



A MURDEROUS ASSAULT

Haffi tumbled hurriedly down off his camel; Julian dismounted too, still covering him with the automatic. He cut short the Armenian's protests.

"You think you can play a game like that with me? I've heard all about you from Miss Ormond. You little thieving swine, you were going away with those camels! Did you think you wouldn't have me to reckon with, when you insulted my sister?"

His voice rose high and threatening in the stillness of the evening. Haffi began a low-voiced, sneering protest, which quickly changed to a note of fear.

"You seem very particular. You talk about the game—then what game is it you have cut here, you and the one you call your sister. It is good, indeed, you are smart to call me a thief—Stop! Do not shoot have mercy—I mean nothing. It is a joke—sir!"

His cry of fear rang out in the empty night, as Julian's hand closed on his throat, forcing him down on his knees.

"Have mercy—ah!" His strangled voice died away in a moaning cry as Julian struck him on the head with the butt of the automatic. He lay and rolled on the sand, and Julian, in what seemed to the watching Iyat to be an ecstasy of rage kicked and kicked again at the dim figure on the ground. Half-conscious, Haffi begged incoherently for mercy, but the infuriated Julian kicked and struck at him until he lay still and silent.

Breathless, Julian stood back and wiped his forehead with his handkerchief, and some of the savagery ebbed out of him, leaving him trembling and full of a weak disgust and hate against the man on the ground. After a moment or two he shifted Haffi with the toe of his boot, and seeing him stir, was sure that he had not actually killed him.

"Come along!"

Silently, awed by the scene he had just witnessed the Iyat gathered the camels together and they mounted. With Julian leading one beast, and Zoani the other two, they turned and headed back to the village, leaving Haffi stretched on the ground under the dark and clouded sky.

When they got to Memshi the Iyat porters had unloaded the camels, fires were burning, and tents set up. Lynne came running to meet Julian out of the darkness, wanting to know what had happened.

The three recaptured camels told her that Julian had overtaken the fugitive; she looked, half expecting to see Haffi with them.

"Where is he?" she said. "What did you do?"

"Just brought back the camels!" said Julian.

His non-committal manner, something tense and sullen in his face in the glow from the fires as he swung himself down off his camel made Lynne uneasy, and she asked again:

"Where is he? You haven't—you didn't hurt him, Julian?"

She realized as she said it that perhaps she was displaying too much anxiety on Haffi's behalf in the circumstances; but she could not have explained the fear which Julian's manner inspired in her.

"My dear girl, don't worry about the wretched little brute! I let him off very lightly, in the circumstances," said Julian, a trifle impatiently. "He's all right! What we wanted were our camels, and we're jolly lucky to have got them back."

Lynne felt that any further questions would be unwelcome, and she asked none; in a few minutes, in fact, the incident of Haffi was forgotten when the scout whom Julian had sent to watch Guthrie's activities arrived in camp. He brought the hoped-for news; Guthrie, with all his tents and stores had moved out of camp that afternoon, and the scout had followed them until they arrived at Kel-el-abir.

This was triumph—the proof that Lynne's tactics had brought about a victory.

"Well," said Julian, "Praemnon is ours! If the cups of Alexander are really where they are supposed to be—in the bottom of the well at Praemnon—there's nothing now to prevent our getting them!"

He stood up in the red light of the fires, and his bearded face was alive with excitement, greed and determination. To Lynne it seemed that there was something different in his triumph to her own; some alien quality that she did not understand. But she fancied that it was because she was tired after two exhausting days.

"We've got to go very carefully—very quickly and carefully," Julian said. "We've got to start before daylight tomorrow—and we haven't got to let all these niggers know that anything special is afoot. If they knew we were after gold, any sort of gold, Lynne, they'd go mad!"

"Then how are we going to do it? when we actually find the cups they may make trouble," Lynne said.

"Well, at present they think we're collecting stones—just mad Englishmen, like all other archeologists. We'll have to be clever enough never to let them see the cups at all, supposing they're there."

"And supposing they're not there?" said Lynne, with a faint smile twitching her lips.

"Good God—don't speak of it!" said Julian, violently. "All this for nothing! If they aren't there we might as well cut our throats, both of us, and be done with it!"

Lynne looked at him in so troubled and surprised a fashion that he modified his tone, and said, half apologetically with a smile and a sigh:

"Ah, Lynne, you can take it calmly! You haven't put three years thought and effort into this thing as I have. It's worth my life to me at present, to get those cups!"

"But still, after all," Lynne said, "Even if the cups aren't there, and it's only a chance that they will be—you and Professor Shaley found Praemnon. You can't say that that is nothing—it's a discovery!"

"What? Oh, yes, of course. Of course it is," said Julian hastily; and added after a moment with a return of moodiness. "But you don't suppose Guthrie would allow me to get any of the kudos for that? He's in with the archeological people, and you'll see—they will be his articles, his opinions on the subject that the archeological journals will publish—not mine. Guthrie will be the man who found Praemnon, not a poor devil called Ormond who merely happened to get there first!"

TO THE WELL OF GOLD

Lynne felt the world's injustice towards her step-brother very deeply. It was no wonder, she felt, that sometimes he seemed a little bitter, a little prejudiced in his attitude. Poor Julian, she thought, as she saw him pacing nervously in front of the fire.

She was very tired and she crept into the tent and lay down on the camp bed very soon after they had eaten. But Julian stayed up and directed the porters, getting everything ready to make a start for Praemnon before daylight, and not even the heavy downpour of rain drove him in to shelter before everything was in order.

After he had gone in to sleep, and the rain began to extinguish the fires, Zoani went to the hut of the Kekhoda, the headman, and there had a conference with him.

They spoke of the feringhi who was lying hardly two miles away from the village, and was likely to die if he remained outside in the rain. It appeared to be the intention of the feringhi Ormond to leave him out there to live or die as might be. But as Zoani said to the headman, there had been inquiries made by the government into such things. Who knew but what blame might not fall upon Zoani, or upon the village itself, if this Armenian were allowed to die, and the thing were discovered. He might be an Armenian of wealth and influence—no one knew.

The headman agreed, after some talk with Zoani that it would not be a safe thing to let the man die; or if he was dead, it would be as well to bury him quickly.

Not long after this, a little troop of Iyats set off on donkeys and on foot through the black night and the rain. An hour later they returned to the camp bearing the inert and groaning body of Haffi; they took him into one of the huts, and daubed his bruises with oil and dung; they gave him a drink of the harsh spirit which they distilled from a purple herb which grew on the steps.

It seemed that Haffi was merely stunned and severely bruised by Julian's brutality. Towards daylight, he began to recover full consciousness. The Iyats kept him quiet, and would not let him speak; they left him in the hut attended by an old woman, and thought it wiser to say nothing to the feringhi Ormond about it.

Julian, indeed, was not thinking about Haffi. What lay ahead of him now was the most difficult task of all. To find the cups of Alexander, and having found them to get out of Persia without a soul knowing that he had done so.

It was a prodigious task. And with Lynne at his side he set off, while the dawn was breaking on the eastern slopes, to accomplish the first step in his task—the excavation of the well at Praemnon.

**CHAPTER XVI
FEVERISH WORK**

In the first fresh early sunshine the little cavalcade rode down from the ridge above Praemnon, into the now deserted camp.

The fallen stones of the fort lay half buried in the eternal sands, and only the trampled ground remained to show where the camp had been.

Lynne and her step-brother went to the well and examined the water. It was still a deep, dark brown.

"You certainly did the job thoroughly!" Julian said. He was tense with excitement, and paced about the well as he considered the best method of excavation.

But Lynne stood gazing at the old stones, and was awed for a moment by a realization of what thousands of years had passed since they were set in their places. And now, perhaps, they were to bring to light the cups of wrought gold which history said that Alexander the Great had given as a prize to the men of his legions.

Her heart beat hard, and all her pulses quickened as she turned to Julian.

"First of all we've got to get rid of the water," Julian was saying. He pointed out to her how the trough of the well was fed by the water of a slow running spring which trickled into the side of the basin; then he sprang up, calling impatiently to the men as they approached with their picks and spades.

He set them to work to dig up the ground about fifteen feet away, on that side of the well where the spring trickled in. He took a pick himself, and set to work vigorously, while Lynne found a spade and helped to shovel away the earth.

An hour's digging did not bring them to water; they extended this hole just north and then south, in a long trench, and at the end of another two hours came to the course of the underground stream. The water welled up and filled the hole; and Julian ordered the men to deepen the trench at right angles, and so drain the water away. Meanwhile the next thing to do was to fix hand pump he had brought to the side of the well, and pump out the water which was already in the basin.

Lynne, who had had no idea that the pump was among their equipment, commented on the way in which Julian had thought of everything.

"I have been waiting for this moment for months!" Julian said, through his teeth. "So I ought to be ready for it."

Sweat stood on his brow, and his face was grim; there was a fever about the way in which he worked, that communicated itself to Lynne. The wish and hope that the cups would be in their hoped-for hiding place, became a gnawing anxiety, as the day wore on; and the business of draining the well seemed to take an interminable time.

Julian laboured with a hurried doggedness himself, urging the other men on; he cursed Zoani for a fool and pushed him away when Zoani's method with the pump had failed to produce the best results.

EXCAVATION BY EXPLOSION

The brown water poured from the pump and made a pool of mud in the dirt beside the well; and with every burst of water and squeak of the pump handle, Lynne's heart seemed to hasten its already suffocating beat.

At last there were but a few inches of thick purple slime on the bottom of the pool. Dripping sweat, the Iyats went to and fro to the water bags they had brought with them and Julian, noticing the frequency with which they were doing it, told them roughly, to quench their thirst less often.

"We may be here for two or three days, and we can't lose time going back to Memshi for water," he said. "If you want water, drink the mud in the trench!"

The Iyats shrugged their shoulders behind his back, and it seemed to Lynne that her step-brother might have adopted better tactics with them, for after this incident she noticed that they did not put so much energy into their work. However, as she was herself, in a fever of impatience to get the job done, it was only natural that Julian should have been even more overwrought.

Julian jumped down into the basin of the well, and examined the inlet to make sure that there was no more water coming in.

There was none.

"Now!" he said, climbing out of the well again, with a deep, shaking sigh of relief. "Now we can get ahead!"

He set the men digging the earth away from the side of the well, laying bare the stone wall of the basin; he went over to the pack where it lay as it had been unladen from the camel,

and produced a box containing some wads wrapped in cotton wool. Lynne wondered what he proposed to do next, and his impatient, almost desperate manner, made her afraid to ask too many questions. It was a moment or two before she realized that the length of rod he held in his hand as he lowered himself into the excavations of the well, was a stick of gelignite.

She waited breathlessly; in a moment he climbed out of the hole again, and they all retreated hurriedly.

"What are you doing?" cried Lynne, as they hurried to a safe distance. "Julian—you can't blow it up!"

"It's the only way!" Julian told her impatiently, glancing at her, and then gazing in tense expectancy towards the well, where the heaps of sand and rubble bore witness to the extent of their excavations.

"But we ought not—we ought not to destroy it. It is so old—!" Lynne's conscience would not be stilled. She felt that this was really vandalism. "If the cups are there, they may be blown to pieces too—!"

"We've got to take the risk!" said Julian in a low harsh voice.

And while Lynne was divided between the pangs of her conscience, and an involuntary admiration for his fierce determination, they saw the stones and dust fly up in a great burst above the well and the dull detonation of the gelignite numbed their ears.

(To be continued)

Try The Advance Want Advertisements

Addition Made to the School at Temagami

Will Accommodate Thirty More Children. Extra Teacher to be Engaged.

Temagami, Aug. 27.—A long-felt need in this community will be filled this fall with the completion of the addition to the public school, for which a contract has been awarded to Hill-Clark-Francis, Ltd., of New Liskeard.

Through the efforts of the school board, comprising A. R. Swayne, secretary-treasurer, and W. Adair, trustee, the decision to proceed with construction of the new wing was made, and men are already at work. Completion of the project will provide accommodation for 30 more children. There will be two classrooms instead of one, and an additional teacher will be hired.

The necessity of more school accommodation here was growing more and more apparent. With approximately 65 children attending and only one classroom with 49 seats it had been necessary to take classes in shifts, with some pupils attending in the morning, others in the afternoon. The situation became so severe that several times orange crates were pressed into use to serve as desks.

The additional wing, which has the approval of Public School Inspector P. W. Brown of North Bay, will be 32 by 24 feet, of frame construction, com-

plete with furnace room and all conveniences.

School opens here Sept. 7, and while it is not expected that the new classrooms will be available then, it should be ready for use shortly after that date.

It is understood the contract price for the building is \$4500. The expenditure will mean but a small addition to taxes at Temagami. The village is a taxpayers' paradise, the school tax being the only levy.

It is believed there will be approximately 90 children attending school this fall here. Classes range from primer to senior fourth grade.

Kiwans to Meet Next Week on Tuesday at Noon

In view of the fact that Monday of next week, Sept. 6th, is Labour Day and a public holiday the regular weekly luncheon will be held on the following day, September 7th, at 12 p.m. This is in accordance with a recent resolution formally passed by the club to the effect that whenever the meeting date falls on a public holiday, the luncheon will be automatically postponed until the next day.

Winnipeg Free Press.—The sad truth is that it would be rather hard to exaggerate the desolation over a large area in Saskatchewan and Alberta and the very small yield of grain in other very large areas of those provinces. The loss is staggering and it is very widespread.



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