

THE NIGHTMARE : Being the Ninth of the Series of the Jungle Tales of Tarzan : By Edgar Rice Burroughs

THE blacks of the village of Mbonga, the chief, were feasting, while above them in a large tree sat Tarzan of the Apes—grim, terrible, empty, and envious. Hunting had proved poor that day, for there are lean days as well as fat ones for even the greatest of the jungle hunters. Oftentimes Tarzan went empty for more than a full sun, and he had passed through entire moons during which he had been but barely able to stave off starvation; but such times were infrequent.

What he was at this moment was a very hungry wild beast whom caution was holding in leash, for the great cooking pot in the center of the village was surrounded by black warriors, through whom not even Tarzan of the Apes might hope to pass unharmed. It would be necessary, therefore, for the watcher to remain there hungry until the blacks had gorged themselves to stupor, and then, if they had left any scraps, to make the best meal he could from such; but to the impatient Tarzan it seemed that the greedy Gomangani would rather burst than leave the feast before the last morsel had been devoured. For a time they broke the monotony of eating by executing portions of a hunting dance, a maneuver which sufficiently stimulated digestion to permit them to fall to once more with renewed vigor; but with the consumption of appalling quantities of elephant meat and native beer they presently became too loggy for physical exertion of any sort, some reaching a stage where they no longer could rise from the ground, but lay conveniently close to the great cooking pot, stuffing themselves into unconsciousness.



He snatched the hunting blade and, thrusting upward, drove it into the breast above him

croch from which he had toppled. Below him a lion roared, and, looking downward, Tarzan could see the yellow-green eyes shining in the moonlight as they bored hungrily upward through the darkness of the jungle night toward him. The ape-man gasped for breath. Cold sweat stood out from every pore, there was a great sickness at the pit of Tarzan's stomach. Tarzan of the Apes had dreamed his first dream.

For a long time he sat watching for Numa to climb into the tree after him, and listening for the sound of the great wings from above, for to Tarzan of the Apes his dream was a reality. He could not believe what he had seen and yet, having seen even these incredible things, he could not disbelieve the evidence of his own perceptions. Never in all his life had Tarzan's senses deceived him badly, and so, naturally, he had great faith in them. Each perception which ever had been transmitted to Tarzan's brain had been, with varying accuracy, a true perception. He could not conceive of the possibility of apparently having passed through such a weird adventure in which there was no grain of truth. That a stomach, disordered by decayed elephant flesh, a lion roaring in the jungle, a picture-book, and sleep could have so truly portrayed all the clear-cut details of what he had seemingly experienced was quite beyond his knowledge; yet he knew that Numa could not climb a tree, he knew that there existed in the jungle no such bird as he had seen, and he knew, too, that he could not have fallen a tiny fraction of the distance he had hurtled downward, and lived.

To say the least, he was a very puzzled Tarzan as he tried to compose himself once more for slumber—a very puzzled and a very nauseated Tarzan. As he thought deeply upon the strange occurrences of the night, he witnessed another remarkable happening. It was indeed quite posterior, yet he saw it all with his own eyes—it was nothing less than Hstah, the snake, wreathing his sinuous and slimy way up the bole of the tree below him—Hstah, with the head of the old man Tarzan had shoved into the cooking pot—the head and the round, tight, black, distended stomach. As the old man's frightful face, with upturned eyes, set and glassy, came close to Tarzan, the jaws opened to seize him. The ape-man struck furiously at the hideous face and as he struck the apparition disappeared. Tarzan sat straight up upon his branch trembling in every limb, wide-eyed and panting. He looked all around him with his keen, jungle-trained eyes, but he saw nothing of the old man with the body of Hstah, the snake, but on his naked thigh the ape-man saw a caterpillar, dropped from a branch above him. With a grimace he flicked it off into the darkness beneath.

And so the night wore on, dream following dream, nightmare following nightmare, until the distracted ape-man started like a frightened deer at the rustling of the wind in the trees about him, or leaped to his feet as the uncanny laugh of a hyena burst suddenly upon a momentary jungle silence. But at

mind on the little bugs upon the printed page before him, the active recollection of his strange adventures presently merged into the text of that which he was reading—a story of Bolgani, the gorilla, in captivity. There was a more or less lifelike illustration of Bolgani in colors and in a cage, with many remarkable looking Tarmangani standing against a rail and peering curiously at the snarling brute. Tarzan wondered not a little, as he always did, at the odd and seemingly useless array of colored plumage which covered the bodies of the Tarmangani. It always caused him to grin a trifle when he looked at these strange creatures. He wondered if they so covered their bodies from shame of their hairlessness or because they thought the odd things they wore added any to the beauty of their appearance. Particularly was Tarzan amused by the grotesque headresses of the pictured people. He wondered how some of the shes succeeded in balancing theirs in an upright position, and he came as near to laughing aloud as he ever had, as he contemplated the funny little round things upon the heads of the shes.

Slowly the ape-man picked out the meaning of the various combinations of letters on the printed page, and as he read, the little bugs, for as such he always thought of the letters, commenced to run about in a most confusing manner, blurring his vision and befuddling his thoughts. Twice he brushed the back of a hand smartly across his eyes; but only for a moment could he bring the bugs back to coherent and intelligible form. He had slept all the night before and now he was exhausted from loss of sleep, from sickness, and from the slight fever he had had, so that it became more and more difficult to fix his attention, or to keep his eyes open. Tarzan realized that he was falling asleep, and just as the realization was borne in upon him and he had decided to relinquish himself to an inclination which had assumed almost the proportions of a physical pain, he was aroused by the opening of the cabin door. Turning quickly toward the interruption Tarzan was amazed, for a moment, to see bulking large in the doorway the huge and hairy form of Bolgani, the gorilla. Now there was scarcely a denizen of the great jungle with whom Tarzan would rather not have been cooped up inside the small cabin than Bolgani, the gorilla, yet he felt no fear, even though his quick eye noted that Bolgani was in the throes of that jungle madness which seizes upon so many of the fiercer males. Ordinarily the huge gorillas avoid conflict, hide themselves from the other jungle folk, and are generally the best of neighbors; but when they are attacked, or the madness seizes them, there is no jungle denizen so bold and fierce as to deliberately seek a quarrel with them. But for Tarzan there was no escape. Bolgani was glowering at him from red-rimmed, wicked eyes. In a moment he would rush in and seize the ape-man. Tarzan reached for the hunting knife where he had lain it on the table beside him; but as his fingers did not immediately locate the weapon, he turned a quick glance in search of it. As he

The theatres marked (a) obtain pictures through the STANLEY Booking Corporation, which is a guarantee of early showing of the finest productions. All pictures reviewed before exhibition.

SEE ANNOUNCEMENT DAILY IN THE PUBLIC LEDGER AND EVENING PUBLIC LEDGER

Table with columns for days of the week (Monday to Saturday) and rows for various theatres and their respective plays. Includes titles like 'The White Heather', 'The Hidden Truth', 'The House Divided', etc.