

**She and Allan**

**By**

**H. Rider Haggard**

## SHE AND ALLAN

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### NOTE BY THE LATE MR. ALLAN QUATERMAIN

My friend, into whose hands I hope that all these manuscripts of mine will pass one day, of this one I have something to say to you.

A long while ago I jotted down in it the history of the events that it details with more or less completeness. This I did for my own satisfaction. You will have noted how memory fails us as we advance in years; we recollect, with an almost painful exactitude, what we experienced and saw in our youth, but the happenings of our middle life slip away from us or become blurred, like a stretch of low-lying landscape overflowed by grey and nebulous mist. Far off the sun still seems to shine upon the plains and hills of adolescence and early manhood, as yet it shines about us in the fleeting hours of our age, that ground on which we stand to-day, but the valley between is filled

with fog. Yes, even its prominences, which symbolise the more startling events of that past, often are lost in this confusing fog.

It was an appreciation of these truths which led me to set down the following details (though of course much is omitted) of my brief intercourse with the strange and splendid creature whom I knew under the names of Ayesha, or Híya, or She-who-commands; not indeed with any view to their publication, but before I forgot them that, if I wished to do so, I might re-peruse them in the evening of old age to which I hope to attain.

Indeed, at the time the last thing I intended was that they should be given to the world even after my own death, because they, or many of them, are so unusual that I feared lest they should cause smiles and in a way cast a slur upon my memory and truthfulness. Also, as you will read, as to this matter I made a promise and I have always tried to keep my promises and to guard the secrets of others. For these reasons I proposed, in case I neglected or forgot to destroy them myself, to leave a direction that this should be done by my executors. Further, I have been careful to make no allusion whatever to them either in casual conversation or in anything else that I may have written, my desire being that this page of my life should be kept quite private, something known only to myself. Therefore, too, I never so much as hinted of them to anyone, not even to yourself to whom I have told so much.

Well, I recorded the main facts concerning this expedition and its

issues, simply and with as much exactness as I could, and laid them aside. I do not say that I never thought of them again, since amongst them were some which, together with the problems they suggested, proved to be of an unforgettable nature.

Also, whenever any of Ayesha's sayings or stories which are not preserved in these pages came back to me, as has happened from time to time, I jotted them down and put them away with this manuscript. Thus among these notes you will find a history of the city of Kôr as she told it to me, which I have omitted here. Still, many of these remarkable events did more or less fade from my mind, as the image does from an unfixed photograph, till only their outlines remained, faint if distinguishable.

To tell the truth, I was rather ashamed of the whole story in which I cut so poor a figure. On reflection it was obvious to me, although honesty had compelled me to set out all that is essential exactly as it occurred, adding nothing and taking nothing away, that I had been the victim of very gross deceit. This strange woman, whom I had met in the ruins of a place called Kôr, without any doubt had thrown a glamour over my senses and at the moment almost caused me to believe much that is quite unbelievable.

For instance, she had told me ridiculous stories as to interviews between herself and certain heathen goddesses, though it is true that, almost with her next breath, these she qualified or contradicted. Also,

she had suggested that her life had been prolonged far beyond our mortal span, for hundreds and hundreds of years, indeed; which, as Euclid says, is absurd, and had pretended to supernatural powers, which is still more absurd. Moreover, by a clever use of some hypnotic or mesmeric power, she had feigned to transport me to some place beyond the earth and in the Halls of Hades to show me what is veiled from the eyes of man, and not only me, but the savage warrior Umhlopekazi, commonly called Umslopogaas of the Axe, who, with Hans, a Hottentot, was my companion upon that adventure. There were like things equally incredible, such as her appearance, when all seemed lost, in the battle with the troll-like Rezu. To omit these, the sum of it was that I had been shamefully duped, and if anyone finds himself in that position, as most people have at one time or another in their lives, Wisdom suggests that he had better keep the circumstances to himself.

Well, so the matter stood, or rather lay in the recesses of my mind--and in the cupboard where I hide my papers--when one evening someone, as a matter of fact it was Captain Good, an individual of romantic tendencies who is fond, sometimes I think too fond, of fiction, brought a book to this house which he insisted over and over again really I must peruse.

Ascertaining that it was a novel I declined, for to tell the truth I am not fond of romance in any shape, being a person who has found the hard facts of life of sufficient interest as they stand.

Reading I admit I like, but in this matter, as in everything else, my

range is limited. I study the Bible, especially the Old Testament, both because of its sacred lessons and of the majesty of the language of its inspired translators; whereof that of Ayesha, which I render so poorly from her flowing and melodious Arabic, reminded me. For poetry I turn to Shakespeare, and, at the other end of the scale, to the Ingoldsby Legends, many of which I know almost by heart, while for current affairs I content myself with the newspapers.

For the rest I peruse anything to do with ancient Egypt that I happen to come across, because this land and its history have a queer fascination for me, that perhaps has its roots in occurrences or dreams of which this is not the place to speak. Lastly now and again I read one of the Latin or Greek authors in a translation, since I regret to say that my lack of education does not enable me to do so in the original. But for modern fiction I have no taste, although from time to time I sample it in a railway train and occasionally am amused by such excursions into the poetic and unreal.

So it came about that the more Good bothered me to read this particular romance, the more I determined that I would do nothing of the sort. Being a persistent person, however, when he went away about ten o'clock at night, he deposited it by my side, under my nose indeed, so that it might not be overlooked. Thus it came about that I could not help seeing some Egyptian hieroglyphics in an oval on the cover, also the title, and underneath it your own name, my friend, all of which excited my curiosity, especially the title, which was brief and enigmatic,

consisting indeed of one word, "She."

I took up the work and on opening it the first thing my eye fell upon was a picture of a veiled woman, the sight of which made my heart stand still, so painfully did it remind me of a certain veiled woman whom once it had been my fortune to meet. Glancing from it to the printed page one word seemed to leap at me. It was Kôr! Now of veiled women there are plenty in the world, but were there also two Kôrs?

Then I turned to the beginning and began to read. This happened in the autumn when the sun does not rise till about six, but it was broad daylight before I ceased from reading, or rather rushing through that book.

Oh! what was I to make of it? For here in its pages (to say nothing of old Billali, who, by the way lied, probably to order, when he told Mr. Holly that no white man had visited his country for many generations, and those gloomy, man-eating Amahagger scoundrels) once again I found myself face to face with She-who-commands, now rendered as She-who-must-be-obeyed, which means much the same thing--in her case at least; yes, with Ayesha the lovely, the mystic, the changeful and the imperious.

Moreover the history filled up many gaps in my own limited experiences of that enigmatical being who was half divine (though, I think, rather wicked or at any rate unmoral in her way) and yet all woman. It is true

that it showed her in lights very different from and higher than those in which she had presented herself to me. Yet the substratum of her character was the same, or rather of her characters, for of these she seemed to have several in a single body, being, as she said of herself to me, "not One but Many and not Here but Everywhere."

Further, I found the story of Kallikrates, which I had set down as a mere falsehood invented for my bewilderment, expanded and explained. Or rather not explained, since, perhaps that she might deceive, to me she had spoken of this murdered Kallikrates without enthusiasm, as a handsome person to whom, because of an indiscretion of her youth, she was bound by destiny and whose return--somewhat to her sorrow--she must wait. At least she did so at first, though in the end when she bared her heart at the moment of our farewell, she vowed she loved him only and was "appointed" to him "by a divine decree."

Also I found other things of which I knew nothing, such as the Fire of Life with its fatal gift of indefinite existence, although I remember that like the giant Rezu whom Umslopogaas defeated, she did talk of a "Cup of Life" of which she had drunk, that might have been offered to my lips, had I been politic, bowed the knee and shown more faith in her and her supernatural pretensions.

Lastly I saw the story of her end, and as I read it I wept, yes, I confess I wept, although I feel sure that she will return again. Now I understood why she had quailed and even seemed to shrivel when, in my



last interview with her, stung beyond endurance by her witcheries and sarcasms, I had suggested that even for her with all her powers, Fate might reserve one of its shrewdest blows. Some prescience had told her that if the words seemed random, Truth spoke through my lips, although, and this was the worst of it, she did not know what weapon would deal the stroke or when and where it was doomed to fall.

I was amazed, I was overcome, but as I closed that book I made up my mind, first that I would continue to preserve absolute silence as to Ayesha and my dealings with her, as, during my life, I was bound by oath to do, and secondly that I would not cause my manuscript to be destroyed. I did not feel that I had any right to do so in view of what already had been published to the world. There let it lie to appear one day, or not to appear, as might be fated. Meanwhile my lips were sealed. I would give Good back his book without comment and--buy another copy!

One more word. It is clear that I did not touch more than the fringe of the real Ayesha. In a thousand ways she bewitched and deceived me so that I never plumbed her nature's depths. Perhaps this was my own fault because from the first I shewed a lack of faith in her and she wished to pay me back in her own fashion, or perhaps she had other private reasons for her secrecy. Certainly the character she discovered to me differed in many ways from that which she revealed to Mr. Holly and to Leo Vincey, or Kallikrates, whom, it seems, once she slew in her jealousy and rage.

She told me as much as she thought it fit that I should know, and no more!

Allan Quatermain.

The Grange, Yorkshire.

## SHE AND ALLAN

### CHAPTER I

#### THE TALISMAN

I believe it was the old Egyptians, a very wise people, probably indeed much wiser than we know, for in the leisure of their ample centuries they had time to think out things, who declared that each individual personality is made up of six or seven different elements, although the Bible only allows us three, namely, body, soul, and spirit. The body that the man or woman wore, if I understand their theory aright which perhaps I, an ignorant person, do not, was but a kind of sack or fleshly covering containing these different principles. Or mayhap it did not contain them all, but was simply a house as it were, in which they lived from time to time and seldom all together, although one or more of them was present continually, as though to keep the place warmed and aired.

This is but a casual illustrative suggestion, for what right have I, Allan Quatermain, out of my little reading and probably erroneous deductions, to form any judgment as to the theories of the old Egyptians? Still these, as I understand them, suffice to furnish me with the text that man is not one, but many, in which connection it may be remembered that often in Scripture he is spoken of as being the home of

many demons, seven, I think. Also, to come to another far-off example, the Zulus talk of their witch-doctors as being inhabited by "a multitude of spirits."

Anyhow of one thing I am quite sure, we are not always the same. Different personalities actuate us at different times. In one hour passion of this sort or the other is our lord; in another we are reason itself. In one hour we follow the basest appetites; in another we hate them and the spirit arising through our mortal murk shines within or above us like a star. In one hour our desire is to kill and spare not; in another we are filled with the holiest compassion even towards an insect or a snake, and are ready to forgive like a god. Everything rules us in turn, to such an extent indeed, that sometimes one begins to wonder whether we really rule anything.

Now the reason of all this homily is that I, Allan, the most practical and unimaginative of persons, just a homely, half-educated hunter and trader who chances to have seen a good deal of the particular little world in which his lot was cast, at one period of my life became the victim of spiritual longings.

I am a man who has suffered great bereavements in my time such as have seared my soul, since, perhaps because of my rather primitive and simple nature, my affections are very strong. By day or night I can never forget those whom I have loved and whom I believe to have loved me.

For you know, in our vanity some of us are apt to hold that certain people with whom we have been intimate upon the earth, really did care for us and, in our still greater vanity--or should it be called madness?--to imagine that they still care for us after they have left the earth and entered on some new state of society and surroundings which, if they exist, inferentially are much more congenial than any they can have experienced here. At times, however, cold doubts strike us as to this matter, of which we long to know the truth. Also behind looms a still blacker doubt, namely whether they live at all.

For some years of my lonely existence these problems haunted me day by day, till at length I desired above everything on earth to lay them at rest in one way or another. Once, at Durban, I met a man who was a spiritualist to whom I confided a little of my perplexities. He laughed at me and said that they could be settled with the greatest ease. All I had to do was to visit a certain local medium who for a fee of one guinea would tell me everything I wanted to know. Although I rather grudged the guinea, being more than usually hard up at the time, I called upon this person, but over the results of that visit, or rather the lack of them, I draw a veil.

My queer and perhaps unwholesome longing, however, remained with me and would not be abated. I consulted a clergyman of my acquaintance, a good and spiritually-minded man, but he could only shrug his shoulders and refer me to the Bible, saying, quite rightly I doubt not, that with what it reveals I ought to be contented. Then I read certain mystical

books which were recommended to me. These were full of fine words, undiscoverable in a pocket dictionary, but really took me no forwarder, since in them I found nothing that I could not have invented myself, although while I was actually studying them, they seemed to convince me. I even tackled Swedenborg, or rather samples of him, for he is very copious, but without satisfactory results. [Ha!--JB]

Then I gave up the business.

Some months later I was in Zululand and being near the Black Kloof where he dwelt, I paid a visit to my acquaintance of whom I have written elsewhere, the wonderful and ancient dwarf, Zikali, known as "The-Thing-that-should-never-have-been-born," also more universally among the Zulus as "Opener-of-Roads." When we had talked of many things connected with the state of Zululand and its politics, I rose to leave for my waggon, since I never cared for sleeping in the Black Kloof if it could be avoided.

"Is there nothing else that you want to ask me, Macumazahn?" asked the old dwarf, tossing back his long hair and looking at--I had almost written through--me.

I shook my head.

"That is strange, Macumazahn, for I seem to see something written on your mind--something to do with spirits."

Then I remembered all the problems that had been troubling me, although in truth I had never thought of propounding them to Zikali.

"Ah! it comes back, does it?" he exclaimed, reading my thought. "Out with it, then, Macumazahn, while I am in a mood to answer, and before I grow tired, for you are an old friend of mine and will so remain till the end, many years hence, and if I can serve you, I will."

I filled my pipe and sat down again upon the stool of carved red-wood which had been brought for me.

"You are named 'Opener-of-Roads,' are you not, Zikali?" I said.

"Yes, the Zulus have always called me that, since before the days of Chaka. But what of names, which often enough mean nothing at all?"

"Only that I want to open a road, Zikali, that which runs across the River of Death."

"Oho!" he laughed, "it is very easy," and snatching up a little assegai that lay beside him, he proffered it to me, adding, "Be brave now and fall on that. Then before I have counted sixty the road will be wide open, but whether you will see anything on it I cannot tell you."

Again I shook my head and answered,

"It is against our law. Also while I still live I desire to know whether I shall meet certain others on that road after my time has come to cross the River. Perhaps you who deal with spirits, can prove the matter to me, which no one else seems able to do."

"Oho!" laughed Zikali again. "What do my ears hear? Am I, the poor Zulu cheat, as you will remember once you called me, Macumazahn, asked to show that which is hidden from all the wisdom of the great White People?"

"The question is," I answered with irritation, "not what you are asked to do, but what you can do."

"That I do not know yet, Macumazahn. Whose spirits do you desire to see? If that of a woman called Mameena is one of them, I think that perhaps I whom she loved----"[\*]

[\*] For the history of Mameena see the book called "Child of Storm."--Editor.

"She is not one of them, Zikali. Moreover, if she loved you, you paid back her love with death."



"Which perhaps was the kindest thing I could do, Macumazahn, for reasons that you may be able to guess, and others with which I will not trouble you. But if not hers, whose? Let me look, let me look! Why, there seems to be two of them, head-wives, I mean, and I thought that white men only took one wife. Also a multitude of others; their faces float up in the water of your mind. An old man with grey hair, little children, perhaps they were brothers and sisters, and some who may be friends. Also very clear indeed that Mameena whom you do not wish to see. Well, Macumazahn, this is unfortunate, since she is the only one whom I can show you, or rather put you in the way of finding. Unless indeed there are other Kaffir women----"

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean, Macumazahn, that only black feet travel on the road which I can open; over those in which ran white blood I have no power."

"Then it is finished," I said, rising again and taking a step or two towards the gate.

"Come back and sit down, Macumazahn. I did not say so. Am I the only ruler of magic in Africa, which I am told is a big country?"

I came back and sat down, for my curiosity, a great failing with me, was excited.

"Thank you, Zikali," I said, "but I will have no dealings with more of your witch-doctors."

"No, no, because you are afraid of them; quite without reason, Macumazahn, seeing that they are all cheats except myself. I am the last child of wisdom, the rest are stuffed with lies, as Chaka found out when he killed every one of them whom he could catch. But perhaps there might be a white doctor who would have rule over white spirits."

"If you mean missionaries----" I began hastily.

"No, Macumazahn, I do not mean your praying men who are cast in one mould and measured with one rule, and say what they are taught to say, not thinking for themselves."

"Some of them think, Zikali."

"Yes, and then the others fall on them with big sticks. The real priest is he to whom the Spirit comes, not he who feeds upon its wrappings, and speaks through a mask carved by his father's fathers. I am a priest like that, which is why all my fellowship have hated me."

"If so, you have paid back their hate, Zikali, but cease to cast round the lion, like a timid hound, and tell me what you mean. Of whom do you speak?"

"That is the trouble, Macumazahn. I do not know. This lion, or rather lioness, lies hid in the caves of a very distant mountain and I have never seen her--in the flesh."

"Then how can you talk of what you have never seen?"

"In the same way, Macumazahn, that your priests talk of what they have never seen, because they, or a few of them, have knowledge of it. I will tell you a secret. All seers who live at the same time, if they are great, commune with each other because they are akin and their spirits meet in sleep or dreams. Therefore I know of a mistress of our craft, a very lioness among jackals, who for thousands of years has lain sleeping in the northern caves and, humble though I am, she knows of me."

"Quite so," I said, yawning, "but perhaps, Zikali, you will come to the point of the spear. What of her? How is she named, and if she exists will she help me?"

"I will answer your question backwards, Macumazahn. I think that she will help you if you help her, in what way I do not know, because although witch-doctors sometimes work without pay, as I am doing now, Macumazahn, witch-doctoresses never do. As for her name, the only one that she has among our company is 'Queen,' because she is the first of all of them and the most beautiful among women. For the rest I can tell you nothing, except that she has always been and I suppose, in this shape or in that, will always be while the world lasts, because she has

found the secret of life unending."

"You mean that she is immortal, Zikali," I answered with a smile.

"I do not say that, Macumazahn, because my little mind cannot shape the thought of immortality. But when I was a babe, which is far ago, she had lived so long that scarce would she knew the difference between then and now, and already in her breast was all wisdom gathered. I know it, because although, as I have said, we have never seen each other, at times we walk together in our sleep, for thus she shares her loneliness, and I think, though this may be but a dream, that last night she told me to send you on to her to seek an answer to certain questions which you would put to me to-day. Also to me she seemed to desire that you should do her a service; I know not what service."

Now I grew angry and asked,

"Why does it please you to fool me, Zikali, with such talk as this? If there is any truth in it, show me where the woman called Queen lives and how I am to come to her."

The old wizard took up the little assegai which he had offered to me and with its blade raked our ashes from the fire that always burnt in front of him. While he did so, he talked to me, as I thought in a random fashion, perhaps to distract my attention, of a certain white man whom he said I should meet upon my journey and of his affairs, also of other

matters, none of which interested me much at the time. These ashes he patted down flat and then on them drew a map with the point of his spear, making grooves for streams, certain marks for bush and forest, wavy lines for water and swamps and little heaps for hills.

When he had finished it all he bade me come round the fire and study the picture across which by an after-thought he drew a wandering furrow with the edge of the assegai to represent a river, and gathered the ashes in a lump at the northern end to signify a large mountain.

"Look at it well, Macumazahn," he said, "and forget nothing, since if you make this journey and forget, you die. Nay, no need to copy it in that book of yours, for see, I will stamp it on your mind."

Then suddenly he gathered up the warm ashes in a double handful and threw them into my face, muttering something as he did so and adding aloud,

"There, now you will remember."

"Certainly I shall," I answered, coughing, "and I beg that you will not play such a joke upon me again."

As a matter of fact, whatever may have been the reason, I never forgot any detail of that extremely intricate map.

"That big river must be the Zambesi," I stuttered, "and even then the mountain of your Queen, if it be her mountain, is far away, and how can I come there alone?"

"I don't know, Macumazahn, though perhaps you might do so in company. At least I believe that in the old days people used to travel to the place, since I have heard a great city stood there once which was the heart of a mighty empire."

Now I pricked up my ears, for though I believed nothing of Zikali's story of a wonderful Queen, I was always intensely interested in past civilisations and their relics. Also I knew that the old wizard's knowledge was extensive and peculiar, however he came by it, and I did not think that he would lie to me in this matter. Indeed to tell the truth, then and there I made up my mind that if it were in any way possible, I would attempt this journey.

"How did people travel to the city, Zikali?"

"By sea, I suppose, Macumazahn, but I think that you will be wise not to try that road, since I believe that on the sea side the marshes are now impassable and you will be safer on your feet."

"You want me to go on this adventure, Zikali. Why? I know you never do anything without motive."

"Oho! Macumazah, you are clever and see deeper into the trunk of a tree than most. Yes, I want you to go for three reasons. First, that you may satisfy your soul on certain matters and I would help you to do so. Secondly, because I want to satisfy mine, and thirdly, because I know that you will come back safe to be a prop to me in things that will happen in days unborn. Otherwise I would have told you nothing of this story, since it is necessary to me that you should remain living beneath the sun."

"Have done, Zikali. What is it that you desire?"

"Oh! a great deal that I shall get, but chiefly two things, so with the rest I will not trouble you. First I desire to know to know whether these dreams of mine of a wonderful white witch-doctoress, or witch, and of my converse with her are indeed more than dreams. Next I would learn whether certain plots of mine at which I have worked for years, will succeed."

"What plots, Zikali, and how can my taking a distant journey tell you anything about them?"

"You know them well enough, Macumazah; they have to do with the overthrow of a Royal House that has worked me bitter wrong. As to how your journey can help me, why, thus. You shall promise to me to ask of this Queen whether Zikali, Opener-of-Roads, shall triumph or be overthrown in that on which he has set his heart."

"As you seem to know this witch so well, why do you not ask her yourself, Zikali?"

"To ask is one thing, Macumazahn. To get an answer is another. I have asked in the watches of the night, and the reply was, 'Come hither and perchance I will tell you.' 'Queen,' I said, 'how can I come save in the spirit, who am an ancient and a crippled dwarf scarcely able to stand upon my feet?'

"Then send a messenger, Wizard, and be sure that he is white, for of black savages I have seen more than enough. Let him bear a token also that he comes from you and tell me of it in your sleep. Moreover let that token be something of power which will protect him on the journey.'

"Such is the answer that comes to me in my dreams, Macumazahn."

"Well, what token will you give me, Zikali?"

He groped about in his robe and produced a piece of ivory of the size of a large chessman, that had a hole in it, through which ran a plaited cord of the stiff hairs from an elephant's tail. On this article, which was of a rusty brown colour, he breathed, then having whispered to it for a while, handed it to me.

I took the talisman, for such I guessed it to be, idly enough, held it



to the light to examine it, and started back so violently that almost I let it fall. I do not quite know why I started, but I think it was because some influence seemed to leap from it to me. Zikali started also and cried out,

"Have a care, Macumazah. Am I young that I can bear being dashed to the ground?"

"What do you mean?" I asked, still staring at the thing which I perceived to be a most wonderfully fashioned likeness of the old dwarf himself as he appeared before me crouched upon the ground. There were the deepset eyes, the great head, the toad-like shape, the long hair, all.

"It is a clever carving, is it not, Macumazah? I am skilled in that art, you know, and therefore can judge of carving."

"Yes, I know," I answered, bethinking me of another statuette of his which he had given to me on the morrow of the death of her from whom it was modelled. "But what of the thing?"

"Macumazah, it has come down to me through the ages. As you may have heard, all great doctors when they die pass on their wisdom and something of their knowledge to another doctor of spirits who is still living on the earth, that nothing may be lost, or as little as possible. Also I have learned that to such likenesses as these may be given the

strength of him or her from whom they were shaped."

Now I bethought me of the old Egyptians and their Ka statues of which I had read, and that these statues, magically charmed and set in the tombs of the departed, were supposed to be inhabited everlastingly by the Doubles of the dead endued with more power even than ever these possessed in life. But of this I said nothing to Zikali, thinking that it would take too much explanation, though I wondered very much how he had come by the same idea.

"When that ivory is hung over your heart, Macumazahn, where you must always wear it, learn that with it goes the strength of Zikali; the thought that would have been his thought and the wisdom that is his wisdom, will be your companions, as much as though he walked at your side and could instruct you in every peril. Moreover north and south and east and west this image is known to men who, when they see it, will bow down and obey, opening a road to him who wears the medicine of the Opener-of-Roads."

"Indeed," I said, smiling, "and what is this colour on the ivory?"

"I forget, Macumazahn, who have had it a great number of years, ever since it descended to me from a forefather of mine, who was fashioned in the same mould as I am. It looks like blood, does it not? It is a pity that Mameena is not still alive, since she whose memory was so excellent might have been able to tell you," and as he spoke, with a motion that

was at once sure and swift, he threw the loop of elephant hair over my head.

Hastily I changed the subject, feeling that after his wont this old wizard, the most terrible man whom ever I knew, who had been so much concerned with the tragic death of Mameena, was stabbing at me in some hidden fashion.

"You tell me to go on this journey," I said, "and not alone. Yet for companion you give me only an ugly piece of ivory shaped as no man ever was," here I got one back at Zikali, "and from the look of it, steeped in blood, which ivory, if I had my way, I would throw into the camp fire. Who, then, am I to take with me?"

"Don't do that, Macumazahn--I mean throw the ivory into the fire--since I have no wish to burn before my time, and if you do, you who have worn it might burn with me. At least certainly you would die with the magic thing and go to acquire knowledge more quickly than you desire. No, no, and do not try to take it off your neck, or rather try if you will."

I did try, but something seemed to prevent me from accomplishing my purpose of giving the carving back to Zikali as I wished to do. First my pipe got in the way of my hand, then the elephant hairs caught in the collar of my coat; then a pang of rheumatism to which I was accustomed from an old lion-bite, developed of a sudden in my arm, and lastly I grew tired of bothering about the thing.

Zikali, who had been watching my movements, burst out into one of his terrible laughs that seemed to fill the whole kloof and to re-echo from its rocky walls. It died away and he went on, without further reference to the talisman or image.

"You asked whom you were to take with you, Macumazahn. Well, as to this I must make inquiry of those who know. Man, my medicines!"

From the shadows in the hut behind darted out a tall figure carrying a great spear in one hand and in the other a catskin bag which with a salute he laid down at the feet of his master. This salute, by the way, was that of a Zulu word which means "Lord" or "Home" of Ghosts.

Zikali groped in the bag and produced from it certain knuckle-bones.

"A common method," he muttered, "such as every vulgar wizard uses, but one that is quick and, as the matter concerned is small, will serve my turn. Let us see now, whom you shall take with you, Macumazahn."

Then he breathed upon the bones, shook them up in his thin hands and with a quick turn of the wrist, threw them into the air. After this he studied them carefully, where they lay among the ashes which he had raked out of the fire, those that he had used for the making of his map.

"Do you know a man named Umslopogaas, Macumazahn, the chief of a tribe

that is called The People of the Axe, whose titles of praise are Bulalio or the Slaughterer, and Woodpecker, the latter from the way he handles his ancient axe? He is a savage fellow, but one of high blood and higher courage, a great captain in his way, though he will never come to anything, save a glorious death--in your company, I think, Macumazahn." (Here he studied the bones again for a while.) "Yes, I am sure, in your company, though not upon this journey."

"I have heard of him," I answered cautiously. "It is said in the land that he is a son of Chaka, the great king of the Zulus."

"Is it, Macumazahn? And is it said also that he was the slayer of Chaka's brother, Dingaan, also the lover of the fairest woman that the Zulus have ever seen, who was called Nada the Lily? Unless indeed a certain Mameena, who, I seem to remember, was a friend of yours, may have been even more beautiful?"

"I know nothing of Nada the Lily," I answered.

"No, no, Mameena, 'the Waiting Wind,' has blown over her fame, so why should you know of one who has been dead a long while? Why also, Macumazahn, do you always bring women into every business? I begin to believe that although you are so strict in a white man's fashion, you must be too fond of them, a weakness which makes for ruin to any man. Well, now, I think that this wolf-man, this axe-man, this warrior, Umslopogaas should be a good fellow to you on your journey to visit the

white witch, Queen--another woman by the way, Macumazahn, and therefore one of whom you should be careful. Oh! yes, he will come with you--because of a man called Lousta and a woman named Monazi, a wife of his who hates him and does--not hate Lousta. I am almost sure that he will come with you, so do not stop to ask questions about him."

"Is there anyone else?" I inquired.

Zikali glanced at the bones again, poking them about in the ashes with his toe, then replied with a yawn,

"You seem to have a little yellow man in your service, a clever snake who knows how to creep through grass, and when to strike and when to lie hidden. I should take him too, if I were you."

"You know well that I have such a man, Zikali, a Hottentot named Hans, clever in his way but drunken, very faithful too, since he loved my father before me. He is cooking my supper in the waggon now. Are there to be any others?"

"No, I think you three will be enough, with a guard of soldiers from the People of the Axe, for you will meet with fighting and a ghost or two. Umslopogaas has always one at his elbow named Nada, and perhaps you have several. For instance, there was a certain Mameena whom I always seem to feel about me when you are near, Macumazahn.

"Why, the wind is rising again, which is odd on so still an evening. Listen to how it wails, yes, and stirs your hair, though mine hangs straight enough. But why do I talk of ghosts, seeing that you travel to seek other ghosts, white ghosts, beyond my ken, who can only deal with those who were black?

"Good-night, Macumazahn, good-night. When you return from visiting the white Queen, that Great One beneath those feet I, Zikali, who am also great in my way, am but a grain of dust, come and tell me her answer to my question.

"Meanwhile, be careful always to wear that pretty little image which I have given you, as a young lover sometimes wears a lock of hair cut from the head of some fool-girl that he thinks is fond of him. It will bring you safety and luck, Macumazahn, which, for the most part, is more than the lock of hair does to the lover. Oh! it is a strange world, full of jest to those who can see the strings that work it. I am one of them, and perhaps, Macumazahn, you are another, or will be before all is done--or begun.

"Good-night, and good fortune to you on your journeyings, and, Macumazahn, although you are so fond of women, be careful not to fall in love with that white Queen, because it would make others jealous; I mean some who you have lost sight of for a while, also I think that being under a curse of her own, she is not one whom you can put into your sack. Oho! Oho-ho! Slave, bring me my blanket, it grows cold, and my

medicine also, that which protects me from the ghosts, who are thick to-night. Macumazahn brings them, I think. Oho-ho!"

I turned to depart but when I had gone a little way Zikali called me back again and said, speaking very low,

"When you meet this Umslopogaas, as you will meet him, he who is called the Woodpecker and the Slaughterer, say these words to him,

"A bat has been twittering round the hut of the Opener-of-Roads, and to his ears it squeaked the name of a certain Lousta and the name of a woman called Monazi. Also it twittered another greater name that may not be uttered, that of an elephant who shakes the earth, and said that this elephant sniffs the air with his trunk and grows angry, and sharpens his tusks to dig a certain Woodpecker out of his hole in a tree that grows near the Witch Mountain. Say, too, that the Opener-of-Roads thinks that this Woodpecker would be wise to fly north for a while in the company of one who watches by night, lest harm should come to a bird that pecks at the feet of the great and chatters of it in his nest."

Then Zikali waved his hand and I went, wondering into what plot I had stumbled.