



The man looked back at the girl smiling into her eyes. Lennox lay as if asleep, the lines of his dark face curiously pronounced. And the girl because she was of the mountains body and soul, answered Dan's smile. Then they knew that all of them knew the truth. Not even an inexperienced ear could have any delusions about the pack snow now. It was that oldest of wilderness songs, the hunting cry—that frenzied song of blood-just that the wolf pack utters when it is running on the trail of game. It had found the track of living flesh at last.

"There's no use stopping, or trying to climb a tree," Dan told them simply. "In the first place, Lennox can't do it. In the second, we've got to take a chance—for cold and hunger, can get up a tree where the wolf pack can't. He spoke wholly without emotion. Once more he tightened the traces of the sled.

"I've heard that sometimes the pack will chase a man for days without attacking," Lennox told them. "It all depends on how long they've gone without food. Keep on and try to for-



"Maybe We Can Keep Them Bluffed."

get 'em. Maybe we can keep 'em bluffed."

But as the hours passed, it became increasingly difficult to forget the wolf pack. It was only a matter of turning the head and peering for an instant into the shadows to catch a glimpse of one of the creatures. Their usual fear of men, always their first emotion, had given way wholly to a hunting cunning; an effort to procure their game without too great risk of their own lives. In the desperation of their hunger they could not remember such things as the fear of men. They spread out farther, and at last Dan looked up to find one of the gray beasts waiting, like a shadow himself, in the shadow of a tree not one hundred feet from the sled. Snowbird whipped out her pistol.

"Don't dare!" Dan's voice cracked out to her. He didn't speak loudly; yet the words came so sharp and commanding, so like pistol fire itself, that they penetrated into her consciousness and choked back the nervous reflexes that in an instant might have lost them one of their three precious shells. She caught herself with a sob. Dan shouted at the wolf, and it melted into the shadows.

"You won't do it again, Snowbird?" he asked her very humbly. But his meaning was clear. He was not as skilled with a pistol as she; but if her nerves were breaking, the gun must be taken from her hands. The three shells must be saved to the moment of utmost need.

"No," she told him, looking straight into his eyes. "I won't do it again."

He believed her. He knew that she spoke the truth. He met her eyes with a half smile. Then, wholly without warning, Fate played its last trump.

Again the wilderness reminded them of its might, and their brave spirits were almost broken by the utter remorselessness of the blow. The girl went on her face with a crack of wood. Her snow shoe had been cracked by her fall of the day before, when running to the fire, and whether she struck some other obstruction in the snow, or whether the cracked wood had simply given way under her weight, mattered not even enough for them to investigate. As in all great disasters, only the result remained. The result in this case was that her snowshoe, without which she could not

walk at all in the snow, was irreparably broken.

"Fate has stacked the cards against us," Lennox told them, after the first moment's horror from the broken snowshoe.

But no one answered him. The girl, white-faced, kept her wide eyes on Dan. He seemed to be peering into the shadows beside the trail, as if he were watching for the gray forms that now and then glided from tree to tree. In reality, he was not looking for wolves. He was gazing down into his own soul, measuring his own spirit for the trial that lay before him.

The girl, unable to step with the broken snowshoe, rested her weight on one foot and hobbled like a bird with broken wings across to him. No sight of all this terrible journey had been more dreadful in her father's eyes than this. It seemed to split open the strong heart of the man. She touched her hand to his arm.

"I'm sorry, Dan," she told him. "You tried so hard—"

Just one little sound broke from his throat—a strange, deep gasp that could not be suppressed. Then he caught her hand in his and kissed it—again and again. "Do you think I care about that?" he asked her. "I only wish I could have done more—and what I have done doesn't count. Just as in my fight with Cranston, nothing counts because I didn't win. It's just fate, Snowbird. It's no one's fault, but maybe, in this world, nothing is ever anyone's fault." For in the twilight of those winter woods, in the shadow of death itself, perhaps he was catching glimmerings of eternal truths that are hidden from all but the most far-seeing eyes.

"And this is the end?" she asked him. She spoke very bravely.

"No!" His hand tightened on hers. "No, so long as an ounce of strength remains. To fight—never to give up—may God give me spirit for it till I die."

And this was no idle prayer. His eyes raised to the starry sky as he spoke.

"But, son," Lennox asked him rather quietly, "what can you do? The wolves aren't going to wait a great deal longer, and we can't go on."

"There's one thing more—one more trial to make," Dan answered. "I thought about it at first, but it was too long a chance to try if there was any other way. And I suppose you thought of it too."

"Overtaking Cranston?"

"Of course. And it sounds like a crazy dream. But listen, both of you. If we have got to die, up here in the snow—and it looks like we had—what is the thing you want done worst before we go?"

Lennox's hands clasped, and he leaned forward on the sled. "Pay Cranston!" he said.

"Yes!" Dan's voice rang. "Cranston's never going to be paid unless we do it. There will be no signs of incendiarism at the house, and no proofs. They'll find our bodies in the snow, and we'll just be a mystery, with no one made to pay. The evidence in my pocket will be taken by Cranston, some time this winter. If I don't make him pay, he never will pay. And that's one reason why I'm going to try to carry out this plan I've got."

"The second reason is that it's the one hope we have left. I take it that none of us are deceived on that point. And no man can die tamely—if he is a man—while there's a chance. I mean a young man, like me—not one who is old and tired. It sounds perfectly silly to talk about finding Cranston's winter quarters, and then, with my bare hands, conquering him, taking his food and his blankets and his snowshoes and his rifle, to fight away these wolves, and bringing 'em back here."

"You wouldn't be barehanded," the girl reminded him. "You could have the pistol."

"He didn't even seem to hear her. 'I've been thinking about it. It's a long, long chance—much worse than the chance we had of getting out by straight walking. I think we could have made it, if the wolves had kept off and the snowshoe hadn't broken. It would have nearly killed us, but I believe we could have got out. That's why I didn't try this other way first. A man with his bare hands hasn't much of a chance against another with a rifle, and I don't want you to be too hopeful. And of course, the hardest problem is finding his camp."

"But I do feel sure of one thing: that he is back to his old trapping line on the North Fork—somewhere south of here—and his camp is somewhere on the river. I think he would have gone there so that he could cut off any attempt I might make to get through with those letters. My plan is to start back at an angle that will carry me between the North Fork and our old



"Keep the Fire Burning."

house. Somewhere in there I'll find his tracks, the tracks he made when he first came over to burn up the house. I suppose he was careful to mix 'em up after once he arrived here, but the first part of the way he likely walked straight toward the house from his camp. Somewhere, if I go that way, I'll cross his trail—in 10 miles at least. Then I'll back-track him to his camp."

"And never come back!" the girl cried.

"Maybe not. But at least everything that can be done will be done. Nothing will be left. No regrets. We will have made the last trial. I'm not going to waste any time, Snowbird. The sooner we get your fire built the better."

"Father and I are to stay here—?"

"What else can you do?" He went back to his traces and drew the sled 100 yards farther. He didn't seem to see the gaunt wolf that backed off into the shadows as he approached. He refused to notice that the pack seemed to be steadily growing bolder. Human hunters usually had guns that could blast and destroy from a distance; but even an animal intelligence could perceive that these three seemed to be without this means of inflicting death.

A wolf is ever so much more intelligent than a crow—yet a crow shows little fear of an unarmed man and is wholly unapproachable by a boy with a gun. The ugly truth was simply that in their increasing madness and excitement and hunger, they were becoming less and less fearful of these three strange humans with the sled.

It was not a good place for a camp. They worked a long time before they cleared a little patch of ground of its snow mantle. Dan cut a number of snappings—invariably with his ax—and built a fire with the comparatively dry cobs of a dead tree. True, it was feeble and flickering, but as good as could be hoped for, considering the difficulties under which he worked.

The dead logs under the snow were soaked with water from the rains and thaws. The green wood that he cut smoked without blazing.

"No more time to be lost," Dan told Snowbird. "It lies in your hands to keep the fire burning. And don't leave the circle of the fire light without that pistol in your hand."

"You don't mean," she asked, unbelieving, "that you are going to go out there to fight Cranston—unarmed?"

"Of course, Snowbird. You must keep the pistol."

"But it means death; that's all it means. What chance would you have against a man with a rifle? And as soon as you get away from this fire, the wolves will tear you to pieces."

"And what would you and your father do, if I took it? You can't get him into a tree. You can't build a big enough fire to frighten them. Please don't even talk about this matter, Snowbird. My mind's made up. I think the pack will stay here. They usually—God knows how—know who is helpless and who isn't. Maybe with the gun, you will be able to save your lives."

"What's the chance of that?"

"You might—with one cartridge—kill one of the devils; and the others—but you know how they devour their own dead. That might break their famine enough so that they'd hold off until I can get back. That's the prize I'm playing for."

"And what if you don't get back?"

He took her hand in one of his, and with the other he caressed, for a single moment, the lovely flesh of her throat. The love he had for her spoke from his eyes—such speech as no human vision could possibly mistake. Both of them were tingling and breathless with a great, sweet wonder.

"Never let those fingers tear that softness, while you live," he told her gently. "Never let that brave old man on the sled go to his death with the pack tearing at him. Cheat 'em, Snowbird! Beat 'em the last minute. If no other way remains! Show 'em who's boss, after all—of all this forest."

"You mean—?" Her eyes widened.

"I mean that you must only spend one of those three shells in fighting off the wolves. Save that till the mo-

ment you need it most. The other two must be saved—for something else."

She nodded, shuddering an instant at a menacing shadow that moved within 50 feet of the fire.

"Then goodbye, Dan!" she told him. And she stretched up her arms. "The thing I said—that day on the hillside—doesn't hold any more."

His own arms encircled her, but he made no effort to chain her lips. Lennox watched them quietly; in this moment of crisis not even pretending to look away. Dan shook his head to her entrancing eyes. "It isn't just a kiss, darling," he told her soberly. "It goes deeper than that. It's a symbol. It was your word, too, and mine; and words can't be broken, things being as they are. Can't I make you understand?"

She nodded. His eyes burned. Perhaps she didn't understand, as far as actual functioning of the brain was concerned. But she reached up to him, as women—knowing life in the concrete rather than the abstract—have always reached up to men; and she dimly caught the gleam of some eternal principle and right behind his words. This strong man of the mountains had given his word, had been witness to her own promise to him and to herself, and a law that goes down to the roots of life prevented him from claiming the kiss.

Many times, since the world was new, comfort—happiness—life itself have been contingent on the breaking of a law. Yet in spite of what seemed common sense, even though no punishment would fortify it if it were broken, the law has been kept. It was this way now. It wouldn't have been just a kiss such as boys and girls have always had in the moonlight. It meant the symbolic renunciation of the debt that Dan owed Cranston—a debt that in his mind might possibly go unpaid, which no weight of circumstance could make him renounce.

(To be continued.)

LEGAL NOTICES

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that W. D. Barnes of Bend has been appointed administrator, with the will annexed, of the estate of May L. Peterson, formerly May L. White. All persons knowing themselves indebted to the estate are requested to make payment and all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present them with proper vouchers within six months from the date of this notice to said administrator at the office of H. C. Ellis, First National Bank building, Bend, Oregon.

W. D. BARNES, Administrator with the will annexed. March 10, 1921. 2-6c

SUMMONS

In the Justice Court for the District of Bend, Deschutes County, State of Oregon.

Christian Tinner, plaintiff, vs. August Hallberg and Jane Doe Hallberg, his wife, defendants. To August Hallberg and Jane Doe Hallberg, the above named defendant:

In the name of the state of Oregon, you are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint in the above entitled action on or before April 15, 1921, that date being six weeks from the first publication of this summons, or for want thereof the plaintiff will take judgment against you for \$65 with interest at six per cent per annum from November 22, 1917, and the costs and disbursements of this action, and apply the money garnished in said action in this county toward the satisfaction of said judgment.

E. D. GILSON, Justice of the Peace. 1-7c

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that George E. Aitken of Sisters, Oregon, has been appointed administrator of the estate of Samuel Wiehl, deceased. All persons knowing themselves indebted to the estate are requested to make payment and all persons having claims against said estate are hereby required to present them, with proper vouchers, within six months from the date of this notice to said administrator at the office of H. C. Ellis, First National Bank building, Bend, Oregon.

GEORGE E. AITKEN, Administrator. 52-4c

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

(Not coal land.) Department of the Interior, U. S. Land Office at Lakeview, Oregon, February 4, 1921.

Notice is hereby given that Lewis A. Edgar, for the heirs of Herbert H. Edgar, deceased, of Tillamook, Oregon, who, on Oct. 2, 1914, made Homestead Entry No. 08126, for S½ NW¼, SW¼, Sec. 22; S½ SE¼, Section 21, Township 21 S., Range 18 E., Willamette Meridian, has filed notice of intention to make final three-year proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before H. C. Ellis, U. S. Commissioner, at Bend, Oregon, on the 13th day of March, 1921.

Claimant names as witnesses: Patrick H. Coffey and Elizabeth E. Coffey, of Bend, Oregon; Joseph Stenkamp, of Brothers, Oregon; Oscar Larson, of Bend Oregon.

Notice will be published in The Bend Bulletin for five consecutive weeks.

JAS. F. BURGESS, Register. 50-54c

In the County Court of the State of Oregon, for Deschutes County.

In the matter of the guardianship of the estates of Charles Arthur Marshall and Robert Grey Marshall, minors.

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And it appearing to the court from the petition above named, now on file in this court, that it would be beneficial to the said wards that the real estate above described be sold.

Wherefore it is ordered, adjudged and decreed by the court that the said minors, Charles Arthur Marshall and Robert Grey Marshall, the wards above named, that R. C. McDonald, the next of kin of each of said wards and all persons interested in the estate, appear before this court at the County Courtroom in Bend, Oregon, on Friday, the 18th day of March, 1921, at 10 o'clock in the forenoon and show cause, if any there be, why the said guardian shall not be authorized to sell the interest of the said wards in the land above described at private sale.

That this order shall be served upon the said Charles Arthur Marshall and Robert Grey Marshall, and upon R. C. McDonald, the next of kin of said wards, by publication in The Bend Bulletin, a weekly newspaper printed and published in Bend, Deschutes County, Oregon, for three consecutive weeks, beginning on the 24th day of February, 1921, and ending on the 17th day of March, 1921.

Dated this 19th day of February, 1921. ROBERT W. SAWYER, Judge. 52-3c

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Name, Present Occupation, Street, and No., City, State.

W. F. WOODHEAD, Representative, 191 Broadway, Portland, Ore.