



SYNOPSIS

The Saladina listens to the history of neighboring Hostile Valley, with group of the mysterious, enticing "Will" wife of Will Ferrin. Later, she drives to the Valley for a day's fishing, though admitting to herself his chief desire is to see the reputedly glamorous Huldry. "Old Marm" Pierce and her nineteen-year-old granddaughter Jenny live in the Valley. Since little more than a child Jenny has at first admired and then deeply loved young Will Ferrin, neighboring farmer, older than she, and who regards her still as merely a child. Will takes employment in nearby Augusta. Jenny is disconsolate. Bart Carey, somewhat of a ne'er-do-well, is attracted to Jenny, but the girl repulses him. Learning that Will is coming home, Jenny, excited, sets his long-empty house to rights, and has dinner ready for him. He comes—bringing his wife, Huldry. The girl's world collapses. Huldry becomes the subject of unfavorable gossip in the Valley.

CHAPTER IV

IT WOULD be a long time before Jenny knew the full tale of that day's events. The latter part of the drama she witnessed, and had in it a part; but the beginning was hidden from her for the time.

It during these months since he brought Huldry home, his wife and became a by-word in the Valley and in the wide region roundabout. Will—as is apt to be the case—was the last to know this. Yet he was not wholly in ignorance. He might not admit even to himself doubt or misgiving, for there was in this man a fine loyalty; nevertheless he was not witless, nor wholly blind, nor could any man loving Huldry as intensely as he did be unconscious of those withdrawals and evasions and scornful mockeries which she offered him behind the screen of her arrogantly yielding smile.

He never even shaped doubt of her in his thoughts; yet just as one looking alone through a deep wood might be conscious of a movement behind him, so Will was conscious of many things that happened just beyond his sight or ken.

He was thus in some degree prepared for what occurred this day. It was not that he had known anything before; but rather that with a sixth sense he felt certain things, and was brought into a frame of mind where full comprehension and belief were made easy, where it needed no more than one tangible peg in order for him to pick up and hang upon it the whole web of his wife's deceptions.

He had been all the long summer very busy about the farm, and dusk each day found him bone-tired, so that he might nod at the supper table, and presently thereafter go quickly and heavily to bed, and sleep till dawn.

He loved Huldry; but after the first rapture of possession passed, he loved also this farm of his father's, and with an almost equal ardor, serving it with the full measure of his strength and energy. At night he was hungry only for sleep, and rose to work again at dawn.

But Huldry needed no more sleep than a cat. Sometimes Will, drowsing in his chair after supper, waked to find her watching him with a disquieting eye; and more than once on summer nights she had roused him, shaking him by the shoulder, a hot fury in her tones, demanding that he prove himself something more than a drowsy of a man.

So when the time did come, he was prepared for comprehension. There had been many visitors at the farm that summer. Will at first discovered in these visits no more than the natural curiosity of his neighbors to see this bride of whom he was so proud. Bart Carey came, and old Win Haven not infrequently; and then Seth Humphreys, whom Will—and Huldry—had known in Augusta, brought his steam mill to the Valley. Also others who had known Huldry in Augusta came to lodge at Bart's and fish the brook below, although they had never seen her before.

Will, when he wooed Huldry, knew her popularity; yet he was continually being reminded of it now. He would return from the fields at dusk to find some stranger sitting with her in the kitchen, in an easy familiarity; and on his arrival, the stranger and Huldry were apt to fall silent, and the man presently to take himself away.

On this day when Jenny saw Will go toward Seth Humphreys' mill, he had planned to go to Liberty to work on the barn; some studs and a bundle of shingles. He was in the farm wagon, behind the team. Huldry asked whether he would be home in time for dinner. Will thought not.

"Don't have me on your mind. I'll pick up a bit when I get back," he said.

He took the steep road up the hill, and a little above the house he met Seth Humphreys' big truck. Seth at the wheel, descending. Will lifted a hand to the other man as they passed by. Seth was hauling his sawed lumber to North Fraternity; but the easier road back to the mill would have brought him to the Valley at its foot, three or four miles lower down. Will was mildly surprised that Seth should have come this way.

Yet the matter stayed not long in his mind. He thought casually that Seth might mean to stop at Bart Carey's.

He was fifteen or twenty minutes from the house when the right rear wheel of his wagon dropped off; and Will, alighting to investigate, found that he had lost the nut which held the wheel in place. He walked back along the road, searching in the ditch and by the roadside for the lost nut; but the weeds were tall in the ditch, and the nut escaped his search. In the end, as the quicker way, Will decided to cut down through the woods to his farm, where he could find a spare nut among the miscellaneous litter of hardware which accumulates in every farmer's shed; so he returned to the wagon and let the horses of the road to let casual traffic pass by, and tied them there. Then he set out to walk home.

It was not far, in a straight line through the woods. Five minutes fast walking brought him into his upper field, with the house in plain sight below. He paid it no particular heed at first, coming on rapidly to do this errand; but as he drew nearer, he saw, stopped in the road in front of the house, Seth Humphreys' truck. Seth passing by, must have alighted for a word with Huldry. There was in this nothing unusual, yet Will vaguely resented it. The inconvenience of the lost nut had faintly frayed his temper; the sight of Seth's truck stopped here—Seth must have been with Huldry for a long half hour—made Will's cheek hot, his pulse fretful. He went on toward the house more swiftly; and across the barnyard to the kitchen door.

The door was closed; and this was in some degree surprising, for the day was warm. Will opened the door and stepped in.

Neither Huldry nor Seth was in the kitchen; and when Will saw the kitchen empty, he stood rooted in his tracks for an instant that may have been longer. Then he called, harshly, his wife's name. There was no reply.

Beyond the kitchen lay the dining room. Will crossed to the dining room door. The bedroom opened off the dining room, in front of the house, toward the road. The bedroom door was closed; but Will heard movement there, and strode that way. His cheek was white as stone.

Before he could come to the door, however, it opened, and Huldry confronted him. She stood, smiling insolently, as though she were just awakened from deep sleep.

He said hoarsely: "What you doing?"

"I laid down a spell," she told him.

"Where's Seth gone to?" he demanded.

"Seth?" Her tone was amused, derisive.

"His truck's in the road outside." There was a window in the bedroom on the side toward the road; she turned to look out of this window, but without moving. "I don't see it," she retorted, maddeningly.

Will brushed past her, himself looked out. The truck in fact was gone; but the screen which belonged in the window lay on the ground outside, and it was broken as though a heavy foot had stepped upon the light mesh.

Will turned back into the room. He passed Huldry silently; but she caught his arm.

"Where you going?"

"After him," said Will, in thick tones strange to his own ears.

"Why?" she challenged.

He shook loose, freed himself from her, moved toward the kitchen. She said behind him, in a rising, defensive fury:

"You work all day and sleep all night. What do you look for me to do?"

He swung to face her, and there was death in his eyes. "I'll be back to tend to you," he said; and with no further word burst through the kitchen and away.

She came, with one of her rare quick movements, after him as far as the kitchen door; she called mockingly:

"Go on, then! But time you're done with Seth, there's a plenty more!" Will, if he heard, made no sign; he went plunging through the barn and down through the orchard. Huldry stayed in the kitchen door, and the sun struck her pleasantly, and she smiled, standing there alone. If she had any regret, it was only that she would not be at hand to see Will and Seth when they came together.

But Seth Humphreys, when he slipped away from the house, was more disturbed by the situation. He had a lively respect for Will's physical powers; and he leaped silently down the hill. Also, he stopped at Bart Carey's farm, beyond the bridge, and there tried to make his tone and his demeanor usual, and stayed a while, talking of the fishing, or of the weather. But while he talked, he looked back along the road, expecting to see Will approaching; he stayed here in order to have Bart at his back if Will should come.

But Will had spent no energy in vain direct pursuit. He had cut straight for the steam mill down the Valley, to wait for Seth there; and Humphreys after a while guessed this. He said to Bart, himself reluctantly preparing to depart:

"Bart, you got a gun in the house? There's a wild bull in the woods down where we're working, been bothering the men. I'm a mind to shoot him."

Bart said: "I've got an old revolver that throws a heavy slug, if you can hold it straight. You get near enough and you could kill an elephant with it."

"Let me have that," Seth proposed. "This bull, he comes right up around the mill. I can get near enough to him without no trouble at all."

So Bart produced the revolver, an ancient model, in a heavy holster stained by years of use. "Got quite a history, that gun has," he said proudly. "Fellow out in Denver found a dead man in a gulch in the mountains one day, with this gun on him and a bullet through his head. He sent the gun to me. Trigger's mighty light. Single action. You have to cock it."

Seth hefted the weapon, sighted it, made sure it was loaded. "Much

obliged," he said. "I'll fetch it back to you."

And he got into the truck, and laid the pistol on the seat beside him, and went on his way.

The man was afraid! He was as big as Will Ferrin; not quite so tall, but heavier. Nevertheless, just as a dog fights best in its own yard, so does a man in the wrong fight poorly. Seth wanted no fight with Will Ferrin; and his very fears gave him a false courage, a pseudo-ferocity. He gripped his teeth and shook his head and vowed that Will had better not try to lay a hand on him.

He drove down the Valley road and turned into the rough wood track that led to the clearing where the steam mill was set beside a spring brook that furnished water for the boilers. The mill was working, the mill crew gathered in the shed.

But Seth did not see Will anywhere about, and knew a deep relief. There was at one side a shed of rough boards, roofed with tar paper, with a dirt floor, in which the truck was customarily stored against the weather. Its doors were swung wide, and Seth turned the truck into this shed.

But as he did so, Will Ferrin came suddenly out from behind one of the mill's rollers, and leaped on the truck's running board, by Seth's very elbow. His countenance was affrighted. Seth's foot missed the brake, pressed the throttle instead; then he found the brake and jammed it down. The truck leaped ahead, tried to stop, skidded sideways; the right rear wheel broke partly through one wall, the front mudguard burst into the opposite wall.

And Will, in silent, deadly purpose, caught Seth's throat with both hands to drag him to the ground.

Seth's hand found the ready pistol. He thrust the hammer back. As the weapon came into his sight, Will released Seth's throat with his left hand and grabbed at Seth's wrist that held the gun. The two men were falling together as the pistol exploded. Will felt the heavy ball plow into his leg below the

knee, crashing through the bone with a shocking impact.

But he did not loose the grip he had.

The mill was sixty or seventy yards away, and the saw, at the moment of the shot, was whining through a log; but Luke Hills was beyond the mill, by the brook, and his ears were clear of the saw's close proximity. He heard the shot, and came lumbering up the bank, shouting the alarm to the others. The men came to the shed door, and saw Will and Seth down in a locked grip, and Will's leg was hideous. But the muzzle of a heavy pistol pointed toward them from the ground, wavering in the tight grip of two opposing hands, and this was enough to deter the boldest for a moment. They dodged aside, peering cautiously; and by the time they found courage to draw near, Seth was dead.

But Will, despite his wound, was alive; and Luke knotted a bit of rope around Will's leg, and twisted it with a stick. There was a babble of commands and advice and argument. For Seth, clearly, there was nothing to be done.

"But we got to get help for Will, here, mighty quick," Luke pointed out.

One of the other men remembered Marm Pierce. Two boards secured together by crosspieces served as a rude litter. They set out to carry Will through the woods to the old woman's house.

It was thus that Jenny saw Will again, his face drained white, his eyes closed, his leg below the knotted rope a shattered thing. She saw the men approaching with their burden, and she and Marm Pierce came out on the kitchen porch, and the old woman cried urgently:

"Somebody's hurt bad! Jenny, get the cloth off the dining room table. Put a couple leaves in, and a blanket on it, so's they can lay him there."

Jenny would have run desperately to meet them, but the old woman held her from that futility. So when Luke and the others arrived, the table was prepared, and Marm Pierce met them at the door.

"Fetch him in," she commanded.

"Who is it? Will Ferrin?"

"His leg's shot off," said Luke Hills hoarsely. "Seth shot him; would have killed him, like as not. But Will held on till he choked the life out of Seth."

"Don't stand there talking!" the old woman scolded. "Lay him on the table here, easy. One of you go over to Bart Carey's house and telephone for a doctor."

"We loved you could..." "Get a doctor, I told you! Jabbering like a pack of crows! Lay him down. Now get out of here, the lot of you. Jenny and me, we'll tend to him. One of you go telephone, and the rest of you stay handy, case I need you."

A man departed at a clumsy run, and Marm Pierce, standing by Will, alighting away his overalls, tugging at his heavy shoe, asked over her shoulder: "Where's Seth?"

"He's dead. No help for him," Luke Hills told her.

"Well, go stay with him, one of you," she directed. "Get along. And to Jenny: 'Shut the door!'"

So Jenny and Marm Pierce were left to tend the hurt man, and Marm Pierce as she bared the wound made little rueful whistling sounds between her teeth, and Jenny was cold as stone, all emotions in abeyance, standing like ice.

"Get water boiling, Jenny," Marm Pierce directed. "The doctor'll want that, certain. And fetch some water here till I clean his leg all I can."

Jenny turned to the kitchen, chunked the fire, pumped water, put the kettle on the stove; then she came back to the dining room. She had not spoken.

Will's eyelids wavered, opened, then closed again. He said weakly: "My team's tied, up on—ridge road. Somebody fetch 'em home."

"You hush up, Will," Marm Pierce told him. "You'll need all the strength you've got."

She loosed the tourniquet a little, till blood flowed again, then tightened it once more. She saw Jenny's fearful doubts of this procedure, and said:

"I dunno, Jenny. Seems like I've heard tell you've got to let some blood get through, or the leg'll die. I guess it's going to have to be cut off, though. No bone left, only splinters, for four-five inches down the shin."

Jenny nodded dumbly.

"All we can do is keep him quiet till the doctor comes," Marm Pierce confessed. "I can cure some hurts, this here is too much for me."

And later she said: "You put a pillow under his head, and a blanket over him, to keep him warm."

But when these things were done they could only keep vigil, till after a long hour the doctor did arrive.

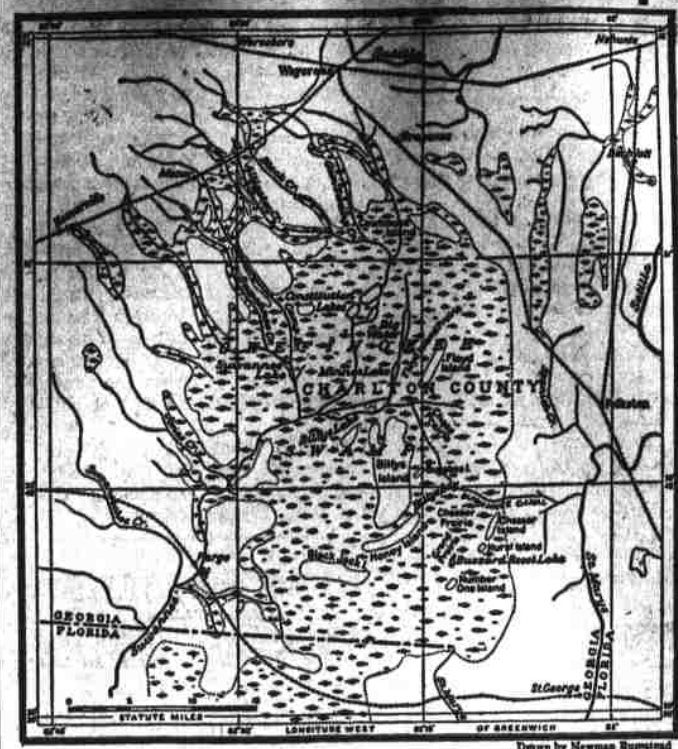
When that which had now to be done was done, Jenny was left drained and empty, her muscles limp, her heart sick. Throughout, she and Marm Pierce had helped the doctor; the old woman administering chloroform drop by drop under strict direction, Jenny holding this and that as she was bidden.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Good Word for Iron

Iron has its place as a heat conducting metal. While it may be less attractive than some other materials, it is still an old standby, practical for many uses. It holds heat, gives a good brown color to foods, and is readily cleaned.

Okefinokee Swamp



Okefinokee Swamp, Mystery Land of Georgia.

Prepared by National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.—WNU Service.

DOWN in the southeastern corner of Georgia lies the great Okefinokee swamp, a primeval wilderness rich in treasure for the modern biologist. Mystery and enchantment live in its coffee-colored waters, its moss-hung cypresses and sunlit piney woods.

The Okefinokee owes a great measure of its unique charm to its "prairies"—wide, unspoiled expanses filled in large part with a tropical abundance of aquatic plants and flanked with dense "bays" of state cypress. On these one may delight his soul amid scenes of unearthly loveliness that have changed virtually not at all since the Seminole warriors poled their dugouts over them. The Okefinokee prairies are not land, but water!

In these morasses are many areas of open water, varying from lakes a quarter of a mile in diameter to "alligator holes" a rod in width. They are also dotted here and there with wooded islets—the so-called prairie "heads"—of cypress, slash pine, sweetbay, and other trees, the taller ones hoary with moss.

The snowy blossoms of the white waterlily gladden many acres of the deeper water, and the golden, globular flowers of yellow pond-lilies, or "bommets," glow in a setting of huge green leaves. In the shallows yellow-eyed grass, its tall stems swaying, forms a sea of pleasant color.

The small pitcherplant is hardly true to its name on the Okefinokee prairies, for its spotted greenish tubes reach a yard into the air—a height unheard of elsewhere; the parasol-like flowers of greenish gold, each on a separate scape, stand a little below the summit of the leaves.

Resort of Hunters and Trappers.

For generations swamp hunters have pushed over these prairie waters, standing up in their slight boats and bending rhythmically with graceful thrusts of their long poles. The skilled boatman is able to make better progress over the prairies than the bear he chases. Old hunters knew well how to drive a deer out of a prairie head in the direction of a waiting companion.

In winter the trapper camps for weeks at a time in these heads, tending his line of traps and taking the pelts of raccoon, otter, wildcat and opossum.

To pass from the sparkling sunshine of the prairies into the gloom of the adjoining cypress bays is a striking experience. The huge trees, buttressed by "knees," stand in close ranks in a foot or so of water. Their green crowns, 80 feet or more overhead, shut out all but a few stray beams of sunshine, causing even at midday a sort of twilight. Here and there a winding channel or "run" permits the hunter to push his tiny boat between the tree trunks; but in the greater part of the cypress bays there is tall, dense undergrowth that makes even foot travel a slow and arduous undertaking. The bear, having the double advantage of bulky strength and a tough hide, is the only large animal that can readily and rapidly break through such a tangle.

Welcome rifts in the cypress bays in the heart of the swamp are formed by long, narrow lakes, most important of which are Billys Lake, Mines Lake, and the Big Water. Though each of these is several miles in length, their width averages scarcely 50 yards. They are merely expansions of "runs" on the headwaters of the far-famed Suwannee river. On entering one of these lakes the swamp boatman lays aside his push-pole and takes up the paddle. He is also apt to cast out his fish line, for the waters shelter multitudes of warmouths, large mouthed bass, and other toothsome fishes.

Good Fishing There.

More than thirty species of fishes inhabit the Okefinokee. Persons who love simple pan-fishing, with an old-fashioned reed pole, and here their heart's content. At Suwannee lake this sort of angling surpasses

that in almost any other part of the country. When one considers that the lake is barely a quarter of a mile long, with an average width of perhaps 30 yards, a year's catch of more than 40,000 fish (recorded in 1925) is astounding.

Farther within the swamp, at Billys Mines, and the Buzzard Roost lakes, or on the Big Water or the Suwannee canal, there is likewise rare fishing. The bulk of a day's catch with hook and line is made up of such basses as the warmouth, the "stump-knocker" and the "sand-flirter," with a goodly proportion of mudfish and catfish. Those who elect trolling are more apt to land jackfish and large-mouthed bass.

The great state of Texas can boast of 30 species of frogs and toads; the Okefinokee region, with one-two-hundredths the area of Texas, has 20. With varied habitats to suit the requirements of different species; with unlimited breeding places in the cypress ponds, cypress bays, and prairies; with abundant rains in normal years, and with a warm and humid climate, the Okefinokee is a veritable frog paradise.

Alligators and Birds.

Men still living can speak of the times when it appeared as if "a feller could walk across Billys lake on 'gator backs.'" To this day the Okefinokee remains perhaps the best stronghold of our famous corrugated saurian. Suwannee lake in particular, where the alligators are protected, provides unequalled opportunities for making intimate studies of the habits of wild individuals.

Of the approximately 180 species of birds recorded in the Okefinokee region, scarcely one-half remain during the summer and breed. While some of these summer residents move southward with the approach of cool weather in the autumn, their places are more than filled by harder species coming from the northern states and Canada to find a congenial winter home in the swamp.

By far the largest mammal of the swamp, and perhaps the most interesting, is the Florida bear. From early times it has attracted the swamp hunters—not so much because of any particular value of its hide and flesh as by reason of the thrill that comes from matching wits and strength with so formidable an animal. An additional reason for the pursuit of the bear is its numerous depredations on the hogs that range through the piney woods and the swamp borders. At a hog's prolonged squealing the residents become instantly alert.

Guns are hurriedly lifted from pegs on the cabin walls, the dogs are called together with the hunting horn, and the chase is on.

Primitive Life of the People.

For generations the sturdy, self-sufficient, and gifted people of the Okefinokee have led a rather isolated and primitive existence, some of them on islands within the swamp and others along its borders. They represent some of the purest Anglo-Saxon stock left in our country, though a few of the families have a slight mixture of French Huguenot and even Seminole Indian blood.

In ancestry, speech, folksongs, and general social ways there is a marked affinity between the residents of the Okefinokee and those of the Appalachian mountains. In each case there has been comparative isolation, tending to preserve the cultural heritage from Britain of several centuries ago. The picturesque regional vernacular contains various elements representing survivals from the Elizabethan age that have dropped out of general American usage.

The old-fashioned square dance, or "frolic," still holds sway here as a leading form of social recreation. The fiddle, the handclap, the foot-beat, and the "calling of the set" by the leader all lend their aid to the rhythmic performance. The late fall days—the season of "hog-killin'" and "cane-grindin'"—see these social expressions at their height.

LEADS IN KINDERGARTENS
Public school kindergarten instruction in Pennsylvania received its start through a school conducted at the Centennial exposition in Philadelphia in 1876. There are more than 500 public kindergartens in the state—with more than 85,000 pupils and in excess of 500 teachers.



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