

"BELA"

"I don't care what you think," she retorted.

"Tell me one thing," said Jack. "What did you come here for first off?"

"Yes, I tell you what I came for," the girl said with a direct look. "I want to see what white men look like. My father's a white man. I never see him. Him good man, good to women. So I think all white men good to women. I think no harm, I come here. I play trick for to mak' fun and be friends. Now I know o'ter white men not lak my father. Now I look out for myself."

Big Jack had the grace to scowl shamefacedly and look away.

"Say, that's right," he muttered. "You're dead right, sister. We got in wrong. I'm sorry. These other fellows, they're sorry, too. We made it up together to tell you we was sorry. Give us a chance to show you we ain't plumb rotten."

The girl dimpled like a white woman. No wailed look then.

"All right," she said. "I come to-morrow early. I be your friend."

When the next squall swooped down from the southerly hills, Bela set off in her dugout from the mouth of the creek. The wind helped carry her in the direction she wanted to go, and the sheets of rain hid her from the view of any one who might be looking out from the shack.

Her Indian up-bringing had taught her to disregard bodily comfort. Streaming like a mermaid, she crouched in her canoe, paddling with the regularity of a machine.

In two hours she had reached the other shore. By this time it had cleared, and the late sun was sending long, golden rays down the lake.

She found a scene of industry in the village. The women were splitting and cleaning the day's catch, and hanging the fish on racks to cure in the smoke of the fires. No surprise was elicited by her arrival. Bela had always gone and come as she chose.

Outside Charley's teepee she found her mother. Losels' eyes lighted up at the sight of her, but she said nothing. She followed her into the teepee and unexpectedly seized and kissed her. They were mutually embarrassed. Bela had not learned to kiss among the tribe. Charley came in scowling.

"The fish are running," he said. "Every body is working now. If you not work you get no fish."

"Keep your fish," said Bela.

In that teepee she was mused as to her adventures. Having changed her clothes in her own little bower in the pines, she sought out Musq'oosis and told him her story.

Musq'oosis was a little sore. He listened, smoking impassively and tending his share of the fish hanging in the smoke. Meanwhile the sun went down in troubled crimson splendor over the pines, presaging more squalls.

When she came to the end he said sententiously: "You foolish go alone. You want a man?"

Bela was mum.

"What you want of me now?" he asked.

"Grease for the wound," said Bela. "A little food for myself."

"All right. I give you. You go- ing back?"

"To-night."

"I go with you," suggested Musq'oosis.

Bela shook her head a little sullenly.

She had good reasons, but it was difficult to explain them.

"I got go alone," she said.

"All right," replied Musq'oosis, huffily. "Why you want talk to me?"

Bela glanced at him appealingly.

"You speak me good words," she said. "You moch my friend. But I go alone. I can't tell it good. When I alone I keep myself much secret lak you tell me. They not see me come and go; think I got magic. They scare of me."

"All right," repeated Musq'oosis. "I lak sleep in my teepee. What you goin' to do when you go back?"

"When the bishop come I goin' marry the cook," said Bela, calmly.

"Um," grunted Musq'oosis. "Is he the biggest?"

"No," answered Bela. "He fitties. I watch him. He got stronges' eye."

"So?"

"He is a pretty man," she said, suddenly lowering her head. "He mak me want him bad. His eyes lak the sky at tan wild roses come. Had bright like milk-skin. He has kindness for women lak my father got."

"Um-m-m" growled Musq'oosis; "you talk lak white woman."

"Tell me how to get him," said Bela, simply.

Musq'oosis affected scorn. "Wa! All tam ask me what to do. Then go do what you lak, anyhow."

"You have good words," she put in meekly.

"I tell you before," grumbled Musq'oosis. "Don't let him see you want him or he never want you."

"I think he not want me moch," said Bela, dejectedly. "Not lak at 'er men."

"Wait a while," encouraged Musq'oosis. "Hard wood slow to catch, but burn longer. I tell you agin—keep your mouth shut. Don't let anything on. If o'ter men think you want the cook, they kill him my-be."

White men sometam crazy lak that. You mus' all sam mak friends wit' all. Ask moch question. Watch them well. When you know their ways, you know what to do. Bam by maybe you get your man to leave the o'ters. Then it is easy."

"I do all you, tell me," promised Bela.

"Come home to-morrow night," he said.

She rebelled at this. "No. I lak stay there. I can't be paddling over every day. Too far."

"Are you a fool?" asked Musq'oosis, exasperated. "Where you going stay at night?"

"I got little cache by the creek," she replied. "They no good in the bush. Can't see not'ing. I fool them all I lak. They never find me."

"Watch yourself," advised Musq'oosis. "It's a dangerous game."

"I got my little gun," she returned, tapping her breast. "They plenty scare of me now."

As soon as it cleared up Young Joe casually remarked that he guessed he'd wash his shirt and let it dry before the fire while he slept. Big Jack and Shand both allowed that it was a good idea, and presently the three of them were squatting together by the creek, sousing their garments in the icy water.

Later Jack and Joe made a dicker to cut each other's hair. Shand, hearing of this, was obliged to part with a necktie to get Jack to cut his also. A general shave ended the ablutions. This was remarkable, for Joe had shaved only the day before.

"A fellow hadn't ought to let himself get careless up in the bush," he opined.

There was a great beating and shaking of clothes, and a combined cleaning of the shack. Sam made a broom out of willow-branches; Jack cut some poles, out of which he designed to make a chair after supper.

"She's got to have something to sit in when she's watching beside Husky's bed like," he said.

It did not occur to him that Bela had probably never before in her life sat in a chair.

"You are damned lucky to get her to nurse you after you brought it on yourself," Joe said to Husky.

Husky was now looking forward to her return no less than the others. He had taken a turn for the better, and no longer thought of dying.

After supper a high degree of amity prevailed in the shack. Joe and Shand helped with the chair, and then they all planned to make a table next day.

Shand, lend a hand with this piece while I drive a nail, will you?" requested Jack, politely.

"Sure thing! Say, this is going to be out of sight! You certainly have a good knack of making things, Jack."

"Oh, so-so. I ought to have a flat piece to put on the seat."

"I'll go out to the stable and see if I can find a box-cover," said Joe.

"You stay here. I'll go," said Joe. Sam, washing the dishes, harkened to this, and smiled a little grimly to himself, wondering how long it would last.

They retired early. The bed was given up to Husky, and the other four rolled up in their blankets across the room like a row of mummies. Calm brooded over the shack throughout the night.

Sam had not had so much time as the others to make himself presentable the night before, so he got up extra early for that purpose. Issuing out of the shack with soap, towel, razor, and glass, the first thing he beheld on rounding the shack was Bela. She was kneeling on a piece of wood to protect her knees from the wet ground, tearing and rolling some pieces of cotton for bandages.

She was dressed differently to-day—all in buckskin.

The newly risen sun was behind her, shooting misty beams across a lake of mother-of-pearl. The artist, latent in every man, arrested Sam, forcing him to wonder and admire.

Bela looked up calmly. "I waitin' till me men get up," she remarked.

"I'll call them," he offered, making a move to turn.

"Let them sleep," commanded Bela.

"It is early."

Sam became uncomfortably conscious of his unkempt condition. "You caught me unawares," he said. "I haven't washed up yet."

She glanced at him sideways. Had he known it, he did not appear altogether at a disadvantage with his fair hair tousled and his shirt open at the throat.

"I don't care," she said, with a child's air of unconcern.

Presently she caught sight of the razor. "You got hair grow on your chin, too? That is funny thing. O'ter day I watch the curly head one scrape his face. He not see me. What for you want scrape your face?"

Sam blushed. "Oh, it looks like a hobo if you don't," he stammered.

She repeated the word with a comical face. "What is hobo?"

"Oh, a tramp, a loafer, a bum."

"I on'erstan," she said. "We got hobbos, too. My mother's 'osban' is a hobo."

She looked at his chin again. "Bish-hop Lajeunesse not scrape his chin," she stated. "Got long hair, so. He is fine man."

Sam, not knowing exactly what to say, remained silent. He found it difficult to accommodate himself to a conversational Bela. She was much changed in the morning light from the inscrutable figure of the fireside. Ten times more human and charming, it is true, but on that account the more disconcerting to a young man without experience of the sex. Moreover, her beauty took his breath away. Bela watches his blushes with interest.

"What mak' your face hot?" she asked. "There is no fire."

He could not but believe she was making fun of him. "Ahh! cut it out!" he growled.

"White man fanny," said Bela, rolling her strips of cotton.

"Funny!" repeated Sam. "How about you? Hanged if you're not the strangest thing I ever came across."

Obviously this did not displease her. She merely shrugged.

She forgot some of her self-consciousness in his curiosity. "Where do you come from?" he asked, drawing nearer. "Where do you go to?"

"You wonderful creature!" his eyes added.

"No magic," she said, calmly. "I just plain girl."

"Why wouldn't you tell them how you got out night before last?"

"Maybe I want to get out again."

"Will you tell me?"

She glanced at him provokingly through her lashes. "Will I tell you? You just go tell your partners."

"They're no partners of mine," said Sam, bitterly. "I should think you could see that. I'm just your cook. I work for my grub. They don't let me forget it, either."

"Why you come to this country?" asked Bela.

"I want a piece of land the same as they do. But I've got to work to earn an outfit before I can settle."

"When you get your land what you do then?" she asked.

"Build a house, raise crops."

"White man all want land to dig," said Bela, wonderingly.

"You've got to have land," explained Sam, eagerly. "You've got to have something of your own. Outside, a poor man has no chance nowadays but to slave away his best years working for a rich man."

Bela studied his face, trying to grasp these ideas so new to her.

"Ho wdo you get out of the shack?" Sam asked her again.

"I tell you," she said, abruptly. "I climb the chimney."

"By George!" he exclaimed, admiringly.

"It was easy. But I get all black. I am all day cleaning myself after."

"You're a wonder!" he cried. "Travelling about alone and all. Are all the girls up here like you?"

"No," replied Bela, quaintly. "There is nobody lak me. I am Bela."

"Where do you live?"

She looked at him again through her lashes. "Maybe I tell you when I know you better."

"Tell me now," he pleaded.

She shook her head.

Sam frowned. "There's generally no good behind a mystery," he remarked.

"Maybe," said Bela. "But I not goin' tell all I know."

There was something highly exasperating to a young man in her cool, smiling air. He stood looking at her, feeling oddly flat and baffled.

Suddenly she turned her head to listen. "They gettin' up now," she said quickly. "Go and wash."

"Can't I speak to you if I am the cook?" he demanded.

"Go and wash," she repeated. "I don't want no more trouble."

Sam shrugged and walked stiffly away. He had plenty to occupy his mind while he shaved. His sensations were much mixed. In her subtle way, the girl allured, mystified and angered him all at once. Anger had the last word.

He would like to show her if he was the cook that he wasn't to be trifled with. He felt as if the most important thing in life was to solve the mys-

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tery that enshrouded her. However, the invigorating touch of cold water brought about a reaction. Violently scrubbing himself with a towel, he came to a sudden stop and addressed himself after this fashion:

"Steady, old man! You're heading in the wrong direction. You've got to get a toe-hold before you can look at a girl. She's a sight too good-looking. You can't think about it straight. Forget it! Anyway, a girl like that, she'd naturally pick a man like Big Jack or Shand. No use storing up trouble for yourself. Put it out of mind. Look the other way. Harden yourself."

Young Joe swung his heavy shoulders around the shack. Seeing Bela alone, he could scarcely credit his good fortune. He approached her, grinning and fawning in his extreme desire to please.

"Hello! You're an early bird," he said.

Bela looked at him in her most inscrutable way.

"How!" she said, offering him her hand according to the etiquette of the country.

Joe fondled it clumsily. "Say! the sight of you is good for sore eyes!" he cried, leering into her face. "Hanged if you ain't better looking than the sunrise."

Bela determinedly freed her hand. "Foolish talk!" she said loftily. "Wake the o'ter men and let us eat."

"Aw, don't be in such a rush," pleaded Joe. "I want to talk to you. I won't likely get another chance."

"What you want say?" she asked. "More foolishness, I think."

"Aw, give a fellow a chance," begged Joe.

"Well, say it," she commanded.

Joe's feeling was genuine enough. The conqueror of the sex found himself at a loss for words.

"The—sight of you sort of ties a man's tongue," he stammered. "I can't say it right. You're certainly a wonder! I never thought there was anything like you up here. I could stop here all day just taking you in!"

"I couldn't," said Bela, coolly. "I too 'ongry. Wake the o'ter men and go wash."

Joe stared at her, scowling, trying to discover if he was being made game of.

"Ahh," he growled, "you might give me a chance to make good."

"I will cook breakfast," said Bela. "I bring some nice whitefish."

"To the deuce with breakfast!" cried Joe. "I spoke you fair. You're only trying to put me off!"

"If you don't wake the men," said Bela coolly, "I will."

Her eyes were as clear as the lake waters. Joe's fell before them. He went sullenly back and shouted in the door of the shack.

CHAPTER VII.

The day started well, with Big Jack, Shand, and Joe all on their good behavior. But it was too good to last. Watching Bela's graceful movements before the fire, and eating the delicious food she put before them, the same thoughts passed through each man's mind.

What a treasure to enrich the cabin of a lonely pioneer! What would hard work and discouragements matter if a man had that to welcome him home at the end of the day? How could a man endure to live alone, having known such a woman? How could he hope to succeed without her help?

Each seeing the same thoughts revealed in the faces of his companions, realized that two men stood between him and his desire, and the baleful fires of jealousy were lighted again.

Each afraid one of the others might steal a march on him, watched his mates like a detective. The consequence was that hating each other, they nevertheless stuck together like burrs.

They followed Bela round in company like dogs contending for scraps, ready upon no occasion to all to bare their teeth and snarl at each other.

Bela, perceiving her power, and being only a human woman, naturally abused it a little. Thus to see white men whom all her life she had revered, cringing for her favor, went to her head a little.

She made them fetch and carry for her like women, she would have said. Thus the situation was reversed from that of her first appearance in the shack.

"Bring me sewing," she said. "I not like do no'ting."

A variety of damaged garments was pressed upon her.

"I sew one for each man," she said. Having made Husky comfortable, she took her work out into the sunshine. Jack, Shand and Joe lounged in front of her smoking, watching her covertly; each privately making up his mind to secure that charming sewing-machine for his own household, whatever the cost.

"Ain't you got no'ting to do?" asked Bela coolly.

"This is a holiday," replied Jack. "The stable is dirty," she persisted. "That's Shand's job," said Joe.

"Well, I ain't goin' to leave you two here," growled Shand. "There's plenty of other work, if it comes to that."

"All go clean the stable," commanded Bela. "I lak a clean stable."

"Now go cut plenty wood, so I can cook good," she ordered when they came back. "I want pine or birch. No poplar."

(To be continued.)

Grape Recipes

Schemes Fail to Beat Draft

Will Rogers, in the "Polities," tells an amusing story of a young man who, wishing to be exempt from military draft, went to the dentist and had all his teeth extracted, only to have the examining physicians reject him because of flat feet.

Rogers' story of course serves its purpose; it makes the audience laugh and that is why it was originated, but there have been numerous instances during the recent examination of the drafted men where subterfuge has been used in an effort to cheat Uncle Sam. These stories are just beginning to gain circulation and they give an insight into the difficulties with which the examining physicians had to contend before the full quota was made up. Some of the schemes employed were crude, no doubt, but still the physicians were kept on the alert.

Take the case of the young man who feigned deafness in order to "beat" the draft. It happened in Harlem, and the schemer came near getting away with it, too, but in his anxiety to be up and away he exposed his hand.

"Do you claim exemption?" inquired one of the physicians of the man being examined. The latter pretended not to hear, and the physician repeated the question, only louder.

"All my life, I guess," answered the schemer.

Nothing the schemer appeared anxious to get away the physician grew suspicious, so he decided to take the schemer by surprise, figuring that unless the schemer really was deaf he would be deceived by the ruse.

"Oh, well, if you are deaf you won't make a good soldier. Get your hat, you're exempt," said the physician in a low tone that only a man with good hearing could understand.

These were welcome words to the schemer, who, forgetting all about the subterfuge he was employing, grabbed for his hat and was about to go when the physician said: "I don't think your hearing is so badly impaired after all. I guess we can pass you." And he was passed.

"Somewhere on the East Side" a drafted man tried to cheat his way out by pretending that his eyesight was poor. He had the physicians fooled, too, for a time. Maybe he would have beaten the draft if he had kept his wits, but he didn't and he is going to serve his country when his time comes.

The examining physicians weren't able to tell by the usual methods whether this man was deceiving them or not, so they hatched up a little scheme which proved his undoing. While one monopolized the attention of the schemer the other physician tossed a marked \$5 bill on the floor in a corner where the schemer would see it if his eyesight was just fair. Then they left the room.

It is easy to surmise what happened, for when they returned the \$5 bill had vanished. The schemer was caught; his greed for money had overcome his cunning. It required some pressing by the physicians to convince the schemer that the bill had been placed there for his undoing.

"I suppose you're very anxious to become a soldier and fight for your country?" said a physician on the West Side to a robust young man who came before him for examination. "You look good and I'll pass you. Do you claim exemption?"

"Well, I should say I do," replied the robust young man, in an injured tone. "I wouldn't make a good fighter."

"I'm sick, I am."

"You're sick?" inquired the physician. "You surprise me. What's the trouble?"

"I'm nervous, doctor," replied the young man.

"You're nervous? What's your occupation?"

"I'm a prizefighter."

"Well, go over and win a few prizes knocking out the enemy and I think your nervousness will wear off. Passed."—New York Sun.

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Grape

Recipes

GRAPE PUDDING.

Sift together a cupful and a half of flour, a fourth of a cupful of sugar and a teaspoonful of baking powder, then with the tips of the fingers work in half a cupful of butter. To the well-beaten yolk of an egg add a quarter of a cupful of cold water, combine with the first mixture, using more water if needed to make a stiff dough. Line a deep pudding dish with this pastry, shaping the edge in scallops above the top of the form. Brush with white of egg and chill in the refrigerator until about an hour before dinner, then fill it a little more than half with sugared grapes, adding also a rounding tablespoonful of flour with each pint of fruit, and bake in rather a hot oven. Beat the yolks of two eggs with the fourth of a cupful of hot milk and pour the mixture over

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