



The Man on the Box

By HAROLD MacGRATH
Author of "The Grey Cloak," "The Puppet Crown."

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CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES MY HERO.

Warburton was graduated from West Point, ticketed to a desolate frontier post, and would have worn out his existence there but for his guiding star, which was always making frantic efforts to bolt its established orbit. One day he was doing scout duty, perhaps half a mile in advance of the pay-train as they called the picturesque caravan which, consisting of a canopied wagon and a small troop of cavalry in dingy blue, made progress across the desert-like plain of Arizona. The troop was some ten miles from the post, and as there had been no sign of Red Eagle all that day, they concluded that the rumor of his being on a drunken rampage with half a dozen braves was only a rumor. Warburton had just passed over a roll of earth, and for a moment the pay-train had dropped out of sight. It was twilight; opalescent waves of heat rolled above the blistered sands. A pale yellow sky, like an inverted bowl rimmed with delicate blue and crimson hues, encompassed the world. The bliss of solitude fell on him, and, being something of a poet, he rose to the stars. The smoke of his corn-cob pipe trailed lazily behind him. The horse under him was loping along easily.



SUDDENLY THE ANIMAL LIFTED HIS HEAD.

Suddenly the animal lifted his head, and his brown ears went forward.

At Warburton's left, some hundred yards distant, was a clump of osage brush. Even as he looked, there came a puff of smoke, followed by the evil song of a bullet. My hero's hat was carried away. He wheeled, dug his heels into his horse, and cut back over the trail. There came a second flash, a shock, and then a terrible pain in the calf of his left leg. He fell over the neck of his horse to escape the third bullet. He could see the Apache as he stood out from behind the bush. Warburton yanked out his Colt and let fly. He heard a yell. It was very comforting. That was all he remembered of the skirmish.

For five weeks he languished in the hospital. During that time he came to the conclusion that he had had enough of military life in the west. He applied for his discharge, as the compulsory term of service was at an end. When his papers came he was able to get about with the aid of a crutch. One morning his colonel entered his subaltern's bachelor quarters.

"Wouldn't you rather have a year's leave of absence than quit altogether, Warburton?"

"A year's leave of absence?" cried the invalid. "I am likely to get that, I am."

"If you held a responsible position I dare say it would be difficult. As it is, I may say that I can obtain it for you. It will be months before you can ride a horse with that leg."

"I thank you, Col. Raleigh, but I think I'll resign. In fact, I have resigned."

"We can withdraw that, if you but say the word. I don't want to lose you, lad. You're the only man around here who likes a joke as well as I do. And you will have a company if you'll only stick to it a little longer."

"I have decided, Colonel. I'm sorry you feel like this about it. You see, I have something like \$25,000 laid away. I want to see at least \$5,000 worth of new scenery before I shuffle off this mortal coil. The scenery around here falls on me. My throat and eyes are always full of sand. I am off to Europe. Some day, perhaps, the bee will buzz again; and when it does, I'll have you go personally to the president."

"As you please, Warburton."

"Besides, Colonel, I have been reading Treasure Island again, and I've got the fever in my veins to hunt adventure, even a treasure. It's in my blood to wander and do strange things, and here I've been hampered all these years with routine. I shouldn't care if we had a good fight once in a while. My poor old dad traveled around the world three times, and I haven't seen any thing of it but the maps."

"Go ahead, then. Only, talking about Treasure Island, don't you and your \$25,000 run into some old Long John Silver."

"I'll take care."
And Mr. Robert packed up his kit and sailed away. Not many months passed ere he met his colonel again, and under rather embarrassing circumstances.

CHAPTER II.

INTRODUCES MY HEROINE.

Let me begin at the beginning. The boat had been two days out of Southampton before the fog cleared away. On the afternoon of the third day Warburton curled up in his steamer-chair and lazily viewed the blue October seas as they met and merged with the blue October skies. I do not recollect the popular novel of that summer, but at any rate it lay flapping at the side of his chair, forgotten.

At this particular moment this hero of mine was going over the monotony of the old days in Arizona, the sand-deserts, the unlovely landscapes, the dull routine, the indifferent skirmishes with cattle-men and Indians; the pagan bullet which had plowed through his leg. And now it was all over; he had surrendered his straps; he was a private citizen, with an income sufficient for his needs: It will go a long way, \$4,500 a year, if one does not attempt to cover the distance in a \$5,000 motor-car; and he hated all locomotion that was not horse-flesh.

For nine months he had been wandering over Europe, if not happy, at least in a satisfied frame of mind. Four of these months had been delightfully passed in Paris; and as his normal excursions had invariably terminated in that queen of cities, I make Paris the starting point of his somewhat remarkable adventures. Besides, it was in Paris that he first saw her. And now, here he was at last, homeward-bound. That phrase had a mighty pleasant sound; it was to the ear what honey is to the tongue. Still, he might yet have been in Paris but for one thing: She was on board this very boat.

Suddenly his eyes opened full wide, bright with eagerness.

"It is she!" he murmured. He closed his eyes again, the hypocrite!

Permit me to introduce you to my heroine. Mind you, she is not my creation; only Heaven may produce her like, and but once. She is well worth turning around to gaze at. Indeed I know more than one fine gentleman who forgot the time of day, the important engagement, or the trend of his thought, when she passed by.

She was coming forward, leaning against the wind and inclining to the uncertain roll of the ship. A gray raincoat fitted snugly the youthful, rounded figure. Her hands were plunged into the pockets. You may be sure that Mr. Robert noted through his half-closed eyelids these inconsequent details. A tourist hat sat jauntily on the fine light brown hair, that color which has no appropriate metaphor. (At least, I have never found one, and I am not in love with her and never was.) Warburton has described to me her eyes, so I am positive that they were as heavenly blue as a rajah's sapphire. Her height is of no moment. What man ever troubled himself about the height of a woman so long as he wasn't undersized himself? What pleased Warburton was the exquisite skin. He was always happy with his comparisons, and particularly when he likened her skin to the bloomy olive pallor of a young peach. The independent stride was distinguishingly American. Ah, the charm of these women who are my countrywomen! They come, they go, alone, unattended, courageous without being bold, self-reliant without being rude; imitable. In what an amiable frame of mind Nature must have been on the day she cast these molds! But I proceed. The young woman's chin was tilted, and Warburton could tell by the dilated nostrils that she was breathing in the gale with all the joy of living, filling her healthy lungs with it as that rare daughter of the Cyprian Isle might have done as she sprang that morn from the jeweled Mediterranean spray, that beggar's brooch of Neptune's.

Warburton's heart hadn't thrilled so since the day when he first donned cadet gray. There was scarce any room for her to pass between his chair and the rail; and this knowledge filled the rascal with exultation. Nearer and nearer she came. He drew in his breath as the corner of his foot-rest (aided by the sly wind) caught her rain-coat.

"I beg your pardon!" he said, sitting up.

She quickly released her coat, smiled faintly, and passed on.

Sometimes the most lasting impressions are those which are printed most lightly on the memory. Mr. Robert says that he never will forget that first smile. And he didn't even know her name then.

I was about to engage your attention with a description of the villain, but on second thought I have decided that it would be rather unfair. For at that moment he was at a disadvantage. Nature was punishing him for a few shortcomings. The steward that night informed Warburton, in answer to his inquiries, that he, the villain, was dreadfully seasick, and was begging him, the steward, to scuttle the ship and have done with it. I have my doubts regarding this. Mr. Robert is inclined to hippnacy at times. It wasn't seasickness; and after all is said and done, it is putting it harshly to call this man a villain. I hardly think possibly have been dutiable. True villainy is always based upon selfishness. Remember this, my wise ones.

Warburton was somewhat subdued when he learned that the suffering gentleman was her father.

"What did you say the name was?"

he asked innocently. Until now he hadn't had the courage to put the question to any one, or to prowl around the purser's books.

"Annesley; Col. Annesley and daughter," answered the unsuspecting steward.

Warburton knew nothing then of the mental tragedy going on behind the colonel's state-room door. How should he have known? On the contrary, he believed that the father of such a girl must be a most knightly and courtly gentleman. He was, in all outward appearances. There had been a time, not long since, when he had been knightly and courtly in all things.

CHAPTER III.

THE ADVENTURE BEGINS.

It was only when the ship was less than a day's journey off Sandy Hook that the colonel came on deck, once more to resume his interest in human affairs. How the girl hovered about him! She tucked the shawl more snugly around his feet; she arranged and rearranged the pillows back of his head; she fed him from a bowl of soup; she read from some favorite book; she smoothed the furrowed brow; she stilled the long, white, nervous fingers with her own small, firm, brown ones; she was mother and daughter in one. Wherever she moved, the parent eye followed her, and there lay in its deeps a strange mixture of love. All the while he drummed ceaselessly on the arms of his chair.

And Mr. Robert, watching all these things from afar, Mr. Robert sighed dolorously. The residue air in his lungs was renewed more frequently than nature originally intended it should be. Love has its beneficences as well as its pangs, only they are not wholly appreciable by the recipient. For what is better than a good pair of lungs constantly filled and re-filled with pure air? Mr. Robert even felt a twinge of remorse besides. He was brother to a girl almost as beautiful as yonder one (to my mind far more beautiful!) and he recalled that in two years he had not seen her nor made strenuous efforts to keep up the correspondence. Another good point added to the score of love! And, alas! he might never see this charming girl again, this daughter so full of filial love and care. He had sought the captain, but that hale and hearty old sea-dog had politely rebuffed him.

"My dear young man," he said, "I do all I possibly can for the entertainment and comfort of my passengers, but in this case I must refuse your request."

"And pray, why, sir?" demanded Mr. Robert, with dignity.

"For the one and simple reason that Col. Annesley expressed the desire to be the recipient of no ship introductions."

"What the deuce is he, a billionaire?"

"You have me there, sir. I confess that I know nothing whatever about him. This is the first time he has ever sailed on my deck."

All of which perfectly accounts for Mr. Robert's sighs in what musicians call the doloroso. If only he knew the colonel! How simple it would be! Certainly, a West Point graduate would find some consideration. But the colonel spoke to no one save his daughter, and his daughter to no one save her parent, her maid, and the stewardess. Would they remain in New York, or would they seek their far-off southern home? Oh, the thousands of questions which surged through his brain! From time to time he glanced sympathetically at the colonel, whose fingers drummed and drummed and drummed.

"Poor wretch! his stomach must be in bad shape. Or maybe he has the palsy." Warburton mused upon the curious incertitude of the human anatomy.

But Col. Annesley did not have the palsy. What he had is at once the greatest blessing and the greatest curse of God—remembrance, or conscience, if you will.

What a beautiful color her hair was, dappled with sunshine and shadow! . . . Pshaw! Mr. Robert threw aside his shawl and book (it is of no real importance, but I may as well add that he never completed the reading of that summer's most popular novel) and sought the smoking-room, where, with the aid of a fat perfecto and a liberal stack of blues, he proceeded to divert himself till the boat reached quarantine. I shall not say that he left any of his patrimony at the mahogany table with its green-baize covering and its little brass disks for cigar ashes, but I am certain that he did not make one of those stupendous winnings we often read about and never witness. This much, however; he made the acquaintance of a very important personage, who was presently to add no insignificant weight on the scales of Mr. Robert's destiny.

He was a Russian, young, handsome, suave, of what the newspapers insist on calling distinguished bearing. He spoke English pleasantly but imperfectly. He possessed a capital fund of anecdote, and Warburton, being an army man, loved a good droll story. It was a revelation to see the way he dipped the end of his cigar into his coffee, a stimulant which he drank with Balzacian frequency and relish. Besides these accomplishments, he played a very smooth hand at the great American game. While Mr. Robert's admiration was not aroused, it was surely awakened.

Mr. hero had no trouble with the customs officials. A brace of old French dueling pistols and a Turkish simitar were the only articles which might possibly have been dutiable. The inspector looked hard, but he was finally convinced that Mr. Robert was not a professional curio-collector.

Col. Annesley and his daughter were old hands; they had gone through all this before. Scarce an article in their trunks was disturbed.

Once outside, the colonel caught the eye of a cabby, and he and his daughter stepped in.

"Holland House, sir, did you say?" asked the cabby.

The colonel nodded. The cabby cracked his whip, and away they rolled over the pavement.

Warburton's heart gave a great bound. She had actually leaped out of the cab, and for one brief moment their glances had met. Scarce knowing what he did, he jumped into another cab and went pounding after. It was easily ten blocks from the pier when the cabby raised the lid and peered down at his fare.

"Do you want 't' folly them ahead?" he cried.

"No, no!" Warburton was startled out of his wild dream. "Drive to the Holland House—no—to the Waldorf. Yes, the Waldorf; and keep your nag going?"

"Waldorf it is, sir!" The lid above closed.

Clouds had gathered in the heavens. It was beginning to rain. But Warburton neither saw the clouds nor felt the first few drops of rain. All the way up-town he planned and planned—as many plans as there were drops of rain; the rain wet him, but the plans drowned him—he became submerged. If he could find some one he knew at the Holland House, some one who would strike up a smoking-room acquaintance with the colonel, the rest would be simple enough. Annesley—Annesley; he couldn't place the name. Was he a regular, retired, or a veteran of the Civil War? And yet, the name was not totally unfamiliar. Certainly, he was a fine-looking old fellow, with his white hair and Alexandrian nose. And here he was, he, Robert Warburton, in New York, simply because he happened to be in the booking office of the Gare du Nord one morning and overheard a very beautiful girl say: "Then we shall sail from Southampton today after to-morrow." Of a truth, it is the infinitesimal things that count heaviest.

(To Be Continued.)

PROOF HE LACKED BRAINS.

Young Man Demonstrated the Truth by Stopping to Argue with a Bull.

A manufacturer advertised for a man to fill the position of timekeeper at the factory gate, and among those who applied was an old man who wanted to secure the position for his son, who, he said, had met with an accident which incapacitated him from following his ordinary occupation.

"What's the matter with him?" inquired the manufacturer.

"He was tossed by a bull and his left arm so badly broken as to necessitate amputation."

"H'm," mused the manufacturer. "That entitles him to consideration, but I don't want a man with a great amount of brains. He must not think for himself but must do just what he is told."

"My boy will suit you, then," replied the old man. "His brains will never get him into trouble."

"Indeed! And why?"

"Because he's got none, sir, or he wouldn't have stopped to argue the point with the bull."

The man was engaged.

BEECHER AND "THE ROOSTER"

Famous Preacher Knew How to Deal with Disturbers of His Peace.

That Henry Ward Beecher was spared much embarrassment by his quickness at repartee is illustrated, says Success, by the following story:—

One evening, as he was in the midst of an impassioned speech, some one attempted to interrupt him by suddenly crowing like a rooster. It was done to perfection; a number of people laughed in spite of themselves, and the speaker's friends felt that in a moment the whole effect of the meeting, and of Mr. Beecher's thrilling appeals, might be lost. The orator, however, was equal to the occasion. He stopped, listened till the crowing ceased, and then, with a look of surprise, pulled out his watch.

"Morning already!" he said; "my watch is only at ten. But there can be no mistake about it. The instincts of the lower animals are infallible."

There was a roar of laughter. The "lower animal" in the gallery collapsed, and Mr. Beecher was able to resume as if nothing had occurred.

Vegetarian Eggs.

A vegetarian had an amusing experience the other morning while at breakfast. His family was out of town, and he went to a restaurant and took a seat next to a stranger.

The vegetarian took occasion to advertise his creed by telling the stranger that all meat was injurious and that the human diet should be strictly vegetarian.

"But," replied the stranger, "I seldom eat meat."

"You just ordered eggs," said the vegetarian. "An egg is practically meat, because it eventually become a bird."

"The kind of eggs I eat never become birds," answered the stranger quietly.

"Good heavens!" cried the vegetarian, "what kind of eggs do you eat?"

"Principally boiled eggs," said the stranger.—New Haven Register.

Getting Back Hand.

Mrs. Kuttig—What a charming debutante you were, my dear, 16 years ago.
Mrs. Kumback—Was I? And I remember that a lovely chaperone you made.—Cleveland Leader.

Backache, "The Blues"

Both Symptoms of Organic Derangement in Women—Thousands of Sufferers Find Relief.



Mrs. J. C. Holmes Emma Cotrely

How often do we hear women say: "It seems as though my back would break," or "Don't speak to me, I am all out of sorts?" These significant remarks prove that the system requires attention.

Backache and "the blues" are direct symptoms of an inward trouble which will sooner or later declare itself. It may be caused by diseased kidneys or some derangement of the organs. Nature requires assistance and at once, and Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound instantly asserts its curative powers in all those peculiar ailments of women. It has been the standby of intelligent American women for twenty years, and the best judges agree that it is the most universally successful remedy for woman's ills known to medicine.

Read the convincing testimonials of Mrs. Holmes and Mrs. Cotrely.

Mrs. J. C. Holmes, of Larimore, North Dakota, writes:

Dear Mrs. Pinkham:—
"I have suffered everything with backache and female trouble—I let the trouble run on until my system was in such a condition that I was unable to be about, and then it was I commenced to use Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound. If I had only known how much suffering I would have saved I should have taken it months sooner—for a few weeks' treatment made me well and strong. My backaches and headaches are all gone and I suffer no pain at my monthly periods, whereas before I took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound I suffered intense pain."

Mrs. Emma Cotrely, 109 East 12th Street, New York City, writes:

Dear Mrs. Pinkham:—

"I feel it my duty to tell all suffering women of the relief I have found in Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."

Ask Mrs. Pinkham's Advice—A Woman Best Understands a Woman's Ills.

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