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tween his until pain came into her fingers. "Listen, Linda," he commanded. She looked straight up at him. "Are you sorry I came?" "More than I can tell you—for your sake!"

"But when people look for the truth in this world, Linda, they don't take any one's sake into consideration. They balance all things and give them their true worth. Would you rather that you and I had never met—that I had never received Elmira's message—that you should live your life up here without ever hearing of me?"

She dropped her eyes. "It isn't fair to ask me that—" "Tell me the truth. Hasn't it been worth while? Even if we lose and die before this night is done, hasn't it all been worth while? Are you sorry you have seen me change? Isn't the change for the better—a man grown instead of a boy? One who looks straight and sees clear?"

He studied her face; and after a while he found his answer. It was not in the form of words at first. As a man might watch a miracle he watched a new light come into her dark eyes. All the gloom and sorrow of the wilderness without could not affect its quality. It was a light of joy, of exultation, of new-found strength.

"You hadn't ought to ask me that, Bruce," she said with a rather strained distinctness. "It has been like being born again. There aren't any words to tell you what it has meant to me. And don't think I haven't seen the change in you, too—the birth of a new strength that every day is greater, higher—until it is—almost more than I can understand. The old smiles are gone, but something else has taken

their place—something much more dear to me—but what it is I can hardly tell you. Maybe it's something that the pines have."

But he hadn't wholly forgotten how to smile. His face lighted as remembrance came to him. "They are a different kind of smiles—that's all," he explained. "Perhaps there will be many of them in the days to come. Linda, I have no regrets. I've played the game. Whether it was Destiny that brought me here, or only chance, or perhaps—if we take just life and death into consideration—just misfortune, whatever it is I feel no resentment toward it. It has been the worthwhile adventure. It seems to me that I can understand the whole world better than I used to. Maybe I can begin to see a big purpose and theme running through it all—but it's not yet clear enough to put into words. Certain things in this world are essentials, certain other ones are froth. And I see which things belong to one class and which to another so much more clearly than I did before. One of the things that matters is throwing one's whole life into whatever task he has set out to do—whether he fails or succeeds doesn't seem greatly to matter. The main thing, it appears to me, is that he has tried. To stand strong and kind of calm, and not be afraid—if I can always do it, Linda, it is all I ask for myself. Not to flinch now. Not to give up as long as I have the strength for another step. And to have you with me—all the way."

"Then you and I—take fresh heart?" "We've never lost heart, Linda." "Not to give up, but only be glad we've tried?" "Yes. And keep on trying." "With no regrets?" "None—and maybe to borrow a little strength from the pines!"

This was their new pact. To stand firm and strong and unflinching, and never to yield as long as an ounce of strength remained. As if to seal it, her arms crept about his neck and her soft lips pressed his.

CHAPTER XXV

Toward the end of the afternoon Linda saddled and rode down the trail toward Martin's store. She had considerable business to attend to. Among other things, she was going to buy thirty-three cartridges—all that Martin had in stock. She had some hope of securing an extra gun or two with shells to match. The additional space in her pack was to be filled with provisions.

For she was faced with the unpleasant fact that her larder was nearly empty. The jerked venison was almost gone; only a little flour and a few canned things remained. She had space for only small supplies on the horse's back, and there would be no luxuries among them. Their fare had been plain up to this time; but from now on it was to consist of only such things as were absolutely necessary to sustain life.

She rode unarmed. Without informing him of the fact, the rifle had been left for Bruce. She did not expect for herself a rifle shot from ambush—for the simple reason that Simon had bidden otherwise—and Bruce might be attacked at any moment.

She was dreaming dreams, that day.

The talk with Bruce had given her



She Was Dreaming Dreams.

fresh heart, and as she rode down the sunlit trail the future opened up entrancing vistas to her. Perhaps they yet could conquer, and that would mean re-establishment on the far-flung lands of her father. Matthew Folger had possessed a fertile farm also, and its green pastures might still be utilized. It suddenly occurred to her that it would be of interest to turn off the main trail, take a little dim path up the ridge that she had discovered years before, and look over these lands. The hour was early; besides, Bruce would find her report of the greatest interest.

She jogged slowly along in the western fashion—which means something quite different from army fashion or sportsman fashion. Western riders do not post. Riding is not exercise to them; it is rest. They hang limp in the saddle, and all jar is taken up, as if by a spring, somewhere in the region of the floating ribs that only a physician can correctly designate. They never sit firm, these western riders, and as a rule their riding is not a particularly graceful thing to watch. But they do not care greatly about grace as long as they may encompass their fifty miles a day and still be fresh enough for a country dance at night. There are many other differences in western and eastern riding, one of them being the way in which the horse is mounted. Another difference is the riding habit. Linda had no trim riding trousers, with tall, glossy boots, red coat and stock. It was rather doubtful whether she knew such things existed. She did, however, wear a trim riding skirt of khaki and a middle blouse washed spotlessly clean by her own hands; and no one would have missed the other things. It is an indisputable fact that she made a rather alluring picture—eyes bright and hair dark and strong arms bare to the elbow—as she came riding down the pine-needle trail.

She came to the opening of the dimmer trail and turned down it. She entered a still glen, and the color in her cheeks and the soft brown of her arms bled well with the new tints of the autumn leaves. Then she turned up a long ridge.

The trail led through an old burn—a bleak, eerie place where the fire had swept down the forest, leaving only strange, black palings here and there—and she stopped in the middle of it to look down. The mountain world was laid out below her as clearly as in a relief map. Her eyes lighted as its beauty and its fearlessness went home to her, and her keen eyes slowly swept over the surrounding hill tops. Then for a long moment she sat very still in the saddle.

A thousand feet distant, on the same ridge on which she rode, she caught sight of another horse. It held her gaze, and in an instant she discerned the rather startling fact that it was saddled, bridled, and apparently tied to a tree. Momentarily she thought that its rider was probably one of the Turners who was at present at work on the old Folger farm; yet she knew at once the tilted lands were still too far distant for that. She studied closely the maze of light and shadow of the underbrush and in a moment more distinguished the figure of the horseman.

It was one of the Turners—but he was not working in the fields. He was standing near the animal's head, back to her, and his rifle lay in his arms. And then Linda understood.

He was simply guarding the trail down to Martin's store. Except for the fact that she had turned off the main trail by no possibility could she have seen him and escaped whatever fate he had for her.

She held hard on her faculties and

tried to puzzle it out. She understood now why the Turners had not as yet made an attack upon them at their home. It wasn't the Turner way to wage open warfare. They were the wolves that struck from ambush, the rattlesnakes that lunged with poisoned fangs from beneath the rocks. There was some security for her in the Folger home, but none whatever here. There she had a strong man to fight for her, a loaded rifle, and under ordinary conditions the Turners could not hope to batter down the oaken door and overwhelm them without at least some loss of life. For all they knew, Bruce had a large stock of rifles and ammunition—and the Turners did not look forward with pleasure to casualties in their ranks. The much simpler way was to watch the trail.

They had known that sooner or later one of them would attempt to ride down after either supplies or aid. Linda was a mountain girl and she knew the mountain methods of procedure; and she knew quite well what she would have had to expect if she had not discovered the ambush in time. She didn't think that the sentry would actually fire on her; he would merely shoot the horse from beneath her. It would be a simple feat by the least of the Turners—for these gaunt men were marksmen, if nothing else. It wouldn't be in accord with Simon's plan or desire to leave her body lying still on the trail. But the horse killed, flight would be impossible, and what would transpire thereafter she did not dare to think. She had not forgotten Simon's threat in regard to any attempt to go down into the settlements. She knew that it still held good.

Of course, if Bruce made the excursion, the sentry's target would be

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Jots and Tittles

(Continued from page 1)

Erceel Suced came home for the week end and to take in the party Saturday night.

Edith and Louise Robnett, Lila Dudley, Frost and Worth Bass, Enoch Cunningham, Wayne Robertson and John Standish attended the high school play at Tangent Friday night. They declared it a fine entertainment. It will be given at Rialto hall tonight.

Dr. Marks and wife visited Portland the latter part of the week, returning Saturday.

Linn county has 88 students at O. A. C.

There is a good prospect that the county will finance a county agricultural agent the coming year.

Linn county voted against authorizing the payment of outstanding overdraft warrants, but the rest of the state made payment possible.

The Albany Herald understands that there isn't going to be any "state house crowd" under the new administration.

A. L. Gardner and wife, William Kirk and family and Jo n Miller were at the county seat Friday.

Mrs. Charlotte Gaunt of Harrisburg, aged, 90, was buried Thursday.

Because the Pacific highway and the market road make it unnecessary the "elbow" road at the H. B. Sprenger place, near Shedd, has been vacated by the county court.

The Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor of the Christian church is preparing to give a play at Rialto hall Saturday, Dec 9.

John Carmichael, a former resident of Halsey, passed away Nov 9, 1922, at the home of his son, C. V. Carmichael of Monitor. One Mr. Carmichael had reached his seventy-fourth milestone and although he had been in poor health for a number of years he passed off quite peacefully. The funeral services were conducted at the home of C. V. Carmichael, with interment in the Woodburn cemetery. He is survived by his widow, and one son, V. Carmichael, and two daughters, Mrs. Mattie Gustin of Coquille and Nellie C. Waitlach of Weiser, Idaho, all of whom were present.

"Mike" McKern returned from Hood River Sunday evening.

Meedames Laura and Beesie Brannell went to Portland Saturday and were gone a couple of days.

W. J. Lane and wife came over from Brownsville and visited Mrs. Ringo Friday evening.

Miss Nettie Spencer came home from Corvallis Saturday.

Mrs. Hugh Leeper's sister, Mrs. Turner of Albany, is with her again, Mrs. Leeper is improving slowly.

(Continued on page 4)

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We have lots of good USED FURNITURE on hand and are getting more every day 9x12 Pabcolin Rugs, \$11 Beauty Banquet Ranges \$65 to \$92 Used ranges \$20 to \$40, Very good condition. All at bargain prices. 422 West First st., Albany, Oregon.

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I. O. O. F.

WILDEY LODGE NO. 66. Regular meeting next Saturday night.

ADMINISTRATOR'S SALE

Notice is hereby given that by virtue of an order of the county court of Linn county, Oregon, made October 16th, 1922, authorizing and directing the undersigned as administrator of the estate of W. H. Kirkpatrick, deceased, to sell lots 5, 6, 7 and 8 in E. Hayes addition to Halsey, Linn county, Oregon. Therefore, I will, from and after the 20th day of November, 1922, at my residence in Halsey, Oregon, sell the real property above described at private sale to the highest bidder for cash in hand, subject to confirmation by said court. F. M. GRAY, Administrator. L. L. SWAN, Atty. for Admr.

Days offered the last hope of success in their war against the Turners.

The adventure in the pasture with the Killer had handicapped them to an unlooked-for degree. Bruce's muscles had been severely strained by the bonds; several days had elapsed before he regained their full use. Linda was a mountain girl, hardy as a deer, yet her nerves had suffered a greater shock by the experience than either of them had guessed. The wild ride, the fear and the stress, and most of all the base blow that Simon had dealt her had been too much even for her strong constitution; and she had been obliged to go to bed for a few days of rest. Old Elmira worked about the house the same as ever, but strange, new lights were in her eyes. For reasons that went down to the roots of things, neither Bruce nor Linda questioned her as to her scene with Dave Turner in the covert; and what thoughts dwelt in her aged mind neither of them could guess.

The truth was that in these short weeks of trial and danger whatever dreadful events had come to pass in that meeting were worth neither thought nor words. Both Bruce and Linda were down to essentials. It is a descent that most human beings—some time in their lives—find they are able to make; and there was no room for sentimentality or hysteria in this grim household. The ideas, the softnesses, the laws of the valleys were far away from them; they were face to face with realities. Their code had become the basic code of life: to kill for self-protection without mercy or remorse.

They did not know when the Turners would attack. It was the dark of the moon, and the moon would be able to approach the house without presenting themselves as targets for Bruce's rifle. The danger was not a thing on which to conjecture and forget; it was an ever-present reality. Never they stepped out of the door, never they crossed a lighted window, never a pane rattled in the wind but that the wings of Death might have been hovering over them. The days were passing, the date when the chance for victory would utterly vanish was almost at hand, and they were haunted by the ghastly fact that the whole defense lay in a single thirty-three rifle and five cartridges. Bruce's own gun had been taken from him in Simon's house; Linda had emptied her pistol at the Killer.

"We've got to get more shells," Bruce told Linda. "The Turners won't be such fools as to wait until we have the moon again, to attack. I can't understand why they haven't already come. Of course, they don't know the condition of our ammunition supply, but it doesn't seem to me that that alone would have held them off. They are sure to come soon, and you know what we could do with five cartridges, don't you?"

"I know." She looked up into his earnest face. "We could die—that's all."

"Yes—like rabbits. Without hurting them at all. I wouldn't mind dying so much, if I did plenty of damage first. It's death for me, anyway, I suppose—and no one but a fool can see it otherwise. There are simply too many against us. But I do want to make some payment first."

Her hand fumbled and groped for his. Her eyes pleaded to him—more than any words. "And you mean you've given up hope?" she asked. He smiled down at her—a grave, strange little smile that moved her in secret ways. "Not given up hope, Linda," he said gently. They were standing at the door and the sunlight

—coming low from the south—was on his face. "I've never had any hope to give up—just realization of what lay ahead of us. I'm looking it all in the face now, just as I did at first."

"And what you see—makes you afraid?" Yet she need not have asked that question. His face gave an unmistakable answer: that this man had conquered fear in the terrible night with the Killer. "Not afraid, Linda," he explained, "only seeing things as they



"And You Mean You've Given Up Hope?" She Asked.

really are. There are too many against us. If we had that great estate behind us, with all its wealth, we might have a chance; if we had an arsenal of rifles with thousands of cartridges, we might make a stand against them. But we are three—two women and one man—and one rifle between us all. Five little shells to be expended in five seconds. They are seven or eight, each man armed, each man a rifle shot. They are certain to attack within a day or two—before we have the moon again. In less than two weeks we can no longer contest their title to the estate. A little month or two more and we will be snowed in—with no chance to get out at all.

"Perhaps before that," she told him. "Yes. Perhaps before that."

They found a confirmation of this prophecy in the signs of fall without—the coloring leaves, the dying flowers, the new, cold breath of the wind. Only the pines remained unchanged; they were the same grave sentinels they always were.

"And you can forgive me?" Linda asked, humbly.

"Forgive you?" The man turned to her in surprise. "What have you done that needs to be forgiven?"

"Oh, don't you see? To bring you here—out of your cities—to throw your life away. To enlist you in a fight that you can't hope to win. I've killed you, that's all I've done. Perhaps tonight—perhaps a few days later."

He nodded gravely.

"And I've already killed your smile," she went on, looking down. "You don't smile any more the way you used to. You're not the boy you were when you came. Oh, to think of it—that it's all been my work. To kill your youth, to lead you into this slaughter pen where nothing—nothing lives but death—and hatred—and unhappiness."

The tears leaped to her eyes. He caught her hands and pressed them be-

Now is the time to have your car put in condition for next season's use. By having the work done at this time of year, when your car is idle, you will not be annoyed by having to wait for it to be repaired next spring, when the best weather is at hand for using the car. Come in and let us make an estimate of the cost of repairing it. We have just received a shipment of spotlights, windshield cleaners, top and curtain patching and many other useful winter accessories. We are pleased to have you inspect our lines of tires and accessories at any time, and our prices are the lowest it is possible to make.

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