

BAREE

Son of Kazan

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

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WNU Service

THE STORY

CHAPTER I.—Part wolf, part dog—when two months old Baree was his first meeting with an enemy. Fawcett-chisew (young owl). Fighting hard, the antagonists are suddenly plunged into a swollen creek.

CHAPTER II.—Badly buffeted, and half-drowned, Baree is finally flung on the bank, but the water has destroyed his sense of direction and he is lost, lonely and hungry. For many days his life is one of fear and distress. He wanders into the trapping grounds of a half-breed, Pierrot Du Quessa, and his daughter, Nepeese the W.M.C.W. Taking Baree for a wolf, Nepeese shoots and wounds him, but he escapes.

CHAPTER III.—The wolf blood in Baree becomes apparent. He rapidly learns Nepeese's secrets, though he finds the comradeship is desperately lonely.

CHAPTER IV.—Following Wapoo, the black bear, Baree is brought to the traps on the creek of Ash the big fellow leaves. He comes again into Pierrot's trapping domain. Pierrot shoots Wapoo. Nepeese, insisting Baree is dog, not wolf, tries to capture him. Baree is strongly drawn to the girl, but cannot entirely overcome his dread of man.

CHAPTER V.—Baree makes friends with a colony of beavers, losing much of his sense of loneliness.

CHAPTER VI.—Bush McTaggart, factor at Lac Bain, Hudson's Bay company's post, man of evil life, has long coveted Nepeese, even to the extent of offering marriage, but makes no progress with his suit. On his way to Pierrot and Nepeese McTaggart takes Baree in a trap, and in a struggle is bitten. With the dog he comes to Pierrot's cabin.

CHAPTER VII.—Nepeese claims Baree as her pet, battling the wounds inflicted by McTaggart after the dog had bitten him. They promise to give him a definite answer to his love-making. Nepeese lures McTaggart to the edge of a deep pool and humiliates him by plunging him into the water, at the same time taunting him for presuming to address her. Blood poisoning develops from Baree's bite. McTaggart and Pierrot hasten to Lac Bain to secure medical treatment.

CHAPTER VIII.—Nepeese has spent three winters at a mission, where she has learned to read and sew. On her seventeenth birthday she fashions a costume which properly sets forth her really great beauty.

a tremendous fuss in the water near the shore.

After this the beaver pond seemed more than ever like home to Baree.

Chapter VI

While lovely Nepeese was shuddering over her thrilling experience under the rock—while Pierrot still offered grateful thanks in his prayers for her deliverance and Baree was becoming more and more a fixture at the beaver-pond—Bush McTaggart was perfecting a little scheme of his own up at Post Lac Bain, about forty miles north and west. McTaggart had been Factor at Lac Bain for seven years. In the Company's books down in Winnipeg he was counted a remarkably successful man. The expense of his post was below the average, and his semi-annual report of furs always ranked among the first. After his name, kept on file in the main office, was one notation which said: "Gets more out of a dollar than any other man north of God's lake."

The Indians knew why this was so. They called him Napao Wetikoo—the man-devil. This was under their breath—a name whispered sinisterly in the glow of tepid fires, or spoken softly where not even the winds might carry it to the ears of Bush McTaggart. They feared him; they hated him. They died of starvation and sickness, and the fighter Bush McTaggart clenched the fingers of his iron rule, the more meekly, it seemed to him, did they respond to his mastery. His was a small soul, hidden in the bulk of a brute, which rejoiced in power. And here—with the raw wilderness on four sides of him—his power knew no end. The Big Company was behind him. It had made him king of a domain in which there was little law except his own. And in return he gave back to the Company bales and bundles of furs beyond their expectation. It was not for them to have suspicions. They were a thousand or more miles away—and dollars counted.

Gregson might have told. Gregson was the investigating agent of that district, who visited McTaggart once each year. He might have reported that the Indians called McTaggart Napao Wetikoo because he gave them only half price for their furs; he might have told the Company quite plainly that he kept the people of the trap-lines at the edge of starvation through every month of the winter, that he had them on their knees with his hands at their throats—putting the truth in a mild and pretty way—and that he always had a woman or a girl, Indian or half-breed, living with him at the Post. But Gregson enjoyed his visits too much at Lac Bain. Always he could count on two weeks of course pleasure; and in addition to that, his own womanfolk at home were a rich treasure of his life.

Some evening a week after the adventure of Nepeese and Baree under the rock, McTaggart sat under the glow of an oil lamp in his "store." For six weeks there had been in him a great unrest. It was just six weeks ago that Pierrot had brought Nepeese on her first visit to Lac Bain since McTaggart had been Factor there. She had taken his breath away. Since then he had been able to think of nothing but her. Twice in that six weeks he had gone down to Pierrot's cabin. Tomorrow he was going again. Marie, the slim Cree girl over in his cabin, he had forgotten—just as a dozen others before Marie had slipped out of his memory. It was Nepeese now. He had never seen anything quite so beautiful as Pierrot's girl.

Audibly he cursed Pierrot as he looked at a sheet of paper under his hand, on which for an hour or more he had been making notes out of worn and dusty Company ledgers. It was Pierrot who stood in his way. Pierrot's father, according to those notes, had been a full-blooded Frenchman. Therefore Pierrot was half-French, and Nepeese was quarter-French—though she was so beautiful he could have sworn there was not more than a drop or two of Indian—Chippewayan, Cree, Ojibway, Dog Rib—anything—there would have been no trouble at all in the matter. He would have bent them to his power, and Nepeese would have come to his cabin, as Marie came six months ago. But there was the accursed French of it! Pierrot and Nepeese were different. And yet—

He smiled grimly, and his hands clenched tighter. After all, was not his power sufficient? Would even Pierrot dare stand against that? If Pierrot objected, he would drive him from the country—from the trapping regions that had come down to him as heritage from father and grandfather, and even before their day. He would make of Pierrot a wanderer and an outcast, as he had made wanderers and outcasts of a score of others who had lost his favor. No other Post would sell to or buy from Pierrot if Le Bete—the black cross—was put after his name. That was his power—a law of the Factors that had come down through the centuries. It was a tremendous power for evil. It had brought him Marie, the slim, dark-eyed Cree girl, who hated him—and in spite of her hatred "kept house for him." That was the polite way of explaining her presence if explanations were ever necessary.

McTaggart looked again at the notes he had made on the sheet of paper. Pierrot's trapping country, his own property according to the common law of the wilderness, was very valuable. During the last seven years he had received an average of a thousand dollars a year for his furs, for McTaggart had been unable to cheat Pierrot quite as completely as he had cheated the Indians. A thousand dollars a year! Pierrot would think twice before he gave that up. McTaggart chuckled as he made his way through the darkness to the door. Nepeese as good as belonged to him. He would have her if it cost—Pierrot's life. And—why not? It was all so easy. A shot on a lonely trap-line, a single knife-thrust—and who would know? Who would guess where Pierrot had gone? And it would all be Pierrot's fault. For the last time he had seen Pierrot, he had made an honest proposition; he would marry Nepeese. Yes, even that. He had told Pierrot so. He had told Pierrot that when the latter was his father-in-law, he would pay him double price for furs.

And Pierrot had stared—had stared with that strange, stunned look in his face, like a man dazed by a blow from a club. And so if he did not get Nepeese without trouble it would all be Pierrot's fault. Tomorrow McTaggart would start again for the half-breed's country. And the next day Pierrot would have an answer for him. Bush McTaggart chuckled again when he went to bed.

Until the next to the last day Pierrot said nothing to Nepeese about what had passed between him and the Factor at Lac Bain. Then he told her.

"He is a beast—a man-devil," he said, when he had finished. "I would rather see you out there—with her—lead." And he pointed to the tall spruce under which the princess mother lay.

Nepeese had not uttered a sound. But her eyes had grown bigger and darker, and there was a flush in her cheeks which Pierrot had never seen there before. She stood up when he had done, and she seemed taller to him. Never had she looked quite so much like a woman, and Pierrot's eyes were deep-shadowed with fear and uneasiness as he watched her while she gazed off into the northwest—toward Lac Bain.

She was wonderful, this slip of a girl-woman. Her beauty troubled him. He had seen the look in Bush McTaggart's eyes. He had heard the thrill in McTaggart's voice. He had caught the desire of a beast in McTaggart's face. It had frightened him at first. But now—he was not frightened. He was uneasy, but his hands were clenched. In his heart there was a smoldering fire. At last Nepeese turned and came and sat down beside him again, at his feet.

"He is coming tomorrow, ma cherle," he said. "What shall I tell him?"

The Willow's lips were red. Her eyes shone. But she did not look up at her father.

"Nothing, Nootawé—except that you are to say to him that I am the one to whom he must come—for what he seeks."

Pierrot bent over and caught her smiling. The sun went down. His heart sank with it, like cold lead.

From Lac Bain to Pierrot's camp the trail cut within half a mile of the beaver pond, a dozen miles from where Pierrot lived; and it was here, on a twist of the creek in which Wakayoo had caught fish for Baree, that Bush McTaggart made his camp for the night. Only twenty miles of the journey could be made by canoe, and as McTaggart was traveling the light stretch afoot, his camp was a simple affair—a few cut balsams, a light blanket, a small fire. Before he prepared his supper the Factor drew a number of copper-wire snares from his small pack and spent half an hour in setting them in rabbit runways. This method of securing meat was far less arduous than carrying a gun in hot weather, and it was certain. Half a dozen snares were good for at least three rabbits, and one of these three was sure to be young and tender enough for the frying-pan. After he had placed his snares McTaggart set a skillet of bacon over the coals and boiled his coffee.

Of all the odors of a camp, the smell of bacon reaches farthest in the forest. It needs no wind. It drifts on its own wings. On a still night a fox will sniff it a mile away—twice that far if the air is moving in the right direction. It was this smell of bacon that came to Baree where he lay in his hollow on top of the beaver dam.

Since his experience in the canyon and the death of Wakayoo, he had not fared particularly well. Caution had held him near the pond, and he had lived almost entirely on crawfish. This new perfume that came with the night wind roused his hunger. But it was elusive: now he could smell it—the next instant it was gone. He left the dam and began questing for the source of it in the forest, until after a time he lost it altogether. McTaggart had finished frying his bacon and was eating it.

It was a splendid night that followed. Perhaps Baree would have slept through it in his nest on the top of the dam if the bacon smell had not stirred the new hunger in him. Since his adventure in the canyon, the deeper forest had held a dread for him, especially at night. But this night was like a pale, golden day: it was moonless; but the stars shone like a billion distant lamps, flooding the world in a soft and billowy sea of light. A gentle whispur of wind made pleasant sounds in the treetops. Beyond that it was very quiet, for it was Puskowepesim—the Moultling Moon—and the wolves were not hunting, the owls had lost their voice, the foxes slunk with the silence of shadows, and even the beavers had begun to cease their labors. The horns of the moose, the deer and the caribou were in tender velvet, and they moved but little and fought not at all. It was late July, Moulting Moon of the Cree, Moon of Silence for the Chippewayan. In this silence Baree began to hunt. He stirred up a family of half-grown

NOTICE OF LAND SALE
Under and by virtue of an order of the Clerk of the Superior Court of Chatham County, North Carolina, in the special therein pending entitled "The County of Chatham vs. Catharine Lawrence," the undersigned Commissioner will on, **SATURDAY, MAY THE 22ND, 1926**, offer for sale at public auction, to the highest bidder for cash, the following described land and timber, to wit:

FIRST TRACT: Adjoining the lands of Joseph Goodwin and others beginning at a persimmon tree on the bank of Horse Pen Branch, running East 82 poles to a pine stump; thence South 80 poles to pointers; thence West 110 poles to pointers on the Horse Pen Branch; thence up said branch 84 poles to the beginning, containing 45 acres, more or less.
SECOND TRACT: Beginning at the Horse Pen Branch, Kiddie Goodwin's line, running East 83 3-4 poles to a Pine Stump; thence North line; thence West 63 poles to Horse Pen Branch; thence down Horse Pen Branch to the first station, containing 24 1-2 acres, less same be more or less.
Place of Sale: Pittsboro, N. C.
Time of Sale: 12 o'clock, noon.
This the 19th day of April, 1926.
W. P. HORTON, Commissioner.
Apr. 22, 4tc.

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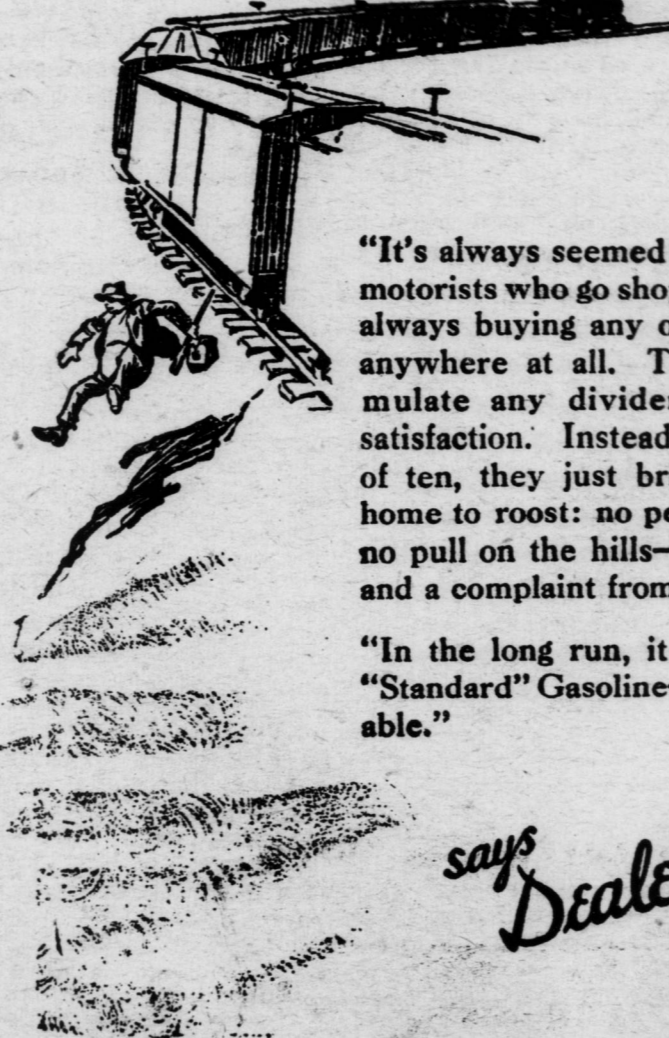
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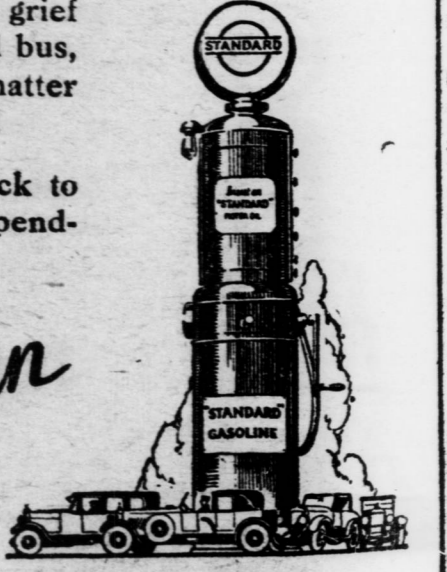
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