

INTO THE PRIMITIVE

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SYNOPSIS.

The story opens with the shipwreck of the steamer on which Miss Genevieve Leslie, an American heiress, Lord Winthrop, an Englishman, and Tom Blake, a brusque American, were passengers. The three were tossed upon an uninhabited island and were the only ones not drowned. Blake recovered from a drunken stupor. Blake, shunned on the boat, because of his roughness, became a hero as preserver of the helpless pair. The Englishman was suing for the hand of Miss Leslie. Blake started to swim back to the ship to recover what was left. Blake returned safely. Winthrop wasted his last match on a cigarette, for which he was scolded by Blake. Their first meal was a dead fish. The trio started a tent on a high ledge. Thirst attacked them. Blake was compelled to carry Miss Leslie on account of weakness. He taunted Winthrop. They entered the jungle. That night was passed roasting high in a tree. The next morning they descended to the open again. All three constructed hats to shield themselves from the sun. They then feasted on coconuts, the only procurable food. Miss Leslie showed a liking for Blake, but detested his roughness. Led by Blake they established a home in some cliffs. Blake found a fresh water spring. Miss Leslie faced an unpleasant situation.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

"They'll be dry in a day or two. Say, Winthrop, you might fetch some of those stones—size of a ball. I used to be a fancy pitcher when I was a kid, and we might scare up a rabbit or something."

"I play cricket myself. But these stones—"

"Better'n a gun, when you haven't got the gun. Come on. We'll go in a bunch, after all, in case I need stones."

With due consideration for Winthrop's ankle—not for Winthrop—Blake set so slow a pace that the half-mile's walk consumed over half an hour. But his smouldering irritation was soon quenched when they drew near the green thicket at the foot of the cleft. In the almost deathlike stillness of mid-afternoon, the sound of trickling water came to their ears, clear and musical.

"A spring!" shouted Blake. "I guessed right. Look at those green plants and grass; there's the channel where it runs out in the sand and dries up."

The others followed him eagerly as he pushed in among the trees. They saw no running water, for the tiny rill that trickled down the ledges was matted over with vines. But at the foot of the slope lay a pool, some ten yards across, and overshadowed by the surrounding trees. There was no underbrush, and the ground was trampled bare as a floor.

"By Jove," said Winthrop; "see the tracks! There must have been a drove of sheep about."

"Deer, you mean," replied Blake, bending to examine the deeper prints at the edge of the pool. "These ain't sheep tracks. A lot of them are larger."

"Could you not uncover the brook?" asked Miss Leslie. "If animals have been drinking here, one would prefer cleaner water."

"Sure," assented Blake. "If you're game for a climb, and can wait a few minutes, we'll get it out of the spring itself. We've got to go up anyway, to get at our poultry yard!"

"Here's a place that looks like a path," called Winthrop, who had circled about the edge of the pool to the farther side.

Blake ran around beside him and stared at the tunnel-like passage which wound up the limestone ledges beneath the overhanging thickets.

"Odd place, is it not?" observed Winthrop. "Looks like a fox run, only larger, you know."

"Too low for deer, though—and their hoofs would have cut up the moss and ferns here. Let's get a close look."

As he spoke, Blake stooped and climbed a few yards up the trail to an overhanging ledge, four or five feet high. Where the trail ran up over this break in the slope the stone was bare of all vegetation. Blake laid his club on the top of the ledge, and was about to vault after it, when, directly beneath his nose, he saw the print of a great catlike paw, outlined in dried mud. At the same instant a deep growl came rumbling down the "fox run." Without waiting for a second warning, Blake drew his club to him, and crept back down the trail. His stealthy movements and furtive backward glances filled his companions with vague terror. He himself was hardly less alarmed.

"Get out of the trees—into the open!" he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, and as they crept away, white with dread of the unknown danger, he followed at their heels, looking backward, his club raised in readiness to strike.

Once clear of the trees, Winthrop caught Miss Leslie by the hand and broke into a run. In their terror they paid no heed to Blake's command to stop. They had darted off so unexpectedly that he did not overtake them short of 100 yards.

"Hold on!" he said, gripping Winthrop roughly by the shoulder. "It's safe enough here, and you'll knock out that blamed ankle."

"What is it? What did you see?" gasped Miss Leslie.

"Footprint," mumbled Blake, ashamed of his fright.

"A lion's?" cried Winthrop.

"Not so large—'bout the size of a guma's. Must be a leopard's den up



Crept Back Down the Trail.

there. I heard a growl, and thought it about time to clear out."

"By Jove, we'd better withdraw around the point!"

"Withdraw your aunty! There's no leopard going to tackle us out here in open ground this time of day. The sneaking tomcat! If only I had a match, I'd show him how we smoke rat holes."

"Mr. Winthrop spoke of rubbing sticks to make fire," suggested Miss Leslie.

"Make sweat, you mean. But we may as well try it now, if we're going to at all. The sun's hot enough to fry eggs. We'll go back to a shady place and pick up sticks on the way."

Though there was shade under the cliff within some 600 feet, they had to go some distance to the nearest dry wood—a dead thornbush. Here they gathered a quantity of branches, even Miss Leslie volunteering to carry a load.

All was thrown down in a heap near the cliff, and Blake squatted beside it, penknife in hand. Having selected the driest of the larger sticks, he bored a hole in one side and dropped in a pinch of powdered bark. Laying the stick in the full glare of the sun, he thrust a twig into the hole and began to twirl it between his palms. This movement he kept up for several minutes; but whether he was unable to twirl the twig fast enough or whether the right kind of wood or tinder was lacking all his efforts failed to produce a spark.

Unwilling to accept the failure, Winthrop insisted upon trying in turn, and pride held him to the task until he was drenched with sweat. The result was the same.

"Told you so," jeered Blake from where he lay in the shade. "We'd stand more chance cracking stones together."

"But what shall we do now?" asked Miss Leslie. "I am becoming very tired of coconuts, and there seems to be nothing else around here. Indeed, I think this is all such a waste of time. If we had walked straight along the shore this morning we might have reached a town."

"We might, Miss Jenny, and then, again, we mightn't. I happened to overhaul the captain's chart—Quillman, Mozambique—that's all for hundreds of miles. Towns on this coast are about as thick as hen's teeth."

"How about native villages?" demanded Winthrop.

"Oh, yes; maybe I'm fool enough to go into a wild nigger town without a gun. Maybe I didn't talk with fellows down on the Rand."

"But what shall we do?" repeated Miss Leslie, with a little frightened catch in her voice. She was at last beginning to realize what this rude break in her sheltered, pampered life might mean. "What shall we do? It's—it's absurd to think of having to stay in this horrid country for weeks or perhaps months—unless some ship comes for us!"

"Look here, Miss Leslie," answered Blake, sharply yet not unkindly; "suppose you just sit back and use your thinker a bit. If you're your daddy's daughter, you've got brains some-

where down under the boarding-school stuff."

"What do you mean, sir?"

"Now, don't get huffy, please! It's a question of think, not of putting on airs. Here we are, worse off than the people of the stone age. They had fire and flint axes; we've got nothing but our think tanks, and as to lions and leopards and that sort of thing, it strikes me we've got about as many on hand as they had."

"Then you and Mr. Winthrop should immediately arm yourselves."

"How?—But we'll leave that till later. What else?"

The girl gazed at the surrounding objects, her forehead wrinkled in the effort at concentration. "We must have water. Think how we suffered yesterday! Then there is shelter from wild beasts, and food, and—"

"All right here under our hands, if we had fire. Understand?"

"I understand about the water. You would frighten the leopard away with the fire; and if it would do that, it would also keep away the other animals at night. But as for food, unless we return for coconuts—"

"Don't give it up! Keep your thinker going on the side, while Pat tells us our next move. Now that he's got the fire sticks out of his head—"

"I say, Blake, I wish you would drop that name. It is no harder to say Winthrop."

"You're off, there," rejoined Blake. "But look here, I'll make it Win, if you figure out what we ought to do next."

"Really, Blake, that would not be half bad. They—er—they called me Win at Harrow."

"That so? My English chum went to Harrow—Jimmy Scarbridge."

"Lord James!—your chum?"

"He started in like you, sort of top-lofty. But he chummed all right—after I took out a lot of his British starch with a good walloping."

"Oh, really now, Blake, you can't expect any one with brains to believe that, you know!"

"No; I don't know, you know,—and I don't know if you've got any brains, you know. Here's your chance to show us. What's our next move?"

"Really, now, I have had no experience in this sort of thing—don't interrupt, please! It seems to me that our first concern is shelter for the night. If we should return to your tree nest, we should also be near the cocoa palms."

"That's one side. Here's the other. Bar to wade across—sharks and alligators; then swampy ground—malaria, mosquitoes, thorn jungle. Guess the hands of both of you are still sore enough, by their look."

"By morning I believe my ankle will be in such shape that I could go back for the string of coconuts which we dropped on the beach."

"I'll go myself, to-day, else we'll have no supper. Now we're getting down to bedrock. If those nuts have not been washed away by the tide, we're fixed for to-night; and for two meals, such as they are. But what next? Even the rain pools will be dried up by another day or so."

"Are not sea-birds good to eat?" inquired Miss Leslie.

"Some."

"Then, if only we could climb the cliff—might there not be another place?"

"No; I've looked at both sides. What's more, that spotted tomcat has got a monopoly on our water supply. The river may be fresh at low tide; but we've got nothing to boil water in, and such bayou stuff is just concentrated malaria."

"Then we must find water elsewhere," responded Miss Leslie. "Might we not succeed if we went on to the other ridge?"

"That's the ticket. You've got a headache, Miss Jenny! It's too late to start now. But first thing to-morrow I'll take a run down that way, while you two lay around camp and see if you can twist some sort of fish-line out of coconut fiber. By braiding your hair, Miss Jenny, you can spare us your hair-pins for hooks."

"But, Mr. Blake, I'm afraid—I'd rather you'd take us with you. With that dreadful creature so near—"

"Well, I don't know. Let's see your feet?"

Miss Leslie glanced at him, and thrust a slender foot from beneath her skirt.

"Um-m—stocking torn; but those slippers are tougher than I thought. Most of the way will be good walking, along the beach. We'll leave the fishing to Pat—er—beg pardon—Win! With his ankle—"

"By Jove, Blake, I'll chance the ankle. Don't leave me behind. I give you my word, you'll not have to lug me."

"Oh, of course, Mr. Winthrop must go with us!"

"Fraid to go alone, eh?" demanded Blake, frowning.

His tone startled and offended her; yet all he saw was a politely quizzical lifting of her brows.

"Why should I be afraid, Mr. Blake?" she asked.

Blake stared at her moodily. But when she met his gaze with a confident smile, he flushed and looked away.

"All right," he muttered; "we'll move camp together. But don't expect me to pack his ludship, if we draw a blank and have to trek back without food or water."

CHAPTER IX.

The Leopards' Den.

WHILE Blake made a successful trip for the abandoned coconuts, his companions leveled the stones beneath the ledges chosen by Winthrop, and gathered enough dried sea-weed along the talus to soften the hard beds.

Soothed by the monotonous wash of the sea among the rocks, even Miss Leslie slept well. Blake, who had insisted that she should retain his coat, was awakened by the chilliness preceding the dawn. Five minutes later they started on their journey.

The starlight glistened on the waves and shed a faint radiance over the rocks. This and their knowledge of the way enabled them to pick a path along the foot of the cliff without difficulty. Once on the beach, they swung along at a smart gait, invigorated by the cool air.

Dawn found them half way to their goal. Blake called a halt when the first red streaks shot up the eastern sky. All stood waiting until the quickly following sun sprang forth from the sea. Blake's first act was to glance from one headland to the other, estimating their relative distances. His grunt of satisfaction was lost in Winthrop's exclamation: "By Jove, look at the cattle!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Public Eye.

In a little more we came to an open space, very thronged.

"The Public Eye!" shouted the megaphone man of our party.

There were some curious people within the space, but even more curious were those just outside.

Of these latter we thought certain women especially interesting; they were busily neglecting their families in order to get into the Public Eye. A pathos attached to another group of women who had been in the Public Eye and could never be happy out of it, though they couldn't in the least tell why.

Positively funny were a few men who kept trying, by a variety of droll devices, to break into the Public Eye—"Vice-presidential candidates!" or megaphone man explained.—Puck.

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