

"Oh, my father," said the Lily, "oh, my father, have pity on me; yes, yes! I am a girl—a girl, no wife—and you who are old—you, perchance, have daughters such as I, and in their name I ask for pity. My father, I have journeyed far—I have endured many things—to find my way to a kraal where my brother rules, and now it seems that I have come to the wrong kraal. Forgive me that I spoke to you so, my father; it was but a woman's feint, and I was sore pressed to hide my sex, for, my father, you know it is ill to be a lonely girl among strange men."

Now I said no word in answer for this reason only, that when I heard Nada call me father, not knowing me, and saw her clasp my knees and pray to me in my daughter's name I, who was childless save for her, went nigh to weeping. But she thought that I did not answer because I was angry and about to drag her to this unknown chief and prayed the more, even with tears.

"My father," she said, "do not this wicked thing by me; let me go and show me the path that I shall ask, you who are old; you know that I am too fair to be dragged before this chief of yours. Hearken! all I knew are slain; I am alone save for this brother whom I seek. Oh, if you betray me may such a fate fall upon your own daughter also; may she also know the day of slavery and the love that she wills not," and she ceased, sobbing.

Now I turned my head and spoke toward the hut. "Chief," I said, "your Ehlose is kind to you tonight, for he has given you a maid fair as the Lily of the Halakazi." (Here Nada glanced up wildly.) "Come, then, and take the girl."

Now Nada turned to snatch up the assegai from the ground, but whether to slay me or the chief she feared so much or herself that I know not; and as she turned in her woe she called upon the name of Umslopogaa. She found the assegai and straightened herself again, and lo! there before her stood a mighty man leaning on an ax, but the old man who had threatened her, he was gone—not very far, in truth, but around the corner of the hut.

Now Nada the Lily looked, then rubbed her eyes and looked again. "Surely I dream," she said at last. "But now I speak to an old man, and in his place there stands before me the shape of one I desire to see."

"Methought, maiden, that the voice of a certain Nada called upon one Umslopogaa," said he who leaned upon the ax.

"Aye, I called, but where is the old man who treated me so ill? Nay, what does it matter where he is—there let him stop. At least you are Umslopogaa, my brother, or should be by your greatness and the ax. To the man I cannot altogether swear in this light, but to the ax I can swear, for once it passed so very near my eyes."

Thus she spoke on, gaining time, and all the while she watched Umslopogaa till she was sure that it was he and no other. Then she made an end of talk, and flinging herself on him she kissed him.

"Now I trust that Zinita sleeps sound," murmured Umslopogaa, for suddenly he remembered that Nada was no sister to him as she deemed.

Nevertheless he took her by the hand and said, "Enter, sister; of all maidens in the world you are the most welcome here, for know, I thought you dead."

But I, Umbova, ran into the hut before her, and when she entered she found me sitting by the fire.

"Now here, my brother," said Nada, pointing at me with her finger, "there is that old Ufngozan—that low fellow who, unless I dreamed but a very little while ago, wrought shame upon me; my brother, he smote me, a maid, and with his kerrie, and that only because I said that I would stab him for his insolence, and he did worse—he swore that he would drag me to some old chief of his to be a gift to him, and that he was about to do had you not come. Will you suffer these things to go unpunished, my brother?"

Now Umslopogaa smiled grimly and I made answer:

"What was it that you called me to protect you? Father, was it not? and I turned my face toward the blaze of the fire so that the full light fell upon it."

"Yes, I called you father, old man; it is not strange, for a homeless wanderer must find fathers where she can, and yet—no, it cannot be—so changed, and that scar! And yet—oh, who are you? Once there was a man named Umbova, and he had a little daughter and she was named Nada. Oh, my father, my father, I know you now!"

"Aye, Nada, and I know you from the first; through all your man's wrappings I knew you after these many years."

So she fell upon my neck and sobbed there, and I remember that I also wept. Now when she had sobbed her fill of joy, Umslopogaa brought Nada the Lily maas to eat and meale porridge; she ate of the curdled milk, but of the porridge she would not eat, saying that she was too weary.

Then she told us all the tale of her wanderings since she had fled away from the side of Umslopogaa at the stronghold of the Halakazi, and it was long—so long that I will not repeat it, for it is a story by itself.

Now when Nada had made an end of her tale, Umslopogaa told his of how things had gone with Dingaan. When he told her of how he had given the body of the girl to the king, saying that it was the Lily's stalk, she said that it was well done, and when he told of the slaying of the traitor she clapped her hands, though she, whose heart was gentle, did not love to hear of deeds of death. At last he finished, and she was somewhat sad and said that it seemed that her fate followed her, and that now the People of the Ax were in danger at the hands of Dingaan because of her.

"Ah, my brother!" she cried, catching Umslopogaa by the hand; "it were better that I should die than that I should bring evil upon you also."

"That would not mend matters, Nada," he answered, "for whether you be dead or alive the hate of Dingaan is already

earned. Also, Nada, know this, I am not your brother."

When the Lily heard these words she uttered a little cry, and letting fall the hand of Umslopogaa clasped mine, shrinking up against me.

"What is this tale, father?" she asked. "He who was my twin, he with whom I was bred up, says that he has deceived me these many years, that he is not my brother; who, then, is he, father?"

"He is your cousin, Nada." "Ah!" she answered, "I am glad; it would have grieved me had he whom I have loved been shown to be but a stranger in whom I have no part," and she smiled a little in the eyes and at the corners of her mouth. "But tell me this tale also."

So I told her the story of the birth of Umslopogaa, for I trusted her.

"Ah!" she said when I had finished, "ah! you come of a bad stock, Umslopogaa, though it be a kingly one. I shall love you little henceforth, child of the byena man."

"Then that is ill news," said Umslopogaa, "for know, Nada, I am now minded that you should love me more than ever—that you should be my wife and love me as your husband."

Now the Lily's face grew sad and sweet and all the hidden mockery went out of her talk (for ever Nada loved to mock).

"Did you not speak to me on that night in the Halakazi caves, Umslopogaa—did you not speak to me of one Zinita, who is your wife and inkosikaa of the People of the Ax?"

Now the brow of Umslopogaa darkened. "What of Zinita?" he said. "It is true she is my chieftainess. Is it not allowed to a man to take more than one wife?"

"So I trust," answered Nada, smiling, "else men would go unwed for long, for few maids would take them who then must labor all their days. But, Umslopogaa, if there be twenty wives yet one must be first. Now this has come about hitherto, that wherever I have been it has been thrust upon me to be first, and perchance it might come about once more—what then, Umslopogaa?"

"Let the fruit ripen before you pluck it, Nada," he answered. "If you love me and will wed me it is enough."

"I pray that it may not be more than enough," she said, stretching out her hand to him. "Listen, Umslopogaa; ask of my father here what were the words I spoke to him many years ago before I was yet a woman, when with my mother, Macrophia, I left him to go among the Swazi people. It was after you had been borne away by the lion, Umslopogaa. I told my father that I would wed no man all my life, because I loved only you, who were dead. My father reproached me, saying that I must not speak thus of my brother, but it was my heart that spoke, and it spoke truly, for see, Umslopogaa, you are no brother to me. I have kept that vow. How many men have sought me in marriage since I became a woman, Umslopogaa? I tell you that they are as the leaves upon a tree. Yet I have given myself to none, and this has been my fortune, that none have sought to constrain me to marriage. Now I have my reward, for he whom I lost is found again, and to him alone I give my love. Yet, Umslopogaa, beware! Little luck has come to those who have loved me in the past—no, not even to those who have but sought to look on me."

"I will bear the risk, Nada," he answered, and gathering her to his great breast he kissed her soft and sweet.

Presently she slipped from his arms and bade him be gone, for she was weary and would rest.

So he went.

CHAPTER XXIX. THE WAR OF THE WOMEN.

"Can it then be that Bulalio loves you better than us, Nada?"

Now on the morrow at daybreak I went to lead Nada to the place of assembly and found her waiting me. She was dressed now in some woman's garments that I had brought her, her curling hair fell upon her shoulders, on her wrist and neck and knee were bracelets of ivory, and in her hand she bore a lily bloom that she had gathered as she went to bathe in the river. And this she did, perhaps, because she was minded here as elsewhere to be known as the Lily, and it is the Zulu fashion to name people from some such thing. Also she had begged of me a cape I had, made of the whitest feathers of the ostrich, and this she put about her shoulders and it hung down to her middle. For this had been a custom with Nada from a child, that she did not love to go about as do other girls, naked except for their girdles, but would always find some rag or skin to lie upon her breast. Perchance it was because her skin was fairer than that of other women, or perchance because she knew that she who hides her beauty oft seems the fairest, or because there was truth in the tale of her white blood and the fashion came to her with the blood.

Now I took her by the hand and led her through the sweet morning air to the place of assembly; and ah! she was sweeter than the air and fairer than the dawn.

There were many people in the place of assembly, for it was the day of the monthly meeting of the council of the headmen, and there also were all the women of the kraal and at their head Zinita. Now it had got about that the girl whom the Slaughterer went to seek in the caves of the Halakazi had come to the kraal of the People of the Ax, and all eyes watched for her.

"Wow!" said the man as she passed smiling, looking neither to the right nor

to the left, yet seeing all. "Wow! But this flower is fair. Little wonder that the Halakazi died for her."

The women looked also, but they said nothing of the beauty of Nada. They scarcely seemed to see it. Zinita stood looking at Nada from beneath her bent brows, while with one hand she held the little daughter of Umslopogaa, her child, and with the other played with the beads about her neck. Presently we passed her, and Nada, knowing well who this must be, turned her eyes full upon the angry eyes of Zinita and held them there awhile. Now, what there was in the glance of Nada I know not, but I know this, that Zinita, who feared few things, found something to fear in it. At the least, it was she who turned her head away, and the Lily passed on smiling and greeted Umslopogaa with a little nod.

"Hail, Nada," said the Slaughterer. Then he turned to his headmen and spoke. "This is she whom we went to the caves of the Halakazi to seek for Dingaan. Out the story is known now. One told it up at the kraal Ungungundhlovu, who shall tell it no more. She prayed me to save her from Dingaan and so I did, and all would have gone well had it not been for a certain traitor who is done with, for I took another to Dingaan. Look on her now, my friends, and say if I did not well to save her, the Lily flower, such as there is no other in the land, to be the joy of the People of the Ax and a wife to me."

With one accord the headmen answered. "Indeed you did well, Slaughterer," for the glamour of Nada was upon them and they would cherish her as others had cherished her. Only Galazi the Wolf shook his head. Yet he said nothing, for words do not avail against fate. Now, as I found afterward, since Zinita, the head wife of Umslopogaa, had learned of what stock he was, she had known that Nada was no sister to him. Yet when she heard him declare that he was about to take her to wife she turned upon him, saying:

"How can this be, lord?"

"Why do you ask, Zinita," he answered; "is it not allowed to a man to take another wife if he will?"

"Surely, lord," she said, "yet men do not wed their sisters, and I have heard that it was because this Nada was your sister that you saved her from Dingaan and brought the wrath of Dingaan upon the People of the Ax—the wrath that shall destroy them."

"So I thought then, Zinita," he answered; "now I know otherwise. Nada is daughter to Umbova yonder, indeed but he is no father to me, though he has been named so, nor was the mother of Nada my mother. That is so, councilors."

Then Zinita looked on me and muttered, "O fool of a Mouth, not for nothing did I fear evil at your hands."

I heard the words and took no note and she spoke again to Umslopogaa, saying: "Here is a mystery, O lord Bulalio. Will it then please you to declare to us who is your father?"

"I have no father," he answered, waxing wroth. "The heavens above are my father. I am born of blood and fire, and she, the Lily, is born of beauty, to be my mate. Now, woman, be silent." He thought awhile and added, "Nay, if you will know, my father was Indabazimbi the Witchfinder, the Smeller out of the Thing, the son of Arpi." This Umslopogaa said at a hazard, since having denied me he must declare a father and might not name the Black One who was gone. But in after years the saying was taken up in the land, and it was told that Umslopogaa was the son of Indabazimbi the Witchfinder, who had long ago fled the land, nor did he deny it. For when all this game had been played out he would not have it known that he was the son of Tchaka, he who no longer sought to be a king, lest he should bring down the wrath of Panda upon him.

When the people heard this they thought that Umslopogaa mocked Zinita, and yet in his anger he spoke truth when he said first that he was born of the heavens above, for so we Zulus name the king, and so the witch doctor Indabazimbi named Tchaka on the day of the great smelling out. But they did not take it in this sense. They held that he spoke truth when he said that he was born of Indabazimbi, the witch doctor who had fled the land, whither I do not know.

Then Nada turned to Zinita and spoke to her in a sweet and gentle voice: "If I be not sister to Bulalio, yet I shall soon be to sister to you, who are the Chief's inkosikaa, Zinita. Shall that not satisfy you, and will you not greet me kindly and with a kiss of peace, who

have come from far to be your sister? And she held out her hands toward her. Zinita scowled and jerked at her necklet of beads, breaking the string on which they were threaded, so that the beads rolled this way and that.

"Keep your kisses for our lord, girl," said Zinita roughly; "as the beads are scattered, so shall you scatter this People of the Ax."

Now Nada turned away with a little sigh and the people murmured, for they held that Zinita had treated her ill. Then she stretched out her hand again and gave the lily in it to Umslopogaa, saying:

"Here is a token of our betrothal, lord, for never a head of cattle have my father and I to send, we who are outcasts, and indeed the bridegroom must pay the cattle. May I bring you peace and love, my lord."

Umslopogaa took the flower and looked somewhat foolish with it, he who was wont to carry the ax and not a flower. And so that talk was ended.

Now on that day Umslopogaa took Nada the Lily to wife, and for awhile there was peace and quiet. But this evil thing came upon Umslopogaa that from the day when he wedded Nada he hated even to look upon Zinita, and not on her alone, but on all his other wives also. Galazi said it was because Nada had bewitched him, but I know well that the only witchery she used was the medicine of her eyes, her beauty and her love. Still it came to pass that thenceforward

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