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## THE RED WIND

A Prophecy That Was  
Fulfilled

By CLARISSA MACKIE

The July day drew to its sultry end. The sagebrush stretched to the horizon, a crisp gray-brown expanse of dry barbs from which the sun had drained every drop of moisture.

Hester Moore, standing in the doorway of the ranch house, scanned the prairie from under the arch of her bent hand. The sun was setting, a great ball of fire dropping below the sky line.

"Hester," came her father's voice from the house, "it's getting cooler, isn't it dear?"

"Just a little, father," she said gently. She went into a room where he was stretched on a wicker couch before an open window, his broken leg propped stiffly on a pillow. She took down the sheet that hung before the window and dipped it once more in a pail of water, wrung it lightly and returned it to the window.

The injured man stirred beneath the grateful coolness. "That feels good, Hester," he murmured. "If I hadn't had the ill luck to step into the gopher hole we might have had a little run up into the hills for a spell, at least until this blistering weather is over."

"Never mind, father. If you hadn't broken your leg you know you would not have taken a vacation. Perhaps you will get rested now," smiled Hester, fanning him gently.

"Perhaps. Where is Henderson?"

"He went to look up the herd. I may as well tell you now, dad—and Hester's eyes clouded with anxiety—"that the herd has been missing since Monday, and Mr. Henderson is afraid that Dixon and his gang have rustled them."

Mr. Moore struggled to sit up, groaned and sank again upon his pillow. "Confound it all, Hester, why did it happen at this time, when I am on my back and can't stir a step?"

"Because you are helpless, I suppose. If you had been as active as usual I hardly think that Dixon would have dared to steal them."

"What is that, Hester?" Mr. Moore sniffed the air suspiciously and tried to look through the screened door, but it was out of his range of vision.

Hester went to the door, looked out and came hurriedly back. "Fires at Alkali," she said briefly. "They seem to be coming this way, but the wind is south and—"

"There came a rap at the kitchen door. Hester answered it, leaving her remark unfinished.

Two Italian women sat on the doorstep, their blankets sagging from their bent shoulders. Their black eyes were mutely appealing.

"Well, Annie, how?" said Hester pleasantly.

"Bread, meat, drink?" uttered Annie gutturally.

"Of course," Hester went to the pantry and prepared several large sand-wiches for the two women. She poured two great glasses of lemonade and carried the whole to the doorstep. The women fell upon it ravenously. When it had disappeared Annie lifted her eyes to those of the pretty white girl.

"Fortune?" she muttered.

"Again?" laughed Hester. "Why, Annie, you tell my fortune every time you come! The last time you promised me a husband and a bag of gold, and I haven't seen a sign of them yet."

"On the way," muttered Annie, snatching at Hester's brown little hand and scanning the palm closely. "He rides before the red wind. He brings peace and plenty. The lost cattle come home, and the maiden marries her lover."

"How lovely!" mocked Hester. "And my father? What of him?"

"He runs away on another man's legs," she said gloomily, and, beckoning her stolid companion to follow, she grunted farewell and went wearily up the trail toward the reservation.

The two Indians passed on a knoll and looked away into the west, where a dark cloud marked the horizon. Annie stretched out a lean arm and pointed, and Frightened Fawn threw up her hands and went wailing out of sight.

"They look like two old priestesses performing some horrid rite," abominated Hester as she locked the door and went back to her father.

"There is danger, Hester?" he asked anxiously.

"The same sort that we always encounter at this season," the girl said calmly. "Remember, every season since we have lived here we have feared the grass fire, and so far it has never come."

"It has never come so close before. Alkali is only twenty miles away, and the smoke is driving this way."

"I know it, but it may shift," Hester's voice betrayed a strained note that her father was quick to catch.

"What can we do, dear? Have you made any preparations in case it does come?" he asked quickly.

"Oh, yes, dad! There isn't much we can do, you know. I've had the hay wagon bedded with blankets and supplied with food and water for a week past. Every portable treasure is ready to be thrown in at the last moment. I have had Benji along so that he will help me pull the wagon when the time comes, if it does."

"Where are the other horses, your own little Bess?" he demanded sharply.

"Gone—stolen," she murmured helplessly, and he swore harshly.

Hester went into the kitchen to prepare the evening meal. Now and then she passed before the open door to look searchingly into the dusk that was creeping fast over the land. The smoke was growing thicker, and she noticed with a start of terror that the sky was obscured.

Something brushed Hester's face. She caught it in her hand and found it was a charred ember.

She darted into the house and lighted a lamp.

"The fire has come, father," she said calmly. "I will get the wagon ready and back it to the door. I think I can transfer you from the couch to the wagon."

"Very well, dear. Wheel me to the door and give me two canes. Have you got your mother's picture?"

"Safe, father, and all your papers and plans and books and clothes. Perhaps the house will be spared after all. These adobe walls ought not to burn."

"Ah!" he cried sharply and pointed away to the southwest, where a lurid line was creeping across the width of the prairie. Henderson's place was to the east of it. Perhaps his men would start a back fire that head it off.

"Back fire, Hester," he ordered, and the girl flew to a place beyond the corral where earlier in the day Dick Henderson had plowed a wide furrow of fresh earth around the homestead.

She touched a match to the flower-dry grass on the far side of the furrow. It blazed up and ran in licking leaps up and down the edge of the fresh earth; then it reached out red tongues of flame, and a broad blast of fire went out to meet that other fire from the southwest.

Back she went to the house and tried to lift her father to the wagon. Once, twice, she exerted all her strength, but he was a heavy man, and now his weight was inert. "Leave me here and go, dear," he begged.

"Never!" she said scornfully, pausing for breath.

In that instant a bunch of cattle snorting past the house and started the restless Benji to action. Without warning he dashed away to safety, dragging the loaded wagon in his wake, leaving Hester and her father to the fate of the red wind behind.

Hester's face went down into her palms. "Oh, father!" she cried helpfully, but his gaze was bent upon her tenderly.

"It will come out all right, daughter," he said gravely. "Hang red sheets to the windows and doors. Close the doors and we will take our chances here."

Nearer the two lines of fire crept. When they met there was a leap of flame thirty feet high, and the dreaded happened. A flying ember drifted across the furrow and ignited the dry grass of the corral. There was a lurid flare of light, and the chickens in the houses squawked noisily.

In a few moments the wooden doors and window frames would be ablaze and the contents of the house would follow. Hester was thankful that the artesian well had been piped to the kitchen. She flew to it and pumped pail after pail of water until her hands were numb. She filled wash boilers and tubs and gave her father a long hapd-dipper so that he might be cooled.

Then it was that there came a thunder of horses' hoofs outside and men's voices shouting. Hester flung open the door, and Dick Henderson staggered in. "You are here!" he cried breathlessly. "I hoped you had gone!"

Hester explained.

"Get on Dipsie, Hester, and ride for your life. I will bring your father, and the boys will fight the fire."

Without a word Hester obeyed the young man. Dick Henderson had always been a good neighbor, and he had not failed them in their greatest need.

Then Dick lifted Mr. Moore in his strong arms and carried him out to where a man offered a horse and helped the two on its back. Then away they went before the red wind that Indian Annie predicted.

Miles away in a little canyon Hester found refuge beside the sagacious Benji, who had arrived there safely with his load. Later, when Dick Henderson came with his unconscious burden, the two worked together to make the injured man comfortable.

"You have done so much for me," said Hester gratefully when he told her that that the fire had broken up Dixon's gang and that the stolen cattle had been driven to a safe place, while the rustlers had escaped over the border.

"Because I love you, Hester," he blurted out suddenly, and then, overcome by his shyness, he hurried away to the mouth of the canyon to view the progress of the fire.

After awhile, when he could report that the worst was over and that they might return to the ranch, he went back to Hester, who had made a little fire of sticks in the dry bed of the creek and was cooking supper.

"What are you smiling at?" he asked sleepily.

"At Indian Annie's prophecy," said Hester demurely. "She came tonight and said that my lover would ride before the red wind and that he would bring peace and plenty; the lost cattle would come home and father would run away on another man's legs."

Dick Henderson shifted uneasily. "Did she say—or that you—er—what did she say, Hester?"

"She said the maiden married her lover," whispered Hester.

"Will she?" whispered Dick.

"Of course—just to make the prophecy come true," was Hester's answer.

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### A WIRELESS STORY.

Call From the Pacific That Was Heard in the Gulf of Mexico.

It was "eight bells" on a ship lying at anchor down in the gulf of Mexico. The men had retired for the night to their bunks and hammocks, and the wireless operator, alone in his watchfulness, was "listening in" at the head phones.

Suddenly, out of the pitchy darkness of the sea, a message that curdled the blood in his veins leaped down the antenna and hummed its fearful contents, "S. O. S.—S. O. S.—S. O. S." And a few minutes later, in response to the customary reply, "What is your position?" the answer flashed back, "125 degrees 27 minutes 37 seconds west, 47 degrees 52 minutes 10 seconds north."

That meant that out on the Pacific ocean 140 miles west of Seattle, Wash.—2,250 miles away—a vessel was calling for help.

The call of the Pacific! The operator hardly believed it. With tremulous fingers he repeated the call to the station nearest to the vessel in distress. But already the wireless watchers along the western coast had caught the message, and relief was on its way. Clear across the entire North American continent, over land and sea and mountain ranges, the ship's cry had been heard.—World's Work.

### BARREN PALESTINE.

Its Forests Are Gone and the Jordan Is Now a Feeble Stream.

One of the most remarkable illustrations in all history of the ill effects of the disappearance of forests may be observed in Palestine. In the days when Joshua conquered the promised land Palestine was a wonderfully fertile country, a land flowing with milk and honey. The Lebanon mountains were heavily wooded, and a large population was supported in comfort.

The general devastation of the forests brought about, however, a gradual deterioration of the country. The hills of Galilee, which had long served as pasture lands for large herds of cattle and sheep, are now sterile. The Jordan has become an insignificant stream, and several smaller rivers are now completely dried up throughout the greater part of the year. Some few valleys in which fertile earth washed down from the hills has been deposited have retained their old fertility. The land today supports only one-sixth the population of the time of Solomon.—Christian Herald.

### Table Manners in the Old Days.

Modern table-manners compare favorably with those of the past. Mrs. Hannah Woolley, author of "The Gentlewoman's Companion," the standard seventeenth century book on etiquette, found it necessary thus to warn her readers: "Gentlewomen, discover not by any ravenous gesture your angry appetite nor fix your eyes too greedily on the meat before you, as if you would devour more that way than your throat would swallow."

"In carrying avoid clapping your fingers in your mouth and licking them after you have buried them. Close your lips when you eat and do not smack like a pig. Fill not your mouth so full that your cheeks shall swell like a pair of Scotch longpipes. It is very uncomely to drink so large a draft that your breath is almost gone and you are forced to blow strongly to recover yourself."

### Historic Hyde Park.

Hyde park has seen not only magnificent reviews, from Stuart times onward, but has witnessed also military musters with a more warlike intent. Here during the commonwealth were

cramped the Roundhead armies of Essex and Lambert, and here Cromwell reviewed his Ironsides. The defenses which were at that time raised in the park have left their mark on Mayfair's street nomenclature, for Mount street, Grosvenor square, commemorates Oliver's mount, as it was called, part of the line of fortifications drawn around London by order of the parliament in 1642. Even the women, Butler tells us in "Hudibras," helped in the defensive work, and—

From ladies down to oyster venches Labor'd like pioneers in trenches.—London Standard.

### Extraordinary Seed.

A farmer who mainly out of curiosity had grown a crop of flax had a tablecloth made out of it. Some time later he remarked to a lady visitor at dinner, "I grew this tablecloth myself."

"Did you really?" she said, apparently much astonished. "How did you manage it?" It was plain from her tone that she had no idea how tablecloths came into existence, so the farmer lowered his voice mysteriously as he replied, "If you'll promise not to tell any one I'll tell you." The lady promised.

"Well," proceeded the farmer still in the same mysterious tone, "I planted a napkin!"

### Side Light on History.

Socrates was about to quit the benchlock.

"Think," he said, "is the cup that neither cheers nor inebriates."

Making a sort of wry face, just the same, he hastened to bring the incident to a close.—Chicago Tribune.

### How to Be Strong.

Man is strong only by union, happy only by peace. Be firm, not obstinate; courageous, not turbulent; free, not undisciplined; prompt, not precipitate.—Comte de Mirabeau.

### The good workman doesn't say,

"There, that will do," but always, "There, that is it—it will last always."—Emerson.

### Sly Old Commodore.

"When Commodore Vanderbilt was alive," says a New York Central official, "the board of directors of the New York Central used to find their work all out for them when they met. All they had to do was to ratify his plans and adjourn. Yet they had their uses. Occasionally a man would come to him with some scheme which he did not care to refuse outright.

"My directors are a difficult body of men to handle," he would say. "I'll submit it to 'em, but I warn you that they are hard to manage."

The matter would be submitted to the board when it assembled and promptly rejected.

"There," the commodore would say when his visitor came to learn the result. "I did the best I could, but I told you in advance that my directors were an obstinate lot."

### It Is Obtainable.

He was young, though of a serious turn of mind. Conversation was languid, and she was earnestly hoping he would take his leave. Her musings were interrupted, however, by him asking:

"Do you think perfection is ever actually attained in this life, Miss Alice?"

"Yes," she answered quickly, "some people become perfect horses."—Denver Republican.

### The Worried Widower.

"He says his poor children need another mother."

"Then why doesn't he take one home to them?"

"It seems that the children pay the rent, and they are very hard to convince."—Exchange.

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