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## READ OUR SERIAL--TO RUN WEEKLY

### The Fettered Hand

Continued from last week

the must that perhaps he coveted still more. But she was going to nothing of the sort.

"I'll defy him," Mamie said. "When he comes I'll refuse him admittance, and he can do his worst."

The minutes crept on, an hour or more passed, and then a little later there was a bold knock at the door. With her heart fluttering a little faster, Mamie inquired who was there. An obviously disguised voice bade her open to a friend of Quint's who had some bad news to tell.

"I know it already," the woman cried. "My husband is lying between here and Hurricane branch with a bullet through his leg. He has been shot by that scoundrel Tanglefoot. Maybe you know who I mean."

"Open the door," the man outside demanded.

"You are not coming in here," Mamie said resolutely. "If you value your life, go away. I know you, never mind how I know, but you shot my husband, you maimed him deliberately so that you could come here and steal his money. Do you think that any woman in her sense would open a door to a human wolf like you? No, I'm ready for you and if you want to get in you must force your way. But you can't do it. So there."

A furious oath came from without, accompanied by a rain of blows on the stout door. Then immediately afterwards a revolver was fired three times through the window of the sitting room, and, after that, silence, but for the roar of the storm outside, and the swish of snow against the shack. And so an hour went by, with no sign from without, and silence within, save for the low growling of the dog, and the steady hammering of Mamie's heart and the rush of blood in her head. For the quietness and the suggestion of some unseen peril was getting on her nerves now, and she was beginning that she had not left the shack for the safety of the pine forest; where some belated miner passing by might have come to her assistance. But it was too late to think of that now. Too late to do anything but hope for the best, and fight it out as best she could. Mamie would have been happier in her mind could she have seen or heard what the ruffian outside was doing, but there was something in his very silence that oppressed her and set all her nerves tingling. Presently she wandered from the front of the house to the back, filled with a sudden fear unless an unexpected ruse should develop in that direction.

#### The Stuff Heroines are Made of

She was not afraid in the ordinary sense of the word, for behind the vague sense of terror lay that fine courage which defies fear and is itself the truest heroism. She had come out there knowing perfectly well what she was going to face as the wife of a pioneer, and she faced it cheerfully enough the last few years. She was, in fact, the sort of stuff that heroines are made of, and despite her slender build, and that dainty beauty of her, she was as strong as one of her own dogs, and the muscles that rippled under her satin skin were as hard as those of an athlete.

And she had been trained, too, in the rough and ready justice of the West, that rugged part of the world where men are accustomed to take the law into their own hands and administer it with a fine sense of right and wrong that could not have been surpassed in any court of justice. And she knew well, too, how essential it was out there to eliminate all trace of sentimentality in dealing with a ruffian like Tanglefoot, picturesque though he undoubtedly was. It was necessary to take this kind of wolf by the throat and shoot him out of hand without mercy, as necessary to the welfare of the state. Mamie would have done it herself, though she was a woman.

She had no illusions. She knew that her husband had tracked down Tanglefoot single-handed when other men had shrunk from that dangerous task, and brought him to Hurricane Branch on the back of a pony with his hands tied behind him. He had tamed the terror of the ranges, the man who had not hesitated to shoot a woman and child in cold blood, and would not hesitate now to destroy the woman who defied him, if only once he could establish a footing within the shack. Mamie knew that, as she knew the teachings of her own Bible.

And yet she was not afraid, she was not thinking so much of herself now, as the man who was lying out in the snow-storm with a bullet through his leg. For Jim's sake she would have hesitated at nothing, and her heart hardened within her as she thought of the danger. And as she stood there, she was wondering if there was a single weak point in the shack that the desperado outside might successfully assault. She knew the shack inside and out, for she had helped to build it. Many a log had she trimmed herself, and many a great nail had she driven into those rough bark covered walls. The fact that she was unharmed only steeled her courage. There was dynamite in the shack, but that was dangerous stuff to handle, and Jim himself had the only rifle and the solitary pair of revolvers.

#### A Terrible Inspiration

Outside the snow was falling again, volleying before the blast of the gale, but inside it was quiet enough save for the whimpering of the dog. Mamie crept quietly through the kitchen and stood there, in the fading light, with her eyes glued on the back door. Then she saw something that drove the blood from her heart and for the moment froze her to the spot. A big knot stopped with clay had been removed, and through the circular opening a hairy gnarled hand protruded. Mamie recollected now how that fault in the log had been plugged with clay and how she had done it herself, when the shack was first built, and, no doubt, Tanglefoot's keen eye had discovered it. He was reaching through the hole now, fumbling and groping quietly for the wooden bar that stretched across the stout door a foot or so below. It was not an easy matter to reach it, for the desperado had a muscular arm like that of a blacksmith, and the hole in the timber was a tight fit. With a sudden realization of danger, Mamie's mind cleared so that she was thinking rapidly and coherently.

It was evident to her that it would take some little time yet for Tanglefoot to work his arm sufficient through before he could reach the heavy cross-bar. He would have to compress his forearm until he could work the limb through up to the elbow joint. But already that cruel hand, with its blunt finger-nails, was working down and down, and Mamie could hear the ruffian chuckle to himself as he strove to grasp the obstacle. But then the plan came into her mind, something that she had read before, though, for the moment, she could not think where.

She crept quietly back into the sitting-room, and from a shelf took down a heavy,

To be concluded

A Military 500 Card Party and Dance will be held in the Berquest Hall in aid of the Red Cross, on Tuesday evening, December 31st, at 8.30 o'clock sharp. Come and dance the Old Year out and the New Year in.

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