

plan. I would go and find the cattle in the valley where I had smelt them out, but I would not bring them to the secret hiding place. No, I would drive them straight to the kraal and denounce Noma before the chief, my father, and all the people. But I was young in those days, and did not know all the heart of Noma.

I went to the corner of my hut, Noma watching me all the while, and took a kerrie and a small shield. Then I started through the moonlight.

For an hour I traveled swiftly over the plain, till I came to the hillside where the bush began. At last I found the little buffalo path I sought, and turned along it. Presently I came to an open place where the moonlight crept in between the trees. I knelt down and looked. Yes! my snake had not hid to me; there was the spoor of the cattle! Then I went on gladly till I reached a dell through which the water ran softly. Here the trail of the cattle was broad; they had broken down the ferns with their feet and trampled the grass flat. Presently I came to a pool. I knew it—it was the pool my snake had shown me.

I stepped forward and looked round. My eye caught something; it was the faint gray light of the dawn gilding on the cattle's horns.

Then I collected them and drove them before me down the narrow path back toward the kraal. Now the daylight came quickly, and the sun had been up an hour when I reached the spot where I should turn if I wished to hide the cattle in the secret place, as Noma had bid me. But this I would not do. No, I would go on to the kraal with them, and tell all men that Noma was a thief. Still, I sat down and rested awhile, for I was tired. As I sat, I heard a noise and looked up. There, over the slope of the rise, came a crowd of men, and leading them was Noma, and by his side the headman who owned the cattle. I stood still wondering, but as I stood they ran toward me, shouting and waving sticks and spears.

"There he is!" screamed Noma. "There he is!—the clever boy whom I have brought up to bring shame on me. What did I tell you? Did I not tell you that he was a thief? Yes—yes! I know your tricks, Mopo, my child! See! he is stealing the cattle!" And he made a rush at me with his stick lifted, and after him came the headman, grunting with rage.

I understood, my father. My heart went mad in me. Everything began to swim round; a red cloth seemed to lift itself up and down before my eyes. I have always seen it thus when I was forced to fight. I screamed out one word only—"Liar!"—and rushed to meet him. On came Noma. He struck at me with his kerrie, but I caught the blow upon my little shield and hit back. Wow! I did hit! The skull of Noma met my kerrie, and down he fell, dead at my feet. I yelled again and rushed on at the headman. He threw an assegai, but it missed me, and next second I hit him too. He got up his shield, but I knocked it down upon his head, and over he rolled senseless. Whether he lived or died I know not, but his head being of the thickest I think it likely that he lived. Then, while the people stood astonished, I turned and ran. They turned, too, and ran after me. But none of them could catch me, and presently I was out of sight and alone.

CHAPTER III. MOPO VENTURES HOME.

I threw myself down on the grass and panted till my strength came back; then I went and hid in a patch of reeds down by a swamp. All day long I lay there thinking. What was I to do? Now I was a jackal without a hole. If I went back to my people, certainly they would kill me, whom they thought a thief. My blood would be given for Noma's, and that I did not wish, though my heart was sad. Then there came into my mind the thought of Chaka, the boy to whom I had given the cup of water long ago.

I had heard of him; his name was known in the land. The words he had said and the vision that my mother had seen were beginning to come true. He had taken the place of his father, Senzangaona. Now I remembered how this Chaka promised that he would make me great, and I thought in myself that I would arise and go to him. Perhaps he would kill me; well, what did it matter? I should certainly be killed if I staid here. Yes, I would go. But now my heart pulled another way. There was but one thing that I loved in the world—it was my sister Baleka. My father had betrothed her to the chief of a neighboring tribe, but I knew that this marriage was against her wish. Perhaps my sister would run away with me if I could get near her to tell her that I was going. I would try—yes, I would try.

I waited till the darkness came down, then I went on till I came to the kraal. Some of my people were seated outside of a hut, talking together over a fire. I crept near silently as a snake and hid behind a little bush. I knew that they could not see me outside the ring of the firelight, and I wanted to hear what they said. As I thought, they were talking of me and called me many names. They said I should bring ill luck on the tribe by having killed so great a witch doctor as Noma, also that the people of the headman would demand payment for the assault on him. I learned, moreover, that my father had ordered all the men of the tribe out to hunt for me on the morrow, and to kill me wherever they found me. "Ah!" I thought, "you may hunt, but you will bring nothing home to the pot." Just then a dog that was lying by the fire got up and began to sniff the air. I could not see what dog it was—indeed I had forgotten all about the dogs when I drew near the kraal; that is what comes of want of experience, my father. The dog sniffed and sniffed, then he began to growl looking always my way, and I grew afraid.

"What is the dog growling at?" said one man to another. "Go and see." But the other man was taking snuff and did not like to move. "Let the dog go and see for himself," he answered, sneez-

ing; "what is the good of keeping a dog if you have to catch the thief?" "Go on, then," said the first man to the dog, and he ran forward, barking. Then I saw him; it was my own dog, Kooos, a very good dog. Presently, as I lay not knowing what to do, he smelled my smell, stopped barking, and running around the bush he found me and began to lick my face. "Be quiet, Kooos," I whispered to him, and he lay down by my side.

"Where has that dog gone now?" said the first man. "Is he bewitched, that he suddenly stops barking and does not come back?"

"We will see," said the other, rising, a spear in his hand.

Now I was once more terribly afraid. For I thought that they would catch me or I must run for my life again. But as I sprang up to run a big black snake glided between the men and went off toward the huts. They jumped aside in a great fright, then all turned to follow the snake, saying that this was what the dog was barking at.

When they had gone I crept off the other way, and Kooos followed me. At first I thought that I would kill him, lest he should betray me; but when I called him to me to knock him on the head I could not do it. So I thought I would take my chance, and we went on together. This was my purpose: First to creep into my own hut and get my assegai and skin blanket, then to gain speech with Baleka. I came to the reef fence that surrounded the huts. Nobody was to be seen at the gate, which was not shut with thorns as usual. That was my duty, and I had not been there to do it. So, bidding the dog lie down outside, I stepped through boldly, came to the door of my hut and listened. It was empty; there was not even a breath to be heard. So I crept in and began to search for my assegai, my water gourd and my wood pillow.

Now the kraal of the chief, my father, Makedama, was two hundred paces away, and there I must go, for there Baleka slept. Also I dared not enter by the gate, because a man was always on guard there. So I cut my way through the reef fence with my assegai and crept to the hut where Baleka was with some of her half sisters. I knew on which side of the hut it was her custom to lie and where her head would be. So I lay down on my side and gently, very gently, began to bore a hole in the grass covering of the hut. Almost I gave it over, thinking that I would fly alone, when suddenly I heard a girl wake and begin to cry on the other side of the thatch. "Ah," I thought, "that is Baleka, who weeps for her brother!" So I put my lips where the thatch was thickest and whispered:

"Baleka, my sister! Baleka, do not weep! I, Mopo, am here. Say not a word, but rise. Come out of the hut, bringing your skin blanket."

Baleka understood, and after awhile crept from the hut.

"Why are you here?" she whispered as we met. "Surely you will be killed!" "Hush!" I said. "Will you come with me, or will you creep back into the hut and bid me farewell?"

She thought awhile, then she said, "No, my brother, I will come, though I believe that this will be the end of it—that you will lead me to my death."

So we slipped away together, followed by the dog Kooos, and soon were running toward the country of the Zulu tribe.

CHAPTER IV. THE FLIGHT OF MOPO AND BALEKA.



Shouted out loud and charged me.

All the rest of that night we journeyed, till even the dog was tired. Then we hid in a meadow for a day, as we were afraid of being seen. Toward the afternoon we heard voices, and looking through the stems of the meadow we saw a party of my father's men pass searching for us. They went on to a neighboring kraal to ask if we had been seen, and after that we saw them no more for awhile. At night we traveled again, but, as fate would have it, we were met by an old woman, who looked oddly at us but said nothing. After that we pushed on day and night, for we knew that the old woman would tell the pursuers if she met them; and so indeed it turned out.

But now I was doubtful whether we would go to Chaka, for after what we had seen I grew afraid lest he should kill us. Still we had nowhere to turn, so I said that we would walk along till something happened. Now we grew faint with hunger and weariness, and Baleka said that we had better sit down and die, for then there would be no more trouble. So we sat down by a spring. But I did not wish to die yet, though Baleka was right, and it would have been well to do so. As we sat, the dog Kooos went to a bush that was near, and presently I heard him spring at something and the sound of struggling. I ran to the bush; he had caught hold of a duiker buck, as big as himself, that was asleep in it. Then I drove my spear into the buck and shouted for joy, for here was food.

When the buck was dead I skinned him, and we took bits of the flesh washed them in the water and ate them for we had no fire to cook them with. It is not nice to eat uncooked flesh, but we were so hungry that we did not

mind, and strength came back to us from the food. When we had eaten what we could we rose and washed ourselves at the spring; but as we washed Baleka looked up and gave a cry of fear. For there, on the crest of the hill, about ten spear-throwers away, were a party of six armed men, and these men people of my own tribe—children of my father Makedama—who still pursued us to take us or slay us. They saw us; they raised a shout and began to run. We too sprang up and ran.

Before us the ground was open and sloped down to the banks of the White Umfolozi. We ran for the river. After us came the warriors. Now we neared the banks of the river; it was full and wide. Above us the waters ran angrily, breaking into swirls of white where they passed over sunken rocks; below was a rapid, in which none might live; between the two a deep pool, where the water was quiet but the stream strong.

"Ah! my brother, what shall we do?" gasped Baleka.

"There is this to choose," I answered, "perish on the spears of our people or try the river."

"Easier to die by water than on iron," she answered.

"Good!" I said. "Now may our snakes look toward us and the spirits of our fathers be with us! At the least we can swim." And I led her to the head of the pool. We threw away everything except an assegai—which I held in my teeth—and plunged in, wading and swimming, the dog Kooos leading the way.

Then it was that the soldiers appeared upon the bank. "Ah! little people," one cried, "you swim, do you? Well, you will drown; and if you do not drown we know a ford, and we will catch you and kill you." And he hurled an assegai after us, which fell between us.

Now we swam hard, for we could swim well. It was just this: if we could reach the bank before we got into the rapids we were safe; if not, then—good night! We strained, we struggled, Baleka was a brave girl, and she swam bravely; but the water pushed her down below me, and I could do nothing to help her. I got my foot upon the rock and looked around. There she was, and eight paces from her the broken water boiled. I could not go back. But the dog Kooos saw. He swam to her barking, then turned around heading for the shore. She grasped him by the tail with her right hand. She too struck out with her feet and her left hand, and slowly, very slowly, drew near. Then I stretched out the handle of my assegai toward her. She caught it with her left hand. I pulled and Kooos pulled, and we brought her to the bank, and there she fell gasping.

Now when the soldiers on the other bank saw that we had crossed, they shouted threats at us, then ran away down the bank.

"Arise, Baleka," I said; "they have gone to seek a ford."

"Ah, let me die!" she answered. But I forced her to rise, and we walked on till at last far away, we saw a large kraal.

"Keep heart," I said. "See, there is the kraal of Chaka."

Presently we came to a path that ran to the kraal from the ford of the Umfolozi. We followed the path till at last we were but half an hour's journey from the kraal. Then we looked back, and lo! there behind us were the pursuers.

Again we ran, but they gained upon us. Then once more I thought of the dog. I called him and told him what to do. He understood, and flew toward them growling. They tried to kill him with spears and kerries, but he jumped around them, biting at them and kept them back. At last a man hit him, and he sprang up and seized the man by the throat. There he clung, man and dog, rolling over and over together, till the end of it was that they both died together.

Meanwhile we were but three hundred paces from the gate of the kraal.

"Run on, Baleka, run on!" I said, dropping behind. Now she staggered on toward the kraal. I sat down to get my breath again, for I was about to fight four men.

The men were running, two and two, with the length of a spear throw between them. But of the first pair one was five or six paces in front of the other. This man shouted out loud and charged me, shield and spear up. I stood waiting for him till he drew back the spear to stab me. Then suddenly I dropped to my knees and thrust upward with all my strength beneath the rim of his shield; and he also thrust, but over me, his spear only cutting the skin of my shoulder. And my assegai? Ah! it ran through and through his middle. He rolled over and over on the plain. I was now weaponless, for the haft of my spear—it was but a light throwing assegai—broke in two, leaving nothing but a little bit of stick in my hand. And the other one was on me! He looked tall as a tree above me.

I fell onto my hands and knees and flung myself over sideways. My body struck the legs of the man about to stab me, lifting his feet from beneath him. Down he came heavily. Before he had touched the ground I was off it. His spear had fallen from his hand. I stooped, seized it, and as he rose I stabbed him through the back. In the shake of a leaf he also was dead. Then I ran, for my valor was gone. About a hundred paces from me Baleka was staggering along. By the time I caught her she was some forty paces from the gate of the kraal. But then her powers left her altogether. Yes! there she fell senseless, and I stood by her. And there, too, I should have been slain had not this chance, for the other two men, having staid one instant by their dead fellows, came on against me mad with wrath. For at that moment the gate of the kraal opened, and through it came a party of soldiers dragging a man by the arms. After them walked a great man, who wore a leopard-skin on his shoulders and was laughing, and with him were five or six ringed counselors, and after them again came a company of warriors.

The soldiers saw that killing was go-

ing on and ran up just as the slayers reached us.

"Who are you?" they cried, "who dare to kill at the gate of the Elephant's kraal? Here the Elephant kills alone!" "We are of the children of Makedama," they answered, "and we follow these evil doers who have done wickedness and murder in our kraal. See, but now two of us are dead at their hands, and others lie dead along the road. Suffer that we slay them!"

"Ask that of the Elephant," said the soldiers. "Ask, too, that he suffer you should not be slain."

Just then the tall chief saw blood and heard words. He stalked up; and a great man he was to see, though still young in years. For he was taller by a head than any around him, and his chest was big as the chests of two; his face was fierce and beautiful, and when he was angry his eye flashed like a smitten brand.

"Who are these who dare to stir up dust at the gates of my kraal?" he asked, frowning.

"O Chaka, O Elephant!" answered the captain of the soldiers, throwing himself to the earth before him, "the men say that these are evil doers and that they pursue them to kill them."

"Good!" he answered. "Let them slay the evil doers."

"O great chief! thanks be to thee, great chief!" said those who sought to slay us.

"I hear you," he answered, then spoke once more to the captain. "And when they have slain the evil doers, let them themselves be blinded and turned loose to seek their way home, because they have dared to lift a spear within the Zulu gates. Now praise on, my children! and be laughed, while the soldiers murmured, 'O! he is wise, he is great, his justice is bright and terrible like the sun!'"

But the two men cried out in fear, for this they did not seek.

"Cut not their tongues also," said Chaka. "What! shall the land of the Zulus suffer such a noise? Never! lest the cattle miscarry. To it, ye black ones! There lies the girl. She is asleep and helpless. Slay her! What you hesitate! Nay, then, if you will have time for thought, I will give it. Take these men, smear them with honey and pin them over ant heaps; by tomorrow's sun they will know their own minds. But first kill these two hunted jackals, and he pointed to Baleka and myself. 'They seem tired, and doubtless they long for sleep.'"

Then for the first time I spoke, for the soldiers drew near to slay us.

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Friction Between Russia and Japan. LONDON, Nov. 11.—The Shanghai correspondent of The Times says: There is every indication of increasing friction between Russia and Japan, owing to the latter's activity in Korea.