

# The Spoilers.

By REX E. BEACH.

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[Continued from page 2.]

She recounted the reasons for Malen's adventure, while the man's face came terrible.

"Oh, Kid, I am to blame for her go. Why did I do it?" he asked.

"The Sign of the Struve, and the fellow rogue." The Bronco clock, his eyes bloodshot, those of a goaded, fly "It's 8 o'clock now—ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, zero. Too late!"

"What ails you?" she questioned, baffled by his strange demeanor. "You called me the one woman just now, and yet—"

He turned toward her heavily. "She—"

"What?"

"You? Oh, I—I'm glad. I'm glad you don't stand there like a wooden block, or you've work to do. Wake up! Do you hear? She's in peril!"

"What?" she asked, as he whipped him out of his seat and drew himself up.

"Get into your coat! Hurry! My pony will take you to the chair and hold it for him while the doctor looks at his veins. Together they will out into the storm as she and she as he flung the saddle over his shoulder, she said:

"I understand it all now. You talk about her and Glenister, but it's wrong. I feel and schemed and intrigued against her, but it's over now. I guess there's a little streak of good in me somewhere, after all."

He spoke to her from the saddle. "It's more than a streak, Cherry, and you're my kind of people." She smiled wanly back at him under the lantern light.

"That's left handed, Kid. I don't want to be your kind. I want to be his kind—or your sister's kind."

Upon leaving the rendezvous Glenister and his two friends slunk through the night, avoiding the life and lights of the town, while the wind surged out of the voids to seaward, driving its wet burden through their flapping slickers, pelting their faces as though enraged at its failure to wash away the purposes written there. Their course brought them to a cabin at the western outskirts of the city, where they paused long enough to adjust something beneath the brims of their hats.

Past them ran the iron rails of the narrow gauged road which led out tonight.

"I'll have to kill him," the man muttered doggedly, and, plead or reason as she would, she could get nothing from him except those words till at last she turned upon him fiercely.

"You say you love me. Very well, let's see if you do. I know the kind of a man you are, and I know what this feud will mean to him, coming just at this time. Put it aside and I'll marry you."

The gambler rose slowly to his feet. "You do love him, don't you?" She bowed her face, and he winced, but continued: "I wouldn't make you my wife that way. I didn't mean it that way."

At this she laughed bitterly. "Oh, I see. Of course not. How foolish of me to expect it of a man like you. I understand what you mean now, and the bargain will stand just the same, if that is what you came for. I wanted to leave this life and be good, to go away and start over and play the game square, but I see it's no use. I'll pay, I know how reluctant you are, and the price is low enough. You can have me—and that—marriage talk—I'll not speak of again. I'll stay what I am for his sake."

"Stop!" cried the Kid. "You're wrong. I'm not that kind of a sport." His voice broke suddenly, its vehemence shaking his slim body. "Oh, Cherry, I love you the way a man ought to love a woman. It's one of the two good things left in me, and I want to take you away from here where we can both hide from the past, where we can start new, as you say."

"You would marry me?" she asked.

"In an hour and give my heart's blood for the privilege, but I can't stop this thing, not even if your own dear life hung upon it. I must kill that man."

She approached him and laid her arms about his neck, every line of her body pleading, but he refused steadfastly, while the sweat stood out upon his brow.

She begged: "They're all against me, Kid. He's fighting a hopeless fight. He laid all he had at that girl's feet, and I'll do the same for you." The man growled savagely. "He got a reward. He took all she had!"

"Don't be a fool. I guess I know, you're a faro dealer, but you haven't a right to talk like that about a good man, even to a bad one like me."

Into his dark eyes slowly crept a angry look, and she felt him begin to tremble the least bit. He undertook to pause, wet his lips, then carefully chose these words:

"Do you mean—that he did not—that he is a—a good girl?"

"Absolutely."

He sat down weakly and passed a haking hand over his face, which had begun to twitch and jerk again as it had on that night when his vengeance was thwarted.

"I may as well tell you that I know more than that. She's honest and principled. I don't know why I'm in this, but it was on my mind I was half distracted when you were in danger tonight, though this minute. I don't dare to think my boy may have happened, for she's got everything to make reparation for—and his friends."

"I've gone to the Sign of the Sled and Struve."

"I shouted the gambler, leaping. "Alone with Struve on like this?" He shook her crying: "What for? Tell me

along. W obeyed and engine and a full head or suffer a dramatic prompt elision for plied mechanics' efforts two of the till the engine's relief.

He rather it was me, lad, but if get you—God help 'em!" He bled after the departing shadows, King Roy alone. With his naked eyes, Glenister ripped open the wider cases and secreted the contents upon his person. Each cartridge held dynamite enough to devastate a village and he loaded them inside his shirt and every- where he had room, till he was and eased in an armor one- with part of which could have him from the face of the earth as to leave no trace except a pit ripped out of the mountain. He looked to his fuses and that they were wrapped in oil then placed them in his hat. When finished, he set out, walking a difficulty under the weight he had.

That his choice of location had been well made was evidenced by the fact that the ground beneath his feet sloped away to a basin out of which bubbled a spring. It furnished the drinking supply of the Midas, and he knew very inch of the crevice it had worn down the mountain, so felt his way cautiously along. At the bottom of the hill where it ran out upon the level it had worn a considerable ditch through the soil, and into this he crawled on hands and knees. His bulging clothes handicapped him so that his gait was slow and awkward, while the rain had swelled the streamlet till it trickled over his calves and up to his wrists, chilling him so that his muscles cramped and his very bones cried out with it. The sharp schist cut into his palms till they were shredded and bleeding, while his knees found every jagged bit of bedrock over which he dragged himself. He could not see an arm's length ahead without rising, and, having removed his slicker for greater freedom of movement, the rain beat upon his back till he was soaked and shivered and felt streamlets cleaving downward between his ribs. Now and then he squatted upon his haunches, his eyes to either side. The banks were barely high enough to shield him. At last he came to a bridge of planks spanning the ditch and was about to rear himself for another look when he suddenly flattened into the stream bed, half damming the waters with his body. It was for this he had so carefully wrapped his fuses. A man passed over him so close above that he might have touched him. The sentry paused a few paces beyond and accented another, then retraced his steps over the bridge. Evidently this was the picket line, so Roy wormed his way forward till he saw the blacker blackness of the mine buildings, then drew himself, dripping, out from the bank. He had run the gantlet safely.

Since evicting the owners, the receiver had erected substantial houses in place of the tents he had found on the mine. They were of frame and corrugated iron, sheathed within and suited to withstand a moderate exposure. The partners had witnessed the operation from a distance, but knew nothing about the buildings from close examination.

A thrill of affection for this place warmed the young man. He loved this old mine. It had realized the dream of his boyhood and had answered the hope he had clung to during his long fight against the northland. It had come to him when he was disheartened, bringing cheer and happiness, and had yielded itself like a bride. Now it seemed a crime to ravage it.

He crept toward the nearest wall and listened. Within was the sound of voices, though the windows were dark, showing that the inhabitants were on the alert. Beneath the foundations he made mysterious preparations, then sought out the office building and cook house, doing likewise. He found that back of the seeming repose of the Midas there was a strained expectancy.

Although suspense had lengthened the time out of all calculation, he judged he had been gone from his companions at least an hour and that they must be in place by now. If they were not—if anything failed at this eleventh hour—well, those were the fortunes of war. In every enterprise, however carefully planned, there comes a time when chance must take its turn.

He made his way inside the blacksmith shop and fumbled for a match. Just as he was about to strike it he heard the swish of oiled clothes passing and waited for some time. Then, igniting his punk and hiding it under his coat, he opened the door to listen. The wind had died down now, and the rain sang musically upon the metal roofs.

He ran swiftly from house to house, and, when he had done, at the apices of the triangle he had traced three glowing coals were sputtering.

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With the first impact overhead the men poured forth from their quarters armed and bristling to be greeted by

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"I don't want to be your kind. I want to be his kind."

across the quaking tundra to the mountains and the mines. Upon this slender trail of steel there rolled one small, ungainly teapot of an engine which daily creaked and clanked back and forth at a snail's pace, screaming and walling its complaint of the two high loaded flatcars behind. The ties beneath it were spiked to planks laid lengthwise over the semi-liquid road-bed, in places sagging beneath the surface till the humpbacked, short waisted locomotive yawed and reeled and squealed like a drunken fishwife. At night it panted wearily into the board station and there sighed and coughed and hissed away its fatigue as the coals died and the breath relaxed in its lungs.

Early to bed and early to rise was perforce the motto of its grimy crew, who lived near by. Tonight they were just retiring when stayed by a summons at their door. The engineer opened it to admit what appeared to his astonished eyes to be a Krupp cannon propelled by a man in yellow oiled clothes and white cotton mask. This weapon assumed the proportions of a great one eyed monster, which stared with baleful fixity at his vitals, giving him a cold and empty feeling. Away back beyond this Cyclops of the Sightless Orb were two other strangers likewise equipped.

The fireman arose from his chair, dropping an empty shoe with a thump; but, being of the west, without cavil or waste of wind he stretched his hands above his head, balancing on one foot to keep his unshod member from the damp floor. He had unbuckled his belt, and now, loosened by the movement, his overalls seemed bent on sinking floorward in an ecstasy of abashment at the intrusion, whereupon with convulsive grip he hugged them to their duty, one hand and foot still elevated as though in the grand halling sign of some secret order. The other man was new to the ways of the north, so backed to the limit of his quarters, laid both hands protectively upon his middle and doubled up, remarking fervidly:

"Don't point that damned thing at my stomach!"

"Ha, ha!" laughed the fireman, with unnatural loudness. "Have your joke, boys."

"This ain't no joke," said the foremost figure, its breath bellying out the mask at its mouth.

"Sure it is," insisted the shoeless one. "Must be. We ain't got anything worth stealing."

"Get into your clothes, and come

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**Scott's Emulsion** strengthens enfeebled nursing mothers by increasing their flesh and nerve force.

It provides baby with the necessary fat and mineral food for healthy growth.

ALL DRUGGISTS; 50c. AND \$1.00.

A volley of gunshots, the thud of bullets and the dwindling whine of spent lead. They leaped from shelter to find themselves girt with a fitful hoop of fire, for the "Strauglers" had spread in the arc of a circle and now emptied their rifles toward the center. The defenders, however, maintained surprising order considering the suddenness of their attack and ran to join the sentries, whose positions could be determined by the nearer flashes. The voice of a man in authority shouted loud commands. No demonstration came from the outer voids, nothing but the wicked streaks that stabbed the darkness. Then suddenly behind McNamara's men the night glared luridly as though a great furnace door had opened and then clanged shut, while with it came a hoarse thudding roar that silenced the rifle play. They saw the cook house disrupt itself and disintegrate into a thousand flying timbers and twisted sheets of tin which soared upward and outward over their heads and into the night. As the rocking hills ceased echoing the sound of the vigilantes' rifles recurred like the crackling of dry sticks, then everywhere about the defenders the earth was lashed by falling debris, while the iron roof rang at the fusillade.

[Continued next week.]

Hereafter we positively refuse to publish any communication received at this office later than Tuesday, noon, except local and personal items, which will not be available later than Wednesday, noon, for the current week. By trying to be accommodating we are thrown late every week and we are tired of it. This notice applies to EVERY BODY.

4-25-tf.

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Visiting chopmen cordially invited to come up and sit on a stump or hang about on the limb.  
PHILIP STOLL, Con. Com.  
9 27 12m.

## Registration Notice.

The office of the Supervisor of Registration will be opened on the first Monday in every month for the purpose of the registering of any person who is qualified as follows: Who shall have been a resident of the State for two years, and of the county one year, and of the polling precinct in which the elector offers to vote four months before the day of election, and shall have paid, six months before, any poll tax then due and payable, and who can both read and write any section of the constitution of 1895 submitted to him by the Supervisors of Registration, or who can show that he owns, and has paid all taxes collectable on during the present year, property in this State assessed at three hundred dollars or more.  
J. Y. MCGILL, Clerk of Board.

Read the Farmers & Merchants Bank's ad. this issue.

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PROCURED AND DEFENDED. Send model, drawing or photo. for expert search and free report. Free advice, how to obtain patents, trade marks, copyrights, etc. IN ALL COUNTRIES. Business direct with Washington saves time, money and often the patent.  
Patent and Infringement Practice Exclusively. Write or come to us at 122 Ninth Street, opp. United States Patent Office, WASHINGTON, D. C.

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## Insurance.

Fire Insurance, Tornado Insurance, Plate Glass Insurance, Life Insurance, Health Insurance, Accident Insurance, Burglary Insurance.

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OFFICE OVER L. STACKLEY'S STORE,  
Kingtree, S. C.