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THE **KING** OF THE
MOUNTAINS

By EDMOND ABOUT



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THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

By EDMOND ABOUT



IN THE YEAR 1856, I HERMANN SCHULZE, A GERMAN BY BIRTH, RECEIVED A PRIZE ALLOWING ME TO STUDY BOTANY IN GREECE. IN ATHENS, I BOARDED AT THE HOME OF A MAN NAMED CHRISTODOLOS.

EVERY DAY, I WENT INTO THE COUNTRY TO STUDY PLANTS, BUT I DARED NOT GO AS FAR AS I WOULD HAVE LIKED. ATHENS WAS SURROUNDED BY BANDITS. I AM NOT A SOLDIER, AS YOU WILL SOON SEE, BUT I VALUE MY LIFE. IT IS A GIFT FROM MY PARENTS AND, FOR THEIR SAKES, I WISH TO PRESERVE IT AS LONG AS POSSIBLE.

AT CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE, IN THE EVENINGS, MY FELLOW BOARDERS AND I WOULD USUALLY TALK ABOUT THE BANDITS. ONE NIGHT, JOHN HARRIS, AN AMERICAN, TOLD US OF AN ENCOUNTER HE HAD HAD WITH THEM.

MY NEPHEW, WILLIAM LOBSTER, AND I WERE RETURNING FROM A RIDE ONE DAY.



SUDDENLY WE FELL INTO AMBUSH.

LET'S GIVE UP OUR CASH, IT'S NOT WORTH LOSING OUR LIVES FOR JUST A FEW DOLLARS.



BUT THE BANDITS WANTED TO HOLD US CAPTIVE SO HE HADN'T SPREAD THE ALARM TO OTHER TRAVELERS. THAT WAS THE LAST STRAW.



I SIGNALLED WILLIAM AND



THEY KILLED OUR HORSES, BUT WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE



THEN CHRISTODOLOS, OUR LANDLORD, SPOKE

IT IS TOO BAD ABOUT THE HORSES— BUT I DON'T BLAME THE BANDITS. IT'S THEIR TRADE



I ASKED CHRISTODOLOS TO TELL US ABOUT HADJI STAVROS, THE BANDIT KING

YOU KNEW THEIR KING, DIDN'T YOU?



YES WE FOUGHT TOGETHER IN THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE AGAINST THE TURKS



HADJI STAVROS WAS VERY SUCCESSFUL DURING THE WAR. BUT AFTERWARD, THE NEW GOVERNMENT TRIED TO COLLECT TAXES FROM HIM. HE ROBBED THE TAX COLLECTOR, AND TOOK TO THE MOUNTAINS.



ALTHOUGH A BANDIT, HE STUDIED FINANCE AND POLITICS. HE BECAME SO HIGHLY REGARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT THAT HE WAS OFFERED A FULL RANSOM AND WAS ASKED TO BECOME A GENERAL.



ISN'T THAT WHEN HE REFUSED, SAYING THAT IF HE WERE GIVEN SOLDIERS TO COMMAND, BY SHEER FORCE OF HABIT, HE WOULD SHOOT THEM?



YES, THAT IS SO.

DON'T STAVROS KIDNAP PEOPLE FOR RANSOM AND TREAT THEM CRUELLY?



NO, HE TREATS THEM WELL.



ONE SUMMER, HE CARRIED OFF A WEALTHY MERCHANT AND HIS FAMILY, ALL OF WHOM WERE IN POOR HEALTH.



WHEN THE RANSOM WAS PAID TWO MONTHS LATER, THEY RETURNED HOME ENTIRELY CURED, THANKS TO THEIR LIFE IN THE OPEN AIR. YOU MUST ADMIT THAT 2,000 POUNDS* IS NOT TOO MUCH TO PAY FOR THE RECOVERED HEALTH OF AN ENTIRE FAMILY.



BUT WHAT IF THE RANSOM IS NOT PAID?

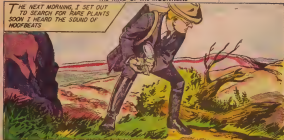


THEN HADJI STAVROS KILLS HIS PRISONERS.



*A pound, of that time, was worth about \$4.85.

THE NEXT MORNING, I SET OUT TO SEARCH FOR RARE PLANTS SOON I HEARD THE SOUND OF HOOFBEATS



TWO LADIES ON HORSEBACK APPEARED, LED BY DIMITRUS, CHRISTODOULS' SON



DO YOU WISH TO JOIN US?

WHO IS WITH YOU?

ENGLISH LADIES I AM THEIR GUIDE. THE OLD LADY IS MRS SIMONS, ONE OF THE OWNERS OF BARCLAY AND COMPANY, AN ENGLISH BANK. THE YOUNG LADY IS HER DAUGHTER, MARY ANN.



WHILE DIMITRUS TALKED TO ME, THE LADIES' HORSES SET OFF AT A TROT. DIMITRUS HAD TO RUN TO CATCH UP WITH THEM

DON'T STOP LIKE THAT AGAIN! I AM ENGLISH AND I MEAN TO HAVE PROPER SERVICE. I DIDN'T PAY YOU TO GOSSIP WITH YOUR FRIENDS



I WALKED DOWN THE ROAD WITH DIMITRIS AND THE TWO LADIES. WE CAME TO THE INN WHERE THEY INTENDED TO EAT, AND FOUND IT CLOSED.

I AM ENGLISH AND I EXPECT TO EAT WHEN I AM HUNGRY.

YOU WILL HAVE YOUR BREAKFAST IN A HALF AN HOUR, AT THE NEXT VILLAGE.



THE ROAD BECAME STEEP AND NARROW

I AM ENGLISH AND I WAS NOT MADE TO ROLL DOWN PRECIPICES. DIMITRIS, HOLD MY HORSE'S BRIDLE.



I HAD BEEN TRYING TO GET A LOOK AT MARY ANN. SEIZING THIS OPPORTUNITY, I SPRANG FORWARD.

I WILL BE YOUR DAUGHTER'S GUIDE



AT THAT MOMENT, A BREEZE BLEW THE VEIL FROM MARY ANN'S FACE. AH, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL!

A HALF AN HOUR LATER

THIS INN IS ALSO CLOSED. I AM ENGLISH AND I WON'T STAND FOR YOU PLAYING ANY TRICKS ON ME. I WILL COMPLAIN TO THE EMBASSY.



THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

WE WILL FIND A HOUSE
NEARBY WHERE WE CAN GET
SOME BREAKFAST. LET US
LEAVE THE HORSES HERE
AND GO ON FOOT.

WE STARTED SINGLE FILE
UP A STEEP PATH

SUDDENLY, WE HEARD A
SHRILL WHISTLE.



SIT DOWN ON THE GROUND EMPTY YOUR POCKETS GIVE ME THAT CASE



I AM ENGLISH. ENGLAND WILL Avenge ME, AND YOU'LL ALL BE HANGED NOW, IF YOU WANT MY MONEY, TAKE IT BUT I WARN YOU, IT WILL BURN YOUR FINGERS IT IS ENGLISH MONEY

EMPTY YOUR PURSE.



DIMITRIOS HAS FREED, FOR SERVANTS DO NOT BRING ANY RANSOM MONEY.

WAIT FOR ME, DIMITRIOS, AND WE WILL RETURN TOGETHER

YOU AND THE LADIES WILL SEE ATHENS AGAIN ONLY WHEN YOUR RANSOM IS PAID.



THEN BE SO GOOD, DIMITRIOS, AS TO ASK THEM THE PRICE OF MY RANSOM

QUITE USELESS, MY DEAR HERMANN IT IS NOT THEY WHO FIX THE PRICE

WHO WILL, THEN?

THEIR CHIEF, HADJI STARVOS, THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS.



Then

HAVE YOU A MESSAGE, NADAM, FOR YOUR FAMILY?

TELL MY BROTHER TO HURRY TO THE EMBASSY AND LODGE A COMPLAINT. HE MUST THEN WRITE TO THE LONDON FIRMS. THE ENGLISH WILL GET US OUT OF THIS BY FORCE OF ARMS OR BY OFFICIAL AUTHORITY, BUT I DON'T WANT THEM TO PAY ONE PENNY FOR OUR LIBERTY.



AFTER DINING LEFT, WE STRUGGLED UP THE STEEP PATH TO THE BANDIT CAMP. THERE WE WERE BROUGHT BEFORE THE KING.

SIT DOWN YOU ARE WELCOME HERE

SIR, I AM ENGLISH AND



NOT NOW, IF YOU PLEASE, I AM BUSY

THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS WAS DICTATING LETTERS, ONE WAS TO HIS DAUGHTER IN SCHOOL.

MY DEAR CHILD, I MUST IMPRESS UPON YOU THE NECESSITY OF WORK. IF I HAD TAKEN THINGS LEISURELY, I WOULD NEVER HAVE REACHED THE PLACE I NOW HOLD IN SOCIETY.



THE KING DICTATED HIS LETTERS IN GREEK. HE WAS NOT AWARE THAT I AM A LEARNED MAN AND UNDERSTOOD EVERY WORD HE SPOKE.

NOW TAKE A LETTER TO BARCLAY AND COMPANY, LONDON. GENTLEMEN: I MUST ASK YOU TO INVEST MY MONEY CAREFULLY FOR, AS FATHER OF A FAMILY, I MUST PROVIDE WELL FOR MY DAUGHTER.

WHY, THE KING KEEPS HIS MONEY IN MRS. SIMONS' BANK.



I ALSO LEARNED THAT THE KING HAD ORGANIZED HIS BANDITS INTO A COMPANY, AND HE ALLOWED PEOPLE TO INVEST IN THIS ORGANIZATION. HE READ OFF HIS LIST OF EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR.

WE PAID 2,540 FRANCS* TO REPAIR THE ROAD TO THERE, WHICH HAD BECOME SO BAD, TRAVELERS WERE NO LONGER USING IT, THEREFORE GIVING US NO ONE TO ROB.



*A franc, at that time, was worth about 20 cents.

THEN,

MACHIM, YOU SEEM GREATLY ANNOYED. HAVE YOU ANY COMPLAINT TO MAKE AGAINST THE MEN WHO BROUGHT YOU HERE?

YOUR RASCALS ARRESTED ME, DRAGGED ME THROUGH THE DUST AND ROBBED ME.



PRAY ACCEPT MY APOLOGIES. I AM OBLIGED TO EMPLOY MEN WITHOUT BREEDING YOU ARE ENGLISH, ARE YOU NOT?

YES, ENGLISH, AND FROM THE BEST LONDON SOCIETY.



YOU ARE VERY RICH? IS YOUR INCOME ABOUT 1,000 POUNDS A YEAR?

OH, MUCH MORE THAN THAT!



I WILL PUNISH SOPHOCLES, YOUR CAPTOR, SEVERELY FOR THE WAY HIS MEN TREATED YOU.



IS IT POSSIBLE, MADAM, THAT YOU ARE A MILLIONAIRE?

THAT IS THE TRUTH

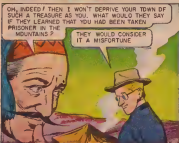


SOPHOCLES, BEG THESE LADIES' PARDON WHEN ONE HAS THE HONOR OF MEETING PERSONS OF SUCH RANK, THEY SHOULD BE TREATED WITH EVERY RESPECT.



EVERY COMFORT SHOULD BE OFFERED THEM UNTIL THEIR FAMILY SENDS US A RANSOM OF 4,000 POUNDS.





THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS



I WILL SEND FOR TWO TENTS AND YOU CAN CAMP BY THE WATERFALL. WE WILL SEIZE THE FIRST GIRL WHO COMES ALONG TO BE YOUR MAID



*T*HE DAY HAD BEEN TRYING FOR ALL OF US WE ATE AND, AS SOON AS DARKNESS FELL, WENT TO OUR TENTS. I FELL FAST ASLEEP



A FRIGHTFUL NOISE OF SHOOTING SUDDENLY AWOKE ME



RACED OUT OF MY TENT, ALMOST RUNNING THE LADIES DOWN.



WE RAN TOWARD THE NOISE, WITH BULLETS WHISTLING AROUND OUR EARS.



BUT INSTEAD OF THE POLICE, WE FOUND THE BANDITS HAVING A CELEBRATION.



LET US AT LEAST FIND THE KING. WE WILL BE SAFER WITH HIM.



HADJI STAVROS MADE MANY EXCUSES FOR HAVING DISTURBED US. AS A BULLET JUST MISSED ME.



AFTER THE MERRIMENT, WE MADE OUR WAY BACK TO OUR TENTS.

I HAVE AN IMPORTANT SECRET TO TELL YOU.

THERE ARE NO SECRETS I WISH TO SHARE WITH YOU.



WE CAN BE SAVED AND NOT SPEND A CENT.

COME TO OUR TENT, THEN, WHEN OUR GUARD IS ASLEEP.



LATE THAT NIGHT...



SAY WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY, QUICKLY.

THIS MORNING, WHILE THE KING WAS DICTATING HIS LETTERS, I DISCOVERED THAT IF YOU WILL HAVE YOUR BROTHER SEND 4,000 POUNDS FOR WHICH YOU GET A RECEIPT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO GET ALL OF YOUR MONEY BACK.



HOW DO YOU THINK I CAN GET MY MONEY BACK, IF ALL THE POLICE IN THE KINGDOM CAN'T GET US BACK?
GOOD NIGHT, SIR!

BUT ..



GOOD NIGHT, SIR!



THE NEXT MORNING, MRS SIMONS WROTE TO HER BROTHER TELLING HIM NOT TO PAY THE RANSOM, AND DEMANDING THAT SHE BE RESCUED. I DID NOT WRITE TO MY FATHER FOR MY RANSOM, BECAUSE I KNEW HE WAS TOO POOR TO PAY IT. INSTEAD, I WROTE, WITHOUT MUCH HOPE, TO MY FELLOW BOARDER, JOHN HARRIS.

I WAS SO UNHAPPY, I ALMOST WEPT.

SHOW A LITTLE COURAGE, YOUNG MAN. ARE YOU MARRIED?

NO.



WELL, DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND? MAKE YOURSELF AGREEABLE TO THE ENGLISH LADIES. HERE IS AN EXCELLENT CHANCE TO HAVE YOUR RANSOM PAID, WIN A BEAUTIFUL BRIDE, AND MAKE YOUR FORTUNE, BESIDES. WHY, IF YOU DO NOT COUNT ME AS ONE OF YOUR BENEFACTORS, YOU WILL BE AN UNGRATEFUL WRETCH!



I RETURNED TO THE LADIES, AND WAS AGAIN STRUCK BY MARY ANN'S BEAUTY. I KNEW THAT I HAD TO SAVE HER THERE AND THEN I IMAGINED A PLAN OF ESCAPE, DARING, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE.



AT THE BACK OF THE KING'S CAMP WAS A PRECIPICE WITH A STREAM CASCADING DOWN OVER IT. IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO CLIMB DOWN THIS PRECIPICE, IF THE STREAM WERE STOPPED.



I KNEW WHAT I WOULD DO. I WOULD DAM UP THE WATER AND TURN THE STREAM ASIDE.



I RAN TO TELL MRS. SIMONS AND MARY ANN

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR GUARD?

I'LL KILL HIM!



THEN, WHEN THE DAM IS READY, I'LL TAKE YOUR DAUGHTER ON MY LEFT ARM AND CLIMB DOWN THE PRECIPICE.



VERY GOOD. AND WHAT ABOUT ME?



IN MY HASTE TO SAVE MARY ANN, I HAD FORGOTTEN ABOUT HER MOTHER.

MY DEAR SIR, YOU SEE, ROMANTIC IDEAS ALWAYS HAVE A WEAK POINT.



EARLY THE NEXT MORNING

THE SOLDIERS! THE SOLDIERS ARE COMING!



HOW MANY COMPANIES?

ONE



WHICH COMPANY IS IT?

I DON'T KNOW



A SHOT RANG OUT IN THE DISTANCE





THE HORSE FINALLY AWAKENED MRS SIMONS AND MARY ANN. THEY SAW THE DISAPPEARING BANDITS AND

WE ARE SAVED!
THEY HAVE ALL GONE!



THEY RAN TO THE MAIN CAMP AND SAW THE SOLDIERS.

THE WRETCHES HAVE GONE, THEN? AND NOW WE CAN RETURN TO ATHENS?

AT THIS MOMENT, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE OUR DUTY AS CONQUERORS IS TO GUARD THE BATTLEFIELD.



LATER, THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS RETURNED. HE HAD BEEN DEFEATED



THOSE DOGS OF SOLDIERS WOULD NOT GIVE UP THE MONEY MY EXPEDITION HAS BROUGHT IN NOTHING, AND HAS COST ME FOURTEEN MEN



WHEN PERICLES HEARD THAT THREE OF HIS MEN HAD BEEN KILLED IN THE EXPEDITION

I'M RUINED!





HOW CAN I EXPLAIN THEIR PRESENCE AMONG YOU—AND DRESSED AS BANDITS?

REMAIN WITH US. I CAN ASSURE YOU A MINIMUM INCOME OF 400 POUNDS A YEAR.



THE OFFER IS TEMPTING, BUT MY HEALTH IS TOO DELICATE, AND BESIDES, I WOULD BE MISSED TERRIBLY AT ALL THE SOCIAL FUNCTIONS. NO, THE BEST THING TO DO IS RETURN AT ONCE.

THE SOUND OF THE SOLDIERS LEAVING BROUGHT MRS. SIMONS OUT OF HER TENT



WELL, ARE WE FREE?

FAR FROM THAT.



WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

BE GOOD ENOUGH, MADAM, TO FOLLOW ME.

WE WERE JUST IN TIME TO SEE THE KING AND FERGLIS SAY GOODBYE





THIS TIME, MRS. SIMONS LISTENED. I EXPLAINED THAT THE KING HAD ALL OF HIS MONEY IN THE BANK OF WHICH SHE WAS ONE OF THE OWNERS. HER BROTHER COULD PAY HER 4,000 POUND RANSOM, AND SHE WOULD GET A RECEIPT FOR IT. THIS WOULD ENABLE HER TO THEN RECLAIM THE 4,000 POUNDS FROM THE KING'S BANK ACCOUNT. SHE WOULD LOSE NOTHING.



TOLD THE KING THAT MRS. SIMONS HAD DECIDED TO PAY THE RANSOM, AFTER ALL.

I WILL AGAIN GIVE HER ALL THE WRITING MATERIAL SHE REQUIRES.



HERE IS HER NAME IN GREEK SO YOU CAN MAKE A RECEIPT OUT CORRECTLY

I WISH YOUR NAME, ALSO

MRS. SIMONS WROTE TO HER BROTHER AND EXPLAINED MY PLAN. SHE ADDED



My health is good in spite of the discomfort we are enduring. It is terrible that two Englishwomen should be made to eat roast meat without mustard or pickles...

WITH GREAT JOY, I WATCHED A MESSENGER DEPART WITH THE LETTER. MY MISFORTUNES WERE DRAWING TO A CLOSE. IN TWO DAYS, I WOULD BE FREE



A FEW DAYS LATER, THE MESSENGER RETURNED WITH A LETTER FROM MRS. SIMONS' BROTHER



YOU AND YOUR DAUGHTER ARE FREE MAY I PRESENT YOU WITH THIS ANTIQUE RING AS A REMEMBRANCE OF YOUR VISIT WITH THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS?



AND I—MUST I HAVE NOTHING TO REMEMBER YOU BY?

YOU? BUT YOU ARE NOT LEAVING US, MY FRIEND YOUR RAMSON IS NOT PAID



Mrs SIMONS GAVE ME HER BROTHER'S LETTER

I have paid the 1000 pounds against the receipt I could not pay the additional 100 pounds because the amount was not in your name. I will have my agents to receive the money.

LIKE A GOOD BUSINESSMAN, THE KING HAD SENT TWO RECEIPTS—ONE IN MY NAME!



STOP LOOKING LIKE A GRENCHED CHICKEN—YOU WILL KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE ON WHAT DAY MAY WE EXPECT YOUR VISIT?

AFTER THE ENGLISH LADIES LEFT THE KING BEGAN TO TALK ABOUT HIS FINANCES

OUR EXPENSES ARE HEAVY, AND WE ARE THINKING OF FOUNDING A HOSPITAL FOR INVALIDS AND GIVING PENSIONS TO THE BARON'S WIDOWS AND ORPHANS



THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN A LOSER?

ONLY ONCE. ONE OF MY SECRETARIES RAN OFF WITH SOME MONEY I HAD HIM HANGED.



I'M NOT HARD TO DEAL WITH, BUT I DON'T LIKE BEING CHEATED.



THE NEXT DAY

YOU LOOK BORED WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEARCH FOR PLANTS? YOU CAN GO FOR A STROLL IN THE COMPANY OF TWO GUARDS



THIS IS MY CHANCE TO ESCAPE

THIS MAN IS WORTH 500 POUNDS IF YOU LOSE HIM, YOU'LL HAVE TO PAY OR LOSE YOUR HEADS.



I SELECTED, FOR OBVIOUS REASONS, THE ROAD THAT LED TO ATHENS



I PRETENDED I WANTED A PLANT AT THE TOP OF SOME ROCKS



ONE OF THE BANDITS TOOK PITY ON ME AND OFFERED TO ALLOW ME TO CLIMB ON HIS SHOULDERS.



I DROD MY HOBNAILED BOOTS INTO HIS SHOULDERS



LET ME GET IT I HAVE NO NAILS IN MY SHOES.



HE CLIMBED TO THE FIRST BANDIT'S SHOULDERS, AND I STARTED TO RUN



IT SEEMED AS IF I HAD WINGS



STOP!
STOP!



A DITCH CAME IN MY WAY, WIDE AS A BROOK. I JUMPED-- WAS SAVED-- WHEN SUDDENLY



... MY SUSPENDERS BROKE!



I WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO RUN HOLDING UP MY TROUSERS. THE BANDITS SOON CAUGHT UP WITH ME.



THE KING RECEIVED ME AS HE WOULD A THIEF WHO HAD RUN OFF WITH 600 POUNDS.

YOU HAVE DECEIVED ME. ONE OF MY OFFICERS, VASILI, WILL NOW REMAIN IN YOUR TENT, IF THIS OCCURS AGAIN, YOU MUST EXPECT TO BE PUNISHED.



FROM THEN ON, I CAREFULLY WATCHED FOR AN OPPORTUNITY TO ESCAPE. THIS TIME, I WOULD TRY THE PRECIPICE.



I SOON THOUGHT OF A WAY TO ESCAPE WITHOUT KILLING VASILI!

DINE WITH ME, VASILI!



HAVE MORE WINE, VASILI!



THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS

VASLI FELL ASLEEP,
DRAGGED BY THE WINE



I WORKED HURRIEDLY TO
GET THE STREAM DAMMED



EVERYTHING WAS GOING
WELL, UNTIL I RETURNED
TO THE TENT FOR MY CASE,
AND



I'M THIRSTY



DRINK TO
MY HEALTH,
VASLI!



HE DRANK HALF, FELL ON
HIS FACE, AND
REMAINED MOTIONLESS.



I WAS READY. I STRAPPED MY PLANT CASE ON MY SHOULDERS, MADE MY WAY TO THE PRECIPICE AND BEGAN TO CLIMB DOWN.



IT WAS A HARD TASK, MUCH MORE SO THAN I HAD SUPPOSED.



AT ONE POINT, I LOST MY FOOTING.



FORTUNATELY, A FIG TREE CAUGHT IN MY COAT AND SAVED ME.



I CONTINUED MY DESCENT. THEN I FELT WATER ON MY HEAD.



BIG PIECES OF EARTH, STONES AND A TORRENT OF WATER CAME POURING OVER ME. MY DAM HAD BROKEN!



I KEPT GOING. MY FOOT TOUCHED SOLID GROUND. I WAS SAVED!





MURDERER! WE'VE GOT YOU NOW!

THE KING WILL BE HIGHLY PLEASED, AND VASILI WILL BE AVENGED

WAS DRAGGED BACK TO CAMP. THERE I LEARNED THAT, BY ACCIDENT, THE WATER FROM MY DAM HAD DROWNED VASILI!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? WHO WOULD HAVE SAID ON THE DAY YOU CAME HERE THAT I WAS RECEIVING A MURDERER?



I HAVE LOST ONE OF MY BEST SOLDIERS. HOW COULD YOU DO IT? HAVE YOU NO FEELINGS?



HOW ABOUT YOU? YOU HAVE KILLED MANY A MAN.



IT IS MY PROFESSION, AND NOT YOURS
I AM A BAKHT, YOU ARE A DOCTOR



DO YOU KNOW HOW NOBLE VASILI WAS--
WHAT A NOBLE RACE HE WAS DESCENDED
FROM? FOR FOUR GENERATIONS HIS
ANCESTORS HAVE BEEN HANGED OR
BEHEADED, NOT ONE HAS DIED IN
BED-- UNTIL NOW.



WHO WILL REPLACE
VASILI? WHEN I
WANT A VILLAGE
BURNED OR ANYONE
PUNISHED-- WHO
WILL DO IT FOR ME?



HAVE CONSOLATION, VASILI I WILL
PUNISH THIS MAN WITHOUT RISKING
OUR INVESTMENT.



YOU WILL RECEIVE TWENTY BLOWS
ON THE SOLES OF YOUR FEET!



MY PRIDE WAS HURT THAT HE WOULD PUNCH ME IN THIS MANNER. I LASHED OUT AT HIM, INSULTING HIM AND USING WORDS NEVER FOUND IN THE DICTIONARY BUT HIS FACE SHOWED NO EMOTION.



I BECAME ENRAGED AND SNATCHED A PISTOL FROM A NEARBY BANDIT.



I AIMED STRAIGHT AT THE KING.



I HIT HIM IN THE FOREHEAD, BUT HE DID NOT FALL.

WHY DO YOU ATTEMPT THE IMPOSSIBLE, YOUNG MAN?



IF YOU CONTINUE IN THIS WAY, WE WILL HAVE TO APPLY TO YOUR HANDS THE SAME TREATMENT WE GIVE YOUR FEET. THEN, WHEN YOUR RANSOM COMES, WE'LL CURE YOUR WOUNDS.



THEN I KNEW THE ONE WAY I COULD HURT THE KING OF THE MOUNTAINS.

MY RANSOM WILL NEVER BE PAID ALL YOU CAN GET FROM ME IS MY HEAD.

NO, THE ENGLISHMEN WILL PAY, I AM SURE.



DO YOU THINK THE ENGLISHMEN HAVE PAID YOU?



LISTEN TO ME, MRS SIMONS IS ONE OF THE OWNERS OF BARCLAY AND COMPANY.

MY BANKERS?



YOUR BANKERS, AND THEY HAVE THE RECEIPT FOR WHICH THEY WILL DRAW THE SAME AMOUNT OF MONEY OUT OF YOUR ACCOUNT AS WAS PAID FOR THE RANSOM.



MISERABLE DOD! I AM RUINED, BETRAYED, ROBBED! ARE YOU SURE THAT WOMAN OWNS BARCLAY'S BANK?

AS SURE AS THAT I WILL DIE TODAY.



YOU WILL NOT DIE UNTIL TOMORROW. FIRST, YOU MUST SUFFER TO THE EXTENT OF 4,000 POUNDS!



THE KING COULD NOT DECIDE UPON A
FORTUNE WORTH 4,000 POUNDS



SPEAK, TELL ME
WHAT TO DO



HAVE A COMPETITION HE WHO
CAN SUGGEST THE BEST TORTURE
WILL BE PROMOTED TO VASILY'S RANK



THE BANDYTS MADE MANY SUGGESTIONS, BUT THE
KING WAS NOT SATISFIED THEN THE COOK SPOKE

I WILL ROAST HIM
TO DEATH SLOWLY



ALL OF YOU WOULD NOT TALK SO PLEASANTLY IF
HE HAD ROBBED YOU OF 4,000 POUNDS! — DO WITH
HIM WHAT YOU LIKE BUT THAT CURSED GOD WILL
DIE BY MY OWN HAND



THE COOK PUT ME ABOUT TWO STEPS FROM THE FIRE. THE IDEA HAD NOT ONLY TO ROAST ME, BUT TO TORTURE ME WITH HUNGER AS WELL.

HOW DELICIOUS THIS SMELLS! HOW YOU MUST WISH YOU HAD SOME!



THE COOK LEFT THE MEAT NEAR ME AS HE WENT OFF TO GET SOME SEASONS. THEN I REMEMBERED A PACKET OF ARSENIC I CARRIED WITH ME FOR MY SCIENTIFIC WORK.



I WORKED MY HAND LOOSE, FOUND THE ARSENIC IN MY POCKET AND



I SAW YOU! YOU DID SOMETHING TO THE KING'S DINNER!

WHAT?



YOU'VE BEWITCHED IT, BUT IT DOESN'T MATTER. THE KING IS A GREATER WIZARD THAN YOU ARE. I'LL SERVE THIS MEAT, ANYWAY.



THE BANDITS WHO ATE THE MEAT SOON FELT THE EFFECTS OF THE ARSINIC.



THE SCIENTIST HAS
POISONED US.

HE WILL
DIE FOR IT!

I WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE MEN.



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?
I ATE, TOO, AM I ILL?



THEN...

WHEN THE BANDITS SAW THAT THEIR KING WAS ILL, THEIR LOYALTY TO HIM VANISHED. THOSE WHO WERE WELL GROUPED THEMSELVES AROUND AN AMBITIOUS BANDIT NAMED EDIQUA, WHO WANTED TO BE THE NEW CHIEF.



MY FRIENDS, LET US BEGIN BY THROWING THE OLD MAN AND THE YOUNG SCIENTIST OVER THE PRECIPICE.

SOME OF THE BARBITS STAYED WITH MADLY STAVROS. THEY DID SO BECAUSE THEY BELIEVED HE HAD NOT LONG TO LIVE, AND THEY HOPED HE WOULD CHOOSE HIS SUCCESSOR FROM AMONG THOSE WHO REMAINED FAITHFUL TO HIM.



THE MEN WERE NOW DIVIDED INTO TWO SIDES. POSITIONS WERE TAKEN, AND THE BATTLE BEGAN.



IN THE EXCITEMENT, THE KING'S HATRED FOR ME WAS FORGOTTEN.

CURE ME, MY SON. I DON'T BLAME YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID. RIGHT WAS ON YOUR SIDE.



I DID WHAT I COULD FOR HIM.

DRINK THIS



THE BATTLE CONTINUED ALL NIGHT WHILE I DID NOTHING BUT WATCH OVER THE POOR SICK OLD KING



THE FOLLOWING MORNING, OUR ENEMY SUDDENLY TURNED THEIR BACKS AND BEGAN SHOOTING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION. APPARENTLY, THEY HAD BEEN SURPRISED FROM THE REAR.



A MOMENT LATER, GUY ALLY APPEARED. IT WAS THE AMERICAN, JOHN HARRIS, AND HIS NEPHEW, WILLIAM LOBSTER. THE TWO MEN SHOWERED BULLETS RIGHT AND LEFT, AND KILLED ALL WHO CAME WITHIN REACH. THEY WERE TERRIBLE, YET GALLANT.



HARRIS WAS THE FIRST TO THINK OF ME.

HERMANN,
WHERE
ARE YOU?



HERE!



THEY

I AM HADJI STAVROS, THE
KING OF THE MOUNTAINS.

THE KING RAUFLY
GOT TO HIS FEET
AND WITH HIS OWN
SABRE KILLED GOLIZZA

NOW MY SHEATH IS EMPTY.
MY BLADE IS USELESS,
LIKE MYSELF.



THE FEW REMAINING BANDITS STAYED IN THE CAMP, BUT THE KING CAME WITH US

WHY DIDN'T YOU COME SOONER?

I WAS AWAY FIGHTING PIRATES. I DON'T FIND OUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED TO YOU UNTIL I RETURNED TO ATHENS



IN THE FEW YEARS REMAINING TO ME, I HAVE TO TAKE CARE OF MY DAUGHTER, AND DICTATE MY MEMOIRS AND I WILL NOW DEVOTE MY EXPERIENCE AND TALENTS TO THE SERVICE OF THE STATE.



WHEN WE REACHED ATHENS

AND NOW, YOUR MAJESTY UNDER WHAT FAVORED SKY WILL YOU GO AND GET HANGED? FOR I DON'T BELIEVE YOU'RE THE SORT OF MAN TO RETIRE FROM BUSINESS

NO I HAVE ENDED MY CAREER AS A BANDIT FOREVER. WHAT WOULD I DO NOW IN THE MOUNTAINS? ALL OF MY MEN ARE DEAD, WOUNDED, OR USELESS. I LEAVE MY PLACE TO MEN YOUNGER THAN I, BUT I DEFY THEM TO EQUAL MY SUCCESS



PERHAPS, BEFORE SIX MONTHS HAVE PASSED, I WILL BE MINISTER OF JUSTICE.



MY ONE WISH NOW WAS TO FIND MARY ANN BUT WHEN WE GOT BACK TO THE BOARDING HOUSE

YOUR ENGLISHWOMEN HAVE LEFT.



WHERE HAVE THEY GONE?

TO TRIESTE



THEN ...

IT WOULD BE WISE FOR YOU TO LEAVE ATHENS AT ONCE IT IS SAID THAT A CAPTAIN PERICLES IS LOOKING FOR YOU



NOT WISHING TO MEET PERICLES, I BOARDED A BOAT FOR HOME THAT NIGHT



WHEN I WAS STILL NOT FAR FROM THE SHORE, BULLETS FROM HALF A DOZEN GUNS WHISTLED PAST MY EARS IT WAS THE FAREWELL OF THE HANDSOME CAPTAIN PERICLES AND HIS FRIENDS.



THE END

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.

EDMOND ABOUT



IN THE YEAR 1851, Edmond Francois Valentin About went to Greece expecting to find the beautiful women of the *Iliad* and the brave men of the *Odyssey*. Instead, he

found the country in turmoil, with bands of robbers freely roaming the hills.

About was shocked, but he had little cause to be. When a country is overrun by bandits, there is usually a good reason for it. Greece had her reason — her unhappy history.

For more than 2,000 years, Greece had been the unwilling subject of one conqueror or another. The last of these masters was Turkey. In 1821, the Greeks began a war of independence against the Turks. After 1829, most of Greece was free. But the country was in ruins. And the post-war government, led by a German king, was weak and helpless.

During the war, the bravest Greek fighters were the fierce Klephts, the men of the hills. When peace came, the Klephts would not settle down as quiet suburban citizens. The talents that made them excellent fighters also made them excellent bandits. Instead of being feared by the Turks, they soon became feared by innocent travelers. The government of Greece could not control the bandits. And many of the people either helped them or quietly sympathized with them.

This was the situation when About was in Greece. With a sharp satiric eye, he noted it and reported it in a book published in 1855 called, *Contemporary Greece*. The Greeks were outraged by the book. About, always the satirist, replied to their protests by writing *The King of the Mountains*. The Greeks were even more outraged.

Yet, shortly afterward, an incident occurred which was almost taken from *The*

King of the Mountains. At Marathon, the scene of a great Greek victory 2,500 years earlier, a party of English tourists was captured by bandits. But these tourists did not have the funny fate of the characters in About's book. Instead, their ransom did not arrive, and they were brutally slaughtered. The bandits were later found by an aroused government and shot. After that, organized banditry practically disappeared in Greece.

Edmond About was born on February 14, 1828 in Dieuze, France. His father was a grocer. About was a good student and studied hard. When he was 23, he went to Athens to teach. He lived there for two years, gathering impressions he later recorded in his books.

When About returned to Paris in 1855, he began to write. Within the next five years, he published six books, including his two on Greece.

About wrote many books, and he wrote many different kinds of books. He wrote novels, plays, essays, histories, books on travel and books on economics. He also did some newspaper work.

About was most popular during the years of the Second Empire, when France was ruled by Napoleon III. He was one of Napoleon's favorite writers, and a lion in court society. And, like many others, he favored the declaration of war which France declared against Prussia in 1870.

The Franco-Prussian War proved nearly fatal for France. France was cruelly whipped by the Prussians. The war ended with the French battling each other in the streets of Paris. The Second Empire and Napoleon III were destroyed, and a republic was formed.

About lost his emperor, some of his property, and some of his popularity. But he continued to write. Then, in 1884, he received the highest honor a French writer can achieve. He was elected to the French Academy.

A year later, on January 16, 1895, he died.

THE STORY OF GREAT BRITAIN

PART I: THE CELTIC INVASION

GREAT BRITAIN WAS ONCE PART OF THE LAND MASS OF EUROPE. THEN, ABOUT 35,000 YEARS AGO, THE GREAT GLACIERS OF THE ICE AGE MELTED. ICE WATER FLOODED THE VALLEYS OF WESTERMOST EUROPE AND CUT OFF THE BRITISH ISLES.



THE FIRST PEOPLE TO LIVE ON THE BRITISH ISLES DISAPPEARED WITH HARDLY A TRACE. ALL THEY LEFT WERE A FEW BONES, SOME POTTERY, AND THE MYSTERIOUS ROCKS AT STONEHENGE.



ABOUT 700 B.C., THE CELTS BEGAN AN INVASION OF THE ISLANDS THAT CONTINUED FOR 400 YEARS. NO ONE KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE THE CELTS CAME FROM.



THERE WERE THREE GROUPS OF CELTS: GAELS, BRITHONS AND PICTS. THE GAELS SETTLED IN IRELAND, THE BRITHONS IN ENGLAND AND THE PICTS IN THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS.



THE PICTS WERE FERCE FIGHTERS, WHO SOMETIMES PAINTED THEMSELVES BLUE FOR GOOD LUCK IN BATTLE.



THE THREE CELTIC GROUPS LIVED IN HUTS MADE OF TREE BOUGHS HELD TOGETHER BY WOVEN TWIGS AND COVERED WITH TURF.



WARS WERE COMMON. THE PEOPLE LIVED EITHER IN FORTIFIED HILL VILLAGES OR IN LAKE VILLAGES, WHICH, BEING SURROUNDED BY WATER, WERE PROTECTED FROM SUDDEN ENEMY ATTACKS.



THE CELTS HAD AN IMPORTANT PRIEST CLASS WHOSE MEMBERS WERE CALLED DRUIDS. THE DRUIDS PERFORMED SECRET RELIGIOUS RITES IN THE FORESTS.



THE DRUIDS EVENTUALLY DISAPPEARED, BUT THE GAELS, PICTS AND BRITONS LIVED ON TO BE THE ANCESTORS OF THE IRISH, THE SCOTTISH HIGHLANDERS, AND THE WELSH OF MODERN TIMES.



THIS IS THE FIRST OF TWELVE FEATURES ON THE HISTORY OF GREAT BRITAIN IN THE NEXT ISSUE: "THE ROMAN CONQUEST."

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES



IN ATHENS, in 399 B. C., a condemned prisoner waited for his death.

He was not a dashing young villain with a score of murders to his credit. He was a squat, bald man seventy years old. His profession was philosophy—the love of wisdom. His crime was having unpopular ideas. His name was Socrates, and he was believed to be the wisest man in all Athens.

At various times in his life, Socrates had been a stonecutter, a senator and a soldier decorated for bravery on the battlefield. But always, his major occupation was thinking, arguing, seeking for answers to the questions men have asked since the beginning of time: What are good and bad? Why were men treated? How should men live?

Socrates was known throughout Athens for his brilliance and for his odd habits. He went barefoot, winter and summer. Fatigue, hunger, and poverty meant nothing to him. He had no time for luxury, yet at the banquets of his friends, he could out-drink, as well as out-think any one in the room.

As far as we know, he never wrote anything down. We know about his life and teachings because they are described in the writings of his pupil and follower, Plato. In two dialogues called *Apology* and *Phaedo*, Plato tells of the trial and execution of his beloved teacher.

Socrates believed in right, and when he believed he was right, he would bow to no one. At his trial, when to deny what he believed in might have saved his life, he told the jurors, "Either acquit me or not; but whichever you do, understand that I shall never alter my ways, not even if I have to die many times."

Many people loved Socrates, but some feared and hated him. In 399 B.C., he was accused by three men of not worshipping

the gods the city worshipped, and of corrupting the youth with his ideas. He was brought to trial before a jury of 501 citizens. In his defense he said, "God orders me to fulfill the philosopher's mission of searching into myself and other men."

The jury found Socrates guilty by a vote of 281 to 220, and condemned him to death. Socrates accepted the sentence calmly, saying, "The hour of departure has arrived, and we go our ways—I to die, and you to live. Which is better, God only knows."

Socrates was to be executed by drinking hemlock, a poison, at sunset. As the day of his execution neared, he was begged by his friends to escape the prison and go to another city. He refused, insisting that it was his duty to the state to stay and obey its orders, even if he thought they were wrong.

During the last hours of his life, Socrates was visited by his wife and three sons. Then he sent them away so their mourning would not disturb his final few minutes. He did allow several of his friends to stay in the jail with him to the end.

As the sun began to set, Socrates asked the jailer for the poison. One of his friends protested, saying there was still time.

"I do not think that I should gain anything by drinking the poison a little later," said the philosopher. "I should only be ridiculous in my own eyes for sparing and saving a life which is already for feint."

The hemlock was brought. "I may and must ask the gods to prosper my journey from this to the other world," said Socrates, and drank the poison.

At that moment, his friends began to weep. "I have been told that a man should die in peace," he told them sternly. "Be quiet then, and have patience."

Socrates walked about the room until his legs began to fail him. Then he lay down. In a few minutes, he was dead.

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