



The Devil's Own
A Romance of the Black Hawk War
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When Wilderness was King, etc.
Illustrated by **Levin 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 gud 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?"

"He lifted his hat, and scratched gently his thin hair."

"Only them Injuns went south. I done run onto their trail after yer left—it was plain as the nose on yer face. That must'r bin a slew o' 'em, an' sum a hossback; they was a strikin' straight across yonder, an' I reckon they fetched a prisoner 'long, sumpbody 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 ain't so very dern tired, an' reckon I'll scout 'round a bit. Them red devils might'r overlooked a rifle or two back thar in the timber, an' I'd sure like ter git my fingers on one."

I nodded indifferently, too completely exhausted myself to care what he did, and then dull-eyed watched him disappear through the trees. No one spoke, even Elsie failing to question me, as I approached where she and Elsie had flung themselves on the short grass, although her heavy eyes followed my movement, and she made an effort to smile.

"One can easily see by your face how tired you are," I said, compassionately, looking down at her. "I ain going to sleep for an hour or two, and you had both better do the same. Tim is going to keep guard."

She smiled wearily at me, her head sinking back. I did not move or speak again; indeed I had lost consciousness almost before I touched the ground.

I could not have slept long, for there was a glow of light still visible in the western sky, when a strong grip on my arm aroused me, causing me instantly to sit up. Tim stood there, a battered, old, long rifle in his hand, and beside him a boy of eighteen, without a hat, tousled headed, with an ugly red wound showing on one cheek.

"Mighty sorry fer ter wake ye, Cap," the deputy grinned. "This yere young chap is one o' them sappers; an' it strikes me, he's got a d— queer tale ter tell."

I glanced backward across my shoulder toward the others. Both girls were sleeping soundly, while beyond them, down the slope, the three horses were quietly cropping away at the herbage. I managed to rise.

"Let's move back to the spring, where we will not wake them up," I suggested. "Now we can talk."

My eyes sought the face of the lad questioningly. He was a loose-lipped, awkward lout, trembling still from a fright he could not conceal.

"You belonged to that squad killed out yonder?"

"Yes, seh; I reckon Iae the only one what ain't ded," he stammered, so tongue-tied I could scarcely make out his words. "I was gone after wakter, an' when them Injuns begun fer ter yell, I never dun nuthin' but just run, an' hid in the bush."

"I understand. What is your name?"

"Asa Hall."

refused to respond. Kennedy broke in impatiently.

"It takes thet boy 'bout an hour fer ter tell enything, Cap," he explained gruffly. "I reckon he's skeered half ter death in the first place, an' then thar's sumthin' wrong with him enyhow. Howsmever, it's what he seed an' heard, Cap, thet sounds mighty queer ter me. He sez thar was more'n fifty bucks in the party, an' that ol' Black Hawk was thar hisself, a leadin' 'em—he done saw him."

I turned, surprised at this statement, to stare into the boy's face. He half grinned back at me, vacantly.

"Black Hawk! He could scarcely be down here; what did he look like?"

"'Bout six feet high, I reckon, with a big hooked nose, an' the blackest pair o' mean eyes ever ye saw. I reckon he didn't hav' no eyebrows, an' he wore a bunch o' eagle feathers, an' a red blanket. Gosh, mister, but the devil cuden't look no worse'n he did."

"Was thet him, Cap?" burst in Tim, anxiously.

"It's not a bad description," I admitted, yet not convinced. "I can't believe he would be here with a raiding party. If he was, there must be some important object in view. Is that all?"

"No, 'tain't; the boy swears thar was a white man 'long with 'em, a feller with a short mustache, an' dressed in store clothes. He wan't no prisoner nuther, but hed a gun, an' talked ter Black Hawk, most like he was a chief hisself. After thet killin' was all over, he was the one what got 'em ter go off thar to the south, the whole kit an' kaboodle."

"I don't doubt that. There have always been white renegades among the Sacs and plenty of half-breeds. If Black Hawk, and this other fellow are leading this band, they are after big game somewhere, and we had better keep out of their way. I favor saddle up immediately, and traveling all night."

"So do I," and Tim flung a half-filled bag from his shoulder to the ground. "But I vote we eat first. Tain't much, only a few scraps I found out thar; but it's a way better then nuthin'. Here you, Hall, give me a hand, an' then we'll go out, an' round up them hosses."

If the party of raiding Indians, whose foul deed we had discovered, had departed in a southerly direction, as their trail would plainly seem to indicate, then our safest course would seemingly be directed eastward up the valley. This would give us the protection of the bluffs, and take us more and more out of the territory they would be likely to cover. Within twenty minutes we were in saddle, descending the steep hillside through the darkness. Tim walking ahead with the lad, his horse trailing behind, and the long rifle across his shoulder.

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 wearied 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, thet's a cabin, all right," he said grimly. "One room, an' new built; likely 'nough sum settler just com' 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 pugnacious 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 girls 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 sank back on the bench, her head supported against the wall, the lashes 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 unwaried 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 aimin' ter blow up sumps, I reckon," he commented, exhibiting a sample. "Coarsest I ever saw; cuden'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."

(To Be Continued.)

SPECIAL RINGS ON FIRE HOUSE PHONE

To avoid confusion at the firehouse, those sending in phone calls for any other reason than to give notification of a fire, are requested to ask the operator to give two rings on "black 401." The ordinary ring is taken by members of the force on duty in the firehouse as indicating a blaze in some part of the city.

Brand Directory

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INCUBATORS IN USE SOON

EXPERTS TELL WHEN TO BUY

Poultrymen Urged to Investigate Before Investing in Hatching and Brooding Equipment — Cheap Outlay Costly Investment.

When only a small number of hens are kept it is doubtful whether an incubator is a profitable investment, but if two or three small poultry flock owners living near each other buy and use one cooperatively, it doubtless would be. Especially is this true if the hens kept are of a non-sitting bred like the White Leghorn. Even hens that come from a type supposed to be good sitters, may prove notional about it some years.

It often pays with hens that brood late to use a machine for incubation and then turn the chicks over to a broody hen. Hens that have been broody for four or five days are usually willing to mother incubator chicks especially if two or three eggs are placed under her and allowed to hatch there, and the poultryman is spared the trouble of owning or operating a brooder.

Kinds of Machines.
There are many different types of incubators on the market, but they may all be roughly classified as: Hot-air, hot-water, or large machines. Both "moisture" (those providing means of adding moisture to the air of the machine) and "non-moisture" incubators (those which it is claimed require no added moisture) are made in the different styles of hot-air and hot-water machines. Most of the small machines are heated by burning kerosene oil or gas, while the majority of the very large machines use a coal stove for supplying heat. Electricity is also used for heating both in the small and very large machines.

Both the hot-air and the hot-water type of incubator have been used successfully throughout the country. Cheap machines are less reliable, require more attention, and wear out much quicker than higher priced incubators. As the value of the machines is small compared with the value of the eggs used during the normal life of an incubator, it is poor economy to purchase a machine which is not reliable. Whenever possible it is well to select an incubator which is giving good satisfaction in your neighborhood, so that you may have the benefit of the experience of the other operators in your section.

How Large Shall it be?
Circumstances must govern to a large extent the size of a machine to buy. It takes about as much time to care for a 60 as it does a 360 egg machine, so that it is advisable to get one of at least 150 egg capacity, although special conditions often exist which make the small machine valuable. A small machine is often used in connection with a larger one, placing all the eggs in the large machine after the first or second test.

Many poultrymen believe that it pays to have an incubator capacity large enough to hatch the bulk of their stock in two or three batches, so that much time is saved in tending to the incubators and breeders, while the chickens are more even in size than those that are hatched when the incubating period extends over a longer time.

A fair estimate of incubator capacity for a poultry farm is an incubator space of one egg per hen, provided that about one-half of the flock is to be renewed yearly and no outside hatching is carried on. That is, if the flock numbers 200 a 200-egg incubator is about the right size. The large machines cost less in proportion to their capacity than the smaller ones.

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