

## THE BEAUTIFUL BAD GIRL AND THE SHADOW.

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THE Beautiful Bad Girl lived at the village of A Hundred Huts, but lest her name should prove misleading it is but right to state that in the opinion of her friends and relations she was more beautiful than bad. The Shadow, a handsome young chief of a powerful neighbouring tribe, was the first to fall in love with her—which was quite a natural and pleasing thing for a man to do—and yet the courting was suddenly broken off through The Beautiful Bad Girl running away to a pa named Rocky Shore, fifty miles away, where she threw herself into the arms of Eight Freckles, a chief who also had made proposals of marriage to her.

No one would expect much of a man with such a name, but whatever her expectations were The Beautiful Bad Girl was woefully disappointed, for Eight Freckles turned out to be an eater of the dearest of her relations. It happened thus: After a fight in which his taua was victorious, Eight Freckles instituted a cannibal orgie; and in his ferocity he slew and dragged to the ovens his wife's younger brother, who had ill-advisedly taken up arms against his brother-in-law and had been made prisoner. It was natural that after this the heart of The Beautiful Bad Girl should revolt from so horrible a husband.

She had been the wife of Eight Freckles a full year and had borne a son whom she had named Te Naue, when, having thus lost her conjugal happiness, her thoughts turned again to The Shadow.

This dark, mysterious person was a tohunga as

well as a chief; that is to say, he was as deeply versed in spells and devilments as he was in diplomacy and war. Whether he divined her change of heart, or whether The Beautiful Bad Girl, in keeping with her name, gave him his cue, will never be explained; but to the pa of Rocky Shore The Shadow came, and brought all his witchcrafts with him.

Etiquette demanded an elaborate reception, and this Eight Freckles gave. A great feast was prepared in The Shadow's honour, and in the korero which followed he was given the freedom of Rocky Shore, to which were attached privileges unspecified but well understood, and beside which those bestowed with the freedom of the City of London would seem insipid.

The Shadow enjoyed himself to the full. Everything that a Maori could wish was his for the asking, and, to crown all, his reputation for witchcraft and devilment reached an unparalleled height. To win that sort of fame was the Maori's deepest joy, and yet in The Shadow's cup there was room for more delight. He coveted the wife of his friend Eight Freckles.

When the Pakeha breaks the Tenth Commandment he follow methods which appear tame beside those of a tohunga. The Shadow pursued a course peculiar to himself. It was quite original.

First he went in for what priests of another cult call a "retreat." He had a hut built outside the pa, and there, speaking to no one, not even to the wahine who brought him his food, he lived a solitary, celibate life for a fortnight. Next he returned to the pa and lived in complete communion with Eight Freckles. The two chiefs talked together by the hour, as Maoris love to do.

The avowed object of The Shadow's mission to Rocky Shore was to effect an offensive and defensive alliance, and with many words the chiefs thrashed out the terms of the treaty, prior to submitting it to their respective tribes. There were fishing-rights and land-rights involved, old feuds to settle, bygone reprisals to explain away, half-forgotten genealogies to be un-

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ravelled, and imaginary intertribal marriages to be invented. This necessitated days of talk. The people, getting wind of the great business which was going forward, became acutely interested in the chiefs' discussions, and developed an inquisitiveness which soon proved inconvenient to the two great men; for the walls of a wharepuni afford eavesdroppers a golden opportunity to gratify their ruling passion. So Eight Freckles and The Shadow took to sitting under a magnificent pohutukawa tree, which spread its blossoming branches in the centre of the village. But there they were open to constant disturbance from romping children, and were put out of countenance by the groups of silent, serious people who constantly sat over against them, watching, listening, almost threatening.

"Let us go down to the beach," said The Shadow, "where we can talk in peace and without being overheard."

So to the shore the arbiters of the tribal fates adjourned, and, sitting beneath the rocky cliff, they deliberated without further interruption.

The sands ran down towards ridges of furrowed rocks, behind which the beating, incoming tides of many years had piled them; beyond the rocks the water deepened suddenly, and the ocean stretched unbroken to the horizon. Along the shore, in the immediate front of the pa, was a gap in the reefs, through which the tribe's canoes could put to sea without danger, in almost any weather.

"We shall be a strong tribe when we are united," said Eight Freckles. "First we will fight Ngati-Toa and then Ngati-Raukawa, and our fame will spread through the whole country. Nothing will be able to withstand us. You and I will be the greatest fighting-men in the three islands!"

"Ngati-Toa have fine fishing-grounds. Those will be ours," said The Shadow. "Ngati-Raukawa possess rich plantations and forests full of fruit trees, on which in summer thousands of pigeons feed. All those will be ours: we shall be able to grow tons of sweet potatoes

and have potted pigeons all the year round."

"Of our prisoners we will make slaves who will do all our work for us," said Eight Freckles; "and all the tribes, hearing of our great supplies of food, will visit us, and we shall increase in numbers as well as in riches."

"We shall be the greatest of great chiefs," said The Shadow. But just at this point of the conversation his head began to itch, and he scratched his scalp violently. "I think," said he, "that I have got too many kutu. Relieve me of them, my dear Eight Freckles."

Eight Freckles took the priest's head between his hands, and acted the part of a friend and a brother. "I think I have the kutu too," he said, when he had performed his kind offices.

"Let me assist you in the same way then," suggested The Shadow.

So Eight Freckles put his head on the priest's knee, and the work of brotherly love continued.

"I think you have them badly," said The Shadow. "I'm afraid it will take a long time. There's one." And as Eight Freckles' face was hid, he could not see the priest's lips as they muttered a fell incantation. "There's another," said The Shadow, as he pulled one of Eight Freckles's ears. "I have got that." The ear became long like a dog's. He pulled out the other ear, and said, "That makes two." Both ears were now like those of a dog. Next, the tohunga passed his hand over Eight Freckles's face and pulled out his nose, and behold! his head was a dog's head. "That's nearly all," said The Shadow, "I have almost finished." Lastly, he passed his hand over his friend's body, and Eight Freckles rose up a dog, and wagged his tail.

"It is a most excellent transformation," said The Shadow. "What a great tribe we shall be. The people from far and near will come to visit us, when they hear what my enchantments have done. Eight Freckles! Oooee! Oooee!"—the dog was racing after some seagulls along the beach. "Here, you come

back. Have you so soon forgotten your master? Have you forgotten your wife and son? Isn't it time you let them see that you are the rangatira of the kuri Maori, the chief of all the dogs?"

So The Shadow and Eight Freckles walked up the beach together, the one full of the importance and dignity attaching to heathen men of occult influences, and the other panting and lolling out his tongue as he ran behind.

The Shadow approached the pa by an unfrequented path which led through some thick scrub. Here he paused, and the dog looked up into his master's face, and wagged his tail. But picking up a stone the tohunga threw it at Eight Freckles, and the dog ran, yelping, out of sight. Then The Shadow entered the pa.

"So you have come back at last," said The Beautiful Bad Girl.

"Yes," replied The Shadow.

"But where is my husband? Did he not go with you to talk upon the beach?"

"I think he must have come back before me."

"No, he hasn't come yet."

"Then I don't know where he is. Perhaps he has gone for a walk. Go and call him."

The Beautiful Bad Girl went outside the pa, and called, "Eight Freckles, come here! Dinner's ready!"

But her husband did not appear.

"I think you had better call 'Oooee,' as if he were a dog," So The Beautiful Bad Girl called "Oooee," and whistled, and called again; and up ran Eight Freckles on four legs.

"Whose dog is this?" asked The Beautiful Bad Girl.

"I think he is yours," said The Shadow.

"Nonsense! I have no dog. He must be yours."

"Good dog, good dog," said The Shadow. Eight Freckles ran to the tohunga, and wagged his tail.

"Now, call him by name," said the wicked sorcerer, "and see if he will answer."

"What name?"

"Call him Eight Freckles. That's what I call him."

The Beautiful Bad Girl laughed; she thought it a good joke. Holding out her hand, she called, "Freckles! Freckles! Good dog, come here. Eight Freckles! Eight Freckles!"

The dog ran up, placed his cold nose in her hand, looked up into her face, and barked.

"It is makutu!" exclaimed The Beautiful Bad Girl. "Some one has cast a spell over my husband. He is bewitched."

Without saying another word she went down to the beach, searched the sand, and followed the tracks of the two men's feet to the place where the chiefs had stopped to talk. From there she could trace but one man's footprints and a dog's. She could see that they had entered the scrub, where all further traces of them were lost. Then, I regret to say, The Beautiful Bad Girl stood with her hands on her hips, and laughed.

"I was right; it is makutu," she said. "Somebody has bewitched my husband. I know who. I know who." In a flash she had realised what had occurred, and I lament exceedingly to say that her opinion of the wicked wizard was immensely heightened, and her affection for him increased ten-fold through the prowess he had shown in devilment.

Of course, presently, The Beautiful Bad Girl married The Shadow. But I don't know what happened to the dog.