

THE LAST SHOT

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by FREDERICK PALMER

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—At their home on the frontier between the Browns and Grays, Marta Galloway and her mother, entertaining Colonel Westerling of the Grays, see Captain Lanstron, staff intelligence officer of the Browns, injured by a fall in his aeroplane.

CHAPTER II—Ten years later. Westerling, nominal vice but real chief of staff, reinforces South La Tir, meditates on war, and speculates on the comparative ages of himself and Marta, who is waiting in the Gray capital.

CHAPTER III—Westerling calls on Marta. She tells him of her teaching children the follies of war and martial patriotism, begs him to prevent war while he is chief of staff, and predicts that if he makes war against the Browns he will not win.

CHAPTER IV—On the march with the 83d of the Browns Private Stransky, anarchist, declares war and played-out patriotism and is placed under arrest. Colonel Lanstron overhearing, begs him of saying the anarchist will fight well when enraged and is "all man."

CHAPTER V—Lanstron calls on Marta at her home. He talks with Feller, the gardener. Marta tells Lanstron that she believes Feller to be a spy. Lanstron confesses it is true.

CHAPTER VI—Lanstron shows Marta a telephone wire and Feller has concealed in a secret passage under the tower for use to benefit the Browns in war emergencies, pointing out its value as being in the center of the fighting zone in case of war. Marta consents for it and Feller to remain for the present. Lanstron declares his love for Marta.

CHAPTER VII—Westerling and the Gray premier plan to use a trivial international affair to foment warlike patriotism in army and people and strike before declaring war. Partow, Brown chief of staff, and Lanstron, made vice, discuss the trouble, and the Brown defenses. Partow reveals his plans to Lanstron.

CHAPTER VIII—At the frontier the two armies lie crouched for attack and defense. In the town with the non-combatants fleeing from the danger zone, Marta hears her child pupils recite the peace oath.

CHAPTER IX—The Gray army crosses the border line and attacks. The Browns check them. Artillery, infantry, aeroplanes and dirigibles engage. Stransky, rising to make the anarchist speech of his life, draws the Gray artillery fire. Killed by a shrapnel splinter, he goes Berserk and fights—all a man.

CHAPTER X—Marta has her first glimpse of war in its modern, cold, scientific, murderous brutality. She allows the secret telephone to remain.

CHAPTER XI—The Browns fall back to the Galloway house. Stransky forges. Marta sees a light attack.

CHAPTER XII—The Grays attack in force. The call of the fight too strong for Feller, he leaves his secret telephone and goes back to his guns. Hand to hand fighting. The Browns fall back again.

CHAPTER XIII—Marta asks Lanstron over the secret telephone to appeal to Feller to stop the fighting. Vandalism by Gray soldiers in the Galloway house which, Marta is notified, will be made Westerling's headquarters.

CHAPTER XIV—Westerling and his staff occupy the Galloway house. At tea with Marta, Westerling begins to woo her, disclosing his selfish ambitions. Marta apparently throws her fortunes with the Grays and offers to give valuable information.

CHAPTER XV—Marta calls up Lanstron on the secret telephone and with his assistance plans to give Westerling false information that will trap the Gray army. Westerling, after questioning her, forms his plan of attack upon what he has learned.

CHAPTER XVI—The Grays win Bordir. Marta continues her role of spy and through her Westerling is led to concentrate the attack on the main line at Engadir. A leak of information is suspected, but the source is undiscovered. Positions are won but the Browns always give way grudgingly, never taken by surprise.

CHAPTER XVII—Bouchard is relieved as staff intelligence officer, and in going, accuses Marta. Westerling thinks him mad.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A Change of Plan.

That day and the next Westerling had no time for strolling in the garden. His only exercise was a few periods of pacing on the veranda. Turcas, as tirelessly industrious as ever, developed an increasingly quiet insistence to leave the responsibility of decisions about everything of importance to a chief who was becoming increasingly arbitrary. The attack on Engadir being the jewel of Westerling's own planning, he was disinclined to risk success by delegating authority, which also meant sharing the glory of victory.

Bouchard's note, though officially dismissed as a matter of pathology, would not accept dismissal privately. In flashes of distinctness it recurred to him between reports of the progress of preparations and directions as to dispositions. At dusk of the second day, when all the guns and troops had their places for the final movement under cover of darkness and he rose from his desk, the thing that had edged its way into a crowded mind took possession of the premises that strategy and tactics had vacated. It passed under the same analysis as his work. His overweening pride, so sensitive to the suspicion of a conviction that he had been fooled, put his relations with Marta in logical review. He had fallen in love in the midst of war. A cool and intense impatience possessed him to study her in the light of his new skepticism, when, turning the path of the first terrace, he saw her watching the sunset over the crest of the range.

She was standing quite still, a slim, soft shadow between him and the light, which glided her figure and quarter profile. Did she expect him? he wondered. Was she posing at that instant for his benefit? When she turned, her face in the shadow, the glow of the sunset seemed to remain in her eyes, otherwise without expression, yet able to detect something unusual under externals as they exchanged commonplace greetings.

"Well, there's a change in our official family. We have lost Bouchard—transferred to another post!" said Westerling.

Marta noted that, though he gave the news a casual turn, his scrutiny sharpened.

"Is that so? I can't say that my mother and I shall be sorry," she remarked. "He was always glaring at us as if he wished us out of sight. Indeed, if he had his way, I think he would have made us prisoners of war. Wasn't he a woman-hater?" she concluded, half in irritation, half in amusement.

"He had that reputation," said Westerling. "What do you think led to his departure?" he continued.

"I confess I cannot guess!" said Marta, with a look at the sunset glow as if she resented the loss of a minute of it.

"There has been a leak of information to the Browns!" he announced. "There has! And he was intelligence officer, wasn't he?" she asked, turning to Westerling, her curiosity apparently aroused as a matter of courtesy to his own interest in the subject.

"Who do you think he accused? Why, you," he added, with a peculiar laugh.

She noted the peculiarity of the laugh discriminatingly.

"Oh! Her eyes opened wide in wonder—only wonder, at first. Then, as comprehension took the place of wonder, they grew sympathetic. "That explains!" she exclaimed. "His hateful glances were those of delusion. He was going mad, you mean?"

"Yes," said Westerling, "that—that would explain it!"

"I have been told that when people go mad they always ascribe every injury done to them to the person who happens to have excited their dislike," she mused.

"Which seems to have been the case here," Westerling assented. He did not know what else to say. His pride was recovering its natural confidence in the infallibility of his judgment of human beings. He was seeing his suspicions as ridiculous enough to convict him of a brain as disordered as Bouchard's.

Marta was thinking that she had been skating on very thin ice and that she must go on skating till she broke through. There was an exhilaration about it that she could not resist: the exhilaration of risk and the control of her faculties, prompted by a purpose hypnotically compelling. Both were silent, she watching the sky, he in anticipation and suspense. The rose went violet and the shadows over the range deepened.

"The guns and the troops wait. With darkness the music begins!" he said slowly, with a start of stern fervor.

"The music—the music! He calls it music!" ran through Marta's mind mockingly, but she did not open her lips.

"They wait, ready, every detail arranged," he continued proudly.

The sky merged into the shadows of the landscape that spread and thickened into blackness. Out of the drawn curtains of night broke an ugly flash and farther up the slope spread the explosive circle of light of a bursting shell.

"The signal!" he exclaimed. Right and left the blasts spread along the Gray lines and right and left, on the instant, the Browns sent their blasts in reply. Countless tongues of flame seemed to burst from countless craters, and the range to rock in a torment of crashes. In the intervening space between the ugly, savage gusts from the Gray gun mouths, which sent their shells from the midst of exploding Brown shells, swept the beams of the Brown search-lights, their rays lost like sunlight in the vortex of an open furnace door.

"Splendid! splendid!" exclaimed Westerling, in a sweep of emotion at the sight that had been born of his command. "Five thousand guns on our side alone! The world has never seen the equal of this!"

Marta looked away from the range to his face, very distinct in the garish illumination. It was the face of a maestro of war seeing all his rehearsals and all his labors come true in symphonic gratification to the eye and ear; the face of a man of trained mind, the product of civilization, with the elation of a party leader on the floor of a parliament in a crisis.

"Soon, now!" said Westerling, and looked at his watch.

Shortly, in the direction of Engadir, to the rear of the steady flashes broke forth line after line of flashes as the long-range batteries, which so far had been silent, joined their mightier voices to the chorus, making a continuous leaping burst of explosions over the Brown positions, which were the real object of the attack.

"The moment I've lived for!" exclaimed Westerling. "Our infantry is starting up the apron of Engadir! We held back the fire of the heavy guns concentrated for the purpose of supporting the men with an outburst. Three hundred heavy guns pouring in their shells as a space of two seconds

are tearing their redoubts to pieces. They can't see to fire! They can't live under it! They're in the crater of a volcano! When our infantry is on the edge of the wreckage the guns cease. Our infantry crowd in—crowd into the house that Partow built. He'll find that numbers count; that the power of modern gunfire will open the way for infantry in masses to take and hold vital tactical positions! And—no—no, their fire in reply is not as strong as I expected."

"Because they are letting you in! It will be strong enough in due season!" thought Marta in the uncontrollable triumph of antagonism. Five against three was in his tone and in every line of his features.

"It's hard for a soldier to leave a sight like this, but the real news will be awaiting me at my desk," he concluded, adding, as he turned away: "It's fireworks worth seeing, and if you remain here I will return to tell you the results."



"We're Tearing Their Redoubts to Pieces!"

Turning her back to the range for the moment, she saw the twinkle of the lights of the town and the threads of light of the wagon-trains and the sweep of the lights of the railroad trains on the plain; while in the foreground every window of the house was ablaze, like some factory on a busy night shift. She could hear the click of the telegraph instruments already reporting the details of the action as cheerfully as Broddingnagian crickets in their peaceful surroundings. Then out of the shadows Westerling reappeared.

"The apron of Engadir is ours!" he called. "Thanks to you!" he added with pointed emphasis. Back in the house he had received congratulations with a nod, as if success were a matter of course. Before her, exultation unbent stiffness, and he was hoarsely triumphant and eager. "It's plain sailing now," he went on. "A break in the main line! We have only to drive home the wedge, and then—and then!" he concluded.

"Peace!" she hastened to say, drawing back instinctively.

And then! The irony of the words in the light of her knowledge was pointed by a terrific renewal of the thunders and the flashes far up on the range, and she could not resist rejoicing in her heart.

"That's the Browns!" exclaimed Westerling in surprise.

The volume of fire increased. With the rest of the frontier in darkness, the Engadir section was an isolated blaze. In its light she saw his features, without alarm but hardening in dogged intensity.

"They've awakened to what they have lost! They have been rushing up reserves and are making a counter-attack. We must hold what we have gained, no matter what the cost!"

His last sentence was spoken over his shoulder as he started for the house.

Without changing her position, hardly turning her head, she watched until the firing began to lessen rapidly. Then she heard his step. She rose to face him, summoning back the spirit of the actress.

"This is better yet! I came to tell you that the counter-attack failed!" he said as he saw her appear from the shelter of the arbor.

She wondered if she were going to fail. But the post of the trellis was within reach. She caught hold of it to steady herself. Failed!

"The killing—it must have been terrible!" her mind at last made her exclaim to cover her tardiness of response to his mood.

NOTICE

SALE OF BONDS

Granger Township, Medina County, O. January 7, 1915. The undersigned township trustees of Granger township, Medina County, Ohio, pursuant to action heretofore taken by the said trustees, and as a result of the election held on the second day of May, 1914, in said township and road district, hereby offer for sale the following bonds to-wit:—sixty bonds each in the denomination of five hundred dollars, and to become due and payable as follows:—two April 1st, 1917, two October 1st, 1917, and two each April 1st, and each October 1st, thereafter up to and including October 1st, 1931, said bonds to be numbered consecutively from one to sixty inclusive, each of said bonds to bear interest at the rate of five per cent per annum, payable semi-annually on the first day of each April and October of each year after issue until paid.

Therefore said trustees hereby give notice that they will offer for sale at their office in Granger township, Medina County, Ohio, to the highest and best bidder said bonds aforesaid as herein provided and described on the 18th day of February, 1915.

The bids for said bonds must be sealed and addressed to S. W. Ganyard, Township Clerk, Medina, Ohio, R. F. D. #2, and each bid must be marked "Sealed bid for Bonds," and must be filed with said township clerk on or before the hour of two o'clock p. m., on February 18th, 1915, and said bids will be opened at a public meeting of the said trustees in their office at the hour of three o'clock p. m., on the 18th day of February, 1915.

Said bonds are to be made payable to the Old Phoenix National Bank, at Medina, Ohio. None of said bonds will be sold for less than par and the accrued interest thereon, and will bear date of sale.

Each bid for said bonds must be accompanied by a certified check or cash equal in amount to two per cent of the respective bid, made payable to S. W. Ganyard, township clerk, as a guarantee that the respective bidder is making his bid in good faith and will do and perform all of the things to be done on his part according to the terms of this notice within a reasonable time after the date of sale; if his bid is accepted; if any bidder after being awarded these bonds or any portion thereof bid upon, refuses or neglects to so perform, then in that event said check or cash becomes at once forfeited to and the property of said Granger township road district.

Said bonds are issued under the provisions of sections 7035 et al. of the General Code of Ohio, and the funds arising therefrom are to be used for the purpose of improving the public highways of said road district.

Bids are hereby asked for said bonds either separately or collectively and each bidder as a part of his bid is to furnish free of charge to the undersigned trustees blanks on which said bonds and coupons are to be executed in a form satisfactory to said trustee's attorney.

Said trustees reserve the right to reject any and all bids.

A. J. ALLARD
C. L. MILLER
F. L. WILBUR.
As trustees of Granger Township, Medina County, Ohio.
Attest S. W. GANYARD, township clerk
F. W. WOODS, atty. 20-5

NOTICE

SALE OF BONDS

Sharon Center, O., Dec. 31, 1914. The undersigned trustees of Sharon township, Medina County, Ohio, pursuant to action heretofore taken by the said trustees, and as a result of the election held on the 17th day of March, 1914, hereby offer for sale the following bonds, to-wit:—One Hundred bonds each in the denominations of five hundred dollars, and to become due and payable as follows:—two April 1st, 1917, two October 1st, 1917, two April 1st, 1918, two October 1st, 1918, two April 1st, 1919, two October 1st, 1919, two April 1st, 1920, two October 1st, 1920, two April 1st, 1921, two October 1st, 1921, three April 1st, 1922, three October 1st, 1922, three April 1st, 1923, three October 1st, 1923, three April 1st, 1924, three October 1st, 1924, three April 1st, 1925, three October 1st, 1925, three April 1st, 1926, three October 1st, 1926, three April 1st, 1927, three October 1st, 1927, three April 1st, 1928, three October 1st, 1928, three April 1st, 1929, three October 1st, 1929, three April 1st, 1930, three October 1st, 1930, three April 1st, 1931, three October 1st, 1931, three April 1st, 1932, three October 1st, 1932, three April 1st, 1933, three October 1st, 1933, four April 1st, 1934, and four October 1st, 1934.

Said bonds to be numbered consecutively from one to one hundred inclusive, each of said bonds to bear interest at the rate of five per cent per annum, payable semi-annually on the first days of each April and October of each year after issue until paid.

Therefore said trustees hereby give notice that they will offer for sale at their office in Sharon Center, Medina County, Ohio, to the highest and best bidder said bonds aforesaid as herein provided and described on the 17th day of February, 1915.

The bids for said bonds must be sealed and addressed to C. L. Hazen, Township Clerk, Sharon Center, Medina County, Ohio, and each bid must be marked "Sealed bid for Bonds," and must be filed with said township clerk on or before the hour of one o'clock p. m., on February 17th, 1915, and said bids will be opened at a public meeting of the said trustees in their office at the hour of two o'clock p. m., on said 17th day of February, 1915.

Said bonds are to be made payable at the Sharon Center Banking Co., at Sharon Center, Ohio.

None of said bonds will be sold for less than par and the accrued interest thereon, and will bear date of the day of sale.

Each bid for said bonds, or any portion thereof must be accompanied by a certified check, or cash equal in amount to two per cent of the respective bid, made payable to C. L. Hazen, Township Clerk, as a guarantee that the respective bidder is making his bid in good faith and will do and perform all of the things to be done on his part according to the terms of this notice within a reasonable time (not to exceed thirty days after date of sale) if his bid is accepted; if any bidder after being awarded these bonds or any portion thereof bid upon, refuses or neglects to so perform, then in that event said check or cash becomes at once forfeited to and the property of said Sharon Township Road District.

Said bonds are issued under the provisions of sections 7035 et al. of the General Code of Ohio, and the funds arising therefrom are to be used for the purpose of improving the public highways of said road district.

Bids are hereby asked for said bonds either separately or collectively and each bidder as a part of his bid is to furnish free of charge to the undersigned trustees blanks on which said bonds and coupons are to be executed in a form satisfactory to said trustee's attorney.

Said trustees reserve the right to reject any and all bids.

J. S. BRANNIGAN
E. A. GRILL
V. J. WATTERS.
As trustees of Sharon Township, Medina County, Ohio.
Attest, C. L. HAZEN, Township Clerk.
F. W. WOODS, atty. 20-5

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