

# *“Words in Waves”*

(English textbook for B.A. First Year)



**KARNATAKA SAMSKRIT UNIVERSITY**

Pampa Mahakavi Road, Chamarajpet  
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***“Words in Waves”***

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## **EDITORIAL**

Karnataka Samskrit University is upon the mission to render Sanskrit learning and comparative research studies in all branches of Samskrit and related areas. Under the bough of the Varsity, several graduate and post-graduate programmes are being run successfully. As the norms go, a Language Paper is being incorporated in the graduate level, with the English being an option. It is with this view that the textbooks of English for First Year, Second Year and Optional English at graduate level is being prepared and presented herewith. It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that we are placing the *“Words in Waves”* before your hands. It is aimed to give an introduction to all facets of English literature to a student earnest to go into further details. I thank the Vice-Chancellor Prof. Padma Shekhar for all the support and encouragement. I also thank the Registrar Prof. M.K. Sridhar for his guidance and support. I thank the members of Board of Studies for their discerning choice of material prescribed for study. I thank Dr Vinay, Assistant Professor, Vice Principal of Samskrit Evening College for using his erudition and neat editing of the work together with relevant summaries, introductions and notes. I thank Mr. M. Ganesh for typesetting and neat layout of the book. I thank the staff and students of the Varsity, and all those who have made the books see the light of the day.

**Dr. Veerananarayana N.K. Pandurangi**

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# The Tiger in the Tunnel

Ruskin Bond

## Introduction

Ruskin Bond is an Indian author of British descent.

The Indian Council for Child Education recognised his pioneering role in the growth of children's literature in India, and awarded him the Sahitya Academy Award in 1992 for *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, given by the Sahitya Academy, India's National Academy of Literature. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2014. He now lives with his adopted family in Landour, in Mussoorie.

Ruskin Bond was born on 19 May 1934 in a military hospital, to Edith Clarke and Aubrey Bond. His siblings were Ellen and William. At present, his sister Ellen lives in Jalandhar, Punjab and brother William lives in Canada. Ruskin's father was with the Royal Air Force. When Bond was four years old, his mother separated from his father and married a Punjabi-Hindu, Mr. Hari, who himself had been married once.

Bond spent his early childhood in Vijayanagar (Gujarat), Jamnagar and Shimla. At the age of ten Ruskin went to live at his grandmother's house in Dehradun after his father's sudden death in 1944 from malaria. Ruskin was raised by his grandmother. He completed his schooling at Bishop Cotton School in Shimla, from where he graduated in 1952 after winning several writing competitions in the school like the Irwin Divinity Prize and the Hailey Literature Prize. He wrote his first short story, 'Untouchable', at the age of sixteen in 1950.

Following his high school education he went to his aunt's house in Channel Islands in England and stayed there for four years. In London he started writing his first novel, *The Room on the Roof*, the semi-autobiographical story of the orphaned Anglo-Indian boy Rusty. It won the 1957 John Llewellyn Rhys Prize, awarded to a British Commonwealth writer under 30. Bond used the advance money from the book to pay the sea passage to Bombay. He worked for some years as a journalist in Delhi and Dehradun. Since 1963 he has lived as a freelance writer in Mussoorie, a town in the Himalayan foothills. He wrote *Vagrants in the Valley*, as a sequel to *The Room on the Roof*. These two novels were published in one volume by Penguin India in 1993. The following year a collection of his non-fiction writings, *The Best Of Ruskin Bond* was published by Penguin India. His interest in the paranormal led him to write popular titles such as *Ghost Stories from the Raj*, *A Season of Ghosts*, and *A Face in the Dark* and other Hauntings.

**(Courtesy Wikipedia)**

## The Tiger in the Tunnel

Tembu, the boy, opened his eyes in the dark and wondered if his father was ready to leave the hut on his nightly errand. There was no moon that night, and the deathly stillness of the surrounding jungle was broken only occasionally by the shrill cry of a cicada. Sometimes from far off came the hollow hammering of a woodpecker, carried along on the faint breeze.

Or the grunt of a wild boar could be heard as he dug up a favourite root. But these sounds were rare, and the silence of the forest always returned to swallow them up. Baldeo, the watchman, was awake. He stretched himself slowly unwinding the heavy shawl that covered him. It was close on midnight and the chill air made him shiver. The station, a small shack backed by heavy jungle, was a station in name only; for trains only stopped there, if at all, for a few seconds before entering the deep cutting that led to the tunnel. Most trains merely slowed down before taking the sharp curve before cutting.

Baldeo was responsible for signalling whether or not the tunnel was clear of obstruction, and his manual signal stood before the entrance. At night it was his duty to see that the lamp was burning, and that the overland mail passed through safely. 'Shall

I come too, Father?’ asked Tembu sleepily, still lying in a huddle in a corner of the hut.

‘No, it is cold tonight. Do not get up.’

Tembu, who was twelve, did not always sleep with his father at the station, for he had also to help in the home, where his mother and small sister were usually alone.

They lived in a small tribal village on the outskirts of the forest, about three miles from the station. Their small rice fields did not provide them with more than a bare living and Baldeo considered himself lucky to have got the job of Khalasi at this small wayside signal stop.

Still drowsy, Baldeo, groped for his lamp in darkness then fumbled about in search of matches. When he had produced a light he left the hut, closed the door behind him and set off along the permanent way. Tembu had fallen asleep again.

At midnight, Baldeo goes out of his hut, into the thick forest. The jungle is full of dangerous animals, but Baldeo has a job to do and it is important.

Baldeo wondered whether the lamp on the signal- post was still alight.

Gathering his shawl closer about him, he stumbled on, sometimes along the rails, sometimes along the ballast. He longed to get back to his warm corner in the hut.

The eeriness of the place was increased by the neighbouring hills which overhung the main line threateningly. On entering the cutting with its sheer rock walls towering high above the rails, Baldeo could not help thinking about the wild animals he might encounter. He had heard many tales of the famous tunnel tiger, a

man-eater, which was supposed to frequent this spot; he hardly believed these stories for since his arrival at this place a month ago, he had not seen or even heard a tiger. There had, of course, been panthers, and only a few days ago the villagers had killed one with their spears and axes. Baldeo had occasionally heard the sawing of a panther calling to its mate, but they had not come near the tunnel or shed.

Baldeo walked confidently for being a tribal himself, he was used to the jungle and its ways. Like his fore-fathers he carried a small axe; fragile to look at but deadly when in use.

He prided himself in his skill in wielding it against wild animals. He had killed a young boar with it once and the family had feasted on the flesh for three days. The axehead of pure steel, thin but ringing true like a bell, had been made by his father over a charcoal fire. This axe was part of himself. And wherever he went, be it to the local market seven miles away, or to a tribal dance, the axe was always in his hand. Occasionally an official who had come to the station had offered him good money for the weapon, but Baldeo had no intention of parting with it.

The cutting curved sharply, and in the darkness the black entrance to the tunnel looked up menacingly. The signal-light was out. Baldeo set to work to haul the lamp down by its chain. If the oil had finished, he would have to return to the hut for more. The mail train was due in five minutes.

Once more he fumbled for his matches. Then suddenly he stood still and listened.

The frightened cry of a barking deer followed by a crashing sound in the undergrowth, made Baldeo hurry. There was still a little oil in the lamp, and after an instant’s hesitation he lit the lamp

again and hoisted it into position. Having done this, he walked quickly down the tunnel, swinging his own lamp, so that the shadows leapt up and down the soot-stained walls, and having made sure that the line was clear, he returned to the entrance and sat down to wait for the mail train.

The train was late. Sitting huddled up, almost dozing, he soon forgot his surroundings and began to nod.

Back in the hut, the trembling of the ground told of the approach of the train, and a low, distant rumble woke the boy, who sat up rubbing the sleep from his eyes.

‘Father, it’s time to light the lamp,’ he mumbled and then, realizing that his father had been gone some time, he lay down again, but he was wide awake now, waiting for the train to pass, waiting for his father’s returning footsteps.

Baldeo finds himself in a dangerous situation. How does he deal with it? A low grunt resounded from the top of the cutting. In a second Baldeo was awake, all his senses alert. Only a tiger could emit such a sound.

There was no shelter for Baldeo, but he grasped his axe firmly and tensed his body, trying to make out the direction from which the animal was approaching.

For some time there was only silence. Even the usual jungle noises seemed to have ceased altogether. Then a thump and the rattle of small stones announced that the tiger had sprung into the cutting.

Baldeo, listening as he had never listened before, wondered if it was making for the tunnel or the opposite direction the direction of the hut, in which Tembu would be lying unprotected.

He did not have to wonder for long. Before a minute had passed he made out the huge body of the tiger trotting steadily towards him. Its eyes shone a brilliant green in the light from the signal lamp. Flight was useless, for in the dark the tiger would be more sure-footed than Baldeo and would soon be upon him from behind. Baldeo stood with his back to the signal-post, motionless staring at the great brute moving rapidly towards him. The tiger, used to the ways of men, for it had been preying on them for years, came on fearlessly, and with a quick run and a snarl struck out with its right paw, expecting to bowl over this puny man who dared stand in the way.

Baldeo, however, was ready. With a marvellously agile leap he avoided the paw and brought his axe down on the animal’s shoulder. The tiger gave a roar and attempted to close in. Again Baldeo drove his axe which caught the tiger on the shoulder, almost severing the leg. To make matters worse, the axe remained stuck in the bone, and Baldeo was left without a weapon.

The tiger, roaring with pain, now sprang upon Baldeo, bringing him down and then tearing at his broken body. It was all over in a sharp few minutes. Baldeo was conscious only of a searing pain down his back, and then there was blackness and the night closed in on him forever.

Baldeo, the bread winner of the family was dead. Who took on his responsibilities and how did he tackle them.

The tiger drew off and sat down licking his wounded leg, roaring every now and then with agony. He did not notice the faint rumble that shook the earth, followed by the distant puffing of an engine steadily climbing. The overland mail was approaching. Through the trees beyond the cutting as the train

advanced, the glow of the furnace could be seen, and showers of sparks fell like Divali lights over the forest.

As the train entered the cutting, the engine whistled once, loud and piercingly. The tiger raised his head, then slowly got to his feet. He found himself trapped like the man. Flight along the cutting was impossible. He entered the tunnel, running as fast as his wounded leg would carry him. And then, with a roar and a shower of sparks, the train entered the yawning tunnel. The noise in the confined space was deafening but, when the train came out into the open, on the other side, silence returned once more to the forest and the tunnel.

At the next station the driver slowed down and stopped his train to water the engine. He got down to stretch his legs and decided to examine the head-lamps.

He received the surprise of his life; for, just above the cow-catcher lay the major portion of the tiger, cut in half by the engine.

There was considerable excitement and conjecture at the station, but back at the cutting there was no sound except for the sobs of the boy as he sat beside the body of his father. He sat there a long time, unafraid of the darkness, guarding the body from jackals and hyenas, until the first faint light of dawn brought with it the arrival of the relief-watchman.

Tembu and his sister and mother were plunged in grief for two whole days; but life had to go on, and a living had to be made, and all the responsibility now fell on Tembu. Three nights later, he was at the cutting, lighting the signal-lamp for the overland mail. He sat down in the darkness to wait for the train, and sang softly to himself. There was nothing to be afraid of – his father had killed the tiger, the forest gods were pleased; and besides, he had the axe with him, his father's axe, and he now knew to use it.

## Summary

Twelve-year-old Tembu lives with his father Baldeo, mother, and young sister in a tribal village on the outskirts of a jungle forest in India. They rely on the produce from a small rice field for subsistence, but the land's paltry yield provides them with little more than a bare living.

To supplement their income, Baldeo works as a watchman at a nearby way station for the railroad. Every night, he stays in a bare hut near a tunnel cut into the rock; his duty is to keep the signal lamp burning and make sure that the tunnel is clear of obstruction so that the overland mail can pass through safely. When he does not have to help his mother and little sister at home, Tembu accompanies his father to his job at the railroad, sleeping with him in the hut. On this particular night, he awakens close to midnight to find his father preparing to leave to check the signal lamp and the tunnel. Tembu asks if he should go with Baldeo, but his father responds that it is cold outside and that the boy should stay in the shelter of the hut.

As Baldeo stumbles alone through the darkness, he thinks about the wild animals he might encounter. He has heard tales of a famous man-eating tiger who is known to frequent the area, but he has neither seen nor heard it so far during his nightly treks.

Despite the dangers in the forest, Baldeo walks with confidence. He is used to the ways of the jungle and carries a weapon, a small axe that is "fragile to look at but deadly when in use." The axe, which his father made for him, is an extension of himself, and he is capable of wielding it with great skill against wild animals.

When Baldeo reaches the tunnel, he finds that the signal light is out. Hauling the lamp down by its rope, he relights it and hoists it back into position. When this task is done, he walks quickly down the length of the tunnel to make sure it is clear, then returns to the entrance.

(Courtesy: <http://www.enotes.com/topics/the-tiger-in-the-tunnel>)

# At The High School

M.K. Gandhi

## Introduction

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, (2 October 1869 – 30 January 1948) was the preeminent leader of Indian independence movement in British-ruled India. Employing nonviolent civil disobedience, Gandhi led India to independence and inspired movements for civil rights and freedom across the world. The honorific Mahatma (Sanskrit: "high-souled", "venerable")—applied to him first in 1914 in South Africa,—is now used worldwide. He is also called Bapu (Gujarati: endearment for "father", "papa") in India.

Born and raised in a Hindu merchant caste family in coastal Gujarat, western India, and trained in law at the Inner Temple, London, Gandhi first employed nonviolent civil disobedience as an expatriate lawyer in South Africa, in the resident Indian community's struggle for civil rights. After his return to India in 1915, he set about organising peasants, farmers, and urban labourers to protest against excessive land-tax and discrimination. Assuming leadership of the Indian National Congress in 1921, Gandhi led nationwide campaigns for easing poverty, expanding women's rights, building religious and ethnic amity, ending untouchability, but above all for achieving Swaraj or self-rule.

Gandhi famously led Indians in challenging the British-imposed salt tax with the 400 km (250 mi) Dandi Salt March in 1930, and

later in calling for the British to Quit India in 1942. He was imprisoned for many years, upon many occasions, in both South Africa and India. Gandhi attempted to practise nonviolence and truth in all situations, and advocated that others do the same. He lived modestly in a self-sufficient residential community and wore the traditional Indian dhoti and shawl, woven with yarn hand spun on a charkha. He ate simple vegetarian food, and also undertook long fasts as a means to both self-purification and social protest.

Gandhi's vision of a free India based on religious pluralism, however, was challenged in the early 1940s by a new Muslim nationalism which was demanding a separate Muslim homeland carved out of India. Eventually, in August 1947, Britain granted independence, but the British Indian Empire was partitioned into two dominions, a Hindu-majority India and Muslim Pakistan. As many displaced Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs made their way to their new lands, religious violence broke out, especially in the Punjab and Bengal. Eschewing the official celebration of independence in Delhi, Gandhi visited the affected areas, attempting to provide solace. In the months following, he undertook several fasts unto death to promote religious harmony. The last of these, undertaken on 12 January 1948 at age 78, also had the indirect goal of pressuring India to pay out some cash assets owed to Pakistan. Some Indians thought Gandhi was too accommodating. Nathuram Godse, a Hindu nationalist, assassinated Gandhi on 30 January 1948 by firing three bullets into his chest at point-blank range.

Indians widely describe Gandhi as the father of the nation. His birthday, 2 October, is commemorated as Gandhi Jayanti, a national holiday, and world-wide as the International Day of Nonviolence.

**(Courtesy Wikipedia)**

## AT THE HIGH SCHOOL

I have already said that I was learning at the high school when I was married. We three brothers were learning at the same school. The eldest brother was in a much higher class, and the brother who was married at the same time as I was, only one class ahead of me. Marriage resulted in both of us wasting a year. Indeed the result was even worse for my brother, for he gave up studies altogether. Heaven knows how many youths are in the same plight as he. Only in our present Hindu society do studies and marriage go thus in hand.

My studies were continued. I was not regarded as a dunce at the high school. I always enjoyed the affection of my teachers. Certificates of progress and character used to be sent to the parents every year. I never had a bad certificate. In fact I even won prizes after I passed out of the second standard. In the fifth and sixth I obtained scholarships of rupees four and ten respectively, an achievement for which I have to thank good luck more than my merit. For the scholarships were not open to all, but reserved for the best boys amongst those coming from the Sorath Division of Kathiwad. And in those days there could not have been many boys from Sorath in a class of forty to fifty.

My own recollection is that I had not any high regard for my ability. I used to be astonished whenever I won prizes and

scholarships. But I very jealously guarded my character. The least little blemish drew tears from my eyes. When I merited, or seemed to the teacher to merit, a rebuke, it was unbearable for me. I remember having once received corporal punishment. I did not so much mind the punishment, as the fact that it was considered my desert. I wept piteously.

That was when I was in the first or second standard. There was another such incident during the time when I was in the seventh standard. Dorabji Edulji Gimi was the headmaster then. He was popular among the boys, as he was a disciplinarian, a man of method, and a good teacher. He had made gymnastics and cricket compulsory for boys of the upper standards. I disliked both. I never took part in any exercise, cricket or football, before they were made compulsory. My shyness was one of the reasons for this aloofness, which I now see was wrong. I then had the false notion that gymnastics had nothing to do with education. Today I know that physical training should have as much place in the curriculum as mental training.

I may mention, however, that I was none the worse for abstaining from exercise. That was because I had read in books about the benefits of long walks in the open air, and having liked the advice, I had formed a habit of talking walks, which has still remained with me. These walks gave me a fairly hardy constitution.

The reason for my dislike for gymnastics was my keen desire to serve as nurse to my father.

As soon as the school closed, I would hurry home and begin serving him. Compulsory exercise came directly in the way of this service. I requested Mr. Gimi to exempt me from gymnastics

so that I might be free to serve my father. But he would not listen to me. Now it happened that one Saturday, when we had school in the morning, I had to go from home to the school for gymnastics at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. I had no watch, and the clouds deceived me. Before I reached the school the boys had all left. The next day Mr. Gimi, examining the roll, found me marked absent. Being asked the reason for absence, I told him what had happened. He refused to believe me and ordered me to pay a fine one or two annas (I cannot now recall how much).

I was convicted of lying! That deeply pained me. How was I to prove my innocence? There was no way. I cried in deep anguish. I saw that a man of truth must also be a man of care. This was the first and last instance of my carelessness in school. I have a faint recollection that I finally succeeded in getting the fine remitted. The exemption from exercise was of course obtained, as my father wrote himself to the headmaster saying that he wanted me at home after school. 13

But though I was none the worse for having neglected exercise, I am still paying the penalty of another neglect. I do not know whence I got the notion that good handwriting was not a necessary part of education, but I retained it until I went to England. When later, especially in South Africa, I saw the beautiful handwriting of lawyers and young men born and educated in South Africa, I was ashamed of myself and repented of my neglect. I saw that bad handwriting should be regarded as a sign of an imperfect education. I tried later to improve mine, but it was too late. I could never repair the neglect of my youth. Let every young man and woman be warned by my example, and understand that good handwriting is a necessary part of education. I am now of opinion that children should first be taught

the art of drawing before learning how to write. Let the child learn his letters by observation as he does different objects, such as flowers, birds, etc., and let him learn handwriting only after he has learnt to draw objects. He will then write a beautifully formed hand.

Two more reminiscences of my school days are worth recording. I had lost one year because of my marriage, and the teacher wanted me to make good the loss by skipping a class--a privilege usually allowed to industrious boys. I therefore had only six months in the third standard, and was promoted to the fourth after the examinations which are followed by the summer vacation. English became the medium of instruction in most subjects from the fourth standard. I found myself completely at sea. Geometry was a new subject in which I was not particularly strong, and the English medium made it still more difficult for me. The teacher taught the subject very well, but I could not follow him. Often I would lose heart and think of going back to the third standard, feeling that the packing of two years' studies into a single year was too ambitious. But this would discredit not only me, but also the teacher; because, counting on my industry, he had recommended my promotion. So the fear of the double discredit kept me at my post. When, however, with much effort I reached the thirteenth proposition of Euclid, the utter simplicity of the subject was suddenly revealed to me. A subject which only required a pure and simple use of one's reasoning powers could not be difficult. Ever since that time geometry has been both easy and interesting for me.

Sanskrit, however, proved a harder task. In geometry there was nothing to memorize, whereas in Sanskrit, I thought, everything had to be learnt by heart. This subject also was

commenced from the fourth standard. As soon as I entered the sixth I became disheartened. The teacher was a hard taskmaster, anxious, as I thought, to force the boys. There was a sort of rivalry going on between the Samskrit and the Persian teachers. The Persian teacher was lenient. The boys use to talk among themselves that Persian was very easy and the Persian teacher very good and considerate to the students. The 'easiness' tempted me, and one day I sat in the Persian class.

The Samskrit teacher was grieved. He called me to his side and said: 'How can you forget that you are the son of a Vaishnava father? Won't you learn the language of your own religion? If you have any difficulty, why not come to me? I want to teach you students Samskrit to the best of my ability. As you proceed further, you will find in it things of absorbing interest. You should not lose heart. Come and sit again in the Samskrit class.'

This kindness put me to shame. I could not disregard my teacher's affection. Today I cannot but think with gratitude of Krishnashankar Pandya. For if I had not acquired the little Samskrit that I learnt them, I should have found it difficult to take any interest in our sacred books. In fact I deeply regret that I was not able to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the language, because I have since realized that every Hindu boy and girl should possess sound Samskrit learning.

## Summary

### Childhood

Mohan attended Primary School at Porbandar. When he was seven, his family moved to Rajkot. He was a mediocre student, was shy and avoided any company. He read little besides the text books and had no love for outdoor games. He had no love

for outdoor games. However, he was truthful, honest, sensitive and was alert about his character. Plays about Shraavan and Harishchandra made a deep impression on him. They taught him to be truthful at any cost and to serve his parents with devotion.

He was married along with his brother and cousin for the sake of economy and convenience. He was only 13 then. He enjoyed the festivities of the marriage. Kasturbai, his wife, was of the same age. She was illiterate but strong-willed. His jealousy and immature efforts to make her an ideal wife led to many quarrels. He wanted to teach her but found no time. His experience later made him a strong critic of child-marriages.

Mohan joined High School at Rajkot. He was liked by the teachers and often received prizes. But he neglected physical training and hand-writing. Habit of taking long walks made up for the first neglect, but he had to repent later for the neglect of handwriting. He was devoted to his father and considered it his duty to nurse him during his illness. In the High-School, he made friends with one Sheikh Mehtab, a bad character. He stuck to the friendship despite warnings from family-members. He wanted to reform Mehtab but failed. Mehtab induced him to meat-eating, saying that it made one strong and that the British were ruling India because they were meat-eaters. Mohan was frail and used to be afraid even to go out alone in the dark. The argument appealed to him. Later, he realized that lying to his parents was worse than not eating meat, and abandoned the experiment.

Mehtab once sent him to a brothel, but God's grace saved him. He induced Mohan to smoking. This once led to stealing. But all this became unbearable for Mohan. He confessed his guilt to his father, who did not rebuke him but wept silently. Those tears cleaned Mohan's heart and taught him a lesson in nonviolence.

Mohan's father died when Mohan was 16. He had nursed him daily. But at the time of his death, Mohan was with his wife. He always felt ashamed for this lapse. Mohan passed the matriculation examination in 1887. He attended the College at Bhavnagar, but left after the first term. At that time, the idea of

his going to England for studying law came up. Mohan was fascinated. He made up his mind and overcame resistance from the family-members. He took the vow not to touch wine, women and meat at the instance of his mother to remove her fears. He then sailed from Bombay in September 1888, leaving behind his wife and a son. The caste elders were against his going to England. They excommunicated him from the caste.

[http://www.mkgandhi.org/intro\\_autobio.htm](http://www.mkgandhi.org/intro_autobio.htm)

## Trouble in Bohemia

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle

### Introduction

Sir Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle KStJ, DL (22 May 1859 – 7 July 1930) was a Scottish writer and physician, most noted for his fictional stories about the detective Sherlock Holmes, which are generally considered milestones in the field of crime fiction.

He is also known for writing the fictional adventures of a second character he invented, Professor Challenger, and for popularising the mystery of the Mary Celeste. He was a prolific writer whose other works include fantasy and science fiction stories, plays, romances, poetry, non-fiction and historical novels.

Arthur Ignatius Conan Doyle was born on 22 May 1859 at 11 Picardy Place, Edinburgh. His father, Charles Altamont Doyle, was born in England of Irish Catholic descent, and his mother, Mary (née Foley), was Irish Catholic. His parents married in 1855. In 1864 the family dispersed due to Charles's growing alcoholism and the children were temporarily housed across Edinburgh. In 1867, the family came together again and lived in squalid tenement flats at 3 Sciennes Place.

Doyle struggled to find a publisher for his work. His first work featuring Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson, A Study in Scarlet, was taken by Ward Lock & Co on 20 November 1886, giving Doyle £25 for all rights to the story. The piece appeared later that year in the Beeton's Christmas Annual and received good

reviews in The Scotsman and the Glasgow Herald. Holmes was partially modelled on his former university teacher Joseph Bell. Doyle wrote to him, "It is most certainly to you that I owe Sherlock Holmes... round the centre of deduction and inference and observation which I have heard you inculcate I have tried to build up a man." Dr. (John) Watson owes his surname, but not any other obvious characteristic, to a Portsmouth medical colleague of Doyle's, Dr James Watson.

## **A SCANDAL IN BOHEMIA**

### **Trouble in Bohemia**

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

To Sherlock Holmes she is always the woman. I have seldom heard him mention her under any other name. In his eyes she eclipses and predominates the whole of her sex. It was not that he felt any emotion akin to love for Irene Adler. All emotions, and that one particularly, were abhorrent to his cold, precise but admirably balanced mind. He was, I take it, the most perfect reasoning and observing machine that the world has seen, but as a lover he would have placed himself in a false position. He never spoke of the softer passions, save with a gibe and a sneer.

They were admirable things for the observer-excellent for drawing the veil from men's motives and actions. But for the trained reasoner to admit such intrusions into his own delicate and finely adjusted temperament was to introduce a distracting factor which might throw a doubt upon all his mental results. Grit in a sensitive instrument, or a crack in one of his own high-power lenses, would not be more disturbing than a strong emotion in a nature such as his. And yet there was but one woman to him, and that woman was the late Irene Adler, of dubious and questionable memory.

I had seen little of Holmes lately. My marriage had drifted us away from each other. My own complete happiness, and the home-centred interests which rise up around the man who first finds himself master of his own establishment, were sufficient to absorb all my attention, while Holmes, who loathed every form of society with his whole Bohemian soul, remained in our lodgings in Baker Street, buried among his old books, and alternating from week to week between cocaine and ambition, the drowsiness of the drug, and the fierce energy of his own keen nature. He was still, as ever, deeply attracted by the study of crime, and occupied his immense faculties and extraordinary powers of observation in following out those clues, and clearing up those mysteries which had been abandoned as hopeless by the official police. From time to time I heard some vague account of his doings: of his summons to Odessa in the case of the Tre off murder, of his clearing up of the singular tragedy of the Atkinson brothers at Trincomalee, and finally of the mission which he had accomplished so delicately and successfully for the reigning family of Holland. Beyond these signs of his activity, however, which I merely shared with all the readers of the daily press, I knew little of my former friend and companion.

One night-it was on the twentieth of March, 1888-I was returning from a journey to a patient (for I had now returned to civil practice), when my way led me through Baker Street.

As I passed the well-remembered door, which must always be associated in my mind with my wooing, and with the dark incidents of the Study in Scarlet, I was seized with a keen desire to see Holmes again, and to know how he was employing his extraordinary powers. His rooms were brilliantly lit, and, even

as I looked up, I saw his tall, spare figure pass twice in a dark silhouette against the blind. He was pacing the room swiftly, eagerly, with his head sunk upon his chest and his hands clasped behind him. To me, who knew his every mood and habit, his attitude and manner told their own story. He was at work again. He had risen out of his drug-created dreams and was hot upon the scent of some new problem. I rang the bell and was shown up to the chamber which had formerly been in part my own.

His manner was not effusive. It seldom was; but he was glad, I think, to see me. With hardly a word spoken, but with a kindly eye, he waved me to an armchair, threw across his case of cigars, and indicated a spirit case and a gasoline in the corner. Then he stood before the fire and looked me over in his singular introspective fashion.

“Wedlock suits you,” he remarked. “I think, Watson that you have put on seven and a half pounds since I saw you.”

“Seven!” I answered.

“Indeed, I should have thought a little more. Just a trifle more, I fancy, Watson. And in practice again, I observe. You did not tell me that you intended to go into harness.”

“Then, how do you know?”

“I see it, I deduce it. How do I know that you have been getting yourself very wet lately, and that you have a most clumsy and careless servant girl?”

“My dear Holmes,” said I, “this is too much. You would certainly have been burned, had you lived a few centuries ago. It is true that I had a country walk on Thursday and came home in a dreadful mess, but as I have changed my clothes I can’t imagine

how you deduce it. As to Mary Jane, she is incorrigible, and my wife has given her notice, but there, again, I fail to see how you work it out.”

He chuckled to himself and rubbed his long, nervous hands together.

“It is simplicity itself,” said he; “my eyes tell me that on the inside of your left shoe, just where the firelight strikes it, the leather is scored by six almost parallel cuts. Obviously they have been caused by someone who has very carelessly scraped round the edges of the sole in order to remove crusted mud from it. Hence, you see, my double deduction that you had been out in vile weather, and that you had a particularly malignant boot-slitting specimen of the London slavery. As to your practice, if a gentleman walks into my rooms smelling of iodoform, with a black mark of nitrate of silver upon his right forefinger, and a bulge on the right side of his top-hat to show where he has secreted his stethoscope, I must be dull, indeed, if I do not pronounce him to be an active member of the medical profession.”

I could not help laughing at the ease with which he explained his process of deduction.

“When I hear you give your reasons,” I remarked, “the thing always appears to me to be so ridiculously simple that I could easily do it myself, though at each successive instance of your reasoning I am baffled until you explain your process. And yet I believe that my eyes are as good as yours.”

“Quite so,” he answered, lighting a cigarette, and throwing himself down into an armchair. “You see, but you do not observe. The distinction is clear. For example, you have frequently seen the steps which lead up from the hall to this room.”

“Frequently.”

“How often?”

“Well, some hundreds of times.”

“Then how many are there?”

“How many? I don’t know.”

“Quite so! You have not observed. And yet you have seen. That is just my point. Now, I know that there are seventeen steps, because I have both seen and observed. By the way, since you are interested in these little problems, and since you are good enough to chronicle one or two of my trifling experiences, you may be interested in this.” He threw over a sheet of thick, pink-tinted notepaper which had been lying open upon the table. “It came by the last post,” said he. “Read it aloud.”

The note was undated, and without either signature or address.

“There will call upon you to-night, at a quarter to eight o’clock,” it said, “a gentleman who desires to consult you upon a matter of the very deepest moment. Your recent services to one of the royal houses of Europe have shown that you are one who may safely be trusted with matters which are of an importance which can hardly be exaggerated. This account of you we have from all quarters received. Be in your chamber then at that hour, and do not take it amiss if your visitor wear a mask.”

“This is indeed a mystery,” I remarked. “What do you imagine that it means?”

“I have no data yet. It is a capital mistake to theorise before one has data. Insensibly one begins to twist facts to suit theories, instead of theories to suit facts. But the note itself. What do you deduce from it?”

I carefully examined the writing, and the paper upon which it was written.

“The man who wrote it was presumably well to do,” I remarked, endeavouring to imitate my companion’s processes. “Such paper could not be bought under half a crown a packet. It is peculiarly strong and stiff.”

“Peculiar-that is the very word,” said Holmes. “It is not an English paper at all. Hold it up to the light.”

I did so, and saw a large “E” with a small “g,” a “P,” and a large “G” with a small “t” woven into the texture of the paper.

“What do you make of that?” asked Holmes.

“The name of the maker, no doubt; or his monogram, rather.”

“Not at all. The ‘G’ with the small ‘t’ stands for ‘Gesellschaft,’ which is the German for ‘Company.’ It is a customary contraction like our ‘Co.’ ‘P,’ of course, stands for ‘Papier.’

Now for the ‘Eg: Let us glance at our Continental Gazetteer.” He took down a heavy brown volume from his shelves. “Eglo, Eglonitz-here we are, Egria. It is in a German-speaking country-in Bohemia, not far from Carlsbad. ‘Remarkable as being the scene of the death of Wallenstein, and for its numerous glass-factories and paper-mills.’ Ha, ha, my boy, what do you make of that?” His eyes sparkled, and he sent up a great blue triumphant cloud from his cigarette.

“The paper was made in Bohemia,” I said.

“Precisely. And the man who wrote the note is a German. Do you note the peculiar construction of the sentence-‘This account of you we have from all quarters received.’ A Frenchman

or Russian could not have written that. It is the German who is so uncourteous to his verbs. It only remains, therefore, to discover what is wanted by this German who writes upon Bohemian paper and prefers wearing a mask to showing his face. And here he comes, if I am not mistaken, to resolve all our doubts.”

As he spoke there was the sharp sound of horses’ hoofs and grating wheels against the curb, followed by a sharp pull at the bell. Holmes whistled.

“A pair, by the sound,” said he. “Yes,” he continued, glancing out of the window. “A nice little brougham and a pair of beauties. A hundred and fifty guineas apiece. There’s money in this case, Watson, if there is nothing else.”

“I think that I had better go, Holmes.”

“Not a bit, Doctor. Stay where you are. I am lost without my Boswell. And this promises to be interesting. It would be a pity to miss it.”

“But your client-”

“Never mind him. I may want your help, and so may he. Here he comes. Sit down in that armchair, Doctor, and give us your best attention.”

A slow and heavy step, which had been heard upon the stairs and in the passage, paused immediately outside the door. Then there was a loud and authoritative tap.

“Come in!” said Holmes.

A man entered who could hardly have been less than six feet six inches in height, with the chest and limbs of a Hercules. His dress was rich with a richness which would, in England, be looked upon as akin to bad taste. Heavy bands of astrakhan

were slashed across the sleeves and fronts of his double-breasted coat, while the deep blue cloak which was thrown over his shoulders was lined with flame-coloured silk and secured at the neck with a brooch which consisted of a single flaming beryl. Boots which extended halfway up his calves, and which were trimmed at the tops with rich brown fur, completed the impression of barbaric opulence which was suggested by his whole appearance. He carried a broad-brimmed hat in his hand, while he wore across the upper part of his face, extending down past the cheekbones, a black wizard mask, which he had apparently adjusted that very moment, for his hand was still raised to it as he entered. From the lower part of the face he appeared to be a man of strong character, with a thick, hanging lip, and a long, straight chin suggestive of resolution pushed to the length of obstinacy.

“You had my note?” he asked with a deep harsh voice and a strongly marked German accent. “I told you that I would call.” He looked from one to the other of us, as if uncertain which to address.

“Pray take a seat,” said Holmes. “This is my friend and colleague, Dr. Watson, who is occasionally good enough to help me in my cases. Whom have I the honour to address?”

“You may address me as the Count Von Kramm, a Bohemian nobleman. I understand that this gentleman, your friend, is a man of honour and discretion, whom I may trust with a matter of the most extreme importance. If not, I should much prefer to communicate with you alone.”

I rose to go, but Holmes caught me by the wrist and pushed me back into my chair. “It is both, or none,” said he. “You may say before this gentleman anything which you may say to me.”

The Count shrugged his broad shoulders. “Then I must begin,” said he, “by binding you both to absolute secrecy for two years; at the end of that time the matter will be of no importance. At present it is not too much to say that it is of such weight it may have an influence upon European history.”

“I promise,” said Holmes.

“And I.”

“You will excuse this mask,” continued our strange visitor. “The august person who employs me wishes his agent to be unknown to you, and I may confess at once that the title by which I have just called myself is not exactly my own.”

“I was aware of it,” said Holmes dryly.

“The circumstances are of great delicacy, and every precaution has to be taken to quench what might grow to be an immense scandal and seriously compromise one of the reigning families of Europe. To speak plainly, the matter implicates the great House of Ormstein, hereditary kings of Bohemia.”

“I was also aware of that,” murmured Holmes, settling himself down in his armchair and closing his eyes.

Our visitor glanced with some apparent surprise at the languid, lounging figure of the man who had been no doubt depicted to him as the most incisive reasoner and most energetic agent in Europe. Holmes slowly reopened his eyes and looked impatiently at his gigantic client.

“If your Majesty would condescend to state your case,” he remarked, “I should be better able to advise you.”

The man sprang from his chair and paced up and down the room in uncontrollable agitation. Then, with a gesture of

desperation, he tore the mask from his face and hurled it upon the ground. "You are right," he cried; "I am the King. Why should I attempt to conceal it?"

"Why, indeed?" murmured Holmes. "Your Majesty had not spoken before I was aware that I was addressing Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismund von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein, and hereditary King of Bohemia."

"But you can understand," said our strange visitor, sitting down once more and passing his hand over his high white forehead, "you can understand that I am not accustomed to doing such business in my own person. Yet the matter was so delicate that I could not confide it to an agent without putting myself in his power. I have come incognito from Prague for the purpose of consulting you."

"Then, pray consult," said Holmes, shutting his eyes once more.

"The facts are briefly these: Some five years ago, during a lengthy visit to Warsaw, I made the acquaintance of the well-known adventuress, Irene Adler. The name is no doubt familiar to you."

"Kindly look her up in my index, Doctor," murmured Holmes without opening his eyes.

For many years he had adopted a system of docketing all paragraphs concerning men and things, so that it was difficult to name a subject or a person on which he could not at once furnish information. In this case I found her biography sandwiched in between that of a Hebrew rabbi and that of a staff-commander who had written a monograph upon the deep-sea fishes.

"Let me see!" said Holmes. "Hum! Born in New Jersey in the year 1858. Contralto- hum! La Scala, hum! Prima donna Imperial Opera of Warsaw-yes! Retired from operatic stage-ha! Living in London-quite so! Your Majesty, as I understand, became entangled with this young person, wrote her some compromising letters, and is now desirous of getting those letters back."

"Precisely so. But how-"

"Was there a secret marriage?"

"None."

"No legal papers or certificates?"

"None."

"Then I fail to follow your Majesty. If this young person should produce her letters for blackmailing or other purposes, how is she to prove their authenticity?"

"There is the writing."

"Pooh, pooh! Forgery."

"My private note-paper."

"Stolen."

"My own seal."

"Imitated."

"My photograph."

"Bought."

"We were both in the photograph."

"Oh, dear! That is very bad! Your Majesty has indeed committed an indiscretion."

“I was mad-insane.”

“You have compromised yourself seriously.”

“I was only Crown Prince then. I was young. I am but thirty now.”

“It must be recovered.”

“We have tried and failed.”

“Your Majesty must pay. It must be bought.”

“She will not sell.”

“Stolen, then.”

“Five attempts have been made. Twice burglars in my pay ransacked her house. Once we diverted her luggage when she travelled. Twice she has been waylaid. There has been no result.”

“No sign of it?”

“Absolutely none.”

Holmes laughed. “It is quite a pretty little problem,” said he.

“But a very serious one to me,” returned the King reproachfully.

“Very, indeed. And what does she propose to do with the photograph?”

“To ruin me.”

“But how?”

“I am about to be married.”

“So I have heard.”

“To Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meningen, second daughter of the King of Scandinavia. You may know the strict principles

of her family. She is herself the very soul of delicacy. A shadow of a doubt as to my conduct would bring the matter to an end.”

“And Irene Adler?”

“Threatens to send them the photograph. And she will do it. I know that she will do it. You do not know her, but she has a soul of steel. She has the face of the most beautiful of women, and the mind of the most resolute of men. Rather than I should marry another woman, there are no lengths to which she would not go—none.”

“You are sure that she has not sent it yet?”

“I am sure.”

“And why?”

“Because she has said that she would send it on the day when the betrothal was publicly proclaimed. That will be next Monday.”

“Oh, then we have three days yet,” said Holmes with a yawn. “That is very fortunate, as I have one or two matters of importance to look into just at present. Your Majesty will, of course, stay in London for the present?”

“Certainly. You will find me at the Langham under the name of the Count Von Kramm.”

“Then I shall drop you a line to let you know how we progress.”

“Pray do so. I shall be all anxiety.”

“Then, as to money?”

“You have carte blanche.”

“Absolutely?”

“I tell you that I would give one of the provinces of my kingdom to have that photograph.”

“And for present expenses?”

The King took a heavy chamois leather bag from under his cloak and laid it on the table.

“There are three hundred pounds in gold and seven hundred in notes,” he said.

Holmes scribbled a receipt upon a sheet of his note-book and handed it to him.

“And Mademoiselle’s address?” he asked.

“Is Briony Lodge, Serpentine Avenue, St. John’s Wood?”

Holmes took a note of it. “One other question,” said he. “Was the photograph a cabinet?”

“It was.”

“Then, good-night, your Majesty, and I trust that we shall soon have some good news for

you. And good-night, Watson,” he added, as the wheels of the royal brougham rolled down the street. “If you will be good enough to call to-morrow afternoon at three o’clock I should like to chat this little matter over with you.”

## II

At three o’clock precisely I was at Baker Street, but Holmes had not yet returned. The landlady informed me that he had left the house shortly after eight o’clock in the morning. I sat down beside the fire, however, with the intention of awaiting him, however long he might be. I was already deeply interested in his inquiry, for, though it was surrounded by none of the grim and

strange features which were associated with the two crimes which I have already recorded, still, the nature of the case and the exalted station of his client gave it a character of its own.

Indeed, apart from the nature of the investigation which my friend had on hand, there was something in his masterly grasp of a situation, and his keen, incisive reasoning, which made it a pleasure to me to study his system of work, and to follow the quick, subtle methods by which he disentangled the most inextricable mysteries. So accustomed was I to his invariable success that the very possibility of his failing had ceased to enter into my head.

It was close upon four before the door opened, and a drunken-looking groom, ill-kempt and side-whiskered, with an inflamed face and disreputable clothes, walked into the room.

Accustomed as I was to my friend’s amazing powers in the use of disguises, I had to look three times before I was certain that it was indeed he. With a nod he vanished into the bedroom, whence he emerged in five minutes tweed-suited and respectable, as of old. Putting his hands into his pockets, he stretched out his legs in front of the fire and laughed heartily for some minutes.

“Well, really!” he cried, and then he choked and laughed again until he was obliged to lie back, limp and helpless, in the chair.

“What is it?”

“It’s quite too funny. I am sure you could never guess how I employed my morning, or what I ended by doing.”

“I can’t imagine. I suppose that you have been watching the habits, and perhaps the house, of Miss Irene Adler.”

“Quite so; but the sequel was rather unusual. I will tell you, however. I left the house a little after eight o’clock this morning in the character of a groom out of work. There is a wonderful sympathy and freemasonry among horsey men. Be one of them, and you will know all that there is to know. I soon found Briony Lodge. It is a bijou villa, with a garden at the back, but built out in front right up to the road, two stories. Chubb lock to the door. Large sitting-room on the right side, well furnished, with long windows almost to the floor, and those preposterous English window fasteners which a child could open. Behind there was nothing remarkable, save that the passage window could be reached from the top of the coach-house.

I walked round it and examined it closely from every point of view, but without noting anything else of interest.

“I then lounged down the street and found, as I expected, that there was a mews in a lane which runs down by one wall of the garden. I lent the ostlers a hand in rubbing down their horses, and received in exchange two pence, a glass of half-and-half, two fills of shag tobacco, and as much information as I could desire about Miss Adler, to say nothing of half a dozen other people in the neighbourhood in whom I was not in the least interested, but whose biographies I was compelled to listen to.”

“And what of Irene Adler?” I asked.

“Oh, she has turned all the men’s heads down in that part. She is the daintiest thing under a bonnet on this planet. So say the Serpentine-mews, to a man. She lives quietly, sings at concerts, drives out at five every day, and returns at seven sharp for dinner. Seldom goes out at other times, except when she sings. Has only one male visitor, but a good deal of him. He is dark, handsome,

and dashing, never calls less than once a day, and often twice. He is a Mr. Godfrey Norton, of the Inner Temple. See the advantages of a cabman as a confidant. They had driven him home a dozen times from Serpentine-mews, and knew all about him. When I had listened to all they had to tell, I began to walk up and down near Briony Lodge once more, and to think over my plan of campaign.

“This Godfrey Norton was evidently an important factor in the matter. He was a lawyer.

That sounded ominous. What was the relation between them, and what the object of his repeated visits? Was she his client, his friend, or his mistress? If the former, she had probably transferred the photograph to his keeping. If the latter, it was less likely. On the issue of this question depended whether I should continue my work at Briony Lodge, or turn my attention to the gentleman’s chambers in the Temple. It was a delicate point, and it widened the field of my inquiry. I fear that I bore you with these details, but I have to let you see my little difficulties, if you are to understand the situation.”

“I am following you closely,” I answered.

“I was still balancing the matter in my mind when a hansom cab drove up to Briony Lodge, and a gentleman sprang out. He was a remarkably handsome man, dark, aquiline, and moustached—evidently the man of whom I had heard. He appeared to be in a great hurry, shouted to the cabman to wait, and brushed past the maid who opened the door with the air of a man who was thoroughly at home.

“He was in the house about half an hour, and I could catch glimpses of him in the windows of the sitting-room, pacing up

and down, talking excitedly, and waving his arms. Of her I could see nothing. Presently he emerged, looking even more flurried than before. As he stepped up to the cab, he pulled a gold watch from his pocket and looked at it earnestly, 'Drive like the devil,' he shouted, 'first to Gross & Hankey's in Regent Street, and then to the Church of St. Monica in the Edgeware Road. Half a guinea if you do it in twenty minutes!'

"Away they went, and I was just wondering whether I should not do well to follow them when up the lane came a neat little landau, the coachman with his coat only half-buttoned, and his tie under his ear, while all the tags of his harness were sticking out of the buckles. It hadn't pulled up before she shot out of the hall door and into it. I only caught a glimpse of her at the moment, but she was a lovely woman, with a face that a man might die for.

"The Church of St. Monica, John,' she cried, 'and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.'

"This was quite too good to lose, Watson. I was just balancing whether I should run for it, or whether I should perch behind her landau when a cab came through the street. The driver looked twice at such a shabby fare, but I jumped in before he could object. 'The Church of St. Monica,' said I, 'and half a sovereign if you reach it in twenty minutes.' It was twenty-five minutes to twelve, and of course it was clear enough what was in the wind.

"My cabby drove fast. I don't think I ever drove faster, but the others were there before us. The cab and the landau with their steaming horses were in front of the door when I arrived.

I paid the man and hurried into the church. There was not a soul there save the two whom I had followed and a surplice

clergyman, who seemed to be expostulating with them. They were all three standing in a knot in front of the altar. I lounged up the side aisle like any other idler who has dropped into a church. Suddenly, to my surprise, the three at the altar faced round to me, and Godfrey Norton came running as hard as he could towards me.

"Thank God,' he cried. 'You'll do. Come! Come!'

"What then?' I asked.

"Come, man, come, only three minutes, or it won't be legal.'

"I was half-dragged up to the altar, and before I knew where I was I found myself mumbling responses which were whispered in my ear, and vouching for things of which I knew nothing, and generally assisting in the secure tying up of Irene Adler, spinster, to Godfrey Norton, bachelor. It was all done in an instant, and there was the gentleman thanking me on the one side and the lady on the other, while the clergyman beamed on me in front. It was the most preposterous position in which I ever found myself in my life, and it was the thought of it that started me laughing just now. It seems that there had been some informality about their license, that the clergyman absolutely refused to marry them without a witness of some sort, and that my lucky appearance saved the bridegroom from having to sally out into the streets in search of a best man. The bride gave me a sovereign, and I mean to wear it on my watch chain in memory of the occasion."

"This is a much unexpected turn of affairs," said I, "and what then?"

"Well, I found my plans very seriously menaced. It looked as if the pair might take an immediate departure, and so necessitate

very prompt and energetic measures on my part. At the church door, however, they separated, he driving back to the Temple, and she to her own house. 'I shall drive out in the park at five as usual,' she said as she left him. I heard no more. They drove away in different directions, and I went off to make my own arrangements."

"Which are?"

"Some cold beef and a glass of beer," he answered, ringing the bell. "I have been too busy to think of food, and I am likely to be busier still this evening. By the way, Doctor, I shall want your co-operation."

"I shall be delighted."

"You don't mind breaking the law?"

"Not in the least."

"Nor running a chance of arrest?"

"Not in a good cause."

"Oh, the cause is excellent!"

"Then I am your man."

"I was sure that I might rely on you."

"But what is it you wish?"

"When Mrs. Turner has brought in the tray I will make it clear to you. Now," he said as he turned hungrily on the simple fare that our landlady had provided, "I must discuss it while I eat, for I have not much time. It is nearly five now. In two hours we must be on the scene of action. Miss Irene, or Madame, rather, returns from her drive at seven. We must be at Briony Lodge to meet her."

"And what then?"

"You must leave that to me. I have already arranged what is to occur. There is only one point on which I must insist. You must not interfere, come what may. You understand?"

"I am to be neutral?"

"To do nothing whatever. There will probably be some small unpleasantness. Do not join in it. It will end in my being conveyed into the house. Four or five minutes afterwards the sitting-room window will open. You are to station yourself close to that open window."

"Yes."

"You are to watch me, for I will be visible to you."

"Yes."

"And when I raise my hand-so you will throw into the room what I give you to throw, and will, at the same time, raise the cry of fire. You quite follow me?"

"Entirely."

"It is nothing very formidable," he said, taking a long cigar-shaped roll from his pocket.

"It is an ordinary plumber's smoke-rocket, fitted with a cap at either end to make it selflighting.

Your task is confined to that. When you raise your cry of fire, it will be taken up by quite a number of people. You may then walk to the end of the street, and I will rejoin you in ten minutes. I hope that I have made myself clear?"

"I am to remain neutral, to get near the window, to watch you, and at the signal to throw in this object, then to raise the cry

of fire, and to wait you at the corner of the street.”

“Precisely.”

“Then you may entirely rely on me.”

“That is excellent. I think, perhaps, it is almost time that I prepare for the new role I have to play.”

He disappeared into his bedroom and returned in a few minutes in the character of an amiable and simple-minded Nonconformist clergyman. His broad black hat, his baggy trousers, his white tie, his sympathetic smile, and general look of peering and benevolent curiosity were such as Mr. John Hare alone could have equalled. It was not merely that Holmes changed his costume. His expression, his manner, his very soul seemed to vary with every fresh part that he assumed. The stage lost a fine actor, even as science lost an acute reasoner, when he became a specialist in crime.

It was a quarter past six when we left Baker Street, and it still wanted ten minutes to the hour when we found ourselves in Serpentine Avenue. It was already dusk, and the lamps were just being lighted as we paced up and down in front of Briony Lodge, waiting for the coming of its occupant. The house was just such as I had pictured it from Sherlock Holmes’ succinct description, but the locality appeared to be less private than I expected. On the contrary, for a small street in a quiet neighbourhood, it was remarkably animated. There was a group of shabbily dressed men smoking and laughing in a corner, a scissors-grinder with his wheel, two guardsmen who were flirting with a nurse-girl, and several well-dressed young men who were lounging up and down with cigars in their mouths.

“You see,” remarked Holmes, as we paced to and fro in front of the house, “this marriage rather simplifies matters. The photograph becomes a double-edged weapon now. The chances are that she would be as averse to its being seen by Mr. Godfrey Norton, as our client is to its coming to the eyes of his princess. Now the question is, Where are we to find the photograph?”

“Where, indeed?”

“It is most unlikely that she carries it about with her. It is cabinet size. Too large for easy concealment about a woman’s dress. She knows that the King is capable of having her waylaid and searched. Two attempts of the sort have already been made. We may take it, then, that she does not carry it about with her.”

“Where, then?”

“Her banker or her lawyer. There is that double possibility. But I am inclined to think neither. Women are naturally secretive, and they like to do their own secreting. Why should she hand it over to anyone else? She could trust her own guardianship, but she could not tell what indirect or political influence might be brought to bear upon a business man. Besides, remember that she had resolved to use it within a few days. It must be where she can lay her hands upon it. It must be in her own house.”

“But it has twice been burgled.”

“Pshaw! They did not know how to look.”

“But how will you look?”

“I will not look.”

“What then?”

“I will get her to show me.”

“But she will refuse.”

“She will not be able to. But I hear the rumble of wheels. It is her carriage. Now carry out my orders to the letter.”

As he spoke the gleam of the sidelights of a carriage came round the curve of the avenue.

It was a smart little landau which rattled up to the door of Briony Lodge. As it pulled up, one of the loafing men at the corner dashed forward to open the door in the hope of earning a copper, but was elbowed away by another loafer, who had rushed up with the same intention.

A fierce quarrel broke out, which was increased by the two guardsmen, who took sides with one of the loungers, and by the scissors-grinder, who was equally hot upon the other side. A blow was struck, and in an instant the lady, who had stepped from her carriage, was the centre of a little knot of flushed and struggling men, who struck savagely at each other with their fists and sticks. Holmes dashed into the crowd to protect the lady; but, just as he reached her, he gave a cry and dropped to the ground, with the blood running freely down his face. At his fall the guardsmen took to their heels in one direction and the loungers in the other, while a number of better dressed people, who had watched the scuffle without taking part in it, crowded in to help the lady and to attend to the injured man. Irene Adler, as I will still call her, had hurried up the steps; but she stood at the top with her superb figure outlined against the lights of the hall, looking back into the street.

“Is the poor gentleman much hurt?” she asked.

“He is dead,” cried several voices.

“No, no, there’s life in him!” shouted another. “But he’ll be gone before you can get him to hospital.”

“He’s a brave fellow,” said a woman. “They would have had the lady’s purse and watch if it hadn’t been for him. They were a gang, and a rough one, too. Ah, he’s breathing now.”

“He can’t lie in the street. May we bring him in, mam?”

“Surely. Bring him into the sitting-room. There is a comfortable sofa. This way, please!”

Slowly and solemnly he was borne into Briony Lodge and laid out in the principal room, while I still observed the proceedings from my post by the window. The lamps had been lit, but the blinds had not been drawn, so that I could see Holmes as he lay upon the couch. I do not know whether he was seized with compunction at that moment for the part he was playing, but I know that I never felt more heartily ashamed of myself in my life than when I saw the beautiful creature against whom I was conspiring, or the grace and kindness with which she waited upon the injured man. And yet it would be the blackest treachery to Holmes to draw back now from the part which he had intrusted to me. I hardened my heart, and took the smoke-rocket from under my ulster. After all, I thought, we are not injuring her. We are but preventing her from injuring another.

Holmes had sat up upon the couch, and I saw him motion like a man who is in need of air.

A maid rushed across and threw open the window. At the same instant I saw him raise his hand and at the signal I tossed my rocket into the room with a cry of “Fire!” The word was no sooner out of my mouth than the whole crowd of spectators, well dressed and ill-gentlemen, ostlers, and servant maids-joined

in a general shriek of "Fire!" Thick clouds of smoke curled through the room and out at the open window. I caught a glimpse of rushing figures, and a moment later the voice of Holmes from within assuring them that it was a false alarm. Slipping through the shouting crowd I made my way to the corner of the street, and in ten minutes was rejoiced to find my friend's arm in mine, and to get away from the scene of uproar. He walked swiftly and in silence for some few minutes until we had turned down one of the quiet streets which lead towards the Edgeware Road.

"You did it very nicely, Doctor," he remarked. "Nothing could have been better. It is all right."

"You have the photograph?"

"I know where it is."

"And how did you find out?"

"She showed me, as I told you she would."

"I am still in the dark."

"I do not wish to make a mystery," said he, laughing. "The matter was perfectly simple.

You, of course, saw that everyone in the street was an accomplice. They were all engaged for the evening."

"I guessed as much."

"Then, when the row broke out, I had a little moist red paint in the palm of my hand. I rushed forward, fell down, clapped my hand to my face, and became a piteous spectacle. It is an old trick."

"That also I could fathom."

"Then they carried me in. She was bound to have me in. What else could she do? And into her sitting-room, which was

the very room which I suspected. It lay between that and her bedroom, and I was determined to see which. They laid me on a couch, I motioned for air, they were compelled to open the window, and you had your chance."

"How did that help you?"

"It was all-important. When a woman thinks that her house is on fire, her instinct is at once to rush to the thing which she values most. It is a perfectly overpowering impulse, and I have more than once taken advantage of it. In the case of the Darlington Substitution Scandal it was of use to me, and also in the Arnsworth Castle business. A married woman grabs at her baby; an unmarried one reaches for her jewel-box. Now it was clear to me that our lady of today had nothing in the house more precious to her than what we are in quest of. She would rush to secure it. The alarm of fire was admirably done. The smoke and shouting were enough to shake nerves of steel. She responded beautifully. The photograph is in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell-pull. She was there in an instant, and I caught a glimpse of it as she half drew it out. When I cried out that it was a false alarm, she replaced it, glanced at the rocket, rushed from the room, and I have not seen her since. I rose, and, making my excuses, escaped from the house. I hesitated whether to attempt to secure the photograph at once; but the coachman had come in, and as he was watching me narrowly, it seemed safer to wait. A little over-precipitance may ruin all."

"And now?" I asked.

"Our quest is practically finished. I shall call with the King to-morrow, and with you, if you care to come with us. We will be shown into the sitting-room to wait for the lady, but it is

probable that when she comes she may find neither us nor the photograph. It might be a satisfaction to his Majesty to regain it with his own hands.”

“And when will you call?”

“At eight in the morning. She will not be up, so that we shall have a clear field. Besides, we must be prompt, for this marriage may mean a complete change in her life and habits. I must wire to the King without delay.”

We had reached Baker Street and had stopped at the door. He was searching his pockets for the key when someone passing said:

“Good-night, Mister Sherlock Holmes.”

There were several people on the pavement at the time, but the greeting appeared to come from a slim youth in an ulster who had hurried by.

“I’ve heard that voice before,” said Holmes, staring down the dimly lit street. “Now, I wonder who the deuce that could have been.”

### III

I slept at Baker Street that night, and we were engaged upon our toast and coffee in the morning when the King of Bohemia rushed into the room.

“You have really got it!” he cried, grasping Sherlock Holmes by both shoulder and looking eagerly into his face.

“Not yet.”

“But you have hopes?”

“I have hopes.”

“Then, come. I am all impatience to be gone.”

“We must have a cab.”

“No, my brougham is waiting.”

“Then that will simplify matters.” We descended and started off once more for Briony Lodge.

“Irene Adler is married,” remarked Holmes.

“Married! When?”

“Yesterday.”

“But to whom?”

“To an English lawyer named Norton.”

“But she could not love him.”

“I am in hopes that she does.”

“And why in hopes?”

“Because it would spare your Majesty all fear of future annoyance. If the lady loves her husband, she does not love your Majesty. If she does not love your Majesty, there is no reason why she should interfere with your Majesty’s plan.”

“It is true. And yet-! Well! I wish she had been of my own station! What a queen she would have made!” He relapsed into a moody silence, which was not broken until we drew up in Serpentine Avenue. The door of Briony Lodge was open, and an elderly woman stood upon the steps. She watched us with a sardonic eye as we stepped from the brougham.

“Mr. Sherlock Holmes, I believe?” said she.

“I am Mr. Holmes,” answered my companion, looking at her with a questioning and rather startled gaze.

“Indeed! My mistress told me that you were likely to call. She left this morning with her husband by the 5:15 train from Charing Cross for the Continent.”

“What!” Sherlock Holmes staggered back, white with chagrin and surprise. “Do you mean that she has left England?”

“Never to return.”

“And the papers?” asked the King hoarsely. “All is lost.”

“We shall see.” He pushed past the servant and rushed into the drawing-room, followed by the King and myself. The furniture was scattered about in every direction, with dismantled shelves and open drawers, as if the lady had hurriedly ransacked them before her flight.

Holmes rushed at the bell-pull, tore back a small sliding shutter, and, plunging in his hand, pulled out a photograph and a letter. The photograph was of Irene Adler herself in evening dress, the letter was super scribed to “Sherlock Holmes, Esq. to be left till called for.” My friend tore it open, and we all three read it together. It was dated at midnight of the preceding night and ran in this way:

“MY DEAR MR. SHERLOCK HOLMES, - You really did it very well. You took me in completely. Until after the alarm of fire, I had not a suspicion. But then, when I found how I had betrayed myself, I began to think. I had been warned against you months ago. I had been told that, if the King employed an agent, it would certainly be you. And your address had been given me. Yet, with all this, you made me reveal what you wanted to know. Even after I became suspicious, I found it hard to think evil of such a dear, kind old clergyman. But, you know, I have been trained as an actress myself. Male costume is nothing new

to me. I often take advantage of the freedom which it gives. I sent John, the coachman, to watch you, ran upstairs, got into my walking clothes, as I call them, and came down just as you departed.

“Well, I followed you to your door, and so made sure that I was really an object of interest to the celebrated Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Then I, rather imprudently, wished you good-night, and started for the Temple to see my husband.

“We both thought the best resource was flight, when pursued by so formidable an antagonist; so you will find the nest empty when you call to-morrow. As to the photograph, your client may rest in peace. I love and am loved by a better man than he. The King may do what he will without hindrance from one whom he has cruelly wronged. I keep it only to safeguard myself, and to preserve a weapon which will always secure me from any steps which he might take in the future. I leave a photograph which he might care to possess; and I remain, dear Mr. Sherlock Holmes,

“Very truly yours,

“IRENE NORTON, née ADLER.”

“What a woman-oh, what a woman!” cried the King of Bohemia, when we had all three read this epistle. “Did I not tell you how quick and resolute she was? Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity that she was not on my level?”

“From what I have seen of the lady, she seems, indeed, to be on a very different level to your Majesty,” said Holmes coldly. “I am sorry that I have not been able to bring your Majesty’s business to a more successful conclusion.”

“On the contrary, my dear sir,” cried the King; “nothing could be more successful. I know that her word is inviolate. The photograph is now as safe as if it were in the fire.”

“I am glad to hear your Majesty say so.”

“I am immensely indebted to you. Pray tell me in what way I can reward you. This ring-

” He slipped an emerald snake ring from his finger and held it out upon the palm of his hand.

“Your Majesty has something which I should value even more highly,” said Holmes.

“You have but to name it.”

“This photograph!”

The King stared at him in amazement.

“Irene’s photograph!” he cried. “Certainly, if you wish it.”

“I thank your Majesty. Then there is no more to be done in the matter. I have the honour to wish you a very good morning.” He bowed, and, turning away without observing the hand which the King had stretched out to him, he set off in my company for his chambers.

And that was how a great scandal threatened to affect the kingdom of Bohemia, and how the best plans of Mr. Sherlock Holmes were beaten by a woman’s wit. He used to make merry over the cleverness of women, but I have not heard him do it of late. And when he speaks of Irene Adler, or when he refers to her photograph, it is always under the honourable title of the woman.

**The End**

## Summary

"A Scandal in Bohemia" was the first of Arthur Conan Doyle's 56 Sherlock Holmes short stories to be published in The Strand Magazine and the first Sherlock Holmes story illustrated by Sidney Paget. (Two of the four Sherlock Holmes novels - A Study in Scarlet and The Sign of the Four - preceded the short story cycle). Doyle ranked A Scandal in Bohemia fifth in his list of his twelve favourite Holmes stories.

It was first published on 25 June 1891 in the issue of the magazine dated July, and was the first of the stories collected in The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes in 1892.

While the currently married Dr. Watson is paying Holmes a visit, a visitor arrives, introducing himself as Count Von Kramm, an agent for a wealthy client. However, Holmes quickly deduces that he is in fact Wilhelm Gottsreich Sigismund von Ormstein, Grand Duke of Cassel-Felstein and the hereditary King of Bohemia. Realizing Holmes has seen through his guise, the King admits this and tears off his mask.

It transpires that the King is to become engaged to Clotilde Lothman von Saxe-Meiningen, a young Scandinavian princess. However, five years previous to the events of the story he had a liaison with an American opera singer, Irene Adler, while she was serving a term as prima donna of the Imperial Opera of Warsaw, who has since then retired to London. Fearful that should the strictly principled family of his fiancée learn of this impropriety, the marriage would be called off, he had sought to regain letters and a photograph of Adler and himself together, which he had sent to her during their relationship as a token. The King's agents have tried to recover the photograph through sometimes forceful means, burglary, stealing her luggage, and waylaying her. An offer to pay for the photograph and letters was also refused. With Adler threatening to send them to his future in-laws, which Von Ormstein presumes is to prevent him marrying any other woman, he makes the incognito visit to Holmes to request his help in locating and obtaining the photograph.

The photograph is described to Holmes as a cabinet (5½ by 4 inches) and therefore too bulky for a lady to carry upon her person. The King gives Holmes £1,000 (£97,200 today[1]) to cover any expenses, while saying that he "would give one of [his] provinces" to have the photograph back. Holmes asks Dr. Watson to join him at 221B Baker Street at 3 o'clock the following afternoon.

The next morning, Holmes goes out to Adler's house, disguised as a drunken out-of-work groom. He discovers from the local stable workers that Adler has a gentleman friend, the lawyer Godfrey Norton of the Inner Temple, who calls at least once a day. On this particular day, Norton comes to visit Adler, and soon afterwards, takes a cab to the Church of St. Monica in Edgware Road. Minutes later, the lady herself gets in her landau, bound for the same place. Holmes follows in a cab and, upon arriving, finds himself dragged into the church to be a witness to Norton and Adler's wedding. Curiously, they go their separate ways after the ceremony.

Meanwhile, Watson has been waiting for Sherlock to arrive, and when Sherlock Holmes finally does deliver himself back to the Holmes HQ, he starts laughing. Watson is confused and asks what is so funny, Sherlock then recounts his tale and comments he thought the situation and position he was in at the wedding was amusing. He also asks whether or not Watson is willing to participate in a scheme to figure out where the picture is hidden in Adler's house. Watson agrees, and Holmes changes into another disguise as a clergyman. The duo depart Baker Street for Adler's house.

When Holmes and Watson arrive, a group of jobless men meander throughout the street. When Adler's coach pulls up, Holmes enacts his plan. A fight breaks out between the men on the street over who gets to help Adler. Holmes rushes into the fight to protect Adler, and is seemingly struck and injured. Adler takes him into her sitting room, where Holmes motions for her to have the window opened. As Holmes lifts his hand, Watson recognizes a pre-arranged signal and tosses in a plumber's

smoke rocket. While smoke billows out of the building, Watson shouts "FIRE!" and the cry is echoed up and down the street.

Holmes slips out of Adler's house and tells Watson what he saw. As Holmes expected, Adler rushed to get her most precious possession at the cry of "fire"-the photograph of herself and the King. Holmes was able to see that the picture was kept in a recess behind a sliding panel just above the right bell pull. He was unable to steal it at that moment, however, because the coachman was watching him. He explains all this to Watson before being bid good-night by a familiar-sounding youth, who promptly manages to get lost in the crowd.

The following morning, Holmes explains his findings to the King. When Holmes, Watson, and the King arrive at Adler's house, her elderly maidservant informs them that she has hastily departed for the Charing Cross railway station. Holmes quickly goes to the photograph's hiding spot, finding a photo of Irene Adler in an evening dress and a letter dated midnight and addressed to him. In the letter, Adler tells Holmes that he did very well in finding the photograph and fooling her with his disguises. She also reveals that she posed as the youth who bid Holmes good-night. Adler and Norton have fled England, but Adler has promised she keeps the photograph only as protection and not to use it against the King.

The King gushes over how amazing Adler is, saying "Would she not have made an admirable queen? Is it not a pity she was not on my level?" Holmes replies scathingly that Miss Adler is indeed on a much different level from the King (by which he means higher - an implication lost on the King). When he asks Holmes how he wants to be paid, Holmes asks for the photograph of Adler. Holmes keeps it as a souvenir of the cleverness of Irene Adler, and how he was beaten by a woman's wit.

**(Courtesy Wikipedia)**

# Kabuliwala

Rabindranath Tagore

## Introduction

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) was the youngest son of Debendranath Tagore, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj, which was a new religious sect in nineteenth-century Bengal and which attempted a revival of the ultimate monistic basis of Hinduism as laid down in the Upanishads. He was educated at home; and although at seventeen he was sent to England for formal schooling, he did not finish his studies there. In his mature years, in addition to his many-sided literary activities, he managed the family estates, a project which brought him into close touch with common humanity and increased his interest in social reforms. He also started an experimental school at Shantiniketan where he tried his Upanishadic ideals of education. From time to time he participated in the Indian nationalist movement, though in his own non-sentimental and visionary way; and Gandhi, the political father of modern India, was his devoted friend. Tagore was knighted by the ruling British Government in 1915, but within a few years he resigned the honour as a protest against British policies in India.

Tagore had early success as a writer in his native Bengal. With his translations of some of his poems he became rapidly known in the West. In fact his fame attained a luminous height, taking him across continents on lecture tours and tours of friendship. For the world he became the voice of India's spiritual heritage;

and for India, especially for Bengal, he became a great living institution.

Although Tagore wrote successfully in all literary genres, he was first of all a poet. Among his fifty and odd volumes of poetry are *Manasi* (1890) [The Ideal One], *Sonar Tari* (1894) [The Golden Boat], *Gitanjali* (1910) [Song Offerings], *Gitimalya* (1914) [Wreath of Songs], and *Balaka* (1916) [The Flight of Cranes]. The English renderings of his poetry, which include *The Gardener* (1913), *Fruit-Gathering* (1916), and *The Fugitive* (1921), do not generally correspond to particular volumes in the original Bengali; and in spite of its title, *Gitanjali: Song Offerings* (1912), the most acclaimed of them, contains poems from other works besides its namesake. Tagore's major plays are *Raja* (1910) [The King of the Dark Chamber], *Dakghar* (1912) [The Post Office], *Achalayatan* (1912) [The Immovable], *Muktadhara* (1922) [The Waterfall], and *Raktakaravi* (1926) [Red Oleanders]. He is the author of several volumes of short stories and a number of novels, among them *Gora* (1910), *Ghare-Baire* (1916) [The Home and the World], and *Yogayog* (1929) [Crosscurrents]. Besides these, he wrote musical dramas, dance dramas, essays of all types, travel diaries, and two autobiographies, one in his middle years and the other shortly before his death in 1941. Tagore also left numerous drawings and paintings, and songs for which he wrote the music himself.

## Kabuliwala

My five years' old daughter Mini cannot live without chattering. I really believe that in all her life she has not wasted a minute in silence. Her mother is often vexed at this, and would stop her prattle, but I would not. To see Mini quiet is unnatural, and I cannot bear it long. And so my own talk with her is always lively.

One morning, for instance, when I was in the midst of the seventeenth chapter of my new novel, my little Mini stole into the room, and putting her hand into mine, said: "Father! Ramdayal the doorkeeper calls a crow a krow! He doesn't know anything, does he?"

Before I could explain to her the differences of language in this world, she was embarked on the full tide of another subject. "What do you think, Father? Bhola says there is an elephant in the clouds, blowing water out of his trunk, and that is why it rains!"

And then, darting off anew, while I sat still making ready some reply to this last saying, "Father! What relation is Mother to you?"

"My dear little sister in the law!" I murmured involuntarily to

myself, but with a grave face contrived to answer: "Go and play with Bhola, Mini! I am busy!"

The window of my room overlooks the road. The child had seated herself at my feet near my table, and was playing softly, drumming on her knees. I was hard at work on my seventeenth chapter, where Pratrapp Singh, the hero, had just caught Kanchanlata, the heroine, in his arms, and was about to escape with her by the third story window of the castle, when all of a sudden Mini left her play, and ran to the window, crying, "A Kabuliwallah! A Kabuliwallah!" Sure enough in the street below was a Kabuliwallah, passing slowly along. He wore the loose soiled clothing of his people, with a tall turban; there was a bag on his back, and he carried boxes of grapes in his hand.

I cannot tell what were my daughter's feelings at the sight of this man, but she began to call him loudly. "Ah!" I thought, "he will come in, and my seventeenth chapter will never be finished!" At which exact moment the Kabuliwallah turned, and looked up at the child. When she saw this, overcome by terror, she fled to her mother's protection, and disappeared. She had a blind belief that inside the bag, which the big man carried, there were perhaps two or three other children like herself. The pedlar meanwhile entered my doorway, and greeted me with a smiling face.

So precarious was the position of my hero and my heroine that my first impulse was to stop and buy something, since the man had been called. I made some small purchases, and a conversation began about Abdurrahman, the Russians, the English, and the Frontier Policy.

As he was about to leave, he asked: "And where is the little girl, sir?"

And I, thinking that Mini must get rid of her false fear, had her brought out.

She stood by my chair, and looked at the Kabuliwallah and his bag. He offered her nuts and raisins, but she would not be tempted, and only clung the closer to me, with all her doubts increased. This was their first meeting.

One morning, however, not many days later, as I was leaving the house, I was startled to find Mini, seated on a bench near the door, laughing and talking, with the great Kabuliwallah at her feet. In all her life, it appeared; my small daughter had never found so patient a listener, save her father. And already the corner of her little sari was stuffed with almonds and raisins, the gift of her visitor, "Why did you give her those?" I said, and taking out an eight-Anna bit, I handed it to him. The man accepted the money without demur, and slipped it into his pocket.

Alas, on my return an hour later, I found the unfortunate coin had made twice its own worth of trouble! For the Kabuliwallah had given it to Mini, and her mother catching sight of the bright round object, had pounced on the child with: "Where did you get that eight-anna bit?"

"The Kabuliwallah gave it me," said Mini cheerfully.

"The Kabuliwallah gave it you!" cried her mother much shocked. "Oh, Mini! How could you take it from him?"

I, entering at the moment, saved her from impending disaster, and proceeded to make my own inquiries.

It was not the first or second time, I found, that the two had met. The Kabuliwallah had overcome the child's first terror by a judicious bribery of nuts and almonds, and the two were now great friends.

They had many quaint jokes, which afforded them much amusement. Seated in front of him, looking down on his gigantic frame in all her tiny dignity, Mini would ripple her face with laughter, and begin: "O Kabuliwallah, Kabuliwallah, what have you got in your bag?"

And he would reply, in the nasal accents of the mountaineer: "An elephant!" Not much cause for merriment, perhaps; but how they both enjoyed the witticism! And for me, this child's talk with a grown-up man had always in it something strangely fascinating.

Then the Kabuliwallah, not to be behindhand, would take his turn: "Well, little one, and when are you going to the father-in-law's house?"

Now most small Bengali maidens have heard long ago about the father-in-law's house; but we, being a little new-fangled, had kept these things from our child, and Mini at this question must have been a trifle bewildered. But she would not show it, and with ready tact replied: "Are you going there?"

Amongst men of the Kabuliwallah's class, however, it is well known that the words father-in-law's house have a double meaning. It is a euphemism for jail, the place where we are well cared for, at no expense to ourselves. In this sense would the sturdy pedlar take my daughter's question. "Ah," he would say, shaking his fist at an invisible policeman, "I will thrash my father-in-law!" Hearing this, and picturing the poor discomfited relative, Mini would go off into peals of laughter, in which her formidable friend would join.

These were autumn mornings, the very time of year when kings of old went forth to conquest; and I, never stirring from my little corner in Calcutta, would let my mind wander over the whole

world. At the very name of another country, my heart would go out to it, and at the sight of a foreigner in the streets, I would fall to weaving a network of dreams, --the mountains, the glens, and the forests of his distant home, with his cottage in its setting, and the free and independent life of far-away wilds.

Perhaps the scenes of travel conjure themselves up before me, and pass and repass in my imagination all the more vividly, because I lead such a vegetable existence, that a call to travel would fall upon me like a thunderbolt.

In the presence of this Kabuliwallah, I was immediately transported to the foot of arid mountain peaks, with narrow little defiles twisting in and out amongst their towering heights. I could see the string of camels bearing the merchandise, and the company of turbaned merchants, carrying some of their queer old firearms, and some of their spears, journeying downward towards the plains. I could see--but at some such point Mini's mother would intervene, imploring me to "beware of that man."

Mini's mother is unfortunately a very timid lady. Whenever she hears a noise in the street, or sees people coming towards the house, she always jumps to the conclusion that they are either thieves, or drunkards, or snakes, or tigers, or malaria or cockroaches, or caterpillars, or an English sailor. Even after all these years of experience, she is not able to overcome her terror.

So she was full of doubts about the Kabuliwallah, and used to beg me to keep a watchful eye on him.

I tried to laugh her fear gently away, but then she would turn round on me seriously, and ask me solemn questions.

Were children never kidnapped?

Was it, then, not true that there was slavery in Kabul?

Was it so very absurd that this big man should be able to carry off a tiny child?

I urged that, though not impossible, it was highly improbable. But this was not enough, and her dread persisted. As it was indefinite, however, it did not seem right to forbid the man the house, and the intimacy went on unchecked.

Once a year in the middle of January Rahmun, the Kabuliwallah, was in the habit of returning to his country, and as the time approached he would be very busy, going from house to house collecting his debts. This year, however, he could always find time to come and see Mini. It would have seemed to an outsider that there was some conspiracy between the two, for when he could not come in the morning, he would appear in the evening.

Even to me it was a little startling now and then, in the corner of a dark room, suddenly to surprise this tall, loose-garmented, much be bagged man; but when Mini would run in smiling, with her, "O! Kabuliwallah! Kabuliwallah!" and the two friends, so far apart in age, would subside into their old laughter and their old jokes, I felt reassured.

One morning, a few days before he had made up his mind to go, I was correcting my proof sheets in my study. It was chilly weather. Through the window the rays of the sun touched my feet, and the slight warmth was very welcome. It was almost eight o'clock, and the early pedestrians were returning home, with their heads covered. All at once, I heard an uproar in the street, and, looking out, saw Rahmun being led away bound between two policemen, and behind them a crowd of curious

boys. There were blood-stains on the clothes of the Kabuliwallah, and one of the policemen carried a knife.

Hurrying out, I stopped them, and enquired what it all meant. Partly from one, partly from another, I gathered that a certain neighbour had owed the pedlar something for a Rampuri shawl, but had falsely denied having bought it, and that in the course of the quarrel, Rahmun had struck him. Now in the heat of his excitement, the prisoner began calling his enemy all sorts of names, when suddenly in a verandah of my house appeared my little Mini, with her usual exclamation: "O Kabuliwallah! Kabuliwallah!" Rahmun's face lighted up as he turned to her. He had no bag under his arm today, so she could not discuss the elephant with him. She at once therefore proceeded to the next question: "Are you going to the father-in-law's house?"

Rahmun laughed and said: "Just where I am going, little one!" Then seeing that the reply did not amuse the child, he held up his fettered hands. "Ali," he said, "I would have thrashed that old father-in-law, but my hands are bound!"

On a charge of murderous assault, Rahmun was sentenced to some years' imprisonment.

Time passed away, and he was not remembered. The accustomed work in the accustomed place was ours, and the thought of the once-free mountaineer spending his years in prison seldom or never occurred to us. Even my light-hearted Mini, I am ashamed to say, forgot her old friend.

New companions filled her life. As she grew older, she spent more of her time with girls. So much time indeed did she spend with them that she came no more, as she used to do, to her father's room. I was scarcely on speaking terms with her.

Years had passed away. It was once more autumn and we had made arrangements for our Mini's marriage. It was to take place during the Puja Holidays. With Durga returning to Kailas, the light of our home also was to depart to her husband's house, and leave her father's in the shadow.

The morning was bright. After the rains, there was a sense of ablution in the air, and the sunrays looked like pure gold. So bright were they that they gave a beautiful radiance even to the sordid brick walls of our Calcutta lanes. Since early dawn today the wedding-pipes had been sounding, and at each beat my own heart throbbed. The wail of the tune, Bhairavi, seemed to intensify my pain at the approaching separation. My Mini was to be married to-night.

From early morning noise and bustle had pervaded the house. In the courtyard the canopy had to be slung on its bamboo poles; the chandeliers with their tinkling sound must be hung in each room and verandah. There was no end of hurry and excitement. I was sitting in my study, looking through the accounts, when someone entered, saluting respectfully, and stood before me. It was Rahmun the Kabuliwallah. At first I did not recognise him. He had no bag, nor the long hair, nor the same vigour that he used to have. But he smiled, and I knew him again.

"When did you come, Rahmun?" I asked him.

"Last evening," he said, "I was released from jail."

The words struck harsh upon my ears. I had never before talked with one who had wounded his fellow, and my heart shrank within itself, when I realised this, for I felt that the day would have been better-omened had he not turned up.

"There are ceremonies going on," I said, "and I am busy. Could you perhaps come another day?"

At once he turned to go; but as he reached the door he hesitated, and said: "May I not see the little one, sir, for a moment?" It was his belief that Mini was still the same. He had pictured her running to him as she used, calling "O Kabuliwallah! Kabuliwallah!" He had imagined too that they would laugh and talk together, just as of old. In fact, in memory of former days he had brought, carefully wrapped up in paper, a few almonds and raisins and grapes, obtained somehow from a countryman, for his own little fund was dispersed.

I said again: "There is a ceremony in the house, and you will not be able to see anyone to-day."

The man's face fell. He looked wistfully at me for a moment, said "Good morning," and went out. I felt a little sorry, and would have called him back, but I found he was returning of his own accord. He came close up to me holding out his offerings and said: "I brought these few things, sir, for the little one. Will you give them to her?"

I took them and was going to pay him, but he caught my hand and said: "You are very kind, sir! Keep me in your recollection. Do not offer me money!--You have a little girl, I too have one like her in my own home. I think of her, and bring fruits to your child, not to make a profit for myself."

Saying this, he put his hand inside his big loose robe, and brought out a small and dirty piece of paper. With great care he unfolded this, and smoothed it out with both hands on my table. It bore the impression of a little band. Not a photograph. Not a drawing. The impression of an ink-smear laid flat on the paper. This touch of his own little daughter had been always on

his heart, as he had come year after year to Calcutta, to sell his wares in the streets.

Tears came to my eyes. I forgot that he was a poor Kabuli fruit-seller, while I was--but no, what was I more than he? He also was a father. That impression of the hand of his little Parbati in her distant mountain home reminded me of my own little Mini.

I sent for Mini immediately from the inner apartment. Many difficulties were raised, but I would not listen. Clad in the red silk of her wedding-day, with the sandal paste on her forehead, and adorned as a young bride, Mini came, and stood bashfully before me.

The Kabuliwallah looked a little staggered at the apparition. He could not revive their old friendship. At last he smiled and said: "Little one, are you going to your father-in-law's house?"

But Mini now understood the meaning of the word "father-in-law," and she could not reply to him as of old. She flushed up at the question, and stood before him with her bride-like face turned down.

I remembered the day when the Kabuliwallah and my Mini had first met, and I felt sad. When she had gone, Rahmun heaved a deep sigh, and sat down on the floor. The idea had suddenly come to him that his daughter too must have grown in this long time, and that he would have to make friends with her anew. Assuredly he would not find her, as he used to know her. And besides, what might not have happened to her in these eight years?

The marriage-pipes sounded, and the mild autumn sun streamed round us. But Rahmun sat in the little Calcutta lane, and saw before him the barren mountains of Afghanistan.

I took out a bank-note, and gave it to him, saying: "Go back to your own daughter, Rahmun, in your own country, and may the happiness of your meeting bring good fortune to my child!"

Having made this present, I had to curtail some of the festivities. I could not have the electric lights I had intended, nor the military band, and the ladies of the house were despondent at it.

But to me the wedding feast was all the brighter for the thought that in a distant land a longlost father met again with his only child.

### **The End**

### **Summary**

Abdur Rehman Khan (Balraj Sahni), a middle-aged dry fruit seller from Kabul (Afghanistan), comes to Calcutta to hawk his merchandise and befriends a small Bengali girl called Mini who reminds him of his own daughter Amina back in Afghanistan. He puts up at a boarding house along with his countrymen. Since he is short of money he decides to sell his goods on credit for increasing his business.

Later, when he goes to collect his money, one of his customers abuses him and in the fight that ensues Rehman warns that he will not tolerate abuse and stabs the man when he does not stop the abuse. In the court Rehman's lawyer tries to obfuscate the facts but in his characteristic and simple fashion Rehman states the truth in a matter of fact way. The judge, pleased with Rehman's honesty, gives him 10 years' rigorous imprisonment instead of the death sentence.

On the day of his release, he goes to meet Mini but discovers that she has grown up into a woman and is about to get married. Mini does not recognize Rehman, he realises that his own

daughter must have forgotten him too. Mini's father gives Rehman the money for travelling back to Afghanistan out of Mini's wedding budget to which Mini agrees; she also sends a gift for Rehman's daughter. (It) ends with Rehman travelling back to his homeland.

### **Courtesy**

[http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1913/tagore-bio.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1913/tagore-bio.html)

# The slaying of Bakasura

C. Rajagopalachari

## Introduction

Chakravarti Rajagopalachari (10 December 1878 – 25 December 1972), informally called Rajaji or C.R., was an Indian lawyer, independence activist, politician, writer and statesman. Rajagopalachari was the last Governor-General of India. He also served as leader of the Indian National Congress, Premier of the Madras Presidency, Governor of West Bengal, Minister for Home Affairs of the Indian Union and Chief Minister of Madras state. Rajagopalachari founded the Swatantra Party and was one of the first recipients of India's highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna. He vehemently opposed the use of nuclear weapons and was a proponent of world peace and disarmament. During his lifetime, he also acquired the nickname 'Mongoose of Salem'.

Rajagopalachari was born in the village of Thorapalli in the Salem district of the Madras Presidency (now the Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu) and educated at Central College, Bangalore, and Presidency College, Madras. In 1900 he started a legal practice that in time became prosperous. On entering politics, he became a member and later President of the Salem municipality. He joined the Indian National Congress and participated in the agitations against the Rowlatt Act, joining the Non-Cooperation movement, the Vaikom Satyagraha, and the Civil Disobedience movement. In 1930, Rajagopalachari risked imprisonment when he led the Vedaranyam Salt

Satyagraha in response to the Dandi March. In 1937, Rajagopalachari was elected Premier of the Madras Presidency and served until 1940, when he resigned due to Britain's declaration of war on Germany. He later advocated co-operation over Britain's war effort and opposed the Quit India Movement. He favoured talks with both Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League and proposed what later came to be known as the C. R. Formula. In 1946, Rajagopalachari was appointed Minister of Industry, Supply, Education and Finance in the Interim Government of India, and then as the Governor of West Bengal from 1947 to 1948, Governor-General of India from 1948 to 1950, Union Home Minister from 1951 to 1952 and as Chief Minister of Madras state from 1952 to 1954. In 1959, he resigned from the Indian National Congress and founded the Swatantra Party, which stood against the Congress in the 1962, 1967 and 1972 elections. Rajagopalachari was instrumental in setting up a united Anti-Congress front in Madras state under C.N. Annadurai, which swept the 1967 elections.

Rajagopalachari was an accomplished writer who made lasting contributions to Indian English literature and is also credited with composition of the song Kurai Onrum Illai set to Carnatic music. He pioneered temperance and temple entry movements in India and advocated Dalit upliftment. He has been criticised for introducing the compulsory study of Hindi and the controversial Madras Scheme of Elementary Education in Madras State. Critics have often attributed his pre-eminence in politics to his standing as a favourite of both Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Rajagopalachari was described by Gandhi as the "keeper of my conscience".

**Courtesy Wikipedia**

## THE SLAYING OF BAKASURA

IN the city of Ekachakra, the Pandavas stayed in the guise of brahmanas, begging their food in the brahmana streets and bringing what they got to their mother, who would wait anxiously till their return. If they did not come back in time, she would be worried, fearing that some evil might have befallen them.

Kunti would divide the food they brought in two equal portions. One half would go to Bhima. The other half would be shared by the other brothers and the mother. Bhima, being born of the Wind god had great strength and a mighty appetite.

Vrikodara, one of the names of Bhima, means wolf-bellied, and a wolf, you know, looks always famished. And however much it might eat, its hunger is never quite satisfied.

Bhima's insatiable hunger and the scanty food he used to get at Ekachakra went ill together. And he daily grew thin, which caused much distress to his mother and brothers. Sometime later, Bhima became acquainted with a potter for whom he helped and fetched clay. The potter, in return, presented him with a big earthen pot that became an object of merriment to the street urchins.

One day, when the other brothers had gone to beg for alms, Bhimasena stayed behind with his mother, and they heard loud lamentations from the house of their brahmana landlord. Some great calamity surely had befallen the poor family and Kunti went inside to learn what it was.

The brahmana and his wife could hardly speak for weeping, but, at last the brahmana said to his wife: "O unfortunate and foolish woman, though time and again I wished we should leave this city for good, you would not agree. You persisted in saying that you were born and bred here and here you would stay where your parents and relations had lived and died.

How can I think of losing you who have been to me at once my life's mate, loving mother, the wife who bore my children, nay, my all in all? I cannot send you to death while I keep myself alive. This little girl has been given to us by God as a trust to be handed over in time to a worthy man. It is unrighteous to sacrifice her who is a gift of God to perpetuate the race. It is equally impossible to allow this other, our son, to be killed. How can we live after consigning to death our only solace in life and our hope for the here after? If he is lost, who would pour libations for us and our ancestors? Alas! You did not pay heed to my words, and this is the deadly fruit of your perversity. If I give up my life, this girl and boy will surely die soon for want of a protector. What shall I do? It is best that all of us perish together" and the brahmana burst forth sobbing.

The wife replied: "I have been a good wife to you, and done my duty by bearing you a daughter and a son. You are able, and I am not, to bring up and protect your children. Just as cast out offal is pounced upon and seized by rapacious birds, a

poor widowed woman is an easy prey to wicked and dishonest people. Dogs fight for a cloth wet with ghee, and in pulling it hither and thither in unclean greed, tear it into foul rags. It would be best if I am handed over to the Rakshasa. Blessed indeed is the woman who passes to the other world, while her husband is alive.

This, as you know, is what the scriptures say. Bid me farewell. Take care of my children. I have been happy with you. I have performed many meritorious actions. By my faithful devotion to you, I am sure of heaven. Death has no terror for one who has been a good wife. After I am gone, take another wife. Gladden me with a brave smile, give me your blessing, and send me to the Rakshasa."

Hearing these words of his wife, the brahmana tenderly embraced her and, utterly overcome by her love and courage, he wept like a child. When he could find his voice, he replied: "O beloved and noble one, what words are these? Can I bear to live without you? The first duty of a married man is to protect his wife. I should indeed be a pitiful sinner if I lived after giving you up to the Rakshasa, sacrificing both love and duty."

The daughter who was hearing this piteous conversation, now interposed with sobs: "Listen to me, child though I be, and then do what is proper. It is me alone that you can spare to the Rakshasa. By sacrificing one soul, that is, myself, you can save the others. Let me be the little boat to take you across this river of calamity. In like manner, a woman without a guardian becomes the sport of wicked people who drag her hither and thither. It is impossible for me to protect two fatherless orphans and they will perish miserably like fish in a waterless pond. If both of you pass

away, both I and this little baby brother of mine will soon perish unprotected in this hard world. If this family of ours can be saved from destruction by my single death, what a good death mine would be! Even if you consider my welfare alone, you should send me to the Rakshasa."

At these brave words of the poor child, the parents tenderly embraced her and wept.

Seeing them all in tears the boy, hardly more than a baby, started up with glowing eyes, lisping: "Father, do not weep.

Mother, do not weep. Sister, do not weep," and he went to each and sat on their lap by turns. Then he rose up took a stick of firewood and brandishing it about, said in his sweet childish treble: "I shall kill the Rakshasa with this stick." The child's action and speech made them smile in the midst of their tears, but only added to their great sorrow.

Feeling this was the moment for intervention, Kuntidevi entered and inquired for the cause of their sorrow and whether there was anything she could do to help them.

The brahmana said: "Mother, this is a sorrow far beyond your aid. There is a cave near the city, where lives a cruel and terribly strong Rakshasa named Bakasura. He forcibly seized this city and kingdom thirteen years ago. Since then he has held us in cruel thralldom. The kshatriya ruler of this country has fled to the city of Vetrakiya and is unable to protect us. This Rakshasa formerly used to issue from his cave whenever he liked and, mad with hunger, indiscriminately kill and eat men, women and children in this city. The citizens prayed to the Rakshasa to come to some sort of stipulation in place of this promiscuous slaughter. They prayed: 'Do not kill us wantonly at your whim and pleasure. Once

a week we shall bring you sufficient meat, rice, curds and intoxicating liquors and many other delicacies. We will deliver these to you in a carriage drawn by two bullocks driven by a human being taken from each house in turn. You can make a repast of the rice, along with the bullocks and the man, but refrain from this mad orgy of slaughter.'

The Rakshasa agreed to the proposal. From that day, this strong Rakshasa has been protecting this kingdom from foreign raids and wild beasts. This arrangement has been in force for many years. No hero has been found to free this country from this pest, for the Rakshasa has invariably defeated and killed all the brave men who tried. Mother, our legitimate sovereign is unable to protect us. The citizens of a country, whose king is weak, should not marry and beget children. A worthy family life, with culture and domestic happiness, is possible only under the rule of a good, strong king. Wife, wealth and other things are not safe, if there be no proper king ruling over us. And having long suffered with the sight of others' sorrow, our own turn has come now to send a person as prey to the Rakshasa. I have not the means to purchase a substitute. None of us can bear to live after sending one of us to a cruel death, and so I shall go with my whole family to him. Let the wicked glutton gorge himself with all of us. I have pained you with these things, but you wished to know.

Only God can help us, but we have lost all hope even of that."

The political truths contained in this story of Ekachakra are noteworthy and suggestive. Kunti talked the matter over with Bhimasena and returned to the brahmana. She said: "Good man,

do not despair. God is great. I have five sons. One of them will take the food to the Rakshasa."

The brahmana jumped up in amazed surprise, but then shook his head sadly and would not hear of the substituted sacrifice. Kunti said: "O brahmana, do not be afraid. My son is endowed with superhuman powers derived from mantras and will certainly kill this Rakshasa, as I have myself seen him kill many other such Rakshasas. But keep this a secret, for, if you reveal it, his power will come to naught."

Kunti's fear was that, if the story got noised abroad, Duryodhana's men would see the hand of the Pandavas, and find out their whereabouts. Bhima was filled with unbounded joy and enthusiasm at the arrangement made by Kunti.

The other brothers returned to the house with alms. Dharmaputra saw the face of Bhimasena radiant with joy to which it had long been a stranger and inferred that he was resolved on some hazardous adventure and questioned Kunti who told him everything.

Yudhishtira said: "What is this? Is not this rash and thoughtless? Relying on Bhima's strength we sleep without care or fear. Is it not through Bhima's strength and daring that we hope to regain the kingdom that has been seized by our deceitful enemies? Was it not through the prowess of Bhima that we escaped from the wax palace? And you are risking the life of Bhima who is our present protection and future hope. I fear your many trials have clouded your judgment!"

Kuntidevi replied: "Dear sons, we have lived happily for many years in the house of this brahmana. Duty, nay, man's highest virtue, is to repay the benefit he has enjoyed by doing good in his turn. I know the heroism of Bhima and have no fears.

Remember who carried us from Varanavata and who killed the demon Hidimba. It is our duty to be of service to this brahmana family." After a fierce battle, the Rakshasa Bakasura was slain by Bhima who pretended to bring him a cartload of food.

## Summary

The Pandavas stayed in the city of Ekachakra disguised as brahmins. They would beg for food on the streets and would then bring it to their mother Kunti. She would then divide the food into two shares. One share was for Bhima who had a very big appetite, being born of Vayu the wind God and all that. The other half was shared by his other brothers and herself.

Bhima was not getting much food in Ekachakra and so he was getting very thin. He made friends with a potter and would carry clay for him to make his pottery. As payment the potter gave him a huge clay pot which was used to collect food. The size of the pot brought much excitement amongst the many people who saw it.

One day his other brothers went out to beg for alms and he stayed at home with his mother. There was loud weeping and wailing coming from their landlord's house. Kunti went in to investigate what was happening.

Kunti heard of a very sorrowful conversation taking place between her brahmana landlord and his wife. They were pondering about some calamity that was about to strike their family. They were very concerned about the two children they had, a boy and a girl and their survival in the world should they become orphans.

Confused by the conversation and all that was going on there, Kunti decided to ask them what the problem was and if she could be of any help. The brahmana replied that the problem was so complex that Kunti will be unable to solve.

He then told her the details about a rakshasa named Bakasura who captured the city years ago and since then he has been terrorising the inhabitants. Overcome by fear the ruler of that

nation and kingdom fled to the city of Vetrakiya so there is no one to protect the citizens.

He continued that,"Bakasura comes out from his cave and would kill men, women and children and would feast on them. The villagers tried to make a deal with him that they would provide food and wine for him only if he would leave them alone. They would send him food drawn by two bullocks and driven by a human being, and he can eat it all, bullocks and human included.

The rakshasa agreed to the proposal and has stopped terrorising the locality since. However, now it is my turn to take the food to him. Since my family cannot survive without me, I will have to take us all for him to feast on".

Kunti was moved by the story and went and discussed it with Bhima. She later returned to the brahmana and told him that one of her sons would take the food to Bakasura. The brahmana was surprised to hear this but was hesitant to accept Kunti's son as a substitute.

Then Kunti explained to him the enormous strength of Bhima but told the brahmana that he should tell no one. She was trying to hide their identity least news reached Duryodhana that they were still alive.

At this time Yudhishtira and his brothers returned from begging alms. Kunti told him of her intentions but he was not in favour of risking Bhima's life since so far they had relied heavily on him. Kunti reasoned with him telling him that they should help the brahmana since he has been so kind to them.

Yudhishtira reminded his mother that it was Bhima who got them out safely from the house of wax and it was also Bhima who took them on his shoulders to Siddhavata. Kunti then told Yudhishtira that a good deed must be repaid with a good deed and as such they should help the brahmana.

Yudhishtira accepted what his mother said and all preparations were made for Bhima to take the food to Bakasura. When Bhima arrived at the spot where Baka would take the food, he called out to him, "Baka, Baka" but there was no sight of him. Feeling a

bit hungry and with all that food before him, Bhima started eating the food.

Suddenly, Bakasura appeared and seeing Bhima eating his food, he attacked him. A fight started and before long Bakasura was slain. Then Bhima carried his body to the gates of the city and left it there. The brahmana and his family was very happy at the outcome.

Kunti told the brahman and his family that if anyone should ask who killed Bakasura, tell them that it was some brahmana who had learned some powerful mantras. She did not want anyone to know that her sons were the Pandavas.

Courtesy <http://www.trinihindu.faithweb.com/aadi18.html>

## Ozymandias

Percy Bysshe Shelley

### Introduction

Percy Bysshe Shelley (4 August 1792 - 8 July 1822) was one of the major English Romantic poets, and is regarded by some critics as amongst the finest lyric poets in the English language. A radical in his poetry as well as his political and social views, Shelley did not achieve fame during his lifetime, but recognition for his poetry grew steadily following his death. Shelley was a key member of a close circle of visionary poets and writers that included Lord Byron; Leigh Hunt; Thomas Love Peacock; and his own second wife, Mary Shelley, the author of *Frankenstein*.

Shelley is perhaps best known for such classic poems as *Ozymandias*, *Ode to the West Wind*, *To a Skylark*, *Music, When Soft Voices Die*, *The Cloud* and *The Masque of Anarchy*. His other major works include long, visionary poems such as *Queen Mab* (later reworked as *The Daemon of the World*), *Alastor*, *The Revolt of Islam*, *Adonais*, the unfinished work *The Triumph of Life*; and the visionary verse dramas *The Cenci* (1819) and *Prometheus Unbound* (1820).

His close circle of admirers included some progressive thinkers of the day, including his future father-in-law, the philosopher William Godwin. Though Shelley's poetry and prose output remained steady throughout his life, most publishers and journals declined to publish his work for fear of being arrested themselves for blasphemy or sedition. Shelley did not live to

see success and influence, although these reach down to the present day not only in literature, but in major movements in social and political thought.

Shelley became an idol of the next three or four generations of poets, including important Victorian and Pre-Raphaelite poets such as Robert Browning and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. He was admired by Oscar Wilde, Thomas Hardy, George Bernard Shaw, Bertrand Russell, W. B. Yeats, Karl Marx, Upton Sinclair and Isadora Duncan. Henry David Thoreau's civil disobedience was apparently influenced by Shelley's non-violence in protest and political action. Shelley's popularity and influence has continued to grow in contemporary poetry circles.

## Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land,  
Who said- "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone  
Stand in the desert. . . . Near them, on the sand,  
Half sunk a shattered visage lies, whose frown,  
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,  
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read  
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,  
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed;  
And on the pedestal, these words appear:  
My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings;  
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!  
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay  
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare  
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

### Summary

The speaker describes a meeting with someone who has travelled to a place where ancient civilizations once existed. We know from the title that he's talking about Egypt. The traveller told the speaker a story about an old, fragmented statue in the

middle of the desert. The statue is broken apart, but you can still make out the face of a person. The face looks stern and powerful, like a ruler. The sculptor did a good job at expressing the ruler's personality.

The ruler was a wicked guy, but he took care of his people.

On the pedestal near the face, the traveller reads an inscription in which the ruler Ozymandias tells anyone who might happen to pass by, basically, "Look around and see how awesome I am!" But there is no other evidence of his awesomeness in the vicinity of his giant, broken statue. There is just a lot of sand, as far as the eye can see. The traveller ends his story.

"Ozymandias" is a sonnet written by the English romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822). First published in the 11 January 1818 issue of *The Examiner* in London, it was included the following year in Shelley's collection *Rosalind and Helen, A Modern Eclogue; with Other Poems* (1819) and in a posthumous compilation of his poems published in 1826. "Ozymandias" is regarded as one of Shelley's most famous works and is frequently anthologised.

In antiquity, Ozymandias was an alternative name for the Egyptian pharaoh Ramesses II. Shelley began writing his poem in 1817, soon after the announcement of the British Museum's acquisition of a large fragment of a statue of Ramesses II from the thirteenth-century BC, and some scholars believe that Shelley was inspired by this. The 7.25-ton fragment of the statue's head and torso had been removed in 1816 from the mortuary temple of Ramesses at Thebes by the Italian adventurer Giovanni Battista Belzoni (1778–1823). It was expected to arrive in London in 1818, but did not arrive until 1821. Shelley wrote the poem in friendly competition with his friend and fellow poet Horace Smith (1779–1849) who also wrote a sonnet on the same topic with the very same title. Smith's poem would be first published in *The Examiner* a few weeks after Shelley's sonnet. Both poems explore the fate of history and the ravages of time—that all prominent figures and the empires they build are impermanent and their legacies fated to decay and oblivion.

## The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost

### Introduction

Robert Lee Frost (March 26, 1874 – January 29, 1963) was an American poet. His work was initially published in England before it was published in America. He is highly regarded for his realistic depictions of rural life and his command of American colloquial speech. His work frequently employed settings from rural life in New England in the early twentieth century, using them to examine complex social and philosophical themes. One of the most popular and critically respected American poets of the twentieth century, Frost was honored frequently during his lifetime, receiving four Pulitzer Prizes for Poetry. He became one of America's rare "public literary figures, almost an artistic institution." He was awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in 1960 for his poetical works. On July 22, 1961, Frost was named Poet laureate of Vermont.

## The Road Not Taken

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,  
And sorry I could not travel both  
And be one traveller, long I stood  
And looked down one as far as I could  
To where it bent in the undergrowth;  
Then took the other, as just as fair,  
And having perhaps the better claim,  
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;  
Though as for that the passing there  
Had worn them really about the same,  
And both that morning equally lay  
In leaves no step had trodden black.  
Oh, I kept the first for another day!  
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,  
I doubted if I should ever come back.  
I shall be telling this with a sigh  
Somewhere ages and ages hence:  
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I-

I took the one less travelled by,  
And that has made all the difference.

### Summary

The speaker stands in the woods, considering a fork in the road. Both ways are equally worn and equally overlaid with un-trodden leaves. The speaker chooses one, telling himself that he will take the other another day. Yet he knows it is unlikely that he will have the opportunity to do so. And he admits that someday in the future he will recreate the scene with a slight twist:

He will claim that he took the less-travelled road.

The Road Not Taken is more than a poem about someone trying to decide which road he's going to take on a stroll through the woods. It's actually a poem about the journey of life. The two roads diverged in a yellow wood symbolize a person's life, and the narrator's choice about which road to take represents the different decisions we sometimes have to make and how those decisions will affect the future; think of the expression 'down the road' that we often use to describe something that might happen months or even years from now, and you'll see how Frost is making this connection between life and traveling.

Frost captures the uncertainty about making decisions and the natural desire to want to know what will happen as a result of the decisions we ultimately make: 'Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and sorry I could not travel both and be one traveler, long I stood and looked down one as far as I could to where it bent in the undergrowth' (ll. 2-5). Here the narrator really wishes he could have a preview of what lies around the corner for him, but of course, he can't, which Frost reminds us with that little bend in

the road beyond which the narrator can't see. The narrator realizes this and decides to take the other road, because it really doesn't matter; he has no way of knowing where he's going to end up no matter what he does.

The only difference is that the road he does choose is 'grassy and wanted wear'; in other words, it doesn't look like anyone's taken it before or in a long time (ll. 8). At this point in the poem, Frost tries to encourage readers to overcome that fear; someone has to be the first person to try a new thing; think about what has happened when a man has boldly gone where no man has gone before. Without that kind of determination, Christopher Columbus wouldn't have 'discovered' America, or Neil Armstrong would never have walked on the moon.