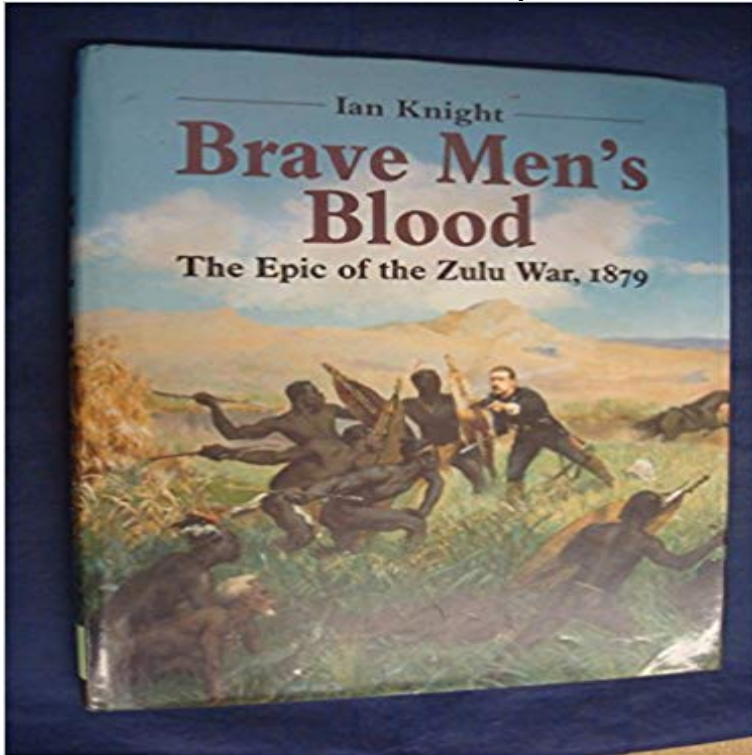


Brave Mens Blood: The Epic of the Zulu War, 1879



The Zulu kingdom, created by Shaka kaSenzangakhona, lasted just over six decades before meeting the imperial might of the British Empire. Within six months the kingdom lay in pieces. A full military campaign, known as the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879 was required to ensure its demise. The British High Commissioner in South Africa, Sir Henry Bartle Frere, believed that the robust and economically self-reliant Zulu kingdom was a threat to this policy. In December 1878 he picked a quarrel with the Zulu king, Cetshwayo kaMpande, in the belief that the Zulu army - armed primarily with shields and spears - would soon collapse in the face of British Imperial might. The war began in January 1879. Three columns of British troops under the command of Lt. Gen. Lord Chelmsford invaded Zululand. Almost immediately, the war went badly wrong for the British. On 22 January, the Centre Column, under Lord Chelmsford's personal command, was defeated at Isandlwana mountain. In one of the worst disasters of the Colonial era, over 1300 British troops and their African allies were killed. In the aftermath of Isandlwana, the Zulu reserves mounted a raid on the British border post at Rorkes Drift, which was held by just 145 men. After ten hours of ferocious fighting, the Zulu were driven off. Eleven of the defenders of Rorkes Drift were awarded the Victoria Cross. These are the best-known episodes of the war, and Rorkes Drift inspired the classic film Zulu, which established Michael Caine as a star. However, the author delves deeply into the causes of the war, the conditions during it and the aftermath. Completely re-set, this is one of the most highly-regarded books on the period.

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