



"I'm Going to Get the Money to Send Her Home Before It's too Late. That's All, Boys."  
He Concluded Simply.

worse for you. I've had my eye on you two fellows for a long time."

The dangerous blue of Dickinson's eyes began to flame red. He half made as though to spring on his tormentor; but the watchful rifle in the other's hands held him back fuming. The Ranger chuckled jeeringly at his helpless rage. It was just such a game as he delighted in, to harass a powerless adversary. He was enjoying the situation thoroughly.

All of a sudden, "What shall we do with him, Dick?" came a quiet voice, causing the Ranger to wheel quickly.

From a bush not three yards behind him protruded the lean barrel of a rifle, the sun glinting blue along the knife edge of the fore sight which was exactly on a line with his eyes.

DICKINSON fell back with a howl of laughter and rolled clenching his sides in an agony of merriment while O'Shane stepped out with a grim smile about the corners of his mouth and relieved the flabbergasted Ranger of his gun. "Now we can talk," he said, handing the weapon to Dickinson, who took it weakly in his doughy hands, and with monkey like glee, between the fits that cramped him breathless on the ground, carefully wiped his fingers all over the lock mechanism, clogging it irredeemably.

"Oh lordy, lordy," he gasped. "Lemme look at his face. He—He was goin' to arrest us, Snake—you an' me, for killin' a Noah's ark full of beasts."

"So I heard. And now we're going to talk the matter over comfortably. Sit down, Mr. Ranger Wilson, I wouldn't keep you standing for wor-lds. So you were going to arrest us under regulation thirty-two, eh? Now tell us all about it."

Beyond a string of oaths and muttered threats about resisting an officer of the government, the Ranger made no reply.

"Come on, now; that won't do," warned O'Shane with a tightening of the lips. "We're not resisting any legal arrest, but you've got to have reasonable proof before you can arrest us. It's up to you to show your hand."

"Well," snarled the other at last, "two ele-

phant have been killed in the Shwe-Gyi hills and the ivory cut out, my men have found the carcasses—and it's my duty to recover the ivory and arrest you two fellows as being the culprits."

"Why, you lyin' hop toad," flared Dickinson, "you know darn well we ain't done no killin', an' we can prove it. There's one of your own keepers, Maung Baw, been in an' out our camp morn'n a week, an' he knows we ain't done no two days trek to Shwe-Gyi an' back, to say nothin' of stayin' over to shoot ivory."

The black scowl on the Ranger's face deepened, and he inwardly cursed the keeper. "Well," he admitted grudgingly, "if you didn't shoot them, Mulvey did it alone."

"Then why don't you ask Mulvey about the ivory?" queried O'Shane.

"Cause he's dead, curse him," gritted Wilson.

"The Hell you say!" from both men. "How?"

"Trampled." Mauled to a pulp, and serve him right, too. He got two and cached the ivory, and then the third got him, and now it's my duty to the government to recover the ivory, and I arrest you for collusion."

"Oh no, you don't," purred O'Shane. "Maung Baw can prove that we haven't seen poor old Mulvey since he left our camp a week ago on his way up; so you have no legal grounds for arrestin' us, and you can just run along home. As we like to keep our camp clean we won't ask you to stay to dinner; and," he added as an afterthought, "I think we shall have to keep your gun till you're in a better humor, else you might try some sniping on us."

"Huh, give'm his gun," chuckled Dickinson. "It's safe. It'll take him a day to dig out its internal economy so it'll work."

THE baffled Ranger sullenly withdrew, vindictive hate glaring from his eyes. When he was at what he considered a safe distance, he shook his fist and shouted, "All right, you fellows; I'll get square with you for this yet, you watch out and see."

With the same grim smile about his lips, O'Shane coolly lifted his rifle and planted a bullet a foot to the right of him, and as the startled man broke into a terrified run, he planted another a foot to the left of him.

The Ranger's wild leap for safety threw Dickinson into another paroxysm of incoherent delight. "The damn brigand!" chuckled O'Shane. "I'd like to have nicked his hat, but it would have been risky at this distance with him running."

A little later, as they sat at their meal, Dickinson, who had been stuffing great sections of venison steak into his mouth in preoccupied silence, suddenly paused with half a potato poised on his fork in mid air. "Snake," he demanded, "whatever was that hold up robber so darned set on arrestin' us for?"

"Dunno," replied the other carelessly. "Because we're Americans, I suppose, and he hates us anyhow."

"Huh, that ain't it," declared Dickinson. "He hates all hunters alike. That geezer hates everything; he sits up nights an' lates himself; but I'll tell you, he ain't goin' to turn no ivory into no Burma Govment. That duty palaver of hisn was all hot air, he ain't never done no duty in his life. He wants to grab them teeth for himself, an' he wants us locked safe out the way while he's locatin' poor ole Mulvey's cache; that's what he wants. You know he's in with Lu-Bain's gang, an' he's tradin' with 'em illicit. Ain't that the right dope? Tell me now."

"By George, Dick, you're right," exclaimed O'Shane. "I never thought of that; matter of fact, I never thought about it at all; but that's what the scoundrel's up to."

"Yep, he's goin' to trade 'em over to Lu-Bain, an' the Govment ain't goin' to smell no ivory. An' poor ole Mulvey's paid for it with his life; an' his ole Mammy down at Mandalay, waitin' to go home—Gee, Snake, ain't it Hell?"

In the gloomy silence which followed O'Shane sat with knit brows in a whirl of indecision. Suddenly he exhaled a great sigh of relief with the coming of resolution, and rose to his feet. "Dick," he announced, "Wilson doesn't know Mulvey's camp, and it'll take him a week to find it. Now we're going to hurry up and grab that ivory for the old lady before he can get his claws on it."

MULVEY'S hide away camp, as he called it, was some twenty miles deeper in the forest. O'Shane was right when he said it would take a week to find it, for Nature seemed to have designed it especially for a snug retreat. It was surrounded by a dense rampart of giant male bamboo, and to any chance passer-by it would seem that the bamboo jungle stretched on for a mile, solid, almost impenetrable, and inhabited only by snakes and porcupines, therefore unprofitable; but within, the matted clumps thinned out and left a regular fairy-story dell with shady trees and appropriate mossy banked stream all complete. Mulvey had discovered the place some time before and camped there undisturbed for many seasons.

As the two partners approached the spot with the silent tread and unconsciously instinctive caution born of long years of experience in the jungles, they were suddenly surprised to hear the sound of voices. With blank looks they sank to the ground and crept warily forward taking advantage of all possible cover. At last they arrived at a point where, screened by a network of roots, they could get a clear view of the camp.

Several Burmese were moving about, probing the ground with long sticks, and among them, directing them to likely places, was Ranger Wilson.

Both men swore softly. "Now how in Hell did that swine find the place?" muttered O'Shane.

"His half brother, the Devil, musta helped him," whispered Dickinson in reply. "Gee, what a hard gang! Look, there's Lu-Bain, an' there's that Maung Hyo sharp, him that was wanted for that murder in Fu-Gong's opium joint. There's a tough bunch of dacoits for you; all got guns, too."

"Hist, be quiet!" warned O'Shane. "They'd cut our throats in a minute if they discovered us."

THEY lay still, watching. The Ranger cursed venomously and grew more and more enraged as the protracted search revealed nothing. Dickinson, who was absorbed in gloomy attention, and almost as excited as if he were participating in the quest himself, presently turned

"What's eatin' you?" he demanded indignantly. "Here've we two sweated up here to get the bones for the ole lady who's sick, an' lost her son, an' don't know it yet, an' we find a crowd of dam robbers got ahead of us. If there's any joke in sight in all that I'd be mighty glad to come in on it."

O'Shane essayed to speak, and choked back the loud cackle that escaped from his throat in frenzied apprehension.

When he was calmer, he explained exultingly.

"I've got to laugh to look at friend Wilson's face, Dick; he's the sickest man in the Chindwin. He's got here alright somehow or other, but he'll never find ole Mulvey's cache, he's got the cunningest hidie hole you ever saw. But I'd like to know how he ever found this place at all," he added with a frown.