

BELOW ZERO

A Romance of the North Woods



By
Harold Titus
W.N.U.
SERVICE

Wolf's camp was the only habitation out yonder; the only habitation in all that country about Kampfest where travelers were turned away. For years men had known that when old Wolf was at home none was welcome to pass his threshold except Ellen Richards. His was a place to shun, a camp where succor was not available.

But Wolf was gone now. He was out in the Caribou deer yard, forty miles away, the cruiser had said. He would stay there, too, driving out timber wolves, come to fill their winter-slack bellies on the easy living afforded by yarded deer.

Richards' cabin, then, was sanctuary for a man who fled the law. Doubly so; going there would throw trailers off the scent; he would find a chance to rest; would take food and ammunition and anything else he might need for a long period of hiding. Then, when the heat of the chase cooled, he could make his way to the westward, around the head of Superior and off into Canada.

He was not an old man, not yet even in his prime. True, he would start with his hands again, but he had started so once and if it had not been for his avariciousness he would have possessed many of the things he wanted. . . . He would not lose his head again! He would not play his cards too strongly! He would keep himself within the law next time!

"The law, the law!" he whispered. "Within the law. . . . Always within the law. . . ."

He ran a bit until the strain on his heart, already heavily taxed by excitement, forced him to walk. Minutes later he halted, thinking he saw someone running off to the right, circling to get in front of him; but it was nothing, a trick of his eyes, of his inflamed fancy.

"Hang on to yourself!" he growled shakily. "You've lost your head once tonight. . . . That's enough. . . ."

The snow still fell, covering his tracks. He took a passing comfort in that. By midnight his trail would show only faint traces; by morning, if the wind blew even a breath, this light snow would shift and obliterate them forever.

He did not reckon that a man was already on that trail, coming slowly, painfully. No, he did not guess such a circumstance; no more than he dreamed that as he left Shoestring behind a lone girl was striking a match in Wolf Richards' camp, looking about a bit nonplussed and then, with a sigh, searching for kindling to build the fire that would make this place, though otherwise untenanted to-night, wholly habitable for her.

The permanent abodes of solitary trappers almost without exception fall into one of two categories: the meticulously clean or the impossibly filthy. To the first belonged Wolf Richards'.

In this living room, direct evidence of his calling was missing. A rifle and a shotgun, greased rags stuffed into the muzzles, stood upright in a rack. On the shelf above a store of ammunition reposed in orderly boxes, and beside them were a half-dozen worn books. The oilcloth on the table against a south window was figured in blue. Dishes and cooking utensils were nestled on shelves beside the cook stove.

The floor of pine had been much scrubbed. The one bed in the corner, with blankets gone now, was covered with a tarpaulin, neatly tucked about the tick. The wood box was filled, supplies ranked in a cupboard above it. A broom hung from its nail, a sharp ax stood behind the door.

Ellen put a kettle on and unhooked the plank door at the end of the room, entered Wolf's fur loft, a windowless chamber, filled with animal skins, and dragged from it a cot. Her own blankets were on a shelf before which hung a curtain of brilliant red calico, and while water heated she made up her bed, as she had made it many another time when coming here to spend a night with the old recluse.

Lighting a lantern she went out to the root cellar, shoveled snow from before the entrance and secured vegetables. Then to the spring for water.

Good camper that she had been taught to be, accustomed to her uncle's comings and goings at any and all times, she was restless at finding herself alone in the cabin tonight. She stopped now and again as she made her meal to listen, hoping to hear Wolf's shrill hail come whooping and ringing through the darkness when he approached to see a light shining from the windows of his camp.

But she heard no shout. The night was very still. She tried to tell herself that she must get hold of her emotions and be guided by reason. Out here, twenty miles from the nearest habitation, there could be no cause for this feeling of apprehension which was rising. . . . rising. She was not of the breed of women that fears isolation and loneliness.

But even as she argued so, tears welled into her eyes as she fought against the weight which tugged at her heart.

Sleepless nights were in her immediate past; harried days had taken their toll. This afternoon she had walked a dozen miles through soft going and her body was weary. She dropped her cheek to the blankets for just a moment; if Wolf did not come soon she would undress, bolt the door, fill the stove with wood, and prepare to spend the night alone. . . . Just a moment.

And sleep came as Gorbel, two hours away from that lonely cabin, cursed at the thinning of the snow, at the faintly blurred stars which began to appear in what had been a void above him.

Ellen woke with a start. The room was cold; her body stiff, but it was not the chill nor the aching of her muscles which startled her from deep sleep.

Not these. . . . Rather the careful, slow creaking of a door hinge.

Wolf returning? That was the first possibility which presented itself to her clearing consciousness, but immediately she reasoned that a man does not enter his own home with stealth and caution.

A man was there, outside. She could see his fingers clasp the door's edge, could make out a segment of his face, probably watching her.

"Who is it?" she cried sharply, sitting up and swinging her feet to the floor. "What do you want?"

The door moved and Paul Gorbel half reeled into the room.

"It's I, Ellen. And what do I want?"—with something of a sneer, something of bravado. . . . "What do I want?"—weakening quickly, oddly. "I. . . . I came for you. . . . for you! That's what!"

Over an hour ago he had come to a halt at the crest of the burned ridge which swept downward to the swamp where Wolf had built his cabin, the first objective in his flight. He had stopped with a gasp. Twin rectangles of light showed down there, windows in a building, a structure which he had counted on being unoccupied.

He was without food, without more than a pocket-knife as a device for procuring food and warmth, because he had dropped his pistol back there in the office after his finger had pulled the trigger and drove him away from men and food and shelter.

A man cannot endure the wilderness in winter without food or the means of procuring food. He must have an ax and blankets; he should have utensils to make the food he could take palatable.

His knees shook and his breath came and went in light moans. Wolf Richards there. . . . back home. . . . a man who was impossible of approach, even had a traveler been free to approach any human being!

He wondered why the dogs had not started their clamor. He had been this way before and on each occasion

the beasts had set up a tremendous din long before he was this near. . . . He closed one eye, striving by that gesture of concentration to still his whirling brain. . . . If Wolf were home, his dogs would be home; if dogs were there, they should be raising the dead by now.

But probably the occupant of that cabin was not Wolf Richards at all. Someone else had stopped there tonight, as his cruiser had been there last night. Relief, with that thought, and on the heels of relief, dismay again. Anyone there, anyone who knew him, anyone observing enough to remember and to describe him would present a fatal hazard.

He started cautiously forward, wondering if the dogs might not be there after all, ready to begin their devilish barking. He stood a long interval at the edge of the timber, less than a hundred feet from the cabin, watching, listening. No dogs were there; Wolf could not be home. This was some other person.

The soft snow covered all sounds of his progress. He could see snowshoes standing against the log wall; a single pair, he thought; if so, only one must be encountered. He edged along the building to the window, peering through the half-frosted panes.

His heart stopped as he saw her lying there on the cot, and then raced wildly on again. Ellen Richards, the girl he had desired and, finding her impossible to possess, the girl whose property he had attempted to acquire through the scheming and treachery which had brought him to the status of a fugitive. . . . Paul Gorbel sank to his knees, gasping.

(Continued Next Week)

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS



Methodist Church
George F. Gordon, Pastor

Sunday evening the subject will be "The Tragedy of the Empty Pew". The message will be presented in four acts namely, Act 1, The Empty Pew; Act 2, An Empty Heart; Act 3, An Empty Life; Act 4, Blank.

Come Sunday evening at eight o'clock and here this message. It is appropriate for these times.

Sunday school meets at ten o'clock. A meeting to be held Friday of this week by the members and friends of the church will discuss plans for a morning worship service in the local church. The hour being considered is nine o'clock, preceding Sunday school.

Congregational Church
Rev. Charles F. Clarke, Pastor

Rev. T. A. Dungan will fill the pulpit at the local Congregational Church next Sunday August 6. His sermon will be "The Forgotten God." There will also be special music.

Rev. Clarke will be back from his vacation in time to assume charge of his pastorate the following Sunday.

"My wife has been working on the car, Simpkins," the householder said to the chauffeur.

"Very good, sir," he replied. "I'll go and put everything right again."

Jones (appearing over garden wall)—Do you realize, Robinson, that you've been digging a hole in the back of my coal cellar?

Robinson—Good gracious, no! And all these years I've been telling myself how lucky I am to have a coal mine in my garden!



COOK'S NOOK

etaci shr

Fruit Bars

These stay moist and good even in hot weather

1/2 cup flour

1/2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 tsp. salt

2 eggs

1 cup brown sugar

1/2 cup nutmeats (chopped)

1/2 pkg. dates (sliced)

Mix and sift baking powder, salt and flour. Mix dates and nuts through the flour with finger tips.

Beat the eggs until light; beat in sugar gradually. Stir in dry ingredients, nuts and dates. Then spread mixture evenly over shallow pan lined with waxed paper. Bake in a moderate oven (350° F.) 30 minutes. When cool, cut into strips 4 inches long by 1 inch wide.

Make Your Own Salad

Take a large platter or round chop plate. Put mounds of sliced tomatoes, sliced beets, cropped cabbage, and other raw or cooked vegetables around a center mound of mayonnaise. Each person may fashion his own combination onto an individual salad plate. For a delicious good-keeping mayonnaise that suits almost every kind of salad, try this: Mix 1/2 teaspoon mustard, 1 teaspoon salt, cayenne (to taste) and 1/2 teaspoon sugar. Add the yolk of 1 egg. Mix well and add 1/2 teaspoon vinegar. Add 1 cup salad oil, gradually, drop by drop at first, and then more rapidly, beating with egg beater. As mixture thickens, thin with lemon juice or vinegar, and continue adding oil. Keep covered in ice box.

Quick Peach Dumplings

Make a shortcake dough by mixing and sifting 2 cups flour, 4 tea-

spoons baking powder, 1 teaspoon salt and 4 tablespoons sugar; then stir in 1/3 cup melted shortening, quickly, with fork or knife. Then add enough milk to make a dough (about 3/4 cup). Remove to floured board and knead half a minute until dough is smooth. Then divide dough into six parts; roll each piece until large enough to cover a half peach. Place peeled and seeded peach half on crust and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Fold crust over, dot with butter, and bake in moderate oven until peaches are soft. Serve with hot or hard sauce.

Frozen Rice Pudding

3 cups milk

1/4 cup rice

4 tbsps. sugar

1/2 cup corn syrup

1/2 tsp. salt

2 sqs. chocolate

1 tsp. vanilla

1/2 pkg. dates

1 cup cream

Scald milk, add rice which has been washed, and sugar. Cook in double boiler until milk is absorbed, and rice is tender. Add corn syrup, chocolate (melted) salt and flavoring. Add dates (sliced). Cool, and fold in 1 cup heavy cream (whipped). Freeze. Makes 1 quart.

Stuffed Tomato Surprise

(Serves 6)

6 medium size tomatoes

1 tablespoon gelatine

2 tablespoons cold water

1/2 cup lemon juice

1/2 cup boiling water

1/2 cup orange juice

1/2 cup shrimps

1/2 cup diced celery

Mayonnaise

Mint sprigs (or stuffed olives or

pimiento)

Lettuce

Peel tomatoes and remove centers. Invert and chill. Soak gelatine in cold water 5 minutes. Add boiling water. Stir well. Add lemon and orange juice. Pour into a pan of the right size to make a gelatine layer 1/4 to 1/2-inch thick. Chill until jelly is solid. Cut in cubes. Half fill tomato shells with shrimps and celery blended with mayonnaise. Then pile shells as full as possible with lemon jelly cubes. Garnish with mayonnaise, which may be colored green with spinach juice or vegetable coloring, if desired. Decorate with mint sprigs, stuffed olive slices or pimiento. Serve very cold in lettuce cups.

Corn Souffle

Mix in a saucepan two tablespoons of flour with one tablespoon melted butter. Pour in slowly one cup of milk. Bring to the boiling point. Add one can of corn, one teaspoon sugar, one teaspoon salt, pepper to taste, and the well-beaten yolks of two eggs. Fold in the whites of the eggs until stiff, and fold into the mixture. Place in a well-buttered baking dish and bake for 25 minutes in a moderate oven. Remove and serve immediately.

McMinnville—Peach and other fruit and nut trees which had been well cared for and entered last winter in good vigorous condition, suffered less from the severe weather than those on poorer soil, or those which had been wholly or partly neglected, observes S. T. White, county agent. He has visited many prune, walnut and peach orchards recently and has found that while the trees came out nicely and appeared to start well, certain branches, part of trees, and occasionally whole trees, suddenly showed withering or dying back of the foliage. Investigation showed them to be suffering from winter injury or lack of plant food.

WESTERN News Features



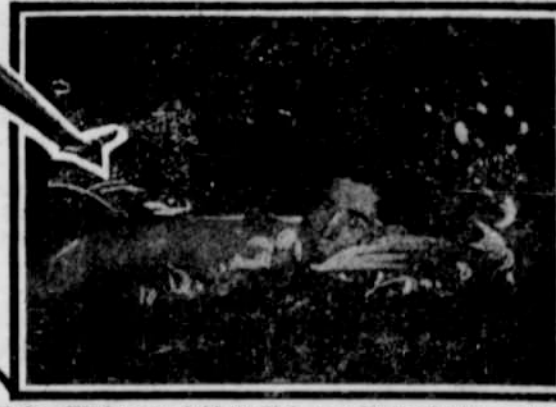
The grandeur of Mount Rainier is making Northwest a mecca for world tourists. It is to the advantage of the region to herald the attractions of this majestic mountain to people everywhere. Public and private individuals are stressing the fact that it costs no more to vacation in your national parks.

Another National crew championship comes to University of Washington with their victory Yale, Cornell and Harvard at the first Western regatta in Long Beach, California.

The man who made "Wooden Money" and wood bathing suits possible has been found. He is J. E. Eckersley, of Seattle, inventor of a machine which cuts wood as thin as 1-500 of an inch. Eckersley is shown with a book, the leaves of which are cut one hundred to an inch.



Art Gunderson designing jeweler of Tacoma has created a new vogue in jewelry and his creations have been sent from Washington State to Newport, Long Island and the East.



The Questions Were Clear Enough

MICKIE, THE PRINTER'S DEVIL

