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KING — OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

By TALBOT MUNDY



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KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

By TALBOT MUNDY



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DURING WORLD WAR I, INDIA ANSWERED BRITAIN'S CALL-TO-ARMS, SENDING HER LEGIONS TO THE BATTLEFIELDS OF FRANCE AND LEAVING HERSELF WITH BUT A SKELETON ARMY. SO WHEN RUMORS OF A JIHAD STARTED, GENERAL COATES SUMMONED ATHELSTAN KING TO BRITISH HEADQUARTERS AT PESHAWUR...



THERE MUST BE NO JIHAD, KING. THAT'S WHY I SENT FOR YOU.

AND MY JOB, GENERAL COATES?

YOU'LL HAVE TO TRY TO GET INTO KHINJAN CAVES AND LEARN THE SECRET OF "THE HEART OF THE HILLS". OTHERS HAVE GONE INTO THE CAVES... BUT THEY HAVE NEVER COME OUT!

I'M TO STOP A JIHAD SINGLE-HANDED, SIR? THAT'S QUITE A TASK!



NOT ENTIRELY SINGLE-HANDED. YOU'RE TO WORK WITH THE WOMAN IN THIS PHOTOGRAPH. THESE PAPERS TELL ALL WE KNOW OF HER AND OF THE JIHAD.

YASMINI, NO DOUBT. I'VE NEVER MET HER, BUT HER NAME IS A BY-WORD IN THE HILLS.



SHE CLAIMS SHE'S ON OUR SIDE, AND WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE HER WORD. I'VE TOLD HER YOU WILL MEET HER IN DELHI.

I'LL SEND YOU AS SECOND IN COMMAND TO THE KHYBER RIFLES. YOU HAVE A BROTHER IN THE KHYBER RIFLES, HAVEN'T YOU? GIVE HIM MY REGARDS GOOD-BY, KING. GOOD LUCK.

THANK YOU AND GOOD-BY, SIR.



ON THE TRIP FROM PESHAWUR TO DELHI, KING SHARED HIS COMPARTMENT WITH A STUFFY MAJOR HYDE...

YOU'RE NO MEDICAL CORPS MAN, WHY DO YOU RIDE ABOUT READING ABOUT MEDICINE? AND WITH A WAR ON! WHY AREN'T YOU WITH YOUR REGIMENT?

IT PLEASES ME, SIR. MORE OVER, OFFICIAL ORDERS TAKE ME WHERE I'M GOING.



AFTER MANY LONG, HOT JOLTING HOURS, THE TRAIN DREW UP AT RAWAL-PINDI. KING STEPPED OUT ONTO THE PLATFORM FOR A BREATH OF AIR.

EXCUSE ME, SIR. I AM SEEKING CAPTAIN KING SAHIB. I HAVE LEARNED HE IS ON THIS TRAIN. I AM VERY ANXIOUS TO BE HIS SERVANT.

I AM MAJOR HYDE AND CAPTAIN KING IS RIDING WITH ME. I WILL HAVE HIM LOOK OUT THE WINDOW, SO YOU MAY SEE AND RECOGNIZE HIM.



KING RETURNED TO HIS COMPARTMENT. ON HIS LIPS WAS A TRACE OF AN AMUSED SMILE, AS HE SAID TO HYDE:

YOU KNOW, SIR, I BELIEVE I'VE JUST SPOTTED A RAILWAY THIEF. I'D HAVE HAD HIM ARRESTED, BUT THOUGHT YOU OUGHT TO DO IT, SINCE YOU'RE THE SUPERIOR OFFICER.

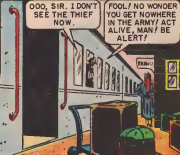
OH, CONFOUND IT, MAN. VERY WELL. WHERE IS HE?



VISIBLY ANNOYED, HYDE STUCK HIS HEAD OUT THE WINDOW. THE NATIVE, SEEING HIM, STEPPED ABOARD THE TRAIN.

OOO, SIR. I DON'T SEE THE THIEF NOW.

FOOL! NO WONDER YOU GET NOWHERE IN THE ARMY! ACT ALIVE, MAN! BE ALERT!



THAT NIGHT, THE DOOR OF THE HYDE-KING COMPARTMENT OPENED SOFTLY.



KING WAITED IN THE HALF-DARKNESS, WATCHING WITH CAT-LIKE EYES, AS THE NATIVE WENT TO HYDE'S BED, LOOKED INTO HIS FACE, THEN BEGAN TO GO HASTILY THROUGH HYDE'S EFFECTS. THE NATIVE WAS THE ONE WHO HAD ACCOSTED KING ON THE PLATFORM...



THEN SUDDENLY, KING MOVED WITH THE SWIFTESS OF A PANTHER . . .



AII-Y-Y-Y-Y!

WHAT IN THUNDERATION!

WRESTLING WITH THE INTRUDER, KING TWISTED THE NATIVE'S WRIST WITH A GRIP OF IRON . . .

JUST THEN, THE TRAIN JOLTED AND SCREAMED TO A WAY-STATION STOP. KING, SEEMING TO GROW ABSENT-MINDED, LOOSEMED HIS GRIP ON THE NATIVE . . .



LOOK OUT! HE'S GETTING AWAY!



KING PICKED UP THE SCATTERED THINGS BELONGING TO HYDE AND HANDED THEM TO HIM . . .

CONFOUND IT, MAN, COULDN'T YOU HOLD HIM? OR WERE YOU AFRAID OF HIM? HE'S GOT CLEAN AWAY!

YES . . . SO HE HAS, BUT YOU GOT BACK YOUR THINGS, SIR.



MAJOR HYDE SNORTED AND WENT BACK TO SLEEP. KING LAY FOR A LONG WHILE, COMPARING YASMINI'S PHOTOGRAPH WITH THE FIGURE ON THE KNIFE HANDLE. "I AM TO WORK WITH HER, AND ALREADY SHE APPEARS TO HAVE ORDERED ME ROBBED . . . PERHAPS EVEN MURDERED!"

THE STATION AT DELHI, WHERE KING GOT OFF, WAS TEEMING WITH HUMANITY. THE PLACE WAS A SPLURGE OF COLOR, DIN AND SMELL. IT ECHOED WITH THE BABBLE OF TWENTY DIFFERENT LANGUAGES. IN THE MIDST OF IT ALL...



WHOA, NOW...

SHE HAS ALREADY GONE NORTH, KING SAHIB. I AM REWA GUNGA, HER HUMBLE SERVANT. WALK WITH ME.

VERY WELL.



TO WHOM ARE YOU REFERRING?

NEED I SAY? OO WE NOT UNDERSTAND ONE ANOTHER? MOREOVER, I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU -- FROM HER. HERE IS HER CARRIAGE.

YOU WONDER THAT I AM NOT IN THE ARMY, I'M NOT QUITE TALL ENOUGH. ALSO YOU ARE DISAPPOINTED AT NOT MEETING HER. AH, WELL, NO ONE QUESTIONS HER DECISIONS.

INDEED? SO BE IT, THEN.

THIS MAN IS READING MY THOUGHTS. I MUST BE ON GUARD.



SHE SENDS YOU THIS, SAHIB. IT IS HER SYMBOL OF POWER. IT WILL ASSURE YOUR SAFE ARRIVAL AT KHINJAN CAVES. TRUST HER, FOR SHE IS HAPPY THAT YOU AND SHE ARE ON THE SAME ERRAND.



"ALREADY HAVE A TALISMAN FROM HER, THOUGHT KING." A BRONZE KNIFE WITH A GOLD HANDLE-- TUCKED IN UNDER MY SHIRT. I HOPE THIS BRACELET PROVES TO BE A MORE TRUSTWORTHY SAFEGUARD."



To Atthetan King sahib, by the hand of Rewa Gunga. Greetings. The bearer is my well-trusted servant, whom I have chosen to be the sahib's guide until Heaven shall be propitious and we meet. He is instructed in all that he need know concerning what is now in hand, and he will tell by word of mouth such things as ought not to be written. By all means let Rewa Gunga travel with you, for he is of royal blood, at the House of Ketchwaha and will not fail you. His honor and mine are one.

Praying that the many gods of India may heap honors on your honor's head, providing each his proper attitude toward entire ability to succeed in all things, but especially in the present undertaking, I am Your Excellency's humble servant, Yasmini



THE STAIRS WOUND UPWARD FOR AT LEAST TWO STORIES. THEN SUDDENLY, KING STOOD IN A BLAZE OF REFLECTED LIGHT, THROWN ON HIM BY MANY MIRRORS SWUNG ON HINGES...



"Greeting"



KING KNEW FROM THE MAID'S VOICE WHICH ENTRANCE WAS THE REAL ONE. WHEN INSIDE...

WELCOME, KING SAHIB. I AM TO DO THE HONORS, SINCE SHE IS NOT HERE.

REWAGUNGA SAT DOWN OPPOSITE KING AND

THIS MAN IS TRYING TO HYPNOTIZE ME, TRYING TO LEARN MY THOUGHTS, MY PLANS. I MUST CONCENTRATE ON OTHER THINGS--THAN HIM. THINGS LIKE...



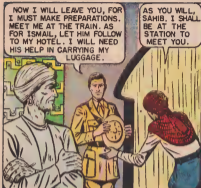
WHO IS THAT MAN? WHY IS HE HERE?

ISMAIL? JUST A SAVAGE WHO LOVES YASMINI. HE IS TO BE YOUR SERVANT ON YOUR JOURNEY INTO THE "HILLS".

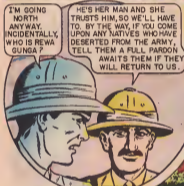
I AM GETTING THE BEST OF HIM. NOW WHAT NEXT SHALL I DO? I KNOW. I HAVE THIS PEN AND PAPER...

A TRAIN LEAVES FOR THE NORTH TONIGHT. YOU WILL NEED A PASS TO GET UP THE LINE. I'LL MAKE IT OUT NOW.





KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES



AT JAMRUD, NEAR THE KHYBER PASS, REWA GUNGA WAS WAITING WHEN KING FINALLY ARRIVED.





THEY DON'T LOOK OVER-FRIENDLY, I MUST SAY!

THEY ARE ALL HER PEOPLE. SHOW THEM THE BRACELET AND THEY WILL BE YOUR SLAVES.

MAY GOD BE WITH THEE!

MAY GOD BE WITH THEE!

THEY ARE HER MEN INDEED!

COME, I WILL SHOW YOU TO YOUR TENT. YASMINI HAS GONE UP THE PASS. WE WILL FOLLOW WITH THESE MEN AS OUR BEARERS.



KING
INSPECTED HIS QUARTERS AND STROLLED TO THE FORT...

HELLO, KING. HEARD YOU WERE COMING. JUST FOUND TWO OF MY MEN MURDERED. THERE'S A BIG LASHKAR* FORMING SOMEWHERE IN THE HILLS.

A LASHKAR, MAJOR COURTESANY? BESIDE THE GROWD AT KHINJAN?

COULD YASMINI BE AWARE OF IT, I WONDER? YOU KNOW OF HER, OF COURSE. SHE WENT UP THE PASS JUST RECENTLY.

CERTAINLY I KNOW OF HER— AND I ALSO KNOW SHE HAS NOT GONE UP THE PASS. IT'S MY BUSINESS TO KNOW WHO GOES UP AND COMES DOWN THE PASS.

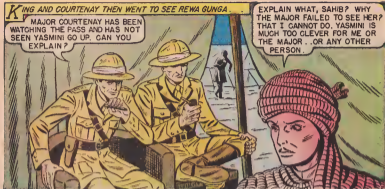


*An army of Afridis (Afghan Hill tribe).

KING AND COURTENAY THEN WENT TO SEE REWA GUNGA.

MAJOR COURTENAY HAS BEEN WATCHING THE PASS AND HAS NOT SEEN YASMINI GO UP. CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

EXPLAIN WHAT, SAHIB? WHY THE MAJOR FAILED TO SEE HER? THAT I CANNOT DO. YASMINI IS MUCH TOO CLEVER FOR ME OR THE MAJOR . . . OR ANY OTHER PERSON.

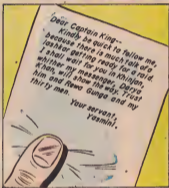


WAIT! THIS MAN APPROACHING IS A SERVANT OF YASMINI'S. WHAT BRINGS HIM HERE?

FOR CAPTAIN KING SAHIB.



Dear Captain King--
Kindly be quick to follow me, because there is much talk of a laskar getting ready for a raid. I shall wait for you in Khinjon, whither my messenger, Darya Khan, will show the way. Trust him and Rewa Gunga and my thirty men.
Your servant,
Yasmini.



THE LETTER SETTLED THE MATTER IN KING'S MIND. HE DECIDED TO LEAVE AT ONCE. THAT SAME EVENING

GOOD-BY AND GOOD LUCK!

GOOD-BY!



KING TOOK HIS POSITION AT THE HEAD OF THE COLUMN AND ORDERED REWA GUNGA TO RIDE LAST. AS THEY STARTED THROUGH THE RUGGED PASS, KING SHOUTED...

MEN OF THE HILLS! KUCH DAR NAHN HAI!

*There is no such thing as fear!

NIGHT FELL BLACK AND EERIE. CRAG, BOULDER AND LOOSE ROCK FADED INTO GLOOM, AND TO LEFT AND RIGHT WERE SHADOWS AMID SHADOWS, UNTIL KING FELT THE SHORT HAIR ON HIS NECK BEGIN TO RISE. THEN, REWA GUNGA WAS BESIDE HIM...

LOOK, SAHIB! THAT IS HER LIGHT--YASMINI'S! SHE PROMISED A SIGNAL WHERE WE ARE TO LEAVE THE TRAIL!

AND I THINK SOMEONE HERE IS A BLASTED LIAR! THAT IS NOT THE WAY TO KHINJAN!

IMMEDIATELY, THE LIGHT DISAPPEARED. KING TURNED TO DARYA KHAN

GET DOWN THERE AND FIND OUT WHAT THAT LIGHT WAS! SHOUT OUT WHAT YOU DISCOVER!

I OBEY, SAHIB.



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

KING SUDDENLY CHANGED HIS MIND.

NO! WAIT!
I'LL GO!



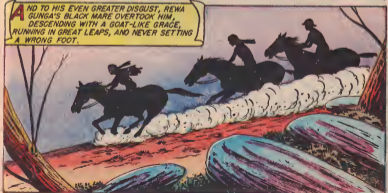
KING DROVE BOTH SPURS HOME AND SENT HIS HORSE DOWNWARD, TRUSTING THE ANIMAL TO FIND A FOOTING WHERE HIS OWN EYES COULD MAKE OUT NOTHING.



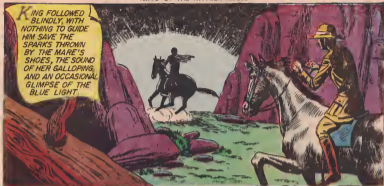
TO HIS DISGUST, KING HEARD REWA GUNGA FOLLOWING...



AND TO HIS EVEN GREATER DISGUST, REWA GUNGA'S BLACK MARE OVERTOOK HIM, DESCENDING WITH A GOAT-LIKE GRACE, RUNNING IN GREAT LEAPS, AND NEVER SETTING A WRONG FOOT.







KING FOLLOWED BLINDLY, WITH NOTHING TO GUIDE HIM SAVE THE SPARKS THROWN BY THE MARE'S SHOES, THE SOUND OF HER GALLOPING, AND AN OCCASIONAL GLIMPSE OF THE BLUE LIGHT.

REWAGUNGA SUDDENLY TURNED A BOULDER. KING TURNED THE SAME ROCK A MINUTE LATER... AND CAME FACE TO FACE WITH A BLANK WALL REACHING A THOUSAND FEET STRAIGHT UP. THERE WAS NEITHER SIGHT NOR SOUND OF REWAGUNGA.

AFTER TEN MINUTES OF FRUITLESS SEARCHING.

BOTH REWAGUNGA AND HIS BLESSED LIGHT SEEM TO HAVE EVAPORATED INTO THIN AIR. WHAT AN ANIMAL THAT BLACK MARE OF HIS IS! I'D CERTAINLY LIKE TO HAVE HER! WELL, THERE'S NOTHING FOR US TO DO BUT TRY TO FIND OUR WAY BACK TO THE ROAD.

SO BE IT, SAHB!



KING'S KEEN SENSE OF DIRECTION BROUGHT THEM BACK TO THE TRAIL. AFTER A DIFFICULT CLIMB UP THE STEEP, ROCKY SLOPE TO THE ROAD, KING TURNED IN SURPRISE TO ISMAIL.

WHERE ARE THE OTHERS?

GONE! ALL BUT THREE!



KING MOUNTED AND ORDERED THE REMAINING MEN TO FOLLOW HIM. AFTER AN HOUR'S TRAVEL . . .

HERE THE TRAIL NARROWS, MASTER. IT MEANS WE ARE NO MORE THAN A MILE FROM FORT ALI MASJID.

THEN WE WILL STOP HERE. I MUST SEND A MESSAGE TO MY BROTHER AT THE FORT.



A FEW MOMENTS LATER, AFTER KING HAD WRITTEN A HASTY NOTE . . .

HERE, YOU THREE. TAKE TWO PACKMULES AND THIS LETTER TO THE OFFICER IN CHARGE AT FORT ALI MASJID.

NAY, IT IS A TRAP / WE SHALL BE PUT IN IRONS!



SHE HAS PLACED YOU IN MY KEEPING. I WOULD NOT BETRAY YOU!

MAY GOD BE WITH THEE!

TO HEAR IS TO OBEY!



SOON THE MEN WERE LOST IN THE BLACK SHADOWS OF THE KHYBER. ONLY VOLLEYS OF RIFLE FIRE, THUNDERING DOWN THE PASS FROM THE GUNS OF ALI MASJID'S GUARDS, TOLD KING OF THE PROGRESS OF HIS COURIERS.



SOME TIME AFTER THE GUNS WERE SILENCED...

HELLO, THERE, ATHELSTAN!

CHARLES, OLD MAN! YOU MADE GOOD TIME! ISMAIL, GIVE ME THE BAG YOU'VE BEEN CARRYING FOR ME. THEN TAKE DARYA KHAN AND THE BEARERS AND GO DOWN THE PASS. I HAVE PRIVATE BUSINESS WITH MY BROTHER.

THOUGH GRUMBLING, ISMAIL DID AS HE WAS BIDDEN...

I RECEIVED YOUR LETTER AND THE PACKMULES, ATHELSTAN. WHAT'S UP?

KEEP THE MULES. I MAY WANT TO DRAW ON THE SUPPLIES. I'VE BEEN SENT TO ENTER KHINJIAN GAVES, TO LEARN THE SECRET OF THE HEART OF THE HILLS... AND TO PREVENT A JIHAD!



THAT'S A TALL ORDER. GOT ANY PLANS?

NO, EXCEPT TO MAKE USE OF THIS DISGUISE. THAT'S WHERE I NEED YOUR HELP.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

WHEN I'VE FINISHED STAINING YOU, NO ONE WILL TAKE YOU FOR AN ENGLISHMAN, ATHELSTAN.

I CERTAINLY HOPE NOT, FOR HENCEFORTH, UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, I WILL BE KNOWN AS KURRAM KHAN, THE HAKIM.*



*Physician

ATHELSTAN KING COMPLETED HIS DISGUISE AND BADE HIS BROTHER GOOD-BY. THEN HE SUMMONED THE OTHERS BY WHISTLING...

WHERE IS HE? OUR SAHIB -- KING SAHIB -- WHERE IS HE?

HE IS GONE. HE LEFT WHEN I CAME. NOW I AM IN CHARGE -- I -- KURRAM KHAN, THE HAKIM!



WHICH OF YOU HAS AN ACHE OR PAIN? YOU? YOU?...

MA'UZBILLAH /⁶HEE--YEE--YEE / THIS HAKIM IS REALLY KING SAHIB / LOOK AT HIM / IS HE NOT A CLEVER ONE?

ISMAL, YOU AND DARYA KHAN WILL ACT AS MY ASSISTANTS SHOULD THE NEED ARISE. NOW, THEN, WHO KNOWS THE WAY TO KHINJAN?

WHO DOES NOT?

WE ARE THY MEN / LEAD AND WE FOLLOW!



*May God protect us!

FOR TWO DAYS THE PARTY PRESSED ONWARD, WITH DEATH LURKING IN THE HILLS ON EVERY SIDE. THEN, ON THE MORNING OF THE THIRD DAY, THEY REACHED KHINJAN'S GRAY, FORBIDDING WALLS. SUDDENLY, THERE WAS A VOLLEY OF GUNFIRE . . .

TURN BACK, SAHIB / BACK . . . BACK! YOU WILL NEVER COME OUT ALIVE!

SILENCE / FORWARD / ON TO KHINJAN!



ALTHOUGH THERE WERE TWO MORE VOLLEYS, KING PRESSED ON TO THE FOOT OF KHINJAN'S WALLS. "WHO ARE YE?" HOWLED A MAN FROM THE PARAPET ABOVE. ISMAL WAVED A SIGNAL WITH HIS ARMS. THEN . . .

YE MAY ENTER!

FORWARD!

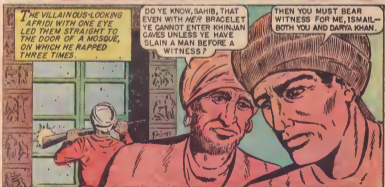
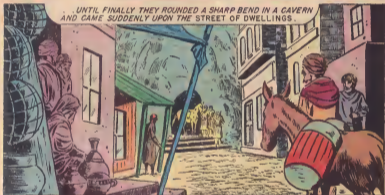


A FEW MOMENTS LATER, A VILLAINOUS-LOOKING AFRIDI SWUNG OPEN A GREAT TEAK-WOOD DOOR. THE AFRIDI DID NOT SPEAK, BUT . . .

HE IS MOTIONING US INSIDE, SO LET US BE ON!



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES



PRESENTLY, THE MOSQUE DOOR OPENED AND THEY STOOD FACE-TO-FACE WITH A MULLAH* WHO WAS HAIRLESS, EVEN TO EYEBROWS AND EYELASHES. KING SHOWED YASMINI'S BRACELET AND THE MULLAH'S BARE EYELIDS BLINKED IN RECOGNITION.

*A leader and teacher of the Moslem faith.

WHOM HAVE YE SLAIN? AND WHO ARE YOUR WITNESSES?

I HAVE SLAIN AN ENGLISHMAN BY THE NAME OF ATHELSTAN KING.

I WILL BEAR WITNESS THAT IT IS SO.

AND I!



WITHIN THE MOSQUE, THE HAIRLESS MULLAH LIFTED A STRANGE BRONZE MALLET AND SMOTE THE WALL. A SECTION OF IT SLID BACK, FORMING A GAPING BLACK HOLE ABOUT TEN FEET SQUARE.

COME! MANY HAVE ENTERED... NOT ALL HAVE COME OUT AGAIN.

MY HORSE SEEMS NOT TO LIKE THIS DARKNESS.



DARYA KHAN AND ISMAIL HELPED KING GET HIS HORSE INTO THE TUNNEL. THEN THE WALL CLOSED ONCE MORE, SHUTTING OUT THE THREE BEARERS AND THE REST OF THE ANIMALS. KING'S TERRIFIED HORSE BOLTED, AND THE AFRIDI SAID:

FOLLOW NOT THE HORSE. I WILL SHOW YOU THE WAY. I AM HER MAN.



THE TUNNEL WOUND LIKE A SNAKE-FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, GRADUALLY GROWING LIGHTER AND LIGHTER, UNTIL SUDDENLY THEY CAME TO A BLAZE OF BLUE SKY.



THEY EMERGED UPON A ROAD CUT LIKE A LEDGE INTO THE MOUNTAIN. IMMEDIATELY THEIR EARS WERE DEAFENED BY THE DIN AND ROAR OF POUNDING WATER...



IS THIS THE HEART OF THE HILLS MEN BOAST ABOUT?

NAY, NOT THIS, HAKIM SAHIB. DOWN THERE IS THE EARTH'S DRINK!

BUT THE ONE-EYED GUIDE BECKONED THEM IMPATIENTLY ALONG THE LEDGE ABOVE THE ROARING RIVER, PAST A HUNDRED CAVES, UNTIL...



THY CAVE, HAKIM. BE CONTENT TO REST HERE

ALLAH REWARD THEE, BROTHER

INSIDE THE CAVE, THE GUIDE PRODUCED THREE DIL LAMPS AND THEN DEPARTED. A GROUP OF NATIVES WAS BUSY SETTING OUT FOOD AND PROVISIONS...



A COMFORTABLE PLACE INDEED, ISMAIL, AND IT SEEMS WE WILL BE WELL PROVIDED FOR.

KING ACCIDENTALLY TOUCHED THE SWOLLEN JAW OF ONE OF THE NATIVES AND THE MAN HOWLED IN PAIN...

DOES THE JAW PAIN THEE? TELL ME, FOR I AM KURRAM KHAN, THE HAKIM

AH, GOOD HAKIM, FIRE AND MY VEINS ARE ONE!



ISMAIL AND DARYA KHAN QUICKLY THREW THE MAN TO THE GROUND AND HELD HIM WHILE KING DREW OUT THREE BACK TEETH IN QUICK SUCCESSION, TO MAKE SURE HE GOT THE RIGHT ONE...

THERE, MY BROTHER! THREE TEETH HAVE I PULLED AND NO LONGER WILL THE DEVILS HAUNT THY SLEEP! IF OTHERS IN KHINJAN ARE IN PAIN, TELL THEM I AM HERE!



SUCH WAS THE RELIEF OF THE NATIVE THAT HE SPREAD THE NEWS. SOON, KING'S CAVE WAS FILLED TO OVERFLOWING.

I FIND MANY FRESH WOUNDS..ALL CAUSED BY BULLETS..HAS THERE BEEN FIGHTING?

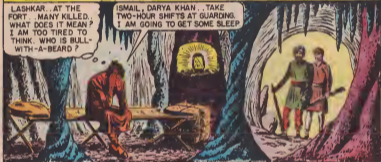
AYE. IN THE KHYBER. A SMALL LASHKAR AT THE FORT. WE SLEW MANY. NOT A JIHAD--YET! BULL-WITH-A-BEARD HOLDS BACK. THE JIHAD WILL COME LATER!



FINALLY NIGHT CAME AND THE NATIVES RETREATED FROM THE CAVE, AS IF THEY FEARED GHOSTS. KING SANK WEARILY ON A COT.

LASHKAR.. AT THE FORT.. MANY KILLED.. WHAT DOES IT MEAN? I AM TOO TIRED TO THINK. WHO IS BULL-WITH-A-BEARD?

ISMAIL, DARYA KHAN.. TAKE TWO-HOUR SHIFTS AT GUARDING. I AM GOING TO GET SOME SLEEP



HE WAS ASLEEP AT ONCE. THEN, IT SEEMED, HE DREAMED OF YASMINI, AS SHE HAD LOOKED IN THE PHOTOGRAPH.

KING SAHIB.. KURRAM KHAN. HE SLEEPS. IT IS GOOD THAT HE SLEEPS.



IT WAS PAST DAWN WHEN KING AWOK. . .

I'M GROGGY.. AS IF I'D BEEN DRUGGED. AND WHAT IS THAT STRANGE ODOR IN THE AIR? PERFUME / YASMINI'S PERFUME! AND THERE IS THE SAME CLOUD OF INCENSE AS THERE WAS IN HER HOUSE IN DELHI!





YASMINI'S BRACELET IS GONE! SO IS THE DAGGER FROM UNDER MY SHIRT! AND MY PISTOL AND AMMUNITION! ISMAIL! -- DARYA KHAN!

THEY ARE GONE, TOO! FOOL THAT I AM! WHAT RIGHT HAD I TO SLEEP? A MAN IN THE RANKS WOULD BE SHOT FOR DOING LESS! IT WAS ALL REAL... IT WAS NO DREAM!



KING WALKED TO THE CAVE ENTRANCE. PERHAPS ISMAIL AND DARYA KHAN WERE MERELY BREATHING SOME FRESH AIR. BUT...



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

GO NO FARTHER! IT IS NOT FOR YOU TO ASK WHY, BUT TO OBEY!

AT INTERVALS THROUGHOUT THE DAY, YASMINI SENT KING FOOD BY SILENT MESSENGERS. IT WAS DUSK ONCE MORE WHEN ISMAIL CAME.



COME, LITTLE HAKIM. SHE BIDS ME TAKE THEE.

TURNING ON HIS HEEL, ISMAIL LED KING OUT OF THE CAVE AND ALONG A LEDGE TO A PLACE HIGH ABOVE THE ROARING WATERFALL.



THEN ISMAIL HURRIED INTO ANOTHER CAVE AND DOWN A DEVIL'S STAIRWAY OF UNEVEN BOULDERS FOR THIRTY MINUTES, UNTIL KING WAS BRUISED IN A DOZEN PLACES.



THEY WERE NOW SIX OR SEVEN HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE ENTRANCE TO THE CAVE WHERE THEY HAD STARTED. NOW A TURN AND THE GLOOM BECAME LUMINOUS.



THE EARTH'S DRINK! COME!

SUCH POWER! ISMAIL, HOW HIGH IS IT? HOW DEEP?

ASK ALLAH HE MADE IT! WE ARE ALMOST THERE, LITTLE HAKIM.

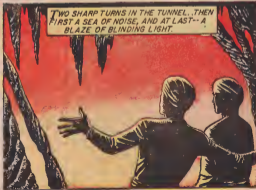


THEN THEY ONCE MORE ENTERED THE CAVE AND RAN FOR AN HOUR UP A GENTLE SLOPE...



AHEAD! JUST AHEAD!

TWO SHARP TURNS IN THE TUNNEL. THEN FIRST A SEA OF NOISE, AND AT LAST-- A BLAZE OF BLINDING LIGHT.



WHEN HIS EYES BECAME ADJUSTED TO THE GLARE, KING FOUND HIMSELF ENTERING A HUGE AUDITORIUM PEOPLED BY THOUSANDS. SOMEWHERE IN THE CAVERNOUS DEPTHS A MUSIC BOX BLARED OUT THE MARSEILLAISE.



ISMAIL PUSHED HIS WAY TOWARD THE FRONT ROW TO FIND SEATS FOR KING AND HIMSELF.



COME, LITTLE HAKIM, FOLLOW ME. THIS IS THE CAVERN OF THE EARTH'S DRINK.

SUDDENLY, THE MUSIC BOX STOPPED PLAYING AND GUARDS MARCHED INTO THE ARENA, BLOWING ON LONG HORNS.



THEN, OUT OF A CAVERN AND ONTO THE STONE STAGE SHE CAME, WHIRLING MADLY IN A DANCE THAT COULD SILENCE ALL MUSIC IN ITS OWN WILD, SOUNDLESS RHYTHM.

YASMINI, NO ORNAMENT OR STATUE COULD EVER DO HER JUSTICE. SHE IS THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I'VE EVER SEEN.



WHEN HER DANCE WAS FINISHED, YASMINI LOOKED DOWN FROM THE STONE STAGE. KING KNEW FROM HER COMMANDING PRESENCE HOW MUCH POWER SHE WIELDED IN THE "HILLS".

ARE THERE ANY WHO WOULD SPEAK? LET THEM COME FORTH!



THERE ARE STRANGERS AMONG US! ONE SWORE HE SLEW A MAN. THE OTHERS ARE HIS WITNESSES. THEY SWORE THEY HAD SLAIN AN UNBELIEVER!

GOOD!

GOOD!





BUT LATER,
WORD CAME TO
ME THAT THEY
HAD LIED!

THEN
SLAY
THEM!



SLAY THEM! SLAY THEM!
SLAY THEM!
SLAY THEM!!



THOSE MEN ARE MINE / THE PROOF
THEY BROUGHT WAS STOLEN FROM
THEM! THEY HAD GOOD PROOF!
AN ENGLISH OFFICER!

WHO IS
THAT
MAN WHO
DEFIES
YASMINI?

HE IS MUHAMMAD ANIM, ALSO
KNOWN AS BULL - WITH - A -
BEARD. A MULLAH WITH FOUR
THOUSAND FOLLOWERS. HE
IS VERY POWERFUL.



THEN YASMINI'S VOICE SPOKE,
HIGH AND MUSICAL.

MUHAMMAD ANIM LIES! THOSE MEN LIE!
AND THEIR LIES FAIL LIKE THE LASHKAR
MUHAMMAD ANIM IS FORMING IN THE HILLS
WILL FAIL! AWAY WITH THOSE THREE!



AIY-Y-Y-Y-Y!



IS THERE ANOTHER STRANGER?

THERE IS ONE OTHER. I WILL SUMMON HIM.

KURRAM KHAN! COME FORWARD! BRING THY WITNESSES!



THE SKIN DOWN KING'S BACK TURNED TO GOOSE FLESH. YASMINI KNEW, YET SHE ASKED PROOF. WAS IT ALL A TRAP? WHY WERE ISMAIL AND DURYA KHAN GOING WITH HIM? WOULD THEY LIE AGAIN?

I AM KURRAM KHAN!

YASMINI STOOD LOOKING INTO KING'S FACE, HER EYES LAUGHING MOCKINGLY.

SPEAK, KURRAM KHAN. TELL THEM WHOM YOU SLEW!

CAPTAIN ATHELSTAN KING! IN THE KHYBER PASS!

I AM WITNESS!

AND I!

PROOF! SHOW US HIS HEAD!



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES



GRASP THIS HEAD,
KURRAM KHAN! HOLD
IT BY THE EARS, FOR
THE HAIR IS SHORT!



GOOD! GOOD!
THROW IT
TO US!



HE LIES! THAT IS THE HEAD
STOLEN FROM MY MEN! SLAY HIM!



THROW IT TO THEM,
KURRAM KHAN.
IT IS THE CUSTOM.

VERY
WELL!

CLASSICS Illustrated

FOR A MOMENT, KING STOOD POISED WITH THE HEAD OF HIS PRETENDED VICTIM IN HIS HAND. HE WAS ABOUT TO THROW IT TO THE CROWD WHEN HE SAW THE FACE . . .

MY BROTHER!

THROW IT, KURRAM KHAN / THROW IT TO THEM!



HOLDING THE HEAD BETWEEN HIS HANDS, KING WALKED TOWARD THE EDGE OF "EARTH'S DRINK" BUT MOVED TOWARD THE CROWD, TOO, AS IF INTENDING TO GET NEARER, FOR A BETTER THROW TO THEM. INSTEAD.



SLAY HIM!
SLAY HIM!

NAY!
KURRAM
KHAN WILL
LIVE!



THEN, AS IF TO DISTRACT THEM, YASMINI GAVE A SIGNAL FOR MUSIC AND SWUNG INTO A WILD DANCE.



AND AS THE GUARDS MOVED AT HER SIGNAL, YASMINI SPRANG UPON THEIR SHIELDS AND DANCED WITH AN ABANDON THAT BROUGHT THE CROWD TO ITS FEET, SHOUTING WITH ECSTASY.



AS SHE DANCED, ISMAIL LED KING OUT OF THE ARENA. THERE WAS NO TIME FOR REFLECTION. HE COULD ONLY FOLLOW BLINDLY.



ISMAIL HURRIED DOWNWARD, THEN CROPT TO A NARROW LEDGE ALONG WHICH HE CRAWLED FOR AT LEAST AN HOUR, WITH KING FOLLOWING, WHILE HE HELD HIS BREATH



ONE LITTLE SLIP HERE IS CERTAIN DEATH!

COME, LITTLE HAKIM, COME!

SUDDENLY, ISMAIL DISAPPEARED SOMEWHERE IN THE DEPTHS OF THE CAVERN WALL. KING LAY FLAT, STARING AHEAD TO WHERE HE SAW TWO RED LIGHTS GLOWING IN THE DARKNESS.



WHAT CAN THOSE TWO RED LIGHTS MEAN?

KING SAHIB / KING SAHIB!

OH, YOU, REWA GUNGA! YOU MUST HAVE KNOWN A SECRET WAY INTO KHINJAN AFTER ALL!

LISTEN, KING SAHIB, I HAVE COME TO WARN YOU TO GO BACK GO BACK, SAHIB!



BEYOND, AT THE RED LIGHTS, IS A CURTAIN. IF YOU PASS BEYOND THAT CURTAIN YOU WILL FOREVER CEASE TO BE YOURSELF! YOU WILL CEASE TO BE YOURSELF! IS THAT CLEAR?

NO MATTER. MY MIND IS MADE UP. I AM GOING AHEAD!



REWIA GUNGA LAUGHED SHRILLY AND DISAPPEARED. KING INCHED HIS WAY TO THE END OF THE LEDGE THAT LED DOWN INTO A SORT OF STONE STREET. ACROSS THE STREET, HE FOUND THE SOURCE OF THE TWO RED LIGHTS.



HELLO! HELLO!
KURRAM KHAN
CALLS!



WHAT HAVE WE HERE?
ARE THOSE TWO ASLEEP?
OR ARE THEY DEAD?

THIS IS A MYSTERY. THESE TWO ARE DEAD, YET PRESERVED WONDERFULLY WELL. THE MAN WEARS ROMAN ARMOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS OLD. YET THE WOMAN'S DRESS IS OF NEW MATERIAL.



BUT--THE RESEMBLANCE OF THE WOMAN TO YASMINI. THAT IS THE AMAZING THING. AND ... YES... THE MAN DOES NOT LOOK TOO UNLIKE ME!

ATHELSTAN!



AT FIRST I TRIED TO KILL YOU. BUT I WAS IN MY HOUSE IN DELHI WHEN REWA GUNGA BROUGHT YOU THERE THEN I SAW YOU. THEN I KNEW I DIDN'T WANT YOU KILLED.

TELL ME MORE, PRINCESS



THEN I MERELY PUT OBSTACLES IN YOUR PATH -- AND YOU CAME IN SPITE OF THEM. THAT'S WHY I SAVED YOUR LIFE AT THE CAVERN OF THE EARTH'S DRINK. DOES THAT NOT TELL YOU THAT OUR HOUR HAS COME?

OUR HOUR? ARE WE NOT WORKING TOWARD THE SAME PURPOSE?



I FOUND THEM ON THAT BEG AS YOU SEE THEM, ATHELSTAN. AND I KNEW I WAS THE WOMAN'S IMAGE. I RECLOTHED HER, LEARNED HER DANCES FROM THE BRACELET. SHE IS THE HEART OF THE HILLS!

BUT WHY GO I BELONG IN THIS SCHEME? BECAUSE I LOOK LIKE THE MAN? IS THAT WHAT YOU MEAN?



YASMINI'S LIPS WERE CLOSE TO KING'S, INVITING HIS KISS, AND HE PRESSED HIS LIPS TO HERS. THERE WAS A THRILL IN YASMINI'S LIPS-- BUT KING WAS AWARE OF A GREATER VICTORY IN THEIR SURRENDER. FOR HE WAS WINNING!



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

YASMIN THEN LED KING TO A ROOM EVEN MORE LAVISHLY FURNISHED THAN THE FIRST HE HAD ENTERED.

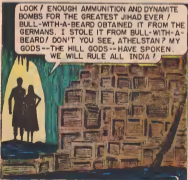
THE PEOPLE KNOW OF THOSE TWO--AND BELIEVE I AM THE HEART OF THE HILLS. COME TO LIFE. DON'T YOU SEE, ATHELSTAN? THEY WILL BELIEVE YOU ARE HE! THE WARRIOR! WE SHALL FORM A JIHAD WITH THE TEN THOUSAND IN KHINJAN!



ALL INDIA SHALL BE OURS!



BUT COME THERE IS STILL MORE TO SEE.



LOOK! ENOUGH AMMUNITION AND DYNAMITE BOMBS FOR THE GREATEST JIHAD EVER! BULL-WITH-A-BEARD OBTAINED IT FROM THE GERMANS. I STOLE IT FROM BULL-WITH-A-BEARD! DON'T YOU SEE, ATHELSTAN? MY GODS--THE HILL GODS--HAVE SPOKEN. WE WILL RULE ALL INDIA!



OH, WHY DON'T YOU SPEAK? I WILL LOVE YOU BETTER THAN SHE LOVED HIM. ATHELSTAN! DID YOU NOT SEE THAT SHE KILLED HIM AND THEN HERSELF?

YES, I SAW. I CARRIED HER KNIFE. OR HIS UNTIL YOU TOOK IT. AND I WORE HER BRACELET. OR HIS.

I BORROWED THEM BECAUSE THE HILL PEOPLE RECOGNIZE THEM BUT I HAD TO RETURN THEM. I KNEW THEY WOULD KEEP YOU SAFE— WOULD GET YOU THROUGH THE HILLS.



YOU BELIEVE YOU LOVE INDIA MORE THAN ME. BUT I WILL PROVE HOW WRONG YOU ARE. FOR I WILL WRITE A LETTER THAT WILL CUT YOU OFF FROM INDIA FOREVER. YOU WILL LOSE... SO THAT YOU MAY WIN!



ISMAIL LED KING THROUGH THE DARK CAVERNS, SWIFTLY, SURELY. KING HAD NO MEANS WHATSOEVER OF GUESSING THEIR DIRECTION.



THEN YASMINI LED KING OUTSIDE ONTO A LEDGE OF ROCK THAT STOOD THOUSANDS OF FEET ABOVE THE HOME OF THUNDER. THEY WATCHED THE SUN RISE ABOVE THE PEAKS.



I LOVE YOU, ATHELSTAN, BUT I THINK YOU DO NOT LOVE ME BECAUSE YOU CONSIDER ME A MURDERESS WHO KILLED YOUR BROTHER. BUT YOU MUST BELIEVE I DID NOT. OR ELSE THROW ME FROM THIS CLIFF. IT WAS BULL-WITH-A-BEARD WHO COMMITTED THAT CRIME!

AND HOW WOULD IT SERVE INDIA TO KILL YOU?

THEN, IN AN INSTANT, SHE WAS GONE. KING WAITED FOR AN HOUR. SUDDENLY



COME, LITTLE HAKIM, COME!

ALL AT ONCE, ISMAIL POINTED TO A LIGHT AHEAD AND DISAPPEARED. KING FOLLOWED THE LIGHT AND

ATHELSTAN, I HAVE JUST WRITTEN A LETTER ABOUT YOU, WHICH REWA GUNGA WILL DELIVER TO GENERAL COATES. SHALL I READ IT TO YOU?

PLEASE DO.



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

YOUR CAPTAIN KING HAS BEEN TOO MUCH TROUBLE. HE HAS TAKEN MONEY FROM THE GERMANS. HE ADOPTED NATIVE DRESS. HE CALLS HIMSELF KURRAM KHAN. HE SLEW HIS OWN BROTHER IN THE KHYBER PASS. THESE MEN WILL SAY THAT HE CARRIED THE HEAD TO KHINJAN, AND THEIR WORD IS TRUE, FOR I, YASMINI, SAW. HE USED THE HEAD, FOR A PASSPORT TO OBTAIN ADMITTANCE. HE PROCLAIMS A JIHAD! HE URGES INVASION OF INDIA! HE HELD HIS BROTHER'S HEAD BEFORE FIVE THOUSAND MEN AND BOASTED OF THE MURDER. THE NEXT YOU HEAR OF YOUR CAPTAIN KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES, HE WILL BE LEADING A JIHAD INTO INDIA. YOU WOULD HAVE BETTER TRUSTED ME.



YASMINI SMILED AND STARED HARD INTO KING'S EYES. HE WAVED, DRAWING HIS HAND ACROSS THEM.



SLEEP, ATHELSTAN! SLEEP! I HAVE HYPNOTIZED YOU, AND YOU ARE IN MY POWER NOW!

YASMINI'S ERROR HAD BEEN IN BELIEVING SHE HAD HYPNOTIZED KING HE HAD ONLY BEEN DEAD TIRED... AND SLEPT THE CLOCK AROUND. BUT ON AWAKENING



TO WHAT DO I OWE THIS EARLY CALL? WHEREVER I AM, IT IS NOT WHERE I FELL ASLEEP LAST NIGHT.

SHE HAD YOU CARRIED HERE. WE SAW WHERE THEY BROUGHT YOU. NOW INSTEAD OF BEING HER PRISONER, YOU ARE MUHAMMAD ANIM'S!

AND WHAT GOOD AM I TO MUHAMMAD ANIM?



I KNOW THE SECRET OF THE SLEEPERS. AND I KNOW WHY SHE HAS SAVED THY LIFE, AND MADE THEE CAPTIVE. WOULDST THOU NOT BE OF VALUE AS MY PRISONER?

DID SHE HAVE SUCH FAITH IN MY LOYALTY THAT SHE LEFT NO GUARDS AT THE CAVE ENTRANCE?

BAH! THOSE GUARDS SWIM BENEATH THE WATERS OF EARTH'S DRINK, WHERE I TOSSED THEM!



SINCE THE NATIVE WAS THE VERY ONE WHOSE TEETH KING HAD EXTRACTED, HE FELT FREE TO DRAW HIM INTO CONVERSATION. WALKING SLOWLY, SO THAT HE COULD NOT BE OVERHEARD BY THE MULLAH, KING SAID.

I THOUGHT YOU WERE HER MAN?

UNTIL YOU CAME, HAKIM, TO BE THE MULLAH'S MAN WAS TO BE HERS, ALSO!



IN TRUTH, HAKIM, I SERVED THE BRITISH FOR ELEVEN YEARS. BUT THERE WAS TROUBLE WITH AN OFFICER, AND I DESERTED.

BEFORE COMING HERE, I HEARD THAT THE ARMY IS PARDONING ALL DESERTERS WHO RETURN TO THE SERVICE.



IT WAS A LONG MARCH OUT OF KHINJAN, BUT BULL-WITH-A-BEARO KNEW SECRET MOUNTAIN PASSES. ALL THAT WAY, KING WATCHED THE EXPRESSION ON HIS NATIVE FRIEND'S FACE AND SPOKE TO HIM.

IT IS A GOOD LIFE, THE ARMY.

THEN WHY NOT GO BACK? NO MATTER WHAT YOUR TROUBLE WAS, I'M CERTAIN THE ENGLISH WOULD PARDON YOU, ESPECIALLY IF YOU COULD FIND PERHAPS A HUNDRED OTHER DESERTERS TO GO BACK WITH YOU. THE ENGLISH NEED ALL THE MEN THEY CAN GET.



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES



THE NATIVE SAID HE WOULD THINK ABOUT IT. ALL DAY THEY TRAVELED, AND LATE THAT NIGHT, THE MULLAH SAID, "MY CAMP! ALMDSST FOUR THOUSAND MEN!"

WHAT ARE FOUR THOUSAND MEN AGAINST INDIA?

YOU SHALL SEE.

NO SOONER WERE THEY IN CAMP THAN BULL-WITH-A-BEARD LOOSENED KING'S BONDS AND OUTLINED HIS PLAN...

SINCE SHE LOVES THEE, SHE MUST BUY THEE BACK. THOU SHALT WRITE A LETTER. IF SHE AGREES TO MY TERMS, YOU AND SHE WILL BE KING AND QUEEN OF INDIA. BUT I WILL OWN KHINJAN AND I WILL RULE! IF SHE AGREES NOT, I WILL STORM KHINJAN, AND THROW YOU BOTH INTO EARTH'S DRINK! TELL HER THAT!

KING WROTE THE LETTER AS DIRECTED, AND...



THERE TAKE IT! MAKE SPEED!

IN THE SHADOWS, OUT OF THE HEARING OF THE MULLAH...

RECRUIT THE ONE HUNDRED MEN, WHILE YOU ARE AT KHINJAN!



AYE!



ALL THE NEXT DAY AND FAR INTO THE FOLLOWING NIGHT, KING WORKED AMONG THE SICK AND WOUNDED IN MUHAMMAD ANIM'S CAMP. AT MIDNIGHT, A VOICE CALLED TO HIM

REWA GUNGA!
HOW DID YOU
GET HERE?

NEVER MIND! I HAVE
WORD FROM HER!



SHE SENDS
YOU... THIS!

KING LEAPED AT GUNGA AND THEY ROLLED OVER AND OVER, STRUGGLING FURIOUSLY, BUT BEFORE KING REACHED AN ADVANTAGE, HE WAS WEARY TO THE POINT OF SICKNESS. THEN REWA GUNGA DROPPED HIS KNIFE



KING THEN DID THE WRONG THING. HE POUNCED ON THE KNIFE INSTEAD OF REWA GUNGA. WITH A SUDDEN, SWIFT EFFORT, REWA GUNGA FREED HIMSELF AND WAS GONE LIKE A SHADOW AMONG THE SHADOWS



KING WAS WEARY AND SICK WHEN HE RETURNED TO THE MULLAH'S CAVE. AS HE PASSED THE FIRE, SOMETHING GLITTERED ON HIS GARMENT.

GOLDEN HAIR!
YASMINI'S HAIR!



THEN REWA GUNGA IS HER TRUE LOVER. FOOL. TO THINK SHE EVER DID LOVE ME. IN THE HANDS OF BULL-WITH-A-BEARD I AM OF NO USE TO HER, SO SHE ORDERED ME KILLED.



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

THE FOLLOWING DAY...



WHO COMES?

IT IS YASMINI'S MESSENGER. A TOKEN OF FRIENDSHIP SHE HAS KEPT YOUR MAN HOSTAGE AND HAS SENT HER MAN TO YOU!

THE MESSAGE WAS WRITTEN IN ARABIC AND BULL-WITH-A-BEARD HANDED IT TO KING. FOR ALTHOUGH HE WAS A MULLAH, HE COULD NOT READ...

SHE WRITES: "COME, THEN. BRING ALL YOUR MEN AND ENTER KHINJAN CAVES. WE WILL STRIKE A BARGAIN IN THE CAVERN OF EARTH'S DRINK."

KHINJAN IS MINE! INDIA IS MINE!



THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE MARCH BEGAN. ISMAIL KEPT CLOSE TO KING.



SHE BIDS ME GIVE THEE WORD, LITTLE HAKIM, THAT YE FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS AND ENTER NOT INTO KHINJAN.

VERY KIND, ISMAIL, SINCE SHE HAS ALREADY SENT REWA GUNGA TO KILL ME.



YET, WHEN NIGHT CAME, KING FOLLOWED ISMAIL. KING BELIEVED THAT IF YASMINI WAS AN ENEMY RATHER THAN A FRIEND, THERE WAS NO SENSE IN LOSING TRACK OF THAT ENEMY.



ISMAIL LED KING TO A HIGH PLACE IN THE HILLS THAT OVERLOOKED KHINJAN. THERE THEY WAITED. AT DAWN.

WHO COMES? OH, MY FRIEND OF THE ACHING JAW! WITH FOLLOWERS!

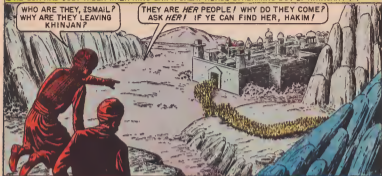
WITH ONE HUNDRED AND ELEVEN WHO SEEK PARDON FROM THE ENGLISH.



THE SUN HAD JUST RISEN WHEN KING SAW A GREAT HORDE STREAMING OUT OF KHINJAN.

WHO ARE THEY, ISMAIL?
WHY ARE THEY LEAVING
KHINJAN?

THEY ARE HER PEOPLE! WHY DO THEY COME?
ASK HER! IF YE CAN FIND HER, HAKIM!



AFTER THE HORDE COMING OUT OF
KHINJAN HAD BEEN HIDDEN IN THE
HILLS, A LONG, THIN COLUMN OF MEN
LED BY BULL-WITH-A-BEARD ENTERED
KHINJAN CAVES.



WHEN THE BEARDED MULLAH AND ALL HIS
MEN WERE WITHIN, A BLACK MARE ROARED
OUT OF THE PLACE, BEARING A LONE RIDER...



THE HORSE CAME STRAIGHT UP THE MOUNTAIN
TO WHERE KING STOOD.

SHE SENDS WORD, KURRAM KHAN THE
HAKIM! SHE SAID TO TELL YDU HER LOVE IS
TRUE, EVEN IF IN A MOMENT OF ANGER
SHE SENT ME TO KILL YOU!



KING OF THE KHYBER RIFLES

SUDDENLY, THERE CAME A SHOCK AND A RUMBLING. THE HILLS SWAYED, THEN ROCK AND EARTH ROARED AND SPAT FIRE. THEN THERE BURST FORTH A COLUMN OF WATER, INMEASURABLY HUGE, THAT BLOTTED OUT THE SUN. EARTH'S DRINK, BLOCKED BY THE EXPLOSION, HAD FOUND A NEW WAY OVER THE BARRIER BEFORE PLUNGING AGAIN INTO THE BOWELS OF THE EARTH.



THAT IS WHAT A WOMAN CAN DO FOR A MAN. SHE SET A FUSE AND EXPLODED ALL THE DYNAMITE. SHE SENT ME TO SAY GOOD-BY TO YOU. SHE SAID, "TELL KING SAHIB I GIVE HIM INDIA AND ALL ASIA THAT WERE AT MY MERCY."



SO ENDS THE HEART OF THE HILLS. THINK KINDLY OF HER, SAHIB. SHE THOUGHT WELL ENOUGH OF YOU.



REWA GUNGA WHEELED HIS HORSE AND WAS GONE BEFORE KING COULD MAKE A MOVE TO STOP HIM. THEN KING TURNED TO THE NATIVES.

GET YOUR MEN TOGETHER FOR THE PARDONS, FRIEND. THERE WILL BE NO JIHAD NOW.

AYE. WE ARE READY, HAKIM.

AT ALI MASJID, KING MADE HIS TRUE IDENTITY KNOWN THROUGH A SECRET SIGN, OBTAINED A FRESH MOUNT AND LED THE DESERTERS TO THE FORT AT JAMRUD. THEY WERE MET BY MAJOR COURTENAY WHO GREETED KING VERY COOLY.

WELL, I'M BACK AT LAST! THESE ARE ALL DESERTERS, COME FOR PARDONS.

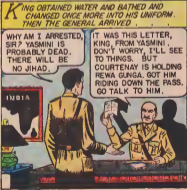
YOU COME WITH ME, CAPTAIN KING. MY MEN WILL TAKE CARE OF THE OTHERS.



WHEN KING AND COURTENAY WERE ALONE.

WHY ALL THE STUFFINESS? WHY AM I GREETED BY YOU AT THE END OF A TUBE, SO TO SPEAK?

YOU'RE UNDER ARREST. I'M WATCHING YOU, MYSELF, SO YOU NEEDN'T HAVE A SENTRY OVER YOU. I CAN TELL YOU WHY, BUT I'D RATHER WAIT FOR THE GENERAL. HE'LL BE HERE SOON.



KING OBTAINED WATER AND BATHED AND CHANGED ONCE MORE INTO HIS UNIFORM. THEN THE GENERAL ARRIVED.

WHY AM I ARRESTED, SIR? YASMINI IS PROBABLY DEAD. THERE WILL BE NO JIHAD.

IT WAS THIS LETTER, KING, FROM YASMINI. DON'T WORRY, I'LL SEE TO THINGS. BUT COURTENAY IS HOLDING REWA GUNGA. GOT HIM RIDING DOWN THE PASS. GO TALK TO HIM.



ANO SO ENDS THE STORY OF KING AND YASMINI. BECAUSE OF THEM, THERE WAS NO JIHAD IN SPITE OF ALL THE EFFORTS OF THE TURKS AND THE GERMANS. IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT THEY RECEIVED THEIR REWARD OF HAPPINESS WITH EACH OTHER AFTER THE WAR WAS OVER.



NOW THAT YOU HAVE READ THE CLASSICS Illustrated EDITION, DON'T MISS THE ADDED ENJOYMENT OF READING THE ORIGINAL, OBTAINABLE AT YOUR SCHOOL OR PUBLIC LIBRARY.

TALBOT MUNDY

TALBOT MUNDY was one of the most prolific writers of fiction of modern times. As evidence of this, he has left some thirty-nine novels and countless numbers of short stories. Most of his novels were very popular, and some of them are exceptional in their treatment. All of his works are outstanding for the amount of unusual and interesting information they give the reader.

Mundy was born in London, England, on April 23, 1879. His early years were spent in England. After finishing his schooling at Rugby, he studied agriculture in Germany. Then he obtained a government job in Baroda, India. India fascinated Mundy. During the years he spent there, he traveled throughout that strange land, usually on horseback, going as far north as Tibet. It was during his stay in India that he began to write novels. They were successful almost at once.

One of the things that interested him most in India was the study of Indian occult teachings. He lost no opportunity to study them wherever he went in that country. He was particularly attracted by the magicians of India. Although he found on studying them and their methods that many were charlatans, yet some of them possessed occult and psychic powers that really could be classified as magic, in the sense that science has never explained nor been able to disregard them.

During his wide travels, two other places captured his great interest and attention: Australia and Africa. His travels in Africa took in the whole length and breadth of the continent. While he was employed in government service in Kenya, Mundy learned several of the native languages. In both India and Africa, he did a great deal of big game hunting.



In 1911, Talbot Mundy came to the United States and soon thereafter took out his first citizenship papers. In 1917, he became a citizen of the United States. From then on, he called the U. S. his home, although much of his time was spent traveling in Egypt and the Near East, including parts of Arabia. In addition, Mundy spent some time in Mexico and Yucatan, where he made an intensive study of Mayan history.

Talbot Mundy resided in Florida and there he wrote many of his novels and short stories. His short stories, published in popular magazines, became as well known as his novels. Some of the latter have been translated into French, German, Hungarian, Swedish, and Japanese.

Many of Mundy's novels, such as "King of the Khyber Rifles," tend to be fantastic, but he worked with such deftness, thoroughness as to detail, and enthusiasm, that his tales are convincing, his characters living and breathing people.

Mundy was a big, fair-complexioned man, partly bald, with a pleasant, earnest face. He seemed hardly the type of person who could create such stories of intrigue and devilry as comprised most of his writing.

Some of Talbot Mundy's most important novels were, "Rung Ho," published in 1914; "King of the Khyber Rifles," 1916; "The Ivory Trail," 1919; "Cock of the North," (similar to "King of the Khyber Rifles"), 1930; "Jim Grim," 1931; "East and West," 1937; "Old Ugly Face" (Mundy's last novel), 1939.

Talbot Mundy died on August 5, 1940. He left a rich heritage of rugged, exciting, interesting and poignant literature as his finest monument to a life of service to mankind's escape from boredom.

Great Lives **BALBOA**

Discoverer of the Pacific Ocean



IN 1513, a Spanish ship sailed from the West Indian island of Hispaniola (Haiti) bound for the Isthmus of Panama. The vessel was well out to sea when there

came a banging and a pounding from one of the supply barrels.

Sailors gathered around the barrel as the ship's captain, a dignified lawyer, Chief of Justice Enciso, came to see what was happening. Suddenly, the lid popped off and out stepped a man.

It was Vasco Munez de Balboa, tall, broad-shouldered and handsome. Balboa looked back in the barrel, whistled and out jumped his dog.

Enciso was furious. "Balboa, I told you I wasn't taking you on this voyage! Your debts aren't clear in Hispaniola!"

"Perhaps my debts only prove I'm no farmer. My sword has proven that I am a soldier!"

"I should put you off on the next island!" the captain ranted. However, Balboa was made one of the crew.

Vasco Balboa was one of the many young cavaliers who came from Spain to the New World seeking adventure, gold and fame. Having failed at farming, Balboa decided to stowaway and throw his luck in with the expedition.

Landing in Panama, the expedition found the established colony at Darien in a bad way. The Indians were hostile, the leaders quarreled among themselves and the people were discontented. Soon the colonists rejected the leadership of the overbearing Enciso and turned to Balboa instead.

The outraged Enciso sailed back to Spain where he reported to King Ferdinand that Balboa had stirred up revolution and appointed himself governor of Darien.

In Panama, Enciso was soon forgotten and Balboa began to explore the Isthmus for gold and precious stones.

Friendly relations were established with a nearby Indian tribe. In fact, Balboa married the chief's daughter.

On a visit to another tribe, Balboa found the chief's palace richly decorated with gold and silver. Here, at last, was some wealth. But the Indian's small amount of gold did not satisfy Balboa.

The Indians, seeing that Balboa and his men were displeased, told them that there was "much gold in the land of the sun-worshippers."

At first, Balboa distrusted the Indians but when the chief offered him a thousand men for the journey, he knew the chief spoke the truth. The Indians also told Balboa that on the journey he would see a "great new sea."

Early in September, 1513, Balboa, 190 Spaniards, and a thousand Indians set out across Panama to find the great sea. They slashed their way through tangled jungles, over high mountains, and down again to steaming swamps.

Finally, on September 25, they came to a mountain ridge on the west side of the Isthmus. Balboa ordered his men to stay behind as he climbed the peak.

There before him lay the sparkling blue waters of a vast ocean. The men moved up beside Balboa and gazed in amazement.

After three days, the expedition reached the shore of the Pacific. Balboa, with sword drawn, took possession of the waters and all the lands they touched in the name of the King of Spain. A cross was set up on the spot as a monument to the discovery.

Without ships, Balboa could not proceed to the land of the sun-worshippers. He returned to Darien and was destined never to reach the land of the sun-worshippers.

Soon after his great discovery, Vasco Munez de Balboa was taken back to Spain and tried for treason. He was beheaded in a public market place.

THE MIRACLE OF 1951

IN ALL the long and colorful history of baseball, there is nothing to compare with the sheer drama and intense excitement of the 1951 National League pennant race.

From the very start of that season, the Brooklyn Dodgers were all alone at the top of the league. In fact, on August 11th, the second-place New York Giants were 13½ games behind the league leaders. With only a month and a half to go, the Dodgers looked like a sure thing.

On August 17th, the Giants won a double-header and followed this twin victory with fourteen more consecutive wins. Sixteen straight wins! However, the Dodgers continued to play good ball and the New Yorkers hardly dented Brooklyn's big lead. The New York cause seemed hopeless.

But the Giants had become an inspired ball club and would not be denied. They scarcely lost a game (losing only 8 of their last 47 games) and slowly closed in on the Dodgers. Fans all over the country, with the exception of Brooklyn, began rooting for them. The Giants had changed a quiet, ordinary baseball season into one of intense interest.

As the season entered its last weeks, the Brooklyn players seemed to go to pieces. The batters lost their ability to hit and the pitchers lost their effectiveness. During the last week of the campaign, the Giants won five straight while Brooklyn had little to show for its last eight games. The seemingly impossible had happened. As the curtain rang down on the last play of the official season, the Dodgers and Giants were tied for first place!

A three-game playoff was necessary to decide the league championship. Excitement among baseball fans was at a peak and even people who had never before been interested in baseball were caught up in the fever.

The Giants won the first game on Jim Hearn's fine pitching and a home run by Bobby Thomson. But the Dodgers came

back the next day and slugged the Giants 10-0 behind their brilliant rookie pitcher, Clem Labine.

Then came the never-to-be-forgotten third and final game. Each manager had saved his ace pitcher for this all-important contest. Leo Durocher, scrappy skipper of the Giants, went with Sal Maglie, winner of 23 games during the regular season; "Chuck" Dressen hoped to win the big one with his fast-balling ace, Don Newcombe.

The innings went by and it seemed that the Giants had made their brilliant stretch drive in vain. Maglie, tired after a long, hard

season, lost his usually superb control and had to be relieved by Larry Jansen; Newcombe just kept pouring his fast ball past the Giant batters. As the Giants came to bat in the last half of the ninth inning, they trailed 4-1.

Alvin Dark led off with a single. When Don Mueller also singled, the spectators, who had started for the exits, paused. The league's runs-batted-in leader, Monte Irvin, then popped out. Again the fans mad for the exits. But Whitey Lockman sent them back to their seats by hitting a screaming double which scored Dark and sent Mueller to third.

Ralph Branca replaced Newcombe on the pitcher's mound for Brooklyn. Bobby Thomson, who had won the first playoff game with a home run, was at the plate, swinging his big bat. Could he repeat his first game's performance?

Branca's first pitch was a called strike. He reared back and threw another fast ball right down the middle. Thomson swung and connected. As the crowd screamed and the whole baseball world went practically hysterical, the ball sailed into the left field stands for a three-run home run.

The Miracle of 1951 had happened. The New York Giants, after trailing by 13½ games on August 11th, had come on to win the pennant.



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