

2 - On the Road to Opar

He left alone entirely the countless succulent fruits and vegetables and the delicious nuts and grubs and insects that had formed the staple of his diet from infancy to manhood; he was a creature of the jungle and the wild open spaces, and so in his heart he always despised the artificialities of civilization, returning to them only for the sake of his wife, Lady Jane Greystoke, whose love and companionship were more necessary to him than all the freedom and jungle life.

When John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, spotted a group of men traversing the plains toward his bungalow, his instinct told him a visitor was seeking his hospitality. This visitor was M. Jules Freccolt, who claimed to be lost in the African wilderness. Welcomed by Clayton and his wife, Lady Greystoke, Freccolt—actually a schemer named Werper, presented himself as a French gentleman. With no immediate opportunity to execute his plan of abduction for ransom due to the close proximity of the Clayton's and the loyalty of Tarzan's Waziri warriors, Werper stayed on, hoping for a chance.

A week later, an opportunity appeared when Werper learned of Tarzan's financial ruin and his decision to retrieve more treasure from Opar, despite his wife's fears of the dangers he would face. Sensing his chance, Werper asked for and was granted permission by Tarzan to hunt in the Waziri country. However, after a short distance, Werper dismissed his Waziri guide, feigning sickness, and made plans to follow Tarzan discreetly by sending a spy to signal Tarzan's movement towards Opar.

Werper, eager for more than just ransom, saw Tarzan's journey to Opar as an opportunity to discover and lay claim to the legendary treasures. As he organized his departure under the guise of hunting, he secretly arranged to follow Tarzan to uncover the location of the gold. Meanwhile, Tarzan, at ease in his natural element and lightly considering this expedition as a mere adventure, remained unaware of Werper's deceitful intentions.

In both Tarzan's joyful anticipation of the adventure and Werper's calculated treachery, the juxtaposition of innocence and cunning sets the stage for a gripping confrontation in the wilds of Africa, revealing the complexities of character, the dangers of underestimation, and the unpredictable nature of human intentions amidst the raw beauty of the jungle.