

# THE BIG MUSKEG

By  
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## "GOOD NIGHT, MOLLY!"

**SYNOPSIS**—Looking over Big Muskeg, a seemingly impassable swamp in the path of the Missetti railroad, Joe Bostock, builder of the line, and Wilton Carruthers, chief of engineers, are considering the difficulties. A rifle shot instantly kills Bostock and breaks Carruthers' arm. Carruthers tries to carry the body to a post of the Hudson's Bay Company, where McDonald is the factor. McDonald's daughter, Molly, sees Carruthers struggling in the muskeg and drags him from the swamp, with his burden. Unaccountably, her father objects to her saving Carruthers. Weakened by his wound and exertions, Carruthers is disturbed by the appearance of Tom Bowyer, Bostock's business rival and personal enemy. Bowyer insults Molly, and Carruthers strikes him. Carruthers declares his love for Molly. She promises to be his wife. Carruthers has to reach the town of Clayton to attend a meeting at which Bostock's enemies plan to wrest control of the Missetti from him. Molly goes with him. They are delayed by a storm. Attacked by his dogs, Carruthers' life is saved by Molly, who is forced to kill the animals. "The snow, the snow!" They set out on foot for Clayton, reaching it with Carruthers in an almost dying condition. He is in time to foil Bostock's enemies and keep control of the line for Mrs. Bostock. He finds enemies at work at Big Muskeg. Bowyer persecutes Molly with attentions. Lee Chambers asks Carruthers for work, saying he has broken with Bowyer. Carruthers takes him on. Kitty Bostock, deeply in love with Carruthers, comes to live at the Big Muskeg. Kitty avows her love to Carruthers, who tells her of Molly and gently repulses her. Tom Bowyer seeks Molly's love, and is repulsed. He inveigles the charmed Kitty into an alliance for the purpose of separating Carruthers and Molly.

## CHAPTER VIII—Continued.

Kitty rose. "I don't know now that I've done right," she said. "I hope you won't come to have any feeling against me, dear. Only you didn't seem to understand—well, things. And what Mr. Bowyer hasn't anything to do with I'm saying, if you feel that you don't care for him."

"Care for that beast!" said Molly.

Day by day the treasting grew, and the embankment appeared about it until the first part was hidden under the permanent way. Thousands of feet of logs had gone into the building. Each day the engine pushed the laden ballast trucks farther out upon the breaking, swaying structure. Then the pressure of the lever, tons of debris discharged through the frame of the woodwork, and the engine went snorting back toward the ballast pit, dragging the empty trucks behind it.

Kitty had gone back to Clayton. She had said that she would return, but Wilton doubted it. He still cherished the hope of friendship, when time had obliterated their joint memory of that afternoon. He could not bear to lose her. She seemed a part of Joe, and he found it hard to shake his mind free of his preconceptions. For the present, however, he recognized that her remaining there would prove an embarrassment.

He sent her back to Clayton with Andersen, who had proved entirely trustworthy since the first night, and was going in on business for him.

And he had very little time to think of Kitty in the critical period that followed. Wilton slept only a few hours nightly. For five days he could not even go to the portage. On the sixth success appeared at hand. The sink-holes had been filled in and there was not the slightest subsidence of the grade. Andersen returned that night and Wilton went to bed in confidence. Chambers was as confident as he.

On the following morning, as he left his shack, the workmen came running toward him, jabbering and gesticulating. The foreman, hurrying up behind them, shouted and pointed in excitement in the direction of the muskeg.

When Wilton reached the shore he found that his worst fears had been exceeded.

Two-thirds of the trestle-work had disappeared, including a great stretch of the foundation, over which the locomotives and ballast trucks had passed the day before. The subsidence was seventy or eighty yards in length. The top alone remained above the treacherous swamp, and the rails hung festooned in midair.

The whole embankment would have to be reconstructed. As the mere mechanical process of dumping might serve merely to add to the weight superimposed upon the treacherous bottom, Wilton determined to lay down a corduroy over the sink-holes—a mattress of tree-trunks. The depositing of the ballast on this would serve to compress the muskeg and loose rock, making a firm foundation, and the trunks, as they became water-logged, would harden, increasing the strength of the whole structure as time went by.

But for a few hours he almost abandoned hope. At the best, it meant holding up the construction of the line, for the permanent way was now only a few miles behind, and he dared not start operations on the east shore until he knew whether the muskeg could be spanned.

He spent the morning in his office, writing a report for the directors. The news would reach Clayton as soon as it could be telephoned, but at least he would have another chance. It was too late now to think of changing the route without throwing the company into liquidation. And Kitty held control.

The thought of that strengthened his resolve. He could not bring himself to go to Molly with the despondency upon him, but busied himself that afternoon examining the wreck.

For about a month he had had a strange protegee. One evening Jules Halfhead, the deaf-mute, appeared at the door of his shack, and quickly assumed the care of it. He was nearly always to be found there in Wilton's absence. Sometimes, however, he would betake himself back to the portage, and he was free of the camp, where he ran errands and messages for the engineers, and was the butt of mild practical jokes.

Wilton came to the conclusion, however, that the Muskegon's mind was as acute as any man's, and that his apparent simplicity was nothing but the outward aspect of his infirmity.

When Jules had cooked Wilton's supper that evening he came into the office in a state of excitement. The man had loved the work. He was often to be seen on the trestle, clinging for dear life to a plank as the trucks rumbled past within an inch of his head. When he saw the wreck of the embankment that morning, the foreman said that he had burst into tears. Now he was evidently trying to describe something to Wilton in pantomime; but Wilton could not follow his meaning.

Suddenly he seized a pencil from the desk and, stooping, began to draw a picture of the trestle upon the wall with remarkable skill.

Wilton's interest was at once aroused. "Yes," he said, nodding to Jules. "What about it?"

It was his habit to talk, although the deaf-mute could not hear his voice. Jules had an instinctive faculty of understanding. He looked at Wilton and nodded back.

He next drew four uprights—the long, heavy trunks of considerable girth that were driven into the ground to support the trestling. Then he made a smudgy line across each. Then he drew a hatchet. He looked up at Wilton in pathetic eagerness, and nodded again.

"You mean that some one tampered with the trestling?" shouted Wilton.

Jules, who had watched his lips, nodded eagerly. But, as he always nodded when he was spoken to, little meaning could be attached to that.

Wilton wondered if that was what he did mean. If the uprights had been tampered with before they were set into the ground, by ax-cuts or otherwise, the weight of the ballast would undoubtedly have broken them. The break would not have been immediately apparent, but the trestling would in such case be practically imposed upon the surface of the swamp, without support. The ballast would have spread over the muskeg, causing the entire structure to subside.

"Who did it?" asked Wilton, speaking slowly and carefully.

Jules, who was still watching him, suddenly turned and, with lightning movements, drew a caricature of Lee Chambers on the woodwork of the wall.

Wilton looked at it and drew in his breath. Then he nodded. Jules nodded in return, smiled, and left the room. Wilton reflected deeply.

If Chambers was a spy of Bowyer's, why had he shown him the bedrock at all? On the other hand, assuming that Wilton must eventually discover it himself, Bowyer might have sent Chambers to make a virtue of a necessity and to secure a position at the camp, where he could be of service to him.

In any case, Wilton could afford to take no further chances with him. It would serve no purpose to accuse him of having tampered with the trestling. He would give him a post somewhere where he could do no harm, and thus get rid of him.

Fighting down the burning rage in his heart, he went down the road toward the shack which the engineer occupied. This was a reconstructed shed. There was only one room in it, but Chambers had asked to have this rather than share the quarters of the other engineers.

The men were back in the bunk-houses, but the door of the shed was padlocked. Thinking that Chambers might be in the camp, he made his way toward the other quarters. But presently he heard some one calling him and, turning, saw Andersen running after him.

"Were you looking for Mr. Chambers, sir?" asked the foreman.

"Yes. Where is he?"

"Why, he went back to Clayton this noon, Mr. Carruthers! He said, he was going in for you."

Wilton's suspicions suddenly flamed up. "The key!" he shouted, pulling at the padlock.

"I guess he took it with him," said Andersen.

"Have the staples pulled out at once!"

Wilton waited, fuming, until Ander-

sen reappeared with the tool. The foreman wrenched out the staples and Wilton burst open the door. As he had expected, the shack was completely empty of all Chambers' belongings.

The two men looked at each other. Slow understanding came into Andersen's face.

"He was a bad yun," said the Swede.

"I guessed you knew your business, Mr. Carruthers, when you took on Tom Bowyer's right-hand man. It wasn't for me to say nothing."

"Keep your mouth shut still, Andersen," said Wilton, slapping him on the shoulder. "We'll just start working again. And keep your eyes open. Some time we'll get him; and I'll telephone Inspector Quain to pick him up if ever he sees him in Clayton."

## CHAPTER IX

### The Face at the Window.

It was five days since Wilton had been to the portage. He had not meant to see Molly in his despondency, but now the discovery of Chambers' treachery came with an invigorating shock and aroused his fighting instinct against Bowyer.

He took the road across the Muskeg. Wilton saw the girl upstairs, at the factor's side. A book was on her knees and a lighted lamp behind her. She was not talking to him, however, but staring out of the window, and yet she did not see Wilton as he came to the door.

At his knock she came downstairs more slowly than usual. When she opened the door to him he saw that she was trembling. Her cheek was icy cold beneath his kiss.

"Come in, Will—I have something to say to you," she said.

He put his arm about her, and they went into the store together. He could feel that she was trembling all the while.

"What is it, Molly?" he asked, looking into her face and seeing tears in her eyes. "What is it, dear?"

"I'm afraid that we've both made a mistake, Will," she answered.

Wilton laughed. Once or twice Molly had questioned his love for her, but he



"Good-Night, Molly," He Said.

had never had any difficulty in convincing her, in the usual lover's way.

"Molly, dear, I know I have neglected you," he said penitently. "But you know that until the work's finished I can't ask you anything. And I've been rushing it through, feeling that then I should have the right to."

"It's not the work, Will," she said, slowly. "I want you to release me."

The laughter died on his lips. He put his hands upon her shoulders and turned her toward him. She raised her face; her lips were quivering, and the tears had fallen, leaving her eyes hard and bright.

"You mean that, Molly?" asked Wilton gravely.

"Every word, Will."

"Why?"

"I have ceased to care for you."

She was keeping control of herself with a strong effort, and she shook more violently. She had nerved herself to offer an explanation, but now, face to face with him, she could not tell him that she had been moved by pity for him, and self-deceived. It was impossible for her to lie to Wilton.

"Molly"—she saw that his face was set hard as on that night of the riot—"I don't play with love. I love you and trust you. If you mean that, tell me again, and that will be enough for me."

"I meant it! Oh, can't you understand that I have changed?" she cried desperately. "I can never care for you, Wilton!"

He released her and turned away. "Good-night, Molly," he said.

Yet he went slowly out of the door, and because the shock had come with stunning force, he was amazed that she did not call him back. He could not make himself understand that all his dreams and hopes of five minutes

were broken. Not until he had reached the portage. Then he stopped and looked back. The door of the store was closed. The light still burned in the factor's room and he saw Molly cross toward him and fling herself on her knees beside him.

He clenched his fists; but somehow the violence that relieved his feelings usually seemed to have no place here. He couldn't understand. He went home slowly across the portage.

The factor looked up when Molly entered, and was astonished to see the tears upon her face. When she knelt down he put his hand clumsily upon her hair.

"What has happened, lass?" he asked. "Was it Will Carruthers ye quarreled with?"

"He will never come here again," said Molly.

A dull fire burned in the factor's eyes. He seemed to be struggling between two impulses: One was to comfort his daughter; the other, his gratification.

"Ah weel, lass, ye'll find another," he said.

But he abased his head before her indignant glance. At that moment the girl felt that her father and she were farther apart than they had ever been.

When Wilton reached his shack he took off his coat and flung himself down on his bed. He would not speculate on Molly's motives. He would not think of her at all. He would neither condemn her nor pity himself.

He forced his mind back to his task. The trestle—he would lay down a corduroy—he would drive the men all the summer, if need be, for Joe's sake. Poor Joe! The presence of the dead man seemed to fill the camp just as of old. Joe was the guiding spirit of this work. He had loved Joe more truly than it seemed possible to love any woman.

He completed the few routine duties of the office and went to bed. He had dozed off to sleep when something made him start up in bed and listen intently. He thought he had heard a slight sound in the office.

It was so slight that even his trained ears sent the message to his brain doubtfully. But it came again. Some one had very softly clicked back the catch of one of the windows.

He had the sense of a listener beneath it, and, all alert, Wilton crept noiselessly to his feet and stood listening in the darkness. Now there was no doubt. The window was being pushed very softly open. It was the window between the safe and his bedroom door. In the moonlight Wilton could see that it was opening by inches.

His own door was slightly ajar, and, inch by inch, he pushed it open, too. He saw a pair of hands, white, not work-roughened, placed against the bottom of the window-frame. A face appeared and was thrust cautiously inside the room in reconnaissance. Wilton recognized Lee Chambers.

Satisfied, apparently, that Wilton was asleep in the next room, Chambers began to climb over the sill. Wilton waited till he was balanced there, and then, leaping forward, he drove his fist with all his force into his face. He felt the bone of the nose smash under his hand.

With a muffled cry Lee Chambers fung up his hands, slipped backward and fell. As Wilton ran to the window the ex-engineer leaped up and raced toward the trees. The thought of his treachery came into Wilton's mind and turned his sardonic humor into red rage. He reached into his desk drawer and pulled out the loaded revolver which he kept there. But by the time he was at the window again Chambers was gone.

Three months later an engine pushed two ballast trucks from the west to the east shore of Big Muskeg. The swamp was spanned. The corduroy had been laid upon the sink-holes, and had borne the ballasting. The trestling ran from bank to bank and carried the metals firmly, but the foundation was only as yet laid half-way, and the final proof had yet to be made.

However, Wilton had no doubts of the result. He had tried out the danger-spots. The trestle would contain the ballast. His work had been accomplished.

After the subsidence he had paid a flying visit to Clayton. He had not seen Kitty, and Kitty had not returned to the camp, but he had had a stormy meeting with the directors and, as he had foreseen, had been given his chance to try once more. There was, indeed, nothing else to be done. Bowyer had made the most of the disaster; but it was to Bowyer's interest that Wilton should try again and fail. That would put the Missetti promptly into liquidation.

"It looks to me," he mused, "as if them two snakes'll get the line!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

More Nature Faking.

Nature cannot jump from winter to summer without a spring, or from summer to winter without a fall—From the Tiger.

## LIKE SHORT COAT

### Abbreviated Jacket Has Taken Paris by Storm.

Garment Cut on Straight Lines, of Finger-Tip Length; Straight and Wide Sleeves.

There is a veritable craze in Paris at the present time for the short separate coat to be worn either over a matching or contrasting skirt or over any sort of dress and for almost every occasion. In fact, the short jacket has taken Paris by storm.

These coats, which are similar to suit jackets, are cut on perfectly straight lines and are of finger-tip length with straight and wide sleeves. They may be worn with or without a belt. It is noteworthy that they are replacing to a considerable extent the full-length coat and the cape.

There is nothing unusual in the cut of these coats, but there is great novelty in the fabrics and trimmings used in their making. All the Rodier silks and satins in quilted and blistered effects which are having such a tremendous vogue at the present time are represented.

There is, also, a blistered fabric which, as its name implies, is double. Again, there is cloque, a quilted novelty. Certain definite patterns have specific names, such as mosaic cloques, bulla moresaux and baragladine. The latter is a wonderfully interesting printed, embroidered and blistered silk crepe. In addition to coats of these cloque fabrics there are models of cloth and heavy silk crepes which are usually embroidered in Russian or Persian designs.

Practically all these jackets, whether of silk or cloth, are black and feature fur trimming of some sort. Rabbit is dyed to imitate squirrel, kolinsky and chinchilla. This lightweight felt is lavishly employed in the form of standing collars, wide cuffs and deep bands around the bottoms of many jackets. Fur trimming is present even where a model carries embroidery.

In the novelty class is a jacket of India cashmere trimmed with monkey fur about the neck and sleeves and around the bottom.

## GOWN FOR AFTERNOON WEAR



For informal afternoon functions this black moon-glo satin crepe makes a strong appeal. It has been made distinctive by the chinchilla collar and long sleeve panels.

## ORGANDIE FOR EVENING WEAR

### Summery Fabric, Considered Too Fluffy for Daytime, Crowded Out by Dark Silk.

Summer isn't over and organdie has always had a place in the heart of the American girl who is often at her best in this sheer, summery fabric. Of late years it has been considered too fluffy for daytime wear and has been crowded out by dark silk gowns, which women prefer to wear in spite of the heat. Now, however, it is offered as one of the latest materials for the summer evening gown and one is entirely surprised at what is being done with it in this line.

The organdie gown of today is not ruffled, tucked or lace-trimmed, but is used with one color over another and trimmed with self-toned flowers and piping. Rose over lavender gives a two-toned effect that is lovely. Yellow over orange is also very attractive.

One of the prettiest combinations is shown in a frock of pale green made over a foundation of old blue. The usage of these two colors gives a bronze effect. Twisted about the low waist is a sash composed of folds of deep lavender, dark green and bronze organdies.

These organdie gowns are at their best when made simply with the snug-fitting bodice that is sleeveless and with quite a full skirt which may be piped in scallops. The neck and armholes finish in piping. Stockings should match the color of the under-slip.

### Feathered Gown.

An exquisite version of an evening gown made entirely of feathers is worn by a popular actress. The color chosen is heliotrope, which sets off to advantage the lady's coloring. Ostrich feathers are admirably suited to the popular bouffant skirt, overlapping in such a way as to form innumerable points. The new decollete line is a deep oval filled in with small feather flowers which also decorate the girdle. This feather gown is the latest word in originality and charm.

## A CAPE FOR GENERAL WEAR



Here is a charming cape of tan and brown that attracts the flappers as well as those desiring a cape outfit for general wear.

**Dainty Touch.**

Dainty rosebud applique adds a pretty effect to the top of the pink corset.

## PLAITING IS MUCH FAVORED

### Trimming Form in Limestone on Chic Summer Dresses—Fattiste Is Always Winsome.

Plaiting is a trimming form much favored for the summer dress. If the skirt is not knife or accordion plaited, it is likely to introduce plaits in the form of inset or flying panels.

One lovely white crepe de chine frock uses flat bands of plaits to outline its bateau neck and deep armholes and drops slender plaited panels from its lowered waistline.

Batiste, delicately embroidered and lace-trimmed, is always attractive for summer. It is best when simply made, so that it relies on its exquisite work for its effect.

Under this heading come frocks of ecru batiste made over black satin or charmeuse slips. One smart one shows the fchu treatment which crosses above the plain, short-sleeved, black satin bodice, while the batiste overskirt parts at the center back to reveal its black satin foundation.

## STRAPS OF PEARL AND METAL

### Dainty Shoulder Pieces Are Used on Some of the Summer Lingerie Instead of Ribbons.

Tiny shoulder straps of pearl and metal are used on some of the summer lingerie instead of ribbons that so easily wrinkle and soil. Some time ago there came into existence the thin silver or gold cord, replacing the ribbon shoulder strap. The idea of the silver or gold cord or chain was that it would be invisible. Not so with the

pearl and metal straps. The more these are seen the better, from the Parisienne's standpoint. And in truth these trappings form an extremely dainty adjunct to the summer costume.

## HINT ON IRONING WITH GAS

### Single Burner Can Be Made to Heat Several Flatirons; Much Can Be Saved.

Get a strip of metal large enough to hold four or five flatirons and heat the irons on this. A single gas burner will heat the metal from end to end, and thus do the work of three or four. The same strip of metal can be used for making griddlecakes.

Turn over the irons a metal pan so as to save the top heat, and turn the gas down low. With care four or five flats can be kept hot at a cost of about 10 cents for an ordinary ironing. Do not put flatirons directly over a gas flame, as the watery vapor from the flame will rust and consequently roughen them.

## Dressmaking Hints.

There are a number of lovely ways to finish the serviceable and smart crotone gowns, Organdie, in the predominating color, may make an inch-wide binding at sleeves, pocket and bateau neck. Through this, ribbon in a harmonizing tone is run and tied in perky bows. Either ribbon or a slender string belt is used and tied at the left front. Another good-looking finish which is seen on a number of imported crotone frocks is button-holing done in colored wools. And still another binds the edges with linen.