

for the big male porcupine, the prowler took it for granted that he had followed the usage of his kind, and gone off about other business. Like a snake, he slipped in, and found the furry baby all alone. There was a strong, squeaking cry, a moment's struggle; and then the weasel drank eagerly at the blood of his easy prey. The blood, and the fierce joy of the kill, were all he wanted, for his hunting was only just begun.

The assassin stayed but a minute with his victim, then turned swiftly to the door of the den. But the door was blocked. It was filled by an ominous, bristling bulk, which advanced upon him slowly, inexorably, making a sharp, clashing sound with its long teeth. The big porcupine had come home. And his eyes blazed more fiercely red than those of the weasel.

The weasel, fairly caught, felt that doom was upon him. He backed away, over the body of his victim, to the furthest depth of the den. But, though a ruthless murderer, the most cruel of all the wild kindred, he was no coward. He would evade the slow avenger if he could; but if not, he would fight to the last gasp.

Against this foe the porcupine scorned his customary tactics, and depended upon his terrible, cut-