

Big Hogs from Little Piggies Grow!

By Albert T. Reid



CEDAR SWAMP

by Michael J. Phillips

Illustrations by Henry Jay Lee

THE LEADING CHARACTERS

EDISON FORBES, a young resident of Scottsdale, goes on a little joy ride with another young fellow. Some liquor is consumed. They are stopped suddenly by the sight of a booze truck driven by SCOTTS LIBBEY, a worthless character, who has smashed his machine into another car, killing its lone occupant, a woman. Forbes' companion and Libbey quit the scene hurriedly, leaving the former alone to face a constable who reasons that Eddie, with the scent of whiskey about him, must be connected in some way, with the accident. Accordingly, Forbes is arrested.

CHAPTER V

"I'm Warden Courtney," announced the newcomer. "You're to go up to Lansing right away. The governor wants to see you." Edison looked at him uncomprehendingly. "The governor?" he stammered. "Me—why?" The warden smiled. "He'll tell you when you get there. If you hurry you can catch the next interurban limited. There's one due in 10 minutes." "But—" Edison looked about uncertainly. "No officer; you go alone." Still smiling the warden shook hands with him. "Good luck." The hand-clasp propelled Edison toward the door. "You know where the station is? All right; better step lively." He caught the car. He did not know what to think. In fact, the waves of emotion which had passed over him made clear thinking impossible. He dared not hope; but the car wheels clicked endlessly: "The governor, the governor, the governor—" and it seemed a song of hope.

When he reached Lansing he found that Governor Albright was expecting him. When he gave his name to the attendant in the executive suite, he was ushered at once into the private office. "Well, Forbes," granted the governor, as they shook hands, "how many kinds of a fool have you been making of yourself?"

"So you took a chance on prison to protect this fellow who was with you?" queried the governor when he had finished.

Eddie nodded. "But I don't know that I would have done it," he confessed frankly, "if I'd thought they'd convict. It didn't seem possible they could do that on the evidence."

"Anyway, you did," returned the

governor. "The world calls you a chump for that. But somehow, my boy, I'm for you. There's too much thinking of ourselves and too little thinking of the other fellow in the world today."

"I suppose you're surprised at my sending for you. Fact is Edison, we should know each other. Did you ever hear that your father was one of my best friends 40 years ago?"

"He mentioned you sometimes before he died, sir."

"Well, I brought you here on his account. When we were both youngsters we worked in the lumber woods together. It was he who gave me my start. He came into a little money the time I had a chance to buy a block of pine. He let me have it. In a couple of years I cleaned up a nice comfortable stake. There was no stopping me after that."

"Of course I paid him back long ago. But I've always had a warm spot in my heart for Joe Forbes. If it hadn't been for him, the chances are about fifty to one, I'd never been governor of Michigan."

"That's why I sent for you, Edison. I feel I owe his son something. I kept an eye on your case. I couldn't interfere until you'd had your trial. When I heard you'd been convicted I telephoned the warden to send you down. Boy, I've pardoned you."

"Pardoned me—pardoned?" gulped Edison.

"Yes, I read the evidence pretty closely. I came to the conclusion you were telling the truth. I was far enough away from Scottsdale not to be blinded by prejudice, and local issues. So you're a free man."

Edison sat motionless, bereft of the power of speech. "Of course the long-hairs will rant about my turning you loose," went on the governor, with a good-natured smile. "But I'm through with this term. I should worry what they say, when my conscience tells me I've done right. Now Edison—"

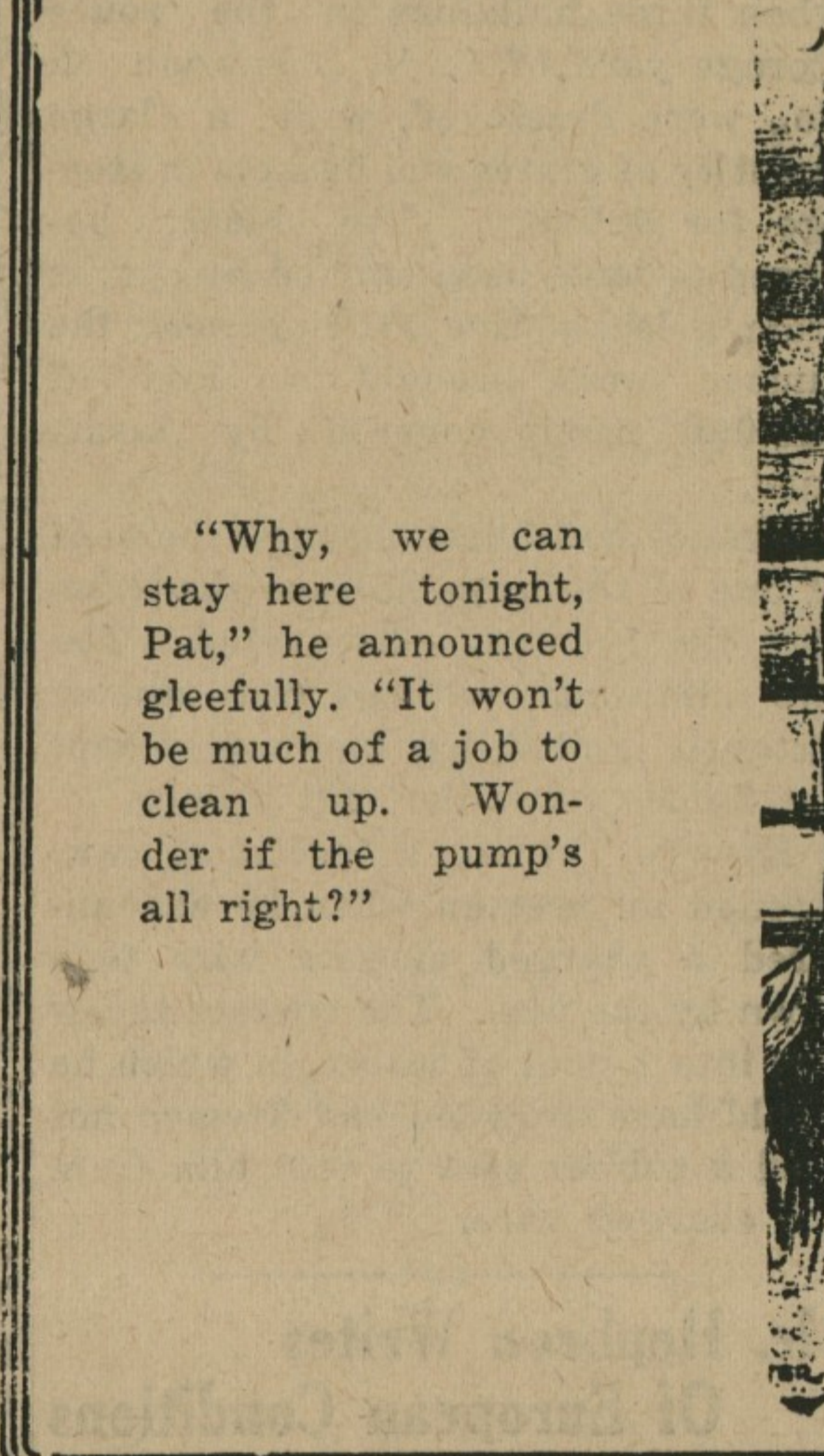
"Yes, sir."

"There's one thing I want you to promise me. You know, your father was a fine man and a clever man. He would have gone a long ways if it hadn't been for—"

"I know, Governor, liquor."

and now less than ever. I wish you'd promise me, Edison—not to quit drinking, because that may be beyond your strength, but to try to quit drinking."

"Oh, Governor, I promise to quit



"Why, we can stay here tonight, Pat," he announced gleefully. "It won't be much of a job to clean up. Wonder if the pump's all right?"

Edison. The governor clapped him on the shoulder. "All right, lad; that's fine. You see, it sort of puts us in the hole and makes the long-hairs right if you fall down on me. I'd like to turn the laugh against 'em. Now run along to that little wife of yours."

In the train-ride from the capital to Scottsdale Edison came as near to true happiness as at any time in his life. The fate which he had faced and so narrowly escaped had toned down the riotousness of his joy. The tornado of emotion which had carried him breathlessly to the depths of misery, through the uncertainty of the journey to the governor's office and through most of the interview that followed, had left him somewhat exhausted.

So he was in a condition of delightful languor, swathed in the ineffable thought that he was a free man—free to start over again, free to take up life again with Patsy Jane. Prison doors did not open blackly behind him. They had closed, closed forever.

"That's as near as I want to get" he said to himself, with a shudder. "That's what booze did for me. I'll never take another drink!" But even as he reiterated the pledge anxiously he was conscious of a lack, of a void at his nerve centres which a good stiff drink would plug up effectually.

CHAPTER VI A CHANGE OF SCENE

Scottsdale hummed like a swarm of angry bees over the governor's pardon. The community had never been for Albright. In all his campaigns it had voted for his opponents, professing church-goers who singled out the liquor law in their speeches as the one they would enforce most rigorously. This applied to Scottsdale which, furthermore, disapproved of Richard Albright because he was known as a "liberal."

Judge Parsons issued a public statement in which he declared that the governor's action was a "gross abuse of power" and made the Forbes case a "travesty of justice." To Edison and his wife the town had become impossible. He could have stayed on, found work of some kind, and forced it to revise its estimate. But the game was not worth the candle. He knew something of the inert vindictiveness toward the erring of which small communities are capable. It might be years before he could fight back to grudging position again. These would be years of loneliness and ostracism.

"It isn't worth it, Eddie," agreed Patsy Jane, soberly when, the first rapture of reunion over, they discussed the future. "Any boy that was born here and tries to be somebody is under a handicap. They can't admit he can possibly be as good as someone who comes from away. No; we'll go. But where?" "I've thought of that," replied Eddie eagerly. "Don't you remember dad had some cutover pine lands near Long Portage? Let's go up there. The land isn't much good, I suppose. But there's a house on the place; anyway there was three years ago when I went fishing on Portage creek."

"It's wonderful up there in the summer. We can make the land support us. If you care to go so far from civilization and rough it, Patsy Jane," he concluded, wistfully.

"Why, of course I would, Eddie," she returned promptly. "I'd love it! If the land won't support us, why there are opportunities there



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provisions and other supplies. It boasted a railroad division headquarters, a sawmill, and little else.

The log house, much to Eddie's surprise and satisfaction, was found to be in fairly good condition. The roof was whole. Apparently, deer-hunters had used the place the previous autumn as a camp. There was a rusty but servicable stove which he did not recall as having been there previously in the kitchen.

The kitchen was a lean-to adjoining the main building. The bigger structure was divided into a combination living-room and dining-room, and a bedroom considerably smaller. The living-room had chairs and a table, of a sort, and there were bunks nailed to the log walls on two sides.

"Why, we can stay here tonight, Pat," he announced gleefully. "It won't be much of a job to clean up. Wonder if the pump's all right?"

A few strokes of the handle of the iron "pitcher" pump near the back door brought up an abundance of clear, cold water. "We're sitting pretty," he declared. "Let's have lunch. I'm crazy to tear in and make this place into something."

In mid-afternoon, as they scrubbing and furnishing happily, they had a visitor. He had walked to the cabin over the rolling jackpine wastes. "Good day to you," he began. "I saw the smoke from your chimney. My name is Isiah Sealman. My land adjoins part of your quartersection on the west."

"How do you do?" greeted Eddie, taking the proffered hand. "I am Edison Forbes. This is my wife."

Sealman, somehow, the name fitted him admirably, Eddie thought. He was as sleek as a seal which just emerged from the water. He had smooth brown hair, worn long, but kept in excellent order. He had a full though sloping forehead, and a large, highbridged nose. The lower part of his face was covered by a beard of several shades lighter than the hair. He was also sleek and well kept. The man was large, inclined to stoutness, and with an air of being above the rough frontier clothing which he wore.

"Here for a summer outing, I suppose?" persuaded Sealman, as he looked about with large, shrewed blue eyes.

"Here for good," returned Eddie, smiling frankly. "I own this place, you know. We thought we'd give the north a try."

Sealman shot him a quick glance. "I had heard that people named Forbes owned it," he said, slowly. "But I thought you'd abandoned it. The taxes—"

"By Jove, that's so!" interrupted Eddie, frowning thoughtfully. "I've neglected the taxes for some time. I must go downtown tomorrow and see about them."

"You intend to farm, Mr. Forbes?"

"To tell the truth, I don't know," returned Eddie. "I haven't had time to look around and decide. I don't suppose much of this land is good. I haven't any implements or horses—"

Sealman nodded agreement. "The land isn't much good. It goes in streaks up here in the jackpine country. There's an occasional belt of good land and then a belt of white sand that won't raise ragweed. Yours except Portage, is mostly sand. It's all right to spend a vacation on, though it's pretty lonesome, even in summer. I'm afraid you'll be pulling up stakes again pretty soon."

Eddie had a good, sizable jaw. He thrust it forward unconsciously as he answered. "Oh, no, we won't. We've decided to locate in the southern part of the state. We haven't seen much of our land, but we like it's lonesome here—"

He looked doubtfully at Patsy Jane. "Neither do I," she supplemented, spiritedly. "I want to stay here. I love it. If the farm won't support us, my husband can find something to do, I'm sure. We don't need much."

Sealman considered without speaking for a time. He spoke slowly: "Well, if that's the way you feel about it I might be able to use you, Forbes. I'm raising a good deal of alfalfa lately. They're taking to feeding sheep and cattle on these barrens. Most of my land's under cultivation. I need a hand—"

He stopped. "I tell you: Come over after you've seen about your taxes and made up your mind fully whether you're going to stay."

(Continued Next Week)

"I haven't taken a woman out in five years," offered the prisoner as he broke another stone.

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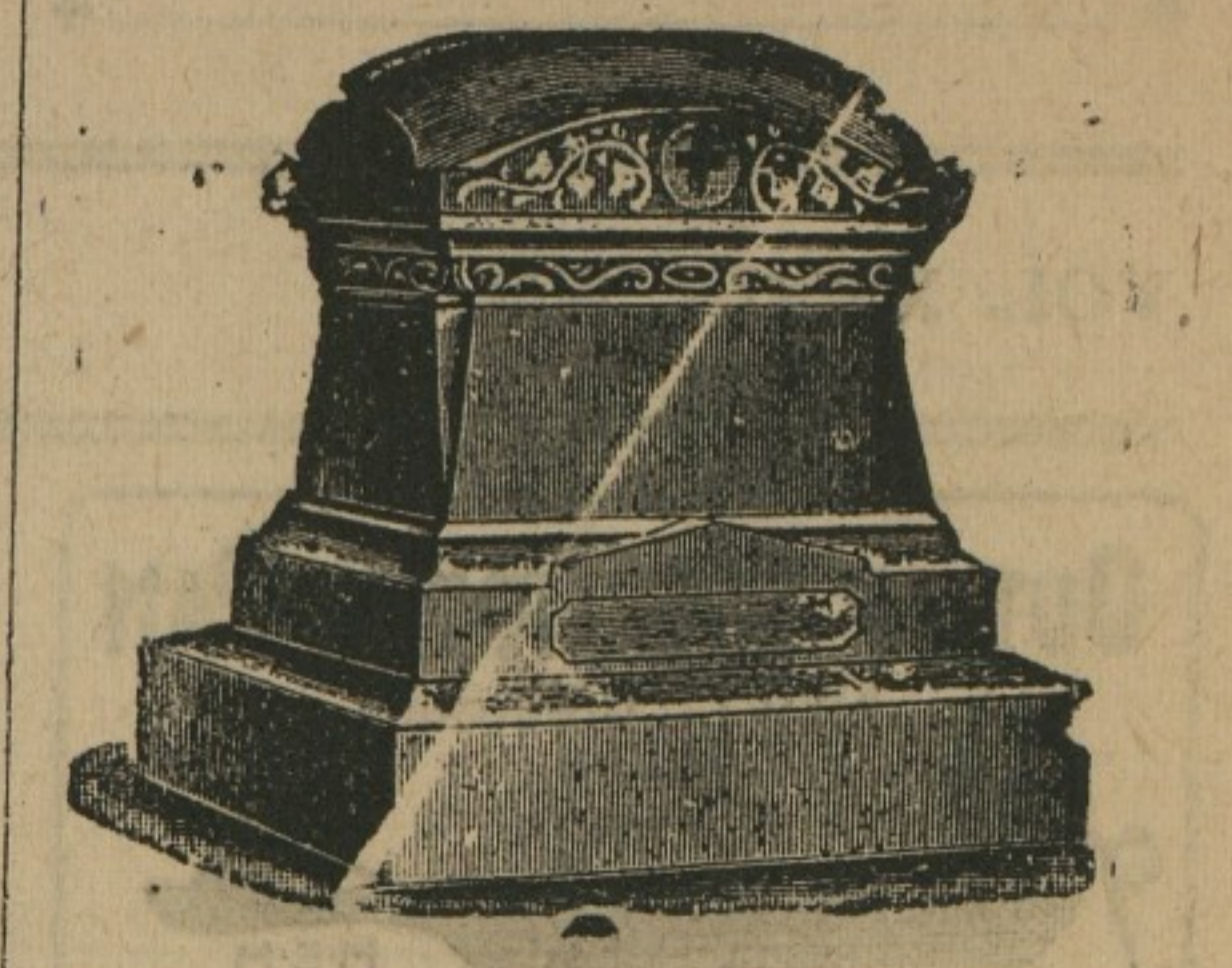
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