

Chapter 1 - Belgian and Arab

Chapter 1 - Belgian and Arab opens with Lieutenant Albert Werper, a man once bound by military discipline, now unraveling in the unforgiving isolation of the Congo. His demotion, a result of personal failure, has left him bitter and mentally frayed. Months of jungle exile erode his conscience until one fateful day, driven by suppressed rage and delusions of restoring his honor, he murders his superior officer. The act is not one of justice but desperation. As realization sets in, Werper flees into the dense forest, hunted by those who once served beside him. Exhausted and at the brink of collapse, he is discovered by none other than Achmet Zek, a feared Arab raider with a reputation for brutality and disdain for colonial authority. Werper's downfall is no longer a secret shame; it becomes his passport into a world far darker than any military court could devise.

Upon their first tense meeting, Werper, recognizing Zek's hatred for Europeans—especially Belgians—spins a tale of shared resentment. He claims he, too, was betrayed by the Belgian command, offering his military experience in exchange for protection. Intrigued, but still suspicious, Zek tests Werper's loyalty, eventually allowing him into his raiding party. As weeks pass, Werper proves himself—not through valor, but through calculated ruthlessness. He adapts quickly to the raiders' merciless ways, finding unexpected comfort in the lawlessness. His integration into Zek's band is not marked by camaraderie but mutual exploitation. Both men understand that trust, in their world, is a currency far too expensive. It is during these early days that Zek begins to speak of a long-standing obstacle—Tarzan, protector of the Waziri and guardian of hidden wealth.

The plan Zek proposes is as audacious as it is cruel: capture or ransom Lady Jane, Tarzan's wife, to force the ape-man into submission. Werper, at first disturbed, is not entirely immune to the appeal of gold. His conscience protests, but it is quickly

overruled by pragmatism. Rationalizations come easily in the jungle. He tells himself she is a symbol of the colonial structure that cast him aside—a woman of privilege in a world that deemed him disposable. Her fate, he concludes, is not his burden. Besides, to oppose Zek is to invite death. And so, Werper accepts the scheme, driven less by greed than by fear, and a growing sense that redemption is beyond reach. He has chosen survival, even if it means sacrificing what remains of his moral compass.

As Werper and Zek plot beneath the faded canopy of the raiders' tent, the jungle outside grows darker, mirroring the decay taking place within. Their shared ambition binds them, but each harbors his own agenda. Zek wants revenge, power, and wealth. Werper craves freedom from the past and a new identity unburdened by guilt or insignificance. Their alliance is built not on shared goals, but mutual need—dangerous and unstable. The tent becomes a symbol of their pact: weathered, patched, and propped up by threats and desperation. Within this space, decisions are made that will soon collide with Tarzan's world of loyalty, justice, and raw strength. As they set their plan into motion, the stage is prepared for a brutal confrontation between greed and integrity, between survival and sacrifice.

This opening chapter lays bare the inner fractures of Werper's soul, exposing how fear, exile, and ambition can warp even the most disciplined man. His fall is not sudden, but methodical—a step-by-step surrender of principles to the wilderness of his own making. At its core, this is a tale about choice: not the ones forced upon us, but the ones we make when no one is watching. Werper's descent contrasts sharply with the looming figure of Tarzan, whose values, though primal, remain grounded in honor. As the paths of these three men—Werper, Zek, and Tarzan—begin to converge, the jungle readies itself for a reckoning where survival will test the soul more than the body.