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BAREE, SON OF KAZAN

James Oliver Curwood
A LOVE EPIC OF THE FAR NORTH

CHAPTER I.

To Baree, for many days after he was born, the world was a vast gloomy cavern. During these first days of his life his home was in the heart of a great windfall where Gray Wolf, his blind mother, had a safe nest for his babyhood, and to which Kazan, her mate, came only now and then, his eyes gleaming like strange balls of greenish fire in the darkness.

Baree, of course, would never know their story. He would never know that Gray Wolf, his mother, was a full-blooded wolf, and that Kazan, his father, was a dog. In his nature was already beginning its wonderful work, but it would never go beyond certain limitations. It would tell him, in time, that his beautiful wolf-mother was blind, but he would never know of that terrible battle between Gray Wolf and the lynx in which his mother's sight had been destroyed. Nature could tell him nothing of Kazan's merciless vengeance, of the wonderful years of their matchood, of their loyalty, their strange adventures in the great Canadian wilderness—it could make him only a son of Kazan.

And then came that wonderful day when the greenish balls of fire that were Kazan's eyes came nearer and nearer, a little at a time, and very cautiously. Heretofore Gray Wolf had warned him back. To be alone was the first law of her wild breed during mothering-time. A low snarl from her throat, and Kazan had always stopped. But on this day the snarl did not come. In Gray Wolf's throat it died away in a low, whimpering sound. A note of loneliness, of gladness, of a great yearning. "It is all right now," she was saying to Kazan; and Kazan—pausing for a moment to make sure—replied with an answering note deep in his throat.

Still slowly, as if not quite sure of what he would find, Kazan came to them, and Baree snuggled closer to his mother. He heard Kazan as he dropped down heavily on his belly close to Gray Wolf. He was unafraid—and mightily curious. And Kazan, too, was curious. He sniffed. In the gloom his ears were alert. After a little Baree began to move. An inch at a time he dragged himself away from Gray Wolf's side. Every muscle in her little body tensed. Again her wolf blood was warning her. There was danger for Baree. Her lips drew back, baring her teeth. Her throat trembled, but the note in it never came. Out of the darkness two yards away came a soft, puppyish whine, and the caressing sound of Kazan's tongue.

Baree had felt the thrill of his first great adventure. He had discovered his father.

This all happened in the third week of Baree's life. He was just eighteen days old when Gray Wolf allowed Kazan to make the acquaintance of his son. If it had not been for Gray Wolf's blindness and the memory of that day on the Sun Rock when the lynx had destroyed her eyes, she would have given birth to Baree in the open, and his legs would have been quite strong. He would have known the sun and the moon and the stars; he would have realized what the thunder meant, and would have seen the lightning flashing in the sky. But as it was, there had been nothing for him to do in that black cavern under the windfall but stumble about a little in the darkness, and lick with his tiny red tongue the raw bones that were strewn about them.

The sun was straight above the forest when, an hour or two after Kazan's visit, Gray Wolf slipped away. Between Baree's nest and the top of the windfall were forty feet of jammed and broken timber through

which not a ray of light could break. This blackness did not frighten him, for he had yet to learn the meaning of light. Day, and not night, was to fill him with his first great terror. So quite fearlessly, with a yelp for his mother to wait for him, he began to follow. If Gray Wolf heard him, she paid no attention to his call, and the scrape of her claws on the dead timber died swiftly away.

This time Baree did not stop at the eight-inch log which had always shut in his world in that particular direction. He clambered to the top of it and rolled over on the other side. Beyond this was vast adventure, and he plunged into it courageously.

It took him a long time to make the first twenty yards. Then he came to a log worn smooth by the feet of Gray Wolf and Kazan, and stopping every few feet to send out a whimpering call for his mother, he made his way farther and farther along it. As he went, there grew slowly a curious change in this world of his. He had known nothing but blackness. And now this blackness seemed breaking itself up into strange shapes and shadows. Once he caught the flash of a fiery streak above him—a gleam of sunshine—and it startled him so that he flattened himself down upon the log and did not move for half a minute. Then he went on. An ermine squeaked under him. He heard the swift rustling of a squirrel's feet, and a curious whut-whut-whit that was not at all like any sound his mother had ever made. He was off the trail.

A new terror held Baree rooted there. In an instant the whole world had changed. It was a flood of sunlight. Everywhere he looked he could see strange things. But it was the sun that frightened him most. It was his first impression of fire, and it made his eyes smart. He would have slunk back into the friendly gloom of the windfall, but at this moment Gray Wolf came around the end of a great log, followed by Kazan. She muzzled Baree joyously, and Kazan in a most doglike fashion wagged his tail. This mark of the dog was to be a part of Baree. Half wolf, he would always wear his tail. He tried to wag it now. Perhaps Kazan saw the effort, for he emitted a muffled yelp of approbation as he sat back on his haunches.

For Baree it had been a great day. He had discovered his father—and the world.

CHAPTER II.

And it was a wonderful world—a world of vast silence, empty of everything but the creatures of the wild. The nearest Hudson's Bay post was a hundred miles away, and the first town of civilization was a straight three hundred to the south. Two years before, Tusso, the Cree trapper, had called this his domain. It had come down to him, as was the law of the forests, through generations of forefathers; but Tusso had been the last of his worn-out family; he had died of smallpox, and his wife and his children had died with him. Since then no human foot had taken up his trails. The lynx had multiplied. The moose and caribou had gone unharmed by man. The beaver had built their homes undisturbed. The tracks of the black bear were as thick as the tracks of the deer farther south. And where once the deadfalls and poison-baits of Tusso had kept the wolves thinned down, there was no longer a menace for these moekuns of the wilderness.

Following the sun of this first wonderful day came the moon and the stars of Baree's first real night.

Half a dozen times, as Baree wandered about near the windfall, he heard a soft whir over his head, and once or twice he saw gray shadows floating swiftly through the air. They were the big northern owl's swooping down to investigate him, and if he had been a rabbit instead of a wolf-dog whelp, his first night under the moon and stars would have been his last; for unlike Wappos, the rabbit, he was not cautious. Gray Wolf did not watch him closely. Instinct told her that in these forests there was no great danger for Baree except at the hands of man. In his veins ran the blood of the wolf. He was a hunter of all other wild creatures, but no other creature, either winged or fanged, hunted him.

In a way Baree sensed this. He was not afraid of the strange blood-curdling cries they made in the black spruce-tops. But once fear entered into him, and he scurried back to his mother. It was when one of the winged hunters of the air swooped down on a snowshoe rabbit, and the ensuing agony of the doomed creature set his heart thumping like a little hammer. He felt in those cries the nearness of that one ever-present tragedy of the wild—death.

This rabbit was the climax in the first chapter of Baree's education. It was as if Gray Wolf and Kazan had planned it all out, so that he might receive his first instruction in the art of killing.

The fact that Ohoomisew, the big snow-owl, had made her nest in a broken stub not far from the windfall was destined to change the whole course of Baree's life. Just as the binding of Gray Wolf had changed her, and a man's cub had changed Kazan's. The creek ran close past the stub, which had been shriven by lightning; and this stub stood in a still, dark place in the forest, surrounded by tall, black spruce and enveloped in gloom even in broad day. Many times Baree had gone to the edge of this mysterious bit of forest and had peered in curiously, and with a growing desire.

He was fully three hundred yards from the windfall when he passed Ohoomisew's stub and into a thick growth of young balsams. And there directly in his path—crouched the monster.

With a space of two feet between them, the pup and the owl eyed each other. In that moment, if Gray Wolf could have seen, she might have said to Baree: "Use your legs—and run!" And Ohoomisew, the old owl, might have said to Papayuchisew: "You little fool—use your wings and fly!"

They did neither—and the fight began.

Papayuchisew started it, and with a single wild yelp Baree went back in a heap, the owl's beak fastened like a red-hot vise in the soft flesh at the end of his nose. That one yelp of surprise and pain was Baree's first and last cry in the fight. The wolf surged in him; rage and desire to kill possessed him. As Papayuchisew lunged on, he made a curious hissing sound; and as Baree rolled and gnashed his teeth and fought to free himself from that amazing grip on his nose, fierce little snarls rose out of his throat.

For fully a minute Baree had no use of his jaws. Then, by accident, he wedged Papayuchisew in a crotch of a low ground-shrub, and a bit of that amazing grip on his nose, fierce little snarls rose out of his throat. Then, but instead of that he was back at the owl like a flash. Flop went Papayuchisew on his back, and Baree buried his needle-like teeth in the bird's breast. It was like trying to bite through a pillow, the feathers were so close and thick. Deeper and deeper Baree sank his fangs, and just as they were beginning to prick the owl's skin, Papayuchisew—jabbing a little blindly with a beak that snapped sharply every time it closed—got him by the ear.

The pain of that hold was excruciating to Baree and he made a more desperate effort to get his teeth through a pillow, the feathers were so close and thick. Deeper and deeper Baree sank his fangs, and just as they were beginning to prick the owl's skin, Papayuchisew—jabbing a little blindly with a beak that snapped sharply every time it closed—got him by the ear.

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At this critical point, when the understanding of defeat was forming itself in Baree's mind, chance saved him. His fangs closed on one of the owl's tender feet. Papayuchisew gave a sudden squeak. The ear was free at last—and with a snarl of triumph Baree gave a vicious tug at Papayuchisew's leg.

In the excitement of battle he had not heard the rushing tumult of the creek close under them, and over the edge of a rock Papayuchisew and he went together, the chill water of the rain-swollen stream muffling a snarl and a final hiss of the two little fighters.

CHAPTER III.

To Papayuchisew, after his first mouthful of water, the stream was almost as safe as the air, for he went sailing down it with the lightness of a big head why he was moving so swiftly and so pleasantly without any effort of his own.

To Baree it was a different matter. He went down almost like a stone.

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SMP DAIRY PAILS

A mighty roaring filled his ears; it was dark, suffocating, terrible. In the swift current he was twisted over and over. For twenty feet he was under water. Then his nose to the surface and he sprang out from almost under his nose and landed with a tremendous splash in the centre of it. It was Nekik, the Otter.

The otter had not heard Baree, and in another moment Napanekik, his wife, came sailing out of a patch of gloom, and behind her came three little otters, leaving behind them four shimmering wakes in the oily-looking water. What happened after that made Baree forget for a few minutes that he was lost. Nekik had disappeared under the surface, and now he came up directly under his unsuspecting mate with a force that lifted her half out of the water. Instantly he was gone again, and Napanekik took after him fiercely.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, and the sun should still have been well up in the sky. But it was growing darker steadily, and the strangeness and fear of it all lent greater speed to Baree's legs. He stopped every little while to listen, and at one of these intervals he heard a sound that drew from him a responsive and joyous whine. It was a distant howl—a wolf's howl—straight ahead of him. Baree was not thinking of wolves but of Kazan, and he ran through the gloom of the forest until he was winded. Then he stopped and listened a long time. The wolf-howl did not come again. Instead of it there rolled up from the west a deep and thunderous rumble. Through the treetops there flashed a vivid streak of lightning. A moaning whisper of winds rode in advance of the storm; the thunder grew nearer; and a second flash of lightning seemed searching Baree out where he stood shivering under a canopy of green spruce.

At first Baree could hardly stand. His legs were cramped; every bone in his body seemed out of joint; his ear was stiff where the blood had coozed out of it and hardened, and when he tried to wrinkle his wounded nose, he gave a sharp little yelp of pain. If such a thing were possible, he looked even wrothier than he was. His head had dried in muddy patches; he was dirt-stained from end to end; and where yesterday he had been plump and shiny, he was now as thin and wretched as misfortune could possibly make him. And he was hungry. He had never before known what it meant to be really hungry.

(To be continued.)



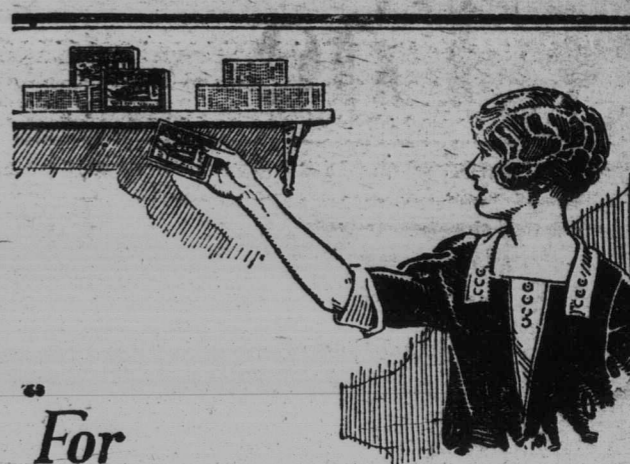
A Junior Party-frock

Each season the styles for children grow more fascinating. Designs and materials are chosen as thoughtfully as for grown-ups; and while the designs are more and more simple, they have gained in charm and individuality. Every little girl loves a party-frock, and No. 1032 of fine French voile, which comes in the most adorable colorings, and looks as light and filmy as chiffon, is sure to please her. The frock illustrated is a two-piece dress closing at the centre back with short kimono sleeves tucked and scampered on shoulders, and three slightly circular flounces. It may have square or bateau neck, and is trimmed with lace edging or insertion. The pattern is cut in sizes 8 to 14 years, the 12-year size requiring 3 1/2 yards of 36-inch material and 2 1/2 yards of 5-inch ribbon for sash.

Pattern mailed to any address on receipt of 20c in silver, by the Wilcox Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Order filled same day as received.



In the Park.
She—"Oh, see the duck! Why does it come out of the water and sit in the sun?"
He—"For sundry reasons, I think."
Minard's Liniment Fine for the Hair.



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—says Mrs. Experience, speaking of the economical use of soap.

"I always keep a good supply of Sunlight Soap on the shelf because I find that Sunlight actually improves with age. It becomes harder and so goes much further.

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"To any woman who wants to get real cleaning value out of a soap for her money, I decidedly say, 'Use Sunlight,' and keep a good supply on the shelf." Sunlight is made by Lever Brothers Limited, largest soap-makers in the world.

Sunlight Soap

"Bobs" That Rob.

A woman having set her feet along the "bobbed" or "shingled" way, will be finding in the very near future that it is going to cost her a good deal more to keep in the fashion than she supposed.

The hairdressers are beginning to feel a slump, consequent upon most of the women who intended to adopt the short hair mode having taken the plunge. But now the latest from Paris is the "pointed bob," which is expected to be all the rage for the smart woman of 1925. This "bob" ends in a point exactly in the centre of the back of the neck. In order to get the correct effect, every other hair will have to be exactly in its place, necessitating much twisting and curling to just the right angle.

Ears are to be covered up and the hair drawn well back off the forehead so that we shall probably see the last of the fringe for a while. The hairdressers of Paris say that, if they can succeed in launching this fashion successfully among smart Parisiennes, they will benefit to the extent of over \$250,000.

Onions Without Tears.

A "tearless" onion-chopper is described in the Manchester Guardian as an ingenious glass container with a chopping device in the centre. The onion is imprisoned in the glass container and chopped "under cover," much to the relief and comfort of the cook!

For Sore Feet—Minard's Liniment.

If you have built castles in the air, your work need not be lost. That is where they should be; now put foundations under them.—Thoreau.

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Walkers' Traffic Lights.

A London newspaper reports that so great has become the automobile peril in that erstwhile land of quiet lanes and remote byways, that people walking at night on busy highways wear over their shoulders small red glass disks that reflect the lights of automobiles approaching from behind, thus indicating to the drivers that a pedestrian is ahead on the road.

104,000 Telephones in Ontario.

There are now 104,000 telephones in use in Ontario, according to the annual report of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board. These are operated by no fewer than 637 different telephone systems, representing an investment of \$10,000,000. Of this number, 113 are owned and operated by rural municipalities and 9 by urban municipalities.

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