

THE WOLF-MAN

A Mystery-Romance of the Frozen North

By S. CARLETON

Men Who Fail XIX.

By Robert Minor

Next Week's Complete Novel in the Evening World

MARIE

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

CHAPTER XV. DON'T know what to think, he growled, "about you. I mean you saved the show to-night, but you might have just felt you had to because of me being there. I'll bet your pardon for the way I've acted to you all day if you'll show me I was wrong and didn't hear you tell Atherton this morning to have patience and wait 'til he got over, nor didn't see you wedged up the bunkhouse door."

CHAPTER XVI. O, all appearance there had not been a sign of life in Atherton's men all day. Kelly, crouching behind the northern rim of the claim in the bitter sunset, suddenly fired through the thrown-up snow wall he had loopoled in the time-honored method of small boys making forts, and smiled as he lowered his gun. He was pretty cold, but at least he knew where Atherton's men were, and where one of them was no longer.

CHAPTER XVII. B the morning there was no doubt that Atherton was clever; if his tactics were plain they seemed to be successful, and Hazard stood in the biting dawn that was thick with needle points of frost and counted damages. Olsen was dead; and Rider had brought him in, at the cost of a gash on Rider's head from a spent bullet; the three men who had been strung along the shore to cover Olsen's going were dead, shot from behind, like Olsen, and all four had been robbed of their guns.

CHAPTER XVIII. The armament of Lastuck was reduced to Hazard's rifle; his two revolvers, of which one was given over to Kelly, and a couple of old shotguns belonging to the men—and up in the joint stock but of Atherton and the wolf-man were fifteen rifles, anyhow. "It's very simple," said Hazard bit-

any one can get through he will, he talks three miles of man better than I do. And I can't get I've got to sit on the claim. "Olsen's ready," said Sophy Ridgeway. "It's not ready for the time to start, and I want to speak to both of you if you've time. I don't know what to think about the wolf-man." "The wolf?" demanded Hazard. "The wolf?" Sophy came out with the whole story. "Do you mean it wasn't Atherton I saw with you in the snow storm?" "Just that." "She held out a scrawled bit of paper. "I found that in the cave this afternoon. It was a note to look for the wolf-man himself." Hazard stared at the penciled words, and read them aloud: "Look out for False River!" "Well," cried Sophy impatiently, "isn't that some sort of warning?" "Depends on who it's to." "I don't know," said Sophy. There was a moment's silence. Hazard, even before she caught the map from him and threw it on the ground. "I do," she said through her teeth. "I never meant to have to tell you though! That map's not father's at all; it's one Atherton made instead of father's, and all wrong. I told you I didn't know whether to believe him or not when he said it was his map, and father had stolen it; even when Atherton wouldn't give it back and father said I'd ruined him, and lost the only chance we ever had of buying Atherton off. I sound a fool, but when I was with father I believed him, and when I was with Atherton it was the other way. I begged Atherton for the map. He gave it back to me when I said I'd marry him. I thought I bought father back. The very first thing Atherton did when he came was to laugh at me. He said it was all a lie. He'd never heard of Lastuck till I told him; he sneered at me, and then he kept cursing; he thought I'd lied to him, and he'd marry him just the same. All the time father told me Atherton was holding prison and all sorts of things over him it was true; I'd promised to marry him for nothing, unless he got the gold!" "Oh, my dearest," was the single thing Hazard said. He gathered the girl to him and kissed her once; she was done with shifts and being made use of, while he had blood in his body.

Outside the bunkhouse the big sleds stood ready for the trail, his sled back to the bunkhouse, and all of him covered from the bitter night but his eyes. Sophy's sled as she clutched his hand. Olsen might have been there, but he was a big thing he was going to do for her and Hazard; she knew it was little enough for him, unless he got the gold!" "Oh, my dearest," was the single thing Hazard said. He gathered the girl to him and kissed her once; she was done with shifts and being made use of, while he had blood in his body. Outside the bunkhouse the big sleds stood ready for the trail, his sled back to the bunkhouse, and all of him covered from the bitter night but his eyes. Sophy's sled as she clutched his hand. Olsen might have been there, but he was a big thing he was going to do for her and Hazard; she knew it was little enough for him, unless he got the gold!"

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"Won't You Give My Son a Position?"

terly. Atherton had had his fill of rushing them; he was going to clear them out one by one, with precision and no fuss, nor any one left to tell ugly tales of Lastuck claim. And as he stood a bullet came past his ear, with the sound of a breaking banjo string. From the south, somewhere, Atherton was commanding Lastuck camp and all there were in it. There were no latrine tracks of the retreat from Olsen's body to say the least where the man had gone. The trail where he had clawed up the glacier slope of snow was plain, and so was his purpose in taking it. "Guns," said the girl slowly, "of course! And if he doesn't get them he'll want his own." She unlocked it, slipped it in her pocket and began to climb. Hazard, at that moment, was finding his way to the wolf-man's hut. He pulled up suddenly behind a rock, but with satisfaction. The dogs were what had really worried him most and he was aware of them yelping steadily; he had his gun, and what Atherton stood as if he were dazed. A chip flew from the boulder, a hoop of deflection from the bunkhouse. Atherton's men piled out neck and crop and ran for the office, broke under the fire the look them as if all but took cover where cover was, and fought like devils—from behind the bunkhouse, with its three windows and two doors cut off! He stumbled, pitched his rifle ahead of him, and fell over the office threshold, as Atherton, a moment too late, fired through the bunkhouse door.

CHAPTER XVIII. THE remnant of Lastuck sat bitterly on the floor of the office. Their gold was still under them, otherwise there was not much for consolation. Atherton had crept round on White and wiped out him and his men; but for Hazard and the rifles he would have finished the job on Rider and the five men left in the bunkhouse which he had captured. Hazard stared out the window. "We look in bad shape," said he irrelevantly, "but I don't know that we're not more even with Atherton than we've ever been. We've sworn to ten now, with guns; instead of being eleven to fifteen without them." "Eight," said the girl fiercely. "Yes, eight," said Hazard. He stared hard from the window, pressed his cheek hard, for one instant, against the girl's arm and stood up. He had seen Atherton's four missing men come out of the dusk, hang a moment, and then race for the bunkhouse in response to something he could not see. "Time, oh!" he said crisply, and Lake and Anderson swung after him to the door. "Oh," cried Sophy frantically, "what are they going to do?" But Rider cut her off half way to the door. "Couldn't do anything, staying in

here," said he. "Not room enough in one window for shooting, and I guess no one but a fool would try to rush the bunkhouse with all the windows they've got. Hazard'll get 'em out, and behind 'em's where we come in. You get in the corner till I say." Outside, between the bunkhouse and the smelters of Sophy's shack, it was light as day; between the fire and the overhanging cliff toward the river, impenetrably dark in contrast. The darkness took Hazard and his men and blotted them out. Inch by inch they gained the angle of the river, and a clear sweep of the bunkhouse from with all Atherton's men inside it, and no one to cut them off from behind. For one moment Hazard thought of Kelly, who was dead somewhere just when he was wanted; then his hand touched the big boulder, twice the height of a man, that cut the view of the river valley from the bunkhouse. "Come on!" he shouted. He stepped out of the dark in the full glow of the fire and raced past the river in full view. He knew just how it would look from the bunk-house, as if they were clearing out up the river instead of doubling round the boulder. Twice round would look as if all but one man and Sophy had cleared out. But for a moment it seemed as if no one had seen. The next Hazard laughed. A chip flew from the boulder, a hoop of deflection from the bunkhouse. Atherton's men piled out neck and crop and ran for the office, broke under the fire the look them as if all but took cover where cover was, and fought like devils—from behind the bunkhouse, with its three windows and two doors cut off! He stumbled, pitched his rifle ahead of him, and fell over the office threshold, as Atherton, a moment too late, fired through the bunkhouse door.

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time, Miss Ridgeway," he said grimly. "He'd his warning not to meddle. This I've sworn like me, that I found in my house, doesn't seem to have worked, either." "Denkin!" exclaimed Sophy. "He's Atherton's Denkin wasn't his name." "The woman stared at her. "It was when you got down to bed rock," said he, "though it never dawned on me you and I were talking of the same man, however it was named by others besides your Atherton; but he's plain Denkin now." Hazard said nothing at all, so far as the woman was called. He was staring with queer sense of buried memory at the wolf-man. "Is Atherton—dead?" asked Sophy challengingly. The wolf-man stopped calmly, and touched his. "Pretty near," he said, not unkindly. "I wonder if he'll ever know it was I." To Sophy's stark horror Atherton stirred. She covered her eyes as he clutched at the hole in his breast. "You!" he gasped, with his sudden vindictiveness. "You, dressed up, that kept driving me out of here last year?" "Just man," said the wolf-man composedly. "I'd a long score against you, Denkin." "Look out!" roared Hazard; but his jump was late. Atherton had shot through his coat, straight upward, before he had dropped like a stone. He was dead now, but not before he had stung. Sophy sprang to the wolf-man's side as he staggered, but he spoke to Hazard. "I didn't think he'd dare come here, either as Atherton or Denkin—or I wouldn't have gone to Macleod." "Macleod?" "What for?" "He choked and crumpled forward on the snow. "I'm kind of done from the tramp, he muttered. "except you was Sophy told me how I'd 'em mine." "Eidon; six years ago," said Hazard simply. With the man's name everything had come back to him like a photograph. One-sweated, mining Eldon had been turned into pandemonium in five minutes, when Devenish had seen fit to shoot five men in what he called cold blood. To Hazard and half a dozen others, who happened to know all Devenish had against the five, it was usually something else. It was plain murder. The only mistake it seemed to them that he had missed the sixth man, who happened to be Denkin, was that he had no money for a second shot.

Hazard could see the dance hall now, with himself and his friends fighting back in it with Devenish in the middle of them, till they got spine and he was out of the way. He had the price on his head, the mounted police, and the openly avowed vengeance of Denkin; but perhaps he had a clear conscience, for he had helped him to do it, certainly he had never known their names. And it had been at Lastuck that Devenish had taken refuge when the Sophy's straggled back to him. He had been Devenish who had played the wolf-man there to frighten away strangers—and God knew with good reason, even if one of them had not happened to be Devenish, as it pleased him to be called. It was no secret to Hazard that Denkin had sworn to get Devenish's blood money. And Sophy, whom he had never seen, had been headed on the subject, was the only person with sense enough not to think Devenish was on Atherton's side. Hazard pulled himself together as best he could. "I was with you in the trouble at Eldon," he said, slowly. "Don't you remember we backed you through Harry's place and held the door till you got clear away? And you mean to say you've been a kind of celebrity! People wouldn't forget you in five years." "Suppose you hold your tongue on the subject," said Devenish, signally. "I didn't go to Macleod for you, anyway; I did it for your girl; and to get even with Denkin. I wasn't going to let him get a claw on this gold. If you were at Eldon I guess you know why, if you didn't know his right name even. He was the kind that doesn't forget—when it's any good, trailing a man for a while, and then he's got to be a kind of high-priced article. I had him scared blue out of here last spring; I didn't think he'd dare come back, or he might have done differently. I thought you were his lot at first, till your girl told me. I didn't tell you I was going in to record for you. Didn't feel"—his voice had a sudden quiver—"too sure about getting back from Macleod." "Oh, don't let him talk," cried Sophy. "Carry him indoors." Devenish smiled. "Don't trouble," he muttered. "I wouldn't get there. Don't cry, girl!" It was true. Hazard covered Devenish with his own coat, and on a sudden snatched up Sophy's hand into the one that groped and fingered in the snow. "I got Denkin cheap," gasped Devenish, at the touch. "Oh, wolf-man, dear, don't talk!" "You keep that for your own man, with the old cynicism. I didn't get hurt for you; not hurt for despising Denkin." Devenish drew a rattling breath. "I'm kind of glad, Sophy," he added simply. "I never thought I'd be holding on to a woman's hand in my girl's dead this ten years. Ten years—till I could get even with Denkin, and keep him away from—other women."

"You kept him from me," Sophy whispered. "I didn't know he was Denkin, but you kept him from me. This I've sworn like me, that I found in my house, doesn't seem to have worked, either." "Denkin!" exclaimed Sophy. "He's Atherton's Denkin wasn't his name." "The woman stared at her. "It was when you got down to bed rock," said he, "though it never dawned on me you and I were talking of the same man, however it was named by others besides your Atherton; but he's plain Denkin now." Hazard said nothing at all, so far as the woman was called. He was staring with queer sense of buried memory at the wolf-man. "Is Atherton—dead?" asked Sophy challengingly. The wolf-man stopped calmly, and touched his. "Pretty near," he said, not unkindly. "I wonder if he'll ever know it was I." To Sophy's stark horror Atherton stirred. She covered her eyes as he clutched at the hole in his breast. "You!" he gasped, with his sudden vindictiveness. "You, dressed up, that kept driving me out of here last year?" "Just man," said the wolf-man composedly. "I'd a long score against you, Denkin." "Look out!" roared Hazard; but his jump was late. Atherton had shot through his coat, straight upward, before he had dropped like a stone. He was dead now, but not before he had stung. Sophy sprang to the wolf-man's side as he staggered, but he spoke to Hazard. "I didn't think he'd dare come here, either as Atherton or Denkin—or I wouldn't have gone to Macleod." "Macleod?" "What for?" "He choked and crumpled forward on the snow. "I'm kind of done from the tramp, he muttered. "except you was Sophy told me how I'd 'em mine." "Eidon; six years ago," said Hazard simply. With the man's name everything had come back to him like a photograph. One-sweated, mining Eldon had been turned into pandemonium in five minutes, when Devenish had seen fit to shoot five men in what he called cold blood. To Hazard and half a dozen others, who happened to know all Devenish had against the five, it was usually something else. It was plain murder. The only mistake it seemed to them that he had missed the sixth man, who happened to be Denkin, was that he had no money for a second shot.

Don't forget that Next Week's Complete "MARIE" Its hero is Allan Quatermain (hero of "King Solomon's Mines"), and the story is written in Haggard's very best Novel in The Evening World will be BY H. RIDER HAGGARD and most enthralling vein. READ IT.