

ended struggling to rise on his elbow, his eyes burning, "take every one and sink them in the river midway out!—I can atone no more.—I wish I'd been willing to till the land—but I was an Indian at heart."

"The past is past," Wynn returned quietly. "I'll sink the traps if the river is still open."

"To-morrow?" insisted the voice drowsily.

"Yes," he replied, going to the hearth.

Wanota blew out two of the candles. Nance rose from the twisted chair.

"Is he asleep?" she questioned breathlessly after a pause.

"Beneath the waters of Lethe," the man answered. He still held the hypodermic syringe, and glanced at it now with a whimsical curve of his lips.

"As Aladdin was the slave of the lamp, so was I the slave of this inadequate master, little lady. In exchange for my will it gave me dreams."

"And now?" she said, raising her sea-blue eyes.

"It has no more influence upon me to-night—no more call, than—that fur-needle of Wanota's sticking in the beaver coat over there. I have outlived the obsession; the spell is lifted."

"Oh, no!" she broke in on his words. "No! No! You have fought it and won. It was the dragon—you were St. George."

He laughed softly.

"Nance," he said, "we've had a pretty wild afternoon, haven't we? People get acquainted under such conditions. Conventionalities go hang. For one thing I've found out the particular brand of courage you possess. . . . Tell me," he branched off irrelevantly, "tell me why you kept out of my way those three days?"

She glanced down, the colour flying to her face, then looked up and laughed a little also, as is a woman's way when she hides the thing in her heart that hurts her most—or it may be has given her the most joy. The thing at least she will not speak of.

"What nonsense!" she parried, "to think I kept out of your way."

"You did," he repeated doggedly, and growing grave. "But next time—next time you hide, I'll find you. Look at me."

She lifted her eyes half-defiantly.

"You are not going to keep out of my sight, not for one day while we are both here at Lone Lake," said Wynn. "Give me your promise that you will not try to."

"Is that a command—or an entreaty?" she challenged.

"Both," he answered. "It's a good sort of blend, don't you think?"

"Oh, well. . . . I promise," the girl said lightly moving to the couch.

"Be serious for a moment and come over to the hearth again. I know when you give your word you will keep it if it be possible, Nance, but has it struck you that up here we only live from day to day, that a thousand things may interfere with our intentions? 'Great is the wheel,' as the old Lama beloved of Kim insisted, and we are bound to it. Who knows what a turn may bring? There are all the winter perils to come; blizzards that will blot the trails out in a white smudge, and the cold that goes through fur. Either you or I might be storm-bound in our separate cabins for days. There is plenty of food and firing, luckily. Your grandfather has overstocked, if anything, and I have enough for two months at least—but accident could befall us . . . or, maybe worse."

"Why do you say all this now? To-night? What reason have you?" Her voice was half-indignant. "You know I anticipate things."

The man turned and looked down at her. His eyes were grave, and in their depths was an expression she had never before seen.

"There may be things you don't anticipate. It would be wiser for you to go back to the Mission, and leave your grandfather in my care. You and Wanota could go safely if the weather turned a bit milder. The river is open still. It would be a stiff paddle, but you could do it—and it

would be safer than stopping here. I fear . . ." He stopped. "It does not matter what I fear."

There was a pause. Wynn kicked a log back into place and the hearth was gay for a moment with golden sparks.

"How can you think I would go?" she exclaimed, with a catch in the words. "How can you?"

"I didn't think you would," he returned gently, "but you see I had to tell you to. We must take chances—together."

The last word sent a thrill to her heart, but she made no answer.

Wanota was cooking the inevitable flap-jacks, and frying moose-meat at the sheet-iron stove, and presently they had supper.

Never at any table had Wynn been better company. The long strain of the afternoon was past. He had advised Nance to return to the Sisters, and she would not. Never in the far student days at Oxford had his spirits soared so high. He determined to banish the sad little droop from the red lips opposite, to bring the colour to her face. The long pain of the day should be forgotten, the ghosts of fear laid. By a thousand turns he led her thoughts away from trouble, and held them where he would.

When they had finished supper Wynn lit his pipe. "Now," he said, "I am going to take affairs into my own hands. I will watch with the old man to-night, and you and Wanota are to go into the next room and rest."

Nance had learned the futility of protest with him in such matters.

"I will not sleep," she said shaking her head.

"Yes," he returned, "you will—by-and-by. The scent of the balsam-bed Wanota has made in yonder will be sweet, and you are very tired. For to-night anyway, I will watch."

Wanota regarded the man sombrely. Witchcraft, or power given by unseen spirits, one of these she concluded had been his in dealing with the old trapper. The small shining instrument had meant nothing to her. Her eyes dwelt upon Wynn with awe, and she who had lain as the three days dead was not easily awed.

The man from Lone Lake was no longer a mere man to the little squaw; he had become as a God—one who could banish agony and bring healing sleep and quiet even by the laying on of his hands. Hitherto she had conceded to him an unwilling and unexpressed admiration, for, like the women of all races and times, she adored the qualities of brute strength and physical endurance in men, while, still more than the average woman of her own people, she was subject to charm by voice and smile and trick of manner.

Now she grew humble in the presence of a force she failed to understand, and had reached the point where obedience would inevitably follow if Wynn by word or look demanded it. Not the questioning obedience of the white woman, but dumb absolute surrender of will known only to those of the brown skin and humble heart.

She followed Nance into the inner room and rested submissively on her bed of boughs—though nothing had been further from her intention. What she had planned was to set rabbit-snares at a spot that crossed a certain nearby runway, and also to hang a harmless looking but deadly grass rope-noose under the trees where the spruce-partridge fed. Later—if Francois had not returned, she had thought to watch for him, it might be still sun-rise.

(To be continued.)

Under Local Option.

Sing a song of sixpence
Pocketful of rye—
That's the way to carry it
Where the town is dry.

The Kicker.—"Everything comes to him who waits, I suppose," said the restaurant diner patiently.

"Yes, suh," answered the colored waiter, "but the gentleman what won't wait done gets his first."—Life.



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