

On Little Peak

A Story of a Western Blizzard

By CLARISSA MACKIE

When they rode up to the gate their young faces seemed to reflect the glory of the sunset. Owen Morgan's was aglow with love and pride, and Annie Bell's was pink flushed and shyly happy.

Annie's father, Peter Bell, saw them coming and strode across the yard with thunder in his voice and lightning in his eyes.

"You clear out of this, young fellow!" he growled as he snatched the bridle of Annie's pony and led the animal away. "You've done about all the mooning around these diggings that's allowed by me—see?"

"Father!" cried Annie indignantly, snatching at the bridle rein.

For reply the gruff old man lifted his daughter's slender form from the saddle and pushed her toward the house. "Go inside and stay there till I come," he added, and because Peter Bell's word was law in his house Annie went, with a single heartbreaking glance at her recently declared lover.

Owen Morgan stared after her with eyes that saw not. The whole scene appeared to be some grotesque comedy that was being enacted for his benefit. Perhaps he was expected to laugh at Peter Bell's joke.

"Understand—you?" rasped Peter Bell unpleasantly.

"You mean it?" Owen managed to ask, with stiff lips. "You mean that I'm not to come and see Annie again?"

"That's just what I do mean! Why, you must think I'm a fool to let you run after my girl after the way your father has treated me!"

"You mean about the boundary line?" asked Owen, wheeling his horse about. "Yes, I mean about the boundary line!" roared Peter. "When them papers was served on me this afternoon I vowed this would be the last ride your father's son ever took with my girl. Now that's all plain, and you're invited to go."

Owen's face was very white and his lips were compressed to a straight line as he rode home at breakneck speed. His own father was smoking in the porch of the ranch house, and the older man's calm demeanor served in a measure to cool Owen's wrath at Peter Bell.

"Careful, lad!" warned Mr. Morgan as his son brought the dripping horse to a standstill. "Don't you know how to treat a beast, Owen? Take Brownie and give him a rubdown and come back to me."

Although Owen was twenty-four, he obeyed his father as meekly as though he were still in his early teens. After he had made the reeking horse as comfortable as possible for the time he walked slowly back to the veranda, where his father sat enveloped in overcoat and hat, for it was January and the thermometer had been near to 20 degrees all day. Now it was a little milder, for the wind had died down. The sunset clouds had lost their delicate colors even as Owen's face had lost its glow of happiness.

"It's going to snow," prophesied Mr. Morgan, with an eye turned toward the weather.

"Then I ought to get that bunch of cattle in from the lower range," remarked Owen rather listlessly.

"Morning will be time enough. Where you been—riding with Annie?" Owen's face reddened to the ears, and he avoided his father's searching eyes.

"Yes," he replied constrainedly.

"Have a good ride."

"Went over to the Little Peak."

"Hum—same place I went with your ma once. It ended in our getting engaged."

"It didn't end that way with me, dad." Owen's eyes still sought the distant horizon.

"Tut!" Mr. Morgan's carefully balanced chair came down on all four legs, and he looked with concern at his son's handsome, downcast face.

"Why, I would have staked my eye that Annie—" He paused helplessly.

"She does!" was Owen's significant reply.

"And you, lad?"

"So do I!"

"Then—what—why?"

"Peter Bell kicked me out—practically—before I even had a chance to ask him—or anything. Just told me to get out and stay out."

"Why?" demanded Mr. Morgan, although he had guessed.

"He said you've served papers on him in a suit over that boundary line."

"What did you say to him?"

"Nothing. There wasn't anything I could say under the circumstances. Annie's his daughter, and he's got the right to say who's coming to see her."

"Leave it to me, Owen, lad. I'll chuck the whole boundary business if it will help any. I don't want you and Annie to be"—

"It's all right, dad. Maybe he'll get over it," said Owen, although he doubted Peter Bell's repentance over such a small matter as that of dismissing one of Annie Bell's suitors. Annie Bell was young, but there had always been suitors for her pretty hand and tender heart. The heart had belonged to Owen Morgan ever since she had discovered that she possessed such a troublesome organ, but Owen had waited until Annie had returned from the boarding school in Denver before asking this question.

The next morning, just before noon, came the beginning of the snowstorm. Owen ate a hasty dinner and, mounting his sturdiest pony, set out for the lower range to gather in a small bunch of cattle that had been left there to graze on the sparse herbage that might be found in sheltered nooks.

Shortly after he started the plain was obliterated from view by the thickly falling flakes, but his pony knew the trail and seemed to realize that perhaps their lives depended upon his speed, for he raced across the whitening earth with undiminished speed until the frightened herd of cattle was located and started on its homeward way.

It was harder going back to the ranch. The snow was driving in their faces now and clung moistly to every inch of exposed surface. Just as the last frightened beast was driven into the corral and Jose, the Mexican stableman, had closed the gates there came the sound of shouting from the front of the ranch house.

By the time Owen had floundered around there he knew the shouting voice to be that of Peter Bell, and he wondered what sudden accession of anger had driven the old man forth in the midst of what promised to be a blizzard.

But Peter Bell was not angry. He was a terrified and grief stricken old man, who was being thawed out before the big coal stove in the sitting room of the ranch. Mrs. Morgan was holding a cup of something hot and steaming to his bearded lips, while Owen's father was pulling on fur lined boots with great haste.

"What is the matter?" demanded Owen, standing in the doorway.

"It's Annie—she went out for a ride before the storm and she hasn't returned," explained Mrs. Morgan quickly. "All of the Bell ranch men are away, and so Mr. Bell came over to see if you and father wouldn't help."

"Of course I don't deserve it after what I said to you yesterday," broke in Peter Bell tremulously, "but—"

"Which direction did she take?" interrupted Owen ruthlessly.

"Toward Little Peak. I warned her it was going to snow, but she said she'd be right back. It's a bad trail, you know, Owen," ended Peter Bell pitifully.

"I'll bring her back," promised Owen confidently. "You have everything ready to thaw us out when we come, and, mother, just give me a flask of that brandy in case—in case Annie should be pretty cold."

A little shudder ran through the older people. They knew the chances of finding Annie Bell cold—cold in death—were very strong. But Owen, fired by his great love, would leave no place unexplored. If any one could find the girl it would be the man who loved her.

Owen's mother kissed him and the two men gripped his hand as he closed the door behind him. Jose had brought around one of the farm horses, a great heavy animal, whose enormous strength could better combat the snow than the lighter animals.

Out of sight of the ranch house, all bearings were lost in the white world of snow. A small pocket compass warmed in his hand guided him to the westward, where Little Peak feared its height.

The trail up the mountain side was narrow and precarious in fair weather. Owen, strong as he was, shuddered as he thought of Annie Bell riding down there in the face of the first flying flakes. Even if she reached the foot of the peak there was the deep canyon to ride through, and if her pony stumbled—why, he did not dare to think of the soft mound of snow that might even now cover pretty Annie Bell, who only yesterday had whispered that she loved him. It had happened on this very self same peak, and Annie had gone back there today!

Owen struck the horse sharply, and the big body heaved convulsively forward, and the great hoofs dashed through the fast forming drifts. They covered the three miles to the canyon in a half hour, and Owen was another thirty minutes finding the narrow entrance. There was not a foot of ground that he had not scanned with his eyes as he rode, and his voice had been lifted in continuous shouting, but so far only the dumb silence of the muffling snow had answered him.

In the ranch house Mrs. Morgan had completed her preparation for the restoration of the half frozen ones when they returned unless—there should be two lost instead of one. Owen's mother was holding her husband's hand, and his other hand was unconsciously

gripped by Peter Bell, who had forgotten his anger over the boundary fence and had become the father of the missing Annie—and that was all.

"Hark!" cried Peter Bell after three hours had passed in agonizing silence. There was no audible sound, but an instant later the outer door burst open and Owen staggered in, holding a snow wreathed burden in his arms.

"She's alive!" he panted. "Take her—I can get along all right!" and to prove that he could Owen Morgan gave Annie Bell safely into her father's arms and sank unconscious to the floor.

When Owen awoke between hot blankets, with a restorative burning its way down his throat, his first thought was for Annie Bell. At his first stir in came Peter Bell, leading Annie by the hand. She was pale, but her eyes shone happily.

"Owen, lad," said Peter Bell in a shaking voice, "you saved my girl's life, and it belongs to you. I give her back to you!"

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Three Score And More Lives Lost

PITTSBURG, Pa., July 25.—Death and desolation spread broadcast over the southwest counties yesterday and last night, through cloudburst and overflowing streams. Three-score or more lives are on the toll, while the damage to homes and industries cannot be estimated. Fifteen lives were snuffed out in Superba Mine No. 2, near Uniontown; 75 miners narrowly escaped death while from many other sections come reports of lives lost by the mountain torrents rushing into mine slopes. Hundreds of families, deserting homes in a mad rush for safety on the mountain sides, sought shelter beneath improvised shacks and tents toward the construction of which every available piece of debris was turned to account. At daybreak shivering women and children gazed at a scene of desolation in the upper Youghioheny Valley, and as the waters receded, upturned dwellings, shattered buildings and crumbled piles of mortar were held in a conglomerate mass by a railroad bridge or trestle, or the progress of debris had been impeded by some larger and stancher building.

It was long after midnight before the waters began to recede. Rain had ceased to fall some hours earlier, but the heavy precipitation soon made the usually dry beds of mountain streams veritable cataracts. Floods in the regions are of an annual occurrence, for which preparation is made, and comparatively little damage is done. Freshets caused by heavy summer rain occur several times a season, but the heavy waterfalls are carried away with but little damage. The cloudburst of yesterday, however, came before the district had recovered from more than twenty hours of torrential rains on Sunday, and with every stream bank full soon all were out of their banks.

BROWNSVILLE, Pa., July 25.—Horsemen dashing frantically down the Red Stone Valley yesterday often with water up to the saddle-girths rode nine miles in time to save the lives of hundreds of persons at Smock, a mining village. Aside from the great quantity of water due to the cloudburst it was feared a huge reservoir was about to let go. "To the hills, to the hills, the reservoir is breaking!" The cry caused terror among the miners and within a few moments one thousand families were rushing through the muddy waters to the hillsides. Soon the water rushed into the mining village causing heavy damage. All last night the miners and their families camped in a pouring rain on the hillsides under makeshift shelters of blankets, quilts, boards and straw. An unconfirmed rumor is to the effect that from six to ten miners were drowned before they could reach safety. When the alarm was spread over 500 men were at work in the mines. According to mine officials all were saved.

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PITTSBURG, July 25.—Early morning hours brought at least one joy to thousands of flood sufferers in Western Pennsylvania, Eastern Ohio and West Virginia, and that was daylight. Camp fires, candles and oil lamps had shown the scene of devastation wrought by torrential rains in weird fashion and all were thankful that darkness had passed. Everywhere there was a picture of wide-spread desolation, a vivid reminder of the swirling, raging waters that had taken many human lives and caused much ruin. During the night meagre reports filtered in that, if later verified, will run the list of fatalities up to 61. The place and the number reported to have been drowned at each are as follows.

Uniontown, 14 dead.
Smoketown, locked in Medston Valley, 14 dead.
Grindstone, Pa., 12 miners missing and reported drowned.
At Lynn, Pa., two miners reported drowned.
At Wheeling, West Virginia, three drowned.
At Lemont, Pa., four miners reported drowned.
At Ellenwood, Pa., H. L. King, his wife and child drowned.
At New Martinsville, six reported drowned.
Monongeh, West Va., one drowned.
Fairmont, West Va., two drowned.
Of this list of 61 fatalities it has been possible to account definitely for 23. Those who are known to have met death are at Uniontown, Wheeling, Ellenwood, Fairmont and Monongeh. Admittedly the death list will not be known for many days to come.

A large number of mines were flooded in a short space of time and the working men were compelled to flee for their lives. Whether some or all of the miners reported missing escaped a watery grave can only be ascertained by time. It will take months to clear some of the mines of water. Many sections have not been heard from up to daylight-to-day. What has taken place at these places is not known.

When the disastrous storms, cloudbursts and floods swept over the large area yesterday scores of the towns afflicted were just recovering from a similar deluge which occurred last Sunday morning. Cellars and homes had been freed of flood water, streets cleared of debris and communication by wire and rail had been adjusted. Then came yesterday's storm and the towns were again plunged into desolation. Hundreds of families were driven from their homes and suffered greatly, residences and buildings were damaged or completely demolished. Streets were torn

up by the waters, while others were piled high with tons of debris carried by the flood waters. Poles were uprooted and wires dropped to the streets, effectually blocking communication from many points and causing darkness at many others. Railroad and street car facilities were practically suspended until after midnight when washed out tracks were repaired or debris moved along some of the routes.

Dunbar, La., nine miles west of Uniontown, is the centre of the region of desolation in Pennsylvania. The flood waters swept away homes and business houses, did serious damage to mines, furnaces and coke plants and spread terror into the hearts of thousands.

The flood came about 12.15 p. m. It had a dramatic announcement in the business section when it arrived with terrifying suddenness. J. W. Fonner was at his desk when the telephone rang. On the other end of the line was Albert Dunn, bookkeeper of the Purnell Bluestone Quarries, two miles above the town. "There's an awful flood coming, warn the people; all the dams above here have burst," Dunn shouted to Fonner, who dropped the receiver and rushed to the street. With all the strength of his lungs Fonner shouted to the people in the streets to run for their lives to the hillside. The alarm spread like wild-fire and in an instant buildings and stores were evacuated by droves of people who rushed pell mell for safety on high ground. The warning came none too soon. Fonner says, it was one of the "quickest rushes of water imaginable." In no time Dunbar Creek was swirling fifteen feet above its normal level undermining the trolley tracks of the West Pennsylvania Railway Company, where they cross the creek. The B. & O. tracks alongside were lifted and the abutments loosened. Less than a hundred feet below this the Pennsylvania railroad bridge was torn from its abutments and with the tracks carried away, another wreck. Among the buildings caught in the swirling current was the city hall. Almost identical conditions were experienced at many other places but few details have been received from them early this morning.

Pittsburg, July 25.—Over sixty lives were claimed by the floods and cloudburst in Southwest Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and hundreds of homes and business houses destroyed. Uniontown, Pa., leads the list of known dead, with fifteen. At Wheeling, W. Va., three were drowned; at Lemont, Pa., four drowned; at Ellenwood, Pa., three drowned, and 36 lives are reported to have been lost in other towns of the two States.

Uniontown, Lemont, Mount Brad-dock, Connellsville and Dunbar, Pa., were inundated. In Turtle Creek Valley the damage is enormous, and scores of families are homeless in the Upper Youghioheny Valley. Railroad traffic through a great territory is demoralized, especially so at Uniontown, where the tracks of two railroads were torn from their foundations. Several towns are without railroads, mail, telephone and telegraph connections. From West Virginia cities no reports can be obtained because telegraph wires are down. It will be several weeks before the complete loss of life is known. The work of clearing up the wreckage was begun to-day.

A Fortune In His Legs

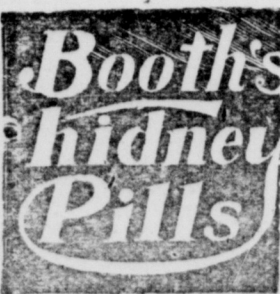
During the reign of Queen Elizabeth an English gentleman of wealth named Corbet, of a distinguished family near Shrewsbury, bet that his leg was the handsomest in the country or kingdom and staked estates worth \$400,000 on the subject. He won the wager, and a picture is still preserved in the family mansion representing the process of measuring the legs of the different contestants.

Distressing Headaches

Headaches are largely the result of disordered kidneys.

Mrs. Hall, 84 Flora Street, St. Flora St., St. Thomas, Ont., says: "I suffered for years with headaches of a most distressing nature. They would come on me suddenly, and would last for days at a time. These were usually accompanied by spells of dizziness that would leave me unable to attend to any house duties."

My back was weak and caused me much suffering through the night. I had doctored for years, but all to no avail. Nothing benefited me



and my condition was gradually becoming worse. I learned of Booth's Kidney Pills. One box gave me a complete and lasting cure. I have not had a headache or dizzy spell since and I feel like a new person."

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