

Erskine Dale Pioneer

by John Fox, Jr.

Illustrated by R.H. Livingstone

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EARLY MORN

SYNOPSIS.—To the Kentucky wilderness outpost commanded by Jerome Sanders, in the time immediately preceding the Revolution, comes a white boy fleeing from a tribe of Shawnees by whom he had been captured and adopted as a son of the chief, Kahtoo. He is given shelter and attracts the favorable attention of Dave Yandell, leader among the settlers. The boy warns his new friends of the coming of a Shawnee war party. The fort is attacked, and only saved by the timely appearance of a party of Virginians. The leader of these is fatally wounded, but in his dying moments recognizes the fugitive youth as his son. At Red Oaks, plantation on the James river, Virginia, Colonel Dale's home, the boy appears with a message for the colonel, who after reading it introduces the bearer to his daughter, Barbara as her cousin, Erskine Dale. Erskine meets two other cousins, Harry Dale and Hugh Willoughby. Duelling rapers on a wall at Red Oaks attract Erskine's attention. He takes his first fencing lesson from Harry Yandell visits Red Oaks. At the county fair at Williamsburg Erskine meets a youth, Dane Grey, and there at once arises a bitter antagonism between them. Grey, in liquor, insults Erskine, and the latter, for the moment, draws his knife. Ashamed of his conduct in the affair with Grey, Erskine leaves Red Oaks that night, to return to the wilderness. Yandell, with Harry and Hugh, who have been permitted to visit the Sanders fort, overtake him. At plantation the boy had left a note in which he gave the property, which is his as the son of Colonel Dale's older brother, to Barbara. The party is met by three Shawnees, who bring it was to Erskine (whose Indian name is White Arrow) that his foster father, Kahtoo, is dying and desires him to come to the tribe and become its chief. After a brief visit to the fort Erskine goes to the river.

CHAPTER VII—Continued.

On the seventh day he was nearing the village, where the sick chief lay, and when he caught sight of the feepees in a little creek bottom, he fired his rifle, and putting fire into a gallop and with right hand high, swept into the village. Several bucks had caught up bow or rifle at the report of the gun and the clatter of hoofs, but their hands relaxed when they saw his sign of peace. The squaws gathered and there were grunts of recognition and greeting when the boy pulled up in their midst. The flaps of the chief's tent parted and his foster-mother started toward him with a sudden stream of tears and turned quickly back. The old chief's keen black eyes were waiting for her and he spoke before she could open her lips: "White Arrow! It is well, here—at once!"

Erskine had swung from his horse and followed. The old chief measured him from head to foot slowly and his face grew content: "Show me the horse!" The boy threw back the flaps of the tent and with a gesture bade an Indian to lead firefly to and fro. The horse even thrust his beautiful head over his master's shoulder and looked within, snorting gently. Kahtoo waved dismissal: "You must ride north soon to carry the white wampum and a peace talk. And when you go you must hurry back, for when the sun is highest on the day after you return, my spirit will pass."

And thereupon he turned his face and went back into sleep. Just before sunset rifle-shots sounded in the distance—the hunters were coming in—and the accompanying whoops meant great success. Each of three bucks carried a deer over his shoulders, and foremost of the three was Crooked Lightning, who barely paused when he saw Erskine, and then with an insolent glare and grunt passed him and tossed his deer at the feet of the squaws. The boy's hand slipped toward the handle of his tomahawk, but some swift instinct kept him still. The savage must have had good reason for such open defiance, for the lad began to feel that many others shared in his hostility and he began to wonder and speculate.

Quickly the feast was prepared and the boy ate apart—his foster-mother bringing him food—but he could hear the story of the day's hunting and the allusions to the prowess of Crooked Lightning's son, Black Wolf, who was Erskine's age, and he knew they were but sturs against himself. Fresh wood was thrown on the fire, and as its light leaped upward the lad saw an aged Indian emerge from one of two tents that sat apart on a little rise—saw him lift both hands toward the stars for a moment and then return within.

"Who is that?" he asked. "The new prophet," said his mother. "He has been but one moon here and

has much power over our young men." An armful of pine fagots was tossed on the blaze, and in a whiter leap of light he saw the face of a woman at the other tent—saw her face and for a moment met her eyes before she shrank back—and neither face nor eyes belonged to an Indian. Startled, he caught his mother by the wrist and all but cried out: "And that?" The old woman hesitated and scowled: "A paleface. Kahtoo bought her and adopted her but"—the old woman gave a little guttural cluck of triumph—"she dies tomorrow. Kahtoo will burn her."

"Burn her?" burst out the boy. "The palefaces have killed many of Kahtoo's kin!" A little later when he was passing near the white woman's tent a girl sat in front of it pounding corn in a mortar. She looked up at him and, staring, smiled. She had the skin of the half-breed, and he stopped, startled by that fact and her beauty—and went quickly on. At old Kahtoo's lodge he could not help turning to look at her again, and this time she rose quickly and slipped within the tent. He turned to find his foster-mother watching him. "Who is that girl?" The old woman looked displeased. "Daughter of the white woman."

"Does she know?" "Neither knows." "What is her name?" "Early Morn."

Early Morn and daughter of the white woman—he would like to know more of those two, and he half turned, but the old Indian woman caught him by the arm: "Do not go there—you will only make more trouble."

He followed the flash of her eyes to the edge of the firelight where a young Indian stood watching and scowling: "Who is that?" "Black Wolf, son of Crooked Lightning."

"Ah!" thought Erskine. Within the old chief called faintly and the Indian woman motioned the



The Squaws Gathered and There Were Grunts of Recognition and Greeting When the Boy Pulled Up in Their Midst.

lad to go within. The old man's dim eyes had a new fire. "Talk!" he commanded, and motioned to the ground, but the lad did not squat Indian fashion, but stood straight with arms folded, and the chief knew that a conflict was coming. Narrowly he watched White Arrow's face and bearing—uneasily felt the strange new power of him. "I have been with my own people," said the lad simply, "the palefaces who have come over the big mountains, on and on almost to the big waters, I found my kin. They are many and strong and rich. They, too, were kind to me. I came because you were sick and because you had sent for me, and to keep my word."

"I have seen Crooked Lightning. His heart is bad. I have seen the new prophet. I do not like him. And I have seen the white woman that you are to burn tomorrow." The lad stopped. His every word had been of defense or indictment and more than once the old chief's eyes shifted uneasily. The dumbless men of the boy, his steady eyes, and his bold truthfulness, pleased the old man. The lad must take his place as chief. Now White Arrow turned questioner: "I told you I would come when the

leaves fell and I am here. Why is Crooked Lightning here? Why is the new prophet? Who is the woman? What has she done that she must die? What is the peace talk you wish me to carry north?"

The old man hesitated long with closed eyes. When he opened them the fire was gone and they were dim again.

"The story of the prophet and Crooked Lightning is too long," he said wearily. "I will tell tomorrow. The woman must die because her people have slain mine. Besides, she is growing blind and is a trouble. You carry the white wampum to a council. The Shawnees may join the British against our enemies—the palefaces."

"I will wait," said the lad. "I will carry the white wampum. If you war against the paleface on this side of the mountain—I am your enemy. If you war with the British against them all—I am your enemy. And the woman must not die."

"I have spoken," said the old man. "I have spoken," said the boy. He turned to lie down and went to sleep. The old man sat on, staring out at the stars.

Just outside the tent a figure slipped away as noiselessly as a snake. When it rose and emerged from the shadows the firelight showed the malignant, triumphant face of Crooked Lightning.

CHAPTER VIII

The Indian boys were plunging into the river when Erskine appeared at the opening of the old chief's tent next morning, and when they came out icicles were clinging to their hair. He had forgotten the custom and he shrugged his shoulders at his mother's inquiring look. But the next morning when Crooked Lightning's son Black Wolf passed him with a taunting smile he changed his mind.

"Wait!" he said. He turned, stripped quickly to a breech-clout, pointed to a beech down and across the river, challenging Black Wolf to a race. Together they plunged in and the boy's white body clove through the water like the arrow that he was. At the beech he waded about to meet the angry face of his competitor ten yards behind. Half-way back he was more than twenty yards ahead when he heard a strangled cry. Perhaps it was a ruse to cover the humiliation of defeat, but when he saw bucks rushing for the river bank he knew that the icy water had brought a cramp to Black Wolf, so he turned, caught the lad by his topknot, towed him shoreward, dropped him contemptuously, and stalked back to his tent. His mother had built a fire for him, and the old chief looked pleased and proud.

"My spirit shall not pass," he said, and straightway he rose and dressed, and to the astonishment of the tribe emerged from his tent and walked firmly about the village until he found Crooked Lightning.

"You would have Black Wolf chief," he said. "Very well. We shall see who can show the better right—your son or White Arrow"—a challenge that sent Crooked Lightning to brood awhile in his tent, and then secretly to consult the prophet.

Later the old chief talked long to White Arrow. The prophet, he said, had been with them but a little while. He claimed that the Great Spirit had made revelations to him alone. What manner of man was he, questioned the boy—did he have ponies and pets and Indian men?

"He is poor," said the chief. "He has only a wife and children and the tribe feeds him."

White Arrow himself grunted—it was the first sign of his old life stirring within him.

"Why should the Great Spirit pick out such a man to favor?" he asked. The chief shook his head.

"Crooked Lightning has found much favor with him, and in turn with the others, so that I have not thought it wise to tell Crooked Lightning that he must go. He has stirred up the young men against me—and against you. They were waiting for me to die." The boy looked thoughtful and the chief waited. He had not reached the aim of his speech and there was no need to put it in words, for White Arrow understood.

"I will show them," he said quietly. When the two appeared outside, many braves had gathered, for the whole village knew what was in the wind. Should it be a horse race first? Crooked Lightning looked at the boy's thoroughbred and shook his head—Indian ponies would as well try to outrun an arrow, a bullet, a hurricane.

A foot-race? The old chief smiled when Crooked Lightning shook his head again—no brave in the tribe even could match the speed that gave the lad his name. The boy and arrow, the rifle, the tomahawk? Tomahawks and bows and arrows were brought out. Black Wolf was half a head shorter, but stocky and powerfully built. White Arrow's sinews had strengthened, but he had scarcely used bow and tomahawk since he had left the tribe. He had the power but not the practice, and Black Wolf won with great ease. When they came to the rifle, Black Wolf was out of the game, for never a bull's-eye did White Arrow miss.

"With a gesture Pontiac bade Crooked Lightning speak."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Man With a Mission. The "man with a mission" is becoming a nuisance. Nine times out of ten he seems to be headed away from the kind of work he is best qualified to do.—Houston Post.

How many self-made men have really been made by their wives?

SPURNED BY MAN, GIRL KILLS SELF

Flapper Love Sends Evelyn Couture to Death and Kenneth Gumm to Hospital.

BREAKS UP WEDDING

Marriage Festivities Turned Into Tragedy by Infatuated Girl—Bride Tells Story of Dead Girl's Persistence.

Toledo, Ohio.—Flapper love, violent and passionate, but shallow and impotent, sent Evelyn Couture, nineteen years old, of Sylvania, to her death by her own hand and put Kenneth P. Gumm, twenty-one, of Toledo, in a hospital with a bullet in his lung.

Mrs. Pearl Thomas Gumm, wife of the wounded man, is a candidate for the state senate in the primary election. She has espoused the cause of short skirts, bobbed hair and other features of a liberal platform.

Wedding festivities of young Gumm and his bride of a few hours were halted by an insistent knock on the



Pulled the Gun and Fired.

door of the bride's apartment on the evening of the wedding day. When it was answered Evelyn Couture, the sinister shadow of the Gumm's courtship, stood in the hall. She formerly had held a place in Gumm's favor.

Asks Girl to Depart.

Mrs. Gumm, realizing that the girl was agitated over the news that young Gumm had married, asked why Miss Couture did not go away and leave them alone.

"He's mine, Pearl Thomas," she replied to the bride who formerly was Pearl Thomas, musician and artist model. Mrs. Gumm attempted to persuade the girl to go away and not make a scene on account of the marriage.

"Oh, what's the use," she replied despondently.

Then, according to Mrs. Gumm, the Couture girl asked that Mrs. Gumm step out into the hallway.

"After a recent experience with her, I was afraid to do this. Then she said she wished to see Kenneth," the bride said.

"He came out of the bathroom and saw her. He said: 'Go home, we're married. Let us alone.'"

"She insisted that she wanted to see him for a moment and came into the room, carrying a flapper hat in her hand. Kenneth said: 'I suppose you have a gun again. Well, if you have, you might as well shoot. I can't shoot.'"

"Of course, he didn't think she would shoot, but she walked up to him and pulled the gun from under her hat and fired. I had started downstairs and turned at the shot. She had thrown her arms around him, but even though wounded, he flung her from him toward a corner. Then I heard another shot, and, running back, thought she had shot him again. When I reached the door she was falling to the floor. She had killed herself."

When I saw her there, all crumpled up and Kenneth wounded, I fainted.

"She didn't love Kenneth and he didn't love her. She might have been infatuated with what I would call flapper love, but there was nothing deep about her affection."

"I truly love my husband, although it has only been in the last few weeks that we have been together much, after a long estrangement. During these weeks this girl continually followed us. Kenneth told me he was through with her."

"As late as two nights before the wedding I wanted to terminate our friendship and give Kenneth to her if he wanted to go to her, but he assured me that there was nothing to his friendship with her and that he merely had spent some time with the Couture girl while we were estranged. Three weeks ago he told me he was ready to settle down and we started going together again."

"Then Miss Couture interfered. Recently she met us on the street and pulled a gun on us. Kenneth told her to stop talking about him as he was through."

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GAMES NOW PLAYED BY RADIO

Checkers Only One of the Many Amusements That Lend Themselves to the Wireless.

"Playing games by radio is the newest sport," writes William Teller in the July St. Nicholas. "The boys in and around New York city who have small radiotelegraph sets, are having a great deal of fun nowadays in carrying on contests and tournaments through the air. Folks who are listening in hear conversations like this: 'It's your move, John. I just jumped from twenty to twenty-seven.' 'All right, Tom; I'm moving from ten to fourteen.'"

"If we did hear a conversation like this, we should at once know that a game of checkers was being played. Checkers is only one of the many games that lends itself to radio. Playing radio checkers is just as easy and almost as fast as playing the game in the ordinary manner. In fact, it is more exciting than the usual game, because we are always playing an invisible opponent."

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Exposing the Paragon.

We were expecting guests for dinner. One of them was a friend of my husband's family, and had the reputation of being a most particular cook and housekeeper. I was, accordingly, a trifle perturbed about the appearance of the house and the dinner.

Just as I began preparations, a neighbor's child was seriously hurt, and I hurried to the assistance of the distracted mother, after giving instructions to my husband to peel the potatoes and put them on to boil. When I returned, my guests had arrived. At the table I noticed that the potatoes had been peeled carelessly, and apologized, explaining that my husband had done them.

The visitor said, "Your husband didn't do them; I did."—Chicago Tribune.

Old Grads.

"B (at class day reunion)—'Hello, Jim, how's the boy?' "B—"Why—er—'It's a girl, you know!"

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