

King's Mate

By Rosita Forbes



SUPERBLY thrilling story. One wonders if it is not pretty largely fact; leaves taken from the note book of Rosita Forbes' own experiences. The fearless English-woman who has explored the desert, watched armies locked in battle and penetrated both the Near and Far East to points where few men have dared to go, must have witnessed many things similar to those described in this tale.

CHAPTER I

"I'm not sure that I want you to win," said the girl.

"We always win in the end. It's inevitable," returned the man, and from the look in his eyes it was obvious he referred to many kinds of battles.

"It is a poor sort of war," went on his companion, unheeding. "When you've had enough you retire into winter quarters with all the comforts of civilization, while your enemies starve in the mountains."

Captain de Vries settled himself comfortably in a hollow of the old stone wall which surrounded the governor's palace at Fez. "In fact, Abdel Krim has your entire sympathy," he remarked, as he studied his companion's profile. It was very effective, he decided, against the blue of a Moroccan sky. Sunshine warmed the pale hair to honey color and dusted freckles, fine as pollen, over a skin which had the texture and flush of petals. The face was attractive, yes, but too decided, reflected the Frenchman. The regularity of feature and determined sweep of the jaw left nothing to the imagination. He was silent as he thought of another woman, the last! She had been very slender, pale, a little sad, she'd had the most beautiful hands in the world. Unfortunately she'd also had a husband with considerable influence in the senate! That was why Gaston de Vries, boulevardier at heart, Parisian to the last cell of a sophisticated brain, was an exile in Fez. "Me, I hate the colonies!" he told himself for the thousandth time. It was the habitual end of all his reflections.

"If you look at the mountains any more, mademoiselle, I shall begin to suspect you of an interest in the Kaid."

The girl turned, her eyes, speculative.

"The Kaid is your local mystery. What would you do without him? It would be as if we in England were deprived of our weather—we should have nothing left to talk about!"

De Vries propped his exceedingly good-looking head on his hand, an elbow among the stones. "He leads us by the nose, that man, providing he exists at all! Sometimes I imagine the Kaid is a composite character evolved from all the—what do you say—scallywags who surround Abdel Krim. There are a score of Europeans up there in the mountains—one cannot suppose it is the Rif who do such work with their guns. There is a modern Napoleon among those crags, and it is to his genius we owe this infinitely tedious campaign!"

"I should have thought you would have known all about him. By this time the Rif must be full of spies," Rosemary's voice was, as usual, direct.

In response to it, the Frenchman lost his note of mockery. He answered her, as if she were a man, but grudgingly, conscious that it was a waste—of what he did not define.

"The mountaineers are superstitious. They have always believed that, in their greatest danger, a stranger would be their salvation. It is a legend buried as deep in history as their religion, or their incredible independence—once you know the Rif's have never been conquered."

"I hope they never will be," interrupted the girl. "You are bent on crushing the romance out of life with the flatiron you call civilization." A flush crept under the golden dusted skin and De Vries was sure there were metal glints below the surface of the gold-green eyes.

"If only one could rouse her into enthusiasm over something more interesting than these sacred natives in the hills," he reflected, while he continued his story. "The Rif's are hard pressed enough to betray anything and anybody, except this one conviction: if there is really some European directing matters, he's safe from our spies. No doubt, they also believe him superhuman. Dear lady, we are not fighting a handful of Berbers, as the newspapers would make you believe. We are fighting a country—the land itself—where each rock is hostile to us, where each ravine is honeycombed with snipers' caves. We are struggling with superstition or faith, with a legend that is the breath of men's bodies, with an epoch, with conditions that are beyond our understanding."

"What good would it do you, then, if you knew all about the Kaid?"

De Vries spread out significant fingers. "If we get him it is mate to the king," he said. "Abdel Krim depends on something we can't tabulate. There is some unknown factor up there. Abdel Krim is welcome to his deserters from a dozen armies, but if there is a genius behind him—the brains of those incredibly mobile guns, those ubiquitous raiders—we've got to have him by fair means or foul."

The girl swept round on him. "I hope you never get him." The blood was red in her cheeks. A pulse beat in her throat.

De Vries responded, shaken out of his usual pose. "I told you, France gets everything in the end and I, mademoiselle, am a Frenchman." For an instant he barred her path. If he had



"I Should Have Thought You Would Have Known All About Him. By This Time the Rif Must Be Full of Spies."

known what he wanted he would have played for it, but he was undecided. The girl's aunt, that admirable Lady Tregarthen, who was on her usual leisurely and luxurious progress in search of winter sunshine, had spoken of her niece's dot.

De Vries hesitated. He was not certain that he had any use for marriage, but money was essential to his scheme of life, and this girl had it and she would be desirable if she were moribund. No, by G—, she was desirable now, with a smile just lifting the corners of her lips, and that gleam of drowned copper in her eyes. His hand touched her arm. He bent to say something—he didn't know what—perhaps to kiss her, but footsteps sounded on the path below them.

The governor and Lady Tregarthen appeared between the orange trees. "We were looking for you, Rosemary. General Lyautey suggests a drive."

A motor took the two Englishwomen southwest toward Meknes. The high road was perfect. Its surface was the pride of France and a drain on the puppet sultan's exchequer.

Helen Tregarthen's keen brown eyes, that did not even trouble to hide how much they took in, ignored the view. She was too active a woman to enjoy anything that was not charged with concentrated purpose. Her mind was as well arranged as her life. She was quite decided that her niece, whom she liked, admired and underrated, should disturb the balance of neither. So she determined to talk.

"The captain," she began, with what she considered tact, "is a marvelous man. He is the most attractive creature I have ever seen."

"Quite," returned her niece dryly. "Has he proposed to you?"

"Oh, auntie! Does anyone in these days?"

But Lady Tregarthen was not to be put off. "Frenchmen do," she said heavily.

"Well, then, the beautiful captain's intentions must be nearly as dishonorable as mine!"

"Goose!" returned her aunt. "What a lot of trouble you take to shock me!"

"When the twins come out, you won't even dare to acknowledge that you could be shocked. Really, Aunt Helen, you ought to make the most of me—you don't know what you're going to be let in for when my futuristic cousins grow up."

"My dear, the whole of your generation has forgotten how to make the most of anything!" retorted the older woman. "It's time you married and settled down."

"The millstone—at twenty-one!"

"Don't be absurd. You said all Englishmen were dull, had no imagination, didn't know whether they wanted to marry you because your drive was just sufficiently shorter than theirs or because your income was longer—such nonsense. Now Captain de Vries doesn't even play golf, and, as for imagination—"

"Yes, darling, lots of it. I'm sure much too much to concentrate on any one woman. No, I don't think I want him as a husband."

That night they danced in a hall surrounded by Moorish arches. A fountain splashed in the court outside and the moon made a trellis work of orange branches. There was much laughter, because war was so very close. Chasseurs d'Afrique, Spahis and captains of artillery contested the privilege of dancing with Rosemary in her shaded chiffons, primrose color to show off the moon-gold of her hair. The girl was restless, for the night was almost too beautiful, and, though she did not want De Vries as a husband, she wanted something—something in keeping with the blend of savagery and civilization around her.

In time the two of them drifted out into the garden. "Let us go and look at the mountains again," suggested the man.

"Some day I shall ride away into them."

"To solve all the mysteries which puzzle us? Mademoiselle, you are a greater mystery than the Kaid," De Vries leaned nearer. There was magic in the stillness. The ripple of the water was like quicksilver poured over steel. From the palace came the thrum of a stringed instrument played by those native fingers which seem to pluck at the very heart of the earth.

Rosemary felt a surge of longing, of discontent, of excitement. "He will kiss me," she thought, and walked with steady foot toward the east on

(To Be Continued Next Week)

All Sorts of Things

Occupy Engaged Man

Sunday: Engagement announced in the society column.

Monday: Received calls from eight insurance agents, who kept him on the defensive trying to explain why he didn't recognize his added responsibilities.

Tuesday: Was interviewed by seven furniture dealers, three motor car salesmen and thirteen real estate specialists.

Wednesday: Found approximately thirty-eight pounds of mail on his desk, chiefly from florists and gift shops, with a good representation from tailors, interior decorators, greeting card handlers and seed houses.

Thursday: Held open house for seven miscellaneous callers who were completing follow-up campaigns.

Friday: Spent an instructive two-hours perusing circulars from travel agencies. Learned that every state and thirteen foreign countries offered honeymoon possibilities. Received professional cards from three plumbers.

Saturday: Decided to close the office early, but not before the postman left a letter from a lawyer who conveyed the information in thinly disguised fashion that he specialized in all sorts of domestic misunderstandings.—Kansas City Star.

Curious Old Custom

of Literary Giants

Lipogrammatic works, the product of the early Greek authors, are those books in which one letter of the alphabet is omitted throughout the volume. Tryphiodorus, when writing his *Odyssey*, had not an "n" in his first book nor a "u" in his second. In so doing he was but copying the Lipogrammatic *Iliad* of Nestor.

Athenaeus writes of an ode by Pindar in which the latter purposely omitted the letter "s," thereby leading up to surprise that this little hoax was one of the literary fashions of the day. A Persian poet once read to the celebrated Jaml one of his own compositions with the letter *Alif* consistently omitted throughout. Jaml, who did not care for the sonnet, sarcastically made the following recommendation: "You can do a better thing yet, take away all the letters from every word you have written."

Although the Greeks originated this ingenious literary device, its use was by no means exclusive with them. Lope de Vega, the celebrated Spanish dramatic poet of the sixteenth century, Gregorio Leti, and at a much later day Lord North of the court of James I all employed this literary device and produced Lipogrammatic books.—Market for Exchange.

The Exact Witness

A barrister was cross-examining a rather innocent-looking countryman.

"So you had a pistol?" the barrister asked.

"I had, sir."

"Whom did you intend to shoot with it?"

"I wasn't intending to shoot any one."

"Then was it for nothing that you got it?"

"No, it wasn't."

"Come, come, sir! By virtue of your solemn oath what did you get the pistol for?"

"By virtue of my solemn oath," said the countryman, "I got it for ten-and-sixpence."—Weekly Scotsman.

RECIPES

DROPPED FISH BALLS

One pint bowl of raw codfish, 2 pints (heaping) of raw potatoes pared whole, 2 eggs, butter the size of an egg; pick the fish fine and measure lightly in a bowl; put the potatoes into a boiler and the fish on top of them and cover with boiling water; boil ½ hour; drain off the water and smash until light; add butter, pepper and the eggs well beaten; have a deep kettle of boiling fat; form in balls and drop in and cook until brown, which should be 2 minutes.

CUCUMBER SALAD PICKLES

Fifteen medium sized cucumbers, peeled and sliced, to one quart of sliced cucumbers, 1 small onion sliced, mix salt and stand over night; 2 quarts vinegar, 1 pound sugar, ¼ pound ground mustard, ¼ pound mustard seed, 6 ounces celery seed, 1 teaspoon mace, cloves, allspice, 2 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon red and black pepper; boil ½ hour and seal.

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