

MY LADY OF THE SOUTH



A Fiftieth Anniversary War Story

By RANDALL PARRISH

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CHAPTER X.

ANOTHER MYSTERY.

THERE was that in both tone and action to urge me forward. "It is odd you should trust me so wholly," I ventured, "a Yankee and a stranger and one under such grave suspicion of crime. Why should you trust me, Miss Denslow?"

"Indeed I do not know," as if she thought had just occurred to her, "only the act is natural to me. I either trust fully or not at all. I have been like that from a child—the servant of first impressions."

"Yet you have not forgotten my uniform." "No, although there are times when I seem to forget," her voice hesitated. "I was brought up to hate my enemies, to fight them bitterly and to the death. That was the feud spirit, and we took this feeling with us into the war. We of the south cling together. I sincerely wish I could take a broader view."

"And you do already. You are here now with a Yankee whom you trust. Peculiar conditions have brought us into sudden intimacy. We are really friends, are we not?"

"I am hardly ready to promise that. I feel kindly toward you, but I do not know you, Lieutenant King, and all my friends are on the other side."

"Oh, no they are not, Miss Denslow. I am your friend in spite of every difference between us. So long as I live there will be one heart under a blue uniform you may feel confidence in. I do not even believe you are as hard hearted as your words would indicate. Shall I be entirely forgotten as soon as this episode is over? Will you not retain some kindly memory of me?"

"I could not be indifferent to the claim of gratitude." "Nor can you refuse friendship while I show myself worthy, can you?"

She remained silent, a silence I did not understand, yet I was unwilling to accept it as a negative.

"You gave me your hand a few moments ago because you were frightened and nervous. It was a comfort then for you to feel the nearness of one upon whom you relied for protection. Will you not give me the same hand now in token of friendship?"

It seemed to me I waited a long while, my own heart beating like a trip hammer, as she sat there motionless in the dark. Then there was a slight rustle of her loose sleeve, as her hand slipped hesitatingly along the arm of my chair. I held it for a moment in silence, not daring to utter the mad words that came thronging to my lips.

"I thank you," I said at last; "your friendship will mean much to me."

"I do not know why I am so foolish," she confessed, as though the words escaped her control. "Somehow you make me do things, even against my will. I haven't liked Yankees, you know, and it is pretty hard to learn to like even one Yankee."

"But you are going to try?" "I could hear the breath between her half opened lips."

"I don't think I shall have to try—very hard. Somehow you do not seem like a Yankee at all."

"Good! I am not going to seem like one—at least not in the sense you mean."

If I could have read the expression in her eyes I might have dared more, but in that darkness, her words barely audible from the cautious whisper in which we conversed, my courage failed. Already I had gained much, more even than I could justly have expected. She had trusted herself to me, and were I to take unfair advantage of the situation it might cost me all I had already gained of her good will.

I tiptoed forward and peered into the doorway. Judge Dunn sat just as be-

There were few tricks I did not know in the wrestler's game, but this man's strength offset them. Inch by inch he forced me back, his grip fairly digging into my flesh, his arms pressing about me like iron bars. There were no blows struck, no words spoken—just the heavy breathing of desperate fight, the scuffling of bodies, the sheer strain of muscles exercised to their uttermost. I had the advantage of posture, he of strength, but at last he got me, his arms crushing me as if I were in the grasp of a bear, tearing my fingers from his throat and forcing my body over against the wall and my head to the floor. The round barrel of a pistol was pressed into my cheek.

A sudden gleam of light swept over us both and I caught a glimpse of Jean Denslow standing white faced, holding a lamp in one outstretched hand, the other grasping at the balustrade. The man gripping me turned his head to glance toward her, the rays of light falling upon his face. With a gasp of astonishment I recognized my antagonist to be Colonel Donald.

"Bring me something to tie the fellow with, Jean," he called, still crushing me relentlessly down. "The belt there on the coat rack will answer."

She acted like one unable to comprehend the situation. "Don't you hear, Jean? Bring me the belt!"

"Yes, I hear," she had found her voice at last, "but what does all this mean? What are you doing here? That is Lieutenant King, and there is no reason why you should blind him."

He brought his eyes from her face to mine, loosened his grip of me and rose to his knees.

"He is not trying to escape. I let him out of the cellar, and he gave me his pledge not to run away. He was here with me watching the house, only I fell asleep. That was all I knew until I heard you struggling."

"You released him? What for?" "Miss Denslow was frightened," I said, catching my breath painfully. "She believed the murderer of Lieutenant Navarre was still concealed in the house. I was here in the dark waiting when you came down the stairs. I supposed you to be the assassin."

Donald laughed, rising to his feet and bending forward to grasp the girl's hands.

"So that was it, Jean, dear. And I gave you a bad scare. You must forgive me, for it was unintentional. I came back hurriedly, without waiting for my men. They are widely scattered, and it will require several hours yet to bring them together. I could not bear to think of your being here alone. I came through a secret passage, never dreaming any one would be hiding in this darkness."

He glanced down at me, where I had lifted myself upon one elbow. "You should have shot me, if you meant."

"And I am very glad I did not," I returned honestly. "I hoped to capture the powder so as to vindicate myself of crime."

"She was a girl, which you might have proved so fortunate, for I am far from being convinced myself that you are capable of such a deed. My little Jean, here, must possess great confidence in you."

"I do," she broke in earnestly. "I would stake my life upon his innocence."

"You shall have the benefit of the doubt, Lieutenant King," said Ble Donald somewhat sternly. "For I have reason to trust this young lady's judgment. However, as a mere military precaution I must ask for your weapons."

An instant I hesitated, feeling that now he had come my pledge to Miss Denslow had been fulfilled; that any opportunity to escape was justly mine. This giant might be able to crush me in his arms, yet with weapons in our hands we stood on even ground, and I was tempted to fight it out then and there. He read the temptation in my eyes, his lips smiling, his hand extended for my revolvers. What a fine looking fellow he was, his face representative of character, strong, manly, his entire bearing indicative of force and cool, resourceful courage. The light of the lamp revealed his clearly chiseled features and the threads of gray in his hair. Suddenly, in a flash, there came to me a strange thought—here was a man to be loved, to be loved of woman. "Dear Jean," he had called her—"dear Jean." The words seemed to burn me as I recalled them. He seemed the older, twenty years or more. But what of that?

Hesitating still I saw her leaning forward, eagerly watching our faces, puzzled by our attitude. Her hand touched his sleeve, the light of the lamp glimmering in her hair, her eyes full of pleading. My month hardened, the grip of my fingers on the revolver butt tightening. It seemed to me I understood. It was Donald, not Calvert Dunn, who stood between us.

"Please, gentlemen, do not quarrel, at least not here, not now. See, I stand between you."

"Lieutenant King is very slow in delivering his weapons," said Donald quietly. "He has perhaps forgotten I am the victor here."

The words were plainly a threat, but it was the look in her eyes that decided me.

"You overpowered me with your strength," I returned coldly, "but the only one I have surrendered to in this house is Miss Denslow. I give her my weapons, not you."

"Oh, as you please," his lips still smiling. "Jean, dear, disarm the fellow and let us get at other work."

"Jean, dear!" The words stung, they were so coolly uttered, so redolent of endearment, yet as she held out her hands I placed my revolvers in them.

noting the flush upon her clear cheek, the sudden drooping of lashes over her eyes. I felt that I understood it all now, my heart heavy from the discovery—her dislike of Calvert Dunn arose from her love for Jim Donald. I had been a fool, dreaming the bright, tinted dreams of a fool. But I would keep that secret to myself; neither he nor she should ever know.

"And now that I am disarmed, Colonel Donald, what do you propose doing with me?"

"As you are Miss Denslow's prisoner, rather than mine," he answered carelessly, "I propose doing nothing more serious than to see you do not escape. She, I believe, has placed you upon parole within the limits of this house. Is this true, Jean?"

She lifted her eyes to his face as if to read his real purpose behind the kindly banter of his voice; then, smiling, glanced at me.

"Yes, paroled, on the word of an officer and gentleman."

"Good! I accept the same, believing Lieutenant King will justify my faith. Now let us work together and search the house, beginning with the library."

We passed into the dimly lighted room together, but I permitted the two to advance, thinking it best not to arouse the vitriolic tongue of the Judge and hence keeping well back within the shadows. His was a strange posture in which to sleep so long, his head lying sideways upon his arm, with face partially upturned toward the light. Suddenly Jean uttered a startled cry, so full of alarm as to cause me to leap forward. I saw Donald lift the head of the old man, then drop it and stare about in dazed bewilderment. The man was dead—dead, with a knife wound in the throat.

We realized the truth, all of us at the same moment, yet were unable to comprehend its full significance, staring first at the dead man and then into one another's faces in a bewilderment beyond expression. To me it came like a fresh accusation, a new link in the chain binding me. Dead! Killed in the same manner and by the same hand that had stricken down Navarre!

I saw the girl drop upon her knees, burying her face upon the nearest chair; then Donald, with lips firm set and white face, lifted the emaciated form tenderly, crossed the room with it in his arms and placed it outstretched upon the sofa. For a moment of silence he stood there motionless, gazing down upon the ghastly countenance, his shoulders bent, his giant form casting a shapeless shadow upon the wall. Then he turned and looked me sternly, searchingly in the eyes.

"What have you to say to this?" he questioned bluntly, pointing with one hand back at the body. "If you have been on guard, sir, how could this have happened?"

"The deed must have been done before I was released. When first I looked in here Judge Dunn rested in the same position in which you found him."

"Neither of you came into the room?"

"No; not so as to approach the table. Miss Denslow thought the sight of me would arouse his anger."

"I came in after the revolver belt," she said, her voice trembling, "but Lieutenant King did not even enter the room."

Donald's form straightened, his voice gruffer than I remembered hearing it before.

"But you were asleep, Jean, when I came down the stairs. Lieutenant King had left his chair and was in the front of the hall."

I took a deep breath, realizing afresh the peril of my position. The girl spoke pleadingly, brokenly.

"But Lieutenant King could not have done this. He is not a murderer, but a soldier."

Donald stood between us, erect, motionless.

"I do not know what to think, Jean," he said with a grave deliberateness. "I only know every circumstance points to this man and leaves no doubt as to my own duty. If Lieutenant King can clear himself I will be first to take his hand." His fingers dropped to the butt of his revolver. "You are my prisoner. Unclass your belt."

(To Be Continued.)

Former Residents Here.

From Wednesday's Daily. Michael Hoffart, Jacob Hoffart and John Weber, all of Pierce county, Nebraska, and living 12 miles from Plainview, came in last night to visit relatives and friends at their former home. They came down with cattle for the South Omaha market and thought it an opportune time to slip down and visit a short time. These gentlemen went to Pierce county several years ago, when the country was new, and they have all been very successful in farming and stock-raising and it pleases the Journal to learn of the prosperity that has attended them. These gentlemen were pleasant callers on the Journal this morning, and while here Mr. Michael Hoffart, who has been a patron for a number of years, renewed his subscription for another year, and also advanced the subscription of Mr. Henry G. Hoffart, who resides in the same vicinity, for another year.

"Had dyspepsia or indigestion for years. No appetite, and what I did eat distressed me terribly. Burdock Blood Bitters cured me."

—J. H. Walker, Sunbury, Ohio.

HOSIERY

FOR LADIES, GENTS AND CHILDREN!

We are in a position to give you better values in woolen, fleeced and cotton hosiery than you have ever gotten before. We have a large stock and are giving some special prices.

ZUCKWEILER & LUTZ

SHEARS & SAWBUCK.

Shears & Sawbuck kept a store, Such as never was before. City folks they wouldn't sell, Wouldn't let 'em have a smell; Fetched their money, but, by Jing, Couldn't buy a blessed thing. Couldn't meet 'em face to face, An' then sell 'em with good grace.

Country trade was what they sought, Folks w'd pay for what they bought, Fore they saw it hide or tail. They sent catalogues by mail Out to every blessed one Gettin' mail at Possum Run. We set up at night and read When we'd order been in bed.

Books was 'bout as big as sin, Had a lot of pictures in, And a bolt of merchandise, Ev'ry kind and ev'ry size, Givin' prices that they swore Knocked out every country store. Looked so straight an' seemed so true I bit at it—Jim did, too.

Jim, my neighbor 'cross the way, Best man ever worked in hay. Just let him top off a stack, Shed's rain like a turkey's back; Pleasure just to see him work, Never knew of Jim to shirk; Swings the sythe like it was play, Love to watch him work in hay.

Well, we like a pair of fools, Sent of, got some haying tools. Jim got harness and a plow, I, a range—I see it now—Drat the thing, it was so light Used it for a torch one night, Towed the darn thing in the yard, Use it now for rendering lard.

Fore Jim used the plow an hour, En'd the blamed thing wouldn't scour;

Tried the harness, broke a tug, Went to Olsen's stole his jug. In the cooler all that night, Jim reflected on his plight, In the mornin' old Al Stoul, Hardware merchant, bailed him out.

Since he left the Possum jail, Jim says he won't buy goods by mail. Home merchants are cheap; anyhow

Might have saved Jim on the plow, Jim says, "We can't sell no truck To sich folks as Shears & Sawbuck."

They will take our cash away, But won't buy our corn or hay. That seems pretty strange to me," So I told Jim that I'd see.

Asked 'em what they'd pay for oats, Couldn't they use some likely shoats,

Or a few good cords of wood; How about four tons of hay, I could ship them right away? Could I furnish Mr. Shears With his family roasting ears? Also, would my friend, Sawbuck, Buy some of my garden truck?

Answer came one summer day, Said they couldn't use our hay, Couldn't use our oats or shoats, Didn't like our Billy goats, And no wood, for they use coal. When they needed truck to eat, Bought it down on Water street, Sorry, but they must refuse Anything but cash to use.

I sat down and wrote 'em then, "Hate to trouble you again, But I want to thank you, sirs, For your bunch of cockleburrs, If you love your fellow-man; Do him good, sirs, while you can. While our merchants sweetly sleep, Shears & Sawbuck shears our sheep."

Medicines that aid nature are always most effectual. Chamberlain's Cough Remedy acts on this plan. It allays the cough, relieves the lungs, opens the secretions and aids nature in restoring the system to a healthy condition. Thousands have testified to its superior excellence. Sold by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Our Business.

The Plattsmouth Journal asserts that Paul Clark's home is in the west, and that he is a resident of Lincoln for political purposes only. This is unjust as well as untrue. Paul Clark has always been a resident of Lincoln. True, he has made a little money, and now and then takes a trip to California, but isn't it about time to quit damning a man because he has made some money? The longer we think about it the more we believe that the man who is capable of managing his own business successfully is a pretty good man to choose when looking for one to manage the public's business.—Will Maupin's Weekly.

If Mr. Maupin will step down to Plattsmouth some time we will soon convince him that we are as able to look after our own business as he is, and are not always "butting in" where we have no business.

When given as soon as the croup cough appears Chamberlain's Cough Remedy will ward off an attack of croup and prevent all danger and cause of anxiety. Thousands of mothers use it successfully. Sold by F. G. Fricke & Co.

Fiddlers' Contest.

The Independent Order of Red Men of Plattsmouth, remembering the unbounded success which they met with in their first fiddlers' contest a year ago, have decided to have another one this winter, and have selected February 16 as the date.—Nebraska City News.

Miss Louretta Kaffenberger and Edward Gabelman, of near Cedar Creek, were in the city today to attend the marriage of Mr. Gabelmann's sister, Miss Clara Gabelmann.

Mrs. B. F. Crook visited Omaha friends for a few hours today, going on the early train.

THE BURLINGTON EXHIBIT CAR

Containing samples of grain, grasses, fruits and vegetables grown by farmers in the Big Horn Basin and Yellowstone Valley, will stand at the Burlington Depot, Lincoln, Neb., until February 10th, 1912. You are especially invited to come to this Exhibit Car and talk over with me the various opportunities to acquire farm homes and to establish mercantile business institutions in these two rich irrigated farming districts.

Come Any Day. Open Evenings



D. CLEM DEEVER, Immigration Agent, 1004 Farnam Street, Omaha, Nebraska