

THE GREEN JADE

A ROMANCE OF THE DESERT

By Lulu L. Bridges

This is a story of facts. I am considered civilized. I have the outward appearance of modern refinement.

I have learned ratio and proportion in an exclusive college and disproved them at Monte Carlo; I have appeared before clubs with papers of philanthropic subject and misanthropic substance.

I have spent days slumming in the name of charity and nights acting in the name of society.

Like an uncharted satellite, I have swung round the world in a path that fades as fast as I move, recognized only by the phosphorescence of my jewels and the nebula of my voices and pongees. But, despite all this, savagery is my heritage. The call of the trackless seas and sandy loneliness stirs my heart more than all the idle chatter of wearied and wearying gentility.

This innate inheritance I can account for only by analyzing myself as a Hybrid freak.

Wizards of plant and animal-kind have long ago proven the law of the Brinn monk, that nature preserves the characteristics of parentage with scientific accuracy through countless generations.

The best of the breed show the colorings emphasized, or the fleece elongated or silvered; others display the weakness of some far remote parent; while one now and then shatters all laws of heredity and establishes a freak.

Thus can I understand how savagery is my heritage, bequeathed by the forbears who dwell in caves near the firns and the ancestors who floated with the sands, driven by the lawless winds, purposeless and without destination.

The history and attributes of the whole Scotch race seem written in the blue of my mother's eye; in the hair where the sun's rays rest and sparkle as if it were composed of myriad crystals; in the heart which can no more be easily won than could the ancestral territory, though once won, loyal forever.

Through my father's veins ran the blood of the royal lineage of the land of adventure whose queen once sent the Pinta and her sisters into unknown seas to find a Fountain of youth and a treasure land of gems of gold.

My friend-mother never told me the story that might have explained my antipathy to the wooded hills or thrown light on my perversity of disposition. It was only from a sparkling of her eye and a softening of the tone that I gathered, link by link, a fairy chain, as it were, that traced backward into the days of her romance, solved the mystery for me.

Somewhere in the realm of long ago, she had been won by a distinguished young Spanish officer; attracted perhaps by his contrasting personal appearance, though more likely by his self tenderness, the counterpart of which her maiden heart yearned for, but found not in the sturdiness of her own race.

The remembrance of that father is limited to a single etching in the gallery of memory. The dimmed picture shows a dark handsome face whose eyes glowed with a worshipful love for his child, when his strong arms clasped me close and swung me upon the most beautiful horse I have ever seen. The tin-type in mother's old hair trunk pictures a mounted, lithe, straight figured man in uniform, adorned with gold buttons, braid and epaulettes and glittering sword.

I loved the horse for a long time. I could not understand why my mother paled at my childish praise of the noble animal which had borne my father to the battle's front and fallen with him in death. Could it be that her change of men betokened a jealousy of the steed? Could the charger be blamed for the husband's death while sharing the fate with him? Perhaps. But still another reason:

The Brinn monk's law was working out its proof; an Arab ancestor had left to this Castilian knight not alone the maroon tinge of blood, but brave fatalism in battle and a devotion to his charger strong enough, deep enough, to rival religions, faith and family ties.

My prosaic mother yearned to keep in touch with the throbbing world yet, several months out of each year, he object unknown to me, she was accustomed to spend alone in the desert. So, in childhood, I had seen many deserts.

One day mother told me we were to make our home in California, that epitome of the earth, with the climate of Italy, the fruits and vineyards of Spain, the scenery of Switzerland, the jewels of the Golsonda, the gold of ophir, and what now seems best of all, the desert.

My introduction to the desert had been made through the windows of an observation car; and my low bow was not in formal recognition, but to escape the blinding dust and stifling wind. Like all strangers, I looked merely upon its heat and desolation, and wondered why God had made it.

tongues forbade life ever to enter what now I know to be my and many another's Eden.

But later, when we decided to winter near the dividing line where the streams on the western slope bound in glad anticipation toward the great Pacific, and on the Eastern strive to assuage the monstrous thirst of count less miles of sand and salt, I one day caught a breath that lulled to sleep the lure of the throbbing social world and awoke a love for this trackless waste.

The transition of my affections came suddenly at daybreak, when in a passing whim, I changed my usual morning ramble from the western slope, and climbed to the very summit to catch the first glimpse of the sun. The panorama that flashed upon my sight when heaven's gates opened and Phoebus' horses burst through lives indelibly photographed on my brain, though the sunrise itself was unnoticed.

Like those dreams when reason's sleeping and imagination alone is guard, I beheld a wealth of jewels, which I had never before fancied in existence. From the crown of a fairy queen at night had come each separate grain of desert's sand, whose glittering radiance was enhanced by the dawn light. Each pebble was an artist's palette wherein the colors had blended till every hue and tint that endless combinations could conceive suggested a lilliputian ball room where midged beauties wore plush coats and satin gowns, a nation of tiny royalty and as the heat waves caught the sun's rays like the turning of a kaleidoscope each second reeled off films of such glistening beauty that I wondered if this were not God's storehouse and these the jewels to be buried in the mines of worlds and stars yet unborn.

As I watched, the jewels melted into a sea of glass, from whose concave depths ascended a single ray of warmth striking my heart and heating my blood to Arab fervor.

I was no longer a child of the world but an Arab of the desert entering upon my heritage.

Forgetting my waiting breakfast and unmindful of the deceptive distances, I sped down the mountain and through the foothills but, lured on by the hope of still greater treasures, leaving the mine road, I turned into the sands, themselves, surrounded by mesquite and cacti.

My objective point was a small river whose bed was dry save when the rainy season made of it a flood rent. Here I found, in an angle, a nook where the sun had seldom sent its blaze and I could rest touching the mute sirens that had enticed me so far from home.

Feverishly, I gathered some near me into my lap. One was an amethyst blue that grew deeper as moisture brought out its depth. It recalled to me my mother's eyes as I pressed it tightly, fancying her fingers in a love clasp around my own. Then clearly her face appeared and suddenly, I seemed to hear her anxious call as she discovered my chair empty at the table. I started as if to go; dropping my pebbles as I did so, all thoughts and visions of mother grew dimmed and vanished.

Was it from my exhausting walk, my almost nervous delirium in my new found happiness, or was it some weird uncanny influence of this sandy cemetery of heroic lives that had woven some psychic spell around me? I trembled and sought my beads. Alas, they were at home.

Then there arose from my lonely battling heart a prayer, not as I was used to praying, but half wish, half utterance, that my new found friends in their brilliant hued garments might be the incarnation of absent loved ones, and in the days to come be companions to charm me here in the nunnery I had chosen for all my idle hours! How strangely real the answer was soon to be!

Slipping the blue pebble into the pocket of my blouse, I picked up one of amber hue, blotched with reddish brown. At the touch, a flash of recollection presented my childhood play-fellow; "Lasses" the children had called him because of his peculiarly colored hair. I gazed at the stone, each blotch became a freckle of his ruddy face as I had seen it one day long gone by, when I made earnest pledges, with guileless lips; or when with haughty words or scornful tone I had wounded him deeper than could have the missiles of his loved battle field. A mist rose before my eyes and as he passed away, I saw the frost of homeless chill cover the noble head.

He had in his life no pebbles to speak of love.

Guiltily, I slipped the amber with the blue and Tom was again forgotten. A pebble of greyish white like an unpulsed diamond lay near my feet. Stopping, I touched it. Instantly, my thoughts reverted to my debut party. Here was the dress my dearest friend wore on that night of nights. How I loved her! How I confided my every secret to her keeping! How often we swore eternal friendship, praying to die the same day!

Thus ran our beautiful comradeship, until we chanced to allow our common taste to which we proudly boasted, to be applied to the same young man.

her present husband.

Now, even the stone is not half so cold as she or I—

And then I found a gold brown one which reflected the strands of another's hair.

Next, a violet tint was a vivid reminder of a life long friend, unresponsive, but true, whose one beauty lay in her violet eyes.

Soon, a cold black jewel whether a quartz charred in some volcanic cauldron or a polished basalt, I am not geologist enough to decide, attracted my attention. As it lay in my hand this somber stone seemed to metamorphose, and a silver plate: At Rest—spoke not of my heart as I gazed for the last time upon lips that had been mine. Yes, this stone was beautiful even under the black wings of death—and this stone alone was silent to my touch, yet I clasped it more tightly than the rest and held it longer.

Thus life's past came surging back as I wandered in the bend of the river. And as I touched each stone, like the murmur of a cone shell, whispers of friendship and love, voices of kindness or reproach, spoke and echoed in my inner mind.

So fraught with life had become these desert sands that I planned to come day after day, as a devotee would go to a medium to converse with their dead. But another feeling also possessed me—a feeling of insufficiency; an idea that my rainbow lacked yet a color, the spectrum of my heart showed an incompleteness. What was it? I could not so much as guess. Thus my conscious self would reason. Reason? With what? With whom? To whom or what do we address our inner thoughts in hours when we struggle with the decisive battles of life? Is it not that at last our conscious faculties are overpowered and a giant rises from the hidden recesses of our little known subconscious selves, and moves the pen or causes the lips to utter the fatal word or direct an act dynamic? It must be so, for in that very moment I stopped and picked up the only ugly stone I had yet found. It had no lustre but instead an unctuous feel. No prismatic crystallization or even rounded form made up for its lack of color beauty. It had not and could not take a polish.

I had added, guided by whim or undiscovered force a plain green jade.

Long I revelled in the companionship of my fetiches until nature introduced the evil spirit of the desert. Thirst. By now it was past the noon hour and hunger added fatigue. Hastily, I started for home, calling my faithful dog upon whom the desert held no charm but who shared with me both the thirst and the hunger.

When I entered the main road and toiled up the foot hills, I heard behind me the labored strokes of a motor. Its presence was so inconspicuous, I thoughtlessly turned and stared. Instantly, it stopped beside me, and the lone occupant of the car almost gruffly bade me ride. Despite his rather unkempt appearance, his unshaven face, and the dust covered clothing, something inspired confidence in him.

As yet I was unaccustomed to the lack of unconventionalities and differences of social customs which makes the west so unlike the east. While my fatigue argued with my sense of propriety, I stood mute, until my unknown companion with a hurry consistent with his general bearing, leaped to the ground and almost lifted me into the seat beside him. I looked at him in wounded amazement; his terrier growled; yet I was not afraid. The grip of his hand on my arm gave me a mental impression of a strong man, an uncut gem that had worth but not polish, begetting both repugnance and admiration. His eyes were dull and through the desert dust as they searched my face and figure, I caught a glint of green. I drew away, but not in fear. I was glad to think the journey home would be short. Our conversation was broken, his consisting of questions bordering on the impertinent, mine on monosyllables uttered in none too kindly tone.

When we reached the summit of the mountain, with a sudden action of the wrist, he swung the car to the left. I pointed to my home. For the first time he smiled. It was like the sunshine and calm following a storm.

Letting the lever almost to the last notch we sped over the crest of the mountain and though, the experience was peculiarly unconventional, I felt a half willingness to go on. Mile after mile we sped until I began to be the questioner, the user of monosyllables. I pleaded to return. Persuasions, tears, temper had no effect—bringing in response only a shake of the head. Then I started to grasp the wheel and found in my clasped fingers a stone. How long I had held it I do not know; I loosed it and immediately, without seeming cause or reason the breaks were set, we swung back to the north and were swiftly borne home. The stone I held was the green jade.

Alone in my room that night, I found I could hardly leave my contemplation of the stones to seek the rest I so much needed. Arrange them as I would,

and began to search for a jade, and oh, how many I found, and cast away. For I found not another with a glow set in an oily dead-hued surface! How long I searched I can only surmise, but at last I turned back to my shrine. My limbs tottered as I stood, my head throbbled in painful rhythm to my heart; beat, the great Desert seemed to rise and tilt and circle, I knew I was at last in its monstrous grip and life or reason would be its sought-for toll.

Then for a moment all my love turned into the bitterness of hatred.

I took all my pebbles from the bag, and, holding them in my hand, drew back to hurl them into their former resting place. I could think only of the ruby tip of the lost Jade. I heard myself cry out in anguish; "Hark!"—the word died on the lips and I stood petrified with terror. Up the long stretch of denuded banks came echoing the cry—a cry that chills the blood and clogs the heart valves.

A growl from my terrier heid my consciousness in poignant poise long enough to see the sneaking form of a coyote creeping stealthily up the stream.

I turned to run but all at once, I seemed that darkness had fallen and I must sleep.

The night was long and my dreams delirious. There was a touch on my pulse that brought peace but not consciousness; a vision of a strong man bending over white; white; white everywhere; and heat—and when I awoke it was not on my desert sands but in my darkened room.

How life's shifting sands can dim the mile posts of the past! What changes nature builds up in the blood of the heart and the cells of the sensory nerves! So, it is hard to describe the shock and how I stood aghast before the counter of a curio shop in an Eastern city a few years later. For around the neck of the swarthy salesgirl I beheld a necklace of gaudy tarnished gold whose pendant was a ruby tipped, dull green stone! She stood beneath a single electric bulb; and as she moved I saw the glint of the blood red.

My voice trembled as I asked the price of the tawdry ornament. Instantly the hand sought the gem. The white teeth no longer showed in a friendly smile. The dark face grew darker. The voice lapsed into broken English; "Senorita no savvy. No money buy it. He sent it me from the Tehachas, the spring by his cabin door—Savvy?" With the last her tone changed, and a faint smile came back to the lips, for her maiden eyes had looked deep through the mists that had filled my own.

I do not know why, but we met at the counter's end and I placed my arm around the neck of the stranger

girl, drawing her close to my heart, my fingers touching the ruby tip and pressing it to the vein. "Yes, I savvy and more" I said, "I knew and owned that jewel when it dropped into the spring at the foot of the precipice. You can not know its worth but value it above all the jewels of the earth."

I never knew its value until it passed into the possession of one who had appreciation. Wear it, child, and may it prove a talisman of joy. For, after all, Joy's brightest jewels are the crystals of another's sorrows!"

are at their height for midsummer wearing, and one finds many orange, flame and vermilion hats. For wearing with the dark silk nothing could be nicer than a rolling turban of shiny black straw with side-sweeping tufts of vermilion agrettes, imitation, of course.

One of the prettiest hats to wear immediately with light summery frocks is the picture hat of soft straw and the wreath of field flowers and grass. For the same wear the dressy hat made of several layers of tulle, more often brown than black, is very chic.

Chic Chapeau of the Moment

If you have already purchased all the hats necessary to fill out your summer wardrobe you are quite apt to wait a few weeks for the between season mode to make itself apparent. But not all of us are so fortunate as to be properly hatted before the middle of July. Then what shall the new hat for the occasion be?

Nothing is safer than an all-white right now. It will "go" with every thing and in the dead of summer nothing looks cooler. There are a great many new sports hats in white, pretty ribbon affairs, and some of them with a colored duvetyn crown. A practical sports hat is made of angora braid, joined together with a wide fagoting of white silk to give the popular transparent effect. An other new white hat is built tan shape, but its surface is a mass of white silk flower petals and leaves. This too, combines the sports idea with a certain amount of dressiness.

Organdie and Black Velvet
Organdie hats are in full bloom. To give them an advance touch you might build the organdie over a facing of black velvet, and trim it with tiny ruffles of val lace.

Navy and white is another popular and becoming combination for mid-summer. It is charmingly combined on a slightly drooping sailor of white georgette with white satin flowers applied under the brim and white embroidery and blue satin flowers on top of the brim. A close little toque, which is necessary even in the summer wardrobe, is made of three rows of triangularly pleated white grosgrain ribbon, each row a little wider than the last, with the narrowest nearest the face. They are separate by several rows of dark blue embroidery. This hat comes with a bag to match.

Many Brilliant Models
Strangely enough brilliant colors

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The Bumble Bee is a Useful Agent

Cherish and protect the lowly bumblebee, for he is a very useful agent and an important adjunct to our agriculture, says the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. The helpful mission of the bumblebee is to distribute the pollen of the clover, thus fertilizing the field and making it possible for the farmer to produce clover seed for the following year's planting. The loud buzzing, hairy little fellow spends most of his time in the clover field and without his activities our clover seed would be reduced to a minimum crop. The bumble-bee is generally regarded, and particularly in the cities and towns, as being a non-producer and a menace to the peace of the community, but in fact, he is just as industrious as his cousin, the honey-bee, and the work he carries on is of first order in importance to our agriculture.

Chewing gum, or chicle, was used by the Indians before the days of Columbus, as a means of quenching their thirst.

Short Notes

The game of billiards was brought to America by the Spaniards, who settled St. Augustine, Fla., in 1565.

The "dog watch" is a nautical term which distinguishes two watches of two hours each from 4 to 6 P. M. and from 6 to 8 P. M.

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