

The Passionate Eskimo, F. Scott Fitzgerald

A master of American fiction comes back to Liberty's pages with a lively comedy of bizarre adventure... The sparkling story of a Locksmith's laugh at love.

Pan-e-troon crawled out of the igloo, pushing away the nose of an inquisitive dog, and uttered in Lapp the equivalent of "Scram!" to the rest of the pack. He looked to see if the line of fish was safely out of their reach and then proceeded a hundred yards over the white surface to his father's hut.

The old man, his face the color of rawhide, looked at him imperturbably.

"Are you packed and ready?" he asked.

"All packed and ready."

"Good. We leave early in the morning. Most of the others are on the point of departure."

It was true. As far as the eye could reach, there were signs of dismantling and preparation, and the bustle and excitement that accompany it.

Pan-e-troon gazed for a moment with an expression of regret that confined itself, however, to his slitlike purple eyes. He was a small youth, but supple and well made—and the contours of his round nose and chin and cheeks gave him a perpetually cheerful expression. He gazed about him for a long time—he had come to like this locality.

"Old Wise One," he said to his father, "I want to go into Chicago."

His father started. "What?"

"For one last look."

"But by yourself?" demanded his father anxiously.

"Yes, Old Wise One. I can find my way around. I speak a lot of American now and if I get lost I only have to say, 'World's Fair.'"

The old man grunted.

"I don't like it. When we have a guide and are together, all right, but alone you'll get hurt, get lost."

"Old Wise One, I must go," said Pan-e-troon. "Here is the last chance before we start for our home. Home is very fine, doubtless—"

"Of course it is!" said his father indignantly.

Pan-e-troon bowed slightly and finished his sentence: "—and often in these hot months I have wished to be fishing through the ice, or hunting bear, or eating well cooked blubber. But—"

"But what?"

"I should like to carry back more memories of this great village. I should like to walk along the street not regarding what the guides tell us to regard but noticing for myself what I wish. I should like to go into a trading post and put down money and say, 'Here—give me that exchange for this'; and I should like to say to people, 'Which way, please? Much 'blige.'"

He was a silent young man and this was probably the longest speech he had ever

made in his life.

"You are a fool!" grunted his father. But he knew Pan-e-troon, and opening his purse he took out a new silver quarter.

"Spend it carefully," he said. "Buy me some tobacco. And bring back what change there is."

Pan-e-troon bowed again.

"I shall indeed, Old Wise One."

He hurried back to his igloo for a small cache of money of his own—a quarter, two dimes, and two pennies. The fortune jingled together pleasantly in his hand, where indeed he must hold it, for he wore the costume of the Arctic Circle. This was not as oppressive as it sounds in Chicago of a late October afternoon, for it had been especially made of the lightest skins for the purpose of display at the Fair.

He hesitated between his fur cap and a new straw hat which an admirer had given him, finally deciding on the latter.

Then he slipped the money into the top of a moccasin, and once more shouting "Scram!" at the dogs who were leaping at the line of fish, he walked out of the Eskimo village into the pleasance.

Immediately he had a following. Pan-e-troon was grown used to strange eyes, however, and they did not disturb him. He felt quite at ease, quite a part of the crowd, in his new straw hat, and he wished he had borrowed his father's new spectacles for additional decoration.

Walking through the rapidly disappearing midway, past Spaniards, Dutchmen, Mexicans, Chinese villagers (between whom and the Eskimos there was some strange jealousy of exhibitionism), Pan-e-troon reached Michigan Boulevard. He was happy, he was excited. He stopped now and then to stare into shop windows, but they held such a surfeit of charms as to be confusing. So with lingering sighs he went on in the direction of a tall building which he knew as one of the city's great department stores. He had gone through it with the other Eskimos several months before as part of a bus tour of the city.

First, though, he would get the tobacco of the Old Wise One off his mind, and he turned into a shop with pipes in the window.

The perspiring man in charge gave him immediate attention. Several men lounging in the store stared at him.

Pan-e-troon beamed. He had never made a purchase in America by himself.

"I give you something," he announced, "and you give me something."

The salesman glanced at the others and then back at Pan-e-troon.

"That's all right with me, brother. What do you want to give me?"

Pan-e-troon's grin grew wider.

"You not understand. I give you something—"

One of the lounging men helped out with:

"He wants to give you his straw hat, George."

"Well, I wish he'd make up his mind. I've got 'bout ten degrees hotter since he

come in here."

Pan-e-troon shook his head regretfully but still smiled. Then he reached down into his moccasin and held out money.

"Here!" he said triumphantly. "I give you this—you give me that."

He pointed at the row of cans behind the man.

"Pipe tobacco?"

Pan-e-troon nodded.

"What kind?" The salesman named a few brands.

"One," said Pan-e-troon. "I give you something, you give me something."

The salesman, unresourceful by nature, gave up. The man who had spoken came behind the counter to his assistance.

"Now, Robinson Crusoe, we got vely mely kinds, savvy?" He put several cans on the counter. "This is a dime; this is a quarter; this is imported, two dollars a pound. How much do you want to spend?"

Pan-e-troon looked at the array.

"One."

"All right. How much you got?" Pan-e-troon showed his money. "I guess you want the cheapest kind. This is a good dime tobacco."

"No more cheap, eh?" inquired Pan-e-troon.

"No more cheap."

"Much 'blige."

"All right. Don't set yourself on fire or melt down your house. Good-by."

"Good-by. I give you something—"

"I understand, and I give you something. All clear—even a banker could understand it."

Pan-e-troon proceeded along Michigan Boulevard toward the department store. He had made a purchase by himself—his heart glowed. Now he could get what he wanted. Reaching the store, he walked through the busy shuffle, looking at the counters and buying copies of Real Sleuths and Gangsters' Secrets, his favorite magazines. His true desire was on an upper floor, but his eye was caught suddenly by an object on a counter. It was a lady—at least it was part of a lady—and she stood on a little pedestal with a short cape over her shoulders; her eyes were a bright blue and she had golden hair. Pan-e-troon beamed at her. Gently he touched her shoulder and then spoke to the saleswoman:

"I give you—"

Half hearing him, she looked at the tag on the cape and said:

"Two fifty-nine."

"What say?"

"Two dollars and fifty-nine cents."

He shook his head regretfully and passed on.

On the occasion of the bus tour the Eskimos had mounted by elevator and moving stairway; but he could find neither, so he walked up a flight and made the same thorough inspection of all the aisles. Luckily the department he sought was on the third floor—he recognized it immediately with a feeling of delight. It was the toy department.

"I want to buy airplane," he said to a saleswoman.

She confronted the strange spectacle with a start.

"You mean these toy ones, don't you? I remember now—you were all in here a few weeks ago."

She wound an elastic motor on a model and sent the model flier soaring around the room. Pan-e-troon watched in rapture.

"How much I give?" he asked.

"These? They are ninety-nine cents, marked down from a dollar fifty."

Ruefully Pan-e-troon surveyed his money.

"No can," he said. "Not give for this?"

"No, not give for that."

Though sorely disappointed, he met the debacle with a smile, as if it were the greatest joke in the world, and turned away. But something about him touched the woman.

"Look here, you. If that's all the money you got you'll get the most out of it at the five-and-ten. They may have little models, smaller than this."

"Five-and-ten?" he repeated blankly.

"There's one just around the corner." She called a bundle boy. "Earl, will you take this—this Eskimo around to the five-and-ten? He don't get the idea."

Earl eyed Pan-e-troon resentfully.

"Me be seen on the street with that!"

"Don't be yourself all the time—I'll fix it with Mr. Richards. Now, monseer, or whatever you call yourself, go along with this boy and he'll fix you up."

Presently he was deposited at the swarming entrance of the emporium. But he had hardly begun his wandering when his attention was caught by a counter piled high with locks of all kinds—padlocks, door locks, safety locks, tire locks—and he gave out a grunt of delight as he approached it.

Locks were his passion—in early boyhood he had come into possession of one from off a Russian steamer that had broken up on the ice. Toys were nonexistent, and he spent many an hour taking the lock apart and putting it together. Later a missionary gave him another, and another wreck yielded up a few more. This mechanical passion was entirely theoretical, due to the absence of doors on igloos; but the chests which his party had brought south were so thoroughly sealed that only Pan-e-troon, using twisted lengths of wire, was able to open them.

He bought a lock. He could have bought three with his remaining money, but he

knew very well which were cheaply made and which were not.

He did not visit the toy department—he was too anxious to return to the Fair and take apart his new acquisition. He was happy—he had an urge to be borne somewhere, to be wafted about. He would take a ride in a trolley.

He rode for an hour, proud and happy. He gave the conductor five cents and the conductor gave him a ride; then he gave the conductor another five cents and the conductor gave him more of a ride.

Then in a traffic tangle at a crossing Pan-e-troon found his eyes fixing themselves with increasing interest outside the window.

In a glittering underslung open car sat a girl. She was probably, not merely in his imagination, the most beautiful creature he had ever seen in his life—a ripply blonde who, had it been necessary, could have posed for any of those exquisite creatures in the advertisements. Her eyes were a little worried; so was her mouth.

Beside her was a morose-looking young man; but Pan-e-troon scarcely looked at the young man.

"She is a chief's daughter," he said to himself. "Doubtless the daughter of one of the greatest chiefs of all—ruler of one of the great trading posts."

Pan-e-troon sighed as the jam broke and the car started forward. Now he began ruminating instead of gazing. Home seemed very far away, very vast and white—but not as white as that girl's forehead. It was becoming plain to him this afternoon that he was not looking forward to going back.

After half an hour when he had concluded that it was time to be getting off, he saw the same car again. It was stopped by the side of the road, and the young man was in the act of removing one of the great bulbous tires—the girl leaning over the side and watching. The trolley clanged past, but before the next corner Pan-e-troon was on his feet, shouting:

"I out! Here I go out!"

On the corner Pan-e-troon waited until the trolley was out of sight. Then he walked back casually in the direction of the automobile.

He walked so quietly on his moccasins that not until he was beside the motor did the girl perceive him. She gave a sudden little gasp and the young man looked up, broke off his work, and stared.

"What is it?" the girl whispered. "It's almost an Eskimo."

"Well, what's he doing down here?"

"Look! He's got on a straw hat."

Pan-e-troon put his hands behind his back and beamed.

"I wonder if he knows anything about tires," the young man said. "Maybe he could stuff the hole with blubber or something, what?"

"You're not supposed to talk to me, Westgate. I keep my word." She lowered her voice. "But evidently this polar number is going to stick around."

The polar number was. When presently the wheel came off with a whirring wrench and went bouncing down the inclined street, Pan-e-troon tore after it, retrieved it, and brought it back to the car.

"Much 'blige," he said proudly.

"Don't mention it," said Edith Cary. "Where do you come from?"

"I from Lapland."

"What are you doing so far from home?"

"Worl's fair," he explained.

"Then what are you doing way out here?" she pursued.

"See Chicago," he explained. "Eskimo village go Lapland tomorrow."

At this moment a coupe drew up beside Edith's car. At the wheel sat a ruddy man of forty with a bristling mustache.

Edith frowned just faintly, and Pan-e-troon, unable to take his eyes from her, remarked upon the fact.

"Well, why the stop?" said the newcomer.

"We had a blowout."

The newcomer looked from Edith to the young man suspiciously.

"Well, as long as you're keeping your promise—as long as you're not letting him work on you."

"Humphrey, shut up!" said Edith impatiently. "By the way, since you're one of the executives of the Fair, you'll enjoy meeting Mr.—" She turned to the observer. "What's your name?"

"Name Pan-e-troon. That mean—"

"Mr. Pan-e-troon. He's in your show, Humphrey, and he's seeing the sights of our city."

"My God, how did he get off the reservation? We have more trouble rounding up these exhibits—they wander around and get fleeced and then we're to blame."

"I'm not going to fleece him, Humphrey. He has such beautiful fleece."

She felt a sympathy for the stranger in his wandering, but her sudden frown was not caused by that.

"Speaking of exhibits," she said, "I thought you were going to hold the—you know what—until the family get back."

"Well, that's tomorrow, isn't it? And the Fair's over."

"But I've no place to keep it—no combination for the safe. Since father lent it to the Fair, it seems to me it isn't much to ask—"

"I'll be staying at your house tonight—anyhow I wouldn't talk about it." Humphrey Deering glanced at Pan-e-troon. "You never can tell what disguises crooks will get up nowadays."

"Oh, no." Edith smiled at the Eskimo. "Mr. Troon's all right—in fact, I've taken a fancy to him."

The young man jacked the car down and put away the tools. Humphrey Deering's eyes fell on him unfavorably.

"You follow me out," he said. "But it seems to me that a man who once aspired to your hand would have more pride than to—"

"I had no place to go," declared Westgate, unperturbed. "I arrived here this morning without a dollar."

"Anyhow, he's a sort of cousin," said Edith.

But Humphrey Deering pursued stubbornly:

"In view of what he did"—he hesitated as Westgate flushed—"you ought to be chaperoned."

"Anything to please," said Edith. She turned to Pan-e-troon. "Would you like to go to a big house in the country to spend the night?"

"Good Lord!" exclaimed Humphrey.

"I told you I'd taken a fancy to him."

"Well, don't put him in the doghouse—unless you want to start a distemper epidemic. He's probably worn those skins all summer."

Pan-e-troon caught the gist of this and said indignantly: "These skins all clean. My father shoot; my aunt sew; I make clean."

Humphrey started his motor impatiently. With little difficulty Edith persuaded Pan-e-troon into the rumble seat.

"If you've never been inside an American house you'll have it to remember on those long, long nights up there."

"Nights very long," Pan-e-troon chuckled. "Six month."

"Six months," Edith repeated to Westgate. "Doesn't that melt your heart?"

"No, never melt," Pan-e-troon assured her. "Snow always."

When they started off he was sure neither of their destination nor of his right to go; but the quiet speed lulled him into reckless content. After an hour of open country they turned in at a gate and curved up a long drive to a great mansion.

In the portentous hall warriors in tin glared down at Pan-e-troon through eyeless helmets, and he took off his hat politely.

"Mr. Troon has no baggage, Christopher. Fit him out and all that. Then take his things and brush them—you understand?"

"If you'll follow me, Mr. Troon," sniffed Christopher.

When Pan-e-troon was alone in his room, he lay on the bed with his feet in the air, stuffed the pillow over his mouth, and roared. What a day! This was an adventure beyond his wildest dreams. Downstairs he found his hostess and Westgate in the library. Edith was more than ever radiant in a dinner dress of wine-colored velvet, and she greeted him with no less courtesy than if he had been the accredited ambassador from the North Pole. From the curios in the trophy room she sought out a sealskin drum, and he recognized on it the markings of a tribe neighbor to his own. Meanwhile she concluded what she was saying to Westgate:

"What we'll do is this. You slip on a tail coat, and put the thing into one of the tails, and have Christopher sew up the tail—and the thing is safe for the

night."

"And sleep in the coat? That'd look just too natural to any burglar."

Christopher appeared to say that two men were outside with a package to be delivered personally to Miss Cary. In a moment Edith came back, her eyes shining.

"I'm going to take a real look at this thing!" she exclaimed as she broke the seals. "I've never had my hands on it before."

From a box within a box she took an object wrapped in velvet—and uttered a little cry of delight. It was a circular setting of gold stuffed with alternate diamonds and rubies large as lumps of sugar. Going to the mirror, she put it on—and watched it settle down about her ears.

"Elizabeth the Second didn't bob her hair."

She showed it to Pan-e-troon.

"Very old—it belonged to a big lady chief a long time ago. It's worth a lot of money."

"Hund'ed dollar," he agreed.

"Many, many, many hundred dollars. Last summer some robbers came to the World's Fair and tried to steal it, but the police chased them away."

An exasperated groan came from the doorway, where stood Humphrey Deering:

"What's the idea, Edith? We keep a day and night guard on that exhibit for two seasons, and you wear it around as if it was a necklace from the five-and-ten!"

"I know five-and-ten," said Pan-e-troon eagerly. "I been five-and-ten. I give them something—they give me something. Look, I show you—I go get."

As he left the room Humphrey looked after him impatiently.

"How do you know who that fellow is?"

"Don't be unpleasant, Humphrey. Somebody ought to wear this—it's part of the responsibility of owning it. And as for Mr. Troon—well, I never heard of any rackets in the Arctic Circle."

Pan-e-troon returned and, simmering with joy, presented Edith with the lock he had bought that afternoon.

"I give you this," he bubbled, "you not give me anything. This free for you."

"Oh, I couldn't take it! Why, it's a lock—isn't it beautiful! I'll be able to lock up all my things with it."

"Yes!" he said excitedly. He pointed to the tiara of Elizabeth the Second, sloped awry upon her head. "Lock up and then no robbers can get. I show you."

"Good God!" snorted Humphrey.

As they went in to dinner, a wind that had been souging through the leaves swelled in gusto; the front door swung open with a bang and a sharp breath of impending winter swept into the hall.

"Autumn's over," Edith mourned. "Shut the door, will you, Westgate?"

She shivered slightly as she sat down at the table, and sent upstairs for a cape. When the butler had left the dining room she took off the tiara and handed it to Westgate.

"Take this now—it makes me uncomfortable. And after dinner do what I said."

"What's that?" demanded Humphrey.

"He's going to keep it for me."

"Why not me?"

"I guess she thinks it's safer with someone in the family," said Westgate dryly.

"See here—I'm much closer to being in the family than you are."

Pan-e-troon, applying himself to the legerdemain of many forks, did not speak but watched their faces in turn. Stimulated by the unusual situation in which he found himself, he was doing much thinking. Here was a most valuable headdress. Here was a young man who did not have a dollar when he reached Chicago. Secondly, here was Miss Cary's fiance, and he knew from the magazines he read that the least likely suspect was only too often the one most capable of villainy. And chiefly, here was the city of Chicago swarming with gangsters and criminals—and in it, defenseless against their wiles, was the goddess, Miss Cary.

She was a goddess. He had lit his small savage flame at her altar, and the minutes fanned it until Edith could feel its white heat cut through the candlelight. She loved to be loved, and she liked it that this odd little package from another zone should respond to her. She would have gone further to make him enjoy himself, save for the general unpleasantness of her own situation. That Westgate should come back just when she had yielded every point, when everything had been settled in a way to please her family!

She was glad when the dinner was over. She walked out on the front terrace for a moment.

"Come out here, Mr. Troon. There's a north wind and maybe you can feel your home in it."

"North wind say many thing."

"What does this one say?"

"Me, I don't know big say. My uncle he know. He know where fish, where hunt, where bad danger. Always he tell from north wind."

"Will you be glad to get home?"

He shook his head doubtfully and beamed as he always did when he spoke of adverse circumstances.

"Born poor race, poor people; work hard always."

It was growing colder. They went into the library for coffee.

Pan-e-troon picked up the drum again and began singing low in time to the strum of his fingers:

"Ben pay—en pay
Pane ina Kohna—
Ben pay—en pay
Pane ina Kohna—"

"What's he groaning about?" said Humphrey.

"It's some tribal song."

Pan-e-troon explained:

"This song is north wind when it mean danger. This here part about danger."

Westgate came downstairs in his tail coat, and took a chair very carefully indeed.

"I'm worth twenty thousand dollars as I sit," he said. "Do I look it?"

"I sing song about danger," announced Pan-e-troon.

"Sing it to yourself!" said Humphrey impatiently.

"No; go on—I like it," said Edith. Pan-e-troon continued soulfully:

"Em sto-poh bay
Em sto-poh bay
Pane ina Kohna—"

"Pain in a corner is right!" exclaimed Humphrey. Pan-e-troon now launched into a gayer number as if to compete with the louder winds outside:

"Bik-bik-bik-bik
Ata-woona-woa
Bik-bik-bik-bik
Ooh-ooH-OOH!"

"Magic song," he interpolated.

"Bik-bik-bik-bik—"

Humphrey threw up his arms desperately.

"This chink is driving me crazy! Can't you make him sign off?"

He went to the radio and turned it on, dialing to a loud band. Pan-e-troon's voice faded off.

"Don't you see you're boring us to death?" demanded Humphrey.

Pan-e-troon was aghast.

"Miz Cary no like?"

"No!"

Pan-e-troon laid down the drum and licked his lips.

"You no like because magic song," he said. "Somebody bad here no like magic song. It tell about danger."

"Just what do you mean?"

"Pan-e-troon have eyes to see. He see other eyes and they look at great fine headdress that cost many hund'ed dollar."

All three stared at him. Edith said mischievously:

"So that's it! I'm interested. Now that I think of it, Westgate could use the chaplet very nicely—and as for you, Humphrey, I haven't yet understood why it

had to be delivered before father arrived."

Humphrey did not laugh.

"I explained that—"

"Never mind now. Tell us all, Pan-e-troon."

Westgate began taking off his coat.

"Here—I'm not wearing this thing."

"Nonsense, Westgate. Anyhow, it's Humphrey that Pan-e-troon really suspects."

"Why, the mangy yellow tramp!" cried Humphrey. "I ought to kick him out of this house."

The Eskimo's eyes glinted on his.

"No kick Pan-e-troon," he said. He turned to Edith. "Sorry you no like song. I go way now. You keep lock. All much 'blige."

"But I do like—"

Laughing politely, yet with an air this time of not laughing at all, he ducked his head and hurried from the room.

"We can't let him go!" Edith cried. "You're absurd, Humphrey—as if he meant anything."

"Didn't he, though! And I wouldn't be a bit surprised if he has his eyes on that tiara himself."

"Besides, it's getting colder outside and he probably can't find his way home."

"He'll find his way," said Humphrey. "Those people are like Indians."

But when after twenty minutes Pan-e-troon had failed to come downstairs, Edith stood up.

"I'm going to find him—he may be committing hara-kiri or something."

"More probably he's at your jewel box," said Humphrey.

"I'll go with you," Westgate offered.

"Then I'll go too."

"See here," said Westgate. "It seems to me it's going too far to extract a promise from a man and then watch him besides. I told you I wouldn't speak to Edith on personal matters unless you were within hearing distance."

"And I'm going to see that you don't. I don't want you harrowing her with any 'explanations' of your conduct last year."

"I've already—" Westgate broke off hopelessly. "What's the use?"

They went up to the east wing, where the three men had been installed. Wind was sweeping through the upper corridors, and Edith shivered as Westgate closed a window at the end of the gallery. She knocked on the door of Pan-e-troon's room, and at the touch it blew open with a bang.

His hat and his magazines were gone; the room was empty.

"I'll bet he crawled out the window," Humphrey said. "And I'm going to look in my room and see if he took my silver brushes with him."

A moment later he called:

"No, here they are—" Humphrey's voice broke off as his own door slammed suddenly shut.

"Say, what is this?" he called a moment later. "Are you doing anything funny to that door, Westgate?"

"No, of course not."

"Well, it won't open. Is there a key out there?"

"No."

The knob was manipulated from both sides without success.

"You're locked in all right," said Westgate, and added consolingly, "Anyhow, it's nearly bedtime."

"Like fun I'll stay locked up here all night! I'll—"

Westgate took off his coat and handed it to Edith.

"Now, when I say 'Hep!' you shove, Humphrey, and I'll pull, and we'll see what we can do. It may just be jammed. All ready? Hep!"

At the word Westgate's body hit the door again, and Humphrey pulled at the knob—whereupon it came off neatly in the latter's hand and he sat down violently.

"There's a door between the two bedrooms," suggested Edith. "We'll try that."

They went into Westgate's room. There too the window was inexplicably open, and hardly had they crossed the threshold when the door blew shut behind them. Westgate jumped to the knob and then groaned:

"This one's jammed too! This is getting phony."

Humphrey's voice reached them through the wall in a muffled roar:

"Whah you boo boom? Onagona—"

"We're locked in too!"

The door between the two bedrooms was to be as unamenable to persuasion as the others. Westgate looked out the window.

"Wouldn't these rooms be sure to have gratings?"

"Father was afraid of kidnapers." She raised her voice. "Humphrey, there's a ventilator over the door. We can talk through that."

They heard him moving furniture to stand on; a moment later his voice reached them clear and wild:

"If you think I'm going to stand for this! If you think I don't know—"

"Humphrey, we're just as helpless as you are."

"Then who did it? Doors don't lock themselves."

"Looks like the Eskimo."

"Ring your call bell, Humphrey," said Edith. "I've tried this one, but it must be broken."

Westgate sat down and considered.

"Somebody wanted us to be locked in our rooms tonight," said Westgate. "That's all I can make out."

"What I want to know is what you two are doing," demanded Humphrey.

"Oh, we're dancing nose to nose," said Westgate disgustedly. "To a new tune called Pain in a Corner. Ever hear it?"

"I mean, what are you talking about? I hope you're not trying to explain—"

"You can hear every word we say."

"I don't call this hearing."

"You're using your ears, aren't you?"

"But I have to stand on top of a chair on top of a sofa—"

"I didn't promise anything about a chair and sofa—"

"Sh—sh!" Edith whispered suddenly. "There's some one outside the door, walking very quietly."

"Hey, you!" cried Westgate. "Who's that? We want to get out of here!"

There was no answer, but the shuffle of footsteps continued. Then they both started as they saw the handle of the door turn very quietly, turn back into place.

"Who's that?" Westgate cried. "Hands up or I fire!"

As he was unarmed and had no means of knowing whether or not his commands were obeyed, his threat was somewhat superfluous. The footsteps lisped off and died away.

"Well, if it was a burglar at least he can't get the—" Westgate broke off. "Say, where's my coat? I gave it to you."

"Your coat!" Edith uttered a little cry. "I dropped it in the hall."

Westgate sat down and whistled.

"What's that?" cried Humphrey.

"Tell him," Westgate said, "that it's the first bars of the Miserere."

An hour passed very quietly, save when from time to time a haggard voice came through the ventilator:

"You're not whispering, are you?"

"No!"

"It isn't fair that I should have to stand here."

"Then why don't you go to sleep? That's what we're trying to do."

"While you make up some fool explanation for Edith? I know it's something you don't want me to hear, something just disgraceful—"

Another hour waned while Edith dozed on the bed and Westgate stretched on the settee. Then, as if a church clock striking in the village was a signal, a cry, followed by a crash, came from the other room. Westgate sprang to his feet.

"He's down!" he exclaimed. "Poor old Humphrey. Now I can talk. Listen, Edith, and listen quick."

"Yes," she said in a frightened voice. "I'm listening."

"It wasn't me who was sued for breach of promise—it was my father. I let people think it because he was senile and I wanted him to die with a good name. I've only just finished paying off his bills. Now if there's anything fancy about that explanation—"

"What is it?" cried Humphrey, who had painfully regained his perch. "Here I have a nasty fall and you take advantage of it—" He broke off at a curious hushed sound. "What is it, Edith?" he cried, despairing.

"Oh, Humphrey, can't a girl cry?"

"Anyhow, it's another day," said Westgate.

"Not until dawn."

"All right, then."

After that there was no sound at all from the room except the occasional squeaking of a wicker settee. Westgate and Edith were keeping their promise.

At the crack of dawn they got the attention of a farmer outside and in half an hour they were free. But the coat was gone from the hall, and with it the tiara was gone—and Pan-e-troon.

"I still can't believe it," protested Edith. "But if he took it he'll be easy to find."

"I don't know—it might have been a clever disguise." Deering looked at Westgate. "A clever inside job."

They were making a cursory tour of the place in the early light, and now they started at a cry from the farmer, who had opened the door of the little icehouse.

Inside, where quarters of beef and mutton swung from hooks, Pan-e-troon was just raising himself sleepily from a pile of sawdust.

"Good morning," he said, grinning. And then, as the men advanced toward him menacingly, "No be mad today. Pan-e-troon sorry. He no think you bad men now."

"But we think you are!" thundered Humphrey. "Where's the coronet?"

"I got it. That's why I fix door so you locked up in room. I think you bad men maybe. But now no—I catch real bad man. Put him here for cool off. I only half good detect," grinned Pan-e-troon. "I forget lock his door too. But when I make march round and round the big house I see him come out with black coat. Then we have big hit fight and I take headdress."

"I see," said Westgate. He turned to Edith. "Then Christopher did answer the call bell—but when he saw the coat in the hall he saw his opportunity."

Pan-e-troon stretched. "I sure danger was there," he said. "Now I go Lapland today."

"Just once before you go we want you to render Pain in a Corner for the special benefit of Mr. Humphrey Deering," Westgate said.

But Pan-e-troon was the son of many chiefs and he had too much dignity to be kidded.

"That fine song in my country. That mean danger."

Pan-e-troon's visit to Chicago is handed down in the annals of his tribe, though the Eskimo version differs a little—the Cary estate, for instance, did not break off from the mainland and float out into Lake Michigan, with Westgate and Edith perched upon it. And as Pan-e-troon is entirely a gentleman his wife will never know that part of his devotion is reserved for a princess of the fabled trading posts in the far away.

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