

**THE NAULAHKA: A STORY
OF WEST AND EAST. IN
TWO VOLUMES. VOL. II**

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The Naulahka: a story of West and East. In two volumes. Vol. II by Rudyard Kipling & Wolcott Balestier

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RUDYARD KIPLING & WOLCOTT BALESTIER

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BY
RUDYARD KIPLING
AND
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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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XIII

Beat off in our last fight were we ?
The greater need to seek the sea ;
For Fortune changeth as the moon
To caravel and picaroon.
Then, Eastward Ho ! or Westward Ho !
Whichever wind may meetest blow.
Our quarry sails on either sea,
Fat prey for such bold lads as we.
And every sun-dried buccaneer
Must hand and reef and watch and steer,
And bear great wrath of sea and sky
Before the plate-ships wallow by.
Now, as our tall bow takes the foam,
Let no man turn his heart to home,
Save to desire land the more,
And larger warehouse for his store,
When treasure won from Santos Bay
Shall make our sea-washed village gay.

Blackbeard.

FIBBY and Tarvin ate their breakfast together, half an hour later, in the blotched shadows of the scrub below the wall. The horse buried his nose into his provender, and said nothing.

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The man was equally silent. Once or twice he rose to his feet, scanned the irregular line of wall and bastion, and shook his head. He had no desire to return there. As the sun grew fiercer he found a resting-place in the heart of a circle of thorn, tucked the saddle under his head, and lay down to sleep. Fibby, rolling luxuriously, followed his master's example. The two took their rest while the air quivered with heat and the hum of insects, and the browsing goats clicked and pattered through the water-channels.

The shadow of the Tower of Glory lengthened, fell across the walls, and ran far across the plain; the kites began to drop from the sky by twos and threes; and naked children, calling one to another, collected the goats and drove them to the smoky villages before Tarvin roused himself for the homeward journey.

He halted Fibby once for a last look at Gunnaur as they reached the rising ground. The sunlight had left the walls, and they ran black against the misty levels and the turquoise-blue of the twilight. Fires twinkled from a score of huts about the base of the city, but along the ridge of the desolation itself there was no light.

'Mum's the word, Fibby,' said Tarvin, picking up his reins. 'We don't think well of this picnic, and we won't mention it at Rhatore.'

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He chirruped, and Fibby went home as swiftly as he could lay hoof to stone, only once suggesting refreshment. Tarvin said nothing till the end of the long ride, when he heaved a deep sigh of relief as he dismounted in the fresh sunlight of the morning.

Sitting in his room, it seemed to him a waste of a most precious opportunity that he had not manufactured a torch in Gunnaur and thoroughly explored the passage. But the memory of the green eyes and the smell of musk came back to him, and he shivered. The thing was not to be done. Never again, for any consideration, under the wholesome light of the sun, would he, who feared nothing, set foot in the Cow's Mouth.

It was his pride that he knew when he had had enough. He had had enough of the Cow's Mouth; and the only thing for which he still wished in connection with it was to express his mind about it to the Maharajah. Unhappily, this was impossible. That idle monarch, who, he now saw plainly, had sent him there either in a mood of luxurious sportiveness or to throw him off the scent of the necklace, remained the only man from whom he could look for final victory. It was not to the Maharajah that he could afford to say all that he thought.

Fortunately the Maharajah was too much en-

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tertaind by the work which Tarvin immediately instituted on the Amet River to inquire particularly whether his young friend had sought the Naulahka at the Gye Mukh. Tarvin had sought an audience with the King the morning after his return from that black spot, and, with the face of a man who had never known fear and who lacks the measure of disappointments, gaily demanded the fulfilment of the King's promise. Having failed in one direction on a large scale, he laid the first brick on the walls of a new structure without delay, as the people of Topaz had begun to build their town anew the morning after the fire. His experience at the Gye Mukh only sharpened his determination, adding to it a grim willingness to get even with the man who had sent him there.

The Maharajah, who felt in especial need of amusement that morning, was very ready to make good his promise, and ordered that the long man who played pachisi should be granted all the men he could use. With the energy of disgust, and with a hot memory of the least assured and comfortable moments of his life burning in his breast, Tarvin flung himself on the turning of the river and the building of his dam. It was necessary, it seemed, in the land upon which he had fallen, to raise a dust to hide one's ends. He would raise a dust, and it should be on the same

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scale as the catastrophe which he had just encountered—thorough, business-like, uncompromising.

He raised it, in fact, in a stupendous cloud. Since the State was founded no one had seen anything like it. The Maharajah lent him all the convict labour of his jails, and Tarvin marched the little host of leg-ironed *kaidies* into camp at a point five miles beyond the city walls, and solemnly drew up his plans for the futile damming of the barren Amet. His early training as a civil engineer helped him to lay out a reasonable plan of operations, and to give a semblance of reality to his work. His notion was to back up the river by means of a dam at a point where it swept around a long curve, and to send it straight across the plain by excavating a deep bed for it. When this was completed the present bed of the river would lie bare for several miles, and if there were any gold there, as Tarvin said to himself, then would be the time to pick it up. Meanwhile his operations vastly entertained the King, who rode out every morning and watched him directing his small army for an hour or more. The marchings and counter-marchings of the mob of convicts with baskets, hoes, shovels, and pannier-laden donkeys, the prodigal blasting of rocks, and the general bustle and confusion, drew the applause of the King, for whom Tarvin always reserved his best