

# DAUGHTER OF THE SUN

## A Tale of Adventure BY QUIEN SABE (Who Knows?)

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**THIS BEGINS THE STORY.**

Jim Kendrick, a cowboy-captain, but with some friends seeks an Aztec treasure in the mountains of Mexico. He is joined by a mysterious woman, Zoraida, who is the daughter of the Montezuma. Her father's death was the cause of her wanderings. Zoraida falls in love with Jim, but he is married to another woman, who is held at Zoraida's house. Zoraida takes Kendrick to the secret treasure, but she is killed by the great earthquake. Kendrick is left alone in the mountains.

**AND HERE IT CONTINUES**

### CHAPTER XIX How One Who Hides and Watches May Be Watched by One Hidden

BUT Kendrick himself did not sleep. He sat by their dead fire and watched the gradual thinning of the darkness about him as the vague light filtered in from the awakening outside world. He looked at Betty sleeping, only to look away with a frown darkening his eyes. She would sleep heavily and long; she would awake refreshed and hungry. He was hungry already.

"It's open and shut," he told himself. "It's up to me to force it."

And it risk of being seen as he left the hiding place. That risk would increase as the day brightened. Hence, since he must go, it were best not to start until the sun was high. On a table he wrote a brief message, placing it on the ground near her outflung hand. Jim Bruce's pistol upon it.

"I'm on my way back. If I'm long close until I come back. If I'm long gone it will be because I can't help it. But be sure I'll be back all right and bring something to eat."

**JIM.**

He left her, not without uneasiness, but eager to hurry away so that, if all went well, his return might be hastened. He took the rifle and slipped cautiously through the bushes, stopping what assurance he could that he was not being seen, crawling for the most part across the open places, keeping as much as possible where shadows were. He had already made up his tentative plans; he made his way down into the bed of the ravine and thence upstream. Swiftly the light increased over the still solitude. Then sun was up on the highlands, the canyon only were still dusky.

He found a place where he could stand hidden and see the cliff-broken slope where Betty lay. Here he waited motionless for a long time, watching. For he knew that if by chance some one had seen him and had not followed it was because that some one had elected rather to seek the girl. At last, when the stillness remained unbroken and he saw no stirring thing, he expressed his relief in a deep sigh and went on.

His plan was to work his way up the ravine until at last he topped the ridge and went down on the further side. From his starting place he had roughly picked out his way, shaping his trail to conform to those bits of timber which would aid in his concealment. Over the ridge he would press on until several miles lay between him and Betty. Then, if he saw game of any sort or a straying calf or sheep, he would have to take the shorter way, and the shot entailed. If his shot brought Zoraida's men down on him, he would have to fight for it or run for it as circumstances directed.

He was hours in creating the first ridge. Before him lay a wild country, broken and barren in places where there were wildernesses of rock and thorny bush; in other places scantily timbered and even up in tough grasses. A more unlikely game country he thought that he had never seen.

But the land hereabouts was not utterly devoid of water and always, as he went on, he sought these engaging screened by some dusty willows, his eye keen either for watering game or for Zoraida's herdsmen who would be watching the waterholes.

But when at last he came on, he found nothing but a jumble of tracks. Ponds had watered here and had trampled the spring into its present resemblance to a mudhole. He found a slight dip, and drank, and drank, finding no fault with the alkali water or the sediment in it. He washed his hands and face in it, wet his hair and went on.

There came three more spurts of mountain to cross, all unlikely for game, each one hotter and drier than the others. Twice he had seen a coyote; he had seen two or three gaunt, hungry-looking jackrabbits. They had been too far away to draw a shot, gray glimmers through patches of sage. He had seen never a spot of wandering cattle. And he realized that during the heat of the day there was small hope of his sighting any browsing animal. He would probably have to wait until the cool of evening and then, if he made his kill, return to Betty in the dark. And though he keenly kept his bearings, he knew that if he mistook a landmark somewhere and got into a wrong canyon, he'd have his work cut out for him finding her at night. Well, that was only a piece of the whole pattern and he kept his mind on the immediate present.

He estimated that he was ten miles from camp. Ahead of him stretched still another ridge, a little higher than the others but a shade less barren; there were scattered pines and oaks and open grassy places. From the top of this ridge, half an hour later, he glimpsed a haze of smoke rising from the little valley just beyond. And when he came to a place whence he could have an unobstructed view he saw a watering flock of sheep, a tiny stream of water and a rickety board shack. It was from this shelter that the smoke rose. It was high noon and down there the midday meal was cooking.

Food being cooked right under his nose! All day he had been hungry; now he was ravenous. So strong was the impulse upon him that he started down the slope in a direct line to the house, bent upon flinging open a door and demanding to be fed. But he caught himself up and sat down in the shade, hidden behind some bushes, and pondered the situation. The sheep straggled everywhere; he might wait for one of them to wander off into the bushes and then slip around upon it and make it his own with a clubbed rifle. Or he might go to the house, taking his chance.

What he was waiting and watching he saw a man come out of the cabin. The fellow lounged down to the spring for a pan of water and lounged back to the house; the eternal Mexican cigarette in his lips sent his floating ribbon of smoke behind him. Ten minutes later the same man came out, this time to lie down on the ground under a

tree. "Just one hombre," decided Kendrick. "A devil of a sheer herder. There's more than a fair chance that his siesta will last all afternoon."

At any rate, here appeared his even track. He sprang up, went with swinging strides down the slope, taking the

shortest cut, and reached the cabin by the back door. The Mexican still lay under his tree. Kendrick looked in at the door. No one there, just a bare, empty untidy room.

It was bedroom, kitchen and dining-room. In the latter capacity it appeared strongly to Kendrick. He went in, set his rifle down on a shelf and slipped a great heap of them. Kendrick took half a dozen of them, moistened them in the half pan of water and poured a high heap of beans on them. On a table he rolled the tortillas up, making a monstrous cylindrical bean sandwich. A soiled newspaper, with a look almost of antiquity to it, he found on a shelf and wrapped his sandwich, which he thrust into the bosom of his shirt. All of this had required about two minutes and in the meantime his eyes had been busy, still rummaging.

There was a box nailed to the wall with a cloth over it. In it he found what he expected; a lot of jerked beef, dry and hard. He filled his pockets, his mouth already full. On a table he put the remaining beef, some coffee and sugar, a couple of cans of milk. Then he looked out at the Mexican. The man still lay in the gorged torpor of the afternoon siesta.

"What will he think," chuckled Kendrick, "when he finds his larder raided and this on the table?"

This was a twenty dollar gold piece, enough to pay many times over the amount of the commandeered victuals. Kendrick took up sack and rifle, and another mouthful of jerked beef, and went out the way he had come. And, all the way up the slope, he chuckled to himself.

"Enough to last Betty and me a week," he estimated. "And a place to get more if need be. That hombre will pray the rest of his life to be raided again—and never a shot fired!"

He ate his beef, enough to keep life and strength in him, but not all that his hunger craved. For he thought of Betty hungering and waiting in that hideous loneliness of uncertainty, and had no heart for a solitary meal. But in fancy, over and over, he feasted with her, and beans and jerked beef and coffee boiled in a milk-can made a banquet.

He hastened all that he could to return to her, though he knew that speeding along the trail could hardly bring him to her a second earlier. For he would, in the end, be constrained to wait for the coming of night before he climbed again to their camp. He realized soberly that Betty must not again fall into Zoraida's hands; that the result, instead of her death, would be Zoraida mad or sane, she was filled with a frenzy of blood lust. There was danger enough without his increasing it for the sake of coming an hour sooner with food. In one day Betty would not starve and fast she must.

But there was satisfaction in drawing steadily closer to her. He traveled as cautiously as he had come, he stopped in many places of concealment, while he could overlook miles of country, he followed not the shortest paths but the safest. And the sun was still high when he came to the last ridge and looked down the canyon and across and saw the cliffs of home. In his thoughts it was home.

All day long, save for the herder, he had seen not a single soul. Now he saw some one, a man at a distance and upon the side of the canyon opposite the spot he and Betty had chosen. Kendrick had been for ten minutes lying under a tree on the ridge, his body concealed by an overhanging ledge of rock over which he had been looking. The man, like himself, was playing a waiting game.

But just now he had stirred, moving

swiftly from behind a tree to a nearby boulder. Thus he had caught Kendrick's eye. And thus Kendrick was reassured, confident after the first quick sinking of his heart, that the other had not seen him.

The man, too far away for Kendrick to distinguish detail of either costume or features, was hardly more than a sinking shadow. But almost with the first glimpse there came the quick suspicion that it was Ruiz Rios. He saw something white in the man's hand; it was a handkerchief since the man was one of wiping a wet forehead. And on that slender evidence Kendrick's belief established itself. Zoraida's vaqueros would not carry white handkerchiefs; if they carried any sort at all they would probably be red or yellow or blue; or, if white originally, they would not be kept as snowy as to flash like that one. And the gesture itself, once the thought had come to him, was vaguely suggestive of that slow grace in eye and hand, and never did a child's eyes at the distant figure. He made out after a long period of motionless another gesture; the man's hands were up to his face; he was shading his eyes or studying the mountainside with field glasses. The latter probably.

The afternoon dragged on and for a long time without a move. At last Rios, if Rios it was, withdrew a little, slipped behind a tree, passed to another and disappeared. Kendrick did not see him again though he kept alert every instant. At last came the time when the sun slipped down behind the ridge and the dusk thickened and the stars came out. Kendrick rose, stiff and weary, and began his slow, tedious way down to his father's canyon. His enforced stillness during which he had not dared doze a second had served to bring a full realization of bodily fatigue and need of sleep. No rest last night; today many hard miles and little nourishment; now every nerve yearned for a safe return to camp for a sight of Betty, for the opportunity to throw himself down on a bed of boughs and rest.

Though it was dark when he started to climb the steep toward camp he relaxed nothing of his guarded precautions. Urged by impatience as he was, eager to know if all was well with Betty, his uneasiness for her growing with every step toward her, he crawled slowly and silently through bushes and among boulders, he stopped frequently and listened, he forced himself to a roundabout way rather than take the direct. All this in spite of his keen realization that for Betty the time must be dragging even as it dragged for him. Betty hungry, frightened and lonely was, above all, uncertain.

But at last he came to the opening in the rocks. He squeezed through, his heart suddenly heavy within him as the stillness of the place smote him like a positive assurance that Betty was gone. He went on, his teeth set hard. If

he estimated that he was ten miles from camp. Ahead of him stretched still another ridge, a little higher than the others but a shade less barren; there were scattered pines and oaks and open grassy places. From the top of this ridge, half an hour later, he glimpsed a haze of smoke rising from the little valley just beyond. And when he came to a place whence he could have an unobstructed view he saw a watering flock of sheep, a tiny stream of water and a rickety board shack. It was from this shelter that the smoke rose. It was high noon and down there the midday meal was cooking.

Betty were gone, by high heaven, there would be a rendering of accounts! And then, even before the first glimmer of her little fire reached him, he heard her glad cry. She came running to meet him, her two hands out, groping for his. And he dropped rifle and provision bag and in the half dark his hands found hers and gripped hard in mighty rejection.

"Thank God!" said Betty.

And Jim Kendrick's words were like a deep, fervent echo: "Thank God."

**CHAPTER XX  
In Which a Rock Moves, a Discovery Is Made and More Than One Avenue Is Opened**

In the light of Betty's fire Jim hastily poured forth the contents of his handkerchief since the man was one of wiping a wet forehead. And on that slender evidence Kendrick's belief established itself. Zoraida's vaqueros would not carry white handkerchiefs; if they carried any sort at all they would probably be red or yellow or blue; or, if white originally, they would not be kept as snowy as to flash like that one. And the gesture itself, once the thought had come to him, was vaguely suggestive of that slow grace in eye and hand, and never did a child's eyes at the distant figure. He made out after a long period of motionless another gesture; the man's hands were up to his face; he was shading his eyes or studying the mountainside with field glasses. The latter probably.

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All day long, save for the herder, he had not seen a single soul.

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"The only thing," cautioned Kendrick, "is to go slow. It's a course dinner, Miss Betty. And first comes a bit of milk."

He ripped open a can with his pocket knife, poured out half of the thick contents into the silk water-bag and diluted the remainder with water. Thereafter he watched Betty while she forced herself, at his bidding, to eat and drink sparingly. And he noted that during his absence she had been busy working on her wardrobe. Using both the red garment and the cloak, employing in her task the obsidian knife and strips of green fiber, she had made for herself a garment which it would have been hard to classify and yet which was astonishingly becoming. As much as anything Kendrick had ever seen it resembled a stylish and therefore outlandish riding habit. She wore Zoraida's shoes and stockings.

"I washed them with sand and water first," said Betty around a corner of her sandwich. "And I let them air all day."

"No visitors?" said Kendrick. "No sign of any one on our trail?"

Betty assured him that she had been un molested, that the terrible stillness

of the mountain had been unbroken. And she sought to tell him how long the day had been.

"I know," he said. "It was long enough for me, and I was out in the open and stirring. It must have been all day, not even knowing if I'd ever get back or have any food when I came."

"I knew you'd come," said Betty. "But it was lonesome and shivery."

He told her of his day and finally of the man he had seen across the canyon. Further, of his suspicion that it was Ruiz Rios. Betty shuddered.

"He is a terrible creature," she said. "I'd rather it was any one else. Do you think he has an idea we're here?"

He stretched out by the fire, helped himself to a bit of the dried beef and told her his thoughts.

"I know just about how Rios would reason things out. And, oddly enough, it strikes me that though he began with a false premise he has come pretty close to reaching the right conclusion. You see, he knows that I came down here with Barlow looking for treasure. He knew Captain Escobar was ahead of him on the same trail, and when he could get nothing further out of Escobar he

killed him. But he did know in a general way where we expected to find the stuff. So, when you and I skip out and don't head straight back to the first best, he's pretty sure I'm still making a grab at getting the treasure.

"And it has happened that you and I, blundering along in the dark, have hit on this spot, which is not far from the place where the treasure is supposed to be. So Rios hides in the brush with a pair of glasses and keeps his eye peeled for us. I think that's the whole explanation of his being out yonder. And I think that's all he knows."

"It's enough," Betty shook her head dubiously.

"Of course," he admitted. "This is just a guess on my part. He may know more than I think. During the day," he added, "and just now while I lay out yonder waiting for dark, I've had a lot of time to think things out. First, it strikes me as best to hide out here one more day and then, tomorrow night, to make a break for the outside. Personally, I don't know that I'd be fit for much tonight; it's a good stiff hike to where we left the Half Moon and I won't be able to keep awake much longer. Then by tomorrow night, even

if Zoraida is as keen as ever to get us back, I doubt if her men's enthusiasm for vigilance will have lasted at the first best. There'll be a better chance for us to slip through."

Here, again, the responsibility in Betty's way of thinking was his and she accepted his plan without challenge. "Another thing I've been thinking of," he went on, "is that queer, smooth hole in that boulder; where we've our water stored. What have you made of it?"

"A reservoir," she answered lightly, her spirits risen swiftly with his coming and a taste of food. "What else?"

"Rios is hard set in his belief that there's ancient treasure nearby. So is Barlow. So, evidently, was Escobar. If so, what more likely place than where we are? That hole didn't make itself after that regular fashion. I don't see just what it has to do with the case. I'll admit. But somebody made it a long time ago and didn't do it just for the fun of the job. I've a notion that it has its bearing on the thing, somehow."

"It isn't big enough to hold much treasure," said Betty. "Maybe they didn't finish it."

He was waiting and watching he saw a man come out of the cabin. The fellow lounged down to the spring for a pan of water and lounged back to the house; the eternal Mexican cigarette in his lips sent his floating ribbon of smoke behind him. Ten minutes later the same man came out, this time to lie down on the ground under a

To be continued tomorrow

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