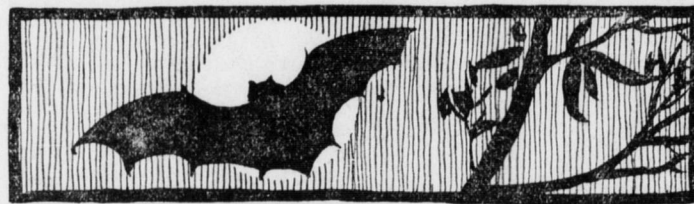


# INTO THE PRIMITIVE

BY ROBERT AMES BENNET  
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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 ten mile hike for higher 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 they established a home in some cliffs. 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 smothering 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. Miss Leslie was attacked by a poisonous snake. Blake killed it and saved its poison to kill game. For the second time Winthrop was attacked by fever. He and Blake disagreed.

### CHAPTER XVIII.—Continued.

"That's it—do the baby act," jeered Blake. "But say, I don't know just how much eavesdropping you did; so there's one thing I'll repeat for the special benefit of your ludship. It'll be good for your delicate health to pay attention. From now on, the cliff top belongs to Miss Leslie. Gents and book agents not allowed. Understand? You don't go up there without her special invite. If you do, I'll twist your damned neck!"

He turned on his heel and left the Englishman cowering.

### CHAPTER XIX.

#### An Ominous Lull.

THE three saw nothing more of each other that day. Miss Leslie had withdrawn into the baobab and Blake had gone off down the cleft for more salt. He did not return until after the others were asleep. Miss Leslie had gone without her supper, or had eaten some of the food stored within the tree.

When, late the next morning, she finally left her seclusion Blake was nowhere in sight. Ignoring Winthrop's attempts to start a conversation, she hurried through her breakfast, and, having gathered a supply of food and water, went to spend the day on the headland.

Evening forced her to return to the cleft. She had emptied the water flask by noon, and was thirsty. Winthrop was dozing beneath his canopy, which Blake had moved some yards down towards the barricade. Blake was cooking supper.

He did not look up, and met her attempt at a pleasant greeting with an inarticulate grunt. When she turned to enter the baobab, she found the opening littered with bamboos and green creepers and pieces of large branches with charred ends. On either side, midway through the entrance, a vertical row of holes had been sunk through the bark of the tree into the soft wood.

"What is this?" she asked. "Are you planning a porch?"

"Maybe," he replied.

"But why should you make the holes so far in? I know so little about these matters, but I should have fancied the holes would come on the front of the tree."

"You'll see in a day or two."

"How did you make the holes? They look black, as though—"

"Burnt 'em, of course—hot stones."

"That was so clever of you!"

He made no response.

Supper was eaten in silence. Even Winthrop's presence would have been a relief to the girl; yet she could not go to waken him, or even suggest that her companion do so. Blake sat throughout the meal sullen and stolid, and carefully avoided meeting her gaze. Before they had finished, twilight had come and gone, and night was upon them. Yet she lingered for a last attempt.

"Good-night, friend!" she whispered. He sprang up as though she had struck him and blundered away into the darkness.

In the morning it was as before. He had gone off before she wakened. She lingered over breakfast; but he did not appear, and she could not endure Winthrop's suave drawl. She went for another day on the headland.

She returned somewhat earlier than on the previous day. As before, Winthrop was dozing in the shade. But

### Satisfied Himself That Miss Leslie Was Well Out Toward the Signal.

Blake was under the baobab, raking together a heap of rubbish. His hands were scratched and bleeding. To the girl's surprise, he met her with a cheerful grin and a clear, direct glance.

"Look here," he called.

She stepped around the baobab and stood staring. The entrance, from the ground to the height of 12 feet, was walled up with a mass of thorny branches, interwoven with yet thornier creepers.

"How's that for a front door?" he demanded.

"Door?"

"Yes."

"But it's so big. I could never move it."

"A child could. Look." He grasped a projecting handle near the bottom of the thorny mass. The lower half of the door swung up and outward, the upper half in and downward. "See, it's balanced on a crossbar in the middle. Come on in."

She walked after him in under the now horizontal door. He gave the inner end a light upward thrust, and the door swung back in its vertical circle until it again stood upright in the opening. From the inside the girl could see the strong framework to which was lashed the facing of the thorns. It was made of bamboo and strong pieces of branches, bound together with tough creepers.

"Pretty good grating, eh?" remarked Blake. "When those green creepers dry, they'll shrink and hold tight as iron clamps. Even now nothing short of a rhinoceros could walk through when the bars are fast. See here."

He stepped up to the novel door and slid several socketed crossbars until their outer ends were deep in the holes in the tree trunk, three on each side.

"How's that for a set of bolts?" he demanded.

"Wonderful! Really, you are very, very clever! But why should you go to all this trouble, when the barricade—"

"Well, you see, it's best to be on the safe side."

"But it's absurd for you to go to all this needless work. Not that I do not appreciate your kind thought for my safety. Yet look at your hands!"

Blake hastened to put his bleeding hands behind him.

"Go and wash them at once, and I'll put on a dressing."

"No, thank you, Miss Jenny. You needn't bother. They'll do all right."

"You must! It would please me."

"Why, then, of course—But first, I want to make sure you understand fastening the door. Try the bars yourself."

She obeyed, sliding the bars in and out until he nodded his satisfaction.

"Good!" he said. "Now promise me you'll slide 'em fast every night."

"If you ask it. But why?"

"I want to make you perfectly safe."

"Safe? But am I not secure with—"

"Look here, Miss Leslie, I'm not going to say anything about anybody."

"Perhaps you had better say no more, Mr. Blake."

"That's right. But whatever happens, you'll believe I've done my best, won't you?—even if I'm not a— Promise me straight, you'll lock up tight every night."

"Very well, I promise," responded the girl, not a little troubled by the strangeness of his expression.

That night Miss Leslie dutifully fastened herself in with all six bars. She wakened at dawn, and hastened out to prepare Blake's breakfast, but she found herself too late. There were evidences that he had eaten and gone off before dawn. The stretching frame of one of the antelope skins had been moved around by the fire, and on the smooth inner surface of the hide was a laconic note, written with charcoal in a firm, bold hand:

"Exploring inland. Back by night, if can."

She bit her lip in her disappointment, for she had planned to show him how much she appreciated his absurd but well-meant concern for her safety. As it was, he had gone off without a word and left her to the questionable pleasure of a tete-a-tete with Winthrop. Hoping to avoid this, she hurried her preparations for a day on the cliff. But before she could get off, Winthrop sauntered up, hiding his yawns behind a hand which had regained most of its normal plumpness. His eye was at once caught by the charcoal note.

"Ah!" he drawled; "really now, this is too kind of him to give us the pleasure of his absence all day!"

"Ye-es?" murmured Miss Leslie. "Permit me to add that you will also have the pleasure of my absence. I am going now."

Winthrop looked down, and began to speak very rapidly: "Miss Genevieve, I—I wish to apologize. I've thought it over. I've made a mistake—I—I mean, my conduct the other day was vile, utterly vile! Permit me to appeal to your consideration for a man who has been unfortunate—who, I mean, has been—er—that—er—bounder so angered me that I—that I—"

"Mr. Winthrop!" interrupted the girl, "I will have you to understand that you do not advance yourself in my esteem by such references to Mr. Blake."

"Aye! aye, that Blake!" panted Winthrop. "Don't you see? It's 'im, an' that blossom! When a man's daffy—w'en 'e's in love!"

Miss Leslie burst into a nervous laugh; but checked herself on the instant.

"Really, Mr. Winthrop!" she exclaimed, "you must pardon me. I—I never knew that cultured Englishmen ever dropped their 's. As it happens, you know, I never saw one excited before this."

"Ah, yes; to be sure—to be sure!" murmured Winthrop, in an odd tone. The girl threw out her hand in a little gesture of protest.

"Really, I'm sorry to have hurt—to have been so thoughtless!"

Winthrop stood silent. She spoke

again: "I'll do what you ask. I'll make allowances for you—for your feelings towards me and try to forget all you said the other day. Let me begin by asking a favor of you."

"Ah, Miss Genevieve, anything, to be sure, that I may do!"

"It is that I wish your opinion. When Mr. Blake finished that absurd door last evening, he would not tell me why he had built it—only a vague statement about my safety."

"Ah! He did not go into particulars?" drawled Winthrop.

"No, not even a hint; and he looked so—odd."

Winthrop slowly rubbed his soft palms one upon the other.

"Do you—er—really desire to know his—the motive which actuated him?" he murmured.

"I should not have mentioned it to you if I did not," she answered.

"Well—er—" He hesitated and paused for a full minute. "You see, it is a rather difficult undertaking to intimate such a matter to a lady—just the right touch of delicacy, you know. But I will begin by explaining that I have known it since the first—"

"Known what?"

"Of that bound—of—er—Blake's trouble."

"Trouble?"

"Ah! Perhaps I should have said affliction; yes, that is the better word. To own the truth, the fellow has some good qualities. It was no doubt because he realized, when in his better moments—"

"Better moments? Mr. Winthrop, I am not a child. In justice both to myself and to Mr. Blake, I must ask you to speak out plainly."

"My dear Miss Leslie, may I first ask if you have not observed how strangely at times the fellow acts—looks odd, as you put it—how he falls into melancholia or senseless rages? I may truthfully state that he has three times threatened my life."

"I—I—thought his anger quite natural, after I had so rudely—and so many people are given to brooding— But if he was violent to you—"

"My dear Miss Genevieve, I hold nothing against the miserable fellow. At such times he is not—er—responsible, you know. Let us give the fellow full credit—that is why he himself built your door."

"Oh, but I can't believe it! I can't believe it!" cried the girl. "It's not possible! He's so strong, so true and manly, so kind, for all his gruffness!"

"Ah, my dear!" soothed Winthrop, "that is the pity of it. But when a man must needs be his worst enemy, when he must needs lead a certain kind of life, he must take the consequences. To put it as delicately as possible, yet explain all, I need only say one word—paranoia."

Miss Leslie gathered up her day's outfit with trembling fingers and went to mount the cliff.

After waiting a few minutes Winthrop walked hurriedly through the cleft and climbed the tree-ladder with an agility that would have amazed his companions. But he did not draw himself up on the cliff. Having satisfied himself that Miss Leslie was well out toward the signal, he returned to the baobab and proceeded to examine Blake's door with minute scrutiny.

That evening, shortly before dark, Blake came in almost exhausted by his journey. Few men could have covered the same ground in twice the time. It had been one continuous round of grass jungle, thorn scrub, rocks and swamp. And for all his pains he brought back with him nothing more than the discouraging information that the back-country was worse than the shore. Yet he betrayed no trace of depression over the bad news, and for all his fatigue maintained a tone of hearty cheerfulness until, having eaten his fill, he suddenly observed Miss Leslie's frigid politeness.

"What's up now?" he demanded. "You're not mad 'cause I hiked off this morning without notice?"

"No, of course, not, Mr. Blake. Nothing of the kind. But I—"

"Well, what?" he broke in, as she hesitated. "I can't, for the world, think of anything else I've done—"

"You've done! Perhaps I might suggest that it is a question of what you haven't done." The girl was trembling on the verge of hysterics. "Yes, what you've not done! All these weeks, and not a single attempt to get us away from here, except that miserable signal; and I as good as put that up! You call yourself a man! But I—I—" She stopped short, white with a sudden overpowering fear.

Winthrop looked from her to Blake with a sidelong glance, his lips drawn up in an odd twist.

There followed several moments of tense silence; then Blake mumbled apologetically: "Well, I suppose I might have done more. I was so dead anxious to make sure of food and shelter. But this trip to-day—"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

It is asserted by a traveler that "the best cigar tobacco in the world comes from Macedonia; that the best tobacco (when it is tobacco at all) in European cigarettes comes from Macedonia, and that when it does not come from Macedonia it is said to come from there."

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