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Dark Lightning

By Helen Topping Miller

CHAPTER XXVII
(Continued)

He saw Bill Grant coming up the slope from the Grice-Morgan lease. The three derricks were up down there now, and Bill would be moving on presently, too. Maybe they could go together—find a job that needed two eager, ambitious young men.

Gary said, "Hello, Bill. Well, she's through. Hauling up and quitting. How about hitting the road with me to the next place? Know where the blind baggage stop on this railroad?"

"Heard about a job over in the Pecos country," Bill said. "Nice, lonesome country over there. Houses forty miles apart—one or two good roads—one town—sounds like dying and going to hell, to me."

"Lonesome country doesn't appeal to me, somehow," Gary said. "Too damned much room and stillness and time to think in."

"So ever things burst, is it? I thought maybe—"

"Well, what do you think? Me with no job and sixteen dollars in my jeans. The lady likes money, she doesn't like oil men. So I'm showing off as soon as I can clean up this stuff here and get packed."

"Mm," mused Bill. "Say, I forgot to tell you what I came up here for. Grice is on the job. He told me to bring you down—he wants to talk to you."

"I don't want to work for that lot, Bill. I never have worked with a sucker outfit, or a bunch that ran hot oil, and I don't think I'll begin."

"You can listen to what he has to say, can't you? I got my orders to bring you on down."

"Oh, yes, I can listen. But it won't do him any good."

Grice was a red-faced man with a cold gray eye. He talked too fast, he did not look a man in the face when he talked to him, he kept his eyes on the ground and switched at the grass around his feet with a willow sprout.

"Hear you're abandoning your well," he said. "Money run out?"

Gary kept his hands in his pockets. He did not like Grice, he did not like anything about him.

"We're abandoning drilling on Mr. Mason's orders," he said. "If you want detailed information, you'll have to talk to him."

"I've got all the information," Grice said. "I know how much he's sunk in that well. It was a fool proposition from the start. I was tried to sell him that idea—indirectly, of course. But we didn't get anywhere with it. We thought Kimball could handle the business, but he bungled it every time he turned around."

"I see," Gary said slowly. "So Kimball was working with you, was he?"

"Kimball wasn't working at all, so far as I can see. He told us he could get us the lease on Mason's land. This stuff down here isn't big enough—we've got to expand. We can't get anywhere on a little patch of ground like this. If we had Mason's stuff we could go somewhere. But Kimball fell down on it, and so I was thinking, now that Mason's quitting definitely—maybe you—"

"You want me to talk Mason into leasing to you, is that it?" said Gary, in a cold, level tone.

"So you can go out and sell stock in an oil field to little school teachers and widows with a little insurance—and bring 'em out here to see derricks going up and drills going down—so you can show 'em a lot of activity—and everything but oil!"

"Look here—I'm ready to make you a legitimate proposition. The well up there is no good to Mason. He'll pull his derrick down, and having an abandoned well only a quarter of a mile from us isn't going to be good for our business. You're in a better position to handle Mason right now than anybody—and we'll take care of you, of course—"

"The way you took care of old man Harper when we went out and cut Mason's water line? And Slide Ellis, when he trumped up a fake lawsuit to harass Mason and delay work on his well?"

"Listen, buddy, when a business man won't listen to a business argument—"

"You heard what he said, Bill," Gary was grim. "Keep it in mind, I may need you. As for you, Mr. Grice—I'm young and out of a job and because I was in a tight spot I worked for you two days. But I don't want the money. You can tear up the check. I've never worked for a crook—and I don't expect to begin. Good day, sir."

He turned away but Grice sprang in front of him, squaring his thick body.

"Look here, you young pup—you can't talk that way to me! I'll run you out of the country—I'll—"

"All right," Gary set his jaw, drew back his arm. "I'll give it to you in a way you will understand, then!"

He swung once at the pulpy, crimson face. Grice went down with a wheeze and a grunt.

Red-hot pain shot along Gary's

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The Board of Directors of The Mutual Life of Canada has announced the appointments of E. A. Rieder, as Assistant General Manager and Actuary; J. H. Luxton as Assistant General Manager and Treasurer, and George Dunbar as Assistant General Manager in Charge of Agencies.

Moscow Busy Centre In Increased Trade Activity

HOW ABOUT A HEADING??

(By Sidney Weiland)

MOSCOW Reuters — A year ago, the arrival of a Western business man in Moscow was an event. Now, the silvery-blue Ilyushin airplanes rarely fly in from Helsinki without a quota of business men.

Georgi Malenkov's government has taken several significant steps in the foreign trade field since the new year.

British industry was offered contracts for machinery, raw materials and consumer goods worth \$1,120,000,000, with the orders spaced out until 1957.

France, which doubled trade with Russia between 1952 and 1953, was promised a "further expansion" of business.

Norway, Sweden and Belgium signed trade pacts with the Soviet Union.

Finland was given a 40,000,000-ruble Soviet loan in gold, dollars and other foreign currency, and talks began on a trade agreement between the two countries.

Argentina sent an economic delegation to Moscow to buy machinery and to discuss export possibilities. The delegation reported "highly favorable" prospects.

Business Men Interested

Egypt studied the chances of selling cotton and other products to Russia in exchange for heavy equipment, and offered Moscow the chance to take part in Egyptian reconstruction plans.

Nearly every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, there is a well-coming party from the foreign trade ministry to meet the plane from Helsinki as it taxis over the runway.

The two Moscow hotels catering to foreigners, the National and the Metropole, both built in czarist times and heavy with golden chandeliers and plush furnishings, have faced a serious accommodation problem. Visiting business men have been invited to "double up" and share rooms.

Business men who have visited Moscow believe that Russia is sincere in wanting to do business. Russia needs western equipment for her expanding heavy industry, products for her much-advertised consumer goods drive and appliances to aid the current Kremlin to raise agricultural output.

Dollar Trade Threatened

Malenkov's government believes the United States is moving toward an economic slump. The Moscow press has, therefore, seized the opportunity to point this moral to western Europe: trade with the dollar world is threatened by crisis and contracting markets, while the planned economy of the East offers stable markets.

Clearly, the Kremlin would be

tortured shoulders, but he was too enraged to notice it. He scrubbed his knuckles on his shirt and strode off. Bill Grant trotted along beside him.

"Boy, what a sock!" he panted. "Well, now I guess we're both out of a job. Yippee! Stand back, you Pecos County boys—here we come."

(Continued)

BURGESS BEDTIME

Continued from page 10

young, very young. Reddy knew from the way he moved about. He had a coat of quite long white hair. He was quite stout for his age. He should make just as good a dinner as would Jumper the Hare, and he would be a lot easier to catch, for his movements were clumsy and slow. Reddy stole nearer. He no longer tried to keep under cover. He could see now that the small white stranger was too slow and too awkward to be able to get away by running or dodging. So he walked right out in plain sight, his mind made up for a good breakfast.

He stepped in front of the small stranger. Instantly, a queer thing happened. The little white stranger turned so that his tail was toward Reddy, and he began slapping that little tail from side to side, and up and down. At the same time, a thousand small, but sharp-pointed little spears popped up out of the long, white hair of the little stranger's coat. Reddy didn't spring as he had intended to. He had a sudden change of mind.

"One of Prickly Porky's children, but what in the world has happened to him!" he exclaimed.

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PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND HOSPITAL NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Accounts Receivable

Owing to the increasing cost of maintaining standard hospital services, the Trustees of the Prince Edward Island Hospital find it necessary to take steps to enforce collection of their many overdue accounts. Individual notices will go out shortly and all persons affected are asked to co-operate by arranging settlement of their accounts promptly and so avoid the embarrassment of legal proceedings.

Initial Payment

To avoid further accumulation of unpaid accounts, the Trustees have also decided to instal the system in operation in practically all hospitals of a size comparable to our institution, namely, the payment of a satisfactory deposit by each patient on entering the hospital. Any unused portion of the deposit will be returned to the patient on discharge.

It is felt by the Trustees that, by each patient paying according to his accommodation, it will help avoid a further increase in the present rates.

The Trustees would point out that the hospital is operated on a non-profit basis. There is no annual maintenance campaign. The salaries of all paid employees and the cost of the many necessary supplies are dependent on the payments made by the patients.

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