

**THE SILVER
FOX, PP. 1-194**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649704927

The Silver Fox, pp. 1-194 by Martin Ross & E. CE. Somerville

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

MARTIN ROSS & E. Œ. SOMERVILLE

**THE SILVER
FOX, PP. 1-194**

THE SILVER FOX

Violet Florence Martin

THE SILVER FOX

BY

MARTIN ROSS AND E. Æ. SOMERVILLE

AUTHORS OF "AN IRISH COUSIN," "NABOTH'S VINEYARD,"
"THE REAL CHARLOTT," ETC.



LONDON

LAWRENCE AND BULLEN, LTD.

16 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

1898

09.26.235M.

Lib.
-11-11-
Sotherman
2293

THE SILVER FOX

CHAPTER I

LADY SUSAN had never been so hungry in her life. So, for the sixth time, she declared between loud and unbridled yawns. She worked her chair across the parquet towards the fire-place, dragging the hearth-rug into folds in her progress, and put her large and well-shod feet on the fender.

"What a beast of a fire! When you've quite done with it, Bunny, I shouldn't mind seeing it just the same. You are a selfish thing!"

In obedience to this rebuke Major Bunbury moved an inch or two to one side.

"I'm not as selfish as you are," he said,

with agreeable simplicity. "Miss Morris can't see anything but your boots."

"Oh, she likes seeing boots," replied Lady Susan, establishing one on the hob. "They don't have 'em in Ireland, do they, Slaney!"

It was obviously the moment for Miss Morris to say something brilliant, but she let the opportunity slip. Perhaps she was hampered by the consciousness that her boots had been made in an Irish country town. She got red. She did not know that it was becoming to her to get red. Finding no more appropriate retort, she laughed, and pushing back her chair, walked over to the window. What she looked out on was the lawn at Hurlingham, covered smoothly and desolately with snow; a line of huddled, white hummocks of ice, moving very slowly across the middle distance, represented the River Thames; down to the right, five or six skaters glided on the black and serpentine curves of a little lake—they looked like marionettes sliding

along a wire. Even at that distance they seemed to Slaney over-dressed and artificial. No doubt they were screaming inanities to each other, as were these other English idiots in the room behind her. How ineffably stupid they were, and how shy and provincial they made her feel! How could Hugh have married into such a pack?

One of the double doors at the end of the room opened, and a small, dark man appeared.

"Awfully sorry to have kept you all waiting," he said abjectly. "I'm afraid it's a bad business; they say that there's nothing to be had here on Sundays at this time of year, unless it's ordered beforehand."

"Oh Lord!" ejaculated Lady Susan, bringing her foot and the shovel down with a crash. "Do you mean to say there's nothing to eat?"

"It's not quite as bad as that, but precious nearly," he replied, looking at her so deplorably that Slaney felt inclined to laugh.

"We're going to have some of the waiter's dinner. It's a leg of mutton, and he says he don't think it's quite boiled yet, but I said we wouldn't wait."

Lady Susan seized Major Bunbury's hand, and pulled herself out of her chair. She was stalwart and tall, and her dress fitted beautifully. With a whisk and rustle of silk petticoats she was across the room and caught Miss Morris by the arm.

"Worry, worry, worry! Sess, sess, sess!" she said, with a sufficiently fortunate imitation of her father's kennel huntsman. "Come on and eat raw leg of mutton! I *hope* the waiter likes onion sauce!"

In the dining-room a genial fire was blazing; a soft and rich-coloured carpet glowed on the floor; the atmosphere was of old-fashioned comfort; there was a desirable smell of fried potatoes. The party sank into their places at an oval table, and to each was administered a plateful of pink mutton that grew rosier at every slice. Captain Hugh French, late of the —th

Hussars, looked round upon his guests, and felt that champagne was the only reparation in his power.

"I feel it's all my fault bringing you people down here to starve. You'll have to take it out in drink," he said helplessly.

The words were addressed to the company, but his brown eyes, that were like the eyes of a good small dog, addressed themselves to those of his wife. Slaney, following them, wondered whether he could help seeing the black line frankly drawn along the edge of Lady Susan's lower eyelids. The white glare from the snow showed it unsparingly, as she looked at her husband over the rim of the champagne glass from which she was drinking.

"Yes, darling, you're a silly little thing," she said blandly; "I always said that spill had given you softening of the brain."

"What spill?" asked Slaney. It was almost the first time she had spoken. She had sat, inwardly scornful and outwardly shy, in the midst of conversation whose