

The Story of Kim

Category

Yarn

Time to allocate
(mins)

The Story of Kim

Kim is the main character in the novel Kim by Rudyard Kipling. This is the story of some of his adventures.

Kim, or to give him his full name, Kimball O'Hara, was the son of a sergeant in an Irish regiment in India. His father and mother died while he was a child and he was left to the care of an aunt. His playmates were all Indian boys, so he learned to talk their language and to know their ways. He became great friends with an old wandering priest and travelled with him all over northern India. One day he chanced to meet his father's old regiment on the march, but in visiting the camp he was arrested on suspicion of being a thief. His birth certificate and other papers were found on him and the regiment, seeing that he had belonged to them, took charge of him and started to educate him. But, whenever he could get away for holidays, Kim dressed himself in Indian clothes and went among the natives as one of them.

After some time, Kim became acquainted with a Mr. Lurgan, a dealer in old jewellery and curiosities, who was also a member of the Government Intelligence Department. This man realised that Kim had such special knowledge of local habits and customs, and saw that he could make a useful agent for Government Intelligence work. He therefore gave Kim lessons at noticing and remembering small details, which is an important point in the training of a Scout.

Kim's Training

Lurgan began by showing Kim a tray full of different kinds of precious stones. He let him look at it for a minute, then covered it with a cloth, and asked him to state how many stones and what sorts were there. At first Kim could only remember a few and could not describe them very accurately, but with a little practice he soon was able to remember all of them quite well. And the same applied for many other kinds of articles which were shown to him in the same way. In Scouting, this sort of memory game is called [Kim's Game](#).

At last, after much other training, Kim was made a member of the Secret Service and was given a secret sign, namely, a locket or badge to wear around his neck and a certain sentence, which, if said in a special way, meant he was one of the Service.

Story

Kim in Secret Service

Once when Kim was travelling in the train he met a man who was rather badly cut about the head and arms. He explained to the other passengers that he had fallen from a cart when driving to the station. But Kim, like a good Scout, noticed that the cuts were sharp and not grazes such as you would get by falling from a cart, and so Kim did not believe him. While the man was tying a bandage over his head, Kim noticed that he was wearing a locket like his own, so Kim showed him his. Immediately the man brought into the conversation some of the secret words, and Kim answered with the proper ones in reply. Then the stranger got into a corner with Kim and explained to him that he was carrying out Secret Service work and had been found out. He was being hunted by some enemies who had nearly killed him.

They probably knew he was in the train and would therefore telegraph down the line to their friends that he was coming. He wanted to get his message to a certain police officer without being caught by the enemy, but he did not know how to do it if they were already warned of his coming.

Kim hit upon the solution. In India there are a number of holy beggars who travel around the country. They are considered very holy and people always help them with food and money. They wear next to no clothing, smear themselves with ashes and paint certain marks on their faces. So Kim set about disguising the man as a beggar. He made a mixture of flour and ashes, which he took from the bowl of a pipe. He undressed his friend and smeared the mixture all over him. He also smeared the man's wounds so that they did not show. Finally, with the aid of a little paint-box he carried, he painted the proper face marks on the man's forehead, brushed his hair down to look wild and shaggy like that of a beggar and covered it with dust, so that the man's own mother would not have known him.

Soon afterwards they arrived at a big station. Here, on the platform they found the police officer to whom the report was to be made. The imitation beggar pushed up against the officer and got scolded by him in English. The beggar replied with a string of abuse into which he mixed the secret words. The police officer at once realised from the secret words that this beggar was an agent. He pretended to arrest him and marched him off to the police station where he could talk to him quietly and receive his report.