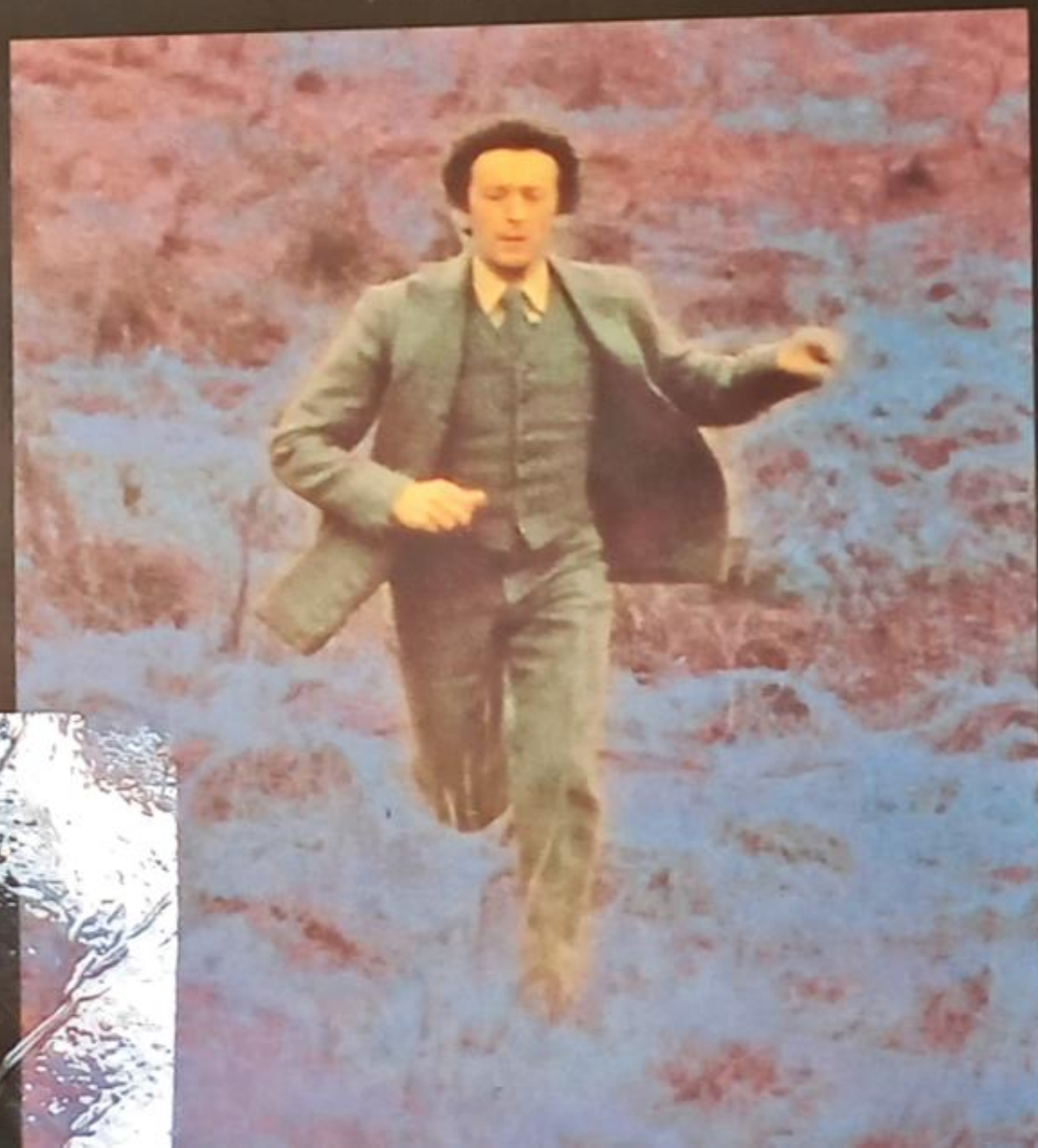


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THE
THIRTY-NINE
STEPS

JOHN BUCHAN



THE THIRTY-NINE STEPS

As Richard Hannay walks home to his flat in London, he is feeling bored. Nothing exciting ever seems to happen in England, he thinks. Perhaps he'll go back to Africa. But that night he has a visitor, a man called Scudder, who has a strange story to tell.

A week later Hannay is lying, hungry and exhausted, in the heather on a Scottish moor. Above him a small plane circles in the blue sky, flying low. Hannay lies still, hoping desperately that the plane will not see him, and thinks about Scudder's little black notebook in his pocket. Who are the people chasing him – the mysterious 'Black Stone' that Scudder writes about? What is so important about 'the thirty-nine steps'? And what is going to happen in London on the 15th of June?

But Scudder has been murdered, and Hannay must find his own answers, while his enemies chase him night and day through the hills of Scotland. If they catch him, they will kill him . . .





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Thriller & Adventure

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Stage 4 (1400 headwords)

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Nick Bullard



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JOHN BUCHAN

The Thirty-Nine Steps

Retold by
Nick Bullard


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THE MAN WHO DIED

I returned to my flat at about three o'clock on that May afternoon very unhappy with life. I had been back in Britain for three months and I was already bored. The weather was bad, the people were dull, and the amusements of London seemed as exciting as a glass of cold water. 'Richard Hannay,' I told myself, 'you have made a mistake, and you had better do something about it.'

It made me angry when I thought of the years I had spent in Africa. I had spent those years working very hard and making money. Not a lot of money, but enough for me. I had left Scotland when I was six years old, and I had never been home since. For years I had dreamt of coming home to Britain and spending the rest of my life there, but I was disappointed with the place after the first week. And so here I was, thirty-seven years old, healthy, with enough money to have a good time, and bored to death.

That evening I went out to dinner and sat reading the newspapers afterwards. They were full of the troubles in south-east Europe, and there was a long report about Karolides, the Greek Prime Minister. He seemed to be an honest man, but some people in Europe hated him. However, many people in Britain liked him, and one newspaper said that he was the only man who could prevent a war starting. I remember wondering if I could get a job in south-east Europe; it might be a lot less boring than life in London.

As I walked home that night, I decided to give Britain one