

The Hollow of Her Hand

by
**George Barr
McCutcheon**
Author of "Craustark"
"Truxton King," etc.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ELLSWORTH YOUNG

COPYRIGHT 1914 BY
GEORGE BARR McCUTCHEON
COPYRIGHT 1914 BY
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Challis Wrاندall is found murdered in a road house near New York. Mrs. Wrاندall is summoned from the city and identifies the body. A young woman who accompanied Wrاندall to the road and subsequently disappeared is suspected. Wrاندall, it appears, had led a gay life and neglected his wife, Mrs. Wrاندall starts back for New York in an auto during a blinding snow storm.

CHAPTER II—On the way she meets a young woman in the road who proves to be the woman who killed Wrاندall. Feeling that the girl had done her a service in ridding her of the man who, though she loved him deeply, had caused her great sorrow, Mrs. Wrاندall determines to shield her and takes her to her own home.

CHAPTER III—Mrs. Wrاندall hears the story of Hetty Castleton's life, except that portion that relates to Wrاندall. The story of the tragedy she forbids the girl ever to tell her. She offers Hetty a home, friendship and security from peril on account of the tragedy.

CHAPTER IV—Mrs. Sara Wrاندall and Hetty attend the funeral of Challis Wrاندall at the home of his parents. Sara had always been treated as an interloper by the snobbish Wrاندall family, but the tragedy seems to draw them closer together.

CHAPTER V—Sara Wrاندall and Hetty return to New York after an absence of a year in Europe. Leslie Wrاندall, brother of Sara, makes himself useful to Sara and becomes greatly interested in Hetty.

CHAPTER VI—Hetty is greatly pained at Sara's evident desire to encourage Leslie's attentions. Sara sees in Leslie's intention possibility for revenge on the Wrاندalls and attempts to tell the girl she will tell her secret and that then Wrاندall by marrying his murderer into the family.

CHAPTER VII—Leslie, in company with his friend, Brandon Booth, an artist, visits Sara at her country place. Leslie confesses to Sara that he is madly in love with Hetty.

CHAPTER VIII—Sara arranges with Booth to paint a picture of Hetty. Booth has a haunting feeling that he has seen Hetty before. Looking through a portfolio of pictures by an unknown English artist he finds one of Hetty. He speaks to her about it. Hetty declares it must be a picture of Hetty Glynn, an English actress, who resembles her very much.

CHAPTER IX—Leslie Wrاندall becomes impatient and jealous over Sara's partiality and declares he is going to propose to Hetty at the first opportunity and have it over with.

CHAPTER X—Much to his chagrin Leslie is refused by Hetty. Sara, between whom and Hetty a strong mutual affection has grown up, tries to persuade the girl that she should not let the tragedy prevent her from marrying.

CHAPTER XI—Booth and Hetty confess their love for each other, but the latter declares that she can never marry as there is an insurmountable barrier in the way. She promises that some day she will tell her secret and that then Booth will not want to marry her.

CHAPTER XII—Hetty admits to Sara that she loves Booth. Sara declares that Hetty must marry Leslie, who must be made to pay his brother's debt to the girl. Hetty again attempts to tell the real story of the tragedy and Sara threatens to strangle her if she says a word. Sara insults Hetty by revealing that all during this time she has believed Hetty to be a girl in relations with Challis Wrاندall. In the end she realizes that Hetty is entirely innocent.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Second Encounter.

Booth trudged rapidly homeward after leaving Hetty at the lodge. He was throbbing all over with the love of her. The thrill of conquest was in his blood. She had raised a mysterious barrier; all the more zest to the inevitable victory that would be his. He would delight in overcoming obstacles—the bigger the better—for his heart was vallant and the prize no smaller than those which the ancient knights went out to battle for in the lists of love.

It was enough for the present to know that she loved him.

What if she were Hetty Glynn? What if she had been an artist's model? The look he had had into the soul of her through those pure blue eyes was all-convincing. She was worthy of the noblest love.

After luncheon—served with some exasperation by Patrick an hour and a half later than usual—he smoked his pipe on the porch and stared meditatively at the shifting clouds above the tree tops.

He did not see the Wrاندall motor at his garden gate until a lusty voice brought him down from the clouds into the range of earthly sounds. Then he dashed out to the gate, bareheaded and coatless, forgetting that he had been sitting in the obscurity of trailing vines and purple blossoms the while he thought of her.

Leslie was sitting on the wide seat between his mother and sister, waiting to see you back, old man," said Booth, reaching in to shake hands with him. "Day early, aren't you? Good afternoon, Mrs. Wrاندall. Won't she come in?"

She looked at Virian as he gave the answer.

"Thank you," she replied. "Won't she come to dinner this evening?"

"I'm not quite sure," said Booth. "I've got a half-dozen old chap," out in Leslie, "I'll be there myself, but I'll be there without me."

What about one thing and another—see what I mean?"

"We shall expect you, Brandon," said Mrs. Wrاندall, fixing him with her lognettes.

"I'll come, thank you," said he. He felt disgustingly transparent under that inquisitive glass.

Wrاندall stepped out of the car. "I'll stop off for a chat with Brandy, mother."

"Shall I send the car back, dear?" "Never mind. I'll walk down."

The two men turned in at the gate as the car sped away.

"Well," said Booth, "it's good to see you. Pat!" He called through a basement window. "Come up and take the gentleman's order."

"No drink for me, Brandy. I've been in the temperance state of Maine for two weeks. One week more of it and I'd have been completely pickled. I shall always remember Maine."

Booth sat down on the porch rail, hooked his toes in the supports and proceeded to fill his pipe. Then he struck a match and applied it, Leslie watching him with moody eyes.

"How do you like the portrait, old man?" he inquired between punctuating puffs.

"It's bully. Sargent never did anything finer. Rippling."

"I owe it all to you, Les."

"To me?"

"You induced her to sit to me."

"So I did," said Leslie sourly. "I was Mr. Fix-it sure enough." He allowed a short interval to elapse before taking the plunge. "I suppose, old chap, if I should happen to need your valuable services as best man in the near future, you'd not disappoint me?"

Booth eyed him quizzically. "I trust you're not throwing yourself away, Les," he said drily. "I mean to say, on some one—well, some one not quite up to the mark."

Leslie regarded him with some severity. "Of course not, old chap. What the devil put that into your head?"

"I thought that possibly you'd been making a chump of yourself up in the Maine woods."

"Piffle! Don't be an ass. What's the sense pretending you don't know who she is?"

"I suppose it's Hetty Castleton," said Booth, puffing away at his pipe.

"Who else?"

"Think she'll have you, old man?" asked Booth, after a moment.

"I don't know," replied the other, a bit dashed. "You might wish me luck, though."

Booth knocked the burnt tobacco from the bowl of his pipe. A serious line appeared between his eyes. He was a fair-minded fellow, without guile, without a single treacherous instinct.

"I can't wish you luck, Les," he said slowly. "You see I'm—I'm in love with her myself."

"The devil!" Leslie sat bolt upright and glared at him. "I might have known! And—and is she in love with you?"

"My dear fellow, you reveal considerable lack of tact in asking that question."

"What I want to know is this," exclaimed Wrاندall, very pale but very hot: "Is she going to marry you?"

Booth smiled. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. She says she won't."

Leslie gulped. "So you've asked her?"

"Obviously."

"And she said she wouldn't? She refused you? Turned you down?" His little mustache shot up at the ends and a joyous, triumphant laugh broke from his lips.

Booth smiled. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. She says she won't."

Leslie gulped. "So you've asked her?"

"Obviously."

"And she said she wouldn't? She refused you? Turned you down?" His little mustache shot up at the ends and a joyous, triumphant laugh broke from his lips.

Booth smiled. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. She says she won't."

Leslie gulped. "So you've asked her?"

"Obviously."

"And she said she wouldn't? She refused you? Turned you down?" His little mustache shot up at the ends and a joyous, triumphant laugh broke from his lips.

Booth smiled. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. She says she won't."

Leslie gulped. "So you've asked her?"

"Obviously."

"And she said she wouldn't? She refused you? Turned you down?" His little mustache shot up at the ends and a joyous, triumphant laugh broke from his lips.

Booth smiled. "I'll be perfectly frank with you. She says she won't."

Leslie gulped. "So you've asked her?"

"Obviously."

Certainly not, accepted Booth amiably. "I quite understand."

"Then, since she's refused you, you might wish me better luck."

"That would mean giving up hope."

"Hope!" exclaimed Leslie quickly. "You don't mean to say you'll annoy her with your—"

"No, I shall not annoy her," replied his friend, shaking his head.

"Well, I should hope not," said Leslie with a scowl. "Turned you down, eh? 'Pos my soul! He appeared to be relishing the idea of it."

"Sorry, old chap, but I suppose you understand just what that means."

Booth's lips hardened for an instant, then relaxed into a queer, almost pitying smile.

"And you want me to be your best man?" he said reflectively.

Leslie arose. His chest seemed to swell a little; assuredly he was breathing much easier. He assumed an air of compassion.

"I shan't insist, old fellow, if you feel you'd rather not—er— See what I mean?" It then occurred to him to utter a word or two of kindly advice.

"I shouldn't go on moping if I were you, Brandy. 'Pos my soul, I shouldn't. Take it like a man. I know it hurts, but— Pooh! What's the use aggravating the pain by butting against a stone wall?"

His companion looked out over the tree tops, his hands in his trousers pockets, and it must be confessed that his manner was not that of one who is oppressed by despair.

"I think I'm taking it like a man, Les," he said. "I only hope you'll take it as nicely if she says nay to you."

An uneasy look leaped into Leslie's face. He seemed noticeably less complacent about the chest. He wondered if Booth knew anything about his initial venture. A question rose to his lips, but he thought quickly and held it back. Instead, he glanced at his watch.

"I must be off. See you tomorrow, I hope."

"So long," said Booth, stopping at the top of the steps while his visitor skipped down to the gate with a nimbleness that suggested the formation of a sudden resolve.

Leslie did not waste time in parting inanities; he strode off briskly in the direction of home, but not without a furtive glance out of the tail of his eye as he disappeared beyond the hedge-row at the end of Booth's garden. That gentleman was standing where he had left him, and was filling his pipe once more.

The day was warm, and Leslie was in a dripping perspiration when he reached home. He did not enter the house but made his way direct to the garage.

"Get out the car at once, Brown," was his order.

Three minutes later he was being driven over the lower road toward Southlook, taking good care to avoid Booth's place by the matter of a mile or more. He was in a fever of hope and eagerness. It was very plain to him why she had refused Booth. The iron was hot. He didn't intend to lose any time in striking.

And now we know why he came again to Sara's in the middle of a blazing afternoon, instead of waiting until the more seductive shades of night had fallen, when the moon sat serene in the seat of the Mighty.

He didn't have to wait long for Hetty. Up to the instant of her appearance in the door, he had revealed in the thought that the way was now paved with roses. But with her entrance, he felt his confidence and courage slipping. Perhaps that may explain the abruptness with which he proceeded to go about the business in hand.

"I couldn't wait till tonight," he explained as she came slowly across the room toward him. She was half-way to him before he was aware of the fact that he was standing perfectly still. Then he started forward, somewhat impelled to meet her at least half-way. "You'll forgive me, Hetty, if I have disturbed you."

"I was not lying down, Mr. Wrاندall," she said quietly. There was nothing ominous in the words, but he experienced a sudden sensation of cold. "Won't you sit down? Or would you rather go out to the terrace?"

"It's much more comfortable here, if you don't mind. I—I suppose you know what it is I want to say to you, you—"

"Yes," she interrupted wearily; "and knowing as much, Mr. Wrاندall, it would not be fair of me to let you go on."

"Not fair?" he said, in honest amazement. "But, my dear, I—"

"Please, Mr. Wrاندall," she exclaimed, with a pleading little smile that would have touched the heart of anyone but Leslie. "Please don't go on. It is quite as impossible now as it was before. I have not changed."

He could only say, mechanically: "You haven't?"

"No, I am sorry if you have thought that I might come to—"

"Think, for heaven's sake, think what you are doing!" he cried, feeling upon the edge of the table with a despairing hand. "I—I had Sara's word that you were not—"

"Unfortunately Sara cannot speak for me in a matter of this kind. Thank you for the honor you would—"

"Thank so changed?" he blurted out, losing his temper. "I love you! It's a purely selfish thing with me, and I'm blotted if I consider it an honor to be refused by any woman. I—"

"Mr. Wrاندall," she cried, fixing him with her flashing, indignant eyes. "You are forgetting yourself." She was standing very straight and slim and imperious before him.

He quailed. "I—I beg your pardon, I—"

"There is nothing more to be said,"

and went on to say, "Goodby."

"Would you mind telling me whether there is anyone else?" he asked, as he turned toward the door.

"Do you really feel that you have the right to ask that question, Mr. Wrاندall?"

He wet his lips with his tongue. "Then, there is some one!" he cried, rapping the table with his knuckles. He didn't realize till afterward how vigorously he rapped. "Some one—founded English nobody, I suppose."

She smiled, not unkindly. "There is no English nobody, if that answers your question."

"Then, will you be kind enough to offer a reason for not giving me a fair chance in a clear field? I think it's due—"

"Can't you see how you are distressing me? Must I again go through that horrid scene in the garden? Can't you take a plain no for an answer?"

"Good Lord!" he gasped, and in those two words he revealed the complete overturning of a lifelong estimate of himself. It seemed to take more than his breath away.

"Goodby," she said with finality.

He stared at the door through which she disappeared, his hopes, his conceit, his self-regard trailing after her with shameless disloyalty to the standards he had set for them, and then, with a rather ghastly smile of self-commiseration on his lips, he slipped out of the house, jumped into the motor car, and gave a brief but explicit command to the chauffeur, who lost no time in assisting his master.

Leslie sat bolt upright and glared at him.

to turn tail in ignominious flight.

Hetty was gloomily but resolutely employed in laying out certain of her personal belongings, preparatory to packing them for departure, when Sara entered her room.

They regarded each other steadily, questioningly for a short space of time.

"Leslie has just called up to ask what the devil I meant by letting him make a fool of himself," said Sara, with a peculiar little twisted smile on her lips.

Hetty offered no comment, but after a moment glared and rather wistfully called attention to her present occupation by a significant frown of her hand and a saddened smile.

"I see," said Sara, without emotion. "If you choose to go, Hetty, I shall not oppose you."

"My position here is a false one, Sara. I prefer to go."

"This morning I should have held a sword over your head."

"It is very difficult for me to realize all that has happened."

"You are free to depart. You are free in every sense of the word. Your future rests with yourself, my dear."

"It hurts me more than I can tell to feel that you have been hating me all these months."

"It hurts me—now."

Hetty walked to the window and looked out.

"What are your plans?" Sara inquired after an interval.

"I shall seek employment—and wait for you to act."

"If you mean?"

"I shall not run away, Sara. Nor do I intend to reveal myself to the authorities. I am not morally guilty of crimes. A year ago I feared the consequences of my deed, but I have learned much since then. I was a stranger in a new world. In England we have been led to believe that you lynch women here as readily as you lynch men. I now know better than that. From you alone I learned my greatest lesson. You revealed to me the true meaning of human kindness. You shielded me who should not. Even now I believe that your first impulse was a tender one. I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

"I shall not forget it, Sara. You will live to regret the easier thought that came later on. I have loved you—yes, almost as a good dog loves his master. It is not for me to tell the story of this night and all these months to the world. I would not be betraying myself, but you. You would be called upon to explain, not I. And you would be the one to suffer. When you met me on the road that night I was on my way back to the 'bar' to give myself into custody. You have made it impossible for me to do so now. My sins are washed. It is done with you, Sara."

Sara smiled, but in the usual manner. There was a gleam in her eyes, but she said nothing.

THE ELEVENTH SERIES OF THE STANDARD BUILDING AND LOAN ASSOCIATION

The eleventh series of the Standard Building and Loan Association opens April 1st, 1914. The books are open daily for subscriptions.

Twenty-five cents entrance fee and 25 cents weekly instalments per share. No back dues required in this series.

R. O'Hara, President
J. T. Barber, Sec. & Treas.
3-27-15th.

NOTICE

March 25th 1914.—Commencing Thursday 26th freight received after 10 A.