

The FORESTERS DAUGHTER



A ROMANCE OF THE BEAR TOOTH RANGE

By HAMLIN GARLAND

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CHAPTER IV.

A Warning.

MEANWHILE his own troubles increased. Frank's dislike had grown to an impenetrable vindictiveness, and if the old man Meeker had any knowledge of his son's devilities he gave no sign. "I don't know why I stay," Wayland wrote to Beria. "I'm disgusted with the men up here—they're all tire-some except Landon—but I hate to sink away, and, besides, the country is glorious. I'd like to come down and see you this week. May I do so? Please send word that I may."

She did not reply, and, wondering whether she had received his letter or not, he mounted his horse one beautiful morning and rode away up the trail with intent to call upon her at the ranch as he went by. Hardly had he vanished among the pines when Clifford Belden rode in from his ranch on Hat creek and called at Meeker's for his mail.

Frank Meeker was in the office, and as he both feared and disliked this big contemptuous young cattlemen he set to work to make him jealous. "You want to watch this one lung boarder of ours," he warned, with a grin. "He's been writing to Berie, and he's just gone down to see her. His highfalutin ways and his fine white hands have put her on the slant."

"I'm not worrying," retorted Belden. "You'd better be. I was down there the other day, and it peared like she couldn't talk of anything else but Mr. Norcross. Mr. Norcross, till I was sick of his name."

An hour later Belden left the mill and set off up the trail behind Norcross, his face fallen into stern lines. Frank writhed in delight. "There goes Cliff, hot under the collar, chasing Nor-

This notion of stabling the horses, a perfectly innocent and natural one for her, led one of the hands, a coarse minded sneak, to watch them from a corral. "I wonder how Cliff would like that?" he evilly remarked.

Berie was frankly pleased to see Wayland and spoke of the improvement which had taken place in him. "You're looking fine," she said as they were returning to the house. "But how do you get on with the boys?" "Not very well," he admitted. "They seem to have it in for me. It's a constant fight."

Her face grew grave. "I reckon you got started wrong," she said at last. "They'll like you better when you get browned up and your clothes get dirty. You're a little too fancy for them just now."

"I don't believe I want any more of their company. What's the use? As you say, I've started wrong with them, and I don't see any prospect of getting right; and, besides, I like the rangers better. Landon thinks I might work into the service. I wonder if I could? It would give me something to do."

She considered a moment. "We'll think about that. Come into the kitchen. I'm cook today. Mother's gone to town." The kitchen was clean and ample, and the delicious odor of new made bread filled it with cheer. As the girl resumed her apron Wayland settled into a chair with a sigh of content. "I like this," he said aloud. "There's nothing cowgirl about you now; you're the Anglo-Saxon housewife. You might be a Michigan or Connecticut girl at this moment."

Her cheeks were ruddy with the heat and her eyes intent on her work, but she caught enough of his meaning to be pleased with it. "Oh, I have to take a hand at the pots and pans now and then. I can't give all my time to the service, but I'd like to."

He boldly announced his errand. "I wish you'd take me to board. I'm sure your cooking would build up my shattered system a good deal quicker than your aunt's."

She laughed, but shook her head. "You ought to be on the hills riding hard every day. What you need is the high country and the air of the pines."

She had read that victims of the white plague always talk in this cheerful way about themselves, and she worked on without replying. "If I were here—in the valley—you and I could ride together now and then, and you could show me all the trails. Why not let me come here and board? I'm going to ask your mother if I may not do so."

"Of course you can come here," she said when she saw he was in earnest. "Mother will be glad to have you, although our ranch isn't a bit pretty. Perhaps father will send you out with one of the rangers as a fireguard. I'll ask him tonight."

"I wish you would. I like these foresters—what I've seen of them. I wouldn't mind serving under a man like Landon. He's fine."

Upon this pleasant conference Cliff Belden unexpectedly burst. Pushing the door open with a slam, he confronted Berie with dark and angry face.

"Why, Cliff, where did you come from?" she asked, rising in some confusion. "I didn't hear you ride up." "Apparently not," he sneeringly answered. "I reckon you were too much occupied."

She tried to laugh away his black mood. "That's right, I was. I'm chief cook today. Come in and sit down. Mother's gone to town, and I'm playing her part," she explained, ignoring his sullen displeasure. "Cliff, this is Mr. Norcross, who is visiting Uncle Joe. Mr. Norcross, shake hands with Mr. Belden." She made this introduction with some awkwardness, for her lover's failure to even say "Howdy" informed her that his jealous heart was aflame, and she went on quickly. "Mr. Norcross dropped in on his way to the postoffice, and I'm collecting a snack for him."

Recognizing Belden's claims upon the girl, Wayland rose. "I must be going. It's a long ride over the hill."

"Come again soon," urged Berie. "Father wants to see you."

"Thank you. I will look in very shortly," he replied and went out with such dignity as he could command, feeling, however, very much like a dog that has been kicked over the threshold.

Closing the door behind him, Belden turned upon the girl. "What's that consumptive 'dogie' doing here? He peared to be very much at home with you—too darn much at home!" She was prepared for his displeasure, but not for words like these. She answered quietly: "He just dropped in on his way to town, and he's not a 'dogie.'" She resented his tone as well as his words.

"I've heard about you taking him over to Meeker's and lending him your only sicker," he went on, "but I didn't expect to find him sittin' here like he owned the place. You're talkin' altogether too much pains with him. Can't he put his own horse out? Do you have to go to the stable with him? You never did have any sense about your actions with men. You've all along been too free of your reputation, and now I'm going to take care of it for you. I won't have you nursin' this runt any longer!"

She perceived now the full measure of his base rage, and her face grew pale and set. "You're making a perfect fool of yourself, Cliff," she said, with portentous calmness.

"Am I?" he asked. "You sure are, and you'll see it yourself by and by. You've no call to get wire edged about Mr. Norcross. He's not very strong. He's just getting well of a long sickness. I know a chile would finish him, that's why I gave him my sicker. It didn't hurt me, and maybe it saved his life. I'd do it again if necessary."

"Since when did you start a hospital for eastern tenderfeet?" he sneered, then his tone changed to one of downright command. "You want to cut this all out, I tell you! I won't have any more of it! The boys up at the mill are all talkin' about your interest in this little whelp, and I'm getting the brandin' iron from every one I meet. Sam saw you go into the barn with that dude, and that would have been all over the country tomorrow, if I hadn't told him I'd sew his mouth up if he said a word about it. Of course I don't think you mean anything by this coddlin'."

"Oh, thank you," she interrupted, with flaming, quick, indignant fury. "That's mighty nice of you. I went to the barn to show Mr. Norcross where to stall his horse. I didn't know Sam was here."

He sneered. "No, I bet you didn't." She fixed at this. "Come now! Some thing nasty is in your mind. Go on! What have I done? What makes you so hot?"

He began to weaken. "I don't accuse you of anything, I—bet I—"

"Yes, you do—in your heart you distrust me—you just as much as said so!" He was losing his high air of command. "Never mind what I said, Berie. I—"

She was blazing now. "But I do mind—I mind a whole lot—I didn't think it of you," she added as she realized his cheapness, his coarseness. "I didn't suppose you could even think such things of me. I don't like it," she repeated, and her tone hardened.

"and I guess you'd better pull out of here—for good. If you've no more faith in me than that I want you to go and never come back."

"You don't mean that?"

"Yes, I do. You've shown this yellow streak before, and I'm tired of it. This is the limit. I'm done with you."

She stood between tears and beaming anger now, and he was scared. "Don't say that, Berie!" he pleaded, trying to put his arm about her.

"Keep away from me!" She dashed his hands aside. "I hate you, I never want to see you again!" She ran into her own room and slammed the door behind her.

Belden stood for a long time with his back against the wall, the heat of his resentment utterly gone, an empty, aching place in his heart. He called her twice, but she made no answer, and so at last he mounted his horse and rode away.

Young Norcross, much as he admired Berie, was not seeking to exchange her favor for her lover's enmity, and he rode away with an uneasy feeling of having innocently made trouble for himself as well as for a fine, true hearted girl.

"What a good friendly talk we were havin'," he said regretfully. "And to think she is to marry that big, scowling brute! How could she turn Landon down for a savage like that?"

He was just leaving the outer gate when Belden came clattering up and reined his horse across the path and called out: "See here, you young skunk! You're a poor, white livered tenderfoot, and I can't bust you as I would a full grown man, but I reckon you better not ride this trail any more."

"Why not?" inquired Wayland.

Belden glared. "Because I tell you so. Your sympathy hunting game has just about run into the ground. You've worked this baby dodge about long enough. You're not so almighty sick as you put up to be, and you'd better hunt some other cure for lonesomeness or I'll just about cave your chest in."

All this was shockingly plain talk for a slender young scholar to listen to, but Norcross remained calm. "I think you're unnecessarily excited," he remarked. "I have no desire to make trouble. I'm considering Miss Berie, who is too fine to be worried by us."

His tone was conciliating, and the cowboy, in spite of himself, responded to it. "That's why I advise you to go. She was all right till you came Colorado's a big place, and there are plenty other fine rangers for men of your complaint. Why not try Routt county? This is certain, you can't stay in the same valley with my girl I serve notice of that."

"You're making a prodigious ass of yourself," observed Wayland, with calm contempt.

"You think so, do you? Well, I'll make a jack rabbit out of you if I find you on this ranch again. You've

worked on my girl in some way or she's just about quit me. I don't see how you did it, you measly little pup, but you surely have turned her against me!" His rage burst into flame as he thought of her last words. "If you were a much as half a man I'd break you in two pieces right now, but you're not. You're nothing but a dead on the hoof lumber, and there's nothing to do but run you out. So take this as your final notice. You straddle a horse and head east and keep a-ridin', and if I catch you with my girl again I'll dent you a whole hatful of misery. Now, that's right!"

Thereupon, with a firm glance of hate in his face, he whirled his horse and galloped away, leaving Norcross dumb with resentment, intermingled with wonder.

"Truly the west is a dramatic country! Here I am involved in a lover's wrath and under sentence of banishment all within a month! Well, I suppose there's nothing to do but carry out Belden's orders. He's the boss," he said as he rode on. "I wonder just what happened after I left? Something stormy evidently. She must have given him a sharp rebuff or he wouldn't have been so furious with me. Perhaps she even broke her engagement with him. I sincerely hope she did. She's too good for him."

And so from point to point he progressed till, with fine indignation, he crossed a resolution to stay and meet whatever came. "I certainly would be a timorous animal if I let myself be scared into flight by that big bone-head," he said at last.

Nevertheless he felt very weak and very much depressed as he rode up the street of the little town and dismounted at the forest service building.

(To Be Continued.)

Itching, bleeding, protruding or blind piles have yielded to Doan's Ointment, 50c at all stores.

MURRAY

(Too Late for Last Week.)

F. L. Rhoden and wife were transacting business in Plattsmouth Saturday.

T. J. Brendel and wife were attending the state fair at Lincoln Wednesday.

Charles Swab and family and Nick Klamms and family were visiting in Nehawka Sunday.

W. R. Good and wife were calling on the Plattsmouth merchants Saturday afternoon.

John VanHorn and Roy Bayles were trying the fishing art Sunday in the Missouri river.

F. L. Rhoden and wife and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wolfe spent Sunday with Alex Rhoden and family.

Mrs. John Hendricks spent Tuesday with her grandmother, Mrs. E. M. Smith, near Plattsmouth.

R. R. Nickels, who has been looking after business and visiting relatives in Missouri, arrived home Wednesday.

H. C. Creamer had a car of stock on the South Omaha market Tuesday. Charles Wolfe and wife were state fair visitors Wednesday.

The ladies of the K. N. K. are busy preparing for the fourth annual Thanksgiving dinner to be held at Lewiston Thanksgiving day.

Mrs. Frank Lilly and children went to Plattsmouth Thursday, where she will visit a few days with Justus Lilly and family, and will also spend a few days in Omaha looking after business matters.

Mrs. W. P. Hutcheson entertained the ladies of the K. N. K. Thursday afternoon. After the usual services were conducted and the business session held the afternoon was spent in a social way, and a delicious two-course luncheon was served, which added much to the pleasures of the occasion. The next meeting will be held with Miss Lillian Wheeler the first of October.

Special Notice.

All parties knowing themselves indebted to the firm of Baker & Nickels are requested to call and settle same by the 15th of September, or proceedings will be taken to collect same. Baker & Nickels.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS.

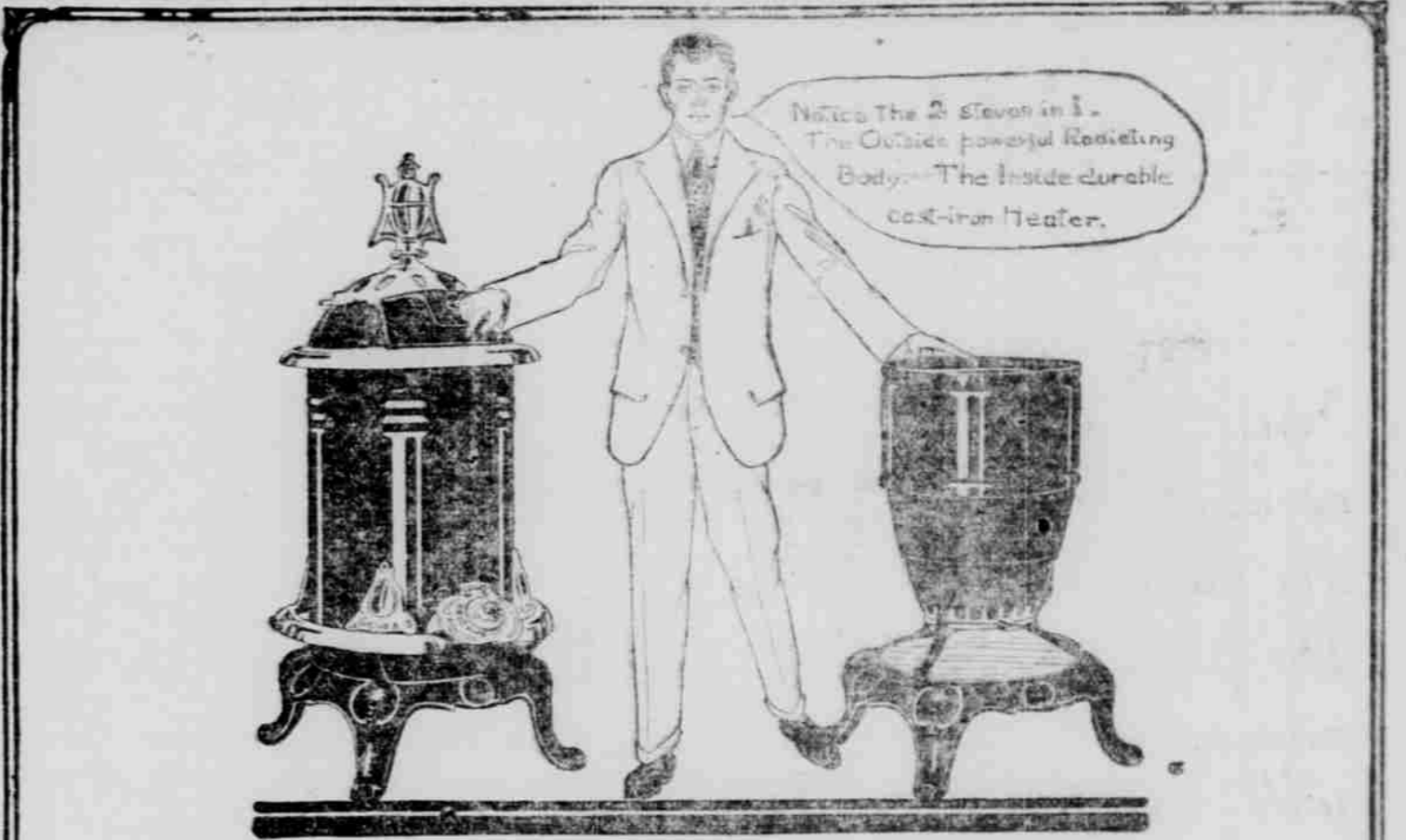
In the County Court of the County of Cass, Nebraska. In Re Estate of Francis Kushinsky, Deceased.

To All Persons Interested: You are hereby notified that hearing upon claims against said estate will be had at the office of the County Judge, Court House, Plattsmouth, Nebraska, on the 8th day of September, A. D. 1915, and on the 8th day of March, A. D. 1916, at 10 o'clock a. m. on each of said days. All claims not filed before said hour on said last day of hearing will be forever barred.

By the Court, ALLEN J. BEESON, County Judge.

W. A. ROBERTSON, Attorney. 8-9-4twikly

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"I've been wondering about you," she said.

cross. If he finds out that Berie is interested in him he'll just about wring that dude's neck."

Meanwhile Wayland was riding through the pass with lightning heart, his thought dwelling on the girl at the end of his journey.

As he reached the McFarlane ranch it seemed deserted of men, but a faint column of smoke rising from the roof of the kitchen gave evidence of a cook, and at his knock Berie came to the door with a look of frank surprise and pleasure. She was dressed in a blue and white calico gown, with the collar turned in and the sleeves rolled up, but she seemed quite unharrassed, and her pleasure in his coming quite repaid him for his long and tiresome ride.

"I've been wondering about you," she said. "I'm mighty glad to see you. How do you stand it?"

"I did, and I was going to write and tell you to come down, but I've had some special work to do at the office." She took the horse's rein from him, and together they started toward the stables.