

Chapter 1 : The Blood Of Belshazzar by Robert E. Howard

The Blood of Belshazzar is a terrific story. Read more. Helpful. Comment Report abuse. See both reviews. Write a customer review. Set up an Amazon Giveaway.

God never gives graces to his servants for them to atrophy. We need his gifts to stand and wait. Remember the forty years Moses spent in the back side of the desert. The years of patience require the gift of faith, and all this time the Lord is strengthening Daniel, preparing him for the imminent confrontation with Belshazzar, and his coming in from the cold to be entrusted with those crucial years of national leadership and yet of trial under King Darius. Daniel is learning that the Sovereign Lord is controlling every period of our own personal histories. In chapter 5 the story of Daniel moves on a further 14 years. It is a fearful fact that many come to their last hours without being aware or prepared for that certainty. He is fighting the Medes and the Persians under Cyrus and Darius, and defeat is staring Nabonidus in the face. We have a window opened in Daniel 5 on what was happening that night in the royal palace. We are shown a drunken feast; Belshazzar is not where a king should be, encouraging the morale of his troops the night before the decisive battle. There was another king who stayed at home in the royal palace and wandered on the roof of his palace while his troops were fighting. That king was David and the sin and death that came into his life because he was not in the place of duty has sullied his reputation ever since. This was a particularly great feast to which a thousand had been invited. The custom at oriental feasts was for the king to sit on a raised platform, apart from the guests. Yet consider how suddenly the fingers of a human hand appeared and wrote a message to these revellers. Not a Christian was in that room but the hand of God moved and affected them all. In the experience of those who are far from God the hours of darkness are shattered by an inner voice which speaks to them. A few words written by a man is all God needs. Some words from God on a wayside pulpit are enough and its effect can be absolutely devastating: The smallest action of Almighty God inscribing four words on a wall can mean nothing is the same again. What may the living God do with a few words? How many words do we hear week after week? Do they make us tremble? Have we grown too familiar with the Word of God? So many excrescences introduced into modern worship suggest that many are wearied by the Word. It was the first time for God to speak personally to him, and when he did it was on the night before he died. God came to Belshazzar to speak of his sins of omission – what the king had failed to do. He had the achievements of despotic power reverently recorded in cuneiform tablets, but he had not honoured the living God. He was a drunk, but the party was over for Belshazzar and his cronies. To live like a lord all your life, and then on your very last day to have the opportunity to repent and to seek forgiveness from God for ignoring him for so long. The first is that Belshazzar does not understand the it. He is a natural man and he does not know it. He does not recognise the message when it comes to him. Have you considered the possibility that if there were an occasion in the distant future when God may choose to speak to you that you will not understand a word of what he is saying to you? There was no one around Belshazzar who could explain the Word of God to him. He had never had much time for religious folks and so he had to ask his lackeys. So into this night club atmosphere all his wise men came to explain to him the Word of God. But they could not help him The Word was as much a mystery to them as to the king. Not one single person in all that vast assembly – the very cream of Babylon – could explain the Word of God to Belshazzar, though he offered them unimaginable authority and riches 5: Then the power behind the throne discovered that the end of feasting had come. The Queen Mother heard the voices and came into the banquet hall 5: It is the honorary title of a highly respected ancestor, and she refers three times to that fact in one sentence 5: Belshazzar could do worse. The Queen was not herself a believer. One person who feared the Lord was needed in these circumstances, not human experts. Daniel is finally found. They knock on his door and he rubs the sleep out of his eyes and they bring him apace to meet the mightiest man in the world whom he has loyally served for sixteen years but never spoken to. When Daniel retired that night he little imagined that within some hours he would have to be ready to give an answer for the reason of the hope that was in him when asked by a king. The Lord Christ encouraged his disciples not to be fearful when they appeared before dignitaries, that it would be given to them in that day

what they were to say. Aneurin Bevan once said that a true orator did not know what he was going to say until he had said it! So it was with Daniel. Daniel takes command of the entire situation and from the start speaks with a calm authority 5: This absolute monarch had done whatever he pleased. He gave life; he took life 5: He was driven away from people and given the mind of an animal until he acknowledged the Most High God is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and sets over them anyone he wishes 5: That courage Daniel had displayed as a boy was nurtured by him through the silent years for such a time as this. Then Daniel opens up their meaning. The God who does not need to count keeps track of us. He has seen the file on our lives; records everything about us. He has taken a comprehensive census on all mankind. Nothing has slipped by him. His omniscience shows itself in the fruits of his care for us of which the whole human race are the beneficiaries. But with the good things come attendant responsibilities. People matter to their Creator, all their thoughts, their actions, their words, their sins, their good works. Did Belshazzar keep a close eye on the records that the satraps sent him from every part of the country? Did he check how the taxes were being paid? Did he keep a record of how obedient the people were? How were the judges judging? The king did keep accounts. He counted income and expenditure. God has done the same. How is it between ourselves and God? Belshazzar are you in the black, or are you a debtor? Jehovah wrote that word twice. God numbers every day of our lives, but God also weighs a life. There is nothing he does not put in his scales – DNA code with its genetic inheritance, infantile environment, family circumstances, health, IQ, talents, education, privileges, gospel opportunities, and length of days. God weighs our entire lives, and having put Belshazzar in his scales the king was found to be deficient. It was a shallow life, an empty and flimsy life for all its famous name, wealth and recorded achievements. All men must appear before God to be weighed by him. This is a moral universe, and we are made by him, in his image, and for him. There is a play on words. What you have is a verbal play in which the basic idea of division is linked with the name of the conqueror who will divide up the nation. Belshazzar himself was to be divided: He chops up an empty life. He breaks it into pieces. He rends asunder soul and body at death. To the dust we return. All our numbered and weighed lives are also going to be divided. Men are going to be separated from all that they have at death, and Belshazzar had more than most men could dream of. Yet his worst enemies, the Medes and Persians, were going to seize it all 5: Does your life count? Is there a battle against sin in your life? Is there the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Is there prayer in your life? Is it a God-honouring life? Is it a God-pleasing life? God weighs, God scrutinises and judges your life. How can we stand before the Most Holy One? There are four other words in a foreign language also found in the Bible.

Chapter 2 : The Blood of Belshazzar|Robert E. Howard|Free download|PDF EPUB|Freeditorial

"So the Blood of Belshazzar drank your life at last, Skol," said he. Turning toward the doorway he again scanned the body of the Nubian. "More than one slew these men," he muttered, "and the Nubian gave scathe to one, at least."

First published in the pulp magazine *Oriental Stories*, Fall This story is set during the Crusades and features the character Cormac Fitzgeoffrey. A lure and a maddening goad. And down through the crimson, changing years It draws men, soul and brain; They drown their lives in blood and tears. And they break their hearts in vain. That night there was feasting in the great hall. Heavy tables loaded with wine pitchers and jugs, and huge platters of food, stood flanked by crude benches for such as ate in that manner, while on the floor large cushions received the reclining forms of others. Trembling slaves hastened about, filling goblets from wineskins and bearing great joints of roasted meat and loaves of bread. Here luxury and nakedness met, the riches of degenerate civilizations and the stark savagery of utter barbarism. Men clad in stenching sheepskins lolled on silken cushions, exquisitely brocaded, and guzzled from solid golden goblets, fragile as the stem of a desert flower. All the races of western Asia met here. Here were slim, lethal Persians, dangerous-eyed Turks in mail shirts, lean Arabs, tall ragged Kurds, Lurs and Armenians in sweaty sheepskins, fiercely mustached Circassians, even a few Georgians, with hawk-faces and devilish tempers. Among them was one who stood out boldly from all the rest. He sat at a table drinking wine from a huge goblet, and the eyes of the others strayed to him continually. Among these tall sons of the desert and mountains his height did not seem particularly great, though it was above six feet. But the breadth and thickness of him were gigantic. His shoulders were broader, his limbs more massive than any other warrior there. His mail coif was thrown back, revealing a lion-like head and a great corded throat. Though browned by the sun, his face was not as dark as those about him and his eyes were a volcanic blue, which smoldered continually as if from inner fires of wrath. He ate and drank apparently oblivious to the questioning glances flung toward him. Not that any had as yet challenged his right to feast in Bab-el-Shaitan, for this was a lair open to all refugees and outlaws. And this Frank was Cormac FitzGeoffrey, outlawed and hunted by his own race. The ex-Crusader was armed in close-meshed chain mail from head to foot. A heavy sword hung at his hip, and his kite-shaped shield with the grinning skull wrought in the center lay with his heavy vizorless helmet, on the bench beside him. There was no hypocrisy of etiquette in Bab-el-Shaitan. Cormac, as he ate, scanned his fellow-feasters openly. Truly Bab-el-Shaitan was a lair of the spawn of Hell, the last retreat of men so desperate and bestial that the rest of the world had cast them out in horror. Cormac was no stranger to savage men; in his native Ireland he had sat among barbaric figures in the gatherings of chiefs and reavers in the hills. But the wild-beast appearance and utter inhumanness of some of these men impressed even the fierce Irish warrior. Surely no divine spark of soul-dust animated these men, but the merciless and soulless spirit of the grim land that bred them. Eyes, wild and cruel as the eyes of wolves, glared through lank strands of tangled hair, hairy hands unconsciously gripped the hilts of knives even while the owners gorged and guzzled. Cormac glanced from the rank and file to scrutinize the leaders of the band--those whom superior wit or war-skill had placed high in the confidence of their terrible chief, Skol Abdhur, the Butcher. Not one but had a whole volume of black and bloody history behind him. There was that slim Persian, whose tone was so silky, whose eyes were so deadly, and whose small, shapely head was that of a human panther--Nadir Tous, once an emir high in the favor of the Shah of Kharesmia. And that wiry, tall, eagle-faced Arab, Yussef el Mekru--he had been a great sheikh once in Yemen and had even led a revolt against the Sultan himself. But at the head of the table at which Cormac sat was one whose history for strangeness and vivid fantasy dimmed them all. Di Strozza was tall and thin and saturnine in appearance, with a hook-nosed, thin-nostriled face of distinctly predatory aspect. His armor, now worn and tarnished, was of costly Venetian make, and the hilt of his long narrow sword had once been set with gems. He knew these by sight or reputation--Kojar Mirza, a brawny Kurd; Shalmar Khor, a tall swaggering Circassian; and Jusus Zehor, a renegade Georgian who wore half a dozen knives in his girdle. There was one not known to him, a warrior who apparently had no standing among the bandits, yet who carried himself with the assurance born of prowess. Even as he ate, he wore a helmet with a lacquered leather drop, and Cormac caught the glint

of mail beneath his sheepskins; through his girdle was thrust a short wide-bladed sword, not curved as much as the Moslem scimitars. His powerful bowed legs, as well as the slanting black eyes set in an inscrutable brown face, betrayed the Mongol. He, like Cormac, was a newcomer; riding from the east he had arrived at Bab-el-Shaitan that night at the same time that the Irish warrior had ridden in from the south. His name, as given in guttural Turki, was Toghrul Khan. He started and flinched as a sudden scream faintly knifed the din; it came from somewhere above, and none of the feasters paid any attention. The Norman-Gael wondered at the absence of women-slaves. Many women had been stolen from raided villages and camel-trains, yet now there were apparently only men in Bab-el-Shaitan. This, to Cormac, held a sinister implication. He recalled dark tales, whispered under the breath, relating to the cryptic inhumanness of the robber chief--mysterious hints of foul rites in black caverns, of naked white victims writhing on hideously ancient altars, of blood-chilling sacrifices beneath the midnight moon. Cormac, alert to intrigue and counter-plot, had already decided that there were factions in Bab-el-Shaitan. He had noticed that di Strozza, Kai Shah, a lean Syrian scribe named Musa bin Daoud, and the wolfish Lur, Kadra Muhammad, stayed close to each other, while Nadir Tous had his own following among the lesser bandits, wild ruffians, mostly Persians and Armenians, and Kojar Mirza was surrounded by a number of even wilder mountain Kurds. The manner of the Venetian and Nadir Tous toward each other was of a wary courtesy that seemed to mask suspicion, while the Kurdish chief wore an aspect of truculent defiance toward both. All eyes turned toward him, for it was evident he had brought word from his master--not often did Skol Abdhur, wary as a hunted wolf, join his pack at their feasts. Has he said naught of an audience with me? He half-made to rise then sank back, his face, schooled to iron control, showing little of his rage. Mongol pride and Mongol wrath are beyond the ken of the Western mind, but Cormac knew that in his humiliation, the nomad hated him as much as he hated Jacob. But Cormac could count his friends on his fingers and his personal enemies by the scores. A few more foes made little difference and he paid no heed to Toghrul Khan as he followed the Jew up the broad stairs, and along a winding corridor to a heavy, metal-braced door before which stood, like an image carved of black basalt, a huge naked Nubian who held a two-handed scimitar whose five-foot blade was a foot wide at the tip. Jacob made a sign to the Nubian, but Cormac saw that the Jew was trembling and apprehensive. Only a little while ago he tore out the eyeball of a slave with his hands. The majordomo spoke swiftly to the mute, who swung the door open. Cormac pushed past his guide and strode across the threshold. And for the first time he looked on Skol Abdhur the Butcher, whose deeds of blood had already made him a semi-mythical figure. Erect, Skol would have towered half a head taller than Cormac, and though a huge belly marred the symmetry of his figure, he was still an image of physical prowess. His short, naturally black beard had been stained to a bluish tint; his wide black eyes blazed with a curious wayward look not altogether sane at times. He was clad in cloth-of-gold slippers whose toes turned up extravagantly, in voluminous Persian trousers of rare silk, and a wide green silken sash, heavy with golden scales, was wrapt about his waist. Above this he wore a sleeveless jacket, richly brocaded, open in front, but beneath this his huge torso was naked. His blue-black hair, held by a gemmed circlet of gold, fell to his shoulders, and his fingers were gleaming with jewels, while his bare arms were weighted with heavy gem-crusted armllets. Altogether his appearance was of such fantastic barbarism as to inspire in Cormac an amazement which in an ordinary man would have been a feeling of utmost horror. The apparent savagery of the giant, together with his fantastic finery which heightened rather than lessened the terror of his appearance, lent Skol Abdhur an aspect which set him outside the pale of ordinary humanity. The effect of an ordinary man, so garbed, would have been merely ludicrous; in the robber chieftain it was one of horror. Yet as Jacob salaamed to the floor in a very frenzy of obeisance, he was not sure that Skol looked any more formidable than the mail-clad Frank with his aspect of dynamic and terrible strength directed by a tigerish nature. And see that those fools downstairs have plenty of wine. The wretch was trembling in every limb as a wounded horse quivers, and the reason was apparent--a ghastly gaping socket from which the eye had been ruthlessly ripped. Blood still oozed from the rim to join the stains which blotched the twisted face and spotted the silken garments. Skol dressed his miserable slaves in apparel rich merchants might envy. And the wretch stood shivering in agony, yet not daring to move from his tracks, though with the pain-misted half-sight remaining him, he could scarcely see to fill the gem-crusted goblet Skol lifted. The man went

hastily, whimpering in agony. But it was not necessary. I would have wrung his neck after we had talked, so he could not repeat our words. Little use to try to explain to Skol that it was pity for the slave and not desire for secrecy that prompted him to have the man dismissed. Skol laughed wildly and emptied his goblet. Before the Turks came the Arabs held it and before them--the devil knows. It is old--the foundations were built in the long ago by Iskander Akbar--Alexander the Great. Then centuries later came the Roumi--the Romans--who added to it. Parthians, Persians, Kurds, Arabs, Turks--all have shed blood on its walls. Now it is mine, and while I live, mine it shall remain! I know its secrets--and its secrets," he cast the Frank a sly and wicked glance full of sinister meaning, "are more than most men reckon--even those fools Nadir Tous and di Strozza, who would cut my throat if they dared. Skol laughed and drank once more. They hate each other; I play them against one another. I hold the key to the plot. They do not trust each other enough to move against me. I am Skol Abdhur! Men are puppets to dance on my strings. And women"--a vagrant and curious glint stole into his eyes--"women are food for the gods," he said strangely. How came they here to Bab-el-Shaitan where the world ends? Ambition--intrigues--women--jealousy--hatred--now they serve the Butcher. And what brought you here, my brother? That you are an outlaw I know--that your life is forfeit to your people because you slew a certain emir of the Franks, one Count Conrad von Gonler.

Chapter 3 : The Blood of Belshazzar - Sinopsis y Precio | FNAC

"The Blood of Belshazzar" is a short story with a lot going on - too much, really, to keep track of it all. This isn't so much because of the plot but rather through the amount of characters and their long, multi-syllable names.

The Hiung-Nu Barbarians and The Yellow Turbans Essay The hellish crimson gem that a doomed diver had brought from a sunken city in the Persian Gulf had caused rivers of blood to flow wherever it went, maddening those who held it with a lust for conquest and slaughter - The Blood of Belshazzar

Archetypal Cursed Gem, Part Seven: Its origins seem to have been definitely pre-human, perhaps in the strange southern civilization whose existence is hinted in the annals of King Kull. In the west it was named for him. For generations its presence haunted the Persian kings. It briefly passed through the hands of Alexander the Great, who took it into India and lost it there. From India it travelled further east in the hands of a thief, and eventually arrived in China. The terrible first emperor, Shi-Huangdi, possessed it, as did the bloody rebel Xiang Yu. All sensible men and women hoped it would remain there until the world ended. Her tomb was despoiled of the cursed gem after a mere four decades. The Hiung-nu, or Xiongnu in the fashionable modern spelling, may have been essentially the same people as the Huns who menaced the late Roman Empire. Even the language they spoke is in considerable dispute among scholars. What is certain is that their first great leader known, Modu, was born about BCE. After killing his father Touman and taking over the tribes Touman ruled, at the age of twenty-five, he set out on a path of conquest, subdued and united all the Hiung-nu tribes much as Genghis Khan did centuries later, creating a vast empire centered on the Gobi - one of the largest that then existed. While Modu reigned, he fought a three-year war with the newly established Chinese Han Empire. He outfought the Han and compelled them to pay a humiliating yearly tribute to the Hiung-nu. When the Emperor Gao-tsu formerly known as Liu Bang, a rebel warlord of peasant origins led an army forty thousand strong against the Hiung-nu in BCE, he was besieged and defeated at Baideng. After that, a still more humiliating peace settlement included the condition that Chinese princesses be given regularly in marriage to the Chanyu of the nomads. Nevertheless, the Han viewed the arrangement as degrading. An embassy from the nomad empire came to his court at once, supposedly to settle details of tribute and trade agreements. The true purpose was to loot the tomb of Lu Zhi of the Blood of Belshazzar. The Chanyu of the nomads at that time was Gunchen, who had been reigning for twenty years. He credited the superstition that the Blood of Belshazzar brought victory and conquest. It inspired bloodlust, obsessive purpose and sometimes outright madness. Gunchen Chanyu never saw it. For the last fifteen years of his reign, chief after ambitious chief attacked his rivals, won or lost, slaughtered their tribes or had his slaughtered, formed alliances and treacherously broke them, while the ruby changed hands with the fortunes of war. Gunchen had other problems, too, as when he was lured into Chinese territory in BCE and almost caught in an ambush by Chinese soldiers. He escaped only because a traitorous Chinese officer sent him warning. After that the Chinese emperor abrogated the heqin arrangement, trade relations collapsed, and Hiung-nu caravans to China were attacked without regard for treaties. Ichise reigned for twelve years, during which Hiung-nu disunity increased and the Chinese had a number of victories over them. Chinese commanders actually penetrated deep into Hiung-nu lands on their campaigns, and in BCE nearly 20 thousand Hiung-nu were killed or captured. According to the Chinese records, over five years they killed or captured, Hiung-nu. It was all but forgotten in the Middle Kingdom. He repelled the Hiung-nu more effectively than any Chinese soldier before him had done, and gained control over the Tarim Basin. In over thirty years of constant fighting, outnumbered for most of that time, he played with great skill on the disunity among his opponents. This occurred in about 95 A. Shortly afterwards, in the capital of Luoyang, he died in A. Three years later the young Emperor He, who had come to the throne as a prepubescent boy, died too, and was succeeded by a baby who lived less than a year. The next emperor, An, was hardly an improvement. At first he was controlled by yet another hard-nosed Dowager Empress. After her death he paid much attention to women and wine, little to running the empire, which he left to corrupt eunuch officials. The ruby passed through the flabby hands of more than one of these creatures, and while their atrocities were many, they were generally carried out in secret. The Eastern Han

Empire went on declining amid debauch and the intrigues of eunuchs. Matters went from bad to worse over the next sixty years. The next emperor, Huandi, came to the throne at the age of 14 and lasted twenty-two years. A powerful and ruthless official, Liang Ji, the brother of yet another meddling dowager empress, had wrested the ruby from the palace eunuchs. He had been Grand Marshal of China since He was a violent autocrat who poisoned the child-emperor who preceded Huandi. Naturally enough, Huandi dreaded meeting the same fate, and while a young boy he was terrified of Liang Ji. As he grew older and stronger, he resolved to get rid of Liang Ji and his entire family. Ironically, it was Liang Ji himself who had gone against the wishes of other key officials and installed Huandi on the throne, with the connivance of his sister. He freely demonstrated how prepared he was to kill or have killed anybody who crossed him, so that he was feared even by the powerful palace eunuchs. We can probably add her name to the long list of women who surrendered their honor for the ruby. Her influence over Liang Ji was considerable, and so was her hunger for power. Liang Ji fell through giving way to the boundless arrogance and power-lust the ruby inspired. He strode in wearing his sword. Despite his all but unassailable position, he was nearly impeached, and did suffer a heavy fine and public humiliation. The powerful eunuch Yuan She foiled the assassins. The Emperor Huandi, now 27 years old, a man and not a boy, was enraged. He engineered a coup against Liang Ji in a dire secret pact with the five most powerful palace eunuchs. The emperor and the eunuchs had made their preparations well. Liang Ji and the salacious Sun Shou realized they were quite out of options, and committed suicide together. The people were overjoyed that Liang Ji and his wife were gone. Sadly, the five palace eunuchs who had planned the coup with the emperor, basking in his favor, engaged in corruption on an immense scale and used China as their personal hog trough, gaining vast fortunes. After Eunuch Dan died, a popular song about the other four declared: Ju sits by himself without match. Xu is a lying wolf. The emperor himself, who now held the Blood of Belshazzar, was corrupt and intolerant of any criticism. Those who offered it risked death. His name, and that of the emperor who followed him, became bywords for bad government and arbitrary punishments. There was a devastating earthquake in and a fearful locust plague two years later, leading people to believe heaven was angry with the emperor. Huandi had three empresses in succession. None gave him heirs. The first died, the second was divorced by him for drunkenness and evil sorcery, and the third became yet another powerful, meddling dowager empress after Huandi died in Of course the dowager and the eunuchs were in control from the beginning. Twenty years of eunuch rule followed, corruption and nepotism ran wild, the administration collapsed, and the people did the suffering. An efficient relief system no longer existed, so with each new drought or flood the number of landless, desperate peasants grew. Then a leader " and alleged sorcerer " named Zhang Jiao appeared in the commandery of Julu, which lay in the east of China, in what is today Pingxiang County. He led Jiao to a nearby cave and presented him with a three-volume work of sorcery which he charged him to use to save mankind, but warned that if he failed in dedication the consequences to himself would be dreadful. Whether Jiao really obtained the book in that way or not, he mastered its contents and became able to control the elements, the lightning, wind and rain. Gaining respect by curing diseases no other man could effectively treat, he added recruits to his secret society wherever he went. He even gained members in the imperial court at Luoyang. With these clandestine allies, and his magic, he was able to steal the ruby " his single greatest mistake. He should never have touched it. With his brothers Bao and Liang, he led the peasant rebellion that became known as the Yellow Turban Revolt. It began in A. The peasant rebels were on their own. The well-intentioned man of peace Jiao perhaps had been at first, no longer existed. The effect on his personality was similar. He summoned his followers and all the disaffected peasants of several provinces. Over , men joined him " and tens of thousands died of hunger, exposure or accident before they even reached his main encampment. That, however, was the beginning. The Grand Administrator of Nanyang was among those killed, and the Grand Administrator of Runan met inglorious defeat. The rebels considered they were sure to triumph. But it takes more than titles, and the Han administration, for one in such corrupt, inefficient decline, reacted promptly. The eight mountain passes around the capital had their garrisons strengthened and the fortifications increased. Three armies were sent out against the rebels. Jiao proved to be no general, even if he was a formidable sorcerer. Lu Zhi beat him in battle after battle. Thousands of his men were killed and he was forced into retreat, despite his ability to summon

storms and heal the wounded.

Chapter 4 : Belshazzar - Wikipedia

Cormac FitzGeoffrey is an Irish knight wandering the Near East after the Crusades. He arrives at a desert castle with a bad reputation as a thieves' stronghold, and meets a veritable United Nations of scoundrels.

Nanda Empire to China Essay introduction. But they were still great reads. Plenty was omitted after Alexander the Great lost it on his Indus campaign. Somewhere far to the east, we know, its gleams shone on a road of blood and rapine, and men slew men and dishonored women for it. For it, as of old, women gave up their virtue, men their lives and kings their crowns. His behavior became so arbitrary and violent that his army, which had all but worshipped him, was nigh to turning against him. He was never more fortunate than when the evil gem was struck from his breastplate, to be lost in the gore and dust of the battlefield. After he recovered, he agreed to turn back to Persia. His intended attack on the Nanda Empire never occurred. It covered most of northern India from west to east. The Nanda army numbered , infantry, probably 50, cavalry more, according to Plutarch , with thousands of chariots and trained war elephants. He had only a year or two to live. This was Dhana, known as Argames to the Greek chroniclers. Dhana never held, or even saw, the Blood of Belshazzar. Someone â€” a wounded soldier who escaped the battlefield, perhaps â€” found the gem and carried it away. The next person to possess it was a scholar, philosopher and wizard called Chanakya. He was a remarkable character even in the age that produced Socrates and Aristotle. He flourished at the great center of learning, Taxila in the western Punjab. Chanakya â€” also known as Kautilya â€” belonged to the Brahmin caste. There are somewhat sinister aspects common to the different versions of his legend. One asserts that he was born with a complete set of teeth, a sign that he would become a king â€” which was not fitting for a Brahmin. His teeth were therefore broken while he was an infant, and a prophecy was then made that while he would never be a king in his own person, he would rule through another. Chanakya mastered the complex and extensive scriptures, the Vedas, at a very early age. He had considerable knowledge of divination and astrology. He was well acquainted with Zoroastrian belief; the city of Taxila had been annexed to the Persian Empire by Darius the Great, though it became independent again later, and Chanakya undoubtedly corresponded with Persian magi and scholars. He may have been a Zoroastrian himself. Chanakya, though, was no unworldly theologian. He knew medicine, economics and commerce. Sagacious and subtle as the serpent of Eden, that was Chanakya â€” and he now had the Blood of Belshazzar. He became a king-maker and went looking for a potential king. This was a promising youth from the Magadha kingdom in the east, poor and obscure because his father, a chief, had been killed in a border dispute. Later he was sold to be a cowherd himself. His character and abilities, though, were evident even in those humble circumstances. Chanakya learned that this youth had met Alexander the Great, and been impressed even while loathing his attempt to conquer India. Later, while he was herding cattle, he had slept in the open and been approached by a lion, which instead of mauling him, gently licked him until he awakened â€” an omen of a kingly future. He became known to history as Chandragupta I, founder of the Mauryan Empire. Chanakya bought the lad and took him to Taxila. At that great centre of learning he was educated in military and political tactics. From one point of view, Chanakya rescued the lad from sorry circumstances and set his feet on a path to greatness. Chandragupta despised the current Nanda monarch, Dhana, for doing nothing while Alexander led his forces to the Indus, and vowed to secure the country against further invasions from outside. Beginning as a bandit, he collected mercenary soldiers and secured public support against the oppression of the Nandas. Their empire was sliding downhill in a riotous debauch of court extravagance and luxury in any case, and headed by a worthless nonentity in the person of Dhana. He was a courageous soldier who knew his business. Wearing the Blood of Belshazzar, the youth won a number of minor battles, earning a reputation. In fact Parvatka is very likely the Indian name of Porus. Porus had no reason to love the Nandas, and least of all Dhana. Alliance with him raised Chandragupta from a small-time brigand and rebel to the leader of an impressive army. It included Indo-Scythian Sakas, Yavanas or Greeks, Kambojas who appear to have been an essentially Iranian tribe and were certainly fierce warriors Kiratas a mountain people, noted archers, who worshipped Shiva and Bahlikas warlike as their friends the Kambojas, and famous breeders of superb horses. Chandragupta then confronted a

large part of the Nanda forces, with Bhaddasala in command. He broke them in a bloody, savage battle. The victory enabled him to control the Magadha kingdom on the Bay of Bengal, the original home of the Nandas and the base of their power. The Nanda army was immensely greater even then, but Chandragupta knew from his mentor how Alexander had many times defeated forces overwhelmingly superior in numbers. Leadership, determination and unity were what really counted. After that the Nanda Empire collapsed. The Maurya Empire, which was to become far greater in extent and accomplishment, was founded. All surviving members of the Nanda clan were killed to prevent any resurgence of their rule. Chandragupta was twenty years old. His contemporary Alexander had died by then. Chandragupta moved against the satraps Alexander had left behind in northern India, defeated them, and slew two of the more important. They met in a fierce battle on the Indus in which thousands of men died. Seleucus lost, concluded a treaty with Chandragupta, married his daughter to the young emperor, and had to cede vast territories west of the river. They included the Hindu Kush and most of modern Afghanistan. Chandragupta had gained his lordship of that immense territory by swimming through gore, like all owners of the ruby, who had to feed its appetite for blood or have it taste their own. It shone on the breast of the Persian king. A lure and a maddening goad. And down through the crimson, changing years It draws men, soul and brain; They drown their lives in blood and tears. And they break their hearts in vain. The daughter of Seleucus was not his chief wife or empress; her name was Durdhara. She came to a gruesome end by accident, or so the legends say. Poison was a favorite way of assassinating rulers. Queen Durdhara, pregnant and some time away from giving birth, ate some of a poisoned meal prepared for her husband. Chanakya entered the room and saw what was happening. He instantly cut off her head with a sword before she could fully swallow the food in her mouth, to save the baby in her womb. He slit open her belly and took the baby out. By his sorcery he kept the child in the stomach of a goat for the remaining term, then gave him to a female slave to nourish. Chandragupta appears not to have punished or dismissed his sinister attendant. Circa BCE he led his vast armies southward, driven by the insatiable hunger for conquest the red stone inspired. He crossed the Vindhya Mountain Range and subjugated the Deccan. Eventually he had mastered all of India except south beyond the Deccan and the kingdom of Kalinga in the east modern Orissa. His army at its greatest numbered over half a million men. There is a scurrilous and unreliable legend that his son Bindusara assassinated him. It just might be true. The southern tip of the subcontinent, Ceylon, and Kalinga, remained unconquered. He gained the title Amitraghata slayer of enemies , and that must have had some cause. Bindusara, like his father and other Indian monarchs, kept a harem. His chief wife, the queen, was evidently named Dharma. Another was Subhadraangi, daughter of Champa. The Asokavadana, or Legend of Asoka, tells how a palace intrigue discredited her and kept her away from the king. Later she was vindicated, reconciled with Bindusara, and bore him a son " the famous Asoka the Great. On becoming the third Maurya Emperor, he inherited it. Like all princes, he belonged to the Kshatriya caste and was trained as a warrior. He appears to have been exceptional. His skill as a swordsman became famous while he was a youth, and as a hunter, he was said to have killed a lion with a wooden staff. These are typical royal hero-tales, of course. Hercules, Samson, Gilgamesh and King David are all credited with killing lions single-handed. Forceful and fierce, he was sent by his father to curb riots in one discontented province Avanti, in the west, near the Gulf of Cambay. Ujjain, in modern Madhya Pradesh, was the capital of the Avanti Kingdom and an important holy city. It marked the prime meridian for ancient Hindu geographers, just as Greenwich does in the western world today. The son of a mere subordinate queen, Asoka swiftly rid himself of his better-born brother, whose claim to the throne was greater.

Chapter 5 : Cormac Fitzgeoffrey - Wikipedia

ONCE it was called Eski-Hissar, the Old Castle, for it was very ancient even when the first Seljuks swept out of the east, and not even the Arabs, who rebuilt that crumbling pile in the days of Abu Bekr, knew what hands reared those massive bastions among the frowning foothills of the Taurus.

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