

THE YELLOW GOD

By H. RIDER HAGGARD

Author of "King Solomon's Mines," "The Brethren," "Benite," "She," Etc., Etc.

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CHAPTER XXII (Continued).

"Now, Major, you get up and follow me, for I know every inch of ground, also by and by good short cut over mountains. You see, Jeeki very clever, and when he herd sheep and goat, he made note of everything and never forget nothing. He put you out of this hole, never fear."

"Glad to hear it, I am sure," answered Alan as he rose. "But what's to become of the Mungana?"

"Don't know and don't care," said Jeeki; "no more good to us. Can go and see how Big Bona feel, if he like," and stretching over his big hand as though in a moment of abstraction, he removed the costly necklaces from their guide's neck and thrust them into the pouch he wore. Also he picked up the crooked knife, he had seen lying on the ground near his head and placed it in the same receptacle remarking that he 'always taught it was wicked to waste anything'."

Then they started, the Mungana following them. Jeeki padded and waved him off, but the poor wretch still came on, whereon Jeeki produced the big crooked knife, he had seen lying on the ground near his head and placed it in the same receptacle remarking that he 'always taught it was wicked to waste anything'."

"What are you going to do?" said Alan, awakening to the situation.

"Cut off head of that cocktail man, Major, and so save him lot of trouble. Also we got no grub and if we find any, he want eat a lot. Chop what do for two, p'raps, make very short commons for three. Also he might play dirty trick, so much best dead."

"Conscience," said Alan sternly, "let the poor devil come along if he likes. One good turn deserves another."

Just so, Major, he want cut our throats, so I want cut his—one good turn deserves another, as wise king say in Book, when he give half baby to woman that didn't want it. Well, so he, Major, specially as I no matter, he not stop with us long."

"You mean that he will run away, Jeeki?"

"Oh! no, he not run away, he in too blue funk for that. But something run away with him, because he ought die to-morrow night. Oh, yes, you see, you see, and Jeeki hope that something run away with you too, Major, because we ought be married at same time."

"Hope not, I am sure," answered Alan, and bethinking him of Big Bona wallowing and screaming on the water, he turned and advanced at the trot, the Mungana running after them like a dog; they had entered, hush purred, and a few wandering paths. Along these paths they sped hour after hour, Jeeki leading them without a moment's hesitation. They met no man and heard nothing, except the splash of the water, which Alan put down to wild beasts, but Jeeki and the Mungana said were produced by ghosts. Indeed, it appeared that all this jungle was possessed by the haunted, and no Asiki would enter it at night, or unless he were very bold and protected by many charms, by day either. Therefore, it was an excellent place for fugitives who sorely needed a good start."

At length the day began to dawn just as they reached the main road where it crossed the hills, whence on his journey thither Alan had his first view of Bona-Town. Peering from the edge of the bush they perceived a fire burning near the road and round it five or six men, who seemed to be asleep. Their faces, but he could not regard that thing the logs in the water as satisfactory as this would be likely to be carried over from last year. Item for log scaling passed. The committee rose and the House read until 10 the next morning.

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Mr. Williams, on a vote for Nana-mo agency, waited in the committee office again opened. The premier said the closing of the committee office had been done on the recommendation of the inspector of the time. It was felt that had not for the reopening of the office, Mr. Williams argued that with extra at Nana-mo and in other ways the of doing the work came within the cost of having an office in Nana-mo. Without an agency there Chinese and Japanese were escap-taxation.

Henderson inquired concerning (Continued on page 12).

Hayward went into the question by Mr. Williams for the fact that those in Cowichan who were Mr. Williams had not been given him the names, but had given the cases were found. He (ward) had written to the agent about the matter. The ad gone out to Mount Sicker those conditions were supposed to be received a letter from the government agent, who said that was no destitution. He had three men out of work, but these of means.

Williams was glad that the com- were as good as the government ad found them at Mount Sicker. However, that doubt might be on the report of the govern- ment in view of the fact that the incl of Nana-mo had absolutely settled the situation there. McInnes said the Socialists this- cle and were objecting to this in this account.

McInnes said that the Salvation had done at least one good thing girls in the places formerly by Chinamen. These white girls come so well satisfied with con- that they would not leave Vic- and the province.

McInnes said that if white girls replaced Chinamen in the places they took lower wages than the men. Under no other conditions the parasites of society employ

Royalties on Timber.

connection with the discrepancy in the timber royalties. Hon. F. ton explained that he had got information. There was yet a dis- crepancy, but part of it was explained, was estimated to be 180 million, which would be 180 million, there was estimated to be in arrears. This reduced the dis- crepancy by a considerable amount.

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away, nor did anyone attempt to follow him. Still it was only after night-fall that he dared to put the boat about and return to the headland, as he had promised. That was all he had to say.

Alan thanked him heartily for his faithfulness, and they paddled on steadily, putting mile after mile between them and Asiki-land. He wondered whether he had seen the last of that country, and its inhabitants. Something within him answered "No." He was sure that the Asiki would not allow him to depart in peace without making some desperate effort to recapture him. Far as he was away, it seemed to him that he could feel her fury hanging over him like a cloud, a cloud that would burst in a rain of blood. Doubtless it would have burst already, had it not been for the few elements that he and his companions were still supposed to be hiding in the woods. But that error must be discovered, and then would come the pursuit.

He looked at the full moon shining upon him, and reflected that at this very hour he should have been seated upon the chair of state proper time rather being wedded, by the Asiki, in the presence of Big Bona and all the people. His eye fell upon the Mungana, who had also been destined to be a prominent part in that ceremony. At once he saw that there was something wrong with the man. A curious change had come over his countenance. It was working like that of a maniac. Foam appeared upon his dyed lips, his haunted eyes rolled, his thin hands gripped the side of the canoe, and he began to sing, or rather to howl like a dog baying at the stars. Jeeki hit him on the head and bade him be silent, but he took no notice, even when he hit him again more heavily. Presently came the climax. The man sprang up in the canoe, causing it to rock from side to side. He pointed to the full moon above and howled more loudly than before; he pointed to something that he seemed to see in the air near by, and gibbered as though in terror. Then his eyes fixed themselves upon the water, at which he stared and stared.

Harder and harder he stared, his head sinking lower every moment, till at length, without another sound, very quietly and unexpectedly, he went over the side of the boat. He lay on his back, and they saw his bright-colored garments sinking to the depths, then he vanished.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Pursuit.

They waited a while, expecting that he would rise again. But he never rose. A spot-weighted corpse could not be so light. The thing was not natural, and for a while there was silence, which was usual was broken by Jeeki.

"That gay dog gone," he said in a reflective way, "all those old ghosts come to fetch him at prop time. Good run, away from ghosts; they travel too quick; one jump, and pop up where you no expect. Well, more place for Jeeki, now, and he spread himself out comfortably in the empty seat, adding, "Like Mungana's room much better than company, he go in and out of the canoe, and sink too much, all that water never wash him clean."

Thus died the Mungana, and such was the poor wretch's requiem. With a shiver Alan reflected that had it not been for him and his insane jealousy, he too might have been expected to go into that said bath and have his face washed with like water. Only he would have escaped the spell that had destroyed his predecessor in the affections of the priestess of the Bona's. Or would some dim power such as Alan had, have drawn him to the death and back to the arms of the Asiki, to Big Bona's torture pit? He shuddered at the very thought of it, for all he had undergone, and seen made his superstitious, then he the men paddle faster, ever faster.

All that night they rowed on, talking to rest, except Alan and Jeeki, who slept a good deal, and as a consequence awoke at dawn much refreshed. When the sun rose they found themselves across the lagoon, over thirty miles from the spot where they had started, and the river which they had travelled some months before flowed out of the lake. Whether by chance or skill, Jeeki had steered a wonderfully straight course. Now, however, they were face to face with a new trouble, for scarcely had they begun to descend the river when they discovered that in many places too shallow to allow the canoe to pass over the sand and mud banks. Evidently there was but one thing to be done—abandon it and walk.

So they landed, ate from their store of food, and began a terrible and toilsome march, either side the river lay desolate waste, and the dead reeds ten or twelve feet high. Doubtless beyond this swamp there was high land, but in order to reach this, if it existed, they would be obliged to force a path through miles of reeds, therefore they thought it safer to follow the river bank. Their progress was very slow, since continually they must make detours to avoid a quicksand or a creek, also the stones and scrubby growth delayed them, so that fifteen or at most twenty miles was a good day's march. Still they went on steadily, seeing no man, and when their food was exhausted, living

on the fish which they caught in plenty in the shallows, and on young flapper-ducks, that haunted the reeds. So at length they came to the main river into which this tributary flowed, and camped there thankfully, believing that the pursuit of them had been undertaken, it was abandoned. At least Alan and the rest believed this, but Jeeki did not.

On the following morning shortly after dawn, Jeeki awoke his master. "Come here, Major," he said in a solemn voice, "I got something show you," and he led him to the foot of an old willow tree, adding, "Now up you go, Major, and look."

So Alan went up, and from the top-most fork of that tree saw a sight at which his blood turned cold. For there not five miles behind them, on either side of the river bank, the light gleaming on their spears, marched two endless columns of men, who from their height and the gleam of their spears, seemed to him like a host of devils. A minute he looked, then descended the tree, and approached the others, asked what was to be done.

"Look, look, look," he exclaimed, Jeeki emphatically, then he licked his finger, held it up to the wind, and added: "But first fire feeds and make it hot for Bona's crowd."

This was a good suggestion, and one on which they acted without delay. Taking red embers, they blew them to a flame and lit torches, which they applied to the reeds, and the strong northward wind soon did the rest; indeed within a quarter of an hour a vast sheet of flame twenty or thirty feet in height was rushing towards the Asiki columns. Then they began their advance along the river bank, running at a steady trot, for here the ground was open.

All that day they ran, padding at intervals to get their breath, and at night rested, because they must. When the light came upon the following morning, they were rushing towards the Asiki hill and saw the outposts of the Asiki advancing not a mile behind. Doubtless some of the army had been burned, but the rest, guessing their route, had forced a way through the reeds and were across the river. So they began to run again harder than before, and kept their lead during the morning; but in the afternoon came the Asiki gallop on them, and the row they were in, for long rise, the river running in the cleft beneath, and Jeeki, who seemed to be absolutely untrifling, held Alan by the hand and said, "Now, Major, look behind. Two of their men had fallen down and been abandoned, and the rest straggled."

"No go, Jeeki," gasped Alan, "they will catch us at the top of the hill."

"Never say die," Jeeki answered, "they will catch us at the top of the hill," and he knew what other side of hill."

Somewhat they struggled to the crest, and between them, beneath them was a great army of men.

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CHAPTER XXIV.

A Meeting in the Forest.

In five minutes more they were among the Ogula, who, having recognized their chief while he was yet some way off, greeted him with rapturous cheers and the sound of the hand.

Then, as there was no time for explanation, they retreated across a little stream which run down the valley, four thousand or more of men, and prepared for battle. That evening, however, there was no fighting, for when the first of the Asiki reached the top of the rise and saw that the fugitives had escaped to the enemy, men and who, in strength, they halted, and finally retired.

Now Alan, and Fahni, also, hoped that the pursuit was abandoned, but again Jeeki shook his head and said: "Not at all, Major; I know Asiki and their little ways. While one of them alive, not dare go back to Asiki without you, Major."

"Perhaps she is with them herself," suggested Alan, "and we might treat with her."

"No, Major, Asiki never leave Bona-Town, that against law, and if she do so, priests make her Asiki and kill her when they catch her."

After this a council of war was held, and it was decided to camp there for over thirty miles, and then to meet an attack if one should be made, and the Ogula were afraid of being caught on the march, with their backs towards the enemy. Alan was glad enough to hear this, for he knew that he had eaten, Fahni visited him here and Alan boded evil from his face.

"White Man," he said, "I can protect you no longer. The Asiki messengers have been with us again, and they say that unless we give you up to-morrow at the dawn, their army will push on ahead of us and destroy my town, which is two days' march down the river, and all the women and children in it, and that afterwards they will fight a great battle with us. Therefore, my people say that I must give you up, or that if I do not, they will elect another chief and do so themselves."

"Then you must give up a dead man, Fahni," said the old chief in a low voice, "the night is dark and the forest not so far away. Moreover, I have set no guards on that side of the river, and Jeeki does not forget a row that he has travelled. Lastly I have heard it said that there are some other white people with soldiers camped in the edge of the forest, and if you are not here in the morning, how could I give you up?"

"I understand, Fahni. You have done your best for me, and now, good-night, Jeeki and I are going to take a walk. Sometimes you will think of the months we spent together in Bona-Town, will you not?"

"Yes, and of you also, White Man, for so long as I shall live. Walk, Jeeki and I are going to take a walk, and far, for the Asiki are clever at following a spoor. Good-night, Friend, and to you, Jeeki the cunning, good-night also. I go to tell my captains that I will surrender you to dawn."

And without more words he vanished out of their sight and out of their lives. Meanwhile Jeeki, foreseeing the issue of this talk, was already getting on in doing up his belongings, including the gold rings, some food, and a native cooking pot, in a bundle surrounded by a couple of bark blankets.

"Come on, Major," he said, handing Alan one spear and taking another himself. "Old cannibal guide right, very nice night for walk. Come on, Major, never saw you in such a hurry. This happen and just before dawn."

"Jeeki, Jeeki," said Alan, "exercise a Christian spirit and let bygones be

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"So they were separated, but, as I chanced, that case never came up, for that morning this Ogula was killed, followed by his reluctant servants. The Ogula, while the others involved in the charge kept themselves out of sight. Whether Jeeki's "Ma" was or was not eaten by the Ogula no one ever learned for certain. At least, she was never heard of any more.

Alan was sleeping heavily when a sound of rushing feet and of strange, thrilling, battle-cries awoke him. He sprang up, snatching at a spear and shield which Jeeki had provided for him, and ran out to find from the position of the moon that dawn was near.

"Come on, Major," said Jeeki, "the Asiki make night attack; they always like to do everything at night who love darkness because their eye evil. Come upon quick, Major, and he began to drag him off toward the rear."

"But that's the wrong way," said Alan, presently: "They are attacking over there."

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"You could-blooded old scoundrel!" ejaculated Alan, as he turned and bolted back towards the noise of fighting, followed by his reluctant servants. He advanced along the river bank, running at a steady trot, for here the ground was open.

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