

TARZAN AND THE Jewels of Opar

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"Tarzan of the Apes"
"Son of Tarzan"

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I.—Hiding in the jungle after killing his captain in a fit of brooding madness, Lieut. Albert Werper, Belgian officer, is captured by the Arab slave-raider, who spares his life and promises to him a scheme to kidnap Jane, wife of Tarzan (Lord Greystoke) and sell her into slavery. Werper accepts.

CHAPTER II.—Passing as Jules French, French traveleer, Werper is hospitably received by the Greystokes. He earns his host's life in financial straits and plans an expedition to the treasure vaults of Opar to procure gold. Werper informs Achmet Zek, of the opportunity to seize Lady Greystoke, and follows Tarzan to learn the secret of Opar.

CHAPTER III.—Spying on Tarzan, Werper sees him load his blacks with gold. Achmet Zek, acting on Werper's information, has attacked the Greystoke home, burned it, and carried off Lady Greystoke. Mugambi, Tarzan's lieutenant, is severely wounded but recovers and follows the raiders.

CHAPTER IV.—Werper recovers from the shock and, driving Tarzan apparently dead, leaves him. Seeking a way to safety, Werper is seized by priests of the Flaming God, a degenerate race. He is about to be offered up as a sacrifice when the ceremonies are interrupted by the appearance of a hunger-maddened lion.

CHAPTER V.—Believing Tarzan dead, his black followers return home with the gold. Achmet Zek, acting on Werper's information, has attacked the Greystoke home, burned it, and carried off Lady Greystoke. Mugambi, Tarzan's lieutenant, is severely wounded but recovers and follows the raiders.

CHAPTER VI.—Lord Greystoke recovers consciousness, but the accident has destroyed his memory and he is again Tarzan of the Apes. Fleeing from the scene of his misfortune he finds himself in the jewel room of Opar. He finds with the "priest's problem." Retching in the sacrificial chamber he is recognized by La, high priestess, whom he had known in previous years. He slays the lion and releases Werper. The latter sees the jewels and covets them.

CHAPTER VII.—Tarzan and Werper watch the former's party return to the ruined Greystoke home and bury the gold. Tarzan has no memory of the place. He buries the jewels, which he picks up, and escapes while Tarzan sleeps.

CHAPTER VIII.—Reaching Achmet Zek's stronghold, Werper tells him the gold but not of the jewels. Lady Greystoke is captured. Achmet discovers Werper has the jewels and the Belgian, fearing for his life, escapes with the gems.

CHAPTER IX.—Tarzan misses Werper but does not discover the theft of the jewels. He resumes the life of a wild man. La and the priests of the Flaming God seek Tarzan and Werper to recover the sacrificial knife, which the latter had carried off. They capture Tarzan.

CHAPTER X.

Condemned to Torture and Death.
La had followed her company and when she saw them clawing and biting at Tarzan she raised her voice and cautioned them not to kill him. She saw that he was weakening and that soon the greater numbers would prevail over him, nor had she long to wait before the mighty jungle creature lay helpless and bound at her feet.

"Bring him to the place at which we stopped," she commanded, and they carried Tarzan back to the little clearing and threw him down beneath a tree.

"Build me a shelter!" ordered La. "We shall stop here tonight and tomorrow in the face of the Flaming God. La will offer up the heart of this defiler of the temple. Where is the sacred knife? Who took it from him?"

But no one had seen it and each was positive in his assurance that the sacrificial weapon had not been upon Tarzan's person when they captured him. The ape-man looked upon the menacing creatures which surrounded him and snarled his defiance. He looked upon La and smiled. In the face of death he was unafraid.

"Where is the knife?" La asked him.

"I do not know," replied Tarzan. "The man took it away with him when he slipped away during the night. Of what good was your knife, anyway? You can make another. Did you follow us all this way for nothing more than a knife? Let me go and find him and I will bring it back to you."

La laughed a bitter laugh, for in her heart she knew that Tarzan's sin was greater than the purloining of the sacred sacrificial knife of Opar; yet as she looked at him lying bound and helpless before her, tears rose to her eyes so that she had to turn away to hide them; but she remained inflexible in her determination to make him pay in frightful suffering and in eventual death for daring to spurn the love of La.

When the shelter was completed La had Tarzan transferred to it. "All night I shall torture him," she muttered to her priests, "and at the first streak of dawn you may prepare the flaming altar upon which his heart shall be offered up to the Flaming God."

During the balance of the day the priests of Opar were busy erecting an altar in the center of the clearing, and while they worked they chanted weird hymns in the ancient tongue of that lost continent that lies at the bottom of the Atlantic.

In the shelter of the hut La paced to and fro beside the stoic ape-man. Resigned to his fate was Tarzan. No hope of succor gleamed through the dead black of the death sentence hanging over him. He knew that his

giant muscles could not part the many strands that bound his wrists and ankles, for he had strained often but ineffectually for release. He had no hope of outside help and only enemies surrounded him within the camp, and yet he smiled at La as she paced nervously back and forth the length of the shelter.

And La? She fingered her knife and looked down upon her captive. She



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glared and muttered but she did not strike. "Tonight!" she thought. "Tonight, when it is dark I will torture him." She looked upon his perfect godlike figure and upon his handsome, smiling face and then she steeled her heart again by thoughts of her love spurned; by religious thoughts that damned the infidel who had desecrated the holy of holies; who had taken from the blood-stained altar of Opar the offering to the Flaming God—no, not once but three. Three times had Tarzan cheated the god of her fathers. At the thought La paused and knelt at his side. In her hand was a sharp knife. She placed its point against the ape-man's side and pressed upon the hilt; but Tarzan only smiled and shrugged his shoulders.

How beautiful he was! La bent low over him, looking into his eyes. How perfect was his figure. She compared it with those of the gnarled and knotted men from whom she must choose a mate, and La shuddered at the thought. Dusk came, and after dusk came night. A great fire blazed within the little thorn boma about the camp. The flames played upon the new altar erected in the center of the clearing, arousing in the mind of the high priestess of the Flaming God a picture of the event of the coming dawn. She saw this giant and perfect form writhing amid the flames of the burning pyre. She saw those smiling lips, burned and blackened, falling away from the strong, white teeth. She saw the shock of black hair tossed upon Tarzan's well-shaped head disappear in a spurt of flame. She saw these and many other frightful pictures as she stood with closed eyes and clenched fists above the object of her hate—ah! was it hate that La of Opar felt?

The darkness of the jungle night had settled down upon the camp, relieved only by the fitful flarings of the fire that was kept up to warn off the man-eaters. Tarzan lay quietly in his bonds. He suffered from thirst and from the cutting of the tight strands about his wrists and ankles; but he made no complaint. A jungle beast was Tarzan, with the stoicism of the beast and the intelligence of man. He knew that his doom was sealed—that no supplications would avail to temper the severity of his end, and so he wasted no breath in pleadings, but waited patiently in the firm conviction that his sufferings could not endure forever.

In the darkness La stooped above him. In her hand was a sharp knife and in her mind the determination to initiate his torture without further delay. The knife was pressed against his side and La's face was close to his when a sudden burst of flame from new branches thrown upon the fire without lighted up the interior of the shelter. Close beneath her lips La saw the perfect features of the forest god and into her woman's heart wailed all the great love she had felt for Tarzan since first she had seen him, and all the accumulated passion of the years that she had dreamed of him.

Dagger in hand, La, the high priestess, towered above the helpless creature that had dared to violate the sanctuary of her deity. There should be no torture—there should be instant death. A single stroke of the heavy blade and then the corpse to the flaming pyre without. The knife arm stiffened ready for the downward plunge, and then La, the woman, collapsed weakly upon the body of the man she loved.

She ran her hands in mute caress over his naked flesh; she covered his forehead, his eyes, his lips with hot kisses; she covered him with her body as though to protect him from the hideous fate she had ordained for him, and in trembling, piteous tones she begged him for his love. For hours the frenzy of her passion possessed the burning handmaiden of the Flaming God, until at last sleep overpowered her and she lapsed into unconsciousness beside the man she had sworn to torture and to slay. And

Tarzan, untroubled by thoughts of the future, slept peacefully in La's embrace.

At the first hint of dawn the chanting of the priests of Opar brought Tarzan to wakefulness. Initiated in low and subdued tones, the sound soon rose in volume to the open diapean of barbaric blood lust. La stirred. Her perfect arm pressed Tarzan closer to her—a smile parted her lips, and then she awoke, and slowly the smile faded and her eyes went wide in horror as the significance of the death chant impinged upon her understanding.

"Love me, Tarzan!" she cried. "Love me, and you shall be saved."

Tarzan's bonds hurt him. He was suffering the tortures of long-restricted circulation. With an angry growl he rolled over with his back toward La. That was her answer! The high priestess leaped to her feet. A hot flush of shame mantled her cheek and then she went dead white and stepped to the shelter's entrance.

"Come, priests of the Flaming God!" she cried, "and make ready the sacrifice."

The warped things advanced and entered the shelter. They laid hands upon Tarzan and bore him forth, and as they chanted they kept time with their crooked bodies, swaying to and fro to the rhythm of their song of blood and death. Behind them came La, swaying too; but not in unison with the chanted cadence. White and drawn was the face of the high priestess—white and drawn with unrequited love and hideous terror of the moments to come. Yet stern in her resolve was La. The infidel should die! The scorner of her love should pay the price upon the fiery altar. She saw them lay the perfect body there upon the rough branches. She saw the high priest, he to whom custom would unite her—bent, crooked, gnarled, stunted, hideous—advance with the flaming torch and stand awaiting her command to apply it to the faggots surrounding the sacrificial pyre. His hairy, bestial face was distorted in a yellow-fanged grin of anticipatory enjoyment. His hands were cupped to receive the life blood of the victim—the red nectar that at Opar would have filled the golden sacrificial goblets.

He approached with upraised knife, her face turned toward the rising sun and upon her lips a prayer to the burning deity of her people. The high priest looked questioningly toward her; the brand was burning close to his hand and the faggots lay temptingly near.

Tarzan closed his eyes and awaited the end. He knew that he would suffer, for he recalled the faint memories of past burns.

He knew that he would suffer and die, but he did not flinch. Death is no great adventure to the jungle bred who walk hand in hand with the grim specter by day and lie down at his side by night through all the years of their lives. As a matter of fact, as his end approached his mind was occupied by thoughts of the pretty pebbles he had lost, yet his every faculty was still open to what passed around him.

He felt La lean over him and he opened his eyes. He saw her white, drawn face and he saw the tears blinding her eyes. "Tarzan, my Tarzan!" she moaned, "tell me that you love me—that you will return to Opar with me—and you shall live. Even in the face of the anger of my people I will save you. This last chance I give you. What is your answer?"

At the last moment the woman in La had triumphed over the high priestess of cruel cult. With heaving bosom she leaned close above him. "Yes or no?" she whispered.

Through the jungle, out of the distance, came faintly a sound that brought a sudden light of hope to Tarzan's eyes. He raised his voice in a weird scream that sent La back from him a step or two. The impatient priest grumbled and switched the torch from one hand to the other, at the same time holding it closer to the tinder at the base of the pyre.

"Your answer!" insisted La. "What is your answer to the love of La of Opar?"

Closer came the sound that had attracted Tarzan's attention, and now the others heard it—the shrill trumpeting of an elephant. As La looked wide-eyed into Tarzan's face, there to read her fate for happiness or heartbreak, she saw an expression of concern shadow his features. Now, for the first time, she guessed the meaning of Tarzan's shrill scream—he had summoned Tantor the elephant to his rescue! La's brows contracted in a savage scowl. "You refuse La!" she cried. "Then die! The torch!" she commanded, turning toward the priest.

Tarzan looked up into her face. In her hand was a sharp knife and in her mind the determination to initiate his torture without further delay. The knife was pressed against his side and La's face was close to his when a sudden burst of flame from new branches thrown upon the fire without lighted up the interior of the shelter. Close beneath her lips La saw the perfect features of the forest god and into her woman's heart wailed all the great love she had felt for Tarzan since first she had seen him, and all the accumulated passion of the years that she had dreamed of him.

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"I cannot love you, La," Tarzan went on in a low voice. "I do not know why, for you are very beautiful. I could not go back and live in Opar—I who have the whole broad jungle for my range. No, I cannot love you but I cannot see you die beneath the goring tusks of mad Tantor. Cut my bonds before it is too late. Already he is almost upon us. Cut them and I may yet save you."

A little spiral of curling smoke rose from one corner of the pyre—the flames licked upward, crackling. La stood there like a beautiful statue of despair, gazing at Tarzan and at the spreading flames. In a moment they

reached the forest came the sound of cracking limbs and crashing trunks. Tantor was coming down upon them, a huge Juggernaut of the jungle. The priests were becoming uneasy. They cast apprehensive glances in the direction of the approaching elephant and then back at La.

"Fly!" she commanded them, and then she stooped and cut the bonds securing her prisoner's feet and hands. In an instant Tarzan was upon the ground. The priests screamed out their rage and disappointment. He with the torch took a menacing step toward La and the ape-man. "Traitor!" he shrieked at the woman. "For this you too shall die!" Raising his bludgeon he rushed upon the high priestess; but Tarzan was there before her. Leaping in to close quarters the ape-man seized the upraised weapon and wrenched it from the hands of the frenzied fanatic, and then the priest closed upon him with tooth and nail. Seizing the stocky, stunted body in his mighty hands Tarzan raised the creature high above his head, hurling him at his fellows who were now gathered ready to bear down upon their erstwhile captive. La stood proudly with ready knife behind the ape-man. No faint sign of fear marked her perfect brow—only haughty disdain for her priests and admiration for the man she loved so hopelessly filled her thoughts.

The warped things advanced and entered the shelter. They laid hands upon Tarzan and bore him forth, and as they chanted they kept time with their crooked bodies, swaying to and fro to the rhythm of their song of blood and death. Behind them came La, swaying too; but not in unison with the chanted cadence. White and drawn was the face of the high priestess—white and drawn with unrequited love and hideous terror of the moments to come. Yet stern in her resolve was La. The infidel should die! The scorner of her love should pay the price upon the fiery altar.

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