



*King Solomon's  
Mines*

F.B.S.



# *King Solomon's Mines*

Dramatization of Henry Rider Haggard's first and most famous novel

by Christian Lanciai (2014)

*The Characters:*

Sir Henry Curtis  
Allan Quatermain  
Captain John Good  
Umbopa, alias Ignosi  
Infadoos, his uncle  
Twala, chief of the Kukuanas  
Scragga, his son  
Gagool, witch  
Foulata  
Neville

Dashing Kukuanan warriors in great numbers

The action is somewhere in Africa in the 1870s.



Act I scene 1.

*Henry* What are you saying?

*Allan* Pardon me, but I generally try to stick to the truth, no matter how weird it sounds.

*Henry* What an amazing piece of good luck!

*Allan* How so? My dear Sir Henry, how on earth have I managed to add to your luck without having had the slightest intention in that direction?

*Henry* Neville was my brother!

*Allan* I'll be damned! But now as you say it I see why I recognized you. You reminded me of your brother, who was dark though instead of blond.

*Good* Tell us more about it, my good Allan. Your stories are fascinating, whether they are true or not.

*Allan* They are always true, and the more so, the more fantastic they sound.

*Henry* I also wish to hear more about my brother. Tell me more!

*Allan* There is not much more to tell. He left and didn't come back.

*Henry* He lives. I know it. I would give anything to find him again. What about organizing an expedition? I'll pay.

*Good* A regular expedition to the inner parts of the country at the risk of your life?

*Henry* Why not?

*Allan* Would you really invite us two to join you?

*Henry* Why not?

*Good* I would do anything to get out on some adventure again. Anything is better than sitting at home getting bored. Any work is better than no work. I have been dismissed from my vocation but refuse any dismissal from life.

*Allan* I am 63 years old and partially handicapped. I am afraid I would be something of an annoying burden.

*Henry* On the contrary. You know everything that is knowable about that country over there. You are experienced like none of us are. Your knowledge and maturity carries the greatest weight of all. We will not go without you.

*Allan* And you are not just temporarily enthusiastic after our good communion and excellent whisky, so that you will have second thoughts tomorrow?

*Henry* I have laid my word, and it lies. I never take back a given word, unless you kill me before it has been fulfilled.

*Allan* Then I see no other possibility than that I am obliged to follow you.

*Henry* Good!

*Good* Cheers to that! The three musqueteers! One for all and all for one!

*Henry* It must be admitted though that the whisky helped me come to a decision, but it was your stories that set the wheels rolling.

*Good* Tell me more now, Mr. Quatermain. What more do you know about it?

*Allan* Too much. Your brother Neville was not the only one.

*Henry* Let's hear the details about Neville once more.

*Allan* He was lying for some weeks in a camp next to mine to give his oxen some rest before he went on his quest. A few months ago I had the letter from the lawyer's office that advertised him as missing. I could do no more than tell them what I knew.

*Henry* Yes, your letter finally ended up with me. I was the one to engage the lawyer. I will tell you exactly how it happened. You report that he left in the beginning of May with a coach, a scout and a certain hunter called Jim. He headed for Inyati at the very end of the map, to there sell his wagon and go on by foot, which he seems to have done, since you told me you had seen the wagon an entire year later with a Portuguese merchant, who said he had bought it from whatever was his name and who probably had continued further into the country with his native on a hunting expedition. Now I wonder if you happen to know anything about what my dear brother Neville had in sight?

*Allan* I have no idea, but there were rumours.

*Henry* He was my only brother and younger than me. Until five weeks ago we were never separated for more than a month. But then we departed because of an argument, which I now bitterly regret.

*Good* Sir Henry has hardly slept since then.

*Henry* Shortly after our division our father left us without a will. According to law, all property then goes to the oldest son, which left me everything and him nothing. Because of our division I did not make any contact with him to make it up to him, which I now regret, since I was hoping for him to offer his hand for a reconciliation. He didn't but just vanished.

*Allan* You can rely on my discretion.

*Henry* Of course. Or else I would not initiate you in our family secrets. He went here hoping to make a fortune as a compensation for his lack of education and position. Three years passed. I wrote several letters to him without answers, and they probably never reached him. Finally I came here myself to investigate his destiny and if possible to appease my disturbing conscience by compensating him. I tell you all this to put you into the picture. I will never give up until I have found him dead or alive. Since I lacked any closer experience of this mysterious country, captain Good was kind enough to follow me, and here we are now. You really brought me great joy by the information that he was still alive half a year ago, which definitely put me on the ship here with great and bright expectations. Tell me now what you know about that country and those adventurers who ventured there with as secret purposes as my brother. Was it all only about diamonds?

*Allan* I haven't dared to mention a word about your brother's real purposes to any living person, especially not after his disappearance. It was king Solomon's mines.

*Good* Don't tell me he had got Ali Baba on his brains.

*Allan* It was more serious than that. Several others disappeared in that direction on the same strange hunt for maybe just a myth.

*Henry* And they are reported to actually exist somewhere there beyond nowhere?

*Allan* Exactly, according to certain sources.

*Good* Tell me more! I love adventure stories!

*Allan* You must promise not to spread the story any further.

*Good* Of course.

*Allan* There was a man called Evans. It was thirty years ago I met him out there in the land of nowhere. He vanished without a trace the year after, but he had time to tell me that far into the country he had found an ancient town in ruins which he thought was the Ophir of the Bible. "Why do you think so?" I asked him. "Because up there in the northwest are the Suliman Mountains. That's where Solomon had his diamond mines."

I was young in those days but did still not just accept anything. I asked him to present further evidence or support for his fantastic information. "I heard it all from an old lady up there. She told me about the people who lived there, who were taller than others and prominent warriors with mighty sorcerers who had learned their black magic from white strangers with blond hair and blue eyes at a time when all people were black, but this tall and mighty people brought forth clear stones from there, the roads to which area they jealously guarded.

*Henry* That was thirty years ago, and no one followed Evans in his tracks?

*Allan* In those days the diamond fields were unknown, so I discarded Evans' tall stories as unreliable yarns, but twenty years later I lay wounded in fever in a tent in the Manica country. There a Portuguese visited me. He was alone except for a half blind guide, but with this picturesque colleague, who wasn't good for very much else than to eventually make his way with great trouble with a stick, he promised to return as the wealthiest man in the world, if he would return at all.

*Henry* Well, did he return?

*Allan* Yes, but more like a skeleton than like a man. There wasn't much left of him. I had to carry him to my tent, and he didn't weigh much more than a child, perhaps barely 30 pounds. He was dying. It was inevitable. But he trusted me with a map.

*Henry* Don't tell me it was a treasure map.

*Allan* Yes, but not just any treasure map. *It was about 300 years old.*

*Good* Tell us more, my good man. And have some more whisky.

*Allan* Not even whisky could save the dying skeleton, for there was only skin and bones left of him, and the skin was so thin like paper, that the bones threatened to stick out of it.

*Henry* Well, what sort of a map was it? Could it be evaluated at all if it was 300 years old?

*Allan* There was a letter also with instructions, and the letter was equally ancient. His name was José Silvestre, and these documents had apparently passed through the family for three hundred years, for the author's name of the letter was José da Silvestra, who apparently had perished in difficult ordeals in the desert over there, while his slave had saved the documents back to our civilization, where they had been buried in a drawer for 300 years...

*Henry* So he died in your arms?

*Allan* Exactly.

*Henry* But you still have the documents, I trust?

*Allan* Of course. I have them here. (*takes them out of his pocket*) The letter, which is in Portuguese, and the map. (*Sir Henry and Good stare dumbfounded at the map which they get immersed in.*)

*Good* I love maps, and the older, the better, but this one beats them all. It's drawn by hand but still wondrously clear after 300 years. But what is this? The breasts of the Queen of Sheba?

*Allan* Exactly. It's two mountains, probably rather round. From there proceeds Solomon's road to the mines.

*Henry* A road about 3000 years old?

*Allan* There are older civilizations than that.

*Henry* Can you read the letter to us. We don't know Portuguese.

*Allan* Neither do I, but I have a translation here. (*presents another piece of paper.*) "I, José da Silvestra, who am dying of starvation in the small cavern where there is no snow, north of the wharf of the southern of the two mountains that I gave the name the Breasts of the Queen of Sheba, write this anno 1590 with a bone fragment for a pen and my blood as ink on a torn piece of my shirt."

*Henry* It actually sounds convincing. What is the content?

*Good* Impressing! Written with his own blood! And it is still red, if somewhat bleached...

*Allan* The content is, that he who follows the map and the instructions of the letter shall be the richest man in the world by the access to the mines of king Solomon. He asks to have the letter forwarded to the king, so that he could send armies and priests for the possession of the country, which at present is controlled by cruel giants of wild and invidious sorcerers besides the witch Gagool, who is the worst and most dangerous of all. His last request is to have someone kill the witch Gagool.

*Good* Witches and sorcerers! Some challenge!

*Henry* So this José da Silvestra apparently died there while his servant managed to return and deliver the letter, so that it ended up with the family, who buried it alive, until the modern José Silvestre found it and took care of it and followed its instructions and happened to meet you shortly before he died. Is that correct?

*Allan* Yes, about correct.

*Henry* A strange story, on my honour. What *has* my brother got himself mixed up with?

*Allan* It remains to tell about Jim, Neville's servant, who returned.

*Henry* What about him?

*Allan* He returned.

*Henry* Alive?

*Allan* Yes.

*Henry* And you met him?

*Allan* Certainly. He was on his way out again. I asked him where he was heading. He would go out for a quest of diamonds, he said. He was on his way to Solomon's mountains across that desert, which almost no one came back alive from.

I considered him somewhat balmy, but he was serious. Then I understood that his master Neville was waiting for him somewhere out there. Then I was so bold as to send with him a copy of the letter and the map. He was grateful for my taking his mission seriously. He would deliver the documents in Inyati, where he would meet with Neville, and he promised to follow my instructions carefully. Since then both have vanished without a trace.

*Henry* The matter is crystal clear. Let's go after them.

*Good* Absolutely, I will be delighted, on my honour.

*Henry* You would make us very disappointed, Allan Quatermain, if you didn't come with us.

*Allan* Of course I will join you. I am after all partly responsible for the whole situation.

*Good* I am sure it will work all right, old boy. Sir Henry and I always get through with it.

*Henry* Don't consider your age. The natural age means nothing. You are not a day older than you feel. And of course we will not take any risks.

*Allan* Says you, Sir Henry, who has never been here before.

*Good* I am sure it will be all right. Have some more whisky. The bottle isn't finished yet.

*Henry* We must bring bottles in a quantity that never can get finished.

*Good* Absolutely. Only that way the journey will be foolproof.

*Allan* But we must have a local guide who knows the country.

*Good* Absolutely. We trust you, Allan.

*Allan* I mean a native.

*Good* Yes, you will find him.

*Henry* That will be the next piece to the puzzle. Then we go at once. Cheers!  
(*They drink to each other.*)

*Allan* Just a moment, gentlemen, but I must make the situation quite clear to you, since I am the only one of us here who knows the country. The chances are slim that we will get back alive.

*Good* (after a moment's silence) So what?

*Henry* What do you mean by that?

*Allan* I am thinking of all those who as far as I know are the only ones who ever crossed that desert to those Sheba breasts, the two Portuguese with a lapse of two hundred years for an interval, the weird adventurer Evans, and we know nothing about your brother and his servant Jim, both lost since half a year. In brief, as far as we know, no one has returned alive.

*Henry* I intend to find my brother dead or alive. I have made up my mind. Either I find him dead or alive or some proof of either or, and then I will not mind if I die myself or get out of it alive. Either we lead the expedition to success, or it will end in disaster. For me it doesn't matter which as long as I get to know something certain about my brother. I don't care a damn about any possible diamonds. If we find any I will gladly leave them all to you.

*Good* Thanks for making the situation clear to us, Allan. That will only make the adventure the more irresistibly intriguing and tempting.

*Henry* I hope you will join us whole-heartedly anyway, Allan.

*Allan* Of course. I have nothing to lose. I stand on the threshold of becoming an old man, I never made any success in life, I have no relatives, but if there would be a last adventure before the autumn of my old age which could give me some security for my last years, like diamonds, then I could not miss such a chance. Of course I am whole-heartedly with you.

*Henry (strikes his shoulder cordially to make him almost bend over)* Good!

*Good (raises his glass)* One for all, all for one!

*All* One for all, all for one! *(They toast.)*

## Act II scene 1.

*Umbopa (sitting on the floor with a mantle about him in a humble squatting position)* This is my last chance. If this door to my freedom does not open I might as well go and die. I have nothing to lose but everything to win, and all that is needed is an agreement from others.

*Allan (enters with Henry and Good)* There he sits again. He has been sitting there all day, as if he was expecting something. Well, I will finally find out what he wants. You may go on in. *(Henry and Good go in.)* Who are you, and what do you want?

*Umbopa* I am Umbopa, and I want to enter your service.

*Allan* Why?

*Umbopa* I have heard that you intend to go to places where no one goes except for very special motives.

*Allan* Do you know anything about those places?

*Umbopa* I come from there. I was born there. I know everything about them. But the country is difficult, and the road there through the desert is lethal. Few come back from there alive.

*Allan* Do you know anyone who did?

*Umbopa* The only ones I know who did were a woman with a child.

*Allan (to himself)* I had forgotten them. – It's true. How do you know about them?

*Umbopa* Everybody here knows about it.

*Allan* And what kind of service do you apply for? As a guide?

*Umbopa* Guide and factotum. I know the country. I think I could be of great help to you.

*Allan* No references? We know nothing about you.

*Umbopa* Do you need to know more than that I know the country?

*Allan* If you were born there you should know it better than anyone else, and we would not be served by being without a guide and factotum. Sir Henry! Captain Good! Come out! What do you think about this possible guide?

*Henry (scrutinizes him)* Rise, so that we may have a look at you.



*Umbopa (rises to his full length, let's the mantle fall and shows himself considerably tall and well shaped, almost majestic)*

*Henry* What is your name, my friend?

*Umbopa* Umbopa.

*Henry* The name means nothing to me. Is that your real name?

*Umbopa* A name is just a name and means nothing. Only the character is of any consequence.

*Henry* I like him. Let's take him.

*Good* No references?

*Allan* He was born in the country and knows more about it than we do. He knew that a woman had come out alive from there with a child. I forgot to tell you. She is the only exception.

*Good* Then he is also acceptable enough for me.

*Allan* Consider yourself employed, Umbopa. We'll start as soon as possible.

*Umbopa* That pleases me, Sir. (*Henry, Good and Allan go out again.*) At last! My life's chance! May nothing go wrong now! I will protect the lives of these brave men with my own. Either we will all survive or no one.

## Scene 2.

*The gentlemen come forth inspecting the horizon with exalted admiration.*

*Allan* What do you say about this, gentlemen? Have you ever seen anything like it?

*Henry* Absolutely not. I never imagined nature could be so overwhelmingly beautiful in such intoxicating majesty transcending all human conception.

*Good* I dare say.

*Allan* Over there are the mountains of Solomon marking the border and wall to the mines of Solomon, if there are any, but who knows if we ever can get across.

*Henry* It doesn't matter. My brother is somewhere over there, and I shall get to him, it doesn't matter how.

*Good* I believe you will.

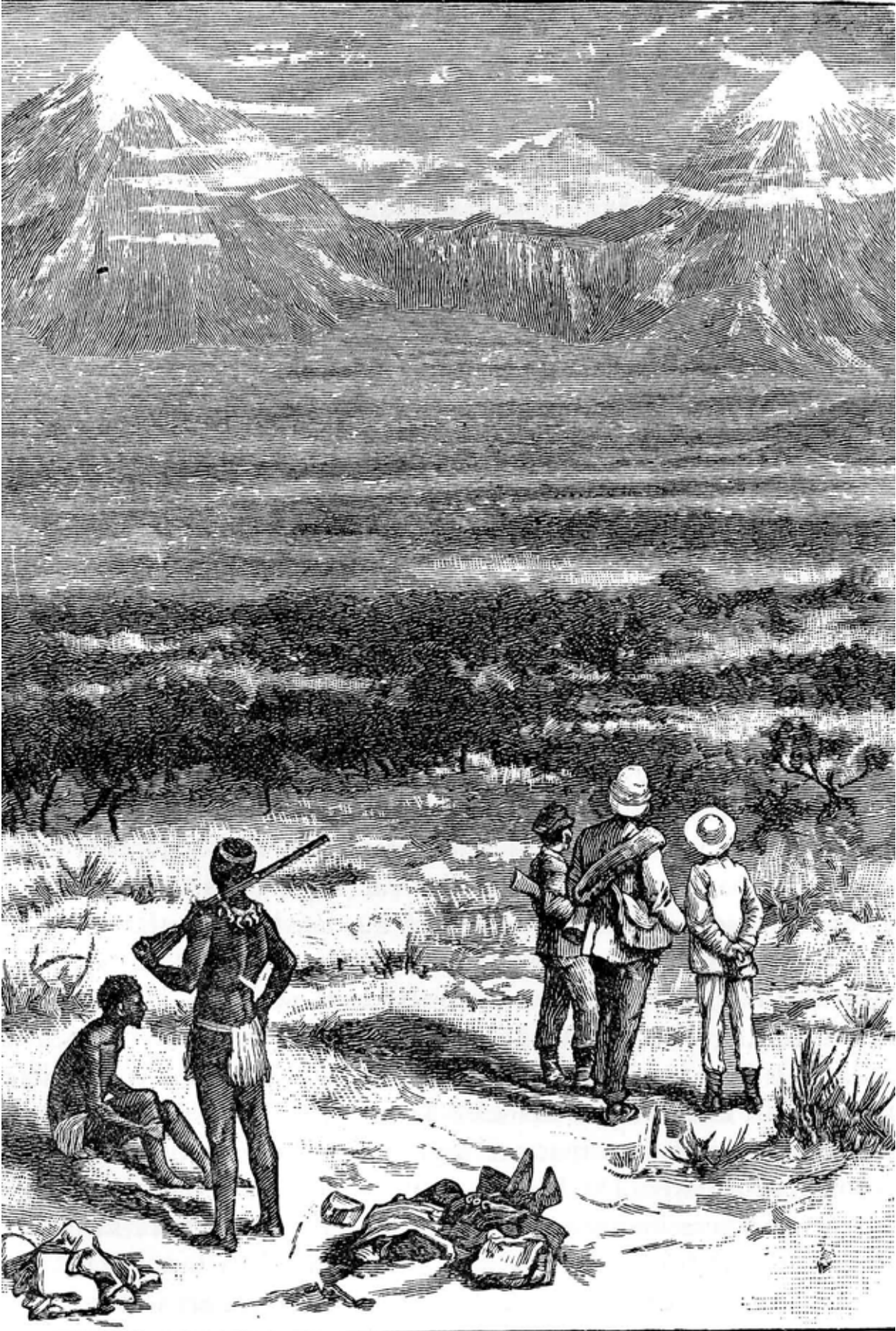
*Allan* You sound convincing enough, and we can only hope for our success.

*Umbopa (has discreetly come forth)* Is that where you want to go, Incubu?

*Allan* You don't address Sir Henry that way, Umbopa.

*Henry* He may address me any way he pleases. I take Incubu as a flattering nickname. It means the Elephant, doesn't it?







*Umbopa (laughs)* And how could you know if I am not of the same rank as he? You could believe him to be of royal breed, but perhaps I am as well. At least we are of the same size. By the way, I also have something important to tell you.

*Good* What could it be?

*Henry* Yes, Umbopa, that's exactly where I am going.

*Umbopa* You don't know what you are challenging, Sir. The desert is vast and without any water, the mountains are high and cold and covered with eternal snow, and no one knows what is beyond them. You can't make a more difficult journey.

*Henry* I know, but that's not why I am making it. My brother has gone there, and I intend to find him.

*Umbopa* So you are only looking for your brother and no diamonds?

*Henry* Exactly. Make the journey the hardest possible, make the desert the most inhuman possible without a drop of water under a deadly scorching sun, and make the mountains the highest and coldest possible with only anonymous death in nowhere to receive us with to obliterate us from existence forever, but I must go for my brother.

*Umbopa* I think I know who he was. A Hottentot told me, that a white man had gone there with a servant. They never came back.

*Henry* What was the name of the servant?

*Umbopa* His name was Jim.

*Allan* There is no doubt about it.

*Umbopa* The Hottentot also described the white man. He was tall like you and looked like you but was dark instead of blond.

*Henry* Neville always completed whatever he undertook. If he said he would cross the mountains, he crossed the mountains. That is final. We have to look for him on the other side.

*Umbopa* It's a long and arduous journey.

*Henry* I know, but that is how it is, and we have no choice. We can't turn back, we can only go forward. There is no way too long and difficult for a man if he is set to make it. There is nothing man cannot do, if love is what drives him on. No mountains can be too high, no deserts can be too vast and scorching, no oceans can be too wild and stormy, if man is prepared to wage his life to overcome the difficulties to reach his altruistic goals. In brief, nothing can stop us.

*Umbopa* Great words, Sir, but what is man more than a fluttering feather in the whirlwind of the storms of destiny or a wavering straw of grass in the wind? The only certain thing is that she will die on the way wherever she is going. If she is lucky she might accomplish something on the way and perhaps bring forth some progeny, but most people vanish without a trace. But you are driven by something more than just yourself, and therefore I will follow you through the desert and across the mountains to the country of mortal danger beyond, even if I will have to die on the way.

*Henry* Where do you actually come from?



*Umbopa* It does not matter. I have been homeless all my life and learned the rules of life and laws of reality on a wayward leaf across the stormy seas, but few people realize their own hopeless situation. What is man with all his knowledge about the stars and the secrets of the earth, of science and everything you discovered by colonising the entire world, with all the delusions of security imagined by your self-complacency, more than just a leaf tossed about with no control by the winds of fate? With all your science you know nothing, and with all your security you constantly happen to new wars. You are not wise but senseless. Only nature is wise, that rules life and always carries it on whatever happens, while all these great pompous vain self-important people self-confident unto idiocy just vanish without a trace on the way.

*Henry* I never met a stranger fellow than you.

*Umbopa* Be my guest, Incubu. I know not how to be anything else. (*bows submissively*) But we are very much alike, you and I. Perhaps I am also searching for a brother beyond those mountains.

*Allan* What do you really know about king Solomon's mines?

*Umbopa* Very little. All I know about the country over there is that it is a country of beauty and sorcery with brave men and difficult sorcerers, dangerous immortal witches and mysterious worlds of hidden knowledge and an endless past. It's a rich country of forests and rivers, high mountains and deep valleys and a broad white road. If we survive we shall see it all. If not we could at least dream about it.

*Allan* You are a dangerous man who knows much more than you pretend to.

*Umbopa* Don't worry. I rig no traps. I am only honest but careful. If we ever come across those mountains I shall tell you more of what I know, but death is sitting on those mountain tops. If you are wise you will return, since you have no idea of what you are out for. Turn back before it is too late. That's my last warning. If you will not heed it, we all just have to obey the capricious winds of destiny which is ruled by no one and which no one can control. All we can do there is to whirl along with the chaos of the storm winds until we sink down and rot and return to dust of mother earth. I have spoken. (*bows and vanishes*)

*Henry* What kind of a strange original is it you gave us for a guide?

*Allan* He certainly is weird, but we have no other. By golly, no one else knows anything about the country over there, except this peculiar original, who constantly goes off into irregular irrelevant legends, as if he tried to enchant us or blind us with mirage stuff, and who knows much more than he will admit. For everything he reveals he appears to know ten times more. It's almost unpleasant.

*Henry* Still he seems realistic enough.

*Allan* Does he?

*Good* Well, we certainly are not.

*Henry* Lucky for us then that we have him.

*Allan* We'll see about that. It will be another issue later on, that we so far can't know anything about.



Scene 3. The cave. All are freezing.

*Umbopa* So we managed to get alive through the desert and made it up to the threshold to the great country of the unknown, but the question is if we will get any further. The world of the scorching heat and the burning thirst only brought us here to the cold death. Who can survive this? Hallo there! Are you alive? Father Incubu! Are you there?

*Henry (shows up wrapped up in scanty rags)* Good of you to check us up. Yes, I am alive, but the question is if the others are. We had better check them up. Captain Good! Are you there?

*Good (shows up shaking)* Always ready!

*Henry* That's the spirit, captain Good! It's obvious that you were at the navy. How are things with our worthy leader Allan Quatermain?

*Allan (appears, wrapped up in blankets)* Have we made it across the world's most burning desert just to freeze to death here?

*Henry* That's the question we all are asking ourselves.

*Allan* Our friend Umbopa seems to be the only one of us who isn't freezing.

*Umbopa* I am freezing indeed like all of you, but I try not to make any fuss about it.

*Allan* Our Hottentot friend Ventvögel was the worse for it. His teeth chattered all night.

*Umbopa* Hottentots can't endure cold.

*Good* Is he alive? Has anyone checked up on him?

*Henry* He is not moving.

*Allan* He is asleep. His teeth chattered until he fell asleep.

*Good* I just hope he hasn't turned in for good.

*Henry (goes to Ventvögel, who is sitting wrapped up in a blanket all huddled up)* Hallo there! Wake up! Sunrise! – He doesn't move. Ice cold and stone dead. I am sorry.

*Umbopa* At least he is the only one of us who has frozen to death. It could have been much worse.

*Henry* But what is this? There is another one sitting here. Were there not only four of us?

*(Suddenly the sun enters the cave and lights up the entire scene. In the far end there is skeleton-like figure sitting all dried up, like a mummy, half naked with a crucifix around his neck but totally unrecognizable as a mummified corpse)*

*Good* Good heavens!

*Henry* Ugh! *(rushes out in a panic. Good follows instantly, also Allan, last Umbopa)*

*Henry (outside)* Do you think it was my brother?

*Good* We forgot to take a closer look.

*Henry* I must go in and see for myself.

*Umbopa* It was just a corpse.

*Allan* But European!

*(They all enter again after Sir Henry, who examines the body)*





*Henry (after a careful examination)* Thank heavens. It's not my brother.

*Allan* But who could it be?

*Umbopa* It's just a corpse.

*Good* But not just any corpse. I must suspect that we by accident have stumbled into the old José da Silvestre's own body.

*Allan* Would it have been so well preserved for three hundred years?

*Good* Extremely dry climate, constant rigorous cold, all the conditions are here. There are considerably older well preserved mummies than three hundred years.

*Allan* He is even somewhat alike to the poor José Silvestre I buried twenty years ago.

*Henry* And here is the bone fragment with which he wrote the letter and the map. And here is the wound he inflicted on himself to use his own blood for writing. His servant must have undressed him of everything except his underwear and then escaped, since he could not bury him himself.

*Good* Let's place our dead Hottentot next to him, to make him company.

*Allan* And a worthy company. Those two will enjoy each other's company.

*Henry (lifts up Ventvögel and places him beside the corpse)* Enjoy yourselves, both of you, until we meet again next time under hopefully more fortuitous circumstances.

*Allan* The sun is coming. It's time. Let's go on.

*Umbopa* I see a green country over there.

*Allan* That's where we are going.

*Henry* Good. We are finished here.

*Good* It was a cold night, but the morning is coming.

*Allan* As always. Come! *(They leave the scene and the two dead.)*

### Act III scene 1. A paradisiacal spot.

*Allan* Don't go bathing, captain Good. There could be crocodiles.

*Good* Do you think I care the least about crocodiles when I need to get clean? They will simply have to beware of me.

*Henry* They will probably be allergic to your desert sweat and your stench of a dead body.

*Good* I know. It could scare anyone to death. That's why I need a bath.

*(goes bathing in his underwear and the monocle in his eye)*

*Henry* That's the first thing he always thinks of: his own cleanliness.

*Allan* Cleanliness is a virtue, but I forgot all about it when I remained chronically a bachelor. We will undoubtedly get even dirtier before this adventure is over.

*Henry* Fortunately I don't sweat so much, so I don't have to wash very often. Sweat and dirt is also a protection against infections. But captain Good gets into a panic as soon as he sweats.

*Good (outside, suddenly)* But what now?



Allan Don't tell me he has scared some crocodile to death.

Good (*upset, returns*) Someone threw a knife at me!

Umbopa We are not alone. Look!

*(Suddenly there is a group of armed and serious natives.)*

Allan What do you want, gentlemen? Do we speak the same language?

Good Damned rude to throw a knife against an unarmed bathing man!

*(removes his monocle and dries it. The natives stare at him in astonishment.)*

Infadoos (*their leader*) How can you take out your own eye and dry it and still keep it? Who are you, o wondrous strangers?

Allan (*to his own*) He speaks the language of the country but in an ancient form. Fortunately it means we can speak with them. – We have come to search for a lost brother. Who are you?

Infadoos Is it this man, who looks as if he was one of us, who has shown you the way? (*indicates Umbopa*)

Allan No, we have come here all by ourselves.

Infadoos But no one comes here except rare confused wanderers and maniacs. It has never happened before that an entire group of strangers has managed to get across the desert and the mountains, which kill everyone trying to get across.

Allan Not us.

Infadoos Obviously not. But there is also another one with you. Who are you, brother, who must have come from us?

Umbopa Perhaps a lost son who is trying to find his way back.

Allan But who are you?

Infadoos We are an old people who since ages past are obliged to protect the country against intruders.

Allan And how do you protect the country against intruders?

Infadoos We kill them.

Henry Quite simply.

Allan Why then haven't you killed us?

Infadoos Because you are something else that should be investigated before you are decapitated. Your brother with the removable eye is something quite unheard of to our experience. We have been in contact with gods but never with such a specimen.

Henry Do you mean to say that you assume we are gods?

Infadoos I didn't say that, but there is much to indicate that you are extra terrestials, and we have no right to kill extra terrestials.

Henry That's good luck for us, boys. Listen, we had better be extra terrestials.

Good I don't mind. When it comes to trying something new, I am the first and greatest enthusiast.

Allan Take it easy, boys. This is serious. They haven't discarded the idea of killing us.

Umbopa Demonstrate your fire weapons, and you will have divine status.

Allan Not yet. A good card player does not play his best cards first.

Henry        So you are an old people. How old?

Infadoos     Older than any other.

Henry        That's easy to say, but can you prove it?

Infadoos     We have our ancient traditions since ninety generations.

Henry        How can you know that for a fact?

Good         Ninety generations, my God, that means 3000 years.

Infadoos     Correct, glass eye. That's how far back our royal lines reach.

Allan         So you have a king?

Infadoos     Indeed, and not just any king. It is the one-eyed Twala, who is as invincible as all our previous kings.

Allan         We would very much like to meet him. Can you bring us to him?

Infadoos     We must, because he is the one to decide over you.

Henry        What is he like, this chief of yours called Twala?

Infadoos     He is the king and ruler of the Kukuanas, the owner of a thousand women, the lord protector of the great road, the terror of his enemies, master of black magic, chief of a thousand warriors and called Twala the One-eyed or the Black One or the Terrible.

Good         The one-eyed black and terrible Twala! That sounds like something. I just hope he will not have my monocle.

Infadoos     It's your very glass eye that saves you and nothing else, o high extra terrestrial lords, for that very eye will be of interest to the great Twala. Without it you would all have been dead at once.

Henry        We have reasons to be grateful for your bad eye, Good, – so far.

Good         Yes, let's just hope it will last. So far I have never lost it and don't intend to either.

Allan         How far is it to your great black king?

Infadoos     He is not black but almost fair like you and your servant. He is only great and black when it comes to his knowledge of black magic.

Henry        So we have to take care of him.

Allan         How far is it?

Infadoos     Three days' journey, if you have patience.

Henry        Do we look as if we started yesterday?

Allan         Three days' journey is close. We have been travelling for three weeks.

Infadoos     Good. Then you have almost reached the end, for you will hardly reach any further than to Twala.

Allan         Not even our servant Umbopa, who is one of you?

Infadoos     He is a special case to be treated separately. Is his name Umbopa?

Allan         Yes, his name is Umbopa. What is yours?

Infadoos     Infadoos, at your service, captain of the army and responsible for the king's son Scragga here, who almost killed you, Glass eye.

Good         He didn't aim very well, for which I am grateful.

Infadoos     He still has much to learn. This way, gentlemen. The big road always leads on to the goal.



*Henry* We believe you.

*Allan* But who really built this fantastic road, which is almost more impressive as an engineer's work than anyone can do today?

*Infadoos* How can we know? We were not born then. No one knows. We only know that it is as old as our kingdom, since the first king was established when it was constructed.

*Good* Why was it constructed?

*Henry* Stupid question, captain Good. All roads are built for transport, not for anything else.

*Allan* Were the Kukuanas established here just because the road was built?

*Infadoos* From the beginning we were a small people, but we thrived so well in this fertile land that we soon grew into a mighty people with a hundred thousand warriors.

*Henry* Why warriors? Who is threatening you? Against whom do you need any defence?

*Infadoos* Kukuanaland is surrounded by mountains in the south, east and west, and only occasional confused maniacs have on very rare occasions come across the desert, but we have sometimes had invasions from the north, but they were always defeated.

*Henry* When did it happen last time?

*Infadoos* Ten years ago. They came to eat us, but we ate them instead. We are the only people who have the divine right to protect and defend this land against the outer world.

*Henry* Who says so?

*Infadoos* It has always been professed to us through generation after generation by our sacred protectors.

*Henry* What sort of sacred protectors?

*Infadoos* The foremost is the old Gagool, oldest in the country, who has the greatest knowledge and art and who maintains the highest traditions and mysteries.

*Good* A woman?

*Infadoos* Yes, and immortal.

*Henry* Only until she dies.

*Infadoos* She has never died.

*Henry* No, not so far. But she might die.

*Infadoos* Nobody thinks so.

*Allan* But if you had peace for so long, the great army must have been demobilized long ago?

*Infadoos* No, for king Twala, my half brother, keeps it trimmed and disciplined without ever cutting down on the activity against his enemies. After the last war we had another war here at home by ourselves.

*Henry* A civil war? Why so?

*Infadoos* It's a long story. Can you endure hearing a terrible horror tragedy with cruelties and sufferings without end?

*Henry* That's what we are here for. Or else we would never have crossed the desert.

*Infadoos* Well then. It happened in those days that the king gave birth to twins. When that happens the normal procedure is that the weaker twin is killed, just to avoid future possible civil wars, but in this case the weaker and later twin was smuggled away and brought up in secret. Well, on one occasion the king fell ill, and it was believed that he was dying. There were already speculations about the succession, when the dying son of Imotu was only three years old. There was a famine in the country in those days because of failure of the crops, and the people were in a general condition of despair and could resort to anything. Then the wise old Gagool appeared and proclaimed, that the famine was king Imotu's fault, holding him responsible, and that he was no king. Then she produced Twala, who had been brought up in secret to become a mighty warrior, Imotu's twin brother, and proclaimed him king. Imotu staggered mortally ill out of his hut, wondering what the infernal hullabaloo was all about, as the entire people had gone hysterical, and then Twala struck his brother dead with a knife into his heart. His young wife with the three year old son managed to get away and escape, but the last thing anyone saw of them was when they spent the night in the closest kraal, where we also will spend the next night. Then she disappeared with her child over the mountains and has never been heard of any more.

*Henry* So your king Twala rules by the help of the old medicine woman Gagool?

*Infadoos* Yes, since then my half brother has absolute power over the country.

*Good* It will be interesting to meet this master Twala. He appears to be a somewhat cruel type.

*Infadoos* You can be sure of that. There. Now you know the recent history of our country. Prepare for the worst.

*Allan* What's the matter, Umbopa?

*Umbopa* (*has been listening attentively, is distracted, like in dreams*) Nothing. Just old memories.

*Allan* (*to Henry*) He knows something.

*Henry* (*to Allan*) For sure.

*Allan* What do you know, Umbopa?

*Umbopa* Not more than that I come from this country and know more about it by myself than what I have been aware of. (*watches something far away*)

*Henry* What do you see?

*Umbopa* The three mountains. The three witches.

*Allan* That's where we are going. That's where the diamonds are.

*Umbopa* Certainly, and you white men, who are so fond of diamonds and toys, shall have them.

*Allan* How can you be so sure of that?

*Umbopa* (*laughs*) I dreamt about it tonight.

*Henry* Dreams are only mirages.



*Umbopa* No, they are truer than reality.

*Henry (more confidentially)* You don't happen to have heard anything from the warriors here about my brother?

*Umbopa* Nothing. I have asked, but no one knows anything.

*Infadoos* Ask Twala.

*Henry* We certainly will.

*Infadoos* If he doesn't know anything, no one does.

*Henry* Then I really hope he knows something. Or else we have come here for nothing.

*Allan* That will be a later issue.

*Good* Be patient, Sir Henry. If we don't find your brother, there are diamonds.

*Henry* No diamonds in the world are worth as much as one hair of my brother.  
(*leaves annoyed*)

*Infadoos* So that's why you are here? The great white Incubu has lost his brother?

*Allan* No, he lost himself. But it is in this country that he is lost.

*Infadoos* Unfortunately I cannot help you. But if Incubu is sure of finding him here, he might find more than he has bargained for.

*Allan* What is that supposed to mean?

*Infadoos* You shall see. (*leaves*)

*Good* The challenges grow more interesting day by day.

*Allan* Do you think so? The excitement increases by all means, but it can't go on increasing forever without ultimately growing unbearable. If anything breaks, it must not be we.

*Good* Of course, old boy, whatever happens.

## Scene 2. The village.

Stately high-grown warriors stand in attention along the line  
up to Twala's throne outside his royal hut.

*Twala (great and terrible, one-eyed and brutal)* Let the intruding strangers tread forth.  
(*People make room for the four travellers with Infadoos in front.*)

*Twala (rises)* Infadoos, what kind of strangers have you encountered by the southern mountains?

*Infadoos* We fear that they are extra terrestials, three of them, while the fourth could be a lost son.

*Twala* I see. It looks bad. They are white. All intruders are white. Why have you come here, white intruders? Answer straight and honest. You will be killed anyway.

*Allan* I don't think so, great chief, for we have fire weapons to defend ourselves with. If you don't believe us we could demonstrate their efficiency on your son Scragga.

*Scragga (scared to death)* No!

Twala Have you seen their fire weapons kill?

Scragga Yes!

Twala People?

Scragga No, only animals, for they don't want to kill people.

Twala What do you have against killing people, white intruders?

Henry We only do it if we have to in self defence. We only consider the act of killing at all defensible if it is the killing of animals in order to survive.

Twala I see that you have scruples. That is unusual. Tell me then why you have come, if not for killing on a meaningless hunt for shiny stones.

Allan We follow our brother here on his search for his lost brother, who was last heard of on his way to this country half a year ago.

Twala (to Umbopa) You, who seems to serve them but to be one of us, is it true?

Umbopa Yes, it is true.

Twala A most unusual mission.

Henry So obviously you have received one or another white traveller here in the country?

Twala Yes. They are extremely easily numbered.

Henry Was there anyone like me?

Twala (confers quietly with his closest warriors, supposedly life guards)

Good It seems as if they knew something about your brother, Henry.

Henry He had better be alive in that case, for their own sake.

Umbopa Caution, gentlemen please, at any price. Whatever you do, don't provoke them.

Henry If they have made it their routine to kill all guests who are white, we can't just humbly accept it, can we?

Twala White strangers, all whites who have come here before you have only come for greed to look for shiny stones. They also had fire weapons which they used for killing. Why are you the first exception? We have reasons to suppose, that you use your search for a lost brother as an excuse to hide your real purpose to exploit our country for diamonds.

Henry I don't care one bit whether there are diamonds here or not. All I want is my brother. Is he here or not?

Twala (confers again quietly with his warriors)

Umbopa He exists. The question is in what condition. Be patient, gentlemen. Only that way you can get to him.

Infadoos I endorse Umbopa's warnings. Keep still, whatever happens.

Twala What do you say, old Gagool?

(Suddenly there is a disgusting creature crawling forth, an ancient dwarflike woman with a hump who rather shuffles along limping than walks on all fours, like a wounded monkey.)

Gagool I smell blood. New civil wars are on their way. The strangers don't know themselves why they are here, but they will know. There is much sorcery in the air. Disaster to all and everyone. No one will escape his destiny.



*Twala* Do the strangers speak the truth? Have they come for a brother and not for diamonds?

*Gagool* They speak the truth but not the whole truth. The one who knows most is none of them.

*Twala* Who is it then?

*Gagool* Ask our lost son who serves them.

*Twala (to Umbopa)* Do you know why you are here?

*Umbopa* I have said what I know, that Incubu is here to search for his brother.

*Twala* Then he shall find him but not yet. Since you are not diamond or head hunters, white travellers, you will be our guests until we have tried you further. Fear no evil. We will not deceive you, even if you might try to deceive us. You will get to know our country and what we are, and it will be interesting to look deeper into you and your purposes. As matters stand at present, we have reasons for mutual mistrust. This will be remedied, so that we may understand each other. Infadoos, who has taken care of them, go on and entertain them well, but report everything to me about what they say and do. Gentlemen, you are our honoured guests as long as you behave. I hope we shall get to know each other during a long enough period of time.

*Allan* So do we.

*Twala* Then we are agreed. Infadoos, they are all yours.

*Infadoos* This way, gentlemen.

*(As they walk out, all the warriors thunder their terrifying saluting call "Koom! Koom!" while they hammer their shields.)*

*One* Hail Twala, our king!

*All* Hail Twala, our king!

*All (thundering)* Koom! Koom! Koom!

*Twala* Well, Gagool, tell me. What are they?

*Gagool* Like all the others they only come with death to die themselves.

*Twala* And the fourth, the lost son?

*Gagool* He protects them. As long as he is with them we cannot touch them, for he is one of us.

*Twala* Are you sure?

*Gagool* Absolutely. I don't know yet who he really is, but until we know we cannot touch them. Only with that certain knowledge in our hand we can be sure of what we do.

*Twala* We shall abide. We shall not overact until they overact.

*Gagool* They will overact like all the others.

*Twala* I know.

Scene 3. The guest hut.

*Allan* Well, my friends, what do you think of today's confrontation?  
*Good* At least there was no short cut or outbreak.  
*Henry* It is impossible to guess at what this Twala thinks. No one is better at dissembling than a dictator, but I think it is realistic enough to take for granted that he is planning our death.  
*Good* In brief, no matter how welcome we are, we are not welcome.  
*Henry* We must be constantly on the alert.  
*Allan* Exactly my opinion. That Gagool creature made the hairs rise on my head. Twala seems to be completely under her influence, and she seems to have the last word in all issues.  
*Good* She was the one who made the cruel Twala king.  
*Allan* Exactly, and he is illegal as such, if the woman with the child got away, which I have reasons enough to believe that they did.  
*Henry* Here is our good host. I think we can trust him.  
*Good* He looks worried.  
*Infadoos* My friends, Twala has sent you gifts, but I believe it is just to lull you into a false sense of security.  
*Henry* What sort of gifts?  
*Infadoos* (*presents three silvery coats of mail and three impressive axes*) He wants to show his honoured guests his respect, but tomorrow it is time for the annual witch dance, to which you are invited.  
*Henry* What kind of a witch dance?  
*Good* With living witches?  
*Infadoos* Gagool and a few others.  
*Good* Can Gagool dance?  
*Infadoos* You will see.  
*Henry* What is the meaning of this witch dance?  
*Infadoos* Under the influence of the ecstasy the witches sense the presence of sorcery and sorcerers and points them out, whereupon they are instantly clubbed to death. It's the annual festivity of fear.  
*Henry* Time for purges, in other words. Every dictator must have them. How many are usually sacrificed?  
*Infadoos* Between a hundred and a thousand.  
*Allan* Are we in danger?  
*Infadoos* You are for sure. It is probable that at least one of you will be pointed out.  
*Good* Do they dare to challenge extra terrestials?  
*Infadoos* I think the only one of you that Gagool and Twala are afraid of is that one. (*indicates Umbopa*)  
*Henry* Has Kukuanaland any reason to fear Umbopa?  
*Umbopa* (*steps forth*) Yes, my friends, they have.  
*Allan* Are you not one of them?



*Umbopa* That's the very reason why.

*Infadoos* Even I have reasons to fear to be pointed out every year, but so far Twala needed me as army commander. As soon as Scragga is grown-up I think that time will be over.

*Henry* That disgusting scoundrel. He seems to be even worse than his father.

*Infadoos* He is.

*Henry* But how can you tolerate such a regime, which organizes annual auto-da-fés to do away with imagined enemies? You are the commander. Can't you make rebellion?

*Infadoos* The royal line is sacred and unbroken since ninety generations. It's the last thing anyone in the country wishes to break. There is no alternative to Twala than Scragga.

*Umbopa* Yes, there is. *(let's his mantle fall and reveals everything except his private parts and appears to be tattooed with a snake biting its tail around the entire diaphragm)*

*Infadoos (rising completely astonished)* You are Ignosi!

*Umbopa* Yes, I am Ignosi.

*Good* Who the devil is Ignosi?

*Infadoos* Imotu's son and the only rightful king of the entire Kukuanaland! And what is more, my only worthy nephew! *(embraces him with overwhelming sentiment)* We have been waiting and hoping for you for twenty years! May I have a closer look at you. *(takes him at an arm's length)* Yes, you are Imotu's son. Imagine that I didn't see it before! I recognize many of his features in you, and they are so evident, that you can't be anyone else. *(embraces him again)*

*Umbopa* Can we trust the army and your support?

*Infadoos* Let me speak with them first. We must not be hasty or commit any mistake. If anyone is to commit the first mistake it's got to be Twala. Or else we have no chances. If the army discovers any weakness in Twala, the army is ours. Or else it will remain Twala's.

*Allan* What is your advice?

*Infadoos* Be sure to be armed when you come to the witch dance. Twala's coats of mail are impenetrable. Bring the axes also. That will be appreciated by Twala.

*Allan (studies one of the coats of mail more closely)* I have never seen the like of this craftsmanship. Who can manufacture this?

*Infadoos* They are as old as our traditions. They were made once and never again. There aren't many left, but these three are intact.

*Henry* We will obey you in everything, Infadoos, since you are on our and Umbopa's, I am sorry, Ignosi's side. Is there anything more we need to know?

*Infadoos* In good time you will know everything. Just take care. Do nothing uncontrolled or suspicious. Whatever Twala does or demonstrates, control yourselves. Leave the initiative to him as long as he can keep it. As long as he feels safe about having the initiative, nothing evil could happen to you, but believe me, he will bring about his own destruction. All we have to do is to wait for it.

*Allan* Thanks for the advice, Infadoos. We will follow it exactly.

*Infadoos* I hope so, gentlemen. (*bows courteously*) Come, Ignosi. We have plenty of things to talk about. (*leaves with Ignosi*)

*Allan* What do you think of this?

*Good* What a revelation!

*Henry* Umbopa king! I knew it!

*Allan* We still have far to go. Anything might happen still.

*Henry* We must constantly be prepared for the worst.

*Good* Absolutely.

*Allan* A night cap, gentlemen, to calm the nerves? I still have some brandy left.

*Henry* In order to be absolutely sober tomorrow.

*Good* Then the night cap will do the very thing.

*Henry* Who or what is the thing?

*Good* No idea. I don't think we will ever know.

*Allan* That is the very thing. What is the very thing? What difficult issues! And we are not in the least under the influence yet.

*Henry* It must be the climate. It's intoxicating.

*Good* To the point! The night cap! Forget the thing! It will come later!

*Allan* Exactly! (*pours in very small thimble glasses*)

*Henry* Thanks awfully! Up to the brim!

*Allan* It could actually be the last time.

*Good* Cheers! Bottoms up!

*Henry* Mud in your eye!

*Allan* Twala's eye! (*They drink up.*)

#### Scene 4. Like scene 2.

*Twala* (*rises as the travellers come with Infadoos*) Welcome, my friends, to the great solemnity!

*Infadoos* I have informed them about what it is all about.

*Twala* That's good, Infadoos, my indispensable commander, but do they really understand what it is about? Do they understand anything at all? Do they understand what our country is?

*Henry* Great king Twala, we are deeply grateful for your fantastic gifts, and as you see we have obliged you to put them on and bring them on to your great festivity.

*Twala* I take that as a courteous compliment.

*Allan* But what is it about your country we haven't understood and should know?

*Twala* Look around. This army of mine is invincible. We crush any enemies. We always did. We were never defeated, plundered or invaded except by casual trespassers like you, but since you have been so few and rare we never took you seriously but allowed you to live as long as possible to try you. Intruders of your kind have always been unique and lonely, but then there is suddenly an entire group of three. Who will then come after you? You have vanquished the high mountains



and the great desert. If you made that, others of your kind will also be able to do it. Whom shall we expect next time? A patrol? A troupe? An army? This makes us concerned.

*Allan* What are you afraid of?

*Twala* That the order of the country be disturbed, that the country be invaded by strangers, that intruders may spread alien diseases here, that the country be plundered, that the whites will arrive in such a number in their greed for diamonds that the country be devastated and ruined. That's what we are afraid of. We can defeat and annihilate invaders from the north, for they are inferior to us in everything, but you whites are a totally different matter, and therefore we never want any more of you than at most just a few. Your company touches the pain limit.

*Henry* No one knows that we are here. Our departure was carried through with careful secrecy. Our only purpose was to find my lost brother. We don't want anything of your land, but we are grateful for your hospitality.

*Twala* It will last as long as you behave.

*Allan* But what is so special about the country that must be protected at any price?

*Twala* That's why we are here. We were chosen to administer this country and protect it against intruders. The great road was built for the purpose of making it easier to extract and transport the great wealth of the country, but that king died and his kingdom disappeared. Instead the work was carried on by the Egyptians, but also their kingdom was lost, and they quit. But we are still here and consider it our holy duty to protect the country against alien interest at any cost.

*Good* Have you had extra terrestials here before?

*Twala* A very appropriate question and very suitable that it comes from you, our exotic glass eye. Our history starts with extra terrestials. They were the ones who discovered the country, found its resources of great interest and gave king Solomon mandate to continue the activity when they disappeared.

*Allan* Was king Solomon then your first king?

*Twala* No, our first king was his subordinate king, whom he made our king, but that dynasty has since then ruled continuously for ninety generations.

*Good* What did the extra terrestials look like? Does anyone know?

*Twala* About like Incubu here, tall and powerful, blond and long-haired and with blue eyes. Well, now at least you know something. I think we can begin the great ceremony.

*Henry* If you know so much, Twala, you must also know something about my brother. What do you know?

*Twala* I had planned to save that dainty till after the death dance, but it must be presented anyway sooner or later. Yes, I know where your brother is.

*Henry* What kind of dainty?

*Twala* Scragga, my son, go and fetch our collection.

*Allan (to Good)* This gives me cold shivers. I suspect foul intentions and foul play.

*Good (back)* You are not the only one, old boy. I fear some most unpleasant surprises before this night of terror is over.

Allan (to Twala) You mentioned the Egyptians. So you have been in touch with them?

Twala Until 60 generations ago. Yes, they continued the great king Solomon's enterprises here through 20 generations, but then they quit.

Allan That's why you have hieroglyphs in your caves and tunnels.

Twala And statues. The three great silents are from the times of the Egyptians. They were created to guard the entrance to our country and the caves.

Allan The caves?

Twala Where the white stones are, which drive all white men crazy. (*Scragga returns.*) Well, Scragga, did you find them all?

Scragga Yes.

Twala There could be more than one that you could recognize. (*Scragga presents a small chest, opens it and suddenly reveals the contents by pulling off a protective cloth.*)

Henry (in absolute terror) NO!

Good This is worse than the worst imaginable.

Allan Shrunk heads! O no! Also Evans!

Henry (brings forth his axe in fury and instantly almost by reflex cuts the head of Scragga)

My brother! My brother! You have desecrated and eaten and shrunk the head of my brother!

Twala (arms himself) That is the custom here.

Allan This is more than terrible.

Umbopa Incubu, you have gone too far.

Henry (roaring) Is that so strange?

Twala Incubu, you have killed my son.

Henry Kill me then if you can, you infernal inhuman monster of a deformed cannibal! (*Both Henry and Twala rush up like raving bulls with their axes and start circling round each other.*)

Twala You have killed my son!

Henry You have killed my brother!

Infadoos (with booming voice) Listen to me, all of you! Twala is a usurper! Your real king is here among you in your midst, Ignosi, son of Imotu, who was murdered by Twala, who chased his wife and son in exile across the mountains, but Ignosi, the king has returned! Twala is dead! Long live king Ignosi! (*raises Ignosi's arm in proclaiming him*)

Twala What is it you white magicians really have undertaken to stage a devilish coup to plunge the country into civil war?

Henry An end to your regime of terror, your murderous villain and barbarian, who only goverens in vain with terror for your means, but a terror dictatorship always strikes back on itself! It is true as Infadoos says! You are dead, you monster!

Twala Never as long as I live and still can fight.

Henry Show then that you can fight, you humbug!

(*They furiously fight each other in smoke and dust, Ignosi and Infadoos hold all others back, and finally Twala lies there mortally wounded.*)

*Twala* I am grateful for the grace of being entitled to die as befits a warrior and king in battle for the honour of my country and its kings! (*dies*)

*Infadoos* Long live king Ignosi, the only living and rightful king of the Kukuanas! (*raises him even more*)

*All warriors* Koom! Koom! Hail Ignosi!

*Henry (all bloody and exhausted)* My brother! My brother! What infamy! (*Good and Allan help him out of there, he is all devastated and in tears.*)

*Good* It's over, Henry. The coup has been successful, but what a coup! Totally unplanned and improvised!

*Umbopa* Take care of Incubu! He is wounded! Great Incubu, you are the hero of today! You have lost a brother but won another, who is now king!

*The warriors* Hail! Hail! Koom! Koom! (*booming greetings from the calls and the shields*)

*Umbopa* No more witch hunts and sorcery persecutions! No more witch dances! No arbitrary executions! There is an end to all superstition and government by terror! The king is dead, but the king liveth!

*Infadoos* Hail the king! Hail king Ignosi, the king of the free Kukuanas!

*Allan* What a story!

*Good* Yes, reality transcends all stories.

*Allan* How is it, Henry?

*Henry* I am inconsolable. Now I can never make it up to him.

*Good* In your despair you have extirpated a terror dictatorship, both the father and the son, and you have a king for a new brother. It's just to accept the future, Henry, and to go on.

*Umbopa* Take care of them, Infadoos! They are my friends and benefactors, they made it possible for me to return to my country, and they are more than extra terrestrials! They are princes!

*Allan* Come, Henry. It is over.

*Good* God damn it, you turned berserk!

*Henry* My old Danish blood had a volcanic eruption.

*Allan* It did a lot of good, Henry. You only did well.

*Henry* But my brother! My poor, desecrated, violated, murdered brother! (*is inconsolable. They lead him away.*)

*Umbopa* He will recover.

*Infadoos* I didn't know that extra terrestrials could cry.

*Umbopa* They are just human, uncle, like all beings.

(*They go out together with arms around each other to meet the warriors, who extol and greet them with "Koom! Koom!" with booming shields. Infadoos and Umbopa receive their greetings of acclaim with dignity but are tired.*)



Act IV scene 1. A hospital tent, (formerly Twala's).  
Henry in bed, cared for by the loveliest possible native woman.

*Good (enters)* How is it with the old boy?

*Foulata* The worst is over. He has come through the crisis, but Twala wounded him deeply.

*Good* In more than one way. I don't think Twala's lethal cut could be as serious as what he did to Henry's brother.

*Henry (wakes up, exhausted)* Is it you, my good captain Good? I can never get through with this.

*Good* You did get through everything so far.

*Henry* That was yesterday. Now I will grieve for the rest of my life over my brother who had to die without his right.

*Good* It wasn't your fault.

*Henry* No, I know, it was the fault of the legal formalism, which nothing can help, when my father died without a will, and it was my brother's fault to go out on adventure travels, but do you think that could soothe me? We have arrived too late! I always come too late! I hesitate too long, hope for problems to solve themselves, don't do what I should, and when at last I do something it is too late. God damn!

*Allan (enters)* How is he?

*Good* He lives.

*Allan* Your guardian angel Foulata seems to have saved your life. She has been by your side for 18 hours during your crisis and long sleep.

*Foulata* Not I. He was the one who saved *my* life.

*Allan* We know.

*Good* How so?

*Allan* At the witch dance Foulata would have been sacrificed as the most beautiful virgin in the country.

*Good* As a witch?

*Allan* Yes, for the sake of her beauty. Twala's religion is not the only one in the world that persecutes, brands or execute women for the sake of their seductive beauty.

*Foulata* It is an honour to be sacrificed to the three Silents. It's the highlight of the year. Every girl strives for that honour, which is the highest in the country. To be sacrificed to the grace of divine providence is to win immortality.

*Henry* Who has put that into your head? Twala and Gagool?

*Allan* Anyway, the ceremony was interrupted before it had started, and for that we and the whole country are sincerely grateful to you, Sir Henry. Or else we would have witnessed bloody execution orgies in absurdum and probably a downright civil war.

*Good* Have we missed something then?

*Allan* It's perhaps best not to know anything about what we managed to stop without really having intended to.

*Foulata* The great Incubu has saved the country and my life. Now we all have something to live for by the new order. We didn't before, when we all had to live in terror for the hangmen of Gagool and Twala.

*Henry* Where is Gagool now? Is she still alive?

*Ignosi (enters)* Yes, my friends, she is alive, and as the oldest sorceress of the country she has dutifully initiated the new king in all the royal mysteries. I know now how we shall get to the diamond mountain, where you can provide yourselves with limitless amounts of diamonds, on one condition: You must never reveal the secret to any outsider, and you must either stay here for the rest of your lives or leave the country to never return. Those are the ancient rules. – I can never stop regretting the fate of your brother, Incubu, but I stick to my word, that you have a new brother in myself, and will be honoured as my brother as long as you honour us by remaining in our land.

*Henry (watches Foulata)* It is tempting indeed.

*Allan* How do we find the diamond mountain?

*Ignosi* The hall of the kings is in the same mountain, where Twala's body is to be buried together with all his predecessors. You may follow me there.

*Allan* And be left there without a guide down to the mine?

*Ignosi* Gagool will show you the way, for she is the only one who knows it.

*Henry* That old bitch!

*Good* Can we trust her?

*Ignosi* She was unwilling to begin with, but I persuaded her, and she will never break her word.

*Henry* She will lead you to hell.

*Good* Are you not coming? We will not go without you.

*Henry* Then I guess I'll have to follow you just to watch that hell of a hag so that she doesn't try any tricks. Of all people in the world you cannot trust, and that's an overwhelming majority, I would rank her as the worst of all. She always only wished us all the worst and made her utmost to accomplish it.

*Ignosi* It's the rules of the country. But only she can help you. Either you follow her or give up the enterprise.

*Good* We can't do that, can we, Henry?

*Henry* What?

*Good* Give up, when we made it this far.

*Allan* No, we really can't.

*Henry* You are right. I must follow and watch your interests.

*Good* Good! One for all, and all for one! (*takes his hand*)

*Allan and Henry* One for all, and all for one!

*Henry* Do you still have your brandy?

*Allan* Of course. (*produces the bottle*)

*Henry* That was the only thing Foulata could not offer. Or else my rehabilitation is completely due to her extraordinary care. (*Allan fills the thimbles. He wants to offer Ignosi one, but he declines.*)

*Ignosi* It's your medicine. We can do without it. *(They toast each other and drink.)*  
Here comes Infadoos with your guide.

*Infadoos* I will follow you as far as I can, but then I must leave you to the guidance of Gagool, but she will never break a word once given. We made her agree to show you the way to the treasure chamber.

*Allan* It pleases us that you follow, Infadoos, as far as you can.

*Good* But first we must have Sir Henry completely restored.

*Henry* I *am* restored. When can we start?

*Allan* Take it easy, Henry. Your fever must go down first.

*Henry* I am down. Isn't that enough? I long to go up.

*Good* He is refreshed.

*Allan* We will leave as soon as we can, Infadoos.

*Henry* I would never dare to trust that old lady with my life. It would feel safer if you would follow us, Foulata.

*Foulata* I was afraid you would abandon me here. I will gladly follow you anywhere, Incubu, and there is nothing I want more.

*Henry* Then even the old ghost Gagool is neutralised by her own opposite, the youthful beauty and purity without any wicked thought in her soul. And you wished to sacrifice her, Gagool, just because she was more beautiful than you?

*Gagool* We must all obey the laws of the country.

*Henry* And who made the law about annual human sacrifice?

*Gagool* It was always there, and the virgins that were sacrificed always considered it the greatest honour of their lives.

*Foulata* It is true, Incubu. I was willing to be sacrificed and prepared for it.

*Henry* Well, I am glad that you are still alive. Or else I would never have entrusted you with that ghastly old ghost, a human monster closer to a monkey than to a human being.

*Gagool* You know nothing about the wisdom of this country.

*Henry* Educate us.

*Gagool* Too late. You are too old. You are trespassing strangers. There is no hope for you. You were born in ignorance and will die in ignorance.

*Allan* That doesn't sound very encouraging, does it?

*Good* A regular oracle, Sir Henry, isn't she?

*Ignosi* Don't take the witch seriously. You will lead them right, Gagool, and Infadoos will wait for you outside the cave. If you don't return with them alive you are dead. Is that clear, Gagool mother of all witches?

*Gagool* The king has spoken, and I am obliged to obey. Follow me then, my extra terrestials, since you insist on watching death straight in the face! *(stumbles half crawling away with her stick)*

*Ignosi* She appears worse than she is. At heart she is just a very ancient woman who survived herself at least with a hundred years, while all that keeps her alive is her tremendously extreme fear of death.



*Allan* We trust you, Ignosi. Come, captain Good. We must prepare the final end of the expedition. We can still return alive.

*Good* Only as long as we live.

*Allan* But so far we managed that all right, didn't we?

*Good* If you disregard that Henry's life was all but lost.

*Allan (indicates Henry with Foulata)* It is definitely saved now.

*(They go out with Infadoos, while Henry remains under the excellent care of Foulata.)*

#### Act V scene 1. The hall of death.

*(An impressive hall with a long table, at the far end of which there is a colossal statue of death high enthroned with a raised sword, where every bone of the skeleton is anatomically correct. Along the sides of the table are petrified corpses of kings seated, and Twala himself is sitting as a corpse directly under the sword of death under the process of being petrified by stalactization.)*

*Gogool (the first one to enter)* Welcome to your encounter with death, obstinate extra terrestrials!

*Allan (enters with the others, backs down in terror like Good, Henry and Foulata – Infadoos is not with them.)* You were supposed to show us the diamond cave, not a lot of corpses.

*Gagool* The road there passes through death. This is the waiting hall for the riches. Trust me, you will see them and relish in them, and perhaps be obliged to eat them!

*Henry* Just show the way. Don't chatter.

*Gagool* I am just warning you. Is that forbidden?

*Allan* What do you want to warn us against?

*Gagool* You will see, ho-ho, you will see! You are not the first ones I let in here. The latest just made a short visit, but he had time to fill his bag with diamonds. The bag with the diamonds is still in there! Do you really want to see it? Ha-ha!

*Henry* By golly, she is scary.

*Allan* But she means what she says and sticks to the truth, although it might not be the whole truth.

*Good* The more she tells, the less we understand.

*Allan* Do we still want to take the risk?

*Good* Absolutely!

*Henry* I will watch her carefully.

*Allan* All these royal corpses, Gagool, I trust they are all your previous kings?

*Gagool* Not all. Only twenty-seven of them.

*Henry* So there are about thirty missing.

*Gagool* Many fell in battle or disappeared or died so that we could not save the bodies.

*Henry* Couldn't you even shrink their heads?

*Gagool*

You don't do that with kings, only with undesired strangers.



*Henry* But I am now your new king's brother, and these two are my brothers.

*Gagool* You survived the risk of getting decapitated and shrunk since you anticipated death by killing Twala and Scragga.

*Henry* They asked for it.

*Gagool* But of the last 30 kings only three are missing. It was about thirty generations ago that someone found out that the kings could be preserved here forever by being petrified.

*Allan* What do you know about king Solomon?

*Gagool* He was the first king, but he was here himself only once to organize the king's road for the transport of his stones across the mountains and the desert, but the road is gone from where the mountains start.

*Allan* Yes, we saw it, caved in and buried in sand, but apparently it is still there all the way to the sea.

*Gagool* He ordered his workers to live here and manage the country forever by always keeping intruders away. They were easy to keep away, for they could only come from the north and were then of simple minds and easy to defeat. No one gets across the mountains and the desert in the south, east and west except madmen like you.

*Henry* But by our madness we made ourselves lords of a fourth of the earth for the benefit of the entire world.

*Gagool* Believe me, it will not last very long. Solomon's endless power was finished with him, the Egyptians also did not last, and still they were a nation ninety generations old without any other enemies than desert people, all organized orders have an end, while only the knowledge of their destruction survives.

*Good* What do you know about the extra terrestials, who discovered Kukuanaland?

*Gagool* They gave Solomon his power and helped him. They also founded the old kingdom of the Egyptians, but they very rarely come here. You are the first to come here after the Egyptians, if you are real extra terrestials or just ordinary mortals, which we soon shall find out.

*Henry* Go on, you witch. Show us the treasure, so that we get it over with.

*Foulata (clings to him)* I am afraid.

*Henry* There is no reason to be as long as you are with me.

*Allan* Show us the way, Gagool, and lecture us on the way. You are right, knowledge is the most important of all and perhaps the only thing that will survive.

*Gagool* Also in tales and legends knowledge survives, like the old traditions of the ancient Egyptians about even earlier world orders, like Atlantis, Lemuria and Mu...

*Henry* Now she is going gaga.

*Good* Wasn't she always?

*Allan* No more gaga than Helena Blavatsky.

*Henry* Listen, witch. Don't try to put irrelevant ideas into our heads.



*Gagool* I always kept strictly to the truth, and you will see it, because it is the death that awaits us all and which always finally reveals the entire naked truth. I lived with it all my life and know it by heart, but you are still ignorant who refuse to receive all that you get to know.

*Allan* That's good, Gagool. We respect your knowledge.

*Henry* Go for it! We don't have all day! And no tricks!

*Gagool* All tricks are just played by destiny and man's own folly. I only live with destiny.

*Good* What does she mean by that?

*Henry* The devil knows. The sooner we get out of here, the better.

*Allan* The diamonds still appear to be there.

*Henry* Yes, for you, if you live to see it. Go on!

*(They go on, and the scene opens to another hall, which is the treasury.)*

## Scene 2. In the treasury.

*Allan* I don't believe my eyes. What do you know about this, Gagool?

*Gagool* During 90 generations only one stone was brought out of here. That's the stone that the king is wearing on his front. King Solomon opened the mine but never entered it himself. As you see, the mining went actively on when the mine was abandoned. No one knows why it was. Perhaps king Solomon didn't want it any more, didn't need it or that his government was finished. He was already the richest man in the world when he first came here, so why would he care to triple his fortune?

*Allan* Has really no one been here before us?

*Gagool* Only one man, who filled the goatskin bag there on the floor with diamonds, but he panicked, ran out and escaped, but he didn't get very far. He got stuck on the mountain over there.

*Good* José da Silvestra!

*Gagool (hard)* How do you know the name? – He only got one single diamond with him, which now is on the king's brow.

*Allan* Has really no one else been here before us?

*Gagool* Like king Solomon never entered, no king after him has wished to do so. They visit the eternal death banquet, but only I know the secret of the door at the entrance. No one can open it except me.

*Good* So all we have to do is to provide ourselves. Let's get to work, boys! The glen is open ahead! Here are diamonds at least worth three times *the Bank of England*.

*Henry* I don't like it.

*Allan* It's not every day you have the opportunity to pick diamonds as large as dove's eggs directly from the ground. Henry, don't be stupid now.

*Henry* Well, one or another couldn't do any harm.

Gagool Welcome to harvest what you did not sow! Collect them! Get loaded with them! Eat and drink them, ha-ha! There is no end to them!

Henry Where is Foulata?

Good She did not want to enter. She is waiting by the door.

Henry I don't like this.

Good But I do. Never in my life I thought I could get such a chance.

Allan It's now or never, Henry.

Henry I should have waited outside. Where is that ancient tart?

Allan I can't see her.

Good Has she gone off?

*(Suddenly heart-rending screams from Foulata.)*

Henry Foulata! *(rushes up and off. Outside:)* The door! The door!

*(Good and Allan also rush up, the stage is turned somewhat, so that you see Foulata and Gagool in a close fight with each other. Foulata holds on to Gagool while Gagool pricks her with a dagger.)*

Foulata The door! The door!

Good It is closing!

Henry We are getting locked in!

Gagool Let me go, you wench!

*Foulata (is forced to let her go)* Alas, she has killed me!

Henry Foulata! *(hurries up to her)*

Allan Stop the witch!

Good Too late.

*(You see the door going down and crushing Gagool.)*

Henry There! She got what she deserved!

Good She wanted to sneak out and leave us here!

Allan How is it with the girl?

Henry Dying. Alas, how could I let her out of my sight!

*Foulata (dying)* I stopped her, Incubu, my god. She wanted to clear out and have you buried alive, but I held on to her. Now she is dead with all her immortality.

Henry But we are still buried alive.

*Foulata* Gagool fixed me, but she hasn't fixed you yet. She was the mortal one, not you. *(dies)*

Henry Alas, yet another victim on my conscience!

Allan It was not your fault.

Henry Do you think that helps?

Good Remember that she sacrificed her life in an effort to save ours. Perhaps she did. We are not dead yet.

Allan With Gagool at large out there we would certainly have been dead and maybe also Umbopa. Maybe she saved the future from further terror.

Henry You are right. Consider. No situation is hopeless. There must be some way out of here. The air remains fresh although we breathe and the lamp burns.

Good The lamp will soon be finished.

Henry        Search with all your might! The slightest hole could save us!  
*(They search intensively everywhere all over the scene while the light constantly diminishes. Finally it gets all dark.)*

Allan        Hopeless! God damn, could it be any worse, buried alive with the corpses of two women, one an infernal monster of terror, and the other the loveliest and most heinously unfairly murdered beauty of the country!

Good        She was too beautiful for you, Henry. You would never have been able to keep her anyway.

Henry        Don't say so. She was perhaps actually the only right one for me. I will never find anyone on the same level.

Allan        Save your air and energy! Go on searching instead! That's our only hope. We have almost no water left.

Good        I found it!

Henry        What?

Good        A draught of air! *(stamps)* It is hollow underneath! It could be another shaft. This seems to be some heavy hatch of some sort...

Allan        Give us a hand here, Henry, if you have any strength left!  
*(With all the effort in the world they succeed in lifting the large hatch. Light comes on them from below. Running water is heard.)*

Good        Water! There is water down there! We are saved!

Henry        Well, not quite just yet. Can you swim?

Good        What a question to a man of the navy.

Henry        Pardon. It was meant as a joke. Come on! Let's leave the curse of Gagool behind!  
*(They go down through the hatch. Allan as the last one first fills his pockets with diamonds.)*

### Scene 3. The camp.

Infadoos    Two days without any sign of life. I am afraid there is no hope left.

A warrior    Here is king Ignosi.

Infadoos    My royal nephew! Welcome! I am afraid the worst might have happened.

Ignosi        I came as soon as I got your message, uncle. No sign? Neither of our friends, Gagool or Foulata?

Infadoos    Lost without a trace. I left a guard up at the entrance to the hall of kings and asked him to send messengers with news every second hour, but they only came with no news.

Ignosi        And in this case no news is bad news.

Infadoos    But what is that? Ghosts or phantoms back from the dead?  
*(Good, Allan and Henry appear in the most deplorable imaginable condition, ragged, dirty and bloody.)*

Ignosi        It's our friends, although it doesn't look like it. Have you had a new furious fight, Incubu?

*Henry* Yes, with nature, canyons and caves, with stones, mountains and jackals.

*Allan* Gagool and Foulata are dead. Gagool killed the girl when she saved our lives.

*Ignosi* Then at least the worst curse of the country is over and done with, but it makes me sorry about Foulata. The point is though that you came back alive.

*Good* We managed to crawl out through abandoned shafts and jackal dens, when Gagool managed to lock us in but was herself crushed in her own trap.

*Infadoos* That serves her right.

*Ignosi* And still you came out with your pockets full of diamonds, I see. You are welcome. They are yours. But will you now stay with us or go away again?

*Henry* My royal brother, I am sorry, but after Foulata's death I could impossibly remain in the country, no matter how much I learned to appreciate it and you. Consider our expedition as a temporary mission to clean up some disorder and restore power to the right person, which for us has been a privilege and honour to be able to do, but now our mission is accomplished.

*Ignosi* I respect your decision and am pleased at the same time that you still got over a perhaps large enough amount of diamonds to be able to conclude your long lives in safety.

*Henry* They belong to my comrades. I don't care about them. All I wanted was to find my brother.

*Ignosi* Then we have a surprise for you. *(makes a sign. Some warriors appear with a palanquin. When its curtains are opened a man appears very much like Henry with a damaged leg.)*

*Henry* Neville! We thought you were dead!

*Neville* I thought so too. I never reached this damned country. I happened to an accident and became an invalid out in the desolation hoping that some ostrich hunter would find me, and then one day this gang appears and fixes a palanquin for me and carries me to the king who claims he found my brother. What the devil are you doing here, Henry?

*Henry* Searching for you!

*Neville* But now it is I who have found you! *(Henry goes forth and embraces him as far as he is able to with his brother's badly damaged leg and crutch and gives Ignosi a questioning glance.)*

*Ignosi* Like all Europeans you jumped too easily to conclusions, Incubu, when you saw Twala's collection. You saw someone like your brother, the shock of the abomination became too much for you, you went mad and killed Twala and Scragga, and for that we are grateful, since you that way solved all the problems of the country except Gagool, which now seems to be resolved as well.

*Neville* Who is Gagool?

*Henry* A dangerous lady who held the entire country in her hands. She was the great terror.

*Allan* She was in possession of superior knowledge which she used in the wrong way.

*Neville* Then I am glad I never met her.



*Good* I have thought of this for a long time, my good brother Infadoos, who still was the one who made our entire happy mission possible. May I try to honour you with this gift? *(takes out his monocle and places it in Infadoos' eye.)*

*Infadoos* My good brother, you couldn't have given me anything better. Now I don't have to envy you any more.

*Good* Yes, for now we are colleagues and on the same level. *(brings out another monocle and puts it in his eye.)*

*Ignosi* We found your brother, Incubu, in an oasis further to the west than the way you followed. There is a chain of oases there that will bring you more easily to the coast than the road across the mountains. I will gladly offer you a guide on the way.

*Henry* King Ignosi, we find ourselves drowned in your overwhelming good will.

*Ignosi* Honestly speaking I did not expect to see you again alive, when uncle Infadoos brought me the news that you had not returned. I could not accept this. Therefore I brought your brother here for him to lure you out, and it was successful. Now we shall celebrate this extremely happy end, and if I am lucky you might still have some drops left?

*Allan* The last drops are reserved for our royal brother.

*Ignosi* Not all, I hope! Come, my friends! First to the bath, and then to the party! *(leads his friends out, and all leave in a festive mood, the festive party crowned by the palanquin with Neville's broken bandaged leg hanging outside.)*

*Neville* Good for us then that I still have some bottles left!

*The End.*

*Mainu Ka Tilla, 11.11.2014,  
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