

BELOW ZERO

A Romance of the North Woods



By Harold Titus
W.N.U. SERVICE

"Shot!" he muttered. "Shot . . . and . . . and—"
He threw out a hand awkwardly for



"Shot!" He Muttered. "Shot!"

support and dragged a chair over with him as he fell against the desk. . . . Paul Gorbelt was at the door, springing the lock. He drew it shut behind him. He went along the corridor and down the steps with breath sputtering through set lips. . . . Inside, the man on the floor breathed heavily, trying to speak, to call out, fighting against the pain, struggling to rise; then slumping backward to lie and pant. But his eyes were open and through the low window he watched the lighted stores across the way.

John Belknap entered the boarding house late for supper. He had visited, after closing hours, with the young cashier of the Bank of Kampfest, paving the way for following up the story of double-dealing there that Marie had told him. Now that the break had come, he would push every angle relentlessly.

As he passed through the office the manager balled him. "Long distance's been tryin' to get you all afternoon from Shoestring," he said. "And Nat Bradshaw was here, lookin' for you. . . . Oh, not over half-hour ago"—glancing at the clock.

"Did Nat drive back?" John asked. "Search me. He seemed sort of . . . sort of glum, I guess. Didn't visit like he usually does."
John stood a moment, irresolute. Men were coming from the dining room. "I'll look up and down the street for Nat," he said. "Likely the call was from him."

He walked to the corner, looked towards the mill and could see a team standing tied before the Belknap & Gorbelt offices.

It was Nat's team, he saw, as he came close, and laid a hand on the cheek of one horse while he scanned the building. The windows were blank, reflecting only the lights from stores across the way. McWethy approached.

"Mac, have you seen Nat?" John asked. "No . . . that's his team, ain't it?" "Yes. He's in town; was looking for me."
They stood, looking at passers, speculating as to the sheriff's whereabouts.

Inside that darkened office Nat Bradshaw, breathing painfully, heard voices drifting into his consciousness as though a dream. He was cold. His feet were numb. His hands felt lifeless. The only warmth about him was the burning spot in his breast and, as he tried to move, a fresh spreading warmth ran down his side.

He tried to call out but choked, and his throat filled with fluid. He struggled and reached an uncertain hand upward. The fingers found a leg of the overturned chair and gripped there. He pulled on the hand, he shoved upward with the other elbow.

He raised his torso slowly, breath bubbling at the effort, until his eyes were above the level of the window sill.

They were standing there, John Belknap and one he could not distinguish; standing talking, looking up and down the street. He tried to call out again, but his voice was drowned in that stuff which made his breath rattle.

He struggled against his weakness more determinedly. One hand was propping his body up. He let go the chair and grasped the desk top with the other. Fingers tipped over a heavy ink-well and the liquid ran down his sleeve. He fumbled for it again, so clumsily, so painfully.

They were going now; those two outside were moving away . . . off somewhere . . . leaving him, when he needed men . . . when an officer needed help. . . . A sort of rage swam upward. . . . It wasn't like young Johnny Belknap to walk away from a man in a fix. . . .

The fingers had the ink-well. He drew the forearm up and put all the strength he had into the throw.

The heavy chunk of glass struck the broad window pane; with an explosive crash it shattered and with a rasp and a tinkle big sections of it came sliding down, some of the fragments jangling about the sheriff as, gasping, he sank slowly back to the rug his blood had stained. . . .

On the crash, John and McWethy turned sharply. "Y gosh! Somebody busted that window!" the mill foreman exclaimed. Instinctively, both looked across the street to locate the source of this minor destruction. No one was there who would have flung an object to smash the glass. A small boy ran across the road, wallowing through the drift.

"Busted!" he shrieked. "Hey! Look! It!"

He had stooped, picked something from the snow, and held it; up just as John reached his side.

"Ink-well!" he said, and with the object in his hand, looked up at the window, brows drawn.

A group was gathering, questioning, exclaiming. "That came from inside, Mac," John said quietly. "It was thrown through the window . . . and there was no light in there. Come along!"

McWethy at his heels, John ran up the steps. The outer door was unlocked, but as he tried the knob to Gorbelt's private office the latch resisted him.

"Gorbelt?" he cried sharply. "Gorbelt, you in there?" He held his head close to the panel as McWethy gestured for silence to those who had followed.

"Gorbelt!" sharply now. The silence in that room was ominous. "I'm coming in unless you speak!"

He strained against the door and thought he heard something like a light, light moan.

"Get back!" he said abruptly. "Give me room!" He shoved them aside, poised and flung his shoulder hard against the door. The lock gave and let him headlong into the darkened office.

"Gorbelt?" he cried sharply. "Somebody here?" he cried sharply as he saw the overturned chair, the figure on the floor. "Where's the light. . . . Somebody hurt. . . . Here!"

The room flooded as McWethy turned the switch.

"Y gosh, it's Nat. . . . He's hurt!" The mill foreman spoke shrilly. John knelt quickly beside the sheriff; he felt a wrist, put the other hand on the cold, wet forehead.

The head turned slightly beneath his hand; the eyes opened stupidly, dully.

"Nat! Nat, what happened?" John cried. He leaned low as the lips worked.

"Johnny! . . . Johnny, you came . . . back?" the faintest sort of whisper.

"Yes, I'm here, Nat! What hap-

pened?" The eyes were clearing now, as consciousness emerged from its low ebb. "Shot me!" Bradshaw whispered. "Shot me . . . lung shot. . . . Warrant's in my . . . pocket, Johnny. The stomach didn't have . . . alky in . . . it. He shot . . . A paroxysm of strangling broke the words and John wiped a crimson stain from the lips.

Panting now, the sheriff, and a bright desperation was climbing through the dullness in his eyes.

One of his hands gripped John's arm tightly. "Listen. . . . You're . . . deputy now. . . . Warrant's in my . . . pocket. . . . Take my gun. . . . Gorbelt shot me when I . . . told him he was under . . . under . . . Understand, Johnny?"

"I've got you, Nat"—gently. Then, over his shoulder: "Call a doctor! Quick!"

A man snatched up the telephone on the desk and gave a number.

"Nat! You have a warrant for Gorbelt. You came in here to serve it and he shot you down. I've got that. Do you remember how long ago it was? And what did he do?"

The brows on the suffering face were high arched now, as the man fought for breath and strength.

"Whistle time. . . . minute or two . . . after. . . . Don't know where he . . . went. Up to you . . . Johnny. . . . Nev' mind . . . me!"

"We will mind you! That's the first thing we will mind, Nat!"

"Doctor's coming!" McWethy whispered hoarsely. "On his way. He was at the drug store."

"Hear that, Nat? Doctor's almost here! The minute he gets in I'm after Gorbelt." He drew a pistol from Bradshaw's pocket and deliberated a moment, kneeling there, the sheriff's head on his knee. "Ma! Call the jail at Shoestring and tel. them. Send word up and down the line that Gorbelt's wanted!"

He saw the stares on the growing group of faces about him— incredulous, shocked looks.

"Nat had a warrant for Gorbelt's arrest on a charge of arson, for planning to burn out the Richards camps," he explained bitterly. "And now there'll be another warrant, so help me Heaven!"

He addressed McWethy again: "Get a team out on every road from town. Phone every Belknap & Gorbelt camp and tell 'em to report Gorbelt if they see him, or they stand a chance of taking a trip with him! I'll go to his rooming house the minute the doctor comes and—"

"Here he is!" The physician was shouldering his way through the group, a young man, cool and collected in emergency.

"Don't stop at anything, doctor!" John said. "Spend any amount that will help in any way if this case has got you stopped. You men stand by to help the doctor. Then report to McWethy. . . . I'll get back here!"

He was gone then, running through the falling snow, around a corner and thundering up well-swept steps.

No, Mr. Gorbelt was not at his rooming house; he had not been there since noon. His supper was waiting. . . .

Look for the woman! The phrase was flashing through his mind as he ran along the street.

He rounded the post office corner and flung himself up into the storm house where he had stood with Marie Varnell and listened to her story of Gorbelt's duplicities.

He entered to confront the girl who stood on the stairs, a hand at her cheek, lips parted in something like terror.

"Where's Gorbelt?" he asked sharply. "My G—d, how should I know? What's happened? He came in here like a . . . like he was crazy! He said everything was all off and for me to get to h—l out of town and instead . . . and he gave me a dirty fifty dollars and said it was—"

"Steady, Marie!" John said, steady himself. "I'm looking for Gorbelt; I've got to find him—"

"And he wouldn't listen!" she screamed. "He gave me a lousy fifty dollars and said to get to h—l out of town as fast as I could or they'd be after me, too!" She laughed shrilly. "He said I was in it, that they were—"

John grasped her other hand savagely.

(Continued Next Week)

Mr. and Mrs. James Kamrat (Doris Woodruff) and little daughter Nancy were visiting with Beaverton friends on Sunday.

Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Carey of Portland, and Mr. and Mrs. T. E. Denney attended the Oddfellows' picnic at Crystal Lake Park on Sunday.



When A Little Must Make a Lot— Use These Budget-Brighteners

A nameless humorist once said that the high-necked giraffe must be an economical animal because he can make a little food go a long way! The stately circus animal does that "just naturally" and so do some home-makers who seem to have an inborn knack for making something out of nothing.

But the rest of us must learn the secrets—how to make two eggs do the work of three; how to stretch a little dab of this and a smaller one of that into enough to go 'round; how to gress up yesterday's leftovers into something new and exciting; and how to combine economical foods with the costly ones to balance the household budget. Not that it's so difficult, making two servings "grow" where only one grew before. Learn your combinations—what goes with what—keep your pantry well supplied with extenders, and soon the stretching technique will be yours.

Most favored by cooks who are clever in these matters is the use of crackers as extenders, for they find that crackers not only reduce the amount of costly food required but that their flavor adds to the good taste of the food. Crumbled crackers make an excellent filler for many a dish; soaked in hot milk they take the place of white sauce in making croquettes, patties and souffles; combined with left-over vegetables or meats they make flavorful casserole dishes, meat loaves, jellied meats. Whole crackers are ideal foundations for the creamed dishes.

Since even in hot weather we must have some hot food these recipes for main-course dishes will be of real help in putting a smile on the face of the budget—a grin on the faces of the diners!

Casserole of Steak

Serve a simple salad and a fruit dessert with this economy meat dish and your dinner is complete.

- 2 lbs. round steak
- 1 tbsp. flour
- 1/2 cup minced celery
- 1/4 cup minced green pepper
- 2 tbsps. minced onion
- 1/5 flake butter crackers, crumbled
- 1 cup chopped apple
- 1 tbsp. butter
- Salt and pepper

The round steak should be about 1/2 inch thick. Dredge one side of steak in flour and brown quickly in hot fat. Cut steak in half and place one piece in a greased casserole with the brown side down. Mix celery, green pepper, onion, crumbled crackers and apple. Add butter (melted) and season to taste. Spread this mixture on steak in casserole. Cover with the other half of steak and bake covered in moderate oven (375° F.) 40 to 45 minutes, 6 portions.

Poularde Marie Antoinette

When Monday's ice box reveals just a little chicken and a mere half-boat of gravy left over from Sunday dinner, don't despair! Leftovers will vanish with this:

- 2 cups cooked chicken, diced
- 2 cups chicken gravy
- 1 tsp. minced onion
- 1/3 soda crackers, crumbled fine
- 6 eggs
- 2 tbsps. butter

Combine chicken and gravy and onion. Turn in buttered baking platter and cover with 2/3 of the crackers. Dot with butter. Bake in a moderate oven (375° F.) until eggs are firm. 6 portions.

When Eggs Are Scarce

Serve six people with only four eggs in the house? Certainly—just

extend the eggs with crackers! To scramble eggs, crumble 12 flake crackers, moisten with 2/3 cup milk and stir in 4 eggs. Cook in a little hot butter over moderate flame; stir until thick.

To make a six-servings omelet with 4 eggs, add 3 crumbled flake crackers and 2 tablespoons milk to each egg in your omelet. Melt butter, pour in the egg mixture and cook, covered, over a low flame until set. Creamed eggs are a toothsome supper dish and if your quantity is small, serve them on toasted and split shredded wheat biscuits or rusks for larger servings.

Stuffed Onions

Only 1/4 cup of cooked meat is needed for this:

- 6 Bermuda onions
- 1/2 saltinas
- 1/4 cup ground cooked meat
- 2 tbsps. butter
- Salt and pepper
- 2 cups white sauce
- 1/4 cup grated cheese

Peel and parboil onions in boiling salted water. Drain and remove centers. Chop centers and combine with crumbled saltina biscuits (about 1 cup), meat, butter (melted) and seasonings. Fill onions with this mixture; place in a buttered baking dish. Cover with medium white sauce and sprinkle with cheese. Bake, covered, in hot oven (450° F.) for fifteen minutes. Uncover and brown. 6 portions.

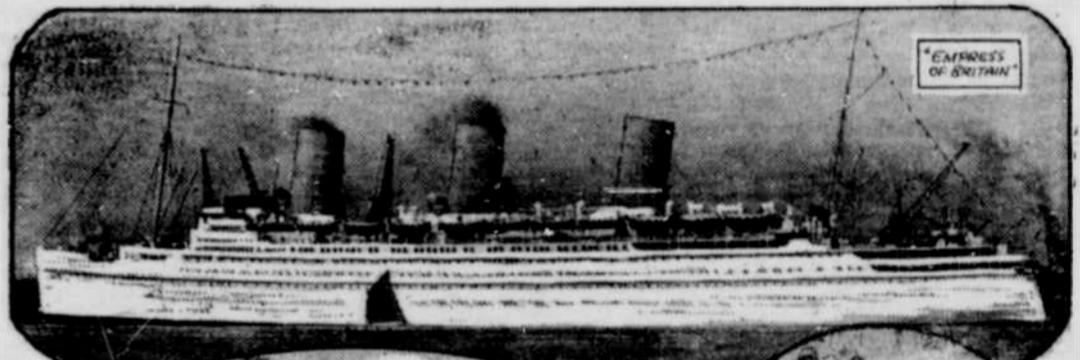
LOCAL NEWS

Mr. and Mrs. John Kirby and children are at the beach for a two weeks' vacation.

Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Boswell, and family, and Mrs. Vena Boswell of Ontario, Ore., were dinner guests at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Archie Buchanan at Aloha on Tuesday evening.

Earl Evans, Mrs. Inez Whitworth, and Mrs. H. R. Neison drove to Government camp Sunday to meet Miss Eva Whitworth, who climbed Mt. Hood Saturday night with a party of the Trails' Club.

Christmas and New Year's at Home With the Family; Then Round the World Is the New Deal in Cruises



CRUISE PASSENGERS AT BOMBAY, INDIA

Nowadays, when it is about as cheap to go around the world as it is to remain at home, thousands of travel-minded people embark upon this greatest of sea adventures. So many friends have looped the world loop that one feels a bit out of the picture if one has not circumnavigated the globe on a floating palace like the "Empress of Britain," 42,500 tons gross register, which will leave New York Jan. 4, 1934, on a 30,000-mile world cruise, visiting 66 ports and 34 countries. One hundred and thirty joyous days on the largest and most beautiful ship that crosses across the Seven Seas! Her new sailing schedule permits one to spend Christmas and New Year's at home. Returning she will steam through the Golden Gate, San Francisco, April 25, and pass the Statue of Liberty, New York Harbor, May 15.

Ball, called the "Last Paradise," an exotic island of the Dutch East Indies, as well as Penang in the Straits Settlements and Samarang in Java, are new on the itinerary. Steaming east the great white ship visits Madeira, the Rock of Gibraltar, Algiers, Monaco, Naples with its smoking Vesuvius and near-by Pompeii, Athens and its Acropolis; all the famous places in the Holy Land; Egypt's many attractions including Cairo, the Sphinx and the Pyramids, and passes through the Suez Canal enroute to Bombay, Delhi, Agra and the Taj Mahal, most beautiful building in the world. In the foregoing and in what follows only some of the high spots of the itinerary are mentioned owing to lack of space.

Still faring eastward the ship visits Ceylon, Penang, Singapore, Bankok, Batavia, Samarang and Bali. The Sulu Archipelago and Manila are next; then Hong Kong, Shanghai and Peiping, China; then Beppu, Kobe and Yokohama, Japan, covering the chief attractions of both countries. "Aloha" is Honolulu's welcome and Kilauea.

Hilo's slumbering volcano, may stage a spectacular show for the visitors. The beauty spots of San Francisco and Los Angeles will charm everyone, then the great liner passes through the Panama Canal to visit Havana and turn northward to New York, demonstrating in a most spectacular and interesting manner that the earth is round, as Columbus declared it was.

MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL



The Counterfeiter Speaks

