

The Yukon Trail An Alaskan Love Story

By William Macleod Raine

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MACDONALD WINS FIRST MOVE IN BATTLE WITH ELLIOT FOR SHEBA'S FAVOR

Synopsis.—As a representative of the government Gordon Elliot is on his way to Alaska to investigate coal claims. On the boat he meets and becomes interested in a fellow passenger whom he learns is Sheba O'Neill, also "going in."

CHAPTER X—Continued.

Elliot glanced at the woman behind whose skirts the youngster was hiding. "She's not bad looking, if that's what you mean," he said after they had taken up the trail again.



Elliot Glanced at the Woman.

could an innocent young girl like Sheba know of such a man as Colby Macdonald? Her imagination conceived, no doubt, an idealized vision of him. But the real man was clear outside her ken.

wanted an invitation to dinner. Yet she hesitated. "My 'phone can't be working well," Gordon told her gayly. "You must have asked me to dinner, but I didn't just hear it. Never mind. I'll be there. Seven o'clock, did you say?"

He could almost hear the smile in her voice as she answered. "Very well. Seven sharp. I'll explain about the curfew limit some time."

"I think so," he answered quietly. "I hear you put up with old Gideon Holt. Is he as cracked as he used to be?" asked Macdonald.

Gordon was ashamed of himself. He could not quite have told what were the impulses that had moved him to carry the war into the camp of the enemy.

that old Holt knew her father? What is he to tell her if they meet—that her father died of pneumonia brought on by drink? Is that what you want?"

"I'm not heartless," said Macdonald impatiently. "Of course I did that. I had to do it. I couldn't do less."

CHAPTER XI. Sheba Says "Perhaps." Obeying the orders of the general in command, Peter took himself to his den with the excuse that he had blueprints to work over.

Sheba came forward to greet the new guest. The welcome in her eyes was very genuine. "You and Mr. Macdonald know each other, of course," she said after her handshake.

"I've asked to see you alone, Miss O'Neill, because I want to make a confession and restitution—to begin with," he told her abruptly.

"You told me that." His masterful eyes fastened to hers. "I didn't tell you that I took advantage of him. He was—not well. I used that against him in the bargaining. He wanted ready money, and I tempted him."

were weak and staggering yourself. He says it was a miracle you ever got through."



"It belongs to you—and you're going to take it."

"The money I cleaned up from that claim belongs to you, Miss O'Neill. You will oblige me by taking it."

A wave of color swept into her face, but her eyes never faltered from his. "I'm not quite sure," she said in a low voice.

"You mean—whether you love me?" She nodded. "I—admire you more than any man I ever met. You are a great man, strong and powerful—and I am so insignificant beside you. I—am drawn to you—so much. But—I am not sure."

When he said good-by it was with a warm, strong handshake. "I'll be back in two days. Perhaps you'll have good news for me then," he suggested.

"Suppose you tell me what the point is," she suggested. "He isn't good enough for her. You know that perfectly well."

"Not the way the story was told me. But let that pass. Does she know that Macdonald beat her father out of one of the best claims on Bonanza and was indirectly responsible for his death?"

"Do you mean—?" Wide-eyed, she looked her question straight at him. "That's just what I mean, Diane. She darned for a minute in silence. It had occurred to Diane before that perhaps Gordon might be in love with Sheba, but she had put the thought from her because she did not want to believe it."

"I'm going away for two days. Perhaps when I come back you will know, Sheba. Take your time. Marriage is serious business. I want you to remember that my life has been very different from yours. You'll hear all sorts of things about me. Some of them are true. There is this difference between a man and a good woman. He fights and falls and fights again and wins. But a good woman is finer. She has never known the failure that drags one through slime and mud. Her goodness is born in her; she doesn't have to fight for it."

"I hope you're not. There will need to be a lot of the human in you to make allowances for Colby Macdonald," he replied with an answering smile.

me? Isn't it because the glamor of the millions blinds you?" "He's a big, splendid man, but I don't like him any the less because he has the power to make life easy and comfortable for Sheba," she defended sturdily. "Yet you turned down Arthur West, the best catch in your set, to marry Peter, who was the worst," he reminded her. "Have you ever been sorry for it?" She recoiled to the previous question. "Sheba knows more about Mr. Macdonald than you think. And about how he got her father's claim, for instance—she has heard all that." "You told her?" "No. Colby Macdonald told her. He said he practically robbed her father, and he gave her a check for nearly two hundred thousand to cover the cleanup from the claim and interest." "Bully for him." On the heel of this she flung a question at her. "Did Macdonald ask her to marry him the night of the dinner?" A flash of whimsical amusement lit her dairy face. "You'd better ask him that. Here he comes now."

(TO BE CONTINUED)



"Am I to Congratulate Mr. Macdonald?"

sat down in a porch chair and stared straight in front of him. The suddenness of the news had brought his world tumbling about his ears. He felt that such a marriage would be an outrage against Sheba's innocence. Though she was sorry for him, Diane did not think it best to say so yet.