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BAREE, SON OF KAZAN

James Oliver Curwood
A LOVE EPIC OF THE FAR NORTH

SYNOPSIS.

McTaggart, the factor, had gone to the cabin of Pierrrot, the trapper, to tempt him to sell Nepeese to his wishes, and, on Pierrrot's unexpected return, had shot him. Now, as he embraced the struggling girl, Baree, the dog, whom also he had shot and who was at first thought to be dead, rose, despite his wounds, and buried his teeth in the factor's leg. Nepeese, pursued by McTaggart, ran from the house to a gorge and plunged into a fifty-foot abyss, to what looked like certain death.

CHAPTER XXII.—(Cont'd.)

It was not sentiment that made him dig Pierrrot's grave close to the princess mother's under the tall spruce. It was not sentiment that made him dig the grave at all, but caution. He buried Pierrrot decently. Then he poured Pierrrot's stock of kerosene where it would be most effective and touched a match to it. He stood in the edge of the forest until the cabin was a mass of flames. The snow was falling thickly. The freshly made grave was a white mound, and the trails were filling. For the physical things he had done there was no fear in Bush McTaggart's heart as he turned back toward Lac Bain. No one would ever look into the grave of Pierrrot Du Quesne. And there was no one to betray him if such a miracle happened. But of one thing his black soul would never be able to free itself. Always he would see the pale, triumphant face of the Willow as she stood facing him in that moment of her glory when, even as she was choosing death rather than him, he had cried to himself: "Ah! Is she not wonderful!"

As Bush McTaggart had forgotten Baree, so Baree had forgotten the Factor from Lac Bain. When McTaggart had run along the edge of the chasm, Baree had squatted himself in the foot-beaten path of snow where Nepeese had last stood, his body stiff, and his forefeet braced as he looked down. He had seen her take the leap. Many times that summer he had followed her in her daring dives into the deep, quiet water of the pool. But this was a tremendous distance. She had never dived into a place like that. He could see the black heads of the rocks appearing and disappearing in the whirling foam like the heads of monsters at play, the roar of the water filled him with dread; his eyes caught the swift rush of crumbled ice between the rock walls. And she had been there!

He had a great desire to follow her, to jump in, as he had always jumped in after her. She was surely down there, even though he could not see her. Probably she was playing among the rocks and hiding herself in the white froth and wondering why he didn't come. But he hesitated—hesitated with his head and neck over the abyss, his forefeet giving way a little in the snow. With an effort he dragged himself back and whined. He caught the fresh scent of McTaggart's moccasins in the snow, and the whine changed slowly into a long snarl. He looked over again. Still he could not see her. He barked—the short, sharp signal with which he always called her. There was no answer. Again and again he barked, and always there was nothing but the roar of the water that came back to him. Then for a few moments he stood back, silent and listening, his body shivering with the strange dread that was possessing him.

The snow was falling now, and McTaggart had returned to the cabin. After a little Baree followed in the



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CHAPTER XXIII.

No man has ever looked clearly into the mystery of death as it is impinged upon the senses of the northern dog. It comes to him, sometimes, with the wind; most frequently it must come with the train. Baree was one of those thousand masters in the northland who will swear that their dogs have given warning of death hours before it actually came; and there are many of these thousands who know from experience that their teams will stop a quarter or half a mile from a stranger cabin in which there is unburied death.

Yesterday Baree had smelled death, and he knew without process of reasoning that the dead was Pierrrot. How he knew this, and why he accepted the fact as inevitable, is one of the mysteries which at times seems to give the direct challenge to those who concede nothing more than instinct to the brute mind. He knew that Pierrrot was dead without exactly knowing what death was. But of one thing he was sure: he would never hear his voice again; he would never see again the swift, swish and his snowshoes in the trail ahead, and so on the trap-line he did not look for Pierrrot. Pierrrot was gone forever. But Baree had not yet associated with the Nepeese. He was filled with a great uneasiness, clearly as if from out of the chasm had made him tremble with fear and suspense; he sensed the thrill of something strange, of something impending, and yet even as he sensed the death-blow in the chasm it must have been for Pierrrot. For he believed that Nepeese was alive, and he was now just as sure that he would overtake her in a midday beam of light as he was yesterday that he would find her at the birch-bark tepee.

Since yesterday morning's breakfast with the Willow Baree had gone without eating; to appease his hunger meant to hunt, and his mind was too filled with the quest of Nepeese for that. He would have gone hungry all that day, but in the third mile from the cabin he came to a trap in which there was a big snowshoe rabbit. The rabbit was still alive, and he killed it and ate his fill. Until dark he did not miss a trap. In one of them there was a lynx; in another a fisher-cat; out on the white surface of a lake he clanked sharply as they prepared to give Baree a hand. But Baree was uninterested. He hurried on, his uneasiness growing as the day darkened and he found no sign of the Willow.

It was a wonderful clear night after the storm—cold and brilliant, with the shadows standing out as clearly as living things. The third idea came to Baree now. He was, like all animals, largely of one idea at a time—a creature with whom all lesser impulses were governed by a single leading impulse. And this impulse in the darkness of the starlit night, was to reach as quickly as possible the first of Pierrrot's two cabins on the trap-line. There was no other idea.

We won't be there, but his senses were undergoing another change now, as strong and unreal as their struggle against that darkness of near-death in the cabin. In a space that had not covered more than an hour the world had twisted itself grotesquely for Baree. That long ago the Willow was sitting before her little mirror in the cabin, talking to him and laughing in her happiness, while he lay in vast contentment on the floor; now there was no cabin, no Nepeese, no Pierrrot. Quietly he struggled to comprehend. It was some time before he moved from under the thick balsams, for already a deep and growing suspicion began to guide his movements. He did not go nearer to the smouldering mass of the cabin, but sinking low, made his way about the circle of the open to the dog-corral. This took him under the tall spruce. For a full minute he paused here, sniffing at the freshly made mound under its white mantle of snow. When he went on, he sunk still lower, and his ears were flat against his head.

The dog-corral was open and empty. McTaggart had seen to that. Again Baree squatted back on his haunches and sent forth death-howls! This time it was for Pierrrot. In it there was a different note from that of the howl he had sent forth from the chasm; it was positive, certain. In the chasm his cry had been tempered with doubt—a questioning hope, something that was so almost human that McTaggart had shivered on the trail. But Baree knew what lay in that freshly dug snow-covered grave. A scant foot of earth could not hide its secret from him. There was death—definite and unrecusable. But for Nepeese he was still hoping and seeking.

Until noon he did not go far from the cabin, but only once did he actually approach and sniff about the black pile of steaming timbers. Again and again he circled the edge of the clearing, keeping just within the bush and timber, sniffing the air and listening. Twice he went back to the chasm. Late in the afternoon there came to him a sudden impulse that carried him swiftly through the forest. He did not run openly now; caution, suspicion, and fear had roused in him fresh the instincts of the wolf. With his ears flattened against the side of his head, his tail drooping until the tip of it dragged the snow, and his back sagging in the curious, evasive gait of the wolf, he scarcely made himself distinguishable from the shadows of the spruce and balsams.

On the afternoon of this day the second big impulse came to him. It was not reason, and neither was it instinct alone. It was the struggle halfway between, the brute mind fighting at its best with the mystery of the intangible thing—something that could not be seen by the eye or heard by the ear. Nepeese was not in the cabin because there was no cabin. She was not at the tepee. He could find no track of her in the chasm. She was not with Pierrrot under the big spruce.

Therefore, unreasoning but sure, he began to follow the old trap-line into the north and west.

showed his fangs—once at a marten that snatched at him from under a root where it had dragged the trap in which it was caught, and the second time at a big snowy owl that had come to steal bait and was now a prisoner at the end of a steel chain.

There were plenty of rabbits in Pierrrot's traps, and Baree did not go hungry. It was the second trap-line cabin late in the afternoon, after ten hours of travelling. He met with no very great disappointment here, for he had not anticipated very much. The snow had banked this cabin even higher than the other. It lay three feet against the door, and the window was white with a thick coating of frost. At this place, which was close to the edge of a big barren, and unsheltered by the thick forest farther back, Pierrrot had built a shelter for his firewood, and in this shelter Baree made his temporary home. All the next day he remained somewhere near the end of the trap-line, skirting the edge of the barren and investigating the short side line of a dozen traps which Pierrrot and Nepeese had strung through a swamp in which there had been many signs of lynx. It was the third day before he set out on his return to the Gray Loon. He did not travel very fast, spending two days in covering the twenty-five miles between the first and the second trap-line cabins. At the second cabin he remained for three days, and it was on the ninth day that he reached the Gray Loon. There was no change. There were no tracks in the snow, but his own, made nine days ago.

And then, of a sudden, Baree made a change. He spent a night in the tepee. After that, whenever he was at the Gray Loon, during the day he always slept in the tepee. The two blankets were his bed—and they were a part of Nepeese. And there, all through the long winter, he waited.

If Nepeese had returned in February and could have taken him unawares, she would have found a changed Baree. He was more than ever like a wolf; yet he never gave the wolf howl now, and always he snarled deep in his throat when he heard the cry of the pack. For several weeks the old trap-line had supplied him with meat, but now he hunted. The tepee, in and out, was scattered with fur and bones. Once—alone—he caught a young deer in deep snow and killed it. (To be continued.)



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Monkeys in Warfare.

The use of monkeys in warfare goes back many thousands of years. The Chinese used one species that because of its peculiar and harsh cry was called the "wah-wah." The monkeys' task was to capture enemy flags, which was a highly important part of early Chinese warfare.

The war monkeys were captured when very young, and their training continued for several years. A company of young monkeys were taken to a secluded hut where the trainer was the only human being they saw. Before the hut were little flags of different colors—red, blue and yellow. They were fastened to little sticks that were thrust into the ground. The training began by tying a cord round the neck of a monkey so that it could not escape from the trainer. The creature was allowed to run out to the flags, where its naturally mischievous disposition made it seize a flag and carry it back to the hut. If the monkey was being trained against an enemy blue flag he was petted and fed when he brought back a flag of that color; if he brought back a flag of different color, he was punished.

As the training proceeded the monkey made no mistake and, shrieking fiercely, would eagerly bring in a flag of a certain color. After a time the cord was removed, and a monkey would bring in the right flag from a distance of two miles or more.

Each separate group of monkeys was trained against a particular color of flag. In warfare a commander would have in cages monkeys that would capture an enemy flag of any color. The color of the flag that a monkey had been trained against was painted on the back of the animal. On the night before an attack the monkeys that were to be sent out to capture enemy flags were painted thickly with luminous paint; they had previously been starved for several days. Eagerly they made off and, uttering their wild cries, entered the encampment of the enemy like a pack of luminous, shrieking devils. Seizing the flags, the colors of which they could see by the light of the great camp fires that in ancient warfare were always kindled, the monkeys would triumphantly carry them off.

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