

# The Snowshoe Trail

By EDISON MARSHALL

## CHAPTER XXII—(Cont'd.)

The same rifle shots that brought lucid meaning for Joe Robinson and Pete the Breed, the two Indians that were occupying Harold's cabin.

"Four shots," Pete said at last.

"Lounsbury's signal."

"That means—big doin's," Joe pronounced gravely. "We go."

Then they put on their snowshoes and rushed away.

There was no nervous waiting at the appointed meeting place—a spring a half-mile from Bill's cabin. Harold Lounsbury was already there.

A stranger to this land might have thought that Harold was drunk. Unfamiliar little fires glittered and glowed in his eyes, his features were drawn.

The breeds waited patiently for him to speak.

"Where's the Sindy?" he asked at last.

"Over Buckshot Den's—just where you said," Joe replied.

"Of course Buckshot took her back?" The Indians nodded.

"Well, I'm going to let him keep her. I've got a white squaw now—and soon I'm going out with her to the Outside. But there's things to do first. Bill has found the mine."

The others nodded gravely.

"And Bill is as blind as a mole—got caught in a cabin full of green-wood smoke. He'll be able to see again in a day or two. So I sent for you right away."

The breeds nodded again, a trifle less phlegmatically.

"The mine's worth millions—more money than you can dream of. More of you get a sixth—one-third divided between you. As soon as we're finished what I've planned, we'll finish our claim notices and put up our own, then go down to the recorder and record the claim," Harold went on. "Then it's ours. No one will ever guess. No one'll make any trouble."

"Both of you are to come to the cabin, just about dark. You'll tell me you have been over Bald Peak way and are hitting back toward the Yuga village."

"Bring along a quart of booze—maybe two quarts would be better. And sometime in the early evening give Bill what's coming to him."

"Do him off?" Joe asked stolidly.

"Make it look like a fight," Harold went on. "Insult him—better still, get in a quarrel among yourselves. He'll tell you to shut up, and one of you flame up at him. Then strike the life out of him before he knows what he's about. He's blind and he can't fight."

"What do you want us to use?" Pete asked. "This?" He indicated the thin blade at his thigh. "Maybe use rifle?"

Harold's eyes looked drowsy when he answered. Something like a lust swept over him; this question of Pete's moved him in dark and evil ways. His father's blood was in the full ascendancy at last.

"There's an old pick in the cabin—Bill had it prospecting," he said.

## CHAPTER XXIII

Bill's eyes were considerably better when he awakened—full in the daylight. The warm wet cloths had taken part of the inflammation out of them, and when he strained to open the lids, he was aware of a little, dim gleam of light.

He couldn't make out objects, however, and except for a fleeting shadow he could not discern the hand that he swept before his face. Several days and perhaps weeks would pass before the full strength of his sight returned.

His greatest hope at present was that he could grope his way about the cabin and build a fire for Virginia.

Building the fire, however, was a grievous task. He felt it incumbent upon him to move with utmost caution so that Virginia would not be awakened by groping about the walls he encountered the stove.

Feeling told him that hot coals were

still glowing in the ashes. Then he fumbled about the door for such fuel as Harold had provided.

He found a piece at last, and soon a cheery crackle told him that it had ignited. He grinned with delight. But his joy was a trifle premature. At that instant he tripped over a piece of firewood and his hands crashed against the logs.

"Oh, blast my clumsiness!" he whispered. Virginia stirred behind her curtain.

"Is that you, Harold?" she asked. She was wide awake.

"No. It's Bill."

"Well, what are you doing up? Did Harold—do you mean to say you built the fire yourself?"

"That's me, lady."

"Then you must have your sight again." The girl snatched aside the curtain and peered into his face.

"No such luck. Coals were still glowing, all I had to do was to put in a piece of firewood. But I'm all well otherwise, as far as I can tell. How about you?"

The girl stretched up her arms. "A little stiff—and now—I want you to tell me just how this blindness of yours—is going to affect our getting out."

It was a serious question. "I don't see how it can affect us a great deal," he answered. "I realize you don't know one step of the way down to Bradleyburg, and I can't see the way; but Harold knows it perfectly."

As if the invocation of his name were a magic summons, Harold opened the door and entered. He carried Bill's loud-mouthed rifle in the hollow of his arm.

"You've been hunting?" Virginia cried.

"Of course. I figured we needed meat. I carried Bill's rifle because I don't trust the sights of mine. They were a yard off that day I shot at the caribou."

"Did you see any game?"

Harold's eye, met hers and narrowed, ever so slightly. But his answer was apt. "I saw a caribou—about two miles away. There didn't seem a chance in the world to hit it, but considering our scarcity of meat, I took that chance. Of course, I didn't hit within ten feet of him; Bill's gun isn't built for such long ranges. I shot—four times."

Bill did not reply. He was thinking about those same four shots. It was incomprehensible that they should have made such an impression upon him.

"And for all that Bill hasn't got his sight back yet, we're going to start down tomorrow," Virginia went on in a gay voice. She glanced once at Bill, but she did not see the world of despair that came into his face at the delight with which she spoke. "You and I will take turns pulling the sled; Bill will hang on to the gee-pole. And Bill says you know the way. We're going to dash right through—camp out on two nights."

That afternoon both Bill and Virginia started with amazement at the sound of tapping knuckles on the door. Harold's eyes were gleaming.

## CHAPTER XXIV

Harold saw fit to answer the door himself. He threw it wide open; Virginia's startled glance could just make out two swarthy faces, singularly dark and unprepossessing.

"We—we mushin' over to Yuga—been over Bald Peak way," Joe said stumbingly. "Didn't know no one was here. Want a bunk here tonight."

"You've got your own blankets?"

"Yes. We got blankets."

"On your way home, eh? Well, I'll have to ask this lady."

Harold seemed strangely nervous as he turned to Virginia.

"A couple of Indians, going home toward the settlement on the Yuga," he explained quickly. "They've come from over toward Bald Peak and were counting on putting up here tonight. That's the woods custom, you know—to stay at anybody's cabin. Do you think we can put 'em up?"

"Good heavens, we can't send them on, on a night like this. It's awkward, though—about food."

"They've likely got their own food."

"Of course they can stay. Bill can sleep on the floor in here—you can take the two of them with you into the little cabin. It will be pretty tight work, but we can't do anything else. Bring them in."

Harold turned again to the door, and in a moment the Indians strode blinking, into the candlelight.

Virginia shot them a swift glance and was instinctively repelled; but at once she ascribed the evil savagery of their faces to racial traits.

Bill, sitting against the cabin wall, tried to make sense out of a confused jumble of thoughts and impressions and memories that flooded in one wave to his mind.

He had assumed at once that the two breeds were Joe and Pete, whom he had encountered when he first found Harold. Why, then, had the latter made no sign of recognition? "It's Joe and Pete, isn't it?" he asked abruptly in the silence.

"Pete—Joe?" Joe answered at last, in a bewildered tone. "Don't know

em. I'm Wolfpaw Black—he's Jimmy Jimmy Dubois."

Except for a little lingering uncertainty, Bill was satisfied.

Virginia went on with her supper preparations, and at last the three of them drew chairs around their crude little table.

The two breeds took their lunch from their packs and munched it, sitting beside the stove.

All at once Joe grunted in the stillness, and all except Bill whirled to look at him. He went to his pack and fished among the blankets. Then, a dark light in his eyes he put two bottles upon the table.

Virginia was suddenly deeply afraid. She looked at Bill, forgetting for the moment that in his blindness he could not see what was occurring; and that in his helplessness she could not depend upon him in a crisis. She turned to Harold, hoping that he would refuse this offering at a word. And her fear increased when she saw the craving on his face.

"Have a drink!" Joe invited.

Bill started them, but he made no response. Harold moved toward the table.

"You're a lifesaver, Wolfpaw," he replied, genially. "It's a cold night, and I don't care if I do. Virginia, pass down the cups."

(To be continued.)

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## A SOLOMON

On a certain island there was a garrison of marines and a garrison of blue-jackets and a senior officer of each corps. The wives of each of the officers laid claim to a special pew in the little island church, and after much dispute, in which each asserted her right, an appeal was made to the governor.

The governor accorded a patient hearing to each of the claimants, and gave as his decision that the pew should be occupied by the elder of the two.

Ever after that the special pew remained empty. (5th Corps News).

## THE MARRIAGE SCHOOLS

"Matrimony," says a writer, "is an institution of learning, in which a man loses his bachelor's degree without acquiring a master's."

Don't know

## Long Skirts, Wind and Spiders Fatal?

Accidents suggest automobiles, grade-crossings, airplanes, explosions, or high-speed machinery.

But a recent survey of the injuries listed in claims under workmen's compensation insurance reveals that even the decorative daffodil, a timorous mouse, or the at the Battery wall may mean months in a hospital for the victim.

Says the New York correspondent of the Boston Herald: "Oddly acquired injuries come to light frequently through the claims work of the New York State insurance fund, which is the largest carrier of compensation insurance in the State. A perusal of the claim files at the home office discloses that hidden perils often beset the most innocent-appearing circumstances."

"An elderly man engaged to run errands could not cope with the strong wind at the Battery. He was blown against a railing and his leg severely injured."

"Some danger lurks in the current fashion—a girl forgot she had placed a needle in the hem of her skirt. Her leg struck against a table. The needle was driven into her leg just above the knee."

"A spider in the cellar bit a plumber."

"A machine at which a girl was working broke with a crash that sounded like an explosion. The girl's facial muscles became paralyzed from the fright."

"A school principal handed a diploma to a girl graduate. With it he presented a bouquet of roses a relative had sent. A thorn pricked his finger and blood poisoning developed. He was incapacitated for several months and the courts awarded him compensation, holding that the injury was received in the course of his employment."

"A bookkeeper turned his head suddenly and a pen in his hand pierced his nose. Infection developed that brought on a fatal brain abscess."

"A delivery boy, who says that, in accordance with safety instructions, he waited for the proper signal light before crossing Fifth Avenue traffic, alleges that as a result he was incapacitated by inhaling the fumes from passing automobiles."

"Even the safety of the home may be overestimated."

"It is not generally realized," said Charles G. Smith, manager of the State fund, "that about one-fourth of all fatal accidents are in the home. The best information is that there were approximately 100,000 persons killed in accidents of all kinds in the United States last year, and that about 25,000 of these deaths occurred in the home."

"In general, automobiles brought about most accidental deaths, while falls took the second largest toll of life. In the home fall stand first in the list of causes of accidental deaths."

## The Perfect Housekeeper

She always kept everything perfectly clean.

From the cellar clear up to the top; For neatness and order she surely was keen.

And no one could get her to stop.

Her husband could never find comfort at home.

For fear he would muss up the place Where his wife with a broom and a duster would roam.

With a stern sort of look on her face.

She never had time to be reading a book.

She never had time for a call.

Instead, she was scrubbing corner or nook.

Or sweeping the stairs in the hall.

She swept all her beauty and gladness away.

She swept all the joy out of life.

Until she became an automaton grey.

A cleaning machine—not a wife.

She scrubbed all the love from the heart of her spouse.

Her children were playless and glum.

She had her reward—an immaculate house.

Where nobody ever would come.

She swept and she dusted and scrubbed like a slave.

Till she swept herself into the tomb.

And the monument now at the head of her grave.

Is a duster, a brush and a broom.

—Berton Braley.

## Taking the Hint

Harold Fish was sitting in the dark in the drawing room with his young lady friend, and he did not notice that the hour was getting late.

Suddenly the door opened and the girl's father appeared on the scene.

"Do you know the time?" he asked.

Fish jumped to his feet at once, snatched up his hat, and almost ran from the room.

When he had gone the girl's father turned to his daughter.

"Is that young man a fool?" he asked angrily.

"What makes you think that, father?" queried the girl. "He only went because he thought you were giving him the hint."

"Nothing of the sort," her father explained. "My watch has stopped and I came to ask him the correct time."—Answers.

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## Pickled Plums

Ingredients: Four pounds of plums, one pound of Demerara sugar, one pint of best vinegar, six cloves, a piece of cinnamon, a few grains of cayenne. Prick the plums well with a silver fork. Put them in an earthenware bowl. Put the sugar and spices in a stewpan with the vinegar and bring to the boil. Cool, and when it is only warm, pour it over the plums. Leave it for twenty-four hours, then reboil the vinegar and pour it over the plums again. Repeat this for three days. Then put plums and vinegar in a preserving pan and boil altogether for five minutes. Turn into jars and tie down when cold.



"She is said to be the most accomplished flirt at the hotel."

"Well, she got a start on the other girls. She went to Palm Beach in March for practice."

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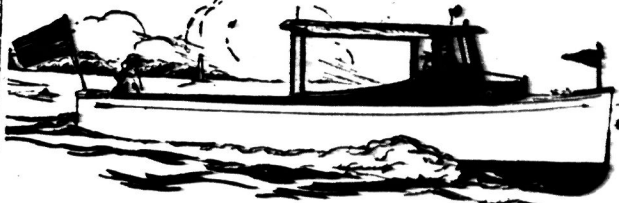


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## Economy Corner

### Date Custard Pie

Line a pie plate with a good crust and put in 2 cups chopped dates, then make a custard as follows:

Two egg yolks, 1/4 cup sugar, 1 cup milk, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon vanilla (a little nutmeg may be used in place of vanilla). Beat this all well and pour over dates. Bake until firm, then cover with beaten egg whites, to which a teaspoon of sugar and pinch of baking powder have been added. Brown in moderate oven.

### Cardinal Salad

Boil 2 large beets until tender, or use canned beets; slice, cover with 2 tablespoons vinegar and allow them to stand over night. Drain off vinegar and add to mayonnaise. Take 1 cup wax beans, 1 cup peas, 1 cup asparagus tips and mix with the red mayonnaise. Serve in little rosette nests of lettuce leaves and garnish with red radishes.

### Strawberry Shortcake

Beat 1 egg, add 1/4 cup sugar and 1 cup milk and mix. Measure 2 1/2 cups pastry flour, 5 teaspoons baking powder and 3/4 teaspoon salt. Add through a sifter to the egg mixture. Beat well. Melt 1/2 cup butter, add mixture, and beat again. Turn into 2 greased 8-inch layer cake pans. Bake at 400 degrees, 25 to 30 minutes. When baked, remove from pans. Place cakes on a cake cooler until cool. Wash and stem 2 quarts strawberries. Reserve about 1 dozen of the finest shaped berries for garnishing. Crush remainder slightly with potato masher. Then add 1 cup sugar and mix. Place one-half of berries between the two layers and the remainder on the upper layer. Whip 1/2 pint cream; add 1/4 cup powdered sugar, pinch salt, and 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, and mix. Cover the upper layer of cake with cream, garnish with whole berries, and serve at once.



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