

BOOK ONE THE CALL OF THE BLOOD CHAPTER I

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Bruce was wakened by the sharp ring of his telephone bell. Instantly he was fully aroused, in complete conit is a trait of the wild creatures; a go." little matter that is quite necessary If they care at all about living. Frontiersmen learn the trait, too; but as Bruce was a dweller of cities it seemed somewhat strange in him. Then he grunted rebelliously and

glanced at his watch beneath the pilwas just midnight now. He had no doubts whatever concern-

been one hundred like it during the and asked me if I was from this very previous month. His foster father had city. recently died, his estate was being settled up, and Bruce had been having a somewhat strenuous time with his old woman sent word, secretly, to creditors. He understood the man's real financial situation at last; at his hunt in the region of Trail's End, death the whole business structure collapsed like the eggshell it was. Bruce had supposed that most of the debts had been peld now; he won dered, as he fumbled into his bedroom slippers, whether the thousand or so dollars that were left would cover the claim of the man who was now calling him to the telephone.

. "This is Mr. Duncan," he said cold-ly Into the transmitter.

"How do you do, Mr. Duncan," a voice answered. "Pardon me if I got you up. I want to talk to your son, Bruce."

- Bruce emitted a little gasp amazement. Whoever talked at the end of the line obviously didn't know that the elder Duncan was dead. Bruce had a moment of grim humor in which he mused that this voice would have done rather well if it me. And then I said I knew you. acould arouse his foster father to anlast month," he answered simply. facts went, more of a stranger to him; As soon as you get home, tell him to

"I won't be a mystery long. He's not, eh-that's what she old hag said. Excuse me, old man, for saying 'hag.' But she was one, if there is any such. Lord knows who she is, or whether or not she's a relation of yours. But I'll begin at the beginning. You know I

was way back on the Oregon frontler -back in the Cascades. I was fishing for steelhead in a river they call the trol of all his faculties. And this is Rogue. While way up on the upper not especially common to men bred in | waters I heard of a place called Trail's the security of civilization. Rather End-a place where wise men do not

"And of course you went?" "Of course. The name sounds silly now, but it won't if you ever go there. There are only a few families, Bruce, miles and miles apart, in the whole region. And it's enormous-no one knows how big. Just ridge on ridge. low. He had gone to bed early; it One day my guide stopped at a brokendown old cabin on the hillside for a drink of water. I was four miles ing the nature of this call. There had away in camp. The guide came back

> "I told him yes, and asked him why he wanted to know. He said that this every stranger that came to fish or wanting to know if they came from here. I was the first one that answered 'yes.' And the guide said that she wanted me to come to her cabin and see her.

"I went-and I won't describe to you how she looked. I'll let you see for yourself, if you care to follow out her instructions. And now the strange part comes in. The old witch raised her arm, pointed her cane at me, and asked me if I knew Newton Duncan.

"I told her there might be several Newton Duncans in a city this size. You should have seen the pain grow on her face. 'After so long, after so

long !' she cried, in the queerest, sob- | in half-tone, and then quite gone. Yet bing way. Then she took heart and began again. " "This Newton Duncan had a son-

a foster-son-named Bruce,' she told "You can't imagine the change that swer it. "The elder Mr. Duncan died came over her. I thought she'd die of heart failure. The whole thing, There was not the slightest trace of Bruce-if you must know-gave me emotion in his tone. No wayfarer on the creeps. "Tell him to come here,"

THE TILLAMOOK HEADLIGHT

growing on a mountain."

know.

-did you get the idea that the old to him. And sometimes he drew Inwoman was Linda?" "I didn't get that idea," Barney answered. "She spoke of Linda as she

might a young girl." quite different. "And how do you get there?"

it twice, if the teacher hadn't stepped "Buy a ticket for Deer Creek, in southern Oregon." There was no need up belfind him and taken it out of his for Bruce to write the name. It was hands. It was "geography" then, not branded, ineffaceably, in his conscious ness. "Then take up the long road "paying attention." And he had every of the Divide, clear to a little store- reason to think that the teacher would Martin's, they call it-fifty miles back. crumple up his picture and send him Then ask directions from there. Ask, she told me to tell you, for Mrs. Ross." but she did no such thing. Whe But she did no such thing. When Bruce leaped up and turned swiftly her eyes glanced down, her fingers through the door. Barney called a slowly straightened. Then she looked question to his vanishing figure. Just again-carefully. "What is this, Bruce?" she asked. for an instant Bruce curned-his dark

"What have you been drawing?" eyes glowing beneath his straight brows. "I'm 'phoning-asking for reservations on the first train west," he anlet his thoughts go wandering here swered.

CHAPTER II

Before the gray dawn came over the land Bruce Duncan had started westward. He had no self-amazement at Bruce, have you ever seen or heard the lightning decision. He was only of such pines?" But Bruce did not strangely and deeply exultant. The reasons why went too deep Another puzzling adventure that

within him to be easily seen. In the stuck in Bruce's memory had happened sense of immeasurable relief at his of adoption. left. He would have no more consul- were extremely dim and vague. He tations with impatient creditors, no did not know to what city he went, ore would he strive to gather to nor had he any recollection whatever anticipation. gether the ruins of the business, and of the people he met there. But he did attempt to salvage the small remain- remember, with remarkable clearness,

ing fragments of his father's fortune. the perpiexing talk that the man and He had no plans, he didn't know which the superintendent of the Square way to turn. All at once, through the house had together on his return. message that Barney had brought him. he had seen a clear trail ahead. It said, "I tried him out and he won't was something to do, something at fill in in my family. And I've fetched last that mattered. him back.

Finally there remained the eminent fact that this was an answer to his you there's something vicious in that dream. He was going toward Linda, boy's nature. It came out the very at last. The girl had been the one living creature in his memory that he had cared for and who cared for him -the one person, whose interest in him was real. Linda, the little "spitfire" of his boyhood, had suddenly become the one reality in his world, and as he thought of her, his memory reviewed the few impressions he had retained of his childhood.

at all." First was the Square house-the orphanage-where the Woman had turned him over to the nurse in Bruce either. charge. Sometimes, when tobacco smoke was heavy upon him, Bruce could catch a very dim and fleeting And there was nothing flickering or glimpse of the Woman's face. It was only a glimpse, only the faintest blur he never gave up trying.

The few times that her memory picture did come to him, it brought a number of things with it. One of them was a great and overwhelming sturdy fellow," he said, as Bruce was realization of some terrible tragedy ushered in. and terror the nature of which he could not even guess.

"She's been through fire," the nurse told the doctor when he came in and emotion in his tone. No wayfarer on the creeps. Tell him to come here, the door had closed behind the Woman. by a thousand electric lights, such Bruce did remember these words, bethe wife's idea, anyway, you know.

many hours of almost overwhelming loneliness. Also there were many dians and cowboys. And one daywhen he wasn't half watching what thoughts such as are not especially good for the spirits of growing boys. he was doing-he drew something The place where the Duncans lived

was a house, but under no liberal in-Perhaps he wouldn't have looked at terpretation of the word could it be called a home. There was nothing homelike in it to Attle Bruce.

was that had come.

Dave glanced away.

taken a message from ner."

"Week ago Tuesday."

"How long ago was this?"

months before we can clinch this

thing for good, and young Folger

might-I say might-have kicking

about somewhere in his belongings

the very document we've all of us

been worrying about for twenty

years." Simon cursed-a single, flery

oath. "But we are yelling before

we're hurt. It isn't worth a cussword.

Like as not, this Wegan will never

take the trouble to hunt him up. And

if he does-well, it's nothing to worry

about, either. There is one back door

that has been opened many times to

let his people go through, and it may easily be opened again."

Dave's eyes filled with admiration.

Then he turned and gazed out through

the window. Against the eastern sky,

manded.

The other lasting memory was of Linda. She represented the one living creature in all his assemblage of phantoms-the one person with whom he could claim real kinship. He had done a bold thing, after his first few years with the Duncans. He planned It long and carried it out with infinite Dave's step. care as to details. He wrote to Linda, in care of the superintendent of the

orphanage. The answer only deepened the "I-I don't know," the child anmystery. Linda was missing. Whether swered. He looked and for an instant she had run away, or whether some one had come by in a closed car and and there. "Those are trees," he said. A word caught at his throat and carried her off as she played on the lawns, the superintendent could not he blurted it out. "Pines! Pine trees, tell. They had never been able to trace her. He had been fifteen then, "Not bad for a six-year-old boy," the teacher commented. "But where, a tall boy with rather unusual muscular development, and the girl was eleven. And in the year nineteen hundred and twenty, ten years after the reply to his letter, Bruce had heard no word from her. He had given up Bruce's life had not been very adven-turous heretofore. They alven at the Square house, when a man had again. "My little sister," he said turous heretofore. Then there was a taken him home on trial with the idea softly to a memory. Then bitterness -a whole black flood of it-would sudden and unexpected freedom from All the incidents and details of the come upon him. "Good Lord, I don't the financial problems his father had excursion with this prospective parent even know that she was my sister." But now he was going to find her

and his heart was full of joy and eager

quiry as to the land Bruce was going He only knew one thing-that "He won't do," the stranger had it was the wilderness. The fact that he had no business plans for the future and no financial resources except a

few hundred dollars that he carried "I believe in being frank, and I tell in his pocket did not matter one way or another. He was willing to spend all the money he had; after it was first moment he was in the house, gone, he would take up some work in when the Missus was introducing him life anew. to my eight-year-old son. "This is lit-

He had a moment's wonder at the tle Turner,' she said-and this boy effect his departure would have upon sprang right at him. I'd never let the financial problem that had been little Turner learn to fight, and this his father's sole legacy to him. He boy was on top of him and was poundlaughed a little as he thought of it. ing him with his fists before we could But the idea that others also-having pull him off. I didn't understand it no business relations with his father -might be interested in this western Nor did the superintendent underjourney of his did not even occur stand; nor-in these later years-

to him. But the paths men take, seemingly, He was quite a big boy, nearly ten, with wholly different aims, crisscross when he finally left the Square house. and become intertwined much more than Bruce knew. Even as he lay in dim about the memory of this occasion. his berth, the first sweet drifting of A tall, exceedingly slender man sat sleep upon him, he was the subject beside the window-a man well of a discussion in a far-distant moundressed but with hard lines about his tain home; and sleep would not have mouth and hard eyes. Yet the superinfallen so easily and sweetly if he tendent seemed particularly anxious had heard it. to please him. "You will like this

. It might have been a different world.

already wan and pale from the encroaching dawn, the long ridge of a Only a glimpse of it, illumined by the The man's eyes traveled slowly from mountain stood in vivid and startling moon, could be seen through the solled the child's curly head to his rapidly silhouette. The edge of it was curland besmirched window pane; butgrowing feet; but no gleam of interously jagged with many little upright that was enough to tell the story. est came into the thin face. "I sup- There were no tall buildings, lighted points.

moon as leers down red and strange

noon that times the hunting hours

of the forest creatures. But the pate

There was only one person who would have been greatly amazed by as Bruce could see through the winthat outline of the ridge; and the dows of his bedroom at night. The years and distance had obscured her lights that could be discerned in this long ago. This was a teacher at an orstrange, dark sky were largely unphanage in a distant city, who once familiar to Bruce, because of the had taken a crude drawing from the smoke-clouds that had always hung above the city where he lived. There hands of a child, Here was the same ridge, hands of a child. Here was the original covered with pines, that little Bruce many of them that the mind was unhad drawn. able to comprehend their number. There was also a moon that cast a CHAPTER IV little square of light, like a fairy tapestry, on the floor. It was not such

Friday, August 11, 1022

log, and he found a comfortable se unexpected. His host had not ret on the ground beside it, his bac against its bark. Then he waited to seen his face. Yet the man knew, before the door was opened, who it the dawn to come out.

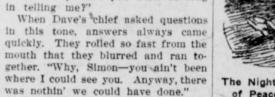
The night hours passed. The sense of peace seemed to deepen on the man The reason went back to a certain quickening of the senses that is the He sat relaxed, his brown face grave peculiar right and property of most his eyes lifted. The stars began t men who are really residents of the dim and draw back farther into th wilderness. This man was the son recesses of the sky. The round out of the wild as much as the wolves that line of the moon seemed less pro-nounced. And a faint ribbon of light ran in the packs. Soft though it was, he had heard the sound of apbegan to grow in the east. proaching feet in the pine needles. It widened. The light grew, As surely as he would have recognized night wind played one more litt the dark face of the man in the door-

game between the tree trunks as way, he recognized the sound as slipped away to the Home of Wind that lies somewhere above the mon The man came in, and at once an tains. The little night sounds wer observer would have detected an air slowly stilled. of deference in his attitude. Very

The

Bruce closed his eyes, not knowing plainly he had come to see his chief. why. His blood was leaping in hi He was a year or two older than his

host, less powerful of physique, and his eyes did not hold quite so straight. There was less savagery but more cunning in his sharp features. He blurted out his news at once. "Old Elmira has got word down to the settlements at last," he said. There was no muscular response in the larger man. Dave, was plainly disappointed. He wanted his news to cause a stir. It was true, however, that his host slowly raised his eyes. "What do you mean?" the man de-"Mean-I mean just what I said. We should have watched closer. Bill-Young Bill, I mean-saw a city chap just in the act of going in to see her. He had come onto the plateaus with his guide-Wegan was the man's name-and Bill said he stayed a lot longer than he would have if he hadn't "And why have you been so long



The Night Hours Passed. The Sense of Peace Seemed to Deepen on the "There wasn't, eh? I don't suppose Man. you ever thought that there's yet two

veins. An unfamiliar excitement, almost an exultation, had come upon He lowered his head nearly to him. his hands that rested in his lap, then walted a full five minutes more.

Then he opened his eyes. The light had grown around him. His hands were quite plain. Slowly, as a man raises his eyes to a miracle, he lifted his face.

The forest was no longer obscured in darkness. The great trees had emerged, and only the dusk as of twilight was left between. He saw them plainly,-their symmetrical forms, their declining limbs, their tall tops piercing the sky. He saw them as they were,-those ancient, eternal symbols and watchmen of the wilderness. And he knew them at last, acquaintances long forgotten but remembered now.

"The pines!" he cried. He leaped to his feet with flashing eyes. "I have come back to the pines!"

CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER III There had not been time to make in-

there was no sense of loss at his death and no cause for pretense now. "This is Bruce speaking."

He heard the other gasp. "Old man, I'm sorry," his contrite voice came. "I didn't know of your loss. This is Barney-Barney Wegan-and I just got in from the West, Haven'f had a bit of news for months. Accept my earnest sympathies-"

"Barney! Of course." The delight grew on Bruce's face; for Barney We gan, a man whom he had met and learned to know on the gym floor of his club, was oute near to being a real friend. "And what's up, Barney?" The man's voice changed at oncewent back to its same urgent, but rather embarrassed tone. "You won't believe me if I tell you, so I won't try

to tell you over the Mone. But 1 must come up-right away. May 1?" "Of course-

"T'll be there in a minute."

Bruce hung up, slowly descended to his library, and flashed on the lights. For the first time he was revealed plainly. His was a familiar type; but at the same time the best type, too. He had the face and the body of an athlete, a man who keeps himself fit; and there was nothing mawkish or effeminate, about him. It is true that men did look twice at Bruce's eyes. set in a brown, clean-cut face, never knowing exactly why they did so. They had startling potentialities. They were quite clear now, wideawake and cool, yet they had a strange depth of expression and shadow that might mean, somewhere beneath the bland and cool exterior, a capacity for great emotions and passions.

He had only a few minutes to wait; then Barney Wegan tapped at his door. This man was bronzed by the sun, never more fit, never straighter and taller and more lithe. He had just come from the far places. The embarrassment that Bruce had detected in his voice was in his face and manner, too.

"You'll think I'm crazy for routing you out at this time of night, Bruce,' he began. "And I'm going to get this matter off my chest as soon as possible and let you go to bed. It's all batty, anyway. But I was cautioned by all the devils of the deep to see you-the

moment I came here." "Cigarettes on the smoking-stand," Bruce said steadily. "And tell away." "But tell me something first. Was Duncan your real father? If he was, I'll know I'm up a wrong tree. I don't mean to be personal-"

"he wasn't. I thought you knew it. My and f ther is something like you great dreams of his life was coming - 8 1 in the sine was the

come here.' "Of course I asked why she hadn't

written to Duncan. The answer was simple enough-that she didn't know how to write. Those in the mountains that could write wouldn't, or couldn't -she was a trifle vague on that point -dispatch a letter. Something is up, Bruce, and I don't know what. But she said-for you to come back and find-Linda."

Bruce suddenly leaned forward. The brown face had grown quite

sked. He spoke slowly-with evident

Earney answered with the slowness-each word distinct. "For you to come-and she made me swear to tell you-on the first train. That

The Man's Voice Broke and Changed. "Isn't That Queer, Bruce?"

> there was no time to lose." The man's voice broke and changed. "Isn't that queer, Bruce?"

Bruce slowly stiffened; the only sign of emotion was one that even Barney's eyes, trained to the dimness of the wilderness, falled to see. It was just an ever-tightening clasp of his hands over the chair arms until the blue veins stood out. There was nothing else about him to indicate that the dead had spoken to him-that one of the

; tras. He stoke rather painfully, "Did and in such books as were brought

cause many years elapsed before he What about parentage? completely puzzled them out. The cent at all?" nurse hadn't meant such fires as swept through the far-spread ever-green a long time before answering. Little forests of the Northwest. It was some Bruce, alfeady full of secret conjecother, dread fire that seared the spirit tures as to his own parentage, thought and burned the bloom out of the face that some key might be given him at

a fixed, strange brightness as of great fear or insemity.

gone quickly; and he had been too a hard time? young to remember if she had carried iny sort of bundle close to her brenst. "She dropped her children and t Yet, the man considered, there must have been such a bundle-otherwise he couldn't possibly account for Linda. And there were no doubts about her. at all.

Of course he-had no memories of her that first day, nor for the first years. But all later memories of the Square house always included her. She must have been nearly four years younger than himself; thus when he was taken to the house she was only an infant. But thereafter, the nurses put them together often; and when Linda was able to talk, she called him something that sounded like Bwovaboo. She called him that so often that for a long time he couldn't be sure that wasn't his real name. Now, in nanhood, he interpreted. "Brother Bruce, of course. Linda

was of course a sister." Linda had been homely; even a

small boy could notice that. Besides. Linda was nearly six when Bruce had left for good; and he was then at an age in which impressions begin to be lasting. Her hair was quite blond then, and her features rather irregular. But there had been a light in her eyes ! By his word, there had been!

She had been angry at him times in plenty-over some childish game-and he remembered how that light had grown and brightened. She had flung at him too. He laughed at the memory of her sudden, explosive feroe.

ity-the way her hands had smacked against his cheeks, and her sharp little nails had scratched him "Little Spitfire," he sometimes called her; but no one else could call her anything but Linda. For Bruce had been an able little fighter, even in those days He was fond of drawing pictures This was nothing in itself; many little boys are fond of drawing pictures Nor were his unusually good. Then strangeness lay in his subjects. He liked to draw animals in particularthe animals he read about in school

The superintendent seemed to wait and all the gentle lights out of the last. "There is nothing that we can eyes. It did, however, leave certain tell you, Mr. Duncan," he said at lights, but they were such that their last. "A woman brought him hereremembrance brought no pleasure to with an infant girl-when he was Bruce. They were just a wild glare, about four, 1 suppose she was his mother-and she didn't walt to talk

to me. The nurse said that she wore The Woman had kissed him and outlandish clothes and had plainly had "But she didn't walt-?"

way."

that it cast on the floor was obscure A cold little smile flickered at the in a moment because the man who man's lips. "It looks rather damhad been musing in the big chair be

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side the empty fireplace had risen and lighted a kerosene lamp.

The light prevented any further scrutiny of the moon and stars. And what remained to look at was not nearly so pleasing to the spirit. It was a great, white-walled room that would have been beautiful had it not been for certain unfortunate attempts to beautify it. There was a stone fireplace, and certain massive, dustcovered chairs grouped about it. But the eyes never would have got to these. They would have been held and fascinated by the face and the form of the man who had just lighted the lamp.

No one could look twice at that massive physique and question its might. He seemed almost gigantic in the yellow lamplight. In reality he stood six feet and almost three inches, and his frame was perfectly in proportion. He moved slowly, lazlly, and the thought flashed to some great monster of the forest that could uproot a tree with a blow,

The face was huge, big and gaunt of bone; and particularly one would notice the mouth. It would be noticed even before the dark, deep-sunken eyes. It was a bloodhound mouth. the mouth of a man of great and ter-"But I'll Take the Little Beggar, Anyrible passions, and there was an un-

mistakable measure of cruelty and nable," he said significantly. "But I'll savagery about it. But there was take the little beggar, anyway." strength, too, No eye could doubt And thus Bruce went to the cold that. But it was not an ugly face. fireside of the Duncans-a house in for all the brutality of the features. a great and distant city where, in the It was even handsome in the hard, years that had passed, many things mountain way. One would notice scarcely worth remembering had tran- straight, black hair-the man's age spired. It was a gentleman's house- was about thirty-nine-long over rather as far as the meaning" of the word dark ears, and a great, gnarled throat. usually goes-and Bruce had been af. The words when he spoke seemed to forded a gentleman's education. There come from deep within it. was also, for a while, a certain amount "Come in, Dave," he said.

of rather doubtful prosperity, a wom- In this little remark lay something an who died after a few months of of the man's power. The visitor had interest in him, and many, come unannounced. His visit had been

The train came to' a sliding halt at Deer Creek, paused an infinitesimal brough the smoke of cities. It was fraction of a second, and roared on in its ceaseless journey. That infinitesimal fraction was long enough for Bruce, polsed on the bottom step of a sleeping car, to swing down on to the gravel right-of-way. His bag, hurled by a sleepy porter, followed him, Duncan's next impression was one

of infinite solitude. He hadn't read any guidebooks about Deer Creek, and he had expected some sort of town. But here was one little wooden structure with only three sides .- the opening facing the track. It was evidently the waiting room used by the mountain men as they waited for their local trains.

There were no porters to carry his bag. There were no shouting officials. His only companions were the stars and the moon and, farther up the slope, certain tall trees that tapered to incredible points almost in the region where the stars began.

The whole scene, for causes deeper than any words may ever seek and reveal, moved him past any experience in his life. It was wholly new

He turned about until the wind was in his face. It was full of fragrances,strange, indescribable smells that seemed to call up a forgotten world. They carried a message to him, but as yet he hada't made out its meaning. He only knew it was something mysterious and profound: great truths that flickered, like dim lights, in his consciousness, but whose outline he could not quite discern.

Perhaps there were sounds, but they only seemed part of the silence. The faintest rustle in the world reached him from the forests above of many little winds playing a running game between the trunks, and the stir of the Little People, moving in their midnight occupations. Each of these sounds had its message for Bruce. They all seemed to be trying to tell him something, to make clear some great iruth that was dawning in his consciousness. He was not in the least afraid. He

felt at peace as never before. He picked up his bag, and with stealing steps approached the long slope behind. The moon showed him a fallen

The dawn revealed a narrow road along the bank of Deer creek-a brown little wanderer which, winding here and there, did not seem to know exactly where it wished to go. Bruce didn't know which direction to take, whether up or down the creek.

He gave the problem a moment's thought. "Take the road up the Divide," Barney Wegan had said; and at once Bruce knew that the course lay up the creek, rather than down. A divide means simply the high places between one watershed and another, and of course Trail's End lay somewhere beyond the source of the stream. The creek itself was apparently a sub-tributary of the Rogue, the great river to the south.

Bruce was in a mood to be delighted. these early morning hours. He was on the way to Linda; a dream was about to come true. The whole adventure was of the most thrilling and joyous anticipations. He did not feel the load of his heavy suitcase. It was nothing to his magnificent young strength.

The sun rose higher, and be began to feel its power. The sweat came out on his bronze face, but he never felt better in his life. There was but one great need, and that was breakfast.

A man of his physique feels hunger quickly. The sensation increased in intensity, and the suitcase grew correspondingly heavy. And all at once he stopped short in the road. The impulse along his nerves to his leg muscles was checked, like an electric current at the closing of a switch, and an instinct of unknown originstruggled for expression within him. In an instant he had it. He didn't know whence it came. It was nothing he had read or that any one had told him. It seemed to be rather the result of some experience in his own immediate life, an occurrence of sc long ago that he had forgotten it. He suddenly knew where he could find his breakfast. He set his suitcase down, and with the confidence of a man who hears the dinner call in h own home, he struck off into the thickets beside the creek bed. Instinct-and really, after all, instinct is nothing but memory-led his steps

He glanced here and there, not even wondering at the singular fact that he did not know exactly what manner of food he was seeking. In a moment he came to a growth of thorncovered bushes, a thicket that only the she-bear knew how to penetrate But it was enough for Bruce just to stand at its edges. The bushes