

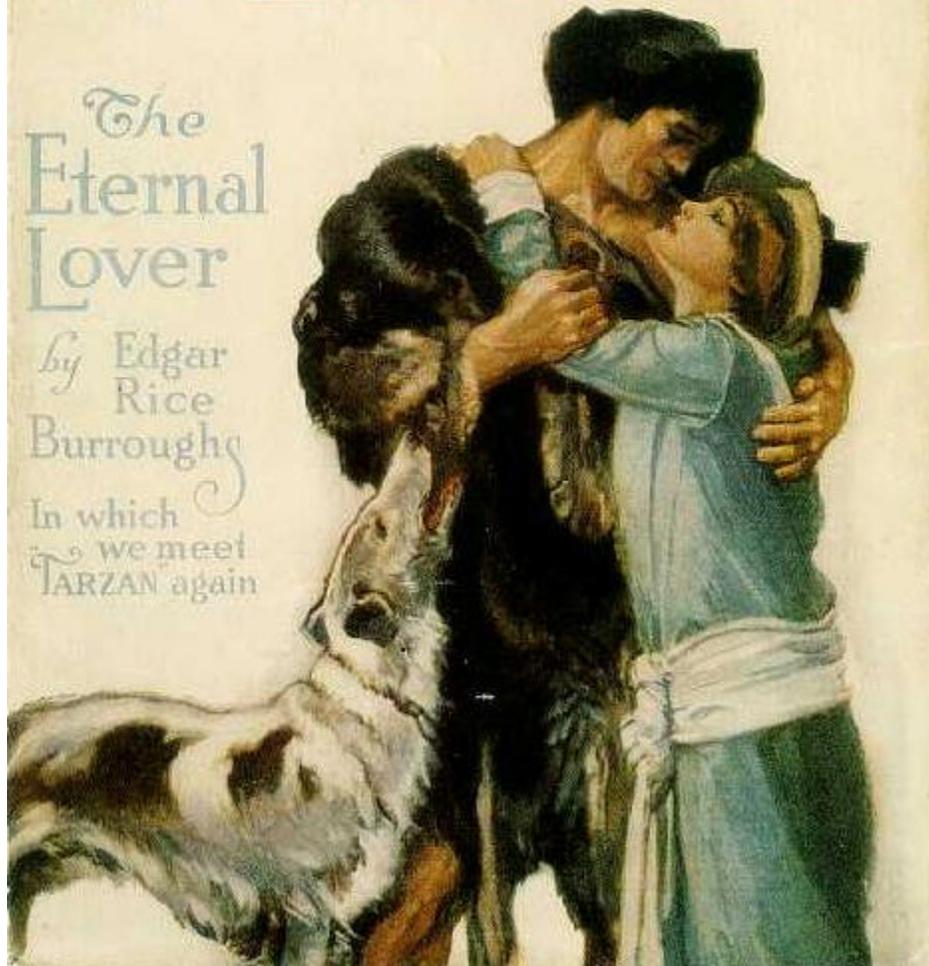
SATURDAY · MARCH 7 · TEN CENTS

# ALL-STORY WEEKLY

*The*  
Eternal  
Lover

*by* Edgar  
Rice  
Burroughs

In which  
we meet  
TARZAN again



THE  
ETERNAL  
LOVER

BY  
EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

**“The Eternal Lover” first appeared on March 7, 1914, in ALL-STORY WEEKLEY magazine. In 1925, it appeared in hardcover, along with its sequel “Sweetheart Primeval”, published by A. C. McClurg & Co.**

# THE ETERNAL LOVER

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## CHAPTER I

### NU OF THE NIOCENE

NU, THE son of Nu, his mighty muscles rolling beneath his smooth bronzed skin, moved silently through the jungle primeval. His handsome head with its shock of black hair, roughly cropped between sharpened stones, was high held, the delicate nostrils questioning each vagrant breeze for word of Oo, hunter of men.

Now his trained senses catch the familiar odor of Ta, the great woolly rhinoceros, directly in his path, but Nu, the son of Nu, does not hunt Ta this day. Does not the hide of Ta's brother already hang before the entrance of Nu's cave? No, today Nu hunts the gigantic cat, the fierce saber-toothed tiger, Oo, for Nat-ul, wondrous daughter of old Tha, will mate with none but the mightiest of hunters.

Only so recently as the last darkness, as, beneath the great, equatorial moon, the two had walked hand in hand beside the restless sea she had made it quite plain to Nu, the son of Nu, that not even he, son of the chief of chiefs, could claim her unless there hung at the thong of his loin cloth the fangs of Oo.

"Nat-ul," she had said to him, "wishes her man to be greater than other men. She loves Nu now better than her very life, but if Love is to walk at her side during a long life Pride and Respect must walk with it." Her slender hand reached up to stroke the young giant's black hair. "I am very proud of my Nu even now," she continued, "for among all the young men of the tribe there is no greater hunter, or no mightier fighter than Nu, the son of Nu. Should you, single-handed, slay Oo before a grown man's beard has darkened your cheek there will be none greater in all the world than Nat-ul's mate, Nu, the son of Nu."

The young man was still sensible to the sound of her soft voice and the caress of her gentle touch upon his brow. As these things had sent him speeding forth into the savage jungle in search

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of Oo while the day was still so young that the night-prowling beasts of prey were yet abroad, so they urged him forward deeper and deeper into the dark and trackless mazes of the tangled forest.

As he forged on the scent of Ta became stronger, until at last the huge, ungainly beast loomed large before Nu's eyes. He was standing in a little clearing, in deep, rank jungle grasses, and had he not been head on toward Nu he would not have seen him, since even his acute hearing was far too dull to apprehend the noiseless tread of the cave man, moving lightly up wind.

As the tiny, blood-shot eyes of the primordial beast discovered the man the great head went down, and Ta, ill natured and bellicose progenitor of the equally ill natured and bellicose rhino of the twentieth century, charged the lithe giant who had disturbed his antediluvian meditation.

The creature's great bulk and awkward, uncouth lines belied his speed, for he tore down upon Nu with all the swiftness of a thoroughbred and had not the brain and muscle of the troglodyte been fitted by heritage and training to the successful meeting of such emergencies there would be no tale to tell today of Nu of the Niocene.

But the young man was prepared, and turning he ran with the swiftness of a hare toward the nearest tree, a huge, arboraceous fern towering upon the verge of the little clearing. Like a cat the man ran up the perpendicular bole, his hands and feet seeming barely to touch the projecting knobs marking the remains of former fronds which converted the towering stem into an easy stairway for such as he.

About Nu's neck his stone-tipped spear hung by its rawhide thong down his back, while stone hatchet and stone knife dangled from his gee-string, giving him free use of his hands for climbing. You or I, having once gained the seeming safety of the lowest fronds of the great tree, fifty feet above the ground, might have heaved a great sigh of relief that we had thus easily escaped the hideous monster beneath; but not so Nu, who was wise to the ways of the creatures of his remote age.

Not one whit did he abate his speed as he neared the lowest

branch, nor did he even waste a precious second in a downward glance at his enemy. What need, indeed? Did he not know precisely what Ta would do? Instead he swung, monkey-like, to the broad leaf, and though the chances he took would have paled the face of a brave man today they did not cause Nu even to hesitate, as he ran lightly and swiftly along the bending, swaying frond, leaping just at the right instant toward the bole of a nearby jungle giant.

Nor was he an instant too soon. The frond from which he had sprung had scarce whipped up from beneath his weight when Ta, with all the force and momentum of a runaway locomotive, struck the base of the tree head on. The jar of that terrific collision shook the earth, there was the sound of the splintering of wood, and the mighty tree toppled to the ground with a deafening crash.

Nu, from an adjoining tree, looked down and grinned. He was not hunting Ta that day, and so he sprang from tree to tree until he had passed around the clearing, and then, coming to the surface once more, continued his way toward the distant lava cliffs where Oo, the man hunter, made his grim lair.

From among the tangled creepers through which the man wormed his sinuous way ugly little eyes peered down upon him from beneath shaggy, beetling brows, and great fighting tusks were bared, as the hairy ones growled and threatened from above; but Nu paid not the slightest attention to the huge, ferocious creatures that menaced him upon every hand. From earliest childhood he had been accustomed to the jabberings and scoldings of the ape-people, and so he knew that if he went his way in peace, harming them not, they would offer him no harm. One of lesser experience might have attempted to drive them away with menacing spear, or well-aimed hatchet, and thus have drawn down upon him a half dozen or more ferocious bulls against which no single warrior, however doughty, might have lived long enough to count his antagonists.

Threatening and unfriendly as the apes seemed the cave man really looked upon them as friends and allies, since between them and his own people there existed a species of friendly alliance, due

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no doubt to the similarity of their form and structure. In that long gone age when the world was young and its broad bosom teemed with countless thousands of carnivorous beasts and reptiles, and other myriads blackened the bosoms of its inland seas, and filled its warm, moist air with the flutter of their mighty, bat-like wings, man's battle for survival stretched from sun to sun — there was no respite. His semiarboreal habits took him often into the domains of the great and lesser apes, and from this contact had arisen what might best be termed an armed truce, for they alone of all the other inhabitants of the earth had spoken languages, both meager it is true, yet sufficient to their primitive wants, and as both languages had been born of the same needs to deal with identical conditions there were many words and phrases identical to both. Thus the troglodyte and the primordial ape could converse when necessity demanded, and as Nu traversed their country he understood their grumbling and chattering merely as warnings to him against the performance of any overt act. Had danger lurked in his path the hairy ones would have warned him of that too, for of such was their service to man who in return often hunted the more remorseless of their enemies, driving them from the land of the anthropoids.

On and on went Nu occasionally questioning the hairy ones he encountered for word of Oo, and always the replies confirmed him in his belief that he should come upon the man eater before the sun crawled into its dark cave for the night.

And so he did. He had passed out of the heavier vegetation, and was ascending a gentle rise that terminated in low volcanic cliffs when there came down upon the breeze to his alert nostrils the strong scent of Oo. There was little or no cover now, other than the rank jungle grass that overgrew the slope and an occasional lofty fern rearing its tufted pinnacle a hundred feet above the ground; but Nu was in no way desirous of cover. Cover that would protect him from the view of Oo would hide Oo from him. He was not afraid that the saber-toothed tiger would run away from him — that was not Oo's way — but he did not wish to come unexpectedly upon the animal in the thick grass.

He had approached to within a hundred yards of the cliffs now, and the scent of Oo had become as a stench in the sensitive nostrils of the cave man. Just ahead he could see the openings to several caves in the face of the rocky barrier, and in one of these he knew must lie the lair of his quarry.

Fifty yards from the cliff the grasses ceased except for scattered tufts that had found foothold among the broken rocks that strewn the ground, and as Nu emerged into this clear space he breathed a sigh of relief for during the past fifty yards a considerable portion of the way had been through a matted jungle that rose above his head. To have met Oo there would have spelled almost certain death for the cave man.

Now, as he bent his eyes toward the nearby cave mouths he discovered one before which was strewn such an array of gigantic bones that he needed no other evidence as to the identity of its occupant. Here, indeed, laired no lesser creature than the awesome Oo, the gigantic, saber-toothed tiger of antiquity. Even as Nu looked there came a low and ominous growl from the dark mouth of the foul cavern, and then in the blackness beyond the entrance Nu saw two flaming blotches of yellow glaring out upon him.

A moment later the mighty beast itself sauntered majestically into the sunlight. There it stood lashing its long tail from side to side, glaring with unblinking eyes straight at the rash man-thing who dared venture thus near its abode of death. The huge body, fully as large as that of a full grown bull, was beautifully marked with black stripes upon a vivid yellow ground, while the belly and breast were of the purest white.

As Nu advanced the great upper lip curled back revealing in all their terrible ferocity the eighteen inch curved fangs that armed either side of the upper jaw, and from the cavernous throat came a fearsome scream of rage that brought frightened silence upon the jungle for miles around.

The hunter loosened the stone knife at his gee-string and transferred it to his mouth where he held it firmly, ready for instant use, between his strong, white teeth. In his left hand he

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carried his stone-tipped spear, and in his right the heavy stone hatchet that was so effective both at a distance and at close range.

Oo is creeping upon him now. The grinning jaws drip saliva. The yellow-green eyes gleam bloodthirstily. Can it be possible that this fragile pygmy dreams of meeting in hand-to-hand combat the terror of a world, the scourge of the jungle, the hunter of men and of mammoths?

“For Nat-ul,” murmured Nu, for Oo was about to spring.

As the mighty hurtling mass of bone and muscle, claws and fangs, shot through the air toward him the man swung his tiny stone hatchet with all the power behind his giant muscles, timing its release so nicely that it caught Oo in mid leap squarely between the eyes with the terrific force of a powder sped projectile. Then Nu, cat-like as Oo himself, leaped agilely to one side as the huge bulk of the beast dashed, sprawling to the ground at the spot where the man had stood.

Scarce had the beast struck the earth than the cave man, knowing that his puny weapon could at best but momentarily stun the monster, drove his heavy spear deep into the glossy side just behind the giant shoulder.

Already Oo has regained his feet, roaring and screaming in pain and rage. The air vibrates and the earth trembles to his hideous shrieks. For miles around the savage denizens of the savage jungle bristle in terror, slinking further into the depths of their dank and gloomy haunts, casting the while affrighted glances rearward in the direction of that awesome sound.

With gaping jaws and wide spread talons the tiger lunges toward its rash tormentor who still stands gripping the haft of his primitive weapon. As the beast turns the spear turns also, and Nu is whipped about as a leaf at the extremity of a gale-tossed branch.

Striking and cavorting futilely the colossal feline leaps hither and thither in prodigious bounds as he strives to reach the taunting figure that remains ever just beyond the zone of those destroying talons. But presently Oo goes more slowly, and now he stops and crouches flat upon his belly. Slowly and cautiously he reaches outward and backward with one huge paw until the

torturing spear is within his grasp.

Meanwhile the man screams taunts and insults into the face of his enemy, at the same time forcing the spear further and further into the vitals of the tiger, for he knows that once that paw encircles the spear's haft his chances for survival will be of the slenderest. He has seen that Oo is weakening from loss of blood, but there are many fighting minutes left in the big carcass unless a happy twist of the spear sends its point through the wall of the great heart.

But at length the beast succeeds. The paw closes upon the spear. The tough wood bends beneath the weight of those steel thews, then snaps short a foot from the tiger's body, and at the same instant Oo rears and throws himself upon the youth, who has snatched his stone hunting knife from between his teeth and crouches, ready for the impact.

Down they go, the man entirely buried beneath the great body of his antagonist. Again and again the crude knife is buried in the snowy breast of the tiger even while Nu is falling beneath the screaming, tearing incarnation of bestial rage.

At the instant it strikes the man as strange that not once have the snapping jaws or frightful talons touched him, and then he is crushed to earth beneath the dead weight of Oo. The beast gives one last, Titanic struggle, and is still.

With difficulty Nu wriggles from beneath the carcass of his kill. At the last moment the tiger itself had forced the spear's point into its own heart as it bent and broke the haft. The man leaps to his feet and cuts the great throat. Then, as the blood flows, he dances about the dead body of his vanquished foe, brandishing his knife and recovered hatchet, and emitting now shrill shrieks in mimicry of Oo, and now deep toned roars — the call of the victorious cave man.

From the surrounding cliffs and jungle came answering challenges from a hundred savage throats — the rumbling thunder of the cave bear's growl; the roar of Zor, the lion; the wail of the hyena; the trumpeting of the mammoth; the deep toned bellowing of the bull bos, and from distant swamp and sea came

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the hissing and whistling of saurians and amphibians.

His victory dance completed, Nu busied himself in the removal of the broken spear from the carcass of his kill. At the same time he removed several strong tendons from Oo's fore arm, with which he roughly spliced the broken haft, for there was never an instant in the danger fraught existence of his kind when it was well to be without the service of a stone-tipped spear.

This precaution taken, the man busied himself with the task of cutting off Oo's head, that he might bear it in triumph to the cave of his love. With stone hatchet and knife he hacked and hewed for the better part of a half hour, until at last he raised the dripping trophy above his head, as, leaping high in air, he screamed once more the gloating challenge of the victor, that all the world might know that there was no greater hunter than Nu, the son of Nu.

Even as the last note of his fierce cry rolled through the heavy, humid, super-heated air of the Niocene there came a sudden hush upon the face of the world. A strange darkness obscured the swollen sun. The ground trembled and shook. Deep rumblings muttered upward from the bowels of the young earth, and answering grumblings thundered down from the firmament above.

The startled troglodyte looked quickly in every direction, searching for the great beast who could thus cause the whole land to tremble and cry out in fear, and the heavens above to moan, and the sun to hide itself in terror.

In every direction he saw frightened beasts and birds and flying reptiles scurrying in panic stricken terror in search of hiding places, and moved by the same primitive instinct the young giant grabbed up his weapons and his trophy, and ran like an antelope for the sheltering darkness of the cave of Oo.

Scarcely had he reached the fancied safety of the interior when the earth's crust crumpled and rocked — there was a sickening sensation of sudden sinking, and amidst the awful roar and thunder of rending rock, the cave mouth closed, and in the impenetrable darkness of his living tomb Nu, the son of Nu, Nu of

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the Niocene, lost consciousness.

That was a hundred thousand years ago.

## CHAPTER II

### THE EARTHQUAKE

TO HAVE looked at her, merely, you would never have thought Victoria Custer, of Beatrice, Nebraska, at all the sort of girl she really was. Her large dreamy eyes, and the graceful lines of her slender figure gave one an impression of that physical cowardice which we have grown to take for granted as an inherent characteristic of the truly womanly woman. And yet I dare say there were only two things on God's green earth that Victoria Custer feared, or beneath it or above it, for that matter — mice and earthquakes.

She readily admitted the deadly terror which the former aroused within her; but of earthquakes she seldom if ever would speak. To her brother Barney, her chum and confidant, she had on one or two occasions unburdened her soul.

The two were guests now of Lord and Lady Greystoke upon the Englishman's vast estate in equatorial Africa, in the country of the Waziri, to which Barney Custer had come to hunt big game — and forget. But all that has nothing to do with this story; nor has John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, who was, once upon a time, Tarzan of the Apes, except that my having chanced to be a guest of his at the same time as the Custers makes it possible for me to give you a story that otherwise might never have been told.

South of Uziri, the country of the Waziri, lies a chain of rugged mountains at the foot of which stretches a broad plain where antelope, zebra, giraffe, rhinos and elephant abound, and here are lion and leopard and hyena preying, each after his own fashion, upon the sleek, fat herds of antelope, zebra and giraffe. Here, too, are buffalo — irritable, savage beasts, more formidable than the lion himself Clayton says.

It is indeed a hunter's paradise, and scarce a day passed that did not find a party absent from the low, rambling bungalow of the Greystokes in search of game and adventure, nor seldom was it that Victoria Custer failed to be of the party.

Already she had bagged two leopards, in addition to numerous antelope and zebra, and on foot had faced a bull buffalo's charge, bringing him down with a perfect shot within ten paces of where she stood.

At first she had kept her brother in a state bordering on nervous collapse, for the risks she took were such as few men would care to undertake; but after he had discovered that she possessed perfect coolness in the face of danger, and that the accuracy of her aim was so almost uncanny as to wring unstinted praise from the oldest hunters among them he commenced to lean a trifle too far in the other direction, so that Victoria was often in positions where she found herself entirely separated from the other members of the party — a compliment to her prowess which she greatly prized, since women and beginners were usually surrounded by precautions and guards through which it was difficult to get within firing distance of any sort of game.

As they were riding homeward one evening after a hunt in the foothills Barney noticed that his sister was unusually quiet, and apparently depressed.

"What's the matter, Vic?" he asked. "Dead tired, eh?"

The girl looked up with a bright smile, which was immediately followed by an expression of puzzled bewilderment.

"Barney," she said, after a moment of silence, "there is something about those hills back there that fills me with the strangest sensation of terror imaginable. Today I passed an outcropping of volcanic rock that gave evidence of a frightful convulsion of nature in some bygone age. At sight of it I commenced to tremble from head to foot, a cold perspiration breaking out all over me. But that part is not so strange — you know I have always been subject to these same silly attacks of unreasoning terror at sight of any evidence of the mighty forces that have wrought changes in the earth's crust, or of the slightest tremor of an earthquake; but today the feeling of unutterable personal loss which overwhelmed me was almost unbearable — it was as though one whom I loved above all others had been taken from me.

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“And yet,” she continued, “through all my inexplicable sorrow there shone a ray of brilliant hope as remarkable and unfathomable as the deeper and depressing emotion which still stirred me.”

For some time neither spoke, but rode silently stirrup to stirrup as their ponies picked their ways daintily through the knee high grass. The girl was thinking — trying to puzzle out an explanation of the rather weird sensations which had so recently claimed her. Barney Custer was one of those unusual and delightful people who do not scoff at whatever they cannot understand; the reason, doubtless, that his sister as well as others chose him as the recipient of their confidences. Not understanding her emotion he had nothing to offer, and so remained silent. He was, however, not a little puzzled, as he had always been at each new manifestation of Victoria’s uncanny reaction to every indication of the great upheavals which marked the physical changes in the conformation of the earth’s crust.

He recalled former occasions upon which his sister had confided in him something of similar terrors. Once in *The Garden of the Gods*, and again during a trip through *The Grand Canyon* in Arizona, and very vivid indeed was the recollection of Victoria’s nervous collapse following the reading of the press despatches describing the San Francisco earthquake. In all other respects his sister was an exceptionally normal well-balanced young American woman — which fact, doubtless, rendered her one weakness the more apparent.

But Victoria Custer’s terror of earthquakes was not her only peculiarity. The other was her strange contempt for the men who had sued for her hand — and these had been many. Her brother had thought several of them the salt of the earth, and Victoria had liked them, too, but as for loving them? Perish the thought!

Oddly enough recollection of this other phase of her character obtruded itself upon Barney’s memory as the two rode on toward the Clayton bungalow, and with it he recalled a persistent dream which Victoria had said recurred after each reminder of a great convulsion of nature. At the thought he broke

the silence.

“Has your — ah — avatar made his customary appearance?” he asked, smiling.

The girl extended her hand toward her brother and laid it on his where it rested upon his thigh as he rode, looking up at him with half frightened, half longing eyes.

“Oh, Barney,” she cried, “you are such a dear never to have laughed at my silly dreams. I’m sure I should go quite mad did I not have you in whom to confide; but lately I have hesitated to speak of it even to you — he has been coming so often! Every night since we first hunted in the vicinity of the hills I have walked hand in hand with him beneath a great equatorial moon beside a restless sea, and more clearly than ever in the past have I seen his form and features. He is very handsome, Barney, and very tall and strong, and clean limbed — I wish that I might meet such a man in real life. I know it is a ridiculous thing to say, but I can never love any of the pusillanimous weaklings who are forever falling in love with me — not after having walked hand in hand with such as he and read the love in his clear eyes. And yet, Barney, I am afraid of him. Is it not odd?”

At this juncture they were joined by other members of the party, so that no further reference to the subject was made by either. At the Claytons they found that an addition had been made to the number of guests by the unheralded advent of two khaki clad young men, one of whom rose and came forward to meet the returning hunters while they were yet a hundred yards away.

He was a tall, athletic appearing man. As Victoria Custer recognized his features she did not know whether to be pleased or angry. Here was the one man she had ever met who came nearest to the realization of her dream-man, and this one of all the others had never spoken a word of love to her. His companion who had now risen from the cool shade of the low veranda was also coming forward, but more slowly, the set of his shoulders and the swing of his stride betokening his military vocation.

“Mr. Curtiss!” exclaimed Victoria, and looking past him, “and Lieutenant Butzow! Where in the world did you come

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from?"

"The world left us," replied the officer, smiling, "and we have followed her to the wilds of Equatorial Africa."

"We found Nebraska a very tame place after you and Barney left," explained Mr. Curtiss, "and when I discovered that Butzow would accompany me we lost no time in following you, and here we are throwing ourselves upon the mercy and hospitality of Lady Greystoke."

"I have been trying to convince them," said that lady, who had now joined the party at the foot of the veranda steps, "that the obligation is all upon our side. It taxes our ingenuity and the generosity of our friends to keep the house even half full of congenial companions."

It was not until after dinner that night that Mr. William Curtiss had an opportunity to draw Miss Victoria Custer away from the others upon some more or less hazy pretext that he might explain for her ears alone just why he had suddenly found Beatrice, Nebraska, such a desolate place and had realized that it was imperative to the salvation of his life and happiness that he travel half way around the world in search of a certain slender bit of femininity.

This usually self-possessed young man stammered and hesitated like a bashful school boy speaking his Friday afternoon piece; but finally he managed to expel from his system, more or less coherently, the fact that he was very much in love with Victoria Custer, and that he should never again eat or sleep until she had promised to be his wife.

There was a strong appeal to the girl in the masterful thing the man had done in searching her out in the wilds of Africa to tell her of his love, for it seemed that he and Butzow had forced their way with but a handful of carriers through a very savage section of the savage jungle because it was the shortest route from the coast to the Greystoke ranch.

Then there was that about him which appealed to the same attribute of her nature to which the young giant of her dreams appealed — a primitive strength and masterfulness that left her

both frightened and happily helpless in the presence of both these strong loves, for the love of her dream man was to Victoria Custer a real and living love.

Curtiss saw assent in the silence which followed his outbreak, and taking advantage of this tacit encouragement, he seized her hands in his and drew her toward him.

“Oh, Victoria,” he whispered, “tell me that thing I wish to hear from your dear lips. Tell me that even a tenth part of my love is returned, and I shall be happy.”

She looked up into his eyes, shining down upon her in the moonlight, and on her lips trembled an avowal of the love she honestly believed she could at last bestow upon the man of her choice. In the past few moments she had thrashed out the question of that other, unreal and intangible love that had held her chained to a dream for years, and in the cold light of twentieth century American rationality she had found it possible to put her hallucinations from her and find happiness in the love of this very real and very earnest young man.

“Billy,” she said, “I — ,” but she got no further. Even as the words that would have bound her to him were forming upon her tongue there came a low sullen rumbling from the bowels of the earth — the ground rose and fell beneath them as the swell of the sea rises and falls. Then there came a violent trembling and shaking and a final deafening crash in the distance that might have accompanied the birth of mountain ranges.

With a little moan of terror the girl drew away from Curtiss, and then, before he could restrain her, she had turned and fled toward the bungalow. At the veranda steps she was met by the other members of the house party, and by the Greystokes and numerous servants who had rushed out at the first premonition of the coming shock.

Barney Custer saw his sister running toward the house, and knowing her terror of such phenomena ran to meet her. Close behind her came Curtiss, just in time to see the girl swoon in her brother’s arms. Barney carried her to her room, where Lady Greystoke, abandoning the youthful “Jack” to his black mammy,

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Esmeralda, ministered to her.

## CHAPTER III

### NU THE SLEEPER AWAKES

**THE** shock that had been felt so plainly in the valley had been much more severe in the mountains to the south. In one place an overhanging cliff had split and fallen away from the face of the mountain, tumbling with a mighty roar into the valley below. As it hurtled down the mountain side the moonlight shining upon the fresh scar that it had left behind it upon the hill's face revealed the mouth of a gloomy cave from which there tumbled the inert figure of an animal which rolled down the steep declivity in the wake of the mass of rock that had preceded it — the tearing away of which had opened up the cavern in which it had lain.

For a hundred feet perhaps the body rolled, coming to a stop upon a broad ledge. For some time it lay perfectly motionless, but at last a feeble movement of the limbs was discernible. Then for another long period it was quiet. Minutes dragged into hours and still the lonely thing lay upon the mountain side, while upon the plain below it hungry lions moaned and roared, and all the teeming life of the savage wilds took up their search for food, their sleeping and their love-making where they had dropped them in the fright of the earthquake.

At last the stars paled and the eastern horizon glowed to a new day, and then the thing upon the ledge sat up. It was a man. Still partially dazed he drew his hand across his eyes and looked about him in bewilderment. Then, staggering a little, he rose to his feet, and as he came erect, the new sun shining on his bronzed limbs and his shock of black hair, roughly cropped between sharpened stones, his youth and beauty became startlingly apparent.

He looked about him upon the ground, and not finding that which he sought turned his eyes upward toward the mountain until they fell upon the cave mouth he had just quitted so precipitately. Quickly he clambered back to the cavern, his stone hatchet and knife beating against his bare hips as he climbed. For a

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moment he was lost to view within the cave, but presently he emerged, in one hand a stone-tipped spear, which seemed recently to have been broken and roughly spliced with raw tendons, and in the other the severed head of an enormous beast, which more nearly resembled the royal tiger of Asia than it did any other beast, though that resemblance was little closer than is the resemblance of the Royal Bengal to a house kitten.

The young man was Nu, the son of Nu. For a hundred thousand years he had lain hermetically sealed in his rocky tomb, as toads remain in suspended animation for similar periods of time. The earthquake had unsealed his sepulcher, and the rough tumble down the mountainside had induced respiration. His heart had responded to the pumping of his lungs, and simultaneously the other organs of his body had taken up their various functions as though they had never ceased functioning.

As he stood upon the threshold of the cave of Oo, the man hunter, the look of bewilderment grew upon his features as his eyes roved over the panorama of the unfamiliar world which lay spread below him. There was scarce an object to remind him of the world that had been but a brief instant before, for Nu could not know that ages had rolled by since he took hasty refuge in the lair of the great beast he had slain.

He thought that he might be dreaming, and so he rubbed his eyes and looked again; but still he saw the unfamiliar trees and bushes about him and further down in the valley the odd appearing vegetation of the jungle. Nu could not fathom the mystery of it. Slowly he stepped from the cave and began the descent toward the valley, for he was very thirsty and very hungry. Below him he saw animals grazing upon the broad plain, but even at that distance he realized that they were such as no mortal eye had ever before rested upon.

Warily he advanced, every sense alert against whatever new form of danger might lurk in this strange, new world. Had he had any conception of a life after death he would doubtless have felt assured that the earthquake had killed him and that he was now wandering through the heavenly vale; but the men of Nu's age had

not yet conceived any sort of religion, other than a vague fear of certain natural phenomena such as storms and earthquakes, the movements of the sun and moon, and those familiar happenings which first awake the questionings of the primitive.

He saw the sun; but to him it was a different sun from the great, swollen orb that had shone through the thick, humid atmosphere of the Niocene. From Oo's lair only the day before he had been able to see in the distance the shimmering surface of the restless sea; but now as far as eye could reach there stretched an interminable jungle of gently waving tree tops, except for the rolling plain at his feet where yesterday the black jungle of the ape-people had reared its lofty fronds.

Nu shook his head. It was all quite beyond him; but there were certain things which he could comprehend, and so, after the manner of the self-reliant, he set about to wrest his livelihood from nature under the new conditions which had been imposed upon him while he slept.

First of all his spear must be attended to. It would never do to trust to that crude patch longer than it would take him to find and fit a new haft. His meat must wait until that thing was accomplished. In the meantime he might pick up what fruit was available in the forest toward which he was bending his steps in search of a long, straight shoot of the hard wood which alone would meet his requirements. In the days that had been Nu's there had grown in isolated patches a few lone clumps of very straight, hard wood trees. The smaller of these the men of the tribe would cut down and split lengthways with stone wedges until from a single tree they might have produced material for a score or more spear shafts; but now Nu must see the very smallest of saplings, for he had no time to waste in splitting a larger tree, even had he had the necessary wedges and hammers.

Into the forest the youth crept, for though a hundred thousand years had elapsed since his birth he was still to all intent and purpose a youth. Upon all sides he saw strange and wonderful trees, the likes of which had never been in the forests of yesterday. The growths were not so luxuriant or prodigious, but for the most

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part the trees offered suggestions of alluring possibilities to the semiarboreal Nu, for the branches were much heavier and more solid than those of the great tree-ferns of his own epoch, and commenced much nearer the ground. Cat-like he leaped into the lower branches of them, revelling in the ease with which he could travel from tree to tree.

Gay colored birds of strange appearance screamed and scolded at him. Little monkeys hurried, chattering, from his path. Nu laughed. What a quaint, diminutive world it was indeed! Nowhere had he yet seen a tree or creature that might compare in size to the monsters among which he had traveled the preceding day.

The fruits, too, were small and strange. He scarcely dared venture to eat of them lest they be poisonous. If the lesser ape folk would only let him come close enough to speak with them he might ascertain from them which were safe, but for some unaccountable reason they seemed to fear and mistrust him. This above all other considerations argued to Nu that he had come in some mysterious way into another world.

Presently the troglodyte discovered a slender, straight young sapling. He came to the ground and tested its strength by bending it back and forth. Apparently it met the requirements of a new shaft. With his stone hatchet he hewed it off close to the ground, stripped it of branches, and climbing to the safety of the trees again, where he need fear no interruption from the huge monsters of the world he knew, set to work with his stone knife to remove the bark and shape the end to receive his spear head. First he split it down the center for four or five inches, and then he cut notches in the surface upon either side of the split portion. Now he carefully unwraps the rawhide that binds the spear head into his old haft, and for want of water to moisten it crams the whole unfragrant mass into his mouth that it may be softened by warmth and saliva. For several minutes he busies himself in shaping the point of the new shaft that it may exactly fit the inequalities in the shank of the spear head. By the time this is done the rawhide has been sufficiently moistened to permit him to wind it tightly about

the new haft into which he has set the spear head.

As he works he hears the noises of the jungle about him. There are many familiar voices, but more strange ones. Not once has the cave bear spoken; nor Zor, the mighty lion of the Niocene; nor Oo, the saber-toothed tiger. He misses the bellowing of the bull bos, and the hissing and whistling of monster saurian and amphibian. To Nu it seems a silent world. Propped against the bole of the tree before him grins the hideous head of the man hunter, the only familiar object in all this strange, curiously changed world about him.

Presently he becomes aware that the lesser apes are creeping warily closer to have a better look at him. He waits silently until from the tail of his eye he glimpses one quite near, and then in a low voice he speaks in the language that his allies of yesterday understood, and though ages had elapsed since that long gone day the little monkey above him understood, for the language of the apes can never change.

“Why do you fear Nu, the son of Nu?” asked the man. “When has he ever harmed the ape-people?”

“The hairless ones kill us with sharp sticks that fly through the air,” replied the monkey; “or with little sticks that make a great noise and kill us from afar; but you seem not to be of these. We have never seen one like you until now. Do you not wish to kill us?”

“Why should I?” replied Nu. “It is better that we be friends. All that I wish of you is that you tell me which of the fruits that grow here be safe for me to eat, and then direct me to the sea beside which dwell the tribe of Nu, my father.”

The monkeys had gathered in force by this time, seeing that the strange white ape offered no harm to their fellows and when they learned his wants they scampered about in all directions to gather nuts and fruits and berries for him. It is true that some of them forgot what they had intended doing before the task was half completed, and ended by pulling one another's tails and frolicking among the higher branches, or else ate the fruit they had gone to gather for their new friend; but a few there were with greater

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powers of concentration than their fellows who returned with fruit and berries and caterpillars, all of which Nu devoured with the avidity of the half-famished.

Of the whereabouts of the tribe of his father they could tell him nothing, for they had never heard of such a people, or of the great sea beside which he told them that his people dwelt.

His breakfast finished, and his spear repaired Nu set out toward the plain to bring down one of the beasts he had seen grazing there, for his stomach called aloud for flesh. Fruit and bugs might be all right for children and ape-people; but a full grown man must have meat, warm and red and dripping.

Closest to him as he emerged from the jungle browsed a small herd of zebra. They were directly up wind, and between him and them were patches of tall grass and clumps of trees scattered about the surface of the plain. Nu wondered at the strange beasts, admiring their gaudy markings as he came closer to them. Upon the edge of the herd nearest him a plump stallion stood switching his tail against the annoying flies, occasionally raising his head from his feeding to search the horizon for signs of danger, sniffing the air for the tell-tale scent of an enemy. It was he that Nu selected for his prey.

Stealthily the cave man crept through the tall grass, scarce a blade moving to the sinuous advance of his sleek body. Within fifty feet of the zebra Nu stopped, for the stallion was giving evidence of restlessness, as though sensing intuitively the near approach of a foe he could neither see, nor hear, nor smell.

The man, still prone upon his belly, drew his spear into the throwing grasp. With utmost caution he wormed his legs beneath him, and then, like lightning and all with a single movement, he leaped to his feet and cast the stone-tipped weapon at his quarry.

With a snort of terror the stallion reared to plunge away, but the spear had found the point behind his shoulder even as he saw the figure of the man arise from the tall grasses, and as the balance of the herd galloped madly off, their leader pitched headlong to the earth.

Nu ran forward with ready knife, but the animal was dead

before he reached its side — the great spear had passed through its heart and was protruding upon the opposite side of the body. The man removed the weapon, and with his knife cut several long strips of meat from the plump haunches.

Ever and anon he raised his head to scan the plain and jungle for evidences of danger, sniffing the breeze just as had the stallion he had killed. His work was but partially completed when he caught the scent of man yet a long way off. He knew that he could not be mistaken, yet never had he sensed so strange an odor. There were men coming, he knew, but of the other odors that accompanied them he could make nothing, for khaki and guns and sweaty saddle blankets and the stench of tanned leather were to Nu's nostrils as Greek would have been to his ears.

It would be best thought Nu to retreat to the safety of the forest until he could ascertain the number and kind of beings that were approaching, and so, taking but careless advantage of the handier shelter, the cave man sauntered toward the forest, for now he was not stalking game, and never yet had he shown fear in the presence of an enemy. If their numbers were too great for him to cope with single handed he would not show himself; but none might ever say that he had seen Nu, the son of Nu, run away from danger.

In his hand still swung the head of Oo, and as the man leaped to the low branches of a tree at the jungle's edge to spy upon the men he knew to be advancing from the far side of the plain, he fell to wondering how he was to find his way back to Nat-ul that he might place the trophy at her feet and claim her as his mate.

Only the previous evening they had walked together hand in hand along the beach, and now he had not the remotest conception of where that beach lay. Straight across the plain should be the direction of it, for from that direction had he come to find the lair of Oo! But now all was changed. There was no single familiar landmark to guide him, not even the ape-people knew of any sea nearby, and he himself had no conception as to whether he was in the same world that he had traversed when last

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the sun shone upon him.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE MYSTERIOUS HUNTER

THE morning following the earthquake found Victoria Custer still confined to her bed. She told Lady Greystoke that she felt weak from the effects of the nervous shock; but the truth of the matter was that she dreaded to meet Curtiss and undergo the ordeal which she knew confronted her.

How was she to explain to him the effect that the subterranean rumblings and the shaking of the outer crust had had upon her and her sentiments toward him? When her brother came in to see her she drew his head down upon the pillow beside hers and whispered something of the terrible hallucinations that had haunted her since the previous evening.

“Oh, Barney,” she cried, “what can it be? What can it be? The first deep grumblings that preceded the shock seemed to awake me as from a lethargy, and as plainly as I see you beside me now, I saw the half naked creature of my dreams, and when I saw him I knew that I could never wed Mr. Curtiss or any other — it is awful to have to admit it even to you, Barney, but I — I knew when I saw him that I loved him — that I was his. Not his wife, Barney, but his woman — his mate, and I had to fight with myself to keep from rushing out into the terrible blackness of the night to throw myself into his arms. It was then that I managed to control myself long enough to run to you, where I fainted. And last night, in my dreams, I saw him again, — alone and lonely, searching through a strange and hostile world to find and claim me.

“You cannot know, Barney, how real he is to me. It is not as other dreams, but instead I really see him — the satin texture of his smooth, bronzed skin; the lordly poise of his perfect head; the tousled shock of coal black hair that I have learned to love and through which I know I have run my fingers as he stooped to kiss me.

“He carries a great spear, stone-tipped — I should know it the moment that I saw it — and a knife and hatchet of the same

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flinty material, and in his left hand he bears the severed head of a mighty beast.

“He is a noble figure, but of another world or of another age; and somewhere he wanders so lonely and alone that my heart weeps at the thought of him. Oh, Barney, either he is true and I shall find him, or I am gone mad. Tell me Barney, for the love of heaven! you believe that I am sane.”

Barney Custer drew his sister’s face close to his and kissed her tenderly.

“Of course you’re sane, Vic,” he reassured her. “You’ve just allowed that old dream of yours to become a sort of obsession with you, and now it’s gotten on your nerves until you are commencing to believe it even against your better judgment. Take a good grip on yourself, get up and join Curtiss in a long ride. Have it out with him. Tell him just what you have told me, and then tell him you’ll marry him, and I’ll warrant that you’ll be dreaming about him instead of that young giant that you have stolen out of some fairy tale.”

“I’ll get up and take a ride, Barney,” replied the girl; “but as for marrying Mr. Curtiss — well, I’ll have to think it over.”

But after all she did not join the party that was riding toward the hills that morning, for the thought of seeing the torn and twisted strata of a bygone age that lifted its scarred head above the surface of the plain at the base of the mountains was more than she felt equal to. They did not urge her, and as she insisted that Mr. Curtiss accompany the other men she was left alone at the bungalow with Lady Greystoke, the baby and the servants.

As the party trotted across the rolling land that stretched before them to the foothills they sighted a herd of zebras coming toward them in mad stampede.

“Something is hunting ahead of us,” remarked one of the men.

“We may get a shot at a lion from the looks of it,” replied another.

A short distance further on they came upon the carcass of a zebra stallion. Barney and Butzow dismounted to examine it in an

effort to determine the nature of the enemy that had dispatched it. At the first glance Barney called to one of the other members of the party, an experienced big game hunter.

“What do you make of this, Brown?” he asked, pointing to the exposed haunch.

“It is a man’s kill,” replied the other. “Look at that gaping hole over the heart, that would tell the story were it not for the evidence of the knife that cut away these strips from the rump. The carcass is still warm — the kill must have been made within the past few minutes.”

“Then it wouldn’t have been a man,” spoke up another, “or we should have heard the shot. Wait, here’s Greystoke, let’s see what he thinks of it.”

The ape man, who had been riding a couple hundred yards in rear of the others with one of the older men, now reined in close to the dead zebra.

“What have we here?” he asked, swinging from his saddle.

“Brown says this looks like the kill of a man,” said Barney; “but none of us heard any shot.”

Tarzan grasped the zebra by a front and hind pastern and rolled him over upon his other side.

“It went way through, whatever it was,” said Butzow, as the hole behind this shoulder was exposed to view. “Must have been a bullet even if we didn’t hear the report of the gun.”

“I’m not so sure of that,” said Tarzan, and then he glanced casually at the ground about the carcass, and bending lower brought his sensitive nostrils close to the mutilated haunch and then to the tramped grasses at the zebra’s side. When he straightened up the others looked at him questioningly.

“A man,” he said — “a white man, has been here since the zebra died. He cut these steaks from the haunches. There is not the slightest odor of gun powder about the wound — it was not made by a powder-spiced projectile. It is too large and too deep for an arrow wound. The only other weapon that could have inflicted it is a spear; but to cast a spear entirely through the carcass of a zebra at the distance to which a man could approach one in the

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open presupposes a mightiness of muscle and an accuracy of aim little short of superhuman.”

“And you think ——?” commenced Brown.

“I think nothing,” interrupted Tarzan, “except that my judgment tells me that my senses are in error — there is no naked, white giant hunting through the country of the Waziri. Come, let’s ride on to the hills and see if we can’t locate the old villain who has been stealing my sheep. From his spoor I’ll venture to say that when we bring him down we shall see the largest lion that any of us has ever seen.”

## CHAPTER V

### THE WATCHER

AS THE party remounted and rode away toward the foothills two wondering black eyes watched them from the safety of the jungle. Nu was utterly nonplussed. What sort of men were these who rode upon beasts the like of which Nu had never dreamed? At first he thought their pith helmets and khaki clothing a part of them; but when one of them removed his helmet and another unbuttoned his jacket Nu saw that they were merely coverings for the head and body, though why men should wish to hamper themselves with such foolish and cumbersome contraptions the troglodyte could not imagine.

As the party rode toward the foothills Nu paralleled them, keeping always down wind from them. He followed them all day during their fruitless search for the lion that had been entering Greystoke's compound and stealing his sheep, and as they retraced their way toward the bungalow late in the afternoon Nu followed after them.

Never in his life had he been so deeply interested in anything as he was in these strange creatures, and when, half way across the plain, the party came unexpectedly upon a band of antelope grazing in a little hollow and Nu heard the voice of one of the little black sticks the men carried and saw a buck leap into the air and then come heavily to the ground quite dead, deep respect was added to his interest, and possibly a trace of awe as well — fear he knew not.

In a clump of bushes a quarter of a mile from the bungalow Nu came to a halt. The strange odors that assailed his nostrils as he approached the ranch warned him to caution. The black servants and the Waziri warriors, some of whom were always visiting their former chief, presented to Nu's nostrils an unfamiliar scent — one which made the black shock upon his head stiffen as you have seen the hair upon the neck of a white man's hound stiffen when for the first time his nose detects the odor of an

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Indian. And, half smothered in the riot of more powerful odors, there came to Nu's nostrils now and then a tantalizing suggestion of a faint aroma that set his heart to pounding and the red blood coursing through his veins.

Never did it abide for a sufficient time to make Nu quite sure that it was more than a wanton trick of his senses — the result of the great longing that was in his lonely heart for her whom this ephemeral and elusive effluvium proclaimed. As darkness came he approached closer to the bungalow, always careful, however, to keep down wind from it.

Through the windows he could see people moving about within the lighted interior, but he was not close enough to distinguish features. He saw men and women sitting about a long table, eating with strange weapons upon which they impaled tiny morsels of food which lay upon round, flat stones before them.

There was much laughter and talking, which floated through the open windows to the cave man's eager ears; but throughout it all there came to him no single word which he could interpret. After these men and women had eaten they came out and sat in the shadows before the entrance to their strange cave, and here again they laughed and chattered, for all the world, thought Nu, like the ape-people; and yet, though it was different from the ways of his own people the troglodyte could not help but note within his own breast a strange yearning to take part in it — a longing for the company of these strange, new people.

He had crept quite close to the veranda now, and presently there floated down to him upon the almost stagnant air a subtle exhalation that is not precisely scent, and for which the languages of modern men have no expression since men themselves have no powers of perception which may grasp it; but to Nu of the Niocene it carried as clear and unmistakable a message as could word of mouth, and it told him that Nat-ul, the daughter of Tha, sat among these strange people before the entrance to their wonderful cave.

And yet Nu could not believe the evidence of his own senses. What could Nat-ul be doing among such as these? How,

between two suns, could she have learned the language and the ways of these strangers? It was impossible; and then a man upon the veranda, who sat close beside Victoria Custer, struck a match to light a cigarette, and the flare of the blaze lit up the girl's features. At the sight of them the cave man involuntarily sprang to his feet. A half smothered exclamation broke from his lips: "Nat-ul!"

"What was that?" exclaimed Barney Custer. "I thought I heard some one speak out there near the rose bushes."

He rose as though to investigate, but his sister laid her hand upon his arm.

"Don't go, Barney," she whispered.

He turned toward her with a questioning look.

"Why?" he asked. "There is no danger. Did you not hear it, too?"

"Yes," she answered in a low voice, "I heard it, Barney — please don't leave me."

He felt the trembling of her hand where it rested upon his sleeve. One of the other men heard the conversation, but of course he could not guess that it carried any peculiar significance — it was merely an expression of the natural timidity of the civilized white woman in the midst of the savage African night.

"It's nothing, Miss Custer," he said. "I'll just walk down there to reassure you — a prowling hyena, perhaps, but nothing more."

The girl would have been glad to deter him, but she felt that she had already evinced more perturbation than the occasion warranted, and so she but forced a laugh, remarking that it was not at all worth while, yet in her ears rang the familiar name that had so often fallen from the lips of her dream man.

When one of the others suggested that the investigator had better take an express rifle with him on the chance that the intruder might be "old Raffles," the sheep thief, the girl started up as though to object but realizing how ridiculous such an attitude would be, and how impossible to explain, she turned instead and entered the house.

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Several of the men walked down into the garden, but though they searched for the better part of half an hour they came upon no indication that any savage beast was nearby. Always in front of them a silent figure moved just outside the range of their vision, and when they returned again to the veranda it took up its position once more behind the rose bushes, nor until all had entered the bungalow and sought their beds did the figure stir.

Nu was hungry again, and knowing no law of property rights he found the odor of the Greystoke sheep as appetizing as that of any other of the numerous creatures that were penned within their compounds for the night. Like a supple panther the man scaled the high fence that guarded the imported, pedigreed stock in which Lord Greystoke took such just pride. A moment later there was the frightened rush of animals to the far side of the enclosure, where they halted to turn fear filled eyes back toward the silent beast of prey that crouched over the carcass of a plump ewe. Within the pen Nu ate his fill, and then, cat-like as he had come, he glided back stealthily toward the garden before the darkened bungalow.

Out across the plain, down wind from Nu, another silent figure moved stealthily toward the ranch. It was a huge, maned lion. Every now and then he would halt and lift his sniffing nose to the gentle breeze, and his lips would lift baring the mighty fangs beneath, but no sound came from his deep throat, for he was old, and his wisdom was as the wisdom of the fox.

Once upon a time he would have coughed and moaned and roared after the manner of his hungry brethren, but much experience with men-people and their deafening thunder sticks had taught him that he hunted longest who hunted in silence.

## CHAPTER VI

### NU AND THE LION

VICTORIA CUSTER had gone to her room much earlier in the evening than was her custom, but not to sleep. She did not even disrobe, but sat instead in the darkness beside her window looking out toward the black and mysterious jungle in the distance, and the shadowy outlines of the southern hills.

She was trying to fight down forever the foolish obsession that had been growing upon her slowly and insidiously for years. Since the first awakening of developing womanhood within her she had been subject to the strange dream that was now becoming an almost nightly occurrence. At first she had thought nothing of it, other than it was odd that she should continue to dream the same thing so many times; but of late these nightly visions had seemed to hold more of reality than formerly, and to presage some eventful happening in her career — some crisis that was to alter the course of her life. Even by day she could not rid herself of the vision of the black haired young giant, and tonight the culmination had come when she had heard his voice calling her from the rose thicket. She knew that he was but a creature of her dreams, and it was this knowledge which frightened her so — for it meant but one thing; her mind was tottering beneath the burden of the nervous strain these hallucinations had imposed upon it.

She must gather all the resources of her nervous energy and throw off this terrible obsession forever. She must! She *must!* Rising, the girl paced back and forth the length of her room. She felt stifled and confined within its narrow limits. Outside, beneath the open sky, with no boundaries save the distant horizon was the place best fitted for such a battle as was raging within her. Snatching up a silken scarf she threw it about her shoulders — a concession to habit, for the night was hot — and stepping through her window to the porch that encircled the bungalow she passed on into the garden.

Just around the nearest angle of the house her brother and

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Billy Curtiss sat smoking before the window of their bed room, clad in pajamas and slippers. Curtiss was cleaning the rifle he had used that day — the same that he had carried into the rose garden earlier in the evening. Neither heard the girl's light footsteps upon the sward, and the corner of the building hid her from their view.

In the open moonlight beside the rose thicket Victoria Custer paced back and forth. A dozen times she reached a determination to seek the first opportunity upon the morrow to give Billy Curtiss an affirmative answer to the question he had asked her the night before — the night of the earthquake; but each time that she thought she had disposed of the matter definitely she found herself involuntarily comparing him with the heroic figure of her dream-man, and again she must need re-wage her battle.

As she walked in the moonlight two pair of eyes watched her every movement — one pair, clear, black eyes, from the rose thicket — the other flaming yellow-green orbs hidden in a little clump of bushes at the point where she turned in her passing to retrace her steps — at the point farthest from the watcher among the roses.

Twenty times Nu was on the point of leaping from his concealment and taking the girl in his arms, for to him she was Nat-ul, daughter of Tha, and it had not been a hundred thousand years, but only since the day before yesterday that he had last seen her. Yet each time something deterred him — a strange, vague, indefinable fear of this wondrous creature who was Nat-ul, and yet who was not Nat-ul, but another made in Nat-ul's image.

The strange things that covered her fair form seemed to have raised a barrier between them — the last time that he had walked hand in hand with her upon the beach naught but a soft strip of the skin of a red doe's calf had circled her gracefully undulating hips. Her familiar association, too, with these strange people, coupled with the fact that she spoke and understood their language only tended to remove her further from him. Nu was very sad, and very lonely; and the sight of Nat-ul seemed to accentuate rather than relieve his depression. Slowly there was

born within him the conviction that Nat-ul was no longer for Nu, the son of Nu. Why, he could not guess; but the bitter fact seemed irrevocable.

The girl had turned quite close to him now, and was retracing her steps toward the bushes twenty yards away. Behind their screening verdure "old Raffles" twitched his tufted tail and drew his steel thewed legs beneath him for the spring, and as he waited just the faintest of purrs escaped his slavering jowls. Too faint the sound to pierce the dulled senses of the twentieth century maiden; but to the man hiding in the rose thicket twenty paces further from the lion than she it fell deep and sinister upon his unspoiled ear.

Like a bolt of lightning — so quickly his muscles responded to his will — the cave man hurtled the intervening rose bushes with a single bound, and, raised spear in hand, bounded after the unconscious girl. The great lion saw him coming, and lest he be cheated of his prey leaped into the moonlight before his intended victim was quite within the radius of his spring.

The beast emitted a horrid roar that froze the girl with terror, and then in the face of his terrific charge the figure of a naked giant leaped past her. She saw a great arm, wielding a mighty spear, hurl the weapon at the infuriated beast — and then she swooned.

As the savage note of the lion's roar broke the stillness of the quiet night Curtiss and Barney Custer sprang to their feet, running toward the side of the bungalow from which the sound had come. Curtiss grasped the rifle he had but just reloaded, and as he turned the corner of the building he caught one fleeting glimpse of something moving near the bushes fifty yards away. Raising his weapon he fired.

The whole household had been aroused by the lion's deep voice and the answering boom of the big rifle, so that scarcely a minute after Barney and Curtiss reached the side of the prostrate girl a score of white men and black were gathered about them.

The dead body of a huge lion lay scarce twenty feet from

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Victoria Custer, but a hurried examination of the girl brought unutterable relief to them all, for she was uninjured. Barney lifted her in his arms and carried her to her room while the others examined the dead beast. From the center of the breast a wooden shaft protruded, and when they had drawn this out, and it required the united efforts of four strong men to do it, they found that a stone-tipped spear had passed straight through the savage heart almost the full length of the brute's body.

"The zebra killer," said Brown to Greystoke. The latter nodded his head.

"We must find him," he said. "He has rendered us a great service. But for him Miss Custer would not be alive now;" but though twenty men scouted the grounds and the plain beyond for several hours no trace of the killer of "old Raffles" could be found, and the reason that they did not find him abroad was because he lay directly beneath their noses in a little clump of low, flowering shrubs, with a bullet wound in his head.

## CHAPTER VII

### VICTORIA OBEYS THE CALL

**THE** next morning the men were examining the stone headed spear upon the veranda just outside the breakfast room.

“It’s the oddest thing of its kind I ever saw,” said Greystoke. “I can almost swear that it was never made by any of the tribesmen of present day Africa. I once saw several similar heads, though, in the British Museum. They had been taken from the debris of a prehistoric cave dwelling.”

From the window of the breakfast room just behind them a wide eyed girl was staring in breathless wonderment at the rude weapon, which to her presented concrete evidence of the reality of the thing she had thought but another hallucination — the leaping figure of the naked man that had sprung past her into the face of the charging lion an instant before she had swooned. One of the men turned and saw her standing there.

“Ah, Miss Custer,” he exclaimed; “no worse off this morning I see for your little adventure of last night. Here’s a memento that your rescuer left behind him in the heart of ‘old Raffles’. Would you like it?”

The girl stepped forward hiding her true emotions behind the mask of a gay smile. She took the spear of Nu, the son of Nu, in her hands, and her heart leaped in half savage pride as she felt the weight of the great missile.

“What a man he must be who wields such a mighty weapon!” she exclaimed. Barney Custer was watching his sister closely, for with the discovery of the spear in the lion’s body had come the sudden recollection of Victoria’s description of her dream-man — “He carried a great spear, stone-tipped — I should know it the moment that I saw it —”

The young man stepped to his sister’s side, putting an arm about her shoulders. She looked up into his face, and then in a low voice that was not audible to the others she whispered: “It is his, Barney. I knew that I should know it.”

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For some time the young man had been harassed by fears as to his sister's sanity. Now he was forced to entertain fears of an even more sinister nature, or else admit that he too had gone mad. If he were sane, then it was God's truth that somewhere in this savage land a savage white man roamed in search of Victoria. Now that he had found her would he not claim her? He shuddered at the thought. He must do something to avert a tragedy, and he must act at once. He drew Lord Greystoke to one side.

"Victoria and I must leave at once," he said. "The nervous strain of the earthquake and this last adventure have told upon her to such an extent that I fear we may have a very sick girl upon our hands if I do not get her back to civilization and home as quickly as possible."

Greystoke did not attempt to offer any remonstrances. He, too, felt that it would be best for Miss Custer to go home. He had noted her growing nervousness with increasing apprehension. It was decided that they should leave on the morrow. There were fifty black carriers anxious to return to the coast, and Butzow and Curtiss readily signified their willingness to accompany the Nebraskan and his sister.

As he was explaining his decision to Victoria a black servant came excitedly to Lord Greystoke. He told of the finding of a dead ewe in the compound. The animal's neck had been broken, the man said, and several strips of meat cut from its haunches with a knife. Beside it in the soft mud of the enclosure the prints of an unshod human foot were plainly in evidence.

Greystoke smiled. "The zebra killer again," he said. "Well, he is welcome to all he can eat."

Before he had finished speaking, Brown, who had been nosing around in the garden, called to him from a little clump of bushes beside the spot where the lion's body had lain.

"Look here, Clayton," he called. "Here's something we overlooked in the darkness last night."

The men upon the veranda followed Greystoke to the garden. Behind them came Victoria Custer, drawn as though by a magnet to the spot where they had gathered.

In the bushes was a little pool of dried blood, and where the earth near the roots was free from sod there were several impressions of a bare foot.

“He must have been wounded,” exclaimed Brown, “by Curtiss’s shot. I doubt if the lion touched him — the beast must have died instantly the spear entered its heart. But where can he have disappeared to?”

Victoria Custer was examining the grass a little distance beyond the bushes. She saw what the others failed to see — a drop of blood now and then leading away in the direction of the mountains to the south. At the sight of it a great compassion welled in her heart for the lonely, wounded man who had saved her life and then staggered, bleeding, toward the savage wilderness from which he had come. It seemed to her that somewhere out there he was calling to her now, and that she must go.

She did not call the attention of the others to her discovery, and presently they all returned to the veranda, where Barney again took up the discussion of their plans for tomorrow’s departure. The girl interposed no objections. Barney was delighted to see that she was apparently as anxious to return home as he was to have her — he had feared a flat refusal.

Barney had wanted to get a buffalo bull before he left, and when one of the Waziri warriors brought word that morning that there was a splendid herd a few miles north of the ranch, Victoria urged him to accompany the other men upon the hunt.

“I’ll attend to the balance of the packing,” she said. “There’s not the slightest reason in the world why you shouldn’t go.”

And so he went, and Victoria busied herself in the gathering together of the odds and ends of their personal belongings. All morning the household was alive with its numerous duties, but after luncheon while the heat of the day was greatest the bungalow might have been entirely deserted for any sign of life that there was about it. Lady Greystoke was taking her siesta, as were practically all of the servants. Victoria Custer had paused in her work to gaze out of her window toward the distant hills far to the south. At her side, nosing his muzzle into her palm, stood one of

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Lord Greystoke's great wolfhounds, Terkoz. He had taken a great fancy to Victoria Custer from the first and whenever permitted to do so remained close beside her.

The girl's heart filled with a great longing as she looked wistfully out toward the hills that she had so feared before. She feared them still, yet something there called her. She tried to fight against the mad desire with every ounce of her reason, but she was fighting against an unreasoning instinct that was far stronger than any argument she could bring to bear against it.

Presently the hound's cold muzzle brought forth an idea in her mind, and with it she cast aside the last semblance of attempted restraint upon her mad desire. Seizing her rifle and ammunition belt she moved noiselessly into the veranda. There she found a number of leashes hanging from a peg. One of these she snapped to the hound's collar. Unseen, she crossed the garden to the little patch of bushes where the dried blood was. Here she gathered up some of the brown stained earth and held it close to Terkoz's nose. Then she put her finger to the ground where the trail of blood led away toward the south.

"Here, Terkoz!" she whispered.

The beast gave a low growl as the scent of the new blood filled his nostrils, and with nose close to ground started off, tugging upon the leash, in the direction of the mountains upon the opposite side of the plain.

Beside him walked the girl, across her shoulder was slung a modern big game rifle, and in her left hand swung the stone-tipped spear of the savage mate she sought.

What motive prompted her act she did not even pause to consider. The results she gave not the slightest thought. It seemed the most natural thing in the world that she should be seeking this lonely, wounded man. Her place was at his side. He needed her — that was enough for her to know. She was no longer the pampered, petted child of an effete civilization. That any metamorphosis had taken place within her she did not dream, nor is it certain that any change had occurred, for who may say that it is such a far step from one incarnation to another however many countless years of

man-measured time may have intervened?

Darkness had fallen upon the plain and the jungle and the mountain, and still Terkoz forged ahead, nose to ground, and beside him moved the slender figure of the graceful girl. Now the roar of a distant lion came faintly to her ears, answered, quite close, by the moaning of another — a sound that is infinitely more weird and terrifying than the deeper throated challenge. The cough of the leopard and the uncanny “laughter” of hyenas added their evidence that the night-prowling carnivora were abroad.

The hair along the wolfhound’s spine stiffened in a little ridge of bristling rage. The girl unslung her rifle, shifting the leash to the hand that carried the heavy spear of the troglodyte; but she was unafraid. Suddenly, just before her, a little band of antelope sprang from the grass in startled terror — there was a hideous roar, and a great body hurtled through the air to alight upon the rump of the hindmost of the herd. A single scream of pain and terror from the stricken animal, a succession of low growls and the sound of huge jaws crunching through flesh and bone, and then silence.

The girl made a slight detour to avoid the beast and its kill, passing a hundred yards above them. In the moonlight the lion saw her and the hound. Standing across his fallen prey, his flaming eyes glaring at the intruders, he rumbled his deep warning to them; but Victoria, dragging the growling Terkoz, after her, passed on and the king of beasts turned to his feast.

It was fifteen minutes before Terkoz could relocate the trail, and then the two took up their lonely way once more. Into the foothills past the tortured strata of an ancient age it wound. At sight of the naked rock the girl shuddered, yet on and up she went until Terkoz halted, bristling and growling, before the inky entrance to a gloomy cave.

Holding the beast back Victoria peered within. Her eyes could not penetrate the Stygian darkness. Here, evidently, the trail ended, but of a sudden it occurred to her that she had only surmised that the bloody spoor they had been following was that of the man she sought. It was almost equally as probable that

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Curtiss's shot had struck "old Raffles" mate and that after all she had followed the blood of a wounded lioness to the creature's rocky lair.

Bending low she listened, and at last there came to her ears a sound as of a body moving, and then heavy breathing, and a sigh.

"Nu!" she whispered. "Is it you? I have come," nor did it seem strange to her that she spoke in a strange tongue, no word of which she had ever heard in all her life before. For a moment there was silence, and then, weakly, from the depths of the cave a voice replied.

"Nat-ul!" It was barely a whisper.

Quickly the girl groped her way into the cavern, feeling before her with her hands, until she came to the prostrate form of a man lying upon the cold, hard rock. With difficulty she kept the growling wolfhound from his throat. Terkoz had found the prey that he had tracked, and he could not understand why he should not now be allowed to make the kill; but he was a well-trained beast, and at last at the girl's command he took up a position at the cave's mouth on guard.

Victoria kneeled beside the prostrate form of Nu, the son of Nu; but she was no longer Victoria Custer. It was Nat-ul, the daughter of Tha, who kneeled there beside the man she loved. Gently she passed her slim fingers across his forehead — it was burning with a raging fever. She felt the wound along the side of his head and shuddered. Then she raised him in her arms so that his head was pillowed in her lap, and stooping kissed his cheek.

Half way down the mountain side, she recalled, there was a little spring of fresh, cold water. Removing her hunting jacket she rolled it into a pillow for the unconscious man, and then with Terkoz at her side clambered down the rocky way. Filling her hat with water she returned to the cave. All night she bathed the fevered head, and washed the ugly wound, at times squeezing a few refreshing drops between the hot lips.

At last the restless tossing of the wounded man ceased, and the girl saw that he had fallen into a natural sleep, and that the fever had abated. When the first rays of the rising sun relieved the

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gloom within the cavern Terkoz, rising to stretch himself, looked backward into the interior. He saw a black-haired giant sleeping quietly, his head pillowed upon a khaki hunting coat, and beside him sat the girl, her loosened hair tumbled about her shoulders and over the breast of the sleeping man upon which her own tired head had dropped in the sleep of utter exhaustion. Terkoz yawned and lay down again.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CAPTURED BY ARABS

**AFTER** a time the girl awoke. For a few minutes she could not assure herself of the reality of her surroundings. She thought that this was but another of her dreams. Gently she put out her hand and touched the face of the sleeper. It was very real. Also she noted that the fever had left. She sat in silence for a few minutes attempting to adjust herself to the new and strange conditions which surrounded her. She seemed to be two people — the American girl, Victoria Custer, and Nat-ul; but who or from where was Nat-ul she could not fathom, other than that she was beloved by Nu and that she returned his love.

She wondered that she did not regret the life of ease she had abandoned, and which she knew that she could never again return to. She was still sufficiently of the twentieth century to realize that the step she had taken must cut her off forever from her past life — yet she was very happy. Bending low over the man she kissed his lips, and then rising went outside, and calling Terkoz with her descended to the spring, for she was thirsty.

Neither the girl nor the hound saw the white robed figures that withdrew suddenly behind a huge boulder as the two emerged from the cave's mouth. Nor did they see him signal to others behind him who had not yet rounded the shoulder of the cliff at the base of which they had been marching.

Victoria stooped to fill her hat at the spring. First she leaned far down to quench her own thirst. A sudden, warning growl from Terkoz brought her head up, and there, not ten paces from her, she saw a dozen white robed Arabs, and behind them half a hundred blacks. All were armed — evil looking fellows they were, and one of the Arabs had covered her with his long gun.

Now he spoke to her, but in a tongue she did not understand, though she knew that his message was unfriendly, and imagined that it warned her not to attempt to use her own rifle which lay beside her. Next he spoke to those behind him and two

of them approached the girl, one from either side, while the leader continued to keep his piece leveled at her.

As the two came toward her she heard a menacing growl from the wolfhound, and then saw him leap for the nearest Arab. The fellow clubbed his gun and swung it full upon Terkoz's skull, so that the faithful hound collapsed in a silent heap at their feet. Then the two rushed in and seized Victoria's rifle, and a moment later she was roughly dragged toward the leader of the ill-favored gang.

Through one of the blacks, a West Coast negro who had picked up a smattering of pidgin English, the leader questioned the girl, and when he found that she was a guest of Lord Greystoke an ugly grin crossed his evil face, for the fellow recalled what had befallen another Arab slave and ivory caravan at the hands of the Englishman and his Waziri warriors. Here was an opportunity for partial revenge. He motioned for his followers to bring her along — there was no time to tarry in this country of their enemies into which they had accidentally stumbled after being lost in the jungle for the better part of a month.

Victoria asked what their intentions toward her were; but all that she could learn was that they would take her north with them. She offered to arrange the payment of a suitable ransom if they would return her to her friends unharmed, but the Arab only laughed at her.

"You will bring a good price," he said, "at the court of the sultan of Fulad, north of Tagwara, and for the rest I shall have partly settled the score which I have against the Englishman," and so Victoria Custer disappeared from the sight of men at the border of the savage land of the Waziri nor was there any other than her captors to know the devious route that they followed to gain the country north of Uziri.

When at last Nu, the son of Nu, opened his eyes from the deep slumber that had refreshed and invigorated him, he looked up expectantly for the sweet face that had been hovering above his, and as he realized that the cave was tenantless except for himself a

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sigh that was half a sob broke from the depth of his lonely heart, for he knew that Nat-ul had been with him only in his dreams.

Yet it had been so real! Even now he could feel the touch of her cool hand upon his forehead, and her slim fingers running through his hair. His cheek glowed to her hot kisses, and in his nostrils was the sweet aroma of her dear presence. The disillusionment of his waking brought with it bitter disappointment, and a return of the fever. Again Nu lapsed into semi-consciousness and delirium, so that he was not aware of the figure of the khaki clad white man that crept warily into the half-darkness of his lair shortly after noon.

It was Barney Custer, and behind him came Curtiss, Butzow and a half dozen others of the searching party. They had stumbled upon the half dead Terkoz beside the spring, and there also they had found Victoria Custer's hat, and plainly in the soft earth between the boulders of the hillside they had seen the new made path to the cave higher up.

When Barney saw that the prostrate figure within the cavern did not stir at his entrance a stifling fear rose in his throat, for he was sure that he had found the dead body of his sister; but as his eyes became more accustomed to the dim light of the interior he realized his mistake — at first with a sense of infinite relief and later with misgivings that amounted almost to a wish that it had been Victoria, safe in death; for among the savage men of savage Africa there are fates worse than death for women.

The others had crowded in beside him, and one had lighted a torch of dry twigs which illuminated the interior of the cave brightly for a few seconds. In that time they saw that the man was the only occupant and that he was helpless from fever. Beside him lay the stone spear that had slain "old Raffles" — each of them recognized it. How could it have been brought to him?

"The zebra killer," said Brown. "What's that beneath his head? Looks like a khaki coat."

Barney drew it out and held it up.

"God!" muttered Curtiss. "It's hers."

"He must 'ave come down there after we left, an' got his

spear an' stole your sister," said Brown.

Curtiss drew his revolver and pushed closer toward the unconscious Nu.

"The beast," he growled; "shootin's too damned good for him. Get out of the way, Barney, I'm going to give him all six chambers."

"No," said Barney quietly.

"Why?" demanded Curtiss, trying to push past Custer.

"Because I don't believe that he harmed Victoria," replied Barney. "That's sufficient reason for waiting until we know the truth. Then I won't stand for the killing of an unconscious man anyway."

"He's nothing but a beast — a mad dog," insisted Curtiss. "He should be killed for what he is. I'd never have thought to see you defending the man who killed your sister — God alone knows what worse crime he committed before he killed her."

"Don't be a fool, Curtiss," snapped Barney. "We don't even know that Victoria's dead. The chances are that this man has been helpless from fever for a long time. There's a wound in his head that was probably made by your shot last night. If he recovers from that he may be able to throw some light on Victoria's disappearance. If it develops that he has harmed her I'm the one to demand an accounting — not you; but as I said before I do not believe that this man would have harmed a hair of my sister's head."

"What do you know about him?" demanded Curtiss.

"I never saw him before," replied Barney. "I don't know who he is or where he came from; but I know — well, never mind what I know, except that there isn't anybody going to kill him, other than Barney Custer."

"Custer's right," broke in Brown. "It would be murder to kill this fellow in cold blood. You have jumped to the conclusion, Curtiss, that Miss Custer is dead. If we let you kill this man we might be destroying our best chance to locate and rescue her."

As they talked the gaunt figure of the wolfhound, Terkoz, crept into the cave. He had not been killed by the Arab's blow, and

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a liberal dose of cold water poured over his head had helped to hasten returning consciousness. He nosed, whining, about the cavern as though in search of Victoria. The men watched him in silence after Brown had said: "If this man harmed Miss Custer and laid out Terkoz the beast'll be keen for revenge. Watch him, and if Curtiss is right there won't any of us have to avenge your sister — Terkoz'll take care of that. I know him."

"We'll leave it to Terkoz," said Barney confidently.

After the animal had made the complete rounds of the cave, sniffing at every crack and crevice, he came to each of the watching men, nosing them carefully. Then he walked directly to the side of the unconscious Nu, licked his cheek, and lying down beside him rested his head upon the man's breast so that his fierce, wolfish eyes were pointed straight and watchful at the group of men opposite him.

"There," said Barney, leaning down and stroking the beast's head.

The hound whined up into his face; but when Curtiss approached he rose, bristling, and standing across the body of Nu growled ominously at him.

"You'd better keep away from him, Curtiss," warned Brown. "He always has had a strange way with him in his likes and dislikes, and he's a mighty ugly customer to deal with when he's crossed. He's killed one man already — a big Wamboli spearman who was stalking Greystoke up in the north country last fall. Let's see if he's got it in for the rest of us;" but one by one Terkoz suffered the others to approach Nu — only Curtiss seemed to rouse his savage, protective instinct.

As they discussed their plans for the immediate future Nu opened his eyes with a return of consciousness. At sight of the strange figures about him he sat up and reached for his spear; but Barney had had the foresight to remove this weapon as well as the man's knife and hatchet from his reach.

As the cave man came to a sitting posture Barney laid a hand upon his shoulder. "We shall not harm you," he said; "if you will tell us what has become of my sister," and then placing his lips

close to the other's ear he whispered: "Where is Nat-ul?"

Nu understood but the single word, Nat-ul; but the friendly tone and the hand upon his shoulder convinced him that this man was no enemy. He shook his head negatively. "Nu does not understand the stranger's tongue," he said. And then he asked the same question as had Barney: "Where is Nat-ul?" But the American could translate only the name, yet it told him that here indeed was the dream-man of his sister.

When it became quite evident that the man could not understand anything that they said to him, and that he was in no condition to march, it was decided to send him back to the ranch by some of the native carriers that accompanied the searching party, while the others continued the search for the missing girl.

Terkoz suffered them to lift Nu in their arms and carry him outside where he was transferred to a rude litter constructed with a saddle blanket and two spears belonging to the Waziri hunters who had accompanied them.

Barney felt that this man might prove the key to the solution of Victoria's whereabouts, and so for fear that he might attempt to escape he decided to accompany him personally, knowing that the search for his sister would proceed as thoroughly without him as with. In the meantime he might be working out some plan whereby he could communicate with the stranger.

And so they set out for the ranch. Four half-naked blacks bore the rude stretcher. Upon one side walked Terkoz, the wolfhound, and upon the other, Barney Custer. Four Waziri warriors accompanied them.

## CHAPTER IX

### NU GOES TO FIND NAT-UL

NU, WEAK and sick, was indifferent to his fate. If he had been captured by enemies, well and good. He knew what to expect — either slavery or death, for that was the way of men as Nu knew them. If slavery, there was always the chance to escape. If death, he would at least no longer suffer from loneliness in a strange world far from his own people and his matchless Nat-ul; whom he only saw now in his dreams.

He wondered what this strangely garbed stranger knew of Nat-ul. The man had most certainly spoken her name. Could it be possible that she, too, was a prisoner among these people? He had most certainly seen her in the garden before the strange cave where he had slain the diminutive Zor that had been about to devour her. That was no dream, he was positive, and so she must indeed be a prisoner.

As he recalled the lion he half smiled. What a runt of a beast it had been indeed! Why old Zor who hunted in the forest of the ape-people and dwelt in the caves upon the hither slopes of the Barren Hills would have snapped that fellow up in two bits. And Oo! A sneeze from Oo would have sent him scurrying into the Dark Swamp where Oo could not venture because of his great weight. It was an odd world in which Nu found himself. The country seemed almost barren to him, and yet he was in the heart of tropical Africa. The creatures seemed small and insignificant — yet the lion he had killed was one of the largest that Brown or Greystoke had ever seen — and he shivered, even in the heat of the equatorial sun.

How he longed for the world of his birth, with its mighty beasts, its gigantic vegetation, and its hot, humid atmosphere through which its great, blurred sun appeared grotesquely large and close at hand!

For a week they doctored Nu at the bungalow of the Greystokes. There were times when they despaired of his life, for

the bullet wound that creased his temple clear to the skull had become infected; but at last he commenced to mend, and after that his recovery was rapid, for his constitution was that of untainted physical perfection.

The several searching parties returned one by one without a clue to the whereabouts of Victoria Custer. Barney knew that all was being done that could be done by his friends; but he clung tenaciously to the belief that the solution to the baffling mystery lay locked in the breast of the strange giant who was convalescing upon the cot that had been set up for him in Barney's own room, for such had been the young American's wish. Curtiss had been relegated to other apartments, and Barney stuck close to the bedside of his patient day and night.

His principal reasons for so doing were his wish to prevent the man's escape, and his desire to open some method of communication with the stranger as rapidly as possible. Already the wounded man had learned to make known his simpler wants in English, and the ease with which he mastered whatever Barney attempted to teach him assured the American of the early success of his venture in this direction.

Curtiss continued to view the stranger with suspicion and ill disguised hostility. He was positive that the man had murdered Victoria Custer, and failing to persuade the others that they should take justice into their own hands and execute the prisoner forthwith, he now insisted that he be taken to the nearest point at which civilization had established the machinery of law and turned over to the authorities.

Barney, on the other hand, was just as firm in his determination to wait until the man had gained a sufficient command of English to enable them to give him a fair hearing, and then be governed accordingly. He could not forget that there had existed some strange and inexplicable bond between this handsome giant and his sister, nor that unquestionably the man had saved her life when "old Raffles" had sprung upon her. Barney had loved, and lost because he had loved a girl beyond his reach and so his sympathies went out to this man who, he was confident,

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loved his sister. Uncanny as her dreams had been, Barney was forced to admit that there had been more to them than either Victoria or he had imagined, and now he felt that for Victoria's sake he should champion her dream-man in her absence.

One of the first things that Barney tried to impress upon the man was that he was a prisoner, and lest he should escape by night when Barney slept Greystoke set Terkoz to watch over him. But Nu did not seem inclined to wish to escape. His one desire apparently was to master the strange tongue of his captors. For two weeks after he was able to quit his bed he devoted his time to learning English. He had the freedom of the ranch, coming and going as he pleased, but his weapons were kept from him, hidden in Lord Greystoke's study, and Barney, sometimes with others of the household, always accompanied him.

Nu was waiting for Nat-ul. He was sure that she would come back again to this cave that his new acquaintances called a bungalow. Barney was waiting for the man to mention his sister. One day Curtiss came upon Nu sitting upon the veranda. Terkoz lay at his feet. Nu was clothed in khaki — an old suit of Greystoke's being the largest that could be found upon the place, and that was none too large. As Curtiss approached, the wolfhound turned his wicked little eyes upon him, without moving his head from where it lay stretched upon his forepaws, and growled. Nu extended a booted foot across the beast's neck to hold him in check.

The hound's show of hostility angered Curtiss. He hated the brute, and he hated Nu as cordially — just why, he did not know, for it seemed that his hatred of the stranger was a thing apart from his righteous anger in his belief that the man had guilty knowledge of the fate of Victoria Custer. He halted in front of the caveman.

"I want to ask you a question," he said coldly. "I have been wanting to do so for a long time; but there has always been someone else around."

Nu nodded. "What can Nu tell you?" he asked.

"You can tell me where Miss Custer is," replied Curtiss.

"Miss Custer? I do not know what you mean. I never heard

of Miss Custer.”

“You lie!” cried Curtiss, losing control of himself. “Her jacket was found beneath your head in that foul den of yours.”

Nu came slowly to his feet.

“What does ‘lie’ mean?” he asked. “I do not understand all that people say to me, yet; but I can translate much from the manner and tone of the saying, and I do not like your tone, Curtiss.”

“Answer my question,” cried Curtiss. “Where is Victoria Custer? And when you speak to me remember that I’m *Mr.* Curtiss — you damned white nigger.”

“What does ‘lie’ mean?” persisted Nu. “And what is a ‘nigger’? And why should I call you mister? I do not like the sound of your voice, Curtiss.”

It was at this moment that Barney appeared. A single glance at the attitude of the two men warned him that he was barely in time to avert a tragedy. The black haired giant stood with the bristling wolfhound at his side. The attitude of the man resembled nothing more closely than that of a big, black panther tensed for a spring. Curtiss’s hand was reaching for the butt of the gun at his hip. Barney stepped between them.

“What is the meaning of this, Curtiss?” he asked sharply. Curtiss had been a warm friend for years — a friend of civilization, and luxury and ease. He had known Curtiss under conditions which gave Curtiss everything that Curtiss wished, and Curtiss had seemed a fine fellow, but lately, since Curtiss had been crossed and disappointed, he had found sides to the man’s character that had never before presented themselves. His narrow and unreasoning hatred for the half savage white man had caused the first doubts in Barney’s mind as to the breadth of his friend’s character. And then — most unpardonable of sins — Curtiss had grumbled at the hardships of the field while the searching parties had been out. Butzow had told Barney of it, and of how Curtiss had shirked much of the work which the other white men had assumed when there had been a dearth of competent servants in the camp.

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Curtiss made no reply to Barney's question. Instead he turned on his heel and walked away. Nu laid a hand upon the American's shoulder.

"What does 'lie' mean, Custer?" he asked.

Barney tried to explain.

"I see," said Nu. "And what is a 'nigger' and a 'mister'?"

Again Barney did his best to explain.

"Who is Miss Custer?" Nu asked.

Barney looked at the man in surprise.

"Do you not know?" he asked.

"Why should I?"

"She is my sister," said Barney, looking closely at the man.

"Your sister?" questioned Nu. "I did not know you had a sister, Custer."

"You did not know my sister, Nat-ul?" cried Barney.

"Nat-ul!" exclaimed the man. "Nat-ul your sister?"

"Yes. I supposed that you knew it."

"But you are not Aht, son of Tha," said Nu, "and Nat-ul had no other brother."

"I am brother of the girl you saved from the lion in the garden yonder," said Barney. "Is it she you know as Nat-ul?"

"She was Nat-ul."

"Where is she?" cried Barney.

"I do not know," replied Nu. "I thought that she was a prisoner among you and I have been waiting here quietly for her to be brought back."

"You saw her last," said Barney. The time had come to have it out with this man. "You saw her last. She was in your cave in the mountain. We found her jacket there, and beside the spring this dog lay senseless. What became of her?"

Nu stood with an expression of dull incomprehension upon his fine features. It was as though he had received a stunning blow.

"She was there?" he said at last in a low voice. "She was there in my cave and I thought it was but a dream. She has gone away, and for many days I have remained here doing nothing while she roams amidst the dangers of the forest alone and unprotected."

Unless," his tone became more hopeful, "she has found her way back to our own people among the caves beside the Restless Sea. But how could she? Not even I, a man and a great hunter, can even guess in what direction lies the country of my father, Nu. Perhaps you can tell me?"

Barney shook his head. His disappointment was great. He had been sure that Nu could cast some light upon the whereabouts of Victoria. He wondered if the man was telling him the truth. Doubts began to assail him. It seemed scarce credible that Victoria could have been in the fellow's lair without his knowing of her presence. That she had been there there seemed little or no doubt. The only other explanation was that Nu had, as Curtiss had suggested, stolen her from the vicinity of the bungalow, killed her, and taken his spear and her coat back to his cave with him; but that did not account for the presence of the hound or the beast's evident loyalty to the man.

Nu had turned from the veranda and entered the bungalow. Barney followed him. The cave man was hunting about the house for something.

"What are you looking for?" asked the American.

"My spear," replied Nu.

"What do you want of it?"

"I'm going to find Nat-ul."

Barney laid a hand upon the other's arm.

"No," he said, "you are not going away from here until we find my sister — you are a prisoner. Do you understand?"

The cave man drew himself to his full height. There was a sneer upon his lip. "Who can prevent me?"

Barney drew his revolver. "This," he said,

For a moment the man seemed plunged in thought. He looked at the menacing gun, and then off through the open windows toward the distant hills.

"I can wait, for her sake," he said.

"Don't make any attempt to escape," warned Barney. "You will be watched carefully. Terkoz will give the alarm even if he should be unable to stop you, though as a matter of fact he can

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stop you easily enough. Were I you I should hate to be stopped by Terkoz — he is as savage as a lion when aroused, and almost as formidable.”

Barney did not see the smile that touched the cave man’s lips at this for he had turned away to resume his chair upon the veranda. Later Barney told the others that Nu seemed to realize the futility of attempting to get away, but that night he locked their door securely, placed the key under his pillow and drew his cot beneath the double windows of their room. It would take a mighty stealthy cat, thought he, to leave the apartment without arousing him, even were Terkoz not stretched beside the prisoner’s cot.

About midnight the cave man opened his eyes. The regular breathing of the American attested the soundness of his slumber. Nu extended a hand toward the sleeping Terkoz, at the same time making a low, purring sound with his lips. The beast raised his head.

“Sh-h!” whispered Nu. Then he rose to a sitting posture, and very carefully put his feet to the floor. Stooping he lifted the heavy wolfhound in his arms. The only sign the animal made was to raise his muzzle to the man’s face and lick his cheek. Nu smiled. He recalled Custer’s words: “Terkoz will give the alarm even if he should be unable to stop you.”

The troglodyte approached the cot on which Barney lay in peaceful slumber. He rested one hand upon the sill of the open window, leaning across the sleeper. Without a sound he vaulted over the cot, through the window and alighted noiselessly upon the veranda without. In the garden he deposited Terkoz, telling him to wait there, then he returned to the living room of the bungalow to fetch his spear, his hatchet and his knife. A moment later the figures of a naked man and a gaunt wolfhound swung away beneath the tropic moon across the rolling plain toward the mountains to the south.

## CHAPTER X

### ON THE TRAIL

**IT WAS** daylight when Barney Custer awoke. His first thought was for his prisoner, and when his eyes fell upon the empty cot across the room the American came to the center of the floor with a single bound. Clad in his pajamas he ran out into the living room and gave the alarm. In another moment the search was on, but no sign of the caveman was to be found, nor of the guardian Terkoz.

“He must have killed the dog,” insisted Greystoke; but they failed to find the beast’s body, for the excellent reason that at that very moment Terkoz, bristling with anger, was nosing about the spot where, nearly a month before, he had been struck down by the Arab, as he had sought to protect the girl to whom he had attached himself.

As he searched the spot his equally savage companion hastened to the cave further up the mountainside, and with his knife unearthed the head of Oo which he had buried there in the soft earth of a crevice within the lair. The trophy was now in a rather sad state of putrefaction, and Nu felt that he must forego the pleasure of laying it intact at the feet of his future mate; but the great saber-teeth were there and the skull. He removed the former, fastening them to his gee-string and laid the balance of the head outside the cave where vultures might strip it clean of flesh against Nu’s return, for he did not wish to be burdened with it during his search for Nat-ul.

A deep bay from Terkoz presently announced the finding of the trail and at the signal Nu leaped down the mountainside where the impatient beast awaited him. A moment later the two savage trailers were speeding away upon the spoor of the Arab slave and ivory raiders. Though the trail was old it still was sufficiently plain for these two. The hound’s scent was but a trifle more acute than his human companion’s, but the man depended almost solely upon the tell-tale evidences which his eyes could apprehend, leaving the scent-spoor to the beast, for thus it had been his custom to hunt

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with the savage wolfish progenitors of Terkoz a hundred thousand years before.

They moved silently and swiftly through the jungle, across valleys, over winding hill-trails, wherever the broad path of the caravan led. In a day they covered as much ground as the caravan had covered in a week. By night they slept at the foot of some great tree, the man and beast curled up together; or crawled within dark caves when the way led through the mountains; or, when Zor, the lion, was abroad the man would build a rude platform high among the branches of a tree that he and the hound might sleep in peace throughout the night.

Nu saw strange sights that filled him with wonder and sealed his belief that he had been miraculously transferred to another world. There were villages of black men, some of which gave evidence of recent conflict. Burned huts, and mutilated corpses were all that remained of many, and in others only a few old men and women were to be seen.

He also passed herds of giraffe — a beast that had been unknown in his own world, and many elephant which reminded him of Gluh, the mammoth. But all these beasts were smaller than those he had known in his other life, nor nearly so ferocious. Why, he could scarce recall a beast of any description that did not rush into a death struggle with the first member of another species which it came upon — provided, of course, that it stood the slightest show of dispatching its antagonist. Of course there had been the smaller and more timid animals whose entire existence had consisted in snatching what food they could as they fled through the savage days and awful nights of that fierce age in the perpetual effort to escape or elude the countless myriads of huge carnivora and bellicose ruminants whose trails formed a mighty network from pole to pole.

So to Nu the jungles of Africa seemed silent and deserted places. The beasts, even the more savage of them, seldom attacked except in hunger or the protection of their young. Why, he had passed within a dozen paces of a great herd of these diminutive, hairless mammoths and they had but raised their little, pig eyes

and glanced at him, as they flapped their great ears back and forth against the annoying flies and browsed upon the branches of young trees.

The ape-people seemed frightened out of their wits at his approach, and he had even seen the tawny bodies of lions pass within a stone's throw of him without charging. It was amazing. Life in such a world would scarce be worth the living. It made him lonelier than ever to feel that he could travel for miles without encountering a single danger.

Far behind him along the trail of the Arabs came a dozen white men and half a hundred savage Waziri warriors. Not an hour after Barney Custer discovered Nu's absence a native runner had come hurrying in from the north to beg Lord Greystoke's help in pursuing and punishing a band of Arab slave and ivory raiders who were laying waste the villages, murdering the old men and the children and carrying the young men and women into slavery.

While Greystoke was questioning the fellow he let drop the fact that among the other prisoners of the Arabs was a young white woman. Instantly commotion reigned upon the Greystoke ranch. White men were jumping into field khaki, looking to firearms and ammunition lest their black body servants should have neglected some essential. Stable boys were saddling the horses, and the sleek, ebon warriors of Uziri were greasing their black hides, adjusting barbaric war bonnets, streaking faces, breasts, limbs and bellies with ocher, vermilion or ghastly bluish white, and looking to slim shield, poisoned arrow and formidable war spear.

For a time the fugitive was forgotten, but as the march proceeded they came upon certain reminders that recalled him to their thoughts and indicated that he was far in advance of them upon the trail of the Arabs. The first sign of him was the carcass of a bull buffalo. Straight through the heart was the great hole that they now knew was made by the passage of the ancient, stone tipped spear. Strips had been knife cut from the sides, and the belly was torn as though by a wild beast. Brown stooped to examine the ground about the bull. When he straightened up he

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looked at Greystoke and laughed.

“Didn’t I understand you to say that he must have killed the dog?” he asked. “Look here — they ate side by side from the body of their kill.”

## CHAPTER XI

### THE ABDUCTION

**FOR** three weeks now Victoria Custer had been a prisoner of Sheik Ibn Aswad, but other than the ordinary hardships of African travel she had experienced nothing of which she might complain. She had even been permitted to ride upon one of the few donkeys that still survived, and her food was as good as that of Ibn Aswad himself, for the canny old sheik knew that the better the condition of his prisoner the better the price she would bring at the court of the sultan of Fulad.

Abul Mukarram, Ibn Aswad's right hand man, a swaggering young Arab from the rim of the Sahara, had cast covetous eyes upon the beautiful prisoner, but the old sheik delivered himself of a peremptory no when his lieutenant broached a proposal to him. Then Abul Mukarram, balked in his passing desire found the thing growing upon him until the idea of possessing the girl became a veritable obsession with him.

Victoria, forced to it by necessity, had picked up enough of the language of the sons of the desert to be able to converse with them, and Abul Mukarram often rode at her side feasting his eyes upon her face and figure the while he attempted to ingratiate himself into her esteem by accounts of his prowess; but when at last he spoke of love the girl turned her flushed and angry face away from him, and reining in her donkey refused to ride further beside him.

Ibn Aswad from afar witnessed the altercation, and when he rode to Victoria's side and learned the truth of the matter he berated Abul Mukarram roundly, ordered him to the rear of the column and placed another Arab over the prisoner. Thereafter the venomous looks which the discredited Abul cast upon Victoria oftentimes caused her to shudder inwardly, for she knew that she had made a cruel and implacable enemy of the man.

Ibn Aswad had given her but a hint of the fate which awaited her, yet it had been sufficient to warn her that death were better

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than the thing she was being dragged through the jungles to suffer. Every waking minute her mind was occupied with plans for escape, yet not one presented itself which did not offer insuperable obstacles.

Even had she been able to leave the camp undetected how long could she hope to survive in the savage jungle? And should, by some miracle, her life be spared even for months, of what avail would that be, for she could no more have retraced her way to Lord Greystoke's ranch than she could have laid a true course upon the trackless ocean.

The horrors of the march that passed daily in hideous review before her left her sick and disgusted. The cruelly beaten slaves who carried the great burdens of ivory, tents and provisions brought tears to her eyes. The brutal massacres that followed the forcible entrance into each succeeding village wrung her heart and aroused her shame for those beasts in human form who urged on their savage and cowardly Manyema cannibals to commit nameless excesses against the cowering prisoners that fell into their hands.

But at last they came to a village where victory failed to rush forward and fall into their arms. Instead they were met with sullen resistance. Ferocious, painted devils fought them stubbornly every inch of the way, until Ibn Aswad decided to make a detour and pass around the village rather than sacrifice more of his followers. In the confusion of the fight, and the near-retreat which followed it, Abul Mukarram found the opportunity he had been awaiting. The prisoners, including the white girl, were being pushed ahead of the retreating raiders, while the Arabs and Manyema brought up the rear, fighting off the pursuing savages.

Now Abul Mukarram knew a way to the northland that two might traverse with ease, and over which one could fairly fly; but which was impossible for a slave caravan because it passed through the territory of the English. If the girl would accompany him willingly, well and good — if not, then he would go alone but not before he had committed upon her the revenge he had planned. He left the firing line, therefore, and pushed his way through the

terror stricken slaves to the side of the Arab who guarded Victoria Custer.

“Go back to Ibn Aswad,” he said to the Arab. “He desires your presence.”

The other looked at him closely for a moment. “You lie, Abul Mukarram,” he said at last. “Ibn Aswad commanded me particularly against permitting you to be alone with the girl. Go to!”

“Fool!” muttered Abul Mukarram, and with the word he pulled the trigger of the long gun that rested across the pommel of his saddle with its muzzle scarce a foot from the stomach of the other Arab. With a single shriek the man lunged from his donkey.

“Come!” cried Abul Mukarram, seizing the bridle of Victoria’s beast and turning into the jungle to the west.

The girl tried to slip from her saddle, but a strong arm went about her waist and held her firm as the two donkeys forged, shoulder to shoulder through the tangled mass of creepers which all but blocked their way. Once Victoria screamed for help, but the savage war cries of the natives drowned her voice. Fifteen minutes later the two came out upon the trail again that they had followed when they approached the village and soon the sounds of the conflict behind them grew fainter and fainter until they were lost entirely in the distance.

Victoria Custer’s mind was working rapidly, casting about for some means of escape from the silent figure at her side. A revolver or even a knife would have solved her difficulty, but she had neither. Had she, the life of Abul Mukarram would have been worth but little, for the girl was beside herself with hopeless horror of the fate that now loomed so close at hand. The thought that she had not even the means to take her own life left her numb and cold. There was but one way; to battle with tooth and nail until, in anger, the man himself should kill her; yet until the last moment she might hope against hope for the succor which she knew in her heart of hearts it was impossible to receive.

For the better part of two hours Abul Mukarram kept on away from the master he had robbed. He spoke but little, and

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when he did it was in the tone of the master to his slave. Near noon they left the jungle and came out into a higher country where the space between the trees was greater, and there was little or no underbrush. Traveling was much easier here and they made better time. They were still retracing the trail along which the caravan had traveled. It would be some time during the next morning that they would turn north again upon a new trail.

Beside a stream Abul Mukarram halted. He tethered the donkeys, and then turned toward the girl. "Come," he said, and laid his hand upon her.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE CAVE MAN FINDS HIS MATE

**EACH** day Nu realized that he was gaining rapidly upon those with whom Nat-ul traveled. The experiences of his other life assured him that she must be a prisoner, yet at the same time he realized that such might not be the case at all, for had he not thought her a prisoner among the others who had held him prisoner, only to learn that one of them claimed her as a sister. It all seemed very strange to Nu. It was quite beyond him. Nat-ul could not be the sister of Custer, and yet he had seen her apparently happy and contented in the society of these strangers, and Custer unquestionably appeared to feel for her the solicitude of a brother. Curtiss, it was evident, loved Nat-ul — that much he had gleaned from conversations he had overheard between him and Custer. How the man could have become so well acquainted with Nat-ul between the two days that had elapsed since Nu had set forth from the caves beside the Restless Sea to hunt down Oo and the morning that he had awakened following the mighty shaking of the world was quite as much a mystery as was the remarkable changes that had taken place in the aspect of the world during the same brief period. Nu had given much thought to those miraculous happenings, with the result that he had about convinced himself that he must have slept much longer than he had believed; but that a hundred thousand years had rolled their slow and weary progress above his unconscious head could not, of course, have occurred to him even as the remotest of possibilities.

He had also weighed the sneering words of Curtiss and with them the attitude of the strangers with whom he had been thrown. He had quickly appreciated the fact that their manners and customs were as far removed from his as they were from those of the beasts of the jungle. He had seen that his own ways were more in accordance with the ways of the black and half naked natives whom the whites looked upon as so much their inferiors that they would not even eat at the same table with them.

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He had noted the fact that the blacks treated the other whites with a marked respect which they did not extend to Nu, and being no fool Nu had come to the conclusion that the whites themselves looked upon him as an inferior, even before Curtiss's words convinced him of the truth of his suspicions. Evidently, though his skin was white, he was in some subtle way different from the other whites. Possibly it was in the matter of raiment. He had tried to wear the strange body coverings they had given him, but they were cumbersome and uncomfortable and though he was seldom warm enough now he had nevertheless been glad when the opportunity came to discard the hampering and unaccustomed clothing.

These thoughts suggested the possibility that if Nat-ul had found recognition among the strangers upon an equal footing with them that she, too, might have those attributes of superiority which the strangers claimed, and if such was the fact it became evident that she would consider Nu from the viewpoint of her new friends — as an inferior.

Such reveries made Nu very sad, for he loved Nat-ul just as you or I would love — just as normal white men have always loved — with a devotion that placed the object of his affection upon a pedestal before which he was happy to bow down and worship. His passion was not of the brute type of the inferior races which oftentimes solemnizes the marriage ceremony with a cudgel and ever places the woman in the position of an inferior and a chattel.

Even as Nu pondered the puzzling questions which confronted him his eyes and ears were alert as he sped along the now fresh trail of the caravan. Every indication pointed the recent passing of many men, and the troglodyte was positive that he could be but a few hours behind his quarry.

A few miles east of him the rescue party from the Greystoke ranch were pushing rapidly ahead upon a different trail with a view to heading off the Arabs. Ibn Aswad had taken a circuitous route in order that he might pass around the country of the Waziri, and with his slow moving slave caravan he had now reached a point but

a few days' journey in a direct line from the ranch. The lightly equipped pursuers having knowledge of the route taken by the Arabs from the messenger who had come to seek their assistance had not been compelled to follow the spoor of their quarry but instead had marched straight across country in a direct line for a point which they believed would bring them ahead of the caravan.

Thus it was that Nu and Terkoz, and the party of whites and Waziri from the ranch were closing in upon Ibn Aswad from opposite directions simultaneously; but Nu was not destined to follow the trail of the raiders to where they were still engaged in repelling the savage attacks of the fierce Wamboli, for as he trotted along with the dog at his side his quick eyes detected that which the hound, with all his wondrous instinctive powers, would have passed by, unnoticing — the well-marked prints of the hoofs of two donkeys that had come back along the trail since the caravan had passed.

That they were donkeys belonging to the Arabs was evident to Nu through his familiarity with the distinctive hoof prints of each, which during the past three days had become as well known to him as his mother's face had been. But what were they doing retracing the way they had but just covered! Nu halted and raised his head to sniff the air and listen intently for the faintest sound from the direction in which the beasts had gone when they left the old trail at the point where he had discovered their spoor.

But the wind was blowing from the opposite direction, so there was no chance that Nu could scent them. He was in doubt as to whether he should leave the trail of the main body and follow these two, or continue on his way. From the manner of their passing — side by side — he was convinced that each carried a rider, since otherwise they would have gone in single file after the manner of beasts moving along a none too wide trail; but there was nothing to indicate that either rider was Nat-ul.

For an instant he hesitated, and then his judgment told him to keep on after the main body, for if Nat-ul was a prisoner she would be with the larger force — not riding in the opposite direction with a single guard. Even as he turned to take up the

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pursuit again there came faintly to his ears from the jungle at his left the sound of a human voice — it was a woman's, raised in frightened protest.

Like a deer Nu turned and leaped in the direction of that familiar voice. The fleet wolfhound was put to it to keep pace with the agile caveman, for Nu had left the earth and taken to the branches of the trees where no underbrush retarded his swift flight. From tree to tree he leaped or swung, sometimes hurling his body twenty feet through the air from one jungle giant to another. Below him raced the panting Terkoz, red tongue lolling from his foam flecked mouth; but with all their speed the two moved with the noiselessness of shadowy ghosts.

At the edge of the jungle Nu came upon a parklike forest, and well into this he saw a white robed Arab forcing a woman slowly backward across his knee. One sinewy, brown hand clutched her throat, the other was raised to strike her in the face.

Nu saw that he could not reach the man in time to prevent the blow, but he might distract his attention for the moment that would be required for him to reach his side. From his throat there rose the savage war cry of his long dead people — a cry that brought a hundred jungle creatures to their feet trembling in fear or in rage according to their kind. And it brought Abul Mukarram upstanding too, for in all his life he had never heard the like of that blood-freezing challenge.

At the sight which met his eyes he dropped the girl and darted toward his donkey where hung his long barreled rifle in its boot. Victoria Custer looked, too, and what she saw brought unutterable relief and happiness to her. Then the Arab had turned with levelled gun just as the caveman leaped upon him. There was the report of the firearm ere it was wrenched from Abul Mukarram's grasp and hurled to one side, but the bullet went wide of its mark and the next instant the girl saw the two men locked in what she knew was a death struggle. The Arab struck mighty blows at the head and face of his antagonist, while the caveman, the great muscles rolling beneath his smooth hide, sought for a hold upon the other's throat.

About the two the vicious wolfhound slunk growling with bristling hair, waiting for an opportunity to rush in upon the white robed antagonist of his master. Victoria Custer, her clenched fists tight pressed against her bosom, watched the two men who battled for her. She saw the handsome black head of her savage man bend lower and lower toward the throat of his foeman, and when the strong, white teeth buried themselves in the jugular of the other it was with no sickening qualm of nausea that the girl witnessed the bestial act.

She heard the half wolfish growl of Nu as he tasted the hot, red blood of his enemy. She saw the strong jaws tear and rend the soft flesh of the Arab's throat. She saw the powerful hands bend back the head of the doomed Abul Mukarram. She saw her ferocious mate shake the man as a terrier shakes a rat, and her heart swelled in fierce primitive pride at the prowess of her man.

No longer did Victoria Custer exist. It was Nat-ul, the savage maiden of the Niocene who, as Nu threw the lifeless corpse of his kill to one side, and opened his arms, flung herself into his embrace. It was Nat-ul, daughter of Tha — Nat-ul of the tribe of Nu that dwelt beyond the Barren Cliffs beside the Restless Sea who threw her arms about her lord and master's neck and drew his mouth down to her hot lips.

It was Nat-ul of the first born who watched Nu and the fierce wolfhound circle about the corpse of the dead Arab. The caveman, moving in the graceful, savage steps of the death dance of his tribe, now bent half over, now leaping high in air, throwing his stone-tipped spear aloft, chanting the weird victory song of a dead and buried age, and beside him his equally savage mate squatted upon her haunches beating time with her slim, white hands.

When the dance was done Nu halted before Nat-ul. The girl rose, facing him and for a long minute the two stood in silence looking at one another. It was the first opportunity that either had had to study the features of the other since the strange miracle that had separated them. Nu found that some subtle change had taken place in his Nat-ul. It was she — of that there could be no doubt;

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but yet there was that about her which cast a spell of awe over him — she was infinitely finer and more wonderful than he ever had realized.

With the passing of the excitement of the battle and the dance the strange ecstasy which had held the girl in thrall passed slowly away. The rhythm of the dancing of the savage, black haired giant had touched some chord within her which awoke the long dormant instinct of the primordial. For the time she had been carried back a hundred thousand years to the childhood of the human race — she had not known for those brief instants Victoria Custer, or the twentieth century, or its civilization, for they were yet a thousand centuries in the future.

But now she commenced once more to look through the eyes of generations of culture and refinement. Before her she saw a savage, primitive man. In his eyes was the fire of a great love that would not for long be denied. About her she saw the wild, fierce forest and the cruel jungle, and behind all this, and beyond, her vision wandered to the world she had always known — the world of cities and homes and gentle-folk. She saw her father and her mother and her friends. What would they say?

Again she let her eyes rest upon the man. It was with difficulty that she restrained a mad desire to throw herself upon his broad breast and weep out her doubts and fears close to the beating of his great heart and in the safety of those mighty, protecting arms. But with the wish there arose again the question — what would they say? — held her trembling and frightened from him.

The man saw something of the girl's trouble in her eyes, but he partially misinterpreted it, for he read fear of himself where there was principally self-fear, and because of what he had heard Curtiss say he thought that he saw contempt too, for primitive people are infinitely more sensitive than their more sophisticated brothers.

“You do not love me, Nat-ul?” he asked. “Have the strangers turned you against me? What one of them could have fetched you the head of Oo, the man hunter? See!” He tapped the

two great tusks that hung from his loin cloth. "Nu slew the mightiest of beasts for his Nat-ul — the head is buried in the cave of Oo — yet now that I come to take you as my mate I see fear in your eyes and something else which never was there before. What is it, Nat-ul — have the strangers stolen your love from Nu?"

The man spoke in a tongue so ancient that in all the world there lived no man who spoke or knew a word of it, yet to Victoria Custer it was as intelligible as her own English, nor did it seem strange to her that she answered Nu in his own language.

"My heart tells me that I am yours, Nu," she said, "but my judgment and my training warn me against the step that my heart prompts. I love you; but I could not be happy to wander, half naked, through the jungle for the balance of my life, and if I go with you now, even for a day, I may never return to my people. Nor would you be happy in the life that I lead — it would stifle and kill you. I think I see now something of the miracle that has overwhelmed us. To you it has been but a few days since you left your Nat-ul to hunt down the ferocious Oo; but in reality countless ages have rolled by. By some strange freak of fate you have remained unchanged during all these ages until now you step forth from your long sleep an unspoiled cave man of the stone age into the midst of the twentieth century, while I, doubtless, have been born and reborn a thousand times, merging from one incarnation to another until in this we are again united. Had you, too, died and been born again during all these weary years no gap of ages would intervene between us now and we should meet again upon a common footing as do other souls, and mate and die to be born again to a new mating and a new life with its inevitable death. But you have defied the laws of life and death — you have refused to die and now that we meet again at last a hundred thousand years lie between us — an unbridgable gulf across which I may not return and over which you may not come other than by the same route which I have followed — through death and a new life thereafter."

Much that the girl said was beyond Nu's comprehension, and the most of it without the scope of his primitive language so

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that she had been forced to draw liberally upon her twentieth century English to fill in the gaps, yet Nu had caught the idea in a vague sort of way — at least that his Nat-ul was far removed from him because of a great lapse of time that had occurred while he slept in the cave of Oo, and that through his own death alone could he span the gulf between them and claim her as his mate.

He placed the butt of his spear upon the ground, resting the stone tip against his heart. “I go, Nat-ul,” he said simply, “that I may return again as you would have me — no longer the ‘white nigger’ that Curtiss says I am.”

The girl and the man were so occupied and engrossed with their own tragedy that they did not note the restless pacing of Terkoz, the wolfhound, or hear the ominous growls that rumbled from his savage throat as he looked toward the jungle behind them.

## CHAPTER XIII

### INTO THE JUNGLE

**THE** searching party from the Greystoke ranch had come upon Ibn Aswad so unexpectedly that not a shot had been exchanged between the two parties. The Arabs pressed from behind by the savage Wamboli warriors had literally run into the arms of the whites and the Waziri.

When Greystoke demanded that the white girl be turned over to him at once Ibn Aswad smote his breast and swore that there had been no white girl with them, but one of the slaves told a different story to a Waziri, and when the whites found that Victoria had been stolen from Ibn Aswad by one of the sheik's lieutenants only a few hours before they hastened to scour the jungle in search of her.

To facilitate their movements and insure covering as wide a territory as possible each of the whites took a few Waziri and spreading out in a far flung skirmish line beat the jungle in the direction toward which the slave had told them Abul Mukarram had ridden.

To comb the jungle finely each white spread his Waziri upon either side of him and thus they advanced, seldom in sight of one another; but always within hailing distance. And so it happened that chance brought William Curtiss, unseen, to the edge of the jungle beside the park-like forest beneath the giant trees of which he saw a tableau that brought him to a sudden halt.

There was the girl he loved and sought, apparently unharmed; and two donkeys; and the dead body of an Arab; and the great wolfhound, looking toward his hiding place and growling menacingly; and before the girl the savage white man stood. Curtiss was about to spring forward when he saw the man place the butt of his spear upon the ground and the point against his heart. The act and the expression upon the man's face proclaimed his intention, and so Curtiss drew back again waiting for the perpetration of the deed that he knew was coming. A smile of

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anticipation played about the American's lips.

Victoria Custer, too, guessed the thing that Nu contemplated. It was, in accordance with her own reasoning, the only logical thing for the man to do; but love is not logical, and when love saw and realized the imminence of its bereavement it cast logic to the winds, and with a little scream of terror the girl threw herself upon Nu of the Niocene, striking the spear from its goal.

"No! No!" she cried. "You must not do it. I cannot let you go. I love you, Nu; oh, how I love you," and as the strong arms infolded her once more she gave a happy sigh of content and let her head drop again upon the breast of him who had come back out of the ages to claim her.

The man put an arm about her waist, and together the two turned toward the west in the direction that Abul Mukarram had been fleeing; nor did either see the white faced, scowling man who leaped from the jungle behind them, and with leveled rifle took deliberate aim at the back of the black haired giant.

Nor did they see the swift spring of the wolfhound, nor the thing that followed there beneath the brooding silence of the savage jungle.

Ten minutes later Barney Custer broke through the tangled wall of verdure upon a sight that took his breath away — there stood the two patient donkeys, switching their tails and flapping their long ears; beside them lay the corpse of Abul Mukarram, and upon the edge of the jungle, at his feet, was stretched the dead body of William Curtiss, his breast and throat torn by savage fangs. Across the clearing a great, gaunt wolfhound halted in its retreat at the sound of Barney's approach. It bared its bloody fangs in an ominous growl of warning, and then turned and disappeared into the jungle.

Barney advanced and examined the soft ground about the donkeys and the body of the Arab. He saw the imprints of a man's naked feet, and the smaller impress of a woman's riding boot. He looked toward the jungle where Terkoz had disappeared.

What had his sister gone to within the somber, savage

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depths beyond? What would he bring her back to were he to follow after? He doubted that she would come without her dream-man. Where would she be happier with him — in the pitiless jungle which was the only world he knew, or in the still more pitiless haunts of civilized men?