

The Red Lock

A Tale of the Flatwoods

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"The Blue Moon"

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

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CHAPTER XX
—26—

Search of the Languid Eyes.

All through the long and terrible day following that tragic night, the angels of life and death waged their grim struggle in the parlor bedroom, where the hapless sufferer writhed in the delirium that followed the shock of her wound.

Toward evening Aunt Eliza, bellowing with the others that the end was near, beckoned the woodsman to the bedside.

It fairly staggered him to see the frightful change the hours had wrought. Under an impulse of pity that he could not resist he bent over the bed, caught up her hands and spoke her name. She instantly grew more quiet and turned her face toward his voice.

The doctor was quick to notice this, and at his direction Jack dropped on his knees by the bedside and began talking to her, softly stroking her hands and wrists and face the while; and as he talked she grew calmer.

Hour after hour the man knelt and crooned the story of their playmate days, while the doctor plied his utmost art and the women lavished their care.

Late that night she seemed to quiet away into a light sleep. A smile struggled out upon the doctor's grim features and he went out into the yard for a moment of relaxation. The woodsman laid the girl's hands down upon the covers, rose to his feet, stumbled out to the kitchen and dropped down on a chair by the cook stove.

Barely a minute after, Aunt Liza, sleepless and faithful, tapped him on the shoulder.

"She's frettin' ag'in."

He sprang up and hurried to the sick-room. But before he reached the bedside her tossing had ceased and she lay back against the pillow still and white. He caught up her hands; they were so cold it startled him.

At that moment the doctor came back in. The instant he entered the room the unusual stillness—or the instinct of his profession—must have warned him that something was amiss, for he hurried to the bedside and bent a keen look upon the patient.

"Her han's are like ice," the woodsman faltered.

"She's sinking fast," was the doctor's answer, as he made ready a powerful stimulant. "Rub her hands and wrists and temples—rub toward the heart—and try to call her back with some more of that Black rock and Whispering spring talk. And be quick with those hot cloths, you women. If we can only keep breath in her for the next hour—"

The woodsman, toiling with gray and graven face, was the first to notice the clamminess leaving her hands and a faint tinge of color beginning to drive the chill out of her fingers. The doctor bent low over her, noted the respiration, took her pulse again.

"She's got a chance," he muttered. "Keep on with that talk, Warhope, and rub her wrists and temples—and come on with more hot cloths, the rest of you."

Nearly an hour had gone when the girl's lids fluttered apart and the brilliant eyes strayed open—weak, haggard, but no longer wild and vacant with delirium.

Slowly the eyes traveled over the room, a languid questioning in them; searched the faces about her; dwelt at last upon the face of the woodsman.

"Jack"—it was only a whisper, fluttering out upon the labored breath, but it was the sweetest sound his ears had ever heard—"he didn't kill y'u—"

He dropped on one knee by the bedside, but dared not trust his voice with a word.

"Jack—what—what—?"

"You've be'n sick—bad—and we're all tryin' t' coax y'u back well. When y'u git strong, we'll have a long talk—you and me—but now, won't y'u jist try t' go t' sleep? Won't y'u?"

"Yes," she whispered, like a trusting child—"I'm so—tired—"

One hand stole across the covers and hunted his; the long lashes drooped over the languid eyes and she slipped away to sleep. The others tiptoed from the room.

"What she needs above everything," muttered the doctor, softly closing the door—"sleep—it will do her more good right now than all the medicine in the world."

And there Jack crouched—himself bruised and worn—afraid to move with her hands in his, lest she start awake and so lose one moment of the rest just then precious beyond calculation. Only a man of his superb physical powers could have held the cramped, uncomfortable pose so long.

Several times one of the women, and once the doctor, softly opened the door and peeped in, but they as often closed it again and left the man to his silent vigil.

By the next day she was so much better that the doctor declared her out of danger—time alone being all that was necessary to bring her well.

In the serene evening the sun peeped under the porch roof for one last look before reluctantly passing on to less interesting scenes beyond the gates of the west; fell in at the open parlor window; crossed the floor and just missed the big old-fashioned sofa, soft and cozy with blankets, where the woodsman had carried the girl in his great arms, the wonderful landscape of lawn and bottoms and winding river spreading before her.

The woodsman himself sat on a low footstool at her side. The room had settled still.

From the kitchen came the low drone of voices where Mrs. Curry and Aunt Liza sat by the cook stove. A tall old clock in a corner of the parlor—taller than the woodsman himself, with a peasant man and maid on the face raking hay—punctuated the silence into a sort of drowsy rhythm.

The girl was so still that he thought she slept. Glancing around at her, he was amazed to see her eyes full of tears.

"W'y—what's the matter—?"

"Nothing—!"

Her lips quivered; she turned her face away and cried silently. He picked up her hand; attempted a comforting word. The sprawled dead figure in the old cabin crossed his mind—the brother in whom she still believed; whose death she still mourned; of whose degradation and deep dishonor she was haply spared from ever knowing—and the attempt failed.

She turned back to him after a time, brushed away the tears and a brave suggestion of the smile that made her eyes so wonderful brightened them.

"Ain't it jist terrible fr me t' cry like this, when y'u're all s' good to me!"

He hitched the footstool closer to the sofa. It surprised him to feel a queer weakness in his breast and a tightness in his throat when he tried to speak.

"Do y'u think y'u're strong enough t' talk—some?"

"W'y, I could git up—n'most."

A sudden thoughtfulness displaced the smile.

"Do y'u remember that letter y'u give me from Pap Simon's las' Saturday?"

The girl raised her eyes.

"T' be opened the day you're twenty-one—I've wondered and wondered what was in it."

He looked down at the floor; looked up again.

"This is the day."

"No!"

"I'm twenty-one t'day—and"—free, he was about to say, but didn't.

"Is it possible it's only be'n six days sence—?"

"Six days," was his slow comment.



It Was the Biggest Word He Had Ever Said in His Life.

"Don't seem like s' much could happen in six days—hardly—"

He fumbled in his blouse; took out the letter in its formidable envelope; held it toward her.

She took it and, glancing over it, handed it back. He tore it open and drew out its contents.

Wide-eyed, they read it through—a title deed in fee simple to the Warhope homestead, together with all stock and betterments and growing crops thereon, duly conveyed and executed to Jack Warhope; and, folded inside the deed, a bank draft in his favor for ten thousand dollars.

The man stared at the girl; the girl stared at the man.

"I'm b'lievin' Pap Simon meant t' do this all along," he mused at last. "I can see it now, as I look back. That's why he was s' good to me. Mebbe"—he hesitated, "that's why he had me—bound—"

"Pore father!"—the girl's eyes strayed away to where the silver contour of the river rimmed the bottoms—"it was his—say?"

He let loose the deed, leaving it in her hand. She turned back from the silver-rimmed bottoms and glanced it over again.

"W'y, it was made out only last Friday—he never knowed it, but that was lady-slipper day—and so he made it a—big day—after all—"

Very slowly, with the tightness still at his throat, the woodsman took out his pocketbook and laid a flattened yellow orchid in the girl's palm.

"I found it there at the edge of Mud haul, where you got on the house-boat." The girl fumbled the flattened blous-

on in her hand; the color of returning health tingled into her cheeks.

"The one you found that—day," she stammered. She lifted a tiny glance up to him from under her long lashes; let her eyes stray far out across the bottoms toward Alpine Island. "Pore—Ken! Hopkins met me up the road and told me he was sick on the boat. I didn't know Hopkins—then."

"I did—and I knowed Brickbat alley. That's why I rode after y'u the minute I got y'u'r note. Hopkins was a—bad man, but we've already talked about him, and what b'come of him. All that money he stol'd I—tuck away from 'im at the parsonage the evening of the—funeral, and drove 'im out o' Flatwoods. That's why he went, and all that stuff he told y'u about—Ken was jist lies. I've got all that money hid, and we'll put it back in the safe as soon as you're able t' open it."

The eyes came back from the distant point where Alpine Island split the silver rim of the bottoms.

"I know now that what he said was all lies, but I didn't then. As soon as I got on the boat I saw—Ken wasn't there, but Hopkins locked the door and wouldn't let me off. And such a cabin as that house-boat had—tight as a jail. He made all the apologies a man could fr raisin' false hopes about—Ken, and told me he'd gone it all fr my own good. Then he told me there was two men plannin' to rob the safe that night and he'd bring me on the boat t' git me out o' danger."

She paused; looked at the man; went on.

"He said he was goin' t' git you t' hep 'im and you'd both watch the house, and after the danger was over you'd come and bring me home. He said one o' the robbers would be Slim Finger Doolin, the most dangerous pistol fighter in the world. I asked 'im how 'e found it all out—not knowin' then that he 'imself was Slim Finger Doolin—but he said he'd rather tell me all about it next day. From that minute I was afraid o' him, though he was as polite and respectful to me as 'e could be, short of lettin' me go."

She felt the eyes of the woodsman upon her. He looked away and she went on.

"From that minute I mistrusted he was one o' the robbers, though I never let on, and as soon as he was gone I tried all I could t' git out. I was afraid"—she looked down at the blanket; crumpled a corner of it hard in her fingers—"you might chance t' hear 'em, and I knowed if y'u did you'd fight, and I was half wild fr fear they'd kill y'u. Oh, if I'd only knowed it was you that moved the boat!—Jack why didn't y'u let me out—!"

The man stared at the floor and twisted his great hands till the knuckles turned white.

"G—d!" he groaned—"if I only had! But I thought you'd be safest there. It was the worst mistake I ever made in my life—that and lettin' Hopkins preach Pap Simon's—funeral, but I didn't have no good proof on 'im then."

The girl glanced at his bowed form. The tick of the tall old clock in the corner throbbed loud on the silence; through the open window came the call of crows flying home.

"It was away in the night," the girl went on at last, thoughtful and slow, "before I fin'ly got out by beatin' a hole in the roof with a stove leg, swum ashore and run home as fast as I could. I'd jist got in the yard when I saw you a-standin' there by the winder. Then come that shot and I thought Slim Finger Doolin had—killed y'u. I don't know what happened after—that—"

"After that," the man echoed, his voice low and broken, "we've all be'n tryin' to coax the bravest and most wonderful girl in the world back to life."

"Life!" she murmured, as if the word came new and strange to her after being so fearfully close to death. "Oh, I want so much t' have it all back ag'in—"

"And y'u shall have it back!" the man cried, catching the appeal in her voice. "You've got it now. Every breath brings the woods and hills, the sunshine and flowers, jist that much nearer—w'y, you're as good as well this very minute."

The smile in her eyes came alive again, stole out over her face and brought back a heartening suggestion of the dimples.

By some intangible bridge all unseen of human eyes, the smile found its way across to the man's grave and serious face; kindled it—like the glint of morning upon the front of Black rock.

He picked up her hand; touched the faded orchid in her palm.

"I low y'u ain't frgot the day we—I—found it—"

He felt the twitch of her fingers.

"I tried t' ask y'u t'—promise me—that day—I'm askin' y'u t'—promise me—now—"

It was the biggest word he had ever said in his life. Much like a man who had committed a crime and awaited his sentence, he raised his head; ventured a glance at the girl.

Something very wonderful had come to her face—like the birth of morning; and her eyes like star trails—a marvelous transfiguration that only one thing in the world can bring.

He slipped from the footstool and knelt down by her side; her arm came up off the blanket and hunted its way across his massive shoulders.

The peasant man and maid on the face of the old clock in the corner smiled, raking hay.

[THE END.]

Should Elect Tailors.
More tailors should be elected to congress. They know a lot about measures and men.

A man would never discover that his wife had a temper if she didn't lose it.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE ITEMS

Greensburg.—Albert E. Bish, of Crafton, near Pittsburgh, was arrested and lodged in the county jail here, in connection with the sale of stock in a chain store company. He was charged with false pretense and held in bond of \$25,000.

York.—Aside from permanent investments in lands, buildings and equipment, York county's agricultural industry, at the close of the year 1923, had a valuation of \$19,417,470.36. Of this amount, \$19,219,968.83 was derived from the sale of fruit and field crops; \$3,122,389.85 from the sale of live stock products, and \$6,075,111.08 in the value of the live stock on the farms at the beginning of the year.

Warren.—Stephen Galsek, 2-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Galsek, of Ludlow, died in the hospital here of burns received when the child fell into a small tub of scalding water in the Galsek home.

Reading.—Ground was broken here in the rain for another junior high school, to cost \$1,000,000. John M. Sesholtz, president of the school board, turned the first shovel of earth.

Hazleton.—A 200-pound rock hurled from a blast at the Cranberry stripping of the Pennsylvania Stripping Quarry and Construction company, crashed through the roof at the home of John Markeskey, taking with it a bed from the second story and landing in the kitchen a few feet from the stove. The house was badly damaged.

Colesville.—To have a 2400-pound steel roller pass over his body and escape with scarcely a scratch was the experience at the Colesville Club golf links of Peter Borrell, aged 24. Borrell was driving a team of horses, hitched to the roller, down a sharp decline on one of the fairways when the tongue broke and he was thrown from his seat directly in the path of the heavy roller. Fortunately, he landed in a slight earth pocket and escaped the full weight. His back was slightly injured, but he was able to return to work.

Greensburg.—The Venice restaurant and the grocery and confectionery store of Sadie Baughman were raided simultaneously by two groups of local officers. Tony Paris, proprietor of the restaurant, was released on \$1000 bond for a hearing. John Franz, alleged partner of Sadie Baughman, placed a bond of \$1000 for her appearance at hearing. Illegal liquor selling is the charge against both.

Pittsburgh.—The rear of the home of Ferdinand Tuclarrone was wrecked by a bomb, but members of the family escaped injury. Tuclarrone reported to the police that he had received a number of threatening letters recently demanding from \$1000 to \$2000.

Wilkes-Barre.—Whitaker & Deal, of Harrisburg, were awarded the contract for building the new ferry bridge over the Susquehanna river at Pittston, by the Luzerne county commissioners. The bridge must be completed by September 1, 1925, and will cost \$680,706.50. The structure will be of reinforced concrete and will be one of the most artistic along the big stream. It is believed that work can be started by the first of next month.

Bethlehem.—Occupying an automobile driven by Jerome E. Brader, of Allentown, Ida Augustus, of New York city, was literally cut to pieces when the machine was struck by a Philadelphia and Reading passenger train on the Hobart street crossing here. Her death was instantaneous, but Brader escaped with a slight injury.

York.—Attacked by a boy with a pocketknife, Lloyd Copeland, 4-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur C. Copeland, is suffering from a painful and dangerous wound on the left side of his back. The wound was inflicted, it is said by Millard Clayman, 5 years old, son of Mr. and Mrs. George A. Clayman, as a result of the alleged attack, which it is claimed came without warning. The victim is confined to bed at his parents' home, his condition being considered dangerous.

The wound is near the lung and his side is partly paralyzed.

Allentown.—A verdict of murder in the second degree was found in the trial of Joseph C. Carroll, of New York, former regular army man, who, with Harvey J. Fahringer, of this city, who also served in the army with his co-defendant, was accused of killing Albert E. Wenrich, former overseas veteran of this city, in a holdup last December. Fahringer was convicted last week and, following the conviction of Carroll, both were sentenced to from ten to twenty years in the eastern penitentiary. Each blamed the other for the shooting.

Hazleton.—Grace Farley, aged 5 years, died at the State Hospital from burns sustained while playing with matches.

Freeland.—John Fisher, a local boy, while walking through the woods near Mount Yeager, was struck in the head with a stray bullet, the source of which has not been determined.

Marietta.—Leonard Tillman, fancier of Rhode Island led chickens, secured thirteen chicks from twelve eggs.

Stroudsburg.—Walter Stables, aged 50, was found dead from poison li-

quor. Adam Smith and his son, Harold, received awards of \$5 each from the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals at Philadelphia, for their daring rescue of three dogs from a mine cave thirty-five feet deep on the outskirts of this city, February 5. Harold Smith was lowered into the cavity by a rope fastened to an automobile and he sent up the dogs before he was drawn to the surface.

Sunbury.—Fifteen firemen were slightly hurt battling a blaze that destroyed the Blank & Gottshall flour mills. The loss is \$50,000. Fire Chief Hopple believes spontaneous combustion caused the fire.

Harrisburg.—Eight bids were received by the board of revenue and finance for the purchase of the \$500,000 of Pennsylvania State College loan script, which was issued fifty years ago. The issue was oversubscribed, but no awards were made pending consideration of the board. The bids average 4½ per cent. The state, as trustee of the bonds, has been obliged to pay the institution 5 per cent interest, which will be reduced ½ per cent when the award is made.

Harrisburg.—The appointment of Dr. William T. Root, Pittsburgh, as a member of the board of trustees of the Western Penitentiary, was announced by Governor Pinchot. Other appointments announced included Joseph C. Zacko, Pottsville, as alderman for the fifth ward, Pottsville, and Mrs. Sarah Powell, Throop, as justice of the peace for the borough of Throop.

Greensburg.—Dr. Theodore Kharas, of Wilkes-Barre, who claims to have written nationally known stories, is now behind the bars of the county jail here, where he was brought on a bench warrant charging him with promoting fraudulent banking schemes.

New Castle.—P. J. Powers, aged 42, a crossing watchman of Wampum, near here, dreamed that he was to die a violent death. He is dead.

Andrew Ward, aged 40, a boarder in the Powers home, and a long-time friend, shot Powers through the head, barricaded his bedroom door and then shot himself. Police were at the door. An argument arose over the switching on of an electric light. Powers had told his wife of the dream of a night before.

Beaver Meadow.—The Evans Colliery company is reported to have found coal in a section where none was supposed to exist. Part of its lands include a hill, on which the veins outcropped. Now it has been discovered that the strata continues under the elevation, having rolled down instead of all ending at the surface. Drilling crews are at work to prove the measures and learn just what thickness they are.

Reading.—John F. Moser, aged 48, well-known horseman and former hotel man, was instantly killed at South Temple by a west-bound Reading railway express train, which struck his automobile. He was a director and member of the executive committee of the Reading Fair and head of the horticultural department.

Allentown.—The Lehigh county Farm bureau at its annual meeting elected P. S. Fenstermacher, of this city, president, and these other officers: Vice president, M. D. Leiby; secretary, M. S. Weaver, and treasurer, A. M. Freenwald. The directors are Edgar A. J. Snyder, F. T. Dickenshild, M. J. Wertman and H. E. Wotrign.

Fleetwood.—Two hundred American elm trees will be planted in memory of world war veterans along the new concrete highway between Fleetwood and Moselem Springs. Thomas C. Bickel, burgess of Fleetwood, is chairman of the committee. Two hundred more will be planted in the fall along the same road.

Harrisburg.—Late snows, wet soil conditions and the rapid growth of vegetation, have enabled the state to keep forest fires to a minimum this spring, Chief Forest Fire Warden George H. Wirth said.

New Castle.—Justyn Jamiel was held for court, charged with the murder of a fellow-boarder, Adolph Uralist, following a hearing before an alderman. The shooting occurred on February 13, and Jamiel, who had been transferred from the county jail to a hospital on account of illness, was returned to the jail. Jealousy over a woman is ascribed by the police as the cause of the killing.

Franklin.—High water and frost caused the bridge over Sandy creek at the point known as Wilson Mills to partially collapse. The stone and cement in the abutment on the Rockland side was loosened and washed out, allowing the floor to sink to the stream.

Scranton.—Joseph De Yorio, of Paterson, N. J., was shot to death in a local rooming house. Ernest Sessa is being held on suspicion, while police have also apprehended four women from the tenderloin district in the hope of clearing up the killing. Police claim De Yorio was a drug peddler, and that when slain he carried an automatic revolver.

Altoona.—James J. O'Brien, of Pottsville, and William J. Zorichak, of Renovo, were ordained to the priesthood at St. John's Pro Cathedral here by Bishop John J. McCort.

Greensburg.—John Subera, of Scottsdale, committed suicide by hanging in his cell in the jail here.

Altoona.—Struck by a pair of heavy tongs while at work in the Pennsylvania railroad shop here, Frank S. Kleiner suffered a skull fracture.

Altoona.—Falling into a bucket of boiling water, Mary Polochorik, aged 2, of Handburg, died at the Altoona Hospital.

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Sliding Down the Icing

"Will you join our party in the jam preserves?" asked the first fly.

"No," said the second fly, "the lady of our house has baked a cake with icing on it. We're going in for winter sports."—Louisville Courier-Journal

Constipation generally indicates disordered stomach, liver and bowels. Wright's Indian Vegetable Pills restore regularity without gripping. 372 Pearl St., N. Y. Adv.

Bright Idea

"Hubby, you must wash the car and the dog." "Suppose I wash the car with the dog?"

What a Bigamist Is

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