

THE RANSOM OF RED CHIEF

A Humorous Reading

by
O. Henry



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Bill and Sam, two young desperadoes, were down South in Alabama when the kidnaping idea struck them. It was, as Bill afterward expressed it, "during a moment of temporary mental apparition."

They selected for their victim the only child of a prominent citizen named Ebenezer Dorset. The father was respectable and tight, a mortgage fancier and a stern forecloser. The kid was a boy of ten, with bas-relief freckles, and red hair.

Two miles from Summit was a little mountain, covered with a cedar brake. There they found a cave where they stored provisions.

One evening after sundown, they drove past old Dorset's house. The kid was in the street, throwing rocks at a kitten.

The boy put up a fight, but, at last, they got him in the buggy and took him up to the cave. Sam drove the buggy back to the village where they had hired it, and walked back to the mountain.

The boy was at the entrance of the cave with two feathers stuck in his hair. He pointed a stick at Sam. "Ha! cursed paleface, do you dare to enter the camp of Red Chief, the terror of the plains?"

Bill was examining the bruises on his shins. "I'm Old Hank, the Trapper, Red Chief's captive, and I'm to be scalped at daybreak."

--- END OF FREE PREVIEW ---