

Tarzan and the Tarzan Twins

by
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1. BACK TO THE JUNGLE

"GOLLY, but he's a whopper, isn't he?" exclaimed Dick.

"Gee, isn't he a beaut?" cried Doc. "I'll bet he could kill an elephant, almost."

"What's his name?" asked Dick.

"This is Jad-bal-ja," replied Tarzan of the Apes.

"The Golden Lion!" shouted Doc. "Not really—is he?"

"Yes, the Golden Lion," Tarzan assured them.

The three stood before a stout cage that stood in the rear of Tarzan's bungalow on his African estate the day following the arrival there of the Tarzan Twins after their rescue from the fierce Bagalla cannibals, who had captured Dick and Doc after they had wandered away from the derailed train that had been carrying them on a visit to Tarzan of the Apes, who was distantly related to Dick's father.

It had been this relationship, coupled with a remarkable resemblance between the two boys, that had won for them the name of Tarzan Twins from their fellows at the English school they attended. Perhaps their resemblance to one another was not so strange after all, if we consider the fact that the boys' mothers were twin sisters.

And not only that.

One of them had married an American and remained in her native country—this was Doc's mother—and the other had married an Englishman and sailed away across the Atlantic to live in England, where Dick was born on the very same day that Doc was born in America.

And now, after passing through such adventures as come to very few boys in this world, Dick and Doc were safe under the protection of the famous ape-man and while they were looking forward to many interesting experiences, they were sure that from now on they would be

perfectly safe and that never again would they be in such distressing danger as that from which they had just escaped.

Nor were they sorry, for while they were normal boys and, like all normal boys, loved adventure, they had discovered that there was a limit beyond which adventure was no longer enjoyable, and that limit lay well upon the safe side of cannibal flesh pots.

It was well for Dick and Doc, as it is, perhaps, for all of us, that they could not look into the future.

"Gee, you're not going to let him out, are you?" demanded Doc, as Tarzan of the Apes slipped the bolt that secured the door of Jad-bal-ja's cage.

"Why, yes," replied the ape-man. "He is seldom confined when I am at home, other than at night. It would scarcely be necessary even then were it not for the fact that some of my people, filled with an instinctive fear of lions, would not dare venture from their huts at night were Jad-bal-ja abroad. And then, too," he added, "there is something that they will always remember, that I am prone to forget—that, after all, a lion is always a lion. To me Jad-bal-ja is friend and companion, so much so that sometimes I forget that he is not a man, or that I am not a lion."

"He looks fierce," said Doc.

"Won't he bite us?" asked Dick.

"When I am with him he will harm no one unless I tell him to," replied Tarzan, as he swung the cage door wide.

Dick and Doc stood as rigid as pewter soldiers as the great, tawny beast stepped majestically from his cage. The round yellow eyes, the terrifying eyes, surveyed them, and Tarzan spoke in a language that the boys did not understand as Jad-bal-ja advanced and sniffed their clothing and their hands.

"I am telling him that you are my friends," explained Tarzan of the Apes, "and that he must never harm you in the least."

"I hope he understands you," said Doc, and Tarzan smiled.

"We will take a walk," he said, "and presently the lion will become accustomed to you. Pay no attention to him. Do not touch him, unless he

comes and rubs his head against you, which he will not. It is his way of showing affection for me and my family—a mark which he has not bestowed upon others."

"Don't worry," said Dick. "I'll not touch him if I can help it!"

"What does 'Jad-bal-ja' mean?" asked Doc, as the four passed through the gate and out onto the rolling veldt that stretched away to the hills on one side and to the forest and the jungle on the other.

"It is taken from the language of the tailed people of Pal-ul-don," explained Tarzan. "Jad means the; bal is their word for either gold or golden, and ja is lion. I found him, a tiny cub, beside his dead mother, after I had escaped from Pal-ul-don, and was returning home. Even then, he had an unusually golden hue and the language of Pal-ul-don, being fresh in my mind, I named him Jad-bal-ja, The Golden Lion."

As they walked the boys asked a thousand questions which Tarzan answered good-naturedly and to the best of his ability, which was excellent, inasmuch as the boys confined their questions rather closely to Tarzan's life in the jungle, which seemed to them quite the most interesting subject in the world.

"What do you boys want to do?" asked Tarzan. "We have the whole day before us."

"I should like to go into the jungle," said Dick, rather wistfully.

"Me too," said Doc.

"I should think that you boys had had enough of the jungle for a while," laughed the ape-man.

"There is a fascination about it that I cannot explain," replied Dick. "I am afraid of the jungle and yet I want to go back into it."

"I sure like to be in it with you," said Doc, looking adoringly at Tarzan. "How long would it take us to walk over there?"

"About two hours. Could you stand it and the return journey?"

"Could we? I'll say we could," cried Dick.

"How about you, Doc?" demanded Tarzan.

"Sure!"

"All right," said the ape-man, "and if we don't want to come back tonight we don't have to. The jungle gives food and shelter to its people—and freedom. That is why I love it."

"Let's go," said the Tarzan Twins, speaking together almost in the same breath.

Tarzan nodded and led the way.

In high spirits they crossed the veldt, the great lion pacing at the side of its savage master, the two lads drinking in every word of jungle lore that fell from the lips of the ape-man.

Tarzan and the twins wore loin cloths and head bands and carried the simplest and most primitive of weapons—each had a bow and arrows, a spear and a knife. Tarzan, in addition, carried the grass rope that long habit had made almost a part of him.

As the cannibals had stolen the clothing that Dick and Doc had worn when they were captured and as their trunks were still at the rail head, there had really been nothing else for the boys to wear other than the primitive apparel in which they were garbed; but, if the truth were known, they were more than satisfied and would have scorned such symbols of effete civilization as pants and shirts.

Their life with the cannibals and their flight through the jungle had accustomed them to scant attire and had already somewhat hardened their youthful bodies against the rigors of the primeval world that beckoned to them from beyond the borders of the veldt.

With light hearts and eager faces they left the veldt behind and entered the gloomy corridors of the African jungle.

Safe in the companionship of the giant man and the great lion that accompanied them, they were troubled by no fears whatever.

2. THE STORM

DEEP into the jungle the ape-man led them, while overhead Manu the monkey chattered and scolded, reproaching Tarzan for bringing Numa the lion to disturb his peace; but neither Tarzan nor Jad-bal-ja paid any attention to the little monkey, and now the two boys noticed that Tarzan had grown suddenly silent. He answered their questions shortly or not at all and there was a serious expression upon his face. Often he watched Jad-bal-ja attentively and often he paused to sniff the air or to listen.

Presently he turned to the boys.

"Something is wrong in the jungle," he said. "Jad-bal-ja has sensed it. I do not yet know what it is. Have you noticed that he has become nervous? He has sensed something that even I cannot as yet sense. I think it lies up wind from us and that would be natural since the scent of Jad-bal-ja, the flesh eater, is keen indeed. Remain here with Jad-bal-ja while I go and investigate. It may be nothing. A storm is coming—that I have sensed for the past hour—and it may be only the coming storm that has affected the nerves of the Golden Lion. In the jungle, however, he who would live must know—he may not guess."

The two boys watched the giant ape-man swing away through the lower branches of the jungle trees and a moment later they were alone with the great cat that paced nervously to and fro, occasionally eyeing them through those cruel, round, yellow eyes that looked anything but friendly and reassuring to the twins.

"Gee," said Doc, "I wish Tarzan had taken him along with him."

"He left him here to guard us, you poor ninny," snapped Dick, his tone of voice plainly evidencing his own nervousness.

"All right, but I can't help but remember what he said about him."

"What did he say about him, except that he wouldn't hurt anyone unless Tarzan told him to?" demanded Dick.

"Yes, smarty, but he also said, 'When Tarzan is with him,' but that isn't what I remember most," retorted Doc.

"Well, then, what is it you remember so fine?"

"Tarzan said: 'After all a lion is always a lion!'"

"You would remember something like that!" growled Dick.

"I believe," said Doc, "that I'll just climb this tree for the fun of it."

"Fraidy-cat!"

"Fraidy-cat nothing! I'm not afraid. I just want to practice climbing. You can't ever tell when it will come in handy, especially in the jungle."

"Suppose he doesn't want us to climb?" Dick nodded in the direction of Jad-bal-ja.

"Why shouldn't he want us to climb?" demanded Doc.

"Well, if he's thinking of being a lion, and is hungry, I guess that would be a pretty good reason for him not to want us to climb."

"Who said I could think of things? I never would have thought of anything like that. It took you to do it."

"Oh, any time you weren't thinking of the same thing yourself," scoffed Dick.

"Well, I wasn't thinking it out loud, anyway," retorted Doc.

Dick said no more.

Jad-bal-ja was moving about restlessly. It was quite obvious that he was nervous. His great head erect, his ears up-pricked, he looked off into the jungle in the direction that Tarzan had gone; then he turned and strode a small circle, whining.

Then suddenly the lion's yellow-green eyes fell upon the two boys and he opened his mouth, exposing huge fangs, and voiced a low roar.

"W-what do you suppose he did that for?" whispered Doc.

"Maybe he's just trying to talk to us," suggested Dick.

"I wish I knew whether it was a threat or a promise," said Doc, beginning to feel more and more uncomfortable and painfully uncertain of the future.

"Maybe we had better climb the tree after all," whispered Dick. "Perhaps we could see Tarzan if we climbed high enough."

"You go first," said Doc.

"No," expostulated Dick. "You go first—it was your idea."

"But if he saw me escaping he might go for you," suggested Doc.

"I'll tell you what we'll do," said Dick. "Here are two trees just about the same size. You stroll sort of nonchalant-like over to one of them and I'll say 'climb,' and then we'll both climb as fast as we can. What do you say, shall we do it?"

"I say hop to it and the sooner the quicker," was Doc's answer.

"There! He's looking the other way now. Now's the time!"

The two boys, glancing fearfully over their shoulders, walked slowly toward their respective trees. If they were nervous, who may blame them? A forest lion at large in his grim jungle is a terrifying creature; so terrifying, in fact, that some persons, meeting one in the jungle, have been known to kneel in a paralysis of fear, waiting for the great beast to come and devour them, offering no defense and no resistance.

Jad-bal-ja, hearing the boy's footfalls, turned his fierce eyes upon them. Doc gasped. Dick tried to swallow, but failed. His throat was suddenly dry and parched. They were but a few steps from the trees they had selected and they did not stop. Their greatest difficulty was to restrain a desire to run.

Jad-bal-ja eyed them questioningly, then he started slowly toward them. Now the boys were at the foot of their respective trees.

"Climb!" gasped Dick, and in the instant both were scrambling up the boles of the trees as fast as they could go.

Jad-bal-ja halted in his tracks and watched them. Upon his wrinkled face was an expression that might have been pained surprise, and when the

boys reached the safety of branches that swung high above the ground and looked down they saw the lion squatting upon his haunches staring steadily upward at them.

"There!" cried Dick. "I knew he wouldn't hurt us. He never tried to stop us at all. Golly, but you're sure a fraidy-cat. I'd hate to have Tarzan come back and find us up here."

"All right, if you're so brave, go on down. I don't care who finds me here. I'd rather be up here all in one piece than scattered around down there on the ground," was Doc's reply.

"Aw, shucks, he wouldn't hurt a flea," insisted Dick. "Look at him."

"Maybe he wouldn't, but I am not so unappetizing as a flea."

"You haven't the nerve of one anyway," Dick scoffed tauntingly.

"All right, instead of talking so much, why don't you go on down and play with him?"

"I guess I will."

Doc laughed raucously.

"All right, watch me!" cried Dick, making ostentatious preparations to descend.

Doc watched him intently. Dick slid from the branch upon which he had been sitting, grasped the bole of the tree with both arms and prepared to slide down to the ground.

"Aw, don't, Dick," cried Doc. "Please don't. Better not take any chances."

"All right," said Dick, "if you don't want me to, I won't," and he climbed back onto his branch again, to perch there safely.

"Gee, but it's getting dark," exclaimed Doc. "Do you suppose it's as late as that?"

"It must be the storm that Tarzan said was coming. Yes, look up there!"

Through a break in the dense foliage overhead, black, angry clouds could be seen billowing low above the forest. The gloom of the jungle deepened. The air became very quiet—breathless—as though the heart of

Nature had momentarily ceased to beat. Presently the tree tops bent as though pressed down by a mighty palm. Then they whipped back. The wind shrieked, the trees waved wildly against the racing clouds, the lightning flashed—jagged, blinding lightning—and then the thunder crashed and roared and with it came the rain, not in drops, but in great sheets and gusts, borne on the frothing teeth of the hurricane.

The two boys were separated by a distance of scarce twenty feet, yet they could neither see nor hear one another, though each shouted at the top of his lungs in an effort to assure himself that the other was still safe and sound.

Branches, torn from great trees, hurtled through the air. Patriarchs of the jungle crashed to the earth, carrying lesser trees with them and adding to the horrid pandemonium that reigned supreme.

Dick and Doc clung with difficulty to their perilous perches, each sure that the other was dead and that he would soon join him. It seemed beyond the remotest possibility that any living thing could escape the fury of that titanic Saturnalia.

For an hour the storm raged, and then gradually it abated, but the rain still beat down, the wind still whined and moaned through the stricken jungle and the intense darkness persisted in only a slightly lessened degree.

Shivering with cold, the boys sat with bowed heads, the rain beating upon their naked backs, and waited. What they waited for they scarcely knew or dared to think.

Each boy thought that he was alone. Each was sure that Tarzan had been killed or injured in the terrific storm. Each wondered how he was to find his way alone back to the bungalow.

Dick raised his head and looked hopelessly about. Through the gloom and the rain he looked sorrowfully in the direction of the branch upon which Doc had been sitting when the storm broke. Dimly he discerned a figure hunched up miserably in an endeavor to avoid buffeting from the storm.

"Doc!" he cried.

The figure was electrified to life. It straightened and wheeled about.

"Dick!"

"Gee!" exclaimed Dick. "I thought you were surely gone."

"And I thought you were gone. I yelled my head off at you for an hour."

"I never heard you. Didn't you hear me?" Dick said in amazement.

"No. I guess nobody could hear anything in that awful racket. Say, did you ever hear anything like it?" demanded Doc.

"I should say not, and I don't want to ever again, either."

"What had we better do?" asked Doc. "Do you suppose Tarzan could find us now?"

"He could if—"

"If what?"

"If he is alive."

"Gee, you don't suppose—?" Doc hesitated.

"I don't see how we ever lived through it," said Dick. "Why, the whole forest was tumbling down all around us."

"I'm cold," said Doc.

"I'm nearly frozen," said Dick.

The two boys shivered, their teeth chattering.

"We can't stay here, Dick. We'd die of exposure."

"What'll we do?"

"We've got to keep moving. We've got to keep our blood circulating."

"Do you suppose we could find the way back to the bungalow?" demanded Dick.

"I didn't pay much attention to directions when we came in here," admitted Doc. "I just depended on Tarzan; but we've got to do something. We can't sit here until we die of pneumonia. Let's beat it."

Simultaneously the two boys looked searchingly at the ground beneath them. Then they looked back questioningly at one another.

"Do you see him?" asked Dick.

"No," replied Doc. "Do you suppose he's gone? If not, where is he?"

"He might be hiding in the brush."

"Oh, well," said Doc, "you're not afraid so we might as well go on down."

"I think I'll practice swinging through the trees," said Dick.

Doc grinned. Cold and miserable as he was, he could not help it.

"All right," he agreed, "I'll practice with you. Which way do we go?"

3. THE SUN WORSHIPPERS

COWERING from the storm, twenty frightful men huddled close for warmth, crouching beneath the scant protection of a rude shelter, hastily thrown together at the first warning of the impending deluge.

Matted hair covered their heads and faces, almost concealing their close-set, wicked eyes, and black hair grew no less profusely upon their shapeless bodies, their long, gorilla-like arms and their short, crooked, stubby legs.

They were bent and crooked men with low brows and beast-like faces. Like gnomes or hobgoblins they seemed; but they were not. They were men of a sort, men of a low and degraded type, bearing down through countless ages more of the attributes of the ape-like men from whom we are all supposed to be descended than are apparent in normal men.

These twenty were outcasts from the golden city of Opar, where La, the High Priestess of The Flaming God, reigns supreme, since Cadj, the wicked High Priest, is dead.

They had been the followers of Cadj and traitors all to La, and now, with Cadj dead, they had fled Opar and were wandering the trackless jungle in search of some secluded spot where they might build themselves a new temple.

All night they crouched in the cold and wet, but with the first faint gleam of dawn they stirred, one by one, and looked about them.

Gulm was the first to rise to his feet. In one hand he carried a knotted cudgel. A leather cord about his thick waist supported a crude knife. From beneath beetling brows he glowered about him through the darkness. He turned his face toward the east. The rain ceased. The sky was cloudless.

Gulm kicked those nearest him. "Up," he commanded. "Up and make ready to greet the coming of the Flaming God who brings a new day."

His fellows stirred. One by one they arose, sluggishly, beast-like. Some of them growled almost like animals. The sky in the east grew rapidly

lighter. The Equatorial day was rolling out of the black heavens with all its wonted suddenness. It revealed the hideous twenty—uncouth, filthy. But what is this? It is no gnarled and awful man that lies huddled in the mud at the center of the fetid pack. Its body and its limbs are symmetrical; its skin is white, even through the mud that is caked upon it. Matted hair covers its shapely head, but it is not coarse, black hair—it is fine and silky and blond.

Prodded by some of the creatures near it, it arose, stiffly, painfully—a girl, a little white girl with golden hair.

"Hurry!" commanded Gulm.

Two of the frightful men seized the girl and dragged her from the shelter out into the open. Gulm pointed toward the east, and mechanically, dully, the girl faced the rising sun and stood motionless, almost automatically.

Behind her the twenty sun worshippers knelt in the mud, facing the east, and Gulm led them in a weird, savage chant as the great, red orb of day rose slowly above the unseen horizon.

From the heart of the dense forest they could not actually witness the rising sun, but Gulm timed the matutinal exercise so that it might coincide as closely as possible with the event.

The brief ceremony concluded, the men turned their attention to breakfast. Everything was too water-soaked from the recent rain to permit of fire making and so from dirty loin cloths, bits of raw or half-cooked meat were produced and squatting in the mud, the brutes ate a meager and a cold breakfast.

Gulm, swallowing, turned to one of his fellows to speak.

"How much further, Blk," he demanded, "to the place you found where we may build a new temple to carry on our worship?"

"One march, maybe two," replied the low-browed Blk indifferently.

"It must not be long," said Gulm. "If we do not soon construct a temple to the Flaming God and offer Him a sacrifice, in His anger He will destroy us all—every one of us!"

"Have we not found Him a new high priestess?" demanded another.

"Aye," assented Gulm, "but He must have His sacrifice. The Flaming God must eat and He looks to Gulm, His High Priest, to furnish Him His food, and Gulm looks to you, the lesser priests of the Flaming God, to find and fetch it. With Cadj dead and La turned against the ancient sacrificial customs of the ages, the Flaming God has only us to serve Him. He is very angry. All the hardships that we have endured since we were driven from Opar were but evidences of His displeasure. The storm of yesterday was, I feared, a sign of the termination of His mercy. Gulm believed that we were to be destroyed with all the world; but He has permitted us to live yet a while longer. He has given us another chance. But it was a sign—a sign that we must no longer ignore. The Flaming God must have a sacrifice. If no other can be found it must be one of us!"

His eyes roved savagely about among his fellows—eyes lit with the flaming maniacal fire of religious insanity.

Ulp glanced toward the little girl and jerked his head in her direction.

"Why not she?" he demanded, for he knew that, not being overly popular with Gulm, he might as readily be chosen by the high priest as another if it became necessary to choose a sacrifice from among their own ranks.

"No!" screamed Gulm and leaping upon Ulp he struck him down. "Who dares think harm to the High Priestess of The Flaming God should die."

Ulp scrambled to his feet and ran quickly out of Gulm's reach.

"I did not think harm," Ulp cried; "I but asked a question."

"Ask no more questions," warned Gulm. "No more questions at all."

"No," promised Ulp.

"I shall see that you do not have the opportunity," Gulm assured him, "for if we do not soon find a more suitable sacrifice you will be chosen."

Gulm growled and was silent.

Ulp squatted on his heels in the mud and devoured the remainder of his breakfast. So slightly removed from the lower orders was he that the threat of imminent death did not affect his appetite. However, he did not

wish to die and so his cunning, brutal brain was occupied with muddy schemings for diverting Gulm's dislike from him to some other unfortunate member of the band.

While the brute-men ate so also did the little girl. From a pocket of her torn and dishevelled clothing she took a bit of cooked meat that she had saved from the last meal.

Ravenous, overpowering hunger had long since broken down the last barrier of fastidiousness and like any other starving animal she ate to live, little though her palate relished the cold, tough, unseasoned meat that formed the bulk of her diet.

Even through the dirt and the evidences of hardship and hunger that were written so plainly upon her face and figure it was quite apparent that the little golden-haired girl had been very pretty. Indeed, she was still very pretty, but in a wan, thin, hopeless way that yet suggested the rounding contours, the rosy cheeks, the happy, smiling countenance of another day.

No one, to look at her, could have thought it possible that she had always lived among these hideous men or that she was in any slightest way related to them.

Nor had she always lived among them, nor was she related to them.

For two months they had held her in captivity and, according to their standards, they had treated her well. In no way had they harmed her and they had protected her from the dangers and hardships of the jungle to the best of their abilities and to the extent of their limited knowledge.

They had let no savage beasts attack her, they served her with the choicest of their rough, scant food, they built a shelter for her at night, and during the storm they gathered thick about her that the warmth of their bodies might save her from the harmful results of her exposure to the cold rain.

They did not do these things because of any sentiments of kindness or humanity, since they were not endowed with such; but selfishly for the furtherance of their own ends because they believed that it pleased The Flaming God to be represented on earth by a high priestess and because

they had been taught that this cruel God of theirs would accept no sacrifice except at the hands of a woman, or rather that he preferred to be thus served by a priestess rather than by a priest. Why, they did not know.

During the two months of her captivity they had taught the girl their crude and simple language, which is also the language of the great apes, though the vocabulary of the sun worshippers contains many words that are not in the vocabulary of the great apes.

They had taught her many of the simple duties of her office, leaving the more elaborate temple rites to the time that they should have located a new temple site and built their first altar.

They called her Kla, which is a contraction of the two words meaning New La, and already they worshipped her quite as fanatically as they had worshipped La herself.

The child, for Kla was only that, was no longer actually afraid of these terrible men, for she had learned that they would not harm her, but none the less was she unhappy and miserable among them, pining for her own home and her parents, longing for clean clothing, for the luxury of a bath, for good food and a warm bed; but most of all for the love and companionship and understanding of a people of her own kind—whom she was afraid she would never see again.

She did not hate Gulm or the others, for there had never been any hate in the heart of this little twelve-year-old girl, who was all sweetness and beauty and purity.

If they had searched the world over Gulm and his fellows could scarce have discovered another more fit to be a high priestess than was little Kla, had they been looking for a high priestess of love and charity and humanity; but the devotees of the Flaming God cared nothing for these attributes in their High Priestess and so after all Kla was not at all suited to their purpose, as they must surely discover when the time came that she must take part in some of the more terrible of their religious rites, and it was well for the little girl that she could not foresee all that was to be demanded of her in the days to come.

Breakfast concluded, the party set forth once more in the direction of the new temple site that Blk had discovered and toward which he had been guiding them for several days.

They had proceeded for perhaps an hour or possibly two when Blk, who was in the lead, suddenly halted, giving a signal that sent the entire twenty silently out of sight into the concealing verdure of the surrounding jungle.

Silence reigned. The soaking jungle steamed beneath the Equatorial sun. Faintly, from afar, came the sound of footfalls, but long before he could hear these Blk had known that something was approaching them along the great game trail they chanced to be following at the moment.

Some sense, unknown to the dim faculties of civilized men, had warned the jungle creature.

What was it that came down the game trail toward the twenty frightful men?

4. DANGER AHEAD

DICK and Doc, moving through the great branches of the lower terrace, soon felt the warm blood stirring in their veins and with it a new sense of well being and hopefulness, which, naturally, was soon followed by hunger.

"I feel like some tea and toast and marmalade," said Dick.

They looked at each other and licked their lips.

"And I feel like a stack of buckwheat cakes and maple syrup," said Doc.

"Let's eat, then," said Dick. "Here is some of that stuff that Ukundo gathered for us the morning after we escaped from Galla Galla's village. What was it he called it?"

"I can't remember its name, but it tasted like a mixture of quinine, sugar and castor oil," replied Doc, making a wry face.

"Who cares what it tastes like as long as it's food?" demanded Dick. "We got to eat and that's all there is to it."

"I suppose we have, but, gee, I hate that stuff. I'd rather shoot a harmless little bird or something," demurred Doc.

"You'll have to eat it raw if you do," Dick reminded him. "We could never make a fire in this soggy old jungle."

"No, I suppose not," admitted Doc; "but after what we ate in Galla Galla's prison hut even raw bird would taste good, as long as it was fresh."

Doc's rueful spirits showed in his face.

Dick had climbed to a loftier terrace and was cutting some of the fruit from a swaying branch while Doc, braced in the crotch of two branches below, watched and waited.

When Dick descended the two boys proceeded to eat the rather ill-tasting heart of two of the large fruits that Dick had brought down with him.

"I'll say this doesn't remind me of anything that 'mother used to make'," said Doc.

"It smells like a linseed poultice," laughed Dick. "Or worse!"

"I wish we knew more about the stuff that grows here," said Doc. "There must be lots of things we could eat if we only knew that they were safe."

"If there were some monkeys around we could watch them," said Dick.

"I wonder where they all are." Doc looked about in all directions. "Well, I don't see any and if I did it wouldn't make any difference because I couldn't eat anything more now after eating that nasty stuff. It's taken my appetite away."

"It sure is filling," admitted Dick. "If we could take some of it back to civilization we could make our fortunes."

"How?" asked Doc.

"We could sell it to women who want to reduce. There are about a hundred million fat ladies who want to get thinner and nobody could even commence to guess how much they spend every year trying to reduce. Why, just think of all the customers we would have."

"But how do you know it would reduce them?" demanded Doc.

"That's easy. What makes 'em fat?"

"Eating too much, of course," said Doc.

"Then if they didn't eat they'd get thin, wouldn't they?"

"Sure, but—"

"All they'd have to do would be to eat some of this the first thing in the morning and then they wouldn't want to eat anything more all day," explained Dick; "at least not if they felt the way I feel right now."

"Gee!" exclaimed Doc. "That's a pretty good idea. Let's start a company."

"We've got to get out of here first, though," Dick reminded him.

"Yes, that is the first thing for us to think about," agreed Doc. "What do you say we go down on the ground? We could make better time. After all, we are more used to walking on the ground."

Dick scratched his head. "We're getting so we are pretty good at travelling through the trees," he reminded his cousin, "and it sure is a lot safer up here. It looks pretty rough going down below. I don't see any trail."

"I guess you're right," agreed Doc, "but when we do find a trail running in the right direction I think we'd better go down for a while anyway. We can always take to the trees again if we hear anything."

"The trouble is it might be too late, especially if the thing we heard was a lion springing out of the underbrush onto us."

"Well, let's stick to the trees for a while, then," said Doc, "but it sure makes a fellow tired."

The two boys continued on through the lower terraces of the forest in the direction in which they believed lay the open veldt that stretched away to Tarzan's bungalow. Once they came to a wide game trail leading in the direction they wished to go and as they had seen or heard no sign of dangerous beasts they decided to rest their tired muscles and at the same time increase their speed by following the trail upon the ground for a while at least.

They had been walking along in silence for some time when Doc stopped.

"Dick," he said, "I'm scared. I don't know why, but I just have a hunch that some very grave danger is hanging over our heads."

"What makes you think so?" asked Dick, looking quickly about them in all directions. "Did you see or hear anything?"

"No, I just feel as though something was going to happen—as though something was watching us, and yet it isn't exactly that feeling either. It's sort of a premonition or something. I can't explain it, but I wish we weren't all alone like this."

"Perhaps we'd better take to the trees again," said Dick. "I'll tell the world I feel a lot safer up there than I do down here."

"All right," assented Doc, "I'm willing; and say, let's see how quietly we can go. Maybe we've been making too much noise. Have you ever noticed how silently Tarzan of the Apes moves through the jungle either on the ground or in the trees?"

"Have I? Say he doesn't make any more noise than a butterfly's shadow," said Dick. "Come on!"

With far greater caution now the boys swung to the lower branches and continued their journey. Their eyes and ears were ever alert and they sniffed the air, too, as they had seen Tarzan do, but they were rewarded with no other odors than those of the steaming jungle that had filled their nostrils ever since the rain.

Intermittently they would pause and listen, and satisfied that nothing was amiss, they moved forward.

The leafy foliage beneath them often hid the trail from their eyes and as often hid them from the sight of any animal that might have been on the trail. A wind, stirring among the trees, helped to conceal them, since it gave motion to the foliage and the branches, hiding the motion that the boys imparted as they moved cautiously and silently through the verdure.

Dick, who was in the lead, suddenly halted, raising his finger in a cautionary gesture and laying it upon his lips to enjoin silence. Doc saw him crouch back behind the bole of the great tree through which they had chanced to be passing; he saw the gaze of his cousin directed downward toward the ground.

Doc froze to immobility immediately that he received Dick's warning. He peered downward, but he could see nothing.

What could it be that had quickly aroused Dick's fearful attention? He watched his cousin intently and presently the latter beckoned him to his side, cautioning him to silence with a warning forefinger placed against his lips.

Doc crept forward. Not even Tarzan himself could have moved through the foliage more quietly and skillfully.

Presently Doc was crouching just behind Dick's shoulder.

Without a word Dick pointed downward through the leafy branches. At first Doc saw nothing to arouse excitement—just a tangled mass of undergrowth bordering a wide game trail. Then something moved, ever so slightly, and Doc's attention was riveted upon the thing that had moved. At first it was only something black amidst the greens and browns and yellows of the brush, but presently it resolved itself into a head of hair, tangled, unkempt. Then Doc saw another and another and another as his eyes accustomed to tracing their now familiar lines. They were human heads and beneath the edges of the tangled hair Doc saw an occasional ear, or the tip of a nose.

Once Doc saw a hand—a hand that firmly grasped a sturdy cudgel.

He saw them now upon both sides of the trail and saw that all the heads were turned in the same direction—the direction from which the boys had been coming. There was but one deduction that could be drawn—these creatures, whoever they were, had either heard or seen the boys and were lying in ambush, waiting for them.

Dick and Doc made no sound. They did not even whisper their thoughts or fears to one another. As though by common agreement they remained crouching there in silence, waiting to see what those mysterious watchers would do next.

Each realized that they had been fortunate in not having attracted the attention of a single member of that sinister party to themselves and they were wise enough to know that they might not be so fortunate were they to try to escape from their present position undetected and so they remained quietly where they were.

Not once did a single member of the band beneath them cast a glance upward. Whatever they awaited they expected along the game trail and with the patience of beasts of prey they remained in silent ambush, in no hurry to act.

Doc, always talkative, had never in his life been so anxious to talk. There were a thousand questions and surmises racing through his brain that he wanted to impart to Dick. He wanted so badly to talk, that, as he said afterward, it hurt; but he controlled himself. Perhaps their enforced silence would have been less difficult to bear had they been able to obtain

a better view of some of those twenty frightful men, for had they, they would certainly have shrunk from calling attention to their presence.

It seemed a very long time that they waited there, watching the silent men beneath them, but at last there was a change. A slight rustling of the foliage was apparent and their ears caught hoarse whisperings, though they could distinguish no words.

Then there crawled out into the trail a knotted, crooked man. The mere sight of him almost caused the boys to gasp.

It was Blk. Gulm had sent him off to reconnoiter. Cautiously, slowly, stopping often to listen and sniff the air, Blk moved down the trail until presently he disappeared beyond a turn.

The minutes passed by slowly. The boys waited. Below them the priests of The Flaming God waited. After what seemed a very long time Blk reappeared. He stopped in the trail opposite his ambushed fellows and spoke in low tones whereupon there was much rustling among the foliage as the balance of the twenty stepped out into the trail.

With the twenty frightful men was another creature the sight of which gave the boys such a start of surprise as they did not recall ever having had before in all their lives.

The twenty hideous men were surprising enough in themselves, but the figure of a slender, golden-haired girl among these awesome, brute-like creatures took away the boys' breath and left them stunned.

Who could she be?

5. TO THE RESCUE!

PRECEDED by Blk, the company of sun worshippers moved off cautiously down the trail and with them went the golden-haired girl, walking between two grotesque, low-browed beasts, and a moment later disappeared from the sight of Dick and Doc beyond the same turn in the trail that had first hidden the reconnoitering Blk from their view.

Doc and Dick stood like two statues.

For several minutes neither of the boys spoke. One of the causes of their silence was undoubtedly the result of caution lest they attract the attention of the party to themselves, but the other was amazement induced by the sight of this dainty white girl in such gruesome-looking company.

Dick was the first to break the silence after it seemed quite safe to assume that the men were out of hearing.

"What do you suppose that pretty girl is doing with those awful men?" he whispered.

"She can't possibly be the daughter of one of them," said Doc; "why, they scarcely look like human beings. Did you ever see such terrible-looking creatures? They look more like gorillas than they do like anything human!"

"They were not gorillas, though," said Dick. "They are men all right, but such men! Golly, I'm glad they didn't catch us."

"But they caught her," said Doc.

"Do you suppose she is a prisoner?" asked Dick in alarm.

"She must be. Did you see how one of them walked on either side of her, as though they were afraid she might try to escape."

"What do you suppose they are going to do to her?"

"Maybe they're cannibals."

"They look uglier than Galla Galla's tribe. They might be anything," said Dick with a shudder.

For a few moments the boys were silent, each absorbed in his own thoughts. An entirely new and, to them, unheard-of problem confronted them and each was wrestling with it in his own way. What were they to do? That question kept revolving in the mind of each.

"Listen," said Dick finally, "that girl doesn't belong with such a gang of half-brutes as those fellows are. Maybe they're going to kill her. They certainly aren't taking her along with them for any good. I'll bet they kidnapped her. They may be holding her for ransom or they may be just wild cannibals and are going to eat her. We've got to do something."

"That is just what I've been thinking," said Doc, "but what can we do?"

"I don't know, but we've got to do something," said Dick, scratching his head in perplexity.

"We might follow them," suggested Doc. "Perhaps we could find a chance to rescue her."

"We ought to follow them anyway," agreed Dick, "to see where they take her, and then if we do get a chance to rescue her we'll be there to do it."

"Good old Dick!" exclaimed Doc. "I knew you'd agree."

The question then arose as to whether they should follow along the ground or in the trees and they finally decided that it would be safer to keep to the latter, even though they might have to exert themselves more to keep up with the party.

As they moved back into the forest above the trail taken by the frightful twenty they put behind them all thought of their own safety and welfare, sacrificing their own chances for rescue in the interest of a total stranger; but that was because, being what they were, they could not have done otherwise.

Many generations of brave men lay behind them, men to whom duty meant more than comfort or safety or even life. These two boys did not think of the thing that they were doing as a brave, self-sacrificing, courageous thing to do. They only thought of it as something that they

must do, as each had been reared among people in whom it is almost a hereditary conviction that a man is the natural protector of women and the weak. In their veins coursed the sort of blood that sent the women and the children to the life boats of the Titanic while the men remained on the deck until the great ship took its final dive into the icy waters of the Atlantic.

More rapidly now, but still with utmost caution the two boys followed the spoor of their quarry, their nerves tingling with the thrill of the hunt. They were moving through the trees now with far greater ease and confidence and this resulted in greater speed with less effort, so that it was not long before they came within hearing of the twenty men and their fair captive and shortly thereafter they caught a glimpse of the rearmost member of the party.

For hours they followed them, keeping safely out of sight and ever careful to move as quietly as possible. It was hard, gruelling work, not only because of the physical effort involved but because of the nervous tension that never relaxed even for a moment, and, too, they were hungry. The fruit they had eaten early in the day had been far from sufficient to meet the demands made upon their bodies and by noon they were ravenous, but they never once thought of abandoning their self-imposed mission of chivalry.

About mid-afternoon the twenty frightful men halted in a small natural clearing at the edge of a little brook.

The two boys, hiding amidst the foliage of a nearby tree, watched intently. They saw three of the men depart into the jungle in different directions, while some of the others gathered branches and foliage with which they constructed a crude shelter.

The girl, apparently very tired, had sunk listlessly to the ground, where she sat with bowed head, her chin resting in her cupped hands—a picture of forlorn and hopeless misery. The picture that she presented filled the hearts of the boys with compassion and imbued them with a stern resolve to let nothing interfere with their determination to save her.

"Gee," whispered Doc, "it makes me sick just to look at her sitting there among all those awful men. I never saw anyone look so terribly unhappy. We'll just have to do something."

"Perhaps we'll get a chance to save her tonight," suggested Dick.

"What'll we do with her?" demanded Doc.

"I don't know," replied Dick. "I never thought of that."

"She's nothing but a girl," Doc reminded him. "She couldn't swing through the trees or anything. If we got her away from them they'd catch us all again in no time."

"Maybe if we got her early in the evening we could get far enough away before morning so that they couldn't find us."

"I suppose if we kept to the trees with her, even if she couldn't go very fast, they wouldn't have any way of following our trail," said Doc. "Well, anyway," he added with a sigh, "we got to do it whether we get caught or not. We can't leave her with them and that's all there is to it."

"I'll tell you another thing, Doc," said his cousin; "we've got to eat. If we don't we'll be so weak we shan't be able to get out of here ourselves, let alone carrying the girl along with us. That's something to think about, too!"

"Maybe we can find some more of that nice breakfast fruit we had this morning," said Doc, making a wry face.

"What we need is meat," stated Dick, emphatically. "Being a vegetarian may be all right for some folks but it doesn't go for an Englishman."

"Nor for an American either," said Doc. "Ham or bacon for breakfast—that's me."

"Don't talk about such things," begged Dick. "Golly! I can feel my mouth water."

"We had a nurse once that wanted us to live on raw carrots and turnips," said Doc; "but Dad said it would be cheaper to order a bale of alfalfa and put mangers in the dining room. She got sore, then, and quit. But I agreed with Dad."

"Say," exclaimed Dick, "I've got an idea. They are evidently going to camp here until morning. What do you say we go and hunt for food and then come back? It doesn't look as though they were going to kill her

right away, because if they were they wouldn't be building that shelter for her."

"How do you know it's for her?" asked Doc doubtfully.

"It must be. It's only large enough for one," was Dick's logical explanation.

"That's right," admitted Doc. "Let's start. It may not be so easy to find the sort of food we want."

"And it may not be so easy to kill it after we do find it."

"I can do better with my bow and arrows than I could a few days ago," Doc reminded him, "and you are pretty keen with your spear."

"All right, come on!"

The boys started off at right angles to the trail directly into the forest. Doc drew his hunting knife and cut pieces of bark from the trees through which they passed. He did it as silently as he could.

"What are you doing?" demanded Dick, who was in the lead and had chanced to turn to see what was delaying his cousin.

"I'm blazing our trail so that we can find our way back again," explained Doc.

"Good old Doc!" exclaimed Dick. "I'll say you use your old bean for something besides a hair farm, and how!"

They had proceeded for about half an hour without discovering the slightest sign of game when Dick came to a sudden halt and simultaneously gestured warningly to Doc.

When Dick then pointed ahead, Doc crept cautiously forward and peered across Dick's shoulder.

Just ahead of them they saw the small brook upon which the twenty had made their camp. Further down its course and in a little opening upon the bank stood a small antelope, drinking.

"It's too far for my spear," whispered Dick, "and anyway there is too much foliage around me. I could not get room for a good throw. You'd better try to get it with your bow and arrow."

"It's an awful long shot," said Doc, dubiously, "and, gee, how I should hate to miss."

"Do you suppose we can get any closer?"

Doc thought a moment

"Let's try."

"You go ahead then," said Dick. "I'll wait here. Two of us will make more noise than one."

"Pray for me," whispered Doc, as he started carefully forward.

Leaving his spear behind with Dick, Doc moved cautiously toward the antelope, his bow and an arrow ready for instant use. A gentle breeze that stirred the foliage of the forest blew toward him from the direction of the quarry, carrying his scent spoor away from the sensitive nostrils of the nervous, timid animal.

Closer and closer he crept—a moment more and he would be within easy range. He strove to keep his nerves under control, so much depended upon the accuracy of his aim, upon his stealth, upon his cunning. He knew now how primitive man must have felt as he stalked his food through the primeval forests of a young world while hunger gnawed at his vitals, for Doc stood face to face with one of Nature's first laws—self-preservation.

Now he was ready! He braced himself against the bole of a great tree, his feet firmly planted upon two adjacent branches. Through an opening in the foliage he could see the antelope below him, only a few yards away. He fitted the arrow and at the same instant the antelope leaped into the air in a sudden, swift bound of fright.

Simultaneously the cause of terror burst from a clump of nearby bushes—a frightful, gnarled man swinging a great cudgel about his head. And in the instant that he appeared, in the same instant that the antelope took its first leap for safety, the man-thing hurled the cudgel.

Straight to its mark flew the heavy missile, striking the fleeing animal a terrific blow that felled it, half stunned. Before it could regain its feet the hunter was upon it, his crude knife finishing the work the cudgel had commenced.

At first Doc and Dick were too surprised to do more than stand and stare at the creature who had robbed them of their meat, but presently anger and resentment made themselves apparent. Just as the primitive hunter would have felt under like circumstance, so these two boys felt—that they had been robbed of what rightfully belonged to them.

Perhaps under different conditions they would have realized that the antelope was as much the property of the beast-man as it was their property—even more so since he had slain it—but as it was they reasoned as the primitive man might have reasoned and they reacted quite in the same way that he might have reacted; that is that they wanted to take the kill away from the killer nor were they deterred by any fine ethical considerations from doing so by any means that lay in their power. The thing that deterred them was fear—fear that the beast-man would kill them in defense of his meat.

Thus easily did the veneer of civilization fall away from these two boys the moment they were faced by the necessity of sustaining life in competition with the savage creatures of primitive Nature.

Doc, standing there with his arrow trained upon the priest of the Flaming God, his heart filled with rage and disappointment and hate, had suddenly reverted a hundred thousand years and lived again an instant in the life of some long dead, primordial ancestor.

Aiming at the man's back, just below his left shoulder, Doc bent his bow and at the same instant Dick, who had followed him, laid a hand upon his shoulder.

"Don't!" whispered Dick. "I know how you feel, but—we mustn't do that; not until we are forced to it."

Doc lowered the point of his arrow, standing silent for a moment. "I suppose you are right," he said; "but, gee! you don't know how mad that made me—just as I was going to shoot, too."

"Listen," whispered Dick, "I've got a scheme."

6. THE TWINS' PLAN

BENDING closer to Doc's ear Dick whispered his plan, and as Doc listened his face brightened, his lips stretching into a broad grin.

"Gee!" he said. "That's a great idea, but—do you suppose it will work?"

"Sure it will," Dick assured him; "but we got to hurry. Three of 'em went out to hunt for food—that's plain enough now—and we don't want one of the others to happen along before we get through. You sneak around into that big tree over there and I'll take the one just beyond. We've got to be on the other side of him so that he'll beat it toward his camp."

"If he doesn't beat it toward us," added Doc.

"He won't—you watch. Come on now, get busy," and as he spoke Dick turned and made his way quietly through the trees, skirting the clearing and keeping well out of sight of the enemy, as they now thought of the crooked man, until he had come to the tree he had selected for himself, while Doc took a position in another tree, both of which were on the far side of the sun worshipper in relation to the camp for which he was headed.

Immediately both were in position they fitted arrows to their bows and taking careful aim let the missiles fly. The astonished Oparian, who was about to lift the small antelope to his shoulders, saw an arrow suddenly bury itself in the carcass of his kill, while another passed near him and struck the ground a few feet beyond, quivering erect in the earth.

With a sudden snarl he turned quickly, his eyes searching in the direction from which the shafts had come.

Another arrow passed close to his side, making him move uneasily, and when he turned his eyes in the direction from which he thought it had come, from another direction came another arrow. He saw no enemies, he heard none—only the arrows—and then he did what Dick had been quite certain that he would do.

He ran toward his camp, leaving the antelope where it had fallen.

Dick and Doc waited until he was out of sight, assured themselves as best they might that no others were about and then swung to the ground and hastened to the body of the kill. Quickly they cut off as much of the meat as they could easily carry, gathered up their arrows and took to the trees again.

Following back along the trail that Doc had blazed they stopped at last in a huge tree that lifted its mighty top far above the surrounding jungle. Here Doc suggested that they eat, and climbing far above the floor of the jungle where they were hidden from chance eyes by the foliage beneath them they found a great crotch that would accommodate them both comfortably.

"Golly," exclaimed Dick, "that was easy enough, but—"

"But what?" asked Dick.

"I am terribly hungry and I feel right now as though I could eat anything, but at that I wish we could build a fire."

Dick laughed. "I thought you were the fellow who had wanted to tear the meat from his kill with his strong, white teeth," he reminded Doc.

"That reads all right in a book," said Doc with a sickly grin, "but somehow it is different now."

"Well," said Dick with a sigh, "If we want to live we must eat and we learned from Ukundo and Bulala that it does not pay to be too finicky, so here goes. Better follow my example!"

For a while the boys occupied themselves in silence, satisfying the cravings of ravenous hunger. All about them were the noises of the jungle; the raucous cries of birds of brilliant plumage, the chattering of monkeys, the buzzing and humming of insects. Faintly and from a distance, occasionally, there were borne to them other sounds as of larger animals moving through the underbrush, but from their aerie, screened by gently waving foliage, they saw little or nothing of the authors of these myriad noises, nor were they seen by other than an occasional monkey or bird.

"Gee," said Doc, wiping his mouth with the back of his hand, "that wasn't so bad after all—it was just the idea of it."

"I sure feel stronger already," said Dick. "There is nothing like good old meat."

"It's going to get dark pretty soon," said Doc, "and if we are going to back trail to the camp of those gorilla-men, we had better get started."

Following the trail that Doc had blazed through the trees, the two boys moved cautiously and silently in the direction of the camp of the sun worshippers and their little prisoner.

The shadows of night were rapidly claiming the jungle as Dick and Doc halted, at last, in a tree that stood upon the edge of the clearing where Gulm had pitched his camp.

The twenty frightful men had succeeded in making a fire and the boys looked down with feelings of envy upon the grotesque creatures huddling about the friendly blaze. They saw the little girl seated upon the trunk of a fallen tree, watching the preparation of the meat that one of the hunters had brought into camp. She looked so much like a personification of hopelessness, misery and despair that the sight of her brought lumps into the throats of the two lads while it fortified their determination to rescue her, if it lay within their power to do so.

With the coming of night, there came also the chill of the damp jungle and then, indeed, did the boys envy the crooked men their warm fire, but they could only sit there, cold and miserable, watching and waiting endlessly.

A meal of the sun worshippers was in no sense a ceremonious function and for that the boys were grateful, since it was not lengthened unnecessarily by any formalities.

The raw flesh of the kill hacked off in strips or hunks by each individual in accordance with his own appetite or preference, was impaled upon sticks and held over the fire, which oft times leaped up and seized upon a cooking morsel so that the culinary result was, more often than not, an unappetizing-looking hunk of meat, raw in the center and in places burnt to a crisp on the outside. The portions thus prepared were torn apart by strong teeth and bolted without mastication.

The little girl was more dainty, using a knife that one of the men loaned her for this purpose. She cut strips of the meat into uniform sizes, which she grilled with far greater care than did her companions, and in the eating of her food, as well as in the cooking, she manifested a daintiness that alone would have differentiated her from her companions.

The boys dared not move around for the purpose of stimulating their circulation for fear of arousing the suspicion of the creatures below them, thus putting them upon their guard, and for the same reason they did not converse more than was absolutely necessary and then only in the lowest of whispers. But as all things must end, so eventually the sun worshippers had appeased their hunger, the little girl had crept into the crude shelter they had built for her and the other members of the party had lain down about the fire to sleep, with the exception of one, who sat upon the fallen log tending the fire that it evidently was their intention to keep burning brightly during the night for the purpose of discouraging the too close advances of the great man eaters of the jungle.

"Do you suppose that bozo is going to sit up all night?" Doc asked in a low whisper. "We didn't bargain for that!"

"If he does," replied Dick, "I can't see how in the world we are going to get into their camp and get the girl."

"We might go around on the other side and crawl up to the rear of her shelter," suggested Doc. "Maybe we could get her out that way."

"But suppose she thought we were some animal trying to get her," suggested Dick. "She would be frightened and raise an alarm."

"We could whisper very low to her," said Doc, "and tell her that we are her friends."

"What if she is not an English girl?"

"I never thought of that," said Doc.

"I can't imagine where she came from," mused Dick, "but, of course, among the few whites in this part of Africa there are Belgians, Germans, and French as well as other nationalities besides English, so she might be most anything."

"She doesn't look like an English girl," said Doc. "She might be German though."

"Yes," said Dick, "I thought of that."

"Well," said Doc, "I can talk a little German."

"Sure you can. You can say 'yes' and 'no' and 'good morning'."

"I know the word for 'friend'," said Doc.

"Then, we will have to wait for daylight," said Dick, "so that you can say, 'Good morning, friend!'"

"You think you are funny, don't you?" said Doc.

"I don't feel funny. I only feel cold. I wish that fellow would fall asleep. He sort of looks sleepy."

"I don't think you'd fall asleep if you thought a lion would walk in and grab you if you did," said Doc, "and so I am pretty sure that we can't bank on that fellow sleeping. Whatever we do has got to be done right under his nose while he is awake and if we cannot make the girl understand us in time to head her off from screaming for help, I don't see how we are going to accomplish much."

"The best chance we have," said Dick, after a moment of thoughtful silence, "is to speak to her in French. We each know enough French to get by fairly well and nearly all Europeans, who have had any education at all, have at least a smattering of French."

"I guess you are right at that," agreed Doc, "and now that we have settled that matter, why not get busy. It will not be any easier an hour from now, or two hours from now, or any other time than it is right this minute."

"That suits me," said Dick, "but let's plan the thing out carefully before we start," and for a few minutes the boys crouched in earnest, whispered conversation.

7. IN THE NICK OF TIME

ULP sat upon the fallen tree gazing into the fire which had lighted the surrounding jungle with its leaping, fitful flames. His black shadow, huge and grotesque, danced weirdly against the shelter in which Kla, the little unwilling high priestess of the sun worshippers, lay wide-eyed and miserable. She could not accustom herself to the terrors of the jungle nights. She knew that great hunting beasts prowled through the black shadows.

The spine-chilling scream of the leopard and the roar of the lion were as terrifying tonight as they had been the first night that she had heard them, nor could she ever entirely allay her fear of the frightful men into whose clutches she had fallen.

Over and over in her mind she revolved the same futile, hopeless plans for escape that she had conjured a thousand times and a thousand times abandoned, and yet, again, they were in the forefront of her thoughts as she lay watching the shadow of Ulp leaping and dancing against the frail wall of her shelter, and Ulp gazed into the fire, letting his own thoughts revolve in his muddy brain. For the most part they were thoughts of fear and hate, and the object of both was Gulm, for Ulp knew that Gulm did not like him and that if a suitable sacrifice was not soon found, it might more likely be Ulp who would be permanently extinguished by the sacrificial knife than any other of the company.

Ulp was hideous, grotesque, sullen, taciturn, ignorant, vindictive, usually half-starved, always entirely uncomfortable from heat or cold or vermin. Life did not seem to offer much to Ulp and yet he clung as tenaciously to it and loved it and nursed it with a fervor quite equal to that of humanity's most favored creature.

In other words, Ulp did not wish to die, and as he sat there upon the log with the firelight playing upon his crooked, hairy body and his ugly, hairy face, he was groping through his turbid brain for some plan to thwart Gulm's bloody intentions toward him.

If he could only find some other sacrifice that would be acceptable to The Flaming God, he knew that Gulm would be satisfied, since naturally the high priest did not wish to weaken the numerical strength of his party by offering its members to The Flaming God unless there was no alternative, but it seemed to Ulp, not even remotely possible that he might discover a substitute, since Gulm avoided the haunts of the natives, knowing full well that his small party of twenty, illy armed as they were, would stand no chance against the black warriors of the interior.

But there was another possibility that loomed large in Ulp's mind and this was based upon his belief that The Flaming God found no sacrifice acceptable unless it was offered to Him through the medium of a sacrificial knife, wielded by the high priestess. Therefore, he reasoned, if there was no high priestess, there would be less likelihood that a sacrifice would be offered to his hungry deity. But how to dispose of the little high priestess without bringing suspicion and punishment upon himself—that was the question. He turned and glared at the shelter, beneath which lay the new La. In the distance, a lion roared. How fortunate it would be, thought Ulp—at least how fortunate for him—if Numa the lion, hungry and searching for food, should accidentally be led to the rear of the shelter of the high priestess.

He thought this matter over seriously and he thought of a wonderful story that he could tell to Gulm in the morning after Numa had come and carried little Kla away.

While he was thinking these thoughts and hoping this hope, two figures descended from a tree at the edge of the clearing and crept stealthily through the brush toward a point upon the opposite side of the camp from where Ulp sat ruminating.

Again from the black jungle roared the thunderous voice of the lion. It was nearer now and Ulp almost thrilled at the suggestion it bore to him of the possible fulfillment of his prayer.

Ulp was not the only one who heard the voice of the king; little Kla heard it and lay stark and trembling on her bed of grasses. The two figures creeping through the brush heard it and came to a sudden halt, huddling close together beside the reassuringly thick trunk of a great tree.

"Golly," whispered Dick, "that last roar sounded pretty close."

"It sounds too darn close to suit me," replied Doc, his voice trembling the least little-bit from the excitement and the nervous tension of the moment. "He must be headed this way."

"Let's shin up this tree for a few minutes," suggested Dick, "until that fellow has gone on about his business."

"You're on," whispered Doc, and the two clambered with the agility of young monkeys in the lower branches of the tree beneath which they had momentarily stopped.

Ulp arose slowly from the log upon which he had been sitting and turned until he faced the direction from which the voice of Numa had come. Between it and him lay the shelter of little Kla, the high priestess of The Flaming God, and upon this shelter his plotting eyes fell.

Ulp's brain was not developed for purposes of rapidity of thought, but he had been thinking of this possibility which now confronted him for some time and the decision that he reached now was not a sudden one, but rather the natural outcome of the slow processes of his brain.

If he was not equipped to think quickly, he could at least act quickly and now he did so. Stooping, he crept into the shelter beside the girl. Kla sat up, a scream of terror trembling upon her lips, but she did not utter it as Ulp's words reassured her.

"Do not be afraid, Kla," he said, "I have come to help you."

"What do you want?" asked the girl. "How can you help me?"

"You do not want to remain with us; you would like to escape and go back to your own people. Is that not true?" asked the man.

"Yes," admitted the girl.

"Then Ulp will help you. Ulp hates Gulm, who would kill him. Ulp will take you away. He will not harm you. He will take you back to your people. He will do it this very night."

"Oh, Ulp, if you only will!" whispered the girl fervently.

"Come!" said Ulp, and he commenced to tear a hole in the rear of the shelter.

"Why are you doing that?" asked Kla.

"I shall take you out this way and hide you in the jungle," replied the man, "and then I shall come back and tell Gulm that a lion broke into the shelter and got you and Gulm will be very angry, and I shall take my cudgel and say to him that I am going out into the jungle to get you away from the lion, but instead I shall join you and we will go away and Gulm will think that the lion has devoured us both. If he thinks this, he will not follow us and so we shall be safe."

Little Kla believed that Ulp was sincere in all that he said to her and so she accompanied him willingly through the opening that he had made in the rear of the shelter, and together they walked to the edge of the clearing, stopping beneath a great tree.

"Wait here," said Ulp, "I shall be gone but a short time."

"I heard a lion roar," said the girl. "I am terribly afraid."

"Do not be afraid," said Ulp. "The lion that roars is lying upon his kill. He will not hunt again until that is devoured. It may be one day; it may be two days before he will be hungry."

"How do you know?" asked Kla.

"I know the language of Numa," replied Ulp. "That lion was eating. He was warning the other beasts of the jungle to keep away from his kill."

"Do not be gone long," begged the little girl pitifully.

"Whatever you do," Ulp admonished her, "do not move; not even if you think a lion is coming near. Stand very still so that he may not hear you."

"I shall try to," replied the girl, but her voice shook with fear.

Ulp returned quickly to the camp and sat upon the log again. He did not wake Gulm as he had promised. He only waited until he should hear certain noises from back there under the great tree that stood at the edge of the clearing. There would be screams and growls and then he would wake Gulm and tell him what had happened.

Once more the voice of Numa stilled the other voices of the jungle. Ulp knew that it was nearer—very near, indeed. Kla heard it and went cold with terror, for to her it sounded almost at her side and yet the lion was not quite so near to her as that, but he was coming nearer. Already he had caught the scent of the flesh of men and now he moved silently, stealthily through the jungle, nor did he raise his voice in warning again.

The dancing beast fire of the twenty frightful men cast a glow even to the furthest extremities of the clearing, invoking many grotesque, shadowy figures so that at first Dick and Doc were not positive that what they saw was really two figures coming from the camp toward the tree in which they had taken temporary refuge. It might only be more of the shadows that moved constantly and fitfully as the flames rose and fell.

At length these shadows took on forms too definite to permit of further doubt and the boys saw that one was a crooked man and that the other was the little captive girl.

They grasped their spears more tightly and both were ready for any eventuality as Ulp and Kla stopped directly beneath them.

Ulp was very near death that moment for two spears were poised above him and had he offered any harm to little Kla, both would have been buried deep in his hairy body.

The boys heard the conversation that passed between Ulp and Kla, but could understand no word of it and they were mystified when they saw the man return to camp, leaving the girl standing beneath the tree.

A moment later the lion roared and it seemed to both boys that he must be very close to them and to the unprotected girl standing in a huddle on the ground beneath them.

"Gee," whispered Doc, "we have got to get her or that lion will."

Kla heard a movement in the tree above her. What could it be? She knew that leopards often sprang upon their prey from the lower branches of the trees, and her little heart stood still.

There was a rustling and a scraping and two bodies alighted upon the ground beside her. The girl shrieked as they seized her.

"We are friends," whispered Dick in French; and then to Doc. "Quick, get her up. I believe the lion is coming."

Doc sprang back into the tree, clinging to a lower limb, and as Dick handed the girl up toward him, he seized her by the arm and dragged her upward. Then Dick clambered to his side and helped him, but it seemed to the two boys that they would never get the frightened, screaming girl pulled high enough from the ground to be safe.

They heard a sudden crashing in the underbrush close by and an instant later a great lion leaped into the clearing beneath them. He looked upward and then he sprang, his mighty talons seeking to seize one of them and drag him down, but by this time the boys had succeeded in dragging the little girl out of reach and Numa fell back baffled and angry.

Once again his thunderous roars shattered the silence of the jungle, and this time it was a roar of baffled rage.

Ulp, seated upon his log, hearing the girl scream and the angry roaring of the lion, smiled to himself. Then he rose and ran hurriedly to Gulm, shaking the high priest by the shoulder.

"Awaken, Gulm!" he cried.

Gulm sat up, startled.

"What is happening, Ulp?" he growled.

"The Flaming God came to the camp of Gulm and took Kla away with Him," cried Ulp excitedly.

"What words are these?" demanded Gulm, leaping to his feet and running with frantic speed toward the shelter.

"They are true words," insisted Ulp. "The Flaming God came himself and the light was so strong that it blinded the eyes of Ulp. With one hand, He tore away the rear of Kla's shelter, and with the other He gathered her from the ground and bore her off into the jungle. Kla screamed and a lion roared and the light of The Flaming God went out, and all was quickly silent."

Gulm looked skeptically at Ulp.

"You saw The Flaming God with your own eyes?" he demanded.

"Yes," admitted Ulp.

"What did He look like?" demanded Gulm in abrupt skepticism.

"I saw only the light. It was so blinding that I covered my eyes with my palm."

"Then, how do you know that it was The Flaming God?" asked Gulm.

"I heard Him speak," replied Ulp.

"And what did he say?"

"He said, 'I am The Flaming God. I have come for Kla, my high priestess, to take her to my temple in the skies. There I have many offerings. There upon my altar, shall Kla give them up to me.'"

Gulm grunted.

"Was that all he said?" he asked.

Ulp had never before enjoyed the thrill of unleashed imagination. He was thoroughly enjoying his interview with God and he felt, as doubtless have many prophets, that revelations might just as well suit one's personal needs as the contrary.

"Oh, yes," he said, "the Flaming God spoke directly to Ulp. He gave him a message for Gulm."

"And what was that message?"

"He said that Gulm was to build a new temple, but that he was to offer no sacrifices until The Flaming God should come in person and demand them."

During this conversation Gulm had crawled into the shelter that had been erected for Kla and found that she was gone and that there was, indeed, a large hole in the rear wall.

When he came out, he stood erect and scratched his head.

"I thought, Ulp, that you had lied to me, but I see now that you have told me the truth for, indeed, there is the hole that The Flaming God made when he stole the high priestess."

8. THE TARZAN TRIO

CROUCHING in the tree above the angry lion, the boys sought to allay the fears of the terrified girl, who was now sobbing hysterically.

"Do not be afraid," said Doc, soothingly. "We do not intend to harm you."

He had forgotten about his intention to speak to her in French, but Dick had not and he repeated Doc's assurances in that language.

The girl appeared to be attempting to stifle her sobs that she might speak to them. Her lips formed inarticulate words, but her gasping sobs cut short what she was about to say.

"Now, now," said Dick, patting her shoulder, "try to stop crying. You are safe with us." He spoke very slowly and deliberately, searching for the right words and phrases in French.

"I guess," said Doc, "that even if she is French, she might not be able to understand that you are trying to speak her language."

"Well, suppose you try it then, smarty," snapped Dick, "although I never saw you carrying away any medals for French at school."

"I couldn't do any worse than you have," said Doc. "If we hadn't agreed to talk French to her, I might have thought you were speaking Chinese."

"That is because you do not know good French when you hear it," replied Dick.

The girl was slowly mastering her emotions, her sobs were becoming less frequent and presently she was able to speak.

"Who are you?" she asked in English.

The boys were dumbfounded.

"Do you speak English?" asked Dick.

"Yes," replied the girl, "but who are you and what are you going to do with me?" She spoke in the precise English that educated foreigners use.

"I am glad you are English," said Dick. "I was afraid you could not understand us."

"I am not English," said the girl, "but I speak English. Who are you?"

"I am an English boy," said Dick, "and my cousin is an American. You need not be afraid of us. We saw you with those men this morning and we were sure that they had kidnapped you."

"Yes," said Doc, "and we have been following all day hoping to get a chance to be of some assistance to you—and save you if possible."

The girl commenced to cry again—softly now, for her hysteria had passed.

"Please don't cry," said Dick. "I tell you that we will not hurt you."

"I am crying because I am happy," said the girl. "I thought that there was no hope for me and now you have come—how can I ever thank you?"

"You do not have to thank us," Doc assured her, "and anyway you may be as badly off with us as you were with those men, for we have not been in the jungle very long."

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Doc means, I guess," said Dick, "that sometimes we have trouble getting food, as we are not exactly sure what is safe to eat and we have not lived this kind of a life long enough to be very good at hunting, but we will do our best to feed you and protect you while we are finding our way home."

"Where is your home?" she asked.

"We are visiting Tarzan of the Apes," replied Dick with a touch of pride in his voice.

"Oh!" exclaimed the girl, "everyone knows about Tarzan of the Apes. I never have seen him, but my father has told me that he is a good man."

"What is your name?" asked Doc.

"Gretchen," replied the girl.

"How did those fellows get hold of you, Gretchen?" asked Doc.

"I went out for a walk in the forest one day," she replied, "and I must have gone too far from the mission for when I tried to find my way back, I became confused and, I suppose, I wandered in the wrong direction. I was out all night alone and I was terribly frightened, and the next day these men found me and took me with them. No one can ever know how terribly afraid I was, but they did not harm me, and after a while I became a little bit used to them so that I did not mind them so much, but still I think I should always have been afraid of them. They are such frightful men."

"What were they going to do with you?" asked Dick. "Were they holding you for ransom? They look like kidnappers, or something low like that."

"No, they are sun worshippers and they made me their high priestess. They told me that their own high priestess, who is a white girl, had turned against their religion and driven them from the temple. They were searching for a place to build a new temple when they found me and they thought that The Flaming God had sent me to them."

"Golly," said Dick, "won't they be sore when they find you are gone and learn that we have stolen you away from them?"

"I guess they wouldn't do much to us if they caught us," said Doc.

"You must be sure that they never catch you," said the girl. "They make human sacrifices to their god and for a long time they have been hoping to find someone to sacrifice."

"Gee," said Doc, "I guess we had better get out of here."

"We'll have to wait until that old lion goes away because now that we have Gretchen with us we cannot travel through the trees. We shall have to go upon the ground."

"Maybe she could go in the trees. Could you, Gretchen?" asked Doc.

"I guess I could with a little help," she said. "I was always climbing trees around the mission and Papa was always scolding me for being a tomboy."

"Fine!" exclaimed Dick. "We think it's a lot safer in the trees than it is upon the ground and we can go pretty fast now."

"I'll try it all right," said Gretchen. "I wouldn't want to be a nuisance."

"Then I believe we better try to get away now," said Doc. "That fellow that brought you out here awakened someone else in the camp. See them? One of them is crawling into your shelter. If they come out here to look for you they might find us."

"Ulp said that he would come back for me. He was going to take me home to my people," said the girl in explanation.

"Then why did he leave you alone out here under the tree?" demanded Dick.

"He said he was going back to tell Gulm a story that would throw him off the track so that we would have time to get away."

"Would you rather wait and go with him, then?" asked Doc.

"No, I am afraid of him. He is a terrible man, but I was willing to risk anything for the chance to escape."

"I watched him when he went back to camp," said Dick, "and he did not go then and wake anyone up. He went to a log and sat by the fire until a lion roared and then when I looked again, after we had pulled you up in the tree, I saw that he had gone to awaken someone else."

"It was an awful dangerous thing," said Doc, "to leave you out here alone on the ground with that lion roaring around."

"He said that the lion would not harm me," said the girl, "that it was lying on its kill, feeding, and would not be interested in me."

"Lying nothing," snapped Dick. "I do not know much about lions, but I'll bet my shirt that lion was hunting. We could hear his voice coming nearer every time he roared."

"Maybe he wanted the lion to get you," suggested Doc. "Those fellows look mean enough to do just about anything."

"And they are terribly mean," said the girl. "They are worse than beasts."

"Well, I'll bet he wanted you killed for some reason," said Dick, "because he didn't do a thing about coming back and he must have heard the lion roar when he sprang for you, and he must have heard your scream."

"What we ought to do is to get out of here right away," said Doc. "We can do our talking later—when we're in a safe place."

"Come on, then," said Dick, and slowly the three made their way through the trees, the two boys helping and supporting the girl.

It was very slow work in the dark, but because of the lion they did not dare come to the ground, and because of their proximity to the camp of the sun worshippers they dared not remain until morning. They knew that if they could get even a short distance away they might be safe and so they crept slowly through the night until, finally, the first ray of dawn tinged the eastern sky.

When the daylight finally came the boys saw the girl scrutinizing them very closely and she seemed pleased with the result of her examination of them. They had stopped again to rest as they had frequently during the night; this time in a great old patriarch of a bower in the jungle, festooned with moss and hung with great creepers.

It was here that full daylight came upon them and the girl looked into the faces of the boys and smiled with gladness.

"I am happy," she said. "I thought that I should never be happy again. You cannot imagine how terrible it was to be with those frightful men and how good it is to be with people of my own kind, where I feel secure."

"Well," said Doc, "we are glad that you are happy, though I am afraid you will have to stretch your imagination a lot if you intend to keep on thinking you're happy."

"Why?" asked the girl.

"Because, in the first place, you may get awfully hungry with us, and, in the second place, there is no telling how long we shall be obliged to roam around the jungle."

"Why may we have to stay in the jungle a long time?" she asked.

"Because we are lost," admitted Doc.

Gretchen laughed aloud then.

"What makes you laugh?" asked Dick.

"Oh, because it struck me as being very amusing that my rescuers are now in need of help, being lost themselves," she replied.

"Well, it isn't our fault," said Dick, "and if you would rather go back with those other men—"

"Oh, no!" she exclaimed. "You know I wouldn't want to do that. I did not mean to make fun of you, but it is funny, isn't it?"

"Well, I guess it is," admitted Doc ruefully, "but, after all, being lost isn't the worst of it."

"Why, is there something you haven't told me?" she asked.

"No," Doc assured her. "We told you all right. It is the question of food."

"Do not let that worry you," said the girl. "I have lived in the jungle nearly all my life. My father is a missionary and a great lover of nature. He taught me ever so many things about the flora of the jungle. I know what is safe to eat and what is not safe, so we shall not have to worry a great deal about food. We shall get enough to keep us alive at least, even if it is not fit for a king."

"Do you see anything around here that we could eat?" demanded Dick.
"We are both about starved to death."

"Yes, there are fruits and vegetables and eggs within fifty feet of us; at least I see birds' nests."

Following Gretchen's directions the boys brought the fruits and roots that she indicated and from several nests they gathered enough eggs to make out a fairly satisfactory breakfast.

9. THE AMBUSH

AS the new day broke, Gulm and the lesser priests finished their meager breakfast and set forth again upon the march to the new temple site that Blk had discovered and toward which he had been guiding them.

With the passing of the hours since the disappearance of Kla, Gulm had had time to consider Ulp's story more carefully and he found that with sober reflection, certain vague suspicions insisted upon obtruding themselves upon his thoughts. Perhaps this may partially have been due to his dislike of Ulp as well as to the fact that the occurrence had upset all his plans for perpetuation in a new location the age-old rituals and ceremonials of his cult, which depended primarily upon the existence of a ruling high priestess whose word would be law to the lesser priests—and a white priestess would awe them.

In emulation of Cadj, the dead high priest, who had ruled Opar through La, he had proposed ruling the new city that he was about to found through the new La.

The Flaming God or, perhaps, and this he was more inclined to believe, a lying Ulp had set all his plans at naught. The more he gave thought to the matter the less probable it seemed that The Flaming God would appear in person to a lesser priest rather than to Gulm himself, and so it was a surly, suspicious Gulm that led his followers upon the trail set by Blk.

The Tarzan twins, tired though they were, did not dare to stop for a long rest until they had put more distance between themselves and the sun worshippers and so, their hunger satisfied, they set out again in the direction toward which, they believed, lay the open veldt and the home of Tarzan.

Gretchen, though very tired, fought bravely to keep pace with the boys that she might not prove a burden to them, but it was necessary for one of both of them to steady and help her through the trees with the result that their progress was slow—so slow that both Dick and Doc soon realized that if the sun worshippers were pursuing them, their chances for escape were hopeless.

"Gee," said Doc, "this old jungle must be as large as the whole state of New York. It seems to me as though we ought to be coming to the end of it pretty soon."

"Are you sure you are going in the right direction?" asked Gretchen.

Doc shook his head.

"That is just the trouble," he admitted. "We think we are going in the right direction, but we do not know for sure."

"You see," explained Dick, "we came into the jungle with Tarzan and neither of us paid any attention to direction. Then Tarzan went away and that terrible storm came and the first thing we knew we were all turned around and were not very sure of any directions, except up and down."

"And then," said Doc, "I am pretty sure that when we are going through the trees it is impossible for us to go in a straight line, and as more than half of the time we never see the sun, even when it is shining, there is nothing to guide us."

"You could probably get out all right if it were not for me," said Gretchen.

"Don't say that," said Dick, gallantly. "On the contrary, we might starve to death before we found the way out if it were not for you."

"I am glad that I can be of some help," said Gretchen, "but I know what boys think of girls—I have two brothers."

"Well," said Doc, candidly, "I never did think a girl was much good for anything like this, but I sure have changed my mind now. Why, you are just like a boy the way you climb and everything."

"And you know so much about the jungle, too," said Dick. "I am awfully glad we found you."

"You are not half as glad as I am," said Gretchen. "It makes me frightened all over every time I think of Gulm and the others and the terrible things they talked of and the horrible plans they were making against the time that their new temple could be built."

"What were they going to make you do then?" asked Doc.

The girl shuddered.

"I know that those creatures offer human beings in sacrifices to their god," she said, "and I, as their high priestess, was to have made the offering—"

"They were going to make you kill people?" demanded Doc in an awestruck voice.

The girl nodded.

"What horrible creatures!" exclaimed Doc.

For a time now they moved on in silence and always it became more and more apparent to the boys that the girl had almost reached the limit of her endurance. She could not stand the ordeal much longer.

"Here is another game trail," said Dick, who was in the lead. "It is running in the same general direction that we are going. I think that we should go down to the ground and take it easy for a while."

"We can make much better time on the ground," said Doc.

"And just as soon as we think it's safe, we can find a good place to hide and get some rest," added Dick, in approval.

"Whatever you say," said Gretchen, wearily as they made their way downward.

The boys assisted her to the ground and the three moved off along the broad, well-marked trail which wound among the jungle growth ahead.

All three of them found that the change was restful and with their increased speed their spirits rose—they were quite as happy as though they were going in the right direction, which they were not, for Doc had been right when he said that they could not move through the trees in a straight line. They had made a great circle and when they came down into the game trail, they moved off into the direction from which they had come.

But such is the confidence of youth that they even laughed occasionally as they plodded, chatting, through the leafy aisles of the forest.

Blk, a few paces in advance of Gulm and the lesser priests, stopped abruptly, raising a warning hand. Gulm listened, straining his ears until

they appeared almost to prick up like those of a beast. Plainly to his ears, though faintly, came the sound of voices and a few notes of laughter.

Turning quickly, Gulm gave a signal to the others and as if by magic, the twenty frightful men melted into the surrounding brush.

Dick stopped and looked back at Doc, who had fallen behind.

"What are you doing?" he asked.

"Gathering some of this grass to fasten my spear head tighter," replied Doc. "It has come loose. Go ahead, I'll catch up."

"Don't get too far behind," said Dick.

Without looking back again, being absorbed in making their way, Dick and Gretchen started off again along the trail, while Doc followed behind winding the tough, fibrous jungle grass securely about the split end of his spear shaft into which the spear was fitted.

Occupied with his work, he walked more slowly than he realized, falling farther and farther behind his companions.

Dick and Gretchen plodded steadily onward. Perhaps they were encouraged and elated because the easy going seemed to presage an early release from the forbidding gloom of the jungle.

Dick recalled that Tarzan and Doc had entered the jungle with the golden lion upon just such a trail, and because he hoped so much he was willing to believe that this was, indeed, the same trail that they had traversed once before with the ape man and Jad-bal-ja.

"Do you know," he said to Gretchen, "that this is about the first time since we were lost that I have felt really certain that we are on the right trail and that our troubles are about over?"

"I hope you are right," said Gretchen, and then she voiced a little cry of terror and turned and seized his arm.

"Oh, Dick, look!" she cried, and at the same moment the twenty terrible men rose from the underbrush all about them.

Blk seized Dick and disarmed him, while another grasped Gretchen and tore her away from her companion.

Down the trail behind them, Doc heard Gretchen's cry and the guttural voices of the gorilla-men. "Dick!" he cried, "Oh, Dick!" and started at a run along the trail in pursuit of them.

Dick thought quickly. He realized that they were helpless prisoners and that if Doc was permitted to run into the ambush no good could be accomplished by it, since he, too, would be immediately taken prisoner and disarmed.

"Go back, Doc! Go back! The sun worshippers have got us. You can help us better if they do not catch you, too. Take to the trees."

"Quick," cried Gulm to his fellows. "There are more of them. Go and catch them."

Instantly a half dozen of the lesser priests started at a run along the trail in the direction from which Doc's voice had come. One of them, fleetest than his fellows, caught a glimpse of Doc as he swung into the lower branches of an overhanging tree, and ape-like the priest followed.

Doc, already close to physical exhaustion, fled as rapidly as he could, but at each backward glance he realized that the powerful gorilla-man was overhauling him.

It would soon all be over. In another moment the creature would be upon him, either to strike him down with his heavy cudgel or to take him back a prisoner and a prospective sacrifice.

Like a cornered beast, Doc turned at bay. He stood in the branches of a great tree, his feet firmly planted upon the rough bark of two mighty limbs, his back against the huge hole.

The gnarled man was swinging toward him. The little, red-rimmed, close-set eyes were glaring through the matted hair that covered the bestial face. The thick lips were parted, revealing fighting fangs, only a trifle less formidable than those of a gorilla, and from the creature's throat rumbled low, growling sounds meant to intimidate his victim.

Doc whipped an arrow from his quiver and fitted it to his bow. The gorilla-man, sensing his intentions, voiced a challenging roar and swung his cudgel as though to hurl it at his foe, but his gesture of defense came too late.

The bow string twanged and the shaft sped straight to its mark.

With a loud blood-curdling scream, the lesser priest grasped the feathered tip of the arrow where it protruded from his breast, and toppled a moment upon the great bough to which he had leaped and then, slumping into sudden collapse, lunged head foremost to the ground below.

10. FILLED WITH DESPAIR

A HAGGARD white man, accompanied by a score of blacks, plodded doggedly along a jungle trail. His clothing was torn and soiled; his flesh scored by many a relentless thorn. Great dark circles were beneath his eyes—eyes that were filled with the anguish of spiritual torture and hopelessness.

Two blacks, who moved in advance of the balance of the party, halted for a momentary rest, and the others, closing up, joined them.

"Are there no signs, Natando?" asked the white man of one of the blacks who had been in the lead of the long procession.

"No, Bwana," replied Natando, "since the great rain we have seen no tracks."

"Up until then we followed them easily," said the white man. "During the rain they must have turned in a new direction. Perhaps we had better retrace our steps until we come upon the tracks again. We cannot go through this jungle aimlessly."

"Look!" whispered one of the Negroes in a low, affrighted voice.

He was pointing his arm ahead of them along the trail.

All eyes turned in the direction indicated by the trembling forefinger of the black.

Just ahead of them, majestically conspicuous in a frame of leafy verdure, where the trail turned from view, they saw a great black-maned forest lion surveying them.

The white man and four or five of the others who were armed with rifles cocked them. In the jungle, one has to be always prepared.

"Do not shoot," said the white, "unless he comes toward us. If we wound him, he will charge, but if we do not fire, he may go away."

They stood thus for a moment, the lion watching them intently, and then, to the amazement of the little party, an almost naked white man

appeared from beyond the turn in the trail and stopped at the lion's shoulder.

The man, too, eyed them in silence for a moment, and then he raised his hand with its palm toward them and addressed them in one of the more common Bantu dialects.

"Put down your rifles," he said, "I am Tarzan of the Apes."

With a sigh of relief, the white man and his followers lowered their weapons as Tarzan, with Jad-bal-ja at heel, approached them.

"Who are you?" he asked, stopping in front of the white man.

"I am Doctor Karl von Harben, a missionary from the Urambi country," replied the white man. "I am a man of peace."

"I have heard of you, Doctor," said Tarzan, "and of the good work you are doing among your people. What brings you to my country?"

"A great misfortune," replied von Harben. "Two months ago my daughter was abducted. At first we thought that she had wandered into the forest and been killed by some wild beasts, but after days of searching we found her trail and saw that she was in the company of a band of men, or at least I assume that they are men, though their footprints slightly resemble those of gorillas. However, we know that they made fires and cooked their food, and so I assume that they are members of some race lower in the scale of evolution than are true men. You can imagine my fears."

Tarzan nodded and listened silently as the man went on with his story.

"It was some time after the abduction that we found their trail and as they moved quite as rapidly as we were able to, we could not overtake them, and then a great storm obliterated all signs of their spoor, nor have we been able to pick it up since," the missionary concluded.

"We are on similar missions then," said Tarzan, "for I am searching for two boys who are lost in the jungle. Two days ago I left them, to investigate a scent spoor that had aroused the suspicions of my lion, leaving him to guard the boys. Before I discovered the cause of his nervousness, the storm broke and when I returned to the spot at which I

had left the boys, they had disappeared, nor have we been able to pick up their spoor since, as they must have moved off through the trees while it was still raining. It is very possible that the scent spoor that disturbed Jad-bal-ja came from the party that abducted your daughter, since it was obvious to me that he scented some creature whose spoor was entirely unfamiliar, or else that of an enemy. He would not have reacted as he did to the scent spoor of any creature native to this part of the jungle."

"Perhaps it was us whose scent he caught," suggested von Harben.

"That is possible," replied Tarzan; "yet I rather doubt it, since we have been cognizant of your presence for some time and have been coming up wind along your spoor, yet at no time has he shown the nervous excitability that he did two days ago when he first caught the scent that aroused him."

"Let us join forces," said von Harben, "and search together for the two boys and my little girl."

"If Jad-bal-ja and I cannot find them," replied Tarzan, "They cannot be found. I can see from your appearance that you are upon the verge of exhaustion. A mile from here there is an open grove in the forest through which runs a small stream. Go there then with your people and make camp and rest while Jad-bal-ja and Tarzan search for your daughter."

"But can we not help?" insisted von Harben.

Tarzan shook his head.

"All that you might do is to follow the trails and you do not know which trail to follow to find your daughter. If the scent spoor was strong in your nostrils, you could not recognize it, and then when Tarzan and Jad-bal-ja had found her they would have to search again for you. No, make camp as I have told you and remain there until you hear further from me. As Jad-bal-ja makes his way upon the ground through the underbrush where there are no trails, Tarzan of the Apes travels through the branches of the trees. No scent spoor, however faint, may escape them. We shall make a great circle, Jad-bal-ja going in one direction, Tarzan of the Apes in the other, and all that lies within that circle shall be known to one or the other. Thus in a day we shall cover a territory that you could not search carefully in weeks."

"Perhaps you are right," said von Harben. "I shall do as you say, but at least my prayers for your success shall accompany you."

The ape man turned to the great lion and spoke a few words that neither black men nor the white could understand. The great cat turned and with lowered head entered the underbrush, while Tarzan sprang to an overhanging limb and in an instant the two had vanished from the sight of von Harben's party quite as though they had dissolved into thin air.

Gulm wasted no time in further effort to capture Doc, but leaving the dead priest where he had fallen, pressed forward toward the new temple site which Blk, who was guiding them, assured him was now near at hand.

Gretchen and Dick, closely guarded, marched hopelessly with their captors.

"Golly," said Dick, presently, "we seem to have all the bad luck in the world."

"Nothing worse could have happened to you, Dick," said Gretchen.

"What do you mean?" he asked. "It is just as bad for you."

"Oh, Dick, you must escape. You must! You must!" she cried frantically.

"How about you?" he demanded.

"They will not kill me," she answered.

"You mean—!"

"I mean that you must escape before we reach the site of the new temple. No matter what happens, nor what risks you must run, you must not let them take you there."

"I think I understand," said Dick, "but if I get away from them you are coming with me."

"No," she said, "you will be fortunate if you can get away alone. You cannot do it at all if you have to think of me. Do not consider me. I am positive that they will not kill me and some day my father will find me. I know that he will never stop searching until he finds me. If you see the slightest chance, you must take advantage of it and get away."

Dick shook his head.

"What sort of a fellow do you think I am? What kind of man would I be," he asked, "if I ran away and left you with them? No, I could not do that."

The girl shook her head and sighed.

"Please understand what I am saying. I do not want to be left alone with them," she said, "but whether you run away or whether you let them take you to the temple site, it will be all the same for I shall be alone with them in either event and I would rather know that you are alive than to feel always that I was the cause of—of the thing that I know must follow if you are with us when we reach the spot where the new temple is built."

Moving cautiously through the trees behind them, Doc followed the frightful men and their captives. In his mind he was revolving many plans of rescue, but in the face of the superior numbers that opposed him, each plan seemed futile and absolutely foredoomed to failure.

He counted his arrows. There were sixteen of them and he knew that there were nineteen sun worshippers to be accounted for. The plan that this calculation suggested appeared to offer as reasonable a chance for success as any that had occurred to him after racking his brains to the utmost.

He had been moving very cautiously, keeping just out of sight of the rear-most member of Gulm's party, but now he moved forward more rapidly, risking detection that he might get closer to his quarry. There was nothing like trying!

Doc was becoming very proficient in the use of his bow and he moved through the trees now with so much greater ease than he did when he first attempted it that it was not difficult for him to fit an arrow as he moved through the branches of a particularly large tree that gave him excellent foothold. Below him, and but a few yards distant, walked the priest that brought up the rear of the procession. Doc halted and bent his bow.

The priest screamed and lunged forward upon his face, and in the same instant Doc sprang quickly back behind the foliage of the tree and moved swiftly off into the jungle for a hundred yards.

Gulm and the lesser priests turned back as the scream of their fellow startled them into a realization of their own danger.

They looked in horror at the arrow protruding between the shoulders of the fallen man.

"It is the other, the one who escaped," said Gulm angrily.

He turned to Ulp.

"The Flaming God came in the night, did he, and took Kla from us, did he?" he shouted. "You lied to me, Ulp, and you shall die for it."

"I did not lie, Gulm," said Ulp, sullenly. "I told you the truth. The Flaming God came and spoke to me and I have told you what He said. That He was pleased with us is proven by the fact that He not only gave us back our high priestess, but offered us two sacrifices in addition. Is it His fault that we captured but one of them? Is it my fault? If you had captured them both, Gulm, this would not have happened. The Flaming God is punishing us, not for what I did, but for what you did not do."

"Very well," said Gulm, "you shall walk behind the rest of us so that you may capture the other sacrifice, if he returns," and with a sudden growl, Gulm resumed the march.

11. STRIKING FROM THE REAR

ULP did not like the idea of marching in the rear with his back continually exposed to the arrows of an unseen foe. He turned his head about so often to look behind him that his neck pained him, and then he turned around and walked backward for awhile until the others got so far away from him that he became frightened and turned and ran rapidly to overtake them.

Meanwhile through the trees behind him came an American boy and now there were only eighteen enemies ahead of him and there were sixteen arrows in his quiver, for he had descended to the trail after the sun worshippers had moved on and wrenched the arrow from the body of his second victim.

It was grim and terrible work for Doc, who never in all his life had really wanted to kill anyone, nor did he wish to now. It was only stern necessity, induced by the danger that threatened Dick and Gretchen, that impelled him to undertake the grisly work that he hated with all his heart and soul.

The forest was less dense now as the party advanced, and the undergrowth less thick. The trail led constantly into higher ground, and presently Dick and Gretchen saw hills looming before them.

Blk led them into the mouth of a ravine, which rose steeply upward into the hills. The great trees of the jungle disappeared and, in places, the undergrowth gave way entirely to rock formations that supported no vegetation.

Doc, coming to the edge of the jungle, surveyed the landscape ahead.

In a glance he saw that the trees were too scattered to offer him a continuous trail above the ground, and there were many places where the underbrush was so scant as to afford no sufficient shelter for him. But to the left of the ravine, a gently sloping hogback, strewn with great boulders, seemed to offer him the best chance of concealment and the easiest trail from which he might keep the quarry in view.

Ulp had caught up with his fellows and followed close behind them, as Doc clambered upward among the rocks to the summit of the hogback. Here he found a well-marked game trail along which he could move with ease and, presently, he looked down into the ravine upon the little party.

Here was another opportunity. Again his bow twanged and as he dropped behind the concealing shelter of a great boulder, Ulp voiced a horrid shriek and crumpled to the ground.

Gulm was furious, not because Ulp had died, but partially because he had been robbed of an intended sacrifice for The Flaming God and partially because he realized the menace to all of them of this unseen foe, who clung so tenaciously to the rear from where he might pick them off one by one at his leisure—while they were helpless.

"It is the anger of The Flaming God!" he cried. "How much further to the temple site, Blk?"

"We are almost there," replied the guide.

"It is well," growled Gulm. "We must offer a sacrifice to appease the wrath of The Flaming God," and his eyes rested upon Dick.

Gretchen heard and understood. She turned imploringly to her companion.

"Oh, Dick!" she cried, her voice almost a sob. "You must escape at once. There is no time to spare. If ever we reach the temple site, you will be lost."

An arrow, speeding silently, buried itself in Gulm's leg, eliciting a cry of pain and anger. He wrenched the missile from his flesh, his eyes searching the direction from which it had come.

Then, quite unexpectedly, for a moment he glimpsed Doc upon the summit of the ridge, and then the lad stood up, clearly revealed to all of them.

"Don't give up hope, Dick," he shouted, "but look for me tonight. I will try to find a way to get you and Gretchen after dark. Be ready."

"It will be too late then, Doc," cried Gretchen. "If Dick is not saved in the next few minutes, he never will be."

"I will do the best I can," said Doc. Without saying more, Doc immediately fitted another arrow to his bow. He drove it swiftly in the direction of the Oparians and another priest collapsed, clutching at his pierced throat.

In a voice that sounded like the growling of a beast, Gulm issued orders to six of his followers, spurring them to action.

"Don't let that boy get the best of us! Go after him," he cried. "Bring him back to me alive if you can, but bring him back—dead or alive."

Doc was fitting another arrow when he saw the six start swiftly up the steep ravine side. They were close together and offered an excellent target, but suddenly an inspiration seized him. All about him were boulders of different shapes and sizes and in them he saw potential engines of destruction that might be used to accomplish his purpose while conserving his few remaining arrows.

Getting behind a fair sized, rounded boulder, he heaved against it with his shoulder until it gave, and then he guided it over the edge of the ridge directly above the six Oparians, who were ascending to capture or kill him. He did not wait for the boulder to strike them, but immediately seized smaller stones and hurled them down at his foe.

The priests attempted to scramble from the path of the descending boulder, but it had gained such momentum and was falling so rapidly that it was upon them before they could elude it. It struck one of them full in the breast, toppling him backward, crushing him, and then continued to bound down to the bottom of the ravine while the body of its victim, rolling and tumbling, leaped grotesquely in its wake.

"Good boy, Doc!" shouted Dick. "Give them another like that."

The five remaining priests hesitated, warding off the smaller stones that Doc hurled down upon them with their cudgels and their forearms.

They were starting to give back, slowly descending, when Gulm's voice rose up in a mighty bellow.

"Go on! Go on!" he cried. "If you come back without him, you shall be the first to be sacrificed to The Flaming God. Obey your high priest or die."

Knowing that Gulm's command was no idle threat, the five scrambled upward in the face of Doc's barrage until the lad was forced to the realization that some of them, at least, must reach the top, when his capture would be assured.

He sent them a parting arrow and then fled even before he saw its effect, while another priest rolled backward toward the bottom of the ravine. Doc leaped rapidly down the hogback toward the jungle where he knew he might better hope to elude his pursuers among the branches of the great trees.

The four lesser priests followed Doc until the foliage of the forest cut him from their view, and then they halted, grumbling.

"If we go in there after him," said one, "we shall not return alive. He will pick us off with his arrows."

"And if we go back to Gulm, we shall be sacrificed to The Flaming God," said another.

"There are four of us," said a third. "Why should we let Gulm offer us in sacrifice? Who made him high priest? In Opar he was only a lesser priest like us. There are four of us. Let us go back and tell Gulm that the creature escaped, and that before we will permit him to sacrifice any of us, we will kill him."

"Good," said the fourth. "Who is Gulm to be high priest or to take our lives if we do not wish it?"

Thus agreed, the four turned back up the ravine and Doc, relieved, watched them depart.

After they had passed out of sight he descended to the ground and followed them. By following along the bottom of the ravine he hoped to retrieve some of the arrows he had expended, for these were precious indeed, and then he hoped to make his way to the ridge on the right hand side of the ravine, which he had discovered from the summit of the opposite side was better suited to his purposes, since it dropped to the ravine bottom so precipitously that it would be difficult for the sun worshippers to scale it in pursuit of him, thus giving him a better opportunity to attack them in safety.

As the four priests who had succeeded in gaining the summit disappeared in pursuit of Doc, Gulm resumed the march up the steep and rocky gorge.

"Are you going to try to escape, Dick?" asked Gretchen.

The boy shook his head.

"Oh, please do, for my sake," she urged.

"No," he persisted. "I could not do it. In the first place there has been no opportunity and if there is we will take it together."

Gretchen shook her head sadly. "I shall never forgive myself," she said.

"It is not your fault, Gretchen, and whatever happens, not one of us is to blame. We have all done our best and if they don't get good old Doc, he may save us both yet."

"I am afraid they will get him," said Gretchen. "These creatures can climb and run like monkeys. I think nothing could escape them."

"Well, good old Doc made them sit up and take notice," said Dick proudly. "If I have to die, at least I shall have that memory to console me."

The gorge had narrowed until there was room for but a single man to pass between its rocky walls and at this point it was necessary to climb steeply upward for twenty-five feet over a water-worn formation of stratified limestone, down one side of which splashed a miniature waterfall.

The smooth moist surface of the rocks offered only precarious foot and hand holds. Dick climbed directly behind Gretchen, steadying her as best he could, and helping her.

Finally they reached the top in safety, and as they stood erect again upon level ground, they saw that they were in the mouth of a rudely circular, natural, rockbound amphitheater.

Gulm looked slowly about him. His eyes gleamed with the fires of mad fanaticism. He looked up at the sun and stretched forth his arms.

"Here, O Great and Mighty God of our ancestors," he cried, "we shall dedicate to you the new temple and the new city that shall be raised in your honor, and here, before you hide your face again from the eyes of your people, we shall consecrate this ground as befits the holy purpose to which it shall be dedicated. Have patience with us, God of our fathers. You have waited long, but the time has almost come—you have not long to wait!"

He turned quickly to the lesser priests, who had knelt behind him.

"Quickly," he said, "go and gather stones and raise an altar."

Gretchen grasped Dick's hands and commenced to sob, softly.

12. THE SACRIFICE

DOC, following cautiously up the bottom of the ravine, watching and listening ahead, lest he run into an ambush, gave no thought to any possible danger that might lurk behind him, and so he neither heard nor saw the silent thing that moved stealthily in his tracks.

With growing horror, Gretchen watched the construction of the altar that the lesser priests were hastily throwing together.

Strewn about the amphitheater were many fragments of flat limestone rock and these the priests were building into an oblong structure, about three feet high, with a more or less level top, four or five feet long and a couple of feet wide, its greater dimension lying due east and west.

During the building of the altar, two priests stood close upon either side of Dick, and now that it was finished, Gulm signaled to bring him forward and he also commanded the girl to approach. The lesser priests arranged themselves in a circle around the altar, at the foot of which stood Gulm.

"Take your place at the head of the altar, Kla," he said to the girl.

When the girl had done as he told her, Gulm nodded to the two priests, who held Dick, whereupon they lifted him to the altar, laying him there upon his back with his head toward the east end, where stood the new La.

One of the two priests who had placed Dick upon the altar stood at his feet to hold him, while the other stood close to Kla and held his arms. At a word from Gulm this one handed Kla his knife.

"It is your first sacrifice," said Gulm, addressing the girl. "A high priestess comes into full power only after her first sacrifice. The moment that the knife had drunk the blood of this creature you become in reality what you have been in name, high priestess of The Flaming God and ruler of the temple and the city that we shall build here. I shall repeat the prayer that later you will learn to repeat and the instant that I raise my hand above my head, you must strike."

"I cannot," said the girl.

"You cannot?" screamed Gulm. "But you will when you know that the fate of a high priestess, who refuses to make an offering to The Flaming God, is far more terrible than the death from which you would save this creature—a futile sacrifice on your part since, if you refuse, both of you shall die."

"What is he saying?" asked Dick in a whisper.

"He wants me to kill you with this knife," said Gretchen.

Dick closed his eyes. "What else did he say?" he asked.

"He said that if I do not kill you, they will kill you and they will kill me also."

Gulm was slowly chanting a long, monotonous prayer.

The priests were kneeling, their foreheads upon the ground.

"Do as he tells you," said Dick. "Doc is risking his life to save us. If we are both killed, it will be in vain. There is no chance for me, and I would rather feel that I am giving my life to save you than that I must die uselessly to gratify their lust for blood."

Gretchen closed her eyes and raised the knife high above her head.

Doc climbed cautiously upward and when he came to the body of Ulp, he stopped and withdrew his arrow from the lesser priest. As he did so, he became conscious, as we sometimes do, of a feeling that he was being watched—that unseen eyes were looking at him. He glanced quickly up the ravine in the direction the four sun worshippers had gone, but he saw no one. Then, he turned around, drawn by a horrid feeling that something was very close behind him.

With difficulty the boy smothered a horror-stricken scream. His knees weakened so that it was with an effort that he remained erect. He seemed to be held in a paralysis of fear that gripped every muscle in his body. He felt the goose flesh rise upon his cold skin, a sickening tremor ran up his spine and it seemed that his hair rose upon end.

Not five feet from him stood a great lion, its round, yellow-green eyes peering straight into his.

Doc tried to think of a prayer, but the only one he could remember was "Now I lay me down to sleep," and this he could only think, since his lips were stiff and his throat parched.

The time seemed to stretch to an eternity that the lion stood there glaring at him with those unblinking eyes, yet it was only a moment. Then the beast moved slowly toward him, but even then Doc could not break the spell of terror that held him paralyzed. Nearer and nearer came the dread carnivore. He could feel its hot breath upon his naked body. It rubbed its head against his side and then he felt its hot, rough tongue upon his hand.

Like a title flashed upon a screen, a sentence burned suddenly bright in Doc's memory: _ "Do not touch him unless he comes and rubs his head against you." _

It was Jad-bal-ja!

Doc's knees gave way entirely and he sat down suddenly upon the hard ground. The golden lion looked at him questioningly and Doc laid his hand upon the beast's mane and buried his face in the great black collar, sobbing.

It was just for a moment that the reaction of the nervous strain he had undergone held him in its grip. Then he gained control of himself and sprang to his feet. Not far away Dick and Gretchen were in danger. The girl had told him that if he were going to save Dick he must do it at once. Perhaps even now it was too late.

"Quick, Jad-bal-ja," he cried, and he turned and started up the ravine at a run.

The golden lion, knowing that he was on the right trail, did not wait for the boy, but leaped swiftly on ahead.

Gulm, chanting his monotonous prayer, approached its end.

Kla was looking at him now, her blue eyes wide in terror, but held by some horrid fascination upon the face of the gnarled high priest.

Suddenly Gulm stopped his monotonous chanting, and raised his hand above his head.

"Strike!" he cried.

"I cannot," wailed Kla.

"Strike, or you die!" thundered Gulm.

"Strike," whispered Dick. "It is the only way."

Suddenly a priest shrieked and pointed, and the others looked and saw a great lion scrambling over the narrow ledge that gave entrance to the amphitheater.

Instantly all was pandemonium.

Only Gulm remembered. "Strike!" he cried. "Strike and appease the wrath of The Flaming God."

The knife fell from the girl's hand as she sank in a swoon beside the altar. The lion bounded forward and the priests scattered, all but the fanatical Gulm. Snatching his own knife from its scabbard, he sprang forward, the blade raised high above his head, its point aimed at the heart of the courageous lad stretched upon the altar.

With a mighty bound, Jad-bal-ja cleared the altar and sacrifice and bore Gulm back to earth. Once, just once, those awful jaws closed upon the face of the high priest and then Jad-bal-ja stood above his kill and looked about him.

At the same instant a voice rang out from the summit of the rocky escarpment surrounding the amphitheater and the lion looked in the direction of the speaker and then lay down upon the body of the high priest.

With the agility of an ape Tarzan dropped quickly down the rocky precipice to the bottom of the amphitheater. The lesser priests recognized him and sought to flee, but he called them back in their own tongue, threatening to send Jad-bal-ja among them if they disobeyed. Sullenly they returned and clustered together at one side of the altar—the side opposite that upon which Jad-bal-ja still lay upon the dead body of their leader.

At the sound of Tarzan's voice, Dick had opened his eyes and then sat up. In an instant he saw what had transpired and knew that he was saved. Never in all his life had he seen a more welcome sight than that of the great lion lying at the foot of the altar and the half-naked ape-man moving quickly across the amphitheater toward him.

Tarzan's eyes had taken in the entire scene. "Where is Doc?" he demanded.

"Here I am," called a voice, and as Tarzan and Dick looked in the direction from which it had come, they saw Doc crawling over the edge of the rocky threshold of the amphitheater.

"Gee," he cried, "we are all saved, aren't we?"

"Oh, Doc," cried Dick, "I was afraid those fellows who went after you had gotten you."

"I'll say they didn't," said Doc, "You ought to have seen them just now. Jad-bal-ja and I came upon them from behind as they were coming back here after I got away from them, and say you ought to have seen them shin up the sides of that old ravine. They went so fast you could have played checkers on their coat tails, if they had any coat tails."

Tarzan had stopped and raised Gretchen in his arms. She opened her eyes and looked up into his face.

"Who are you?" she cried.

"Do not be afraid," he said, "I am Tarzan of the Apes."

With a little sigh, she closed her eyes and commenced to weep very softly—tears of relief and happiness.

Tarzan turned to the sun worshippers. "This is Tarzan's country," he said. "You may not remain here. If you would live, go back to Opar."

"If we go back to Opar, La will have us killed," said one of the priests sullenly.

"You will surely be killed if you do not go back as I tell you," said Tarzan, "but if you do go back and agree to serve La loyally, I believe that she will let you live. Which do you choose to do?"

The priests whispered among themselves for a few moments. "We will go back to Opar," said one of them, finally.

13. THE END

A HAGGARD white man paced nervously back and forth before a campfire that two blacks kept burning while their fellows slept. To and fro, back and forth, the man paced as he had done for hours and then suddenly he halted and the blacks beside the fire seized their rifles and leaped to their feet, and the three stood listening.

"Something is coming," whispered one of the blacks.

"Yes, I hear it," replied the white man.

"Perhaps it is the Big Bwana, Tarzan," suggested the other black.

"Then we had better awaken the others," said the white man, and a moment later the entire party had been aroused and men with rifles, or spears, or bows and arrows stood ready and waiting for whatever it was that was coming toward them along the jungle trail.

They did not have long to wait and as the party came in sight at the edge of the clearing, von Harben cried aloud in his joy and ran forward to grasp his little daughter in his arms.

"How can I ever repay you? How can I ever thank you brave lads?" said von Harben, when he heard from Gretchen's lips the entire story of her rescue.

"Don't thank us," said Dick. "Thank Jad-bal-ja, the golden lion, for after all it was he who really saved Gretchen."
