

Gene & Nancy





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GENE & NANCY

By Eugenia Dawn Baker

As Told To Ms Georgia Davis

ONE

Eugenia "Gene" Dawn Baker drew her stallion to a quick stop when she heard the gunshots coming from the rocky trail ahead of her.

"The stage!" she muttered. "Some rascally coyote's robbing the danged stage!"

The stage had just passed her a few miles back, Hell bent for election as the driver tried to make up for the lost time resulting from the broken wheel that had had to be replaced at the last station before continuing.

"Heeyup!" she urged her mount who took off like a shot and quickly arrived on the scene. As she had already determined, the stage was being held up all

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right. It was Budger "Bud" MacLanahan and his two half-breed cohorts, Injun Mike and Black Hat who were struggling with the strong box that the driver, Shorty McClain, had tossed down.

Even though the three had bandanas covering their faces, Gene recognized them right off. Who could miss that tangle-footed pie-bald Bud insisted was the best hoss in the country! Those filthy, ragged skins and stained head-bands his two cohorts wore could belong to no one else!

Bud was struggling with a girl passenger who was trying desperately to keep her reticule from the outlaw's possession. Bud was cursing a blue streak as he fought with her and when Gene's horse came up to him, he was distracted enough that he did not notice that it was not one of his henchmen!

"Whadda fuck?" he swore as he became aware of Gene's hand grasping his and pulling it away from the girl's reticule. He turned just as her 44 Colt revolver struck him behind the ear, knocking him from the saddle and stunning him as he fell to the ground.

Quickly, the stage driver swung his shotgun up, and as he did, the other two men, seeing their companion down, spurred their horses and fled into the rocky clefts along the trail, leaving the strong box behind them beside the trail.

Bud was scrambling to his feet, reaching for his pistol when he looked up into the steady barrel of Gene's 44 Colt. "Go ahead'n draw, Buddy Boy, if'n yuh feel lucky!" she invited with a sly grin.

His face full of disgust, Bud raised his hands. "Yuh gots me!" he admitted.

"Yep, ah shore does!" she grinned.

"Hot damn, Missy Gene!" Shorty exclaimed, waving his shotgun excitedly, "Yuh shore saved air bacon! Ol' Budger Boy had us'n's ded tuh rights!"

Gene blushed. "Aw, t'weren't nothin'," she replied.

"Well, I'd certainly say it was something!" the girl spoke up. "That was the bravest thing I have ever seen! Thank you for saving us! And I do thank you so much for saving my Daddy's ranch."

"Hunh?" Gene was surprised. "I didn't save anybody's ranch that I know of! Not unless if'n h'it's yer'n!"

"Here!" the girl held up her reticule. "I have the money to pay off Dad's mortgage on his ranch, the mortgage held by Hiram Wilding, the banker in Silver Springs."

"So that's why Bud was so set on robbing this particular stage," Gene mused. "I knew he had to have a reason, he's not that smart!"

"I don't understand," the girl was puzzled.

"Bud's Banker Wilding's enforcer. He knew you had the money."

"But, no one knew! I just got it myself day before yesterday morning in Denver."

"Then someone in Denver telegraphed the news to ol' Wilding and he set Bud on you to get it, the money, I mean," Gene deduced.

"Well, thanks to you, Mr. Wilding is soon to be minus one less mortgage!" the girl declared defiantly.

The fiery defiance of this angry girl touched Gene in a way no one else had ever touched her! Gene felt the blood rush hotly through her veins and a hot stab of wetness flooded her crotch!

Never before in all of her twenty-five years had anyone affected her as this girl was doing right now!

Gene knew that she had always been more attracted to other girls than boys and had gone to great lengths to conceal the fact because in this day and age, Lesbians and homosexuals were generally an unknown, shunned group!

It was, after all, the year of Our Lord 1879 AD and anyone "different" was a pariah before the fact! Up

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until now, Gene had been able to keep her “strangeness” quiet and to herself.

She gazed thoughtfully at the smaller, five foot two inch, one hundred six pound female, taking in the red Irish hair, the blue-green eyes, the tiny retrousée nose with its sprinkling of freckles to the exciting swell of a small bosom under her snug fitted bodice to the narrow, obviously tightly corseted waist that flared into full hips to the tiny foot in a high heel button boot that was tapping with an obvious irritation, all encased in a travel worn, dust covered, dark green velvet traveling suit with the required wide brimmed hat and flimsy, lace parasol, and suddenly Gene felt awkward and gawky!

Her reverie was broken by Shorty, asking, “Hey, Missy Gene, gimme a hand with this h’yar strong box, will yuh?” he called. He had already trussed Bud up securely and the man lay on the ground, glaring hatefully at Gene.

“Yer ded meat, Baker!” he growled defiantly.

Gene laughed. “I’ll so enjoy watching you dance at the end of a rope, right along with your boss, Mr. Hiram Wilding!”

“Yuh gots nuttin’ on us’n’s!” he retorted.

“Cattle rustling and murder are still capital crimes, Sir!” Gene retorted.

“Yuh cain’t prove ah had ennythang tuh do wi’h shootin’ ol’ Higgins ‘n rustlin’ them there steers uh his’n er stealin’ them there hosses neither!” he blustered.

“Au contraire, Buddy boy, we have an eye witness who saw you shoot Mr. Jack Higgins in the back and the marked money you got for selling the cattle in Dodge was found in Wilding’s safe. The Federal Marshals’re arresting Wilding even as we speak.”

For once, Bud MacLanahan had nothing to say.

A minute or so later, she and Shorty had deposited Bud in the boot where he would be “safe” until arrival

at The Springs at which time he'd be transferred to the county jail to be held until trial.

The girl was waiting patiently by the stage door. "I'm afraid I did not introduce myself properly. My name is Miss Nancy Rose Burdett, and you are?"

"Oh, I'm Gene Baker. I'm glad to meet you, Miss Burdett. Will you be staying around long?"

Nancy dimpled. "Oh, yes, I'm going to live on Daddy's ranch, the Lazy B," she explained. "I've been East to Finishing School and when Dad wrote me about having the money in Denver and him unable to go there, I did it for him. I was going back to school, but once I got out here, I knew I didn't ever want to leave again!" she explained.

"Hey, that's right next door to my spread, the Upside Down B."

"You own a ranch?" Nancy asked in surprise.

"Yep, got it when my Daddy and Mother were killed in an Apache raid a year or so back."

"Oh, I am so sorry for your loss!" Nancy exclaimed, her hand touching Gene's with quiet sympathy.

Gene staggered as flame raced up her arm and exploded in her brain! Caught off guard, she blushed helplessly. "Thanks," she mumbled, confused.

"Well, you must come calling, since we're neighbors," Nancy invited.

Gene smiled wryly. "Yer Dad and I don't seem to see eye ball to eye ball on most things and we kinda steer clear of one another."

"Yes, he can be a big pain in the girdle at times!" Nancy agreed with a fond smile. "But for all of his faults, I still love him very much."

"Well, enjoy yourself." Gene swung into the saddle.

"You will visit our ranch, won't you, Miss Baker?" Nancy pleaded. "Soon?"

"Proolly," Gene half-promised as she rode away.

‘Damn!’ Gene thought irritably. ‘Why’d she have to be related to that asshole?’

But she knew in her heart of hearts that nothing could keep her from seeing this girl again, and again, and again, and again, for as long as she would allow her!

Gene did not fully realize it yet, but she had fallen in love with another girl!

Miss Eugenia “Gene” Dawn Baker’s life would never be the same again.

Nor would Miss Nancy Rose Burdett’s!

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TWO

A bit about our Eugenia “Gene” Dawn Baker. As noted, she was just twenty-five years old, the owner of the Upside Down B Ranch, an expanse of one hundred twenty thousand acres, more or less, located in the north west Arizona Territory, that supported over ten thousand head of cattle, a small herd of buffalo, several hundred Havasupai-Hopi Indians, some prong-horn antelope, numerous coyotes, several packs of wolves, a dozen or so grizzly bears, thousands of rattlesnakes and horny toads, various mesquite, cacti, tumbleweeds, bramble-brush and many smaller animals and fauna of which she knew nothing and cared even less.

As noted, she had inherited the vast ranch upon the deaths of her parents in an Apache Indian raid in 1877, a sort of last ditch defiance after the Custer Massacre.

Gene was a tall woman, standing six foot one inch tall with one hundred fifty-six pounds of solid muscle voluptuously distributed on her muscular 42-C, 28, 40 frame, a frame of which she was vastly proud and one

that many men had lusted after since she had begun to mature at age twelve.

But, as also noted, our Gene did not care for boys and because of her size and her work-hardened fists, she had successfully evaded any and all attempts to share her personal space without her consent, and yes, I do mean her personal "sexual" space!

To complement her voluptuous figure, Gene had jade green eyes and Irish red hair that she kept in a pony-tail under her Stetson, coupled with a peaches and cream skin from head to toes, she had gone East to college and had returned to the Arizona Territory after her parents were killed

She was referred to as "That Icy Bitch" or "The Ice Queen" by those who envied her, but never to her face! That she was successful as a rancher did not endear her to many of her neighbors who all thought that a woman should be a wife, a mother and a homemaker, and, Heaven forbid, never a ranch ramrod, much less owner of said ranch!

There had been some vicious rumors started when she took up residence at the ranch with seven cowboys who were holdovers from her Dad and who were loyal to a fault, riding for the brand, one and all!

That she had a Mexican couple as housekeepers was overlooked by those who would disparage her because "Mexes" were not to be trusted nor their very existence acknowledged by any "decent" folk! Such was the prejudicial feeling of the time.

Still, the Lopezs were loyal to Gene and Uncle Jimmy, Luis Lopez the ranch cook and Lupe Lopez the housekeeper.

They had been with the ranch since before Gene's birth and she not only loved them, she trusted them as few others. With the death of her parents, the Lopezs had become her de facto parentis loco, Uncle Jimmy notwithstanding!

That her blood uncle, James "Jimmy" Wilkins lived on the ranch did nothing to curb gossip's tongues. It only intensified the evil minds who thought evil of everyone and anyone else except themselves. Such is human nature, always denounce anything you don't understand. Most people don't pay any attention to gossip, but there are many who do.

To her credit, Gene never paid any attention to the gossip about her so called "immoral" life-style and those of her hands who fought for her in several street brawls instigated by some local toughs were never penalized for their loyalty to her.

That she insisted on wearing denim jeans instead of skirts and rode astraddle, eschewing side saddles as beneath contempt, was her personal choice. She didn't care if other women used a side saddle, it just wasn't her way!

But even though her male detractors condemned her for wearing "pants," to a man they all admired the way her bottom stretched and filled the material and wriggled so enticingly when she strode around. She knew how it looked, but she didn't care.

"Let 'em eat cake!" she had snorted on more than one occasion.

Upon her arrival back at the home ranch, she was greeted by Long John Smith, a fortyish man who had been on the ranch since before she was born. "Hey, Boss Gal, whut's this ah heared 'bout you 'n Bud MacLanahan havin' uh run-in?" he demanded.

She stared at him in amazement. "How in blazes did you know about that?"

"Met Shorty on the trail 'n he tole me all 'bout h'it! Gal, yuh gotta watch h'it w'en yer out on the range la'k that there! Yuh coulda been kilt! Then whut would the Ol' Man say 'bout that?"

Gene laughed. "Nothing, unless you tell him!"

The "Ol' Man" he referred to was her Uncle Jimmy, her mother's younger brother, the only survivor of the

raid that had taken the lives of her parents. He was crippled and unable to ride, but that didn't stop him from being useful. He was ranch foreman.

"Wa'l, if'n ah don' tell 'im, wonna t'other hands'll!" he snapped.

"Good grief, he still treats me like a ten year old!" she snapped in disgust.

"Sumbuddy's gotta rein yuh in!" Long John snapped peevishly.

Gene stopped dead and gazed at Long John. "Well, you wanna try?" she invited.

He shook his head. "Not me, Mister! Ah've seen whut youse kin do wi'h them there sledges uh yers!"

"Chicken!" she teased.

"Braawkk! Braawkk!" he clucked.

Laughing, she strode into the ranch house, only to be met by a querulous tone emanating from the office. "That you, Eugenia?" came Uncle Jimmy's voice.

"Yeah, whut's up?" she called back as she went through to the kitchen for a cup of coffee.

"Get in here, dammit!" he bellowed. "Now!"

Carrying her coffee, she sauntered into the office. "Whut's up, Unc?" she asked as she plunked down in a hide chair.

He glared at her. "Up tuh yer ol' tricks, ain't yuh?" he snarled.

"Why, Uncle Jimmy, I have no idea what you're talking about!" she smiled.

"Why fer'd yuh clobber Bud MacLanahan fer?" he demanded querulously.

"He was holding up the stage and I didn't think he should do that, so I stepped in and tore down his meat house. Who told you?" she demanded questioningly.

"Never you mind who tole me! I've tole you time and again to be careful out there on the open range and you tackle three of the worst of the lot all by yerse'f!" he stormed. "If'n ah weren't so danged crippled up,

I'd haul you across my knee for a danged good smack bottom!" he threatened.

She laughed with delight. "Oh, I am so scared!" she teased.

"Oh, it'd be a battle, fer shore, but ah'd still do't!" he alibied.

"Well, stop worrying about me. I can take care of myself. Just ask ol' Bud!"

"Enny kinda luck, they'll hang the varmit this time!"

"Especially when folks find out he hit a woman and tried to rob her."

"He hit yuh?" he asked incredulously.

"No, not me, Miss Nancy Burdett of the Lazy B."

"Oh, that old goat's daughter comed'd home, did she?" he snapped angrily.

"Yes, she surely did. Bud was trying to take her reticule when I stopped him. T'other two took off when they saw Bud get knocked from his horse and Shorty tried to cover them with his shotgun. I had my Colt on Bud and he didn't like it one little bit!

"When we talked, Nancy told me that she had money in her reticule to pay off the mortgage held by Hiram Wilding, the banker. Bud said he didn't shoot Mr. Higgins nor steal his cattle and horses, but Dan's testimony and the marked bills in Wilding's safe will hang both of them," she finished with a satisfied smile.

"Bout time!" he agreed. "Now, let's talk cattle. We gots too danged many four and five year olds and we oughtta get rid of some of them."

"I couldn't agree with you more, Uncle Jimmy!" Gene laughed. "That's why I told Tom Boy and Jim Bob to start chasing them ornery critters outta the scrub pines. They already have a hundred or more bunched near the mesa graze."

"Good start. When they get to a thousand or so, we'll drive 'em to market."

"Dodge?" she asked with a raised brow.

"No, Las Vegas. H'it's closer and there's more demand there than Dodge. Them miners need beef jist as bad's Easterners duz, prolly more."

"Yuh gots a pernt, Unc. But what about the Canyon?"

She was referring to the Grand Canyon, a formidable barrier.

"We'll swing around it to the west ford. Take a few days longer, but it'll be easier on the cattle and the men than going to Dodge," he explained. "'Sides, we'd get a better price there than Dodge."

"Sounds good to me, Uncle Jimmy!" she agreed.

"Then we drive to Vegas?" he asked.

She smiled. "~~We~~ drive to Vegas? You gonna go with us?"

"Who said you wuz going?" he snapped.

"You go, I go. We're a package deal, Uncle Jimmy. You know that!"

"Then ah h'ain't agoin'!" he blustered.

"Who you trying to kid, Uncle Jimmy?" she laughed. "You haven't missed a drive in more years than I've been alive and you're not about to miss this one, even if you do have to ride the chuck wagon with Mr. Lopez!" she pointed out needlessly.

"Ah'd ride uh danged hoss, if'n ah could get aboard!" he groused.

"But you can't, so be glad you can ride a wagon!" she laughed. "'Sides, yer uh better cook'n Cookie ever wuz!" she teased. "So he can stay here."

"Us'n's'd've starved if'n sumbuddy coul'n't!" he retorted.

"Humbly, you leaped into the breach!" she laughed.

"Uppity danged brat!" he snorted.

"Live with it, Uncle Jimmy, I do!" she laughed as she started for the stairs and her bedroom. "I've had a busy day so I think I'll turn in."

"Sleep tight, niece of mine!" he called after her gently.

But sleep was a long time coming for Eugenia "Gene" Dawn Baker as she tossed and turned, her thoughts filled with Miss Nancy Rose Burdett.

Even when sleep did come, it was fitful as she saw Miss Nancy beckoning at her, enticingly, a sly, come hither smile wreathing her red, red, bee-stung lips as her swirling skirt flirted with her calves!

But Gene never got close enough to taste them. . .

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THREE

"Hallo the house!" Gene called.

An elderly man came to the porch. It was the ranch owner, Theodore "Big Ted" Burdett. "Come tuh gi'e me back mah cows, Baker?" he demanded.

"Your cows? I bought them, fair and square and you know it, Teddy Boy. 'Sides, I ain't here 'bout no cows."

"Den whut yuh wan', Baker?" he asked suspiciously.

"I stopped by to visit Miss Nancy," she explained.

"Wa'l, she don' wanna see yuh, so git off'n mah prop'ty!" he snapped angrily.

"Father!" came a questioning voice. "I invited Miss Baker to visit. She's my guest for as long as she stays. I had thought better of you, Sir!" she scolded with a smile.

Gene stared at Nancy with a smile of appreciation. The girl was dressed as a Spanish Senorita and she carried it off well. Her long green velvet, split riding skirt was topped by a white, frilled, long sleeved, high necked blouse that screamed "Female" to one and all. Skirt and blouse flowed together at her extremely corseted waist and Gene had visions of her hands spanning that same waist as she kissed those plump, oh so tempting, blood red lips.

Her reverie was interrupted by, "Visit, then get off mah prop'ty!" Burdett snorted as he turned and walked off, back stiff with righteous anger.

"I am so sorry, Miss Baker," Nancy apologized. "He gets that way from time to time, and I have no idea why."

Gene smiled shyly and took off her Stetson. "Good afternoon, Miss Burdett," she mumbled sheepishly. "I shouldn'a come 'cause he's allus like that with me."

"Forget him. Come in and have some tea with me. I want to hear all about what you've been doing since the hold-up." Nancy smiled widely and held the door open.

Inside, Gene settled into a comfortable leather sofa and accepted the cup of tea Nancy handed her. "Thank you."

Nancy settled into a chair in front of Gene. "Now, tell me what you've been doing since I saw you last."

"Well, we made a drive to Vegas. . ."

"Across the Canyon?" Nancy asked, incredulously.

"Yes, we went west and crossed easily at the west ford. Didn't lose a head on the whole trip neither!" she bragged proudly. "And the sheriff lucked out when he caught Injun Mike and Black Hat hiding in the hay loft of the livery stable in town and when they found out they were gonna hang, they turned on Bud and Wilding, spilling their guts and telling things no one had guessed until they blabbed! I was there when we found them and they were some sore because I had the

drop on them and they knew I'd shoot 'em if'n I had to!" she narrated.

"Good for you!" Nancy enthused. "You're a very brave woman, Miss Baker!" she touched the back of Gene's hand and a bolt of lightning shot up Gene's arm.

She gasped with surprise, but continued doggedly. "And we dredged out that swale on the south forty, cut hay, stacked it, fenced in the sinkhole and like that. We never run out of things to do," she added weakly.

"Same here. We could use a dozen more men to get caught up, but then they'd just sit around and that's not economically feasible!"

Gene stared at Nancy. She had never heard most of those words used locally, or if she had, she didn't remember!

"Have you been bothered with renegade Apache raids?" Nancy asked suddenly.

"No!" Gene was surprised. "Not a thing. Why?"

"Chief Running Deer's on the warpath again. He's angry about the 'round eyes' taking over more Apache land. Wants all of us to get out of the Territory. I'll be so glad when we're finally a State and the Army can step in to control him."

"That'll be years, if ever," Gene replied doubtfully.

"It's inevitable," Nancy insisted.

"So, what's ol' Running Deer done now?" Gene asked.

"Burned down one of our line cabins, rustled a beef or two and wounded Jimmy Joe when he tried to stop them. Shot him with an arrow right through his left calf! We found him in a routine sweep of the north range. He'll be all right, but he's out of action for the time being. Sure hate to lose a good man like that!"

"Good grief!" Gene gasped. "I had no idea ol' Running Deer was that sore!"