

The Abysmal Brute

By JACK LONDON

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[Continued from last week.]

She remained silent. "I say you knew he wouldn't." He spoke peremptorily and, when she still declined to speak, stepped nearer to her.

"You thought you saw him knocked out. Yet the blow I struck was not heavy enough. It didn't hit him in the right place either. He made believe it did. He faked that knockout."

"Well?" he demanded, and she thrilled anew at the compellingness of him. She stood up, and her hand went out to his.

"I believe you," she said. "And I am glad, most glad."

It was a longer grip than she had anticipated. He looked at her with eyes that burned and to which her own unconsciously answered back.

Never was there such a man, was her thought. Her eyes dropped first, and his followed, so that, as before, both gazed at the clasped hands.

He made a movement of his whole body toward her, impulsive and involuntary, as if to gather her to him, then checked himself abruptly with an unmistakable effort. She saw it and felt the pull of his hand as it started to draw her to him.

And to her amazement she felt the desire to yield, the desire almost overwhelmingly to be drawn into the strong circle of those arms. And had he compelled she knew that she would not have refrained.

She was almost dizzy when he checked himself and, with a closing of his fingers that half crushed hers, dropped her hand, almost flung it from him.

"God," he breathed; "you were made for me!"

He turned partly away from her, sweeping his hand to his forehead. She knew she would hate him forever if he dared one stammered word of apology or explanation.

But he seemed to have the way always of doing the right thing where she was concerned. She sank into her chair, and he into another, first drawing it around so as to face her across the corner of the desk.

"I spent last night in a Turkish bath," he said. "I sent for an old broken down bruiser. He was a friend of my father in the old days. I knew there couldn't be a thing about the ring he didn't know, and I made him talk."

"The funny thing was that it was all I could do to convince him that I didn't know the things I asked him about. He called me the babe in the woods. I guess he was right. I was raised in the woods, and woods is about all I know."

"Well, I received an education from that old man last night. The ring is rottenner than you told me. It seems everybody connected with it is crooked. The very supervisors that grant the fight permits graft off of the promoters, and the promoters, managers and fighters graft off of each other and off the public."

"It's down to a system in one way, and, on the other hand, they're always doing you know what the double cross is?" She nodded. "Well, they don't seem to miss a chance to give each other the double cross."

"The stuff that old man told me took my breath away. And here I've been in the thick of it for several years and knew nothing of it. I was a real babe in the woods. And yet I can see how I've been fooled. I was so made that I nobody could stop me. I was bound to win, and, thanks to Stubener, everything crooked was kept away from me."

"This morning I cornered Spider Walsh and made him talk. He was my first trainer, you know, and he followed Stubener's instructions. They kept me in ignorance. Besides, I didn't herd with the sporting crowd. I spent my time hunting and fishing and monkeying with cameras and such things."

"Do you know what Walsh and Stubener called me between themselves? The virgin. I only learned it this morning from Walsh, and it was like pulling teeth. And they were right. I was a little innocent lamb."

"And Stubener was using me for crookedness, too, only I didn't know

it. I can look back now and see how it was worked. But you see, I wasn't interested enough in the game to be suspicious.

"I was born with a good body and a cool head. I was raised in the open, and I was taught by my father, who knew more about fighting than any man, living or dead. It was too easy. The ring didn't absorb me. There was never any doubt of the outcome. But I'm done with it now."

She pointed to the headline announcing his match with Tom Cannan.

"That's Stubener's work," he explained. "It was programmed months ago. But I don't care. I'm heading for the mountains. I've quit."

She glanced at the unfinished interview on the desk and sighed.

"How lordly men are," she said. "Masters of destiny. They do as they please."

"From what I've heard," he interrupted, "you've done pretty much as you please. It's one of the things I like about you. And what has struck me hard from the first was the way you and I understand each other."

He broke off and looked at her with burning eyes.

"Well, the ring did one thing for me," he went on. "It made me acquainted with you. And when you find the one woman there's just one thing to do—take her in your two hands and don't let go. Come on, let us start for the mountains."

It had come with the suddenness of a thunder-clap, and yet she felt that a

"I don't dare," she said in a whisper. She had been expecting it. Her heart was beating up and almost choking.

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TREASURER'S SALE OF UNSEATED LANDS FOR NON-PAYMENT OF TAXES FOR 1912 AND 1913.

Table listing land parcels with columns for Acres Per, Warrantee, Owners, Taxes and Costs, and Township. Includes entries for Harris, Howard, Huston, Liberty, Marion, Miles, Patton, Ferguson, Haines, and Potter townships.

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Treasurer's Sale of Seated Lands June 10, 1914.

SEATED LIST RETURNED BY THE SEVERAL TAX COLLECTORS.

Table listing land parcels with columns for Acres, Name, Township, Taxes and Costs. Includes entries for William Myers, Daniel Purrell, Joseph Packard, etc.