

BEYOND the FRONTIER A STORY OF EARLY DAYS by RANDALL PARRISH

SYNOPSIS

Adela la Chesnayne, a belle of New France, is forced into marriage with Comissaire Cassion, benchman of Governor La Barre...

They rounded the point, the pere talking earnestly, but the canoe so far away I could not overhear his words...

"You are a soldier of France, Monsieur d'Artigny tells me." "Yes, madame, of the Regiment Carignan-Salliers," he answered.

When a woman falls in love with a man, does it mean that she is willing to give herself body and soul to him if he asks the sacrifice?

"What is that yonder—a canoe?" I started, shrinking back, suddenly realizing what I had done...

"I was but a girl when he was killed, and we seldom met, for he was usually on campaign. Yet what do you mean by this surprising surprise at my marriage to Monsieur Cassion?"

In a way I must have known this before, yet not until that moment did the fact dawn upon me in full acknowledgment.

"What were in the canoe?" "Besides the Indians, Cassion, Pere Allouez and the soldier Descaartes. Do you realize, monsieur, why I chose to remain unseen?"

"That I cannot say; yet the bullet entered behind the ear, for I was first to reach him, and he had no other enemy in the Regiment Carignan-Salliers."

The knowledge of my love for D'Artigny brought me more fear than pleasure. I dare not dream, or hope; I must escape his presence while I retained moral strength to resist temptation.

"Your confidence shall not be betrayed, madame," he said gallantly. "I pledge you my discretion whatever circumstances may arise."

"I looked at the soldier, and his eyes were grave and honest." "Yes," I answered, "it can do no harm."

Even as I reached this decision, something arose in my throat and choked me, for my eyes saw just outside the curve of the shore line a canoe emerge from the shadows of the bluff.

"In that we are no longer entirely alone in our wilderness adventure. I have fortunately brought back with me a comrade, whose presence will rob Cassion of some sharpness of tongue."

"There is some low trick here, Barbeau," he began soberly, "but the details are not clear, Madame has trusted me as a friend, and confided all she knows, and I will tell the facts to you as I understand them."

I sank down out of sight, yet my decision was made in an instant. It did not seem to me then as though another course could be taken.

I accepted D'Artigny's outstretched hand, and permitted him to assist me down the bank. The new arrival was just within the edge of the forest.

"I see," commented Barbeau shrewdly. "Such marriage would place the property in their control by law. Had Cassion sought marriage previously?"

The canoe rounded the curve in the shore and headed straight across toward where I rested in concealment. Their course would keep them too far away from the little strip of sand on which we had landed to observe the imprint of our feet or the pile of wood D'Artigny had flung down.

I crept back to the bluff summit and lay down to watch. bending over a freshly kindled fire, barely commencing to blaze, and beside him on the grass lay a wild fowl, already plucked of its feathers.

"I spoke," he said, "of the fact that he was murdered at St. Ignace." "Murdered?" "Ay, struck down from behind with a knife. No one knows who did it, but Cassion has charged the crime against D'Artigny, and circumstances are such he will find it difficult to prove his innocence."

"This is the spot," he exclaimed, pointing. "I saw that headland just before the storm struck. But there is no wreck here, no sign of any landing. What is your judgment, pere?"

"He stood up and made me a salute as though I were an officer, and was a looking little man as ever I had seen, with a small, peaked face, a mop of black hair, and a pair of shrewd, humorous eyes."

"The soldier stood silent, evidently reviewing in his mind all that had been told him, his eyes narrowed into slits as he gazed thoughtfully at us both."

been told him, his eyes narrowed into slits as he gazed thoughtfully at us both. "Bah!" he exclaimed at last, "the riddle is not so hard to read, although, no doubt, the trick has been well played."

"I glanced at D'Artigny, and his eyes gave me courage. "Monsieur, you are a French soldier," I answered, "an educated man, also, and my father's friend. I will listen gladly."

"Then my plan is this—leave Monsieur Cassion to go his way, and let me be your guide southward. I know the trails, and the journey is not difficult. M. de la Durantaye is camped at the portage of the Des Plaines, having but a handful of men, to be sure, yet he is a gallant officer, and no enemy to La Salle, although he serves the governor. He will see justice done, and give you both safe conveyance to Fort St. Louis, where D'Artigny knows how to protect his officers."

"I spoke quickly, and before D'Artigny could voice decision. "We will accept your guidance, monsieur. It is the best choice, and now the only one, for the time is past when we can expect the return of the canoes. Can we not at once begin the journey?"

"It was an hour later, after we had eaten, that we left the bluff, and turned westward into the great woods. Barbeau led the way, moving along the bank of a small stream, and I followed, with D'Artigny close behind. As we had nothing to carry, except the soldier's rifle and blanket, we made rapid progress, and in less than half an hour we came to the Indian trail, which led southward from Green Bay to the headwaters of the Des Plaines."

"It was late in the afternoon of the second day when we arrived at the forks of the Chicago river. There was a drizzle of rain in the air, and never saw I a more desolate spot; a bare, dreary plain, and away to the eastward a glimpse of the lake."

"If this miserable place had been the headquarters of M. de la Durantaye, evidently it was so no longer. Not a vestige of occupancy remained, save a rotten blanket on the floor, and a broken bench in one corner. Rude benches lined two walls, and a table hewed from a log stood in the center of the dirt floor."

"Perhaps it is as well," commented D'Artigny lightly. "At least as far as my good health goes; but 'tis like to make a hard journey for you, madame."

"A matter of twenty-five leagues; of no moment had we a boat in which to float downstream, but the trail, as I remember, is rough."

Both men believed there was peace in the valley, except for the jealousy between the white factions at Fort St. Louis, and that the various Algonquin tribes were living quietly in their villages under protection of the Rock. D'Artigny described what a wonderful sight it was, looking down the long paddles to the broad meadows below, covered with tepees, and all with peaceful Indians. He named the tribes which had gathered there for protection, trusting in La Salle, and believing De Tonty their friend—Illini, Shawnees, Abenakis, Miami, Mobergans—at one time reaching a total of twenty thousand souls.

Owing to the leaking of our canoe, and many difficulties experienced, we were three days in reaching the spot where the Illinois and the Fox rivers joined their waters, and swept forward in one broad stream. The time of our arrival at this spot was early in the afternoon, and as D'Artigny said Fort St. Louis was situated scarce ten miles below, our long journey seemed nearly ended. We anticipated reaching there before night, and, in spite of my fear of the reception awaiting us, my heart was light with hope and expectation.

"Do you believe that Madame Cassion's new friend will be instrumental in proving her right to her dead father's fortune and in denouncing and silencing forever Cassion and La Barre?"

"He stood up and made me a salute, where the Illinois and the Fox rivers joined their waters, and swept forward in one broad stream. The time of our arrival at this spot was early in the afternoon, and as D'Artigny said Fort St. Louis was situated scarce ten miles below, our long journey seemed nearly ended."

"HESITATION KEEPS ONE BACK Cultivation of Quick Decision Means Much in the Success of Modern Business Man."

"Once decided, you ought not to waste time. If a man decides rightly then he has a running start on rivals who hesitate. If he decides wrongly then he has discovered his blunder backed up, and is ready to start on even terms with the hesitating rival for a man of decision can decide he is right. Also, in a greater number of cases, the man who decides quickly may fall to decide the best way and still carry it through to success, and even convince others he was right all the time. This has happened to me many times in cases where there were a number of ways in which a thing might be done."

"Two Famous Dreamers. In Hebrew literature dreams went for a great deal; men were 'warned of God in a dream'; the crises of men's lives turned often upon dreams; and St. Paul, when relating a piece of spiritual experience, tells his readers he is not sure if the events he is telling actually took place or whether he dreamed them—'whether in the body or out of the body, I cannot tell.'"

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