

An Inspector Holt Story

THE BRIDGE

JOHN TULLY



Collins English Library

Collins English Library

Series editors: K R Cripwell and Lewis Jones

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Collins English Library Level 2

Chapter 1

An Inspector Holt Story
THE BRIDGE
JOHN TULLY

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London and

Chapter 1

It was Sunday afternoon. The street was quiet. A young Arab, Hassan, walked towards the house where he lived.

Two men jumped out from behind a wall. One was tall with long black hair. The other man was shorter, but heavy and strong. The tall man put a coat over Hassan's head. The other took hold of his arms. Hassan fought but he could not get free.

A police car came into the street. Bill Ojo was the driver. Inspector Holt was beside him.

Bill saw the two men with Hassan. "Look! Look there!"

The tall man put Hassan into the back of a red motor car and climbed in after him. The shorter man got into the driver's seat. The car moved off.

"After them!" said Holt.

Bill drove fast after the other car.

The tall man saw the police car behind them. "Faster!" he said to his friend. They turned into another street. There were more cars in this street,

and buses. The driver turned from side to side to get past them. He could not go fast enough. The police car came closer.

“Get in front of them if you can,” said Holt.

Bill saw an open space. He put his foot down hard. The police car shot round the other one – then slowed down in front of it.

The red car stopped. The tall man and the short one both jumped out. They ran off down a side street. Hassan was still inside with the coat over his head.

Bill ran into the side street. He could not see the two men. He went into a shop, but they were not there. He tried another shop, and another.

At last he went back to Holt. “No good,” he said. “They’ve escaped.”

Holt and Bill took Hassan to the Police Station.

“Do you know those men?” asked Holt.

“I didn’t see their faces,” said Hassan.

“Why did they try to take you away?”

“I don’t know that either. Perhaps they wanted money.”

“Money? From you?”

“Not from me. From my father, Sheik Rahman. He’s a rich man. He would pay a lot of money to get me back.”

“What are you doing in England?” asked Bill.

“I came here to learn engineering. How to build bridges – that kind of thing. I’ve learnt all I can here. I’m flying back home tomorrow. I’m going

to work at a new bridge they're building. It's the Khabur Bridge."

"We'll send a man with you to the airport," said Holt.

"Thank you," said Hassan. "Will you find those men?"

"We'll try," said Holt.

Police looked for the men but didn't find them. Hassan flew back home. Three days later Holt and Bill went to see the Chief of Police.

"About those two men," said the Chief. "We think they've left the country."

"Good," said Holt.

"It's not good," said the Chief. "We think they've followed Hassan. We've told his father about it. Sheik Rahman is afraid. He thinks they'll try to take his son away again."

"We can't do much about that," said Bill.

"Oh yes, you can! Only two people have seen those men. You, Inspector, and you, Ojo. Sheik Rahman wants you to help him."

"How can we help?" asked Holt.

"You can go to his country for two weeks."

"Us?" said Bill.

"Yes, both of you. See that Hassan is all right. And find those men. You're good at that. You always find people when you want to."

"We do in England, perhaps," said Holt.

“Now you can do it in the Middle East,” said the Chief. “Have a good time.”

Chapter 2

Holt and Bill came out of the airport.

“It’s hot here,” said Holt.

“Yes,” said Bill. “I like it.”

“All right for you!”

A small man with a brown face came up to them. “Are you Mr Holt and Mr Ojo?” he asked.

“That’s us,” said Holt.

“My name is Ahmed. I’ve come to meet you. This way, please.”

He led them to a large car which belonged to Sheik Rahman. Holt and Bill got in. Ahmed drove them to the city. He stopped at a big hotel.

“You’ll stay at this hotel. Your rooms are ready for you.”

“How much will it cost?” asked Holt.

“It will cost you nothing. Sheik Rahman will pay.”

“I like it more and more,” said Bill.

“I’ll come back when you’ve eaten,” said



Ahmed. "The Sheik will meet you this afternoon."

Holt and Bill went to their rooms. They put their clothes away. Holt had some papers and notes which he put in a desk. He put some money in the desk too, and shut it.

They had a meal at the hotel. Then Ahmed came back with the car. He drove them through the city to a big white house. They passed through an open space in the middle of the house. Here there was a garden with bright flowers. On the other side was a big room coloured blue and gold.

"Wait here," said Ahmed.

He went out. In a little while Sheik Rahman came into the room. Another man was with him.

"I'm very pleased to see you," said the Sheik.

"This is Captain Salem, our Commissioner of Police."

"How do you do?" said Holt.

"I'll help you in any way I can," said Salem.

"I'm very much afraid for my son," said the Sheik.

"Where is Hassan now?"

"He's working at the Khabur Bridge. We're building a new railway from the mountains down to the sea. It crosses the Khabur River. We're building a bridge there. It's nearly finished now. Hassan is working with the Chief Engineer, Mr Scott. He's learning about the bridge, how they build it."

“I’d like to talk to him again,” said Holt. “Can we go to the bridge?”

“Of course,” said the Sheik. “Ahmed will bring the car for you tomorrow morning.”

Holt and Bill left the house with Salem. They had dinner with him and talked for a long time. It was late when they got back to their hotel.

Holt went to his room and found the door open. He went to the desk. That was open too. His money was still there but there were no papers. He called Bill into the room.

“A thief has taken my papers but not the money. So he knew what he wanted. They were my notes about Hassan.”

“Those two men, perhaps?” said Bill.

“Or others working with them. How did they know we were here?”

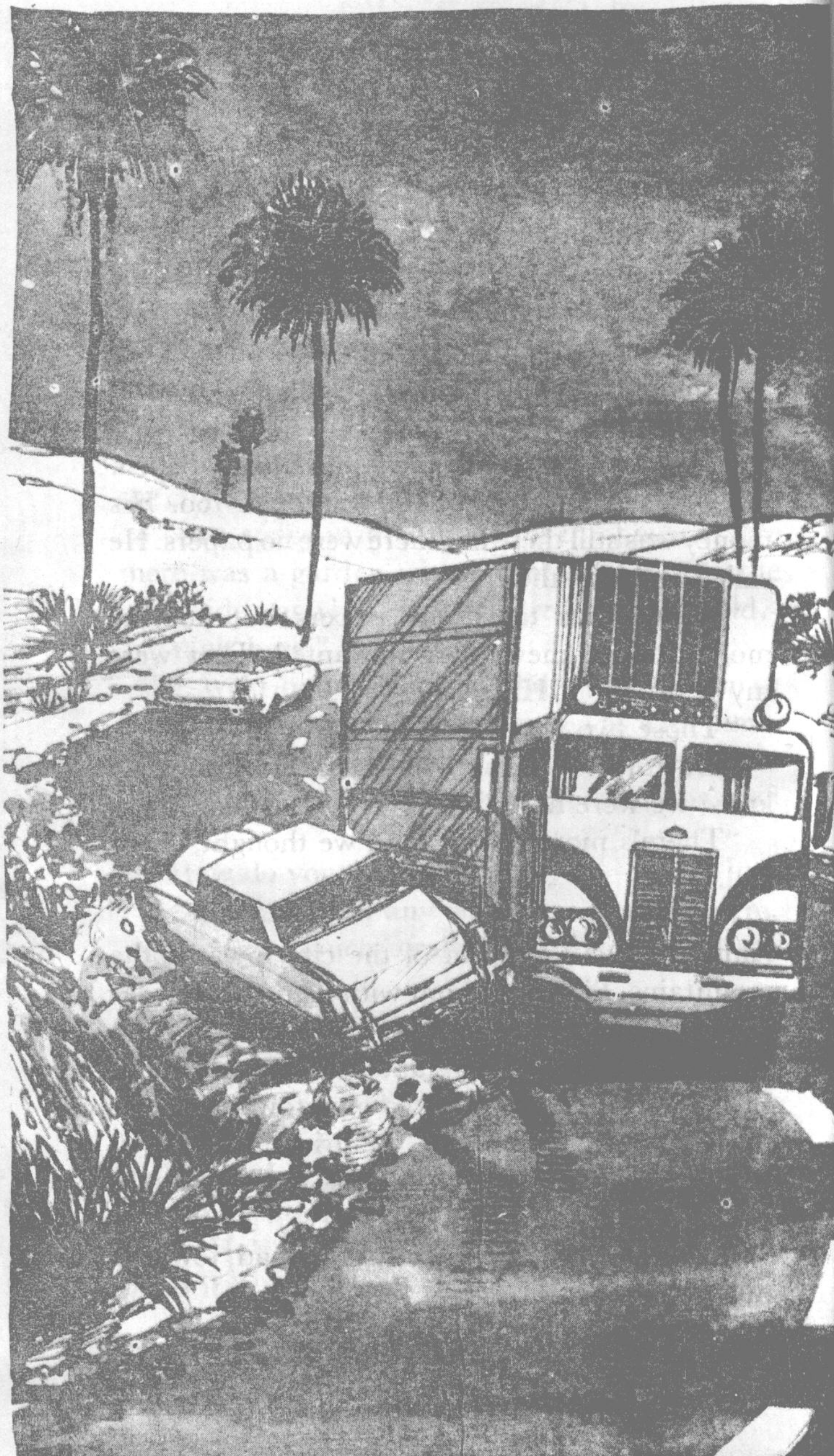
“There’s more to this than we thought,” said Bill.

Ahmed drove them out of the city towards the mountains. Bill sat in front with Ahmed. Holt sat in the back, writing out his notes again.

There were cars, buses and lorries on the road. Bill saw a big, heavy lorry coming towards them. As it came closer Bill saw the driver’s face.

“That driver is looking at us all the time,” said Bill. “Why does he want to....?”

Then the lorry turned across the road, towards them.



"Look out!" cried Bill.

Ahmed turned the wheel, but too late. The car turned over as the lorry crashed into it. The heavy lorry didn't stop. It went on fast, down the road.

The car fell off the road into a field. It landed on its side.

Chapter 3

Bill found Ahmed on top of him.

"Are you hurt?" asked Ahmed.

"Not badly," said Bill. He turned to Holt at the back. "Are you all right?"

"No, I'm not," said Holt. "I've lost my notes again."

They climbed out of the car.

"What happened?" asked Holt.

"A man drove his lorry into us," said Bill. "He wanted to kill us!"

A large black car stopped beside them and a man got out. He was heavily built with a round face like a full moon. "Can I help you?" he asked.

"We're going to the Khabur Bridge," said Holt. "Can you take us that way?"

“Of course,” said the stranger. “But you must come home with me first. Sit down and have a drink. You’ll feel better then. My name is Kossoff. Vladimir Kossoff.”

“Pleased to meet you,” said Holt.

Kossoff took them to a country house with a long wall round it. A gate opened to let them in. Around the house was a large garden.

The visitors washed and had drinks. Kossoff wanted to talk but Holt stopped him. “We can’t stay any longer. We must get to the bridge.”

“My driver will take you,” said Kossoff.

They arrived at the bridge two hours later.

The Khabur was a wide river. The bridge was high enough to let boats go under. It looked bright in the sunlight. There were buildings for the workmen beside it.

Holt spoke to a workman passing by. “Where can I find the Chief Engineer, Mr Scott?”

The man showed them a building by the bridge. “Mr Scott works in there.”

“We’re also looking for Hassan, the son of Sheik Rahman,” said Bill.

“He’s at work on the bridge,” said the man.

“I’m going there now. I’ll take you.”

“You go and see that Hassan is all right,” said Holt to Bill. “I’ll speak to Scott.”

Bill went off towards the bridge with the workman. Holt went into the Chief Engineer’s building.