

Coolidge Dane

# **Silver and Gold: A Story of Luck and Love in a Western Mining Camp**



Dane Coolidge

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### **THE PROPHECY**

*“You will make a long journey to the West and there, within the shadow of a Place of Death, you will find two treasures, one of Silver and the other of Gold. Choose well between them and both shall be Yours, but if you choose unwisely you will lose them Both and suffer a great disgrace. You will fall in love with a beautiful woman who is an artist, but beware how you reveal your affection or she will confer her hand upon Another. Courage and constancy will attend you through life but in the end will prove your undoing, for you will meet your death at the hands of your Dearest Friend.”*

## CHAPTER I

### THE GROUND-HOG

The day had dawned on the summit of Apache Leap and a golden eagle, wheeling high above the crags, flashed back the fire of the sun from his wings; but in the valley below where old Pinal lay sleeping the heat had not begun. A cool wind drew down from the black mouth of Queen Creek Canyon, stirring the listless leaves of the willows, and the shadow of the great cliff fell like a soothing hand on the deserted town at its base. In the brief freshness of the morning there was a smell of flaunting green from the sycamores along the creek, and the tang of greasewood from the ridges; and then, from the chimney of a massive stone house, there came the odor of smoke. A coffee mill began to purr from the kitchen behind and a voice shouted a summons to breakfast, but the hobo miner who lay sprawling in his blankets did not answer the peremptory call. He raised his great head, turned his pig eyes toward the house, then covered his face from the flies.

There was a clatter of dishes, a long interval of silence, and then the sun like a flaming disc topped the mountain wall to the east. The square adobe houses cast long black shadows across the whitened dust of the street and as the man burrowed deeper to keep out the light the door of the stone house slammed. The day seldom passed when Bunker Hill's wife did not cook for three or four hoboes but when Old Bunk called a man in to breakfast he expected him to come. He stood for a minute, tall and rangy and grizzled, a desert squint in one eye; and then with a muttered oath he strode across the street.

"Hey!" he called prodding the blankets with his boot and the hobo came alive with a jump.

"You look out!" he snarled, bounding violently to his feet and dropping back to a crouch; but when he met Bunker Hill's steely eyes he mumbled something and lowered his hands.

"All right, pardner," observed Hill, "I'll do all of that; but if you figure on getting any breakfast you'd better come in and eat it."

"Huh!" responded the hobo scowling and blinking at the sun and then without a word he started for the house. He was a big, hulking man, with arms like a bear and bulging, bench-like legs; but the expression on his face above his enormous black mustache was that of a disgruntled ground-hog. His nose was tipped up, his eyes were small and stubborn and as he ate a hurried breakfast he glanced about uneasily as if fearful of some trap; yet if Bunker Hill had any reservations about his guest he did not abate his hospitality. The coffee was still hot, there was plenty of everything and when the miner rose to go Old Bunk accompanied him to the door.

"Going to be hot," he observed as the heat struck through their clothes; but the hobo omitted even a nod of assent in his haste to be off down the trail.

"Well, the dadblasted bum!" exclaimed Bunker in a rage as the miner passed over the first hill and, stumping across the street, he rolled up the tumbled blankets. "The dirty dog!" he grumbled vindictively, hoisting the bed upon his shoulders; but as he started back to the house he heard something drop from the roll. He paused and looked back and there on the ground lay a wallet, stuffed with bills. It was the miner's purse, which he had put under his pillow and forgotten in his sudden departure.

"O-ho!" observed Bunker as he picked it up. "O-ho, I thought you was broke!" He opened the purse with great deliberation, laying bare a great sheaf of bills, and as his wife and daughter came hurrying down the steps he counted the hobo's hoard.

"Over eight hundred dollars," he announced with ominous calm. "Some roll, when a man is bumming his meals and can't even stop to say thanks—"

"He's coming back for it," broke in his wife anxiously. "And now, Andrew, please don't—"

"Never mind," returned her husband, slipping the wallet into his pocket, and she sighed and folded her hands. The hobo was walking fast, coming back down the hill, and when he saw Hill by the blankets he broke into a ponderous trot.

"Say," he called, "you didn't see a purse, did ye? I left one under my blankets."

"A purse!" exclaimed Bunker with exaggerated surprise. "Why I thought you was broke—what business have *you* got with a purse?"

"Well, I had a few keep-sakes and—"

"You're a liar!" rapped out Bunker and his sharp lower jaw suddenly jutted out like a crag. "You're a liar," he repeated, as the hobo let it pass, "you had eight hundred and twenty-five dollars."

"Well, what's that to you?" retorted the miner defiantly. "It's mine, so gimme it back!"

"Oh, I don't know," drawled Bunker hauling the purse from his pocket and looking over the bills, "I don't know whether I will or not. You came in here last night and told me you were broke, but right here is where I collect. It'll cost you five dollars for your supper and breakfast and five dollars more for your bed—that's my regular price to transients."

"No, you don't!" exclaimed the hobo, but as Bunker looked up he drew back a step and waited.

"That's ten dollars in all," continued Hill, extracting two bills from the purse, "and next time you bum your breakfast I'd advise you to thank the cook."

"Hey, you give me that money!" burst out the miner hoarsely, holding out a threatening hand, and Bunker Hill rose to his full height. He was six feet two when he stooped.

"W'y, sure," he said handing over the wallet; but as the miner turned to go Hill jabbed him in the ribs with a pistol. "Just a moment, my friend," he went on quietly, "I just want to tell you a few things. I've been feeding men like you for fifteen years, right here in this old town, and I've never turned one away yet; but you can tell any bo that you meet on the trail that the road-sign for this burg is changed. I used to be easy, but so help me Gawd, I'll never feed a hobo again. Here my wife has been slaving over a red-hot stove cooking grub for you hoboes for years and the first bum that forgets and leaves his purse has eight hundred dollars—cash! Now you git, dad-burn ye, before I do the world a favor and fill you full of lead!" He motioned him away with the muzzle of his pistol while his wife laid a hand on his arm, and after one look the hobo turned and loped over the top of the hill.

"Now Andrew, please," expostulated Mrs. Hill, and, still breathing hard, Old Bunk put up his gun and reached for a chew of tobacco.

"Well, all right," he growled, "but you heard what I said—that's the last doggoned hobo we feed."

"Well—perhaps," she conceded, but Bunker Hill was roused by the memory of years of ingratitude.

"No 'perhaps' about it," he asserted firmly, "I'll run every last one of them away. Do you think I'm going to work my head off for my family, only to be et out of house and home? Do you think I'm going to have you cooking meals for these miners when they're earning their five dollars a day? Let 'em buy a lunch at the store!"

"No, but Andrew," protested Mrs. Hill, who was a large, motherly soul and not to be bowed down by work, "I'm sure that some of them are worthy."

"Yes, I know you are," he answered, smiling grimly, "that's what you always say. But you hear me, now; I'm through. Don't you feed another man."

He turned to his daughter for support, but his bad luck had just begun. Drusilla was shading her eyes from the sun and staring up the trail.

"Oh, here comes another one," she cried in a hushed voice and pointed up the creek. He stood at the mouth of the black-shadowed canyon where the trail comes in from Globe—a young man with wind-blown hair, looking doubtfully down at the town; but when he saw them he stepped boldly forth and came plodding down the trail.

"Oh, not this one!" pleaded Mrs. Hill when she saw his boyish face; but Bunker Hill thrust out his jaw.

“Every one of ’em,” he muttered, “the whole works—all of ’em! You women folks go into the house.”



## CHAPTER II

### BIG BOY

He was a big, fair-haired boy, blue-eyed and clean limbed, and as he came down the trail there was a spring to his step that not even a limp could obliterate; and at every stride the great muscles in his chest played and rippled beneath his shirt. He was a fine figure of a man, tall and straight as an Apollo, and yet he was a hobo. Never before had Bunker Hill seen a better built man or one more open-faced and frank, but he came down the trail with the familiar hobo-limp and Bunker set his jaws and waited. It was such men as this, young and strong and full of blood, who had kept him poor for years. Hobo miners, the most expert of their craft, and begging their grub on the trail!

“Good morning,” nodded Hill and squinted down his eyes as the young man boggled at his words.

“Good morning,” replied the hobo and then, after a pause, he straightened up and came to the point. “What’s the chance to get a little something to eat?” he inquired with a twisted smile and Bunker Hill sprang his bomb.

“Danged poor,” he returned, and as the hobo blinked he spoke his piece with a rush. “I’ve got a store over there where you can buy what you want; but I’ve quit, absolutely, feeding every hobo that comes by and batters my door for grub. I’m an old man myself and you’re young and strong—why the hell don’t you get out and work?”

“Never you mind,” answered the hobo, his eyes glowing angrily; and as Old Bunk went on with his tirade the miner’s lip curled with scorn. “That’s all right, old-timer,” he broke in with cold politeness—“no offense—don’t let me deprive you. I don’t make a practice of battering on back doors. But, say, I’m looking for a fellow with a big, black mustache—did you see him come by this way?”

“Did I *see* him?” yelled Hill flying into a fury, “well you’re danged whistling I did! He came in last night and bummed his supper—my wife had to cook it special—and I gave him his bed and breakfast; and this morning when he left he didn’t even say: ‘Thanks!’ That’s how grateful these hoboies are! And when I went out to pick up his blankets a thumping big purse dropped out!”

“Holy Joe!” exclaimed the hobo looking up with sudden interest, “say, how long ago did he leave?”

“Not half an hour! No, not ten minutes ago—and if my wife hadn’t been there to hold me down I’d have run him till he dropped. And when I opened that purse it was full of money—there was eight hundred and twenty-five dollars—and him trying to tell me he was broke!”

“That’s him, all right,” declared the hobo. “Well, so long; I’ll be on my way.”

He started off down the trail at a long, swinging stride, then turned abruptly back.

“I’ll get a drink,” he suggested, “if there’s no objection. Don’t charge for your water, I reckon.”

It was all said politely and yet there was an edge to it which cut Old Bunk to the quick. He, Bunker Hill, who had fed hoboies for years and had never taken a cent, to be insulted like this by the first sturdy beggar that he declined to serve with a meal! He reached for his gun, but just at that moment his wife laid a hand on his arm. She had not been far away, just up on the porch where she could watch what was going on, and she turned to the hobo with a smile.

“Mr. Hill is just angry,” she explained good-naturedly, “on account of that other man; but if you’ll wait a few minutes I’ll cook you some breakfast and—”

“Thank you, ma’am,” returned the miner, taking off his hat civilly, “I’ll just take a drink and go.”

He hurried back to the well and, picking up the bucket, drank long and deep of the water; then he threw away the rest and with practiced hands drew up a fresh bucket from the depths.

“You’d better fill a bottle,” called Bunker Hill, whose anger was beginning to evaporate, “it’s sixteen miles to the next water.”

The hobo said nothing, nor did he fill a bottle, and as he came back past them there was a set to his jaw that was eloquent of rage and disdain. It was the custom of the country—of that great, desert country where houses are days' journeys apart—to invite every stranger in; and as Bunker Hill gazed after him he saw his good name held up to execration and scorn. This boy was a Westerner, he could tell by his looks and the way he saved on his words, perhaps he even lived in those parts; and in a sudden vision Hill beheld him spreading the news as he followed the long trail to the railroad. He would come dragging in to Whitlow's Wells, the next station down the road, so weak he could hardly walk and when they enquired into his famished condition he would unfold some terrible tale. And the worst of it was that the boys would believe it and repeat it to all who passed. Men would hear in distant cow camps, far back in the Superstitions, that Old Bunk had driven a starving man from his door and he had nearly perished on the desert.

"Hey!" called Bunker Hill taking a step or two after him, "wait a minute—I'll give you a lunch."

"You can keep your lunch," said the man over his shoulder and strode doggedly on up the hill.

"Gimme something to take to him," rapped out Hill to his wife, but the hobo's sharp ears had caught the words and he wheeled abruptly in his tracks.

"I wouldn't take your danged lunch if it was the last grub on earth," he shouted in a towering rage; and while they stood gazing he turned his back and passed on over the hill.

"Let 'im go!" grumbled Bunker pacing up and down and avoiding his helpmeet's eye, but at last he ripped out a smothered oath and racked off down the street to his stable. This was an al fresco affair, consisting of a big stone corral within the walls of what had once been the dancehall, and as he saddled up his horse and rode out the narrow gate he found his wife waiting with a lunch.

"Don't crush the doughnuts," she murmured anxiously and patted his hand approvingly.

"All right," he said and, putting spurs to his horse, he galloped off over the hill.

The old town of Pinal lay on a bench above the creek bed, with high cliffs to the east and north; but south and west the country fell off rapidly in a series of rolling ridges. Over these the road to the railroad climbed and dipped with wearisome regularity until at last it dropped down into the creek-bed again and followed its dry, sandy course. Not half an hour had passed from the time the second hobo left till Old Bunk had started after him, yet so fast had he traveled that he was almost to the creek bed before Bunker Hill caught sight of him.

"Ay, Chihuahua!" he ejaculated in shrill surprise and reined in his horse to gaze. The young hobo was running and, not far ahead, the Ground Hog was fleeing before him. They ran through bushy gulches and over cactus-crowned ridges where the sahuaros rose up like giant sentinels; until at last, as he came to the sandy creek-bed, the black hobo stood at bay.

"They're fighting!" exclaimed Bunker with a joyous chuckle and rode down the trail like the wind.

After twenty wild years in Old Mexico, there were times when Bunker Hill found Arizona a trifle tame; but here at last there was staged a combat that promised to take a place in local history. When he rode up on the fight the young miner and the Ground Hog were standing belt to belt, exchanging blows with all their strength, and as the young man reeled back from a right to the jaw the Ground Hog leapt in to finish him.

"Here! None of that!" spoke up Bunker Hill menacing the black hobo with his quirt; but the battered young Apollo waved him angrily aside and flew at his opponent again.

"I'll show you, you danged dog!" he cursed exultantly as the Ground Hog went down before him, "I'll show you how to run out on me! Come on, you big stiff, and if I don't make you holler quit you can have every dollar you stole!"

"Hey, what's the matter, Big Boy? What's going on here?" demanded Bunker of the blond young giant. "I thought you fellers were pardners."

“Pardners, hell!” spat Big Boy, whose mouth was beginning to bleed. “He robbed me of all my money. We won eight hundred dollars in the drilling contest at Globe and he collected the stakes and beat it!”

“You’re a liar!” retorted the Ground Hog standing sullenly on his guard, and once more Big Boy went after him. They roughed it back and forth, neither seeking to avoid the blows but swinging with all their might; until at last the Ground Hog landed a mighty smash that knocked his opponent to the ground. “Now lay there,” he jeered, and, stepping over to one side, he picked up a purse from the ground.

It was the same bulging purse that he had forgotten that morning in his hurry to get over the hill, and as Bunker Hill gazed at it two things which had misled him became suddenly very plain. The day before had been the Fourth of July, when the miners had their contests in Globe, and these two powerful men were a team of double-jackers who had won the first prize between them. Then the Ground Hog had stolen the total proceeds, which accounted for his show of great wealth; and Big Boy, on the other hand, being left without a cent, had been compelled to beg for his breakfast. A wave of righteous anger rose up in Old Bunk’s breast at the monstrous injustice of it all and, whipping out his pistol, he threw down on the Ground Hog and ordered him to put up his hands.

“And now lay down that purse,” he continued briefly, “before I shoot the flat out of your eye.”

The hobo complied, but before he could retreat the young miner raised himself up.

“Say, you butt out of this!” he said to Bunker Hill, wagging his head to shake off the blood. “I’ll ’tend to this yap myself.”

He turned his gory front to the Ground Hog, who came eagerly back to the fray; and once more like snarling animals they heaved and slugged and grunted, until once more poor Big Boy went down.

“I can whip him!” he panted rising up and clearing his eyes. “I could clean him in a minute—only I’m starved.”

He staggered and the heart of Bunker Hill smote him when he remembered how he had denied the man food. Yet he bore in resolutely, though his blows were weak, and the Ground Hog’s pig eyes gleamed. He abated his own blows, standing with arms relaxed and waiting; and when he saw the opening he struck. It was aimed at the jaw, a last, smashing hay-maker, such a blow as would stagger an ox; but as it came past his guard the young Apollo ducked, and then suddenly he struck from the hip. His whole body was behind it, a sharp uppercut that caught the hurtling Ground Hog on the chin; and as his head went back his body lurched and followed and he landed in a heap in the dirt.

“He’s out!” shouted Bunker and Big Boy nodded grimly; but the Ground Hog was pawing at the ground. He rose up, and fell, then rose up again; and as they watched him half-pityingly he scrambled across the sand and made a grab at the purse.

“You stand back!” he blustered clutching the purse to his breast and snapping open the blade of a huge jack-knife; but before Old Bunk could intervene Big Boy had caught up a rock.

“You drop that knife,” he shouted fiercely, “or I’ll bash out your brains with this stone!” And as the Ground Hog gazed into his battle-mad eyes he weakened and dropped the knife. “Now gimme that purse!” ordered the masterful Big Boy and, cringing before the rock, the beaten Ground Hog slammed it down on the ground with a curse.

“I’ll git you yet!” he burst out hoarsely as he shambled off down the trail, “I’ll learn you to git gay with me!”

“You’ll learn me nothing,” returned the young miner contemptuously and gathered up the spoils of battle.

## CHAPTER III

### HOBO STUFF

“Young man,” began Bunker Hill after a long and painful silence in which Big Boy completely ignored him, “I want to ask your pardon. And anything I can do—”

“I’m all right,” cut in the hobo wiping the blood out of one eye and feeling tenderly of a tooth, “and I don’t want nothing to do with you.”

“Can’t blame ye, can’t blame ye,” answered Old Bunk judicially. “I certainly got you wrong. But as I was about to say, Mrs. Hill sent this lunch and she said she hoped you’d accept it.”

He untied a sack from the back of his saddle, and as he caught the fragrance of new-made doughnuts Big Boy’s resolution failed.

“All right,” he said, making a grab for the lunch. “Much obliged!” And he chucked him a bill.

“Hey, what’s this for?” exclaimed Bunker Hill grievously. “Didn’t I ask your pardon already?”

“Well, maybe you did,” returned the hobo, “but after that call down you gave me this morning I’m going to pay my way. It’s too danged bad,” he murmured sarcastically as he opened up the lunch. “Sure hard luck to see a good woman like that married to a pennypinching old walloper like you.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” observed Old Bunk, gazing doubtfully at the bill, but at last he put it in his pocket.

“Yes, that’s right,” he agreed with an indulgent smile, “she’s an awful good cook—and an awful good woman, too. I’ll just give her this money to buy some little present—she told me I was wrong, all the time. But I want to tell you, pardner—you can believe it or not—I never turned a man down before.”

The hobo grunted and bit into a doughnut and Bunker Hill settled down beside him.

“Say,” he began in an easy, conversational tone, “did you ever hear about the hobo that was walking the streets in Globe? Well, he was broke and up against it—hadn’t et for two days and the rustling was awful poor—but as he was walking along the street in front of that big restaurant he saw a new meal ticket on the sidewalk. His luck had been so bad he wouldn’t even look at it but at last when he went by he took another slant and see that it was good—there wasn’t but one meal punched out.”

“Aw, rats,” scoffed Big Boy, “are you still telling that one? There was a miner came by just as he reached down to grab it and punched out every meal with his hob-nails.”

“That’s the story,” admitted Bunker, “but say, here’s another one—did you ever hear of the hobo Mark Twain? Well, he was a well-known character in the old days around Globe—kinder drifted around from one camp to the other and worked all his friends for a dollar. That was his regular graft, he never asked for more and he never asked the same man twice, but once every year he’d make the rounds and the old-timers kind of put up with him. Great story-teller and all that and one day I was sitting talking with him when a mining man came into the saloon. He owned a mine, over around Mammoth somewhere, and he wanted a man to herd it. It was seventy-five a month, with all expenses paid and all you had to do was to stick around and keep some outsider from jumping in. Well, when he asked for a man I saw right away it was just the place for old Mark and I began to kind of poke him in the ribs, but when he didn’t answer I hollered to the mining man that I had just the feller he wanted. Well, the mining man came over and put it up to Mark, and everybody present began to boost. He was such an old bum that we wanted to get rid of him and there wasn’t a thing he could kick on. There was plenty of grub, a nice house to live in and he didn’t have to work a tap; but in spite of all that, after he’d asked all kinds of questions, Old Mark said he’d have to think it over. So he went over to the bar and began to figger on some paper and at last he came back and said he was sorry but he couldn’t afford to take it.

“Well, why not?” we asks, because we knowed he was a bum, but he says: ‘Well gentlemen, I’ll tell ye, it’s this way. I’ve got twelve hundred friends in Arizona that’s worth a dollar apiece a year; but this danged job only pays seventy-five a month—I’d be losing three hundred a year.”

“Huh, huh,” grunted Big Boy, picking up some folded tarts, “your mind seems to be took up with hoboos.”

“Them’s my wife’s pay-streak biscuits,” grinned Bunker Hill, “or at least, that’s what I call ’em. The bottom crust is the foot-wall, the top is the hanging-wall, and the jelly in the middle is the pay streak.”

“Danged good!” pronounced the hobo licking the tips of his fingers and Old Bunk tapped him on the knee.

“Say,” he said, “seeing the way you whipped that jasper puts me in mind of a feller back in Texas. He was a big, two-fisted hombre, one of these Texas bad-men that was always getting drunk and starting in to clean up the town; and he had all the natives bluffed. Well, he was in the saloon one day, telling how many men he’d killed, when a little guy dropped in that had just come to town, and he seemed to take a great interest. He kept edging up closer, sharpening the blade of his jack-knife on one of these here little pocket whetstones, until finally he reached over and cut a notch in the bad man’s ear.

“There,” he says, “you’re so doggoned bad—next time I see you I’ll know you!”

“Yeh, some guy,” observed Big Boy, “and I see you’re some story-teller, but what’s all this got to do with me?”

“Oh, nothing, nothing,” answered Old Bunk hastily, “only I thought while you were eating—”

“Yes, you told me two stories about a couple of hoboos and then another one about taming down a bad man; but I want to tell you right now, before you go any further, that I’m no hobo nor bad man neither. I’m a danged good miner—one of the best in Globe—”

“Aw, no no!” burst out Bunker holding up both hands in protest, “you’ve got me wrong entirely.”

“Well, your stories may be all right,” responded Big Boy shortly, “but they don’t make a hit with me. And I’ve took about enough, for one day.”

He started back up the trail and Bunker Hill rode along behind him going over the events of the day. Some distinctly evil genius seemed to have taken possession of him from the moment he got out of bed and, try as he would, it seemed absolutely impossible for him to square himself with this Big Boy.

“Hey, git on and ride,” he shouted encouragingly, but Big Boy shook his head.

“Don’t want to,” he answered and once more Bunker Hill was left to ponder his mistakes. The first, of course, was in taking too much for granted when Big Boy had walked into town; and the second was in ever refusing a hobo when he asked for something to eat. True it amounted in the aggregate to a heart-breaking amount—almost enough to support his family—but a man lost his luck when he turned a hobo down and Old Bunk decided against it. Never again, he resolved, would he restrain his good wife from following the dictates of her heart, and that meant that every hobo that walked into town would get a square meal in his kitchen. Where the cash was coming from to buy this expensive food and pay for the freighting across the desert was a matter for the future to decide, but as he dwelt on his problem a sudden ray of hope roused Bunker Hill from his reverie. Speaking of money, the ex-hobo, walking along in front of him, had over eight hundred dollars in his hip pocket—and he claimed to be a miner!

“Say!” began Bunker as they came in sight of town, “d’ye see those old workings over there? That’s the site of the celebrated Lost Burro Mine—turned out over four millions in silver!”

“Yeah, so I’ve heard,” answered Big Boy wearily, “been closed down though, for twenty years.”

“I’m the owner of that property,” went on Bunker pompously. “Andrew Hill is my name and I’d be glad to show you round.”

“Nope,” said the future prospect, “I’m too danged tired. I’m going down to the crick and rest.”

“Come up to the house,” proposed Bunker Hill cordially, “and meet my wife and family. I’m sure Mrs. Hill will be glad to see you back—she was afraid that something might happen to you.”

The hobo glanced up with a swift, cynical smile and turned off down the trail to the creek.

“I see you’ve got your eye on my roll,” he observed and Bunker Hill shrugged regretfully.

## CHAPTER IV

### CASH

It was evident to Bunker Hill that no common measures would serve to interest this young capitalist in his district; and yet there he was, a big husky young miner, with eight hundred dollars in his pocket. That eight hundred dollars, if wisely expended, might open up a bonanza in Pinal; and in any case, if it was spent with him, it would help to pay the freight. Old Bunk chopped open a bale of hay with an ax and gave his horse a feed; and, after he had given his prospect time to rest, he drifted off down towards the creek.

The creek at Pinal was one of those vagrant Western streams that appear and disappear at will. Where its course was sandy it sank from sight, creeping along on the bed-rock below; but where as at Pinal the bed-rock came to the surface, then the creek, perforce, rushed and gurgled. From the dark and windy depths of Queen Creek Canyon it came rioting down over the rocks and where the trail crossed there was a mighty sycamore that almost dammed its course. With its gnarled and swollen roots half dug from their crevices by the tumultuous violence of cloudbursts, it clung like an octopus to a shattered reef of rocks and sucked up its nourishment from the water. In the pool formed by its roots the minnows leapt and darted, solemn bull-frogs stared forth from dark holes, and in a natural seat against the huge tree trunk Big Boy sat cooling his feet. He looked younger now, with the blood washed off his face and the hard lines of hunger ironed out, and as Bunker Hill made some friendly crack he showed his white teeth in a smile.

"Pretty nice down here," he said and Bunker nodded gravely.

"Yes," he said, "nice place for frogs. Say, did you ever hear the story about Spud Murphy's frog farm? Well Spud was an old-timer, awful gallant to the ladies, especially when he'd had a few drinks, and every time he'd get loaded about so far he'd get out an old flute and play it. But it sounded so sad and mournful that everybody kicked, and one time over at a dance when Spud was about to play some ladies began to jolly him about it.

"Well, I'll tell you," says Spud, "there's a story connected with that flute. The only time I ever stood to make a fortune I spoiled it by playing that sad music."

"Oh, tell us about it," they all says at once; so Spud began on his tale.

"It seems he was over around Clifton when some French miners came in and, knowing their weakness, Spud dammed up the creek and got ready to have a frog farm. He sent back to Arkansaw and got three carloads of bull-frogs—thoroughbreds old Spud said they was—and turned them loose in the creek; and every evening, to keep them from getting lonely, he'd play 'em a few tunes on his flute. Well, they were doing fine, getting used to the dry country and beginning to get over being homesick, when one night Murph went up there and played them the Arkansaw Traveler.

"Well, of course that was the come-on—Old Spud stopped his story—and finally one lady bit.

"Yes, but how did you lose your fortune?" she asks and Spud he shakes his head.

"By playing that tune," he says. "Them frogs got so homesick they started right out for Arkansaw—and every one perished on the desert."

"Huh!" grunted Big Boy, who had been listening intolerantly. "Say, is that all you do—sit around and tell stories for a living? Why the hell don't you git out and work?"

"Well, you got me again, kid," admitted Old Bunk mournfully, "I'm sure sorry I made you that talk. But I was so doggoned sore at that pardner of yours that I kinder went out of my head."

"Well, all right," conceded Big Boy, "if that's the way you feel about it there's no use rubbing it in, but you certainly lost out with me. My hands may be big, but I never broadened my knuckles by battering on other people's back doors. At the same time if I have to ask a man for a meal I expect to be treated civil. When I'm working around town and a miner strikes me for a stake I give him a

dollar to eat on, and if I happen to be broke when I land in a new camp I work my face the same way. That's the custom of the country, and when a man asks me why I don't work—"

"Aw, forget it!" pleaded Bunker, "didn't I ask your pardon? Didn't my wife tell you why I said it? But I'll bet you, all the same, if you'd fed as many as I have you'd throw a fit once in a while, yourself. Here's the whole camp shut down, only one outfit working and they're just running a diamond drill—and at the same time I have to feed every hobo that comes through, whether he's got any money or not. How'd you like to buy your grub at these war-time prices and run a hotel for nothing, and at the same time keep up the assessment work on fifteen or twenty claims? Maybe you'd get kind of peevish when a big bum laid in his blankets and wouldn't even get up for breakfast!"

"Ah, that man Meacham!" burst out Big Boy scornfully. "Say do you know what that yap did to me? We were drilling pardners in the double-jack contest—it was just yesterday, over in Globe—and in the last few minutes he began to throw off on me, so I had to win the money myself. Practically did all the work, and while they were giving me a rub-down afterwards he collected the money and beat it. I'd put up every dollar I had in side bets, and the first prize was seven hundred dollars; but he collected it all and then, when I began looking for him, he took out over this trail. Well, I was so doggoned mad when I found out what he'd done that I didn't even stop to eat, and I followed him on the run until dark. When I ran out of matches to look for his tracks I laid down and slept in the trail and this morning when I got up I was so stiff and weak that I couldn't hardly crawl. But I caught the big jasper and believe me, old-timer, he'll think twice before he robs me again!"

"He will that," nodded Bunker, "but say, tell me this—ain't half of that money his?"

"Not a bean!" declared Big Boy. "We fought for the purse, the winner to take it all. He saw I was weak or he'd never have stood up to me—that's why he was so sore when he lost."

"I'd never've let him hurt you!" protested Old Bunk vehemently, "I had my gun on him, all the time. And if I'd had my way you'd never have fought him—I'd have taken the purse away from him."

"Yes, that's it, you see—that's what he was fishing for—he wanted you to make it a draw! But I knew all the time I could lick him with one hand—and I did, too, and got the money!"

"You did danged well!" praised Bunker roundly, "I never see a gamier fight; but I thought at the end he sure had you beat—you could hardly hold up your hands."

"All a stall!" exclaimed Big Boy proudly. "I began fighting his way at first, but I saw I was too weak to slug; so, just for a come-on, I pulled my blows and when he made a swing I downed him."

"Well, well!" beamed Old Bunk, "you certainly are a wise one—you know how to use your head. I wouldn't have believed it, but if you're as smart as all that you've got no business working as a miner. You've got a little stake—why don't you buy a claim and make a play for big money? Look at the rich men in the West—take Clark and Douglas and Wingfield—how did they all get their money? Every one of them made it out of mining. Some started in as bankers, or store-keepers or saloon-keepers; but they got their big money, just the same as you or I will, out of a four-by-six hole in the ground. That's the way I dope it out and I've spent fifteen years of my life just playing that system to win. Me and old Bible-Back Murray, the store-keeper down in Moroni, have been working in this district for years; and, sooner or later, one or the other of us will strike it and we'll pile up our everlasting fortunes. I hate the Mormon-faced old dastard, he's such a sanctified old hypocrite, but I always treat him white and if his diamond drill hits copper he'll make the two of us rich. Anyhow, that's what I'm waiting for."

Big Boy looked up at the striated hills which lay like a section of layer cake between the base of the mountains and the creek and then he shook his head.

"Nope," he said, "it don't look good to me. The formation runs too regular. What you need for a big mineral deposit is some fissure veins, where the country has been busted up more."

"Oh, it don't look like a mineral country at all, eh?" enquired Bunker Hill sarcastically. "Well, how do you figure it out then that they took out four million dollars' worth of silver from that little hill right up the creek?"



“Don’t know,” answered Big Boy, “but you couldn’t work it now, with silver down to fifty-two cents. It’s copper that’s the high card now.”

“Yes, and look what happened to copper when the war broke out?” cried Bunker Hill derisively, “it went down to eleven cents. But is it down to eleven now? Well, not so you’d notice it—thirty-one would be more like it—and all on account of the metal trust. They smashed copper down, then bought it all up, and now they’re boosting the price. Well, they’ll do the same with silver.”

“Aw, you’re crazy,” came back Big Boy, “they need copper to make munitions to sell to those nations over in Europe; but what can you make out of silver?”

“Oh, nothing,” jeered Bunker, “but I’ll tell you what you *can* do—you can use it to pay for your copper! You hadn’t figured that out, now had you? Well, here now, let me tell *you* a few things. These people that are running the metal-buying trust are smart, see—they look way ahead. They know that after we’ve grabbed all the gold away from Europe those nations will have to have some other metal to stand behind their money—and that metal is going to be silver. The big operators up in Tonopah ain’t selling their silver now, they’re storing it away in vaults, because they know in a little while all the nations in the world are going to be bidding for silver. And say, do you see that line of hills? There’s silver enough buried underneath them to pay the national debt of the world.”

He paused and nodded his head impressively and Big Boy broke into a grin.

“Say,” he said, “you must have some claim for sale, like an old feller I met over in New Mex.

“W’y, young man,” he says when I wouldn’t bite, ‘you’re passing up the United States Mint. If you had Niagara Falls to furnish the power, and all hell to run the blast furnace, and the whole State of Texas for a dump, you couldn’t extract the copper from that property inside of a million years. It’s big, I’m telling you, it’s big!’ And all he wanted for his claim was a thousand dollars, down.”

“Aw, you make me tired,” confessed Bunker Hill frankly, now that he saw his sale gone glimmering, “I see you’re never going to get very far. You’ll tramp back to Globe and blow in your money and go back to polishing a drill. W’y, a young man like you, if he had any ambition, could buy one of these claims for little or nothing and maybe make a fortune. I’ll tell you what I’ll do—you stay around here a while and look at some of my claims; and if you see something you like—”

“Nope,” said Big Boy, “you can’t work me now—you lost your horse-shoe this morning. I was a hobo then and you told me to go to hell, but now when you see I’ve got eight hundred dollars you’re trying to bunco me out of it. I know who you are, I’ve heard the boys tell about you—you’re one of these blue-bellied Yankees that try to make a living swapping jack-knives. You got your name from that Bunker Hill monument and they shortened it down to Bunk. Well, you lose—that’s all I’ll say; I wouldn’t buy your claims if they showed twenty dollar gold pieces, with everything on ’em but the eagle-tail. And the formation is no good here, anyhow.”

“Oh, it ain’t, hey?” came back Bunk thrusting out his jaw belligerently, “well take a look up at that cliff. That Apache Leap is solid porphyry—”

“Apache Leap!” broke in Big Boy suddenly sitting erect and looking all around, “by grab, is this the place?”

“This is the place,” replied Old Bunk wagging his head and smiling wisely, “and that cap is solid porphyry.”

“Gee, boys!” exclaimed Big Boy getting up on his feet, “say, is that where they killed all those Indians?”

“The very place,” returned Bunker Hill proudly, “you can find their skeletons there to this day.”

“Well, for cripe’s sake,” murmured Big Boy at last and looked up at the cliff again.

“Some jump-off,” observed Bunker, but Big Boy did not hear him—he was looking up at the sun.

“Say,” he said, “when the sun rises in the morning how far out does that shadow come?”

“What shadow?” demanded Bunker Hill. “Oh, of Apache Leap? It goes way out west of town.”

“And does it throw its shadow on these hills where your claims are? Well, old-timer, I’ll just take a look at them.”

He climbed out purposefully and began to put on his shoes and Old Bunk squinted at him curiously. There was something going on that he did not know about—some connection between the Leap and his mines; he waited, and the secret popped out.

“Say,” said Big Boy after a long minute of silence, “do you believe in fortune-tellers?”

“Sure thing!” spoke up Bunker, suddenly taking a deep breath and swallowing his Adam’s apple solemnly, “I believe in them phenomena implicitly. And, as I was about to say, you can have any claim I’ve got for eight hundred dollars—cash.”

## CHAPTER V

### MOTHER TRIGEDGO

“Well, I’ll tell you,” confided Big Boy, moving closer to Old Bunk and lowering his voice mysteriously, “I know you’ll think I’m crazy, but there’s something to that stuff. Maybe we don’t understand it, and of course there’s a lot of fakes, but I got this from Mother Trignedgo. She’s that Cornish seeress, that predicted the big cave in the stope of the Last Chance mine, and now I *know* she’s good. She tells fortunes by cards and by pouring water in your hand and going into a trance. Then she looks into the water and sees a kind of vision of all that is going to happen. Well, here’s what she said for me—and she wrote it down on a paper.

“You will soon make a journey to the west and there, in the shadow of a place of death, you will find two treasures, one of silver and the other of gold. Choose well between the two and—”

“By grab, that’s right, boy!” exclaimed Old Bunk enthusiastically, “she described this place down to a hickey. You came west from Globe and when you went by here the shadow was still on those hills; and as for a place of death, Apache Leap got its name from the Indians that jumped over that cliff. Say, you could hunt all over Arizona and not find another place that came within a mile of it!”

“That’s right,” mused Big Boy, “but I was thinking all the time that that place of death would be a graveyard.”

“Sure, but how could a graveyard cast a shadow—they’re always on level ground. No, I’m telling you, boy, that there cliff is the place—lemme tell you how it got its name. A long time ago when the Indians were bad they had a soldiers’ post right here where this town stands, and they kept a lookout up on the Picket Post butte, where they could heliograph clear down to Tucson. Well, every time a bunch of Indians would go down out of the hills to raid some wagon-train on the trail this lookout would see them and signal Tucson and the soldiers would do the rest. It got so bymeby the Indians couldn’t do anything and at last Old Cochise got together about eight hundred Apaches and came over to wipe out the post. It looked easy at the time, because there was less than two hundred men, but the major in command was a fighting fool and didn’t know when he was whipped. The Apaches all gathered up on the top of those high cliffs—it’s flat on the upper side—and one night when their signal fires had burned down the soldiers sneaked around behind them. And then, just at dawn, they fired a volley and made a rush for the camp; and before they knowed it about two hundred Indians had jumped clean over the cliff. They killed the rest of them—all but two or three bucks that fought their way through the line—and now, by grab, you couldn’t get an Indian up there if you’d offer him a quart of whiskey. It’s sure bad medicine for Apaches.”

“Isn’t it wonderful!” exclaimed Big Boy, “there’s no use talking—this sure is the place of death. And say, next time you go over to Globe you go and see Mother Trignedgo—I just want to tell you what she did!”

“All right,” sighed Old Bunk, who preferred to talk business, and he settled down to listen.

“This Mother Trignedgo,” began Big Boy, “isn’t an ordinary, cheap fortune-teller. Those people are all fakes because they’re just out for the dollar and tell you what they think you want to know. But Mother Trignedgo keeps a Cousin-Jack boarding house and only prophesies when she feels the power. Sometimes she’ll go along for a week or more and never tell a fortune; and then, when she happens to be feeling right, she’ll tell some feller what’s coming to him. Those Cousin Jacks are crazy about what she can do, but I never went to a seeress in my life until after we had that big cave. I’m a timber man, you see, and sometimes I take contracts to catch up dangerous ground; and the best men in the world when it comes to that work are these old-country Cousin Jacks. They’re nervy and yet they’re careful and so I always hire ’em; but when we were doing this work down in the stope of the Last Chance, they began talking about Mother Trignedgo. It seems she’d told the fortune of a boy or two—

they were all of them boarding at her house—and she was so worried she could hardly cook on account of them working in this mine. It was swelling ground and there were a lot of old workings where the timbering had given way; and to tell you the truth I didn't like it myself, although I wouldn't admit it.”

“Well, it was the twenty-second of April, and all that morning we could hear the ground working over head and when it came noon we went up above, as we says, for a breath of fresh air. But while we were eating, there was a Cousin Jack named Chambers fetched up this old talk about Mother Trigedgo, and how she'd predicted he'd be killed in a cave if he didn't quit working in the stope; and when our half-hour's nooning was up he says: 'I'll not go down that shaft!'”

“We were all badly scared, because that ground was always moving, and finally we agreed that we'd take a full hour off and work till five o'clock. Well, we waited till after one before we went to the collar and just as I was stepping into the cage the whole danged stope caved in!”

“Well, sir, I went back to my room and got every dollar I had and gave Mother Trigedgo the roll. I could easy earn more but if I'd been caught in that cave they'd never even tried to dig me out. That was the least I could do, considering what she'd done for me; but Mother Trigedgo took on so much about it that I told her it was to have my fortune told. Well, she tried the cards and dice and consulted the signs of the Zodiac; and then one day when she felt the power strong she poured a little water in my hand. That made a kind of pool, like these crystal-gazers use, and when she looked into it she began to talk and she told me all about my life. Or that is, she told me what she thought I ought to know, and gave me a copy of the Book of Fate that Napoleon always consulted. And here it ain't three months till I make this journey west and find the place she prophesied.”

“Yes, and silver, too!” added Old Bunk portentously, “she hit it, down to a hickey. And now, if you'd like to inspect those claims—”

“No, hold on,” protested Big Boy still pondering on his fate, “I've got to find these treasures myself. And one of them was of gold. What's the chances around here for that?”

“Danged poor,” grumbled Bunker as he saw his hopes gone glimmering, “don't remember to have seen a color. But say, old Bible Back is drilling for copper and that's a good deal like gold. Same color, practically, and you know all these prophecies have a kind of symbolical meaning. A golden treasure don't necessarily mean gold, and I've got a claim—”

“Say, who's that up there?” broke in Big Boy uneasily and Old Bunk looked around with a jerk.

An old, white-haired man, wearing a battered cork helmet, was peering over the bank and when he perceived that his presence was discovered he came shuffling down the trail. He was a short, fat man, in faded shirt and overalls; and on his feet he wore a pair of gunboat brogans, thickly studded on the bottom with hob-nails. A space of six inches between the tops of his shoes and the worn-off edge of his trousers exposed his shrunken shanks, and he carried a stick which might serve for cane or club as circumstances demanded. He came down briskly with his broad toes turned out in grotesque resemblance to a duck and when Bunker Hill saw him he snorted resentfully and rose up from his seat.

“Have you seen my burros?” demanded the old man, half defiantly, “I can't find dose rascals nowhere. Ah, so; here's a stranger come to camp! Good morning, I'm glad to know you.”

“Good morning,” returned Big Boy glancing doubtfully at Bunker Hill, “my name is Denver Russell.”

“Oh, excuse *me!*” spoke up Bunker with a sarcastic drawl, “Mr. Russell, this is Professor Diffenderfer, the eminent buttinsky and geologist.”

“Ah—so!” beamed the Professor overlooking the fling in the excitement of the meeting, “I take it you're a mining man? Vell, if it's golt you're looking for I haf a claim up on dat hill dat is rich in auriferous deposits.”

“Yes,” broke in Bunker giving Big Boy a sly wink, “you ought to inspect that tunnel—it's unique in the annals of mining. You see the Professor here is an educated man—he's learned all the big words in the dictionary, and he's learned mining from reading Government reports. We're quite proud of

his achievements as a mining engineer, but you ought to see that tunnel. It starts into the hill, takes a couple of corkscrew twists and busts right out into the sunshine.”

“Oh, never mind *him*!” protested the Professor as Bunker burst into a roar, “he will haf his choke, of course. But dis claim I speak of—”

“And that ain’t all his accomplishments,” broke in Bunker Hill relentlessly, “Mr. Diffenderfer is a count—a German count—sometimes known as Count No-Count. But as I was about to say, his greatest accomplishments have been along tonsorial lines.”

A line of pain appeared between the Professor’s eyes—but he stood his ground defiantly. “Yes,” went on Bunker thrusting out his jaw in a baleful leer at his rival, “for many years he has had the proud distinction of being the Champion Rough-Riding Barber of Arizona.”

“Vell, I’ve got to go,” murmured the Professor hastily, “I’ve got to find dem burros.”

He started off but at the plank across the creek he stopped and cleared his throat. “Und any time,” he began, “dat you’d like to inspect dem claims—”

“The Champeen–Rough-Riding–Barber!” repeated Old Bunk with gusto, “he won his title on the race-track at Tucson, before safety razors was invented.”

“Shut up!” snapped the Professor and, crossing the plank with waspish quickness, he went squatting off down the creek. Yet one ear was turned back and as Bunker began to speak he stopped in the trail to listen.

“He took a drunken cowboy up in the saddle before him,” went on Bunker with painful distinctness, “and gave him a close shave while the horse was bucking, only cutting his throat three times.”

“You’re a liar!” yelled the Professor and, stamping his foot, he hustled vengefully off down the trail.

“Say, who is that old boy?” enquired Big Boy curiously, “he might know where I’d find that gold.”

“Who–him?” jeered Bunker, “why, that old stiff wouldn’t know a chunk of gold if he saw it. All he does is to snoop around and watch what *I’m* doing, and if he ever thinks that I’ve picked up a live one he butts in and tries to underbid me. Now I’ll tell you what I’ll do, I’ll get you a horse and show you all over the district, and any claim I’ve got that you want to go to work on, you can have for five hundred dollars. Now, that’s reasonable, ain’t it? And yet, the way things are going, I’m glad to let you in on it. If you strike something big, here I’ve got my store and mine, and plenty of other claims, to boot; and if there’s a rush I stand to make a clean-up on some of my other properties. So come up to the house and meet my wife and daughter, and we’ll try to make you comfortable. But that old feller—”

“Nope,” said Big Boy, “I think I’d rather camp—who lives in those cave-houses up there?”

He jerked his head at some walled-up caves in the bluff not far across the creek and Old Bunk scowled reproachfully.

“Oh, nobody,” he said, “except the rattle-snakes and pack-rats. Why don’t you come up to the house?”

“I don’t need to go to your house,” returned Big Boy defiantly. “I’ve got money to buy what I need.”

“Yes, but come up anyway and meet my wife and daughter. Drusilla is a musician—she’s studied in Boston at the celebrated Conservatory of Music—”

“I’ve got me a phonograph,” answered Big Boy shortly, “if I can ever get it over here from Globe.”

“Well, go ahead and get it, then,” said Bunker Hill tartly, “they’s nobody keeping you, I’m sure.”

“No, and you bet your life there won’t be,” came back Big Boy, starting off, “I’m playing a lone hand to win.”

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ORACULUM

The palpitating heat lay like a shimmering fleece over the deserted camp of Pinal and Denver Russell, returning from Globe, beheld it as one in a dream. Somewhere within the shadow of Apache Leap were two treasures that he was destined to find, one of gold and one of silver; and if he chose wisely between them they were both to be his. And if he chose unwisely, or tried to hold them both, then both would be lost and he would suffer humiliation and shame. Yet he came back boldly, fresh from a visit with Mother Trigedgo who had blessed him and called him her son. She had wept when they parted, for her burdens had been heavy and his gift had lightened her lot; but though she wished him well she could not control his fate, for that lay with the powers above. Nor could she conceal from him the portion of evil which was balanced against the good.

“Courage and constancy will attend you through life” she had written in her old-country scrawl; “but in the end will prove your undoing, for you will meet your death at the hands of your dearest friend.”

That was the doom that hung over him like a hair-suspended sword—to be killed by his dearest friend—and as he paused at the mouth of Queen Creek Canyon he wished that his fortune had not been told. Of what good to him would be the two hidden treasures—or even the beautiful young artist with whom he was destined to fall in love—if his life might be cut off at any moment by some man that he counted his friend? *When* his death should befall, Mother Trigedgo had not told, for the signs had been obscure; but when it did come it would be by the hand of the man that he called his best friend. A swift surge of resistance came over him again as he gazed at the promised land and he shut his teeth down fiercely. He would have no friends, no best of friends, but all men that he met he would treat the same and so evade the harsh hand of fate. Forewarned was forearmed, he would have no more pardners such as men pick up in rambling around; but in this as in all else he would play a lone hand and so postpone the evil day.

He strode on down the trail into the silent town where the houses stood roofless and bare, and as he glanced at the ancient gallows-frame above the abandoned mine fresh courage came into his heart. This city of the dead should come back to life if what the stars said was true; and the long rows of adobes now stripped of windows and doors, would awaken to the tramp of miners’ boots. He would find two treasures and, if he chose well between them, both the silver and the gold would be his. But neither wily Bunker Hill nor the palaverer Professor should pull him this way or that; for Mother Trigedgo had given him a book, to consult on all important occasions. It was Napoleon’s Oraculum, or Book of Fate; and as Denver had glanced at the key—with its thirty-two questions covering every important event in human life—a thrill of security had passed over him. With this mysterious Oraculum, the Man of Destiny had solved the many problems of his life; and in question thirteen, that sinister number, was a test that would serve Denver well:

“Will the FRIEND I most reckon upon prove faithful or treacherous?”

How many times must that great, aloof man have put some friend’s loyalty to the test; and if the answer was in the negative how often had he avoided death by foreknowledge of impending treachery! Yet such friends as he had retained had all proved loyal, his generals had been devoted to his cause; and with the aid of his Oraculum he had conquered all his enemies—until at last the Book of Fate had been lost. At the battle of Leipsic, in the confusion of the retreat, his precious Dream Book had been left behind. Kings and Emperors had used it since, and seeresses as well; and now, after the lapse of a hundred years, it was published in quaint cover and lettering, for the guidance of all and sundry. And Old Mother Trigedgo, coming all the way from Cornwall, had placed the Book

of Fate in his hands! There was destiny in everything, and this woman who had saved his life could save it again with her Oraculum.

Denver turned to the Mexican who, with two heavily-packed mules, stood patiently awaiting his pleasure; and with a brief nod of the head he strode down the trail while the mules minced along behind him. Past the old, worked-out mine, past the melted-down walls of abandoned adobe ruins, he led on to the store and the cool, darkened house which sheltered the family of Andrew Hill; but even here he did not stop, though Old Bunk beckoned him in. His life, which had once been as other people's lives, had been touched by the hand of fate; and gayeties and good cheer, along with friendship and love, had been banished to the limbo of lost dreams. So he turned across the creek and led the way to the cave that was destined to be his home.

It was an ancient cavern beneath the rim of a low cliff which overlooked the town and as Denver was helping to unlash the packs Bunker Hill came toiling up the trail.

"Got back, hey?" he greeted stepping into the smoke-blackened cave and gazing dubiously about, "well, it'll be cool inside here, anyway."

"Yes, that's what I figured on," responded Denver briefly, and as he cleaned out the rats' nests and began to make camp Old Bunk sat down in the doorway and began a new cycle of stories.

"This here cave," he observed, "used to be occupied by the cliff-dwellers--them's their hand-marks, up on the wall; and then I reckon the Apaches moved in, and after them the soldiers; but when the Lost Burro began turning out the ore, I'll bet it was crowded like a bar-room. Them was the days, I'm telling you--you couldn't walk the street for miners out spending their money--and a cliff-house like this with a good, tight roof, would bring in a hundred dollars a night, any time that it happened to rain. All them melted-down adobes was plumb full of people, the saloons were running full blast, and the miner that couldn't steal ten dollars a day had no business working underground. They took out chunks of native silver as big as your head, and it all ran a thousand ounces to the ton, but even at that them worthless mule-skinners was throwing pure silver at their teams. They had mounted guards to ride along with the wagons and keep them from stealing the ore, but you can pick up chunks yet where them teamsters threw them off and never went back to find 'em.

"Did you ever hear how the Lost Burro was found? Well, the name, of course, tells the story. If one of these prospectors goes out to find his burros he runs across a mine; and if he goes out the next day to look for another mine he runs across his burros. The most of them are like the old Professor down here, they wouldn't know mineral if they saw it; but of course when they grab up a chunk of pure silver and start to throw it at a jackass they can't help taking notice. Well, that's the way this mine was found. A prospector that was camping here went up on that little hill to rock his old burro back to camp and right on top he found a piece of silver that was so pure you could cut it with your knife. That guy was honest, he gave the credit to his burro, and, if the truth was known, half the mines in the west would be named after some knot-headed jackass. That's how much intellect it takes to be a prospector."

"No, I'll tell you what's the matter with these prospectors," returned Denver with a miner's scorn, "they do everything in the world but dig. They'll hike, and hunt burros and go out across the desert; but anything that calls for a few taps of work they'll pass it right up, every time. And I'll tell you, old-timer, all the mines on top of ground have been located long ago. That's why you hear so much about 'Swede luck' these days--the Swede ain't too lazy to sink.

"That's my motto--sink! Get down to bed-rock and see what there is on the bottom; but these danged prospectors just hang around the water-holes and play pedro until they eat up their grub-stakes."

"Heh, heh; that's right," responded Bunker reminiscently, "say, did you ever hear of old Abe Berg? He used to keep a store down below in Moroni; and there was one of these old prospectors that made a living that way, used to touch him up regular for a grub-stake. Old Abe was about as easy as Bible-Back Murray when you showed him a rich piece of ore and after this prospector had et up

all his grub he'd drift back to town for more. But on the way in, like all of them fellers, he'd stop at some real good mine; and after he'd stole a few chunks of high-grade ore he'd take it along to show to Abe. But after a while Old Abe got suspicious—he didn't fall for them big stories any more—and at last he began to enquire just where this bonanza was, that the prospector was reporting on so favorable. Well, the feller told him and Abe he scratched his head and enquired the name of the mine.

“‘Why, I call it the Juniper,’ says the old prospector kind of innocent; and Abe he jumped right up in the air.

“‘Vell, dat's all right,’ he yells, tapping himself on the chest, ‘but here's one Jew, I betcher, dat you von't nip again!’ Get the point—he thought the old prospector was making a joke of it and calling his mine the Jew-Nipper!”

“Yeah, I'm hep,” replied Russell, “say who is this feller that you call Bible-Back Murray—has he got any claims around here?”

“Claims!” repeated Bunker, “well, I guess he has. He's got a hundred if I've got one—this whole upper district is located.”

“What—this whole country?” exclaimed Denver in sudden dismay, “the whole range of hills—all that lays in the shadow of the Leap?”

“Jest about,” admitted Bunker, “but as I told you before, you can have any of mine for five hundred.”

“Oh hell,” burst out Denver and then he roused up and a challenge crept into his voice. “Do you mean to tell me,” he said, “that he's kept up his assessment work? Has he done a hundred dollars worth of work on every claim? No, you know danged well he hasn't—you've just been doing lead-pencil work.”

“That's all right,” returned Bunker, “we've got a gentlemen's agreement to respect each others monuments; and you'll find our sworn statements that the work has been done on file with the County Recorder.”

“Yes, and now I know,” grumbled Russell rebelliously, “why the whole danged district is dead. You and Murray and this old Dutchman have located all the ground and you're none of you doing any work. But when a miner like me blows into the camp and wants to prospect around he's stuck for five hundred dollars. How'm I going to buy my powder and a little grub and steel if I give up my roll at the start? No, I'll look this country over and if I find what I want—”

“You'll pay for it, young man,” put in Bunker Hill pointedly, “that is, if it belongs to me.”

“Well, I will if it's worth it,” answered Russell grudgingly, “but you've got to show me your title.”

“Sure I will,” agreed Bunker, “the best title a man can have—continuous and undisputed possession. I've been here fifteen years and I've never had a claim jumped yet.”

“Who's this Bible-Back Murray?” demanded Denver, “has he got a clean title to his ground?”

“You bet he has,” replied Bunker Hill, “and he's got my name as a witness that his yearly assessment work's been done.”

“And you, I suppose,” suggested Denver sarcastically, “have got *his* name, as an affidavit man, to prove that *your* work has been done. And when I look around I'll bet there ain't a hole anywhere that's been sunk in the last two years.”

“Yes there is!” contradicted Bunker, “you go right up that wash that comes down from them north hills and you'll find one that's down twelve hundred feet. And there's a diamond drill outfit sinking twenty feet a day, and has been for the last six months. At five dollars a foot—that's the contract price—Old Bible-Back is paying a hundred dollars a day. Now—how many days will that drill have to run to do the annual work? No, you're all right, young man, and I like your nerve, but you don't want to take too much for granted.”

“Judas priest!” exclaimed Russell, “twelve hundred feet deep? What does the old boy think he's got?”



“He’s drilling for copper,” nodded Bunker significantly, “and for all you and I know, he’s got it. He’s got an armed guard in charge of that drill, and no outsider has been allowed anywhere near it for going on to six months. The cores are all stored away in boxes where nobody can get their hands on them and the way old Bible-Back is sweating blood I reckon they’re close to the ore. But a hundred dollars a day—say, the way things are now that’ll make or break old Murray. He’s been blowing in money for ten or twelve years trying to develop his silver properties; but now he’s crazy as a bed-bug over copper—can’t talk about anything else.”

“Is that so?” murmured Denver and as he went about his work his brain began to seethe and whirl. Here was something he had not known of, an element of chance which might ruin all his plans; for if the diamond drill broke into rich copper ore his chance at the two treasures would be lost. There would be a big rush and the price of claims would soar to thousands of dollars. The country looked well for copper, with its heavy cap of dacite and the manganese filling in the veins; and it was only a day’s journey in each direction from the big copper camps of Ray and Globe. He turned impulsively and reached for his purse, but as he was about to plank down his five hundred dollars in advance he remembered Mother Trigedgo’s words.

“Choose well between the two and both shall be yours. But if you choose unwisely, then both will be lost and you will suffer humiliation and shame.”

“Say,” blurted out Denver, “your claims are all silver—haven’t you got a gold prospect anywhere?”

“No, I haven’t,” answered Old Bunk, his eye on the bank-roll, “but I’ll accept a deposit on that offer. Any claim I’ve got—except the Lost Burro itself—for five hundred dollars, cash.”

“How long is that good for?” enquired Russell cautiously and Bunker slapped his leg for action.

“It’s good for right now,” he said, “and not a minute after!”

“But I’ve got to look around,” pleaded Denver desperately, “I’ve got to find both these treasures—one of silver and one of gold—and make my choice between them.”

“Well, that’s your business,” said Bunker rising up abruptly. “Will you take that offer or not?”

“No,” replied Denver, putting up his purse and Old Bunk glanced at him shrewdly.

“Well, I’ll give you a week on it,” he said, smiling grimly, and stood up to look down the trail. Denver looked out after him and there, puffing up the slope, came Professor Diffenderfer, the eminent buttinsky and geologist.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE EMINENT BUTTINSKY

That there was no love lost between Bunker Hill and Professor Diffenderfer was evident by their curt greetings, but as they began to bandy words Denver became suddenly aware that he was the cause of their feud. He and his eight hundred dollars, a sum so small that a shoestring promoter would hardly notice it; and yet these two men with their superfluity of claims were fighting for his favor like pawn-brokers. Bunker Hill had seen him first and claimed him as his right; but Professor Diffenderfer, ignoring the ethics of the game, was out to make a sale anyway. He carried in one hand a large sack of specimens, and under his arm were some weighty tomes which turned out to be Government reports. He came up slowly, panting and sweating in the heat, and when he stepped in Bunk was waiting for him.

"O-ho," he said, "here comes the Professor. The only German count that ever gave up his title to become an American barber. Well, Professor, you're just the man I'm looking for—I want to ask your professional opinion. If two white-bellied mice ran down the same hole would the one with the shortest tail get down first?"

The Professor staggered in and sat down heavily while he wiped the sweat from his eyes.

"Mr. Russell," he began, ignoring the grinning Bunker, "I vant to expound to you the cheology of dis country—I haf made it a lifelong study."

"Yes, you want to get this," put in Bunker *sotto voce*, "he knows every big word in them books."

"I claim," went on the Professor, slapping the books together vehemently, "I claim dat in dis district we haf every indication of a gigantic deposit of copper. The morphological conditions, such as we see about us everywhere, are distinctly favorable to metalliferous deposition; and the genetic influences which haf taken place later—"

"Well, he's off," sighed Bunker rising wearily up and ambling over towards the door, "so long, Big Boy, I'll see you to-morrow. Never could understand broken English."

"Dat's all righd!" spat back the Professor with spiteful emphasis, "I'm addressing my remarks to dis *chentleman*!"

"Ah—so!" mimicked Bunker. "Vell, shooldt id indo him! And say, tell him about that tunnel! Tell him how you went in until the air got bad and came out up the hill like a gopher. Took a double circumbendibus and, after describing a parabola—"

"Dat's all righd!" repeated the Professor, "now—you think you're so smart—I'm going to prove *you* a liar! I heard you the other day tell dis young man here dat dere vas no golt in dis district. Vell! All righd! We vill see now—joost look! Vat you call *dat* now, my goot young friend?" He dumped out the contents of his canvas ore-sack and nodded to Denver triumphantly. "I suppose dat aindt golt, eh! Maybe I try to take advantage of you and show you what dey call fools gold—what mineralogists call pyrites of iron? No? It aindt dat? Vell, let me ask you vun question den—am I righd or am I wrong?"

"You're right, old man," returned Denver eagerly as he held a specimen to the light; and when he looked up Bunker Hill was gone.

"You see?" leered the Professor jerking his thumb towards the door, "dot man vas trying to *do* you. He don't like to haf me show you dis golt. He vants you to believe dat here is only silver; but I am a cheologist—I know!"

"Yes, this is gold," admitted Denver, wetting the thin strip of quartz, "but it don't look like much of a vein. Whereabouts did you get these specimens?"

"From a claim dat I haf, not a mile south of here," burst out the Professor in great excitement; and while Denver listened in stunned amazement he went into an involved and sadly garbled exposition of the geological history of the district.

“Yes, sure,” broke in Denver when he came to a pause, “I’ll take your word for all that. What I want to know is where this claim is located. If its inside the shadow of Apache Leap, I’ll go down and take a look at it; but—”

“But vat has the shadow of the mountain to do with it?” inquired the Professor with ponderous dignity. “The formation, as I vas telling you, is highly favorable to an extensive auriferous deposit—”

“Aw, can the big words,” broke in Denver impatiently, “I don’t give a dang for geology. What I’m looking for is a mine, in the shadow of that big cliff, and—”

“Ah, ah! Yes, I see!” exclaimed the Professor delightedly, “it must conform to the vords of the prophecy! Yes, my mine is in the shadow of Apache Leap, where the Indians yumped over and were killed.”

“Well, I’ll look at it,” responded Denver coldly, “but who told you about that prophecy? It kinder looks to me as if—”

“Oh, vell,” apologized the Professor, “I vas joost going by and I couldn’t help but listen. Because dis Bunker Hill, he is always spreading talk dat I am not a cheologist. But him, now; *him*! Do you know who he is? He is nothing but an ignorant cowman. Ven dis mine vas closed down I vas for some years the care-taker, vat you call the custodian of the plant; and dis Bunker Hill, ven I happened to go away, he come and take the job. I am a consulting cheologist and my services are very valuable, but he took the job for fifty dollars a month and came here to run his cattle. For eight or ten years he lived right in dat house and took all dat money for nothing; and den, when the Company can’t pay him no more, he takes over the property on a lien. Dat fine, valuable mine, one of the richest in the world, and vot you think he done with it? He and Mike McGraw, dat hauls up his freight, dey tore it all down for junk! All dat fine machinery, all dem copper plates, all the vater-pipe, the vindows and doors—they tore down everything and hauled it down to Moroni, vere they sold it for nothing to Murray!

“Do you know vot I would do if I owned dat mine?” demanded the Professor with rising wrath. “I vould organize a company and pump oudt the vater and make myself a millionaire. But dis Bunker Hill, he’s a big bag of vind—all he does is to sit around and talk! A t’ousand times I haf told him repeatedly dat dere are millions of dollars in dat mine, and a t’ousand times he tells me I am crazy. For fifteen years I haf begged him for the privilege to go into pardners on dat mine. I haf written reports, describing the cheology of dis district, for the highest mining journals in the country; I haf tried to interest outside capital; and den, for my pay, when some chentleman comes to camp, he tells him dat I am a barber!”

The Professor paused and swallowed fiercely, and as Denver broke into a grin the old man choked with fury.

“Do you know what dat man has been?” he demanded, shaking a trembling finger towards Bunker’s house, “he has been everything but an honest man—a faro-dealer, a crook, a gambler! He vas nothing—a bum—when his vife heard about him and come here from Boston to marry him! Dey vas boy-und-girl sweetheart, you know. And righdt away he took her money and put it into cows, and the drought come along and killed them; and now he has nothing, not so much as I haf, and an expensive daughter besides!”

He paused and wagged his head and indulged in a senile grin.

“Und pretty, too—vat? The boys are all crazy, but she von’t have a thing to do with them. She von’t come outdoors when the cowboys ride by and stop to buy grub at the store. No, she’s too good to talk to old mens like me, and with cowboys what get forty a month; but she spends all her time playing tunes on the piano and singing scales away up in G. You vait, pretty soon you hear her begin—dat scale-singing drives me madt!”

“Oh, sings scales, eh?” said Denver suddenly beginning to take an interest, “must be studying to become a singer.”

“Dat’s it,” nodded the old man shaking his finger solemnly, “her mother vas a singer before her. But after they have spent all their money to educate her the teacher says she lacks the temperament.

She can never sing, he says, because she is too *dumf*; too—what you call it—un-feeling. She lacks the fire of the vonderful Gadski—she has not the g-great heart of Schumann-Heink. She is an American, you see, and dat is the end of it, so all their money is spent.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” defended Denver warmly, “what’s the matter with Nordica, and Mary Garden and Farrar? They’re Americans, all right, and I’ve got some of their records that simply can’t be beat! You wait till I get out my instrument.”

He broke open a box in which was packed with many wrappings a polished and expensive phonograph, but as he was clearing a space on a rickety old table the Professor broke into a cackle.

“Dere! Dere!” he cried, “don’t you hear her now? ‘Ah, ah, ah, oo, oo, oo, oo!’ Vell, dat’s what we get from morning till night—by golly, it makes me sick!”

“Aw, that’s all right,” said Denver after listening critically, “she’s just getting ready to sing.”

“Getting ready!” sneered the Professor, “don’t you fool yourself dere—she’ll keep dat going for hours. And in the morning she puts on just one thin white dress and dances barefoot in the garden. I come by dere one time and looked over the vall—and, psst, listen, she don’t vare no corsets! She ought to be ashamed.”

“Well, what about you, you danged old stiff?” inquired Denver with ill-concealed scorn. “If Old Bunk had seen you he’d have killed you.”

“Ah—him?” scoffed the Professor, “no, he von’t hurt nobody. Lemme tell you something—now dis is a fact. When he married his vife—and she’s an awful fine lady—all she asked vas dat he’d stop his tammed fighting. You see? I know everyt’ing—every little t’ing—I been around dis place too long. She came right out here from the East and offered to marry him, but he had to give up his fighting. He was a bad man—you see? He was quick with a gun, and she was afraid he’d go out and get killed. So I laugh at him now and he goes away and leaves me—but he von’t let me talk with his vife. She’s an awful nice woman but—”

“Danged right she is!” put in Denver with sudden warmth and after a rapid questioning glance the Professor closed his mouth.

“Vell, I guess I’ll be going,” he said at last and Denver did not urge him to stay.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE SILVER TREASURE

As evening came on and the red eye of the sun winked and closed behind a purple range of mountains Denver Russell came out of his cliff-dwelling cave and looked at the old town below. Mysterious shadows were gathering among the ruins, the white walls stood out ghostly and still, and as a breeze stirred the clacking leaves of the sycamores a voice mounted up like a bird's. It rose slowly and descended, it ran rippling arpeggios and lingered in flute-like trills; but it was colorless, impersonal, void of feeling.

It was more like a flute than like the voice of a bird that pours out its soul for joy; it was perfect, but it was not moving. Only as the spirit of the desolate town—as of some lost soul, pure and passionless—did it find its note of appeal and Denver sighed and sat silent in the darkness. His thoughts strayed far away, to his boyhood in the mountains, to his wanderings from camp to camp; they leapt ahead to the problem that lay before him, the choice between the silver and gold treasures; and then, drowsy and oblivious, he left the voice still singing and groped to his bed in the cave.

All night the prying pack-rats, dispossessed of their dwelling, raced and gnawed and despoiled his provisions; but when the day dawned Denver left them to do their worst, for his mind was on greater things. At another time, when he was not so busy, he would swing some rude cupboards on wires and store his food out of reach; but now he only stopped to make a hasty breakfast and started off up the trail. When the sun rose, over behind Apache Leap, and cast its black shadow among the hills, Denver was up on the rim-rock, looking out on the promised land that should yield him two precious treasures.

The rim where he stood was uptilted and broken, a huge stratified wall like the edge of a layer cake or the leaves of some mighty book. They lay one upon the other, these ledges of lime and sandstone, some red, some yellow, some white; and, heaped upon the top like a rich coating of chocolate, was the brownish-black cap of the lava. In ages long past each layer had been a mud bank at the bottom of a tropic sea, until the weight of waters had pressed them down and time had changed them to stone. Then Mother Earth had breathed and in a slow, century-long heave, they had emerged from the bottom of the sea, there to be broken and shattered by the pent-up forces of the fire which was raging in her breast.

Great rents had been formed, igneous rocks had boiled up through them; and then in a grand, titanic effort the fire had forced its way up. For centuries this extinct volcano had belched forth its lava, building up the frowning heights of Apache Leap; and then once more the earth had subsided and the waters of the ocean had rushed in. The edge of the rim-rock had been sheered by torrential floods, erosion had fashioned the far heights; until once more, with infinite groanings, the earth had risen from the depths. There it stayed, cracking and trembling, as the inner fires cooled down and the fury of the conflict died away; and boiling waters bearing ores in solution burst like geysers from every crack. And there atom by atom, combined with quartz and acids, the metals of the earth were brought to the surface and deposited on the sides of the cracks. Copper and gold and silver and lead, and many a rarer metal, all spewed up from the molten heart of the world to be sought out and used by man.

All this Denver sensed as he gazed at the high cliff where the volcano had overflowed the earth, and at the layers and layers of sedimentary rock that protruded from beneath its base; but his eyes, though they sensed it, cared nothing for the great Cause—what they looked for was the fruit of all that labor. Where along this shattered rim-rock, twisted and hacked and uptilted, were the hidden cracks, the precious fissure veins, that had brought up the ore from the depths? There at his feet lay one, the gash through the rim where Queen Creek took its course; and further to the north, where the rim-rock was wrenched to the west, was another likely place. To the south there was another, a deep, sharp

canyon that broke through the formation to the heights; and over them all, like a sheltering hand, lay the dark, moving shadow of Apache Leap. He traced out its line as it crept back towards the town and then, big eyed and silent, he started down the trail, still looking for some sign that might guide him.

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