

The Last Shot

FREDERICK PALMER

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SYNOPSIS.

At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays...

CHAPTER XV.—Continued.

"Yes!" the monosyllable was detached, dismal, labored. "A woman can be that!" she exclaimed...

"Yes, yes, yes!" the constriction was gone from her throat; there was a drum-beat in her soul.

Waiting on the path of the second terrace for Westerling to come, Marta realized the full meaning of her task.

"I have considered all that you have said for my guidance and I have decided," she began.

"All true!" whispered an inner voice. Its tone was Lanny's, in the old days of their comradeship.

"It is little that I know, but such as it you shall have it," she began, conscious of his guarded scrutiny.

Browns' defense, she noted no change in his steady look; but with the mention of Engadir in the main line she detected a gleam in his eyes...

Quietly he began a considerate catechism. Soon she was subtly understanding that her answers lacked the convincing details that he sought.

"But I have not told you the sources of my information! Isn't that like a woman!" she exclaimed.

"Yes!" put in Westerling, betraying his eagerness. Partow and Lanstron! Then her source was one of authority...

"After luncheon I remember Partow saying, 'We are going to have a look at the crops,' and they went for a walk out to the knoll where the fighting began."

"Yes! When was this?" Westerling asked keenly.

"Later, I came upon them unexpectedly after they had returned," she went on.

Soon after dark the attack began. Flashes from gun mouths and glowing sheets of flame from rifles made ugly revelry...

She was seated in the recess of the arbor the next morning, when she heard the approach of those regular, powerful steps whose character had become as distinct to her as those of a member of her own family.

Posted in the drawing-room of the Galland house were the congratulations of the premier to Westerling, who had come from the atmosphere of a staff that accorded to him a military insight far above the analysis of ordinary standards.

Only twenty thousand! Her revulsion at the bald statement was relieved by the memory of Lanny's word over the telephone after breakfast that the Browns had lost only five thousand.

"Then the end—then peace is so much nearer!" she asked.

"Very much nearer!" he answered earnestly, as he dropped on the bench beside her.

only help to end the slaughter!" She held out her hand convulsively in parting as if she would leave the rest with him.

"I think it will," he said soberly. "I think it will prove that you have done a great service," he repeated as he caught both her hands...

His steps were sturdier than ever in the power of five against three as he started back to the house.

"A little promenade in the open and my mind made up," said Westerling, clapping Bouchard on the shoulder.

Westerling could pose when it served his purpose. Now he rose and, going to one of the wall maps, indicated a point with his forefinger.

"We are going to mass for our main attack in front at Bordir!"

"Nothing!" admitted Bouchard wryly. He lowered his head under Westerling's penetrating look...

"I am going on a conviction—on putting two and two together!" Westerling announced.

"Yes, I made the prophecy that came true!" she put in. This ought to bring him back to himself and his ambitions, she thought.

"The victory that I was thinking of last night was not the taking of Bordir. It was finer than any victory in war. It was selfish—not for army and country, but born of a human weakness triumphant; a human weakness of which my career had robbed me."

"In a cause!" she interrupted hurriedly, wildly, to stop him from going further, only to find that her intention was such that it was drawing him on.

"That fatality seemed to be working itself out to the soldier so much older than yourself in renewed youth, in another form of ambition. I hoped that there was more than the cause that led you to trust me. I hoped..."

"Was he testing her? Was he playing a part of his own to make certain that she was not playing one? She looked up swiftly for answer. There was no gainsaying what she saw in his eyes."

He stretched his arms out on the back of the seat and the relaxed attitude, unusual with him, brought into relief a new trait of which she had

been hitherto oblivious. The conqueror had become simply a companionable man. Though he was not sitting close to her, yet, as his eyes met hers, she had a desire to move away which she knew would be unwise to gratify.

She lowered her lashes before it; before gratitude that made her part appear in a fresh angle of misery.

"There seems to be a kind of fatality about our relations," he went on. "I lay awake pondering it last night."



"I'm Not a Human Being."

His tone held more than gratitude. It had the elation of discovery.

"He is going to make it harder than I ever guessed!" echoed her own thought, in a flutter of confusion.

"Yes, I made the prophecy that came true!" she put in. This ought to bring him back to himself and his ambitions, she thought.

"Yes!" he exclaimed, his body stiffening free of the back of the seat.

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"I think it will," he said soberly. "I think it will prove that you have done a great service," he repeated as he caught both her hands...

she felt his breath on her cheek burning hot, and she was sickeningly conscious that he was looking her over in that point-by-point manner which she had felt across the tea-table at the hotel.

"Confess! Confess!" called all her own self-respect. "Make an end to your abasement!"

"Confession, after the Browns have given up Bordir! Confession that makes Lanny, not Westerling, your dupe!" came the reply, which might have been telegraphed into her mind from the high, white forehead of Partow bending over his maps.

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Ambition and Humility. The highest ambition is the parent of the truest humility; it makes one realize that our ultimate aim is so high that we need a power far beyond our own...

U. S. GOV. LAND FREE Under special act of Congress the agricultural land of the U. S. Forest reserve of Arkansas can now be homesteaded in tracts not to exceed 160 acres to each person...

His Mistake. "John," she said to her husband, who was grumbling over his breakfast, "your love has grown cold."

SUFFERED FOR FOUR YEARS. Mr. J. M. Sinclair of Olivehill, Tenn., writes: "I strained my back, which weakened my kidneys and caused an awful bad backache and inflammation of the bladder."

Mr. J. M. Sinclair. ed for four years and was in a nervous state and very much depressed. The doctor's medicine didn't help me, so I decided to try Dodds Kidney Pills, and I cannot say enough to express my relief and thankfulness, as they cured me. Diamond Dinner Pills cured me of Constipation."

Some Hint. "Hello, Blank! Where are you going in such a hurry?" "To the post office to put up a check about the wretched delivery service."

When Your Eyes Need Care. The medicine...

Helping the Youngsters. One of the Chicago municipal court judges has established a library for foreign boys in the boys' court.

Interrupted Communication. "You don't mean to say that this is the first you've heard of it?" "Absolutely."

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