

# The RING and the MAN



WITH SOME INCIDENTAL RELATION TO THE WOMAN  
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## PROLOGUE

A QUARTER OF A CENTURY BEFORE.

### The Storm Within.

The storm was one of the worst that had ever burst from the mountains and swept across the plains. The wind came in wild bursts of tremendous speed. Even in the lulls, which were only comparatively such, it blew perhaps 20 miles an hour. The fierce blasts were laden with fine snow—frozen spindrift from a white ocean of cold! Needles of ice sharper than their prototypes of steel cut the bare flesh of those whom evil fortune kept abroad on such a night, bringing the blood to the freezing skin. The onslaught of the screaming tempest drove the hapless cattle mad with pain and terror. The thick snow compelled them to huddle together at last, and shelterless to suffer, freeze, and die in the pitiless hurricane.

Just where the foothills lose themselves in the prairie lay huddled a little town or camp. Every door and window was shut and barricaded against the searching storm.

In one of the poorest and most miserable shanties on the outskirts of the town a woman waited alone. A common kerosene lamp stood on a table before the window, set there as if in signal.

The house, a mere shack which shook and quivered under the tremendous assaults of the storm, and might have been blown down if it had not been buttressed and protected by heaps of snow yet threatening to overwhelm it, contained but one room. In the corner farthest from the door stood a tumbled, frowzy bed. A rickety chest of drawers, a kitchen table, a rusty cook stove, a few uncertain chairs of the plainest and cheapest quality, were all the rest of the furniture. A few clothes hung from pegs driven in the boarded wall. A saddle in one corner, a pickax and shovel, a heavy quilt, and a rifle hanging from pegs beneath a shelf sufficiently pointed out the avocations of the owner.

Yet she was a woman who, whatever her outward circumstances, showed no poverty of spirit. She raged up and down the room as a caged tiger paces the narrow confines of his cage. Sometimes she paused and stopped by the window, to rest her head beneath her hand on the sash and peer eagerly, passionately, out into the falling snow. She could see nothing, and after having stared with increased disappointment and further mutterings of angry words, she would resume her restless backward and forward march.

Had there been any spectator when she assumed that picturesque position at the window, where the light, however it failed to illuminate the snow, threw her own face and person in high relief, the observer would have been surprised at the coarse and yet not unattractive beauty of her face and figure. She was full lipped and deep boomed, tall, lithe, strong. Her cheeks were full of color, her hair black and coarsely crisp and curly. Her hands, which she clasped and unclasped nervously, were large and reddened by toil, but they were shapely nevertheless. But there was neither refinement nor goodness in her face. There were great possibilities of evil which experience could have detected. Hers had been a hard life, and it had made her a hard woman. She was perhaps twenty-five years old, but looked older.

For hours the woman had waited in that hut alone. It had been storming badly when she began her vigil, and the violence of the tempest had increased until she feared that no human soul could brave it. That she very much wanted some one to attempt it, that she very keenly, ardently, longed for that, was quite evident.

Great is the power of love. Even its counterfeit—that which passes for it in the eyes of the ignorant and inexperienced—may attract men and women to mighty deeds. This woman waited the arrival of one who fancied himself a modern Perseus about to release another bound and helpless Andromeda from a devouring monster.

Whether the man who fatuously filled that role—or the boy, rather, for he had not reached man's years or estate—would arrive before her husband, was the problem that filled the woman's mind. In view of the blizzard raging, she might have wondered whether, in case either of them sought the house, they could find it or reach it alive. If she had stopped to consider that there were possibilities, she would have been profoundly glad had both ventured and had both wandered on in the night until beaten down and mastered by the spirit of the storm, so that the searchers, after their violence had abated, might find them frozen to death as many another poor fellow was found frozen there after. For while the woman loathed and hated her drunken brute of a husband, yet she had no affection for the foolish young tenderfoot who had wandered out west to spend a summer

holiday and had lingered on through the winter, fascinated by her exuberant attractiveness, and flattered by her bold and artful pursuit of him.

She had thought to amuse herself in her dreary, wretched, sordid life by his fresh, frank, open admiration. The woman's drunken husband had cared little at first; but lately, under the jibes, sneers, and innuendos of his companions, he had become fiercely jealous. Then in maudlin fury he had forbidden the boy the house, and had sworn that he would kill him on sight.

The woman thereupon swiftly made up her mind to break the thralldom of her matrimonial bond, and in the young stranger's company or by his agency to leave the country. She neither desired nor intended to be tied to the boy a half dozen years younger than she.

Once in civilization it would be easy to break away from him, she knew. Thereafter she had no fear but with her beauty, her wit, and her courage, with her utter unscrupulousness, she could make her way in the east which she had never seen. And this was the night on which they had agreed to take their departure.

Since her husband's wild outbreak of jealousy, she had seen the boy only once. In that surreptitious interview they had concocted their plans. Her husband spent the greater part of the nights, whenever he had any money, in gambling and drinking at the saloon. By a lucky chance a short time before in an all night trial with Fortune he had won something over \$1,000. The bulk of it in hard cash

gored into the room. The woman screamed slightly and stepped toward the snow-crowded, ice-incrusted figure. The young man forced the door shut, turned and faced her. He tore off his fur cap and threw it on the floor. He stretched out his icy gauntleted hands toward her. To reach the cabin he had been compelled to face the blizzard. His face was white yet bleeding. The woman shrank back from him.

"Is this my welcome?" he said in a voice manly enough in spite of his youthful aspect.

"You're so wet and so cold," said the woman. "The horses?"

"They're outside," returned the boy. "But you didn't think of venturing in this blizzard? Why, it's like hell itself, or would be if hell was cold!"

"I'd risk anything," said the woman fiercely, "to get away from him! You won't fail me now?"

"But, my God, girl!" answered the boy with that assumption of superior age which so satisfied his pride, "we'll die in this blizzard."

"No," persisted the woman. "See, the storm comes straight from the north. Our way is due south; we've only to keep it at our backs."

"All right," said the boy cheerily. He turned and stared out of the window. "You've no idea how terrible it is, though."

"I don't care," "Get ready, then," "I'm ready," she replied. "See!" She lifted the skirt of her dress and showed him a pair of horseman's boots with a pair of her husband's trousers tucked tightly in them. "It's a good thing he has a small foot," she sneered.

"Curse him!" said the boy. "I'd like to settle with him before we go."

"You'll settle with him enough," said the woman cynically, "when you take me away from him."

She turned and took down from one of the pegs a heavy fur overcoat. The boy assisted her to put it on. From a holster hanging on the wall she drew a small silver-mounted 32-caliber revolver.

"I'm ready," she said again. "Let us start, then," cried the boy, stepping forward.

On the instant a whirl of wind dis-

closed to them that the door had suddenly opened. They turned to face a drunken, infuriated, leering figure. He had on a short, thick fur jacket, which left his hips completely uncovered. A heavy revolver had dangled in his holster. He dragged it out as he spoke and trained it on the boy.

"You're going for a longer journey than you planned!" he panted. "You're going for a longer journey than you planned!" he panted thickly, as he strove to steady the weapon and cover the other.

The boy was fumbling at the fastenings of his coat. His own revolver was not get-at-able instantly, as it should have been and would have been had he been a native to the west.

"Fumble at 'em, you fool!" cried the man. "Before you get 'em open, I'll shoot you dead. I don't do it now, cause I want you to taste death and hell as long as possible before you go into 'em. You thought you'd make a fool out of me, did you, and you, too, you—"

He flung a frightful, mordant word at his wife which stung not less because it was in large measure undeserved, at least so far as the boy was concerned.

"I'll settle with you when I get through with him. Your time's up!" he continued, as the boy at last succeeded in reaching his weapon.

He was game, that boy, although his face under its blood was whiter than

it had been when he entered the cabin, while the other man's, similarly snow wounded, was red with rage; and, though he was covered and even a drunken man could scarcely miss at such range, he nevertheless drew his own weapon. But before he could raise it there was a sudden movement back of him. The man in the doorway turned sharply.

"What!" he cried to his wife. "You would, you—"

At that instant the boy was conscious of a sudden flash of light and a sharp detonation. The room was filled with noise, a little cloud of smoke blew down on him. Standing with his own pistol butt clasped tight in his hand, he saw the man in the doorway reel. The arm that held his weapon dropped to his side. With a convulsive movement he pulled the trigger. The bullet buried itself in the floor, while the man sank down on his knees, swayed a moment, a frightful look in his eyes, and then pitched forward on his face and lay still.

"Good God!" whispered the boy turning to his companion, "you've shot him!"

He stared at the woman, who still clasped the little silver-mounted weapon she had used with such terrible effect.

"It was his life, or your life or mine," was the answer. "I did it for you," she said quickly, seeing a look of horror and repulsion spreading over the face of her companion.

"Yes—yes! I know," he replied; "but—"

"Come, we must get out of here immediately."

"Of course, of course," whispered the boy nervously, "we can't stay here now."

"Drag him into the room and shut the door!"

The lad hesitated.

"Are you afraid?" sneered the woman, making as if to do so herself. "Certainly not," was the answer; but the boy nevertheless was afraid—afraid of death, with more fear than he had ever felt for any one living. Yet something had to be done and at once.

Forcing himself to the task at last, he stooped down, seized the man by the shoulders, turned him over on his face, and dragged him farther into the room. Then he shut the door. The two stared a moment at the prostrate figure.

"He's not dead yet," said the boy slowly.

"No; but he soon will be." The woman stooped over and unbuttoned the man's coat and waistcoat. "There!" she said, pointing to a ghastly hole. "I struck him fair in the breast. Would to God it'd been in his black heart!" she added. "Don't you see that we must go now and quick? Come, we can't delay any longer."

## FOR THE WARMER DAYS

HOT-WEATHER DISHES CONCOCTED BY FAMOUS CHEFS.

New and Palatable Food to Tempt Jaded Palates—How Brook Trout Are Served at New York Swell Hotel.

The chefs of New York hotels have invented many new dishes for the hot days; every housewife will be interested in them, as they suggest new and palatable food for jaded palates.

At the Waldorf-Astoria are brook trout with sauce au bleu. The trout are taken alive out of a fountain basin in the grillroom, then dipped into boiling water. When properly done they are served in a delicious sauce made from old Burgundy and other ingredients, which are a secret of the inventor, Chef Nence. Cooked in this way, one only knows the delicious flavor of a brook trout.

Another Waldorf-Astoria surprise is a Foster salad, made by cutting in halves large King of Slam oranges, scooping out the pulp, lining the shells with small leaves of lettuce, returning the pulp mixed with finely-grated pineapple, sprinkling with Jamaica rum, covering with mayonnaise, dusting with paprika, then setting each half orange on a leaf of lettuce or a plate, ready to serve.

Chef Huguet of the Hotel Knickerbocker, has a number of new spring dishes with which he is delighting the patrons. One of the most popular of his surprises is the following: Take a Boston duckling, a very young one. In a baking pan put a layer of sliced Spanish onions and some pats of sweet butter; sprinkle with salt and pepper; lay the duckling on the preparation of onion, put it in a hot oven, and let it cook about forty minutes. Remove the pan from the oven, take the duckling out of the pan, lay it on a platter, pour a glass of white wine and a glass of old Madeira in the pan, put it over the fire, let it come to a boil, then add one large glass of veal stock, two fresh tomatoes, peeled and sliced. Cook for thirty minutes, strain the gravy through a cheese cloth sieve, add one ounce of sweet butter and half a glass of curacao.

In the meantime peel a lemon and an orange, slice these in julienne style, blanch in water and add to the gravy. Pour it over the duckling very hot. The duckling must be laid on slices of toast on a hot platter, with a slice of orange on its breast and on each side. Serve sliced oranges with this dish.

Two-thirds whole onions sliced, one-third tart apples cut in dices. Smooth together in a closely covered dish, and serve in a border around calves liver saute in sweet butter.

A Milliner's Aid. An excellent preparation of stainless glue for millinery purposes has recently been put on the market. Kid, velvets and tapestries, as well as the most delicate silks and satins, may be glued on buckram frames without injury to the material. The glue is water and weather proof and will not dry or peel off. The lovely floral effects and smart butterfly and quill designs, shown by the leading milliners, may be contrived at home with a little ingenuity and the aid of most welcome millinery requisite—Vogue.

Creamy Potatoes. One quart of sliced potatoes, two tablespoons butter, two teaspoons salt, one-eighth teaspoon pepper, three-quarters pint of milk; wash and pare the potatoes, cut them into thin slices; put all the ingredients together in a small cooker pan or pan, set this in a larger cooker pan of boiling water; when it is steaming hot, put the small utensil directly over the heat until it boils; replace it in the pan of boiling water, set in cooker for one hour. Serves four persons.

Deviled Meat. The wings, drum sticks and side bones of chicken or cold, rare beef or underdone mutton may be used. One tablespoon butter, one teaspoon of vinegar, one of Worcestershire sauce, one-half teaspoonful of made mustard and a pinch of cayenne; make a sauce of the butter, vinegar, etc.; mix these thoroughly, make cuts in the meat with a knife, rub this sauce into them, rub the chafing dish with a little butter, heat it and grill the meat. Serve hot.

Asparagus Omelet. Beat five eggs separately, add two tablespoonfuls of thick cream to the yolks with a tablespoonful of butter, salt and pepper to taste. Fold in the frothed whites, mix well, add a half teaspoonful of baking powder and a teaspoonful of steamed asparagus tips. Melt a medium sized lump of butter in the frying pan, pour the omelet in. Fry a delicate brown on both sides and serve at once.

Glaced Fruits and Nuts. Boil without stirring 10 or 15 minutes, one pound of granulated sugar, one-half cup of water. When brittle remove from fire, add a tablespoon lemon juice and let it stand over hot water. Then on the end of a hat pin immerse sections of oranges (all diced), grapes, figs, almonds and walnuts set on oiled paper.

Old Trays. When light oak trays have been badly marked, well wash and rub with warm beer until the stains have disappeared. Polish in the usual way.



"You Are Going on a Longer Journey Than You Planned," He Panted.

still reposed in the chest of drawers. That, with what the boy could contribute, would provide for the expenses of the journey. She had got it out and tied it up in a little canvas bag. It lay on the table near the lamp.

Fifteen miles south the Union Pacific railroad ran across the continent. It had been her plan to ride thither and take the first train eastward, losing themselves in Chicago, and thence by whatsoever route pleased them making their way to New York. Whether her husband would pursue her or not, she could not tell. He would be without the money, since she meant to take all with her. He would hardly be able to follow her very soon. But if he did, that was a risk she must take.

Engrossed in the present, the boy thought nothing at all about the future. The woman's predicament bulked so large in his immature imagination that there was nothing else on the horizon. There was no other horizon than she, in fact. And his one desire was to get her away to free her.

And now this storm bade fair to render the whole plan impossible. Misunderstanding his temper she feared that the boy would be frightened by the blizzard. Yet there was more in the boy than she imagined; for when she had about made up her mind finally that he would not come, the door was thrown open and he stag-

closed to them that the door had suddenly opened. They turned to face a drunken, infuriated, leering figure. He had on a short, thick fur jacket, which left his hips completely uncovered. A heavy revolver had dangled in his holster. He dragged it out as he spoke and trained it on the boy.

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**Libby's Sliced Dried Beef**  
Old Hickory Smoked  
Highest Quality  
Finest Flavor

Try This Recipe  
To the contents of one medium size jar of Libby's Sliced Dried Beef, add one tablespoonful of butter, then sprinkle with one tablespoonful of flour and add one-half cup of cream. Cook 5 minutes and serve on toast.

Ask for Libby's in the sealed glass jars.  
At All Grocers  
Libby, McNeill & Libby  
Chicago

IT DOES ON HOUSES.

Wise—Do you see that striking looking woman with the veil?  
Howe—Yes.  
Wise—Do you know why she wears the veil?  
Howe—No. Homely?  
Wise—No; she's afraid the sun might blister the paint.

Very Select.  
The landlady was trying to impress the prospective lodger with an idea of how extremely eligible the neighborhood was. Pointing over the way at a fine mansion, she said in a hushed whisper:  
"Young man, over there across the street there's seven million dollars!"

Out of the Hare.  
"Here's a hairpin in the soup, waiter," said the mad diner.  
"Yes, sir. It's all right. It's hare sopp, sir."

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