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Both days of the journey home he wakened sharply at dawn. The cool, morning hours were the best for travel. He was of naturally strong physique, and although the days fatigued him unmercifully, he always wakened refreshed in the dawn. At noon he would stop to lunch, eating a few pieces of jerkey and frying a single flapjack in his skillet. And usually, during the noon rest, he would practice with his rifle.

He knew that if he were to fight the Turners, skill with a rifle was an absolute necessity; such skill as would have felled the grizzly with one shot instead of administering merely a flesh wound, accuracy to take off the head of a grouse at fifty yards and at the same time, an ability to swing and aim the weapon in the shortest possible space of time. The only thing that retarded him was the realization that he must not waste too many cartridges. Elms had brought him only a small supply.

man half turned about, giving the girl an instant's glimpse of something that she transferred from her breast to her sleeve. It was slender and of steel, and it caught the moonlight on its shining surface.

The girl's eyes glittered when she beheld it. She nodded, scarcely perceptibly, and the strange file plunged deeper into the shadows.

hands they drew his wrists back of him and tied them tight with the long bandanna handkerchief he wore about his neck. They worked almost in silence, with incredible rapidity and deftness.

The man was waking now, stirring in his unconsciousness, and swiftly the old woman cut the buckskin thongs from his tall logging boots. These also she twisted about the wrists, knotting them again and again, and pulling them so tight they were almost buried in the lean flesh. Then they turned his face upward to the moon.

Fifteen minutes later Dave drew up to a halt in a little patch of moonlight, surrounded by a wall of low trees and brush.

"There's more than one way to make a date for a walk with a pretty girl," he said.

The two women stood an instant, breathing hard. "What now?" Linda asked. And a shiver of awe went over her at the sight of the woman's face.

"Nothing more, Linda," she answered, in a distant voice. "Leave Dave Turner to me."

"Then why did you bring us here?" "Just to be sociable," Dave returned. "I'll tell you, Linda. I wanted to talk to you. I ain't been in favor of a lot of things Simon's been doing—to you and your people. I thought maybe you and I would like to be—friends."

No one could mistake the emotion behind the strained tone, the peculiar languor in the furtive eyes. The girl drew back, shuddering. "I'm going back," she told him.

It was a strange picture. Womanhood—the softness and tenderness which men have learned to associate with the name—seemed fallen away from Linda and Elms. They were only avengers—like the she-wolf that fights for her cubs or the she-wolf that guards the lair. There was no more mercy in them than in the females of the lower species.

He laughed again, a hoarse sound that rang far through the silences. She moved toward her, hands reaching. She backed away. Then she half-tripped over an outstretched root.

The next instant she was in his arms, struggling against their steel.

Dave awakened. They saw him stir. They watched him try to draw his arms from behind him. It was just a faint, little-understanding pull at first. Then he wrenched and tugged with all his strength, flopping strangely in the dirt. The effort increased until it was some way suggestive of an animal in the death struggle—a fur bearer dying in the trap.

She was in his arms, struggling against their steel.



She Was in His Arms, Struggling Against Their Steel.

She didn't waste words in pleading. A sob caught at her throat, and she fought with all her strength against the drawn, nearing face. She had forgotten Elms; in this dreadful moment of terror and danger the old woman's broken strength seemed too little to be of aid. And Dave thought her as helpless to oppose him as the tall pines that watched from above them.

His wild laughter obscured the single sound that she made, a strange cry that seemed lacking in all human quality. Rather it was such a sound as a puma utters as it leaps upon its prey. It was the articulation of a whole life of hatred that had come to a crisis at last—of deadly and terrible triumph after a whole decade of waiting. If Dave had discerned that cry in time he would have hurled Linda from his arms to leap into a position of defense. The desire for women in men goes down to the roots of the world, but self-preservation is a deeper instinct still.

Terror was upon him. It was in his wild eyes and his moonlit face; it was in the desperation and frenzy of his struggles. And the two women saw it and smiled into each other's eyes.

Slowly his efforts ceased. He lay still in the pine needles. He turned his head, first toward Linda, then to the inscrutable, dark face of the old woman. As understanding came to him, the cold drops emerged upon his swarthy skin.

"Good G—d!" he asked. "What are you going to do?"

"I'm going back," Linda answered. "You had some other purpose in bringing me out here—or you wouldn't have brought Elms, too. I'm going back to wait for Bruce."

"And you and I will linger here," Elms told him. "We have many things to say to each other. We have many things to do. About my Abner—there are many things you'll want to hear of him."

The last vestige of the man's spirit broke beneath the words. Abner had been old Elms's son—a youth who had laughed often, and the one hope of the old woman's declining years. And he had fallen before Dave's ambush in a half-forgotten fight of long years before.

The man shivered in his bonds. Linda turned to go. The silence of the wilderness deepened about them. "Oh, Linda, Linda," the man called. "Don't leave me. Don't leave me here with her!" he pleaded. "Please—please don't leave me in this devil's power. Make her let me go."

But Linda didn't seem to hear. The brush crackled and rustled; and the two—this dark-hearted man and the avenger—were left together.

CHAPTER XVIII

The homeward journey over the ridges had meant only pleasure to Bruce. The days had been full of little nerve-tingling adventures, and the nights full of peace. And beyond all these, there was the hope of seeing Linda again at the end of the trail.

It was strange how he remembered her kiss. He had known other kisses in his days—being a purely rational and healthy young man—but there had been nothing of immortality about them. Their warmth had died quickly, and they had been forgotten. They were just delights of moonlight nights and nothing more. But he would wake up from his dreams at night to feel Linda's kiss upon his lips. To recall it brought a strange tenderness—a softening of all the hard outlines of his picture of life.

But aside from his contemplations of Linda, the long tramp had many delights for him. He rejoiced in every manifestation of the wild life about him, whether it was a bushy-tailed old gray squirrel, watching him from a tree limb, a maple trying its best to insult him, or the fleeting glimpse of a deer in the covert. But he didn't see the killer again. He didn't particularly care to do so.

He would walk all afternoon—going somewhat easier and resting more often than in the morning; and these were the times that he appreciated a fragment of jerked venison. He would halt just before nightfall and make his camp.

And the best hour of all was after his meal, as he sat in the growing shadows with his pipe. At this hour he felt the spirit of the pines as never before. He knew their great, brooding sorrow, their infinite wisdom, their inexpressible aloofness with which they kept watch over the wilderness. The smoke would drift about him in soothing clouds; the glow of the coals was red and warm over him. He could think then. Life revealed some of its lesser mysteries to him. And he began to glimpse the distant gleam of even greater truths, and sometimes it seemed to him that he could almost catch and hold them. Always it was some message that the pines were trying to tell him—partly in words they made when their limbs rubbed together, partly in the nature of a great allegory of which their dark, impassive forms were the symbols. If he could only see clearly! But it seemed to him that passion blinded his eyes. More and more he realized that the pines, like the stars, were living symbols of great powers who lived above the world, powers that would speak to men if they would but listen long and patiently enough, and in whose creed lay happiness.

The last afternoon he traveled hard. He wanted to reach Linda's house before nightfall. But the trail was too long for that. The twilight fell, to find him still a weary two miles distant. And the way was quite dark when he plunged into the south pasture of the Ross estates.

Half an hour later he was beneath the Sentinel Pine. He wondered why Linda was not waiting beneath it; in his fancy, he thought of it as being the ordained place for her. But perhaps she had merely failed to hear his footsteps. He called into the open door.

"Linda," he said. "I've come back." No answer reached him. The words rang through the silent rooms and echoed back to him. He walked over the threshold.

A chair in the front room was turned over. His heart leaped at the sight



Her Coat and Hat Lay on the Bed, but There Was No Linda to Stretch Her Arms to Him.

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of it. "Linda," he called in alarm, "where are you? It's Bruce."

He stood an instant listening, a great fear creeping over him. He called once more, first to Linda and then to the old woman. Then he leaped through the doorway.

The kitchen was similarly deserted. From there he went to Linda's room. Her coat and hat lay on the bed, but there was no Linda to stretch her arms to him. He started to go out the way he had come, but went instead to his own room. A sheet of note-paper lay on the bed.

It had been scrawled hurriedly; but although he had never received a written word from Linda he did not doubt but that it was her hand:

"The Turners are coming—I caught a glimpse of them on the ridge. There is no use of my trying to resist, so I'll wait for them in the front room and maybe they won't find this note. They will take me to Simon's house, and I know from its structure that they will lock me in an interior room in the east wing. Use the window on that side nearest the north corner. My one hope is that you will come at once to save me."

Bruce's eyes leaped over the page; then he thrust it into his pocket. He slipped through the rear door of the house, into the shadows.

(To be continued.)

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Used ranges \$20 to \$40. Very good condition. All at bargain prices.

422 West First st., Albany, Oregon.

cordially invited to attend. Each member be prepared to give some suggestion for the improvement of our meetings for the coming year.

Ercell Sneed and Roland Marks were home from O. A. C. over the week end.

Clifford Carey came from the U. of O. for the week end.

The Ringos visited at Cottage Grove Sunday.

J. A. Porter of Halsey is reported by the Democrat as a Saturday visitor at the county seat.

O. E. Eichinger of Scio is the latest candidate to file for the sheriff's office.

Douglas Taylor and family took in the state fair Friday and B. M. Bond and family the next day.

Mrs. Brown, who has been absent from the school room, is teaching her class again.

The new concrete Howe garage at Brownsville is 60 by 100 feet in size. It and the new concrete creamery are not far apart on Main street in the section swept by fire three years ago.

The Christian church rally day Sunday brought 78 to Sunday school and about seventy-five partook of the basket dinner.

Earl D. Harmon will give up the McLain place, three miles south of town, which he has been renting, and will sell his stock and farming paraphernalia at auction next Monday.

T. J. Skirvin went to the state fair Saturday.

E. B. Penland and wife were at the state fair Friday.

The Salvation Army will have a harvest festival at the county seat Monday next, at which, among other things, donations of farm products sent in by farmers will be sold at auction. Col. Suddell has agreed to donate his services as auctioneer.

Mrs. M. C. Brandon went to the state fair Saturday, where she expected the pleasure of meeting a daughter and together with her taking in the sights.

Mrs. Russ Kneeland left Saturday for a visit in Portland with relatives and friends.

Bob Tussing of Brownsville expects to complete a course at the U. of O. this year and enter the practice of law with his father, Amor A. Tussing.

(Continued on page 4)

How Many Will Give One Dollar?

WALTER M. PIERCE is making a gallant fight, almost single-handed, to be elected governor of Oregon. He has no funds to pay the expenses of his campaign. The issue he makes is Reduced Taxes, and he promises, if elected, to use every power vested in the governor to lessen the taxation that now rests heavily upon the backs of the people.

No powerful corporations are backing Pierce; nobody but the plain people. His election depends upon them alone. Don't you feel it your duty to help him in his worthy fight by contributing One Dollar to his expenses? It isn't much for anyone to give, but there are many plain people, and if you help a little the battle will be won. It will make a clean campaign and elect a clean man.

Please send your dollar today, together with your name and address, and the contribution will be acknowledged by return mail.

Putting Pierce in means putting your taxes down Help Pierce Win!

Write your Name here _____

Write your Address here _____

Cut this notice out and pin a dollar bill to it and mail to

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W. J. Ribelin

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Dealer in Real Estate.

Handles Town and Country Property. Give him a call and see if he can fix you up.

Jots and Tittles

(Continued from page 1)

D. H. Starrtevant and wife took in the state fair Friday.

Mrs. R. A. Templeton was a county seat visitor Monday.

Miss Cleona Smith left Monday for Eugene to enter the U. of O.

Dr. Garnjobst and family were Sunday callers from Brownsville.

R. L. Winniford and wife and Adrian Goodbrod were guests at the Sidney J. Smith home Sunday.

Charles Sterling and wife of Brownsville were in Halsey Sunday.

Not a very large house greeted "Jiggs and Maggie" at the Rialto Monday night, and those who went were not enthusiastic over the entertainment.

W. L. Norton and wife, Mrs. N. T. Sneed, Miss Marie Sneed and Miss Cleona Smith drove to Corvallis Friday and visited Ercell Sneed and O. B. Stalnaker and wife. Miss Sneed took the train the same evening for Seattle, where she will take up her studies at the University of Washington and her work at the Seattle public library.

The W. F. M. S. of the M. E. church will meet at the home of Mrs. J. C. Standish Saturday afternoon, Oct. 7, at 2. All members

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