

ONE ARM CARL

“What the hell difference did it make? To be hung for cattle rustling was probably a better ending than being known as a member of Quantrill’s Raiders!” the man talking to himself was Carlin Jarrette ex confederate soldier, formerly a member of Quantrill’s hell raising killers and later serving as company commander under General Joseph Shelby’s Calvary he was wounded disabling his left elbow. This disability forced him to accept work anywhere and it almost cost him his life. He still recalled the words of Bobby John Reynolds,” Your damn arm still works good enough to steal cows!”

Yes, the man was right and a hanging noose was what he faced, but the young lady Ranch owner and Bobby John let him go free. A man just didn’t get that many chances in this life. He was gonna have to be more careful of the people he worked for in the future or he wasn’t gonna have one. He knew better , but no one would hire him with a bum arm and he’d taken the job knowing it was a rawhide cattle thieving outfit. He was desperate and took the risk. What now? No job anywhere around Benson, Arizona territory and no money. The sheriff said, “ Get the hell outta my County or I’m locking you up the first time I smell burning cow hair!”

Carl grabbed his old Calvary horse and saddle roll making quick tracks outta town. Indian trouble was still very common and the Sheriff had let him keep his rifle and side arm. He was lucky to have a good supply of bullets for his 44 and his repeater. The Bar Circle E had always had a box of shells handy and Carl had grabbed some before leaving. He was thinking, “ At least, I can shoot something to eat. There’s plenty of wild Mustangs out there. Many times during the war , I had to settle for horse meat, when there was no game to kill. Where to now? Just head west. Maybe Tucson or Phoenix. Can’t try mining with a bum arm, maybe some kind of ranch work.”

Two weeks in Tucson and still no job. The railroad was hiring , but they wanted men for laying track and every job open in town required two good arms. Disappointed and discouraged , Carl headed west once again. No one wanted a one armed ex-soldier. He’d earned a few dollars cleaning saloons in the early morning hours to pay his

Livery bill and feed himself, but he was an outdoorsman and hated towns. The wide open blue skies and open country was calling him.

The trail west pretty much followed the railroad and Carl often saw and sometimes heard the train blowing and rattling past him at his off road campsites. One big advantage was the water stops necessary for the steam engines. These sites were excellent sources for wild game and Carl shot most of his meat supply near these water holes.

Camped at the Cactus Wells station, he was awakened at daybreak by the arrival of a train, and suddenly the beautiful morning was destroyed by the loud crack of rifle fire! Carl was no stranger to gunfire and keeping low in the brush, he scrambled to a position where he could see the train. A band of Mexican Bandits were robbing the train!

During the night, the Bandits had piled a large mound of rocks across the tracks. There was no way the train could move until this blockade was removed. The Bandits were well concealed and poured a continuous barrage of bullets toward the engine and the passenger coach. This siege would go on until the engineer and guards were killed or surrendered allowing the Bandits to come aboard and rob all the passengers. The withering fire prevented the engineer from reversing the train and a few members of the Band had already started rock piling the tracks behind. Carl had heard stories in Tucson of this type of robbery and the frequent abuse women passengers suffered at the hands of the criminals. He desperately hoped that there were no women aboard. There were at least twenty Bandits in this group and there was nothing he could do to prevent what was about to take place. He checked the loads in his rifle and waited. The shooting continued with the Bandits yelling for the guards to surrender or die!

Suddenly a white flag was waved from the window of the Passenger car and a demand from the Bandits to throw out guns followed. Carl, once again prayed that there were no women aboard as rifles and side arms were thrown out. It appeared that the guards

were afraid to do their job and preferred to sacrifice the passengers for their own cowardly safety. Carl was angered by this action and recalled Shelby's command to shoot deserters that turned cowards for their own safety putting their comrades in jeopardy. A Bandit leader appeared demanding all passengers to get off the train. His small army of rifles remained in protective hiding ,waiting for his orders. Carl was thinking, " This is a well organized and disciplined group of Bandits. Someone plenty savvy is leading this hold up. He's taking no chances on a surprise from the guards on the train. I'll bet anything he has a plant in the passenger car to assure him that everything is Ok aboard before he brings his men out. That plant will have a concealed gun to provide backup." It appeared that this robbery would go off without a hitch and Carl settled low in the brush to wait it through. Frustrated and angry he was , but as one man alone, it would be suicide to try stopping the Bandits.

Passengers were pouring from the coach on the side opposite Carl and he could only get an occasional glimpse of each one. Unfortunately there were a number of women on the train and he felt terrible that he could do nothing for them. Rape ,abuse and abduction was the normal for a Mexican Bandit robbery. Frequently the younger women were sold in Mexico. Carl could only wish there was something he could do, but like a losing battle during the war , he tried to aid his men one at a time if he had the opportunity. This was worse than defeat, but he continued watching, hoping that something would happen to spare these women.

Suddenly , two small girls jumped from a coach window on his side of the train. They quickly scampered like Antelope for the surrounding brush. An older black lady then attempted to follow them and finally managed to squeeze through the window dropping to the ground. Carl could see the white age in the woman's hair. Unlike the small girls, she could hardly run and halfway to the brush, a man appeared at the window pointing a gun at her. Carl quickly aimed his

rifle and fired at the man as he blasted away at the black woman. Carl was limited in his ability to use his left arm, but he was deadly accurate with a rifle and the train shooter disappeared from the window. One shot was enough, and Carl ran from his cover and went to the black lady. She had been hit in the back twice and Carl picked her up taking her into the brush as quickly as possible. Looking back at the train, there was no pursuit. The Bandits were all gathering around the passengers .

Laying the old lady down , Carl once again, felt the helpless despair he knew so well. She was dying! The two young girls had seen him and came running to kneel beside the old lady crying, “Miss Jenny! Miss Jenny! Please Miss Jenny don’t die!” Carl saw the tell tale blood on her lips and knew her lungs had been hit. She had little time left. Jenny reached up her hand to Carl and mouthed the words, “ Bless You.” Gaining a little strength in her voice she said, “Please care for my girls.” Carl watched with tears in his own eyes as the life faded from Jenny’s face and the wide open staring eyes went blank. He tried to comfort the two girls, but they were wailing and crying. He knew they had to move and quick away from the train. If the Bandit’s heard them , he wasn’t sure he could save them. Telling them “ Quiet! We have to get Miss Jenny away from here.” Picking up the lifeless body , he quickly made tracks back to his campsite. The two young girls followed.

At his campsite , he gently lay Jenny down and then explained to the frightened little girls that she had died. He said, “ Miss Jenny is on her way to Heaven girls. She wants you to be brave and she asked me to take care of you. Was she your family?” The two girls were crying so hard it was difficult to understand them. Finally, the older girl said, “We love Miss Jenny. She’s all we have. Mommy died a long time ago. What will we do mister? What will we do?” She broke up crying again. Carl said, “ Don’t cry , Please. You’ll have to be Miss Jenny for your sister. You’re the oldest and your little sister will need you to help her.

My name is Carl. What's yours?" The little girl stopped crying and said, " Mister Carl, I'm Anna . Anna Hedalgo and she's my sister Maria. Miss Jenny has been at our house for as long as I can remember. She always takes care of us." Carl was thinking , " Jenny was their Nanny and they loved her like a Mother. Where was their home ? Why did Jenny try to escape the train risking her life? " Carl had a lot of questions, but they'd have to wait until the girls had time to get over the shock of Jenny dying.

That evening , Carl had a real problem. Two scared little girls ; the dead body of Jenny and no place for the girls to sleep. Taking one thing at a time , he took his canvas ground sheet that normally went under his blanket roll and wrapped Jenny in it. Near the railroad tracks there was an excavation and a pile of road bed gravel. Knowing that it was not the best, he had to hand dig a burial place for Jenny's body in the loose gravel. Gently placing her in the shallow grave , he said a prayerful farewell for her that at the least made Anna and Maria feel Miss Jenny had a decent burial. Following the brief and tearful burying, he asked the girls to help him gather stones to circle her grave. Carl placed them to try and keep animals away.

Next came gathering dry grass to make a bed for the night. The girls became interested and helped him. This and asking them to help him fix a place to sleep kept them busy till dark and Carl was afraid to make a campfire and possibly draw the attention of the Bandits. The girls had not eaten since breakfast and they tore into his antelope jerky. The bed was a problem, but Carl used his saddle blanket and bedroll saying, "Girls, you sleep on this side and I'll sleep on the other. I'm sorry but it's the best I can do. We may be in for a cold night. The girls were both already half asleep and said , " Good night Mister Carl and Thank you." Carl fell asleep wondering what the next day would bring and if more killing would be necessary to protect these two little angels. He woke up in the wee dark hours after midnight and both girls

were snuggled up close to his back. He pulled all of the blankets up and over the girls.

Morning brought it's problems with Anna taking Maria into the brush for they were a long way from any kind of an outhouse. Anna said, " Mister Carl, we live on a big ranch and when we're away from the house , Miss Jenny says, we have to learn to take care of our self even out in the brush." This brought on another bit of crying from both girls. Carl quickly said, " Anna , Miss Jenny is looking down on you from heaven. You have to be brave and strong. Little Maria needs your help. How about some more of that Antelope jerky?"

Soon, the two girls were tearing into his food supply and he knew another day would clean him out. Hopefully the Bandits would soon clear out and he could return the girls to the train. Unfortunately, the Bandits were in no hurry, and were enjoying their capture of the train.

Later, that morning, he returned to his lookout site and observed that the rock pile was still in place and all of the Bandits now occupied the train. Returning to his campsite, he said to Anna, " We can't stay here. You and Maria are gonna have to ride my horse so we can get away from these killers. I'll have to walk ." Carl was thankful that both girls were accustomed to riding . He quickly packed his saddle roll and bags, crossed the railroad tracks and began to head north. A small spring fed creek grew heavy brush along its bank for a good quarter mile west and this looked like the better path to take as it would screen them from any anyone near the train. It was slow going and Carl was thankful for those Calvary boots he wore. He'd taken them off of a dead Yankee and the flat soles made for easy walking.

Suddenly, Anna leaned forward pointing and anxiously whispered, " Mister Carl, Mister Carl! There's horses over there!" Carl stopped and looked, but the brush was too thick . He said, " Anna , I

can't see from here, but I'm gonna take a look. Keep quiet and hold ol'Georgia Boy here . I'll be right back."

Quietly as possible , he moved through the thick brush to the creek bank and peering through at ground level , he saw a group of horses tethered in the trees on the south bank of the creek . It was the train Bandit's riding horses. They were still saddled and even the pack horses had been neglected. It appeared that the Bandit's were so occupied and jubilant over the success of their robbery, they had ignored their horses. Nowhere was there any sign of a wrangler or horse boy. Carl watched for long minutes as no one came to the aid of those horses that had stepped over their lead ropes and needed correction of entanglements. Carl was thinking, "Here was a grave mistake that Shelby would never have made."

Quickly crossing the creek, he cut the lead rope to a good looking gray horse . Then as there was no reason to stop, he released all of the horses. Stepping into the saddle on his gray horse, he herded the others across the creek and waving for Anna to follow, he headed west. There would be a surprised and angry bunch of Mexican Bandits when they found out the only way outta Cactus Wells was on the train they had robbed and this could bring about terrible retribution when they arrived in the next town. The cavy of twenty some horses moved along without any trouble, and Carl caught up the two pack horses leading one and handing Anna the other. He was thinking, " There outta be some food in those Panniers the pack horses carried."

He was right. There were also blankets, cooking gear, a pair of union Binoculars and boxes of rifle shells. The good looking gray horse he had taken was a poor choice and he switched to a mustang that looked sound and carried half a dozen Mexican brands. The cavy of horses drifted south and Carl let them go continuing west following the railroad. He now had plenty of food and bedding for the two girls.

He pushed along trying to get plenty of distance between himself and the Bandits at Cactus Wells.

That evening ,he put together a good meal for the girls and asked Anna about her home and why they were on the train. Anna said, “ Mister Carl, Daddy had to go to Santa Fe for something and took us with him. He didn’t come back with us on the train. He had to take a wagon train to our ranch. He said , “ It would be much easier for Miss Jenny on the train.” Anna broke up crying again and Carl said, “ Anna , Miss Jenny wants you to be brave. I know you miss her , but I told her I’d take care of you for her. Try to be a brave girl and help me . You have to tell me what happened on the train . Why did that man shoot Miss Jenny?”Anna quit crying and replied, “ I don’t know, he locked us in the bathroom. Miss Jenny said, “ We’ve got to get away. He wants you and Maria for money.” I heard him mention Daddy’s name . Don Hedalgo.” Carl said, “ OK Anna , I’m beginning to get it now. It looks like they were robbing this train to get you two girls. Your Dad must be a pretty important and rich man. I thought from the beginning that someone pretty smart put this robbery together. His one mistake was overlooking the actions of the Bandits once they were successful in robbing the train. They got the little stuff, but let the real prize get away.”

Carl set up camp for the girls and now that he had plenty of food, and bedrolls, things were much easier for him. He had built a small campfire that he put out at dusk so it wouldn’t be seen after dark and bring unwelcome visitors. Indians were still a problem, but only small bands of Renegades still resisted going to the Reservations. He tethered his Mustang close to his bedroll and hoped that it would alert him if anyone approached.

In the early hour just before dawn, a pull on the tether rope woke him and Carl carefully tried to see the mustangs head in the starlight. Yes! He could see the ears pointed and the horse looking at their back

trail. Something was out there! Strain as he could to see, there was not enough light. Carl figured that it had to be an animal of some type. No man or Indian could see any better than he could. Carl was wrong!

The Mexican Bandits had discovered the loss of their horses and one of them, a half breed Apache had ran the herd down on foot. Catching one of the saddle horses , he managed to herd the whole cavy back to the stalled train. He was selected to follow the girls and bring them back, killing whoever was with them. He selected an older mare from the cavy and set off after the unsuspecting Carl. Indians had great experience with horses and he knew that even in the dark a mare would follow the trail of another horse if left to go their own way. The one thing in Carl's favor was the Indian had no knowledge of how close to their camp he was. Unfortunately , One of Carl's pack horses whinnied alerting the Indian and he immediately stopped and retreated to wait for daylight.

Carl was scared! There had to be another horse out there! Quickly , he woke the two girls and in the dark began to pack up. There was a small knoll west of his camp site and as quietly as possible , he led the girls and pack horses up and over the top. Handing Anna the lead ropes he stepped down and spread eagled near the crest of the hill Using the binoculars was the wrong thing to do after sunrise, but in the morning twilight, he could easily scan his back trail without fear of reflection showing his location.

Luck was with Carl; he spotted the Indian's mare as she pulled leaves from a sage bush that hid her location. Carl saw nothing of the rider, but could almost feel the danger getting closer. That ol'lonesome feeling of resignation came over him as it had so many times during the war when he was faced with killing. His every sense came fully alert. When the hair rose on the back of his neck, he knew death was close by. Intently scanning the ground in front of him , he missed the Indians movement to get behind him. Mentally kicking

himself for forgetting, he quickly turned his head to check his mustang, he found that former wild member of a horse herd looking directly at the Indian . Carl immediately rolled sideways and narrowly escaped the bullet that was meant to kill him. Bad arm and all, Carl was deadly with a rifle. The Indian only got off one shot. Carl fired twice just to be sure the threat was erased. He had only needed one bullet. The Indian would never be a part of another raid and pillage of a train.

The two girls were scared and Maria was crying in fear. Carl went to them as he watched the dead Indian. He said as he hugged the two little girls. “ It’s Ok . Anna you are a very brave girl and Maria we won’t let anything happen to you. Please quit crying and we’ll go back to our campsite and get something to eat.” That seemed to be the magic word and Anna helped him get coffee going and bacon frying . Carl was still not convinced of their safety and hurried the girls along. They were both big eyed as he rode past the body of the Indian. Carl figured, “ May as well let the girls get used to seeing dead men and leaving them where they lay. I can’t take time to try and bury him. It’s a hard ol’world and I’m afraid they may see more killing before this trip is over. I saw the Battlefields full of dead boys at the battle of Brandy station and they were left for the buzzards. I hope these two little angels never have to live through what I did.” Carl now had one more pack horse and his ol’Georgia Boy would get a little relief from the heavy saddlebags.

Carl pushed the horses. He had no idea if there were more Bandits following him . Since he had the prize they were after, he figured they would try to track him down. He was going to have to sleep during the day while riding. He couldn’t afford to let his guard down at night. Anna would be a big help. He could tell her where to head for and alert him of anything. While in the Army, he had learned to catch every wink of sleep possible. He had ridden many miles dozing in the saddle. All that food in the panniers was a great help. He

wouldn't have to fire a rifle for killing game and alert followers of his location.

Later that evening, he was thinking, " They'll be sending a train car out to check on the missing train. Maybe I should take the girls to the nearest water station and put them on a return car to their hometown." That seemed like a good idea, but Carl got to thinking about the hold up. Someone smart and close to the Railroad had put this plan together. He could just as easily send out one of his top men to investigate and arrange for another abduction of the girls. " No." He decided, " They're safer with me. There's a hundred miles of open country to hide in. If I can find an old wild horse trail, maybe I can lose any trackers following us."

Carl was luckier than he could hope for. The following morning , he saw a dust cloud in the north west. It was probably a small group of wild mustangs and they were traveling south. This was perfect for his plans. The trail would cut across his pathway going west. Slowly he veered north west to meet the Mustangs. When he finally made it to the trail, the mustangs were out of sight going south. Boldly he rode his horse and led the girls and pack horses to the center of the trail and rode for a mile , at times trotting the horses to make deep tracks.

Approaching a rocky ridge, he stopped the girls and had them dismount. He removed the shoes from all of the horses and placed them in one of the panniers. Remounting ,he headed south following the horse trail , trying to ride clear of the center; thereby leaving shod prints headed north west. Carl knew that mustang trails would always follow soft going for the horses feet. Wild mustangs were smarter than folks gave them credit for. If he stayed to soft ground, his horses would be fine without shoes. He hoped that his ruse would send the trackers in the wrong direction. He had no idea that his trick might work too well. Wild horses moved in a large forty mile area which

would bring the Raiders around in front of him, if they followed the trail.

The unshod horse tracks blended well with those of the mustangs and Carl moved south at a much faster pace than before. If the Raiders took his ruse, he felt there would be no close pursuit for two or three days. He struck south to find the railroad and follow it if possible. Once again, he knew that water stops would be his best chance of finding daily water and good grazing for the horses. If a train came from either direction, he would hide with the girls until it passed. This appeared to be a safe plan and would take him west to The Peralta Ranch in the least amount of time. Unfortunately there were other events taking place that should have had no bearing on his rescue mission, but they did . The wild mustang herd that he followed was also headed for the railroad and the waterhole of a train stop.

The wild herd arrived hours before Carl and upon their arrival, the herd stallion bugled his challenge at a small group of horses already at the waterhole. The stallion watering, stomped out in front of his small harem viciously striking the ground with his front feet in challenging anger. Quickly a fight began between the two and the stallion from the waterhole was much the stronger. The incoming stallion had traveled all day without water and was no match for the rested and fresh fighter. After taking a vicious kicking, he quickly conceded the fight high tailing it to the nearest Bluff for safety and watched as the other stallion now visited all of the new mares asserting his authority as their new Master. An hour later, an older lead mare headed west and quickly the others followed.

The losing Stallion, now a single Rogue, then came in to water and rest in the shade of the low growing trees around the waterhole. This was the situation when Carl rode in a few hours later. The Rogue, quickly ran south afraid of the new group coming in. Most mustangs had been chased by mounted riders and disappeared hiding from them.

Carl took note of all the tracks surrounding the area, but thought nothing of it as he knew that every animal around watered there.

Setting up camp was easier with fresh water handy. He placed rope hobbles on all five of his horses and let them brose around the waterhole. Once again he and Anna made a good supper from the last of the food in the Bandit's panniers. A long day past and Carl fell into a deep sleep. It was so good to get a little respite from fear of being followed. There had been no sign of a dust cloud following them. Things were looking much better for getting the two little girls to their home Ranch. Wrong!

The rogue stallion came in around midnight to join Carl's horses and since the indian's horse was a mare, he drove her and the geldings west on the same trail taken earlier by the other stallion. Fortunately, Carl had hobbled all of his horses so the going was slow for the stallion, but by daylight they were two miles west of his camp.

"Now What?" exclaimed a very angry Carl . It was easy to see the tracks of another horse coming in and finally after much moving around, herded his horses west along the rail road tracks. At first he assumed it was a rider, maybe another Indian stealing his horses. He felt like turning the air blue with cussin, but held up remembering the two little girls. He said , " Anna honey,I'm sorry. All of our horses are gone. They've been stolen! I should have kept better watch, but I was dead tired. I've gotta trail after them and hope we get lucky. I can't leave you here alone . We'll stash my gear outta sight and just take some water and what jerky I've got left,but we've gotta hurry". Anna took Maria's hand and hurried her along. The three were following horse tracks ten minutes later.

Carl was curious about the scattering of tracks and finally realized that his horses were still hobbled . He was thinking, " No one would try to steal horses and leave them hobbled." After trailing for almost an hour, he had determined that it was a wild horse, most likely

a rogue stallion, driving his horses. The two little girls were tired. He was carrying Maria, when in the distance he could see a dust cloud. The horses were kicking up a lotta dust. Carl figured the stallion was having difficulty with the geldings He left Maria in the shade of a large rock formation with Anna and hurriedly went after his horses. He hated to leave the two girls, but there was no other choice. They had to have horses. Those two little ones could go no farther.

Carl was a hundred yards out when he was able to see what was causing the ruckus. The mare and his horse ol'Georgia Boy were tangled up . The mare had stepped over the other horses hobbles and neither one could move. A frustrated and angry stallion was biting and kicking both as they stumbled around. Carl wasted no time , he shot and killed the Rogue . His horses stood as he walked to them. Seeing that the stallion was a young horse, and thinking about his lack of food , he cut the horses throat. Smoked horse meat was not beef, but still pretty good eating when there's nothing else.

Releasing the hobbles , he mounted Georgia Boy and returned to where he'd left the girls. They were gone ! “ Oh God ! Now What?”He exclaimed! Suddenly two little dirty faces appeared from back of a rock. Carl almost fainted in relief and grabbed the two in a bear hug. He was beginning to realize his love and concern for these two little angels. Sitting down on a rock, Anna said, “ Mister Carl, we heard some body shooting . I was scared and we scrambled back in the rocks to hide. We were afraid that the Bandits had shot you.” Carl said , “ No Darling, I had to shoot a wild horse. There was no other way to rescue our horses. Look, I'm gonna put you two on a horse and take you back to that wild horse. We need the horse hide.” The little girls were happy to help, but Carl had them stay back. He didn't want them to know he was going to take some of the meat for smoking.

As he put the two on a horse, he noticed black charcoal soot on both girls and asked, “ Anna, where did you get all the black from?”

She answered, “ From the rocks around the big hole Mister Carl. We hid in the rocks when you were shooting and they were covered with black. I’m sorry Mister Carl, but we didn’t know they were so dirty.” Carl asked, “ Was the big hole in the rocks maybe an old mine shaft?” Anna replied, “ I don’t know . it was a big dark hole and we didn’t go in. it was too scary.” Carl said , “We’ll check it out later, I’m gonna get that horse hide and get back to our camp. We need our saddles and camp gear. As soon as we can, we need to head west. Those Bandits are probably still held up at the train. We should be safe to follow the railroad .” Wrong!

Carl was leading when they approached camp. He heard noise and exclaimed “Oh God!” there was a train headed east filling the steam engine water tank. There was no way he could risk going in and putting the girls in danger again. He was thinking, “ I can’t take a chance. Someone pretty smart is behind this whole thing and taking the girls back to the hold up train is dead wrong. Wish I could see what’s going on, but my glass is in my saddle bag We’ll just hold up here until the train leaves and get our gear.” To be safe Carl led the girls back to a cut bank where they could get a little shade and sat down. He explained to Anna why they were hiding and hoping the train would leave in a short time. His canteen was almost empty and other than raw horsemeat, they had nothing to eat. Suddenly a barrage of gunfire came from the Train.

Quickly going to a brush covered knoll where he could see, he witnessed a number of Mexican Bandits trying to hold up this train. They were riding around shooting at the engineer, trying to kill him and stop the train from leaving. Fortunately, return fire held the Bandits off and the engineer was able to move on down the track. Unfortunately, this unsuccessful group of bandits set up camp by this water station. Carl was cursing his luck, “ What now? Damn it I can’t fight off this bunch. I can’t even get to water. I’ve gotta do something, the nearest

water station is a good days travel away and we'll never make it in this desert heat without water.

Going back to the girls he said, "Anna we've got a serious problem. The bandits have our camp and we can't get our saddles and bedrolls. The really bad thing is , we can't get to water. It would take a coyote to get through that low brush to get to that pond by the railroad tank. I think after dark, though, I've gotta try it. We've got to have water even if I get shot trying." Carl was looking at his bad elbow knowing he couldn't crawl through the brush. He'd have to walk and take a chance on being seen. Anna came to him and said, " Mister Carl , I can crawl through the brush easy. No one will see me; I'm small like a coyote. I'll do it!" Carl said "No! too dangerous. I'll take the canteen down and fill it as soon as dark gets here. We'll leave the horses here and get in a little closer, there's brushy spot over on the back side of the pond I can walk through but we've gotta be quiet." Dark seemed like it was never gonna get there and when it did Carl was even more dismayed. The moon was already up and at half moon, it made the campsite look like daylight.

He was saying in a whisper to Anna, " The bandits have built a big fire which will help because it'll blind them some when they look away. Might be some shooting; you girls stay down . I might as well get on with it anyway, we can't go anywhere without water. Give Maria what's left in the canteen." Three or four minutes later Carl asked " Anna , Anna ,what's the hold up. Bring me the canteen". Maria came to Carl and shocked him whispering, "Anna went to get water, and I'm scared Mister Carl! "Oh God Maria," he almost exclaimed and whispering harshly said, " Damn it she might get killed! Come on Maria , but don't make a sound. I've gotta get close enough to shoot if they see her!"

Maria had no trouble at all, but Carl was having a fit trying to stay down and keep below the brush . There was no sign of Anna and

Carl was getting more scared by the minute for her safety. Search as he could for her through out the brush around the pond, there was no movement at all. He was thinking up all kinds of things that might happen to her and getting more anxious by the minute. It seemed like an hour had gone by with Maria getting more frightened and Carl was trying to hold and comfort her as he anxiously searched the hillside for movement of Anna. Suddenly, he thought, "Anna will go back to where we were! She may be looking for us by now." Slowly he went back through the brush and "Thank God! There she was looking for them!" Maria grabbed her in a hug. Anna held up her full canteen saying, "Mister Carl, you would get killed and we have no one then what happens to me and Maria. I can crawl like a coyote. It was easy."

Carl said, "Anna, I know you did a very brave thing. It might have been easy for you but very scary for us. I wish you wouldn't pull things like that. My nerves won't take it. I really need a drink and yes I'll have some of your water, but I was talking about a real bracer like a shot of red eye." Maria said, "Mister Carl, I don't know what red eye is but I was scared too. Can I have some?" Carl laughed low saying, "No little darling, that's for big people."

Anna said, "Mister Carl, I went to where you hid our stuff and brought your saddlebags too. I couldn't carry anything else. Do you want me to go back? I can get our bed rolls. Carl said, "No, one heart attack is enough for tonight. We'll ride back to that rock pile and big hole. We don't have blankets, but the rocks will be warm. Maybe these bandits will pull out tomorrow. We have enough water to make it to the next water station now, but these horses need water too. If I have to, I'll turn'em loose before I'll let'em die of thirst. They'll head straight for that pond and I know the Bandits will grab'em. We'll be without horses, but I won't see'em die."

The rock formation was only two miles away, but in the moonlight and considering the condition of the horses, he made a slow

trip, finally carrying Maria the last mile. He was thinking, “ I guess this is what I was meant for; saving these two little girls. . I just hope I can protect them until I can get them to their Father. I’ve never had strong feelings for anyone and my life till now, has been a waste; but seeing them safely home is worth dying for. I know what real love is now and if more killing is necessary, I’ll do it.” Anna spoke up saying, “Mister Carl were you talking to me?” he aid , ‘No darling, I reckon I was thinking out loud.We’re almost to the rocks. That big hole will have to wait until daylight for me to check out. There could be animals living in there.” Anna replied, “ It’s scary.”

Their night was long, sleeping next to the large boulders, but warm. The two girls piled up close to Carl and slept. At daybreak , he went to the big hole with the girls. It was a tunnel into the hillside. There were charred remains of timbers all around the entrance. This was where the two girls got so dirty. Entering the tunnel , Carl couldn’t believe his good luck. The floor of the tunnel was wet! Every depression was standing full of water. Carefully , he examined as much of the tunnel as he could see. There was evidence of small animals everywhere, but thankfully, no dead bodies.

The water was safe! He could bring the horses here to drink. Much relieved, he brought all five horses in one at a time. Anna was helping him as Maria watched and start picking up the small sticks and brush around the tunnel. Carl had told her they needed fire wood so he could get something together for eating. That chunk of horsemeat, he brought with him; would have to do. Maria was proud of her pile of sticks and Cal used them to get a fire going. The girls weren’t too taken with the half raw blackened strips of meat, but ate what there was. Carl hoped that the Bandits would leave so he could get to his saddle and Panniers. In the meantime he would smoke horsemeat, but had to watch his fire for too much smoke. He’d eaten plenty of it during the War.

He had the girls move away from the tunnel so that local animals could get to the water. They enjoyed watching the small cave Tern birds swooping in and out. There were many Jack Rabbits and Dove but shooting would bring trouble. Carl wasn't too good at trapping, but rigged up some string loops on the ground for the Dove. Unfortunately they didn't do much good . Maria was upset to see the trapped dove and Carl had no choice but to eat horse meat. There was no chance she would be okay with killing them for food.

He explored the cave tunnel. It was obvious that it was man made. He figure it was some mining group from years back that had dug it out, maybe looking for gold. A short ways inside the tunnel was blocked with huge rocks. Possibly a cave in. Carl gave up exploring it. He knew very little about mining. There was nothing there and he had no further interest. The water came from a seep under the rock pile. He was just grateful that it had been a life saver for himself and the girls.

Two days he waited and watched for the Bandits to leave the water station. The girls were having a difficult time with sleeping on the ground without blankets . They had gathered grass and small brush to make a bed, but Carl knew it was dirty and miserable for the little ones. He had suffered worse conditions during the War, but he was at the point of risking his life to get their bedrolls when the Bandits thankfully left the Station.

He was lucky. The bandits had not discovered his cache and he made a quick packing up and leaving. The girls had been wearing the same clothes since escaping the train, but there was no help for it. They were a couple of dirty little urchins, but angels for Carl. Dirty ,but happy they headed west and north of the train tracks. He knew they were maybe a day from the next water station and hoped there might be desert antelope or black tailed deer in the area. Some of the low hills showed low brushy growth. It was while stopped on one of these

and trying to spot game that his Mustang swung his head around with pointed ears looking south. “ Riders! More Bandits?” Carl practically cursing asked Anna to hold the horses and keep them quiet while he got out his glass to get a close look at the riders. “ Damn” he said, “ They’re Mexicans! More Bandits probably. Girls we’ll have to set here for a while. Can’t afford to be seen. There’s four riders and they’re armed to the teeth. We’ll have to wait till dark to leave here. Just my luck the ground slopes up going North. They’d spot us the minute we rode out, no matter which direction we took. We’ll sit here for another day and hope they move on. I can’t take a chance of crossing that valley at night, it would leave a perfect trail for one of those half Apache’s to catch us.”

Anna said, “ Mister Carl I’m scared. What do we do if you get shot like Miss Jenny?” Carl replied, “ Anna you’ll have to be a big girl and take Maria towards those mountains you see in the South. You’re big enough to shoot my rifle. Have you ever fired a gun?” At her “No” response, Carl said, “ Honey, I’ll show you how it works, but we can’t do any shooting . It’ll bring the Bandits . We’re just gonna have to wait, but here I’ll take the shells out and you can pretend you’re shooting it.

Maia was digging and Carl asked where she got the spade like thing she was digging with. Replying that she found it in the dirty black cave. Taking a closer look it was a short wooden stick like handle with a sharp steel pointed spike like thing attached to one end. Giving it no further thought to Maria’s digging, he worked with Anna to school her on how to shoot a rifle. Anna was quick to learn and anxious to shoot the rifle, but dry fire is all that Carl would permit.

It was later that night when a startling thought made him get up quickly and find that digging tool of Maria's . In the star light it was difficult to see much, but he made himself a promise to examine it closely at daylight.

Daylight revealed the digging tool to be about one foot long and notched in the wooden end. Carl had never seen one of these, but recalled that General Shelby had instructed his snipers to use Crossbows instead of rifles to avoid detection. Maria's digging tool was a badly decomposing Crossbow projectile. Carl became excited to realize what finding this in that tunnel like cave could mean. Many times during his Army career he'd heard tales of the Spanish Conquistadors and the fabled gold mines they supposedly discovered and worked in the Arizona Territory . The Spanish were considered masters of the Crossbow. The sharp hardened iron point had been attached by a craftsman and the burned and blocked condition of the cave could mean Indian slaves had revolted killing and burying the Spanish soldiers in the mine tunnel. Carl was fascinated with the possibility that he'd found a Spaniard Gold mine. Unfortunately, there was no time to examine it further, he was faced with protecting his two little girls. Gold mining would have to wait for another day. He loaded both rifles and pistols. Taking up his glass once again , he studied the Mexican camp site.

Suerprised, he saw that one of the four Mexican's was a woman .Startled by his discovery. He exclaimed , " Damn one of them is a woman. What's she doing here with the Bandits?" His exclamation brought Anna running to his side. He said " Anna one of the Bandit's is a woman. I thought at first she was a captive, but she's got a gunbelt and pistol. I hope we don't have to fight them. I'm not sure that I could shoot a woman." Anna replied, "Mister Carl, I don't wanna see you killed. I'll shoot her." Carl hugged her saying, "Honey I hope you never have to shoot anyone. You're too young to realize it, but killing is a terrible thing that lives with you forever. We'll hope and pray that you

don't ever face that possibility. We'll hang out here for a day and stay hidden until they move on." Anna said, " Mister Carl, can I use your glass to look. I've never seen one before?"

Anna took the glass and adjusted it as Carl showed her. Anna suddenly yelped and spun to Carl saying , "Mister Carl, Mister Carl! That's aunt Ava ! Our aunt Ava !, Daddys sister. is she in trouble?" Taking the glass from Anna, Carl said, " No honey I don't think so, if those are her men, I'd guess they're out here near the train tracks searching for you two girls. I can't be sure of that and I don't know how safe it would be going down there. First of all I don't know your aunt Ava and if she might be connected with the Bandits . Secondly, if they're out looking for you and see me as your abductor, they'll shoot me on sight. I don't like either option. Honey I'm in a tough situation and don't know what to do."

Anna exclaimed, " No Mister Carl . She loves Maria and me. She would never do anything to hurt us. I'll go down there and tell her all about you and how you saved us from the Bandits. She can take us to Daddy." Carl replied, " I can't let you do that Anna until I'm sure about your aunt Ava. Money does awful things to folks. Give me a little while, I'll think of something."

Suddenly Carl's problem took another turn. A cloud of dust was showing in the west and approaching following the rail road track. Carl studied the group with his glass and found there were eight riders and exclaimed, " The Bandits ! Anna that group coming are the train Bandits! Looks like about eight riders." He was thinking," They followed the wild horse trail and it brought them right back to a rail road water hole. Well, my question concerning Ava will be answered shortly." He said , " Come on Anna and get Maria on a horse. We're going down there. There's a good wind blowing and it's getting pretty dusty. The two groups will be too busy watching each other to notice us. We'll get into that big washout just below us and take it outta

here. It'll put us close to both groups, but we can follow it west down at the bottom. There's a good chance they'll never know we were anywhere near here." Anna objected saying "What about aunt Ava Mister Carl. The Bandits will take her. Can't we do something to help her." Carl exclaimed, " Damn! Hadn't thought of that. If she's not part of that bunch, you're right. They'll capture or kill her. You girls lay down on your horses manes. I'll do the same . we could be taken for wild horses at this distance Let's get on down there. We can't do a thing from here and it's a good chance for us to get away. Let's go."

Carl walked the horses and prayed they could get to the wash without being seen. His Army training came in handy here moving slowly and spread out wouldn't attract attention. He still thought a little praying wouldn't hurt. He breathed a sigh of great relief as they reached the wash without being detected. Ten long minutes or more went by as he carefully walked through the rocky wash. He mentally kicked himself for not taking time to shoe the horses. They could easily come lame if he moved them too fast in the rough and splintered rocks. It seemed like forever that it was taking to go any distance. Suddenly gun fire erupted in the small valley!

Quickly dismounting, he signaled for Anna to hold the horses as he scrambled to the lip of the wash to see what was going on. He needed no glass to see that the Bandits had attacked Ava and her men. One man was down and the others were clustered in a small depression next to their camp site trying to hold off the Bandits. Carl could easily see that they didn't have a chance if the Bandits split up and sent half up the valley slope. They could easily shoot down into Ava's group and kill them all. From his location, he would be witness to another terrible mass killing by the same Bandits that had robbed the train. There was no question. Ava was not a part of the Bandit group and desperately needed help. Looking at the setup, he was thinking, " I can do something this time there's only eight of them and if they split up I can take out a few.

Carl became worried when five of them dropped back and began to climb up the valley wall on his side . He called to Anna, “ Quick Honey, bring me up that other rifle.” When she climbed to where he was, he said, “ Anna I have to try and help your aunt Ava. That’s a sixteen shot Henry and I need you to fire all sixteen rounds when I begin shooting. The Bandit’s may think we’re part of aunt Ava’s group and high tail it outta here. I don’t want you to try and shoot these men, just shoot in their direction. Our two guns should do the trick. I’m not worried about shooting these murderers. They bought their ticket to hell when they killed Miss Jenny.”

Carl waited until the five Bandits were in a clear area and his first two shots took out one and wounded another. Shooting down hill is always difficult and with his stiff arm he knew his shooting wasn’t the best, but the remaining three began to run back to their comrades. Carl looked to see how Anna was doing and she had been knocked down by the kick of the Henry, but that brave little girl had recovered and was shooting Bandits. Two of the three made it back and one of those was the one Carl had wounded. Carl was proud of his little angel Anna. All sixteen rounds had been fired and over half directly at the fleeing Bandits, he began shooting at the Bandit leaders position with his other two men. His shooting was too close for comfort and they scrambled for their horses. Carl let them go. He then hugged a crying Anna saying, “Don’t cry Honey, you did a great job.”

When Anna was able to quit crying she said, “ I’m sorry Mister Carl, but I forgot what you said about the rifle. I forgot to hold it tight. I’m sorry.” Carl hugged her saying, “ Little Angel, you did a grown woman’s job and we saved your Aunt Ava. Get back on your horse and we’ll see if we can get outta this wash and go meet your aunt.” The next hour was a blur of happiness for the two girls and they couldn’t stop talking about Mister Carl and what a great man he was.

Carl's meeting with Ava was humiliating for him. She was so beautiful and he was so dirty and unshaven. He could hardly believe that this lady would hug him as she did for rescuing them and then relating the hair raising story that he and Anna told of their escape from the train robbery. Ava insisted on seeing to his comfort and planned a hearty meal. Carl was really surprised when she sat by him all evening asking about his life and how he came to be at the Cactus Wells Train stop when the Bandits robbed the train. Carl replied, " I've never been a hero and I was sickened at what happened when I could do nothing to help the women on that train. I have to think it was God's work that put me there to save these two little angels." Ava hugged him once again saying, "God must have sent you to rescue me also. Carl you don't give yourself enough credit. How many times did you risk your life for us with never a thought for reward. You're a wonderful man and a true hero. I can never thank you enough for what you've done."

Carl replied, " Ava , I can't pretend what I'm not. I just happened to be in the right place at the time and did what little I could to try and make things right. There was a young lady ranch owner that saved a cattle thief from hanging and here I am. I'm really no hero, but I couldn't turn my back on these two little angels. Yeah , I guess I'd risk my hide for them. I've never had a family and I guess the good Lord sorta put one in my way. I promise you Miss Ava that there'll be a pile of dead Bandits out there before any harm comes to them." Ava , once again gave Carl a big hug and kissed his cheek saying , " Carl you just don't realize it; you're the Angel God sent to protect us, but right now I want you to be human and let me fix you a good meal." Carl thanked her insisting it wasn't necessary, but Ava waved off his objection and asked him to help getting it together. He was agreeable to that thinking, " It's really nice to have a beautiful lady like her for a friend. I'm dirty and stink from sweaty dirt of the past two weeks. I just can't get over her feelings for someone as downright wore out ugly and dirty

as me, but I'll enjoy it while I can. It's something I can remember and enjoy years from now."

Carl was really surprised the following morning when Ava insisted on cutting his hair and trimming up his beard. She said , " Carl, you're a very good looking man with all of that brush removed." Anna and Maria both agreed that Mister Carl was much prettier. Once again Ava embarrassed him saying, " Yes Carl. I can't believe that some girl hasn't put a rope on you." Carl replied, " No , never slowed down enough or stayed in one place long enough for any girl to get me." Ava laughed saying, " How long are you staying in Arizona territory, there's a number of unmarried girls back at the hacienda. Carl, my brother would love to see one of them settle down and get married. I'm certain you would be a very welcome addition to the Ranch." Carl said, " Ava, I've thought about trying to stay on a Ranch some where. This bad arm though is not any help for getting a job. Do you think your brother would take me on. Ava replied, " Carl, if he won't, I will. Half of that ranch belongs to me! As of right now you're hired."

Carl exclaimed, " Ava, you can't do that. You hardly know me . I thank you for the offer, but lets see what your brother has to say. I'm really not looking to get married; no one wants a broken down drifter with a bum arm. I can't offer any girl a descent home or anything of value. The best thing that's come into my life has been these two little angels. They've shown me what love is really like and I'd love nothing better than to be a part of their life. I know that's not possible; just my wishful thinking. Ava said, " Mister Carl we'll be at the hacienda in three days and we'll discuss your job then. My brother owes you a tremendous thank you obligation for what you have done and so do I. I think you can at least count on being around Anna and Maria for as long as you like." Carl just shook his head. He didn't know what to say.

The following three days they traveled as fast as the horses would permit, but Carl became concerned as a dust cloud seemed to

be following their trail. He was thinking, “ Bandits! Had they regrouped and planning another attack? It wouldn’t hurt to pull out and see what was following them.” Ava was not happy with his decision saying, “ Carl it may be wild horses or some one coming to our ranch. I wish you wouldn’t take everything as a threat to us. We’ll be home tomorrow.” Carl replied. “OK, we’ll see what tomorrow brings. You might be right. I guess I’m too suspicious.”

The morning brought alarm to Carl. There was no sign of pursuit and he was worried. Ava insisted it was probably a small herd of wild horses that had moved on overnight. Carl couldn’t get over his feeling of danger and asked her, “ What’s the trail ahead like and are we travelling through any area that could be used for an ambush?” Ava replied, “Carl you’re being way too concerned. We’re on the ranch property now and the only thing between us and home is Jack Rabbit hill. It’s just a small hill that has seen some mining activity, but there’s nothing there but a half burned building that’s home to desert Bobcats and coyotes. Our trail goes around the bottom of the hill. We won’t be anywhere near the old building; you can quit your worrying.” Carl liked what she said, but couldn’t shake the feeling of danger. His war years had given him a sense of danger and the feeling got to worrying him . Finally he said to Ava, “ Ava I might be chasing dust devils, but can we ride out and around this hill. I just have to trust my feeling. You and these two little angels don’t need any more Bandit threats. Please. I’d feel a lot better if we rode out a couple hundred yards or so.” Ava became concerned as Carl checked the loading in his rifle and pistol. She said, “ Carl you’re really worried aren’t you .Ok if you feel that strong about it we’ll veer off right here and take a coyote trail out and around.” Anna spoke up saying ,”Aunt Ava, Mister Carl always knows what’s better. Mister Carl can I have that rifle again?” Ava was shocked as Carl put a Henry rifle in the boot on Anna’s horse saying, “ Honey if you need to shoot jump down on the ground. I’ll be doing the

same and don't forget to hold it tight into your shoulder." Anna said, " I will Mister Carl. I won't forget again."

Carl asked Ava to instruct her men to spread out and be prepared for a possible attack. Ava shook her head thinking, "Maybe Carl is suffering from too much Army fighting. It's a beautiful day and there's not a thing moving anywhere. I'll do as he says but I think it's a waste of time and cost us a good extra hour of travel."

Suddenly a rifle report broke the silence and Carl fell to the ground. Riders boiled out from behind Jack Rabbit hill and a shocked and concerned Ava had no time to look to Carl, she was in a fight to the death. . Anna hit the ground and began shooting. Ava's men were giving the riders more that they wanted . Three of the rushing leaders were shot from their saddles and one horse was down The remaining Bandits were slowing down as another man was wounded and just as suddenly as the fight had begun; it was over. The remaining Bandits were fleeing in a hail of rifle fire . They had given up their attack and were high tailing it north.

Ava ran to Carl. His back was covered in blood and both of the young girls were there beside him crying to him, " Mister Carl , please don't die . Please don't die." Ava found herself uttering the same words and praying he would live. Carl surprised everyone as he sat up pistol in hand, asking, " Where's the Bandit's Ava? God my back hurts ! What happened? Ava said , " Lay down Carl . you took a bullet across your shoulders and you're bleeding bad Just lay still and I'll throw part of my dress around you and tie it in place. We'll have to get you to the ranch as soon as possible. Don't worry about the attack. The bandits have all fled. We killed a few and maybe wounded some of the others. We've gotta worry about you right now . I'll have my men check those that are laying out there but, I've gotta get you on a horse and hope you make it."

Carl said, “ Ava if I’m bleeding bad , I’ll never make it. It would be better if you camp right here and and sew up that cut across my shoulders. I know you brought some medical supplies with you. Yeah, I know , you don’t know how to sew me up . I’ll tell you how . Have one of your men get a fire started right away. Get out a needle and Anna pull a dozen hairs outta my horses tail . Boil the hairs in a small amount of water. You can use them to sew me up. It was over two hours later that the job was done. The two girls and Ava were hurting worse than Carl. Every stitch it seemed they could feel. Ava was astounded that Carl withstood the stitching without screaming in pain. Luckily there was Laudanum in the medical box and Carl was soon resting asleep.

Ava was comforting Anna and Maria telling them Carl was gonna be OK. She was surprised at herself and how she was beginning to feel about Carl. He was the best man she’d ever met and she was thinking , “ I’ve been waiting for the right man to come along and I think Mister Carl might be that man. If he was able to travel, they’d head home the next day.”

Two days later, Carl met Don Hedalgo the father of Anna and Maria. The Don could do nothing but cry in joy at the safe return of his two girls. The happy reunion was a little restrained because of the injuries to Carl . He developed a high fever and fear for his recovery had everyone concerned. A doctor was called in and redid some of Ava’s stitching, but Carl’s own system responded in fighting off the fever. Two weeks in bed recovering was killing Carl. The only thing that gave him pleasure was the attention of Ava and the two little girls. He said to Ava, “ You’re spoiling me rotten and I’ll never be worth anything if you won’t let me get outta this house. Yes, I’ll stay, but I’ve been sick way too long for just a bullet wound. Ava you’ve been wonderful. If I ever had a wife , I’d want one just like you and two little angels to raise.”

Ava and both girls were overjoyed that he had agreed to stay and work for the Rancho. Ava said “ Carl the girls and I need you here. I know you’re worried about your arm and limited ability to work, but my brother wants you for protection of our Rancho and Carl, you’re the greatest fighter we’ve ever known, one arm or two. Oh and by the way Mister Carlin Jarrett, you say you’ve never been married and neither have I. We’re gonna fix that too!”

The End