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THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN By HAROLD MacGRATH

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

Kathlyn Hare believes her father, Jol 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.

On her arrival in Allah she is informed by Umballah that her father is dead and that she is the queen. An elaborate durbar is arranged, the central figure of which is Kathlyn, protesting and grief-stricken. When the crown is placed upon her head Umballah announces that she is to be married to him forthwith. Her refusal infuriates him, but as Kathlyn's beauty and spirit have made a strong appeal to the people he yields the point for the time being. A priest announces that no woman may rule unmarried by the laws of the state she will be given seven days to decide.

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 rule 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 heart is also the home of the lion, and she is forced to fly from it, with the savage brute in pursuit.

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CHAPTER VII

"TRUCE WATER."

When Kathlyn came to the river she swerved toward the broadest part of it. Twice she stumbled over boulders, but rose pluckily and, bruised and breathless, plunged into the water. It was swift running and shouldered deep, and she was forced to swim strongly to gain the opposite shore. She dragged herself up to the bank and, once there, looked back. What she saw rather astonished her. She could not solve the riddle at first. The lion seemed to be struggling with some invisible opponent. He stood knee deep in the sands, tugging



"Kathlyn crouches in the grass and waited for men and elephants to enter the stockade."

and shuddered, and then the eternal blankness of sand.

She was not, then, to die? should she return to the temple? Would they not demand of her the restoration of the lion? She must go on, whether she knew not. She regretted the peace of the temple in the daytime. She could see the dome from where she stood. Like Ishmael, she must go on, forever and forever on. Was God watching over her? Was it His hand which stayed the onslaught of the beast and defeated the baser schemes of man? Was there to be a haven at the end? She smiled wistfully. What more was to beset her path she knew not, nor cared just then, since there was to be a haven at the end.

Perhaps providence brought to her mind's eye a picture; she saw her father, and Bruce, and Winnie, and her sweetheart, and they seemed to be toasting her from the end of a long table, under the blue California sky. This vision renewed her strength. She proceeded onward.

She must have followed the river at least a mile when she espied a raft

and a thoroughgoing Mohomedan, and was a different matter. Arriving at the river brink, they saw the foot-prints of the lion on the wet sand which ran down to the water; for, while the handful of Mohomedans in the village was fanatical in their belief in the true prophet and his koran, and put little faith in miracles, and still less in holy men who performed them, the advent of the white priestess deeply mystified them. There was no getting the innocent looking sand. Instantly around this; she was there; with their own eyes they saw her. There might be something in Hinduism after all.

When the hunters arrived at the portico of the temple they found two greatly terrified holy men shrilling their "A! A!" in lamentation and beating their foreheads against the earth. "Holy men, what is wrong?" asked one of the hunters, respectfully. "The lion has killed our priestess; the sacred fires must die again! Ah! A!"

"Where is the lion?" "They fled toward the river, and there he doubtless destroyed her,

through which she was passing. She ran toward the jungle, all unconscious of the stone she still held in her hand. She lost all sense of time and compass; and so ran in a half circle, coming out at the river again.

The Indian twilight was rising in the east when she found herself again looking out upon the water, the stone still clutched tightly. She gazed at the river, then at the stone, and again at the river. The stone dropped with a thud at her feet. The savage in her had not abated in the least; only her body was terribly worn and wearied and the robe, muddied and torn, enveloped her like a veil of ice. Above her the lonely yellow sky; below her the sickly river; all about her silence which held a thousand menaces. Which way should she go? Where could she possibly find a shelter for the night?

The chill roused her finally and she swung her arms to renew the circulation. Near by she saw a tree, in the crotch of which reposed a platform and upon this platform sat a shrine. A few withered flowers hung about the gross neck of the idol, and withered flowers lay scattered at the base of the tree. There was also a bundle of dry rushes which some devotees had forgotten. At least, yonder platform would afford safety through the night. So, with the last bit of strength at her command, she clambered up the rushes and climbed to the platform, arranging her bed behind the idol. She covered her shoulders with the rushes and drew her knees up to her chin. She had forgotten her father, Bruce, the happy days in a far country; she had but a single thought, sleep.

The current of the stream carried Kathlyn along at a fair pace; all she had to do was to pole along from the numerous sandbars and such boulders as lifted their ragged heads above the water.

Round a bend the river widened and grew correspondingly sluggish. She sounded with her pole. "Something hideous beyond words arose—a fat, aged crocodile. His corrugated snout was thrust quickly over the edge of the raft. She struck at him wildly with the pole, and in a fury he rushed the craft, upsetting Kathlyn.

The crocodile sank and for a moment lost sight of Kathlyn, who waded frantically to the bank, up which she scrambled. She turned in time to see the crocodile's tearful eyes staring up at her from the water's edge. He presently slid back into his limy bed; a few yellow bubbles, and he was gone.

Kathlyn's heart became suddenly and unaccountably swollen with rage; she became primordial; she wanted to hurt, to maim, to kill. Childishly she stooped and picked up heavy stones which she hurled into the water. The instinct to live fanned so strongly in her that the mist of civilization fell away like mist before the sun, and for a long time the pure savage (which lives dormant in us all) ruled her. She would live, live, live, she would live to forget this oriental inferno

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Thus, she neither saw nor heard the pious pilgrims who were on their way to Allah to pray in that temple known to offer protection against the beasts. Fortunately, they did not observe her.

The pilgrim is always a pilgrim in India; it becomes, one might say, a fascinating kind of sport. To most of them, short pilgrimages are as tame as rabbits would be to the hunter of lions. They will walk from Bombay to Benares, from Madras to Llausa, begging and bringing all the way. Eventually they become semi-holy, distinguished citizens in a clutter of mud huts.

They deposited some corn and fruit at the foot of the tree and departed, leaving Kathlyn in peace. But later, when the moon poured its white, cold radiance over her face it awakened her, and it took her some time to realize where she was.

Below, belly deep in the river, stood several water buffaloes, their sweeping horns glistening like old ivory in the moonshine. Presently a leopard stole down to the brink and lapped the water greedily, from time to time throwing a hasty, apprehensive glance over his sleek

shoulders. The buffaloes never stirred; where they were it was safe. Across the river a bulky shadow moved into the light, and a fat brown bear took his tithe of the water. The leopard snarled and slunk off. The bear washed his face, possibly sticky with purloined wild honey, and betook himself back to his lair.

Kathlyn suddenly became aware of the fact that she was a spectator to a scene such as few human beings are permitted to see; true water, where the wild beasts do not kill each other, she grew so interested that she forgot her own plight. The tree stood only a few feet from the water, so she saw everything distinctly.

Later, when his majesty the tiger made his appearance dramatically, the buffalo simply moved closer together, presenting a formidable frontage of horns.

Never had Kathlyn seen such an enormous beast. From his great added paws to the sloping shoulders he stood easily four feet in

height, and his stripes were almost as broad as her hand. He drank, doubtless eyeing the buffalo speculatively; some other time. Then he too, sat on his haunches and washed his face, but with infinite gracefulness. It occurred to the watcher that, familiar as she was with the habits of wild beasts, never had she witnessed a tiger or a lion enact this domestic scene. Either they were always pacing their cages, gazing far over the heads of those who watched them, or they slept. Even when they finished a meal of raw meat, they merely licked their chops; there was no toilet.

Here, however, was an elaborate toilet. The great cat licked his paws, drew them across his face; then licked his beautiful sides, purring; for the night was so still and the beast was so near that she could see him quite plainly. He stretched himself, took another drink, and trotted off to the jungle.

Then came a herd of elephants, for each species seemed to have an appointed time. The buffalo, enraptured and fled away into the dark. The elephants plunged into the water, squealing, making sport squirting water over their backs, and rolling, head under; and they buffeted one another amiably, and there was a baby who seemed to get in everybody's way and the grow-up treated him shabbily. By and by they, too, trooped off. Then came wild pigs and furtive antelope and foolish chattering apes.

At last the truce water became deserted and Kathlyn lay down again, only to be surprised by a huge ape who stuck his head up over the edge of the platform. The surprise was mutual. Kathlyn pushed the idol toward him. The splash of it in the water scared off the unwelcome guest and then Kathlyn lay down and slept.

A day or so later Bruce arrived at the temple. Day after day he had hung to the trail, picking it up here and losing it there. He found Rajah the elephant, the howdah gone, and only the ornamental headpiece disclosed to Bruce that he had found his rogue. Rajah was docile enough; he had been domesticated so long that his freedom rather irked him.

Bruce elicited from the mourning holy men the amazing adventure in all its details. Kathlyn had disappeared in the jungle and not even the tried hunters could find her. She was lost. Bruce, though in his heart of hearts he believed her dead, took up the trail again. But many weary weeks were to pass ere he learned that she lived.

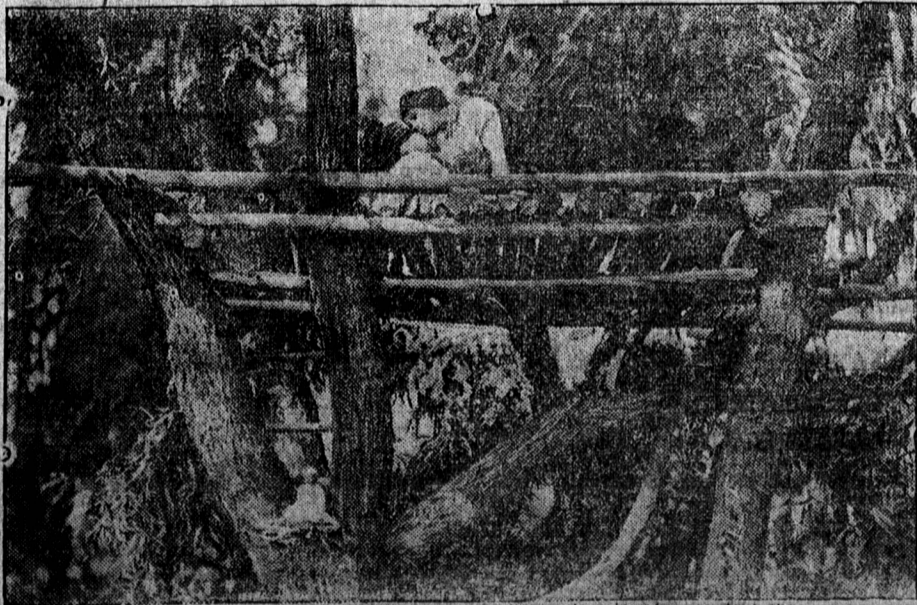
He shook his fist toward Allah. "O, Burma Ram one of these days (out and I shall square accounts!)"

Kathlyn had just completed for herself a dress of grass. Three years before she had learned the trick from the natives in Hawaii. The many days of hardship had made her thinner, but never had she been so hardy

(Continued on page three.)



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and pulling. He began to roar. Even as Kathlyn gazed she saw his chest touch the sand and his swelling flanks sunk lower. Fascinated, she could not withdraw her gaze. How his mighty shoulders heaved and pulled! But down, down, lower and lower, till nothing but the great rounded head remained in view. Then that was drawn down, the sand filled the animal's mouth and stopped his roaring; lower, lower..... Quicksands! The spot where he had disappeared stirred and glistened

moored to a clump of trees. Here she saw a way of saving her weary limbs many a rugged mile. She lorded the stream, freed the raft, and poled out into the middle of the stream.

It happened that the Mohomedan hunters who owned the raft were at this moment swinging along toward the temple. On the shoulders of two rested a pole from which dangled the lifeless body of a newly killed leopard. They were bringing it in as a gift to the headman of the village, who was

for in evil Siva, represented by the lion, is more powerful than Xishnu, reincarnated in our priestess. Ah! Ah! She is dead and we are undone!" "Come!" said the chief namesman. "Let us run to the river and see what these queer gods are doing. We'll present the skin of Siva to our master!" He laughed.

The leopard carriers deposited their burden and all started off at a dog-trot. They had always been eager regarding this lion. In the temple he was inviolable; but at large, that live to forget this oriental inferno