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the Detective of the

Woods

By HESKETH PRIGHARD

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By Hesketh Prichard

"Sort of loaf shaped island? 'Yes."

you're thinking—that he killed the fox-

"One reason is that I own only one

couldn't have got away if he wanted.

she's hard put to it to plan for the chil-

prised to see me, and I showed her

the letter. You can guess. It was all

farlane, nor any operation, and back

was he lived in my cabin several days.

ters spent with Sam alone, like some

gals down at Valdez."

more in a month.

"Then why?"-

in particular?"

man nor deer, said Joe.

S. MACFARLANE (Doctor).

dren till she gets about again. So you'

best come. Yours truly.

man gone disappeared."

only I know he didn't."

"How's that?"

"Who was he?"



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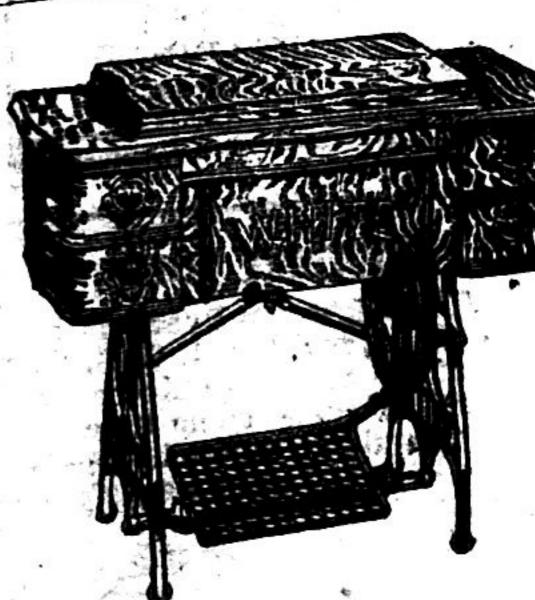
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"Learnin' to be," said Joe.

about the stove, for the interior of th Cabin was pretty dark even in the day-

stain on the near side, and then at a similar stain upon the other. "I'm through," he said at length. turned sharply to question him: "Found out anything?"

Not much," answered Joe. "I dare say," said Joe. "There was

o of them, you know."

"No, I don't! And what else can you tell me about them?" "I think they was man and wife, eaten his supper when he heard a Stafford joined us. She's a smallish woman; I'd guess she's knocking on the door. Thinking maybe weakly, too. And he's fond must be me who had returned,

Stafford grunted. "You said she was boat were gone. hadn't spilt the water out of the kettle tumbled ashore from the boat which most times she took it off the stove marooned him-to keep him from starvthere wouldn't be any track, and here ing, I suppose. He went up into the is one near on top of the other, so it scrub and made a fire. Since then he's happened more'n once on the same been here and seen no one. That's spot. She found her kettle heavy, Mr. all." Stafford," Joe said seriously.

"That's where I come from-Eel is acknowledged Stafford. "But the readland. I have a fox farm there. I re- ing-that's different." fortnight ago I left my man in charge and he's had the lamp close up along- else to ask him?" tween this and Ungava. I got back to There's plenty old oil stains in the mid- this island?" find the foxes all killed and my hired | dle of the table, but these close to the edges ain't been long on. You can see that for yourself."

"An Aleut, called Sam. He's been in "By jingo!" said the fox farmer. my employ three years. I see what | "Anything else?" "The chap what robbed you was a es, and I'd have thought that myself. | trapper all right and had killed a red | Joe nodded. "Well, let's go to his fox recent, so recent he carried it camping place and boil the kettle. He'll across and skinned it here." "Where?"

"By your stove." Joe bent down and life, but in doing so was so unfortunate land last Friday week I took it, leav. picked up some short red hairs. "Clum- as to overturn the kettle. seven miles from the coast, so he and take a look round the island." so cleverly. Here's the letter that did | ness that I had learned to connect delving among the ashes. with his more important discoveries. | "Get rid of your hired man for a

the hospital here on Friday week, and pointed out another island lying some ing." five miles north, where, he told us, he "You mean he's in the robbery?" kept his less valuable stock. gave him back the letter. "Any over there on Edith island. It's named of getting your foxes back. Here he teen hours which we spent in the want you." man would have gone on such news." I for my eldest gal," he said. "When- comes." "Well, I did," said Stafford savagely. litters I try to catch it and bring it sight walking up the narrow track be. at the door of the Jurgensens' cabin word and rung off. I smiled as I call-

and off I went hot foot, leaving Aleut | that?" Sam in charge. It took me a week going down. When I reached the house ing his eyes staring at Edith island. where my wife is living, she was sur-"Look! That's smoke or I'm dream the island.

ing." he cried. A very faint line of bluish haze rose wood while the kettle's boiling. Now a plant! There wasn't any Dr. Mac from the distant rock. "Smoke it is," said Joe. "But the island is uninhabited. Come I came-record breaking travel-to Ee! island. I found the place clean gutted. on, come on!" cried Stafford excitedly. All the blacks and silvers caught and "It may be those ruffians clearing out skinned carcasses!"

been done for spite, but whoever he Aleut Sam marooned over there." and slept in my bank. I wonder what he did with Sam. Knocked him on made that fire is putting on moss. And black foxes. That's one thing. I've noticed things here that make me another. I found some red hairs. like as not. I'm nigh desperate. The | think it ain't likely they killed Sam."

kind of a Crusoe and his man Friday, and keeping my wife and two little "Look bere, ain't it a bit early in the year to kill foxes?" said Joe, after a "They'd have been worth 25 per cent "Because I couldn't have been de coyed away except while the steamer, was running before the winter closed down. See? Even as early as this in the year the pelts were worth \$15,000." "My!" said Joe. "Suspect any one "I believe it may have been Trapper He's had a down on me this good white back. Well, if it was him, he's paid me out good, the black-"Hard words don't bring down nor There was a silence; then L said: could give him nothing. If he did he'd be welcome to \$500," replied the "Good enough, November?" I asked. "What do you mean?" asked Stafe ford, turning to Joe. "You a trail? it was agreed that we should

and, drawing his knife, scratched at a

CLEANS-DISINFECTS-USED FO HARD AND SOFT SOAP -----FULE DIRECTIONS WITH EACH CAN.

Well, all I can see is that the vil- vas boat, and on the beach Stafford has eaten a good share of my seld a rapid conversation with his could follow what was said, but pres- mean'- I cried. ently Stafford enlightened us.

"Sam says that one night, four days

after I left Eel island, he had just of reading; anyway, he can read." opened it. Seeing no one, he stepped Stafford stared at November half sus, out into the dark, when a pair of arms through just the way you said. piciously.

"What?" he shouted. "Are you kid. that smelt like the stuff that made ding me? Or how did you get all that?" him go asleep in the hospital (Sam's "That's easy," replied November. had most of his toes off on account of "There are two or three traces of a lit- frost bite down to Valdez) was clapped tle flat foot in front of the stove and about his head. He struggled, but he a woman couldn't run this job on her says he does not remember any more own, so it's likely there was a man until he woke up on the beach here. It was still dark, and the men and

"Toward evening he discovered a "I thought maybe she was, for if she barrel of dried fish which had been

"Then he didn't ever really see the "I'm free to own that seems sense," faces of the chaps that kidnaped him?" Stafford translated the question to Sam and repeated the answer.

turned to it yesterday after a run "Table's been pulled up alongside "One had a beard and was a big down to Valdez. When I went away a | the bunk—see that scrape of the leg?— | man; he wore a peaked cap. Anything of some of the finest black foxes be side near the edge where the stain is. "Yes. How long has he been here on "Eight days."

> "What's he been doing all the time?" "Just wandering around." "Where has he been camped?" Stafford raised his thumb over his shoulder. "In the scrub above here." sure have a bit of fire there." Joe stirred the smouldering logs into

ing Sam on the island. It's all of sy skinning," said he. "Let's go out "That's bad," said he. "Best tell your man to get some more water." Stafford led the way. At a short dis- Stafford sent off Sam on his errand; "I'll shoot him when the hand reaches That, I say, is one reason why it | tance some of the skinned carcusses but no sooner had the Aleut disappearcouldn't have been him. The other lay. Joe turned them over. Suddenly ed than November was on his knees reason's as good. I was decoyed away | he bent down with that quick intent examining the charred embers and

Sir-Your wife wants you to come down | From one he passed to another till he while longer, only so he don't suspect had handled every carcass. Stafford anything," he said. "I hear him com "He sure is. And, what's more, it "There's a lot of red and cross foxes looks to me like he's your only chance

ever there happens a black one in the A moment later Sam appeared in history again with Stafford knocking position, but Linda had said her last "I got that letter twelve days back, over here to Eel- Hullo! What's tween the rocks, kettle in hand. Staf. on Upsala island. We had landed ed up the picture of a small Greek

ford spoke to him in Aleut. Sam Stafford stood with his hands shad, grunted in acquiescence, and went off up the hill that formed the center of "I told him to go gather some more

you can talk and tell me who you think has the pelts of my foxes." "Your foxes ain't dead." "Ain't dead? You've forgot their killed, and the skinned carcasses lying | Edith island too. We'll get after them." | "I allow we saw some skinned car. | ago you and your wife, having decoy-

f he had never lived. It may have "But I guess it's liable to be your red foxes worth no more than \$10 land. You were, there eight days, duramined those carcasses mighty careful. "That's a signal fire. Whoever's Their eyes wasn't the right color for ain't in nature you can take a pelt of The wind served us fairly well, and and not a hair stick on the body un-

Stafford digested this in stience. "But why in creation should the chaps have taken the trouble to bring over red fox carcasses?" he inquired

"That's easy answered. They was after your best stock. It's pretty likethey didn't take them far, and they wouldn't want you nosing about for

Another thing. The robbers was six days or more on Eel island. Now. they could catch and kill all your for es in two. But to catch them so they ain't far off, meither, and your Aleu knows who's got them. He told you be'd been eight days on this island. Stafford nodded. "Eight days, that's

what be said."

"Now," said Stafford, "who is it has

The Aleut shook his head.
Stafford pulled out his revolver, opened and cocked it. Next he held his watch in front of Sam's face and pointed out the fact that it wanted but five "I'm telling him if he don't confess,"

e said. 'T'll shoot him when the hand "Good heavens! You don't really Stafford winked. Joe and I went down to the beach below.

"He's confessed, all right." Then



the hour." was a rival fox farmer, Jurgensen, did had already come before another wife the night I left, they were there until two days ago; took them all their they brought him over here."

And now I will leave out any act is it?" count of the events of the next six. "I will tell you when you come. skiff and pick up the thread of this I made another effort to explain my there after dark. Joe and I stood back while Stafford

faced the door. It was thrown open, ing a rather imperious expression. and a big gingerbread Swede demand. ed his business. "I've just called around to take back my foxes," said Stafford.

"Vot voxes?" "The blacks and silvers you stole." "You are madt!"

animal I owned on it. I know you didn't kill them, though you tried make me believe you had by leaving the skinned carcasses of a lot of red

As he spoke I saw the wizened fig ure of a woman squeezing out unde the big Swede's elbow. She had a narrow face, with blinking, malevolent eyes, that she fixed on Stafford.

"Zo! Vot then?" jeered Jurgensen. "Then you rowed over to Edith island and marooned my man Aleut Sam, who was in the robbery with you." The big Swede snatched up a rifle by the door and stepped out.

"Get out of here," he cried, "or"-He paused on catching sight of Joe and

"And look here, Mr. Dutchman, broke in Joe gently, "if it comes to full of moose and there are beaver and your father think he will serve by the that you'll get put away for a fifteen otter, and that's where the trouble dertaking this very risky expedition years' rest cure, sure." "Who are you?" bellowed Jurgensen.

from the keftle when she lifted it, for Didn't your father know that? Why of a small band of individuals who he found her tracks at my place by the did Mr. Petersham have anything to wish to blackmail him. We will be stove. He's the man that discovered do with the place?" ax cut log ends in Aleut Sam's fire on Edith island when we knew Sam had tions, I suppose," said Linds, with the no ax with him. He's the man I owe sather weary tolerance of the modern "Me also," said Jurgensen venomousas he bowed his head. "Vot you there."

vant-your terms?" he asked at last. Stafford had his unswer ready. "My own foxes-that's restoration-and two those woods and hills for gen "Ant if I say no?" "You won't Where's my foxes?"

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"Poof! I haf read of all that in the book 'Zientific Zelection of Color

fishing when news came that one of fa-'Yes," put in Joe, "you read a good bit while you were at Mr. Stafford's place, that's so-lying in Mr. Stafford's Jurgensen raised startled eyes. "You

"How you know then?" Joe laughed. "I guess the spiders

CHAPTER XIII Linda Petersham. YOVEMBER JOE had bidden me farewell at the little siding by the picturesqu

name of Silent Water. "'Spect you'll be back again, Mr. Quaritch, as soon as you've fixed them new mining contracts, and then, maybe, we'll try a wolf hunt. There's a tidy pack comes out on the Lac Noir

ice when it's moonlight." But the shackles of business are not so easily shaken off, and the spring Landed on Eel island with his cation in the woods had begun to merge into possibility. About this time Linda Petersham rang me up on time and Sam's to get my foxes. Then the telephone and demanded my pres-

"But I am engaged." said L. "What

head crowned with golden hair, a pair that if father does not pay up that \$5. of dark blue eyes and a mouth wear 000 he will be shot." The end of it was that I went, for I to Kalmacks this fall." have known Linda all her life. The But of course be will go! He's more Petersham family consists of Linda set on going than ever. You know fa-

er to be reckoned with, at home he ex? ter is probably only bluff." ists for the sole apparent purpose of I considered for a little before "Shut it!" cried Stafford. "Ten days carrying out his charming daughter's spoke. "Linda, have you really sent around. And Alent Sam vanished as "All right, Mr. Stafford," agreed Joe. casses, but they was the carcasses of ed me away to Valdez, went to Eel is. found myself the only guest, which Linda's lip curied scornfully. surprised me, for the Petersham man- should not put it just like that! I can

'James, I want you to do this for I'm afraid it will be no good letting me. I want you to persuade pop not you say anything you don't know how

"I thought I could, but I find I can't." "How is that?" "Well, he is set on going back to us." "Kalmacks? I know it is the place

Julius Fischer built up in the mounains. He used to go shooting and never abow it!" fishing there." "That is it. It's a place you'd love- sue said softly. "I don't for a mement lots of good rooms and standing way suppose that even the Kalmacks people back on a mountain slope, with miles would attack a woman. And father is "I'll go if you wish it," said Stafford of view and a stream tumbling past all that I have in the world I'm godangerously, "but if I do it'll be to rethe very door. Father bought it last ing." year and with it all the sporting rights Then I suppose I shall have to go

"But Fischer had trouble from the up at Kalmacks is in his favor. an "He's the man that told me your day be went up to shoot at Kalmacka the shooting of the warden as well as wife was weakly and spilled the water He had to run for it, so I was told the writing of this letter is the work

"He knew that. They are squatters of in Fenimore Cooper's novels?" Fischer offered and gave them was in-

or what they considered to be the rights, for in law, of course, they possessed none. Every one seemed pleased and satisfied, and we were looking for ward to going there this spring for the

ther's game wardens had been shot at Linda nodded the Greek head I ad-

mired so much. "Yes. Last autumn father put on couple of wardens to look after the game, and they have been there all winter. From their reports they have got on quite well with the squatters, and now suddenly, for no reason that they can guess, one of them. William Worke by name, has been fired upon in

his camp." "Killed?" I asked. "No, but badly wounded. He said to was sure the bullet could have been put into his heart just as easily, but it was sent through his knee by way of a notice to quit, he thinks."

Those folks up there must be half "They are, but that's not all. Three days ago a letter came, meant for father, but addressed to me. Whoever wrote it must have seen father an knew that he was not the kind of ma who could be readily frightened. they thought they would get at hir through me. It was a horrible letter

The words were written upon a sheet torn from an old account book. The Fou. Petersham, you mean skunk Don't you come in our-wods unles y willing to pay five thousand dollars. Bring so it will come into the hands of riters

keep an expanding bulet out yor hida "Do you think it is a hoax?" "Well, no. I can't honestly say I do "Which means, in plain language, Not necessarily. He need not go up

and her father, and, though in busi- ther when he's dealing with men. And ness relations Mr. Petersham is a pow- be persists in his opinion that the let-

imagine father's answer if you did.

. "You mean that I have no tact?" She smiled at me, and I instantly need me for that-you, who can make lorgave her. "Well, perhaps I do, but give help than just to talk about it Father is determined on going to Kalmacks, and I want you to come with

"Us?" I cried.

"Naturally, I'm going." "But it s absurd! Your father woul "He can't prevent it, dear James,"

Julius Fischer claimed. The woods are too. But tell me what purpose does He believes that the general feeling

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