

# BURNING DAYLIGHT

By JACK LONDON

AUTHOR OF "THE CALL OF THE WILD," "WHITE FANG," "MARTIN EDEN," ETC.

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## SYNOPSIS.

Elam Harnish, known all through Alaska as "Burning Daylight," celebrates his 50th birthday with a crowd of miners at the Circle City Tivoli. The dance leads to heavy gambling.

### CHAPTER I.—Continued.

"I still got that hunch," Kearns fingered his cards a long time. "And I'll play it, but you've got to know how I stand. There's my steamer, the Bella—worth twenty thousand if she's worth an ounce. There's Sixty-Mile with five thousand in stock on the shelves. And you know I got a saw-mill coming in. It's at Linderman now, and the scow is building. Am I good?"

"Dig in; you're sure good," was Daylight's answer. "And while we're about it, I may mention casual that I got twenty thousand in Mac's safe, there, and there's twenty thousand more in the ground on Moosehide. You know the ground, Campbell. Is that all in the dirt?"

"There sure is, Daylight."

"How much does it cost now?" Kearns asked.

"Two thousand to see."

"Well sure bump you if you-all come in," Daylight warned him.

"It's an almighty good hunch," Kearns said, adding his slip to the growing heap. "I can feel her crawling up and down my back."

"I ain't got a hunch, but I got a tolerable good hand," Campbell announced, as he slid in his slip; "but it's not a raising hand."

"Mine is," Daylight paused and wrote. "I see that thousand and raise her the same old thousand."

The Virgin, standing behind him, then did what a man's best friend was not privileged to do. Reaching over Daylight's shoulder, she picked up his hand and read it, at the same time shielding the faces of the cards close to his chest. What she saw were three queens and a pair of eights, but nobody guessed what she saw. Every player's eyes were on her face as she scanned the cards, but no sign did she give. She laid the hand face down again on the table and slowly the lingering eyes withdrew from her, having learned nothing.

MacDonald smiled benevolently. "I see you, Daylight, and I hump this time for two thousand. How's that hunch, Jack?"

"Still a-crawling, Mac. You got me now, but that hunch is a rip-snorter persuadin' sort of a critter, and it's my plain duty to ride it. I call for three thousand. And I got another hunch; Daylight's going to call, too."

"He sure is," Daylight agreed, after Campbell had thrown up his hand. "He knows when he's up against it, and he plays accordin'." I see that two thousand, and then I'll see the draw."

In a dead silence, save for the low voices of the three players, the draw was made. Thirty-four thousand dollars were already in the pot, and the play possibly not half over. To the Virgin's amazement, Daylight held up his three queens, discarding his eights and calling for two cards. And this time not even she dared look at what he had drawn. She knew her limit of control. Nor did he look. The two new cards lay face down on the table where they had been dealt to him.

"Got enough," was the reply.

"You can draw if you want to, you know," Kearns warned him.

"Nope; this'll do me."

Kearns himself drew two cards, but did not look at them. Still Harnish let his cards lie.

"I never bet in the teeth of a pat hand," he said slowly, looking at the saloon keeper. "You-all start her rolling, Mac."

MacDonald counted his cards carefully, to make doubly sure it was not a foul hand, wrote a sum on a paper slip, and slid it into the pot, with the simple utterance:

"Five thousand."

Kearns, with every eye upon him, looked at his two-card draw, counted the other three to dispel any doubt of holding more than five cards, and wrote on a betting slip.

"I see you, Mac," he said, "and I raise her a little thousand just so as to keep Daylight out."

The concentrated gaze shifted to Daylight. He likewise examined his draw and counted his five cards.

"I see that six thousand, and I raise her five thousand. . . . Just to try and keep you out, Jack."

"And I raise you five thousand just to lend a hand at keeping Jack out," MacDonald said in turn.

His voice was slightly husky and strained, and a nervous twitch in the corner of his mouth followed speech. Kearns was pale, and those who looked on noted that his hand trembled as he wrote his slip. But his voice was unchanged.

forehead. The bronze of his cheeks was darkened by the accession of blood. His black eyes glittered and his nostrils were distended and eager. They were large nostrils, tokening his descent from savage ancestors who had survived by virtue of deep lungs and generous air-passages. Yet, unlike MacDonald, his voice was firm and customary, and, unlike Kearns his hand did not tremble when he wrote.

"I call for ten thousand," he said. "Not that I'm afraid of you-all, Mac. It's that hunch of Jack's."

"I hump his hunch for five thousand just the same," said MacDonald. "I had the best hand before the draw, and I still guess I got it."

"Mebbe this is a case where a hunch after the draw is better'n the hunch before," Kearns remarked; wherefore duty says, 'Lift her, Jack, lift her,' and so I lift her another five thousand."

Daylight leaned back in his chair and gazed up at the kerosene lamps while he computed aloud:

"I was in nine thousand before the draw, and I saw and raised eleven thousand—that makes thirty. I'm only good for ten more." He leaned forward and looked at Kearns. "So I call or five thousand."

"You can raise if you want," Kearns answered. "Your dogs are good for five thousand in this game."

"Nary dawg. You-all can win my dust and dirt, but nary one of my dawgs. I just call."

The saloon keeper finally spoke: "If anybody else wins, they'll have to take a mortgage on the Tivoli."

The two other players nodded. "So I call, too."

MacDonald added his slip for five thousand. Not one of them claimed the pot, and not one of them called the size of his hand. Simultaneously and in silence they faced their cards on the table, while a general tiptoeing and craning of necks took place among the onlookers. Daylight showed four queens and an ace; MacDonald four jacks and an ace, and Kearns four kings and a trey. Kearns reached forward with an encircling movement of his arm and drew the pot in to him, his arm shaking as he did so. Daylight picked the ace from his hand and tossed it over alongside MacDonald's ace, saying:

"That's what cheered me along, Mac. I knowed it was only kings that could beat me, and he had them."

"What did you-all have?" he asked, all interest, turning to Campbell.

"Straight flush of four, open at both ends—a good drawing hand."

"You bet! You could a' made a straight, a straight flush or a flush out of it."

"That's what I thought," Campbell said, sadly. "It cost me six thousand before I quit."

"I wish you-all'd drawn," Daylight laughed. "Then I wouldn't a' caught that fourth queen. Now I've got to take Billy Rawlins' mail contract and mush for Dyea. What's the size of the killing, Jack?"

Kearns attempted to count the pot, but was too excited. Daylight drew it across to him, with firm fingers separating and stacking the markers and J. O. U.'s and with clear brain adding the sum.

"One hundred and twenty-seven thousand," he announced. "You-all can sell out now, Jack, and head for home."

The winner smiled and nodded, but seemed incapable of speech.

"Name your snake-juice, you-all—the winner pays!" Daylight called out loudly to all about him, at the same time rising from his chair and catching the Virgin by the arm. "Come on for a reel, you-all dancers. The night's young yet, and it's Helen Breakfast and the mail contract for me in the morning. Here, you-all Rawlins, you—

I hereby do take over that same contract, and I start for salt water at nine a. m.—savvee? Come on, you-all! Where's that fiddler?"

### CHAPTER II.

It was Daylight's night. He was the center and the head of the revel, unquenchably joyous, a contagion of fun. In between dances he paid over to Kearns the twenty thousand in dust and transferred to him his Moosehide claim. Likewise he arranged the taking over of Billy Rawlins' mail contract, and made his preparations for the start. He dispatched a messenger to rout out Kama, his dog-driver—a Tananaw Indian, far-wandered from his tribal home in the service of the invading whites. Kama entered the Tivoli, tall, lean, muscular, and furred, the pick of his barbaric race and barbaric still, unshaken and unabashed by the revelers that rioted about him while Daylight gave his orders.

"Um," said Kama, tabbing his instructions on his fingers. "Get um letters from Rawlins. Load um on sled Grub for Selkirk—you think um plenty dog-grub stop Selkirk?"

"Plenty dog-grub Kama."



"She's a Comin', Fellows, Gold From the Grass Roots Down, a Hundred Dollars to the Pan."

"Um. Bring sled this place nine um clock. Bring um snowshoes. No bring um tent. Mebbe bring um fly? um little fly?"

"No fly," Daylight answered decisively. "We travel light—savvee? We carry plenty letters out, plenty letters back. You are strong man. Plenty cold, plenty travel, all right."

"Sure all right," Kama muttered, with resignation. "Much cold, no care. Um ready nine um clock."

He turned on his moccasined heel and walked out, imperturbable, sphinx-like, neither giving nor receiving greetings nor looking to right or left. The Virgin led Daylight away into a corner.

"Look here, Daylight," she said in a low voice, "you're busted."

"Higher'n a kite."

"I've eight thousand in Mac's safe—she began.

But Daylight interrupted. The apron-string loomed near and he shied like an unbroken colt.

"It don't matter," he said. "Busted I came into the world, busted I go out, and I've been busted most of the time since I arrived. Come on; let's wait."

"But, listen," she urged. "My money's doing nothing. I could lend it to you—a grub-stake," she added, hurriedly, at sight of the alarm in his face.

"Nobody grub-stakes me," was the answer. "I stake myself, and when I make a killing it's sure all mine. No thank you, old girl. Much obliged. I'll get my stake by running the mail out and in." With a sudden well-assumed ebullition of spirits he drew her toward the dancing-floor, and as they swung around and around in a wait she pondered on the iron heart of the man who held her in his arms and resisted all her wiles.

At six the next morning, scorching with whisky, yet ever himself, he stood at the bar putting every man's hand down. The way of it was that two men faced each other across a corner, their right elbows resting on the bar, their right hands gripped together, while each strove to press the other's hand down. Man after man came against him, but no man put his hand down, even Olaf Henderson and French Louis falling despite their hugeness.

"The winner pays!" Daylight cried. "Surge along you-all! This way to the snake-room!"

"I'm busted higher'n a kite, and I'm hittin' the trail for Dyea—"

"Gold" out?" some one called.

A spasm of anger wrought on his face for a flashing instant, but in the next good humor was back again.

"I know you-all are only pokin' run asking such a question," he said with a smile. "Of course I ain't going out."

"Take the oath again, Daylight," the same voice cried.

"I sure will I first come over Chilcoot in '33 I went out over the Pass in a fall blizzard, with a rag of a shirt and a cup of raw flour. I got my grub-stake in Juneau that winter, and in the spring I went out over the Pass once more. And once more the tame drew me out. Next spring I went

in again, and I swore then that I'd never come out till I made my stake. Well, I ain't made it, and here I am. And I ain't going out now. I get the mail and I come right back. I won't stop the night at Dyea. I'll hit up Chilcoot soon as I change the dogs and get the mail and grub. And so I swear once more. I'll never hit for the Outside till I make my pile. And I tell you-all, here and now, it's got to be an almighty big pile. I'll be real conservative, and put the bottom notch at a million. And for not an ounce less'n that will I go out of the country. I tell you-all I got a hunch. There's a big strike coming on the Yukon, and it's just about due. I don't mean no ornery Moosehide, Birch creek kind of a strike. I mean a real rip-snorter hair-raiser. Nothing can stop her, and she'll come up river. There's where you-all'll track my moccasins in the near future if you-all want to find me—somewhere in the country around Stewart river, Indian river and Klondike river. When I get back with the mail, I'll head that way so fast you-all won't see my trail for smoke. She's a-comeing, fellows, gold from the grass roots down, a hundred dollars to the pan, and a stampede in from the Outside fifty thousand strong."

"If I was you, Daylight, I wouldn't mush today," Joe Hines counseled, coming in from consulting the spirit thermometer outside the door. "We're in for a good cold snap. It's sixty-two below now, and still goin' down. Better wait till she breaks."

Daylight laughed, and the old sourdoughs around him laughed.

"It's a thousand miles to Dyea," Bettles announced, climbing on the chair and supporting his aching body by an arm passed around Daylight's neck.

"It's a thousand miles, I'm saying, an' most of the train unbroke, but I bet any cheechno—anything he wants—that Daylight makes Dyea in thirty days."

"That's an average of over thirty-three miles a day," Doc Watson warned, "and I've traveled some myself. A blizzard on Chilcoot would tie him up for a week."

"Yep," Bettles retorted, "an' Daylight'll do the second thousand back again on end in thirty days more, and I got five thousand dollars that says so, and damn the blizzards."

To emphasize his remarks, he pulled out a gold sack the size of a bologna sausage and thumped it down on the bar. Doc Watson thumped his own sack alongside.

"Hold on!" Daylight cried. "Bettles right, and I want in on this. 'I bet five hundred that sixty days from now I pull up at the Tivoli door with the Dyea mail."

A skeptical roar went up, and a dozen men pulled out their sacks.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Not What You Pay.

"It isn't what you pay for clothes that makes you well dressed," said Mrs. Knicker.

And Mrs. Bocker remarked: "No, in deed; it's what you owe."

## SUMMER COMPLIMENTS.



The Elephant—What an elegant throat you have for a cool drink!  
The Giraffe—Yes, it is grand. But, say, I wish I had a skin with a nice breezy fit like yours.

## BABY'S ECZEMA AND BOILS

"My son was about three weeks old when I noticed a breaking-out on his cheeks, from which a watery substance oozed. A short time after, his arms, shoulders and breast broke out also, and in a few days became a solid scab. I became alarmed, and called our family physician who at once pronounced the disease eczema. The little fellow was under treatment for about three months. By the end of that time, he seemed no better. I became discouraged. I dropped the doctor's treatment, and commenced the use of Cuticura Soap and Ointment, and in a few days noticed a marked change. The eruption on his cheeks was almost healed, and his shoulders, arms and breast were decidedly better. When he was about seven months old, all trace of the eczema was gone.

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## Budding Genius.

Knicker—You think Johnny will grow up to be president?  
Proudpop—Yes; that boy can eat anything.—New York Sun.

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