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THE STORY THUS FAR

Permitless but not discouraged, Pierce Phillips sets out to make enough money carrying packs across Chilkoat Pass to gain entrance to the gold country in the Yukon. The Canadian government required that everyone entering the country be provided with a thousand dollars. Neither of these Phillips had, but he was a sturdy young fellow and he decided to hire himself out packing other prospectors' provisions over the Pass to Linderman until he acquired the necessary funds.

They were with their outfit from time to time. We're at Sheep Camp now, and I share their tent whenever I'm there. I'm about ready to pull and go it alone. "Right! And don't hook up with anybody." The old man spoke with feeling. "Look at me, I'm not long for a dole-laden, gray-whiskered milliner! He's no one I have to hide the ax every time I see him. I just yearn to put him out of his misery, but I dissent. Of course he has his points—everybody has, he's a game old rooster and he loves me. That's all that saves him.

"If that's the case, I'll give you a hand." "Better stand back," the other cautioned him. "I don't need any help—this is my line." The man's fatigue had fallen from him; of a sudden he had become surprisingly alert and forceful. He stole forward, making as little noise as possible, and Phillips followed at his back. They came to a pass within arm's length of the tent flaps, which they noted were securely tied.

CHAPTER II. (Continued)

Phillips' abundant vigor continued to evoke the older man's frank admiration; he eyed the boy approvingly and pined him with questions. Before they had traveled many miles he had learned what there was to learn, for Pierce answered his questions frankly and told him about the sacrifice his family had made in order to send him north, about the trip itself, about his landing at Dyea, and all the rest. When he came to the account of that shell game the grizzled stranger smiled.

"No—no. Old Jerry totters across with packages of soda-crackers once in a while. You must have heard him; he croaks like a cat. Of course he eats up all the crackers before he gets to Linderman and then gorges himself on the heavy grub that I've tugged over, but in spite of that we've managed to make pretty good time." After a moment of meditation he continued: "Say! You ought to see that old buzzard eat! It's disgusting, but it's interesting. It ain't so much the expense that I care about as the work. Old Jerry ought to be in an institution—some place where they've got wheel-chairs and a big market-garden. But he's plumb helpless, so I can't cut him loose and let him bleach his bones in a strange land. I haven't got the heart."



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his weapon under his left arm. "I invited myself in," the voice explained—it was a deep-pitched, contraalto voice. "I was wet and nobody offered to let me dry out, so I took possession of the first empty tent I came to. Is it yours?" "It is—half of it. I'm mighty tired and I ain't particular how you look, so hurry up." As the two men returned for their loads the speaker went on, irritably. "She's got her nerve! I s'pose she's one of these actresses. There's a bunch of 'em on the trail. Actresses! He snorted derisively. "I bet she smells of cologne, and, gosh! how I hate it!"

When he and Pierce returned they were admitted promptly enough, and any lingering suspicions of the trespasser's intent were instantly dispelled. The woman was clad in a short, damp undershirt which fell about to her knees; she had drawn on the only dry article of apparel in sight, a man's sweater jacket; she had thrust her bare feet into a pair of beaded moccasins; on a line attached to the ridgepole over her head sundry outer garments were steaming. Phillips' first thought was that this woman possessed the fairest, the whitest skin he had ever seen; it was like milk. She was Scandinavian, she was a Norwegian; that much was instantly apparent. She appeared to derive a certain malicious pleasure now from the consternation her appearance evoked; there was a hint of contempt, of defiance, in her smile. In a voice so low-pitched that its

quality alone saved it from macabre, she said: "Tray don't be distressed; you merely startled me that'll all. My Indians managed to get hold of some hootch at English and upset our canoe just below here. (To Be Continued.)"

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