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Beany Hendrix Of the Big Y.

By CLARISSA MACKIE.

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It was while he was riding down Little Bear trail that Beany Hendrix saw her. She was riding up the trail, and they met at the narrowest point, where the steep walls of the canyon shut out the sunlight, leaving a gloomy tunnel through which there was barely room for two riders to pass. Hendrix backed his cayuse against the rocky wall and tried to shrink his huge form into smaller compass.

She, Edith Van Tine, looked at him from the level of grave, gray eyes questioning. She bowed politely and then smiled. All women smiled when they met Hendrix's genial gaze. They smiled in approval of the warm kindness of his good looking face, at the strength of his great body and at the good heart shining through his honest brown eyes.

Miss Van Tine's smile faded, however, as she saw the narrow trail that became almost a footpath as it wound up the canyon, and her cheek paled. In spite of this formidable outlook she urged her horse forward, bravely determined not to reveal her cowardice to this big cow puncher, who sat, hat in hand, waiting for her to pass.

"You're not afraid, are you, ma'am?" he drawled as she hesitated.

"Not in the least, thank you," she replied crisply.

"I was about to say," he continued soberly, "that if you're a stranger in these parts this is a nasty bit of country for a lady to get about in alone."

"Thank you," she repeated, still more coldly, "but I—was only resting my horse."

Hendrix looked curiously solemn; indeed, his features assumed a rigid expression. One who knew might have said that Hendrix was suppressing a smile. He threw one leg over the pommel of his saddle, thus permitting his cayuse to hug the wall more closely, and looked amiably upon the pretty stranger. Pretty girls were rare in the Bear creek district.

She flushed under his frank, admiring gaze and dug her spurred heel into her horse's flank with angry impatience. The animal bounded forward, striking fire with his scattered hoofs. There was a faint cry from the girl



"LET US GO TOGETHER ALWAYS," HE SAID CONTENTEDLY.

as she dashed away, and instantly Hendrix turned his mount and followed her.

It was impossible for him to pass her on the narrow trail without inflicting serious injury to either one of them, but somehow he managed to extend his length along his horse and grasp the bridle rein of her terrified animal.

"Now," he said kindly, "just you let me follow you up till you get out of this hole. As I said before, this is a nasty bit of country for a lady to get about in."

"And as I said before," she began tartly, with eyes fixed toward the mouth of the canyon, "I'm not afraid."

"We won't quarrel about that, ma'am," returned Hendrix calmly. "There isn't room for two to quarrel here."

Edith smiled faintly. Beany Hendrix, riding at her horse's flank, could see the dimple in her cheek and the curl of her lip, and a troubled look came into his eyes, and a deep wrinkle found place between his brows.

As they passed out of the canyon and into the open she turned toward him. The smile had fled from her face, and there was a cold, hard look in the gray eyes.

"Thank you, sir, for your kindness. I believe I shall get along famously now."

Hendrix removed his hat and passed a bronzed hand through his shock of sunburnt hair. "If you will excuse me, ma'am," he said, with his slow drawl, "I'd like to say that you better ride home by the long trail; it's easy riding, and it's safer than the canyon."

"But I don't know the long trail. I have never been about here before," she returned blankly.

"I should be pleased if you will let me take you to the other trail. Oh, I'm all right," he added hastily as she turned a doubtful glance in his direction. "I'm Beany Hendrix, from the Big Y

"Beany Hendrix!" she repeated, suppressing a smile.

"You never heard of me before, I dare say, ma'am. I'm only a cow

puncher," said Hendrix, with a dogged look about his pleasant mouth.

"Your name sounds familiar," she said, with a return to her stiff manner. "I will be very grateful if you will show me the other way around."

"Certainly." He fell into line at her side, and they rode in silence for several miles. Presently Edith became conscious that the cow puncher was observing her furtively, and her cheeks flushed. She turned indignantly toward him, but he was gazing fixedly away across the plain, although there was that tense line about his jaw which indicated some repressed feeling.

"I believe he is laughing at me," she thought angrily, and then, mindful of his gentle courtesy and of the fact that he was going out of his way to make her journey safe and pleasant, she turned a softened face toward him. "I am afraid I am making you a great deal of trouble," she said.

"Not at all," he returned. "I was out looking for some stray critters. If I don't round 'em up today I will tomorrow."

"That is what I like about this western country," she said wistfully. "There isn't the hurry and bustle of the east and the undying conviction that what isn't done today will never be done at all. Every day is so crowded with events that there is no time to really live!" She spoke bitterly now, and her eyes were turned away toward the low line of serrated hills before them.

"I thought you were from the east," he said quietly. "Where are you staying?"

"At Anderson's. You like the west better than the east?" she asked timidly.

He removed his hat and looked about the level expanse of country that was visible from the slight rise they had gained, at the bending blue sky, the gray green of the sagebrush and the greener slopes of feeding grounds dotted with cattle.

"Who wouldn't?" he replied briefly. She sighed softly. "I didn't know it was so beautiful—out here," she said, rather sadly, he thought. "They said I must come for my health, and here I am."

"I came—because—somebody in the east was tired of me—said she never wanted to see me again," drawled Hendrix, turning his eyes away from her downcast face.

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed warmly. "Not that!"—She blushed vividly. "Something like that," he returned calmly.

There was silence for a time, she riding with drooping head and sad mouth and he watching her with tender pity in his eyes.

"Here is your trail, ma'am," he said at last, drawing in his horse with sudden energy.

There was a startled look in her face as she raised her eyes to his and then glanced at the well defined trail that led to Anderson's.

"It's easy to follow and will take you straight as a die to Anderson's." He pulled his horse to one side and removed his hat.

"It—it is safe for me to go—alone?" she faltered as she turned her horse into the trail and glanced appealingly at him.

Hendrix hesitated. She saw the red creep into the bronze of his cheek and a strange light invade his eyes. "Safe as time, ma'am," he said stubbornly, facing his horse about and preparing to leave her.

She rode a few paces away from him and then stopped. "Benforth," she said tremulously over her shoulder, "I don't want to go alone—any longer. I want you to come with me!"

He was at her side instantly.

"Do you mean it, Edith?" he questioned eagerly. "Do you mean it?"

"Yes," she whispered softly. "I came after you, Benforth. I wanted you! Will you come with me—now?"

"Let us go together—always," he said contentedly.

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MISCELLANEOUS.

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Notice is hereby given that there is money in the treasury to pay all general fund warrants endorsed prior to April 1, 1907, and all courthouse fund warrants endorsed prior to April 1, 1908. Interest ceases after this date. Payable at the treasurer's office at the courthouse.

WM. A. SHERMAN,
Treasurer, Clatsop County, Ore.
Astoria, Oregon, April 1, 1908.

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