

LOUISE ANDREWS KENT

He Went With
Hannibal



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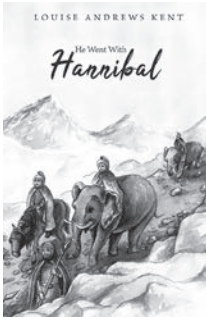
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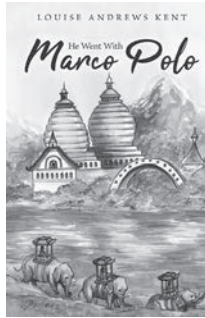
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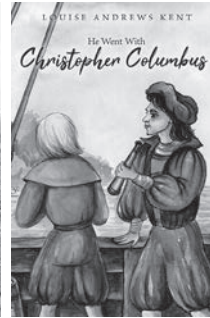
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Hannibal



Marco Polo



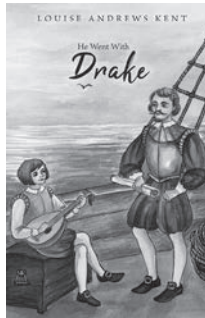
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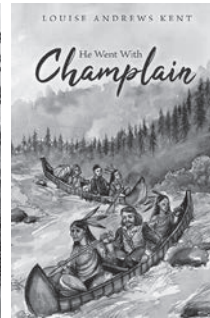
Vasco da Gama



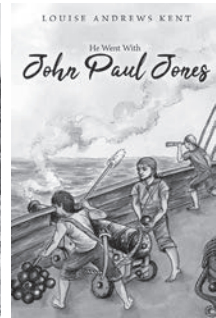
Magellan



Drake



Champlain



John Paul Jones

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DATES

IT IS difficult for us to think back two thousand years and get a clear idea of the calendars of the period. We do not know the Carthaginian. The Roman dates are figured from the founding of the city by Romulus. Ours center around the birth of Christ. By relating them to the Roman dates, we get the following table for the chief events in the life of Hannibal.

247 B.C.	Hannibal, oldest son of Hamilcar Barca, born
238 B.C.	Hamilcar and his three sons leave Carthage for Spain
221 B.C.	Hannibal made commander of army in Spain
219 B.C.	He besieges Saguntum
218 B.C.	Crosses Alps to Italy
218 B.C.	Defeats Romans at Ticino and Trebbia
217 B.C.	Battle of Trasimeno
217 B.C.	Escape at Cales
216 B.C.	Battle of Cannal
216 B.C.	Capua joins Hannibal
212 B.C.	He captures Tarentum
212 B.C.	Syracuse defended by Archimedes
211 B.C.	Hannibal at the gates of Rome
211 B.C.	Capua surrenders to Rome
209 B.C.	Tarentum captured by Rome
209 B.C.	New Carthage captured by Scipio
207 B.C.	Death of Hasdrubal Barca
206 B.C.	Meeting of Syphax and Scipio
205 B.C.	Scipio crosses to Africa
203 B.C.	Hannibal summoned to Carthage
202 B.C.	Battle of Zama
202-195 B.C.	Hannibal a statesman of Carthage
195 B.C.	Hannibal in Tyre, Syria
195-183 B.C.	Hannibal a fugitive from Roman vengeance
183 B.C.	Death of Scipio Africanus
183 B.C.	Death of Hannibal

CHAPTER 1I

WAR OF THE LEOPARD SKIN



BRECON WAS almost thirteen years old when he was sent as a hostage to Hannibal.

“Remember that when Orion rises behind the White Cliff,” his grandmother said, “and you see his belt and his sword of stars, you will be thirteen. Almost a man.”

Brecon’s grandmother knew things about people’s ages and the stars. She knew how to pickle fish and what herbs to mix with mud to prevent baldness. She was a tall old woman with thick black eyebrows meeting over surprisingly bright blue eyes. Her eyebrows made her look as if she were scowling but when her eyes flashed blue, she was really smiling. Brecon knew.

“And remember, only you can wear the leopard skin,” she added proudly. “You are the Chief’s only son.”

She had a comb made of the shell of a tortoise. Few people in their part of Spain had such a treasure. Brecon wished his grandmother did not have one. He tried to slip away while she was hunting for it. They were in the cave back of their stone house, the cave with the paintings on the wall. He had almost passed the picture of the buffalo when a skinny white arm shot

out from under her black cloak and long fingers grabbed him by his tousled red hair.

“No grandson of mine goes as hostage to the Lord Hannibal Barca with snarls in his hair,” she said. “Hold still.”

Brecon squirmed. He felt every hair of his head being yanked. “You are killing me,” he moaned. “I’ll be bald. Thistles—you scratch me with thistles! You sting me like a nest of wasps!”

His grandmother went on combing and said, “Did I hear you say you had washed your neck?”

At last his sufferings were over, though his neck was so clean it felt cold and his new clothes were prickly. His grandmother had spun, dyed, and woven the woollen cloth for his jacket and loose trousers. The pattern was a plaid of brown and green with a red line across it here and there. Over one shoulder she put the leopard skin. Brecon was not tall, and the leopard had been a large animal.

“It’s too big for me,” he said, stumbling over the tail, which had somehow got between his feet.

“You must fight anyone who says so,” his grandmother said.

Brecon thought there had been enough fighting already. When his grandfather died, a cousin, leader of another tribe, had claimed the leopard skin. Dafyd, Brecon’s father, had led his tribe into battle. They were victorious and the men had brought the leopard skin home and had put it in the cave with his father’s sword and shield. His father never came. They had buried him in the valley beyond the White Cliff. He had won the battle, but while he was sleeping on the leopard skin he had been treacherously stabbed. The reddish-brown spot, black now and bigger than many leopard spots together, was his blood.

This was not the end of the War of the Leopard Skin. There

had been vengeance and more vengeance. Other tribes had joined in the fighting. Once, during a battle, men had seized Brecon and carried him off. His own men had come quickly to the enemy's camp. They found Brecon kicking the shins of an enormous man called Prince Leon. They had knocked the Prince down and had carried Brecon home again. His grandmother was so pleased that she had told Pablo, the smith, to make Brecon some small gold armbands out of a large one of his father's and she had given him his mother's gold chain. He did not remember his mother. She had died when he was born.

Pablo was a smith who could do anything with metal. He could shoe a horse, make a sword or a trumpet or a silver cup. He let Brecon make a cup for his grandmother while he himself worked on the gold armbands. Brecon did well, Pablo said.

"You have the secret," he said. "To work iron, you have to be iron. To work silver, you must be silver. With silver, patience is better than speed."

The cup was finished the day that the news came that peace was made between the tribes. Lord Hannibal Barca had made the peace. He had asked for Brecon as one of the hostages who were to be sent to him.

"What does a hostage mean?" Brecon had asked.

"That if our tribe makes war you will be killed or sold as a slave," his grandmother said. "I will see that they keep the peace," she added, and Brecon felt quite sure she would.

She also said that since Brecon was a cousin of Hannibal's wife, the Lady Imilce, he would be among friends. She sent some of her special pickled fish and some of her worst-tasting medicines and a blanket of her own weaving to Hannibal.

So now, when Hannibal's men came, Brecon was ready. He rode his little chestnut mare called Starlight. He rode her

without either saddle or bridle but she had a saddlecloth of the brown and green plaid, like his jacket. Fastened to his belt was a short two-edged sword Pablo had made. Inlaid in silver on the bronze sheath was the pattern of Orion's stars.

Some of the hostages were crying, but not Brecon. He thanked his grandmother again for the sword.

"Remember you are the Chief," she said again in her deep voice. "The comb is in your saddlebag. Use it."

"Yes, Grandmother."

"Keep count of the moons. You have the parchment."

"Yes, Grandmother."

She had taught him how to keep track of time and she had given him a precious piece of parchment and a pen made from an eagle's feather. Every time the moon was a thin new crescent, he must draw it on the parchment, she had said. Then when it was half a silver coin he must draw it again. In seven days it would rise like a shield of gold. In seven days more he would



see the other half of the silver coin. Another seven days and, before dawn, he would see the last thin curved fingernail of brightness.

There would be thirteen new moons, she told him.

“And what else?” she asked.

“An extra day, Grandmother.”

“How old will you be then?”

“Fourteen, Grandmother.”

“Right. You have my leave to go now. Behave as well as you look.”

“Yes, Grandmother.”

She made a twisting sign that was a blessing, he knew. He bent his head till it almost touched Starlight’s chestnut mane. When he looked up again she had gone into the cave. She kept her loom there, and for a minute or two he could hear the sound of weaving. Then he was riding beside one of the other hostages down the hill. The jingling of bridles, the creak of saddles, and the thud of horses’ hoofs was all he heard.

He rode next to a fat, pink-faced boy with hair like yellow wool. Alain was his name. Brecon had seen him before. Alain was the son of Prince Leon, whose shins Brecon had once kicked. Alain had splendid weapons and a big black warhorse. He had silver stirrups and a saddle trimmed with silver. His horse’s headband and bridle were as bright with gold as a lady’s necklace.

“Who’s that little man who calls himself the leader?” Alain asked Brecon.

“My grandmother said it was Lord Carthalo.”

“He doesn’t look like a leader.”

“How should a leader look?” Brecon asked.

“Why, tall, of course, with arms like branches of a great

oak. Fair-haired, nose like an eagle's beak. White teeth like a lion's. A mustache like a curtain of gold. He should have a voice like a trumpet and be dressed in purple and gold," Alain said.

Carthalo certainly did not fit this description. He was neither tall nor short, fat nor thin. His hair was no special color. His eyelids drooped over eyes that were perhaps gray, perhaps hazel. His nose was not at all like an eagle's beak. His teeth were white but not suitable for a lion. His upper lip had been shaved but not lately. His beard was roughly clipped, apparently with a dull pair of scissors. As for his voice, it would not, like a trumpet, rouse anyone from a sound sleep at dawn.

Yet, Brecon noticed, though Carthalo's orders were softly spoken, his men obeyed them quickly and without question.

"My father's shepherds wear better cloaks," Alain added.

Carthalo's cloak had once been black. It had been wet so many times, slept on, wet or dry, so often that it was now blackish brown.

"I think he'd make a good shepherd," Brecon said. "Keep the sheep together. Keep wolves away. Know all the dangers."

"Dangers! What are you afraid of?" Alain asked with his whining laugh. "Of me? You'd better be."

"No, not of you," Brecon said.

"Want to fight?"

"Not especially. Certainly not just now."

"We'll wrestle at Hannibal's camp. I'll throw you down, crush every rib you have. You know I can, don't you?"

"You certainly weigh more than I do," Brecon said, "but perhaps we would not be wrestling. I have a sword."

He drew it out so suddenly that it flashed in the clear blue air. Alain's horse reared.

“Put that thing away, you fool,” he shouted. “Can’t you see you frighten my horse?”

“Certainly,” Brecon said, sheathing the sword.

The whole thing had taken only a minute but Carthalo had noticed it. He waved his men and the other hostages ahead, stopped his old brown horse beside the trail, and waited till Alain and Brecon came up with him.

He looked at them without speaking for a moment and then said to Alain, “Has there been trouble between you and the young Chief, Prince?”

“Chief indeed! Chief of the Leopard Skin with a little boy’s sword. He’s a coward. Won’t fight. Make him get off that skinny horse, and drop that carving knife, and I’ll break his ribs and knock his teeth out.” Alain’s pink face was red. His voice ran up into a squeak.

“You wish to accept this invitation?” Carthalo asked Brecon.

“No, my lord,” Brecon said. “It was my fault, the disturbance. I should not have pulled out the sword. I ask your pardon. And Alain’s.”

“So now he apologizes. I said he wouldn’t fight,” Alain said.

“You don’t enjoy fighting?” Carthalo asked Brecon.

“When I’m older I might learn to fight in a good cause.”

“What is your idea of a good cause?”

“Why, to defend my land and the people of my tribe from harm.”

“Ha!” Alain broke in. “The dirty little coward means his grandmother. The old witch. Everyone knows she’s a witch.”

Carthalo turned to Alain. His voice was not loud but it had a tone that made Alain’s red face turn pale.

“If I hear more of such talk, I must report it to my Lord Hannibal. You are hostages, pledges that peace has been made

between your tribes. The penalty of breaking the peace is one I prefer not to speak of," Carthalo said. He turned to one of the rear guard waiting on the trail. "Escort Prince Alain. You, Sir Brecon, may come with me."

The journey took many days. It was the time beech leaves turn bronze and gold. The sky was a clear cloudless blue. At night, as Brecon lay curled up on his cloak with his leopard skin over him, stars were gold sparks in a silvery-green sky. Sometimes he woke and saw the Pleiades twinkling, the red glow of Sirius, the bright flash of Orion's sword.

He and Alain were never close enough to quarrel for the rest of the journey. When the track was narrow, Brecon rode behind Carthalo. When it was wide, the leader would wave one of the hostages, often Brecon, to ride beside him. The Carthaginian was easy to talk to. Brecon found himself telling Carthalo things he had never told anyone else.

Once Carthalo said, "You are young to be the chief of a tribe." And Brecon answered, "No boy thirteen years old can really be a chief. I am only a toy chief."

"There must be a real chief—who is it?"

Brecon laughed and said, "Why, my grandmother, of course. She always tells whoever is called the chief what to do. First my grandfather, next my father, then me. If I do not go back, it will be my Uncle Carlo, I think."

"You wish to go back?"

"Someday. But I'd like to see the world—Italy and Greece and Carthage. Will you tell me about Carthage, my lord?"

So Carthalo told about Carthage: about the arm of land that circled the harbor, about the quays where ships brought elephants and silver and purple cloth or carried away peacocks and glass and the skins of lions.

“Or leopards,” Carthalo added, the crease in his cheek deepening into a smile.

He told about the Byrsa, the hill high above the city. There was a great temple on top of it. Nearby were palaces and, along the streets below, factories six stories tall. On one floor men might be making swords. Below, glass masks might be made, or wigs of red hair for ladies who were tired of brown. He told about palaces where the floors were pink cement, veined and polished to look like marble. There was the inner harbor where you tied up your galley to a ring in a white marble wall.

It was a hidden harbor, Carthalo said, a circle with an island in the middle of it. There was a high tower on the island from which the admiral could see all the ships in both harbors.

No, he said when Brecon asked him, it was not true that ships of Carthage were rowed with oars of solid silver.

“Alain said so but I told him they’d be too heavy,” Brecon said, and Carthalo made the quiet chuckling sound that was as near laughing as he ever seemed to come.

The track soon narrowed and Brecon dropped behind. It was not until the last day of the journey that he asked about Hannibal.

“What do you know about him?” Carthalo asked.

“Just what Alain was telling everyone at supper last night.”

“What was that?”

“He says Hannibal is an enormous man with eyes like a cruel snake’s. That he dresses in purple and gold and wears a jeweled crown. He sleeps on a gold couch stuffed with the down of a thousand geese. He rides an elephant in a gold and ivory tower and prods the elephant with a gold spear. Rich food is brought to him from all over the world. He calls himself King of Spain and has your tongue cut out if you won’t call him so.

He swore when he was nine years old to hate Rome, and every day since he has been planning to burn every Roman alive and be king of the world.”

“Do you believe him?” Carthalo asked.

“No.”

“Why not?”

“I do not think a man like you would be his follower,” Brecon said.

“I thank you,” said Carthalo. He rode on in silence for a moment and then added, “When I was your age, I followed Hannibal’s father, Hamilcar Barca, wherever he went. He was wise, brave, and just. He loved Carthage. The Council and the Shofets—they are the rulers of Carthage—made him their general. His trade was fighting, but when he made treaties he kept his word. The Romans did not. There should be room along the Mediterranean Sea for both Carthage and Rome. Carthage wants to trade with people. Rome wants to rule them. She threatened Carthage, so the city sent Hamilcar here to Spain to set up new trading posts. There is Gades on the Atlantic and New Carthage south of the Ebro. Hamilcar brought Hannibal to Spain when he was nine years old. Hannibal did make a vow. I heard him. Shall I tell you about it?”

“Please.”

“Before we left Carthage, Hamilcar and his officers met in the temple. At the altar Hamilcar prayed and offered a lamb as a sacrifice. Hannibal remembers the day well. This is how I have heard him tell about it. He said, ‘My father had a cup in his hand. He poured a libation to Melkart. I was standing near the altar. My father asked all the others to draw back a little way. Then he called me over to him and asked me very gently if I wished to go with him on his journey. Like a boy, I quickly

said yes, even begged to go. He took me by one hand, led me to the altar, told me to put my other hand on the sacrificed lamb. He asked me to swear never to be a friend to Rome. I did so.”

“When a city becomes a friend of Rome,” Carthalo went on, “its spirit is soon broken. Hamilcar Barca—Barca means ‘thunderbolt’—fought until he died to keep the spirit alive. Now this is the work of his sons, Hannibal, Hasdrubal, and Mago. As to the foolishness about jeweled crowns and couches of down—Hannibal dresses like any soldier of Spain, in a black cloak and a headcloth of black wool. He often sleeps on the cloak near his sentries. Or on a lion’s skin. Or on bare ground. If there is an icy stream to swim, he is the first in the water. Where the greatest danger to his men is—there is Hannibal. He eats what his men eat—a little porridge, a little cheese. If anyone goes hungry, it is Hannibal.”

“And he’s not a giant?” Brecon asked.

“A little taller than you and I,” Carthalo said, smiling.

“I think I’ll know him when I see him,” Brecon said.