

would shield his good name as you would shield your own. Yet I am the daughter of a rustler, of a moon-shiner, of a drunken criminal."

"No," denied Lennon. "You are the daughter of an unfortunate gentleman, who paid bitterly for his mistakes—who gave his life in an attempt to save you and the child whom he had taken in and sheltered. Let God judge whether he was not far more victim than wrongdoer."

"But the daughter of a weak man——"

Lennon smiled into her troubled eyes.

"You glory of the desert—you cactus blossom! It was your very strength that repelled me, like the spines of the cactus. I never had known your like. I thought a woman must be weak and clinging."

He cast a smiling glance at the wide-eyed Elsie.

"But now, dear, I know that the bloom of the desert thorn may be even more fragrant and lovely than any garden flower."

THE END