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THE SIN OF MARTHA QUEED

By Allan Dwan

Martha Queed was worshipped from afar by Atlas, crippled of body, ideal of heart. She was coveted by David Boyd, a worthless, half degenerate distant relative. She was honestly loved by Arnold Barry, spending a vacation in the mountains. As a ruse to see the inside of Barry's hunting lodge, Martha feigned a sprained ankle. Before the open fire they talked about themselves and their love, and time passed unheeded.

David spied upon them. His filthy mind put an evil interpretation on her presence there. He told Martha's father, the district attorney. Marvin Queed hadn't an ounce of faith in a single human on earth. Stern, domineering, narrow-minded, suspicious, he was hated and feared by the community and his own family.

When Martha came home she was accused by her father. His suspicious mind convinced that the fair name of Queed had been sinned against by his daughter, he gave her a revolver and said that if she had a drop of Queed blood in her, she would let it out. David said then the whole world would know her shame-- why not marry her to him and keep it in the family?

Before Mrs. Queed, frantic at the sacrifice of her daughter to her husband's pride, could get Martha out of the house, Queed's hireling, the Justice of the Peace, had arrived. Without a license, using her mother's wedding ring, her father answering the marriage question for her, Martha was forcedly married to David, whom she loathed. He dragged her through the storm to the slovenly hovel he called home.

The next morning Martha's little brother informed Barry of the wedding. Barry publicly told Queed that if David had harmed a hair of Martha's head he'd kill him. At David's home he found Martha

gone and David lying dead on the floor. He was accused and imprisoned.

In the meantime Atlas found Martha on the hill, unconscious. He took her to his cabin, where his grandmother administered her simple remedies. For a week Martha tossed in fever and babbled deliriously. The grandmother feared she would die and wanted Martha's mother, or a doctor, called. But, sick, the poor cripple could worship her and pretend her delirious ravings of love were for him-- he would keep her forever, and no one would know who killed David Boyd!

One day Atlas heard that it was certain Arnold Barry would hang. Martha steadily got worse instead of better. He prayed for strength to tell the truth and save the flower of his heart for the man she loved. After a last good-bye to the unconscious girl, he went to the courthouse, arriving just as the jury was returning with a verdict of guilty. He confessed to killing David to keep him from harming Martha. Then-- no one saw his quick movement, the flash of steel-- David fell dead!

Barry rushed Martha to the hospital in the valley where, when she was convalescent, they were married with the happy consent of her mother. Fearing Queed would ruin the life of his little son, as he had ruined Martha's and hers, Mrs. Queed had left her husband, never to return.

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