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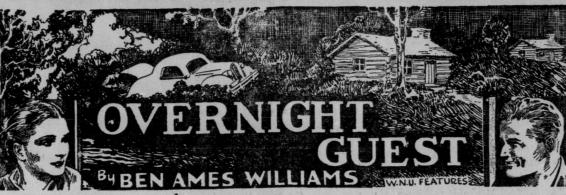
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CHAPTER I

Adam Bruce decided it was time for lunch, sought the hotel. He gave his order, and while he waited, two people came into the dining room and stood just inside the door. A gray-haired man, round without being fat, apple-cheeked, with a mild blue eye and a curious suggestion of physical readiness in his walk. Beside him a woman, not so old as he, with a certain formidable sobriety in her countenance that was belied by the warmth in her eyes.

Adam rose, stepped toward them, said in quick pleasure: "Hello, Tope!"

The old man turned, smiled broadly and clasped him by the hand. 'Why, hullo, Adam!-Mrs. Tope, this is Adam Bruce, an old friend of

"Sit down with me," Adam urged. They obeyed, and Bruce looked inquiringly at Mrs. Tope. "I didn't know you were married, Inspector."

"Oh, yes, over a year ago." And the old man told Mrs. Tope: "Adam here was a youngster on the force while I was on the Homicide squad. He spoiled a first-rate policeman to become a second-rate lawyer."

Bruce grinned. "You're behind the times, Inspector! I'm a policeman again." Tope looked surprised; and the younger man explained: "I passed the bar exams, but no one seemed to need a lawyer. So I went to work in the bank commissioner's office for a while, and now I've hooked up with Washington-Department of Justice."

'Your outfit has done some good jobs lately," Tope said approvingly.

'Anything happening up here?''
Adam said casually: "No, I'm on vacation." And under Tope's inquiring eye he added: "I used to live up this way, when I was a boy. Been home on a visit. I'm leaving on the midnight train. I often wish we had you with us, Inspector. We need a man who can see the hole in a doughnut . . . Which way are you heading?"

"North, I think. We're just gypsying. I plan to do some fishing as we go. We may hit Canada by and by." Bruce nodded. "Every little brook up this way had a trout in it when was a boy," he said. "I haven't tried them lately." And he asked: "Where do you expect to stay to-

"We may camp out. Or we may try a hotel, if one attracts us. Or a roadside camp.'

"There's a good camp about forty miles from here, between Ridgcomb and Maddison village. I was there only last night," Adam said eagerly. 'A place called Dewain's Mill. You'd like it!"

'We might take a look at it," Tope agreed.

"A girl named Bee Dewain runs it," Adam explained. "She's a cantankerous, stubborn young woman; but if you're careful not to mention my name, she may take you in!"

He felt Mrs. Tope's eye upon him, and was conscious that his ears were red; but after lunch, when he came out to see them continue on their way, he suggested again: "If you do stop at Dewain's Mill, tell that young hussy I sent her my

When they were gone, Adam paid calls here and there, at police headquarters, the post office, the drugstore. There was a wealth of time upon his hands. A little past six o'clock, he returned to the hotel to dine; and while he was at table, a bell-boy came calling his name. Adam shut himself into the telephone booth and heard a familiar "Adam?"

"Yes," Adam replied, wondering faintly at this call.

"This is Tope."

"Yes. Sure. What's up?" "I'm phoning from that place you recommended, Dewain's Mill. Adam, you'd better come up here."

"What's the matter?" "Rather not talk over the phone.

"Miss Dewain all right?" "Yes, of course. Do you know the

police up here?" "Sure. Ned Quill-he's a state

trooper-is an old friend of mine." "On your way here," Tope directed, "get word to your friend the trooper to meet you-without anyone seeing him-at the cabin called Faraway. You hire that cabin for the night. I'll see you there."

"But Tope, I'm due in New York tomorrow.

"You've a job to do here," Tope insisted. "Good-by!"

And Adam heard the receiver click as Tope hung up. The young man stared at the instrument for a moment in a perplexed and indecisive fashion; but-here was at least a pretext for seeing Bee again, and Tope had not used to be one to cry

'Wolf" without cause. Adam sent a wire to his chief. Possible trouble here. Staying to investigate. Will report. Bruce." Then he retrieved his bag from the check-room, hired a car and driver, and started north along the moonlit

When they left Middleford after

that chance encounter with young Adam Bruce, Mrs. Tope saw that her husband was silent, and she asked:

"I was wondering why we hap pened to run into Adam ' "Just an accident?" "Call it that. But-accidents have a trick of fitting into a pattern by and by. As if some one had planned

"What are you thinking?"

sides a vacation on his mind." "I wondered whether Miss Dewain is as cantankerous and stubborn as

me that Adam had something be-

And he added: "It struck

he pretends!" He chuckled. "You're looking for romance! But I'm wondering what fetched a Department of Justice man into these hills?"

It was obviously impossible, as yet, to answer this question. As they went on, the hills were bolder; the valleys deep, the streams swift and silver. They passed big estates, and

The little car required gas, and they came to Ridgcomb. Chet's Place invited their patronage. A lean, dry man as old as Tope, with shrewd twinkling eyes, came out to serve them. Mrs. Tope



"We might take a look at it," Tope

stayed in the car, but Tope, mild and beaming and inquisitive, alighted. "Handsome stretch of country through here!" he remarked.

"All right in the summer-time," the man-this was doubtless Chet himself-assented. His hand was on the hose, his eye on the clicking pump gauge. "But in winter, it's cold as a banker's heart!"

Tope chuckled. "A lot of big places around."

"Summer folks, mostly! Not so many now as there used to be. There can't many people afford to hire a hundred men just to cut lawns, these days!"

"I noticed one place that looked like a castle, back on the mountain," Tope suggested.

"That's where Ledforge lives, when he ain't in New York." Chet spat, as though the name left a bad taste in his mouth. "He owns half the water power in New England. He sold a pile of his stocks and bonds to the folks around here. Stuck 'em, mostly."

"Didn't stick you," Tope flatteringly surmised.

"Not me! Me, I keep my money where I can handle it any time I'm a mind." And Chet volunteered: "You don't see Ledforge around here much, now. I dunno as it'd be safe for him to walk through the village."

"Married?"

"Sister keeps house for him. She's all right; but they don't mix with nobody only the Holdoms." "What Holdom is that?"

Chet shook his head. "I dunno. 'H.H.' they call him. In the stock market I guess. Good feller. He'll stop and talk, when he fills up at my pump here." He hung up the hose. "Check your oil?" Mrs. Tope nodded. "You c'n stand a quart," Chet decided. And he said: "I sell H.H. all his gas. Cars and airplanes

"Planes?"

"He's got him a landing-field down by the river. I dunno but he'll give it up now, though. I would, in his

"Why?" Tope was always curious. "Den't you like flying?"

"Guess't I don't! Never done any of it my own self; but my nephew, Bob Flint, he got killed here Sat'day in one of the dummed things. Holdom and Ledforge, they used to ride back and forth from New York in Holdom's airplane about half the time, and Bob worked for Holdom

he took a dive into Long Island Sound, long about daylight Sat'day morning." He added resentfully: "I'll have Bob's ma to support, I guess. It ain't likely he'd saved anything." He shut the hood.

Mrs. Tope said quietly: "Shall we go on?" So the inspector climbed in beside her, but as they moved away he protested:

"Don't you hurry me all the time, ma'am! I like to get the flavor of the country as I go along. I like to talk to folks." And he said inquiringly: "You acted kind of

"I was," she admitted. "When he spoke of Mr. Holdom."

"Know him, do you?"

"I know who he is." Mrs. Tope, before her marriage, had been the effective head of the Jervis Trust, with an active interest in business and finance; and she explained: "He's the floor specialist in the Ledforge stocks, and he's a crook!"

Slowly they drove on, stopping now and then to look across the hills and down the deep bright valleys. They ascended a steep grade, and at the top she checked the car. Tope looked to see why she slowed down, and discovered beside the road a large white-painted sign, on which black letters cried invitingly:

COME IN AND MILL AROUND!

He chuckled, and a moment later saw by the brook the gray weathered structure of an old mill, neat and in repair. An arched entrance and a gravel drive offered admis-

Mrs. Tope said: "This must be the place your young friend Adam Bruce told us about. It looks clean. Shall we try it?"

"I'd like to try that brook below the road," he admitted, so she turned in and stopped by the Mill

Tope surveyed the surroundings with that quick interest any new scene always provoked in him. The Mill was on their left. Beyond it by the stream side there was a turfed terrace, an open hearth, picnic tables. A gray-haired man sat on one of these tables and played a violin; and a girl stood near by, her shoulders against the trunk of a tree, watching him and listening. A State Trooper in uniform bestrode his silent motorcycle-to which a side car was attached-in the drive near them, and his eyes were on the girl.

Beyond, the millpond was visible, and a spring-board; and two small boys so much alike that they were clearly twins were diving, swimming ashore, climbing on the board and diving again, chasing each other like comely woman with knitting in her hands, seated on a boulder flear by, turned an interested eye on the car and the newcomers. Small cabins were scattered among the trees.

The scene was peaceful, but abruptly its peace was shattered. The trooper kicked his motorcycle into life with a series of explosions of entirely unnecessary violence, and he wheeled his machine, darted past the little car, turned into the highroad and raced away. The girl looked after him with amused eyes, and so saw these old people in their car, and came toward them.

"Have you room for two lodgers?" Mrs. Tope asked.

"Oh, yes, plenty," she assured them. "There's hardly anyone here. Not many people travel these days." Tope remarked: "That policeman don't really enjoy the violin!"

The girl laughed softly. "Ned's not very musical," she agreed. "But it was rotten of him to start his motorcycle right in the middle of Mr. Vade's flddling. I shall tell him

"Be back, will he?" "Oh, he always comes back!"

Mrs. Tope looked around with an appreciative glance. "You run this The girl said readily: "Oh, yes.

I'm Bee Dewain. Mrs. Priddy cooks for us, and she's been famous for her biscuits and waffles ever since I was a child. Earl-he's Mrs. Priddy's husband-does the chores, and rakes the drives, and cleans the cabins. But I keep the books and generally run things." "How's the fishing?" Tope in-

quired. "Earl Priddy brings in a good mess, now and then."

Mrs. Tope asked:

choose our cabin?" "They're all just alike, inside, only those up there on the knoll are nearer the road of course, with cars go-

"I shouldn't like that," Mrs. Tope decided.

"Then why don't you take Fara-way?" Bee advised. "It's new this year, and it's clear out of sight up in the woods, so if you want to be really quiet . . . No one has ever spent even one night in Faraway. It was only finished about two weeks ago. You'll be the very first ones." stepped up on the running board. "Just go straight ahead," she directed.

Dirt Removal Helps

Extend Life of Rug The life of a rug can be extended or shortened according to the care it receives. Cleanliness is one of the first requirements for good care, as dirt is the enemy of all pile fabrics and gritty particles actually cut the pile at its base if allowed to accumulate. There are three types of dirt to watch for in pile rugs-surface dirt such as crumbs and lint, all-over surface dirt, and grit. Grit causes the most damage.

Remove surface dirt from pile floor coverings every day. A carpet sweeper will do the trick, and so will a broom used directly with the pile. At least once a week clean all carpet areas thoroughly with your vacuum cleaner-do it oftener when needed. The vacuum cleaner does a good job if it is operated correctly. Run the machine lengthwise of the material, and go over each section at least twice. This will give the cleaner a chance to do a thorough job in removing imbedded dirt or grit

If you must use a broom for rug cleaning, remember to use short, deep strokes instead of long brushing sweeps. It's easy enough to take the surface dirt off with a broom, but you have to go after the imbedded grit.

BEGINNING OF

Well, here comes the rest of the Blue Ridge story.

very satisfactorily, then they gave me a contract of splitting and preparing about 1,000 cords of acid wood, and pulling it up to the line. I had a bunch of men, both white and colored. They off and had it enlarged. I still kept me busy from first one thing have it. (Anybody interested in to another, chopping, grading, cleaning off the hotel site, etc and see the picture). The yoke They laid out work so fast for that's on their necks was made

Well, then the building got under way. The building contractor, stone, he had his men trying Hotel. to carry them in on hand bars, he couldn't keep stone for his of Ridgecrest next time. masons. He ask Mr. Jim Hampton, who was one of the carpenters what would he do to get the stone in, Mr. Hampton said go up there and get that negro, I'll guarantee he'll get it for you. He came, and told me his trouble. told me what Mr. Hampton said. He said, can you do this? I told him yes, if he'd give me what I wanted to work with. He wanted to know what that was. I told him first I wanted a good sled built then a platform about half way up the car line, 12 ft. wide

and about 25 ft. long, built so I could drive up on one end and down on the other, just about as high as the car is. Alright, he said, I will send three carpenters right on up and I'll put Mr. Hampton to building the sled, and I will have the men that's hauling lumber to drop off just what you want and you stay up there and boss it just like you want it. I told him I'd use one yoke of my oxen and about five men beside myself, and about 4 or 5 good crow bars. He ask would he have to furnish the men, or did I have them. I told him I had plenty of men. Garland Bird and Deb Curtis (both white), Hub Morehead, Walt Lytle and one of my boys, Jack Stepp, colored, so, about three o'clock in the evening I had things ready to go. He had two men of his own to run the tram car, Prock and Milt Lytle. They pulled the car up the mountain with a mule, then they let it back down with

Mr. Getaz was a very sour looking man but about the 3rd day I seen him coming up the line with a smile on his face. Well, Ed, vou're are doing just what Mr. BLUE RIDGE Hampton said you'd do, you've got me covered up down there. I'll have to ask you to stop for a couple of days until we make room so I went back to sleding wood. I completed the job of logging I had one prize yoke of oxen, name "Mike and Bill." They were the one's I used to the sled.

One day Dr. Weatherford slipped up in the woods and snapped their picture. I sent it seeing Mike and Bill can drop by me until it made me pull my hair by Higgins Ledbetter of Broad River. He really could make ox yokes. He made six for me at one time. So, you see I got all Mr. Getz, run up against it for the stone that's in the Blue Ridge

Will tell you about the beginning

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