

# GOLD BOUND

A STORY OF ALASKAN GOLD COUNTRY

(Continued from last week)

real furrows in your cheeks," said Ducane. "But to return to Miss Grey: Has she already sailed?"

"I don't think so, for I saw her two or three days ago," was the reply. "Mrs. McKinney would know for sure. She runs a boarding house down the street, and Yukona always stops with her when she's in Nome! You'll just love Yukona Grey when you see her. She's strong as a man, and she's as beautiful as any woman I ever laid eyes on, and as true as the gold she'll have so much of."

With a smile for the girl's enthusiasm, Ducane thanked her, and left the dining room. With this glowing description of Yukona Grey, a plan had come to him suddenly. Straightway, he decided to follow it, even though it comporting strangely with the letter which he had received.

## CHAPTER III.

The Widow McKinney had more roles than that of landlady of a boarding house; she played mother to every one who took shelter under her roof, from the youthful assayer fresh from his school of mines, to the oldest sourdough from upriver. But particularly did she mother Yukona Grey, although the girl was an entirely capable young woman, used to being alone in the world.

Ducane sensed this material talent immediately when he was ushered in to the cosy sitting room by the widow herself. The glance of her gray-green eyes were penetrating, as the she were ever seeking out the bad in a man. But there were softer lines about her mouth, which told him that she appreciated the good qualities, if she found them, and would be just weighing them.

Straightway he assumed his very best front—the smile that most people found pleasing from his mouth to the dark eyes that had mastered the trick of returning a gaze squarely. His voice was naturally quiet, and his substantial clean-shaven chin gave an unmistakable suggestion of

purpose.

"You say Miss Grey does not know you," objected the landlady brusquely, after she had closed the door into the hall behind her. "Then why is she honored with this visit?"

"I have heard from some people who know her well," returned Ducane, not materially disturbed by the sarcasm of the widow's question. "I have news of one of her friends."

"What name shall I saw?"

"I am Rupert Ducane, madam."

"Who's asking your name? What good would that do? You say the girl doesn't know you. The name of the friend is what I want to know. It's for Yukona herself to decide if he really is a friend. Up here in Alaska many call themselves and few are chosen!"

"Forster is the friend's name," said Ducane, resolved to forego his plan if this astute Widow McKinney insisted on remaining with them thru the interview.

Her glance swept him from his straight-gazing eyes to the substantial toes of his boots. Then she motioned to a chair near the stove, and left the room.

Now that Ducane found himself actually awaiting the coming of the young woman in the case, he began to doubt the wisdom of the impulse he had followed. He realized that it would have been more his usual way to avoid the feminine element. He was probably piling up complications for himself, complications that would have been eliminated by her promised departure for the States.

"Yet this is the safest way for me," he mused. "In dealing with men as desperate as Keating and Jensen write themselves, one can't have too many safeguards. Here's where I establish an alibi, come what may."

Despite the enthusiastic report of the hotel waitress, Ducane was scarcely prepared for the veritable gold woman who presently stood framed in the open door. His initial glance brought realization of many perfect details. She was nearly as tall as

himself, with an erect, healthy carriage. The soft folds of her house gown—he had expected short skirts and blanket cloth—showed strength in every line of her figure. There was an honest, uncompromising directness in her blue eyes which their long lashes did not hide. Above them, her hair, the color of gold that has been washed in sea water, was parted in the middle, and combed severely back to cluster in a generous roll behind her neck. All this his eyes reported as he was rising to his feet and taking a single step toward her.

"Good evening," was her greeting in modulated voice. "Mother Mae says you bring news from Uncle Ned Forster."

Ducane took time to think before replying: "News of him, not from him."

"That's nearly as good," she said, with a smile that illuminated her loveliness. "Won't you sit down and tell me all about it?"

With relief he resumed his chair by the fire, but his reply was not as ready. He realized now that he had been a fool to come to her with that letter of tragedy. Yet he knew that he would not have missed the pleasure of seeing her for a dozen such letters. Impulse came to him to invent some casual message, and make his escape. But another glance at the frank eyes of the girl convinced him that he would bungle any such attempt. He felt impelled to carry out his original plan, despite the danger that a girl such as she seemed to be would probably insist on accompanying him out on the tundra.

"When did you leave Paint Creek?" asked Yukona, as tho noting his hesitation, and desiring to give him an easy beginning.

"I have never been there, Miss Grey. I landed only this afternoon from the Senator."

"But Uncle Ned is at Paint Creek, two days' hike away. You really have news of him?" The question implied bewilderment rather than doubt.

"The news is in a letter which I found waiting for me when I arrived at the Gold Digger." Rupert kept the words from floundering with an effort. "It is not pleasant news, and perhaps I'd best not tell it. When I came I didn't know how—how young you were." The conclusion clearly had a limp.

Her expression changed instantly. The smile faded, and a grave look came into the blue eyes.

"I'm no infant," she said shortly. "I've heard bad news before, more than my share, but I reckon I can stand another instalment. You are free to tell me, Mr.—Mr.—"

"Ducane," he supplied. "I suppose it is best for all concerned that you know." With a deliberation that implied marked reluctance, he took the letter from his pocket, and handed it to the young woman.

He watched her narrowly as she read. Incredulity and amazement played across her face, but he saw there was no hint of fright. She read the missive thru a second time before she looked up at him.

"The wretches!" she cried, with a suggestion of power rather than feminine hysteria. "They mean to kill Uncle Ned and rob my claims this winter while I am in the States."

"You recognize the names signed to the letter?" Ducane felt growing admiration for her composure under what must have been a great shock.

"Know Jim Keating and Nelse Jensen? Who doesn't know that pair? The scum of the bench. Nobody but dear old Ned Forster would give them a bank, whatever their necessity. He knows them, too, but his heart is big, and he was sorry for them. I warned him, but he said he had fed hungry dogs before and never been bitten."

"Looks as though they were trying to show their fangs," remarked Ducane.

But she had returned to the penciled scrawl, and was reading it with greater deliberation. Suddenly he felt that her eyes were again upon him. When he looked up he found them as coldly penetrating as had been those of the widowed landlady. He met them, however, without flinching.

"But I don't understand!" she said, genuinely puzzled. "The letter is addressed to you. They expect you to make way with Uncle Ned at the Circle Ford?"

"That's the way the letter reads to me," said Ducane, still looking at her steadily.

"And you bring it to me? You let me into the plan to murder my oldest and dearest friend, my father's partner?"

"I wanted you to know that there are some things that Rupert Ducane won't do," said he in a voice that had a convincing ring of truth. "Potting a man as he crosses a ford, and sharing a woman's gold with a black-hearted pair like Keating and

Jensen is one of them."

It would have required a far more suspicious nature than Yukona Grey possessed to doubt the look and tone of Rupert Ducane at that moment. If ever a man looked sincere repugnance of a proposal, he looked it then. Arguing rapidly within herself, the girl concluded that she had the strongest possible proof of his sincerity in the fact that he had brought the letter to her. She was utterly ignorant of the more subtle forms of crime, and the wiles of master criminals.

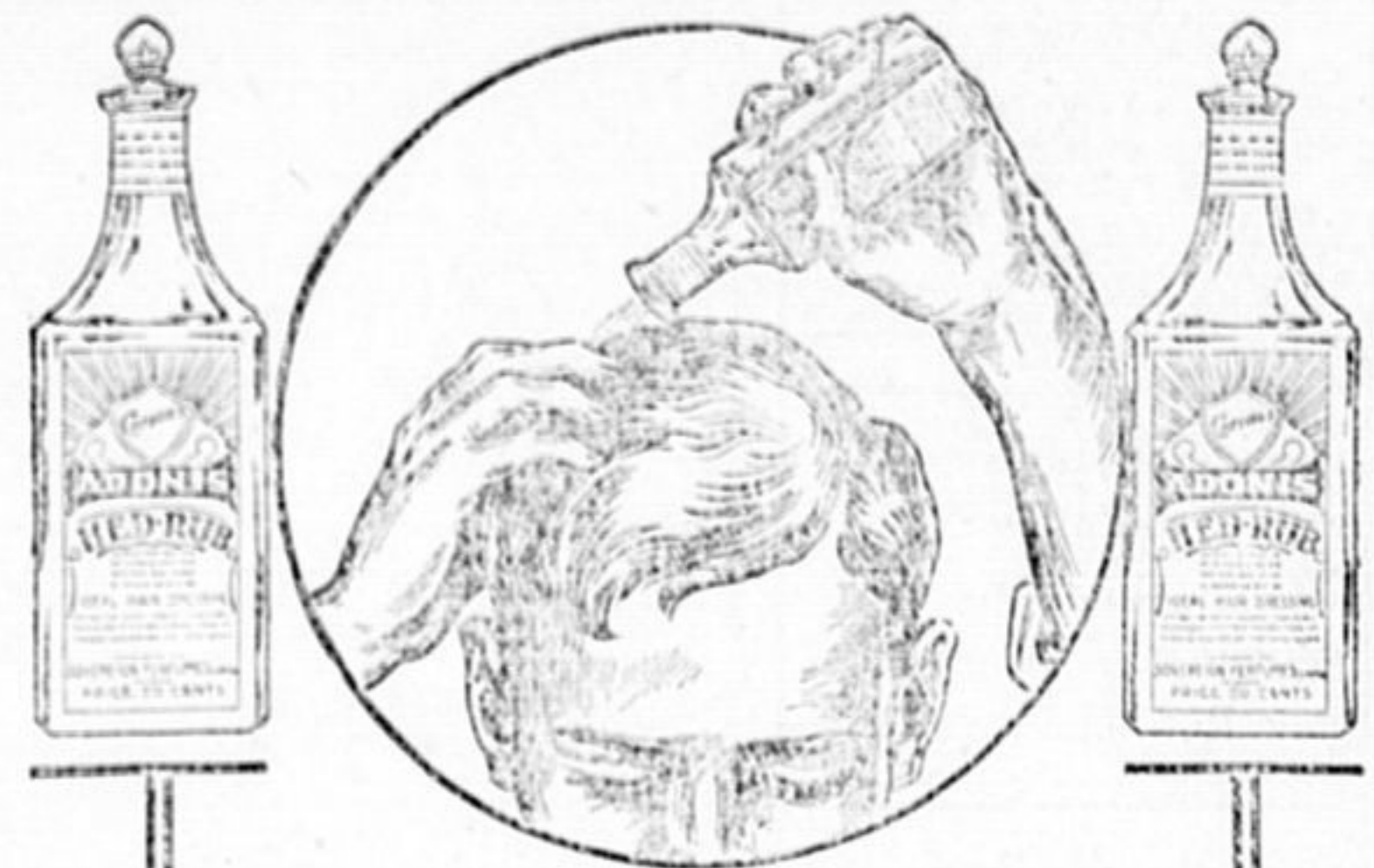
She had never heard of the time-dishonored method of securing immunity by proving in advance that one could not be guilty. The word alibi was not in her vocabulary. They had crimes in Alaska, it was true—claim robberies, train holdups, and murders—but the robberies were de-

liberately direct, and most of the murders of the hot-blooded sort. Yet she could not forbear wondering how it came about that this man, whom she had never even seen before, who must be more or less in the confidence of the conspirators out on the claims, should betray his friends. If he would be false to them, what warrant had she that he would not treat her in the same way if it suited his purpose? Was it possible that his seeming frankness cloaked some deep twist in the miserable plot?

"Why have you turned against Keating and Jensen?" she asked him directly. "You don't know Ned Forster, and you never laid eyes on me before."

His answer came without hesitation: "Those scoundrels up at Paint Creek have no valid claim upon me.

(Continued in next issue.)



## Hair with Life and Lustre

Nothing responds so readily to a little care as the hair. We all—men and women—are irritated when our hair becomes brittle, dry and colorless.

### ADONIS HED-RUB

is an invigorating hair tonic which keeps the hair in excellent condition and is cooling and refreshing to the scalp. Barbers have been using it for years. They find it makes the hair thicker, softer and brighter in color. Adonis Hed-Rub contains no sediment or grease.

50c AND \$1 SIZES.

Sold by all  
Druggists

# REMOVING

TO LAFLAMME'S NEW BUILDING  
(NEXT DOOR)

# Geils, the Tailor

On or About the 10th

Watch for further details in this space

Next Week