

THE LOST  
WILDERNESS  
TALES

# DANIEL BOONER

DODGE TYLER



BY HONOR  
BOUND



**DAN'L BOONE**  
**BY HONOR BOUND**

**DODGE TYLER**

LEISURE BOOKS



NEW YORK CITY

*Dedicated to a modern-day Dan'l,  
Frank Joseph Soss, Jr.*

A LEISURE BOOK®

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## MANTRAP!

The trail looped back close to the river and led into a stretch of pine tree country.

"Look lively," Dan'l warned his companions as he urged his horse forward to take the point. "Ambush country. Check your loads, make sure your powder ain't clumped."

And perhaps because he was looking for a strike from their distant flanks, Dan'l became a mite too complacent about the trail immediately before them. The carpeting of pine needles had grown even thicker, completely covering the sod.

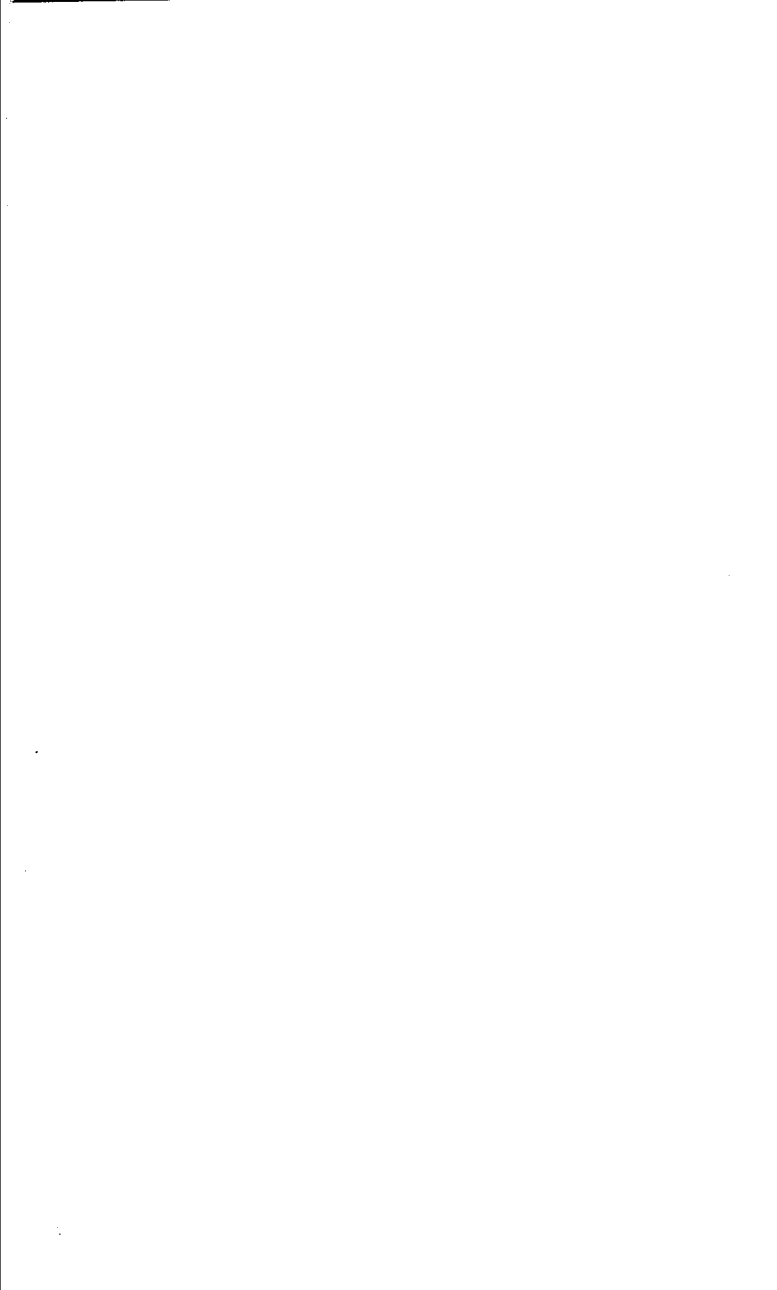
His horse, moving forward at a steady trot, planted his left forefoot, then suddenly pitched hard toward the ground. Dan'l's very first thought was that the animal had stepped into a gopher hole.

But this "hole," Dan'l quickly realized when *both* the horse's forelegs were swallowed up, was a man-made pitfall trap! The pine-needle-covered framework of boughs collapsed, and Dan'l pitched forward over his pommel—straight toward three pointed stakes smeared black with deadly poison!

*The Dan'l Boone: The Lost Wilderness Tales series:*

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# BY HONOR BOUND



## Chapter One

"Looks to me," said young Evan Blackford, "like we finally got us a *nation* shaping up, Dan'l! Leastways, if we ever get shut of them English devils, we'll have us a nation."

"We'll get shut of John Bull," Dan'l replied confidently. "No misdoubting that. Sure as the Lord made Moses, this land *will* pass to our children's children. But it won't come easy. Right now there's too many pigs and too few teats."

Even as he said this in his easygoing mountaineer's drawl, Dan'l's clear, deep-set, penetrating eyes stayed in constant motion, scanning the forest to either side of the pike in search of trouble. The two men, dressed in the butternut-dyed uniforms of the newly formed



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Kentucky Militia, rode abreast. Within hailing distance behind them, Dan'l's oldest son, Israel, drove Becky and the rest of the Boone tribe in a new surrey.

"I *still* don't credit the news," Evan said. "After all them threats and foreclosures, now Governor Hammond just up and agrees to recognize any duly filed land warrant. I wish—"

The lad's throat abruptly tightened on him, and he fell silent for a moment. Dan'l knew Evan was thinking about that terrible day, almost a year ago now, when the rest of the Blackford family had been brutally massacred at Blackford's Mill by the Shawnee and Fox tribes.

"I wish Ma and Pa coulda lived to see this day," Evan resumed. "Blackford's Mill not only thriving again, but now about to become part of the Colony of Virginia. A by-God charter, Dan'l! No more frets about some greedy land company taking title to our property and pushing us out."

Dan'l nodded. "Looks that way, anyhow," he said carefully. "But we best not start spending ahead of the harvest. Promises been made before, too. Turned out they was writ on water."

When it came to highly coveted land titles, in this heady decade of the 1770's, Dan'l knew that rumors were always thicker than toads after a hard rain. But finally, the pioneer-hating Lord Dunmore had been called back to London by the Colonial Secretary. Now Virginia Colony had a halfway decent governor in Cornelius Hammond. Hammond tried to balance his loy-

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alty to England against his sympathy for colonial pioneers.

And Hammond had offered the far-flung, trans-Appalachian settlers of Boonesborough, Harrodsburg, and other frontier settlements an enticing arrangement: He would recognize all duly filed land warrants. The settlers, in turn, must agree to organize Kentucky as part of the Colony of Virginia and to provide for the common defense of the entire colony.

And thus, this very day there was to be a double celebration at the parade commons—a truly grand gala. The new Kentucky Militia, under command of Major Daniel Boone, was to be officially commissioned. And then, before a secular feast began, the deeply religious Kaintucks meant to give heartfelt thanks to the Lord Almighty for His divine providence. It looked like this was *their* land at long last!

“Why, Dan’l!” Evan’s voice sliced into Dan’l’s pleasant rumination. “Your horse has gone lame!”

Boone grinned wide, and strong white teeth flashed out of a square, sun-weathered face that was presently smooth-shaven—a sure sign Dan’l had not been yondering lately. He only shaved when he was in the settlements, as required by law.

“Lame, huh?” he said. “Which foot?”

“Why . . . the right forefoot—see him favor it?”

“Uh-huh, I see it. You just wait a bit. Next, it’ll

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be the left hindfoot. He's foolin' us, ain'tcha, Rip?"

Young Evan removed his tricorn hat to scratch his head. The youth was slight of build and as dark as an Indian. He cut a proud figure in his new uniform, but was still so young that down covered his cheeks.

Evan stared at Rip. Dan'l's favorite horse was an ugly, dish-faced ginger—a sturdy little fifteen-hand descendant of Southwest mustang stock Dan'l himself had driven back east from the Wild Horse Desert of New Spain.

Dan'l laughed at the dubious look in the lad's eyes.

"When it comes to horses, sprout, never let appearances be your guide. A pretty horse is a petted horse, and a petted horse is spoiled. Now, thissen's ugly as a heath witch. But *fast*? Well, I reckon! Why, happen I should spur him right now, he'd light out like Going was his ma's name and Fast his pa's. And as you see—he's smart enough to fake lameness to avoid duty!"

Dan'l dropped back to check on his family. There was a hubcap missing off the surrey. But in honor of this day, there was fresh blacking on the dashboard and a new whip in the socket.

Becky, her face framed in golden curls, smiled at her husband from under a calico sun-bonnet.

"Major Boone!" she called out gaily. "Thee has a rebellion on thy hands! Tell thy son here he's still too young to go soldiering."

Becky, like Dan'l, had lapsed somewhat in her

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strict Quaker training. But she always switched to the formality of "First Day" or Sunday speech on important occasions such as today.

Dan'l glanced at the scowling Israel. The fifteen-year-old was big and strapping for his age, and already had his father's determined eye and stalwart jaw.

"Ain't fair," Israel complained. "When you was only sixteen, Pa, you went off by yourself on your first long hunt! I'm bigger 'n Evan, and he's only two years older than me. But *he* can go for a soldier—a officer, at that."

Dan'l understood the boy's frustration. But Boone had already lost his son James only three years earlier during an Indian attack in the Cumberland Gap. He had no desire to mollycoddle this boy, but losing a child was a deeper hurt than any arrow point or bullet could inflict. Dan'l wasn't eager to feel it again.

"You'll go for a soldier, son," Dan'l assured him. "There'll be no shortage of scrapes and battles, and you'll get your fill of them. The world ain't likely to grow honest anytime soon. But your ma and sisters need a stout man to home when I can't be there. Your pa sleeps easier knowing Israel Boone is up and on the line."

*A stout man!* This praise from his father swelled Israel with pride. He sat up a little straighter behind the reins and squared his shoulders.

"Papa!" called out little Jemima from the back seat. "There's something on your face!"

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Dan'l grinned, for it was a familiar little game between them.

"Oh, Lord, no," he said with mock chagrin, leaning his face close to the little girl's. "What is it?"

"A *kiss!*" she shouted, laughing with delight as she planted one on Dan'l's cheek.

Dan'l and Becky laughed, too, and Dan'l tousled the girl's hair. Then he clucked to his horse and joined Evan again.

"Fine day, ain't it, Major Boone?" Evan said.

"Still got the Lord's thumbprint fresh on it, Lieutenant Blackford," Dan'l agreed, looking around them with satisfaction. Spring had come roaring in recently, and now the fox grapes and wild mint flourished. The trees were swollen with new sap, and long fingers of sunlight revealed the silvery flash-and-dart of minnows in the nearby Kentucky River. Now and then Dan'l heard fat bass plopping in the deeper pools.

It was a scene out of a storybook. But Dan'l never confused stories with life. That was why he was immediately alert when he heard the sudden hooting of an owl.

"What's the matter?" Evan asked, seeing his commander suddenly rein in and stare off into the shadowy depths of the forest.

"Mayhap it ain't nothing," Dan'l finally replied. "You hear that owl?"

"Naw. But so what? Owls *live* in the woods."

"For a fact they do," Dan'l replied, squeezing Rip with his knees to start him forward again.

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"But they generally hole up by day and hunt by night."

"This one could be notional," Evan suggested.

"Ahuh. Mayhap 'notional' is the very word," Dan'l agreed absently.

*Take a good look, Sheltoewe. Your death-bringer has arrived.*

The Shawnee renegade named War Hawk was perched high in a silver spruce overlooking the Boonesborough Pike. Below him rode the whiteskin legend who had become the greatest enemy, white or red, of the Shawnee tribe: Daniel Boone to his own people, Sheltoewe to the outraged, and now permanently displaced, Shawnees.

War Hawk wore an eagle-bone whistle thrust into his greasy topknot. He was tall and well muscled for an Indian, his pox-scarred face sharp-featured like a fox's. And now, eyes like black agates watched Boone as rage transformed War Hawk's visage into a mask of violent hatred.

*This* was the man War Hawk had vowed, in front of all his people, to kill and scalp. That was War Hawk's right. For it was his band that had captured Boone while he was making salt near the Clinch River settlement.

But instead, Boone had escaped, making a fool out of War Hawk, turning him into a squaw in front of his own tribe!

Yes, there had been some satisfactions for the Shawnee tribe. One of Boone's children killed

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at Cumberland Gap, Boone's brother Edward killed during attacks in Ohio. And only one winter ago, War Hawk himself had personally slaughtered two families in Boonesborough, both of them very dear friends of the mighty Sheltowee.

But the Shawnee list of grievances was long and bitter. Twice Boone had managed to escape from them. Another time, he had led the rescue of his daughter and several other whiteskin girls held captive by the Shawnees. However, most galling of all: It was Boone's brilliant Indian-fighting campaigns that had permanently driven the Shawnees from their ancestral homeland.

Now, against their will, War Hawk and his people had wandered far to the north and west, well beyond the river called Great Waters.

Regretfully, War Hawk knew he would never return permanently to these eastern lands. For he had tasted the waters of Manitou, and Ute legend said it would always call him back, the eternal wanderer.

No. He had come this long way for one purpose only: to avenge himself in the eyes of his people, to make Daniel Boone die hard. As hard as a man could die.

War Hawk's sun-slitted eyes flicked left, to the surrey following Boone and the young buck. The woman's yellow hair seemed to have trapped the very light of the sun itself.

Boone could only die once, no matter how hard War Hawk made the dying. But a loving

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husband and father died many times over when his family went under before he did.

Again War Hawk cupped his hands before his mouth and expertly imitated an owl hooting. He wanted Boone to know, yet *not* know—to *feel* death everywhere, yet *see* it nowhere.

“The end will finally come, Sheltowee,” he vowed out loud. “All that remains for you is the dying!”



## *Chapter Two*

**"Eyes . . . right!"**

Lieutenant Evan Blackford, marching proudly at the head of the new, one-hundred-man-strong Kentucky County Militia, barked out the command as two platoons of soldiers passed the reviewing stand.

Major Boone stood solid as a meetinghouse at the front of the stand. He saluted back, and when he did, a six-pounder cannon roared out. A resounding cheer went up from hundreds of spectators scattered about the parade commons.

Sharing the new pine reviewing stand with Dan'l were all the area's dignitaries. These included Josiah Burns, the circuit judge; Septimus Luce, the Kaintucks' new representative to