

King Solomon's by H. Rider Haggard **Mines**

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125TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

KING SOLOMON'S MINES

By
H. Rider Haggard

125TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION
1885 - 2010

Revised and Edited
By
Michael J. McHugh



GREAT LIGHT PUBLICATIONS

King Solomon's Mines—

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Originally published by: Cassell & Company, London (1885)

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A publication of

Great Light Publications

422 S. Williams Ave.

Palatine, Illinois 60074

www.greatlightpublications.com

GLP

ISBN 978-0-9822848-3-7 (print)

978-0-9852077-0-0 (eBook PDF)

Printed in the United States of America

CONTENTS

About the Author.....iv
 Prefacev
 Dedicationvii
 Introduction.....ix

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. I MEET SIR HENRY CURTIS	1
2. THE LEGEND OF SOLOMON’S MINES	11
3. UMBOPA ENTERS OUR SERVICE.....	21
4. AN ELEPHANT HUNT.....	33
5. OUR MARCH INTO THE DESERT.....	43
6. WATER! WATER!.....	57
7. SOLOMON’S ROAD	69
8. WE ENTER KUKUANALAND	85
9. TWALA THE KING	95
10. THE WITCH-HUNT	109
11. WE GIVE A SIGN	123
12. BEFORE THE BATTLE	137
13. THE ATTACK.....	147
14. THE LAST STAND OF THE GREYS	157
15. GOOD FALLS SICK.....	175
16. THE PLACE OF DEATH	187
17. SOLOMON’S TREASURE CHAMBER.....	197
18. WE ABANDON HOPE.....	209
19. IGNOSI’S FAREWELL	221
20. FOUND.....	231
MESSAGE FROM SIR HENRY CURTIS.....	235

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sir Henry Rider Haggard was born in England on June 22, 1856. He was the eighth of ten children, and received most of his primary and elementary education at home through private tutors and occasionally at a local grammar school. His parents took him on frequent trips to mainland Europe during his childhood days.

In 1875, when Haggard was nineteen, he traveled to South Africa to work as a secretary for the newly appointed governor of Natal. Three years later, the young Englishman resigned his post at the high court of Pretoria to take up ostrich farming in Natal.

Haggard visited England in 1880 and was married on August 11 to Mariana L. Margitson. The newlyweds soon returned to their farm in Natal to resume the business of farming. In his spare time, Haggard began to work on his first book project, and also began to take up the study of law. In 1882, the Haggard family sold their farm in Natal and returned to England.

Henry Haggard completed his law studies in 1884 and accepted a call to the bar of attorneys in London where he worked as an assistant to a chief judge. It was during this time that he made use of what he describes as his “somewhat ample leisure time in chambers” to write his first successful novel, *King Solomon's Mines*. This book, as he put it, “finally settled the question of whether to pursue a legal or literary career.” Henry Haggard went on to write over sixty-six novels, as well as numerous papers, producing nearly one book for each year of his life.

Haggard traveled extensively throughout the world during much of his married life. His knowledge of the culture, customs, and terrain of many parts of Europe, Africa, and the Middle East enabled him to construct a host of adventure novels set in various locations around the globe. The recognition of his contributions as a writer were crowned in the year 1912 when Henry Rider Haggard was knighted.

Sir Haggard died in London on May 14, 1925, at the age of sixty-eight.

PREFACE

This novel, by Sir H. Rider Haggard, is a genuine classic that provides readers with a rich balance of drama, humor, and high-stakes adventure. No wonder that his work has inspired and captivated so many millions of would-be adventurers since it was first written in 1885.

Long before there was an “Indiana Jones” or a “Crocodile Dundee”, the name of Allan Quatermain had already become synonymous with the quintessential action hero. *King Solomon's Mines* was the first adventure tale by Haggard featuring Allan Quatermain, and is set in the remote African interior during the last portion of the nineteenth century. As a seasoned hunter and trader, Mr. Quatermain ends up being hired on as a guide by a wealthy Englishman who is in search of a long lost brother. Before his journey is over, however, our hero ends up playing the role of both treasure hunter (*King Solomon's Mines*) and soldier-of-fortune. In these roles, both he and his companions face more than their share of hardships as they end up getting themselves in the middle of a tribal war and loads of dangerous situations.

It is important for every reader to understand that all of the essential aspects of the original version of *King Solomon's Mines* were left intact during the process of revising/updating the manuscript. For those readers who wonder why it is even necessary to revise or update a literary gem, I simply submit that even the finest of gemstones need a bit of careful cutting and polishing to enhance their original luster.

One century ago, Henry Haggard was regarded as one of the world's premier writers of adventure novels and historical fiction. Many of his works are now rightly regarded as classics. The book that follows, *King Solomon's Mines*, deserves to be counted among the best of Sir Haggard's adventure novels. It is the sincere belief of the publishers of the Anniversary Edition of this stirring novel, that it is now in a state to be enjoyed to the fullest by readers today who want to explore good literature.

Michael J. McHugh
2010

King Solomon's Mines was originally published in 1885. From the day it was first released, until now, it has enjoyed immense popularity. This novel, by H. Rider Haggard, is in fact one of the best selling books of all time. Now, through this new Anniversary Edition, the publisher hopes to introduce this timeless classic to a whole new generation of readers.

DEDICATION

*This faithful but unpretending
record of a remarkable adventure is hereby
respectfully dedicated by the narrator,*

ALLAN QUATERMAIN,

*to all the big and little boys
who read it.*

INTRODUCTION

Now that this book is printed, and about to be given to the world, a sense of its shortcomings both in style and contents, weighs very heavily upon me. As regards the latter, I can only say that it does not pretend to be a full account of everything we did and saw. There are many things connected with our journey into Kukuaneland that I should have liked to dwell upon at length, which, as it is, have been scarcely mentioned. Amongst these are the curious legends which I collected about the chain armor that saved us from destruction in the great battle of Loo, and also about the "Silent Ones", or Colossi, at the mouth of the stalactite cave. Again, if I had given way to my own impulses, I should have wished to go into the differences, some of which are to my mind very suggestive, between the Zulu and Kukuana dialects. Also a few pages might have been given up profitably to the consideration of the indigenous flora and fauna of Kukuaneland. Then there remains the most interesting subject—that of the magnificent system of military organization in force in that country, which, in my opinion, is much superior to that inaugurated by Chaka in Zululand, inasmuch as it permits of even more rapid mobilization. Lastly, I have scarcely spoken of the domestic and family customs of the Kukuanas, many of which are exceedingly quaint, or of their proficiency in the art of smelting and welding metals. This science they carry to considerable perfection, of which a good example is to be seen in their "tollas," or heavy throwing knives, the backs of these weapons being made of hammered iron, and the edges of beautiful steel welded with great skill to the iron frames.

The fact of the matter is, I thought, with Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good, that the best plan would be to tell my story in a plain, straightforward manner, and to leave these mat-

ters to be dealt with subsequently in whatever way ultimately may appear to be desirable. In the meanwhile I shall, of course, be delighted to give all information in my power to anybody interested in such things.

And now it only remains for me to offer apologies for my blunt way of writing. I can but say in excuse of it that I am more accustomed to handling a rifle than a pen, and cannot make any pretence to the grand literary flights and flourishes which I see in novels—for sometimes I like to read a novel. I suppose they—the flights and flourishes—are desirable, and I regret not being able to supply them; but at the same time I cannot help thinking that simple things are always the most impressive, and that books are easier to understand when they are written in plain language, though perhaps I have no right to set up an opinion on such a matter. “A sharp spear,” runs the Kukuana saying, “needs no polish”; and on the same principle I venture to hope that a true story, however strange it may be, does not require to be decked out in fancy words.

ALLAN QUATERMAIN.

CHAPTER I

I Meet Sir Henry Curtis

It is a curious thing that at my age—fifty-five last birthday—I should find myself taking up a pen to try to write a history. I wonder what sort of a history it will be when I have finished it, if ever I come to the end of the trip! I have done a good many things in my life, which seems a long one to me, owing to my having begun work so young, perhaps. At an age when other boys are at school, I was earning my living as a trader in the old Colony. I have been trading, hunting, fighting, or mining ever since. And yet it is only eight months ago that I made my fortune. It seems like an impressive mass of wealth now that I have got it—I don't yet know how big—but I do not think I would go through the last fifteen or sixteen months again for it. No, not if I knew that I should come out safe at the end, riches and all. But then I am a timid man, and dislike violence; moreover, I am almost sick of adventure. I wonder why I am going to write this book: it is not in my line. I am not a literary man, though very devoted to the Old Testament and also to the "Ingoldsby Legends." Let me try to set down my reasons, just to see if I have any that hold water.

First reason: Because Sir Henry Curtis and Captain John Good asked me.

Second reason: Because I am laid up here at Durban with a pain in my left leg, and I need something to do to take my mind off this malady. Ever since that confounded lion got hold of me I have been liable to this trouble, and being rather painful just now, it makes me limp more than ever. There must be some poison in a lion's teeth, otherwise how is it that when your wounds are healed they break out again; generally, mark

you, at the same time of year that you got your mauling? It is a hard thing when one has shot sixty-five lions or more, as I have in the course of my life, that the sixty-sixth should chew your leg like a quid of tobacco.

Third reason: Because I want my boy Harry, who is over there at the hospital in London studying to become a doctor, to have something to amuse him and keep him out of mischief for a week or so. Hospital work must sometimes grow rather dull, and as this history will not be dull, whatever else it may be, it will put a little life into things for a day or two while Harry is reading of our adventures.

Fourth reason and last: Because I feel personally obliged to tell people about one of the most fantastic and strangest stories ever experienced by men. It may seem like an odd thing to say, especially considering that there is no woman in it—except Foulata. Stop, come to think of it there was Gagool, if she was a woman, and not a fiend. But she was a hundred, at least, and therefore not a subject for romance, so I don't count her. At any rate, I can safely say that there is not a petticoat in the whole history.

Well, I guess that I had better make a beginning of my tale before I die of old age. My mind still feels stiff though, and the pen in my hand seems like it were bogged up to the axle. But, "sutjes, sutjes," as the Boers say—I am sure I don't know how they spell it—softly does it at the start.

At any rate, I, Allan Quatermain was born a gentleman, though I have been nothing but a poor travelling trader and hunter all my life. Whether I have remained so I know not, you must judge of that. Heaven knows I've tried. I have killed many men in my time, yet I have never slain wantonly or stained my hand in innocent blood, but only in self-defense. The Almighty gave us our lives, and I suppose He meant us to defend them, at least I have always acted on that principle, and I hope it will not be brought up against me when my clock strikes. Truly, truly, it is a cruel and a wicked world, and for a timid man I have been mixed up in a great deal of fighting. I cannot tell the rights of it, but at any rate I have never stolen, though once I cheated a herdsman out of a prize cow. But then

he had done me a dirty turn, and his deeds have caused me no shortage of grief over the years.

Well, it is eighteen months or so ago since first I met Sir Henry Curtis and Captain Good. Our meeting took place in this way. I had been up elephant hunting beyond Bamangwato, and had met with bad luck. Everything went wrong that trip, and to top it off I got the fever badly. So soon as I was well enough I trekked down to the diamond fields, sold such ivory as I had, together with my wagon and oxen, discharged my hunters, and traveled to the Cape. After spending a week in Cape Town, finding that they overcharged me at the hotel, and having seen everything there was to see, including the botanical gardens, which seem to me likely to confer a great benefit on the country, and the new Houses of Parliament, which I expect will do nothing of the sort, I determined to go back to Natal. To this end, I purchased a passage on the *Dunkeld*, which was then lying at the docks waiting for the *Edinburgh Castle* to arrive from England. I went aboard the *Dunkeld* and took my berth, and later that afternoon passengers from the *Edinburgh Castle* transferred to our vessel, and we put out to sea.



Among these passengers who came on board were two who excited my curiosity. One, a gentleman of about thirty, was perhaps the most muscular and longest-armed man I ever saw.

He had yellow hair, a thick yellow beard, clear-cut features, and large gray eyes set deep in his head. I never saw a finer-looking man, and somehow he reminded me of an ancient Dane. Not that I know much of ancient Danes, though I knew a modern Dane who did me out of ten pounds. I do, however, remember once seeing a picture of some of those gentry, who, I take it, were a kind of white Zulus. They were drinking out of big horns, and their long hair hung down their backs. As I looked at my friend standing there by the companion-ladder, I thought that if he only let his hair grow a little, put one of those chain shirts over his great shoulders, and took hold of a battle-axe and a horn mug, he might have sat as a model for that picture. And by the way it is a curious thing, and just shows how strong blood lines flow, that afterwards I discovered that Sir Henry Curtis, for that was the big man's name, is of Danish blood. He also reminded me strongly of somebody else, but at the time I could not remember who it was.

The other man, who stood talking to Sir Henry, was stout and dark, and of quite a different cut. I suspected at once that he was a naval officer; I don't know why, but it is difficult to mistake a navy man. I have gone on shooting trips with several of them in the course of my life, and they have always proved themselves the best and bravest and nicest fellows I ever met, though sadly given, some of them, to the use of profane language. A Royal Naval officer is, generally speaking, the very epitome of upright manhood, though of course there undoubtedly is a black sheep among them here and there. I fancy it is just the wide seas and the breath of God's winds that wash their hearts and blow the foolishness out of their minds and make them what men ought to be.

Well, to return, my hunch proved right again. I ascertained that the dark man was a naval officer, a lieutenant of thirty-one, who, after seventeen years' service, had been turned out of her Majesty's employ with the barren honor of a commander's rank, because his services were no longer needed. This is what people who serve the Queen have to expect: to be shot out into the cold world to find a living just when they are beginning to really understand their work, and to reach the prime of life. I suppose they don't mind it, but for my own part I had rather

earn my bread as a hunter. One's rewards are as scarce perhaps, but you do not get so many kicks.

The officer's name I found out—by referring to the passengers' list—was Good—Captain John Good. He was broad, of medium height, dark, stout, and rather a curious man to look upon. He was very neat and clean-shaved, and he always wore an eye-glass in his right eye. It seemed to grow there, for it had no string, and he never took it out except to wipe it. At first I thought he used to sleep in it, but afterwards I found that this was a mistake. He put it in his trouser's pocket when he went to bed, together with his false teeth, of which he had two beautiful sets. I well remember those teeth for, my own being unsound at best, I began to desire them to the point where I broke the tenth commandment. But I am getting ahead of myself.

Soon after we had got under way evening closed in, and brought with it very rough weather. A keen breeze sprung up off land, and a kind of aggravated Scottish mist soon drove everybody from the deck. As for the *Dunkeld*, she is a flat-bottomed vessel, and going up light as she was, she rolled very heavily. It almost seemed as though she would go right over, but she never did. It was quite impossible to walk about, so I stood near the engines where it was warm, and amused myself with watching the pendulum, which was fixed opposite to me, swinging slowly backwards and forwards as the vessel rolled, and marking the angle she touched at each lurch.

"That pendulum's wrong; it is not properly weighted," said a somewhat testy voice over my shoulder. Looking round I saw the naval officer whom I had noticed when the passengers came aboard.

"Indeed, now what makes you think so?" I asked.

"Think so. I don't think at all. Why there"—as she righted herself after a roll—"if the ship had really rolled to the degree that thing pointed to, then she would never have rolled again, that's all. But it is just like these merchant skippers, they are always so confoundedly careless."

Just then the dinner-bell rang, and I was not sorry, for it is a dreadful thing to have to listen to an officer of the Royal Navy when he is in the mood to criticize another seaman. I

only know one worse thing, and that is to hear a merchant skipper express his candid opinion regarding officers of the Royal Navy.

Captain Good and I went down to dinner together, and there we found Sir Henry Curtis already seated. He and Captain Good were placed together, and I sat opposite to them. The captain and I soon fell into talk about shooting and what not; he asking me many questions, for he was very inquisitive about all sorts of things, and I answering them as well as I could. After several minutes, he began to ask me about elephants.

"Ah, sir," called out somebody who was sitting near me, "you've reached the right man for that; Hunter Quatermain should be able to tell you about elephants if anybody can."

Sir Henry, who had been sitting rather quietly listening to our talk, suddenly began to be visibly startled.

"Excuse me, sir," he said, leaning forward across the table, and speaking in a low deep voice, a very suitable voice, it seemed to me, to come out of those great lungs. "Excuse me, sir, but is your name Allan Quatermain?"

I said that it was.

The big man made no further remark, but I heard him mutter "fortunate" into his beard.

Presently dinner came to an end, and as we were leaving the dining area Sir Henry strolled up and asked me if I would join him in his cabin for a cordial. I accepted, and he led the way to his deck cabin, and a very good cabin it was. According to my host, it had been two cabins, but during a previous voyage one of those big swells knocked away the partition and the owners had never bothered to put it up again. There was a sofa in the cabin, and a little table in front of it. Sir Henry sent the steward for a bottle of whisky, and the three of us sat down and lit our pipes.

"Mr. Quatermain," said Sir Henry Curtis, when the man had brought the whisky and lit the lamp, "the year before last about this time, you were, I believe, at a place called Bamangwato, to the north of the Transvaal."

"I was," I answered, rather surprised that this gentleman should be so well acquainted with my movements, which were not, so far as I was aware, considered of general interest.

"You were trading there, were you not?" put in Captain Good, in his quick way.

"I was. I took up a wagon-load of goods, made a camp outside the settlement, and stopped till I had sold them."

Sir Henry was sitting opposite to me in a Madeira chair, his arms leaning on the table. He now looked up, fixing his large gray eyes full upon my face. There was a curious anxiety in them, I thought.

"Did you happen to meet a man called Neville there?"

"Oh, yes; he camped alongside of me for a fortnight to rest his oxen before going on to the interior. I had a letter from a lawyer a few months back, asking me if I knew what had become of him, which I answered to the best of my ability at the time."

"Yes," said Sir Henry, "your letter was forwarded to me. You said in it that the gentleman called Neville left Bamangwato at the beginning of May in a wagon with a driver, a voorlooper, and a black hunter called Jim. Your letter stated that he told you of his intention of trekking if possible as far as Inyati, the extreme trading post in the Matabele country, where he would sell his wagon and proceed on foot. You also said that he did sell his wagon, for six months afterwards you saw the wagon in the possession of a Portuguese trader, who told you that he had bought it at Inyati from a white man whose name he had forgotten, and that he believed the white man with the native servant had started off for the interior on a shooting trip."

"Yes, you have the details correct," I responded.

Then came a pause.

"Mr. Quatermain," said Sir Henry suddenly, "I don't suppose you know any of the reasons of my—of Mr. Neville's journey to the north country, or as to what point that journey was directed?"

"I heard something," I answered, and stopped. The subject was one which I did not care to discuss.

Sir Henry and Captain Good looked at each other, then Captain Good nodded.

"Mr. Quatermain," went on the former, "I am going to tell you a story, and ask your advice, and perhaps your assistance. The agent who forwarded your letter told me that I might trust you implicitly, as you were," he said, "well known and universally respected in Natal, and especially noted for your discretion."

I bowed and drank some whisky and water to hide my embarrassment, for I am a modest man by nature. Moments later, Sir Henry went on.

"Mr. Neville was my brother."

"Oh," I said, starting, for now I knew of whom Sir Henry had reminded me when first I saw him. His brother was a much smaller man and had a dark beard, but now that I thought of it, he possessed eyes of the same shade of gray and with the same keen look in them: the features too were similar.

"He was," continued Sir Henry, "my only and younger brother, and till five years ago I do not suppose that there were two better friends in all the world. But just about five years ago a misfortune befell us, as sometimes does happen in families. We quarreled bitterly, and I behaved unjustly to my brother in my anger."

At this point, Captain Good nodded his head vigorously to himself, while the ship began to heave and roll more violently.

"As I daresay you know," went on Sir Henry as he struggled to keep his drink from spilling, "if a man dies intestate, and has no property but land, real property it is called in England, it all descends to his eldest son. It so happened that just at the time when we quarreled our father died intestate. He had put off making his will until it was too late. The result was that my brother, who had not been brought up to any profession, was left without a penny. Of course it would have been my duty to provide for him, but at the time the quarrel between us was so bitter that I did not—to my shame I say it (and he sighed deeply)—offer to do anything. It was not that I grudged him justice, but I waited for him to make advances, and he made

none. I am sorry to trouble you with all this, Mr. Quatermain, but I must to make things clear."

"Quite so, quite so," said the captain. "Mr. Quatermain will, I am sure, keep this history to himself."

"Of course," said I, for I rather pride myself on my discretion, for which, as Sir Henry had heard, I have some repute.

"Well," went on Sir Henry, "my brother had a few hundred pounds to his account at the time. Without saying anything to me he drew out this paltry sum, and, having adopted the name of Neville, started off for South Africa in the wild hope of making a fortune. This I learned afterwards. Some three years passed, and I heard nothing of my brother, though I wrote several times. Doubtless the letters never reached him. But as time went on I grew more and more troubled about him. I found out, Mr. Quatermain, that blood is thicker than water."

"Quite so," said I, thinking of my boy Harry.

"I found out, Mr. Quatermain, that I would have given my entire fortune to know that my brother George, the only relation I possess, was safe and well, and that I should see him again."

"But you were very slow to acknowledge your error, Curtis," interjected Captain Good, glancing at the big man's face.

"Well, Mr. Quatermain, as time went on I became more and more anxious to find out if my brother was alive or dead, and if alive to get him home again. I made various contacts, and your letter was one of the results. So far as this information went it was satisfactory, for it showed that till lately George was alive, but it did not go far enough. So, to cut a long story short, I made up my mind to come out and look for him myself, and Captain Good was so kind as to come with me."

"Yes," said the captain; "nothing else to do, you see. Turned out by my Lords of the Admiralty to starve on half pay. And now perhaps, sir, you will tell us what you know or have heard of the gentleman called Neville."