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Haggard ILLUSTRATED: Gordon Browne--  
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# **Benita: An African Romance, by H. Rider Haggard**

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H. Rider Haggard, Gordon Browne

Benita: An African Romance is a 1906 novel by H Rider Haggard. An adventurous trader, it is said, hearing the legend of a great treasure buried a party of Portuguese hundreds of years before, as a last resource attempted its discovery by the help of a mesmerist. A child was put into a trance, and gave his mesmerist details of the adventures and death of the unhappy Portuguese men and women. With much other detail, the boy described the burial of the great treasure and its exact situation so accurately that the white man and the mesmerist were able to dig for and find the place "where it had been" -- for the bags were gone, swept out by the floods of the river.. Sir Henry Rider Haggard,( 22 June 1856 – 14 May 1925), known as H. Rider Haggard, was an English writer of adventure novels set in exotic locations, predominantly Africa, and a pioneer of the Lost World literary genre. He was also involved in agricultural reform throughout the British Empire. His stories, situated at the lighter end of Victorian literature, continue to be popular and influential. In 1875, Haggard's father sent him to what is now South Africa to take up an unpaid position as assistant to the secretary to Sir Henry Bulwer, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Natal. In 1876 he was transferred to the staff of Sir Theophilus Shepstone, Special Commissioner for the Transvaal. It was in this role that Haggard was present in Pretoria in April 1877 for the official announcement of the British annexation of the Boer Republic of the Transvaal. Indeed, Haggard raised the Union flag and read out much of the proclamation following the loss of voice of the official originally entrusted with the duty. At about that time, Haggard fell in love with Mary Elizabeth "Lilly" Jackson, whom he intended to marry once he obtained paid employment in Africa. In 1878 he became Registrar of the High Court in the Transvaal, and wrote to his father informing him that he intended to return to England and marry her. His father forbade it until Haggard had made a career for himself, and by 1879 Jackson had married Frank Archer, a well-to-do banker. When Haggard eventually returned to England, he married a friend of his sister, Marianna Louisa Margitson (1859–1943) in 1880, and the couple travelled to Africa together. They had a son named Jack (who died of measles at age 10) and three daughters, Angela, Dorothy and Liliás. Liliás Rider Haggard became an author, edited *The Rabbit Skin Cap* and *I Walked By Night*, and wrote a biography of her father entitled *The Cloak That I Left* (published in 1951). Gordon Frederick Browne (15 April 1858 – 27 May 1932) was an English artist and children's book illustrator in the late 19th century and early 20th century. He was born in Banstead, the younger son of notable book illustrator Hablot Knight Browne (who as "Phiz" illustrated books by Charles Dickens). He studied art at the Heatherley School of Fine Art and South Kensington Schools and started to receive professional commissions while still at college. From the 1880s, Browne was one of Britain's most prolific illustrators, his work appearing in newspapers, magazines and many books by children's authors including Frederic William Farrar, G.A. Henty, Juliana Horatia Ewing, Andrew Lang, Talbot Baines Reed, L. T. Meade, Catherine Christian and E. Nesbit. Browne worked in watercolour and pen and ink. He was a member of the Royal Institute of Painters in Water Colours (RI) and the Royal Society of British Artists (RBA). He died in Richmond, London in 1932.

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