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## From the Dime Novel, *The Badman and the Lady*: Chapter 12 - "Lost in the Snow"

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*From the Dime Novel, The Badman and the Lady:  
Chapter 12--"Lost in the Snow"*

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"Hindus tell of being caught between  
a snarling tigress and a drop-off deep enough  
to shatter diamonds big as a statue's fist.  
That was the situation, as John Sprockett-  
gunfighter and guide to Sophia Starling-saw it:  
a cougar screaming not ten feet from her  
and a storm stampeding in like a herd  
of longhorns, murderous on locoweed.

"Sprockett had time only to lunge,  
as he had at the grizzly that had swiped  
his right eye with its hell-born claw  
in the melee that had left the demon-beast dead  
and gave him the nickname he'd kill  
any man for muttering in his presence.

"When the dust settled this time,  
his Bowie blade was buried  
in the catamount's tawny hide,  
Miss Starling shattered  
by the danger she had never imagined  
amid England's culture and fox hunts:  
seeing a man best the king of killers,  
their mounts drumming desertion and terror  
into the caliche, as they disappeared.

"At that moment, the blizzard hit: snow  
like a million tacks hammered their faces.  
'This way,' Sprockett gasped, lungs raspy  
as the underside of a scorched skillet,  
remembering a line-shack further up the slope.  
'Just pray we don't stumble past it,'  
he roared above the wolf-pack storm.  
Ice stitched his eyes, her steps shortened.  
'I shall lie down now, Mr. Sprockett. Save yourself.'  
'Not if I have to cradle you like my own infant!'

"For a miracle instant blue patches darted  
across the sky, and Sprockett spied the hut.  
He nudged open the door like a bridegroom  
and laid her on the mouse-gnawed pallet.  
'You are truly a gentleman,' she sighed,  
sank into the arms of the Prince of Sleep,  
while Sprockett brewed tea in their unlikely palace."

*by Robert Cooperman*