

The Devil's Own

A Romance of the Black Hawk War

By Randall Parrish

Author of "Contraband," "Shea of the Irish Brigade," "When Wilderness was King," etc.

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Illustrated by Irwin Myers

"HE'S A BLACK ABOLITIONIST, SAH!"

Synopsis.—In 1832 Lieutenant Knox of the regular army is on duty at Fort Armstrong, Rock Island, Ill., in territory threatened by disaffected Indians. The commandant sends him with dispatches to St. Louis. He takes passage on the steamer Warrior and makes the acquaintance of Judge Beaucaire, rich planter, and of Joe Kirby (the Devil's Own), notorious gambler. Knox learns Judge Beaucaire has a daughter, Eloise, and a granddaughter, Rene, offspring of a son whom the judge has disowned. Rene's mother is a negress, and she and her daughter, never having been freed, are slaves under the law, although the girls have been brought up as sisters. Kirby induces the judge to stake his plantation and negro servants on a poker hand unfairly dealt by Joe Carver, Kirby's partner. The two hands contain five aces, and Kirby accuses the judge of cheating. Beaucaire, infuriated, arises to attack Kirby, and drops dead. In the confusion Kirby and Carver are enabled to steal away. Knox tries to induce Kirby to give up his stolen winnings. Kirby refuses and after a hot argument he and Carver throw Knox overboard. The lieutenant swims ashore and reaches a hut. Knox lies unconscious for ten days. Recovering, he finds he is in a cabin owned by Pete, a "free nigger," who had shot him, mistaking him for an enemy. His dispatches have been forwarded.

CHAPTER V.—Continued.

"'Bout a week, maybe mor'n dat, ago. De Warrior brought de body down, sah."

"The Warrior? Did anyone go ashore with it?"

"'Pears like thar wus two men stopped off at de Landin'. I disremember de names, but one ob 'em wus an ol' friend ob de jedge's."

I turned my head away silently, but only for a moment. The two men were in all probability Kirby and his satellite, Carver. Doubtless the Beaucaire property was already legally in Kirby's possession, and any possible chance I might have once had to foil him in his nefarious purpose had now completely vanished.

To be sure I had reasoned out no definite means whereby I could circumvent his theft, except to take legal advice, confer with Governor Clark, and warn those threatened girls of their danger. But now it was too late even to do this. And yet it might not be. If Kirby and his confederate believed that I was dead, were convinced that I had perished beneath the waters of the river, they might feel safe in taking time to strengthen their position; might delay final action, hoping thus to make their case seem more plausible. If Kirby was really serious in his intention of marrying Beaucaire's daughter he would naturally hesitate immediately to acknowledge winning the property at cards, and thus indirectly being the cause of her father's death. He would be quite likely to keep this hidden from the girl for a while, until he tried his luck at love.—If love failed, then the disclosure might be made to drive the young woman to him—a threat to render her complaisant.

"Do you know a lawyer named Haines?"

"Livin' down at de Landin'? Yas, sah."

I lifted myself up in bed, too deeply interested to lie still any longer.

"Now listen, Pete," I explained earnestly. "I've got sufficient money to pay you well for all you do, and just as soon as you get me something to eat I want you to go down to the Landing and bring Lawyer Haines back here with you. Just tell him a sick white man wants to see him at once, and not a word to anyone else."

"Yas, sah," the whites of his eyes rolling. "He done know ol' Pete, an' I'll sure bring him back yere."

It was dark when they came, the fire alone lighting up the interior of the dingy cabin with a fitful glow of red flame. I had managed to get out of bed and partially dress myself, feeling stronger, and in less pain as I exercised my muscles. Haines was a small, sandy-complexioned man, with a straggling beard and light blue eyes. He appeared competent enough, a bundle of nervous energy, and yet there was something about the fellow which instantly impressed me unfavorably—probably his short, jerky manner of speech and his inability to look straight at you.

"Pete has been telling me who you are, lieutenant," he said, as we shook hands, "and putting some other things together I can guess the rest. You came south on the Warrior?"

"From Fort Armstrong—yes; who told you this?"

"Captain Throckmorton. I saw him in St. Louis, and he seemed deeply grieved by your sudden disappearance. No one on board was able to explain what had occurred."

"Yet there were two men on the boat who could have explained if they had cared to do so," I answered dryly. "I mean Kirby and Carver; they were the ones who threw me overboard."

He dropped into a chair, his keen ferret eyes on my face.

"Kirby and Carver? They went ashore with the judge's body at the Landing. So there is a story back of all this," he exclaimed jerkily. "D——n it, I thought as much. Was Beaucaire killed?"

"No—not at least by any violence. No doubt the shock of his loss hastened his death. Surely you must know that he risked all he possessed on a game of cards and lost?"

"Throckmorton knew something about it, and there were other rumors floating about the Landing, but I have heard no details."

"I have every reason, Haines, to feel convinced that both Kirby and Carver trailed Beaucaire up the river with the intention of plucking him. Kirby practically confessed this to me, boastingly, afterward. That last night he so manipulated the cards—or rather Carver did, for it was his deal—as to deceive Beaucaire into firmly believing that he held an absolutely unbeatable hand—he was dealt four aces and a king."

The lawyer leaned forward, breathing heavily.

"Four aces! Only one hand is better than that, and it would be impossible to get such a hand out of one pack."

"That is exactly true, Haines. I am no card player, but I do know that much about the game. Yet Kirby took the pot with a straight flush. Now, either he or Carver slipped an extra ace into the pack, or else Beaucaire did. In my opinion the judge had no chance to work such a trick. And that's the case as it stands."

Haines jumped to his feet and began pacing the dirt floor excitedly, his hands clasped behind his back.

"By heaven, man!" he cried, pausing suddenly. "Even if he did have a chance the judge never did it—never. He was a good sport, and always played a straight game. You say he bet everything he had?"

"To the last dollar—Kirby egged him on. Besides the money a deed to his land and a bill of sale for his negroes were on the table."

"The field hands, you mean?"

"Yes, and the house servants. Kirby insisted that he write these words, 'This includes every chattel slave legally belonging to me,' and made Beaucaire sign it in that form."

Haines' face was white, his eyes staring at me incredulously.

"God help us, man! Do you know what that means?" he gasped.

"I am almost afraid I do," I answered, yet startled by his manner. "That was why I sent for you. Would that include his son's daughter?"

He buried his face in his hands.

"Yes," he confessed brokenly. "To the best of my knowledge Rene Beaucaire is a slave."

The silence following this blunt statement was sickening. Up to that moment, in spite of every fact brought to my knowledge, I had secretly believed this condition of affairs impossible. Surely somewhere, through some legal form, Judge Beaucaire had guarded the future safety of this young woman, whom he had admitted into his household. Any other conception seemed impossible, too monstrous, too preposterous for consideration. But now the solemn words of the lawyer, his own legal counselor, brought conviction, and for the moment all power of speech deserted me. It was actually true, then—the girl was a slave, a thing belonging to Kirby. Nothing broke the stillness within the cabin except the sharp crackling of flames in the open fireplace, and the heavy breathing of the negro. He was seated on the edge of the bed, his black face showing a greenish tint and revealing puzzled amazement, with wide-opened eyes staring blankly at Haines, who stood motionless before the fire.

"Whut wus dat yer sed, Mister Haines?" he asked thickly. "You say as how Missus Rene Beaucaire is a slave, sah? 'Pears like I don't just rightfully understan'."

"Still, that is true, Pete," and the lawyer lifted his head and surveyed us both. "She is the illegitimate daughter of Delia, Judge Beaucaire's



"By Heaven, Man!" He Cried, Pausing Suddenly.

housekeeper; her father was Adelbert Beaucaire, the judge's only son. No one knows where he is, dead or alive."

"De good Lord! An' de ol' jedge never set her free?"

The lawyer shook his head, words evidently failing him.

"But are you absolutely certain of this?" I broke in impatiently. "Have you searched the records?"

"Not only searched them, Knox, but before he left for the north on this last trip Beaucaire was in my office, and I practically forced him to acknowledge the negligence. He even authorized me to draw up the necessary papers for him to sign on his return—for both Delia and the girl. They are in my desk now, unexecuted. There is no mistake—Rene is legally a slave, together with her mother."

"My God!" I exclaimed. "Could anyone conceive a more horrible position! Here is a young girl, educated, refined, of more than ordinary attractiveness, Throckmorton tells me, brought up amid every comfort, and led to believe herself the honored daughter of the house, awakening in an instant to the fact that she is a slave, with negro blood in her veins—a mere chattel, owned body and soul by a gambler, won in a card game, and to be sold to the highest bidder. Haines, I tell you Kirby knew all this—he either suspected, or had discovered through some source that Rene Beaucaire had never been set free. For some reason he desired possession of both Beaucaire girls; they meant more to him than either the money or the property. This card game gave him one; the other—"

"Eloise, you mean? Did the fellow threaten her?"

"Here is what he said sneeringly; you can judge yourself what he meant: 'She's worth fifty thousand dollars by her mother's will, and I intend to win her if I can, fair means or foul.'"

Haines did not speak for some moments, his eyes on my face. Then he paced back and forth across the floor, finally stopping before the fire.

"This is as near hell as anything I ever knew," he said, "and so far as I can see there is no legal way out of it. We are utterly helpless to assist."

"We are not," I answered hotly, "if we are men. There may be no legal way in which we can beat this villain, but there is an illegal one, unless we are already too late, and I propose to use it, whether you join me or not. You are sure the girls are still at the plantation house—that they know nothing of this condition?"

"I have reason to believe so. Delia was buying provisions at the Landing yesterday; I talked with her a moment."

"And you said that Kirby and Carver were only in town for one night, leaving the next morning on a keelboat for St. Louis. My idea is they were not quite ready to take possession; that they have gone to St. Louis to file the papers, and will come back with officers prepared to execute them. This means that we must work fast to get out of their way."

"What do you propose doing?"

"Let me ask a question first. Is it true that Eloise Beaucaire is heiress to fifty thousand dollars through her mother's estate?"

"Yes; I invested most of it."

"In what?"

"New Orleans property principally."

"Then it is safe enough whatever happens. The only thing we can do is this: tell those girls and the mother the whole truth—tell them at once, before Kirby can return, and then help them to get out of this country. It is not necessary for Eloise to go, unless she desires to, but there is no other safe course for Delia and Rene. They must reach a northern state before Kirby can lay hands on them. Could Delia pass for a white woman?"

"Not in the South; still she could travel as Rene's maid. But I do not believe it is possible for the two to escape in that way, Knox. Understand, I'd be willing to risk it if there were any show. How can it be done? On the average at this time of year there isn't a steamboat along here once a month. If we did get them onto a boat they would have to travel straight south as far as the Ohio. Kirby wouldn't be more than a day or two behind them, with friends on every boat on the river. Illinois is no free state for fugitive slaves—they might just as well be caught in Missouri as over there. There is not one chance in a thousand that they make it."

"And less than that if they remain here for Kirby to get his hands on," I retorted bitterly. "Now look here, Haines. I am going to carry out this plan alone if you will not back me in it. I am not talking about steamboats; they could travel by night, and hide along shore during the day. All they would need would be two negro oarsmen, sufficient food, and a boat big enough to carry them safely. You have small boats, surely?"

"I got one, Massa Knox," burst out Pete eagerly. "She's down by de mouth ob de creek, sah, an' she sure am a mighty good boat. We could load her up right here, an' I'd be one ob de niggers fer ter take dem ladies down ribber. I'se a free boy, an' nobody care whar I done go."

These unexpected words heartened me, strengthened my own resolve, and I obeyed the first impulse, instantly crossing the room and frankly extending my hand to the surprised negro.

"That sounds like a man, Pete," I exclaimed warmly. "Yes, of course I mean it—shake hands. You are white enough for me, boy, and I do not propose letting you do any more than I am willing to do. I'll go along with you on this trip. I have sixty days' furlough.

"And now, what about you, Haines?" I demanded. "Are you ready to help? Come, man, surely this is not something we have any time to debate. Kirby is liable to show up at any moment with full authority, and the sheriff to back him. It is still early in the evening, and we must work tonight if at all."

"You haven't the strength for such a venture," he protested.

"Haven't I?" and I laughed. "Oh, yes, I have. I am young and this wound is nothing. Are you with us?"

He was slow in replying, and, as I eagerly watched his face, I could almost comprehend the working of the lawyer mind. He saw and argued every doubt, considered every danger.

"In spirit, yes," he answered at last, "but not physically. I believe under the circumstances you are justified, Knox. Perhaps I'd do the same thing if I was in your place and had your youth behind me. But I am a lawyer, fifty years old, and this is my home. If the story ever got out that I took part in nigger stealing, that would be the end of me in Missouri. You can take the risk, but about all I can do will be to keep a quiet tongue in my head. I'll promise you that. But that is all I can promise."

"Yet, you acknowledge this is the only way? No legal course is open to us?"

"Absolutely none. If there was I should never consent to be a party to this plan, or shield you in any way. Kirby has undoubtedly got the law with him. We cannot establish fraud; the property actually belongs to him—both mother and daughter are his slaves."

"And how about the other girl—Eloise?"

"He has no legal hold on her; she is a free white woman. He could only hope to overcome her resistance by threats. The plantation is irrevocably lost to the Beaucaires, but she possesses the power to defy him because of her mother's property. If Kirby marries her, it will only be through her consent."

He picked up his hat from the table, and a stout stick he had brought along with him, taking a step toward the door.

"I might as well tell you I consider this a mad scheme," he paused to add gravely, "and that it will probably fail. There is a possible chance of success, I admit, and for that reason I permit you to go ahead with it, and pledge myself to keep the secret. I was rather intimately associated with Beaucaire for a number of years, and to see his granddaughter sold into slavery, even if she does have a drop of nigger blood in her veins, is more than I can stand, without giving her a chance to get away. That is why I consent to abet a crime, and keep still about it. But beyond that I'll not go. Do you understand the position this infernal affair puts me into?"

"Yes, I do, Haines," and I held out my hand to him, with fresh cordiality. "It is uncommonly white of you to even go that far. I'll pledge you this



"Have You Ever Assisted Any Slaves to Run Away From Missouri?"

—for Pete here, as well as myself—that if we are caught, your name shall never be mentioned. Have you any advice to give?"

He paused uncertainly, his hand on the latch, the firelight flashing up into his face.

"Only this," he said slowly. "If I were you I'd never attempt to go south. Below St. Louis boars are numerous, and you would be almost certain to be discovered. If Kirby chases you—and I know him well enough to be sure he will—he will naturally take it for granted that you have headed for the Ohio. The very fact that the fugitives are women would convince him of this. To my mind the one chance of your getting away, lies to the north—up the Illinois. Anyhow, good luck to you both, and good night."

The door closed behind him, and the negro and I were alone. The die was cast; I had pledged myself to action; was fully committed to the attempted rescue of Rene Beaucaire, and no thought of any retreat once occurred to me. The negro still remained seated on the edge of the bed, digging his toes into the hard earth of the floor.

"Pete," I began earnestly. "You trust me, don't you? You do not suspect me of being any slave-hunter?"

"No, sah, Massa Knox, I ain't 'feared o' yer—yers one o' dem downeasterners."

"Well, not exactly that. I came from a slave state, but my family is of New England blood and breeding. I am just as much your friend as though you were white. Now, you and I have got a hard job before us."

"Yas, sah, we sure has."

"And the first thing we have to do, is to trust each other. Now I am going to ask you a question—is that the best way for us to go, up the Illinois?"

He was slow to answer, evidently turning the whole matter over in his mind. I waited impatiently, feeling the delay to be a serious loss of time.

"Well then, let me put this differently. Have you ever assisted any slaves to run away from Missouri?"

"Well, Massa Knox, I reckon thet maybe I knew'd 'bout som' gittin' away—'pears like I did, sah."

"And these escaped by way of the Illinois?"

His dumb, almost pathetic eyes met mine pleadingly, but some expression of my face served to yield him courage.

"I—I reckon I—I don't know much 'bout all dis, Massa Knox," he stammered doubtfully, his hands locking and unlocking nervously, "I—I sure don'; an' fer de mattah o' dat, ther ain't no body whut does, sah. All I does know, fer sure, is dat if a nigger onct gets as fer as a certain white man up de ribber, 'bout whar do mouth ob de Illinois is, he's got a mighty good chance fer ter reach Canada. De next place whar he's most likely ter stop is Beardstown, long wid som' sorter preacher whut lives thar. An' thet's as fer as dey ever done tol' me, sah."

"About this first white man—the one near the mouth of the Illinois—do you know his name?"

Pete rose to his feet, and crossed the room to where I stood, bending down until his lips were close to my ear. His answer was spoken in a thick whisper.

"Massa Knox, I never did 'spect to say dis ter no white man, but it seems I just nat'larly got fer ter tell yer. He's got a cabin hid way back in de bluffs, whar nobody don't go, 'cept dem who know whar it is. I reckon he don't do nuthin' but hunt an' fish nohow—leastways he don't raise no corn, nor truck fer ter sell. He's a tall, lanky man, sah, sorter thin, with a long beard, an his name wus Ames Shrunk. I reckon maybe he's a Black Abolitionist, sah."

"Quite likely, I should say. And you could take a boat from here to his place?"

"Sure, the darkest night yer ever see."

This knowledge greatly simplified matters. If there was already in operation an organized scheme by means of which fugitives from this side of the great river were taken through to Canada, protected and assisted along the way, then all we would be required to do in this case would be to safely convey the unfortunate Rene and her mother in Pete's boat up the river, and there turn them over to the care of this Amos Shrunk. Undoubtedly he could be trusted to see to it that they were promptly forwarded to others, fanatics like himself, who would swiftly pass them along at night across the Illinois prairies, until beyond all danger of pursuit. The distance to the mouth of the Illinois could not be far, surely not to exceed fifty miles as the river ran. It ought not to prove difficult to baffle Kirby for that short distance, and then we would be free to return, and no one could prove any charge against us. The only important fact fronting us was that we must act quickly, before Kirby and his aides, armed with legal authority, could return—this very night.

"Pete," I said shortly, my tone unconsciously one of authority, "we must be out of here before daylight, and safely hidden somewhere up the river. The first thing to be done, and the hardest, is to explain to those women the situation, and persuade them to accompany us. They may not believe my story; that was why I was so anxious to have Haines go to the house. They would have confidence in him. Do they know you?"

"Lord love yer—ob course dey do. I'se knowed all ob 'em for a long while, sah. Dey'll sure believe ol' Pete."

"Well, we can only try our best. Have you any conveyance here?"

"Any whut, sah?"

"Any wheeled vehicle in which we can ride to Beaucaire, and by means of which we can bring the women back? The distance is too far to walk."

"I'se got a sorter khart, an' an ol' mule, sah. Dey's out yonder in de bush."

"Hitch them up at once, while I put a few things we may need in the boat. Show me how to find it."

He pointed out the path, with the directions necessary, and disappeared, while I returned to the cabin, dragged a blanket from off the bed, and filled it with whatever miscellaneous articles of food I was able to discover about the place. My wound, now that I was busily engaged, troubled me very little, and I easily transported this stock of provisions to the river bank, and safely stowed them away in the boat found there. I returned to discover the mule and cart ready, and a few moments later we were creaking slowly along a gloomy wood road, jolting over the stumps, with Pete walking beside the animal's head, whispering encouragement into the flapping ear. The great adventure had begun.

Knox sets out on the "Great Adventure."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

WORTH A PLACE IN MEMORY

Commonplace Jingle Carries a Sentiment to Which More of Us Should Subscribe.

Every once in awhile someone with a genius for rhymes jingles a great big chunk of truth into verse. These are the unknown and perhaps unconscious poets. You see their outpourings on picture post cards, scribbled on dead walls and in other unlooked for and wholly unexpected places.

A friend sends us one of these wandering vagaries, and we have so much enjoyed reading it that we herewith pass it on to you. It runneth thus:

"Let the howlers howl,
And the growlers growl,
And the prowlers prowl,
And the gee-gaws go it.
Behind the night
There is plenty of light,
And things are all right,
And—I KNOW IT."

One hundred rhymes of this natu put into a book would constitute a f greater and an infinitely more imp tant philosophy than Plato's or Em son's or any other produced by eith ancient or modern sages.

In the eight lines of that crude a homely jingle here reproduced there all the philosophy that any man nee It is a declaration of faith. It is a p found expression of belief in the go ness and the wisdom of God.

Will the friend who sent us t rhyme please accept our very gr thanks?—Los Angeles Times.

Original "Lone Tree."

There was an immense cottonwo four feet thick and very tall, wh stood in Nebraska almost in the c ter of the continent, half way betw New York and San Francisco, wi was within one mile of that cen Under its branches rested thousa of '49-ers en route to the Eldorad the Pacific coast. It was the b known camping ground on the California trail. From 1849, when gold seekers rushed across the g plains down to the completion of Union Pacific railway, the great t was a guidepost to the wagon tra going west.

After the railway was comple there was no further use for the tree and it eventually rotted away died. In 1910 a monument erected on the spot that the tree occupied. It represents the trunk a giant cottonwood and bears this scription: "On this spot stood original Lone Tree on the old C fornia trail."

Origin of the Handkerchief.

The tracing of the term "pock handkerchief" reveals some pecul facts. At first it was described kerchief (couvre-chef), a covering the head; then it became handk chief, a covering for the head carr in the hand, and at length pock handkerchief, covering for the h held in the hand or kept in pocket.

Cash Value of Bolt.

It has been estimated by an Eu pean scientist that the commer value of the electricity in a flash lightning lasting one one-thousan of a second is 29 cents.

Types of Hats for Juveniles



Long and short-napped beavers, felts and wool-fur hats account for the great majority of hats for little girls. Then there are velvet tams, conspicuously classy in the best grades, and some trimmed hats for little misses. Nearly all hats for children are quite plain, with a band and sash of ribbon for trimming in most cases, or a bit of feather ornament on velvet tams. But, to suit the taste of those who are not in sympathy with these plain styles, there are others that make up a very interesting minority in the displays of children's hats. One of these is shown here, together with two long-napped beaver models and a practical tam of wool fur or plush.

Far and away the most popular of the various beaver shapes are made up of wide floppy-brimmed models and those with narrow drooping brims and square crowns, like those shown in the picture. Between these two widths of brim there are some very attractive shapes with round crown and brims that curve upward (in the fashion of a French sailor hat) and are moderately wide. All of them are finished with band or sash of ribbon. The tam shown is one of many, with crowns more or less full and made of duvetyn, velvet, plush, and other materials.

A dressy bonnet for a tiny girl, as pictured, is covered with satin shirred to the brim and crown. The wide collar of shirred velvet is finished at the base with a quilling of ribbon with bow and ends at the back, and a cluster of three little roses nestle in the ribbon quilling.

Among the trimmings which find most favor, because they are most appropriate for misses' hats, are pompons of wool or fur and flat "pinwheels" of ostrich flues. These appear on Blue Devil tams with fine effect. For older misses, those nearing the debutante class, there is greater variety than in hats for younger girls. Hatters' plush, metallic and metal brocade facings on upturned brims, and brilliant colors in shapes toned down by dark ribbon trims, are outstanding features in styles for the "subdeb."

New Fabrics Make Their Debut

