

# Tarzan the Magnificent



Edgar Rice Burroughs

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# Chapter

## 1 Out of the Past

**1** TRUTH IS STRANGER than fiction.

If this tale should seem in part incredible, please bear this axiom in mind. It had its beginning more than twenty years ago, unless one wishes to go further back to the first amoeba or even beyond that to the cosmos shattering clash of two forgotten suns; but we shall confine our story, other than by occasional reference, to the stage, the actors, and the business of the present time.

The searing sun rays scorch down upon a shriveled plain a scant five degrees north of the equator. A man, clothed in torn shirt and trousers upon which dried blood has caked and turned a rusty brown, staggers and falls to lie inert.

A great lion looks down upon the scene from the summit of a distant rocky ledge where a few tenacious bushes cling to give shade to the lair of the king; for this is Africa.

Ska, the vulture, wheels and circles in the blue, sky-writing anticipation far above the body of the fallen man.

Not far to the south, at the edge of the dry plain, another man swings easily toward the north. No sign of fatigue or exhaustion here. The bronze skin glows with health, full muscles glide beneath it. The free gait, the noiseless tread might be those of Sheeta, the panther; but there is no slinking here. It is the carriage of one who knows neither doubt nor fear, of a lord in his own domain.

He is encumbered by but a single garment, a loincloth of doe-skin. A coil of grass rope is looped over one shoulder, behind the other hangs a quiver of arrows; a scabbarded knife swings at his hip; a bow and a short spear complete his equipment. A shock of black hair falls in disorder above serene, grey eyes, eyes that can reflect the light of a summer sea or the flashing steel of a rapier.

The Lord of the Jungle is abroad.

He is far to the north of his ancient haunts, yet this is no unfamiliar terrain. He has been here many times before. He knows where water may be had for the digging. He knows where the nearest water hole lies where he can make a kill and fill his belly.

He has come north at the behest of an emperor to investigate a rumor that a European power is attempting to cause the defection of a native chief by means of bribery. War and rumors of war are in the air, but of this tale such things are not a part—we hope. However, we are no prophet. We are merely a chronicler of events as they transpire. We

follow the activities of our characters to the bitter end, even to war; but we hope for the best. However, only time can tell.

As Tarzan swung with easy strides out across the plain, no sound escaped his keen ears; no moving thing, his eyes; no scent, borne upon the soft bosom of Usha the wind, went unidentified. Far in the distance he saw Numa the lion standing upon his rocky ledge; he saw Ska the vulture circling above something that Tarzan could not see. In all that he saw or heard or smelled he read a story; for to him this savage world was an open book, sometimes a thrilling, always an interesting narrative of love, of hate, of life, of death.

Where you or I might occasionally pick out a letter or a word, Tarzan of the Apes grasped the entire text and countless implications that we might never guess.

Presently, ahead of him, he saw something white shining in the sunlight—a human skull; and as he came closer his eyes picked out the skeleton of a man, the bones only slightly disarranged. From among them grew a low desert shrub proclaiming that the skeleton had lain there for a long time.

Tarzan paused to investigate, for to him in his world nothing is too trivial to pass by without question. He saw that the skeleton was that of a Negro and that it had lain, there for a long time, years probably; which was entirely possible in this hot, dry plain. He could not tell how the man had come to his death, but he guessed that it might have been from thirst.

Then he saw something lying by the bones of a hand, something half buried by shifting soil; and he stopped and picked it up, drawing it carefully out of the earth. It was a split stick of hardwood in the split end of which was wedged a thin parcel of oiled silk.

The silk was stained and brittle and dry. It seemed that it might crumble to his touch, but that was only the outer layer. As he carefully unwrapped it, he found the inner layers better preserved. Inside the silk wrapper he found what he had expected—a letter.

It was written in English in a small, extremely legible hand. Tarzan read it with interest, interest that was perhaps stimulated by the date at the top of the sheet. Twenty years had elapsed since that letter had been written. For twenty years it had lain here beside the skeleton of its bearer in mute testimony to the loneliness of this barren plain.

Tarzan read it:

To Whom This May Come: I am dispatching this without much hope that it will even get out of this damnable country, still less that it will reach any white man; but if it does, please contact the nearest Resident Commissioner or any other authority that can get help to us quickly.

My wife and I were exploring north of Lake Rudolph. We came too far. It was the old story. Our boys became frightened by rumors of a fierce tribe inhabiting the country in which we were. They deserted us.

Where the Mafa River empties into the Neubari we turned up the gorge of the former as though drawn by some supernatural power, and were captured by the wild women of Kaji, when we reached the plateau. A year later our daughter was born and my wife died-the she-devils of Kaji killed her because she did not bear a son. They want white men. That is why they have not killed me and a dozen other white men captives.

The Kaji country lies on a high plateau above the falls of the Mafa. It is almost inaccessible, but can be reached by following the gorge of the Mafa from the Neubari.

It will require a strong expedition of white men to rescue me and my little daughter, as I doubt that blacks can be induced to enter the country. These Kaji women fight like devils, and they have strange, occult powers of some nature. I have seen things here that-well, things that just can't be but are.

No native tribes will live near this mysterious, ill-omened country; so, little is known of the Kaji; but rumors of their terrifying practices have become part of the folklore of their nearest neighbors, and it is the hushed recital of these that frightens the bearers of any safari that comes within the sphere of their baneful influence.

The white men may never know the cause of it, for the blacks fear to tell them, thinking that the black magic of the Kaji will reach out and destroy them; but the result is always the same-if the safari approaches too close to Kaji, the blacks all desert.

Then that happens which happened to my wife and me-the whites are lured by some mysterious means to the plateau and made prisoners.

Perhaps even a large force might be overcome, for the whites would not be contending against natural forces; but if they succeeded, the reward might be very great. It is the hope of this reward that I hold out against the dangers involved.

The Kaji own an enormous diamond. Where it came from, where it was mined, I have been unable to ascertain; but I suspect that it came from the soil of their own country.

I have seen and handled the Cullinan diamond, which weighed over three thousand carats; and I am certain that the diamond of Kaji weighs fully six thousand. Just what its value may be I do not know, but using the value of the Brazilian stone, Star of the South, as a measure, it must be worth close to £2,000,000-a reward well worth some risk.

It is impossible for me to know whether I shall ever get this letter out of Kaji, but I have hopes of doing so by bribing one of their black slaves who occasionally leave the plateau to spy in the lowlands.

God grant this be delivered in time.

Mountford.

Tarzan of the Apes read the letter through twice. Mountford! Almost ever since he could remember, it seemed, the mysterious disappearance

of Lord and Lady Mountford had been recalled to the minds of men by rumors that they still lived, until they had become a legend of the wilderness.

No one really believed that they lived, yet at intervals some wanderer from the interior would revive the rumor with more or less circumstantial evidence. He had had the story from the chieftain of a remote tribe, or perhaps from the lips of a dying white man; but there never came any definite clew as to the exact whereabouts of the Mountfords—they had been reported from a score of places all the way from the Soudan to Rhodesia.

And now at last the truth had come, but too late.. Lady Mountford had been dead for twenty years, and it was quite improbable that her husband still lived. The child must, of course, have died or been killed by the Kaji. It could scarcely have survived among those savage people through infancy.

To the jungle bred ape-man death was a commonplace phenomenon of existence and far less remarkable than many other manifestations of nature, for it came eventually to all living things; so the possibility of the death of the man and the child induced no reaction of sorrow or regret. It simply meant nothing to him whatsoever. He would deliver the letter to the English authorities at the first opportunity, and that would be all that there would be to it. Or so Tarzan thought. He continued his way, putting the matter from his mind. He was more interested in the maneuvers of Ska the vulture, for they indicated that Ska was circling about some creature not yet dead and which, because of its size or nature, he hesitated to attack.

As Tarzan approached the spot above which Ska wheeled on static wings he saw Numa the lion drop from the ledge upon which he had been standing and move cautiously toward the thing that had aroused the man's curiosity. Though the latter was in plain sight, Numa seemingly ignored his presence; nor did Tarzan alter his course because of the lion. If neither changed his pace or his direction they would meet close to the thing above which Ska hovered.

As the ape-man came nearer the object of his interest he saw the body of a man lying in a little natural depression of the ground—the body of a white man.

To the right of it, a hundred yards away, was Numa. Presently the man stirred. He was not dead. He raised his head and saw the lion; then he struggled to rise, but he was very weak and could only manage to raise himself to one knee. Behind him was Tarzan, whom he did not see.

As the man half rose, the lion growled. It was only a warning in which there was no immediate menace. Tarzan recognized it as such. He knew that Numa had been attracted by curiosity and not by hunger. His belly was full.

But the man did not know these things. He thought it was the end, for he was unarmed and helpless; and the great carnivore, the king of beasts, was almost upon him.

Then he heard another low growl behind him and, turning his eyes quickly in that direction, saw an almost naked man coming toward him. For an instant he did not understand, for he saw no other beast; then he heard the growl again and saw that it came from the throat of the bronzed giant approaching him.

Numa heard the growl too and paused. He shook his head and snarled. Tarzan did not pause; he continued on toward the man. There was no sanctuary should the lion attack no tree to offer the safety of its branches; there were only Tarzan's weapons and his great strength and his skill; but greatest of all was his conviction that Numa would not attack.

The Lord of the Jungle well knew the art of bluff and its value. Suddenly he raised his head and voiced the hideous warning-cry of the bull ape. The man shuddered as he heard the bestial cry issue from the lips of a human being. Numa, with a parting growl, turned and stalked away.

Tarzan came and stood over the man. "Are you hurt?" he demanded, "or weak from hunger and thirst?"

The voice of a beast coming from the lips of this strange white giant had been no more disconcerting to the man than now to hear him speak in English. He did not know whether to be afraid or not. He glanced hurriedly in the direction of the lion and saw it moving off in the direction from which it had come, and he was filled with a new awe of this creature who could frighten the king of beasts from its prey.

"Well," demanded the ape-man, "do you understand English?"

"Yes," replied the other; "I am an American. I am not hurt. I have been without food for several days. I have had no water today."

Tarzan stooped and lifted the man to a shoulder. "We will find water and food," he said, "and then you may tell me what you are doing alone in this country."

# Chapter

## 2 A Strange Tale

AS TARZAN CARRIED the man toward safety, the limp, dead weight of his burden told him that his charge had lost consciousness. Occasionally he mumbled incoherently, but for the greater part of the journey he was as one dead.

When they came at last to water, Tarzan laid the man in the shade of a small tree; and, raising his head and shoulders, forced a few drops of the liquid between his lips. Presently he could take more, and with its revivifying effects he commenced to speak—broken, disjointed, sometimes incoherent snatches of sentences; as one speaks in delirium or when emerging from an anesthetic.

"She-devil," he mumbled. "... beautiful ... God! how beautiful." Then he was silent for a while as Tarzan bathed his face and wrists with the cool water.

Presently he opened his eyes and looked at the ape-man, his brows wrinkled in questioning and puzzlement. "The diamond!" he demanded. "Did you get the diamond? Huge ... she must have been sired by Satan ... beautiful-enormous-big as ... what? It can't be ... but I saw it—with my own eyes—eyes! eyes! ... what eyes! ... but a fiend ... ten million dollars ... all of that ... big ... big as a woman's head."

"Be quiet," said the ape-man, "and rest. I will get food."

When he returned, the man was sleeping peacefully and night was falling. Tarzan built a fire and prepared a brace of quail and a hare that he had brought down with arrows from his bow. The quail he wrapped in wet clay and laid in the embers; the hare he jointed and grilled on sharpened sticks.

When he had done, he glanced at the man and saw that his eyes were open and upon him. The gaze was quite normal, but the expression was one of puzzlement.

"Who are you?" asked the man. "What happened? I do not seem to be able to recall."

"I found you out on the plain—exhausted," explained Tarzan.

"O-oh!" exclaimed the other. "You are the—the man the lion ran away from. Now I remember. And you brought me here and got food?—and there is water, too?"

"Yes; you have had some. You can have more now. There is a spring behind you. Are you strong enough to reach it?"

The man turned and saw the water; then he crawled to it. Some of his strength had returned.

"Don't drink too much at once," cautioned the ape-man.

After the man had drunk he turned again toward Tarzan. "Who are you?" he asked. "Why did you save me?"

"You will answer the questions," said the Lord of the Jungle. "Who are you? And what are you doing in this country alone? What are you doing here at all?"

The voice was low and deep. It questioned, but it also commanded. The stranger felt that. It was the well modulated, assured voice of a man who was always obeyed. He wondered who this almost naked white giant could be. A regular Tarzan, he thought. When he looked at the man he could almost believe that such a creature existed outside of story and legend and that this was, indeed, he.

"Perhaps you had better eat first," said the ape-man; "then you may answer my questions." He took a ball of hard baked clay from the fire, scraping it out with a stick; then with the hilt of his knife he broke it open, and the baked clay fell away from the body of the quail, taking the feathers with it. He impaled the bird on the stick and handed it to the man. "It is hot," he said.

It was, but the half-famished stranger risked burning for an initial morsel. Without seasoning, as it was, no food had ever tasted better. Only its high temperature restrained him from wolfing it. He ate one quail and half the rabbit before he lay back, at least partially satisfied.

"To answer your questions," he said, "my name is Wood. I am a writer-travel stuff. Thus I capitalize my natural worthlessness, which often finds its expression and its excuse in wanderlust. It has afforded me more than a competence; so that I am now able to undertake expeditions requiring more financing than a steamer ticket and a pair of stout boots.

"Because of this relative affluence you found me alone and on the point of death in an untracked wilderness; but though you found me deserted and destitute without even a crust of bread, I have here in my head material for such a travel book as has never been written by modern man. I have seen things of which civilization does not dream and will not believe; and I have seen, too, the largest diamond in the world. I have held it in my hands. I even had the temerity to believe that I could bring it away with me.

"I have seen the most beautiful woman in the world-and the cruelest; and I even had the temerity to believe that I could bring her away with me, too; for I loved her. I still love her, though I curse her in my sleep, so nearly one are love and hate, the two most powerful and devastating emotions that control man, nations, life-so nearly one that they are separated only by a glance, a gesture, a syllable. I hate her with my mind; I love her with my body and my soul.

"Bear with me if I anticipate. For me she is the beginning and the end-the beginning and the end of everything; but I'll try to be more coherent and more chronological.

"To begin with: have you ever heard of the mysterious disappearance of Lord and Lady Mountford?"

Tarzan nodded. "Who has not?"

"And the persistent rumors of their survival even now, twenty years after they dropped from the sight and knowledge of civilized man?"

"Well, their story held for me such a glamour of romance and mystery that for years I toyed with the idea of organizing an expedition that would track down every rumor until it had been proved false or true. I would find Lord and Lady Mountford or I would learn their fate.

"I had a very good friend, a young man of considerable inherited means, who had backed some of my earlier adventures-Robert van Eyk, of the old New York van Eyks. But of course that means nothing to you."

Tarzan did not comment. He merely listened-no shadow of interest or emotion crossed his face. He was not an easy man in whom to confide, but Stanley Wood was so full of pent emotion that he would have welcomed the insensate ears of a stone Buddah had there been no other ear to listen.

"Well, I gabbled so much about my plans to Bob van Eyk that he got all hepped up himself; and insisted on going along and sharing the expenses; which meant, of course, that we could equip much more elaborately than I had planned to and therefore more certainly ensure the success of our undertaking.

"We spent a whole year in research, both in England and Africa, with the result that we were pretty thoroughly convinced that Lord and Lady Mountford had disappeared from a point on the Neubari River somewhere northwest of Lake Rudolph. Everything seemed to point to that, although practically everything was based on rumor.

"We got together a peach of a safari and picked up a couple of white hunters who were pretty well familiar with everything African, although they had never been to this particular part of the country.

"Everything went well until we got a little way up the Neubari. The country was sparsely inhabited, and the farther we pushed in the fewer natives we saw. These were wild and fearful. We couldn't get a thing out of them about what lay ahead, but they talked to our boys. They put the fear o' God into 'em.

"Pretty soon we commenced to have desertions. We tried to get a line on the trouble from those who remained, but they wouldn't tell us a thing. They just froze up-scared stiff-didn't even admit that they were scared at first; but they kept on deserting.

"It got mighty serious. There we were in a country we didn't know the first thing about-a potentially hostile country-with a lot of equipment and provisions and scarcely enough men to carry on with.

"Finally one of the headmen told me what they were scared of. The natives they had talked with had told them that there was a tribe farther up the Neubari that killed or enslaved every black that came into

their territory, a tribe with some mysterious kind of magic that held you-wouldn't let you escape, or, if you did escape, the magic followed you and killed you before you got back to your own country-maybe many marches away. They said you couldn't kill these people because they were not human-they were demons that had taken the form of women.

"Well, when I told Spike and Troll, the white hunters, what the trouble was, they pooh-poohed the whole business, of course. Said it was just an excuse to make us turn back because our carriers didn't like the idea of being so far from their own country and were getting homesick.

"So they got tough with the boys. Whaled hell out of 'em, and drove 'em on like slaves. As Spike said, 'Put the fear o' God into 'em', and the next night all the rest of 'em deserted-every last mother's son of 'em.

"When we woke up in the morning there were the four of us, Bob van Eyk, Spike, Troll, and myself, four white men all alone with loads for fifty porters; our personal boys, our gun bearers, our askaris all gone.

"Spike and Troll back-tracked to try to pick up some of the boys to take us out, for we knew we were licked; but they never found a one of them, though they were gone for two days.

"Bob and I were just about to pull out on our own when they got back; for, believe me, if we'd had plenty of it before they left we'd had a double dose while they were away.

"I can't tell you what it was, for we never saw anyone. Maybe we were just plain scared, but I don't think that could have been it. Van Eyk has plenty of nerve, and I have been in lots of tough places-lost and alone among the head-hunters of Equador, captured in the interior of New Guinea by cannibals, stood up in front of a firing squad during a Central American revolution-the kind of things, you know, that a travel writer gets mixed up in if he's really looking for thrills to write about and hasn't very good sense.

"No, this was different. It was just a feeling-a haunting sense of being watched by invisible eyes, day and night. And there were noises, too. I can't describe them-they weren't human noises, nor animal either. They were just noises that made your flesh creep and your scalp tingle.

"We had a council of war the night Spike and Troli got back. At first they laughed at us, but pretty soon they commenced to feel and hear things. After that they agreed with us that the best thing to do would be to beat it back.

"We decided to carry nothing but a revolver and rifle apiece, ammunition, and food, abandoning everything else. We were going to start early the following morning.

"When morning came we ate our breakfasts in silence, shouldered our packs, and without a word started out up the Neubari. We didn't even look at one another. I don't know about the rest of them, but I was ashamed to.

"There we were, doing just the opposite of the thing we had decided on-going deeper and deeper into trouble-and not knowing why we were doing it. I tried to exercise my will and force my feet in the opposite direction, but it was no go. A power far greater than my own will directed me. It was terrifying.

"We hadn't gone more than five miles before we came across a man lying in the trail-a white man. His hair and beard were white, but he didn't look so very old-well under fifty, I should have said. He seemed pretty well done in, notwithstanding the fact that he appeared in good physical condition-no indication of starvation; and he couldn't very well have been suffering from thirst, for the Neubari river was less than fifty yards from where he lay.

"When we stopped beside him, he opened his eyes and looked up at us.

" 'Go back!' he whispered. He seemed very weak, and it was obviously an effort for him to speak.

"I had a little flask of brandy that I carried for emergencies, and I made him drink a little. It seemed to revive him some.

" 'For God's sake turn back,' he said. 'There are not enough of you. They'll get you as they got me more than twenty years ago, and you can't get away-you can't escape. After all these years I thought I saw my chance; and I tried it. But you see! They've got me. I'm dying. His power! He sends it after you, and it gets you. Go back and get a big force of white men-blacks won't come into this country. Get a big force and get into the country of the Kaji. If you can kill him you'll be all right. He is the power, he alone.'

" 'Whom do you mean by "he"?' I asked.

" 'Mafka,' he replied.

" 'He's the chief?' I asked.

" 'No; I wouldn't know what to call him. He's not a chief, and yet he's all-powerful. He's more like a witch-doctor. In the dark ages he'd have been a magician. He does things that no ordinary witch-doctor ever dreamed of doing. He's a devil. Sometimes I have thought that he is the Devil. And he is training her-teaching her his hellish powers.'

" 'Who are you?'

" 'I'm Mountford,' he replied.

" 'Lord Mountford?' I exclaimed.

"He nodded."

"Did he tell you about the diamond?" asked Tarzan.

Wood looked at the ape-man in surprise. "How did you know about that?"

"You rambled a little while you were delirious, but I knew about it before. Is it really twice the size of the Cullinan?"

"I never saw the Cullinan, but the Kaji diamond is enormous. It must be worth ten million dollars at least, possibly more. Troll used to work at Kimerly. He said somewhere between ten and fifteen million. Yes,

Mountford told us about it; and after that Troll and Spike were keen on getting into this Kaji country, hoping to steal the diamond. Nothing Mountford said could deter them. But after all it made no difference. We couldn't have turned back if we'd wanted to."

"And Mountford?" asked Tarzan. "What became of him?"

"He was trying to tell us something about a girl. He rambled a little, and we couldn't quite make out what he was driving at. His last words were, 'Save her ... kill Mafka.' Then he died.

"We never did find out whom he meant even after we got into the Kaji country. We never saw any woman captive. If they had one they kept her hidden. But then, we never saw Mafka either. He lives in a regular castle that must have been built centuries ago, possibly by the Portuguese, though it may have antedated their excursion into Abyssinia. Van Eyk thought it may have been built during the Crusades, though what the Crusaders were doing in this neck of the woods he couldn't explain. At any rate, the Kaji never built it; though they had done considerable toward restoring and preserving it.

"The diamond is kept in this castle and is guarded along with Mafka and the queen by Kaji warriors who are constantly on guard at the only entrance.

"The Kaji attribute all their powers and the power of Mafka to the diamond; so naturally they guard it very carefully. For the stone itself they show no particular reverence. They handle it and allow others to handle it as though it were quite an ordinary stone. It is for the queen that they reserve their reverence.

"I am not certain that I correctly fathomed the connection between the queen and the diamond; but I think that they consider her the personification of the stone, into whose body has entered the spirit and the flame of the brilliant.

"She is a gorgeous creature, quite the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. I do not hesitate to say that she is the most beautiful woman in the world; but a creature of such radical contradictions as to cast a doubt upon her sanity. One moment she is all womanly compassion and sweetness, the next she is a she-devil. They call her Gonfala, and the diamond Gonfal.

"It was during a moment of her femininity that she helped me to escape; but she must have repented it, for it could have been only Mafka's power that reached out and dragged me down. Only she knew that I had gone; so she must have told him."

"What became of the other three men?" asked Tarzan.

"They are still prisoners of the Kaji. When Gonfala helped me to escape, I planned to come back with a force of whites large enough to rescue them," Wood explained.

"Will they be alive?"

"Yes; the Kaji will protect them and marry them. The Kaji are all women. Originally they were blacks who wished to turn white; so they married only white men. It became a part of their religion. That is why they lure white men to Kaji-and frighten away the blacks.

"This must have been going on for generations, as there is not an unmixed black among them. They range in color all the way from brown to white. Gonfala is a blond. Apparently there is not a trace of Negro blood in her veins.

"If a baby is born black it is destroyed, and all male babies are destroyed. They believe that the color of the skin is inherited from the father."

"If they kill all the males, where do they get their warriors?"

"The women are the warriors. I have never seen them fight; but from what I heard I imagine they are mighty ferocious. You see, we walked right into their country like long-lost friends, for we didn't want to fight 'em. All two of us wanted was their diamond, Bob van Eyk wanted adventure, and I wanted material for another book. If we could make friends, so much the better.

"That was six months ago. Bob has had adventure and I have material for a book, though much good it will ever do me. Spike and Troll haven't the diamond, but they each have seven Kaji wives-all properly married, too, by Gonfala in the presence of the great diamond.

"You see, Gonfala, as queen, selects the wives for all captured whites; but she herself is not allowed to marry.

"This allotting of the whites is more or less of a racket. The women make offerings to Gonfala, and the ones who make the most valuable offerings get the husbands.

"Well, we saw a lot of Gonfala. She seemed to take a liking to Bob and me, and I sure took a liking to her. In fact, I fell in love with her, and even after I guessed the truth I didn't care.

"She liked to hear about the outside world, and she'd listen to us by the hour. You know how people are. Seeing so much of her and being near her broke down my revulsion for her cruelties; so that I was always mentally making excuses for her. And all the time I kept on loving her more and more, until finally I told her.

"She looked at me for a long time without saying a word. I didn't know whether she was sore or not. If you knew what a big shot the queen of the Kaji is, you'd realize how presumptuous I was in declaring my love. She's more than a queen; she's a sort of deity that they worship-all mixed up with their worship of the diamond.

" 'Love,' she said in a little, low voice. 'Love! So that is what it is!'

"Then she straightened up and became suddenly very regal. 'Do you know what you have done?' she demanded.

" 'I have fallen in love with you,' I said. 'That is about all I know or care.'

"She stamped her foot. 'Don't say it,' she commanded. 'Don't ever say it again. I should have you killed; that is the penalty for daring to aspire to the love of Gonfala. She may not love; she may never marry. Do you not understand that I am a goddess as well as a queen?'

"I can't help that,' I replied. 'And I can't help loving you any more than you can help loving me!'

"She gave a little gasp of astonishment and horror. There was a new expression in her eyes; it was not anger; it was fear. I had voiced a suspicion that I had had for some time, and I had hit the nail on the head-Gonfala was in love with me. She hadn't realized it herself until that very moment-she hadn't known what was the matter with her. But, now she did, and she was afraid.

"She didn't deny it; but she told me that we would both be killed, and killed horribly, if Mafka suspected the truth. And what she was afraid of was that Mafka would know because of his uncanny powers of magic.

"It was then that she decided to help me escape. To her it seemed the only way to insure our safety; to me it presented an opportunity to effect the rescue of my friends with the possibility of persuading Gonfala to come away with me if I were successful.

"With her help, I got away. The rest you know."

# Chapter

## 3 The Power of Mafka

THP APE-MAN HAD listened patiently to Stanley Wood's recital. How much he could believe of it, he did not know; for he did not know the man, and he had learned to suspect that every civilized man was a liar and a cheat until he had proved himself otherwise.

Yet he was favorably impressed by the man's personality, and he had something of the wild beast's instinctive knowledge of basic character—if it may be called that. Perhaps it is more an intuitive feeling of trust for some and distrust of others. That it is not infallible, Tarzan well knew; so he was cautious, always. And in that again the beast showed in him.

"And what do you propose doing now?" he asked.

Wood scratched his head in perplexity. "To be perfectly frank, I don't know. I am confident that Mafka found out that I had escaped and that it was his magic that followed and brought me down. Perhaps Gonfala told him. She is a Jekyll and Hyde sort of person. In one personality she is all sweetness and tenderness, in another she is a fiend.

"As far as my future actions are concerned, I have a very definite premonition that I am not a free agent."

"What do you mean?" demanded the ape-man.

"Since it commenced to get dark haven't you felt an invisible presence near us, haven't you sensed unseen eyes upon us, and heard things, and almost seen things? These are the manifestations of Mafka. We are in his power. Where he wills us to go, we'll go; and you can lay to that."

A shadow of a smile moved the lips of the Lord of the Jungle. "I have seen and heard and sensed many things since we stopped here, but none of them was Mafka. I have identified them all either through my ears or my nose. There is nothing to fear."

"You do not know Mafka," said Wood.

"I know Africa, and I know myself," replied the ape-man, simply. There was no bravado in his tone, but absolute assurance. It impressed the American.

"You are a regular Tarzan," he said.

The other shot a quick glance at him, appraising. He saw that the man spoke without knowledge of his identity, and he was satisfied. His mission required that he remain unknown, if possible. Otherwise, he might never gain the information he sought. He had felt safe from recognition, for he was unknown in this district.

"By the way," continued Wood. "You have not told me your name. I have seen so many unbelievable things since I came into this country that not even the sight of an evidently highly civilized man wandering