

Satan Sanderson

By HALLIE
ERMINIE RIVES,

Author of
"Hearts Courageous," Etc.

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"Who's Who" In the Story.

"SATAN" SANDERSON, the hero, dare-devil, quixotic friend and minister of the Gospel.

HUGH STIRES, prodigal and criminal.

JESSICA HOLME, the beautiful heroine, helpless in the rush of events and the principal sufferer in a case of mixed identity.

MRS. HALLORAN, the camp oracle.

DAVID STIRES, stern, yet forgiving, and at the last made happy by another's unhappiness.

THE BISHOP, the victim of a misunderstanding.

HALLELUJAH JONES, the religious fanatic on whose shoulders rests the whole weight of the story.

EMMET PRENDERGAST, the false friend, perjurer and thief.

THE SHERIFF, who is very much divided between duty and inclination.

"BIG" DEVLIN, who turns champion instead of prosecutor after the hero's race with death.

Chapter 1

TO my son Hugh, in return for the care and sorrow he has caused me all the days of his life, for his dissolute career and his desertion, I do give and bequeath the sum of \$1,000 and the memory of his misspent youth.

It was very quiet in the wide, richly furnished library. The May night was still, but a faint aspiration heavy with the fragrance of jasmine flowers stirred the Venetian blind before the open window and rustled the moon silvered leaves of the aspens outside. As the incisive professional pronouncement of the judge cut through the silence the grim face on the pillow of the wheel chair set more grimly, a girl seated in the shadow of the fire screen caught her breath, and from across the table the Rev. Henry Sanderson turned his handsome, clean shaven face and looked at the old man.

A peevish misogynist the neighborhood labeled the latter, with the parish chapel for hobby and for thorn-in-the-flesh this only son Hugh, a black sheep whose open breaches of decorum the town had borne as best it might till the tradition of his forbears took him off to an eastern university. A reckless life there and three wastrel years abroad had sent him back to resume his peccadilloes on a larger scale, to quarrel bitterly with his father and to leave his home in anger.

"Wait," came the querulous voice from the chair. "Write in 'graceless' before the word 'desertion.'"

"For his dissolute career and his graceless desertion," repeated the law-



The parchment crackling under his pen, the parchment crackling under his pen.

Judge Conwell glanced curiously at Harry Sanderson as he blotted the emendation. He knew the liking of the cross grained and taciturn old invalid, St. James' richest parishioner, for this young man of twenty-five who had come to the parish only two months before, fresh from his theological studies, to fill a place temporarily vacant and had stayed by sheer force of personality. He wondered if, aside from natural magnetic qualities, this liking had not been due first of all to the curious resemblance between the young minister and the absent son whom David Stires was disinheriting, for as far as mold of features went the young minister and the never-do-well might have been twin brothers.

No one perhaps had ever interested the community more than had Harry Sanderson. He had entered upon his duties with the marks of youth, good looks, self-possession and an ample income thick upon him and had brought with him a peculiar charm of manner and an apparent incapacity for doing things in a hackneyed way. Convention sat lightly upon Harry Sanderson. He recognized few precedents either in the new methods and millinery with which he had invested the service or in his personal habits. Instead of attending the meeting of St. Andrew's guild, after the constant custom of his predecessor, he was apt to be found playing his violin (a passion with him) in the smart study that adjoined the gothic chapel where he shepherded his fashionable flock or tramping across the country with a briar pipe in his mouth and his brown spawlet, Rummy, nosing at his heels. His athletic frame

and clean dressed features made him a rare figure for the reading desk, as his violin practice, the cut of his golf flannels, the immaculate elegance of his motor car, even the white carnation he affected in his buttonhole, made him for the younger men a goodly pattern of the cloth, and it had speedily grown to be the fashion to hear the brilliant young minister.

Something of all this was in the lawyer's mind as he paused—a perfunctory pause—before he continued:

"I do give and bequeath the sum of \$1,000 and the memory of his misspent youth."

Harry Sanderson's eyes had wandered from the chair to the slim figure of the girl who sat by the screen. This was Jessica Holme, the orphaned daughter of a friend of the old man's early years, who had recently come to the house in the aspens to fill the void left by Hugh's departure. Harry could see the contour of throat and wrists, the wild rose mesh of the skin against the Romney blue gown, the pensive red bronze hair uncoiled and falling in a single braid and the shadowy pathos of her eyes. Clear hazel eyes they were, wide and full, but there was in them no depth of expression, for Jessica Holme was blind. As the crisp, deliberate accent pointed the judicial period as with a subterranean echo of irrefutable condemnation Harry saw her under lip indrawn, her hands clasp tightly, then unclasp in her lap. Pliant, graceful hands, he thought, which even blind could not make maladroit.

"Go on," rasped the old man.

"The residue of my estate, real and personal, I do give and bequeath to my ward, Jessica Holme"—

He broke off suddenly, for the girl was kneeling by the chair groping for the restless hand that wandered on the afghan and crying in a strained, agitated voice: "No—no—you must not! He is your son!"

"In the eyes of the law, yes. But not otherwise!" His voice rose. "What has he done to deserve anything from me? What has he had all his life but kindness? And how has he repaid it? By being a waster and a prodigal. By setting me in contempt and finally by forsaking me in my old age for his own paths of ribaldry."

The girl shook her head. "You don't know where he is now or what he is doing. Oh, he was wild and reckless, I have no doubt, but when he quarreled and left you wasn't it perhaps because he was too quick tempered? And if he hasn't come back isn't it perhaps because he is too proud?"

"Jessica, I've not forgiven him seven times. I've forgiven him seventy times seven. But he doesn't want forgiveness. To him I am only 'the old man' who refused to 'put up' longer for his fopperies and extravagances! When he left this house six months ago he declared he would never enter it again. Very well; let him stay away! He shan't come back when I am in my grave to play ducks and drakes with the money he misuses! And I've fixed it so that you won't be able to give it away either, Jessica."

The girl, still kneeling, turned off about with a hopeless gesture. "Oh, won't you help me?" she said. She spoke more to herself, it seemed, than to either of the men who waited.

"Sanderson," said the old man with bitter fierceness, lifting his hand. "I dare say you think I am hard, but I tell you there has never been a day since Hugh was born when I wouldn't have laid down my life for him! You are so like! When I look at you I seem to see him as he might have been but for his own wayward choice! If he were only as like you in other things as he is in feature! You are nearly the same age. You went to the same college, I believe. You have had the same advantages and the same temptations. Yet you, an orphan, come out a divinity student, and Hugh—my son!—comes out a roisterer with gambling debts, a member of the 'fast set,' one of a dissolute fraternity known as 'The Saints,' whose very existence, no doubt, was a shame to the institution!"

Harry Sanderson turned slowly to the light. A strange panorama in that moment had flashed through his brain—kaleidoscopic pictures of an early reckless era when he had not been known as the "Rev. Henry Sanderson."

"I think I ought to say that I was the founder, and at the time you speak of, the abbot of The Saints. I was in the same year with Hugh. We sowed our wild oats together, a tidy crop, I fancy, for us both. That page of my life is pasted down. I speak of it now because it would be cowardly not to. I have not seen Hugh since college closed four years ago. But then I was all you called him—a waster and a prodigal. And I was more, for while others followed, I led. At college I was known as 'Satan Sanderson.'"

"It is the Hugh of the present that I am dealing with," said the old man. For David Stires was just and he was feeling a grim respect for Harry's honesty.

Harry acknowledged the brusque kindness of the tone with a little motion of the hand. As he spoke he had been feeling his way through a maze of contradictory impulses. For a moment

he had been back in that old irresponsible time, the Hugh he had known then had sprung to his mind's eye, an imitative idler, with a certain grace and brilliancy of manner that made him fall-fellow-well-met, but withal shallow, foppish and incorrigible, a cheap and shabby imitator of the outward manner, not the inner graces, of good fellowship. Yet Hugh had been one of his own "fast set." They had called him "Satan's shadow," a tribute to the actual resemblance as well as to the palpable imitation he affected Harry shivered a little. The situation seemed, in antic irony, to be reversing itself. It was as if not alone Hugh, but he, Harry Sanderson, in the person of that past of his, was now brought to bar for judgment in that room. For the instant he forgot how utterly characterless Hugh had shown himself of old, how devoid of all desire for rehabilitation his present reputation in the town argued him. At that moment it seemed as if in saving Hugh from this condemnation, he was pleading for himself as he had been, for the further chance which he, but for circumstances, perhaps, had needed too.

"You," he said, "have lived a life of just and balanced action. It is bred in the bone. You hate all loose conduct, and rightly. You hate it most in Hugh for the simple reason that he is your son. The very relation makes it more impossible to countenance. He should be like you—of temperate and prudent habit. But did you and he start on equal terms? Your grandfather was a Standsch; your ancestry was unadorned Puritan. Did Hugh have all your fund of resistance? With me it was the turning of a long lane, Hugh perhaps has not turned—yet." A breath of that past life had swept anew over Harry, the old shuddering recall again had rushed upon him. It gave his voice a curious energy as he ended: "And I have seen how far a man may go and yet—come back!"

There was a pause. The judge had an inspiration. He folded the parchment.

"Perhaps it would be as well," he said in a matter of fact way, "if the signing be left open for the present." He rose as he spoke and laid the document on the table.

For a moment David Stires sat in silence. Then he said, with a glint of the old ironic fire: "You should have been a special pleader, Sanderson. There's no client too bad for them to make out a case for! Well—well, we won't sign tonight. I will read it over again when I am more equal to it."

For long the old man sat alone, musing in his chair. At length he sighed and took up a magazine. He was thinking of Harry Sanderson.

"How like!" he said aloud. "So Sanderson sowed his wild oats too! . . . When he stood there, with the light on his face—when he talked—I—I could almost have thought it was Hugh!"

Chapter 2

HARRY SANDERSON and the judge parted at the gate, and Harry walked slowly home in the moonlight.

The youthful follies that he had resurrected when he had called himself his old nickname of "Satan Sanderson" he had left so far behind him, had buried so deep, that the ironic turn of circumstance that had dragged them into view seemed intrusive and malicious.

He had saved an old college mate from possible disinheritation and the grind of poverty, for David Stires' health was precarious. He thought of this with a tinge of satisfaction. The least of that peculiar clan, one who had held his place not by likeable qualities, but by a versatile talent for entertainment, Hugh Stires yet deserved thus much. Harry Sanderson had never shirked an obligation. "As a man sows"—

words used by the old man—re-echoed to him. Did any man reap what he sowed, after all? Was he, the "Satan Sanderson" that was, getting his deserts?

Was he, the "Satan Sanderson" that was, getting his deserts?

The later night was very still, and the moon, lifting like a paper lantern over the aspen tops, silvered all the landscape. In its placid radiance the white house loomed in a ghostly pallor. The windows of one side were blank, but behind the library shade the bulbous lamp still drowsed like a monster glowworm. From the shadowy side of the building stretched a narrow L, its front covered by a rose trellis whose pale blossoms in the soft night air mingled their delicate fragrance with that of the jasmine.

Save for the one bright pane there seemed now no life or movement in the house. But outside in the moonlight a lurching, shabbily clothed figure moved, making his uncertain way with the deliberation of composed inebriety. The sash of the window was raised a few inches, and he nodded sagely at the yellow shade.

"Gay old silver top," he hiccupped, "see you in the morning!"

He capsize against an althea bush and shook his head with owl's gravity as he disentangled himself. Then he staggered serenely to the rose trellis and, choosing its angle with an assurance that betrayed ancient practice, climbed to the upper window, shot its bolt with a knife and let himself in. He painstakingly closed both windows and inner blinds before he turned on an electric light.

In the room in which he now stood he had stored his boyish treasures and shirked his maturer tasks. It should have had deeper human associations, too, for once, before the house had been enlarged to its present proportions, that chamber had been his mother's. The Marchal Niel rose that clambered to the window sill had been planted by her hand. In that room he had been born. And in it had occurred that sharp, corrosive quarrel with his father on the night he had flung himself from the house vowing never to return.

As Hugh Stires stood looking about him it seemed for an instant to his clouded senses

that the past six months of wandering and unsavory adventure were a dream. There was his bed, with its clean linen sheets and soft pillows. How he would like to lie down just as he was and sleep a full round of the clock! Last night he had slept where he had forgotten for the moment. He looked longingly at the spotless coverlet. No; some one might appear, and it would not do to be seen in his present condition. It was scarcely 10. Time enough for that afterward.

He drew out the drawer of a chiffonier, opened a closet and gazed over the order and plenty of their contents. He made difficult selection from these and, steadying his progress by wall and chair, opened the door of an adjoining bathroom. It contained a circular bath with a needle shower. Without removing his clothing he climbed into this, balancing himself with an effort, found and turned the cold faucet and let the icy water, chilled from artesian depths, trickle over him in a hundred stinging needle points.

It was a very different figure that re-entered the larger room a half hour later from the slinking mudrack that had climbed the rose trellis. The old Hugh lay, a heap of soiled and sodden garments; the new stood forth shaven, fragrant with fresh linen and clean and fit apparel. The maudlin had vanished, the gaze was unweaved and bright, the whole man seemed to have settled into himself, to have grown trim, nonchalant, debonaire. He held up his hand, palm outward, between the electric globe and his eye. There was not a tremor of nerve or muscle. He smiled. No headache, no fever, no uncertain feet or trembling hands or swollen tongue after more than a week of deep potations. He could still "sober up" as he used to do (with Blake, the butler, to help him) when it had been a mere matter of an evening's tipsiness. And how fine it felt to be decently clad again!

He crossed to a cheval glass. The dark, handsome face that looked out at him was clean cut and aristocratic, perfect save for one blemish—a pale line that slanted across the right brow, a birthmark, resembling a scar. All his life this mark had been an eyesore to its owner. It had a trick of turning an evil red under the stress of anger or emotion.

On the features, young and vigorous as they were, subtle lines of self-indulgence had already set themselves, and beneath their expression, cavalier and caressing, lay the unmistakable stigmata of inherited weakness. But these the gazer did not see. He regarded himself with egotistic complacency. Here he was just as sound as ever. He had had his fling and taught "the governor" that he could get along well enough without any paternal help if he chose.

He attentively surveyed the room. It was clean and dusted—evidently it had been carefully tended. He might have stepped out of it yesterday. Not a thing had been disturbed—yes, one thing. His portrait had had hung over his bed was not in its place. A momentary sense of trepidation rushed through him. Could his father really have meant all he had said in his rage? Did he really mean to disown him?

For an instant he faced the hall door with clinched hands. Somewhere in the house, unconscious of his presence,

was that ward of whose coming he had learned. Moreau was a good friend to have warned him. Was she part of a plan of reprisal—her presence there a tentative threat to him? Could his father mean to adopt her? Might that great house, those grounds, the bulk of his wealth, go to her, and he, the son, be left in the cold? He shivered. Perhaps he had stayed away too long!

As he turned again, he heard a sound in the hall. He listened. A light step was approaching—the swish of a gown. With a sudden impulse he stepped into the embrasure of the window, as the figure of a girl paused at the door. He felt his face flush. She had thrown a crimson kimono over her white night-gown, and the apparition seemed to part the dusk of the doorway like the red breast of a robin. She held in her hands a bunch of the pale Marchal Niel roses, and his eye caught the long rebellious sweep of her bronze hair and the rosy tint of bare feet through the worsted meshes of her night slippers.

To his wonder the sight of the lighted room seemed to cause her no surprise. For an instant she stood still as though listening, then entered and placed the roses in a vase on a reading stand by the bedside.

Hugh gasped. To reach the stand the girl had passed the spot where he stood, but she had taken no note of him. Her gaze had gone by him as if he had been empty air. Then he realized the truth; Jessica Holme was blind! Moreau's letter had given him no inkling of that. So this was the girl with whom his father now threatened him! Was she counting on his not coming back, waiting for the windfall? She was blind—but she was beautiful! Suppose he were to turn the tables on the old man, not only climb back into his good graces through her, but even—

The thin line on his brow sprang suddenly scarlet. What a supple, graceful arm she had! How adroit her fingers as they arranged the rose stems! Was he already wholly blackened in her opinion? What did she think of him? Why did she bring those flowers to that empty room? Could it have been she who had kept it clean and fresh and unaltered against his return? A confident, daring look grew in his eyes. He wished she could see him in that purple tie and velvet smoking jacket. What an opportunity for a romantic self-justification! Should he speak? Suppose it should frighten her!

Chance answered him. His respiration had conveyed to her the knowledge of a presence in the room. He heard her draw a quick breath. "Some one is here!" she whispered.

He started forward. "Wait, wait!" he said in a loud whisper as she sprang back. But the voice seemed to startle her the more, and before he could reach her side she was gone. He heard her flying steps descend the stair and the opening and closing of a door.

The sudden flight jarred Hugh's pleasurable sense of novelty. He thrust his hands deep into his pockets. Now he was in for it! She would alarm the house, rouse the servants. He should have a staring domestic audience for the imminent reconciliation his sobered sense told him was so necessary. Shrugging his shoulders, he went quickly down the stair to the library.

He had known exactly what he should see there—the vivid girl with the hue of fright in her cheeks, the



"My son!" he cried.

shaded lamp, the wheel chair and the feeble old man with his furrowed face and gray mustaches. What he himself should say he had not had time to reflect.

The figure in the chair looked up as the door opened. "Hugh!" he cried and half lifted himself from his seat. Then he settled back, and the sunken, indomitable eyes fastened themselves on his son's face.

Hugh was melodramatic—cheaply so. He saw the girl start at the name, saw her hands catch at the kimono to draw its folds over the bare white throat, saw the rich color that flooded her brow. He saw himself suddenly the moving hero of the stagers, the tractive force of the situation. Real tears came to his eyes; tears of insincere feeling, due partly to the cheap whisky he had drunk that day, whose outward consequences he had so drastically banished, and partly to sheer nervous excitement.

"Father!" he said, and came and caught the gaunt hand that shook against the chair.

Then the depths of the old man's heart were suddenly broken up. "My son!" he cried and threw his arms about him. "Hugh, my boy, my boy!"

Jessica waited to hear no more. Thrilling with gladness and flushing with the sudden recollection of her bare throat and feet, she slipped away to her room to creep into bed and lie wide-eyed and thinking.

What did he look like? Of his face she had never seen even a counterfeit

(To be Continued.)

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Notice is hereby given that Linnie B. Hart, of Webesville, Washington, who, on Nov. 19, 1908, made timber and stone entry, No. 11512, (Serial No. 01515, for e 1/2 sec 1/4, Sec. 19, n 1/2 sw 1/4, Section 10, Township 39 n, Range 26 e. w. m., has filed notice of intention to make final proof, to establish claim to the land above described, before Fred J. Fine, U. S. Commissioner, at his office at Oroville, Washington, on the 5th day of March, 1909.

Claimant names as witnesses: John F. Samson, of Oroville, Washington; Frank Arnold, Fred G. Hart, W. B. Reilly, all of Webesville, Washington.

W. F. Haynes, Register.