way of our making a deal." and are ready to close the deal today."

"Since we both know that you want the land for an airport for the city, I'll make you a deal," said Roger. "I'll sell the land to you for thirty thousand, but with one small condition. The land belongs to the city as long as it is used as a municipal airport. Should it ever cease being used for that purpose, either I or my heirs have the option to repurchase it for the two thousand dollars difference between what I want and what you are willing to give."

"That's a rather silly condition because if we make it into a municipal airport, it will remain one from now on," said Farris.

"Perhaps so, but I want some assurance that the city will never decide to close the airport and sell the land or use it for some other purpose. I'm willing to gamble two thousand dollars on that," replied Roger.

"Agreed," said Farris. "The city attorney will draw up the papers and the treasurer will issue a check to you."

"See how I saved the city a cool two thousand bucks on that deal," said Farris. "I'd call that pretty

good negotiating."

"Perhaps," said Joe. "But some day, that could become the most expensive two thousand dollars this city ever saved."

"LUCKY LINDY LANDS IN PARIS!" shouted the headlines of the newspaper Joe was reading while he had his breakfast. Now is the time to strike and make the airport into something really nice, Joe thought to himself as he read the story of the first solo crossing of the Atlantic in an airplane.

The section of land had been purchased and underground gasoline tanks installed. A beacon atop a steel tower swung its dagger of light across the sky from dusk to dawn and an orange windsock opened its mouth toward the constant southwest wind. Joe had driven out to the airport to watch the daily arrival of the westbound Transcontinental and Western Ford Tri-motor. It came rumbling in, following the highway from the east. It veered off to the north, then made a sweeping turn to the left, aligning itself into the wind and bouncing down on the dry grass. Seconds later it rolled to a stop beside the man who was holding the gasoline hose. The three polished aluminum propellers rotated to a stop.

While a hundred gallons of gasoline was being pumped into the tanks, the door on the right side of the ship opened and the pilots and four passengers stepped to the ground. The passengers stood around looking very uncomfortable until the pilot said something to them. They walked out past the tail of the airplane and added a bit of moisture to the dry grass. None of the four people aboard were stopping in Amarillo and no passengers getting on. As soon as the tanks were filled with gasoline, everyone got back on the airplane and it took off.

Joe had attempted to get the airline to locate their ticket office in the Armitage Hotel by offering to provide a free room to the pilots if they had to lay over in Amarillo for any reason, but he lost out when Brewster offered to provide free office space for the first year.

"We can't keep the airline service that we have and certainly can't attract any other carriers without basic facilities at the airport," Joe told the commission. "There isn't even a crapper out there and the passengers have to piss on the ground. What would happen if there was a woman aboard?"

"Well, hell," said Farris. "We can get a crapper from Chic Sales for twenty bucks if that is what it will take to improve the airport."

"I'm not talking about an outhouse," said Joe. "What we need are the things which all modern airports have, like a hangar, waiting rooms, offices and decent parking for the people who drive their cars out there."

"I can see building a toilet and even a place where people can wait out of the sun and wind, but why the hell do we need a hangar?" asked Farris. "There's only two airplanes in the whole damn Panhandle and they belong to Howard Irving, and he has his own airport out by the smelter. So what would be put into this hangar that you are suggesting?"

"If we build the hangar, the planes will come," replied Joe. "According to the CAA, there is an average of twelve airplanes in every city the size of Amarillo. Take Wichita, Kansas; they are not as big as Amarillo, yet they not only have more than fifty airplanes based there, they also have three factories building them."

"I say that if the airplanes come, then we build the hangar," said Farris. "You didn't build your hotel in the hope that people could come some day, they were already here."

"No, but I certainly built a town when there wasn't a soul around to occupy it," said Joe. "Just look at what we have now. If I had waited for the people to show up first, you'd be living in a shack over by Wild Horse Lake."

"Well, how big does a hangar have to be, fifty by fifty feet?" asked Farris.

"More like a hundred feet wide by a hundred-sixty deep," replied Joe.

"You could put one of those German Zeppelins in a place that big," said Farris. "Who ever heard of an airplane with wings a hundred feet long."

"One was built in Italy ten years ago which had a wingspan of one hundred thirty feet," replied Joe.

"Next thing we know, you are going to tell us that big airplane is going to fly all the way over here from Italy and land here," said Farris.

"Lindbergh just flew a small airplane with one engine across the Atlantic, so it won't be long before big airplanes with several engines will be flying all over the world," Joe answered.

"In order to bring this endless discussion about something which we know nothing to an end," said one of the commissioners. "I move that we table this and turn it over to a Civil Engineer who can give us some costs for building such a hangar."

The engineer submitted his findings to the next board meeting. For erecting a hangar the size that Joe had suggested, the price would be slightly more than thirty thousand dollars; however by reducing the width by only twenty feet, the cost could be cut almost in half. The board voted to build the smaller size, but added a lean-to extension to one side of the hangar to serve as a waiting room with two rest rooms, plus space for two offices.

The hangar was built according to the engineer's plans. It was an impressive structure with clay tile walls laid to a height of sixteen feet to give more than adequate space between its concrete floor and the bottom of the arched steel beams for any airplane known to exist. Eight massive doors, each rolling on its own steel track embedded in the concrete, could be rolled open to allow an airplane with a full eighty feet of wingspan to be pushed inside. Six huge floodlights, capable of illuminating the full section of land, were installed on towers along either side of the field for night landings.

By this time, the Western Air Express had begun to operate along the other airway and were landing their Fokkers at Amarillo each day. It was not unusual to have two of the giant airplanes on the ground at the same time. Transient airplanes began to land at Amarillo for gasoline and one of the residents had just bought a brand new Travel Air, which he based at the airport. The ultimate justification for the hangar came just two weeks after it was finished when airplanes for both of the airlines were on the ground and a storm came up. They were both safe inside the hangar while hail the size of baseballs began to pound down. Had the ships been outside, they would most certainly have been damaged.

The time had come for the dedication of the new municipal airport and plans were being made. Joe came to the commissioners with some great news.

"I just received word that the national tour of Charles Lindbergh, along with something like twenty airplanes, will be landing at Amarillo three days from today for fuel. We can schedule the dedication of the airport to coincide with their arrival and have none other than the Lone Eagle himself as the featured speaker. I suggest that we consider naming our airport Lindbergh Field, in his honor."

"That will really put us on the map," said Farris. "We might even get publicity in some of the big newspapers like the New York Times and the Los Angeles Sun."

A frantic effort was made to have everything in readiness for the arrival of the tour. A platform was built for the speakers, The local Texaco wholesaler sent four trucks loaded with gasoline to the airport to make refueling faster and the waiting room walls were painted. There wasn't time to have a local painter go to the airport and paint "Lindbergh Field" across the front of the hangar, so they settled for a big banner bearing the name. The high school band would play and both of the airlines agreed to keep their ships on the ground until after the dedication.

People began to arrive early on the appointed day and by noon, the scheduled time of arrival of the tour, there was more than a thousand people milling around the airport. The two big airliners were parked wingtip to wingtip and excitement ran high.

"Here they come!" was the shout from a photographer who had climbed to the top of the hangar in order to get better photos. Three specks appeared in the western sky. By the time they arrived over the field, four more airplanes could be seen approaching. The airplanes began to touch down on the grass and taxi to where the fuel trucks waited in a roped-off area in front of the hangar. As soon as an engine would stop, a hose would be put into the tank and gasoline would be pumped aboard.

"Where's Lucky Lindy?" was the shout from the crowd.

More airplanes appeared and landed as Joe waved his hands for quiet. "One of the pilots had just told me that Mr. Lindbergh will be a little late because a small mechanical problem had delayed his takeoff from Albuquerque, but he will be here."

Twenty-two airplanes were filled with gasoline and pushed into two long rows while they waited for the arrival of the hero. Finally, out of the west came a single airplane. "He's here! came the shout from the top of the hangar. A sleek Lockheed Vega ripped across the airport and pulled up into a steep climbing turn. The Vega was far faster than any of the other airplanes in the tour and had taken barely half of their time to make the flight from Albuquerque.

It touched down on the grass and came rolling to the ramp at a high rate of speed. The engine was still rotating to a stop when the door popped open and a lanky figure stepped out. The high school band struck up a lively Sousa march. A shout went up from the crowd as he emerged from beneath the wing, took one look at the banner hanging above the hangar door and walked briskly toward the bathroom. While two hoses pumped the tanks full, one of the other people who were aboard the ship checked the oil in the engine.

People were busily pulling the propellers through on the parked ships and engines were coming to life in clouds of blue smoke and noise. The ladders, which had been used by the men who had filled the fuel tanks on the Lockheed, were carried aside and the tail of the ship was pushed around.

The Lone Eagle walked toward his ship and Joe held his hand up for quiet. The crowd fell silent and the band stopped playing. "Mr. Lindbergh," said Joe in a loud voice. "Could you come say a few words for us."

Lindbergh glanced toward the stands, turned his back and quickened his pace to the waiting Vega. The door slammed, the electric starter whined and the engine coughed to life. Seconds later, the engine revved up, sending a cloud of dirt rolling into the waiting crowd as the ship bounded across the grass field. As the Vega lifted into the sky, the other ships in the tour began to pull into position and take off. Within five minutes, they were nothing more than dots fading into the eastern sky.

Joe looked around at the crowd which was rushing toward their cars to leave while the city commissioners and others in the reviewing stand sat in shocked silence.

Joe turned to the commissioners and said, "I think this calls for a special meeting of the city commission. Does anyone here have any objections if we forget about calling this Lindbergh Field and simply call it Amarillo Municipal Airport?"

They quickly agreed and Joe announced to the empty field, "I hereby dedicate this place to be Amarillo Municipal Airport."

As they stepped from the reviewing stand to leave, the Texaco man walked up and said, "Glad that I caught you men. Somebody owes me for nine hundred sixty gallons of gasoline, who gets the bill for it?"

"You mean to say that the pilots of the planes didn't pay for the fuel that they took?" asked Farris.

"Nope," replied the Texaco man. "I asked a couple of them and they said that fuel was always furnished at airports where they landed in return for the publicity they got from Lindbergh landing there."

As Joe was gathering his papers to leave the airport, Buck Henry came roaring up in his new Oldsmobile. He walked quickly to Joe and said, "Joe, I have some bad news for you. I just got a call from Austin and your father has been killed."

"Oh, God. No!" said Joe as he sank onto one of the folding chairs. "How did it happen?"

"Lloyd Brewster shot him."

"If they don't send that son of a bitch to the electric chair, I'll kill him myself," Joe said in a quiet voice.

"You won't have to, he's also dead. Your father killed him. From what I was able to learn, the two senators got into a shouting match, followed by a fist-fight. Then Brewster pulled a pistol and shot your father in the stomach. Mr. Armitage grabbed a pistol from one of the guards who was trying to help him and shot Brewster. Lloyd died on the spot and your father died an hour later in the hospital."

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Joe had an appointment with a man from Kansas City who was going to decorate the interior of the hotel. He was a rather effeminate sort of a little man with a handshake that reminded Joe of grabbing a handful of soft dough. Joe took an immediate dislike to the man, but thought that he would go along with him as long as he did an acceptable job.

"My suggestion is to decorate every room in a Louis the Fourteenth style, using a combination of purple and puce as the basic colors. I'll work those colors against the bed covers which....."

Joe interrupted the man, "Ninety percent of the people who will be staying at the Armitage will be men and most of them would throw up at the thought of spending a night in a room painted puce, whatever the hell that color is. I want something strong and masculine but looks warm, comfortable and reeks of old money."

"Perhaps you would like something in a western motif with murals of cowboys, campfires and horses?"

"Hell no," said Joe. "That isn't what I want either. I'll fire any person who even suggests anything that would connect this hotel with cows. There is already one hotel in this town for people like that. I want a hotel that appeals to men with money--lots of money. No stuffed animals, no cuspidors and no damn cowboy paintings. I want you to get your ass on the train and go see what some of the best New York hotels look like, and while you are at it, stop by Philadelphia and have a look at their best. Also, check out some of the exclusive men's clubs back east. If you can't bring yourself to decorating my hotel in the same manner as the Astor and Waldorf, then I have the wrong man on the job."

One thing that could be said for the little man was the fact that he understood what Joe wanted and went about producing it. While the carpeting that he bought was a bit on the floral side, the rest of the hotel had the look of the inside of a bank. The doors and trim were solid oak and the furniture was soft leather. The lobby was finished mostly in marble with off white colors for the areas which were painted. A huge chandelier swung above a bubbling fountain in the center of the lobby and the registration desk was raised six inches higher than the lobby floor to give a more aloof appearance.

The hotel was equipped with the latest fully automatic elevators which needed no operators. One stepped on the elevator, pressed the button for the desired floor and the elevator stopped exactly level with that floor.

It was Joe's desire to have the grand opening of the Armitage Hotel make the one Brewster did for Amarillo Hotel pale in comparison. Remembering what had brought out the people to vote a number of years before, Joe bought twenty steers and arranged to have them cooked over mesquite coals. There would be huge pots of beans and tubs of coleslaw. This would be a free barbecue to surpass anything ever seen in Amarillo or anywhere in Texas for that matter.

When the day for the dedication and grand opening came, the hotel was draped with red, white and blue bunting and United States flags flew from staffs on each corner of the building. A single Texas flag hung from a staff above the entrance doors. The new streamlined Santa Fe Superchief, the very latest and most modern in passenger trains, stood on the siding behind the hotel. Everyone was invited to come aboard and inspect it. A large platform, much like the one erected on the steps of the national capitol for the inauguration of a president, was built in front of the hotel. It was estimated that more than six thousand people came to Amarillo see the dedication of the new hotel.

In his dedication speech, Joe had decided to fling a few barbs of his own. He wanted to let the people know how he felt about the future of Amarillo without lowering himself to the level of the Brewsters with

their personal insults. He had worked on the speech for several weeks before it was just the way that he wanted.

On the evening prior to the dedication, Joe hosted a reception in his new penthouse for the various state officials, including three state senators who had been friends of his father. There were also bankers, industrial leaders and other dignitaries at the party.

The reviewing stand in front of the hotel was jammed with dignitaries of all sorts. All of the city commissioners as well as the county board of commissioners and other elected officials were present. Both US Senators from Texas and three US Congressman were present. Warren Brewster, who had recently won re-election to the Texas State House, was absent because his name had been intentionally omitted from the guest list.

Roger stepped up to Joe and said, "I'd like for you to meet Grace Hammond. She's a movie actress from California and is here to visit some friends."

Not since that first look at Maggie, had Joe's heart done such a flip-flop. She had long blonde hair, blue eyes and a figure that would stop traffic. Her full lips were painted fire engine red and her eyes were outlined in some sort of green shading. She wore a knit dress that clung to every curve of her body, leaving nothing to the imagination.

"I'm pleased to meet you," Joe said.

"It's time for your speech," Roger reminded him.

Grace took Joe's arm and walked to the reviewing stand with him. Joe did his best to divide his attention between what he was going to say and the striking woman seated by his side.

The band played several numbers, followed by the National Anthem to quiet the crowd. Buck Henry, the editor of the newspaper, stepped forward to introduce Joe, which he did with pomp and style.

"Ladies and Gentlemen, friends and neighbors," Joe began. "When I decided to build this fine hotel, I wanted it to represent the future of our great city and to propel Amarillo into the future instead of pushing it further back into the frontier. Amarillo's future is not in cattle, but in commerce and industry. I see a landscape dotted with factories which will put thousands of people to work, building millions of products each year. Keeping the land in grass to graze cows which drop only a single calf each spring is such a waste of our resources because it puts no one to work and does nothing to benefit our great city. I see Amarillo becoming the hub of transportation with more railroads and highways meeting here. I see the sky filled with giant airplanes, using Amarillo as their hub while they transport people rapidly from one coast to the other. Amarillo is in a unique location, almost exactly in the center of this great nation. We can either take the lead as this nation prospers and grows, or hide behind a cow and watch it pass us by. I prefer to be a part of the future and this is why I have built this new hotel. I dedicate this hotel to the future, not the past."

There was a roar of applause, the firemen cranked the sirens on the fire trucks and the engineer blew the whistle on the Santa Fe Superchief. When the crowd was finally quiet again, Joe continued, "In appreciation for all of you fine people coming to help celebrate this occasion with me, I am inviting you to attend the free barbecue which will be held at the fair grounds, beginning at six tonight. Also, each person who attends the barbecue will be given a ticket for a drawing in which two hundred lucky people will be given free lodging tonight in the new Armitage Hotel." The applause and shouting was even louder and lasted longer than it had following his main speech.

Joe raised his hand for quiet and when the applause finally ceased, he added, "I would also like to dispel any rumors that I am running for the office of Governor of this great state of Texas. I will leave that to those who feel the need for public adulation."

As if by magic, several signs popped up in various locations throughout the crowd, each proclaiming, "Armitage for Governor" and the crowd began to chant, "JOE! JOE! JOE!".

"Is this your way of announcing that you are running for governor?" asked Roger.

"I'm not as of this moment, just putting the idea in some people's heads."

Everyone looked up when they heard the roaring of three airplanes which appeared overhead. A wingwalker could be seen standing atop the wing of one of the ships and the other two performed loops, spins and other maneuvers.

"Did you hire those airplanes?" asked Roger.

"No, they are probably just some barnstormers who are here to take advantage of the crowd here for the dedication," Joe replied. "But speaking of airplanes reminds me, they are settling the estate of old man Bergin on Monday morning and I want you to buy that section of land that he owned out east of town."

"What in the world do you want that piece of land for?" asked Roger.

"I have my reasons. You can probably buy it for around four or five dollars an acre if you do it quickly and quietly. I'll put up the money but I can't have my name connected with it in any way. Put the deed in your company name and you will own ten percent and I'll own ninety." Roger had been involved in many such deals in the past with Joe and he had always profited from them, so he asked no more questions.

While they watched, the two airplanes which were doing loops suddenly turned toward one another and slammed together with a grinding crash. The crowd gasped in shock as the two ships seemed to cling together and then separate in a whirl of wings and other parts. A body thrown free of the wreckage, tumbled toward the ground. The other airplane began a drunken spiral toward the ground and two people could be seen struggling to get out of it. As soon as they were free of the doomed ship, white parachutes blossomed above them and they floated toward the ground as the airplane slammed through the roof of the steam laundry. The fuselage of the other ship crashed in the middle of Polk street while the wings fluttered down three blocks away. The pilot fell through the roof of a house on Harrison Street. Fortunately, the only injury or fatality was the pilot who was thrown out of his ship without a parachute.

When the shock of the crash had subsided, Grace took his arm and whispered, "I'm sorry that I wasn't here last night to attend the party in your penthouse, why don't you show it to me now."

Joe stepped into the elevator with Grace, inserted his key into the slot above the button for the twelfth floor and the door closed. A few second later, the elevator delivered them to the penthouse.

"This is quite a place you have here," Grace said as she looked around. "And you even have a pool up here too. Let's go swimming."

"That's a good idea. While you go down to your room for your suit, I'll get into mine," Joe replied.

"Why bother with swimsuits? There's no one around and it's a lot more fun to swim nude. Only old fuddy-duddies wear swimsuits in California," Grace said as she began to peel off her tight dress.

Joe hesitated for a few moments and as Grace tossed the last piece of her clothing onto the bed, he turned his back and began to take off his clothes. There was a splash and he heard Grace yell, "What are you waiting for, the water's great."

As Joe stepped into the water, Grace grabbed him around the neck and as she gave him a warm, wet kiss, she leaned back and pulled him under the water with her. When they finally came up for air, she said, "Now isn't this a lot more fun than swimming around in stuffy old suits."

Just as they were getting out of the pool, they heard the roar of an airplane taking off from the landing strip across the tracks to the north. The airplane lifted off the ground and began to climb in the direction of the hotel. Joe darted into the penthouse but Grace stopped to watch it approach. The airplane was about level with the penthouse as it passed so close they could see the shocked look on the pilots face when he saw a naked woman waving to him from the terrace. The pilot banked sharply to circle the hotel for another look.

"Good heavens, Grace," Joe shouted. "Get in here before you cause another airplane crash."

"I love airplanes," Grace said as she walked into the penthouse. "My brother is a pilot but he won't teach me to fly."

They dried off quickly and were soon locked in frantic lovemaking. Joe had never imagined that any woman could make love with such wild abandon. The time flew by and he finally realized that he was due

as the guest of honor at the big barbecue to be held at the fairgrounds.

The party lasted until well past midnight before he and Grace could return to the penthouse. He was exhausted and ready to go right to sleep, but she had other ideas. He was able to indulge only half-heartedly in one session of lovemaking before he lapsed into a deep slumber.

Joe had been asleep for only a short time when he was awakened in a most pleasant manner. He was lying on his back and Grace was astride him, providing all the enthusiasm necessary for the moment. Realizing that he was awake, she said, "Just lie there and enjoy it, Darling. Let me do all the work."

She was still asleep when he woke the next morning. He took a quick shower and kissed her on the cheek before leaving for his office on the second floor. When she turned over and smiled, he told her, "I have a few things that I need to take care of this morning. When you get up, call room service and ask them to bring up breakfast for both of us."

When he returned to the penthouse for breakfast, she was dressed in tight riding pants and boots. "Going for a ride today?" he asked.

"Well, sort of," she replied with a smile. "I have a little adventure planned. Care to come along?"

"I'm sorry but I have a meeting with the hotel staff in half an hour, followed by meetings with several rather important people."

It was past four in the afternoon before the multitude of meetings were finished and Joe was able to leave his office and return to the penthouse. Grace wasn't there, so he poured himself a drink and settled into a chair beside the pool. From where he was sitting, he could see the dirt runway across the tracks to the north. He owned the property but allowed the airmail airplanes and Howard Irving to use it as a landing field. Irving had learned to fly during World War One and was now trying to make a living teaching people how to fly and by hopping rides for three dollars a head. Business wasn't too good because in addition to the dilapidated condition of his airplanes, he was usually falling-down drunk. The combination was usually enough to discourage even the most enthusiastic customers.

Two airplanes were parked beside the runway and a man was spinning the propeller on one of them. Even after seeing two of airplanes crash and a man get killed, people are still dumb enough to go up in the damn things, he thought to himself.

There was a belch of blue smoke as the engine came to life and the man who was cranking it jumped clear of the spinning propeller. Slowly, it moved forward and turned to taxi to the north end of the runway. The airplane turned around and the noise of the engine increased. It waddled along, slowly picking up speed. Dust boiled behind the ship as the tail rose from the ground. It was at this point that Joe noticed a person clinging to the struts between the wings about half way between the fuselage and the tip on the right side.

As the airplane gained more speed, it tilted toward the side where the figure was clinging and the wooden skid under that wing began to drag along the ground, kicking up small plumes of dust and pulling the ship around in that direction. Looks as if he is going to crash before he ever gets it off the ground, Joe thought to himself.

At the last instant before the wing plowed into the roll of dirt along the edge of the runway, the ship staggered into the air. Fighting the added drag of the person standing on the wing, the ship wallowed along, climbing very slowly as it headed directly toward the hotel. Closer and closer it came. Joe could see that the pilot was having a considerable amount of difficulty keeping the ship in the air, much less being able to control where it was going. It appeared to Joe that the ship would certainly crash into the building.

The airplane was now so close that Joe could clearly see the expression on the face of the pilot. He didn't appear to be concerned at all, in fact there was a silly, drunken grin on his face. At the last instant before it crashed into the building, the pilot jerked the airplane to the left, missing the corner of the hotel by inches. It was only then that Joe recognized that Grace was the person who was clinging to the interplane struts of the ragged old Curtis Jenny.

The airplane climbed slowly as it flew in large circles over the city. Joe watched Grace struggle

against the force of the wind and work her way out to the tip of the wings and then back to the inner struts where she had been perched when it took off. Joe ran inside, took the elevator to the lobby and hurried to his car. He bounded across the tracks and slid to a stop just as the airplane landed.

Grace was grinning from ear to ear as she slid off the trailing edge of the wing. The airplane roared around in a cloud of flying dust and pulled into position to be tied down.

"What the hell do you think you are doing," Joe yelled over the roar of the engine.

"Howard is teaching me how to wing-walk," shouted Grace as she danced around in glee. "Tomorrow, he is going to teach me how to climb up on the top wing."

"Like hell, he will," shouted Joe.

"You can't tell me what to do," she shouted, stamping her foot and kicking up a cloud of dust.

"I'll damn sure tell you what to do when it comes to letting some drunken fool kill you in a crate like that," he yelled. "Get your ass into that car!"

"Just because I sleep with you doesn't give you the right to order me around," she shouted. "I'm over twenty-one and I can do whatever I damn please, and you or no one else can stop me."

Joe got into his car and drove back to the hotel. Grace didn't come back to the penthouse that night and when Joe looked into her room the next day, her luggage was gone. He called downstairs to the desk and was told that she had moved to the Amarillo Hotel.

The following morning, he called Ed Masterson and told him, "Get Howard Irving and his damn airplanes off my property. Tell him that if he isn't gone by dark, I'll have him arrested for trespassing."

## CHAPTER TWELVE

"Good evening, Joseph," came the voice from behind him as he was reading the evening edition of the newspaper over an after-dinner cup of coffee in the Armitage Hotel restaurant.

"Well, surprise of surprises," he replied. "Good evening, Maggie. It certainly has been a long time. Have you had dinner?"

"Yes, thank you, I've already eaten."

"Then perhaps you would join me for a cup of coffee."

"Thanks," she replied. "If my memory serves me correctly, you bought me a cup of coffee the morning that I arrived in Amarillo ten years ago."

She poured two teaspoons of sugar into the coffee, followed by a good dash of cream. She stared at the coffee while stirring it around and around without ever tasting of it.

"You seem to have lost your appetite for coffee," Joe finally remarked. "If I remember correctly, you once said that good, black coffee was one of the greater joys in your life."

"Many of the joys in my life have gone the way of my love of black coffee," she replied.

Joe sipped his coffee without saying another word because he sensed that Maggie wanted to tell him something but probably would avoid doing so as long as he kept giving her a chance to evade the subject.

"I'm so tired of sitting alone night after night in that mausoleum while Warren plays the political peacock down in Austin," she said. "I just had to get out of the house and see a friendly face."

He found it most difficult to remain silent while she moved the spoon in a slow, circular motion in the cup, but he waited for her to continue.

"The Texas Legislature adjourned more than a month ago but he is still down there; says that he is working on a special committee of some sort."

"Maggie, I'm beginning to get the feeling that you would like to say far more than what you have. Would you like to go some place a bit more private so we can talk?"

"Could we, please?" she said slowly. "I'm afraid that I may burst out in tears any second and this is no place to let that happen."

She rose and walked with Joe to the elevators. He pushed the button to call elevator number four, the door slid open and they stepped inside. The Armitage Hotel was the only building in Amarillo which had the new, automatic Otis Elevators which needed no operator. The bottom button was marked Tascosa Room, which was located in the basement; the next was for the lobby level and the third one was for the Mezzanine. The numbered floors began with number three and stopped at twelve. In the spot where the button which would send the elevator to the penthouse would normally have been located, was an unmarked key slot. Joe inserted his key and turned it. The elevator traveled directly to the penthouse without stopping and the door slid open into the large living room.

"This is quite a place that you have here," said Maggie as she looked around. "I've heard stories about your private little domain up here, but had never seen it."

"Just a little place that I can call home," he replied. "I watched you beat that cup of coffee to death without ever taking a sip of it. Would you like something a bit stronger?"

"I'd like a good, stiff drink if you have it," she replied.

"It will take a lot more than prohibition to stop the flow of spirits," replied Joe. "What will you have?"

"Scotch and water."

"It's nice to know that there is still someone beside myself who drinks Scotch. Most of the people

around Amarillo think that the only two things in the world for a person to drink are beer and Bourbon," said Joe.

"Make it a double if you don't mind."

"You must really have something that you want to get off your mind," replied Joe. "Let's go into the library. It is quiet and much more comfortable in there."

Maggie took a sip of the drink, then rolled the glass between her palms, watching the ice remain motionless while the glass rotated around it. "I have had the feeling for some time that Warren was having an affair, but now I'm sure of it."

"You're positive?" asked Joe.

"I don't know what else could be going on," she replied. "About two months ago, I tried to call Warren at his apartment in Austin; the one the state furnishes each of the members while they are in session. A woman answered but when I told her who I was and asked to speak to Warren, she became very nervous and said that he didn't live there. When I asked if that was his apartment, she said that it was but she rented it from him. Then I asked if she knew where he could be reached, she said that she didn't know and hung up."

"I understand that most of the legislators consider those apartments to be one of the side benefits of the office and it's not unusual for them to rent it out and pocket the money," replied Joe, not believing that he was actually defending someone whom he disliked as much as he did Warren.

"That may be true, but he called me back in less than five minutes after I hung up, so how did he know that I had called if he wasn't there," she said more as a statement than a question.

"Perhaps the lady knew how to get hold of him and gave him your message," said Joe.

She finished her drink and handed the empty glass back to Joe. "Another one just like the first, if you please."

Joe set the new drink on the table in front of her and she continued, "Warren hasn't been home since going to Austin nearly eight months ago. He went down there a full month before the first session opened, didn't come home during either recess and is still there a month after the last session adjourned."

"The end of his present term in office is coming up shortly. Perhaps he is trying to solidify his political base before the next election," said Joe.

"I might be able to accept a story like that if I hadn't received this today," she said as she removed a folded piece of paper from her purse and handed it to Joe.

The note was written on embossed stationery from the Adolphus Hotel in Dallas. "Dear Mrs. Brewster; We are happy to return the dressing gown you left in the room when you and Congressman Brewster checked out. I hope that you enjoyed your stay with us." It was signed by the director of maid service. Joe looked up at Maggie, his eyes asking the question.

"I haven't been in Dallas in more than a year and that certainly wasn't my gown," she replied.

"Maggie, I'm so sorry," was all that Joe could think of to say.

Maggie looked fragile and alone as she sat there, so different from the self-assured woman whom he had met when she stepped off the train. She wrapping her body with her own arms, as if trying to hold and comfort herself. Tears welled in her eyes, then big drops came rolled down her cheeks. Joe put one arm over her shoulders and the other around her waist, pulling her close to him.

She sobbed against his shoulder for several minutes, finally saying, "Joe, I want to apologize for dumping my problems on you, but I didn't know anyone else to whom I could turn. My parents are out of town and the rest of the people that I know around here are really Warren's friends and not mine."

"You can come to me with your problems any time that you like," said Joe. "After all, what is your oldest friend in town for?"

"That is the other thing that I wanted to talk with you about," she continued. "I want to apologize for the insensitive way I treated you when I first came to Amarillo."

"I see no reason for you to apologize," said Joe. "After all, we barely became acquainted before...."

and he let the sentence trail off.

"That's exactly what I am talking about," she replied. "I felt a very strong attraction between us the first second that I laid eyes on you."

"I will have to admit that the attraction was mutual," said Joe. "But you certainly had a strange way of showing how you felt."

"That wasn't my idea," she replied. "I didn't know it when I arrived, but my father and Lloyd Brewster had more or less arranged a marriage between Warren and me and they weren't about to let anyone interfere with their plans. That morning when my father came to pick me up at the station and saw me with you at the Ellis Hotel, he told me that you were nothing more than an opportunist who would be gone from Amarillo within the year and that I shouldn't become involved with you. Then, when I agreed to go to the dance with you, he really hit the ceiling. He said that I was not to see you any more and that I should concentrate on someone who was stable and had a good reputation, like Warren Brewster."

"That's a shocker," said Joe. "I never even considered the fact that someone might class Warren's character above mine."

"He said that even though he trusted you in your position as one of the directors of his bank, he didn't want his daughter marrying someone like you. From the way that he acted, I got the feeling that you might be Jack the Ripper or something worse."

"I always considered Eldon Farris not only to be a business associate, but also a friend," said Joe. "But I suppose that with friends like that, who needs enemies?"

The only light in the library was that which reflected upward from the streets below. Maggie moved her body tightly against his and slipped her arm around his neck. In the darkness, Joe could not see those deep pools of green, but he knew that she was looking up at him.

"Please kiss me," she said. "I haven't been kissed or held close by anyone in such a long time and I especially need it tonight."

"Is that Maggie who said that or is it the Scotch talking?" he asked.

"I've never been more in control of my faculties than I am right now and I assure you that I am the one who is asking you to kiss me," she replied.

Joe kissed her lightly on the lips, much in the same manner as he would kiss his maiden aunt. She returned the kiss, except that hers was warm, wet and passionate.

"Maggie," said Joe. "Are you sure about what we are doing. After all, you are a married woman."

"There are two states of being married; the one which a person feels in their heart and the legal one. I have never felt in my heart that I was married to Warren and I plan to take action to eliminate the legal one as soon as possible."

As Joe kissed her hard on the lips, he moved his hand upward to cup her firm, round breast. He could feel her nipple harden and thrust against his palm, then a quiver seemed to begin at her waist and flow through her body. Her breath came in short gasps as she clung to him with her lips, pressing her warm body against his. He felt her body gradually relax but her heart still pounded beneath the breast he was holding. He kissed her tenderly.

"I've never had anything like that happen to me before, just from kissing a man," she whispered. "It was almost as if we were actually making love."

Joe moved his hand from her warm, firm breast to the long row of buttons that ran down the back of her dress. He slipped the top button loose, then the second, third and so on as he worked his way downward toward her waist. When he finished unbuttoning her dress, she moved slightly away from him and slipped her arms out of the sleeves and let the top part drop to her lap. Then she slipped the straps of her petticoat off her shoulders and slid it down.

In the dim light, Joe could see the outline of her breasts, standing firm and round. He cuddled each one in his hand, then bent down and kissed them, running his tongue around each nipple. They sprang erect in instant response. He felt her warm hand slip between his legs and stroke the growing bulge in his pants.

"Let's go into the bedroom, Maggie. I think that it will be a lot more comfortable than this couch."

He rose, removed his coat and shirt, dropping them onto the couch. She pushed her dress, petticoat and panties over her hips and let them slide to the floor. He quickly finished undressing and led her into the bedroom. Without bothering to turn down the covers, they lost themselves in one another, making frantic, passionate love three times in quick succession.

As they held one another close and basked in the afterglow of lovemaking, she whispered, "I wish that we had done this instead of going to that stupid dance ten years ago. Perhaps things would be much different for us now."

"We certainly wasted a lot of time in finding what we really wanted," he answered.

"We'll have to see if we can make up for a lot of lost time," said Maggie.

The following morning, Joe called for breakfast to be sent to his room and when they had finished eating, she asked him, "The lobby and restaurant are bound to be full of people who know me. How am I going to go about getting out of here without creating a scandal?"

"Where did you park your car?"

"In the parking lot behind the hotel," she answered.

"No problem," said Joe as he brought a key from his desk and handed it to her. "This key not only brings the elevator to this floor, but it's also a master key which will open just about every other door in the hotel, including the back service door. Take the elevator down to the Mezzanine, walk down the back stairs to the service door which opens out onto the parking lot. I use that route all the time to get to or from my room without going through the lobby."

"Am I likely to meet anyone as I go out this way?"

"Only three staff people have keys to the back door, and if one of them should see you, they will never say anything about it," replied Joe

"Does giving me this key mean that I am invited to come see to you again?" she asked.

"Yes, my darling, and I hope that you will use it often," replied Joe. "If you are ready to go, I'll walk you to your car and show you the back way."

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Joe announced to the Amarillo City Commission, "Gentlemen, in addition to the daily service by two airlines, we now have five privately owned airplanes based at the Amarillo Municipal Airport. The man that we hired to guard the airport and pump gasoline lacks both the time and ability required to run the place properly, so we need to hire an airport manager."

"How much would an airport manager cost us?" asked Farris.

"Everything considered," replied Joe. "I feel that he should offer at least a hundred fifty dollars per month if we expect to get a qualified person."

"The airport doesn't show that much total revenue from both gasoline sales and hangar rent," said Farris. "How could we justify paying a man that much?"

"An airport is a public utility just like roads and parks," replied Joe. "We don't make any money from the roads but we have to maintain them. The same thing applies to an airport."

"Only people with airplanes can use the airport while everyone can use the roads," said Farris, who seemed to object to everything that was ever brought before the commission, especially if it involved spending money.

"The airport not only serves those who have airplanes, but also the people who send letters by airmail and those who need to use the airline service for rapid travel," said Joe.

"Do you have anyone in mind for the job?" asked one of the commissioners.

"As a matter of fact, I do," replied Joe. "Ed Masterson's son, Robert, is returning from college in the very near future and I feel that he would be a good choice."

"For a job like that, we should advertise for applicants and take the most qualified person," said Farris. "The City of Amarillo doesn't operate under the spoils system."

"If that is a fact, then how did your son become the head of the city utilities department the day that he returned from college?" asked another of the commissioners.

"That was a different situation," said Farris. "He came well qualified for that position and I feel that we were lucky to get him."

"He came with the exact same qualifications as Robert Masterson, a brand new college degree," said Joe.

"What does this Masterson kid know about airplanes?" asked Farris. "Anyone who is expected to run an airport certainly should know how to fly an airplane. That just makes good sense."

"No, Masterson is not a pilot," replied Joe. "I realize that your son could pass water when he took over the job as head of the utility department, but what did he know about producing it."

When the rest of the commissioners finished roaring with laughter, they voted to advertise for an airport manager at a salary of a hundred fifty dollars per month.

Three people applied for the position of Airport Manager; Robert Masterson, Howard Irving and John Polk. Each applicant was interviewed by the members of the commission, after which they met in private to make their selection.

"Its obvious that John Polk should be eliminated immediately," said Farris. "This man has absolutely no business sense, has been in jail at least a dozen times for various petty offenses and just recently returned from two years in the State Penitentiary down at Huntsville for attempted murder."

The rest of the commissioners agreed with Farris that Polk's application should be rejected, leaving Masterson and Irving in the running for the job.

"Does anyone have anything to say for or against either of the two remaining applicants?" said Joe.

"I think that we should hire Howard Irving for the job because he's a pilot, has been running his own airport and has been around Amarillo for a good number of years," said Farris.

One of the other commissions spoke up, "I feel that young Masterson is the proper choice because he has far more education than Irving, who dropped out of high school to join the Army. About the only thing that Irving has going for him is being able to fly and I still don't see any future in flying."

"I feel that being a pilot has far more to do with being able to run an airport than spending the past four years in college," said Farris. "One year of experience is worth ten years of books, I always say."

"I'd suggest that the proper way to select the man would be for each of us to write the name of our choice on a piece of paper and then have the mayor, who can't vote except in the event of a tie, count them," said another of the commissioners.

When Joe separated the slips of paper into two stacks, there were four in the stack for Irving and four for Masterson. "There are nine commissioners and only eight votes," Joe said after counting the slips of paper a second time.

"I abstained," said Eldon Clark. "Masterson's mother is my sister and I don't want anyone to say that I was responsible for putting relatives on the city payroll."

"In that case, it is a tie vote and I'll cast the deciding vote for Masterson," said Joe.

"You and Ed Masterson have always been thicker than molasses," stormed Farris. "How much is he paying you under the table to throw the job to his kid?"

"Mr. Farris, I take that as a personal insult and I demand an apology," Joe said in a deliberate tone of voice. "I voted the way that I did because I feel that we would be making a grave mistake in selecting Howard Irving to manage our airport. Irving or any other pilot would tend to spend more of his time flying around in an airplane than at his desk running the airport."

"You don't want Irving to get the job because he was man enough to take Grace Hammond away from you. Everyone knows about you and her," said Farris. "This is just your way of getting even with him."

"That is not true," said Joe. "My reason is that I do not intend to allow the City of Amarillo to make the mistake of hiring a drunken bum to run their airport."

The three applicants for the position of airport manager were asked to return to the room and Joe said, "Gentlemen, I appreciate your taking the time to come before us. We found each of you to be well qualified for the position, but unfortunately, only one can be hired. I am pleased to announce that a decision has been reached and the manager of the Amarillo Municipal Airport will be Robert Masterson."

"You have been cheating me out of things all my life!" yelled John Polk as he lunged at Joe but was stopped by several of the commissioners. "I should have killed you years ago when you stole my land from me," he screamed as they hauled him from the room.

The commission meeting broke up and Howard Irving walked with Farris as he made his way back toward the bank. "You told me that you had the job all sewed up for me," said Irving.

"I thought that I did until Joe Armitage opened his mouth," said Farris.

"I didn't think that he had any say in commission decisions unless he had to vote to break a tie. I counted all nine commissioners there," said Irving.

"There were only eight votes cast, four for you and four for Masterson. One of the commissioners abstained."

"Did Armitage give a reason for going against me?" asked Irving.

"He said that he didn't intend to allow the City of Amarillo to make the mistake of hiring a drunken bum to run their airport," he replied.

Howard Irving walked away without saying another word. A week later, Todd Hammond, wealthy playboy and brother of Howard's wife, landed his new Waco Cabin Biplane on Irving's strip. For the next two weeks, they flew over the area to the east of Amarillo, looking at various pieces of property from the air. A month later, Irving filed the deed to a section and a half of land at the court house. It was located on

the south side of the road to Panhandle and about five miles east of the Municipal Airport.

"I noticed in the newspaper that Howard Irving bought a sizable piece of land way out east of town," Joe mentioned to Roger Bates while they were having coffee one morning. "Did you get to handle the deal?"

"I try to keep my ear to the ground on all land deals around this area, but the first thing that I knew about this one was when John Polk came to me to see if I could get Irving to buy his half section too. Irving bought three of the four half-sections of land which Ellis Polk left to his four grandchildren when he died. John Polk said that he always got the short end of the stick, even when something was given to him. He got the eastern half section, the one that Irving didn't want. I contacted Irving about John's half section but he said that he couldn't afford it and didn't need it."

"Why on earth would he be buying such a large piece of land so far out of town?" asked Joe.

"He said that he lost his lease on that place out by the smelter," replied Roger. "The owners wanted to get possession of it back so they can sell it to the smelter. They are planning to expand and needed that land."

"A section and a half of land represents a good bit of money, at least ten thousand dollars," said Joe. "Flying airplanes must be paying off pretty well for him."

"Irving couldn't buy twenty acres out of his own pocket. He most likely got the money from his wife," said Roger. "I hear that her family is pretty well off."

"They ought to be. After all, her dad was the founder and developer of the city of Hammond, California and now he is making piles of money in the movies."

Joe didn't give any more thought to Irving and his land purchase for several weeks until Roger dropped by his office one morning and said, "Come drive out to the Irving land with me. I want to show you something that you might find most interesting."

When they arrived, Joe was amazed to see a huge airplane hangar going up. It was obviously much larger than the one at Amarillo Municipal. A huge crane was in the process of lifting steel arches in place to form the roof. They got out of the car and walked around to look at the progress. The concrete floor of the hangar extended several hundred feet to form a paved ramp. On the south side of the ramp a glazed-tile office building some twenty by sixty feet in size was being erected. There was a single large room at the front of the building with plate glass windows giving a panoramic view of the ramp. There were several smaller offices and two bathrooms toward the rear of the building.

Roger stepped off the distance across the front of the hangar and then down one side. "This thing is going to be a hundred twenty feet wide by two forty deep."

"That is one awfully big hangar just to house Irving's two puddle jumpers," said Joe.

"He must be planning to use a lot of gasoline too, look at the size of those three tanks over there," said Roger. "Each one of them must hold at least ten thousand gallons."

"Do you realize that we are looking at well over a hundred thousand dollars worth of construction," said Joe. "There is no way that he can ever hope to recover an investment of this size, much less ever make it profitable."

"I'll say," replied Roger as they walked back to his car. "I checked the distance out here and it is nine miles from town. We are almost half way to Panhandle. Nobody in their right mind would build an airport way out in the middle of the country."

There was no grand opening of Irving Field when it was finished. Howard simply flew his two airplanes over there and began the same type of operation that he had out by the smelter. He would take passengers for rides and give a few lessons now and then.

It was the first day of June and Joe had driven out to the Municipal Airport to pick up a man who was to arrive on the Western Air Express airplane from Kansas City. He stood in front of the hangar, waiting for his arrival. The first airplane Joe heard was the Ford Tri-motor inbound from the west so he walked out on the ramp to watch it land.

The big airliner rumbled over Amarillo, its three polished propellers spinning in the sunlight. It was headed directly toward him, following the railroad, or iron compass as the pilots called it. As it came abreast of the airport, instead of turning into a landing pattern, it continued on to the east.

"Where is he going?" Joe asked Robert, who had joined him to watch the airliner land.

"Probably just missed the field with the sun in his face," said Robert. "As soon as he reaches the radio range station, he will realize where he is and come back."

They watched the airplane as it continued eastward for two or three more miles, angled away from the railroad, made a turn to the right and begin to descend for a landing.

"It looks as if he is landing over at Irving's Field," said Joe.

"He must really be lost," said Robert as they watched the airplane disappear from sight. "He'll realize his mistake and be back here in a few minutes."

While they watched, the Fokker Universal came into view from the northeast, approached Irving Field, turned and also landed. "Come go with me," said Joe. "We have to find out what's going on."

They roared toward Irving Field in Joe's big Cadillac, kicking up a cloud of dust. "Come to think of it," said Robert. "I didn't see any passengers and you were the only person who came out to meet the planes. Not only that, but the truck wasn't here to pick up the airmail either."

When Joe and Robert arrived, the place was a beehive of activity. Several passengers were getting on the Ford while others waited for the Fokker to be filled with gasoline. Several other people were getting aboard a new touring bus with a sign on each door which read, "Irving Field Transportation". Inside the air conditioned office building, people were milling around the two ticket counters. One was marked Western Air Express and the other Transcontinental and Western Air.

"It doesn't appear that there was any mistakes about where the airplanes were supposed to land," said Joe. "Now we need to find out how and why this happened to us."

Officially, all that Joe could learn from talking with the local station managers was that the main offices of the two airlines had instructed their Amarillo offices to make the change of the first day of June. On that date, all operations would be transferred from Amarillo Municipal Airport to Irving Field. The truth of the matter was that Todd Hammond, who had furnished the money to buy the land and erect the buildings at Irving Field, had also bought fifty thousand dollars worth of stock in each of the two airlines in exchange for their agreement to change their bases of operation in Amarillo.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Even though Maggie Brewster wasn't enjoying the conjugal benefits of being married to Warren, she did enjoy his wealth and the status of being the wife of a Texas State Representative. Being an intelligent woman, she also knew that while she was his wife, she would have access to his entire fortunes but under Texas law, she would come out with a very small percentage of it in a divorce settlement.

On the other hand, Joe Armitage was a more than willing partner in bed and seemed to be content with an arrangement which did not include marriage. Whenever Maggie felt driven by the sexual urge, which averaged two or three times each week, she could use the key to visit Joe's bed. Maggie was enjoying the best of both worlds with the only threat to its continuing was the necessity for Warren to return to the Panhandle to campaign for re-election.

"What are we going to do when Warren returns from Austin?" Maggie asked Joe during one of their clandestine meetings. "I don't see any way that we can continue our relationship while he is in Amarillo."

"We'll just have to do what we can to help get him re-elected so he can return to Austin and his mistress. That isn't going to be easy because his opponent, George Wilkins, is not only a rich rancher from Dalhart, but he is also a very strong political figure," said Joe.

"Warren doesn't need money to run a campaign as badly as he needs strong support from the business community," she replied.

"I think that I can take care of that," said Joe. "I feel that my support was instrumental in getting him elected the first time and I hope that it will carry as much weight this time. Most of the businessmen of Amarillo will follow suit because the last thing that they want to happen is to lose the prestige of having a man from Amarillo in the state house."

When Warren returned to the Panhandle to campaign for the coming election, Maggie told him, "I have been doing some groundwork for your campaign and I think that I have been able to line up some support which you never seemed to have before."

"Who is that?" asked Warren.

"The business community of Amarillo," she replied. "My Father's support has always helped, but the people who you really need behind you are those like Joe Armitage."

"I'd rather lose the election than cower to that bastard," he replied. "My daddy would be alive today if it wasn't for the Armitage family."

"Politics makes strange bedfellows," said Maggie, with a knowing smile at the real truth behind that statement. "You had better accept support anywhere you can find it if you plan to be in Austin next session. George Wilkins is going to pull a lot of the ranching support away from you, and that was mostly what put you in office in the first place. I feel that the businesses of this town will be the deciding influence in this election."

"Armitage wouldn't give me the time of day, much less his support," said Warren.

"I wouldn't be too sure of that," she replied. "I have a feeling that he would do almost anything in order to keep a man from Amarillo in Austin."

Warren wasn't convinced that Joe Armitage would support him until he saw the headlines in the Amarillo World News which stated, "Armitage Throws Support Behind Brewster."

Warren was busy putting together his campaign organization and was searching for the address of Clayton Farris, brother to Eldon Farris and a political supporter who lived in the northeastern Panhandle town of Perryton. Thinking that Maggie might have it, began to search through her purse. He didn't find the address, but he did find a strange, heavy brass key. It contained no markings or number of any sort

and didn't appear to fit any lock or door with which he was familiar.

Warren went around the house, trying the key in every slot he could find. He even went to the attic and tried the key in a number of old trunks and cabinets without success. Thinking that it might be a key which her father had given her for some reason, he dropped by the bank to see if it was for a safety deposit box of some sort.

Instead of simply asking Maggie what the key was for, he took it to the local locksmith to see if he knew anything about it. The locksmith took a long look at the key, turning it one way and the other. Whether the locksmith recognized the key and its purpose or not, he told Warren that it was a rather common type of key, most often used in heavy duty locks such as those found on office buildings. Warren had the locksmith cut a duplicate of the key, then he returned the original to Maggie's purse.

Finding the lock which matched the key became an obsession with Warren. Any time he walked up to a door, cabinet or anything else with a key slot, he would pull the key from his pocket and try it in the lock. Most of the places where Warren tried the key, it would not go into the slot. The occasional times when the key matched the milled fluting of the cylinder, it would not turn it. In trying locks, he did find that it would go into the cylinder at the Amarillo Hotel, but could find no lock that it would open. Warren must have tried the key in a hundred locks as he went about his campaign.

Warren was both pleased and surprised by the unexpected support for his candidacy by Joe Armitage. Not only had he given the power of his name in support, but had taken an active role in promoting him. He had scheduled a dinner in the Tascosa Room of the Armitage Hotel as a means of introducing Warren to his circle of friends.

Warren had never been inside the Armitage before and in order to be comfortable speaking in a strange location, he arrived a full half hour before the scheduled time for the dinner. Instead of simply walking down the one flight of stairs from the lobby to the ballroom in the basement, he decided to use the new, automatic elevator. He pressed the button to call the elevator, and pure chance brought the Number Four elevator to the ground floor.

Instead of an elevator operator like he had in the Amarillo Hotel, there was only a row of buttons indicating the floors from the Tascosa Room all the way to number twelve. He winced at the thought that it automatically placed his own hotel, with only ten floors, into the category of a second rate building. Warren pressed the button for the basement. Where the button would have been for the thirteenth floor, was a key slot. Warren's hand automatically went into his pocket where it sorted the strange key out of a number of coins. The door of the elevator slid open into the Tascosa Room as he tried the key in the unmarked slot. The key slipped easily into the slot.

It was so seldom that he had found a slot which matched the key that it came as a surprise. He held the head of the key between his thumb and forefinger and tried to turn it. The key rotated easily and the door of the elevator slid shut. Almost as if the elevator had a mind of its own, it began to move upward. Warren watched the row of lights above the door flash on to indicate a floor that it was approaching and blink off as it passed. The elevator slid silently past the lobby, the mezzanine and he began to count off the floors as it rose; three, four, five and so on. As the number twelve flashed on, he expected to feel the elevator stop its upward movement, but it didn't. His heart pounded in his throat as the number twelve light flashed off, indicating that he had passed the topmost floor of the hotel.

Warren felt the elevator slow and stop. The door slid open and he was looking directly into a large living room. "This must be the penthouse!" he thought to himself. Then he realized that it meant he was on the 13th floor and his long-standing superstition of that number sent a cold shiver down his spine.

Almost in panic, he turned the key to its original position and pressed the bottom button to take him back to the Tasocsa Room. As the elevator traveled downward, he removed the key from the slot and pondered for a reason why his wife would be in possession of a key that made the elevator of the Armitage Hotel go to the penthouse. He tried to convince himself that there was no way that Maggie could be having an affair with Joe Armitage.

Warren's head was swimming when he stepped off the elevator and into the Tascosa Room. Even though he realized that he had been neglecting his marital duties to Maggie while he was living with another woman in his apartment in Austin, he had never given the slightest thought to the fact that his wife might be doing the same thing.

The only people in the Tascosa Room were the waiters who were putting glasses of water on the tables in preparation for the dinner. While he was looking around the room, almost as if by instinct, he noticed the key slots in the main doors of the room. He pulled the key from his pocket and tried it in those doors. It turned easily. Next, he went to the door of a closet to one side of the room. The key fit those doors. The key not only fit the elevator, it seemed to fit every door in the whole hotel. It was a master key!

Joe walked into the room, extended his hand and said with a warm smile, "Hello, Warren. Are you ready to mow them down?"

"Ready as I will ever be, I suppose," he replied.

Warren was accustomed to speaking to ranchers and farmers, not a group of businessmen dressed in suits. He tried to think of the parts of his speech which had appealed to the ranchers but might not fit into the thinking of this crowd. He found trying to mentally rewrite his speech while sitting next to Joe Armitage was most difficult because his mind kept snapping to visions of Maggie and Joe locked in lovemaking.

When the meal was finished, Joe Armitage rose and gave a glowing introduction to Warren. Warren's mind was a tangle of thoughts about how this man could be sleeping with his wife but still be so warm and cordial with him. By all standards, if he was actually having an affair with his wife, he should be hostile.

Warren called on his experience gained from countless speeches on the floor and did a credible job of laying out his future plans for legislation that would benefit the businessmen. When he finished his speech, he received polite, but not necessarily enthusiastic, applause.

"How do you think that I came over with your friends?" he whispered to Joe.

"No problem, Warren. I have a feeling that you will be seeing some nice checks coming to your campaign from this crowd and they will throw a lot of votes your way when the time comes."

Then, out of the blue, Warren asked, "Have you seen Maggie lately?"

"Yes," replied Joe with a smile. "She was by here yesterday to check on the arrangement of the speaker's table for this dinner. She has a good political head on her shoulders and you should take advantage of it. With her beauty and poise, she could do a lot for your election."

"I'd never thought of her as being a political asset," said Warren as he was beginning to have doubts whether Maggie and Joe could actually be having an affair. If they were, how could Joe make a suggestion which would possibly take her away from Amarillo much of the time. The key in his pocket was now a greater quandary than it had been before he knew which locks it fit.

Warren dwelt on the key for several more days before he had the nerve to ask Maggie about it. "Maggie," he said. "A few weeks ago, I was looking in your purse for an address and noticed a strange key. What is it for?"

"Maggie always had a very quick mind and replied without hesitation. "How should I know. it's your key. When I picked up your suits at the cleaners, they gave it to me and said that it had been left in one of your pockets. I had just forgotten to give it back to you."

The following morning, the phone at the cleaners rang. When the owner answered the phone, Joe Armitage said, "I have a small favor to ask of you."

"Why yes, Mr. Armitage, I'll be glad to do whatever I can for you."

"Oh, Mister Brewster," shouted the owners of the cleaners when he saw Warren Brewster walking down the street later that day. "May I have a word with you? When your wife picked up some of your suits, I gave her a key that I thought was yours. As it turns out, it belongs to Mr. Armitage. Do you

happen to have it with you?"

Warren reached into his pocket and handed the duplicate key to him. "I didn't recognize it and was wondering where it went," he replied with the greatest satisfaction, now that his mind had been set at ease.

A few days later, Warren was to be out of town for two days while campaigning in the eastern part of the Panhandle. Maggie used her key to visit the penthouse where she told Joe, "That was a close one. From now on, I'll be more careful with that key."

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

John Polk was always searching for an easy way to make money and the discovery of oil in the Panhandle attracted him like honey attracts ants. He realized that he would never be able to accumulate enough money to drill his own well, so he began to look around for ways to cash in on other people's fortunes.

Polk discovered that he could occasionally pick up a dormant lease for a few dollars and then sell it at a profit to some oil company willing to take a risk on it. This required a lot of time to search through the lease records in the court house and then match them back against drilling reports, but time was the one commodity of which Polk had more than ample amounts. In his searching through the records, he found that the entire Faith Ranch had been leased for drilling but after three dry holes, the owners of the lease had simply picked up stakes and left the country. The lease had been filed under the obscure name of the Wildcat Drilling Company, but since the firm had disbanded without ever recording the necessary papers to show ownership of the company, there were no records of whom, if anyone, really owned the Wildcat Drilling Company and the lease.

This was that one rare opportunity that John Polk had been searching for. He had a lawyer draw up papers showing himself as the sole owner of the Wildcat Drilling Company and recorded a notice of intent to drill on the lease. The lawyer's charges plus the filing fee came to nearly a hundred dollars, which was just about every cent Polk had to his name. He might still be as broke as usual, but he was now the owner of an oil drilling company and a lease covering more than twenty thousand acres. It would probably never amount to anything worthwhile, at least it was something that he could brag about in bars.

The geologist's reports on the land weren't all that bad and indicated a very good possibility of oil. The only fly in the ointment was that record of those three dusters which had been drilled right in the middle of the most promising area.

Polk set out to see if he could find a buyer for his lease and the drilling rights. He began with the larger oil companies like Texaco, Phillips and Gulf, but as soon as their geologists saw those dry holes, they dropped the thing like a hot potato. Those companies didn't get as big as they were by buying highly speculative leases. Polk moved to the smaller companies like City Service, Skelly and Shamrock, but met with the same results. He was finally down to hounding people who were much like himself, always looking for a bird nest on the ground but without money to do anything about one if they found it.

One day, Polk had a great idea. He would find people who had lots of money and were willing to share a risk with someone else. He would sell shares in his lease and when he had enough money, would simply walk away. He thought for a while about selling stock in the lease for a dollar a share, but that would take several thousand small sales in order raise much money. The answer was to find one person with lots of money and sell him just under half of it. A minority stockholder would never raise a stink if he thought that someone else was losing more than he did.

The first person to come to mind was Joe Armitage. After all, he had come to the Panhandle and bought land on the blind faith that a city would be built on it. He had all kinds of money and might be willing to risk a few thousand dollars on an oil lease. Besides, Joe Armitage had cheated him out of everything that he ever had and running a good scam on him would bring him the greatest pleasure.

Joe was always being approached by people with various schemes, wanting him to invest in them. Every one of these offers was supposed to be a sure thing which would make him lots more money. Joe could see right through most of these deals and turned them down on the spot. Considering how much John Polk hated him, it came as somewhat of a surprise when he came in asking him to invest in his oil

lease. Perhaps Polk thought he could recover some of the money that he thought Joe had cheated him out of. He decided to listen to Polk's offer, because who knows, even a blind sow will find an acorn now and then.

Polk told him that he owned the lease and drilling rights to a huge ranch over on the north side of the Canadian River but didn't have the money to drill a well on it. He offered to sell Joe a forty-nine percent interest in the lease for fifty thousand dollars. With the fifty thousand dollars he could afford to drill a well which was bound to come in as a gusher and make them both rich.

No matter how far fetched an offer might be, Joe made it a point to never reject an idea without careful research and consideration. He found the same information which all of the oil companies had used in their evaluation, but he went a bit further. He found that there were producing wells just to the east of that lease and two exploratory wells to the north had produced natural gas which indicated the presence of oil. He also found that a well would have to be started within three months or the drilling permit on the lease would expire.

Joe decided that what the heck, he would put a few dollars into the venture and see what came out of it but he wasn't about to pop for Polk's first offer of fifty grand. People like John Polk aren't usually smart enough to be crafty, but sometimes they are just blind lucky.

"I'll tell you what I'll do," he told Polk at their next meeting. "I'll give you five thousand dollars for fifty-one percent of your company and the lease and then I'll drill a well on it. That way, you won't have to risk any of your money but will still make nearly the same return when the well comes in."

"A paltry five thousand dollars for more than half of my oil company," shouted Polk. "I'll let the lease run out before I give it away."

"Your oil company, as you call it, consists of nothing more than a piece of paper which isn't worth two cents unless someone drills a well and finds the oil for you," replied Joe. "I feel that I am offering you far more than what the whole deal is worth, much less half of it."

"This is just like the time when you stole that twenty acres from me," said Polk. "You gave me less than four hundred bucks for my land when you knew that you would make a million off it."

"This deal is the same as that one was," replied Joe. "It's your choice, take it or leave it."

"I'll have to think about it for a while," said Polk.

"You should be able to do all the thinking possible in three days, so you have that long to take my up on my deal or it dies," said Joe.

John Polk was already convinced that the lease was worthless, but he wanted to milk it for all that he could. The next person who he went to see was Warren Brewster. He had heard that he was known to invest in a various oil deals from time to time and might go for this one.

Warren happened to be in town so Polk took the geologists reports, less those which reported the two dry holes, to him. He made the same basic offer as he had to Joe, thinking that he would take whatever became the best offer.

Warren mulled the offer for a few minutes and replied, "I'll give you eight thousand dollars for fifty-one percent and you drill the well."

"I've already turned down a better offer than that," replied Polk.

"Then, I suggest that you see if you can save that offer, because I am offering you more than what I feel that the whole lease is worth," replied Warren.

"I have always known that Joe Armitage was a better businessman than you," said Polk as he rose to leave the room.

"You mean that the other offer was from Armitage," said Warren.

"Sure was, replied Polk. "He is willing to give me ten thousand dollars for forty-nine percent and he will drill the well."

"I make it a firm rule that I will never put a cent into any venture unless I can own the controlling interest in it," said Warren. "I'll sweeten the deal a little. I'll give you ten thousand, five hundred for

fifty-one percent, and not a penny more."

"Well, as bad as I hate to let control of my oil company go for so little money, you have yourself a deal," said Polk. "How soon can I have my money?"

"I have to leave for Austin on the Two O'Clock train, so you be here tomorrow at noon to sign the papers and you can have your check at that time," replied Warren.

One thing which could always be said for John Polk was that his greed far exceeded his intelligence and he began to think about both of the offers that he had on the lease. "I could come out of this with more than fifteen thousand dollars in my pocket if I sold out to both of them. That lease is never going to be worth a dime, so what if each one owns fifty-one percent. Fifty-one percent of nothing is still nothing and neither of them will ever be the wiser." The following day, he signed over a fifty-one percent shares of the lease to Warren, got his check and then signed over fifty-one percent to Joe.

A week later, as soon as both of the deeds were filed, Joe realized what had happened. He called Warren, who was back in Austin, and told him of the deceit.

"Shall we have the little bastard arrested and sent back to the pen?" asked Warren.

"What good would that do?" asked Joe. "We have been outsmarted by that little weasel and are stuck with the deal so might as well make the best of it. So what if we each bought fifty-one percent, it is still half and half."

"Whatever you say, Joe," replied Warren. "How about drilling a well? Do you want to go ahead with that?"

"Might as well, but we may be sending good money after bad," answered Joe.

"I'm willing to go half on one well if you are," replied Warren. "I don't believe in giving up without at least trying."

The Armitage-Brewster No. 1 blew in with the howl of a thousand train whistles. It sent a jet of natural gas shooting five hundred feet into the Panhandle sky and took five days to bring under control.

"That one well can produce more natural gas than all the rest of the wells in the Panhandle combined," said Joe when he called Warren to report the find. "It is twenty miles closer to Amarillo than any of the other wells, which now makes it more economical for the city to buy from us."

An exclusive agreement was reached with the City of Amarillo to buy the entire natural gas production of the field. The city would buy all of the natural gas that it needed from Joe and Warren, and in return, they agreed not to sell gas to any other customer.

When the State Mental Hospital in Wichita Falls got John Polk dried out from the six-month drunk he began on the day he got the money for the lease, he returned to Amarillo. It was only then that he learned what had happened out on the Faith Ranch. He also realized that he had blown nearly every cent of his money.

"I had a million dollars in my hand and Joe Armitage and Warren Brewster ganged up and cheated me out of it," he ranted, never being able to accept the fact that his own greed was what had cost him the fortune.

Polk had been back in Amarillo only a couple days when Roger Bates stopped him on the street, "I've been looking high and low for you. Where have you been?"

"I was in the hospital down in Wichita Falls," replied Polk. "I had a nervous breakdown. Why are you looking for me?"

"I have a customer who is interested in buying that half section of land that you have out east of town," Bates answered.

"Who wants to buy it?" he asked.

"Howard Irving said that he might be interested if the price is right."

"A couple years ago, Irving wasn't interested. How come he wants it now?"

"He said that he has the money now and would like to buy it just in case he ever wants to expand his airport. He asked me to see if you were interested in selling now."

"Tell him that the price is twenty bucks an acre now," replied Polk.

"Why don't I just set up a meeting and you can tell him personally," suggested Roger.

"Twenty bucks an acre is a lot more than land is worth these days," replied Irving. "Land is worth whatever someone is willing to pay for it, and right now with the depression going on, it seems that no one is willing to pay anything for land. I'd sell the half section I own just west of the Municipal Airport for four dollars an acre if I could get cash for it."

"What would you give?" asked Polk, who was now becoming desperate.

"Tell you what I'll do," said Irving. "Just to help you out, I will give you five dollars an acre but it will have to be in payments."

"What kind of payments did you have in mind?" asked Polk.

"Fifty cents an acre when we close the deal and a fifty cents an acre each year till it's paid off."

Polk thought about the fact that he would have to wait a whole year between payments and made a counter offer. "Give me a flat thousand bucks for the 320 acres and it's yours."

The deal was made and two weeks later Polk picked up the local newspaper and read the headlines, "ARMY BUYS LAND FOR TRAINING BASE. The US Army just paid \$50,000 for 320 acres of land on the east side of Irving Airfield as a location for their new Air Corps training base."

"They are all cut from the same bolt of cloth; Armitage, Brewster, Irving. They are all a bunch of thieving bastards and Bates is just as bad because he sets me up for them," Polk yelled. "They cheat a man out of every cent he has and then come back for more. Every time I turn my back, one of them sticks a knife into it. They have cheated me out of everything that I have ever owned. I ought to get a gun and kill every damn one of them!" screamed Polk.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

Warren Brewster had some business in Amarillo which needed his attention, so he decided to return during a short recess. It was almost dark when he stepped off the train. The station was deserted and the thought of walking ten blocks to his house in cowboy boots didn't appeal to him so he decided to walk around to the front of the Armitage Hotel where there was always at least one cab parked. As he walked through the rear parking lot, he was surprised to see Maggie's red Buick roadster parked next to Joe's big Cadillac. Warren stood there looking at it, wondering why his wife's car would be parked at the Armitage Hotel when the strange key he had found in her purse suddenly began to make sense.

Warren went directly to the elevators which were all stopped at the lobby with their doors open. He stepped into one of them and looked at the buttons. There was no key slot above the 12th floor button. He moved to the next but it was the same. Then he stepped into number four and there was the key slot, but he had no way to get the elevator to go to the penthouse.

He punched the button for the twelfth floor and the doors slid shut. He got off on the 12th floor and walked around looking for stairs leading to the penthouse, but found none. There seemed to be no way to get any higher without the key until he noticed a fire escape sign over the window at the end of the hall. He opened the window and stepped out onto the steel landing, closing the window behind him. Steel steps zig-zagged from landing to landing down the side of the hotel to the ground while a simple steel ladder led the ten or twelve feet to the roof. He climbed the ladder a rung at a time until he could peer over the edge of the wall. The glow of the underwater lights in the swimming pool reflected off the big windows but the place seemed to be deserted. Warren climbed over the wall and walked quietly across the terrace.

One of the sliding glass doors leading to the terrace was open and he could hear soft music and see a faint glow of light coming from inside. The plush carpet absorbed any sound his boots might have made as he tiptoed toward the source of the music and light. He was careful not to bump any of the expensive furniture on the way. He peered carefully into the bedroom. The covers were tossed aside and the sheets were wrinkled. He could hear muffled voices coming from the partially open door to the bath room.

Warren crossed to the bathroom door and peeked through the crack on the hinge side of the door. Through the narrow slot, he saw Maggie and Joe in the huge sunken tub. Joe lifted Maggie's foot from the deep bubbles and kissed her toes which brought forth a girlish giggle from her. A bottle of champagne and two glasses sat on the tile surface beside the tub.

Hot rage surged through his body and he stepped back to kick the door open and confront the adulterous pair, then he hesitated, thinking that there must be a better way to handle the situation. He retraced his steps to the ladder and climbed down to the twelfth floor landing only to find that the inside latch had automatically locked when he closed the window. That was a safety feature which prevented anyone from being able to climb up the fire escape and enter the hotel. He was glad that it was dark and no one would be able to see him as he made his way down the outside of the building. When he reached the second floor, he stepped out onto the final flight of steps which were raised so no one could reach them. They swung down under his weight and he walked away in the darkness.

Maggie didn't come home that night and Warren paced the floor until dawn, plotting what he should do. He thought about divorcing Maggie but that was probably just what they wanted him to do. For some reason, at times Warren would become excited at the thought of Maggie making love with another man and wished that she were home so he could do the same, but then the rage would return. Then he thought about going back to the hotel, climbing the fire escape and killing both of them while they slept but rejected that because it would certainly get him a ride in "Old Sparky", the electric chair down at Huntsville. Then

he thought about the Texas law which said that a man could kill another man whom he found having sex with his wife, but he would have to wait until they were actually making love in order to shoot him. Warren wanted to kill Joe as soon as possible.

When dawn began to break in the east, Warren finally came up with a plan. He would kill Joe and make it look like self defense. After all, everyone knew that there was bad blood between them, especially after their fathers having killed one another. Not only would he get his revenge against Joe but also against Maggie, who would lose her lover.

Warren took a shower, shaved and went to the basement where he had several boxes of guns stored. He had acquired most of his gun collection by taking them away from drunks while he was sheriff. He selected a .32 Cal. revolver which he knew hadn't been in circulation in a dozen or more years and checked to be sure that it was fully loaded with ammunition. Then he went to the bedroom and got the 38 Special which he kept in the cabinet beside his bed. His plan was to walk into Joe's office and shoot him with the 38. Then before anyone could get there after hearing the shot, he would put the .32 in Joe's hand and fire a bullet from it into the wall. People would hear two shots fired but no one could ever swear which shot was fired first. It would be just like when their fathers killed one another on the Senate floor, except that there would be no witnesses this time and only Joe would be dead. He would probably never go to trial, but even if he did, no jury in the world would convict him.

With the two pistols hidden under his coat, Warren drove to the hotel, parked his car and walked up the stairs to the mezzanine where Joe's office was located. As he stepped into the outer office, he was greeted by Roger Bates who said, "Warren, we were just trying to get in contact with you. We are supposed to meet Howard Irving and John Polk out at Irving Field as soon as possible."

Warren hadn't anticipated anything like this to interrupt his plans so he asked, "What are meeting them for?"

"I don't know." Roger replied. "Polk caught up with me while I was on my way over here to see Joe this morning and said for me to find both of you and meet him and Irving out at the airport. He said that it was really important and that he wanted to show us something which would make us all rich."

"Why at the airport?" asked Warren.

"He said that we would have to go up in an airplane in order for him to show it to us," Roger replied as Joe came out of his office.

"Wonder what kind of half-baked scheme that drunken fool wants us to put money into this time," said Joe.

"Well, we've always made money on everything else that he came to us with before, so I see no reason why we should pass up this chance," said Roger.

They drove out to the airport in Joe's Cadillac and when they arrived, Irving was already seated in the left seat of his shiny new Spartan Executive. Its engine was ticking over slowly. John Polk, holding a ragged old suitcase under his arm, was waiting for them beside the airplane. He didn't appear to be drunk but was even more seedy looking than usual. He had red rings around his eyes, his clothes were wrinkled and he was badly in need of a haircut and shave.

"I was able to locate both of them, John. What do you want to show us?" asked Roger as they walked to where he was standing by the cabin door.

"You'll see in a few minutes. Get in, Irving has it all warmed up and ready to go." John replied as he stepped up on the wing and into the cabin, sliding into the right front seat.

Joe, Roger and Warren sat in the rear seat and as they fastened their seat belts, Irving released the brakes and the silver ship rolled toward the runway. "Where to, John?" Howard asked as he lined the ship up with centerline of the runway and received clearance from the tower for takeoff.

It's out west but let's fly over downtown Amarillo first. I've never seen what the street that was named after me looks like from the air," he answered.

Irving advanced the throttle, the big radial engine thundered with power and the sleek ship surged

forward. Joe had ridden in an airliner a few times but never really liked to fly. A few seconds later the ship lifted easily into the morning air and Irving flipped the switch to retract the landing gear. There was a hum of electric motors and a solid clunk as the wheels tucked away inside the wings. The Amarillo skyline stood sharp and clear in the early sun as Irving banked the airplane to the right and pointed its nose toward the downtown area which was bracketed by the Santa Fe building on the south and the two tall hotels on the north. When he arrived over downtown Amarillo, he banked steeply so his passengers could see over the wing. He made a couple circles and then asked, "Where are we going from here, John."

"From the kind of lives we all have lived, I'd say that we will probably all go to hell," said John as he opened the suitcase which he was holding on his lap. Irving caught a quick glimpse of a large bundle of sticks of dynamite, a telephone battery and some wires; but before he could react, John touched one of the wires to the post on top of the battery.

The people going to work in downtown Amarillo that morning looked up when they heard the explosion. There was a rolling ball of smoke and flames directly above Polk street. Then they scurried for the protection of doorways as bits and pieces of airplane and five men began to rain down. The engine, which was the largest piece, crashed into the old Polk homestead which had stood vacant for years on Harrison Street.

The newspaper reported that not only had four of the leading businessmen of Amarillo, as well as an additional unknown passenger, been killed when the airplane exploded for no apparent reason, but there was also a freak accident associated with it. A 38 Special revolver fell with the wreckage of the airplane and discharged when it struck the ground. The bullet from the pistol went through the door of a red Buick Roadster that was traveling south on Polk street at just that moment, killing the driver, Mrs. Warren Brewster.