

GUITAR COWBOY

By

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1

He was only thirteen
when his house was destroyed,
Ben lost both his parents
which left a big void.

The Indians attacking
were howling and hooting,
As the boy and his dog
saw them all looting.

Ben ran to a hideout
his father had planned,
Then watched the wild Indians
torch most of their land.

The ranch had been home
since the day he was born,
But his house was now lost
And how he would mourn.

His dog and a horse
were also alive,
So chances were good
they all would survive.

He sat in the saddle
with the dog at his side,
And headed straight west
with a star as his guide.

Riding day and all night
he saw cattle galore,
That roamed the wide range
which he soon would explore.

As young as he was
he knew how to ride,
And could lasso a calf
from his horse in one stride.

A ranch could be seen
that looked calm without strife,
Could this be the home
where he'd find a new life?

2

Ben pushed through the cattle
as he heard someone yell,
But whoever it was
he just couldn't tell.

The ranch boss appeared
riding in from the rear,
With a face that was weathered
and without any fear.

The boy he saw mounted
looked thin as a rail,
He was gaunt with big eyes
with a face that was pale.

"I'm looking for work,"
said the youngster with zeal,
"I need a job now
so let's make a deal."

“Do you have the right stuff?”
the boy was then asked,
“You have to be tough
and one that will last.”

“I shoot and I ride,”
he answered right back,
“And do a man’s work
so give me a crack.”

The foreman decided
The boy was all right,
He thought he had grit
And would stand up and fight.

The cowboys liked Ben
who they treated like kin,
And Calico his dog
who was always with him.

3

Ben Haggard made friends
with an old hand named Zan,
Who showed him to strum
his guitar that was grand.

The guitar was called "Nellie"
which was known as a "she,"
It was curved like a woman
and not like a "he."

And right from the start
Ben loved to play Nellie,
He'd sit on the bed
as it lay on his belly.

As Calico looked on
not making a peep,
Ben played a sweet song
that put him to sleep.

Ben's mother had taught him
to read and to write,
And Zan could do neither
though he was quite bright.

Zan asked his young friend
if he'd teach him to read,
He'd give Ben old Nellie
to which they agreed.

Zan got his first lesson
from the boy as his teacher,
The alphabet first
and soon could write preacher.

While working together
they had lots of fun,
Old Zan treated Ben
like he was his own son.

Their respect for each other
was something that grew,
And was noticed by all
as a bond that was true.

With Nellie in hand
Ben played an old song,
A favorite of cowboys
who sang right along.

4

A cowhand named Luke
was a man filled with greed,
Who was really an outlaw
a bad guy indeed.

The foreman caught Luke
as he rustled their cattle,
And told him to leave
or they'd soon have a battle.

When he went to the bunkhouse
to pack up his gear,
He stole Ben's guitar
and then snuck out the rear.

He saddled his horse
like a thief in the night,
With Nellie in tow,
he took off in flight.

With the item he'd stolen
the robber rode by,
But a guard saw him clearly
in the bright moonlit sky.

"Luke's taken old Nellie"
yelled the guard in the night,
"Let's get on our horses
the outlaw's in flight!"

Luke fired his gun
that stampeded the cattle,
The men ran out fast
and were soon in the saddle.

The cowboys were riding
with Zan at the front,
Then tragedy struck
when he took the full brunt.

When the cattle were stopped
there was Zan on the ground,
With hardly a breath
who uttered no sound.

With Ben on his knees
to comfort his friend,
You could see it was hopeless
for old Zan to mend.

“Get Nellie for me,”
whispered Zan to young Ben,
As he gasped one last breath
and his life seemed to end.

5

With Calico at hand
and rage in his eyes,
Ben got on his horse
as his tears turned to cries.

Ben swiftly rode off
with his dog on the run,
He 'd follow the trail
with his lasso and gun.

His father had taught him
to track like a pro,
From horses to deer
Ben surely did know.

It was hot the next day
as he continued his search,
Through colorful canyons
filled solid with birch.

As day turned to night
he found tracks that were clear,
Leading straight to his man
that he knew was quite near.

As Luke stoked the fire
because it was cold,
He looked at old Nellie
that was better than gold.

He thought he was free
from the ranch and its men,
So he let his guard down
and could end in the “pen.”

But just out of sight
from Luke who was eating,
Ben crept on his stomach
and soon they’d be meeting.

A lasso was thrown
over Luke from the dark,
He was bound by the rope
which had found its true mark.

“I’m taking you back”
said Ben to his captive,
“The hangman is waiting
and soon will be active.”

“My gun is on you
and I’m a sure shot,
If you try to ride off
they’ll be choosing your plot.”

With Luke on his horse
and his hands bound behind,
The law would be waiting
and would not be kind.

But Ben had a distance
to go with the villain,
He’d have to be careful
or there might be a killin’.

Old Nellie was strapped
to his horse with great care,
There were a few scratches
but its shape was still fair.

6

The next day was warmer
with Ben’s eyes half shut,
But Luke was well guarded
by Calico the mutt.

They rode through the night
and were on their way home,
The horse made its way
on a path that was known.

The men at the ranch
were just being fed,
When they heard pleasing sounds
as the sun turned bright red.

It could only be Ben
with a pure voice like that,
He's brought in a man
they hoped was that rat.

The dog and the horse
came prancing right by,
With the bandit tied up
who wished he could fly.

And there was their hero
you could see was aglow,
Singing songs with old Nellie
going high and then low.

It was just like old times
with the boy and guitar,
Who proved he was worthy
to wear a sheriff's star.

As he jumped off his horse
right on to his feet,
He was heading inside
for something to eat.

There was a surprise
that the cowboys all knew,
For this boy that was brave
whose reward was soon due.

Ben noticed the men
were acting quite strange,
In a much different way
than they did on the range.

He was blinded by fright
when he entered the room,
Chills shot up his spine
had he entered a tomb?

“It must be a ghost?”
as his eyes opened wide,
“It just cannot be,
I thought he had died!”

It was Zan on a bench
all bandaged up tight,
With his arm in a sling
he was sitting upright.

Ben howled in delight
and jumped a mile high,
As he hugged his old friend
and yelled YIPPIDEE YI!