

THE FORESTER'S DAUGHTER

A Romance of the Bear Tooth Range

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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CHAPTER XII

The Death Grapple.

YOU had been very considerate of me, Miss Supervisor. Wayland took her hand...

Leaving his saddle with one flying leap, the cowboy practices at play, Belden hurled himself upon his rival with the fury of a panther. The slender youth went down before the big rancher as though struck by a catapult...

multitudinous human drama, but the wind, less insensate than the brute, swept through the grove of dwarfed, distorted pines with a desolate, sympathetic moan...

ness, as though suddenly grown old, the relieved assassin rode away up the mountain, his head bent low, his eyes upon the ground. CHAPTER XIII. Berrie's Vigil.

about the fire, to see her from moment to moment, with full liberty to speak to her, to meet her glance, pleased him. It was the most romantic and moving episode in his life...

"I'm not worth all your care," he said to her, with poignant glance. The sun rose clear and warm, and the fire, the coffee, put new courage into him...

shall I do? What shall I do? I'm so moaned. Instantly smitten into abject, miserable mood, he said: "Don't worry about me. Please don't. I can do what I feel better. You mustn't complain. Please forgive my asking you to bear it again. Come! Let us go now."



Belden snarled between his teeth, "I told you I'd kill you, and I will!"

Wayland again struggled with reality. "What has happened to me?" "You fell and hurt your head."

She hesitated an instant. "He's in the tent. He fell and struck his head on a rock, and I had to go into camp here."



She sat staring at the fire with the calm brow of an Indian.

He followed her to the door of the tent, apprehending something new and inexplicable in her attitude. In the music of her voice as she spoke to the sick man was the love note of the mate...

She hated to have him resume that tone of self-depreciation, and, kneeling to him, she kissed his cheek and told her head beside his. "You're splendid," she insisted.

Oh, no, they wouldn't. You'd have to modify your stride a little, but you'd negotiate it. You're equal to anything. "You're making fun of me!"

He looked up at her with challenging glance. "Suppose I refuse—suppose I decide to stay here?" "Upon her as he talked a sweet hesitation fell, a dream which held more of happiness than she had ever known."

"Hello, old man! What you been doing with yourself? Hitting the high spots?" "Oh, yes," she answered, "but I don't intend to sleep."

He followed her to the door of the tent, apprehending something new and inexplicable in her attitude. In the music of her voice as she spoke to the sick man was the love note of the mate.

"What a mystery it all is! You turn from a splendid fellow like Landon to a 'skate' like me. Landon worships you—you know that—don't you?"

She took his hand and pressed it to her cheek, then, putting her arm about his neck, drew him to her bosom and kissed him passionately. "You break my heart when you talk like that."

He had accepted her loving praise, he clasping arms, as a part of the rescue from the darkness and pain of the long ride, careless of what it might bring to him in the future.

He did not answer. His glance wandered to his horse, serenely cropping the grass in utter disregard of this attack.

He accepted his banishment. "All right. If you feel that way I'll ride. But I'd like to do something for you before I go. I'll pile up some wood."

Beneath his joking he was profoundly chagrined. He had hoped by this time to be as sinewy, as alert as Nash, instead of which here he sat, shivering over the fire like a sick girl, his head swollen, his blood sluggish, but this discouragement only increased Berrie's tenderness—a tenderness which melted all his reserve.

CHAPTER XIV. The Gossip Awaits. Berrie was frightened for Wayland, and as she thought of the long ride still before them she wrung her hands. "Oh, what shall I do?"

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