



sinew, except for the leader which was a yard of monofilament. He showed it to the dog. "Look at this, will you. And this." The hook was made of stainless steel and baited with a quarter trout. "Dolly Varden." He dropped the line back into the hole, changed his mind, and pulled it up again. "Don't you dare tell anyone," he said as he removed the bait, bit off a mouthful, and tossed the remainder to the dog.

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The fisherman's trail weaved among snow-choked hills. When darkness fell, the old man let the dog lead the way. The smell of woodsmoke told him they were near. The hut was built of poles and caribou skins and heaped with earth. A wannigan of arched snow blocks served as entrance. The old man stashed the sled behind a pair of birch trees not far from this entrance and unharnessed the dog. He fastened his parka and hood and sat on the sled. The dog curled up at his feet. After an hour or so, the moon came out and revealed the yard in pale light. There were drying racks and two small outbuildings. There was a food cache slung between two giant white spruce. There was a woodpile and chopping block. Two pairs of skis leaned against the wannigan. Every now and then a voice or laugh could be heard from inside the hut. "That means he's not alone," said the old man. He led the dog on a tour around the hut. There were no tracks behind it and, as best as he could tell, no back door. There was no dog yard or sign of dog. One of the outbuildings had a door with leather hinges. Inside were old tools: a shovel, a scythe, axes, a bow saw, and more. There were coils of rope, piles of caribou hide, and a crate of metal scraps. "Clearly, he's a man of wealth and industry," said the old man. "But who invited him? I didn't. Did you?" He eased the door shut. "He's got to go, I think. At least that's my take on the situation. What does the dog say to that? The dog says it's that whole resource management thing all over again."

Someone came out of the hut, a woman leading a child by the hand. The old man and dog stood still and watched as she helped the child pee in the snow next to the wannigan. The woman laughed. She sent the child back into the hut, then squatted in the same spot, peed quickly and hurried back inside. "Did you see that?" said the old man. "A family. Did you see it? What a tragedy. What a shame." He went back to the sled and pulled a carbine from under the cover. "We don't have many rounds left. I was saving them for something big we could eat." He pulled off his hood and overmitts. He cracked his knuckles. "Then again, maybe we should sleep on it. What does the dog say?"

The dog's ears went erect, and she snuffled the air. "What is it?" said the old man. Then he smelled it too, a new odor mixed with the woodsmoke.

"Jesus," he cried, "cod skin on a hot griddle, getting all crisp and wonderful." He sat down on the sled. "Yes, and long, fat slabs of cod liver just dripping with oil. Dripping big greasy drops of oil." He stood

up. "I've made up my mind." He returned the carbine to the sled and reached for the game sack.

The old man stood in front of the wannigan. "Hello, the house," he shouted. When there was no reply, he shouted again, "Hello, the house." Then he heard a click next to him. The fisherman was aiming a pistol at his head from ten paces. The dog growled. "Now she growls," said the old

man. To the fisherman he said, "Where'd you pop up from?"

The fisherman said, "Put your hands where I can see them."

"Glad to oblige." The old man spread his arms out. In each hand he held a

snowshoe hare. "I make damn good company," he said. "What do you say to that?"

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