

# Reading for Women and all the Family

## Bringing Up Father

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By McManus

## BIG TIMBER

By BERTRAND W. SINCLAIR

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(Continued.)

### CHAPTER XVIII

#### "Out of the Night That Covers Me,"

The Waterbug limped. Her engine misfired continuously, and Barlow backed the mechanical knowledge to remedy its ailment. He was satisfied to let it pound away so long as it would revolve at all. The boat moved slowly through that encompassing smoke at less than half speed. Outwardly the once spick and span cruiser bore every mark of hard usage. Her topsides were fouled, her decks splintered by the tramping of caked boots, grimy with soot and cinders. It seemed to Stella that everything and every corner and about Roaring Lake bore some mark of that holocaust raging in the timber, as if the fire were some malignant disease menacing and marring all that it affected and affecting all that trafficked within its smoky radius.

But of the fire itself she could see nothing, even when late in the afternoon they drew in to the bay before her brother's camp. A heavier smoke cloud, more pungent of burning pitch, blanketed the shores, lifted in blue, rolling masses farther back. A greater heat made the air crackling, causing the eyes to smart and grow watery. That was the only difference.

Barlow laid the Waterbug alongside the float. He had already told her that Lefty How, with the greater part of Effe's crew, was extending and guarding Benton's fire trail, and he half expected that Effe might be turned up there. Away back in the smoke arose spasmodic coughing of donkey engines, loud resounding of ax blades. Barlow led the way. They traversed a few hundred yards of path through brush, broken far aside, brush piled and burned. A breastwork from which to fight advancing fire, it ran away into the heart of a smoky forest. Here and there blackened fire scorched patches abutted upon its northern flank, stumps of great trees smoldering, crackling yet. At the first such place half a dozen men were busy with shovels blotting out streaks of fire that crept along the

dry leaf mold. No, they had not seen Effe. But they had been blamed busy. He might be up above.

Half a mile beyond that, beside the first donkey shuddering on its anchored skids as it tore an eighteen inch cedar out by the roots, they came on Lefty Howe. He shook his head when Stella asked for Effe.

"He took twenty men around to the main camp day before yesterday," said Lefty. "There was a piece of timber beyond that he thought he could save. I—well, I took a shoot around there yesterday after your brother got hurt. Jack wasn't there. Most of the boys was at camp loadin' gear on the scows. They said Jack's gone around to Tumblin' creek with one man. He wasn't back this mornin', so I thought maybe he'd gone to the Springs. I dunno, there's any occasion to worry. He might 'a' gone to the head up the lake with the constables that went up last night. How's Charlie Benton?"

She told him briefly.

"That's good," said Lefty. "Now, I'd go around to Cougar bay if I was you, Mrs. Jack. He's liable to come in there anytime. You could stay at the house to-night. Everything around there, shacks and all, was burned days ago, so the fire can't touch the house. The crew there has grub and a cook. I kinda expect Jack'll be there unless he fell in with them constables."

She trudged silently back to the Waterbug. Barlow started the engine, and the boat took up her slow way. As they skirted the shore Stella began to see her and there the fierce havoc of the fire. Black trunks of fir reared nakedly to the smoky sky, lay crisscross on bank

and beach. Nowhere was there a green blade, a living bush—nothing but charred black, a melancholy waste of smoking litter, with here and there a pitch soaked stub still waving its banner of flame or glowing redly. Back of those seared skeletons a shifting cloud of smoke obscured everything.

Presently they drew in to Cougar bay. Men moved about on the beach; two bulky scows stood nose-to-the shore. Upon them rested half a dozen donkey engines, thick belted, upright machines, blown dead on their skids. About these in great coils lay piled the gear of logging, miles of steel cable, blocks, the varied tools of the logger's trade. The Panther lay between the scows, with lines from each passed over her towing bits.

Stella could see the outline of the white bungalow on its grassy knoll. They had read only that, of all the camp, by a light that sent three men to the hospital on a day when the wind shifted into the northwest and the varied tools of the logger's trade, the Panther lay between the scows, with lines from each passed over her towing bits.

Barlow swung the Waterbug about, cleared the point and stood up along the shore. Stella sat on a cushioned seat at the back of the pilothouse, hard eye, struggling against that dead weight that seemed to grow and grow in her breast. That elemental fury raging in the woods made her shrink. Her own hand had helped to loose it, but her hands were powerless to stay it; she could only sit and watch and wait, eaten up with misery of her own making. She was horribly afraid, with a fear she would not name to herself.

Behind the density of atmosphere the sun had gone to rest. The first shadows of dusk were closing in, betokened by a thickening of the smoke fog into which the Waterbug slowly plowed. To port a dimming shore line; to starboard, aft and dead ahead, water and air merged in two boat lengths. Barlow leaned through the pilothouse window, one hand on the wheel, straining his eyes on their course. Suddenly he threw out the clutch, shut down his throttle control with one hand and snatched with the other at the cord which loosed the Waterbug's shrill whistle.

Dead ahead, almost upon them, came an answering toot.

"I thought I heard a gas boat," Barlow exclaimed. "Sufferin' Jerusalem! Hi, there!"

He threw his weight on the wheel, sending it hard over. The momentum of her ten ton weight scarcely had slackened, and she answered the helm. Out of the deceptive thickening loomed the sharp, flaring bow of another forty footer, sheering quickly as her pilot sighted them. She was upon them and abreast and gone, with a watery purr of her bow wave, a subdued miter of exhaust, passing so near that an active man could have leaped the space between.

### Daily Dot Puzzle

(To be Continued)

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### Life's Problems Are Discussed

By MRS. WILSON WOODROW.

The cry everywhere to-day is for efficiency. System is a god and the card-index is its prophet.

Even the taking on and discharge of employees is now regulated in many large establishments by a scientific method and according to a set of psychological tests. Promotions and demotions come automatically as the chart on individual performance kept by a force of experts shows a rise above or a fall below a fixed standard of accomplishment.

Yet so long as the functions of "hiring and firing" lie within human hands and until some machine is invented to govern the processes of advancement and retrogression, there is bound to be in such matters a strong element of prejudice, favoritism, "pull" and pure whim.

Smithers was a clerk in a large bank. I call him Smithers because that is not his real name and this is a true story. I doubt very much if any bank clerk was ever called Smithers outside of fiction, and they are all of the Smithers family.

At any rate, this particular Smithers one day fell under the observation of the president of the bank. There was nothing done on Smithers' part to produce this result. It was a pure case of destiny.

Every afternoon in passing out of his office the eye of the president swept over that roomful of industrious young men and took no more note of them individually than if they were a flock of sheep. He didn't even know their names; they were merely a set of cogs in the machine he was operating.

But on this especial occasion, through some fell circumstance, his glance lingered on Smithers and the image of that unfortunate youth lodged in some niche in his memory. The president himself was scarcely conscious of it at the moment. His mind was absorbed in far weightier matters—whether to use the machine

of the creak on a certain golf stroke. And Smithers, equally unconscious, toiled away at his ledger until quitting time, then joined the homeward rush for dinner, and that night returning from the movies told his girl that with his Christmas bonus and the five-dollar raise he was sure to get the first of the year he saw no reason why they might not pull off the for-better-for-worse thing the following June.

It is only the young men who see visions. The old ones dream dreams, and that night the president, as the result of a rather diversified after-dinner supper, dreamed a peach. As he dozed and tossed upon his pillow, various of the incidents and people which had fallen within his ken during the past few years trooped from the subconscious and regrouped themselves into a strangely tangled and fantastic but vivid nightmare.

Most unaccountable of all, the visage of Smithers, known to the president only through that cursory glance, persisted in claiming the spotlight and assuming the leading role in a "crook drama" wherein through a novel and brilliantly audacious method of falsifying accounts the bank was robbed of over a million dollars.

The next morning the president was down at the bank before the doors were open and conducting an investigation. To his great relief, he found the books absolutely correct and no shortage of any kind. But the nightmare had been too realistic to dismiss from his mind. So he summoned the head of the department in which Smithers worked.

His chief gave a good report of the young man. "He's steady and reliable as a clock. I'm planning to put him in charge of the out-of-town accounts next year."

The president started as if he had been stung. In his dream it was the out-of-town accounts which Smithers had manipulated to his own profit.

So the guillotine fell. And Smithers' blameless record and three years' devoted service to the bank were sacrificed to the malevolent shades of a deceased lobster.

As another instance, a friend of mine who is a lawyer had a stenographer whom he had exulted as a jewel of her kind. She was rapid, accurate, keen-witted, everything that could be desired. But she managed to grow a habit of scribbling a mole on the tip of her chin, and the lawyer said he simply could not keep his mind off it when she was in his office. It did to his own thoughts and disturbed the flow of his dictation, and finally wore so on his nerves that he was obliged to discharge her.

Unless you stop to consider various causes, few people realize how much personal caprice counts in business. Many a deserving employe has lost out because the boss's liver happened to be out of order, or because he had been bickering with his wife before coming to the office. Many an undeserving one has received preferment on grounds just as illogical.

We are all swayed more or less by our whims and prejudices. We deal at certain shops and avoid others for the most fantastic and unreasonable causes. We refuse to visit a certain restaurant because we have a groundless antipathy for the head waiter. We decline to employ a lawyer or physician because one's voice doesn't suit us and we don't like the way the other brushes his hair.

"I do not like you, Dr. Fell. The reason why, I cannot tell."

And chiefs, foremen, superintendents and employing agents are only human like the rest of us. They have their prejudices and their predilections, their uncertain livers and their vulnerable heels.

And not all the Muensterberg tests

and chart systems can alter the fact. There is this to be said on the other side of the question. The lawyer is more important to the office than the stenographer; the president more important to the bank than a Smithers. It is, of course, unreasonable to discharge a faithful and competent subordinate simply because his face or some peculiarity of dress or mannerism happens to get on somebody's raw nerves. But one is surprised to learn how many dismissals, cloaked under other excuses, are really due to this cause.

"I could not stand that girl's whining voice," one man rather shamefacedly confesses.

"That eternal Mona Lisa smile got my goat," says another.

"He was a good man, but his shoes squeaked," complains a third.

There is no way to cope with this form of injustice. An employe may study an employer's peculiarities and try to conform in every way to his little prejudices, only to find that he has aroused suspicion and distrust by this very compliance.

The answer to the difficulty lies in the fact that no two people have ex-

actly the same prejudices. What one employer would call a whining voice another would term plaintively soothing tones. The smile that got one man's goat would prove a source of inspiration to another.

And the person who honestly, faithfully and conscientiously fulfills his obligations is not going to serve long as a football for fate.

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You should use GOLD MEDAL Haarlem Oil Capsules immediately. The oil soaks gently into the walls and lining of the kidneys, and the lit-

tle poisonous animal germs, which are causing the inflammation, are immediately attacked and chased out of your system without inconvenience or pain.

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### Fashions of To-Day

By May Manton

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