

ROYAL RANGER RALPH;

The Waif of the Western Prairies.

BY WELDON J. COBB.

CHAPTER XXIII.—Continued.

Darrel seized the bandit's arm and forced him through the doorway. Despard made no resistance as Brown snatched his revolver from his belt. Standing in the darkness near the door was a queer-looking vehicle with a queer door.

"Get in," ordered the Sheriff, sternly.

"What am I arrested for?" demanded Despard.

"Never mind; if you don't want to be lynched you obey orders."

"This is an act of treason, and I am stout and secure," said Brown to Darrel.

"There is a driver?"

"Yes."

"And he has orders to proceed to Miners' Gulch?"

"Exactly. Here is the key to the vehicle. Get in with your prisoner, and leave before the miners know of the capture."

"There was an accomplice of this man," "Where is he?"

"Escaped."

"I'll try and find him. Drive ahead."

Darrel sprang into the vehicle and closed the door. It shut with a spring lock.

Darrel held his revolver ready for use. Despard, sullen and silent, sat glaring fiercely at him.

The vehicle left the place and started for the mountain roads. The capture of the bandit had been accomplished most expeditiously. Darrel well knew, however, that he must be very watchful of so wily a foe.

For over an hour not a word was spoken, and the vehicle proceeded on its way. There was a small shelf in the forward part of the wagon. Here a little lamp cast dim rays of light over the interior.

"I think I know you at last," remarked Despard, finally, in a sullen, sneering tone of voice.

"Indeed?"

"Yes. You are the friend of Ranger Ralph."

"And his avenger."

"You expect to prove me to be his assassin?"

"And that of the others—yes."

"Where are you taking me?"

"To Miners' Gulch."

This seemed to alarm and subdue Despard, for he relapsed into silence.

A casual glance from the rear barred window showed that the vehicle was slowly treading a dangerous road on the very edge of the mountains.

Suddenly he started. He was positive that a light on horseback had fitted by the vehicle. A minute later there was a shot. It was succeeded by a cry for help and then a fall.

"Whoa!"

The horses came to a halt. The voice was that of Darrel. A revolver was thrust through the bars. Its possessor was sheltered by the darkness beyond.

"Move, and you are a dead man," spoke Darrel's voice. "Whoever you are, you are in my power. I can see your every movement. Listen to what I say."

These words were directed to Darrel. He clutched his revolver and was silent.

"You driver, I have disposed of," spoke Darrel. "You listen in my power. Despard, who is this man?"

"The scout's friend."

"Grey?"

"Yes."

"Mr. Grey, you will first hand out the revolver you have in your hand."

Darrel moved as if to obey Darrel's request. Instead, he raised it suddenly and fired.

Darrel drew back. The horses, alarmed at the shot, started off. With tremendous velocity the vehicle was dragged down a steep grade. Without a driver they dashed madly forward.

One glance showed Darrel their awful peril. They were so near the edge of the precipice that the vehicle would go over the edge of the declivity.

Despard himself, terrified, sprang excitedly to his feet. A yawning abyss showed as the wagon struck a tree.

The horses broke loose and dashed away. The vehicle tumbled, crashed, and fell over the steep mountain road.

CHAPTER XXIV.

It was some minutes before the two men in the locked wagon could fully realize what had occurred. They knew that the horses had run away, and the wagon colliding with a tree, they had dashed madly on, descending the declivity. The wagon had tumbled, crashed, and fell over the steep mountain road.

Darrel caught one glimpse of the gloomy depths of the valley below, and gave himself up for lost. To his amazement, the wagon whirled downward only a few feet. Then it came to an abrupt halt.

Its sudden stoppage brought him and Despard together with a shock.

Amid the excitement and peril of the occasion, Darrel thought not of treachery on the part of his companion. The latter seemed paralyzed with terror, and his face was white and craven.

"We are doomed!" he muttered, in a frightened tone.

"Not at all," replied Darrel. "We are enemies, Dyke Despard, but for once we had better act in union."

"Anything to escape a fall into that dark abyss?"

Despard shuddered as he pointed to the yawning depths below.

The lamp in the wagon had been extinguished by the shock of the fall, but the moonlight outside revealed their surroundings plainly. Darrel soon learned their real situation. The wagon lay on its side, about ten feet below the edge of the road.

It had fallen partly on a shelf of rock, partly across a tree, and these supported it temporarily. The horses were still one, however, and the least dislodgment might send them whirling to death a hundred feet below. Darrel groped his way to the door and unlocked it.

"If I allow you to follow me, will you agree to make no resistance?" he asked of Despard.

"I promise," replied the outlaw eagerly.

"Very well; by clinging to the shrubs and rocks we can reach the cliff."

Darrel stepped out the door and clambered over the shelving rock. By careful climbing he reached the cliff in safety. He aided Despard, who had followed him, to reach the same place. Both breathed relievedly at their marvelous escape from death.

Darrel was once more on his guard, and the reluctant captor, as he clasped his revolver in his hand.

"March on," he said, gently, "we have lost time."

He glanced up and down the deserted mountain road. There was no trace of either Darrel or the horses that had broken loose from the wagon.

"Well, what is it?"

"You intend to take me to Miners' Gulch?"

"Yes."

"What for?"

"Can you ask? Your many crimes!"

"It will be poor satisfaction to you."

"Why?"

"You are losing time."

"In what way?" asked Darrel.

"In seeking revenge on me, you are leaving your friends in danger."

"What friends?"

"Ranger Ralph and the girl, Inez Tracy?"

"Ranger Ralph is dead."

"No; he escaped at the old hermit's cave. I saw him."

"Allowing that, he can take care of himself."

"But the girl. She is a prisoner with the Modocs. See here: I'm willing to help you find her, if you will allow me my liberty."

"No! I shall place you in safe hands. Then I shall place the girl alone and unaided. March on."

Despard obeyed the mandate, and started down the road with a sullen face. The menace of Darrel's revolver was sufficient to make him an abject and unresisting captive.

Not a word was spoken as the journey was resumed. Darrel resolved to convey his prisoner to the next mining settlement, and there make known his crimes, and return to search for the driver of the wagon, who had been shot by Darrel.

Later, he learned that the driver had escaped with a slight wound.

For over an hour the lonely tramp continued. Several times, as they came to where the road was more tortuous, Darrel paused.

He imagined he could hear horses' hoofs in the distance, but finally attributed the sound to some ravine waterway or cataract. He was not aware that a deadly foe was upon his trail, that Despard's accomplice, Danton, had followed them, intent on rescuing the former.

As they rounded a point of rocks, Grey started quickly. Too late to avoid a catastrophe, Darrel saw to his horror an advancing foe suddenly revealed behind them. It was Danton, and he was on horseback.

With a deft movement a lasso shot from the saddle bow. The rope encircled his form, pinioning his arms tightly.

The revolver fell to the ground. With a cry of fierce delight Despard seized it. Danton gave the lasso a tightening jerk, secured the other end, and round his waist, and faced his captive with malignant joy depicted on his evil face.

"The tables are turned, my friend," he jeered.

Darrel was silent with discomfiture and chagrin.

Despard proceeded to see that the lasso was firmly tied around the prisoner. "We won't delay here," remarked Danton. "Some of this man's friends may be on our trail. Come along, Captain."

Danton urged forward his horse. Despard walked by his side conversing with him. Darrel was compelled to keep pace with them, secured to the other end of the rope. He could hear enough of the conversation of his captors to know that they were discussing his fate.

He made every effort possible to release his hands, and had almost succeeded in getting one arm loose, when Danton suddenly halted.

"What is it?" asked Darrel.

"Look ahead."

"A fire!"

"Perhaps a camp-fire of the Indians."

"That you must learn. Reconnoiter and see who it is."

Despard led them and went in the direction of a glow of light in a thicket a short distance away. Darrel, less regarding Darrel, until Despard returned. The leader reappeared finally greatly excited.

"We're in luck, Danton!" he cried. "What do you mean?"

"It is a camp yonder in the thicket."

"Redskins?"

"No."

"Vigilantes?"

"What then?"

"A dozen of one of our old bands."

Danton uttered a satisfied ejaculation. He started the horse forward so suddenly that Darrel was thrown from his seat.

The latter was at that moment near the edge of the cliff and fell precipitately over it. With a yell of fright Danton was dragged from his horse. The astounded Despard saw the two men disappear from sight with a cry of alarm.

He seized the side of the lasso supporting Darrel and shot up several feet. Then seizing some twigs growing out of the cliffs, he endeavored to ascend still higher.

A flash Darrel comprehended his peril. He discerned that when Danton reached the tree across which they were swung, he would cut the rope and send him to his death below. With a free hand he seized the foot of Danton.

"I will not! You will let me ascend first or I will hold on to you all night."

"Shoot him!" shouted Danton to Despard, wild with rage.

The outlaw leader leaned over the edge of the cliff and leveled a revolver at Darrel. There was a flash and a report. Darrel withdrew his hand from the lasso as a hot, scaring sensation coursed his fingers.

Despard began to pull at the rope Darrel shot downward and Danton reached the tree. There was a flash of a gleaming blade and the lasso was severed.

Darrel fell with terrific velocity. He must have fallen some twenty feet when he stopped abruptly. He had fallen into a tree which swayed and gave way with a slight crash.

Darrel found that its branching top had split and held him a prisoner in the half-severed cleft. For the present he was safe at least.

He glanced upward. All view of the top of the cliff was shut out from his vision. Below, far as he could look into the cavernous depths, was darkness and gloom.

Evidently his enemies supposed he had been dashed to pieces on the rocks below. His position was certainly a most unenviable and perilous one. To extricate himself from his dilemma he knew that he must exert unusual caution and ingenuity.

Without much difficulty he released himself from the folds of the lasso and descended from the crotch of the tree. A thick furze or underbrush covered the side of the declivity and Darrel determined to descend.

He made a loop of the lasso and descended its length clinging to the shrubs. His descent in this way was a laborious one and it was several hours before he reached the ravine below.

He regarded his escape as miraculous, and he was so exhausted that he flung himself on the ground and lay there for some time.

He aroused himself at last and traversed the banks of the little stream that ran through the ravine. As he

rounded a projecting ledge of rocks, Darrel Grey passed in some surprise. There was a deep indentation in the solid rock.

Here a light showed. It proceeded from a small lantern set on a rock. Its rays showed two persons. One of them was a man fancifully attired, whom he had never seen before. His companion at a glance Darrel recognized. It was White Fawn, the Modoc princess.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murmured, as he recalled Ranger Ralph's reference to the hermit.

"Am I to wait here?" asked White Fawn.

"Yes. If I succeed at all, it will be unaided. I will bring the girl here, if I rescue her."

"But how can you hope to do so against so many foes?"

The old man significantly tapped the box which he had just opened. "Leave that to me and my science," he replied, confidently. "The outlaws' camp is just beyond the valley, you say?"

"Yes."

Walford, for it was he, left the place. Darrel was about to reveal himself and address the hermit, but hesitated from doing so until Walford had departed.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CHAPTER XXV.

THE OLD HERMIT.

Darrel Grey did not at once manifest himself at his discovery of his friend the Indian girl. Instead, he stood silently regarding the two persons he had happened to find so strangely.

He was, too, somewhat puzzled at the actions of White Fawn's companion. The whole dress and manner of the latter were so strangely peculiar and grotesque. He possessed a patriarchal appearance and wore a white beard combed and a strange cone-like hat on his head. His dress was a mixture of civilized and savage, and was ornamented with shells and war-paint.

On the rock before him lay a small oblong box, from which he had just taken a long read, which was evidently a musical instrument. So fully was Darrel's curiosity aroused at all he saw that he strained his hearing to catch the first words spoken by the old man.

"You are all ready?" asked the Indian maiden.

"Yes," replied her companion. "We will see what the science of the old hermit can do for these plain-looking daughters."

Darrel started. "The strange old man must be the recluse, Walford," he murm