

WHISPERING ROCK

by JOHN LEBAR



AUTOCASTER SERVICE INC.

FIFTH INSTALMENT

SYNOPSIS . . . Ruth Warren, living in the East, comes into possession of three-quarter interest in an Arizona ranch, left to her in the will of her only brother, reported to have died while on business in Mexico. With her ailing husband and small child she goes to Arizona to take possession, thinking the climate may prove beneficial to her husband's weakened lungs. Arriving at the nearest town, she learns that the ranch, "Dead Lantern," is 85 miles across the desert. Charley Thane, old rancher and rural mail carrier, agrees to take them to "Dead Lantern" gate, which was 5 miles from the ranch house. As they wearily walked past a huge overshadowing boulder in a gulch in coming to the ranch house, a voice whispered "Go back! Go back." Their reception is cool and suspicious. Snavelly and Indian Ann are the only occupants. They hear the legion of the gulch.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

No. You understand I don't believe there's anything to it—it's just an echo or some noise, that's all. 'Course with Ann it's different."

"How do you mean?"
Well, she's superstitious clean through. She's scared to death to go through the gulch—but just the same she hasn't go around it. She thinks the voice tol' her never to avoid it in case it wants to tell her anything."

The three sat silent. Soon the slightest of noises came from behind them and at the same instant Snavelly raised his eyes. Turning, the man and girl saw the giant woman towering above them. Snavelly, alone, was not startled by her silent appearance. She nodded to Warren. "Your trunk an' things is in your room."

Ruth stood up at once and gathered her sleeping son in her arms. "Th-hank you so much—I—we'll be going to bed now, I guess."

The old adobe seemed very huge and dismal. With no word between them the man and wife stood in the center of the room. The yellow light from the oil lamp shone upon the walls of earth, mellow and dim.

"What do you think of him?" asked Warren, glancing suddenly into Ruth's eyes.

"I don't know," said Ruth slowly. "Did you notice that look on his face when he was talking about people? Not what you'd call a social animal."

"He hates us—he hates every human being!"

Warren said nothing for a time, then, "We'd better go to bed, I guess" Ruth nodded.

One of the canvas cots Ann had placed near the glassless window; another, close by, was probably intended for David. The third cot was in the rear room. When the man and girl had finished their preparations the three cots were so close together that there seemed to be only a single broad bed made up in three sections. So hot was the night that covering was impossible. With David between them and the lamp extinguished the

father and mother lay on their backs, their hands clasped above David's head.

The stillness was stifling. Finally the hand of her husband gradually relaxed. How could he possibly sleep? Poor Kenny—so terribly tired. She lowered her eyes from their upward stare and looked at the window. It was no longer a black hole but a patch of light—as though the moon were shining.

Carefully, she got to her knees and worked her way to the foot of the bed. Thus kneeling, she could rest her elbows on the sill and look out into the night.

A sound, a single squeak of a metal spring, instinctively brought her eyes to the back door of the ranch house. Some one was standing there; some one had just come softly out. Breathless, she watched. The figure moved slowly toward the ancient adobe and stopped. She knew that it was Snavelly. After a moment he turned slightly and, walking with quiet steps went toward a mound of earth heavily covered with bushes. This mound was nearly opposite the girl's window and about a hundred feet away. When he had reached the clump of bushes Snavelly paused and seemed again to be looking at the adobe. She saw that he had a bundle under his arm. Suddenly he stooped low and disappeared from sight. The minutes passed—two ten, or a hundred, the girl could not have told. Then she heard a hollow, echoing clank among the clump of bushes. A moment later, Snavelly reappeared and walked softly back to the ranch house. His hands were empty. This time he opened the door in such a way that it did not squeak.

By mid-afternoon of the next day Ruth could hardly stand. All morning, and for three hours since lunch she and Ann had been cleaning out the two rooms in the old adobe.

In spite of Ruth's exhaustion she had done very little actual work. Of the entire two floors she was only able to scrape an area which might have been covered by the ranch bathtub before the palms of her very white hands developed puffy red mounds, extremely tender. The hoe in Ann's huge hands ripped up long scrolls of earth untiringly.

Much might be said for Ruth's bravery in attempting to do any work whatever, but as a matter of plain fact she was afraid to do anything else. That morning at breakfast she had asked if Ann could help her, and Snavelly had replied, "I reckon she can, if you need help."

All day this reply had rankled. She told herself that Ann was merely a servant employed on the ranch and that Snavelly's interest in the ranch was only one-quarter. Yet, while this was in some ways a comforting reflection, it could not put from her mind those pale, jerking eyes.

Warren and David were speaking the day under a great live oak which stood on the western bank of the gulch and was visible from the doorway of the old adobe. It was a beautiful tree, its wealth of shade made even more inviting by the cool green of its leaves. Warren lay back in a

canvas chair, lazily improvising on his guitar. Little David was tremendously busy making things with the small acorns which covered the shaded ground.

Often Ruth glanced toward the oak tree, and once she had gone part way over and shouted to Warren to watch out for snakes. She returned to the adobe reluctantly. She rather felt that she also should be under that tree.

Anyway, the adobe looked quite clean and pleasant compared with its appearance the evening before. Only last evening? Ruth could hardly believe that she had not yet been twenty-four hours on the ranch; it seemed a month. Well, the cleaning was over. She supposed that a storm would come in a few days and the whole place would fall down. In such an event she could imagine Snavelly suggesting that she move her family into the barn—after cleaning it out.

Since rising that morning, she had wondered constantly what Snavelly had been doing the night before. But she had not gone to the bushes to investigate, she had not mentioned the incident to her husband, and she had not the remotest intention of asking Snavelly. And, just as she told herself that the voice in the gulch was an echo, she told herself that Snavelly was probably attending to some neglected ranch chore—well, such as putting something away in a box which made a clank when the lid was dropped.

Ruth did not know what she thought about Ann. The giantess both fascinated and frightened her. She was fascinated by the skill with which Ann drove nails and she was frightened when the woman bent her back and tossed aside a huge chunk of fallen adobe which partially obstructed the doorway, as though the heavy earth were cork. It was hard to think of the giantess as a woman; her enormous strength and size were so foreign to the girl's idea of femininity. And always Ann was aware of the little dog—Ruth felt that but for her presence Ann and sugarfoot would have carried on a continuous conversation. Several times Ruth had tried to start friendly talk with Ann but with no success. The giantess had not once smiled; she did her work like a relentless machine, but a machine with thoughts of its own.

From the corner of her eye she saw Ann loading trash from a pile near the door into a wheelbarrow. She stepped to the threshold and asked casually, "What in the world shall we do with all that stuff, Ann? It won't burn; that's certain."

Ann grunted and lifted the wheelbarrow. Ruth fell into step beside her as the giantess wheeled her load toward the clump of bushes beyond the woodpile. "You know, Ann, we ought to have a regular place for putting trash—something out of sight where we could put things we didn't want to see any more."

Ann said nothing.
"I've often wished I had a place where I could put things, I've done that I shouldn't have done." The haughty cast of Ann's features softened; she looked into the girl's eyes and nodded slightly.



Suddenly he stooped low and disappeared from sight.

canvass chair, lazily improvising on his guitar. Little David was tremendously busy making things with the small acorns which covered the shaded ground.

Often Ruth glanced toward the oak tree, and once she had gone part way over and shouted to Warren to watch out for snakes. She returned to the adobe reluctantly. She rather felt that she also should be under that tree.

Anyway, the adobe looked quite clean and pleasant compared with its appearance the evening before. Only last evening? Ruth could hardly believe that she had not yet been twenty-four hours on the ranch; it seemed a month. Well, the cleaning was over. She supposed that a storm would come in a few days and the whole place would fall down. In such an event she could imagine Snavelly suggesting that she move her family into the barn—after cleaning it out.

Since rising that morning, she had wondered constantly what Snavelly had been doing the night before. But she had not gone to the bushes to investigate, she had not mentioned the incident to her husband, and she had not the remotest intention of asking Snavelly. And, just as she told herself that the voice in the gulch was an echo, she told herself that Snavelly was probably attending to some neglected ranch chore—well, such as putting something away in a box which made a clank when the lid was dropped.

Ruth did not know what she thought about Ann. The giantess both fascinated and frightened her. She was fascinated by the skill with which Ann drove nails and she was frightened when the woman bent her back and tossed aside a huge chunk of fallen adobe which partially obstructed the doorway, as though the heavy earth were cork. It was hard to think of the giantess as a woman; her enormous strength and size were so foreign to the girl's idea of femininity. And always Ann was aware of the little dog—Ruth felt that but for her presence Ann and sugarfoot would have carried on a continuous conversation. Several times Ruth had tried to start friendly talk with Ann but with no success. The giantess had not once smiled; she did her work like a relentless machine, but a machine with thoughts of its own.

From the corner of her eye she saw Ann loading trash from a pile near the door into a wheelbarrow. She stepped to the threshold and asked casually, "What in the world shall we do with all that stuff, Ann? It won't burn; that's certain."

Ann grunted and lifted the wheelbarrow. Ruth fell into step beside her as the giantess wheeled her load toward the clump of bushes beyond the woodpile. "You know, Ann, we ought to have a regular place for putting trash—something out of sight where we could put things we didn't want to see any more."

Ann said nothing.
"I've often wished I had a place where I could put things, I've done that I shouldn't have done." The haughty cast of Ann's features softened; she looked into the girl's eyes and nodded slightly.

Inside the enclosing fence of underbrush a half a dozen sun-bleached planks lay upon the ground. Ann turned back the nearest of these disclosing a black hole. She tipped the wheelbarrow and the trash slid from sight. Ruth caught her breath without knowing why—there was some-

thing weird in the silent way that load disappeared—perhaps there was water in the hole, very close to the top. Ruth took a step forward, just as a sudden roar of sound belched from the blackness. She screamed—the trash had just struck bottom.

Ann looked at her. "It ain't nothin'—jest, an ol' well we throw stuff into."

"How—how deep is it?"
"Way dep—a hundred feet, I reckon. The folks what built the 'dobe dugged it years ago. But they never found no water jes' here'bouts"

The girl shivered. Something in Ann's face caused her to turn quickly—Snavelly was coming through the bushes. His pale eyes glinted dangerously.

"Now, Ann,"—he spoke in a high voice—"I think you'd better be tendin' to the milkin'. You best finish with the cleanin' to-morrow. We got to butcher this evenin' too."

Ann left at once. After a moment in which he stood as though half stupefied, Snavelly smiled on the girl. "Ann'd rather do most anything than milk—seems to me. She don't know how lucky she is to have somethin' to milk—it ain't every cattle ranch that's got a milk cow." As he was speaking he walked away from the well and Ruth followed. "I got that Jersey for milk—solely for milk—traded a long yearlin' beef for her to a Mexican who was goin' to slaughter her. Besides," he smiled again and stopped beyond the bushes, "we've got good milk for our victuals."

"Oh, I see. It seems like good business to have a milk cow, then. Mr. Snavelly, about that well—"

"You're dead right it's good business. I told Grey that when we first started up. While he was puttin' in a new windmill, and the ce-went water troughs I look around and got hold of that Jersey—she's already paid for herself in the poor little weak calves she's nursed."

They were passing the woodpile and Snavelly stooped to pick up the axe. "I come up here for this—me and Ann're goin' to butcher. We need meat. Can't keep it more'n a couple of days in this weather, but Ann'll jerk a lot of it. But we'll have fresh meat for supper." He smiled. "Don't reckon you ever had a chance to eat beef a half hour after it was killed. You want to come down to the corral and watch us butcher?"

"No—no, thank you. Mr. Snavelly, please fence that horrible well! I won't let David out of my sight until you do. And when you begin I'll get him out of the way—I don't want him to know about it or be curious. He must never go into those bushes. Poul'll fence it right away won't you? Please."

Snavelly nodded. "That's a good idea, Mrs. Warren. I'll attend to it myself to-morrow—we never expected to have kids on the place and just throwed loose boards over it to keep the stock out. But I'll fence it sure."

"Make a very strong fence—one David can't get through or over. Couldn't you use boards. These barbed wire fences look so insecure."

Something terrible flashed into Snavelly's face. "Barbed wire"—he spat the words—"ain't goin' to be used for nothin' on this place! What wire is here can stay but by God I ain't never touched it an' I ain't never going to!"

"Well—I—I'm glad you will use boards, Mr. Snavelly," said Ruth uncertainly, and left him.

That evening when the girl and her family went into the ranch house for supper, they were sorry to see that Ann had a long cut on her cheek Snavelly explained that she had done it on the catch of the kitchen cupboard.

(Continued Next Week)

WE HAVE the best cut hard wood you could find. So clean and sound and no cinders. Try a load. Apply I. D. Ramer & Son, phone 10.

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR THE BUSY FARMER

Canada has about 350 million acres of land suitable for farming purposes and of this total 163 millions are in occupied farms of which nearly 86 million acres are improved land.

Certain suggestions for cures for hens eating their eggs have been made such as putting dummy eggs on which the hen damages its beak or putting in the nest an egg filled with some substance such as quinine or mustard. The only sure cure, however, is to hand over the bird to the cook.

The seed of carrots, due to the fact that the individual seed-clusters do not ripen at the same time, cannot be harvested in the same manner as mangels and swedes. The individual seed-clusters must be picked by hand when they become brown and several pickings are necessary to harvest the crop in best condition.

Dipping Sheep
Ticks and other external parasites of sheep are serious enough at any time and cause more direct loss than is generally supposed, but during the period when the sheep are in winter quarters it is even more important to rid them of all sources of irritation. It is especially desirable that the flock be clean before and during lambing, otherwise the infestation is sure to be passed along to the lambs which will thus receive a very serious set-back at the most important period of their lives.

Ridging in the Fall
One of the best methods of killing weeds is to ridge the land in the fall. There are men who claim that there is no benefit in the way of killing rootstocks of sow thistle and couch grass remaining in the soil after summer cultivation. Others regard ridging as supplementary to early after-harvesting cultivation in the eradication of weeds. At the Kemptville Agricultural School in Ontario ridging is considered an important tillage practice, all land ploughed early and subsequently top worked being drilled up in early fall. Another advantage of ridging is that it aids in getting on the land a few days earlier in the spring which is a decided gain on low or heavy land. Some clays tend to run together if left in a highly cultivated state all winter, but ridging up corrects this.

Killing The Flies
Most efforts to keep clear of stable flies have been restricted to spraying the flies on the cows. The suggestion is now made that the flies be fought in the stable as well. The idea is to spray the flies with a killing spray while they are settled in the walls and ceiling. If this spraying is done in the early morning it will be more effective as the flies are then sluggish in their movements. Late afternoon is also a good time. Close the stable and spray with a fine mist that fills the air. One part of formalin in 19 parts of milk or sweetened water makes a good and cheap spray. The same mixture may be left around in plates for the flies to drink. Keeping all manure cleared away from the stable and yards will remove breeding places for the flies and reduce the nuisance. Where it is not convenient to move the manure to the fields, it should be kept in a screened shed.

1932 Farm Figures
Depressed economic conditions have not affected the continuity of agricultural production in Ontario, according to figures just issued by the Department. The acreage planted to the principal crops amounted to 9,225,700 acres in 1932, as compared with 9,176,062 the previous year. Beans, potatoes and flax experienced the largest percentage decline in acreage, while barley, alfalfa, buckwheat and corn showed the greatest increases. The average yield per acre was very satisfactory, but gross value of agricultural production showed a decrease of \$45,677,000 from the preceding year, the figures for 1932 being \$226,445,000.

A crop of 45,759,800 lbs. of tobacco was grown in Ontario in 1932, marking a new high record of production. The outstanding feature of this industry is the increasing predominance of the bright blue-cured type which has increased in production from 8,726,000 lbs. in 1928 to 27,615,000 in 1932.

An increase in the number of horses and cattle on farms in Ontario and a reduction in the number of sheep, swine and poultry occurred between June 1st, 1931 and June 1st, 1932. The total value of all livestock and of each species fell during the year and was due chiefly to a further drop in values per head. The total value of all livestock amounted to \$144,580,000 on June 1st, 1932, compared with \$171,732,000 on June

1st, 1931, which represents a reduction of 16 per cent.

On Thinning Mangels
Experiments carried out over a period of eight years by the Dominion Experimental Farm, Ottawa, show that the largest crop of mangels is secured when they are thinned to a distance of 9 inches apart. The report also observes that the system of blocking plants into small bunches results in the production of many small roots, which are difficult to harvest.

Weekly Crop Report
In spite of low lie stock prices, inquiries for sires of high quality and breeding females particularly ewe lambs, has been greater than usual, according to a report from Dufferin County. Recent showery weather has greatly improved the condition of the land for fall wheat germination. Apple picking is in full swing in all the orchard districts and a fine crop of clean, healthy fruit is being harvested. Pastures have held up fairly well in Eastern Ontario and live stock should go into stables in good condition. From Leeds County comes the report that more clover and alfalfa are being left for seed than usual, the second cut alfalfa having an excellent seed set.

Hullless Oats
As a cheap source of high quality feed of particular value for poultry and young stock and one which can be used at once without processing, except perhaps grinding, hullless oats has no equal writes A. Gordon Skinner, Agricultural Representative in Haldimand County. The yields as recorded are most encouraging and compare so favorably with the ordinary hulled varieties as to put the hullless variety in the lead when considering actual pounds of digestible nutrients produced, and after all that is the point in which we should be most interested. A twenty bushel crop of hullless oats weighing fifty pounds per bushel of hulls is equal to a yield of forty-two bushels when figured on the basis of 30 per cent hull.

Hullless oats are very susceptible to smut and unless measures are taken to prevent this disease, the loss will be heavy. Treatment is very simple, however, and can be readily made by any farmer with equipment which he may already have. Copper carbonate dust is used and according to instructions issued by the Department of Botany, O.A.C., should be applied at the rate of about two ounces per bushel of seed. A hand operated cement mixer is an ideal piece of equipment for this operation and is in common use in Haldimand. The Formalin treatment cannot be applied to Hullless Oats as it will destroy germination. Copper carbonate dust, on the other hand, is safe to use and seed can be treated any time when it is convenient and stored without injury. Treated seed, however, cannot be used for feeding or milling purposes.

Hudson Decorators
B. F. WOLFREY, Prop.
Painting, Paperhanging and Decorating
WORK GUARANTEED
Estimates Free
A Taxpayer of The District,
Church St. Richmond Hill
P. O. Box 32

THE MILL
RICHMOND HILL
Prepare your lawns and gardens for good showing in Spring Fertilizers now at reduced prices
FLOUR BRAN SHORTS
Poultry feed always in stock.
139 Phones 82W
WE DELIVER

PLASTERING
Chimneys Built and Repaired
General Repairs
P. FARR,
R. R. No. 1 — Richmond Hill
Phone 46-r-14

TAKE THE CONTINENTAL LIMITED



Enhance the joys of your Western trip—travel via Canadian National's train de luxe—The Continental Limited. This modern magic carpet smoothly unfolds rugged Northern Ontario before your eyes—across the Prairies—pilots you through the Scenic Route over the lowest altitude—yet keeps you within easy sight of the mightiest and most inspiring peaks.

WINNIPEG EDMONTON JASPER ROCKY MOUNTAINS PACIFIC COAST ALASKA

Leaves TORONTO Daily at 10.40 P.M. (E.S.T.)

JASPER GOLF WEEK Sept. 3rd to 9th.

T-77

CANADIAN NATIONAL