



The Devil's Own A Romance of the Black Hawk War

By Randall Parrish Author of 'Contraband,' 'She of the Irish Brigade,' 'When Wilderness was King,' etc. Illustrated by Lewis Myers

"Indians, you say! Here?" Her eyes



"Indians, You Say! Here?" Her Eyes Widening in Horror.

widening in horror. "When do you suppose this happened? How long ago?"

"Within twelve hours certainly; probably soon after dawn." I caught the rein of her horse, and Elsie, who was now wide awake, and trembling with fear, pressed forward, close to my side, moaning and casting her frightened glances backward.

"I reckon maybe this yere is as good as any place fer ter stop," he said rather doubtfully. "It'll be mighty dark in an hour, an' then we kin go on; only my hoss is about did up. What ye say, Cap?"

"We are probably as safe here as anywhere in the neighborhood. Is that all you have to report, Tim?"

"Only that them Injuns went south. I done run onto their trail after yer left—it was plain as the nose on yer face. Thar must'r bin a slew o' 'em, an' sum a horseback; they was a strikin' straight across yonder, an' I reckon they fetched a prisoner 'long, sumbody wearin' boots enyhow, fer I saw the tracks in the mud." He hesitated, as though something was on his mind, glancing toward the girls, and lowering his voice.

"I do not recall feeling any special fear. In the first place I was convinced that we must already be at the extreme limit of Black Hawk's radius, and that, traveling as we were eastward, must before morning be well beyond any possible danger of falling into the hands of his warriors. The other pursuers I had practically dismissed from thought. Shortly after midnight my horse strained a tendon, and could no longer uphold my weight. On foot, with the poor beast limping painfully behind me, I pressed on beside Elsie, both of us silent, too utterly worried with the strain for any attempt at speech.

The rising sun topped the summit of the bluff, its red rays seeming to bridge with spans of gossamer the little valley up which we toiled. I had lost my interest, and was walking doggedly on, with eyes bent upon the ground, when the girl beside me cried out suddenly, a new excitement in her voice.

"Oh, there is a cabin! See! Over yonder; just beyond that big oak, where the bluff turns." Her eager face was aglow, her outstretched hand pointing eagerly.

The logs of which the little building had been constructed, still in their native bark, blended so perfectly with the drab hillside beyond, that for the moment none of us caught the distant outlines. Tim possessed the keenest sight, and his voice was first to speak.

"Sure, miss, thar's a cabin, all right," he said grimly. "One room, an' new built; likely 'nough sum settler just con' in yere. I don't see no movement, ner smoke."

"Fled to the nearest fort probably," I replied, able myself by this time to decipher the spot. "Be too risky to stay out here alone. We'll look it over; there might be food left behind, even if the people have gone."

"We must have been half an hour in covering the distance. The cabin stood well up above the stream, within the shade of the great oak, and we were confirmed, long before we reached it, in our former judgment that it was uninhabited. No sign of life was visible about the place; it had the appearance of desertion, no smoke even curling from out the chimney. A faint trail, evidently little used, led down toward the creek, and we followed this as it wound around the base of the big tree. Then it was that the truth dawned suddenly upon us—there to

our right lay a dead mule, harnessed for work, but with throat cut; while directly in front of the cabin door was a dog, an ugly, massive brute, his mouth open, prone on his back, with stiffened legs pointing to the sky. I dropped my rein, and strode forward.

"Wait where you are," I called back. "There have been savages here; let me see first what has happened inside." The dog had been shot, stricken by two bullets, and I was obliged to drag his huge body to one side before I could press my way in through the door. The open doorway and window afforded ample light, and a single glance was sufficient to reveal most of the story. The table had been smashed as by the blow of an ax, and pewter dishes were everywhere. The bed in one corner had been stripped of its coverlets, many of them slashed by a knife, and the straw tick had been ripped open in a dozen places. Coals from the fireplace lay widespread, some of them having eaten deeply into the hard wood before they ceased smoldering.

I saw all this, yet my eyes rested upon something else. A man lay, bent double across an overturned bench, in a posture which hid his face from view. His body was there alone, although a child's shoe lay on the floor, and a woman's linsey dress dangled from a hook against the wall. I crept forward, my heart pounding madly, until I could gain sight of his face. He was a big fellow, not more than thirty, with sandy hair and beard, and a pugacious jaw, his coarse hickory shirt slashed into ribbons, a bullet wound in the center of his forehead, and one arm broken by a vicious blow. His calloused hands yet gripped the haft of an ax, just as he had died—fighting.

Tim's voice spoke from the doorway. "Injuns, I reckon?" "Yes, they have been here; the man is dead. But there must have been others, a woman and child also—see that shoe on the floor, and the dress hanging over there. The poor devil fought hard."

Kennedy stepped inside, staring about him. "Do you think it best to stop here?" "Why not? 'Tain't likely them devils will be back agin. Thar sure must be somethin' fer us ter eat in the place, an' the Lord kno's we can't go on as we are. Them gurls be mighty nigh ready ter drop, an' two o' the hosses has plum giv' out. I'm fer settin' down fer a few hours enyhow—say till it gits middling dark."

Undoubtedly this was the sensible view. We would be in far less danger remaining there under cover than in any attempt to continue our journey by daylight. Together we carried the body out, and deposited it in a thicket behind the cabin, awaiting burial; and then dragged the dead dog also out of sight. The disorder within was easily remedied, and, after this had been attended to, the girls were permitted to enter. Elsie snuck back on the bench, her head supported against the wall, the flashes of her half-closed eyes showing dark against the whiteness of her cheeks. She looked so pitifully tired, the very heart choked in my throat.

The rest of us found a small stock of provisions, and Elsie, with Tim to aid her, built a fire and prepared breakfast. A half-filled bottle of whisky discovered in the cupboard, helped to revive all of us slightly, and gave Asa sufficient courage to seek outside for a spring. Tim, comparatively unwearyed himself, and restless, located a trapdoor in the floor, rather ingeniously concealed, which disclosed the existence of a small cellar below.

Candle in hand he explored this, returning with two guns, together with a quantity of powder and ball, and information that there remained a half keg of the explosive hidden below.

"Must a bin almin' ter blow up sumps, I reckon," he commented, exhibiting a sample. "Coarset I ever saw; cudn't hardly use that in no gun, but it's powder alright."

To remove the debris out of our way, I was gathering up the straw tick and slit blankets, and piled them all together back on the bed. Clinging to one of the blankets, caught and held by its pin, was a peculiar emblem, and I stood for a moment with it in my hand, curiously examining the odd design. Elsie unclosed her eyes, and started to her feet.

"What is that you have?" she asked. "A pin of some kind—a rather strange design; I just found it here, entangled in this blanket."

"Why," she exclaimed in surprise, "I have seen one exactly like it before—Kirby wore it in his tie."

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MARINE WILL NEVER FORGET MULE'S KICK

Sustains Operation as Result, and Scar Bears Legend, "Opened by Mistake."

(By United Press to The Bend Bulletin) HOUSTON, Tex., Feb. 21.—A kick from a mule is guaranteed to make just about as much impression on the memory as it does on the anatomy. Yet Clyde D. Jarvis has made sure that he will not forget the kick he received from a Missouri beast of burden for the rest of his natural life.

Jarvis applied for enlistment in the Marine corps here today and was accepted. He exhibited a scar about six inches long on the left side of his abdomen, and explained it was the result of an operation he had undergone, some six months before, for a supposed ruptured spleen, following the kick from the mule.

The operating surgeon had made the wrong diagnosis, however, and found that Jarvis' spleen was O. K. Tattooed above the scar in large letters were the words, "Opened by mistake."

SUPERVISION CRITICISED

Amplifying her statement in criticism of the supervision at the Reid school, made at the Wednesday night meeting of the directors of the Bend district, Mrs. E.M. Thompson, member of the board, declares that the

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He nodded, his eyes dull, his lips moving, as though it was an effort to talk. Quite evidently whatever little intellect he had ever possessed, now