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Higher and higher climbed the huge bird

[*Page 221*]

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JUNGLE TALES *of* TARZAN

BY

EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

Author of the "Tarzan" Stories, the "Martian" Stories, etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY

J. ALLEN ST. JOHN

CHICAGO

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I	Tarzan's First Love	1
II	The Capture of Tarzan	29
III	The Fight for the Balu	53
IV	The God of Tarzan	72
V	Tarzan and the Black Boy	101
VI	The Witch-Doctor Seeks Vengeance	140
VII	The End of Bukawai	172
VIII	The Lion	190
IX	The Nightmare	213
X	The Battle for Teeka	235
XI	A Jungle Joke	266
XII	Tarzan Rescues the Moon	294

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ILLUSTRATIONS

PAGE

Higher and higher climbed the huge bird. . *Frontispiece*

Away into the depth of the jungle with his prize. . 112

Tarzan foils Numa, Lord of the Jungle. 200

Tarzan overcomes Bolgani, the great gorilla. . . . 232

Again and again did Tarzan launch his arrows. . 316

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Chapter One

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JUNGLE TALES OF TARZAN

CHAPTER I

TARZAN'S FIRST LOVE

TEEKA, stretched at luxurious ease in the shade of the tropical forest, presented, unquestionably, a most alluring picture of young, feminine loveliness. Or at least so thought Tarzan of the Apes, who squatted upon a low-swinging branch in a near-by tree and looked down upon her.

Just to have seen him there, lolling upon the swaying bough of the jungle-forest giant, his brown skin mottled by the brilliant equatorial sunlight which percolated through the leafy canopy of green above him, his clean-limbed body relaxed in graceful ease, his shapely head partly turned in contemplative absorption and his intelligent, gray eyes dreamily devouring the object of their devotion, you would have thought him the reincarnation of some demigod of old.

You would not have guessed that in infancy he had suckled at the breast of a hideous, hairy she-ape, nor that in all his conscious past since his parents had passed away in the little cabin by the land-locked harbor at the jungles verge, he had known

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no other associates than the sullen bulls and the snarling cows of the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape.

Nor, could you have read the thoughts which passed through that active, healthy brain, the longings and desires and aspirations which the sight of Teeka inspired, would you have been any more inclined to give credence to the reality of the origin of the ape-man. For, from his thoughts alone, you could never have gleaned the truth—that he had been born to a gentle English lady or that his sire had been an English nobleman of time-honored lineage.

Lost to Tarzan of the Apes was the truth of his origin. That he was John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, with a seat in the House of Lords, he did not know, nor, knowing, would have understood.

Yes, Teeka was indeed beautiful!

Of course Kala had been beautiful—one's mother is always that—but Teeka was beautiful in a way all her own, an indescribable sort of way which Tarzan was just beginning to sense in a rather vague and hazy manner.

For years had Tarzan and Teeka been play-fellows, and Teeka still continued to be playful while the young bulls of her own age were rapidly becoming surly and morose. Tarzan, if he gave the matter much thought at all, probably reasoned that his growing attachment for the young female could be easily accounted for by the fact that of the former

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playmates she and he alone retained any desire to frolic as of old.

But today, as he sat gazing upon her, he found himself noting the beauties of Teeka's form and features—something he never had done before, since none of them had aught to do with Teeka's ability to race nimbly through the lower terraces of the forest in the primitive games of tag and hide-and-go-seek which Tarzan's fertile brain evolved.

Tarzan scratched his head, running his fingers deep into the shock of black hair which framed his shapely, boyish face—he scratched his head and sighed. Teeka's new-found beauty became as suddenly his despair. He envied her the handsome coat of hair which covered her body. His own, smooth, brown hide he hated with a hatred born of disgust and contempt. Years back he had harbored a hope that some day he, too, would be clothed in hair as were all his brothers and sisters; but of late he had been forced to abandon the delectable dream.

Then there were Teeka's great teeth, not so large as the males, of course, but still mighty, handsome things by comparison with Tarzan's feeble white ones. And her beetling brows, and broad, flat nose, and her mouth! Tarzan had often practiced making his mouth into a little round circle and then puffing out his cheeks while he winked his eyes rapidly; but he felt that he could never do it in the same cute and irresistible way in which Teeka did it.

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And as he watched her that afternoon, and wondered, a young bull ape who had been lazily foraging for food beneath the damp, matted carpet of decaying vegetation at the roots of a near-by tree lumbered awkwardly in Teeka's direction. The other apes of the tribe of Kerchak moved listlessly about or lolled restfully in the midday heat of the equatorial jungle. From time to time one or another of them had passed close to Teeka, and Tarzan had been uninterested. Why was it then that his brows contracted and his muscles tensed as he saw Taug pause beside the young she and then squat down close to her?

Tarzan always had liked Taug. Since childhood they had romped together. Side by side they had squatted near the water, their quick, strong fingers ready to leap forth and seize Pisah, the fish, should that wary denizen of the cool depths dart surfaceward to the lure of the insects Tarzan tossed upon the face of the pool.

Together they had baited Tublat and teased Numa, the lion. Why, then, should Tarzan feel the rise of the short hairs at the nape of his neck merely because Taug sat close to Teeka?

It is true that Taug was no longer the frolicsome ape of yesterday. When his snarling-muscles bared his giant fangs no one could longer imagine that Taug was in as playful a mood as when he and Tarzan had rolled upon the turf in mimic battle.

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The Taug of today was a huge, sullen bull ape, somber and forbidding. Yet he and Tarzan never had quarreled.

For a few minutes the young ape-man watched Taug press closer to Teeka. He saw the rough caress of the huge paw as it stroked the sleek shoulder of the she, and then Tarzan of the Apes slipped catlike to the ground and approached the two.

As he came his upper lip curled into a snarl, exposing his fighting fangs, and a deep growl rumbled from his cavernous chest. Taug looked up, batting his blood-shot eyes. Teeka half raised herself and looked at Tarzan. Did she guess the cause of his perturbation? Who may say? At any rate, she was feminine, and so she reached up and scratched Taug behind one of his small, flat ears.

Tarzan saw, and in the instant that he saw, Teeka was no longer the little playmate of an hour ago; instead she was a wondrous thing—the most wondrous in the world—and a possession for which Tarzan would fight to the death against Taug or any other who dared question his right of proprietorship.

Stooped, his muscles rigid and one great shoulder turned toward the young bull, Tarzan of the Apes sidled nearer and nearer. His face was partly averted, but his keen gray eyes never left those of Taug, and as he came, his growls increased in depth and volume.

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Taug rose upon his short legs, bristling. His fighting fangs were bared. He, too, sidled, stiff-legged, and growled.

"Teeka is Tarzan's," said the ape-man, in the low gutturals of the great anthropoids.

"Teeka is Taug's," replied the bull ape.

Thaka and Numgo and Gunto, disturbed by the growlings of the two young bulls, looked up half apathetic, half interested. They were sleepy, but they sensed a fight. It would break the monotony of the humdrum jungle life they led.

Coiled about his shoulders was Tarzan's long grass rope, in his hand was the hunting knife of the long-dead father he had never known. In Taug's little brain lay a great respect for the shiny bit of sharp metal which the ape-boy knew so well how to use. With it had he slain Tublat, his fierce foster father, and Bolgani, the gorilla. Taug knew these things, and so he came warily, circling about Tarzan in search of an opening. The latter, made cautious because of his lesser bulk and the inferiority of his natural armament, followed similar tactics.

For a time it seemed that the altercation would follow the way of the majority of such differences between members of the tribe and that one of them would finally lose interest and wander off to prosecute some other line of endeavor. Such might have been the end of it had the *casus belli* been other than it was; but Teeka was flattered at the attention that

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was being drawn to her and by the fact that these two young bulls were contemplating battle on her account. Such a thing never before had occurred in Teeka's brief life. She had seen other bulls battling for other and older shes, and in the depth of her wild little heart she had longed for the day when the jungle grasses would be reddened with the blood of mortal combat for her fair sake.

So now she squatted upon her haunches and insulted both her admirers impartially. She hurled taunts at them for their cowardice, and called them vile names, such as Histah, the snake, and Dango, the hyena. She threatened to call Mumga to chastise them with a stick—Mumga, who was so old that she could no longer climb and so toothless that she was forced to confine her diet almost exclusively to bananas and grubworms.

The apes who were watching heard and laughed. Taug was infuriated. He made a sudden lunge for Tarzan, but the ape-boy leaped nimbly to one side, eluding him, and with the quickness of a cat wheeled and leaped back again to close quarters. His hunting knife was raised above his head as he came in, and he aimed a vicious blow at Taug's neck. The ape wheeled to dodge the weapon so that the keen blade struck him but a glancing blow upon the shoulder.

The spurt of red blood brought a shrill cry of delight from Teeka. Ah, but this was something

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worth while! She glanced about to see if others had witnessed this evidence of her popularity. Helen of Troy was never one whit more proud than was Teeka at that moment.

If Teeka had not been so absorbed in her own vainglorіousness she might have noted the rustling of leaves in the tree above her—a rustling which was not caused by any movement of the wind, since there was no wind. And had she looked up she might have seen a sleek body crouching almost directly over her and wicked yellow eyes glaring hungrily down upon her, but Teeka did not look up.

With his wound Taug had backed off growling horribly. Tarzan had followed him, screaming insults at him, and menacing him with his brandishing blade. Teeka moved from beneath the tree in an effort to keep close to the duelists.

The branch above Teeka bent and swayed a trifle with the movement of the body of the watcher stretched along it. Taug had halted now and was preparing to make a new stand. His lips were flecked with foam, and saliva drooled from his jowls. He stood with head lowered and arms outstretched, preparing for a sudden charge to close quarters. Could he but lay his mighty hands upon that soft, brown skin the battle would be his. Taug considered Tarzan's manner of fighting unfair. He would not close. Instead, he leaped nimbly just beyond the reach of Taug's muscular fingers.

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The ape-boy had as yet never come to a real trial of strength with a bull ape, other than in play, and so he was not at all sure that it would be safe to put his muscles to the test in a life and death struggle. Not that he was afraid, for Tarzan knew nothing of fear. The instinct of self-preservation gave him caution—that was all. He took risks only when it seemed necessary, and then he would hesitate at nothing.

His own method of fighting seemed best fitted to his build and to his armament. His teeth, while strong and sharp, were, as weapons of offense, pitifully inadequate by comparison with the mighty fighting fangs of the anthropoids. By dancing about, just out of reach of an antagonist, Tarzan could do infinite injury with his long, sharp hunting knife, and at the same time escape many of the painful and dangerous wounds which would be sure to follow his falling into the clutches of a bull ape.

And so Taug charged and bellowed like a bull, and Tarzan of the Apes danced lightly to this side and that, hurling jungle billingsgate at his foe, the while he nicked him now and again with his knife.

There were lulls in the fighting when the two would stand panting for breath, facing each other, mustering their wits and their forces for a new onslaught. It was during a pause such as this that Taug chanced to let his eyes rove beyond his foeman. Instantly the entire aspect of the ape altered.

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Rage left his countenance to be supplanted by an expression of fear.

With a cry that every ape there recognized, Taug turned and fled. No need to question him—his warning proclaimed the near presence of their ancient enemy.

Tarzan started to seek safety, as did the other members of the tribe, and as he did so he heard a panther's scream mingled with the frightened cry of a she-ape. Taug heard, too; but he did not pause in his flight.

With the ape-boy, however, it was different. He looked back to see if any member of the tribe was close pressed by the beast of prey, and the sight that met his eyes filled them with an expression of horror.

Teeka it was who cried out in terror as she fled across a little clearing toward the trees upon the opposite side, for after her leaped Sheeta, the panther, in easy, graceful bounds. Sheeta appeared to be in no hurry. His meat was assured, since even though the ape reached the trees ahead of him she could not climb beyond his clutches before he could be upon her.

Tarzan saw that Teeka must die. He cried to Taug and the other bulls to hasten to Teeka's assistance, and at the same time he ran toward the pursuing beast, taking down his rope as he came. Tarzan knew that once the great bulls were aroused none of the jungle, not even Numa, the lion, was

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anxious to measure fangs with them, and that if all those of the tribe who chanced to be present today would charge, Sheeta, the great cat, would doubtless turn tail and run for his life.

Taug heard, as did the others, but no one came to Tarzan's assistance or Teeka's rescue, and Sheeta was rapidly closing up the distance between himself and his prey.

The ape-boy, leaping after the panther, cried aloud to the beast in an effort to turn it from Teeka or otherwise distract its attention until the she-ape could gain the safety of the higher branches where Sheeta dare not go. He called the panther every opprobrious name that fell to his tongue. He dared him to stop and do battle with him; but Sheeta only loped on after the luscious titbit now almost within his reach.

Tarzan was not far behind and he was gaining, but the distance was so short that he scarce hoped to overhaul the carnivore before it had felled Teeka. In his right hand the boy swung his grass rope above his head as he ran. He hated to chance a miss, for the distance was much greater than he ever had cast before except in practice. It was the full length of his grass rope which separated him from Sheeta, and yet there was no other thing to do. He could not reach the brute's side before it overhauled Teeka. He must chance a throw.

And just as Teeka sprang for the lower limb of a

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great tree, and Sheeta rose behind her in a long, sinuous leap, the coils of the ape-boy's grass rope shot swiftly through the air, straightening into a long thin line as the open noose hovered for an instant above the savage head and the snarling jaws. Then it settled—clean and true about the tawny neck it settled, and Tarzan, with a quick twist of his rope-hand, drew the noose taut, bracing himself for the shock when Sheeta should have taken up the slack.

Just short of Teeka's glossy rump the cruel talons raked the air as the rope tightened and Sheeta was brought to a sudden stop—a stop that snapped the big beast over upon his back. Instantly Sheeta was up—with glaring eyes, and lashing tail, and gaping jaws, from which issued hideous cries of rage and disappointment.

He saw the ape-boy, the cause of his discomfiture, scarce forty feet before him, and Sheeta charged.

Teeka was safe now; Tarzan saw to that by a quick glance into the tree whose safety she had gained not an instant too soon, and Sheeta was charging. It were useless to risk his life in idle and unequal combat from which no good could come; but could he escape a battle with the enraged cat? And if he was forced to fight, what chance had he to survive? Tarzan was constrained to admit that his position was aught but a desirable one. The trees were too far to hope to reach in time to elude

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the cat. Tarzan could but stand facing that hideous charge. In his right hand he grasped his hunting knife—a puny, futile thing indeed by comparison with the great rows of mighty teeth which lined Sheeta's powerful jaws, and the sharp talons encased within his padded paws; yet the young Lord Greystoke faced it with the same courageous resignation with which some fearless ancestor went down to defeat and death on Senlac Hill by Hastings.

From safety points in the trees the great apes watched, screaming hatred at Sheeta and advice at Tarzan, for the progenitors of man have, naturally, many human traits. Teeka was frightened: She screamed at the bulls to hasten to Tarzan's assistance; but the bulls were otherwise engaged—principally in giving advice and making faces. Anyway, Tarzan was not a real Mangani, so why should they risk their lives in an effort to protect him?

And now Sheeta was almost upon the lithe, naked body, and—the body was not there. Quick as was the great cat, the ape-boy was quicker. He leaped to one side almost as the panther's talons were closing upon him, and as Sheeta went hurtling to the ground beyond, Tarzan was racing for the safety of the nearest tree.

The panther recovered himself almost immediately and, wheeling, tore after his prey, the ape-boy's rope dragging along the ground behind him. In doubling back after Tarzan, Sheeta had passed around a low

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bush. It was a mere nothing in the path of any jungle creature of the size and weight of Sheeta—provided it had no trailing rope dangling behind. But Sheeta was handicapped by such a rope, and as he leaped once again after Tarzan of the Apes the rope encircled the small bush, became tangled in it and brought the panther to a sudden stop. An instant later Tarzan was safe among the higher branches of a small tree into which Sheeta could not follow him.

Here he perched, hurling twigs and epithets at the raging feline beneath him. The other members of the tribe now took up the bombardment, using such hard-shelled fruits and dead branches as came within their reach, until Sheeta, goaded to frenzy and snapping at the grass rope, finally succeeded in severing its strands. For a moment the panther stood glaring first at one of his tormentors and then at another, until, with a final scream of rage, he turned and slunk off into the tangled mazes of the jungle.

A half hour later the tribe was again upon the ground, feeding as though naught had occurred to interrupt the somber dullness of their lives. Tarzan had recovered the greater part of his rope and was busy fashioning a new noose, while Teeka squatted close beside him, in evident token that her choice was made.

Taug eyed them sullenly. Once when he came

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close, Teeka bared her fangs and growled at him, and Tarzan showed his canines in an ugly snarl; but Taug did not provoke a quarrel. He seemed to accept after the manner of his kind the decision of the she as an indication that he had been vanquished in his battle for her favors.

Later in the day, his rope repaired, Tarzan took to the trees in search of game. More than his fellows he required meat, and so, while they were satisfied with fruits and herbs and beetles, which could be discovered without much effort upon their part, Tarzan spent considerable time hunting the game animals whose flesh alone satisfied the cravings of his stomach and furnished sustenance and strength to the mighty thews which, day by day, were building beneath the soft, smooth texture of his brown hide.

Taug saw him depart, and then, quite casually, the big beast hunted closer and closer to Teeka in his search for food. At last he was within a few feet of her, and when he shot a covert glance at her he saw that she was appraising him and that there was no evidence of anger upon her face.

Taug expanded his great chest and rolled about on his short legs, making strange growlings in his throat. He raised his lips, baring his fangs. My, but what great, beautiful fangs he had! Teeka could not but notice them. She also let her eyes rest in admiration upon Taug's beetling brows and

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his short, powerful neck. What a beautiful creature he was indeed!

Taug, flattered by the unconcealed admiration in her eyes, strutted about, as proud and as vain as a peacock. Presently he began to inventory his assets, mentally, and shortly he found himself comparing them with those of his rival.

Taug grunted, for there was no comparison. How could one compare his beautiful coat with the smooth and naked hideousness of Tarzan's bare hide? Who could see beauty in the stingy nose of the Tarmangani after looking at Taug's broad nostrils? And Tarzan's eyes! Hideous things, showing white about them, and entirely unrimmed with red. Taug knew that his own blood-shot eyes were beautiful, for he had seen them reflected in the glassy surface of many a drinking pool.

The bull drew nearer to Teeka, finally squatting close against her. When Tarzan returned from his hunting a short time later it was to see Teeka contentedly scratching the back of his rival.

Tarzan was disgusted. Neither Taug nor Teeka saw him as he swung through the trees into the glade. He paused a moment, looking at them; then, with a sorrowful grimace, he turned and faded away into the labyrinth of leafy boughs and festooned moss out of which he had come.

Tarzan wished to be as far away from the cause of his heartache as he could. He was suffering the

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first pangs of blighted love, and he didn't quite know what was the matter with him. He thought that he was angry with Taug, and so he couldn't understand why it was that he had run away instead of rushing into mortal combat with the destroyer of his happiness.

He also thought that he was angry with Teeka, yet a vision of her many beauties persisted in haunting him, so that he could only see her in the light of love as the most desirable thing in the world.

The ape-boy craved affection. From babyhood until the time of her death, when the poisoned arrow of Kulonga had pierced her savage heart, Kala had represented to the English boy the sole object of love which he had known.

In her wild, fierce way Kala had loved her adopted son, and Tarzan had returned that love, though the outward demonstrations of it were no greater than might have been expected from any other beast of the jungle. It was not until he was bereft of her that the boy realized how deep had been his attachment for his mother, for as such he looked upon her.

In Teeka he had seen within the past few hours a substitute for Kala—someone to fight for and to hunt for—someone to caress; but now his dream was shattered. Something hurt within his breast. He placed his hand over his heart and wondered what had happened to him. Vaguely he attributed

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his pain to Teeka. The more he thought of Teeka as he had last seen her, caressing Taug, the more the thing within his breast hurt him.

Tarzan shook his head and growled; then on and on through the jungle he swung, and the farther he traveled and the more he thought upon his wrongs, the nearer he approached becoming an irreclaimable misogynist.

Two days later he was still hunting alone—very morose and very unhappy; but he was determined never to return to the tribe. He could not bear the thought of seeing Taug and Teeka always together. As he swung upon a great limb Numa, the lion, and Sabor, the lioness, passed beneath him, side by side, and Sabor leaned against the lion and bit playfully at his cheek. It was a half caress. Tarzan sighed and hurled a nut at them.

Later he came upon several of Mbonga's black warriors. He was upon the point of dropping his noose about the neck of one of them, who was a little distance from his companions, when he became interested in the thing which occupied the savages. They were building a cage in the trail and covering it with leafy branches. When they had completed their work the structure was scarcely visible.

Tarzan wondered what the purpose of the thing might be, and why, when they had built it, they turned away and started back along the trail in the direction of their village.

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It had been some time since Tarzan had visited the blacks and looked down from the shelter of the great trees which overhung their palisade upon the activities of his enemies, from among whom had come the slayer of Kala.

Although he hated them, Tarzan derived considerable entertainment in watching them at their daily life within the village, and especially at their dances, when the fires glared against their naked bodies as they leaped and turned and twisted in mimic warfare. It was rather in the hope of witnessing something of the kind that he now followed the warriors back toward their village, but in this he was disappointed, for there was no dance that night.

Instead, from the safe concealment of his tree, Tarzan saw little groups seated about tiny fires discussing the events of the day, and in the darker corners of the village he descried isolated couples talking and laughing together, and always one of each couple was a young man and the other a young woman.

Tarzan cocked his head upon one side and thought, and before he went to sleep that night, curled in the crotch of the great tree above the village, Teeka filled his mind, and afterward she filled his dreams—she and the young black men laughing and talking with the young black women.

Taug, hunting alone, had wandered some distance from the balance of the tribe. He was making

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his way slowly along an elephant path when he discovered that it was blocked with undergrowth. Now Taug, come into maturity, was an evil-natured brute of an exceeding short temper. When something thwarted him, his sole idea was to overcome it by brute strength and ferocity, and so now when he found his way blocked, he tore angrily into the leafy screen and an instant later found himself within a strange lair, his progress effectually blocked, notwithstanding his most violent efforts to forge ahead.

Biting and striking at the barrier, Taug finally worked himself into a frightful rage, but all to no avail; and at last he became convinced that he must turn back. But when he would have done so, what was his chagrin to discover that another barrier had dropped behind him while he fought to break down the one before him! Taug was trapped. Until exhaustion overcame him he fought frantically for his freedom; but all for naught.

In the morning a party of blacks set out from the village of Mbonga in the direction of the trap they had constructed the previous day, while among the branches of the trees above them hovered a naked young giant filled with the curiosity of the wild things. Manu, the monkey, chattered and scolded as Tarzan passed, and though he was not afraid of the familiar figure of the ape-boy, he hugged closer to him the little brown body of his life's companion. Tarzan laughed as he saw it; but the laugh was

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followed by a sudden clouding of his face and a deep sigh.

A little farther on, a gaily feathered bird strutted about before the admiring eyes of his somber-hued mate. It seemed to Tarzan that everything in the jungle was combining to remind him that he had lost Teeka; yet every day of his life he had seen these same things and thought nothing of them.

When the blacks reached the trap, Taug set up a great commotion. Seizing the bars of his prison, he shook them frantically, and all the while he roared and growled terrifically. The blacks were elated, for while they had not built their trap for this hairy tree man, they were delighted with their catch.

Tarzan pricked up his ears when he heard the voice of a great ape and, circling quickly until he was down wind from the trap, he sniffed at the air in search of the scent spoor of the prisoner. Nor was it long before there came to those delicate nostrils the familiar odor that told Tarzan the identity of the captive as unerringly as though he had looked upon Taug with his eyes. Yes, it was Taug, and he was alone.

Tarzan grinned as he approached to discover what the blacks would do to their prisoner. Doubtless they would slay him at once. Again Tarzan grinned. Now he could have Teeka for his own, with none to dispute his right to her. As he watched, he saw the black warriors strip the screen from

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about the cage, fasten ropes to it and drag it away along the trail in the direction of their village.

Tarzan watched until his rival passed out of sight, still beating upon the bars of his prison and growling out his anger and his threats. Then the ape-boy turned and swung rapidly off in search of the tribe, and Teeka.

Once, upon the journey, he surprised Sheeta and his family in a little overgrown clearing. The great cat lay stretched upon the ground, while his mate, one paw across her lord's savage face, licked at the soft white fur at his throat.

Tarzan increased his speed then until he fairly flew through the forest, nor was it long before he came upon the tribe. He saw them before they saw him, for of all the jungle creatures, none passed more quietly than Tarzan of the Apes. He saw Kamma and her mate feeding side by side, their hairy bodies rubbing against each other. And he saw Teeka feeding by herself. Not for long would she feed thus in loneliness, thought Tarzan, as with a bound he landed amongst them.

There was a startled rush and a chorus of angry and frightened snarls, for Tarzan had surprised them; but there was more, too, than mere nervous shock to account for the bristling neck hair which remained standing long after the apes had discovered the identity of the newcomer.

Tarzan noticed this as he had noticed it many

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times in the past—that always his sudden coming among them left them nervous and unstrung for a considerable time, and that they one and all found it necessary to satisfy themselves that he was indeed Tarzan by smelling about him a half dozen or more times before they calmed down.

Pushing through them, he made his way toward Teeka; but as he approached her the ape drew away.

"Teeka," he said, "it is Tarzan. You belong to Tarzan. I have come for you."

The ape drew closer, looking him over carefully. Finally she sniffed at him, as though to make assurance doubly sure.

"Where is Taug?" she asked.

"The Gomangani have him," replied Tarzan. "They will kill him."

In the eyes of the she, Tarzan saw a wistful expression and a troubled look of sorrow as he told her of Taug's fate; but she came quite close and snuggled against him, and Tarzan, Lord Greystoke, put his arm about her.

As he did so he noticed, with a start, the strange incongruity of that smooth, brown arm against the black and hairy coat of his lady-love. He recalled the paw of Sheeta's mate across Sheeta's face—no incongruity there. He thought of little Manu hugging his she, and how the one seemed to belong to the other. Even the proud male bird, with his gay plumage, bore a close resemblance to his quieter

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spouse, while Numa, but for his shaggy mane, was almost a counterpart of Sabor, the lioness. The males and the females differed, it was true; but not with such differences as existed between Tarzan and Teeka.

Tarzan was puzzled. There was something wrong. His arm dropped from the shoulder of Teeka. Very slowly he drew away from her. She looked at him with her head cocked upon one side. Tarzan rose to his full height and beat upon his breast with his fists. He raised his head toward the heavens and opened his mouth. From the depths of his lungs rose the fierce, weird challenge of the victorious bull ape. The tribe turned curiously to eye him. He had killed nothing, nor was there any antagonist to be goaded to madness by the savage scream. No, there was no excuse for it, and they turned back to their feeding, but with an eye upon the ape-man lest he be preparing to suddenly run amuck.

As they watched him they saw him swing into a near-by tree and disappear from sight. Then they forgot him, even Teeka.

Mbonga's black warriors, sweating beneath their strenuous task, and resting often, made slow progress toward their village. Always the savage beast in the primitive cage growled and roared when they moved him. He beat upon the bars and slavered at the mouth. His noise was hideous.

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They had almost completed their journey and were making their final rest before forging ahead to gain the clearing in which lay their village. A few more minutes would have taken them out of the forest, and then, doubtless, the thing would not have happened which did happen.

A silent figure moved through the trees above them. Keen eyes inspected the cage and counted the number of warriors. An alert and daring brain figured upon the chances of success when a certain plan should be put to the test.

Tarzan watched the blacks lolling in the shade. They were exhausted. Already several of them slept. He crept closer, pausing just above them. Not a leaf rustled before his stealthy advance. He waited in the infinite patience of the beast of prey. Presently but two of the warriors remained awake, and one of these was dozing.

Tarzan of the Apes gathered himself, and as he did so the black who did not sleep arose and passed around to the rear of the cage. The ape-boy followed just above his head. Taug was eyeing the warrior and emitting low growls. Tarzan feared that the anthropoid would awaken the sleepers.

In a whisper which was inaudible to the ears of the Negro, Tarzan whispered Taug's name, cautioning the ape to silence, and Taug's growling ceased.

The black approached the rear of the cage and examined the fastenings of the door, and as he stood

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there the beast above him launched itself from the tree full upon his back. Steel fingers circled his throat, choking the cry which sprang to the lips of the terrified man. Strong teeth fastened themselves in his shoulder, and powerful legs wound themselves about his torso.

The black in a frenzy of terror tried to dislodge the silent thing which clung to him. He threw himself to the ground and rolled about; but still those mighty fingers closed more and more tightly their deadly grip.

The man's mouth gaped wide, his swollen tongue protruded, his eyes started from their sockets; but the relentless fingers only increased their pressure.

Taug was a silent witness of the struggle. In his fierce little brain he doubtless wondered what purpose prompted Tarzan to attack the black. Taug had not forgotten his recent battle with the ape-boy, nor the cause of it. Now he saw the form of the Gomangani suddenly go limp. There was a convulsive shiver and the man lay still.

Tarzan sprang from his prey and ran to the door of the cage. With nimble fingers he worked rapidly at the thongs which held the door in place. Taug could only watch—he could not help. Presently Tarzan pushed the thing up a couple of feet and Taug crawled out. The ape would have turned upon the sleeping blacks that he might wreak his pent vengeance; but Tarzan would not permit it.

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Instead, the ape-boy dragged the body of the black within the cage and propped it against the side bars. Then he lowered the door and made fast the thongs as they had been before.

A happy smile lighted his features as he worked, for one of his principal diversions was the baiting of the blacks of Mbonga's village. He could imagine their terror when they awoke and found the dead body of their comrade fast in the cage where they had left the great ape safely secured but a few minutes before.

Tarzan and Taug took to the trees together, the shaggy coat of the fierce ape brushing the sleek skin of the English lordling as they passed through the primeval jungle side by side.

"Go back to Teeka," said Tarzan. "She is yours. Tarzan does not want her."

"Tarzan has found another she?" asked Taug.

The ape-boy shrugged.

"For the Gomangani there is another Gomangani," he said; "for Numa, the lion, there is Sabor, the lioness; for Sheeta there is a she of his own kind; for Bara, the deer; for Manu, the monkey; for all the beasts and the birds of the jungle is there a mate. Only for Tarzan of the Apes is there none. Taug is an ape. Teeka is an ape. Go back to Teeka. Tarzan is a man. He will go alone."

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Chapter Two

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CHAPTER II

THE black warriors labored in the humid heat of the jungle's stifling shade. With war spears they loosened the thick, black loam and the deep layers of rotting vegetation. With heavy-nailed fingers they scooped away the disintegrated earth from the center of the age-old game trail. Often they ceased their labors to squat, resting and gossiping, with much laughter, at the edge of the pit they were digging.

Against the boles of near-by trees leaned their long, oval shields of thick buffalo hide, and the spears of those who were doing the scooping. Sweat glistened upon their smooth, ebon skins, beneath which rolled rounded muscles, supple in the perfection of nature's uncontaminated health.

A reed buck, stepping warily along the trail toward water, halted as a burst of laughter broke upon his startled ears. For a moment he stood statuesque but for his sensitively dilating nostrils; then he wheeled and fled noiselessly from the terrifying presence of man.

A hundred yards away, deep in the tangle of im-

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penetrable jungle, Numa, the lion, raised his massive head. Numa had dined well until almost daybreak and it had required much noise to awaken him. Now he lifted his muzzle and sniffed the air, caught the acrid scent spoor of the reed buck and the heavy scent of man. But Numa was well filled. With a low, disgusted grunt he rose and slunk away.

Brilliantly plumaged birds with raucous voices darted from tree to tree. Little monkeys, chattering and scolding, swung through the swaying limbs above the black warriors. Yet they were alone, for the teeming jungle with all its myriad life, like the swarming streets of a great metropolis, is one of the loneliest spots in God's great universe.

But were they alone?

Above them, lightly balanced upon a leafy tree limb, a gray-eyed youth watched with eager intentness their every move. The fire of hate, restrained, smoldered beneath the lad's evident desire to know the purpose of the black men's labors. Such a one as these it was who had slain his beloved Kala. For them there could be naught but enmity, yet he liked well to watch them, avid as he was for greater knowledge of the ways of man.

He saw the pit grow in depth until a great hole yawned the width of the trail—a hole which was amply large enough to hold at one time all of the six excavators. Tarzan could not guess the purpose of so great a labor. And when they cut long stakes,

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sharpened at their upper ends, and set them at intervals upright in the bottom of the pit, his wonderment but increased, nor was it satisfied with the placing of the light cross-poles over the pit, or the careful arrangement of leaves and earth which completely hid from view the work the black men had performed.

When they were done they surveyed their handiwork with evident satisfaction, and Tarzan surveyed it, too. Even to his practiced eye there remained scarce a vestige of evidence that the ancient game trail had been tampered with in any way.

So absorbed was the ape-man in speculation as to the purpose of the covered pit that he permitted the blacks to depart in the direction of their village without the usual baiting which had rendered him the terror of Mbonga's people and had afforded Tarzan both a vehicle of revenge and a source of inexhaustible delight.

Puzzle as he would, however, he could not solve the mystery of the concealed pit, for the ways of the blacks were still strange ways to Tarzan. They had entered his jungle but a short time before—the first of their kind to encroach upon the age-old supremacy of the beasts which laired there. To Numa, the lion, to Tantor, the elephant, to the great apes and the lesser apes, to each and all of the myriad creatures of this savage wild, the ways of man were new. They had much to learn of these black, hairless creatures

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that walked erect upon their hind paws—and they were learning it slowly, and always to their sorrow.

Shortly after the blacks had departed, Tarzan swung easily to the trail. Sniffing suspiciously, he circled the edge of the pit. Squatting upon his haunches, he scraped away a little earth to expose one of the cross-bars. He sniffed at this, touched it, cocked his head upon one side, and contemplated it gravely for several minutes. Then he carefully recovered it, arranging the earth as neatly as had the blacks. This done, he swung himself back among the branches of the trees and moved off in search of his hairy fellows, the great apes of the tribe of Kerchak.

Once he crossed the trail of Numa, the lion, pausing for a moment to hurl a soft fruit at the snarling face of his enemy, and to taunt and insult him, calling ter of carrion and brother of Dango, the h a, his yellow-green eyes round and ncentrated hate, glared up at the him. Low growls vibrated his eat rage transmitted to his ike motion; but realizing tility of long distance turned presently and tion which hid him With a final scream grimace at his g his way.

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Another mile and a shifting wind brought to his keen nostrils a familiar, pungent odor close at hand, and a moment later there loomed beneath him a huge, gray-black bulk forging steadily along the jungle trail. Tarzan seized and broke a small tree limb, and at the sudden cracking sound the ponderous figure halted. Great ears were thrown forward, and a long, supple trunk rose quickly to wave to and fro in search of the scent of an enemy, while two weak, little eyes peered suspiciously and futilely about in quest of the author of the noise which had disturbed his peaceful way.

Tarzan laughed aloud and came closer above the head of the pachyderm.

"Tantor! Tantor!" he cried. "Bara, the deer, is less fearful than you—you, Tantor, the elephant, greatest of the jungle folk with the strength of as many Numas as I have toes upon my feet and fingers upon my hands. Tantor, who can uproot great trees, trembles with fear at the sound of a broken twig."

A rumbling noise, which might have been either a sign of contempt or a sigh of relief, was Tantor's only reply as the uplifted trunk and ears came down and the beast's tail dropped to normal; but his eyes still roved about in search of Tarzan. He was not long kept in suspense, however, as to the whereabouts of the ape-man, for a second later the youth dropped lightly to the broad head of his old friend.

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Then stretching himself at full length, he drummed with his bare toes upon the thick hide, and as his fingers scratched the more tender surfaces beneath the great ears, he talked to Tantor of the gossip of the jungle as though the great beast understood every word that he said.

Much there was which Tarzan could make Tantor understand, and though the small talk of the wild was beyond the great, gray dreadnaught of the jungle, he stood with blinking eyes and gently swaying trunk as though drinking in every word of it with keenest appreciation. As a matter of fact it was the pleasant, friendly voice and caressing hands behind his ears which he enjoyed, and the close proximity of him whom he had often borne upon his back since Tarzan, as a little child, had once fearlessly approached the great bull, assuming upon the part of the pachyderm the same friendliness which filled his own heart.

In the years of their association Tarzan had discovered that he possessed an inexplicable power to govern and direct his mighty friend. At his bidding, Tantor would come from a great distance—as far as his keen ears could detect the shrill and piercing summons of the ape-man—and when Tarzan was squatted upon his head, Tantor would lumber through the jungle in any direction which his rider bade him go. It was the power of the man-mind over that of the brute and it was just as effective as

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though both fully understood its origin, though neither did.

For half an hour Tarzan sprawled there upon Tantor's back. Time had no meaning for either of them. Life, as they saw it, consisted principally in keeping their stomachs filled. To Tarzan this was a less arduous labor than to Tantor, for Tarzan's stomach was smaller, and being omnivorous, food was less difficult to obtain. If one sort did not come readily to hand, there were always many others to satisfy his hunger. He was less particular as to his diet than Tantor, who would eat only the bark of certain trees, and the wood of others, while a third appealed to him only through its leaves, and these, perhaps, just at certain seasons of the year.

Tantor must needs spend the better part of his life in filling his immense stomach against the needs of his mighty thews. It is thus with all the lower orders—their lives are so occupied either with searching for food or with the processes of digestion that they have little time for other considerations. Doubtless it is this handicap which has kept them from advancing as rapidly as man, who has more time to give to thought upon other matters.

However, these questions troubled Tarzan but little, and Tantor not at all. What the former knew was that he was happy in the companionship of the elephant. He did not know why. He did not know that because he was a human being—a normal,

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healthy human being—he craved some living thing upon which to lavish his affection. His childhood playmates among the apes of Kerchak were now great, sullen brutes. They felt nor inspired but little affection. The younger apes Tarzan still played with occasionally. In his savage way he loved them; but they were far from satisfying or restful companions. Tantor was a great mountain of calm, of poise, of stability. It was restful and satisfying to sprawl upon his rough pate and pour one's vague hopes and aspirations into the great ears which flapped ponderously to and fro in apparent understanding. Of all the jungle folk, Tantor commanded Tarzan's greatest love since Kala had been taken from him. Sometimes Tarzan wondered if Tantor reciprocated his affection. It was difficult to know.

It was the call of the stomach—the most compelling and insistent call which the jungle knows—that took Tarzan finally back to the trees and off in search of food, while Tantor continued his interrupted journey in the opposite direction.

For an hour the ape-man foraged. A lofty nest yielded its fresh, warm harvest. Fruits, berries, and tender plantain found a place upon his menu in the order that he happened upon them, for he did not seek such foods. Meat, meat, meat! It was always meat that Tarzan of the Apes hunted; but sometimes meat eluded him, as today.

And as he roamed the jungle his active mind busied

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itself not alone with his hunting, but with many other subjects. He had a habit of recalling often the events of the preceding days and hours. He lived over his visit with Tantor; he cogitated upon the digging blacks and the strange, covered pit they had left behind them. He wondered again and again what its purpose might be. He compared perceptions and arrived at judgments. He compared judgments, reaching conclusions—not always correct ones, it is true, but at least he used his brain for the purpose God intended it, which was the less difficult because he was not handicapped by the second-hand, and usually erroneous, judgments of others.

And as he puzzled over the covered pit, there loomed suddenly before his mental vision a huge, gray-black bulk which lumbered ponderously along a jungle trail. Instantly Tarzan tensed to the shock of a sudden fear. Decision and action usually occurred simultaneously in the life of the ape-man, and now he was away through the leafy branches ere the realization of the pit's purpose had scarce formed in his mind.

Swinging from swaying limb to swaying limb, he raced through the middle terraces where the trees grew close together. Again he dropped to the ground and sped, silently and light of foot, over the carpet of decaying vegetation, only to leap again into the trees where the tangled undergrowth precluded rapid advance upon the surface.

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In his anxiety he cast discretion to the winds. The caution of the beast was lost in the loyalty of the man, and so it came that he entered a large clearing, denuded of trees, without a thought of what might lie there or upon the farther edge to dispute the way with him.

He was half way across when directly in his path and but a few yards away there rose from a clump of tall grasses a half dozen chattering birds. Instantly Tarzan turned aside, for he knew well enough what manner of creature the presence of these little sentinels proclaimed. Simultaneously Buto, the rhinoceros, scrambled to his short legs and charged furiously. Haphazard charges Buto, the rhinoceros. With his weak eyes he sees but poorly even at short distances, and whether his erratic rushes are due to the panic of fear as he attempts to escape, or to the irascible temper with which he is generally credited, it is difficult to determine. Nor is the matter of little moment to one whom Buto charges, for if he be caught and tossed, the chances are that naught will interest him thereafter.

And today it chanced that Buto bore down straight upon Tarzan, across the few yards of knee-deep grass which separated them. Accident started him in the direction of the ape-man, and then his weak eyes discerned the enemy, and with a series of snorts he charged straight for him. The little rhino birds fluttered and circled about their giant ward. Among

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the branches of the trees at the edge of the clearing, a score or more monkeys chattered and scolded as the loud snorts of the angry beast sent them scurrying affrightedly to the upper terraces. Tarzan alone appeared indifferent and serene.

Directly in the path of the charge he stood. There had been no time to seek safety in the trees beyond the clearing, nor had Tarzan any mind to delay his journey because of Buto. He had met the stupid beast before and held him in fine contempt.

And now Buto was upon him, the massive head lowered and the long, heavy horn inclined for the frightful work for which nature had designed it; but as he struck upward, his weapon raked only thin air, for the ape-man had sprung lightly aloft with a catlike leap that carried him above the threatening horn to the broad back of the rhinoceros. Another spring and he was on the ground behind the brute and racing like a deer for the trees.

Buto, angered and mystified by the strange disappearance of his prey, wheeled and charged frantically in another direction, which chanced to be not the direction of Tarzan's flight, and so the ape-man came in safety to the trees and continued on his swift way through the forest.

Some distance ahead of him Tantor moved steadily along the well-worn elephant trail, and ahead of Tantor a crouching, black warrior listened intently in the middle of the path. Presently he heard the

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sound for which he had been hoping — the cracking, snapping sound which heralded the approach of an elephant.

To his right and left in other parts of the jungle other warriors were watching. A low signal, passed from one to another, apprised the most distant that the quarry was afoot. Rapidly they converged toward the trail, taking positions in trees down wind from the point at which Tantor must pass them. Silently they waited and presently were rewarded by the sight of a mighty tusker carrying an amount of ivory in his long tusks that set their greedy hearts to palpitating.

No sooner had he passed their positions than the warriors clambered from their perches. No longer were they silent, but instead clapped their hands and shouted as they reached the ground. For an instant Tantor, the elephant, paused with upraised trunk and tail, with great ears up-pricked, and then he swung on along the trail at a rapid, shuffling pace — straight toward the covered pit with its sharpened stakes upstanding in the ground.

Behind him came the yelling warriors, urging him on in the rapid flight which would not permit a careful examination of the ground before him. Tantor, the elephant, who could have turned and scattered his adversaries with a single charge, fled like a frightened deer — fled toward a hideous, torturing death.

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And behind them all came Tarzan of the Apes, racing through the jungle forest with the speed and agility of a squirrel, for he had heard the shouts of the warriors and had interpreted them correctly. Once he uttered a piercing call that reverberated through the jungle; but Tantor, in the panic of terror, either failed to hear, or hearing, dared not pause to heed.

Now the giant pachyderm was but a few yards from the hidden death lurking in his path, and the blacks, certain of success, were screaming and dancing in his wake, waving their war spears and celebrating in advance the acquisition of the splendid ivory carried by their prey and the surfeit of elephant meat which would be theirs this night.

So intent were they upon their gratulations that they entirely failed to note the silent passage of the man-beast above their heads, nor did Tantor, either, see or hear him, even though Tarzan called to him to stop.

A few more steps would precipitate Tantor upon the sharpened stakes; Tarzan fairly flew through the trees until he had come abreast of the fleeing animal and then had passed him. At the pit's verge the ape-man dropped to the ground in the center of the trail. Tantor was almost upon him before his weak eyes permitted him to recognize his old friend.

"Stop!" cried Tarzan, and the great beast halted to the upraised hand.

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Tarzan turned and kicked aside some of the brush which hid the pit. Instantly Tantor saw and understood.

"Fight!" growled Tarzan. "They are coming behind you." But Tantor, the elephant, is a huge bunch of nerves, and now he was half panic-stricken by terror.

Before him yawned the pit, how far he did not know, but to right and left lay the primeval jungle untouched by man. With a squeal the great beast turned suddenly at right angles and burst his noisy way through the solid wall of matted vegetation that would have stopped any but him.

Tarzan, standing upon the edge of the pit, smiled as he watched Tantor's undignified flight. Soon the blacks would come. It were best that Tarzan of the Apes faded from the scene. He essayed a step from the pit's edge, and as he threw the weight of his body upon his left foot, the earth crumbled away. Tarzan made a single Herculean effort to throw himself forward, but it was too late. Backward and downward he went toward the sharpened stakes in the bottom of the pit.

When, a moment later, the blacks came they saw even from a distance that Tantor had eluded them, for the size of the hole in the pit covering was too small to have accommodated the huge bulk of an elephant. At first they thought that their prey had put one great foot through the top and then, warned,

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drawn back; but when they had come to the pit's verge and peered over, their eyes went wide in astonishment, for, quiet and still, at the bottom lay the naked figure of a white giant.

Some of them there had glimpsed this forest god before and they drew back in terror, awed by the presence which they had for some time believed to possess the miraculous powers of a demon; but others there were who pushed forward, thinking only of the capture of an enemy, and these leaped into the pit and lifted Tarzan out.

There was no scar upon his body. None of the sharpened stakes had pierced him—only a swollen spot at the base of the brain indicated the nature of his injury. In falling backward his head had struck upon the side of one of the stakes, rendering him unconscious. The blacks were quick to discover this, and equally quick to bind their prisoner's arms and legs before he should regain consciousness, for they had learned to harbor a wholesome respect for this strange man-beast that consorted with the hairy tree folk.

They had carried him but a short distance toward their village when the ape-man's eyelids quivered and raised. He looked about him wonderingly for a moment, and then full consciousness returned and he realized the seriousness of his predicament. Accustomed almost from birth to relying solely upon his own resources, he did not cast about for outside aid

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now, but devoted his mind to a consideration of the possibilities for escape which lay within himself and his own powers.

He did not dare test the strength of his bonds while the blacks were carrying him, for fear they would become apprehensive and add to them. Presently his captors discovered that he was conscious, and as they had little stomach for carrying a heavy man through the jungle heat, they set him upon his feet and forced him forward among them, pricking him now and then with their spears, yet with every manifestation of the superstitious awe in which they held him.

When they discovered that their prodding brought no outward evidence of suffering, their awe increased, so that they soon desisted, half believing that this strange white giant was a supernatural being and so was immune from pain.

As they approached their village, they shouted aloud the victorious cries of successful warriors, so that by the time they reached the gate, dancing and waving their spears, a great crowd of men, women, and children were gathered there to greet them and hear the story of their adventure.

As the eyes of the villagers fell upon the prisoner, they went wild, and heavy jaws fell open in astonishment and incredulity. For months they had lived in perpetual terror of a weird, white demon whom but few had ever glimpsed and lived to describe.

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Warriors had disappeared from the paths almost within sight of the village and from the midst of their companions as mysteriously and completely as though they had been swallowed by the earth, and later, at night, their dead bodies had fallen, as from the heavens, into the village street.

This fearsome creature had appeared by night in the huts of the village, killed, and disappeared, leaving behind him in the huts with his dead, strange and terrifying evidences of an uncanny sense of humor.

But now he was in their power! No longer could he terrorize them. Slowly the realization of this dawned upon them. A woman, screaming, ran forward and struck the ape-man across the face. Another and another followed her example, until Tarzan of the Apes was surrounded by a fighting, clawing, yelling mob of natives.

And then Mbonga, the chief, came, and laying his spear heavily across the shoulders of his people, drove them from their prey.

"We will save him until night," he said.

Far out in the jungle Tantor, the elephant, his first panic of fear allayed, stood with up-pricked ears and undulating trunk. What was passing through the convolutions of his savage brain? Could he be searching for Tarzan? Could he recall and measure the service the ape-man had performed for him? Of that there can be no doubt. But did he feel grat-

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itude? Would he have risked his own life to have saved Tarzan could he have known of the danger which confronted his friend? You will doubt it. Anyone at all familiar with elephants will doubt it. Englishmen who have hunted much with elephants in India will tell you that they never have heard of an instance in which one of these animals has gone to the aid of a man in danger, even though the man had often befriended it. And so it is to be doubted that Tantor would have attempted to overcome his instinctive fear of the black men in an effort to succor Tarzan.

The screams of the infuriated villagers came faintly to his sensitive ears, and he wheeled, as though in terror, contemplating flight; but something stayed him, and again he turned about, raised his trunk, and gave voice to a shrill cry.

Then he stood listening.

In the distant village where Mbonga had restored quiet and order, the voice of Tantor was scarcely audible to the blacks, but to the keen ears of Tarzan of the Apes it bore its message.

His captors were leading him to a hut where he might be confined and guarded against the coming of the nocturnal orgy that would mark his torture-laden death. He halted as he heard the notes of Tantor's call, and raising his head, gave vent to a terrifying scream that sent cold chills through the superstitious blacks and caused the warriors who guarded him to

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leap back even though their prisoner's arms were securely bound behind him.

With raised spears they encircled him as for a moment longer he stood listening. Faintly from the distance came another, an answering cry, and Tarzan of the Apes, satisfied, turned and quietly pursued his way toward the hut where he was to be imprisoned.

The afternoon wore on. From the surrounding village the ape-man heard the bustle of preparation for the feast. Through the doorway of the hut he saw the women laying the cooking fires and filling their earthen caldrons with water; but above it all his ears were bent across the jungle in eager listening for the coming of Tantor.

Even Tarzan but half believed that he would come. He knew Tantor even better than Tantor knew himself. He knew the timid heart which lay in the giant body. He knew the panic of terror which the scent of the Gomangani inspired within that savage breast, and as night drew on, hope died within his heart and in the stoic calm of the wild beast which he was, he resigned himself to meet the fate which awaited him.

All afternoon he had been working, working, working with the bonds that held his wrists. Very slowly they were giving. He might free his hands before they came to lead him out to be butchered, and if he did—Tarzan licked his lips in anticipation,

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and smiled a cold, grim smile. He could imagine the feel of soft flesh beneath his fingers and the sinking of his white teeth into the throats of his foemen. He would let them taste his wrath before they overpowered him!

At last they came — painted, befeathered warriors — even more hideous than nature had intended them. They came and pushed him into the open, where his appearance was greeted by wild shouts from the assembled villagers.

To the stake they led him, and as they pushed him roughly against it preparatory to binding him there securely for the dance of death that would presently encircle him, Tarzan tensed his mighty thews and with a single, powerful wrench parted the loosened thongs which had secured his hands. Like thought, for quickness, he leaped forward among the warriors nearest him. A blow sent one to earth, as, growling and snarling, the beast-man leaped upon the breast of another. His fangs were buried instantly in the jugular of his adversary and then a half hundred black men had leaped upon him and borne him to earth.

Striking, clawing, and snapping, the ape-man fought — fought as his foster people had taught him to fight — fought like a wild beast cornered. His strength, his agility, his courage, and his intelligence rendered him easily a match for half a dozen black men in a hand-to-hand struggle, but not even Tarzan

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of the Apes could hope to successfully cope with half a hundred.

Slowly they were overpowering him, though a score of them bled from ugly wounds, and two lay very still beneath the trampling feet, and the rolling bodies of the contestants.

Overpower him they might, but could they keep him overpowered while they bound him? A half hour of desperate endeavor convinced them that they could not, and so Mbonga, who, like all good rulers, had circled in the safety of the background, called to one to work his way in and spear the victim. Gradually, through the milling, battling men, the warrior approached the object of his quest.

He stood with poised spear above his head waiting for the instant that would expose a vulnerable part of the ape-man's body and still not endanger one of the blacks. Closer and closer he edged about, following the movements of the twisting, scuffling combatants. The growls of the ape-man sent cold chills up the warrior's spine, causing him to go carefully lest he miss at the first cast and lay himself open to an attack from those merciless teeth and mighty hands.

At last he found an opening. Higher he raised his spear, tensing his muscles, rolling beneath his glistening, ebon hide, and then from the jungle just beyond the palisade came a thunderous crashing. The spear-hand paused, the black cast a quick glance

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in the direction of the disturbance, as did the others of the blacks who were not occupied with the subjugation of the ape-man.

In the glare of the fires they saw a huge bulk topping the barrier. They saw the palisade belly and sway inward. They saw it burst as though built of straws, and an instant later Tantor, the elephant, thundered down upon them.

To right and left the blacks fled, screaming in terror. Some who hovered upon the verge of the strife with Tarzan heard and made good their escape, but a half dozen there were so wrapt in the blood-madness of battle that they failed to note the approach of the giant tusker.

Upon these Tantor charged, trumpeting furiously. Above them he stopped, his sensitive trunk weaving among them, and there, at the bottom, he found Tarzan, bloody, but still battling.

A warrior turned his eyes upward from the mêlée. Above him towered the gigantic bulk of the pachyderm, the little eyes flashing with the reflected light of the fires — wicked, frightful, terrifying. The warrior screamed, and as he screamed, the sinuous trunk encircled him, lifted him high above the ground, and hurled him far after the fleeing crowd.

Another and another Tantor wrenched from the body of the ape-man, throwing them to right and to left, where they lay either moaning or very quiet, as death came slowly or at once.

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At a distance Mbonga rallied his warriors. His greedy eyes had noted the great ivory tusks of the bull. The first panic of terror relieved, he urged his men forward to attack with their heavy elephant spears; but as they came, Tantor swung Tarzan to his broad head, and, wheeling, lumbered off into the jungle through the great rent he had made in the palisade.

Elephant hunters may be right when they aver that this animal would not have rendered such service to a man, but to Tantor, Tarzan was not a man—he was but a fellow jungle beast.

And so it was that Tantor, the elephant, discharged an obligation to Tarzan of the Apes, cementing even more closely the friendship that had existed between them since Tarzan as a little, brown boy rode upon Tantor's huge back through the moonlit jungle beneath the equatorial stars.

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Chapter Three

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CHAPTER III

THE FIGHT FOR THE BALU

TEEKA had become a mother. Tarzan of the Apes was intensely interested, much more so, in fact, than Taug, the father. Tarzan was very fond of Teeka. Even the cares of prospective motherhood had not entirely quenched the fires of carefree youth, and Teeka had remained a good-natured playmate even at an age when other shes of the tribe of Kerchak had assumed the sullen dignity of maturity. She yet retained her childish delight in the primitive games of tag and hide-and-go-seek which Tarzan's fertile man-mind had evolved.

To play tag through the tree tops is an exciting and inspiring pastime. Tarzan delighted in it, but the bulls of his childhood had long since abandoned such childish practices. Teeka, though, had been keen for it always until shortly before the baby came; but with the advent of her first-born, even Teeka changed.

The evidence of the change surprised and hurt Tarzan immeasurably. One morning he saw Teeka squatted upon a low branch hugging something very close to her hairy breast—a wee something which

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squirmed and wriggled. Tarzan approached filled with the curiosity which is common to all creatures endowed with brains which have progressed beyond the microscopic stage.

Teeka rolled her eyes in his direction and strained the squirming mite still closer to her. Tarzan came nearer. Teeka drew away and bared her fangs. Tarzan was nonplussed. In all his experiences with Teeka, never before had she bared fangs at him other than in play; but today she did not look playful. Tarzan ran his brown fingers through his thick, black hair, cocked his head upon one side, and stared. Then he edged a bit nearer, craning his neck to have a better look at the thing which Teeka cuddled.

Again Teeka drew back her upper lip in a warning snarl. Tarzan reached forth a hand, cautiously, to touch the thing which Teeka held, and Teeka, with a hideous growl, turned suddenly upon him. Her teeth sank into the flesh of his forearm before the ape-man could snatch it away, and she pursued him for a short distance as he retreated incontinently through the trees; but Teeka, carrying her baby, could not overtake him. At a safe distance Tarzan stopped and turned to regard his erstwhile play-fellow in unconcealed astonishment. What had happened to so alter the gentle Teeka? She had so covered the thing in her arms that Tarzan had not yet been able to recognize it for what it was; but now, as she turned from the pursuit of him, he saw it. Through

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his pain and chagrin he smiled, for Tarzan had seen young ape mothers before. In a few days she would be less suspicious. Still Tarzan was hurt; it was not right that Teeka, of all others, should fear him. Why, not for the world would he harm her, or her balu, which is the ape word for baby.

And now, above the pain of his injured arm and the hurt to his pride, rose a still stronger desire to come close and inspect the new-born son of Taug. Possibly you will wonder that Tarzan of the Apes, mighty fighter that he was, should have fled before the irritable attack of a she, or that he should hesitate to return for the satisfaction of his curiosity when with ease he might have vanquished the weakened mother of the new-born cub; but you need not wonder. Were you an ape, you would know that only a bull in the throes of madness will turn upon a female other than to gently chastise her, with the occasional exception of the individual whom we find exemplified among our own kind, and who delights in beating up his better half because she happens to be smaller and weaker than he.

Tarzan again came toward the young mother—warily and with his line of retreat safely open. Again Teeka growled ferociously. Tarzan expostulated.

"Tarzan of the Apes will not harm Teeka's balu," he said. "Let me see it."

"Go away!" commanded Teeka. "Go away, or I will kill you."

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"Let me see it," urged Tarzan.

"Go away," reiterated the she-ape. "Here comes Taug. He will make you go away. Taug will kill you. This is Taug's balu."

A savage growl close behind him apprised Tarzan of the nearness of Taug, and the fact that the bull had heard the warnings and threats of his mate and was coming to her succor.

Now Taug, as well as Teeka, had been Tarzan's play-fellow while the bull was still young enough to wish to play. Once Tarzan had saved Taug's life; but the memory of an ape is not overlong, nor would gratitude rise above the parental instinct. Tarzan and Taug had once measured strength, and Tarzan had been victorious. That fact Taug could be depended upon still to remember; but even so, he might readily face another defeat for his first-born—if he chanced to be in the proper mood.

From his hideous growls, which now rose in strength and volume, he seemed to be in quite the mood. Now Tarzan felt no fear of Taug, nor did the unwritten law of the jungle demand that he should flee from battle with any male, unless he cared to from purely personal reasons. But Tarzan liked Taug. He had no grudge against him, and his man-mind told him what the mind of an ape would never have deduced—that Taug's attitude in no sense indicated hatred. It was but the instinctive urge of the male to protect its offspring and its mate.

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Tarzan had no desire to battle with Taug, nor did the blood of his English ancestors relish the thought of flight, yet when the bull charged, Tarzan leaped nimbly to one side, and thus encouraged, Taug wheeled and rushed again madly to the attack. Perhaps the memory of a past defeat at Tarzan's hands goaded him. Perhaps the fact that Teeka sat there watching him aroused a desire to vanquish the ape-man before her eyes, for in the breast of every jungle male lurks a vast egotism which finds expression in the performance of deeds of derring-do before an audience of the opposite sex.

At the ape-man's side swung his long grass rope —the plaything of yesterday, the weapon of today— and as Taug charged the second time, Tarzan slipped the coils over his head and deftly shook out the sliding noose as he again nimbly eluded the ungainly beast. Before the ape could turn again, Tarzan had fled far aloft among the branches of the upper terrace.

Taug, now wrought to a frenzy of real rage, followed him. Teeka peered upward at them. It was difficult to say whether she was interested. Taug could not climb as rapidly as Tarzan, so the latter reached the high levels to which the heavy ape dared not follow before the former overtook him. There he halted and looked down upon his pursuer, making faces at him and calling him such choice names as occurred to the fertile man-brain. Then, when he

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had worked Taug to such a pitch of foaming rage that the great bull fairly danced upon the bending limb beneath him, Tarzan's hand shot suddenly outward, a widening noose dropped swiftly through the air, there was a quick jerk as it settled about Taug, falling to his knees, a jerk that tightened it securely about the hairy legs of the anthropoid.

Taug, slow of wit, realized too late the intention of his tormentor. He scrambled to escape, but the ape-man gave the rope a tremendous jerk that pulled Taug from his perch, and a moment later, growling hideously, the ape hung head downward thirty feet above the ground.

Tarzan secured the rope to a stout limb and descended to a point close to Taug.

"Taug," he said, "you are as stupid as Buto, the rhinoceros. Now you may hang here until you get a little sense in your thick head. You may hang here and watch while I go and talk with Teeka."

Taug blustered and threatened, but Tarzan only grinned at him as he dropped lightly to the lower levels. Here he again approached Teeka only to be again greeted with bared fangs and menacing growls. He sought to placate her; he urged his friendly intentions, and craned his neck to have a look at Teeka's balu; but the she-ape was not to be persuaded that he meant other than harm to her little one. Her motherhood was still so new that reason was yet subservient to instinct.

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Realizing the futility of attempting to catch and chastise Tarzan, Teeka sought to escape him. She dropped to the ground and lumbered across the little clearing about which the apes of the tribe were disposed in rest or in the search of food, and presently Tarzan abandoned his attempts to persuade her to permit a close examination of the balu. The ape-man would have liked to handle the tiny thing. The very sight of it awakened in his breast a strange yearning. He wished to cuddle and fondle the grotesque little ape-thing. It was Teeka's balu and Tarzan had once lavished his young affections upon Teeka.

But now his attention was diverted by the voice of Taug. The threats that had filled the ape's mouth had turned to pleas. The tightening noose was stopping the circulation of the blood in his legs—he was beginning to suffer. Several apes sat near him highly interested in his predicament. They made uncomplimentary remarks about him, for each of them had felt the weight of Taug's mighty hands and the strength of his great jaws. They were enjoying revenge.

Teeka, seeing that Tarzan had turned back toward the trees, had halted in the center of the clearing, and there she sat hugging her balu and casting suspicious glances here and there. With the coming of the balu, Teeka's care-free world had suddenly become peopled with innumerable enemies. She saw

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an implacable foe in Tarzan, always heretofore her best friend. Even poor old Mumga, half blind and almost entirely toothless, searching patiently for grubworms beneath a fallen log, represented to her a malignant spirit thirsting for the blood of little balus.

And while Teeka guarded suspiciously against harm, where there was no harm, she failed to note two baleful, yellow-green eyes staring fixedly at her from behind a clump of bushes at the opposite side of the clearing.

Hollow from hunger, Sheeta, the panther, glared greedily at the tempting meat so close at hand, but the sight of the great bulls beyond gave him pause.

Ah, if the she-ape with her balu would but come just a trifle nearer! A quick spring and he would be upon them and away again with his meat before the bulls could prevent.

The tip of his tawny tail moved in spasmodic little jerks; his lower jaw hung low, exposing a red tongue and yellow fangs. But all this Teeka did not see, nor did any other of the apes who were feeding or resting about her. Nor did Tarzan or the apes in the trees.

Hearing the abuse which the bulls were pouring upon the helpless Taug, Tarzan clambered quickly among them. One was edging closer and leaning far out in an effort to reach the dangling ape. He had worked himself into quite a fury through recol-

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lection of the last occasion upon which Taug had mauled him, and now he was bent upon revenge. Once he had grasped the swinging ape, he would quickly have drawn him within reach of his jaws. Tarzan saw and was wroth. He loved a fair fight, but the thing which this ape contemplated revolted him. Already a hairy hand had clutched the helpless Taug when, with an angry growl of protest, Tarzan leaped to the branch at the attacking ape's side, and with a single mighty cuff, swept him from his perch.

Surprised and enraged, the bull clutched madly for support as he toppled sidewise, and then with an agile movement succeeded in projecting himself toward another limb a few feet below. Here he found a hand-hold, quickly righted himself, and as quickly clambered upward to be revenged upon Tarzan, but the ape-man was otherwise engaged and did not wish to be interrupted. He was explaining again to Taug the depths of the latter's abysmal ignorance, and pointing out how much greater and mightier was Tarzan of the Apes than Taug or any other ape.

In the end he would release Taug, but not until Taug was fully acquainted with his own inferiority. And then the maddened bull came from beneath, and instantly Tarzan was transformed from a good-natured, teasing youth into a snarling, savage beast. Along his scalp the hair bristled; his upper lip drew back that his fighting fangs might be uncovered and ready. He did not wait for the bull to reach him,

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for something in the appearance or the voice of the attacker aroused within the ape-man a feeling of belligerent antagonism that would not be denied. With a scream that carried no human note, Tarzan leaped straight at the throat of the attacker.

The impetuosity of this act and the weight and momentum of his body carried the bull backward, clutching and clawing for support, down through the leafy branches of the tree. For fifteen feet the two fell, Tarzan's teeth buried in the jugular of his opponent, when a stout branch stopped their descent. The bull struck full upon the small of his back across the limb, hung there for a moment with the ape-man still upon his breast, and then toppled over toward the ground.

Tarzan had felt the instantaneous relaxation of the body beneath him after the heavy impact with the tree limb, and as the other turned completely over and started again upon its fall toward the ground, he reached forth a hand and caught the branch in time to stay his own descent, while the ape dropped like a plummet to the foot of the tree.

Tarzan looked downward for a moment upon the still form of his late antagonist, then he rose to his full height, swelled his deep chest, smote upon it with his clenched fist and roared out the uncanny challenge of the victorious bull ape.

Even Sheeta, the panther, crouched for a spring at the edge of the little clearing, moved uneasily as

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the mighty voice sent its weird cry reverberating through the jungle. To right and left, nervously, glanced Sheeta, as though assuring himself that the way of escape lay ready at hand.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes," boasted the ape-man; "mighty hunter, mighty fighter! None in all the jungle so great as Tarzan."

Then he made his way back in the direction of Taug. Teeka had watched the happenings in the tree. She had even placed her precious balu upon the soft grasses and come a little nearer that she might better witness all that was passing in the branches above her. In her heart of hearts did she still esteem the smooth-skinned Tarzan? Did her savage breast swell with pride as she witnessed his victory over the ape? You will have to ask Teeka.

And Sheeta, the panther, saw that the she-ape had left her cub alone among the grasses. He moved his tail again, as though this closest approximation of lashing in which he dared indulge might stimulate his momentarily waned courage. The cry of the victorious ape-man still held his nerves beneath its spell. It would be several minutes before he again could bring himself to the point of charging into view of the giant anthropoids.

And as he regathered his forces, Tarzan reached Taug's side, and then clambering higher up to the point where the end of the grass rope was made fast, he unloosed it and lowered the ape slowly down-

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ward, swinging him in until the clutching hands fastened upon a limb.

Quickly Taug drew himself to a position of safety and shook off the noose. In his rage-maddened heart was no room for gratitude to the ape-man. He recalled only the fact that Tarzan had laid this painful indignity upon him. He would be revenged, but just at present his legs were so numb and his head so dizzy that he must postpone the gratification of his vengeance.

Tarzan was coiling his rope the while he lectured Taug on the futility of pitting his poor powers, physical and intellectual, against those of his betters. Teeka had come close beneath the tree and was peering upward. Sheeta was worming his way stealthily forward, his belly close to the ground. In another moment he would be clear of the underbrush and ready for the rapid charge and the quick retreat that would end the brief existence of Teeka's balu.

Then Tarzan chanced to look up and across the clearing. Instantly his attitude of good-natured bantering and pompous boastfulness dropped from him. Silently and swiftly he shot downward toward the ground. Teeka, seeing him coming, and thinking that he was after her or her balu, bristled and prepared to fight. But Tarzan sped by her, and as he went, her eyes followed him and she saw the cause of his sudden descent and his rapid charge across the clearing. There in full sight now was

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Sheeta, the panther, stalking slowly toward the tiny, wriggling balu which lay among the grasses many yards away.

Teeka gave voice to a shrill scream of terror and of warning as she dashed after the ape-man. Sheeta saw Tarzan coming. He saw the she-ape's cub before him, and he thought that this other was bent upon robbing him of his prey. With an angry growl, he charged.

Taug, warned by Teeka's cry, came lumbering down to her assistance. Several other bulls, growling and barking, closed in toward the clearing, but they were all much farther from the balu and the panther than was Tarzan of the Apes, so it was that Sheeta and the ape-man reached Teeka's little one almost simultaneously; and there they stood, one upon either side of it, baring their fangs and snarling at each other over the little creature.

Sheeta was afraid to seize the balu, for thus he would give the ape-man an opening for attack; and for the same reason Tarzan hesitated to snatch the panther's prey out of harm's way, for had he stooped to accomplish this, the great beast would have been upon him in an instant. Thus they stood while Teeka came across the clearing, going more slowly as she neared the panther, for even her mother love could scarce overcome her instinctive terror of this natural enemy of her kind.

Behind her came Taug, warily and with many

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pauses and much bluster, and still behind him came other bulls, snarling ferociously and uttering their uncanny challenges. Sheeta's yellow-green eyes glared terribly at Tarzan, and past Tarzan they shot brief glances at the apes of Kerchak advancing upon him. Discretion prompted him to turn and flee, but hunger and the close proximity of the tempting morsel in the grass before him urged him to remain. He reached forth a paw toward Teeka's balu, and as he did so, with a savage guttural, Tarzan of the Apes was upon him.

The panther reared to meet the ape-man's attack. He swung a frightful raking blow for Tarzan that would have wiped his face away had it landed, but it did not land, for Tarzan ducked beneath it and closed, his long knife ready in one strong hand — the knife of his dead father, of the father he never had known.

Instantly the balu was forgotten by Sheeta, the panther. He now thought only of tearing to ribbons with his powerful talons the flesh of his antagonist, of burying his long, yellow fangs in the soft, smooth hide of the ape-man, but Tarzan had fought before with clawed creatures of the jungle. Before now he had battled with fanged monsters, nor always had he come away unscathed. He knew the risk that he ran, but Tarzan of the Apes, inured to the sight of suffering and death, shrank from neither, for he feared neither.

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The instant that he dodged beneath Sheeta's blow, he leaped to the beast's rear and then full upon the tawny back, burying his teeth in Sheeta's neck and the fingers of one hand in the fur at the throat, and with the other hand he drove his blade into Sheeta's side.

Over and over upon the grass rolled Sheeta, growling and screaming, clawing and biting, in a mad effort to dislodge his antagonist or get some portion of his body within range of teeth or talons.

As Tarzan leaped to close quarters with the panther, Teeka had run quickly in and snatched up her balu. Now she sat upon a high branch, safe out of harm's way, cuddling the little thing close to her hairy breast, the while her savage little eyes bored down upon the contestants in the clearing, and her ferocious voice urged Taug and the other bulls to leap into the mêlée.

Thus goaded the bulls came closer, redoubling their hideous clamor; but Sheeta was already sufficiently engaged—he did not even hear them. Once he succeeded in partially dislodging the apeman from his back, so that Tarzan swung for an instant in front of those awful talons, and in the brief instant before he could regain his former hold, a raking blow from a hind paw laid open one leg from hip to knee.

It was the sight and smell of this blood, possibly, which wrought upon the encircling apes; but it was

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Taug who really was responsible for the thing they did.

Taug, but a moment before filled with rage toward Tarzan of the Apes, stood close to the battling pair, his red-rimmed, wicked little eyes glaring at them. What was passing in his savage brain? Did he gloat over the unenviable position of his recent tormentor? Did he long to see Sheeta's great fangs sink into the soft throat of the ape-man? Or did he realize the courageous unselfishness that had prompted Tarzan to rush to the rescue and imperil his life for Teeka's balu—for Taug's little balu? Is gratitude a possession of man only, or do the lower orders know it also?

With the spilling of Tarzan's blood, Taug answered these questions. With all the weight of his great body he leaped, hideously growling, upon Sheeta. His long fighting fangs buried themselves in the white throat. His powerful arms beat and clawed at the soft fur until it flew upward in the jungle breeze.

And with Taug's example before them the other bulls charged, burying Sheeta beneath rending fangs and filling all the forest with the wild din of their battle cries.

Ah! but it was a wondrous and inspiring sight—this battle of the primordial apes and the great, white ape-man with their ancestral foe, Sheeta, the panther.

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In frenzied excitement, Teeka fairly danced upon the limb which swayed beneath her great weight as she urged on the males of her people, and Thaka, and Mumga, and Kamma, with the other shes of the tribe of Kerchak, added their shrill cries or fierce barkings to the pandemonium which now reigned within the jungle.

Bitten and biting, tearing and torn, Sheeta battled for his life; but the odds were against him. Even Numa, the lion, would have hesitated to have attacked an equal number of the great bulls of the tribe of Kerchak, and now, a half mile away, hearing the sounds of the terrific battle, the king of beasts rose uneasily from his midday slumber and slunk off farther into the jungle.

Presently Sheeta's torn and bloody body ceased its Titanic struggles. It stiffened spasmodically, twitched and was still, yet the bulls continued to lacerate it until the beautiful coat was torn to shreds. At last they desisted from sheer physical weariness, and then from the tangle of bloody bodies rose a crimson giant, straight as an arrow.

He placed a foot upon the dead body of the panther, and lifting his blood-stained face to the blue of the equatorial heavens, gave voice to the horrid victory cry of the bull ape.

One by one his hairy fellows of the tribe of Kerchak followed his example. The shes came down from their perches of safety and struck and

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reviled the dead body of Sheeta. The young apes refought the battle in mimicry of their mighty elders.

Teeka was quite close to Tarzan. He turned and saw her with the balu hugged close to her hairy breast, and put out his hands to take the little one, expecting that Teeka would bare her fangs and spring upon him; but instead she placed the balu in his arms, and coming nearer, licked his frightful wounds.

And presently Taug, who had escaped with only a few scratches, came and squatted beside Tarzan and watched him as he played with the little balu, and at last he too leaned over and helped Teeka with the cleansing and the healing of the ape-man's hurts.

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Chapter Four

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CHAPTER IV

THE GOD OF TARZAN

AMONG the books of his dead father in the little cabin by the land-locked harbor, Tarzan of the Apes found many things to puzzle his young head. By much labor and through the medium of infinite patience as well, he had, without assistance, discovered the purpose of the little bugs which ran riot upon the printed pages. He had learned that in the many combinations in which he found them they spoke in a silent language, spoke in a strange tongue, spoke of wonderful things which a little ape-boy could not by any chance fully understand, arousing his curiosity, stimulating his imagination and filling his soul with a mighty longing for further knowledge.

A dictionary had proven itself a wonderful storehouse of information, when, after several years of tireless endeavor, he had solved the mystery of its purpose and the manner of its use. He had learned to make a species of game out of it, following up the spoor of a new thought through the mazes of the many definitions which each new word required him to consult. It was like following a quarry

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