

# The Silver Horde

By REX BEACH

Author of "The Spoilers" and "The Barrier"

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## SYNOPSIS OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS.

Boyd Emerson and "Fingerless" Fraser enter Kalvik, Alaska, and meet a young white woman, Cherry Malotte, who shelters them.

Cherry describes the salmon fisheries and Marsh, the unscrupulous head of the Kalvik cannery.

Cherry owns a cannery site. Emerson, George Balt and she go into partnership. Emerson describes his failure to "make good" in Alaska.

Emerson kisses Cherry goodbye. Balt, Fraser and Emerson nearly lose their lives in Katmat pass and miss the steamer at Katmat on their way out to get capital.

After dreadful privations they catch the boat at Kadlak and are seen en route for Chicago. Emerson seeks Miss Mildred Wayland.

She and Emerson are engaged. Her father, Wayne Wayland, is a millionaire. Alton Clyde offers \$10,000 toward the cannery.

Balt and Emerson meet Marsh in Chicago. Marsh is a suitor for Mildred's hand. Marsh tells Mildred about Cherry Malotte. He and Wayne Wayland plan a cannery trust.

Mildred learns that Emerson and Cherry are partners. Banker Hilliard, Seattle, refuses to lend Emerson \$100,000. Cherry, who has arrived in Seattle, accepts a dinner invitation from Hilliard.

Cherry discovers that Emerson is to marry Mildred. Marsh causes annoying delays for Emerson's party. Tacoma refuses Emerson a loan. Clyde suggests that Cherry can get the loan from Hilliard.

Emerson estranges Cherry by criticizing her friendly relations with Hilliard. Cherry severs Hilliard, who unexpectedly furnishes the money. Marsh causes a strike, delaying the loading of Emerson's machinery.

"No, I was so com-cussed lately I picked that I forgot I even spoke about the salmon canning business. I'll break my cork-screw and seal my flask, and from this moment until we come out next fall the demon rum and I are divorced. Is that good news?"

"Everything is a joke to you, isn't it?" said Boyd. "If this trip doesn't make a man of you, you'll never grow up."

As if Hilliard's conversion had marked the turning point of their luck, the partners now entered upon a period of almost uninterrupted success. Boyd signed his charter, securing a tramp steamer then discharging at Tacoma. Balt closed his contracts for Chinese labor, and the scattered carloads of material which had been lost en route or mysteriously laid out on shingles began to come in as if of their own accord.

A brigade of orientals and a miniature army of fishermen had appeared as if by magic and were quartered in the lower part of the city awaiting shipment. At the dock one throbbing April evening the Bedford Castle berthed, ready to receive her cargo, and the two men made their way toward their hotel, weary, but glowing with the grateful sense of an arduous duty well performed. The following morning would find the wharf swarming with stevedores and echoing to the rattle of trucks, the clank of hoists and the shrill whistles of the signalmen.

"Looks like they couldn't stop us now," said Balt.

"It does," agreed Emerson. "We ought to clear in four days—that'll be the 15th."

"It smells like an early spring, too," the fisherman observed, sniffing the air. "If it is we'll be in Kalvik the first week in May."

"I'm off to tell Cherry," said Boyd.

His course took him past Hilliard's bank, and when abreast of it he nearly collided with a man who came hurrying forth. In the well-groomed, fery-haired, plump figured man Emerson recognized the manager of the North American Packers' association.

"Good evening, Mr. Marsh."

Marsh whirled about. "Eh? Ah? Why, yes, it's Emerson."

Marsh informed Boyd of the anger of Mildred's father at his canning enterprise and also that Mildred and Mr. Wayland were to visit Kalvik on a yachting tour. Emerson was greatly amazed at this information; also he realized that Marsh had arrived on the spot because Hilliard had granted his opponents their needed loan. The men separated.

The next morning Balt rushed in on Emerson with news that the laborers loading the Bedford Castle had gone on a strike because the captain, Penseley, had refused a demand of \$2,000 by the union.

"It's Marsh again," said Big George.

"Yes," Emerson answered; "it's a boldup pure and simple." A look of intense anxiety came into his eyes.

When Boyd returned some two hours later he found the dock deserted save for Big George, who prowled watchfully about the freight piles.

"Well, did you fix it up?" the fisherman inquired.

"No," exclaimed Boyd. "It's a rank frame-up, and I refused to be bled."

"Good for you."

"There are some things a fellow's manhood won't stand for. I'll carry that freight aboard with my own hands before I'll be robbed by a labor union at the bidding of Willis Marsh."

"Say, will you let me load this ship my way?" George asked.

"Can you do it?"

Balt's thick lips drew back from his yellow teeth in that smile which Em-

son had come to recognize as a harbinger of the violent acts that rejoiced his lawless soul.

"Listen," said he, with a chuckle. "Down the street yonder I've got a hundred fishermen. Half of them are drunk at this minute and the rest are half-drunk."

"Then they are of no use to us."

"I don't reckon you ever seen a herd of Kalvik fishermen out of a job, did you? Well, there's just two things they know, fishing and fighting, and this ain't the fishing season. When they hit Seattle the police force goes up into the residence section and stuffs cotton in its ears, because the only thing that is strong enough to stand between a uniform and a fisherman is a bill."

"Can you induce them to work?"

"I can. All I'm afraid of is that I can't induce them to quit. They're liable to put his freight aboard the Bedford Castle and then pull down the dock in a spirit of playfulness and pile it in Captain Penseley's cabin. There ain't no convulsion of nature that's equal to a gang of idle fishermen."

"When can they begin?"

"Well, it will take me all night to round them up, and I'll have to be four or five, but there ought to be a dozen or two on hand in the morning." George cast a rying eye over the warehouse from the heavy planking underfoot to the wide spanning rafters above. "Yes," he concluded, "I don't see nothing breakable, so I guess it's safe."

"Would you like me to go with you?"

The giant considered him speculatively. "I don't think so. I ain't never seen you in action. No, you better stay here and arrange to guard this stuff till morning. I'll do the rest."

The following morning, true to his word, the big fellow walked into the warehouse followed by a score or more of burly fishermen.

Balt bore signs of strife. The big man's lips were cut, while back of one ear a knot had sprung up overnight like a fungus.

They fell to work quickly, stripping themselves to their undershirts; they manned the hoists, seized trucks and bale hooks and began their tasks with a thoroughly nonunion energy. Some of them were still so drunk that they staggered, their awkwardness affording huge sport to their companions, yet even in their intoxication they were surprisingly capable. George sought out Boyd and proudly inquired:

"What do you think of them, eh?"

"They are splendid. But where are the others?"

"Well, there are two or three that won't be able to get around at all." He meditatively stroked the knuckles of his right hand, which were badly bruised. "But the balance will be here tomorrow. These are just the mildest mannered ones—the family men, you might say. The others will show up gradual."

The work had not continued many hours before a stranger made his way in upon the dock and began to argue with the first fisherman he met. Boyd, approaching him, demanded:

"What do you want?"

"Nothing," said the newcomer.

"Then get out."

"What for? I'm just talking to this man."

"Will you go?"

"Say, you can't load that cargo this way," the man began threateningly. "And you can't make me go."

At which Emerson seized him by the collar and quickly disproved the assertion, to the great delight of the fishermen. He thrust him out into the street.

"I'm a union man, and you can't load that ship with 'embs." The stranger swore as he slunk off.

The first actual violence, however, occurred when the fishermen knocked off for the noon hour. Boyd called up the police department, then summoned Big George. It was with considerable difficulty that the nonunion crew fought its way back to resume work at 1 o'clock.

During the afternoon the strikers made several attempts to enter the dock shed, and it required a firm stand by the guards to restrain them.

The next morning found the nonunion men out in such force that they were divided into a night and a day crew, half of them being sent back to report later, while among the mountains of freight the work went forward faster than ever. But in time the city awoke to the realization that a serious conflict was in progress. The handful of fishermen, outnumbered twenty to one and guarded only by a thin line of pickets, became a center of general interest.

It was on the fourth day that Boyd espied the man in the gray suit among the strikers and pointed him out to his three companions, Clyde and Fraser having joined him and George in a spirit of curiosity.

Late in the afternoon, without a moment's warning, the strikers rushed in a body, bearing down the guards like reeds.

Emerson and his companions found

themselves carried away before the onslaught like chips in the surf, then sucked into a maelstrom where the first duty was self preservation. Boyd succeeded in keeping his footing and eventually fought his way to a backing of crated machinery, where he stooped and ripped a cleat loose. Then, laying about him with this weapon, he cleared a space.

At the first alarm the fishermen had armed themselves with bale hooks and bludgeons and for a time worked havoc among their assailants.

Seeing Clyde in a helpless condition, Emerson shouted:

"Come on! I'll help you aboard the ship." He found a hardwood club beneath his feet and with it cleared a pathway for Clyde and himself. He suddenly spied the man in the gray suit, who had climbed upon one of the freight piles, whence he was scanning the crowd. The man recognized Emerson and pointed him out. The next instant Boyd saw him approaching, followed by several others. Then, though Boyd fell back farther, the others rushed in and he found himself hard beset. What happened thereafter neither he nor Alton Clyde, who was half dazed to begin with, ever clearly remembered.

Before he had recognized the personal nature of the assault Emerson found himself engaged in a furious hand to hand struggle. Then a sudden blackness swallowed him up, after which he found himself upon his knees, his arms loosely encircling a pair of legs. As he struggled upward something smote him in the side with sickening force, and he went to his knees again.

He could only raise his shoulder and fling an arm weakly above his head in anticipation of the crushing blow he



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thought was coming. But it did not descend. Instead he heard a gunshot. A weight sank across his calves. Then, with a final effort, he pulled himself free and staggered to his feet, his head reeling, his knees sagging. He saw a man's figure facing him and lunged at it to bring up in the arms of "Fingerless" Fraser.

Boyd turned and beheld the body of a man stretched face downward on the floor. Beyond the fellow in the gray suit was disappearing into the crowd. Then he saw a gleam of blue metal in Fraser's hands.

"Give me that gun!" he panted.

"I may need it myself, and I ain't got but the one here. Let's get Clyde out of this."

Fraser lifted the young clubman, who was huddled in a formless heap as if he had fallen from a great height, and together the two dragged him toward the Bedford Castle.

That night under glaring headlines the evening papers told the story, reporting one fisherman fatally hurt, one striker dead of a gunshot wound and many others injured.

## CHAPTER XII.

**A** HALF mile from Captain Penseley's ship the rival company tenders were loading rapidly with union labor. The next day Emerson and Clyde drove down to the dock with Cherry in a closed carriage, experiencing no annoyance beyond some jeers and insults as they passed through the picket line. Boyd had barely seen them comfortably established on board when up the ship's gangway came "Fingerless" Fraser radiantly attired, three heavily laden hotel porters groaning at his back, the customary thick waisted cigar between his teeth.

"Are you going with us?" Boyd inquired.

"Sure."

"See here! Is life one long succession of surprise parties with you?"

"Why, I've figured on this right along."

"But the ship is jammed now. There is no room."

"Oh, I fixed that up long ago. I am going to bunk with the steward."

"Well, why in the world didn't you let us know you were coming?"

"Say, don't kid yourself. You know I couldn't stay behind." Fraser blew a cloud of smoke airily. "I never start anything I can't finish, I keep telling you, and I'm going to put this deal through now that I've got it started." With a half embarrassed laugh and a complete change of manner, he laid his hand upon Boyd's shoulder, saying: "Pal, I ain't much good to myself or anybody else, but I like you and I want to stick around. Maybe I'll come in useful yet—you can't tell."

Emerson had never glimpsed this side of the man's nature, and it rather surprised him.

(To be continued.)

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