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# A Far Off Place

By Robert Caswell

Look out! Get 'em!  
Burn the place!  
Harry!  
Kill the girl!  
Harry!  
Mrs. Parker, tell him stop!  
Koba, I tell him to stop,  
you have to carry water every day  
- from the well to the new garden.  
- I walk. I carry. Just tell him stop.  
You'll be nuts for it.  
Turn on the faucet, out comes water.  
Faucet. Bullshit.  
Koba? Who's been helping you  
with your English?  
Miss Nonnie has.  
I'll kill her.  
It's only three weeks.  
It won't kill you to be nice.  
- Mopani's taking me on patrol next week.  
- That's out.  
Why? Just because I have to baby-sit  
some American boy?  
No, because it's dangerous.  
Well, Mopani says I'm ready.  
I can hit a flying can at 20 meters, Dad.  
What are you talking about?  
Shooting poachers?  
It's only in self-defense.  
- Mopani says I'm ready.  
- Mopani and I disagree.  
- Dynamite.  
- Hintza. Come.  
- But he's your friend.  
- You can disagree with friends.  
- Not with your father?  
- Disagree, yes. Disobey, no.  
You know, Dad, people need to stand up  
and fight for what they believe in,  
or nothing's ever going to change.  
People need to sit down and talk.  
Otherwise, people won't change.  
All right.  
Africa. First impression:

Bone dry and boring:

**Dust everywhere:**

Hunter's Drift

is a very famous place, you know.

- What?

- Hunter's Drift is a very famous place.

Famous for what?

Mr. Parker is the first wildlife commissioner  
to employ the locals  
and split the profits with them.

Oh. So, is there  
anything to do around here?

We grow the food, take care of the reserve,  
and if there is a sickness...

No, I mean, to do. You know, basketball,  
go to the movies, any good concerts?

**Three weeks:**

a satellite dish where we're staying:

Or at least a VCR:

Steve.

It's good to see you, Liz.

Uh... this is Harry.

I was a good friend of your mother's  
a long time ago.

I'm so pleased you could visit us.

- Yeah, me too.

- Come on in. Let's get you settled.

Yeah, I'd like to stretch my legs,  
if that's all right.

- Wouldn't you like a cold drink?

- I think I'll work up a thirst.

He wanted to spend  
his vacation in Utah, skiing.

- Oh.

- I had to twist his arm.

- I hope I didn't break it.

- No. He'll have a swell time.

This is beautiful.

Hey. Come on, Hin.

What? Stay.

Hey!

- Nonnie!

- Get out of the way!

**Mr:**

Nonnie!

What the hell is going on, huh?

Are you crazy?

Look what you did to me!

- Nonnie, are you OK?

- Yeah.

Are you OK?

Didn't you see the sign?

What sign? Look, I was just taking a walk, all right?

My name's Harry Winslow.

Maybe you want to skip the handshake?

Paul Parker.

This is my daughter Nonnie.

Yeah. We met.

Hintza! It's for the cat.

You already had yours.

Harry! Oh, how nice you look.

Come over here

and sit next to Nonnie, OK?

Yeah, sure.

- Thanks for waiting.

- Waiting for what?

In New York,

it's polite to wait for your guests.

Out here it's polite to thank somebody for saving your butt.

- My butt thanks you.

- "My butt thanks you. "

Is that how you say

"thank you" in New York?

- Thank you.

- You're welcome.

Nonnie.

So who's that guy?

That's Ricketts.

He's one of my dad's friends.

Pt?

Pt?

- No.

- Dad told me this place was a desert.

No. That's 20 miles west.  
It's called the Kalahari.  
Looks pretty green to me.  
Well, it... The Kalahari isn't the Sahara.  
It's got dunes, but there's also...  
...but there's also bush and salt pans.  
Nonnie, cat food belongs on the ground.  
You have to talk to Daddy.  
He says I can't go.  
Slow down, slow down.  
So is it true?  
You arrested 20 poachers before lunch?  
Well, it was after lunch,  
and the number's a little bit off.  
There were 117  
coming at me from behind.  
- So, will you talk to him?  
- I'll try.  
I've got a present for you.  
Oh...  
It belonged to my father.  
It was mine, now it's yours.  
Give it to your firstborn  
and tell him about me.  
You tell him yourself.  
And you think killing  
poachers is gonna do it?  
No, but it's a start.  
I've lost more elephants in the last  
three months than in all of last year.  
- Mopani, I have audits...  
- Am I interrupting something?  
...on every trade and exportation  
company in the country.  
- Paperwork. That's all you got.  
- I know we're dealing with a corporation.  
They must be getting ready  
to make a shipment.  
- What makes you say that?  
- My petition locked the borders.  
Exportation stopped, but poaching didn't.  
All those tusks are stored somewhere.  
- Can I see those?  
- You can keep these. I have a copy.

I'm going to Karlstown tomorrow  
to have them analyzed.

Then I'm gonna see  
the Minister of the Interior.

And what will he do?

- Form another committee?
- What would you suggest,
- shooting them all?
- That's exactly what I would suggest.
- Well, he who lives by the sword...
- Stays alive a day longer.
- He's right, you know.
- Not you, too.

I mean about staying alive.

Paul, you're my friend. Let it go.

I really don't think you understand  
the kind of men you're dealing with.

I understand they're  
butchering the soul of Africa.

- You talk like a bloody missionary.
- And why not?

This is the last country with a soul.

That's cool.

Hi.

Shut up, Hin. Hintza!

Good night.

OK, I'm coming.

What is it, Hintza?

Xhabbo!

Xhabbo.

- Danger, Nonnie.
- No, it's OK. Can you stand up?
- Danger.
- Come on, stand up. Lean on me.
- Let's go back to the house.
- No. Cave.
- No, your leg is hurt. Let's go back...
- Cave!

OK. Cave.

D- don't shoot. It's me, Harry.

- Harry.
- What are you doing out here?

Walking off the pt. Who's he?

It's none of your business.

Just go back to the house.  
Harry must come with  
Xhabbo and Nonnie.  
What? To the cave?  
Well, hey. I'm invited. Let's go.  
- So, what happened to him?  
- "Him" has a name: Xhabbo.  
- So what happened to Xhabbo?  
- You don't want to know.  
- What? A lion get him?  
- No, it was a leopard.  
Those must be a million years old.  
How'd you find this place?  
I didn't. Xhabbo showed me.  
Here. Smash these.  
Ugh. Look, this guy needs  
antibiotics, not voodoo.  
You know,  
I got Band-Aids back in my room.  
Here.  
This should help you sleep.  
Promise. Stay in cave, Nonnie.  
What is it?  
Did you have a tapping?  
What did you see?  
OK. I promise.  
And Harry?  
No, no, no.  
I'm not spending the night in here.  
Scared of sleeping in a cave?  
What do you think? After camping out  
in Central Park, you know, this is...  
Well, then what's the big deal?  
Stay here, Hintza.  
Don't look at me.  
Go and empty the rooms. Go on.  
I'll tell you what we leave.  
Get out of that.  
Bring it along, bring it along.  
So, everyone taken care of?  
The children aren't here.  
We looked everywhere.  
Two kids on foot.  
How far can they get?

- OK, now take care of the rest of the room.
- Yes, my boss.
- Don't forget the computer.
- Yes, boss.

OK...

The girl!

Under the truck! Get her!

Whoa!

What the hell is going on?

Talk to me!

Tell me, goddamn it!

They killed them!

Don't you understand?

They killed everybody!

My mother and father,

your father, Koba, everybody!

I've got to go to the border station  
and radio Mopani.

- I'm going down there.
- You go tell Xhabbo what happened.

And you stay with him

in that cave until I come back!

I don't believe you!

OK, let's spread out!

Come on, men, move it!

Samual!

They are with Mantis now.

Gods are like old people.

You think they are deaf, but they are not.

Pain gets better

when you find good name.

This is "Cave you cried for your father".

We gotta get out of here. They smashed  
the radio. And they killed Samual.

- I couldn't reach Mopani.
- Tapping told Xhabbo,  
"Danger for Nonnie and Harry. "  
Not for parents.

I'm sorry. They were poachers,  
and my dad was trying to stop them.

Yeah, well, my father wasn't.

He was just a tourist.

- We follow wind.
- What do you mean?



Xhabbo had a tapping.  
We follow wind.  
I don't care what you had.  
You follow the wind.  
- I want the nearest town.  
- But the wind blows west.  
Are you listening to me?  
I said the nearest town with a phone.  
Shh.  
Are you saying we should cross  
the Kalahari? That's impossible.  
Wind can do it, we can do it.  
Just bring me to the nearest town.  
- Where's he going?  
- To see if they're following us.  
- So how far are we going?  
- It's pretty far.  
So what was all that crap  
about following the wind?  
It's not crap. He had a tapping.  
That crap saved your life.  
How do you think he knew  
we were in danger last night?  
Bushmen see the future.  
You wouldn't understand.  
- And you believe in this?  
- I don't know.  
My father did.  
Tapping's kind of like  
knocking on a door.  
And when the door opens, they can  
see things that the eyes can't see  
and hear things that the ears don't hear.  
- Well?  
- They go here.  
It looks like one. More than one people.  
Was an animal, a dog.  
Which way?  
West?  
West is the Kalahari.  
That's ridiculous.  
The girl was born and raised here.  
She'd know better than that.  
I didn't know it would be

so cold in Africa.

What about you?

Come on. Let's go.

- What's the big rush?

- It's trackers.

Xhabbo, they're not looking for you,  
and you might get hurt.

- I want you to leave us now, OK?

- No, wait, wait. Speak for yourself.

I don't want this guy to leave.

He's our guide.

As brother and sister,  
we go together or we stop.

You need to rest?

No, I'm fine, thanks.

- What's he saying?

- Elephants.

Elephants.

- What's he doing?

- He's talking to them.

Yeah, well,

I can see that, but what for?

To cover our tracks.

OK, they agree to help.

Do you want a written invitation?

Come on!

Oh, this is great.

I'm on safari with Doctor Dolittle.

- What's wrong?

- It has gone.

- What do you mean, gone?

- Elephants. Tracks gone.

Hunter's Drift, come in.

Hunter's Drift, come in.

Hunter's Drift, come in!

- What's he saying?

- He's thanking them.

Thanks.

To the ones who speak English.

- Let's camp here, all right?

- We're gonna cross that?

Yeah.

- The nearest town's across that?

- Mm-hm.

- But you said that...

- When we get you to Karlstown,  
we're gonna put you on a plane for New  
York. That's what you wanted, isn't it?  
Karlstown! Wait, Karlstown's on  
the ocean. You said the nearest town!

- Karlstown is the nearest town.

- You lied to me.  
I didn't lie to you.  
I said, "the nearest town. "  
Yeah, and I said, "How far?"  
And you said, "Pretty far. "  
- 2000 kilometers is pretty far, isn't it?  
- No, that's impossibly far!  
That's like walking from New York to  
Miami! We're never gonna make it!  
I shouldn't have even told you, OK?

- But you wouldn't have ever come.  
- And how do you know?  
Because that's the kind  
of person you are.  
You have no idea  
what kind of person I am.  
Yeah, I do.  
You're scared.  
You'd be scared, too,  
if you had any sense.  
So you really think  
we can make it to Karlstown?  
Wind can do it, we can do it.  
I don't want that Bushman crap.  
I want a real answer.  
You want a real answer?  
Let me hear the Bushman version again.  
I could carry your bag for a while.  
Why?

- 'Cause it's heavy.  
- And if you carry it, it'll get lighter?  
- No, but...  
- What, you're a guy?  
I wasn't gonna say that.  
- Then what? Bigger?  
- No. Nicer.  
Well, it's my bag,

and I'll carry it.

- She hates me.

- Woman's like a tree.

Harry must not judge tree  
by flowers, but by fruit.

Yeah, well, flowers count for something.

When Xhabbo first sees Nonnie,  
girl is lost.

Girl doesn't say she is lost.

Girl is afraid.

But she says nothing.

Yeah, well, that girl  
doesn't say much of anything.

You're right. She's a tree.

Have they identified the bodies?

- No. There isn't much left.

- I see.

How ironic that...

he should die by the sword.

Look, I'll take a couple of men  
and we'll see if we can  
spot these poachers from the air.

They can't be very far away.

Mopani.

We'll get them.

Yes, we'll get them.

Hey! Over here! Help!

We don't know who that is.

It could be poachers. Come on.

They're gonna see our footprints.

I got an idea.

Take your clothes off.

No! Come here, Hintza!

Take some men, get down there,  
and get rid of those bodies.

- This time, finish the job. You hear me?

- I hear you.

Ladies and gentlemen,

let's hear it for Harry Winslow! Hey!

Come on, let me hear you say it.

Say, "Harry, you're a genius. "

Come on, let me hear it!

It was Ricketts.

- Ricketts?

- Yeah, Ricketts.  
My dad's friend.  
- You mean the guy with the gun?  
- In the plane with the gun.  
- That means he's the one...  
- Who killed our parents.  
And he killed Koba.  
Wait. He's the one  
who's been exporting the ivory.  
Are you sure?  
Why did my dad trust him?  
He should've known.  
I thought you said  
it wasn't safe to have a fire.  
We're dead now.  
We can have whatever we want.  
What you did with the dummies  
was pretty smart.  
Yeah - smart for a guy, right?  
Ow.  
So, what is this?  
Hand it over.  
It has my name in it.  
I should be able to read it.  
- I don't write about you.  
- My name is right here.  
Give it back!  
You shouldn't read  
other people's journals.  
Even someone brought up  
in the bush should know about that.  
Xhabbo's wife does this.  
- For how long?  
- Once, for a month.  
- Nonnie worried?  
- No.  
- So when do you think he'll be back?  
- Man always come back.  
Woman always wait.  
It's by your jacket.  
So, you gonna be a writer or something?  
Or something.  
Well, don't go off like that again.  
Xhabbo was really worried.

- What's he doing?

- Getting water.

Here.

Roots like water, too.

- What is it?

- Food.

Food.

- So, how do you like it?

- It's right up there with your pt.

So, how do you say "root" in Bushman?

How do you do that with your tongue?

That's amazing.

Look.

Two stars are walking  
together in the sky.

Those aren't stars, Xhabbo.

That's a satellite.

- Satellite?

- Yeah, a satellite.

You know, television.

Broadcasting.

- Television?

- Yeah, television.

See, it's this little box,  
and then you turn it on,  
and you can see pictures  
from all around the world.

When they walked on the moon,  
people all across the world saw it  
at the same time because of television.

What's so funny?

- Well, you tell him.

- You tell him how it works.

Tell him how you put the moon  
in that tiny, little box.

See, the moon in the box  
isn't the real moon.

It's a pattern of light transformed  
into electromagnetic waves.

Look. It's like my Walkman, all right?

Only with pictures.

The batteries are dead.

It's shrinking powder. It's magic shrinking  
powder that shrinks the moon...

...down to the size of a baseball.  
You know what a telephone is, eh?  
There's this little man.  
He's got really quick writing,  
and he writes down everything you say.

- Mountains?  
- More dunes.

Harry must not look back.  
This is Harry's future.  
Mopani. These audits.  
What about them?  
They're a dead end.  
It's been two months.  
You've found nothing, I've found nothing,  
and neither have the police.  
You said last week  
you were onto something.  
Some coffee merchants  
trying to avoid export tax. Nothing.  
Nonnie was like my own daughter.  
Are you telling me to give up?  
I'm telling you it wasn't  
a corporate conspiracy.  
Paul and his family  
were killed by poachers.  
It's taken you two months  
to reach that conclusion?  
And how long are you going to  
pursue this... the rest of your life?

- If I have to, yes.  
- Our friend is dead.  
We buried him.  
We've mourned him.  
I think it's about time  
we got on with the business of living.  
I know that when I find the tusks,  
I will find the killers.  
If they don't find you first.

- Are you trying to tell me something?  
- I don't want to lose another friend.  
- Ready, Mopani.  
- Don't worry. You won't.  
I'm gonna go  
get some more wood.

- Harry has a wife?  
- No. Are you kidding?  
Nonnie has no husband.  
Of course she doesn't.  
She's too young.  
When Xhabbo was like Harry,  
Xhabbo marry.  
You got married when you were 16?  
When Bushman is ready,  
Bushman marry.  
She must be pretty.  
- Is she good-looking?  
- You're wasting your time.  
He doesn't have a clue what you're saying.  
Bushman never give each other  
compliments about their looks.  
Well, they gotta think something.  
What did you think when you first saw me?  
I don't remember.  
Harry killed his first gemsbok.  
Harry is a hunter now.  
Harry feeling bad.  
Gemsbok giving life  
so Harry may be strong for journey.  
Yeah, well, you don't understand, Xhabbo.  
I killed him.  
Only kill for food.  
Only kill when you must.  
The herd of gemsbok  
have come back to our camp:  
They're not afraid: Xhabbo says they've  
accepted the death of one of them:  
He says only to kill when you must:  
What would I do face to face  
with the man who killed my father?  
Oh, you found your stick.  
Are you gonna go get it? Fetch!  
Go! Go get it!  
We're gonna eat that?  
It's Harry's gift.  
You're giving this to me?  
Harry's gift to Nonnie.  
What is it?  
It's beautiful. Is it for me?



No, I made it for me.

- You made it?

- Xhabbo showed me.

You're so...

- What?

- I don't know.

- Well, go ahead. Try it on.

- Right here, now?

Why not?

OK.

- So, does it fit?

- Just a minute.

OK.

You're the most beautiful gemsbok

I've ever seen.

When you went back...

to the house, I mean...

did you actually see them?

Yeah.

I wish I hadn't seen them.

When my mother died...

my father wouldn't let me see her.

'Cause he thought it would be better.

But it wasn't.

'Cause for me it's never-ending.

I still look for her sometimes.

I miss my birds.

Had them ever since I was really little.

My mother put them in my room

to sing me to sleep.

But I mostly think of hearing them

when I wake up in the morning.

I know it's stupid,

but that's home to me.

Hearing them before

I even open my eyes.

Wildlife Commission.

Mopani Theron. Please: For John Ricketts:

He's in the air, sir.

- Really? Still looking?

**- Yes. Sir:**

Can you tell me

where he's looking today?

I'm afraid I can't tell you that. Sir:  
Would you like to leave a message?

**No. Thank you:**

That's all right:

That is the Shumba mine down there.

The Shumba mine

belongs to Ricketts. That's OK.

All right, all right, I'm coming.

Here we go.

No, come!

Come back, you bastards!

Run!

Over here!

Harry!

Aah!

Grab my hand!

Hintza!

- Hintza! Jump!

- Jump, Hintza!

- Is he gonna be all right?

- Yeah.

None of the wounds

are to the bone.

Thank you.

- For what?

- For catching Hintza.

Larry. Right on time.

- The shipment is ready?

- You have the letter of credit?

As agreed. And now I would like  
to inspect the merchandise.

So you shall.

It's not far.

Solid gold. It reads, uh, "Nonnie,"  
but you can get that off.

Where did you get this?

I bought it from a trader.

Where did you get this?

I found it. By the gorge.

- When?

- Couple of days ago. You want it?

I must apologize to you, Larry,  
for bringing you all the way out here.

There's a small matter I must attend to  
before I can allow you  
to inspect the merchandise.

Hey, man, what happened to Patel?

I thought he was coming with us.

Those two kids in the desert. You  
remember what I told you to do with them?

- Yeah. Go back and bury them.

- That's right. And did you do it?

- Yeah, of course I did.

- Good. Good.

This has got to be the last dune.

I can almost smell the ocean.

It's just more dunes.

Wind can do it, we can do it.

Aah!

Xhabbo!

Maybe Bushmen cross deserts:

Maybe they even make it:

But we're gonna die here:

All the wind will do for us

is bury us in the sand:

Take Harry.

Leave Xhabbo.

As brothers,

we go together or we stop.

Mopani?

Harry?

- Keep the damned thing steady!

- I can't hold it!

- I said, keep the damned thing steady!

- I just can't! You understand?

I'm losing control!

- I'm getting out of here.

- Turn around! Get me down now.

Nonnie!

Sebastian!

Sebastian!

Sebastian, come on!

Mommy! Mommy!

He'll be out in a couple of days.

It's just an allergic reaction  
to the antibiotics.

It's white man's medicine.

You should go back  
to your own ward now, young lady.  
I'm not going back, I'm going...  
Is this the young lady who  
followed the wind across the Kalahari?  
I thought I was never  
gonna see you again.  
Let me look at you.  
It's a miracle. A miracle, what you did.  
What all of you did.  
- Did you get him?  
- Get who?  
Ricketts.  
It's John Ricketts.

**Ricketts:**

Also detain and inspect all small aircraft  
attempting to leave the country:  
Meet me at the Shumba gold mine.  
Bring backup.  
Let's blow it up.  
Wait a second.  
These are corpses.  
We have to bury them.  
- You're pretty good at this.  
- I had a good teacher.  
- I miss him.  
- So do I.  
Step back from the gun, Mopani.  
Nonnie, don't!  
You're mad!  
I can't let you do this!  
You did it all for nothing.  
There's millions of dollars worth  
of ivory in there! You bloody fools!  
Ricketts, don't!  
It's too late!  
- Will I see you again?  
- Ask desert.  
Desert knows to find Xhabbo.  
We go together and now we stop.  
Xhabbo will not look back.  
Harry, you should go now,  
or you will miss your plane.

Yes, sir.

Thank you.

- Goodbye, Nonnie.

- Goodbye, Harry Winslow.

- You look different.

- Yeah, it's the tie. I look stupid in a tie.

No, you don't look stupid.

You look nice.

Don't look back.