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THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN

By HAROLD MacGRATH

SYNOPSIS

Kathlyn Hare believes her father, Col. Hare to be in dire peril in Allah a principality of India. The King of Allah has recently died, and because the colonel had once saved his life he names him as his successor. Umballah, pretender to the throne of Allah, loves Kathlyn and has forged a message summoning her to her father, whom he has thrown into prison. She leaves her home in California to go to him.

As for himself, hot irons could not have wrung a tear from his eyes; but Kit, in the hands of that black devil again! "Colonel," said Bruce, "I'm going to get some cartridges."

thing she could have done. Most of the barges were upset and the great beasts were blundering across the river between her and the barges. Bruce witnessed Kathlyn's brave attempt and dashed into the water after her. It took him but a moment to clasp her in his arms and broke down again.

Let us go on," said the colonel. "I don't care where. I am dead for want of food and sleep."

being led into the city gates." The colonel peered eagerly through the glasses. "The sun is shining on him. No! he is... white! A white elephant! I'd give ten thousand times the gate. Well, well, well! And I've lived to see it! Poor old Barnum, to have carried around a tinted pachyderm! He's white as any elephant flesh could be. Those dancing chaps are going in, too. What caste would those dancers be, Ramabai?"

acted as interpreter. He then ushered them into his house, spread rugs and cushions for them to sit upon, and mildly inquired what had brought the son of his old friend so far.

wary aching limbs upon the rope bed. Almost immediately he sank to slumber as deep and silent as the sea.

When Kathlyn reiterates at the expiration of the week of grace, her refusal to marry Umballah she receives sentence from the supreme tribunal that she is to undergo two ordeals with wild beasts. If she survives, she is to be permitted to ride without hindrance.

Through the pluck and resourcefulness of John Bruce, an American and fellow passenger on the boat which brought Kathlyn to Allah, and who has come to her assistance, she escapes unharmed from two ordeals. With Bruce she flees from Allah. The elephant which carries her becomes frightened and runs away, separating her from Bruce and the rest of the party.

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 risen from the tomb, allow her to remain as the guardian of the sacred fire. But Kathlyn's haven is also the abode of a lion, and she is forced to fly from it with the savage beast in pursuit. She escapes and finds a retreat in the jungle, only to fall into the hands of a band of slave traders, who bring her to Allah to the public mart. She is sold to Umballah, who, finding her still submissive, throws her into the dungeon with her father. Bruce and his friends effect the release of Kathlyn and the colonel, Umballah, with a company of soldiers, starts in pursuit. Shots are exchanged when the opposing forces meet, and Kathlyn is struck by a bullet.

CHAPTER XI THREE BAGS OF SILVER

It was the shock of the bullet rather than the seriousness of the wound that had terrified Kathlyn into the river. In the confusion, the rattle of musketry, the yelling of the panic-stricken pack coolies who had fled hither-asketer for the jungle, the squealing of the elephants, she had forgotten to crouch low in the howdah.

There had come a staggering blow, after which sky and earth seemed black; then the chill of water and strangulation, and she found herself struggling in the deepest part of the ford, a strange deadness in one arm. She had no distinct recollection of what took place; her one thought was to keep her head above water.

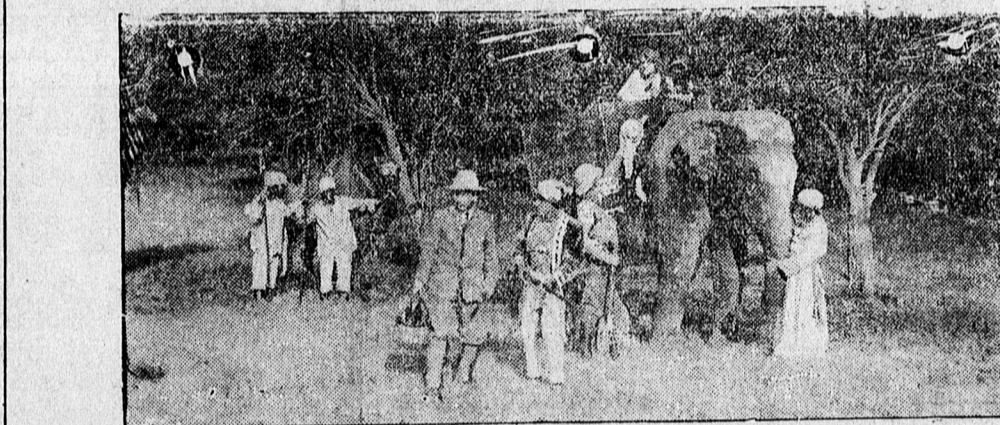
Instantly the firing ceased; on one side because there were no more cartridges, on the other for fear of hitting the one person who had made this pursuit necessary.

Kathlyn struggled between the elephant which carried Ramabai and Pundita and the boat or barge which held the eager Umballah and his soldiers. The mahout, terrorized, had slid off and taken to his heels ingloriously. Thus Ramabai could do nothing to aid Kathlyn. Nor could the elephant ridden by the colonel and Bruce be managed.

Umballah was quick to see his advantage, and, laughing, he urged his men toward the helpless girl. The colonel raised his rifle and aimed at Umballah, but there was no report, only a click which to the frantic man's ears sounded like the gates of hell closing in behind him.

"Forward!" shouted Umballah. She was his again; he would have the pleasure of taking her from under the very eyes of her father and lover. His star never faltered. Bruce stood up in the howdah, ready to dive; but the colonel restrained him.

"Don't waste your life! My God, we can't help her! Not a bullet in either gun. God's curse on all these worthless stones men call guns! There, he's got her! Not a shell left! Kit, Kit!" The colonel broke down and cried like a child.



Somewhere between us and yonder hills is a walled city belonging to Bala Khan.

her; but as he touched her she shrank in loathing. His anger flamed and he flung her roughly into a seat.

"Suffer, then, little fool!" Meantime the colonel and Bruce dismounted and tried to stem the tide of fleeing coolies; but it was no more effective than blowing against the wind. They found, however, an abandoned pack containing cartridge cases, and they filled their pockets, calling to Ramabai and Pundita to follow them along the river in pursuit of Umballah's barge, which was now being rapidly poled upstream. They might be able to pick off enough soldiers, sharpshooting, to make it impossible to man the barge. They were both dead snots, and the least they could do would be to put the fight on a basis of equality so far as numbers were concerned.

The colonel forgot all about how wide was the rage and despair in his heart had once more given him a furious strength. "The curse, the curse, always the curse!" "Don't you believe that, colonel. It is only misfortune. Now I'm going to pot Umballah, that will simplify everything. Without a head the soldiers will be without a cause, and they'll desert Kathlyn as quickly as our coolies deserted us."

"Where is Ahmed?" "Ahmed? I had forgotten all about him! But we can't wait now. He'll have to look out for himself. Hark! A squealing and trumpeting and thunderous clashing in the distance.

"Wild elephant!" cried the colonel, the old impulse wheeling him round. But the younger man caught hold of his arm significantly.

The soldiers poled diligently, but against the stream, together with the clumsiness of the barge, they could not make headway with any degree of speed. It was not long before Bruce could see them. He raised his rifle and let go; and in the boat Umballah felt his turban stir mysteriously. The report which instantly followed was enough to convince him that he in particular was being made a target. He crouched behind the soldiers returned the shot, aiming at the clump of scrub from which a film of pale blue smoke issued. They waited for another shot, but none came.

The reason was this; the herd of wild elephants which Bruce and the colonel had heard came charging directly toward them, smashing young trees and trampling the tough underbrush. Some of them quade for the water directly in line with the passing boats, Kathlyn, keenly alive to the fact that here was a chance, jumped overboard before Umballah could reach out a staying hand.

To Kathlyn there was only death in the path of the elephants; to remain on the barge to face eventually that which was worse than death. Her arm throbbled painfully, but in the desperate entry with which she determined to take the chance she used it. Quite contrary to her expectation, her leap was the best

to hunt elephant that they did not seem to know what to do without some one to guide them. Bruce ordered one of the big fellows, doubtfully, but the other obeyed the command docilely, and the colonel and Bruce helped the exhausted girl into the howdah. The colonel followed, while Bruce took upon his own shoulders the duties of mahout. Pundita got into the other howdah and Ramabai imitated Bruce. The elephants shuffled off, away from the river. For the time being neither Bruce nor Ramabai gave mind to the compass. To make pursuit impossible was the main business just then.

Later Umballah, dulled and stupefied from his emersion stood on the shore, with but nine of the twenty soldiers he had brought with him. Evidently his star had faltered. Very well; he would send for the other six. She was the Colonel Sahib's daughter, and young; she would be as wax in his hands. A passion remained in Umballah's heart, but it was now the passion of revenge.

When he had recovered sufficiently he gave orders to one of the soldiers to return to the city, to bring back at once servants, elephants, and all that would be required for a long pursuit. The messenger was also to make known to these preparations to the Council, who would undertake to forward the cable submitted to Umballah. All these things of his mind, Umballah sat down and shivered outwardly, while he boiled within. He was implacable; he would blot out his enemy, kith and kin. Col. Hare should never dip his fingers into the filigree basket—never while he Durga Ram, lived.

Quite unknown, quite unsuspected by him, for all the activity of his spies, a volcano was beginning to grumble under his feet. All tyrants, the petty and the great, have heard it, the muttering of the oppressed.

Perhaps the fugitives had gone thirty miles when suddenly the jungle ended abruptly, and a desert opened up before them. Beyond stood a purple line of rugged hills. Ramabai raised his hand, and the elephants came to a halt.

"I believe I know where I am," said Ramabai. "Somewhere between us and yonder hills is a walled city, belonging to Bala Khan, a Pathan who sometimes styles himself as a rajah. He has a body of fierce fighting men; and his lives unmoored for two reasons; looting would not be worth while, and his position is isolated and almost impregnable. Now, if I am right, we shall find shelter there, for he was an old friend of my father's, and I might call him a friend of mine, since I fell asleep for him occasionally."

"Bala Khan?" mused Bruce reminiscently. "Isn't he the chap who has a sacred white elephant?" "It is the same," answered Ramabai. "We can reach there before sunrise. It would be wise to have in, however, as this desert, and these hills are infested with lawless, nomadic bands of masterless men—brigands, you call them. They would cut the throat of a man for the sake of his

them later, in case this place Ramabai is taking us to, should turn out hostile. I like to know what is going on ahead of me."

"Poor Kit!" reiterated the colonel. "Never mind, dad; you meant it all for the best; and you must not let that tiny misfortune convince you that this yag or guru cast a spell of evil over you. That is all nonsense."

"My child, this is the orient, Asia. Things happen here that are outside the pale of logic. Bruce, am I not right?" "I have seen many unbelievable things here in India," replied Bruce reluctantly. "Think of yesterday and today, Miss Kathlyn."

"Yes, but the curse of a priest who believes in different gods, who knows before he has prayed, I just simply can't believe anything so foolish. Dad, but the thought of your mind for my sake. So long as we have the will to try we'll see California again before many weeks."

"Do you feel like that?" curiously. "In my soul, dad, in my soul." She stared dreamily toward the emerald hills. "I can't explain, but that's the way I feel. Some day we shall be free again; re-enter the life we have known; and all this will be an idle dream. Ahmed has said it."

"No; he is alive somewhere back there." Bruce turned to look at her again, but Kathlyn was still gazing at the hills again without seeing them. "A white elephant," mused the colonel. "Do you know it for a fact that this Bala Khan has a white elephant?" he called across to Ramabai.

"I have never seen it, Sahib. It is what they say." "A pair of mottled ears is the nearest I ever came to seeing a white elephant, and I've hunted them for thirty years, here, in Ceylon, in Burma, in Africa. There was once a tiger near Madras that hadn't any stripes. The natives would not permit him to be killed because they held that, being unique, he was sacred. A sacred white elephant! Poor simple minded fools!" The colonel felt in his pockets, then dropped his hands dispiritedly. How long, since he had tasted tobacco? "Bruce have you got a cheroot in your pocket? I think a smoke would brace me up."

Bruce laughed and passed up a broken cigar, which the colonel lighted carefully. The weariness seemed to go out of his face magically. "This Bala Khan" should be Mohammedan," said Bruce. "The Pathans despise the Hindu."

"There are Hindus in yonder city, quite as many," said Ramabai, "as there are Mohammedans. Even the Pathans respect that which he cannot understand."

gave the necessary directions. The party continued on into town. It was an odd place for a walled city. There wasn't a tree about, not a sign of a hedge, except some miles away where the hills began to slope upwards. Bruce wondered what the inhabitants fed upon. It was more like an Egyptian village than anything he had ever seen in India. Bruce asked for his rifle, which he laid carefully in the crook of his arm. One never could tell.

Presently they came upon a group in the center of which were the dancers at their vocation. They ceased their mad whirling at the sight of the two elephants. There were nine of these men, fierce of eye and built muscularly. No effeminate Hindu here mused Bruce, who did not like the looks of them at all. The surrounding natives stared with variant emotions. Many of them had never seen a white man before. Their gaze centered upon the colonel. Kathlyn was almost as dark as Pundita, and as for Bruce, only his European dress distinguished him from Ramabai, for there was scarcely a shade difference in color. But the colonel, having been weeks in prison, was as pale as alabaster and his hair shone like threads of silver.

On through the narrow streets, sometimes the sides of the elephants scraping against the mud and plaster of the buildings, and one could easily look into the second stories. No one seemed hostile; only a natural curiosity was evinced by those standing in doorways or leaning out of windows. The house of Bala Khan was not exactly a palace, but it was of respectable size. A high wall surrounded the compound. There was a gateway, open at this moment. A servant ran out and loudly demanded what was wanted.

"Say to your master, Bala Khan, that Ramabai, son of Maah Singh, his old friend, awaits him with friendly greetings."

"Kit," whispered Kathlyn's father, "this chap Ramabai wouldn't make a bad king. And look! There's the sacred elephant, and if he isn't white I'll eat my hat!" Kathlyn sighed gratefully. That her father could be interested in anything was a good sign for the future. A few days' rest and wholesome food would put him half way on his legs. Her own vitality was an inheritance from her father. The male line of the family was well known for its recuperative powers.

The servant ran back into the compound and spoke to a dignified man, proved to be a high caste Brahmin, having in his charge the care of the white elephant. He disappeared and returned soon with the Khan. The pleasant face, though proudly molded together with the simplicity of his appearance, conveyed to Kathlyn the fact that here was a man to be trusted, at least for the present. He greeted Ramabai cordially, struck his hands and ordered out the servants to take charge of what luggage there was and to lead away the elephants to be fed and watered.

Courteously he asked Kathlyn how she had become injured, and Ramabai



The Colonel, Bruce and Ramabai sat out at once.

acted as interpreter. He then ushered them into his house, spread rugs and cushions for them to sit upon, and mildly inquired what had brought the son of his old friend so far.

Col. Hare spoke several dialects fluently, and briefly told (between sips of tea and bites of cake which had been set out for the guests) his experience in Allah.

"The rulers of Allah," observed Bala Khan, "have always been half mad."

Ramabai nodded in agreement. "You should never have gone back," went on Bala Khan, lighting a cigarette and eyeing Kathlyn with wonder and interest. "Ah, that Durga Ram whom they call Umballah! I have heard of him, but unfortunately for him, our paths have not crossed in any way." He blew a cloud of smoke above his head. "Well, he has shown wisdom in avoiding me. In front of me, a desert; behind me, verdant

hills and many sheep and cattle, well guarded. I am too far away for them to bother. Sometimes the desert thieves cause a flurry, but that is nothing. It keeps the talwar from growing rusty," patting the great knife at his side.

Bala Khan was muscular; his lean hands denoted work; his clear eyes, the sun and wind. He was in height and build something after the pattern of the colonel.

"And to force a crown on me!" said the colonel. "You could have given it to this Umballah," wisely. "That I would not do."

In each case you showed forthrightly. The Durga Ram, when he had you where he wanted you—Bala Khan drew a finger suggestively across his throat. "Ramabai, son of my friend, I will have many sheep for you this autumn. What is it to me whether you Hindu eat beef or not?" He laughed.

Midnight. In the compound the moonlight lay upon every thing; upon the fatsides and back of the sacred white elephant, upon the three low caste keepers, now free of the vigilant eye of their Brahmin chief. The gates were barred and closed; all inside the house of Bala Khan were asleep. Far away a sentry dozed on his ride, on the wall. The three keepers whispered and chuckled among themselves.

"Who will know?" said he. "The moon will not speak," said another.

"Then let us go and smoke." The three approached the elephant. A bit of gymnastics and one of them was boosted to the back of the elephant, to whom this episode was more or less familiar. Another followed; the third was pulled up, and from the elephant's back they made the top of the wall and disappeared down into the street. Here they paused cautiously, for two guards always patrolled the front of the compound during the night. Presently the three truant stole away to ward the bazaars, which in this desert town occupied but a single street. Down they went into a cellar way and the cur's curse stalked beside them. For opium is the hand maiden of all curses.

Perhaps twenty minutes later eight sounds came from the front of the compound wall. A rifle barrel clattered upon the cobbles. Then, over the wall, near the elephant, a head appeared, then a body. This was repeated four times, and four light-footed nomads of the desert lowered themselves into the compound. They ran quickly to the gate and noiselessly unbarred it. Outside were five more desert nomads, gathered about the insensible bodies of the sentries.

These nine men were the dancers who had entered the town in advance of Kathlyn. For weeks they had lain in wait for this moment. They had spied upon the three low caste keepers upon learning of their nocturnal wickets into the opium den had cast the die this night.

With the utmost caution they approached the sacred elephant, took off his chains, and led him from the compound. Immediately six of the rascals trotted far ahead toward the gate they knew to be the least guarded. The sacred elephant, passing through the streets, attended by three men, aroused no suspicions in any stragler who saw. So remote was the wall city, so seemingly impregnable, and so little interfered with that it was only human that its guardians should eventually grow careless.

When the keepers, staggering under the fumes of the drug, returned near daybreak, first to find the gate open secondly to find their sacred charge gone, they fled in terror; for it would be death, lingering and painful for them to stay and explain how and why they had left their post.

The wild and lawless brigands knew exactly what they were about. There were several agents of European and American circuses after this white elephant and as it could not be purchased there was no reason why it could be stolen. When the Brahmin arrived at sunrise to find his vocation gone and set up a wailing which awakened the household. The Khan was furious and ordered a general search. He vowed death to the foul hands which had done this sacrilege! Kathlyn and the others were genuinely sorry when the Khan announced what had taken place. "Come, you are all skilled hunters. Find me elephant and

(Continued on page three)

SEE THESE SENSATIONAL PICTURES AT THE PEOPLES THEATRE