

The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

Copyright, 1905, by Rex E. Beach.

CHAPTER III. WELL, here's me an' Glen... I'm a widder, but here he seem'd naturally to take on the attributes of his surroundings...

"What portent do you see that makes you stare into the night so anxiously?" he inquired. "Naturally, I never have," she answered.

"Well, here it is. I have it from the lips of a great hunter of the Tanamas. He told it to me when I was sick once in his cabin, and inasmuch as he is a wise Indian and has a reputation for truth I have no doubt that it is scrupulously correct."

"Then it was that Hika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world... He tried to dissuade him, saying it was certain death because a pack of monstrous white wolves taller than the moose and swifter than the eagle was known to range these mountains...

"What part of the saw tooth range do you mean?" she asked. "The very old days, before the world was divided into nations, or other words, before the moose and the caribou were the only animals that roamed the hills like mist... The dogs grow gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women became pale and their eyes grew wild."

"Then it was that Hika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world... He tried to dissuade him, saying it was certain death because a pack of monstrous white wolves taller than the moose and swifter than the eagle was known to range these mountains...

"What part of the saw tooth range do you mean?" she asked. "The very old days, before the world was divided into nations, or other words, before the moose and the caribou were the only animals that roamed the hills like mist... The dogs grow gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women became pale and their eyes grew wild."

the first place. You are an eastern man. You have had advantages, education, and yet you choose this. You must have the north."

"I am a widder, but here he seem'd naturally to take on the attributes of his surroundings, acquiring a picturesque negligence of dress and morals and suggesting rugged, elemental, chilling potentialities. While with him—and he had sought her repeatedly that day—she was uneasily aware of his strong personality tugging at her; aware of the unbridled passionate flood of a nature unbrooking of delay and heedless of doubt. This it was that antagonized her and set her every mental shew in rigid resistance."

"What part of the saw tooth range do you mean?" she asked. "The very old days, before the world was divided into nations, or other words, before the moose and the caribou were the only animals that roamed the hills like mist... The dogs grow gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women became pale and their eyes grew wild."

"Then it was that Hika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world... He tried to dissuade him, saying it was certain death because a pack of monstrous white wolves taller than the moose and swifter than the eagle was known to range these mountains...

"What part of the saw tooth range do you mean?" she asked. "The very old days, before the world was divided into nations, or other words, before the moose and the caribou were the only animals that roamed the hills like mist... The dogs grow gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women became pale and their eyes grew wild."

"Then it was that Hika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world... He tried to dissuade him, saying it was certain death because a pack of monstrous white wolves taller than the moose and swifter than the eagle was known to range these mountains...

"What part of the saw tooth range do you mean?" she asked. "The very old days, before the world was divided into nations, or other words, before the moose and the caribou were the only animals that roamed the hills like mist... The dogs grow gaunt and howled all night, the babies cried, the women became pale and their eyes grew wild."

"Then it was that Hika decided to go hunting over the saw tooth range which formed the edge of the world... He tried to dissuade him, saying it was certain death because a pack of monstrous white wolves taller than the moose and swifter than the eagle was known to range these mountains...

when he was near she could not help but smile. He overpowered her; he would not be lured; he paid no heed to her slights. This very quality reminded her how willingly and unhesitatingly he had fought off the sailors from the Ohio at a word from her. She knew he would do so again, and more, and it is hard to be lured or to one who would lay down his life for you even though he had the maddest, particularly when he has the magnanimity that sweeps you away from your moorings.

"There's no danger of being seen," he continued. "The crowd's crazy, and besides, we'll go ashore right away. You must be mad with the excitement. It's on my nerves too."

"Good evening, Mr. Glenister," she said, with a cordiality. "Howdy, Mrs. Chapman!" He moved away. She followed a step, staring at Helen.

"What I want, I take," he repeated, and then suddenly he reached forth and laid his hand on her shoulder. "I am going to love you, Helen," said he.

"And may God strike me dead if I ever stop hating you," she cried, her voice coming thick and hoarse with passion. Turning, she walked proudly forward toward her cabin, a trim, straight, haughty figure, and he did not know that her knees were shaking and weak.

"That's Anvil creek up yonder," said Glenister. "There's where the Midland... The beach they neared was walled and crowded to the high tide mark with remnants of merchandise, while every incoming craft deposited its quota upon whatever vacant foot was close at hand till bins, boxes, boilers and baggage of all kinds were confusedly intermixed in the narrow space."

"There was no room for more, yet hourly they added to the mass. Teams splashed through the lapping surf or stuck in the deep sand between hills of goods. All was noise, profanity, congestion and feverish hurry. The crowd had a ring in the voice of the multitude, shored in its violence of gesture and redness of face, re-created the atmosphere with a magnetic, electrifying energy."

"It's something there ashore," said the oarsman. "I been up for three days an' nights steady. There ain't no room no time no darkness to sleep in. Ham an' eggs is a dollar an' a half, an' whiskey's 4 lets a bottle. He wailed the last sadly, as a complaint unexpressed."

blood and violence as corollaries. Emerging from the doorway at the foot of the stairs, they deflected slowly along the walk, watching the crowd. Besides the universal tension, there were laughter and hope and exhilaration in the faces. The enthusiasm of this boyish multitude warned one. The girl wished to get into this spirit—to be one of them. Then suddenly from the lullaby of their elbows came a discordant note, not long nor loud, only a few words, penetrating and harsh with the metallic quality lent by passion.

Helen glanced over her shoulder to find that the smiles of the throng were gone and that its eyes were bent on some scene in the street with an eager interest she had never seen mirrored before. Simultaneously Glenister spoke. "Come away from here."

With the quickened eye of experience he foresaw trouble and tried to drag her on, but she shook off his grasp impatiently and, turning, gazed absorbed at the spectacle which unfolded itself before her. Although not comprehending the play of events, she felt vaguely the quick approach of some crisis, yet was unprepared for the swiftness with which it came.

Her eyes had leaped to the figures of two men in the street from whom the rest had separated like oil from water. One was slim and well dressed, the other bulky, black-haired and lowering of feature. It was the smaller who spoke, and for a moment she misjudged his bloodshot eyes and swaying carriage to be the result of alcohol until she saw that he was racked with fury.

"Make good, I tell you, quick! Give me that bill of sale, you—!" The unkempt man swung on his heel with a growl and walked away, his course leading him toward Glenister and the girl. With two strides he was abreast of them; then, detecting the fashing movement of the other, he whirled like a wild animal. His voice had the snarl of a beast in it.

"He'd had to have it, didn't he? Well, there!" The actions of both men were quick as light, yet to the girl's taut senses they seemed theatrical and deliberate. Into her mind was seared forever the memory of that second as though the shutter of a camera had snapped, impressing upon her brain the scene, sharp, clear cut and vivid. The shaggy back of the large man almost brushing her, the rage-drunken, white-shirted man in the derby hat, the crowd sweeping backward like rushes before a blast, men with arms flexed and feet raised in flight, the glaring yellow sign of the "Rich Belt Luce Hall" across the way—these were stamped upon her retina, and then she was jerked violently backward, two strong arms crushed her down upon her knees against the wall, and she was smoothed in the arms of Roy Glenister.

"My God! Don't move! We're in line!" He crouched over her, his cheek against her hair, his weight forcing her down into the smaller compass, his arms about her, his body forming a living shield against the flying bullets. Over them the big man stood, and the sustained roar of his gun was deafening. In an instant they heard the thud and felt the jar of lead in the thin boards against which they huddled. Again the report echoed aloud. "What d'you want?" he howled, his legs wavering uncertainly. His eyes were heavy and bloodshot, his lips hoarse, and his whole person exhaled alcoholic fumes like a gust from a still house. Hanging to the knob, he strove vainly to solve the mystery of his supporters, hiccoughing intermittently.

"Humph! Been drunk ever since I left!" questioned Glenister. "Somebody's got to tell you," the lawyer replied. There was neither curiosity, recognition nor resentment in his voice. In fact, his head drooped so that he paid no attention to the girl, who had shrunk back at sight of him. He was a young man, with marks of brilliancy showing through the dissipation betrayed by his slivery hair and contorted features.



They saw the slender man spin half round.

placed his arm about her waist. Her eyes were staring and horror filled. "Don't be frightened," said he, smiling at her reassuringly. But his own lips shook and the sweat stood out like dew on him, for they had both been close to death. There came a surge and swirl through the crowd, and Dextery swooped upon them like a hawk.

"He's hurt! Holy Mackinaw! When I see you blaze away I yell at you fit to bust my throat. I show thought you was gone. Although I can't say but this kiltin' was a sight for sore eyes—no heat an' gentee—still, as a rule, in these street brawls it's the famous bystander that has flowers sent around to his house afterward."

"Look at this," said Glenister. Breast high in the wall against which they had crouched, not three feet apart, were bullet holes. "Then's the first two he unhitched," Dextery remarked, jerking his head toward the object in the street. "He had been a new gun an' pulled hard—threw him to the right. See?"

Even to the girl it was patent that had she not been snatched as she was the bullet would have found her. "Come away quick," she panted, and led her into a nearby store, where she sank upon a seat and trembled until Dextery brought her a glass of whiskey.

"Here, miss," he said. "Pretty tough go for a 'cheekako.' I'm afraid you ain't pottin' enmoured of this here country a whole lot." For half an hour he talked to her in his whimsical way of foreign tongues till she was quieted. Then the partners arose to go. Although Glenister had arranged for her to stop with the wife of the merchant for the rest of the night, she would not.

"I can't go to bed. Please don't leave me! I'm too nervous. I'll go and if you do. The strain of the last week has been too much for me. If I sleep I'll see the faces of those men again." Dextery talked with his companion, then made a purchase which he laid at the lady's feet.

For half an hour he talked to her in his whimsical way of foreign tongues till she was quieted. Then the partners arose to go. Although Glenister had arranged for her to stop with the wife of the merchant for the rest of the night, she would not.

WOOD'S SEEDS. Best qualities obtainable. Winter or Hairy Vetch. Farm & Garden Seeds. T. W. WOOD & SONS, Seedsmen, Richmond, Va. UNION INSTITUTE. The Wingate School. Teachers for 1907-1908.

The effect of malaria lasts a long time. You catch cold easily or become run-down because of the after effects of malaria. Strengthen yourself with Scott's Emulsion. It builds new blood and tones up your nervous system. ALL DRUGGISTS: 50c. AND \$1.00.