

The CROSS-CUT

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CHAPTER XIX

He stooped and Anita, laughing at her posture, clambered upon his back, her arms about his neck. Fairchild found himself wishing that he could carry her forever, and that the road to the sheriff's office were twenty miles away instead of two. But her voice cut in on his wishes.

"I can walk now. We can get along so much faster!" came her plea. "I'll hold on to you—and you can help me along."

Fairchild released her and she seized his arm. Once, as they floundered through a knee-high mass, Fairchild's arm went quickly about her waist and he lifted her against him as he literally carried her through. When they reached the other side, the arm still held its place—and she did not resist. Some way, after that, the stretch of road faded swiftly. Almost before he realized it, they were at the outskirts of the city.

Grudgingly he gave up his hold upon her, as they hurried for the sidewalks and for the sheriff's office. There Fairchild did not attempt to talk—he left it all to Anita, and Bardwell, the sheriff, listened. Taylor Bill had confessed to the robbery at the Old Times dance and to his attempt to so arrange the evidence that the blame would fall on Harry. Taylor Bill and Blindeye Bozeman had been caught at work in a cross-cut tunnel which led to the property of the Blue Poppy mine, and one of them, at least, had admitted that the sole output of the Silver Queen had come from this thieving encroachment. Then Anita completed the recital—of the plans of the Rodaines to leave and of their departure for Center City. At last, Fairchild spoke, and told the happenings which he had encountered in the ramshackle house occupied by Crazy Laura. It was sufficient. The sheriff reached for the telephone.

"No need for hurry," he announced. "Young Rodaine can't possibly make that trip in less than two hours. We've got plenty of time—hello—Central! Long distance, please. What's that? Yeh—Long Distance. Want to put in a call for Center City." A long wait, while a metallic voice streamed over the wire into the sheriff's ear. He hung up the receiver. "Blocked," he said shortly. "The wire's down."

"But there's the telegraph!"

"It'd take half an hour to get the operator out of bed—office is closed. Nope. We'll take the short cut. And we'll beat him there by a half-hour!" Anita started.

"You mean the Argonaut tunnel?"

"Yes. Call up there and tell them to get a motor ready for us to shoot straight through. We can make it at thirty miles an hour, and the skip in the Reunion mine will get us to the surface in five minutes. The tunnel ends sixteen hundred feet underground, about a thousand feet from Center City," he explained, as he noted Fairchild's wondering gaze. "You stay here. I'll be getting my car warmed up to take us to the tunnel."

A thumping sound came from without. Harry entered with his two charges, followed shortly by Bardwell, the sheriff, while just beneath the office window a motor roared in the process of "warming up."

A moment more and a steel door clanged upon the two men, while the officer led the way to his motor car. There he looked quizzically at Anita Richmond, piling without hesitation into the front seat.

"You going too?"

"I certainly am," and she covered her intensity with a laugh. "There are a number of things that I want to say to Mr. Maurice Rodaine—and I haven't the patience to wait!"

Bardwell chuckled. The doors of the car slammed and the engine roared louder than ever. Soon they were churning along through the driving snow toward the great buildings of the Argonaut Tunnel company, far at the other end of town. There men awaited them, and a tram motor, together with its operator. The four pursuers took their places on the benches of the car behind the motor. The trolley was attached. Then clattering over the frogs, green lights flashing from the trolley wire, the speeding journey was begun.

Three miles, four, five, while Anita Richmond held close to Fairchild as the speed became greater and the sparks from the wire above threw their green, vicious light over the yawning stretch before them. A last spurt, slightly down-grade, with the motor pushing the wheels at their greatest velocity; then the crackling of electricity suddenly ceased, the motor slowed in its progress, finally to stop.

A greasy being faced them and Bardwell, the sheriff, shouted his mission. "Got to catch some people that are making a get-away through Center City. Can you send us up in the skip?"

"Yes, two at a time."

"All right!" The sheriff turned to Harry. "You and I'll go on the first trip and hurry for the Ohadi road. Fairchild and Miss Richmond will wait for the second and go to Sheriff Mason's office and tell him what's up. Meet us there," he said to Fairchild, as he went forward.

A long wait followed while Fairchild strove to talk of many things—and failed in all of them. Things were happening too swiftly for them to be put into crisp sentences by a man whose thoughts were muddled by the fact that beside him waited a girl in a whipcord riding suit—the same girl who had leaped from an automobile on the Denver highway and—

It crystallized things for him momentarily.

"I'm going to ask you something after a while—something that I've wondered and wondered about. I know it wasn't anything—but—"

She laughed at him.

"You really didn't think I was the Smelter bandit, did you?"

"Darned if I know what I thought. And I don't know what I think yet."

"It's very, very awful!" came in a low, mock-awful voice. "But—then the laugh came again—"maybe if you're good and—well, maybe I'll tell you after a while."

"Honest?"

"Of course I'm honest! Isn't that the skip?"

Fairchild walked to the skip, stepped in, and lifted Anita to his side.

The journey was made in darkness—darkness which Fairchild longed to turn to his advantage, darkness which seemed to call to him to throw his arms about the girl at his side, to crush her to him, to seek out with an instinct that needed no guiding light the laughing, pretty lips which had caused him many a day of happiness, many a day of worried wonderment. He strove to talk away the desire—but the grinding of the wheels in the narrow shaft denied that. His fingers twitched, his arms trembled as he sought to hold back the muscles, then, yielding to the impulse, he started—

"Da-a-a-gone it!"

"What's the matter?"

"Nothing."

But Fairchild wasn't telling the truth. They had reached the light just at the wrong, wrong moment. Out of the skip he lifted her, then inquired the way to the sheriff's office of this, a new county. The direction was given, and they went there. They told their story. "You say Bardwell and your partner went out on the Ohadi road to head the young 'un off?"

"Yes. Do you think—?"

But a noise from without cut off the conversation. Stamping feet sounded on the steps, the knob turned, and Sheriff Bardwell, snow-white, entered, shaking himself like a great dog, as he sought to rid himself of the effects of the blizzard.

"Hello, Bardwell, what'd you find?"

The sheriff of Clear Creek county glanced toward Anita Richmond.

"No matter how much a person dislikes another one—it's, it's—always a shock."

Anita came closer. "You mean that he's dead?" The sheriff nodded. "He must have rushed his horse too hard. When we got to him he was just about gone—tried to stagger to his feet when we came up, but couldn't make it. Kind of acted like he'd lost his senses through fear or exposure or something. Asked me who I was, and I said Bardwell. Seemed to be tickled to hear my name—but he called it Barnham. Then he got up on his hands and knees and clutched at me and asked me if I'd drawn out all the money and had it safe. Just to humor him, I said I had. He tried to say something after that, but it wasn't much use. The first thing we knew he'd passed out. That's where Harry is now—took him over to the mortuary. There isn't anybody named Barnham, is there?"

"Barnham?" The name had awakened recollections for Fairchild; "why he's the fellow that—"

But Anita cut in.

"He's a lawyer in Denver. They've been sending all the income from stock sales to him for deposit. If Maurice asked if he'd gotten the money out, it must mean that they meant to run with all the proceeds. We'll have to telephone Denver."

The message went through. Then the two sheriffs rose and looked at their revolvers.

"Now for the tough one," Bardwell made the remark, and Mason smiled grimly. Fairchild rose and went to them.

"May I go along?"

"Yes, but not the girl. Not this time."

Anita did not demur. Fairchild walked to her side.

"You won't run away," he begged.

"I'll be right here," she answered, and with that assurance, he followed the other two men out into the night.

Far down the street, where the rather bleak outlines of the hotel showed bleaker than ever in the frigid night, a light was gleaming in a second-story window. Mason turned to his fellow sheriff.

"He usually stays there. That must be him—waiting for the kid."

The three entered. Tiptoeing, they went to the door and knocked. A high-pitched voice came from within.

"That you, Maurice?"

Fairchild answered in the best imitation he could give.

"Yes. I've got Anita with me."

Steps, then the door opened. For just a second Squint Rodaine stared at them in ghastly, sickly fashion. Then he moved back into the room, still facing them.

"What's the idea of this?" came his forced query. Fairchild stepped forward.

"Simply to tell you that everything's blown up as far as you're concerned, Mr. Rodaine."

"You needn't be so dramatic about it. You act like I'd committed a murder! What've I done that you should—"

"Just a minute. I wouldn't try to act innocent. For one thing, I happened to be in the same house with you one night when you showed Crazy Laura, your wife, how to make people immortal. And we'll probably learn a few more things about your character when we've gotten back there and interviewed—"

He stopped his accusations to leap forward, clutching wildly. But in vain. With a lunge, Squint Rodaine had turned, then, springing high from the floor, had seemed to double in the



Crashed Through the Window.

air as he crashed through the big pane of the window and out to the twenty-foot plunge which awaited him. Hurriedly they gained the window, but already the form of Rodaine had unrolled itself from the snow bank into which it had fallen, dived beneath the protection of the low coping which ran above the first-floor windows of the hotel, skirted the building in safety and whirled into the alley that lay beyond. Squint Rodaine was gone. Frantically, Fairchild turned for the door, but a big hand stopped him.

"Let him go—let him think he's gotten away," said grizzled Sheriff Mason. "He ain't got a chance. There's snow everywhere—and we can trail him like a bound dog trailing a rabbit. And I think I know where he's bound for. Whatever that was you said about Crazy Laura hit awful close to home. It ain't going to be hard to find that ratter!"

CHAPTER XX

Quietly, as though nothing had happened, the three men went down the stairs, passed the sleeping night clerk, and headed back to the sheriff's office, where waited Anita and Harry, who had completed his last duties in regard to the chalk-faced Maurice Rodaine. The telephone jangled. It was Denver. Mason talked a moment over the wire then turned to his fellow officer.

"They've got Barnham. What's more, he had close to a million dollars in currency strapped around him. Guess we'd better stir up some horses now and chase along, hadn't we?"

"Yes, and get a gentle one for me," cautioned Harry.

"That goes for me, too," laughed Fairchild.

"And me—I like automobiles better." Anita was twisting her long hair into a braid, to be once more shoved under her cap. The start was made.

A detour, then the tracks led the way to the Ohadi road, and behind them came the pursuers, heads down against the wind, horses snorting and coughing as they forced their way through the big drifts, each following one another for the protection it afforded. A long, silent, cold-gripped two hours—then finally the lights of Ohadi.

But even then the trail was not difficult. The little town was asleep; hardly a track showed in the streets beyond the hoofprints of a horse leading up the principal thoroughfare and on out to the Georgeville road. Onward until before them was the bleak, rat-ridden old roadhouse which formed Laura's home, and a light was gleaming within.

Silently the pursuers dismounted and started forward, only to stop short. A scream had come to them, faint in the bluster of the storm, the racking scream of a woman in a tem-

pest of anger, suddenly the light seemed to bob about in the old house; it showed first at one window—then another—as though some one were running from room to room. Once two gaunt shadows stood forth—of a crouching man and a woman, one hand extended in the air, as she whirled the lamp before her for an instant and brought herself between its rays and those who watched.

(To be Continued.)

BEND REBEKAHS WIN IN DEGREE CONTEST

Work Staged by Both Teams Near Perfect, Judges Find—Next Competition in May

With both teams staging degree work which was adjudged nearly perfect, the Bend Rebekah Lodge managed to gain a victory over the visitors from Silver Lake Friday night, with the result that the trophy cup will remain in Bend at least until May, when another contest in degree work will be held. Averaging of the judges' grading gave Bend a percentage of 99.3-5, Silver Lake 99.2-5. Judges were Mrs. J. F. Carey of Tumalo, Mrs. N. H. Pinkerton of Redmond and Mrs. P. N. Armstrong, a member of the order in Colorado.

Over 120 Rebekahs attended the meeting at Sather's hall last night. A hot supper was served at 2 o'clock this morning.

Members of the local team were: Louise Grimes, noble grand; Lillian Van Matre, vice grand; Mamie Bennett, chaplain; Dorothy Nedrow, past grand; Retta Fagg, warden; Florence Friedley, conductress; Vora Bevans, Beattie Hearn, Margaret Wise, Mary Kelley, Maude Shuey, Gall Ingeman, Marie St. Clair, Eva Winters, Caroline Horner, Julia Catlow, Mildred Brentano, Loretta Springer, Minnie Ayres, Minnie Sanders, Alice McReynolds, Ada Montague, Dorcas McMunn, Richard Wise, F. J. Steinhauer, W. E. Sanders; Bertha Morgan, captain; and Sadie Niswonger, musician.

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YEAR'S LUMBER OUTPUT NEARLY DOUBLE 1921 CUT

207,000,000 Feet Produced in County

MORE SEEN FOR 1923

New Units Now Under Construction to Add to Total—Shevlin-Hixon Increase Large—New Mills Started as Market Improves

Deschutes county's lumber output for 1922 will be nearly twice that of 1921, according to estimates made last week, which show that at the end of the present month approximately 207,000,000 feet will have been put out, as compared to 107,000,000 for the year previous.

A large share of the increase must be credited to the Bend mills, although the improvement in the lumber market has also been reflected in the establishment of a number of new mills of smaller capacity in the county. With the market still good, and both The Shevlin-Hixon Company and the Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Co. building new units, which will be in operation early in the new year, this total is almost certain to be eclipsed by the 1923 output.

Oreweller Cut Doubles The Shevlin-Hixon Company made

the greatest increase this year, with 110,000,000 feet, as compared to 40,000,000 feet in 1921, when the mill was entirely shut down for a part of the year and ran only eight hours a day for a further period. The Brooks-Scanlon Lumber Co. also showed a large increase, cutting 85,000,000 feet this year against 57,000,000 for 1921.

Due to a long delay in starting the sawing season, due to weather conditions, the McKinley-Hampson Lumber Co. did not saw so much lumber this year as last, cutting 3,000,000 feet. The 1921 figure was 7,000,000 feet. The Oreweller mills more than doubled their output this year, cutting about 6,000,000 feet.

New Mill Operated

The J. N. Masten mill at La Pine, operated this year for the first time, adds 2,000,000 feet to the total. The J. P. Duckett mill at Sisters cut 1,000,000, and the Michaels Brothers mill sawed 400,000, its cut being reduced when fire destroyed the mill, making rebuilding necessary. The Deschutes Lumber Co., whose cut was included in the total for last year, has moved its mill to Crook county.

3 SCARLET FEVER CASES LAST WEEK

Three scarlet fever patients were quarantined in Bend last week, bringing the total back to 17; but unless more cases appear, the number quarantined will be greatly reduced early next week, reports City Physician C. A. Fowler. Alexander Murray, James Olson and Irene Brevold were the patients quarantined.

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