

Then I'll Come Back to You

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CHAPTER XIII. A Girl Like Her.

It was dark, the night of that second day, when Stephen O'Mara came quietly up to the open door of his own lighted shack and stopped for a moment to gaze in at the two men, whose faces were touched by the glow of the lamp on the table. There had been more than one moment in those forty-eight hours which had elapsed since he had lifted that black robed, inert figure from the floor in which Steve had wondered whether Garry Devereau would even await his return to Thirty Mile.

Save for a short and casual "See you in the morning," Stephen O'Mara turned without a word that night to leave the improvised sleeping quarters in the storehouse shack.

He looked at Garry nodding drowsily on a bunk and then at Fat Joe seated near him. Their eyes held for a moment before Steve turned again toward the door. And perhaps his manner was a little too unconcerned that evening, a little too carefully careless, for almost before he had lifted the latch Fat Joe stepped forward one quick, protesting step and then stopped on second thought.

"You ain't goin'!" he began, and suffered that spoken protest also to remain uncompleted.

"It's not late," Steve's voice was thoughtful. "It's not late, but it's surely very quiet." He stood gazing out into the gloom. "Maybe I'd best run down and see what ails our visitor of the other night. Somehow the more I've come to fear that he is temperamental, Joe, too temperamental for such a wearing proposition as this one is likely to be. And you haven't slept much since I've been gone. Oh, that was easy, just from your eyes! So you'd better turn in. I'll just stroll down and let them know that I'm back home."

It is odd how much of finally there can be in the quietest of statements. Eyes narrowed, Joe stood in the middle of the floor and watched him depart without further objection. But the moment the blackness had swallowed him up he backed to the bunk, fumbled for a gun which Steve had tossed upon the blankets and followed out into the dark.

Stephen O'Mara stood a long time outside the door of the workmen's bunkhouse that night, fingers upon the latch, before he made any move to enter. But neither a wish to eavesdrop nor a desire to frame experimentally the words he meant to speak was the reason behind that pause. It was in itself a new thing to find the long, low building lighted at that hour, even though, as he had himself put it to Joe an instant before, it was hours from being late. That night the almost absolute silence beyond the closed door was an even more unusual state of affairs. The voice of one man only was audible, the words he spoke indistinguishable altogether. But sudden bursts of laughter, punctuating the recital which he could not clearly follow, were indication enough to the man outside of what manner of tale was holding the ears of that roomful of rivermen. Stephen O'Mara, who had long ceased to wonder at the discovery in them of new and impulsive fancies which bordered close upon inherent nobility, knored fully as well how utterly and unspeakably gross could be the premeditated coarseness of those same men.

There was no movement to mark his entrance when he finally pressed the latch and swung the door open, not so much as a single glance to indicate that his presence was noted. Under the yellow light of flickering oil lamps the eyes of all those scores of gaudy shirted figures lounging against the walls were fixed eagerly upon the face of him who held the middle of their stage—him who talked from where he half lay, propped on one elbow, in his bunk at the end of the room. Harrigan, red shirted, red headed, was lounging at ease, waiting for the last gurgle of appreciation to subside before he gave them the close of the story, the last titbit, the savor of which already had set him noisily to licking his lips. And in the doorway Steve, rigid of a sudden, sensed what that climax was to be.

"Her f-an-say inside"—the droningly indistinguishable words were very plain now—"her f-an-say inside, consounded with pride and anticipation, tellin' all who had come to dance that she had promised to be his for-ri-ver more. And her at that same minute outside with him, and both a-thin'!" Harrigan did not hurry it in the telling. And if his portrayal of Archibald Wickersham was unmistakably deliberate, neither did he fail for want of sufficient detail to make the other picture clear. Vilely he gave them the complete imagery of his vile brain.

A shout went up, a louder, hoarser outcry of applause which picked the

room. And then that rigid figure in the doorway had started forward. Between those lanes of suddenly silent men Steve passed in silence, to stand before him who had achieved his climax a breath before. And at his coming Harrigan slid from the bunk, started to reach within the blanket pack at the head of what had been his bed and then thought better of such impulsive bravado intermingled with blank surprise, he came haltingly to his feet. The voices of few men have been as unhurriedly deadly as was that of him who faced Harrigan that night.

"That was wise, Harrigan," Steve told him slowly—far too gently. "That was wise to let your knife lie safe within your pack, for if you'd touched it I'd have killed you, for I ought to kill you now. But you're drunk, Harrigan. You were drunk a minute ago when you lied your lie. You're soberer now. You're sober enough to start again and tell me you're a liar."

They waited—the roomful of rivermen. Nothing stirred save the clouds of flaky blue smoke floating against the rafters—that and a bulky blot of shadow outside which shifted a little, noiselessly, just beyond the patch of light that streamed through the door. They waited, heavy breathed, while Harrigan began to recover from the disconcertment into which O'Mara's coming had flung him. Slowly the former's lips twisted into a mocking leer; mockery rose and swam with the hatred in his inflamed eyes. He would have spoken, sparring for time, when Steve's hand leaped in and made of the joking effort only a rattle in his throat. Beneath the stiff red stubble the flesh was livid where those fingers had been when he was able to draw breath again.

"'Twas only a bit of a joke," he gasped and gulped and swallowed hard. "'Twas only a bit of a joke I was tellin' the boys about seein' you an'—"

Steve's voice bit in and cut him short.

"Your turkey's ready, Harrigan!" He pointed at the pack toward which the



"There's not room for both of us on this river."

other had groped and then thought better of the impulse. "You were going of your own accord, I see. Well, I'm telling you to go now! The door's open. I left it so for you when I came in. And I'm telling you, too, before you leave that you'll do well not to come back. There's not room for both of us on this river any more, Harrigan!"

The riverman's eyes shifted. Furtively they flitted from face to face in those rows of faces at the walls. But whatever he thought or hoped to find—fleeting flash of support or encouragement—was hidden behind a common mask of astonishment as blank as had been his own. They were waiting for his answer. He knew they were waiting for that as he crossed to the door. And when he paused there, to turn in sudden savagery, he realized that his tardiness had robbed him of his chance. It was too late to talk back then.

"You're tellin' me," he rasped out, "and I was goin'—sur-re! But things ar-re not yet finished between you and me, for I'm pr-promis'n' you that I'll be back. I'm pr-promis'n' you I'll be wid ye again. I'll be wid ye again, come spring!"

He disappeared. And hard upon his going Steve wheeled and fronted those scores of silent men. His eyes leaped from point to point, as Harrigan's had craftily flitted. Briefly, crisply, he accompanied the sweeping survey with a voice that was loud enough for all of them to hear.

"Big Louie! Fallon! Shayne! This is your chance to say so if you're going to be lonesome, now that your song bird has flown. Speak up! I came down tonight just to hear you talk."

Nothing but an indistinguishable murmur answered him, a low growl that was neither argument nor evasion. Rebellion was still a long way ahead for most of them. They had not yet had time to talk themselves to the pitch of open revolt. They had merely begun to listen to Harrigan, whose disciples in dissatisfaction they were. And now in his absence they stirred uncomfortably under the gaze of him who remained. They dropped their heads and searched for matches. But Steve felt the weight of unspoken thoughts when he, too, faced back in the doorway. This time there was no naming of names. He embraced the whole room when he spoke.

"They tell me," Steve continued, "that there's talk among you of no more

work on the river when we've put this railroad through. I've heard it said that some of you think you are cutting the ground out from under your feet with every shovelful of earth you lift. You ought to know better than that. You ought to know for yourselves that there'll be need for more men in these woods than there has ever been before. But if you don't, if you can't see it that way, why not come around and let me have a fair chance to talk things over with you myself before you decide to turn on this job? I want you to remember that a man who is a liar in one thing is mighty likely to talk loose tongued, no matter what he preaches."

And there, without lifting his eyes from the floor, Big Louie cleared his throat and made answer.

"Maybe," he retorted—"maybe, and maybe not so sure either! I have listened to big words before now, me, that have put no food under my belt, no coat to my back."

"If it's only food and shelter and clothes for your back, Big Louie, you'll not have to worry. But I'm not promising either, mind, that there'll be easy money to blow on white whisky. Were you expecting any?"

That brain which could cope with but one idea at a time was fertile ground for seed which such a one as Harrigan might sow. Big Louie failed to reply. He sat quiet, deep in thought, when Stephen O'Mara closed the door noiselessly behind him.

It was minutes after Steve had gone back up the hill before Garry Devereau reached out a hand in the darkness and touched, experimentally, what had seemed to be only a shapeless black blotch at the edge of light, a rod or two from the door. And instantly at his touch the shadow was galvanized into life. It reared and plunged and enveloped the slighter man in a crushing embrace and bore him over backward. With the muzzle of a revolver chafing his ear Garry managed to worry his head high enough to free his mouth and nostrils from dirt.

"Get off me! Get off me, you fat roncancer, you!" he whispered fiercely.

An explosive grunt of dismay answered him before Fat Joe let him rise. In a thin and profane tenor he was hidden to explain his presence there.

"I couldn't sleep," Garry replied, his voice still peevish, "so I came out for a breath of air. I saw him start this way—saw you following him with that gun in your hand. I just slipped over, too. In case there might be doings. What's the row, Joe?"

Joe took him ungenially by the elbow, turned him about and started him up the rise.

"An old grudge," he deigned an ungracious explanation. "It's years and years old. Steve licked him once. Once when they were boys the folks that live down next to Allison's dressed Steve up like a picture book, the nearest I can make out, and sent him to town a-shoppin'. Harrigan, he—"

"I know! I remember!" Garry's eager whisper interrupted. "That is, I didn't know that Harrigan was one of the mob Steve whipped that day. But that wasn't what I meant. Who was the—the girl Harrigan was talking about when Steve—when Steve—"

Joe's fingers tightened a little as the other evinced a tendency to lag.

"Hurry a bit, will you?" he urged complacently. "Show a little speed! I'm supposed to be up there asleep!" And then, gruffly, "It was the Allison girl, of course."

In spite of the hand upon his elbow Garrett Devereau stopped short in his tracks.

"Barbara!" he stammered. "Barbara Allison? Joe, was that the girl he meant tonight when he said he was going to 'marry one of those women himself?'"

Joe peered at him, trying to make out the expression upon his face.

"Why not?" he wanted to know. "Why not? Ain't he good enough for her?"

There came a pause; then Garry's stunted rejoinder.

"Good enough!" he repeated senselessly. "Good enough?" He laughed half wildly, as though he had suddenly hit upon a very funny thought indeed. "That man in love with a girl like her—good Lord!"

And Fat Joe, who had failed to understand, swore again beneath his breath because there was no time left in which to argue the matter. His face was still very red from his struggle for self restraint and his whole mental balance so disturbed that he forgot entirely to conceal the blue revolver dangling in one hand when he re-entered the cabin a moment later.



"Get off me! Get off me, you fat roncancer, you!"

The latter object ruined the effect of his insouciant rendition of "Home, Sweet Home."

"Thought you were going to retire, Joe?"

Steve was already undressed and crawling into bed. His question was slow worded and a trifle stifled.

"I was," Joe assured him hastily. "I

was. I just stepped out to see that everything was tight and tidy for the night; that's all."

Quizzical eyes contemplated the revolver now.

"Taken to carrying a weapon, after all, eh? Well, perhaps that's wisest. And blow out the light, will you, Joe? I'm tired. You'll have to undress in the dark."

Then Steve buried his face in his pillow. But sundry sounds, escaping, were unmistakably hysterical. Joe's mouth opened and closed, fishlike. He stood and stared down at his side in beautifully eloquent profanity, if a stare can be both eloquent and profane.

"You need a nurse," he stated sulkily at last. He finished the light with a vicious blast. "You need a chap-eron!"

But once again, just before he slept, Steve heard him mutter to himself less injudiciously as he heaved over in his bunk.

"This has been a very busy evening," he opined.

(To Be Continued)

FOR SCHOOL DAYS.

Pretty Model That Mothers Can Copy in Any Color.

For little girls is this frock of pale pink linen cut with a box plaited skirt. The round collar and cuffs are white.



A PROUD LADY.

plique, the waist closing in two scallops buttoned. The only trimming is a dash of hand embroidery on the front and back of the belt.

SHADOW EMBROIDERY.

How to Make This Fascinating Work on Blouse Fronts.

Not for many years has shadow embroidery been in favor, but this season one sees it here and there on many organdie and voile frocks. When the work is done in colors it is most effective.

As the name indicates, the work is done on the wrong side of the material, and in order for its shadow to be visible on the right side the material must necessarily be thin and sheer. A practical idea if you intend to do the work in colors is to hold different shades of the color or colors you intend to use beneath your material. You can then tell how the finished work will look.

The work done on the wrong side of the material is nothing more than the herringbone stitch. Learn how to do this. Practice on a sample of material before actually doing the work. To make the directions clear just imagine you are working on a long, narrow leaf. To make the herringbone stitch put the needle through at the left hand end of the lower line, slant the silk obliquely upward across the space to the upper line and take a short stitch from right to left on the upper line. With the same slant cross the silk to the lower line and take a second short stitch from right to left. Proceed in this manner across the space, keeping the slant true and the length of the stitch even.

Now, there is just one difference in the herringbone stitch and the stitch used for the shadow embroidery. That is that the stitches are placed closer together, so that a solid effect is gained on the right side. Aim to let the work on the right side show lines of little forward stitches of uniform size and exactly on the lines of the design.

If you desire to insert veins in the leaves these should be worked before the petal is covered on the wrong side. For the veins use the back stitch.

French knots placed within the leaves and petals of a flower add materially to the effect of the shadow work.

The natives of New Guinea are the shortest lived people in the world, and this result is attributed to their diet of the larvae of certain beetles and their practice of drinking sea water.—London Telegraph.

THE BLEUTH'S DEDUCTION.

The great detective eyed his visitor thoughtfully.

"Yes, Mr. Blake," sobbed the grief stricken woman, "many attempts—eight in all, I think—have been made on his life, but he was so strong and handsome that he foiled them all."

She buried her face in her hands, and her shoulders shook.

"You say your husband wears a green hat and long ginger side whiskers?" asked the detective gently.

"Y-y-y-es, sir," stammered the woeful one, wiping her eyes with her gloves.

Mr. Blake thought sadly of the man he had seen by the river bank only that afternoon and of the strange bundle the said man had borne. Then he bent gently toward the woman.

"I am sorry, madam, believe me," he said softly, "but it is too late. Your cat is dead!"

His Choice.

The boy stood in the crowded car. He couldn't turn his neck. He groaned before he traveled far. "For me the burning deck." —Pittsburgh Telegraph.

Fondly Recalled.

Artist—What's the matter? It's a good joke, isn't it? "It's a very good joke. The first time I heard that joke I laughed till the tears rolled down my pinafore."—Life.

Concerning Miss Peachy.



"I say, old chap, I hear you are engaged to Miss Peachy. Is that true?" "Quite true, old dear. Isn't she the lucky girl?"—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

Answered.

"George," queried the curious passenger of the elevator conductor, "how far do you go in a day?"

The boy thought a moment. "When I get to the top I stop, and when I get to the bottom I stop," he said.—Judge.

Confusing.

One thing to my mind is not clear: These boots the pretty ladies wear. Are wondrous things to see, But how their wearers, ere they sup, Can find the time to lace them up. A puzzle is to me. —Richmond Times-Dispatch.

Less Work.

Ragged Rogers—Dat's a mighty short stump yer smokin'. Frayed Phillip—Yep; I like 'em dat way. Yer don't have ter draw der smoke so far.—Boston Transcript.

A Surprise For Him.



Mother Bird—Here's a poor fellow begging for something to eat, so I will just give him this nice fat worm.—Country Gentleman.

The Resemblance.

"Some stars are so far away that the light from them hasn't reached us yet. But it will arrive eventually." "Reminds me of my hired man coming from the postoffice," said Farmer Heck.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

A Hot One.

How wonderful would be the hen, How wonderful could she then boast, If she could go and lay an egg Well poached upon a piece of toast. —Yonkers Statesman.

Pert.

"A fool and his money are soon parted, my son." "Who got yours away from you, dad?"—Detroit Free Press.

Had His Measure.



"I can't quite make out what Butb means." "Why not?" "She keeps on referring to my man, doncher know, as a keeper."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

BLOUSES OVER SKIRTS.

Vivid Chat About the Very Latest Kinds of Waists.

Many and varied are the lines of the new blouses; possibly the most noteworthy feature is the peplum or skirt sections which are seen on many of the new models. To be sure, these peplumed blouses were introduced some time ago, but they have not attained the wide popularity which they would seem to deserve as pleasingly different and affording splendid opportunity for effective trimming.

New blouses of this type are of crepe, taffeta and satin, and when in matching color with the separate skirt give the appearance of smart dresses that eliminates one of the chief objections to separate blouses and skirts—that of giving the figure a cut in half look that is disastrous to the average figure.

A very striking example of this peplum blouse is of taffeta, the wrist length sleeves set in at a drop shoulder line; the peplum a straight gathered one about eighteen inches long and the sleeves and bodice generously trimmed with tiny buttons. Still another feature is the draped or hoodlike collar of the blouse material.

Striped silk used on the bias is another fashion feature, and an interesting blouse made thus is finished as a basque and is to be worn without a belt or girdle. Most of the dressy washable blouses and many of the silk and crepe ones are enhanced by effective hand embroidery, for the vogue of this attractive trimming is now assured.

Sleeves are long or short as one prefers in dresses and blouses and set into regulation extended or drop shoulder armholes, so you see fashion is kind just now and does not restrict us to one and only one style. Probably there will not be a narrowing of new fashion features, such as was the case a few years ago. Women do not like to be dressed like an aggregation of twins, and we have come to know that there is not one particular fashion that suits us all to perfection.

NEW MODEL OUT.

Missies' Corsets For Autumn Wear Are Built Like This.

Built on straight lines to please French dressmakers, this juvenile corset has a free hip and comfortable, almost boneless seams. The material



FASHION DESIGNS.

is crepe de chine, with only two side bones and one at the side back. The top is fitted with elastic to ease respiration, and the bottom is hemstitched.

INFANTILE PARALYSIS.

An Expert Tells Mothers How to Avoid and Prevent This Scourge.

The following statement was issued recently by Dr. Charles F. Bolduan, director of the bureau of public health education of New York city:

"Infantile paralysis is caused by a very small germ, perhaps the smallest germ known, entering the brain and spinal cord of little children. The germ probably gets in through the nose or mouth. It is important to keep your children away from those who have the disease and also away from the other members of the family in which the case has developed.

"The reason for this is that the germ is in the nose and throat of the patient and frequently is carried there by others in the household.

"Read the list of addresses where the disease has occurred and which are published in the newspapers, and keep away from the infected houses.

"Every mother should keep her children about her much as a hen looks after her little chicks. It is dangerous to let children attend parties and festivals and to take them into crowds where they may sit alongside of some person who has the germs in his or her nose.

"Since the germs are so very small and may be present on the hands or the face or soiled handkerchiefs, even when there is no visible dirt, the utmost cleanliness is necessary. See that the hands and the faces of your children are kept absolutely clean. Soap and water, after all, are the greatest foes of all disease.

"Clean up your house. Throw away all useless rubbish. Take down the curtains and wash them. Wipe all the woodwork with a damp cloth."