

Chapter IV - When the Lion Fed

Kudu, the sun, was well up in the heavens when Tarzan awoke. The ape-man stretched his giant limbs, ran his fingers through his thick hair, and swung lightly down to earth. Immediately he took up the trail he had come in search of, following it by scent down into a deep ravine. Cautiously he went now, for his nose told him that the quarry was close at hand, and presently from an overhanging bough he looked down upon Horta, the boar, and many of his kinsmen. Un-slinging his bow and selecting an arrow, Tarzan fitted the shaft and, drawing it far back, took careful aim at the largest of the great pigs. In the ape-man's teeth were other arrows, and no sooner had the first one sped, than he had fitted and shot another bolt. Instantly the pigs were in turmoil, not knowing from whence the danger threatened. They stood stupidly at first and then commenced milling around until six of their number lay dead or dying about them; then with a chorus of grunts and squeals they started off at a wild run, disappearing quickly in the dense underbrush.

Tarzan then descended from the tree, dispatched those that were not already dead and proceeded to skin the carcasses. As he worked, rapidly and with great skill, he neither hummed nor whistled as does the average man of civilization. It was in numerous little ways such as these that he differed from other men, due, probably, to his early jungle training. The beasts of the jungle that he had been reared among were playful to maturity but seldom thereafter. His fellow-apes, especially the bulls, became fierce and surly as they grew older. Life was a serious matter during lean seasons--one had to fight to secure one's share of food then, and the habit once formed became lifelong. Hunting for food was the life labor of the jungle bred, and a life labor is a thing not to be approached with levity nor prosecuted lightly. So all work found Tarzan serious, though he still retained what the other beasts lost as they grew older--a sense of humor, which he gave play to when the mood suited him. It was a grim humor and sometimes ghastly; but it satisfied Tarzan.

Then, too, were one to sing and whistle while working on the ground, concentration would be impossible. Tarzan possessed the ability to concentrate each of his five senses upon its particular business. Now he worked at skinning the six pigs and his eyes and his fingers worked as though there was naught else in all the world than these six carcasses; but his ears and his nose were as busily engaged elsewhere--the former ranging the forest all about and the latter assaying each passing zephyr. It was his nose that first discovered the approach of Sabor, the lioness, when the wind shifted for a moment.

As clearly as though he had seen her with his eyes, Tarzan knew that the lioness had caught the scent of the freshly killed pigs and immediately had moved down wind in their direction. He knew from the strength of the scent spoor and the rate of the wind about how far away she was and that she was approaching from behind him. He was finishing the last pig and he did not hurry. The five pelts lay close at hand--he had been careful to keep them thus together and near him--an ample tree waved its low branches above him.

He did not even turn his head for he knew she was not yet in sight; but he bent his ears just a bit more sharply for the first sound of her nearer approach. When the final skin had been removed he rose. Now he heard Sabor in the bushes to his rear, but not yet too close. Leisurely he gathered up the six pelts and one of the carcasses, and as the lioness appeared between the boles of two trees he swung upward into the branches above him. Here he hung the hides over a limb, seated himself comfortably upon another with his back against the bole of the tree, cut a hind quarter from the carcass he had carried with him and proceeded to satisfy his hunger. Sabor slunk, growling, from the brush, cast a wary eye upward toward the ape-man and then fell upon the nearest carcass.

Tarzan looked down upon her and grinned, recalling an argument he had once had with a famous big-game hunter who had declared that the king of beasts ate only what he himself had killed. Tarzan knew better for he had seen Numa and Sabor stoop even to carrion.

Having filled his belly, the ape-man fell to work upon the hides--all large and strong. First he cut strips from them about half an inch wide. When he had sufficient number of these strips he sewed two of the hides together, afterwards piercing holes every three or four inches around the edges. Running another strip through these holes gave him a large bag with a drawstring. In similar fashion he produced four other like bags, but smaller, from the four remaining hides and had several strips left over.

All this done he threw a large, juicy fruit at Sabor, cached the remainder of the pig in a crotch of the tree and swung off toward the southwest through the middle terraces of the forest, carrying his five bags with him. Straight he went to the rim of the gulch where he had imprisoned Numa, the lion. Very stealthily he approached the edge and peered over. Numa was not in sight. Tarzan sniffed and listened. He could hear nothing, yet he knew that Numa must be within the cave. He hoped that he slept--much depended upon Numa not discovering him.

Cautiously he lowered himself over the edge of the cliff, and with utter noiselessness commenced the descent toward the bottom of the gulch. He stopped often and turned his keen eyes and ears in the direction of the cave's

mouth at the far end of the gulch, some hundred feet away. As he neared the foot of the cliff his danger increased greatly. If he could reach the bottom and cover half the distance to the tree that stood in the center of the gulch he would feel comparatively safe for then, even if Numa appeared, he felt that he could beat him either to the cliff or to the tree, but to scale the first thirty feet of the cliff rapidly enough to elude the leaping beast would require a running start of at least twenty feet as there were no very good hand- or footholds close to the bottom--he had had to run up the first twenty feet like a squirrel running up a tree that other time he had beaten an infuriated Numa to it. He had no desire to attempt it again unless the conditions were equally favorable at least, for he had escaped Numa's raking talons by only a matter of inches on the former occasion.

At last he stood upon the floor of the gulch. Silent as a disembodied spirit he advanced toward the tree. He was half way there and no sign of Numa. He reached the scarred bole from which the famished lion had devoured the bark and even torn pieces of the wood itself and yet Numa had not appeared. As he drew himself up to the lower branches he commenced to wonder if Numa were in the cave after all. Could it be possible that he had forced the barrier of rocks with which Tarzan had plugged the other end of the passage where it opened into the outer world of freedom? Or was Numa dead? The ape-man doubted the verity of the latter suggestion as he had fed the lion the entire carcasses of a deer and a hyena only a few days since--he could not have starved in so short a time, while the little rivulet running across the gulch furnished him with water a-plenty.

Tarzan started to descend and investigate the cavern when it occurred to him that it would save effort were he to lure Numa out instead. Acting upon the thought he uttered a low growl. Immediately he was rewarded by the sound of a movement within the cave and an instant later a wild-eyed, haggard lion rushed forth ready to face the devil himself were he edible. When Numa saw Tarzan, fat and sleek, perched in the tree he became suddenly the embodiment of frightful rage. His eyes and his nose told him that this was the creature responsible for his predicament and also that this creature was good to eat. Frantically the lion sought to scramble up the bole of the tree. Twice he leaped high enough to catch the lowest branches with his paws, but both times he fell backward to the earth. Each time he became more furious. His growls and roars were incessant and horrible and all the time Tarzan sat grinning down upon him, taunting him in jungle billingsgate for his inability to reach him and mentally exulting that always Numa was wasting his already waning strength.

Finally the ape-man rose and un-slung his rope. He arranged the coils carefully in his left hand and the noose in his right, and then he took a position with each foot on one of two branches that lay in about the same horizontal plane and with

his back pressed firmly against the stem of the tree. There he stood hurling insults at Numa until the beast was again goaded into leaping upward at him, and as Numa rose the noose dropped quickly over his head and about his neck. A quick movement of Tarzan's rope hand tightened the coil and when Numa slipped backward to the ground only his hind feet touched, for the ape-man held him swinging by the neck.

Moving slowly outward upon the two branches Tarzan swung Numa out so that he could not reach the bole of the tree with his raking talons, then he made the rope fast after drawing the lion clear of the ground, dropped his five pigskin sacks to earth and leaped down himself. Numa was striking frantically at the grass rope with his fore claws. At any moment he might sever it and Tarzan must, therefore, work rapidly.

First he drew the larger bag over Numa's head and secured it about his neck with the draw string, then he managed, after considerable effort, during which he barely escaped being torn to ribbons by the mighty talons, to hog-tie Numa--drawing his four legs together and securing them in that position with the strips trimmed from the pigskins.

By this time the lion's efforts had almost ceased--it was evident that he was being rapidly strangled and as that did not at all suit the purpose of the Tarmangani the latter swung again into the tree, unfastened the rope from above and lowered the lion to the ground where he immediately followed it and loosed the noose about Numa's neck. Then he drew his hunting knife and cut two round holes in the front of the head bag opposite the lion's eyes for the double purpose of permitting him to see and giving him sufficient air to breathe.

This done Tarzan busied himself fitting the other bags, one over each of Numa's formidably armed paws. Those on the hind feet he secured not only by tightening the draw strings but also rigged garters that fastened tightly around the legs above the hocks. He secured the front-feet bags in place similarly above the great knees. Now, indeed, was Numa, the lion, reduced to the harmlessness of Bara, the deer.

By now Numa was showing signs of returning life. He gasped for breath and struggled; but the strips of pigskin that held his four legs together were numerous and tough. Tarzan watched and was sure that they would hold, yet Numa is mightily muscled and there was the chance, always, that he might struggle free of his bonds after which all would depend upon the efficacy of Tarzan's bags and draw strings.

After Numa had again breathed normally and was able to roar out his protests and his rage, his struggles increased to Titanic proportions for a short time; but as a lion's powers of endurance are in no way proportionate to his size and strength he soon tired and lay quietly. Amid renewed growling and another futile attempt to free himself, Numa was finally forced to submit to the further indignity of having a rope secured about his neck; but this time it was no noose that might tighten and strangle him; but a bowline knot, which does not tighten or slip under strain.

The other end of the rope Tarzan fastened to the stem of the tree, then he quickly cut the bonds securing Numa's legs and leaped aside as the beast sprang to his feet. For a moment the lion stood with legs far outspread, then he raised first one paw and then another, shaking them energetically in an effort to dislodge the strange footgear that Tarzan had fastened upon them. Finally he began to paw at the bag upon his head. The ape-man, standing with ready spear, watched Numa's efforts intently. Would the bags hold? He sincerely hoped so. Or would all his labor prove fruitless?

As the clinging things upon his feet and face resisted his every effort to dislodge them, Numa became frantic. He rolled upon the ground, fighting, biting, scratching, and roaring; he leaped to his feet and sprang into the air; he charged Tarzan, only to be brought to a sudden stop as the rope securing him to the tree tautened. Then Tarzan stepped in and rapped him smartly on the head with the shaft of his spear. Numa reared upon his hind feet and struck at the ape-man and in return received a cuff on one ear that sent him reeling sideways. When he returned to the attack he was again sent sprawling. After the fourth effort it appeared to dawn upon the king of beasts that he had met his master, his head and tail dropped and when Tarzan advanced upon him he backed away, though still growling.

Leaving Numa tied to the tree Tarzan entered the tunnel and removed the barricade from the opposite end, after which he returned to the gulch and strode straight for the tree. Numa lay in his path and as Tarzan approached growled menacingly. The ape-man cuffed him aside and unfastened the rope from the tree. Then ensued a half-hour of stubbornly fought battle while Tarzan endeavored to drive Numa through the tunnel ahead of him and Numa persistently refused to be driven. At last, however, by dint of the unrestricted use of his spear point, the ape-man succeeded in forcing the lion to move ahead of him and eventually guided him into the passageway. Once inside, the problem became simpler since Tarzan followed closely in the rear with his sharp spear point, an unremitting incentive to forward movement on the part of the lion. If Numa hesitated he was prodded. If he backed up the result was extremely painful

and so, being a wise lion who was learning rapidly, he decided to keep on going and at the end of the tunnel, emerging into the outer world, he sensed freedom, raised his head and tail and started off at a run.

Tarzan, still on his hands and knees just inside the entrance, was taken unaware with the result that he was sprawled forward upon his face and dragged a hundred yards across the rocky ground before Numa was brought to a stand. It was a scratched and angry Tarzan who scrambled to his feet. At first he was tempted to chastise Numa; but, as the ape-man seldom permitted his temper to guide him in any direction not countenanced by reason, he quickly abandoned the idea.

Having taught Numa the rudiments of being driven, he now urged him forward and there commenced as strange a journey as the unrecorded history of the jungle contains. The balance of that day was eventful both for Tarzan and for Numa. From open rebellion at first the lion passed through stages of stubborn resistance and grudging obedience to final surrender. He was a very tired, hungry, and thirsty lion when night overtook them; but there was to be no food for him that day or the next--Tarzan did not dare risk removing the head bag, though he did cut another hole which permitted Numa to quench his thirst shortly after dark. Then he tied him to a tree, sought food for himself, and stretched out among the branches above his captive for a few hours' sleep.

Early the following morning they resumed their journey, winding over the low foothills south of Kilimanjaro, toward the east. The beasts of the jungle who saw them took one look and fled. The scent spoor of Numa, alone, might have been enough to have provoked flight in many of the lesser animals, but the sight of this strange apparition that smelled like a lion, but looked like nothing they ever had seen before, being led through the jungles by a giant Tarmangani was too much for even the more formidable denizens of the wild.

Sabor, the lioness, recognizing from a distance the scent of her lord and master intermingled with that of a Tarmangani and the hide of Horta, the boar, trotted through the aisles of the forest to investigate. Tarzan and Numa heard her coming, for she voiced a plaintive and questioning whine as the baffling mixture of odors aroused her curiosity and her fears, for lions, however terrible they may appear, are often timid animals and Sabor, being of the gentler sex, was, naturally, habitually inquisitive as well.

Tarzan un-slung his spear for he knew that he might now easily have to fight to retain his prize. Numa halted and turned his outraged head in the direction of the coming she. He voiced a throaty growl that was almost a purr. Tarzan was upon the point of prodding him on again when Sabor broke into view, and behind her

the ape-man saw that which gave him instant pause--four full-grown lions trailing the lioness.

To have goaded Numa then into active resistance might have brought the whole herd down upon him and so Tarzan waited to learn first what their attitude would be. He had no idea of relinquishing his lion without a battle; but knowing lions as he did, he knew that there was no assurance as to just what the newcomers would do.

The lioness was young and sleek, and the four males were in their prime--as handsome lions as he ever had seen. Three of the males were scantily maned but one, the foremost, carried a splendid, black mane that rippled in the breeze as he trotted majestically forward. The lioness halted a hundred feet from Tarzan, while the lions came on past her and stopped a few feet nearer. Their ears were upstanding and their eyes filled with curiosity. Tarzan could not even guess what they might do. The lion at his side faced them fully, standing silent now and watchful.

Suddenly the lioness gave vent to another little whine, at which Tarzan's lion voiced a terrific roar and leaped forward straight toward the beast of the black mane. The sight of this awesome creature with the strange face was too much for the lion toward which he leaped, dragging Tarzan after him, and with a growl the lion turned and fled, followed by his companions and the she.

Numa attempted to follow them; Tarzan held him in leash and when he turned upon him in rage, beat him unmercifully across the head with his spear. Shaking his head and growling, the lion at last moved off again in the direction they had been traveling; but it was an hour before he ceased to sulk. He was very hungry--half famished in fact--and consequently of an ugly temper, yet so thoroughly subdued by Tarzan's heroic methods of lion taming that he was presently pacing along at the ape-man's side like some huge St. Bernard.

It was dark when the two approached the British right, after a slight delay farther back because of a German patrol it had been necessary to elude. A short distance from the British line of out-guard sentinels Tarzan tied Numa to a tree and continued on alone. He evaded a sentinel, passed the out-guard and support, and by devious ways came again to Colonel Capell's headquarters, where he appeared before the officers gathered there as a disembodied spirit materializing out of thin air.

When they saw who it was that came thus unannounced they smiled and the colonel scratched his head in perplexity.

"Someone should be shot for this," he said. "I might just as well not establish an out-post if a man can filter through whenever he pleases."

Tarzan smiled. "Do not blame them," he said, "for I am not a man. I am Tarmangani. Any Mangani who wished to, could enter your camp almost at will; but if you have them for sentinels no one could enter without their knowledge."

"What are the Mangani?" asked the colonel. "Perhaps we might enlist a bunch of the beggars."

Tarzan shook his head. "They are the great apes," he explained; "my people; but you could not use them. They cannot concentrate long enough upon a single idea. If I told them of this they would be much interested for a short time-I might even hold the interest of a few long enough to get them here and explain their duties to them; but soon they would lose interest and when you needed them most they might be off in the forest searching for beetles instead of watching their posts. They have the minds of little children--that is why they remain what they are."

"You call them Mangani and yourself Tarmangani--what is the difference?" asked Major Preswick.

"Tar means white," replied Tarzan, "and Mangani, great ape. My name--the name they gave me in the tribe of Kerchak--means White-skin. When I was a little balu my skin, I presume, looked very white indeed against the beautiful, black coat of Kala, my foster mother and so they called me Tarzan, the Tarmangani. They call you, too, Tarmangani," he concluded, smiling.

Capell smiled. "It is no reproach, Greystoke," he said; "and, by Jove, it would be a mark of distinction if a fellow could act the part. And now how about your plan? Do you still think you can empty the trench opposite our sector?"

"Is it still held by Gomangani?" asked Tarzan.

"What are Gomangani?" inquired the colonel. "It is still held by native troops, if that is what you mean."

"Yes," replied the ape-man, "the Gomangani are the great black apes--the Negroes."

"What do you intend doing and what do you want us to do?" asked Capell.

Tarzan approached the table and placed a finger on the map. "Here is a listening post," he said; "they have a machine gun in it. A tunnel connects it with this trench at this point." His finger moved from place to place on the map as he talked. "Give me a bomb and when you hear it burst in this listening post let

your men start across No Man's Land slowly. Presently they will hear a commotion in the enemy trench; but they need not hurry, and, whatever they do, have them come quietly. You might also warn them that I may be in the trench and that I do not care to be shot or bayoneted."

"And that is all?" queried Capell, after directing an officer to give Tarzan a hand grenade; "you will empty the trench alone?"

"Not exactly alone," replied Tarzan with a grim smile; "but I shall empty it, and, by the way, your men may come in through the tunnel from the listening post if you prefer. In about half an hour, Colonel," and he turned and left them.

As he passed through the camp there flashed suddenly upon the screen of recollection, conjured there by some reminder of his previous visit to headquarters, doubtless, the image of the officer he had passed as he quit the colonel that other time and simultaneously recognition of the face that had been revealed by the light from the fire. He shook his head dubiously. No, it could not be and yet the features of the young officer were identical with those of Fraulein Kircher, the German spy he had seen at German headquarters the night he took Major Schneider from under the nose of the Hun general and his staff.

Beyond the last line of sentinels Tarzan moved quickly in the direction of Numa, the lion. The beast was lying down as Tarzan approached, but he rose as the ape-man reached his side. A low whine escaped his muzzled lips. Tarzan smiled for he recognized in the new note almost a supplication--it was more like the whine of a hungry dog begging for food than the voice of the proud king of beasts.

"Soon you will kill--and feed," he murmured in the vernacular of the great apes.

He unfastened the rope from about the tree and, with Numa close at his side, slunk into No Man's Land. There was little rifle fire and only an occasional shell vouched for the presence of artillery behind the opposing lines. As the shells from both sides were falling well back of the trenches, they constituted no menace to Tarzan; but the noise of them and that of the rifle fire had a marked effect upon Numa who crouched, trembling, close to the Tarmangani as though seeking protection.

Cautiously the two beasts moved forward toward the listening post of the Germans. In one hand Tarzan carried the bomb the English had given him, in the other was the coiled rope attached to the lion. At last Tarzan could see the position a few yards ahead. His keen eyes picked out the head and shoulders of the sentinel on watch. The ape-man grasped the bomb firmly in his right hand. He measured the distance with his eye and gathered his feet beneath him, then in

a single motion he rose and threw the missile, immediately flattening himself prone upon the ground.

Five seconds later there was a terrific explosion in the center of the listening post. Numa gave a nervous start and attempted to break away; but Tarzan held him and, leaping to his feet, ran forward, dragging Numa after him. At the edge of the post he saw below him but slight evidence that the position had been occupied at all, for only a few shreds of torn flesh remained. About the only thing that had not been demolished was a machine gun which had been protected by sand bags.

There was not an instant to lose. Already a relief might be crawling through the communication tunnel, for it must have been evident to the sentinels in the Hun trenches that the listening post had been demolished. Numa hesitated to follow Tarzan into the excavation; but the ape-man, who was in no mood to temporize, jerked him roughly to the bottom. Before them lay the mouth of the tunnel that led back from No Man's Land to the German trenches. Tarzan pushed Numa forward until his head was almost in the aperture, then as though it were an afterthought, he turned quickly and, taking the machine gun from the parapet, placed it in the bottom of the hole close at hand, after which he turned again to Numa, and with his knife quickly cut the garters that held the bags upon his front paws. Before the lion could know that a part of his formidable armament was again released for action, Tarzan had cut the rope from his neck and the head bag from his face, and grabbing the lion from the rear had thrust him partially into the mouth of the tunnel.

Then Numa balked, only to feel the sharp prick of Tarzan's knife point in his hind quarters. Goading him on the ape-man finally succeeded in getting the lion sufficiently far into the tunnel so that there was no chance of his escaping other than by going forward or deliberately backing into the sharp blade at his rear. Then Tarzan cut the bags from the great hind feet, placed his shoulder and his knife point against Numa's seat, dug his toes into the loose earth that had been broken up by the explosion of the bomb, and shoved.

Inch by inch at first Numa advanced. He was growling now and presently he commenced to roar. Suddenly he leaped forward and Tarzan knew that he had caught the scent of meat ahead. Dragging the machine gun beside him the ape-man followed quickly after the lion whose roars he could plainly hear ahead mingled with the unmistakable screams of frightened men. Once again a grim smile touched the lips of this man-beast.

"They murdered my Waziri," he muttered; "they crucified Wasimbu, son of Muviro."

When Tarzan reached the trench and emerged into it there was no one in sight in that particular bay, nor in the next, nor the next as he hurried forward in the direction of the German center; but in the fourth bay he saw a dozen men jammed in the angle of the traverse at the end while leaping upon them and rending with talons and fangs was Numa, a terrific incarnation of ferocity and ravenous hunger.

Whatever held the men at last gave way as they fought madly with one another in their efforts to escape this dread creature that from their infancy had filled them with terror, and again they were retreating. Some clambered over the parapets and some even over the parapet preferring the dangers of No Man's Land to this other soul-searing menace.

As the British advanced slowly toward the German trenches, they first met terrified blacks who ran into their arms only too willing to surrender. That pandemonium had broken loose in the Hun trench was apparent to the Rhodesians not only from the appearance of the deserters, but from the sounds of screaming, cursing men which came clearly to their ears; but there was one that baffled them for it resembled nothing more closely than the infuriated growling of an angry lion.

And when at last they reached the trench, those farthest on the left of the advancing Britishers heard a machine gun sputter suddenly before them and saw a huge lion leap over the German parapet with the body of a screaming Hun soldier between his jaws and vanish into the shadows of the night, while squatting upon a traverse to their left was Tarzan of the Apes with a machine gun before him with which he was raking the length of the German trenches.

The foremost Rhodesians saw something else--they saw a huge German officer emerge from a dugout just in rear of the ape-man. They saw him snatch up a discarded rifle with bayonet fixed and creep upon the apparently unconscious Tarzan. They ran forward, shouting warnings; but above the pandemonium of the trenches and the machine gun their voices could not reach him. The German leaped upon the parapet behind him--the fat hands raised the rifle butt aloft for the cowardly downward thrust into the naked back and then, as moves Ara, the lightning, moved Tarzan of the Apes.

It was no man who leaped forward upon that Boche officer, striking aside the sharp bayonet as one might strike aside a straw in a baby's hand--it was a wild beast and the roar of a wild beast was upon those savage lips, for as that strange sense that Tarzan owned in common with the other jungle-bred creatures of his wild domain warned him of the presence behind him and he had whirled to meet the attack, his eyes had seen the corps and regimental insignia upon the other's

blouse--it was the same as that worn by the murderers of his wife and his people, by the despoilers of his home and his happiness.

It was a wild beast whose teeth fastened upon the shoulder of the Hun--it was a wild beast whose talons sought that fat neck. And then the boys of the Second Rhodesian Regiment saw that which will live forever in their memories. They saw the giant ape-man pick the heavy German from the ground and shake him as a terrier might shake a rat--as Sabor, the lioness, sometimes shakes her prey. They saw the eyes of the Hun bulge in horror as he vainly struck with his futile hands against the massive chest and head of his assailant. They saw Tarzan suddenly spin the man about and placing a knee in the middle of his back and an arm about his neck bend his shoulders slowly backward. The German's knees gave and he sank upon them, but still that irresistible force bent him further and further. He screamed in agony for a moment--then something snapped and Tarzan cast him aside, a limp and lifeless thing.

The Rhodesians started forward, a cheer upon their lips--a cheer that never was uttered--a cheer that froze in their throats, for at that moment Tarzan placed a foot upon the carcass of his kill and, raising his face to the heavens, gave voice to the weird and terrifying victory cry of the bull ape.

Underlieutenant von Goss was dead.

Without a backward glance at the awe-struck soldiers Tarzan leaped the trench and was gone.