

Joseph McCord's

HEART'S HERITAGE

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THE STORY

CHAPTER I—The congregation of the Old White Church in Locust Hill turns out in full force to look over the new preacher, Dr. Jonathan Farwell, and there is much speculation among the communicants as to what sort of man he will be. Absent from the service is Cassius Brady, treasurer of the church who had recommended Dr. Farwell for the post after his baccalaureate sermon at the graduation of Dale Farwell, his son, who is a geologist and geologist Lenora Brady, Dale, who lives alone with his father.

CHAPTER II—Dr. Farwell meets the members of his congregation personally, accepts their tributes, but refuses to be impressed by the banker's family, the Marblestones, whose daughter Evelyn obviously has her cap for Dale. Meanwhile the women of the town are curious about the mystery of the Farwells' womanly housekeeping, and Abbie Brown attempts to get behind the scenes by bringing the men a pan of home-made doughnuts. In the privacy of his room Dale has enlisted the aid of a beautiful young man, inscribed in childish lettering "Elaine."

CHAPTER III—The Marblestones invite the Farwells to dinner with Cassius Brady, Lenora, known as "Lee," in poor health. At the dinner Evelyn monopolizes Dale, who tells her of his geological studies. Farwell about his womanly housekeeping, and Abbie Brown brings the men a pan of home-made doughnuts. In the privacy of his room Dale has enlisted the aid of a beautiful young man, inscribed in childish lettering "Elaine."

CHAPTER IV—Constable Kerney is perturbed by the strange appearance of a suspicious-looking little man and shadows him. He is further mystified when the stranger goes to the parsonage. There the newcomer is warmly greeted as "Pink" Mulgrew and takes up his duties as housekeeper, adding to the town's speculation as to the return of Mrs. Brady and her daughter to Locust Hill. Dale calls and is won immediately by Mrs. Brady.

CHAPTER V—Evelyn Marblestone gives a party in honor of Dale and is obviously annoyed at his marked attentions to Lee. Lee has been escorted to the party by Pink, Mulgrew, who is a man for whom Dale forms an immediate dislike. Later, Dale takes Lee for a drive around the town, in which she has a student's interest, and he confides in her his ideal of Elaine, his mother, who had died when he was more than a baby and who is still deeply mourned by his father. Lee is sympathetic and understanding, and the two are drawn more closely together.

CHAPTER VI—Dr. Farwell invites the Marblestones to his first formal dinner. Dale has already accepted an invitation to attend a birthday party for the man for whom Dale forms an immediate dislike. Later, Dale takes Lee for a drive around the town, in which she has a student's interest, and he confides in her his ideal of Elaine, his mother, who had died when he was more than a baby and who is still deeply mourned by his father. Lee is sympathetic and understanding, and the two are drawn more closely together.

CHAPTER VII—Evelyn hurries to tell Lee the details of the Farwells' dinner. Abbie Brown's curiosity is heightened by sight of the new man, and she asks Pink to recover her doughnut pan. Pink tells her he has never seen Mrs. Farwell, that Dr. Farwell saved his life in the World War, and that she is a former high school prizefighter. Too late, Pink realizes he has said too much to the town gossip.

CHAPTER VIII—Pink, finding the doughnut pan left behind, returns it to Abbie, but fears from meeting her mother, realizing the women's gossip curiosity. Meanwhile, Dale calls on Lee and after a preliminary coolness on her part, confides his plans to return to college after Christmas to assist Dr. Payne, head of the geology department. The young couple exchange Christmas presents, Dale being a picture reminiscent of their trip around the historical countryside.

CHAPTER IX—Marblestone, urged by his daughter, offers Dale a position in the bank and confides the news to Brady. Dale promises to keep the matter secret. Dale is roused from sleep by a phone call from Lee, anxious about her mother and father, whose car has been found on the road to Trenton whether they went on a secret business trip. Dale drives her there, where they find Brady in a hospital, the result of an accident. Mrs. Brady is unhurt.

CHAPTER X—Over their coffee on their return, Lee and Dale discover their mutual love. Pink advises Dale not to tell his father of the romance, yet, but when he finds Lee's family warmly approving he decides he must tell his father that night.

CHAPTER XI—Dr. Farwell's first reaction is disappointment because of Dale's career, but the sensible stand of waiting pleases him, and he wishes him happiness. Back at the university, Dale is recommended by Dr. Payne for a geological survey in northern Ontario, backed by a man named Wade Kelsey, and agrees to go early in the summer.

CHAPTER XII—Dale hurries home to tell his father and Lee. Driving with Lee, he hears the news that Evelyn and her mother are abroad, and that Pinky Morehead now has the proffered job at the bank.

CHAPTER XIII—The shock to Dr. Farwell of the name, Wade Kelsey, brings out the story of Elaine. Dale listens. Engaged to Wade Kelsey when Dr. Farwell fell in love with her, Elaine had married Farwell, but unable to stand the life of a minister's wife and heartbroken over her failure, had disappeared. With Elaine gone, Farwell's faith was saved only by the war. Unknown to him until he finds him with Elaine's mother, Dale becomes his means of atonement, but Farwell thinks Dale is Kelsey's son.

CHAPTER XIV—Dale wanders through the night, to battle with his disillusionment. Pink, meanwhile, promises Lee to find Dale, and tries to tell Farwell Dale is a geologist. Wade Kelsey calls, accuses Farwell of being responsible for Elaine's death, but with difficulty tries to convince him Dale is Farwell's son, not Kelsey's.

Lenora Brady was slightly incoherent when she flung open the front door for a young man who came bounding up her porch steps. "Dale! Dale! Is it really you? Come in quick. Shut that door!" There was a brief interval without words. "You'll have to excuse me. I'm

a cry-baby." Lee winked back her tears with a laugh. I think I came very near fainting with excitement when I heard your voice. I never dreamed of it being you! Why didn't you prepare me?" "There really wasn't time. I came away on such short notice. Do you mind?" "Mind! I'm so excited I can't talk." She patted his hand. "I was writing a letter to you when the phone rang. And when Hattie said some man wanted to speak to me..." "You thought it was Pliny," Dale volunteered. "I want that letter just the same." "This is better than a million letters!" "I kept my promise, didn't I?" "So wonderfully, dear. I believe you always will." "I'll do my best, Lady Lee."

Dale gave a glowing account of the future to Lee. Old Payne had been a trump to recommend him. It seemed that this chap Kelsey had a lot of interests and there was no telling what the Canada job might lead to. Dale was going to do his best to make good right from the start. He would, too. "It's wonderful," Lee sighed. "I feel, too, that it's the start of happiness for us. Only I dread to see you go so far away. Dale, dear..." "Yes?" "You must help me not to be selfish with you. We must think of your father. But you'll give me every minute you can, won't you?" "Do you have to ask?" "Yes. It's because I am selfish about sharing my heart and geologist. Have you those blue goggles?" "Not yet. I think mosquito netting will be more appropriate, about what I hear."

"It does sound thrilling. Indians and everything. Maybe you'll fall in love with a squaw, Dale." "I just wouldn't wonder. Now, let's plan for this afternoon. It's gorgeous out. Couldn't we run off?" "You saw the car out there, didn't you? I'll go, if you'll drive." "Bargain. We can have several hours to ourselves. I promised father I would show up for dinner. We had only a moment. And I want to see your mother before we go." "Of course. I'll send her down. She's waiting upstairs for me to get over the shock. I won't be but a minute."

"Dale! What a pleasant surprise this is!" was Mrs. Brady's greeting, when that young man planted an impulsive kiss on her cheek and escorted her to her favorite chair. "Isn't it, though?" he beamed. "I'm the one who's lucky." "We are so delighted to hear of your good fortune. Lee was so excited she scarcely could tell me about it. She insisted that I call her father and tell him. He is very much pleased and anxious to see you." "I do wish we could drive over to Staten," said Lee when he helped her into the car. "But it's too far. Where shall we go?"

"I was hoping you would want to go there. We will before I go away. What do you say if we run out and park on the top of Allen's Hill for a time? I like the view there." "I'd love it." "Then I shall take you up into an exceeding high mountain and show you all the kingdoms of this world and the glory. There are some special peaks to see today." "You mustn't tempt me too far and... Watch out for that car, Sir Lucifer. He's going to try to pass us. This steering wheel has too much play. You'll have to get used to it—and back-seat driving."

Sudden silence stilled their lively flow of talk when Dale parked the car on the summit of Allen's Hill and the two sat watching the landscape unrolled at their feet. Woods and farmlands basking in the early afternoon sunlight. Locust Hill among its trees, two miles to the east. The slender spire of Old White thrust above a sea of green. "What are you so busy thinking about, Dale?" Lee asked it gently. For some minutes she had been watching his contemplative eyes looking into the distance. "Oh—things," he admitted, without shifting his gaze. "I suppose it sounds queer. But just now it was about the funeral over there."

He nodded in the direction of the church. "That's where father went this afternoon." "I know. It's Helen Emmons. You remember her, don't you?" "Of course. She was one of those three sisters. Always together and always dressed in black. I sat in the pew with them the first Sunday I was here."

"Did you ever hear anything about them?" "Can't say that I did." "I've often wished I knew the whole story. They say that Miss Helen—she was the oldest—was engaged to be married when she was a young girl. Her lover died. Her sisters have never left her through all these years and all three have worn mourning. It makes you wonder about Miss Eloise and Miss Jane. They gave their lives to Helen. And now she has gone. Why did you think about her just now, Dale?"

"Just how strange it all is. Father standing in the pulpit and telling people what a good woman she was. Miss Emmons there, too. Perhaps she knows more than anybody in the world, what it's all about." "I hope so."

"That's what I was thinking of."

She's on the way out. You and I really are just coming in. I suppose it's that way all the time. "Dale, dear!" Lee's hand came out and caught his in a fierce little clutch. "Don't talk like that. I—I can't bear it. I—I can't bear it."

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can't bear it. If anything happened now, I—I think I'd die! The message came eyes were brimming with sudden tears. "Lady Lee!" Dale exclaimed remorsefully. "I didn't mean to."

"I know," she murmured a smile. "You see, I love you so much. It makes me that way." "Well, nothing is going to happen. It couldn't. Not now."

"I don't believe it could. It seems to me that I have known and loved you always. And it's really been but a few months, hasn't it? After you went away I used to find myself wishing that I had told you about it sooner. But I couldn't have very well. Just the same, I feel that we wasted time."

"We'll try to make it up," Dale smiled. "We have years and years coming to us." "Do you suppose that you'll ever be sorry?"

"No. I never will be sorry. I love you more than anybody in the world. It will always be like that."

"I know. But my chin gets wobbly every time I think of you going so far away. I've got to worry some, Dale. You'll be away off from everybody. There won't even be letters. If you were hurt or sick, I might know nothing about it for a long time."

"Don't worry, dear. Nothing can happen to me as long as you love me. And I know you do." "So terribly. I'll try to keep my chin up while I have you here and can see you every day. Oh, Dale, I have some gossip for you. It's bad news."

"Go on. Break it." "Evelyn is away. She and her mother have gone to Europe. I was going to tell you in the letter."

"Tough." "And that isn't all. Pliny resigned his position with the gas company and has gone into the bank with Mr. Marblestone. So..."

"I'm resigned, too. Pliny hasn't a thing on me."

"Sure you're not sorry?" "What's the use?"

And so lengthening shadows found them, watching the world at their feet. "I'm afraid we should be going," Lee sighed regretfully. "I hate to see this day go. It's the happiest I have ever known, Dale."

"I know. I feel the same way. But it isn't gone. That is, if you'll let me come over for a little while after dinner."

"I was almost afraid to suggest it. Of course I want you to. I'll drop you at your house as we go in."

"Oh, didn't I tell you?" Wade Kelsey. He's the man who is sending me up there. He's a mining man. A great friend of Doctor Payne. "Then I met this man."

"I'll say I did. He came down to the U to consult Payne on the proposition. He wanted to send a man up there to make a report and the chief suggested me. I'm to make a survey while the snow is off the ground and to take all the time I need. Of course all my expenses are paid and I get a fair salary in addition. I may have to lay out some money for my outfit, but I guess I can manage that."

"Let me know if you need anything." "Thanks, Father. If I do, it will be a loan this time. If I have real luck, Mr. Kelsey rather hinted there might be something..."

"Dinner!" Pink's strident voice interrupted from the lower hall. "I must wash up," Dale remarked hurriedly. "See you downstairs, Father."

A few moments later, he was in the dining room chatting with Mulgrew as they waited for Doctor Farwell to put in an appearance. "Didn't the dominie hear?" Pink demanded. "The calf's gone to be havin' a chill pretty quick."

"Why, yes, he heard," Dale said. "I was telling him about the job up north when you called. I'd just been giving him all the dope I had from my new boss, Wade Kelsey, and..."

"Gawd!" Mulgrew's small face was ashen. His gray eyes stared helplessly. "Pink!" Dale leaped forward and caught the man by his white shoulders. "What's happened? What is it?"

"Kid... Pink's tongue wet his lips. They were trembling oddly. "Kid, you'd best go up and see your dad."

Dale hastened upstairs. "Father, I must ask you something." "Well...?" came a muffled voice from the man facing the window. The swivel chair swung about reluctantly. Dale caught his breath at the sight of his father's face, the black eyes peering up at him in a lackluster stare.

"When I went down," Dale began, "I felt that something was wrong. I was talking to Pink and..."

"What did he tell you?" "Nothing. But he... Father, who is Wade Kelsey?" Farwell sighed wearily. He pulled himself to his feet, holding to the table with both hands. His face was a white mask of misery. "Sit here on the bed, Dale. We will talk as two men." He dropped heavily to a place at Dale's side and sat in brooding silence.

"Did this Kelsey question you about your mother?" "Then it's something about my mother?"

"About all of us, Dale. Our day of reckoning. Hearts of men are as nothing... The old familiar fervor touched his voice. Vanished. "Souls are in the balance now. Souls, I say. Are you listening?"

"Yes." "When I left the seminary, I supplied the pulpit of our church in a small Oregon town. Middleton. It was your mother's home from childhood. Her father was dead. Some of this you know, Elaine and your grandmother were alone."

"You have told me that." A respectful impatience marked the words. "And I have tried to have you know Elaine. As she was then—very young and very beautiful. Scarcely more than a child. Fragile. I am wondering if I can make you understand what I was. How bleak my early life had been. Those harsh experiences softened only by my faith in God. It drove me. I was zealous, intolerant. I fancied myself another Saint Paul called to persecute. Before these past few days, I doubt if you could have understood how I came to love Elaine. Or rather, how she could have loved such a man as myself."

Dale's thoughts had turned swiftly to Lee. "I know," he said simply. "I think you do now. And I did love her. It was the same fierceness that characterized my every desire. I brushed aside her every doubt. I was convinced our union was desired by God. And I forced her to see it, although... She was promised to another, Dale. The man's name was Kelsey, Wade Kelsey."

"I told you I never had seen this man. I believe that is true. He meant nothing to me, save that he stood in the way of an ordained priest. I recall that he was an engineer then. Stationed in Middleton. Elaine consented to our marriage when I was given my first regular appointment. I took her out of the only home she ever had known. Hundreds of miles away. Among strangers." "But she was happy," Dale interjected defensively. Again it was Lee. "Some flowers do not bear transplanting. I may not spare myself, if you are to understand. I bruised her with my relentless efforts. Elaine tried—pitifully. God knows. So do I, now. She wanted to conform to my pattern of life. The tragedy of all was my own blindness. I failed her. And she never knew..."

"That I saw when it was too late. How lonely and frightened she must have been. I was obliged to leave home for a few days. I told Elaine that I would expect her to conduct the weekly prayer service. It seemed a trivial thing. She shrank from the idea in terror. I would not listen. It was the simple duty of a pastor's wife. I chided her for want of faith—for giving way to her nerves. It was the culmination for her. Everything must have toppled..."

"What did my mother do?" Dale's fingers slowly relaxed their hold. His hand fell to the bed. "She was gone when I came home. There was a note. She had failed me, so she said. My life and work were all that mattered. She was doing it for me. Me."

"Go on." "Even then, I did not believe the truth. I went to your grandmother's at once. I kept telling myself Elaine would be there. That a moment of panic had driven her home. Mrs. Cameron could tell me nothing. We searched. Oh, yes, we searched. Days dragged by. Months. I never saw her again."

"You mean she... Kelsey," Dale forced the words from his stiff lips. "Walt," Farwell lifted a hand in weary protest. "You must let me tell you as I can. I paid for it with my soul. It is a dreadful thing for a man to lose his soul, Dale. My conscience drove me out of my church and away from my God. The conviction that I was to preach was inborn. There was my father—his father. I threw all that aside and lived because I was afraid to die. I worked with my brain and my hands, trying to forget. I failed in everything. A Cain now. Always in flight."

Dale sat motionless, listening. Someone passed the house, whistling carelessly. A hollow thump against the front door. The evening paper from the city. And here in this upper room the world had come to a standstill.

Jonathan Farwell's voice again, pitched in that unbearable monotone. "It was in the fall of 1914 that a solution came to me. Thousands were meeting death in the war. I crossed into Canada and enlisted with a contingent training for overseas. I had no intention of coming back."

"There is not much more. I was in battle many times. I wanted to be among those I saw falling on every hand, but God would not let me join their company. And somewhere in all that rack of blood and filth I... I found my soul. I owe it to Pink."

"So he knows," Dale muttered. "Yes, he knows everything. When death walks with men by day and night, all human values shrink. Men know each other for what they are. I may not tell you of Pink. Save that his small body shelters a heart whose equal I never have found in another. You are to believe that. Some day, you will realize my debt there."

Farwell rose to his feet with seeming difficulty and moved to the table where he stood supporting his weight on his hands. "When I returned from France I knew that my only salvation was in a life devoted once more to the church. I sought out..."

"No!" There was a ring of desperation in Dale's voice. He left the bed in his turn, to stand at Farwell's back. "Let's get this done. Where—where did you find me?"

"Your grandmother was caring for you." "My mother..." "Had found rest, Dale. She left you to me. Kelsey brought her home." Jonathan Farwell faced about with an effort. His head came up as he met Dale's gaze unflinchingly. "Say what you will. We are men."

"I am trying to make myself think of you," Dale said slowly. "I want to remember all that you have done for me. Everything is gone now."

"Don't say that. I do not wish you to think of me. I killed the one great love of my life. Lived in the hell from which I have warned others. There was but one possible atonement. Can't you see that? You are all that I have left of Elaine. Your life is all ahead of you."

"Yes. A nobody," Dale choked on the word. "And you've let me go on and on."

"I thought perhaps God was giving me a chance. I always was fearful of this day. But years passed. Nothing came out of the void. I might have known. God never forgets."

"But you would have!" Dale exclaimed harshly. "Can't you see what you've let me do—to somebody? I can take it. But Lee... He made an effort to control himself. "I think there is only one thing I would ever like to know from you." Dale's voice was curiously calm. "You have let me live a lie. Why did you try so hard to make me believe that my mother..." He could not finish it.

"Because your mother was good, Dale. The sin was mine. Never hers. Wait—where are you going?" "I don't know." Dale flung himself out of the study. The door closed behind him with a crash. A few strides took him into his own room where he paused, looking about with a ya-

cant slip... he had found himself in a strange place. His eyes fell upon the picture of his mother hanging in the chimney niche. Very slowly he approached the one-time shrine, detached the photograph from the wall, held it clonched in his two hands. A sudden wrench and the frame was pulled apart. Its glass fell and shattered on the bare floor boards.

Dale took one lingering look at the portrait, lifted it and held it for an instant against his cheek. Very gently he laid it on the shelf. He left the room, walking quietly. This time, he sought the rear stairway. "Kid. Wait a minute."

There was Pink, barring the outer door of the kitchen with his small frame. Deep shadows filled the room. "Get out of the way." "Don't be like that, kid. I know. Where you goin'?" "Anywhere."

Pink followed Dale as far as the back porch and watched him hurry swiftly through the dusk. He made his way back into the darkened house with a heavy heart. Then he stepped into the parlor and listened attentively. From overhead came the sound of footfalls pacing back and forth.

An hour later Pink was in the kitchen adjusting his tie before a tall mirror. He had changed into his checked suit and the ceremonial derby was on the back of his head. "I ain't a-goin' to get thanked none for this, either," he muttered to his reflection.

Lee Brady sat alone in the swing that hung in a shadowy corner of the front porch. When her vigil was rewarded by the sound of approaching steps from the street, she hurried forward with a low word of greeting—halted in confusion. A small man stood below her, but in hand.

"Oh... Mr. Mulgrew. Won't you come up? I was expecting Dale. Is—did he send me a message?" "No'm, he didn't." Pink ascended the steps and glanced about uncertainly. "I want to talk to you a minute. You see, Miss Lee, I don't know you so very good. But you always struck me as bein' pretty square. Of course, I'm wise to you and the kid. I'm the first one he spilled it to. You're pretty strong for him, too. I'm wondering just how much you'd do for him if he was in a jam."

"Is Dale in trouble? Oh, please tell me what it is, Pink." "Fraid he is. The kid's goin' to try and kill me when he finds I come here. But somebody's got to do somethin' for him and you're the only one I know who can bring him around."

"You can tell me, Pink. There is nothin' in the world I wouldn't do for Dale." "Well then... Miss Lee, I'm a lot older'n you. It's a queer world any way you want to look at it. Did you ever stop to figure that when a guy climbs through the ropes, he—well, he don't have such a hell of a lot to say about it. He goes to his corner and waits for the gong. Sometimes, just sometimes, I say, the match is fixed ahead of time. Wonder if you get that..."

"You mean," Lee hazarded in a low voice, "that something happened to Dale. Something that wasn't his fault at all?" "Yeah. His bout was fixed. That's it."

"... I think I know what you're trying to tell me, Pink." Lee said after a little. "I'm thinking of Dale. Nothing else matters."

"You mean it, Miss Lee? You mean you stick by what you said—about doin' anything for the kid?" "Yes, Pink. Anything."

"Gawd! Excuse me, Miss Lee. You're actin' awful white about it. I know what sent the kid down."

"I am trying to make myself think of you," Dale said slowly. "I want to remember all that you have done for me. Everything is gone now."

"Don't say that. I do not wish you to think of me. I killed the one great love of my life. Lived in the hell from which I have warned others. There was but one possible atonement. Can't you see that? You are all that I have left of Elaine. Your life is all ahead of you."

"Yes. A nobody," Dale choked on the word. "And you've let me go on and on."

"I thought perhaps God was giving me a chance. I always was fearful of this day. But years passed. Nothing came out of the void. I might have known. God never forgets."

"Never mind, Pink I can guess." "You're one ahead of me all the time. Can you beat that one? Twenty years and never a word of the guy. And then right out of a clear sky, like I said. Worse'n a story book."

"Where is Dale?" "Can't say for sure. H. walked out. I tried to stop him. It woulda meant a fight. I didn't have the heart to smear him. Maybe I should, at that."

"But suppose he doesn't come back! Pink, he told me all about his mother. I know as well as you do what this is doing to him. We must help him! We must find him! And you don't know where he is..."

"Maybe I don't. But it don't stop me from havin' a good guess. If you say you want him, I'll dig him up. That's a promise, Miss Lee." "Oh, is it, Pink? I'll wait. Until tomorrow. You won't fail me?" "Not a chance. Not a chance."

Dale pushed on. His torturing reflections did not drive him as far afield as Pink suspected. He made his way out over a road that passed a woodland patch not far from the town limit. It was dark among the trees. Gratefully dark. There was nearness of rain in the unseasonable warmth.

Dale vaulted a fence and stumbled through the crackling underbrush, heedless of briars that caught and tore at his knees as he passed. When he found himself in a small clearing, safe from the prying gleam of hurrying ear lamps, he flung himself to the ground under a tree.

Alone at last with his seething thoughts. So far, there had been only the wild urge to escape. From every realization that he must give battle to life, reach a decision of sort. But his brain refused to function. He crouched alone in a mad upside-down world. Hands clenched in anguish. Host to a stormy panorama of distorted images.

Through it all, over it all, the name he had been unable to force from his lips back there in the study. How long ago. That was the memory his battered consciousness desired most of all to crush. Even as his fingers tried to mutilate the tangible evidence and failed.

Elaine. Elaine. Her face watching him through all this nightmare. It would not be blotted out. No matter how he beat at it with his bare heart. That hurrying maddening procession, swirring past his staring eyes. Where was the end?

A host of puzzling shadows ferging by. Taking shape at last. Those were pennons streaming from bobbing lance tips. Clearer. The half-forgotten game of dreams. Old guests of the Table Round. Men-at-arms astride their phantom charges. Bearings in confused masses of color. A pageant without voice or hoofbeat. Heralds with mute trumpets.

And ever present in the motley of mail, a lone rider. Coming out again, hidden behind arms that bore no device. Blank. The shield argent.

Dale's face was upflung across his face to shut away the picture. He rolled over and pressed his eyes deep among the dead leaves. Sobers broke from him.

"Elaine." When that first storm had spent itself, the boy who had been Dale Farwell roused and stared dully at his surroundings. At the trees looming darkly on all sides. It was the same world he had seen slip from beneath his feet. He still was in it. If no longer of it.

For the moment his mind refused to recognize the present or future. He must go back a little, reconstruct his chaos. Adjust himself to a perspective of some sort. Slowly, matters began to right themselves in his numb brain. It came back to him how his father...

That was it. He had no father. But he did. He was the son of Wade Kelsey. That should have been his name, too. No right to that other of which he had been so proud. Who was Jonathan Farwell? Only his mother's husband. A man who had been kind to him for her sake. Had he?

This man of God. Who stood up on each Sunday and told people how to be good. Live righteous lives, hate sin. And he let me live this lie. He lived it, too. Why? Why? All these years giving himself to the task of saving souls. What about his own soul? What about... The Lady Lee.

No use to push that out of his mind any longer. The thing that mattered most of all. He groaned softly to himself. She was waiting for him now—somewhere in this soft darkness. He had promised. His last words had told her that nothing could ever keep them apart. How could he ever tell her? He couldn't. Never to see her again...

(Continued next week)

FINDERS KEEPERS

"Say Porter, did you find a big roll of money under my pillow?" "Yessuh. I did, suh, and I thanks you, suh, very much, suh."



"That's a tough one," Mulgrew admitted morosely.