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Kim

By Leon Gordon

Salaam.

This tale begins in the year 1885...
when Alexander III was czar of Russia...
and Victoria of England
was also empress of India.
India, gateway to the East...
empire of magnificent pageantry
and exotic color...
the jewel of the Orient,
land of mysticism and reality...
whose history is filled with the romance...
and the intrigue of the 19th century...
which already belongs to a legendary past.
To the romantic domain
of Rudyard Kipling...
to the days when the white man
was called "sahib. "
These were the days
of turmoil and bloodshed...
caste against caste, creed against creed.
At this time, all eyes would turn
to the warlike hillmen...
who continually swept down to battle.
To prevent massacres,
there was banded together...
a small group of men.
Some were native-born, others rich.
Heading this secret service
was a certain Colonel Creighton.
He called their work the "Great Game"...
and the history books tell us
that many died playing it.
In this year of unrest,
in the city of Lahore...
one starlit night...
among the rooftop quarters
of the women...
who were well-guarded from all eyes,
save those of their lords and masters...
there roamed a small boy known as Kim.
A product of the gutters and bazaars...
an orphan waif,
who lived by his shrewdness and cunning.
Having known only poverty...

Kim was ever-willing to risk his neck
for a copper coin...
or for a good friend.
- Laluli?
- Yes? Who are you?
I bear a message.
The Red Beard chooses well,
flower of delight.
Since when does the Red Beard
risk the life of a boy? Go home.
Oh, no. In truth, I was sent by Mahbub Ali,
the Red Beard.
What is the message?
He trades horses on the Kulu Road.
He'll come to see thee tomorrow evening.
Give him this key.
My lord and master journeys
to another city.
Tell the Red Beard he may come in safety.
Caution him to wait
until the moon has fallen.
Keep thy beauty in the shade,
O dispenser of delights.
The red-bearded goat
comes tomorrow night.
You will make him very welcome
when he comes.
He is but a horse trader.
Why not cut him down in some alley?
We begin to think this Red Beard
is a different kind of horse trader.
Tell her for what she must search.
He may carry upon his person
a certain parchment...
which if decoded
would show our enemies...
the five points
from which we plan to strike.
Should this reach the Creighton sahib...
there will be soldiers maneuvering,
and we will again have to wait.
The Czar's emissaries become impatient.
You see?
A sultry night, perfumed brandy...

it should be easy.
I understand.
But I like it not.
Defiler of the faith! Beggar's brat!
Imp of the devil!
May you be reborn a gnat!
Kim found it more convenient
to pose as an Indian...
because the missionaries
sent white boys to school.
But on occasions such as this,
when it suited his purpose...
he would don the dress and manners
of his own race.
Who are you looking for?
A defiler of the women's quarters.
- Defiler of the rooftops.
- No less.
I saw a fleeting shadow go that way.
But run not the wind from your belly.
I hear many whispers from the bazaars.
His name I will reveal to you.
You are my friend.
Does a cheroot go with your gratitude?
Have you a taper?
Mahbub Ali.
Well, little sahib. What have you for me?
Tomorrow night. She bid you wait
until the moon has fallen.
Well done, friend of all the world.
Well done.
Gratitude is good for the ear,
but a rupee is better for the stomach.
One day, you'll make a great trader.
And ride horses
and wear a cloak like that?
No, there's but one Mahbub Ali.
Besides, such a cloak costs many rupees.
I'm no camel. I can earn rupees.
So you can.
Come to me tomorrow,
the Kashmir Serai Gate.
One hour before the sun sets.
Boy, I'm falling!

It's mine! Come on!
Boy, give it back to me! I paid for it!
What's the matter with you?
I got it!
Perhaps it is a man.
Without a doubt.
But he's no man of India I have ever seen.
He is a foreigner.
He is a wandering priest.
Look, he carries praying beads.
What is your caste?
Where is your house?
Have you come far?
From the hills of Tibet...
where the air and the water
are fresh and cool.
A holy man?
Priest of the Lord Buddha, living in peace.
But I came forth
to find the River of the Arrow.
River? That's not difficult to find.
Then thou knowest
the River of the Arrow?
What is the River of the Arrow?
The Lord Buddha shot an arrow.
Where it touched the earth,
there broke out a stream...
whose virtue is that whoever bathes in it
washes away all taint of sin.
Is that all?
My dream told me to find it.
- For years I have searched.
- Years?
How do you fare on the road?
On charity.
What is the custom of charity
in this town?
In silence or aloud?
Those who beg in silence starve in silence.
I beg as the master begged.
Even as he went, so go I.
It is past midday.
If you would eat, you must hurry.
That I cannot do.

The rule demands
that my chela beg for me.
- Chela?
- Disciple.
A helper.
I see. Where is your chela?
Alas, he left me three days ago.
Since then, I have not eaten.
If you had a chela,
would he share your charity?
How else would he live?
Give me your bowl. Rest, thou.
I know the people of this city.
They're broken.
It is of no consequence,
since my eyes have long outaged them.
I beg for a holy man.
I am tired of new priests
and tired of old priests.
They settle on our wares like flies.
But he is a very holy man.
He has come a long way without food.
You will win great merit.
Just once, fill this little bowl.
Little bowl? That's a sheep-bellied basket.
My holy man can curse as well as bless.
My holy man is not a cow.
A little curry, perhaps.
A little conserve would please him, I think.
Your holy man must have a large belly.
Must his chela go hungry?
Then ask the holy man's blessing
upon my daughter...
who bears no children.
Thou art a wonderful provider.
Thou hast not seen all, yet.
Broken glasses.
What kind of magic is this?
Again I see clearly.
Even thy face...
which is very young and very honest.
I see now that thou was sent
for a purpose.
Now you talk like a missionary.

With thee, I shall find
the River of the Arrow.
But I search for a red bull on a green field.
Have you seen something like that
in your travels?
Before my father died...
he said I was to look for the coming
of a red bull on a green field...
and a sahib on a white horse
leading 900 first-class devils.
That's my search.
It's all here, in the papers of my father.
I cannot read, but it is here.
Then we shall search together.
Thee for thy red bull, and I for my river.
Now, what can a river do for you?
It is written that this river can free a man
from the ties and fears of earth...
from all the world's uneasy circumstance.
It can open the doors to final wisdom.
Will thou search with me and be my chela?
Not I, holy man.
But I'll find you a place to sleep.
Kim led the lama
through the hustling throng...
which always gathered
near the Kashmir Serai Gate...
where the caravans
made their encampment...
before entering the city of Lahore...
to the huge, open square...
where the camel
and horse caravans paused...
on their return north from Central Asia.
Here were all manner of traders.
Men from Kashmir,
men from Afghanistan...
camel drivers, grooms, elephant tenders...
All the races of Upper India.
Kim made straight for the quarters
of the man he envied...
and admired most in all India:
Mahbub Ali, the red-bearded horse trader.
Mahbub Ali?

A lama.
Here is a priest of the god Buddha.
See if he'd be hungry.
The Holy One will come to the fire.
I will come to you later.
He needs taking care of. He is but a child.
What are you doing
with this lama from Tibet?
He's friendless, quite mad. He wants me
to travel with him to Benares.
And do you go?
No. I've decided to travel with you.
Indeed.
Marsala.
What perfume!
The beard becomes silk.
Try it next time you grow one.
Umballa is on the way to Benares.
If you travel as far as Umballa
with your holy man, I'll pay you well.
He who travels alone travels faster.
But not as safely.
I wish you to travel
as the holy man's chela.
What must I do?
I have a message for you to deliver.
What's the message?
I wish...
I know the ways of horses
and seek service in your caravan.
Go to my head man. Ask him.
Leave it open.
Closed doors invite inquisitive eyes.
Put up your hands as though begging.
Be charitable, O protector of the poor.
In Umballa, you'll seek out
Creighton sahib.
My mother is dead! My father is dead!
You'll say to him, "The pedigree
of the white stallion is fully established. "
Give alms to the poor, O maharajah.
Then he'll know you come from me
and he'll ask you for proof.
Win merit in the hereafter.

My stomach is empty.
You'll say, "The Red Beard
has given me the proof. "
- My mother is dead...
- Are you the only beggar in this city?
Your parents are dead! Your sister's dead!
Your dog's dead! So it is with all of you.
Here's bread.
Thank you, O protector of the poor.
To hear is to obey.
Chew it well.
I shall be trading horses
down the Grand Trunk Road.
Perhaps there will be more rupees for you,
little friend of all the world.
The moon is falling.
This is the hour of beauty.
She's younger than some and prettier
than many that you've sent me to.
The sky's the same color wherever you go.
To a small boy...
the Red Beard had entrusted
a big message...
upon which many lives depended.
Although Kim could not understand
the meaning...
of the five holes in the parchment...
it was for him the beginning
of the Great Game.
Come in. He's drunk beyond hearing.
He's a red-bearded goat.
You will pay me well for this.
There's nothing. I searched the soles
of his sandals and folds of his turban.
- They're as empty as his head.
- He could have sent it away by now.
I think he's no more than
a pleasure-hungry horse trader.
They did not say it was Mahbub Ali.
They said a horse trader.
The country's full of horse traders.
Take the goat with you.
No. Watch him well.
Hassan Bey is searching his belongings.

He may find that for which we look.

Wake, Holy One.

It is your chela.

My chela. Thou?

Thy mind changes.

I go with you.

It was so ordained.

- Be quick.

- What, why now?

The train departs at daybreak.

It was so ordained.

This is the work of the devil.

No. It is the work of the government.

Be not afraid.

When I was young,

I, too, was afraid of the train.

Come.

While Kim was carrying the message

to Colonel Creighton...

that gentleman, as head

of the British-Indian Secret Service...

was receiving disturbing reports

from his agents.

Reports that warned

of bloodshed and plunder.

- Salaam, sahib.

- Chunder.

I hardly recognized you in that beard.

It is easy to disguise the face, sahib,

but with me, the real difficulty is here.

- There is much trouble coming, sahib.

- Yes.

All reports indicate attacks from the north.

Here is my report, sahib.

Lurgan.

I'm delighted to see you, but what

are you doing so far away from your post?

There are times when one is afraid

to trust a third person...

or even a cohort.

But for the belly,

I'd never have recognized you.

There's real trouble, Colonel.

No roving bands of hillmen this time...

but a well-organized, full-scale attack.

Yes.

Even Simla's crawling with their spies.

Looks like history is repeating itself.

Russian influence again advances

like a tide throughout Central Asia.

Another Afghan war.

The Czar is once more sending arms

and supplies across this border...

as they did in 1878.

His agents and staff officers

are in Afghanistan.

They are organizing the hillmen

for a sweep through the Khyber Pass...

down into the plains of India.

Well, the pattern's very clear.

The vital question is

when and where they'll strike.

I sent the Red Beard north

to get that information.

I should've heard from him. I'm afraid...

Well, don't worry

about Mahbub Ali, Colonel.

He bears a charmed life.

You will resume your disguise as the

cab driver at Lucknow railway station...

and observe all Europeans

coming from the north by train.

Yes, sahib.

I wish you both a jolly good day.

Now, give me your report.

The General is dining with me tonight,

and he'll want to see this.

Thank you.

Be sure the Commander sahib's curry

is the way he likes it. Very hot.

Yes, sahib.

O protector of the poor.

The pedigree of the white stallion

is fully established.

What proof have you?

The Red Beard has given me this proof.

Perhaps another coin for my holy man

who awaits with an empty belly.

- Good evening, sir.

- Good evening.

- How are you, sir?

- Hungry, I could eat a horse.

I have one cooking for you, sir.

It may be a little indigestible.

A white stallion from Lahore.

Come into the map room, sir.

- Peters, help yourself to a peg.

- Thank you, sir.

The white stallion message came through.

They'll strike from these five points.

With my lancers, the artillery

and the mavericks...

we'll have 8,000 men in the field

if we force-march.

This means war.

My compliments to Colonel Stevenson.

He's to report here at once.

Yes, sir.

Colonel Stevenson.

Rest you.

I go beget our evening meal.

I beg for a very holy man,

and he is also very hungry.

Today is not a fast day.

- A little meat, perhaps, and fried rice.

- Begone.

The world is too full of holy men who

expect to eat the food of those who toil.

- Is he very ill?

- Nay.

- Perhaps the devil's entered into him.

- It is only his father's temper.

Such a handsome baby,

but I fear he's very ill.

I've seen things like this before.

What evil hangs over us, my little frog?

Hush, my little owl.

My lama's a very great and holy man.

Only yesterday, a woman came to him

with a great, burning pain here.

After the holy man blessed her,

the evil came out...

and ran away in the shape
of a green mouse.
I saw it with my own eyes.
- Where is your lama?
- At the gate.
Last week, he made a blind man see...
and took in payment a handful of rice.
Thy blessing on this child, Holy One.
A blessing on this and all children.
Thou art indeed a wonderful provider.
The Grand Trunk Road...
running straight across India
for 1,500 miles.
Such a river of life
as exists nowhere else in the world.
They walked in silence.
The lama, as usual, deep in meditation.
There were new sights at every stride.
The drum and flute
of a marriage procession mingled...
with the laughter of the dancing girls
as they journeyed to a village wedding.
Of the five million holy men in India...
none were more startling than the sadhus,
with their weird antics.
Kim's eyes were bright and wide open...
drinking in the sights
of this endless highway.
Kim and his lama rubbed elbows
with all humanity...
from the lowly beggar to the maharajah...
who traveled the Grand Trunk Road
in lordly state...
accepting homage from those who passed,
and giving alms to those who pled.
Only when the lama saw a river
or a stream did they pause.
Chela, look, another river!
India's full of rivers.
Perhaps it is the one I seek.
Tell me, little mother,
is this the River of the Arrow?
The River of the Arrow?
No, that is the Chambok River.

The sacred river would not be known
as the River of the Arrow.
But I shall be given the power
to know it when I see it.
What ails your holy man?
He's quite sane until he sees a river.
Then he's quite mad.
See, Holy One?
It's just another little stream.
No, Holy One, don't go there!
See, a cobra. King cobra.
No.
Let him live out his life.
He's bound up on the wheel of life
as we are.
Great evil must this soul have done
to be reborn in this shape.
No, Holy One, don't go.
Please!
May thy release come soon.
Never have I seen such a holy man.
Do even the snakes understand your talk?
Who knows?
Come.
No, I will go around.
Come. He will do thee no hurt.
Be not afraid. Come.
Oh, Holy One!
After the miracle of the cobra,
there grew in the boy's heart...
a real love for the old priest.
Kim and the lama journeyed on,
and there were long, dusty days...
on the Grand Trunk Road.
But Kim, inspired by his new faith...
found joy in serving his holy man.
Willingly, he followed the lama
in his search for the sacred river...
proudly assuming the role of disciple...
begging a place for them
by some campfire at night...
pleading, conniving, and cajoling
for their food by day.
O protector of the poor,

give food for a holy man.
Stand farther off, beggar!
Since when does a hillman
own all Hindustan?
Begone, thou filth of the earth. Thou
infected descendant of unspeakable slime!
Thy father rooted for offal in the alleys
while thy mother begged in the streets.
Where I come from,
they call that the beginning of love talk.
Fill the beggar's belly!
Look, Holy One.
What are they doing?
See, it is a green flag, and the bull is red.
A red bull in a green field!
This touches thy search.
See, Holy One? It is as written.
Not only the red bull on the green field...
but the 900 devils
and the colonel on the big, white horse.
This is sorcery.
- Are you there, Ainsley?
- Come in, Father.
That is a sahib priest.
Go, talk to him of thy search.
Perhaps he might also have heard
of my river.
Gotcha!
Stop that, you little heathen!
- What goes on here?
- I caught him sneaking around the tents.
Let's take a look at him.
Come on, up you get.
In you go.
Boys who steal are punished.
I suppose you know that.
I am no thief.
Give it to me! That is my charm!
Do not thief it from me!
- Better take a look at it, Father.
- Give it back to me and let me go!
Powers of darkness.
The honorable discharge
of Colonel Sergeant Kimball O'Hara...

and the birth certificate of his son.
Why, Ainsley, I married them myself,
O'Hara and Annie Scott.
- Where did you get these, boy?
- They are mine.
Will you listen to this, now?
Scrolled in O'Hara's hand.
"Take care of the boy.
"Please take care of the boy. O'Hara. "
- Where did you steal these from?
- I do not steal. They are mine.
You see, Ainsley?
He's white, white as you and me.
- What's your name?
- Kim.
Or, Kimball, like your father.
- I say Kim. Now let me go.
- No one's going to hurt you.
Now, sit down
and tell me all about yourself.
What happened to your father
after he left the regiment?
He is dead in Lahore city,
since I was very little.
- And your mother?
- She died when I was born.
What are you doing in those clothes?
They send white boys to school.
What brings you
on the Grand Trunk Road?
At present, I am the disciple of a holy man.
- What?
- I follow in the footsteps of the Lord.
That's more than
I was able to teach the father.
I do not lie.
I saw the red bull on the green field.
The red bull?
The camp markers
with the regimental insignia.
It was my father's prophecy to the woman
who took care of me when I was little.
That and the 900 devils,
and the colonel riding the white horse.

The day of miracles is not done.
- He could be O'Hara's son, all right.
- He's an O'Hara, and that's no lie.
The dad was a good man, I'm telling you.
And a good soldier
when he wasn't drinking.
There's a school for regimental orphans
that'll make a good man of you, too.
I wish only to stay with my holy man.
If you try to take me from him,
he will give you very bad curses.
Who would take thee from me?
Holy One, tell them that I am thy chela.
Tell them I help thee seek a sacred river.
Then they won't send me
to the school of the sahibs.
Why would they send a son of India
to the school of the sahibs?
Because he is a sahib
and the son of a sahib.
It is true. I've known it since my birth.
But no sahib knows the people
and customs of the land...
- as thou knowest them.
- He carries with him proof.
If further proof were needed...
there's his skin
where the sun has not scorched it.
Thou hast done a wrong to an old man...
because my heart went out to thee.
And mine to thee.
But how could I know the red bull
would bring me to this?
What difference is it between us
because I am a sahib?
If thou art a sahib...
- thou belongest amongst thy people.
- No, I belong to thee.
Do they give or sell learning
among the sahibs?
That depends.
Regimental funds would take care
of the boy at the military orphanage.
I do not want to go to the sahib school.

And the more money paid,
the better the learning given?
That is so.
What should I learn
that thou does not teach?
The best schooling
is at St. Xavier's at Lucknow.
But that's out of the question.
It costs 400 rupees a year.
No rajah has such sums.
Write the school name
and the amount of money upon a paper...
and it shall be received.
I ask thee, as one priest to another.
I am still thy chela.
Travel towards Benares.
- Later, I will find thee on the road.
- No.
Thou must stay with thine own people.
Have I failed thee
that I'm taken from thee?
I have known many men
in my so long life...
and chelas not a few...
but to none among them
has my heart gone out as it has to thee.
Never have I seen
such a holy man as thou.
The days are few
since we took the road together...
yet it seems as though it were 100 years.
A blessing on thee.
I want you to promise me now
you'll not try to join him.
Cheer up.
We'll make a white boy of you
as soon as we get you to Umballa.
Umballa?
You're not going to Umballa,
you're going to war.
We're not going to war, Kim,
we're on maneuvers.
We do this twice a year.
You're going to war.

That's the only reason I stay with you.
Otherwise, do you think 1,000 sentries
would keep me from my holy man?
I say it is war, a war of 8,000 men.
The lancers, the artillery, and us Red Bulls.
Major Ainsley, sir.
Will you report to the Colonel
immediately, sir? We're breaking camp.
- What's going on, Shaughnessy?
- It's war, Your Reverence.
Orders to entrain tonight
for the Khyber Pass.
Powers of darkness!
How did you know, boy?
I forgot to tell you.
Among other things, I am a prophet.
- A Company!
- F Company!
D Company! Attention!
Kim's hope of going to war with his
father's regiment was soon doomed.
The timely movement of troops
to the border had again averted war...
and Kim found himself a prisoner
in the orphanage school...
in the barracks at Umballa.
In this problem,
we have two known factors...
"A" and "B."
"X," the unknown quantity,
is arrived at by...
This is the last straw, O'Hara.
I've tried to show you
kindness and tolerance.
But when you go to sleep right in my face,
something must be done about it.
You'll be confined to barracks.
What is your price for a short letter?
What manner of white man's son are you
to need a bazaar letter writer?
Is there not a schoolmaster
in the barracks?
What manner of an inquisitive goat
are you?

Thy mother was married under a basket.
Thy father was a sweeper of the stables.
Who are you...
dressed in that fashion
to speak in that fashion?
Write as I tell you.
Bad words have made the price higher.

First, my pay:

four annas.
That is the price for sahibs.
Now fix me a true price.
Anna and a half.
There's the matter of the stamp, too.
I pay no commission on that.
Now write.
To Mahbub Ali, the horse trader at Lahore.
Mahbub Ali! Wonder of wonders!
I came with the holy man
as far as Umballa.
There I delivered with great success
the news of the white...
- The news of the bay mare's pedigree.
- Slower, a little.
But I was seized...
by the soldiers of the Red Bull...
who put me to school.
The clothes are heavy.
My heart is heavy, too.
Come and help me...
or send me some money,
for I have not sufficient...
to pay the writer who writes this letter.
What? You haven't...
Devil take ye, O'Hara!
Ain't it hot enough around here...
without having to forage around
to find a scut like you?
If they don't skin you alive
when we get back, I'll do it myself.
Now march, you lunk,
or I'll twist it out of your socket.
The school is very terrible.
I beg you to help me, Mahbub Ali,

as I have helped you in the past.
- You helped me?
- You have a short memory.
I carried a message
all the way from Lahore to Umballa.
I send many messages. I cannot
well remember one from the other.
I was to meet you
on the Grand Trunk Road.
And I would earn rupees. Many rupees.
You belong with your people.
A true man, like a true horse,
runs with his breed.
Let me go, you faithless Afghan.
Selling me back to the soldiers...
what price will they give you
for blood money?
Cheerful young devil.
I will not pay you more than 150 rupees
for the mare.
Then regretfully, Colonel sahib,
I cannot sell her to you.
You have some strange friends,
young man.
I have but one, my holy man.
Please let me go to him.
All in good time, O'Hara.
You should know that, being a prophet.
A prophet?
You knew of the trouble up north
before the marching orders were out.
The night has many eyes, Colonel... sir.
Even a cat cannot see through a wall.
Yet, 'tis said,
"Even the wall has long ears. "
Or ventilators, O'Hara?
Powers of darkness!
Will you look at this now?
A native banker's note for 1,200 rupees...
and a signature good from here to China.
And read this.
It taxes my powers. How the devil...
Yes, he's the man I mean.
...can a wandering native beggar beg...

this sum of money
to educate a white boy?
You're going to St. Xavier's.
What do you think of that, young fellow?
The holy man said he would send
the money. Naturally, he has sent it.
I'd like to see the documents
you found around his neck.
- If you'll come inside, Colonel.
- Right.
Trust a frog before a rat,
and a rat before a snake...
and a snake before a Red Beard!
Children should not see a carpet on a loom
before the pattern becomes clear.
Believe me, friend of all the world,
I do you great service.
- They'll not make a soldier out of you.
- What good is all this to me?
You'll go away, and they will return me
to the school rooms.
I shall never see my holy man again.
Mahbub Ali, come in here
for a moment, please.
Sahib?
As regards that wild young horse
you captured...
Yes, sahib.
When a colt is born to be a polo pony...
I think it would be a crime
to bind him to a heavy cart.
Yes. I'll take him to be trained
for polo only.
But first of all, he must be schooled.
- And very well-schooled.
- I'm sure that when the time comes...
he'll be a credit to the Great Game.
This way, sahib.
Coachman!
This is a fair city, this Lucknow.
It is the center of all idleness,
intrigue and luxury.
- Drive me a little through the bazaar.
- Nay.

My order is to drive you
to St. Xavier's School.
Did you hear me, son of a snake?
Father of all thieves and robbers?
Drive me through the bazaar.
You infected descendant
of unspeakable slime!
Unspeakable slime?
That is good. That is very good.
Welcome, brother.
The sky is the same color
wherever you go.
I drive many young sahibs
to and from this school.
Devils all. But to speak the truth...
I have never seen one that had in him
the making of a better devil than you.
Is that the school?
Nice little building.
Stop!
I have waited here a day and a half.
Not that I was led
by any affection for thee...
but because I acquire merit
by helping thee to wisdom.
Surely, it was a little to see me
that you came.
It is a sin to be misled by affection.
That is not part of the way.
Thou art young and will soon forget me
and our meetings.
But I shall be eating your bread.
How can I forget you?
I am all alone in this land.
Do not go altogether away.
It is manifest that I shall acquire
additional merit by...
writing thee letters
and coming to see thee from time to time.
Much rather would I leave all this...
and go with you.
Do not grieve, my chela.
All desire is illusion, and a tie
to bind thee upon the wheel of life.

Come.

Does thou love me?

Then go...

or my heart cracks.

Mr. O'Hara, sir.

I'm Dr. Bronson.

We were expecting you.

These gentlemen

are members of the teaching staff.

Gentlemen!

This is Kimball O'Hara.

I'm sure you'll make him welcome
in our midst.

Thorpe, we'll place O'Hara
temporarily in your form.

How do you do? This way.

Bearer.

- Just come out from England?
- What school are you from?
- Any good at cricket?
- What's the family? Civil service or army?
- Army.
- So am I. Put it there, O'Hara!
- Connor's the name.
- Wish they'd stuck you in another form.

You make 13, and I'm superstitious.

Leave him alone and let him eat.

Go ahead, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't do that at St. Xavier's, O'Hara.

We don't run away like a thief in the night.

If we have a problem

that makes us unhappy or discontented...

we face it.

We talk it over with each other...

and try to get our feet back on the ground.

Yes, sahib, sir.

I know your background, O'Hara.

And I know how it must feel

to be in a cage.
But many of the boys here are Indian-born,
like yourself.
We're teaching them to command.
But no man is fit to command...
until he's first learned
to command himself.
Yes, sir.
Colonel Creighton has high hopes for you.
But I'm so far behind
on the road to learning.
What about that interesting chap
who made it possible for you to be here?
I mean the lama.
You wouldn't want to let him down,
would you?
Rather would I be reborn a snake.
That's all I wanted to know.
Go back to your dormitory.
There'll be no report made of this incident.
Thank you, sir.
As for that road to learning...
I shall be here every evening
from dinner until roll call.
Perhaps I can help you catch up.
Thank you, sir.
With the coming of the sultry heat
of summer, the students of St. Xavier's...
left for their long vacation.
But Kim, who had no family...
must return to spend his holidays
in the military orphanage at Umballa.
Stop here.
We haven't time. I've given my word
to see you safely to Umballa.
- I want to get something in Sarges.
- Look sharp. There isn't much time.
It won't take long.
No stain holds longer than walnut juice.
- But remember, it does not wash off.
- I shall remember.
You are very young a sahib
to go for such devilry.
Thank you for lending me these clothes.

Keep mine till I return
and I shall give you another rupee.
Another? But you have given me none yet.
Have faith in the gods, my sister.
Some days are feast, others are famine.
Driver, can't find him anywhere.
Mustn't miss the train. Drive on.
An anna, O protector of the poor.
Just one little anna.
My mother is dead. My father is dead.
My brothers and sisters
are young and foodless.
An anna, O protector of the poor.
Just one little anna.
Where's Mahbub Ali?
Begone. We make no room
for beggars or gutter thieves.
Is that the way to welcome a friend, Abul?
By the beards of my ancestors...
you are the boy from Lahore.
Where's your master?
I seek service with him.
Where would he be after sunset, except
baiting a trap with that red beard of his?
Until he returns,
give me a place by your fire.
Over there.
In the tall grass by the mango tree.
The price was to be 20 rupees,
Hassan Bey.
The other 10 when Red Beard is dead.
It is as we planned. I will show you.
See...
I have arranged his saddlebags.
Always he sleeps near the fire
with his head to the west.
Mahbub Ali!
Friend of all the world
will give you a warning.
Never again will I use a shod horse
for night work.
They pick up every nail
and rock in the road.
Down. Keep down.

The night is full of eyes.
But for this meeting,
your head would be full of holes.
Hold still, sire of all devils.
How far do you trust your head man?
As far as from thee to me.
He's plotting with a man
disguised as a peddler.
They plan to shoot you.
- As I ride into camp?
- No, after you are asleep.
The plan is for Abul
to kindle a fire near you...
and make you an easy target.
Did you see this peddler's face?
As well as I saw it when he searched
your belongings that night at Lahore.
Go back to my camp. I'll meet you there.
Be careful, Mahbub Ali.
Mahbub Ali does not die this night.
Salaam, sahib.
This is a world of danger to peaceful men
like thee and me, is it not?
What have we here?
Cardamom cakes...
and cinnamon.
Help yourself, sahib. It's free.
My stomach is not yet right for it.
I killed my first man when I was 15.
Tell me.
Did you find your lama?
At Benares they said
he'd again taken to the road.
Colonel Creighton was very angry
when you disappeared.
What I do during my holidays
is my own affair.
I'll return to St. Xavier's
when it opens again.
But Creighton sahib
knew that our paths would cross.
So he's ordered me to take you to Simla
for a certain purpose.
But why Simla? What will I do there?

There you'll learn things
that Creighton sahib...
not even Mahbub Ali himself,
can teach you.
Now let us break camp and avoid
pointless discussions with the police.
You'll like being with Lurgan sahib.
It's a different kind of school.
Very different.
Why should I go to school?
Colonel's orders.
But it's the holidays.
Tell me, Mahbub Ali, as man to man...
did you go to school in your holidays?
Frankly, as man to man,
and as one horse trader to another...
I never went to school at all.
Then why should I?
Because Colonel Creighton's a man to be
obeyed to the last wink of his eyelash.
Lurgan sahib, is he one of us?
Well, he's...
"Us. "
What is this talk of us?
I know you and others
gather news for Colonel Creighton.
He tells it to the General,
and then the armies march.
Do they, indeed?
I'm no fool. I am not blind.
It is a game. The Great Game.
Is it, indeed?
Very well, my friend.
And you will never speak of it again.
Remember...
you've never seen or spoken
to a certain Mahbub Ali...
who sells horses...
to one Colonel Creighton,
whom also you've never seen.
I like it not.
I think I shall not go to this Lurgan sahib.
I am here.
...seventy-nine, eighty, eighty-one.

You will stay with me until it is time
to go back to the school.
It is an order.
It is an order.
Where shall I put this?
You will sleep here.
Are you afraid?
Afraid of what?
I've seen things like this many times.
One day, I fell asleep
in the museum at Lahore.
I found myself locked in for the night.
Nothing happened.
Shake hands, O'Hara.
This is Wanna, my other pupil.
Wanna learns quickly.
Now come, O'Hara,
let me see you match wits with him.
Bring me the tray.
Look at them well. Finger them if you like.
Get the number and their color
in your mind's eye.
One glance is enough for me.
Ready?
How many stones did you see
upon the tray?
That's easy. 26, perhaps 27.
- Tell him the correct number, Wanna.
- Thirty-four, sahib.
Look well this time, O'Hara.
The brown-red stones,
the garnets, note their number.
Now, take your time.
And those milk-colored pearls...
fix with your memory,
the number of blue turquoise.
And see? There are only five cat's-eyes.
Now, that should be easy to remember.
- I've got it this time.
- But make sure.
Check and recheck.
Shall I cover them?
All right.
There are eight garnets...

seven pearls...
thirteen blue stones...
and the five cat's-eyes.
- There are eight garnets...
- That's what I said.
...seven pearls...
thirteen turquoise...
- and six cat's-eyes.
- Correct, Wanna.
- But you said five.
- I also said check...
and recheck.
You should believe only your eyes...
and not the voices of others.
This is a child's game, Mr. Lurgan.
It is part of a Great Game, Mr. O'Hara.
Bring Mr. O'Hara an urn of water.
- I'm not thirsty.
- I said bring Mr. O'Hara an urn of water.
There will be no more customers tonight.
Happy dreams, sahib.
Here, O'Hara. Catch!
Look down at the urn.
It will come together again...
piece by piece.
First the big piece shall join itself
to the two others...
on the right...
and on the left.
On the right...
and on the left.
Look.
It's coming into shape.
Look.
It's coming into shape.
Coming into shape.
No.
It's smashed!
Yes, it is smashed.
Many would have seen it grow
completely together again.
Is it magic?
Yes, of a sort.
It's called hypnotism.

Tell me, did you not see it
start to reshape?
For a while.
Then what did you do?
I mean, how did you think?
I knew it was broken,
and I kept telling myself so.
And it was broken.
Has anyone ever done
this sort of magic to you before?
No.
Then never let them do it again.
Remember...
when anyone asks you
to look closely at anything...
and uses his eyes and his hands as I did...
don't do it.
I'm pleased with you, Mr. O'Hara.
Good night.
Now...
name their numbers and their types.
Two Mohammedans, four sadhus,
one Bengali, three Afghans...
Fourteen old flintlocks, six scythes...
thirteen double-edged swords,
five double-barreled pistols...
Well?
Oh, about 600.
More than half, say, 400 men...
and the rest women and a few children.
Easy, Wanna. In three weeks from today,
I have to scrub it off.
You can tell your companions
at St. Xavier...
that the sun was strong.
That will do.
I wish I could journey with you to Umballa
and meet your holy man.
That which is between my lama and me
is for no other.
- I don't see anything I really like.
- Have you anything else to show us?
Darling, you're very sweet,
but there's absolutely nothing here I want.

We have now reached
the bottom of the well.
Pardon, sahib. I have heard of a new pen
that carries its own ink. Have you one?
I don't see anything I like. Come along.
It would be of great use to learned man
of medicine such as myself.
There are pictures of the pen
in English magazines.
Without dipping in the ink, it writes like...
Look over my shoulder.
What do you see?
Only the afternoon shadows.
Since leaving the village of Simla...
I have been followed.
Simla is far to the north.
In the line of duty,
I was posing as a cab driver.
And I took from one of my passengers
a very valuable communication...
which must reach
Colonel Creighton urgently.
To throw those who follow me
off the scent, I have traveled far...
several times changed my appearance.
But still they follow me.
Well, you haven't lost any weight over it.
No? Continual fear fattens me.
Good day, Lurgan.
I've come for my jade set. Is it ready yet?
It is indeed, sir.
Wanna!
Bring Mr. Fairlee's jade.
This is the type of thing
I was thinking about.
Yes, of course. One moment, Doctor.
- Thank you very much, Mr. Fairlee.
- Good day.
Give alms for a holy man.
Spare an anna for my lama,
O protector of the poor.
Begone.
If you give to one beggar,
there'll be 50 here within the hour.

He can curse as well as bless.
And I am a most fearful man, sahib.
Doctor, let me introduce my pupil...
who's just completed
his first course with me.
O'Hara is the name.
It is many years since I also was a pupil.
I congratulate you
on most efficient performance.
Except for one little thing,
you had my legs pulled.
The chela's waist string is
always of horsehair. Never of cotton.
I shall remember that.
And you are wearing Hindu beads,
not Buddhist.
Anything else?
The stain on your face
should go higher into the hairline.
I am going to Umballa tonight.
But in three weeks,
I shall go back to school again in Lucknow.
Perhaps by that time the learned doctor...
will be once more driving his cab
in that fair city.
That is jolly dash good, Master O'Hara.
Umballa?
O'Hara's going there to meet his holy man.
He has permission to spend
the rest of his vacation with him.
And could carry a message safely.
I think this will cover the cost
of the magic pen, sahib.
Creighton sahib will be
at Umballa station tomorrow night...
when the train from the north arrives.
When you give him the message,
tell him...
as soon as I can disengage myself
from those who follow me...
I shall be at my usual place
to await his instruction.
Do you follow?
I wish you all a jolly good afternoon.

Let us see how well you have learned.
Come to the window.
Tell me what you see.
The fat one pauses.
He uses a brass tray as a mirror...
to watch a tall man with a rounded beard
and a tall turban of a Sikh.
This man leans against a wall,
eating an orange.
The fat one moves off briskly,
followed by the man with the orange.
The man with the orange pauses,
speaks quickly to two men.
The other men, describe them.
Well, the small one, 5'4", I would say,
turban torn on the left side...
wears only one earring.
The big man has a scar
on the left side of his face...
running from the corner of his eye
to below the cheekbone.
The men part.
Very good.
Remember the faces of those men.
In years to come,
when you play the Great Game...
it might stand you in good stead.
Here's the message.
Third-class ticket, Umballa.
My mother is dead. My father is dead.
An anna, O protector of the poor.
Blessed is the father of two sturdy sons.
But for their strong legs
and their stronger arms...
we would have missed the train.
Do you journey far, farmer?
To Umballa.
O protector of the poor, a half an anna.
I have traveled a long way.
A half an anna, O sahib, please.
Keep your dirty hands off me!
Now go along with your business.
Without your help, sahib,
I shall not go very far.

- May I live to spend it, O protector...

- Now, get along with you.

Stop that boy! He stole my watch!

Stop him!

All right, stand him on his feet.

Bring him into the stationmaster's office.

Keep the crowd back.

I'll attend to this little thief myself.

Where did the fat man say

he could be reached?

He said he could be reached

at the usual place.

He'll be found at the northernmost house

in the village of Camba.

- Do you know it?

- Oh, yes, sir.

Two days journey on the Grand

Trunk Road and a half a day to the south.

Right.

Can you remember a difficult message?

Well, I think so, sir.

Listen carefully.

Blue follows the green.

The gray is under the blue.

The red is to the right of the green.

The gray must go five leagues

to the point of eight...

and then return seven leagues

to meet the red.

Repeat.

"The blue follows the green.

"The gray is under the blue.

"The red is to the right of the green.

"The gray must go five leagues

to the point of eight...

"then return seven leagues

to meet the red. "

Lurgan spoke very well of you.

- He was not exaggerating.

- Thank you, sir.

Now I'll tell you a real message.

I want you to go to the fat man and say...

that the two Europeans

who are surveying the Khyber Pass...

are not the geologists they claim to be.
Tell him to go with all haste
and investigate.
And, if possible,
to secure for our information...
any maps or data
they may have accumulated.
- Can you do this?
- Oh, yes, sir.
But what about my holy man?
Will he stay here?
No. You'll take your lama
with you to Camba.
As the chela of a holy man,
you will look less conspicuous.
But he might harm him, sir.
Why not leave that to me, Kim?
Now, you go meet your lama as arranged.
Oh, and just one thing:
I want you to give me
your word of honor...
that you'll be at St. Xavier's
in three weeks time...
at the opening of term.
Yes, sir.
And when you've finished at St. Xavier's...
this is yours.
Thank you, sir.
Now run along, and good luck.
Did any of you see the theft?
Sahib, with my own eyes,
I saw his thieving hand...
reach into thy honorable pocket.
We've got our evidence.
Take him to the police station
and hold him as a witness.
You cannot arrest me! You cannot!
I came as soon as I got your message.
R3 is dead.
- The fat one?
- Strangled by a rope.
There was one
with the heart of a full-blooded stallion.
A brain, too, as big as his belly.

There will be a reckoning.
I sent a message to him
to go to the Khyber Pass...
and investigate the two Europeans
who are surveying in the Himalayas.
You must take his place.
- Did he receive your message before...
- I don't know.
There's been no word from Kim
since he carried it.
I've inquired everywhere,
including the school.
He's completely disappeared.
I am terribly worried about the boy.
Did he carry your message
to the fat one in writing?
No. By word.
I felt I could trust him.
You, too, are thinking perhaps
that he was also...
I am thinking only that perhaps
a boy has gone upon a man's mission.
- We waste time.
- Mahbub Ali, our ranks grow thinner.
Have a care.
Sahib, I am a man of peace.
Thank you, boy.
For only four annas, O sahib princes...
a skin full of milk.
Four annas, sahibs. The man is a thief.
But it's fresh milk. We need it.
Are you bankers to pay such a price?
Here. Buy the milk.
What sort of milk can you offer?
Never have I seen such a mangy herd
or such a thieving herder.
Mudhead. Thy mother was born
under a basket.
- Three annas.
- Bury thy head in a dung heap.
We do not ask the price of the herd.
One anna.
Son of 10,000 maggots!
Two annas.

Save thy slimy voice. One anna!

- Two!

- One!

- One and one half annas!

- One anna!

Oh, you drive a harder bargain
than a horse trader from Lahore!

One anna.

That one.

For one anna, I will pick the goat.

Mahbub Ali.

So...

for such as thee, I sacrificed my beard.

If we were not watched,

I would lash you until my arm wearied.

Then I'd take you to Colonel Creighton,
who'd lash you with his tongue.

But am I not playing the Great Game?

The first order is to obey orders.

It's a miracle your throat isn't slit...

and that which we're looking for, lost.

Turn your head to the last pack animal.

What we seek is in that kilt

with the red top.

They draw maps and plans

of fortified places.

And chart where landslides

might be dangerous.

At each spot with the passing arrows...

they plan a fort just to be held

by a handful of soldiers.

I've seen it marked so.

Do you know when the soldiers will come?

No. They speak together in a language

my holy man called Russian.

Now the pattern is clear on the loom.

The northern tribes

were the ones that brought war.

This time the Imperial Czar

prods them in the backside.

But am I not playing the Great Game?

Could the fat one or even Mahbub Ali

have done so much?

Tonight, when they sleep...

you and the holy one
will go down to the plains.
But they trust me.
I've made myself useful.
They love me like a brother.
I could get ahold of those maps.
From now on, you'll obey orders!
One anna.
May the milk sour in your belly, skinflint!
Good boy. Thank you.
Milk.
You skinflint!
Did the holy one hear what they said
in the strange tongue?
Their hearts are glad because someone
they expected approaches up the pass.
Did they say who it was?
Yes. Even at this distance,
they recognize him...
by the sign he carries upon his umbrella.
Boy, our fire. Hurry with it.
Tonight you cook well, very well.
- A visitor is coming.
- A visitor, sahib?
We have wine. Cool it in the stream.
With such complete preparations,
this time we cannot fail.
And if our fighting tribesmen
could be joined...
by some of your master's soldiers...
There is peace between my country
and England. It is not possible.
Our imperial master will help
with guns, ammunition...
We're expecting hourly the arrival here
of several men...
- some of our best staff officers.
- Excellent.
You'll conduct these officers
to your headquarters...
where they'll be at your service
during the campaign.
If their identity were ever discovered...
my government would be compelled

to repudiate them.

To be less conspicuous, they travel
in the costume of your countrymen.

Your pardon, sahibs.

The milk of the goat soothes the belly
and brings sound sleep.

Our bellies are still full of your good food.

Where did the sahibs find the boy?

He is young, but very attentive.

We did not find him. He found us.

Attached himself to us
the very next morning...

- after our bearers...

- The superstitious fools.

After our bearers deserted us...

because something frightened them
in the night.

The boy was journeying
in the hills with a lama.

A religious fanatic...

- searching for a sacred river.

- Yes, some mythical river.

Searching for a river in the hills?

- Yes.

- The old man is mad, quite mad.

And yet he can speak with us
in our own language.

These lamas have
the gift of many tongues.

Strange meeting.

It smells strongly.

Boy, bring back the goat's milk.

Here. Catch.

Oh, I am sorry, sir! I am very clumsy.

Look down at the cup.

Look down!

It will come together, piece by piece.

Piece by piece...

it will come together.

You are from the plains?

Yes.

What are you doing in the hills?

I serve my holy man

who searches for a river.

You search in the hills for a river?
It is a sacred river.
You are lying.
I do not understand, master.
Others have sent you to find out things.
We search for a sacred river.
Who sent you?
We search for a...
Wake up.
Where am I?
I will tell you.
You are in deep trouble.
The boy resisted my will.
His senses did not leave him.
I can tell by his eyes.
See? They are unchanged.
Why did you pretend?
Why?
Who sent you?
- Let me go!
- Why did you pretend?
- Let me go!
- Who sent you?
- Who sent you?
- Let me go to my holy man!
Tell me, who sent you?
Leave him for me.
We have our own way
of loosening a tongue.
After you speak,
you have but to throw the rope up...
and you will be pulled to safety.
When wisdom opens your mouth,
you have only to whisper.
I shall be here.
Soon the muscles of your legs
will no longer hold.
You will crash down many thousand feet.
Well, boy, speak.
Who sent you here?
So much courage in one so young
must conceal a deep secret.
The moon is not yet high.
I can wait.

Come, boy.
Is your mouth still shut?
Already your strength begins to ebb.
An hour or so more...
and a gust of wind will blow you
off that ledge like a feather.
Come, boy. Speak!
Sahibs, welcome.
What is the meaning of this?
It's a long climb down the cliff.
I've been waiting all night for your return.
Did you still recognize your friend
when you found him?
Who are you? What do you want?
It was whispered in the bazaar
that two sahibs...
had crossed the Russian border
into our land in search of knowledge.
That is so.
We are scientists.
We come here with permission.
We have it written here.
This expedition is for geological research.
Alas.
And all I find in here are plans for war.
Why, you...
If any harm comes to us,
you will answer to our government.
Sahib, failure in this life
is seldom rewarded.
Your government would be the first
to repudiate you.
And your journey down to the plains,
tied to the back of the pack animals...
will not be as uncomfortable as
the questions you'll be called to answer...
concerning the evidence in here.
Then there's the little matter
of injuring a holy man.
For that alone, were I not a man of peace...
I would take pleasure
in slitting your throats.
Mahbub Ali!
Tribesmen are coming from the north.

- How many?

- Ten.

And they all carry
the short-barreled rifles of sahibs.
When they arrive, it is you
who will take an uncomfortable journey.
Give me that rifle.

I'll give you only a warning, sahib.
To pull that trigger
would only warn our men who approach.
Chela!

If only thou would take a little food,
or even some water.

My heart is very heavy
for my neglect of thee.

I walked thee too far.

I have not always picked
good food for thee.

I've not considered the heat.

I have talked to people on the road
and left thee alone.

I have, I have.

But I love thee, Holy One.

Love thee.

My chela must not weep.

But I deceived your trust.

It was not in search of your river
that I led you into the mountains...
and brought injury upon you.

I lied, Holy One. Lied.

Have I taught thee so little of the way?

Does thou really think that
thou could've led me into the mountains...
if God had not so ordained it?

Mahbub Ali and thy chela
will take you to the plains...
to a man of medicine.

No, chela.

For me, the journey ends here.

But because of my love for thee,
there comes a voice which cries:

"What shall become of the boy
when thou art gone?"

Follow not those

whose feet lead to violence.
No.
Not even Mahbub Ali.
Return to the road of learning...
so that thou, son of my soul,
may stand prepared upon the threshold...
of a new and better world.
O Holy One.
And when I can no longer see thy face...
thy voice will reach me like a song.
Come.
Rejoice with me.
For through these hours of trial,
my soul went free...
and reeling like an eagle...
passed beyond the illusion
of time and space...
and the things...
that tell thee
my hour of deliverance is at hand.
Oh, my chela...
for me, the search has ended.
For the merit that I have acquired,
the River of the Arrow is here.
It breaks forth as I said it would.
Oh, my chela.
Holy One, you have not the strength.
There comes to me
the strength of the free and the sinless.
The wheel is just.
Stay thee, chela.
This is not yet for thee.
Keep thy feet upon the way...
until we meet again.
Hello, Father Victor.
It's your father's regiment you should
be joining, as they go to hold the pass.
When a young polo pony has played
a hard game, and played it well...
he should be allowed
to rest in the pasture.
You will see to it, Mahbub Ali.
Where do we ride now, Mahbub Ali?
Friend of all the world

goes back to the school of the sahibs.

Must I?

Father Victor said I should join
the soldiers of the Red Bull like my father.
All in good time.

And...

speaking of time...

Creighton sahib wanted you to have it.

How will you manage without me,
Mahbub Ali, when I am at school?

Well, I can but try.

Your beard grows slowly.

Yes.

But for you and others...

it shall bloom again.