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NOVEMBER JOE The Detective of the Woods by Hesketh Prichard.

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Thus it was agreed that we should go across to Eel Island at dawn to let November have a look round. We went ashore, and Joe at once took a cast, looking for tracks, though he knew he was little likely to find any, for the ground was as hard as iron and had been impervious for days. We next climbed to Stafford's cabin. "Come right in," said he. "Wait!" said Joe. "You told us the robber lived in here while he was on the island. If things is the way he left them I'd like to look round." "Have your way," said Stafford. "I haven't disturbed them. I put off directly I saw your smoke, and I hadn't been long ashore." Joe went in and examined everything with his usual swift care. He lit match after match and peered about the stove, for the interior of the cabin was pretty dark even in the daytime.

After this he bent over the table and, drawing his knife, scratched at a stain on the near side, and then at a similar stain upon the other.

"I'm through," he said at length. Stafford, who had been watching Joe's proceedings with an air of incredulity that bordered on derision, turned sharply to question him: "Found out anything?"

"Not much," answered Joe. "Well, all I can see is that the villain has eaten a good share of my grub."

"I dare say," said Joe. "There was two of them, you know." "No, I don't! And what else can you tell me about them?"

"I think they was man and wife. She's a smallish woman; I'd guess she's maybe weakly, too. And he's fond of reading; anyway, he can read."

Stafford stared at November half suspiciously. "What?" he shouted. "Are you kidding me? Or how did you get all that?"

"That's easy," replied November. "There are two or three traces of a little flat foot in front of the stove and a woman couldn't run this job on her own, so it's likely there was a man too."

Stafford grunted. "You said she was weakly?"

"I thought maybe she was, for if she hadn't spilt the water out of the kettle there wouldn't be any track, and here is one near on top of the other, so it happened more'n once on the same spot. She found her kettle heavy, Mr. Stafford," Joe said seriously.

"I'm free to own that seems sense," acknowledged Stafford. "But the reading—that's different."

"Table's been pulled up alongside the bunk—see that scrape of the leg?—and he's had the lamp close up alongside near the edge where the stain is. There's plenty old oil stains in the middle of the table, but these close to the edges ain't been long on. You can see that for yourself."

"By jingo!" said the fox farmer. "The chap what robbed you was a trapper all right and had killed a red fox recent, so recent he carried it across and skinned it here."

"Where?"

"By your stove." Joe bent down and picked up some short red hairs. "Clumsy skinning," said he. "Let's go out and take a look round the island."

Stafford led the way. At a short distance some of the skinned carcasses lay. Joe turned them over. Suddenly he bent down with that quick intentness that I had learned to connect with his more important discoveries. From one he passed to another till he had handled every carcass. Stafford pointed out another island lying some five miles north, where, he told us, he kept his less valuable stock.

"There's a lot of red and cross foxes over there on Edith island. It's named for my eldest gal," he said. "Whenever there happens a black one in the litters I try to catch it and bring it

over here to Eel—Hullo! What's that?"

Stafford stood with his hands shading his eyes staring at Edith island. "Look! That's smoke or I'm dreaming," he cried.

A very faint line of bluish haze rose from the distant rock. "Smoke it is," said Joe.

"But the island is uninhabited. Come on, come on!" cried Stafford excitedly. "It may be those ruffians clearing out Edith island too. We'll get after them."

"All right, Mr. Stafford," agreed Joe. "But I guess it's liable to be your Aleut Sam marooned over there."

"That's a signal fire. Whoever's made that fire is putting on moss. And I've noticed things here that make me think it ain't likely they killed Sam." The wind served us fairly well, and



"Look! That's smoke or I'm dreaming," he cried.

as we ran under the lee of the land we were aware of a figure standing on the beach waiting for us.

"It's Aleut Sam, sure enough," said Stafford.

The Aleut proved to be a squat fellow of a most Mongolian cast of countenance. We rowed ashore in the canvas boat, and on the beach Stafford held a rapid conversation with his man in Indian. Neither Joe nor I could follow what was said, but presently Stafford enlightened us.

"Sam says that one night, four days after I left Eel island, he had just eaten his supper when he heard a knocking on the door. Thinking it must be me who had returned, he opened it. Seeing no one, he stepped out into the dark, when a pair of arms were thrown round him, and a cloth that smelt like the stuff that made him go asleep in the hospital (Sam's had most of his toes off on account of frost bite down to Valdez) was clapped about his head. He struggled, but he says he does not remember any more until he woke up on the beach here. It was still dark, and the men and boat were gone."

"Toward evening he discovered a barrel of dried fish which had been tumbled ashore from the boat which marooned him—to keep him from starving, I suppose. He went up into the scrub and made a fire. Since then he's been here and seen no one. That's all."

"Then he didn't ever really see the faces of the chaps that kidnaped him?" Stafford translated the question to Sam and repeated the answer.

"One had a beard and was a big man; he wore a peaked cap. Anything else to ask him?"

"Yes. How long has he been here on this island?"

"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."

Joe nodded. "Well, let's go to his camping place and boil the kettle. He'll sure have a bit of fire there."

Joe stirred the smouldering logs into life, but in doing so was so unfortunate as to overturn the kettle.

"That's bad," said he. "Best tell your man to get some more water."

Stafford sent off Sam on his errand; but no sooner had the Aleut disappeared than November was on his knees examining the charred embers and delving among the ashes.

"Get rid of your hired man for a while longer, only so he don't suspect anything," he said. "I hear him coming."

"You mean he's in the robbery?" "He sure is. And, what's more, it looks to me like he's your only chance

of getting your foxes back. Here he comes."

A moment later Sam appeared in sight walking up the narrow track between the rocks, kettle in hand. Stafford spoke to him in Aleut. Sam grunted in acquiescence, and went off up the hill that formed the center of the island.

"I told him to go gather some more wood while the kettle's boiling. Now 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 skinned carcasses?"

"I allow we saw some skinned carcasses, but they was the carcasses of red foxes worth no more than \$10 apiece instead of a thousand. I examined those carcasses mighty careful. Their eyes wasn't the right color for black foxes. That's one thing. For another, I found some red hairs. It ain't in nature you can take a peit off and not a hair stick on the body under."

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

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

"Is that it?"

"Another thing. The robbers was six days or more on Eel island. Now, they could catch and kill all your foxes in two. But to catch them so they wouldn't be hurt would take time. No, your foxes ain't dead yet, and they ain't far off, neither, and your Aleut knows who's got them. He told you he'd been eight days on this island, didn't he?"

Stafford nodded. "Eight days, that's what he said."

"He lied. I knew it the moment I set eyes on his fire. Not enough ash to this fire to make heat to keep a man without a blanket comfortable for eight days this weather. And look! The boughs he's broke off for his bed. They're too fresh. Ag'in, he ain't got no ax here, yet the charred ends of the thicker bits on the fire has been cut with an ax. It's clear as light. The robbers ferried Sam across here about two days back, cut some wood for him so he shouldn't be too cold, gave him grub to last till 'bout the time you'd likely be home and left him."

"I guess you're right. I see it now. I'm grateful to you."

Stafford reached for his rifle, but Joe intervened.

"Stay you still, and I'll show you the way we do in the lumber camps."

Sam's strong, squat figure advanced toward us. As he stooped to throw the wood he had brought on the ground Joe caught his shoulder with one hand and snatched the knife from his belt with the other. And then there flashed across the features of the Aleut an expression like a mad dog's. He flung himself, gashing and snarling, on November.

But he was in the grip of a man too strong for him, and, though he returned again and again to the attack, the huge young woodsman twisted him to earth, where Stafford and I tied his struggling limbs.

This done we rolled him over.

"Now," said Stafford, "who is it has got my foxes?"

The Aleut shook his head. Stafford pulled out his revolver, opened the breech, made sure it was loaded and cocked it. Next he held his watch in front of Sam's face and pointed out the fact that it wanted but five minutes to the hour.

"I'm telling him if he don't confess," he said. "I'll shoot him when the hand reaches the hour." He turned to us. "You'd best go."

"Good heavens! You don't really mean"—I cried.

Stafford winked. Joe and I went down to the beach below.

A quarter of an hour passed before Stafford joined us.

"What's happened?" I asked.

"He's confessed, all right." Then Stafford looked at Joe. "It all went through just the way you said. It was a rival fox farmer, Jurgensen, did it. Landed on Eel island with his wife the night I left, they were there until two days ago; took them all their time and Sam's to get my foxes. Then they brought him over here."

And now I will leave out any account of the events of the next sixteen hours which we spent in the skiff and pick up the thread of this history again with Stafford knocking at the door of the Jurgensens' cabin on Upsala island. We had landed there after dark.

Joe and I stood back while Stafford faced the door. It was thrown open, and a big gingerbread Swede demanded his business.

"I've just called around to take back my foxes," said Stafford.

"Vot foxes?"

"The blacks and silvers you stole."

"You are mad!"

"Shut it!" cried Stafford. "Ten days ago you and your wife, having decoyed me away to Valdez, went to Eel island. You were there eight days, during which time you cleaned out every animal I owned on it. I know you didn't kill them, though you tried to make me believe you had by leaving the skinned carcasses of a lot of red foxes. Three days ago you left Eel island."

As he spoke I saw the wizened figure of a woman squeezing out under the big Swede's elbow. She had a narrow face, with blinking, malevolent eyes, that she fixed on Stafford. "Zo! Vot then?" jeered Jurgensen. "Iben you rowed over to Eel island."

Continued on page 7.

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BRYAN FOR EUROPE.

President Wilson cannot be ignorant of the danger to the United States involved in a visit to Europe at this time by any notoriously loose-tongued person of meddlesome disposition given to advertising himself as the representative of a powerful faction of his fellow-countrymen.

This danger, serious in any case, will be immeasurably increased if the traveller bears the endorsement, express or implied, of the Administration; such an endorsement, for example, as might easily be deduced from a cordial reception of the voyager at the White House immediately before his departure from America.

That President Wilson would expose his Administration and the nation to probable humiliation and possible grave injury by permitting misconceptions as to the status and authority of any of his recent visitors to gain credence is inconceivable. The country may expect from him at the appropriate time a tactful but explicit declaration revealing with the utmost precision the exact standing of any person who might otherwise be mistaken for his official or unofficial spokesman.—New York Sun.

MR. FORD AND MILITARISM

Mr. Henry Ford opposed the American loan to the Anglo-French Commission on the ground that it would prolong the

war. He must mean that he would be willing to witness the defeat of the Allies in order that the return of peace might be hastened. If this is his view, Mr. Ford is the real militarist, for the triumph of Germany would vindicate the most consummate military school of all history, and introduce an era of world-wide militarism. If Will-to-Power and the Shining Armor win in the war, every nation on earth, including the United States, must arm to the teeth in self-preservation. Mr. Ford should reconsider his position. The Allies are fighting for all that he holds dear if he is a real democrat, and the vast majority of Americans know it and frankly acknowledge it.—Toronto News.

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