Nada the Lily

H. Rider Haggard

Dedication

Sompseu:

For I will call you by the name that for fifty years has been honoured by every tribe between Zambesi and Cape Agulbas,—I greet you!

Sompseu, my father, I have written a book that tells of men and matters of which you know the most of any who still look upon the light; therefore, I set your name within that book and, such as it is, I offer it to you.

If you knew not Chaka, you and he have seen the same suns shine, you knew his brother Panda and his captains, and perhaps even that very Mopo who tells this tale, his servant, who slew him with the Princes. You have seen the circle of the witch-doctors and the unconquerable Zulu impis rushing to war; you have crowned their kings and shared their counsels, and with your son's blood you have expiated a statesman's error and a general's fault.

Sompseu, a song has been sung in my ears of how first you mastered this people of the Zulu. Is it not true, my father, that for long hours you sat silent and alone, while three thousand warriors shouted for your life? And when they grew weary, did you not stand and say, pointing towards the ocean: "Kill me if you wish, men of Cetywayo, but I tell you that for every drop of my blood a hundred avengers shall rise from yonder sea!"

Then, so it was told me, the regiments turned staring towards the Black Water, as though the day of Ulundi had already come and they saw the white slayers creeping across the plains.

Thus, Sompseu, your name became great among the people of the Zulu, as already it was great among many another tribe, and their nobles did you homage, and they gave you the *Bayéte*, the royal salute, declaring by the mouth of their Council that in you dwelt the spirit of Chaka.

Many years have gone by since then, and now you are old, my father. It is many years even since I was a boy, and followed you when you went up among the Boers and took their country for the Queen.

Why did you do this, my father? I will answer, who know the truth. You did it because, had it not been done, the Zulus would have stamped out the Boers. Were not Cetywayo's impis gathered against the land, and was it not because it became the Queen's land that at your word he sent them murmuring to their kraals?1 To save bloodshed you annexed the country beyond the Vaal. Perhaps it had been better to leave it, since "Death chooses for himself," and after all there was killing—of our own people, and with the killing, shame. But in those days we did not guess what we should live to see, and of Majuba we thought only as a little hill!

Enemies have borne false witness against you on this matter, Sompseu, you who never erred except through over kindness. Yet what does that avail? When you have "gone beyond" it will be forgotten, since the sting of ingratitude passes and lies must wither like the winter veldt. Only your name will not be forgotten; as it was heard in life so it shall be heard in story, and I pray that, however humbly, mine may pass down with it. Chance has taken me by another path, and I must leave the ways of action that I love and bury myself in books, but the old days and friends are in my mind, nor while I have memory shall I forget them and you.

Therefore, though it be for the last time, from far across the seas I speak to you, and lifting my hand I give your "Sibonga"2 and that royal salute, to which, now that its kings are gone and the "People of Heaven" are no more a nation, with Her Majesty you are alone entitled:—

Bayéte! Baba, Nkosi ya makosi!
Ngonyama! Indhlovu ai pendulwa!
Wen' o wa vela wasi pata!
Wen' o wa hlul' izizwe zonke za patwa nguive!
Wa geina nge la Mabun' o wa ba hlul' u yedwa!
Umsizi we zintandane e ziblupekayo!
Si ya kuleka Baba!
Bayéte, T' Sompseu!3

and farewell!

H. RIDER HAGGARD.

To Sir Theophilus Shepstone, K.C.M.G., Natal.
13 *September*, 1891.

Preface

The writer of this romance has been encouraged to his task by a purpose somewhat beyond that of setting out a wild tale of savage life. When he was yet a lad,—now some seventeen years ago,—fortune took him to South Africa. There he was thrown in with men who, for thirty or forty years, had been intimately acquainted with the Zulu people, with their history, their heroes, and their customs. From these he heard many tales and traditions, some of which, perhaps, are rarely told nowadays, and in time to come may cease to be told altogether. Then the Zulus were still a nation; now that nation has been destroyed, and the chief aim of its white rulers is to root out the warlike spirit for which it was remarkable, and to replace it by a spirit of peaceful progress. The Zulu military organisation, perhaps the most wonderful that the world has seen, is already a thing of the past; it perished at Ulundi. It was Chaka who invented that organisation, building it up from the smallest beginnings. When he appeared at the commencement of this century, it was as the ruler of a single small tribe; when he fell, in the year 1828, beneath the assegais of his brothers, Umhlangana and Dingaan, and of his servant, Mopo or Umbopo, as he is called also, all south-eastern Africa was at his feet, and in his march to power he had slaughtered more than a million human beings. An attempt has been made in these pages to set out the true character of this colossal genius and most evil man,—a Napoleon and a Tiberius in one,—and also that of his brother and successor, Dingaan, so no more need be said of them here. The author’s aim, moreover, has been to convey, in a narrative form, some idea of the remarkable spirit which animated these kings and their subjects, and to make accessible, in a popular shape, incidents of history which are now, for the most part, only to be found in a few scarce works of reference, rarely consulted, except by students. It will be obvious that such a task has presented difficulties, since he who undertakes it must for a time forget his civilisation, and think with the mind and speak with the voice of a Zulu of the old regime. All the horrors perpetrated by the Zulu tyrants cannot be published in this

polite age of melanite and torpedoes; their details have, therefore, been suppressed. Still much remains, and those who think it wrong that massacre and fighting should be written of,—except by special correspondents,—or that the sufferings of mankind beneath one of the world's most cruel tyrannies should form the groundwork of romance, may be invited to leave this book unread. Most, indeed nearly all, of the historical incidents here recorded are substantially true. Thus, it is said that Chaka did actually kill his mother, Unandi, for the reason given, and destroy an entire tribe in the Tatiyana cleft, and that he prophesied of the coming of the white man after receiving his death wounds. Of the incident of the Missionary and the furnace of logs, it is impossible to speak so certainly. It came to the writer from the lips of an old traveller in "the Zulu"; but he cannot discover any confirmation of it. Still, these kings undoubtedly put their soldiers to many tests of equal severity. Umbopo, or Mopo, as he is named in this tale, actually lived. After he had stabbed Chaka, he rose to great eminence. Then he disappears from the scene, but it is not accurately known whether he also went "the way of the assegai," or perhaps, as is here suggested, came to live near Stanger under the name of Zweete. The fate of the two lovers at the mouth of the cave is a true Zulu tale, which has been considerably varied to suit the purposes of this romance. The late Mr. Leslie, who died in 1874, tells it in his book "Among the Zulus and Amatongas." "I heard a story the other day," he says, "which, if the power of writing fiction were possessed by me, I might have worked up into a first-class sensational novel." It is the story that has been woven into the plot of this book. To him also the writer is indebted for the artifice by which Umslopogaas obtained admission to the Swazi stronghold; it was told to Mr. Leslie by the Zulu who performed the feat and thereby won a wife. Also the writer's thanks are due to his friends, Mr. F. B. Fynney,[4] late Zulu border agent, for much information given to him in bygone years by word of mouth, and more recently through his pamphlet "Zululand and the Zulus," and to Mr. John Bird, formerly treasurer to the Government of Natal, whose compilation, "The Annals of Natal," is invaluable to all who would study the early history of that colony and of Zululand.

As for the wilder and more romantic incidents of this story, such as the hunting of Umslopogaas and Galazi with the wolves, or rather with the hyaenas,—for there are no true

wolves in Zululand,—the author can only say that they seem to him of a sort that might well have been mythically connected with the names of those heroes. Similar beliefs and traditions are common in the records of primitive peoples. The club “Watcher of the Fords,” or, to give its Zulu name, U-nothlola-mazibuko, is an historical weapon, chronicled by Bishop Callaway. It was once owned by a certain Undhlebekazizwa. He was an arbitrary person, for “no matter what was discussed in our village, he would bring it to a conclusion with a stick.” But he made a good end; for when the Zulu soldiers attacked him, he killed no less than twenty of them with the Watcher, and the spears stuck in him “as thick as reeds in a morass.” This man’s strength was so great that he could kill a leopard “like a fly,” with his hands only, much as Umslopogaas slew the traitor in this story.

Perhaps it may be allowable to add a few words about the Zulu mysticism, magic, and superstition, to which there is some allusion in this romance. It has been little if at all exaggerated. Thus the writer well remembers hearing a legend how the Guardian Spirit of the Ama-Zulu was seen riding down the storm. Here is what Mr. Fynney says of her in the pamphlet to which reference has been made: “The natives have a spirit which they call Nomkubulwana, or the Inkosazana-ye-Zulu (the Princess of Heaven). She is said to be robed in white, and to take the form of a young maiden, in fact an angel. She is said to appear to some chosen person, to whom she imparts some revelation; but, whatever that revelation may be, it is kept a profound secret from outsiders. I remember that, just before the Zulu war, Nomkubulwana appeared, revealing something or other which had a great effect throughout the land, and I know that the Zulus were quite impressed that some calamity was about to befall them. One of the ominous signs was that fire is said to have descended from heaven, and ignited the grass over the graves of the former kings of Zululand. ... On another occasion Nomkubulwana appeared to some one in Zululand, the result of that visit being, that the native women buried their young children up to their heads in sand, deserting them for the time being, going away weeping, but returning at nightfall to unearth the little ones again.”

For this divine personage there is, therefore, authority, and the same may be said of most of the supernatural matters

spoken of in these pages. The exact spiritual position held in the Zulu mind by the Umkulunkulu,—the Old—Old,—the Great—Great,—the Lord of Heavens,—is a more vexed question, and for its proper consideration the reader must be referred to Bishop Callaway's work, the "Religious System of the Amazulu." Briefly, Umkulunkulu's character seems to vary from the idea of an ancestral spirit, or the spirit of an ancestor, to that of a god. In the case of an able and highly intelligent person like the Mopo of this story, the ideal would probably not be a low one; therefore he is made to speak of Umkulunkulu as the Great Spirit, or God.

It only remains to the writer to express his regret that this story is not more varied in its hue. It would have been desirable to introduce some gayer and more happy incidents. But it has not been possible. It is believed that the picture given of the times is a faithful one, though it may be open to correction in some of its details. At the least, the aged man who tells the tale of his wrongs and vengeance could not be expected to treat his subject in an optimistic or even in a cheerful vein.

Introduction

Some years since—it was during the winter before the Zulu War—a White Man was travelling through Natal. His name does not matter, for he plays no part in this story. With him were two wagons laden with goods, which he was transporting to Pretoria. The weather was cold and there was little or no grass for the oxen, which made the journey difficult; but he had been tempted to it by the high rates of transport that prevailed at that season of the year, which would remunerate him for any probable loss he might suffer in cattle. So he pushed along on his journey, and all went well until he had passed the little town of Stanger, once the site of Duguza, the kraal of Chaka, the first Zulu king and the uncle of Cetywayo. The night after he left Stanger the air turned bitterly cold, heavy grey clouds filled the sky, and hid the light of the stars.

“Now if I were not in Natal, I should say that there was a heavy fall of snow coming,” said the White Man to himself. “I have often seen the sky look like that in Scotland before snow.” Then he reflected that there had been no deep snow in Natal for years, and, having drunk a “tot” of squareface and smoked his pipe, he went to bed beneath the after-tent of his larger wagon.

During the night he was awakened by a sense of bitter cold and the low moaning of the oxen that were tied to the trek-tow, every ox in its place. He thrust his head through the curtain of the tent and looked out. The earth was white with snow, and the air was full of it, swept along by a cutting wind.

Now he sprang up, huddling on his clothes and as he did so calling to the Kaffirs who slept beneath the wagons. Presently they awoke from the stupor which already was beginning to overcome them, and crept out, shivering with cold and wrapped from head to foot in blankets.

“Quick! you boys,” he said to them in Zulu; “quick! Would you see the cattle die of the snow and wind? Loose the oxen from the trek-tows and drive them in between the wagons;

they will give them some shelter.” And lighting a lantern he sprang out into the snow.

At last it was done—no easy task, for the numbed hands of the Kaffirs could scarcely loosen the frozen reins. The wagons were outspanned side by side with a space between them, and into this space the mob of thirty-six oxen was driven and there secured by reims tied crosswise from the front and hind wheels of the wagons. Then the White Man crept back to his bed, and the shivering natives, fortified with gin, or squareface, as it is called locally, took refuge on the second wagon, drawing a tent-sail over them.

For awhile there was silence, save for the moaning of the huddled and restless cattle.

“If the snow goes on I shall lose my oxen,” he said to himself; “they can never bear this cold.”

Hardly had the words passed his lips when the wagon shook; there was a sound of breaking reims and trampling hoofs. Once more he looked out. The oxen had “skrecked” in a mob. There they were, running away into the night and the snow, seeking to find shelter from the cold. In a minute they had vanished utterly. There was nothing to be done, except wait for the morning.

At last it came, revealing a landscape blind with snow. Such search as could be made told them nothing. The oxen had gone, and their spoor was obliterated by the fresh-fallen flakes. The White Man called a council of his Kaffir servants. “What was to be done?” he asked.

One said this thing, one that, but all agreed that they must wait to act until the snow melted.

“Or till we freeze, you whose mothers were fools!” said the White Man, who was in the worst of tempers, for had he not lost four hundred pounds’ worth of oxen?

Then a Zulu spoke, who hitherto had remained silent. He was the driver of the first wagon.

“My father,” he said to the White Man, “this is my word. The oxen are lost in the snow. No man knows whither they have gone, or whether they live or are now but hides and bones. Yet at the kraal yonder,” and he pointed to some huts about two miles away on the hillside, “lives a witch doctor named Zweete. He is old—very old—but he has

wisdom, and he can tell you where the oxen are if any man may, my father."

"Stuff!" answered the White Man. "Still, as the kraal cannot be colder than this wagon, we will go and ask Zweete. Bring a bottle of squareface and some snuff with you for presents."

An hour later he stood in the hut of Zweete. Before him was a very ancient man, a mere bag of bones, with sightless eyes, and one hand—his left—white and shrivelled.

"What do you seek of Zweete, my white father?" asked the old man in a thin voice. "You do not believe in me and my wisdom; why should I help you? Yet I will do it, though it is against your law, and you do wrong to ask me,—yes, to show you that there is truth in us Zulu doctors, I will help you. My father, I know what you seek. You seek to know where your oxen have run for shelter from the cold! Is it not so?"

"It is so, Doctor," answered the White Man. "You have long ears."

"Yes, my white father, I have long ears, though they say that I grow deaf. I have keen eyes also, and yet I cannot see your face. Let me hearken! Let me look!"

For awhile he was silent, rocking himself to and fro, then he spoke: "You have a farm, White Man, down near Pine Town, is it not? Ah! I thought so—and an hour's ride from your farm lives a Boer with four fingers only on his right hand. There is a kloof on the Boer's farm where mimosa-trees grow. There, in the kloof, you shall find your oxen—yes, five days' journey from here you will find them all. I say all, my father, except three only—the big black Africander ox, the little red Zulu ox with one horn, and the speckled ox. You shall not find these, for they have died in the snow. Send, and you will find the others. No, no! I ask no fee! I do not work wonders for reward. Why should I? I am rich."

Now the White Man scoffed. But in the end, so great is the power of superstition, he sent. And here it may be stated that on the eleventh day of his sojourn at the kraal of Zweete, those whom he sent returned with the oxen, except the three only. After that he scoffed no more. Those eleven days he spent in a hut of the old man's kraal, and every

afternoon he came and talked with him, sitting far into the night.

On the third day he asked Zweete how it was that his left hand was white and shrivelled, and who were Umslopogaas and Nada, of whom he had let fall some words. Then the old man told him the tale that is set out here. Day by day he told some of it till it was finished. It is not all written in these pages, for portions may have been forgotten, or put aside as irrelevant. Neither has it been possible for the writer of it to render the full force of the Zulu idiom nor to convey a picture of the teller. For, in truth, he acted rather than told his story. Was the death of a warrior in question, he stabbed with his stick, showing how the blow fell and where; did the story grow sorrowful, he groaned, or even wept. Moreover, he had many voices, one for each of the actors in his tale. This man, ancient and withered, seemed to live again in the far past. It was the past that spoke to his listener, telling of deeds long forgotten, of deeds that are no more known.

Yet as he best may, the White Man has set down the substance of the story of Zweete in the spirit in which Zweete told it. And because the history of Nada the Lily and of those with whom her life was intertwined moved him strangely, and in many ways, he has done more, he has printed it that others may judge of it.

And now his part is played. Let him who was named Zweete, but who had another name, take up the story.

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1. The Boy Chaka Prophesies

You ask me, my father, to tell you the tale of the youth of Umslopogaas, holder of the iron Chieftainess, the axe Groan-maker, who was named Bulalio the Slaughterer, and of his love for Nada, the most beautiful of Zulu women. It is long; but you are here for many nights, and, if I live to tell it, it shall be told. Strengthen your heart, my father, for I have much to say that is sorrowful, and even now, when I think of Nada the tears creep through the horn that shuts out my old eyes from light.

Do you know who I am, my father? You do not know. You think that I am an old, old witch-doctor named Zweete. So men have thought for many years, but that is not my name. Few have known it, for I have kept it locked in my breast, lest, though I live now under the law of the White Man, and the Great Queen is my chieftainess, an assegai still might find this heart did any know my name.

Look at this hand, my father—no, not that which is withered with fire; look on this right hand of mine. You see it, though I who am blind cannot. But still, within me, I see it as it was once. Ay! I see it red and strong—red with the blood of two kings. Listen, my father; bend your ear to me and listen. I am Mopo—ah! I felt you start; you start as the regiment of the Bees started when Mopo walked before their ranks, and from the assegai in his hand the blood of Chaka[5] dropped slowly to the earth. I am Mopo who slew Chaka the king. I killed him with Dingaan and Umhlangana the princes; but the wound was mine that his life crept out of, and but for me he would never have been slain. I killed him with the princes, but Dingaan, I and one other slew alone.

What do you say? “Dingaan died by the Tongola.”

Yes, yes, he died, but not there; he died on the Ghost Mountain; he lies in the breast of the old Stone Witch who sits aloft forever waiting for the world to perish. But I also was on the Ghost Mountain. In those days my feet still

could travel fast, and vengeance would not let me sleep. I travelled by day, and by night I found him. I and another, we killed him—ah! ah!

Why do I tell you this? What has it to do with the loves of Umslopogaas and Nada the Lily? I will tell you. I stabbed Chaka for the sake of my sister, Baleka, the mother of Umslopogaas, and because he had murdered my wives and children. I and Umslopogaas slew Dingaan for the sake of Nada, who was my daughter.

There are great names in the story, my father. Yes, many have heard the names: when the Impis roared them out as they charged in battle, I have felt the mountains shake and seen the waters quiver in their sound. But where are they now? Silence has them, and the white men write them down in books. I opened the gates of distance for the holders of the names. They passed through and they are gone beyond. I cut the strings that tied them to the world. They fell off. Ha! ha! They fell off! Perhaps they are falling still, perhaps they creep about their desolate kraals in the skins of snakes. I wish I knew the snakes that I might crush them with my heel. Yonder, beneath us, at the burying-place of kings, there is a hole. In that hole lie the bones of Chaka, the king who died for Baleka. Far away in Zululand there is a cleft upon the Ghost Mountain. At the foot of that cleft lie the bones of Dingaan, the king who died for Nada. It was far to fall and he was heavy; those bones of his are broken into little pieces. I went to see them when the vultures and the jackals had done their work. And then I laughed three times and came here to die.

All that is long ago, and I have not died; though I wish to die and follow the road that Nada trod. Perhaps I have lived to tell you this tale, my father, that you may repeat it to the white men if you will. How old am I? Nay, I do not know. Very, very old. Had Chaka lived he would have been as old as I.[6] None are living whom I knew when I was a boy. I am so old that I must hasten. The grass withers, and the winter comes. Yes, while I speak the winter nips my heart. Well, I am ready to sleep in the cold, and perhaps I shall awake again in the spring.

Before the Zulus were a people—for I will begin at the beginning—I was born of the Langeni tribe. We were not a large tribe; afterwards, all our able-bodied men numbered one full regiment in Chaka’s army, perhaps there were

between two and three thousand of them, but they were brave. Now they are all dead, and their women and children with them,—that people is no more. It is gone like last month's moon; how it went I will tell you by-and-bye.

Our tribe lived in a beautiful open country; the Boers, whom we call the Amaboona, are there now, they tell me. My father, Makedama, was chief of the tribe, and his kraal was built on the crest of a hill, but I was not the son of his head wife. One evening, when I was still little, standing as high as a man's elbow only, I went out with my mother below the cattle kraal to see the cows driven in. My mother was very fond of these cows, and there was one with a white face that would follow her about. She carried my little sister Baleka riding on her hip; Baleka was a baby then. We walked till we met the lads driving in the cows. My mother called the white-faced cow and gave it mealie leaves which she had brought with her. Then the boys went on with the cattle, but the white-faced cow stopped by my mother. She said that she would bring it to the kraal when she came home. My mother sat down on the grass and nursed her baby, while I played round her, and the cow grazed. Presently we saw a woman walking towards us across the plain. She walked like one who is tired. On her back was a bundle of mats, and she led by the hand a boy of about my own age, but bigger and stronger than I was. We waited a long while, till at last the woman came up to us and sank down on the veldt, for she was very weary. We saw by the way her hair was dressed that she was not of our tribe.

"Greeting to you!" said the woman.

"Good-morrow!" answered my mother. "What do you seek?"

"Food, and a hut to sleep in," said the woman. "I have travelled far."

"How are you named?—and what is your people?" asked my mother.

"My name is Unandi: I am the wife of Senzangacona, of the Zulu tribe," said the stranger.

Now there had been war between our people and the Zulu people, and Senzangacona had killed some of our warriors and taken many of our cattle. So, when my mother heard the speech of Unandi she sprang up in anger.

“You dare to come here and ask me for food and shelter, wife of a dog of a Zulu!” she cried; “begone, or I will call the girls to whip you out of our country.”

The woman, who was very handsome, waited till my mother had finished her angry words; then she looked up and spoke slowly, “There is a cow by you with milk dropping from its udder; will you not even give me and my boy a gourd of milk?” And she took a gourd from her bundle and held it towards us.

“I will not,” said my mother.

“We are thirsty with long travel; will you not, then, give us a cup of water? We have found none for many hours.”

“I will not, wife of a dog; go and seek water for yourself.”

The woman’s eyes filled with tears, but the boy folded his arms on his breast and scowled. He was a very handsome boy, with bright black eyes, but when he scowled his eyes were like the sky before a thunderstorm.

“Mother,” he said, “we are not wanted here any more than we were wanted yonder,” and he nodded towards the country where the Zulu people lived. “Let us be going to Dingiswayo; the Umtetwa people will protect us.”

“Yes, let us be going, my son,” answered Unandi; “but the path is long, we are weary and shall fall by the way.”

I heard, and something pulled at my heart; I was sorry for the woman and her boy, they looked so tired. Then, without saying anything to my mother, I snatched the gourd and ran with it to a little donga that was hard by, for I knew that there was a spring. Presently I came back with the gourd full of water. My mother wanted to catch me, for she was very angry, but I ran past her and gave the gourd to the boy. Then my mother ceased trying to interfere, only she beat the woman with her tongue all the while, saying that evil had come to our kraals from her husband, and she felt in her heart that more evil would come upon us from her son. Her *Ehlosé*[7] told her so. Ah! my father, her *Ehlosé* told her true. If the woman Unandi and her child had died that day on the veldt, the gardens of my people would not now be a wilderness, and their bones would not lie in the great gulley that is near U’Cetywayo’s kraal.

While my mother talked I and the cow with the white face stood still and watched, and the baby Baleka cried aloud.

The boy, Unandi's son, having taken the gourd, did not offer the water to his mother. He drank two-thirds of it himself; I think that he would have drunk it all had not his thirst been slaked; but when he had done he gave what was left to his mother, and she finished it. Then he took the gourd again, and came forward, holding it in one hand; in the other he carried a short stick.

"What is your name, boy?" he said to me as a big rich man speaks to one who is little and poor.

"Mopo is my name," I answered.

"And what is the name of your people?"

I told him the name of my tribe, the Langeni tribe.

"Very well, Mopo; now I will tell you my name. My name is Chaka, son of Senzangacona, and my people are called the Amazulu. And I will tell you something more. I am little to-day, and my people are a small people. But I shall grow big, so big that my head will be lost in the clouds; you will look up and you shall not see it. My face will blind you; it will be bright like the sun; and my people will grow great with me; they shall eat up the whole world. And when I am big and my people are big, and we have stamped the earth flat as far as men can travel, then I will remember your tribe—the tribe of the Langeni, who would not give me and my mother a cup of milk when we were weary. You see this gourd; for every drop it can hold the blood of a man shall flow—the blood of one of your men. But because you gave me the water I will spare you, Mopo, and you only, and make you great under me. You shall grow fat in my shadow. You alone I will never harm, however you sin against me; this I swear. But for that woman," and he pointed to my mother, "let her make haste and die, so that I do not need to teach her what a long time death can take to come. I have spoken." And he ground his teeth and shook his stick towards us.

My mother stood silent awhile. Then she gasped out: "The little liar! He speaks like a man, does he? The calf lows like a bull. I will teach him another note—the brat of an evil prophet!" And putting down Baleka, she ran at the boy.

Chaka stood quite still till she was near; then suddenly he lifted the stick in his hand, and hit her so hard on the head that she fell down. After that he laughed, turned, and went away with his mother Unandi.

These, my father, were the first words I heard Chaka speak, and they were words of prophecy, and they came true. The last words I heard him speak were words of prophecy also, and I think that they will come true. Even now they are coming true. In the one he told how the Zulu people should rise. And say, have they not risen? In the other he told how they should fall; and they did fall. Do not the white men gather themselves together even now against U'Cetywayo, as vultures gather round a dying ox? The Zulus are not what they were to stand against them. Yes, yes, they will come true, and mine is the song of a people that is doomed.

But of these other words I will speak in their place.

I went to my mother. Presently she raised herself from the ground and sat up with her hands over her face. The blood from the wound the stick had made ran down her face on to her breast, and I wiped it away with grass. She sat for a long while thus, while the child cried, the cow lowed to be milked, and I wiped up the blood with the grass. At last she took her hands away and spoke to me.

"Mopo, my son," she said, "I have dreamed a dream. I dreamed that I saw the boy Chaka who struck me: he was grown like a giant. He stalked across the mountains and the veldt, his eyes blazed like the lightning, and in his hand he shook a little assegai that was red with blood. He caught up people after people in his hands and tore them, he stamped their kraals flat with his feet. Before him was the green of summer, behind him the land was black as when the fires have eaten the grass. I saw our people, Mopo; they were many and fat, their hearts laughed, the men were brave, the girls were fair; I counted their children by the hundreds. I saw them again, Mopo. They were bones, white bones, thousands of bones tumbled together in a rocky place, and he, Chaka, stood over the bones and laughed till the earth shook. Then, Mopo, in my dream, I saw you grown a man. You alone were left of our people. You crept up behind the giant Chaka, and with you came others, great men of a royal look. You stabbed him with a little spear, and he fell down and grew small again; he fell down and cursed you. But you cried in his ear a name—the name of Baleka, your sister—and he died. Let us go home, Mopo, let us go home; the darkness falls."

So we rose and went home. But I held my peace, for I was afraid, very much afraid.

2. Mopo Is In Trouble

Now, I must tell how my mother did what the boy Chaka had told her, and died quickly. For where his stick had struck her on the forehead there came a sore that would not be healed, and in the sore grew an abscess, and the abscess ate inwards till it came to the brain. Then my mother fell down and died, and I cried very much, for I loved her, and it was dreadful to see her cold and stiff, with not a word to say however loudly I called to her. Well, they buried my mother, and she was soon forgotten. I only remembered her, nobody else did—not even Baleka, for she was too little—and as for my father he took another young wife and was content. After that I was unhappy, for my brothers did not love me, because I was much cleverer than they, and had greater skill with the assegai, and was swifter in running; so they poisoned the mind of my father against me and he treated me badly. But Baleka and I loved each other, for we were both lonely, and she clung to me like a creeper to the only tree in a plain, and though I was young, I learned this: that to be wise is to be strong, for though he who holds the assegai kills, yet he whose mind directs the battle is greater than he who kills. Now I saw that the witch-finders and the medicine-men were feared in the land, and that everybody looked up to them, so that, even when they had only a stick in their hands, ten men armed with spears would fly before them. Therefore I determined that I should be a witch-doctor, for they alone can kill those whom they hate with a word. So I learned the arts of the medicine-men. I made sacrifices, I fasted in the veldt alone, I did all those things of which you have heard, and I learned much; for there is wisdom in our magic as well as lies—and you know it, my father, else you had not come here to ask me about your lost oxen.

So things went on till I was twenty years of age—a man full grown. By now I had mastered all I could learn by myself, so I joined myself on to the chief medicine-man of our tribe, who was named Noma. He was old, had one eye only, and was very clever. Of him I learned some tricks and more wisdom, but at last he grew jealous of me and set a trap to

catch me. As it chanced, a rich man of a neighbouring tribe had lost some cattle, and came with gifts to Noma praying him to smell them out. Noma tried and could not find them; his vision failed him. Then the headman grew angry and demanded back his gifts; but Noma would not give up that which he once had held, and hot words passed. The headman said that he would kill Noma; Noma said that he would bewitch the headman.

“Peace,” I said, for I feared that blood would be shed. “Peace, and let me see if my snake will tell me where the cattle are.”

“You are nothing but a boy,” answered the headman. “Can a boy have wisdom?”

“That shall soon be known,” I said, taking the bones in my hand.[8]

“Leave the bones alone!” screamed Noma. “We will ask nothing more of our snakes for the good of this son of a dog.”

“He shall throw the bones,” answered the headman. “If you try to stop him, I will let sunshine through you with my assegai.” And he lifted his spear.

Then I made haste to begin; I threw the bones. The headman sat on the ground before me and answered my questions. You know of these matters, my father—how sometimes the witch-doctor has knowledge of where the lost things are, for our ears are long, and sometimes his *Ehlosé* tells him, as but the other day it told me of your oxen. Well, in this case, my snake stood up. I knew nothing of the man’s cattle, but my Spirit was with me and soon I saw them all, and told them to him one by one, their colour, their age—everything. I told him, too, where they were, and how one of them had fallen into a stream and lay there on its back drowned, with its forefoot caught in a forked root. As my *Ehlosé* told me so I told the headman.

Now, the man was pleased, and said that if my sight was good, and he found the cattle, the gifts should be taken from Noma and given to me; and he asked the people who were sitting round, and there were many, if this was not just. “Yes, yes,” they said, it was just, and they would see that it was done. But Noma sat still and looked at me evilly. He knew that I had made a true divination, and he was very angry. It was a big matter: the herd of cattle were many,

and, if they were found where I had said, then all men would think me the greater wizard. Now it was late, and the moon had not yet risen, therefore the headman said that he would sleep that night in our kraal, and at the first light would go with me to the spot where I said the cattle were. After that he went away.

I too went into my hut and lay down to sleep. Suddenly I awoke, feeling a weight upon my breast. I tried to start up, but something cold pricked my throat. I fell back again and looked. The door of the hut was open, the moon lay low on the sky like a ball of fire far away. I could see it through the door, and its light crept into the hut. It fell upon the face of Noma the witch-doctor. He was seated across me, glaring at me with his one eye, and in his hand was a knife. It was that which I had felt prick my throat.

“You whelp whom I have bred up to tear me!” he hissed into my ear, “you dared to divine where I failed, did you? Very well, now I will show you how I serve such puppies. First, I will pierce through the root of your tongue, so that you cannot squeal, then I will cut you to pieces slowly, bit by bit, and in the morning I will tell the people that the spirits did it because you lied. Next, I will take off your arms and legs. Yes, yes, I will make you like a stick! Then I will”—and he began driving in the knife under my chin.

“Mercy, my uncle,” I said, for I was frightened and the knife hurt. “Have mercy, and I will do whatever you wish!”

“Will you do this?” he asked, still pricking me with the knife. “Will you get up, go to find the dog’s cattle and drive them to a certain place, and hide them there?” And he named a secret valley that was known to very few. “If you do that, I will spare you and give you three of the cows. If you refuse or play me false, then, by my father’s spirit, I will find a way to kill you!”

“Certainly I will do it, my uncle,” I answered. “Why did you not trust me before? Had I known that you wanted to keep the cattle, I would never have smelt them out. I only did so fearing lest you should lose the presents.”

“You are not so wicked as I thought,” he growled. “Get up, then, and do my bidding. You can be back here two hours after dawn.”

So I got up, thinking all the while whether I should try to spring on him. But I was without arms, and he had the

knife; also if, by chance, I prevailed and killed him, it would have been thought that I had murdered him, and I should have tasted the assegai. So I made another plan. I would go and find the cattle in the valley where I had smelt them out, but I would not bring them to the secret hiding-place. No; I would drive them straight to the kraal, and denounce Noma before the chief, my father, and all the people. But I was young in those days, and did not know the heart of Noma. He had not been a witch-doctor till he grew old for nothing. Oh! he was evil!—he was cunning as a jackal, and fierce like a lion. He had planted me by him like a tree, but he meant to keep me clipped like a bush. Now I had grown tall and overshadowed him; therefore he would root me up.

I went to the corner of my hut, Noma watching me all the while, and took a kerrie and my small shield. Then I started through the moonlight. Till I was past the kraal I glided along quietly as a shadow. After that, I began to run, singing to myself as I went, to frighten away the ghosts, my father.

For an hour I travelled swiftly over the plain, till I came to the hillside where the bush began. Here it was very dark under the shade of the trees, and I sang louder than ever. At last I found the little buffalo path I sought, and turned along it. Presently I came to an open place, where the moonlight crept in between the trees. I knelt down and looked. Yes! my snake had not lied to me; there was the spoor of the cattle. Then I went on gladly till I reached a dell through which the water ran softly, sometimes whispering and sometimes talking out loud. Here the trail of the cattle was broad: they had broken down the ferns with their feet and trampled the grass. Presently I came to a pool. I knew it—it was the pool my snake had shown me. And there at the edge of the pool floated the drowned ox, its foot caught in a forked root. All was just as I had seen it in my heart.

I stepped forward and looked round. My eye caught something; it was the faint grey light of the dawn glinted on the cattle’s horns. As I looked, one of them snorted, rose and shook the dew from his hide. He seemed big as an elephant in the mist and twilight.

Then I collected them all—there were seventeen—and drove them before me down the narrow path back towards the kraal. Now the daylight came quickly, and the sun had

been up an hour when I reached the spot where I must turn if I wished to hide the cattle in the secret place, as Noma had bid me. But I would not do this. No, I would go on to the kraal with them, and tell all men that Noma was a thief. Still, I sat down and rested awhile, for I was tired. As I sat, I heard a noise, and looked up. There, over the slope of the rise, came a crowd of men, and leading them was Noma, and by his side the headman who owned the cattle. I rose and stood still, wondering; but as I stood, they ran towards me shouting and waving sticks and spears.

"There he is!" screamed Noma. "There he is!—the clever boy whom I have brought up to bring shame on me. What did I tell you? Did I not tell you that he was a thief? Yes—yes! I know your tricks, Mopo, my child! See! he is stealing the cattle! He knew where they were all the time, and now he is taking them away to hide them. They would be useful to buy a wife with, would they not, my clever boy?" And he made a rush at me, with his stick lifted, and after him came the headman, grunting with rage.

I understood now, my father. My heart went mad in me, everything began to swim round, a red cloth seemed to lift itself up and down before my eyes. I have always seen it thus when I was forced to fight. I screamed out one word only, "Liar!" and ran to meet him. On came Noma. He struck at me with his stick, but I caught the blow upon my little shield, and hit back. Wow! I did hit! The skull of Noma met my kerrie, and down he fell dead at my feet. I yelled again, and rushed on at the headman. He threw an assegai, but it missed me, and next second I hit him too. He got up his shield, but I knocked it down upon his head, and over he rolled senseless. Whether he lived or died I do not know, my father; but his head being of the thickest, I think it likely that he lived. Then, while the people stood astonished, I turned and fled like the wind. They turned too, and ran after me, throwing spears at me and trying to cut me off. But none of them could catch me—no, not one. I went like the wind; I went like a buck when the dogs wake it from sleep; and presently the sound of their chase grew fainter and fainter, till at last I was out of sight and alone.

3. Mopo Ventures Home

I threw myself down on the grass and panted till my breath came back; then I went and hid in a patch of reeds down by a swamp. All day long I lay there thinking. What was I to do? Now I was a jackal without a hole. If I went back to my people, certainly they would kill me, whom they thought a thief. My blood would be given for Noma's, and that I did not wish, though my heart was sad. Then there came into my mind the thought of Chaka, the boy to whom I had given the cup of water long ago. I had heard of him: his name was known in the land; already the air was big with it; the very trees and grass spoke it. The words he had said and the vision that my mother had seen were beginning to come true. By the help of the Umtetwas he had taken the place of his father Senzangacona; he had driven out the tribe of the Amaquabe; now he made war on Zweete, chief of the Endwande, and he had sworn that he would stamp the Endwande flat, so that nobody could find them any more. Now I remembered how this Chaka promised that he would make me great, and that I should grow fat in his shadow; and I thought to myself that I would arise and go to him. Perhaps he would kill me; well, what did it matter? Certainly I should be killed if I stayed here. Yes, I would go. But now my heart pulled another way. There was but one whom I loved in the world—it was my sister Baleka. My father had betrothed her to the chief of a neighbouring tribe, but I knew that this marriage was against her wish. Perhaps my sister would run away with me if I could get near her to tell her that I was going. I would try—yes, I would try.

I waited till the darkness came down, then I rose from my bed of weeds and crept like a jackal towards the kraal. In the mealie gardens I stopped awhile, for I was very hungry, and filled myself with the half-ripe mealies. Then I went on till I came to the kraal. Some of my people were seated outside of a hut, talking together over a fire. I crept near, silently as a snake, and hid behind a little bush. I knew that they could not see me outside the ring of the firelight, and I wanted to hear what they said. As I guessed, they were

talking of me and called me many names. They said that I should bring ill-luck on the tribe by having killed so great a witch-doctor as Noma; also that the people of the headman would demand payment for the assault on him. I learned, moreover, that my father had ordered out all the men of the tribe to hunt for me on the morrow and to kill me wherever they found me. “Ah!” I thought, “you may hunt, but you will bring nothing home to the pot.” Just then a dog that was lying by the fire got up and began to sniff the air. I could not see what dog it was—indeed, I had forgotten all about the dogs when I drew near the kraal; that is what comes of want of experience, my father. The dog sniffed and sniffed, then he began to growl, looking always my way, and I grew afraid.

“What is the dog growling at?” said one man to another. “Go and see.” But the other man was taking snuff and did not like to move. “Let the dog go and see for himself,” he answered, sneezing, “what is the good of keeping a dog if you have to catch the thief?”

“Go on, then,” said the first man to the dog. And he ran forward, barking. Then I saw him: it was my own dog, Koos, a very good dog. Presently, as I lay not knowing what to do, he smelt my smell, stopped barking, and running round the bush he found me and began to lick my face. “Be quiet, Koos!” I whispered to him. And he lay down by my side.

“Where has that dog gone now?” said the first man. “Is he bewitched, that he stops barking suddenly and does not come back?”

“We will see,” said the other, rising, a spear in his hand.

Now once more I was terribly afraid, for I thought that they would catch me, or I must run for my life again. But as I sprang up to run, a big black snake glided between the men and went off towards the huts. They jumped aside in a great fright, then all of them turned to follow the snake, saying that this was what the dog was barking at. That was my good *Ehlosé*, my father, which without any doubt took the shape of a snake to save my life.

When they had gone I crept off the other way, and Koos followed me. At first I thought that I would kill him, lest he should betray me; but when I called to him to knock him on the head with my kerrie, he sat down upon the ground wagging his tail, and seemed to smile in my face, and I

could not do it. So I thought that I would take my chance, and we went on together. This was my purpose: first to creep into my own hut and get my assegais and a skin blanket, then to gain speech with Baleka. My hut, I thought, would be empty, for nobody sleeps there except myself, and the huts of Noma were some paces away to the right. I came to the reed fence that surrounded the huts. Nobody was to be seen at the gate, which was not shut with thorns as usual. It was my duty to close it, and I had not been there to do so. Then, bidding the dog lie down outside, I stepped through boldly, reached the door of my hut, and listened. It was empty; there was not even a breath to be heard. So I crept in and began to search for my assegais, my water-gourd, and my wood pillow, which was so nicely carved that I did not like to leave it. Soon I found them. Then I felt about for my skin rug, and as I did so my hand touched something cold. I started, and felt again. It was a man's face—the face of a dead man, of Noma, whom I had killed and who had been laid in my hut to await burial. Oh! then I was frightened, for Noma dead and in the dark was worse than Noma alive. I made ready to fly, when suddenly I heard the voices of women talking outside the door of the hut. I knew the voices; they were those of Noma's two wives, and one of them said she was coming in to watch by her husband's body. Now I was in a trap indeed, for before I could do anything I saw the light go out of a hole in the hut, and knew by the sound of a fat woman puffing as she bent herself up that Noma's first wife was coming through it. Presently she was in, and, squatting by the side of the corpse in such a fashion that I could not get to the door, she began to make lamentations and to call down curses on me. Ah! she did not know that I was listening. I too squatted by Noma's head, and grew quick-witted in my fear. Now that the woman was there I was not so much afraid of the dead man, and I remembered, too, that he had been a great cheat; so I thought I would make him cheat for the last time. I placed my hands beneath his shoulders and pushed him up so that he sat upon the ground. The woman heard the noise and made a sound in her throat.

"Will you not be quiet, you old hag?" I said in Noma's voice. "Can you not let me be at peace, even now when I am dead?"

She heard, and, falling backwards in fear, drew in her breath to shriek aloud.

“What! will you also dare to shriek?” I said again in Noma’s voice; “then I must teach you silence.” And I tumbled him over on to the top of her.

Then her senses left her, and whether she ever found them again I do not know. At least she grew quiet for that time. For me, I snatched up the rug—afterwards I found it was Noma’s best kaross, made by Basutos of chosen cat-skins, and worth three oxen—and I fled, followed by Koos.

Now the kraal of the chief, my father, Makedama, was two hundred paces away, and I must go thither, for there Baleka slept. Also I dared not enter by the gate, because a man was always on guard there. So I cut my way through the reed fence with my assegai and crept to the hut where Baleka was with some of her half-sisters. I knew on which side of the hut it was her custom to lie, and where her head would be. So I lay down on my side and gently, very gently, began to bore a hole in the grass covering of the hut. It took a long while, for the thatch was thick, but at last I was nearly through it. Then I stopped, for it came into my mind that Baleka might have changed her place, and that I might wake the wrong girl. I almost gave it over, thinking that I would fly alone, when suddenly I heard a girl wake and begin to cry on the other side of the thatch. “Ah,” I thought, “that is Baleka, who weeps for her brother!” So I put my lips where the thatch was thinnest and whispered:—

“Baleka, my sister! Baleka, do not weep! I, Mopo, am here. Say not a word, but rise. Come out of the hut, bringing your skin blanket.”

Now Baleka was very clever: she did not shriek, as most girls would have done. No; she understood, and, after waiting awhile, she rose and crept from the hut, her blanket in her hand.

“Why are you here, Mopo?” she whispered, as we met. “Surely you will be killed!”

“Hush!” I said. And then I told her of the plan which I had made. “Will you come with me?” I said, when I had done, “or will you creep back into the hut and bid me farewell?”

She thought awhile, then she said, “No, my brother, I will come, for I love you alone among our people, though I

believe that this will be the end of it—that you will lead me to my death.”

I did not think much of her words at the time, but afterwards they came back to me. So we slipped away together, followed by the dog Koos, and soon we were running over the veldt with our faces set towards the country of the Zulu tribe.

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4. The Flight Of Mopo And Baleka

All the rest of that night we journeyed, till even the dog was tired. Then we hid in a mealie field for the day, as we were afraid of being seen. Towards the afternoon we heard voices, and, looking through the stems of the mealies, we saw a party of my father's men pass searching for us. They went on to a neighbouring kraal to ask if we had been seen, and after that we saw them no more for awhile. At night we travelled again; but, as fate would have it, we were met by an old woman, who looked oddly at us but said nothing. After that we pushed on day and night, for we knew that the old woman would tell the pursuers if she met them; and so indeed it came about. On the third evening we reached some mealie gardens, and saw that they had been trampled down. Among the broken mealies we found the body of a very old man, as full of assegai wounds as a porcupine with quills. We wondered at this, and went on a little way. Then we saw that the kraal to which the gardens belonged was burnt down. We crept up to it, and—ah! it was a sad sight for us to see! Afterwards we became used to such sights. All about us lay the bodies of dead people, scores of them—old men, young men, women, children, little babies at the breast—there they lay among the burnt huts, pierced with assegai wounds. Red was the earth with their blood, and red they looked in the red light of the setting sun. It was as though all the land had been smeared with the bloody hand of the Great Spirit, of the Umkulunkulu. Baleka saw it and began to cry; she was weary, poor girl, and we had found little to eat, only grass and green corn.

"An enemy has been here," I said, and as I spoke I thought that I heard a groan from the other side of a broken reed hedge. I went and looked. There lay a young woman: she was badly wounded, but still alive, my father. A little way from her lay a man dead, and before him several other men of another tribe: he had died fighting. In front of the woman were the bodies of three children; another, a little one, lay on her body. I looked at the woman, and, as I