



The Sign of the Spider: An Episode (Valancourt Classics)

Bertram Mitford

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Laurence Stanninghame walks out of his unhappy marriage in England to pursue adventure in Johannesburg. Things seem to be looking up for Stanninghame, though: on the cruise to South Africa he meets the beautiful Lilith Ormskirk, and when he arrives in Johannesburg he quickly makes his fortune.

But things just as quickly take a turn for the worse when Stanninghame's luck deserts him and he loses everything. Left with seemingly no choice but to put a gun to his head, Stanninghame sets out with a slave trader, Hazon, into the country of the mysterious tribe of the Ba-gcatya, the People of the Spider. Stanninghame is a hardened adventurer, undaunted by danger or death. But even he is unprepared for the horror he encounters when he is marked out as a sacrifice to the monstrous spider-god of the Ba-gcatya!

A thrilling mixture of adventure, romance, and horror, *The Sign of the Spider* (1896) is nonetheless pervaded throughout by a sense of Mitford's profound pessimism and disillusionment. Although he has long been largely forgotten or dismissed as an imitator of H. Rider Haggard, Mitford is a masterful storyteller, and *The Sign of the Spider* is one of his finest. This edition includes an introduction and notes by Gerald Monsman, the foremost Mitford scholar.

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