

An Imaginary Feast

A Thanksgiving Day Story

By CLARISSA MACKIE

They had started out in Jack Henshaw's cabin launch for a cruise among the islands, with duck shooting as their object. It was a fair day in November, with an Indian summer warmth that did not hint of a sudden change in the weather. There were six in the party—Frank Carew and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Bob Hayden and pretty Phyllis Hayden and Jack Henshaw. The three women occupied the cabin of the launch, and the men made themselves comfortable with blankets and saddlebags on deck.

The first day had passed uneventfully, without even a shot at a duck. The second passed likewise, and the third dawned in the same glow of amber haze and ruddy sun.

"It looks very much as though we would have to return without those promised ducks for Thanksgiving day," observed Jack restlessly as he took the wheel after breakfast.

"If it would blow up a bit colder we might bag a few today. If my prophetic instinct serves me right those clouds yonder look like wind and rain." Bob Hayden puffed out a cloud of smoke and leaned lazily over the rail.

"I hope it doesn't storm. If we don't hurry we won't get back to Cromore in time for dinner tomorrow," said his wife.

"What's the matter with Thanksgiving dinner aboard the Nautilus?" asked her owner.

"It would be perfectly lovely, of course, only you know it couldn't seem like a real Thanksgiving feast. Everything is tinned or bottled. All the Thanksgivings I ever remember are accompanied by the aroma of delicious goodies cooking in the kitchen."

"Enough said," returned Jack grimly. "You spurn my invitation to dinner; therefore it is up to me to turn and beat it for Cromore. We will have barely time to make it before nightfall."

They might have done so easily had not those threatening clouds gradually massed toward the zenith and slowly covered the rest of the blue sky. Then came a thick blanketing fog that blot out the world and left them isolated in a dense white world of dripping moisture.

There was consternation aboard the Nautilus after that. Those November fogs were very deceiving, and it might be many hours, perhaps days, before the mist lifted. If they could keep in the winding channel among the islands they would be all right, but if they missed their way and nosed around outside in the track of the big steamers there was no knowing what would be the fate of the little craft and her passengers.

They anchored for awhile, and then, impatient of the delay that would prevent them from arriving home in time for Thanksgiving dinner, they started out again, feeling their way. Jack Henshaw at the wheel and Frank Carew blowing the siren at intervals, Bob Hayden and the three women remained in the cabin and played bridge by the light of the lamp. It was very cheerful in there, away from the fog.

Jack Henshaw stared at the lighted windows of the cabin and thought rather ruefully that his task would be more attractive if Phyllis Hayden would come out and share his turn at the wheel.

The little Nautilus felt her way among the hidden rocks in the channel that snaked among the little islands, and it seemed that hours passed before the fog thinned sufficiently for them to glimpse the dark bulk of an island near at hand.

With the lifting of the fog, which was driven before a nasty easterly wind, the channel became unpleasantly choppy, changing to dashing waves as the wind increased.

While they debated whether to go on or to make an anchorage among the islands their fate was decided for them. A big wave rushed along the narrow channel, lifted the Nautilus upon its crest and sent her crashing upon the rocks of the nearest island, where she wedged tightly between two bowlders.

It all came so suddenly that the duck hunters hardly realized what had happened before Jack Henshaw hustled them ashore with their belongings.

"She's sprung a leak, a big hole in her port bow. We can't do a thing except to carry a couple of lines ashore and fasten them to some of those large cedars."

He was hurrying them ashore with their burdens of hastily snatched clothing and bedding. He followed with all the provisions he could gather and later sent the small oil stove from the galley. By scrambling over the slippery rocks they could reach the firm white beach where ancient cedars fringed the foot of the sand bluffs.

Here the women waited while the three men made the Nautilus fast in her cradle among the rocks in the manner suggested by Jack. When all was completed the six pleasure seekers gathered ruefully about their possessions.

"Goodby, Thanksgiving dinner!" said Carew in a hollow tone.

"And nobody knows how soon we

may get to Cromore for any meals," added Mrs. Carew mournfully.

Phyllis Hayden and Jack Henshaw exchanged glances of amusement. To them the adventure savored of romance. To be cast away upon a desert island was a novel experience enough, but to be cast away together, these two, who were in love with each other, made that island a paradise.

"Ah, you're a cheerful lot of Robinson Crusoes!" chided Jack at last. "You may never have the chance to be cast ashore again, and you sit here bemoaning because you can't spend Thanksgiving in the conventional way."

"Can't you be thankful without being prodded by the smell of pumpkin pie and roast turkey?" demanded Phyllis scornfully.

"Let us contrive a shelter for the tarpaulins, and you four may sit there and play bridge. Miss Phyllis and I will concoct a Thanksgiving feast for you to enjoy tomorrow."

The others shamelessly agreed to this unfair division of labor, and after a very practical shelter had been constructed against the stopping bluff and under the shade of two wind blown cedars the married couple made themselves very comfortable with cushions from the boat and by the light of a ship's lantern played bridge.

In the meantime Jack Henshaw and Phyllis Hayden held several conferences, during which they displayed much merriment and a thorough contentment with their lot.

They fussed around a hastily improvised shelter that Jack arranged for a little kitchen, and there they prepared the evening meal with the aid of the oil stove.

A creditable meal it proved to be, though canned beans formed the principal dish, and other canned and bottled delicacies rounded out the menu.

Morning brought sunshine and scudding clouds across the blue sky. The wind still blew heavily, but from another quarter, and the waves were dashing over the deck of the Nautilus.

The castaways tried to be cheerful, but it proved a dismal failure, except in the case of Jack and Phyllis. Those two seemed to have tapped some resourceful flow of good humor, for they laughed and joked and promised a most inviting dinner for the others, who clung to their bridge playing, now sitting on the sandy beach with their cards.

Jack and Phyllis disappeared and were gone for a couple of hours. While they were gone those left behind heard the report of Jack's gun.

"Ah! We'll have a duck, at any rate," murmured Carew.

"I'm afraid not," said his wife. "I notice that the supply of oil is gone, and the Nautilus is washed over with water. Every stick of wood on the island is too wet to burn. Cold canned beef and crackers and peanut butter will constitute our menu today," she ended drearily.

There was nothing cheering in the sight of Jack and Phyllis returning with a brace of ducks, for there was no fire to cook them by. When this evil news was announced to the young pair they merely laughed and said there was all enough to boil coffee and heat some beans.

"Dinner's ready!" sang out Jack, and they gathered about the hastily prepared meal.

"I thought it was to be a big dinner with trimmings," remarked Carew as he unfolded a paper napkin and sniffed hungrily at the tinned soup.

To the four older ones of the party it was a gusty feast. With most unseemly levity Jack and Phyllis insisted on referring to the various tinned foods as though they were delicious viands served at a well appointed Thanksgiving table.

"Do have some more turkey," insisted Jack, passing the tinned beans around.

"And some of the cranberry sauce," added Phyllis, holding up a bottle of tomato ketchup.

"This chestnut stuffing is delicious," commented Jack, nibbling a crisp cracker. "Mrs. Carew, you are not going to pass up the mince pie?"

"I've eaten many a badly cooked meal," observed Bob Hayden bitterly, "and I've partaken of food from Bombay to Bangor, but this is the first time I've ever eaten an imaginary meal. It gives me mental indigestion to think of it."

"Then what we all need is exercise," cried Jack. And, having disposed of the remnants of the meal by tossing them into the swift waters of the channel, he drove his guests before him up the steep bank and into a plowed field.

"This doesn't look like any of the islands I've met around here," remarked Carew, gazing thoughtfully around.

"We went a good deal farther than we realized in the fog. I'll lead you to a place. Well, ladies and gentlemen, welcome to Cromore!"

A surprised shout went up as they found themselves on the hill back of Jack Henshaw's home. A curl of blue smoke from the kitchen chimney here witness that dinner might be expected there after all.

They looked at Jack for explanation. "We struck the mainland instead of an island. I haven't been in that spot for years and didn't recognize it till Phyllis and I went out this morning. We shot a brace of ducks, and I believe mother has prevailed upon Uncle to include them in the dinner."

"A real dinner!" yelled Hayden and Carew in chorus.

"Yes," Jack laughed as the two men broke away pellucid toward the house.

Mrs. Carew and Mrs. Hayden looked at blushing Phyllis and happy Jack.

"I believe you two have found something else to be thankful for," said Phyllis' mother softly.

The Scrap Book

His Only Question.

Jack Rafferty, a reporter, who has worked in many places, went to work on the Seattle Post-Intelligencer under Scott Bone about the time a grand jury was called. Rafferty was ordered to cover the grand jury. The judge and the district attorney warned the grand jurors about the necessity for secrecy. Rafferty had full reports of the doings in his paper every day.

The judge summoned Rafferty. "Young man," he said, "you have been asking those jurors questions. Who has been informing you?"

"I can't tell you, judge," Rafferty replied. "It wouldn't be right to the juror. He didn't know he was talking to a reporter."

"But you asked him questions," said the judge heatedly.

"Not questions, judge," soothed Rafferty. "I only asked him one question—just one—but I asked that one frequently."

"What was that question?" demanded the judge. "What was it?"

"Why," Rafferty replied, "my question was, 'What will you have to drink?'—Saturday Evening Post.

What Might Be Done.

What might be done if men were wise—What glorious deeds, my suffering brother—

Would they unite in love and right And cease their scorn of one another!

Oppression's heart might be inclined With kindling drops of loving kindness, And knowledge pour From shore to shore

Light on the eyes of mental blindness.

All slavery, warfare, lies and wrongs, All vice and crime, might die together, And with the dawn, To each man born,

Be free as warmth in summer weather.

The meanest wretch that ever trod, Might stand erect, Might stand erect In self respect

And share the teeming world tomorrow

What might be done? This might be done, And more than this, my suffering brother—

More than the tongue Ever said or sung,

If men were wise and loved each other.

—Charles Mackie.

Next Time.

Curious wedding customs linger still in obscure places. When in 1870, the Rev. S. L. Warren became rector of Esber he was called upon to marry a couple who, at the conclusion of the service, kissed each other before the altar. Mr. Warren did not approve of the custom, and as the wedding party proceeded to the vestry he said to old John Woods, the clerk, "Next time tell them not to kiss till they get to the vestry."

Instantly John Woods hobbled forward and said to the bridegroom, "The rector says as next time ye're not to kiss her till yer gets to the vestry," and no one saw the humorous side of the injunction except the rector himself, who told the story.—Westminster Gazette.

Yes, He Could Hold Him.

A christening ceremony was taking place in a church in a mining district in Scotland. The infant that was to be christened was very gloriously arrayed. Among other things it wore a splendid bonnet, which, when the critical moment arrived, the mother had some difficulty in removing.

With the eyes of the congregation upon her the poor woman was greatly flustered, and her attempts to hold the baby and take its bonnet off at the same time seemed likely to end in her dropping the infant on the floor.

The clergyman turned rather impatiently to the father, a tremendously powerful looking collier, who was standing stolidly watching his wife's struggles.

"Can't you hold the child?" he asked sharply.

The big collier turned a disdainful glance on the minister, rather a diminutive man. "Hand him!" he whispered fiercely. "Man, I could fling him over the kirk—and you tae!"

A Willing Agent.

Agents for the various transportation companies that operate in the Yellowstone park meet the trains at Livingston, Mont., and endeavor to secure for their companies tourists who have not been booked through.

Several of them were trying to get a tourist early this season. They explained the advantages of their various methods of seeing the park.

Finally the tourist said: "It isn't a question of money with me. It is simply a question of congeniality."

"Yes, yes, yes!" shouted one of the agents. "We show you that, too—just the other side of Mammoth Hot Springs."—Saturday Evening Post.

Just in Time.

There is a delicious flavor about this story of a Virginia lady married to a man who, though uniformly unsuccessful in his hunting trips, boastfully spoke of his "killings."

One day returning from a trip with the usual accompaniment of an empty bag it occurred to him that his wife would make fun of him if he returned without even one proof of his oft boasted skill. So he purchased a brace of partridges to deceive his trusting spouse. As he threw them on the table in front of her he observed, "Well, my dear, you see I am not so awkward with the gun after all."

"Dick," replied the wife, turning from the birds, with a grimace, after a brief examination, "you were quite right in shooting these birds today. Tomorrow it would have been too late."

STRONG ON PIE.

All He Needed Was a Fair Start, and It Was His Very Own.

A southern congressman relates how, when he was once making a campaign tour through the interior of Mississippi, he came upon a negro cabin, across the threshold of which lay a dinky and a pickaninny of perhaps eight years of age.

The child was voraciously devouring a plate heaped high with chicken, vegetables, corn bread and other bits of food, in a manner it was plainly to be seen, that commanded the elder negro's hearty admiration.

"Is that your child?" asked the congressman.

"Yes, boss, he's shorely mine," answered the father, with a broad grin. "He's got a pretty fair appetite," remarked the congressman, after a moment's silence during which the pickaninny finished the plate and produced a huge section of pie.

"Purty fair, boss, purty fair," said the father. "Jes' look at him goin' after dat pie!" Then after a further period of silence, the proud parent added:

"Boss, it ain't no use a-ta'kin' dat chile's got a pow'ful infuocence over food. Onet he gits his upper lip ovah a piece o' pie, it's his pie, boss, it's his pie!"—Harper's Magazine.

Do It Now.
Defer nothing till the morrow. Resolutions which are not carried into execution at the right time resemble clouds without rain in a long drought.—Gustavus Vasa.

She Agreed.
When John Drew was much younger than he is now he took a small part in "Much Ado About Nothing" when that comedy was being performed by his mother, nor did he believe that his performance of his role left much to be desired until he uttered the line, "A gentleman should act better than I," whereupon he overheard his mother remark in an undertone, "I should say so."

Easier to Remember.
The Rev. Henry Ward Beecher had a rather defective memory at times. When he was making the announcements for the coming week one Sunday he wanted to intimate that he would not be the preacher on the following Sunday and that the pulpit would be occupied by his son-in-law, the Rev. Samuel Scoville, but at the last moment his memory went astray.

"In addition to the notices just read," he announced, "I desire to say that I shall not be preaching here next Sabbath, and the pulpit will be occupied by—by—by—"

After he had stammered for a few seconds he tried again. "I shall not be here next Sabbath, and the preacher will be—will be—be"—Here he broke off with a touch of exasperation: "Why, I know him quite well. You all know him. He married my daughter. Oh, I remember!" And he proceeded gravely, "Sam will preach here next Sabbath."

Sarcastic Stanley!
The antipathy which Dr. Johnson bore to Scotland was not singular or unprecedented. Lord Stanley came plainly dressed to request a private audience with King James I. A gayly dressed Scotsman refused him admittance into the king's room. The king, hearing an altercation between the two, came out and inquired the cause.

"My liege," said Lord Stanley, "this gay countryman of yours has refused me admittance to your presence."

"Cousin," said the king, "how shall I punish him? Shall I send him to the Tower?"

"Oh, no, my liege," replied Lord Stanley; "inflict a severer punishment. Send him back to Scotland."

Pat's Drams.
A physician not long ago was called to see an Irishman and among other directions told him to take an ounce of whisky three times a day. A day or so later he made another visit and found the man, while not so sick, undeniably drunk.

"How did this happen?" the physician demanded of Pat's wife, who was hovering about solicitously.

"Sure, docter, an' 'tis just what you ordered an' no more that he had," she protested.

"I said one ounce of whisky three times a day. That could not make him drunk," the physician said. "He has had much more than that."

"Nivur a drop more, docter, dear," she declared. "Sure, an' O! didn't know just how much an ounce was, so O! went to the drug store an' asked, an' the lad—he's a broth of a boy, ton—told me that an ounce was sixteen drams, an' Pat has had him regular an' no more."—London Tit-Bits.

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