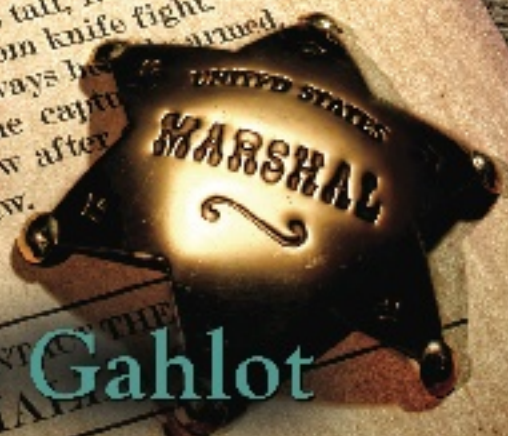


# ALIAS PANDEMONIUM

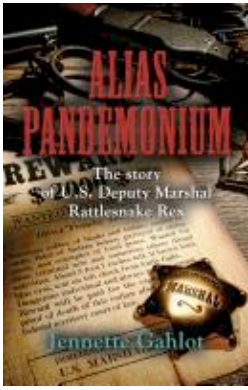
The story  
of U.S. Deputy Marshal  
Rattlesnake Rex

**WANTED**  
Oliver "Frenchy" [illegible]  
Notorious robber of banks and trains, rustler of  
cattle, thief of Indian horses, purveyor of stolen  
goods, and corruptor of local peace. Wanted for  
these criminal acts and numerous others illegal  
activities. About 5 foot 7 inches tall, light brown hair,  
blue eyes, scar on left cheek from knife fight.  
Dangerous individual and always has a gun.  
Reward will be paid for the capture of this outlaw after  
proof of death of this outlaw after  
federal territory court of law.



Jennette Gahlot

IMMEDIATE REPORT TO THE  
U.S. MARSHAL



*Men try to shoot him, women try to seduce him, but he has no greater interest than that of serving justice. As a product of war torn Arkansas, Rex Redfern joins Judge Isaac Parker's deputy marshals in his search for justice. The tables soon turn and Rex finds himself searching for his sister, Katy, who's disappeared. Can he do his job and find Katy before it's too late?*

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# **Alias Pandemonium**

**The Story of U.S Deputy Marshal Rattlesnake Rex**

**Jennette Gahlot**

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ISBN: 978-1-63491-061-3

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Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.

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2015

First Edition

## Chapter 7

The fourth day after their return from the Arbuckle Mountains, Rex was out in the field when he heard a familiar voice call out. “Hey Rattlesnake, dust off yer boots. I got some news for ya.”

It was Flint. He pulled his horse up at the edge of the cornfield where Rex had been tending the rows. Rex walked up to him.

“Whatcha got for me?”

Flint handed him the Fort Smith newspaper.

“You’re one of the biggest headlines this month. Fagan says you helped us get a conviction on that murder case. You’ve been approved as a deputy marshal if you still want the job.”

Rex looked down at the paper. Half way down the front page in bold print the headline read: RATTLESNAKE REX AIDS IN CONVICTION OF BLACK HARRY. The article went on to describe the crime in detail and the exploit Rex and the rest had been on to recover the evidence.

He looked up at Flint. “Who comes up with these headlines anyway?”

“Don’t look at me. I don’t write the paper.” He shrugged then leaned over his horse toward Rex to study him. “You gonna join the deputies? After the official reports were turned in and Fagan read it, he says you got real potential. He wants you to report in first thing in the mornin’ if yer still interested. He’s got another assignment for ya. Only this time ya head it yerself. Already asked me if I wanted to ride along and keep an eye on ya.”

“Am I goin’ after livin’ people this time?”

“Last time we heard they were. Got a whiskey peddler sellin’ to the Indians, some man that’s suspected of bigamy, and a couple other warrants that I don’t member the particulars on.”

“Alright, I’ll be there.”

“Fagan says he recommends you take two more posse men with you. Anybody particular you have in mind?”

Rex searched his memory for a minute. He didn’t know very many people. Since he’d been back home, he’d mostly worked the small farm and hadn’t got out much. “How bout Ted? He still in town or he ride out again?”

“If I’m not mistaken I saw him round town yesterday. I’ll swing by his place on my way back into Fort Smith.”

“I haven’t been around in a while. Got any suggestions for me?”

“There’s a feller that rides with the deputies sometimes if you can catch him when he’s not trappin’ in the mountains. He lives a piece up north. If I start now I can make it to his place by dinner time. But if he’s not there ya might find yerself up a creek.”

“Well, take a crack at it. If he’s not there we’ll see what Fagan says in the mornin’.”

Flint tipped his hat. “See ya in the mornin’ Rex.”

Rex headed for the house. He needed to let Ma know he was leaving again and gather anything he may need for his trip. He wasn’t even sure where he was going yet, he just knew that he may be gone a while.

Rex had just stepped onto the porch, when he heard a wagon approach. He was expecting Katy’s return. She had gone to Mrs. Richards house to drop off some soup. When ma had found out their elderly neighbor was sick, she sent Katy over as soon as she was able to prepare some food. Normally Ma would take it herself, but Katy had begged to go. Rex

suspected ulterior motives and as he looked to the wagon approaching the house, he began to think he knew what it was.

Katy held the reins to Claire, their trusty little mare, firmly in her hands. On the seat next to her sat Sally Mae in a yellow dress. The husband hunter was back. All of a sudden Rex felt an urgency to get out of town. Flint may be his new favorite person for bringing the message from Fagan to get on the trail.

Rex walked into the house through their sitting room. Ma had just retrieved the laundry off the line a few minutes before Flint came by, now she stood in their kitchen starting dinner.

“Hey Ma, do you think you could cook up some biscuits tonight?” She turned to face him in the doorway.

“What’s the matter son? Aren’t you gettin’ enough to eat?” He turned his hat in his hands. The new rattlesnake band and rattle a clear reminder of his last venture. Ma wasn’t real keen on his wonderings. She wanted to see him settled down. Preferably married and near her.

“A feller I rode out with on that last assignment came by a short while ago. I got the job. I gotta report to Fagan first thing in the mornin’. I’m leavin’ out again.” Her face fell slightly. He knew it was no easy task for them to keep the place going with just the two women there.

She seemed to be struggling with her words before she spoke again. “Promise me you’ll be careful and won’t take unnecessary chances. I heard last week on of the marshals was killed out there in the territory.”

“Don’t worry ma. I’ll be careful. Somebody’s gotta keep an eye on you and Katy.” He smiled trying to reassure her.

She blinked her eyes and turned back to working. He could tell she was fighting back tears. In that moment, Katy and Sally Mae made their entrance.

“Ma I’m back,” called Katy from the sitting room. “Mrs. Richards said to tell you thank you for the soup. Sally Mae was

visitin' her too and came home with me." The two girls poked their heads into the kitchen.

"Hi Sally Mae, how's your folks?" Ma asked, probably happy to change the subject from Rex leaving again.

"They're fine Mrs. Redfern. Thanks for askin'." Sally Mae had barely looked at Ma as she answered her. She'd seemed distracted by Rex's presence.

Rex eyed her somewhat skeptically. How conveniently she just happened to show up. She must've found out he was back in town. Too bad for her that he was leaving again tomorrow. He inwardly smiled. Maybe this time he'd be able to stay out of sight long enough for her to set her sights on some other unfortunate man. He decided that it was time to make his exit.

"Will you be staying for supper?" He heard Ma ask Sally Mae as he crossed the living room. He shook his head. Some girls just didn't know when to stop. He had to admit though that she was a very pretty girl. He wasn't sure why she was after him of all people though. From what he knew of her family, they were doing pretty good for themselves. He also knew they were carpet baggers. Maybe that's why she had such a hard time finding a suitor and was coming after him. Nobody had good feeling toward the carpet baggers.

By the time Rex had most the supplies he needed packed and ready to go, he had managed to avoid the house the entire time. When he opened the kitchen door, the wonderful aroma of Ma's cooking greeted him. His stomach rumbled in anticipation. He saw the biscuits that Ma had made for him. All three women had vacated the kitchen, so he snatched one on his way through. He found them sitting in the next room.

"Thanks Ma. I'll have a hard time keepin' these biscuits to myself." He took another bite.



Ma had a mischievous look on her face. "Actually, Sally Mae made them. You can thank her." Rex nearly choked on the bite he was swallowing. Maybe she wasn't such a spoiled man chaser after all. Sally Mae actually blushed slightly as she was singled out. There could be more to her than Rex realized.

By the time dinner ended, Rex had warmed to Sally Mae's easy smile and her quirky comments. The sun had nearly set. The shadows were long and the crickets and other night creatures had started their night songs. The conversation around the table had lulled.

"Thank you for the delicious meal Mrs. Redfern," Sally Mae said, "but I really need to be getting home."

"You're welcome dear, and thank you for helpin' cook. I don't think I could've got everythin' done tonight without your help." Sally Mae lowered her eyes looking somewhat embarrassed.

"I'd be obliged to take you home. That is if you don't mind?" Rex offered. He wasn't sure why he'd offered to take her home. He knew it was a mistake as soon as he saw Katy and Ma exchange a quick glance. He was falling right into their trap they were carefully laying for him.

"I'd appreciate that Rex."

"Let me hook up the wagon." With that he exited the house and went to the barn. He kept telling himself he was just being polite after she had cooked the biscuits for him. She did have a talent for cooking. Maybe he should make Katy take her home. He still had work to do.

Silence had descended on the night except for the cllop of Claire's hooves on the solid ground and the creaks and groans of the wagon. Sally Mae sat quietly by his side. Her home was only a few miles down the road. He couldn't decide if he should make polite conversation or keep his mouth shut.

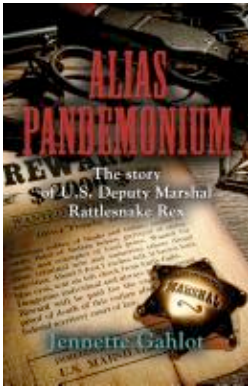
“Will your trip be dangerous?” Sally Mae asked, breaking the silence.

“Any time you go into the Territory it’s dangerous and anytime you try to serve a warrant to arrest somebody, it can be dangerous.” Rex shrugged dismissing the danger as a fact of the job, glad for a safe subject. He was starting to think his job was safer for him than next to this beautiful woman. It’d been a long time since he’d had such beauty so close, at least one that was so easy to converse with. A flash of the book lady’s image crossed his mind. He mentally shook it out.

“Forgive me if this is out of line, but have you thought about how this affects your Ma and Katy? They’re both terribly afraid for you.”

It was a good thing it was dark and Sally Mae couldn’t see the dagger look Rex was giving her. She had no idea how much he struggled with that thought. However, his sense of justice and protecting others was stronger. He had to protect others, like Ma and Katy, who had no one to watch over them.

“Have you thought about those innocents that are hurt that I’m riskin’ my life for? Ma and Katy are protected here. They have good neighbors, even if some of them are carpetbaggers, they have each other. Some of those people have nobody to protect them. Don’t they deserve the same justice and security as you, Ma, and Katy,” Rex asked her. The vehemence of his words soaked in like poison. She kept silent. He let out his breath. Some people had no thought past themselves and their immediate surroundings. He didn’t expect her to understand. She lived such a sheltered life.



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