

the furniture we had; and when he saw them doing that, he put his hands up to his head, and called out, 'Alessandro! Alessandro!' and I was not there! Senorita, she said it was a voice to make the dead hear, that he called with; and nobody could stop him. All that day and all that night he kept on calling. God! Senorita, I wonder I did not die when they told me! When I got there some one had built up a little booth of tulle over his head, to keep the sun off. He did not call any more, only for water, water. That was what made them think the sun had done it. They did all they could; but it was such a dreadful time nobody could do much; the sheriff's men were in great hurry; they gave no time. They said the people must all be off in two days. Everybody was running hither and thither. Everything out of the houses in piles on the ground. The people took all the roofs off their houses too. They were made of the tulle reeds; so they would do again. Oh, Senorita, don't ask me to tell you any more! It is like death. I can't!"

Ramona was crying bitterly. She did not know what to say. What was love, in face of such calamity? What had she to give to a man stricken like this?

"Don't weep, Senorita," said Alessandro drearily. "Tears kill one, and do no good."

"How long did your father live?" asked Ramona, clasping her arms closer round his neck. They were sitting on the ground now, and Ramona, yearning over Alessandro, as if she were the strong one and he the one to be sheltered, had drawn his head to her bosom, caressing him as if he had been hers for years. Nothing could have so clearly shown his enfeebled and benumbed condition as the manner in which he received these caresses, which once would have made him beside himself with joy. He leaned against her breast as a child might.

"He! He died only four days ago. I stayed to bury him, and then I came away. I have been three days on the way; the horse, poor beast, is almost weaker than I. The Americans took my horse," Alessandro said.

"Took your horse!" cried Ramona, aghast. "Is that the law, too?"

"So Mr. Rothsaker told me. He said the judge had said he must take enough of our cattle and horse to pay all it had cost for the suit up in San Francisco. They didn't reckon the cattle at what they were worth, I thought; but they said cattle were selling very low now. There were not enough in all the village to pay it, so we had to make it up in horses, and they took mine. I was not there the day they drove the cattle away, or I would have put a ball into Benito's head before any American should ever have had him to ride. But I was over in Pachango with my father. He would not stir a step for anybody but me; so I led him all the way; and then after he got there he was so ill I never left him a minute. He did not know me any more, nor know anything that had happened. I built a little hut of tulle, and he lay on the ground till he died. When I put him in his grave I was glad."

"In Temecula?" asked Ramona.

"In Temecula!" exclaimed Alessandro fiercely. "You don't seem to understand, Senorita. We have no right in Temecula, not even to our graveyard full of the dead. Mr. Rothsaker warned us all not to be hanging about there; for he said the men who were coming in were a rough set, and they would shoot any Indian at sight if they saw him trespassing on their property."

"Their property!" ejaculated Ramona.

"Yes; it is theirs," said Alessandro doggedly. "That is the law. They've got all the papers to show it. That is what my father always said—if the

Senor Valdez had only given him a paper! But they never did in those days. Nobody had papers. The American law is different."

"It's a law of thieves!" cried Ramona.

"Yes, and of murderers too," said Alessandro. "Don't you call my father murdered just as much as if they had shot him? I do! And, O Senorita, my Senorita, there was Jose? You recollect Jose, who went for my violin? But, my beloved one, I am killing you with these terrible things! I will speak no more."

"No, no, Alessandro. Tell me all, all. You must have no grief, I do not share. Tell me about Jose," cried Ramona breathlessly.

"Senorita, it will break your heart to hear. Jose was married a year ago. He had the best house in Temecula, next to my father's. It was the only other one that had a shingled roof. And he had a barn too, and that splendid horse he rode, and oxen, and a flock of sheep. He was at home when the sheriff came. A great many of the men were away, grape-picking. That made it worse. But Jose was at home; for his wife had a little baby only a few weeks old, and the child seemed sickly and not like to live, and Jose would not leave it. Jose was the first one that saw the sheriff riding into the village, and the band of armed men behind him, and Jose knew what it meant. He had often talked it over with me and with my father, and now he saw that it had come; and he went crazy in one minute, and fell on the ground all froth at his mouth. He had had a fit like that once before; and the doctor said if he had another he would die. But he did not. They picked him up, and presently he was better; and Mr. Rothsaker said nobody worked so well in the moving the first day as Jose did. Most of the men would not lift a hand. They sat on the ground with the women, and would not see. But Jose worked; and, Senorita, one of the first things he did, was to run with my father's violin to the store, to Mrs. Hartsel, and ask her to hide it for us; Jose knew it was worth money. But before noon the second day he had another fit, and died in it—died right in his own door, carrying out some of the things; and after Carmena—that's his wife's name—saw he was dead, she never spoke, but sat rocking back and forth on the ground, with the baby in her arms. She went over to Pachanga at the same time I did with my father. It was a long procession of us."

"Where is Pachanga?" asked Ramona.

"About three miles from Temecula, a little sort of canon. I told the people they'd better move over there; the land did not belong to anybody, and perhaps they could make a living there. There isn't any water; that's the worst of it."

"No water!" cried Ramona. (TO BE CONTINUED)

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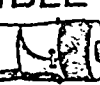
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