

"What!" screeched the old rancher. "Talk like that to your old uncle who has kept you all this time when no one else would have you! Say 'No' to me—you ungrateful young baggage!"

He advanced, shaking his stick in menace.

"That'll do, Jackson," interfered the Captain. "Get about your business. Kathie shall never set foot inside your door again—not with my sanction."

"With your sanction," screamed Colin Jackson, "did you say with your sanction? If that isn't the brightest! When did you get the power to sanction?"

"There's the sanction on the table," said Captain Gray calmly. "Kathie is my brother's daughter."

"I don't believe it. It's another lie—a damned lie. It's another scheme. You're all scheming to ruin me."

"Read for yourself then," went on the Captain. "As for the schemes and all such dirty work—I leave that to you. Your sister married my brother years ago. Kathie is the child of that marriage. The proofs are all there—read them!"

"My brother's express desire is that I should become the guardian of his daughter."

The news fell almost unheeded on Colin Jackson's ears. His mind seemed to be clouded and unable to grasp with the swiftness of old times. He did not read the papers; he merely nodded his head as if accepting a final judgment.