

DO NOT FORGET THE DATE OF THE DOMINION

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THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN By HAROLD MacGRATH

Kathlyn Hare believes her father, Col. Hare to be in dire peril in Allah...

On her arrival in Allah she is informed by Umballah that her father is dead and that she is the queen...

Through the pluck and resourcefulness of John Bruce, an American and fellow passenger on the boat...

After a ride filled with peril she takes refuge in a ruined temple. The holy men and villagers, believing her to be an ancient priestess...

Umballah's attempt to recapture them is unsuccessful, and the fugitives are given shelter in the palace of Bala Khan.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SACRED ELEPHANT RECOVERED

When Kathlyn returned to the compound it was with the news that she had discovered a group of men, some twelve or fifteen miles to the west...

As I came toward the compound I was given a message. The man who gave it to me was gone before I could get a good look at his face.

These men who stole the sacred white elephant are brave and desperate. At the first sign of pursuit they promise to kill the elephant.

But just now," said Ramabai quietly, "the main thing is to rescue the elephant, and I have a plan."

"From what you told me last night," went on Ramabai, "those nomads or brigands are opium fiends."



You and your lover shall indeed be won—by the striped one.

"But Kit, they will recognize us. They will not have forgotten me. They will know that we have come from the town, despite the fact that to all appearances we come from the west."

Bruce also shook his head. "It doesn't look good, Ramabai. Why not we three men?"

"They would be suspicious at once. They would reason if they saw Kathlyn Memshahib, and my wife with us that we were harmless. Will you trust me?"

"Anywhere," said the colonel. "But they will simply make us prisoners along with the elephant."

"Ah, but the Colonel Sahib forgets the opinion," Ramabai laid his hand upon the colonel's arm. "Let them make prisoners of us. The very first thing they will do will be to search the saddle bags. They will find the opium. In a quarter of an hour they will be as dead and we can return."

"It's a good plan," said Bala Khan, when the conversation was fully translated to him. "And once the elephant is back in the compound I'll send a dozen men back for the rogues. Ah! they will play with me; they will steal into my town, overcome my guards, take the apple of my eye! Ramabai, thou art a friend indeed. Hasten and Allah send thee! Umballah may arrive with an army, but he shall not enter my gates."

Guided by a servant, Bruce and Ramabai set off for the opium den. The proprietor understood exactly what they desired. There were times when men entered his place who were in need of a long sleep, having money tucked away in their fatatic cummerbunds.

So, mounted upon five swift camels, the party started off on a wide circle. Whether they caught the brigands at the well or on the way to their mountain homes was of no great importance. Ramabai was quite certain that the result would be a good deal. Supposing the rascals did not smoke, what then?

"They will smoke," declared Ramabai, confidently. "The old rascal of whom we bought the opium has entertained them more than once. They are too poor to own pipes. Have patience, Colonel Sahib. A good deal depends upon the success of our adventure with Umballah. He will shortly be on the march. Bala Khan has given his word."

Those helmets were never worn by any save white men. The chief scowled under his shading palm. Women! O, this was going to be something worth while.

When the caravan came within distance the chief of the brigands stepped forward menacingly. The new arrivals were informed that they were prisoners, and were hidden to dismount at once.

"But we are on the way to the city of Bala Khan," remonstrated Ramabai.

"Which you left this morning!" jeered the chief. "Dismount!"

"Opium!"

"Where is it? Give it to us!" cried one of the brigands.

The chief thought quickly. If his men would smoke they should suffer the penalty of being left at the well to await the arrival of the tender Bala Khan. The white elephant was worth ten thousand rupees. He might not be obliged to share these bags of silver. Let them have the pipes. He himself would only pretend to smoke.

But the first whiff of the fumes were too much for his will power. He sucked in the smoke, down to the bottom of his very soul, and suddenly found peace. The superdrug with which the poppy had been mixed was unknown to Ramabai, but he had often witnessed tests of its potency. It worked with the rapidity of viper venom. Within ten minutes after the first inhalation the nine brigands sank back upon the sand, as nearly dead as any man might care to be.

At once the elephant was liberated, and the party made off toward the town. Col. Hare, suspicious of everything these days marveled over the simplicity of the trick and the smoothness with which it had been turned. He began to have hope for the future. Perhaps this time they might succeed.

through Bruce's heart. Home! Would he ever have a real one? Was she to go out of his life at last? Kathlyn Hare.

"But you, Ramabai!" said Kathlyn. "I shall return to Allah, I and Pundita," replied Ramabai.

"It will be death!" objected Bruce and Kathlyn together.

"I think not," and Ramabai permitted one of his mysterious smiles to stir his lips.

"Ramabai!" whispered Pundita, fearfully.

"Yes. After all, why should we wait?"

"Even so!"

"What is all this about?" inquired Kathlyn.

"Allah is weary of Umballah's iron heel, weary of a vacillating council. And the time has arrived when the two must be abolished. A thousand men await the turn of my head. And who has a better right to the throne of Allah than Pundita, my wife?"

"Good!" cried Kathlyn, her eyes sparkling. "Good! And if we can help to protect you, and the word of Bala Khan is as sound as British gold."

"For that," said Bruce, "thanks." "Keep your men from the walls," cried Kathlyn, "and bring me the white elephant. I would deal with this man Umballah."

Her request was granted. So when Durga and his soldiers arrived before the closed gates, they beheld Kathlyn mounted on the white elephant, alone.

discovered that these new arrivals were none other than the white people who had given him and his men a superdrug and thereby muled them out of the sacred white elephant which was to have brought them a fortune.

Unfortunately, the men of Kathlyn's party laid aside their weapons on approaching the cage to tear away the brush. Eight brigands, at a sign from their chief, surrounded the investigators, who found themselves nicely caught.

The natives fled inconspicuously. So did Bala Khan's camel men.

"Death if you move!" snarled the chief. "Ah, you gave us had opium, and we dropped the logs. (Swine!) He raised his rifle threateningly.

Wait a minute," said Bruce coolly. "What you want is money."

"Ay, money! Ten thousand rupees!" "It shall be given you if you let us go. You will conduct us over the hills to the sea, and there the money will be given you."

The chief laughed long and loudly. "What! Am I a goat to put my head inside the tiger's jaws? Nay, I shall hold you here for ransom. Let them bring gold. Now, take hold," indicating the trap cage.

"We shall take this fine man" eater along with us. I am speaking to you, white men, and you, pig of a Hindu! Chalu! I will kill anyone who falters. Opium! Al yes! You shall pay for my headache and the sickness of my comrades. Chalu! And you white woman; she shall give a ransom of her own!"

"The village luted out into the desert after the fashion of a peninsula. On the west of it lay another stretch of sand. They followed verdure till they reached the base of the rocky hills which were barren of any vegetation; huge jumbles of granite the color of porphyry. During the night they made about ten miles, and at dawn were smothered by one of those raging sandstorms, prevalent in this latitude. They had to abandon the trap cage and seek shelter in a nearby cave. Here they remained huddled together till the storm died away.

"It has blown itself out," commented the chief. Then he spoke to Ramabai. "Who is this man?" with a nod toward the colonel.

"He is an American."

"Go, Ramabai; it is useless to fight against these men, who mean all they say and who are as cruel as the tiger himself."

"It shall be as the memshahib says," replied Ramabai resignedly.

One morning Umballah entered the judgment hall of the palace, disturbed in mind—anonymous notes, bidding him not to persecute Ramabai and his wife further, on pain of death. He had found these notes at the door of his zenana, in his stables, on his pillows. In his heart he had sworn the death of Ramabai; but here was a phase upon which he had set no calculation. Had there not been unrest abroad he would have scorned to pay any attention to those warnings; but this Ramabai—may he burn in hell!—was a power with the populace, with low and high castes alike, and for the first time, now that he gave the matter careful thought, his own future did not look particularly clear.

More than ever he must plan with circumspection. He must trap Ramabai, openly, lawfully, in the matter of sedition.

Imagine his astonishment when, a few minutes after his arrival, Ramabai and Pundita demanded audience the one straight of back and proud of look, the other serene and tranquil! Umballah felt a wave of bland hatred surge over him, but he gave no sign. Ramabai stated his case briefly. Col. Hare and his daughter were being held prisoners for ransom. Three bags of silver—something like five thousand rupees—were demanded by the captors.

The council looked toward Umballah, who nodded, having in mind the part of the good Samaritan, with reservations, to be sure. Having trod the paths of the white man, he had acquired a certain adroitness in holding his people. They had at best only the stability of chickens. What of one moment was a terror was at another a feast. For the present, then, he would pretend that he had forgotten all about Ramabai's part in the various unsuccessful episodes.

To the council and the gurus (or priests) he declared that he himself would undertake to assume the part of envoy; he himself would bring the regal king of Allah back to the throne. True, the daughter had been



Beyond the desert's rim lies safety and—separation.

"He came from Allah?"

"Yes," said Ramabai, unsuspectingly. "Ha! Then this great prince did not lie."

"What prince?" cried Ramabai, not alarmed.

"The Prince Durga Ram. Three fat bags of silver, he said, would be paid me for the white hunter with the white hair. It is the will of Allah!"

crowned, but she had forfeited her rights. Thus he would return with Col. Hare as soon as he could make the journey and return.

"He is contemplating some treachery," said Ramabai to his wife. "I must try to learn what he is."

In his shop in the bazaars Lal Singh had resumed his awl. He had, as a companion, a bent and shabby old man, whose voice, however, possessed a resonance which belied the wrinkles and palsied hands.