

'Will you tell me if I ask?' he smiled.

'Try,' I said.

He tried, and I told him.

'Mine is Bartlett,' he informed me.

'There was a moment's silence; he seemed to be preoccupied. Finally he said, and I think I detected a tinge of sadness in his tone:

'You remind me of someone, Miss Lang, and I could not resist the temptation to ask you your name.' This seemed to end the conversation.

That evening after we had closed up I stopped in at the little church, and there, to my surprise, he sat in the front pew looking up through those large, brown eyes at the statue of the Madonna.

For several months after this I did not see anything of him. Someone told me that he had gone on a business trip.

A short time after this my mother died, leaving me alone in the city. It was then that I received a letter from my uncle, my mother's brother, who lived in northern Canada, asking me to come and stay with him.

I thought the matter over and after making all preparations I left the city and joined him. He had three sons, all big, brawny fellows, who would remind one of the men pictured in the early Greek paintings. They were so different from the pampered men that I had been accustomed to that at first, I will confess, I was a trifle afraid of them, they seemed so big, so powerful; but we soon came to know each other and became very good friends.

They lived in the centre of a large lumber district, in which they had invested all the money that they had earned during the twenty years spent in the country, and had just sold the lumber on this tract to a large New York corporation for a fairly good price and with the understanding that they were to be employed in cutting and floating the lumber. There was no question as to when the money should be paid, as the corporation was a reliable one and had had a number of transactions with the neighbors of Dubawnt—this was my uncle's name—all of which had turned out satisfactorily. Then they had plenty of provisions, and not having any need of the money at the time, thought it would be more secure with the company than in their cabin.

Gradually winter drew on, and with it came a decrease in the provisions. Then for the first time they felt the need of money. Dubawnt asked the superintendent of the company's lumber camp for a portion of the money. He was put off from time to time, until finally their need became so great that he demanded it, and was unconcernedly told by the superintendent that they did not have the money on hand and that he would have to wait till they got good and ready to pay him. At this Dubawnt forbade the company's men to enter his premises for the purpose of cutting lumber, and also forbade them to float a single log over the dam next his house. At first they refused to take him seriously, and the next morning sent their men to cut the timber as usual. The first man had no sooner broken the bark, however, than he was shot dead. Then followed an affair with the sheriff, in which Dubawnt's youngest son was killed. From this on he was considered an outlaw, having sworn that the first man from that thieving lumber company that he set his eyes on would be a dead one. They had pushed him now—they had forced him to it. They had refused to give him money with which to buy food to live. Now it was too late for explanations—it was fight.

The superintendent had immediately sent word to the junior member of the firm, who had charge of the Canadian division, telling him of the action taken by Dubawnt and requesting him to enlist the services of the Canadian police, as their work was tied up because of the siege at the dam. On receiving this notice Mr. William Bartlett, junior member of the firm of the Cartwright and Bartlett Lumber Co., looked up the claim, and finding that the money was long since due, immediately set out for Canada with the intention of adjusting the claim as well as to attend to some other business he had in the vicinity.

Arriving at the station of Laterneau, he found the country in the throes of a terrible blizzard. He was the only passenger to leave the train at that station, and was advised by the station agent to wait till the storm had somewhat abated before starting out for the camp.

'How long will that be?' asked Bartlett.

'Don't know,' was the answer. 'Maybe a week, maybe two, maybe three. One can never tell in this here country by the start what the finish is going to be.'

'Can I get anybody around here to drive me out to the lumber camp?'

'No, sir; you could not get a man within three miles, and you could not get a man to drive you out there, anywhere. Not if he knows anything.'

Bartlett remained silent for a while, tapping the floor of the station thoughtfully with his booted foot. Finally he looked up at the agent.

'How far is the camp from here?' he asked.

'About five miles,' came the answer.

'Got a good horse and sleigh?'

'Yes, sir; but I would not let them out in this weather. They would be as good as gone.'

'Who carries the most freight over this railroad?' asked the young man.

'The Cartwright and Bartlett Lumber Company,' answered the agent somewhat puzzled, not seeing what relation that question had to the matter they were discussing.

'I'm Mr. Bartlett,' said the other with a smile, and watching the result of this information on the man before him. The station agent took the black pipe from between his teeth and looked at him for some moments. 'I guess yer can take the sleigh,' he finally said, 'but I would not venture out in any such weather if I wuz you.'

Bartlett insisted that it was necessary for him to get out to the camp at once, and at last the horse was hitched and he started out.

'Just keep in a straight line, and give the horse his head, and whatever you do, don't run against Dubawnt, for if you outlive the blizzard, you will never outlive him after one meeting.' This was the old man's parting word.

From here on I will continue the story as I have it from Annette, William, and eyewitnesses.

For about an hour he drove on, the wind and snow beating in his face. The horse was a good one, but the weather was bad. Bartlett thought he had never been so cold in his life, although this was not the first time that he had been out in a Canadian blizzard. Gradually the horse began to show signs of weakness. His head bent, his legs lagged. For another half hour he trudged along. The man in the sleigh could see nothing but dark, murky snow, could hear nothing but the whistling of the wind. Suddenly an overpowering fear took possession of him. Was the horse on the right road? He had surely covered five miles. It was getting so very cold. In spite of his heavy gloves, his fingers had long since become numb. The horse now began to limp, and after going a short distance further, fell exhausted. Bartlett jumped out of the sleigh and tried to tug him to his feet; but it was useless, worse than useless. The horse was done. He looked around him, but could see nothing, nothing but snow. He helloed, but there was no response. He thought of returning, and in fact had already started back, but discovered that his tracks were entirely covered with snow. There was only one thing to do—to stick to the horse. He might recover. It was a long chance, but it was his only chance, and he held to it as a drowning man clings to a plank in the middle of the ocean. He was beginning to feel weak now, very weak. He had eaten nothing since morning. He had walked up and down in the small space surrounding the sleigh in an effort to keep up the circulation, then, finally exhausted and half stupid with the cold, wrapped himself in the blankets, and throwing the foot-robe on the snow beside the warm, panting body of the horse, he waited. If he must die, he would die at least warm, he thought, in his stupid semi-consciousness. Every few minutes he set up a hello, each weaker than the last. Suddenly he became numb. A chill,