

The Woman in the Cage

(Continued From Page Two.)

By Beatrice Grimshaw

had not encumbered themselves with heavy loads; Irvine, with pangs of regret, had ordered the abandonment of nearly all the stores. "Better starve to death, if we have to, than let those beasts in the village put our eyes in sticks and gut us like fish before we're dead," was his silent comment as they drove, hour after hour, through the tangling dark, the carriers ahead, Gault and the woman next, himself guarding the rear.

It was the woman, chiefly, who kept them from their highest speed. Most native girls, unencumbered by their usual heavy loads, can make as good a show as a man; but the girl from the cage—whether it was due to her recent caging, or to her present fear—did not get along nearly as fast as they could have wished. Bush tracks, in Papua, are seldom wide enough for two; Gault could not give her his arm, but he cut a length of trailing bamboo and put one end of it in her hand, hauling, as he went, upon the other; and so they progressed. Irvine, through the night, had time to wonder what might be the real cause of the imprisonment that the Kid had so violently ended. He knew that the Babakiri tribe, though savage and fierce, were in some ways further ahead on the road to civilization than any others of their kind; that their dance, ceremonies, tribal customs and taboos were very highly organized. He inferred that the girl, who had clearly offended in some way, must be an object of reverence to the tribe, through her color, and to this fact she owed her life. But what, among the Babakiri, could be the crime that doomed her to such close imprisonment he could not even imagine.

As for the Kid, Irvine considered that all was not yet lost. It might be possible, come daylight, to convince him that the girl, gold haired and marble skinned though she might be, was no more white in reality than the blackest of their mop-haired, grinning carriers. Yet he felt troubled when he thought

of her, and the more he thought the more troubled he felt. He knew that Gault, impossible though it seemed—Gault, who had seen the world and had the best of everything—Gault, who was engaged to a "nice girl of distinguished appearance"—had met with love, big love, at last, in the person of the gold and marble woman whom the Babakiri had shut into a cage. What was to follow?

Dawn found them nearing the sea coast; the trees, on the impoverished soil, were growing sparse and poor. Ahead, pale lights struck through thinning foliage; the sound of humming surf, when they paused to take breath, made chorus with the rustling of the leaves. No one had pursued them—or, if they had been pursued, they had not been caught. With the sea in front and daylight waking, Irvine knew that, for the time at least, they were safe.

It was none too soon. The carriers were worn out and halting. Gault was gray with fatigue, and the girl who had kept up bravely with his help, now seemed on the knife-edge of collapse. In the windy dawn, with the waves bursting red upon the beach, she sank upon a heap of sand. She was wrapped in her mantle of native figured tappa cloth, which she had not taken off all night. Her hair, more wonderful than dreams, waved, half erect and gloriously gold, in the waxing light of dawn. One arm, white and bare, shone out from the brown folds of her garment; her feet, beneath their stains of clotted mud, showed delicately arched and small.

"Look at that," said the Kid. "Did you ever see a duchess with such a—"

"I haven't much acquaintance with duchesses, but I've seen some hundreds of native girls with very nice little feet," answered Irvine. "Did you ever see such a nose on a duchess, since you're keen on the comparison?"

"Her nose is just like every one else's."

Irvine pursed his lips and whistled softly some frivolous sounding air.

Light was growing; the sea wind after the dripping heats of the bush blew gratefully on mouth and cheek. Two of the carriers, under Irvine's sharp command, had trailed their tired limbs along the beach to gather driftwood for a fire. The rest were lying flat on the sand. A little way from them sat the girl, her white face set and hard as the white coral blocks, thrown up from deep sea reefs beyond, that lay upon the beach.

Gault, sitting on a fallen tree beside her, was trying, with the help of a prostrate carrier, to make her understand the words he repeated over and over again. The carrier, it seemed, knew something of some language that the girl, imperfectly, knew. Through the mists of double interpretation the strange wooing went on. Irvine, his back against a tree, lit his pipe and listened.

The Kid was telling her that he had set her free from her enemies. Vaguely, mangled and distorted, came back to him her thanks. But she still sat looking out, not at him, but at the sea, and her face was set and cold. Only the wonderful, deep-lidded eyes seemed to be awake; and what they were saying, Irvine, curiously on watch, could not even guess. But he sensed trouble, dark and not far off.

The Kid went on to say that there was a mission some days down the coast, and that he was going to bring her there. That they would have a missionary to marry them. That he would ("O, Lord, Lord," said Irvine silently to his pipe) take her away to his country, and make a queen of her. There was a ring in his voice that Irvine had never heard before.

"Well, he thought, as he looked aside at the strong, sharp-lined

countenance that had in one night taken the place of the Englishman's baby-face. "I'll never call you the Kid again; you've grown up since we made camp last."

There was silence; Gault's hard-breathed, quivering words, and the stumbling of the carrier died away. No answer came from the girl. But suddenly she sprang to her feet, and the marble face broke up into passionate crying. She knelt down, laid her head, with its wonderful gold hair, for one instant upon Gault's muddy boots, and then broke away and ran wildly down the beach.

The two white men, each equally surprised, stared after her. Gault was the first to speak. "What's what's the matter?" he asked, not of Irvine, but seemingly of the universe. His face was pale; he seemed as one seems who has been suddenly, treacherously struck.

"She's looking for something," offered Irvine. The girl had stopped a good distance away. Her tappa mantle was gathered in one hand; with the other she was groping, hunting in a mass of rotten logs that lay piled one upon the other at the margin of the forest.

It was not the bushman, with his keen, practiced senses, who first saw what the gold-haired girl was hunting for—what she had found. It was Gault, never more to be known as the Kid again. He had seen, had understood, somehow, without understanding, and had covered half the distance in a frantic rush before Irvine, too, had understood, and swearing as he only swore in moments of fiercest excitement, tore after him.

Both were too late to snatch the black snake from the girl before it had buried its fangs in her uncovered breast. Even after it had struck, and let go, she held it to her as a mother holds her child, and Gault could hardly tear the hideous thing away. In a desperate wrench, he pulled it from her at last, flung it on the ground, and stamped its head to pulp. Then,

with hands that shook, he began fumbling in his pockets, after the little first aid snake-bite case that never left either of the men during bush travel.

"Give her a whisky while I get at this," he choked.

Irvine, more slowly than one might have expected, felt for his flask, and opened it. The girl seemed to understand; she moved a little from him and shook her head.

"Quick, men!" ordered Gault, who had got his case now and was opening it. "It's her only chance."

The girl stood silent; she looked at the man who had risked his life for her, and beneath her deep-cut eyelids lay horror, love, tragedy beyond words. She did not move, but she let her half-held mantle fall suddenly, into folds at her feet.

"Steady her while I try," said Gault, opening his case. "We can't let her—God, she mustn't—"

Irvine's hand came between him and the little phial. Irvine's voice said, gravely: "Look."

Gault looked up. He saw the gold and marble girl still standing motionless, in front of him, her mantle fallen down. He saw that her white body was marked.

"What is it?" he asked, his tongue dry between his teeth.

"Leprosy," said Irvine. And then as if to himself, "I always did say the Babakiri were the most advanced savages in the country."

Gault, gray-faced, but trying hard to hold himself, went on fumbling with his case.

"It's our duty," he said. "Not to let—she mustn't—"

Irvine's strong hand came once more between him and the case, and this time took it away.

"Have some mercy on her!" he said.

The gold and marble girl, drawing a long sigh, staggered a little, and lay down. She drew the folds of her tappa mantle across her face.

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Letters From Happyland Readers

(Continued From Page Five.)

have a cat which comes over here quite often. One morn, while it was here the mother and father bird thought it would discover their nest so they would fly down and pick it on the head till it went away. The next day all the birds had flown. Will close, hoping to receive badge. — Bonella Ford, Bartley, Neb.

The Runaway Cats.

Dear Happy: Last winter our cat had four little kittens. One day when they were about five months old they began to follow me when I started off to school—the mother and three kittens. When I saw them, I picked them up and carried them home.

When I was a little way off they came running after me, and I couldn't make them go home and it was late, so I let them go.

Just as we were in town they stopped at a house. I thought they would stay, so I went on to school.

At night when I went after them they were gone. We never saw them again until about two months afterward, when the mother came back, and has three kittens now. Will close.—Earl Robbins.—Ithaca, Neb.

Little Red Cap.

Dear Happy: I want to join the Go-Hawk club. I am enclosing a 2-cent stamp. My name is Regina Jarosy. My birthday is September 5. I am 10 years old. My house number is 4608 South Thirty-second Street, Omaha, Neb.

There was a farmer who had an elf. He named it Little Red Cap. He told the Red Cap to work very hard because he was too old to work. His wife was ill. She could not work. The farmer told the elf to work as hard as he could. The elf did not like it, so it went away and did not come back.

Adventures of My Pets.

My first dog's name was Trixie. It was a little Fox Terrier. When I was at school Trixie got run over by a car. We had a horse doctor for it and he healed the place where she was hurt. One time I called her but she did not come, then she disappeared. Then I got another dog and its name is Jack.

It is a bulldog and at night it will not let anybody in the house. I have three pairs of pigeons and they stay out in the barn. One black one will come down and sit on my shoulder. I made four bird houses and put them up for the birds. Every year birds come and stay in them for the summer. I am a boy 8 years old and I am in the fourth grade.—Byron Bockenwell, Cedar Bluffs, Neb.

A New Member.

Dear Happy: I like to read the Happy Land page:

I would like to join your happy tribe. I am sending a 2 cent and the coupon. I read it every Sunday. Tell Polly that I tried her turnip balls and have had success. They were good. I am 12 years old, but will be 13 the 20th of April. I say I am 13; wouldn't you? I am a Camp Fire Girl. The camp's name is Otokeyha. I think I can get one of my friends to join. I have four pets. One Shetland pony, one poodle, Bobby; two goldfish. I wish some of the Go-Hawks would write to me. I will gladly answer them. I am writing to one now.

I have no brothers nor sisters. I am in the seventh grade. My teacher's name is Miss Van Orman of Harding, Neb. I like her very much. Well I must close.—Maxine Murphy, Arapahoe, Neb.

Likes Happyland.

Dear Happy: I'm enclosing a 2-cent stamp to join the Happy tribe. I promise to be kind to all dumb animals and birds and help others.

I am 12 years old and in the seventh grade. I like to read the Happyland page and can hardly wait for the paper to come. I read the Teenie Weenies. Hoping to get my pin as soon as possible. Yours Truly, Bertha Woehler, Age 12, Wayne Neb.

Drives Team.

Dear Happy: This is my first letter to you. My mother reads your paper to me every Sunday. I want to be a Go-Hawk. I am sending a 2-cent stamp for a button.

I drive the stacker team for my Uncle Jim. I earned \$9.50 this summer.

I have an airedale dog and I made a house for her.

I will be 7 years old September 10, so I will have a birthday cake. —Donald Galvin, Odessa, Neb.

First Letter.

Dear Happy: This is my first letter I have written to you. I would like to join your Happy Ho-Hawks. I am sending 2 cents. My letter is getting long. I wish some of the happy Go-Hawks would write to me.—Abbie Samms, Age 10, Powell, Neb.

Reads Happy Land.

Dear Happy: I have read the paper about a year. I have one dog named Rover, which likes to ride in the car with us. I will be in the fourth grade next year. I am sending my 2-cent stamp and the coupon. I have got two sisters, a brother older than I am. I am 8 years old.—Fred Rowley, 407 Bird street Atlantic, Ia.

Will Keep Rules.

Dear Happy: I am 8 years-old. I am sending a 2 cent stamp for my button. I am interested in the Happy Land page. I will promise to obey your rules. I am in the fourth grade at school. I have a dog named Charley, a cat and about 60 little chickens. This is my first letter to you. I will close now.—Madge Leslie, Brownville, Neb.

A New Member.

Dear Happy: I would like to join the happy tribe. I am enclosing a 2-cent stamp and would like to have you send me a badge. I have a yellow kitten named Goldie. I am 10 years old and will be in the fifth grade. I have a sister 11 years old and she will be in the seventh grade. My letter is getting long, so I will close.—Thelma Rodman, Ogallala, Neb.

A Wyoming Go-Hawk.

Dear Happy: I would like to join your Happy Tribe. I am 7 years old. I will be in the second grade. I am sending a 2-cent stamp. Please send my button. I will try to keep the pledge. I am, Helen Johnson, Medicine Bow, Wyoming.

First Letter.

Dear Happy: I wish to be a member of your happy tribe. I am sending a 2-cent stamp and the coupon and would be delighted if you would send me a badge. I am 12 years old and will be in the seventh grade next year. I have one sister, who is 10 years old and will be in the fifth grade next year. Her name is Thelma. Thelma has a little kitten that she calls Goldie. My letter is getting long, so I will close.—Yours truly, Tressa Rodman, Ogallala, Neb.

Ruth and Ruby.

Once upon a time there were two little girls. Their names were Ruth and Ruby. Ruth was rich and Ruby was poor. Ruth was very kind and Ruby very mean. Ruth lived next door to Ruby. Every day Ruth could hear Ruby scolding at her mother. Ruth belonged to the "Go-Hawk Club" and kept the rules very well. One day when Ruth was out playing she saw Ruby teasing a cat. Ruth asked Ruby to please stop teasing the cat. Ruby scolded her and told her she would stop teasing the cat when she took a notion. Then Ruth told Ruby about the Go-Hawks and Ruby joined the "Go-Hawk Club." She keeps the rules now very well. Will some of the "Go-Hawk" girls who are 11 or 12, and whose birthdays are in June please write to me.—Florence Grafton, aged 12, Lexington, Neb.

Two Boys.

Dear Happy: I am going to join your club. Once there were two boys about 12 years old. The one was lazy and the other liked to work. One year the boy that liked to work wanted a coat to wear, something that was useful, the other wanted a deck of cards that he could play with. When they were going some place the one was almost too lazy to dress. They were all ready but him. He was almost ready when they got in the car except him. And they went without him. That taught him a lesson to not be slow and he always was ready in time after that. —Inez Hansen Kennard, Neb.

A Third Grader.

Dear Happy: My name is Robert A. Fischer. I am 8 years old and I want to be a Go-Hawk. I will be 9 years old September 2. I am in the third grade. I am sending a 2-cent stamp. Please send me a Go-Hawk pin. I will try to be a good Go-Hawk member. Yours truly, Robert James Fischer, 900 West Broadway, Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Wants to Join.

Dear Happy, I have been reading your stories every Sunday and like them very much. Will you please send me a Go-Hawk button. I am sending a 2-cent stamp and the coupon. I promise to be kind to all dumb animals. Good-bye. From Helen Patterson, Wakefield, Neb. Box 475

A New Member.

Dear Happy: I have joined your tribe and am very happy. I go to school and will be in the fifth grade this fall. I live in a hotel and have lots of pretty flowers and a lot of pet chickens. Goodbye. —Twila Keller, Mason City, Neb.

Dot Puzzle



Now here's the educated — At sixty-one he'll dance a jig.

Complete the picture by drawing a line through the dots, beginning with one and taking them numerically.