



LAHOMA

BY JOHN BRECKENRIDGE ELLIS

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SYNOPSIS.

Brick Willock, highwayman, saves one Gledware and a baby girl from being murdered by his fellow outlaws on the western plains.

Willock flees to the mountains and hides to escape the wrath of the outlaws he had outwitted. He learns that some one has discovered his hiding place.

Red Feather, an Indian chief, brings Willock a little white girl named Lahoma, and instructs him to take care of her. He says her father is living with Indians.

The girl is taken across country by Willock to visit Bill Atkins, and later she makes her first trip to a real town.

Willock recognizes her as the daughter of a woman who had died and was buried near by. He begins to teach Lahoma correct English.

A young man, Wilfred Compton, visiting at a ranch, gets an accidental glimpse of Lahoma and becomes interested in her. The girl is now fifteen years old.

Compton afterward visits Willock and is finally allowed to meet and talk with Lahoma. They become vastly entertained by one another's company.

Compton leaves and goes to another section of the country as a prospector, where he hopes to make his fortune. Willock and Atkins join forces. Compton later returns.

Lahoma is sent to a city to get education and training. Compton is heart broken at not being able to see her. Red Feather appears on the scene once more.

Lahoma writes a long letter. One of the men she meets is Gledware, her step father, but she does not know of the relationship. He is a enemy of the law.

Lahoma sends a warning to Willock that Red Kimball, one of the outlaws with whom Willock formerly operated, has sworn to kill him and has started on the way to do so. She adds that Gledware is in dread of something the Indian, Red Feather, may do to him.

Red Feather attacks Gledware and almost kills him. Lahoma learns that Gledware has saved the Indian's daughter and is now a wanted man. Willock and Atkins join forces to attack Gledware and Willock.

Kimball and two other men are killed. Willock is wounded and Atkins is severely injured. Gledware is shot. Willock is an outcast.

Red Kimball and the remnants of his old outlaw gang are seen by Lahoma and Willock on their way to kill Willock. A terrific storm, a Texas norther, overtakes Lahoma and Willock.

The citizens are enraged at Willock, believing him to be a murderer. A mob gathers. Lahoma makes a speech in a desperate effort to save him from arrest. She describes his worthy deeds.

face. "I thought," she murmured, "it was on account of Annabel."

"I went away because I loved you," he answered softly. "I promised Brick"



"There you are!" she said.

"I'd go if I felt myself caring, and nobody could help caring for you. That's why I left the country. Just as soon as we laughed together it happened. That's why I didn't come again."

"Yes," sighed Lahoma, as if it was not so hard to understand now.

"And that's why I've come back," he added. "Because I've kept on loving you."

"Yes," she sighed again. She closed her eyes and seemed to fall asleep. Perhaps it was a sort of knowing sleep that lost most of the world, but clung tenaciously to a few ideas. The noise of the night died away. Presently he heard her murmur as a little smile crept about the parted lips. "The cave's pretty big—there's more room than I thought."

When she was wide awake daylight had slipped through the windows. "Oh Willock!" she exclaimed, sitting suddenly erect and putting her hands to her head mechanically. "Is—are we all right?"

"All right," said the young man cheerily. "There's a good deal of snow on the ground, but it was blown off the trail for the most part. Some friends have provided us with the means of going forward."

"But I don't understand."

"We'll finish the sandwiches and melt some snow for water and then mount. Look see those two Indian ponies fastened to the tongue of the stage? They'll carry us to the next station like the wind."

She stared from the window, bewildered.

"I don't know any more about them than you," he answered her thoughts. "But there they are and here we are." He said nothing about the bodies evidently carried away by those who had brought the ponies. "It's all a mystery—a mystery of the plains. I haven't unraveled the very first thread of it. What's the use? The western way is to take what comes, isn't it, whether no-headers or ponies? There's a much bigger mystery than all that filling my mind."

"What is that?"

"You."

She bent over the sandwich with heightened color. "Poor Brick!" she murmured, as if to divert his thoughts. But his sympathy just then was not for Brick.

"Lahoma, you said that this is a subject a man should bring up."

She looked at him brightly, still flushing. "Well?"

"I'm bringing it up, Lahoma."

"But we must be planning to save Brick from arrest."

"I'm hoping we'll get home in time. Note that I say home, Lahoma. I refer to the cave. I'm hoping we'll reach home in time to forestall Red Kimball. We've lost a great deal of time, but Brick doubtless is safely hiding. And when we get to the journey's end—Lahoma, do you know what naturally comes at the journey's end?"

"No."

"A marriage."

"I thought that was what you meant."

"Will you marry me at the journey's end?"

Lahoma turned very red and laid down the sandwich. Then she laughed. Then she started up. "Let's get on the ponies!" she cried.

The show that morning lay in drifts

from five to eight inches across the trail and to the height of several feet up against those rock walls, raising, as on vast artificial tables, the higher stretches of the Klowa country. But by noon the plain was scarcely streaked with white, and when the sun set there was nothing to suggest that a snowflake had ever fallen in that sand strewn world. When the rude cabins and hasty tents of the last stage station in Greer county showed dark and white against the horizon of a springlike morning Wilfred cried exultantly:

"The end of the journey!"

And Lahoma, suddenly showing in her cheeks all the roses that had opened in her dreams, repeated gayly, yet a little brokenly:

"The end of the journey!"

The end of the journey meant a wedding. The plains blossom with endless flower gardens and the mountains slung together when the end of the journey means a wedding.

Leaving Lahoma at the small new hotel, from whose boards the sun began boiling out resin as soon as it was well aloft, Wilfred hurried after a fresh horse to carry him at once to the cave, ten miles away. Warning must be given to Brick Willock first of all Lahoma even had a wild hope that Brick might devise some means whereby he could attend the wedding without danger of arrest, but to Wilfred this seemed impossible.

He had gone but a few steps from the hotel when he came face to face with the sheriff of Greer county. Cutting short his old friend's outburst of pleasure—

"Look here, Mizzo," said Wilfred, drawing him aside from the curious throng on the sidewalk, "have you got a warrant against Brick Willock?"

Mizzo tapped his breast. "Here!" he said. "Know where he is?"

Wilfred sighed with relief. "At any rate, you don't," he cried.

"No use riding over to the cave," remarked his friend, with a grin. "That is, unless you want to call on some friends of mine—deputies. They're lying in the dugout, just laying for Brick to show himself."

"But, Mizzo," expostulated Wilfred, "why are you taking so much trouble against my best friend? The warrant ought to be enough, and if you can't get a chance to serve it on him that's not your fault. Your deputies haven't any right in that cave, and I'm going to smoke 'em out!"

Mizzo chewed with a deprecatory shake of his head. "See here, old tip," he murmured, "don't you say nothing about being Brick Willock's friend. The whole country is roused against him. Heard of them three bodies?"

Wilfred explained that he had just come to town.

"Well, good Lord, then, the pleasure I'm going to have in telling you so—thing you don't know and something that's full of meat! Let's go where we can sit down this air not so stinking now."

The link, red faced sheriff started across the street without looking to see if he were followed.

He did not stop till he was in his room at the hotel. "Now," he said, locking the door, "sit down. Yes, you bet, I got a warrant against Brick Willock. It was sworn out by a fellow named Jeremiah Kimball. You know him as Red. The form's regular, charges weighty. Brick Willock was once a member of Red Kimball's gang. He's the only one that didn't come in to get his amnesty. See? Well, he killed Red's brother shot 'im. Gledware's coming on to witness it. Willock will claim he done the deed to save Gledware's life—his and his little gal's. But Gledware will show it was other wise. Red told me all about it. Brick's a murderer, and, worst of all, he's a murderer without an amnesty—that's the only difference between him and Red. Well, old tip, I took my oath to do my duty. You know what that signifies."

"But there's no truth in all this rot. Brick had to shoot Kaussus Kimball!"

"Well, let him show that in court. My business is to take him alive. That ain't all; that's just the preface. Listen. If you'll believe me the stage that Red and his pals was in—coming here to swear out the warrant, they was—that there stage was set on by this friend of yours. Yes, Brick has gathered together some of his old pals, and is a highwayman. Why he shot one of Red's witnesses, and he shot the driver!"

"I know something about that hood up," cried Wilfred scornfully. "It must have been done by Indians."

"Red saw Brick among the gang. He recognized him. Well, Red and his other pals gets on horses they cuts loose and comes like lightning and gets here and tells the story, and maybe you think this community ain't roaring and rebelling and a-swalling for blood. There'd be more excitement against Brick Willock if there was more community, but such as they is is commended."

"Mizzo, listen to reason. Don't you understand that Red wants revenge and has misrepresented this Indian at fault to tally with his other lies?"

"I wouldn't say nothing against Red, old tip. It ain't gentlemanly to call dead folk liars."

"Don't talk!" echoed Wilfred, starting up.

"I knowed you didn't understand that Red's off the trail forever," Mizzo rejoined gently. "I knowed you wouldn't be accusing him so rancid had you been posted on his funeral!"

Wilfred felt a great relief, then a great wonder.

"Yes, he's dead. I don't say he's better off—I don't know—but I guess the world is. I don't like to ensure them that's departed. Brick Willock is still with us, and him the county can't say enough against. His life wouldn't be worth two bits if anybody laid eyes on 'im. Consider his high headed doings. Wasn't it enough in the past to

kill Red's brother, but what he must needs collect his pals, stop the stage-coach, and then try to get Red, and one of 'em the innocent driver? You say yes. But hold on. That ain't all by no means. No sir. The very next day after Red swore out that warrant—and it was yesterday, if you ask me—what is saw when we men of Mizmo comes out of our doors? Three corpses lying on the sidewalk side by side. You say what corpses? Wait. I'm coming to that. One was that driver, one was the pard that got shot with the driver, the other was Red Kimball his own self."

"I knew the bodies had been carried away from the trail," exclaimed Wilfred in perplexity.

"But you didn't know they had been brought to town all this distance to be laid beside Red. You didn't know Red had been stabbed so he could be added too. You didn't know the three of them had been left on the street to rise up every man with blood in his veins. Why, Wilfred, it's an insult to the whole state of Texas. Such high handed doings ain't to be born. At Brick Willock don't want to be tried in court, is that an excuse for killing out all that might witness against him? It might of been once. But we're determined to have a county of law abiding citizens. Such free living has got to be nipped in the bud or we'll have another No Man's Land. I am the—er—as sheriff of Greer county I am a—I am the angel of civilization, you may say."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ENGLISH QUIT STRAITS—LEAVE POSITION TAKEN AFTER HEAVY LOSS OF LIFE.

Troops at Sulva and Anzac Quietly Moved Without Losses and Almost Unknown to Turks; Perils of Location Cause for Departure From District.

MOVE CONSIDERED VICTORY FOR ARMS.

Commanding General and Navy Given Great Credit for Extricating Forces Without Heavy Losses; England is Much Relieved by Announcement.

London, Dec. 20. — The British troops at the Sulva and Anzac districts of the Gallipoli peninsula have been withdrawn. The following official statement was issued here today:

"All the troops at Sulva and Anzac, together with their guns and stores, have been successfully transferred with insignificant casualties to another sphere of operations."

"Further details of the evacuation of the Anzac and Sulva zones have been received," says the official statement. "With out the Turks being aware of the movement a great army has been withdrawn from one of the areas occupied on the Gallipoli peninsula, although in the closest of contact with the enemy. By this contraction of the front operations at other points of the line will be more effectively carried out."

"Sir Charles Monro gives great credit for this skillfully conducted transfer of forces to the general commanding and the royal navy."

Ends Disastrous Move.

"The withdrawal of the British troops from Sulva Bay and the Anzac zone ends more successfully than most military men thought possible, the most unfortunate chapter of the British arms in this war. Thousands of lives were sacrificed in gaining these positions and other thousands in holding them."

The question has been constantly discussed why the generals commanding the Dardanelles expedition did not try to make a lodger near the center of the peninsula in the beginning and cut off the Turkish troops on the lower end. When the attempt was finally made to secure a foothold higher up on the peninsula, the Turks were fully prepared to meet it.

Moreover, the British arrangements lacked several essential features, particularly a supply of drinking water. The story has been revealed by soldiers and correspondents returning from the Mediterranean only gradually and by detail. One eye witness declared that after the first battalion landed the men were shot down so quickly that the watchmen aboard the ships were asking, "Why don't our men advance?" and thought the troops were lying down awaiting orders. The soldiers found barbed wire entanglements stretching clear out under the water when they jumped from their small boats. To add to their sufferings, the supply of drinking water was very short.

Robert Blatchford, an author, in a newspaper article, yesterday, asserted:

"Many of these men died of thirst. There was no ice for the wounded. There was no place ashore, except in dugouts under the hillsides, where the men were never safe from the enemy's shell fire, night or day. Numbers were sent to Malta and England suffering from dysentery or nervous collapse."

John Redmond, the Irish Nationalist leader, said in a speech in the house

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of commons, that the sufferings of the Irish troops on Gallipoli were the worst known in the present war.

An official announcement was made recently that the general responsible for the Sulva Bay operations had been removed from his command, but his identity is not yet known to the British public. Gen. Sir Charles C. Monro reported in favor of withdrawing the troops when he took command at the Dardanelles, but the popular belief, shared by military men here, was that thousands of soldiers could not be taken aboard the transports and effect complete withdrawal from their trenches without calamitous loss of life. The achievement must have been a difficult one and the country is relieved that it has been done without disaster.

"Thank God, they are safely out of there without serious loss," is an expression frequently heard today in connection with the transfer of the troops from the Sulva and Anzac zones to "another sphere of operations," although this is invariably coupled with regrets that it should have been regarded as necessary to evacuate the hard won footholds on the peninsula, obtained at such a heavy cost in casualties.

Destination Unknown.

The toe of the Gallipoli peninsula with Seddul-Bahr commanding the entrance to the Dardanelles, is apparently still to be held, as no mention is made of the transfer of troops from this region.

The war office statement leaves the public to draw its own conclusions as to the destination of these Australians and United Kingdom forces, which must be well over 100,000 strong. It is widely conjectured, however, that any southward sweep of the Teutonic or Bulgarian armies in the Balkans, whether from the north, west or east, will sooner or later come in contact with them, and that the transfer is connected with a determination on the part of the entente powers not to remain on the defensive in the near eastern theatre of war longer than is requisite to assure the success of a forward march.

In giving the house of commons information of the withdrawal of the Sulva and Anzac forces, as announced by the war office, Premier Asquith added that the transfer was made in pursuance of a decision reached by the cabinet some time ago.

"The operation so successfully carried out," said the premier, "reflects the utmost credit on the general on the spot, upon the admiral, the staff and all ranks of both the army and the navy."

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