The Man From Home

A Novelization of the Play of the Same Name

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This romance deals with a curious admixture of American plainness and European high life; with a young Indiana girl dazzled by a title and in the clutches of a quartet of sharpers headed by an impecunious British peer; with the girl's Anglomaniac brother, a Russian noble in disguise, an escaped Russian convict and a faithless wife, and, most important of all, with the girl's shrewd, witty, courageous, resourceful guardian, Daniel Voorhees Pike of Kokomo. Daniel loves the Indiana girl and is determined to save her from the sharpers even against her own will. Read and you will learn how Daniel, with but a single friend to aid him, faced a most difficult dilemma and why he figured so prominently in an international romance in which heraldry was more important than hearts and cupidity far more conspicuous than Cupid.

CHAPTER I.

"IT'S A GIRL!"

HIS feet on the desk of the office in the Central Bank building, the gaunt young man with the stern features and the kindly gray eyes that always seemed a perpetual rebuke to the face in which they were set ruminated over the letter he held in his hand. His back was to the door—a half glass door which was also the main and only entrance to the room and which bore upon its translucent surface in ragged letters, worn by the polishing the glass had undergone, the words, "Daniel Voorhees Pike, Attorney at Law."

Pike himself had a queer twist of feature, a sort of whimsicality that pervaded the very atmosphere about him, and the smile with which he regarded the letter he held had a world of reminiscence and sadness in it.

As he gazed at it the letter seemed to fade into nothingness, and in its place there rose the picture of a day years before, a day that caused the dingy walls of the office to become tenuous and gauzy, and through the gauze he seemed to see another office—a ramshackle sort of place, with a tin sign showing through the window which informed the passerby that real estate was the commodity dispensed within. To Pike the picture grew yet more distinct, and in the broken bottom cane chair he saw the figure of a heavy faced man in his shirt sleeves engaged in smoking a corncob pipe.

In another corner of the room he could see a red headed boy poring over a pine table, laboriously copying in a round hand some title deeds. Then, through the reaches of the past, he seemed to hear the heavy faced man remove the pipe from his mouth and heard him speak.

"Dan," he said, "it's a girl!"

And he heard the gasp the boy gave forth as he turned about on his stool

"Show her to Dan."

and looked with startled eyes into the kindly blue ones that glimmered into his own.

"A—girl!" he seemed to hear the boy say. "A little girl, Mr. Simpson?"

In his fancy he saw the big man nod, saw him place the pipe back in his teeth and extend his two palms until they were a foot or so apart.

"A girl, Dan," he heard. "'bout so long, Dan, and purtier than all get out. An' she's goin' to be a big responsibility, my boy. We'll have to sell a heap of lots to pay what she's goin' to cost, Dan—a whole heap of lots."

And gradually the picture seemed to fade away, and, like a dissolving view, its place was taken by another the picture of a half timbered house that stood back among some trees at the corner of Main and Center streets. He could see the worn steps leading up to the veranda and himself approaching half fearfully along the gravel walk that led in from the rusty gate.

On the veranda sat the big man with the heavy features and the corncob pipe, and he heard the voice again bidding him come up. And then there was a call to some one within, and a woman emerged with a white bundle in her arms.

"Show her to Dan," he heard the man's voice say, and then, when the woman had removed a bit of the flannel covering from the little face and he had looked upon it, startled, abashed and marvelously choking as to the throat, the big voice went on again:

"She's going to be Ethel, Dan, that bundle of infancy. And maybe some of these days she'll be getting herself in a tight place, and it's going to be up to you, Dan, to help her out, and you're going to promise me that you'll do it, boy. Horace, the other kid, he'll grow up maybe to have sense, and he'll look out for himself, but it's a tough place for girls, Dan—a mighty tough place."

He could almost hear the hushed voice in which the boy had given the

"SHE'S GOING TO MARRY THE HON. ALMERIC ST. AUBYN."

required promise and the awe with which he heard that the newest atom of humanity to arrive was already motherless, and then the picture faded again. Then came a succession of similar views.

He saw the dingy real estate office grow into a respectable brick building, and then into a handsome stone edifice, and the heavy featured man turn grayer and grayer and more somber and more hardworking, and he could remember the day when the tiny Ethel was brought to the office for the first time and of the manner in which she began to grow up. He recalled the day when she reached the mature age of twelve and of how he had presented to her a Bible for a gift and of the manner in which he had blushed for all his twenty-five years.

And then he recalled the day when John Simpson had confided to him that the "kids" were to be given advantages and were to be sent abroad to school. There came a blank after that, but he recalled as if it had been but yesterday the feeling with which he had gone off into a corner and wrestled with the grief that had beset him. He could even see the fluttering hand that waved to him from the car window as the train took her and her brother away.

Suddenly the door behind him opened and shut quickly, and quick steps caused him to drop his feet to the floor. He turned and found a visitor at his elbow.

"Dan," said the newcomer, "it's all yours. Jenkins just got a telegram that the K. and G. has decided to offer you the representation for this end of the state."

"That so?" responded Pike simlessly.

"Of course it's so, man!" replied the other, shaking him vigorously by the shoulder. "Wake up, can't you? It's worth fifteen thousand a year to you!"

Pike turned quizzical eyes upon his friend and folded the letter he held in his hand.

"Much obliged to you, Tom," he said. "I guess I'm kind of upset today. Got a letter here that—jolted me a little. I'm thinking of going away for a spell."

"Going away!" ejaculated his friend with wide eyes. "Going away! Where?"

"I guess I'll take a trip across the water," replied Pike dreamily. "Always wanted to see those foreign parts, those Venices and Romes and Londons. Must be a queer tribe over there, Tom. Not much like us plain folks here, eh? Lots of high and mighty dukes and earls and things and coats of arms and crowns and coaches with white horses, eh?"

Tom Perkins sat down in a chair with a gasp of astonishment. He stared at his friend with frank amazement written on his face and opened his mouth twice before his lips formed the words.

"Europe!" he said at last.

"Europe," he replied. "Say, Tom, you remember Jim Cooley? They sent Jim over there, didn't they? Made him vice consul or something over in London? I'd maybe get a chance to see Jim and talk to him about—about old times."

His voice died down, and he regarded the wall again.

"Never happened to hear of folks over there of the name of—of Hawcastle, did you, Tom?" he went on. "I don't know what sort of business they are in, but I guess they're well to do. Never happened to hear of them, eh?"

Perkins shook his head, and Pike went on:

"Maybe I'll write to Jim Cooley and ask him about these people. Jim 'd be likely to know 'em, I guess. Vice consul must be a pretty big bug over there."

"Law case?" asked Perkins suddenly.

"Sort of," answered Pike quietly. "I don't know that I'd call it just that. Perhaps the trip would be a change anyway. And I'd like to see this man Hawcastle."

"Where does this Hawcastle live?" asked Perkins.

"England. Got a house he calls Hawcastle Hall."

"What about the K. and G.?" asked Perkins suddenly.

"I guess the K. and G. will have to wait awhile."

Perkins stood up resolutely and faced his friend.

"There's something wrong with you, Dan," he said emphatically. "There's something mighty wrong. It ain't like you to go running off this way unless there's something behind it."

He stopped, for Pike was whistling softly to himself, whistling like the man who is striving to recall some tune that is only half forgotten. Then he turned to Perkins.

"Remember that old tune, Tom," he asked—"Sweet Genevieve?"

"Get out!" snapped Perkins. "That's a million years old. Why don't you keep up to date if you're going in for music? What do you care about 'Sweet Genevieve, anyway?'"

"I used to know somebody that sang it once long ago," said Pike quietly. "I used to hear John Simpson whistle it years before he died and left all that money to me for those two kids. Tom!" he turned suddenly and transfixed his friend with an accusatory finger, "what would you think of a guardian that doesn't guard?"

Perkins regarded him rebelliously.

"Depends on whose guardian he is and whether the guardees want him to attend to business or not. If you're talking about those kids of John Simpson's, I'd say you've done about all you could be expected to. You've kept the money together, haven't you? You've made it grow. You've sent it along regular—over there. What more could any one want?"

"Maybe that isn't enough."

"When are those two coming home?" went on Perkins. "Why don't they come back and spend John's money where it was made—at home?"

"I don't believe they're coming back right soon," replied Pike. "Things

Ethel in a big garden hat.

sort of seem to attract 'em over there. It must be a mighty fine place."

"Huh!" replied Perkins disgustedly. "What's the matter with Kokomo? Why don't that girl come back home and marry and settle down? Tell me that."

Pike smiled queerly, and his head seemed to shrink into his shoulders a trifle as he thrust his hands into his pockets.

"I guess she's going to marry and settle down, Tom, all right," he said slowly. "From what I hear she's going to marry one of those dukes or earls I was mentioning."

"Marry a foreigner!" cried Perkins, jumping to his feet. "Why, I thought she"—

"Never mind what you thought, Tom," returned Pike. "I'm telling you she's going to be married. That's why I guess she won't be likely to come back to Kokomo. I guess Kokomo's a pretty poor looking place after some of those other places she's been seeing."

"How do you know?" asked Perkins, drawing his chair forward.

Pike lifted the letter he had folded up.

"I got this from her," he said simply. "Want to know what's in it?"

"Yes," answered Perkins.

"I can't let you read it, but it's from a place in Italy—Sorrento," he went on slowly, mouthing the unfamiliar word. "She says she's going to marry the Hon. Almeric St. Aubyn, heir to the ancient house of Hawcastle. And she wants to make a settlement on him. She can't marry without my consent, you know, Tom. If she does the money goes to the Kokomo Orphan asylum."

"Going to give your consent?" inquired Perkins.

"Don't know," answered Pike. "I've got to look the young man over first. I promised John Simpson I'd always look after her. That was when she was born. He said girls sometimes got into a tight place and they'd need some one to pull them out. Sounds good, doesn't it, Tom? Hon. Almeric St. Aubyn. Must be a member of congress or something over there. Maybe he'll be a senator some day. I can't object, Tom, if he's got a show to make a good living for her, can I? Say, what is a settlement, anyway? You don't suppose I've been keeping her short of money, do you, and she's had to borrow?"

Perkins shook his head gloomily.

"Don't ask me," he said. "I don't know anything about women. Why, Dan, I thought you'd mapped it out to marry"—

"That'll do for that," said Pike quickly. "We'll not talk about that now, Tom. Suppose you go down to Archie Toombs and ask him about Sorrento and how to get there and when a fellow gets there after he starts. I'm going to write a letter to Jim Cooley and get him to hunt up this Hawcastle."

When Perkins had gone Pike pulled open the letter and read it once again. It was the most formal of notes, beginning "Dear Mr. Pike" and ending "Yours sincerely." It contained a brief notice of the writer's intentions, or, rather, intentions in the event of a certain contretemps that to her seemed inevitable, and trusted that the end would meet with his approval.

He sighed as he folded it and returned it to its envelope.

"And that ends the guardianship," he muttered. "Wonder what I'm going to do with the old house now?"

From a drawer in his desk he pulled a framed picture that showed a delicately featured girl, with big, frank eyes and a wealth of light, curling hair that was half hidden by a big garden hat. There was a smile about the lips that seemed very engaging, and the muslin dress she wore had been accentuated in its simplicity by the art of the London photographer. Pike had preserved the picture, which had been given to him by old John Simpson the day before he died, and he sighed as he looked at it.

Then he laid it face down upon the desk and dropped his chin into his hand. It may have been an hour that he sat there, and in that time never a thought of his legal business crossed his mind. He was busy with a fanciful picture of an unknown city that in spite of his desire seemed to take on the aspects of a larger Kokomo, and in his fancy he could see a big, well knit young fellow, bending eagerly over to look into the face of a girl, and he heard her call him Almeric.

"Must be a mighty fine man," he mused—"a fine big man—to capture her."

Then Perkins came in to ask if Pike wished to sail from New York for Havre in two days' time, stating that it would be necessary to leave that night if Pike wished to take passage on her.

"I'll go, Tom," he said. "Maybe you'll drop in here once in awhile and tell folks that ask for me that I'll be back in a month or so."

Then he sat down and wrote to Jim Cooley at London.

At 8 that night he stepped aboard an eastbound train and the next afternoon was in New York. Sorrento seemed a long way off, and it was with a heavy heart that he walked up the gangplank of La Provence.

CHAPTER II.

THE EXILES.

SIX years of life abroad, and these during the most impressionable period of their young lives, had left an indelible imprint upon the two young people.

Horace Simpson had taken to himself the manners of the Harrow and Oxford youth. He had eschewed the society of what he had learned, with parrot-like aptness, to call those "vulgar Americans" and had confined his social intercourse solely to such of the European "haut ton" as he could manage to scrape acquaintance with.

And this last was a somewhat uphill task, for, whatever else one may say about the English, they are inclined to view with very little favor the possessor of no other attribute than money. True, there are exceptions, and these but prove the rule.

Ethel, who had grown into a really beautiful young woman, had followed suit, so far as in her modest powers lay. Such of her school friends as would permit the half formed acquaintance to ripen she had retained. Such others of her own modest beginnings she had quietly but emphatically dropped. From plain democracy she had sought the antithesis, and the leap was all the more an earnest one because of its breadth.

The Simpsons—and they had added their mother's maiden name and linked it to the paternal nomenclature with a hyphen—had been deeply bitten with the aristocratic virus and after a long and arduous struggle had managed to meet Lady Greech.

This titled mondaine had the misfortune to be viciously short of patrimony and inordinately long of lineage, and, while her life of self denial had doubtless imbittered her, she had a most inordinate value of birth and a distinct appreciation of cash; hence when it came her way to pick the Granger-Simpsons out of the slough of commonplace acquaintance she did it with a royal favor and for a stipulated consideration.

"Really, my dear Hawcastle"—she pronounced it as old sailors pronounce "fo'c's'tle"—she was wont to say, "really, of course, they are quite impossible, but the girl is an adaptable little thing, and I may be able to make something of her in time, while the boy—ah, I fear I shall have to leave him to you and St. Aubyn."

"Do as you like," replied the Earl of Hawcastle, with some choler, "but keep them out of my way as much as possible. I positively will not be badgered by these unbaked colonists."

"One might stand a quantity of badgering, Hawcastle, for £300,000," at which the genial earl would squirm nervously.

At any rate, the Simpson children began to be seen in the second stratum of London society and met endless numbers of the shopworn nobility, but, sad to relate, never one of the truly respectable. To those who know their London there are several layers of nobility, and the layer the ordinary individual meets, who has no social prestige to begin with, is composed of that peculiar class that lends its name to doubtful directorates, to queer prospectuses, to struggling milliners with an eye on the main chance and who gladly extend unlimited credit to their patrons in return for modest and well put advertisement.

Strangely enough, the Hawcastle-Creech combination did not drag the willing Simpsons into the glittering presence of the real set.

On the contrary, with a somewhat dog in the manger policy, they awakened both the earl and his sister-in-law to the fact that they wished no sharers in those American dollars that John Simpson had sweated his brow for, and as a consequence they proposed a little trip—a quiet, ante-season trip—to Sorrento, where not a guest would disturb them and where matters might be given a chance to right themselves.

And there, strangely enough, the Simpsons met the Comtesse de Champigny and were quite delighted to find the gifted and brilliant Frenchwoman an intimate of the earl's. The second morning of their arrival the gay comtesse put in an appearance and with a promptitude that was astonishing took young Horace under the widowly wing and marked him for her own. And that same morning the noble earl took his equally noble son into the shrubbery and spoke to him.

"You've got to do it, St. Aubyn," he said. "The family honor is at stake. For heaven's sake, marry the little fool! What if her scurrilous name is Simpson? You can make her forget it we are stony broke, my good boy, and she has a hundred and fifty thou. That will keep us going for another year or two, and if Helene can capture the young ass, Horace, I'll force her to divide with me."

"But it's such a beastly bore, governor," drawled Almeric St. Aubyn, and he flicked idly at the rhododendron bushes with his stick.

He was a pale, washed out youth, with an inimitable drawl and a shimmering of intellect that might, if it had been given an opportunity, have resolved itself into a good working imitation of a brain. To his friends he was "that hopeless ass" and to his enemies and debtors—of the latter not a few—"that beastly bounder, St. Aubyn."

"You see, governor," the honorable Almeric went on, "it isn't as if I cared for the little gal. I'm a queer beggar,

"The family honor is at stake."

you know, and it's fearfully rough on a chap to pretend interest in such a little vulgarian. Of course I know we're awfully hard up and all that sort of thing, but"—

His noble father seized him roughly by the arm.

"You don't have to live with her, you know," he said savagely. "It will be easy enough to make it so unpleasant for the minx that she'll be glad to go back to the States, and she can't get back a penny. We'll have that tight enough."

The Hon. Almeric laughed.

"Oh, all right, old chap!" he drawled. "I'll lift her to the infernal seventh heaven, or whatever you call it. Don't expect me to moon over her, though."

And that compact being settled, the earl went off for his morning walk along the cliff and Almeric to keep his engagement for a morning ride with Ethel Granger-Simpson.

CHAPTER III.

IN DISGUISE.

AN hour later Mariano, the maitre d'hotel of the Regina Margherita, stepped out upon the terrace and began to lay a cloth upon one of the small round tables that stood close to the white marble balustrade. On the other side of the wall could be heard the mandolins and guitars of the fishermen, and Mariano glanced up crossly as the song arose upon the morning air.

"Silenzio!" he cried, and for a moment the music died down.

Mariano went at once to the table upon which he had spread the cloth and placed silverware and delicate china upon it, and he was thus engaged when Michele, the commissionaire, appeared at the top of a flight of marble steps that led into the eastern wing of the hotel, fronting on the terrace.

"Here is M. Ribiere to see you, sir," he said softly, with a backward glance over his shoulder, and Mariano straightened up instantly, with a smile of welcome, for Ribiere was an old and valued accomplice in the gentle art of soft Italian legal stealing.

A tall, alert young Frenchman, clad in an English walking suit of gray and carrying a portfolio beneath his arm, ran lightly down the steps and approached the maitre d'hotel.

"Ah, Mariano!" he cried as he approached.

The genial Mariano bowed gracefully and rubbed his flexible hands together.

"M. Ribiere!" he chattered gayly. "This is one of the days of days"—

The music burst forth again, and he whirled about angrily in the direction of the lemon grove.

"Silenzio!" he cried, with waving hands. "Silenzio!" and turned again to Ribiere. Michele, with a glance at them, went back within the hotel.

Ribiere turned a warning glance toward the hotel and whispered in Italian:

"Let us speak Engleesh. Fewer understand."

Mariano again bowed and spread out his hands in assent.

"I hope m'sieu still occupy the exalt' position of secretar' to monseigneur the gran' duke."

The Frenchman walked quickly to one of the little wicker tea tables that were scattered about, sat down and opened his portfolio.

"We will not mention either the name or the rank of my employer," he said gravely. "There are reasons of state. You understand?"

The maitre d'hotel threw up his hands in despair, and his round eyes rolled heavenward.

"Again incognito! Every year he come to thees hotel for two, three or four day, but always incognito!"

Ribiere paid little attention to him, but opened a notebook and removed a fountain pen from his pocket. Mariano shrugged his shoulders and went on setting the table, then stopped and looked up.

"Each time we lose the honor to have it known," he went on. "In Naples, everywhere, are reech American peoples that would give large pourboire to mingle with his highness"—

The secretary lifted a warning finger.

"Have I not said it is to be incognito, and yet you prate of highness in the first breath. Would you wish he shall withdraw his patronage?" He looked stringly at the man opposite him. "See that you do not offend again." He consulted his watch.

"He comes in his machine from Naples. As on former visits, all is to be as before. No one must guess. To all he must be Herr Grollerhagen"—

"Herr Grollerhagen?" ejaculated Mariano quickly and with astonishment in his round features. "Herr Grollerhagen!"

"He wishes to be known as a German," went on M. Ribiere. "It pleases him to be so thought."

Mariano stood lost in contemplative astonishment.

"What a man," he sighed—"of caprice, eccentrique, so wonderful! Ha!"

The secretary smiled in a superior manner.

"You have said it. Last night he talked by chance to a strange North American in the hotel at Napoli. Apparently he is much interested. Today he has that stranger for companion in his automobile. I remonstrate. What use? He laugh for one-half the hour."

Again the maitre d'hotel remained lost in astonishment. For some moments he stood with the napkin in his hands gazing out over the wonderful bay that lay before the hotel.

"He is not like those cousin of his in Petersburg and Moscowa," he said at last, with a touch of awe in his tones. "And yet, though monseigneur is so good and generoso, will not the anarchist strike against the name of even royalty himself? You have not that fear?"

The secretary shivered in the soft warm air and seized his companion by the wrist.

"I have!" he said quickly. "He has not. I take what precautions I can secretly from him. But of what use? You have few patrons?"

A smile crossed Mariano's face, and he shrugged his shoulders expressively.

"It is yet so early in the season. "Those poor musician"—he pointed off beyond the gates—"they wait always at every gate to play when they shall see any one coming, but of late they are disappoint. Within, with us in the hotel, are but seex people, all of one party!"

An expression of relief crossed the Frenchman's face, and he opened his notebook quickly.

"Good!" he murmured. "Who are they?"

Mariano scratched his head with one ruminative finger and bent his brows upon the table in thought.

"There is milor', an English excellency—the Earl of Hawcastle; there is also his son, the excellency honorabile Almeric St. Aubyn; there is Miladi Creeshe, an English miladi, who is sister-in-law to Milor' Hawcastle."

Quickly Ribiere jotted down the names in his book and then looked up.

"Three English," he said. "Good so far. Those English are safe."

Mariano went on:

"There is an American signorina, Mees Granger-Seempsone. Miladi Creeshe travel with her to be chaperon." Here he became enthusiastic as the memory of sundry pieces of gold and silver wakened his keen thoughts. "She is young, generoso; she give money to every one; she is multa bella, so pretty, weeth charm"—

"You mean this Lady Creeshe?" interrupted the Frenchman, with a puzzled frown.

"No, no, no!" cried Mariano in horrified amazement. "Miladi Creeshe is ole lady and does not hear so well; quite deaf; no pourboires; nothing. I speak of the young American lady, mees Granger-Seempsone, who the English honorable son of Milor' Hawcastle wishes to espouse, I think."

Ribiere wrote rapidly in his notebook and without looking up said:

"Who else is there?"

"There is the brother of Mees Granger-Seempsone, a young gentleman from also North America. He make

"Always incognito!"

the eyes all the day at another lady, who is of the party, a French lady, Comtesse de Champigny. Ha, eet amuse me!" And he burst into a respectful titter.

Ribiere looked at him with grave astonishment and bent once more to his notebook, over which the pen flew with a practiced hand.

"Why?" he said shortly.

Mariano smothered his mirth with the napkin he carried and with an effort controlled himself.

"Becoss," he answered—"becoss I have thought that madame the comtesse is so good a friend of the ol' English Milor' Hawcastle. A maitre d'hotel see many things, eh, and I think Milor' Hawcastle and madame have known each other from long perhaps. This dejeuner is for them; also I