

PRICE TWENTY-FIVE CENTS

P5435
20/223

THE TEXAN
BY
HARRY VAN DEMARK

Vo



THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA

SHOEMAKER'S BEST SELECTIONS

For Readings *and* Recitations

Nos. 1 to 27 Now Issued

Paper Binding, each number.	. . .	30 cents
Cloth " " "	. . .	50 cents

Teachers, Readers, Students, and all persons who have had occasion to use books of this kind, concede this to be the best series of speakers published. The different numbers are compiled by leading elocutionists of the country, who have exceptional facilities for securing selections, and whose judgment as to their merits is invaluable. No trouble or expense is spared to obtain the very best readings and recitations, and much material is used by special arrangement with other publishers, thus securing the best selections from such American authors as Longfellow, Holmes, Whittier, Lowell, Emerson, Alice and Phœbe Cary, Mrs. Stowe, and many others. The foremost English authors are also represented, as well as the leading French and German writers.

This series was formerly called "The Elocutionist's Annual," the first seventeen numbers being published under that title.

While the primary purpose of these books is to supply the wants of the public reader and elocutionist, nowhere else can be found such an attractive collection of interesting short stories for home reading.

Sold by all booksellers and newsdealers, or mailed upon receipt of price.

The Penn Publishing Company

923 Arch Street, Philadelphia

THE TEXAN

A Western Melodrama in Four Acts

BY

HARRY VAN DEMARK

Author of "HER FRIEND THE ENEMY," "THE
RANCHMAN," etc.



PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY

1911

P5635
Z9 V229

COPYRIGHT 1911 BY THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY



unread

The Texan

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- BUCK DOYLE *Known on the border as "Buck Sapello"*
 WESLEY DOYLE *His brother*
 DAN INMAN *"Ranching it" as an experiment*
 MAJOR ALLEN TRUESDELL, U. S. A. *Commanding a regiment from Fort Hancock*
 CAPTAIN GEORGE HENDERSON, U. S. A.
 LIEUTENANT THOMAS PURDY, U. S. A.
 TROOPER MURPHY.
 CARL KING *Dan's nephew*
 SWIFTWING *An Apache boy, devoted to Buck*
 ELSIE INMAN *Dan's sister, a girl with a will of her own*
 MILLIE INMAN *Dan's wife*
 ETHEL TRUESDELL *The major's daughter*
 AUNTY LOU *A Texas "touch of color"*
Soldiers—U. S. cavalry troopers.

TIME OF PLAYING :—Two hours and a half.

SYNOPSIS

- ACT I.—Dan Inman's ranch in the Sierra Diablo Mountains, Western Texas, afternoon. (The meeting.)
 ACT II.—Cabin in the valley, used as a guard-house for the army, the next afternoon. (Horse-thief or hero—which?)
 ACT III.—A ravine on Blue Moon Mountain, the same night. (The death trap.)
 ACT IV.—Major Truesdell's headquarters in the valley, three days later. (The coming of Sapello.)

The entire action of the play occurs in Western Texas. The time is the winter of 1878-79.

COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

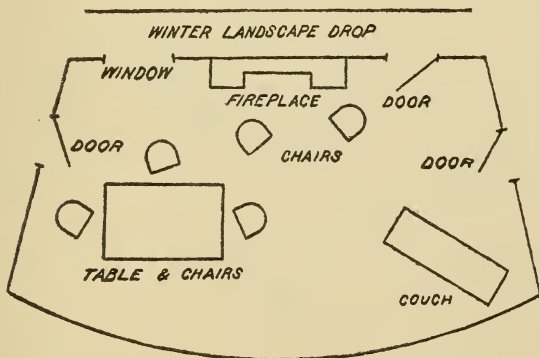
- BUCK DOYLE.** A man under thirty, heavily built, tanned face and arms. Wears corduroy suit, boots and spurs, wide-brimmed army hat, belt with pistol and cartridges.
- WESLEY DOYLE.** About thirty, dressed in border fashion. At his first entrance, Act I, and also in Act III he wears riding gauntlets, and his appearance indicates he has ridden a long way.
- DAN INMAN.** Not over thirty. Border costume, flannel shirt, trousers tucked into high boots, wears belt with revolver.
- MAJOR TRUESDELL.** A rather pompous man of middle age with gray moustache. Uniform of major in U. S. Cavalry. (Khaki will do for all uniforms, although blue is correct for the period in which this play is laid, 1878.)
- CAPTAIN HENDERSON.** About thirty-five. Uniform of captain in U. S. Cavalry service.
- LIEUTENANT PURDY.** About thirty. Uniform of a lieutenant of cavalry.
- TROOPER MURPHY.** Forty or over. Uniform of a cavalry trooper, armed with a carbine and sword.
- CARL KING.** Sixteen or seventeen, dressed in exaggerated border fashion.
- SWIFTWING.** An Indian boy, not over eighteen. Wears a leather suit, or "chaps" and flannel shirt, moccasins on feet, and a battered army hat.
- ELSIE INMAN.** About twenty-five. In Act I simple house dress suitable for winter on a Western ranch; skirt rather short. Act II, riding costume, short skirt, leggins, etc. Belt with revolver, cartridges and a knife, and long cloak over all. Act IV, same as Act I, with hat and coat.
- MILLIE INMAN.** About twenty-five. Simple winter house dress in Act I. Same, with hat and coat, in Act IV.
- ETHEL TRUESDELL.** About eighteen. Very vivacious. Wears riding costume in Act I, with short skirt, wide hat, leggins, etc. In Act IV simple indoor costume.
- AUNTY LOU.** Stout colored woman, about fifty. Dark dress and bright colored turban.
- SOLDIERS.** In uniform of U. S. cavalymen.

PROPERTIES

- ACT I.—Knife and gun for CARL. Dishes, coffee-pot, handkerchief for MILLIE. Tobacco and pipe for DAN. Cigar and pipe for WESLEY. Sugar in bowl, cream in pitcher for ELSIE. Two letters for SWIFTWING.
- ACT II.—Rifle, rope, tobacco for MURPHY. Revolver for CAPTAIN HENDERSON. Cigarette for BUCK. Letter, knife, belt with revolvers and cartridges for ELSIE.
- ACT III.—Paper, cigarette for BUCK. Indian trinkets and ornaments for SOLDIERS.
- ACT IV.—Book for ETHEL. Cigar for CAPTAIN. Papers for MAJOR.

SCENE PLOTS

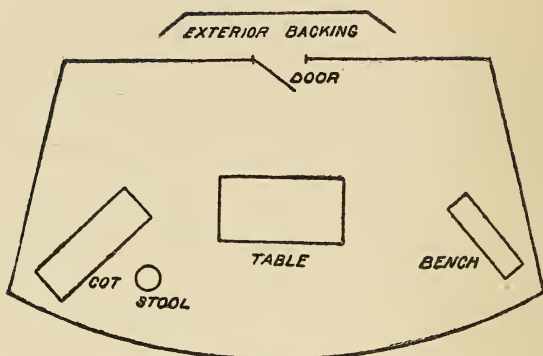
ACT I



SCENE.—Dining-room at Inman's ranch. Doors R. L. and in flat L. C. Window L. C. Fireplace c. Table and chairs R. Couch down L. Other plain furnishings as desired. Fireplace may be omitted if necessary, with slight changes in lines and business.

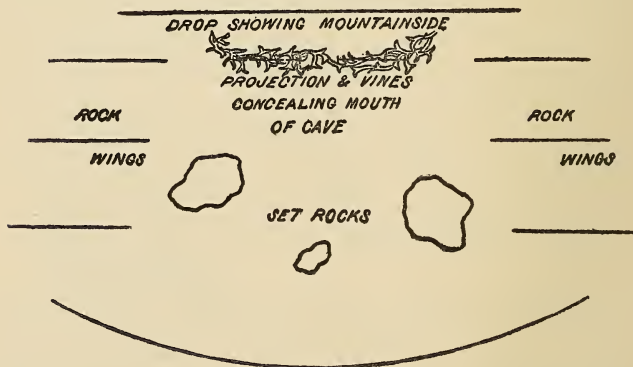
SCENE PLOTS

ACT II



SCENE.—Interior of log cabin, or rough shack. Door up c. Table c. Cot and stool down r. Bench down l. No other furnishings necessary.

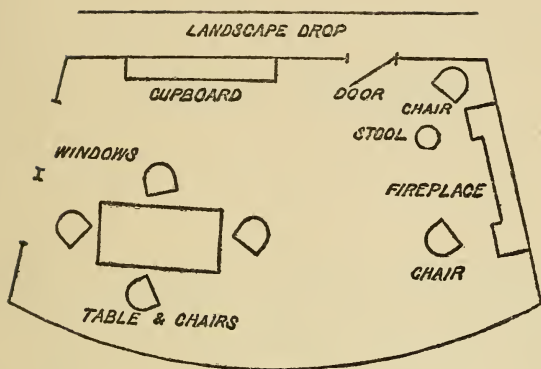
ACT III



SCENE.—A ravine on Blue Mountain. Drop showing mountainside, entrance to cave c., its mouth concealed by vines, etc. Rock wings and set rocks as shown. Snow on ground, on rocks, etc.

SCENE PLOTS

ACT IV



SCENE.—Major Truesdell's headquarters. Rough cabin interior. Rude fireplace L. (May be omitted if desired.) Window or windows R. Door up L. c. Cupboard up R. Table and chairs down R. Stool and chair near fireplace. Other furnishings as desired.

The Texan

ACT I

SCENE.—*Dining-room at Inman's ranch. Rather rough interior, with rude pictures and prints on the walls, most of which have apparently been cut from the illustrated papers of the period. About R. C., well down stage, is a large table and three chairs. There are dishes on table, which is covered with a bright red table spread. Down R. is a couch. Centre back is a large fireplace and mantel, before which are two rockers. A pot of coffee is boiling on the fire. Old-fashioned cupboard up L. On mantel are clock, photographs and other bric-à-brac. A saddle, bridle and several pieces of harness are hanging on wall at back. A rifle stands in upper R. corner. There are doors L. and R., and L. C. at back. There is a window R. C., at back, through which can be seen the snow-covered hills. Wind and snow effects are used throughout the entire act, the time being early winter.*

(AUNTY LOU is discovered bustling about between cupboard and table. CARL KING enters at rise, shivering and brushing the snow from his coat. Crossing to fire, he warms his hands. AUNTY, stopping L. C., arms akimbo, surveys him thoughtfully.)

AUNTY (*chuckling*). Yo' acts as if yo' might be kinder cool. I reckon dese yere snow-sto'ms doesn't agree wif yo'.

CARL (*teeth chattering*). F-f-froze is n-n-no name for what I am, Aunty. The r-r-ranch f-f-feels like a chunk out of the N-N-North Pole to-day. Boo-o-o!

(*Rubbing hands vigorously, he sticks them over the fire.*)

THE TEXAN

AUNTY. Oh, I ain't a-blamin' yo' fo' huggin' de fiah—
Ah'd do hit mahself if dar wuzn't so much work tuh
do. But, Lor' bress yo', chile, dar's so many fings
tuh demand mah attention, dat w'en I goes tuh walk,
mah feet gits in such er hurry, dey likes tuh run away
wif me, en I falls all ober mahself. He, he, he!

(*Laughing boisterously, she crosses to the table.*)

CARL. That's what comes of having chair cushions for
feet.

AUNTY (*turning quickly*). Huh, boy? W'at's dat?

CARL. I said that's what comes of being so neat.

AUNTY. He! He! Dat's right, a pusson's got tuh be
neat—'specially w'en dey's got er repytation tuh ab-
stain —

CARL (*interrupting her*). You mean sustain, Aunty.

AUNTY. Does I? Reckon I knows w'at I means, so go
'long, boy, en don't interrupt your aunty no mo'. If I
don't abstain mah repytation, I's gwine tuh lose mah
job. (*A slight pause.*) Say, w'at wuz all dat racket
down de valley afore yo' come in?

CARL. Why, that was the soldiers, Aunty.

AUNTY. So'gers! Lor' sakes! Am dey done gwine tuh
murder us all?

CARL. Of course not. The Indians have grown trouble-
some, and the soldiers have come up into the hills to
stop an uprising. They're making their camp down in
the valley now.

AUNTY. An' will dere be a scrap?

CARL. I s'pose so, Aunty—lots of 'em.

AUNTY. Golly! I's gittin' scairt.

CARL (*boastfully*). Humph! What you scared about?
They don't scare me none whatever. Why, I'm going
to ask Uncle Dan if I can't take my rifle and go along
with the soldiers when they go after the Indians. I
can shoot Comanches as well as anybody.

AUNTY. Yo' jest took mah advice en stay tuh hum. Lil'
boys ain't got no bizness fightin' Injuns—en dat's de
whole trufe, en nuffin' but de trufe!

(*She shakes her head significantly.*)

CARL (*with a contemptuous sniff*). Who you calling a lit-
tle boy, I'd like to know? If you mean me, I'll have

you understand that you're away off. Ain't I sixteen, and if I'm sixteen, ain't I a man? Pshaw! You give me an ache in the toe!

AUNTY (*soothingly*). Dar, dar, chile. Don't git on yo' high hoss 'bout hit. I were only jokin'. But what fo' yo' wanter fight Injuns? Ain't yo' got er home heah wif Marse Dan as long as yo' wants hit?

CARL. Oh, I reckon that's true enough, even if I do have to work like sixty. But that isn't the point, Aunty. I'm simply spoiling for a fight. It's in my blood. Why, sometimes I feel like I could turn cannibal, I'm so bloodthirsty. (*Assumes a ferocious expression.*) How would you like to have me eat you?

AUNTY. Look heah, boy—stop dat nonsense! Eat me, does yuh say? May de good Lord forbid any sich sacrifice. Yo' couldn't git me down, nohow, fer how am er lady ob mah size gwine tuh go down yo' lily-like froat?

CARL (*with mock ferociousness*). Why, Aunty, I'd chew you into little teeny, tiny bits. It wouldn't be any trouble at all when I got started. And I reckon I might as well begin right now.

(*He seizes a large hunting-knife from mantel, and brandishing it, starts stealthily toward her. She slowly backs away from him, as if in doubt as to his purpose.*)

AUNTY. W'at yo' gwine tuh do, boy? (*He growls.*) Oh, Lordy, I reckon he means it suah ernuff. He's crazy. See de look in dem eyes! Oh, de good Lord help er pooh niggah lady!

(*She runs around table screaming, he after her.*)

CARL. Eeeny, meeny, miny mo, catch a nigger by the toe. If she hollers let her go, eeny, meeny, miny mo! Whoop!

(*He lets off an ear-splitting yell, and AUNTY falls on her knees c., hands upraised as if in prayer.*)

AUNTY. Oh, I axes yo' tuh hab mercy on er pooh, weary cullud woman. I—I—I —

CARL (*interrupting her, striking pose, arm raised*). Arise, heathen, thou art spared, spired, speared!

THE TEXAN

(As he says "speared," he jabs her in the ribs with the handle of the knife. She yells.)

(Enter suddenly, L., DAN, ELSIE and MILLIE INMAN.)

DAN. What's all this racket about? (Sees CARL and AUNTY.) Well, may I be hanged!

(ELsie breaks out into peal after peal of laughter; DAN and MILLIE finally join her. CARL and AUNTY recover themselves, and AUNTY rises. Both look sheepish.)

ELsIE. Millie, it looks like we'd struck a cannibal island up here in the hills. (Still laughs.)

MILLIE. What were you doing, Aunty?

(AUNTY doesn't know what to say. CARL speaks aside to her, nudging her with his arm.)

CARL. Tell 'em you were praying for a snow-storm.

AUNTY. I were prayin' fo' a snow-stawm, missus.

DAN (laughing). Well, you're not easily satisfied. There's six inches on the level now, and more in prospect.

(CARL and AUNTY look at each other sheepishly.)

(Enter SWIFTWING, door L. C.)

MILLIE. Here's Swiftwing.

DAN (turning). Hello, Swiftwing! Want to see me?

SWIFTWING (gravely). Yep. Man at gate say he want to see boss man of ranch. I come tell you.

DAN. A man at the gate, eh? A stranger?

SWIFTWING. Huh! I never set peepers on him before.

DAN (laughing). Never set your "peepers" on him, eh? Well, if you don't stop using Carl's slang, you'll get a twist in your tongue some of these fine mornings. Tell the stranger to come in by the fire and we'll give him a sample of our Western hospitality.

SWIFTWING. All right. I go.

(He salutes, turns stiffly, military fashion, hands at sides and exits, door L. C.)

MILLIE. I wonder who the stranger is?

ELsIE. Have patience a moment and you'll find out. An Indian, perhaps.

DAN. No; had it been an Indian, Swiftwing would have said so.

(AUNTY has resumed her work of arranging dishes, going back and forth from table to cupboard. CARL has taken the rifle out of corner, upper R., and is polishing it before the fire.)

MILLIE. Perhaps it is the old scout, McDougall—Elsie's friend. Or (to ELSIE) your squaw man, Sapello.

(This is said rather sneeringly, but with a smile.)

ELSIE (offended). Now, that was unkind of you, Millie. Sapello has left his old life. He was in New Mexico the last news I had.

MILLIE. I don't care where he is; the fact that he lived in degradation for the matter of five years or more makes him almost irreclaimable. Accept my advice and drive him out of your head altogether.

DAN. Millie is right, Elsie. Forget him.

ELSIE (with spirit). What! forget that he saved my life when we were in New Mexico last spring? That would be gratitude, indeed.

MILLIE. Well, the first thing you know people will be talking—saying that you are going with a white man who has—well, who has lived with a squaw.

ELSIE. Let them talk. I do my duty as I see it, and it's no one's affair.

(Enter WESLEY DOYLE, door L. C.)

WESLEY (bowing). Good-morning. I hope I am not intruding. (The ladies bow.)

DAN (extending hand). Not at all. We are always glad to welcome visitors in these forsaken parts. You're a stranger out here, I take it?

WESLEY (taking off gauntlets). Yes. I'm just from Van Horn, where the railroad touches.

DAN (surprised). And you came from there without a guide?

WESLEY. I had to; there was none available.

DAN. Well, that's pretty good for a stranger, Mr. er —

WESLEY (as DAN pauses). Doyle, sir—Wesley Doyle.

DAN. I beg your pardon, Mr. Doyle, for not introducing you to the ladies. I am Dan Inman, and this is my

wife. And this is Miss Inman, my sister. We are rather lax in the matter of introductions in Texas. It is so seldom we see a newcomer that we are generally disposed to trust those who come. But you are cold, aren't you? Millie, let's have some of that coffee. Come over to the table, Doyle.

WESLEY. Thank you.

(*He crosses over and sits left, DAN right, of table. MILLIE arranges the dishes while they talk. ELSIE speaks aside to CARL at fire.*)

DAN. We drink our coffee about every hour in the winter—that is, when we have it. Sometimes we run out before we can get our regular supply from Van Horn. Then there's pretty lively times around here for a while. (*Laughs.*) Eh, Millie?

MILLIE. Well, there's usually a committee of one appointed to look into the delay, and the air gets so blue at times you can hardly see through it.

WESLEY (*with a significant laugh*). With—er—smoke, I suppose?

MILLIE (*in the same spirit*). Oh, yes, with—er—smoke! (*Laughs.*) It is caused by—well, I call them cuss words.

DAN. Mr. Doyle, I've been wondering where I've heard your name before. (*Turns.*) Elsie, do we know any Doyles?

ELSIE (*coming down c.*). I believe not, Dan—I don't recall any at this moment.

WESLEY. Oh, Doyle is rather a common name—apt to encounter it most anywhere, I should think.

MILLIE. Not in this part of the country.

(*MILLIE pours coffee at table, then seats herself in rocker down l. WESLEY'S face assumes an anxious expression.*)

WESLEY. Are you sure you know of no one by that name out here?

MILLIE. Quite sure.

DAN. Quite sure, Doyle. Will you smoke?

(*Tenders pouch.*)

THE TEXAN

WESLEY (*taking it*). Thank you, yes. (*Pulls pipe from pocket.*) This will not prove obnoxious to the ladies, I trust? (*Looks at them inquiringly.*)

ELSIE. Not at all. We're used to it.

MILLIE. It is part of our daily program. Anyway, I love the smell of tobacco.

WESLEY. Now, that sounds homelike. (*To DAN.*) Do you know, Mr. Inman, I should like to propose myself for membership in your household for a few weeks, if it would not be deemed an impertinence — (*Interrupted.*)

DAN (*heartily*). You are welcome to stay as long as you wish. Strangers are a luxury out here.

WESLEY. You Westerners are nothing if not hospitable.

DAN. Oh, we've a way of making people feel at home, I'll admit. Elsie, will you show Mr. Doyle to the front room, where he can remove the stains of his journey? (*ELSIE inclines her head.*) I'll have Carl or Swiftwing attend to your horse at once, sir. (*Both rise.*)

WESLEY. Thank you.

ELSIE (*at door R.*). This way, Mr. Doyle.

WESLEY (*laughing*). Where you lead, Miss Inman, there shall I blindly follow.

(*Laughing and talking they exeunt, R.*)

AUNTY (*looking after them*). Dat suah am er nice-lookin' gemman.

(*DAN goes to fire, takes pot off the coals and fills his cup again.*)

DAN. That's right, Aunty; he's a clever and entertaining fellow.

MILLIE. Seems to be a man of culture, too. I wonder what he's doing 'way out here?

DAN. Give it up. (*Drinks.*)

CARL (*still polishing gun*). He's a jim-dandy, all right. I like him.

MILLIE. Well, if I hear you using any more such expressions, I'll jim-dandy you!

AUNTY (*surveying DAN*). Lawsee, if dat ain't de sebenth cup ob coffee Marse Dan done drink tuh-day. I reckon some o' dese fine ebenin's he gwine tuh 'vaporate.

THE TEXAN

DAN (*laughing*). Now, Auntie, don't make fun of my drinking propensities. Coffee doesn't hurt me. Why, I thrive on it. (*Rises.*) Come, Millie, find my overcoat. I'm going down the valley to pay Major Truesdell a visit. The troops have come, you know. I understand his daughter is with him.

MILLIE. Is that so? (*Rises.*) She must be a nervy one. You must bring her here. Your overcoat is in the kitchen. Come—I'll help you on with it, and you can go out the back way. (*They go up to door' L.*)

CARL. Say, Mr. Inman—I mean Uncle Dan—can't I go down there with you?

DAN. Why, yes, I suppose so. Put Mr. Doyle's horse in the stable, then saddle ours. I'll be out in a moment.

(*Exeunt DAN and MILLIE, door L. CARL runs to upper R. corner, where he stands gun against wall.*)

AUNTY. Yo' suah bettah stay heah, boy. Dem so'gers gwine tuh git yuh, if yuh go out.

CARL. I want them to get me, Auntie.

(Goes up to door L. C.)

AUNTY. Say, what fo' yo' reckon dat Mr. Doyle done come tuh dis kentry?

CARL (*mysteriously*). Why, don't you know what he came for?

AUNTY. I ain't no mind readah. Wha' fo' he come?

CARL. Sh! (*Hand to lips, he tiptoes toward her.*) He came out here to die!

AUNTY (*horrified*). Tuh die! Lor' sakes, chile, don't tell me dat!

CARL. Well, he came out here to eat some of your corn bread—it's all the same.

(Laughing, he runs out L. C., slamming door.)

AUNTY. Now, ain't dat a pestiferous boy? Huh! (*Snorts.*) I'll git eben wif him yet fer playin' jokes on me! Huh!

(With another snort she exits, door L.)

(Enter ELSIE, door R.)

ELSIE (*standing in thoughtful attitude before fire*). Now,

THE TEXAN

why did he persist in my telling over and over that I knew no one out here by the name of Doyle? There's something strange about it. I wish I knew just what.

(Enter BUCK DOYLE, door L. C.)

BUCK (*with a start, as he sees ELSIE*). Why, Miss Inman, I—I beg your pardon! I saw your brother riding toward camp, and asked if I might come in and warn myself. I should have knocked.

ELSIE (*crossing to him and taking his hands*). It doesn't matter. How came you here, Buck?

BUCK. You seem to forget—or perhaps you did not know—I am scouting with the army.

(ELSIE *withdraws her hands, motioning BUCK to a chair. He sits in rocker, having pulled it down stage from the fire, laying his hat on the floor beside him.*)

ELSIE. I had not heard. But you don't know how glad I am to see you.

BUCK. Thank you, Miss Inman. That's the pleasantest speech I've heard in six months.

ELSIE. I trust you haven't heard many unpleasant ones?

BUCK. Well, a few.

ELSIE. Some one in the army, Buck?

BUCK. Yes. (*Grits his teeth.*) It's Captain Henderson. But I've given him as good as he sent.

ELSIE. What's the trouble?

BUCK. I caught him whipping a young boy in the ranks one day, and we mixed it up right there. There's been no love lost between us since.

ELSIE. I supposed whipping had been abolished in the army long since.

BUCK. It has. In fact, it never existed. But this man Henderson usually takes the law into his own hands.

ELSIE. Oh, I've forgotten, Buck. You must be tired. I'll get you some coffee.

BUCK. Thanks; I am pretty well fagged. Scouting is no pleasure in the winter, I assure you.

ELSIE. I should imagine not. (*At fire.*) What a long time it has been since I saw you!

(*Taking pot from coals she goes to table, R.*)

BUCK. Yes. Seems like an age to me.

THE TEXAN

(ELSIE hands him the coffee, and goes for cream and sugar to cupboard up L.)

ELSIE (*going to him*). Two spoonfuls? Just what you used to take? (*He nods.*) Now, some cream. (*Pours it.*) No, Buck, I haven't seen you since that night Carl and I were caught in the storm—that night in New Mexico, in the little cabin — (*Interrupted.*)

BUCK (*interrupting*). Don't mention that! (*He starts up, a note of appeal in his voice.*) That's a thing of the past now! (*Seizes her hand.*) You believe me, don't you?

(*A pause. They look into each other's eyes.*)

ELSIE (*slowly*). Yes, I believe you. What—what became of the—the Indian woman?

BUCK (*slowly, hanging head*). She—is dead!

ELSIE (*hand on his shoulder*). It is better so.

BUCK (*raising his hand*). She was a good wife. I played straight with her, too.

ELSIE. I know. But she was not your equal. You have the making of a man in you, Buck. I have always believed in you and felt that you could make something of your life if you tried. Do you realize that for five years you have been asleep? I do not know what the cause of this has been, but I have felt that there was some sorrow in your past life—forgive me for mentioning it—but am I right?

BUCK (*slowly*). You are right. I—I — (*Pauses.*)

ELSIE. Oh, you need not tell me. I am satisfied to know you have awakened at last.

BUCK (*seizing her hands impetuously*). I like to hear you talk that way—it brings back to memory those days in the hills—on your camping trip—when I first met you and before—well, before you knew what a low specimen I was. Do you remember that night when we stood at the edge of a massive cliff, gazing off into the starry night? Do you remember the ride back to the camp under the soft rays of the moon, with the night winds rustling and sighing through the trees? (*She listens with rapt attention.*) Do you remember—Miss Inman—Elsie?

ELSIE. How—how can I forget? You saved my life that

very night. My foot slipped, but you caught me in time.

BUCK. I am thankful I was there. Somehow, I realized that night all I had missed in this world. And when the full realization came upon me, I wondered that you would even speak to me.

ELSIE (*looking at him quickly*). And was it because you knew I had heard of—of her—that you went away so suddenly?

BUCK. Yes. I could not stay within range of your eyes. I was ashamed to look you in the face.

ELSIE. Well, those things are in the past. You have only the future to think of. Have you come back to Texas for good?

BUCK. I don't know. It may be for bad. You see, I know these Indians so well, having lived among them for years, that the government asked me to take the trail in this direction, ahead of the troops, and sound any tribes that seemed hostile. Anyway, I wanted to look over my old ranch on Blue Moon Mountain. If the troops were needed, they were to follow me.

ELSIE. Which is as much as saying the troops were needed, for they are here.

BUCK. The Comanches are on the war-path, and refuse to be pacified. The thing now is to keep the Mescalero Apaches from joining them. We are going to strike up an alliance with the Apaches if we can. We should have little trouble in inducing them to join us, for the Comanches are their mortal enemies.

ELSIE. I hope there will be no serious trouble, for this place is much more satisfactory as a cattle-ranch than a battle-ground. By the way, we have a visitor.

BUCK. A visitor?

ELSIE. Yes. He came riding up to the gate a while ago. Said he was from the East, and wanted to know if he could stay a while. Of course, Dan took him in. His name is Doyle—Wesley Doyle.

BUCK (*with a start*). Wesley Doyle! (*Rising, he paces back and forth.*) A young man?

ELSIE. I didn't ask, but about twenty-eight, I should say.

BUCK (*half to himself*). And he's in this house—in this house.

ELSIE. Why, yes. Why do you act so queerly? Did you ever know a man of that name?

BUCK (*picking up his hat*). Yes, I knew a man named Doyle once. If—if there's nothing pressing, I'll go now. I've been thirty-six hours in the saddle, and I need some sleep. (*He goes up to door L. C.*)

ELSIE (*following*). Well, come again, Buck. You'll always find me glad to see you. (*Extends hand.*)

BUCK. I appreciate your kindness, and it's more than I deserve. For the present then—good-bye!

ELSIE. Good-bye!

(*Exit BUCK, door L. C. ELSIE goes thoughtfully to fire, and stands lost in thought, then walking to table she drops into chair, head in her arms.*)

(*Enter MILLIE, door L.*)

MILLIE. Who were you talking to just now?

ELSIE (*raising her head, a defiant note in her voice*). Buck Sapello.

MILLIE. What was he doing here?

ELSIE. Talking to me. He has been scouting for the army and dropped in to see—well, to see Dan.

MILLIE. To see Dan? Nonsense! I know why he came, and I wish he'd stayed away, or else that we'd known more about him when we first met him. But who thought he would prove such a scamp? I could never trust him again—even if he did save your life.

ELSIE. Is it proper to snub him after treating him well so long?

MILLIE. Well, I'll admit it's rather awkward to change one's manner, yet, in this case, it's the only thing to do.

ELSIE (*with spirit*). Certainly it's the only thing for you to do—if you feel that way.

MILLIE. And it's the only thing for you.

ELSIE. I shall treat him as my conscience dictates, and, anyway, I would never kick a man when he's down.

MILLIE. Well, you needn't be so sharp about it. It makes me feel wretched as it is. At first I thought the freedom of the social law out here was so fine. But I find it isn't. I tell you, this Sapello had no right to come imposing on us in the first place.

THE TEXAN

ELSIE. He never made any advances. Dan hunted him up and insisted that he visit us.

MILLIE. He did seem nice enough, but you'll admit now it was only pretense.

ELSIE. I'll admit nothing of the kind. I believe in giving a man his just dues. Buck Sapello is trying to make a man of himself. You mark my words, he has not always been what he seems, and some day he's going to prove his worth so forcibly that you and Dan won't be able to do enough for him.

(Enter DAN, CARL, MAJOR ALLEN TRUESDELL and ETHEL TRUESDELL, door L. C., and WESLEY, door R.)

DAN. Elsie! Millie! I want to present Major Truesdell and his daughter, Miss Ethel. (To MAJOR and ETHEL.) My wife and sister. (They exchange greetings, ETHEL kissing both MILLIE and ELSIE. DAN turns to WESLEY.) And this is a newcomer in the Pecos country—Mr. Doyle.

(WESLEY and MAJOR shake hands; ETHEL bows.)

MAJOR. We're charmed, I'm sure. Being so far from the fort, it seems good to know you have neighbors.

ETHEL. Your ranch is a regular oasis in our desert. When I found there were women so near, I threw my cap in the air and gave three cheers. I was so hungry to see something with skirts on, I just had to kiss you both.

MILLIE. Well, we're every bit as glad to see you, my dear, so ease your mind on that score.

MAJOR. We hope to have you ladies down at camp at least once a day. We'll try and keep you out of the guard-house.

ETHEL. And see that none of the officers run away with Miss Elsie.

ELSIE (laughing). Oh, I don't believe they'd want me.

ETHEL. Well, they just think they own me. Just because I'm little. (Pouts.) It's only a year and a half since they stopped calling me "Baby"—just think of that! I tell you, when you're owned by a whole regiment, it's hard to be dignified.

ELSIE. Well, I can't say that I agree with you, never having been owned by a regiment.

ETHEL. How delightfully independent you are. Well, you

don't have an orderly forever on duty at your heels.

MAJOR. Or a major to boss you.

(*Horse's hoofs are heard in the distance, faintly at first, then growing louder. They finally pause outside.*)

DAN. Elsie is independent, Miss Ethel—there's no getting around that. She has a will of her own, and I must say she exercises it pretty much all the time. Hello, who's that? I hope they haven't been running off any more of your horses, Major?

MAJOR. I hope not! (*Enter SWIFTWING, door at back. He has a note which he hands to MAJOR, saluting.*)
What's this? (*Tears it open.*)

SWIFTWING (*saluting again*). Dunno! Man say give to Major quick.

MAJOR (*reading note*). H'm! (*Strokes moustache fiercely.*)
H'm! (*To SWIFTWING.*) Who gave you this note?

SWIFTWING. Man on hoss. (*Points.*) Come from that-a-way.

MAJOR. A white man?

SWIFTWING. No, an Injun.

DAN. Is it anything serious, Major?

MAJOR. It looks that way, Inman. This note from one of my scouts would lead me to infer that the Mescalero Apaches have decided to join the Comanches against us.

CARL (*aside to WESLEY, with a wink*). Here's where we find if the Major's been ringing a bluff.

(*WESLEY smiles indulgently.*)

DAN. What will you do about it, Major?

MAJOR. Find Sapello and get his counsel in the matter.
(*To SWIFTWING.*) Do you know Buck Sapello when you see him?

SWIFTWING (*saluting—stiffly*). Yes, Major.

MAJOR. Then find him and tell him to come here at once.
You will likely catch him at the camp.

(*SWIFTWING salutes, and exits door at back. Sound of hoofs receding.*)

ETHEL. And is there really going to be a fight, papa?

MAJOR. I fear so. I won't be able to say positively until I have had a talk with Sapello. He has lived among

THE TEXAN

these Apaches and knows their nature. If he says fight, we fight. If he advises against it, we shall endeavor to accomplish the peaceful mission which brought us here.

CARL. I hope it'll be a scrap, myself.

ELSIE. You bloodthirsty imp! What good will it do you?

CARL. Lots. That is, if the Major'll have me. I can break the record killin' Injuns if he'll gimme a good gun.

DAN. The Major has no time to waste on boys.

CARL. Well, who's a boy? Ain't I sixteen, and if I'm sixteen ain't I a man? You make me tired! You think if I go away to fight, I won't come back to the ranch any more. Shows you don't know me.

MAJOR (*amused*). So you really want to fight Indians?

CARL (*embarrassed*). Yes, your highness—I—I mean Major, sir.

MAJOR. Well, could you pick out an Indian's heart at one hundred yards?

CARL. Could I? Well, I should hope to snicker! I—I mean yes, sir, I could. I shot a rooster's head off twice as far away as that oncet.

ELSIE (*laughing in protest*). Carl, you'll disgrace us!

CARL (*to MAJOR*). You believe me, don't you, sir?

MAJOR (*tugging at his moustache*). Humph! If you're as good at shooting as you are at telling stories, you should easily command a regiment.

CARL (*aside to WESLEY*). Now, wouldn't that rattle your window-panes?

WESLEY. I think Carl's intentions are good, Major. We should never discourage laudable ambitions. Carl may be a great general some day.

CARL. Thank you, sir, only I don't want to be a general. I want to be a big, roaring, slap-bang scout like Buck Sapello.

WESLEY. Say, it's Sapello, Sapello, wherever I go. It's all I've heard since I came here. I'd like to see this wonderful fellow.

ELSIE. You will probably have the pleasure in a very short time.

(*Enter BUCK, door L. C. Comes straight down to MAJOR.*)

BUCK (*saluting*). You wished to see me, sir?

THE TEXAN

(WESLEY and CARL are talking up R. and have not noticed BUCK's entrance.)

MAJOR. Yes, Sapello. I have received a rather startling piece of intelligence. Oh, by the way, this is my daughter. (BUCK and ETHEL bow.) Do you know Mr. Inman and his wife and sister? (BUCK nods.)

DAN. Yes, we've met before. Here, Doyle—(to WESLEY) meet Mr. Sapello. (To BUCK.) A friend of ours from the East, Sapello.

(WESLEY starts down stage hand outstretched, BUCK starts to meet him. They look into each other's eyes. BUCK stops with a cool stare. WESLEY gives a violent start.)

WESLEY (*aside*). My brother!

(He still holds out hand, but BUCK gives it a contemptuous glance and turns away. WESLEY retires up stage crestfallen. The MAJOR does not observe the slight, but the others exchange wondering glances.)

MAJOR (*to BUCK*). I have here a note, informing me that the Mescalero Apaches are on the war-path, and are thinking seriously of joining the Comanches against us. What would you advise?

BUCK. I would advise you to pay no attention to the note.

MAJOR. You think ——?

BUCK (*interrupting*). That the writer of that note didn't know what he was talking about.

MAJOR. Then there is no cause for apprehension?

BUCK. Not if the Mescaleros are handled rightly.

MAJOR. You have influence with them?

BUCK. In a way—yes.

MAJOR. And you will use it?

BUCK. If it becomes necessary. I would suggest that matters be allowed to stand as they are for the present, and that any Mescaleros that come our way be treated civilly.

MAJOR. Very well; I shall follow your suggestions. Come back in five minutes. I may have an important mission for you.

(BUCK salutes, bows to ladies and exits door L. C.)

ETHEL. Papa, your friend Sapello seems rather uncivil.

THE TEXAN

MAJOR. He means well. He is quite a character, and has been invaluable to us during the present Indian troubles. He is, I believe, averse to meeting strangers. Anyway, the men down at the camp don't take to him much. His work makes amends for that, however. He came in last night from a trip I don't believe any other white man could have made and got back alive. Yes; Sapello has his good points, and they're in decided demand up here just now.

DAN. You are right, Major. Sapello has many good points along with the bad ones. His greatest drawback is that he has been what is known out here as a "squaw man."

ETHEL. Well, surely that's enough to hear of him.

ELSIE. Don't say anything against him till you know you have reason, Miss Ethel. He saved my life once, for which I am very grateful.

ETHEL. Well, if you've taken him under your wing, I reckon his social success is assured.

ELSIE. He probably has few social aspirations, but he is entitled to a fair hearing.

MAJOR. Any man is entitled to that. You're true blue, Miss Elsie. I'm proud to know you.

ELSIE (*dropping a little curtsey*). Thank you, Major.

MILLIE. Don't, Major Truesdell, or Elsie's vanity will get the better of her.

MAJOR. Oh, I'll risk that, Mrs. Inman. But come, Ethel, my dear. We must be going. I have stayed longer than I intended already.

(MAJOR and ETHEL go up to door at back.)

ETHEL (*kissing ELSIE*). Good-bye, Miss Elsie. Good-bye, Mrs. Inman and every one. (*All bow, or say "Good-bye" to her.*) I just can't begin to tell you how happy I am to know there are other women up here in the hills. I shall count the minutes till you come down to the camp.

ELSIE. Don't fear—we shan't be long.

DAN. I'll see the Major off, Millie.

(MILLIE *nods*. *Exeunt MAJOR, ETHEL, DAN and CARL, door L. C.*)

MILLIE. Well, I must find Aunty Lou. If we visit the

THE TEXAN

camp to-morrow I'm going to take a large piece of roast venison for the Major's table.

(Exit MILLIE, door L. ELSIE, smiling, turns toward WESLEY.)

WESLEY. May I smoke?

ELSIE. Certainly. (WESLEY lights cigar.)

WESLEY. I beg your pardon—I do not mean to appear inquisitive, but—do you mind giving me a few particulars about this man, Sapello?

ELSIE. You are displaying rather a curious interest in Mr. Sapello, don't you think, Mr. Doyle? Suppose—suppose you ask him!

(Exit ELSIE, door L.)

WESLEY (looking after her). Humph! (He starts as if he would follow her, then goes thoughtfully up R. Pause. He is thinking.) And he refused to recognize me! (With a shrug.) Oh, well——!

(Exit, door R.)

(Enter SWIFTWING door at back.)

SWIFTWING (looking around, softly calling). Miss Elsie Inman—oh, Miss Elsie Inman! (No answer. He pauses in indecision.) I wonder where she be. Oh, Miss Elsie Inman!

(Enter ELSIE, door L.)

ELSIE. What is it, Swiftwing?

SWIFTWING (finger to lips in caution). Sh! A brave—one of my tribe—bring this from Devil's Mountain.

(Hands her note.)

ELSIE (tearing it open and reading). "Miss Elsie: I am sick. Have been snowed in three days without food. I send this by a friendly Apache. Do what you can for me. Your old friend, Davy McDougall." (Looks up.) This is terrible. Where is this Indian, Swiftwing?

SWIFTWING. Him outside. No can walk. Tired out. Cannot go back. Swiftwing, he go, Miss Elsie.

ELSIE. No. Listen. Davy McDougall taught me to ride and shoot, when I first came out here. He knows I'd do anything for him. But he and Dan had a little misunderstanding. That's why he sends to me. I am going to him myself. He may be sick enough to need nursing. Saddle my horse, and bring him around to the front of the house. Don't let any one see you. Understand?

SWIFTWING (*in tone of protest*). Yes, but Swiftwing he go too, Miss Elsie.

ELSIE. No. I forbid it. And, mind you, say nothing about this. Let them think I have ridden down to camp. Why—it's not so far—with a good horse.

(*She sticks note in her belt, but it falls to floor unobserved.*)

SWIFTWING (*with reluctance*). All right. Swiftwing do as you say.

(*Exits slowly, door L. C.*)

ELSIE. I must prepare some food while Swiftwing is saddling the horse, but I must not arouse Millie's suspicions, and I must avoid Aunty Lou.

(*Exits cautiously, door L.*)

(*There is a knock on door L. C. ELSIE reënters with bundle of food. The knock is repeated—she stops as if to answer it, then changes her mind, and tiptoeing R., exits door R. Enter CAPTAIN GEORGE HENDERSON, door L. C. He looks about.*)

CAPTAIN. Humph! All gone, apparently—just when I was expecting to have a little tête-à-tête with Miss Inman. I hear she's a stunning girl!

(*He goes to fire where he warms his hands. The door at back opens suddenly and BUCK enters.*)

BUCK (*surprised at seeing CAPTAIN*). Hello!

CAPTAIN (*sternly*). Sapello, what are you doing in this house?

BUCK (*coolly*). I might ask the same of you.

CAPTAIN. Curse your impudence! I—I—well, I'm looking for Major Truesdell.

BUCK. Perhaps.

CAPTAIN. What!

BUCK. Oh, I've heard the boys talking about the conquest you've been boasting you'd make when you met Miss Inman.

CAPTAIN. I tell you I'm looking for Major Truesdell. Have you seen him?

BUCK. You'll get no information from me.

CAPTAIN. Answer me civilly, or don't speak at all.

BUCK. I'll answer as I please. I'm not under your orders.

CAPTAIN. Look here! (*Goes up to BUCK—they glare at each other.*) You've done nothing but cause dissension since you joined the army at Fort Hancock.

BUCK. I might question that. But suppose I have—what of it?

CAPTAIN. I, for one, am getting tired of it.

BUCK. You know the alternative.

CAPTAIN. What do you mean?

BUCK. I'll let you guess it. Did you come here to question me?

CAPTAIN. I told you I came to find the Major.

BUCK. Well, he's not here, and I undertake to say that the people who live here don't want to see you.

CAPTAIN (*raging*). You—you—you insignificant —

BUCK (*interrupting*). In other words, they are likely to need the room you're standing in.

CAPTAIN. You dare talk this way to me! (*Raises his hand as if to strike. BUCK looks him in the eye.*) Why, I'll—I'll —

BUCK (*folding arms, calmly*). Well, why don't you?

CAPTAIN. I—I—I —

(*Splutters, so angry he cannot talk. BUCK takes hold of his upraised hand and forces it down to his side.*)

BUCK. You'll do nothing at all. You're a coward at heart, and you know it. I've been itching to get my hands on you ever since I saw you flog that young boy at the fort. You're an inhuman brute and I want you to know I think so.

CAPTAIN. I—I—Sapello, I'll — (*Interrupted.*)

BUCK. Oh, no, you won't. You'll get out of here, and in the future just leave me out of all your calculations.

THE TEXAN

If you don't you'll get into more trouble than you can manage.

CAPTAIN. Have you dared tell these women here that I flogged a boy?

BUCK. I hope it will not be necessary for me to mention you in their presence. (*Points.*) Now, there's the door. This house can't shelter us both at the same time.

CAPTAIN. I'll go when I get ready.

BUCK. You'll go now or I'll throw you out!

CAPTAIN (*looking at him a moment, deciding he means business*). You'll hear further from this!

BUCK. Go the limit!

(*The CAPTAIN'S hands twitch and his face is distorted with rage. He glares at BUCK an instant, then exits door L. C., slamming it. At the same instant WESLEY enters door R.*)

WESLEY. Buck! (*BUCK turns and coolly stares at him.*) Come, old man, don't act so ugly about it. Let me speak a few words and tell you what I came out here for.

BUCK (*sullenly*). I don't want to know.

WESLEY. You must listen, and grant me one favor, then I won't bother you further. Where is my wife? Where is Jennie, Buck?

BUCK. I won't tell you.

WESLEY. Please, Buck. I want to go back to her.

BUCK. No. Do you think after these years I'd do anything so foolish as to let you bother her again? I'll see you in blazes first. So you can hit the trail back East as soon as you've a mind to.

WESLEY. I shall never go back till I get what I came for.

BUCK. Then you'll stay out here forever! You'll have a chance to become what I have—an outlaw from civilization.

WESLEY. You are unjust to yourself.

BUCK. I'm not. I know—you don't.

WESLEY. But you are. (*Crosses to him.*) Listen, Buck! My repentance is true. I want to see Jennie and—and my child! I'm homesick for a sight of them. Now that I see my folly, it seems that you might change and

show that you have some feeling and know that other men have.

BUCK (*fiercely*). You're a nice one to talk. You married, and deserted within a year, as fine and true a little woman as ever lived. She and the baby that came afterward would have starved to death if I hadn't learned of it just in time. She's better off now without you. I told you if you ever went back to Jennie, I'd kill you, and I'll keep my vow.

WESLEY. But I love her, Buck—I swear I do!

BUCK. You said you did five years ago, yet you went off and forgot her.

(WESLEY *drops into chair at table, head in his arms, sobbing. Finally he rises and turns toward BUCK again.*)

WESLEY. Ah, I know, Buck! I've been punished every day since. I've tried to forget it all, but it nearly drove me mad. So I set out to find you. I hunted for months and never found a trace until—until to-day.

BUCK. It would have been better if you had never found me.

WESLEY. No. I have at least made you see that I wish to make amends. I've showed you that I want to win back the old faith you had in me before our parents died, and Jennie was left to our care.

BUCK. You can save your fine speeches. They're wasted on me. And don't you dare tell Miss Inman or any one else out here that we are brothers.

WESLEY. I won't, Buck. Why should I?

BUCK. You have a little way of doing things without reason. And don't go making eyes at Miss Inman. You're no more fit to associate with her than I am, and I'm willing to admit that that's saying about as little as a man can say for you.

(*Enter MILLIE, door L.*)

MILLIE. Oh, I beg your pardon! But have either of you gentlemen seen Elsie?

BUCK. She hasn't been in here during the past ten minutes, Mrs. Inman.

MILLIE. I can't imagine what's become of her. (*Sees note on floor. Picks it up—reads.*) Oh, this is terrible.

(*Both men start sympathetically toward her.*)

THE TEXAN

BUCK. Mrs. Inman, what is wrong?

MILLIE. This is a note to Elsie from Davy McDougall, her old trapper friend. He is ill on Devil's Mountain, and she must have gone to him. Just think, and in this storm! I fear the worst—I fear the worst! What can we do?

BUCK. Why, I'll go for her, Mrs. Inman.

MILLIE (*embarrassed*). Well, well—er—you—you might send some one if you will. I—I——

BUCK (*bitterly*). I see, Mrs. Inman, you don't want to trust her alone on the mountain with me. You fear the rumors that might creep out about her being with a man of my reputation. Very well, Mrs. Inman. I will send some one for her. You may tell Mr. Inman and the others, if you like, that I have sent some one who can be trusted to bring her home safe.

MILLIE. Oh, thank you, Mr. Sapello. I—I thought perhaps you would like to send some one—perhaps Swift-wing for her.

(*Hanging head as if half ashamed, she goes R.*)

WESLEY. Don't worry. Mr. Sapello will keep his promise, I am sure.

MILLIE. All right. But—oh, I wish Dan were here!

(*Pressing handkerchief to her eyes, she exits R.*)

WESLEY (*quickly, to BUCK*). You must let me go on this journey. It will be far better for a white man to make it. These Indians are all treacherous.

BUCK. Do you reckon for a moment that a man who deserted one girl in the hills of Virginia could be entrusted with another in the Sierra Diablos?

WESLEY. But, Buck, I —— (*Pause.*)

BUCK. That's enough! A white man is going for her—myself! If I find her, I reckon you'll hear of it. If I don't—— (*Slowly and tenderly.*) If I don't, tell Mr. and Mrs. Inman that I sent a man who would give his life for her—ay, a thousand if he had them!

CURTAIN

(*Second curtain:—BUCK seen going out door, WESLEY standing hands extended toward him in a pleading attitude.*)

ACT II

SCENE.—*Interior of cabin used as temporary guard-house of the army. Large, rough-hewn door, c., at back. Cot, with comforter and pillow, down R. Stool near by. Table c., on which is a lighted candle, which sheds a rather dim light through the room. Down L. is a rough chair or bench.*

(BUCK is discovered seated on stool near cot, a dejected look on his face. CAPTAIN'S gruff tones are heard outside immediately after rise of curtain. He enters, a scowl on his face, followed by TROOPER MURPHY, who carries a carbine. CAPTAIN pauses c., and looks at BUCK. MURPHY stands near door, the butt of his weapon resting on the floor.)

CAPTAIN (to BUCK). Well, now that you're in the guard-house, perhaps you'll come to your senses and realize that I mean business. (BUCK shrugs his shoulders and looks at CAPTAIN with a sneer.) Tell me where you spent the night!

BUCK (*sullenly*). That's my business. I refuse to answer.

CAPTAIN. Eh? You —

BUCK. I said I refused! Is that plain?

CAPTAIN. You sit there and defy me after what I have told you?

BUCK. Yes.

CAPTAIN. You had best think twice before making your final answer.

BUCK. If I thought a dozen times the result would be the same.

CAPTAIN. Where's your half-breed, Swiftwing?

BUCK. I don't see how his whereabouts can concern you. He is my Indian, and neither he nor I belong to the army in the sense you do. We can leave camp when it suits us, and it's nobody's business. I don't mind telling you, however, that I sent him down to Van Horn.

CAPTAIN. For what purpose?

THE TEXAN

BUCK. You're too inquisitive.

CAPTAIN. For what purpose, I say?

BUCK. My own purpose.

CAPTAIN. What business?

BUCK. My own business.

CAPTAIN. Yes, the same business that kept you away from camp all night, I suppose?

BUCK. The very same.

CAPTAIN. Well, since you refuse to answer, you may, until such a time as I have had an opportunity of investigating your very suspicious absence, remain here under arrest.

BUCK. On what charge?

CAPTAIN. You know as well as I.

BUCK. I know nothing of the sort. Your men made no charge against me—simply said I was under arrest by your orders. Then you come and ask me to explain my whereabouts last night, and I refuse, because it's none of your business.

CAPTAIN. Your assumption of injured innocence is delightful. You play your hand very well for a horse thief.

BUCK (*springing toward him*). Take that back or I'll kill you!

(CAPTAIN *covers him with his revolver*. BUCK *pauses*. MURPHY *raises his gun and aims it at BUCK, who falls back after a moment*.)

CAPTAIN. I'll explain when I get good and ready. And don't make any more attempts at violence, or they'll take you out of here on a stretcher—and I don't want that—it might hurt the stretcher! (*With a cruel laugh he turns*.) Murphy!

MURPHY (*saluting*). Yes, sir.

CAPTAIN. Have you the rope?

MURPHY. Yes, sir.

(*Reaches outside the door and gets it*.)

CAPTAIN. Bind Sapello's hands in front of him. That will be indignity enough for the present.

MURPHY. Yes, sir.

THE TEXAN

(He binds BUCK's hands, the latter submitting with rather bad grace.)

BUCK (to CAPTAIN). I suppose you feel safer now?

(MURPHY returns to his place by the door.)

CAPTAIN. I wish simply to show you the futility of further resistance.

BUCK. Well, I don't know what your game is, but you're up to some dirty work, I'll be bound, and I'm ready to be under arrest just to see the fur fly when the Major returns from down the valley.

CAPTAIN. Yes, he will have an abundance of sympathy for a horse thief.

BUCK. Say, would you mind telling me whose horse I stole? Being the party most concerned, I think I'm entitled to that information.

CAPTAIN. Of course, you don't remember how you and your Apache friends ran off half the horses belonging to Troop K last night?

BUCK. You don't know what you're talking about. I don't believe an Apache ever touched any of your horses last night, and I know very well I never did.

CAPTAIN. We're wasting words. If you didn't run off the horses, you'll find no trouble about explaining your absence last night. And even this much explanation is more than your insolence deserves.

BUCK. Again I say it's an infernal lie. No Apache ever touched your stock. If there are horses missing they were run off by the thieving Comanches and their white friends, and if you interfere with the Apaches at this stage of the game, or try to put the blame on them for this, you'll find yourself in trouble.

CAPTAIN. When I need your advice I'll ask for it.

BUCK. You'll get it when I'm in the mind to give it to you —put that in your pipe and smoke it.

CAPTAIN. Well, I'm going to make it mighty warm for you from now on.

BUCK. I'm willing to take my chances on that. I can easily satisfy Major Truesdell of my innocence, if I care to.

CAPTAIN. Then why not satisfy me?

BUCK. I don't care to. You'll have enough trouble hold-

THE TEXAN

ing yourself level with these Apaches, pending the Major's return. There's been just a suspicion of trouble with them, but affairs have passed the crisis, and the Apaches are only awaiting the Major's return to camp to send us word that they will join us against the Comanches if needed. The messenger is likely to come with that message at any time, and it will be a bad thing for our cause if he isn't received in this camp as a friend.

CAPTAIN (*with a sneer*). Our cause, eh? What interest have you in the cause?

BUCK. Not a great deal, I'll admit, except that I hope to save a great many lives of settlers here in the valley—lives that would be lost in a useless fight.

CAPTAIN. You acknowledge then that you don't consider the cause of the whites your cause?

BUCK. Yes, I'll acknowledge that, so make me a horse thief on it if you can. I'd work for the red men quicker than I would for a man like you. But there's nothing to be gained by fighting for them. They'd only be exterminated in the end. I've been a good friend to Uncle Sam, but it's been to save innocent lives. It's been to have peace—not war. Now you've got my ideas in a nutshell.

CAPTAIN. Yes, very plainly expressed. And to show your entire sympathy with the red fiends you helped them steal our horses.

BUCK (*starting forward*). Oh, if I had you five minutes —

(*There is a rap on door. CAPTAIN turns, just as MURPHY opens it.*)

(*Enter CARL.*)

CAPTAIN. Well, my boy, what is it?

CARL (*saluting*). Mrs. Inman says, sir, do you know where Mr. Inman and Mr. Doyle are, sir? They've been gone almost all day, and the women folks is worried, sir.

CAPTAIN. They've gone up into the hills with some of our troops.

CARL. Up into the hills!

CAPTAIN. Yes, and as there's considerable danger connected with the venture, I'd advise you to say nothing

THE TEXAN

about it. Tell the ladies they are out on the range with the cattle and will return safely to-night or to-morrow morning.

CARL. Yes, sir—thank you, sir. (*Sees BUCK.*) Oh, hello, Mr. Sapello.

BUCK. Hello, boy!

CARL. I didn't know you were here. They're all wondering up at the house what's become of you. The Indian you sent found Miss Elsie all right. (*BUCK starts.*)

BUCK. The—the—er—yes—yes.

CARL. I reckon you're glad to hear that?

BUCK. Indeed I am, youngster. Did—er—that is, did she say anything about the—er—Indian?

CARL. No, sir, 'cept that he treated her mighty well.

BUCK. Did she say that?

CARL. Yes, sir. But you'd better come up and let her tell you about that herself.

BUCK. I can't, boy. I'm under arrest.

CARL. Under arrest? You under arrest, sir?

BUCK. Yes.

CARL. Well, who in the dickens did that?

BUCK (*nodding toward CAPTAIN*). It!

CARL. What you under arrest for?

BUCK. Merely a whim, as near as I can find out.

CAPTAIN. He was arrested for horse stealing, my boy.

CARL. Horse stealing! I don't believe it.

CAPTAIN. He was absent from camp early this morning when our horses were run off, and refuses to explain his whereabouts. We believe he was with the Apaches when they ran off the stock.

CARL (*backing slowly toward the door*). Well, I don't believe it, and you'll find there's lots of other people don't, neither. (*To BUCK.*) Oh, I'm very sorry, sir, but I think it will come out all right.

BUCK (*significantly*). It will turn out all wrong for some one.

CARL (*jerking his thumb toward CAPTAIN*). For—it?

BUCK (*smiling*). Yes, for—it.

CAPTAIN (*half angrily to CARL*). You're an impudent young rascal. Now get along and tell the ladies what I told you.

CARL. Oh, I'll tell 'em, all right. But I'm sorry now that I saluted you. Good-bye, Mr. Buck.

THE TEXAN

BUCK. Good-bye, boy.

(CARL turns his back on CAPTAIN, and exits, door c.)

CAPTAIN. Murphy, I'm going up into the hills to see if I can find out what's become of that party. I may not be back before morning, but relief will be sent you on my return.

MURPHY (*saluting*). All right, sir.

CAPTAIN (*to* BUCK). When you decide to tell me what you were doing last night, you can send for me and I'll come to you.

BUCK. Then you'll never come.

CAPTAIN. If I don't—so much the worse for you.

BUCK. That's all right—your room is always better than your company.

(*He is still on stool and not looking at CAPTAIN.*)

CAPTAIN. I'll make you regret that speech!

(BUCK laughs. CAPTAIN grinds his teeth in anger and exits door c.)

MURPHY (*in an undertone to* BUCK, *when the door closes*).
Better be quiet, sir.

(Exit, after CAPTAIN.)

BUCK (*as* MURPHY goes). I don't reckon I'm apt to raise much disturbance. (*Rolls a cigarette.*) This is a pretty mess, but I'll make that stupid fool, Henderson, wish he'd never been born. The Apaches have got to be handled with kid gloves, and I'm about the only man at present who can do it, as Major Truesdell knows. I must find out about this. (*Going to door, he raps.*) Murphy!

MURPHY (*outside*). What is it?

BUCK. Come in here, will you?

MURPHY. Against orders, sir.

BUCK. Hang the orders! Don't stand out there and freeze all night. I want to learn more of this business. (*MURPHY peeks in at door.*) I've got to know the particulars of this affair before the Major returns.

MURPHY. Captain said I wasn't to talk to you, sir.

BUCK. Don't stand telling me what the Captain said.

THE TEXAN

He's not responsible for what he says. (MURPHY chuckles.) Come in.

(BUCK seats himself on stool. MURPHY hesitates a moment, then enters, rather cautiously, carbine in readiness for use. When he sees BUCK intends no violence, he lowers the hammer and stands c., facing BUCK, the butt of the weapon on the floor.)

MURPHY. What is it you want to know, sir?

BUCK. About the theft of these horses, of course.

MURPHY. Sure, you're a queer horse thief, to want me to tell you how you got away with the animals.

BUCK. I'm supposed to know all about it, according to Henderson, but just to pass the time away suppose you refresh my memory.

MURPHY (*pulling tobacco from pocket, he takes a generous chew, then offers it to BUCK*). Have some, sir? (BUCK makes a gesture of dissent.) There ain't very much to tell, sir. Inman's men had been around pretty late after some stray cattle, and for a while we thought it was them. It was about one o'clock in the morning, and the snow coming so you could hardly see your hand before your face. The sentry heard a big racket in the corral where the horses were tied, and thinking some of Inman's cattle had got in there and were causing disorder, he took a lantern and went to run them out. He had barely reached the end of the corral, sir, when some one knocked him on the head. He fell and his gun went off. It gave the alarm, and we made an investigation. We found over forty head of horses had been run off through the snow. Then this morning Captain Henderson sent out a party to look for the Apaches. That was the one Inman and Doyle went with, sir.

BUCK. They're ambushed, most likely. Had Henderson no motive in sending out troops other than to get revenge for the stolen horses?

MURPHY (*with some hesitation*). Well, yes, sir. I don't think I've any right to tell you, though, sir—I——

BUCK (*interrupting*). Nonsense! I've got to know. Go on.

MURPHY. Well, sir, Tommy Doolan shot a young buck this morning out on the ridge yonder. He called to

THE TEXAN

him to halt, but the Injun paid no attention. Then Tommy, being riled because his horse was among the stolen, just let drive.

BUCK. Huh! Kill him?

MURPHY. Deader'n a door-nail, sir!

BUCK. Huh! Where was this?

MURPHY. A mile to the north, sir—you know where that ridge is? (BUCK *nods*.) It seems there was other Injuns with the buck, and when Tommy shot him they come out of the trees and opened up on our boys.

BUCK. There was a fight, then?

MURPHY. Yes, sir—sort of a scrimmage. Our boys chased the Injuns as far as they could see them.

BUCK. And the buck Tommy Doolan shot?

MURPHY. They buried him where he fell, sir.

BUCK. And the troops this morning set off on the trail of the Apaches?

MURPHY. Yes, sir.

BUCK. How many in the party?

MURPHY. About twenty, I should say, sir.

BUCK. Poor fools! That settles them! And that's where Doyle and Inman have gone, eh? Fools—fools, all of them. I wish I were free! I wish I were free! (*There is a knock on door at back.*) Hello, who's that? (MURPHY *opens it, and ELSIE enters, enveloped in a long cloak.*) Elsie!

(BUCK *speaks half aside, perplexed.*)

MURPHY (*removing cap*). Sure, what can I do for you, miss? It's a pretty bad night for the likes of you to be abroad.

ELSIE. I came to ask a favor. Let me speak to Mr. Sapello a few moments alone.

MURPHY (*fingering his cap nervously*). Well, now, you see, miss, I—I—— (*Interrupted.*)

ELSIE. I know it's against orders, but surely you're not afraid of me. I am Miss Inman, you know, and I have an important letter and message for him.

MURPHY. Well, I s'pose there's no harm in lettin' you talk to him, miss. But be mighty careful. I'll be right outside the door in case you want me. All you've got to do is yell.

ELSIE. Thank you, but there will be no trouble.

THE TEXAN

MURPHY. Very well, miss.

(MURPHY *exits slowly, closing door.* BUCK *does not look at ELSIE until door is shut, then he springs quickly up.*)

BUCK. Why are you here, Elsie?

ELSIE (*laughing*). To pay a visit—what else?

BUCK. Come—this is serious. Don't joke.

ELSIE. Well, I'm here, and I did not come for fun, and I've no time to lose. I have brought you a letter. Here it is. (*Gives it.*)

BUCK. Then you've seen Swiftwing?

ELSIE. He just came in from Van Horn with the mail. Read the letter to allay suspicions. (BUCK *tears it open.*) We'll let the guard see.

(*She throws open door.* MURPHY *stops outside and looks in.*)

MURPHY. It's all right, miss—I'm right here.

ELSIE. Thank you. (*Closes door.*) He'll think the letter is all that brought me here. Now, listen. You must get out of this. Your horse is at the door. I rode him down. Do you think you can make a dash for it and get away?

BUCK. I might, but why should I run away?

ELSIE. Well, for several reasons, perhaps, but principally because the troops that set out for the hills this morning, with Dan and Mr. Doyle among them, are hemmed in in that death-trap on Blue Moon Mountain, right back of the cave that's on your old ranch property. I don't know how long they've been there, but they are completely surrounded by Indians—Apaches—who are only waiting for daylight to come to murder them.

BUCK (*with a start*). You must be mistaken. The Apaches are not hostile.

ELSIE. Yesterday they were not. To-day it is different. Did you hear about the young buck Tommy Doolan shot?

BUCK. Yes, a Comanche—Murphy told me.

ELSIE. Buck, that Indian was not a Comanche, but an Apache!

BUCK. What!

ELSIE. Yes, the son of Gray Eagle, coming to this camp

THE TEXAN

with a message of good will and peace. It's no wonder the Apaches are enraged.

BUCK. This is terrible! Who told you?

ELSIE. Swiftwing. He met an Indian trapper who passed the Blue Moon this afternoon. He says the white soldiers are blaming you for causing all the trouble. He thinks if it hadn't been for the theft of the horses last night, everything would have been all right.

BUCK. It's all their own fault. If they'd watched the thieving Comanches, like I told them, there would have been a different tale to tell.

(He paces fiercely up and down.)

ELSIE. Yes, but it will be hard to make the men believe that.

BUCK. I don't care whether they believe it or not.

ELSIE *(laying her hand on his arm)*. Yes, you do, Buck, and you must get out of here and save them. The ravine where they are hemmed in must be right near the mouth of the cave. By going in from the other side you can reach the ravine and lead those men out. Remember, Dan and Mr. Doyle are among them!

BUCK *(thoughtfully)*. Yes, that's right—Wesley Doyle's among them.

ELSIE. Lead them out, Buck. It's your only salvation. If they succeed in getting away without you, and return and find you here, they will shoot you down without trial.

BUCK. A nice lot they are! But I'll do it for your sake—partly for your sake—partly for my own. And this is what you came for—to make me ride to Blue Moon Mountain?

ELSIE. Yes. *(She draws knife from her belt and cuts the ropes on his wrists.)* I wanted to help you out of this trouble, Buck, and by saving you, save my brother and my friends. *(She reels suddenly as if faint. He puts his arms around her. She sighs and smiles.)* That's better.

BUCK. It's hard to believe you're doing this for me, little girl. Why, you didn't even stop to think whether I deserved shooting or not.

ELSIE. Don't speak of that part of it. When I let myself

THE TEXAN

think I feel as if I am growing crazy, and a crazy woman might handicap you some just now. Here!

(She throws off cloak, displaying a belt containing cartridges and two revolvers, which she takes off and hands to him.)

BUCK. Elsie, you're a great girl!

(He readjusts belt and puts it on.)

ELSIE. I'm glad you think so, Buck. It's the first time I've ever armed you and sent you away to battle. It may be the last. Bring my friends back safe, Buck. And—and—come back yourself!

BUCK *(kissing her)*. Then I am first to you, little girl.

(She nods, trying to keep back the tears.)

ELSIE. Nearer than all the rest, Buck. They tried to prejudice me against you, but I can't believe them.

BUCK. Never mind that. You've shown by your actions to-night how much you care for me, and I'll try my best to prove worthy. If you know how to pray, pray for me to-night—for me and the men in that death-trap. I am going now. Here is the letter you brought. *(Hands her letter.)* If I never come back and Wesley Doyle does, tell him things are right in the East at last, and that he can go back. Tell him I believe in him. I will come back if I live and I'll try to live long enough for that. One more kiss!

(As he takes her in his arms again, MURPHY enters.)

MURPHY *(covering BUCK with rifle)*. You cur—to lay hands on a lady!

(BUCK knocks up the rifle, and strikes MURPHY on the head with a revolver. MURPHY falls, the revolver flies out of BUCK's hand onto the floor. He does not stop, but rushes out, closing door.)

ELSIE. Oh, he's gone—he's gone!

MURPHY *(springing up)*. Yes, but I'll get him yet, miss!

(He seizes his gun and starts for the door, but ELSIE at the same moment picks up the revolver dropped by BUCK and, back against the door, bars the way.)

THE TEXAN

ELSIE (*covering* MURPHY). Stand where you are. He has gone in a good cause!

(*Sound of hoofs outside, growing fainter.*)

CURTAIN

(*Second curtain :—ELSIE shown kneeling by couch, her face buried in her hands. MURPHY at door, looking off.*)

ACT III

SCENE.—*A ravine on Blue Moon Mountain, some hours later. At back may be seen the side of the mountain, rising precipitately. In c. at back is the mouth of a cave, cleverly concealed by long hanging vines. Set rocks R. L., and down c. It is moonlight, and snow covers the ground.*

(At rise of curtain the following are discovered: CAPTAIN, WESLEY and DAN, well down c. Grouped to L. are LIEUTENANT THOMAS PURDY and the soldiers of the troop. They have arms, but no horses. Indian yells are heard in the distance, and continue for several seconds after curtain is up.)

CAPTAIN. Hear the red devils! I tell you, Inman, I got here just in time.

DAN. In time to save your hides, perhaps. You say the Indians trailed you hotly?

CAPTAIN. So hotly, and in such great numbers, I hardly know what we should have done had we not discovered this spot by accident. It may be lucky for you that we were able to find you. Our united forces can make a stronger resistance.

DAN. At that, it only adds a few more scalps to the red men's belts.

CAPTAIN. Oh, it may not be as bad as that. We can tell the worst before morning. I wish the red fiends would keep up their noise. Somehow, when they stop, it seems as still as death—as if, not satisfied with surrounding us, they were creeping up to catch us unawares. *(He shudders.)*

DAN. We're in a hole all right—no getting around that.

WESLEY. And a bad one. It was foolhardy in us to come up here.

DAN. But it can't be helped. There's only one man who could have prevented this.

LIEUTENANT *(coming down and joining them)*. Who, for instance?

THE TEXAN

DAN. Buck Sapello.

LIEUTENANT. What! I suppose that's intended as a criticism of the way I managed the pursuit of the horse thieves?

DAN. Not necessarily, but — (Pause.)

LIEUTENANT (*rather hotly*). Well, anyway, I don't agree with you in regard to Sapello. He was more than likely getting ready for this when he ran off the horses the other night.

WESLEY. Take that back, confound you!

(*Grasps him by the throat.*)

LIEUTENANT (*choking*). I—I —

WESLEY. Buck Sapello is no horse thief! Take it back, or I'll save the Indians the trouble of using their hatchets on you!

LIEUTENANT. I—I'll take—it—back!

(*WESLEY releases him—they glare at each other.*)

WESLEY. And don't make any more remarks like that.

LIEUTENANT. I won't—not now. This is no place for an argument—much less a fight. So I'll swallow what I said for the present. We'll settle the question when we get out of here—if we ever do.

WESLEY. At any time and place you wish.

(*The LIEUTENANT walks back to his men.*)

CAPTAIN. I'm surprised to find you picking a quarrel, Doyle—especially about such a worthless object as this Sapello.

WESLEY. Say, you heard what I said to him. (*Points to LIEUTENANT.*) Well, that goes for you, too!

CAPTAIN. You can't scare me. I say again, find something better than Sapello to waste your words on. (*Turns.*) And that means you, too, Lieutenant Purdy. Not that I've any doubt that the man is guilty —

WESLEY. Stop right there! (*Going up, he looks CAPTAIN squarely in the eyes.*) You may hold what opinion you will of him, but you can't tell me he's a horse thief.

CAPTAIN. But I can!

WESLEY. Not and live!

THE TEXAN

(*They glare at each other.*)

CAPTAIN (*after a pause*). I always speak my convictions.

WESLEY. Well, you're not in a position to judge Buck Sapello, and until you are, don't call him a thief.

Now, I've warned you for the last time.

CAPTAIN. I know in my own mind he is guilty, but I'll keep still until I can prove it to your satisfaction.

WESLEY. That you'll never be able to do, so things look mighty unpleasant for you.

(BUCK *enters quickly and silently through vines at back, letting them fall in place. He is not observed.*)

CAPTAIN. I refuse to discuss the matter further. I am in command here, Doyle.

BUCK (*stepping down between them*). You're wrong there, Captain Henderson. I am in command here!

CAPTAIN (*surprised—turning*). Eh? Who——?

BUCK. Oh, you know me, all right—it hasn't been many hours since you saw me.

DAN. By heaven, it's Sapello!

WESLEY. Buck!

CAPTAIN. What are you doing here?

BUCK. That you'll find out soon enough.

WESLEY (*grasping his hand*). But why did you come into this death-trap?

BUCK. To get you fellows out, unless—(*eyeing CAPTAIN coolly*) unless Captain Henderson still disputes my right of command.

CAPTAIN. I do dispute it, curse you!

BUCK. That's all the good it will do you.

CAPTAIN. How did you get out of the guard-house?

BUCK. By overpowering the guard.

CAPTAIN. That only adds another to the many offenses chalked up against you.

BUCK. Do you know that I hold your life, and the lives of these other men, in the palm of my hand?

CAPTAIN. I don't believe it!

BUCK. Unless I say the word, you will never leave this place alive.

CAPTAIN. Then, loving me as you do, I suppose you'll never say the word.

BUCK. Yes, I will. I wouldn't leave a dog in a place like this.

THE TEXAN

CAPTAIN. How did you get in?

BUCK. By the same way that you'll go out. (*Turns to the men.*) You fellows want to leave this hole, don't you?

MEN. Yes, yes. You bet we do, etc.

BUCK. Where are your horses?

DAN. Huddled together at the other end of the ravine.

BUCK. They can't go where I am going to take you any-way. You'll have to leave them.

CAPTAIN. I refuse to desert the horses.

BUCK. Just what I expected from a man of your disposition. If these men are kept here till daylight by your commands, I'll not be responsible for their deaths. I'm here to get them out, and you, too, if you want to come.

CAPTAIN. Oh, I'll come, all right.

BUCK. I thought maybe you'd decide to. You haven't the nerve to stay if we'd let you.

CAPTAIN. Well, I'm going to have the poor horses shot—we'll leave only the carcasses.

BUCK. We've no time for that sort of work. The shots would be heard and the Apaches wouldn't wait until morning to celebrate their feast. It serves you right to lose your horses for letting them get into such a trap as this.

LIEUTENANT (*approaching him*). I suppose that's thrown at me. Well, I'll have you understand ——

(*Interrupted.*)

BUCK. If you open your head again to me I'll take you across my knee and spank you.

LIEUTENANT. I—I ——

(*Pauses, then hastily withdraws.*)

DAN. How do you propose to get us out of here, Sapello?

BUCK. Through a secret exit, known only to myself—the way I came in. This ravine is on an old claim I staked out when I first came to the Southwest, five years ago.

DAN. And you came all the way up here to give us the benefit of your knowledge? That's what I call a mighty white thing to do. Here's my hand on that!

THE TEXAN

BUCK (*refusing it*). That's all right, Inman. I'm glad for old times' sake that you were moved by such a friendly impulse, but I reckon it would be pretty low to let you take me on false pretenses.

DAN. Oh, come, now, that's all right, Sapello.

BUCK. No; it's not all right. I haven't been acquitted of horse stealing yet, and that's about the most low-lived trade a man can turn to in this country.

DAN. Oh, to the devil with the horse business! This clears that as far as we're concerned. Doesn't it, boys?

(*Turns.*)

MEN. Yes, yes. Sure it does, etc.

BUCK. Well, it happens that you fellows haven't the power to settle the matter. Come now. I left some pine torches in a cave not far from here. I don't want any of you to strike a light after you reach the other entrance. I'll show you the way, and you'd better make a bee-line for camp. The fog may hide you till sunup, but after that—look out! These Apaches have a knack of seeing a long way.

DAN. But surely you're coming with us?

BUCK. Well, no. You see, I've got a horse waiting for me in the cave back there—and anyway I'm not ready to leave.

WESLEY. You must come, Buck.

BUCK. No; I want to think this matter over. Thanks to Mr. Tommy Doolan and his rifle, my work isn't over yet.

CAPTAIN. I suppose you're sore because he shot that young buck down on the ridge near camp. Well, we gave the Indian a decent burial.

BUCK. Yes, and I dug him up.

CAPTAIN. You dug him up? What for?

BUCK. To furnish you with convincing proof of what a consummate ass you had made of yourself. Do you remember what I told you in the guard-house about a message of good will the Apaches were sending to our camp?

CAPTAIN. Yes, but it hasn't come yet, as anybody knows of. Instead we get this.

BUCK. Hasn't come yet! (*There is fine scorn in his tones.*) Why, it had already come when I was telling

you about it, only you didn't have sense enough to know it. Do you see this? (*Holds up paper.*) Well, that's a message of peace from the Apache tribe; it's an offer to help our troops against the Comanches! That is the result that Major Truesdell has been hoping for—it represents the sum total of my work since coming into the hills. Success within our grasp, and ruined by a dunce of an army officer who should but don't know his business!

CAPTAIN. I don't understand you.

BUCK. That message was sent by Gray Eagle, the biggest chief of the Apache tribe, and the messenger was Gray Eagle's son, Snowcap, the future chief of his people. And Doolan shot him down like a dog, when he bore a flag of truce, then fired on his comrades when they dared try to avenge his death. I wouldn't have blamed them if they'd scalped every mother's son of you!

CAPTAIN (*humiliated*). In heaven's name, Sapello, are you speaking the truth?

(*In the stress of his excitement he puts his hand on BUCK'S shoulder. BUCK shakes it off.*)

BUCK. Take your hand away! I don't want to be polluted by the touch of such as you. Now, here's the paper; when you get to the light, read it, then give it to Major Truesdell with an account of this whole affair. And now, let the fellows who stripped Snowcap's body of its ornaments dig up everything they've got of his, and waste no time about it either. (*There is a shuffling of feet among the men.*) Come on, you fellows! Don't stand like a pack of idiots! File past me here and drop them in my hat, and see that you produce every one. (*They do so.*) A nice clean-handed lot of soldiers you are, without grit enough to hold up a train or rob a mail coach, but with plenty for robbing the body of a poor dead boy.

LIEUTENANT. Well, you needn't blame the whole squad, Sapello; Tommy Doolan took these things from the buck after he shot him.

BUCK. Certainly it was after he shot him. He hadn't the nerve to attempt it before.

LIEUTENANT. Well, there's no use cursing him, for he was

THE TEXAN

buried back there in the ravine. The Apaches finished him.

BUCK. And saved me the trouble. (*Walking back to the mouth of the cave, he pulls vines away.*) Through that hole, now, every one of you, and light your torches once you're inside. (*They go, led by LIEUTENANT.*) Go straight through to the other side of the hill. You can't miss the exit. As soon as you come out on the other side you'll know where you are.

(*As he finishes, CAPTAIN crawls through, leaving only DAN and WESLEY.*)

DAN. I wish you'd come with us, Sapello.

BUCK. No, Inman—my work isn't finished yet.

DAN. Then good-bye, and good luck.

(*Exit after others.*)

WESLEY (*at entrance, taking BUCK's hand*). You're not really going to stay here, are you, Buck?

BUCK. I've got to. There's work to do. It doesn't matter much about me, anyway. I—— (*Interrupted.*)

WESLEY. But it does matter, Buck. I can't afford to lose you now when you're beginning to realize that I'm in earnest in my repentance. Come with us, won't you?

BUCK. No; don't urge me. I've a duty to perform. But say, there's a lady down in the valley I treated pretty badly in the guard-house last night.

WESLEY. You don't mean Miss Inman?

BUCK. That's just who I mean.

WESLEY. You say you treated her badly. Why, I don't—— (*Interrupted.*)

BUCK. I mean this. She was good enough to ride over to the guard-house and bring me a letter. Swiftwing brought it from Van Horn, and it concerns you deeply. I told her to give it to you if you got out of here alive. Well, you know they might think she connived at my escape, but you know very well, old man, whether she would do a thing like that. But I took her revolver from her, overpowered the sentry, sprang into the saddle of her horse, and rode like the wind. I don't want the people in the valley to get the impression she countenanced my escape. Tell them what I've told you.

THE TEXAN

WESLEY. Be sure I shall. As for Miss Inman, you need never fear her judgment of you.

BUCK. I've been pretty hard on you, Wes—pretty hard. All at once I've realized it, and all the time you've been thinking a heap better of me than I deserved. But I won't stand in your way any longer. The letter Miss Inman brought me was from Jennie. It will explain it all. If I should happen to come back ——

(Interrupted.)

WESLEY. Come back! Why, where are you going?

BUCK. I'm going to take the dead body of that Indian boy, Snowcap, and hit the trail for the Apache camp, to see if I can't find a way to patch up this blunder.

WESLEY. Oh, that's foolhardy—it's dangerous!

BUCK. Yes. But if there's any way of doing it I can do it. If I get out of it alive, I'll be back to stand trial for stealing horses. But if I'm not back on the evening of the third day, you'd better take the Inmans and the whole blamed army and get out of the valley, for the Apaches won't show any quarter. Now, good-bye, old man; keep up heart, and tell Miss Inman to give you that letter.

WESLEY *(greatly affected)*. Buck—my God, man! I can't leave you like this!

BUCK. You can and you must.

(Pushes him, and wrings his hand.)

WESLEY. Then may God be with you and bring you back safely.

(Exit into cave.)

(BUCK stands a few seconds in silence, then walking down to rock C., he pulls tobacco and paper from his pocket and rolls a cigarette. Then, rising suddenly, he puffs away deliberately in deep thought, then makes a gesture indicative of impatience.)

BUCK. It ain't such a lot of fun to be a hero!

CURTAIN

(Second curtain:—BUCK, still smoking, moves up to cave, parts vines and exit.)

ACT IV

SCENE.—MAJOR'S headquarters, a rough cabin interior. Rude fireplace L., before which are a couple of stools or chairs. R. are two windows, with rough bench beneath. Cupboard up R. C. Table and chairs down R. C. Doors L. first and L. C. at back. On table are cigars, a pitcher, and several glasses.

(At rise of curtain MAJOR and CAPTAIN are discovered seated at table. ETHEL is in chair before the fireplace, reading. The time is late afternoon.)

CAPTAIN. You say, Major, the horse was left at Van Horn by a white renegade of the Comanches?

MAJOR. Yes; the fellow rode in there the morning after we missed our stock. He got drunk, picked a row and some cowboy put a hole through him.

CAPTAIN. Did they bury him down there?

MAJOR. Yes, and then it was discovered that the horse had a brand on his hip. So they turned him over to me as I came through. It was one of those big bays that belong in Troop K.

CAPTAIN. Well, it's a queer business.

MAJOR. Yes, it is.

CAPTAIN. I can't quite understand it.

MAJOR. Well, it only goes to show that in all probability the stock was not run off by Apaches after all.

ETHEL (*rising and laying book in chair*). Then it certainly wasn't Buck Sapello who stole the horses?

MAJOR. Sapello? Nonsense! If that man's a horse thief, I'm no judge of human nature.

CAPTAIN. But, Major, he ——— (*Interrupted.*)

MAJOR. I won't believe it until more proof has been forthcoming. I mean to look into the affair at once.

ETHEL. Well, I know he isn't a horse thief, and so do you, papa. Common sense tells us that. A man wouldn't ride mile after mile on a cold night to rescue a squad of men who in their minds had condemned him, and were ready to string him up to the nearest tree.

THE TEXAN

MAJOR. I think you're right. There is no proof that will weigh against courage like that.

ETHEL. And then they say he took the body of that young Indian Tommy Doolan shot and went over the hills to the Apache village to make peace with the tribe for the misdeeds of others. Show me another man who would do it if you can!

MAJOR. He's a man in a thousand, and it is utterly absurd to connect him with the theft of the horses.

CAPTAIN. But, Major, he scarcely denies it. (ETHEL turns up her nose and goes back to her seat at fire.) He swore the Apaches did not do it, but ——

(*Interrupted.*)

MAJOR. Well, in the light of this paper which he took from the Indian's body it would appear that he was right. That was a bad blunder, Captain Henderson—a bad blunder.

CAPTAIN. I acted with discretion, Major. I knew how friendly Sapello was with the Apaches. He was absent almost all the day and night the theft occurred, and refused to give an account of his absence, even when I impressed him with the seriousness of the situation. The man's reputation, added to his suspicious absence, left me but one alternative. I placed Sapello under arrest.

(*Puffs coolly at his cigar.*)

MAJOR (*thoughtfully*). That does look strange—his not wanting to explain his whereabouts.

ETHEL. He has the best of reasons, believe me.

CAPTAIN. A few days since, Miss Ethel, you were not disposed to champion this squaw man. May I inquire why you have changed your opinion concerning him?

ETHEL. Certainly you may inquire, and you'll be informed politely, but firmly, that it's none of your business.

MAJOR. Tut, tut, now. I hope Sapello is innocent, and we're going to probe this matter to the bottom.

(*Enter LIEUTENANT, door L. C.*)

LIEUTENANT (*saluting*). I beg pardon, sir.

MAJOR. Well, Lieutenant?

LIEUTENANT. There's an old negro woman outside, sir,

THE TEXAN

who says she's cold, and wants to come in by the fire. That young boy who works for Mr. Inman is with her.
MAJOR. Well, let them come in. I'll see what they want.

(LIEUTENANT *salutes and withdraws.*)

ETHEL. There must be something wrong, papa. What can bring Auntie Lou and Carl down here on a stormy day like this?

MAJOR. I haven't the slightest idea, I'm sure.

CAPTAIN. Nor I.

ETHEL. I didn't ask your opinion, Captain Henderson.

CAPTAIN. I—I beg your pardon!

(*He scowls at her. She turns away.*)

Enter LIEUTENANT, who stands at salute by door, to let AUNTIE and CARL pass in. Both are timid, and advance hesitatingly into the room.)

MAJOR. You may go, Lieutenant. (LIEUTENANT bows and exits.) To what am I indebted for the honor of this visit?

CARL (*looking first at MAJOR, then at AUNTIE*). Er—why, Auntie'll tell you all about it, sir.

AUNTIE. I won't do nuffin' ob de kind. Tell him yo'self.

CARL (*edging up to her and jabbing her rather viciously with his elbow*). You tell him!

AUNTIE. No, sah—yo' tell him yo'self!

MAJOR. Come, come—stop this foolishness. You came here with some specific purpose in view. Now, what is it?

AUNTIE. No, sah, we didn't have no specifical pu'pose, sah.

CARL. You see, sir, it was this way: the folks up at the ranch are getting ready to come down here—that is, Mr. and Mrs. Inman and Miss Elsie, sir,—and, and they decided to—to leave Auntie and me at home. Of course, we'd like to be obliging and watch the ranch and all that, sir, but there's too many Injuns about. We didn't know but they might swoop down and scalp us before we could even cry for help.

AUNTIE. Yas'r. (*Nods vigorously.*) Dat's why we come down, sah.

(*She and CARL look at each other and grin.*)

THE TEXAN

MAJOR. You were both afraid, eh?

CARL. Well, no, sir, not exactly, sir, but ——— (*Pause.*)

MAJOR. And you're the boy who wanted to join my Indian fighters?

CARL (*hanging head*). Y-y-yes, sir.

MAJOR. Don't you know we don't allow cowards in the ranks?

CARL. But—but, I wouldn't be afraid with the other men around, sir.

MAJOR. Oh, I see. Well, you're a very valiant young man. I think I'll send you and Auntie back to the ranch.

CARL. P-p-p-please don't d-d-do that, sir. Mr. Inman, he'd be mad, sir, and that would be worse than the Injuns, sir.

AUNTIE. No, sah, no, sah—don' yo' send us back, sah. We wants tuh stay right heah.

MAJOR. No—I think I'll send you back.

ETHEL. Oh, do let them stay, papa. They didn't mean anything wrong.

MAJOR. Do you hear that young lady pleading for you? (*They nod.*) Now, I'll tell you what I'll do—I'll let you stay here till Mr. Inman arrives. Is that satisfactory?

CARL. Whoop, Major! You're a brick!

MAJOR (*sternly*). What's that?

CARL. Er—I beg pardon, sir. I—I mean it's good of you to do that, sir. I know Mr. Inman won't send us back to the ranch, even if he is mad. Do you hear, Auntie? The Major's going to let us stay. Whoop!

(*He yells in her ear, and, with a piercing shriek, she collapses in a heap on the floor.*)

MAJOR. Here, here! I can't have anything like this going on.

CARL (*bending over and laughing heartily*). Ho, ho, ho! You're an old coward, Auntie—that's what you are! (*While in this position, MAJOR walks over and grabs him by the ear. His laugh changes to a howl.*) Ouch! Ouch! Leggo! Leggo! Leggo, I say! (*Looks up and sees who it is.*) Oh, excuse me, sir—I didn't know it was you.

MAJOR. So I observe. What do you mean by playing

THE TEXAN

Indian in my quarters? I've a notion to have you court martialed.

CARL. Would that be very terrible, sir?

MAJOR. Indeed it would.

AUNTY. Lawsee, boy—'course hit would. Any time yo' heahs dat word "martial," jes' look out fer somethin' gwine tuh happen suah.

CARL (*to MAJOR*). I didn't mean anything, sir. I just wanted to have a little fun with Aunty.

MAJOR. And do you think such conduct becoming in a gentleman?

CARL (*in surprise*). Would—would you mind saying that again, sir?

MAJOR. I say, do you think such conduct becoming in a gentleman?

CARL (*laughing rather foolishly*). Well, sir, I hadn't thought of that. I suppose it isn't, sir.

(*Hangs head, embarrassed.*)

MAJOR. And you hope to be a gentleman some day, don't you?

CARL. Yes, sir.

MAJOR. Well, don't you think this is a poor way to start—pestering an old woman who has done you no harm?

(*At this, AUNTY, who is sitting on the floor, rolls her eyes and grins.*)

CARL. I suppose, sir, I shouldn't have done it, but it seemed too good a chance to let slip.

ETHEL. I'm sure he won't ever do it again, papa.

(*Winks at CARL to say he won't.*)

CARL. No, Miss Ethel, I'll try not to.

MAJOR. Well, I'm sure if you try you'll succeed. Now, help Aunty up!

(*CARL goes to her and tugs at her arm, but she is obstinate and refuses to budge. He looks at MAJOR, then turns to her again.*)

CARL. Aunty, get up. (*She does not move.*) Aunty! (*She does not move. He turns to MAJOR.*) She won't give an inch, sir.

THE TEXAN

MAJOR. Come, Aunty, you heard the young man say he intended you no harm. What's the matter with you? Why don't you get up?

AUNTY. I don't know, sah, but I reckon it's because I feels satisfied.

MAJOR. But this will never do. If Mr. Inman catches you in that position you will surely lose your place. Come, get up.

CARL (*tugging at her arm*). Come, Aunty, I didn't mean anything.

(*She looks at him an instant, then rises slowly, grunting.*)

AUNTY. Hit was all yo' fault, boy.

CARL (*aside to her*). Just wait till I get you home.

(*He assumes a ferocious expression, then finds MAJOR looking at him, and changes it to a smile.*)

MAJOR. You may warm yourselves until Mr. Inman comes. (*To CAPTAIN.*) Come, Captain. Let's see if there is any news from the Apache camp. I'm afraid Sapello has run into trouble.

CAPTAIN. Looks very much like it, Major—in fact, I——

(*He joins MAJOR, and they go out door at back, talking.*)

ETHEL (*stirring the fire*). So the Inmans are coming down here?

CARL. Yes, ma'am.

ETHEL. Don't say "yes ma'am" to me. My name is Ethel, and that's what my friends call me.

CARL. All right, Ethel, I'm a friend of yours.

ETHEL. Of course you are. I suppose the Inmans are anxious about Mr. Sapello, too?

CARL. Yes, ma'am—er—I mean, Ethel. That is, Miss Elsie is. I reckon that's why they're coming down here—they think if there's any news the Major'll have it first.

ETHEL. And you and Aunty were afraid to stay alone? I'm surprised at you! (*Laughs.*)

CARL (*displeased at her tone*). Well, of course we weren't exactly afraid, but —— (*Interrupted.*)

ETHEL. Oh, yes, you were, you might as well own up. What do you suppose Mr. Inman'll say when he finds you here?

THE TEXAN

CARL (*with a show of bravado*). I don't know, and I don't care. He hadn't ought to make us stay up there by ourselves, and if he says too much about it, I'll quit my job and join the army.

ETHEL. My, but you can brag. What a fine soldier you'd make. Papa might station you at the Inman ranch, for instance, to keep the Indians away. (*Laughs.*)

CARL. It's mean of you to talk that way. I wouldn't be afraid if I got to be a soldier.

AUNTY (*with a contemptuous sniff*). A fine so'ger you'd make. Huh!

CARL. Just wait till I get you home.

AUNTY. I reckon ef yo' was a so'ger de Indians'd scalp yo' forty times er day.

CARL. By which I s'pose you mean I've forty heads and can die forty deaths. That'd certainly beat the nine lives of a cat.

ETHEL. Carl will grow braver as he grows older, Aunty. I suppose we shouldn't blame him for not wanting to stay alone and watch the ranch. I shouldn't like such a job if I were a boy.

(*Enter LIEUTENANT, door L. C.*)

LIEUTENANT (*saluting* ETHEL). There's a young Indian outside, Miss Truesdell.

ETHEL. You may let him in, Lieutenant.

(*He salutes and exits.*)

AUNTY. Oh, Lordy, am an Injun comin' in heah?

ETHEL. Why, yes. Don't you like Injuns, Aunty?

AUNTY. No, sah—don't like none ob 'em—dey's all a bad lot. Dey suah is!

(*Enter SWIFTWING, door L. C.*)

ETHEL. Well, you just sit still. I won't let him hurt you. Hello, Swiftwing. I thought it was you.

SWIFTWING (*cap in hand*). I call to see has Major yet heard news of great scout.

ETHEL. Meaning Mr. Sapello, I suppose?

SWIFTWING. Uh-huh.

ETHEL. No. We've heard nothing, but we're looking for news every minute. What do you think has happened to him?

THE TEXAN

SWIFTWING. No can tell. Sapello able to take care of his-self pretty well, maybe. But my people mad at white men because white men think they take hosses, and because they shoot big chief's son. Me no can tell what they do. Kill Sapello, maybe.

ETHEL. But he has lived among your people. I thought they loved him.

SWIFTWING. They love him, all right, but if get real mad, no stop to think of that.

ETHEL. Well, I surely hope he pulls through all right.

AUNTY (*fervently*). Amen to dat!

CARL. Well, if you want my opinion, I think he's had a scrap and cleaned out the whole caboodle—gosh darn 'em. I beg your pardon, Ethel, but that's the sort of a hairpin he is.

SWIFTWING. Huh! White boy not know much about it.

CARL. Do I understand you to mean that I'm a prevaricator?

SWIFTWING. Huh! No got dictionary to find what big word means. Talk plain.

CARL. You hadn't better say I don't know what I'm talking about, for I'm simply death to Injuns when I get started. I've killed forty-six about your size this week. I had six of 'em for breakfast this morning. That's me! Understand?

SWIFTWING. Huh! White boy talk too much with um mouth.

CARL. Well, how would you have me talk—with my ear?

SWIFTWING (*scornfully*). Huh!

CARL. Oh, you make me tired, but then that's all you can expect from an Injun.

SWIFTWING. Some fine day maybe I cut your heart out.

CARL. Well, it's lucky you were here, Ethel. I'd have chewed him up into little tiny bits. There wouldn't have been a grease spot left.

ETHEL (*laughing*). How thankful I am that I was here to prevent such a dreadful catastrophe. How poor Swiftwing would have looked after you had masticated him.

AUNTY. Will you please say dat word agin, Miss Ethel?

ETHEL. What word? Masticate?

AUNTY. Dat's hit—masterkate. What dat mean?

ETHEL. Why, when you chew anything, you masticate it.

AUNTY (*shaking her head*). Well, I's heered ob Master

THE TEXAN

Dan an' Master Buck, but I nebber heered ob Master Kate.

(*Enter MAJOR and CAPTAIN, door L. C.*)

ETHEL. Well, papa, what news?

MAJOR. None. I fear Sapello has run into a hornet's nest.

CAPTAIN. Oh, he'll turn up yet, Miss Ethel. Such fellows have as many lives as a cat.

ETHEL. Well, such fellows are human, like every one else.

CAPTAIN. You seem to forget that you were denouncing Sapello a few days since as not fit for decent people to associate with.

ETHEL. Some people can never learn how to change their mind—to admit they were wrong. But I'm one that can. I used to think because Mr. Sapello had been a squaw man that he wasn't good enough for the rest of us. But I've found out differently. Mr. Sapello is a man every inch of him, which is more than can be said of some who call themselves gentlemen.

(*Looks pointedly at him and turns away.*)

CAPTAIN. Do you mean to insinuate that I ——?

(*Interrupted.*)

ETHEL. If the shoe fits you, Captain Henderson—wear it!

CARL. Oh, mamma, but wasn't that a stem-twister?

CAPTAIN (*turning on him*). What's that?

CARL (*quickly drawing away from him*). I—I said I wished we could hear from Mr. Sapello.

CAPTAIN (*glaring at him*). I thought you said something else, and I was going to warn you to be careful. Pretty bad accidents happen to little boys sometimes.

CARL. Yes, and men, too; only men who are born to be hung can't be killed by accident.

AUNTY (*chuckling*). Lordy, jes' heah dat boy spout!

(*CAPTAIN glares at CARL, then turns angrily away, sitting left of table and lighting a cigar.*)

MAJOR (*who has been examining some papers*). Carl, I'm afraid I'll have to twist your ear again. Have you been pestering Aunty again?

CARL. Not Aunty this time, sir.

THE TEXAN

MAJOR. Well, be on your good behavior from this moment.

CARL. Yes, Major.

(Enter LIEUTENANT, door L. C.)

LIEUTENANT (*saluting*). Mr. and Mrs. Inman, and Miss Inman, sir.

MAJOR. Show them right in.

(*He goes up toward door, just as enter DAN, MILLIE and ELSIE. ELSIE goes quickly, anxiously, to MAJOR, hands extended.*)

ELSIE. What news?

MAJOR. None, as yet, I regret to say. But we hope to hear something any minute. But where is Mr. Doyle?

ELSIE. Out on the ridge yonder, looking for Buck Sapello. His vigilance has been ceaseless throughout the day. (*Turning she sees CARL and AUNTY.*) Well, Dan Inman, will you see who is here?

(DAN and MILLIE turn toward fire. CARL and AUNTY hang their heads with a sheepish look.)

DAN. The disappearance of my hired help is a secret no longer. (*Sternly.*) How did you two get over here?

CARL (*nudging AUNTY*). You tell him.

AUNTY. Tell him yo'self.

CARL. Naw—you tell him.

AUNTY. Tell him yo'self.

CARL. Well, you see, sir, the Injuns have been giving us so much trouble — (*Interrupted.*)

DAN. What's that got to do with your being here?

CARL. I'm getting to that, sir. You see, with so many Injuns running loose, Aunty and I didn't think it was safe to stay on the ranch alone. We might have been scalped and then you would have been hung for leaving us to our fate. I didn't want to see you hung. Neither did Aunty. So we came down here.

DAN. Well, you're a good pair to draw to. So kind and considerate of you to save me from hanging. I've a good notion to send you both back this minute.

CARL. Oh, please don't do that, sir.

AUNTY. No, sah—don' do nuffin' like dat.

DAN. Can you advance a plausible reason why I should not?

THE TEXAN

CARL. No, sir, except that we don't care to go, sir. We'd rather quit our jobs than stay there all alone, wouldn't we, Aunty?

AUNTY. Yas'r, we suah would.

DAN. Well, you can stay this time, but don't let it happen again.

ELSIE. I am worried about Sapello. I feel that he has given his life for those who have treated him so poorly.

MILLIE. Well, you needn't take on about it. There's nothing certain yet.

DAN. I'm sure he'll be in before night. Sapello is plucky, and he wasn't born to be killed by Indians.

MAJOR. Yet I fear he has put his foot in a hornet's nest this time. Of course, I don't want to seem discouraging, but I prefer to be frank and tell you that I think his chances for returning at all are mighty slim.

CAPTAIN. Exactly my opinion.

ELSIE (*turning quickly*). When we want your opinion, Captain Henderson, we will ask for it.

CAPTAIN. Oh, come now, Miss Inman, I —

(*Interrupted.*)

ELSIE. If it hadn't been for you, Sapello would have been alive and well, and those poor fellows would never have had to go through that trying experience on Blue Moon Mountain. For if you had attended to business, Tommy Doolan would never have shot the young buck, Snowcap.

CAPTAIN. Really, Miss Inman, I — (*Interrupted.*)

ELSIE. It is true, every word, and you know it.

MAJOR. I feel that there is a great deal in what you say, Miss Elsie, and I have been only awaiting Sapello's return that I may place the blame in a fair and impartial manner.

DAN. That will be the better way, Major.

MAJOR. But if Sapello does not turn up, Captain Henderson will know that he has been at least partly responsible for the circumstances which caused his death.

CAPTAIN (*rising quickly*). Well, if Sapello had explained his absence during the night the horses were stolen much trouble would have been averted. He had a fair chance. That he did not accept it is no fault of mine.

MAJOR. But a man cannot be condemned on such flimsy

evidence. There may be good and sufficient reasons why he wished to conceal his whereabouts on that night.

CAPTAIN. Not at the cost of being falsely accused, you may be sure.

ELSIE. Major Truesdell, did I understand you to say the night the horses were stolen?

MAJOR. Why yes. It was in the night—about two o'clock, I believe. I thought you knew that.

ELSIE (*greatly agitated*). But I knew nothing of the kind. I had supposed it was in the morning—just before the break of day, in fact.

MAJOR. No; it was not many hours after midnight.

ELSIE. Oh, why—why didn't I find out for myself, and not accept the word of others?

MAJOR. What matters the exact hour, Miss Elsie?

ELSIE. It matters a great deal, Major, for I could have told where Sapello was at that hour of the night.

DAN. You could have told?

ELSIE. Yes, I. Is there anything so strange about that?

DAN. Where was he, Elsie?

ELSIE. He was with me!

MILLIE. Oh, I see it all—I see it all.

DAN. But I see nothing.

MAJOR. Nor I.

MILLIE. Why, it was Sapello who went up into the hills to rescue Elsie, after she had gone to take food to McDougall, the imprisoned trapper. (*To ELSIE.*) But you told me it was Taranti who brought you home—Taranti, an Apache.

ELSIE. Well, Buck Sapello is an Apache by adoption, and the Indians call him Taranti. On the night the horses were stolen he was with me from an hour after sundown until four o'clock in the morning!

DAN. Do you realize what you are saying?

ELSIE (*with a bitter laugh*). Of course I realize it, and if it is to serve as food for lying and malicious gossipers, let them begin. I am not going to stand idly by and have Buck Sapello accused of a crime of which he knows nothing. I reckon you don't know me.

DAN. No, Elsie—I reckon we don't.

MAJOR. Then, since you can tell us this much in his favor, perhaps you can tell us why he, himself, refused to answer so simple a question.

ELSIE. I can tell you that and more. He knows what you all think of him. He has been made to feel like an outcast among you; he knows in your eyes his friendship might bring discredit to a woman.

MILLIE. Elsie!

ELSIE. Oh, don't I know, Millie? You think so now, in spite of what he has done for me—for us all. He is a generous man, and wanted to spare me. And I was mean enough to doubt him. Why, when I brought him his horse to the guard-house that night, I believed the lies about him, and he knew I believed them and never said one word. Not one word.

MAJOR (*surprised*). When you brought him his horse? Is that what you said, Miss Elsie?

ELSIE. That is what I said, Major Truesdell.

MAJOR. You brought Sapello his horse?

ELSIE (*defiantly*). Yes, and not by accident, either. It was premeditated. When Carl came up to the ranch and told how he had found Sapello a prisoner, I made up my mind to effect his escape; so I took him arms and ammunition, cut the rope your guard had fastened him with and helped him get away. (*Draws herself up proudly.*) What are you going to do about it?

MAJOR (*ignoring her question*). You did all this for him? Yet I understand that he threw you roughly to the floor of the guard-house.

ELSIE. He did not. He only—he kissed me.

MAJOR. You—you let him do that!

ELSIE. I did—and I'm afraid I would again.

(*ETHEL utters a cry of delight, and rushing over, seizes ELSIE in her arms and kisses her.*)

ETHEL. You're a darling, and the pluckiest girl I know.

MAJOR (*drawing ETHEL away from ELSIE*). I'll trouble you to step aside a moment, Ethel, until I have finished with Miss Inman. (*To ELSIE.*) Yours is a very grave offense. I feel it my duty to frankly say so.

ELSIE. I am ready to take the consequences.

MAJOR. The penalty for contriving the escape of prisoners is one I hesitate to mention. But since the man in this case was innocent of wrong-doing, and I have taken your evidence as proof, that might be some extenuation of the act.

THE TEXAN

ELSIE. You forget, Major, that when I helped him I did not know he was innocent.

MAJOR. That makes it more serious, certainly, and since you seem to allow nothing in extenuation of your own actions, I can only say that I value very highly the lives of the men Sapello saved from the death trap, and when I see him—if I ever do—I will thank him in the warmest manner at my command.

ELSIE. Thank you, Major—thank you.

(He holds out his hand to ELSIE. She takes it and seems on the verge of breaking down, but recovers her composure after a moment. DAN rushes over, and lifting her fairly off her feet, kisses her.)

DAN. By George, I'm proud of you, Elsie. You are plucky enough to be—well, to be Buck Sapello himself.

CAPTAIN *(with a sneer)*. If he wasn't a squaw man we might find some excuse for him.

MAJOR. A squaw man? Well, what if he is? What difference does it make so long as the agreement and affection were mutual? I've been along the border nearly all my life and some of the best and bravest white men I ever saw have had Indian wives. Miss Inman here has shown more good common sense than all the rest of us put together—she gave Sapello the valuation of a man.

CAPTAIN. Every man to his own opinion, of course.

MAJOR. And it seems to me that had a man—no matter who—come to my rescue while I was in that death trap in the hills, I should never be able to do enough for him. And do you realize what he did when he took the trail to the Apache camp with the body of that Indian boy? He took his life in his hands, and for the sake of a lot of people who felt nothing but contempt for him, and were at that very moment accusing him of stealing horses.

(Enter LIEUTENANT, door L. C.)

LIEUTENANT *(saluting)*. Mr. Doyle is outside, sir.

MAJOR. You know better than to announce him every time he comes. Let him in!

(LIEUTENANT salutes and exits, meeting WESLEY in the doorway. They glare at each other.)

THE TEXAN

WESLEY. Don't be backward about mentioning it any time you feel like settling that little difficulty, Lieutenant.

(LIEUTENANT *exits with an angry gesture.* WESLEY *enters the room.*)

MAJOR. Any signs of Sapello?

WESLEY. None. There's a heavy snow-storm in the valley, and one can't see a great distance.

ELSIE. You don't think anything has happened to Mr. Sapello, do you, Mr. Doyle?

WESLEY. I don't want to alarm you needlessly, but I fear the worst.

CAPTAIN. If a man will be a fool, he should take the consequences.

WESLEY (*over to him*). To whom did you address that remark?

CAPTAIN (*growling*). To myself, I suppose.

(*Turns away.*)

WESLEY (*hands clenched*). If it wasn't for those stripes on your shoulders, I'd give you something to remember me by.

DAN. Those stripes are to be respected, Mr. Doyle, which is more than can be said for the man who wears them.

MAJOR (*in a tone of protest*). Gentlemen—gentlemen!

CAPTAIN. Oh, you're all against me! You think more of this contemptible cur, Sapello, than you do of a respectable army officer. Well, I have a little score to settle with this Sapello. Your eyes will be opened to many of his so-called virtues before I am through with him.

(*Crossing to door, he turns to exit. As he opens door, BUCK enters, slamming it behind him. He stands close to CAPTAIN looking him in the eye.*)

OMNES. Sapello!

BUCK (*slowly to CAPTAIN*). I heard what you said. Will you be kind enough to let me know when you get through with me?

CAPTAIN. I want nothing to do with you.

BUCK. But I want something to do with you. You're going to fight me within twenty-four hours—swords, pistols or fists—I don't care which. If you refuse I'll brand you a coward before the whole blamed army. Now you can

THE TEXAN

go. (*He steps aside, CAPTAIN looks at him a moment, then goes out. BUCK closes the door and walking up to MAJOR, salutes.*) Major Truesdell, I have come back for my trial!

MAJOR (*grasping his hand*). Oh, that's all over now. But tell me, what news do you bring of the Apaches?

BUCK. I secured a stand-off in hostilities. (*Hands paper to MAJOR.*) You can take the matter up with them now in perfect safety and if carefully handled good relations may be restored.

MAJOR. I can't find words to thank you for what you've done, Sapello.

WESLEY (*stepping forward*). I beg your pardon, Major—not Sapello, but Doyle.

OMNES. Doyle!

WESLEY. Yes, and my brother!

BUCK. I owe you a little explanation, friends, if I may call you such. I—— (*Interrupted.*)

MAJOR. Explanations be hanged, sir. We accept you for what we know you are—a brave man!

BUCK. I thank you, Major. (*To ELSIE.*) Did you give my brother the letter as I requested, Miss Inman?

ELSIE. Yes, Buck. (*She extends her hand; he takes it.*)

WESLEY. She gave it to me, and I can't find words to tell you how happy it has made me. I start east to-morrow, glad to know I am to have a chance to right the wrong I did Jennie.

BUCK (*taking his hand*). It's all right, Wesley. I know you'll be good to her. But we have wandered from the subject in hand, apparently forgetting that I stand here an accused horse thief.

DAN. Oh, hang it all, no one is thinking of that now.

BUCK. I beg your pardon. I am thinking of it. There are some who will doubt my innocence. I—I can't explain my absence from camp that night, but I want you all to believe I had the best of reasons for going, and that I had nothing to do with the theft of the horses.

MAJOR. We do believe it, sir—in fact, we know it.

BUCK (*perplexed*). I—I don't believe I quite grasp your meaning. (*Looks blankly from one to the other.*)

MAJOR. Miss Inman has told us that you were in her company, and we hold for you only feelings of profound

THE TEXAN

respect, and regret that the facts in the case were not known to us earlier.

BUCK (*turning to ELSIE, who hangs her head*). Tell me, why did you do this? Surely —— (*Pause.*)

ELSIE. Oh, Buck, can't you guess?

BUCK. Elsie! Do you love me?

ELSIE (*going to him*). Buck!

(*He clasps her in his arms. MAJOR and ETHEL, MILLIE and DAN, clasp hands, while CARL and AUNTY look at each other and grin.*)

CURTAIN

Practical Elocution

By J. W. SHOEMAKER, A. M.

300 pages

Cloth, Leather Back, \$1.25



This work is the outgrowth of actual class-room experience, and is a practical, common-sense treatment of the whole subject. It is clear and concise, yet comprehensive, and is absolutely free from

the entangling technicalities that are so frequently found in books of this class.

Conversation, which is the basis of all true Elocution, is regarded as embracing all the germs of speech and action. Prominent attention is therefore given to the cultivation of this the most common form of human expression.

General principles and practical processes are presented for the cultivation of strength, purity, and flexibility of Voice, for the improvement of distinctness and correctness in Articulation, and for the development of Soul power in delivery.

The work includes a systematic treatment of Gesture in its several departments of position, facial expression, and bodily movement, a brief system of Gymnastics bearing upon vocal development and grace of movement, and also a chapter on Methods of Instruction, for teachers.

Sold by all booksellers, or sent, prepaid, upon receipt of price.

The Penn Publishing Company

923 Arch Street, Philadelphia



Do you want to be an Orator

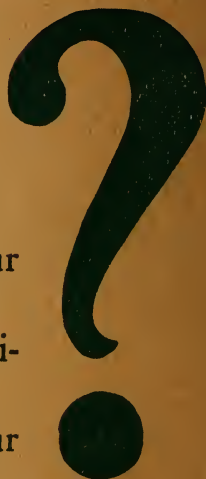
Do you want to be a Teacher
of Elocution

Do you want to be a Public
Reader

Do you want to improve your
conversation

Do you want training in Physi-
cal Culture

Do you want to increase your
power in any direction



A CATALOGUE GIVING FULL INFORMA-
TION AS TO HOW ANY OF THESE AC-
COMPLISHMENTS MAY BE ATTAINED
WILL BE SENT FREE ON REQUEST

The National School of Elocution and Oratory

Temple Building

Philadelphia