

# WINDS OF CHANCE

by Rex Beach

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### CHAPTER VIII. (Continued)

He was very bashful about this level of his. Lacking confidence to make known his feelings, he undertook to conceal them and believed he had succeeded. No doubt he had, for as the men in his party were concerned, they were far too busy to give thought to affairs other than their own—but the woman had marked his very first surrender and now read him like an open page, from day to day. His blind, unreasoning loyalty, his complete unresponsiveness to her desires, his extravagant joy in doing her will, would have told her the truth even without the aid of those numerous little things which every woman understands. Now, oddly enough, the effect upon her was only a little less disturbing than when she first saw him. It was a thing which no good woman could have treated lightly; his simplicity, his purity, his unworldliness were different to anything she had known—so different, for instance, to that affection which Count Courteau had bestowed upon her as it seemed almost surreal—therefore she watched his growth with apprehension. It was flattering and yet it gave her cause for some uneasiness.

As a matter of fact, Phillips was bashful only in this one regard in other things he was very much of a man—more of a man than any the Countess had met in a long time—and she derived unusual satisfaction from the mere privilege of depending upon him. This pleasure was so keen at times that she allowed her thoughts to take strange shape, and was stirred by yearnings, by impulses, by foolish fancies that reminded her of her girlhood days.

The boat-building had proceeded with such despatch thanks largely to Phillips, that the time for departure was close at hand, and inasmuch as there still remained a reasonable margin of safety, the Countess began to feel for the first time a sense of success. While she was not disposed to quarrel with such a happy state

of affairs, nevertheless one thing continued to bother her; she could not understand why interference had failed to come from the Kirby crowd. She had expected it, for Sam Kirby had the name of being a hard, conscienceless man, and Danny Royal had given proof that he was not above resorting to desperate means to gain time. Why, therefore, they had made no effort to bite her men away from her, especially as men were almost unobtainable here at Linderman, was something that baffled her. She had learned by bitter experience to put trust in no man, and this, coupled perhaps with the natural suspicion of her sex, combined to excite her liveliest curiosity and her deepest concern; she could not overcome the fear that this unspoken truce concealed some sinister design.

Feeling this afternoon, a strong desire to see with her own eyes just what progress her rivals were making, she called Pierce away from his work and took him with her around the shore of the lake.

"Our last boat will be in the water to-morrow," he told her. "Kirby can't hold us up now if he tries."

"I don't know," she said, doubtfully. "He is a short-headed man as we are. I can't understand why he has left us alone so long."

Phillips laughed. "He probably knows it isn't safe to trifle with you."

The Countess shook her head. "I couldn't bluff him. He wouldn't care whether I'm a woman or not."

"Were you bluffing when you held up Royal? I didn't think so."

"I don't think so, either. There's no telling what I might have done—I have a furious temper."

"That's nothing to apologize for," the young man declared, warmly. "It's a sign of character, force, I hope I never have reason to feel it."

"You? How absurd! You've been perfectly dear. You couldn't be otherwise."

"Do you think so, really? I'm awfully slighted. The Countess was implied to answer this boy's eagerness by telling him frankly just how well she thought of him, just how grateful she was for all that he had done, but she restrained herself.

"All the fellows have been spoiled, especially those two rascals," she said, coolly. After a moment she continued: "Don't stop when we get to Kirby's camp—I don't want him to think we're serious."

Neither father nor daughter was in evidence when the visitors arrived at their destination, but Danny Royal was superintending the final work upon a stout scow the seams of which were being caulked and doused with tar. Mace and sweeps were being rigged, Royal himself was painting a name on the stern.

At sight of the Countess the ex-horseman dropped his brush and thrust his hands aloft exclaiming, "Don't shoot, mamma!" His grin was friendly; there was no danger in his voice. "How you gettin' along down at your house?" he inquired.

"Very well," the Countess told him.

"Well, get loaded to-morrow," said Pierce.

"Same here," Royal advised.

"Better come to the launching ain't she a beauty?" He gazed fondly at the bluntnosed, ungraciously barge. "I'm comin' to bust a bottle of wine on her nose when she sets her feet. First rain-weather back we ever had in the family. Her name's Koutelets."

"I hope she has a safe voyage," Royal eyed the speaker meditatively.

"This trip has got my goat," he acknowledged. "Water's all right when it's cranked up and put in a glass, but—it ain't meant to hold roads with. I've heard a lot about this canon and them White Horse Rapids. Are they bad?" When the Countess nodded, his weariness faded visibly. "Gimme a horse and I'm all right, but water scares me. Well, the Koutelets's good and strong and I'm goin' to christen her with a bottle of real champagne. If there's anything in good liquor and a good name she'll be a lucky ship."

When they were out of hearing the Countess repeated: "I don't understand it. They could have gained a week."

"We could, too, if we'll limit one crew instead of those small boats," Pierce declared.

"Kirby is used to taking chances; he can risk all his eggs in one basket if he wants to, but—not I." A moment later the speaker passed to stare at a curious sight. On the beach ahead of her stood a brand-new rowboat ready for launching. Near it was assembled an outfit of gear and provisions, divided into two equal piles. Two old men, armed each with a hand-saw, were silently at work upon the skiff. They were sawing it in two, exactly in the middle, and they did not look up until the Countess greeted them.

"Hello! Changing the model of your boat?" she inquired.

The partners straightened themselves stiffly and removed their caps.

"Yes!" said Quirk, avoiding his partner's eyes.

"Changing her model," Mr. Linton chuckled, with a hand-to-hand expression.

"Dot—why? What for?"

"We've split," Mr. Quirk explained. Then he heaved a sigh. "It's made a new man of me already."

"My end will look all right when I get her boarded up," Linton vouchsafed. "But old Jerry drew the hind quarters." He shoulders heaved in silent amusement.

"Oh! Jerry?" snapped the smaller man. "Where'd you get the old dot? I've acted like a feeble-minded idiot. I'll admit—that, imposed on me by a man who's a real swell in business. Wait till you shove off in that front end, it ain't no better than being kicked and packed to death by a blunt-bladed hammer. I'd look on it as a kind of relief. Anyhow, you won't be there to see it; you'll be dead of rheumatism. I've got the tent."

"Huh! The Stove's mine. I'll make out."

"Have you men quarreled after all these years?" the Countess made bold to inquire.

Jerry answered, and it was plain that all sentiment had been consumed in the fires of his present wrath. "I don't quarrel with a

### COMES A TIME IN THE LIVES OF ALL PARENTS



DOG GONE IT, FOLKS! - I CAN'T BE TIED TO YOUR APRON STRINGS FOREVER - I GOTTA HAVE FREEDOM GOSH! - I'M GROWIN' UP NOW AN' IT'S TIME I WAS STRIKIN' OUT FOR MYSELF - YOU FOLKS IS HAMSINGIN' MY PROGRESS

dam's old fool; I give him his way." Linton's smoky eyes were blazing when he cried, indignantly: "Cut that dot" out, or I'll show you something. Your mind's gone—see! See! They call it—but I'll—"

Quirk flung down his saw and advanced belligerently around the hull of the boat. He was bristling with the desire for combat.

"What'll you show me?" he shrilly challenged. "You're longer than me, but I'll cut you down!"

The Countess stepped between the two men, crying, impatiently: "Don't be silly. You're worn out and irritable, both of you, and you're acting like perfect idiots. You'll have everybody laughing at you."

Jerry diverted his fury to this intermediary. "Is that so?" he mumbled. "Well, let 'em laugh; I'll do 'em good. You're a nice woman, but this ain't ladies' day at our club and we don't need no outside advice on how to run our party."

"Oh, very well!" The Countess shrugged and turned away, motioning Pierce to follow her. "Fight it out to suit yourselves."

Quirk muttered something about the insolence of strangers; then he picked up his saw. In silence the work was resumed, and later, when the boat had been divided, each man set about boarding up and caulking the open end of his respective half. Neither of them was expert in the use of carpenter's tools, therefore it was supper-time before they finished, and the result of their labor was nothing to be proud of. Each now possessed a craft that would float, no doubt, but which in few other respects resembled a boat. Linton's was a square-ended wedge, while Quirk's was a blunt-hinged, tabular form on the lines of a water-tight trough. They eyed the freaks with some dismay, but neither voiced

the slightest regret nor acknowledged anything but supreme satisfaction.

Without a word they gathered up their tools and separated to prepare their evening meals. Linton entered his tent, now empty, cold, and cheerless; Quirk set up his stove in the open and rigged a clumsy shelter out of a small tarpaulin. Under this he spread his share of the bedding. Engaged in this, he realized that his two blankets promised to be woefully inadequate to the weather and he cocked an apprehensive eye heavenward.

(To be Continued.)

**WALLOWA NEWS NOTES.**

**WALLOWA, Ore. (Special)**—This section of the country has been visited by frequent showers of rain during the past several days. A heavy rain fell over much of the county Monday afternoon, stopping threshing and hayting operations, while the threshing in this end of the valley has practically all been cleaned up, there yet remains many fine crops of grain in the upper part of the valley of Alder, Slope and Prairie Creek, which have not been threshed. A number of machines are busy there when the weather will permit. Farmers say help is quite scarce and hard to get, and many are compelled to run with short crews which tends to make threshing slow. A number of farmers in this section are busy cutting their third crops of alfalfa hay, which has come along rapidly making a good growth, but the rainy weather makes the curing of his hay a very difficult task. Farmers in the dry farming sections are rushing fall seeding operations, with a few having finished, the grain is coming up rapidly as the ground contains an abundance of moisture at this time.

**COUNTY MAY ADVERTISE.** WARRENTON, Ore. — Ability of making an annual tax levy for equity publicity and other important questions will be discussed at a formal dinner at the Hotel Astoria, in Astoria, at noon October 2. The dinner will be under the auspices of the Clatsop county council.

J. Clifford Bartow, secretary.

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said tonight that delegates were expected from Hammond, Warrenton, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Astoria Chamber of Commerce, Rotary club, Kiwanis club, Gryo club, Clatsop County Taxpayers' association and other organizations.

**Radio Craze Sweeps Japan.** TOKYO (AP)—The radio craze has grown to such an extent in Japan that some of the middle school authorities in Tokyo have issued orders that students shall not "listen in" during certain hours of the evening, but shall devote these hours to their studies. The school heads found upon investigation that the youngsters were neglecting their school work in the evening to listen to the radio.

**STRANGE BLOOMS FOUND.** BEND, Ore.—Belief that he has

found on the storm-swept summit of Mauden peak, 7750 feet above sea level, two species of flowers never classified by a botanist, is held by E. T. Vallant of Portland, forest service lookout on the peak this summer.

The two flowers have been given by Vallant to Professor Wilhelm (German), in charge of the Oregon building on the Lewis & Clark fair grounds in Portland. Vallant is a member of the Magamas. The peak on which he was stationed this summer is by the south part of the Bechata national forest.

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