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THE CLAW

By

Cynthia Stockley

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Adaptation by Winnifred Reeve

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This story owned by Universal. Selznick.
Produced several years ago with Clara Kimball Young.

Adaptation by:

Winnifred Reeve.

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THE AFRICAN VELDT.

Bare, bleak kops of Bechanaland. Effect of stillness and overpowering heat. Sky splashed and gashed with black and red and yellow. The sun like a cannon ball shooting towards the west.

A POST CART, straggling slowly and deviously along, swaggering from side to side and drawn by eight weary mules.

In the driver's seat a big dirty Boer, with muddy piggish eyes, unshaven chin, a great uncouth head with coarse hair upstanding. Reins loose in his hands. He is dozing. As the cart jolts into a rut, he rouses and curses the mules. Then drowsily reaches for a black bottle beside him and takes a long swig. Comes to partial life and cracks the whip above the heads of the mules.

As he drinks, something in the back of the wagon,

crammed up among the mail bag and pillows moves upward. A head swathed in veils. A hand puts the veils back and a girl's lovely young face is revealed.

DEIRDRE SAURIN

The death of her father in England has left Deirdre practically penniless. Her brother, Dick Saurin, has offered her a home in South Africa where he is in the employ of the Chartered Company. Deirdre is travelling by " coach" to Mashonaland. Her brother has been unable to meet her at Johnnesburg, and the girl is pluckily making the trip alone.

Hour after hour in the ricketty shaky cart for four intensely hot and sultry days under a giant African sun. Even her veils are unable to protect her from the fierce sunrays, and she holds them up, shading the effect of the light.

The driver's sly eyes blinks. He grins and with a dirty old comb combs his shock of hair and his straggy mustache. Then he takes another long drink of " dop" and waits for further developements from the girl behind him. His attitude is that of one slyly waiting for something and he smacks his lips and chuckles. Her voice is clear and sharp. Deirdre Saurin is very wide awake and with her hand on her colt she is mistress of the situation.

" Driver, how far are we from the river?"

" Mebbe tree four miles. Can't say 'zatly Missee."

" Three--four-- Miles."

Dierdre looks at the slow moving mules.

she says:

" At the rate the mules are going now, it will take an hour to a mile. It will be dark before we reach the river. Can you not speed up the mules a bit?"

" No missee. Mules very sleepy animal. He perfer to go slow. Like better lie down. He too."

He grins broadly. The girl glares at his back, then resignedly settles herself back in the cart, looking out before her in a sort of a dreaming abstraction at the marvelous sky. The heat becomes more oppresive and she herself.

On and on.

The sun creeping farther to the west, the sky seems splotched with blood.

The stealthy coming of dusk and the sun going down and down. As the dusk comes on, the heat lessens. Deirdre sits up, freshens her face with powder from her vanity case. We see her cold cream her face and get the dust and sunburn and then freshly powder it. She has taken off her hat during these operations and her fair hair blows in little curls on her head.

The mules are barely moving and the driver has turned his head around, watching Deirdre, at the same time, grinning with anticipation as he combs his own hair and washed his face by the simple expedient of spitting on a cloth and wiping his face off. He takes another swig of " dop". His expression is evil.

Night closing in softly. The veldt seems immense

with a vastness that seems illimitable.

The cart going by bush. The outlines of the hills in the distance silhouetted against the now silvered sky. The cart gliding into bush that becomes more dense.

A deisel (native stable) on edge of road. Cart stopping with a jerk. Driver gets out, lights a lantern, for it is now quite dark, opens the door of stable. Deirdre peers after him. She is kneeling in the wagon, behind the mail bags.

Driver returning, swinging lantern. Deirdre watching him as he goes to head of mules. She is puzzled and alarmed. She hears him unstrapping the straps and the harness falls to the ground with a thud. Deirdre standing up in the cart. Calls out sharply:

" What are you doing driver? Why are you unharnessing those mules?"

Driver in thick voice replies:

" River full. No can cross tonight."

Deirdre is alarmed at this information. She asks:

" What are you going to do?"

" Put mules in stable for night. Seh me in wid mules. You better come same with me and mules, missee."

" Nonsense. There must be a place along the road for me to spend the night in. Take me to some such place."

The driver has all the mules loose now and is holding each by a small head rein. He still swings his lantern in one hand. He comes alongside the cart and says:

" No more place this side river. You come to stable with me and mules, Missee. me like girl very much, kip you warm in stable. "

He has been edging nearer to the wagon at back leaning across into it, one hand slyly going across on a feeling tour. Deirdre has recoiled back. She does not reply. She can see his wide, grinning sensual face. Her own white terrified one shows wanly in the fading light. The man's laughter is hideous.

" Go into the stable with the mules. I will stay here."

The man shrugs, leers, grins.

" All right Missee. Me do same. You like to sit all night in cart with lions?"

" Lions!" she falters.

Driver nods his head, grinning and licking his lips.

" Dats right. Plenty lion come at night. Worse place here for lion. That why I go into stable wid de mules. You better come same, missee. Me big feller- keep you nize and warm--yes?"

The girl's face is a study. She has the choice of following this horrible brute-man with his mules into the unknown black interior of a native stable or remaining in the open cart with--- the lions. She makes her choice, as the man, as if expecting her to join him, leers into the cart at back and tries to touch her.

Something cold and hard is jammed up against his face. It is the nose of a revolver. He jumps back scared. Then out of the range of the colt he tries to resume his swagger.

" All right. I told you what. Expect you die when lions eat you. He no care. Good night, missee. No see you again."

The girl watches him stagger away, the lantern flickering and the mules stumbling after him. She sees them go into the stable and the heavy door banged to.

ALL ALONE IN AN OPEN CART ON THE AFRICAN VELDT.

She stands for a moment, slightly swaying. Then her wits get to work. She tries to build a barricade of the mail bags. She crouches, kneeling behind them, her revolver pointing out across the bags.

Hours pass.

The girl's terror has not abated with the night. Everything appears ghostly---- like a weird nightmare. A new white moon comes up like a wraith above the black bush. There is something terrible desolate and yet beautiful about the African night. There is a feeling of preying and moving wild things peering out at her, creeping towards her. Somewhere in the distance there arises a long, moaning cry. A jackel sends up his hungry dirge. The cry sends her into a cold shiver. Breathing with terror, Deirdre, finds her hands trembling so that they can barely hold the revolver. She wraps around her a blanket. She dare not sit. She must watch

and wait for she knows not what. Her straining ears are alert. She hears strange whispering sounds-- something moving close at hand.

Shadowy things coming out of the wood. The silhouette of a lean form. Behind it another. A ghostly pack silhouetted against the sky. The girl in the cart does not see them but when one of the creeps nearer and nearer to the cart, peering out, across the bags, suddenly Deirdre sees two green points of fire. Then two more, and two more. She cannot count them but she knows that they are the eyes of a savage beast/ And now new terror assails her. The cart begins to rock from side to side. Something under it. Half a dozen jackels nosing and pushing, while many more in front, peering into the cart and ready to climb aboard.

Paralysed with fright, Deirdre backs up as far as possible to the driver's seat. In front of her are the piled up mail bags, over which she sees those points of fire- the eyes of the wild animals. As the cart shakes, she realises that it may topple over. With a prayer on her lips, Deirdre leans forward and fires barrel after barrel from the revolver in the direction of the pale fires.

There is a scurrying and a scattering at the second detonations. The revolver drops from the girl's nervless hand. She falls back behind the mail bags in a dead faint.

Another part of the veldt.

A horseman silhouetted against the silvered sky, coming up over a bit of rising ground. He lopes along, sitting carlessly, slightly to one side of the horse. He wears a large slouch hat, a flannel shirt open at the neck, with a crimson stripped handerchief knotted loosely about his bare throat. His khaki riding breeches are hitched around him with a leather belt, from which depends a heavy service revolver and a knife case. He has a gun also strapped to his saddle. Evidently he is fully armed against lions and hostile natives, for of course, this is a white man- Major Anthony Kinsella.

MAJOR ANTHONY KINSELLA.

In the goverment service. Returning from a tour in the transvaal where he has been buying horses and wagons.

Unconscious or indifferent to the dangers of the wild country about him, knowing every inch of the veldt, Kinsella travels along at a slow and easy lope of the African horseman. He sings as he goes and his clear, fine voice sounds strangely in the night. He looks up at the sky as he sings:

" SING ME A SONG OF A LAD THAT IS GONE

Say can that boy be I?
Merry of heart he sailed on a day
Over the sea to Skye.

Glory of youth glowed in his veins,
Where is that glory now?"

He takes off his handerchief muffler and draws in his breath, as if inhaling the invigorating freshness of the cool night air. He is looking out at the same wild sky, as the girl in the cape cart, when suddenly his mood of absorption

is broken and his horse stands still.

He hears the loud detonations of the revolver echoing and repeating through the silent place. His face registers surprise and bewilderment.

PRETTY DANGEROUS LION HUNTING AT NIGHT is the man's thoughts. He spurs his horse along the trail and at a sharp trot rides along and comes presently to the wooded place, where he first sees the dark outline of the deisel (native stable) and then the mail cart.

Kinsella rides up to the cart. He does not see the girl, in a faint, behind the mail bags. His glance goes to the front of the cart and he surmises as he looks towards stable that the driver is probably camping there for the night. He prepares to camp himself for the night- but not in the stable with the driver.

Dismounting and unpacking his guns and blankets and supplies, leaving them on the ground by the horse, which he ties in front of the wagon. Builds four great bonfires, in a square, near the cart. Throws his rugs and packs by one of the bobfires and prepares to lie himself down.

In the cart Deirdre stirs into consciousness. She finds herself looking up straight at the sky and a realization of her plight comes to her. Her first impulse is to reach for her revolver. This she finds. She hears the movements in the front of the cart, as Kinsella feeds his horse, Deirdre then becomes aware of the crackling fire.

Her face reveals her consciousness of the fact that she apprehends that the driver has built the fires. She thinks it to be, fumbling at the front of the cart.

Cautiously Deirdre comes to her feet. Holding her revolver before her, she looks over the front. She sees only the outline of a man and she calls out:

"Hands up!"

Kinsella wheels around. His hands unconsciously slightly rise, but in one of them, steadily aimed, is his own colt. He sees the pale blonde hair like an aureole about the girl's face, and the revolver, shaking from side to side in her hand.

"Hands up--I s-s-ssaid! or I'll sh-shoot!"

Deirdre's teeth are chattering with fear.

Kinsella stares up at her amazedly.

"Good God -- a lady!. What are you doing here? Where is your driver?"

Deirdre is so overcome and hysterical by the discovery that it is not the driver, but an Englishman that again she drops the revolver and she almost toppies forward over against the driver's seat. But she pulls herself up bravely. Kinsella moves around the back of the cart. From across the barricade of mail bags, the girl's white face gleams. He holds out his hand:

"Come -- you are perfectly safe now."

Deirdre steps over the mail bags and Kinsella assists her to the ground. By the light of the nearest

bonfires they look into each other's faces. Then Kinsella removes his large hat and says:

"I am Major Kinsella of the Chartered Company."

"And I - Deirdre Saurin. I am travelling to Mashonaland to join my brother. He is also with the C hartered Company."

"Yes, I know him well. Where is your driver?"

Deirdre indicates the barn. She almost sobs

"He gave me the choice of the stable with the mules and -- him - or out here in the cart alone -- with lions!"

"The infernal scoundrel. The low down whelp!"

Deirdre gasps hysterically. She is so relieved by the strong presence of this man that she is almost ready to shout with joy:

"He said the river was full and we could not cross tonight. My brother is to meet me -- on the other side."

"His business was to build fires and guard you. This is one of the most dangerous places in Africa. I'll drag him out and thrash him within an inch of his life."

He starts toward the stable, but Deirdre grasps his arm.

"Don't leave me alone -- please, please don't."

She begins to sob and Kinsella, stops, puts his arm awkwardly about her and tries to soothe her as he leads her to the fire.

"There, there--don't cry -- there's nothing to

be afraid of now I'm here. And as for that dog - we'll wait 'til the morning. Here, lie down by the fire."

He settles Deirdre on his rug, and brings pillows from the cart, which he piles up around her. Then kneeling on the ground by her, with the flares of the bonfire blazing high he questions her gravely:

"Why are you travelling alone, Madame? It is dangerous for a woman in Africa.

"I could not afford a chaperon. There was a missionary and a telegrapher in the cart until this morning, but they dropped off at their posts."

"Pardon me," says Kinsella brusquely, "but your brother should have met you at Johnnesburg."

"Oh he wanted to, but you see he was delayed -- there is some trouble with the natives and ---"

Kinsella nods gravely.

"Yes -- Lobengula is on the rampage again. I can understand why your brother was unable to meet you, but you should have stayed in Johnnesburg."

"I know. My brother wired me to stay there, but I wanted to come and I've never been afraid of anything before."

"You have nothing to be afraid of now."

Deirdre gives a happy little laugh of confidence.

"Not with <u>you</u> near. But the lions gave me an awful scare."

"Lions!"

"Yes, they came all about the cart and they sniffed

at me -- and got under the cart and tried to upset it."

Kinsella smiles, his white teeth gleaming and robbing his face of something of its sternness and gravity.

"Those were not lions. They were hyaenas. If they had been lions - you wouldn't be here now. Hyaenas are afraid to touch human beings and are easily scared off."

A long silence now falls between them. The two of them sit in the glare of the giant bonfire, sometimes gazing into the flames, sometimes looking out at the wide night around them, and sometimes their glances unconsciously drawn to each other. Slowly but surely there is growing up between them a powerful and beautiful force. The English girl has come out of the night on the African veldt, and she seems to Kinsella to be the realization of his best dreams and ideals. Kinsella, on the other hand, has come to her in her hour of dire need. Her heart goes out to him. There is something about the man that is aloof and lonely. His is a strong, stern face.

As they sit in this charmed silence, broken only by the man occasionally feeding the fire, suddenly out of the dense there comes an immense roar. It booms out like thunder upon the still night air. It is awe inspiring, a hollow, belching sound that seems to fill the whole of the wide open veldt. Instantly Kinsella is on his feet and assisting Deirdre to hers. He reassures her, telling her she has nothing to fear, but must get back into the cart. He assists her swiftly aboard. Then goes to front of cart

and tightens the straps about his horse tied there. Then he climbs aboard, and half sitting, half stooping, his rifle across the splash board.

In the dark woods a monster lion is treading his way steadily toward the open camp, where the fires have burned low.

Fascinated and thrilled, Deirdre watches the man, as quietly he waits, his eye instinctively on one point in the woods. There are no more roars. The silence is ominous. The horse is shuddering and the poor beast tries to break loose, but Kinsella leans across and soothes it, getting it under control.

At last the click of a broken twig. The faint rustling of leaves. Kinsella's gaze intent. He has spotted something dim, shadowy, barely seen at first against the dark foliage.

Suddenly, something huge, pale, massive comes bounding high in the air out of the shadows. The horse shies violently. The Martini Henri cracks twice. There's a flash of gunpowder. Kinsella talking soothingly to the horse. Smoke dying down and the thud of a heavy body crashing to the earth.

Kinsella climbing over the seat into the back of the cart. Deirdre reaches out her hands blindly. His voice, firm, gentle:

"Steady! Atta boy! All's well!"

He puts Deirdre gently down on the floor of the

cart, drags back the mail bags, piles pillows and blankets there, bidds her, "Go to sleep now," then with a military turn of his heel he passes the great dead lion, heaps wood upon the four fires, and begins his guarding patrol for the night.

Dawn on the African veldt. A soft misty veil unfolding. A dim goldness. Wide streamers of red and gold, with black fingers interlacing fanlike, and suddenly the "da wn comes up like thunder" in the east.

First we see the dawn above the wide spreading veldt, and presently the outlined forms of the bush, the deisel, the cart, the burnt out bonfires.

Kinsella asleep on the ground, his rifle under his hand.

Deirdre awakening among the pillows in the cart. Her eyes widen. She moves her head, raises it. She rises, looks across the side of the cart, and then climbs over the mail bags and steps down to the ground.

The first thing she sees is the great lion, and her first impulse is to scream. This she suppresses and her glance goes to Kinsella, asleep. On tiptoes she moves to the fire, throws some sticks on it, fumbles among the supplies.

She is making coffee when Kinsella sits up. He

He goes over to her, takes the pot from her hands. They look at each other, kneeling on the ground in the dawn. She is very lovely to look at and he, in spite of the sternness of his face, has a brave splendid look about him. Deirdre's shy gaze drops to the strong hand on the handle of the coffee pot which he is taking from her, and she finds herself looking at twin jade rings that are side by side on the third and little fingers of his right hand. He smiles as he follows her glance. She says shyly:

"They are very nice--your rings."

"Yes-- they were my father's and my mother's. Each wore 'engagement' rings."

They make breakfast together, "Deidre spreading the rough Dutch cloth on the ground and Kinsella carrying over the bacon and the coffee and the paper plates. As they sit opposite each other their joy is seen in their faces and Deirdre cries out:

"Oh Africa is <u>beautiful</u>! I adore it!"

His face turns slightly grave, as he sets his cup on the ground and looks steadily at Deirdre.

"It's a brute of a country in many ways. They say that Africa reaches out a Claw that pierces to the very heart of one. It is like a vampire that drags men to her and fastens its claw in their hearts forever. And yet--yet. Miss Saurin, if you can learn to <u>comprehend</u> and understand and love Africa, I tell you there is no other place in the world that can compare with it."

Her eyes are wistfully studying his face and he a sks her what she is thinking of. She replies shyly:

"That you, who have lived long and know Africa so well, seem somehow to embody everything that is fine and brave about her. Hoh! I am not afraid of Africa's Claw! Let it reach my heart. I am full-armed---now!"

Without a word, Kinsella, with a great light in his eyes reaches across and takes her two little hands in his. The bright sunlight seems to enfold them. Under its glow they sit like two children, enchanted.

We fade into the moving mail cart. A cringing, cowering driver is in the seat looking back with rolling eyes toward the man -- Kinsella riding alongside. We get the effect across that the driver has suffered condign punishment at the hands of Kinsella for whom he entertains a wholesome fear.

Deirdre has her old place in the back of the cart, but the space has been made quite comfortable, with a box for her to sit on, piled with pillows.

Cart proceeding along banks of a river, swollen high and moving along at a rapid pace. They come to where formerly a ferry has been, but the swollen waters have washed it away.

On the opposite bank two carts. In one a driver,

waiting to take on mail and luggage, In the other, a cape cart with two seats back to back.

JUDY SAURIN, Deirdre's sister-in-law and MAURICE STAIR, good looking, but somewhat weak expression. Very dapper in his white clothes and panama hat. Something of a lady's man and paying devoted attention to Judy. There is something shifty and furtive about Stair's face. His gaze is inconstant and he does not look one squarely in the face. However, he has a charming manner and Judy is half in love with him. Judy is a fair, shallow, pretty little chatterbox. There is nothing much in her giddy little head and Africa has made her petulant and peevish. She is the type that craves attention and Stair's devotion and of other young men of Mashonaland is the only compensation and balm afforded her for the misery of living in Africa.

On the front seat with the driver, practically ignored by his mother and Maurice Stair is little Dick Saurin, a little boy of five. He is a sturdy, beautiful boy, very much excited over the coming of his Aunt "Deedee."

Little Dick is the first to spy the mail cart on the other side of the river and he stands up excitedly in the cart and points to the other cart:

"Dere she is muvver! Dere's my Aunt Deedee!"

Stair and Judy stand up in the cart also. Judy seizes the field glasses from Stair and adjusts them. Looks through them. Sees Deirdre being helped from cart by

Kinsella. Judy exclaims a mazedly:

"Well, upon my word!"

To Stair's inquiry as to what is the matter, Judy points, glasses in her hand:

"The idea of her coming alone, and who do you suppose is with her?"

Judy pauses to catch her breath:

"Of all men --- Tony Kinsella!"

Stair laughs.

"Thought he was a woman hater!"

While they are exclaiming, Kinsella is busy with the man on the other side of the river. He tests the cables and wire apparatus and pulleys that swing the mail across the river. Seeing that the ferry has been washed away, he tries to discover whether the apparatus is strong enough to take p ssengers also.

Having strengthened with the skill of an engineer the apparatus, he climbs into the mail basket and a moment later is whizzing across the stream. As he lights on the opposite bank, Judy rushes up to him, followed by Stair. Judy, though her own flirtations are the talk of Mashonaland has a good sized gorm of Mrs. Grundy in her when it comes to other women. She instantly jumps on Kinsella in regard to Deirdre:

"Major Kinsella, will you explain how you come to be alone with my sister? Where's her caperon?"

Kinsella replies curtly that Miss Saurin will,

no doubt, herself explain. He has merely crossed to test the apparatus, before permitting Miss Saurin to cross. He gets aboa rd the bag immediately, paying little attention to the still excitedly chattering Judy. He is swung back across the river.

As he steps out, he motions Deirdre to the bag.

"And now your turn, Miss Saurin. As you see, the wires are perfectly safe."

Deirdre hesitates, looking up at him somewhat wistfully. Kinsella holds out his hand:

"And now -- goodbye."

"Are you not coming with me?" falters Deirdre.

"I am sorry -- no, but we will meet in Mashonaland later."

Deirdre's face shows her disappointment. A realiza tion of what this man has come to mean to her grows, and she can barely endure to part from him. Kinsella's face is alight with tenderness and the great love that has come.

Deirdre's little hand rests in his a moment. As he puts her into the mail basket, their faces come closer and he says softly:

"God bless you."

A moment later, and Deirdre is being swung across the swollen river, which rages along below her. The bag hangs perilously low, almost touching the surging waters. It slides along the wire line, with Deirdre clinging to the

sides. But her gaze is turned back. She is not thinking of the perils of the trip. She is watching the man on horseback, his hand above his eyes, watching until she has safely reached the other side, when he turns his horse's head around and gallops swiftly off into the African bush.

Like one in a dream, Deirdre steps out of the bag. Judy is exclaiming and scolding even while she embraces Deirdre. She keeps up a running stream of chatter and upbraiding.

"How could you do it, Judy! Everyone in Mashonaland will be talking if they find out about it. And scandal travels so quickly in Africa, doesn't it, Maurice -- this is Mr. Maurice Stair -- yes-- and this is Dick -- little Dick."

Deirdre hugs little Dick, and with her arms around his inquires where big Dick, her brother is.

"Dick Saurin. Oh, of course, he had to be away as usual. Dick's always away. I never saw anything like it. This time it's some nasty old war they say is coming on-- that old black king, Lobe ngula's been raiding and massacring people and -- but Deirdre how could you travel all alone like this. Everybody'll talk about it----"

"Dear Judy," don't scold me," says Deirdre, who is being e xamined and then hugged by little Dick, who wants to know if she is really his "Aunty Dee-dee."

By this time, they are climbing aboard the cart. Little Dick clinging to Deirdre's hand coaxes her into the front seat with him. Judy and Stair in back seat. Stair sits turned around in such a position, that while seeming

to be leaning toward Judy devotedly, he can get a clear view of Deirdre's lovely profile. His eyes gleam. He moistens his dry lips.

The cart drives out along the road to Mashonaland.

A week later.

The Postoffice, which is the chief building of the town. Large courtyard around it, with a picket fence of iron bars.

It is about eight thirty in the evening. There is to be a dance in the Postoffice. Already the place is brightly lighted, and lanterns are strung all along the eaves and the wide verandah which is on four sides of the building. Several of the guests have already arrived, and the musicians are tuning up.

Outside the gates several native boys are peering through and a group is around the gates as the guests arrive.

Inside the courtyard, people from Fort George - clerks and shopkeepers and children, besides a few Boers watch curiously, there is a considerable group about the doors when the music starts and the guests pass in.

Society of Mashonaland.

It is made up mostly of English people. "Younger sons", employees of the Chartered Company, which has charge of Mashonaland, employees of the Government, military men, adventurers, visitors.

The women are somewhat languid and petulant looking. Africa is not conducive to either a woman's good

looks or her temper. The chief amusement of the women is carrying on light love affairs, but nevertheless, there is a strict code among them and the taboo is swiftly placed upon any unfortunate one who violates certain of the ethics of their class.

As the guests pass through we get close ups of certain of the more prominent among them.

Colonel Blow, the magistrate. A fine looking weather beaten man of about fifty.

Nat Burton, the Mining Commissioner, sleek and fair, with eyes actively searching out the prettier women.

Anna Cleve, a very lovely but discontented looking girl, who is attended by Andrew Montesquice, a Kimberley multi-millionaire. Anna has come to Africa for two purposes. First to "pick up and Marry" a diamond king of South Africa and second, for the same purpose to visit her cousin:

NONIE VALETTA. Nonie Valetta has in her time been a beauty, but Africa and the shady side of the thirties are doing their worst to Nonie. She is keeping up a passionate fight against the encroaching hand of time and is nearly starving herself dieting and exercising.

Nonie follows behind Anna and her millionaire, with her own husband, "Nicky" Valetta. Nicky is a little fat, chubby faced man of about thirty-five, but with a cherubic, boyish smile. He is not long on brains and is blindly devoted to his wife, who is passionately in love with Major Kinsella.

Others going to the dance are Tommy Dennison and Jack H unloke, sons of English earls who are keeping a shop in Mashonaland, two light hearted, light haired youngsters, who think it is allagreat lark, and

Mrs. Skeffington Smythe, a typical British matron of the middle class, who through her marriage to her otherwise despised husband is one of the elite. Her husband is a nasty, quarrelsome, fault-finding pompous man.

Mrs. Brand, a "horsey" type of woman, who comes to the dance on horse and in riding dress. Mannish sort of woman.

Mrs. Marriott, a nervous, timid little woman whose eyes scarcely ever leave her huge wreck of a husband.

Dr. Marriott, once a great London surgeon, a big stoop-shouldered man, with a ravished face -- an opium smoker.

There are about 200 at the dance. The men stadd along the walls, watching the dancers. Deirdre, in whose honor Judy Saurinsis giving the dance, stands with her sister-in-law receiving.

Judy kisses each of the women affectionately as they pass and then whispers derogatory things about them behind her fan to Deirdre.

Deirdre's glance is going from one group to another. Unconsciously she is looking for Kinsella. Will he come? She scarcely hears the flattering words whispered in her ear by Maurice Stair whose devotion to Deirdre is arousing all of the vindictive cat in Judy. She

makes several ineffectual attempts to bring Stair to her side or to send him off to dance with this or that girl, but Maurice Stair stands his ground. He has fallen headlong in love with Deirdre and he continues to coax her to let him have the first dance.

Deirdre is putting him off. She wants her first, and indeed all of her dances to be with Kinsella.

MRS. ROOKWOOD.

A group of young men around her. She is a tall lovely woman, with wide, somewhat tragic eyes, and she is looking past the men directly at Deirdre to whom she has not been presented. She affects a great deal of laughter and gaiety, and Deirdre is interested in her -- puzzled to know why she does not come forward to be introduced.

Presently Deirdre becomes conscious of the fact that none of the women speak to her. Those in her vicinity turn their backs upon her, or they pass her by, with faces averted or scornful heads held high.

Deirdre touches Judy's arm and asks who she is and Judy replies contemptuously:

"<u>That</u> person? She calls herself Rookwood."

"What has she done?"

"She <u>lives</u> <u>with</u> that big fair man -- Captain Rookwood."

Deirdre is taken aback. She is shocked and yet feels a strange wave of pity for the woman now looking at her boldly as though fully aware of the fact that Judy is

retailing her history to Deirdre. Judy goes on:

"She is married to a man named Geach who used to beat and kick her. She ran away with Captain Rookwood. Her husband's back in England. He won't divorce her and so she lives with Captain Rookwood openly. Isn't she insolent and declasse? Absolutely taboo in Mashonaland. That's the way we treat women who run amuck here," Judy ends virtuously, yet all the time she is angling for Stair to come to her side, nor is she oblivious to the attentions of aman named Kirk Rowland, who is partner of Andrew Montesquio, and evidently much impressed by Judy's aristocratic ways. Rowland is a common sort of person with an obsequious manner. Tries to be courtly and ape the manners of the other men but succeeds only in being conspicuously common. Judy, however, flirts with him. She has a great respect for a millionaire and she has already accepted several valuable presents in jewelry from him.

The town of Mashonaland.

This should show the main street, the "huts" and bungalows of the white people, the hand full of shops and public buildings, and the native quarter alittle apart from the town, with temporary shacks -- or rather mud huts, sufficient for protection from wild animals, which sometimes have been known to come down from the bush.

Through the town riding at a shap clip - Major Kinella. He is riding with a man named McBurney, who wears

a khaki uniform. McBurney is a scout who has returned from a recent tour of inspection and brings disquieting news to Kinsella.

McBurney under instructions from Kinsella rides out to meet certain scouts expected from other parts. Kinsella dismounts at post office. Goes in.

LOBENGULA, King of the Matabele.

Sitting at the door of the royal kraal, his evil slits of eyes grazing his several wives. Gorgeous peacock cocks open their wide gorgeous tails and wander around the barbaric court. A native scout runs in, drops face down before the kind. His message is transmitted by the king's chief adviser, whispering in to the King's ear. The king nods as the adviser gives him the news. Lobengula grins with savage glee.

What the adviser is whispering into the ear of the King:

The raiding of a Boer farm, in which several families have taken refuge. The burning of the farm; the pursuit of the hapless natives. The king and his advisers take counsel. There are twenty thousand spearmen of the Matabele. They have nothing to fear -- even of Mashonaland. There are only 600 Englishmen in Mashonaland. There might be none before reinforcements could reach them.

BACK to the Post Office.

Deirdre dancing with Maurice Stair. He i

at her - madly in love. Deidre's gaze is wide and absent. She is still thinking of Kinsella. They bump into Captain and "Mrs."Rockwood. Deirdre with a lovely smile says:

"Oh, I'm so sorry. Did I hurt you?"

Mrs. Rockwood shakes her head. As she dances away with her "husband", she whispers up at him.

"That's the first time a woman -- of my class - has spoken to me decently since we-------"

He gives her a warmer clasp; smiles reassuringly down into her face and she says breathlessly:

"Oh Don, with your arms around me -- I should worry, as the Yankees say."

Deirdre's eyes still wistfully searching the room over the shoulder of Maurice Stair. She sees Kinsella as he comes in, and even Stair is conscious of the fact that some change has come over her. Her eyes interlock with Kinsella's, and he makes his way directly to her. The dance is just finished, and the dancers are clapping for its repetition.

Stair is furious as Deirdre, almost as if unconscious of his presence, leaves him and goes into the arms of Anthony Kinsella. As they dance, Stair and Nonie Valletta watch them. Nonie says spitefully:

"Cut you out, didn't he?"

"How about you?" he returns sneering. "Thought Kinsella was your private and personal property."

Nonie flames. Their angry glances cross, then

Nonie suddenly gets an inspiration. He is looking sideways at Nonie.

"Since our interests are identical -- why should n't we work together -- as friends?"

Nonie looks up, scrutinizing his shifty eyes.

"What do you mean?"

"If someone told Judy Saurin that Tony Kinsella was a married man - had a wife in England ---"

Their eyes meet significantly. Nonie takes this in. She slowly nods as Stair whispers. Then Nonie and Stair separate and Nonie makes her way across the ballroom to where Judy has been glaring across at Stair and affecting to show her indifference by flirting with Kirk Rowland.

Kinsella and Deidre dancing toward exit. Kinsella speaking:

"Will you go with me into the watch-tower. There is something I must tell you tonight."

Deirdre nods her assent and they reach the door and slip out unnoticed by anyone save Maurice Stair, who with his back against the wall, his hands in his pockets has been noting their every motion from under half closed eyes. As Deirdre and Kinsella go out, Stair saunters carelessly along the edge of the room,but doubles down once outside and slipping around the side of the building he follows the two to the watch-tower.

THE WATCH TOWER. This structure adjoins the

post-office. It was built for the double purpose of overlooking the prison yard and the wide outlook over the surrounding native kraals and the veldt.

Deirdre and Kinsella come out upon the top. They lean against the low enclosing wall and look down upon a land washed with silver moonlight and far off ebony hills. The marvellous secret in their hearts are drawing them ever closer to each other.

Watching them from the top step of the tower stairs, with jealousy and fury, Maurice Stair.

"Deirdre," Kinsella speaks her name gently, and she turns her face up to his in the moonlight.

"Deirdre! That here, in my beloved Africa, I should have found my only love!"

Her face looks like a flower as it turns up to his in the moonlight. She does not reply, but her hands go out. Kinsella takes them in his. He is drawing her into his arms, when the furious Stair at the door picks up a log that holds the door open and hurls it toward them. He then goes down the stairs in leaps and springs.

The two are startled. Kinsella leaps for the door. It has sprung locked, but is old and ricketty and he has no trouble forcing it. Followed by Deirdre they go down the stairs.

Riding toward the tower, McBurney and a dust covered scout from the patrol.

As Kinsella flings the door open and looks about him he sees McBurney coming in through the court

with the scout.

McBurney's news is so serious that the incident of the door and stick are forgotten. Kinsella with a few words from McBurney turns to Deirdre and conducts her back to the post-office.

While the above in the tower has been going on Nonie Valetta has at last caught the inconstant ear of Judy.

Nonie is saying:

"Oh, by the way, dear, don't you think someone ought to warn your sister-in-law that Tony Kinsella is a married man!"

Judy stares at Nonie,half questioning this news, and Nonie keeps on:

"Oh yes -- I had it from someone who <u>knows</u>. He married a girl of a good Cape family, and just because she had a few little harmless flirtations, he sent her off to England and -- I suppose he'll be joining her when he gets over his jealousy and sulks."

As Kinsella comes in Judy is pouring out a torrent of exciting questions to Nonie, who having delivered her charge presently escapes to spread the pleasant tale among her other friends.

KINSELLA goes directly to Colonel Blow and the two hold a confab.

Meanwhile Judy has been beckoning to Deirdre whose face is alight and radiant. She goes to Judy who at once harangues her:

"Deirdre, you must be more careful. You can't afford to flout all of the conventions."

Deirdre smiles dreamily and puts her arm around her sister, but Judy is peevish and shakes her off.

"Now listen to me.. do please. This is the worst place in the world to be talked about, and a girl can't afford to make herself conspicuous with a married man."

As she says this Deirdre makes an eloquent motion. A slow horror comes into her face. She stands like one turned suddenly to stone.

"Tony Kinsella has a wife in England. I think it's perfectly terrible the way you've been flirting with him and Maurice Stair and...."

Deirdre is not listening to her. She has grown white as death, and is grasping at the chair behind her for support. Jude's indignation that Deirdre has turned from her is short-lived, because at that moment the music is suddenly stopped. The dancers all stand looking about them and then up to the gallery, where Anthony Kinsella, MacBurney and Colonel Blow is addressing the assemblage.

Lobengula has attacked the N---------- settlement, and is marching toward Fort George, burning and massacring along the way.

The news of the war is spread by a courier from

door to door of the English and native kraals. We see the natives slipping out, shadows in the night.. disappearing into the bush. They are fleeing like rats from a sinking ship.

The whole town is astir. Excited people run out and down the street. A great throng outside the postoffice and over-running the court yard. Villagers and Boers and a hand full of native servants.. everyone in the town gathered at the post-office.

Colonel Blow, whom Kinsella has appointed commandant of the extemporized fort, reads from a paper in his hand. Every able bodied man is called to the colors. Mashonaland is placed under control of martial law and everyone must be in "laager" before morning. The expedition will leave at once. Allowing the men enough time to prepare for the march. Prisoners are to be released under guard from the cells and put to work turning the post-office into an adequate fort, where every man, woman and child, not in the army, must remain until the return of the expedition.

The announcement causes no end of excitement, but the British people mask their feelings as far as possible, with several exceptions.

Judy is wringing her hands and exclaiming:

"What are we to do? Oh, whatever are we to do?"

Kirk Rowland has made his way to the side of his partner, Montesquieou. They whisper together, then talk to Blow, who nods an unwilling assent and refers something to Kinsella, who also curtly nods.

Montesquiou talking to Anna Cleve, who shakes her head. He says:

"But.. I tell you I am not an Englishman.. therefore, entitled to the horses and escort. We can get safely away before the movement begins."

Anna continues to shake her head. Rowland is speaking to Judy, who is nodding. We see them slipping out. Judy stops to speak to Nonie Valetta. Nonie looks at her enviously and furiously. So Judy is to get away! Judy adds her pleas to Montesquious' and Anna unwillingly leaves.

Judy excitedly explains to Deirdre whose anguished gaze has not left the gallery.

"Deirdre-- we are going to get away. Mr. Montesquiou is going to take us by cart to Johannesburg. You see-- he's a non-combattant.. not English.. and Major Kinsella has to send an escort and.. he's good enough to offer to take Anna and I along. You needn't worry.. Nonie Valetta will chaperone you... and I know you'll look after our precious little Dick and... I wish there was room for more than two of us in the cart."

Rowland hustles her along. They go out.

Kinsella addressing the men of Mashonaland. He is on the steps of the postoffice and a crowd is below him, hanging upon his every word.

"Men, we are about to tackle a tough job. The time has come for us to march against Lobengula. He has betrayed our trust and broken every promise. He has crossed our boundaries, cut our telegraph wires, and raided the chiefs under our protection.. and has been torturing and massacring and

murdering our people. Our women and children are in great danger. Our mining and agricultural interests dearly bought are threatened. None of us can ever be safe on a lonely farm or a mine. Either we must put down the power of Lobengula or leave Africa. I ask you to march with me.. to make Africa safe for white men!"

His speech is wildly cheered. He puts up his hand to add a brief word of admonition.

"We have only a brief time.left. Time for you to prepare for the march and to say goodbye to our loved ones!"

Bungalows of Mashonaland. People hurrying in and laden with baggage and belongings.

Interior of the Saurin bungalow. Nonie Valetta who is followed by a servant, her arms full of bedding and articles, steps in.

Deirdre Saurin, dressing little Dick. He is half asleep and rubbing his eyes.

Deirdre is soothing and petting him.

Nonie Valetta calls:

"Miss Saurin!"

Deirdre does not answer. She puts a finger to her lips to warn little Dickey to make no sound.

Major Kinsella at the door of Saurin's bungalow. Deirdre stiffens as she hears his voice. He has stopped inside.

Nonie Valetta runs to him:

"Oh Tony-- I knew you wouldn't go without wishing me good-bye."

Kinsella puts her hands from him. He stands very erect. He says gravely:

"Where is Miss Saurin?"

Deirdre's eyes close in a sort of rapturous agony as she hears him ask for her. Nonie replies:

"I don't know where she is. Somewhere with Maurice Stair. Oh Tony-- what has come over you? We used to be such friends.. ah! more than friends..."

Their murmuring voices fade away as they go out into the night.

Her face stony and cold, Deirdre rolls a few articles into a bundle. She is carrying them under one arm and little Dick clinging to her other, when Maurice Stair darts out of the shadows and seizes the bundle. He escorts her and little Dick assiduously along. They follow the line of people on the way to the Post Office. At the gate Deirdre takes the bundle from Stair. She knows he must join the men. He begs her to let him speak to her a moment, and with little Dick held by the hand, they step to one side of the fence. Stair's pleading face, his mouth twitching and his hands.

"Miss Saurin, before I leave I want to tell you that I love you. If I return may I hope that you will be my wife?"

Deirdre looks at him pityingly. She slowly shakes her head.

"No," she says. "I couldn't marry you, Mr. Stair. I am so sorry."

Deidre looks at him pityingly. She slowly shakes her head.

"No", she says. "I couldn't marry you, Mr. Stair. I am so sorry."

"Is it because of... Kinsella?"

Deirdre does not answer. Her head droops. Little Dick tugs at her hand.

Stair's passionate voice and his words cause her to lift her head with a motion of defense and defiance.

"He's.... not good enough for you. Kinsella is already married."

Deidre's eyes flash. She cries out in a suffocating voice:

"I will not believe anything base of Major Kinsella. I cannot discuss him with you, Mr. Stair.. goodnight."

With little Dick holding her hand she hurries in to the courtyard.

The following morning. A grey dawn over Mashonaland. Everyone on hand outside the walls of the great post office courtyard to see the expedition off.

A troop of horses saddled and bridled in the square.

Column of men marching by, their eyes steadily before them. Young Englishmen, leaving counter and stool at the word of Kinsella to march out into the unknown wild country to make Africa "safe for white men to live in."

As they pass, they are frantically cheered.

Their women and children run out to clasp their arms around them and to bless and bid them a last goodbye. No one knows whether they will ever return.

A long line of mules, loaded with packs, driven along by men in khaki. Two ammunition carts.

A little band, with a big brawny Scot marching at the head. The Scotchman is marching backward, facing his band, his cheeks blow out, his kilts make a brave showing above his bare knee, he tosses his baton in the air and performs feats of jugglery with it that brings cheers and smiles through tears.

Six hundred white men, marching out to face a savage army of over 30,000.

The troop of cavalry men are forming. Kinsella stands by his horse's head, his hand upon its neck. There is something tense and waiting about his attitude. His keen glance rakes the crowds on all sides. He is looking for Deirdre Saurin. Deirdre standing back of the crowd. She feels a passionate pride in Kinsella. and though her heart is breaking, her love exalts her.

A stir in the crowd. A man pushing his way through. It is Dr. Marriott. His little wife follows him. He is speaking to Col. Blow, who shakes his head. A woman behind Deirdre says:

"Marriott, by all the gods! They'll never take him. He's an opium fiend."

Kinsella glances back, sees Marriott. The latter staggers over to him. His hands are clasped. He pleads frantically to be permitted to go with the expedition. Colonel Blow says to Kinsella:

"... unfit.. cannot be trusted."

Kinsella's steady glance on Marriott. He answers Blow.

"It will make a man of him. We need surgeons of his skill. I'll answer for Dr. Marriott."

Marriott almost leaps at him with joy. He turns around in a circle, gathers his wife in his arms, gives her a frantic hug, and a moment later is rushing down the road after the disappearing troops. There is scarcely a dry eye in the crowd, but little Mrs. Marriott's eyes are shining, and she holds her head high and proudly.

A new disturbance.

A sergeant and a boy in soldier's clothes coming back. The sergeant leads the boy over to Kinsella and points at him with a thumb. Takes cap from his head. The tumbled curls and the face of the "boy" are clearly shown. Mrs.Rookwood! She has tried to accompany her"husband" disguised as a boy. She has been discovered and brought back. She takes her defeat with a swagger, but her eyes gleam with defiance as she turns toward the woman of Mashonaland and pushes by them into the court. Deirdre alone looks after her pityingly. The women laugh, shrug their shoulders, raise their eyebrows, form contemptuous motion with their lips. Deirdre, with a motion of sympathy goes up the steps to follow her,when her elevation brings her directly on a level with Anthony Kinsella, now on horse. Like one hypnotized, Deirdre finds herself slowly turning. Across the heads of the moving crowds Kinsella and Deirdre look at each other. His eyes seem to be drawing, compelling her to come to him. She forgets everything in thw world but her love for this man.

Her hands make a motion, like a swimmer and Deirdre Saurin, before all of Mashonaland goes, as one drawn by a magnet, syraight, straight to where Kensella, now dismounted awaits her. His arms are out and she goes into them directly. Their lips meet. A moment, in this close embrace, then hs releases her. He takes one of the jade rings.. the one on his little finger.. and puts it on Deidre's engagement finger.

"Heart of my heart", he says. "God keep you till I return!"

A great joy floods the being of Deidre Saurin. She is like one in a trance. Unconscious of the fact that every eye is upon her; that a menacing whispering is growing like a storm around her, she watches after her man with her hand shading her eyes, until she can no longer see him.

Nonie Valetta laughing harshly. A Dutch woman grinning up in the face of Deidre.

"Faskinating man, dardee Kinsella. Too bad he got wife already at England."

Like one in a dream, Deidre moves back into the court. Almost immediately Nonie Valetta leaps at her. Her eyes are wild with fury of the woman scorned. She is one of a group of women who are looking askance at or turning their heads away as Deidre comes up to them.

"Miss Saurin," says Nonie Valetta shrilly. "Your sister-in-law asked me to chaperone you. Your scandalous conduct makes that impossible."

Deidre does not reply. Mrs. Skeffinton takes up the righteous denouncing:

"We live in a free and easy fashion in Mashonaland, but we must draw the line somewhere. If you ever had a reputation it is gone. You cannot publicly kiss another woman's husband. Major Kinsella is a married man."

Deidre's glittering eyes sweep the circle of hard faces. She says wildly:

"It's a base lie! I do not believe it!"

With her head held high, Deidre moves along the court, little Dick running out from a group of children to follow her and take her by the hand.

THE FORT

The post-office turned into a fort and barracks for the women and children and disabled and old men of Mashonaland.

Along the wall, prisoners are piling sandbags. Through and above these, the guns point out to the country.

Every room in the building seized by groups and parties of people, everyone scrambling for the best places. Human nature is in all its sublime beauty and ugly baseness revealed.

A group of "society women" have a tent set up in the midst of the court, where they can have a measure of privacy and seclusion. They have luxurious pillows and blankets and mattresses and tent cots. They set up a card table, and the men of Mashonland have hardly marched away before they are hard at it.

The Dutch and Boer women are sitting among their children and household effects.

Sitting on a pile of blankets and luggage, like one shipwrecked, little Mrs. Marriott. She looks lost and forsaken.

Deidre coming across court with little Dick. She notices Mrs. Marriott and quickens her steps.

"Mrs. Marriott,you must come in the building. You can't stay out here."

Mrs. Marriott smiles gently. She is like a child.

"Really it doesn't matter, Miss Saurin. My husband will be sleeping on the bare ground tonight."

"Do come with me. I am all alone, except for little Dick."

"I thought you were with Mrs. Baletta, and the other women."

She indicates the tent.

"I was.. but they are going to cut me now."

"Why?" asks Mrs. Marriott.

"You see, Anthony Kinsella and I love each other. They are trying to make me believe he is a married man."

At the back of Deidre Mrs. Rookwood has been standing. She puts out a hesitating hand and touches Deidre's arm. Deidre turns. Their glances meet.

"You poor little thing! So those cats are going to taboo you too!"

"Oh, I'm not poor!" cries Deidre bravely. I'm ever so rich. The man I love loves me. Nothing else in all the world matters."

"I thought that once too," says Mrs. Rookwood,"but look what they did to me. Oh, you can't imagine what it means

to have every woman turn away from you just as if you were unclean."

"Oh, don't worry about me," cries Deirdre. "Mrs. Marriott is going to take care of me."

Mrs. Marriott gets up. She feels that a responsibility has been put upon her, and it arouses her from her inertia.

"I'll do my best. A young girl shouldn't be alone.. and a dear little boy.. Oh, I hope I'll have a little boy too," she says wistfully, her hand on Dick's head.

Deirdre puts one arm around Mrs. Marriott and one around Mrs. Rookwood. Dick, smiling up at his new friend, Mrs. Marriott, cuddles up on the other side of her.

"Let's all go together and find a place where we can camp." They go into postoffice. Mrs. Rookwood's face is working. She surreptitiously wipes a tear away from her eyes, and then her head wavers and falls on Deirdre's shoulder. She sobs:

"Oh, you're the first white woman who has treated me as...as... a human being."

Deirdre soothes and pets her.

That night.

Outside the gates, shadows of natives crouched along the wall. The few remaining "boys" loyal to the British. One boy sleeps on his back right at side of gate. Mango, the houseboy of the Saurins. He has been a silent witness of all that has transpired and it is he who has helped move over Deirdre's belongings to the fort.

Inside the gates.

The wall patrolled by four men. They march along the line of sand bags. They hold themselves erect and march with as proud and military step as possible. The moonlight reveals each one as old men.. the youngest at least seventy. Tey they carry their rifles as if conscious of the great responsibility reposing on them.

In the courtyard.

The Dutch, the Boers, a number of the villagers, all asleep, covered over with bedding, blankets or rags. A drizzly mist-rain is falling.

The verandah around the post office.

Family groups everywhere asleep.

INSIDE THE POST OFFICE.

Every room with rows of bedding and mattresses. Not a vacant room, and scarcely a vacant place on floor.

THE POST OFFICE COUNTER.

Under the counter, two long native mattresses. Sound asleep, Mrs. Marriott, Deirdre, Mrs. Rockwood and little Dick.

On the march to Bulawayo. Columns of white men, pushing on steadily through the African bush.

The waiting army of Buluwayo.. 30,000 strong, armed with rifles and assengai. The flower of the Matabele army,

in all their glory of native war dress and waving Ostrich plumes, shaking the ground beneath their dancing feet, is a monster war dance.

The battle of the Imbembesi.

Matabele warriors, in war paint and feathers, holding red and white ox shields before them, carrying huge assegai. The wite men ambushed. Under Kinsella they break into the open, form the famous British square and repel the advance of the charging Matabele. They put up a tremendous fight. Hundreds of Matabele killed; hundreds fleeing. Kinsella's army fearfully depleted but victorious.

The Matabele in retreat. They are going into the bush. A number of them fleeing to Bulawayo to warn Lobengula of the defeat and that Kinsella is marching to Bulawayo to seize the city and take the King captive.

Lobengula, the old monarch, sitting at the door of his kraal, watching his peacocks, his wives about him in a circle. The royal kraal is completely surrounded, by native huts.

The battle between the Matabele and the whites may be made unique and effective. The small body of white men attacked on all sides by the Zulus. The Shuefftan process might be utilized here to show the immense body and size of the Matabele army as opposed to the brave 600 of the British. Although the Matabele charge with assengai, they are also armed with rifles, but they are not properly lead and do not know how to use the rifles and so shoot wildly. They drop the rifles

when they flee.

Lobengula, being fanned by one of his wives. A scout running in, dropping on his face, bringing the tidings of defeat. The old king desperate and cornered. He orders the burning of the stores and all buildings. We see the fat monarch waddling off followed by his wives. A native litter takes them aboard and they flee.

Bulaway in flames.

Kinsella's army marching in. There is but a remnant of the 600 left.. a bare two hundred. They carry in their wounded and their dead.

They draw up in the square, and the Union Jack is immediately hoisted to a tall Mimosa tree that stands outside what was onceth royal kraal but is now a mass of smouldering ruins.

(Most of the facts above are historical.)

The roll call, the tattered, ragged army drawn up in the square, answering to the call.

Kinsella calls for volunteers to accompany him to bring in Lobengula. As long as the King is at large the power of the Matable is not completely broken.

Kinsella, with a native guide, Mango, and a dozen of his men, one of whom is Maurice Stair, who goes against his will, in the bush. They are following the spoor of the Lobengula party.

Lobengula, in a cave. He is sick and crawls along

on his belly to the opening. He waves his wives aside and jabbers his orders to his warriors. Word has come to them that Kinsella is on the trail of the King. A council of war in the cave. The Matabele under orders from the King to surround; then ambush Kinsella and his men, and to bring in, alive, Kinsella, who must not be injured. Kinsella is "wise in medicine" and the King is sick.

Kinsella and his men surrounded. They put up a great fight. Stair escapes, flees back to Bulawayo, brings the tidings that Kinsella and his men have all been killed and cut up.

McBurney, a scout, riding across the veldt, to carry the news to Mashonaland and other towns and to ask for nurses and supplies.

A cave in the African bush. The King lying on a pile of robes. Kinsella, chained to the wall, by a long rope that withholds him from freedom and at the same time allows him to move around. The King squats up on his quilts, whines, and holds out his hands to Kinsella. He has a superstitious faith in the power of Kinsella, and thinking he is dying, he pleads with Kinsella to save his life. Kinsella replies that he will do so on condition that Lobengula will return with him to Buluwayo.

Lobengula's advisers and guards and wives all about for Kinsella's life, but are restrained from touching him by the king.

K Kinsella is advised that he will be given ten days in which to cure the King. So long as the King lives, Kinsella's life is safe. The minute he dies, Kinsella will be tortured and bruned at the stake. Kinsella agrees to take care of the King, but requires that he be left alone in the cave, and asks for certain articles and oils, and medicions, which he says are in his kit taken from him when captured.

Kinsella caring for Lobengula. Lobengula is suffering from dropsy.

The Fort at Mashonaland.

Human nature in all its phases, Caste has ceased to exist. We see Mrs. Rookwood, the center of the little ring of children. She is sitting on an uptruned box and is telling them a story. Their mothers squatting on the ground, or on boxes listen and look on approvingly. Evidently Mrs. Rookwood is popular. Only the little group in the tent, now somewhat delapidated and frightfully disordered looks askance at her. They are still at their Bridge playing, but they have gotten upon each others nerves and are insulting and quarrelling and nagging each other. Nonie Valetta almost has hysterics over a bad play of her partner, Mrs. Brand, and the two women nearly come to blows. Nonie bursts into tears to the amazement of all. She cries out:

"Oh, I am sick and tired of this whole terrible business! We are herded here like cattle among all those common people.. and I want to get out of Africa..."

She is working herslef up to hysterics and cries out that Africa's claw has fastened itself upon her and she cannto shake it off.

Mrs. Brand stands up and looks down at Nonie, whose head is on the table. Suddenly she flings the cards down on the table and she says to Nonie:

"It's not Africa's claw that has got you, Nonie Valetta.. it's your conscience!"

"What do youmean by my conscience?"

Mrs. Brand says steadily:

"The wrong you did to Deirdre Saurin. If I were you I'd tell her."

Nonie flames. Furious and indifferent to the consequences she says that Deirdre was the one who was to blame. She had come out to Africa and stolen Kinsella from Nonie. As she suddenly realizes what she has said, Nonie stops the words midway on her lips. She falls to sobbing.

A room in the postoffice. A pallet on the floor. Mrs. Harriott on the pallet. Sitting on a box alongside, Deirdre Saurin. Deirdre wears the white dress of a red cross nurse. She is leaning over and laying Mrs. Harriott's new born baby down beside her. Her face is lovely.

There has been no more news from the front in weeks. The tension is becoming almost beyond enhurance. Even the old guards along the wall show the strain of the long days of waiting.

The watch tower. An old man, with field glasses looking out and scanning the veldt. Suddenly his gaze becomes intent. He turns around. His body trembling with excitement and he can barely make his way down the stairs and into the courtyard. He tries to speak and words fail him. He points with a trembling hand. A crowd comes around him. The guards climb on the wall. The guard looks out, and in the distance he sees rider coming sqiftly in. The guard puts his two hands to his mouth and haloos and then, though he too is over seventy, he leaps down from the wall and to the crowd surging in on all sides of him, he breaks the news.

The mob held back from the gates by main force. McBurney, almost dropping from his horse with exhaustion, is admitted through the gates. McBurney is covered with dust and fatigus, a stubby beard is on his chin, his coat hangs in rags and tatters, his bare feet show through his ragged boots.

Deirdre who has come to the steps of the post office goes quietly to a faucet, fills a dipper with water and making her way through the crowd, offers it to McBurney. He drinks thirstily.

McBurney tells the glorious tale of the Battle of the Inbombesi. Women are weeping on all sides of him. When he is through, pale lips implore him to give them news of their loves ones. McBurney takes a soiled piece of paper from his breast and begins solemnly to read the names of those who have fallen.

Wilson, Barrow, Kirton, Judd, Greenbaum, Saurin, (Deirdre's brother.)

A stillness in the courtyard. The dipper drops from Deirdre's hand. So she is never again to see the brother whom she had come all the way from England to join in Africa!

On and on down the long list.

Andrew Harriott!

McBurney pauses at the name, and tells them that the man they had thought "unfit" had died sublimely. He went out to attend the wounded under fire and he was killed while carrying in upon his great shoulders, two of the wounded.

Captain Allan Valetta.

Nonie Valetta starts forward, breathing hysterically.

"My Allen-- my little-- man!"

She screams harshly and then crumbles up in a faint. The women close in around her, bear her to the tent.

And now McBurney is telling of that second heroic expedition that went out to bring in Lobengula. Twelve men following the trail of the retreating Matabele. Ambushed, slaughtered like cattle, with just one to return to tell the tale, Maurice Stair. The head of that band.. Anthony Kinsella, the bravest man in Africa.

As if she has received her death warrant, Deirdre, as Nonie Valetta had done, starts a few steps forward and then she too pitches downward.

Two weeks later.

The return of Kinsella's army. The tattered, ragged remnant, many of them barefooted, many of them crippled.

OF THE SIX HUNDRED MEN WHO HAD MARCHED OUT OF MASHONALAND ONLY TWO HUNDRED AND THIRTY RETURNED TO TELL THE TALE OF VICTORY.

Yet the little town is en fete. Flags and bunting are everywhere seen. There is excitement, jubilation, hysteria in the air.

On the steps of the post-office Mrs. Rockwood, with a flag in her hand. She is one of a group of the women who had formerly cut her. Beside her Mrs. Marriott, and on the otherside of Mrs. Marriott, with her baby in her arms, Deirdre Saurin.

As the men march by, women run out and grab the arms of husbands, brothers and fathers. Mrs. Marriott, in spite of her weakness, seizes her baby from Deirdre and goes down to hold it up to Colonel Blow, calling out:"Don Marriott's son! Don Marriott's son!"

The men lift their hats to the woman and child of the dead opium fiend.

Captain Rockwood, almost unrecognizable with his hair long, his face bearded, one leg cut off, hobbling along with a native sapling as a crutch. Mrs. Rockwood lets out a loud cry, pushes her way by the people on steps, runs down and out into the open road. Crying and laughing she kisses the grizzled dirt encrusted face of her man. Nonne condemns her now. Women are sobbing, as with her arm around the veteran, Mrs. Rockwood marches down the road.

Standing somewhat apart, with a white strained face, Nonie Valetta in widow's weeds. Deirdre has seen her come across

the court, and now with only a few yards between them, but Honie Valetta looks at her appealingly.

Maurice Stair, stopping to speak to Deirdre. She looks at him with eyes full of pity and admiration. Her hands go out impulsively. He kisses her hand, looks at her hungrily. She says:

"Oh, Mr. Stair, it's so good to see you back. You are all heroes.. wonderful men! I am so proud of you all!

Stair says:

"Deirdre, I've been through hell, but always I have kept before me the hope that if I should ever return, you would pity me and... be my wife!"

Deirdre smiles gently at him.

"I can't, Maurice. Please don't speak about it."

An evening in early fall. It's about two months since the return of Kinsella's army. Mashonaland has resumed something of its normal aspect. People are back in their homes and the affairs and businesses have resumed functioning.

The interior of the Saurin bungalow. Judy packing. She has returned to Mashonaland to gather up her effects and is tosail for England. Judy looks very charming in her widow's weeds. She keeps going over to the door and peering out as if expecting someone. Presently Kirk Rowland comes to the door, taps. He looks in at the window and watches Judy as she bends over trunk. Slips in behind her, puts his arms around her. Judy turns around; they laugh and embrace.

Judy and Kirk Rowland sitting on trunk to close it.

It is crammed and they try to hold it closed with their weight. Their arms are about each other. They are kissing.

Deirdre at the door, looking at them, horrified. She steps in. The two draw apart. Kirk goes out sheepishly. Deirdre and Judy facing each other.

Judy says:

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"Judy, how could you.. and my brother dead only two months?"

Judy is defiant, brazen.

"You may as well know the truth, I am engaged to be married to Kirk Rowland. Of course, we can't marry right away, but after we get back to England..."

Deirdre continues to regard her with that look of horror and almost loathing. Judy begins to whimper and sob.

"I know it looks bad, but.. you know I'm the kind of woman that has to be cared for, and Kirk Rowland is awfully rich. He can do all sorts of things for us. Deirdre..do be reasonable."

Deirdre says nothing. She turns slightly toward the door. Her revulsion toward Judy has shaken her out of the calm that has upheld her through all of these terrible months.

Judy is peevish, hurt, injured now. She changes to upbraiding Deirdre.

"Anyway I think you are the last person to condemn anyone, after the way you've been talked about here. I heard all about your running down and kissing Major Kinsella..."

Deirdre says violently :

"That will do, Judy! You are not fit to speak his name even."

"I'm not, eh!" cries Judy shrilly. "I'll show you, Deirdre Saurin, whether I'm fit or not. You can shift for yourself from now on. Dick left what little he had to me... and I'm not going to support you any longer, and if you say anything more to me I'll.. I'll turn you right out of my house..."

Deirdre replies by walking calmly out of the house. Judy runs after her, grasps her by sleeve.

"Deirdre, I didn't mean that. Please don't tell anyone about our row. It'd make a most awful scandal, and Deirdre dear, I do love you and..."

Deirdre quietly releases her arm from Judy's grasp. She walks away from Judy.

Mrs. Valetta on her verandah. She is watching Deirdre and Judy. Now she saunters across to the Saurin bungalow as Judy goes in. Judy is in hysterics and tells her she has turned Deirdre out. Nonie Valetta says:

"You little weak cat! I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to offer Deirdre Saurin a home."

Deirdre walking out at a distance from the town. She is in a still mood of abstraction. She sits presently on a rock and stared out before her in a wide-eyed day dream. Maurice Stair has followed her. She does not look up as he sits down beside her. When he takes her hand, Deirdre does not withdraw it.

"Deirdre, won't you let me try to make you happy?" Marry me, dearest."

Deirdre, allowing her hand to remain in his, replies, sadly:

"I am sorry, Maurice. I appreciate your friendship, but.. I can't marry you... I can't marry any man now."

Stair pleads:

"A girl like you needs a protector.. a husband..

Deirdre shakes her head sadly.

Stair says almost fiercely:

"Is it because of Kinsella?"

Deirdre puts her hand on her heart. She says:

"Maurice, something here tells me that my Anthony Kinsella is... alive!"

"But that's proposterous! I tell you he is dead.. I saw him killed. I have positive proof."

Deirdre, her heart standing still,,looks at him fixedly. Stair fumbles in his vest, brings out a ring that he holds on the palm of his hand. It is dirt encrusted and is the twin of the jade ring on Deirdre's third finger of her left hand. She stares at it, wide-eyed, her hand making an eloquent motion of despair. Stair says hoarsely:

"I found this on the spot where Tony Kinsella was killed."

"Oh, my God! cries Deirdre violently, rocking herself tearlessly like one half distracted.

Maurice Stair's bungalow.

Judy and Deirdre having tea. Deirdre has at last consented to marry him, and Stair has promised to take her back to England.

Judy has stayed over a month for the wedding. Nonie Valetta is also there. She has little to say. Sits in lounging chair, with narrowed eyes, smoking. Her glance on Stair is not pleasant, Judy too is torn between her love for Stair and her own impending marriage to the rich Kirk Rowland, also one of the party.

A little white kitten comes in at the door and Maurice somewhat impatiently puts it out twice. Deirdre goes to door, picks up the kitten, fondles it. At the little wooden gate a native boy is watching her. She does not recognize Mango.

Deirdre goes across verandah and into the house through another door. Theinis a little den, and the opening of the door sends a draft through that scatters a number of papers on the desk. Deirdre picks them up. The last one is face up before her, and she half absently looks at it. It is a bill from a local jewelry for a jade ring and is made out to Maurice Stair. At first the significance of the bill does hot strike Deirdre, and then all of a sudden she begins to have apprehensions and suspicions. Slowly there dawns upon her the realization that Stair has practiced a fraud on her.

With this thought, she begins to hunt for the ring itself, opening the drawer of the desk, and finding the box, with the jeweler's name, and in it, returned now, the ring Maurice Stair had shown her. She takes it out, compares it with the one on her hand. As Stair's duplicity, lying deceit is borne home to her, murder almost comes to her heart.

In the other room then, they have missed her. Judy calls:

"Deirdre! Where are you?"

Maurice looks out on the verandah; comes back with the door snapping behind him. The door opening into the den is suddenly violently banged. Theyball look at each other and then Maurice moves to the door. Something is holding it closed. It is Deirdre, leaning against it.

Stair leaps at the door. His shoulder against it, he forces it open. Her hand is held out. On its palm is the box with the ring in it. The bill is under them. Nonie Valetta and Judy are standing behind Stair. Deirdre jisses at him:

"Liar! Coward!Cheat! Oh, horrible beast, you are unfit to live."

Stair shrinks, cowers before her. He looks overtaken.. guilty. Suddenly Deirdre leaps at him. Her fists doibled, she beats him on the face.

Judy is screaming. Nonie Valetta watches, her eyes narrowing.

Suddenly Deirdre throws back her head and bursts into hysterical laughter.

Stair cries out:

"Deirdre... Deirdre! I did it for love of you!"

"For love of me! Ha,Ha! And to think I believed you.. why, I nearly married you!"

Stair has dropped to his knees and is cringing her skirt. She cries out harshly:

"Get to your feet, coward and liar!"

He sways up.

"Deirdre, for God's sake forgive me!"

"Forgive you---you?" She glares at him. "I only wish I were a man and could beat you from head to foot -- yes -- kill you, as you tried to make me believe they killed my Anthony Kinsella."

Sobbing, broken, Stair regains his feet.

"I know it was base, but I honestly believed Kinsella was dead. I had to get some proof to make you believe, and so-- and so-- I had the ring made."

Deirdre moves swiftly out of the house. Nonie Valetta suddenly follows her.

"Miss Saurin---" She is walking side-by-side with Deirdre, but the latter is scarcely conscious of her presence.

"I have something to confess to you, also. It will make you hate me -- but I deserve that. It was a lie about Tony Kinsella being married. His wife died in England more than a year ago. Both Maurice Stair and I knew that."

Deirdre stops a moment. She looks at Nonie Valetta: Then she says quietly:

"Of course, I knew that. I never doubted Anthony Kinsella for one little moment. I knew that you had lied."

Nonie's chin quivers. Her eyes swim.

"I know I'm a beast, b-but if you only knew how I have suffered since my little Allen died! I never realised how much I cared for him, and I'm simply dying from remorse at the way I treated him!"

Deirdre is touched by the other's suffering. She puts her arms around her.

Stair coming out of his bungalow. His head down. He looks dejected and utterly miserable. At gate Mange pops up, touches his sleeve. Stair turns, absent-mindedly throws a coin to the boy. Manago takes it, follows Stair, calls him. Stair stops. Boy whispering up at him.

IN THE CAVE OF UMLIMO IN THE MATOPPOS THERE IS A WHITE MAN HIDDEN.

Maurice grasps the shoulder of the boy. Stairs at him, his eyes wild, his mouth gaping.

Holding on to the boy, Stair drags him along the way. They are half running, half dragging their steps. The people in the streets look after them. They come to the Saurin bungalow. Maurice hammers on the door. He throws the boy in.

Judy, Nonie and Deirdre inside. They start up as the boy sprawls on the floor. Stair is beside himself with excitement and a strange, exhilarating joy.

"Deirdre!" he cries -- "Anthony Kinsella is alive! Now I can prove to you how much I love you. I am going out -- out into the jungle -- to bring him back to <u>you</u>!"

The expedition after Kinsella. Mango leading the way.

The cave of Lubengula.

Outside a mournful festival. Fires lighted, and the remains of Lobengula's army walking around in circles in the center of which Lobengula's mourning wives are wailing like hyaenas.

Inside the cave Lobengula lies dead.

Still chained to the wall, Anthony Kinsella. He knows that the King's death means his own speedy end. He can see the flares of the giant bonfire in which he will be thrown as soon as Lobengula is interred.

The funeral cortege of the Matabele King. Lobengula taken from the cave. The long procession forms. Lobengula is to be buried as near to his ancestors as possible. It is a day's march for the funeral, and then the return for the burning of Kinsella.

Fierce cries resound on all sides. The mournful wails of Lobengula 's wives rend the air.

Watching from a hidden place in the woods, Stair and his men see the departure of the funeral. They make a dash for the cave. But they have not reckoned with the wives of Lubengula. Hardly have they set Kinsella free, when the women are upon them like ravening wolves. Their cries reach the departing Matabele. They halt, listen, and with loud shouts turn back.

The white men, with Kinsella are now vainly making their escape from the women, when the Matabelle return. There is a battle, one after another of the Matabele falling before the shots of the white men; but not before they have done devastating work. As the Matabele retreat back toward the funeral cortege, Kinsella takes account of their dead.

Maurice Stair is dying. Kinsella raises his head to his knee. Maurice whispers up at him. His head falls back.

Maurice Stair has done a last heroic act. He has given his life for his rival.

The Dawn of a new day, over the veldt. The sun coming up "like thunder." The slumbrous, wide-spreading land tinged to gold by the rising sun.

A camp. This scene practically duplicates the earlier one, except that now the cart is a covered and strong one.

From the native shed Mango and a couple of boys come out with the mules. They rebuild the fires and prepare the breakfast. Mango thumps on a tin pan to awaken those in the cart and call them for breakfast.

Kinsella's face is the first to show through the khaki curtain. Then a leg clad in breeches shows. Kinsella turns his head, and his smiling profile shows he is calling to someone inside. He throws apart the curtain, and rising up from among the cushions, Deirdre Kinsella is revealed. She sits up, rubbing her eyes like a child. Kinsella, dressed in khaki breeches and rough shirt is standing on the top step of the cart. He leans over, takes Deirdre's hand and helps her to arise.

She protests, but he draws her along, until she is held in the curve of his arm, cuddled up practically on his knee. Her face comes around till like Kinsella's, they are both looking out at the sunrise. Then Deirdre tilts back her head and looks up in Kinsella's face. Her hands make an eloquent motion toward the sunrise. She says:

"Isn't Africa -- beautiful!"

Kinsella replies: "It's not Africa, dear - it's love!"

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