

Adventure

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*tells a strange story
of the Amazon Jungle*

SCARLET FACE

OLHA, senhor! Look! Here I have a prize for you!

Saw you ever a monkey as queer at this? No, I wager not. I myself in all my years in this Amazon forest have seldom met beasts of this breed. They are rare. When I left camp yesterday to hunt something new for that North American museum of yours, I no more expected to find a singing fish, or a flying frog, than to chance on this *uakari*.

Yes, that is his name: *uakari*, the scarlet face. Observe, senhor, the brilliant red skin of his face and bald head. Notice, too, the bushy reddish whiskers under his jaw, so different from the long white hair all over his body; and the red tint in his yellow eyes. Red in the head, white on the body, and— Well, that is all. His tail is so short that you must look close to see it. In truth, he is shaped more like a man than like the usual—

Guardase! Be careful. He will bite you. Here, I shall put him into this cage. You had best keep him there until he dies. Oh, yes, he will soon perish. You can never take him alive to your country. He is *mortal*, as we Brazilians say; delicate. No *uakari* lives long in captivity. So observe him while you can, and then stuff him for your people at home to gaze at. And while he lives, take no chances with him, or he will surely do you harm. All *uakarís* are ugly . . .

There, now, he is safe, and so are you. And now I shall sit down and rest and tell you a tale which has been in my mind ever since I caught him. I need the rest. I am not so young as I was twenty years ago, when the rubber boom was at its height here on the Great River. Those were the days when the names of Lourenço Moraes and Pedro Andrada, my

young partner, were known up here as those of men not only willing to twist the tail of the devil, but eager to go and find that devil in order to do it.

It was then that Pedro and I met a *uakari* even more odd than this. And if you care to hear of him—

Bom! Good!

It was in the time of the *enchente*, the flood season, when the rubber trees were not to be tapped, that we two went out on a canoe cruise along waterways connecting with the Rio Javary, where we then were employed. We were scouts in the service of Coronel Nunes, owner of the greatest *seringal*—rubber estate—on that river, which is the boundary between Brazil and Peru. And we were so used to scouting and adventuring that often we went out on voyages of our own, without permission, when life at headquarters grew stale. The *coronel* used to pretend to be angered when we made these sudden departures without orders, but he always ended by grinning and saying:

“Pois bem, the rogues are gone, so let them go. They will find something before they come back.”

And we always did, though our discoveries did not always mean profit to the pocket of the *coronel*.

Now at the time of which I am speaking we had gambled away our year's pay, and so had nothing ahead of us but weary weeks of waiting for the new rubber season to open. And on an evening when we lounged sluggishly in our *barracao* and listened to the soggy sound of the rain, Pedro remarked—

“Lourenço, you old sloth, you are growing pot bellied again.”

I looked at him, saying nothing. I knew what was to come. I have always been short and broad, and it is natural for men of my build to put on



weight in times of idleness. Pedro, on the contrary, was tall and slender, and if he grew heavier in the wet season he did not show it. But, though my own increase of flesh might be noticeable, it was no thicker at my middle than elsewhere. And, having known him for years, I knew also what to expect when he began to abuse my shape.

"In fact," he went on, "you are so bloated that you look like a rum barrel. And it is no wonder. Since the rains began you have drunk more *cachaça* than any two men on this *seringal*—"

"Except you," I interrupted.

"I can carry it, graybeard," he jeered. "You are too old to indulge in the pleasures of youth."

At that time I was twenty-eight years old. He was twenty-five.

"And," says he, "if you continue to squat here and guzzle liquor until the working season comes again you will be too unwieldy to be of any use. In truth, you are of no use now. You need exercise—and at once."

"I seem to remember," I said, "that a few nights ago I thrashed three men at the same time, and then dragged you out from under a table and brought you home and put you to bed. But perhaps my memory is wrong. The point is: where do you wish to go?"

He snickered, made a cigaret, looked about him casually, and then answered:

"That proves what I was saying. If you were in your usual condition you could thrash six men instead of three—"

"There were no more in the place," I reminded him.

"And if I wish to sleep under a table that is my privilege," he kept on. "But, to answer your question, I have been wondering what the Rio Jutahy looks like."

"I don't know," I admitted. "How can we get there?"

"I don't know," he echoed. "But let us find out."

So, the next morning, we started for the Jutahy.



NOW the Jutahy, senhor, meets the Amazon about two hundred miles farther east than the Javary. But, by way of the flooded *furos* and *igarapés* of the back bush, the distance is shorter. And although neither of us had made the traverse before, we found the eastern river after about a week of easy paddling. In truth, we cared little whether we found it or not. What we really desired was to be moving, going somewhere, seeking something new, though it might not be worth looking at when we saw it.

And when we did see the Jutahy, it looked like nothing much. Nothing but the usual dark mass of jungle on either shore, the dirty flood water and drifting trees, the dull sky threatening to vomit more rain on us at any moment. That was all. Yet it was no worse than what we had left behind. Indeed, it seemed much brighter and more cheerful than the gloomy creeks by which we had come, always overshadowed by the tangled branches of

interlocking trees. And soon after we entered it and began cruising down it, the blanket of cloud overhead suddenly broke and a brilliant ray of sun shot down on the river and the bush a mile ahead. It burned only a minute, then was gone.

"Ah! A good omen!" exclaimed Pedro. "We shall find something somewhere beyond."

"Yes. Bush and bugs," I predicted.

But I began to look forward with more interest. That slim, sensitive partner of mine had a strange gift of sometimes feeling things not yet seen; a gift which I have never possessed, and which he himself could not explain, but which seldom failed to lead us to something odd.

Now we stroked onward without further speech until we reached the spot where the bar of light had centered. There we held our paddles, looked at both shores, listened, but neither saw nor heard anything out of the ordinary. And then, as if to mock us, the sky drizzled more cold rain.

"A great discovery," I grumbled, "and well worth a week's trip! The bush is as empty and the rain as wet here as on the Javary. The men back home will be intensely interested in our report."

"It was a mistake for you to come here," pleasantly admitted Pedro. "I should have brought a younger man."

At that I heaved so hard on my stern paddle that he nearly fell backward from his bow seat. After regaining his balance he grinned back at me, but voiced no more taunts. And we cruised on through the rain until our appetites warned us that it was time to make camp for the night.

Then the drizzle stopped and the clouds broke again. From low in the west a long streak of sun darted through a hole in the leaden sky, a fiery finger pointing into a narrow *angra*—a cove.

Once more Pedro held his paddle, scanning the opening; then, with grunt and jerk of head, resumed stroking. I steered into the waterway. Tall trees and thin brush flanked it, and its water was clean, proving that a brook flowed in at its end. So it was a good spot to camp.

The *angra* curved a little, and we moved onward for a hundred feet before we saw its end. Then Pedro swiftly drew in his paddle, snatched up his rifle, sighted high and fired.

The report crashed loud in the quiet. From a limb fell something whitish, which streaked down into the dull green bush and disappeared.

"*Mono*. Monkey," Pedro explained.

"Good eye," I approved. And, with our supper meat thus provided, we moved on to the brook mouth.

"Go and get it," I said then, "while I make a fire to cook it."

So he walked back toward the spot where the monkey had dropped. I took a machete from the dugout and plodded up the sloping shore to cut firewood and the poles and leaves for a one night *tambo*. But the saplings which were to make those poles probably are large trees by now. I did not cut them.

The brush was thin, as I have said; starved by thick bodied, thick leaved trees which absorbed all sun. As I walked in among those trees I suddenly stopped. They were only a waterside fringe. Beyond them was a clear space. In that clearing was a village.

A dead village. A hamlet of low mud houses, silent, decayed, along a short brush grown street. A town in which I saw no living creature—not even a vulture roosting on a roof. But I stood and stared as if it were Pará or Rio de Janeiro.

I still was standing there amazed when Pedro came up behind. His tread was almost as silent as that of a jaguar; but I heard and recognized it and did not turn. He stopped beside me.

"*Que diabo?*" he muttered. "What the devil have we here?"

"A city," says I. "There are fourteen houses. It is the capital of the Jutahy, no less."

"Hm!" says he, through his nose. For a minute or two he scanned the place. Then he chuckled—

"Well, meet the mayor."

I looked at him, and down at what hung from his left fist.

"*Por Deus!* What is it?" I blurted.

"I don't know," he replied. "I shot it for a monkey, but now I think it must be the population of this place. Shall we eat it, or bury it with ceremony?"

It was a *uakari*; the first we had ever seen. Both of us had passed more than ten years in the great forest, and had encountered strange things—things so queer that I dare not tell of them now, lest you think me the world's worst liar. But in all that time neither of us had met one of those scarlet faced animals.

Now, though the brute was dead and had bled plentifully from the .44 hole through his body, his scarlet face still was bright red. His color would have been surprising even in life. Now it was uncanny.



I STARED at him and felt him from end to end. And then, for no reason at all, I looked all around, and up into the trees, and over into the deserted town. So did Pedro. Somehow it seemed that something was watching us; something hostile. But nothing was

visible. Nothing made a sound. Even the sun was gone. Gray light, shading into dark, was over all.

"He is meat," said I loudly. "So we shall eat him. And here is a whole town to sleep in. Come, let us find the best house. And if anything is here which thinks it can stop us, let it try!"

With that I strode forward, machete in hand. My rifle was back in the canoe. Pedro had his gun in his right fist, and he followed with another small chuckle. But I heard him drop the monkey, in order to have both hands free. To him, as to me, the place seemed to hold a threat.

The houses looked even more dead when we glanced into them than when we had first gazed at their walls. Doors sagged crazily; some had fallen flat. Inside were only small scattered pieces of moldy rubbish—broken jars, decayed gourds, a rotten fragment of a hammock, and other such trash. Plainly the people who once lived here and had not died but migrated, taking with them all belongings worth keeping. Everything indicated that they had been gone many years. Yet the brush which had grown since their departure was neither high nor dense.

We reached the last house. There we stopped, eyeing it narrowly. It showed signs of recent use. Its door was shut, and looked firm. Its wooden window bars were not worm-eaten, like all the others, but strong and well set. And along the front wall was no bush growth.

We looked at it, and at each other. And then, clearly though not loudly, Pedro gave the bush call of strangers approaching a house with friendly intentions—

"O da casa!"

From inside the *casa* came no answer. Listening intently, we heard no movement. Watching the two windows, we saw no face.

I stepped to the door and shoved it open. Inside was one long room. In that room was a hammock, a table made from sticks, a chair of the same construction—and not much else. Nothing alive was there. But it was plain that something alive had lately been there. Unlike all the other houses, this one held the feeling of life.

Pedro wheeled and looked along the desolate street, toward our canoe. Then he strode to the waterside. I watched him go, but asked no question. It occurred to me, as it had to him, that my loaded rifle lay there in the boat, ready to any hand; and that a gun does not care whom it shoots.

While he was gone I stood at the doorway, watching all about. Something made me lift my gaze to the tall trees surrounding the village. On a high branch of one of them I spied a patch of white and red against the farther green. As my eyes fixed

on it, it moved. The red disappeared, the white traveled behind a bunch of leaves, and so it was gone.

"Another *uakari*," I guessed. "The mate of the one Pedro shot, no doubt. It has been watching us, and now it knows I am watching it, and is taking cover. They are almost human, those beasts."

Then the rustle of brush caught my ear, and I glanced aside. Pedro was returning. He brought my rifle and some news.

"Our supper is gone," he told me.

"*Como?* How?" I puzzled.

"Something has carried away our *uakari*. What it was I do not know. I heard something move in the woods at my right, and it sounded heavy. But I did not see it. A prowling bush cat, probably. So we must eat the usual salt fish and *farinha*."

"I saw another monkey up yonder," I said, pointing. "Of the same breed. But he moved, and probably has moved again since I took my eye off him, so there is no sense in hunting him. Well, the rain will soon start once more and keep coming all night. Let's make ourselves comfortable."

We went back to the waterside, got our hammocks and some travel food and a candle, tucked a rubber coated sheet snugly around all else, and returned. We got water from the brook behind the house, hung our beds, ate, smoked, and so were ready for sleep. But neither of us felt very sleepy. Our minds remained awake.

The rain came and pounded down in the usual night pour, but nobody arrived. The candle burned and flickered and waved, and we looked often at the windows, but found nothing looking in at us. At length I said:

"The man who lives here has gone on a trip. There is no canoe, no paddle, no gun, no food—"

"There is a hammock," Pedro reminded me, pointing a thumb toward it. "Who goes traveling in the bush without his bed?"

"I have slept many a time in my canoe," I declared. "And so have you."

"True enough," he admitted. "But by necessity, not by choice. I did not leave my hammock behind me when starting away. Nor did you."

With that he stood up and began walking around the place. I made no answer, for there was none to make; he had spoken truth. I watched him move around and around the small space, restless as an uneasy jaguar. All at once he stopped at the shut door.

For a moment he stood there, looking down. Then he squatted and made some motions under the doorsill. Rising, he held a wide, thick book. Just under the sill was a long empty hole.

That cavity was one of the cleverest hiding places I had ever seen. Any intruder entering the house could not possibly see it. The same intruder, going out, would be gazing at the street, and so would cross the threshold without glancing at it. Who looks at a doorsill, anyway? Nobody. One always steps over it without thought, watching for whatever may be beyond.



BUT PEDRO, with the candle shining on that usually dark space and with nothing outside to hold his eyes, had detected the secret niche. Now he brought his find to the table. Together we looked at all it held. Then we looked again at each other, wondering.

The portfolio was full of pictures of monkeys; pictures drawn on paper now yellowed and spotted by dampness, but still good; pictures made with a pencil, and very true to life. From start to finish it showed no other animal. Monkeys, monkeys, nothing but monkeys!

As we looked again, we found every monkey we knew, and some we did not. There was the bag bellied *barrigudo*, the spidery *coaitá*, the shaggy *parauacú*, and many another—even the little owl faced *eiá*, which moves only at night. Yet all these tailed creatures took up only half the book. All the rest of it was given to the almost tailless scarlet face; the *uakari*.

That beast was drawn in every sort of position and with every kind of expression. More than that, his scarlet face was really scarlet. What kind of dye or paint had been used to make that vivid color I do not know. But there it was. Page after page showed that same brilliant shade of skin on the almost human face of that rare brute.

“We have found something queer, indeed, in this queer town of yours,” I said. “What do you make of it?”

“I make neither head nor tail of it,” he confessed, “except that somebody likes monkeys.”

We examined the pictures again. Then, for no particular reason, we glanced at the windows. As before, we saw nothing. But Pedro shut the book and carried it back to the threshold. When he returned the black cavity in the clay had disappeared. He had shut its door.

We lay down in our hammocks, smoked, thought, looked a few more times at the windows, but said nothing. There was no more to be said, and no sense in wasting breath in idle guesses. Soon we grew heavy eyed. The rain drummed down on the roof, and nobody came, and there was no sign that anyone ever would come. So at last I blew out the candle. With the blackness came swift sleep. I was gone.

After a time I came back, much distressed. My breath seemed almost shut off. Something was pressing on my throat; not violently, but hard enough to interfere with my breathing. I tried to start up and lift my hands to seize the thing. But I could not.

At the upward movement of my head the thing throttled me. Moreover, my hands could not rise. Each of them was bound to the hammock. So was each foot.

I gulped, gasped, lay back. The pressure on my throat eased at once. Peering around, I saw only blackness. Outside the rain poured louder than ever, its rumble on the roof and splash on the ground drowning all other sounds of the night.

I kicked my feet, yanked my hands, striving to tear them loose. They did not come free. I twisted head and neck. The only result was to learn just what held my throat—a triple cord of rough palm fiber, which scratched my skin.

Lying quiet again, I looked toward the door. By steady gazing I soon made it out; an oblong patch of blackness not quite so black as the wall on each side. It was open.

We had not barred it, for we were not accustomed to locking ourselves inside any place; our own *barracao* at home had no door, and the *tambos* we made in the woods had no walls. Now, in this new spot, some man or beast or demon had come through walls and door and, while I lay deadened by sleep and rain noise, had lashed me cunningly to my hammock. The cords were, I knew, looped through those of my bed. And they were strong.

Straining eyes and ears, I still saw and heard nothing different. But, now that all my senses were wide awake, I smelled something. It was something alive, something warm, something wet, which gave off a faint body odor in the heavy air. It was not very close, but not far.

“Pedro!” I called sharply.

“Yes,” he replied. His quiet tone showed that he had been awake before I spoke.

“I am tied down! Are you?”

“Yes,” he repeated. “And the thing that did it is in the other hammock.”

“Have you seen it?”

“No. But I feel it and smell it.”

I said no more; further words were needless. Neither of us could help the other. Each must free himself, if he could. So each of us went to work again, feeling for some way to loosen a hand. And meanwhile the thing which had bound us made no sound.

Try as I would, I could not break a strand. My hammock was nearly new, and very tough; and, like

all other hammocks, it yielded to every movement. Thus it weakened my pulling power. Never have I cursed the softness of my bed as I did then—though I kept the oaths behind my teeth.

At last, drenched with sweat and as tired as if I had done two days' paddling in one, I had to desist and rest. And, lying there with flesh and nerves worn raw by the long exertion, I felt panic growing on me. I wanted to yell and screech and writhe. The place had become a black horror. If only that damnable thing yonder would speak, light the candle, show itself, instead of sit and smell!

I felt that it could see me, was watching me, grinning at me, enjoying my misery; and that when it was ready it would do something far worse. But I held myself under control. When my breathing became easy I tried to hear some sound from Pedro which would show how he fared. None came. For all my ears would tell me, he might be dead.



FINALLY the blackness began to fade. The rain redoubled. I knew it to be the downpour of dawn. For a few minutes the gloom remained so thick that I could make out only the vague curve of my comrade's hammock. Then the watery tumult lessened, the light swiftly brightened, and all became clear.

And then, from the hammock beyond Pedro, rose a creature that made me grunt with amazement.

For the moment I could hardly tell whether it was a man or a giant *uakari* monkey. Its face was scarlet red, its hair reached its shoulders. It stood there looking at us without words or further movement, gazing fixedly first at Pedro, then at me. And neither of us spoke or moved.

At length it walked from behind Pedro's hammock to come and stand by mine. I still stared up at it, tongueless. It was a man; a man so old that the top of his head had become bare and his heavy fringe of hair, once black, had turned gray. Yet his face was almost unwrinkled, and both his vivid coloring and his muscular build proved him very strong; strong with the agile strength of the monkey, which habitually performs feats impossible to nearly all men. And now that I saw him more closely I found something very like a monkey in his expression and his eyes.

Those eyes were brown, and cold, and not human. They did not contain the human soul. As they looked down at me they were as hard and merciless as those of a monkey which has caught a moth and is about to pull it to pieces.

Some people may tell you, *senhor*, that a monkey is a gentle, affectionate animal. So it may be, if caught young, tamed, petted. But that is only because it is subject to the stronger will and

intelligence of its master. Watch that same monkey sometime when it thinks itself alone and has some weaker creature in its power, and you will realize that by nature it is a cruel, vile beast. And you will see in its eyes then the same look I saw in those of the human *uakari*.

A clammy chill went over me as I watched him. More than once in the past I had faced and fought the worst savages of our jungles; beasts with the shapes of men but with the murderous minds of snakes or *jacarés*—crocodiles. But then I had been free, on my feet, with weapons in hand and on my belt, and so had had a fighting chance. Now, bound hand and foot and neck, powerless to defend myself, I felt my bones turn to water as I read that unfeeling gaze.

It went over me from head to foot and back, looking longest at my skinned throat and wrists and ankles. It had studied Pedro in the same way. Now it fixed on my own eyes, and I felt twice as cold as before. In that unwinking watch was not only cruelty but hate.

I looked at his hands, to see whether he held a weapon. They were empty. In truth, they did not need any gun or knife for use against us. They were big, powerful hands, able to throttle both of us helpless men at once. In the night they had stolen both my rifle from my hammock and my machete from my belt, as I had already learned while straining about. But it was clear that he now had no thought of using lead or steel against us. Even his strong fingers hung loose, as if he had no intention of choking us, either. Yet his look was full of death.

After another minute or two I gulped down something and found my tongue.

"Who are you?" I growled. "And what do you mean by this?"

He made no answer. His pupils shrank a little, making his gaze all the more sharp. But he spoke no word.

"If this is your idea of a joke it has gone far enough!" I went on, growing angrier. "Untie these cords!"

Again no answer.

"And if this is your idea of hospitality to river travelers you are a rotten river man," I scolded. "We are peaceable voyagers who took shelter here from the rain, as every bush man has the right to do at any settlement. We have done no harm to your place or to you. We did not even bar your door against you. Why could you not walk in like a man, wake us up, talk to us, be friendly, instead of playing this monkey trick? *Por Deus*, it must have been because you were afraid!"

At that his fingers curled suddenly and a scowl grooved his forehead. I had been wondering

whether he understood me. Now it was clear that he did. But still his lips did not open. He continued to stand there silent; and his silence was more terrible than the worst cursing or raving.

Now Pedro spoke, for the first time in hours. His voice was as calm as if he were mentioning the weather.

"He is dumb, Lourenço. Probably somebody cut out his tongue."

The scowl of the *uakari* man deepened. A monkey snarl went over his face. Then he stuck out a whole tongue, wagged it insultingly, drew it back. But still he said nothing.

"I was wrong," Pedro admitted. "And you were right. His tongue is good enough. But he is too much afraid of us to use it."

For a second or two I thought the man animal would leap over me and throttle him. All his muscles drew taut, and his teeth showed in a grimace of fury. But he checked himself and stood glaring at my partner. I could not see Pedro's face, which was hidden from me by the side of his deep hammock, but I knew from his tone what sort of look must be on it: a sneering smile, a contemptuous stare at our wordless captor. And suddenly I comprehended his object—to goad the creature into talking. With a man who will talk there may be some chance of reasoning.

So I followed my comrade's lead. Said I, with a sniff:

"Of course. He has proved his fear by tying our throats. With our hands and feet bound we cannot get up, but he is afraid even to let us lift our heads. He dares not even give us a chance to spit on him. He has not the courage of a louse—"

There I stopped abruptly. One of those big hands had shot to my neck and shut tight. Now it shook me until all went black before my eyes. It was only one hand, mind you, and I was a heavy man; but it threw me about with such power that I felt like a rat in the jaws of a dog. Dimly I heard Pedro's voice yelling oaths. Then I went deaf and blind.

But sight and hearing soon came back, for the hand released me. Pedro still was swearing, calling the red man every species of nauseous coward. And, to my surprise, that man looked somewhat ashamed—as a monkey might look if caught by a man at some vile deed.

"I live, Pedro," I croaked, when my voice returned. "But he has proved the truth of what I said. Only a poltroon will attack a man who cannot strike back."

Pedro quieted.

"Coward! Filthy beast!" he gasped.

Then he lay breathing loudly. I knew he had tried to break loose and rescue me, and had nearly strangled himself by the effort.

Before either of us could gain breath to say more, the monkey man turned and walked to the back of the room. He brought back a machete. I set my teeth. But the steel did not harm me. Scarlet Face stooped. My throat cord tightened, then was loose. He had cut the knot under the hammock.

He stepped to Pedro and did the same thing. We both sat up, still tied hand and foot, swaying in our unsteady nets, but, for the moment, feeling almost free.

"That is better," said my partner. "You are not such a bad fellow. Now cut the others."



INSTEAD, the queer creature tossed the long knife aside and gave each of us a hard look. He walked again to the back of the room. Watching him, we saw that our stolen rifles were standing there against the wall. But he did not touch them. He picked up something else, stalked back, held it up before us.

"*Por Deus!*" muttered Pedro. "It is the *uakari* I shot!"

It was. It was the monkey which had disappeared while he left it lying on the ground, and which we had supposed to have been snatched up by some sneaking bush cat. Its dead face was no longer scarlet; the color had faded to gray. But otherwise the beast was unchanged. The big bullet hole in its body and the large blood stain on its light hair proved it to be the same animal.

Then the man who seemed so much like a *uakari* found his voice.

"*Uakari!*" he echoed.

We stared now at him instead of at the monkey. He had held his tongue so long that we should almost as soon have expected the corpse in his arms to speak. And his tone was queer. It was harsh as the creak of an iron hinge on a door which has not been moved for years.

"*Uakari!*" he said again.

His lips twisted in another monkey grimace. He seemed struggling inside. Soon he went on.

"*Uakari* man. Man of the trees. Little man. But real man! More strength than you! More brains than you! Man able to live without weapons! Man like me!"

The words came slowly, with much twisting of the mouth. The voice rasped like steel on stone. I had noticed the same slowness, the same rustiness of tone, in men who had been long in the forest without any one to talk to. But I had never seen one work so hard to find his words.

"Man?" scoffed Pedro. "A monkey!"

“Man!” snarled Scarlet Face. “Man! Better man than you! And you killed him!”

We said nothing to that. We sat studying him and the *uakari*.

“Man!” he repeated once more, his voice coming stronger now. “Man of the old time. Man of high places. Man of hands, feet, teeth, muscles. Not man of today! Not man of bows, arrows, guns, knives, crawling on dirt. Not like you!”

He glared again.

“Cowards!” he went on, parroting the name we had called him. “*You* are cowards! You are weaklings! You cannot catch *uakari* people without guns! You cannot climb and run in trees! They can! I can! But you can only shoot! Without guns you are worms! With them you are snakes! With them you kill the people who do no harm! You shoot little men like this! You murder my people!”

He held out the dead monkey in both hands, as if it were his baby. And the rage in his eyes was no less than that of a man who has found his son slain by savages. Clearly there was little use in trying to reason with him. But I made the attempt.

“Well, we didn’t know he was your pet,” I blundered. “And we—”

“Pet?” he yelled. “Brother. My little brother. My brother of the forest. You murdered him! He did nothing to you. He only looked at you. You shot him! You! You nobodies from nowhere! You river snakes! You crawling things who have no right here! This is our home. We live our own life. You come and shoot us. But you shall see. Now it is our turn. You shall see.”

He spun around and stalked to the door. And we, looking after him, saw several things already. We saw that full day had come, bright though cloudy. We saw also, of course, that he was far from sane. We saw, from his nakedness and likeness to a *uakari*, that he really did believe the monkeys to be his people. And speedily we saw more, as he had promised. Much more. Too much.

Standing in the doorway, Scarlet Face called. It was a queer call, without words; a high, odd, barking sound. Something answered. He repeated his cry. Then, as quickly as he had left us, he whirled and came back.

About a yard away he stopped, dumb again, cradling the dead animal in his arms, but seeming forgetful of it. And we sat as dumb as he, wondering what was to come. It came very soon, and kept coming.

Into the doorway came a shape, and into the house it ran without hesitation. Then it halted and sat up on its haunches, staring at me. It was a scarlet faced monkey.



AND AFTER it, by ones and twos and threes, came a horde of them. How many appeared I do not know, but they numbered at least twenty. And every one was full grown, heavy, strong, with a body as long as that of a dwarf man, arms and legs hard muscled, eyes intelligent but cold.

They grouped inside the door, all sitting up, all watching us two strangers. And as they watched, their red faces grew redder, their hard eyes harder, and their long sharp teeth began to gleam behind their backdrawn lips. They may not have seen that we were tied, but somehow they knew we were helpless. And, knowing that, they showed quick hate.

The scarlet faced man had stood with his back to them, keeping his attention on us. Now he turned his head and looked at them as if counting and recognizing them. To me they looked all alike—bright red, hostile, hateful faces, cruel mouths, strong shaggy bodies. To him each seemed different.

His head jerked back toward us, quick as that of a monkey watching enemies. His lips opened, and behind them shone teeth as wicked as those of his friends.

“You shall see!” he repeated. “Now it is day. My brothers do not leave their trees at night. Now they are here. *Ach, ja*, you shall see!”

Again we saw more than he said. I had noticed that his accent was strange. Now, when he used those foreign words, I knew what country had given him birth. We had seen a few men of that country before. And we had not learned to expect from them any humanity in time of misfortune.

He spun around again. Facing the crowd of *uakarís*, he began barking once more. And he held up their dead fellow for all to see. His noises lasted only a minute. But that was long enough.

The beasts replied with savage snarls. Their long hair bristled. Their eyes turned green with rage. Those eyes all fixed on us. And in them we saw the vindictiveness of all the monkey tribe.

“*Christo!*” whispered Pedro. “He means to have them kill us!”

I went cold again. He was right. Scarlet Face had loosed our necks only to let us sit up and see our killers. And his fiends would give us no easy death. They would tear out our eyes, bite open our bowels, pull us apart . . .

The monkey man turned again to us.

“Our turn now!” he said once more. “We *uakari* people show you what we can do! Without guns or knives. With hands, feet, teeth. *Ja wohl*. You shall see!”

His grin now was not only that of a beast, but that of a devil. I took another look at his brother devils. Their fierce teeth snapped and their paws worked like claws. I tugged furiously at my wrist bonds. They did not yield.

Then came Pedro's voice, low, confidential.

"It is time for our comrades to be here, Lourenço. Probably they are landing now. They will blow all these creatures to hell."

I peered at him, puzzled. He was looking through the doorway, and seemed to be listening for footsteps.

"What?" yelled Scarlet Face.

"I said nothing," my partner denied. "Proceed with your show, monkey."

The monkey man glowered. In his red face remained rage. But with it also was a look of alarm.

Suddenly he coughed out a harsh noise and dropped the dead *uakari*. He sprang sidewise, snatched up the machete he had thrown away, and bounded to the door. Several of the squatting monkeys fell over, knocked down by his rush through them. Then he was outside. He turned sharp to the right and was gone toward the river.

The monkeys barked and chattered and twitched around, bumping one another, looking outside after their man brother. I looked the same way, wondering, in one flash of thought, why he had not taken time to run around us and grab a rifle, instead of clutching a machete. The answer came at once: he had seized the nearest weapon, as a monkey would do; the weapon which had been in his hand latest. His brain was a monkey brain . . .

"Hold them!" came Pedro's voice, low and quick. "When they turn, hold them with your eye!"

Then from his hammock came a straining grunt. I obeyed his order. The thoughts I have told you had taken only a second, or less. In the same time I saw his idea and supported it.

Something snapped dully. Something moved. Something strained again, with the same grunt through the nose. Another dull snap—

The monkeys faced back toward us, snarling again, poising to spring at us, but uncertain. I gave them my hardest look. They hung there, making ghastly faces and noises, but dodging my eyes. Some jerked their heads to look once more outside, seeking Scarlet Face, their big brother. Others gnashed their teeth, drooled, quivered. But none leaped on us.

"*Graças a Deus!*" panted Pedro. "Thank God! I am loose!"

I did not look at him. Scowling, I still held the red devils in their places. Then came a dull pain in one of my numb hands. Pedro was up and cutting me free so hastily that he had slashed my flesh also.

The other hand, and both my feet, came loose with the same swift darts of a knife. We were no longer lashed down.

Later I learned that Pedro had managed to liberate one foot just before dawn. His hammock was much older than mine, and so its cords were weaker. The binding of that foot, too, perhaps was not so strong. But the freeing of one leg was not of much use then. Afterward, when he tricked Scarlet Face into leaving the house, he got his free knee under a wrist and, with that as a brace for his arm, tore that hand free; then flopped over and did the same with the other. The strain burst all his fingers at the ends. But he was able to get out a small pocketknife, open it, release his other foot, then cut the bonds holding me.



NOW I scrambled out of my hammock. My feet seemed wood, my hands lead. Those cords had been tight. But I was able to stand, and lost no time in standing.

The red faced brutes chattered louder. Their vicious eyes blazed brighter. But they huddled closer and gave ground a little. Now that we men were up and confronting them, their monkey courage and monkey hate were a trifle weakened by monkey fear of man. Yet they saw that we held no weapons except Pedro's tiny blade, and that we staggered as we stood. So they hung halfway between fight and flight.

In one more minute we might have driven them out without a blow. But we did not get that minute. Just as the blood again ran free in our pinched veins, Scarlet Face returned.

He came leaping in from the street, foaming with rage. He had run to the river, found it empty, comprehended Pedro's deceit, dashed back. Inside the door he halted, staring. Then he screeched and sprang at me.

The machete swung up as he came. I did not dodge or wait. I dived at him. Head first, I hit him in the stomach.

"Ooah!" he groaned.

We went down together. Then all hell broke loose around us.

He fought like ten devils. So did I, for I was blood mad. But at least ten more devils sprang on me, biting, tearing, gouging, fouling with the foulness natural to devil beasts which are almost men. The *uakari* people had followed their leader.

The heavy brutes were all over me, snapping and slaving and slashing, tooth and nail. Yet I hardly felt them. My mind and body were fixed on the work of holding their big brother and trying to break him. I knew that if he could overpower me he

would smash me to a pulp. So I fought for my life and his death.

We rolled over, hitting, clutching, kicking, wrestling. His machete had dropped from his hand when I knocked him down, and now I forced him away from it. As we turned I crushed several *uakarís* under me, and injured them badly, perhaps; at any rate they screamed horribly. But I gave no heed to anything but my most dangerous enemy.

He was a madman now, if he had not been so before. His eyes were as red as his face and full of hell's fire. He hissed and spat as he fought. He bit at my neck, kneed my groin, twisted me terribly, trying to get his iron hands around my throat. But for the moment I outfought him. The violent blow of my head in his middle had hurt him. And I made the most of my chance. I battered him, wrenched at him, choked him, until my own breath went from me and I had to pause.

For a few seconds we held each other powerless, gasping for new air and strength. Monkeys bit at me, but not so many as before. Something had knocked most of them off me. Kicking one away, I caught a glimpse of the others. They were swarming on Pedro.

It was he who had struck most of my monkey foes from my body. And nearly all of those still able to fight had turned on him. Now he was battling them with fists and feet. He met some leaping in air with fierce blows that knocked them spinning. He kicked others in their bellies so hard that they rolled end over end and lay yelping. He grasped those which ran up his back or tore at his groin, and hurled them against the walls. But they wounded him. Blood gushed from his bitten body, and his set face showed pain.

All this I caught in one fast look. Then I threw myself all the harder at Scarlet Face. But I was a breath too slow. He moved just before I did. And he got me.

One hand gripped the back of my neck, the other my jaw, both clenching so hard that I was almost paralyzed. My head went back—back—back. I felt my spine grate and crackle. Agony streaked down my back. I knew I was doomed . . .

A jarring blow nearly broke my neck, but saved me. Pedro had thrown off the monkey horde and hurled himself at Scarlet Face. His shoulder, hitting the arm which was forcing back my jaw, knocked my head sidewise with a snap that almost cracked my backbone. But it also broke the awful hold of my killer. The next second I was free; half dead, unable to move fast for a minute, but out of the clutch which had nearly destroyed me.

I fell over, shielding eyes and throat with my arms from some vicious *uakarís* which had rushed

on me again. I got my breath, moved my head, tore a monkey off my neck and scrambled up. And then I saw an amazing thing.

Scarlet Face was quitting the fight.

As suddenly as he had attacked us, he was escaping from us. He had heaved Pedro aside—though not before Pedro had damaged him more than a little—and now he was up and running. His mad courage had failed.

He had been brave enough, and cunning enough, to steal in and tie us while we slept. He had been fearless enough, and furious enough, to assail both of us when we were again free. He had been courageous enough to fight me hand to hand on the floor. He was strong enough, perhaps, to conquer the two of us if he continued to fight with the same power. But when he attacked us he was mad with rage, and held a machete, and was backed by a big gang of his "brothers," while we were without weapons. And when he fought me alone he believed himself, rightly enough, to be my superior in strength. He thought, too, that his *uakari* band could conquer Pedro and help him to overcome me.

He could fight terribly while he felt that he was winning. But the unexpected assault of Pedro shocked him into fear, and the moment he felt doubt of victory he was done. His courage was monkey courage. And now, like any monkey, he fled from what he thought to be a losing combat.

Before I was fully on my feet he was leaping for the door. A hoarse sound of alarm came from him. Then he was outside and gone.



WE BOUNDED after him. We stumbled over *uakarís*, nearly fell, but knocked them aside and went on. They were not fighting us any longer. They were scrambling after their big brother, and bawled in a scared way as we kicked them. But they slowed us for a few seconds. When we emerged Scarlet Face had disappeared.

Bushes across the street still were quivering, though, so we knew which way he had gone. At top speed we ran after him. Behind the opposite house was a faint path leading off into the woods. Along it we dashed, Pedro ahead; his legs were longer and faster than mine. We went for some distance. Then my partner stopped, pointing.

Twenty feet up a strong vine which hung from a tall tree, Scarlet Face was climbing. He went up with the marvelous speed of a scared monkey, lifting himself without jerks, seeming to run straight into the heights. While we stood there, watching, he reached a broad branch, at least fifty feet above the ground. He swung himself up on it as nimbly as any *uakari*. And there he squatted and cursed us.

He howled and squalled and barked and chattered. He spoke no human words; or, if he did, we did not recognize them. But his tones and actions left no doubt that he was calling us the filthiest names known to men or monkeys. And he kept motioning down at the vine, daring us to try to climb it and fight him again up there. Yet, as he did so, he dripped blood down to the earth.

"Monkey bravado," said Pedro, hard voiced. "A gun will change his tune. Go get one. I'll watch him."

I turned to do so. I was hot enough to shoot that creature a hundred times and to damn him with every shot. But after a few steps I slowed and thought, and came back.

"No," I refused. "That would only prove him right. It would prove that we are not good enough to climb to him, and so we must use rifles. And would he wait there for me to come back with the gun? Not he!"

For a minute Pedro made no answer. Scarlet Face yelled louder and made the most insulting motions; monkey motions too vile for me to show you, senhor. We gave him no reply, by word or action. We were not monkeys.

Soon Pedro turned back to me and the path.

"You are right," he admitted. "He would not be here when you returned. And it is unnecessary. His brothers will take care of him. So let us go."



WE WENT. I knew what he meant. It is the way of all monkeys—and of many men—to follow a leader as long as he is strongest among them, but to turn on him and destroy him when he weakens. Now that Scarlet Face had called the *uakarís* to a fight, caused them pain and injury and death, and finally fled from the battle he had started—No, he would not last much longer.

We limped back to the old village, beginning now to feel our hurts. Scarlet Face screeched after us; then suddenly was still. Perhaps he had spied a tree snake sneaking toward him, or seen or heard some other thing that hushed him. At any rate, we heard him no more.

Back at the house we found no life. Scattered about the dirt floor were five *uakarís* killed by Pedro in fight. A sixth, the one he had shot, lay where Scarlet Face had dropped it. Others, crippled or un hurt, had gotten away into the surrounding bush.

After a gaze around us we looked at each other. Both of us were almost naked and bloodied from head to foot by bites and clawings. Our necks and wrists and ankles were raw from the chafing of our bonds. But neither of us had any serious injury. By

that I mean, of course, the kind of injury which would be called serious by us bush men. Town people, hurt as we were, might spend two weeks in bed.

Pedro grinned, looking very droll, with half his face clawed off.

"You need a bath," he said.

"A good wash would not do you any harm either," I retorted.

And for the time we said no more.

I hobbled over and examined our guns, finding them just as we had last seen them; picked up the machetes and took down our hammocks. From time to time I looked at the door, but found nothing there. I knew well enough that nothing would be there, for monkey bravery, once broken, stays broken as long as the same danger is near. But I took no chances. I never let myself be caught twice in the same place.

Pedro also walked about the house, but with a different thought. He was looking for something inside, not outside; something not of the present but of the past. Here and there he tapped on the walls with his knuckles, listening for a hollow sound. None answered. If Scarlet Face had another hiding place than the one under the doorsill, it was not to be found without long search. And so any records that could show who he was—or had been—remained hidden.



A LONG time afterward, when we told this tale on the Amazon, we heard another tale in turn. Years before that time, men said, a foreigner with a red face had come up the Great River from the sea and lived for a time at Fonte Boa, which is about twenty leagues below the mouth of the Jutahy. He studied animals and birds and snakes and butterflies. And he was most interested in monkeys. And when he learned of the rare *uakari* monkey which looked like himself he could think of nothing else. And after a time somebody told him about an old abandoned village far up the Jutahy where *uakarís* were said to be living. And soon afterward he went away in a canoe, toward the Jutahy, with some Indian boatmen. Neither he nor any of his paddlers, nor even the canoe, was ever seen again. So the men of Fonte Boa thought they must be dead from fever or savages or some other common danger, and thereafter forgot them.

That was all that was known. And to this day nobody knows more. Why his men forsook him, what became of them and their boat, only the dark forest can tell. It is clear enough that they carried him to the old town. But what came about after that is a secret of the jungle.

And to us two, there in the house of Scarlet Face that morning, even that much was unknown. Yet Pedro guessed very close to the truth. After going all around the room he squatted at the doorsill, pulled the book of monkey pictures from its niche, looked at it again, and put it back. Then he stood and gazed at the dim bush.

"Man," he said, "is not made to live alone."

"True," I agreed.

"And the minds of monkeys are not those of men, and never can be."

"Right again," said I.

"And so when a man lives alone among monkeys there is only one end to the companionship. Their minds cannot rise to his. So his must sink to theirs. His body can learn to go up among the branches with them. But as his body goes up his brain goes down."

I made no answer to that. I thought it over. I was still thinking when he added:

"And that is the story of Scarlet Face. And now let us leave him to finish his life among his brothers."

I nodded. He turned back, took his weapons and hammock and paddle, and went lamely out. I followed.

Going, I paused a second to look at the newly killed meat lying about the floor. Then I shook my head. In past years I had eaten many a monkey and enjoyed its taste. But now I did not feel that I could stomach any of those red faced brutes. So I left them there and went my way.

We limped down the silent street to our canoe. We bailed out several inches of rain water, took our

usual places and shoved off. Out of the curving cove we paddled, giving no look behind. And from behind came no sound of life; no sound at all, except the slow drip of wet from high leaves. The dead town and the things of the dead night were gone from our lives forever.

A mile or more down the Jutahy we landed on a bare point. There we bathed, and patched up our worst hurts with certain leaves which we crushed and bound on with bush cord. After that we breakfasted on our usual travel food, *farinha* and dried *pirarucu* fish. And then Pedro, smoking a cigaret, looked down the muddy river.

The low clouds had lifted high and, in spots, grown thin. Now, as on yesterday, the sun bored through them for a few seconds, a long finger against the gray. Where its tip rested we did not know, for the beam was miles off. But Pedro smiled.

"The bright finger beckons again, Lourenço," he said, tossing aside his roll of *tabari* bark and tobacco. "Let us go and see what it will point out this time."

And so, though hardly able to grasp our paddles, we went. And so we said *adeos* to all *uakarís*. From that time until yesterday I have never seen another of them.

And now, senhor, if I could borrow a cigarro, and perhaps a drink of your good rum . . . I am not so young as I was in those days, and the dampness gets into my bones . . .

Thank you, senhor. *Saude!* Your health!