

Beyond the Frontier

By RANDALL PARRISH

A Romance of Early Days in the Middle West

CHAPTER XX—Continued.

"Thick as flies out there, monsieur," he answered, "and with a marksman or two among them. Not ten minutes since Bowald got a ball in his head."

"And no orders to clear the devil's seat?"

"No, monsieur—only to watch that they do not form for a rush."

The commandant's office was built against the last stockade—a long but no more pretentious than the others. A sentry stood at each side of the closed door, but De Baugis ignored them and ushered me into the room. It was not large, and was already well filled, a table littered with papers occupying the central space, De Baugis and De la Durantaye seated beside it, while numerous other figures were standing pressed against the walls. I recognized the familiar faces of several of our party, but before I recovered from my first embarrassment De Baugis arose, and with much politeness offered me a chair.

De Tonty remained beside me, his hand resting on my chair back, as he coolly surveyed the scene. Casson pushed past, and occupied a vacant chair, between the other officers, laying his sword on the table. My eyes swept about the circle of faces seeking D'Artigny, but he was not present. But for a slight shuffling of feet, the silence was oppressive. Casson's unpleasant voice broke the stillness.

"M. de Tonty, there is a chair yonder reserved for your use."

"I prefer remaining beside Madame Casson," he answered calmly. "It would seem she has few friends in this company."

"We are all her friends," broke in De Baugis, his face flushing, "but we are here to do justice, and avenge a foul crime. This told us that madame possesses certain knowledge which has not been revealed. Other witnesses have testified, and we would now listen to her word. Sergeant of the guard, bring in the prisoner."

He entered by way of the rear door, manacled, and with an armed soldier on either side. Coats and bareheaded, he stood erect in the place assigned him, and as his eyes swept the faces, his stern look changed to a smile as his glance met mine. My eyes were still upon him, seeking eagerly for some message of guidance, when Casson spoke.

"M. de Baugis will question the witness."

"The court will pardon me," said D'Artigny. "The witness to be heard is madame?"

"Certainly; what means your interruption?"

"To spare the lady unnecessary embarrassment. She is my friend, and, no doubt, may find it difficult to testify against me. I merely venture to ask her to give this court the exact truth."

"Your words are impertinent."

"No, M. de Baugis," I broke in, understanding all that was meant. "Sieur d'Artigny has spoken in kindness, and has my thanks. I am ready now to

"Why did you make no report—was it to shield D'Artigny?"

I hesitated, yet the answer had to be made.

"The Sieur d'Artigny was my friend, monsieur. I did not believe him guilty, yet my evidence would have cast suspicion upon him. I felt it best to remain still and wait."

"You suspected another?"

"Not then, monsieur, but since."

Casson sat silent, not overly pleased with my reply, but De Baugis smiled grimly.

"By my faith," he said, "the tale gathers interest. You have grown to suspect another since, madame—dare you name the man?"

My eyes sought the face of De Tonty, and he nodded gravely.

"It can do no harm, madame," he muttered softly. "Put the paper in De Baugis' hand."

I drew it, crumpled, from out the bosom of my dress, rose to my feet, and held it forth to the captain of dragons. He grasped it wonderingly.

"What is this madame?"

"One page from a letter of instruction. Read it, monsieur; you will recognize the handwriting."

the pledged word of Henri de Tonty. Make passage there! Come, madame. No one stopped us; no voice answered him. Almost before I realized the action, we were outside in the sunlight, and he was smiling into my face, his dark eyes full of cheer.

"It will make them pause and think—what I said," he exclaimed, "yet will not change the result."

"They will convict?"

"Beyond doubt, madame. They are La Barre's men, and hold commission only at his pleasure. With M. de la Durantaye it is different, for he was soldier of Frontenac's, yet I have no hope he will dare stand out against the rest. We must find another way to save the lad, but when I leave you at the door yonder I am out of it."

"You, monsieur! What can I hope to accomplish without your aid?"

"Far more than with it, especially if I furnish a good substitute. I shall be watched now, every step I take. 'Tis like enough De Baugis will send me challenge, though the danger that Casson would do so is slight. It is the latter who will have me watched. No, madame, Boisrondet is the lad who must find a way out for the prisoner; they will never suspect him, and the boy will enjoy the trick. Tonight, when the fort becomes quiet, he will find way to explore his plans. Have your room dark, and the window open."

"There is but one, monsieur, outward, above the precipice."

"That will be his choice; he can reach you thus unseen. 'Tis quite possible a guard may be placed at your door."

He left me, and walked straight across the parade to his own quarters, an erect, manly figure in the sun, his long black hair falling to his shoulders. I drew a chair beside the door, which I left partially open, so that I might view the scene without. I could see the door of the guardhouse, and, at last, those in attendance at the trial emerged, talking gravely, as they scattered in various directions. The three officers came forth together, proceeding directly across toward De Tonty's office, evidently with some purpose in view. No doubt, angered at his words, they sought satisfaction. I watched until they disappeared within the distant doorway. De Baugis the first to enter. A moment later one of the soldiers who had accompanied us from Quebec, a rather pleasant-faced lad, whose injured hand I had dressed at St. Ignace, approached where I sat, and lifted his hand in salute.

"A moment, Jules," I said swiftly. "You were at the trial?"

"Yes, madame."

"And the result?"

"The Sieur d'Artigny was held guilty, madame," he said regretfully, glancing about as though to assure himself alone. "The three officers agreed on the verdict, although I know some of the witnesses lied."

"My own mate, for one—George Desartres; he swore to seeing D'Artigny follow Chevet from the boats, and that was not true, for we were together all that day. I would have said so, but the court bade me be still."

"Ay, they were not seeking such testimony. No matter what you said, Jules, D'Artigny would have been condemned—it was La Barre's orders."

"Yes, madame, so I thought."

"Did the Sieur d'Artigny speak?"

"A few words, madame, until M. Casson ordered him to remain still. Then M. de Baugis pronounced sentence—it was that he be shot tomorrow."

"The hour?"

"I heard none mentioned, madame."

"And a purpose in that also to my mind. This gives them twenty-four hours in which to consummate murder. They fear De Tonty and his men may attempt rescue; 'tis to find out the three have gone now to his quarters. That is all, Jules; you had best not be seen talking here with me."

I closed the door, and dropped the bar securely into place. I knew the worst now, and felt sick and faint. Tears would not come to relieve, yet it seemed as though my brain ceased working, as if I had lost all physical and mental power. I know not how long I sat there, dazed, incompetent to even express the vague thoughts which flashed through my brain. A rapping on the door aroused me as from sleep.

"Who wishes entrance?"

"I—Casson; I demand speech with you."

"For what purpose, monsieur?"

"Mon Dieu! Does a man have to give excuse for desiring to speak with his own wife? Open the door, or I'll have it broken in. Have you not yet learned I am master here?"

I drew the bar, no longer with any sense of fear, but impelled by a desire to hear the man's message. I stepped

back, taking refuge behind the table, or wrong, whatever the church might do, or the world might say, I had come to the parting of the ways; here and now I must choose my own life, obey the dictates of my own conscience. I had been wedded by fraud to a man I despised; my hatred had grown until now I knew that I would rather be dead than live in his presence.

If this state of mind was sin, it was beyond my power to rid myself of the curse; if I was already condemned of holy church because of failure to abide by her decree, then there was naught left but for me to seek my own happiness, and the happiness of the man I loved.

I lifted my head, strengthened by the very thought, the red blood tingling again through my veins. The truth was mine; I felt no inclination to obstruct it. The time had come for rejoicing, and action. I loved Rene d'Artigny, and, although he had never spoken the word, I knew he loved me. Tomorrow he would be in exile, a wanderer of the woods, an escaped prisoner, under condemnation of death, never again safe within reach of French authority. Ay, but he should not go alone; in the depths of those forests, beyond the arm of the law, beyond even the grasp of the church, we should go together. In our own hearts love would justify. Without a qualm of conscience, without even a lingering doubt, I made the choice, the final decision.

I know not how long it took me to think this all out, until I had accepted fate; but I do know the decision brought happiness and courage. Food was brought me by a strange Indian, apparently unable to speak French; nor would he ever enter the room, silently handing me the platter through the open door. Two sentries stood just without—soldiers of De Baugis, I guessed, as their features were unfamiliar. They gazed at me curiously, as I stood in the doorway, but without changing their attitudes. Plainly I was held prisoner also; M. Casson's threat was being put into execution. This knowledge merely served to strengthen my decision, and I closed and barred the door again, smiling as I did so.

It grew dusk while I made almost vain effort to eat, and, at last, pushing the pewter plate away, I crossed over, and cautiously opened the wooden shutter of the window. The red light of the sunset still illumined the western sky, and found glorious reflection along the surface of the river. It was a dizzy drop to the bed of the stream below, but Indians were on the opposite bank, beyond rifle shot, in considerable force, a half-dozen canoes drawn up on the sandy shore, and several fires burning. They were too far away for me to judge their tribe, yet a number among them sported war bonnets, and I had no doubt they were Iroquois.

So far as I could perceive elsewhere, there was no movement, as my eyes traveled the half-circle, over a wide vista of hill and dale, green valley and dark woods, although to the left I could occasionally hear the sharp report of a rifle, in evidence that besieging savages were still watchful of the fort entrance. I could not lean far enough to see in that direction, yet as the night grew darker the vicious spits of fire became visible. Above me the solid log walls arose but a few feet—a tall man might stand upon the window ledge, and find grip of the roof; but below, save the sheer drop to the river—perchance two hundred feet beaver—already darkness shrouded the water, as the broad valley faded into the gloom of the night.

There was naught for me to do but sit and wait. The guard which M. Casson had stationed at the door prevented my leaving the room, but its more probable purpose was to keep others from communicating with me. De Tonty had evidently resorted to diplomacy, and instead of quarrelling with the three officers when they approached him, had greeted them all so graciously as to leave the impression that he was disposed to permit matters to take their natural course. He might be watched of course, yet was no longer suspected as likely to help rescue the prisoner. All their fear now was centered upon me, and my possible influence.

If I could be kept from any further communication with either D'Artigny or De Tonty, it was scarcely probable that any of the garrison would make serious effort to interfere with their plans. De Tonty's apparent indifference, and his sudden friendliness with De Baugis and Casson, did not worry me greatly. I realized his purpose in thus diverting suspicion. His pledge of assistance had been given me, and he was the word of a soldier and gentleman. In some manner, and soon—before midnight certainly—I would receive message from Boisrondet.

Yet my heart failed me more than once as I waited. How long the time seemed, and how dead silent was the night. Crouched close beside the door, I could barely hear the muttered conversation of the soldiers on guard; and when I crossed to the open window I looked out upon a black void, utterly soundless.

Not even the distant crack of a rifle now broke the solemn stillness, and the only spot of color visible was the dull red glow of a campfire on the opposite bank of the river. I had no way of computing time, and the lagging hours seemed centuries long, as terrifying doubts assailed me.

Every now and then became an agony of suspense. Had the plans failed? Had Boisrondet discovered the prisoner so closely guarded as to make rescue impossible? Had his nerve, his daring, vanished before the real danger of the venture? Had D'Artigny refused to accept the chance? What had happened; what was happening out there in the mystery?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

I acknowledge him as husband. Right or wrong, whatever the church might do, or the world might say, I had come to the parting of the ways; here and now I must choose my own life, obey the dictates of my own conscience. I had been wedded by fraud to a man I despised; my hatred had grown until now I knew that I would rather be dead than live in his presence.

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"—Casson, I Demand Speech With You."

CHAPTER XXI.

Condemned.

He opened the paper gravely, shading the page with one hand so that Casson was prevented from seeing the words. He read slowly, a frown on his face.

"'Tis the writing of Governor La Barre, although unsigned," he said at last.

"Yes, monsieur."

"How came the page in your possession?"

"I removed it last night from a leather bag found beneath the sleeping bunk in the quarters assigned me."

"Do you know whose bag it was?"

"Certainly; it was in the canoe with me all the way from Quebec—M. Casson's."

"Your husband?"

"Yes, monsieur."

De Baugis' eyes seemed to darken as he gazed at me; then his glance fell upon Casson, who was leaning forward, his mouth open, his face ashen gray. He straightened up as he met De Baugis' eyes, and gave vent to an irritating laugh.

"Sacre, 'tis quite melodramatic," he exclaimed harshly. "But of little value else. I acknowledge the letter, M. de Baugis, but it bears no relation to this affair. Perchance it was unhappily worded, so that this woman, eager to save her lover from punishment—"

De Tonty was on his feet, his sword half drawn.

"'Tis a foul lie," he thundered hotly. "I will not stand silent before such words."

"Messieurs," and De Baugis struck the table. "This is a court, not a messroom. Be seated, M. de Tonty; no one in my presence will be permitted to besmirch the honor of Captain de la Chesnyne's daughter. Yet I must agree with Major Casson that this letter in no way proves that he resorted to violence, or was even urged to do so. The governor in all probability suggested other means. I could not be led to believe he countenanced the commission of crime, and shall ask to read the remainder of his letter before rendering decision. You found no other documents, madame?"

"None bearing on this case."

"The papers supposed to be taken from the dead body of Chevet?"

"No, monsieur."

"Then I cannot see that the status of the prisoner is changed, or that we have any reason to charge the crime to another. You are excused, madame, while we listen to such other witnesses as may be called."

Tears misted my eyes, so the faces about me were blurred, but, before I could find words in which to voice my indignation, De Tonty stood beside me, and grasped my arm.

"There is no use, madame," he said coldly enough, although his voice shook. "You only invite insult when you deal with such curs. They represent their master, and have made verdict already—let us go."

De Baugis, Casson, De la Durantaye were upon their feet, but the dragon first found voice.

"Were those words addressed to me, M. de Tonty?"

"Ay, and why not! You are no more than La Barre's dog. Listen to me, all three of you. 'Twas Sieur de la Salle's orders that I open the gates of this fort to your entrance, and that I treat you courteously. I have done so, although you took my kindness to be sign of weakness, and have larded it mightily since you came. But this is the end; from now it is war between us, messieurs, and we will fight in the open. Convict Rene d'Artigny from the lies of these hirelings, and you pay the reckoning at the point of my sword. I make no threat, but this is

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Finding Fault.

"The prisoners here seem to be a contented lot."

"Yes, they have little to complain of. However, I have discovered one inmate who is discontented."

"What is it about?"

"He says the intramural literary clubs don't devote as much attention as they ought to the study of Brown-

Casson Stared at Me Across the Table, His Face Dark With Passion.

Dear witness frankly. What is it you desire me to tell, monsieur?"

"The story of your midnight visit to the Mission garden at St. Ignace, the night Hugo Chevet was killed. Tell it in your own words, madame."

As I began my story trembled, and I was obliged to grip the arms of the chair to keep myself firm. I read sympathy in De Baugis' eyes, and addressed him alone. Twice he asked me questions, in so kindly a manner as to win instant reply, and once he checked Casson when he attempted to interrupt, his voice stern with authority. I told the story simply, plainly, with no attempt at equivocation, and when I ceased speaking the room was as silent as a tomb. De Baugis sat motionless, but Casson stared at me across the table, his face dark with passion.

"Wait," he cried as though thinking one about to rise. "There are questions yet."

"Monsieur," said De Baugis coldly. "If there are questions it is my place to ask them."

"Ay," angrily beating his hand on the board, "but it is plain to be seen the woman has bewitched you. No, I will not be denied; I am a commandant here, and with force enough behind me to make my will law. Seem if you will, but here is La Barre's commission, and I dare you ignore it. So answer me, madame—you saw D'Artigny bend over the body of Chevet—was your uncle then dead?"

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"Yes, they have little to complain of. However, I have discovered one inmate who is discontented."

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Naturally Surprised.

An old German furniture dealer had a woman customer who was a great talker. Nobody could get away from her when she started in. One day he sent a clerk to the lady's house to try to collect a bill. When the clerk returned empty handed, the old German said:

"Vat! Vat did de lady say?"

"She did not say anything, sir. She was mute," replied the clerk.

"Vat!" exclaimed the surprised German; "vas she dead?"

Saving Money.

"A dollar box of candy for me, hubby? Really, I must curb such extravagance."

"I bought you one frequently before we were married."

"But things are different now. Instead of a dollar box of candy it would have been better to have gotten me a ten-cent box, and a sports coat, and that parasol I want so much,



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"As a result these girls know their vocabularies. The trouble with the average person is that they cannot collect together what they already know. Every subject studied should be made to co-ordinate with what one is studying in other lines."

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W. L. DOUGLAS
"THE SHOE THAT HOLDS ITS SHAPE"
\$3.00 \$3.50 \$4.00 \$4.50 & \$5.00 FOR MEN AND WOMEN
Save Money by Wearing W. L. Douglas shoes. For sale by over 9000 shoe dealers. The Best Known Shoes in the World.
W. L. Douglas name and the retail price is stamped on the bottom of all shoes at the factory. The value is guaranteed and the wearers protected against high prices for inferior shoes. The retail prices are the same everywhere. They cost no more in San Francisco than they do in New York. They are always worth the price paid for them.
The quality of W. L. Douglas product is guaranteed by more than 40 years experience in making fine shoes. The smart styles are the leaders in the Fashion Centres of America. They are made in a well-equipped factory at Brockton, Mass., by the highest paid, skilled shoemakers, under the direction and supervision of experienced men, all working with an honest determination to make the best shoes for the price that money can buy.
Ask your shoe dealer for W. L. Douglas shoes. If he cannot supply you with the kind you want, take no other make. Write for interesting booklet explaining how to get shoes of the highest standard of quality for the price, by return mail, postage free.
LOOK FOR W. L. Douglas name and the retail price stamped on the bottom.
W. L. Douglas Shoe Co., Brockton, Mass.

Getting Over Obstructions.
Bill—They say he's great in a burlesque race.
Jill—That's right; he is.
"Where did he learn?"
"Why, his people used to do household stunts four times a year."

THIS IS THE AGE OF YOUTH.
You will look ten years younger if you darken your ugly, grizzly hair by using La Creole Hair Dressing—Adv.

WHEN FOES MEET IN AIR
German Lieutenant Tells of Engagement in Which French Aviators Lost Their Lives.
"One afternoon a French flyer appeared," says a German lieutenant. "It circled over Douaumont and then rose high above the clouds. For a long time it seemed to be just hanging in the air. And then—from our side there arose a buzzing, a fierce, sharp buzzing, and it made straight like a bee line for the little French flyer. It went through the clouds and disappeared. Nothing could be seen. The clouds covered all. Five minutes of suspense passed, and then a shot, and after that a roaring. We waited breathlessly, and then two little black spots were seen breaking through the clouds. Tiny little spots, and these spots were the two French aviators. They grew bigger as they fell. A moment after the men came the flaming machine. It came down roaring and crashing. Its wings were yet on fire, and the red, white and blue of the tricolors looked like a revolting American barber pole. Everything crushed to the earth, a hopeless, mangled mass. Again a spot broke through the clouds. It came swift and straight, without any spectacular showing. It was Boelke returning home."

Respite.
"Poor Mr. Grimes next door is laid up with rheumatism."
"That so? I thought it was funny I hadn't heard that darned old player piano of his for the last three or four days."

Butter and cowardly soldiers develop like reactions if exposed to fire.

Important to Mothers
Examine carefully every bottle of CASTORIA, a safe and sure remedy for infants and children, and see that it bears the Signature of *Dr. J. C. Fletcher* In Use for Over 30 Years. Children Cry for Fletcher's Castoria.
"I say," the visitor told the police sergeant, "my neighbor had all his chickens stolen last night."
"How many?"
"Oh, I don't know!"
"You want to make a report of these chickens being stolen?"
"No; I'll let him do that."
"Well! (Impatiently) 'what do you want?'"
"Why, I just wanted to ask you, if the police catch that chicken-thief, to give him my thanks!"

COVETED BY ALL
but possessed by few—a beautiful head of hair. If yours is streaked with gray, or is harsh and stiff, you can restore it to its former beauty and luster by using "La Creole" Hair Dressing. Price \$1.00—Adv.

Promoters of Vigilance.
"Aren't you afraid your course will make you some enemies?"
"I'll have to take a chance," replied Senator Sorghum. "Sometimes it's better to have a few enemies so as to keep you from getting too good-natured and careless."

Mixing Comparisons.
"Don't you think that Jones would be a good one for our best man?"
"Oh, I know a better."

More than 30,000 government civil employees are paid less than \$820 a year.

ITS PLACE IN THE SUN
To hold "its place in the sun," is the avowed purpose of a great nation's conflict. To hold "its place in the sun," is the object of every business in the great fight for industrial and commercial supremacy.
To be able to hold "its place in the sun," is the supreme test of an asphalt roof. It is the sun, not rain or snow, that plays havoc with a roof. If it can resist the drying out process of the sun beating down upon it, day after day, the rain or snow will not affect it except to wash it clean and keep it sanitary.

Certain-teed Roofing
takes "its place in the sun" and holds it longer than other similar roofing, because it is made of the very best quality roofing felt, thoroughly saturated with the correct blend of soft asphalt, and coated with a blend of harder asphalt. This outer coating keeps the inner saturation soft, and prevents the drying out process so destructive to the ordinary roof.
The blend of asphalt used by "The General" is the result of long experience. It produces a roofing more pliable than those which have less saturation, and which are, therefore, harder and drier.
At each of the General's big mills, expert chemists are constantly employed to refine, test and blend the asphalt used; also to experiment for possible improvements. Their constant endeavor is to make the best roofing still better.
The quality of CERTAIN-TEED is such that it is guaranteed for 5, 10