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NATURE has been called "the effect whose cause is God." Ulysses became an integral part of this effect and, in spite of the fact that he considered himself the world's top bumbler—often with plenty of reason, vehemently vouched for by those left behind in the debris—he proved himself indispensable to the Woodland World into which he characteristically stumbled. In the world of man, Ulysses stumbled and bumbled constantly, but in the world of the forest, where he surprisingly became winter caretaker and lone occupant of an isolated hunters' lodge, he attained dignity, wisdom and assurance as he employed every faculty of his senses and opened his heart to its mysteries and its beauty—and its animal residents. For Ulysses was not alone for long. During that winter in his beloved woods he acquired his amazing wild zoo. This included a pugilistic crippled antelope buck, an injured bird, a lost beagle, a rabbit saved from a weasel and a baleful bobcat! He also acquired a dangerous human enemy. All were a challenge to his young manhood—met with simple courage and unique glory.

The judges for the 1960 *Boys' Life—Dodd, Mead Writing Award* have unanimously agreed that, this year, the prize should not be given to a writer new in the field. Rather, it was decided that the honor should be awarded posthumously to Jim Kjelgaard who has won the affection and esteem of many boys over many years for his fine and understanding books. ULYSSES AND HIS WOODLAND ZOO, an entirely new book, is a true example of his buoyant, sensitive writing.

# Ulysses and His Woodland Zoo

BOOKS BY JIM KJELGAARD

Big Red  
Rebel Siege  
Forest Patrol  
Buckskin Brigade  
Chip, the Dam Builder  
Fire Hunter  
Irish Red  
Kalak of the Ice  
A Nose for Trouble  
Snow Dog  
The Story of Geronimo  
Stormy  
Cochise, Chief of Warriors  
The Spell of the White Sturgeon  
Trailing Trouble  
Wild Trek  
Outlaw Red  
The Lost Wagon  
Lion Hound  
The Coming of the Mormons  
The Explorations of Pere Marquette  
Cracker Barrel Trouble Shooter  
Trading Jeff and His Dog  
Desert Dog  
Haunt Fox  
The Oklahoma Land Run  
Double Challenge  
Swamp Cat  
The Land Is Bright  
Rescue Dog of the High Pass  
Hi Jolly!  
Wolf Brother  
Wildlife Cameraman  
Ulysses and His Woodland Zoo

WINNER OF BOYS' LIFE—  
DODD, MEAD  
WRITING AWARD

ULYSSES AND HIS  
WOODLAND ZOO

By Jim Kjelgaard

ILLUSTRATED BY KENDALL ROSSI

*New York* DODD, MEAD & COMPANY · 1960

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# Contents

1. Ulysses Grant Jones	<a href="#"><u>1</u></a>
2. Robert E. Lee	<a href="#"><u>18</u></a>
3. Sherman	<a href="#"><u>37</u></a>
4. Exodus	<a href="#"><u>51</u></a>
5. A Foul Deed	<a href="#"><u>64</u></a>
6. Lost	<a href="#"><u>79</u></a>
7. Stormbound	<a href="#"><u>93</u></a>
8. Orphans of the Storm	<a href="#"><u>107</u></a>
9. Hay Lift	<a href="#"><u>124</u></a>
10. Neighbors	<a href="#"><u>140</u></a>
11. The Second Villain	<a href="#"><u>153</u></a>
12. The First Villain	<a href="#"><u>167</u></a>
13. Finale	<a href="#"><u>180</u></a>



## Ulysses Grant Jones

Ulysses Grant Jones, who didn't think it possible for Mr. William Travers to get any madder, at the same time saw nothing to be gained by tempting fate. He closed the door of Travers' Department Store and Supermarket, wherein the owner was orating at supersonic speed, and, to some extent, muffled the most vehement sequence of opinions, all derogatory, that he'd ever heard expressed anywhere by anyone. But Ulysses—and at least half the population of Mesquite—heard very plainly Mr. Travers' concluding bellow.

"And don't ever come back!"

Ulysses sighed lugubriously and buttoned his thin coat around his chest. He was dismayed. To drop ten crates, each of which had contained twelve dozen perfectly saleable eggs, was cause enough for mortification. But to drop them in such a manner that not a single egg survived the downfall, was a feat that could have been successfully performed by almost nobody except Ulysses Grant Jones in person.

Ulysses sighed again and looked without enthusiasm at the cars that were traveling down Highway 63, into the desert or up it into the mountains. It was an ideal way to travel and some drivers would stop for a hitchhiker, especially if the hiker happened to be eighteen years old, clean and gifted with two appealing brown eyes and a shock of light brown hair. But Ulysses still shuddered when he recalled the driver who had picked him up back in Ohio, a few light years away.

He hadn't really been responsible for the crash, but he hadn't dared hitch a ride since. The jinx that rode his shoulders must not, if he could help it, be inflicted on any more innocent bystanders.

He made his way across the main street of Mesquite, Arizona—population 307 when everybody was home, which they usually weren't because anybody who could get out of Mesquite did so—and came to the railroad tracks. He was through in Mesquite almost as soon as he started. It was now

just short of noon, and Mr. Travers had hired him as boy of all work only this morning. Nor, as Ulysses had discovered from previous canvassing, had anyone else in the town needed anybody to do anything.

Ulysses trudged moodily up the tracks, reviewing his scarcely dazzling career as he stepped from wooden tie to wooden tie. His parents had died when he was nine months old, and the uncle who brought him up had never let him forget that he was the great-grandson of a hero who'd distinguished himself in the War between the States. It was a proud heritage, one that Ulysses must be worthy of. Ulysses did his best, and succeeded fairly well until he was five years old. Then things in general not only went wrong, but nothing ever went right.

On his fifth birthday, playing in a sandbox that a strong man couldn't have lifted, Ulysses still managed to upset it on himself and the four little guests his aunt had invited to the festivities. Thereafter he was dogged by the same jinx. When he tried roller skating, the wheels came off his skates. His wary aunt never let him help with housework; if he wasn't breaking furniture and vases, he was smashing dishes and windows. He was a good scholar, but the first night he invited the girl of his dreams to a dance, even though there was just one bottle of ink in the entire hall and that was high on a shelf, Ulysses managed to spill it on her dress.

Graduating from high school, he was given a job by his contractor uncle and applied himself assiduously to the various duties of an apprentice carpenter. The first day, he sawed roof rafters to a perfect pattern—but six inches short. The second, he roughed out kitchen cupboards nicely enough but put them in the living room. The third, transferred to the plumbing department, he connected the gas furnace to the water main and the water pipes to the gas line. The fourth, he and his uncle had a heart to heart talk. The uncle had a friend on the West Coast, he told Ulysses, and the friend was in the shipping business. Wouldn't Ulysses like to learn that instead of contracting?

Ulysses would. Equipped with ample funds, he saw no reason to pay for transportation when it would be far more adventurous to hitchhike. The first night out, a genial young chance acquaintance who was also hitchhiking west relieved him of all his money. Not daring to go back,

Ulysses could only go on and all the rest was almost too horrible to contemplate.

Though he'd held none of them for more than two weeks, he'd acquired, and been summarily fired from, jobs all the way from his home in Pennsylvania to Mesquite, Arizona. Now, with his total resources consisting of a dime, two nickels and three pennies, he was still headed west.

It occurred to him suddenly that he had forgotten to buy and mail his usual card in Mesquite. It was always a cheerful card and it always contained a variation of the same message; he was well, having a wonderful time and still hitchhiking. But somewhere up the line there'd be another town and he'd mail a card from there.

The highway, with its tempting stream of westbound cars and trucks, paralleled the railroad. Ulysses glanced enviously at it, then put Satan behind him and stayed on the tracks. Probably he could get a ride, but with the crash in Ohio still haunting him, he didn't dare. It was difficult to understand how even he could wreck a train.

On this line, however, trains were not so numerous that there was danger of the tender of one overrunning the caboose of another. Ulysses roused suddenly to the fact that he had walked for three hours without a single sign of anything that remotely resembled the trusty iron horse. At the same moment, he discovered that he had walked right out of the desert.

That had been cactus, scrub and boulders. This was grassland, with dark splashes of juniper and piñon pine. It was also, as Ulysses remembered afresh when a blast of cold wind snapped like an angry dog at his thin coat, November. Still the mountains towered in the distance, and, since he could neither stay here nor go back, it followed that he must cross them. Just then he heard a train.

It was coming out of the desert, from Mesquite, and on this stiff climb it was panting like an over-worked dog. Ulysses chose a level stretch of track and stepped behind a convenient piñon pine to wait; passengers who boarded without first buying tickets seldom gave brakemen and conductors reason to leap with joy. Presently, still laboring on an upgrade, the train came beside him.

Ulysses ran alongside a gondola, grabbed the ladder, swung up and climbed down into the empty car. It was not a luxurious environment, since the car had contained coal, and gritty coal dust whirled in a stifling cloud every time the car jerked, which it seemed to do every nine feet. But it was better than facing the cold wind, and, more to the point, it was out of sight of the train crew.

Pulling his coat a little tighter, Ulysses bent his head and beguiled the hours by thinking of a roaring fire-place flanked by a table whereon reposed a roast turkey, a gallon of mashed potatoes, two gallons of steaming coffee, four mince pies—and nobody except himself to partake. He rode thus for some hours, and in the furtive glances he allowed himself over the gondola's rim, he discovered that the country was still changing. Here there was little grass land and no piñon pine. The juniper forest was thick, with occasional yellow pines. Definitely, as they climbed higher, it became colder.

Some time after nightfall, the train stopped as though in need of rest. Ulysses unwound himself, thereby discovering that he was not really frozen solid, and climbed stiffly out of the gondola to make a stealthy way along the stalled train. He came to a boxcar whose door stood invitingly open and at once accepted the invitation.

The boxcar, besides being cleaner than the gondola, was considerably warmer. At one end was a heap of cartons which, though not the softest bed Ulysses had ever known, seemed like goosedown itself compared to the layer of gritty coal dust in the gondola. Ulysses snuggled down on them. By the time the train started again, he was fast asleep.

When he awoke it was morning, and he knew at once where he was because, considering the pattern his life had taken recently, he'd have been astonished not to awaken and peer from a freight car at some town he'd never before seen. Ulysses made his way to the open door and peeked out.

The train was obviously on a siding, and the frame depot that met Ulysses' questing gaze bore the legend CONIFER. Beneath, in smaller letters, was printed, 'Elev. 7150 ft.'

The town that lay beyond, evidently the town of Conifer, was not big. It was long, with most of the residences and business places sprawled out along a single street that was also the principal east-west highway. All about, tall pines rustled in the little breeze that was stirring and looked strangely black against the two inches of snow that lay on their boughs and also on the town of Conifer. Obviously it was, or had been, hunting season. Most of the cars that were parked in Conifer had frozen bucks strapped on their fenders and most of the houses that could be seen had deer either hanging on the porches or depending from tripods in the yard.

Ulysses, who'd observed many strange towns and cities, was not unduly impressed by his first glimpse of Conifer, or by anything else except the fact that he seemed to have eaten his last meal forty-seven days ago. Watching his chance, he leaped lightly from the boxcar. The instant his feet touched the snow, the train started to move.

For a moment Ulysses stood indecisively. Trains were few on this line and there was no telling when the next one would come along. But distances were great and how far was it to the next town? Regardless of the distance, Ulysses was pretty sure he'd never live to get there unless he got something to eat first. He made his way to the depot, tried his best to ignore a skinny clerk who looked remarkably like a squirrel and stared at him, made himself as presentable as circumstances would permit in the washroom, then set out to try his luck.

Since he had eyes for nothing except a restaurant and thoughts for nothing except food, his first impressions of the town were not razor-sharp. Conifer, or so it seemed, was populated exclusively by booted and jacketed hunters who were either just getting into cars or just getting out of them. They talked in loud voices, jostled each other and hooted insults at other booted and jacketed hunters on the opposite side of the street. But nobody became angry, and, even though he could think of little except something to eat, Ulysses felt dimly that he might learn to like this place.

He entered the Ski-Hi Cafe, Meals at All Hours, simply because that was the first one he came to. Like everything else in Conifer, it was crowded with hunters. But Ulysses spied an empty chair at the counter, sat down and picked up a menu.

He began at the top, with the special rancher's breakfast, and obviously the ranchers around Conifer, or at least such of them as ate this breakfast, were trenchermen of no small stature. It included fruit or fruit juice, coffee, cereal, steak, eggs, fried potatoes, toast, and it cost two dollars and sixty-five cents. Bacon and eggs were a dollar fifteen, and everything else on the list, with the exception of the final item, was soaringly outpriced. The single tidbit with which Ulysses might hope to allay his hunger pangs was a grilled hamburger sandwich that cost twenty-five cents.

"Yours?" the crisply-starched waitress asked, pausing in front of him.

Ulysses fingered the coins in his pocket. "Er—Can you give me a twenty-three-cent hamburger?" he asked.

"Hamburgers," the waitress said, "are twenty-five cents."

"I know. But—but I—" Ulysses stammered.

"I'll come back when you make up your mind," said the waitress and dashed off to serve somebody who could make up his mind.

Ulysses sat numbly on his chair, scarcely caring if the world came to an abrupt end because, obviously, any change would be a vast improvement. On the point of asking the waitress if he might work out the extra two cents, in time he remembered the disasters and near-disasters in which his previous gainful employment had inevitably culminated. Trouble was his shadow, and just at that moment he writhed at the very thought of bringing any more upon himself or making any for anyone else.

"Are you hungry, Bud?" someone asked.

Ulysses needed a moment to deduce that the question had been addressed to him, and then he turned to face three men sitting at a table intended for four. In order to accommodate an anticipated rush of hunters, extra tables had been crowded onto the floor and the three men sat almost at Ulysses' elbow. All three were dressed in hunting garb and needed shaves, but rough clothing and whiskers were not an adequate disguise for the successful business or professional men that these three were when they were not hunting. The one who'd addressed Ulysses, a middle-aged man with jet-black hair and wise brown eyes, repeated his question.

"Are you hungry, Bud?"

"Come to think of it," replied Ulysses, "I am."

The black-haired man nodded at the waitress. "Bring him the ranchers' breakfast." He turned back to Ulysses. "Sit down with us."

Ulysses sat down, unable to account for this manna but with no intention of questioning it. He ate the special ranchers' breakfast. Then he ate an order of ham and eggs. Then he remembered his manners.

"Gee, thanks!" he said, looking at the black-haired man. "Thanks, Mr.—"

"Corson," his benefactor said. "Pete Corson. This is my brother Joe and this is John Breedlaw."

Ulysses acknowledged the introductions and introduced himself, "I'm Ulysses Grant Jones."

"Where did you come from?" Pete Corson asked.

"Off the freight train," Ulysses answered honestly. "I have a job in San Diego, always supposing I can get there."

"What kind of a job?" Pete pressed.

"I don't know," Ulysses admitted. "It's with a friend of my uncle."

"And who," asked Pete, "is your uncle?"

Ten minutes and thirty-three questions later, Ulysses had provided his benefactors with the information that he was eighteen years old, unmarried, in no trouble with the law, a high-school graduate, of reasonably good character, and sundry additional statistics. Pete Corson left the table, entered the phone booth, incarcerated himself therein for some minutes . . . and returned.

"You're telling the truth," he advised Ulysses.

"Why—I—I—" Ulysses stammered. "Why sure I am."

"I know you are because I just talked with the Chief of Police in your home town," Pete stated. "He seems to be a nice chap. How'd you like a job right here?"

Ulysses hesitated. He'd left his uncle's house in mid-June and should have reported in San Diego a week later. It was now mid-November. Even if the job was still open, it was not unreasonable to suppose that his uncle's friend would be able to restrain his enthusiasm for employees who were slightly tardy in reporting for work.

"I'd consider it," Ulysses answered finally.

Pete Corson said, "You've got it."

Ulysses took a second thought. He'd met many people since leaving his uncle's house, and not all of them were the sort he'd like to have along if he were marooned on a desert island. But this man passed that test with flying colors. Why, though, with his genius for trouble, should he inflict himself on a person who'd been so very decent?

"I'd better not," he said.

"Why?" Pete Corson asked.

"Because—" Ulysses began with the time he upset the sandbox on his birthday guests and ended with the ten crates of eggs that had been so unceremoniously converted into omelette mix in Mr. Travers' store. He included everything in between. "I don't do it intentionally," he finished, "but I just can't seem to help myself. I'm a jinx."

"Did you ever wreck a place by just living in it?" Pete Corson asked.

"Not that I remember," Ulysses told him.

"Then the job's still open. A place to stay, all you can eat and seventy-five a month."

"For just living somewhere?" Ulysses asked incredulously.

"Well, living and watching. Keep porcupines and other varmints out, see that mice don't overrun it—and a few little things like that."

"Where is it?" Ulysses gasped.

"We'll show you," Pete Corson answered.

The four got into Pete Corson's station wagon, that was nearly as long as the box car Ulysses had ridden but somewhat more luxurious, and headed out of Conifer. Their way took them down a narrow and obviously little-traveled road that was flanked on both sides by brooding pines. There was just enough snow to lend exactly the right touch of enchantment, and Ulysses liked it better the farther they went. When eight deer leaped across the road, went a little way into the pines and halted to stare, he gasped in disbelief. Deer were something one found in parks.

"Why didn't you shoot?" he asked breathlessly.

"Deer season closes today," Pete Corson stated. "Anyhow, all three of us have our bucks."

A measured nineteen miles from Conifer, Pete Corson made a right-angle turn down a still narrower road whose entrance was marked by a rustic sign. Segments of pine branches, cleverly placed in a frame of larger branches, spelled out, "Arcadia Sportsmen's Club. Members only." A mile down that road, they came to the lodge.

"There it is," Pete Corson said.

Ulysses gasped, for there indeed it was, a massive log structure. The native-stone chimney at the far end would dwarf an ordinary dwelling. A mountain of wood, some fireplace chunks and some range-size pieces, neatly stacked, practically filled an open-faced shed that formed one of a cluster of outbuildings. Elk antlers, the first Ulysses had ever seen, hung over the door. The whole place suggested expensive good taste.

"There's all the food you can eat inside and all the wood you can burn outside," Pete Corson said. "The water's been shut off for the winter and the pipes drained, but there's a good well. The electricity's off, too—winter winds blow the wires down, but you'll find lamps."

"Seventy-five a month and everything else for just living here!" breathed Ulysses, and at the same time he was trying to stifle a most uncomfortable feeling that there was more to this than met the eye.

"For living here as winter caretaker," Pete Corson amended this. "By the way, club property extends a mile in any direction."

"And I'm caretaker for all of it?" Ulysses questioned.

"All of it," Pete Corson assured him.

"And no work to do?" Ulysses pursued.

"Taking proper care," Pete Corson replied, "is work."

"Now tell me the truth," Ulysses suggested. "Why do you really want someone here in winter?"

To this blunt and wholly unexpected query, Pete Corson had no immediate answer. But after a moment he delivered a thoroughly honest reply.

"To keep out pilferers," he said, "to watch for accidents, such as broken windows and such. To keep the place from being overrun with mice, and also because our insurance is voided unless we have someone here for twelve months out of the year."

"Oh," said Ulysses, who knew almost nothing about insurance but thought it sounded very businesslike. "Why didn't you hire someone you knew?"

Pete Corson remained honest. "Everyone we know knows this place," he confessed. "From the time the first heavy snow falls, which might be any day between now and mid-January, until the time it melts, which might be the first of April or the tenth of May, whoever may be here stays here. He can't even get into Conifer, and not many people care for that sort of isolation. If you take the job, you'll be snowbound. Do you still want it?"

"I still want it," Ulysses declared. "Now if you'll show me around. Then I'll be very grateful if you'll wait long enough for me to write a letter to my uncle. I want to tell him I have a new job."

## Robert E. Lee

The next morning, for several minutes after he woke up, Ulysses remained quite sure that he was still asleep and dreaming. Rather than the dingy roof of a boxcar or a sweep of open sky, his eyes beheld massive beams that supported a ceiling. His bed was luxuriously soft. The fact that he was neither too hot nor too cold, plus the fact that he awakened with only a normal appetite, completed the illusion that he must be enjoying a pleasant dream.

Then he knew, and for a short interval he lay and pondered the astonishing sequence of events that had brought him here. Though he was not lacking in outdoor experience, which included extensive fishing trips with his uncle and aunt, a fair amount of camping—and even a little hunting that had been singularly unproductive because, though on occasion he had fired a vast number of shots at something or other, he had never been able to hit anything—by no means had he ever considered himself a modern day Daniel Boone. It was as plausible to suppose that he was visiting the North Pole as it was to imagine himself as caretaker of a wilderness lodge.

Suddenly it occurred to him that, for all practical purposes, he might as well be at the North Pole. As far as he'd observed, there was not a single human habitation between Conifer and himself. Though Conifer was only twenty-one miles away, when the heavy snows came, according to Mr. Corson, it might as well be twenty-one million. It looked remarkably as though he would be very accustomed to talking with himself before the winter ended.

Still, the situation was not without its advantages. In spite of reams of lyrical prose that have been penned about the open road and the vagabond's life—Ulysses suspected that those who penned it must have endured untold mental anguish as they sat in their comfortable chairs near their groaning tables and tried to think of something to write—the fact remained that an innerspring mattress was softer than the ground. Also, there was much to be said for a full stomach and more for a secure job, even though the job must be secure largely because there was nobody around to fire him.

Finally, it would be impossible to find a place more ideally suited to having it out with his personal jinx and determining, once and for all, which was to emerge victorious. That much decided, Ulysses wondered where he went from here.

Pete Corson had escorted him all through the lodge, with its apparently numberless bedrooms, bathrooms and storage rooms. There was a whole closet full of assorted clothing, footwear and headwear, all suited to the country, from which Ulysses was free to choose at will. The gun cabinet contained every imaginable firearm, from compressed air pistols to rifles capable of dropping a bull elk in its tracks, and ample ammunition for all of it. Huge pantries were stocked with everything from common table salt to canned caviar and quail eggs. In the sheds at the rear were snowshoes, steel traps, skis, axes, toboggans and a bewildering assortment of other gear. Though the horses had already been moved to lower country, where snow did not lie so deep, there was even a shed full of baled hay.

After showing him about, and after satisfying himself that Ulysses knew how to build a fire, open cans, heat water, and was otherwise equipped for life in the wilds, Pete Corson made the sensible suggestion that he should not even try to live in the entire lodge. Of course he must use the kitchen. Other than that, why not move a bed in front of the living-room fireplace and do his sleeping there?

It was in this bed, near a room-sized fireplace wherein dying embers still snapped, that Ulysses awoke, at first to fears and doubts and then to a steadily-mounting sense of contentment. For the first time in his life he was entirely alone. Thus, for the first time in his life, he was free to cope with Ulysses Grant Jones with no advice or interference from the bleachers.

The day was not warm, as he discovered when he hopped out of bed and shrugged into long-handled underwear, wool pants, wool shirt, heavy wool socks and leather-topped rubber-bottomed pacs that, with Pete Corson's help, he had already taken from the closet. Neither was it cold. The windows were clear, rather than frost-glazed, and the thermometer that hung outside read just seven degrees below freezing. Ulysses entered the kitchen, a large room equipped with everything he'd ever heard of and much that he hadn't. However, Pete Corson had also simplified that.

The great electric stove over which a white-aproned chef presided when the lodge was filled with summer guests, was cold and shrouded in a covering of transparent plastic. So were the huge refrigerators and everything else designed for mass production meals. But there was a small wood-burning range that kept the kitchen warm enough and the pantries were filled to overflowing.

Ulysses built a fire, and such was his newfound sense of well-being that it never even occurred to him to be astonished because the stovepipe didn't fall down on his head or the flames leap out at him. In fact, everything remained as normal as it might have been for anyone who wasn't jinxed. The fire going, Ulysses filled a teakettle, set it over a hot lid and went about preparing his breakfast.

He smacked his lips in anticipation of the repast he had planned, but since his previous culinary experience had been restricted to making toast, boiling water and using a pointed stick to hold various edibles over an open fire until they were sufficiently incinerated, he dumped a pound of coffee in the coffeepot and added three pints of water. The flapjacks that he set hopefully out to mix would have made an ideal substitute for glue. By the time he conceded that he had a bit to learn about making flapjacks, the bacon that he had laid in a skillet was burned to a crisp and the coffeepot had come to a merry boil.

Nothing daunted, Ulysses opened a whole canned chicken, dumped it among the blackened embers of his bacon and wondered how he could be sure when it was done. He was not even slightly discouraged. There was a whole winter during which he might teach himself how to cook and who in their right mind turned up a scornful nose at fried chicken? When the chicken appeared to be reasonably crisp in all quarters, Ulysses lifted it onto a plate and poured a cup of coffee so thick that he all but had to scoop it out of the pot with a spoon. He was happily devoting himself to this pleasing repast when there came a knock at the door.

Ulysses' first thought was that Pete Corson had returned for something or other. He dropped the drumstick he was chewing, wiped his hands on a napkin and hurried to admit his employer. The man who stood before him—and almost at first glance Ulysses knew it was a man—was most

certainly not Pete Corson. Although he was dressed in hunting clothes and needed a shave, nothing whatever indicated that Ulysses' visitor was a successful businessman or a successful anything else, unless a decided talent for holding his coat together with twisted wire and his pants up with neither belt nor gallus might be considered success. He was tall, seemed taller because he was almost too thin to cast a shadow, sported sideburns that met beneath his chin and blinked watery blue eyes.

"Haowdy?" he said.

"Hello," Ulysses greeted the stranger cordially. "Won't you come in?"

"Wal naow," said the visitor, who had already started to come in as soon as the door opened, "I jest mought do that. I'm Sime Hanley an' I live over thataway." He waved a hand that took in approximately fourteen million acres.

"Oh," said Ulysses, who had thought he'd be alone but was pleased to learn he had a neighbor. "I'm Ulysses Grant Jones, the caretaker."

"Be ya naow?"

As though he was overwhelmed by such news, or was trying to dazzle Ulysses, or had something wrong with his eyes, Sime Hanley devoted himself to a forty-second spasm of rapid fire blinking.

"Have some breakfast?" Ulysses invited.

"I jest mought do that."

So saying, he took up the three-quarters of a chicken that remained on Ulysses' plate, began to tear it apart with his teeth and swallowed without visibly chewing first. Ulysses studied him curiously, but at the same time respectfully.

Steeped in the finest traditions of The Lone Ranger, Wyatt Earp, Wild Bill Hickok and other immortals, nobody had to tell Ulysses that, before anything else, the West was a place of true hospitality. The stranger at your door automatically becomes your brother, your son and your responsibility. What's yours must be his, and shame to you for even thinking otherwise. However, somebody should have told Ulysses that not every western

character—or eastern, southern, or northern—must necessarily have the strength of ten because his heart is pure.

The great open spaces are productive of various character types, and Sime Hanley was scarcely the ideal. Horrified by little except work of any description, the youthful Sime had left his native soil hereabouts and gone out in the world fired with ambition to let almost anybody else earn his living. Thereafter he pursued a varied career, including time served in various jails throughout the Southwest. Now in his early forties, he'd finally decided that an unfeeling world would have to get along without him in the best way it could and returned to his native mountains.

His visit to the lodge was not, as Ulysses assumed, inspired by a craving for the society of his fellow men. Sime knew perfectly well that the hunting season was over. He was also completely aware of the difficulties involved in hiring a caretaker. He'd come over this morning in hopes that the lodge would be deserted and he'd be able to steal something.

Like all mortals who see their fond hopes dashed, Sime had learned to weather cruel adversity. Unlike most, he had not learned to do so with any measure of grace. He threw the polished chicken bones—only the larger ones for, evidently, he'd swallowed the smaller—on his host's plate and stared moodily out the window. Ulysses sought to make conversation.

"Do you own a ranch?" he asked.

"Nah."

"A farm?"

"Nah."

"Do you work for the Forest Service?"

"Nah."

"Are you a trapper or guide?"

"Nah."

"What do you do?"

"Ah, shet ep!"

Delivering himself of this, and without another word or backward glance, Sime rose and stamped out the door. Ulysses, who didn't know that his guest was really in high dudgeon because he hadn't been able to steal anything, was properly abashed. He'd suddenly remembered that it is no part of the code of the great untrammelled West to ask personal questions, and he was appalled by his own effrontery. Determining never to repeat such an awful mistake, he hoped he'd meet Sime again.

He would, but it was just as well that there was no available crystal ball wherein he might examine the future and visualize the circumstances of their next meeting! Ulysses was sure only that his own unintentional rudeness had spoiled his appetite. He gathered up the dishes and pensively washed them in hot water from the teakettle. Then his inspiring heritage came to his aid.

His great-grandfather, as Ulysses had been told several dozen times, had singlehandedly stormed a hill bristling with Confederate soldiers and saved the great General Grant himself from annihilation. There was another version, one usually told by other than blood relatives of the Jones family, that Great-grandfather had never stormed anything except a hen house in Georgia and had been driven from that by a wrathful fourteen-year-old girl, but Ulysses had never heard that one. All he knew was that he must carry on, rise above everything, including his own mistakes, and never show the white feather.

Fired with this noble resolution, he donned a wool jacket, pulled a wool cap over his ears and fared forth. It never once occurred to him that nobody expected him to do anything except live at the lodge and cope with any emergencies that might arise. Ulysses, hired as caretaker, considered that his responsibilities began at the lodge and extended for one mile in any direction from it. Pete Corson himself had said that the club owned that much land.

He hadn't the least idea of where to start. Indeed, for the first few minutes after he went outside, he hadn't much idea of anything except that this was wholly delightful. The brisk air had a tang and depth such as he had never before known; now he understood what poets meant when they spoke of air like wine. But there was a lot of air blowing over a lot of land, and a glance

told Ulysses that it was impossible to inspect all of it at the same time. He'd have to take it little by little, and since he'd been brought in from the south, he decided to go straight north.

There was no difficulty in choosing the proper direction. On top of the lodge was a weather vane with the four points of the compass supported upon it in ten-inch-high metal letters. His heart light and his spirit of adventure soaring, Ulysses plunged into the forest primeval.

Presently he saw a fowl, then another, then six more, and halted to wonder why anyone in their right mind would even think of starting a poultry farm in this isolated spot. The creatures were turkeys, and of this Ulysses had no doubt because every Thanksgiving he and his uncle had driven to a nearby turkey farm to choose a proper fowl for the festive board. Then, becoming aware of his presence, the turkeys melted into the adjacent forest and Ulysses' heart gave a mighty leap as he realized the significance of what he'd just seen.

These were wild turkeys, lineal descendants, or so Ulysses hoped, of the birds Pocahontas had shot with her bow and arrow and carried over her shoulder to Captain John Smith. Anyhow, Ulysses thought that was the way it had been; history had never been his strong point. It didn't really matter, though. If he needed it, he now had proof positive that he was indeed in the wilderness.

Next he saw three deer, then five more, and tracks were everywhere. Ulysses couldn't be sure about any except the deer and turkey tracks, but he tried to identify the rest. There was one that resembled a cat's track, although it was a bigger cat than he had ever seen. Others were like the tracks of a small dog, while still others might have been left by big dogs. There were faint tracings where mice had scampered over the snow and huge pawprints that proved jack rabbits had passed by here.

Ulysses wandered happily onward, feeling as though he had accidentally stumbled into a huge, fascinating and unfenced zoo. He hadn't even thought of bringing a gun. Although Pete Corson had assured him that he might legally hunt varmints, the boy was not certain as to the difference between a varmint and anything else. Even if he had been sure, he wouldn't have

wanted to kill. He was a caretaker. Interpreting that term in its broadest aspects, which was the only way Ulysses knew how to translate it, his new job meant taking care of everything, from the least to the most.

Ten minutes later, he took one of the least beneath his sheltering wing. He saw it from a distance, a flutter of feathers trailing some bittersweet, and advanced to find a little bird with one foot entangled in the vine. Actually, it was a fox sparrow that, having summered in these cool heights and started on its way to wintering grounds, had come to grief when it alighted on the vine. Ulysses, who for lack of a better name called it a dickey bird, knew only that it needed help. He closed his left hand gently about it, loosened the imprisoned foot with his right and debated.

The dickey bird, whose heart pounded a trip-hammer beat at first, presently calmed and quieted. Obviously, it was not seriously or permanently injured, but it should rest before being liberated to go on its way. Should Ulysses interrupt his exploration and return at once to the lodge? Or might he go on?

Since the dickey bird seemed to be resting as comfortably in his hand as it would anywhere else, he decided to go on. An hour later, he mounted a knoll and, from its crest, looked down on a clearing and across at mountains that rose in the distance. Both caught his interested attention, the mountains because they were there and the clearing because there were wild animals in it. Ulysses chose to study the mountains first.

Remembering that the sign on the depot declared that the town of Conifer was 7150 feet above sea level, Ulysses was pretty sure that the lodge was at least as far up in the air. But the mountains, that were forested all the way to the summit and upon which there seemed to be a considerable depth of snow, rose at least another 4000 feet. Earmarking them for future investigation, Ulysses turned his attention to the animals and the clearing in which they fed.

The rectangular clearing, or park, would have been a good-sized farm in some areas but it was little more than a speck in the forest here. There were nine of the tan and white animals, and, although they were obviously all the same species, they varied from the size of a big dog to that of a big goat.

The smaller ones, of which there were five, were evidently the young. The biggest carried impressive antlers that rose from his forehead and ended in a Y, and clearly he was accustomed to throwing his weight about. When he wanted a bit of browsing space that was already occupied by two of his smaller companions, he merely butted them aside and took it.

Ulysses decided immediately that the big whatever-it-might-be was a potential antagonist. He had a feeling that, sooner or later, he would either have to meet it in battle or bring it into his camp—and that either course would be difficult. The spirit of the valiant ancestor whose deeds lived among his blood descendants surged powerfully within him.

"I'll call you Robert E. Lee," he declared to himself.

The dickey bird in his warm hand adjusted itself to a more comfortable position and chirped plaintively. Robert E. Lee launched a vicious attack on the smallest of his companions, and Ulysses turned thoughtfully homeward. Due entirely to the fact that his own tracks were plain in the snow, and all he had to do was follow them, instead of getting hopelessly lost, he went straight to the lodge.

The now happy dickey bird demanded his primary attention. Ulysses quartered the rescued traveler in a wicker waste basket, supplied him with a saucer of water and some crumbled cracker crumbs, kept him from flying out by covering the waste basket with a newspaper and turned his attention to the well-filled bookshelves in the living room. Selecting a ponderous volume entitled *Big Game Animals of North America*, he sat down, began to turn the pages . . . and presently came to a picture of Robert E. Lee.

"Antelope," the caption read. "*Antilocapra americana*. Prongbuck, pronghorn, antelope." Ulysses learned further that it is the only hoofed animal with hollow horns that are branched or bifurcated, that it has no dew claws, etc. Finally, he discovered that it prefers barren, rolling country or naked plains and that it avoids forests and mountains.

When he closed the book, he was both puzzled and a bit more amiable toward Robert E. Lee and his pals, all of whom were obviously in a spot. Whoever wrote the book seemed to know what he was talking about, but by no stretch of Ulysses' imagination was the little clearing either barren,

rolling country or a naked plain. What foul stroke of fortune had brought Robert E. Lee and friends to such a place?

Ulysses could not know that he had just met an antelope, or a herd of them, that had cast tradition to the winds and chose to live in an unorthodox fashion. Born in the grass country through which Ulysses had passed on his way to Conifer, Robert E. Lee had started life as a proper antelope should. But he had swiftly learned that his speed was no match for a bullet's. Grazed by a shot from a trigger-happy game hog who was also hunting out of season, Robert E. Lee was two years old when he forsook the grasslands for the forest. At the proper time, he had sneaked back into the grass country and sweet-talked a beautiful young bride into sharing his exile. Now the little herd summered in the mountains that Ulysses had seen and wintered as far down as the snow drove them.

Throughout the years, Robert E. Lee had grown magnificent antlers, indeed, a record rack. He had also acquired experience and deepened his own wisdom. So adept had he become at hiding his family and himself that not even the poachers suspected their presence. Ulysses' were the first human eyes to behold Robert E. Lee since the poacher's bullet had convinced the big buck that he'd better go to the mountains for his health.

Unaware that he had just made a revolutionary discovery, Ulysses closed and replaced the book. He went about his personal chores, that seemed to grow less complex the more he did them. Even his supper was not a complete mess. Finally, Ulysses turned in to sleep the sleep of the just.

He did not know what time it was when he awakened, but only that it was the blackest part of the blackest night he could remember. A little wind moaned disconsolately about the eaves, as though looking for a place where it might enter. Ulysses waited tensely for a repetition of the noise that had disturbed his slumber.

It came, a ferocious snarl, followed by a vigorous scratching at the door. The boy, suddenly very cold rather than comfortably warm, shivered in his bed. Pete Corson had not said that there were man-eaters around, but neither had he expressly stated that there were not. Obviously, there was something at the door, and, considering the manner in which it snarled and

scratched, it was there with the sole intention of converting Ulysses Grant Jones into a nine-course dinner. Well, it must be faced.

The young caretaker slipped out of bed and made ready to sell his life as dearly as possible.

*Sherman*

Despite the two or three plus years that must elapse before most high-school girls would consider him an old man, Ulysses had jammed much excitement into his tender span of life. Few were the foreign skies that had not known a jet fighter with Ulysses Grant Jones at the controls, and the enemy planes he'd shot down in spirit were as numerous as whirling leaves in an autumn gale. He'd been an undercover man for the FBI, fearless right hand of various hard-fighting sheriffs, redoubtable hunter of big game, and, with courage unflinching, he had unhesitatingly filled a few dozen other roles where the least error meant death.

Dismally enough, the fact that he had done all this in imagination only meant that he had established no precedent that might be practically applied to his current dilemma. But he swiftly discovered several things that he should have done.

In an unfamiliar place wherein there was no functional electric light switch, it would have been handy indeed if he had either stuck a flashlight under his pillow or left one on the floor beside his bed. A second dazzling bolt of hindsight revealed that it would have been wise to leave some sort of weapon where he could reach out and grab it. These were his two major sins of omission, and, as there was no possibility of rectifying them at this fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour, he'd simply have to trust to his great-grandfather's inspiration and his own luck.

Since he'd never before faced a man-eater—and by this time he was convinced his nocturnal visitor could be no less—he was sure only that doing anything at all would be a considerable improvement over doing nothing. His first act was to stumble over a chair. Luckily enough, it was a padded and cushioned chair and Ulysses fell on it, so happily, rather than breaking any bones or otherwise suffering serious injury, he merely knocked himself dizzy when his head came in rather violent contact with the floor.

Recovering his senses, which required a few seconds, the boy's first thought was that Lady Luck in person might have taken him by the hand and guided his steps. He and the chair, falling together, made no inconsiderable noise, and Ulysses hoped that the racket would frighten his undesirable visitor. That hope was dashed almost at once.

Straining to hear, for a few seconds Ulysses noted only the moaning wind. Then, very distinct and certainly issuing from the throat of a famished animal, there came an excited whine. The youthful caretaker's heart threatened to spring from his mouth and both legs turned to jelly. The old jinx was not merely with him; it was working overtime. If whatever was seeking entrance had the faintest doubt about someone being in the lodge, after such a racket it need question no more. Nor did it. Its whine, in the apprehensive listener's opinion, was one of purest anticipation.

As calmly as circumstances permitted, Ulysses considered various courses of action. The most appealing—and on superficial consideration by far the most sensible—consisted of jumping back into bed and covering his head with a pillow. But, after a moment's deliberation, he saw the fallacy of such a plan.

The thing, whatever it might be, was determined to get in. When it realized the futility of trying to scratch a hole through the door, it would doubtless try a window, and no window glass would cause even a slight delay. As soon as it entered the lodge, its prey would be at its mercy.

Even if it became discouraged and went away, out of sight by no means implied out of mind. If Ulysses did not meet this peril now, when opportunity was scratching, he risked an ambush any time he ventured from the lodge. Finally, if he were confronted with such a dilemma, Great-grandfather Jones would utter just one word—"Forward!"

However, it was neither wise nor necessary to advance with undignified haste. Having just been reminded in a somewhat drastic fashion that he did not yet know enough about the lodge to find his way about it in the dark, Ulysses failed to recognize the advantage in falling over anything else. Also, though there'd certainly be a flashlight under his pillow tomorrow night, there wasn't even a match in his pants pocket tonight. The lodge's

entire supply of matches was stored in empty coffee tins and kept in a pantry with the rest of the canned goods.

Ulysses had remembered to put a few in his pocket when he went exploring, but he'd carefully replaced them as soon as he returned. Somewhere he had heard that mice gnaw match heads and, in so doing, ignite them, which in turn would naturally ignite the lodge. He wasn't sure if that was true, but there must be some good reason for keeping matches in tins, and, until he knew what to do, he was safe enough to stick to what was being done.

At least, he was safe enough in daylight. Tonight, when it was questionable whether he could have seen a white pillowcase six inches in front of his eyes, a single flaring match would have revealed both the obstacles in his path and the exact location of the gun cabinet. His fingers itched for a firearm, but the gun cabinet had glass doors. If he stumbled and put his hands through them, the chances were excellent that not all his fingers would itch hereafter for the simple reason that he'd be minus a few of them.

There was, however, a practical solution to one serious problem. If he was already down, he could hardly fall. Dropping to hands and knees, pausing at judicious intervals to extend an exploring arm and discover if he was on the verge of bumping into anything, eventually Ulysses found the kitchen door and crawled through it. He also found—he'd spent more time in the kitchen than any other room—that his mobility was gratifyingly expanded.

Sufficiently familiar with the kitchen arrangement so that he could make his way about there, even in darkness, a suddenly-inspired Ulysses rose and went directly to the wood box. He seized a piece of kindling, scarcely a recommended weapon for coping with a man-eater but certainly better than meeting it with bare hands. The most enthusiastic wolf or bear would surely find its ardor slightly dampened if a supposedly helpless human victim clunked it across the nose or between the eyes with a club.

The piece of wood rousing no small degree of optimism as to his prospects for the immediate future, Ulysses considered various ways for joining the battle. While thus absorbed, he accidentally bumped his weapon against the stove and immediately provoked a noise that might have terrified a ghost.

The beast was at the kitchen door now. Heard from a snug bed, it had been bloodcurdling enough. But hearing it from the bed, it had still been almost comfortably distant. Heard close up, its wail blended the shriek of a demon, the sob of a fallen angel and the hunger howl of a werewolf.

Ulysses conquered another near-overpowering urge to fly back to bed and start all over again. The hundred or so miles that suddenly seemed to yawn between that haven and himself loomed more formidably than the master plan for conquering this peril he thought he might work out if only he could think calmly. Nor was he certain, considering the way his feet wanted to fly, that he could again navigate that distance at a circumspect pace. All things considered—and he considered all—there was not a great deal of choice between being eaten alive and falling over something and breaking his neck.

He'd be equally dead either way, but, although he could call to mind 714 good reasons why he'd better have a perfect plan of combat before he opened the door, he knew he'd never open it at all unless he did so soon. Ulysses took a firmer grip on his club and went forward.

Far from having a perfect plan, he hadn't even a good one. However, since the thing would never dare come to his door unless it had physical stature to back its threat, it stood to reason that Ulysses must connect somewhere if he simply opened the door and swung. He proceeded to do so.

The cold night air greeted him when he flung the door open. Nothing else did, nor did his club strike anything more solid than air when he swung with all his strength and narrowly missed smashing his own kneecap. He blinked his astonishment, but, at the same time, he was not entirely able to control his fright. During the day, he certainly did not believe in ghosts. In this lonely place, on a night black as the inside of a charred barrel, it was possible to believe in anything. Still, he saw nothing at all.

Feeling a bit sheepish, but still more than a bit frightened, Ulysses closed the door and stood safely within the kitchen's four walls. The club hanging loose in his hand, he wondered dejectedly why such things must always happen to him and, apparently, to nobody else.

Having long ago conceded that he was not a gifted youngster, for the first time he wondered seriously if he was perhaps an idiotic one. He'd heard every snarl, growl, wail and scratch so plainly that they were still imprinted on his mind. Apparently, they'd never existed anywhere else.

Then, all at the same time, he gasped, shivered, moaned . . . and dropped his club to stand in horrified silence. He heard very clearly the scraping of paws on the floor, and, although he remained too fear-paralyzed to move, he knew instantly what had happened.

The fiendishly clever thing had somehow managed to slip past him when he opened the door. Now it was stalking. In a second it would leap. Determining that under no circumstances would he go down screaming, Ulysses felt razor-sharp fangs at his throat.

He needed a full two seconds to decide that there was nothing at his throat. It was at his knee, and, if razor-sharp fangs were involved, they had not as yet been brought into active use. Feeling his way with an extended arm, Ulysses stooped.

His fingers encountered a smallish head to which was fastened a pair of dangling ears. The owner of same, as he proved a second later, possessed also a warm, wet tongue with which he began to lick Ulysses' fingers. The situation became less tense.

Man-eaters resorted to violence in various forms, with some using fangs to kill their meal and others trusting to talons, but even Ulysses' imagination could not conceive of one licking a hapless victim to death. The boy stepped forward, opened the door of that pantry which was devoted to canned goods, groped for and uncapped a can of matches, withdrew a handful and struck one.

The flickering light revealed a little brown, black and white dog, a beagle, that sat on the floor and wagged an appeasing tail, the while it regarded this rescuing human with imploring eyes. Ulysses lighted a lamp and turned to make sure that he had really seen what his mind told him couldn't possibly be here.

It was. The little dog, some thirteen inches high at the shoulder, turned to face him but remained seated while continuing to declare his pacific intentions with wagging tail and melting brown eyes. Obviously, he was in great need of a friend.

He was in at least equal need of something to eat. His paunch, that should have been plumply rounded, was so pitifully gaunt that Ulysses might have encircled it with thumb and forefinger. Slatted ribs showed like bowed sticks, and even the little dog's tail was thinner than any beagle's has a right to be.

Ulysses, who did not understand why this starved waif had come to his door, had no difficulty whatever in understanding hunger. He returned to the pantry, got a can of meat balls, opened it and emptied the contents into a bowl. Determined to be polite, but finding some difficulty in observing the rules of courtesy and at the same time restraining hunger, the little dog licked his chops.

He did not come to the feast until Ulysses invited him, and then he walked with a pronounced limp. Taking a second to sigh ecstatically over the glorious aroma of genuine meat balls, the little dog fell to.

Ulysses knelt beside him, gently raised a front paw—and quickly let go when his guest winced. The pad, that should have been firm and hard, was so worn that traces of blood showed. Obviously, aside from the fact that he had been missing most of his meals, the little dog had had a hard journey.

"Sherman!" Ulysses said, suddenly thinking of the Union general who had taken more than an idle stroll through Georgia. "You're Sherman!"

As though acknowledging and accepting the name, Sherman stopped eating long enough to look soulfully at his benefactor and wag his tail. Ulysses speculated about his new dog, for apparently it was his. Sherman wore neither collar nor other identification, so, although Ulysses was willing to return him honorably to his rightful master, how was he to know whether Sherman was a native or a fugitive from some tourist's car? In short, did he properly belong in Connecticut, California or Kalamazoo?

While Sherman continued to eat, Ulysses continued to study this creature that couldn't have sounded like anything except a beagle by day. By night, when he came unannounced to one's door—and when one's imagination was set on a hair trigger anyhow—he sounded like whatever first leaped into the fancy. Ulysses wondered about Sherman's story, for indeed he must have one.

Indeed he did have. Not precisely native to these mountains, Sherman was Arizona-born. The erstwhile property of a dweller in one of the desert cities, Sherman's rightful owner was a man of firm ideas, most of which concerned hunting. Anyone who'd sink that low, he declared frequently, loudly and caustically, could go right ahead and hunt deer, elk, lions, or any other second-rate game. For real sport, he'd take rabbits. It was to help him take rabbits that he acquired Sherman.

Unfortunately, although rabbits abounded in the desert, so did cactus. Very few dogs could run in it, or even walk in it, without coming to grief. At the earliest opportunity, Sherman's master and Sherman set out for the mountains where the master proposed to indulge in his own version of real hunting.

Sherman, however, had ideas of his own—a fact totally unrecognized by his master. They went unheeded because it requires a discerning eye indeed to perceive the heart of a lion in the body of a beagle. At the proper time and place, Sherman was put down to hunt rabbits.

For the first two days of a proposed week's vacation, he did. Sherman's master collected a satisfying bag of cottontails, a couple of jack rabbits, and everybody except the rabbits had a fine time.

Sherman, happy enough to hunt rabbits, decided on the third day that he'd be even happier if he exercised his talents on nobler game. A bear that he jumped from a thicket seemed noble enough. Sherman flung himself in joyous pursuit.

He discovered speedily that there is more than a slight difference between a bear and a rabbit. Sooner or later, with Sherman urging him on, big bruin circled and came in sight of Sherman's master, who was ambushed with his trusty shotgun. The bear ran fast and straightaway.

Resting when he must and eating not at all, Sherman followed for two days and a night. Even then, he did not surrender. He liked this sort of hunting. But the bear was most uncooperative, so Sherman decided that it would be a good idea to return to his master.

However, the road back was a long one. Sherman finally arrived at the place where his master had camped, to find nothing but a cold fire and stale tire tracks. Now his master was not really at fault for this. Hearing Sherman tongue and arriving at the not illogical conclusion that he was on a rabbit's track, the master took a stance and prepared his usual ambush. After waiting a reasonable time, he waited an unreasonable one. He hung around two full days after that before sadly concluding that Sherman had met with some foul fate. Then he got in his car and departed citywards, where he arrived in due course and promptly bought another beagle.

Sherman waited three full days at the cold camp, hoping his master would return for him. Finally, deciding that it was a forlorn hope and nearly desperate with hunger, he set out to find his own way home.

That was ten days ago and seventy miles away as the crow flies. Passing near the lodge, Sherman made up his mind to stand on the time-honored prerogatives of exhausted travelers and ask asylum—which he had done in no uncertain terms—as Ulysses could vouch. Now he finished the last of the meat balls, licked the bowl clean and turned to tell his rescuer in every way a dog can that he offered full allegiance to a new master.

"Now that you've eaten," Ulysses said, "how about some salve for your paws?"

Sherman beamed happily and went to have his paws doctored. The rest of the night he slept on the foot of his master's bed.

## Exodus

There was something about mountain air, coupled with something about the fact that this was the first comfortable bed he'd known since leaving his uncle's house, that induced Ulysses to very sound slumber. He did not awaken until two hours after sunrise. Probably he'd have slept even longer, except that the imprisoned dickey bird, now rested and refreshed, was making considerable noise as it fluttered about in efforts to escape.

Once he was awake, however, Ulysses resorted to no wishful thinking, devious schemes, or cunning wiles that might gain for him a few additional moments of sleep and thus another brief respite from the cares that would doubtless beset his day. Such devices were only for those who find sleep more attractive than the boredom that usually attends them as they plod through their daily routine. Ulysses' current days, although certainly laden with more cares than had ever before afflicted him, were anything except boring.

By this time quite certain that he was not enjoying a beautiful dream whose loveliness would presently be shattered into atom-sized splinters by a kick in the ribs and an order to get up and get out, he awoke to a full awareness of his surroundings and all that had occurred in that environment. Therefore, he was not unduly surprised when Sherman crept from the foot of his bed to his pillow and enthusiastically started licking his face. Every detail attendant on Sherman's arrival was remembered with utmost clarity, and in that moment Ulysses decided that he would never again be unable to distinguish immediately between a man-eating wolf and a half-starved beagle.

Sherman, Heaven-sent to share his exile, was a friend. Ulysses put his arms around the little dog's neck and sighed ecstatically. No less ecstatic, Sherman echoed the sigh and settled down in the crook of his master's arm.

But a frown creased Ulysses' brow and a nagging little worry pierced his veil of happiness. Where was the old jinx? Not that it would be missed, if indeed it was missing, but he doubted that it had taken itself elsewhere.

Perhaps, as he suspected, it had merely wearied of playing the same old tricks and was hovering in the background, the while it thought up something that would make all previous performances seem the antics of a playful kitten. On the other hand, maybe, Ulysses hoped, it was a sort of tenderfoot jinx that was too over-awed by present surroundings to strike more than feeble blows.

In any event, it was not how threatening—the moment beckoned. There was much to be done. First things must be first, and the dickey bird clamored for immediate attention. Ulysses hopped out of and Sherman jumped off the bed, and, while the boy clothed himself, the dog sat on the floor beside him.

Still painfully gaunt, the little beagle somehow did not seem as shockingly emaciated as he had last night. Apparently, he possessed an efficient inner works that utilized to the fullest any nourishment he took, and the can of meat balls had not been lacking in benign effect. Sherman had made at least a start toward rounding out and looking as a beagle should. However, the looks a beagle ought to have did not deceive Ulysses one particle. Outwardly, Sherman was—or would be as soon as he'd consumed enough food—a lovable, mild, soft-eyed junior edition of a long-legged fox hound. Depending on the personal inclinations of whoever owned Sherman, he was either a cuddlesome pet or a device for hunting rabbits.

But all that was only superficial. Ulysses, gifted with the necessary perception, saw beneath an appealing exterior to the stout heart that had inspired Sherman to attempt deeds for which nature has equipped no beagle. Without ever knowing that the dog had stopped chasing rabbits because he thought he was better suited for chasing bears, Ulysses would have understood at once if he had known.

The rabbit hunter who had brought Sherman to the hills would not. A beagle that could be interested in any game except rabbits, in that hunter's opinion, was a canine rebel. Fortunately, we are glad to report, the beagle he bought as soon as he reached his home in the city not only turned out to be a first-class rabbit hunter but wholeheartedly agreed with his master that rabbits are the only worthwhile game. He just wasn't ambitious, like Sherman, but he was happy and he made his master happy.

As for Ulysses and Sherman, they were delighted with each other from the start.

His paws laced, Sherman padding contentedly beside him, Ulysses entered the kitchen to find the dickey bird still fluttering about. A moment later, hooking claws through the wicker basket, it perched on the side and regarded its confiner with accusing eyes. When it began to chirp in a scolding manner, its host deduced that it was well enough to be indignant. Therefore, it was well enough to be set free.

As Sherman watched with vast interest, Ulysses slid back the magazine with which he had covered the wicker basket and reached in. His purpose was innocuous enough; he wished only to grasp his captive, carry it to the door, open same and let the prisoner fly away. But the dickey bird had ideas of his own.

As soon as there was a space wide enough to flit through, he flitted. Rising, he landed first on Ulysses' head and at once flew from there to the top of the refrigerator. Since that was the loftiest perch in the kitchen, he chose to stand his ground the while he defied both Ulysses and Sherman to come get him.

Sherman, who'd never felt the faintest urge to go get a dickey bird, barked three times and wagged an approving tail. Ulysses, who would have accepted the dickey bird's challenge if it was practical to do so, faced frustration. He did not fear to cope with a dickey bird, but if he tried to grasp it, his impatient guest would almost certainly fly. In so doing, there was an excellent chance that he would dash himself against something or other and either go back to the wicker basket for an extended stay or pass forever from this mortal coil.

Since neither course was desirable, Ulysses sat down to think his way out of this one. Sherman, who appeared to be concentrating on the same situation, and who seemed to have a studious frown on his face, sat beside him. . . . Presently, Ulysses hit upon the happy plan of letting the door swing open.

He did so. As soon as the dickey bird spotted the wild blue yonder, he consigned himself to it. Flying out the door, he chirped once, circled twice

and, at all possible speed, winged toward that sunny southland which is the proper wintering place for all right-thinking dickey birds.

Ulysses closed the door, feeling as he did so that, in his new capacity as caretaker, he had already achieved a measure of success. Although it was true that, so far, he had taken care of nothing except the dickey bird and Sherman, but both had been sorely in need of somebody's care and Ulysses found himself reaping an unexpected bonus.

As he watched the dickey bird fly away, feeling reasonably certain that it would have died had he not been zealous in his caretaking, Ulysses' first thought was that he had served the dickey bird well. His second centered about the fact that he had served Pete Corson almost as well. His third, astonishingly enough, was that he had been of great service to himself.

It was a new feeling, one he had never before known, and possibly that was because he had always considered himself too humble to be served by anyone at all. But it was entirely true that bread cast on the waters did return. There was also a dawning suspicion that, whatever problems might arise, he would do very well indeed if he never hesitated to call on Ulysses Grant Jones for a solution.

Obviously, Mr. Jones possessed talents that Ulysses had never suspected. Even less did he suspect that, with decisions to be made and consequences faced, and nobody else around to do anything, he was just beginning to realize that Mr. Jones existed.

However, he really hadn't time for self-analysis, since there was much to be done, with problems to be faced. The next important problem concerned a proper diet for Sherman. It was not a question of quantity, since the pantry shelves contained enough tins and cans of assorted meat to last master and dog for the next two years, even if they ate nothing else. But, although he knew that dogs are carnivorous, Ulysses thought that Sherman would not attain the peak of physical perfection if he dined on canned meatballs and nothing else.

Although he'd always yearned for a dog of his own, he'd yearned in vain, since his aunt declared that all dogs are subject to rabies, fits, possibly even the bubonic plague, and never would permit one about the house.

Therefore, Ulysses had no idea of how to feed man's best friend. However, he was entirely willing to experiment. He opened a large can of carrots and deposited the contents in the beagle's saucer.

Sherman, who was either equally willing to experiment or still hungry enough to try anything, sailed into the offering with a verve that would have reflected credit on his illustrious namesake. He topped the meal off with half of the contents of a can of peaches that Ulysses opened for his own breakfast and promptly indicated, with a semaphoring tail, that he was prepared for the day and anything it might bring.

Ulysses, equally ready and even more eager, could not be unmindful of his duties. His caretaking obligations began with the lodge, and care started with cleanliness. He let Sherman out to start leading a dog's life while he cleaned up the dishes, kitchen and living room. Then, for it had occurred to him that wet wood can scarcely be expected to burn as cheerily as dry, he filled the kitchen wood box and carried in chunks for the fireplace.

Although his fresh tracks were very much in evidence, Sherman was not during his master's trips to the various woodpiles and back to the lodge. But something else was about. It was nothing upon which Ulysses could lay a finger, or see, or hear, but it was strongly sensed. It seemed to have some connection with the weather, that was warm enough to be almost mild. No breath of wind stirred and a great peace lay over the wilderness. Nevertheless, the boy felt a stirring anxiety and restlessness. The great peace somehow seemed a great trap.

Even though he thought caution was in order, Ulysses had no intention of being confined or restricted. A caretaker who feared to leave four sheltering walls would be a feckless caretaker indeed. So, in spite of the fact that he seemed to be venturing into something that was fully as real and far more dangerous than the supposed man-eater that had come scratching at his door, venture he must. Ulysses put a handful of matches in his pocket and left by the kitchen door.

There was still no sign of Sherman, a fact that caused Ulysses little concern, since he was sure that his friend would not desert him. But there was ample evidence of other things.

Without finding it necessary to orient himself by the weather vane, Ulysses looked north, toward the meadow in which he had seen Robert E. Lee and company. Directly before him, on a line with the lodge and the meadow, was a towering pine with a missing top and a trunk that terminated in a ragged rip. He recalled seeing the pine before, as well as other landmarks. Closing his eyes, he discovered that he was able to visualize very clearly the exact route to Robert E. Lee's meadow and back again.

It seemed a trifle, and certainly it was no cause for excitement. Deciding that he had better assure himself of an ample supply of dry wood seemed another trifle. It never crossed the boy's mind that, by anticipating and preparing for future problems and by keenly observing and remembering what he saw, he was educating himself for the life he was now leading.

Right now, he was too involved in making a decision to consider anything else. Having visited the little herd of antelope, he'd already been north. Since he wanted the most intimate acquaintance with all the property for which he was responsible, would it not be wise if he explored in a different direction this morning?

Definitely it would be. But Robert E. Lee interested him, and he was anxious for another look. It wouldn't take long to go and see how the antelope were faring. Besides, knolls rose to the east of their park. From the summit of any one of these, Ulysses hoped, he'd be able to spot landmarks that would enable him to return directly to the lodge. If not, he'd do as he had done yesterday and simply backtrack himself.

Ulysses was on the point of starting when he heard Sherman bark. He looked toward the sound, that originated in a copse of young pine, about three hundred yards east of the shed in which the baled hay was stored. Sherman barked a second time, an anxious sort of sound that demanded investigation. Thereafter, he maintained a steady barking that marked his exact position. Ulysses set out to investigate.

A short time later, he came upon Sherman, who was sitting on his haunches in the very center of the copse. Three feet away, having already run as far as it could and obviously too exhausted to move another inch, a panting cottontail lay in the snow. Sherman, who had indeed been barking in order

to guide Ulysses truly, quieted as soon as his master appeared and turned happily to him.

Ulysses stared wonderingly at the scene, completely at a loss as to how such a thing had come about. If he'd been able to speak, Sherman could have told him.

Last night, the rabbit had been peacefully nibbling in its own patch of brush when a weasel appeared on the scene. The rabbit, a creature of excellent judgment, promptly went elsewhere. With utmost confidence in its own speed, it stopped as soon as it became short of breath. A few minutes later, the weasel came close again. No match for the rabbit's speed and knowing it, the creature knew also that no rabbit could hope to equal his endurance. All he had to do was stay on the same trail. He did, and every time he came on the cottontail, it ran a shorter distance. Finally, and inevitably, the rabbit could run no more and the happy weasel prepared to kill.

It was practically made when Sherman, nosing hopefully about, came and saw. Recognizing defeat when it barked in his face, the weasel conducted himself accordingly. The dog concentrated on the rabbit, but not in any pugnacious fashion because he was rarely pugnacious. Nor was killing at all a part of his plan. An artist in his own right, the beagle's art was hunting. Let the master kill if he wished, and, thinking that Ulysses might wish, Sherman proceeded to summon him.

Sherman looked on interestedly as Ulysses stooped to gather the exhausted cottontail in his arms. He paced contentedly beside his master as both returned to the lodge where, upon arrival, the rabbit was placed in a carton from which Ulysses unceremoniously dumped some assorted papers. A dish of uncooked oatmeal and one of water were placed where this latest patient in Ulysses' private hospital could reach it.

Sherman, whose tail thumped constantly against the floor, indicated his approval of the entire proceeding. Then he fell happily in beside Ulysses as the pair struck out toward the clearing where Robert E. Lee held forth.

Ulysses, who noticed much and was rapidly coaching himself to notice more, still had a vast distance to travel before he would be able correctly to interpret everything that took place. He did wonder at the scarcity of

individual animal tracks, and, when he came to a broad path in the snow, his wonder mounted. An entire herd of deer had beaten that path and all were traveling in the same direction. Before the boy reached the clearing favored by Robert E. Lee he crossed another such path, and then a trail where a half dozen elk had walked.

It did not escape Ulysses' observation that all these paths headed in the same direction, south and toward lower country. But beyond wondering whether wild animals emulated humans and might possibly be journeying to some sort of woodland convention, he attached no special significance to any part of what he saw.

Ulysses had sensed the trap, but, partly because he was human and more because he was the rankest of tenderfeet, he did not see that which was so clearly visible to all wild creatures. The deer, the elk, the wild turkeys, all understood that the first great storm of winter was about to strike, and they were fleeing before it came.

Ulysses, all unknowing, continued to walk in the other direction. He climbed the selfsame knoll from which he had spied on the antelope before and looked into the clearing. Robert E. Lee and his herd were still there.

But, as the boy presently noted, they were neither well nor happy.

## A Foul Deed

The dreadful conviction that all was less than well with Robert E. Lee and his family did not burst upon Ulysses like a bolt from the blue. By the time he gained a vantage point from which he could adequately scan the meadow, there was no blue worth noting. The sky had changed to ugly gray and a brisk wind made the trees shiver. Had the boy been less intent on snooping into the private affairs of Robert E. Lee, he might have noticed that the temperature had dropped several degrees.

However, although it was practically the only thing for which he had not assumed full responsibility, Ulysses had not yet appointed himself caretaker to the weather. Very definitely, he was the guardian of Robert E. Lee, and he became so interested in studying his ward that, probably, he'd have taken no more than passing notice if the sky had started to rain pink hoptoads.

When Ulysses' anxious eyes again discerned Robert E. Lee, the buck was lying down. There was no cause for agitation in that because it was not unreasonable to suppose that antelope would lie down if they were tired enough. The does and fawns were standing up, which again was not extraordinary, except that they seemed as nervous as a bank robber at a police convention.

As Ulysses intruded on the scene, the does and fawns were arranged in a semicircle about their reclining leader, and, to the last antelope, their eyes were fixed upon him. It was at once apparent, however, that they were not regarding him so intently because they could not get enough of his regal posture. In the first place, considering the rather slipshod manner in which he had chosen to lie, he was scarcely regal. In the second, since they lived with him all the time and could look at him as often as they pleased, the does and fawns must already have a pretty good idea of what he looked like. In the third, the scarcely worshipful actions of Robert E. Lee's followers said very plainly that they wished their lord and master would get up.

They were, Ulysses decided after due deliberation, not dissimilar to a large family of humans who are

spending a day at the beach. The sire, after being dunked in the surf, brushing sand from his eyes and fighting the good fight with large numbers of ants who covet the picnic lunch, has at length decided that enough is sufficient and settled down for a sorely-needed siesta. Now, even though it's past time to go home, he haughtily ignores the entreaties of his good wife, the petulance of his weary offspring and the urging of the aunts or sisters-in-law who might have been sharing the day. He'll move when he's ready and not one second before.

Only it wasn't quite like that, Ulysses told himself as the watching beasts switched nervous tails and stamped fretful hoofs. There was something more at stake than just getting home in time to hang wet bathing suits on the line and put the children to bed. When one of the does ventured too near Robert E. Lee, Ulysses saw that there was indeed much more involved.

The doe, as far as Ulysses could determine, did nothing except touch Robert E. Lee with the extended tip of her dainty muzzle. Immediately, it became apparent that he was very allergic to such familiarity.

He whirled to his feet and, at the same time, lunged sidewise. As he did so, he struck out with antlers that, had they connected, at the very least would have taught the presumptuous doe the folly of interfering with a buck's repose. They did not connect, though, not because the doe was so much more agile, but because Robert E. Lee was considerably less dexterous than he had been.

As he chased the doe—who hadn't the least difficulty keeping out of his way—across the clearing, Ulysses saw, to his complete horror, that Robert E. Lee was no longer capable of maintaining family discipline because he had only three functional legs upon which he might overtake any doe or fawn that merited castigation. The fourth leg, that normally supported Robert E. Lee's right rear, was drawn up beneath his body and at no time permitted to touch the ground.

Obviously, the big buck was seriously injured. How he'd ever come to such a sorry pass was beyond Ulysses' comprehension, but there was a logical, if

rather grim, explanation. Robert E. Lee was fully aware of most things on such portions of the earth as he could see. But he could not probe beneath the earth.

Going to drink from a water hole where he'd quenched his thirst fifty times at least, he hadn't the faintest reason to suspect an enemy. Nevertheless, a sinister foe indeed lay in ambush. Six feet below ground, a huge boulder that had been clinging precariously for some time, finally dropped into and effectively dammed the water hole's subterranean outlet. The backed-up water, seeking another outlet, undermined a surrounding shell of earth, and Robert E. Lee went through.

He struggled for three hours in ground frozen to rock-hard consistency before finally freeing himself, and the price he paid for freedom was a seriously injured and most painful right rear leg and haunch. He knew as well as every other wild creature that the storm was impending and he'd better get out of here while he could. Only he couldn't. The does and fawns, similarly aware of the approaching storm, had always been too dependent on Robert E. Lee's leadership even to think of striking off on their own initiative. They were nervous now because their leader couldn't lead. He couldn't even move without enduring agony.

But he could, as Ulysses did not fail to note when Robert E. Lee pursued the doe, still run at a considerably greater speed than any man could hope to attain. Therein lay a problem.

Since he was presently on club property, and since Ulysses was official caretaker, Robert E. Lee was by no means exempt from being taken care of. But how did one go about taking care of an antelope buck that he couldn't even catch and probably wouldn't be able to control if he could? In this dilemma, where the wisdom of a Solomon would have been sorely taxed, Ulysses could appeal only to a little beagle hound.

"What are we going to do, Sherman?" he queried.

Sherman, who did not consider antelope noble enough game for a beagle of his talents, summed up his opinions with a wagging tail and a whine, and by licking his master's hand. Ulysses sighed resignedly and looked again at the crippled Robert E. Lee. Then, with a flash of inspiration that approached

true genius, he thought once more of the great peace that had been so like a great trap.

A trap, of course, was the answer. Only it had to be the right sort of trap, one that would entice and contain Robert E. Lee without adding to his injuries. Since he'd never heard of such a trap, Ulysses knew that he must become both designer and builder. It would be no easy task, but Ulysses was not daunted by hard ones. However, because he could summon no immediate ideas, but could usually think while walking, it would be very well to walk.

Paced by the happy Sherman, who didn't care what direction he took as long as it was the direction his master was taking, Ulysses swung east toward the high knolls whose presence he had already marked and whose summits he planned to utilize as observation points for familiarizing himself with the surrounding terrain. However, since he was deeply involved in plans for taking care of Robert E. Lee, who'd probably present strenuous objections to being taken care of, observing anything at all was as far from his thoughts as the North Pole is from the South. He turned toward the knolls because chance alone led him in their direction.

He deduced as he walked along that a corral was scarcely the answer to his problem, for, even if he could build one, this was scarcely a practical undertaking, since he hadn't any wire. Moreover, it would require no inconsiderable time to erect it, and, because any such construction must necessarily be under the direct observation of Robert E. Lee himself, it was highly questionable whether he could be enticed into it. Or, if he were, he'd still have to be caught and bound or otherwise restricted before he'd submit to proper care.

Dismissing the idea of a corral, Ulysses speculated on the possibilities offered by various pens. A boxlike pen, just big enough to hold Robert E. Lee, and with a sliding door that Ulysses might trip with a rope after the buck was lured inside, would answer very nicely. However, there was still the problem of inducing him to enter, and Robert E. Lee did not seem a type to be easily induced.

He must find something natural, simple, fitting, something that just couldn't help working. Ulysses recalled a movie he'd seen; he had, in fact, sat through three showings and would happily have remained for seven more if an unfeeling usher had not invited him to leave. It was an adventure movie wherein a considerable part of the action concerned the live trapping of what accompanying publicity declared were untamed jungle beasts.

One untamed jungle beast, a choice morsel much coveted by the intrepid trapper, consisted of a baby elephant. The particular specimen desired was accompanied by a large and belligerent mother who'd attack anything at all on the turn of a tusk; he was further shielded by some antisocial herd bulls; and, just to add to the trapper's difficulties, a tribe of cannibalistic natives did not care to have him trapped. Eventually surmounting all obstacles, the trapper finally enticed his prize into a cunningly concealed pit, thereby so dazzling the native princess that he won her hand, too!

Ulysses was contemplating the virtues of cunningly concealed pits when he happened to look down the sloping side of a knoll he'd just climbed. At first, so determinedly did he continue to wrestle with the problem of proper care for Robert E. Lee, that the spectacle which greeted his eyes failed to register on his mind. Then it became a herd of running deer, of which there were forty-two by actual count. But there were so many white tails flashing and so many gray forms bounding that Ulysses thought there must be at least three hundred and forty-two!

They were traveling south, a direction highly favored just now by all wild creatures that had occasion to travel anywhere, and they'd been frightened from a walk to a run by Ulysses. For a few moments, so pleasing was the spectacle, the boy forgot Robert E. Lee and watched until the last white tail had disappeared in the pine forest.

On the point of renewing his mental struggle as to the best way to take care of the injured buck, Ulysses was immediately diverted by Sherman's bark. It came from the left, the direction from which the herd of deer had come, and immediately afterwards it was repeated.

Then it rang steadily, with a far different inflection from that Sherman had invoked when he found the exhausted cottontail. That time he'd called

urgently, asking Ulysses to come at once and do as he would. This time, he sang a happy song, a paean of triumph, a declaration of victory, and he sang it as loudly as his vocal chords would permit. Ulysses hurried toward him.

A second time, he found Sherman sitting beneath a tree. Upon the trunk of same, but not very far up, a huge and ferocious-appearing bobcat glared balefully down. The preying creature, following the herd of deer with high hopes that one would straggle, had hurt itself, or at least grown careless, so it had been detected on the wind by Sherman. Recognizing opportunity when he smelled it, the beagle had come close to the would-be slayer of deer before he had a chance to run and now had him at bay.

At least, Ulysses decided as he inspected the scene, Sherman had his adversary partly at bay. No more than six feet up, the bobcat was apparently pondering very seriously the advisability of jumping back down to make mincemeat of Sherman. If a clearly growing impulse to come down and fight got out of hand, Ulysses suspected that he also would, in very short order, become mincemeat.

Encountering another situation that called for heroic measures—and not feeling even slightly heroic—Ulysses gulped. He wanted to run, an idea with which both his legs were heartily in accord. But, once again, he forced his mind to control his body, although he could not help a fleeting notion that it must be a disordered mind.

Great-grandfather Jones, seeing a dear friend in such dire peril as Sherman faced, would not have run. Ulysses concentrated the full capacity of his mind on Great-grandfather Jones—even to the extent that he wished Great-grandfather were here to take over. Nevertheless, Ulysses went forward.

At that, to his great astonishment—and infinitely greater relief—the bobcat scampered the rest of the way up the tree and hid himself in the topmost branches. He hadn't been sure whether he wanted to flee or fight when the beagle was his only tangible opponent, but he hadn't the least difficulty in making up his mind to flee when the human being appeared. The one was a rather insignificant little dog, but the other was a man, and men, as the bobcat had learned in kindergarten, are considerably more lethal than even significant big dogs.

Unaware of that, and deducing only that a miracle had saved him from certain death, Ulysses decided to resort to his original plan and get out of here with all possible speed. The bobcat might think it wise to come back down the tree and miracles, like lightning, seldom strike twice in the same place.

Ulysses started away. Sherman, who had not only hunted but actually treed game noble enough to kindle a warm glow in any beagle's heart, did not. Ulysses went back.

Much as it grieved him to resort to force where Sherman was involved, he saw no alternative. Stooping, he gathered the dog up in his arms. Turning, he began to run at top speed, an act that was somewhat complicated by the beagle's burning desire to go back to the treed bobcat. His weight was no handicap, but his frantic wriggling would have discouraged a pack mule.

Ulysses held grimly on, no small feat! This was rendered somewhat larger when Sherman started nibbling at his arm. There was no viciousness involved and no harm meant or done. Sherman, who saw the chance of a lifetime falling behind with every step his master took ahead, merely wanted to get away.

When shortness of breath finally forced him to walk, Ulysses did not know how much distance he had put between the treed bobcat and himself. Although reasonably sure that it was not enough, he felt no hot breath down the back of his neck and, when he risked a hasty backward glance, he saw no fire-breathing creature bounding in pursuit.

Ulysses addressed himself to Sherman. "Were there many idiots among your ancestors?"

As though suddenly ashamed of himself, but actually deciding that they were now so far from the bobcat that it would hardly be worth his while to go back and bark some more, the beagle stopped struggling and went limp in his master's arms. He rolled abject eyes that would have melted a dragon's heart and drooped both ears. Ulysses put him down.

About to lecture Sherman again on the doubtful wisdom of involving both himself and his master in any arguments with bobcats, Ulysses was

diverted by a sudden, sharp report. It was in the distance, but how much distance or in what direction, he was unable to determine. Running from the treed bobcat, speed had been of prime importance. Now he found that he had run into, and was still in, a shallow gully that both muffled and distorted sound.

Since the report he'd heard seemed nothing to get excited about, Ulysses remained calm. It had sounded rather like a backfiring car, but, since there were no cars nearer than the town of Conifer, he decided that he had heard a breaking tree limb.

With his dog again padding contentedly beside him, Ulysses walked on. He had, he remembered, been trying to think of some way to take proper care of the injured Robert E. Lee and he must continue to ponder the same subject until he found a solution. But before he did anything else, he'd better climb out of this gully and get his bearings.

Gaining the crest of the opposite knoll, Ulysses peered into the distance and saw, not only the familiar broken pine that he had marked from the door, but the roof of the lodge itself. He started straight toward it.

Although he had been thinking about Robert E. Lee, it had been so disconcerting to face and then run from a treed bobcat that his thread of thought was broken. Try as he would, Ulysses could evoke no workable plan for taking care of Robert E. Lee.

He did not know exactly when Sherman again left his side, but Ulysses heard him whine. It was a winsome little sound, as though the beagle had chanced on something that at the same time both depressed and saddened him. Ulysses swung toward Sherman, and when he was near he halted in shocked disbelief.

The herd of deer that had run before him obviously had fled this way. And the sharp report had been neither a backfiring car nor a breaking limb, but a discharged rifle. The head and front quarters of a fat doe lay in a bloody pool before Ulysses' eyes, and she'd been killed so recently that misty little vapors curled up from still warm flesh.

In that moment, Ulysses knew that never before in his life had he been really angry. All the little flare-ups he'd mistaken for anger meant nothing compared with the fury that consumed him now. This was a crime of the foulest order.

Even if deer season were not already closed, the season on does had never been opened. Even if it had been and still was, so that the pitiful remnants in the snow represented a legally killed deer, it would still be atrocious. Whoever had killed the doe had taken only the choice hams, leaving all the rest to rot or for scavengers.

Ulysses, never doubting what he must do, set grimly out on the man tracks that led away from the murdered doe.

So intent was he and so grimly determined that justice would be done, he was more than mildly astonished when day turned suddenly to night. Halting, he made the additional discovery that it was not night at all. Snow, falling in huge, feathery, and seemingly harmless flakes, but falling so fast that already the poacher's tracks were hidden, merely shut out most light.

As he realized this, Ulysses also realized that he hadn't the slightest idea of where he was.

## Lost

Certain only that the perpetrator of a fiendish crime must be marked by a fiendish appearance, and that he would know the killer at first glance, Ulysses never even suspected that he already knew him. Sime Hanley, a provident individual, always stocked his cabin with venison as soon as freezing weather made it feasible to store a quantity of meat. Since he was too lazy to process an entire carcass, he seldom bothered to take anything except the hams.

This being the case, Ulysses could hardly understand that he was currently being pelted by the biggest stroke of luck that had befallen him in many a moon. If the snow hadn't covered them, he'd have stayed on the poacher's tracks. They'd have brought him to Sime's cabin where, under no imaginable circumstances, would he have been welcome. Now Sime might have tolerated him as long as he didn't make himself obnoxious, but, if the latter occurred, he'd shoot the pest. That would have been the end of this story because, when and if he overtook the killer, Ulysses had very firm intentions of making himself as obnoxious as possible.

Now, as he simultaneously faced both the storm and the fact that the poacher's tracks were hopelessly lost, at first Ulysses was somewhat more disappointed by the latter than disquieted by the former. Although he'd tried his level best to discharge a sacred duty, the fact that he'd failed most dismally effectively counterbalanced any E that he might have been inclined to award himself for effort.

Moreover, the assurance that he would not fail a second time uplifted his dejected spirits for a brief period only. Whatever comfort might have come from his determination to succeed the next time did not survive the scarcely solacing thought that, unless he found a refuge from the storm, there might not be a next time.

It soon became apparent that his chances of returning to the lodge were scarcely promising. Remembering a landmark, a pine stub that he'd passed

a moment ago and a hundred yards back, Ulysses turned to orient himself by it. It was impossible to do so.

Refusing to admit that his failure even to see the stub was a somewhat disturbing influence, the boy also refused to admit the raw facts that were revealed by his eyes. He told himself that he was in error, and that the pine stub was ten minutes and six hundred yards behind him. His courage, sadly in need of bolstering, would not have been effectively helped by an admission that visibility was already reduced to a maximum fifteen yards.

Ulysses assured himself that he was keeping cool, not entirely an exaggeration since, especially in the regions of the heart and spine, he felt somewhat colder than an iceberg at seventy degrees below zero. His eyes continued to sweep the horizon, or at least, such restricted portions of the horizon as remained visible, and he resolutely refrained from looking downward. If everything else failed, his salvation was at his feet. If he glanced down and backtracked himself, he must inevitably return to the lodge, he kept repeating.

With such minute particles of conviction as remained, he told himself that he did not seize upon that way because it was the easy one. If he wanted to be a woodsman, and he yearned to achieve that exalted state, he must learn to cope with storms. This storm, nicely in process and ready for coping with, was really a heaven-sent opportunity.

Even as he tried to make himself believe this, he could not help toying with the real reason why he did not start backtracking with no delay. The poacher's tracks had been plain beneath his angry eyes, and all of a sudden they were invisible. Once it started, the snow fell fast enough to obliterate a perfectly good trail in minutes. It logically followed that his own tracks were likewise wiped out, but he dared not look. If his eyes confirmed what his mind told him was the truth, his last hope would be gone. Then—

Ulysses was unable to suppress a shiver that had nothing to do with the cold. An omnivorous reader, he had eagerly pored over every book he'd been able to get his hands on, and he'd got his hands on everything from comic books to *Anna Karenina*. But in that interval immediately following full awareness that he was facing a serious situation indeed, the

only literature he was able to recall—and remember down to the least detail—was concerned exclusively with people who'd become lost in the wilds and succumbed to panic.

Ulysses closed his eyes and suffered every pang ever endured by every victim of any storm he had read about recently. . . . Presently, a little surprised because he was still able to do so, he opened his eyes. He saw the whirling snow, with visibility now reduced by another yard. It occurred to him that he was still alive where the characters in many of these adventure stories had succumbed because he had inadvertently skipped the most dangerous phase of a lost person's routine. He had not yet given way to panic, and, in the same thought, he determined that he would not.

Sherman, who apparently saw nothing to get excited about, reared to brace both front paws against his master's knee and gaze up at his face. Ulysses, who could not help looking down if he would deliver the caress for which the devoted beagle was asking, saw what he already knew was true. There was no possibility of backtracking himself for there were no longer any back-tracks.

Oddly enough, rather than precipitating panic, the revelation proved stabilizing. Now that his final hope of some foolproof way to reach the lodge no longer existed, Ulysses was free to come to grips with facts as they were. Although he was certainly lost, all else was not. Nor need it be.

Seeking inspiration in the example of Great-grandfather Jones, Ulysses found none. If he had been standing in Ulysses' paws, Great-grandfather might have been without fear, but the boy conceded without the least reservation that he was terrified. Strangely enough, that also helped. Rather than looking to his great-grandfather to extricate him from this mess, Ulysses had turned to the proper source of help, which was none other than Ulysses Grant Jones. In addition, after ridding himself of the specter of his "heroic" great-grandfather, Ulysses found it easier to rid his mind of other rubbish.

He closed his eyes again, not in anticipation of immediate death, but in an attempt to create a mental image of the course that had brought him here. But beyond a reasonably good idea of the path he'd taken until Sherman led

him to the murdered doe, he couldn't do it. After that, he'd been too intent on overtaking and accusing the poacher to pay any heed to anything else. Nor did he have any clear idea of how long he'd been on the trail. He'd traded his watch for a meal somewhere on the long trek to Conifer, and, although the lodge stocked practically everything else, nobody had thought to include some spare timepieces.

Next, Ulysses made a stern effort to recall all the sensible advice he'd heard or read that might be applied to lost people. The most practical suggestion was that which urged anyone who got lost to stop in his tracks, build a fire and let rescuers come to him. Unfortunately, Ulysses saw no reasonable basis for practicing such advice. It was all very well to stay where he was, build a fire and wait . . . but it was very certain that he'd be in for a prolonged spell of lingering. As far as he knew, Sime Hanley and the deer poacher—one and the same, although Ulysses did not know that—were the only humans who shared this winter wilderness with him. It was hardly likely that the deer poacher would come to the aid of anyone at all. That left only Sime Hanley, and, remembering the fellow's addiction to rapid-fire blinking, Ulysses doubted that he'd be able to see a smoke signal—if he cared to wait here and risk the hundred to one chance that his nearest neighbor would be out in the storm looking for any such.

However, suddenly recalling that, signal or not, he had the means for starting a warming fire, Ulysses decided that his prospects were at least a hundred per cent improved. He plunged a hand into the shirt pocket where he kept his matches, then into the other shirt pocket, then into all his pants pockets. For a moment, a single, fleeting moment, he again trembled on the verge of panic.

The matches, which had indeed been in the pocket where he'd first sought them, were not there now. Instead, there was a large hole that had not been there before. Stifling an urge to make a second search, Ulysses recalled picking up an excited Sherman and carrying him away from the treed bobcat. Sherman had kicked, squirmed and nibbled, which explained the hole. But, aside from determining that hereafter he'd be more careful with his matches, there was nothing Ulysses could do about it now.

"Come on, Sherman," he said, hoping he sounded as confident as he wished he could feel.

Without the vaguest idea as to where he was going, but without the least doubt that going anywhere was preferable to staying here and meekly accepting whatever fate had in store, he struck off through the forest. At any rate, he was reasonably sure that he was still in forest. It was difficult to be positive. Trees were not identifiable as such until he was within three times an arm's length from them and not distinctly observed until he'd cut that distance by two thirds. Even Sherman, trailing at his heels, was partially hidden by a veil of snow.

Recalling that cheer is the foe of gloom, Ulysses did his valiant best to think of something cheerful. But, aside from noting that, despite its deadly potential, the snow arranged itself in pleasing patterns as it swirled earthward, he experienced difficulty in thinking about anything at all except that it was deepening by the minute. When he had started, it was ankle deep. When he finally stopped, it was halfway to his knees. Desperately seeking some blessing to count, he reminded himself that it was rather soft and that, as yet, he was able to break trail without undue strain. Sherman, making full use of the pathway his master opened up, encountered even less trouble.

Finally stopping to rest, Ulysses did not know how far he had walked and he declined to make a serious estimate. However, since no special harm seemed involved in a little flight of fancy, offhand he thought he'd covered a minimum of forty-nine miles. His paces, that had not been unduly heavy when he left the lodge this morning, weighed at least nineteen times as much as they had. His feet were heavy too, and numb, with an estimated four inches worn from each.

Ulysses conceded that he was growing tired. Immediately thereafter, recognizing this first admission of defeat as the first chink in his armor, he promptly assured himself that he wasn't tired at all. In fact, or so ran his argument, he felt considerably fresher by the minute. Still, he supported himself against a convenient tree as he plotted the next move.

Sherman, who was not visibly dismayed and who seemed entirely happy to be wherever his master was, sat down beside him. It occurred to Ulysses, suddenly and dreadfully, that if he died in this storm, Sherman must inevitably perish with him. Since he'd brought Sherman out from the safe shelter of the lodge, he would be wholly responsible.

The thought shook him to his very marrow, but it also provided a most potent motive for fighting his way clear. Forthwith, Ulysses resumed the fight.

He didn't really know whether lost people actually traveled in circles, but it was reasonable to suppose they might. However—not that a straight line had any advantage over circles—if he was going nowhere anyhow, there was a way to travel straight. The wind, always out of the same quarter, although he did not know which quarter, might be kept against his right cheek. Rather, his right cheek might be kept against the wind. Keeping it there, Ulysses went on.

Presently, the boy knew that he had become totally blind. Although awareness burst upon him, there was no accompanying shock or horror, only a sort of naive wonder. He was fairly certain that he had not been suddenly stricken. At any rate, he could remember no ache or pain—or even inconvenience. He wouldn't even have known he was blind if he had not become suddenly conscious of the fact that he could no longer see anything at all.

In a way, this was rather embarrassing. People who lose their sight, or so Ulysses understood, needn't necessarily give way to hysteria. But they have every reason to regard it as other than a rather natural occurrence that provokes only wonder. There was a blind man who lived near the home of Ulysses' uncle who told everyone that he couldn't even see a hand before his eyes and—

Deciding that it would be interesting to experiment Ulysses held a hand before his eyes. Seeing a very dim outline of the hand, he comprehended that he was not blind at all! He could not be sure as to when it had come about, but black night had replaced the murky day. In a way, this was rather pleasant because, although there was every reason to suppose that the snow

was falling just as fast, he could not see it fall. Therefore, it did not seem as bad. In any event, he was no longer worried.

The pendulum had swung in the other direction. He was serenely confident, and he had no doubt whatever but that he was going directly to the lodge. Anything else was ridiculously far-fetched. If he did not reach that shelter, his dog would die in the snow and he must answer for that death. But he had become very sure that the beagle would not die, and that confidence achieved a tangible basis when, in a floating haze, he finally came to the lodge, opened the door, built a fire, fed himself and Sherman, and both went to bed.

A feeling of complete peace and comfort was marred only by the fact that the beagle seemed to want something else. At any rate, he insisted on whining and barking. Annoyed, but at the same time determined to give his loyal companion whatever he wanted, Ulysses struggled up, to find Sherman licking his face.

He found that he was not in the lodge at all but lying in the snow—a fact that no longer seemed the least bit important. However, it was very warm and comfortable snow right around him, and doubtless Sherman cried because his own bed was cold. Obviously, he must bring his dog into the exact cozy spot that he himself had found.

When he extended his hands to grasp Sherman, the beagle slipped away. His annoyance growing, but his responsibility toward his dog still overcoming his own desire to rest, Ulysses rose to catch him and bring him back.

Sherman halted. Stooping to grasp him, Ulysses' extended hands found a wooden wall, then a door. Groping and stumbling, but at least faintly awake and aware now, he sought and found the doorknob. This time, as he promptly discovered when he stumbled forward and bumped his head on a chair, the lodge he entered was no illusion.

The "bed" in the snow, where Ulysses would have remained and died if Sherman had not awakened him, was less than fifty feet from the lodge door.

## Stormbound

When he emerged from soundest slumber to a reasonable facsimile of wakefulness, Ulysses knew at once where he was and how he came to be there. The bump on his head, still throbbing, was a forceful reminder of the chair into which he'd stumbled when at last he reached the lodge. But for the most part the events of last night, or two nights ago, or perhaps even the end of this night, since the interior of the lodge was swathed in only a dim gray light that was strongly suggestive of very early morning, remained vague.

Hearing his master stir, Sherman came from the foot of the bed to the pillow and snuggled happily down. Ulysses enfolded the little dog with an affectionate arm and tried to recall everything. However, it was impossible to recall with even a reasonable clarity of detail everything that had taken place. The mental pictures that the boy fought to summon were all somewhat dim and etched in varying shades of gray, but some were more distinct than others. And one was uppermost.

Although he was not sure as to where he'd lain down in the snow, or how far he'd traveled after he got up, he hadn't the least doubt but that he'd still be there if Sherman hadn't insisted otherwise. The half-starved waif that had scratched at his door on such a black night had paid his debt in full. The arm that embraced Sherman tightened gently.

Ulysses gave himself to studying what else had happened.

After stumbling into the chair—another phase of his adventures that stood out rather clearly—he had wanted nothing except sleep. But he thought he hadn't gone to sleep at once. There was something that he not only must do but dared not neglect, and it seemed to him that he had spent considerable time doing it. But doing what?

The last thing he remembered was going to bed with an inward determination to sleep ninety-six hours.

Not at all sure whether he had slept ninety-six, or one hundred and ninety-six, or a mere six hours, he was certain that he felt rested now. As soon as the final foggy remnants of sleep were swept from his brain, he bounced up in bed. At this unheralded manifestation of vigor, the startled beagle jumped onto the floor. Ulysses blinked in the dim light and immediately became aware of three facts.

It was eleven o'clock, for the eight-day clock on the wall pointed to that hour; the storm was still in full swing, which accounted for the dim light; he knew what he'd been doing last night.

Extending from either side of the fireplace to the far wall, chunks of wood were stacked chin high. Ulysses, who'd previously seen no reason to maintain more than a single day's supply, but who now gazed on a ten-day reserve of dry chunks, would have found it impossible to believe he'd carried all of it, except that it was even more incredible to suppose Sherman had.

Fully awake, and quite sure that it was late in the morning following his adventure, Ulysses clothed himself. Attended by Sherman, he approached the kitchen and peered through the open door at scenes that had not been and should not have been but definitely were.

The wood box was piled high with fuel. So were the kitchen corners—and every other place where it was practical to store wood. His mental processes stimulated by his vision, Ulysses finally remembered. He had been desperate for rest, but he had also been convinced that the storm would not terminate in the immediate future. So, even though he must have been asleep on his feet as he did so, he had carried wood.

He could not recall carrying so much. Nor, until the sight of an empty tin provided the necessary mental stimulus, did he remember that only eight hams now remained in the pantry. He had no recollection whatever of disposing of the full contents of the tin. Even with Sherman's enthusiastic cooperation, eight and a half pounds—which is what a red label that stared rather accusingly at Ulysses declared had been the net weight of the tin's contents—was a lot of ham. But the tin was empty, and, faced with such

incontrovertible evidence, Ulysses began to comprehend why he was not ravenous now.

A cottontail rabbit, that had been applying himself with a commendable industry to a half-peck of dry oatmeal that had been emptied into a washbasin, but who stopped eating to turn and glare balefully when the boy and dog appeared, completed the charming domestic scene that greeted Ulysses' eyes on this first morning of the storm. Presently, the cottontail demonstrated that his baleful glare was no bluff. He hopped over to Sherman, jumped high, kicked that astonished little beagle in the face as he descended, then tried to repeat the procedure on Ulysses. But since his rescuer's face was somewhat beyond his reach, the cottontail had to be content with thumping him on the knee.

Ulysses sighed dolefully and Sherman echoed him. As though being stormbound were not enough, it appeared that they were marooned in the company of a rabbit with a split personality. Unable to determine any good reason for such pugilistic tendencies in the mild little creature that had lain exhausted on the snow, the boy could only speculate on the potency of dry oatmeal.

Although he longed to be out and around where he might take care of everything, it was quite apparent that, at least for the time being, the young custodian must necessarily confine himself to burning wood. Snow was falling so fast that a shed, which was only about forty feet from the kitchen window, could not be seen at all. The wind mourned about the eaves, breathed hollowly down the chimney and otherwise voiced dire threats.

The fact that they were empty threats, for Ulysses, Sherman and Stonewall were safe in the lodge, brought little joy to the caretaker. He had become the hapless victim of a mood compounded of frustration, aggravation and trepidation, with the latter predominant.

Yesterday, gazing on a seriously injured Robert E. Lee who was sorely in need of care, he had recognized his solemn duty. Far from discharging it—and he'd hoped to have Robert E. Lee in a position to accept care whether he wanted it or not no later than noon today—he hadn't even been able to design a functional trap. Now, and this alone was sufficiently

aggravating, frustrating and worrisome, he couldn't even reach the meadow. Until the storm ceased, or at least lulled, it would be folly to try.

As if that were not enough—and it was plenty—the poacher was still free. While Ulysses, a prisoner of the storm, fumed impotently, he might slay any number of deer. It never occurred to the worried boy that the poacher would be similarly stormbound. In every mental image of the slayer that he conjured up, the villain was never lacking horns and tail, and anything so equipped is not restricted by storms. In addition, since by far the majority of deer had descended into more congenial lowlands, there were very few left for a fiend or anything else to slay. But Ulysses didn't know this.

He did know that, of all the caretakers who'd ever been, since one human being had asked or paid another to take care of anything at all, he was doubtless the most worthless specimen. Caretakers did not permit themselves to be imprisoned in lodges. They got out and took care, and, even if no reasonable person could blame him for the storm—

Ulysses gasped. He might have staggered if the thought that had just occurred had not frozen him in his tracks. Although a considerable time had elapsed since the old jinx had struck with anything that resembled his former cunning and resourcefulness, there was no indication that he had gone away. So who couldn't blame Ulysses for the storm?

For an interval, he was far more unhappy than he had ever been—or ever thought he might be. It was true that the jinx had got out of hand on occasion and afflicted other people with trouble aimed at him, but he had done his very best to prevent such accidents. As long as he must have a jinx, he had tried in every way he knew to keep it a personal one, and he was not too ashamed of his record—so far.

Now, however, with all his heart, he wished he had never seen Pete Corson, the lodge, or the mile in any direction. It was not that he disliked any one of them or anything about any one. Rather, he had come to love this place, and this work, with an affection that surpassed all previous boundaries.

If he'd stayed away, bad luck would not have come here. He'd leave right now, if he could—but of course he couldn't. When he glanced out of the window, it was to perceive no noticeable lessening of the storm, and it

would help nothing to set off through it. For one thing, Sherman would insist on going with him and the faithful little beagle had done nothing to merit punishment.

Stonewall, who'd consumed all the dry oatmeal he wanted for the time being, hopped under the stove. Presently he emerged to make another sally against Sherman, but the dog was not unprepared this time. He stepped backwards when Stonewall leaped, then forward, to butt him with his nose. Miffed, Stonewall hopped back under the stove to plan a more subtle campaign against this tricky enemy.

While Stonewall perfected his plans and Sherman kept a wary eye on the stove beneath which he lurked, Ulysses prepared and consumed a combination breakfast-lunch. After that, he washed the dishes, swept the kitchen and living room and dusted everything that he thought was dusty. Then, satisfied that a suitable lapse of time had been filled by these necessary domestic tasks, he was mildly astonished to discover that he had not filled as many unforgiving minutes as he had thought. Completing all his chores in a manner that satisfied him—and that presumably suited Stonewall and Sherman as well—required only two and a quarter hours.

As yet, however, time did not hang heavily and there was no decided indication that it would. There was much about the lodge that he had yet to learn, and while he languished in storm-enforced idleness seemed a good time to learn it. Forthwith Ulysses set out to make himself acquainted.

He had noticed that, among other articles, the living room was furnished with a record player that could be operated manually. Recalling that music hath charms to soothe the savage beast and wondering whimsically if it might soothe Stonewall, Ulysses decided to find out.

Unfortunately, another fact of which Ulysses could not be aware, the self-appointed custodian of the lodge's record library was a true *aficionado*, a dedicated being who'd no more think of exposing his cherished discs to wintry blasts than he'd think of exposing himself to same. The cabinet contained only one lonely record and that bore an undecipherable label, but, since one was a marked improvement over none, Ulysses applied it to the turntable and sat back to revel in some music.

The record, a western, turned out to be the saga of a horse named Old Paint, who carried his rider through some two dozen verses of assorted perils. Finally, one stormy night, the restless little dogies went into a stampede. Springing at once to the back of Old Paint, the fearless young cowboy galloped full speed to turn the herd about. He succeeded admirably, but, sadly enough, although, once again, he carried his rider safely through the fracas, Old Paint suffered a broken leg. There was nothing for it except to shoot him, which was done with appropriate ceremony, to the accompaniment of considerable dolorous wailing.

In no sense of the word classical music—or any other kind, if one cared to be specific and honest, too—still the sad tale of Old Paint was not unendurable at first hearing. But the long-playing record seemed considerably longer the second time around. Considering that the faithful steed was doomed anyhow, Ulysses could not help wondering if he might have left more grateful listeners behind had he managed to get shot a couple of dozen verses earlier. When, in the process of replacing the record, Ulysses dropped it and saw it break into five separate pieces, he did not ascribe the accident to his personal jinx. He was pretty sure he knew why that particular record had been left behind.

Although he was to be denied the pleasures of music, by no means was the caretaker to be deprived of everything. His passion for literature burned with a steady flame, and the bookshelves were well-filled. Ulysses turned to them.

Previously, he'd had time for little except a hasty inspection of the titles, but he had hours to spare now and he used them to full advantage. A set of Shakespeare, he discovered, was flanked on one side by a ponderous tome whose subject was big game rifles and on the other by a detective thriller. There were classics and reputed classics, fiction and non-fiction, treasures and trash. Such a cosmopolitan array of literature, Ulysses concluded, could represent nothing except the various tastes of various club members.

Some of the books Ulysses had read: some he'd always intended to read, and some he wouldn't be caught reading. He selected a volume he'd always intended to read, Tolstoi's *War and Peace*, and sat down to become

acquainted with what he had heard acclaimed as the most powerful novel ever written.

Probably it deserved such a reputation, Ulysses conceded after struggling through the first chapter, but nobody could prove it by him. Although he recognized fleeting shadows of greatness, he also encountered heavy fare. He admitted honestly that it bewildered him and that one chapter at a reading was enough. Fully intending to struggle some more with *War and Peace*, he returned it to the shelf and selected an adventure novel—a tale of a gold rush in the frozen North. This was much more in his line, particularly when he came to a chapter that might have been suggested by the precise situation he now faced. Four men, stormbound in an isolated cabin, got along harmoniously enough for a time. Then, and evidently it was the little things that counted, they began to get on each other's nerves. Each took exception—which in no time at all became violent exception—to the way another 1. Sipped his coffee. 2. Twiddled his thumbs. 3. Snored. 4. Whistled.

All were clearly aware of the perils involved in cabin fever, the term they applied to the malady, but the inevitable explosion flared to the thunder of blazing guns. Far from carrying out his churlish intention and escaping with all the gold, the single survivor was shortly thereafter captured by an intrepid Mountie. Getting his man in this instance was no more than the fellow deserved, since it turned out that, although he'd been posing as a hero, he was actually a crook of a very low order and the gold really belonged to an orphan girl from Portland, Oregon.

Ulysses, who thought the story not inferior to most that depend on the same old worn-out theme, was very grimly intrigued by the references to cabin fever. Naturally, he had not been able to avoid a few vagrant thoughts that concerned the pleasures of human company, but now he was suddenly glad that he hadn't any. It was easy enough to imagine human beings who couldn't escape each other not only foregoing any desire to do so but also mixing on intimate terms and with blood in their eyes!

By the time he finished that book, the murky day had again shaded into black night. His hands were beginning to yearn for something to do, so he turned happily to the preparation of supper. He planned an elaborate meal,

not because he was especially interested in such but because he was pretty sure it would take a lot of time.

It did, and, even though a master chef might not have regarded the result as the crowning triumph of his career, it was more than acceptable. Acquiring skill as he gained experience, Ulysses' culinary products were no longer the sort that might give a billy-goat indigestion. However, after the meal was eaten and the kitchen tidied, the cook was not tired enough for bed. He settled down for another tussle with *War and Peace*.

The next morning, when he awakened, for the first time Ulysses tried deliberately to go back to sleep. If nothing else told him that the storm was still in progress, he had only to open his eyes in the dimly-lighted room. Rather than precious hours to be filled, the day that faced him was something to be endured. However, he could not sleep, no matter how hard he tried, so he got reluctantly out of bed. He dressed and, with Sherman beside him, went out to the kitchen. There he received a most dreadful shock.

Stonewall promptly left his fortress under the stove and sallied out to engage the beagle. Rather than parry or counterattack, Sherman cast subtlety to the winds and sprang. As Stonewall scooted back under the stove, the dog's snapping fangs closed a scant half inch from the warrior rabbit's tail.

Ulysses stared aghast at what had nearly been—and yet might be—stark tragedy. The book hadn't said whether animals are susceptible to cabin fever, but there had been no animals with the four men. Was Sherman, gentlest of the brave, about to succumb to a malady that would reduce him to beast level? Ulysses, who feared the worst, watched the dog carefully all day long. He spent a fretful, worried night. But when he woke up, and shortly thereafter sat up, the anxiety that might have risen with him was blasted by a whoop of sheerest joy.

Sunlight filtered through the windows!

## Orphans of the Storm

Ulysses, whose eyes had dwelt upon a normal quota of interesting, appealing and occasionally fascinating sights, was positive that he never had before—and never would again—behold anything that could possibly be one-tenth of one per cent as charming as the view which greeted him when he sat up in bed. For a sublime five minutes, during which he was unaware even of Sherman, who had come to his pillow for the usual morning caress, he sat perfectly still and stared in rapt fascination.

The storm had evidently spent its force. The sun was shining and all God's chillun had shoes, which, as Ulysses discovered when he bounded out of bed and flew to the window, was indeed fortunate as they'd certainly need them.

The storm had departed, but, at a hasty estimate based on a first glance, the residue it had left behind would still be there seven years after Gabriel blew his trumpet. White snow, pure and unsullied, came to within four inches of the window sills and the window sills, as Ulysses recalled, were a minimum forty inches from the ground.

Under an initial impression that he was looking at drifts, the young caretaker was relieved of that illusion when he let his questing gaze roam farther afield.

Obviously, the storm had blown in on the west wind, and it required no experienced eye to discern that the west wind had blown with somewhat more than zephyr force. The west wall of every outbuilding within the scope of Ulysses' vision supported a snowbank that began at the foundation and ended at the highest point of the roof. The pine trees were laden with so much snow that it was difficult to see any trunks. The few that Ulysses was able to make out bore a ridge of snow from the roots to that point where foliage obscured them, so uniform that it might have been poured from a mold. Wherever there had been a little knoll or other obstruction, there was a snow drift of such proportions that, if it were hollowed out, any Eskimo family in search of an igloo would have found their quest ended.

Even on becoming aware of the fact that approximately three feet of snow had fallen, Ulysses refused to become depressed. The shining sun signified far more than the termination of a seemingly interminable storm. It meant liberation, which in turn meant that he could make his way with all possible speed to Robert E. Lee. The fact that he might again do what he most yearned to do, which was take care of anything in need of care, was sufficient to make his cup run over.

Presently, he became aware of the one small fly in his generous bowl of ointment. He was cold and his feet were colder, something that did not trespass upon his awareness until the breakers of his ecstasy subsided to waves of joy. He immediately took stock of both himself and that which surrounded him.

During the night, his fire had gone out, which was to be expected, since it had also expired, or nearly died, on preceding nights. But it seemed much colder than it had been on any previous morning. When he glanced at the window thermometer, Ulysses understood that there was a tangible reason for his goose pimples. Temperatures that had ranged from the low twenties at early morning to the low fifties at high noon had taken a drastic plunge. The mercury now indicated five below zero.

Surrendering to a spasm of joy, brought about by the sight of genuine sunshine, Ulysses had forgotten everything else, including his clothes. He had come face to face with arctic temperatures in bare feet and flimsy pajamas.

Quickly arraying himself in more suitable attire, he remained in a happy glow as he and Sherman escorted each other to the kitchen. He had, Ulysses was unable to help feeling, suddenly become ten feet high and strong in proportion. Far from quailing at the additional obstacles that were sure to be presented by three feet of snow and five below zero, he was sure he wouldn't flinch if there were thirty feet of snow and fifty below. Since he was again free to pick up the cudgels where he had necessarily, however reluctantly, dropped them, was anything else important?

His own spirits, Ulysses learned as he and Sherman entered the kitchen, were not the only ones elevated by the storm's ending. Instead of hopping

under the stove to plot defiance, Stonewall didn't even find it necessary to glare. He scratched his right ear with his left rear paw and declared a truce with Sherman by sniffing noses. Then he started nibbling away at his washbasin of dry oatmeal.

As he kindled a fire and filled his teakettle, a task made slightly more complex by the necessity for breaking two inches of ice that had formed over the water pail, Ulysses, no longer able to contain his bubbling spirits, released them in song. Although he considered it pleasing, the truth is that the boy's singing voice would have blended admirably in a chorus of braying jackasses, a dismal fact that was not without its immediate effect on both Sherman and Stonewall. Planting his rear on the floor and tilting his muzzle upward, Sherman voiced a plaintive howl of protest. Stonewall, unable to remonstrate vocally but probably wishing he did not have such long ears, hopped hastily under the stove.

Ulysses stopped singing. Stonewall hopped out from under the stove and Sherman quieted. Silent but no less happy, the young caretaker prepared and consumed an adequate breakfast. Then, instead of immediately bringing the kitchen to a desirable state of tidiness, he proceeded to attack the snow.

Unfortunately, what was intended to be a spirited campaign that must end in total victory, at once became a feeble skirmish that didn't carry anywhere and ended in total, although temporary, defeat. The kitchen door, originally intended to face south, for purposes of expediency had finally been placed on the southwest corner. Snow, in quantities ample enough to bury the door three-quarters of the way to the top, had funnelled around that corner. When Ulysses tried to go out, the snow came in.

To be more precise, when the support offered by the door was suddenly removed, the drift fell in. Anticipating no such onslaught, so totally unprepared, Ulysses fell back with it. Partly because of his heavy clothing, partly due to youthful reflexes and partly because the snow helped cushion him, he suffered injury to nothing but his dignity.

Even as he freed himself and rose, he saw the need for—and prepared to undertake—action that must be divided into two separate parts. The first,

since the open door left no room for doubting that five below zero means cold weather, was to put a coat on. Ulysses did so. Preparing to undertake the second part, which was to remove a considerable pile of snow from his kitchen, he became aware of another omission.

He had thought of a reserve supply of wood. Obviously, since he'd used as much as necessary and there were still two pailfuls left, he'd considered future needs for water. But it simply hadn't crossed his mind that, when it is necessary to make paths through snow, it is rather convenient to have a shovel. Ulysses gazed sadly at the shed, a full seventy-five yards away, wherein he'd find shovels, snowshoes, toboggans, skis and sundry other tools and utensils that might have a practical application to deep snow.

Ulysses cast a calculating eye over everything between the shed and himself. Concluding that a determined dash would achieve the objective, he proceeded to dash and did very well until he was approximately a yard and a half from the kitchen door. There, even though it seemed no insurmountable obstacle when reviewed mentally, he discovered that three feet of snow is sufficient to halt the most determined dasher. However, he could still plod.

Plodding for some twenty yards, he was less than delighted to find himself suddenly trying to plod through six feet of snow instead of three. Cogitating this unexpected and vehemently unwelcome turn of events—for, viewed objectively, the snow seemed the same depth all the way to the shed—Ulysses recalled that there was a little dip, or swale, at approximately that point where even plodding resulted in no progress. Filling the swale, evidently snow had then blown in on top of it to create an invisible and very deceptive drift.

Ulysses, who for one brief second did not feel quite ten feet tall or possessed of a giant's strength, accepted the inevitable and plodded back to the lodge. However, although his physical self was fast shrinking to normal, his determination soared to always loftier heights.

Since he was unable to reach a proper tool, he'd simply have to make use of those that were available. He considered the snow-moving equipment upon which he might lay a hand and thereafter exercise to good effect.

The fireplace shovel, although admirably suited to scooping ashes, was too small to be of much use in scooping snow. A bucket might work but had its disadvantages. However, there were five metal dustpans in the broom closet and to think of them was to act.

Unless he wanted what bid fair to become a full-sized swimming pool in his kitchen, obviously his first action had better be to remove the fast-melting snow that had fallen in when the door was opened. That was a rather puny task compared to moving a snowdrift, but, by the time he finished it, Ulysses could have quoted fourteen good reasons why dustpans are ideal for gathering up dust but shovels are more practical for moving snow. However, since he had nothing better, as soon as the kitchen was clean, he gripped a dustpan firmly and purposefully advanced on the drift. He was not without a strategic plan of attack. Since he'd already proved that he could plod to the drift, it now became necessary to scoop away enough snow to let him plod through it. Once on the other side, he'd be able to plod to the shed and get a proper shovel.

Sherman, who wanted to be with his master, but who reluctantly conceded that even beagles are out of their depth in rare situations, of which three feet of snow is one, was reduced to sitting on the doorstep and offering moral support. Stonewall, already in a dry place that suited him and doubtless regarding the entire affair as a silly waste of time, since the snow would melt anyhow when spring came, hopped under the stove to rest. Ulysses worked.

He did not know how long he toiled, for, since he was wholeheartedly in favor of getting out and taking care, he begrudged every second that must be devoted to shoveling snow. But he did not desist, since the snow must be shoveled, and, under such circumstances, any time spent in running back to the lodge and consulting the clock would be time wasted. So, even though he was under an impression that he labored for at least nine hours, actually it was only a bit more than an hour until he broke through the drift and plodded to the shed.

His eager gaze fastened on the rackful of snowshoes that he had never used at all, even though he was sure he understood the theory behind snowshoeing. But, while he yearned to harness a pair to his paces and fly

over the snow to take care of Robert E. Lee, more practical considerations held him back.

Although the sky was now cloudless, there was not the faintest guarantee that it would remain so. There was more than an even chance that any clouds which gathered would dump more snow. If the generous supply already present was augmented by another load, it logically followed that there'd be more to shovel. Before anything else, Ulysses wisely decided, he'd better have a path to both the tool and wood sheds. For the present, he needn't worry about water. Melted snow would be an acceptable substitute.

Although a proper shovel contributed much to accelerating his work, and the conscientious young caretaker did not loaf, progress remained agonizingly slow. But since the only way to get it done was to do it, Ulysses did not relax. He was shoveling hard when he heard Sherman bark.

Hopelessly stalled by three feet of snow, but well able to get about in the paths Ulysses was producing, Sherman did so the minute he was able to leave the kitchen step. For a while, he was content to sit at the heels of his master, who was currently in the throes of shoveling a tributary path to the woodshed, but not for a second did the beagle forget his heritage as a great hunter or the duties involved in such. Presently came the clear call of duty.

His nose brought the summons, and, following his nose, Sherman proceeded to the tool shed. There, although snow prevented his seeing anything else, Sherman's nose assured him that, as soon as some snow was removed, he would gaze upon a wild turkey.

It was a little hen that, lingering belatedly in these blizzard-ridden heights, had become another orphan of the storm. Going to roost in a big pine, the small bird had clung precariously to a wind-whipped perch until a heavy blast of wind removed the entire upper third of the tree. Tossed into the night and unable to do anything except go with the breeze, the little hen finally came to rest against the shed and let the snow cover her.

Sherman, who knew only that she was there, barked to summon Ulysses, who answered the call without delay. When his master appeared, the beagle greeted him with an appropriately wagging tail and rose to push his nose two inches into the blanket of snow that covered the bird.

Since he knew nothing whatever as to the way dogs should hunt and, therefore, was in no position to regard Sherman's methods as other than orthodox, Ulysses knelt and shoved both hands deep into the hole already bunted by the beagle's muzzle. He found and withdrew the turkey hen, to whom so much had already happened that a bit more was not alarming. After a few halfhearted lunges, she decided that it was hardly worth while to try to escape and settled comfortably in her rescuer's arms.

Ulysses transported the forlorn little creature to the kitchen, and Stonewall hopped out from beneath the stove to learn the reason for this visit. He sneered almost visibly when he discovered that all the fuss and bother was brought about by a turkey hen—and a very bedraggled one at that—and hopped back under the stove. Ulysses pondered his newest problem.

The dickey bird had been nicely accommodated in the wicker wastebasket and Stonewall was both comfortable and happy under the stove, but there seemed to be no adequate facilities for a turkey. . . . Again inspiration came to his aid. The cabinet beneath the record player was commodious enough, and, now that the sorrowful tale of Old Paint was in five sections rather than one, it was devoid of records.

Ulysses installed the turkey there, propped a spare fire-place screen that he took from a closet in place, to discourage any roaming instincts, and gave her a dish of water. All this fell drastically short of solving the whole problem. Although he was aware of the fact that turkeys eat, until he faced the problem of furnishing a proper menu for one, Ulysses had never devoted so much as a passing thought to their proper diet. Finally—although by no means certain that it was proper—he provided the little hen with a smörgåsbord consisting of dry oatmeal, shredded meat balls, a can of whole kernel corn and the undiluted contents from a can of vegetable soup.

Lingering long enough to assure himself that his latest patient was as happy as circumstances permitted and concluding that she must be when she started to peck at the food, Ulysses returned to the great outdoors and the estimated nineteen miles of path that remained to be shoveled.

However, the work that had been entirely forgotten while he took care of the turkey hen, was no longer as onerous as it had been. His day, Ulysses told himself happily as he tackled the scant few thousand tons of snow that remained, had not been a complete loss. Determining to complete all necessary paths if he shoveled until midnight, then reach Robert E. Lee tomorrow, Ulysses shoveled snow so fast and threw it so recklessly that, until he turned around to see what Sherman was doing, he did not discover that he had been tossing the snow back over his own shoulder, squarely into the path he had just cleaned.

Despite this mishap, he did not need until midnight to finish, but the raven wings of darkness had been hovering over the place for a full three-quarters of an hour before there were adequate paths to all points that he must reach. He was tired, and, as he returned to the lodge, he decided that the man who had grown to ten feet tall when he saw sunshine, had shrunk back to ten inches with darkness. But rest he must not.

After seeing that the turkey was settled for the night, replenishing Stonewall's store of oatmeal, feeding Sherman and himself and doing all the domestic chores that he had not yet had time to do, he wended a purposeful way to the bookshelves. Indulging in mathematical calculations as he shoveled, Ulysses had concluded that, if all good luck remained with him, he'd be able to shovel a path to Robert E. Lee's meadow by the year 2097. The snowshoes in the shed represented his only hope of reaching the antelope. Thereafter, he would learn to snowshoe, so he turned to the bookshelves, with a firm conviction that he'd be sure to find *Ten Easy Lessons that Lead to Mastery of Snowshoes*.

Only he didn't. Besides the volume on big game rifles, there were books that concerned themselves with tennis, golf, water skiing, crocheting, butterflies, handball, Buddhism, bees, head-shrinking, mountain climbing and a few dozen assorted subjects in which Ulysses hadn't the least interest. The single reference that even remotely touched on snowshoes devoted itself to the eccentricities of the snowshoe hare.

Ulysses replaced the last volume on the bottom shelf and consulted the clock. It was half past two and his knowledge of snowshoeing remained at the precise level where it had balanced before he started

researching—which was nothing whatever. Resolutely, he put pessimism behind him. As he crept wearily toward his bed, it was with a fixed determination that, if nobody else would teach him, he'd teach himself. He was going to snowshoe.

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The next morning, breakfast over, the turkey cared for, Stonewall lurking under the stove, Ulysses returned to the shed, with Sherman at his heels. Although the sky remained cloudless, the hour was so early that he found it necessary to strike a match before he could even see the snowshoes. The sight was bewildering. On previous visits to this shed, he'd been so pressed for time that he had only passing glances for anything not immediately needed for the task at hand. Now that he finally fastened an analytical gaze upon them, his first thought was that snowshoe styles ran in cycles and every cycle for the past fourteen decades was represented in the club collection.

There were snowshoes almost as long as his body, but scarcely wider than a ski. There were squat ones, round ones, narrow ones, wide ones—Ulysses extended a grim hand and closed his fingers on the first snowshoe they encountered. Fortunately, whoever had stored them had remembered that snowshoes come in pairs and tied matching duos together.

Even though he merely reached out and grabbed, Ulysses' personal jinx was not on duty that morning. The snowshoes that fell to his lot, a foot wide by five feet long, had been made and laced by a trapper whose ideas concerning the right way to break rough trails were a direct result of breaking them. They had everything snowshoes should have, including sufficient strength to bear up under the rankest of beginners.

Having chosen and separated his snowshoes, Ulysses' next problem was attaching them to his pacs. This he finally accomplished—after they'd been laced on and fallen off no fewer than four times—by devoting himself to an intent study of the harness and deciding, step by step, how it might best be adapted to his pacs. That done, he prepared to skim over the snow. But when he tried a forward step, he promptly learned that two snowshoes which were rather easily held in one hand multiplied in weight beyond all reason when they were attached to the feet. Far from skimming over

the snow, he couldn't even move until he happened to glance down and discover that the tail of the snowshoe on his left foot was across that on his right, so he was very effectively serving as his own anchor.

The situation remedied, although he did not precisely skim, he was able to move. However, while he was looking over his shoulder to make sure that the tails did not cross, the toes tangled. Luckily, the snow into which he fell was very soft.

Ulysses picked himself up, brushed himself off and went grimly on. . . . Panting, he stopped after the first hundred yards, to find that Sherman had no intention of letting him go alone. It was not easy, but it was not impossible for the little beagle to flounder along in a snowshoe trail. He was directly at his master's heels.

After another two hundred yards, Ulysses had conquered the art of snowshoeing to such an extent that sometimes he could advance fifty feet without tripping. But the calves of both legs felt as though gripped with the jaws of a large vise which somebody seemed to be steadily tightening. Of course, the young novice did not have the faintest idea that even an experienced snowshoe traveler would not have been too happy at attempting the task he had set himself—but he wouldn't have turned back if he had. It took him three hours to snowshoe a distance that, on bare ground or in light snow, he might have walked in twenty minutes. . . . However, eventually, he got there.

The devoted Sherman still with him, he climbed his usual knoll, wiped a perspiring face, braced himself against a convenient tree—and gazed down on a tragedy that was not only in the making but practically made.

## Hay Lift

Now Robert E. Lee knew perfectly well that a storm was in the making and that he should flee before it, but he also knew that he could not, even though he cherished no delusions concerning the probable consequences if he did not. Since he was unable to run away from the storm, obviously, he'd have to meet it, and the least he could do was meet it on terms as favorable as any that might be contrived from a situation that looked pretty hopeless.

The basic question was one of topography, which happened to be among the subjects in which Robert E. Lee excelled. To Ulysses, viewing the clearing from a distance, it appeared to slope gently toward the east but otherwise was flat as the Texas Panhandle. Robert E. Lee knew better.

The meadow, which supported a lush and delectable crop of grass, presented a surface that lacked even one perfectly level spot that was more than seven feet square. It was broken by a great number of knolls, none of which were high, although some were veritable Everests when compared with others. It was the knolls that Robert E. Lee counted on to help him weather the storm, and hours before the snow started falling he had selected the exact spot to which he would betake himself at the proper time. It was east and a bit south of the geographical center of the meadow, and Robert E. Lee chose it for most practical reasons.

Of course, he hadn't a compass, but he did know the compass points, and he'd lived too long in these heights not to realize that violent storms always came from the west. Slightly west of the refuge he'd chosen, a miniature mountain range, consisting of the highest knolls in the meadow, would be sure to deflect or stop a lot of snow. Although, no matter what he did, Robert E. Lee would find himself hemmed in by drifts, in this precise area, he would not have to break any. Besides a sheltered position, the refuge offered grass as rich as any in the meadow; water would be no problem; the antelope that couldn't teach itself to lick snow probably should be thirsty anyhow.

Having chosen, Robert E. Lee could only wait for what he knew was coming. It came, but it did not envelop him as a surprise, as it did Ulysses. An hour before snow started falling, Robert E. Lee hobbled painfully to the place where he intended to see it through. Since they could not be prevented from going wherever he went anyhow, it naturally followed that the does and fawns went with him.

The blizzard blew in, as Robert E. Lee had known it would, from the west. With it came ample proof of the wisdom he'd displayed in being right where he was. Snow fell on the antelope, even as it did on everything else. But almost at once, what would be a great drift started gathering about the high knolls to the west. As the drift grew, which it did rapidly, it deflected the wind so that Robert E. Lee and his family were not subjected to the more violent blasts.

They were, however, distinctly subject to a great nervousness which sprang from the fact that they should not be here at all, and they knew it. Although they rested on occasion, they did not remain quiet for very long. Since every last one of them, including Robert E. Lee, seemed to think that all the others knew some happy trick that would get them out of here, they stayed together, rested and moved as a unit. In this fashion, and after a fashion, they trampled the snow that fell in their restricted refuge. The happy result was that, within limits, they could not only move without laboring through any appreciable depth of snow but even run if they felt like it. True, they had only a tiny area in which—although as yet they did not know it—they were already imprisoned. But what they had was a great deal more than they would have had under a less experienced leader.

The process of tramping out a yardage where the snows of wrath descended was materially assisted by the fact that the antelope had to eat. But getting enough to eat, or even half enough, was rather more complex than it had been. The few inches of snow that had covered the meadow proved no impediment for antelope nor had it buried a great deal of the grass. In any event, any antelope which tired of cropping frozen grass that thrust above the snow had only to scrape with both front hoofs and sufficient vigor to find an abundance of frozen grass buried beneath the snow. All of it tasted

exactly alike, but the grass on the other side, be it the other side of fence or snow, often looks better.

As the storm pursued its course, conditions suffered a radical change. The buried grass, which included all of it as soon as the snow became deep enough, would have cheered the heart of any misguided cultist who thinks that nothing can possess either virtue or value unless it is attended by a lot of hard work. But such members of the marooned little herd as didn't already know it, speedily found out that

there is a vast difference between digging into three feet of snow for one's supper and pawing into two inches.

Since otherwise they'd have eaten nothing at all, they dug. This, plus the fact that they moved most of the time anyhow, maintained a small area that was comparatively free of deep snow.

Robert E. Lee gazed on this area, or yard, when the sun shone once more. He also gazed on fourteen-foot drifts that were heaped about the knolls to the west. In addition, although he did not exactly gaze on them, since some could not be seen from where he stood; or think about them, since he did not think in that fashion, there were impassable drifts in all other directions. Nor did Robert E. Lee burden his mental processes with the distressing fact that every particle of food which might be easy to get, was already got. The rest was buried. If one considered all the grass that was available, down to the last mouthful, the strongest member of the herd might live another two weeks. The weakest would succumb in four days.

Incapable of considering this future, Robert E. Lee could not help being impressed by a rather pleasing fact that applied to the present. He was still alive, no small accomplishment when balanced against the numerous potent reasons why he and every member of his herd should be dead. As he looked about his present domain, whose length he might have bounded in six easy jumps had it not been for his painfully-wrenched rear leg and quarter, he was fairly sure he'd remain alive for at least the immediate future. Beyond that he did not speculate as to potential miracles.

Neither could he have the remotest idea that, the morning after the storm broke, the only miracle in which he and his family might place the faintest

hope was standing on a snowy knoll up in the pines, looking down at them. For that matter, Ulysses himself could not know that he was a miracle. As he looked with horrified eyes upon the trapped antelope, he wished he knew how to summon one.

He recalled his scheming, plotting, contriving, snowshoeing. He had undertaken all these vast labors with the sole aim of reaching and taking care of Robert E. Lee. When he gazed from the knoll and saw what had been a knotty problem so fantastically multiplied—rather than one there were now nine antelope in desperate need of care—his first thought was to concede defeat.

His second told him that he couldn't possibly surrender, although he now interpreted surrender as indicating that never again would he be able to look in a mirror at the hideous features of Ulysses Grant Jones if Ulysses did nothing except wring his hands while Robert E. Lee and his family died from slow starvation. Then it occurred to him suddenly, and shudderingly, that there was a way out.

The gun cabinet at the lodge was stocked with firearms of high and low degree, plus ample ammunition. Even though he was no marksman, there seemed to be no possibility of missing, since, if they tried to leave the pathetic little yard in which they were already trapped, the antelope would soon be helplessly mired in deep snow.

It was not merely the way, Ulysses told himself dejectedly, but the only way. A quick and merciful death was infinitely preferable to the agonizingly slow demise that otherwise was the inevitable fate of Robert E. Lee and his family. Having decided, Ulysses did not swerve from his decision. At the same time, he had no intention of wallowing in the depths of degradation, probed by the poacher who shot deer and took only the hams. Robert E. Lee and his family would not die in vain. If it took all winter, he'd transport all nine antelope to the lodge. When the roads were again open, some hospital or other public institution would be happy to make full use of the meat. The frozen carcasses would keep and they'd be unmolested if he hung them in the shed—

As he thought of the shed, Ulysses forgot aching legs, snowshoes that weighed 235 pounds each and everything else except the wings he wished he had so that he might fly at once to the lodge. Deepest dejection became flickering hope . . . and then loftiest joy. There was another way, and when it first occurred to him, Ulysses thought that it might work. Then he knew that it *must* work. The hands of Ulysses Grant Jones need not, after all, be stained with the blood of Robert E. Lee and his entire family.

Ulysses' burst of genius, as is usually the case with such, was simplicity itself. During the summer, riding horses were maintained at the lodge. Before the snows came, they were removed. But a great quantity of baled hay, intended for but unconsumed by the horses, was still piled high in one shed.

Already turned and making all possible speed toward the lodge, the young caretaker had put a third of the distance behind him when he happened to think that there were also toboggans in the tool shed. Strictly speaking, they were not indispensable. Ulysses would happily have carried as much hay as possible in his teeth if there was no other way to transport it to the marooned antelope, but the toboggans were the answer to moving hay in quantity.

Embarked on another project, and, as usual, giving it the full measure of his heart, soul and brain, Ulysses was unable to think of anything else. Thus he did not notice that, on the back trail, he was having far less trouble and making greater speed than on the way out. This was due to very tangible advantages he'd lacked before but had now. Since the return trip was made on a trail already broken, he did not have to break it. Although as yet he was not precisely a master of snowshoeing, he knew considerably more about it than he had. He felt no personal aches and pains because, fired and inspired with the thought that it might be practical to take very good care of all nine antelope, it never occurred to him that he had any.

Normally, Ulysses responded whenever Sherman barked, but just now he hadn't a second to spare, so, when the beagle barked, aside from a brief backward glance which assured him that the little dog was at his heels, he took no action.

Sherman was indeed at his heels, but from necessity rather than choice. A sudden gust of wind had told him something that Ulysses did not know. There was another orphan of the storm, the selfsame bobcat that the beagle had treed on a previous occasion. It was crouching, more or less uncomfortably, off in the pines and wishing it knew where there was something to eat. Sherman would have been happy to seek it out, but the physical limitations of a small dog as opposed to three feet of soft snow forced him to stifle the yearnings that stirred his warrior spirit. Since he couldn't possibly travel anywhere except in a broken trail, he stayed at his master's heels.

On arriving at the lodge Ulysses felt reasonably sure that both Stonewall and the turkey hen were faring well enough, so he saw no reason to go have a look. He proceeded directly to the shed, lifted a toboggan from the rack on which it was stored and carried it outside.

When a preliminary examination revealed that there was nothing so complex about a toboggan that further study was in order, he did think to gather up a coil of rope. He eyed the shed wherein was stored the baled hay, and wished fervently that he had shoveled a path to it while he was shoveling one to everywhere else, but he had less than a second for vain lamentations over a path that should be but wasn't.

His trusty snowshoes, over which he had achieved at least sufficient control to keep the toes and tails from crossing, breaking the path, and the toboggan gliding smoothly behind him, Ulysses tackled the unbroken snow. Except that the toboggan did not glide quite as smoothly after he pulled it out of the path, he reached the shed without undue incident.

He eyed the bales of hay, looked from them to the toboggan, calculated that he'd be able to load two of the former on the latter, and forthwith proceeded to do so. However, what seemed to be a simple enough task when one did it mentally, proved to be slightly complicated when he attempted to translate mental plans into physical action. The first bale of hay he lifted down came apart in his hands. Somebody who understood the theory of baling hay, must have neglected any practical application of the strands of wire that held bales together.

The second bale came apart in similar fashion, as did the fourth. But the third and fifth held and were duly placed on the toboggan. Ulysses, who had never before lashed bales of hay—or, for that matter, anything else—on any sort of conveyance, atoned for his lack of experience by lavishing enough rope on each bale to anchor a destroyer in a hurricane. Grasping the toboggan's draw rope, he faced happily toward the stormbound antelope.

Although he continued to face in the proper direction, and strained mightily, his glow of happiness vanished when he discovered that he was unable to move at all. Wondering if he'd inadvertently anchored the toboggan too, he glanced back and remembered that, hoping to save a few priceless seconds, he'd decided that, the nearer the baled hay he placed the toboggan, the easier the loading would be. There was nothing wrong with the idea, but he'd forgotten that toboggans should run on snow, and, since the open-faced shed faced due east, no snow had entered it. Taking the toboggan in had been simple. Taking it back out, with two bales of hay lashed tightly aboard, would have taxed the pulling power of a Percheron.

Being no Percheron, Ulysses untied his ropes, removed the load, pulled the toboggan onto the snow, carried the two bales to it and tied the whole thing up a second time. When he again tried to move, he found he was able to do so. But, vexingly enough, instead of skimming toward the marooned herd, the maximum speed he was able to achieve probably could have been exceeded by a turtle—providing the turtle was in fair physical condition and inclined to move. Also, even though Ulysses was able to pull the load, a good horse would have been mighty handy.

Exhausted physically but undaunted in spirit, four hours after he started out with the toboggan, Ulysses arrived back on the same knoll which he'd managed to reach in three when breaking trail with snowshoes. With victory in sight, he was dealt a low blow indeed. A brisk wind, skimming in from the meadow, whirled directly into the rearmost bale. Wires snapped, and, before the young caretaker could rescue a worthwhile portion, the contents of that bale were merrily blowing in numerous directions, none of which had any need whatever for baled hay.

Momentarily staggered, but stoutly telling himself that, although he'd lost half his load, he still had the other half, Ulysses undertook to move that

forward. But from this point on there was no broken trail, and, even though the toboggan bore only fifty per cent of its former weight, it was at least nine times as hard to pull. He needed thirty-five minutes, every second of which represented desperate struggle, just to reach the meadow.

Robert E. Lee saw him at once. Immediately thereafter, since there was no special reason why Robert E. Lee should look at anything they couldn't look at, the does and fawns spied Ulysses, too.

It was a very delicate moment, one that might have resulted in utter disaster under a general less cool than Robert E. Lee. The does and fawns, who seldom saw more than three human beings from one year's end to the next and, even so, considered themselves crowded, hadn't the least doubt that, the greater the distance maintained between man and antelope, the better the latter would fare. A panicky fawn ran out of the trampled yard and, almost at once, was struggling in neck-deep snow.

Although he'd have been first to run had circumstances permitted, Robert E. Lee found it unnecessary to glance at the trapped fawn in order to understand what would happen to him if he ran at all. He might die if he stayed, but was certain to perish if he did not, so he adopted a policy of watchful waiting. As Ulysses advanced, Robert E. Lee retained his self-control and even felt somewhat reassured. He'd felt a bullet burn his flank once, and he'd never forgotten the experience. Nor had he forgotten that the pot hunter who fired that shot had done so from approximately four hundred yards. This human was already within two hundred, and no bullets were flying.

Presently, it became apparent to the buck that the creature would come no nearer. At any rate, he had stopped advancing to kneel beside the toboggan and fuss with his load. Robert E. Lee sadly miscalculated the mettle of his man.

Ulysses was indeed kneeling beside the toboggan, but only because he couldn't possibly pull it another inch. However, having come this far, he was going the rest of the way. Struggling to loose the wires that bound the bale, to his perplexity he discovered that, although some were certainly fastened in a slipshod fashion, Houdini himself might have had trouble

escaping from these tightly clamped wires. Since he hadn't thought to bring pliers or any other device for snipping wire, Ulysses was reduced to plucking the bale apart. It was scarcely rapid plucking, since the hay was so tightly bound that, at first, it was necessary to remove one piece at a time. But, eventually, the wires were slack enough to permit him to slip a respectable quantity of the fodder from beneath them. Gathering as much as his arms could surround, he went forward on snowshoes.

Robert E. Lee, with his family, ran to the far end of the yard. Marking the precise spot beyond which Ulysses must not venture, the buck decided to try his luck in the snow if this unknown enemy passed it.

Stopping eighteen inches short of the deadline, Ulysses threw his hay into the trampled yard. He returned for another load . . . and another . . . until the toboggan was empty. Then he caught up the draw ropes, turned around and, trailed by both the faithful Sherman and the toboggan, started back toward the forest.

The mired fawn struggled back into the yard and helped his companions watch Ulysses until he was out of sight. Then, led by Robert E. Lee, who with unerring eye had marked the choicest morsels and intended to have them for himself, nine antelope rushed the hay.

*Neighbors*

Ulysses knew it was past time to be up and doing, being well aware of the fact that he must somehow contrive to do forty-eight hours' worth of work in the brief and ever-shrinking span of a single winter's day. However, he had much to think about, so, since lying in bed somehow stimulated his mental processes, he stayed in it.

Ten full days—a rather glaring understatement for, indeed, they were the most crowded days Ulysses had ever experienced—had passed since the first bale of hay went over the Toboggan Trail to Robert E. Lee & Co. Not counting five unsuccessful night attempts to keep his hay lift running, Ulysses had made twenty round trips from the baled hay in the shed to the trapped antelope in the meadow. He had delivered just nine full bales of hay.

The trail, now well packed from repeated trips, was no longer his most vexing problem. He could, and did, take his loaded toboggan right up to the yard where, if he wasn't careful, Robert E. Lee was happy to start munching hay even before his delivery boy snipped the baling wires. Once he even started munching Ulysses! He had been forgiven, though, since the boy's cap had fallen off at an inauspicious moment, and, considering the need of a haircut that the latter intended to give himself as soon as he found time, the buck's mistake might even have been unintentional.

Ulysses should not have needed twenty round trips in order to deliver a mere nine bales of hay. He always left the lodge with two bales on his toboggan. Once he'd tried three, with the third lashed on top of two. It worked marvelously until he was within a hundred yards of his destination, where the third bale fell off and snapped the wires on all three. Of the various problems with which he was beset, these temperamental wires belonged in first place. Although he inspected every bale before lashing it on the toboggan and always tested the wires by first trying to break them with his hands, he could invariably count on one, and sometimes two sets

breaking. Baled hay was strewn the length of the Toboggan Trail, and wisps of hay that were not worth salvaging festooned the forest on both sides.

Inclined at first to blame indifferent workmanship, Ulysses now suspected that some natural phenomenon was responsible for the breaking wires. Since nothing else was convenient, he ascribed his woes to the weather. Last night, for the first time since the storm's end, temperatures had climbed above the freezing point. Metal, or so Ulysses understood, contracted at the zero or below that had held sway. Wires, already tensed to the breaking point, snapped after bumping about on the toboggan.

Adding no spark of gaiety to an already unhappy situation, a distressing proportion of the hay Ulysses finally managed to deliver was lost anyhow. The wind, that blew hard for twelve hours a day—and harder for the remaining twelve—was at all times strong enough, even in the forest where much of its initial force was spent on the trees, to tear an unwired bale of hay apart and whisk it out of reach before he was able to think of any way to stop it. In the meadow, where there were no trees, it was stronger. It was also possessed of a fiendish bag of tricks.

Right up to the very second when Ulysses broke the bonds on a bale of hay, the wind keened way over his head, whirled snow devils about the far side of the meadow, tried to scatter drifts, or otherwise left a peaceful lull in the antelope yard. But the moment he threw his first armload of hay, the wind was sure to come whisking in . . . and fodder in large amounts went whisking out! Of the nine bales of hay he'd finally managed to put in their yard, Ulysses thought that Robert E. Lee and his family had retained perhaps three—nor was this by any means the sum of the young caretaker's tribulations.

For a time Robert E. Lee and his family had remained justly suspicious of both Ulysses and his intentions. Looking at them as they waited at the far end of the yard, the boy had wistfully hoped that he might find some way to make them tame. Now he wished, even more wistfully, that there was a way to make them wild again.

When they had finally accepted him, which they did on his third visit, the antelope scorned any middle of the road policy and withheld nothing. Once

it became apparent that the millennium was here, and that antelope and man might enjoy a peaceful coexistence, it became equally evident that the human was to provide the existence without regard to his ease and peace. Rather than a mere friend, Ulysses was father, mother and source of an endless supply of hay which the antelope were free to waste with joyous abandon.

When it was no longer necessary to work for a living, all nine antelope suddenly became gourmets of a most fastidious order. When Ulysses distributed their hay, they pawed or nosed through it for morsels they desired. What they did not desire, they consigned to the winds or trampled into the snow. When everything they liked was gone, they looked reproachfully at the donor. Although there might be hay scattered at their feet, did he really expect them to scramble for trash when it was so simple for him to provide another bale from which they might choose the dainties they wanted?

Ulysses began to develop an uneasy feeling that the complete brotherhood of man and beast was not the ultimate ideal he'd thought it would be before becoming an active participant in the brotherhood, for it was increasingly evident that what had been a self-sufficient group of animals was rapidly becoming a gang of first-class moochers. However, he saw no way to remedy the situation. Although the antelope were entirely satisfied to live on a dole, once they discovered the advantage of such, they'd have died without it. Nor could they possibly survive without continuing handouts, and that was the red-hot iron which seared Ulysses' conscience. Since serving nine moochers was infinitely preferable to becoming the guardian of nine carcasses, he was determined to maintain his hay lift for as long as that might be humanly possible. His present agony of mind and heart was rooted in the thought that, very shortly, to say nothing of feeding them, just reaching the antelope would be humanly impossible.

Because he was so naively inexperienced, he had been trapped by the first storm. The luck that attended him on that occasion had been stretched to the breaking point, so he had no intention of being anywhere except safe in the lodge when the second big snow arrived.

The signs that heralded its approach had been present the night before when Ulysses went to bed. The wind, that had blown with varying degrees of fury all day and all night, had lulled to a series of gentle zephyrs. For the first time in almost two weeks, the temperature was above the freezing point. A great peace, that would never again be mistaken for anything except a great trap, ruled the wilderness.

Ulysses turned restlessly on his side. Sherman, who had been alert and listening, decided that his master was indeed awake and crept up to the pillow to snuggle in the boy's protective arm. Ulysses embraced the little dog and went on thinking.

The first storm had raged two full days and two nights. Although there was no practical way to predetermine the duration of the second, there was no reason to suppose that it would be remarkable for its brevity. While it lasted, he would be a prisoner in the lodge. When it stopped, the first order of business must necessarily be shoveling new paths. He would then need a full day to break a new trail and another to transport the first bale of hay over it.

If the second storm lasted no longer than the first, Robert E. Lee and his family would still be cast on their own scanty resources for at least five days. Could they survive? Ulysses doubted it.

But the more he thought, the more he doubted that there was any way at all to forestall certain disaster. His caretaking began with the lodge. Even though he had managed to stumble around after dark, with a storm already in progress, and provide sufficient wood and water to withstand a siege, he was by no means sure that he could do it again. Nor did he want to try it.

Ulysses sighed and wished he were two people, of whom one might prepare for the forthcoming storm while the other devoted himself to freighting enough hay to give the antelope a chance of living through it. On this, the first day the wind had been less than savage, there was some hope of loading two bales at the lodge and arriving at the meadow with both of them. Perhaps—But even as he cast about for some way of doing everything himself, Ulysses continued to search in vain.

He admitted final defeat when he heard Stonewall pounding on the floor. It was a hideous racket that Stonewall produced by lifting one of his rear feet up and thumping it sharply down. Stonewall indulged in thumping whenever he was mad, and lately that had been most of the time.

As day followed day, additional orphans of the storm had come to light and were being taken care of. Without exception, these unfortunates, or at least they'd have been unfortunate under a less zealous caretaker, had either failed to journey to a more benign climate while they still had time, or else they had come to grief by reason of the storm itself.

The turkey hen, quite recovered, had been transferred to a shed wherein another turkey, a squirrel and a little porcupine that Ulysses had captured by scooping it into a bucket, were also quartered. The record cabinet was the current abode of a raccoon. It had carefully chosen a hollow tree and gone to sleep when winter came, but the fierce winds had blown the tree down. Responding to Sherman's call, Ulysses had found the forlorn creature burrowing through a snowdrift in search of any place at all that was reasonably warm and dry.

The wicker wastebasket held a crow with a broken wing. A marmot, another creature sensible enough to go to sleep when winter came and wake up when it ended, had either been evicted from its subterranean den or had left for reasons of its own. Ulysses had found the marmot in the Toboggan Trail. A hawk with a passion for canned meat balls and a shrill whistle which he exercised whenever he thought he lacked an ample supply of his now favorite food, a badger and a wandering muskrat completed the roster of present guests.

Except for the marmot, all had been discovered by Sherman. Including the marmot, all were fiercely resented by Stonewall. Accepting Ulysses because he distributed dry oatmeal and Sherman because he couldn't do anything else, the jack rabbit considered the recent arrivals trespassers of a very foul and most undesirable order. Whenever Ulysses appeared with a new refugee, he expressed his displeasure by thumping the floor. Since nothing ever thumped back, or otherwise expressed defiance, Stonewall concluded that all were properly intimidated. Thereafter he tolerated them as long as they kept their places.

Deducing from Stonewall's ceaseless thumping that one of his guests had not kept its place, which meant that it had left the container in which it was installed, Ulysses went to the kitchen, escorted by Sherman. He halted in the doorway. Sherman, who considered Stonewall's shenanigans rather boring, yawned and sat down beside him.

Searching for the reason behind Stonewall's present fit, Ulysses discovered none. Nevertheless, making no attempt to conceal the fact that he was thoroughly irritated, Stonewall sat in the center of the floor and continued to thump. Since he was looking fixedly at the door, in due course Ulysses thought to go over and open it. His lower jaw dropped so abruptly that, if it could have fallen far enough, it might have bruised his chest.

Since he'd loaded his toboggan at the hay shed, and since two bales of hay had become unbound and scattered their contents at the loading dock, a plentiful supply of hay was strewn about the place. Feeding from it, pursuing their usual course of choosing everything they liked and leaving everything else, were Robert E. Lee and his whole family!

Stonewall, who'd known something was there but hadn't bargained for anything this big, hopped under the stove and thumped no more. Although the nine antelope did not look as if they'd enjoy rabbit meat, there was no sense in attracting attention and discovering thereafter that looks can deceive.

Ulysses and Sherman went outside, where Ulysses figured out the reason for this solution of his biggest problem. With no surplus of hay in their yard—and scorning all except choice morsels anyhow—Robert E. Lee and his family had merely done what came naturally. Leaving the yard via the Toboggan Trail and choosing anything that pleased them as they advanced, they'd followed the litter of blown hay clear to its source.

Chewing at a rapid rate, and looking remarkably like a contented goat, Robert E. Lee glanced at Ulysses but stood his ground. With this bonanza located and staked, he had no intention of admitting claim jumpers. More wary, not of Ulysses but of their noble leader, who lunged with his antlers whenever some member of his family seemed on the point of getting some

tidbit he wanted for himself, the does and fawns snatched whatever they could.

As Ulysses looked fondly at Robert E. Lee, every one of the ominous clouds that were creeping into the sky suddenly acquired a lining of purest silver. In turn, he inspected each of the three does and five fawns, then glanced back at their lord and master. The latter he'd recognize at first glance and anywhere. But, although it was easy to distinguish fawns and does, he could not be sure as to which of either group was whom. However, since neighbors should have names, the three does became The Third Cavalry and henceforth the fawns would be known as The Fifth Infantry.

Reminded by the gathering clouds and the great hush that another storm was coming and prodded by a painful memory of the swift ferocity with which the first one had arrived, Ulysses pulled down and scattered enough hay to last Robert E. Lee, The Third Cavalry and The Fifth Infantry through any reasonable blizzard. That done, he added enough to see them through one of unreasonable duration. He provided a reserve of food for the two turkeys, the jack rabbit and the porcupine in the shed—and followed by providing himself with an ample supply of wood and water. Not forgetting to place a shovel and a pair of snowshoes just inside the kitchen door, or to lean a toboggan within easy reach just outside it, Ulysses settled down and waited for the storm's attack.

It came, but, even though clouds of snow again turned daylight to darkness and a raging wind snarled the usual threats, both together could not so much as dim the happy glow within Ulysses. Let the snow fall! Regardless of the depth it attained, his problems couldn't possibly be one-tenth as formidable as they had been after the first storm. Everything that needed taking care of was within reach of the caretaker. Ulysses' cup of ointment was unsullied by a single fly.

At any rate, it was not spoiled by any Ulysses could see or imagine—which was probably just as well for, at that very moment, one villain was plotting all-out war on Ulysses. Before the storm ended, another would be doing the same.

The first was Sime Hanley, who sat in his lonely cabin and gave himself over to brooding bitterness. Snow filtered through sundry cracks and either formed puddles on the floor or hissed against the stove. As though that were not enough to make a man resent whoever had a sturdy shelter, it was far from the most serious problem Sime faced. Hoping it would be a mild winter, which meant that the deer would linger in the heights and be available for pot hunting, he saw his hopes dashed. He also saw the sad remnants of his final haunch of venison, enough to last him through the storm—providing the storm did not keep on too long—reposing on the orange crate that served him as a kitchen table.

Inevitably, the fellow's thoughts turned to Ulysses, surrounded by more food than he could ever eat, waxing fat and loafing the winter away in bloated luxury. The more Sime thought about such a miscarriage of justice, the more it seemed his righteous duty to correct it. As soon as the storm ended, he finally determined, he would journey to the lodge and, exercising such force as might be necessary, bring about a more equitable distribution of the world's goods.

But the second villain, whose intentions were very villainous indeed but who otherwise was more to be pitied than condemned, must be considered first.

*The Second Villain*

The bobcat, a big, tough and very battle-hardened tom, was not precisely ruler of the wilderness, since creatures with the strength and stature of a bull elk or adult bear seldom granted him the right of way. But there was no question whatsoever that he ruled such portion of the forest's society as was represented by other felines. Every male bobcat that haunted the same area, and that had contrived to attain the ripe old age of six months, had either felt his claws—or proved fleet enough to outrun him.

Besides his own species, two young lions, both of which had all they could do just to provide themselves with a modest living, frequented the bobcat's range. Each, having met and been promptly attacked by the bobcat once, suddenly remembered urgent business a long way off, speedily set out to attend to it and thereafter were careful not to meet him a second time.

Possessing such a modest view of one's personal prowess was not necessarily a complete liability. Neither lion was a skilled hunter, but both understood that there was a direct ratio between hunting and eating. Both had already followed the majority of the deer into lower country where, although their skill underwent no marked improvement, there were far more opportunities to have good luck.

Their example had been followed by most bobcats, male and female—and everything else that was not equipped for surviving in deep snow, with the exception of a few creatures that remained in the snow country for various reasons. The bobcat's reason for lingering was a strictly personal one which, it must be admitted, reflects neither high ideals nor an admirable character.

He had every intention of going into lower country with the deer, in fact, he was on his way when the bold beagle treed him. As soon as he became sure that Ulysses and Sherman had gone far enough from his tree so that the likelihood of their interfering was no important factor, he came down and set off after the same herd of deer he'd been following when interrupted.

His purpose was twofold: to gorge himself on fresh venison and then go down into lower country. This intention was inspired more by the fact that he knew he'd find better hunting there than by any special anxiety about the storm.

His refusal to worry about snow that was not even falling was partly due to his own very inflated opinion of himself. Having fought with everything that would stand and fight, without a single defeat to mar a string of unblemished victories, he was not accustomed to running from anything. But it was also because he knew his considerable personal powers. Having plowed through more snows than he could remember—and experience had taught him that snow never achieves a forbidding depth until it falls a required number of hours—he had no reason to suppose he might get into anything he couldn't get out of.

Then jealousy imprinted its ugly feet. Halfway between the tree up which Sherman had chased him and the place where Sime Hanley pot-shot his doe, he ran across the recently made trail of his most hated rival.

It was another big tom, one of the very few in the high forest that, due entirely to remarkable fleetness of foot, bore none of the bobcat's usual scars. Moreover, on more than one occasion he had wooed and won a lady bobcat that his rival had marked for himself.

To compound both insult and injury, a second set of tracks told all able to read that the other tom was by no means wending a lonely way into the sunset. Accompanying him was one of the most alluring of all the lady bobcats. There was only one direction to choose.

The bobcat did not bound in pursuit of his arch foe and hoped-for lady love. Although bounding was very picturesque, it was also very likely to be noted by an enemy, who thereupon had all the time necessary to decide if he'd rather fight or run. The bobcat chose to walk, a more practical gait in this situation, since it presented the delightful possibility of approaching, creeping, leaping and disabling his enemy before the enemy even knew he was being followed.

The pursuer gauged his speed at a slightly faster pace than that of the pair. Presently he resorted to strategy.

The twain he followed swerved sharply north, and their reason for so doing was crystal clear to any bobcat who knew the ABCs of hunting, plus a little about this terrain. A short distance to the north was a thicket much frequented by turkeys. It followed, therefore, that although the two must be on their way to lower country, they were making a little detour with the fond hope of enjoying a turkey dinner first.

Whether or not they had any luck, they would not come down at the same place they went up. Three-quarters of a mile ahead, a south-sloping draw that offered the easiest and safest path to where the two wanted to go, also offered an ideal ambush in which the bobcat made himself comfortable.

If he had a virtue, it was patience. He preferred action, but he was past master of the art of inaction. Crouching on a rabbit's runway, or on a limb that overhung a deer path, he acted accordingly when a rabbit or deer came along. Until one appeared, which might be in five minutes or six hours, it was essential to stay absolutely quiet.

However, although there had been some rather long waits, presently it dawned on the bobcat that none had ever been this long. It was quite apparent that the other bobcat and his lady fair were not coming down this draw. However, it failed to dawn on the schemer that they could be anywhere else except still on the ledge. He set grimly out to look for them.

Having not the vaguest idea that the pair had departed hours ago by a different route and were now far down the slope, the bobcat continued to look. When he finally conceded that his quest was hopeless, which concession came immediately after another five-hour ambush, he found also that he was trapped.

As soon as he discovered that the drifts were too deep to let him go downslope—or much of anywhere else—he promptly climbed a tree. In no sense expressing philosophical acceptance of, or resignation to, a sorry plight, the tree was one method of moving about. Since he must eat if he would stay alive and there was no food here, the need for moving was rather evident.

Climbing far out on a branch, he leaped into the adjoining tree. Jumping from tree to tree and plowing through snow where there were no trees,

which necessarily involved numerous detours around drifts, did not prove the swiftest possible method for getting from one place to another. But eventually it brought the bobcat to a veritable honeycomb of holes in the snow. Deer hair was scattered profusely about the holes, all of which informed the bobcat that something besides sloppy housekeeping was in progress.

He had chanced upon the snow-covered remnants of one of Sime Hanley's deer. Burrowing mice had discovered it first and worked it over so thoroughly that, after he scraped snow aside, the bobcat found just enough venison for a scanty meal.

Deficient though it was in quantity, it was a royal feast compared with the rations that fell to his lot thereafter. Once he caught a mouse, another time a small bird, and once he chanced upon all that was left of a rabbit from which a hungry owl had already fed. Not lacking a growing conviction that he should have gone downslope while the going was good, shortly thereafter the bobcat was trapped by the second storm.

He chose to wait it out in a thicket, and since, of course, he did not move while the blizzard was in progress, it followed that he did not eat. When the storm finally broke, there was considerable doubt as to whether he ever again would eat.

Although his tribulations had not rendered him less savage, they had contributed markedly toward making his most savage impulse a state of mind only. While the weight he'd lost would have provided the owner of any reducing salon with sufficient reason to insert large advertisements in all available newspapers and raise his prices accordingly, unfortunately, the bobcat had lost strength in proportion. Far from struggling valiantly on, it was debatable as to whether he could even struggle out of his bed.

All unknowingly, the bobcat had waited out the storm within a pebble's toss of Ulysses' hay shed. It had been impossible to be aware of anything else while the snow fell and the wind screamed, but, with the first lull in both, the bobcat detected antelope nearby. In his present physical condition, a rabbit might have given the bobcat an unequal tussle; however, desperation loaned him strength to move forward.

Now it was eat antelope or be eaten by mice.

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Ulysses who had already waited out one storm, discovered that the second was no less irksome than the first. After he'd read as many chapters of *War and Peace* as he could absorb, and skimmed through nine light novels and cleaned the lodge and washed and mended clothes and given himself a haircut and wished he hadn't broken the record because even the saga of Old Paint would have provided a different sort of monotony, and he had thought of everything he'd do if he inherited nine million dollars and put Stonewall in a box when Sherman again displayed symptoms of cabin fever and tried to teach the whistling hawk to whistle a tune, he still found time hanging very heavy indeed.

There was some compensation in the lack of mental torment that had been present during the first storm. Everything that needed taking care of was nicely under control and very convenient to the caretaker.

Nevertheless, after a full night and a full day, Ulysses would have been delighted to do anything except what he was already doing. The paths that must be shoveled, an irksome and time-consuming chore on the previous occasion, now seemed a welcome escape from doing nothing at all.

In mid-morning of the second day, the storm first lulled and then ended. The sun that shone immediately thereafter, although welcome enough, did not inspire the ecstatic tailspin that had left Ulysses dizzy on the previous occasion. But the prospect of getting out and taking care resulted in a delight that soared to satisfying heights.

Glancing out the window in hopes that he'd have at least six feet of snow to shovel, Ulysses saw that he'd have to be content with a bit more than two. Not wholly disappointed, he donned jacket and cap and seized his trusty shovel.

As he approached the door, before which Sherman waited with eagerly wagging tail and an intense air of anxious anticipation, it became apparent to Ulysses that he was not alone in a desire for the great outdoors. Recalling the snowdrift that had piled against the back door—and had thereafter fallen on him—Ulysses avoided a repetition of that incident by opening the

door quickly and leaping back as he did so. Snow tumbled in, but not in the same quantity as before.

Gazing out the open door, he discovered, to his vast astonishment and temporary disappointment, that there was very little shoveling to be done. Robert E. Lee, The Third Cavalry and The Fifth Infantry were currently arrayed in front of the hay shed, sniffing hopefully for any choice morsels that might have been overlooked. But obviously they had not stayed there for the duration of the storm. Even though they were safe in a caretaker's care, the antelope had been too recently intent on taking care of themselves to regard snow complacently. While it was nice to have as much hay as they wanted, it was wise to have open paths upon which they might run, should running be in order. To that end, they'd trampled the paths already open.

Since, this time, he needn't sit on the doorstep until his master shoveled a path, Sherman voiced a glad whine and sprang outside. Ulysses, whose momentary disappointment was banished by the realization that paths already clear left him free for whatever else needed doing, began throwing snow out of the kitchen.

All of it was practically thrown when Sherman barked, an announcement that he'd discovered something else that his master had better come see right away. Ulysses shook off the tattered remnants of gloom and his spirits ascended into the stratosphere where they must abide to make him feel normal.

He threw the final shovelful of snow out of the kitchen and the shovel with it, ran quickly down the path—and achieved such an abrupt halt that his heels plowed twin furrows in the snow. A small tree stood beside the path. Sherman stood beside this, while, to the trunk of it, at almost exactly the same distance beyond the beagle's eager and as yet unscratched nose as he had previously climbed, clung the bobcat.

There was, however, a vast difference between the former and present occasions. Ulysses' first impression took the form of an urge to defend himself against a ravenous raider whose probable intention was to eat everything about the lodge that might prove edible. This was swiftly supplanted by an appreciation of things as they really were. Although he

did not recognize the bobcat, which is scarcely astonishing since the bobcat wouldn't even have recognized himself, he lost no time in comprehending its hardly robust condition. The first bobcat had disdained to ascend a discreet distance because he was undecided as to whether or not it would be a good idea to make dogburgers of Sherman. This one lingered near the ground simply because it lacked strength to climb.

That being so, the young caretaker instantly adjusted the bobcat's category from a ferocious raider to be met with battle to another entirely fitting subject that needed care. Of course, he was still something to be regarded with due caution, for, although the paws were feeble, there was no evidence that they were in other than working order. However, this erased no part of the fact that Ulysses had better start taking care of the starved creature.

Some preliminary meditation was essential before Ulysses decided how he might take care of anything that was so admirably fitted to reject a caretaker. In due course, he found a way. Rescuing his shovel, he repaired to the tool shed for a length of rope. Forming a noose in the latter and attaching it to the extreme tip of the former, he made sure by a practical test that the loop was long enough for its intended purpose but short enough to terminate a comforting ten inches from the shovel's opposite end.

Then, with a deftness that could not have been surpassed by the most expert rider ever to ride Old Paint, he snared the bobcat and pulled it from the tree. At once it became apparent that the ends of discretion would have been served by shortening the loop still more. Pulling the rope so tight that the only breaths he could draw were wheezing gasps, the outraged bobcat strained toward his audacious human captor. At the same time, he seemed to develop fourteen claws on each paw and managed to keep all of them flying at any part of Ulysses' anatomy they might reach.

This proved to be not entirely a disadvantage. While concentrating on scraping his enemy to shreds and devoting himself to that end with a steadfast singleness of purpose, it was necessary for the bobcat to go forward. In strategic retreat, Ulysses backed toward the kitchen door as his captive advanced in the same direction. Presently he was in the kitchen.

More than ever determined to take care, as soon as he could provide suitable accommodations, Ulysses found it necessary to tether the bobcat, which he did by wedging his end of the shovel under the stove, while quarters were readied.

Stonewall, who thought of waxing indignant at such an invasion of his privacy, promptly reconsidered. Although there was some doubt as to whether antelope dined on rabbits, there was no question at all concerning the favored place Stonewall and all his kin held on a bobcat's menu. He flew to the far end of the kitchen, hid behind a pile of wood and hoped that everybody would think he was gone.

Ulysses stocked the bobcat's quarters in the pantry with a dish of water. Considering a proper supply of food, his questing eye lighted upon the eight remaining tins of ham, a delicacy for which he'd been able to restrain his enthusiasm since that night when he and Stonewall had consumed an entire ham. When all else was ready, Ulysses fought his latest orphan of the storm into his selected quarters. Closing the sliding door, except for a crack just wide enough to let the rope protrude, he hastily cut it and even more hastily closed the crack.

It seemed to the satisfied Ulysses that he had handled the entire affair with great skill—until it occurred to him that there was one important problem still to solve. There was no avoiding that time when the bobcat, having recuperated after being properly taken care of, could no longer occupy his present quarters.

How was his kind custodian to let him go?

## The First Villain

With something pretty big attempted—and done—Ulysses finally went to bed with a pleasant, even rather smug, feeling that he had indeed earned a night's repose. For a required number of hours he enjoyed sound slumber. Then he became plagued by a dream.

He was lying in bed before the fireplace, drowsily contemplating patterns wrought by the early morning sun as it glanced from frosty windows. Sherman, as usual, lay beside him. Stonewall was pushing his dish about and making a great clatter that was slyly designed to attract Ulysses' attention to the fact that the jack rabbit needed some more oatmeal.

No part of the dream would have been as exciting as many Ulysses had enjoyed; in fact, it might even have been dull, except that he also dreamed he heard a rifle shot. He had not dreamed of anything killed or wounded, yet never before in his practically nineteen years had he been more shaken or afraid.

Presently he roused to the fact that he was not asleep at all, but awake. He was lying in bed with Sherman beside him; he was looking at the morning sun on frosted windows; he was listening to Stonewall's clatter; he *had* heard a rifle shot! Instead of galvanizing him into instant action, this realization exerted precisely the opposite effect and startled him into an inability to do anything at all.

That anyone should shoot a rifle was amazing enough—but why there was need for such shooting proved astounding. The shot had been very near the lodge. Now, if some chance traveler in this winter wilderness desired to make his presence known, wouldn't it have been as simple to come knock on the door?

The puzzled Ulysses presently worked out a reason for the shot. Someone had found himself lost in the wilderness. Well aware of some rather grisly possibilities attached to such a situation, but with commendable fortitude and courage unflinching, he had determined to get out or die trying. In the

process, he had become afflicted with snow blindness, another malady that Ulysses had discovered in a novel. Clinging to both courage and hope, he was firing his rifle on the chance someone might hear. Although he had been within spitting distance of the lodge when someone finally heard, how could a snow-blind man know that?

Ulysses' explanation was not exactly simple, but it was the only one that seemed plausible. With happy thoughts of the life that would be saved and the hope that would leap as soon as he ran to the door and called, the caretaker lost no time in dressing, running, opening the door and calling, "It's all right! You're safe!"

Such was the stark realism of the picture that had sprung into Ulysses' imagination, he was on the point of running to help the snow-blind traveler who had appeared in his thoughts when he took a second look. Instantly, the entire affair became more realistic and infinitely more stark.

Robert E. Lee, The Third Cavalry and eighty per cent of The Fifth Infantry had run to the farthest point of the longest cleared path and were now halted, casting apprehensive glances over their shoulders. The missing member of The Fifth Infantry lay quivering in a puddle of his own blood. Carrying a rifle and regarding the dying fawn with an air of vast satisfaction, was Sime Hanley.

Fully as gaunt, as tall and as weird as he had been when he first appeared at Ulysses' door, the only change was in his dress. To fortify himself against this colder weather, a second pair of trousers had been pulled over the first. He wore the same coat, that was still held together with the same strips of wire, but beneath it he had donned no fewer than four shirts. All were different colors and all seemed to be arranged so that the fabric of one covered the large holes in another. A pair of snowshoes somehow clung to Sime's feet.

Although clearly visible and not too complex, this tableau and the drama Ulysses had conjured up in his imagination were separated by a chasm of such depth and width that he needed additional mental gymnastics in order to reconcile the two. When the true facts came into proper focus,

Ulysses' next action became purely automatic. Reminding himself that he must control his fury but would see justice done, he advanced on Sime.

Dismally enough, Ulysses did not also remind himself that he was armed with a righteous cause and bare hands only, or that Sime had a rifle. Outraged by a crime so foul, he gave not a thought to arms; he knew only vaguely that Sime had a rifle. He only realized that he proposed to take into custody and thereafter punish—of course by due process of law—a thoroughly mean man.

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Repairing to his cabin as the storm began, Sime's bitter resentment began to grow when he compared the bloated rich, as represented by Ulysses, with the oppressed poor, as typified by one Sime. While the storm gathered fury, so did his twisted sense of injustice and oppression.

There had been plenty of sunny days for repairing his cabin, or even building a better one, between the first storm and the second, but Sime had been so very busy resting that, even if he had possessed the inclination, he would not have had time for menial labor. In truth, he hadn't thought about necessary repairs until the new snow, sifting through the same cracks that had been there the last time, revealed that they were still there. But the snow that fell into his cabin, and even made him shift his chair to a dry place when it started falling on him, gave momentum to his train of thought.

The poor get poorer and the rich get richer, he reminded himself, following the horrifying thought that he might even have to sweep the snow out unless a sufficient quantity to stop all cracks piled up on the roof. Snow fell into a poor man's cabin, he brooded, but was it falling into the lodge? The answer, a resounding no, increased his indignation.

As he nibbled on the sad remains of his last haunch of venison, which from time to time he was forced to do, since he had nothing else to nibble, the foul injustices he'd been asked to endure roused Sime to a pitch so feverish that he'd have gone to the lodge at once, except that one of his snowshoes was broken and fixing it represented no small amount of work. Later, although the clarion call to rise and be oppressed no more sounded

constantly and ever more loudly, he was glad that he had not yielded to his first mad impulse.

If he'd gone, he would have demanded nothing but asylum while the storm raged and an adequate store of food afterwards. He'd have received both, now he had neither. However, as his resentment of the heavy heel which ruthless plutocrats are forever grinding into the faces of the oppressed poor mounted, the very fact that he had nothing else to do forced him to think. The picture that evolved from his thoughts became steadily more interesting.

Sime had deduced from his observations during his first visit that Ulysses was the rankest and rawest of tenderfeet. He had been installed as caretaker solely because the proprietors of the Arcadia Sportsmen's Club were happy to find anyone who'd take the job. Coupling this with the fact that more snow than usually fell during the entire winter would be on the ground when this current storm ended, and that the deep drifts would most effectively prevent anyone coming from Conifer to see how Ulysses was doing, brought about some interesting conclusions.

What was more natural than that a tenderfoot, trying desperately to keep warm, would build a very hot fire? Who would be amazed if, under such conditions, a tenderfoot burned the lodge and himself, too. Since there'd be nothing except ashes left anyhow, who would know that, before the lodge burned, it had been most expertly looted?

This master plan would not only eliminate the injustices inflicted on the poor by the rich. It would eliminate the rich too, and, at the same time, reward Sime handsomely enough for his trouble. He wondered how he'd managed to hide his genius all these years. Although the carrying out of Sime's plan meant, most annoyingly, that he must first repair the broken snowshoe, he finally managed it and set out with grim determination to let nothing turn him back. Nearing the lodge, he qualified this resolution to this extent—nothing would turn him back if he could get all the necessary advantages. Failing, he could always resort to his original scheme and beg for a handout.

However, despite the fact that they came as a complete surprise, since he hadn't even suspected that there were any in the high forest, nothing at all could have prevented his shooting an antelope that came within range of his trusty rifle. Of course, he was ninety per cent sure that he could steal everything worth having and cover his tracks by burning both lodge and caretaker, but he could not forget the ten per cent doubt. If everything else went wrong, an antelope dead meant meat on a table that was in sad need of some.

This was the situation when Ulysses came forth to conquer. With victory in his very grasp, a single forward step would put him in a position to grapple with Sime, if there must be grappling. Instead, suddenly and quite painfully, he was hit in the ribs by a wholly unanticipated but most tangible obstruction. Glancing down, he saw the unwavering muzzle of Sime's rifle.

Ulysses looked up, then to the left, then to the right, then back down. His second inspection verified a first opinion that a rifle's bore exceeds by an unbelievable degree the diameter of a ten-inch pipe. But, even though it seemed prudent to halt, the young caretaker's indignation soared to stratospheric heights.

"You—" he began, but, because he could think of no adjectives that might apply to a creature so low that he'd shoot one of The Fifth Infantry, he said no more.

"Turn raound," Sime ordered.

Ulysses found his voice. "Give me that rifle!" he blazed. "I'm going to take you in to the game warden! You—" Again failing to find adequate descriptive terms, he grew silent.

"Turn raound, an' I means hit!" Sime snapped.

The boy had no difficulty seeing that the rifle was cocked. When Sime's right hand, the index finger of which was on the trigger, tightened perceptibly, it became most evident that the fellow was not in a frivolous mood. Since Ulysses was unable to think of any arguments more powerful than a cocked and loaded rifle, he turned around. His spirit remained

both unshackled and unconquered, but the most thunderous expression of defiance he could think of was a lame, "You'll never get away with this!"

"Git in the haouse," Sime directed.

As the directions were emphasized by a poke in the small of his back that almost sent him stumbling, Ulysses went in the house. Robert E. Lee and the surviving antelope stamped nervous feet. Sherman, who was pretty sure he didn't like any part of this but who did not know what to do about it, padded beside his master. Stonewall hopped under the stove.

Sime, who had divested himself of his snowshoes, hooked a foot under a kitchen chair and pulled it away from the table. "Set daown," he ordered. Ulysses obeyed—and he did not disobey when ordered to stick his hands behind him.

Presently, he could not doubt that he'd be sitting down, with his hands behind him, for at least the immediate future. He became aware of rope, which Sime must have produced from his coat, or one of his pairs of pants, or one of his various shirts, snaking about and then biting into his wrists. When they were tied in a fashion that suited him, Sime lashed Ulysses' feet to the chair legs and, just for good measure, passed a few strands of rope about his body. Then he left the room.

Sherman, sympathetic concern in his eyes, came to sit before his master and stare up at him while he strained at his bonds, discovering in the process that they had not been applied by an amateur. In time, he could work loose, but he'd need plenty of it.

Presently, becoming aware that Sime was going out the open kitchen door, Ulysses turned his head and saw that he was burdened with as much of the contents of the gun cabinet as he was able to carry. The awful truth burst upon him. This man, not content with shooting one of The Fifth Infantry in cold blood, was stealing, too!

"Bring those back!" Ulysses demanded. "You'll go to jail for this!"

In addition to the fact that it would have been pleasanter to look upon, a brick wall would have furnished a response as articulate. Whatever else Sime had in mind, obviously he had no intention of bandying words.

Ulysses watched with growing horror, to which he added a growing wonder, as Sime carried load after load to the tool shed and stacked it in the snow.

Finally, still without finding it necessary to address or even glance at Ulysses, he caught up a gallon can of kerosene. Unscrewing the stopper, he spilled the contents about the kitchen and threw down the empty can.

Ulysses' wonder became horror only. While the kerosene soaked in, Sime, who seemed to know the exact layout of the lodge, transported available food supplies to his now mountainous cache. Finally he turned to the pantry where the canned goods were stored—and matches.

Cold sweat erupted on the boy's brow and he gasped, "No!"

Unswerving, and unheeding, Sime inserted two fingers in the proper apertures. With a grand sweep of his arm and an appropriate flourish he flung the sliding door wide open. Ulysses struggled madly, but vainly, with his bonds. Even as he sank back to stare, he could not help drawing certain conclusions. Never again would he have reason to wonder whether a large bobcat that is too weak to present a really formidable resistance when in a state of near starvation, regains marvelous strength and agility after it has consumed an entire ham. Nor would he ever doubt that such a bobcat, if enclosed in a dark pantry, becomes angry indeed. Finally, should anyone ever ask him, he was in a position to declare authoritatively that a large and angry bobcat can inflict unpleasant damage on a man.

Fortunately for Sime, he was still pretty much in one piece when the bobcat spied the open door and streaked through it.

## Finale

This report would be unforgivably incomplete if it failed to present an account of what happened to Ulysses and at least the outstanding characters who shared in the momentous events of that stirring winter.

When, after a season of record snows, Pete Corson and his friends finally managed to break through to their lodge, they hoped they'd find Ulysses alive. They found him and Sherman and a herd of antelope about the kitchen door, as well as a crippled cow elk that their caretaker was taking care of and Stonewall and three jack rabbits and two ordinary cottontails and seven turkeys and diverse other creatures, all in various stages of being taken care of, here and there about the premises. Immediately Ulysses was promoted from winter caretaker to General Manager of the Arcadia Sportsmen's Club.

Of course, a handsome increase in salary accompanied the promotion. Ulysses, who'd have been happy to go on working at his old rate of pay, nevertheless found reason to be most happy with more, since, when he went down into the grasslands and met a rancher's beautiful young daughter, he did not hesitate to be very serious indeed when describing the delights of the high forest. Naturally, she became his wife, whereupon the Club members built them a snug little chalet all their own. When three sons, all of whom want to be exactly like their father; and three daughters, all of whom hope to be as lucky as their mother when they marry—proof sufficient that Ulysses is no longer a fugitive from a jinx—came to live with them, Ulysses found it necessary to add rooms.

Although he lived through the winter, the bobcat survived by such a narrow margin that, as soon as the snow melted and he could travel, he did so. He kept right on doing so until he arrived in a desert country where snow is such a rarity that nobody's even mentioned it for fifty-six years. There he has been ever since.

The Third Cavalry and what was left of The Fifth Infantry heard and heeded the call of the wild when spring came, but Robert E. Lee observed

that civilization is not without advantages and decided to stick with it. He's still at the lodge, although, for a time, there was some danger that he'd be exiled. With a chivalry worthy of his name, he never hurt a lady. But at first he was simply unable to resist the tempting target offered by some of the more portly among the Club's gentlemen members when they stooped over to pick up something or other. Fortunately, he outgrew that playful little trick. When the frenzied pace of modern life becomes too much, he takes a vacation in the wilderness. Nobody knows exactly what he does there, but since young antelope bucks, all of which look exactly like Robert E. Lee, are appearing in large numbers, some people suspect.

Sime Hanley is also at the lodge. After he served his term in jail, he came back up to his native country. Ulysses, who never could turn away from any forlorn creature, offered him a job. At this deadly insult, Sime stamped off to his cabin and refused to speak to anyone until he got hungry. Since he could not go pot-hunting because the game warden had thoughtfully confiscated his rifle, he then took the job. Finding, to his boundless astonishment, that he was still alive after two trial days of work, he wondered why he hadn't started earning an honest living thirty years sooner. Recently, when he saw a pothunter shoot a doe, he told Ulysses, who in turn told the game warden—and gave Sime a raise.

Sherman's there also. Too old to do much except doze on Ulysses' doorstep, he dreams happy dreams of a glorious youth. He too became a father, and, as befits proper beagles, most of his offspring chose a career of rabbit hunting. Ulysses never has difficulty getting premium prices for any that do not appeal to the Club Members, for they are premium rabbit dogs.

They should be, considering that they were educated by Stonewall. After scheming all winter to get the best of Sherman—and never coming even near success—he consoled himself by teaching Sherman's children that the best of them couldn't come within a country mile of a really smart rabbit. In so doing, of course, he taught them the tricks in every superior rabbit's bag and they never have the least trouble with inferior ones.

However, and inevitably, certain of Sherman's children favored their father's side and aspired to his lofty ambitions. It's said that those beagles

can give a full hour's start to and still outhunt the second best pack of big game dogs in the whole Southwest.

Jim Kjelgaard

was born in New York City. Happily enough, he was still in the pre-school age when his father decided to move the family to the Pennsylvania mountains. There young Jim grew up among some of the best hunting and fishing in the United States. He commented: "If I had pursued my scholastic duties as diligently as I did deer, trout, grouse, squirrels, etc., I might have had better report cards!"

Jim Kjelgaard has worked at various jobs—trapper, teamster, guide, surveyor, factory worker and laborer. When he was in his late twenties he decided to become a full-time writer. He succeeded in his wish. Several hundred of his short stories and articles and quite a few books for young people have been published.

He has listed his favorite hobbies as hunting, fishing, lifelong interest in conservation, dogs and questing for new stories. He has described some of these searches in this way: "Story hunts have led me from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Arctic Circle to Mexico City. Stories, like gold, are where you find them. You may discover one three thousand miles from home or, as in *The Spell of the White Sturgeon* and *Hi Jolly!*, right on your own door step."

[The end of *Ulysses and His Woodland Zoo* by Jim Kjelgaard]