

Ned Buntline's Great Story! The Great Living Scout! Buffalo Bill.

THE KING-OF BORDER MEN!

The Wildest, Truest Story Ned Buntline ever Wrote

An oasis of green wood on a Kansas prairie—a bright stream abounding like liquid silver in the moonlight—a log house built under the limbs of great trees—within this humble home a happy group. This is my first picture.

Look well on the leading figure in that group. You will see him but this once, yet on his sad face lingers all the wild and fearful realities which are to follow, drawn to a very great extent, not from imagination, but from life itself.

A noble-looking, white-haired man sits by a rough table, reading the Bible aloud. On stools by his feet all two beautiful little girls, his twin daughters, not more than ten years of age, while a noble boy of twelve or thirteen, stands by the back of the chair where sits the handsome, yet maternally-looking mother.

It is the hour for family prayer before retiring for the night, and Mr. Cody, the Christian, always remembers it in the heart of his dear home.

He closes the holy book and is about to kneel and ask Heaven to bless and protect his dear ones.

Hark! The sound of horses galloping with mad speed toward his house falls upon his ear.

"Is it possible there is another Indian alarm?" he says, inquiringly.

Alas, worse than the red savages are riding in hot haste toward that door.

"Hallo—the house!" is shouted loudly, as a large cavalcade of horsemen halt before the door.

"What is wanted, and who are ye?" asked the good man, as he threw wide open the door and stood upon the threshold.

"Ye are wanted, you black-hearted nigger-worshiper, and I—Colonel M'Kandias—have come to fetch you! And there's the warrant!"

At the ruffian leader of the band shouted these words, the pistol already in his hands was raised, leveled, fired, and the father, husband and Christian, fell dead before his horror-stricken family.

"If them gals was a little older—but never mind, boys, this will be a lesson for the sneaks that come upon the border—let's be off, for there's plenty more work to do before daylight!" continued the wretch, turning the head of his horse to ride away.

"Stop!"

It was but a single word—spoken, too, by a boy whose blue eyes shone wildly in a face as white as new-fallen snow and full as cold—spoken as he stooped over the body of his dead father, weaponless and alone.

Yet that ruffian, awe, and all of his mad, reckless crew, stopped as if a mighty spell was laid upon them.

"You, Jake M'Kandias, have murdered my father! You, blue cowards, who saw him do this dark deed, spoke no word to restrain him. I am only Little Bill, his son, but as God in Heaven hears me now, I will kill every father's son of you before the beard grows on my face!"

Hear the little rooster crew. He'll fight when his spurs gear, if we don't cut his comb now, and the leader, with a mocking laugh, and he raised his pistol once more.

"Monster, you have robbed me of a husband; you shall not kill my boy," shrieked the mother, as she sprang forward and drew her son up to her own bosom.

"Colonel, there's a big gang of men coming over the prairie. We'd better get," cried a scout, riding in at this moment.

"Aye! For I don't want to kill a woman, if I can help it. Column to the right, boys, and follow me."

In a minute, at full speed, the party dashed away after their leader, and the wretched family were left alone with the dead.

Frozen with terror and awe, the beautiful twins, Lillie and Lottie, crept out to the doorway, where their mother and brother knelt over the stiffening form of him who had been so good and kind—their dear father.

Oh, what a picture! Grief was still. Nor sob, nor tear, nor even a moan arose. They were dumb with agony—paralyzed with a sense of utter bereavement.

It is now 1861. The old log house has disappeared, but in the same noble grove a pretty white cottage is seen. Barns and haystacks all tell a story of good farming and profitable results.

On the embowered porch of this cottage sits the widow, still in her mourning garb, worn for him whose death we have already pictured, and near her stand two lovely girls—the twin sisters, Lillie and Lottie, now in the early bloom of beautiful womanhood.

They look alike, are dressed alike, and are exceedingly beautiful.

Lillie held a letter in her hand which the mounted mail carrier had left as he swept by.

"Oh, mamma, mamma! brother is coming home! He says he will be here before the sun sets on the twenty-fifth! The letter is from Fort Kearney, and has been long in coming."

"Is not to-day the twenty-fifth?" asked Lottie.

"To be sure it is, and he will be here. Our William is wild, but he never tells a falsehood. He is too proud for that! Heaven bless him!" and the mother, in a low, earnest tone.

"He is not coming alone," said Lillie. "He brings two friends with him."

"It lacks scarce a half hour of sunset," said the mother.

At the same instant Lillie, who had been glancing through an avenue which led westward in the grove, cried out:

"And three minutes later, their horses frothy and hot, three riders at full speed dashed up to the gate fronting the cottage.

"Oh, brother! brother!" cried the two sisters, joyously, and all the blood of the stranger eyes now looking on them, they rushed out to embrace and kiss him.

Buffalo Bill, for this was he, had learned to hide all his feelings, but with a gentle tenderness he shook himself out of their embraces, and presenting his two friends by name, hurried on to meet his dear mother, who, with glistering eyes, waited to greet her idol and her pride.

"My good mother," was all he said as he pressed his manly lips to her white forehead.

"My dear son," was all she said, but her eyes told his manly lips the reverence in his tone, or the rapturous love in her look.

Bill now presented his friends in more form to his mother than he had deemed it necessary in the case of his sisters.

"This, mother," said he, presenting a young man who, in form and appearance, resembled himself very closely, though he was an inch taller and hardly as muscular, "this is my mate—this is Bill Hitchcock, the best friend I ever had, or ever will have, outside of my own family. Three times he has saved me from being wiped out. Once by the Ogallalas, once when I was taken with the cramps in the lee-cold prairie, last winter—and once when old Jake M'Kandias and his gang had a sunset on me. He and I will sink or swim in the same river, and that's a safe bet. Bill, that's my mother, and a better never trod the footstool!"

Will Bill, with a natural grace, bent his proud head and took the hand of the lady, saying, in a tremulous tone:

"I'm glad to see you, ma'am, for I've got a good old mother that I haven't seen this many a day, and this rayther brings her up afore me."

"And this other," continued Bill, "is Dave Tutt. He is good on a hunt, death on the reds, and as smart as border-men are made now-a-days. Now, boys, you're all acquainted, make yourselves at home. The darkey out there has got the horses, and he'll see them all right."

Three more perfect men in point of personal beauty never trod the earth.

Will Bill, six feet and one inch in height, straight as an ash, broad in shoulder, roined and full in chest, slender in the waist, swelling out in muscular proportions at hips and thighs, with tapering limbs, small hands and feet, his form was a study. His face, open and clean, with regular features, the nose slightly aquiline, his large bright eyes now soft and tender in expression, were a bluish gray in color, shaded by lashes which often drooped over his bronzed cheek as he looked down, somewhat confused in female society, to which he was unused. His long brown hair fell in wavy masses over his shoulders, but it was fine, soft and glossy as silk.

The same picture would be Buffalo Bill, only this difference noted. The eyes of the latter were nearer a blue in color, his light eyes much less, and his hair a little more wavy and a shade lighter.

Dave Tutt, nearly of the same height, was equally well formed, but there the resemblance ceased.

His eyes were black as jet and deeply set, though his features were perfect, and, when he chose, his expression was soft and winning. His hair, curling slightly, was black and glossy.

But with all his beauty, there was a sensual expression about his mouth, so utterly different from that in the other two, and a fierce, passionate longing in his eyes, which made the two girls, inductive in their purity, shrink from him.

After supper the reunited family and their guests were cozy seated in the sitting-room, when Mrs. Cody, whose face was toward the

* This is the son of the late Wm. F. Cody, the greatest hunter, guide and scout in the far West, now employed in that capacity in General Augustus DeSpain's regiment, and is a great favorite with General Custer and Sheridan. A man who has killed sixty-nine buffaloes in one day's hunt, has earned the name, I think.

wing, screamed out in sudden terror, and rose to her feet with a face so deathly pale that it seemed as if she was death-stricken.

"What is it, mother?" cried Bill, springing to her side.

"The window—he was there!" she gasped, and then she swooned away.

"He? Girls look out for mother! I'll see what he was at the window!" cried Bill, and he sprang to the open casement.

As he did so, a bullet whistled past his ear and struck the opposite wall, while a hundred wild yells proclaimed that Indians had surrounded the house.

Wild Bill, cool and collected, instantly bent out both the lights, exclaiming:

"Darkness here and no sunlight out there! We'll be all right in a shake. Jump for your guns, boys, make 'em handy! Gals, lay low out of range, we'll soon let the reds know old hands are here."

The three young men, reinforced by three negroes and one white man, the farm hands were ready for work in less than a minute, and as the Indians did not seem disposed to make a rush for the inside of the house, crept quickly to points where from the doors and windows they could pick the dead out from their covert among the trees around.

Meantime the twins had succeeded in restoring the mother to consciousness, and she had hurried inquiry of her son as to whom she had seen at the window, replied that she had recognized the face of Jake M'Kandias, the murderer of her husband, glaring in with a look so full of hate and vindictive cruelty that she was completely horror-stricken.

"There's too many reds out there, or I'd make a rush and settle his hash!" said her son.

"If he'll only stay 'till we thin 'em down a few, I'll accommodate him with a private entertainment. Look out for yourselves, girls—the boys are giving 'em Jesse, and it's about time my hand was in."

A rapid firing had been going on from the moment Will Bill got to the door, the Indians shooting at random, for all in the house was dark except the flash of the guns, but every now and then a yell of agony told that the attacking party were not going un punished.

They could only be seen as they sprang from tree to tree for cover, but their terrible yells ringing through the air told that in numbers they were at least ten to one of the defending party.

"What's the stock? Won't they try to run that off?" asked Will Bill, as his mate, standing by his side, sent a Red to eternity with a shot from his favorite long rifle.

"I expect they will. I would almost as soon lose my hair as to lose Powder Face, for the insect has carried me through more bad scrapes than I've time to count," said Buffalo Bill, referring to his favorite horse.

"And I will lose my hair, too! I'll lose Black Nell, for she never deserted me. She'll kick the head of any Red that tries to mount her. But can't we get to the horses?"

"Wait till I give Dave and the boys in here their orders, and then you an' me will get to the horses and come in on 'em like as if we were fresh hands in the fight."

"That's the talk, Bill—that's the talk. Only let me and Black Nell and you and Powder Face give 'em a charge in the rear and they're gone in a minute."

"Pepper into 'em then, so till I tell the boys here where we're goin', so they'll be keener how to show when we're comin'."

"And I will lose my hair, too! Dave Tutt and the men who were firing at everything they saw move among the trees, what he and Will Bill intended to do. The girls and his mother were to know nothing of it till it was all over, for the two Bills felt as sure of driving off the foe by their plan as if they were already in full chase of them.

Dave Tutt did not express any wish to go along, which rather surprised Buffalo Bill, for it was a duty that brave man would surely court. But there was a reason for this, as there is indeed for everything, as the reader will learn by and by.

The two friends, carrying their arms and bending low in the shadow of the garden bushes, crept away from the house until they reached the grain-field beyond the trees, into which they moved swiftly. They had but a little distance now to go to reach the stock pasture, and they got to the last in the very nick of time.

A half-dozen dusky figures were already there, and the horses, disturbed by the firing, were very uneasy as these advanced.

Two shrill calls, understood well by the animals for which they were intended, brought two noble animals, "Black Nell" and "Powder Face," to the edge of the grain-field. The next instant, needing neither saddle nor bridle, the two men were mounted, and without a word, both dashed forward upon the Indians who were after them.

So suddenly and unexpectedly were these overwhelmed—not a shot being fired, only the rattle of muskets—that there was no alarm in the grove. Then the two men sped on, not noiselessly now, but whooping and yelling in wild concert, and urging their steeds faster by their cries, till they were upon the rear of the astonished redskins pouring out about after shot with deadly effect on the enemy.

Whirling and circling here and there, never missing a shot—it seemed as if there were two, rather than two—Will Bill and Dave were dashed on, carrying death at every leap.

The Indians, who were Cheyennes, supposing this to be a reinforcement to those who had defended the house so well, soon gave way and fled in every direction, but not before full half their number had fallen.

"Curse them, why do they shoot so careless from the house—this is the second graze I have had from there," cried Will Bill, as he wiped the blood from a wound grazing his cheek.

"There's a hole in my hat from the same quarter," said Buffalo Bill. "I'd like to know what they mean. It can't be but they know where we are. Never mind—I must hunt up old M'Kandias now, for if mother saw him he must be here. Let's chase them, Bill, as long as we can."

The two men dashed away, and again a bullet, evidently from the house, passed so close to Buffalo Bill's head that he felt its wind.

The Indians scattered far and wide, but the two men succeeded in knocking over a half dozen more, when the thought struck them that it was better not to go far from the house lest some lurking behind would continue the attack, and they rode back.

The search for a white man among the bodies of the slain was unavailing, so Bill decided in his mind that if M'Kandias had been in the party he had escaped this time.

As they approached the house, they took pains to make their individuals known by signals which could not be misunderstood, therefore they were spared the perils which it seemed friends rather than their foes had cast upon them during the chase.

In a short time, their horses got close in the shadow of the house, the two brave friends were in it once more.

"You can fight up, I reckon," cried Buffalo Bill when he entered. "The Reds, or what, left 'em off to their tribes on the run."

"Thank Heaven, you are safe," said Mrs. Cody, as she heard the voice of her son. "I hope you and your brave friend are unhurt."

"All right, mother, but a scratch or two that cold water will heal—but are you sure you saw the face of Jake M'Kandias at the window?"

"Yes, my son—I never can forget his face. I surely saw it."

"Then he has got off this time. I knew most of his gang had gone under, but I didn't think he had taken up with the Cheyennes. They say that every tribe in the West but the Pawnees are going with the South. If they are our border folks will have our hands full. But we're good for 'em, aren't we, Bill?"

"I reckon we are, if we know ourselves," said Will Bill.

The moon had gone down before day dawned, but the repulsed Cheyennes never bated in their headlong speed until a couple of hours after sunrise, when they had reached a thick cottonwood grove on the south bank of the Republican river.

Here, at the call of their chief, they dismounted and gathered around him. By his side, with a scowl of anger and some show of distrust, too, in his face, stood Jake M'Kandias, the white ruffian who had planned this foray.

Looking sternly at him, after counting the warriors left, the old chief said:

"There will be a great cry among the squaws in the lodges of the Cheyennes. Many warriors have gone down—their scalps are in the belts of our enemies, and we have not a scalp to show that has been taken in return for ours. What has the Hawk of the Hills to say to this?"

"That which the Great Spirit wills to be, will be!" said M'Kandias in reply. "If we had fought as white men fight and charged right in on them, we would now have their scalps in our belts. Big Maple would not listen to my words. He fought his way and lost half his warriors. It is not my fault, I have spoken."

"The Hawk of the Hills has spoken with a single tongue. His words are true. But the faces of the tribes will be black when we go back without scalps. What has my brother to say to that?" asked the chief.

"That if we go back without scalps, we are fools!" said M'Kandias, quietly. "If the gun of Big Maple misses fire, does he throw it away, or pick the flint and try it again? There are more days and nights than one, and plenty of pale faces are scattered about the plains. The Hawk of the Hills knows other settlements which we can reach in two or three days' journey. We can go there for plunder and scalps and then come back here, and when the fighting men are not here or are asleep we can sprinkle the bones of our dead with the blood of vengeance where they fell."

"The Hawk of the Hills speaks like a man. The heart of Big Maple was weak. It is strong again. The warriors will cook meat and eat 'till their horses rest and feed."

Light blazing fires emitting scarcely any smoke were now made from dry twigs, and the warriors made a hearty meal, the first for twenty-four hours. It was not finished when an alarm was given by a scout. White men mounted and armed were coming in from the South.

"They are not those we fought last night!" said M'Kandias. "They have not had time to get to this side of the river. I will ride out alone and see who they are. Let my red brothers remain where they are ready to fight or to die, if they see that I am among their enemies."

"The Hawk of the Hills be a great brave. His words are good and his deeds go with them," said the Cheyenne chief.

M'Kandias now mounted his horse, put a bit of white cloth on the ramrod of his rifle and rode out from the shelter of the grove toward the group of advancing horsemen, some ten or dozen in number.

They halted as soon as he was observed and seemed to look to their arms.

He rode boldly on until within two or three hundred yards when a shout of recognition rose on both sides and men rode rapidly to meet him.

They were his own men from the Black Hills, whom he had left there to carry on his business of pilaging emigrant trains, while he came down on an expedition on his own private account.

"Why are you here?" he asked, as they rode up. "What did you leave Cave Canyon for?"

"Because we got scarched out, and scarched out and whipped out!" said one, who seemed to head the party.

"Well, boys, I'm glad you are here, for now I'll do the work I failed in last night. That infernal fiend, Buffalo Bill, with Will Bill and Dave Tutt wiped out over twenty Cheyennes that I piloted down to the Cody place last night."

"Dave Tutt! Why he is one of us—one of our sort at any rate!" said Frank Stark, the one who had spoken first.

"Yes—he used to be, but he's with them now. I couldn't get no chance to see him alone or I would have known what it meant. I had my own idea that he was after one of the gals, for they're purtier than any picture that was ever painted, and I know he's death after that kind of game. But ride on boys and get something to eat and then we'll plan for a nice bit of work to-night. There's between twenty and thirty Cheyennes left, and they'll fight like blazes for revenge."

M'Kandias now turned and rode back with his men to the grove, so busy in talking with them, that he did not notice a single person on the hill beyond the river, who had evidently seen all his movements, and who rode off swiftly when the ruffian leader entered the grove.

"These are warriors from my band in the Black Hills, come to fight by the side of their chief!" said M'Kandias to the Cheyenne chief, as he and his men rode up among the campfires.

"They are welcome as the rain when the earth is dry. Big Maple is glad to see them here."

"Now cook and eat, boys," said M'Kandias, "and let your horses rest and feed till we are right. We'll then wipe out Buffalo Bill and his party, and make a raid down the river as far as we can, and then strike for the Platte for a rest." The continuation of this wild, true and exciting story will be found in the New York WEEKLY, No. 7, which can be purchased from all News Agents on and after Tuesday, December 14th. Specimen copies sent free. The terms to mail subscribers are: Single copy, one year, \$3; Four copies (\$2.50 each), \$10; and Nine copies (money all sent at one time), \$20. Orders up of clubs can afterwards add subscribers at \$2.50 each. All letters must be directed to STRAUB & SMITH, P. O. Box No. 4800, N. Y.