

By ALLMAN



THE SKY LINE OF SPRUCE

by Edison Marshall

BEGIN HERE TODAY.
BEN DARBY, a prisoner, is paroled to an old friend of his, Darby, "I only because he is proven by the evidence that Ben is a victim of amnesia. The old friend.

EDWARD MELVILLE takes Ben on a journey to the Yuga River to locate on a rich claim left by Ezra's dying brother.

HIRAM MELVILLE, leader of Bay

CHAN HEMINWAY, notorious crook. They go to steal the claim left by Melville and locate there before his brother can arrive. Ben is in love with Beatrice, who repulses him.

BEATRICE, who repulses him. When Ezra and Ben arrive at the north woods, the latter's memory is restored. They turn on the road to Snowy Gulch, where they were to procure supplies and call for him.

FENRIS, pet of the deceased Hiram. Ben and Ezra meet a frontiersman. While Ben is otherwise enraged, Ezra learns from the traveler that Hiram and his grandsons have started toward Hiram's claim. Not wanting to endanger his life, Ben follows Ezra. Ezra goes alone to Snowy Gulch, leaving Ezra to travel toward their destination. At Snowy Gulch Ben finds Fenris to be a well-behaved, broken bone and stands ready to destroy a beautiful girl.

GO ON WITH THE STORY

THE FANGS were bared, gleaming in foam, the hair stood erect on the powerful shoulders; and instantly Ben recognized his breed. It was a magnificent specimen of that huge, gaunt runner of the forest, the Northern wolf.

He knew this breed—this savage, blood-mad, fierce-eyed creature that turned, snarling, at his approach. Fenris was only a fellow wilderness creature a pale brother of the dark forests, and he had no further cause for fear.

"Fenris!" he ordered sharply. "Come here!" His voice was commanding and clear above the animal's snarl.

There followed a curious, long instant of utter silence and infinite suspense.

"Down, Fenris," Ben said again. "Down!"



under a wondering scrutiny by both Morris and the girl. "Good Lord, Darby!" the former exclaimed. "How did you do it?"

Suddenly Ben reached and took the wolf's head between his hand. Slowly he lifted the savage face till their eyes met. The wolf growled, then, whimpering, tried to avert its gaze. Then a rough tongue lapped at the man's hand.

And now, for the first time, Ben found himself regarding Beatrice. He could scarcely take his eyes from her face. He knew perfectly that he was staring rudely, but he was without the power to turn his eyes. Her dark eyes fell under his gaze.

"There's nothing I can say—to thank you," the girl was murmuring. "I never saw anything like it; it was just as if the wolf understood every word you said."

"Old Hiram had him pretty well trained, I suspect." The man's eyes fell to the shaggy form at his feet. "I'm glad I happened along, Miss—Beatrice Neilson, I live here."

Neilson: His mind seemed to leap and catch at the memory. Just that day he had heard it from the lips of the merchant. And this was the house next door where dwelt his fellow traveler for the morrow.

"Then it's your father—or brother—who's going to the Yuga."

"No," the girl answered doubtfully. "My father is already there. I'm here alone."

Then the gray eyes lighted and a smile broke about Ben's lips. Few times in his life had he smiled in quite this vivid way.

"Then it's you," he exulted, "who is going to be my fellow traveler tomorrow!"

CHAPTER VI
Hitting the Long Trail

Ben found, rather as he had expected, that the girl was not at all embarrassed by the knowledge that they were to have a lonely all-day ride together.

The frontier had taught her to judge men.

As daylight broke they started out down the shadowed street of the little town.

"The last we'll see of civilization for a long, long time," the girl reminded him.

The man thrilled deeply. "And I'm glad of it," he answered. "Nothing ahead but the long trail!"

At the very headquarters of Poor Man's Creek, where the stream had dwindled to a silver thread between mossy banks, Beatrice and Ben made their noon camp.

But it should not be that this journey should hold only delight for Ben. A half-mile down the river he suddenly made a most momentous and disturbing discovery.

He had stopped his horse to reread the copy of Hiram Melville's letter, intending to verify his course. His gaze came to rest upon a familiar name.

"Look out for Jeff Neilson and his son," the letter read. "They see some of my dust."

At first he did not glance at Beatrice. Slowly he folded the letter and put it back into his pocket.

"I'm going all right," he announced. He urged his horse forward.

"It seems to me we must be heading into about the same country," Ben went on. "You see, Miss Neilson, I'm going to make my first permanent camp somewhere along this still stretch."

"My father has come to the conclusion that it's really worth prospecting. He's in this same country now."

"I suppose I'll meet him—I'll likely meet him tonight when I take you to the cabin on the river. You said his name was—"

"Jeffrey Neilson."

Ben's thought flashed to Ezra. The recovery of the mine had been the old man's fondest dream, the last hope of his declining years, and this setback would go hard with him. But there would be certain planning, when they met again over their campfire. And there were three of them allied now. Fenris the wolf had come into his service.

CHAPTER VII
The Wolf Seeks Death

As twilight darkened to the full gloom of the forest night, Ben and Beatrice rode to a lonely cabin on the Yuga River—one that had been built by Hiram Melville years past. They had seen lighted window from afar, marking the end of Beatrice's hard day's ride.

"Of course you won't try to go on tonight?" she asked Ben. "You'll stay at the cabin?"

"There likely won't be room for three," he answered. "But it's a clear night. I can make a fire and sleep out."

They halted at last, and Beatrice saw her father's form, framed in the doorway. She hastened into his arms; waiting in the darkness Ben could not help but hear his welcome. Many things were doubtful; but there could be no doubt of the love that Neilson bore his daughter.

"But why so many horses, Beatrice?" he asked. "You—brought some one with you?"

"He's a prospector—Mr. Darby," the girl replied. "Come here, Ben—and be introduced."

Ben had already decided upon his course of action. He knew perfectly that it would only put Neilson on his guard if he stated his true position; and besides, he wanted word of Ezra. "I may have a wrong steer, Mr. Neilson," he said, "but a man I met down on the river trail, out of Snowy Gulch, advised me to come here. He said that he had some sort of a claim up here and that his brother left him, and through it was a pocket country, he thought there'd soon be a great rush up this way."

"I hardly know who it could have been that you met," Neilson began doubtfully. "He didn't tell you his name—"

"Melville. I believe that was it. And if you'll tell me how to find him, I'll try to go on tonight."

"Melville, eh? I know I know who you mean now. But no—I don't know of any claim unless it's over East, beyond here. Maybe further down the river."

Ben made no reply at once; but his mind sped like lightning. Of course Neilson was lying about the claim; he

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knew perfectly that at that moment he was occupying one of Hiram Melville's cabins.

"He hasn't come up this way?"

"He hasn't come through here that I know of. Of course I'm working at my claim—with my partners—and they might have gone through without our seeing him. It seems rather unlikely."

"He told me, in a few minutes,

that I talked to him, that his cabin was somewhere close to this one—I thought he said up this creek."

"There is a cabin up the creek a way," Neilson admitted, "but it isn't the one he meant. It's on my claim, and my two partners are living in it. But when he said near to this one, he might have meant ten miles. That's the way the northern men speak of distance."

He said his farewells to the girl, the gaunt servant at his heels.

refused an invitation to pass the night in the cabin, and made his way to the green bank of the stream. Four hundred yards from the cabin—obscured from both by the thickets—he pitched his camp.

Ben made his fire and unpacked his horses. He confined his riding horse with a picket rope; the others he turned loose. He cooked a simple meal for himself and the gaunt servant at his heels.

When the night had come down in full, and as he sat about the glowing coals of his supper fire, he had time to devote serious thought to the fate of Ezra.

Impelled by an urge within himself Ben suddenly knelt beside his loping friend. He could not understand the flood of emotion, the vague sense of impending and dramatic events that stirred him to the quick. He only knew, with a knowledge akin to inspiration, that in Ezra lay the answer to his problem.

"Ezra, old boy," the man whispered. "Can you find him for me, Ezra?" He's out there somewhere—"

"I want him. Can you take me to him?"

United States is using four times as much timber annually as it is growing.

Bulldog Pocket Nest
LONDON, June 13.—A wren has made her nest in a pocket of an old army blouse. An ex-soldier had left the tunic hanging in a sawmill at Linslade Bucks.

Spring-cleaning the Leviathan recently employed more than 1,000 men for five weeks, and two miles of new carpets were laid.