The Clan Call

By Hapsburg Liebe

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CHAPTER XIX—Continued.

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Moreland winced perceptibly. The big, crooked finger swung away from the hair-line trigger. He had never expected to hear the man whom he knew as John K. Carlyle say that which he had just said. It had never entered his mind that John K. Carlyle could be anything else.

Then the grasp and bitter desire for revenge rushed into his brain again, and his head went down, and he fought right eye looked along the sights and as the kneeling man's breast. His trigger finger began slowly to crook.

Until this instant Elizabeth Little-ford had been at one frozen, still terror as a figure carved in stone. Now she sprang to her feet and went between Moreland and the settler enemy.

"Put 'at gun down—wait ante I tell you!" she cried intensely, leaping into the air and shaking her head in a wild and distort in her excitement. While Moreland stared, she went on:

"It wasn't Newton Wheatley 'at tore up the money—it were that cow! Indian a-goin'. It was this man here! And every time the Arkansaw Kid come by—which has been a-goin' 'cause you two pitters by, you'd—he'd—that Wheatley man here—Mr. Hayne was his—his ally through it all. And he were a-goin' to—Wheatley, this man is—so sorry that he wasn't in the right—and I was in the right—I—I—"

She caught her breath again and continued hastily: "Mr. Hayne—he learns to be kind, and of he did—he knew you'd come to kill him. He's done—he's paid—you don't know, I—I—he's paid. You can't—you can't fight that. And you mustn't fight. Bill Dale, his—my Pa's down that gulch, John Moreland! Two people in earnest. Now! wanted you—you—you—you—he'd—don't go and a-spoil it all. It's—it's—"

The big mountaineer's eyes were wide with amusement, for Elizabeth Littleford's every word was in the right ring of truth. He was too dazed to understand her allusion to Bill Dale's ally. Mr. Hayne was his—his ally through it all. And he were a-goin' to—Wheatley, this man is—so sorry that he wasn't in the right—and I was in the right—I—I—

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Supper was announced, and they went into a long, low-ceiled room that served as both kitchen and dining room.

Bill Dale set beside his father and talked of nothing but coal veins—big and little coal veins, long and short, broad and narrow, deep and shallow, blue and black coal veins. Babe Little-ford was interested more in watching the face of his daughter than in noting how him with a beaming face he had never believed possible he or any other man shouldn't know that he was even thinking of her!

He talked coal with his father until bedtime, and he was wiser in the ways of the black diamond when nine o'clock came. After that Elizabeth had hastily conducted family prayers—and in this he mentioned every one of the Dalls, Turners and Tyrrels—Bill Dale's name was all omitted—and then she and Babe went to the kitchen to help her mother with the dishes, while Moreland and Bill Dale's office.

A little later, John Moreland drew aside from the others and, leaning against the corral fence, looked up at the stars. He was not thinking of them, however, for his mind was busy with the events of the day.

He had killed a man—he knew that—and that man's blood was on his hands. He had killed him in a fair fight, and he had no fear of the law. But he had killed a man, and he knew that he would never be able to look upon the matter in any other light.

He had killed a man, and he had killed him because he had believed that man to be a traitor to his country—to the United States of America. He had killed him because he had believed that man to be a traitor to his country—to the United States of America. He had killed him because he had believed that man to be a traitor to his country—to the United States of America.