



"Beating the Brakes"

Or How "Fearless Freddie Backed Bruin Off the Board."

By "Eat-'Em-Up-Eddie" the Eagle-Eyed Enemy of Evil—Author of "Undesirable Uriah," "Ananias Andrew," "Mollycoddle Mike," Etc., Etc.

Chapter One

The southern sun was slowly sliding summitward as a bold youth, armed to the molars, paused at the edge of the Louisiana canebrake to throw a fresh cartridge into his trusty rifle.

"Hist!" It was the bold youth who had "histed," and at the signal the little coterie of guides, dogs, etc., etc., obeyed as one man and one dog.

All eyes were turned upon the bold young man. Clearly he was the undaunted leader of the party.

It was Fearless Freddie, the bold and fearless young hunter whose very name was a terror to all the bears in the brush.

Tall, robust, and dressed in a suit consisting of flannel hunting shirt, knickerbockers, laced shoes and a campaign hat, he was the personification of the strenuous life. Across the hollow of his left arm he carried a magazine rifle. Stuck into his belt were three army revolvers and five bowie knives. A long hunting knife was concealed between the back of his shirt and his neck, and a similar knife was tucked into the top of each boot.

The lust of the chase shone in his eye.

This, in brief, is a description of our hero.

"Forward!" The sharp word of command issued from the lips of this fearless leader, and was obeyed instantly.

Such was the discipline that Fearless Freddie maintained.

"A hunter should not only be willing to hunt, but eager to hunt."

This epigram, uttered by Fearless Freddie on a notable occasion, long since passed into imperishable history.

"Forward!" And the cavalcade disappeared into the dismal fastness of the almost impenetrable canebrake.

Chapter Two

Deep in the fastnesses of the canebrake, where the sunlight found it as hard to penetrate as a gleam of civic decency finds it to penetrate the atomic soul of a public utility monopoly, Fearless Freddie, the terror of the bear tribe, leaned against a stalk of cane and peered into the gloom.

"This must be the place," he muttered.

For hours he had been following the trail as closely as an oil monopoly follows a chance for discrimination and rebate, and he felt that he was close upon his quarry. Long hours before he had left his companions far behind. Exhausted at the terrific pace he had set they had dropped to the ground one by one, each falling with a dull sickening thud that sounded like a gob of mashed potatoes falling on a Brussels carpet.

"Hark!" Fearless Freddie spoke in a whisper to himself.

This was a characteristic of the great hunter.

He talked to himself because he loved to hear a good man talk, and because he loved to talk to a good man.

Throwing his rifle into position he

stepped softly forward, ready at a moment's notice to send a deadly bullet into the corporosity of any luckless bruin that happened to be tethered in the immediate vicinity.

Thrusting aside the brambles that infested his pathway, Fearless Freddie continued to step forward.

"Ha!" The exclamation was forced from Fearless Freddie's lips by the sudden sight of a huge bear reclining gracefully at the foot of a cypress tree.

Swiftly raising his trusty rifle to his shoulder Fearless Freddie sent seven bullets speeding towards the reclining bear.

But for once Fearless Freddie's aim was not true, and instead of hitting the bear the bullets cut the rope which tethered bruin to the tree. Freed from restraint bruin rose to his feet, yawned cavernously, and then started toward the intrepid hunter.

"Foiled!" hissed Fearless Freddie, throwing his rifle to the ground and looking about for a tree.

"Foiled!"

This was another hiss. The bear rushed forward, but ere his brawny forelegs could clasp in deadly embrace the bold hunter, Fearless Freddie leaped to one side and shinned up a tree.

With a growl of baffled rage bruin squatted down beneath the tree and waited.

Chapter Three

"Why does he not come?" This question was repeated by the white-lipped comrades of Fearless Freddie, whose long absence was alarming them.

He had already missed three meals, which is enough to alarm any man's friends.

"Why does he not come?"

Candor compels the admission that these are not the exact words, but they are used because they look better in print than the words that really issued from the lips of the guides, beaters, horse wranglers and cooks.

"I venture the suggestion that some mishap may have befallen our beloved leader," remarked Beat-'Em-Up-Ben the famous bear trailer.

"I concur in the suggestion advanced by our beloved comrade," assented Track-'Em-Down-Tom, whose hounds were known in eleven or five parishes.

It may appear somewhat strange that these men should be using language that sounded like a literary society in full blast, but strange things are really happening these days.

"Something must be done!"

All spoke in unison.

"Forward!"

The stern command issued from the lips of the lieutenant of the cavalcade.

Ere the echoes had died away every man was ready.

"Forward!"

And with startling unanimity the rescuing party dashed into the canebrake.

Every man was ready to bust a hamestring in the effort to rescue Fearless Freddie, their beloved leader, from any danger that might be menacing him.

Chapter Four

"Will help never come?"

The question slowly filtered from the drawn lips of a man whose hold upon the crotch of a tree was hourly, yea, momentarily, growing weaker.

"Will help never come?" The only answer was a low growl from a bear that lay close at the foot of the tree.

For hours on end the man had clung to the limb while the patient bear paced slowly around the tree.

Gentle reader, you may wonder why the bear did not climb the tree and get its prey.

The answer is easy. Why should a bear take the trouble to climb a tree for its prey when it could just rest easy on the ground until the prey fell off?

This was a wise bear, and also a thoughtful bear. It had reasoned the whole thing out.

And that's no "nature fake," either.

It might have been otherwise with a bear of the Teddy tribe.

"Help must come soon or I will be compelled to descend the tree and soil my new hunting clothes by kicking that bear in the ribs a few times and then squeezing it to death."

Fearless Freddie faced this terrible alternative without a tremor visible to the naked eye. A properly clothed eye would also have experienced difficulty in detecting any tremor.

Once more the bear growled and gnawed a few square yards of bark from the trunk of the tree, merely to keep its gnawing apparatus in good trim.

Several hours sped by, albeit they appeared to Fearless Freddie to be hitched fast.

At last human strength could endure the ordeal no longer, and our brave hero prepared to descend the tree and give bruin the boot.

But fortune had not yet deserted our hero.

Just as he took a trusty knife between his teeth and prepared to slide down the tree his acute auricular appendages caught the baying of a hound off to the thumb hand side of the canebrake.

With Fearless Freddie to think was to act.

"I guess I'll stay up here awhile," he muttered, a grim smile lighting up his face.

Nearer and nearer drew the baying hounds.

Bruin bit a few more chunks out of the tree, winked solemnly at nothing in particular, and sauntered off into the gloom just as sixty-five ferocious hounds bounded with beautiful baying into the little clearing made by bruin's gyrations around the tree.

The hounds were followed instanter by the rescuing party, whose shouts of joy at the sight of their leader unharmed and as cool as a street car in December, sitting jauntily perched upon a limb.

"Saved!" shouted the dashing comrades of Fearless Freddie.

Sliding gracefully to terra firma Fearless Freddie let his piercing eyes rest upon the forms of his dashing followers. Then he took off his campaign hat and said:

"Comrades, I thank you for this daring rescue."

The answer was a volley of cheers.

When the cheering had subsided Fearless Freddie strode quickly to the head of the column, and pointing in the direction taken by bruin he said:

"Comrades, our quarry lies yonder."

Instantly every man was ready.

"Forward!"

The command issued from the lips of Fearless Freddie with all the volume of an issue of watered stock from a Wall Street corporation.

A moment later the cavalcade had

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