

White Fang

She bounded in amongst them, her anxious and militant motherhood making her anything but a pretty sight. But to the cub, the spectacle of her protective rage was pleasing. He uttered a glad little cry and bounded to meet her, while the man-animals went back hastily several steps. The she-wolf stood over against her cub, facing the men, with bristling hair, a snarl rumbling deep in her throat. Her face was distorted and malignant with menace, even the bridge of ~~of~~ the nose wrinkling from tip to eyes, so prodigious was her snarl.

Then it was that a cry went up from one of the men. "Kiche!" was what he uttered. It was an exclamation of surprise. The cub felt his mother wilting at the sound.

"Kiche!" the man cried again, this time with sharpness and authority.

And then the cub saw his mother, the she-wolf, the fearless one, ~~couching~~ crouching down till her belly touched the ground, whimpering, wagging her tail, making peace signs. The cub could not understand. He was ~~apalled~~ appalled. The awe of man rushed over him again. His instinct had been true. His mother verified it. She, too, rendered submission to the man-animals.

The man who had spoken came over to her. He put his hand upon her head, and she only crouched closer. She did not snap, ~~not~~ nor threaten to snap. The other men came up; and surrounded her; and felt her; and pawed her, which actions she made no attempt to resent. They were greatly ~~exited~~ excited and made many noises with their mouths. These noises were not indications of danger, the cub decided, as he crouched near his mother, still bristling from time to time but doing his best to submit.

“It is not strange,” an Indian was saying. “Her father was a wolf. It is true, her mother was a dog; but did not my brother tie her out in the woods all of three nights in the mating season? Therefore was the father of Kiche a wolf.”

“It is a year, Gray Beaver, since she ran away,” spoke a second Indian.

“It is not strange, Salmon Tongue,” Gray Beaver answered. “It was the time of the famine, and there was no meat for the dogs.”

“She has lived with the wolves,” said a third Indian.

“So it would seem, Three Eagles,” Gray Beaver answered, laying his hand on the cub’s. “and this be the sign of it.”

The cub snarled a little at the touch of the hand, and the hand flew back to administer a clout. Whereupon the cub covered ~~it's~~fangs and sank down submissively, while the hand, returning, rubbed behind his ears, and up and down his back.

“This be the sign of it,” Gray Beaver went on. “It is plain that his mother is Kiche. But his father was a wolf. ~~Wherefore~~Therefore there is in him little dog and much wolf. His fangs be white, and White Fang shall be his name. I have spoken. He is my dog. For was not Kiche my brother’s dog? And is not my brother dead?”

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