

The Man From Yonder

By HAROLD TITUS

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THE STORY FROM THE BEGINNING

Ben Elliott—from "Yonder"—arrives at the lumbering town of Tincup, with Don Stuart, old, very sick man, whom he has befriended. He defeats Bull Duval, "king of the river," and town bully, in a log-birling contest. Nicholas Brandon, the town's leading citizen, resents Stuart's presence, trying to force him to leave town and Elliott, resenting the act, knocks him down. Elliott is arrested and finds a friend in Judge Able Armitage. The judge hires him to run the one lumber camp, the Hoot Owl, that Brandon has not been able to grab. This belongs to Dawn McManus, daughter of Brandon's old partner, who has disappeared with a murder charge hanging over his head. Brandon sends Duval to beat up Ben, and Ben worsts him in a fist fight and throws him out of camp. Don Stuart dies, leaving a letter for Elliott "to be used when the going becomes too tough." Ben refuses to open the letter, believing he can win the fight by his own efforts. Fire breaks out in the mill. Ben, leading the victorious fight against the flames that threatened to win the fight for Brandon, discovers the fire was started with gasoline. Elliott gets an offer of spot cash for logs, that will provide money to tide him over. But a definite time limit is set.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"I saw your trail. That is, I . . ." How different, this beginning, from the manner of address he had planned! He felt called upon, now, to explain his presence on her trail rather than to demand a reason for her being there. "I saw your trail," he began again, "and I thought . . ." It seemed to me you might be a little lost."

"As a matter of fact, I am completely turned around," she said. "It was silly of me to come into the woods, especially on a day like this, without a compass. But I did . . . and here I am!" She was searching for some special detail of face or figure.

"Lost! He thought; a lost Diana!"

"I kept losing my bearings and had trouble getting oriented and am getting a little tired. It was so silly! Downright stupid! If you know this country you can set me right. I should be back in Tincup before long or they'll worry."

Ben wondered quickly and irrelevantly, who they might be. Yes, he could get her out. In a half hour he could have her in camp and send her on her way to town. . . . But in a half hour . . . and with her manner so clearly hostile for no reason at all? . . . She impressed him as a young woman most desirable to know well and also as one whose confidence would be slow in acquiring.

"Lost, eh?" he asked and laughed oddly. "Matter of fact, I came out without a compass myself." That was true. He needed no compass for a short swing such as he had made today; his sound woodsman's instinct would hold him safe.

"Well, that complicates matters," the girl said drily. "I've got to get out of this timber and I'm not good for much more travel in this sort of going. I haven't been on webs in several years and I've gone further than I should have."

"By George, that's too bad!" he said and hoped that none of his men, who would be trekking into camp by now, would shout or sing so their voices would break down the illusion of empty distances surrounding them which evidently possessed the girl. "Too bad! It's getting dark sure enough but it isn't very late. If you could sit down and get your wind, now—"

"But what good will that do? If we stay here until it's really dark there may be no getting out until morning. All I have with me is a cake of chocolate and the prospect of a hungry, cold night in the woods with you isn't alluring."

Ben rubbed his chin.

"I'm sorry. If the impression I make is as bad as—"

"I meant nothing personal. But I don't know you. I don't fancy being lost with anyone, let alone a stranger."

He thought she almost smiled, as if relenting a bit from her brusqueness.

"Look!" he said, pointing aloft to where a break in the clouds near the zenith let about the last of the daylight through. "It's going to clear. We'll have stars directly. Let me build a little shelter and a fire here. A few minutes of rest will do a lot of good and with stars we can get anywhere."

She hesitated, seeming to consider.

"All right, I must admit the last half hour's going has been hard."

Out came his belt ax, off went the lower limbs of young hemlocks. In less than it would take an ordinary man to lop the branches he had a bench of trampled snow on a knoll covered with aromatic boughs and a thick windbreak of them behind it. Then, attacking a huge birch stub he peeled off a quantity of loose bark. This he lighted from a match carried in a tightly corked bottle and as the quickly burning stuff shed a comfortable glow on the bower he had built, he knocked dead branches from a hemlock, fed them to the flame and then turned to a nearby dry top of a fallen maple, knocking off substantial faggots.

By the time he finished this the girl had shaken off her snowshoes, stuck them on end in the snow and was sitting on the couch he had built for her.

She eyed the fire as he stood erect, drawing off his gloves and spreading his big hands to the warmth.

"Strange," she said, "that you should be lost. From the way you make yourself comfortable in the woods I'd say you'd been born in timber."

"From the way you know woodcraft when you see it, I'd say it's as strange that you should be lost!"

"What I know of the woods was learned years ago. One gets rusty, I've discovered. Who are you and what are you doing here?"

Her directness quite took his breath.

"Well, my name's Ben Elliott, if that means anything to you. And I was looking for somebody who has no business to be here. Who are you and what brings you into this timber?"

He was bound, now, to break through her aloofness.

"That," she replied, however, "is largely my own affair. But, Mr. Elliott, if you should guess that I was simply trying to lose a certain unpleasant mood in the woods where I once was quite happy, you wouldn't be far from right."

She spoke incisively and unhesitatingly but it seemed to him that behind this brusqueness was something quite different; something he could not fathom. He was about to remind her that she had not yet revealed her identity when she went on:

"Looking for someone who has no business here, you said. Just who are they, what are they doing?"

"As to the first, I can't tell you. For the second, their purpose probably would be to attempt to hold up a timber operation in which I'm rather interested not so far from here."

Her eyes were on him with a curious expression, which might possibly have been personal interest.

"To hold you up? How?"

"Are you from Tincup?"

"I am."

"You know people there? And what seems to be the town's most famous tradition?"

"I don't understand."

"Isn't it that Nicholas Brandon finishes what he starts out to do? That whatever he says goes, come what may?"

Her eyes dropped.

"I've heard that said. People like to talk."

"Right! But I'm managing an outfit that's encouraging rough going from some source. All sorts of things are happening and I'm trying to head off certain of them."

"I see."

She looked away and puckered her delectable lips as though to whistle. Ben rubbed his chin again. She was not even interested in learning more about him, but where many young men would have been piqued at that he only laughed softly.

"What's the joke?" she asked, almost defiantly.

"I was just thinking that it's a funny situation when a man gets into a scrap and it looks so big to him that he thinks the whole darned country must be watching it and him; and then along comes a nice girl who's been in a position to hear all about it and who isn't interested a dime's worth."

She looked up at him slowly.

"You mean that you want to talk about it?"

"Perfectly natural that I should. I'm in one whale of a fight and having the time of my life. It's the first job I've found in a coon's age that was hard enough and complicated enough to be worth working over."

"That's what I've heard about you."

"You've . . . Oh, so you have heard about me?"

"Of course, I live in Tincup. Few have any secrets in a town of Tincup's size."

Ben chuckled again.

"Well, then, if you've heard that much about me and my job, may I tell you there isn't anything I could tell you that would be interesting."

"Maybe not," she said with an air of dismissal.

Ben watched her closely as she slowly broke a twig to bits with her slim fingers.

"Deer used to yard in the swamp back of here," she said. "When I was a little girl I used to come out and try to make friends with them. That's why I came out today . . . wondering if they'd started to yard yet."

"It's too early for them to yard."

"Yes, but the snow may get deep enough any day to bunch them."

"Snow?" he said and shrugged. "If it gets deep in a hurry the deer will yard all right and, maybe, I'll be licked and a little girl done out of all she has in the world."

"All she has in the world? Meaning just what?"

"If you live in Tincup and know the town you must know about the owner of this property. This is the Hoot Owl timber."

A queer smile twitched at the girl's lips.

"Sometimes I think I do; as often, I wonder what she's like . . . really like. I happen to be Dawn McManus."

Ben Elliott opened his mouth as if to speak. Then closed it again and made a foolishly helpless movement with one hand. He stared at her and began to stammer.

"Why I . . . Why, you . . . Why, Able said! . . ." He laughed outright, then, as his misconception became clear. "Oh, if I'd given it a second thought I'd have known! Able first told me about you as a little girl! But stuck in my head; a little girl! But that was years ago, of course. . . . Gee! . . . Why, then you're lost in your back yard, as you might say."

"I was," she corrected. "But a few minutes ago I heard some one sing out; and just now the cook called the crew to supper."

"Then why didn't you—"

"Because I was rather curious to discover what sort of man is standing behind this me and poverty,"—perhaps ironically, this. "And, of course, I knew you weren't lost."

Elliott flushed on that.

"I played at being lost myself so I'd have a chance to talk to you. I'm glad I did . . . unless it has offended you."

"No, I'm . . . I'm only ready to go in, now."

She adjusted the harness of her shoes dexterously and they set out. On the way to camp Ben tried to talk to her further but her responses were brief and non-committal. Her interest appeared to be only poorly aroused even on such a vital matter as the operation of her property, and so finally he gave up trying to make talk and broke trail thinking that now the job would have an added zest, that a girl like Dawn McManus was an ever greater incentive than the thought of a small child, alone, with her timber at the mercy of hard schemers, and depending on him to make safe her heritage.

In camp Blackmore, the veneer buyer, was waiting for Ben and after eating silently in the cook shanty with those two Dawn set out for Tincup with Blackmore, leaving Ben with considerable to think about besides re-vamping the mill and getting out "choice logs."

CHAPTER VI

The new piston head for the locomotive arrived and Elliott was at the station when the train bearing it pulled in. More, he was close beside the express car when it halted and carried the part himself to his waiting sleigh.

The veneer logs were ready to come out to the siding. Standard cars had been set off at Hoot Owl that day. To



"The Pool Room's a Good Place for You to Be, Limpy."

morrow, bright and early, they would start loading and by night his contract with Blackmore would be filled. He would receive a large check, a substantial part of it clear profit, in return.

His men were growing restless under the driving; whispers in camp had it that the job was broke beyond repair and he knew that to pass a pay day would send his crew scattering, a handicap which he could never overcome in time. But with the men held on the job and the mill ready to saw in another week he would be ready to give the Hoot Owl a fresh start, a new hold on hope.

After reaching camp he plunged into his blankets for a night's rest.

And about the time he burrowed into the pillow Nicholas Brandon sat in his office talking to a pale, slender young man whose blue eyes smiled genially. Genially, yes, but in that quality was a flaw, one might have observed on close scrutiny. Familiarity with Limpy Holbrook might not breed contempt; but surely, in an alert man, it would stir an awareness for the need of caution soon or later.

Brandon now nodded slowly.

"All right. Don't start until dark. And do just as I've told you; don't forget to give yourself plenty of time. You can't travel fast."

"I get you, Mr. Brandon."

"Have you . . . That is, has he ever seen you?"

"He came into the pool room and I sold him tobacco the other day. We visited a minute."

"Friendly?"

"Nothing but!" The open smile had the cast of a leer as Holbrook made reply.

"The pool room's a good place for you to be, Limpy. Great center for news. Well . . . You keep on reporting everything that's said there. . . . Good night."

Holbrook limped out and Brandon, alone, puffed for a time on his cigar. Next, he opened a lower drawer and drew out a bottle of whisky. Only one drink remained in it. He frowned. A year ago he had procured that liquor; for nearly twelve months it had been scarcely touched. But since the night that old Don Stuart died its contents had been drawn upon frequently. His hands shook a bit as he lifted the bottle to his lips, now, but after drinking new strength began to surge through his body and he smiled. He looked at his watch after a time and then out into the street. After a time he rose and walked to the wall telephone.

"Give me Miss Coburn's house, will you?" he asked the operator. "Hello! Miss Co— Ah, Dawn! Its Uncle Nick talking. Want to go to the movie tonight?"

She seemed to hesitate and he tilted his head sharply, lips parted. Then her voice came.

"It's nice of you to think of me, Mr. Brandon. But I don't think I care to go with you tonight."

"Oh; sorry," he said genially enough but his brows gathered. "Another time, then."

"Perhaps."

Her receiver clicked up and he turned away from the instrument scowling thoughtfully.

"Mister Brandon, eh?" he said softly. "And . . . No excuse. . . . Well!"

The last word was spoken with a snap, as though a chapter were closed. He paced the floor slowly. He was brooding, planning, and by the look on his face it was evident that he planned good for no man . . . except, possibly Nicholas Brandon.

Perhaps he was thinking of the matter that was to confront Ben Elliott within twenty-four hours.

That young man was in high feather as the crew came in to supper. His locomotive had shunted the standard cars up from Hoot Owl before daylight and the veneer logs scattered along the steel had commenced going up at once.

Able had come driving out from town in mid-afternoon, Dawn beside him, and with an added thrill because of her presence Ben directed the loading of the last car, conscious that the girl's eyes were often on him with an expression which belied her apparent indifference when he tried to engage her in conversation.

It was dark when the jammer man swung the last log into place and toggles were made fast. Able and Dawn rode with Ben in the locomotive as they trundled down the track to camp.

"You boys have had a long day," Ben said to the engineer and fireman. "It won't get any darker. You eat your suppers here and we'll run 'em in this evening."

He turned to Able.

"Our contract calls for delivery in time to meet the local. She's been coming through a little before eight in the morning. Want to take no chance of having this stuff held up now. That would be a tough break!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

Serbia Always Markets Brides Through Broker

Many of the younger Serbians wish elders would abolish the custom of buying and selling brides, but the older generation can't see it that way. And the authorities are helpless to stop the practice, too, because negotiations between the parents involved are carried on in secret by a marriage broker, called the stornik, and no one is wiser until it is settled.

The supporters of the old order claim they are put to great expense in rearing their daughters, and it's only right and fair that the bridegroom should pay for the added help he thus obtains for his household in taking a wife.

Prices vary greatly in this Serbian bride market, some fetching as high as 30,000 dinars (about \$900), others as low as 2,000 dinars. A bride's worth is measured by her health, strength and knowledge of farm and household affairs. Beauty is a secondary consideration, but should the prospective wife possess it her value is enhanced.

In many instances when a suitor has been too poor to pay the price asked by the girl's parents, he has abducted his bride with the aid of friends. And as only the spilling of blood can wipe out the deep humiliation and disgrace of having a daughter "snatched," feuds lasting through generations have in this way begun.—Pathfinder Magazine.

Foot-Worm Disease

The malady which has been termed a foot-worm disease, is an infection of the feet by a thread-like, white nematode worm known as the onchocera flexuosa, which sometimes reaches a length of 10 inches, says the Detroit News. These parasites are found extended in the subcutaneous tissues, and, in advanced stages, coiled in cysts near the surface. Deer afflicted with this malady usually have inflamed and swollen feet, are often notably lame and in some cases the hoofs may even be loosened.

GREAT FEATS OF MEMORY PUT ON HISTORIC RECORD

Unless there is something unusually difficult in memorizing figures quickly, the young Serb of Belgrade who claims to have set up a world's record by committing to memory in ten minutes a number containing more than eighty figures does not seem to have done anything remarkable. He would at any rate have had a formidable rival in James Milnes Gaskell, a cousin of Lord Houghton (Monckton Milnes), who once repeated the tellers in every ounce of commons division for the preceding sixty years and suggested an "amusing game" which consisted in each player giving the name of a parliamentary borough and the persons who had represented it during the same sixty years. Gaskell said that he and his father once played at that game nearly a whole day without stopping. What prodigies of useless knowledge they must have been!

Another remarkable feat of memory is recorded of a soldier who served in the New Zealand expeditionary force during the war. He claimed that he could remember the name and number of every soldier in his battalion, and his claim was unexpectedly put to a test when the battalion headquarters were blown

up and all the records were destroyed. But the soldier, who is now a professor at Edinburgh university, was as good as his word and supplied the missing details.—Montreal Herald.

Russia Looking Ahead

Russia has recognized Australia, at least so far as its fauna is concerned, declares the Los Angeles Times. In years to come the emu and the kangaroo which adorn the Australian coat-of-arms may be hopping around the steppes more freely than in their native land, where they have been warred on by generations of sheep and cattle men because of their appetite for crops and grass.

As part of the five-year plan, emus and kangaroos were introduced to Russia, and they have thrived and multiplied, even in the cold winters of the Moscow region. Emu eggs contain about 600 grams of nutritious foods and kangaroos can be eaten, but their principal value is in providing shoe leather of the highest quality.

Dr. Pierce's Pellets are best for liver, bowels and stomach. One little Pellet for a laxative—three for a cathartic.—Adv.

Settled That

"I can't live without your daughter, sir."

"Right; I'll pay for the funeral!"

—London Answers.

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