

# The Everlasting Whisper, By Jackson Gregory

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## FROM THE BEGINNING

Mark King, prospector, is on his way to the home of Ben Gaynor. King and Gaynor share with a desperado, Sven Brodie, knowledge of a vast store of hidden gold. King meets Mrs. Gaynor and is impressed by her daughter, Gloria. He dislikes a house visitor named Gratton. With Gloria, King rides to Coloma, intending to "sound" Honeycutt. He finds Brodie there, and animosity flares. King is drawn closer to Gloria. She and her mother return to San Francisco. In a spirit of adventure Gloria accompanies Gratton on a "business" trip. At Coloma she finds her father badly hurt. He gives her a message for King, urging her to get it to him at once. Gloria realizes she has compromised herself by her journey with Gratton. He proposes marriage, and Gloria apparently accepts him. Gratton, unseen by Gloria, watches the ceremony from a window. At the last moment the girl refuses to utter the requisite "yes." King enters and Gloria appeals to him for protection. Gratton, dismissed, reveals the location of the hidden gold and makes threats. King, heartened by Gloria's appeal to him, renounces her to marry him. Really in love with her, and seeing a way out of her dilemma, the girl consents. Gratton's message reveals the location of the treasure, and urges King to go at once and secure it. After the wedding ceremony, Gloria asserting the necessity for rest after her trying experience, King leaves her and prepares for his trip. Next morning Gloria insists on going with him. On the journey her overwrought nerves give way in hysteria, she admits to King that she married him only to "save her name from gossip." King, humiliated, renounces her but refuses to take her home, declaring he is under promise to her father to lose no time seeking the gold. She, unable to find her way home alone, has perforce to follow him. Gloria's horse goes lame and they have to abandon it, but King keeps on.

## CHAPTER VII—Continued

He dumped at her feet the roll from the horse's back, setting his rifle down against it. Then he led Buck away, zigzagging tediously, at last passing from sight beyond an outjutting monster crag. When he rejoined Gloria she was staring off at nothingness, her back to him.

He lashed the two canvas rolls together, swung them up to his shoulders, took frying-pan, coffee-pot, and rifle in his free hand, and nodded toward the small pack of provisions which had been left over from lunch. "Better bring those," he advised briefly. "There's no telling what may be in the cards." He went on along the knife-edge of the ridge, down into a little depression, up beyond. She snatched up the parcel.

When she came up with him he had thrown down his pack at the very edge of the gorge. She came to his side, leaned forward, and looked down. Far below plunged the wildest torrent she had ever seen; it looked as black as ebony in sections of smoother channel and as cold as death; it spun in whirlpools, it filled the air with its din, and King meant to go down to it; to cross it; to climb the dizzy cliff upon the further side! She knew from his look, without asking, for just across the chasm from them in the highest of the cliffs was the yawning black-mouthed place of horrors.

King went about his task methodically. Slowly and with difficulty he made his way down the steep wall of rocks, dragging and pulling the roll of bedding and provisions after him. He went up-stream; there lay an old cedar log so that it spanned the current, its sturdy old trunk ten feet above the water. For a moment King disappeared under an out thrust ledge; then she saw him again, the pack on his shoulders. He had climbed up to the top of the log; he was crossing. Where he went now she must follow!

Unerringly he trod the rude bridge underfoot, gained the other side without mishap, tossed down his bundle, and lowered himself from the log after it. On he went, down-stream again, clinging to the steep pitch of the gorge, until he was almost under the mouth of the cavern. It was a hundred feet above him and the cliffs, from where Gloria sat numb with the cold and dread, looked unsurmountable. Yet he was going up them!

"And where he goes you will follow." It was as though the wild waters below were chanting it into her ears.

Slowly, tediously, but with never a sign of hesitation, King made his way up the cliff. Nor was the task the impossible one it looked from a distance. There were cracks and crevices; there were seams of a harder material which, better withstanding the attacks of time, were thrust out beyond the general level; on them a man might stand.

King had drawn up after him, stage after stage, the roll of bedding, using Blackie's tie-rope to haul it up and to

moor it briefly. At length he came safely to the cave's mouth. Then he drew up to his feet the dangling roll; with it in his arms he was gone into that yawning hole. She waited breathlessly for his return. She saw him come again into the light; he had the rope in his hand, was coiling it. He began to come down. He was returning for her.

She did not stir while he made the slow descent.

"I am going to spend the day up there," he told her in his studied aloof manner. "I'll know soon enough now what truth there is in the story of Gus Ingle's gold. There's room in the cave to sleep, and there's shelter of a sort. Tomorrow morning, if I find nothing, I'll start back with you. If you care to come up now I'll help you."

"What else is there to do?" cried Gloria, with the first flash of passion. "What else do you leave me?"

He slipped a loop of the rope about her waist, taking slow pains not to touch her with his hands, and turned downward again. She followed, filled with sudden fear when they had climbed down ten feet, obeying him hastily when he commanded her to stand still or to move on, feeling her fear grow mightily as they progressed. Like one moving through the fearsome steps of a nightmare she went on, clinging to King's hand, his hand tight upon hers, cold hands which met because they must. At last the torrent was behind her.

It was another nightmare climbing up the cliffs to the cave. King ordered and she obeyed. Stage by stage, weary stages fraught with terror, she toiled up and up and up. And so at last, she came to King's side at the gloomy entrance of Gus Ingle's cave. She crept by King with never a backward glance, and threw herself face down on the uneven floor.

## CHAPTER VIII

King looked at his watch; not yet eleven o'clock. Need for haste; the day would be short. Here was one of Gus Ingle's caves; another, he knew, was directly below and at the base of the cliff; the third should be near. He recalled the words in the old Bible: "We come to the first cave and then we come to Calve number three and two." There lay significance in the order of Ingle's numerals; first, three, and two. Two of the caves were for anyone to see; before now King had been in both of them. Hence it must be that Gus Ingle's treasure lay in the third. That one King must locate.

Taking his rope with him King made what haste he could going down the cliffs. He gathered as heavy a load of dry branches as he could handle, bound them about with his rope, and clambered again to the upper cave. Gloria had not stirred. He moved about her, went a dozen paces deeper into the great cavern, and then down his wood. Breaking branches into short lengths he quickly got a fire going. He brought the bedding-roll closer and opened it into a rough-and-ready bed. Then he called to Gloria.

"You'd better lie here by the fire," he told her. "You're apt to catch cold there."

She rose listlessly and came forward, dropping down into a sitting position upon the blankets, her chilled hands out toward the blaze.

"I don't like the look of this storm," he told her. "It is up to us to hurry. I am going to look around now."

"You are going to leave me here?"

"I won't be far." With that he set fire to a dry pine fagot, the best torch available, and left her, going deeper into the cave. She sat, tense and still, listening, trying to probe with tired eyes through the dark.

Then it seemed to her that he had

been gone a long time. She rose to her feet, tempted to follow him. But pride restrained her and she sat down again to wait in an attitude of indifference.

But the minutes dragged on. She went a little way in the direction he had taken; stood peering into the dark, listening breathless and rigid. Never a sound. She went back to the front of the cave, looking down, staring out into the gray sky, across the ridge.

Gloria, trembling with a new excitement, was down on her knees before the pack when King returned. She sprang up to face him. Gloria was excited; King's excitement was no less. Where she had at least the clew to his altered expression, he had none to hers.

"It's here!" he burst out. "And I've found it. Tons and tons of it, such knobs and nuggets of pure gold as



She Came to King's Side at the Gloomy Entrance of Gus Ingle's Cave.

never man laid eyes on! We have old Ben made whole and full of power again."

She saw that in each hand he carried what looked like a big rough stone; she saw from the way he carried them that they were heavy. The fires leaped higher, brighter in her eyes. Now she saw the way to make Mark King pay for all of his brutality to her; to pay to the uttermost!

"I have nothing to say to you," she said as stiffly as she knew the way. "I care to hear nothing you have to say. I have tolerated all that I mean to tolerate from you."

Her bearing, no less than her words, astonished him. He stared at her wondering.

"I don't understand—"

Gloria treated him to cool laughter. "You will in a minute. I am going."

"Going? You? In God's name, where?"

Deep silence answered him. He frowned at her in puzzled fashion a moment; then, suspecting the truth, he dropped to the fireside the things in his hands and went swiftly to the cave's mouth.

Then he saw. For a long time he stood, studying it, seeking to make sure. It was a column of smoke. Some one had encamped no great distance away; on the same stream. Some one. Why, then, Gratton and Brodie and their crowd. He glowered angrily toward the faint smudge of smoke. Then he swung about and came back to Gloria's side.

"You saw that smoke?" he demanded. "You plan on going to them? You know who they are?"

"No; but that doesn't matter."

"Do you know," he asked, "that

they are probably Gratton and Sven Brodie and their outfit? You know that Gratton has set out to ruin your father? That he's a double-dealing scoundrel? That Brodie is worse? That neither is hardly the sort for a girl to trust herself to in a place like this?"

"I am not given much choice."

"That's a fact," he conceded with a grunt.

King made his decision. She was, after all, Ben Gaynor's daughter and, furthermore, the apple of Ben's eye. She was in King's keeping; he had been eminently to blame for bringing her here, his was the responsibility.

"You are not going," he said suddenly, turning upon her. "I won't allow you to put yourself in Gratton's or Brodie's dirty hands."

A quick light was in her eyes, a quick spurt of satisfaction in her heart. In King's decision she read the assurance that he was still madly in love with her, that now his jealousy stirred.

"Stand aside, please," she commanded. "I am going. I tell you."

When she came to his side and he did not stir, she sought to brush by him. There was no hesitation in the way in which he put out his hand and held her back.

"There can be only one captain to an expedition in adventure," he told her seriously. "I have been elected to the job. You are not going to desert ship."

"By what right do you issue orders to me?" she cried.

"Let us say," he returned in the calm of her own harshness, "by the old right of a husband. If that isn't sufficient you can add to it: by the time-honored right of the lord and master! Wait a minute," he added sternly, as he saw her lips opening to a rush of words. "I would be glad to have you go were conditions less exacting. Now I have thought matters over and it appears essential that certain of our marriage vows be remembered. For my part, I fully intend to keep my obligation of protecting you against your own foolishness, the storm, Gratton, Brodie, and the devil himself. And, finally, I mean to keep my promise to your father."

Gloria tried to stare him down, to wither him with the fire of her scorn to brave by him. But the man, all emotion having receded from his eyes, was once more like so much rock, but rock endowed with dormant power of aggression. On the instant it became clear to her that physically King was the master. So, for the first time, she began a certain logical line of thought, seeking to shape her own plans.

"Please listen to me seriously," King said quietly to her. "I won't talk long to you. Here's the point: this is treasurove; we got here first. It is up to us to hold it. Can I count on you sticking on the job, your father's and your own job as much as mine, until we make a go of it?"

Gloria's spite was lively and bitter. In her distorted vision, blurred by passionate anger, she cried out quickly:

"So, now that the odds are against you, you come cringing to me, do you?" Again she was misled into fancying that she held a whip-hand over him.

"Answering your question, I would trust Mr. Gratton any day rather than you. He, at least, is not quite the brute and bully that you are."

King was hardly disappointed.

"At least you have given a straight answer," he muttered. "That is something."

Now he shaped his plans swiftly and carefully, knowing where she stood. Henceforth he would merely consider her his chief handicap, with him but against him.

King stood at the cave's mouth, frowning into the ever-thickening smother of the storm. It struck him clearly and forcefully that he had but one thing to do: to trust that his enemies did not have such full information as had fallen into his hands and to see to it that he gave them no help. First he would bring with him all that he could manage to carry with the rest of his necessary load. Enough to help Ben Gaynor over a crisis; enough raw gold to slam down before some San Francisco capitalist, together with a tale which would make any man eager to stake the owner to what loan he asked. He would get provisions, snowshoes, a dog team, if necessary, a couple of trusted men to come with him; he would be back here within the week. But first, before he went, he would strive to make as sure as a man could that the "crowd" did not find the golden

## LOCAL NEWS

Mrs. W. C. McKell entertained the Tuesday Bridge Club at her home Tuesday. Mrs. Ruby W. Boyd was a special guest and also won the high honors.

N. A. Peters is enjoying the convenience of a new Kalamazoo water system installed last week by the Richey Hardware and Furniture Company.

Mr. and Mrs. T. B. Denney attended the lectures given by Dr. Bragg, editor-in-chief of the Physical Culture Magazine, in Portland last week at the Masonic Temple. Dr. Bragg gave a series of lec-

tures on food and health. Mrs. Andy Timmer is on the sick list.

Hillsboro Grange was host to the Washington Pomona Grange Wednesday, October 26, at their new hall. Election of the Pomona officers was one of the features of the day. Mr. James Mott was the principal speaker.

Miss Helen Dennis and Mr. Philip Petrequin both of Portland, were united in marriage at the home of the bride's mother in Portland, Friday evening, October 21. Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Tucker of Beaverton were among the guests. Mr. and Mrs. Petrequin will make their home in Portland.

## SAFEGWAY STORES

### Hallow'en Party Suggestions

FEATURES For Saturday - Monday, Oct. 29 - 31

### PUMPKIN Marsh'allows

DEL MONTE 19c FRESH and FLUFFY 19c  
2 No. 2 1/2 cans Per Pound

CIDER Pure Apple 19c  
Gallon

## COFFEE

"AIRWAY" Always Fresh, lb. 23c Edwards Dependable Vacuum Pack, lb. 29c

Pop Corn, Jolly Time, 3 lbs. 19c

Pancrust Shortening, 2 lbs. 19c

Red Mex Beans, 4 lbs. 19c

Corn Meal, 9-lb. bag 19c

### RAISINS

4-lb. pkg. 19c

### PINEAPPLE

Broken Slices, No. 2 cans, 2 for 19c

Wanda Beauty Soap 3 bars 10c

Luna Laundry Soap 10 bars 19c

Par Const. Soap, pkg. 29c

Instant Postum, 4-oz. can 23c

MILK Max-I-Mum Tail Cans 2 for 9c

Butter Fresh Creamery The pound 21c

BISQUICK One Pkg. and 2 Biscuit Cutters 29c

OATS Crystal Wedding, With Glassware Package 21c

## Meats of Quality

VEAL ROAST lb. 10c

WEINERS For Hallow'en Parties

BOILED HAM 1 lb. for 25c

SHORT RIBS lb. 7c

2 lbs. 25c

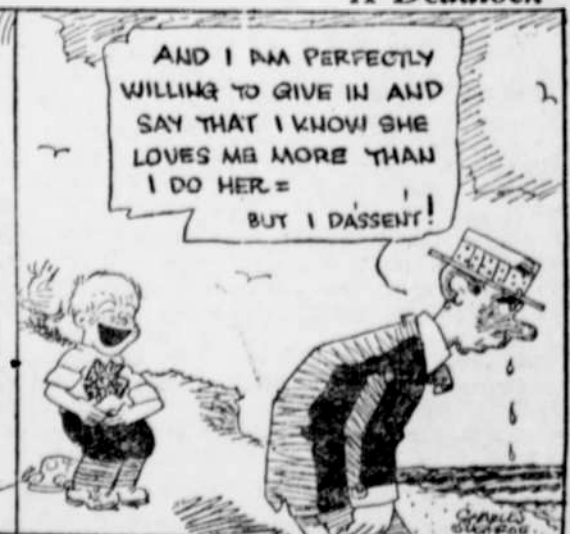
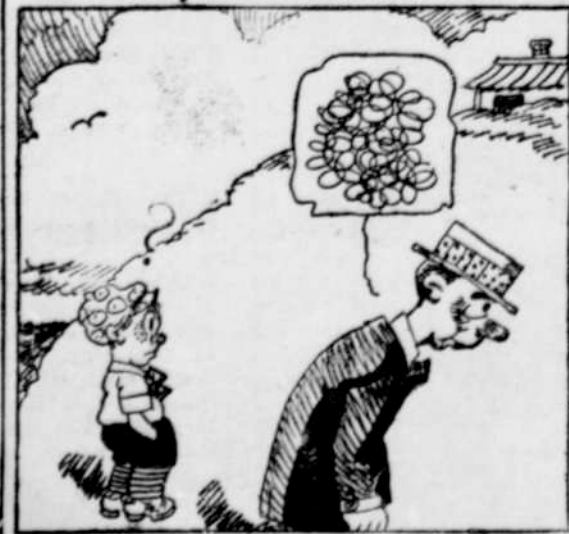
25c

For Sandwiches

PORK ROAST lb. 9c



## MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL



## A Deadlock