



## VAL of PARADISE

by Virginia S. Roe  
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**SYNOPSIS**  
JOHN HANNON, wealthy ranch owner, his blind wife, BEILE, and their beautiful daughter, VAL, live happily together in Hannon's wonderful ranch home, Paradise. Redstar is the king of the Red Blood of horses owned by HUNNEWELL'S store. In a game from the border wins LOLA SANTEZ, who offers herself as stake for BEIDE. MAN, man of mystery. Velantrie sends Lola home to her father. Val attends the Fourth of July celebration at Santa Leandra. Escorted by the Paradise cowboys in the afternoon, Val watches the races where the Red Blood wins honors. At the dance in the evening Val dances the first dance with TOM BRISTON, the foreman of Paradise, who loves Val sincerely.

These strangers came in unostentatiously and stood in a bunch, somewhat close together. There were nine of them, all clad in good garments, the best that money could buy in a wider market than the rangeland owned. Their soft fine boots were stitched in colors, their hats were very wide and ornate, and with much silver after the fashion of their kind across the line.

They stood quietly and watched the dancers, and in their midst stood one who was of a different mold. Tall, slim, fine of feature and form, smiling, his reckless face a-sparkle with the joy of youth in music and motion this man was not so guardedly alert, and he carried his hat in his hand. Thick black hair waved back from a handsome brow, white with the bleach of the sweatband, sign manual of him who rides much in the open.

His blue eyes under their black lashes roved over the dancers with a bright bold glance. As the couples drifted out again Lolo Sanchez, a living flower in her black and scarlet, came down the room in the arms of a big blond boy, her small face upturned, her coquette's heart playing the old game in her dusky eyes.

And then—the boy swung her past the door and she looked up full into the smiling face of the stranger. "Velantrie!" she breathed to herself.

"What?" asked the boy but she did not hear.

From that moment she forgot him utterly. When the dance ended Lolo stopped, as if by accident—something about the tiny slipper that encased her light foot—and she straightened it—close by the door. As she rose, quick as a willow wand released, she looked into Velantrie's eyes and her own were eloquent.

"Master!" she murmured in Spanish, so low that none but he caught the soft word.

"Who's th' chap by th' door?" the blond boy asked suspiciously, but Lolo looked up innocently.

"Which one?" she asked, and the suspicion died. The newcomers did not dance. They had come because Velantrie gave the word, because he chose to look upon Santa Leandra at her merry-making, and that was all.

Velantrie did not dance either. There was none whom he knew upon the floor save and except the small girl who called him master, and he only smiled with amusement as he watched her.

But Lolo Sanchez's quick little brain was working and she meant to change that very soon. Therefore she sent the least of her followers, a meek brown Mexican unnoticeable in the crowd, to whisper something in the fiddle's ear.

And then the music stopped, the crowds drifted to the benches, and the fiddler was tuning his fiddle to another key.

He tucked the fiddle in his neck and began abruptly to play—and no one called this number.

Wild, swift, beautiful music it was, Spanish to the core.

It lifted and swung and at regular intervals there came a thrum of the bass that sounded like the stroke of a foot upon the floor. And then, softly, swiftly, like a leaf before a



Softly, swiftly, like a leaf before a wind, Lolo Sanchez came drifting down the floor.

As if by artless chance she drew the figure gracefully toward the far side of the floor, directly before the blond boy, and she was utterly irresistible. Butterflies in the breeze, stars that glittered, fires at night—she was all of them, and men's pulses throbbed drunkenly to behold her.

And then, as the music rose to one last keening, she fled straight to Velantrie, sank backward in his reach-out arm, and held up her flower in its intent, its invitation.

Half under her spell the man hesitated a fraction of a second. The perfect action of the steps and the music lost its first beat in that second's wait. Lolo's face glowed deeper—and Velantrie bent.

"By—" came a choking whisper as the blond boy, gray as ashes and cold, reached to his hip.

There was a flash of metal, a step

forward—and in that second Val Hannon beside him dropped a lightning-quick hand on his shoulder and swung him round in a circle—as she had so often swung her dad. There was an oath, a shot that went wild and landed in Hunnewell's tray on the platform's edge across the room, and Velantrie, arrested half way to Lolo's wren lips, looked straight past the brilliant light of the blinding black eyes of the girl who had saved his life.

For one sharp moment the tension held. Then Velantrie slowly straightened up and Lolo slipped from his arm, forgotten as she had forgotten the blond boy. He stood still, breathing hard, his blue eyes fastened on Val's face, a frown between them.

From all sides men crowded in, pushed between and hustled the boy away, while from that other side of the room Valantrie's followers came like a bolt, solid packed, their faces aflame and keen, their hands on their guns ready.

"Steady, boys," said Velantrie, "there's nothing wrong."

Then he made one stride to Val, reached out a hand and smiled. It was as if he knew the lighting of his face, like fire behind a curtain, that was his chiefest charm.

"I've had many a close call," he said simply, "and have done some sharp tricks to beat them myself, but I never saw a prettier piece of work than that. The quick thought, the quick action—they were like a man, a keen man, used to desperate chances, and I never saw a woman before who could think and act like that. If you knew me," he finished frankly, "perhaps you would not take my hand. But I want to thank you."

Gravely, Val looked full into his brilliant eyes. The light and the laughter of the earlier night were gone from her face, why she could not have told to save her life, yet it was not because of the near tragedy, that she knew.

"Yes," she said, as simply, "I will

take your hand."

And her firm brown fingers closed around his in a strong clasp. The smile died on the man's face and he looked into hers for another long moment.

Then he loosed her hand and turned away. "I shall not forget," he said. Instantly his men closed about him, they marched across the floor among the crowd which felt back from them, filed compactly out the door and were gone.

The celebration was over in Santa Leandra. Dim shapes rode through the dust and cool starlight that pre-empted the dawn, and the denizens of the rangeland scattered for another year.

It was mid-morning when they rode into Paradise, and far off Val shaded her eyes with her hand and searched the familiar place.

"Boys," she said at last, "there's something wrong at home. The rangers are all in and hanging round the corral. There's dad—he's waiting for us."

There was something wrong at Paradise, indeed. John Hannon met them at the corner of the great house and his face bore signs of strain. His dark eyes were cold and narrow.

(Continued in Our Next Issue)

### BIBLE CLASS AT PRAYER MEETING.

Members of the West Presbyterian Church Women's Bible Class will attend the prayer meeting of West Church tonight in a body. The desire is to have all the members out and sit together. Professor Clymer will direct the music and the women will sing special numbers. The pastor, the Rev. A. W. Sonne, D. D., will discuss "Our Attitude Toward Money—Acquiring, Saving and Spending." These meetings, at which a particular department is present, are proving of unusual interest and benefit to the attendants.

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Many of the stones come down too large; quarry-men must "pop shoot" them into smaller pieces.

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At a medium-sized plant—one turning out a million barrels a year—hundreds of thousands of dollars are invested in quarry and quarry equipment—air compressors, drills, steam shovels, railways, locomotives and cars.

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## MRS. GRIFFITH'S LETTER IS REVEALED TO THE PUBLIC

Alabama Woman Has Used Dr. Thacher's Liver and Blood Syrup Thirteen Years and Is Still Enthusiastic About It.

The recent introduction here of Dr. Thacher's celebrated Liver and Blood Syrup has met with general favor among all classes and is a topic of more than usual interest. Some remarkable evidence of the widespread popularity of this preparation has come to light in the form of letters received by the manufacturers and published now for the first time. Among the most interesting shown is one from Mrs. Lydia Griffith, R. F. D. No. 1, Tallahassee, Ala., who writes:

"I consider Dr. Thacher's Liver and Blood Syrup an old friend of mine, as I have used it in my family for thirteen years and in all that time it has never failed in a single instance of giving the desired relief. I gladly recommend it to all who suffer from indigestion, stomach trouble and impure blood."

If one may judge from present indications as shown by the large

number of people who are calling for it, Dr. Thacher's Liver and Blood Syrup bids fair to break all records in the near future for number of bottles passed over the counter, which alone is one of the strongest recommendations that can be made in its favor, for people would not buy it so continuously and advise their friends to take it if they were not perfectly satisfied that it was doing them good.

The public is reminded that Dr. Thacher's Liver and Blood Syrup is sold by leading druggists. It is being featured in Wilmington by The Miller Drug Store, 406 Market Street. Mr. Delaney, of the Thacher Laboratories, may be consulted at Miller's Drug Store without obligation. (Adv.)

## BEWARE THE COUGH OR COLD THAT HANGS ON

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