

CAUGHT IN THE WILD

By ROBERT AMES BENNET



Arrogant as was the tone, the words were an unqualified apology. Garth turned to Lillith, who stood gazing at him with a peculiar hard glow in her blue eyes. He spoke as if nothing had happened:

"Some of the ashes are now cool enough for you to use, Miss Ramill. Rub them on as a mud paste till the potash cuts the grease, then scour with sand, and rinse. Better take your ashes in the blanket, and use it for protection while you do your laundering. The skeets and bulldog flies are swarming. You'll find a bit of sand beach just under that clump of spruce."

Without a word of thanks, she dragged the blanket to the edge of the nearest outburst fire and began brushing the fluffy gray wood ashes upon it with a spruce spray. Her father had been gazing thoughtfully at Garth. He took up his empty foxskin bag.

"Come on, Vivian. This is washday. Take Lillith's bag and get your potash."

The wolfskin knapsack, with its platinum alloy treasure, had been left attached to the mooring line of the canoe. There was no bag for Garth. He made one by opening the front of his buckskin shirt and hand-ladling wood ashes inside.

Lillith went over beyond the spruce thicket with her blanket-bagged ashes. Garth led Mr. Ramill and Huxby to the strip of sand below the beached canoe. There he showed them how to cheat the buzzing insect pests. Instead of stripping for his laundry work, he muddled his ashes and plastered the paste all over his body and on the inside and outside of his clothes.

He rubbed in the mess and gave the weak solution of potash lye time to act. After that came the rinsing. He waded out and sat down in the water up to his neck. Thus protected from the swarms of stingers, he stripped off one garment at a time, washed it clean of ashes, and tossed it upon the edge of the beach. Before coming out, he took a luxurious swim in the clear river water.

Fast Ramill and then Huxby rather glowerly copied Garth's method. Like him, both wound up with a swim. Neither, however, ventured far out into the vast slow flood of the Mackenzie.

With the landing came the comedy. The others ended their bathing before Garth. He tread water to watch them. They had wrung out their clothes and hung them well up the beach. The moment they splattered ashore, the waiting swarms of blood-suckers closed to the feast.

Huxby cursed, snatched up his half-buried rifle, and dashed back in, to dress under water. Mr. Ramill, however, had no desire to put on wet clothes. He beat at the zizzing pests with his fattened union suit. It enabled him to get into the leather trousers and coat without being stung more than half a hundred times.

Garth's mirth was mixed with admiration for the mine investor's nerve. Along with this he felt a glow of satisfaction over the results of what his rigorous training had done for the successful millionaire. Though still heavy-set, the portly gentleman had become something of an athlete in appearance. His flabby muscles had been hardened; his loose joints were now firm. His paunch had disappeared. He was lean about the waist and hips, and full-chested.

"My word, sir," Garth sang out, "you look in for the football squad. That should be worth more to you than a dozen platinum claims. At least, you ought to toss me my buckskins."

Mellowed by the bath and swim to a benignant return of friendliness, the millionaire chuckled and came down the beach to fling the sodden garments out to their owner. His loitering afterwards may have been for Huxby. Yet he went back to the dead fires with Garth, when the engineer muttered something about having dropped his penknife.

As the two disappeared over the top of the ice-gouged bank, Huxby sprang to open the wolfskin knapsack. From it he snatched out a piece of rancid bear-cub fat, a clip of pistol cartridges, and his "lost" automatic.

With swift, purposeful movements, he rubbed the fat on the rusty pistol and began working the mechanism. It jammed repeatedly. But as the sun-dried fat soaked the rust, the action became normal.

Still quick yet unhurried, he loaded the clip into the hollow butt and slid back the outer barrel to throw a cartridge into the breech.

As was of course to be expected Lillith Ramill had not returned from her own dip and wood-ashes laundering. Garth sat down beside the tin cup and little aluminum pot to mend a rip in the left leg of his buckskin trousers.

Still in a friendly mood, but with shrewd calculation in his eyes, Mr. Ramill stretched out on his back in the long grass beside Garth.

"Well, young man, it appears that the game is played out. The joke on

father—he's not killed, only knocked out. The wound's not serious, so sign up through the chest. Same way one of my classmates was shot by a hold-up. Take hold. We'll get him into the canoe and make a quick run down across to the retreating post. That fellow Tobin will have a medical kit."

The pulling of her father from under her had let the girl down upon the body of Garth. Huxby's eager assurance roused her from the semi-swoon. She struggled partly up, to peer at her father, her hands braced upon Garth's lax side.

Even as she gazed, the gray of her father's face became less ghastly. But in place of the smile of relief for which Huxby looked, she sprang up to flare at him in another outburst of denunciation:

"Murderer! liar! There's his knife where I left it. He did not have it! Liar! sneak! He did not attack Dad. But you—you crawled up and shot him—without warning!"

Huxby dropped his mask.

"What of it? The d-d wood louse led first. He thought it funny to keep mum about having recorded his claim—to play your father and me all this time. Great joke that. Only it back-fired on him. I'm the only pilot who can find the valley. No one can say that the claim we file on is the same as the one he recorded."

The girl quivered, tensed, and bounded sideways. The belt-ax was lying near the knife. She clutched one in each hand and straightened erect, her eyes ablaze.

"You beast!" she cried. "Go! Go, or I'll kill you!"

He smiled with cool irony. "Why so theatrical? Hysterics are not in your line, my dear Lillith."

That lowered her voice, but not the knife and ax. She began to edge towards him, with the blades raised ready to strike. Her voice came from her stiffened lips, low and hoarse and deathly calm:

"If you do not go, I will kill you, unless you first kill me."

The smile left his lips. His eyes narrowed. He replied no less quietly:

"You are stark crazy. I'm going. It may be two or three weeks before I can get back. That should be long enough for you to starve into sanity. You'll be glad to welcome me then. Only, how about your father? Does it not sober you to realize it will be your fault if he dies?"

For answer, she took a full step nearer. The look in her eyes daunted him. He slanted sideways, caught up Garth's rifle, and ran across to the bank above the canoe. When, more slowly, she came to the top of the bank, he had the canoe lashed and was heaving in the wolfskin knapsack.

He jumped aboard with the rifle and one paddle. As he backed offshore, she ran down to the water's edge and flung his engagement ring at his feet. It struck his upturned forehead and glanced outward. The ash-encrusted diamond flashed like a bit of blue-white lightning that was instantly quenched in the water.

The canoe swung around and went yawning out upon the mighty expanse of the Mackenzie.

CHAPTER VIII

Woodcraft.

Out of the pit of blindness, Garth's first dimly conscious thoughts were of water. He was still swimming. No, the water was only on his face. Not rain, nor poured water—something wet supping his forehead.

He opened his eyes, blinked the daze from them, and found himself gazing up into a pair of sunken blue eyes. They were clouded and dark with misery. Yet with strange suddenness they brightened. At that he realized they were the eyes of Lillith Ramill.

"What's happened?" he murmured. Even as his lips moved, he remembered—Huxby—his pistol. Must have—shot me."

"Yes, Dad also."

Garth sought to tense his face muscles, ready to bound up. She laid a restraining hand on his forehead. "Lie still. He went—"

"Went?"

"Right after it. Be quiet, else you may go unconscious again. The bullet cut across the back of your head. All these two days you've lain there in that frightful stupor. I could not wake you up. I tell sure you'd die."

"Stupor—two days?" he muttered. "Concussion—brain."

He made deliberate trial, and found he could move his legs and arms. "Luck—no paralysis. Soon he'll be all right. But—your father? You said 'father also.' Can't see why. Wolf was rabid only for my claim—not blood mad."

"Of course! The cowardly beast meant only to murder you. But when he fired again, Dad jumped up between."

"Bad?"

"Not if there was a doctor. It's through the shoulder. The coward—to run off with the canoe, instead of shooting himself like a man!"

"Ran off, did he? Thought he had killed your father?"

"No, he said it wasn't serious. All we needed was to take Dad in the canoe and get that man Tobin's medical kit."

"Yet he ran off without you?"

"I made him go. I drove him off, the beastly sneaking coward!"

Garth stared, perplexed. "You did that? Yet he wanted to take your father where he could receive treatment."

She frowned. "He thought you dead. But after I nearly fainted, I pushed against you to get up. I felt you were still alive. I was afraid you'd come to—would move. He would have—fished you. So I—drove him off."

"Leaving yourself and your father marooned here."

The girl stiffened. Her mouth went hard. "Don't fancy I did it for you! It was—it was because I was not going to let him finish his sneak murder. It would have been the same if I'd gone off and let you die. You can see that. You must!"

He smiled up at her frown. "All the more sporting of you. Not half bad, I'd say."

"Oh, but it is bad—frightfully bad! No food—not a thing to give Dad all this time. No chance of getting any for either of you. And now his fever, too. No medicine for it!"

A sudden thought jerked Garth up to a sitting position. He swayed from dizziness. Then his head cleared. He was only rather weak from blood-letting and sore about the back of his head. An exploring hand found a wad of moss, tied upon his wound with a band of plaited grass. He heard the girl murmur:

"I fixed Dad's the same way—ashes and the moss to hold it on. Ashes or soot—I once heard about something like that for cuts."

He pointed to the scattered ashes of the dead fires. "Be quick. Build a big blaze and throw on green wood. That southbound plane! Must signal it. Even if he's aboard, he can't keep the pilot from coming down."

Lillith Ramill's head dropped dejectedly. "I saw it this morning—way out across the sky. First there was the drone of the motor. Then I saw it—way off. Only, I could do nothing. Yesterday I used your last match. I wanted to boil for Dad the one pinch of tea that's left. A puff of wind blew out the flame. Now there's no hope. He took your rifle too. No fire or food or gun, or any chance of rescue!"

Garth looked around and saw her father tossing in feverish sleep under the shade of a slight brush canopy. He gave the overwrought girl a bantering smile.

"What, merely a matter of fire, medicine, food, and escape? If only you were a boy scout! How about becoming a Campfire Girl? Fetch me a two-foot willow branch the size of your forefinger, a thong, one straight dry stick, and that chunk of dead birch trunk."

A little sand increased the friction of the fire-drill point at the bottom of the shallow hole he made in the block of wood. The dry birch soon began to smoke. Lillith had gathered tinder of dead inner bark. In wide-eyed wonderment, she watched the simple primitive method of fire making.

When Garth stood up beside the crackling flames of the new fire, he found himself stronger than he expected. All shock from his wound had passed during his two days' unconsciousness, and his healthy tissues had already begun to heal.

"Now we're under way," he said. "Next comes medicine. By using the ashes, you gave our wounds sterile dressings. Your father was tuned up to the pink of condition. His wound will heal as rapidly as mine. What little fever he has means nothing. To cool it, crush in his drinking water some of the cranberries from over there along the edge of the muskeg. You might boil willow bark and add a little of the bitter decoction to the cranberry juice."

"Oh, it's good to know, but not sick. But to starve to death?"

Garth pointed to the wild fowl out in the swamp. They were beginning to flock together with the approach of autumn. "How would you like canvas back or mallard for dinner?"

Her eyes brightened, only to cloud again. "You have no gun?"

(Continued Next Week)

Lying and being at Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, adjoining the lands of H. E. Adams, Manson Tate, and others, and described as follows:

Being lots Nos. 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, and 190, 191, 192, 193, and 194, of the Limer-Coman Sub-division near Lake Junaluska, as per map and survey made by J. W. Seaver, February, 1924, said map and survey recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Haywood County.

This being the same lots conveyed by W. P. Leatherwood and wife, Maggie K. Leatherwood to F. A. Smith, and recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds for Haywood County.

The sale made pursuant to the power of sale conferred upon me by that certain deed of trust executed by Ella Smith, dated August 17, 1923, and recorded in Book 24, page 244, Record of Deeds of Trust of Haywood County.

This January 17, 1936.

W. R. FRANCIS, Trustee.

No. 41—Jan. 23-30-Feb. 6-13-20.

ADMINISTRATRIX NOTICE

Having qualified as administratrix of the estate of E. G. Cathey, deceased, late of Haywood County, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of said deceased to exhibit them to the undersigned at her home, Waynesville, N. C., route one, on or before the 15th day of January, 1937, or this notice will be filed in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make immediate payment to the undersigned.

This 15th day of January, 1936.

MRS. E. G. CATHEY, Administratrix of the estate of E. G. Cathey, deceased.

No. 438—Jan. 16-23-30-Feb. 6-13-20.

NOTICE

NORTH CAROLINA, HAYWOOD COUNTY, LEE PRICE

VS.

ANNA MAE PRICE.

The defendant above named will take notice that an action entitled as above has been commenced in the Superior Court of Haywood County, N. C., for a divorce absolute under the Statute, and that said defendant will further take notice that she is required to appear on the 16th day of February, 1936, at the Court House in Waynesville, N. C., Haywood County, and answer or demur to the complaint within the time allowed by law, or the plaintiff will apply to the Court for the relief demanded in said complaint.

This 15th day of January, 1936.

KATE WILLIAMSON, Asst. Clerk of Superior Court, Haywood County.

No. 439—Jan. 16-23-30-Feb. 6.

EXECUTRIX NOTICE

Having qualified as executrix of the estate of Doyle D. Alley, deceased, this is to notify all persons having claims against the estate of the deceased to file them with the Clerk of the Superior Court of Haywood County on or before the 5th day of February, 1937 or this notice will be filed in bar of their recovery. All persons indebted to said estate will please make settlement at once.

This 5th day of February, 1936.

MRS. DOYLE D. ALLEY, Executrix of the estate of Doyle D. Alley, deceased.

No. 441—Feb. 6-13-20-27-Mar. 5-12

NOTICE OF COMMISSIONER'S SALE

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF HAYWOOD.

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT, BEFORE THE CLERK.

Mrs. W. P. Leatherwood, Administratrix of the Estate of W. P. Leatherwood, Decd.

VS.

Eva Leatherwood, Clara Starnes, and husband, Fulton Starnes, Ruth Leatherwood, and Louise Leatherwood, by her Guardian Ad Litem, W. T. Crawford, Heirs at Law of W. P. Leatherwood, Decd.

Under and by virtue of an order of the Superior Court of Haywood County, dated December 9, 1935, and report of sale made by the Commissioner in this cause on January 13, 1936, and pursuant to a raised bid, and order of the Clerk of the Superior Court, dated February 1, 1936, the undersigned Commissioner of the Court will, on the 17th day of February, 1936, at eleven o'clock A. M., at the court house door in the town of Waynesville, sell at public outcry to the highest bidder for cash, the following lands and premises:

Tract No.—Being in Waynesville Haywood County, North Carolina, and being lots Nos. 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, of the Limer-Coman Sub-division at Lake Junaluska, as per survey and plat of J. W. Seaver, made January and February, 1924, and duly recorded in Map Book "B," Index "L," office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County, being lots conveyed to W. P. Leatherwood by deed, recorded as follows: Book 71, page 266; Book 63, page 97, Book 63, page 270.

Tract No.—Being in Waynesville Township, Haywood County, N. C., and being a part of the Moore or John Morrow lands, and BEGINNING at a hickory, and runs N. 60° W. 1 chain, 71 links to a stake; thence N. 23° 5' W. 6 chains, 80 links to a stake; thence S. 87° 30' E. 4 chains, 63 links to a stake; thence S. 2° 30' W. 6 chains, 89 links, to a hickory, the BEGINNING, containing 1.94-100 acres, more or less, and being the first tract in the deed from James Reed and wife, to W. P. Leatherwood, dated April 10, 1919, recorded in Book 53, page 156.

This 1st day of February, 1936.

MRS. W. P. LEATHERWOOD, Commissioner.

No. 442—Feb. 6-13.

NOTICE OF TRUSTEE'S SALE

On Monday, February 17, 1936, at eleven o'clock A. M., at the court house door in the town of Waynesville, Haywood County, N. C., the undersigned trustee will sell at public outcry, to the highest bidder for cash, the following lands and premises:

Tract No.—Being in Waynesville Township, Haywood County, N. C., and being a part of the Moore or John Morrow lands, and BEGINNING at a hickory, and runs N. 60° W. 1 chain, 71 links to a stake; thence N. 23° 5' W. 6 chains, 80 links to a stake; thence S. 87° 30' E. 4 chains, 63 links to a stake; thence S. 2° 30' W. 6 chains, 89 links, to a hickory, the BEGINNING, containing 1.94-100 acres, more or less, and being the first tract in the deed from James Reed and wife, to W. P. Leatherwood, dated April 10, 1919, recorded in Book 53, page 156.

This 1st day of February, 1936.

MRS. W. P. LEATHERWOOD, Commissioner.

No. 442—Feb. 6-13.

NOTICE OF SALE UNDER DEED OF TRUST

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, COUNTY OF HAYWOOD.

Under and by virtue of the power of sale contained in that certain Deed of Trust bearing date of December 31, 1932, executed by V. A. Campbell and wife, Hattie Campbell to the undersigned trustee for Haywood Supply Company, which Deed of Trust is recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book 39 at Page 439.

And default having been made in the payment of the indebtedness secured by the said Deed of Trust and the holders of the said note having demanded and requested the undersigned trustee to advertise a sale of said lands under the terms and conditions of the said Deed of Trust.

NOW, THEREFORE, the undersigned trustee will on Wednesday, the 11th day of March, 1936, at 12:00 noon, at the courthouse door in Waynesville, N. C., sell to the highest bidder for cash in order to pay the indebtedness secured by said Deed of Trust aforesaid and cost and expenses of said sale the following described land to-wit:

TRACT NUMBER ONE: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 13 day of October, 1925, from Alden Howell, Sr., to V. A. Campbell, the said lands being in Jonathan's Creek Township, and containing ten (10) acres, more or less, the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book No. 68, at page 165, to which Book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

TRACT NUMBER TWO: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 1st day of November, 1926, from W. P. Posey and wife, M. H. Boyd, to V. A. Campbell, the said lands being in Ivy Hill Township, Haywood County, North Carolina, and the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County, in Book No. 74, at page 219, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of said lands, and containing about 17 1/2 acres, more or less.

EXCEPTION, HOWEVER, from this tract of land what is known as the Old Gambel tract, containing about 100 acres.

TRACT NUMBER THREE: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 27th day of October, 1922, from Madie Moody to V. A. Campbell, and containing about 12 1/2 acres, more or less, the deed to the same being recorded in the office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book No. 80, at page 126, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of said lands.

TRACT NUMBER FOUR: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 23rd day of November, 1923, from Alden Howell and wife, Emma D. Howell, to Verlin A. Campbell, the said lands containing 12 1/2 acres, more or less, the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book 89, at page 131, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

TRACT NUMBER FIVE: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 15th day of December, 1930, from M. G. Starnes, Trustee, to V. A. Campbell, the said lands being in Jonathan's Creek Township, and containing about 42 1/2 acres, more or less, and the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book No. 81, at page 34, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

EXCEPTION, HOWEVER, from the above tract of land about 100 acres of the same heretofore sold to M. Moody and R. T. Boyd.

TRACT NUMBER SIX: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 3rd day of January, 1926, from C. M. Moody and wife, Annie Moody, and J. P. Boyd and wife, Emma Boyd, to V. A. Campbell, the said lands being in Jonathan's Creek Township, Haywood County, and containing about 136 acres, more or less, being the same lands described in a deed recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County in Book 89, at page 387, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

TRACT NUMBER SEVEN: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 17th day of May, 1928, from Sam Earlsone and wife, Dora Earlsone, said lands being in Jonathan's Creek Township, Haywood County, and containing two and one-half acres, more or less, the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County, in Book 80, at page 127, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

TRACT NUMBER EIGHT: Being the same lands described in a deed bearing date of the 31st day of December, 1923, from James A. Martin and wife, Lena M. Martin, to V. A. Campbell, said lands lying in Ivy Hill Township, and containing 17 1/2 acres, more or less, the deed to the same being recorded in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Haywood County, in Book 53, at page 444, to which book and page reference is hereby made for a full and complete description of the same.

This 10th day of February, 1936.

WILLIAM T. HANNAH, Trustee.

No. 444—Feb. 13-20-27-Mar. 5.