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THE GIRL AND THE OUTLAW

BY
KATHARINE KAVANAUGH



SERGEL'S
ACTING
DRAMA

No. 631

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Girl and the Outlaw

A DRAMATIC PLAYLET

BY

KATHARINE KAVANAUGH
it

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1914

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

MARGARET FENTON, a prairie flower.

DON THOMASO, an outlaw.

PEDRO, a half-breed.

JAN -6 1915

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The Girl and the Outlaw

SCENE: *Interior of Don Thomaso's hut in the mountains. Door R. U. and door C. Open window L. C. with blanket for curtain. Rough table and chair R. C. Couch with Navajo blanket L. C. Rough wooden cupboard up L., with a few heavy plates and other dishes.*

[*Curtain rises on Pedro, who lies, smoking, on the couch. His eyes are directed to the door R. U. Presently he rises and goes slowly to the door R. U., listens, then comes down to the table.*]

PEDRO. Huh—mighty quiet in dere—she sleep, may be. She raise blazes dis mornin'. For one little girl she raise most hell anybody I ever see. [*Looks at his left hand.*] Huh—dere where she cut me yesterday—trow knife and most cut off my two fingers. Now, I know better, she eat without a knife. Little devil. Well, pretty soon her father send ransom money and she go way from here—[*Pauses to take a puff*—]—may be, and may be not. I t'ink boss pretty much stuck on her. She trow knife at him he pretty soon get cured. [*Suddenly pauses—half turns as he sits on end of table—listens, then shrugs his shoulders and keeps on smoking.*] Oh, I guess she still sleep!

[*MARGARET quietly enters R. U., unseen by PEDRO. She makes toward window, raises end of blanket, looks out, then goes back softly toward door C. Has reached door when PEDRO turns and sees her.*]

PEDRO. Little fool! You go out dat door dose men shoot you quick, like dat! [*Snaps fingers.*]

MARGARET. I don't believe you! I don't believe there can be more than two such scoundrels as you and that master of yours in the whole world! [*PEDRO reaches for his pistol.*] I'm not afraid of your gun. Shoot me if you like. I'm going to take my chances out there.

PEDRO. I swear I am telling you the truth! The men out there are all outlaws like myself. You would stand no chance with them. They have orders from the boss to shoot you if you tried to get away. They'd kill me if I let you go. They'd even kill the boss if he let you go before your father sends the money.

MARGARET. Why?

PEDRO. Because every one of them is entitled to his part of the ransom. You t'ink I am hard man—you t'ink the boss hard man, eh?—but I tell you, every one of dose men is as bad or worse. They are hard up, crazy for money, and they are outlaws.

MARGARET. But aren't they men, after all? Aren't they human beings? Haven't they any feelings? Oh, I'm not worried about myself—but think what my poor dad is suffering.

PEDRO. We do think of him. There is not a man out there that don't hate him. There's not one among us that he has not hunted and sworn to punish.

MARGARET. It's his duty to hunt outlaws. That's what he is sheriff for. If you were honest men you'd have no cause to hate him—or fear him either.

PEDRO [*Shrugs*]. Huh—we do not fear him.

MARGARET. You do fear him—and you'll have cause to fear him more than ever when he learns what you've done to me.

PEDRO. Don't we treat you well? You got nice room—plenty to eat—and Pedro to wait on you. You would also have knife and fork to eat with if you didn't have bad habit of throwing them at people.

MARGARET. See here, Pedro, you say you need money. Get me out of here before Don Thomaso returns, and I swear you'll be well paid for it.

PEDRO. Sure, I will be well paid, with a knife in my back. I like to be accommodating, *Senorita*, but I have only one life, and that is very dear to me. Besides, it is impossible—you could not go a foot outside that door before they would have you.

MARGARET. God!—is it possible there is not one man among you? Have you never had a sister, Pedro?

PEDRO. No—my sisters were all brothers, and I am the only child.

MARGARET. Have you never been in love, Pedro?

PEDRO. Oh, yes, sixteen or seventeen times—but it never took.

MARGARET. Well, isn't there something I can appeal to? Isn't there anything soft about you, Pedro?

PEDRO. Only my head—my heart is as hard as nails.

MARGARET. What do you think is going to happen to you when Don Thomaso and all his ruffianly gang are captured by my father, the sheriff?

PEDRO. Your father, the sheriff, will never capture Don Thomaso. He has been trying to do it for years, but Thomaso is too smart for him.

MARGARET. Well, he'll get him one of these days, and when he does, all you bad men are going to have a necktie party all to yourselves. I wonder how it feels to have a rope real tight around your neck, with the other end thrown over the limb of a tree, and four or five big

husky fellows pulling you up and up, and you feel yourself choking—choking—

PEDRO. By gar, you stop dat kind of talk—you hear me?

MARGARET [*Laughing*]. Pedro, you're a coward.

PEDRO. What!

MARGARET. That's what I said, a coward! All your bravery lies in that six-shooter you've got in your belt. If you didn't have that within reach you'd be afraid of me, a girl.

PEDRO. Huh—who wouldn't be afraid of a girl who throws knives so straight like you?

MARGARET. Well, I haven't got a knife now, but I'd like to have one. I'd spoil that smoke of yours. [*Takes a plate from cupboard.*] Don't you know it's impolite to smoke in the presence of a lady? Throw that cigarette away—throw it away.

PEDRO. By dam—who you talkin' to?

MARGARET. I'm talking to you, and I mean business. [*Aims plate at him.*] Throw that nasty thing away before I break this plate over your head.

PEDRO. Break plate nothing—you break my head.

MARGARET. I'll give you just four seconds to do what I tell you.

PEDRO. No, I don't throw no cigarette away. [*Is about to put cigarette in his mouth. MARGARET throws plate at his feet. He dodges.*] By dam, girl, what you doin'?

MARGARET. Didn't you see what I was doing? Wait, I'll do it again. [*She reaches for another plate.*]

PEDRO. You come away from dere.

MARGARET. Not a step.

PEDRO. Come way, I tell you. You tink I goin' to

stand here and let you throw whole damn china closet at me. Come, I fool enough; now I mean what I say. [*Puts hand to gun.*]

MARGARET. You're bluffin', Pedro. You can't scare me that way.

PEDRO. Huh—you tink I won't shoot.

MARGARET. I know you won't. If you harmed me, that outlaw chief of yours would cut your ears off.

PEDRO. You know why? Because he save you for himself. You mighty fresh, eh? You tink you come to no harm in dis place. I tell you dere is no more cruel man in de whole world than Don Thomaso. Murderer, outlaw, thief—he cares for nothing, nobody. He is the most bad man I ever see.

MARGARET. Then why do you stick to him?

PEDRO. Dey say birds of a feather flock together. I guess I most bad man as he is. [*Is about to put cigarette to his mouth.*]

MARGARET. Didn't I tell you not to smoke?

PEDRO. Oh, you go— [*MARGARET throws another plate. He dodges.*] By dam, you stop dat now—stop it, I say—I stand 'nough such foolishness.

MARGARET. And I've stood enough of your bad tobacco. Every time you take a puff I'll smash a plate as close to that hardwood head of your as possible.

PEDRO. If I say I no smoke, you come 'way from dose plates, eh?

MARGARET. Yes, if you throw that bag of tobacco over here.

PEDRO. But I give you my word—

MARGARET. Your word ain't worth a huckleberry to me. Throw the bag, or I throw a plate.

PEDRO [*Throws bag*]. Dere, you—you—

MARGARET [*Aiming plate*]. Don't you call me names.

PEDRO. I had no intention, Senorita. [MARGARET *throws bag out of window*.] You little devil, you throw away my good tobacco.

[MARGARET *suddenly pretends to be ill*. PEDRO *looks at her distrustfully*.]

PEDRO. What's matter now, eh?

MARGARET. Pedro, I'm beginning to feel faint—that rope you were smoking has made me ill—get me a glass of water, will you?

PEDRO. Here, take drink whiskey. [*Offers flask*.]

MARGARET. No, I couldn't drink that stuff. I want water—get me some water—quick, Pedro, I'm sick. [*Staggeres to couch and lies down*.]

PEDRO [*Crosses and looks down at her*]. You no tell me lie, eh? You sick for sure, eh?

MARGARET. Can't you see I am? I'm going to faint. I know I am. I feel it coming. Get me some water—water— [*She pretends to faint*. PEDRO *stands looking at her*.]

PEDRO. If you fool me, you little devil, I shake de life out you. Here, you no sick. You little liar, eh? Come, wake up. [*He shakes her—she remains in faint*.] By gar, she sick sure 'nough. If boss give me job take care woman again I cut my own throat first. I go get bucket water and throw it in her face. [*Exit R. U.*]

MARGARET [*Jumps up, runs to R. U. E., turns the key in door, and laughs*]. Oh, how easy. [*Runs to window, looks out*.] I wonder if he was telling the truth about those men out there. I must take the chance. I must get home to Dad.

[*About to exit C. D. when door opens and DON THOMASO enters. He closes door*.]

THOMASO. What! Going to take French leave, were you? Where is that dog of a Pedro? [*Looks about.*]

MARGARET. Oh, I've got him in cold storage. [*Crosses to table R.*]

THOMASO. Inclined to be funny, eh? Good, I like you better that way. You've been a little devil since yesterday, do you know it?

MARGARET. Yes, but I found so many other devils around, I thought I'd change just to be different.

THOMASO. How did you manage to get rid of Pedro?

MARGARET. Pretended to faint and sent him for a glass of water.

THOMASO. And he went like a fool.

MARGARET. Exactly!

THOMASO. You're a clever little woman, but you won't work any of your tricks on me. As for that Mexican dog, I'm going to teach him a lesson. [*Starts for door L. U. with whip.*]

MARGARET [*Runs and stands before door L. U.*]. What are you going to do?

THOMASO. I'm going to whip him within an inch of his life.

MARGARET. You shan't do it!

THOMASO. What!

MARGARET. You shan't touch him! You called him a Mexican dog, but he's whiter than you are.

THOMASO. He's a dirty half-breed.

MARGARET. And what are you?

THOMASO. Never mind about me. As good blood flows in my veins as there does in yours.

MARGARET. Oh, no, my people are white people—my father is a man—a brave, courageous man—not a cowardly thief and outlaw.

THOMASO. I'm an outlaw, yes, but no one has ever called me a coward.

MARGARET. It's cowardly to keep me here against my will—it's cowardly to torture an old man as you are torturing my father.

THOMASO. Ever since your father has been sheriff he has made it his business to hunt me, day and night; he has sworn to take me, where other men have failed; he has put a price on my head, and if it were not that I know the secret places of these mountains better than any man living, he would have strung me up long ago. Do you expect me to have any pity on him—do you expect me to have any for you, his daughter?

MARGARET. Does he know that I am in your power?

THOMASO. Yes. I took great pleasure in imparting the information. As soon as he hands over the ransom money I'll send you home.

MARGARET. He'll never send you a penny.

THOMASO. Then I will send him one of your little fingers for a reminder. If that isn't enough I'll send another—one each day until he gives in. I think the first one will be sufficient.

MARGARET. And I warn you the first chance I get to escape, I'll take it.

THOMASO. How? That door is guarded on the outside.

MARGARET. Then I'll try the window. [*Starts toward the window.*]

THOMASO. Wait. [*Goes to door L. U., unlocks it, and calls.*] Pedro—you black dog—come here.

[*Enter PEDRO, frightened.*]

THOMASO. Take your gun and stand outside that

window. If any one as much as raises that curtain, shoot, and shoot to kill—do you understand?

PEDRO. Si, Señor.

THOMASO [*Slashes whip*]. Then go. [PEDRO *takes gun and exits C. D.*]

MARGARET. You dog—and you call yourself a white man—you lie; no white man would torture a woman.

THOMASO. That'll do out of you. So you think I'm a miserable half-breed like those men outside, do you? Come here. [*He takes from his shirt a small chain with a half a locket attached.*] You see this little trinket? It is one-half of a baby's locket with a woman's picture inside. Read what it says. [MARGARET *hesitates. He holds the locket out.*] Read!

MARGARET [*Takes the locket wonderingly—glances at it in surprise*]. Where did you get this?

THOMASO [*Impatiently*]. Read!

MARGARET [*Reads from locket*]. "Tom, from mother." Who are you—where did you get this locket?

THOMASO [*Taking it from her*]. I've always had it—ever since I remember. In my baby days among the half-breed Mexicans who raised me, this trinket was my only plaything. I used to gaze at the picture and wonder who the pretty lady was.

MARGARET [*Looking at him closely*]. Do you know now?

THOMASO. I believe she was my mother.

MARGARET [*Her hands to her eyes*]. Oh, no, no, that can't be.

THOMASO. What do you mean?

MARGARET. I mean that I have the other half of that locket, with the same woman's face in it, and she was my mother.

THOMASO. Are you telling me the truth?

MARGARET. Here it is—see for yourself. [*Takes half-locket from her neck.*]

THOMASO [*Gazes at locket*]. The same. [*Reads.*] “To Margaret from mother.” What does it mean?

MARGARET. It means that you have stolen that locket—and the man you’ve stolen it from was my brother. He was taken from us by gypsies when he was five years old—that trinket was about his neck. I was only a baby then—but I remember the dark-haired little fellow— [*Pauses, puts her hands on his shoulders, looks closely.*]

Let me look at you. My God, it can’t be—it can’t be—

THOMASO. It is—it’s true—it’s true.

MARGARET [*Turns sadly from him*]. And you an outlaw.

THOMASO. And what chance had I to be anything else? Raised among a gang of cutthroats who taught me to steal and cheat and murder! Five years ago, when I was nothing more than a boy, a man called me a Mexican dog—I told him he lied—he struck me in the face with the butt of his revolver—I drew mine and shot him through the heart. Since then, they’ve tried to catch me—my own father has set a price on my head.

MARGARET. Ah, but he didn’t know it was his own son he was hounding! You were nothing to him but an outlaw, a notorious criminal. It will be different now! He will try to save you instead!

THOMASO. He can’t! If they ever catch me, no one can save me. I am a murderer—an outcast—

MARGARET. You are my brother, and you’ve never had a fair chance. Dad must try to save you.

THOMASO. Never mind about me now. The thing is to get you out of this place as soon as possible.

MARGARET. Won't they let me go if you tell them—Isn't your word law among them?

THOMASO. No—far from it. They call me chief because I'm a little braver, a little more reckless than they are, but every one of them is waiting for his share of the ransom money you were to bring—they'll never let you go without it.

MARGARET. Then what are we to do?

THOMASO. I'll lie to them. I've never lied to them before and they'll believe me. Go, get your hat—perhaps I can get you away without being seen. [MARGARET *exits R. U.*] If I can only get her away. My life will pay the forfeit, but I am willing. Let's see if the coast is clear. [*Raises curtain at window. A shot is fired. THOMASO staggers back, catching on cupboard to hold himself up.*] My God—it was Pedro—I forgot.

[*Enter MARGARET, R. U.*]

MARGARET. I'm ready. Are you coming with me?

THOMASO [*Bracing himself*]. I can't just now. You'll be safe with Pedro. Call him for me.

MARGARET [*Goes to door*]. Pedro—come.

[*Enter PEDRO.*]

THOMASO. Pedro, see that Miss Fenton leaves here immediately. Tell the men the ransom money has been paid. That I am responsible.

PEDRO. Si, Señor. [MARGARET and PEDRO *exit door in flat.*]

THOMASO. If I can only hold out until she is safe. God, will you help me do it? You've never done much for me in all my wasted life—but help me just this once—for her sake.

[*Enter PEDRO.*]

THOMASO. Is she safe, Pedro?

PEDRO. She is gone, Master.

THOMASO [*Relaxes and falls on couch*]. Then I can go too. [*He rolls to floor, dead. PEDRO drops his gun, runs to THOMASO'S side and feels his heart.*]

PEDRO. Master!

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