



**H. Bedford-Jones**

*Bob Bowen  
comes  
to Town*

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# Bob Bowen Comes to Town

by H. Bedford-Jones

# CHAPTER I.

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### MINING STOCK.

**T**HE fat man squeezed himself into the chair of the smoking-room, eyed the lean man and the drummer who had stretched out on the cushioned seat, wiped his beaded brow, and sighed.

"This central California," he observed squeakily, "is the hottest place this side of Topheth! Thank Heaven, we get into Frisco to-night."

The drummer from San Francisco resented the diminutive and gave him a casual stare. The lean man said nothing. Then the drummer turned to the lean man and picked up a thread of conversation which had apparently been broken by the fat man's entrance.

"This here ruby silver, now," he argued. "I've heard it ain't up to snuff. Ain't no thin' in working it, they tell me."

The lean man smiled. When he smiled, his jaw looked a little leaner and stronger, and he was quite a likeable chap.

You can hear 'most anything, especially about ores," he remarked, between pulls at his cigar. "But Tonopah was founded on ruby silver, and the Tonopah mines are not exactly poor properties to own." His eyes twinkled, as if at some secret jest. "But they tell me," persisted the drummer, "that ruby silver's got too much arsenic in it to make development and smelting pay. Besides it comes in small veins—"

"It has not too much arsenic to make smelting pay—sometimes! It does not come in small veins—sometimes! Look at the Yellow Jack, the richest mine over at Tonopah! They busted into ruby silver; last week a bunch of mining sharks come and look over the outcrop. They wire east, and their principals pay a cool million and a half cash for the property. That's what ruby silver did for the Yellow Jack!"

"How d'you know so much about, it?" demanded the drummer. "You been up that way yourself, eh?"

"I'm the man who sold out the Yellow Jack." The lean man smiled again as he threw back his elbows into the cushions and puffed his cigar.

"Gee!" The drummer stared sidewise at his informant. Very manifestly, that mention of a million and a half was running in his mind. His eyes began to bulge under the force of impact. "Gee! Say, are you stringin' me?"

Carelessly, the lean man reached into his vest pocket and extended a pasteboard.

"Here's my card." The twinkle in his gray eyes deepened a bit. "Bob Bowen—I guess 'most everybody around Tonopah knows me. I'm going to Frisco to sell a couple more mines."

This time, the drummer took no umbrage at the hated word "Frisco." Instead, he put out his hand with quick affability.

"Glad to meet you, Mr. Bowen! Here's my card. Going to the Palace?"

Before the lean man could respond, the fat man leaned forward in his chair. He stared intently at Bowen, then spoke.



"Do I understand, sir," he squeaked, that you are Robert Bowen, and that you have sold the Yellow Jack mine?"

"You do," said Bowen, eying him.

"Upon my word! " The ejaculation was one of surprise and was followed by a chuckle. "My name is Dickover—of New York, Mr. Bowen. If I'm not mistaken, it was my agent who bought that mine of yours! Am I right?"

Bowen's gray eyes hardened for a moment, and then they twinkled again and his lean hand shot forth.

"Well, well!" he exclaimed heartily. "Talk about unadulterated coincidence! And you're actually Dickover; *the* Dickover? You're the man who owns half the copper mines in Arizona and two-thirds of Tonopah?"

"Uhuh. Glad to meet you, Bowen. Going to Frisco, are you?"

The drummer looked from one to the other, agape. And small wonder! The name of Dickover was known wherever ores were smelted or mining stocks sold.

Bowen and Dickover gazed at each other, appraisingly. After a moment they began to discuss mining stocks. The drummer listened attentively, and after venturing one timid assertion which was promptly quashed by Dickover, ventured no more. At length the train slowed down, and he sprang to his feet.

"Gee, I'd plumb forgotten that I had to make a stop!" he said regretfully, and held out his hand. "Mighty glad to 've met you, Mr. Bowen. And you, Mr. Dickover. Mighty glad! May see you at the Palace in three-four days. Look me up, won't you? So-long."