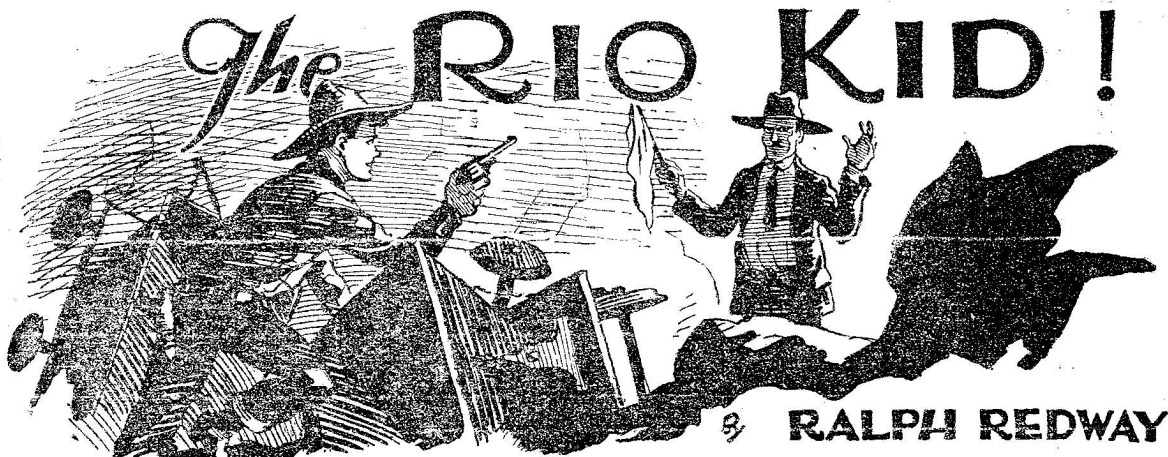


# THE END OF HIS BONANZA!

The Rio Kid vowed he would never let his gold mine fall into the hands of his enemies—much rather would he blow it sky-high! And when the moment of final decision comes, the Kid keeps his word!



A ROARING LONG WESTERN TALE, FEATURING THE RIO KID, BOY OUTLAW!

## THE FIRST CHAPTER. At Bay!

**T**HAT the game was up, that the remainder of his young life might be counted in hours, if not in minutes, would have seemed a sure thing to anyone but the Rio Kid. And even the Kid doubted, though without the slightest slackening of his nerve, or diminution of his courage. The Kid had always held life lightly, in the old days, on the llanos of Texas, and now in the gold mountains of Arizona. All he knew for certain was, that he was going to fight to the last cartridge, and the future was on the knees of the gods.

Deep in the tunnel of the Gambusino Mine, in the Golden Canyon of the Gila Mountains, the Kid watched and waited. He was hemmed in by unnumbered foes; but they did not seem in a hurry to come to grips. Almost a day had passed since the gang of gunmen from Los Pinos had attempted to rush the tunnel, and had broken and fled before the Kid's barking six-guns. The Kid was confident of stalling off any attack, regardless of the numbers; but getting out of the mine and making his own escape was a different matter. Neither was he willing to hit the trail and leave the mine to the greedy clutches of his enemies. It was his bonanza; he had found it, he had fought almost to the death with the apaches of the desert in finding it; and he had no thought of surrendering it. He was grimly determined not even to save his life by escaping and leaving the mine to his foes.

From where he watched behind a barricade of stacked ore-wagons across the tunnel, the Kid could see the opening of the adit far in front of him, with a glare of sunshine there, contrasting with the shadow of the deep tunnel where he was camped. Every stick of timber had been burned away; the mine buildings lay in ashes; the tunnel was open to the hot wind from the Red Desert. Occasionally a bullet whizzed in from some restless rifleman, and ricocheted along the walls, and dropped, spent, among the ore that had been dug out when the mine had last been working. But a random bullet had little chance of finding the Kid. He did not waste his own powder on random firing; his guns

## This Week: "THE RIO KID'S TRUMP CARD!"

were silent till he should see a target. The solitude of the tunnel did not trouble the Kid; he had spent many solitary days and nights on the llanos and in the chaparral, but he had never been in a tighter corner than he was in now, as he well knew. But when a voice hailed him from the mouth of the tunnel, the Kid answered, in tones that rang as cheery and care-free as of old.

"Kid Carfax!"

"Hallo!" called the Kid.

"Will you respect a flag of truce?"

"Sure, if you don't try to put anything over."

A slim, well-dressed man in store clothes stepped out of the blaze of sunshine into the shadow of the tunnel. The Kid's eyes gleamed, and he half repented of his promise to respect the white flag that the man carried in his hand. For the black-coated man in the spotless white shirt was Jas Drew, the agent of the Arizona Consolidated Mining Company of Tombstone; the man who had pulled the string behind the scenes, and brought about the disaster that had overwhelmed the owner of the Gambusino Mine. But the Kid was a slave to his word; and though he grasped a gun he did not lift it, and the agent of the Arizona Con walked up the avenue towards him, holding the white flag, unharmed. And the Kid admired his nerve a little, too; only the Kid's word stood between Jas Draw and sudden death, and he trusted his life to the Kid's word.

"Halt right there!" said the Kid, when the agent was within a dozen feet of the barrier. "I guess that's near enough for chewing the rag."

The agent stopped.

In the dim twilight of the mine tunnel he stared and peered at the Kid, whose handsome face looked coolly over the stacked wagons. Drew's face was cool and calm; scoundrel as he was, he had a nerve of iron.

"Well, what's the news, feller?" drawled the Kid. "Have you come to tell me that you're letting up on this racket?"

Drew smiled faintly.

"Hardly that; I've come to talk turkey."

"You can wade in."

"We've got you exactly where we want you, Mr. Carfax," said the agent calmly. "I guess any galoot in Los Pinos could have told you that we'd get the goods on you; but you couldn't see it. A few weeks ago I made you an offer from my company of fifty thousand dollars for the mine."

"I kind of remember," said the Kid.

"That offer's still open."

"Gee!"

"I mean it," said Drew. "You're cornered here, Kid Carfax. You don't reckon you'll beat off a hundred gunmen?"

"Nope!" grinned the Kid. "But I guess I can hold this tunnel against all the gunmen in Arizona."

"For how long?" asked Drew. "I'm wise to it that you stacked up food and water here ready for the rookus. But they won't last for ever."

"You've said it."

"You've put yourself on the wrong side of the law," continued Drew.

"You've shot up Rube McCoy, town marshal of Los Pinos. That means the rope when you're corralled."

"When!" agreed the Kid.

"You're an outlaw already—proclaimed an outlaw through all the section. If you get out of this, you could never work the mine again—with a price on your head and the sheriff hunting you."

"That's a cinch," agreed the Kid. "You've played a dirty game on me, Jas Drew; but I allow you've played it mighty well."

The agent smiled.

"I reckon I offered you good terms at the start," he said. "You refused to sell, and you shot at the gunmen I put on your trail. You asked for what you've got."

"And I quirted you, Mr. Drew," said the Kid coolly. "I sure thrashed you like a dog in the Red-Eye at Los Pinos, with half the town looking on."

Drew's eyes glowed for a moment. He had not forgotten the lashing of the quirt; the marks were still deep on him.

"That was a mistake, Kid Carfax," he said coldly.

"I guess so. I sure ought to have put a bullet through you instead?" answered the Kid scornfully.

"I guess that wouldn't have made any difference. If I got shot up by a wild puncher from Texas the Arizona Con would have put a new man in my place, and the game would go on."

The Kid nodded.

"Yep; I guess you're only a tool, like the durned galoots who kicked up a rookus here," he admitted.

"The Arizona Consolidated want this mine," said Drew. "They've got the goods on you now. I guess you know that I worked the strike at the mine—and forced the fighting—and sent Rube McCoy to chip in. And if he'd brought you in a prisoner you'd have been strung up out of hand; and if you shot him up, as you did, you'd be on the wrong side of the law—an outlaw. I guess you know all that."

"I guess so," assented the Kid. "I ain't denying that you've played your cards like a durned clever card-sharp. But what's it coming to? You didn't mosey in to tell me what I know."

"No. This game of yours, skulking in the tunnel and stalling off my men, wasn't in the programme," said Drew. "I reckon we can starve you out all right, long as it may take; but I'd rather come to terms. You're an outlaw now—nothing can wipe out the fact that you've shot up the town marshal of Los Pinos. But I'm willing to let you come out, take your horse, and ride away with fifty thousand dollars. That's better than dying like a hunted coyote in a hole in the ground, Kid Carfax."

"A durned sight better!" smiled the Kid.

"It's a square offer. Make your own conditions for safety, and I guess I'll take them as read."

"I'm not selling," said the Kid coolly. "I told you so when you put the proposition up to me weeks ago. You sure want a lot of telling, Mr. Drew."

"You're not selling—now?"

"Sure not."

The agent stared at him blankly.

"You don't hope to get out of this mine alive?" he exclaimed.

"Quien sabe?"

"If you do, you sure don't figure on taking the mine along with you on your back?"

The Kid laughed.

"Nope."

"The best you can look for is to sneak out some dark night when my men aren't on the watch, and get clear," said Drew.

"Correct."

"You leave the mine—and I guess it doesn't matter a Continental red cent to us whether you are shot up here, or whether you take to the hills. We get the mine!"

"I guess not," drawled the Kid. "I guess if you was so sure of getting the mine, Mr. Drew, you wouldn't be here talking turkey to me this minute. I reckon you're wise to it that I've stacked up the dynamite in the tunnel, ready to touch off when I durned choose. And I reckon you know that before I give up my bonanza to the Arizona Con I'll blow it up into chips, and half the canyon along with it." The Kid's eyes glistened. "That's on the programme, Jas Drew—if I go up, the mine goes up. There's enough dynamite stacked here to blow the mine half-way to Mexico. I've got the fuse laid all ready, and I'll let you know it's a short

fuse. You don't get the mine. There won't be any mine after that fuse burns down."

Drew gritted his teeth.

The Kid laughed again.

"You've sure played your cards well, Mr. Drew," he said banteringly. "You've got the goods on me, and turned me into an outlaw in Arizona. You've sure lost me my bonanza. But you ain't roped it in for your company. I guess you thought you was dealing with a kid puncher from Texas, and could put it across him easy. You've slipped up on it, feller."

Drew's face was white with rage now.

"If you blow up the mine, you go up with it!" he snarled.

"I'm sure wise to that," nodded the Kid, "and I guess a lot of your gang will go up about the same time. The explosion will bring down thousands of tons of rock from the canyon wall. There won't be much of Gold Brick Camp left afterwards."

"You're mad!" muttered Drew. "I'm offering you life and freedom and a sack of dollars—"

"Keep 'em till I ask for 'em," suggested the Kid. "I sure told you at the beginning of this rookus that I wasn't selling, and I ain't a galoot to change my mind. This mine belongs to me, and I guess it never will belong to the Arizona Con. It's going up in smoke, Mr. Drew, and I guess if I get clear of this I'll make the Arizona Con pay for the damage."

He made a motion with his gun.

"You can hit it lively, Jas Drew! I'm sure tired of you! Get out of the tunnel!"

"I tell you—" began Drew.

"Git!"

The Kid's gun came up.

"Beat it lively, or that white rag won't save you!" he said grimly.

And the agent of the Arizona Consolidated, with white rage in his face, trapped out of the tunnel.

The Kid's mocking laugh followed him.

The Arizona Con had put the goods on him, and he had lost his mine, but the Con had not won it. The Rio Kid still held the trump card.

## THE SECOND CHAPTER.

### Rainy Face Talks Business!

**R**AINY FACE, the Apache, stalked in his tattered blanket in the street of Gold Brick, his bronze face expressionless, his ears open. The Apache had sampled the fire-water at the Gilt-Edge saloon, but the "hooch" liquor that was sold over the bar at the Gilt-Edge had not affected the hardened old sinner from the desert. Sober and stolid, the Apache stalked an oddly dignified figure in his tattered blanket. Few gave him any attention. Tattered Apaches from the Red Desert were not uncommon in the mining-camps, and the days of Indian raids were long over. No doubt the camp of Gold Brick held some interest for the Apache. It was but a few weeks since the Golden Canyon had been a barren desert, never echoing even the clang of a prospector's pick. In that lonely canyon the thief-Apaches had attacked the Rio Kid when he came seeking the bonanza; but no thief-Apache would have ventured to raise a war-whoop in the canyon now. The camp had grown up there, and hundreds of white men swarmed in the camp, and every man packed a gun. If Rainy Face felt hostility towards the palefaces who had torn yet one more strip of territory from the Redskins, he gave no sign of it. The fierce chief of

the desert was left behind when Rainy Face entered the camps of the whitemen, and to white men's eyes he was nothing more than a tattered loafer.

Gold Brick was seething with excitement. The Gilt-Edge was crowded, and groups of men talked in the streets, staring often towards the mouth of the Gambusino tunnel in the opposite hill-side.

The miners on the Rio Kid's pay-roll, who had been deluded into a strike, had already repented of their folly. The strike had served its purpose, and the strikers were of little account in Gold Brick now. The camp was being run by the gang of gunmen in the pay of Jas Drew, and Bud Starbuck, one of Drew's right-hand men, had been appointed town marshal of Gold Brick. Many of the strikers had gone, and those that remained would gladly enough have resumed their work at the Gambusino Mine had it been possible. But the Gambusino Mine was now the fortress of the Rio Kid, held by him single-handed against all comers; and the Kid's intention of blowing up the mine rather than surrender it was rumoured through the town. Saloon-keepers and storekeepers, and others whom the "boom" had brought along to Gold Brick, heard that rumour with consternation. The boom town had sprung up like a mushroom, and if the Gambusino Mine was destroyed it was the end of Gold Brick as a settlement. Deserted cabins would be left to mark the spot where the camp had once stood—if indeed the whole place was not gutted by the explosion. The Gambusino Mine was tunnelled horizontally into the canyon wall, and the explosion was certain to bring down a great section of the rocky wall, thousands of tons of rock thundering down in the catastrophe. And there were few in Gold Brick who doubted that the Kid would keep his word. The Arizona Consolidated had beaten him in the struggle for the mine, but the Kid was a bad man to crowd. Once the store of dynamite was touched off in the tunnel the bone of contention would cease to exist. And the Kid was the man to do it.

Rainy Face, stalking silently in his tattered blanket, heard the excited talk of the groups in the street, giving no sign. He saw the gun-men who watched the mine—hard-faced men, in cover, gun in hand, in a semi-circle facing the mouth of the tunnel. It was certain that the Rio Kid could not make a break without being riddled by bullets. Day and night the half-circle of grim-eyed men watching the tunnel watched and waited, constantly relieved by fresh men. Starbuck, the new marshal of Gold Brick, represented the law in the camp, and he had sworn in the gang as deputies; and the gun-men, accustomed to wild deeds and lawless brawls, grinned to find themselves for the nonce upholders of the law. Kid Carfax was resisting arrest after shooting up the marshal of Los Pinos, and he was to be taken alive or dead—that was the order. But the gun-men, as they watched the tunnel, listened uneasily for the first hint of an explosion, and were ready to run if it came. And the half-circle enclosing the mine was widely flung, to keep clear of falling rocks if the Kid made good his threat.

For hours the tattered Apache hung about the crowded street of Gold Brick, listening to talk which he appeared to pass unheeded. It was late in the afternoon when he stalked into the Gold Brick Hotel—a lumber building—where Jas Drew had his headquarters. And in

the bar he asked to see the chief. The bartender, when he understood at last that the Apache was referring to the agent of the Arizona Consolidated, grinned.

"I guess you can't see Jas Drew, Injun," he answered. "You better go into the barn and sleep it off."

Rainy Face made no reply, but withdrew, and leaned in tattered dignity on the doorpost, and waited. He had to wait an hour before he saw the agent coming out. Evidently he knew Drew by sight, for he stepped forward and saluted him. Drew stared at the Apache.

"Beat it, Injun!" he snapped.

"Rainy Face serve big white chief," said the Apache. He made a gesture with a bronze hand towards the Gambusino Mine.

Drew stared again, and then gave attention. There was a reward offered in Cold Brick of a thousand dollars for any man who could get the Kid, and it came into Drew's mind that the savage from the desert had heard of it.

"Step in here, Injun," he said curtly, and he led the Apache into a room where Starbuck and two or three others were in consultation. They stared at the tattered Apache.

"What's this, boss?" asked Starbuck.

"I guess the Injun may be useful," said Drew, with a gleam in his eyes. "He says he's willing to get Carfax."

"Injun got 'um!" said the Apache quietly. "Injun creep like snake in grass, little white chief no hear, Injun kill."

"By gum!" muttered Starbuck. "That's the goods, boss! There ain't a white man in camp would put his nose inside the Gambusino Mine, with Kid Carfax on the shoot! But an Injun—"

"You've said it!" muttered Drew.

The agent's face was bright now. In the very hour of success, he was threatened with the destruction of all his hopes. Whether the Kid lived or died was a matter of little moment, but if the mine was blown up, all Drew's plotting and scheming went for nothing. Indeed, it was likely enough that he would be "fired" by the company he served. The Arizona Consolidated had no use for failures. Drew had outgled his brains for a scheme to handle the desperate puncher in the mine tunnel, and had had to confess that there was no way. The chances of an attack were doubtful; and even a successful attack could not prevent

the Kid from touching off the dynamite. If he had the nerve to carry out his throat, the Kid was still master of the situation; and Drew knew that he had the nerve. The Indian's offer came to the agent like a gleam of light in a dark sky. What a white man could not do might be done by the cunning stealth of a desert Apache.

"Speak!" he said curtly.

"Injun creep at night like snake," said Rainy Face. "Injun no afraid. Go soft and make no sound. Catch little white chief asleep maybe—catch him anyhow. Kill."

"By gum!" repeated Starbuck. "An Injun could do it."

As likely as not, the Kid would be on the watch, too keenly on the watch for the Redskin, and a bullet from a six-gun would stretch the Apache dead in the tunnel. But the Apache's life was nothing to Jas Drew; he would have risked his own for a chance of success. For it was ruin that stared him in the face if he failed to save the Gambusino Mine for the Arizona Con. If the Redskin failed there was nothing lost but his life, which mattered nothing; if he succeeded—and the stealthy cunning of the Redskin had a good chance of success—Jas Drew breathed deep at the thought.

"Get the little white chief, as you call him, Injun, and name your own reward," said Drew, almost husky with eagerness. "There's a thousand dollars to be picked up for it."

The Indian shook his head.

"No want dollars," he answered. "Want hoss."

"The Kid's horse?" asked Drew.

"The chief has spoken. Mustang with black nose," said the Apache. "Rainy Face see little white chief ride him horse with black nose. Rainy Face want little white chief's hoss."

"I guess I remember the critter," said Drew. "I've sure seen Carfax riding it. He's not got it in the tunnel with him. Where is it, Starbuck? One of your gang roped it in, I suppose?"

Bud Starbuck grinned.

"I guess I've got it," he answered. "It's in the stable behind this hyer shebang now. A savage beast, too—the stableman doesn't like going near it. But it's a good hoss."

"You shall have the hoss, Injun," said Drew, turning to Rainy Face again. "Dollars, too, if you get the Kid."

"No want dollars; want hoss."

"It's a cinch," said the agent. "And when—"

"When light go," said the Apache. "Injun creep in dark like cascabel. Little white chief no hear, no see till Injun's knife find um. Injun go to camp in desert for war-paint and knife—no can go on warpath without war-paint. Come back in dark."

"It's a cinch!"

And a few minutes later the Apache rode out of camp on his horse, and Jas Drew and his confederates waited eagerly for his return. If there was anything in an Apache's skill and stealth and cunning, the solitary defender of the Gambusino Mine would perish in the darkness of the tunnel; perish before he had a chance of touching off the dynamite. And the Gambusino Mine would be saved, and Jasper Drew along with it.

Drew's only fear was that the Apache might repent of his bargain, and fail to return from the desert. But that fear was unfounded. Late in the night the Redskin arrived at the Cold Brick Hotel.

By that time most of the camp was sleeping; though a score of watchful, armed men, guarding the tunnel against the escape of the Kid, did not dream of closing their eyes. The Gilt-Edge saloon was still open, and a crowd was there at the bar and round the faro lay-out. At the bar of the Gold Brick Hotel, too, men were drinking "hooch" and discussing the situation at the Gambusino Mine. But Jas Drew and Bud Starbuck stood outside the frame building, under the stars, waiting for the Apache; and they exchanged a glance of satisfaction when the tattered chief rode up. Rainy Face had a bundle on his bony broncho, which the white men guessed was his fixings for the warpath. The Apache alighted from his broncho, and saluted the two men gravely, with an inclination of his feathered head.

"Injun on time," he said. "Injun ready! Rainy Face dress in war blanket and war feathers, take scalping-knife—wah! I have spoken!" He glanced round. "Injun bring scalp of little white chief, and Big Chief give hoss with black nose."

Drew shuddered slightly. "I guess I don't stand for scalping a white man!" muttered Starbuck. "You can sure give that a miss, Injun!"

"Injun scalp um, show big chief prove um dead," said the Apache.

"It's a cinch," said Drew. "Give me proof that you've laid him out, and the hoss is yours."

"But—" began Starbuck again. Ruffian as the gunman was, he revolted at the thought of the scalping. Drew interrupted him roughly:

"Can it! Let the Injun have his way."

"Injun no see hoss," said Rainy Face.

"I guess it's in the stable hyer!" growled Starbuck.

In his own mind the gunman had resolved to drive a bullet through the Redskin's heart, if he came back with a white man's scalp from his expedition.

"Injun see um," persisted the chief. He hitched his bony broncho to the rail outside the lumber hotel. "Tie um here; Injun see."

Starbuck muttered an oath, but Drew signed to him fiercely to obey. The Apache was worth more to the agent of the Arizona Consolidated, at that hour, than all the gunmen in his pay. He would have given the Redskin a

## LOOK OUT FOR THESE CORKING VOLUMES!

### THE SCHOOLBOYS' OWN LIBRARY.

- No. 77.—**ALONZO THE GREAT!**  
A Humorous Long Complete School Story. By FRANK RICHARDS.  
No. 78.—**THE TANGLEWOOD TWINS!**  
An Enthralling Book-Length Story of School Life at its Best. By ERNEST PROTHEROE.

### THE BOYS' FRIEND LIBRARY.

- No. 145.—**BOUNDARY BILLY!**  
A Corking Yarn of the Cricket Field. By JOHN ASCOTT.  
No. 146.—**THIS IS THE LIFE!**  
A Topping Tale of Thrills on the Turf. By JOHN GABRIEL.  
No. 147.—**THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE WHITE HEATHER:**  
A Powerful Yarn of Mystery and Intrigue.  
No. 148.—**LEAVE IT TO PETE!**  
A Rollicking Story of Sport and Fun, introducing the Famous Comrades—Jack, Sam, and Pete. By GORDON MAXWELL.

### THE SEXTON BLAKE LIBRARY.

- No. 145.—**THE CASE OF THE REJUVENATED MILLIONAIRE!**  
Plot, Intrigue, and Thrilling Detective Work. By the Author of Zenith the Albino.  
No. 146.—**THE MONOMARK MYSTERY.**  
Gripping Detective Adventure in London and the Chinese Dens of Liverpool.  
No. 147.—**THE RUBBER SMUGGLERS.**  
A Powerful Tale of the Rubber Industry, introducing G. M. Plummer and the Fascinating Adventurers, Vah, Mata-Yah.  
No. 148.—**THE RIDDLE OF THE CROCODILE CREEK.**  
Vivid Mystery and Scarring Adventure in London and the Nigerian Protectorate.

NOW ON SALE.

Price 4d. per Volume.



whole drove of horses for getting the Rio Kid before the dynamite could be touched off. And the black-muzzled mustang, though a good steed, was scarcely worth the thousand dollars the agent had already offered as a reward for the Kid, and which he would have been glad to see any man earn. Starbuck, with a scowling brow, led the Kid's mustang from the stable, and hitched it to the rail beside the Indian's broncho. Rainy Face looked at it with a keen eye and nodded.

"The hoss is yours. Injun, and a bag of dollars, too, if you like, if you get the Kid!" said Drew, in a tense voice.

"Easy to get him," answered the Apache. "Rainy Face can creep on the panther and the prairie fox and they no hear. Rainy Face big chief. Big White chief come tell him young men to let Injun pass." "This way," said Drew.

He walked towards the mine with the Apache, Starbuck following. The night was dark—heavy banks of clouds hiding the moon. Drew stopped at the wide-flung semi-circle of men watching the tunnel for cover. He whispered, and his order was passed along the line, and all the guards learned that an Indian was to make a stealthy attempt to surprise the Kid, and that the Redskin was to be allowed to go and come. The Apache, with his bundle of war-trappings, passed the line and disappeared in the darkness of the wide, rough stretch of ground that separated them from the tunnel in the canyon-side.

Drew set his lips.

"I guess it's the last throw of the dice, Starbuck!" he muttered.

"The Injun will get him!" granted Starbuck. "They're like snakes, durn their red hides. The Injun'll get him in the dark. I guess he's sticking on his filthy war-paint now, yonder—we've got to wait." He touched the butt of his gun. "I guess he won't carry off a white man's scalp to his tepees in the desert, though—not while I've got a gun."

Jas Drew made no reply. He was listening intently, with bent head, in deep anxiety, while minute followed long minute.

**THE THIRD CHAPTER.**  
**A Friend in Need.**

"**L**ITTLE white brother!" The Rio Kid started violently.

He was not sleeping. If he had closed his eyes in the last twenty-four hours it had only been in brief cat-naps.

Sleeping or awake, the Kid was on his guard.

He was fully alive to the possibility

that some stealthy foe might creep into the shadowed tunnel in the dark; but he had no fear of being surprised. Even if a creeping foe came so silently that the Kid did not spot him, the ore wagons stacked across the tunnel would stop him, and the Kid must hear any attempt to clamber over the barricade. But he doubted whether the cunningest of the enemy could have got so far without giving him the alarm.

That soft whisper from the blackness of the tunnel startled him. For he knew the voice, softly whispering as it was—the voice of Rainy Face, the Apache he had befriended once at Los Pinos, and who had saved him from the knives of the Redskins on the day he had located his bonanza.

"Little white brother!" The whisper came again.

It was quite close to the Kid—only a truck between, turned on its side. Not the faintest sound had betrayed the approach of the Apache. The Kid caught his breath before he answered: "Rainy Face, old hoss. You?"

"The chief of the Apaches comes to his little white brother," murmured the Redskin. "Come save little chief."

"Gee-whiz!" murmured the Kid. "How the thunder did you get through that caboodle yonder, Rainy Face?"

There was a husky chuckle in the darkness.

"Injun fool um plenty," said Rainy Face. "Big white chief Drew say big reward any brave that get little chief."

"And you put in for the reward?"

"Little white chief speaks the truth."

"Oh gum!" said the Kid.

"Rainy Face speak with double tongue," said the Apache. "Rainy Face he say take back scalp of little white chief, and Big Chief give Rainy Face hoss with black nose for reward. Apache tell plenty lie."

"Oh!" said the Kid.

"No take scalp of little white brother. Big Chief Drew no savvy little chief brother of Rainy Face."

"I guess you'd be a dead Injun if he savvy that, old timer," chuckled the Kid. But he wondered as he spoke. The thief-Apache of the desert, stained with the murder of many a lonely prospector, drenched with the foul liquor of the saloons, was not the "brother" the Kid would have chosen. But his service to the Apache had won his gratitude, and he could not but wonder that the old red ruffian remembered that service so well and rated it so high. That he could trust the Apache—savage and faithless as he was



**THE MINE GOES UP!** As the disguised Kid reached his horse there was a fearful roar and a rolling echo of thunderous crashes—then the whole of the hillside seemed to rise in the air, and the night was lit with blinding flashes. "He's done it!" came the yell from the miners. "He's blown up his mine!" (See Chapter 4.)

By nature—the Kid knew, from his last experience of Rainy Face. The Apache had saved his life then, and now he was seeking to save it again.

"How did you know—" he began.  
"Much talk in white man's camp," said the Apache. "Let my little white brother listen. Many men guard with guns—no can get out. Rainy Face come and go easy. The Big White Chief has spoken to his men. Listen! Rainy Face bring Injun blanket, leggings, moccasins, feathers, war-paint—little white chief dress and paint all same Injun."

The Kid whistled softly.  
"Big white chief tell um men let Injun pass," went on the cunning old Apache. "Rainy Face creep out one way—one side of tunnel—little chief look like Injun creep out other side. Same men no see both—all think one Injun, Rainy Face. Is it good?"

"Injun, you've sure got a headpiece on you," said the Kid admiringly. "It's as easy as rolling off a log, I guess."

"Rainy Face glad. Little white brother's boss with black nose tied up outside Gold Brick—get um in dark. Ride with Rainy Face to the lodges of the red men in the desert—is it good?"

"Like thunder it is," agreed the Rio Kid. "I guess I shan't forget this, Rainy Face. Wait till I get to you."

The Kid, who seemed to be able to see like a cat in the dark, busied himself for a minute with the fuse to the dynamite, so that he could reach it from the other side of the barricade, lengthening it to the required extent. Then he crawled quietly over the barrier of ore trucks, and dropped beside the Apache in the darkness. Only a gleam of the Indian's eyes was visible to him. But after a few moments he made out the shadowy figure of the Apache in the deep gloom.

"Little white brother no lose time," muttered the Apache gutturally. "Big white chief waiting."

The Kid grinned in the darkness. "Pronto!" he said.

In a few minutes the Rio Kid was draped in the Apache blanket, the fringed leggings were drawn on, the moccasins took the place of his boots. The Stetson hat was discarded; feathers were stuck in his hair, and the Indian daubed his face with the war-paint of the Apaches. The disguise would have been good, even in the daylight; in the darkness of the night it was perfect. Under the Apache blanket the Kid hid the belt and holsters that held his six-guns.

The cunning Indian had planned well. If he crept out from the right of the tunnel mouth, and the disguised Kid from the left, they would strike different sections of the semi-circle of watchers; and the watchers had been ordered to let the Redskin pass. Not till they compared notes afterwards would the guards know that two Indians instead of one, had left the tunnel.

The Rio Kid's eyes were gleaming. He had hardly hoped to save his life from this desperate adventure, and now the way was easy. It had seemed likely enough that he must perish in the explosion when he blew up the Gambusino Mine, as he had resolved to do. Now he would be clear and safe when the mine went up. To save the mine for himself was no longer possible; to save it from falling into the hands of Jas Drew and the Arizona Consolidated required only a match to the fuse.

"Little white brother come!" whispered the Apache.

THE POPULAR.—No. 403.

"Hold on a spell," said the Kid. "I guess I ain't finished here yet, Injun. You go first; I've got a fuse to light."

The Indian understood; he had heard the talk of the camp on the topic of the Kid's threat to blow up the mine.

"How long him burn?" he asked.

"Two minutes."

"Wah! It is good. Injun wait."

The Kid drew a deep, deep breath. For a moment, perhaps, he hesitated. The fuse once lighted, nothing could save the mine; as soon as it burned down to the powder the whole canyon-side would be rent by a frightful explosion, and the untold riches of the Gambusino Mine would be scattered and destroyed for ever. But if the Rio Kid hesitated it was only for a moment. The mine was his, but it was lost to him for ever; if he fled with the Indian and left it, the grip of the Arizona Consolidated would close on it. If the Kid, as owner of the mine, had failed in his struggle with the Consolidated, he was not likely to succeed when he fought them as an outlaw, an associate of the chief Apaches of the Red Desert. His hesitation, if he hesitated, was brief. There was the glitter of a spark in the blackness.

"I guess we want to step lively now, Injun," chuckled the Kid. "In two minutes the mountain will be falling on us."

And they hurried along the tunnel, while, in the opposite direction, the spark hurried on its way.

#### THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

##### The Last of the Bonanza!

"INJUN!" One of the guards, on the extreme left of the half-circle enclosing the mouth of the tunnel, half raised his gun as a creeping figure approached, and lowered it again as he discerned the blanket and head-feathers and painted face of a Redskin. "All O.K., Injun; you can pass!"

The Rio Kid grinned under his paint.

"Did you get him, Injun?" breathed the gunman.

"Injun get him," said the Kid in a guttural voice. "Go take scalp show Big White Chief."

"By gum! I guess Jas Drew will be sure glad to see it."

And the gunman allowed the Redskin to pass.

Beyond the circle of gunmen the Rio Kid hurried on in the gloom. He was anxious to get away before the explosion roared out. He crossed the rugged street, and passed unconcernedly in the light of the naphtha lamps of the Gilt Edge saloon, and went on to the Gold Brick, where he stopped beside the horses that were hitched to the rail. The black-muzzled mustang gave a low whinny; he knew his master under the blanket and feathers and Apache paint. The Kid stroked the black muzzle fondly. Standing by the horses, which he unhitched from the rail, he stared back anxiously towards the tunnel. The fuse was timed to burn two minutes, and the time had almost elapsed. Had Rainy Face got clear? He had turned to the right on leaving the black tunnel, and there was no reason why he should not have passed the guards as easily as the Kid—more easily, as he was the Indian who had entered. The Kid heard calling voices, and as the moon showed a silver glimmer from behind the banks of clouds he sighted the

rugged street. Drew, in his eagerness, had laid a hand on the Indian's blanket.

"Did you get him, Injun?"

In the silence the words came clearly across to the Kid. There was no need for the Apache to answer. Suddenly, like the crash of the end of the world, came a frightful roar from the tunnel, with red, blinding flashes; a roar that was like the rolling of thunder in the depths of the mine, and the high, rocky side of the canyon split like a curtain—the very ground shaking under the fearful force of the explosion. Great rocks and boulders hurtled in the air, many of them falling far across the street; one great rock crashing through the roof of the Gilt Edge saloon, and sending the crowd there scurrying forth in terror. A wild, rumbling, thundering roar, and screams of terror as the guards at the mine came racing away, stumbling and falling in their panic-haste. There was a yell from Starbuck: "He's done it! He's blown up the mine!"

Jas Drew did not speak—did not move. He stood transfixed, heedless of the rocks and stones raining round him. His face was white and drawn; he gazed at the yawning gulf torn in the canyon-side with haggard eyes, seeing there the end of his scheming, the ruin of his plots, utter ruin for himself. Howls and yells of terror filled the camp; frantic men rushed past the agent, who still stood there rooted to the ground. The wind of the fearful explosion caught the Kid, distant as he was, and made the horses plunge. Rainy Face joined him in two bounds.

Without a word the Apache flung himself upon his broncho, and the Kid mounted the black-muzzled mustang. Side by side they galloped down the street, down the canyon, heading for the desert. Behind them rose a wild uproar—cries of men, squealing of horses, crash on crash of falling rocks. The madness of terror and panic reigned in Gold Brick—hardly an eye noted the two Redskins who galloped away into the night. And still Jas Drew stood motionless, his face white, his eyes haggard. This was the end of his scheming—the end of the Gambusino Mine. The Rio Kid was a bad man to crowd. Starbuck, bleeding from a crashing stone that had struck him in the face, breathed curses.

"The mine's gone up, but the Kid's gone up with it, Jas. Kid Carfax has gone up with the mine, for sure!"

It was all the solace that remained to Jas Drew. The Gambusino Mine was gone for ever, but the Kid who had defied him and defeated him lay shattered under the wreck of the rent and gashed hillside. In Gold Brick there was no one who doubted that the Kid was dead. But Jas Drew, and others who had played that lawless and desperate game for the Kid's bonanza, were destined to learn that the Rio Kid was not dead.

THE END.

ANOTHER ROARING  
YARN of the WEST,  
starring  
The **RIO KID,**  
Next Week, Boys.  
**DON'T MISS IT!**