



About Rama, a country elephant who went to the city

A BEAST FOR

THE road winds like a black snake through the hills to Kandy.

At first it runs straight; as though to escape as quickly as possible the teeming crowds, the street calls, the smells and bazaars of Colombo—that low, sprawling port on the southern coast of Ceylon. Then it lifts itself eagerly into the hill country. Through the terraced tea plantations, lush with glossy leaves and white flowers, it goes. Up and up into the bracing air blowing down from Adam's Peak; through forests of cashew nut, satinwood, ebony, tamarind, kittul and cinnamon it stretches its steady climb. It curves around mountain spurs and burrows through the hillsides when it can find no other passage. It flows past insubstantial palm huts and solid-stone dagobas, those towering, bell-shaped monuments to Buddha that have stood for two thousand years and have not yet begun to age.

At last the road climbs the last height and slips quietly into the ancient city of the kings of Ceylon. There it stops before a building marked out by millions upon millions

of people as the holiest spot in all the world. The road has reached the Temple of the Tooth.

There, in a building within a building, is enshrined a true tooth of Buddha. It is enclosed in a framework of silver—bell-shaped, with ropes of pearls and gems woven about it. Inside that is another covering of gold and gems, then another and another—seven in all before the tooth is revealed. Although the tooth is carried by elephants in procession very occasionally and shown only to kings and very holy priests, it is a magnet to the faithful, drawing them through the mountains, up the road to the old and beautiful city.

Bayini, the boy, and Bayin, his father, went up the road this morning on their way to Kandy. Bayin walked ahead, a slight, slim figure of a man. His only garment was a red skirt, wrapped tightly around his waist. The sheath of cloth fell elegantly to his delicate ankles. His straight, shining black hair was gathered into a neat bun at the nape of his neck. Like all Singhalese, Bayin was tiny. From his bare soles to the top of his graceful,

birdlike head was no more than a few inches over four feet. He stood straight and walked with the unconscious fluency of a woman or a wild thing. But his fragility was deceptive. That small, lithe, perfectly proportioned body was as hard as steel. Bayin lived by the labor of his hands.

FOR hundreds of years Bayin and his fathers had planted and harvested the same fields. The land belonged to the Temple of the Tooth, twenty miles away in Kandy. Rice, coconuts, tea and cinnamon—most of the produce went to the temple where it was used by the priests or sold for profit. But Bayin was given his fair share and enough rupees besides to buy the things he could not grow. He was content with the arrangement. His son would be content and his sons and their sons so long as there was land and the temple.

Today, however, Bayin was troubled. There was no hint of it in his steady walk; no sign in his oval face that was the color of cinnamon bark. But small clouds drifted over his mind and would not go away. He should

be elated this morning on his way to Kandy. It was not often that he took this trip, usually not more than once in every two or three years. What was more, he was taking Bayini for the first time up the winding, macadam ribbon to visit the temple. It was a great occasion, for himself as well as the boy, but still Bayin was uneasy. He glanced behind him for a moment to look fondly at his son. Bayini did not walk behind him. The boy was perched above the broad, domed forehead of a shambling elephant, resting securely on the lofty head, looking with calm curiosity at the exciting scenes all about him. He rode the elephant with casual confidence, rising and descending, as the animal moved beneath him, like a small sea bird on the crest of a wave. Bayini was as delicate as his father; brown, small-boned and pert. Contrasted with the huge bulk of the elephant, he seemed even more elfin. His slim legs straddled his mount's ponderous neck, his body sat straight and bold on its eminence above the road, unknowingly proud and regal.

Like his father's, Bayini's frailness

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THE TEMPLE

BY RICHARD WILCOX

was misleading. With a nudge of his knee he could command the thousands of pounds of bone and sinew beneath him to do his slightest bidding. A word from him was enough to set the great mass in motion—that stupendous body would haul tree trunks, stamp out clearings, topple mahogany forests, load wagons or, at another word, probe daintily into a tree or bush to pluck a flower or a fruit for his young master.

It was Bayini who had given the elephant his name—Rama, the name of a king. Rama and Bayini had grown up and played together in the clearing before Bayin's hut. Rama had been a part of the boy's world of games and sudden, fierce affections. He had learned to come when the boy called, to swim with him in the pool at the bottom of Bayin's fields, to obey him when they were both of an age and size to help in Bayin's work. It was as if the two lived only for each other. And now, thought Bayini, their companionship has come to its end.

Today, at the temple, he must deliver Rama to Mahinda the overseer

and come back with his son from Kandy alone. Ten years ago, Mahinda had brought the elephant to him as a hairy baby, captured in a kraal far in the northern jungles of Ceylon. He had been dedicated to the temple as a ceremonial beast then, because of his promise of unusual size and magnificence. Now, thought Bayin, looking at his gray bulk, he was indeed a glorious animal. Ten feet tall he stood, the dome of his forehead curved like a dagoba, the ears perfectly placed, the long tapering trunk without a blemish. He was tuskless, like all Ceylonese elephants, smooth-sided and immense. Mahinda would be proud of such an elephant. But what would Bayini say when he learned that Rama must go?

Smiling, he called to his son. "Come down and walk with me, little man. Let me tell you about the sights on the road."

Bayini bent forward and hissed softly into Rama's fanlike ear. Slowly the sinuous trunk twined up, wrapped itself around Bayini's waist, lifted him through the air and placed him gently at his father's side. The soft, pink tip

of the trunk rested affectionately on the boy's shoulder as the three of them began to walk once more.

"It is such a smooth road, Father," Bayini's soft, black eyes were round with wonder.

"Yes. It is made of tar for the motorcars to ride swiftly from Colombo to Kandy," said Bayin. "But once, many hundreds of years ago, our people made roads as smooth as this. At Pollanarus, which was a city thirty miles long and four in breadth, there were roads paved with blocks of stone. They ran straight through the city and beside them were buildings with gilded towers whose brightness shone again in the waters of the lake below. Now there is nothing there but the vines and trees of the jungle."

BAYIN was silent and they went quietly up the road. Now and then they passed huts nestled at the foot of slender coconut trees. There were occasional roadside fruit stands with bunches of small, red bananas and spiky pineapples hanging on display—trays of dates and mangoes piled on crude tables. Bayin did not talk

again. He was trying to think of a way to break the news to the boy gently. At last he decided that he would wait until they reached the temple. Perhaps Mahinda would let them keep the elephant for a little more time. If he did not, the boy would have at least seen the temple before his day was spoiled.

They glided on together, hand in hand, Rama shuffling along behind. At times his trunk reached up into a tree by the side of the road, stripped the leaves from a branch and tamped the wad into his mouth with a grunt. Usually he paced behind them placidly, blowing softly on the boy's back through the wavering tip of his trunk.

The traffic was slight this morning. Now and then a Tamil in a white turban passed them, sedately pedaling his bicycle, jangling the bell importantly. Braces of water buffalo pulling big-wheeled carts came down the road and slowly passed them. At times, far up or down the road, they would hear the imperious honking of an automobile clearing its path. Then it would swish past them, blaring
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ILLUSTRATED BY MARTHA SAWYERS



It wasn't a very even battle, nor a spectacular one. Slim grabbed me. Ernie let his gun drop and swung

CONTINUING A NOVEL OF TENDER LOVE AND DESPERATE CRIME

BY OCTAVUS ROY COHEN

The Story:

STEVE BLAKE, young engineer on trial for the murder of JEFF NULTY, manager of the Casa Linda night club, is saved from almost certain conviction by the testimony of beautiful Mrs. PATRICIA KINGSLEY, who swears that she is Blake's mistress, and that she was with him the night of Nulty's murder. Steve is astounded; Mrs. Kingsley is almost a perfect stranger to him.

Steve is acquitted, but he knows that many people, including MARTY WALSH, tough detective, think he is guilty; for one thing—Jeff Nulty was killed with a .38 revolver, and Steve cannot explain the disappearance of his own .38 revolver.

Steve feels sure Mrs. Kingsley can lead him to the real murderer, so when she asks him to escort her in public so she can avoid the charge of perjury, and says that her husband, REX KINGSLEY, will not interfere, Steve consents. He even moves into the Casa Linda Apartments, where Nulty was killed, and where the Kingsleys live.

The following Saturday night Steve and Pat go to dinner in the Casa Linda club, which is on the first floor of the Casa Linda Apartments. Gradually their party grows. Among the arrivals are: WADE RAMSAY, owner of the Casa Linda Apartments and club; PETE CONNOLLY, escorting Ramsay's blond, voluptuous secretary, RUSTY MASON, who is making an obvious play for Steve; CONCHITA MONTERO, petite Cuban rumba dancer, who is in the floor show, and who likes Steve very much. During the evening, Steve notices a man in gray staring at him.

Conchita leaves, briefly, to search for some pictures in a closet in Rusty Mason's office, but she soon returns, obviously disturbed, and whispers to Steve that she must see him. He agrees to meet her outside his apartment in a half hour. When Steve and Pat go to meet Conchita, she is not there. Then Steve opens the door and they look into his apartment. Conchita is lying on the floor, dead.

III

FOR a few seconds we stood staring down at what had been Conchita Montero. Then we knelt beside the body and felt for the pulse that wasn't there. There was no blood. Pat pointed to some ugly red bruises on Conchita's throat and looked at me inquiringly. I nodded. That must have been what did it. She had been choked to death.

We stood up. I felt as though I might be sick; Pat was beginning to tremble. Her slender body started shaking all over. So I put my arms around her and held her tight. It wasn't a caress. It was a crude effort to keep her from breaking down completely. I said, "Steady, kid—steady."

She nodded. Finally she withdrew from my arms and said, "I'll be all right, Steve."

I didn't like what I saw in Pat's eyes. There was more than horror; there was fear, too. Of what or for what, I couldn't guess, and this was no time to ask. Even to an amateur this was

unmistakably murder, except the thought hit me that maybe the police might not peg me as an amateur. I was fresh out of superior court, where I'd been tried for murder. A murder which had happened in this same building.

I called City Hall and said I wanted to report a murder. That brought me a man's voice in a hurry. He fired a few questions at me: my name, my address, and said not to touch anything. Just before he cut off, I told him that Lieutenant Marty Walsh would be interested in this.

I took Pat's arm and walked her across the room. I turned a chair around so that she could sit there without looking at Conchita. She was crying. It was a quiet, terrible sort of crying, and there was nothing I could do about it.

I couldn't understand what was going on inside myself. Pat hadn't asked for her husband, or expressed any

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