

"Do you happen to be going as far as Josh Browning's lumber camp?" asked the old man, with a wag of his head towards the thick forest inland from the harbour, where the axe of the lumberman was busy from dawn to dark.

"Yes, I'm going within half a mile of it; is there anything that I can do for you in that direction?" asked Elgar, thinking that in such a case he would have to walk uphill a little faster or else he would risk being late in getting home, for an extra mile on such a trail made a considerable difference in an afternoon's journey.

"I'd be glad if you can take a message for me," said the old fellow quietly, and with such an air of sense, that Elgar immediately called himself hard names for even thinking that there was anything wrong with the old man's head.

"What is the message, a letter?" asked Elgar.

"No, I'm not in the habit of giving myself away on paper, I leave that for other people," snarled Reuben, with a sudden lapse into ferocity; and then he said, striving to make his voice sound pleasanter, "I suppose that you can remember a message, can't you?"

"Just rather! You try me," and Elgar swelled visibly, thinking of his prowess in memory with regard to his business dealings.

"Well, then, you just go to Josh Browning's camp and find the cook, which won't be difficult, as he will be just in the thick of getting his supper under way, and you say to him that Reuben Shore wants the skunk smoked out to-morrow night."

"A skunk, is it? Oh, where? And do you suppose that the men will let me help?" demanded Elgar