

# Talbot Mundy

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**Talbot Mundy** (born **William Lancaster Gribbon**) (April 23, 1879 – August 5, 1940) was an English writer. He also wrote under the pseudonym **Walter Galt**.

Born in London, at age 16 he ran away from home and began an odyssey in India, Africa, and other parts of the Near and Far East. By age 29, he had begun using the name Talbot Mundy, and a year later arrived in the United States, starting his writing career in 1911.

His most famous book is *King—of the Khyber Rifles*, which is set in India under British Occupation. The long buildup to the introduction to Yasmini and the scenes among the outlaws in the Khinjan Caves clearly influenced fantasy writers Robert E. Howard and Leigh Brackett.

His related JimGrim series, which has mystical overtones and part of which is available over the web from theosophical sites, ran in *Adventure* magazine before book publication. Mundy was associated with Theosophy's movement and helped popularize the legend of the Nine Unknown Men in the West.

He wrote many other books and stories, including *Hira Singh* and a number of stories about Tros of Samothrace, a Greek freedom fighter who aided Britons and Druids in their fight against Julius Caesar.

**William Lancaster Gribbon** best known as **Talbot Mundy** also used or was known by the following names:

"Makundu Viazi ("White Arse")"

"Talbot Chetwynd Miller Mundy (Son of Earl of Shrewsbury)"

"Thomas Hartley"

"Walter Galt"

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## History

**Talbot Mundy** was born William Lancaster Gribbon in London, 1879. His father was Walter Galt Gribbon, an English businessman, and his mother was Margaret Lancaster Gribbon of Nanty-Glo, in Wales. Young William seemed destined from the start to be the family "black sheep," especially when compared with his younger brother Walter Harold Gribbon (1881 - 1944), who became a distinguished soldier

and diplomat. It seems ironic that Harold Gribbon was just the sort of heroic figure that Willie would later portray in his early fiction.

After a singularly undistinguished record at Rugby School, Willie ran off to Germany and joined a circus. After his return from Germany, William Gribbon left Britain to work as a relief worker in Baroda in India. He arrived in March 1899, and worked in Baroda for a little over a year when he was struck by a bout of malaria, and returned to England in April 1900.(1)

On 24 March 1901, he returned to Bombay, and worked with press credentials. Thus far no record of his work as a reporter has surfaced. In his own vague autobiography he claimed to have covered "a little native war" there. This was identified by Ellis as probably the "Mahsud Blockade" (November 1901-March 1902) in what is now the Northwest Territories of Pakistan. If this were true, it would have provided a good background for his story "The Chaplain of the Mulingars"l

(*Adventure*; March 1912), and the novel *King—of the Khyber Rifles* (1916).

Then comes the first period of "tramping around the Empire." Mundy later claimed to have gone tiger-shooting, then took a trip to Afghanistan, "though I hadn't gone very far over the Himalayas before the Government turned me back."(2)

Then he claims to have traveled to China, Singapore and the Straits Settlements, then sailed to the Persian gulf on a tramp steamer. "I also cooked up a gorgeous scheme then for a trip with another man up through India to Siberia. .."(3)

He also claimed to have served in the Boer War, which was already over by this time. About all that can be said for much of this is that some of it is moonshine, but some of it may not be. Sometime in 1902, Gribbon surfaced in Bombay, where he met Kathleen Steele, who was to become Mrs Mundy #1, and returned with her to England, where they

were married on 31 January 1903.

Even today, it comes as a bit of a surprise to learn that the author who wrote so much about India was actually there such a short time. He was in Africa for much longer, a little less than 6 years. But it was during his African period that things began to go very badly for William Gribbon.

Shortly, William Gribbon and Kathleen Steele made their way to South Africa, where a series of irregular stock transactions and bad business dealings forced him to send Kathleen back to England. Thus begins the second period of "tramping around the Empire." Mundy's account of this in his autobiography tells a tale of tramp steamers to Australia, ship jumping in exotic ports, and traveling on foot. As with the first period of wandering, it seems likely that some of this was true, and some was not. I have a suspicion that he may have actually returned to the familiar lands of India where he may have felt safer until things cooled down in

South Africa.

Now calling himself Thomas Hartley, he returned to Africa in late 1904 and began a career as an ivory poacher and was often in trouble with the authorities. He was arrested and served time on a road gang in British East Africa (now Kenya) for bad debts. Thereafter he worked as a town clerk of the town of Kisumu in British East Africa. But young Gribbon was not able to stay out of trouble for long. In 1907 he became involved in an adulterous affair with Mrs. Inez Craven (a rather notorious woman in her day), which ultimately resulted in them both serving 6 months for vagrancy in British East Africa, and being deported as undesirables to Bombay, India. It was during this period that Gribbon began using Talbot Mundy as an alias.

Divorced from his first wife, and married to Inez, Mundy arrived in New York City, September 1909. After being almost beaten to death by thieves in New York's "Gas House

District," Mundy seems to have settled down to make a living for himself as a writer.

He became an American citizen under the name Talbot Mundy on 9 December 1916. Not surprisingly, Mundy did much to obscure the facts surrounding his colorful early life, and some of the facts of his early history were not known until 1984 when Peter Barresford Ellis published his biography *The Last Adventurer*.

Mundy's first story, "A Transation in Diamonds," was published in *The Scrap Book* in February 1911.(4) In April of that same year he published his first non-fiction article, "Pig-sticking in India" in *Adventure*. His first story for *Adventure* was "The Blooding of the Queen's Own," about the Crimean War, in the December 1911 edition, and followed it with 16 stories and 4 articles in 1912. One of these, "The Soul of a Regiment" (February 1912) remained one of *Adventure's* most popular stories, and remains the most reprinted of all Mundy short stories. In June



of 1912, Mundy and Inez were divorced. Shortly after Mundy married Harriette Rosemary Strafer. It was through Rosemary that Mundy became involved with Christian Science.

During the period of the Great War, Mundy turned out a series of adventure tales for the pulp magazines, finally forging his life-long association with *Adventure* magazine, which ranked with *Argosy* as publishers of higher quality adventure tales, sometimes writing under the pseudonym "Walter Galt" (his father's first and middle name). In January 1914, he introduced one of his most memorable female protagonists, Princess Yasmini, to readers in "A Soldier and a Gentleman." He produced his first novel *Rung Ho* (Scribners's, 1914), serialized under Mundy's preferred title, *For the Peace of India*, in *Adventure* from February to April of the same year. He also began a series of eight novelette length tales about Dick Anthony, a Scotsman fighting Russians in Persia. These rousing tales, such as "The Sword of

Ishkander," would catch the imagination of a young Robert E. Howard, who would later use them as "templates" for some of his own tales of Conan the Barbarian.

In 1915 Mundy produced his second novel, *The Winds of the World*, serialized June through August in *Adventure*, and published first in England by Cassel, and later in 1917 by Bobbs-Merrill Co. But it would be the publication of his third novel, *King—of the Khyber Rifles*, that would cement his reputation as a great adventure writer. *King* was published in *Everybody's* magazine in a nine-part serial beginning in May 1916. *Everybody's* hired the great illustrator Joseph Clement Coll, who had illustrated such best selling writers as A. Conan Doyle, A. Merritt, and Sax Rohmer to profusely illustrate the tale. It was published in book form in November of that same year by the Bobbs-Merrill Co. Ironically enough, the title page of first edition spelled his name "Talbutt", much to Mundy's displeasure. There were many subsequent reprintings, and it remains

Mundy's most famous and best loved work.

The publication of *King* also began a long successful relationship between Mundy and the Bobbs-Merrill company that would last fifteen years. After the publication of *King*, Bobbs-Merrill brought out their own edition of *Winds of the World* (1916) adding illustrations from Joseph Coll. This surely delighted Mundy, who once wrote: "There was never a better illustrator in the history of the world! If the world were mine I would give this guy Coll half of it."

In 1919, Mundy serialized *On the Trail of Tippoo Tib*, a novel about treasure hunting and ivory poaching in East Africa, which Mundy always claimed was the most autobiographical of his novels. Recent discoveries about his life bear out this claim. Published in book form as *The Ivory Trail* (Bobbs-Merrill, 1919), it is probably the best of his "Africans."

In March 1919, Mundy's involvement with

the Christian Science movement would lead to one of the most interesting and fruitful periods of his life. William Denison McCracken, an editor of several Christian Science publications, was organizing an Anglo-American Society's relief effort for Palestine, and convinced Mundy to become involved, and eventually its president. Because of this new project, Mundy published very little in 1920. In January, "In Aleppo Bazaar" was published in *Adventure*, and in January "The Eye of Zeitun" appeared in *Romance*. Retitled *The Eye of Zeitoon* when it was published in book form by Bobbs-Merrill in March, it focused on contemporary troubles between Turkey and Armenia.

In 5 February 1920, Talbot Mundy, President of the Anglo-American Society of America arrived in Jerusalem. He also met and fell in love with a widow named Sally Ames, who would eventually become Mrs. Mundy #4. During this period Mundy worked mainly as de facto editor for the Jerusalem News, which

entailed doing everything from proof reading to reporting. One of his biggest coups was that he was invited to go to Damascus to interview King Feisal. On another occasion, Mundy interviewed the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, which may have actually been a diplomatic mission for the British authorities. In June, Talbot and Sally visited Egypt, and returned to New York in August.(5)

Returning from the Mid-east, Mundy threw himself into one of the most productive periods of his life. He published *The Guns of the Gods* in *Adventure* (March - May, 1921) and for Bobbs-Merrill (June 1921), which was actually finished before the Palestine adventure. Beginning in November 1921, Mundy began publishing a series of stories around James Schuyler Grim, an intelligence operative in the Mid-east. This Mid-East cycle of the Jimgrim stories began with *The Adventure of El Kerak* in 10 November 1921 issue of *Adventure*, and continued unbroken to *Khufu's Real Tomb* in the 10 October 1922 issue of *Adventure*.

Much of the speculation about Talbot Mundy's possible connections to British intelligence organizations is probably a result of his creation of Jimgrim. Mundy told the readers of *Adventure* that Jimgrim was based on a real person, "the first American ever commissioned in the British Army without going through the farce of pretending to be a Canadian." Over the years some have suspected that Mundy's model might have been an American named John Whiting who worked for the British in Jerusalem during the post war period. Others have suggested that Jimgrim is based on T. E. Lawrence, or even Mundy himself. It is quite unlikely that Mundy would have worked for the British in Palestine during this period. He was solidly in the Anti-British faction of the Anglo-American Society of America, and was highly critical of British policies in Palestine. Whatever the answer to this puzzle, there is little doubt that Mundy's Mid-east Jimgrim tales have a distinct air of reality about them, recognized by others who were in the region

at the time. *The King in Check* published in *Adventure* on 10 July 1922, but not published in book form until the early 1930s, is certainly based on Mundy's own personal experiences with King Feisal.

Almost exactly one year after Mundy had begun his Mid-east cycle, he began to create a kind of literary fugue, slowly moving the Jimgrim character from the Mid-east to India. "The Gray Mahatma," (retitled *The Caves of Terror* in book form) which appeared in the 10 November issue of *Adventure*, moves the Jimgrim supporting character Jeff Ramsdam to India, where he comes into contact with characters like Athelstan King and Princess Yasmini from earlier Indian stories. This novel is one of the first to clearly show a more mystical turn of mind for the writer. By summer of that year Mundy had written a Jimgrim novel with an even more mystical orientation, which was eventually known as *The Nine Unknown* when it was published in *Adventure* in March and April of 1923, and in book form (Bobbs Merrill, March 1923).

In early 1922, Mundy moved to San Diego California. It was here that he met Katherine Tingley, the head of a splinter branch of the Theosophical Society which maintained a community at Point Loma, outside San Diego. On New Years Day, 1923 Mundy was admitted to the society. It was there in late 1923, and early 1924 that Mundy began writing what many believe to be his finest novel, *Om, the Secret of Ahbor Valley*, while a guest at Tingley's private residence in the compound.

In July 1924, Mundy married Sally Ames after a Mexican divorce from Rosemary. *Om* was serialized in the October and November issues of *Adventure*, and was published by Bobbs-Merrill to better than usual reviews. Mundy became a regular contributor to the group's publication, *The Theosophical Path*, for the next five years.

The California period also produced one of the most unusual of Mundy's works, *Her*



*Reputation*. The novel is actually the result of a collaboration between Mundy and screen writer Jane Wray who wrote under the professional name, Bradley King. The romantic melodrama was produced by First National Pictures in 1923, and Mundy's novel was issued as a "Photoplay Edition." by Bobbs-Merrill in 1923 (issued in Britain by Hutchinson as *The Bubble Reputation*, 1923).

For some time Bobbs Merrill had been pressuring Mundy to produce a "blockbuster," a novel which would cement Mundy as a bestselling author (and sell lots of copies for them). Mundy had promised them a novel about Cleopatra to fulfill that request. In 1925 he surprised them by producing the mammoth Tros saga, which began running in *Adventure* in 10 February 1925. Tros of Samothrace had originally been conceived as a supporting character in Mundy's projected Cleopatra novel, but now had taken on a life of his own. Bobbs-Merrill became increasingly distressed by Mundy's failure to deliver the Cleopatra novel.

Mundy's entire output for *Adventure* for 1925 was the serialized adventures of Tros of Samothrace. When the final episode finally appeared in the February 1926 issue Mundy had delivered a massive epic of the ancient world which is hardly rivaled even today. When finally published as *Tros of Samothrace* ten years later, by the Appleton-Century Co (1934), it weighed in at an amazing 949 pages.

In the summer of 1926 Mundy became involved in the finances of an oil drilling operation in Baja California, which would eventually turn sour. It also took much of his time, and his writing suffered. He should have heard the words "Mexican oil deal" and run away, but would pay dearly for not doing so. At the same time Mundy was supposed to join Katharine Tingley on one of her world tours, but was detained in Mexico with business concerns. Tingley was quite angry with him, and even publicly chastised him in *The Theosophical Path*.(6) Mundy may have

had good reasons for wanting to avoid appearing in the spotlight in Europe and India, where he might have been recognized, possibly damaging his special relationship with Tingley. From then on there was a certain cooling of interest between Mundy and the Point Loma group.

In June 1926 *Adventure* serialized a new Jimgrim novel, *Ramsden*, which was the second of Mundy's novels with Tibetan themes. Bobbs-Merrill published it in book form that same year as *The Devil's Guard*, as did Hutchinson in Britain (as *Ramsden*). In June of 1927 Arthur Hoffman was replaced as editor of *Adventure*, and from then on the number of Mundy stories which appeared there began to drop, and the number which appeared in the rival *Argosy* began to increase.

April of 1928, the oil drilling venture in Mexico went bad, probably due to one of the other partners in the scheme being a con man. Mundy was forced into debt, and it soured

relations with former *Adventure* editor Arthur Hoffman who had also invested in the venture. Shortly after, his marriage with Sally also soured. At this point, Mundy left California and moved to New York City, to rebuild his life and his fortunes.

Mundy quickly took up with Theda Allen Conkey, who went by her writing name, Dawn Allen. Both met well-known astrologer Evangeline Adams, and on 29 July 1928 Mundy introduced Dawn to Natacha Rambova. This famous lady was the former Mrs. Rulolph Valentino, and had a long career as a ballerina, clothing designer, art director, and later became a talented Egyptologist and archaeologist.(7) Mundy may have met Rambova in Hollywood, or through her mother, who was also associated with the Point Loma Theosophists.(8) Rambova was also a dedicated Theosophist, and it was probably through her that Mundy and Dawn were introduced to other mystical luminaries of New York. Dawn would later describe Rambova as one of the best friends

she ever had, and the two remained very close until Rambova's death in 1966.(9)

During a period when Mundy and Dawn lived in Greenwich Village, Rambova introduced them to the medium George Wehner, and the three of them began to host seances on a regular basis. Mundy also tried unsuccessfully to get Bobbs-Merrill to publish Wehner's book *A Curious Life*, which was eventually published by Horace Liveright, in 1930, with Mundy proving a glowing introduction. Mundy would later come to regret this when Wehner's mediumistic talents turned out to be somewhat less than advertised.(10)

In February 1929, Bobbs-Merrill published *Queen Cleopatra* with no magazine version serialized. But disputes over the long promised novel had put a strain on author and publisher, and the relationship continued to worsen into the early 30s. On 9 May 1929, *The Black Watch*, John Ford's talkie version of *King of the Kyber Rifles*, premiered in

New York City with Mundy in the audience. He hated it, and had some pretty unpleasant things to say about Myrna Loy (who played Yasmini) and director John Ford. The film made a shambles of the original novel, but was downright faithful compared to the 1953 remake with Tyrone Power.

11 July 1929, Katherine Tingley died in Europe, and Mundy's association with the Point Loma group came to an end. Shortly afterward, Rambova suggested that Mundy and Dawn join her in renting rooms in the newly completed Master Building at 310 Riverside Drive in New York.(11) This famous location (remembered today as the model for the sinister building in the movie Ghostbusters) was part of the far reaching plans of Russian artist and mystic Nicholas Roerich. The first three floors were reserved for the Nicholas Roerich Museum, while the rest was supposed to provide reasonable lodgings for artists, writers and other creative types.

While it is not known how well the Mundy and Dawn knew Nicholas, it is clear that the Mundys and Rambova knew Nicholas's younger son Svetislov, who was often present at the seances with George Wehner.(12) The Mundys were present at the opening of the Roerich Museum on 17 October 1929. Dawn would later claim that Talbot made a trip to London in late 1930, to help arrange a British visa so that Nicholas could travel to India. (13) About this same time Mundy's final Jimgrim tale, *The King of the World*, began its serialization in *Adventure* (November 1931 -- February 1931. Retitled *Jimgrim* in book form (The Century Co., March 1931), it includes a number of fictional borrowings from Roerich's experiences while traveling in Tibet and central Asia.

In October 1930, Bobbs-Merrill published Mundy's novel *Black Light*. It was the last Mundy book published by that publisher. From Mundy's viewpoint it must have looked as though their British counterpart, the

Hutchinson Co., was doing a much better job on his behalf. Besides publishing *Black Light*, and almost everything Mundy wrote during the period, Hutchinson also reprinted most of the early Jimgrim novels, such as *The Hundred Days* (1930), *The Marriage of Meldrun Strange* (1930), *The Woman Ayisha* (1930), and *Jimgrim and Allah's Peace* (1933) which Bobbs-Merrill had turned down repeatedly. During this period The Century Co. and its successors would replace Bobbs-Merrill as Mundy's primary book publisher.

31 July 1931 Talbot Mundy married Dawn Allen, after a Mexican divorce from Sally. In 1932 Talbot and Dawn traveled to Europe, eventually staying for some time with Natacha Rambova in Mallorca. Here Mundy wrote the first draft of his mystical philosophy, which he called *Thus Spake the Devil*, that would eventually be published as *I Say Sunrise*. Many of the dialogues in the work are reputed to be based on actual arguments between the liberal mystic Mundy and the Falangist, Catholic Alvaro de Urzaiz,



Rambova's aristocratic Spanish husband.(14)

After a prolonged stay, the Mundys traveled to Britain where Dawn gave birth to a girl on 26 February 1933. Unfortunately the child died shortly after birth. Mundy would also be reunited with The Gribbon family, possibly including his brother Harold.

Meanwhile, in August 1932, Universal Pictures released *Jungle Mystery*, a 12-part serial based on Mundy's novel *The Ivory Trail*, with Tom Tyler, Noah Berry Jr. and Cecilia Parker. In 1935, the serial was re-edited and released as a feature film in Britain.

1934 saw a whole series of Mundy books published, but most of them were reprints or rewrites of earlier magazine tales. The most significant of these was the simultaneous release of *Tros of Samothrace*, which was the revised version of the Tros tales published in *Adventure* almost a decade before. The only new Mundy novel published that year was

*Full Moon* which appeared in *The American Weekly*, beginning in October. It appeared in book form by Appleton Century in early 1935 (retitled *There Was a Door* by Hutchinson).

In 1935, Mundy published the last of the Tros saga by serializing *The Purple Pirate in Adventure* (May through August). In October and November, Appleton-Century and Hutchinson issued it in book form. Mundy's book and magazine output was decreasing due to health problems and the advent of a new rival media and market. Beginning in the spring of 1936, Mundy became the script writer for radio's "Jack Armstrong: The All-American Boy."

In July 1937 Mundy produced *The Thunder Dragon Gate* for *The American Weekly* (eight parts beginning 24 January). Appleton-Century produced it in hardback in April, and Hutchinson followed in June. It is a rather long tale of intrigue in Tibet. Shortly thereafter, in October 1937 Mundy Published *East and West* (Appleton-Century), his

penultimate novel, set in India (retitled *Diamonds See in the Dark* by Hutchinson). There was no magazine version.

In 1938 Mundy relocated to Anna Maria Island of Bradenton Florida, where he completed his last novel. On 15 April 1938 MacLean's (Canada) published the serial version of *Old Ugly-Face* (three parts beginning April 15), a lengthy sequel to *The Thunder Dragon Gate*. Mundy heavily revised the novel in long hand before it was published by Appleton-Century in February of 1940, and by Hutchinson in June. The novel is a rather long tale of intrigue, involving Nazis in Tibet. It was the last book published by Mundy in his lifetime.

On 5 August 1940 Talbot Mundy died from complications associated with diabetes. Mundy's final book, *I Say Sunrise*, revised under Dawn's aegis, (15) was finally published by British publisher Andrew Dakers in 1947. It would not appear in America until Milton F. Wells published it in

1949. This was part of the work of his personal philosophy, *Thus Spake the Devil*, which Mundy had begun to write in Mallorca, in 1932.

In the years since Mundy's death interest in his books has been spotty. Shortly after Gottfried de Purucker assumed leadership of the Point Loma Theosophists, Mundy novels like *Om* and *Queen Cleopatra* were dropped from their approved reading lists.(16) However this did not keep his books from being popular with Theosophists of other groups. As a used book dealer, I am very familiar with Mundy volumes which turn up with resale stickers indicating that they were sold by various Theosophical mail order houses and bookstores. A complete collection of Mundy's "theosophical thrillers" was apparently highly prized in Theosophical circles.(17)

In 1945 The Oriental Club of Philadelphia reprinted *The Devil's Guard*, with a forward by Milton F. Welles. This was followed in

1950 by a reprint of *Old Ugly-Face* by the same publisher. Adventure occasionally reprinted his stories, but the great age of the Pulps was over. A few of his better known stories appeared in anthologies.

Around 1953 there was a flurry of Mundy editions in paperback editions. This was probably sparked by the release of the Twentieth Century Fox Cinemascope production of *King—of the Khyber Rifles* in 1953. Beacon Books published *King—of the Khyber Rifles* in 1953, with "hot passages" added, apparently to cash in on the film. The Gilbertson Company produced a comic book version of *King—of the Khyber Rifles* for their Classics Illustrated series in the same year. Royal Books reprinted *W. H.* as *The Queen's Warrant*, *The Ivory Trail* as *Trek East*, *Jimgrim* as *Jimgrim Sahib*, and *The King in Check* as *Affair in Araby* in their Universal Giant Series all in 1953.

After the mini-revival of 1953 relatively few of Mundy's novels were published through

out the remainder of the 1950s. The Gnome Press, a publisher which catered to science fiction and fantasy fandom, managed to keep *Tros of Samothrace* and *The Purple Pirate* in print for their short duration. In 1962 Ace Books trotted out *Queen Cleopatra*, in order to cash in on the publicity of the movie *Cleopatra*. The cover illustration showed a Cleopatra obviously redrawn from a publicity still of Elizabeth Taylor in costume. Castle Books' Xanadu Library produced a undated trade paperback edition of *Om*, which seems to have been mostly sold through the Theosophical Society.

The late 60s saw the second major Mundy revival, this time sparked by general interest in eastern and alternate religions within the "counterculture" of the times. Avon Books reprinted the entire Tros of Samothrace saga in 6 volumes, as well as *Om* and three of the Jimgrim novels, *The Nine Unknown*, *The Devil's Guard* and *Jimgrim*. The short lived Centaur Books produced *Caesar Dies* in the early 70s. Following the abysmal reprinting

of the Tros saga by Zebra Books in the early 80s, most of Mundy's books lapsed out of print. Carroll and Graf, a perpetual reprint house, kept *King—of the Khyber Rifles* and *Om* in print. Meanwhile, Point Loma Books reprinted *Om*, while mystically oriented Ariel Press issued erratic printings of *Black Light*. Occult publisher DeVores continued to carry *I Say Sunrise* on their backlist.

Perhaps the single most important revival came when fan oriented publisher Donald Grant issued *King—of the Khyber Rifles*, complete with all the wonderful Joseph Clement Coll illustrations which had originally graced the magazine edition, in 1977. This seemed to have rekindled interest and paved the way for Grant's own bio-bibliography *Talbot Mundy: Messenger of Destiny* (1983) and Peter Berresford Ellis' biography *The Last Adventurer* (1984). This may have finally borne fruit among a younger generation of comic and pulp fans such as artists Mark Wheatley and Frank Cho, whose Insight Studios published a lavishly

illustrated edition of two of Mundy's early Jimgrim tales in *Jimgrim and the Devil at Ludd* in 1999. It remains to be seen whether their projected reprinting of the entire Mundy corpus will find support, but it may well be a good sign, whatever happens.

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Notes cited by R.T. Gault

1. Unless otherwise noted most of the biographical information in this work comes from Peter Berresford Ellis, *The Last Adventurer: The Life of Talbot Mundy* (1984), which is used uncited throughout. However, it is now clear that Ellis's groundbreaking work is now dated, and newer information has come to light. I have only cited material that adds to or supersedes information in Ellis. I would also like to thank Brian Taves, who is currently working on a new biography of Mundy, for his factual corrections and helpful guidance.



2. Talbot Mundy, "Autobiography," in Donald M. Grant, ed., *Talbot Mundy, Messenger of Destiny* (1983), p. 20; Mundy's autobiographical sketch first appeared in *Adventure* magazine, 3 April 1916.

3. Talbot Mundy, "Autobiography," p. 20.

4. All bibliographic information is keyed to Donald W. Grant, ed., *Talbot Mundy: Messenger of Destiny* (1983), though the earlier bibliographic work of Bradford M. Day's *Bibliography of Adventure: Mundy, Burroughs, Rohmer, Haggard* (1964) has also been consulted.

5. Brian Taves, "From Jerusalem to Jimgrim, Talbot Mundy and the Middle East," introduction to *Jimgrim and the Devil at Ludd* (1999), pp 5-17; gives an extremely detailed account of Mundy's activities in the Mid-east.

6. Brian Taves, "Philosophy into Popular

Fiction: Talbot Mundy and The Theosophical Society," *Southern California Quarterly* (Summer 1985), p. 168.

7. William McGuire, *Bollingen: An Adventure in Collection the Past* (2nd ed., 1989), pp 90-94, and 233-36; contains a lively account of Rambova's later intellectual quests.

8. Michael Morris, *Madam Valentino: The Many Lives of Natacha Rambova* ( 1991), p. 174. Natacha also had another area of common ground with Mundy, in that she was born Winifred Shaughnessy in Salt Lake City in 1897.

9. Dawn Mundy Provost, "Talbot Mundy" in Grant ed., *Talbot Mundy: Messenger of Destiny* (1983), p. 80.

10. Michael Morris, *Madam Valentino*, pp. 196-97

11. Morris, *Madame Valentino*, p 197.

12. Morris, *Madame Valentino*, p 198.

13. Dawn Mundy Provost, "Talbot Mundy," p. 86.

14. . Morris, *Madame Valentino*, p 203

15. Brian Taves, "Philosophy into Popular Fiction," p. 174. In an interview with Taves in 1980, Dawn said that the original manuscript of *Thus Spake the Devil* was massive, and that *I Say Sunrise* was her selections from it.

16. Taves, "Philosophy into Popular Fiction," p. 177. In 1980, the Point Loma group began reprinting Om, so one assumes that the proscription was long over when this happened.

17. William McGuire, Bollingen, p 151; In the 1950s, Olga Froede-Kapteyn, Theosophist and founder of the legendary Eranos Conferences apparently introduced a

young Mircea Eliade to Mundy "From her "strange and incongruous" library Olga loaned Eliade theosophical thrillers by Talbot Mundy."

## Biography

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- Ellis, Peter Berresford, Introduction, *Om, The Secret of Ahbor Valley* (Point Loma Pubs., 1980),
- "Willie - Rogue and Rebel," in Grant ed., *Talbot Mundy, Messenger of Destiny*.
- Mundy, Talbot, *I Say Sunrise* (DeVorss & Co., 1964)
- Taves, Brian, Afterword, *Om, The Secret of Ahbor Valley* (Point Loma Pubs., 1993).

- "Talbot Mundy, Philosopher of Adventure", *The Fantasy Collector* # 229 & 230, April and May 1991.
- The Life of Talbot Mundy: The Cartoon Version - A Ripley-like feature called Above The Crowd, drawn by Skookie Allen for the New York Daily Mirror, circa 1928(?); a biographical cartoon largely made up of fictional episodes in Mundy's life.

## Sources

- *Author and Book Info.com*

## External links

- Dustfall
- Works by Talbot Mundy at Project Gutenberg
- *Materials Toward a Bibliography of the Works of Talbot Mundy*, available at Project Gutenberg.
- Talbot Mundy - Master of Mystical Adventure

- FantasticFiction (Complete bibliography with cover images)

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