

## THE SKY LINE OF SPRUCE

by Edison Marshall  
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### BEGIN HERE TODAY

BEN DARBY, a prisoner, is declared to be a victim of amnesia by a noted alienist, and is paroled to an old friend.

JEFFERY NELSON and his two partners, Ray Brent and Chan Heminway, Nelson, leader of the notorious gang, has a beautiful daughter, Beatrice, with whom Ben is in love. She detests him. Ben complains to Nelson and her father promises to aid him in his suit. Nelson hears of the rich pocket discovered by Hiram Melville and plans with his confederates to steal the claim before Ezra can arrive. When Ben and Ezra reach the north woods Ben suddenly regains his memory. Knowledge of his past life returns. They meet a friendly stranger who directs them.

### GO ON WITH THE STORY

"YES, Goin' to Snowy Gulch." "It's only five miles up this road," the stranger ventured. "I'm goin' up to Saltspruce way myself, but I won't have no river to tow me. I've got to do my own paddlin'. Thank the Lord I'm only goin' a small part of the way."

"You ain't goin' to swim, are you? Where's your boat?" "My pard's got an old craft and he and I are goin' to pack it out next trip." The stranger paused, blinking his eyes. "Say, partner, you don't want to sell your boat, do you?"

Ezra stated his figure, and Ben was prone to believe that he had adopted a highwayman for a buddy. The amount named was nearly twice that which they had paid. And to his vast amazement the stranger accepted the offer in his next breath.



THEY SAID THEIR SIMPLE GOOD-BYES, SHAKING HANDS OVER A PILE OF STORES.

"So you don't know any folks in Snowy Gulch, then?" the stranger had asked politely. "But you'll get acquainted soon enough."

"I've got a letter to a fellow named Morris," Ezra replied. "And I've heard of one or two more men, too. Jeffery Nelson was one of 'em."

"You'll find Morris in town, all right," the stranger ventured to assure him. "He lives right next to Nelson's. And—say—what do you know about this man Nelson?"

"Oh, nothin' at all. Why?" "If you fellow is prospectin', Jeffery Nelson is a first-class man to stay away from—Ray Brent and Chan Heminway. But they're out of town right now. They skinned out all in a bunch a few weeks ago—and I can't tell you what kind of a scent they got."

Ezra felt cold to the marrow of his bones. He glanced covertly at Ben, fortunately his partner was busy among the supplies and was not listening to this conversation.

"You don't know where they went, do you?" he asked.

"Not exactly. They took up this creek here—a ways, through Spruce Pass, and over to Yuga River—the country that kind of a crazy old chap named Hiram Melville, who died here

and a few weeks ago, has always prospected."

The stranger marveled that his old listener should have suddenly gone quite pale.

Ezra had only a moment's further conversation with his new friend. He put two or three questions—in a rather curious, hushed voice—and got his answer.

"What have you and your poor victim been talking about, all this time?" Ben asked.

"Oh, just a gab-fest—a tat-tat as you'd call it. But you know, Ben, I've got a idea all a-sudden."

Ben straightened, lighted his pipe, and prepared to listen. "This old boy tells me that we'd save just twelve miles by striking off from here, instead of goin' into town. Snowy Gulch is six miles, and we have to come back to this very place. What's the use of goin' into town at all?"

"Good heavens, Ben! Have you forgotten we've got to get supplies? And your brother's gun—and his dog?"

"Yes, I know—one of us has. But, Ben, it seems to me that one of us ought to strike off now and figure out the way and sort of get located."

"Oh, it would be all right," Ben began rather doubtfully. "I don't see that much to be gained by it. But I'll strike off on foot, if you want me to."

Ezra's mind was flashing with thoughts like lightning, and his answer was ready. "Ben, if you don't mind, I'll do that," he said.

"But you'd get a ride, if you wait—"

"I hate a horse, anyway—"

"You've surely changed a lot since the war."

"I was thrown off not long ago—and have been leery of the dum things ever since."

Ezra was wholly deliberate. He knew what awaited him on arrival at his brother's claim. Jeffery Nelson and his gang had assembled there, had already jumped the claim just as his brother had warned him that they would do; and coolly and quietly he had resolved to face them alone.

He made his pack—a few simple provisions wrapped in his blanket—and a knife and camp ax swung on his belt. He took his trusted pipe—because he knew well that he could never acquit himself creditably in a fight without a few lungfuls of tobacco smoke first—and he also took his rifle. "You keep this copy of the letter," he handed Ben the copy he had made of Hiram's will. "I'm the worst hand for losin' things you ever seen."

They said their simple good-bys, shaking hands over a pile of stores. "I've only got one decent place to keep things safe," Ezra confided, "and that ain't no all-fired decent, either. When I get any papers that are extra precious, I always stick 'em down the leg of these high old boots, between the sock and the leather. But it's too much work to take the boot off now, so you keep the letter."

"I suppose you've got a million-dollar bank note hidden down there now," Ben remarked.

"No, not a cent. Just the same, if ever I get shuffled off all of a sudden I want you to look them right careful. There may be a document or two of importance."

"I won't forget," Ben promised.

CHAPTER V  
Taming the Wolf

On arriving in Snowy Gulch, Ben's first efforts were to inquire in regard to horses. Both pack and saddle animals, he learned, were to be hired of Sandy McClurg, owner of the general store and leading citizen; and at once he made his way to confer with him.

"Most of my mustangs are rented out," the merchant informed him, "but if you can get along with three, I guess I can fix you up. You can pack two of 'em, and ride the third."

"Through Spruce Pass and down into the Yuga River."

"Prospectin', eh? There's been quite a movement down that way lately. By starting early you can make it through in a day. And you said your name was—"

"Darby, Ben Darby."

The merchant opened his eyes. "Not the Ben Darby that took all the prizes at the meet at Lodge Pole—"

Ben's rugged face lit with the brilliancy of his smile. "The same Darby," he admitted.

"And when did you say you was going?"

"First thing tomorrow."

"Well, you're pretty likely to have companionship on the road, too."

"I'm glad of it, if he isn't a tenderfoot. That must be a pretty thickly settled region—where I'm heading."

"On the contrary, there's only three human beings in the whole district. These three are some men who went up that way prospecting some time ago, and this other party will make four."

"All right—I'll be here before dawn tomorrow and get the horses. And now will you tell me—where Steve Morris lives?"

"Right up the street—clear to the end of the row," McClurg's humor had quite engulfed him by now, and he chuckled again. "And if I was you, I'd stop in the door just this side—and get acquainted with your fellow travelers."

"What's his name?" Ben asked.

"The party is named 'Nelson.'"

"All right. Maybe I'll look him up."

A few moments later he was standing in the Morris home, facing the one friend that Hiram Melville had possessed on earth.

"Hiram didn't leave anything, far as I know, except his old gun and his pet. Lord knows, I'd let any body take that pet of his that's fool enough to say he's got any claim to him, and you can be sure I ain't going to dispute his claim."

He turned, with the intention of securing the gun from an inner room. He did not even reach the door. It was as if both of them were struck

motionless, frozen in odd, fixed attitudes, by a shrill scream for help that penetrated like a bullet the thin walls of the house.

The sound was in the range between a growl and a bay, instantly identifying itself as the utterance of an animal, rather than a human being. Ben's first thought was of some enormous, vicious dog, and yet his

wood's sense told him that the utterance was not that of a dog.

He heard it even as he leaped

through the door in answer to the scream for aid. His muscles gathered with that mysterious power that had always sustained him in his moments of crisis. He took the steps in one leap, Morris immediately behind him.

"Ben is loose," he heard the man say. "He'll kill come one—"

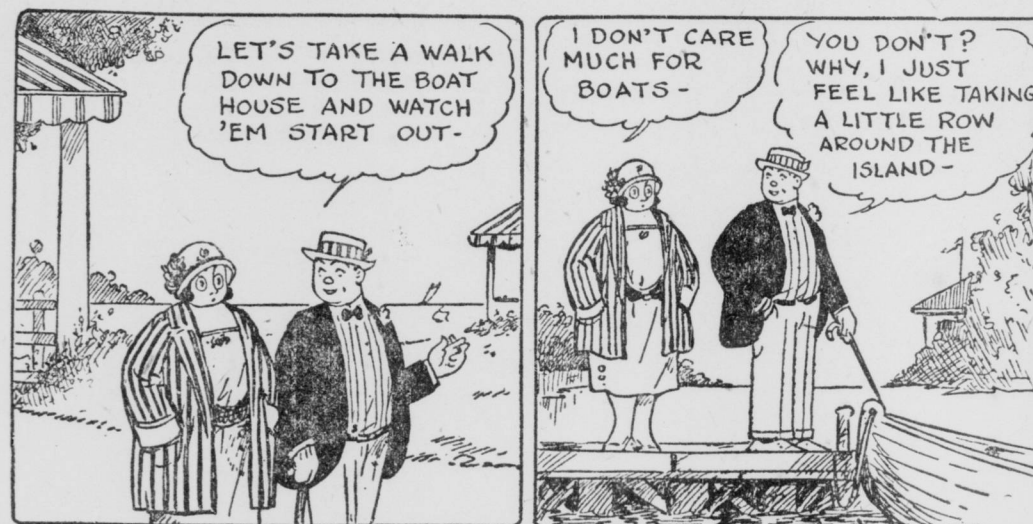
He raced about the house; and at once the scene, in every vivid detail, was revealed to him. Pressed back against the wall of a little woodshed

that stood behind her house a girl stood at bay—a dark-eyed girl whose beautiful face was drawn and stark white with horror. She was screaming for aid, her fascinated gaze held by a gray-black, houndlike creature that crouched, snarling, twenty yards distant.

(Continued in Our Next Issue)

From royalties on phonograph records alone, Caruso, famous Italian tenor, received more than \$2,000,000.

### DOINGS OF THE DUFFS—



OUT OUR WAY—By WILLIAMS



THEM DAYS IS GONE FOREVER—

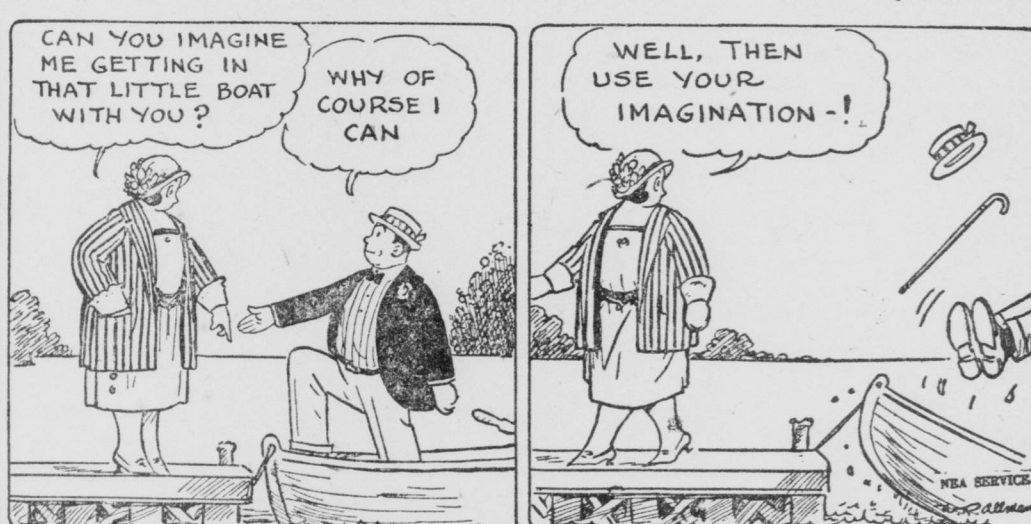


THE OLD HOME TOWN—By STANLEY

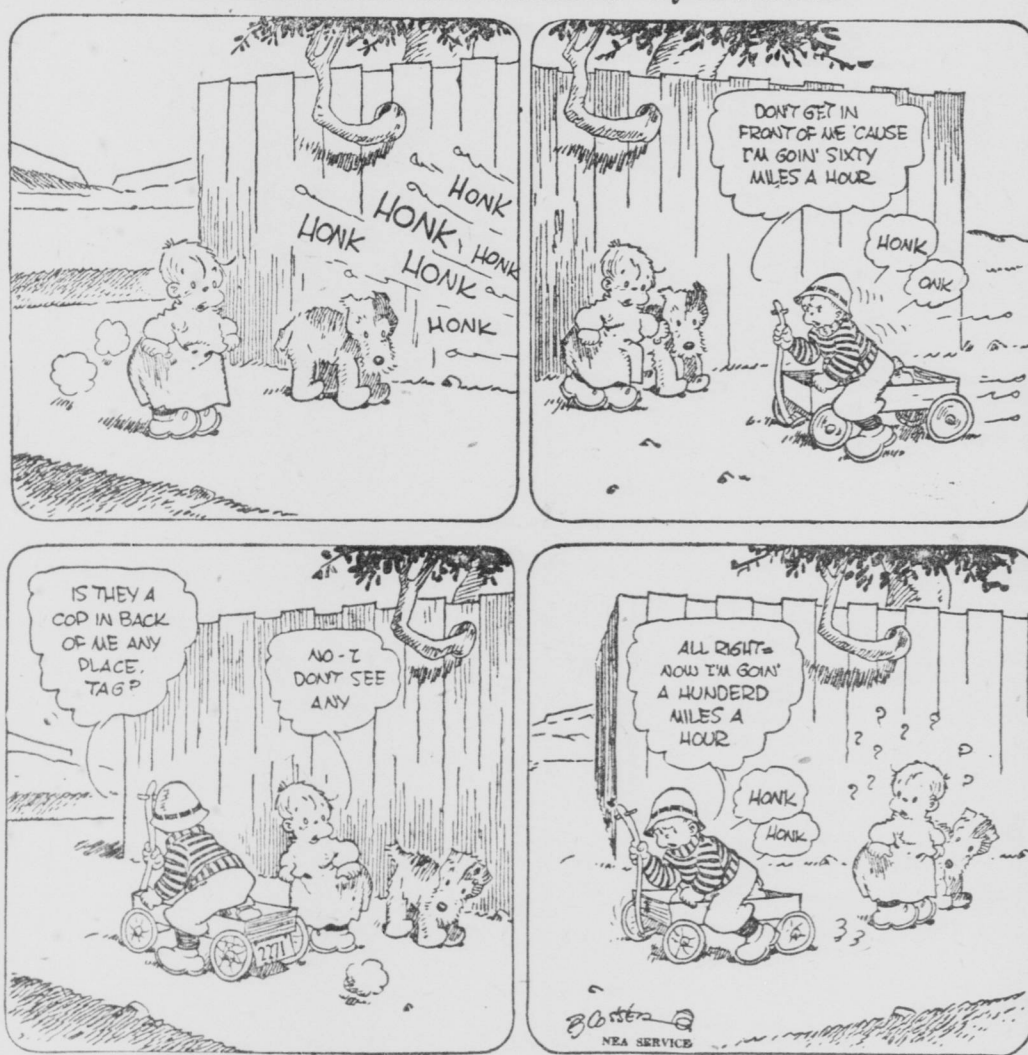


BACHELOR CAL HOKE, WHO HELD SADIE APPLAGATES CRYING BABY FOR SEVERAL HOURS THE OTHER DAY, WHILE THE MOTHER MAILED A LETTER, WAS SO EMBARRASSED HE LEFT FOR PARTS UNKNOWN THIS MORNING

### Safety First



FRECKLES AND HIS FRIENDS—By BLOSSER



"She's Mine, All Mine—"



OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By AHERN



THE EVIDENCE POINTS TOWARD MR. MEELER—

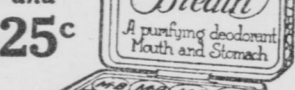
## Never Dance

Without a May Breath

Think how bad breath offends. Cigars may cause it, decaying food, stomach disorders, etc. Few escape, yet offenders are seldom aware.

Safety lies in May Breath. It is a purifier, not a perfume. It instantly ends the cause.

10c and 25c



An antiseptic mouth wash in candy form. Instantly deadens, purifies both the mouth and stomach. Gives spring odors to the breath. In the stomach it also acts as a digestant. Carry with you. All druggists.

A WOMAN'S NERVOUS SYSTEM

You Cannot Afford to Overlook One Word of This

South Bend, Ind.—"It is a pleasure for me to recommend a medicine that has proved so beneficial as Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription has from the time I developed into womanhood. It not only built me up in health and strength but toned up my nervous system. Not only do I recommend Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription on my own account but my sister's as well. Her suffering at times was terrible. The doctors had given her up when my mother gave her the 'Favorite Prescription' and it helped her at once and eventually cured her."—Mrs. Helen Bennett, 617 1/2 Wengert St.

If you are run-down, nervous, see how quickly your nerves and strength are built up when you take this famous 'Prescription' in tablet or liquid form. All druggists.—Advertisement.

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## SILVER CROSS IS 900 YEARS OLD

LONDON, June 12.—A silver cross said to be 900 years old, on which a very high value is placed and which

is supposed to have been stolen from a church in Italy, is now in the care of the Glasgow police.

The cross was offered for sale in a pawn broker's shop in Glasgow in November, 1920, two years after a similar cross had disappeared from a church at Aquileia, Italy.

Recently a Glasgow police inspector took the cross to Italy in order to have it identified and to obtain evidence against the time when the proceedings to determine its ownership

should be taken in the Glasgow Sheriff's Court.

The cross is claimed by the church in Aquileia and by an Italian who was recently extradited from London on the charge of having stolen it. In court he declared that he had recovered it from the ruins after an earthquake.

Eye-glass makers can supply glasses to correct any one of 184,794 defects in vision.