

THE ADVENTURES OF KATHLYN

By HAROLD MAC GRATH.

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

Kathlyn Hare, believing her father, Col. Hare, in peril, has summoned her, leaves her home in California to go to him in Allah, India. Umballah pretender to the throne of that principality, has imprisoned the colonel, named by the late king as his heir, because he fears the American may insist on his royal rights. Upon her arrival in Allah, Kathlyn is informed by Umballah that her father being dead, she is to be queen, and must marry him forthwith. Because of her refusal she is sentenced to undergo two ordeals with wild beasts.

John Bruce, an American and fellow passenger on the boat which brought Kathlyn to Allah, saves her life. The elephant which carries her from the scene of her trials 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. Thirteen men and villagers, believing her to be an ancient priestess, raise from the tomb, allow her to remain as the guardian of the sacred fire. But Kathlyn's navel is also the abode of a lion, and she is forced to flee 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 unsubmitive, throws her into the dungeon with her father.

Bruce and his friends effect the release of Kathlyn and the colonel. Umballah's attempt to recapture them is unsuccessful, and the fugitives are given shelter in the palace of Bala Khan. Supplied with camels and servants by that hospitable prince, the party endeavors to reach the coast, but, are overpowered by a band of brigands, and the encounter results in the colonel being delivered to Umballah. Kathlyn and Bruce escape from their captors and return to Allah, where Kathlyn learns that her father, while nominally king, is in reality a prisoner. It is arranged to find a bride for him. Candidates come from near and far, and Kathlyn gains access to the palace by appearing disguised as one of them.

During the ceremony of betrothal the leopards which guard the treasury become free and enter the throne room, throwing the entire court into a wild panic. This makes it possible for Bruce and Kathlyn to rescue Kathlyn and her father, and the party steals away from Allah.

When the seaport town, from which they intend to sail for home, is reached, the colonel receives by cable the news that Winnie, his younger daughter, had started for India some time before, and is about due to arrive in Allah. Her father's suspicion that Umballah had played on Winnie's fears for his and Kathlyn's safety in order to get her into his power, proves to be well founded.

Kathlyn, her father, and Bruce journey once more to Allah. Winnie arrives before they reach there and waits in the trap which Umballah has set. Another coronation ceremony is arranged, with Winnie as the queen. Kathlyn and the colonel, however, are making their presence known to the terrified child.

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CHAPTER XVII.

UMBALLAH began to go about cheerfully. He no longer doubted his star. Gutter born, was he? A rat from the streets? Very well; there were rats and rats, and some bit so deep that people died of it. He sometimes doubted the advisability of permitting Colonel Hare's headman, Ahmed to roam about; the rascal might in the end prove too sharp. Still, it was not a bad idea to let Ahmed believe that he walked in security. All Umballah wanted was the colonel, Kathlyn, and the young hunter, Bruce. It would be Ahmed, grown careless, who would eventually lead him or his spies to the hiding place.

That the trio were in the city Umballah did not doubt in the least, nor that they were already scheming to liberate the younger sister. All his enemies where he could put his hand on them!

Cheerful was the word. The crust of civilization was thin; the true savage was cracking out through it. In the days of the Mughals, Umballah would have been the Nana Sahib's right hand. He would have given the tragedy at Cawnpore an extra touch.

Ten thousand rupees did not go far among soldiers whose arrears counted for ten times that sum. So he placed it where it would do the most good. It was a capital idea, this of cutting Ramabhai's throat with his own money. The lawless element among the troops was his, Umballah's; at least his long enough for the purpose he had in mind.

When the multitude round the platform dissolved and Winnie was led to her chamber in the zennana, Umballah treated himself to a beverage known as the king's peg—a trifle composed of brandy and champagne. That he drank to stupefaction was God's method of protecting that night, an innocent child—for Winnie was not much more than that.

Alone, dazed and terrified, she dropped down upon the cushions and cried herself to sleep—exactly as Kathlyn had done. In the morning she awoke to find tea and food. She had heard no one enter or leave. Gazing curiously round her prison of marble and jasper, and porphyry, she discovered a slip of white paper protruding through a square in the latticed window, which opened out toward the garden of brides.

Hope roused her into activity. She ran to the window and snatched the paper eagerly. It was from Kathlyn, darling Kit. The risk with which it had been placed in the latticed window never occurred to Winnie.

The note informed her that the woman doctor of the zennana had been sufficiently bribed to permit Kathlyn to make up like her and gain admittance to the zennana. Winnie must complain of illness and ask for the doctor, but not before the morning of the following day. So far as she, Kathlyn, could learn, Winnie would be left in peace till the festival of the car of Juggermatt, ill, she would not be forced to attend the ceremonies, the palace would be practically deserted, and then Kathlyn would appear.

This news plucked up Winnie's spirits considerably. Surely her father and Kit were brave and cunning enough to circumvent Umballah. What a frightful country! What a dreadful people! She was miserable over the tortures her father had suffered, but nevertheless she felt him culpable for not telling both her and Kit all and not half the truth. A basket of gems! She and Kit did not wish to be rich, only free and happy. And now her own folly in coming would but add to the miseries of her loved ones.

Ahmed had told her of the two ordeals, the black



"Poor little fool! Back into the cage like a homing pigeon."

dungeon, the whiplash; he had done so to convince her that she must be eternally his. He had done so carefully into any proposition laid before her, and play for time, for every minute she won meant nearer her ultimate freedom. She must promise to marry Umballah, but to set down date.

Unlike Kathlyn, who had Pandita to untangle the intricacies of the bastard Persian, Winnie had to depend wholly upon sign language; and the inmates of the zennana did not give her the respect and attention they had given to Kathlyn. Kathlyn was a novelty; Winnie was not. Besides, one of them watched Winnie constantly, because the heeded sound had attracted her fancy and because she hoped to enchain him.

So the not from Kathlyn did not pass unnoticed, though Winnie believed that she was without espionage.

Kathlyn, her father, Bruce, Ramabhai and Pandita met at the colonel's bungalow, and with Ahmed's help they thrashed out the plan to rescue Winnie. Alone, the little sister would not be able to find her way out of the garden of brides. It was Kathlyn's idea to have Winnie pretend she needed air and sunshine and a walk in the garden after the doctor's visit. The rescue would be attempted from the walls.

Juggermatt, or Jagannath in Hindustani (meaning Lord of the World), was an idol so hideously done in wood that the Prince of Hell would have taken it to be the personification of a damned soul could he have glimpsed it in the temple at Allah. The god's face was black, his lips and mouth horribly and significantly red; his eyes were polished emeralds, his arms were of gilt, his body like that of a toad. His temporal reign in Allah was somewhere near four hundred years, and no doubt his emerald eyes had seen a crimson trail behind his car as many hundred times.

He was married frequently. Some poor, benighted, fanatical woman would pledge herself and would be considered with awe till she died. But in these times no one flung himself under the car; nothing but the income of crushed flowers now followed his wake. His grin, however, was the same as of old. Wood, paint, gilt, and emeralds! Well, we enlighten Europeans sometimes worship these very things, though we indignantly deny it.

Outside the temple stood the car, fantastically carved, dull with rubbed gold leaf. You could see the sockets where horrible knives had once glittered in the sunlight. Xerxes no doubt found his war chariots upon this idea. The wheels, six in number, two in front and two on each side, were solid, broad, and heavy, capable of smoothing out a corrugated winter road. The superstructure was an ornate shrine, which contained the idol on its peregrinations to the river.

About the car were the devotees, some holding the ropes, others watching the entrance to the temple. Presently from the temple came the gurus, or priests, bearing the idol. With much reverence they placed the idol within the shrine, the pilgrims took hold firmly of the ropes, and the car rattled and thundered on its way to the river.

Of Juggermatt and his car more anon.

The street outside the garden of brides was in reality no thoroughfare, though natives occasionally made use of it as a short cut into town. Therefore no one observed the entrance of an elephant, which stopped close to the wall, seemingly to melt into the drab of it. On his back, however, the howdah was conspicuous. Behind the curtains Kathlyn patiently waited. She was about to turn away in despair when through the wicker gate she saw Winnie, attended by one of the zennana girls, enter the garden. It seemed as if her will reached out to bring Winnie to the wall and to hold the other young woman where she was.

But the two sat in the center of the garden, the thoughts of each far away. The attendant felt no worry in bringing Winnie into the garden. A cry from her lips would bring a dozen guards and eunuchs from the palace. And the white girl could not get out alone. More than this, she saw Winnie liberty in order to trap her if possible.

By and by the native girl pretended to feel drowsy in the heat of the sun, and her head fell forward a trifle. It was then that Winnie heard a low whistle, an old familiar whistle such as she and Kit had used once upon a time in playing "a spy." She sat up rigidly. It was hard work not to cry out. Over the wall the dark trunk of an elephant protruded, and something white fluttered into the garden. Winnie rose. The head of the native girl came up

instinctively, but as Winnie leisurely strolled toward the palace, the head sank again. Winnie turned and wandered along the walls apparently examining the flowers and vines, but all the while moving nearer and nearer to the bit of white paper which the idle breeze stirred back and forth tentatively. When she reached the spot she stooped and plucked some flowers, gathering up the paper as she did so. And, still in the stooping posture, she read the note, crumpled it, and stuffed it into a hole in the wall.

Poor child! Every move had been watched as a cobra watches its prey. She was to pretend illness at once. Plans had been changed. She stood up, swayed slightly, and staggered back to the seat. In truth, she was pale enough, and her heart beat so fast that she was horridly dizzy.

"A doctor!" she cried, forgetting that she would not be understood. The native girl stared at her. She did not understand the words, but the signs were plain. The young white woman looked ill; and Umballah would deal harshly with those who failed to stem the tide of an illness which might betfall his cap of the palace. Three other girls came out, and Winnie was conducted back to the zennana.

All this Kathlyn observed. She bade the mahout go to the house of the zennana's doctor, where she had donned the habiliments familiar to the guards and inmates of the zennana.

Everything went forward without a hitch; so smoothly that had the object of her visit been other than Winnie, Kathlyn must have sensed something

of them, unfamiliar with the customs and the language of the people! How she had succeeded in getting there without mishap was in itself remarkable. She took Winnie's wrist in her hand and pressed it reassuringly, then pattered about in her medical bag. Very softly she whispered:

"I shall remain with you till dusk. Give no sign whatever that you know me, for you will be watched. Tonight I will smuggle you out of the palace. Take these, and soon pretend to be quiet." Winnie swallowed the bits of sugar and lay back, her patient. Once alone with Winnie, she cast aside her veil.

"Hush, baby! We are going to get you safely away."

"I am afraid."

"So are we all; but we must not let any one see that we are. Father and Ahmed are near by. But O, why did you attempt to find us?"

"But you called me to come, weeks ago!"

"Never! And the mystery was no longer a mystery to Kathlyn. The hand of Umballah lay bare. Could they eventually win out against a man who seemed to miss no point in the game? 'You were deceived, Winnie. To think of it! We had escaped, were ready to sail for home, when we learned that you had left for India. It nearly broke our hearts!'"

"What ever shall we do, Kit?" Winnie flung her arms round her sister and drew her down. "My Kit!"

"We must brave whatever happens."

"And am I not your sister?" quietly. "Do you be-



But Kathlyn Mensahib did not die under the broad wheels of the car of Juggermatt.

unusual. She entered the palace and even led the way to Winnie's chamber—a fact which appeared natural enough to the women about, but which truly alarmed Umballah's spy, who immediately set off in search of the man.

One thing assured her: the hands of the zennana's real physician were broad and muscular, while the hands she saw were slender and beautiful, brown though they were. She had seen those hands before, during the episode of the leopards of the treasury.

It was very hard for Kathlyn to curb the wild desire to crush Winnie in her arms, arms that truly ached for the feel of her. Even as she fought this desire she could not but admire Winnie's superb acting. She and her father had misjudged this butterfly. To have come all this way alone in search

leave in me so little? Why shouldn't I be brave? But you're always treated me like a baby; you never tried to prove me."

Kathlyn's arms wound themselves tightly about the slender form. . . . And thus Umballah found them.

"Very touching!" he said, standing with his back to the door. "But nicely trapped!" He laughed as Kathlyn sprang to her feet, as her hand sought the dagger at her side. "Don't draw it," he said. "I might hurt your arm in wrenching it away from you. Poor little fool! Back into the cage, like a homing pigeon! Had I not known you all would re-

turn, think you I would have given up the chase so easily? You would not bend, so then you must break. The god Juggermatt yearns for a sacrifice to prove that we still love and worship him. You

spurned my love; now you shall know my hate. You shall die, unpleasantly."

Quickly as a cat springs he caught her hands and wrenched them toward him, dragging her toward the door. Winnie sprang up from the cushion, her eyes ablaze with the fighting spirit. "Too soon the door closed in her face and she heard the bolt outside so clattering home."

Said Umballah from the corridor: "To you, pretty kitten, I shall come later. I need you for my wife. When I return you will be all alone in the world, truly an orphan. And do not make your eyes red needlessly."

Winnie screamed, and Kathlyn fought with the fury of a netted tigress. For a few minutes Umballah had his hands full, but in the end he conquered. Outside the garden of brides three men waited in vain for the coming of Kathlyn and her sister.

The god Juggermatt did not repose in his accustomed niche in the temple that night. The car had to be pulled up and down a steep hill, and on the return, owing to the darkness, it was left at the top of the hill, safely propped to prevent its rolling down of its own accord. When the moon rose Juggermatt's eyes gleamed like the striped cat's. Long since he had seen a human sacrifice. Perhaps the old days would return once more. He was weary at heart, riding over sickly flowers; he wanted flesh and bones and the music of the death rattle. His cousins, War and Pestilence, still took their tithes. Why should he be denied?

The whispering became a murmuring, and the murmuring grew into excitable chattering; and by 10 o'clock that night all the bazaars knew that the ancient rites of Juggermatt were to be revived that night. The bazaars had never heard of Nero, called Abenobarus, and, being without comparisons, they missed the greatness of their august but hampered regent Umballah.

Always the bazaars heard news before any other part of the city. The white mensahib was not dead; but had been recaptured while posing as the zennana physician in an attempt to rescue her sister, the new queen. O, the chief city of Allah was in the matter of choice and unexpected amusements unrivaled in Asia.

Yes, Umballah was not unlike Nero—to keep the populace amused so they would temporarily forget their burdens.

But why the sudden appearance of soldiers, who stood guard at every exit, compelling the inmates of the bazaars not to leave their houses? At all! Why this secrecy, since they knew what was going to take place? But the soldiers, ordinarily voluble, maintained grim silence, and even went so far as to extend the bayonet to all those who tried to leave the narrow streets.

"An affair of state!" was all the natives could get in answer to their inquiries. Men came flocking to the roofs. But the moonshine made all things ghostly. The car of the god Juggermatt was visible, but what lay in its path could not be seen.

Umballah was not popular that night. But this was a private affair. Well he knew the ingenuity and he sources of his enemies at large. There would be no rescue this night. Kathlyn Mensahib should die; this time he determined to put fear into the hearts of the others.

Having drunk his king's peg, he was well fortified against any personal qualms. The passion he had had for Kathlyn was dead, dead as he wanted her to be.

Whom the gods destroy they first make mad; and Umballah was mad.

The palanquin waited in vain outside the wall of the garden of brides—waited till a ripple of the news eddied about the conveyance in the shape of a greatly agitated Lal Singh.

"He is really going to kill her!" he panted. "He lured her to her sister's side, then captured her. She is to be placed beneath the car of Juggermatt within an hour. It is to be done secretly. The people are guarded and held in the bazaars. Ahmed, with an elephant and armed keepers, will be here shortly. I have warned him. Umballah runs amuck!"

Suddenly they heard voices in the garden, first Umballah's then Kathlyn's. Sinister portents to the ears of the listeners, father and lover and loyal friends. The former were for breaking into the garden then and there; but a glance through the wicket gate disclosed the fact that Umballah and Kathlyn were surrounded by fifteen or twenty soldiers. And they dared not fire at Umballah for fear of hitting Kathlyn.

The palanquin was hastily carried out of sight. At the end of the passage or street nearest the town was a gate which was seldom closed. Through this one had to pass to and from the city. Going through this gate, one could make the hill (where the car of Juggermatt stood) within fifteen minutes, while a detour around the walls of the ancient city would consume three-quarters of an hour. Umballah ordered the gate to be closed and stationed a guard there. The gates changed behind him and the army. This time he was guarding every entrance. If his enemies were within they would naturally be weak in numbers; outside, they would find it extremely difficult to make an entrance. More than this, he had sent a troop toward the colonel's camp.

The gates had scarcely been closed when Ahmed, his elephant, and his armed keepers came into view. The men sent Pandita back to camp, and the actual warfare began. They approached the gate, demanding to be allowed to pass. The soldiers refused. Instantly the keepers flung themselves furiously upon the soldiers. The trooper who held the key threw it over the wall just before he was overpowered. But Ahmed had come prepared. From out the howdah he took a heavy leather pad, which he adjusted over the fore skull of the elephant, and gave a command.

The skull of the elephant is thick. Hunters will tell you that bullets glance off it as water from the back of a duck. Thus, protected by the leather pad, the elephant becomes a formidable battering ram, backed by tons of weight. Only the solidity of stones may stay him.

Ahmed's elephant shouldered through the gates grandly. For all the resistance they offered that skull they might have been constructed of papier mache.

Through the dust they hurried. Whenever a curious native got in the way the butt of a rifle beset him out of it.

Umballah had lashed Kathlyn to a sapling which was laid across the path of the car. The man was mad, stark mad, this night. Even the soldiers and the devotees surrounding the car were terrified. One did not force sacrifices to Juggermatt. One soldier had protested, and he lay at the bottom of the hill, his skull crushed. The others pulled one way by greed or money and love of life, aimed no hand.

But Kathlyn Mensahib did not die under the broad wheels of the car of Juggermatt. So interested in Umballah were his men that they forgot the vigilance required to conduct such a ceremony free of interruption. A crackling of shots, a warning cry to drop their arms, the plunging of an elephant in the path of the car, which was already thundering down the hill, spoiled Umballah's classic.

(Continued next Saturday.)

SEE THE PICTURES NEXT FRIDAY AND SATURDAY AT THE IMPERIAL