



THE MAN FROM YONDER

By Harold Titus
W.N.U. SERVICE

SYNOPSIS

Ben Elliott—from "Yonder"—makes his entry into the lumbering town of Tincup. He has brought along an old man, Don Stuart, who had been eager to reach Tincup.

CHAPTER I—Continued

Walters felt their middles aching as they followed those straining contestants. Again the Bull sought to strike Elliott's extended hand and missed by inches. His left hand raised jerkily, up and up. His body tilted. His great torso was twisting, wrenching at the hips, and, seeing this, Elliott leaped high, came down running, sent water sloshing back and forth the length of the stick until with a throaty cry of rage and humiliation, of hatred and jealousy, the great Bull, missing a stride, went sideways and backward, disappeared beneath the surface of the pond with a mighty splash and came up blowing and shaking his black thatched head.

Hats went into the air, then, along with yips and yells and enthusiastic oaths as Ben Elliott, panting heavily, brought the log to a stop and, hands on his knees, stood blowing and grinning and watched the man whose title he had taken swim for the broom sticks.

The Bull slunk quickly toward the boiler room of the mill, water streaming from his pants and sleeves. The pond man threw out his pike pole and brought the cedar log to shore and there Birney, the announcer and master of ceremonies, greeted Elliott with a clap on the back and, with the other hand, thrust a roll of currency at him.

"Here's your money as you sure deserve it!" he cried, close in Ben's ear to make himself heard. "You'd got it on a foul, anyhow!"

Others surged around the victor and Elliott accepted this homage modestly.

"Luck!" he said to one enthusiastic well-wisher. "I got the breaks in luck."

"Luck be damned!" shrilled Bird-Eye. "I'll lick any man you see old or me heavy who says 'twas luck! You got stuff, me b'y; you got guts!"

"Thanks, chum!" Elliott laughed. "I hope you don't find me out!"

He shouldered his way slowly to his pack-sack and, surrounded by his admirers, with Bird-Eye in the fore, changed to his shoes again. He looked about for Don Stuart, craning his neck to see over the crowd which was now moving up toward Tincup's main thoroughfare.

"Who ye want?" Bird Eye asked "Owd Donny?"

"Yeah, Stuart. The old duffer's broke, on top of being sick, and I want to look out for him."

A man at his elbow said cautiously: "I'm afeard old Don won't do much visitin' in Tincup." Bird-Eye turned to him inquiringly and the man nodded. "Brandon. He found him here while th' birlin' was goin' on. He's likely made other arrangements."

"Th' dirty stinker!" Bird-Eye said beneath his breath. "So he's drivin' him out already, is he? Well, th' few down—"

"Who's drivin' who out?" Elliott asked.

"Misther Brandon. Amerlicky might be a free country but Tincup ain't in it, thin. Owd Donny ain't welcome here 'nd t's likely he's got his orders to move on."

Elliott hitched his pack-sack a bit higher.

"What's this? Orders? What's wrong with him? Seemed like a harmless old gaffer to me. Bent on coming to Tincup, too; wanted it like a little kid wants candy. Got my goat. . . . Who's going to run him off?"

Bird-Eye had hopped nimbly to a log from which point he could see across bobbing heads.

"Ah-ha!" he exclaimed. "Sure, it's Misther Brandon himself who's a-runnin' owd Donny off!"

Elliott craned his neck and could see, half-way to the depot, two men on the sidewalk. One was his companion in travel earlier that day; the other a man he had not seen before. The latter had Don Stuart by one arm but that contact was not the friendly assistance which Ben had offered the old fellow. As Elliott looked, the feeble old man tried to draw away, but the other was insistent, scarcely hesitated in his progress toward the station.

"Train west's due now," Bird-Eye said. "Sure, 'nd pore owd Donny, he'll be a passenger. It's a d-d sorry shame, kapin' him away from Tincup so!"

Elliott started forward, Bird-Eye at his heels, crossing the street, leaping to the high board sidewalk

and swinging on.

He overtook the two he followed just in time to hear Stuart gasp: "—ain't long to . . . live, Nick. I'd like to stay here. . . . Ain't pleasant to . . . be sick and not . . . among friends." "Never mind," the other said as one might to a protesting child. "I've told you any number of times to stay away."

On this reply Elliott moved abreast of the man.

"Hello, old timer," he said, addressing Stuart. "Going some place?"

He did not look at the man said to be Nicholas Brandon. His manner on the question was almost casual.

"Oh . . . hello," Dan panted. "I . . . Mister Brandon, here I . . . won't let me . . . stay."

Then Elliott looked at Brandon. A man of undetermined age; not old, neither young. Powerfully built, with a peculiarly white face and eyes as black as night. These eyes bored into Elliott's now, keenly, intelligently, with the look of a man who is accustomed to gauging others without delay or hesitation.

"Oh, this man doesn't want you to stay!" Ben said softly. And then with a smile, to Brandon: "I sort of took the old timer under my wing today. He wants to stay here quite badly. I'll look after him."

"There's no place for him here," Brandon said positively. "Come, Stuart, it's almost train time."

He twitched at the old man's arm but Ben broke in, brow wrinkled as if he wanted to handle a perplexing matter fairly.

"Well, now, say! No place? Suppose a place was made for him a few days? I'd sort of planned on that. There's a hotel here, and I'd be willing to—"

"I don't know you," Brandon interrupted and irritably crept into his voice. "I've never even seen you. I've known this man for years. He's an old employe of mine. This is my affair. I never have others, especially strangers, meddling."

A low whisper came from Stuart and Ben rubbed his chin with one knuckle.

"Yeah, I am butting in, I guess. But . . . You see, the old timer told me a little about himself. He's been lonesome a long time. I take it. He's not what you'd call in robust health. I figure that if I was in his shape I'd like to be with a few old friends myself and if—"

In the distance a train whistled and on the sound Brandon's eyes snapped.

"I've no time to argue my affairs," he said sharply. "Come, Stuart."

"But, Nick! See . . . here,"

With a Sharp Oath Brandon Went Down into the Half-Thawed Mire of the Street.

Nick . . . I'll never get back . . . again. It's lonesome, bein' sick . . . alone, where you can't . . . Nick! You're . . . hurtin' my wrist!"

He winced from the grasp and on that last shadow of a smile went out of Ben Elliott's face. He put himself squarely before Brandon.

"Let him go," he said quietly, but his look drove hard into those black eyes.

The man hesitated and flushed.

"If you aren't looking for trouble," he said, voice edged with wrath, "you'll keep out of this!"

"Fair enough. But unless you've got a better reason than I know about, let the old timer alone! Let go of his wrist!" he added sharply, as Stuart winced again.

"I'll thank you to keep out of—" "Let—go—his—wrist, you d-d bully!"

He had grasped Brandon's forearm with both hands, letting his pack slip to the sidewalk. The clutch on Don Stuart's arm loosened.

With a snarl Brandon drew back and swung for Ben's jaw. Elliott ducked, swayed forward and bending his supple body caught Brandon about the middle, drove his head into the man's chest, raised a knee to his groin, lifted him from his feet, swung, shoved and flung him free.

With a sharp oath Brandon went down in the half-thawed mire of the street, sprawling ignominiously on his back.

Well, now! That was something else again. Men had been coming, edging cautiously near during the brief argument between Elliott and Nicholas Brandon. But when Brandon, the man who ruled Tincup and its county, was seen lifted from his feet and tossed ignominiously into the mud, trampled by his horses, stirred by the wheels of his wagons and tractors, the street which led through the town, to his mill . . . Well, then they came a-running!

Bird-Eye cackled an impudent laugh and turned to watch the faces of the vanguard who came to see their huge lord, sprawled in the mud there, scramble to his feet. Their voices were raised in incredulity. In two decades and more no man save Bird-Eye Blaine had dared lift even his voice in Tincup in other than respect for Nicholas Brandon. And now this stranger had picked him up and thrown him away!

But Brandon was up, lurching for the sidewalk where Ben Elliott stood, legs spread, fists clenched but with good humor repressed and grinning as he had grinned at Bull Duval; grinning as a man will who loves combat for its own sake and not at all as one who fights in red rage.

However his smile faded and his jaw settled as Brandon lifted his face in that rush. Murder was there. In the black eyes, in the loose hanging of the lower lip, in the purple flush of his cheeks. Murder, and no less. As quickly as that homicidal look had come, it passed. Something like fear swept those eyes, driving it away. Not fear of this encounter, Ben knew; not fear of a stronger, younger man. Something else again; something entirely different. It was the sort of fear that comes from within; the kind of fear a man has for his own impulses.

Brandon halted abruptly. His fists relaxed into hands and with one of them he brushed rather aimlessly at mud on his sleeve.

A dozen men were close, then, holding back, watching, waiting, listening. Others were coming. And as Brandon halted, looking up into Elliott's face and evidently fighting for self-control, one of these new arrivals pushed to the front and came up importantly.

"What's the matter, Mr. Brandon?" he asked sharply, with the manner of one ready to render service.

Brandon did not reply at once. He settled his coat on his shoulders.

"Sheriff, arrest this young man immediately," he said then. "I'll swear to a complaint of assault and battery myself."

A sigh of relief, of disappointment, of laxing tension, or of all these combined, went up from the growing group. The sheriff turned to Elliott and touched his arm significantly.

"You'd better come along, Elliott," he said. "You tock in too much territory."

Ben looked about almost foolishly. He was embarrassed and surprised. He had expected a rough-and-tumble fight in what he considered a righteous cause and surely he was the sort who would have been on familiar ground in such an encounter. But here he was, with a sheriff plucking at his sleeve!

He laughed a bit sheepishly.

"All right, Sheriff. If it's arrestin' you run to here in Tincup, likely I'm it!"

He turned for his pack-sack and as he did so observed old Don Stuart sitting weakly on the step of the vacant store building before which the scene had been enacted. He was obviously a sick man and trouble clouded Elliott's eyes.

"Minute, Sheriff," he said and crossed to Don, thrusting one hand into a pants pocket.

"Here, old timer," he said gently. The hand came out and into Don Stuart's palm he pressed a thin packet of bills and some change.

"Get one of your old buddies . . . Here you!"—straightening and beckoning Bird-Eye, who approached with alacrity. "Get the old timer to a hotel. Better get a doctor, too. He's heeled enough to take care of himself a few days. After that . . . we'll see."

He turned then and fastened a severe gaze on Brandon.

"And you, chum, let him alone!" he warned. "Until a doctor says! he can travel, you watch your step wit. him!"

But Brandon ignored this. He was buttoning his coat, pushing his way through the group, with fell aside respectfully.

"All right, Sheriff," said Ben to that worthy. "Let's go!"

CHAPTER II

ABLE ARMITAGE, justice of the peace in Tincup, looked over his spectacles into the face of the prisoner before him and a twinkle appeared in his keen blue eyes. He asked:

"Now, young man, you're charged with assault and battery on the per-

son of Nicholas Brandon. Are you guilty?"

From the rear windows of his cluttered little office, Able had watched young Ben Elliott emerge from the status of a complete stranger to the populace to that of his latest hero by sending Mr. Bull Duval to a damp and ignominious finish in the log birling. After that he picked up an old clarinet and commenced to play a halting, aimless and not completely musical tune.

He was so occupied either with the musical performance or with his thoughts that he did not hear the tramp of many feet on the walk outside and was unaware that he was about to be called on to function in an official capacity. When the door opened, though, and Ben Elliott, Hickens, the sheriff, and Nicholas Brandon, followed, it seemed, by the total male population of the county, surged through the doorway, the clarinet's squeaking leaped into a shrill squeal and died away. The judge's feet dropped to the floor and he swung his chair to face the entrance.

The sheriff stated his errand, the complaint was drawn, Nicholas Brandon affixed his signature and then for the first time Able looked closely into the face of the defendant.

It was a long and searching look and was met steadily by a pair of clear steel-gray eyes.

"Are you guilty or not?" Able repeated and Ben Elliott who had stood at ease before him, slouch hat in his great brown hands, gave his head a grave twist.

"Well, if pitching a man off the sidewalk into the mud is called assault and battery in Tincup, then I'm about a hundred per cent guilty," he said.

A stir in the room followed that and Able frowned, a convincingly judicial frown.

"Guilty, eh?" He cleared his throat at length. "Now how about this disruption of the peace, anyhow?"

The sheriff spoke.

"You see, Able, 'twas this way, Mr.—"

"Now, just a minute, Art. This accused has pleaded guilty, as I understand it. I don't see any need of anybody else saying anything. He's thrown himself on the mercy of the court, you might say, and it's regular and proper and according to the spirit of the statute that I question him before passing sentence."

The sheriff sniffed and subsided. Clearly, there was little friendship between him and the justice.

"Now, Mr. . . . Able glanced at the complaint again. "Mr. Ben Elliott, how come that you go about the country tossing reputable citizens into the mud?"

"Why, he was trying to make a friend of mine do something he didn't want to do. That's all. I butted in, I guess; he got hard and so,—"shrug—"I lost my head for a minute and put him in his place."

"In the mud, you mean."

"Yeah. In the mud."

"Well, go on, go on. Go back to the beginning. I want to know all about this affair."

Elliott drew a long breath.

"I started for Tincup several days ago. I was a long ways off, over in Minnesota. This morning I got down to the junction west of here and while I waited for my train got talking to this old timer, Don Stuart, who was in the station. Maybe you know him, Judge. Other folks here do." Able blinked twice; hard.

"The old fellow is about all in, I'd say. He's got it into his head that he's about to die and probably his guess isn't such a bad one. Seems this used to be his stamping ground, that he's been away a long time and that he'd started back to finish his days here where he could see some old friends. He went broke on the way and was just sitting there this morning waiting for something to happen. I happened. I wasn't any too well heeled myself, but I had enough for his ticket so I brought him along."

"As luck would have it, I got a chance to pick up a few dollars of Tincup money as soon as we got in and I had to have it, with the old timer on my hands. While I was busy getting this cash this man Brandon evidently saw my buddy and started rushing him back to the depot to take the next train back to where he came from. I didn't like that so well. I tried to talk him out of it but Mr. Brandon isn't a greater talker. That's all . . . here I am!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)



"Guilty, Eh?"

Thirty Years
By JEWELL H. MOGFORD
McClure Newspaper Syndicate, WNU Service.

PLACING his watch on his desk in front of him, Kenneth Rowell picked up the gun. With his free hand he pulled his evening coat back and with calm, calculating movement, placed the muzzle over his heart.

His handsome young face was set and colorless, his fine body tense. He looked at the watch. In the soft light of the shaded gas jet the minute hand marked five minutes to eleven.

Five minutes to wait. He relaxed slightly. He must pull the trigger at exactly eleven. That had been Kathleen's last caution an hour ago as they stood on the little balcony of the country club.

"We must go together, darling—at the same instant." He could hear again the half-sob with her whispered words as her small head nestled against his shoulder.

He had held her close—the first time he had ever taken her in his arms, for, young as she was, she was another man's wife.

"I shall not see him again," Kathleen had said, after a moment. "I'll leave a note on his desk." He did not like to think of Chauncey Grimes. Yet, they were talking the only way out, he and Kathleen.

He held the gun against his heart again. Three minutes now.

"We must both be sure of the time," she had cautioned again, "and very careful." He had known in the stillness that followed that she was trying to banish the fear of a possible slip in their plans. "For I could never bear being without you, darling, no matter where."

He forced his mind to register the time. One more minute. Involuntarily he turned the gun and looked into the muzzle. The cold ugliness of its startled him. Kathleen, at this moment, too, must be frightened. But in a few seconds now a bullet—vainly he tried to force back this thought—a bullet would go tearing through her soft flesh—and his own.

The minute hand again. It plainly marked eleven-three!

Frantically he reached the wall telephone and turned the crank. Then, at last, the Grimes' butler, excitedly:

"Mrs. Grimes? She's gone! Came back from the club, must have gone out again by the side door . . . husband frantic, just found a note on his desk . . . suicide, yes, at exactly eleven, the note said, but didn't say where . . . gun gone, too . . . The scattered words, each a definite flame, burnt into his brain.

Too late! She had gone alone!

On the boat bound for the Orient Kenneth Rowell knew little peace. The waves swishing against the sides of the vessel shrieked Kathleen's last words to him, "I couldn't bear being without you, darling, no matter where." The throb of the engine groaned them, the wind hissed them. He had failed her, had let her go alone into that vast unknown.

It was the same everywhere he went. Running from his conscience, he traveled for five miserable years, from country to country, but never back to America. Finally, in Honduras, his money gone, he worked on a coffee plantation, a common laborer. Always that insistent cry; never away from it.

Thirty years passed.

He returned, a stowaway, to America. Stopped, a ragged man, old beyond his years, he moved like a forlorn spirit across the soft sward in front of the country club—the old building, enlarged. He stood beside a shrub under the same little balcony, the same moon, the same soft breeze. The orchestra was playing a sweet, gliding waltz. They had danced to that same tune thirty years ago, he and Kathleen.

He took a step into deeper shadow as a woman, followed by a boy, came out. He saw her distinctly as she stepped through the lighted french doors, the large puffs of her silken sleeves, her blond curls. Holding tight to his senses, he told himself that this was no ghostly apparition. He reminded himself that American papers had said much of late about woman's return to the fashions of the 90s.

She was heavier, with curves more ample, older, of course. Then he saw that she was smoking a cigarette.

"But Kay," the boy was saying, "I'll die if you don't leave old Grimesy and marry me! I'll—I'll kill myself!"

"Don't try it, sweets," she answered in a heavy contralto voice, but with something of the old sweetness. "I tried it once. Thought I couldn't live without a certain man. Left the usual note on Grimesy's desk, had the gun ready and everything. But well—I caught a last minute boat to Calais instead."

"But Grimesy, how did he know?" the boy asked breathlessly.

"Oh, I sent a messenger with another note from the boat." She lighted one cigarette with the stub of another. Then, inhaling a long draft, she said languidly:

"No, I need you too much. I really couldn't bear being without you, darling!"

Give Thought to Abnormal Child
Neglecting and Spoiling Are Both Extremes to Be Avoided.

Depending on what kind of parents they have, handicapped children are classified into three groups by Dr. John Ruhrah, author of "The Parent and the Handicapped Child," in Hygeia Magazine. The crippled child may be neglected, or he may be spoiled, or he may be treated sensibly and correctly.

The parents of the neglected child will feel outraged that such a thing as a handicapped child has been wished on them. They are liable to worry a bit and then they shut the child out of their lives and emotions as far as possible and feel no responsibility for his preparation for life.

The second set of parents make pity, of themselves and of the child, the biggest stumbling block in the way of educating the child. If the parent pities the child, the child will pity himself instead of making the best of his condition. The child is allowed to become spoiled, irritable, exacting, wanting everything his own way and doing nothing for himself.

There is the third set of parents who are quick to realize that they have a problem on their hands, and they set about learning how best to solve it. The child must be taught first that he is to behave as other children do as far as he is able, taking into consideration his handicap. The child can be taught independence if the parent finds out what the child can do for himself and what he cannot do, and then does only what is necessary. Children like to do things for themselves and it is one way they learn not only to do things, but to be independent. This also applies to teaching the child to make decisions for himself. Children who are never allowed to decide things for themselves grow up into men and women who have a hard time, and no one needs self-confidence and independence more than the handicapped person.

Idleness is bad and makes children unhappy. The handicapped child should be kept occupied with games and hobbies in which he is interested, but there should be a careful steering between overexertion and underexertion. All physically handicapped children need extra rest, which should be a part of the daily routine. Too much exercise is worse than none.

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