

17-Year-Old Authoress Wins National Acclaim

'The Magnificent Rift' Story Of Marooned Prospectors

The following story is printed in its entirety by special arrangement with the author.

By Jannice Henbest
The air of the small dimly-lit cabin was blue and smelled of stale tobacco smoke and had the rank odor of close living. All through the long winter, the two men had been closely confined to the small comforts which the cabin offered. The winter had been severe and long; out, they had been well-prepared to face the rigors of the long, cold nights and the sunless, freezing days. Many of the previous summer's long days had been spent obtaining wood, which was split and neatly piled in the lean-to next to the cabin, just two long steps from the front door. The shelves and bins had been well stocked with good substantial food, food that would stick to a man's ribs and help insulate him from the razor-sharp, biting air.

Yes, they had been well-prepared for the long, bitter winter in every way but one. They hadn't prepared themselves to live with each other. It is true, they realized that they needed some form of relaxation, something to keep their minds occupied. They sacrificed the space of one pack-saddle bag that they filled with magazines and books, which would afford them entertainment, they figured, for all winter. But these had all been read, reread, and reread until each could tell almost to the page that a certain word had been written. When they had read the books and magazines until they were boring and intolerable, they started reading the labels on the canned goods and flour sacks. Each could tell you how many ounces of tomatoes were in the can, where it was canned, who was the brokerage firm that handled it. The brown bean sack advertised itself as being filled in Twin Falls, Idaho, the dried bean center of the world. Man, wouldn't it be nice to be there. Any place but this cold, God-forsaken hole. They had met two summers ago, and there was an immediate attraction between the two. They were definitely opposite types, just as different as the two poles of a magnet, and just as the opposite

poles of a magnet attracts, they, too, were drawn to each other. The only thing they had in common was a desire to go into the wilds of the Yukon Territory and find a rich vein of gold. It seemed that Fate had brought these men together in the town, Whitehorse, that day.

The tall red-head had just been graduated from Princeton. He wanted to be on his own for a year or two before he settled down to a humdrum existence of living and working and rushing around in a big town like his father and grandfather before him had done, as they were accumulating money—money which would do neither good. Many times, during the trip on the boat from Seattle to Skagway, he had thought about these two. He finally concluded that their only enjoyment in life was to obtain more and more money and spend more time and effort trying to devise better methods of securing it.

The red-head had been in Whitehorse two days and had looked the town over completely. Everyone was friendly and hospitable; but, his driving urge to go on North was making him restless. His long legs were drawn toward the waterfront. The beach was lined with boats of every description and size, from small canoes to huge river boats with large side and stern-wheels. The ordinary hustle and bustle was temporarily suspended and everyone's eyes were riveted on the rapids above the town. The red-head looked up the river to see what was claiming their attention. A small, gray boat had just entered the smooth chute at the head of the broken water. It was so far away that it was difficult to see the small figure standing in the stern.

As the small craft shot down the sleek water, everyone who had made the trip involuntarily tensed, as if he were in the boat and were again experiencing the thrills and fears they had on their first trip through.

made in its mad race through the frothy water. The boat was travelling way too close to shore and the heavy stern was slowly starting to turn in the current and put the boat sideways. A huge, white wave lifted and crashed high and the observers could see the boatman frantically rowing, trying to get the nose of the boat headed down-stream. The craft disappeared from view into a trough. A sigh of relief came from the crowd when the craft again appeared, still intact, on the crest of the next swell.

"By gar!" said the breed. "He got more guts than brains. Everything he do, he do the wrong way. Come let's get in my boat and pick up the pieces when they drift over the rapids." The red-head and the breed hurriedly pushed a graceful, high-sided boat into the eddy at the foot of the racing rapids and waited for the inevitable wreckage. They stood high in the boat so they might see over the huzzling, foaming and churning clear water into a froth. Occasionally they could see the boat as it careened and bounced first one way and then another in its mad race through the spine-chilling rapids.

The craft appeared to be riding lower in the water and would not respond to the oar, as the lone rider tried to steer it away from the last high, white froth, which boiled around the huge boulder that marked the end of the turbulent water. It would need more and stronger arms to pull the craft into safer water. Practically the oars were pulling and straining to straighten the boat and ease it through. A loud thud jarred the boat and tossed it sideways, throwing the occupant over the side into the foaming water. The boat lurched sideways shipped water, settling it lower.

The red-head and the breed rowed the boat to the edge of the swift water and waited, holding the craft under control in the heavy upstream pull of the back-water. Soon they could see a dark, shining head struggling to stay above the white foam. They rowed rapidly into the fast water to intercept it. The gray boat was rushing toward them, as if trying to hit them and throw them off course. The crazy, bouncing river crashed the boats together and knocked the bow of their craft downstream. They lost sight of the black head in the torrent for a minute. There it was again and they pulled on the

Routine Class Assignment Wins Laurels For Jannice Henbest

What started out to be a routine class assignment turned into national recognition for a Roseburg Senior High School junior. Jannice Henbest, one of a class of 23 English students, submitted a short-story with others of her class in a regular assignment. Her instructor, Donald W. Bodeen, advised her to submit the story to Scholastic Magazine's annual contest. Others in the class were also invited to submit their original compositions for judging, but Miss Henbest was the only entrant from Roseburg.

A few weeks later, she learned through her instructor and the newspaper that she had received a commendation from the magazine for her work.

The story, "The Magnificent Rift," is printed in its entirety in adjoining columns.

Miss Henbest, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Henbest, is 17, and has been an advanced student in Bodeen's class since the beginning of the year. Students of the class have shown an aptitude in English composition prior to their assignment to the group.

Bodeen states that while he has had students reach similar rank in the contest, Miss Henbest is the first Roseburg student to receive recognition, to his knowledge.

While she does not have definite plans to be a writer, Miss Hen-



JANNICE HENBEST
...authoress

best plans to take journalism and composition as a prep course if she attends the University of Oregon, as planned.

She comes by her talent honestly, she says, since her father has written several stories, and is at present engaged in writing a book.

pulled on the rope to get the water-logged craft closer to shore. The curious group of people crowded around the boat. Some helped to get the newcomer to his feet on the shore and others pulled on the sunken boat to get it up higher where the water could be rock-ed out of it. All of the strangers supplies were unloaded and placed on the beach to dry.

The friendship between the red-head and stranger wasted no time in getting started. Yes, it seemed to be fate that brought such opposites together to form a combination which would travel over quite a bit of the province in search of the elusive gold.

The contrast between the two was apparent to the eye. One was tall, light-complexioned, and red-haired. The other was short, muscular, dark skinned, and deep, brown eyes. The tall one was carefully groomed and the short never cared anything for clothes, except that they covered him and kept him warm. All their habits followed the same pattern and it seemed that each was needed to complement the personality of the other.

For a full year and a half another they were constant companions before they had struck it rich. All this time was spent doing things, helping each other, and having their minds occupied on getting things ready for the winter they were now spending.

They had planned things very well. In fact, too well. If only they had left something undone, like not cutting enough wood; or, if they had run short of grub and had to snow-shoe the seventy-odd miles to Whitehorse, they would not be getting on each other's nerves. The continual, boring life they were living in the cramped quarters kept them in constant

contact with each other and the friction was increasing daily. Without realizing it, these two were victims of the scourge of long northern winter nights—cabin fever. The symptoms appeared slowly at first; but, by the end of February, neither would talk about the work (and very little of that was being done). Things had come to such a state that neither could stand the thought of continuing partnership. Everything that each had admired about the other was now a source of annoyance and irritation. The tall one had an Eastern inflection to his voice, which had at first intrigued the other, in fact; he had even copied it. Now, he felt like hammering the mouth it came from. The tall one had been raised in a family that was neat and precise. When the other dropped his boots in the middle of the floor, he felt like kicking them through the wall; and when the other spilled food on the floor, he wanted to grab him by the hair and rub his nose into it.

Matters rapidly became worse and when it became time for the Spring break-up, sheer will-power alone kept them from each other's throat. Everything would have been straightened out by the activity of the Summer's work, if the tall one hadn't opened the door and remarked:

"There's a warm chinook wind blowing. Won't be long until the snow will be melting, and you can go out and fall in the creek and get the bath you've been needing all winter."

The smaller one jumped to his feet and yelled:

"By God! I'm not goin' to take any more of your high and mightiness. I've been puttin' up with your snobby ways all winter and

bending over backwards to keep my temper; but this is it. I wouldn't be partners with you, if that whole dang mountain was gold."

"Do you want to split-up?" asked the other. "That's the way I want it, too, the sooner the better. What do you want for your half?"

"You can go to blazes! What do you want for your half? I ain't goin' to sell out to you."

It took effort for the tall one to hold his voice down, as he answered, "My half isn't for sale to you, either."

"What do you want to do about it? It's a cinch I ain't goin' to sell out to you and I shov' ain't goin' to have you around all summer."

The two men stood, glaring at each other, and each trying to devise some scheme to rid himself of the other.

"Why don't we cut the cards and high man take all?" asked the tall one.

The smaller thought for a minute and answered, "That's fine with me."

Both walked to the table and a deck of worn cards were placed on the table when a loud roar filled the cabin. The floor tipped up crazily, throwing the two men across to the other wall. The door was now above their heads and snow gradually drifted down to cover the white face of the tall one, lying unconscious on the broken wall. The stove tipped over the cabin.

The short, black-haired one was dazed by the sudden shock, but soon realized that he had better get out. He looked up at the door and knew that he couldn't reach it. He pulled the table over and climbed on it to push the heavy door up and crawl outside.

(Continued on page Four)

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