

# Black Heart and White Heart.

A ZULU IDYLL.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

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## CHAPTER II.—Continued.

Then the Bee slipped back her kaross and stood before them bending over the fire, into which she threw herbs taken from a pouch that was bound about her middle. She was still a thin-shap'd woman, and she wore none of the abominations which Hadden had been accustomed to see upon the persons of witch doctoresses. About her neck, however, was a curious ornament, a small, live snake, red and gray in hue, which her visitors recognized as one of the most deadly to be found in that part of the country. It met unusual for Zulus with doctors thus to decorate themselves with snakes, though whether or not their fangs have first been extracted, no one seems to know.

Presently the herbs began to smoulder and the smoke of them rose up in thin straight stream, that, striking upon the face of the Bee, clung about her head, enveloping it as though with a strange blue veil. Then it suddenly stretched out her hands and let fall the two locks of hair upon the burning herbs, where they writhed themselves to ashes like things alive. Next she opened her mouth and began to draw the fumes of the hair and herbs into her lungs in great gulps, while the snake, feeling the influence of the medicine, hissed and uncoiled itself from about her neck, crept upward and took refuge among the black saccobola feathers of her headdress. Soon the vapors began to do their work, she swayed to and fro muttering, then sank back against the hut, upon the straw of which her head rested. Now the Bee's face was turned upward toward the light and she was looking at Hadden as if he had become blue in color and the open eyes were sunken like the eyes of one dead, while above her forehead the red snake wavered and hissed, reminding Hadden of the Ghastron crest on the brow of the Egyptian kings. For ten seconds or more she remained thus, then she spoke in a hollow, unnatural voice: "O Black Heart and body that is white and beautiful, I look into your heart and it is black as blood and black as blood it shall be black with blood. Beautiful white body with a black heart, you shall die and blow for blow, for my word when the spotted cat purrs above your breast; think of it when the battle roars about you; think of it when you grasp your great reward and for the last time stand face to face with the ghost of the dead in the Home of the Dead.

"O White Heart and black body, I look into your heart and it is white as milk and the milk of innocence shall save it. Fool, why do you strike that blow? Let him who is loved call you his brother, and let him who is the love of a tiger. Ah! what face is that in the battle? Follow it, follow it, O swift of foot, but follow warily, for the tongue that has lied will never plead for mercy, and the hand that can betray is strong in war. White Heart, what is death? In death life lives and among the dead you shall find the life of the living. You see when kings and waters cannot harm."

As the Bee spoke by degrees her voice sank lower and lower until it was inaudible. Then it ceased altogether and she seemed to pass from trance to sleep. Hadden, who had been listening to her with an amused and cynical smile, now looked aloud.

"Why do you laugh, White Man?" asked Nahoon, angrily.

"I laugh at my own folly in wasting time listening to the nonsense of that lying fraud."

"It is no nonsense, White Man."

"Indeed? Then will you tell me what it means?"

"I cannot tell you what it means yet, but her words have a low and evil sound, and a leopard, and with your fate and my fate."

Hadden shrugged his shoulders, not thinking the matter worth further argument, and at that moment the white man's eyes opened, and he drew the red snake from his headdress, and coiled it about her throat, wrapped herself again in the greasy kaross.

"Are you satisfied with my wisdom, Inkoo?" she asked Hadden.

"I am satisfied that you are one of the cleverest cheats in Zululand, mother," he answered coolly. "Now, what is there to pay?"

"The Bee took no offense at this rude speech, though for a second or two the look in her eyes grew strangely like that which they saw in those of the snake when the fumes of the fire had made it angry.

"If the white lord says I am a cheat, it must be so," she answered, "for he of all men should be able to discern a cheat. I have said that I ask no fee—yes, give me a little tobacco from your pouch, and I will give you my word when the spotted cat purrs above your breast; think of it when the battle roars about you; think of it when you grasp your great reward and for the last time stand face to face with the ghost of the dead in the Home of the Dead."

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and notwithstanding the distance and the spray of the fall he could see that they were those of two men and a girl, for their shapes stood out distinctly against the fiery red of the sunset sky. One instant there were three, and the next there were two, for the girl had gone, and something dark rushing struck the top of the fall, striking the surface of the pool with a heavy thud, while a faint and piteous cry broke upon his ear.

"That is the meaning of that?" he asked, horror-struck and amazed.

"Nothing," answered the Bee with a laugh. "Do you not know, then, that this is the day of the white women, or girls who have loved without the love of the king, are brought to meet their death, and with them their accomplices. Oh! they die here this each day, and I watch them die and keep the count of the number of them," and drawing a tally-stick from the thatch of the hut, she took a knife and added a notch to the many tally-sticks which were piled up on the table with a half questioning, half warning gaze.

"Yes, yes, it is a piece of death," she muttered. "Up yonder the quick die day by day and down there—" and she pointed along the course of the river beyond the pool to where she had seen some two hundred yards from her hut—the ghosts of them have their home. Listen!"

As she spoke a sound reached their ears that seemed to swell from the dim skirts of the forest, a peculiar and unearthly sound which it is impossible to define more accurately than by saying that it seemed bestial and almost inarticulate.

"Listen," repeated the Bee, "they are merry yonder."

"Who?" asked Hadden. "The baboons?"

"No, Inkoo, the Amatungo, the ghosts that welcome her who has just become of their number."

"Ghosts," said Hadden, roughly, for he was angry at his own tremor. "I should like to see those ghosts. Do you mean to say that you heard a troop of monkeys in the bush before, mother? Come, Nahoon, let us be going while there is light to climb the cliff. Farewell!"

"Farewell, Inkoo, and doubt not that your wish will be fulfilled. Go in peace, Inkoo—to sleep in peace."

## CHAPTER III.

The prayer of the Bee notwithstanding.

Philip Hadden slept ill that night. He felt in the best of health and his conscience was not troubling him more than usual, but rest he could not. Whenever he closed his eyes his mind conjured up a picture of the king and witch doctor, so strangely named the Bee, and the sound of her evil-omened words as he had heard them that afternoon. He was neither a superstitious man, nor a fanatical one, and any supernatural beliefs that might linger in his mind were, to say the least of it, dormant. But do what he would he could not shake off a certain morbid conviction, and lest there should be some grains of truth in the prophecies of this hag. What if it were a fact that he were near his death and that the hour which he was so strongly in the breast would soon be still forever—no, he would not think of it. This gloomy place and the dreadful sight which he saw that day had wrought upon the mind until, like a cloud, it lay over his eyes, and he could scarcely stir, and that would be an opportunity. Nahoon, however, might not succumb to this temptation, therefore he trusted to luck to be rid of him, if it came to the worst he could put a bullet through him, which he considered he would be justified in doing, seeing that in reality the man was his enemy, and he could not see why he should be so tenderly treated as he had been.

"What is your will, Umunoo (white man), that you are up before the sun?"

"I am here, answered Hadden coolly. It irritated him that this savage should give him no title of any sort.

"Your pardon," said the Zulu, reading his thoughts, "but I cannot call you Inkoo, because you are not my chief, or any man's, still, the White Man offends you, we will give you a name."

"As you will," answered Hadden briefly. Accordingly they gave him a name, Inkoo, which means, as he knew, among them thereafter, but Hadden was not best pleased when he found that the naming of these self-sounding syllables was the first step toward his death. He had addressed him, only she used different words.

An hour later and they were in the swampy bush country that lay behind the encampment searching for game. Within a very little while Nahoon held up his hand, then pointing to the ground. Hadden looked, there, a deep red in the marshy soil and to all appearances not ten minutes old, was the spur of a small herd of buffalo.

"I knew that we should find game today," whispered Nahoon, "because the Bee said so."

"Curse the Bee," answered Hadden below his breath.

For a quarter of an hour or more they followed the spur through thick reeds, till suddenly Nahoon whistled very softly and touched the ground. He looked up, and there, about 300 yards away, feeding on some higher ground among a patch of mimosa trees, were the buffaloes, six of them, an old bull with a splendid mane, three young heifer, and a calf about four months old. Neither the wind nor the nature of the veils were favorable for them to stalk the game from their present position, so they made a detour of half a mile and very carefully crept toward them up the wind, slipping from trunk to trunk of the mimosa, and when they had reached their goal, they stood their stomachs under cover of the tall tumbati grass. As they were within forty yards, and a further advance seemed impracticable, for although he could not smell them, it was evident from his movements that the old bull had heard some unusual sound and was growing suspicious. Nahoon, who was now the sole guide of the party had a rifle, stood the heifer broadside on—a beautiful shot. Remembering that she would make the best head, he lifted his Martini and aiming at her immediately behind the shoulder, gently squeezed the trigger. The rifle exploded, and the heifer fell dead, shot through the heart. Strangely enough the other buffaloes

did not at once run away. On the contrary they seemed puzzled to account for the sudden noise and not being able to wind anything, lifted their heads and stared round them. The pause gave Hadden space to get in a fresh cartridge and to aim again, this time at the old bull. The bullet struck him just above the neck or shoulder, for he came to his knees, but in another second was up, and, having caught sight of the cloud of smoke, he charged straight at it. Because of this smoke, or for some other reason Hadden did not see him coming and in consequence would most certainly have been trampled or gored, had not Nahoon springing forward at the instant on the risk of his own life and dragged him down behind an ant heap. A moment more and the great beast had thundered by, taking no further notice of this smoke, or for some other reason Hadden did not see him coming and in consequence would most certainly have been trampled or gored, had not Nahoon springing forward at the instant on the risk of his own life and dragged him down behind an ant heap. A moment more and the great beast had thundered by, taking no further notice of this smoke, or for some other reason Hadden did not see him coming and in consequence would most certainly have been trampled or gored, had not Nahoon springing forward at the instant on the risk of his own life and dragged him down behind an ant heap. A moment more and the great beast had thundered by, taking no further notice of this smoke, or for some other reason Hadden did not see him coming and in consequence would most certainly have been trampled or gored, had not Nahoon springing forward at the instant on the risk of his own life and dragged him down behind an ant heap. 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