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CHAPTER VII.

The Storm

Kitty sailed out of the ranch drawself-confidence gone; her spirit only eturning when Anstruther made an effort to cheer her. Then the little wish himself a thousand times one of you can tempt it, Mr. Anstruther." Dick Rolt's avenging posse.

could find to justify her attitude to careered along the floor. Jim Combe, and the less she saw to As usual in this confounded country Kitty would not say "no" to him, of door to behind him. that he fett-sure. She was not one of It required all Anstruther's strengt those women who would willingly to shut the door, and for a moment he anadiam ranch.

tterly unendurable,

ng in his absence, she would haunt! he two yours beorge like their shadow

Mrs. Rolt; no pair of reputed lovers Indeed to such a pitch of misery was

hat unfortunate young man reduced beforewevenings that Mrs. Rolt found erself trying to make some amends o him for the girl's perverse temper. In her affeart "she" began to hate young people." Without them there ad been peace at the ranch, whereas now it was air out as bad as being in ove agains herself? aw tuning

her sweet face There had never been any rival in her case to big Dick Rolt. She scarcely thought the man existed he made a spring at the fawn's collar, who could have been. sarksons.

The night after Jim's departure here was no music at the ranch, and

The last edden lead dad tallen from winds as there were, were purely local and short lived until the Wednesday

Then the dawn broke in weird fashion, with such devilish storm lights, such unearthly and terrifying shadows as are only seen on the sea or the prairies, and the first act of winter be-

In half an hour every loose thing about the ranch had been blown from #\$@#*************** its position. A wagon which the Inand lay bottom upwards in the yard.

Fences which the biggest of the bulls had been but card houses.

fore had threatened to run dry, became a swollen torrent. Pieces board and tin cans whirled along in the wind, battered and rattled against the walls, whilst the old house itself throbbed and hummed like an organ and from time to itme an earth-shaking report announced the downfall fo some great Douglas pine in the slashing. Whilst the storm lasted there was no sun. The racing clouds bloted him out, so that a vague dull light prevailed,

SELLINGS I COUNTRY

tic Indians must have let it out."

"Well, she can go into the barn if she wants to. I think she is going." But the fawn, like other only halfcivilized things, had lost its wild wits, ing-room with her head in the air. before it had acquired the sense of the Only to Frank Anstruther she unbent domestic beest, and now stood shiverin the sweetest of smiles. She came ing in the very eye of the wind, lookdown next morning white-faced, the ing for some human being to take care sparkle of her dimmed, and all the of it, instead of taking care of itself. "Mary, I must let it in, poor, miser-

able beastie. Do you mind, dear?" "No, of course not; though I don't vixen turned upon him and made him suppose that it will come in. Try if With a piece of bread in his hand

There had been tears in the night; to entice the fawn Anstruther went tears, confession and penitence, and to the main door, glad to do anything between the two women there was to win a smile from his offended lady, peace again, but there was no peace but the very elements warrel against for Anstruther. With Jim before her, the unfortunate lover that day. As Kitty had been a small angel to his soon as the latch gave under his hand rival, but Jim had gone at early dawn; the great door burst inwards with such there were no longer and loud men's a noise that the fawn fled, whilst Anvoices about the corrals. The quiet struther himself was sent reeling beof the place invited meditation, and fore the blast, and pictures, stick the more Kitty meditated the less she racks, and bear hides clattered and

admire in the man she had induced to he had made a mess of it. No one but stay behind. Indeed all her own small; a fool, he reflected, would have tried sins took a bodily form, and called to open a door on the weather side themselves Frank Anstruther. As he of the house, when it would have been smoked his last cigarette before turn- much easier to have brought the deer ing in, that gentleman had come to a round to the lea side, but it was too decision. He was quite sure then that late to think of that now. He had to the only woman fit to succeed his bring that beast in. He simply dared mother at Bilbury Park was the girl not face those two women without it he had been singing to, and he had so, with a glance at the damage he had decided that he would put his fortunes done, he plunged recklessly into the to the test before he was a day older. storm bareheaded, dragging the great

spend all their lives in an humdrum had to cling to the handle of it for support before he could make good his But though he suffered without pro- footing against the wind. Like most est, as a man must, by midday Frank newly-arrived Englishmen he was still ound himself wondering whether after particular about his attire, but in less all a world without women would be so time than it takes to write it, the glory of his boiled shirt and smart collar had As for Mrs. Rolt, she had privately gone, his riding breeches, built wide in owed that her favorite should have a the latest fashion, were clinging to him air chance, and that to prevent poach- like the skin of a fish, his long coattails were performing like a giddy wind-mill, and his whole appearance was such as to justify his belief that No self-constituted duenna ever the ladies at the window were con found her duties less exacting than did vulsed with laughter. As he crossed the paddoca it occurred to him tha ess anxious to be alone than Kitty and Mrs. Rolt was signalling to him come back, but he was uncertain, and in any case he did not mean to go back without that infernal little beast which tempted him yard by yard across the corrals, and towards the patch of shrieking and groaning timber.

Surely, he thought, the ladies were signalling to him, but he could not understand what they meant. They wer calling, but the window was closed, which in itself would have been enough But thought brought a smile to to drown their voices, without the deafening din all around him.

touched it, but could not secure his hold, so that he only frightened the the music next morning was neither of the timber. But here it paused, as if him if only they knew what was the man's making nor to his liking. For it was as much afraid to go forward as matter with him, but they did not days past the great red, "Herefords" to come back. Of course, Anstruther know. had been crowding in closer and closer followed it. As he reached the edge There was no broken bone that they round the courses, and for five days the of the brule a dry bough no thicker could find, no bleeding wound for tory seemed within his grasp. The nother resonnces of the ordinary ranch man neither saw nor understood, hesi-

thought formed itself in his mind title its staims. baster

something happened.gran To him it seemed that a terrific crash was followed by instant and complete darkness, accompanied by a curiinstinctively; even when ceverything rose and went away from him, feeling and thought, wind and rain, and even the crashing of the brule, and the angereat Kitty Clifford's laughter:

CHAPTER VIII.OT Jim to the Rescue

"Put it out of its misery; it's back

Anstruther recognized Mrs. Rolt's voice, and wondered in an idle dream; dians had left out was lifted right over fashion whose back was broken, and whether if its back was broken would wish to be put out of its misery had respected, were laid flat as if they His back was not broken nor was he in any misery. He wondered who was, The little creek which a week be- and turning to see was struck by a hideous shock of pain, after which it was night again. of av a coe

When he came to himself he knev that he was dead. He knew more than that. He was lying in his coffin; he could smell the new boards of it, and they were nailing down the lid, but this strangely enough did not worry him a bit. Death was a silly painless thing after all, very much like sleep. How even their strokes were. There were two of them at work, one on each such as might have existed when the side of him, beat, beat, beat! The Spirit moved on the face of the waters. ring of their hammers was rhythmi-The three in the house cowered at cal; rather good dream music he the windows, and watched the deso- thought, but how hard they worked, late scene with that feeling half of and what a lot of nailing up that coffin pleasure, half of awe, which is natural required. He wished that they had be should not worry. Isn't it brave of petent judges to be the best porto human beings safely entrerched in not thrown the earth in before they him?" and bending over her head, she traits of Their Majesties in exista cosy, storm-proof house when storms nailed him down, the weight of it rage without, until a miserable looking above him was so great that he could shoulder to smother the sobs which traits of Their Majesties in exist-shoulder to smother the sobs which object with lowered head and streaming hide came trembling past the winsuddenly the weight was lifted, and he
should blocking above him was so great that he could should be shook her.

object with lowered head and streamnot move his limbs. And then quite shook her.

suddenly the weight was lifted, and he sind drow her could be should be s

Reckless of falling limbs and risking, with eyes open to their danger, a fate I similar to that of the man below them, two of the half-breed boys of the ranch had been swinging their axes as they had never swung them before, and as the blades bit and the white chips flew, two pale faced women, drenched with rain, and wild with grief and terror of the storm, pleaded with them to work "faster, faster, for God's sake, faster," clenching their feeble hands, and, yearning for something to do where there was nothing they could

Heavens! how long the time seemed. Surely between them they could lift the tree off him now, and they strained at a trunk, one limb of which was too eavy for their united strength. They night as well have tried to lift the anch house. Those only who have andled a Douglas pine know what the reight of it is.

The Indians way was the only way nd there was no help but theirs, hough by some miracle Frank Anstruher lived still. The hand that poor Citty held in hers was limp and cold is a dead man's, but he was not dead et. Not yet. Surely the men could vork more quickly. Ah, if only Jim ad been there.

At the very last the half-breeds stopped and consulted. Those two men, as if time was of no value, con sulted and argued, and then one o them went to the house for a saw That was the most insufferable five minutes of all to Kitty, and even when the saw cut through, and the ends of the log were free, the log did not rise an inch. Another cut had to be made, and all the agony of waiting endured agein. Even when a six-foot length had been sawn out of the pine those two imbeciles could not lift it, a log which Jim would have carried on his shoulders.

It was well for Anstruther that they Diarrhoea Cordial could not. But for the broken limb on the underside which had buried itself many feet deep, and held now like a tap root, Anstruther would long since have learned the great secret.

Thanks to that bough he was held as in a vice but not crushed, as a Dou glas crushes what it falls upon. With levers and bars and all the ingenuity of practised loggers the men at last Tan and Freckle Lotion pried up the log sufficiently for their purpose, and drew out their man, still uncertain whether he was dead

With gentle strength they unclenched the long white fingers from the fawn's collar. Poor beast. It at any give you perfect satisfaction. rate would not come in again from that storm. The tree had broken its back, and a merciful axe stroke had split its graceful head from end to end. And yet Kitty, who at another time would have wept for a day over her pet, had now no thought of it.

On a rude stretcher, improvised by carried Anstruther to the house and laid him in the warm, firelit room or the Boss's bed, and then the greates terror, the only one of ranch life, faced those women. As long as all goes well to those who are country bred there is no hardship in the enforced separation from the town and its thousand and one conveniences. Every difficulty is a joke to be laughed at, a puzzle which natural ingenuity will delight in overcoming. You can do with out the shops and the theatres, you can hold service if you want to, and the strong man needs no policeman to protect him; but the time comes when even he cannot do without the doctor He was within arm's length now, and when he would give all that the world holds for someone who could tell him what to do to save one dear life.

Anstruther might be dying for some beast, which in a few bounds reached little help which they could have given

clouds had grown more and more than his little finger, whirled out of thein tosamundicand yet whenever murky overhead, whilst a bitter wind one of the tops and struck him across consciousness returned to him, at the kept whining uneasily, amongst the the hand. The force of that blow first effort to move or speak he fainted,

fawn, frightened by something the in such cases as this are pitifully inman neither saw nor understood, hesi- adequate. As a rule the wife knows tated, until with a quick leap Anstru- a little about the treatment of ordither sprang in and gripped the leather hary actidents and the simpler ail-It would be a curious thing, the man cerally some book which professes to thought, which would loosen his grip be a substitute for the physician. You now until the propoking pet was safely have only to turn to it in an emergency in its mistress's keeping, and asothe to discover how Hitle there is to jus-

> nate. Roll world such a volume from half therdoctor's success at least depends upon the patient's faith in him, but when you good folk at home boast yourselves of your many colonial possessions, in which you take only an occasional pride and a very little ser ious interest, allow something not only for the courage of the men who hew out fresh dominions for you all over the world, but something too for the martyrdoms of women, who watch through the long nights of lone lands. growing old between a sun's setting and and sum's rising, whilst all that makes life valuable for them is fading away under their eyes, for want of that which to you is but a natural accesory of your every-day life.

Through that long and wild night those two women watched; whilst it seemed to them that the winds clamored round the house for the which had escaped them.

Towards morning, Mrs. Rolt. had been dozing in a chair by the fireside asked : Juing 8 Hee

"Is he sleeping now, Kitty?" "No, he is pretending to, but I can see how his poor lips are pressed together. I don't believe he has slept once since they carried him in,"

"Oh, nonsense. He was sleeping nicely through the night while I watched. Dan 1990 Et. Mil Bon W "He was shamming, Mary, so that

growing in value year after year. drew a great breath, and again the girl, and drew her gently to her knee; you both papers until January 1st "Oh, my poor little Mawitch. Mary, fierce pain came and took him away soothing her quietly, whilst a very look eame into her 1912, and the Coronation porlook. There is my fawn. Those idio- into the cool dark where there was no wistful motherly look came into her

own steady grev eyes. Continued on page 7.

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