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THE FORESTER'S DAUGHTER

A Romance of the Bear Tooth Range
By HAMLIN GARLAND

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CHAPTER XVII. Deserting the Ranch.

ALL that Wayland said of his family deepened Berrie's dismay. Their interests were so alien to her own.

"I'm afraid to have you go even for a day," she admitted, with simple honesty, which moved him deeply. "I don't know what I should do if you went away. I think of nothing but you now."

Her face was pitiful, and he put his arm about her neck as if she were a child. "You mustn't do that. You must go on with your life just as if I'd never been. Think of your father's job—of the forest and the ranch."

"I can't do it. I've lost interest in the service. I never want to go into the high country again, and I don't want you to go either. It's too savage and cruel."

"That is only a mood," he said confidently. "It is splendid up there. I shall certainly go back some time."

"Of course, we are not rich, but we are not poor, and my mother's family is one of the oldest in Kentucky." She uttered this with a touch of her mother's quiet dignity. "Your father need not despise us."

"So far as my father is concerned, family don't count and neither does money. But he confidently expects me to take up his business in Chicago, and I suppose it is my duty to do so. If he finds me looking fit he may order me into the ranks at once."

"I'll go there. I'll do anything you want me to do," she urged. "You can tell your father that I'll help you in the office. I can learn. I'm ready to use a typewriter—anything."

He was silent in the face of her naive expression of self-sacrificing love, and after a moment she added hesitatingly: "I wish I could meet your father. Perhaps he'd come up here if you asked him to do so."

He seized upon the suggestion. "By George, I believe he would! I don't want to go to town. I just believe I'll wire him that I'm laid up here and can't come."

A knock at the door interrupted Wayland, and Mrs. McFarlane's voice, filled with new excitement, called out, "Berrie, the district office is on the wire!"

Berrie opened the door and confronted her mother, who said, "Mr. Evingham phones that the afternoon papers contain an account of a fight at Alec Belden's men and that the district forester is coming down to investigate it."

"Let him come," answered Berrie defiantly. "He can't do us any harm. What was the row about?"

"I didn't hear much of it. Your father was at the phone."

"What is it all about, father?" asked Berrie.

"Why, it seems that after I left yesterday Settle rode down the valley with Belden's outfit, and they all got to drinking, ending in a row, and Tony beat one of Belden's men almost to death. The sheriff has gone over to get Tony, and the Beldens declare they're going to railroad him. That means we'll all be brought into it. Belden has seized the moment to prefer charges against me for keeping Settle in the service and for putting a nonresident on the roll as guard. The whelp will dig up everything he can to queer me with the office. All that kept him from doing it before was Cliff's interest in you."

"He can't make any of his charges stick," declared Berrie.

"Of course he can't. He knows that. But he can bring us all into court. You and Mr. Norcross will both be called as witnesses, for it seems that Tony was defending your name. The papers call it 'a fight for a girl.' Oh, it's a sweet mess. You and Berrie and Mrs. McFarlane must get out of here before you are subpoenaed."

"And leave you to fight it out alone?" exclaimed his wife. "I shall do nothing of the kind. Berrie and Mr. Norcross can go."

"That won't do," retorted McFarlane quickly. "That won't do at all. You must go with them. I can take care of myself. I will not have you dragged into this muckhole."

Berrie now argued against running away. Her blood was up. She joined her mother. "We won't leave you to inherit all this trouble. Who will look after the ranch? Who will keep house for you?"

McFarlane remained firm. "I'll manage. Don't worry about me. Just get out of reach. The more I consider this thing the more worrisome it gets. Suppose Cliff should come back to testify?"

"He won't. If he does I'll have him arrested for trying to kill Wayland," retorted Berrie.

"And make the whole thing worse! No; you are all going to cross the range. You can start out as if for a little turn round the valley and just naturally keep going. It can't do any harm, and it may save a nasty time in court."

"One would think we were a lot of criminals," remarked Wayland.

"That's the way you'll be treated," retorted McFarlane. "Belden has retained old Whitely, the foulest old brute in the business, and he'll bring you all into it if he can."

"But running away from it will not prevent talk," argued his wife.

"Not entirely, but talk and testimony are two different things. Suppose they call daughter to the stand? Do you want her cross examined as to what basis there was for this gossip? They know something of Cliff's being let out and that will inflame them. He may be at the mill this minute."

"I guess you're right," said Norcross sadly. "Our delightful excursion into the forest has led us into a predicament from which there is only one way of escape, and that is flight."

McFarlane was again called to the telephone. Landon, with characteristic brevity, conveyed to him the fact that Mrs. Belden was at home and busily phoning scandalous stories about the country. "If you don't stop her she's going to poison every ear in the valley," ended the ranger.

"You'd think they'd all know my daughter well enough not to believe anything Mrs. Belden says," responded McFarlane bitterly.

"All the boys are ready to do what Tony did. But nobody can stop this old fool's mouth but you. Cliff has disappeared, and that adds to the excitement."

"Thank the boys for me," said McFarlane, "and tell them not to fight. Tell 'em to keep cool. It will all be cleared up soon."

As McFarlane went out to order the horses hooked up Wayland followed him as far as the bars. "I'm conscience smitten over this thing, supervisor, for I am aware that I am the cause of all your trouble."

"Don't let that worry you," responded the older man. "But he spoke with effort. 'It can't be helped. It was all unavoidable.'"

"The most appalling thing to me is the fact that not even your daughter's popularity can neutralize the gossip of a woman like Mrs. Belden. My being an outsider counts against Berrie, and I'm ready to do anything—anything," he repeated earnestly. "I love your daughter, Mr. McFarlane, and I'm ready to marry her at once if you think best. She's a noble girl, and I cannot bear to be the cause of her calamity."

There was mist in the supervisor's eyes as he turned them on the young man. "I'm right glad to hear you say that, my boy." He reached out his hand, and Wayland took it. "I knew you'd say the word when the time came. I didn't know how strongly she felt toward you till today. I knew she liked you, of course, for she said so, but I didn't know that she had plum set her heart on you. I didn't expect her to marry a city man, but I like you, and—well, she's the doctor. What suits her suits me. Don't you be afraid of her not meeting all com-

ers. He went on after a pause, "She's never seen much of city life, but she'll hold her own anywhere, you can gamble on that."

"She has wonderful adaptability, I know," answered Wayland slowly. "But I don't like to take her away from here—from you."

"If you hadn't come she would have married Cliff, and what kind of a life would she have led with him?" demanded McFarlane. "I knew Cliff was rough, but I couldn't convince her that he was cheap. I live only for her happiness, my boy, and though I know you will take her away from me, I believe you can make her happy, and so I give her over to you. As to time and place, arrange that—with her mother."

He turned and walked away, unable to utter another word.

Wayland's throat was aching also, and he went back into the house with

a sense of responsibility which exalted him into sturdier manhood.

Berrie met him in a pretty gown, a dress he had never seen her wear, and a costume which transformed her into something entirely feminine. She seemed to have put away the self-reliant manner of the trail and in its stead presented the radiant gaze, the tremulous lips of the bride. As he looked at her thus transfixed his heart cast out its hesitancy, and he entered upon his new adventure without further question or regret.

It was 3 o'clock of a fine, clear, golden afternoon as they said goodby to McFarlane and started eastward, as if for a little drive. Berrie held the reins in spite of Wayland's protestations. "These bronchos are only about half-busted," she said. "They need watching. I know them better than you do." Therefore he submitted, well knowing that she was entirely competent and fully informed.

At last the topmost looming crags of the continental divide cut the skyline, and then in the smooth hollow between two rounded grassy summits Berrie halted, and they all silently contemplated the two worlds. To the west and north lay an endless spread of mountains, wave on wave, snow lined, savage, sullen in the dying light, while to the east and southeast the foothills faded into the plain, whose dim cities, insubstantial as flecks in a veil of violet mist, were hardly distinguishable without the aid of glasses.

Berrie turned in her seat and was about to take up the reins when Wayland asserted himself. "Wait a moment. Here's where my dominion begins. Here's where you change seats with me. I am the driver now."

She looked at him with questioning, smiling glance. "Can you drive? It's all the way downhill—and steep."

"If I can't I'll ask your aid. I'm old enough to remember the family carriage. I've even driven a four in hand."

Their descent was rapid, but it was long after dark before they reached "Home," which lay up the valley to the right. It was a poor little degrading mining town set against the hillside, and had but one hotel, a sum warped and sagging pine building just above the station.

"Not much like the Profile house," said Wayland as he drew up to the porch. "But I see no choice."

"There isn't any," Berrie assured him.

CHAPTER XVII. A Matter of Dress.

WELL, now," Wayland went on as they stepped off at the hotel. "I am in command of this expedition. From this on I lead this outfit. When it comes to hotels, railroads and the like of that I'm head ranger."

Mrs. McFarlane, tired, hungry and a little dismayed, accepted his control gladly, but Berrie could not at once slip aside her responsibility. "Tell the hostler—"

"Not a word!" commanded Norcross, and the girl, with a smile, submitted to his guidance, and thereafter his efficiency, his self-possession, his tact delighted her. He persuaded the sullen landlady to get them supper. He secured the best rooms in the house and arranged for the care of the team.

Berrie was correspondingly less masculine. In drawing off her buckskin driving gloves she had put away the cowgirl and was silent, a little sad even in the midst of her enjoyment of his dictatorship. And when he said, "If my father reaches Denver in time I want you to meet him," she looked the dismay she felt.

"I'll do it, but I'm scared of him."

"You needn't be. I'll see him first and draw his fire."

Mrs. McFarlane interposed. "We must do a little shopping first. We can't meet your father as we are."

"Very well. It is arranged. We get in, I find, about noon. We'll go straight to the biggest shop in town. If we work with speed we'll be able to lunch with my father. He'll be at the Palmer House at 1."

Berrie said nothing, either in acceptance or rejection of his plan. Her mind was concerned with new conceptions, new relationships, and when in the hall he took her face between his hands and said, "Cheer up! All is not lost!" she put her arms about his neck and laid her cheek against his breast to hide her tears. "Oh, Wayland, I'm such an idiot in the city. I'm afraid your father will despise me."

She woke to a new life next morning—a life of complacency, of following, of dependence upon the judgment of another. She stood in silence while her lover paid the bills, bought the tickets and telegraphed their coming to his father. She acquiesced when he prevented her mother from telephoning to the ranch. She complied when he countermanded her order to have the team sent back at once. His judgment ruled, and she enjoyed her sudden freedom from responsibility. It was novel, and it was very sweet to think that she was being cared for as she had cared for and shielded him in the world of the trail.

In the railway coach Wayland tactfully withdrew, leaving mother and daughter to discuss clothes undisturbed by his presence.

"We must look our best, honey," said Mrs. McFarlane. "We will go right to Mrs. Crosby at Battle's, and she'll fit us out. I wish we had more time, but we haven't, so we must do the best we can."

"I want Wayland to choose my hat and traveling suit," replied Berrie.

"Of course. But you've got to have a lot of other things besides." And they bent to the joyous work of making out a list of goods to be purchased as soon as they reached Chicago.

Wayland came back with a Denver

paper in his hand and a look of disgust on his face. "It's all in here—at least, the outlines of it."

Berrie took the journal and there read the details of Settle's assault upon the foreman. "The fight arose from a remark concerning the forest supervisor's daughter. Ranger Settle resented the gossip and fell upon the other man, beating him with the butt of his revolver. Friends of the foreman claim that the ranger is a drunk, a bully and should have been discharged long ago. The supervisor for some mysterious reason retains this man, although he is an incompetent. It is also claimed that McFarlane put a man on the roll without examination." The supervisor was the protagonist of the play, which was plainly political. The attack upon him was bitter and unjust, and Mrs. McFarlane again declared her intention of returning to help him in his fight. However, Wayland again proved to her that her presence would only embarrass the supervisor. "You would not aid him in the slightest degree. Nash and Landon are with him and will refute all these charges."

This newspaper story took the light out of their day and the smile from Berrie's lips, and the women entered the city silent and distressed in spite of the efforts of their young guide. The nearer the girl came to the ordeal of facing the elder Norcross the more she feared the outcome, but Wayland kept his air of easy confidence and drove them directly to the shopping center, believing that under the influence of hats and gloves they would regain their customary cheer.

In this he was largely justified. They had a delightful hour trying on millinery and coats and gloves.

Silent, blushing, tumbled by the hands of her decorators, Berrie permitted hats to be perched on her head and jackets buttoned and unbuttoned about her shoulders till she felt like a worn clothes horse. Wayland beamed with delight, but she was far less satisfied than he, and when at last selection was made she still had her doubts, not of the clothes, but of her ability to wear them. They seemed so alien to her, so restrictive and enslaving.

"You're an easy fitter," said the saleswoman. "But—here she lowered her voice—'you use a new corset. This old one is out of date. Nobody is wearing hips now.'"

Thereupon Berrie meekly permitted herself to be led away to a torture room. Wayland waited patiently, and when she reappeared all traces of Bear Tooth forest had vanished. In a neat tailored suit and a very chic hat, with shoes, gloves and stockings to match, she was so transformed, so charmingly girlish in her self-conscious glory, that he was tempted to embrace her in the presence of the saleswoman. But he didn't. He merely said: "I see the governor's finish. Let's go to lunch. You are stunning!"

"I don't know myself," responded Berrie. "The only thing that feels natural is my hand. They clacked me so tight I can't eat a thing, and my shoes hurt." She laughed as she said this, for her use of the vernacular was conscious. "I'm a fraud. Your father will spot my brand first shot. Look at my face—red as a saddle!"

"Don't let that trouble you. This is the time of year when tan is fashionable. Don't you be afraid of the governor. Just smile at him, give him your grip, and he'll melt."

"I'm the one to melt. I'm beginning now."

Notwithstanding his confident advice Wayland led the two silent and inwardly dismayed women into the showy cafe of the hotel with some degree of personal apprehension concerning the approaching interview with his father. Of course he did not permit this to appear in the slightest degree.

It pleased him to observe the admiring glances which were turned upon Berrie, whose hat became her mightily, and, leaning over, he said in a low voice to Mrs. McFarlane: "Who is the lovely young lady opposite? Won't you introduce me?"

"This little play being over, he said, "Now, while our order is coming I'll run out to the desk and see if the governor has come in or not."

Wayland returned with an increase of tension in his face.

"He's here! I've sent word saying 'I am lunching in the cafe with ladies.' I think he'll come round. But don't be afraid of him. He's a good deal rougher on the outside than he is at heart. Of course he's a bluff old business man and not at all pretty, and he'll transfix you with a kind of estimating glare as if you were a tree, but he's actually very easy to manage if you know how to handle him. Now, I'm not going to try to explain everything to him at the beginning. I'm going to introduce him to you in a casual kind of way and give him time to take to you both. He forms his likes and dislikes very quickly."

"What if he doesn't like us?" inquired Berrie, with troubled brow.

"He can't help it." His tone was so positive that her eyes listed with happiness. "But here comes our food. I hope you aren't too nervous to eat. Here is where I shine as provider. This is the kind of camp fare I can recommend."

Berrie's healthy appetite rose above her apprehension, and she ate with the keen enjoyment of a child, and her mother said, "It surely is a treat to get a chance at somebody else's cooking."

"Don't you stander your home fare," warned Wayland. "It's as good as this, only different."

He sat where he could watch the door, and despite his jocular pose his eyes expressed growing impatience and some anxiety. They were all well into their desert before he called out, "Here he is!"

Mrs. McFarlane could not see the

newcomer from where she sat, but Berrie rose in great excitement as a heavy set, full faced man with short, gray mustache and high, smooth brow entered the room. He did not smile as he greeted his son, and his penetrating glance questioned even before he spoke. He seemed to silently ask: "Well, what's all this? How do you happen to be here? Who are these women?"

Wayland said: "Mrs. McFarlane, this is my father. Father, this is Miss Berrie McFarlane of Bear Tooth Springs."

The elder Norcross shook hands with Mrs. McFarlane politely, coldly, but he betrayed surprise as Berrie took his fingers in her grip. At his son's solicitation he accepted a seat opposite Berrie, but refused dessert.

Wayland explained: "Mrs. McFarlane and her daughter quite saved my life over in the valley. Their ranch is the best health resort in Colorado."

"Your complexion indicates that," his father responded dryly. "You look something like a man of your age ought to look. I needn't ask how you are feeling."

"You needn't, but you may. I'm feeling like a new fiddle, barring a bruise at the back of my head, which makes a 'hard hat' a burden. I may as well tell you first off that Mrs. McFarlane is the wife of the forest supervisor at



She Was So Transformed That He Was Tempted to Embrace Her.

Bear Tooth, and Miss Berrie is the able assistant of her father. We are all rank conservationists."

Norcross senior examined Berrie precisely as if his eyes were a couple of X ray tubes, and as she flushed under his slow scrutiny he said, "I was not expecting to find the forest service in such hands."

Wayland laughed. "I hope you didn't mash his fingers, Berrie."

She smiled guiltily. "I'm afraid I did. I hope I didn't hurt you—sometimes I forget."

Norcross senior was waking up. "You have a most extraordinary grip. What did it—plano practice?"

Wayland grinned. "Piano! No—the clinic."

"The what?"

Wayland explained. "Miss McFarlane was brought up on a ranch. She can rope and tie a steer, saddle her own horse, pack an outfit and all the rest of it."

"Oh! Kind of cowgirl, eh?"

Mrs. McFarlane, eager to put Berrie's better part forward, explained: "She's our only child, Mr. Norcross, and as such has been a constant companion to her father. She's not all cowhand. She's been to school, and she can cook and sew as well."

"Mrs. McFarlane comes from an old Kentucky family, father. Her grandfather helped to found a college down there."

Wayland's anxious desire to create a favorable impression of the women did not escape the lumberman, but his face remained quite expressionless as he replied: "If the life of a cowhand would give you the vigor this young lady appears to possess I'm not sure but you'd better stick to it."

Wayland and the two women exchanged glances of relief. "Why not tell him now?" they seemed to ask. But he said: "There's a long story to tell before we decide on my career. Let's finish our lunch. How is mother, and how are the girls?"

Concluded in next week's Banner.

O'Connell's Bull.

O'Connell, the great Irish agitator, being pestered by a stranger for his autograph, returned the following answer:

"Sir—Yours requesting my autograph is received. I have been so bothered with similar importunesses that I'll be blessed if I send it. Your obedient servant DANIEL O'CONNELL.

Economy Tip.

"My tobaccoist tells me that if I will stick my cigars in my vest pocket so that the small end is out instead of the big end I'll lose fewer cigars."

"I've a better plan than that. Stick 'em in your coat pocket so that they don't show at all."—Boston Transcript.

Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none.—Shakespeare.