

# TARZAN AND THE JEWELS OF OPAR

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**T**HIS is the fifth of the wonderful Tarzan stories dealing with the adventures of the steel-throated ape-man in the fastnesses of his African jungle. The first was "Tarzan of the Apes," which began in the *Evening Public Ledger* May 15, 1915. The second was "The Return of Tarzan," which began July 17, 1915; the third, "The Beast of Tarzan," which began October 23, 1915; and the fourth, "The Son of Tarzan," which began May 13, 1916.

In one of his early adventures Tarzan visited the mysterious city of Opar. It dated back to Atlantean times and was inhabited by a strange horde of blood-thirsty, apelike priests headed by La, the beautiful high priestess of the Flaming God. In the present story you will learn why Tarzan returned to the mysterious city and what he found there.

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### CHAPTER I The Renegade

**L**IUTENANT ALBERT WERPER had only the prestige of the name he had dishonored to thank for his narrow escape from being cashiered. At first he had been humbly thankful, too, that they had sent him to this God-forsaken Congo post instead of court-martialing him, as he had so justly deserved; but now six months of the monotony, the frightful isolation, and the loneliness had wrought a change.

The young man brooded continuously over his fate. His days were filled with morbid self-pity, which eventually engendered in his weak and vacillating mind a hatred for those who had sent him here—for the very man he had at first inwardly thanked for saving him from the ignominy of degradation.

He regretted the gay life of Brussels as he never had regretted the sins which had snatched him from that gayest of capitals, and as the days passed he came to center his resentment upon the representative in Congoland of the authority which had exiled him—his captain and immediate superior.

This officer was a cold, taciturn man, inspiring little love in those directly beneath him, yet respected and feared by the black soldiers of his little command.

Werper was accustomed to sit for hours glaring at his superior as the two sat upon the veranda of their common quarters, smoking their evening cigarette in a silence which neither seemed desirous of breaking.

The senseless hatred of the lieutenant grew at last into a form of mania. The captain's natural taciturnity he distorted into a studied attempt to insult him because of his past shortcomings. He imagined that his superior held him in contempt, and so he chafed and fumed inwardly until one evening his madness became suddenly homicidal. He fingered the butt of his revolver at his hip, his eyes narrowed, and his brows contracted.

At last he spoke. "You have insulted me for the last time!" he cried, springing to his feet. "I am an officer and a gentleman, and I shall put up with it no longer without an accounting from you, you pig."

The captain, an expression of surprise upon his features, turned toward his junior. He had seen men before with the jungle madness upon them—the madness of solitude and unrestrained brooding, and perhaps a touch of fever.

He rose and extended his hand to lay it upon the other's shoulder. Quiet words of counsel were upon his lips; but they were never spoken. Werper construed his superior's action into an attempt to close with him. His revolver was on a level with the captain's heart, and the latter had taken but a step when Werper pulled the trigger.

Without a moan the man sank to the rough planking of the veranda, and as he fell the mist that had clouded Werper's brain lifted, so that he saw himself and the deed that he had done in the light that those who must judge him would see them.

He heard excited exclamations from the quarters of the soldiers and he heard men running in his direction. They would seize him, and if they didn't kill him they would take him down the Congo to a point where a properly ordered military tribunal would do so just as effectively, though in a more regular manner.

Werper had no desire to die. Never before had he so yearned for life as in this moment that he had so effectively forfeited his right to live. The men were nearing him. What was he to do? He glanced about as though searching for the tangible form of a legitimate excuse for his crime; but he could find only the body of the man he had so carelessly shot down.

In despair, he turned and fled from the oncoming soldiery. Across the compound he ran, his revolver still clutched tightly in his hand. At the gate a sentry halted him.

Werper did not pause to parley or to exert the influence of his commission—merely raised his weapon and shot down the innocent black. A moment later the fugitive had torn open the gates and vanished into the blackness of the jungle, but not before he had transferred the rifle and ammunition belts of the dead sentry to his own person.

pushed ahead again, more fearful of the human huntsmen in his rear than of the wild carnivora ahead.

Dawn came at last, but still the man plodded on. All sense of hunger and fatigue was lost in the terrors of capture. He could think only of escape. He dared not pause to rest or eat until there was no further danger from pursuit. And so he staggered on until at last he fell and could rise no more. He had no conception of the length of time he had been fleeing, nor did he care. When he could flee no longer the knowledge that he had reached his limit was hidden from him in the unconsciousness of utter exhaustion.

And thus it was that Achmet Zek, the Arab, found him. Achmet's followers were for running a spear through the body of their hereditary enemy; but Achmet would have it otherwise. First he would question the Belgian. It was easier to question a man first and kill him afterward than kill him first and then question him.

So he had Lieutenant Albert Werper carried to his own tent, and there slaves administered wine and food in small quantities until at last the prisoner regained consciousness. As he opened his eyes he saw the faces of strange black men about him, and just outside the tent the figure of an Arab. Nowhere was the uniform of his soldiers to be seen.

The Arab turned, and seeing the open eyes of the prisoner upon him, entered the tent.

"I am Achmet Zek," he announced. "Who are you, and what were you doing in my country? Where are your soldiers?"

Achmet Zek! Werper's eyes went wide, and his heart sank. He was in the clutches of the most notorious of cutthroats—a hater of all Europeans, especially those who wore the uniform of Belgium. For years the military forces of Belgian Congo had waged a fruitless war upon this man and his followers—a war in which quarter had never been asked nor expected by either side.

But presently in the very hatred of the man for Belgians Werper saw a faint ray of hope for himself. He, too, was an outcast and an outlaw. So far, at least, they possessed a common interest, and Werper decided to play upon it for all that it might yield.

"I have heard of you," he replied, "and was searching for you. My people turned against me. I hate them. Even now their soldiers are searching for me, to kill me. I knew that you would protect me from them, for you, too, hate them. In return I will take service with you. I am a trained soldier. I can fight, and your enemies are my enemies."

Achmet Zek eyed the European in silence. In his mind he revolved many thoughts, chief among which was that the unbeliever lied. Of course, there was the chance that he did not lie, and if he told the truth then his proposition was one well worthy of consideration, since fighting men were never overplentiful; especially white men with the training and knowledge that a European officer must possess.

Achmet Zek scowled and Werper's heart sank; but Werper did not know Achmet Zek, who was quite apt to scowl where another would smile and smile where another would scowl.

"And if you have lied to me," said Achmet Zek, "I can kill you at any time. What return, other than your life, do you expect for your services?"

"My keep, only, at first," replied Werper. "Later, if I am worth more than you can easily reach an understanding."

Werper's only desire at the moment was to preserve his life. And so the agreement was reached, and Lieutenant Albert Werper became a member of the ivory and slave-raiding band of the notorious Achmet Zek.

For months the renegade Belgian rode with the raiders. He fought with a savage abandon and a vicious cruelty fully equal to that of his fellow desperadoes. Achmet Zek watched his recruit with eagle eye, and with a growing satisfaction which finally found expression in a greater confidence in the man, and increased independence of action for Werper.

Achmet Zek took the Belgian into his confidence to a greater extent, and at last unfolded to him a pet scheme which the Arab had long fostered, but which he never had found an opportunity to effect. With the aid of a European, however, the thing might be easily accomplished. He sounded Werper.

"You have heard of the man men call Tarzan?" he asked.

Werper nodded. "I have heard of him; but I do not know him."



ONE GLANCE CONVINCED HIM THAT THE MAN WAS DEAD

"But for him we might carry on our trading in safety and with great profit," continued the Arab. "For years he has fought us, driving us from the richest part of the country, harassing us, and arming the natives that they may repel us when we come to trade." He is very rich. If we could find some way to make him pay us many pieces of gold we should not only be avenged upon him, but repaid for much that he has prevented us from winning from the natives under his protection."

Werper withdrew a cigarette from a jeweled case and lighted it.

"And you have a plan to make him pay?" he asked.

"He has a wife," replied Achmet Zek, "who men say is very beautiful. She would bring a great price further north, if we found it too difficult to collect ransom money from this Tarzan."

Werper bent his head in thought. Achmet Zek stood awaiting his reply. What good remained in Albert Werper revolted at the thought of selling a white woman into the slavery and degradation of a Moslem harem.

He looked up at Achmet Zek. He saw the Arab's eyes narrow, and he guessed that the other had sensed his antagonism to the plan.

What would it mean to Werper to refuse? His life lay in the hands of this sullen renegade, who esteemed the life of an unbeliever less highly than that of a dog. Werper loved life. What was this woman to him, anyway? She was a European, doubtless; a member of organized society. He was an outcast. The hand of every white man was against him. She was his natural enemy, and if he refused to lend himself to her undoing Achmet Zek would have him killed.

"You hesitate," murmured the Arab. "I was but weighing the chances of success," lied Werper—and my reward. As a European I can gain admittance to their home and table. You have no other with you who could do so much. The risk will be great. I should be well paid, Achmet Zek."

A smile of relief passed over the raider's face.

"Well said, Werper," and Achmet Zek slapped his lieutenant upon the shoulder. "You should be well paid, and you shall. Now let us sit together and plan how best the thing may be done," and the two men squatted upon a soft rug beneath the faded silk of Achmet's once gorgeous tent, and talked together in low voices well into the night.

Both were tall and bearded, and the exposure to the sun and wind had given almost an Arab hue to the European's complexion. In every detail of dress, too, he copied the fashion of his chief, so that outwardly he was as much an Arab as the other.

It was late when he arose and retired to his own tent.

The following day Werper spent in overhauling his Belgian uniform, removing from it every vestige of evidence that might indicate its military purposes. From a heterogeneous collection of loot, Achmet Zek procured a plain helmet and a European saddle, and from his black slaves and followers a party of porters, askaris and an tent boys to make up a modest safari for a big-game hunter.

Lady Greystroke never rode alone at any great distance from the bungalow, and the savage loyalty of the ferocious Waziri warriors who formed a great part of Tarzan's followers seemed to preclude the possibility of a successful attempt to forcibly abduction, or of the bribery of the Waziri themselves.

A week passed and Werper was no nearer the fulfillment of his plan, so far as he could judge, than upon the day of his arrival; but then some thing occurred which gave him renewed hope and set his mind upon an even greater reward than a woman's ransom.

A runner had arrived at the bungalow with the weekly mail, and Lord Greystroke had spent the afternoon in his study reading and answering letters. At dinner he seemed distraught, and early in the evening he excused himself and retired, Lady Greystroke following him very soon after.

Werper, sitting upon the veranda, could hear their voices in earnest discussion, and having realized that something of unusual moment was afoot, he quietly rose from his chair, and keeping well in the shadow of the shrubbery growing profusely about the bungalow, made his silent way to a point beneath the window of the room in which his host and hostess slept.

Here he listened, and not without result, for almost the first words he overheard filled him with excitement. Lady Greystroke was speaking as Werper came within hearing.

"I always feared for the stability of the company," she was saying; "but it seems incredible that they should have failed for so enormous a sum—unless there has been some dishonest manipulation."

"That is what I suspect," replied Tarzan; "but whatever the cause, the fact remains that I have lost everything, and there is nothing for it but to return to Opar and get more."

"Oh, John," cried Lady Greystroke, and Werper could feel the shudder through her voice; "is there no other way? I cannot bear to think of your returning to that frightful city. I would rather remain in poverty all ways than to have you risk the hideous dangers of Opar."

"You need have no fear," replied Tarzan, laughing. "I am pretty well able to take care of myself, and were I not, the Waziris who will accompany me will see that no harm befalls me."

"They ran away from Opar once and left you to your fate," Lady Greystroke reminded him.

"They will not do it again," he answered. "They were very much

ashamed of themselves, and were coming back when I met them."

"But there must be some other way," insisted the woman.

"There is no other way, half so easy, to obtain another fortune, as to go to the treasure vaults of Opar and bring it away," he replied. "I shall be very careful, Jane, and the chances are that the inhabitants of Opar will never know that I have been there again and despoiled them of another portion of the treasure, the very existence of which they are as ignorant of as they would be of its value."

The finality in his tone seemed to assure Lady Greystroke that further argument was futile, and so she abandoned the subject.

Werper remained listening for a short time, and then, confident that he had overheard all that was necessary and fearing discovery, returned to the veranda, where he smoked numerous cigarettes in rapid succession before retiring.

The following morning at breakfast Werper announced his intention of making an early departure, and asked Tarzan's permission to hunt big game in the Waziri country on his way out—permission which Lord Greystroke readily granted.

The Belgian consumed two days in completing his preparations, but finally got away with his safari, accompanied by a single Waziri guide which Lord Greystroke had loaned him. The party had made but a single short march when Werper simulated illness, and announced his intention of remaining where he was until he had fully recovered. As they had gone but a short distance from the Greystoke bungalow, Werper dismissed the Waziri guide, telling the warrior that he would send for him when he was able to proceed.

The Waziri gone, the Belgian summoned one of Achmet Zek's trusted blacks to his tent, and dispatched him to watch for the departure of Tarzan, returning immediately to advise Werper of the event and the direction taken by the Englishman.

The Belgian did not have long to wait, for the following day his emissary returned with word that Tarzan and a party of fifty Waziri warriors had set out toward the southeast early in the morning.

Werper called his head man to him, after writing a long letter to Achmet Zek. This letter he handed to the head man.

"Send a runner at once to Achmet Zek with this," he instructed the head man. "Remain here in camp awaiting further instructions from him or from me. If any come from the bungalow

brought with him for the purpose, and the flickering light of which had cast the first alleviating rays into the impenetrable darkness of the buried chamber that it had known for the countless ages since it had lain forgotten of man, Tarzan's mind reverted to that first occasion upon which he had entered the treasure vault, coming upon it by chance as he fled from the pits beneath the temple, where he had been hidden by La, the high priestess of the sun worshippers.

He recalled the scene within the temple when he had lain stretched upon the sacrificial altar, while La, with high-raised dagger, stood above him, and the rows of priests and priestesses awaited in the ecstatic hysteria of fanaticism the first gush of their victim's warm blood, that they might fill their golden goblets and drink to the glory of their flaming god.

The brutal and bloody interruption by Tha, the mad priest, passed vividly before the ape-man's recollective eye, the flight of the votaries before the insane blood-lust of the hideous creature, the brutal attack upon La, and his own part in the grim tragedy when he had battled with the infuriated Oparian and left him dead at the feet of the priestess who had profaned.

This and much more passed through Tarzan's memory as he stood gazing at the long tiers of dull yellow metal. He wondered if La still ruled in the temples of the ruined city whose crumbling walls rose upon the very foundations about him. Had she finally been forced into a union with one of her grotesque priests? It seemed a hideous fate, indeed, for one so beautiful.

With a shake of his head Tarzan stepped to the flickering candle, extinguished its feeble rays and turned toward the exit from the darkened chamber.

Behind him the spy waited for him to be gone. He had learned the secret for which he had come, and now he could return at his leisure to his waiting followers, bring them to the treasure vault and carry away all the gold that they could stagger under.

The Waziri had reached the outer end of the tunnel, and were winding upward toward the fresh air and the welcome starlight of the kopje's summit, before Tarzan shook off the detaining hand of Reverie and started slowly after them.

Once again, and he thought, for the last time, he closed the massive door of the treasure room. In the darkness behind him Werper rose and stretched his cramped muscles. He stretched forth a hand and lovingly caressed a golden ingot on the nearest tier. He raised it from its immemorial resting place and weighed it in his hands. He clutched it to his bosom in an ecstasy of avarice.

Tarzan dreamed of the happy homecoming which lay before him, of dear arms about his neck, a soft cheek pressed to his.

And then, in the span of a few brief seconds, the hopes of both these men were shattered. The one forgot even his greed in the panic of terror—the other was plunged into total forgetfulness of the past by a jagged fragment of rock which gashed a deep cut upon his head.

It was at the moment that Tarzan turned from the closed door to pursue his way to the outer world. The thing came without warning. One instant all was quiet and stability—the next, and the world rocked, the tortured sides of the narrow passageway split and crumbled, great blocks of granite dislodged from the ceiling, tumbled into the narrow way, choking it, and the walls bent inward upon the wreckage.

Beneath the blow of a fragment of the roof Tarzan staggered back against the door of the treasure room, his weight pushed it open and his body rolled inward upon the floor.

In the great apartment where the treasure lay, less damage was brought by the earthquake. A few ingots tumbled from the higher tiers. A single piece of the rocky ceiling splintered off and crashed downward to the floor, and the walls cracked though they did not collapse.

There was but the single shock, no other followed to complete the damage begun by the first. Werper, thrown to his length by the suddenness and violence of the disturbance, staggered to his feet; when he found himself unharmed. Gropping his way toward the far end of the chamber, he sought the candle which Tarzan had left stuck in its own wax upon the protruding end of the ingot.

By striking numerous matches, the Belgian at last found what he sought, and when, a moment later the sickly rays relieved the Stygian darkness about him, he breathed a nervous sigh of relief, for the impenetrable gloom had accentuated the terrors of his situation.

As they became accustomed to the light the man turned his eyes toward the door—his one thought now was of escape from this frightful tomb—and as he did so he saw the body of the naked giant lying stretched upon the floor just within the doorway. Werper drew back in sudden fear of detection; but a second glance convinced him that the Englishman was dead. From a great gash in the man's head a pool of blood had collected on the concrete floor.

(TO BE CONTINUED)