

9 - The Theft of the Jewels

For two days, Werper searched for his party in the dense jungles, only to discover the mutilated bodies of three non-slave members of his group, evidence of a deadly uprising by the enslaved party members seeking freedom from their cruel Arab master. This grim discovery displayed the volatile and deadly nature of their environment, leaving Werper unnerved but thankful for his narrow escape.

Meanwhile, Tarzan, stripped of recent civilizing influences by a tragic blow to his head, reverted to the primal instincts of his jungle upbringing. Unfazed by the violent death around him, he conversed in French with Werper, showcasing his ability to switch languages effortlessly, a vestige of his past self, now overshadowed by his primitive nature.

One evening, while admiring a collection of gems intended for a necklace, Tarzan rebuffed Werper's attempt to examine the jewels, instinctively protecting his find with a primitive fierceness. This act sparked a profound fear in Werper, who then saw Tarzan not as a man amnesiac but as a potentially lethal savage beast, unpredictable and uncontrollable.

As they journeyed, avoiding conflict with local warriors laden with treasure, they neared the Waziri plains. Werper, longing for the stolen gems and fearing the imminent pursuit by the Waziri warriors of their abductors, plotted how he could turn the situation to his advantage, his avarice blinding him to the dangers of his companion's feral nature and to the desperate situation of Lady Greystoke, potentially taken by the Arabs.

Upon reaching the outskirts of what was once a peaceful valley, they discovered devastation: the Greystoke bungalow and its surrounds laid to waste, the clear handiwork of Achmet Zek's raiding party, leaving a scene of devastation and the grim evidence of a violent attack on Tarzan's home. The Waziri warriors, returning to find their lands desecrated, vowed revenge, illustrating the cycle of vengeance and violence that characterizes both the civilized and uncivilized worlds.

As night fell, Werper's scheming continued, his mind racing with plans to obtain the jewels and betray Tarzan to Achmet Zek, even as he witnessed Tarzan's adoption of the rudimentary practice of burying valuables for safekeeping, inspired by the Waziri's precautionary measures. The depth of Werper's obsession with the jewels drove him to a desperate calculation, waiting for the moment to strike, even as the unpredictable nature of his feral companion loomed ominously over his nefarious intentions.