

CHAPTER ONE

THE LAST camel collapsed at noon.

It was the five-year-old white bull he had bought in Gialo, the youngest and strongest of the three beasts, and the least ill-tempered: he liked the animal as much as a man could like a camel, which is to say that he hated it only a little.

They climbed the leeward side of a small hill, man and camel planting big clumsy feet in the inconstant sand, and at the top they stopped. They looked ahead, seeing nothing but another hillock to climb, and after that a thousand more, and it was as if the camel despaired at the thought. Its forelegs folded, then its rear went down, and it couched on top of the hill like a monument, searing across the empty desert with the indifference of the dying.

The man hauled on its nose rope. Its head came forward and its neck stretched out, but it would not get up. The man went behind and kicked its hindquarters as hard as he could, three or four times. Finally he took out a razor-sharp curved Bedouin knife with a narrow point and stabbed the camel's rump. Blood flowed from the wound but the camel did not even look round.

The man understood what was happening. The very tissues of the animal's body, starved of nourishment, had simply stopped working like a machine that has run out of fuel. He had seen camels collapse like this on the outskirts of an oasis, surrounded by life-giving foliage which they ignored, lacking the energy to eat.

There were two more tricks he might have tried. One was to pour water into its nostrils until it began to drown; the other to light a fire under its hindquarters. He could not spare the water for one nor the firewood for the other, and besides neither method had a great chance of success.

It was time to stop, anyway. The sun was high and fierce. The long Saharan summer was beginning, and the midday temperature would reach 110 degrees in the shade.

Without unloading the camel, the man opened one of his bags and took out his tent. He looked round again, automatically: there was no shade or shelter in sight – one place was as bad as another. He pitched his tent beside the dying camel, there on top of the hillock.

He sat cross-legged in the open end of the tent to make his tea. He scraped level a small square of sand, arranged a few precious dry twigs in a pyramid, and lit the fire. When the kettle boiled he made tea in the nomad fashion, pouring it from the pot into the cup, adding sugar, then returning it to the pot to infuse again, several times over. The resulting brew, very strong and rather treacly, was the most revivifying drink in the world.

He gnawed at some dates and watched the camel die

THE KEY TO REBECCA

whilst he waited for the sun to pass overhead. His tranquillity was practised. He had come a long way in this desert, more than a thousand miles. Two months earlier he had left El Agela, on the Mediterranean coast of Libya, and travelled due south for five hundred miles, via Gialo and Kufra, into the empty heart of the Sahara. There he had turned east and crossed the border into Egypt unobserved by man or beast. He had traversed the rocky wasteland of the Western Desert and turned north near Kharga; and now he was not far from his destination. He knew the desert, but he was afraid of it – all intelligent men were, even the nomads who lived all their lives here. But he never allowed that fear to take hold of him, to panic him, to use up his nervous energy. There were always catastrophes: mistakes in navigation that made you miss a well by a couple of miles; water-bottles that leaked or burst; apparently healthy camels that got sick a couple of days out. The only response was to say *Inshallah*: It is the will of God.

Eventually the sun began to dip towards the west. He looked at the camel's load, wondering how much of it he could carry. There were three small European suitcases, two heavy and one light, all important. There was a little bag of clothes, a sextant, the maps and the water bottle. It was already too much: he would have to abandon the tent, the tea set, the cooking pot, the almanac and the saddle.

He made the three cases into a bundle and tied the clothes and the sextant on top, strapping the lot together with a length of cloth. He could put his arms

through the cloth straps and carry the load like a rucksack on his back. He slung the goatskin water bag round his neck and let it dangle in front.

It was a heavy load.

Three months earlier he would have been able to carry it all day then play tennis in the evening, for he was a strong man; but the desert had weakened him. His bowels were water, his skin was a mass of sores, and he had lost twenty or thirty pounds. Without the camel he could not go far.

Holding his compass in his hand, he started walking.

He followed the compass wherever it led, resisting the temptation to divert round the hills, for he was navigating by dead reckoning over the final miles, and a fractional error could take him a fatal few hundred yards astray. He settled into a slow, long-strided walk. His mind emptied of hopes and fears and he concentrated on the compass and the sand. He managed to forget the pain of his ravaged body and put one foot in front of the other automatically, without thought and therefore without effort.

The day cooled into evening. The water bottle became lighter round his neck as he consumed its contents. He refused to think about how much water was left: he was drinking six pints every twenty-four hours, he had calculated, and he knew there was not enough for another day. A flock of birds flew over his head, whistling noisily. He looked up, shading his eyes with his hand, and recognized them as Lichtenstein's sandgrouse, desert birds like brown pigeons that flocked to water every morning and evening. They were

THE KEY TO REBECCA

heading the same way as he was, which meant he was on the right track, but he knew they could fly fifty miles to water, so he could take little encouragement from them.

Clouds gathered on the horizon as the desert cooled. Behind him, the sun sank lower and turned into a big yellow balloon. A little later a white moon appeared in a purple sky.

He thought about stopping. Nobody could walk all night. But he had no tent, no blanket, no rice and no tea. And he was sure he was close to the well: by his reckoning he should have been there.

He walked on. His calm was deserting him now. He had set his strength and his expertise against the ruthless desert, and it began to look as if the desert would win. He thought again of the camel he had left behind, and how it had sat on the hillock, with the tranquillity of exhaustion, waiting for death. He would not wait for death, he thought: when it became inevitable he would rush to meet it. Nor for him the hours of agony and encroaching madness – that would be undignified. He had his knife.

The thought made him feel desperate, and now he could no longer repress the fear. The moon went down, but the landscape was bright with starlight. He saw his mother in the distance, and she said: 'Don't say I never warned you!' He heard a railway train that chugged along with his heartbeat, slowly. Small rocks moved in his path like scampering rats. He smelt roast lamb. He breasted a rise and saw, close by, the red glow of the fire over which the meat had been roasted, and a small

boy beside it gnawing the bones. There were the tents round the fire, the hobbled camels grazing the scattered thorns, and the well-head beyond. He walked into the hallucination. The people in the dream looked up at him, startled. A tall man stood up and spoke. The traveller pulled at his howli, unwinding the cloth to reveal his face.

The tall man stepped forward, shocked, and said: 'My cousin!'

The traveller understood that this was not, after all, an illusion; and he smiled faintly and collapsed.

When he awoke he thought for a moment that he was a boy again, and that his adult life had been a dream.

Someone was touching his shoulder and saying, 'Wake up, Achmed,' in the tongue of the desert. Nobody had called him Achmed for years. He realized he was wrapped in a coarse blanket and lying on the cold sand, his head swathed in a howli. He opened his eyes to see the gorgeous sunrise like a straight rainbow against the flat black horizon. The icy morning wind blew into his face. In that instant he experienced again all the confusion and anxiety of his fifteenth year.

He had felt utterly lost, that first time he woke up in the desert. He had thought *My father is dead*, and then *I have a new father*. Snatches from the Surahs of the Koran had run through his head, mixed with bits of the Creed which his mother still taught him secretly, in German. He remembered the recent sharp pain of his adolescent

THE KEY TO REBECCA

circumcision, followed by the cheers and rifle-shots of the men as they congratulated him on at last becoming one of them, a true man. Then there had been the long train journey, wondering what his desert cousins would be like, and whether they would despise his pale body and his city ways. He had walked briskly out of the railway station and seen the two Arabs, sitting beside their camels in the dust of the station yard, wrapped in traditional robes which covered them from head to foot except for the slit in the howli which revealed only their dark, unreadable eyes. They had taken him to the well. It had been terrifying: nobody had spoken to him, except in gestures. In the evening he had realized that these people had *no toilets*, and he became desperately embarrassed. In the end he had been forced to ask. There was a moment of silence, then they all burst out laughing. It transpired that they had thought he could not speak their language, which was why everyone had tried to communicate with him in signs; and that he had used a baby-word in asking about toilet arrangements, which made it funnier. Someone had explained to him about walking a little way beyond the circle of tents and squatting in the sand, and after that he had not been so frightened, for although these were hard men they were not unkind.

All these thoughts had run through his mind as he looked at his first desert sunrise, and they came back again twenty years later, as fresh and as painful as yesterday's bad memories, with the words 'Wake up, Achmed.'

He sat up abruptly, the old thoughts clearing rapidly

like the morning clouds. He had crossed the desert on a vitally important mission. He had found the well, and it had not been an hallucination: his cousins were here, as they always were at this time of the year. He had collapsed with exhaustion, and they had wrapped him in blankets and let him sleep by the fire. He suffered a sudden sharp panic as he thought of his precious baggage – had he still been carrying it when he arrived? – then he saw it, piled neatly at his feet.

Ishmael was squatting beside him. It had always been like this: throughout the year the two boys had spent together in the desert, Ishmael had never failed to wake first in the morning. Now he said: 'Heavy worries, cousin.'

Achmed nodded. 'There is a war.'

Ishmael proffered a tiny jewelled bowl containing water. Achmed dipped his fingers in the water and washed his eyes. Ishmael went away. Achmed stood up.

One of the women, silent and subservient, gave him tea. He took it without thanking her and drank it quickly. He ate some cold boiled rice whilst the unhurried work of the encampment went on round him. It seemed that this branch of the family was still wealthy: there were several servants, many children, and more than twenty camels. The sheep nearby were only a part of the flock – the rest would be grazing a few miles away. There would be more camels, too. They wandered at night in search of foliage to eat, and although they were hobbled they sometimes went out of sight. The young boys would be rounding them up now, as he and Ishmael had done. The beasts had no names,

THE KEY TO REBECCA

but Ishmael knew each one individually, and its history. He would say: 'This is the bull my father gave to his brother Abdel in the year many women died, and the bull became lame so my father gave Abdel another and took this one back, and it still limps, see?' Achmed had come to know camels well, but he had never quite adopted the nomad attitude to them: he had not, he remembered, lit a fire underneath his dying white yesterday. Ishmael would have.

Achmed finished his breakfast and went back to his baggage. The cases were not locked. He opened the top one, a small leather suitcase; and when he looked at the switches and dials of the compact radio neatly fitted into the rectangular case he had a sudden vivid memory like a movie: the bustling frantic city of Berlin; a tree-lined street called the Tirpitzufer; a four-storey sandstone building; a maze of hallways and staircases; an outer office with two secretaries; an inner office, sparsely furnished with desk, sofa, filing cabinet, small bed, and on the wall a Japanese painting of a grinning demon and a signed photograph of Franco; and beyond the office, on a balcony overlooking the Landwehr Canal, a pair of dachshunds and a prematurely white-haired admiral who said: 'Rommel wants me to put an agent into Cairo.'

The case also contained a book, a novel in English. Idly, Achmed read the first line: 'Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again.' A folded sheet of paper fell out from between the leaves of the book. Carefully, Achmed picked it up and put it back. He closed the book, replaced it in the case, and closed the case.

Ishmael was standing at his shoulder. He said: 'Was it a long journey?'

Achmed nodded. 'I came from El Agela, in Libya.' The names meant nothing to his cousin. 'I came from the sea.'

'From the sea!'

'Yes.'

'*Alone?*'

'I had some camels when I started.'

Ishmael was awestruck: even the nomads did not make such long journeys, and he had never seen the sea. He said: 'But why?'

'It is to do with this war.'

'One gang of Europeans fighting with another over who shall sit in Cairo – what does this matter to the sons of the desert?'

'My mother's people are in the war,' Achmed said.

'A man should follow his father.'

'And if he has two fathers?'

Ishmael shrugged. He understood dilemmas.

Achmed lifted the closed suitcase. 'Will you keep this for me?'

'Yes.' Ishmael took it. 'Who is winning the war?'

'My mother's people. They are like the nomads – they are proud, and cruel, and strong. They are going to rule the world.'

Ishmael smiled. 'Achmed, you always did believe in the desert lion.'

Achmed remembered: he had learnt, in school, that there had once been lions in the desert, and that it was possible a few of them remained, hiding in the moun-

THE KEY TO REBECCA

tains, living off deer and fennec fox and wild sheep. Ishmael had refused to believe him. The argument had seemed terribly important then, and they had almost quarrelled over it. Achmed grinned. 'I still believe in the desert lion,' he said.

The two cousins looked at each other. It was five years since the last time they had met. The world had changed. Achmed thought of the things he could tell: the crucial meeting in Beirut in 1938, his trip to Berlin, his great coup in Istanbul . . . None of it would mean anything to his cousin – and Ishmael was probably thinking the same about the events of *his* last five years. Since they had gone together as boys on the pilgrimage to Mecca they had loved each other fiercely, but they never had anything to talk about.

After a moment Ishmael turned away, and took the case to his tent. Achmed fetched a little water in a bowl. He opened another bag, and took out a small piece of soap, a brush, a mirror and a razor. He stuck the mirror in the sand, adjusted it, and began to unwind the howli from round his head.

The sight of his own face in the mirror shocked him.

His strong, normally clear forehead was covered with sores. His eyes were hooded with pain and lined in the corners. The dark beard grew matted and unkempt on his fine-boned cheeks, and the skin of his large hooked nose was red and split. He parted his blistered lips and saw that his fine, even teeth were filthy and stained.

He brushed the soap on and began to shave.

Gradually his old face emerged. It was strong rather than handsome, and normally wore a look which he recognized, in his more detached moments, to be faintly dissolute; but now it was simply ravaged. He had brought a small phial of scented lotion across hundreds of miles of desert for this moment, but now he did not put it on because he knew it would sting unbearably. He gave it to a girl-child who had been watching him, and she ran away, delighted with her prize.

He carried his bag into Ishmael's tent and shooed out the women. He took off his desert robes and donned a white English shirt, a striped tie, grey socks and a brown checked suit. When he tried to put on the shoes he discovered that his feet had swollen: it was agonizing to attempt to force them into the hard new leather. However, he could not wear his European suit with the improvised rubber-tyre sandals of the desert. In the end he slit the shoes with his curved knife and wore them loose.

He wanted more: a hot bath, a haircut, cool soothing cream for his sores, a silk shirt, a gold bracelet, a cold bottle of champagne and a warm soft woman. For those he would have to wait.

When he emerged from the tent the nomads looked at him as if he were a stranger. He picked up his hat and hefted the two remaining cases – one heavy, one light. Ishmael came to him carrying a goatskin water bottle. The two cousins embraced.

Achmed took a wallet from the pocket of his jacket to check his papers. Looking at the identity card, he realized that once again he was Alexander Wolff, age

THE KEY TO REBECCA

thirty-four, of Villa les Oliviers, Garden City, Cairo, a businessman, race – European.

He put on his hat, picked up his cases, and set off in the cool of the dawn to walk across the last few miles of desert to the town.

The great and ancient caravan route, which Wolff had followed from oasis to oasis across the vast empty desert, led through a pass in the mountain range and at last merged with an ordinary modern road. The road was like a line drawn on the map by God, for on one side were the yellow, dusty, barren hills, and on the other were lush fields of cotton squared off with irrigation ditches. The peasants, bent over their crops, wore galabiya, simple shifts of striped cotton, instead of the cumbersome protective robes of the nomads. Walking north on the road, smelling the cool damp breeze off the nearby Nile, observing the increasing signs of urban civilisation, Wolff began to feel human again. The peasants dotted about the fields came to seem less like a crowd. Finally he heard the engine of a car, and he knew he was safe.

The vehicle was approaching him from the direction of Assyut, the town. It came round a bend and into sight, and he recognized it as a military jeep. As it came closer he saw the British Army uniforms of the men in it, and he realized he had left behind one danger only to face another.

Deliberately he made himself calm. I have every right to be here, he thought. I was born in Alexandria.

I am Egyptian by nationality. I own a house in Cairo. My papers are all genuine. I am a wealthy man, a European, and a German spy behind enemy lines.

The jeep screeched to a halt in a cloud of dust. One of the men jumped out. He had three cloth pips on each shoulder of his uniform shirt: a captain. He looked terribly young, and walked with a limp.

The captain said: 'Where the devil have you come from?'

Wolff put down his cases and jerked a thumb back over his shoulder. 'My car broke down on the desert road.'

The captain nodded, accepting the explanation instantly: it would never have occurred to him, or to anyone else, that a European might have walked here from Libya. He said: 'I'd better see your papers, please.'

Wolff handed them over. The captain examined them, then looked up. Wolff thought: There has been a leak from Berlin, and every officer in Egypt is looking for me; or they have changed the papers since last time I was here, and mine are out of date; or.

'You look about all in, Mr. Wolff,' the captain said. 'How long have you been walking?'

Wolff realized that his ravaged appearance might get some useful sympathy from another European. 'Since yesterday afternoon,' he said with a weariness that was not entirely faked. 'I got a bit lost.'

'You've been out here all *night*?' The captain looked more closely at Wolff's face. 'Good Lord, I believe you have. You'd better have a lift with us.' He turned to the jeep. 'Corporal, take the gentleman's cases.'

THE KEY TO REBECCA

Wolff opened his mouth to protest, then shut it again abruptly. A man who had been walking all night would be only too glad to have someone take his luggage. To object would not only discredit his story, it would draw attention to the bags. As the corporal hefted them into the back of the jeep, Wolff realized with a sinking feeling that he had not even bothered to lock them. How could I be so stupid? he thought. He knew the answer. He was still in tune with the desert, where you were lucky to see other people once a week, and the last thing they wanted to steal was a radio transmitter that had to be plugged in to a power outlet. His senses were alert to all the wrong things: he was watching the movement of the sun, smelling the air for water, measuring the distances he was travelling, and scanning the horizon as if searching for a lone tree in whose shade he could rest during the heat of the day. He had to forget all that now, and think instead of policemen and papers and locks and lies.

He resolved to take more care, and climbed into the jeep.

The captain got in beside him and said to the driver: 'Back into town.'

Wolff decided to bolster his story. As the jeep turned in the dusty road he said: 'Have you got any water?'

'Of course.' The captain reached beneath his seat and pulled up a tin bottle covered in felt, like a large whisky flask. He unscrewed the cap and handed it to Wolff.

Wolff drank deeply, swallowing at least a pint. 'Thanks,' he said, and handed it back.

‘Quite a thirst you had. Not surprising. Oh, by the way – I’m Captain Newman.’ He stuck out his hand.

Wolff shook it and looked more closely at the man. He *was* young early twenties, at a guess – and fresh-faced, with a boyish forelock and a ready smile; but there was in his demeanour that weary maturity that comes early to fighting men. Wolff asked him: ‘Seen any action?’

‘Some.’ Captain Newman touched his own knee. ‘Did the leg at Cyrenaica, that’s why they sent me to this one-horse town.’ He grinned. ‘I can’t honestly say I’m panting to get back into the desert, but I’d like to be doing something a bit more positive than this, minding the shop hundreds of miles from the war. The only fighting we ever see is between the Christians and the Muslims in the town. Where does your accent come from?’

The sudden question, unconnected with what had gone before, took Wolff by surprise. It had surely been intended to, he thought: Captain Newman was a sharp-witted young man. Fortunately Wolff had a prepared answer. ‘My parents were Boers who came from South Africa to Egypt. I grew up speaking Afrikaans and Arabic.’ He hesitated, nervous of overplaying his hand by seeming too eager to explain. ‘The name Wolff is Dutch, originally; and I was christened Alex after the town where I was born.’

Newman seemed politely interested. ‘What brings you here?’

Wolff had prepared for that one, too. ‘I have busi-

THE KEY TO REBECCA

ness interests in several towns in Upper Egypt.' He smiled. 'I like to pay them surprise visits.'

They were entering Assyut. By Egyptian standards it was a large town, with factories, hospitals, a Muslim university, a famous convent and some 60,000 inhabitants. Wolff was about to ask to be dropped at the railway station when Newman saved him from that error. 'You need a garage,' the captain said. 'We'll take you to Nasif's – he has a tow truck.'

Wolff forced himself to say: 'Thank you.' He swallowed drily. He was still not thinking hard enough or fast enough. I wish I could pull myself together, he thought; it's the damn desert, it's slowed me down. He looked at his watch. He had time to go through a charade at the garage and still catch the daily train to Cairo. He considered what he would do. He would have to go into the place, for Newman would watch. Then the soldiers would drive away. Wolff would have to make some enquiries about car parts, or something, then take his leave and walk to the station.

With luck, Nasif and Newman might never compare notes on the subject of Alex Wolff.

The jeep drove through the busy, narrow streets. The familiar sights of an Egyptian town pleased Wolff: the gay cotton clothes, the women carrying bundles on their heads, the officious policemen, the sharp characters in sunglasses, the tiny shops spilling out into the rutted streets, the stalls, the battered cars and the overloaded asses. They stopped in front of a row of low mud-brick buildings. The road was half-blocked by an

ancient truck and the remains of a cannibalized Fiat. A small boy was working on a cylinder block with a spanner, sitting on the ground outside the entrance.

Newman said: 'I'll have to leave you here, I'm afraid – duty calls.'

Wolff shook his hand. 'You've been very kind.'

'I don't like to dump you this way,' Newman continued. 'You've had a bad time.' He frowned, then his face cleared. 'Tell you what – I'll leave Corporal Cox to look after you.'

Wolff said: 'It's kind, but really . . .'

Newman was not listening. 'Get the man's bags, Cox, and look sharp. I want you to take care of him – and don't you leave anything to the wogs, understand?'

'Yes, sir!' said Cox.

Wolff groaned inwardly. Now there would be more delay whilst he got rid of the corporal. Captain Newman's kindness was becoming a nuisance – could that possibly be intentional?

Wolff and Cox got out, and the jeep pulled away. Wolff walked into Nasif's workshop, and Cox followed, carrying the cases.

Nasif was a smiling young man in a filthy galabiya, working on a car battery by the light of an oil lamp. He spoke to them in English. 'You want to rent a beautiful automobile? My brother have Bentley.'

Wolff interrupted him in rapid Egyptian Arabic. 'My car has broken down. They say you have a tow truck.'

'Yes. We can leave right away. Where is the car?'

'On the desert road, forty or fifty miles out. It's a

THE KEY TO REBECCA

Ford. But we're not coming with you.' He took out his wallet and gave Nasif an English pound note. 'You'll find me at the Grand Hotel by the railway station when you return.'

Nasif took the money with alacrity. 'Very good! I leave immediately!'

Wolff nodded curtly and turned round. Walking out of the workshop with Cox in tow, he considered the implications of his short conversation with Nasif. The mechanic would go out into the desert with his tow truck and search the road for the car. Eventually he would return to the Grand Hotel to confess failure. He would learn that Wolff had left. He would consider he had been reasonably paid for his wasted day, but that would not stop him telling all and sundry the story of the disappearing Ford and its disappearing driver. The likelihood was that all this would get back to Captain Newman sooner or later. Newman might not know quite what to make of it all, but he would certainly feel that here was a mystery to be investigated.

Wolff's mood darkened as he realized that his plan of slipping unobserved into Egypt might have failed.

He would just have to make the best of it. He looked at his watch. He still had time to catch the train. He would be able to get rid of Cox in the lobby of the hotel, then get something to eat and drink whilst he was waiting, if he was quick.

Cox was a short, dark man with some kind of British regional accent which Wolff could not identify. He looked about Wolff's age, and as he was still a corporal

he was probably not too bright. Following Wolff across the Midan el-Mahatta, he said: 'You know this town, sir?'

'I've been here before,' Wolff replied.

They entered the Grand. With twenty-six rooms it was the larger of the town's two hotels. Wolff turned to Cox. 'Thank you, Corporal – I think you could get back to work now.'

'No hurry, sir,' Cox said cheerfully. 'I'll carry your bags upstairs.'

'I'm sure they have porters here—'

'Wouldn't trust 'em, sir, if I were you.'

The situation was becoming more and more like a nightmare or a farce, in which well-intentioned people pushed him into increasingly senseless behaviour in consequence of one small lie. He wondered again whether this was entirely accidental, and it crossed his mind with terrifying absurdity that perhaps they knew everything and were simply toying with him.

He pushed the thought aside and spoke to Cox with as much grace as he could muster. 'Well, thank you.'

He turned to the desk and asked for a room. He looked at his watch: he had fifteen minutes left. He filled in the form quickly, giving an invented address in Cairo – there was a chance Captain Newman would forget the true address on the identity papers, and Wolff did not want to leave a reminder.

A Nubian porter led them upstairs to the room. Wolff tipped him at the door. Cox put the cases down on the bed.

Wolff took out his wallet: perhaps Cox expected a

tip too. 'Well, Corporal,' he began, 'you've been very helpful—'

'Let me unpack for you, sir,' Cox said. 'Captain said not to leave anything to the wogs.'

'No, thank you,' Wolff said firmly. 'I want to lie down right now.'

'You go ahead and lie down,' Cox persisted generously. 'It won't take me—'

'Don't open that!'

Cox was lifting the lid of the case. Wolff reached inside his jacket, thinking *Damn the man* and *Now I'm blown* and *I should have locked it* and *Can I do this quietly?* The little corporal stared at the neat stacks of new English pound notes which filled the small case. He said: 'Jesus Christ, you're loaded!' It crossed Wolff's mind, even as he stepped forward, that Cox had never seen so much money in his life. Cox began to turn, saying: 'What do you want with all that—' Wolff pulled the wicked curved Bedouin knife, and it glinted in his hand as his eyes met Cox's, and Cox flinched and opened his mouth to shout; and then the razor-sharp blade sliced deep into the soft flesh of his throat, and his shout of fear came as a bloody gurgle and he died; and Wolff felt nothing, only disappointment.