

The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

By BOOTH TARKINGTON and HARRY LEON WILSON

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Henry Crech in his own right. The earl had buried himself in the Pall Mall Gazette and was apparently oblivious to such minor details as an Italian peasant row.

But to Horace in his highly strung state as was to be expected, the news made an impression. It will take about all your share of the estate, but it's worth a hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Ethel lifted the book to the level of her eyes. "What better use could be made of a fortune, Huddy, than to maintain the state and high condition of so ancient a house?"

He looked at her affectionately and took her hand. "It does seem impossible that we were born in Indiana, doesn't it, sister?"

And the tones of his voice were those of incredulity.

She smiled at him fondly. "But isn't it good that the father made his pile as the Americans say, and let us come over here while we were young to find the nobler things, Huddy—the nobler things?"

"The nobler things—the nobler things! Why, sis, when old Hawcastle dies I'll be saying offhand, you know, 'My sister, the Countess of Hawcastle'."

For a moment Ethel remained thoughtful and then turned to her brother. "You don't imagine that father's friend, this old Mr. Pike, will be—will be queer, do you?"

"Well, the governor himself was father raw, you know. This is probably a harmless old chap, easy to handle."

"I wish I knew. I shouldn't like America's family to think we had queer connections of any sort, and he might turn out to be quite shockingly American. I—I couldn't bear that, Huddy."

There was a note of genuine pathos in her voice, and her brother responded instantly.

Condition of nerves the uproar was aggravating, and he called to Mariano, who was busily setting the table again: "Mariano, how long is this noise to continue?"

The maître d'hôtel shrugged his expressive shoulders and replied: "How can I know, m'lord? We can do nothing."

Michele, who was assisting his chief, smiled covertly at the young man. "The populace that will not be de-part so long as there shall be the chance once again to observe the North American who pulled the automobile with the donkeys?"

"Merci!" cried Mariano, with vigor. "He have confuse me. He have confuse everybody. He will not be content with the dejeuner until he have the ham and the egg, and he will have the egg cooked upon but one of two sides, and how in the name of heaven can we tell which of these two sides?"

Mariano was about to continue his grumbling complaint when from the doorway of the hotel there came an interruption. The courier who had spoken with him earlier in the morning stood there and voiced but one word. "Garçon!" he said softly. But it was like the command of a cavalry officer in its effect, for instantly the maître d'hôtel and his aid stood at attention like trained veterans. The earl evidently was not too deeply immersed to catch the sudden silence, for he looked up from his paper and observed:

"Upon my soul! Who's this?"

"Mariano did not turn his head nor make his attitude of a cavalry officer, but answered obediently: "It is the Herr von Groellerhagen, a German gentleman, m'lord."

Hawcastle turned with an amused smile to Horace.

"The man who owns the automobile. Probably made a fortune in sausage."

From within the hotel there came the tones of a heavy though cultivated voice detaining quietly: "Stein, nein, Ethel! Ich mach' nicht."

And instantly there came down the steps the German gentleman aforesaid. He was tall and of a commanding presence. He wore a grayish beard and an automobile cap that half covered the eyes that burned with the authority of generations beneath. Without it was a kindly face, and though there was a stern countenance in the figure, there was genial humor and even tenderness too. By no authority could he have been considered well dressed. His clothes seemed rather to have been thrown on negligently.

The little party at the table regarded him with hostility, and Lady Crech turned up her aristocratic nose.

"What a dreadful person!" she said and turned again to her paper.

The German walked sedately across the terrace to the table where the two visitors still stood at attention and fixed his hand to a curt but military

way folks are neighbors?" Horace rattled his paper sharply and glanced angrily at the disturber of his harmony. The German went on. "But you have no leisure class," he objected, and Daniel smiled.

"We've got a pretty good sized colored population," he replied. The German lifted his hand protestingly. "I mean no aristocracy—no great old families such as we have, that go back to the middle ages."

Pike laughed seriously, if one might imagine such a thing, and returned instantly: "Well, I expect if they go back that far they might just as well sit down and stay there. No, sir; the poor man in my country don't have to pay any taxes to keep up a lot of useless kings and earls and first grooms of the bed-chamber and second ladies in waiting and I don't know what all. If anybody wants our money for nothing, he's got to show energy enough to steal it. Doc, I wonder a man like you doesn't emigrate."

" Bravo!" cried Von Groellerhagen, with keen delight, while Hawcastle turned with an angry gesture to Horace. "Your countryman does seem to be rather down on us!"

Horace flushed with mortification and returned: "This fellow is distinctly of the lower orders. We should cut him as completely in the States as here."

Immediately following the service came Pike, clad in a linen duster and a straw hat that was decorated with a bright ribbon. If there was anything distinctive about him it was his scar, which was of that type known as Waterloo and much affected by artists in the east and every one in the west. He carried a towel with him and dropped it in one hand as he glanced about.

"How horrible!" she said, and the Frenchman batted her shoulder reassuringly. "Immediately following the service came Pike, clad in a linen duster and a straw hat that was decorated with a bright ribbon. If there was anything distinctive about him it was his scar, which was of that type known as Waterloo and much affected by artists in the east and every one in the west. He carried a towel with him and dropped it in one hand as he glanced about."

"Law!" he observed, started, but amused. "I didn't know there were folks here. Reckon you'll have to excuse me, Horace," he called, tossing the towel into Michele's hands and walking over to the table. Hawcastle, Lady Crech and Horace stared unbelievingly. Ethel hid her face, with an other little shudder, as Pike, without removing his dust coat, sat down opposite the German.

"You are a true patriot," laughed Von Groellerhagen. "You allow no profane hand to cook your national dish. I trust you will be as successful with that wicked motor of mine."

"Lord bless your soul, doc, I've put a self binder together after a pony engine had bucked it halfway through brick depot," said Pike genially, tucking his napkin inside the collar of his shirt and falling to on the ham and eggs. At the table where sat the Hawcastle party there were expressions of pained agony.

"You have studied mechanics at the university, then?" went on Von Groellerhagen. "Is it not so?"

"Unsurprisingly," returned Pike. "Not much. On the old man's farm."

Hawcastle turned at once to Horace. "Without any disrespect to you, my dear fellow, what terrific boundaries most of your fellow countrymen are!"

Horace mentally writhed under the veiled taunt, but turned quickly with an assent in effect.

"Do you wonder that sis and I have emancipated ourselves?" he asked, glancing at the noble earl, with a softened glance as he thought of the dollars, replied blandly. "Not at all, my dear boy, I and turned once more to his paper.

Von Groellerhagen glanced at the three with slight amusement and held out the caviare to Pike.

"Can I persuade you to try one of my national dishes?" he asked—"caviare?"

"Caviare?" replied Pike. "I've heard of it, but I thought it was Russian."

"It is also German," answered the other, recovering himself from the start he had given. "Will you not?"

Daniel looked him straight in the eye quizzically.

"I'd never get into the legislature again if any of the boys heard of it," he remarked, "but I guess I'm far enough from home to take a few chances."

Quite slowly and hesitatingly he placed some of the caviare in his mouth and then turned a vacant and pained look upon the German. The latter smiled and observed quickly:

"You do not like it? I am sorry. Here! A taste of the vodka will destroy the caviare."

Mariano quickly filled a glass and passed it to Daniel, who sipped it eagerly. This time he sat bolt upright in the chair and exhibited real distress. Then he quickly seized another forkful of the caviare and ate it heartily.

"But I thought you did not like the caviare?" said the German.

Daniel breathed quickly for an instant, and the flush died from his face. "That was to take away the taste of the vodka," he said weakly, and Von Groellerhagen lifted his head and laughed heartily.

"I like my hat to you, my friend," he said, and Pike looked at him genially.

"You never worked on a farm, did you, doc?" he asked, and the German admitted that such a pleasure had been denied him.

"I guess that's right," went on Daniel reflectively. "Talk about things to drink! Harvest time and the women folks coming out from the house with a two gallon jug of ice cold butter-milk."

Horace shuddered convulsively, and Von Groellerhagen asked:

"You still enjoy these delights?"

"No, sir, I need to go up to our county seat and begin to practice law, ten years ago," Pike answered. "Things don't taste the same in the city."

"Then you do not like your city?" "Like it! Why, sir, for public buildings and architecture I wouldn't trade my state insane asylum for the worst school rule in Europe—not for hygiene and comfort."

"And four people?" "And four people?" "And four people? Why, out my best on earth. Why, out my best on earth."

"Is there any possibility you mean Granger-Simpson?" he asked, with elaborate sarcasm, but this was lost on Daniel.

"No, sir; just plain Simpson. Granger's middle name. That's for old Jed Granger, grandfather on their mother's side. I want to see 'em both, but it's the girl I'm really looking for."

"Will you be good enough to state any possible reason why Miss Granger-Simpson should see you?" and Pike started in genuine astonishment.

"Reason?" he reiterated. "Why, yes, I'm her guardian."

The effect of this simple statement was terrifying. Ethel recoiled dizzily and was supported by Mme. de Champligny. The earl rose to his feet, and Horace staggered back.

"What?" he cried. "Yes, sir, went on Pike—Daniel, Woodhouse Pike, attorney at law, Kokomo, Ind."

Horace fell back from him in horrified amazement. "I shall ask her," he began weakly and shamefacedly, "if she will consent to be married to me in amusements in his turn."

"Interview?" he said. "Why, I want to talk to her!"

Hawcastle, with some of his finer feelings aroused, picked up his sister-in-law with his eyes, much as a clever bootlegger picks up her feminine guests at a dinner, and arose, turning to Pike.

"This shall make no difference to us, my child," he said, and turning sharply, took Lady Crech by the arm and left the terrace. Pike looked at Horace pityingly.

"Don't you understand?" he said. "I'm her guardian!"

For a fleeting instant Horace stared at him and then dropped his chin and walked away.

"I shall never hold up my head again," he said.

The sudden horror of the revelation that Horace had drawn forth bore down upon Ethel's mind with a crushing weight.

To her artificial understanding the disgrace was more than she could ever hope to bear, and Horace's expressed thought that he should never be able to hold up his head again was but a vindication of her own.

Surely it would have been bad enough, she told herself, if this fearful thing had come upon them privately, but to have it appear in the full light of day and in the very hearing of the family of the man she was about to marry was too cruel.

And with an inward groan she leaned for a moment against the terrace wall where the countess had left her. When the first astonishment had passed and she had time to realize what had occurred, events that had seemed but fleeting impressions rose up before her in all their vivid nakedness.

With a bracing of her spirit she stepped forward, resolutely and came up close behind Pike as he stood with drooping jaw gazing in perplexity after the retreating Horace. Ethel cast a look of loathing upon the straight back of the man, the stick that upheld his end in the battle against oppression in several wars, came back to her with a rush, and she decided to see this awful man and give him to understand that he must go away at once and never insult her again by his sneering and vulgar presence. Such business as he had to be transacted could be done through an intermediary.

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"Reason? Why, yes, I'm her guardian!" he said, and she—that is, they—will probably want me to have supper with them."

The horror was closing fast around the other party, and they simply stared.

"Do not trouble for me," observed the German. "Your young people—they have a villa?"

"No," answered Pike, with a smile. "They're right here in this hotel."

Horace, with fear lending wings to his scattered senses, sprang to his feet and began to walk toward the grove. Pike looked up.

"I'd better ask," he said, and then, observing Horace, went on addressing him: "Hey, there! Can you?" He stared at the young man, paying no attention to the question on his way. Pike raised his voice.

"Excuse me, son, ain't you an American?" As Horace paid no more attention he turned to Mariano. "Here, waiter! Tell that gentleman I want to speak to him!"

Mariano sprang after the retreating Horace.

"Fardon, m'lord, the gov'eman, he wish to speak to you."

"Excuse me, m'lord, the gov'eman, he wish to speak to you."

"What gentleman?" he demanded, and Pike regarded him calmly.

"I thought from your looks," he proceeded quietly, "you might be an American."

Horace platted himself squarely before his interrogator.

"Are you speaking to me?" he demanded haughtily.

"I shouldn't be surprised," said Pike genially. "Ain't you an American?"

"I happen to have been born in the States," replied Horace aggressively, and Pike smiled quizzically.

"Well, that was luck," he commented, and as Horace turned again to go he said: "Hold on a minute. I'm looking for some Americans here, and I expect you know 'em—boy and girl named Simpson!"

"I don't see how that's possible," she said, and she waved her hand indignantly.

"Will you please sit down?" she said, and Pike made an awkward bow.

"Yes, m'am," he replied meekly, with the faintest accent on the last word, and obediently took the chair that Daniel had vacated so precipitously. She shuddered at the word he had used and glanced nervously at the hat he was holding in his hands.

"Are you really my guardian?" she asked at last, with a trace of heat.

"Yes, m'am," he answered, "I'm her guardian."

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"no, m'am, not without seeing the young man," answered Pike resolutely.

"Well," he said, "I've got the papers in my grip. I expect that—"

"Oh, I know it!" she interrupted abruptly. "It's only that we didn't fancy we didn't expect—"

She paused and he went on: "I expect you thought I'd be considerably older."

"Not only that."

"And I guess you thought I'd neglected you a good deal. There was a touch of remorse in his tone, and he looked idly at the hat he held. "And it did look like a server coming to see you—but I couldn't hardly manage the time to get away. You see, being trustee of your share of the estate I don't hardly have a fair show at my law practice. But when I got your letter eleven days ago I say to myself, 'Here, Daniel Woodhouse Pike, you old shellback, you've just got to take time. John Simpson trusted you with his property, and he's done more—he's trusted you to look out for her, and how she's come to a kind of jump of place in her life—she's thinking of getting married—so you just pack your grip and hike out over there and stand by her.'"

During the last half of his speech there was a tone of affectionate regard, at which she brightened.

"I quite fall to look out for your point of view," she said frigidly. "Perhaps I had best make it clear to you that I am no longer thinking of getting married."

"Well, Lord 'a' mercy!" ejaculated Pike, leaning back in his chair and smiling at her, but she affected not to notice the lighter tone and went on: "I mean I have decided upon it. The ceremony is to take place in a fortnight."

Pike brought the front feet of his chair down with a crash.

"Well, I declare!" he cried.

"I shall dispense with all delays," she went on, and Pike regarded her solemnly for a moment.

"Well, I don't know as I could say anything against that. He must be a mighty nice fellow, and you must think a heap of him." He sighed. "That's the way it should be." He looked at her. "And you're happy?"

"Distinctly!" said Ethel decisively.

Pike looked over the bme way, and then his gaze traveled to where Horace had been standing, and with a start he turned to her again, speaking eagerly:

"It ain't that fellow I was talking with, yonder?"

And she voiced an indignant protest. "That was my brother!"

"Lord 'a' mercy!" ejaculated Daniel and then recovered himself. "But, then, I wouldn't remember him. He couldn't have been more than twelve when you was home last. Of course I'd 'a' known you—"

"How?" demanded Ethel. "You couldn't have seen me since I was a child."

"From your picture, though now I see it ain't so much like you," he answered, and she stepped forward, with astonishment.

"You have a photograph of me?"

"The last time I saw your father alive he gave it to me—to look at."

"And you remembered—"

"Yes, m'am."

A look of incredulity passed over Ethel's face, and she replied:

"It does not strike me as possible. However, we will dismiss the subject."

"Well, if you'd like to introduce me to your—"

"To my brother?"

"No, m'am; to your—to the young man."

"To Mr. St. Aubyn?" cried Ethel, recalling a step. "I think it quite unnecessary."

"I'm afraid I can't see it that way. I'll have to have a couple of talks with him, sort of look him over, so to speak."

"We could have been spared this—the mortification."

"I won't stay around here appointing your fun any longer than it can help—only just for that and to get letter for me from England."

Ethel bit her lip wearily.

"I do not see that you need have come at all. We could have been spared this—the mortification."

"You mean I mortify you? Why, I—I can't see how."

"In a hundred ways," she replied, "every way you can."

"That common person who is with you?"

"He isn't common. You only think so because he's with me," returned Daniel sadly, looking down.

"Who is he?" demanded Ethel sharply.

"He told me his name, but I can't remember it. I call him 'doc'."

"It doesn't matter. What does matter is that you needn't have come. You could have written your consent."

"That!" he groaned. "Seven hundred and fifty thousand dollars!"

"Precisely that!" said Ethel.

"Well, he has made you care for him," said Daniel. "I guess he must be the prince of the world. He must be a great man. I expect you're right about me not meeting him. I probably wouldn't stack up very high alongside a man that's big enough for you to think so much of as you do him. Why, I'd have to squeeze every bit of property your pa left you."

"Is it your property?" she stared at him.

"I've worked pretty hard to take care of it for you," he answered gently, and instantly she regretted the sharp speech.

"Forgive me," she pleaded. "It was unworthy of me—unworthy of the higher and nobler things that life calls me to live up to—that I shall live up to. The money means nothing to me. I'm not thinking of that. It is a necessary form."

Pike looked at her keenly.

"Have you talked with Mr. St. Aubyn about this settlement—this present you want to make to him?" he asked.

"No, with him."

"I thought not," he went on amusedly. "You'll see. He wouldn't take it if I'd let you give it to him. A fine man like that wants to make his own way. Mighty few men like to have fun poked at them about living on their wives' money."

"Oh, I can't make you understand!" cried Ethel despairingly. "A settlement isn't a gift."

"Then how'd you happen to decide that just a hundred and fifty thousand dollars was what you wanted to give him?" he demanded.

"It was Mr. St. Aubyn's father who fixed the amount," replied Ethel despondently.

"His father! What's he got to do with it?"

"He is the Earl of Hawcastle, the head of the ancient house."

"And he asks you for it in so many words?"

"And your young man knows it?"

"I tell you, Mr. Pike, I have not discussed it with Mr. St. Aubyn."

Pike laughed.