**CHAPTER 28x : The Hunter Hunted**

Mr. Heelas, Mr. Kemp's nearhaun neebor amang the hame ainers, wis asleep in his simmer hoose fin the siege o Kemp's hoose stertit. Mr. Heelas wis ane o the sturdy fyew fa didnae believe "in aa thon styte" aboot an Inveesible Cheil. His wife, hoosaeiver, as he wis eftir tae be remindit, did. He set aboot waukin roon his gairden jist as if naethin wis the maitter, an he gaed tae sleep in the efterneen as he’d daen fur years. He slept throwe the smashin o the windaes, an syne waukened up o a suddenty wi a fey idea o somethin agley. He luikit ower at Kemp's hoose, rubbit his een an luikit again. Syne he pit his feet tae the grun, an sat lippenin. He said he wis damned, bit still the fey ferlie wis veesible. The hoose luikit as tho it hid bin teem fur wikks--efter a coorse melee. Ilkie windae wis brukken, an ilkie windae, barr thon o the belvedere study, wis blinned bi the inbye shutters.

"I could hae swore it wis aa richt"--he luikit at his watch--"twinty meenits syne."

He becam awaur o a meisured concussion an the brakk o glaiss, far awa in the hynie aff. An syne, as he cockit gap-moued, cam a far mair winnerfu ferlie. The shutters o the drawin-chaumer windae wir haived ajee forcie, an the hoosemaid in her ootdoor bunnet an claes, seemed tae be warsslin in a pouerfu mainner tae rug up the sash. O a suddenty a cheil appeared aside her, helpin her--Dr. Kemp! In anither meenit the windae wis ajee, an the hoosemaid wis warsslin oot; she cowpit forrit an vanished amang the busses. Mr. Heelas stude up, spikkin oot wi smeddum an winnerment at aa thon unca ferlies. He saw Kemp staun on the sill, lowp frae the windae, an reappear near richt aff rinnin alang a pathie in the busses an booin ower as he ran, like a cheil fa jinks bein seen. He vanished ahin a laburnum, an appeared again sclimmin ower a palin that boundit on the open lea. In a secunt he’d tummlit ower an wis rinnin at a byordnar rate doon the

brae tae Mr. Heelas.

"Loshtie!" skreiched Mr. Heelas, strukk wi a notion; "it's thon Inveesible Cheil breet! It's richt, efter aa!"

Wi Mr. Heelas tae think things like thon wis tae act, an his cook watchin him frae the tap windae wis bumbazed tae see him cam breengin tae the hoose at a guid nine miles an oor. There wis a slammin o yetts, a ringin o bells, an the voyce o Mr. Heelas skellochin like a bull. "Steek the yetts, steek the windaes, steek aathin!--the Inveesible Cheil’s camin!" Straicht aff the hoose wis fu o skirls an orders, an rinnin feet. He ran himsel tae steek the French windaes that opened ontae the sit ooterie; as he did sae Kemp's heid an shouders an knee appeared ower the tap o the gairden palin. In anither meenit Kemp hid plooed throwe the asparagus, an wis rinnin ower the tennis lawn tae the hoose.

"Ye canna cam in," quo Mr. Heelas, steekin the bolts. "I'm verra sorry gin he's efter ye, bit ye canna cam in!"

Kemp appeared wi a face o unca fleg teetle the glaiss, rappin an syne shakkin forcie at the French windae. Syne, seein his warssles wir eeseless, he hashed alang the sit ooterie, lowpit the eyn, an gaed tae haimmer at the side yett. Syne he ran roon bi the side yett tae the front o the hoose, an sae intae the knowe-road. An Mr. Heelas glowerin frae his windae--a face o grue--hid scarce seen Kemp vanish, afore the asparagus wis bein trampit this wey an thon bi feet unseen. At thon Mr. Heelas fled faist upstairs, an the lave o the chase is ayont

his ken. Bit as he passed the staircase windae, he heard the side yett clap tee.

Camin oot intae the knowe-road, Kemp natural-like tuik the doonwird wey, an sae it wis he cam tae rin his ain sel the verra race he’d watched wi sic a gleg ee frae the belvedere study anely fower days syne. He ran it weel, fur a cheil ooto trainin, an tho his face wis fite an weet, his harns wir cweel tae the last. He ran wi braid strides, an finever a swatch o roch grun raise up, finever there cam a daud o raw stanes, or a bittick o brukken glaiss glentit sheenin, he crossed it an left the nyaakit inveesible feet that follaed tae takk fit we they wid.

Fur the first time in his life Kemp fand oot that the knowe-road wis unspikkably vast an lanely, an that the stert o the toon hyne doonbye at the knowe fit wir unca far. Niver hid there bin a slawer or mair painfu wey o gaun forrit than rinnin. Aa the shargeret hooses, dwaumin in the efterneen sun, luikit steekit an snibbit; nae doot they wir steekit an snibbit—bi his ain orders. Bit onywey they micht hae keepit a lookout fur a happenin like this! The toon wis risin up noo, the sea hid drappit ooto sicht ahin it, an fowk doonbye wir steerin. A tram wis jist camin in at the knowe fit. Ayont thon wis the polis station. Wis thon fitsteps he heard ahin him? Breenge.

The fowk aneth wir glowerin at him, ane or twa wir rinnin, an his braith wis stertin tae hurt in his thrapple. The tram wis rale near noo, an the "Blythe Cricketers" wis loodly snibbin its yetts. Ayont the tram wir stakes an howpies o graivel--the drainage wirks. He’d a flichterin idea o lowpin intae the tram an haivin tee the yetts, an syne he set on gaun fur the polis station. In anither meenit he’d passed the yett o the "Blythe Cricketers," an wis in the hett dowp eyn o the street, wi fowk aboot him. The tram driver an his helper—stoppit bi the sicht o his roosed hash--stude glowerin wi the tram shelts lowsed. Farrer on the dumfounert faces o navvies raise up abune the howpies o graivel. His speed a thochtie, an syne he heard the faist fitstep o his hunter, an lowped forrit again. "The Inveesible Cheil!" he skreiched tae the navvies, wi an unclear pyntin wyve, an bi a brainwyve lowpit the hole an pit a strangg boorich atween him an the chase. Syne, daein awa wi the idea o the polis station he turned intae a wee side street, breenged bye a greengrocer's cairt, dauchlit fur the tenth o a secunt at the yett o a sweetie shoppie, an syne ran fur the moo o a lane that ran back intae the main Hill Street again. Twa or three wee bairns wir playin here, an skreiched an skittered at the sicht o him, an efter yetts an windaes lowsed an vrocht up mithers shawed their hairts. Oot he breenged intae Hill Street again, three hunner yarids frae the tram-line eyn, an richt aff he becam awaur o a wud skirlin an rinnin fowk. He teetit up the street tae the knowe. Scarce a dizzen yairds aff ran a muckle navvy, bannin betimes an slashing veecious wi a spad, an hard ahin him cam the tram conductor wi his neives knottit. Up the street ithers follaed thon twa, strikkin an skirlin. Doon tae the toon, cheils an weemen wir rinnin, an he spied clear ae cheil camin ooto a shoppie-yett wi a stick in his haun. "Spreid oot! Spreid oot!" cried a cheil. Kemp o suddenty unnerstude the cheenged maitter o the chase. He stoppit, an luikit roon, pechin. "He's near here!" he skreiched. "Form a line ben--"

He wis hit hard aneth the lug, an gaed birlin, ettlin tae face roon tae his unseen fae. He jist managed tae keep his feet, an he strukk an eeseless coonter in the air. Syne he wis chappit again aneth the jaw, an sprachled heidlang on the grun. In anither meenit a knee trampit his stammache, an a pair o keen hauns grippit his thrapple, bit the grip o ane wis mair dweeble than the ither; he grippit the wrists, heard a skreich o pain frae his fae, an syne the spad o the navvy cam furlin throwe the air abune him, an strukk somethin wi a smored dunt. He felt a drap o moisture on his face. The grip at his thrapple sae o a suddenty lowsed, an wi a forcie tyauve, Kemp lowsed himsel, grippit a fooshunless shouder, an rowed uppermaist. He grippit the unseen elbucks near the grun. "I've got him!" skreiched Kemp. "Help! Help--haud! He's doon! Haud his feet!"

In anither secunt there wis a jynt breenge upon the warssle, an a fremmit cheil camin intae the road o a suddenty micht hae thocht a byordnar coorse gemme o Rugby fitbaa wison-gaun. An there wis nae skirlin efter Kemp's skreich--anely a soun o skelps an feet an heivy braithing. Syne cam a michty tyauve, an the Inveesible Cheil haived aff twa o his faes an raise tae his knees. Kemp grippit him tae him in front like a dug tae a stag, an a dizzen hauns grippit, clutched, an ruggit at the Unseen. The tram conductor o a suddenty got the thrapple an shouders an pued him back.

Doon gaed the boorich o warsslin cheil again an rowed ower. There wis, I’m sorry tae say, some coorse kickin. Syne o a suddenty a wud skirl o"Mercy! Mercy!" that died doon faist tae a soun like smorin.

"Get back, ye gypes!" skreiched the smored voyce o Kemp, an there wis a forcie pushin back o sturdy cheils. "He's skaithed, I tell ye. Staun back!"

There wis a wee warssle tae clear a space, an syne the cercle o keen faces saw the doctor kneelin, it luikit like, fifteen inches in the air, an haudin inveesible airms tae the grun. Ahin him a polis cheil grippit inveesible cwuits.

"Dinna ye lat gae o him," roared the muckle navvy, haudin a bluid-merked spad; "he's makkin-on."

"He's nae makkin-on," quo the doctor, cannily raisin his knee, "an I'll haud him." His face wis hurtit an already gaun reid; he spakk thick because o a bleedin moo. He lat gae ae haun an luikit tae be finnin at the face. "The moo's aa weet," he carried on. An syne, "Guid God!"

He stude up faist an syne knelt doon on the grun bi the side o the unseen ferlie. There wis a pushin an shauchlin, a soun o wechty feet as mair fowk turned up tae makk mair the wecht o the boorich. Fowk noo wir camin oot o the hooses. The yetts o the "Blythe Cricketers" stude o a suddenty wide ajee. Verra little wis spukken.

Kemp felt aboot, his hun seemin tae pass ben teem air. "He's nae breathin," quo he, an syne, "I canna finn his hairt. His side--fyauch!"

O a suddenty an auld cailleach, keekin aneth the airm o the muckle navvy, skirled sherply. "Luik thonner!" she telt them, an powked oot a wrunkled finger.

An luikin far she pyntit, aabody saw, feint an see-throwe as gin it wis vrocht o glaiss, sae that veins an arteries an banes an nerves could be made oot, the ootlin o a haun, a haun fooshunless an hingin. It grew cloudy an see-throwe even as they glowered.

"Weel, weel!" cried the polis cheil. "Here's his feet shawin!"

An sae, slawly, stertin at his hauns an feet an creepin alang his limbs tae the necessar intimmers o his body, thon fey cheenge cairriet on. It wis like the slaw spreidin o a pyson. First cam the wee fite nerves, a foggy grey sketch o a limb, syne the glaissy banes an fankle o arteries, syne the flesh an skin, first

a feint haar, an syne growin faist thick an cloudy. Sune they could see his brukken breist an his shouders, an the dweeble ootlin o his weariet an blootered face.

Fin at last the boorich stude back fur Kemp tae staun up, there lay, nyaakit an peetifu on the grun, the hurtit an brukken corp o a young cheil aboot thirty. His hair an broo wir fite--nae grey wi age, bit fite wi the fiteness o albinism--an his een wir like reid gems. His hauns wir grippit, his een gapit wide, an his luik wis ane o roose an wae.

"Hap his face!" quo a cheil. "Fur God's sake, hap thon face!" an three wee bairns, breengin forrit throwe the boorich, wir o a suddenty birled roon an sent awa again.

Somebody brocht a sheet frae the "Jolly Cricketers," an haein happit him, they cairried him intae that hoose. An there it wis, on a threidbare bed in a skyrie, ill-lichtit bed chaumer, cercled bi a boorich o gypit an vrocht up fowk, brukken an hurtit, betrayed an unpiteed, that Griffin, the first o aa cheils tae makk himsel inveesible, Griffin, the maist skeelie pheesicist the warld his iver seen, eyndit in bounless mishanter his fey an awfu darg.