

We stood and watched the train move away, and then I said, 'What are we to do next, Edith? You are in command, I see.'

'We are to find Mr. Rib,' she replied, confidently. 'I think he is lost, or else has met with an accident.'

'That is quite possible,' said I. 'Still, if we go into the woods in search of him, he may come back to the railroad while we are away, and go on to Glacier House. In such a case we should not find him, and should not know that he had found himself.'

'That is true,' replied Edith. 'One of us will have to remain here, for naturally, if he comes back, he will come back here first of all.'

'But I don't know about leaving you here alone, Edith,' said I. 'Some wild animal might come along. The porter says this range is infested by panthers.'

'Then I certainly mustn't let you go off alone into the woods, Arthur,' cried Edith. 'Why, you might be attacked by them—and you have no gun.'

'We have no arms of any sort,' I replied. 'What we do must be done with our bare hands. But I think I can put you in a safe place on the roof of the snow shed. Then you will see him if he comes to the track.'

'But I must not let you go off alone,' Edith insisted. 'You might get lost, too.'

'Well, then, it would seem that there is nothing we can do, now we are here,' I rejoined, with some loss of patience.

'Oh, but we must do something!' Edith exclaimed. 'We are going to do something! Now that the train is gone and everything is so still, we might shout again. Perhaps he will hear and answer.'

'I'm afraid we can hardly hope to out-shout those brakemen,' said I.

'Oh, but I can call much louder,' replied Edith, and when we had again climbed up on the snow-shed she proved the truth of her statement by sending forth a note which woke a far, clear echo from the Hermit-side.

We listened. Edith repeated her far-reaching so-hoo-oo-oo. And immediately, after the faint echoes were borne back to us, miles away, we heard the very distant report of a gun.

'There, he's fired off his gun!' cried Edith, triumphantly. 'He was lost, just as I feared,' and she sent forth another operative note.

Again we listened, and after many seconds the Hermit-side returned the faintest of far-off silvery replies. Then a moment later a second distinct report was borne to our ears from down in the wooded valley.

'It's he!' cried Edith. 'And now he will come back toward the sound of our voices. He cannot remain lost if we keep calling.'

Her view seemed not improbable, and we shouted in turn for some time, walking back and forth on the roof of the snow-shed. As if in response to our halloos, the report of a gun came up at intervals from far down the valley. It soon became apparent, however, that the last of these reports was no nearer than the first.

'He certainly is not coming to us,' I said.

'Then I am afraid he is hurt,' Edith rejoined.

'Still, it is quite possible, Edith, that the person being is not Mr. Rib, but some hunter, responding because he thinks from our cries that we are the ones lost,' I suggested.

But after a very thoughtful look at me Edith said, 'No, I think it is our Mr. Rib, and that he has met with some accident and cannot come to us.'

'You stay here on the shed, then, and I will go and find him,' I said. 'You can shout every second minute if you fear my getting lost.'

'Well, but do be careful!' cried Edith, earnestly clutching my hand. 'Why, no!' she called after me, as I was getting down from the roof. 'This is foolish. If he cannot walk, you could not bring him back alone. I had better go along with you,' and she promptly prepared to do so.

'But it is a fearfully steep, rough place.'

'It would be a waste of time for me to stay here,' she said, and came down from the snow-shed after me. 'Arthur, you know I am strong. If we have to bring that boy up I shall do my part.'

It is reassuring for a young man to feel that the girl whom he has married is brave and efficient, also that she will stand by him in emergencies, yet it was not without a sense of misgiving that I allowed Edith to accompany me down into that gorge. She was not dressed for it, more than myself. She even had her red parasol in her hand, and the place proved to be an utter tangle of evergreen, dry brush, and huge, rotting tree trunks standing among great rocks as large as freight cars.

PART II.

Edith and I soon found ourselves in a very difficult place. Vast rocks were about us, half buried under fallen trees, brush, and tangled evergreens, and the de-

scent was so steep, so full of pitfalls, that I feared for Edith every moment, to say nothing of my growing apprehension lest I might never be able to conduct her back to the railroad. What if she were to fall into one of these frightful holes and break a limb or disfigure herself for life. On our wedding trip, too!

Edith did bravely. She followed prudently, but not too closely, on my steps, and put her feet in exactly the right spots. Suddenly we dropped into a narrow, well-made path, the sled road or winter trail where several years before all the timbers for the snow-sheds had been drawn up to the line of the railroad above. The old skids and hand-spikes lay scattered along the path, and in many places it was quite paved with chips and hewings. And here we shouted again, but failed to get the report of the gun in response, as before.

'Perhaps we are too far down among these fir-trees for him to hear us,' Edith said.

The old timber trail slanted down, and then led along the bank of a brook for a mile or more, past several old log camps, long ago abandoned by the axemen, and now nearly overgrown with rank wild raspberry shrubs. Gangs of several hundred men must have worked here, preparing the square timbers for the miles of snow-sheds. They had formerly made openings in the forest and small clearings about the groups of log camps, where they lived; and all these open places were now jungles of raspberry bushes, growing nine and ten feet in height, showing stalks as large as golf sticks and a profusion of dark green leaves.

In many places where the trail led through these old openings it presented the aspect of an embowered, arborescenced walk, overhung by stalks so loaded with great berries that either of us could have gathered nearly a bushel in an hour.

Several times, as we hastened along this trail, Edith stopped and called, anxious to get another response by gun or hail from our missing fellow-passenger. The roar of the brook, however, which here became a torrent, so filled the gorge that there was little or no use in shouting. But as the last report of the gun had seemed to come from a considerable distance down the vale, we felt that we must be going toward the place, and therefore held on for fifteen or twenty minutes, till we had reached the fourth group of log camps.

One of these camps, half-hidden in greynery, stood close beside the old trail; and as the cleared door hung ajar I swung myself up by it to the low roof—to gain a vantage-point for more shouting. The roof was unsound and shaky, the cleft fir stabs of which it was made being much decayed. It was nearly flat, and overlooked the swamp of thick raspberry shrubs.

'Now listen,' I said, and shouted long and loud. And then we heard a kind of strangling cough, accompanied by a mighty scuffling and swaying of the raspberries close to the other side of the old camp.

'What was that?' Edith exclaimed, in low tones, looking up at me. My first thought was of deer, but I could see nothing for the moment but the commotion of the tall green stalks. Then some animal, gray, almost white, in color, came into view, pushing its way out to the sled trail. It coughed again, then reared itself up in the trail, till its head was on a level with the old roof—a great misshapen, flabby animal in a coat of long silvery hair.

Its expression as it rolled its eyes about, munching a mouthful of berries and green leaves, was foolish rather than fierce. Indeed, my first impulse was to laugh at the astonishment on its silly visage. Yet at first sight I felt sure that it must be a bear of some kind, although I had never met a bear in the woods; and, in truth, this one no more resembled the iron-gray grizzlies I had once seen at the Philadelphia Zoo than it did a Jersey cow.

Meanwhile a great swaying of the raspberry shrubs was going on hard by, and presently a second bear struggled out into the trail, a few yards beyond the first, and also reared up to look at me. A third bear also got up a little farther off, and all three ogled me with the most innocent wonder, extending their noses and sniffing earnestly. Nor did scent of me, if they got it, courage or disturb them.

I suppose that I stood quite still for a moment, so sudden, so odd was the spectacle presented. But Edith, who heard only the rustling where she stood, was watching my face.

'What is it, Arthur?' she whispered.

'Edith,' I whispered back, 'make as little noise as you can, but go into the camp and pull the door to after you.'

She did so at once. The door closed.

'Can you fasten it?' I said, in low tones.

'Yes,' she replied after a slight pause. 'There is a wooden bolt. But what is it?'

'Bears, I think,' said I. 'Some sort of great, odd-looking bears.'

'Are they very near?' asked Edith.