

THE WILD MAN

A short English tale

One early Springtide day not long ago I took my tivering wares and drove to the nearby mere, that it thew for a good antimber for another craftwork to eke to my hoard. I had always liked that little-known, rowny mere, which seemed like it lay in its own World, umgone by thick, green-leaved tree boughs on all sides, soaking it in shadow with a few little openings for the Sun to shine through, if the time of day and Yeartide were right, and if it were not too cloudy at that braid. I had sometimes gone for nesh little midday-meals there with my wife, and even once went fishing there with a few of my friends, but when the beknowing struck me that I could brook that landshape for tivering timber – when everything else I had tivered theretofore had been a swith boring landshape, or one downlettingly flawed and beset with the evils of the Borough and of mankind's fortreading on the Kindly World, that the fairness of that tivering lay not in the true look of what it tokened, for that was unlite, but in how I chose to throughbear that look by my own eyes onto the hempcloth, and make it with my own will into something fair – I couldn't forbear yelling to my wife giddily, and with a little gost of madness in me, that "I found it! I got it! I know sheerly what I'm going to tiver now!" And it thrilled her too, when I retched her my thank.

So I set up my easel by the shady bank, and laid the hempcloth on it, and got out my tivers and my brust. It was swith cool, but the wind was light and the lift dry, which I was unwont to, since much of the time in that Rich the lift was too damp to be likesome. It was still the morning, and the Sun rose markedly higher among the treeboughs every time I looked.

Before I began, I chose how much of my field of sight I wished the tivering to span. If you're tivering a landshape live, you must do this, since you're throughbearing a deal of the thrimeted rimth that byes all about you onto a twi-meted, flat hempcloth. This needs some keenness to do overwinningly. And this is something that is oft overlooked, as if it were truly all that onefold to bear something from one meting to a lesser meting, when it is not. The World overlooks many things, and this is but one of them. I always fand to keep watch over these forgotten and forsaken things, as it gives me a great feeling of eest to know that in these little ways, I have bested the whole World and its work to underdelve what's in sheer sight; and for the grounds that, the more I think, think freely, even when that path of thought has long been forlorn and reckoned empty and idle, the freer I as a whole become.

I chose a field about fifty kirves of a bow to tiver, that inheld where the Sun bode in its left fourth. The trees framed a wall before me, behind which I could only guess what lay, and the lake was as still as ice, about the hue of Americkish Allow leaves, and a little murky. The rich, deep brown turf all about me was somewhat damp, as ever, and the only shrubs in sight were in the littlest thicket to my left, by some more tall trees and the dirt road whence I came. They were out of the my likeness's field, however, though I wished to tiver them.

Startling me a little, a slightly fat man in his underwear came forth out of the trees, about a hundred yards away from me on my ilk side of the mere, bearing a bunch of dim-hued clothes thereto to wash them. The whole time I saw him, he looked more frightened of me than I was of

him that half-braid he startled me. He was keeping wary of me. I kept tivering, doing the background first. I wondered whether I should give him an atewing in the tivering, but I quickly chose against it. Nevertheless, it was hard to stop looking over at him, who bore a rather uncanny look on his leer, as you can liche for yourself if you hold your brows starkly to your upper eyelids, as a laughtercrafter might stare in dread at a cockroach on the beed, and you tightly open your mouth into the shape of an evenshanked threeside and keep your chavel as wide as it can be. And he never dropped it.

Come to think of it, nearly the whole time he was there, he was looking at me. After about two sixtybraids, he was done washing and ran off once more into the thick trees with his now-wet clothes.

I let my tiverbrust on the easel's rest and ran off after him. I had to know what was up, and why he was so wary of me, and what he was doing.

I ran at my fullest might into the same deal of the trees where he went, and had a little hardship running without hitting any of the trees, but I had a feeling for whither I was going, and soon I saw a little hut wrought of sticks amid a leigh to my left. I couldn't see the man.

I durstn't go any nearer to the hut, beginning to grow swith frightened. Standing there not so long, I went about and walked softly but swiftly back into the open lift by the mere, and ran back to my easel and wain.

Wreatly, the tiverbrust wasn't anymore on the easel's rest. I looked about for a short while, but then put away my timbers in the wain, as I was thoroughly crept out by that man, leaving me in no hoad fitting to do a craftwork, and I started the wain and left home, in such a hurry that I forsook the brust. I settled that I would eftcome to the mere the next morning to tiver the leftover layers of that likeness.

Later, in evenmeal mooting with my wife that night about the day (I had told her earlier what had befallen at the mere), she put forth that, since I told her my tiverbrust was missing when I came back to the easel, as told earlier, the wild man had stolen it. I said I thought that were unmightly, as the man had run in the wholly witherward bearing from where the brust and I were. But she said that since I saw him not when I went into the woods, he might have went about and nummen it while I was away; it oughtn't take much time to do that, she said.

"So you think that man was pleely?" I asked, beginning to be worried about going back to the mere again.

"I mean I only know what you told me about him, but by that, yes, it's swith mightly that he could be. Also, all I'm becalling him of is stealing your brust, but I would redely beware him."

Now, as I have better brookings of my time than to tell ordless tales like the happenings of that day, I wouldn't bother; only, later, what I believe was two in the morning, the smoke warner went off and my wife and I awoke startled and then wholly frightened. Opening the door to our bedroom, we saw that at the other end of the hall was a fire burning.

At once we called the Fire Board, and in a few sixtybraids they got to us and soon it was quelled, and not too much harm was wrought on the house, thankfully.

The firemen said the fire had seemingly started by the foredoor. I asked them *how* it started, but all of their retchings were too far-fetched for us to believe, such as that "Maybe there was a mist leak owing to broken piping."

I yet wonder if that fire had something to do with the wild man that I had met sixteen stounds earlier.