

# 10 DESPERATE CHANCE

Chapter 10 of "The Monster Men" by Edgar Rice Burroughs, titled "A Desperate Chance", unfolds intense drama and betrayal on the treacherous rivers of Borneo. The narrative opens with Rajah Muda Saffir's disaster turning into opportunity for Ninaka, the panglima of the Signana Dyaks, who decides to betray his leader for the lure of a mysterious chest and Virginia Maxon, the captive white girl. Ninaka ponders over his newfound riches but fears the consequences of holding onto Virginia, knowing well the wrath of white men towards those who harm their women.

As Ninaka contemplates his next move, a conversation with Virginia reveals her value not just as a captive but possibly a ransom. Meanwhile, Muda Saffir, having barely escaped death, vows revenge against Ninaka and Barunda, unaware of their treacherous plans.

An uneasy alliance forms between Barunda and Ninaka, aiming to divide the spoils, even as their deceptions weave a dangerous path. Bulan, the "white giant" leading the ourang outangs, finds himself misled, lost in the jungle due to the machinations of Ninaka and Barunda, who continue their journey upriver with the chest and Virginia, moving ever further from potential rescue.

Virginia's despair deepens as she finds herself moving deeper into the heart of Borneo, away from hope and rescue. She is caught between the dread of her captors and the terrifying tales of headhunters in the native long-houses they pass. In a moment of despair and determination, she makes a daring escape attempt by diving into the river, only to be pursued by Ninaka's prahu. Outwitting her pursuers momentarily, she faces the grim realities of her plight—exhaustion, the threat of crocodiles, and the relentless pull of the river towards a deadly gorge. In a desperate bid for survival, Virginia reaches for a fleeting chance at salvation, amidst the roaring waters leading to

the unknown.

This chapter deftly captures the spirit of adventure and the darkness of human greed, set against the backdrop of Borneo's unforgiving wilderness. Through deceit and courage, the characters navigate a world where survival hangs by a thread, and where every decision can lead to riches or ruin.

