



The VOICE OF THE PACK

BY EDISON MARSHALL

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TO SHOOT OR BLUFF?

Synopsis—Warned by his physician that he has not more than six months to live, Dan Felling sits dependently on a park bench, wondering where he should spend those six months. Memories of his grandfather and a deep love for all things of the wild help him in reaching a decision. In a large southern Oregon city he meets people who had known and loved his grandfather, a famous frontiersman. He makes his home with Silas Lennox, a typical westerner. The only other members of the household are Lennox's son, "Bill," and daughter, "Snowbird." Their abode is in the Umpqua divide, and there Felling plans to live out the short span of life which he has been told is his. From the first Felling's health shows a marked improvement, and in the companionship of Lennox and his son and daughter he fits into the woods life as if he had been born to it. By quick thinking and a remarkable display of "nerve" he saves Lennox's life and his own when they are attacked by a mad coyote. Lennox declares he is a reincarnation of his grandfather, Dan Felling I, whose fame as a woodsman is a household word. Dan learns that an organized band of outlaws, of which Bert Cranston is the leader, is setting forest fires. Laundry Hildreth, a former member of the gang, has been induced to turn state's evidence. Cranston shoots Hildreth and leaves him for dead. Whisperfoot, the mountain lion, springs on Hildreth and finishes him.

CHAPTER II—Continued.

And as for Whisperfoot—the terror that choked his heart with blood began to wear off in a little while. The man lay so still in the thickets. Besides, there was a strange, wild smell in the air. Whisperfoot's stroke had gone home so true there had not even been a fight. The darkness began to lift around him, and a strange exultation, a rapture unknown before in all his hunting, began to creep into his wild blood. Then, as a shadow steals, he went creeping back to his dead.

Dan Felling had been studying nature on the high ridges; and he went home by a back trail that led to old Bald mountain. The trail was just a narrow serpent in the brush; and it had not been made by gangs of laborers, working with shovels and picks. Possibly half a dozen white men, in all, had ever walked along it. It was just the path of the wild creatures, worn down by hoof and paw and cushion since the young days of the world.

It was a roundabout trail home, but yet it had its advantages. It took him within two miles of Snowbird's lookout station, and at this hour of day he had been particularly fortunate in finding her at a certain spring on the mountain side. It was rather a singular coincidence. Along about four he would usually find himself wandering up that way. Strangely enough, at the same time, it was true that she had an irresistible impulse to go down and sit in the green ferns beside the same spring. They always seemed to be surprised to see one another. In reality, either of them would have been considerably more surprised had the other failed to put in an appearance. And always they had long talks, as the afternoon drew to twilight.

"But I don't think you ought to wait so late before starting home," the girl would always say. "You're not a human hawk, and it is easier to get lost than you think."

And this solicitude, Dan rightly figured, was a good sign. There was only one objection to it. It resulted in an unmistakable inference that she considered him unable to take care of himself—and that was the last thing on earth that he wanted her to think. He understood her well enough to know that her standards were the standards of the mountains, valuing strength and self-reliance above all things. He didn't stop to question why, every day, he trod so many weary miles to be with her.

She was as natural as a fawn, and many times she had quite taken away his breath. And once she did it literally. He didn't think that so long as death spared him he would ever be able to forget that experience. It was her birthday, and knowing of it in time he had arranged for the delivery of a certain package, dear to a girlish heart, at her father's house. In the trying hour he had come trudging over the hills with it, and few experiences in his life had ever yielded such unmitigated pleasure as the sight of her, glowing white and red, as she took off its wrapping paper. It was a jolly old gift, he recollected—and when she had seen it, she fairly leaped at him. Her warm, round arms around his neck, and the softest, loveliest lips in the world pressed his. But in those days he didn't have the strength that he had now. He felt he could endure

the same experience again with no embarrassment whatever. His first impression then, besides abounding, incredible astonishment, was that she had quite knocked out his breath. But let it be said for him that he recovered with notable promptness. His own arms had gone up and closed around her, and the girl had wriggled free.

"But you mustn't do that!" she told him.

"But, good Lord, girl! You did it to me! Is there no justice in women?"

"But I did it to thank you for this lovely gift. For remembering me—for being so good—and considerate. You haven't any cause to thank me."

He had many serious difficulties in thinking it out. And only one conclusion was obtainable—that Snowbird kissed as naturally as she did anything else, and the kiss meant exactly what she said it did and no more. But the fact remained that he would have walked a good many miles farther if he thought there was any possibility of a repeat.

But all at once his fantasies were suddenly and rudely dispelled by the intrusion of realities. Dan had been walking silently himself in the pine needles. As Lennox had wondered at long ago, he knew how by instinct; and instinctively he practiced this attainment as soon as he got out into the wild. The creature he had heard was fully one hundred yards distant, yet Dan could hear him with entire plainness. And for a while he couldn't even guess what manner of thing it might be.

A cougar that made so much noise would be immediately expelled from the union. A wolf pack, running by



Dan Saw His Purpose.

sight, might crack brush as freely; but a wolf pack would also be to wake the dead. Of course it might be an elk or a steer, and still more likely, a bear. He stood still and listened. The sound grew nearer.

Soon it became evident that the creature was either walking with two legs, or else was a four-footed animal putting two feet down at the same instant. Dan had learned to wait. He stood perfectly still. And gradually he came to the conclusion that he was listening to the footfall of another man.

But it was rather hard to imagine what a man might be doing on this lonely hill. Of course it might be a deer hunter; but few were the valley sportsmen who had penetrated to this far land. The footfall was much too heavy for Snowbird. The steps were evidently on another trail that intersected his own trail one hundred yards farther up the hill. He had only to stand still, and in an instant the man would come in sight.

He took one step into the thickets, prepared to conceal himself if it became necessary. Then he waited. Soon the man stepped out on the trail.

Even at the distance of one hundred yards, Dan had no difficulty whatever in recognizing him. He could not mistake this tall, dark form, the soiled, slouchy clothes, the rough hair, the stent, dark features. It was a man about his own age, his own height, but weighing fully twenty pounds more, and the dark, narrow eyes could belong to no one but Bert Cranston. He carried his rifle loosely in his arms.

He stopped at the forks in the trail and looked carefully in all directions. Dan had every reason to think that Cranston would see him at first glance. Only one clump of thicket sheltered

him. But because Dan had learned the lesson of standing still, because his olive-drab sporting clothes blended softly with the colored leaves, Cranston did not detect him. He turned and strode on down the trail.

He didn't move quite like a man with innocent purposes. There was something stealthy, something sinister in his stride, and the way he kept such a sharp lookout in all directions. Yet he never glanced to the trail for deer tracks, as he would have done had he been hunting. Without even waiting to meditate on the matter, Dan started to shadow him.

Before one hundred yards had been traversed, he could better understand the joy the cougar takes in his hunting. It was the same process—a cautious, silent advance in the trail of prey. He had to walk with the same caution, he had to take advantage of the thickets. He began to feel a curious excitement.

Cranston seemed to be moving more carefully now, examining the brush along the trail. Now and then he glanced up at the tree tops. And all at once he stopped and knelt in the dry shrubbery.

At first all that Dan could see was the glitter of a knife blade. Cranston seemed to be whittling a piece of dead pine into fine shavings. Now he was gathering pine needles and small twigs, making a little pile of them. And then, just as Cranston drew his match, Dan saw his purpose. Cranston was at his old trade—setting a forest fire.

For two very good reasons, Dan didn't call to him at once. The two reasons were that Cranston had a rifle and that Dan was unarmed. It might be extremely likely that Cranston would choose the most plausible and effective means of preventing an interruption of his crime, and by the same token, prevent word of the crime ever reaching the authorities. The rifle contained five cartridges, and only one was needed.

But the idea of backing out, unseen, never even occurred to Dan. The fire would have a tremendous headway before he could summon help. Although it was near the lookout station, every condition pointed to a disastrous fire. The brush was dry as tinder, not so heavy as to choke the wind, but yet tall enough to carry the flame into the tree tops. The stiff breeze up the ridge would certainly carry the flame for miles through the parched Divide before help could come. In the meantime stock and lives and homes would be endangered, besides the irreparable loss of timber. There were many things that Dan might do, but giving up was not one of them.

After all, he did the wisest thing of all. He simply came out in plain sight and unconcernedly walked down the trail toward Cranston. At the same instant, the latter struck his match.

As Dan was no longer stalking, Cranston immediately heard his step. He whirled, recognized Dan, and for one long instant in which the world seemed to have time in plenty to make a complete revolution, he stood perfectly motionless. The match flared in his dark fingers, his eyes—full of singular conjecturing—rested on Dan's face. No instant of the latter's life had ever been fraught with greater peril. He understood perfectly what was going on in Cranston's mind. The fire-fred was calmly deciding whether to shoot or whether to bluff it out. One required no more moral courage than the other. It really didn't make a great deal of difference to Cranston. But he decided that the killing was not worth the cartridge. The other course was too easy. He did not even dream that Dan had been shadowing him and had seen his intention. He would have laughed at the idea that a "tenderfoot" could thus walk behind him, unheard. Without concern, he scattered with his foot the little heap of kindling, and slipping his pipe into his mouth, he touched the flaring match to it. It was a wholly admirable little piece of acting, and would have deceived any one who had not seen his previous preparations. Then he walked on down the trail toward Dan.

Dan stopped and lighted his own pipe. It was a curious little trace. And then he leaned back against the great gray trunk of a fallen tree.

"Well, Cranston," he said civilly. The men had met on previous occasions, and always there had been the same invisible war between them.

"How do you do, Felling," Cranston replied. No perceptions could be so blunt as to miss the premeditated insult in the tone. He didn't speak in his own tongue at all, the short, guttural "Howdy" that is the greeting of the mountain men. He pronounced all the words with an exaggerated precision, an unmistakable mockery of Dan's own tone. In his accent he threw a tone of sickly sweetness, and his inference was all too plain. He was simply calling Felling a milksoop and a white-liver; just as plainly as if he had used the words.

The eyes of the two men met. Cranston's lips were slightly curled in an unmistakable leer. Dan's were very straight. And in one thing at least, their eyes looked just the same. The pupils of both pairs had contracted to steel points, bright in the dark gray of the irises. Cranston's looked somewhat red; and Dan's were only hard and bright.

Snowbird to the rescue.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Has to Be Clever.

"She's a clever conversationalist." "She has to be, to cover up the breaks her husband makes."

Cupid Hath Ears

By MARTHA MACWILLIAMS.

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"I am always glad to find a widow at a house party," chuckled Ned McCrae. "Then I am sure I won't be bored. One is certain to be amused with one of the species around. I wonder why old MacNelson still follows in Hortense's wake! If she had wanted him, she'd have taken him long ago."

From her comfortable place in a hammock, under wide-spreading trees, Lila Marshall regarded Ned where he sat on a low stool near enough to keep the hammock swaying gently. "Ask me something hard!" she drawled lazily. "Horty has sense. Let her enjoy life as long as she can! Do you think that Mac as a husband would measure up to Mac the lover? I'll say he won't. Look at my worse half, playing tennis on a hot morning like this, trying to fool himself that he is young enough to attract little Peggy O'Neil! Pass the chocolates, old boy! My disillusionment hasn't affected my appetite yet."

"Oh, say, you're jealous of that child. Aren't you the silly one when it's plain as day your good old scout sees that the child is crazy about Mac and that the presence of Hortense is a real thorn in the child's quivering flesh? He's just entertaining her to keep her from missing Mac's attention. Didn't Mac rush her to death the first two days we were here, until Hortense arrived?"

Lila sat up straight. "Is that, you just get your six feet of good-looking manhood up to the court at once and make Peggy O'Neil have the time of her life!"

Ned stretched himself and dusted a fleck of imaginary dirt from his spotless flannels. "You're a cruel woman to rush me around after a fledgling who hasn't sprouted pin feathers yet. I don't like them before they're seasoned. It's so much more comfortable to talk to a finished product like you. A man doesn't have to exert himself—"

Lila grinned indulgently. "And he's safe, playing around married women. Go on, brace up, Ned! You're a good sort. Assume your own responsibilities in the world. A real love would do wonders for you."

It was not until that evening at dinner that a complication of affairs began to be subtly manifested to the guests. Peggy O'Neil was the personification of springtime. In a little apple-green frock, and a wisp of flesh-colored tulle displaying rather than hiding the beauty of her white throat and arms, she made a striking contrast to the handsome Hortense, around whose flashing black eyes and too red lips the acid of time was already etching unmistakable lines. A man would have had no heart if he had not been attracted to Peggy that night, her fresh innocent loveliness, her big, dream-filled eyes, her flattering attention to those around her. Lila's shrewd eyes soon saw evidence that she had certainly started something when she had sent handsome Ned McCrae toward the tennis court that morning. For Ned, after years of philandering, seemed "hard hit" by the sweet young girl just out of school. And MacNelson for the first time in his three years arduous pursuit of the gay, fascinating widow was watching Peggy with an undeniable light in his face.

Afterward, when there was dancing in the big ballroom on the third floor, it appeared even to Hortense that good, dependable Mac was roving at last. And just then, fate stepped in and took a hand in the game.

Mac had been out somewhere on the lantern-decked balcony with the pretty exponent of springtime when he suddenly presented himself before Hortense. "Gee, he said, 'I've got the devil of a toothache. What in the Sam Hill am I going to do about it, way out here in the country? I've taken on a couple of drinks but they don't help a bit.'"

Hortense rose quickly. There seemed to be a motherly quality in the touch of her white hand on his arm. "Come on down stairs to the den and I'll fix you up! I'll stop on the way and get my medicine case out of my room. I travel prepared for any and all emergencies."

"Spoken just like a true widow," laughed one of the men sitting near.

When Hortense entered the cozy little den a few minutes later she found poor Mac huddled on the couch, his face buried in the cushions. Nothing on earth can so unnerve a man as a cruelly aching molar when he is miles away from dental help. "Here, swallow this!" she commanded, sitting down beside him. She gave him a little white tablet. "Then I'll paint around the tooth with iodine and acetone and by that time the molar will be here with a hot water bottle. I'll fix you up in no time."

And she did. Poor Mac, in the act of dozing off in blissful relief from pain, reached out and patted the widow's hand. "Good old girl," he sighed happily. "You're much better for me than one of these little young things that don't know how to make a man comfortable." And after that he slept, hot water bottle clutched tightly to his face.

Hortense regarded him with eyes from which the scales had suddenly been snatched. He was thinking—possibly thinking seriously of that

young thing upstairs, that pretty little creature on whose soft cheeks the down of babyhood still lingered. Mac—why, he had belonged to her for three years. He had been her constant cavalier. He had never allowed her to be lonely or to feel, in a moment of depression, that she did not belong to any one. Suppose Mac should fall in love with Peggy! Perhaps he had already. Her heart grew very tender toward him. She pulled a light cover over his shoulders, tucking it solicitously about him. It would not do for him to take cold while a tooth was on a rampage.

At first the sound was soft like the contented purring of a kitten that has just lapped up a bowl of cream. Then it grew a bit harsher until finally it rose and rose with the raucous hideousness of a giant file being scraped across an iron bar. Mac's mouth became a volcano, emitting frightful sounds.

Hortense moved her chair back from him a little. It was terrible. She wished suddenly that the pretty Peggy would run down the stairs and happen to pass the door. A sight like Mac with his mouth open and snoring so fervently would forever destroy any illusions she might have about the fascinating man. But Peggy did not come. Ned was conducting one of those whirlwind campaigns that sweep so many girls into bondage before they are aware of the chains.

Suddenly Mac opened his eyes and gropingly held out a hand to her. "Marry me, my dear, or cut the strings that bind! You've been a good pal for a long time."

Hortense laughed shakily. "I—I was thinking of marrying you, Mac, but—but you snored just now, Ugh!" She shuddered a little. "It was terrible, Mac, really, terrible! It sounded like a buzz saw."

From upstairs came a gale of light laughter, with the tinkling, musical ripple of the very young. Mac sat up alertly. There was an expectant look on his handsome face. "So, you are going to cut the strings, then? I'm not going to hang on forever, Horty, honest, now." He touched his cheek where the pain had lately attacked him. A smile of gratitude came into his eyes. "You'd be such a comfortable sort of wife Horty, and—and I'm used to you. Can't you, now? Say?"

All at once Hortense capitulated. Perhaps it was another burst of laughter from upstairs that determined her. "Snoring's not the worst fault a man can have, Mac," she consoled herself. "I think—perhaps—well, I know this time, it's—yes."

KINSHIP TIES ARE STRONGEST

Bond of Brothers and Sisters is Closer Than That of Sweethearts.

Pauline is an only child; for her one gateway into romance is barred and bolted. No childish memories of joys and sorrows shared in the earliest, most impressionable years will forge for her the strongest of all chains—that between children born of the same parents.

In Serbian folk lore the tie between brother and sister is more often the theme of romance than that between sweethearts—in this tie of kinship lies a mystic significance. George Eliot recognized it in "The Mill on the Floss," the great English classic of brotherly and sisterly love.

In "Wuthering Heights" Catherine Earnshaw cries out passionately of Heathcliff, "He's more myself than I am! Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same."

Such a bond as there was between those two—strange, combative, but all powerful—is seen many a time between brother and brother, sister and sister—perhaps most of all between brother and sister—a bond which finds no expression in caresses or words of affection—but is nevertheless strong unto death, its origin sunk deep in elemental truth.

Sweethearts may kiss and cling and swear eternal fealty; marry; then tire, and seek divorce—but who shall ever be divorced from that elemental tie of kinship? "Am I my brother's keeper?" asked Cain, and throughout the ages some deep instinct has answered "yes."

Thus it is that to many an only child is a pathetic, if not a tragic figure, barred from a thousand joys and hopes and purifying sorrows, too. Pauline may have hosts of friends when she is grown up; she may marry and have children—but there is one most precious comradeship in life that she will never know.—London Mail.

Globe Lightning.

Joseph H. Krauss, editor of Science and Invention, went a long way toward reproducing that most puzzling of all big electrical phenomena, "globe" or "ball" lightning. This seems to be produced when a fork of lightning strikes in such manner that it is not immediately conducted away. It then forms an incandescent ball, which hisses over the ground with miraculous speed in an irregular course, and is finally dissipated, sometimes with a powerful explosion. It may last several seconds, and in this brief time can do great damage. It has been known, said Mr. Krauss, to bore its way through the walls of a building like a bullet.

There's the Difference.

The wise producer looks to the "fixing of his fences." The plodder goes along haphazard and howls at conditions and the lack of profit, but does nothing and gets nowhere.—F. P. Willits.

POULTRY FLOCKS

EGGS FROM BACK YARD FLOCK

Owner Should Be Satisfied With No Less Than Ten Dozen Eggs Per Hen, Say Experts.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

The average novice can reasonably expect to get an average of at least ten dozen eggs per hen a year from his small flock in the back yard, say poultry specialists of the United States Department of Agriculture. On the basis of two hens to each member of the family this will give 20 dozen eggs a year to each person, which amount is about half way between the general average of farm and city consumption. No back-yard poultry keeper should be satisfied with less than this. He should try, however, to get as much more as possible.

To provide an egg a day for each person two hens would have to lay 183 eggs each a year. This is by no means an impossible average for small flocks. It is perhaps not too much to



A Common Mongrel Back Yard Flock.

say that in case, where the person attending the flock is in a position to look after the wants of the birds three or more times a day an average of better than thirteen dozen eggs per hen can be secured if the hens are mature and in good condition at the start, and have the vitality to carry them through a year of heavy laying.

For the farm the average of 100 eggs per hen is advised as the lowest that should be accepted as satisfactory, while for the back yard 120 is insisted upon as the lowest average, although in general the conditions in back yards are less favorable to poultry keeping than on farms.

WHY CULLING IS PROFITABLE

Unculled Flock of 992 Hens Laid 3,576 Eggs in Week and 3,520 With 79 Taken Out.

An unculled flock of 992 hens laid 3,576 eggs in the week before being culled. Seventy-nine weak layers were cast out. The culled flock of 913 came right back the next week with a record of 3,520 eggs, while the 79 culls, living under precisely similar conditions, and doing their very best, were laying only 85 eggs. The market value of the eggs laid by the culls was around \$3.50. The cost of feed alone for them at a cent a day for each hen was \$5.53 for the week. Figures like these, say the poultry specialists at the university farm, show the importance of keeping only the best layers. Lessons driven home in the farm bureau's and extension division's campaign for frequent culling of flocks should put thousands of dollars in the pockets of poultry raisers.

GEESE ARE QUITE PECULIAR

Different From Other Fowls as They Must Be Mated Previous to Breeding Season.

Geese are peculiar animals. They ought to be mated several months prior to the breeding season to obtain the best results; therefore breeding stock should be bought in the fall, and all changes in matings made then. Matings are not changed from year to year unless results are unsatisfactory. And this is the peculiar feature of it. If the matings are changed, it is necessary, usually, to keep the previously mated geese so far apart they cannot hear each other.



Keep them always in reach, plenty of gravel or grit and a good dry dust bath for the fowls.

Give the growing stock all they want to eat. They won't pay unless they grow, and they can't grow unless well fed.

Separate the males and females. Both will stand the hot summer weather better if separated, and the eggs will also keep better.

Hens need fresh water as much as do horses. During these hot summer days they will suffer greatly unless they have constant access to it.

The farmer who fails to save some of his choicest second-growth clover for the hens during the winter will miss one of the best egg producing feeds we have.