

SNOW LEOPARD

by CHRIS HAWTHORNE

CHAPTER XXXII

The patter stopped abruptly. Toole had never learned the strategy of retreat—a fugitive always infers a chase. He walked forward. Far back in that black sink he saw a pair of baleful green eyes glaring at him.

"Come out in the open, come out!" he bellowed.

A snarl answered him; not the timorous bluff of a scared beast but the savage defiance of an animal unaccustomed to refusing a challenge. In a moment the creature emerged into the pale light; it was a feroceous, furry, full grown wounded snow leopard.

"Don't shoot, Toole! He's my game!"

Strange and hollow as the voice came from the black depths, the detective recognized it as Bannister's!

A moment later Bully burst through the darkness and began to harry the wounded brute.

In an eventful lifetime of forty-six years, "One-Armed" Toole had heard many sounds that fell musically upon his ears. As a detective on the lookout for "dips" he had mixed with the crowds in front of old Trinity, listening to the Christmas chimes at midnight; he had heard words of commendation from police commissioners for signal acts of bravery; once a supreme court justice had spoken of him as a "brilliant and courageous member of the headquarters staff." But none of those pleasurable moments equaled in sheer joy the sensation he felt when he heard Bannister's voice coming out from that black pit over the hunching back of a wounded snow leopard.

Dangling an automatic in each hand, Toole waited. The harried beast, trapped between two men who held death in their fingers, wavered, finally choosing as his antagonist the enemy of whom, as yet, he knew nothing. In a desperate crouch, he slithered toward Toole, his mouth open, his eyes ablaze with fury.

Toole had raised his right arm again when Bannister staggered into the dim light. The detective saw his friend lean weakly against the side of the gorge, saw him bring a gun slowly to his shoulder and then—collapse! It was only one shot but it seemed to linger on a hundred echoes. The leopard stiffened on all fours, humped up like a huge cat, sprang into the air and fell inertly across the thin stream that issued from the cavern.

"Keep away from him, Toole!" warned Bannister. "Back Bully!"

But the leopard was dead. The brute that had deserted his mate and his cub had been shot through the heart.

Bannister seemed to have put his last ounce of strength into that effort. Dropping the gun, he tottered toward his friend on loosely coupled legs.

The detective put a flask of the dwarf's liquor—miraculously untouched till now in the excitement—to the spent man's lips. Bannister sank to a reek and drank deeply. Toole took a convincing swig himself and waited. After a while he said:

"The air is better further down the gorge. We can see the sun, anyway, before—"

"Oh, we'll get out of this hole, at light," Dick said weakly. "I've been in it long enough to know something about the infernal places. It's a runway for leopards and maybe other beasts. I think it must lead somewhere near the plains below us where they pick up their quarry—wild ass, probably."

Toole glanced at the ghostly carcass of the snow leopard, grim and terrible even in death. "I didn't think you were such a nut as to follow that critter underground," he said disquietly.

"Ain't you got any common sense notion of caution at all?"

"Here I am and there he is," Bannister rejoined. "And, by the way, how did you happen to drop in on us?"

"Drop in? You said it. I went after Jeff Whipple in Karen Sire's plane and the thing blew up under me. Must have been that orchid paint. I came down here under a white umbrella."

"I didn't think," Bannister remarked, "that you were such a nutthead as to attempt anything like that."

Toole grinned. "Well, here I am," he said, with a fine imitation of his friend's voice.

"But where's Jeff Whipple?" Bannister asked.

Toole subsided and drew a package of sandwiches from his pocket. He opened them on a flat rock, placing the flask at an impartial distance between himself and Bannister. For five minutes they ate and drank, while Toole told of Whipple's arrival at the base of the mountain. "Miss Sire is with him and safe, the Abbe thinks," he said.

"I've got to take the pelt of that critter before we shove along," Bannister exclaimed, indicating the dead leopard. "Sorry you haven't got Jeff with you." He threw a piece of meat to Bully. "That dog," he went on, "has an exaggerated notion of his own fighting ability. He wanted to mix it with the leopard in the dark."

While Bannister was removing the leopard's skin the two exchanged accounts of their experiences, girding themselves for what they hoped would be the final episode—the rescue of Karen and the capture of "Big Jeff" Whipple.

Brenda still remained outside of their reckoning, and their interest in Sire's vast colonization scheme had become that of mere spectators. They must get to Karen and her captor and get 'em quick! There were surprises ahead.

It was a full hour before Bannis-

it, she always laughed at me when I insisted upon chucking everything until I got this pelt for her. What do such things mean to a girl these days? Guess I'm a throwback, old boy. My brother Hod has often told me so."

Toole dismissed these despondent speculations with a snort. "Take it from me, son," he consoled, "there ain't a woman in the world who wouldn't rather have the hide of a wild animal than her man got for her in a fair fight than all the glory that money could buy. Be reasonable—how can you expect them to fall in love with an automobile factory or a marble store full of jools? It ain't in 'em, I tell you. They've got to have something personal, boy, and you're delivering that kind of goods."

Bannister threw the pelt over his shoulder. "Let's move along," he said, "there must be some way out of this cut."

A hundred yards farther down they encountered what looked like an impassable barrier. Huge boulders, with shoulders rounded from rolling and centuries of weather, lay like a natural dam across the canyon.

"Hurrah!" yelled Bannister, "there's a crevasse running up to the top."

A half hour later two badly spent men were standing on top of a narrow plateau, gazing upward at "Our Lady in White."

Toole was the first to put his glasses to his eyes. From one of those vast shelves of rock he could see a slow pillar of smoke rising. "The friar's house!" he yelled. "We're home, son! That place looks as good to me as Madison square."

Bannister was sweeping the sky in the vain hope of picking up the air squadron. Lowering his glasses finally, he began a loud inspection of the rugged mountainside, pivoting slowly to complete a circle.

"More smoke," he observed at length. "Can't you see it down there? We're about half way between the Abbe's hut and Jeff Whipple's camp. Which way shall we go, Toole?"

The "one-armed" detective stared at Dick's fresh discovery, keeping his back turned from the blue plume that wavered over the hut. Bannister saw him take a hitch in his belt and pat the "empty" sleeve.

"For a moment the detective gazed into the rugged but worn face of his friend. The night in the cavern, the day of heavy tramping with the hot pelt over his shoulders, had taken toll from the hunter's vast reserve of strength. But something more disquieting than all this was in the detective's mind. It was the fear that the gallant young fellow might fall into Whipple's hand and be subject to terrible torture in requital of the deadly grudge that "Big Jeff" bore him.

"Bannister," Toole said quietly, "I let you go out for the leopard (three or four nights without me, I said to myself 'Let the boy have his fun.' Now I want you to say the same thing: 'Let the old stiff have his way.' Go back to the Jeff Whipple, I want to get Jeff Whipple alone."

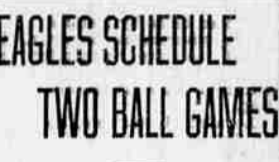
Wrath had been gathering in Bannister's face as Toole spoke. "If you're going after Jeff Whipple," he said, "you'll need a private secretary, at least. Come on, let me go 'one-armed' wonder! You let me not look you of the glory of putting Jeff, unless—"

Toole knew what he meant—if Whipple had harmed Karen Sire, Bannister would kick him to death with his behemoth boots. The detective yielded. He and Dick both would tackle the Whipple "mob."

(To be continued)



Active in Legion



Active in Legion

At top—Bill Cantor, Klamath Falls post, membership champion of Oregon in 1935. Lower—Bill Cantor, also of Klamath Falls, past post commander and one of the outstanding adjutants of the Oregon department. Both veterans will attend the convention here.

EAGLES SCHEDULE TWO BALL GAMES

Two baseball games, scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, were announced today by Dr. H. B. Scofield, manager of the Eagles lodge team. Saturday the lodge team will play a traveling team, the "Convicts" of Seattle, and Sunday will meet the Glendale Loggers, runners up in the Southern Oregon league.

The "Convicts"—so named because they "murder" the ball, "rob" the hitters, "burn-up" the bases and "steal" the show, according to their publicity—compose a team made up of a group of lusty youngsters, who are out on a Pacific coast tour, meeting independent ball teams.

Nearly all of the players are former Legion junior baseball stars from the Seattle district.

The Saturday game, starting at 5:30 o'clock, is expected to furnish plenty of excitement.

Sunday's game with the Glendale Loggers will give the Eagles some tough competition. It is anticipated that former members of the lodge squad, "Buck" Avery and Bill Schermer, will be seen in action in Glendale uniforms. The Glendale team, tied with the Klamath Falls Red Sox for first place in the Southern Oregon league, lost 1-0 in the playoff at Grants Pass Sunday.

Applies for Divorce—Joseph H. Murphy has filed suit for divorce from Bertha Mae Murphy of Sacramento, at Reno, Nevada, this week. They were married in Roseburg December 25, 1932. The plaintiff charges cruelty.

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DIZZY CARLETON HAVE FIST FIGHT

Cardinals' Pitcher Loses Temper but Wins Game Against Cubs.

By PAUL MICKELSON (Associated Press Sports Writer)

Should the baseball fates give the St. Louis Cardinals the 1936 National league pennant by one game or less over Chicago Cubs, Charles Grimm probably would go down in the frayed record books as the "rooey time Charlie" who gave away the flag.

The Cub plot made the sportsmanlike gesture yesterday of allowing Dizzy Dean to remain in the first game of the important Cub-Cardinal series after the pitcher was about to be chased out by umpires for fighting Tex Carleton.

Grimm talked the umpire into letting Dizzy stay, and the Red Bird star proved his gratitude by handcuffing the Cubs, 7 to 3, dropping them to second place.

The chances are that the Cards, who drove Wernke to cover with a four-run barrage in the fourth inning to break up a close game, would have won without the great Dizzy. If that game alone separates the two teams at the finish, however, Grimm undoubtedly will be accused of being too tender hearted.

Stung by the quips flung at him by Carleton, who celebrated an off day by doing a lot of shouting, Dizzy suddenly left the pitching mound in the first inning and raced toward the Cub dugout.

The fiery Carleton leaped out, and they clinched and scuffled until players separated them. To the amazement of 30,000 fans, Dean resumed the mound, and it was explained that Grimm had pleaded successfully against his expulsion.

Brooklyn snapped the Giants' seven-game winning streak, 6 to 5.

New York's Yankees, riding along with a seemingly invincible margin in the American league race, absorbed one of their nearest neighbors of the year yesterday as Washington pounded three pitchers for 18 hits and a 13 to 4 victory.

It was the first Senator triumph of the season at Yankee stadium, and Jimmy DeShong, ex-Yankee hurler, led the procession by holding the New Yorkers to eight hits. The defeat trimmed the Yankee lead over Cleveland's idle Indians to 11½ games, with 48 to play.

The Boston Bees rallied sharply in the closing innings to hand the luckless, ailing Philadelphia Phillies their eighth straight setback, 9 to 7. Other teams were idle.

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BUTTE JUNIORS WIN REGIONAL TITLE

POCATELLO, Idaho, Aug. 11.—(AP)—The American Legion Junior league team from Butte, Mont., carried off regional honors (Idaho-Montana) in a three-game series with the Pocatello nine here. Butte dropped the first game 8 to 7 but won the second 4 to 1 and eliminated the series with another 8 to 2 victory yesterday to remain in national competition.

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