

# *The Great Game*



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Historical drama in five acts

by Christian Lanciai (2000)

*The Characters:*

a messenger  
Sergeant Feodosov  
Colonel Grombchevsky  
a dispatch rider  
a Gurkha soldier  
Francis Younghusband  
Petrovsky, Russian consul in Kashgar  
Sven Hedin  
a servant  
George Nathaniel Curzon  
Cecil Rhodes  
Sir Thomas  
John Claude White  
King Chogyal av Sikkim  
Queen Gyalmo av Sikkim  
Count Lamsdorff  
Tzar Nicholas II of Russia  
Agvan Dorjjeff, Mongolian monk  
Lord Kitchener  
General Depon Lhading  
Shatra Paljor Dorje  
Dalai Lama XIII  
Soldier Jack  
Soldier Brown  
Anne Taylor  
Brigadier James MacDonald  
Yu-Tai, amban from China  
Mrs Helen Younghusband, the colonel's wife  
Eileen Younghusband, their daughter  
Sir Charles Bell

Tibetan monks and lamas, British soldiers, servants and attendants

The action takes place in the Himalayas around 1900,  
including a scene in Rhodesia and one in St. Petersburg.

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Act I scene 1. Outside a tent.

*messenger (in hurriedly) Colonel! Colonel! (stops outside the tent)*

*Grombchevsky (inside, grumpy and newly risen) Who is it?*

*messenger Sergeant Feodosov!*

*Grombchevsky Yes, come in then, segeant Feodosov, and don't stand there outside howling!*

*(The tent is opened as the segeant enters. It's a wealthy Russian colonel's sumptuous tent with a large dominating richly furnished table.)*

*messenger Sir, the British are close! (delivers a report)*

*Grombchevsky That's no news, my friend. They are always too close. (eyes the report)*

*messenger But now they are quite close! And they clearly have hostile intentions!*

*Grombchevsky They always have, my friend. That's no news either. Who is leading them?*

*messenger A captain in the British army.*

*Grombchevsky Just a captain? He has no rank. And how many men?*

*messenger A Gurkha escort of a handful men.*

*Grombchevsky Then they come as gentlemen. Then we have nothing to fear. They only come here to make a palaver. Then we must invite them.*

*A dispatch rider (outside the stage) Colonel!*

*Grombchevsky (grumpily) What is it now then?*

*Dispatch rider (enters) Colonel!*

*Grombchevsky Yes, you already said that! Come to the point!*

*rider A group of Englishmen are on their way here asking for an audience.*

*Grombchevsky Parliamentarians?*

*Rider Probably.*

*Grombchevsky An English captain with some Gurkhas?*

*Rider Precisely.*

*Grombchevsky Let them come. They are expected. (claps his hands) Sergeant, make the table! We will treat the English devils handsomely!*

*(The dispatch rider disappears, the sergeant organizes servants to lay the table. A large soup terrine is brought in and lots of vodka.)*

This is the moment I have been waiting for all my life! At last I may meet an English officer eye to eye! This is a moment none of us will ever forget! We will turn a new leaf of history!

*(to the servants) What nonsense is this? Only soup? Where is the stew? Where is the steak?*

*A servant Coming!*

*Grombchevsky Yes, let the English come. We'll see who is best at breaking arms here in the heart of Central Asia!*

*A Gurkha soldier (enters, saluting) Colonel Grombchevsky?*

*Grombchevsky The same.*

*Gurkha Captain Younghusband in her Majesty's Service is asking for an audience.*

*Grombchevsky He is welcome.*

*Gurkha (salutes, disappears. Enter Younghusband with his Gurkha escorts at once.)*

*Younghusband* Colonel, a great honour to at last meet you personally!  
*Grombchevsky* Captain, my total hospitality is at your full disposal.  
*Younghusband* What luck that we both speak French! Then we don't have to trouble ourselves with interpreters.  
*Grombchevsky* I hope to be able to satisfy all your wishes to the full, captain. May I offer you some real borshtch with appropriate appetizers?  
*Younghusband* What was that you said?  
*Grombchevsky* Borshtch.  
*Younghusband* What's that?  
*Grombchevsky* Soup.  
*Younghusband* Thank you, I'd be delighted. Food is always appropriate.  
*Grombchevsky* Have a seat. The table is laid to your honour, as you can see.  
*Younghusband* I thank you. (*takes a seat*) May I ask, what are you actually doing here, colonel?  
*Grombchevskyj* I was just about to put the same question to you.  
*Younghusband* I was first.  
*Grombchevsky (proud)* I am here by command of His Imperial Majesty Tzar Alexander III.  
*Younghusband* And what is your mission?  
*Grombchevsky* No, it's your turn now to answer the question.  
*Younghusband* I am here to visit you.  
*Grombchevsky* I thought so. Some vodka?  
*Younghusband* Thank you, I don't drink while on duty.  
*Grombchevsky* But I do, and if you don't keep me company you are insulting me! Here I invite you for dinner, and you don't want to drink with me! What sort of manners is that? (*angrily, to a servant*) Make haste with the stew!  
*Younghusband* Anything to please you, colonel. (*offers his glass*)  
*Grombchevsky* That sounds more like it. Now I can almost start believing in you. (*fills his glass to the brim*) And how would you approach me?  
*Younghusband* Politely but firmly to insist on knowing your intentions.  
*Grombchevsky* By what right?  
*Younghusband* You are on British territory, colonel.  
*Grombchevsky* Hunza belongs to the emir of Hunza.  
*Younghusband* Who is allied with England.  
*Grombchevsky* No one can argue about that.  
*Younghusband* Has he invited you here?  
*Grombchevsky (proud)* No, I am sent by the Tzar.  
*Younghusband* Are you aware that your location is south of the Karakoram pass?  
*Grombchevsky* Yes, of course I am. Or else I would never have met you.  
*Younghusband* So you are here just for a visit of courtesy?  
*Grombchevsky* Yes, you could say that. My real camp is far from here in Turkestan out of your reach.  
*Younghusband* And what are you doing in Turkestan?  
*Grombchevsky* Guarding our interests.

*Younghusband* Is it part of your interests to attack and plunder the caravans from Yarkand to Leh?  
*Grombchevsky* I know nothing about that.  
*Younghusband* I almost knew that.  
*Grombchevsky* Then why did you ask? More vodka?  
*Younghusband* I would rather not.  
*Grombchevsky* I insist. You must. My stew demands plenty of vodka.  
*Younghusband* As you wish. (*Grombchevsky fills up.*)  
*Grombchevsky* I am getting a constantly more favourable impression of you. I almost begin to like you. You drink like a Russian but without getting drunk.  
*Younghusband* That's intended.  
*Grombchevsky* Cheers, my brother! (*empties his glass*)  
*Younghusband* Mud in your eye. (*empties his*)  
*Grombchevsky* What does that mean?  
*Younghusband* An English expression. Something like 'Shit in your eye'.  
*Grombchevsky* Shit in your eye! Wonderful! Shit in your eye, brother! (*refills his glass and empties it.*)  
*Younghusband* Ditto. (*empties his*)  
*Grombchevsky* I am sure we will get along well and do some good business together. If the Tzar sends me here, I must get here, mustn't I? – even if I haven't got a damned thing to do here.  
*Younghusband* That's what I mean.  
*Grombchevsky* Have you come here to chase me away?  
*Younghusband* Not at all, only to know your intentions.  
*Grombchevsky* I have no intentions. I only guard the Tzar's interests.  
*Younghusband* Yes. The raids against our caravans.  
*Grombchevsky* I am innocent. They are local bandits.  
*Younghusband* On whose orders?  
*Grombchevsky* Their own.  
*Younghusband* But they are extremely well organized and planned, as if there was a military mind behind.  
*Grombchevsky* I suggest a settlement.  
*Younghusband* I am listening with interest.  
*Grombchevsky* I give you information of from where the raids come, and you give me information of the best way to get down to Leh from here.  
*Younghusband* But surely you must know that?  
*Grombchevsky* I know how to get down into the Nubra valley, but where do you then cross the mountains? If I am rightly informed about your reputation, you are the geographical expert on the area.  
*Younghusband* If you really can put an end to the raids, I can give you that information.  
*Grombchevsky* My word of honour! (*grasps cordially Younghusband's hand*) As between officers! We never break our word! Have some more vodka!

*Younghusband* (*impressed*) I really think you are serious. And you could actually end the raids?

*Grombchevsky* Of course! From tomorrow!

*Younghusband* I believe you. (*to his closest Gurkha*) That knave is then actually behind the raids.

*Gurkha* But he has regretted them now.

*Younghusband* So it is forgiven, until it happens again. (*to Grombchevsky*) It's easier than you think to get up from Nubra.

*Grombchevsky* I am sure it is, if you only know the way.

*Younghusband* There is a shortcut from Shahud-Ula to Polu.

*Grombchevsky* (*surprised*) Is there?

*Younghusband* Indeed there is.

*Grombchevsky* And you are not trying to trick me or lead me astray?

*Younghusband* I can offer you my own guides.

*Grombchevsky* Ladakhis? Kashmiris? Turkestanians?

*Younghusband* Better still. Kirghiz.

*Grombchevsky* Great! (*strikes the hand of Younghusband*) Then I buy it!

*Younghusband* You'll get across the mountains at once.

*Grombchevsky* That's what I call an officer and gentleman!

*Younghusband* I am rather content with our palaver, colonel Grombchevsky.

*Grombchevsky* Me too! I have found a friend! More spirits?

*Younghusband* No thank you, but the stew was delicious. I think it's time for me to retire to my own camp.

*Grombchevsky* You are welcome any time, comrade! There is always more vodka to drink together with real Russians!

*Younghusband* Yes, I believe you. (*rising*) A great pleasure, colonel! (*offers his hand. Grombchevsky shakes it heartily.*)

*Grombchevsky* Mutual! Mutual! (*then falls down into his chair again to immediately bring his glass back to his mouth. The tent is closed, and Younghusband is alone with the Gurkhas.*)

*Younghusband* The matter is settled. The situation is under control.

*Gurkha* Will your Kirghiz really bring him to Leh?

*Younghusband* There are no shortcuts across those mountains. The Kirghiz will lead him to hell, and then he is out of the game. His raids will be discontinued, and then we have only the emir of Hunza to deal with. The matter is settled. But don't tell anybody.

*Gurkha* About what?

*Younghusband* The Kirghiz. It's important for our Russian colonel to make that experience himself.

*Gurkha* You will put him on crutches for the rest of his life.

*Younghusband* No, my friend, he will do it all by himself and most enthusiastically. (*takes the Gurkha around his shoulder, and they walk out.*)

Scene 2. Kashgar. The garden of the Russian embassy.  
Consul Petrovsky and Sven Hedin.

*Petrovsky* I have invited that ridiculous Englishman.

*Hedin* What tricks will you play this time?

*Petrovsky* All sorts of. We are in a cold war with England. If they trample on our toes, it's no more than fair that we trample back.

*Hedin* But no blows under the belt, I hope?

*Petrovskij* If they hit us under the belt, it's not more than fair that we hit them back under the belt.

*Hedin* I understand you perfectly. The English are arrogant and imagine themselves to own the world. All means are allowed in humiliating them. I have never been so badly treated as in London.

*Petrovsky* It pleases me that you are on our side. We have many unplucked geese with the English. I can confidentially reveal a small amusing secret. We intercept all English mail from Kashgar to India.

*Hedin* Are they aware of it?

*Petrovsky* That's the amusing thing. They have no idea.

*Hedin* Serves them right!

*Petrovsky* Cheers, my brother! (*raises his glass. Hedin reciprocates. In the same moment, Younghusband enters.*)

*Younghusband* Gentlemen, I am sorry for being late but at the same time grateful for your invitation. (*discovers Hedin and is surprised*)

*Petrovsky* I understand that you have met the great geographer Sven Hedin before?

*Younghusband (cool)* Yes, we have met. I thought you were on your way south, Mr. Hedin.

*Hedin* I was detained a day or two.

*Petrovsky* But have a seat, captain Younghusband. Make yourself at home. We have both vodka and brandy and red wine.

*Younghusband (takes a seat)* Your rich hospitality has always surprised me. You seem to have inexhaustible resources to turn out more delicious soups and stews than you ever can find in India. From where do you get all your vegetables, here in the most remote city of all from every coast?

*Petrovsky* Don't bother about that, my dear captain. It's our problem. But I have invited another guest here today, who happened to pass by.

*Younghusband* Who?

*Petrovsky* Another incorrigible traveller, just like you yourselves. (*you hear advancing, staggering crutches*) Here he is. (*rises. Grombchevsky enters on crutches.*)

*Younghusband (astonished, rises)* Colonel Grombchevsky!

*Grombchevsky* We meet again, my dear captain.

*Hedin* What on earth has happened to you?

*Petrovsky* He tried to force his way across the Hindukush but went wrong and got stuck in the mountains among multiple avalanches and landslides.

*Hedin* You should have known better, colonel. In the Himalayas it is forbidden to make mistakes. Ask the colonel here.

*Grombchevsky (fixes his eye on Younghusband)* I had reliable guides at my disposal from Kyrgyzstan.

*Hedin* Apparently not so reliable. Now you have learned. Don't make that mistake again.

*Grombchevsky (still with his eye on Younghusband)* Thanks for the warning.

*Petrovsky* But sit down, gentlemen. You are not duelling, are you?

*Younghusband* At least you seem to have survived the ordeals.

*Grombchevsky* That was not the intention.

*Petrovsky* But tell us now about your next projects, professor Hedin. They sound most interesting.

*Hedin* I have been greatly inspired by you, captain Younghusband. How on earth did you manage to cross the Gobi desert the whole way from Manchuria to Lahore?

*Younghusband* Endurance.

*Hedin* I admire you and intend to do the same thing but exclusively for scientific reasons.

*Younghusband* It's an impossible area to chart, because it is moving all the time. Like in Tibet you have to constantly move cities and villages because of the wandering deserts. Even the rivers change their course.

*Hedin* That's what interests me. I intend to chart it all.

*Younghusband (laying a hand on the decrepit Grombchevsky's arm)* I hope, my dear colonel, that you didn't fare too ill in the mountains?

*Grombchevsky (empties a glass)* No danger. I always have my vodka.

*Petrovsky* We Russians always manage, because we always bring our bottle.

*Younghusband* Is that the only reason why?

*Petrovskij* No, but it helps.

*Grombchevsky (to Hedin)* While you Swedes are far too sober and stiff and cold. You will never make it at length.

*Hedin* On the contrary. That's why we manage better than you.

*Grombchevsky (warningly)* Don't forget Poltava!

*Petrovsky* Gentlemen, please don't start arguing now.

*Younghusband (rising)* I have to go on. Thanks for your hospitality, consul Petrovsky.

*Petrovsky* You are always welcome. (*wants to kiss and hug, but Younghusband only offers his hand almost like protection. Petrovsky has no choice but to accept it and be content with that.*)

*Younghusband* Colonel Grombchevsky. (*offers his hand*)

*Grombchevsky* Pardon me for remaining seated, but you know what I have been through.

*Younghusband (to Hedin, without offering his hand)* Good luck with your expeditions, Mr. Hedin.

*Hedin* Thank you, I wish you the same. (*Younghusband leaves.*)

*Petrovsky (to Hedin)* He doesn't like you.

*Hedin* No, he is an Englishman, you know.



*Grombchevsky* On the day when the English start kissing and hugging, that will be the last day of the British Empire.

*Petrovsky* But ours will probably see the end before that. Cheers, gentlemen! (*They drink contentedly and heartily together, but Sven Hedin with some more detachment.*)

### Scen 3. Mastuj in Chitral.

*Younghusband* What do you do here in the world beyond nowhere? My soul is empty, and I have nothing to live for. I ought to quietly retire in peace and loneliness without telling anyone and only dedicate myself to philosophical meditation. My career has lost its bearings, and my betrothed has broken our engagement. So there is really nothing else to do than to drop off altogether.

*A servant* Captain! A lonely traveller is on his way here.

*Younghusband* Who is it?

*servant* No one knows.

*Younghusband* Who would come to Mastuj except for my sake? Is he an Englishman?

*Servant* He could be nothing else. He seems tired.

*Younghusband* Then we must take care of him. Alert the kitchen!

*Servant* Now he reaches the gate.

*Younghusband* I fear some life decisive surprise.

(*Curzon staggers in, completely exhausted, dusty and miserable.*)

George Nathaniel Curzon!

*Curzon* Beer! Or else I die!

*Younghusband* Give him some beer, for God's sake.

*Curzon* Don't get God mixed up in this.

*Younghusband* God is mixed up with everything.

*Curzon* That is debatable.

*Younghusband* My God, you must have been travelling for weeks or months to get here!

*Curzon* I have never forgotten you, Francis. The two of us are the only ones today who make some point of the British Empire. (*gets his beer*) Here is my salvation.

*Younghusband* I have given it up.

*Curzon* Drinking? Your salvation? Or the empire?

*Younghusband* My mother died shortly after my betrothed broke our engagement. I believe in nothing any more and least of all in the empire.

*Curzon* Then I really arrived here at the right moment. The dullards are in power now, Francis, but they are boring the entire world to death. Gladstone is going gaga with his pitiable blinkers policy. There must be a change, and then you and I will be needed, Francis.

*Younghusband* Is the career all you can think of?

*Curzon* What else is there to think of?

*Younghusband* God.

Curzon Don't bring up that old waltz! It is worn out! It leads nowhere! We have nothing else to live for than our own glorious vanity!

Younghusband So therefore you believe in the empire.

Curzon You and I know how dangerous the Russians are. They never compromise with their political egoistical appetite. They never gave up the ambition to reach down to the Indian Ocean.

Younghusband I know. But the Tzar is getting old, and his son is incompetent.

Curzon The Tzar is just their figurehead. It's the ship that is sailing, and it will stop at nothing, not even Turkestan or Tibet. You have seen that for yourself.

Younghusband You are right. So what do you want of me?

Curzon Be ready. Stand up for the conservatives. Make public speeches. Write articles in the press. Write about what you know about the Russian advances into Turkestan and Tibet.

Younghusband They are more dangerous here on the western front.

Curzon Write about that as well! Demand a firmer government! That's the least thing we can ask for.

Younghusband In that case I must come home to England.

Curzon Do so. We are waiting for you.

Younghusband I had almost dropped off and intended to retire.

Curzon Who has tempted you off on such byways? Who has seduced you?

Younghusband (*shows a book*) Leo Tolstoy.

Curzon Beware. He is a Russian. He only favours Russian interests.

Younghusband No. He preaches christianity and universal good will.

Curzon He is a count and Russian officer. He will always remain a Russian imperialist at heart. He just wants to demoralise the rest of the world to further the egoistic interests of Russia.

Younghusband You don't know him.

Curzon Neither do you.

Younghusband But he is good.

Curzon But we are better.

Younghusband You are incorrigible as a careerist, Curzon.

Curzon You should be grateful for that. Or else you would have been lost. Come with me to England now, and let's get some action in politics.

Younghusband (*thoughtfully*) You are irresistible.

Curzon That's intended. If only there were more than just the two of us, the world would look considerably better.

Younghusband Finish your beer, and let's have some dinner.

Curzon You think of everything. (*drinks up*)

Younghusband A British officer must always do that.  
(*He pats Curzon's arm, and they walk out.*)

Act II scene 1. Rhodesia.

*Cecil Rhodes (sumptuous, pompous, in a heavily furnished room)* But my dear Sir Thomas, you can't just act like that!

*Thomas* I am innocent. I was not the one who failed,

*Rhodes* Who was it then that failed? Queen Victoria?

*Thomas (shrugs his shoulders)* Everybody except we and she.

*Rhodes (strikes the table)* No, Sir Thomas, we are all accountable, for we were all in on it to plan the plot!

*Thomas* We can afford a failure. You are after all the richest man in the world, Sir Cecil.

*Rhodes* No, damn it, Sir Thomas, we can't afford the slightest failure! Nothing must go wrong in our perfect planning! But here exactly everything has gone wrong!

*Thomas* It's not our fault.

*Rhodes* You are wrong, Sir Thomas, for the whole world is unanimous in condemning us and blaming the British Empire! *(a servant turns up)* Yes, what is it, miserable rogue!

*Servant* Captain Francis Younghusband is here.

*Rhodes* The only man with clean hands in all Africa!

*Servant* Shall I let him in?

*Rhodes* Yes, what else, you miserable rogue! *(the servant disappears)*

*Thomas* Who is it?

*Rhodes* The only link in the entire enterprise that hasn't broken. He is our most important link of communications. He was the one to have delivered the message that the coup had been successful and that Transvaal had joined South Africa. Now he instead got the most awkward task of secretly revealing to us that everything had gone down the drain.

*Thomas* What does he want?

*Rhodes* Increase our bad conscience and pull out, I guess.

*(enter Younghusband.)*

*Younghusband (very correct, bowing)* My gentlemen, Cecil Rhodes, Sir Thomas.

*Rhodes* I assure you, Francis, that you will get through all this with clean underwear.

*Younghusband* I can only do that if I don't have to appear publicly in this deplorable affair.

*Rhodes* That's what you don't have to do. You can return home to England and take it easy, and no one will ask you any inconvenient questions.

*Thomas* I am just trying to explain to Sir Cecil that really no one is to blame.

*Rhodes* Bullshit! Shut up! We are all equally accountable!

*Younghusband* But why really did everything go wrong?

*Thomas* That's what everyone is wondering.

*Rhodes* Balderdash! Everything went wrong, because everything was just pipedreams! The enterprise was not anchored in reality! We thought the Englishmen of Johannesburg would rebel when the Jameson raid went off, but they didn't, and least of all when Jameson and all his men were caught. It appeared that the Englishmen of Johannesburg don't give a damn whether they are governed by Englishmen or Boers. The

only important thing to them is their wallet. If other Englishmen make fools of themselves they would rather remain under the Boers. It's called pragmatism. We are no pragmatists.

*Younghusband* A worrisome fiasco, Sir Cecil, for which the entire British Empire will have to carry the blame.

*Rhodes* That's precisely what I mean! An unforgivable, outrageous hell of a fiasco!

*Younghusband* But that is not the worst of it.

*Rhodes* What is then the worst, if I may ask?

*Younghusband* This is only the beginning. The consequences must lead to war between ourselves and the Boers, a war that must be stamped as unjust by the entire world, for president Kruger could then point out the criminality of the British aggression to the whole world, since we ourselves have provided him with the evidence.

*Rhodes (mumbling)* He is so damned right, that brick of honour Younghusband!

*Thomas* But at the same time we can rejoice at Lord Kitchener's successes in Khartoum. He has at last avenged general Gordon.

*Rhodes* That arsehole! Lord Kitchener is a disgrace to his country! Do you suggest that mowing down thousands of sabre swinging muslims by armoured machine guns is honourable? That's not war, my boy! It is downright meat slaughter! Such as Kitchener will lead all Great Britain to hell! I never want to see him any more!

*Younghusband* Are there any honourable wars? (*Rhodes and Thomas fall silent.*)

*Rhodes (after a while)* Your question surprises us, old boy. Can you as an experienced old professional soldier who fought Russians and Turks all your life ask such a question?

*Younghusband* I have already asked it.

*Rhodes* Perhaps you can also answer it then.

*Younghusband* No, there really are no honourable wars, for no one ever won more than he lost in a war. The only matter that could justify a war is if it is a war of defence, which is the only kind of war I ever engaged in, until I came down here to South Africa and was mixed up in the Jameson coup.

*Thomas* War of defence? Against whom? Mountain Turks? Turkmenians? Afghans? Harmless Hindus?

*Younghusband* No, against Russians. Russia is threatening all Asia, and only we Englishmen can defend Asia against them.

*Thomas* You mean our British colonies.

*Younghusband* By our mandate in Asia we have the possibility and right to defend Asia against Russia. If we didn't exist, probably all Turkestan, Tibet and even India would be overwhelmed by the greedy voluptuous Russian empire.

*Rhodes* He is right. We have made fools of ourselves in Africa, but we still keep Africa. But we haven't made fools of ourselves in India, and there we have a noble cause to defend. Forget Africa, captain Younghusband, and go on defending India, its integrity and culture.

*Younghusband* That's what I intend to do.

*Rhodes (goes up to him and shakes his hand)* You are a man of honour, captain. You never had any part in the Jameson plot.

*Younghusband* Thanks for that.

*Rhodes* Go now to your duties. You are free from us.  
(*Younghusband makes a short bow and leaves.*)

Well, where were we?

*Thomas* The entire Jameson affair has to be cleaned up.

*Rhodes* Politically we could perhaps wash up our so far dirtiest laundry ever, Sir Thomas, but never historically.

## Scene 2. Delhi.

Curzon's installation as viceroy of India in pompous splendour, Curzon himself on a high ivory throne with a cupola and dressed up in all the regalia of imperial India...

*Curzon (rising)* Our glorious Queen is dead, but instead we have our new glorious king and emperor of India, Edward VII! Long live His Majesty!

(*raises his sword. A male chorus answers:*)

*all* Long live the king!

*Curzon* Our glorious empire is without limits, and in the name of our glorious majesty Queen Victoria we acquired a fourth of the world to further it, develop it and educate it in a democratic direction. As Rudyard Kipling so aptly put it, our responsibility is total. The white man's burden is given him to carry it, and it is a glory for him to carry it. One day perhaps our 300 million Indian subjects will have acquired the right education to be able to carry it themselves in democratic order. If that day comes, we have succeeded with our mission.

*Many voices* Hear! Hear!

*Curzon* Captain Francis Younghusband, step forth. (*He steps forth. Curzon sits down and is completely relaxed at ease, shows Younghusband to take a seat next to him.*) Sit down, captain Younghusband. I have a mission for you.

*Younghusband (sits down next to him)* I am all ears.

*Curzon* At last we have the chance, and we are both the right man in the right place. I have total power of India and can do with all Asia whatever I please.

*Younghusband* Pardon me, Sir, but England has never and will never be able to control half of India at most and even less the countries outside.

*Curzon* You are just the realist I need by my side. You mean all the maharadjas, emirs, the independent kingdoms, the French, Danish, Portuguese colonies, etcetera...

*Younghusband* Exactly. We only have those maharadjas in our power who asked for our protection themselves in order not to have to fight among themselves.

*Curzon* Exactly. But in order to succeed so well in our balancing and protecting task, more and more maharadjas are coming to us for protection in subordination to us. That is perfectly in order. That's not what I mean. What threatens us is the Russian aggression.

*Younghusband* I fully agree, Sir.

*Curzon* How much have they really been able to infiltrate Turkestan and Tibet?

*Younghusband* No one knows, Sir. But Turkestan is out of our reach. Tibet is not.

*Curzon* That's what I mean. Just because Turkestan perhaps will fall under Russian influence, we must prevent Tibet from doing so.

*Younghusband* I completely share your opinion, Sir. But how would we do it?

*Curzon* I have all London and Westminster and Whitehall over me. My hands are tied behind my back. I can only do what I want within the borders of India. But we could always begin with Sikkim.

*Younghusband* The king there is weak and harmless and all too kind, like the entire people.

*Curzon* Therefore Sikkim should be an easy task for us and our first step towards Tibet.

*Younghusband* What are your orders, Sir?

*Curzon* Francis, my good friend, go to Darjeeling and reconnoitre. Report directly to me. Inform yourself of the situation and investigate all possibilities. We must begin discreetly with some research.

*Younghusband* Caution is always rewarding, Sir.

*Curzon* We are friends. We have always been, and we will always remain so, through all past lives and in all future ones.

*Younghusband* You flatter me, Sir.

*Curzon* No, for once I am the realist here. Your hands are as free as mine. (*rising*) Do your duty to Edward VII like you did to her most glorious majesty Queen Victoria, our eternal empress of India.

*Younghusband* (*rising, bows in perfect correctness*) It will be an honour for me, Sir.

*Curzon* At ease!

(*Younghusband marches out to the pompous music of a Victorian march.*)

It's bricks of honour like that who keep the empire going. Or else we would all just be empty monkey suits. We still are, but people like Younghusband make us believe that we aren't, that there really is some meaning about our existence... and perhaps there really is, even if we then get to know it when it is too late...

(*sits down on the throne again, brooding*)

### Scene 3. At Younghusband's in Darjeeling.

*Younghusband* I must say that I think you have considerably exceeded your authorities, officer White.

*White* I have only tried to maintain order in the country, captain.

*Younghusband* No, officer White, you have transformed Sikkim into your own personal feudal realm.

*White* I have kept order, Sir.

*Younghusband* Couldn't you have done it without enslaving the people and humiliating the royal family?

*White* Not in my way, Sir.

*Younghusband* You have also implanted a considerable Nepalese population in Sikkim that threatens to supplant the Sikkimese themselves. May I ask why, officer White?

*White* The Sikkimese didn't want to work. So we had to import labour.

*Younghusband* In that way in the long run you steal the land of Sikkim from the Sikkimese and give it to Nepalese strangers instead. Are you aware of this?

*White* It was unavoidable, Sir.

*Younghusband* No, it was not unavoidable. But a more important question is: Was it right?

*White* Captain, you are a younger officer than I and have no right to set yourself above me in moral issues.

*Younghusband* That was all, officer White.

*White* When are you going to Sikkim?

*Younghusband* As soon as possible.

*White* I am grateful for that, Sir. (*leaves*)

*Younghusband* These interminable abusers of power! They don't know what they are doing. They plant a seed of misery which other have to harvest than themselves, and therefore they think they can wash their hands. Only the harvesters are guilty of the harvest, since they harvest it. Wrong, you damned shorts-sighted idiots, wrong!

(*a servant peeks cautiously in*)

Yes, what is it?

*Servant* Sir, the king and queen of Sikkim are here on a visit.

*Younghusband* On a visit?

*servant* Yes, Sir.

*Younghusband* But that's fantastic! Then we must treat them! Make preparations at once for a gala dinner!

*servant* Yes, Sir. (*opens the door*) Their majesty the king and queen of Sikkim. (*enter these, a small man and a more striking Tibetan woman*)

*Younghusband* What an honour! Welcome!

*Queen (Gyalmo)* We understand that we could speak with you. Therefore we thought we should meet.

*Younghusband* It's a great honour for me. I ask you to stay for dinner.

*Gyalmo (exchanges a look with the king)* We shall be delighted.

*Younghusband* I understand you have complaints of officer White.

*Gyalmo (exchanges a look with the king)* We have no complaints.

*Younghusband* I am aware though that officer White has treated you badly.

*king (Chogyal)* No, he hasn't. He has taken my land away from me, he has prevented me from escaping to Tibet, he has kept me imprisoned and isolated, but he has not done us any harm.

*Younghusband* But you can't very well regard him as a benefactor?

*Gyalmo (exchanges a look with Chogyal)* We don't understand our English masters. That's why we thought it necessary to meet one of them with whom we could talk. I think it is important for you to start learning to understand us.

(*meanwhile preparations are made for dinner*)

*Younghusband (fascinated by her, sits down)* Nothing is more important.

*Gyalmo* Then we would like to know: what are your real intentions with us? Do you want to extirpate us as a nation?

*Younghusband* Absolutely not.

Gyalmo                    Why then are you doing it?  
                               *(Younghusband can't endure her keen glance. He lowers his own.)*

Younghusband        Sheer stupidity. Officer White has mismanaged, and I apologise for everything that he has done.

Gyalmo                    He has already taken our land away from us and given it to the Nepalese. Can you give it back?

Younghusband        We can't evacuate all the Nepalese.

Gyalmo                    That's what I mean. The harm is done, and you can do nothing about it. And you haven't answered my question yet.

Younghusband        Which one?

Gyalmo                    What do you really want, I mean in the long term?

Younghusband        Make sure that Tibet does not fall under Russian slavery.

Gyalmo                    Is English slavery better?

Younghusband        There is no English slavery.

Gyalmo                    What has then officer White's business been in Sikkim?

Younghusband *(controls his emotion with difficulty)* My dear guests, dinner is served. I beg you to join me at table.

*(They take their seats at the table.)*

*(offering Gyalmo on his one side)* Champagne? *(She nods. He serves.)*

My dear queen, I know you are Tibetan, and I know that you forward everything I say to your friends in the Tibetan government. First of all I wish to assure you that we will never touch the Tibetan autonomy.

Gyalmo                    Can I believe that after the fate of Sikkim?

Younghusband        Sikkim has a special status of its own, and I sincerely regret what has occurred there without the knowledge or approval of the British government. What has happened in Sikkim will never happen in Tibet.

Gyalmo                    And can you repair what has happened in Sikkim?

Younghusband        I shall see what I can do.

Gyalmo                    You are a good man, captain Younghusband. I think you only want to do good, but I should warn you of daring to enter Tibetan territory.

Younghusband        What do you wish to warn me against?

Gyalmo                    You could start understanding too much and more than what is good for you and your British empire.

Younghusband        That sounds intriguing. More champagne?

Gyalmo                    One day you will understand what I mean, captain.

Younghusband        I hope so, my queen. *(refills her glass.*  
                               *They politely drink to each other and have a nice time together.)*



Act III scene 1. The Russian court.

*Nicholas II* Who is this mysterious monk really?

*Lamsdorff* A Buddhist monk from our part of Mongolia. He studied in his youth in Lhasa and acted for some time as a tutor to the Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of Tibet. But the remarkable thing about him is that he has been able to travel both to Paris and London.

*Nicholas* It sounds interesting. He could be our man. Let me speak with him privately.

*Lamsdorff* Yes, your imperial majesty. (*retires*)

*Nicholas* I was always fascinated by Tibet. This monk Dorjieff could be the right link connecting and uniting Tibet with us. It's worth trying.

*Dorjieff* (*enters, bowing*) Your imperial majesty.

*Nicholas* What is your mission, Dorjieff?

*Dorjieff* I am worried about the future destiny of my country, your highness, and I believe only Russia could save her.

*Nicholas* From what?

*Dorjieff* From England and China.

*Nicholas* Do then England and China really constitute a threat against Tibet, where it lies on the top of the world behind its most unassailable fortress of the highest mountains in the world?

*Dorjieff* No one is at length protected against evil.

*Nicholas* Are then China and England evil powers?

*Dorjieff* All powers are evil that use force.

*Nicholas* Then also Russia is an evil power.

*Dorjieff* You never used force against us and never will.

*Nicholas* Neither did England.

*Dorjieff* England will.

*Nicholas* I doubt it. And as long as they haven't, you have nothing to accuse them of. China hasn't either used force against you. Of what I can understand, you have lived happily under China for two hundred years.

*Dorjieff* China is a greedy bloodsucker who always used force against us by poisoning Dalai Lama before he was old enough to rule.

*Nicholas* That's a terrible accusation.

*Dorjieff* If you all three are evil powers, China is the most evil and you the least evil.

*Nicholas* And therefore you want our protection?

*Dorjieff* Yes. It would be urgent, since probably only you can save us.

*Nicholas* I believe you, dear monk, and respect you, for you are serious and know what you are saying. But my hands are tied. I can do nothing myself, and my foreign minister would never allow us to take the risk of challenging England by importuning in Tibetan affairs. We even have to keep our hands clean of East Turkestan and Mongolia. All I can give you is my personal moral support. We have nothing to do in Tibet, but you can always trust the Tzar personally as a friend.

*Dorjieff* (*bowing*) I am very grateful for that. Maybe that is enough.

*Nicholas* We must be very careful. If the English get the idea that we reached any kind of settlement with you, they could panic and attack Tibet only for that reason. For the sake of Tibet we must try to avoid that.

*Dorjieff* You are a wise man, your highness.

*Nicholas* Be a wise man you too, and all will be well, and neither England, China nor Russia will ever disturb your sacred Tibet.

*Dorjieff (bowing)* May your words come true.

*Nicholas* I hope so too.

*Dorjieff (bowing his way out)* May you live and govern long, your imperial highness.

*Nicholas (alone)* Poor Tibet. It has no chance against the cruel world around it. Neither have I, for that matter. *(leaves)*

## Scene 2. Simla.

*Kitchener* What's happening, Curzon? There must be some great things going on.

*Curzon* Gentlemen, a storm is gathering over Asia unless you do something about it.

*Younghusband* What has happened?

*Curzon* We have obtained confirmed information that Dorjieff has been to Saint Petersburg and had private audiences with both the Tzar and the Tzarevna.

*Kitchener* I'll be damned!

*Younghusband* Who is Dorjieff?

*Curzon* Agvan Dorjieff is Mongolian but a Russian citizen and educated in Lhasa. He is in immediate contact with the Dalai Lama and now also with the Tzar. Add two and two together, gentlemen.

*Younghusband* While Tibet return our letters unopened and refuse to have any communication with us.

*Curzon* Precisely.

*Kitchener* I'll be damned indeed! So we have a Russian-Chinese conspiracy against England!

*Curzon* China has nothing to do with it. But we don't know what has been spoken in Saint Petersburg.

*Kitchener* Then we simply must turn in to Lhasa and force that lama to speak out clearly before he starts speaking Russian!

*Younghusband* My dear Lord Kitchener, you don't know what you are talking about. Tibet is an unassailable fortress at more than ten thousand feet and as large as half of Europe.

*Kitchener* So you would then just sit still and roll your thumbs while the Tzar overtakes Tibet and we get Russians welling down from the mountains into India?

*Curzon* You understand exactly what I mean, Lord Kitchener.

*Kitchener* Francis, only you can do it.

*Younghusband* Do what?

*Kitchener* Set the lama straight in Lhasa.

*Younghusband* It has to be nothing short of an Alexander campaign, if it is to succeed.  
*Kitchener* You could give him unlimited resources, couldn't you, Curzon?  
*Curzon* What will you need, Francis?  
*Kitchener* Just give him a fair battalion, eight Sikh companies, six Gurkha companies, a field hospital, military police, post and telegraph personnel, engineers, road-builders, some hundred porters, some thousand horses, even more yaks and oxen, mules for the entire army and a decent artillery with at least two ten pound cannons, and he will make it.  
*Curzon* Is that enough, Francis?  
*Younghusband* Lord Kitchener has thought it all out in advance.  
*Kitchener* I knew we had to get there sooner or later. No one has been to Lhasa before, Francis, not even Sven Hedin. It will be you who will get the honour of planting our English flag in Lhasa.  
*Younghusband* No violence if it doesn't become necessary. We must have a talk with them. That is all.  
*Curzon* And annul eventual Russian agreements.  
*Younghusband* Yes.  
*Kitchener* Fix them, Francis, so that the Russians never dare to come near India again.  
*Younghusband* I will do my best.  
*Curzon* Francis is the best man we have in the Himalayas. He could but succeed.  
*Kitchener* I agree.  
*Younghusband* In that case, gentlemen, it will be my honour to be able to succeed.  
*Curzon* The matter is settled. Next stop Lhasa! You will have your army, Francis. (*takes his hand with congratulations.*)  
*Younghusband* And it will be brought back intact.  
*Curzon* I don't doubt that for a moment.  
*Kitchener* Good luck, old sport! (*strikes him heavily in the back*)  
*Younghusband* Thank you.  
*Curzon* My back would never survive that unbroken.  
*Kitchener* You don't have to march to Lhasa, Curzon. Others will do it for you.  
*Curzon* I am sincerely grateful for that.  
*Younghusband (rising)* Gentlemen, I must immediately start making my preparations, if you'll excuse me.  
*Curzon* Just don't overstrain yourself.  
*Younghusband* That's all I live for to be able to do. (*leaves*)  
*Kitchener* The right man in the right place.  
*Curzon* That's what we all three are, Kitchener. The empire is fortunate in having us. Or else the Russians would take over the world.

Scene 3. The camp at Khamba La.

*Jack (wakes up, comes out of his tent, yawns, stretches himself, goes to a vessel, shakes it, inspects it, is astonished)* I'll be damned!

*Brown (comes out of the tent)* What's the matter?

*Jack* My teeth!

*Brown* What's the matter with your teeth? You don't have any!

*Jack (shows the vessel)* They are here.

*Brown* Of course they are there! So what?

*Jack* I put them here in the water yesterday.

*Brown* But they are still there. So what is your complaint?

*Jack* They are stuck! They are frozen solid!

*Brown (inspects the vessel)* I'll be damned!

*Jack* I thought we were making war in India, not in Siberia.

*Brown* This is Tibet, old chum! Here anything could happen.,

*Jack* Obviously, but now I have no teeth to bite the grass with until this lump of ice has melted.

*Brown* There is no grass here to bite anyway. You'll find only ice flowers here.

*Anne Taylor (enters)* Could you tell me where I could find commissioner Francis Younghusband, please?

*Brown (inspects her)* Are you his wife?

*Taylor* Don't be impertinent, cheeky lummo! Do I look like a wife of his?

*Brown* You would fit the picture perfectly.

*Jack* Crazy fool! His wife is at a sanatorium in Darjeeling.

*Brown* What luck! I was afraid this could be his wife.

*Taylor* Cheeky louts! Show me to commissioner Younghusband at once!

*Jack* And who sends her greetings?

*Taylor* Miss Anne Taylor! Who else!

*Jack* And what are you doing here, if I may ask, in the middle of the Tibetan Siberian tundra in the middle of January?

*Taylor* That's exactly what I wanted to ask your commissioner about!

*Brown* Do you have anything here to do?

*Taylor* If!

*Brown* Will you put a ring in his nose and drag him down with you to his unhappy wife in Darjeeling?

*Taylor (proud)* I am a missionary, gentlemen!

*Brown (to Jack)* She is a missionary.

*Jack (back)* That would suit a commissioner.

*Brown* I doubt it. Here he is.

*Younghusband (enters)* What is going on here?

*Taylor* Are you commissioner Francis Younghusband?

*Younghusband* Yes, madam.

*Taylor* I am miss Anne Taylor, missionary of the presbyterian church.

*Younghusband (backs)* I have heard about you.

*Taylor* I wished to discuss the Tibetan situation with you.

*Younghusband* I am a military, not a preacher.

*Jack (to Brown)* Now I know who she is. She was the one who would convert all Lhasa to Christianity.

*Brown* Did she succeed?

*Jack* No, she was stuck here on the border.

*Brown* What would she convert them with? Her umbrella?

*Jack* No, she had forgotten that at home.

*Brown* No wonder she failed.

*Younghusband (irritated)* Go to your business, boys. I will take care of our guest.

*Jack and Brown* Yes, Sir. *(They leave.)*

*Younghusband* So. What can I do for you?

*Taylor* Theosophy is very much in demand now. Have you read this book by Annie Besant?

*Younghusband* That distracted dispersion who wants to separate India from the empire preaching female emancipation and voting rights making a career as an anarchist and communist? No, I certainly haven't.

*Taylor* Then you really should.

*Younghusband* I haven't time for such nonsense, madam.

*Taylor* You forget yourself, Sir. I am a woman.

*Younghusband* So what? Why should I care? No matter who you are there is no place for you here, for this is a military expedition, where women have absolute nothing to do.

*Taylor* There you are absolutely wrong.

*Younghusband* The hell I have! *(roars)* MacDonald!

*1 (reappears)* He is busy with the fortifications, Sir.

*Younghusband* I can see that. It's just what he wasn't supposed to be! We are here to negotiate, not to take fortresses!

*Jack* Here he is.

*MacDonald (a brutal stolid military)* Sir, the fortress has been taken and is fortified.

*Younghusband* You silly ass, do you want to ruin the entire expedition? I told you to take no military action!

*MacDonald* We can't just pass an excellent fortress without fortifying it on the way.

*Younghusband* Colonel MacDonald, try to get it into your restricted brain sometime, that this is not some world conquering enterprise like in the fashion of Alexander the Great but just an effort to open a peaceful communication with the Tibetans!

*Taylor* The Tibetans don't speak English. It is fruitless.

*Younghusband (bellowing at her)* Stay out of this!

*Jack (to Brown, who has rejoined)* Now she should have had her umbrella.

*Brown* Then Sir Francis would have had an extra private war on.

*Jack* He already has.

*Taylor* Commissioner Younghusband, you are a conceited humbug! *(marches out)*

*Younghusband (ignores her completely)* Colonel MacDonald, don't you understand that the least hostile demonstration must totally wreck the entire diplomatic mission and meaning of our enterprise!

*MacDonald* I am a soldier, Sir, and I perform my duty.

*Younghusband* No, you don't, since you don't obey orders!

*MacDonald* I am a colonel and take orders from Lord Kitchener.

*Younghusband* But I answer directly under the viceroy! Evacuate the fortress at once!

*MacDonald* Yes, Sir. *(remains standing)*

*Younghusband* Well, what are you waiting for?

*MacDonald* One more thing, Sir.

*Younghusband* Well?

*MacDonald* We can't stay here, Sir. The men can't handle the cold.

*Younghusband* Speak for yourself. The men are doing splendidly.

*MacDonald* The men are losing their teeth when they try to drink water, since they get stuck with them in the ice.

*Younghusband* Nonsense! My Gurkhas and sepoy's have managed worse winters in Pamir!

*MacDonald* This is Tibet, Sir, not Pamir.

*Younghusband* And neither is it Siberia! We are on the same latitude as Cairo in Egypt!

*MacDonald* Sir, the men can't take it.

*Younghusband* Now it's bloody well enough, damn it! I'll ride to the lamas alone to get this business finished. Bring my horse!

*MacDonald* Don't do it, Sir. Don't risk your life and the entire expedition!

*Younghusband* Says you!

*Brown* Sir, the lamas are here. They wish to speak with you.

*Younghusband* Well, at last! *(calms down instantly. Relieved, to MacDonald:)* Make sure now that we don't touch the fortress. And we stay here.

*MacDonald* Yes, Sir. *(leaves)*

*Younghusband* Welcome, gentlemen! Adjutant, tea, at once!

*(The tent is opened, the lamas show up, they all ceremoniously take their seats, tea is served.)*

Come in, gentlemen. You have no idea how much we have longed for you.

*(The lamas look at each other, no one understanding anything.)*

*lama 1* The dangerous yeti at least appears to be hospitable.

*2* Perhaps we could speak with him like to a man.

*1* Maybe it isn't that dangerous. *(They sit down and have tea.)*

*Younghusband* First of all, gentlemen, what does your government mean by refusing to open our letters and receive our messengers?

*1* Tibet is a closed country to all foreigners.

*Younghusband* Also to Chinese and Russians?

*1* We have to endure the Chinese to avoid trouble with them.

*2* No Russian has ever been to Tibet.

*Younghusband* Not even Agvan Dorjief? *(The lamas look at each other.)*

*1* Agvan Dorjief is Mongolian.

*2* Only Mongolians are welcome to Tibet from the outside world.

*Younghusband* But Agvan Dorjieff is a Russian citizen and has met the Tzar and his wife. *(The lamas look at each other.)*

1 We know nothing about that.

2 No Russian has ever been to Tibet.

*Younghusband* But you accept him as a Russian envoy and send him with letters to the Tzar. Why will you then not accept letters from us?

2 Tibet has no contacts with Russia.

1 Tibet wants no foreign aggression in Tibet.

*Younghusband* Why are you so afraid of us? We have been in India for 300 years and never touched the least of their hindu, muslim and buddhist circles. Why do you then think that England will encroach on yours?

2 We didn't want to take any risks.

*Younghusband* We must get into contact with the Dalai Lama. He must listen to what we have to say.

1 You stay here!

*Younghusband* Not if you refuse us any contact with the Dalai Lama.

1 *(rising, in anger)* How do you think the Dalai Lama wants to see you when you come here with armies like bands of bandits and ruthless trespassers? It's an insult to His Holiness!

*Younghusband* I am sorry, but his holiness must accept it if he doesn't want to speak with us.

2 *(rising, also in anger)* You will never get to Lhasa!

*(The monks leave the tent and stage in anger.)*

*Younghusband (quietly, resigned)* So it has to be Lhasa.

Scene 4. Lhasa. Kashag, the Tibetan parliament.  
Dalai Lama XIII enthroned above the others,  
mostly monks and lamas but also officials and generals.

*General* We must make no concessions to these alien barbarians. They have entered the country without right and have nothing to do here. The right is on our side, and we should throw them out.

*Shatra* Do you think we can? It's a great army and well armed. What do we have to put against them but wooden spears and sling-stones?

*Dalai Lama* Shatra Paljor Dorje, you have been abroad and know the English better than any of us do. Is it your opinion that we should negotiate with them since they insist on forcing us to the negotiating table?

*Shatra* I don't think we have any choice.

*General* But it is wrong! You are wrong and we are right! We have no right to compromise with foreign devils just because they come here bringing war into our own land of Tibet! And I am certain that we can drive them back. We are on our own native ground, and they are not even used to cold, even less to our altitude conditions. I am sure

they all just want to go home. It's only their leader, that mad commissioner, who forces them to stupid follies inside our country.

*A monk* We must turn to our oracle of Nechung for advice. (*general enthusiastic acclaim*)

*General* The oracle of Nechung is intended for more spiritual issues about the future and such things. In this issue we have to be practical.

*Shatra* Couldn't we set ourselves to both negotiate with the intruders and at the same time be determined not to make any concessions?

*Dalai Lama* Wisely spoken, Shatra.

*General* But we still have to teach them a lesson. If we manage to beat them in a confrontation, we don't need to negotiate with them nor keep them in the country.

*Shatra* I advise you to avoid a confrontation at any price!

*General* A confrontation is unavoidable!

(*All start chattering at once, no one listening to anyone.*)

*Dalai Lama (rings a bell to have silence)* Silence! I decide, that we shall both be prepared for negotiations, to never make any concessions and to meet them in a confrontation. Does that satisfy everyone?

(*All mumble assent.*)

That resolves that issue until the Englishmen turn up. But I fear, general Depon Lhading, that our weapons and means of defence will be poor against theirs.

*General* No matter how much Buddhist we are, we must never give up without a fight.

(*many agree*)

*Dalai Lama* We haven't been at war for more than a thousand years.

*General* There has been no need. Now there is need.

*Dalai Lama* I greatly fear the consequences of the course of these events. I don't like the hard ugly world outside Tibet. None of us wants it in Tibet, but we can't keep it away. So we have to fight with the risk that it won't help. Shatra, any comment?

*Shatra* I think the English themselves just wish to negotiate without fighting.

*Dalai Lama* I think so too, but if they fight we have to fight back, even if that's the last thing we were meant for in life. But we will anyway ask the oracle of Nechung for advice.

(*rises with approving consent from the monks above all but also from all the others, retires, and all the others follow him out.*)

#### Act IV scene 1. Guru.

*MacDonald* The enemy is in sight, Sir! Request permission to open fire.

*Younghusband* No! Not until they attack, and they will not attack!

*MacDonald* We have them, Sir! We could surround them in a few minutes!

*Younghusband* Keep still! I see a parliamentarian.

*a soldier* It's the general himself.

*Younghusband* I'll go up and talk with him.

*General* Englishmen, we wish to speak with you! Don't shoot!

*MacDonald* Lay down your weapons first! If anyone shoots we open fire!



*Younghusband* No! Let me speak with him!  
*MacDonald* Put out your fuses, general! That counts for all of you!  
*General (back, to his own)* Put out the fuses. They don't intend to shoot.  
*Younghusband* I am happy to speak with you, general.  
*General* And I am happy to speak with you. As you see, we have put out all our fuses. All we want is peace.  
*Younghusband* We also only want peace. We have a common aim and interest.  
*Lhading* But you have to leave Tibet. We can't have you here. You have come here without right with an army and fire arms although Tibet never insulted your country.  
*Younghusband* We have to speak with your Dalai Lama. We can't accept that you only have contact with Russia and not with England.  
*Lhading* We have no contact with Russia. All Russians who have come to Tibet have been expelled.  
*Younghusband* Except Dorjjeff.  
*Lhading* Dorjjeff is Mongolian.  
*Younghusband* But he is in contact with the Russian court, and you have Russian support against England.  
*Lhading* That is incorrect.  
*Younghusband* We must speak with your Dalai Lama.  
*Lhading* He doesn't want to speak with you. I must ask you to leave the country.  
*Younghusband* If you will not let us through we will come anyway.  
*Lhading* You are deceitful and insidious intruders. You have no good intentions. You only bring misfortune into Tibet.  
*Younghusband* No, we only want better contact with Tibet.  
*Lhading* You bring double standards. I can see from here how you are disarming my army and surrounding it! You never wanted to give us any chance! You only wanted to vanquish us!  
*Younghusband* No!  
*(The general desperately snatches a gun and starts shooting in panic against the English. The shot immediately releases cannonades and incessant fire from the English. You hear heartrending screams of pain and death from the Tibetans. The general is instantly shot to death.)*  
*Younghusband* No! No! No! Cease fire! I never gave that order!  
*MacDonald* I gave the order, Sir, since I had to as a general. They opened fire. We answered it.  
*Younghusband* Can't you see what you have done? You are not making war, general MacDonald! You have only caused a massacre!  
*MacDonald* Our men had clear orders, Sir. They answered given fire.  
*Younghusband* From a poor panicky desperate Tibetan without weapons or armour!  
*MacDonald* He was a general, Sir.  
*Younghusband* But he came here without weapons and almost not even dressed! And did the Tibetans fire back? Did they run away? No, they just remained standing to let themselves be butchered! They didn't come here to fight! They only came here for appearances!

*MacDonald* I am sorry, Sir. (*retires*)

*Younghusband (falling over Lhading's body)* This if anything I came here to avoid! I was never a military and never took part in any battle. That's why I was the right man to be sent on a peaceful mission to Lhasa! And the result? Massacre, bloodbath, human slaughter, misunderstanding, evil and death! How could I ever be able to work as a man after this?

*Brown* Come now, Sir. It is over.

*Younghusband* How many dead?

*Brown* None on our side.

*Younghusband* And what about the Tibetans?

*Brown* At least six hundred.

*Younghusband* Sacrificed, murdered, butchered for nothing! How could we now ever get the good will of Asia?

*Brown* They have to understand the concrete language of force and weapons, which cannot be misunderstood.

*Younghusband* But it's the wrong language! Can't you see? The Asians don't speak with weapons. Their language is of the spirit and good sense.

*Brown* No one can call general Lhading's action sensible, Sir.

*Younghusband* He felt betrayed, when we surrounded and disarmed his troops. How many guns of theirs could we collect?

*Brown* We have found three old rifles, Sir, made in Russia. For the rest it was only wooden spears and sling stones.

*Younghusband* And you just gunned them down!

*Brown* No, Sir, *we* gunned them down.

*Younghusband (resigned)* Get lost, poor devil. You don't get anything. (*Brown leaves, doesn't understand Younghusband.*)

A day of sorrow for Asia, a day of sorrow for England. This is the end of days for the British Empire. We have trespassed into forbidden territory and taken a spiritual realm by violence. Our days are numbered. This is the end of imperialism. We can never survive this with preserved dignity.

(*to some common soldiers*) Take this poor general away and give him a decent funeral. He was after all the brother of the Queen of Sikkim, but they who shot him didn't know that. I was your friend and your brother, general, and the rest of my life I will spend atoning for your death, for I will bring the spirituality of Tibet to the world. You have vanquished us and the British empire by vanquishing me.

(*The common soldiers lay the general on a bier. Younghusband uncovers his head to him.*)

*MacDonald* We can't go back any more. We have swum too far from the beach to be able to return. We have no choice but to carry through this entire expedition by force.

*Younghusband* Don't you think I know?

*MacDonald* And it is not your fault or my fault. It's the fault of this poor dead general, who didn't see what was good for him.

*Younghusband* Don't you understand anything, general? He didn't come here to fight. He came here to give us a moral chance. The wall they built to block our march was not even up to our thighs, and our Tibetan general always kept in front of it! We met an army

of only symbolically armed pacifists, general, and you pressed this completely harmless army down into a meat grinder of blood and splatter and the most unnecessary massacre in the history of our empire!!

*MacDonald* Sir, I am aware that it could have been avoided, but I don't know how, the way your general acted.

*Younghusband* We have lost all our chances of a decent settlement with the Tibetans. Our last chance was this general, whom you shot down. Now all Tibet will raise new harmless armies against us and invite us to constantly increase our massacres of them, and, as you say, we will have no choice.

*MacDonald* I am not quite well, Sir. I have been rather sick lately.

*Younghusband* Yes, and you smoke 40 cigarettes a day, as if that would improve your health! I suggest that you take some time out, general, and return to Darjeeling at once. If you are lucky you will immediately be dismissed with a pension by our sensible viceroy.

*MacDonald (straightens up, bowing in absolute correctness)* Sir, I can't say how sorry I am about this.

*Younghusband* Neither can I! (*MacDonald leaves in dejection.*)

And there is nothing more we can do. The carousel of violence has started off and must accelerate from now on, and we have lost our face to this innocent people and to the whole world and with us the entire British Empire. Yes, there is one thing we can do. (*speaks to the dead general caressing his face*) We can dress your fallen heroes, bandage them and save all your wounded. We can put your fallen Tibetans back on their feet. We can in spite of all act as human beings and gentlemen and do what is right, as far as it is possible, even if the cause of our entire empire now is hopelessly lost.

## Scene 2. Lhasa. Like act III scene 4.

(*Dalai Lama enthroned above the court. Enter monks and councillors with their heads bent.*)

*Dalai Lama* Is the disaster so definite?

*Dorjieff* Yes, it is so definite.

*Dalai Lama* Is then our entire country then in danger?

*Dorjieff* Lhasa is in danger with our entire independence. We are threatened by the invasion of a foreign power, and we have no means to meet force by force.

*Dalai Lama* What actually happened at Guru? Who started the fight?

*Dorjieff* The general palavered. It came to nothing. The English surrounded us and started to disarm us. Then the general had enough and refused to cooperate. He straight mounted a horse and shot an Indian through his hip. Then it was all done for. Then the English immediately started to massacre us. We all died, but none of them died. But afterwards they did a strange thing.

*Dalai Lama* What?

*Dorjieff* They took care of our wounded, bandaged them and saved the lives of most of them. They took no prisoners.

*Dalai Lama* Then they are human after all. Then they have compassion, and then we can speak with them and they become our friends. Shatra was right and the general was wrong, but it is too late now to realize that. Release Shatra from prison immediately. He will speak for us when I am gone.

*Dorjieff* Do your holiness intend an escape?

*Dalai Lama (climbs down)* Do I have any choice? I will escape to Mongolia. Tibet is a free country, and as long as her Dalai Lama is free all Tibetans are free, and they can trust their freedom which is Buddha's own forever. We can no longer stop the English from coming here, but it is beneath my dignity to speak with them. You will negotiate with them, and I dare hope the terms will be humane.

*Dorjieff* Tibet will follow you in your exile, your holiness, as long as you are absent.

*Dalai Lama* As long as I am absent I will be safe and all Tibet will be safe with me, for my spirit stays and lives on with Tibet. You know that. And I will be back. The English cannot stay here, for it is not their country. Their empire will disappear, but Tibet will always remain the eternal custodians of Buddha's most sacred teachings and books. That is our mission in the world as a people: to preserve, guard and protect the sacred message of the Buddha.

May the Buddha remain with you forever, and I will remain with you as long as I live wherever I am.

Now follow me out from here, and let me saddle my horses.

*(The Dalai Lama is escorted out. All the monks remain bent in sorrow.)*

### Scene 3.

*Brown* It's hopeless, Sir. Nobody wants to see you.

*Younghusband* They must give in. They can't just ignore us.

*Brown* That's what they are doing, Sir.

*Younghusband* But still they seemed rather enthusiastic when we marched into Lhasa. They did after all applaud us.

*Brown* Sir, it was a misunderstanding. It was no sign of appreciation. They clap their hands when the point is to drive out evil spirits.

*Younghusband* I see.

*MacDonald (marches in)* Sir, we can't tolerate this any more.

*Younghusband* Are you still at it, general? I thought you had retired with a pension because of ill health.

*MacDonald* I have to safeguard the interests of the empire when you are neglecting them, Sir, even if it has to cost my entire health.

*Younghusband* I thought it did that long ago.

*MacDonald* Are you aware, Sir, that London has requested us to fire cannons at Lhasa if the Tibetans refuse to negotiate with us?

*Younghusband* I am fully aware of it, as I am aware of that they try to get rid of Curzon thanks to the infantile intrigues of that incompetent boor Broderick.

*MacDonald* Curzon has nothing to say any more.

*Younghusband* I know. And by that your empire has lost its only man with both wisdom, power and initiative. Since Curzon was recalled to London, the government has never got its thumb out of its arse.

*MacDonald* I ought to report those words, Sir.

*Younghusband* Do you think you will be allowed to use cannons against Lhasa if you do? I tell you, general, that as long as we are here no one will ever give us any clear orders, since Curzon no longer can do that. Therefore everything that happens here is completely up to ourselves. You know nothing about Asia, general. I know so much about Asia at least, that the most important thing of all here is patience.

*Brown* A delegation wants to see you, Sir.

*Younghusband* At last! Is it the whole government?

*Brown* No, Sir, it is one single person.

*Younghusband* Who then?

*Brown* Yu-Tai, amban and representative of imperial China.

*Younghusband* What does he want?

*Brown* He wants to intrigue. But I don't think he understands himself that he has no deal to come with.

*Younghusband* Very well, if he wants to talk he will be allowed to talk. He could be worth some investigation. General, keep your cannons cooled off.

*MacDonald* Not indefinitely, Sir. (*retires.*)  
*(Amban Yu-Tai is shown in.)*

*Yu-Tai* (*bows ceremoniously and humbly. His entire figure reminds you of Uriah Heep.*) My sincerest good wishes to our guests from far away, wishes the heavenly emperor of Beijing himself.  
*(bows in affected humility with the flats of his hands together)*

*Younghusband* May we offer you some tea, most venerable amban?

*Yu-Tai* With the greatest delight, in the hope that we in the future may requite your hospitality thousandfold.

*Younghusband* Have a seat, venerable amban. What did you say about our being your guests?

*Yu-Tai* Tibet belongs to China since thousands of years, and you English have accepted that yourselves in various signed documents, so when you come to Tibet you are actually the most welcome guests of China.

*Younghusband* But you are the only Chinese around here. For the rest I only see Tibetans and not a single Chinese.

*Yu-Tai* Noble commissioner, you are deceived by appearances. We Chinese are everywhere, and even if we are not seen we are always present by our power and influence.

*Younghusband* So you don't come as a representative of the Tibetan government but of China?

*Yu-Tai* Of course. Tibet has no real government. It has a kind of menagerie for its perverted monks, where they gobble nonsense like poultry in a mad asylum without even

knowing what they are saying, while the fake Dalai Lama throne it like a peacock without a voice.

*Younghusband* Do I understand it correctly? Tibet has no government, but the only government valid in Tibet is that of Beijing?

*Yu-Tai* Yes, of course! Since Tibet has belonged to China in thousands of years! And during all these millennia we have worriedly been kept busy and concerned with forbearing all these poor religious aberrations and superstitions gathered in a monstrous sectarian state without equal in the world.

*Younghusband* So you don't recognize the Dalai Lama?

*Yu-Tai* Why should we? He is an impostor! He has left the country himself! He has let it down! He wallows in pleasures with the whores of Mongolia, like all Dalai Lamas always did since the sixth! He is a prince of monkeys! The empress of Peking has already issued a manifesto in which it is confirmed that the Dalai Lama is deposed and that only the Chinese government now has a mandate to establish a new Dalai Lama, if that should be needed, which it probably will not, since Tibet has a real government in Peking.

*Younghusband (to Brown)* The man is deranged. – Unfortunately, venerable amban, we have direct orders from our British government to only negotiate with Tibetans and not with Chinese.

*Yu-Tai* You can't negotiate with Tibetans. You must see that for yourself.

*Younghusband* I admit that it looks bad. But it gives us no right to negotiate with Chinese. We are in Tibet, not in China.

*Yu-Tai* But Tibet *is* China!

*Younghusband* Why then do you not treat Tibetans like Chinese?

*Yu-Tai* But we do!

*Younghusband* You just discarded the entire Tibetan government as a menagerie of gobbling poultry and its leader as a monkey. Is that how you regard all other people than the Chinese?

*Yu-Tai* You insult me! You hurt my feelings!

*Younghusband* Don't make yourself ridiculous by coming here again, venerable amban. Then it will only end by no Chinese ever being let into Tibet again!

*Yu-Tai (rising, angry)* Peking shall hear of this!

*Younghusband* Yes, you are welcome to let your dear empress down there go to blazes like yourself.

*(The amban leaves thoroughly angry.)*

Are there more clowns here in Lhasa except such as that Chinese and ourselves?

*Brown* Only Tibetans, Sir.

*Younghusband* And they are wise enough to ignore us and to keep quiet. At most they can applaud us to drive us out as evil spirits. These Tibetans know more about all humanity than all humanity.

*Jack* Sir, something has turned up.

*Younghusband* More clowns and demented fools who only play false by affected gags?

*Jack* No, Sir. Some Tibetans have sent gifts.

*Younghusband*        What kind of gifts? Rat poison? Latrine manure? Amulets and fetishes to dismantle our weapons?

*Jack*                    No, Sir. They send us practical basics like meat, fruits and eggs.

*Younghusband*        Is this the Tibetan thaw?

*Jack*                    It doesn't look any better. They want to negotiate.

*Younghusband*        At last! Get going, gentlemen! Forget all about China and general MacDolnald! (*leaves wit his arms around Jack and Brown.*)

Act V scene 1. In the Potala.

(*All are gathered, Younghusband and Yu-Tai in seats of honour.*)

*Shatra*                Honoured gentlemen of England, we have now finally reached an agreement which I believe we all sincerely hope that never will be broken and that our friendship thereby will remain forever. I have to remind you, though, that this agreement was reached by unfair means. It was you who invaded our country without our asking for it, and still you force us to pay for damages of war. We have had to accept being forced there unto since you stand with your army and your weapons in the middle of Lhasa and at this moment have your cannons pointed at Potala without anyone having wished to help us and least of all that government in Peking who always promised to help us, and who in this case actually have taken a stand for the English against us out of sheer opportunism and unrighteousness. (*has turned to the amban, who only smiles loftily*) But these matters are not mentioned in the document. Instead a later history will debate and evaluate them. Still I think something good could come out of this agreement, which I ask all Tibetans to remember and to consider. By this agreement we are bound in peace and friendship with Great Britain on condition that Great Britain herself leaves us in peace. No other power will be able to have anything to do with Tibet without the permission of Great Britain. This I hope will mean that we once can count on the help of Great Britain against China, if needed. That's the good result I am hoping for from this under the threat of gunfire enforced agreement. I ask you all, gentlemen of the Tibetan government, to sign the agreement as I myself and these Englishmen have done.

(*The large document is sent around, and the monks and the councillors eagerly sign it.*)

*Younghusband (to Yu-Tai)* You don't have to sign it, venerable amban.

*Yu-Tai*                I have no part in the case, and the document is worthless to China.

*Younghusband*        Still it has consequences for China. From now on every Chinese has to have a British visa to be able to visit Tibet.

*Yu-Tai*                Just you wait! Nothing lasts forever!

*Younghusband*        It is what counts now that is of importance.

*Yu-Tai*                The present is obsolete and forgotten for the future.

*Younghusband*        Your philosophy, Yu-Tai, is powerless against our politics.

*Yu-Tai*                We philosophers know that things can turn out to the contrary at any time.

*Younghusband*        But we Englishmen stick to our word, we never desert a friend, Tibet is now our friend, while you have broken all your words with Tibet.

*Yu-Tai*                   The government in Peking does as it pleases.  
*Younghusband*       And thereby it places itself outside the community of civilised humanity.  
*Yu-Tai*                   It does not matter what you say, Englishmen, for you are wrong anyway.  
*Younghusband*       Your political principle and attitude is a stillborn case, Mr Chinese.  
*Shatra*                   Thereby the agreement is signed by all parties. May now our  
friendship with England last for all time.  
*(Suddenly everyone is quite happy and content, and the Tibetans cordially embrace the English  
with warmth and joy, who respond in the same way. Only the amban remains alien.)*  
*(to Younghusband)* A word with you, Sir. What will you do now?  
*Younghusband*       Go home. What else?  
*Shatra*                   Don't forget Tibet.  
*Younghusband*       Never in my life.  
*Shatra*                   Don't forget what you learned here.  
*Younghusband*       And what did I learn here?  
*Shatra*                   An infinite patience with all the follies of the world, of which the  
greatest is all the misunderstandings of humanity concerning each other's religions. There  
is only one religion, it is shared by all of us, and it is only the misunderstandings of it and  
of each other that separate us.  
*Younghusband*       You are so very right.  
*Shatra*                   You have come to Tibet to take the burden of Tibet on your shoulders. When  
you return to the world it is your duty to bring that burden and to present it to the world.  
*Younghusband*       It is as if you had read my thoughts.  
*Shatra*                   There is only one right way, and that is to do the right thing. All who  
follow that way have a unique insight in common in what that way is about. It imparts a  
telepathic community. You are now one of us, Francis Younghusband.  
*Younghusband*       And for that I will get all kinds of troubles for the rest of my life, if I  
know the western world correctly.  
*Shatra*                   Yes, but not in the long run, for all of us who follow the way of  
righteousness belong to eternity.  
*Younghusband*       We have much to talk about, minister.  
*Shatra*                   You stay for a few more weeks. Let's use the time well.  
*Younghusband*       I am looking forward to it.  
*Shatra*                   Come and visit us already tomorrow.  
*(Younghusband offers his hand. Shatra puts out his tongue. Both laugh, and walk out together.)*

Scene 2. Kashmir. Srinagar, 3 years later.

*Helen*                   I don't understand how Whitehall can be so mean in rewarding Francis. He  
accomplished the greatest and hardest task that the empire ever has ventured, and then he  
gets accused of not having got all the details perfectly correct.  
*Eileen*                   It's only because of the quarrel between Broderick and Curzon, mother.  
Broderick is exactly like MacDonald: a narrow-minded oaf, who doesn't know better than



to behave like a stupid boor. And the one to be most pitied is Curzon, the best viceroy that India ever had.

*Helen* Yes, just because he was so excellent all the government must hate him led by Broderick, blinded by his envy, who only is governed by his feelings, which are all aggressions and hatred. But that will be the fall of that government.

*Younghusband (enters)* Are you talking garbage about Broderick now again?

*Helen* You are unfairly treated, darling, and appointed the culprit of the Tibetan expedition instead of its glorious master.

*Younghusband* It's just water in the stream. Don't complain. We are after all allowed to live here in Kashmir, the most beautiful part of India, and we want nothing. On the contrary. We are replenished with affluence and are drowning in the overwhelming sumptuousness of social life.

*Helen* By the way, someone was looking for you.

*Younghusband* Who?

*Helen* Some geographical devotee, almost intolerably self-sufficient.

*Younghusband* From Sweden?

*Helen* Yes.

*Younghusband* Then it was Sven Hedin. Show him in at once.

*Helen* I hope he is still left. (*leaves*)

*Younghusband (sits down, somewhat tired. After some moment Sven Hedin shows up on the threshold.)* Sven Hedin. It was a long time ago.

*Sven Hedin (enters perkily, offering Younghusband his hand)* Let me be the first one to congratulate you on having been the first of all of us to reach Lhasa.

*Younghusband* Thanks, old colleague. You still seem equally enthusiastic although you never came to Lhasa. I came to Lhasa but am now a broken man because of that, and my career is ruined. Even Curzon's and MacDonald's careers are ruined, as if Tibet only became a curse to us all.

*Sven Hedin* I don't think so. It's not the fault of Tibet. You were all too politically involved. I am just a geographer and scientist and am now bound for Tibet.

*Younghusband* You succeeded well with your Turkestan voyage.

*Sven Hedin* There is still much to do in those parts.

*Younghusband* I heard you had problems with our British bureaucracy.

*Sven Hedin* You have discovered the purpose of my visit.

*Younghusband* Of course I will help you. Just get on to Ladakh, and I will help you with the rest. They hardly expect anything else of me than that I will get behind their backs and violate their regulations. I always did.

*Sven Hedin* That's why you always succeeded, you brick of honour.

*Younghusband* You have nothing to worry about. Just get on with your expedition. But send me a thought now and then, since I can't play the game any more. I only have my wife and daughter still to live for.

*Sven Hedin* And your philosophy.

*Younghusband* Wasn't he a Swede, that Swedenborg, who meant that all religions could and should be united?

*Sven Hedin*                Yes, he was.  
*Younghusband*            He was right. I find many of my ideas and thoughts already with him.  
 We have much to do, Sven Hedin, you in Tibet and I outside.  
*Sven Hedin*                The gods know that!  
*Younghusband*            Get going!  
*Sven Hedin*                You too!  
 (*They cordially shake hands and separate as the best of friends.*)

*Epilogue.*  
 Darjeeling 1909.

*Sir Charles Bell*    Welcome to Darjeeling, your holiness. It is an honour to receive you here.  
*Dalai Lama*        Last time I escaped from Tibet it was to Mongolia for the sake of you  
 Englishmen. Now I escape for the sake of China to you Englishmen.  
*Bell*                I am aware of it.  
*Dalai Lama*        Are you aware that China has invaded Tibet?  
*Bell*                Yes, and I sincerely regret it.  
*Dalai Lama*        According to our agreement in Lhasa five years ago with colonel  
 Younghusband, England is now our only friends who have promised to help us against  
 our enemies.  
*Bell*                I can solace you with, your holiness, that the emperor of China will probably  
 not remain very long. There is a rebellion all over China, and the whole empire is shaking  
 in its foundations and is heading for a general collapse.  
*Dalai Lama*        That's their punishment for having used force against Tibet!  
*Bell*                Perhaps. So I ask you to have patience. Wait here in peace and quiet for a  
 year or two and see if the situation doesn't change suddenly and drastically. Isn't there a  
 Chinese old proverb that says, that if you wait long enough by the waters of a purling  
 river, you will finally one day see the corpse of your enemy floating by?  
*Dalai Lama*        It was originally Tibetan, but all Chinese rivers start in Tibet. And only China  
 is polluting them.  
*Bell*                You are our guest of honour in Darjeeling as long as you stay. You will want  
 nothing here. The entire British Empire will be at your personal service.  
*Dalai Lama*        It feels reassuring that the British Empire exists, but we are facing hard times  
 of unsurveyable revolutions.  
*Bell*                I am afraid so too.  
*Dalai Lama*        When I return to Lhasa you will always be welcome to Lhasa.  
*Bell*                I am grateful for that. And it will then be my highest pleasue to accept your  
 high invitation.  
*Dalai Lama*        I am sure that we will agree very well, Sir Charles Bell.  
*Bell*                Thanks to colonel Francis Younghusband, our friendship was already  
 established before you arrived.  
*Dalai Lama*        Is he still alive?

*Bell* Yes, but he is completely religious.  
*Dalai Lama* He overcame Tibet and became a Tibetan as a result.  
*Bell* Yes, that was maybe what happened to him.  
*Dalai Lama* But it is not dangerous. You will see yourself when you come to Tibet.  
*Bell* I am looking forward to it. Welcome home to us, Dalai Lama.  
*Dalai Lama* And welcome to Tibet.

*(They shake hands and smile.)*

*The End.*

*(Joshimath, 1 November 2000,  
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