

BELOW ZERO

A Romance of the North Woods



By
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W.N.U. SERVICE

Burke had put on even more saws at the Belknap & Gorbet camps. The switches at the crossing were plugged with loaded cars bound for Rampfest; equipment breakdown on the branch had delayed movement, but when John had called this to Burke's attention, arguing that it achieved his employers nothing to keep insisting that their logs were moved to the crossing as soon as loaded, the man only grinned.

"Orders are orders; contracts are contracts. I've got mine; go read yours, Steele!"

And so John buckled down in earnest to the uphill pull.

Through supper and for a brief time in the office afterwards, the old trapper's voice held to its sustained, shrill quibble. Then, abruptly, he rose and, divesting himself of his outer clothing with rapid jerks, jumped into the bed assigned him, and within seconds was snoring.

Jack Tait came in to talk to John who sat before the stove, smoking and going over plans with Saunders. He was there a few minutes and went out. "Saunders yawned, rose and stretched. He rid himself of his chew and unbuttoned his shirt."

The light was turned out, and superintendent and foreman lay in their beds, still talking lowly.

"I feel like a fella at the edge of a big drop-off in the dark," Mark said, and stirred in his blankets. "Everything's so long 's we keep the ground under our feet, but any step ahead's likely to send us tail over ears down to the rocks yonder. Somethin' might happen here in the woods to slow us down; Tiny's old coffee-pot may go all to hell in a heap and then where are we?"

"Over the edge," said John morosely, and rolled over on his side.

For a long time he lay sleepless. He dozed and suddenly saw his father pursuing someone who fled towards him, screaming for his help, and this other, suddenly revealed, was Ellen Richards.

He woke with a start and rolled over, muttering to himself. He did not dream then that the time would come when the girl's voice would be lifted in screams as shrill as those he heard in his dreams.

He dreamed of stamping his foot, stamping his foot on a resounding floor and demanding of Paul Gorbet that he come into the open and fight. . . . Of stamping, stamping . . . and when he stopped stamping the sound continued.

He sat up. The sound continued, and he looked about for its source, bewildered by sleep.

Sounds, yes; coming from outside. Heavy thuds. Horses kicking! A number of horses kicking, and a shrill nickering.

His feet hit the cold floor and he lunged to a window.

"Turn out!" he croaked, as he whirled back to grope for his pants. "Turn out, you! The barn's afire!"

Saunders was up; Jerry was rolling out, babbling as sleep added to his panic. Wolf Richards chattered shrilly. . . .

"Fire!" John yelled, as he ran outside and buttoning his coat over his underwear made for the men's shanty.

"Fire!" as he burst in the door. "Out, you buffles! Fire!"

He went on, Saunders hard after him.

Horses were squealing now, and kicking more furiously. He heard wood splintered under a hoof and could see, through the partially opened doorway, the low cavern of the barn lit by angry flames.

He was into it, throwing an arm over his face to strain smoke from the air he breathed. He caught a distant odor, though, and through his mind went one word:

Goodness!

A window of hay along the center of the building burned. Flakes of the bales half torn apart, were strewn there, it seemed, and they blazed brightly, orange fronds of flame leaping upward to find hold on covebebed rafters as the draft of the ventilators

sucked the gases through the roof. Smoke swirled about the floor and he stumbled as he ran on, striving to gain the rear stalls first.

He choked as he entered the stall, but grasped the horse's mane over and over, putting a hand on the rump.



"Steady, Now!"

"Come on, boy!" he said, trying to speak without excitement. "Steady, now!"

The horse sidled, banged into a stall partition, leaped the other way, kicked as flame touched his belly. He broke, tried to run and John went with him, strangling from the smoke, bumping into another led horse, out into the night.

Men were running; others were back in there, shouting at horses.

"How many in there?" John yelled, grabbing Tait's arm as the barn boss, crying now, ran past him.

"All out but two, Prince won't come!"

John saw men struggling with a horse inside and turned to their aid.

He found a pitchfork and got behind the horse, striking it without mercy, prodding with the tines. They got the animal out and Jack Tait reeled, gagging with nausea. John backed from the building, shielding his face with an upraised arm. Flames were through the roof now, licking at the cornices, melting holes in the walls.

"All out, Jack?" he croaked.

"Look out!"

The warning shout made John whirl. He threw himself forward to grab at the rope as the horse shook off the last restraining hand, throwing a man end over end, and broke for the stable, screaming shrilly. John could see him, outlines distorted by wriggling heat waves. He crouched low and rushed in.

He heard the horse scream again and kick. The terror of the creature's cry gave him strength. It screamed the third time, and John dropped to his hands and knees for relief.

He stopped crawling. He had almost gone on, across that thing. It felt like a bag of oats, a sack of inert material, until his hands brushed flesh.

He had come upon a man, lying there, when he sought to save a horse!

John grasped the limp arm and pulled the figure about. He got to his feet and, bent double, ran three steps. The heat and the burden beat him down. An eddy brought in a gulp of fresh air. He rose again and made a stride or two . . . and went down, cowering from the terrific punishment of standing.

Another man was crawling towards John from the doorway. He found a hold and they went for the open with a rush.

It was Jack Tait who had come in to help.

"Who's this?" John choked, rolling the man over.

Firelight fell on the face as a score of men pressed about.

"Never saw him!" panted the barn boss.

Someone began to fan the face with a cap and Jack Tait plucked at John's arm.

The old veteran was holding up a hand, blood-stained. That hand had just turned the unconscious man's head over, had been pressed against the side of the skull.

"Get over with Mark!" John ordered those about him. "Jack and I'll tend to this lad."

The group scattered.

The burden that the two carried was not heavy. They went across the trampled snow towards the office, walking the faster as they neared their objective.

John lighted the hanging lamp and they stood looking down into that set face.

"Never seen him!" the barn boss said.

"Nor did I."

Gingerly John examined the great mark on the skull, tracing it out with his fingers through the thick hair.

"What's it shaped like?" he asked, looking up.

"Horseshoe. There's where the calk went in!"—pointing.

Tait stared hard at John.

"Do you notice anything special in the barn?"

"Smell, you mean?"

The other nodded grimly.

"I smell gasoline," he said.

"So did I!"

"Where was he?" Tait asked.

"Right behind your pile of baled hay."

"Prince got him!" he muttered.

"He's the only horse in the lot that's light behind. He"—gesturing—"touched the place off, the—! Old Prince got him!"

Saunders came in, breathless, slamming the door.

"Got her soured down," he said.

"Worst of over. Who's that?"

"Ever see him?" John asked.

A pause, while the foreman stared hard at the face.

"Never."

"And what did you smell?" John demanded.

Mark looked from one to the other.

"Do you both get it?"

"Both of us. . . ."

"A bug fire! G—d d—n 'em, they'll—"

John held up a warning hand.

"It's between the three of us, for now. Keep it from the men. This fellow was suffocated, as far as they know. Stranger; drunk; got in, tried to smoke. . . . And here we are!"

"But the three of us smell gasoline. This man's hair isn't even singed. See? He didn't die from fire. It was the kick of a horse. We find out who he is and where he came from and why— if we can—and we make things as hot for other parties as they made them for us tonight!"

Hot for other parties! And even as he swore that this thing would not go unpunished if he could track it down a sort of terror seized him. Old Tom, his father, behind this? The thought made his middle go weak.

Oh, a man's temper can stir him to bitterness against those for whom he has had affection. But old loyalties, old respects are hard to down. For nearly a month now John Belknap had thought of his father as an enemy, but this night's work killed his temper, replaced it with a profound fear.

Old Tom in a rough-and-tumble fight? Yes, that was imaginable! But old Tom resorting to the torch? That was unthinkable, did not square with anything in experience.

A hard old bird, men had said of his father; a relentless fighter when driven to it . . . when driven to it! But a fair fighter, it was agreed, and even beaten enemies had admitted that.

(Con't Next Week)

LOCAL NEWS

The fire department was called out at three o'clock Tuesday morning to fight a fire at the Joe Miller home on First and Franklin Streets. The family was not at home. Mr. Fred Smith turned in the alarm as he was leaving on his Oregonian route.

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Hansen celebrated their 9th wedding anniversary at their home in Sorrento, Friday March 17. The evening was spent in dancing and playing games. The guests were: Mrs. and Mrs. Mrs. John H. Stein, Mrs. Carrie Hansen and family, Mr. and Mrs. H. Lucks, Mr. and Mrs. W. Wettenberger, Mr. M. Hite, Miss Iene Hansen and Mr. and Mrs. Henry Erickson. Refreshments were served.



BREEZES BLOW AND ROBINS SING; TIME FOR TONICS—IT IS SPRING! TONICS TASTE GOOD NOW; "FEVER" NO BUGBEAR

"The March wind doth blow and we shall have snow" (maybe) but just the same Spring is here by the calendar and will arrive in reality one of these gusty days. "Sweet Springtime" brings us new straw hats—with higher crowns this year, and gay printed dresses; a new crop of poems, a song containing "sing" and "ring"—and Spring Fever!

But "Spring Fever" is a laugh, nowadays. Not that it's a mythical ailment; it exists, all right, but is no weird affliction affected by the moon, as the ancients thought. It is simply the outward sign that the body lacks "pep", due to a depleted supply of energy and a lack of stored up vitamins and minerals, which often follows the inactive winter months.

If you were Great-Grandmamma you would immediately dole out generous doses of sulphurous compound to "clear the blood". Being, instead a modern home-maker, you do nothing of the kind. You see that the spring feverish one gets plenty of outdoor exercise, and feed him his tonic in foods that are as good to the tongue as the health.

Of course plenty of vegetables and fruits are necessary, as at all times. Foods which are rich in mineral salts and energy should be used freely. Dried fruits, dates in particular, are important in the spring tonic-diet, because they contain generous amounts of iron for the blood and calcium for the teeth and bones. Too, they are largely invert sugar, a valuable energy factor, and have a mildly laxative effect which is beneficial.

You, however, need not tell the

family any of this. Just serve the tonic foods because they are delicious, and let their healthfulness be your secret.

SPRING FRUIT CUP

1/2 pkg pasteurized dates.
1 grapefruit
12 maraschino cherries
6 sprigs mint
3 slices pineapple
Pit dates or use pitted variety; cut in slices with wet scissors. Cut the grapefruit into segments or use the canned grapefruit. Halve the cherries and dice the pineapple. Mix all the fruits thoroughly and marinate in French dressing well ahead of serving time so that the flavors may be well blended. Serve in glass compote and garnish with sprigs of mint.

RHUBARB-PINEAPPLE CONSERVE

2 pkgs. pasteurized dates
4 cups rhubarb
1 can No. 2 Pineapple
1 orange (juice and grated rind)
1 cup nutmeats
Cut the unpeeled rhubarb in about 1 inch pieces, add the dates (pitted) pineapple, crushed variety sugar, orange juice and rind. Cook slowly until thick. Add the nutmeats; cook five minutes longer. Pour into sterilized jelly glasses. When cool cover with melted paraffin.

FRUIT OLIVE SALAD

1 can grapefruit
2 oranges
4 slices pineapple
French Dressing
8 ripe olives
1 cream cheese
Horse-radish
Lettuce
Place a slice of pineapple on each individual plate. On the pineapple,

arrange alternately half sections of grapefruit and orange, using three of each. Between these sections place crescent-shaped pieces of ripe olives. In the center place a ball of cream cheese an inch in diameter. Serve with Horse-radish French dressing. Garnish with lettuce leaves and serve with cheese wafers.

GOLDEN MOLD

1 tbsp. gelatine
1/2 cup cold water
1/4 cup sugar
1 No. 1 can grapefruit
1 1/2 tbsps. lemon juice
1/2 cup pasteurized dates
1/4 cup figs
1/4 cup nutmeats
Soak gelatine in cold water in top of double boiler for five minutes. Add the sugar; stir over hot water until the sugar and gelatine are dissolved; add grapefruit juice and lemon juice. Cool until the mixture begins to jelly; stir in the sliced dates, chopped figs and nutmeats, mold. Unmold and serve on lettuce with mayonnaise dressing thinned with whip cream. Serve with buttered crackers.

SPRING HEALTH TIP

Mothers who wish to feed increased amounts of cod liver oil will find that the oil is more palatable when floated on grapefruit juice. Canned grapefruit juice may be used since it contains all the properties of the fresh fruit.

LOCAL NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. Barney Dezure (Jesse Peterson) of Vancouver Barracks were Sunday evening callers at the home of Mrs. B. K. Denney.

Mrs. H. M. Barnes entertained the members of her Sunday School class and the members of the Intermediate C. E. society at her home on Tuesday evening. She was assisted by Mrs. L. R. Dean. About thirty young people were present. Games and puzzles furnished the entertainment after which refreshments of hot chocolate and cookies were served.

FRANK L. MCGUIRE

REALTOR

In Portland at 106 1/2 Third Street Telephone Atwater 7171.

One of the essential qualities of successful operations in real estate is a comprehensive knowledge of the business. Another is the inherent ability to bring deals to a successful and satisfactory close. That this office is in charge at all times of men amply endowed with the above attributes is evidenced by its successful operations throughout this part of the state.

In this day and age when conservative men are constantly seeking investments where they are not only assured a permanent source of income, but a reasonable certainty of increasing in value, the real estate dealer is doing more than his share to meet the demands of such men. This locality is indeed fortunate in having in its midst

such a firm as the Frank L. McGuire & Co.

This institution has been closely identified with the growth and expansion of the section and has made a close study of real estate conditions so that they could offer both the buying and selling public the very best service. They have on their books a large list of most desirable properties for sale, both town and country at prices that can not fail to be attractive to the intending purchaser.

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This place has made it a point not to list property for sale for more than its value, this is where their close study of local conditions render them an authority on values. In all transactions their word is as good as their bond and the people have come to look for them when seeking a desirable medium through which they may dispose of their property.

Frank L. McGuire and Co. are to be complimented for their past reputation of forceful the trend in real estate values and there is no reason why their future service will not retain the same foresight. With this fact in mind whether the purchaser be an investor, a speculator, or a home builder he will profit by his association with them.

California Western States Life Insurance Co.

Located in Portland in the Stevens Bldg. Telephone Atwater 1313, under the capable management of Mr. C. E. Condon.

Among the most prominent insurance underwriters in this well known agency and to him a large element of the people in this community look for insurance service. Representing as he does one of the largest companies in business he is equipped to serve every need in his line. During Mr. Condon's service to the public he created a record for efficiency and built up a clientele of large proportions as well as establishing a reputation as one of the most reliable and prominent members of the profession.

This business review would be lacking in appreciation if it did not

direct attention to a leader in this profession, who through years of practice, has built up a reputation for efficient service which is second to none in this section of the state.

That C. E. Condon has succeeded in this to an extraordinary degree is evidenced by the fact when one thinks or speaks of insurance he unconsciously thinks of this agency. Mr. Condon is indissolubly connected in the minds of the people in this city and vicinity. Not only does this agency perform the more material offices connected with the writing of insurance, but they are at all times ready and glad to give friendly and even disinterested advice based on their wide experience in the field.

In years long gone the business

of the insurance salesman was to convince people of their necessity for insurance and to persuade them to secure that protection. Today the work is not so much educational as it is advisory. The salesman or the agent from his knowledge and experience is expected to assist his clients in selecting the kind of insurance best suited to their needs—the necessity for such protection is now generally recognized. No one of whom we have any knowledge is better qualified to perform this important function than the subject of this review.

We therefore feel an unusual sense of satisfaction in directing attention to C. E. Condon and recommending him to all. Adv.

MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL



A Hint to Housewives