

# HIGH, WIDE AND HANDSOME

starring **IRENE DUNNE** and **RANDOLPH SCOTT**

NOVELIZED BY **HENRY LACOSSITT**

**SYNOPSIS**

Just before the discovery of oil at Titusville, Pa., Sally Watterson comes to the town with her father's medicine show. She falls in love with and marries Peter Cortlandt, a young farmer, who is drilling for oil on his property. Cortlandt's first well is a gusher. The farmers organize to ship the oil to Eastern refineries. But a group of Eastern capitalists, headed by Walter Brennan, keep on raising the freight rates to obtain control of this new industry. Cortlandt attempts to negotiate with Mr. Brennan, but the latter threatens to run the farmers out of business by raising the rates still higher.

**CHAPTER VI**

Sally had something, at least, to occupy her time, now. She had a job to do. It concerned Molly, the shantyboat girl. Caleb Stark, true to his vow, had led a formidable raid on the shantyboat, burning it, whipping the inmates from it, and Molly, bruised and dangerously hurt, had taken refuge at the Cortlandt house. Sally and Peter, with Grandma, ever willing to fight, had withstood the anger of the fanatical reformers, had driven them from the house and taken the girl in. Now, Sally and Grandma were nursing her back to health. She had been there two weeks and was nearly well enough to leave, but Sally knew Molly could sing, so she had

an idea. She was teaching her to sing brightly, to sing something beside the sad ballads she had used on the shantyboat. If she learned, Sally said, there might be a job for her in Pop Bowers' circus. Pop Bowers, Sally explained, was a friend of her father's. So they rehearsed.

It was a gloomy day. Rain fell dimly. Down the street in Titusville, the farmers met in gloomy session. Peter, on the platform, exhorted them to further effort in the fight with Brennan. But they were doubtful now. Thousands of barrels of oil lay on the railroad sidings; production had shut down.

He looked at them and pitied them. There was grizzled Rafe Moulton, who had put all his savings into his oil; Jim Stackpole, who had done likewise; Doc Lippincott; all the others. They looked at him dumbly, hoping he would say or do something that would work the miracle, bring back their profits. But all he had to offer now was his courage. He had plenty of that, but it wasn't he was afraid, enough. Yet he spoke on. Then he was interrupted by a porter from the hotel.

"Mr. Brennan wants to see you," said the porter.

They were jubilant then. "I got a hunch I'll bring back good news," said Peter as he hurried away. He buttoned his coat against the rain, whistling as he went to the hotel. He found Brennan in the latter's suite.

"Listen, Mr. Cortlandt," said the rail-

road man, smiling. "This is between you and me, nobody else. Why don't you give your business to Central Refineries in Pittsburgh?"

"Your railroad owns that, doesn't it?" asked Peter.

"Yes—" Brennan chuckled—"so if you deal with our refinery you get certain favors, to make up for the high freight rates. Understand?"

"Yes," said Peter. "That takes care of me. You just freeze out the others, is that it?"

"You catch on quickly, Mr. Cortlandt." Peter had been calm. Now his calm broke. "That's stealin'!" he shouted. "You can't tie up this oil and make it at any price you like! Damn you, you can't!"

Brennan only chuckled. "Oh, yes, I can, Mr. Cortlandt. And I will."

"Not," said Peter Cortlandt, "while I got any breath left in my body to fight you!"

"Fight me?" Beneath the smiling mask, the ruthlessness of the man showed for a moment. "You fool! What can you do without the railroads? Are you going to carry the oil in your hat to the refineries? Go ahead and fight! I'll smash you!"

Peter flung from the room. Outside he stood by the building in the pounding rain, a picture of dejection. Nearby a rain pipe spouted a flood of water. Some of it splashed him and he looked up, and started to move away; then something

gave him pause. His eyes widened unnaturally as he looked at the pipe. The pipe conveyed water.

Why could it not convey oil?

With a whoop, Peter raced across the street to the office of his friend, John Thompson, the engineer and builder.

"John!" he shouted. "John! I got it! Look at that pipe!"

John looked. He looked at Peter, too; said he thought Peter was drunk, but Peter explained. Slowly, excitement came into the engineer's expression.

"By God, Peter!" he exclaimed. "You got something!" He paused. "But what about money, costs for labor, for pipe, for rights of way?"

"We'll do it somehow, John. We'll lay pipe clear across the state o' Pennsylvania to the refineries and pipe our oil to 'em. And we'll tell Walter Brennan to go to hell!"

"Let's get to work."

He hurried out. It was night, now. He hurried home. He had to share this with Sally. On the way he broke off a cluster of dripping apple blossoms and took them along.

She was asleep when he got home. For a moment he looked at her, his throat filling, then he shook the blossoms over her, sprinkling her with the rain drops and the petals. She awoke, startled, to be pulled violently into his arms. He kissed her again and again.

"Peter!" she exclaimed, laughing. "Honey, you've had good news. Something's come your way. What's happened, Peter—tell me!"

"Hush," he said softly. "Just lie there. Just be quiet. Just stay like this in my arms forever. Like this—with me—close, darlin', close..... forever....."

"Peter," she whispered. "You're back again. You aren't far away like you were."

Her heart sang. It seemed that the dreary months when he had been preoccupied and distant were gone, that she would have him again, the husband and

lover she had married. They lay still, close together, their hearts at peace.

It was broken by a voice calling Peter from the outside.

"John Thompson wants you," called the man. "Says he won't go ahead 'till he sees you. Got to ask you some questions."

"Peter!" said Sally. "You won't go! Not now. Not at this—this time of the night!"

But he was going. His thoughts were far away again. "Can't help it, honey. It's vital to us all. I got to go. A day lost maybe if I don't. Can't afford that..... Goodbye, honey."

He kissed her lightly, was gone.

She lay there among the fallen petals of the apple blossoms and again the desperate loneliness came over her; again the fear of the dangerous forces that moved around her swept her.

She looked down at the spot where his head had lain so close to hers a moment before and wept without restraint.

(To be Continued)

**Lehman Alumni To Have Party**

The Lehman High School Alumni Association will hold its third annual card party and dance at Lehman High School auditorium on Monday night, December 27. Miss Dorothy Major, chairman of the committee, will be assisted by Sheldon Ehret, Katherine Stolarick, Kenneth Hawke and Murial Zimmerman. Dancing will be from 8 to 12.

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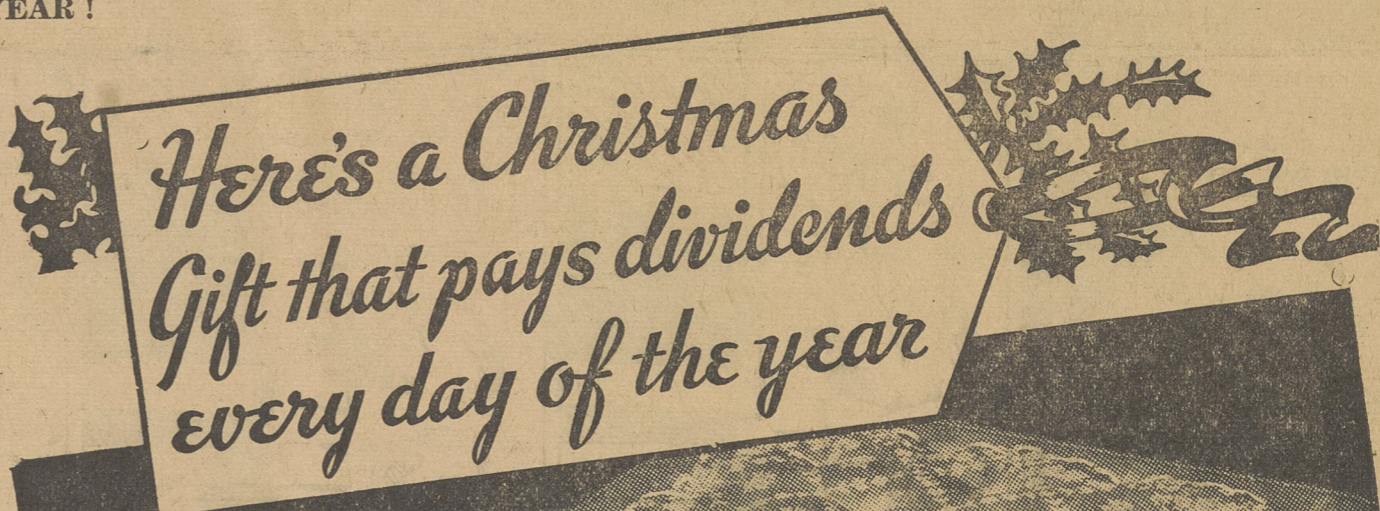
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