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KAZAN

JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—Kazan, the wild stage dog, one-quarter wolf and three-quarters husky, distrustful of all men because of his brutal treatment of him, learns to love his master, who when he kills him in new and strange surroundings.

CHAPTER II—He shows surprising sympathy to McCready, who is to accompany Thorpe and his wife to the Red River camp.

CHAPTER III—Kazan knows that McCready is a murderer, already steadily by Kazan's hair and Kazan attacks him. Thorpe whips Kazan. McCready tries to hit him. Thorpe attacks Kazan. Kazan kills him and then, carrying him in punishment, runs away into the forest.

CHAPTER IV—Thorpe between love of his mistress, the fear of his master's club and the desire of the wolf nature in him, he at length sends forth the wolf cry.

CHAPTER V—Kazan runs with the wolves, fights his leader, becomes master of the pack, and mates with Gray Wolf.

CHAPTER VI—Kazan and the pack attack Pierre Radisson, his daughter Joan and her baby. Kazan kills the baby, turns dog again and helps drive off the wolves.

CHAPTER VII—Kazan's wounds are dressed and he is tied to the sleds.

CHAPTER VIII—Pierre and Kazan drag the sleds. Gray Wolf follows at a distance. Pierre dies, 50 miles away from their home on the Little Beaver.

CHAPTER IX.

The Tragedy on Sun Rock.

All that day Kazan guarded the top of the Sun Rock. Fate, and the fear and brutality of masters, had heretofore kept him from fatherhood, and he was now a father. He had a cub now that he belonged to the Sun Rock, and not to the cabin. The call that came to him from over the plain was not so strong. At dusk Gray Wolf came out from her retreat, and slunk to his side, whimpering, and licked gently at his shaggy neck. It was the old instinct of his fathers that made him respond by caressing Gray Wolf's face with his tongue. Then Gray Wolf's jaws opened, and she laughed in short panting breaths, as if she had been hard run. She was happy, and as they heard a little snuffling sound from between the rocks, Kazan wagged his tail, and Gray Wolf darted back to her young.

The cub's cry and its effect upon Gray Wolf first Kazan's first instinct again told him that Gray Wolf could not go down to the hunt with him now—that she must stay at the top of the Sun Rock. So when the moon rose he went down alone, and toward dawn returned with a big white rabbit between his jaws. It was the wild in him that made him do this, and Gray Wolf responded accordingly. Then he knew that night hereafter he must hunt for Gray Wolf, and the little whimpering creature hidden between the two rocks.

The next day, and still the next, he did not go to the cabin, though he heard the voices of both the man and the woman calling him. On the fifth he went down to the cabin, and when he was there he saw the woman and the baby. He was glad that the woman hugged him, and the baby kicked and laughed and screamed at him, while the man stood by cautiously, watching their demonstrations with a gleam of disapprobation in his eyes.

"I'm afraid of him," he told Joan for the hundredth time. "That's the wolf-glean in his eyes. He's of a treacherous breed. Sometimes I wish we'd never brought him home."

"If we hadn't—where would the baby have gone?" Joan reminded him, a little catch in her voice.

"I had almost forgotten that," said her husband. "Kazan, you old devil, I guess I love you, too." He laid his hand caressingly on Kazan's head. "Wonder how he'll take to life down here?" "He has always been used to the forests. It'll seem mighty strange."

"And so have I—always been used to the forests," whispered Joan. "I guess that's why I love Kazan—next to you and the baby. Kazan—dear old Kazan!"

This time Kazan felt and scented more of that mysterious change in the cabin. Joan and her husband talked incessantly of their plans when they were together; and when the man went away Joan talked to the baby, and to him. And each time that he came down to the cabin during the week that followed, he grew more and more restless, until at last the man noticed the change in him.

"I believe he knows," he said to Joan one evening. "I believe he knows we're preparing to leave." Then he added: "The river was rising again today. It will be another week before we can start, perhaps longer."

That same night the moon flooded the top of the Sun Rock with a golden light, and out into the glow it came Gray Wolf, with her three little whippersnappers toddling behind her. There was much about these soft little balls that tumbled about him and snuggled in his arms that reminded Kazan of the baby. At times they made the same queer, soft little sounds, and they staggered about on their four little legs just as helplessly as baby Joan had been way about on two. He did not fondle them, as Gray Wolf did, but the touch of them, and their babyish whimperings, filled him with a kind of pleasure that he had never experienced before.

The moon was straight above them, and the night was almost as bright as day, when he went down again to hunt for Gray Wolf. At the foot of the rock a big white rabbit popped up ahead of him, and he gave chase. For half a mile he pursued, until the wolf instinct in him rose over the dog, and he gave up the futile race. A deer he might have overtaken, but small game the wolf must hunt as the fox hunts it,

helpless—more helpless than the little creature that had gambled in the moonlight a few hours before. He remained close beside her all that day.

Valley that day did Joan call for Kazan. Her voice rose to the Sun Rock, and Gray Wolf's head snuggled close to Kazan, and Kazan's ears drooped back, and he licked her forehead. She called to him, and he began to run to the bottom of the trail and bring up the snow-shoe rabbit. Gray Wolf nuzzled the fur and flesh, but would not eat. Still a little later Kazan urged her to follow him to the trail. He no longer wanted to stay at the top of the Sun Rock, and he no longer wanted Gray Wolf to stay there. Step by step he drew her down the winding path away from her dead puppies. She would move only when he was very near her—so near that she could touch his scurred flank with her nose.

They came at last to the point in the trail where they had to leap down a side of a rock, and here Kazan looked utterly helpless. Gray Wolf, however, she whined, and crouched twenty times before she dared make the spring, and then she jumped stifflingly, and fell in a heap at Kazan's feet. After this Kazan did not have to urge her so hard, for the fall into the snow was so soft, and she was safe only when her muzzle touched her mate's flank. She followed him obediently when they reached the plain, trotting with her forehead to his hip.

When he came to the narrow trail that led to the top of the Sun Rock he stopped. In that trail was the warm scent of strange feet. The rabbit fell from his jaws. Every hair in his body was suddenly electrified into life. What he scented was not the scent of a rabbit, a marten or a porcupine. Fungus and claw had climbed the path ahead of him. And then, coming faintly from him from the top of the rock, he heard sounds which sent him up with a terrible whimpering cry. When he reached the summit he saw in the white moonlight a scene that stopped him for a single moment. Close to the edge of the sheer fall to the rocks, fifty feet below, and a dozen times in that short distance, Kazan was engaged in a death-struggle with a huge gray lynx. She was down—and under—and from her there came a sudden sharp terrible cry of pain.

Kazan flew across the rock. His attack was the swift silent assault of the wolf, combined with the greater courage, the fury and the strategy of the husky. Another husky would have died in that first attack. But the lynx was not a dog or a wolf. It was "Mow-lee, the swift," as the Sarcees had named it—the quickest creature in the wilderness. Kazan's inch-long fangs should have sunk deep in its jugular. But in a fractional part of a second the lynx had thrown itself back like a huge soft ball, and Kazan's teeth buried themselves in the flesh of its neck instead of the jugular. And Kazan was not now fighting the fangs of a wolf in the pack, or of another husky. He was fighting claws—claws that ripped like twenty razor-edged knives, and which even a jagular hold could not stop.

Once he had fought a lynx in a trap, and he had not forgotten the lesson the battle had taught him. He fought to pull the lynx down, instead of forcing it on its back, as he would have done with another dog or a wolf. He knew that when on its back the fierce cat was most dangerous. One rip of its powerful hind feet could dismember him.

Behind him he heard Gray Wolf sobbing and crying, and he knew it was terribly hurt. He was filled with the rage and strength of two dogs, and his teeth met through the flesh and hide of the cat's throat. But the big lynx escaped death by half an inch. It would take a fresh grip to reach the jugular, and suddenly Kazan made the deadly lunge. There was an instant's freedom for the lynx, and in that moment it flung itself back, and Kazan gripped at its throat—on top.

The cat's claws ripped through his flesh, cutting open his side—a little too high to kill. Another stroke and they would have cut to his vitals. But they had struggled close to the edge of the rock wall, and suddenly, without a snarl or a cry, they rolled over. It was fifty or sixty feet to the rocks of the ledge below, and even as they pitched over and over in the fall, Kazan's teeth sank deeper. They struck rock, and the stiff force, Kazan uppermost. The shock sent him half a dozen feet from his enemy. He was up like a flash, dizzy, snarling on the defensive. The lynx lay limp and motionless where it had fallen. Kazan came nearer, still prepared, and sniffed cautiously. Something told him that the fight was over. He turned and dragged himself slowly along the ledge to the trail, and returned to Gray Wolf.

Gray Wolf was no longer in the moonlight. Close to the two rocks lay the limp lifeless little bodies of the three pups. The lynx had torn them to pieces. With a whine of grief Kazan approached the two boulders and thrust his head between them. Gray Wolf was there, crying to herself in that terrible sobbing way. He went in, and began to lick her bleeding shoulders and head. All the rest of that night she whimpered with pain. With dawn she dragged herself out to the lifeless little bodies on the rock.

And then Kazan saw the terrible work of the lynx. For Gray Wolf was blind—not for a day or a night, but blind for all time. A gloom that no sun could break had become her shroud. And perhaps again it was that instinct of animal creation, which often is more wonderful than man's reason, that told Kazan what had happened. For he knew now that she was

going—more helpless than the little creature that had gambled in the moonlight a few hours before. He remained close beside her all that day.

When he returned to Gray Wolf the spruce and balsam. The cabin was the one place to which Gray Wolf would not follow him. At all other times she was at his side. Now that she had become accustomed to blindness, she even accompanied him on his hunts, until he struck game, and began the chase. Then she would wait for him. Kazan usually hunted the big snow-shoe rabbits. But one night he ran down and killed a young dog. The kill was too heavy to drag to Gray Wolf, so he returned to where she was waiting for him, and guided her to the feast. In many ways they became more and more inseparable as the summer lengthened, until at last, through all the wilderness, their footprints were always two by two and never one by one.

Then came the great fire. Gray Wolf caught the scent of it when it was still two days to the west. The moon, drifting into the west, became blood red. When it dropped behind the wilderness in this manner, the Indians called it the bleeding moon, and the air was filled with omens.

All the next day Gray Wolf was nervous, and toward noon Kazan could hear the whining that she had heard many hours ahead of him. Sturdily the scent grew stronger, and by the middle of the afternoon the sun was veiled by a film of smoke.

The flight of the wild things from the triangle of forest between the junctions of the Pipestone and Cree rivers would have begun then, but the wind shifted. It was a fatal shift. The fire was raging from the west and south. Then the wind swept straight eastward, carrying the smoke with it, and turning this breathing spell all the wild creatures in the triangle between the two rivers waited. This gave the fire time to sweep completely across the base of the forest triangle, cutting off the last trails of escape.

Then the wind shifted again, and the fire swept north. The head of the triangle became a death-trap. All through the night the southern sky was filled with a lurid glow, and by morning the heat and smoke and ash were suffocating.

Panic-stricken, Kazan searched vainly for a means of escape. Not for an instant did he leave Gray Wolf. It would have been easy for him to swim across either of the two streams, for he was three-quarters dog. But at the first touch of water on her paws, Gray Wolf drew back, shrinking. Like all her breed, she would face fire and death before water. Kazan urged. A

The other tragedy was the going of Joan, her baby and her husband. Something more infallible than reason told Kazan that they would not come back. Brightest of all the pictures that remained with him was that of the sunny morning when the woman and the baby he loved, and the man he endured because of them, had gone away in the canoe, and often he would go to the point where the canoe had been, where he had leaped from the canoe to return to his blind mate.

So Kazan's life seemed now to be made up chiefly of three things: his hatred of everything that bore the scent or mark of the lynx, his grieving for Joan and the baby, and Gray Wolf. It was natural that the strongest passion in him should be his hatred of the lynx, for not only Gray Wolf's blindness and the death of the pups, but even the loss of the woman and the baby he loved, and the man he endured because of them, had gone away in the canoe, and often he would go to the point where the canoe had been, where he had leaped from the canoe to return to his blind mate.

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He found that Gray Wolf was more necessary to him now than she had ever been since the day she had left the wolf-pack for him. He was three-quarters dog, and the dog-part of him demanded companionship. There was only Gray Wolf to give him that now. They were alone. Civilization was four hundred miles south of them. The nearest Hudson's Bay post was sixty miles to the west. Often, in the days of the woman and the baby, Gray Wolf had spent her nights alone out in the forest, waiting and calling for Kazan. Now it was Kazan who was lonely and uneasy when he was away from her side.

In her blindness Gray Wolf could no longer hunt with her mate. But gradually a new code of understanding grew up between them, and through her blindness they learned many things that she had not known before. By early summer Gray Wolf could travel with Kazan, if he did not mind the fact that she had to lean on his shoulder or muzzle touching him, and Kazan learned not to leap, but to trot. Very quickly he found that he must choose the easiest trails for Gray Wolf's feet. When they came to a space to be bridged by a leap, he would muzzle Gray Wolf and whine, and she would stand with ears alert, and when he leaped she would take the leap, and she understood the distance she had to cover. She always overleaped, which was a good fault.

In another way, and one that was destined to serve them many times in the future, she became of greater help than ever to Kazan. Scent and hearing entirely took the place of sight. Each day developed these senses more and more, and at the same time there developed between them the dumb language whereby she could impress upon Kazan what she had discovered by scent or sound. It became a curious habit of Kazan's always to look at Gray Wolf when they stopped to listen, or to scent the air.

After the fight on the Sun Rock, Kazan had taken his blind mate to a thick clump of spruce and balsam in the river bottom, where they remained until early summer. Every day for weeks Kazan went to the cabin where Joan and the baby—and the man—had been. For a long time he went hopefully, looking each day or night to see some sign of life there. But the door was never open. The boards and saplings at the windows always remained. Never a spiral of smoke rose from the clay chimney. Grass and vines began to grow in the path. And fainter and fainter grew that scent which Kazan could still find about it—the scent of man, of the woman, the baby. One day he found a little baby moccasin under one of the closed windows. It was old, and worn out, and blackened by snow and rain, but he lay down beside it, and remained there for a long time, while the baby Joan—a thousand miles away—was playing with the strange toys of civilization.

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GRAHAM CHURCH DIBREC 104 Y. Graham Baptist Church—Rev. W. R. Davis, Pastor. Preaching every first and third Sundays at 11:00 a. m. and 7:30 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m. A. P. Williams Supt. Prayer meeting every Tuesday at 7:30 p. m.

Graham Christian Church—N. Main Street—Rev. J. P. Trout. Preaching services every Second and Fourth Sundays, at 11:00 a. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 10:00 a. m.—E. L. Henderson, Superintendent.

New Providence Christian Church—North Main Street, near Depot.—Rev. J. G. Trout, Pastor. Preaching every Second and Fourth Sunday nights at 8:00 o'clock. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m.—J. A. Bayliff, Superintendent. Christian Endeavor Prayer Meeting every Thursday night at 7:45 o'clock.

Friends—North of Graham Public School—Rev. Fleming Martin, Pastor. Preaching 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sundays. Sunday School every Sunday at 10:00 a. m.—James Crisco, Superintendent.

Methodist Episcopal, South—Main and Maple St., H. E. Myers Pastor. Preaching every Sunday at 11:00 a. m. and at 7:30 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m.—W. B. Green, Supt.

M. P. Church—N. Main Street, Rev. R. S. Trotter, Pastor. Preaching every Second and Fourth Sundays at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m.—J. L. Amick, Supt.

Presbyterian—West Elm Street—Rev. T. M. McConnell, pastor. Sunday School every Sunday at 9:45 a. m.—Lynn B. Williamson, Superintendent.

Presbyterian (Travosa Chapel)—J. W. Clegg, pastor. Preaching every Second and Fourth Sundays at 7:30 p. m. Sunday School every Sunday at 1:30 p. m.—J. Harvey White, Superintendent.

Oneida—Sunday School every Sunday at 2:30 p. m.—J. V. Pomeroy, Superintendent.

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