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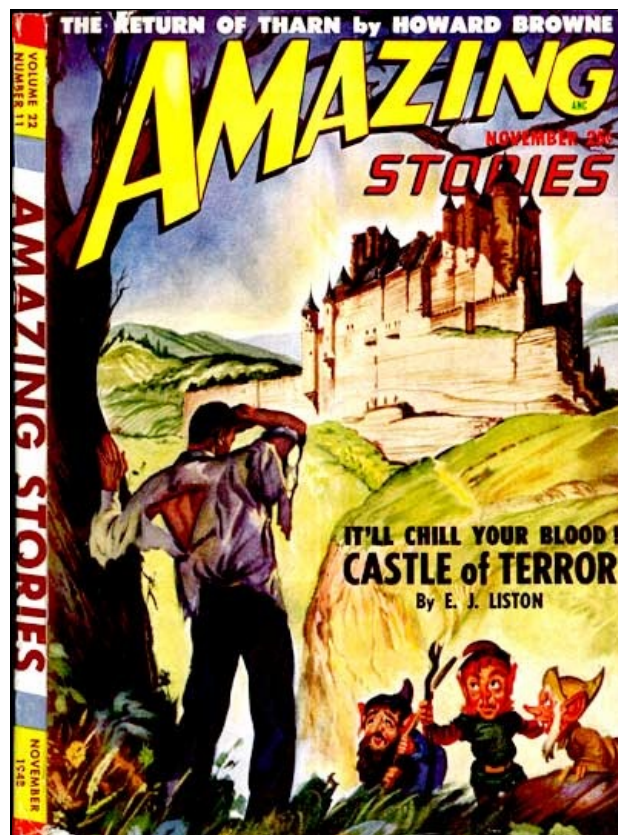
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## OOGIE FINDS LOVE

## by Berkeley Livingston

It took a fierce battle with the prehistoric Cro-Magnons, and a modern wrestling match with the Russian Bear, before Oogie, the Caveman, finally won beautiful Sala for his woman



From the caves men appeared, dragging after them the women who had been clubbed into submission

“**K**ill him...!” “Moider ‘im...!” “Tear his arm off!” The cries and shrieks and boos and confusion were general throughout the auditorium, and the tenor of them was about the same, that the Russian Bear should be annihilated. Alas for the public's pleas. Oogie the Caveman was underneath, and already the referee was on his knees, his head bent almost to the canvas, his nose almost touching the muscled shoulder of Oogie who was underneath the Russian Bear. The two wrestlers were almost in the center of the ring and the nearest of the spectators was some eight feet off. The front row could see the lips of the referee moving but none could hear the words, nor even imagine. For what the referee said, was:

“Boss wants to see you after the match....”

Oogie rolled a face toward the referee upon which was written the tortures of the damned, and blinked his right eyelid. Then the referee slapped the Russian Bear on the shoulder and the match was over....

“... Hi boss,” Algernon Allerdycce called in greeting. His nose sniffed appreciatively at the aroma of coffee.

“Hi Oogie,” Sam Grogan replied without turning from what he was doing, lifting the cover of the percolator on the electric plate. “Squat Oog,” he directed. “This is just about done. Be with you....”

The fragrant aroma of Mocha, Java and Brazilian coffee beans, ground, mixed and blended until they had achieved a perfect harmony, perfumed the air. Two cups, saucers and spoons lay on the desk. Beside them was a bottle of brandy. Oogie and Sam shared the same vice, *coffee*.

Sam did the honors, and after both men sniffed with the deepest delight of the brew, he leaned back in his chair and regarded the muscular man at his side with both affection and speculation. After all, Algernon Allerdycce, known to the wrestling public as Oogie the Caveman, had been Sam's own discovery, and he was proud of it.

A flashback of memory brought a clear picture to Sam's mind: A huge bulk of a man whose face could have served as a model for the drawing of *Pithecanthropus Erectus*, entering his offices at the old Hippodrome Building. The wonder he felt at the gentleness of the voice, as the stranger asked:

“Sam Grogan?” And at Sam's nod, “I'm here in answer to the ad you had placed in the *Sun*....”

That had been the beginning of a strange and very profitable friendship. For Grogan had advertised for wrestlers and Allerdycce had been the first of those to answer. It was Sam who gave him the name of Oogie the Caveman. As such he had achieved fame around the wrestling circuits, fame and fortune. Sam had learned many facts in the life of Allerdycce during the three years of

their association. How when Allerdyce was fifteen a truck had struck the bike he was riding and hurled the unfortunate boy into a tree which mashed his face to a pulp. How the family had brought the injured youth to a famous plastic surgeon who had performed surgery on him. The next day it was found the surgeon was insane, and had been insane when he performed the plastic work on the boy. The result was the ape-like face he had given him.

"... Oogie," Sam said from the depth of his introspection, "I've got news for you...."

Allerdyce took another appreciative sip of the brew before bending his attention to the other. And then it was only with lifted brow and questioning eyes.

"... The Big Deal we've been waiting for is on the fire," Sam said.

"At last, eh?" Allerdyce said.

"Yep! The big clean-up! A hundred grand guarantee plus a percentage. It will mean at least two hundred thousand for you...."

Allerdyce's lips twisted in a smile though to the casual observer, those lips seemed to snarl. "I can't say I won't be glad that this long grind is over. Three years of this fakery is enough to try the soul of a saint. But now that the goal is in sight I can only feel a sort of fear that maybe...."

Grogan knew what the other meant. For on that afternoon, long, long gone, Allerdyce had told him why he had answered the ad. It was to achieve enough money to permit the building of a dream, a laboratory of research in plastics. For Algernon Allerdyce had graduated *cum laude* from one of the finest technical schools in the country, his heart set on research, but with his goal closed to him because of his fearsome appearance. He had tried time and again to enter any of the phases of his calling but after the first interview there had never been a second. Sam Grogan had shown him how enough money could be made at wrestling to do what he wanted to. Allerdyce had not always been Oogie the Caveman. Once he had been billed as The Gentleman Grunter, but laughter had only greeted his appearance. As Oogie, he looked the part and the fans had never failed him.

"So don't go soft now!" Grogan said sharply. "It's in the bag, kid...."

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**A**llerdyce leaned back and the chair creaked loudly at the unexpected movement. "What's the set-up, Sam?" he asked.

"The whole troupe goes; the Bear, the Irishman, the Masked Marvel and all the others. London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow.... Yep, Oog, all eighteen of us on the European circuit.... Hey! What's wrong?"

Grogan had observed the darkening thunderhead of a frown on the wrestler's forehead.

"Sam, this may sound a bit childish because the whole thing is childish, but I don't like Ed Finster.... Now wait! I know we've been packing them in with our act, the Russian Bear and Oogie the Caveman. But Ed's been taking the deal a little more seriously than it warrants. Like tonight. He threw a double hammer on me and *really* used pressure. Nor was tonight the first time.

"A week ago in Omaha he almost tore my ears off with a headlock...."

Sam Grogan beamed. Allerdyce didn't know it but Sam had been the motivating force behind the grudge which had developed between the two men. Finster had complained one night that the public didn't like him, said that the name he had been given made them mad. Sam had mentioned the name was Oogie's idea. Finster then took personal exception to it and made a personal issue out of it. So the grudge begun in jest developed until it was noticeable to the rest of the troupe.

Grogan chuckled and in a few words made clear how the thing started. But the smile was wiped from his lips at Allerdyce's words:

"Too late now, Sam. I'd just as soon forget it but not Ed. He's got that excuse for a brain thinking the whole thing is real. I'd suggest you get to work on him before it's too late altogether...."

"That bad, huh? Maybe I'd better straighten the yuk out...."

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**F**light 243 was well out over the Atlantic, thirty thousand feet below. The super-cruiser *Orion* of the *TWP* lines held a full complement of passengers among whom was the wrestling circus of Sam Grogan and his partner Algernon Allerdyce, more affectionately known to the wrestling public as Oogie the Caveman.

The hour was for sleep and everyone but two were observing it. These two, Allerdyce and Finster, were in the lounge, playing gin. Finster had challenged Allerdyce to a couple of games to pass the time. But those two games had long been played. Finster played a wild and woolly game, never remembering discards, or trying knocks when they would be to his advantage, but always

playing for gin. So it was that Allerdyce had won almost every game. And since they were playing for a cent a point, Finster was out money. That was why they were still playing while the rest had gone to bed.

"... I'll knock with two, Ed," Allerdyce said.

"Now why the hell didn't you give that ten!" Finster yelled. He held up the discard and looked at it with savage eyes. "That would have ginned me...."

Allerdyce shrugged his shoulders and replied:

"That's what I figured. Well, Ed, let's call it quits, huh?"

"Sure! Call it quits when you got me stuck for dough. But that's the way you operate. Why you yellah...."

It was at that instant the horror descended on the *Orion*. There was a screaming cacophonous whirlwind of sound, a shriek of metal parting, flames suddenly bursting into full bloom, and the thin voices of men and women in mortal fear. Above all there was a *whooshing* noise, as though a giant hand was gripping them. Finster and Allerdyce felt themselves lifted from the depths of the ship and plunged into a maelstrom of storm in space.

For a full ten seconds Algernon Allerdyce looked into the face of terror beyond words, then unconsciousness descended on him....

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**T**he air was hot and damp and the slight breeze which fanned his cheek was of little solace. Allerdyce turned his head from side to side; a quiver stirred the heavy frame of his body, and awareness came in a rush to him as he opened his eyes. He sat erect and looked about him.

A figure lay sprawled on the ground some ten feet away. It was that of a man and one glance showed Allerdyce that the man was Ed Finster and that he was alive, though not yet conscious. Allerdyce rose to his feet and grunted at the effort. It seemed as if every bone and muscle creaked and groaned in protest. Awe and amazement made his brows lift and his eyes widen as he looked about. The two men had fallen among some ferns in a shallow glade bound about by dense jungle growth. Allerdyce caught a glimpse of hills in the near distance. Then he saw Finster stir and he stepped to the other's side.

"Wha-what happened?" Finster asked while he turned his head from one side to the other.

"I don't know exactly," Allerdyce replied in a low voice. "But I'm going to make a guess, fantastic as it may sound. I think we fell or were sucked into a space fault. From the looks of this jungle and from the feel of the atmosphere, I'll bet we've landed in a time long before the dawn of men such as we know...."

And as though in corroboration there came to their ears a low, grunting sound. Instantly Finster leaped to his feet and jumped the several feet to the side of the other. The sharp movement brought another coughing grunt, this time from the opposite side. And as they watched, a huge striped shape stepped into the open from the depths of the thick jungle growth. It was fully ten feet long and high as their shoulders, and the head of it was that of a tiger but such as they had never seen, for twin tusks, a foot long protruded down the length of the jowls....

"A saber tooth!" Allerdyce whispered hoarsely.

Ed Finster could only stare in open-mouthed horror at the thing. His muscled jaws began to quiver as the tiger began a sinuous advance toward them, and then, as the animal suddenly crouched in preparation for its leap, Finster screamed.

But the tiger never moved from his crouch. As if by magic a half dozen spears pierced its sides and two found a resting place in the tiger's throat. Then the silence was broken by the hoarse shouts of human voices, and a dozen men leaped into the glade and advanced on the two.

"Cro-Magnons," Allerdyce said aloud.

They were tall, broad-shouldered, deep of chest and long of limb. The skins of wild animals covered their nakedness. Their faces showed intelligence, though it was all too apparent that it was limited. But whatever speculations about their origin was in Allerdyce's mind, were wiped from it by their attitudes. They were definitely hostile. Most of them were armed with spears, as if those they had hurled were just one of a number they carried. Those who bore no spears, held clubs from the heads of which wooden spikes stuck out in vicious fingers of anger.

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**A**llerdyce acted from instinct. His right hand shot up to the height of his head and stuck out in front of his face. At that the advancing cavemen stopped and looked at each other. There were guttural sounds of consultation, then the largest most-fearsome stepped forward and moved toward the two until he was at arm's length.

"Who are you?" he asked. "What do you here in the land of Ugg the Mighty? From whence come

you?"

Allerdyce's mind worked at lightning speed. The solution to their problem lay in but a single direction, whatever their position. He looked up to the cloudless, sun-scorched sky and said:

"From the Great Spirit we come. For see ... are we not different than you? So we were sent to look into the affairs of the Great Spirit's children...."

The caveman knitted his brows, shook his head in wonder, then, as a child does at an elder's invitation to inspect a doll, he stepped forward and fingered the suiting of the two men. Little clucking sounds came from the lips as he did so. Then whirling, he shouted:

"The Great Spirit has sent them! Let us do them honor...."

At the same time Allerdyce whispered, "Don't act scared," to Finster.

Their leader's words were as a signal for the rest. They came forward in dancing steps, raising their spears and clubs on high and shouting gleefully words of exultation and praise of their leader Ugg. They surrounded the two strangers and after their leader stepped in the lead they started on a march through the brush. The way seemed endless and after a while Allerdyce shed his upper garments, leaving only his trousers to cover him. Finster followed suit. Oddly, there was a complete absence of insect life.

The way led straight toward the hills they had glimpsed. The wall of jungle ended with startling abruptness and they entered on a rolling plain which after a while became more and more rocky as the upland sweep began. Quite suddenly Ugg stopped, his head tilting to one side in a listening attitude and one hand held in warning.

The others, with the two strangers in their midst, crowded close.

"Sobar!" Ugg grunted hoarsely. "He is after our young and women. Listen...."

They heard it then, shouts and screams from up above. But what was going on was hidden from them. Ahead lay a narrow cleft between two sides of sheer rock some fifty feet high. The way on the right was clear though at a strong angle. Ugg motioned for Allerdyce to follow and the two climbed to the top of the rock where they lay on their bellies and looked slightly downward at the scene. Ahead were some dozen caves and a common compound. Men were struggling here and there but for the most part those were few. The screams came from the caves. In a matter of seconds men appeared, dragging after them the women and some children. When a woman failed to go along too readily or when one of the men lost his patience, the club was used. Ugg nudged Allerdyce and motioned with a silent shake of the head for them to return.

"... It is the tribe of Sobar," Ugg explained to his men. "They must have learned I sent my son, Ugg the Younger, on a hunting expedition with most of the tribe and that we few went on the hunt for the saber-tooth. They are too many for us...."

"But they must come through the cleft in the rock," Allerdyce said. "We can lie in wait for them. Hidden, they cannot know how many we are and when the spears are thrown they will think they have been ambushed."

"But there are only the few of us," Ugg objected.

"Even a few will be enough."

But Ugg had an even better idea:

"They will not fear us. But the Spirits.... They will run from you after they see how little their weapons do against you...."

Now we're in for it, Allerdyce thought. Right in the middle. If we don't, these boys will let us have it. If we do, the others will. And what is worse we can't ask for weapons.... H'm! Maybe.... An idea had come to him, a silly idea. Yet if it succeeded....

"Come on, Ed," he said, turning to Finster. "Follow my lead, fellah. Otherwise...."

He didn't have to finish. The other understood.

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**A**llerdyce felt the quiver in his legs and arms as they reached the top of the cleft. One look and he saw the enemy tribe was about to descend. They saw the two men at the same time. For a long moment the modern and the prehistoric stared at each other. It was the modern who made the first move:

"Men of Sobar!" Allerdyce shouted. "Hear me!"

There were a full fifty of them. Three of them stepped forward, spears held ready for the throwing. One of them was a giant of a man, a full seven feet tall and wide as a barn door.

"Who calls Sobar," the giant asked.

"I do," Allerdyce replied. "The messenger of the Great Spirit...." He hoped Sobar knew of this Great Spirit. "He has sent me because Sobar has displeased him...."

For a few seconds silence reigned. Then the giant stepped forward a few more steps, and his brow tight in a scowl of anger, asked:

"I do not believe you. You look like one of the swamp people, face of an ape...."

Allerdyce felt the brittle coldness of a terrible anger sweep through him. He had been called ape before. And always the one who had done the calling had suffered for his temerity. But mixed with his anger was the knowledge that death could be the result of an unwise move or word. Yet time was not on his side, for Sobar was taking the initiative and was stepping even closer and behind him the other two were also coming toward him in imitation of their leader.

"Hold!" Allerdyce suddenly called in a ringing, imperative voice. "You do not believe me, then, eh? A test, Sobar...?"

The other was silent, waiting for the stranger to continue.

"Drop your weapon," Allerdyce said. "You and I, unarmed, to the death...."

Then gone was the scowl, gone the furrowed brow. Here was meat to Sobar's liking. Here was something he was not frightened of. Spirit or man, Sobar was not afraid of combat of arms. Flinging the spear to one side Sobar motioned for the other to come to him.

Allerdyce made a feint to come in low but the other merely waited, arms wide, legs spread, and body shifting from the waist. Once again Allerdyce feinted, and as Sobar's body shifted to the side the other seemed to want to come from, Allerdyce leaped forward and grabbed Sobar by his right wrist and using the hand as a lever pivoted on it until he was behind the giant. Then Allerdyce began to exert pressure in a hammerlock.

All the while he had been moving the giant had been still, as if confused. But as pain came in a rush to his shoulder blade, he moved. Never had Allerdyce felt such strength. For though the wrestler was using all his strength on the grip, Sobar broke it with one gigantic movement of his huge body.

Allerdyce knew then that the rules of fair play were out. This prehistoric baby was dynamite.... Allerdyce staggered away from the other but recovered quickly as the giant came in, both arms outstretched. And once again Allerdyce grasped one of those huge wrists. Only it was in a judo grip this time, a grip where when a man tries to break it, pressure simply multiplies until either the arm breaks or one cries quits. In this case Sobar waited too long.

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**E**ven as his face contorted in pain Allerdyce whipped around to one side and delivered a blow with the side of his palm to the side of Sobar's neck. The crack of the breaking neck was like that of a branch breaking. Sobar pitched to his face and lay still.

Instantly Ugg leaped to Allerdyce's side.

"Your chieftain was bested in fair play!" he shouted to the warriors of Sobar's tribe. "By our laws you have now become our prisoners."

"But not by mine!" a strange voice yelled.

And before Allerdyce could do more than turn, Finster was on him. What made Ed Finster do what he did was never explained. Perhaps the realization of what had happened came to the man. Perhaps his mind, twisted by jealousy and hate snapped at that moment. Whatever the reason, he turned on Allerdyce. It was the signal for a general battle. For of all the cavemen who were present, only one was quick-witted enough to take advantage of the situation. This one was one of the two who had come forward with Sobar.

He yelled:

"Gomar is now chief. One of the Spirits is on our side.... Kill Ugg and his...."

Had it been one of the cavemen attacking, Allerdyce would have managed to get away for the moment he needed to recover. But it wasn't. It was a trained wrestler, one who knew all the tricks, who had leaped at him. So Finster worked his surprise vantage for all it was worth.

But even then Allerdyce might have won out had it not been for Gomar's call to arms. His men forgot the booty they had taken, the women and children and leaped forward with savage shouts, spears and clubs used indiscriminately. Allerdyce had broken Finster's first hold, and was turning to get a grip on the other, when a club thrown by one of the cavemen caught him a blow on the temple and stretched him senseless to the ground.

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**A**llerdyce's awakening this time was not as pleasant as before. Someone was kicking him in the face. He opened his eyes, one of them anyway. The other was closed shut. He was in a cave. It was a smelly cave, the walls blackened from the smoke of many fires. Nor was he alone. He tried to move his arms and discovered he had been securely bound. Suddenly from behind, a foot came swinging out and pain shot up the side of his jaw as the bare toes connected

with it.

"Enough," a voice called.

"Aah! I've been wanting to do this for a long time," Ed Finster said.

There was disgust in Gomar's voice as he replied:

"The Great Spirit has small men for messengers.... Remove the other's bonds."

"Hey!" Finster yelled in protest.

But no one paid attention. Hands tore the fibre ropes loose from about Allergyce's figure and helped him to his feet where he stood swaying like a tree in a high wind.

"The Great Spirit sent two messengers," Gomar said. "But He had a reason. One was sent to conquer Sobar so that I could become chief. The other was to conquer you. The light is clear.... Take him to the women...."

Only Finster laughed at the edict. He had reason for the laughter. In all the years of their association Allergyce had never been known to go for the fillies. And now he was to be thrown to a pack of them. With that puss, Finster thought, they'd throw him right back.

Spear points pressed against his back, a rope around his wrists, and while the rest walked behind, one man led Allergyce from the cave into the open, across a level stretch of ground and into a very large cave. Here his wrists were unbound and to the jibes and laughter of the warriors who had accompanied him, Allergyce was shoved into the cave proper itself.

The cave was immense, and seemed to be filled entirely with women and children. For a second there was silence. Then as their eyes saw this almost naked stranger, a wild shriek of laughter went up. Hands went out, pointing to his shorts which seemed to be all the clothing he had, to his face, puffed into a gargoylish mask, and to his hairy chest, which looked like the stuffing of a mattress.

Allergyce stared in horror at the women, turned and started for the cave entrance. But the cavemen had anticipated his move. They stood guard, spears thrust point forward, and after a few hesitant seconds, Allergyce turned back.

But now they were no longer scattered about the cave. They came over in a rush, forcing him to the wall, his hands pawing in futile attempts to prevent them from touching him. For some reason this made them angry. Their hands clenched and spiteful words came from their lips, and several turned aside and called something to the children, who after a moment returned, with stones and sticks.

"Hey!" Allergyce called in alarm. "Take it easy...."

The alarm in his voice was the signal for them to attack. In a moment he was the center of a mob of women all bent, it seemed, on his destruction. He fought at first as gently as he could. But as some of the stones hit and some of the clubs struck vulnerable parts of his anatomy, he fought with less gentleness. Finally, he was forced to club one of the women with his fist. She went flying backward and landed flat on her back.

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**I**nstantly the attack ceased.

He watched them move away from him and wondered why. His question was answered as the woman he had struck crawled to him and embraced his legs. He tried to withdraw her hands but she held only tighter and said:

"We are mated. You made the choice. I am Sala...."

"You're nuts!" Allergyce said sharply. He turned to call the guards to help him with the woman when he discovered that they were gone.

"Are customs different in your tribe?" Sala asked. "Do you not mate with a woman in this manner?"

The beginning of a hope came to him in a rush as he realized the consequences of what had happened. He was free now. He tried to put the proper authority in his voice, when he said:

"Go woman! Find me a corner and bring me food...."

Without the slightest hesitation Sala rose and trotted to a far corner of the cave. Allergyce followed and squatted beside her. He had always been a shy man and had never known many women, especially women with as little clothes as Sala wore. She was beautiful by any standard he thought. But only for a moment. His thoughts for the first time centered on his predicament.

His mind allowed for but a single conclusion. That the plane had run into a time-fault and that he and Ed Finster had been drawn into it. The others must have died in the plane crash. Since the giant ship was over the Atlantic at the time of the crash it was reasonable to assume that time only was involved and not space. Therefore, by the same line of reasoning, he and Ed were to be

here for the rest of their lives. That is unless somehow they found the same fault again. But that was not probable, he realized.

For a moment fear lay heavy on him. Then the scientist came uppermost. What an opportunity he had. A man of science among these children. The chance to build a civilization. It could be done with his knowledge. But first he had to get the power over these people.

Sala came back just then with what looked like the leg of a rabbit. It was very underdone but Allerdyce didn't quibble. If he were going to live as they did then he might as well start right there.

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**T**hree days went by and nothing changed. He learned all about his mate. She had been one of Ugg's tribe. Now she was part of the tribe of Gomar. It was that simple. She was a tigress when she thought another woman was even looking at her mate and fought with the savagery of a beast for him. And he had been granted his freedom with his acquisition of a mate. He learned to hunt as the others did, with spear and club. But already he had fashioned his first bow and arrow, and knew it would be a matter of time before he was taught the rest. There was but one fly in the ointment, Ed Finster. As yet he had no mate. And he looked with avaricious eyes on Sala.

It was on the fourth day.

Allerdyce had returned from the hunt. He had killed an animal with his arrow and the tribe looked on him with respect. As he neared his cave he heard shrieks of pain and anger. And as he watched with amazement, Ed Finster appeared, dragging Sala by her hair. His action was instinctive. Rushing forward, he threw his bow to one side and knocked Ed to the ground.

Immediately a circle of warriors were drawn about the two men and Gomar stepped forward.

"It is time," he said. "I have wondered about this. A combat of arms will settle it. Whoever wins will have the woman ... and his freedom."

As they stood facing each other, Finster turned aside as though to say something to Gomar. Allerdyce relaxed naturally. But Finster had done it with that view in mind. Like a flash he whirled on Allerdyce and grabbed a headlock. It would have ended right then had not both men been barefoot. For Allerdyce had not stiffened his neck muscles. But Finster stepped on a thorn and the shock made him loosen his grip for an instant. It was enough for Allerdyce to break free.

There were no more surprises.

Bit by bit Allerdyce wore the other down. At last he straddled Finster, who lay face down on the ground. Then Allerdyce grabbed the other by the shock of black hair, pulled his neck up until he could get his arm under it. Then slowly, using all his strength, Allerdyce pulled back until after a moment there was a sharp crack. Finster would be no more trouble.

Algernon Allerdyce rose and throwing his head back let out a bellow of triumph, and knew then he was no longer Algernon Allerdyce. He was in fact Oogie the Caveman, replete with wife. For Sala had been the first to rush to his side. And as he threw his arms around her he knew love had come to him. She was his and woe betide the one who tried to take her from him.

But when Gomar stepped to his side and asked:

"This sliver of wood you made and the bow of elk thong.... Could you make another for me...?" Oogie the Caveman knew his life had begun in earnest....

**THE END**

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