

GIFT OF THE DESERT

By RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER XI—Continued.

The girl hesitated, biting her lips, angered by his insistence. "I cannot very well help listening; I doubt if I believe."

"Believe or not, as you d—n please," he broke forth impatiently. "This is no time or place in which to play. The truth is I have been white with you—square. I came here seeking refuge just exactly as I explained to you last night. I knew this was a thieves' hole, of course, but had no suspicion that we were going to run into their outfit at this time. But when we did, I had to act along with them. There was no other way. I had you to consider, and I had something else to consider. I lied to them, not to you—to both Sanchez and Bob Meager. They are going to get the surprise of their lives tonight. Now listen. I came back there for you; I tried to trace you all the afternoon. I knew you couldn't be far away, because you had not taken the horse. Finally I decided you must have climbed the cliff on foot, and I came up and ran into Meager. Neither of us was very happy about it, but I had some knowledge of what was on foot from Sanchez. Only Bob wasn't there for that purpose; he pretended to be, but he had something else up his sleeve. You don't know what he was really up to, do you?"

"No," she said quickly, not willing yet to tell her tale, "why should I?" Kelleen went on, undiscouraged. "I didn't know how long you were hiding there. But that is why I came back."

"Because you saw me?"

"Yes; and because I believed Bob was up to some trick. I even had reason to suspect, did I not, that you two might be there together?"

She faced him indignantly. "You thought I would secretly meet him?"

"Why not? You evidently believe every evil of me. How did I know you had told the truth? You are his wife, by your own statement. Why shouldn't I suspect, finding you there together? Anyhow I went back to discover the truth. That is why I am here with you now."

"Believing what of me?"

"I hardly know—except not that. You were not with him, yet that is his horse you are riding. He fired at you, did he not?"

"Yes; he went past me down the gully after you left. It was dark then, and I was not seen. I stole his horse and rode away. I doubt if he even knew it was a woman he shot at."

The listlessness suddenly left her voice. "But I am not going with you," she went on coldly. "If you are a man you will not try to urge me. I trusted you last night, but not now. Will you let me go?"

"Where?"

"I'll find my way; I have a horse, and the stars. By morning I'll be in sight of some point of guidance. Anyhow if the choice is between the cruel desert and you, I take the desert. Am I free to go?"

Kelleen laughed. "You leave it to me, then? Well, I say you are not going. I am not the sort of cur who would let you commit suicide just because you have taken a dislike to me. You would be lost in ten minutes; you don't know this country—it's treacherous as h—l. Now listen; you are going to trust me whether you wish to or not. You needn't like me—that cuts no ice in this affair—but you are going to learn that when I give my word to either man or woman, I'm going to keep it. Now, that's flat. If you want to go back to Bob Meager, all right. I'll take you to him, and we're done. But when you talk of my turning you loose in this desert, to take your chances out there alone, I am the wrong kind of man for any such job. You can hate me all you please, but we stick together until I get you where there are white folks."

"I believe I do hate you!"

"All right; I don't mind that. Will you do what I tell you to do?"

He had spoken quickly, almost harshly, and the tone of command had aroused Deborah's resentment. The two wills clashed, and neither would give way or seek compromise. Deep down in her secret heart a bit of faith in this Daniel Kelleen yet lingered, but she was in no mood then to acknowledge it. He was threatening her; trying to frighten her; endeavoring to force her into his power, and she resented it immeasurably.

"No, I will not," she said sharply. "Take your hand off my bride rein!"

She struck her mount suddenly, and the startled animal sprang forward, whirling sidewise from the blow, careening against the flank of Kelleen's horse as it swept swiftly past. The next instant the wild race was on through the black night. She rode recklessly, desperately, lashing her mount with the flapping end of her reins, yet, leap by leap, Kelleen drew closer, riding as he often had before in heading off a wild stampede of cattle, pressing her horse more and more to the right into a half-circle as he drew near. Inch by inch they drew

closer together, the girl's skirt flapping against his leg; then his iron grip closed on the bit of her horse, and the two animals came to a stop, pawing the air. Deborah was breathless, frightened, angry; but the man was conqueror and in no mood for compromise.

"You fool! do you know where you were going?" he exclaimed sternly. "straight to the edge of that hole; a dozen strides more and you would have been over. By G—d! I got you in time, but that is the last trick you'll play on me."

"You—you dare speak to me like that—you?"

The man laughed grimly, the nervous reaction thus finding unconscious expression. "Dare? I'll say dare. What else could I call you? You didn't even know what direction you were going."

"No," she said quickly, not willing yet to tell her tale, "why should I?" Kelleen went on, undiscouraged. "I didn't know how long you were hiding there. But that is why I came back."

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Meager or a charge of having killed him."

"Go on," he said soberly, as she stopped breathless. "Let's have this out; there is no better time."

"I never knew until morning; until I finally recognized you. Then you told me that story—told it so I almost believed it true, almost trusted you. Really I had to believe, or pretend to believe, for I was there alone with you, helpless to protect myself, unable to escape. I was lost in the desert. Then you talked with that Mexican cutthroat, where I could hear all you said. He accepted you as one of the gang, and even obeyed your orders. He believed Bob Meager had sent you out here. You were certainly lying to someone, and naturally I supposed it must be me. There was every reason why you should lie to me. When you rode away together I was sure you would soon be back alone, and I determined you should never find me there. I made my choice—it was the desert and death rather than you. You understand what I mean, Daniel? Kelleen?"

"Yes, I understand," quietly. "Go on, let's have it all."

"Then up above, in that little gully, I ran into you again; it makes no difference how I happened to be there. It was hours later; I had some time in which to think, and began to wonder if my decision had been right. Then, in the gathering dark, I crept through that patch of sagebrush and found you in private conference with Bob Meager. You were surely not playing a part then, for you had no knowledge you were being overheard. After that how could I still retain faith in you or trust myself with you?"

Kelleen did not answer directly, his gaze leaving her face and turning inquiringly to the strange scene revealed below. He stared at this moment in moody silence. Then he swung down from the saddle, dropped the rein over the horse's head, and stood beside her.

"I am going to tell you," he said calmly. "If you consent to listen. Will you trust me enough to dismount?"

There was something about the man, his quiet confidence, his low, even voice, his entire personality, which Deborah found impossible to resist. Hesitating an instant, even shrinking back from any personal contact, her lips refusing a direct answer, she yet permitted his hand to close firmly over her own and draw her down from the security of the saddle to the common level of the desert sand. Without a word of urging or explanation, Kelleen led her forward to the very edge of the cliff, where an exposed rock, swept bare by the wind, gave them a seat. Directly beneath lay the narrow valley, dimly lighted by that single fire, about which black dots constantly moved, too far away to be clearly visible. It was like a scene thrown upon a screen. Kelleen dropped down beside her, peering first over into the depths, the flicker of the distant flame barely illuminating his face. She could not help but mark his strong outline.

"You really do not understand what is being done down there?" she asked at last, as he held silent.

"I do not." He glanced aside at her, the trace of a smile on his lips. "There is something going on here quite beyond me. I had supposed this was a plain case of smuggling war munitions over the line into Mexico. But it isn't. Casebeer's outfit must have come in through that lower pass yonder—beyond the clump of trees," extending his hand, "and the only feasible way to the border lies up the opposite ravine, directly behind the cabin. All they would require here is water for the stock and a guide. That was to be Sanchez' job. He was to assure them that the way ahead was open, unguarded, and lead them over the safe trail. They need all the rest of the night to make it in."

"But—but they are unloading the mules."

"That is exactly what they are doing—all of them; and taking the stuff back into the cabin. They are not going on at all; they are going back unloaded. Now, what does it mean? Why did Sanchez lie to me about it? and Bob Meager?"

Deborah sat up straight. "Why shouldn't they lie to you?" she asked quickly. "If you are really what you pretend to be to me?"

"Because they have no suspicion—they can have none. Not a thing has occurred to arouse such doubt. The game has been played too carefully. It's not that. Meager has not the faintest suspicion as yet that I am not one of his kind. The fellow, together with Garrity, is pulling off something here out of the ordinary, which they want to keep me out of—that's all."

He stopped suddenly; then turned, and placed his hand firmly on her own where it rested on the rock surface, his voice changing.

"Miss Deborah, there is no masquerade between us. I do not know why I talked to you as freely as I did last night. I must have liked you very much, and trusted you. Anyhow I told you the exact truth, and there is no occasion now to deny it. I am Daniel Kelleen, a captain in the reg-

ular army, who has volunteered for special scouting detail to stop this border work. The character of the Frisco Kid has been made to order, to permit of my thus gaining the confidence of these outlaws. The whisper reached me a week ago that munitions were being run through here—that Bob Meager's outfit was doing it; that G—d was the leak we had been unable to stop. I came up to Nogales; hung around there in the lowest quarters of the town, picking up stray bits of rumor. Finally I heard about Garrity, learned he was going out on the Meager ranch. His henchman split a little, leaving me to believe there was going to be a run made across the line this week—the Casebeer outfit. That's why I came out; that's how Garrity picked me up at Silver Springs, and I rode on with him to Meager's."

She was deeply interested now, impressed by his earnestness.

"I had sent word to our people from Nogales. There is a narrow pass through the hills on the trail below, which this outfit must use just before they cross into Mexico. There is no other way south leading from here. Early this evening a squad of cavalry got there from the north, and are waiting."

"And if the outfit they are watching for do not show up tonight, or early tomorrow, what will the soldiers do?"

"Hard to tell. This halt here has knocked out my plans completely; my guess at the game has gone wrong. As it is I have the choice of two things—either remain here and learn what these birds are really up to, or else ride south, bring those troopers back, and round up this entire outfit on general principles. I'd like most of all to discover where Meager is."

"Perhaps I can help you. I have a story to tell you yet."

Deborah spoke rapidly, clearly, depicting her experiences in the concealed tunnel, her escape up the narrow passage leading to the desert level, how she came to be hidden in the gully, and what had occurred there after Kelleen had ridden away. The captain listened eagerly to her recital of adventure, interrupting the narrative with numerous questions. This fresh knowledge brought a new element into the affair, complicating the whole matter.

"You say this was a tunnel?" he asked finally. "Dug out, you mean?"

"The light was too poor for me to tell very much. I thought at the time it might be an ancient watercourse, but work had certainly been done on it. I found a pick and shovel on a heap of loosened rock. Quite a pile of broken stone lay at the farther end, as though it might have been blasted from the wall. I had to climb over it."

Kelleen drew a long breath, his hand smiting his knee in sudden conviction.

"By G—d!" he said slowly. "I believe it must be the 'Lost Mine.' Meager may have found it, and is trying to keep it to himself."

"The 'Lost Mine'?"

"Yes; it is a tradition of this country, an old Spanish legend, I believe, but implicitly believed for a hundred years. Men by scores have lost their lives hunting for it from one end of this desert to the other. The story goes that it was fabulously rich, discovered by a Spanish explorer, who carried samples of ore clear to Mexico City. He came there twice with laden mules, but refused all definite information, and the men he took back with him as helpers were never permitted to go beyond the edge of the desert. He would then go in alone,

and bring out the ore, a muleload at a time. No one ever tracked him; the only one who made any serious attempt to do so, was found dead. Then one day the discoverer failed to return to camp. He never did come back, and no trace of him was ever found. His name was Alvares, and ever since men have been hunting after 'Alvares' Lost Mine."

"And it was actually here?"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Six Miles a Minute.

An earthquake wave has been known to travel across the Pacific ocean in 12 hours 16 minutes—that is at the rate of six miles a minute.

Of Course Men Change.

"Two months ago I was desperately in love with Ronald and now I can't stand him. How men change!"—London Opinion.

Magical Touch of Ribbon for Gowns

Combination of Gay Strands May Be Used to Obtain Winsome Effects.

Every woman should have a silk negligee adapted to her personality. They are simple and easy to make. A plain one-piece pattern is used to cut it out. After that everything depends on the application of trimming at the right places. A wide, flowered satin ribbon may be draped over the left shoulder, coming to a low waistline on the right side and tying in a huge bow. If the material of the kimono is a coral silk the ribbon should have the coral color as a background, but could also show tones of blue, green and gold.

A bertha made of the wide, soft satin ribbon would be equally as effective, especially if decorated at opening with a few colorful ribbon flowers.

A panel of wide, soft ribbon may reach from the shoulder to the floor, the last foot lying on the floor and ending in a heavy gold tassel. This panel hangs free from the negligee and, being on the side back instead of the center back, may be draped over the arm becomingly.

There are moderately priced plain silk negligees and kimonos in the shops that could be treated with ribbon and turned into a thing of beauty instead of being merely a practical garment.

The combination of a number of ribbons is a feature of dresses. There is such a variety of beautiful ribbons, exquisitely shaded or shirred or scalloped, that an infinite variety of combinations is afforded. In combining a number of ribbons, it is not necessary that the colors match, but they should be so selected as to afford harmony either through the blending or the contrast of colors and of texture.

For instance, a deep bertha, which adds a modish note to any frock, may be made as follows:

First, an almond green ribbon, three inches wide, is used. It should be the kind of a ribbon that has a gathering thread along one edge and is scalloped along the other. The gathering thread is pulled just enough to fit the neckline of the dress and to allow the scalloped edge to lie flat.

The next ribbon used should be a green plisse, a shade lighter than almond and six inches wide. One edge is attached to the first ribbon just under the scalloped edge. The ribbon falls over the shoulder but does not flare. On the contrary it hugs the shoulders closely, the shirred center allowing room for the curve of the shoulders. A green ombre ribbon, three inches wide, is next attached. It should have a scalloped edge or a gold edge.

Instead of using shades of one color, two or three, or even four, pastel shades might be combined. Or two colors, such as gold and blue would be effective.

The ribbon bertha on a dress requires another ribbon touch either at girdle or bottom of skirt.

Adaptations of Home Electric Light Shade

The shade or globe that covers an electric or even a gas light when replaced by a newer design can be used as a flower holder. Merely invert the shade and place a tumbler in the middle actually to hold the flowers or ferns. The bowl has an attractive shape. If the shade is made of frosted glass it can be decorated with water-color paint. Little flowers grouped in dots, each dot composed of one color such as pink and blue and mauve, give a dainty decoration in such a receptacle.

Frosted-glass electric light shades

Dahlia Duvelyn Frock Is an Imported Number



Quite smart in hue and texture is this dahlia duvelyn frock, which is one of the popular fall importations that bids for favor.

In plain white may be made more attractive matched to the color scheme by a painted border. Bead fringe, which can be purchased by the yard and glued on, also adds a great deal of style to simple frosted-glass shades. Any color can thus be brought out to emphasize the color scheme of the room.

Lovely Russian Tunic Makes Welcome Return

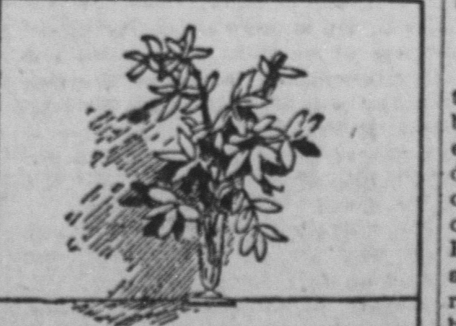
The Russian tunic, more radiant, resplendent in shimmer and color, and as sophisticated as the most cosmopolitan of world beauties, is with us again. Few women are going to attempt to resist its appeal, although only the divinely slim, and we might add the equally divinely tall, can wear it with the dash and nonchalance that it deserves. To appreciate it at its full value you should see it scintillating in a metallic sheen and ablaze with color, the scarlets and the golds, with sprinklings of equally radiant tints.

When one of the metallic brocades is not selected, the choice invariably falls upon a brocade or printed velvet, the printed Chim-king, or a richly napped fabric elaborately embroidered. Like the coats of the season, it runs to great depths, for it is at knee depth that the generous band of fur adds its swirling finish. There is more of the fur banding the short sleeves and occasionally a collar across the back at the neck. And you girdle it or not as the fancy and the wearer's figure may demand. Show it with a black velours or velveteen skirt and you have the costume of the hour.

The Jungle Frock.
Although the animal-applique gowns of a famous designer have made a sensation, a still greater one has been caused by the new Jungle frocks. The jungle frock has not only applique animals, in silk, velvet and leather; it has also an applique landscape for their background.

Linings Match Costume.
One of the smartest things you can do this season is to line your cape or coat with the same material as the frock over which you will wear it. This is particularly effective if the gown is of figured silk.

Decorate Your Rooms With Laurel Branches
Everyone realizes the great decorative value of cut flowers, and how much their presence adds to the charm of a room. Unfortunately, observes a writer in the Portland Oregonian, at certain times of the year, cut flowers are expensive and do not last long.



Laurel Garnishings.

One is therefore often obliged to do without them, no matter how welcome they would be. But there is another resource that can take the place of cut flowers to some extent—branches of laurel or bunches of laurel twigs.

Laurel is cheap, and a good quantity can be purchased for a very little money. Placed in jars or vases of water it will last a long time. If the water is changed frequently, it will not only keep fresh for weeks at a time, but will sometimes throw forth new shoots.

In this way, at an insignificant cost, one can add to any room the grace and interest that only a living, cratching thing will impart. Use jars or vases of agreeable color and of a

Beading Is Combined With Ribbon on Frocks
On the tide of the demand for ribbon trimming has come a like demand for beading, since a charming embroidery effect can be attained by its use on dainty frocks without the actual bother of doing the embroidery. This is especially popular for children's dresses. Rows of beading may encircle the skirt and yoke. Through this beading narrow ribbons are run, tying in miniature bows at odd places. Several pastel shades are used effectively on light frocks, while black velvet ribbon is appropriate for any kind of dress.

Earrings Large.
The struggle for mastery between hoop earrings and pendants still goes merrily on. One style is as fashionable as the other. The prime necessity is that, whatever the style, colors of material, the earrings must be as large as the face can bear.

Silk Jumpers.
Hand crocheted jumpers and those of silk crepe, bound with braid, are developing wing sleeves that are most attractive.

White Silk Bag.
A white silk bag has many rows of white petals.