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## The Riverman

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By  
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### Chapter 7

ABOUT a dozen of the crew appeared in the evening to go with Orde. They set out up the long reach of Water street, their steel calks biting deep into the pitted board walks.

For nearly a mile the street was flanked solely by lumber yards, small mills and factories. Then came a strip of unimproved land, followed immediately by the wooden, ramshackle structures of Hell's Half Mile.

As yet the season was too early for much joy along Hell's Half Mile. Orde's little crew and the forty or fifty men of the drive that had preceded him constituted the rank and file at that moment in town. A little later, when all the drives on the river should be in and those of its tributaries and the men still lingering at the woods camps, at least 500 woods weary men would be turned loose. Then Hell's Half Mile would awaken in earnest from its hibernation. The lights would blaze from day to day. From its open windows would blare the music, the cries of men and women, the shuffle of feet, the noise of fighting, the shrieks of wild laughter, curses deep and frank and unashamed, songs broken and interrupted. Crews of men, arms locked, would surge up and down the narrow sidewalks, their little felt hats cocked one side, their heads back, their fearless eyes challenging the devil and all his works—and getting the challenge accepted. Girls would flit across the lit windows like shadows before flames or stand in the doorways hailing the men jovially by name.

Tonight, however, the street was comparatively quiet. The saloons were of modified illumination. The barkeepers were listlessly wiping the bars. The "pretty walter girls" gossiped

the jack when I throw these out like this?" asked the dealer.

"Sure! She's that one."

"Well," exclaimed the gambler, "danged if you didn't! I bet you \$5 you can't do it again."

Again Orde was permitted to pick up the jack.

"You've got the best eye that's been in this place since I got here," exclaimed the dealer. "Here, Dennis," said he to his partner. "You try him."

Dennis obligingly took the cards and lost. By this time the men, augmented by the idlers, had drawn close.

Whether it was that the gamblers sensed the fact that Orde might be led to plunge or whether they were using



with each other and yawned behind their hands.

In the middle of the third block Orde wheeled sharp to the left down a dark and dangerous looking alley. Another turn to the right brought him into a very narrow street where stood a three story wooden structure into which led a high arched entrance. This was McNeill's.

A figure detached itself from the shadow. Orde uttered an exclamation.

"You here, Newmark?" he cried.

"Yes," replied that young man. "I want to see this through."

"With those clothes?" marveled Orde. "It's a wonder some of these thugs haven't held you up long ago. It's dangerous. You're likely to get stugged."

"I can stand it if you can," returned Newmark.

McNeill's lower story was given over entirely to drinking. The second floor was a theater and the third a dance hall. Beneath the building were still viler depths. From this basest of the riverman and the shanty boy generally graduated penniless and perhaps unconscious to the street. Now, your lumberjack did not customarily arrive at this stage without lively doings en route; therefore McNeill's maintained a force of fighters. They were burly, sodden men, but strong in their experience and their discipline. To be sure, they might not last quite as long as their antagonists could, but they always lasted plenty long enough. Sand bags and brass knuckles helped some and team work finished the job.

Orde and his men entered the lower hall as though sauntering in without definite aim. The river boss wandered about with the rest, a wide, good natured smile on his face.

Presently he found himself at the table of the three card monte men. The rest of his party gravitated in his direction.

"Do you think you could pick out

as many rivermen, eight hangers-on of the joint, probably fighters and "bouncers;" half a dozen professional gamblers and several waitresses. The four barkeepers still held their positions. The rivermen were scattered back of Orde, although Orde's own friends had gathered at his shoulder. The mercenaries and gamblers had divided and flanked the table at either side. Newmark, a growing wonder and disgust creeping into his usually unexpressive face, recognized the strategic advantage of this arrangement. A determined push would separate the rivermen from the gamblers long enough for the latter to disappear through the small door at the back.

A gasp of anticipation went up as coolly the gambler made his passes. Orde planted his great red fist on one of the cards.

"That is the jack!" he cried.

"Oh, is it?" sneered the dealer.

"Well, turn it over and let's see."

"No!" roared Orde. "You turn over the other two!"

A low oath broke from the gambler, and his face contorted in a spasm. For a moment the situation was tense and threatening. The dealer, with a sweeping glance, again searched the faces of those before him. In that moment probably he made up his mind that an open scandal must be avoided. Force and broken bones, even murder, might be all right enough under color of right. If Orde had turned up for a jack the card on which he now held his fist and then had attempted to prove cheating a cry of robbery and a lively fight would have given opportunity for making way with the stakes. But McNeill's could not afford to be shown up before thirty interested rivermen as running an open and shut brace game.

"That isn't the way this game is played," said the gambler. "Show up your jack."

"It's the way I play it," replied Orde sternly. "These gentlemen heard the bet." He reached over and dexterously flipped over the other two cards. "You see, neither of these is the jack. This must be."

"You win," assented the gambler after a pause.

Orde, his fist still on the third card, began pocketing the stakes with the other hand. The gambler reached across the table.

"Give me the other card," said he.

Orde picked it up, laughing. For a moment he seemed to hesitate, holding the bit of pasteboard tantalizingly unwatched, as though he was going to turn also this one face up. Then quite deliberately he handed the card to the gambler.

"All to the bar!" yelled Orde.

Orde poured his drink on the floor

and took the glass belonging to the man next him.

"Get them to give you another, Tim," said he. "No knockout drops if I can help it."

"Tim," said Orde, low voiced, "get the crowd together and we'll pull out. I've a thousand dollars on me, and they'll sandbag me sure if I go alone. And let's get out right off."



### Chapter 8

JACK ORDE was the youngest and most energetic of a large family that had long since scattered to diverse cities and industries. He and Grandpa and Grandma Orde dwelt now in the big, echoing, old fashioned house alone save for one maid. Grandpa Orde, now above sixty, was tall, straight, slender. His hair was quite white and worn a little long. His features were finely chiseled. Grandma Orde had been a mighty breaker of the wilderness, but his time had passed, and he had fallen upon somewhat straitened ways. Grandma Orde, on the other hand, was a very small, spry old lady, with a small face, a small figure, small hands and feet. She dressed in the then usual cap and black silk of old ladies. Half her time she spent at her housekeeping, which she loved, flitting about from cellar to attic storeroom, seeing that Amanda, the maid, had everything in order.

To these people Orde came direct from the greatness of the wilderness and the ferocity of Hell's Half Mile. Such contrasts were possible even ten or fifteen years ago. The untamed country lay at the doors of the most modern civilization.

Newmark, reappearing one Sunday afternoon at the end of the two weeks, was apparently bothered. He examined the Orde place for some moments, walked on beyond it. Finding nothing there, he returned and after some hesitation turned in up the far sidewalk and pulled at the old fashioned wire

(Continued on Page 2)

### BASKET BALL COMES NEXT

After Successful Foot Ball Season High School Boys Ready for Basket Ball

The High School Foot Ball team has now closed the season of 1909, being successful in every way and today the local High School is looked upon in the foot ball field in the state, as a team which are full of fight and are up and a coming when it comes to the foot ball gridiron. The team this year was composed of eleven men who have fought and practiced consistently and through this practice have put the town of Denison on the map in athletics where it was not before. For the first time it should be remembered that Denison High School was in on a bid for the State Championship title, which has been unknown before. Although being defeated in the last game of the season the boys have reason to feel that next year with eight of this year's squad left they should claim the pennant without much trouble. The games this year were heavy and results have been very satisfactory. Below is found the score: Logan 11, Denison 5; Audubon 0, Denison 11; Harlan 0, Denison 2; Audubon 0, Denison 11; Ida Grove 15, Denison 2.

The Council Bluffs game was called off on Thanksgiving thus making a disappointment in every way.

### Basket Ball Next

With a successful Base Ball team and a successful Foot Ball team and the Athletic line booming in every way, why shouldn't we have a basket ball team? We have the material and the school has the support, so the boys have gone to work on basket ball and a winning team is looked for. The team last year was made up of Otto, Vanderwall, Nielsen, Richardson and Dannels, and the same bunch is now in school and with the experience great results are looked for. The games this winter would be played in the Opera House with the best teams in the state such as Fort Dodge, Council Bluffs and Marshalltown so with the support of the town people Denison will be on the map in all lines of athletics.



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