

Black Bart



Black Bart, the meanest desperado west of Deadman's Gulch, peered out from the entrance to his hideout at the Old Diablo Mine. He thought he'd heard a sound, like the approach o' horses. But as he scanned the horizon, he couldn't spot nuthin' out of the ordinary. Just desert scrub as far as the eye could see. Bart lowered his shotgun and scratched his whiskers pensively. He was gettin' mighty jumpy of late. Maybe the stress from all them bank robberies was finally beginnin' to take its toll! But then he glanced down at the umpteen bags o' loot at his feet. Nah! No pain, no gain!, he chuckled to himself, and turned away. Up on the ridge, the Lone Ranger and Tonto had stood stock still after crossing Cripple Creek. They realized at once they'd ridden their horses too far – right into view of the Mine! But fortunately, Lone Ranger was wearing his cactus hat, and the lifelike camouflage had concealed them. Up till then, the hat had been the butt of many jokes from Tonto. Whenever Lone Ranger greeted the ladies, he liked to tip his hat, and he always wound up with a handful of spines. But now, Tonto would think twice before ridiculing his partner's headgear. Just then, a swarm of hornets buzzed by. Lone Ranger instinctively swatted at them. He missed ... but he didn't miss his hat. "Yeow!" he howled. Well, Black Bart was sure he heard somethin' *this* time. He looked over by the creek and noticed a wobbling saguaro where there hadn't been a cactus before. Bart drew a bead on it and fired. "Yeow!" repeated Lone Ranger, as the buckshot strafed his right side. "Let's get outta here, Tonto!" he shouted, but his Indian sidekick was already galloping away. "Hi-ho, *Silver!*" urged Lone Ranger. As the stallion kicked into high gear, the masked man automatically grabbed hold of his hat so it wouldn't fall off. "*Yeow!*" he hollered yet again.