

November Joe

The Detective of the Woods.

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CHAPTER XVI. The Capture.

As we walked Joe gave me in little bits the story of his adventures.

"I started out, Mr. Quaritch," he began, "and crossed the lake to the camp where Ben Worke was fired at you and Miss Linda dropped a bunch there. I had a search for it, but I didn't find it though I come across what I'd hoped to find a lot of tracks, men's tracks.

"Who had been there since Saturday? 'Hub! Yes, only about two days ago. After while I built a bit of a fire and cooked a bunch of tea in a tin. I'd formed along then after dark. Joe always called me 'Hub'."

"I started back. I was coming along west, not on the path, but in the wood about twenty yards to the south of it, and after I'd gone about three or four across a line showed at me from above. The bullet didn't strike me, but it was in a wonderful position for cover—just three or four inches and half a dozen inches of wood. I got the bullet, pitched over the way a man does that's got it high up, and I took care to get the bullet square between me and where I came from."

"Sometimes, if you are down like that, a man'll get rattled like and come out, but not this one. Guess I'm not the first to get a bit of lead into me. He lay still and fired again, but he hit me in the shoulder that time, and I gave a kick and shoved in among the rasp-berry bushes in good earnest, had some of them whiffling buds in my mouth and was chewing of them, when the fellow shoots twice more. Both misses. Then he kind of paused, and I guess he's going to move to where he can let me have it again."

"I see the black hat on him for a moment and then I lets drive. I tried to get up to have a look at him."

"Surely that was risky. How could you know he was dead?"

"I heard the bullet strike and saw the hat go backward. A man don't never fall over backward when he's shamning. I couldn't get to him, faintly, I guess. Then you come along."

the ground, where we quickly overpowered him, snoring and snoring. Some hours later we set out on the couch. Puffick had been up and had been in the strongest room. "No, Mr. Petersham," Joe was saying, "I don't think you'll have much more trouble. There was only three men in it. One's dead, one's locked up, and I dare say we'll find a way of dealing with the third."

"What I don't understand," said Linda, "is how you found out that Puffick was in it. When did you begin to suspect him?"

"Last night, when Mr. Petersham didn't go to Puffick's cabin. The fellow was supposed to meet him here, but in those places that was never done. Of course it could mean one thing—that some one had told him that Mr. Petersham wasn't coming. There was only us three, and Puffick knew. So Puffick must have been the one to tell."

"But, November," I said, "Puffick never left the house, for you remember you found no tracks on the sand. How then could he let them know?"

"I guess he wanted a lantern or made some other sign that'd agreed on."

"But why didn't you tell me all this at once?" exclaimed Peter. "You're kidding me, aren't you? You're kidding me, aren't you? You're kidding me, aren't you?"

"No, Mr. Quaritch, the hours slip past quick enough. I've never had a day and a night for thinking since I been a man. There's a good few puzzles to life that wants facing one time or another, I s'pose."

"Which puzzle is it that you are facing now?"

"Mr. Petersham wants to be the making of me."

we know everything except who it was shot Bill Worke."

"I guess Muppy Tomlinson's the man."

"What makes you think that?"

"Bill was shot with a 45.75 rifle. Both Puffick and Dandy Tomlinson carries 30.30's. Muppy's rifle is a 45.75."

"How can you know what sort of rifle was used to shoot with? The bullet was never found," said Linda.

"I picked up the shell the first time I was over with you."

"And you never told me!" said she.

"But that doesn't matter. What I'm really angry with you for is your making me promise not to go out yesterday and then afterwards going out your self to draw those lines. Why did you do it? If you had been killed I should never have got over it."

"And what did I have done if you'd been killed, Miss Linda?"

"I mean that if one of the party I were with got killed in the woods, while I was their guide I'd go right into Quebec and run a boarding house or become a politician. That's all I'd be good for."

"I pointed frankly to the door. We must shut that door and shut out those voices, but Petersham swore at me under his breath."

"Darn, you know those hinges squeak like a wildcat! It can't be helped, for it would kill her to know we heard a word of this."

"We crept away into the furthest corner of the workshop, but even there phrases floated to us, though mercifully we could not hear all."

"But father would help you, for you know you are a genius, Joe."

"All I could ever do lies in the woods, Miss Linda; woodsways is the whole of it. A yard outside the wood and the nearest chap bred on the streets could beat me easy. I can't thank you nor Mr. Petersham the way I'd like to, for my tongue is slow." Here his voice fell.

"But if you hate the city life so much you must not go to the city," was Linda again. "Live your life in the woods. I love the woods too."

"The woods is bleak and black enough to them that's not born among the trees. Them that's lived outside allus wants more, Miss Linda."

"A long interval followed before the voices became audible again."

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"You'd best join your hands above your head, Ben Puffick."

had a look around by the river, I knew at once his story was a lie, and that he'd got an interest in securing Mr. Petersham away."

"How did you know that?"

"You mind Puffick that the fellow came first when he was beginning to mend the canoe? I took a look at the work he'd done on it and he couldn't get through all that under an hour. He's used a little square of tin over the rest as neat as nail. And then wasn't it queer that the fellow should have come on him there a piece he wouldn't be in not one morning of a Friday?"

"You believe he made up the whole story? And that no one came at all?"

"It sounds a very brilliant future for you, November."

"I was silent for a moment. 'It does, Mr. Quaritch,' he said at length in a different tone. 'And it gives me something to think about. So they caught Muppy all right? Him and Puffick. I'd find prison a poor place after the woods.'

"I can feel for them," said I, "for I am leaving the woods tomorrow myself. I must get back to Quebec."

"Hub, yes. There's no call for you to stay longer."

"He made no reply and when I turned from the window to look at him he was lying with his eyes closed, and, thinking he was tired, I left him."

"At the end of the south veranda was situated a small detached room which we had turned into a workshop, and early the same afternoon I went around there to repair a favorite fishing rod. The veranda was empty as I passed through it, but presently Petersham joined me."

"That fellow November Joe is an infernal fool," he said presently. "He is a dolt without an ounce of ambition!"

"In his own sphere"—I began.

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you, Mr. Qu There's a go before we I'm not so w yet. He soon wrote me o ing, so at at get all that I But will Lit to say? An I wonder.

der Hauße Die Gei fannten, de schönen K man das B Bauern die den Name ladrote A braunen Z Wams glä Hofentglä ein ziemlic schlag, der ches langer Auf eine tetraffenfö freigenden fer Seppl, diger Men eine Waga und er hat feres, gen Aber denn in seinem Anliegen, die 14 heil der Seppi te, schier j Himmel ab ten. Aber tig, das w öffentliche plicht erli daß er da hätte wech nachjagen Wenn Berg voll deder Nre te, dann nach dem Weiber h m!" U wenig lie einige Nre eben die j Anliegen eine Erhö der Sepp "Ja, ja, dere muß Einma Herrgott Herrmann als Wert einem de Mädchen war in di ren verlic dem Ann hörte un Hofe log "Du, du du liegt tief drin der Sep aber, w einholb Seppi a Glauben eines S lichen A merkte, Anliegen verhebt merkte, gefchlag "Wart", jeiber b Ewa gen; es ladte du lingsblö Dorf he im ichö wohlge über zu Theres Reinen Jawort und wi wo fle sicher d gebetet ger-Th "nein" gsben. Der hen B an die te feir bold i nicht, I wefen.