

CHAPTER XLII

HEADED for Guido's strip of beach Celeste's small boat drove slowly towards the shore. There was very little breeze, but what there was had served her across the lake. Becalmed the night before, the girl had slept curled up under her sail, her craft snugly moored in a sheltered nook she knew, somewhere along the opposite banks. She crossed with the first of the daylight, picking her way unerringly through the clinging mists that wrapped the breast of Warning Lake like a nebulous cerement. Celeste sprang lightly from bow to land, the bearer of important tidings.

For she had been again to the delinquent farmer who was to have delivered the remaining sheep and now, due to her happy mingling of smiles and coercion, they would be landed from the ferry at her own wharf early in the forenoon, and Guido must be there to help her drive them over to his barn.

It was strangely still at that early hour as Celeste commenced to walk the few yards intervening between beach and buildings. Of a sudden she felt, without sign or substance prompting it, that the unusual or unwonted confronted her. All at once she saw the tracks.

Why did Dinodon tread so heavily in that soft stretch of sand? Why had his caution left him? And why again had he not kept a less visible course over the gravel bars?

Uneven, agitated tracks they seemed. She looked at them contemplatively, keenly. Then: Why had Dinodon rushed from the house like that?