

## A SAMPLE FROM NORTH OF RAGE

At the first mauve streak of day, high above in the heavens, appeared the marauder. On the ledge, in front of his den, sat the crafty fox. By the aid of his glasses, Paul could see that both were intently watching each other. Eagerly, Paul awaited the beginning of the drama he knew was sure to come. For a long time the condor circled with its motionless wings, now and then volplaning in a lightning swoop. Down, down, the great bird would drop, until within a hundred feet of the ledge, then, suddenly, he would shoot upward, rising again to an immense height - gyration upon gyration - soaring and wheeling through space in an apparent effortless ecstasy of motion.

The monarch of the air was playing with this lowly beast of the earth; testing the fox's nerve, as it were. Apparently, there was no terror within the heart of the little furry body that stood so boldly out upon the ledge. Only once did Renegade flatten himself, and that was, from all appearance, an involuntary movement, more from instinct than from fear. The red hunter was bidding defiance to his enemy. He was a living picture of savage cunning as he stood his ground, fangs bared, ears

flattened, his long black feelers bristling - a fierce grin on his face.

Then, suddenly, in the swoop of doom, the killer came down for his prey! Instantly, the muscles of the fox tightened. A quiver, scarcely perceptible, surged through the slender, sinewy body of the little hunter. Like a flash, Renegade vanished from the ledge, just as the terrible talons reached for him. He dashed, a red phantom, along the deer trail, down into the canyon below.

A buffeting of the mighty wings followed, and the condor checked its fall. It flapped once, arose, veered, and swooped again. The bird was too late. The nimble fox melted into a tangle of wild cucumber vines. Once more the plucky old fox swept along the trail; always moving down to the floor of the gorge. Nearer and nearer he approached his goal, the great boulder. Swoop upon swoop, the condor reached for him - but was always that fraction of a second too late.

The heart of the naturalist was thrilled by the scene enacted before him; a bit of animal strategy which he knew he could never hope to witness again. Slipping from rocky prominence to thicket, a red and white flash flitting over the earth like a shadow,

the fox reached the bottom of the canyon unharmed. Hidden beneath a dense brake of ferns, pausing for a rest, seething with rage, he barked up in savage vindictiveness at the winged killer. Bark upon bark he uttered; and so quickly that the sounds fairly rolled from his throat.

It was his battle-cry, and the plucky old fox set his muscles for the final dash - the trump card of his ruse. Between the bed of ferns - where Renegade crouched in concealment - and the protective shrubbery at the base of the boulder - lay an open space, probably two hundred feet across. This, the fox would be forced to negotiate, in order to complete his stratagem. Could he cover the distance in safety before the condor would be upon him? Paul asked himself. It appeared doubtful.

Apparently, the great bird thought that the fox might move out into the clearing. For that reason, he did not rise far above the earth, but kept wheeling in narrow circles just over his prey. Now and then, with his long, bare neck fully extended, his legs crooked, and his stubby talons hanging down like hooks, he would come to a pause a few feet above the ferns - hissing and snorting his death-cry.

Craftily, Renegade awaited his opportunity. His enemy was about to place himself in the position for which the red strategist had been waiting. Time after time, the condor skimmed above the fox, and, with each circle, nearer he came to the earth. Then the killer's talons touched the fern tops just above the little animal's head. Like a streak of light, and hugging the ground so closely that his back was scarcely perceptible above the grass, Renegade raced into the open.

The condor had seriously blundered, in that he was facing in the opposite direction from the boulder, as he swept down. He also had ventured too near the earth. Before the great bird could rise and circle for another dive, the little strategist was half-way across the clearing. With one flap of its mighty wings, the condor shot a hundred feet into the air, and, as he mounted, he veered, circled, then dived in a long, graceful slant - his legs hanging beneath him, his claws reaching, opening and closing like grappling irons.

It happened in an instant. The boy - the lone and silent witness - caught his breath in a gasp. There came a whir of buffeting wings, a terrible hiss, and the hooks of the bird's right leg caught the fleeing animal in his back just above the hips, and raised

him from the earth. With a rasp of pain and rage - clicking his fangs together furiously - Renegade writhed violently as he rose; finally hurling himself free of the grip.



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