



# NOVEMBER JOE

The Detective of the Woods  
by Hesketh Prichard.

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Continued

But as it happened Joe was wrong. I believe that his reasoning was correct enough, and that it was the fear of leaving such marks as would enable us to gather something of their identity that kept the enemy from pinning upon our door the letter which finally arrived prosaically enough in a cheap store envelope that bore the Primville postmark. The contents of this letter were as follows:

Petersham, you go alone to Butler's cabin 11 o'clock Friday night. Take the dollars along; you'll be met there and can hand it over.

Below was a rude drawing of a coffin. Petersham read the note out to Joe and myself.

"Where's Butler's cabin?" he asked. "I know it," said November. "Butler's cabin is on a hill about two miles west of here."

"I suppose you won't go?" said I. "With the money? Certainly not." "You can hardly go without it."

"Why not?" "You would be shot down."

"I'd talk to the ruffians first and then if there was any shooting, I guess I'd be as much in it as they would."

"I suggest that we all three go," I said. But Joe would have none of this plan.

"There's nothing to be gained by that, Mr. Quaritch. You bet these fellows'll keep a pretty bright lookout. If they saw three of us coming they'd snoot as like as not."

"I was thinking I might slip right along to Butler's cabin and maybe get a look at the fellows."

"No!" said Petersham decidedly. "I won't allow it. You say yourself you would be shot."

"I said we would get shot, not me alone. Three men can't get quiet where one can."

And so finally it was arranged, though not without a good deal of argument with Petersham.

"That's a fine fellow," remarked Petersham. I nodded.

"The kind of fellow who fought with and bettered the Inroquois at their own game. I wonder what he will see at Butler's cabin?"

It was past midnight when Joe appeared again. Petersham and I both asked for his news.

November shook his head. "I've nothing to tell; nothing at all. I didn't see no one."

"Where were you?" "Lying down on top of the cabin itself. There's good corners to it."

"You could see well round, then, and if any one had come you would not have failed to observe them."

"Couldn't be too sure. There was some dark times when the moon was shut in by clouds. They might a' come them times, though I don't think they did. But I'll know for certain soon unless it comes on heavy rain. There's a fine little lake they call Butler's pond up there. You take your fishpole, Mr. Quaritch, and we'll go over at sunrise and you try for some of them trout, while I take a scout round for tracks."

This we did, but search as Joe would he failed to discover any sign at all. He told me this when he joined me at breakfast time.

After I had caught a nice string of trout we walked back to Kalmacks, circling round the house before we entered it. The sand lay undisturbed by any strange footstep, but when we got in we found Mr. Petersham in a state of the greatest excitement.

"One of the blackmailers has had a long talk with Puttick," he told us. "What?"

"Incredible as it sounds, it is so." "But when was this?"

"Early this morning, some time after you and Joe started. This is how it happened. Puttick had just got up and gone down with a tin of rosin and some spare canvas and tin to mend that canoe we ripped on the rock yesterday. In fact, he had only just begun working when he was startled by a voice ordering him to hold up his hands."

"By Jove, what next?" "Why, he held them up. He had no choice. And then a man stepped out from behind the big rock that's just above where the canoe lies."

"I hope Puttick recognized him." "No. The fellow had a red handkerchief tied over his nose and mouth. Only his eyes showed under the brim of a felt hat that was pulled low down over them. He carried a rifle, that he kept full on Puttick's chest while they talked. But I'll call Puttick. He can finish the account of the affair himself. That's best."

Puttick answered to the call, and after running over the story, which was exactly similar to that we had just heard from Petersham, he continued:

"The tough had a red hanker tied over his ugly face, nothing but his eyes

showing. He had me covered with his gun to rights all the time."

"What kind of a gun was it?" "I didn't see; leastways I didn't notice."

"Well, had he anything to say?" "He kep' me that way a minute before he started speaking. You tell Petersham," says he, "it's up to him to pay right away. Tell him unless he goes at once to Butler's cabin and takes the goods and leaves them there on the big flat stone by the rock he'll hear from us afore evening, and he'll hear in a way that'll make him sorry all his life. And as for you, Ben Puttick, you take a hint and advise old man Petersham to buy us off, and he can't be too quick about doing it either. If he tries to escape we'll get him on the road talking to Primville." After he'd done talking he made me put my watch on the canoe—that I'd turned bottom up to get at that rent—and warned me not to move for half an hour. When the half hour was up I come right away and tell you."

"Tall or short was he?" "Medium-like."

"Which way did he go when he left you?" "West; right along the bank."

"You followed his trail after the half hour was over?" "Puttick opened his eyes. "He didn't leave none."

"Left no trail! How's that?" cried Petersham.

But Joe interposed. "You menn he kep' to the stones in the bed o' the brook all the time?"

"That's it. And, anyway, if I'd got fooling lookin' for his tracks I'd 'a' got a bullet in me same as Bill Worke," ended the little man. "They're all watching for us."

### CHAPTER XV.

#### The Man in the Black Hat.

WE were silent for a moment. Then Petersham turned to Puttick.

"What do you think of it, Ben? You have some experience of these squatters up here. Do you think they mean business?"

"There ain't much fooling about these mountain men," Puttick answered bitterly. "And now I says this to you, Mr. Petersham, and I can't never say nothing stronger. If you're minded to stay on here at this place, you must pay if you don't want Miss Petersham hurt or killed."

"My daughter?" "That's how I read it. What else could he mean? He said you'd be sorry all your life."

"Good heavens! Even the most hardened ruffians would not hurt a woman. You don't think it possible?" Petersham turned to me.

"I think that Linda runs a very great risk by staying."

"Then she shall go."

But when Linda was called and the facts made clear to her she absolutely refused to leave Kalmacks.

"You will force me to pay the money, then," said Petersham, "though I am well aware that this demand will only be the first of many. Whenever these blackmailers want \$1,000, aye, or \$10,000, they know they will only have to ask me to supply them. But I can't risk you—I'll pay."

Joe turned to Petersham. "If you climb down now I'll be right sorry I ever come with you. I don't hold with backing down under a bluff."

I, who knew Joe, was surprised to hear him offer so definite an opinion in such strong terms, but Linda clapped her hands.

"It's all nonsense, isn't it? Why, if any one attempted to hurt me Joe would make him regret it, wouldn't you, Joe?" She flashed him a glance of her glorious eyes.

"I'd sure try to hard enough," replied November. "And now, Mr. Quaritch, I'll ask Ben here to show me just where the fella stood when he held him up this morning."

So Joe went down to the brook, and I went with him. We were soon beside the canoe which Puttick had been mending.

"Here's where I was, and there's where he stood," said Puttick, pointing to a small mass of rock close by. "And there's the place I set down my watch."

November glanced over the details and then followed the bank of the brook for some distance. Presently he returned.

"Did you strike his trail?" asked Puttick.

"No, the stones lead right away to the lake, and like as not he came in a canoe."

"Like as not," agreed Puttick and resumed his work on the canoe which had been so rudely interrupted earlier in the day.

We found Linda in the living room arranging some fishing tackle. She also appeared to Joe.

"Oh, Joe, I want to try some of those English lures Mr. Quaritch gave me. I'm going to fish, and I want to use this two jointed pole. Will you

fix it for me?" "I'd like you to make me a promise, Miss Linda."

"What is it?" "Not to go out at all today."

"You don't think I'm in danger?" "You're in great danger, Miss Linda."

"Then you must go out with me. Joe. If you are with me they will not dare!"

"Look here, Miss Linda, if you'll stay in the house just over today I wouldn't wonder but it might be quite safe for you to go out tomorrow—and ever after."

"Joe, you mean you have discovered?"

"No; I ain't discovered nothing, but if you stay in the way I ask maybe I shall." Joe took up his hat.

"Where are you going, November?" I asked.

"Over to Senlis lake, Mr. Quaritch. Will you see Ben Puttick and tell him I won't be back till lateish and will be cook the potatoes and the cornflour cakes if I don't get back to time? Miss Linda, will you please tell every one, even your father, that you have a mighty painful head and that's why you're staying in?"

"Yes, Joe," said Linda.

After Joe's departure I took a book and sat with it in the veranda, where I was joined in due course by Linda and Mr. Petersham.

"It's cool here, the only cool spot in the place today," remarked Petersham. "Yes, and don't the spruces smell sweet?" said Linda. "Joe cut them to give me shade."

She pointed to a row of tall saplings propped against the rail of the veranda so as to form a close screen.

"Joe always thinks of things for people," she added.

Petersham glanced from me to Linda. "If your headache is bad you had better lie down in the house," he said.

"It is ever so much better, but I'll fetch some smelling salts."

I was about to offer to bring them for her when I caught her father's eye behind her back and remained where I was. As soon as she had gone in Petersham stepped up to me and whispered:

"To give her shade," he repeated. I looked around and nodded.

"There is always shade here," he went on. "The sun can't get in through the pines on this side. The wood is thickest here."

"That's true," I agreed, looking at the close grown junipers that stood in front of us. "Joe stacked these saplings against the rail for some other reason."

"Of course. He knew that Linda would very likely sit here, and he was afraid."

"Afraid? Of what?" said Linda suddenly from behind us. "No one could hurt me here. Why, I could call for help and you are both here. You could protect me."

"Not against a rifle bullet," said Petersham. "For my sake, go in, Linda!"

As he said the words from far away came the sound of a shot. Distance robbed it of that acrimony with which the modern rifle speaks, and it struck a dull, even drowsy note upon the air of that languid afternoon of late spring.

#### To Be Continued.

### INJURED AUTOIST'S RELAPSE

Young Hawaiian Now Reported in Serious Condition

South Bethlehem, Pa., Nov. 25.—The condition of James McCandless, the young Hawaiian planter's son, who is a student at the University of Pennsylvania, and who was the owner and driver of the racing automobile which last Sunday was struck at the Broadhead avenue grade crossing here, and one of the five occupants of the car killed, is reported to be serious at St. Luke's Hospital. This information was obtained by Chief of Police William Halteman, of Bethlehem, who had received a telegram from Philadelphia, inquiring after the condition of the young student.

While his leg is severely lacerated, McCandless is suffering most from shock and nervous collapse.

### MUST SPEND HIS LIFE ALONE

Bay State Officials Refuse to Lift Solitary Confinement Penalty

Boston, Nov. 25.—The Governor's Council yesterday voted not to grant greater liberty to Jesse Pomeroy, a prisoner under solitary confinement at the Charlestown State prison. The Board of Parole had recommended that Pomeroy be allowed to mingle with other prisoners. The decision not to modify the restrictions on Pomeroy was reached by the Council after it had listened to a brother of one of the boy victims of his crimes.

### \$600,000 Saved For Christmas

Pottsville, Nov. 25.—A statement made by Schuylkill county banks yesterday show that the Christmas clubs of this county have saved \$600,000 for Christmas. This is an average of \$3 for every man, woman and child in the county. The Schuylkill Trust Company alone has \$125,000 on deposit, which will be distributed next week.

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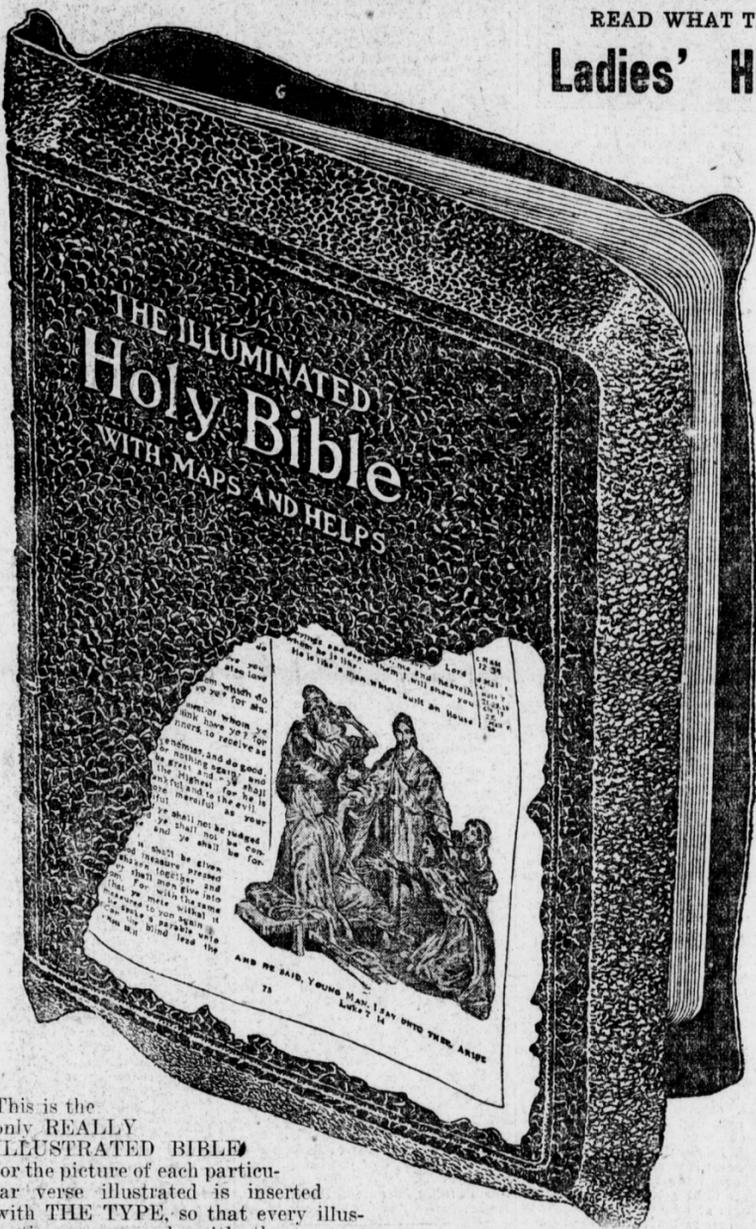
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### FLEEING PAIR FACE ARSON

Accused of Having Doubly Insured Furniture Before Fire  
York, Pa., Nov. 25.—Winton N. Mays and his wife, who disappeared from York last March, during an investigation of the cause of a fire which damaged their home in the East End,

were arrested in Carroll county, Md., yesterday on a charge of arson, and will be brought here for trial. W. W. Wunder, a Deputy State Fire Marshal, brought the prosecution after making the discovery that the couple had their furniture doubly insured with two companies.

The house they occupied was leased.

Fire Chief Wills had reported the case as apparently of incendiary origin, and when the insurance companies delayed adjustment of the loss the couple hastily departed. They were located through the York police.

Clergymen Killed Big Game  
Hazleton, Pa., Nov. 25.—The Rev.

James E. Skillington, pastor of Paul's Methodist Episcopal church here, has sent home an eight-pound buck which he shot near Remov. His brother, the Rev. Walter Skillington of Austin, also killed a deer and a 100-pound bear.

Artistic Printing at Star-Independent