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## Red Mud



The wild pig ran right under the wheels of the motorcycle. There was a squeal and a crash. The pig staggered round in circles, but the rider was hurled across the road by the impact, and lay ominously still.

From a side track a Land Rover swung on to the main east-west road in Tanzania. It pulled up sharply and an excited voice shouted, 'A pig! Quickly, Doctor! It will be useful food for the hospital.'

Two figures ran forward, but the pig grunted and scurried off into the undergrowth.

'Hongo! Daudi!' called the doctor. 'Look over here!'

They hurried towards the young man who lay huddled beside the road. The doctor bent down and made a quick examination.

'Pulse good, but he's concussed. He'd be dead but for that crash helmet. His left arm is broken. We'll splint it and then drive him to hospital.'



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'Kah!' said Daudi, the Medical Assistant. 'To break your arm is a thing of small danger; anyhow, you have two arms. But he has only one head and to hit that as hard as he has hit his is a very different matter.'

Jungle Doctor smiled. 'Do you know who he is?'

'He looks important, Bwana.' Daudi scratched his head.

'He could well be one of the people you're specially trying to help.'

'Kah! Daudi. The 'Doyek people don't ride motorbikes and dress in safari jackets.'

'Truly, Bwana. Most of them are of the old ways; they have no joy in schools and education, but there are some ...'

The young man stirred and muttered in English, 'My motorbicycle. Where is it? What happened?'

'Take it quietly,' said the doctor. 'All will be well. You have a broken arm and a solid bump on the head. We'll take you to hospital. First, though, off with your jacket and shirt.'

The arm was temporarily splinted with sticking plaster and a copy of the *British Medical Journal*.

Into the back of the Land Rover they hoisted the motorcycle and gently helped its rider into the front seat. Then they set out slowly, the Medical Assistant supporting the injured man.

Halfway to the hospital he slumped over against Daudi.

'Kah! Doctor, he's unconscious again.'

'It's a nasty business, this concussion, Daudi. Keep his head on one side and watch him carefully.'



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When the patient was at last in bed Daudi grinned. 'I'm glad he's here safely, Bwana.'

'*Ngheeh!*' nodded the doctor. 'But he will have a stormy week or two, and the father and mother of headaches.'

A cheerful voice called, '*Hodi?* May I come in?' The postman swung off his battered bicycle. 'Here is the mail, Bwana. *Yoh!* It becomes heavy after a sixty-mile ride, which is a long way, especially if you have a pain at the very end of your spine.'

'Did you fall off, Yohanna?'

He nodded. 'That is exactly what I did. And behold, I hit the ground with speed.'

'*Hongo!* And how did you manage that?'

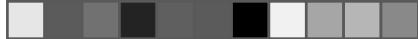
Yohanna spat. 'It's the Wadoyek people, Bwana. *Yoh!* They are a *kali* lot these days, They drink much beer, and while their wisdom becomes less because of this, their desire to damage increases. *Kumbe!* And do they go around making trouble? Today six of them saw me. They all had spears. They shouted and started to run in my direction, but I pedalled with strength and left them behind. It was when I looked back over my shoulder that the front wheel found itself in a large hole, and ...'

He made comical hand-signs that drew a picture in the air of a somersault and a heavy landing.

'Truly, they are a fierce people, these Wadoyek.'

'*Eheh!* And because of this many of the people of my tribe carry bows and arrows.'

'Two years ago very few of the Wadoyek came to the hospital, but these days more and more are coming.'



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'That is so, Doctor, and the closer they are to the hospital the less trouble they make. But five miles from here, only yesterday, there was fighting. They drove about fifty cattle through a man's standing corn and flattened it, *kabisa*.'

'As you say, Yohanna, it's different here. Is it the work of the hospital that makes them friendly?'

'Certainly they have words of praise for our medicine,' broke in Daudi. 'Are they not greatly helped in their sicknesses?'

The doctor nodded. 'We certainly do help them. But is there never a thought in their minds that those of the hospital might put a little poison in the medicine? Now, take your wife, Esteri! If she had anger in her heart what trouble she could produce.'

Now Yohanna and Esteri had been married a month before. He was in training as a teacher and was riding sixty miles twice a week with the mail to earn money to complete his course.

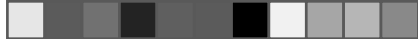
He laughed. 'Bwana, they know that this is a hospital of those who serve Jesus Christ. This is a not a place of poison and resentment.'

'Yohanna, that is a thing of great importance for us to remember at all times.'

He motioned backwards with his head. 'Here they are now.'

Up the hill from the river came a group of Wadoyek led by a commanding figure inches taller than those that were with him.

'If we are to help the Wadoyek that is the man we must start with.'



## Jungle Doctor Sees Red

Into the hospital courtyard stalked the Wadoyek warriors. The doctor greeted each of them under a spreading flame-tree.

There was red ochre rubbed into their hair. In their earlobes were bead ornaments, wheel-like and very colourful. Each man wore a plain red cloth draped over his shoulders.

The leader stood facing the doctor. He came straight to the point.

'Bwana, doctor, in my family there is my elderly father, Olongo, who has seven sons. I, Korometti, am the second and am now the leader of the tribe. We have come because the old man is in great trouble. We need your help.'

'You have tried the ways of the medicines of the tribe?'

A mumble came from the ochre-coloured group, but the tall man answered. 'We have, but they did little to help.'

'Has he charms about his neck or his ankles?'

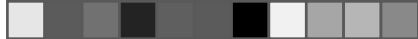
'*Kah!* We come for medicine not for talk!' He drew himself up to his full height. His one good eye glittered with anger.

'There is purpose in my words, Korometti. If we are to help him we do it with the wisdom of the hospital ways, not sharing the task with the vague paths of magic.'

Korometti nodded. 'Some of the 'Doyek people follow the ways of witchcraft, but my father does not.'

'Good. Now tell me, how does his trouble attack him?'

Immediately he started on a long story. It seemed that his father had had all sorts of tropical troubles,



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and now he had developed one of the complaints of old men which make life a complete misery.

‘We would like you to work with your medicines and to cure him with speed.’

The doctor nodded. ‘Many like it this way, but, *kumbe!* You are a man who has many cattle. Behold, you like those cattle to reproduce their kind with speed, but, behold, these things always seem to take time.’

The tall African smiled. ‘Bwana, this we understand. You work as you see best, but as fast as you can. We have a strong desire that Olongo should be helped.’

The doctor’s eyes took in the rather fierce group that squatted watching intently everything that went on. ‘Korometti, these people of yours have been stirring up strife on the roads and in the hills. Will you make sure that there is no trouble here at the hospital if we take the old man into the ward?’

‘I shall, Bwana. They will obey me. If I say, “No”, they will obey.’

‘If they disobey you?’

A little smile played around his lips.

‘I see how it is, Korometti. You say – they obey!’

‘That’s the way of our tribe.’

‘It is God’s way also. Here on earth while we live in the bodies He has made for us, He wants us to go along His path doing what He tells us. He has no time for those who shrug their shoulders when He gives orders.’

Korometti took snuff from the antelope-horn bottle that hung round his neck. ‘We Wadoyek travel where we please and do what we please.’



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As if to prove this one of the young men squatting against the wall threw his spear at a passing chicken. It transfixed the bird, and immediately the courtyard was full of shouting. People jumped to their feet. A grim-faced man slowly fitted an arrow to his bow.

Daudi yelled, '*Basi!* Stop it! Someone will be killed if you don't.'

But the archer took not the slightest notice. Very deliberately he drew back the bowstring. In a second the uproar stopped; the silence was tense.

Korometti walked quietly forward. In a deep voice he called, 'Let there be no fighting. Tell me, whose fowl was that?'

An old woman shuffled forward and pointed to the dead hen. Her voice was shrill. 'It was mine. *Kah!* You Wadoyek are people of fierceness, and ... '

The man with the bow shouted, 'Let me put one of these arrows through his leg!'

But Korometti, weaponless, spoke with complete calm.

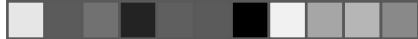
'What do you say is the value of your hen, Grandmother?'

'Two shillings,' she quavered.

He fumbled in his clothing and produced the two coins. With quiet courtesy he placed them in the old woman's hand.

'Receive this, Grandmother, and let there be peace between your tribe and mine.'

'*Yoh!*' came a voice. 'Did you see that! He paid! But it was the one with the long spear that killed the hen!'



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'True,' nodded the 'Doyek leader, 'I pay now, but make no mistake ...' he turned a stern face towards the young warrior, 'I pay now, but he will pay, later.'

'*Kah*,' broke in Daudi. 'Don't let this thing escape your memory. Your ways are different from God's. He pays the price and then He forgives the debt. Not because of anything we've done. We call this grace – something we don't deserve, something given to us quite freely.'

Korometti seemed not to have heard. He took snuff and then turned away. '*Kwaheri*, goodbye. We shall bring the old man in the morning.'