

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, stunned on the boat, because of his roughness, became a hero 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 wanted his last match on a cigarette, for which he was scored by Blake. Their first meal was a dead fish. The trio started a tent like for lecher land. Thirst attacked them, Blake was compelled to carry Miss Leslie on account of weariness. He taunted Winthrop. They entered the jungle. That night was passed roosting 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, Blake found a fresh water spring. Miss Leslie faced an unpleasant situation. They planned their campaign. Blake recovered his surveyor's magnifying glass, thus insuring fire. He started a jungle fire, killing a large leopard and smoothing several cubs. In the leopard's cavern they built a small home. They gained the cliffs by burning the bottom of a tree until it fell against the heights. The trio secured eggs from the cliffs. Miss Leslie's white skirt was decided upon as a signal. Miss Leslie made a dress from the leopard skin. Blake's efforts to kill antelopes failed. Overhearing a conversation between Blake and Winthrop, Miss Leslie became frightened. Winthrop became ill with fever. Blake was poisoned by a fish. Jackals attacked the camp that night, but were driven off by Genevieve. Blake returned after nearly dying. Blake constructed an animal trap. It killed a hyena. On a tour the trio discovered honey and oysters.



"Told You So! See Him Wiggle!"

CHAPTER XVI.—Continued.

"Would it not be best for Mr. Winthrop to rest during the noon hours?"

"Fraid not, Miss Jenny. We're not on 'other side of Jordan yet, and there's no rest for the weary this side."

"What odd expressions you use, Mr. Blake!"

"Just giving you the reverse application of one of those songs they jolly us with in the mission churches—"

"I'm sure, Mr. Blake—"

"Me, too, Miss Jenny! So, as that's settled, we'll be moving. Chuck some live coals in the pot, and come on."

He started off, weapons in hand. Winthrop made a languid effort to take possession of the pot. But Miss Leslie pushed him aside, and wrapping all in the antelope skin, slung it upon her back.

"The brute!" exclaimed Winthrop. "To leave such a load for you, when he knew that I can do so little!"

The girl met his outburst with a brave attempt at a smile. "Please try to look at the bright side, Mr. Winthrop. Really, I believe he thinks it is best for us to exert ourselves."

"He has other opinions with which we of the cultured class would hardly agree, Miss Leslie. Consider his command that we shall go thirsty until he permits us to return to the cliffs. The man's impertinence is intolerable. I shall go to the river and drink when I choose."

"Oh, but the danger of malaria!"

"Nonsense. Malaria, like yellow fever, comes only from the bite of certain species of mosquitoes. If we have the fever, it will be entirely his fault. We have been bitten repeatedly this morning, and all because he must compel us to come with him to this infected lowland."

"Still, I think we should do what Mr. Blake says."

"My dear Miss Genevieve, for your sake I will endeavor not to break with the fellow. Only, you know, it is dented hard to keep one's temper when one considers what a boulder—what an unmitigated cad—"

"Stop! I will not listen to another word!" exclaimed the girl, and she hurried after Blake, leaving Winthrop staring in astonishment.

"My word!" he muttered; "can it be, after all I've done—and him, of all the low fellows—"

He stood for several moments in deep thought. The look on his sallow face was far from pleasant.

CHAPTER XVII.
The Serpent Strikes.

WHEN Winthrop came up with the others, they were gathering green leaves to throw on the fire which was blazing close beside the ant-hill.

"Get a move on you!" called Blake. "You're slow. Grab a bunch of leaves, and get into the smoke, if you don't want to be stung."

Winthrop neither gathered any leaves nor hurried himself, until he was visited by a highly irritated bee. Then he obeyed with alacrity. Blake was far too intent on other matters to heed the Englishman. Leaping in and out of the thick of the smoke, he pounded the ant-hill with his club, until he had broken a gaping hole into the cavity. The smoke, pouring into the hive, made short work of the bees that had not already been suffocated.

Although the antelope skin was drawn into the shape of a sack, both it and the pot were filled to overflowing with honey, and there were still

more combs left than the three could eat.

Blake caught Winthrop smiling with satisfaction as he licked his fingers.

"What's the matter with my expedition now, old man?" he demanded.

"I—ah—must admit, Blake, we have had a most enjoyable change of food."

"If you are sure it will agree with you," remarked Miss Leslie.

"But I am sure of that, Miss Genevieve. I could digest anything to-day. I'm fairly ravenous."

"All the more reason to be careful," rejoined Blake. "I guess, though, what we've had'll do no harm. We'll let it settle a bit, here in the shade, and then hit the home trail."

"Could we not first go to the river, Mr. Blake? My hands are dreadfully sticky."

"Win will take you. It's only a little way to the bank here and there's not much underbrush."

"If you think it's quite safe—" remarked Winthrop.

"It's safe enough. Go on. You'll see the river in half a minute. Only thing, you'd better watch out for alligators."

"I believe that—er—properly speaking, these are crocodiles."

"You don't say! Heap of difference it will make if one gets you."

Miss Leslie caught Winthrop's eye. He turned on his heel, and led the way for her through the first thicket. Beyond this they came to a little glade which ran through to the river. When they reached the bank, they stepped cautiously down the muddy slope, and bathed their hands in the clear water. As Miss Leslie rose, Winthrop bent over and began to drink.

"Oh, Mr. Winthrop!" she exclaimed; "please don't! In your weak condition, I'm so afraid—"

"Do not alarm yourself. I am perfectly well, and I am quite as competent to judge what is good for me as you—ah—countryman."

"Mr. Winthrop, I am thinking only of your own good."

Winthrop took another deep draught, rinsed his fingers fastidiously, and arose.

"My dear Miss Genevieve," he observed, "a woman looks at these matters in such a different light from a man. But you should know that there are some things a gentleman cannot tolerate."

"You were welcome to all the water in the flask. Surely with that you could have waited, if only to please me."

"Ah, if you put it that way, I must beg pardon. Anything to please you, I'm sure! Pray forgive me, and forget the incident. It is now past."

"I hope so!" she murmured; but her heart sank as she glanced at his sallow face, and she recalled his languid, feeble movements.

Piqued by her look, Winthrop started back through the glade. Miss Leslie was turning to follow, when she caught sight of a gorgeous crimson blossom under the nearest tree. It was the first flower she had seen since being shipwrecked. She uttered a lit-

tle cry of delight, and ran to pluck the blossom.

Winthrop, glancing about at her exclamation, saw her stoop over the flower—and in the same instant he saw a huge, vivid coil, all black and green and yellow, flash up out of the bedded leaves and strike against the girl. She staggered back, screaming with horror, yet seemed unable to run.

Winthrop swung up his stick, and dashed across the glade toward her.

"What is it—a snake?" he cried.

The girl did not seem to hear him. She had ceased screaming, and stood rigid with fright, glaring down at the ground before her. In a moment Winthrop was near enough to make out the brilliant glistening body, now extended full length in the grass. It was nearly five feet long and thick as his thigh. Another step, and he saw the hideous triangular head, lifted a few inches on the thick neck. The cold eyes were fixed upon the girl in a malignant, deadly stare.

"Snake! snake!" he yelled, and thrust his cane at the reptile's tail.

Again came a flashing leap of the beautiful ornate coil, and the stick was struck from Winthrop's hand. He danced backward, wild with excitement.

"Snake!—Hi, Blake! monster!—Run, Miss Leslie! I'll hold him—I'll get another stick!"

He darted aside to catch up a branch, and then ran in and struck boldly at the adder, which reared hissing to meet him. But the blow fell short, and the rotten wood shattered on the ground. Again Winthrop ran aside for a stick. There was none near, and as he paused to glance about, Blake came springing down the glade.

"Where?" he shouted.

"There—Hi! look out! You'll be on him!"

Blake stopped short, barely beyond striking distance of the hissing reptile.

"Wow!" he yelled. "Puff adder! I'll fix him."

He leaped back, and thrust his bow at the snake. The challenge was met by a vicious lunge. Even where he stood Winthrop heard the thud of the reptile's head upon the ground.

"Now, once more, tootsie!" mocked Blake, swinging up his club.

Again the adder struck at the bow tip, more viciously than before. With the flash of the stroke, Blake's right foot thrust forward, and his club came down with all the drive of his sinewy arm behind it. The blow fell across the thickest part of the adder's outstretched body.

"Told you so! See him wiggle!" shouted Blake. "Broke his back, first lick—What's the matter, Miss Jenny? He can't do anything now."

Miss Leslie did not answer. She stood rigid, her face ashy-gray, her dilated eyes fixed upon the writhing, hissing adder.

"I think the snake struck her!" gasped Winthrop, suddenly overcome with horror.

"God!" cried Blake. He dropped his club, and rushed to the girl. In a mo-

ment he had knelt before and flung up her leopard-skin skirt. Her stockings ripped to shreds in his frantic grasp. There, a little below her right knee, was a tiny, red wound. Blake put his lips to it, and sucked with fierce energy.

Then the girl found her voice.

"Go away—go away! How dare you!" she cried, as her face flushed scarlet.

Blake turned, spat, and burst out with a loud demand of Winthrop: "Quick! the little knife—I'll have to slash it! Ten times worse than a rattlesnake—Lord! you're slow—I'll use mine!"

"Let go of me—let go! What do you mean, sir?" cried the girl, struggling to free herself.

"Hold still, you little fool!" he shouted. "It's death—sure death, if I don't get the poison from that bite!"

"I'm not bitten—Let go, I say! It struck in the fold of my skirt."

"For God's sake, Jenny, don't lie! It's certain death! I saw the mark—"

"That was a thorn. I drew it out an hour ago."

Blake looked up into her hazel eyes. They were blazing with indignant scorn. He freed her, and rose with clumsy slowness. Again he glanced at her quivering, scarlet face, only to look away with a sheepish expression.

"I guess you think I'm just a damned meddling idiot," he mumbled.

She did not answer. He stood for a little, rubbing a finger across his sun-blistered lips. Suddenly he stopped and looked at the finger. It was streaked with blood.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "Didn't stop to think of that! It's just as well for me, Miss Jenny, that wasn't an adder bite. A little poison on my sore lip would have done for me. Ten to one, we'd both have turned up our toes at the same time. Of course, though, that'd be nothing to you."

Miss Leslie put her hands before her face and burst into hysterical weeping.

Blake looked around, far more alarmed than when facing the adder.

"Here, you blooming lard!" he shouted; "take the lady away, and be quick about it. She'll go dotty if she sees any more snake stunts. Clear out with her, while I smash the wriggler."

Winthrop, who had been staring fixedly at the beautiful coloring and loathsome form of the writhing adder, started at Blake's harsh command as though struck.

"I—er—to be sure," he stammered, and darting around to the hysterical girl, he took her arm and hurried her away up the glade.

They had gone several paces when Blake came running up behind them. Winthrop looked back with a glance of inquiry. Blake shook his head.

"Not yet," he said. "Give me your cigarette case. I've thought of something—Hold on; take out the cigarettes. Smoke 'em, if you like."

Case in hand, Blake returned to the wounded adder, and plucked up his club. A second smashing blow would have ended the matter at once; but Blake did not strike. Instead, he feinted with his club until he managed to pin down the venomous head. The club lay across the monster's neck, and he held it fast with the pressure of his foot.

When, half an hour later, he wiped his knife on a wisp of grass and stood up, the cigarette case contained over a tablespoonful of a crystalline liquid. He peered in at it, his heavy jaw thrust out, his eyes glowing with savage elation.

"Talk about your meat trusts and Winchesters!" he exulted; "here's a whole carload of beef in this little box—enough dope to morganize a herd of steers. Good God, though, that was a close shave for her!"

His face sobered, and he stood for several moments staring thoughtfully into space. Then his gaze chanced to fall upon the great crimson blossom which had so nearly lured the girl to her death.

"Hello!" he exclaimed; "that's an amaryllis. Wonder if she wasn't coming to pick it—"

He snapped shut the lid of the cigarette case, thrust it carefully into his shirt pocket, and stepped forward to pluck the flower.

"Whew!" he sighed; "if only—But what's the use? She's 'way out of my class—a rough brute like me! All the same, it's up to me to take care of her. She can't keep me from being her friend—and she sure can't object to my picking flowers for her."

Amaryllis in hand, he gathered up his bow and club. Then he paused to study the skin of the decapitated adder. The inspection ended with a shake of his head.

"Better not, Thomas. It would make a dandy quiver; but then, it might get on her nerves."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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