North West Frontier

By Robin Estridge
Man) 'This is India. The North West Frontier province. 1905.
'A country of many religions.
'Men find many reasons for killing each other -
'greed, revenge, jealousy
'or perhaps because they worship God by different names.
'Rebel fanatics are gathering in the hills.
'Their objective -
to kill a six-year-old boy
'because he is a prince and the future leader of his people.
'His father, the Maharajah, has appealed to us, the British,
'asking us to take his son to the garrison town of Haserabad
'and then to send him to safety in Delhi.'

(Warlike shouting)
(Gunshot)
(Shouting)
(Train whistle blows)
(Bugle call echoes)
(Distant shouting)
Fire!
Fire!
Fire!
Ra! Ra! Rata cha!
Ra! Ra! Rata cha! Rata cha!
(Cannons boom)
Peechi jao! Peechi jao!
There's another gate along to the left!
For heaven's sake, keep that door open.
Peechi! Peechi! Keep back!
I'm frightfully sorry, sir.
B Company. They gave it the right name.
Have they held the last train?
No, sir. They wouldn't have got away.
Damn! We'd better report.
- Still with me?
- Yes. For better or worse.
(Speaks Urdu)
- Yes, sahib.
- He'll be all right.
Of course. His people
have always been soldiers.
Sorry, there's no more I can do...
Captain Scott!
I demand an immediate escort away.
I'm so glad you got through.
We've been worried.
Mrs Wyatt, this is Mr Bridie.
He does all the work around here.
- His Excellency wants to see you.
- I'll report at once.
Will you come with me please,
Mrs Wyatt?
You don't seem to realise
that I am a British citizen. Look!
We're all British citizens,
Mr Peters, even without papers.
It's unforgivable I wasn't warned.
There's a cable office.
The lines were cut. Into the ballroom.
See Lady Windham.
I insist. You must take me
to the Governor at once!
There's nothing he can do.
The last train's gone.
I'm not blaming you. Having Mrs Wyatt
with you can't have made it any quicker.
She did pretty well, sir.
Not my idea of a governess.
Her husband was a fine doctor.
Saved the boy's life when he was a baby.
- We couldn't get him to leave.
- I didn't expect you would.
The important thing is Prince Kishan.
Delhi sent a special order —
get him out at once. Seems I've failed.
- (Knock on door)
- Yes?
- General Ames.
- Come in, Charles.
- You're a bit late.
- Scott did his best.
- Where's the boy, sir?
- In the library.

(Music box tinkles)

Your Highness, welcome to my home.
- Thank you, Your Excellency.
- He's very tired.

Mrs Wyatt, I met your husband in Bombay. This is General Ames. The last train has gone. We held it for His Highness as long as we dared. I promised I'd take him to safety. I promised his father.
- He'll be safe here.
- What makes you think that? This isn't an ordinary tribal uprising. It's far bigger.
- We have no reason to believe so.
- I'm telling you.

Princes who fight each other are on the same side.
- Rasjad, Hussein, even Rahim.
- She's perfectly right, sir.

If you'd have acted on my message three days ago, Prince Kishan would be safe.
- We are the best judges of that.
- I disagree.

The British never seem to do anything until they've had tea.

(Sniggers)
I'm sorry, but that's the way it seems to America.
Please forgive me. Nobody told me you'd come. My dear, you might have sent word. Your Highness. Mrs Wyatt, isn't it? I've heard of you.
- How do you do?
- The child looks exhausted.

So do you, Captain Scott. I'm sure you're dying for a bath.
- I certainly am.
- I'll show you to your rooms.
- Thank you, Captain Scott.
- You're a good soldier.
You'll have to forgive me for speaking my mind but I believe that's what it's for. Hussein, Rasjad and Rahim fighting together.

- It's possible she's wrong, sir.
- I wish she was.
- Go and get some rest.
- Thank you, sir.

(Shouts command)

(Clicking of rifles loading)

Fire!

They've captured the railway gates, so we're under siege.

- Can we hold out?
- If we get reinforcements.
- If we don't?
- We haven't a hope.

Prince Kishan must be got out. Delhi made it clear we must save him if it's the last thing we did.

- It may be the last thing we do.
- Captain Scott here yet?
- He's waiting.
- Send him in, please.

(Ames) The boy is only a figurehead.

(Sir John) His family have been a "figurehead" for generations. It's our only chance of restoring order.

- You think he's that important?
- I know he is.

He's the religious and political leader of thousands of Hindus.

- (Knocking)
- Come in.

These rebels are Moslems. If they had managed to kill him, if they still manage to kill him, the Hindus will have no leader. It'll be civil war. Worse than the Mutiny.

All right, Scott. What are the chances of getting the Prince to Kalapur in safety? I'm sorry. His Excellency
didn't request your presence.
The subject under discussion affects
me more closely than anybody else here.
Mrs Wyatt's perfectly right.
Can you get him to Kalapur?
- The last train has gone.
- The army doesn't need engines.
- What about horses?
- No chance. We had to leave ours.
- They've got a sniper on every hill.
- But you got through.
- Yes, sir. Before they closed in.
- Yes, that's right.
I'm afraid the Prince
will have to stay here.
He'll be quite safe.
We're expecting reinforcements.
I'm beginning to understand
British people.
You really mean it won't be safe
and reinforcements won't get here.
My dear lady, you don't understand.
No. It's a good way of looking at things.
It just takes a little getting used to.
- Thank you, Scott.
- Sir.
(Cannons pound)
- It's no use your waiting, Mr Peters.
- When can I see him?
The Governor is very busy.
I shall lodge a complaint
when I get to Delhi!
If you get to Delhi!
See, sahib? Very plenty of the steam.
But is it coming
from the right places, Gupta?
What right places?
Victoria is old, I confess that.
But she has experience and when she
has experience, nothing can go wrong.
(Whistle shrieks)
(Clank, whistle stops)
It is not the fault of Victoria.
I asked them last week,
and last month I asked them 17 times,
to give me one day for repair.
But no. They said Victoria is old
and no good except for shunting.
Nobody understands.
Kalapur's over 300 miles away.
What is 300 miles to this engine, sahib?
You know what she did
in the Karachi run?
- Two times in one week!
- Yes, but how many years ago?
Look at the boiler. Not even one leak.
Not an inch of steam is escaping from it.
If the boiler's good,
the whole engine is good.
Look for yourself if not believing Gupta.
That is only the piston bearing
which is not good.
That is why one half
of the steam is escaping.
That's all that's wrong?
Gupta has been for 30 years
in the railway service.
- You think Gupta don't know?
- No, Gupta. I think you do know.
- We shall need a coach.
- There is no one but that one.
- But that's broken down.
- Broken.
What about those wheels? Will they fit?
Yes. They are very fitting wheels.
Gupta, how many miles per hour could
Victoria go pulling just one coach?
- At least 50 miles, sahib.
- 50?
Well, if not 50, then at least 40 miles.
And when it is mended, sahib,
you don't know what speed it will go.
She'll be mended.
The only problem is coal.
- We'll never get enough in there.
- We need five to six times more.
But where can we put it?
Have you a truck?
- Yes, sahib. In the shed.
- Good.
I'll get the sappers.
Tell them what you want.
You will be never sorry
for the judgment you are making.
I hope you're right, Gupta.
I hope you're right.
- (Whistle shrieks)
- And get that fixed!
Yes, sahib. At once.
She is like the lady!
She shouts too much when she is happy!
- You must know one way or the other.
- The rumours must have foundation.
In my experience,
rumour is seldom backed by truth.
- Is the Prince here?
- Yes. That's why they're attacking.
- When the time comes you'll be told.
- Why don't you trust us?
We know they killed the boy's father.
I assure you, I know nothing.
I'm not in a position of authority.
- Sir John wants you.
- Thank heavens. Excuse me.
- He cannot make a statement.
- Why is the city being attacked?
Isn't it because the Prince is here?
This hinges on Prince Kishan.
This province has been loyal to
Prince Kishan's family for centuries.
While he's alive, there's no possibility
of a successful rebellion.
The Governor will make a statement
tomorrow.
It's impossible to get dispatches out.
The wires are cut.
- Then why not tell us the truth?
- Why all the secrecy?
Mr Peters. You wish to go to Kalapur?
It is essential.
I'm expected in Delhi on Friday.
There's a train leaving in an hour.
I hope you can fire those rifles you sell.
The armament industry is impartial.
Your customers out there aren't.
- Will you all sit down?
- There's no need for me to go.
Someone has to be responsible
for the dispatch box.
- I know.
- I've chosen you.
Besides, I know you'll look after my wife.
Heavens, it's not forever. You'll be back.
The whole thing's settled.
Be in the station yard at 11:15.
You'll be in Captain Scott's hands.
He'll explain.
I don't intend to be a schoolmaster
but I'd like to explain the position.
The whole point is the rebels
think that the last train has gone.
They do not know
that we have another engine.
Also, the outer gate on the railway
is in their hands.
And quite obviously shut.
I'm not much of an artist.
We hold the inner gate up here
And between these two gates,
there's a gradient.
Victoria's a wonderful old engine,
but she makes a lot of noise.
Too much.
So although we'll have steam up,
we're going to freewheel.
We ought to get up quite a speed
on this slope.
Enough to smash through
this outer gate
before they know what's hit them.
Well, that's roughly the plan.
I admit that any number of things
can happen.
They may even have blocked
the line to stop reinforcements
but that's something we'll have to face
if and when we get to it.
(Shouting outside)
So it's true. He is here.
Sorry, sir. He came up the back stairs.
- Send this man away.
- Please leave, Mr Van Leyden.
You're going to try to get him out?
Impossible.
- Come on.
- All right, Scott.
Since you've discovered
both salient points,
there's no need to throw you out.
By train with the outer gate
in enemy hands? What a story!
It's hardly likely to reach the papers!
I suppose not.
Unless I was to go on the train also.
It's an idea. I could go on the train.
There are a thousand people
I'd send first.
Of course. You don't like me.
I don't know about you, madam.
I'm Peter Van Leyden.
Now you have your story and no chance
of getting it out, perhaps you'll leave!
It's terrible to think what would
happen to your train if people knew.
They'd tear it to pieces
rather than let it go.
But of course it's a secret.
Nobody could possibly know.
Mr Van Leyden...
It is possible the newspapers
of the world should know.
Oh, no. It's of no importance.
- Mr Van Leyden?
- Yes?
- You may go on the train.
- Why, thank you, Sir John.
Your luggage must be at the yard by 11.
I'll check the dispatch box.
- Where are you going?
- To get my bag.
Yes. That's an excellent idea.
- I see. If I go, I miss the train?
- Yes, Mr Van Leyden.
Then I shall have to travel light.
As a journalist I'm used to it.
I couldn't wish for better company -
the decline and fall of an empire.
Roman, not British.
You haven't given me a chance
to speak to you.
There's nothing left to discuss.
Get your things ready.
They are ready but I'm not going.
This little boy's very, very important,
yet you're prepared to take this risk.
And it is a tremendous risk,
we all realise that.
We can't hold out here, isn't that it?
- We have every hope.
- Hope? Everybody hopes.
- You're going.
- No. I'm staying here with you.
- I have no right to get on...
- Right?!
Right? Haven't I my rights?
Am I Governor of a province for nothing?
- But I can't be so selfish.
- I'm being selfish, my dear.
For once, I'm being selfish.
You're going on the train and that's that.
That's that.
Your luggage has been loaded.
Board the train please?
(Speaks Urdu)
- You've got a complete set of tools.
- Crowbars, pickaxes?
- Everything.
- I wanted these mountings fixed.
- I'm sorry. There wasn't time.
- I hope they keep their distance.
Good luck.
Cheer up. I'm sure those gates
aren't as strong as they look.
It's not that. It's... I'd rather stay behind.
Haserabad doesn't seem a very good place to be now. It's my home. When I shut up my little house I had a feeling I'd never see it again. Satisfied?
- You trying to kill us all?
- We're trying to save you. The British are incurably optimistic.
- But you're British.
- My passport is. You really think we can get through? Would I be trying it if I didn't? Course you would. You've been ordered to try it. Get aboard. Quickly.
- How's the pressure, Gupta?
- Not very forcing to go yet. It will be forcing in a soon moment. Oh, do let me. We'll be off soon.
Will you all lie on the floor please? It may be uncomfortable but it's necessary and it won't be for long. Mr Bridie, turn that lamp out please. All being well, the train won't stop. If it does, don't look out of the windows or leave the carriage, but put the shutters up and wait for me. Right.
- How is she now?
- Now it is forcing. It will be ready to go only in a soon moment. Lie down right here. Mrs Wyatt, there is more room here. I'm quite happy where I am, thank you. Never mind, Mr Peters. The Americans are by tradition isolationist.
Now it is terribly ready, sahib. Terribly ready. Is everybody all right? Good. We're off. For better or worse.
- Ready to move off, sir.
- Good luck, Captain Scott.
Thank you, sir.
Close the fire door, Gupta.
(Whistle shrieks)
Let her go!
Keep down, everybody!
We'll soon be clear.
(Speaking Urdu)
- Morning, Mr Peters.
- Morning.
Here. Sorry, it's a Lee Enfield.
The rival firm. Ten rounds.
I've never used one of these
before in my life.
They're for killing people with.
Why do fighting men pretend
to despise those that sell their tools?
- A soldier's job is not to kill.
- No?
We prevent your customers
from tearing each other to pieces.
- You really believe that?
- I wouldn't say it if I didn't.
What I dislike is that you sell
without discrimination.
To the other side?
You think we should be like God?
Only on the side of the British?
The Germans, the Japanese
and the Hottentots
all think God's on their side.
And so do these rebels.
They're children.
Would you give this to a child?
They are not children.
They are grown men.
Uneducated men yes, but fighting
for the freedom of their country.
- You see?
- You may feel differently
when you get one of your own bullets.
If you think I'm ashamed, you're wrong.
Men make wars, not guns.
Before there were guns, men used swords, spears, stones, anything...
- Oh, go away. I'm sleepy.
- Here.
Or can't you shoot either?
Oh, yes. I can shoot.
Newspapermen have to be able to protect themselves.
Especially if their reports differ from the truth as much as yours.
- You read my reports? I'm honoured.
- Of course.
But truth is like God - not always on the side of the British.
It pleases you to mock us. We're used to that. Half the world mocks us.
And half the world is civilised because we have made it so.
Good for you, ma'am.
Excellent! Excellent!
Already we split into factions.
Our little train trundling across this desert is like our little world trundling through space.
Mr Peters will sell us guns and we can fight each other.
Delighted.
Men are absurd. You stand around arguing and who does all the work?
We do, as usual.
Wait a minute.
This journey's dangerous enough. Arizona isn't England.
From the time I was 13 my father never let me out without one.
Could I have one? I doubt I could hit anybody but I could frighten them.
- Here, Mr Bridie.
- I've never shot anyone in my life.
With luck, you won't have to.
I once won a cigarette case with one of these on Brighton pier.
You did better than me.
All I ever won was a bag of sweets! Here.
I should think Gupta and the Sergeant
are ready for this. Would you mind?
With pleasure.
(Speaking Urdu)
Thanks, sahib. Much thanks.
This is very nice engine, sahib.
Your friend did not admit, eh?
Here. You may need this.
Gun for Gupta? Oh, no, sahib.
Gupta only engine driver.
Very good engine driver.
30 years in the railway service.
It may be this or no more years
in the railway service.
No, sahib. Gupta Indian.
Indian to kill Indian, not very good.
Maybe sahib think Gupta foolish?
No. I don't think you're foolish.
If other man has other religion,
why should Gupta mind?
Gupta don't mind.
Sahib! Sahib!
Pull up, Gupta!
Sahib, on the other line.
Shutters up? Good. Don't leave the train.
- No trouble, I hope.
- Nothing for you to worry about.
Kumar? (Speaks Urdu)
Gupta, if you hear firing,
get back quickly. Don't wait for us.
Yes, sahib. Gupta will do that
but sahib also to look after himself.
(High-pitched squawking)
I'm glad to see it makes you sick.
I told you to stay in that train!
I'm a newspaper reporter.
It is my duty to look.
- To look and to report.
- All right, Van Leyden. Have a look.
Have a good look!
And see what happens when
the British aren't around to keep order.
Keep order? You?
You divide.
You set Moslem against Hindu.
You divide in order to rule,
that's what you do.
The Moslems were fighting the Hindus
for hundreds of years before we came.
And well you know it.
Get back on that train!
All right. I'm going. I've seen enough.
You call this keeping order?
Kumar! (Speaks Urdu)
Hey, Kumar. (Speaks Urdu)
- Kishan, do stop playing with that.
- Have something to eat.
It's dangerous to stay here so long.
What does Scott think he's doing?
He's supposed to be protecting us.
- What is it?
- What's happened?
- Come along. We can't all look.
- Don't.
Please, Mr Van Leyden,
tell us what's going on.
- It's the refugee train.
- It ought to be miles away.
- Is something wrong?
- Can we help?
- Is there anything we can do?
- No. There is nothing you can do.
Any of you! Except go home!
And keep order at home and stay there!
For good.
I'm sorry. There's nothing we can do.
They're all dead.
But there were hundreds of people
on that train.
- How do you know they're all dead?
- We're moving on.
Somebody may be alive.
We cannot go without being sure.
Please believe me. I've seen this before.
When those devils do a job,
they do it properly.
Gupta! Move on!
Hold it! Mrs Wyatt, please
get back on the train! Mrs Wyatt!
You can't court-martial her.
She's not one of your soldiers.
And neither are we.
If the sahib permits, Gupta to try
bringing back the memsahib?
No, Gupta. Let the memsahib
find out for herself.
Come on. We'll move up.
(Baby gurgles)
Let's get on the train.
It was a chance in a million.
He was completely hidden.
The mother had covered him. Nobody...
Please don't make excuses.
I was wrong and that's that.
Where's Kishan?
(Music box tinkles)
I thought it better
that he, er, shouldn't see the um...
We must find somewhere
to put the little blighter.
I have just the thing. Come and look.
That was a very courageous thing
to do, my dear.
The fellows always used
to pull my leg about this case.
"There goes Bridie with the baby."
Looks as if they were right.
What do you think? A perfect cot.
Put in some of these to make it soft.
How's that?
Excellent.
One life saved...and thousands lost.
Shall we give him a pillow for luck?
Laska. The driver of that engine
was a friend of mine, sahib.
30 years on the railway train service.
He had four small children, sahib.
You know, sahib.
Sometimes I want to get hold
of my people - all my people -
and beat their heads together
to put little sense into them.
Come on, Gupta. She's hardly moving.
She can do better than this.
- She's totally doing her best.
- Her total best isn't good enough.
There is no more of the steam.
Then you must find some.
Gupta! You can't stop wherever you like!
You're under army orders.
She cannot do it! She will not do it!
- You promised she'd get to Kalapur.
- Yes! But not with this!
Is that all? Don't you ever frighten me like that again.
We'll soon get that off.
(Speaks Urdu)
We're stopping
to do some minor repairs.
We seem to stop every few miles.
I don't know when Scott proposes to get us there.
He'll get you there all right, Mr Peters, that's all you need worry about.
Mr Van Leyden, would you mind passing me my case? It's just above your head.
Yes. That's it.
Thank you.
Ah. Thank you. I think the boys on the engine could do with a drop too.
I'll bring it...
I'm sorry.
About the baby? You needn't be.
- It was a fine thing to do.
- That's not why I did it.
You'd have to go too far back with me to understand.
I think I do understand.
You were married to a doctor.
A very fine one. A man who died trying to save people's lives.
You can't be married to a man like that without living up to his ideals.
I'm right, am I not?
You're right
but for all the wrong reasons.
I didn't live up to them.
I think I hated them.
I hated the squalor and the dirt,
the places we had to live.
I hated his being a doctor at all.
I even left him once
and went back to the States.
One does learn, though.
Even if it is a bit late in the day.
Does that make sense?
Yes, it makes sense. I may be one of
the brutal and licentious soldiery
but I'm not a complete blockhead.
He would have been as surprised
as you to see me on that train.
Anyway, how is young India?
How are we going to feed it?
Mr Bridie has an idea to do with
a leather glove.
- If we had a leather glove.
- Lady Windham has.
She has everything in her handbag.
Smelling salts, playing cards,
iodine, bandages.
Even the latest edition of The Times.
How about that drink for the boys?
And I could do with a cup of tea.
Coffee? Or would that
bring the Empire crashing down?
Tea.
You were happy in Haserabad,
weren't you?
Yes, it's my home.
I've lived there for 21 years.
I was happy there too.
It's a little bit different for you,
Lady Windham.
I've only a half-sister in England.
We've never been very close.
I don't think her husband likes me.
So really, you see, I'm alone.
It's not so different for me.
I have a few relations in England.
I even had to leave my old dog behind.
Not much of a dog, but he was mine.
- I had to leave my husband behind.
- I'm sorry. I didn't mean...
You've had your home in one place
for 20 years. I haven't had a home.
Just a succession of big houses
that haven't been easy to run.
My husband has been my home.
Wherever he is.
Lady Windham, how could I have been
so thoughtless? Please forgive me.
- Don't be silly, Mr Bridie.
- Can I get you some water?
How about a drop of whisky?
There's some in the van.
Lady Windham, what's the matter?
Nothing like a woman in tears to stop
a man feeling sorry for himself.
Mr Bridie? He certainly doesn't
seem sorry for himself now.
Your husband will be all right.
I'm sure he will.
Here we are, Lady Windham. Dear me...
That was a near one.
Thank you. That's better.
- It's rather strong.
- More water?
- I'm not complaining.
- Mrs Wyatt?
- No. I'm supposed to be fixing tea.
- Leave it to me.
He's happy now he's doing
something for somebody else.
You've been married, you should know
that much about men.
Maybe a doctor's wife doesn't see
enough of her husband to find out.
He was one of his patients.
Thin and wasted like a starved little frog.
Look at him now.
The railway line is broken.
- Reverse, quick! Back in the tunnel.
- Yes, sahib.
Damn! I beg your pardon.
They've blown up the line.
Shutters up, please.
It may be nothing to do with us.
It may have been done
to prevent reinforcements getting in.
- We can't just sit here.
- Can't we?
We can't go forwards and going back
seems to be out of the question.
It seems to be a most interesting
military problem.
Or just a matter of common sense.
Let's see. The dufada will have
to stand guard. That leaves six men.
We can replace that blown section
with a length of rail taken from behind.
- It's impossible.
- It's been done before.
Thank you, Mr Bridie.
This is what we're going to do.
We'll move the train forward...
It'll be safer to leave the ladies
in the tunnel.
Yes, but that gives us 200 yards
of open country.
We may need all the cover we can get.
Any more questions?
Good. Let's get on with it.
I hope there's some more of these.
A cup of tea might come in handy.
(Birds squawking)
Well, it looks clear enough.
But as Mr Peters put it,
we just can't sit here.
Look!
- What is it? What did you see?
- Something move.
- Are you sure? Where? Show me.
- Up there.
- What did you see? Was it a man?
- I don't know.
You'll have me doing it next.
Don't come out till I call you.
Kumar! Spanners, turnkeys, crowbars.
Excuse me. I'd advise you gentlemen
to do the same. It'll be pretty hot.
A master of understatement.
It's an old English pastime.
Right, gentlemen. Out. Come on!
Good for you, Mr Bridie.
- Armament merchants first.
- Come on!
If there is anyone out there, this is
the moment they've been waiting for.
- Why not send one of the Indians?
- Mr Peters!
Be careful, sahib.
Where you going, sahib?
This one yours. This one yours.
Oh, no. Not that way, sahib. This way.
Van Leyden, for heaven's sake!
Don't you want posterity to know
what a hero you are?
We want help now.
You sound like the empire builder
in distress.
I am coming.
I really find it quite pleasant to be
out of the train, Captain Scott.
You wait till you start lugging rails about.
- (Whistle shrieks)
- Strangle that, Gupta!
I thought Victoria was on our side.
Quick as you can, gentlemen.
Leave the shutter alone, Kishan.
Come and sit over here
and we'll build a card house.
I'll show you how.
Now gather up the cards first.
Now we'll start on the second floor.
That's right. You put your wall up there.
Shall we put one roof there?
Now yours.
Ah.
This is now a most intriguing situation,
Captain Scott.
No rail in front and no rail behind.
What happens if you are attacked?
Trust you to think of that one.
Now we've got two floors.
Let's try to get another, shall we?
Oh dear. We shall
have to start that one again.
(Animal calls)
Look. There it is.
A heliograph.
(Mrs Wyatt) What does it mean?
(Scott) They've found us.
- Ought we to open fire?
- It's a waste of time at this range.
We'll have to work fast. Come on.
- Come and sit down here.
- Why?
Just do as you're told, darling.
Right in this corner.
Right, Mr Bridie. Back to the coach.
I'll put the two last bolts in.
(Rifle clicks)
(Gunfire)
Back in the carriage quickly.
Keep your heads down!
Gupta, get back!
Dakhtar, covering fire!
Oh, my father God. Don't be careless
to save your Indian son.
(Indistinct call)
Gupta, get moving!
- What's the matter? You been hit?
- Yes, sahib.
But he was careful only to hit me
at the foot of the leg.
And a little bit in the arm also, sahib.
- That is all.
- We'll soon fix you up.
Soon we'll be down on the plain.
We can relax a bit. I hope.
Yes, sahib. And Gupta will
have to teach you to drive Victoria.
Can you keep your eyes open
a few moments?
- Yes, sahib.
- You did well.
- Pressure's dropping.
- Victoria wants water, sahib.
- How far is the next station?
- 20 miles distance.
- Will she make it?
- Oh, yes, sahib. But slowly slowly.
- How's that?
- That's very all right.
Sahib is engine driver now.
Tomorrow we'll have you in hospital.
Oh, no. Gupta does not like
to live in hospitals.
- Why not?
- Those nurses, they are not human.
Ooh, you'd be surprised.
She is going too quick, sahib.
The compression is losing.
Good. Victoria talks to me.
I understand her language.
It's just as well because
I can't understand a word she says!
This is ridiculous. It'd be quicker to walk.
There's nothing to stop you walking,
Mr Peters.
I don't know why the British
buy these.
Our models are twice as good.
Twice as good? Oh, you mean
it can kill twice as many people?
Exactly. And twice as fast.
It's an ingenious piece of mechanism.
But this thing...
Won't fire again?
No. Not a hope.
Now this you might call
an ingenious piece of mechanism.
It's a life saver too. Not a life destroyer.
I'm surprised you're a sentimentalist.
Most ruthless men are sentimental.
Me, ruthless? What makes you say that?
The things you write.
Crude sensationalism.
I'm very flattered that you're such
an attentive reader of my work.
Reading newspapers
is like everything else -
one must take the good with the bad,
the informed and the shoddy.
Thank you.
You do an awful lot of harm.
You know that, don't you?
Sometimes I think
you're even inciting violence.
The cure for some diseases
is often violent and painful.
War is like that.
But it's sometimes the only cure.
I'm sorry. I was just quoting
from one of my shoddy articles.
- Is the engine driver still out in the sun?
- Yes.
That wound will dry up superficially,
then heaven knows what will happen.
- When can I drive the engine?
- Later. Tomorrow perhaps.
- Will you ask Captain Scott?
- You ask him yourself.
No, you. He likes you.
Does he now?
You'd better take this out to him.
It might keep the sun off a little.
I'll take it.
(Mrs Wyatt) Captain Scott?
Lady Windham says the driver
must keep out of the sun.
I told you she has everything.
Here you are, Gupta. I hope none
of your fellow engine drivers see this.
No, sahib.
They will be calling me Lady Gupta!
- All set for Henley Regatta.
- Who is Henry Regatta, sahib?
He says, "Who is Henry Regatta?"
It's not a who, Gupta. It's an occasion.
When all the most sahib sahibs
in England get together,
dress up in a lot of silly hats,
and row up and down a river.
That is very funny. Why do they do that?
Why? Why, indeed?
You may well ask. I don't know.
It's one of the things
I joined the army to get away from.
- Pressure's up.
- Oh.
There's an attractive song
that goes with it.
(Hums "Eton Boating Song")
# And a hay harvest breeze
# Blade on the feather
# Shade off the trees
# Swing, swing together
# With your bodies between your knees
# Swing, swing together
# With your bodies between your knees
# Swing, swing together
# With your bodies between your knees #
All together now!
(Both hum)
# Blade on the feather
# Shade off the trees
- # And we'll swing, swing... #
- Mind your business, sahib!
# Harrow may be clever
# Rugby may make more row
# But we'll row, row forever
# Steady from stroke to bow
# And nothing in life shall sever
# The chain that is round us now
# And nothing in life shall sever
# The chain that is round us now #
(Bell tinkles)
- I'll have to stop her.
- No, sahib.
If you stop her now,
she will never start again.
Then we'll give them a short burst
with the maxim as we go through.
If there's anyone there, they'll
know we mean business. Dakhtar Sahd!
Keep down, everybody in the coach!
Kumar! (Speaks Urdu)
(Speaks Urdu)
They made a shambles of this place.
Sahib to please see if they
have not spoilt the well of water
and also if the pump is working.
If it isn't, it's a long walk to Kalapur.
(Speaks Urdu)
It's all right, everybody.
It's quite safe to come down.
Mr Peters, Van Leyden, find some wood
and take it to the pump house.
I'm going to try and light that boiler.
Careful, sahib. Careful.
If I can get the pump to work,
we'll get some water.
But we've got to get it over to the engine,
so if you can all look around for
something to carry it in, it would help.
Oh, Mr Van Leyden.
Unfortunately,
your survival depends on ours,
so, if you don't mind, some wood.
- How are you, Gupta?
- I am not very well, memsahib.
But I will be very well
in a very soon moment now.
You really should be in the coach.
Gupta must stay with his engine till
Scott sahib becomes engine driver.
That will be in a very soon moment.
(Mrs Wyatt) Don't go far, Kishan.
Memsahib, you have first time
come to Gupta's engine.
You must not go back empty-handed.
Gupta must give you something.
Indian custom.
Bucket for water, memsahib.
Thank you. Put it down there.
If this works, we'll get some water.
- And if it doesn't?
- Then we'll stay here until they kill us.
It would be preferable,
then, that it works.
It's all right, I think.
Stand clear of that wheel.
It'll make mincemeat of you.
Come on, old girl.
Good. Outside.
Keep that fire going, Van Leyden.
There it is. Fill your buckets. Kumar!
Dakhtar Sahd! (Speaks Urdu)
Where does the old girl
like to take her drink?
- She drinks up on the roof, sahib.
- Right.
Over here!
Kishan, you're all wet.
Go over there and play.
Thank you, Mr Bridie.
Two more like that and we're away.
- You look surprised.
- I am. To see you working so hard.
Everybody can if they have to.
Is the armament business hard work?
Heavens, no.
People are always fighting each other.
We are the only salesmen who are
actually pursued by our customers.
- I have worked hard at other jobs.
- What other jobs, Mr Peters?
For many years I devoted myself
to marrying a rich woman.
Truly, it's very difficult.
- Did you succeed?
- With my charm? Of course I did.
But it's a funny thing.
A man can keep a woman
but a woman can't keep a man.
Poor Vera, I ended up despising her.
Myself too, come to that.
It wasn't a good job anyway.
Too much hard work.
Kishan!
Stand away from that. What the devil
do you think you're doing?
- You ought to have more sense.
- Don't fuss. I was looking after him.
Come on, back on the train. You too.
All aboard, please! Dakhtar, peechi jao.
- Right, Gupta. Kalapur.
- Kalapur, sahib.
Would you like a drink of water, Gupta?
No water, memsahib. No water.
Try to sleep.
I understand
I will like hospitals after now.
- How's Gupta?
- Not too good.
A bit of a fever. We shouldn't
have let him stay out so long.
- Who's driving the train?
- The gunner.
- Is that safe?
- I think so.
Victoria is most intelligent.
- Whisky?
- Oh, why not?
- Thirst comes when the sun sets.
- How true.
- Whisky?
- No, thank you.
- Oh, come on. Do you good.
- I don't drink.
- What? And you a journalist?
- It's not essential to the job.
No? You surprise me.
Oh, come on. To show we're all friends.
I said no, didn't I?
Mr Van Leyden, are you a Moslem,
by any chance?
Why should you say that?
Because you won't touch alcohol
and this morning you were unwilling
to give Lady Windham her case.
Her pigskin case.
Yes, I am a Moslem, it so happens.
A Dutch Moslem. That's a bit unusual.
Not so unusual, no.
Many Dutch Indonesians are Moslems.
Are you an Indonesian, Mr Van Leyden?
Or half Indonesian?
Yes, I am.
Why should an Indonesian
be so anti-British?
Indonesian, Dutch, Christian, Moslem -
what has it got to do with it?
I merely sympathise with minorities
fighting the aggression of big nations.
In any case, the accidents of my birth
have nothing to do with you.
- Any of you!
- You're perfectly right.
You're being slow, young man. Snap.
- A very ill-natured fellow.
- Snap!
- Cigar?
- No, thank you.
Don't be so touchy.
There's no harm in being a Moslem.
- One would think there was.
- Not all Moslems are rebels.
- Thank you very much.
- But some are.
- Oh. Are you?
- Me? I'm no Moslem.
Moslem or no Moslem,
you sold them the arms.
People in glasshouses should mind
their own bloody business.
- And I mean bloody!
- How dare you?
You should not be so touchy.
I'll change my mind.
I'll have that cigar after all.
You ought to be getting some sleep.
Pass me those scissors, will you?
He's a lot tougher than he looks.
- Anything else?
- Yes.
Put a little water in here, would you?
You're the first American woman
I've met. Are they all like you?
Why? How do I seem?
Shall we say a little bit
more independent than most?
Is that the tactful English way of saying you think I'm pigheaded?
Let me ask you something.
Why did you join the army?
- Is that such an odd thing to do?
- It's a crazy thing to do.
Come on. Tell me why.
Well, let me see now.
When I was eight, my dear grandfather gave me a box of tin soldiers.
You've been playing soldiers ever since.
If you like to put it like that, yes.
Don't you ever feel it's rather a waste?
We were all put on earth with minds of our own,
why hand yours over to somebody else?
A soldier can have a mind of his own.
Can he? He takes orders from other people whether he agrees or not, like a machine.
We're not machines. We're human beings, like everybody else.
A soldier can never be that in the fullest sense.
Human beings have responsibilities.
- Don't you call this responsibility?
- Not yours.
The Governor ordered you to get us to Kalapur. The responsibility's his.
Well, thank you very much indeed for that most comforting thought.
It's not that I'm not grateful to you for saving me, I am,
but it doesn't alter my opinion of soldiers.
Are you one of these emancipated women we're having trouble with?
- I might be. What's wrong with that?
- They're just a lot of cranks.
A woman who has a mind of her own is a crank?!
Men who spend their lives obeying orders are cranks!
You can't go doing what you like
in life. My job is to obey orders.  
- Like an animal in blinkers!  
- I agree, Mrs Wyatt.  
Have you been there...?!
I'd like to punch you on the end of your interfering nose.  
Actually, I was going through for a smoke.  
Never mind. The front observation platform is now vacant.  
Mr Van Leyden, how about a cup of tea before we turn in?  
Thank you.  
I think Mr Peters was wrong to say the things he said to you just now.  
Mr Peters is entitled to think and say what he likes.  
It's of no importance to me. I didn't mind.  
You looked as if you did. You still do.  
- Do I? Is there any sugar?  
- How silly of me. Of course.  
Back to the footplate.  
Good night, Van Leyden.  
- Good night.  
- Mr Bridie.  
Good night. Don't stay out too long.  
Get some sleep.  
(Scott) Good night, ma'am.  
Try and get some rest.  
I've got a lot of friends back home in Haserabad who are of mixed blood.  
Don't be shy, Mr Bridie.  
They are half-breeds. So am I.  
It's nothing to be ashamed of.  
That's what I tell them.  
They're charming people.  
They are charming to you because you are charming to them.  
No, no. They're my friends, I told you.  
Mm. Half-breeds in this country, Mr Bridie, are hungry for friends.  
They spend most of their time worrying about what they are.  
I think it's degrading.
I'm not ashamed to be what I am.
I think I'm all right.
I have a certain amount of power,
you know.
I don't think power
has anything to do with it.
Oh, yes, it has. It is vital.
If people know that you can hit back,
they're careful how they treat you.
You mustn't be angry with her,
she's one of the old school.
I'm not angry.
In fact, I rather admire her.
She's proud, tough, ruthless.
Unashamedly patriotic.
A real pain in the neck.
Oh, His Highness.
I am sorry. I cannot rise
to bow to His Highness.
When did you learn to drive the engine?
I was same old as Your Highness.
My father taught me.
He was also engine driver,
like your father is King.
Don't you want a bigger engine?
No, His Highness.
I am in the habit of Victoria now.
Bigger engines bring troublesomeness.
Peoples become unsatisfactory with
small engines and want big engines.
But when there are no bigger engines
than the very big ones,
peoples again becomes unsatisfactory.
So have small engines
and be satisfactory.
Gupta, your English is hopeless.
Yes, His Highness.
But I am doing practice with Scott sahib.
His English is very hopeful.
Come along, Kishan.
(Clunking)
- We're stopping.
- It's the Kukprut Bridge.
It's almost five years since I was
here last on my way home from leave.
Dakhtar!
This time it's the bridge.
They've blown it up.
A section of it anyway.
I'll have to ask you to walk.
Walk? If it's blown up,
what are we going to walk on?
These chaps aren't clever
with explosives.
The force has gone down,
so we're still left with a couple of rails,
but there's nothing supporting them.
We're going to walk along a rail
with nothing to hold on to?
It's only a few yards. It won't be pleasant
but I think you can do it.
Isn't there a chance this is an ambush?
A chance but I don't think so.
I don't think this was designed for us.
(Mrs Wyatt) We walk across,
what happens then?
(Bridie) It won't
take the weight of a train?
(Scott) I think they were
trying to stop heavier trains.
I think it'll bear the weight of Victoria.
Anyway, there's no alternative.
And if it is an ambush?
I'll send the two soldiers on ahead
to give us covering fire.
Come on the bridge
as soon as you're ready.
Kumar.
Dakhtar.
Let me have the baby now.
Thank you.
That is the army. I don't expect
you'll find it as easy as that.
Now... Any volunteers?
Good for you, Mr Peters.
Don't look down.
Right.
Good.
Ma'am?
Step up on the rail. Don't look down.
Good for you, ma'am.
Mr Bridie?
Now, sir, on the rail.
- Don't look down.
- Oh dear.
- I can't move.
- It's all right, sir.
(Laughs) Good for you!
(Mrs Wyatt) Go on.
Captain Scott won't let you fall.
I'll show you.
If I can do it, I know you can.
Don't look down.
Good girl. I'll cross and you pass
the boy over, Van Leyden.
Thanks.
Right. Let's have him.
Now, then. Look at me, young fellow.
Keep looking at me.
Now hold him out.
Reach out.
Right. Hold him out, Van Leyden.
Reach out with him, man!
Look at me, young fellow.
That's a good boy.
Don't look down.
Come on, man. Stretch out.
Peters, get my waist.
Hold him out!
What's the matter with you?
Stretch him out!
Grab the boy!
Come on.
- What the devil are you doing?
- Please!
You deliberately held that boy short.
What? You nearly dropped him
and you have the audacity to blame me?
- That's how you wanted it to look.
- Don't be childish!
And what went on in the pump house
with that flywheel?
Pump house? What is he talking about?
Let go of me.
Oh, no. I'm not letting you go.
You're a Moslem, aren't you?
I was wondering
when you'd bring that up.
The people who want to kill
that boy are Moslems too. Kumar!
(Speaks Urdu)
I'm putting you under close arrest.
You do and I'll put you into every
newspaper from Calcutta to Berlin.
That's a risk I'll have to take.
I thought you had a brain
in spite of being a professional soldier.
- Yes. I am a professional soldier.
- And I am a professional journalist!
You're overstepping your mark.
I'm a free journalist! My job is to report!
And my job is to get that boy to Kalapur!
The man's a maniac.
The sun has gone to his head.
Don't hold him. He'll say you're
trying to strangle him.
(Speaks Urdu)
All right, Captain Scott. You seem
determined to get into the headlines.
But you will regret this.
- (All protest)
- Please get off the bridge!
There may be a dozen rifles
aimed at you. Leave the bridge.
Anyone can slip on a rail inches wide.
That's no proof that he's a murderer.
Surely you didn't have to arrest him?
We could have watched him.
Oh, for heaven's sake!
I could be wrong, very wrong,
but we can't take a chance
with this boy's life.
Now, please, leave the bridge.
- Please take him off the bridge.
- Will it take the weight?
Of course. I often drive trains
over blown-up bridges.
Oh, stop behaving like a schoolboy!
How do you want me to behave?
Tell you there isn't a hope in hell?
I've got to do this job.
This time it's my responsibility.
I don't know whether it's a human
problem or a military one.
You can work that out. Peters.
Your best chance is to take it fast.
The vibration will break up the structure.
I disagree. There's less weight on...
Who's doing this? You or me?
All right?
- Well... Here we go.
- Careful, sahib.
Stand by, Gupta. This is it.
- (Creaking)
- On with the brake! On with the brake!
Now totally.
Very slowly.
Very little bit more.
Little bit more.
Yes. Very slowly, sahib.
It is right. Right.
Don't worry, Gupta. She'll make it.
She is made, sahib. She is made.
Good driving, sahib. Oh, sahib.
I'm sorry about this, Mr Van Leyden.
I feel sure there'll be an explanation.
We made it!
(Whistle shrieks)
Oh!
(Speaks Urdu)
Captain Scott. I think you acted
very wisely over Mr Van Leyden.
If I didn't, I'm in the soup. Gupta?
- Yes, sahib?
- The old girl ready to go?
She's not a young man like you, sahib.
She needs some steam.
- How long?
- Not more long than five minutes.
Hello. Isn't this carrying your celebrated
dislike of soldiers a little too far?

What do you mean?
Looking so miserable just because
I didn't end up down in the valley.
Now you look like an abandoned woman!
I always thought you were.
I hope there aren't any more bridges.
You really had me scared.
I can promise you, I was scared myself.
Are you sure about Mr Van Leyden?
Won't you get into a lot of trouble?
Wouldn't you like to see me
drummed out of my regiment?
Medals torn off my manly bosom?
Just your cup of tea!
- They don't really do all that?
- Of course they do.
Then my best friend calls on me,
hands me a loaded revolver
and says, "Carruthers, it's the only way
out for a gentleman."

Catherine...

Thank you, Captain Scott.
William Charles Willoughby.
Take your pick.
Oh, Willoughby, definitely!
Dear me, it does seem a pity.
I know Mr Van Leyden's a difficult man
but it would have been nice
to have finished the journey together.
- Can I blow the whistle?
- Not till we get down on the plain.
When I grow up,
I will buy my own engine.
That's a good idea. Come on.
Stand over there. Watch me.
At last little Kishna's got his way.
- Your play, Mr Bridie.
- I'm sorry I'm so slow.
Do you think they've tied him up?
Don't worry. I'm sure Captain Scott
knows what he's doing.
Yes, but it seems a bit extreme
to shut him up. What can he do?
The idea of shutting him up is so we don't find out what he can do. I suppose he's got nothing to read. What does reading have to do with it? Captain Scott thinks he tried to kill Kishan. Mrs Wyatt, you do not understand the British mentality. While Van Leyden was a Dutch journalist, Mr Bridie disliked him. As soon as he discovered he was a half-breed, Mr Bridie felt a certain sympathy for him. Now we all suspect him of being an anti-British fanatic and a murderer, Mr Bridie will crusade for him. He has become an underdog and the British love underdogs. It's better than kicking them. That tells us how much steam is in the boiler. Voom voom voom!

(Guard shouts)
- Oh...let me fill the jug.
- Thank you.
So it is true, Mr Van Leyden. Stand up where I can see you. All of you. The boy too. He's not here. He's on the engine. You. Call the boy.
- Call him.
- No. Don't.
If you think you can get away with this... I can and I will and there won't be any witnesses. There's the other soldier. He controls the engine. He will obey this.
- Call that boy.
- No.
All right. Don't call him. He won't stay out there forever. If you must massacre us all...
you'd better remove your safety catch.
Keep back!
- May I drive the train?
- Presently.
- When?
- When I say so. Here, have a go.
You were set
right from the beginning to do this.
- You find that strange?
- The man's mad.
Not madder than you are.
Like you ladies and gentlemen,
I believe in my country.
- You are Dutch.
- I am Indian. My mother was Dutch.
I'm just one of the half-breeds
you despise.
What does killing us prove?
That you're not a half-breed?
It proves that I am a true Moslem.
That I care enough to fight
and maybe even to die for my faith.
For a country that will be all Moslem
and I will belong there.
Are you capable of understanding that?
You're a criminal. You belong in jail.
I find the moral indignation of
an armament peddler rather touching.
Look.
Mrs Wyatt. That lamp. Turn it up.
We will be passing through more tunnels
and would I hate to leave you all
standing in the dark.
Do as I say.
- (Clattering)
- Gupta!
(Speaks Urdu)
(Speaks Urdu)
Gupta, why didn't you go?
- He would have killed you, memsahib.
- Yes. I would have killed you.
"Memsahib."
(Baby gurgles)
Don't!
I've had enough tricks.
He's choking!
See to it!
Did you like that?
Prince Kishan's never gonna walk
through that door. Nor Captain Scott.
Time will tell.
I'm going to scream
long before they get here.
You're afraid, aren't you?
It can't be easy
to kill a child in cold blood.
And the refugee train.
When you came back from it
you were as sick as any of us.
It was a useless slaughter.
Isn't killing always useless?
Has it ever solved any problems?
It has and it will again.
I like children as much as you do
but that one boy...
My God, don't you understand?
That one boy, he's a symbol,
an outworn tradition that stands
between my country and freedom.
I shall kill him.
I must kill him in order
to save the lives of thousands.
One life will be lost - one Indian life -
but thousands will be saved.
Stand back! Stand back from that door!
Tea time, young fellow.
Can I come back later
and drive the engine?
Of course. I promised you. Tickly!
Can you box?
Dakhtar? (Speaks Urdu)
(Speaks Urdu)
Look at it. Look.
(Van Leyden) Not a sound
from any of you.
Hey, hey!
How can you drink tea with dirty hands?
(Whistles) Wait a minute.
And not a move from any of you.
Don't scream. I will not kill you
if you don't scream.
- Don't come in!
- Down, everybody!
Gupta!
Tell the dakhtar not to stop. It's a trap!
It's no good.
You can't depress that gun any more.
- Help Kumar.
- Oh dear. I think I've been hit.
Yes. Yes, you have.
We'll soon have this cleaned up for you.
- (Thudding)
- They're not on the roof?
(Gunshot)
Am I losing much blood?
You could have hurt yourself more
falling off a bicycle.
You're quite wrong.
Mr Bridie will have to take care.
You need a stiff drink
and I'll get that arm into a sling.
Thank you. You are kind.
- Where's Mr Van Leyden?
- He, er...
He got off.
He got off?
Oh dear.
I couldn't help liking Mr Van Leyden
even though he did try to drill us
all full of holes.
- Drink that.
- Thank you, Lady Windham.
Now, I suppose,
all our troubles are over.
There. That's it.
Put this on. You mustn't get any more
sun on your head after a shock.
Thank you very much.
Mr Bridie!
Feed the belt through!
Oh, that's a bit of luck!
This is the Bindar Tunnel.
They'll never catch us now.
It's two miles long.
Come along, Captain Scott.
Captain Scott?
Well, that's a funny thing.
Is he all right?
He will be. Get me some water, Mr Bridie.
- I don't think he can have been hit.
- It looks like just this wound.
That's just about the luckiest thing
that ever happened.
- Oh!
Oh, I tell you, this is a mug's game.
I think perhaps you're right.
What would you say if I put
those tin soldiers back in the box?
I'd say you'd want to get them
out again tomorrow.
Don't tell me you've changed
your opinion about soldiering?
Let's just say I've learned
a couple of things on this journey.
Let's just say we've both learned
a couple of things on this journey.
There, you see? What did I tell you?
It's the uniform. They all fall in the end.
Oh!
Message to Kalapur.
(Whistle toots)
Hey, there!
You!

Is this the 9:
No, it bloody well isn't.
It's the last train from Haserabad.
And stand to attention when you speak
to a senior officer!
Then John's all right?
Yes. The rebels never broke into the fort.
- Reinforcements got through, sir?
- Yes.
The attack broke up
once you'd got the boy away.
Captain Scott, the Viceroy will want to hear of your part in this journey. Thank you. Don't forget Mr Bridie. He's got a kick like a mule. That saved the lot of us. Well, Gupta. See, sahib? They say Victoria too old, no good except but for shunting. Let them speak now. She showed them. She certainly did. Shabash, Kumar. Shabash, Dakhtar Sahd.

We were worried you wouldn't get to the Delhi conference. The government are very interested in your people's new field gun. Captain Scott, thank you for saving my life. You are my friend now.

- Well, I hope so.
- But you are British.
- Will I have to fight you?
- Good heavens, no. Why should you?
- My father said...
- Well, what did he say?
I must fight the British to make them go away.
I wish I could have driven the engine. Looks as though you'll have to fight little Kishan now.
That's all the thanks you get.
That's all the thanks we ever get.
"Be thankful you're living and trust your luck.
"March to your front like a soldier."
- Who said that?
- A man called Kipling.
Another tea drinker.
(Baby cries)
Well, we'd better try and find a home for young India.