

11 - Tarzan Becomes a Beast Again

In Chapter 11 of *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*, the narrative dives into a thrilling and pivotal moment in Tarzan's life, emphasizing his innate connection with the jungle and the creatures within it. The chapter initiates with an intense scene where Werper, harboring malicious intentions towards the sleeping Tarzan, hesitates at the crucial moment, allowing fear of the potent repercussions to deter him. This hesitation saves Tarzan, as Werper flees into the night, fearing retribution not just from Tarzan but also from the encroaching dangers of the jungle symbolized by the nearing lion. Tarzan, meanwhile, remains unconscious, his previously sharp instincts seemingly dulled by a blow to his head until the lion's presence awakens him.

Displaying the instinctual vigilance of the jungle's apex predator, Tarzan rises, prepared for combat. The confrontation, however, ends anticlimactically as the lion retreats, showcasing the unpredictable nature of these wild beasts and reflecting Tarzan's own unpredictability. In the aftermath, Tarzan's contemplation reveals a disinterest in pursuing or even condemning Werper for his treachery, illustrating Tarzan's detachment from human moral judgments and his deep-rooted connection with the jungle's law of survival.

As Tarzan traverses the jungle, his actions and interactions with the environment and its inhabitants— from hunting a zebra with a blend of innate skill and primal intuition, asserting dominance over hyenas, to a respectful standoff with a herd of buffalo — underscore his embodiment of the natural world's rhythm and hierarchy. These encounters serve not only to highlight Tarzan's superior position in the jungle's social order but also to narrate his profound reconnection with his primal identity, letting go of his past as Lord Greystoke.

The chapter delineates Tarzan's encounters with various jungle denizens, portraying him as a creature of immense strength, agility, and inherent understanding of the wild. His confrontation with a rhinoceros illustrates his quick reflexes and combat readiness, even when ambushed. It's through these brushes with death, moments of peace, and the constant proving of his physical and intellectual superiority that Tarzan's character is explored – a being torn between the world of man and the call of the wild, yet seemingly at peace with his current existence beneath the canopy. The narrative, thus, weaves a compelling portrait of Tarzan as a figure of both power and complexity, navigating the dangers and wonders of the jungle with equal parts ferocity and grace.