

TARZAN
THE UNTAMED

BY CRAIG BREWER
+
'**TARZAN**' BY ADAM COZAD

REVISIONS BY
ADAM COZAD

BASED ON CHARACTERS CREATED BY
EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

***'Beast?' Jane murmured. 'Then God, make me a beast;
for, man or beast, I am yours.'***

- Edgar Rice Burroughs, TARZAN OF THE APES

Men carry their superiority inside, animals outside.

- Kuba Proverb

EXT. INSIDE A CLOUD - DAY

PUSHING THROUGH mist, a series of TITLE CARDS appear.

At the Berlin Conference of 1884, the United States and thirteen European nations ceded control of Africa's Congo River Basin to King Leopold II of Belgium.

In return, the king made three guarantees: an area the size of continental Europe would become a free trade zone, slavery would be abolished within its borders, and, in time, full control would be ceded to the native chiefs.

By 1889, after personally funding massive infrastructure investments in the Congo, King Leopold was bankrupt. Unable to secure further financing for his philanthropic endeavour, the future of the grand experiment hung in the balance.

A GREEN LANDSCAPE takes shape below us.

The following tale was inspired by true events.

EXT. A MOUNTAIN PATH - DAY

50 BELGIAN SOLDIERS march uphill through impenetrable fog. Their khaki uniforms dripping with sweat and condensation.

CAPTAIN ROM (30's) pauses. His men follow suit as he studies the mist with a potent fearlessness (*Rom was Joseph Conrad's inspiration for Kurtz*). Everything about him is razor sharp: mind, visage, even the waxed-tips of his walrus moustache.

A BEADED PRAYER ROPE wrapped around his hand. Flicks it back and forth, hawking fog. YOUNG OFFICER steps beside him, seeing nothing. Speaks French (with subtitles).

YOUNG OFFICER
(Captain Rom? You see something?)

CAPTAIN ROM
(Form your lines. Smartly.)

BELGIAN SOLDIERS snap to action. Aiming breach-loading RIFLES with BAYONETS out at the jungle. Unarmed NATIVE CONSCRIPTS hold METAL SHIELDS, covering for the Belgians.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MORE SHIELDS are lifted over FOUR GUNNERY POSITIONS. An ancient protection for cutting edge technology: BELT-FED MAXIM GUNS (forerunner to .50 CALIBER CHAINGUNS) set on large wagon wheels, and tended by THREE MAN FIRE-TEAMS.

SERGEANT
(Maxim guns ready, sir!)

Rom draws a SABER and a PISTOL. Seeing-- nothing. Until THIRTY MBOLONGO WARRIORS run in. Sprinting *silently*. Bodies chalked gray to match the mist. Fifty feet away, they throw spears-- that bounce off shields. They fire arrows-- to no effect. Swords in hand, closing in.

ROM
(Steady. Wait. Now! Cut them down!)

BRRAAAAPP!! Four Maxim guns, two to a side, DECIMATE THE MBOLONGO! Survivors halt the charge, dive, break off into mist, dragging, carrying their wounded up into fog.

UPHILL

Rom leads from the front, charging past a few DEAD WARRIORS--

YOUNG OFFICER
(These are the legendary guardians of Opar?)

-- tracking the enemy, retreating uphill. They follow BLOOD trails. Rom sees TWO MONOLITHS. Wipes one. A BAS RELIEF IMAGE of a GODDESS with hieroglyphics and runes.

BELGIAN SOLDIER
(You know what it means, sir?)

A WHIP PAN, and Rom's speaking accented English--

ROM
This is the place legends are born.

EXT. A CLEARING - BELOW OPAR - DAY

NATIVE SCOUTS track the blood trail uphill. Rom, just behind, leads his Conscripts into a cloud-coated clearing, undulating with KNEE HIGH GRASS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Heading towards ROWS OF RED BALACLAVA-STYLE MASKS, hovering over the grass. Stationary, so Rom doesn't slow. Made of woven red beads. Mouths open in silent screams.

A YOUNG CONSCRIPT touches one. Threads disintegrate, beads cascade off-- a HUMAN SKULL. He looks closely, the SPINE still attached below. Tied on with blonde hair.

OTHER CONSCRIPTS see every SKULL/SPINE TOTEM is held aloft by a BELGIAN RIFLE, bayonets spiked in the earth. Hairs rise on necks, goose bumps on arms. Fear begins.

NATIVE SCOUTS see the blood trail *splitting in every direction*. They look back at Rom. Odd. His eyes alive and scanning. Sees tendrils of-- RED MIST begin to snake in.

NATIVE SCOUT

The Devils Breath. No one has ever seen it and lived.

Rom glares at him. And back at his MEN: scared.

ROM

All of you had better steel your spines, or I will hack them out.

A DEEP VOICE HISSES, seeming to come from everywhere.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)

None may pass into these lands.

At the edges of visibility, they sense more than see-- HUNDREDS of apparitions. Ghosts in fog all around them.

ROM

There is nothing supernatural about these savages! Let them come to us!

FORTY FEET AWAY

From behind, we see the MBOLONGO ARMY. In rows, curling into mist in both directions. The ARCHERS stand in the back, drawing bows. In the middle, a row of STOUT JAVELIN THROWERS. And in front, nearest to the Belgians are--

-- the ELITE MBOLONGO INFANTRY, wearing LEOPARD PELTS. The heads, with emerald eyes, used as cowls. Hands stuck ingeniously in the PAWS, fingers in hollowed-out CLAWS.

BACK INSIDE THE BELGIAN FORMATION

FOUR MAXIM GUN FIRE TEAMS get set, aiming out in all directions. Ready to mow down any charge. A YOUNG BELGIAN slaps belt-fed ammo into the MAXIM GUN. Kneels on something odd. Moving grass under him. Peering down on-- two eyes. Looking up. Hateful.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
(Kill them all.)

THIRTY MBOLONGO WARRIORS leap up, covered in grass ghillie suits, HANDS in LEOPARD PAWS, attacking all MAXIM GUN FIRE TEAMS. A strategic ambush from within. Chaos is instant. Metal Shields drop. Riflemen spin to deal with the internal threat, the THIRTY INFILTRATORS kill with speed and precision until--

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
(Three.)

Infiltrators snatch METAL SHIELDS for cover. ROM sees it--

ROM
Shields overhead!!!

-- shoots an Infiltrator, grabs a SHIELD from one of his OWN NATIVES as a perfectly timed flight of JAVELINS arrives from the mist. HUNDREDS DROPPING IN! Shields spin and drop. Then come ARROWS. Arcing down. Killing more.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
(Two.)

Infiltrators pivot, shields forward as a SECOND FLIGHT OF ARROWS arrives from straight ahead. Felling Belgians, Native Scouts, piercing shields of Infiltrators.

DEEP VOICE (O.S.)
(One.)

Infiltrators pivot again. A third flight arrives, hitting shields. Dropping nearly every Belgian. A *perfectly choreographed, expertly timed ballet of death*.

Then, from the mist, LEOPARD INFANTRY arrive. Fast, silent. So skilled the Belgians that hold their ground die in seconds. Belgians that flee last five steps more. Leopard infantry finish them all off--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- except for ROM. His saber stabbing, handgun blasting. An arrow hits his arm, his gun drops. Claws arc in, his saber drops. A HUGE WARRIOR thrusts a spear at Rom's stomach, Rom yanks it past him-- up into an attacker coming in behind him. HUGE WARRIOR already drawing a SABER with his off-hand, slashes at Rom.

TIME SLOWS-- *Rom, unarmed, steps under the blade, wings the end of the prayer rope around Huge Warriors neck and thrusts both hands under his adversary's chin. Then-- drops to a knee, dodging the saber again.*

Huge Warrior looks surprised, since the PRAYER ROPE is cinched tight around his neck! Choking him. Can't breathe at all. Rom kicks him away while snatching his SABER and hears a HISS, readying himself, spinning, but--

-- no one's attacking. The HISS some kind of order to hold. Rom, surrounded by spear tips. No fear. Eyes the HUGE WARRIOR, sliding his knife under the rope. Sawing.

ROM

Best of luck.

He can't cut it! What? It's strong as cable. Rom sensing something behind him, turns. CHIEF MBONGA (50), seeming to come from nowhere, stands five feet away. His face is hidden, shadowed by his BLACK MELANISTIC LION COWL. Fingers inside huge claws. Very tall. Very muscular.

ROM

You must be Chief Mbonga; one can always sense a worthy adversary.

Mbonga looks at Huge Warrior, eyes-bulging-tongue-lapping-death throes. Other Warriors kneel beside him, all trying to sever the Prayer Rope, but-- it can't be cut.

DEEP VOICE/CHIEF MBONGA

How is that possible?

ROM

Magic.

CHIEF MBONGA

Your tribe has no magic, just weapons. But you are different than the others, who come up here to bleed and beg and die.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ROM
(waving Mbonga in)
And I shall have a good death.
Your warriors will remember me.

Mbonga ignores him, watching his HUGE WARRIOR-- expire.
He steps towards Rom, who keeps his sword pointed at
Mbonga's throat. Mbonga doesn't care. Close now-- Mbonga
turns his hand over, an UNCUT DIAMOND, the size of a
large marble, deftly held in FOUR-INCH LION CLAWS.

CHIEF MBONGA
These are what you came for?

Rom nods, keeping his sword up.

CHIEF MBONGA
What would you do for them?

ROM
Anything.

Mbonga drops it in Rom's palm.

CHIEF MBONGA
There is one thing I desire above
all else. Bring it to me, bring
him to me, you shall have your
riches.

Rom steps over to HUGE WARRIOR. Dead. Rom uses the sword
tip, searches for a slip knot. With a flick, the rope
releases. Rom swirls it back on to his hand.

ROM
All I need is a name.

INT. NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM - PRESENTATION HALL - DAY

In back, a PROJECTIONIST fiddles with a TRIUNIAL 'MAGIC
LANTERN', blasting a BRIGHT LIGHT through the dim hall.

HANDS hold Tarzan memorabilia. Postcards, drawings of his
absurd feats: *knifing a thirty foot boa constrictor.*
wrestling a gorilla, 5 times his size.

JOHN (O.S.)
Giraffes fight with their necks,
rhinoceros horns are composed
entirely of matted hair--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Tarzan hurling a boulder at the moon.

JOHN (O.S.)

-- and cheetahs are extremely shy.

A CROWD, all walks of life, watch JOHN CLAYTON III (30's) on stage. Their faces, a showcase of disappointment, since John's diction is perfect. Jet black polished hair, tailored suit. 100% the British Lord, but trying hard to win them over as he squints into the light.

JOHN

These are just a few surprising facts about the African continent, a miraculous land of legend and lore, but also, a real place, composed of thousands of tribes, and millions of people who dream and hope-- just like us.

CROWD does not like that comparison. JOHN nods to Projectionist, the Magic Lantern spins to life. GLASS SLIDES spin past the light, *and illustrations of African animals appear on the front wall, moving haltingly.*

JOHN

Now, if you live in a place where ten thousand things can kill you before lunch, knowledge is king.

The mortifying BANNER ABOVE THE STAGE makes it worse. It reads: '**THE LORD OF THE JUNGLE**' and features John, in a loincloth, punching out a rhino. At the bottom, in tiny font: '*A charitable appearance by John Clayton III, Eighth Earl of Greystoke, benefiting the Natural History Museum*'.

JOHN

Can anyone tell me the deadliest animal on the African continent?

TALL PENSIONER

Cannibals! Wif sha-pened fangs!

As John just looks at the guy, a KID compares him to his POSTCARD OF: Tarzan drinking a cup of lava from a volcano! Kid glances at his DAD. Disappointed.

JOHN

Other than 'man'?

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Mr. Tarzan! Mr. Tarzan!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

Please. My name is John Clayton.

MIDDLE AGED WOMAN

Sorry, is it elephants?! Trampling
all them natives!?

Projectionist accelerates through SNAKES, BIRDS, moving
absurdly fast-- reaching-- ELEPHANT ILLUSTRATIONS.

JOHN (cont'd)

Elephants are quite friendly if
they sense you mean them well.

ELEGANT BANKER

Lions! Of course it's lions!

Projectionist scrambles to switch canisters. Crowd grows
more restless. They did not come for this.

JOHN

Lions hardly ever hunt humans. And
most of their prey is killed
without spilling a drop of blood.

Only to John, looking out on surly faces, waits for the
Projectionist, whipping slides to find-- LION'S TEETH--

JOHN

-- the lion's Bicuspid possess
thousands of nerve endings that
allow them to feel for the aorta--

PORTLY MERCHANT

-- *that's how you did it, when
you'd choke the lions to death?*

CROWD is all over it. YES!! They want THIS story!

BUXOM JOURNALIST

Ever do it with your teeth?

John, Jesus, marks BUXOM JOURNALIST (30), near the stage.

JOHN

You're asking me if I choked a
lion-- with my mouth?
(she nods, yep)

No.

John, frustrated, seeing surly faces. Stops caring. Then
his eyes find the KID, staring back, hopeful.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN

But the most dangerous beast in Africa can kill a lion, even snap the back of a crocodile, with a single bite.

Projectionist, relieved, since his slides of 'the beast' are right here: a HIPPO (this is true). The Kid smiles. Thinks it's cool, but the rest of the crowd seethes.

YOUNG MAN

What about them monkeys?

JOHN

They can be dangerous, but a hippo will drown a man for no reason.

YOUNG MAN

No. I mean they was your parents?

John fights blazing light to focus on his GRANDFATHER, LORD GREYSTOKE (60's). Polished, warm, eager to please.

JOHN

My parents were marooned during a mutiny. My mother never recovered from my birth, and father was killed by a Great Ape from the Bili area. One of whom raised me as her own--

JOURNALIST #2

-- is it true you loved her?

JOHN

She saved my life.

OLD SHOPKEEPER

Is it true she was your mum?

John looks at her. Staring back expectantly.

JOHN

Of course not. She was an ape.

The light suddenly cuts out. Dark in here.

PROJECTIONIST (O.S.)

Sorry, sorry, it's overheated!

HUSKY WOMAN

Just give us one ape noise!

(CONTINUED)

•

OTHERS

HUSKY WOMAN

Bark for us! Do the roar!

Yeah! Swing on something!

A man apart. Brooding. Eyes down to keep calm.

AMERICAN WOMAN (O.S.)

Would you do my favorite bird?

John zeroes the voice just before ATTENDANTS yank huge curtains back. Sunlight kills the uproar. It's suddenly bright and comfortable here.

JOHN
And what might that be, miss?

JOHN

And what might that be, miss?

Heads swivel to AMERICAN WOMAN (29). An indomitable dazzler, changing the very chemistry of the room.

AMERICAN WOMAN
It's missus, and the bird is a
Blue Bottomed Rufus Toe-hee.

AMERICAN WOMAN

It's missus, and the bird is a Blue Bottomed Rufus Toe-hee.

JOHN
I'm afraid your favorite bird
sounds like a Hyena in heat.

JOHN

I'm afraid your favorite bird sounds like a Hyena in heat.

Buxom Journalist eyes her gorgeous competition. Mutters--

BUXOM JOURNALIST
-- who's the harlot?

BUXOM JOURNALIST

-- who's the harlot?

Others recognize her. Murmuring. A FUNNY LOOKING GRANNY:

FUNNY LOOKING GRANNY
That's his *Jane*.

FUNNY LOOKING GRANNY

That's his Jane.

From the rafters, a BEAUTIFUL BIRDCALL falls. Floats around the room. Landing on awed spectators. It only seems magical. JANE CLAYTON smiles.

John's mouth hardly moves, but it's coming from him, as evidenced by the slight flexing of his vocal chords. Crowd claps, delighted. A master mimic and ventriloquist.

IN BACK-- a black American in custom clothes hawks John. Other than the chaw in his cheek, GEORGE WASHINGTON WILLIAMS (40's) looks quite refined. He exits the room.

INT. A SMALL 'GREEN' ROOM - DAY

CROWD NOISE RUMBLES from outside the door. Waiting for more! John washes up in a basin, tunes them out. This is the first time we get a good look at his HANDS. They're huge! Bones are twenty percent larger than normal. Coated with SCARS. Knuckles and finger bones flat and wide.

He looks into the mirror. A scar runs from his forehead into his hair. His dark eyes hold a sadness in them. A sense of danger. A powder keg in cold storage. A RAP on the door, his bearing stiffens, but only until he sees Jane, spinning in, smirking.

JOHN

At least no one asked the flavour
of ape milk.

JANE

Yet.

She smiles at him in the mirror. Runs her hands down his back, then around his waist. Holding him close as she holds up a drawing into the mirror. John sees it: *Jane shooting arrows at a polar bear in snow. Wearing a very revealing fur bikini.*

JOHN

Daring outfit for an arctic fight.

JANE

I think it's very flattering.

JOHN

It does look like they got the
important bits right.

She glances over her shoulder, a frisky look on her face, then-- someone pounds on the door. Damn.

GRANDFATHER (O.S.)

John my boy, it's your
grandfather.

John opens the door. Grandfather looks-- flummoxed.

GRANDFATHER

You've been-- summoned.

JOHN

By whom?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John leans around the doorjamb, sees a snippet of the waiting crowd, and a ROYAL MESSENGER in front of them.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE RECEPTION AREA - DAY

HOUSE GUARDS (wearing red wool and metal plates), stiffen for the Claytons as they enter. John's nonplussed, but Jane's walking a bit more gingerly. Sweetly intimidated by the historic environment. The formality of the room prompts her and Grandfather to use library voices:

GRANDFATHER

Once we pass the final House
Guardsmen, you must keep your eyes
down until Her Majesty speaks.

MORE HOUSE GUARDS open a huge set of doors. They enter a larger, grander room, filled with CLASSIC ART and FINERY.

GRANDFATHER

Jane, love, you do know how to do
a *proper* curtsy?

JANE

Of course.
(to John, smirking to
ease her nerves)
How hard can it be?

GRANDFATHER

This is no time for games.

Even larger doors are opened, they enter an even larger room, with forty foot ceilings, gold leaf all over.

GRANDFATHER

Use 'Your Majesty' the first time.
Then 'Ma'am' after, which you must
say at the end of every sentence.

Jane and John keep peeking at each other.

GRANDFATHER

And don't say 'pleased to meet
you' as it is assumed. And for
God's sake, John, be delicate with
those mallets of yours--

EIGHT HOUSE GUARDS (in the most opulent uniforms), open a *gigantic* set of gilded doors, and they finally enter--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

THE THRONE ROOM-- where QUEEN VICTORIA regards them as a half-finished TWENTY FOOT PORTRAIT. A TINY ARTIST paints on a ladder. Peeks around the canvas at-- his subject.

A MINISTER's feet appear below the painting. Steps out, waves them to follow him past the portrait. Up plush steps. John and Jane can't help but peek at-- QUEEN VICTORIA (70) on her throne. Men bow. Jane curtseys. Victoria extends a hand to Jane, who begins with a:

JANE

Pleassss--

-- not supposed to say that, turns it to 'pleasure'--

JANE

-- urrreee--

-- nowhere to go. Stops. Grandfather blushes. John's amused, since he knows Jane's about to recover--

JANE

-- your Majesty. Terribly sorry, Ma'am. I've no idea what a 'pleesure' even is.

QUEEN VICTORIA

It happens all the time, my dear. The last visitor to do it exactly like that was Nietzsche.

JANE

Good company then.

Victoria reaches her hand to John. With perfect posture, mindful of his manners, he delicately takes it.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Joseph and Mary's manger! You could take a man's head off with a lone blow! However did you get them?

JOHN

Well, I grew them.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Don't be daft, Lord Greystoke. That bone structure truly came from prancing about on all fours?

She hasn't let go of them. Pulling the fingers apart.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

I purposefully roughed them up a bit as a child, trying to fit in.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Roughed them up? What did you do, punch cliffs and crush diamonds?
(to Jane)
Can he even use silverware?

JANE

He can be as delicate as a snowflake with them. Ma'am.

Victoria eyes Jane, then John. And smirks. Jane blushes.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - MOMENT LATER

George Washington Williams examines a painting. Even here, he's got a chaw of tobacco in. Turns as doors open. Heads into the THRONE ROOM. Everyone waiting.

QUEEN VICTORIA

May I present Colonel George Washington Williams, a special envoy sent by the President of the United States.

He strolls up, shakes Jane's hand, then Grandfather's.

GEORGE

Jane, Edward.

George's voice is great, like a smokey-smooth mash up of Frederick Douglas and Doc Holiday. He takes John's hand--

GEORGE

-- Johnny. Glad to meet you.
(off their looks)
I'm not much for putting on airs.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Indeed. Do you need a spittoon?

GEORGE

No, Ma'am. Juice'll help me live to a hundred. Old Chinese remedy.

Of course, Jane likes him instantly.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

QUEEN VICTORIA

Lord Greystoke, we are in need of your service.

GEORGE

Five years ago, my government recognized King Leopold of Belgium's claim on the Congo. He promised to open it up to foreign trade, which hasn't happened yet, but more importantly, he promised to run the slave traders out.

(nods to the Queen)

The Crown got behind him, too.

QUEEN VICTORIA

No one has been invited in to see that he has made good on that promise-- until now. You and Colonel Williams have received an invitation to take the royal tour.

Grandfather stiffens, quite proud of this moment. Jane beams, this is the best development ever. But John is studying George: his hands-- closed. His posture-- stiff. His eyes-- steady. Nothing appears off-- to us.

GEORGE

We'll be visiting new churches, schools for the natives, and vouching for the systems he's put in place to end the slave trade.

Jane notices John is dissecting George's body language.

QUEEN VICTORIA

You are to be his first official dignitaries.

JOHN

I've been called many things, a dignitary has never been one of them. There are far better choices, Ma'am.

Jane's beaming smile fades. So does Grandfather's.

QUEEN VICTORIA

There could be no better ambassador than an esteemed British Lord who also happens to be Congo's most famous son.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

If he's inviting us in, can't we
assume everything is above board?

George cools to John, who picks up on it instantly.

QUEEN VICTORIA

Of course; but the King wants *you*
to acknowledge the good he's done.
A favor we may call on him to
return when British--

(for George)

-- and American businesses begin
operating in the Congo.

GEORGE

You get a free trip home, we get a
fresh new engine for economic
growth. Called a win-win.

JOHN

Unless you're African.

(to the Queen)

Forgive me, but I can't, in good
conscience, take part in a
colonial endeavour sure to exploit
the Congolese people, Ma'am.

(to George)

Nor do I wish to return to Africa
to act as King Leopold's *celebrity*
spokesman, but please pass along
my apologies to his Serene
Highness.

Victoria smiles demurely. Then-- just exits. It's odd.

GEORGE

(chuckles)

You got stones, I'll give you
that.

Grandfather steps in front of John. His face is red.

GRANDFATHER

The Queen of England does not make
requests.

GEORGE

I'll make all the arrangements.
See you in Liverpool.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

John glares at George, enjoying the moment way too much.
Jane looks buoyed. Relief evident on her face.

HEADING OUT

Grandfather, in a huff, muttering to John--

GRANDFATHER
*-- you're a British Lord. What
could've possibly got into you?*

JOHN
African trade means conquest, Mr.
Williams is hiding something, and--

-- Jane, so happy, breezes out the HUGE DOORS--

JANE
*-- It will be wonderful to go
home.*

Grandfather freezes. Looks sheepishly at John

GRANDFATHER
Oh.

John tries to keep his emotions veiled. Watching his wife
greet TWO YOUNG WOMEN. Both over the moon to meet Jane,
and she's doing her best to make their day. Jane turns,
reads John. He's not angry, or frustrated-- he's worried.

EXT. ESTABLISHING - MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

Gale force winds thrash trees along the lane leading to
CASTLE GREYSTOKE. John's massive ancestral home towers
like a Gothic cathedral. Rain buffets glass windows, a
few glowing with newly installed electric lamps.

INT. GREYSTOKE MANOR - NIGHT

John, in a mood, a bottle of 1842 MACALLAN in hand, on
the move as he dumps it in a snifter. Passes his VALET,
who wisely keeps his head down, tending a five-foot fire
in a ten-foot fireplace. John heads down a hall, passing
STANDARD, PROPER PORTRAITS OF GREYSTOKES, then--

INT. WORKSHOP/CONVERTED CARRIAGE HOUSE - MOMENT LATER

-- SILVER PRINTS on the walls, bursting with life: JANE (16) with the Kuba, a regal agrarian tribe. CHIEF MUVIRO with his WIVES. ARCHIMEDES PORTER (40's), a round academic with Jane. He's holding a mess of a melon. Jane's holding a bow and arrow, both smiling.

John slows as he passes a picture of Young Jane, beaming, holding a KUBA BABY. He makes sure not to look at it. In the corner is a half-finished, dusty BABY CRIB. His tools and planers remain right where he left them. He makes sure not to look at that, either.

He yanks a cloth off a STEAMER TRUNK. Opens it. On top is a LADIES HANDKERCHIEF with dirty fingerprints, and a CLOSED LOCKET. He pauses, then digs past them, and finds what he's looking for:

A KNIFE IN AN ELABORATE SHEATH. We recognize the RUNES, and the GODDESS (from the opening): Opar. Snaps the Knife to his belt, closes the trunk, but a JOURNAL stops him. Its mud-stained cover reads '*British Colonial Office, John Clayton, 1859*'. He slowly cracks it open.

JOHN CLAYTON II (V.O.)
'I've built a shelter in a tree
for fear of predators.'
(flipping a page)
'My Alice has taken ill. She can't
eat. She can't drink. She cannot
feed our son.'

He flips to a new page, CLOSING ON A PASSAGE--

JOHN CLAYTON II (V.O.)
'Today I buried my wife. My Alice.
Our child cries out from hunger,
but I can do nothing to save him.
There is no greater horror than
this feeling. There is no greater
horror than this land'.

FLASHBACK - INT. TREEHOUSE - SOME POV - DAY

The JOURNAL, falling off a table, lands near two sets of tracks: HUGE HAND PRINTS, and tiny FOOT PRINTS.

- A cracked mirror gives us a glimpse of: TINY TARZAN (5) crouched, hair to the waist.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A curious little guy, poking at a DRAWER. KALA (a sweet-faced, 200 pound female Bili ape) scoops him up, carries him to an OLD SKELETON; an open LOCKET on ribs: A PHOTO OF ALICE CLAYTON.

- Tiny Tarzan studies the photo. Wow, what is that?! Kala places a hand on his neck. Then, the hair on her crown rises suddenly (pilo-erection, danger!).

-KERCHAK, 300 pounds of muscle, is standing in the door. His cruel eyes pinned on meager, disgusting, hairless us.

- *Tiny Tarzan, scared, leaps from the VINE-COVERED TREE HOUSE. Snatching VINES. Kala a blur behind him. We gracefully land on a GRAVE. A wood cross with writing. BOOOM! The earth shakes!*

-- Kerchak's dragging Tiny Tarzan by the ankle. Kala's making helpless DISTRESSED NOISES as Kerchak slaps her boy. Whap-WHAP! Trying to goad her into interfering *Whap-CRACK! Sounds mute, WHITE HOT PAIN, and--*

PRESENT - INT. BACK IN THE WORKSHOP - NIGHT

-- John rewraps the journal.

GRANDFATHER (O.S.)
Your mother was just like Jane.

John turns around. His GRANDFATHER standing in the door.

GRANDFATHER
Perhaps even more stubborn.

JOHN
I doubt that's possible.

GRANDFATHER
Really? If Jane were still with child, would she insist on going?

John replaces the journal, and closes the trunk.

JOHN
She idealizes it. I never had a single good night's sleep until we came to England.

GRANDFATHER
A life lived in fear of loss is no life at all, lad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
I fear nothing but her safety.

GRANDFATHER
I know. But-- whatever broke isn't
healing here.

John knows, it weighs on him too.

GRANDFATHER (cont'd)
You may have enemies there. You
may not want to go back. You may
not even like who you were. But
you must go. And Jane needs to go.
(firmly)
It's just a visit. History will
not repeat itself.

JOHN
You can't be sure of that.

GRANDFATHER
I can. My son was an exceptional
man. But he was not Tarzan.

JOHN
Neither am I.

Grandfather meets his eyes, doesn't buy it.

INT. BEDROOM - CASTLE GREYSTOKE - NIGHT

-- Jane, in bed, looking out the window. Emotional. Then,
she smiles. Without even a whisper of noise, John's
behind her, wrapping her up. They stay like that.

JANE
Thank you, John.

He doesn't respond. Looking out. Tense, and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. CLOUDS - DAY

FLYING through mist, PINK FLAMINGOS swoop into frame,
banking down on THE STEAM CLIPPER, turning from the open
ocean, to head up the MILE WIDE MOUTH OF THE CONGO RIVER.

EXT. STEAMING UP THE CONGO RIVER - SUNSET

On the NORTH BANK, straddling the mouth of a wide canyon,
we see the SPARKLING NEW TOWN of--

-BOMA, CAPITAL OF THE CONGO FREE STATE-

-- King Leopold's colonial dream come true. Whitewashed
government buildings. Wide promenades. Flowers. Lawns.
Behind it, grass savannah rises into the canyon, VERDANT
JUNGLE visible, climbing up and away in the mountains.

A NEW FORT protects the PORT AREA, where a matrix of
RAISED WALKWAYS lead to PIERS lined with PADDLEWHEEL
STEAMSHIPS. OCEAN-GOING SHIPS are anchored further out.

EXT. THE NEW FORT - CONTINUOUS

Captain Rom (all healed up) strides through the gates.
Passing 100 FORCE PUBLIQUE MERCENARIES; the violent white
rejects of every civilized army. BUTTERFLIES flutter as
he heads towards a VERANDA--

-- where TWO FORCE PUBLIQUE LIEUTENANTS (30's) and a
BANKER (60's) are eating. The banker, MR. FRUM, is
annoyed to see Rom dancing up the stairs.

ROM

Mr. Frum! Good news. I now have
everything I need to make good on
our deal. Just give me a company
of your Force Publique ruffians--

MR. FRUM

-- you have your own men.

ROM

Belgian Conscripts. The very sight
of whom incites our natives to
rebel.

(waving at the men)
But *your* mercenaries?

Rom shudders theatrically.

MR. FRUM

You are in no position to ask for
favours, Captain Rom. Your king's
payment was due three months ago.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROM

That delay is precisely why we tripled the agreed upon sum.

MR. FRUM

Right as we were about to disband!
(to both Lieutenants)
Then, lo and behold, his bankrupt king says he has our money. Bring them down and you shall have it, he says. *It's all suspiciously convenient.*

Rom rolls out a MAP OF THE CONGO.

ROM

You agreed because it was worth the wager, so don't get trutty.

MR. FRUM

Not a wager, a contract. With enforceable payment due me in *six days time*--

Points to a spot on a RIVER. Nothing around it.

ROM

-- which I shall deliver to you, right here.

Mr. Frum looks at the location on the map. Up at Rom.

MR. FRUM

It's a legend.

Rom spins a dazzling CUT DIAMOND on the table like a top.

ROM

It's a fortune.

Mr. Frum eyes the big beauty, hmmm, as Rom flicks his Prayer Rope back and forth--

MR. FRUM AS

-- what is it with you and that talisman?

ROM

A prayer rope. Not a talisman. It soothes my spirits.

Mr. Frum-- pockets the diamond. Rom stands. Dons his cap.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MR. FRUM

None of it leads back to me.

ROM

The dark continent begins but a
stone's throw from Boma, Mr. Frum,
and I am chomping at the bit to
wash it clean.

Rom dances down the stairs, looking out on a great view
of the port. A huge sun sinking towards the glassy river.

EXT. THE PORT - SUNSET

A SKIFF pulls up to a floating pier below raised
walkways. Jane and George, chat, whispering, thick as
thieves as they climb the steps. Jane is elated. John
behind them, pauses. Inhaling Africa. He's returned. The
BLOOD RED SUN turning the river an ominous crimson.
Oppressive heat. Then, a CHILDREN'S CHOIR bridges the...

*

CUT TO:

EXT. MAIN STREET OF BOMA - EVENING

John, working his way down a RECEPTION LINE of sweating
OFFICIALS. All greeting John and Jane warmly, and giving
George perfunctory handshakes. A GRANDIOSE STATUE OF KING
LEOPOLD II on horseback towering behind them.

John notes THE GOVERNORS MANSION, flying Belgian flags,
and THIRTY NATIVE CHILDREN, in uniform, singing Belgian
songs. No joyful exuberance. Feels rigid. Off. He glances
at George and Jane also watching the kids.

John keeps playing the game, pressing flesh down the
line, his senses and eyes absorbing--

-- pristine lawns, freshly placed flowering plants. New
paint on everything. John greets FANCY WOMEN, dressed to
the nines, with MAKEUP smeared by perspiration. Jane
isn't wearing any (she grew up here, knows better)

Some Congolese Natives walk past as if they've never worn
shoes before. John looks at Jane. She's noticed.

TRIBESMEN pass them chilled towels. Smiling to John and
Jane, but when they don't think he's watching, their eyes
flit to FORCE PUBLIQUE, posted around the edges. Passing
in the background. And they feel-- predatory. FW00SH!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FLASH POWDER! John turns to MILITARY PHOTOGRAPHER. Sees FORCE PUBLIQUE LIEUTENANT #1 (last seen with Mr. Frum) in shade behind him, watching, and John realizes the CHOIR has stopped singing, and Jane, George, and an OFFICIAL are waiting for him to follow.

JOHN

Forgive me.

John follows, heading towards the GOVERNORS MANSION, where their LUGGAGE is being brought inside.

OFFICIAL

The governor will be hosting you in his diplomatic quarters.

(wiping sweat)

There's a dinner this evening, in your honor, but I'm sure you'd like to get freshened up first.

INT. BALLROOM - GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

MOVING THROUGH GUSSIED UP GUESTS dancing to an ORCHESTRA. FORCE PUBLIQUE BRUTES, in dress uniforms, leer at Jane, in a gown, standing out like a jewel with George and John, wearing tuxes exceptionally well.

Mr. Frum and the GOVERNOR, motion to a MAP on an easel, it shows THREE FORTS along the main rivers East of Boma--

GOVERNOR

-- per our colonial charter, you shall see we have no more than 500 soldiers in the country.

CAPTAIN ROM enters. Dress whites, medals gleaming, working the room like a politician on his way over.

MR. FRUM

-- used solely to root out any of the remaining slavers, and protect a few small construction projects--

GOVERNOR

-- and the churches and schools of course.

JOHN

Why would they need security?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CAPTAIN ROM

It's Africa!

Governor doesn't like Rom, there's tension between them.
Rom eyes John. Sizing him up.

CAPTAIN ROM

The legend returns.

Then greets him warmly.

CAPTAIN ROM

Captain Leon Rom, at your service.
I'll be providing security for
your visit.

(shaking hands)

It must be strange to need it.

JOHN

I do hope we won't.

CAPTAIN ROM

(re: John's hand)

At least there's one vestige of
the old beast left.

Rom takes Jane in. His manners remain proper, but she is
a sight.

CAPTAIN ROM

Lady Clayton, It's been ages since
I've seen anything so stunning.

Jane handles it well. As Rom kisses her hand, her eyes
catch John, examining Rom (like he did to George). Rom
notices George is wearing a pair of HUGE HANDGUNS in
shoulder holsters under his jacket.

CAPTAIN ROM

(doesn't shake hands)

And Colonel Williams, of course.
Negros are not allowed to bear
firearms here, but I shall make an
exception for the world's most
powerful black-powder repeating
handguns. May I?

George doesn't respond. A moment. Then quick-draws fast,
spins the handle to Rom's hand. Rom doesn't flinch.
George turns to the Governor.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE
Walker Colts. Owned by Davy
Crockett himself.

Rom flips the gun back to George.

CAPTAIN ROM
May I ask where you acquired such
a peculiar accent?

GEORGE
Maryland, Montana, and law school,
how about yourself?

Jane smirks. So does Rom, turning his attention back to
John. Fascinated by him.

CAPTAIN ROM
I must say, it is hard to believe
a man this dapper--
(waving at his tux)
-- used to bed down with apes.
Though you are also the man who
taught himself to read and speak
from books. A brilliant leap.

John stays still. Inhales deeply (no one notices but us).

JOHN
Jane and her father taught me.

ROM
Of course. The stories do take on
a life of their own. But their
uniformity can be surprising.

GEORGE
How's that?

ROM
(to John)
'*The jungle protects itself?*' No
less than five tribes used that
exact phrase in reference to your
return.

Jane opens her mouth, John fires a look at her. She
stops. The Governor looks at Rom. Unsure of what's going
on, then the band begins a new tune.

ROM
May I have the honor of a dance?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JANE

It would be my pleasure.
Unfortunately, I am exhausted.

ROM

Another time, then. Rest up. I
shall see you all at first light.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

George, in expedition clothing, wraps his guns in socks (to keep them silent) tucks them in a satchel. Peeks out his window, KEROSENE STREET LAMPS BURN. Sees TWO SENTRIES, in shadow, watching from across the street. Looks the other way, sees TWO MORE. Watching the Mansion.

His UNPACKED STEAMER TRUNK stands up like a closet. He pulls open a secret compartment. Surprised to see it's empty. George muttering. Something has been removed.

INT. DARK HALLWAY - GOVERNOR'S MANSION - NIGHT

George, satchel over his shoulder, boots around his neck, socks on his feet, slips from his room. Hallway lamps have burned out for the night. George presses an ear to a door. He's just about to rap on it, when he hears--

JOHN (O.S.)

-- come in, Mr. Williams.

George pulls back in surprise. Then-- ENTERS JOHN AND JANE'S SUITE. Moonlight only. Jane is dressed, two backpacks on the bed. Ready to go.

GEORGE

Looks like we're on the same page.

John, standing near a window, pulling the threads from an ORIENTAL RUG as he eyes the street down below.

JOHN

Deception has a scent and a feel.
This town is bathed in both.

George clocks the rug, half it's normal size now. John's twisting threads together, wrapping a long strand carefully around his hand, looks like fishing wire.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

They unpacked my luggage for me;
but my camera's been 'misplaced'.
Why do you think they'd do that?

JOHN

(hunting for a clue)
Why did you need a camera?

GEORGE

(not giving him
anything)
Unlike you, I've never even seen
an elephant.

Jane dons her backpack.

JANE

Well, whatever they're hiding will
not be uncovered by taking the--
(purposeful cussing)
-- royal horseshit tour.

GEORGE

(softly)
Now you're speaking my language.

John ties an end of his line to a METAL BALL.

JOHN

Let's have a bit of fun.

John is looking forward to this. George finds it odd.

GEORGE

It's gonna be tricky to get away
without knocking some heads.

JOHN

Only if you're scared of heights.

George stiffens, then his face fills with wonder: John's
jamming fingers into vertical wainscotting, and climbing
the wall! Leans out, one-handing a LARGE VENT and we...

CUT TO:

INT. JOHN AND JANE'S STATEROOM - DAWN

Captain Rom kicking the door in. Empty. Sees a smudge on the large vent. Half an oriental rug. A missing BALL from the claw-footed tub.

EXT. SIDE OF THE GOVERNOR'S MANSION - DAWN

Rom strides out from the Mansion, GUN in hand. A FAT BELGIAN OFFICER trails behind with his SIX BELGIAN CONSCRIPTS. All very scared.

FAT BELGIAN

I had sixteen men surrounding the building, sir.

The Mansion's surrounded by wide dirt streets on all four sides. A huge gap to the TOWERING MARULA.

Rom searches under the tree. Finds footprints leading away. Eyes the gap back to the Mansion roof, where a NATIVE washes windows, BELGIAN FLAGS flap from the poles.

ROM

You there! Any issue with those flagpole ropes this morning?

NATIVE

We got them fixed right away, sir.

Rom nods. Looks at the gap to the Marula tree.

ROM

He made a lead line from the rug. Threw it over using a weight from the tub.

Then-- looks at LAMPPOSTS.

ROM

Lit there. There. Dark-- here.

Shifts to a DRAINPIPE, bent in sections all the way down.

ROM

Snuck across. Climbed the tree. Brought the rope over, and helped them climb above your men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FAT BELGIAN

But the rope would still be there.

Rom doesn't look frustrated. He looks adrenalized.

ROM

He must've swung with it. You men,
gather round.

The Conscripts jog in. Rom shoots Fat Belgian point
blank. Holsters his gun. Spits on him!

ROM

That is your lesson for the day.

EXT. MAIN STREET OF BOMA - DAY

Busy with PEOPLE, parting like a wave.

LIEUTENANT #1 (O.S.)

FORCE PUBLIQUE! MOVE ASIDE!!

Rom leads LIEUTENANT #1 and #2, and THIRTY NASTY ARMED
MERCENARIES towards the DOCKS.

EXT. STEAMBOAT - TOP DECK - HEADING UPRIVER - DAY

Both Lieutenants flank Rom as he whips open the LEATHER
FOLIO, flips through articles and photos of Tarzan/John
Clayton. An oppo research file. Stops on PHOTOS OF TARZAN
in his prime. Muscles bulging. Confident, dangerous eyes.

LIEUTENANT #2

Once he hits the jungle, that's
it, then. I mean, he's Tarzan.

Flips past 'Tarzan' articles. 'Kuba' circled in spots.

ROM

No, he's still a man--

Points to a MAP, the CONGO RIVER runs east west. The
MANGALA runs north from it up to a pristine area, barely
mapped, where Rom has scribbled 'KUBA LANDS'.

ROM

-- and men always return home.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

A SCAR under his finger has CRACKED. A drop of blood falls ON THE CONGO RIVER, as we PUSH IN and...

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. WIDE ON THE MANGALA RIVER - DAY

Broadening waters flowing through a mob of wooded islands. Gorgeous, emerald green. A STEAMBOAT pulls off the bank, turning back the way it came. FARMS stretch up terraced hillsides on either side of the river. CATTLE GRAZE as we find John, Jane, and George strolling uphill in stylish expedition clothing, carrying backpacks.

As they crest a rise--

JOHN
George, don't look the Silverback
in the eye.

GEORGE
Silver-what?

FORTY LOWLAND GORILLAS come into view. Covering the path in front of them. George tenses, whispers to Jane--

GEORGE
-- these aren't those great apes
he made famous?

JANE
Oh no. Gorillas are wonderful.
Mangani are the opposite.

They slow, making sure not to startle them. Getting closer. Seeing their majestic, expressive faces. George spies a run down COLONIAL HOUSE up the hill.

GEORGE
Didn't think they'd live this
close to people.

JOHN
They live everywhere they aren't
hunted.

TWO FEMALES screech at each other: *this is my spot.*

SILVERBACK is just trying to munch his leaves in peace. The girls keep at it. Enough!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He charges between them: *cut the shit*. He herds them apart: *you go there, you go there!* They do it.

SILVERBACK knuckle-walks towards them, looks at John, who keeps his eyes down, makes a guttural Ha-Mmm. Silverback 'prrrrs' back comfortably, touches John, sidles past him to a beaming Jane, running his hand on her arm.

Gets to GEORGE. Silverback leans down. Peering up into George. George shifts his eyes. Gorilla counters.

JOHN

Kind of like meeting the Queen.

George finally has to look at him. It's magical. BABY GORILLAS roll in. OTHERS inspect them. Incredible.

EXT/INT. RUN DOWN COLONIAL HOUSE - DAY

John leads them through a high picket fence, rotted to fragments. A broad deck grown over with vegetation.

INSIDE-- reclaimed by creeping, flowering RUBBER VINES. EXQUISITE ORCHIDS growing between beams. And bushes with exotic FRUIT growing through cracked windows.

GEORGE

So it wasn't a treehouse?

JANE

It was. This is where I grew up.
Quite literally!

Jane at the DOORJAMB, wipes it with a handkerchief to reveal NOTCHES, pencil marks showing a stack of 'Jane' heights with dates and ages (10-17). Other kids are marked with ages as well. The name 'Wasimbu' among them.

GEORGE

You weren't much taller than a chicken when you got here.

Jane giggles, cannot stop smiling. Beaming at John while touching rare Orchids, growing in the kitchen, pops FRUITS dangling off the counter into her mouth, her joy intoxicating her husband.

JOHN

It's a visit, Jane.

She pecks him on the cheek, whirls out--

EXT. A HILLTOP - DAY

-- Jane leads them up a hill from the house, points to a HUGE TREE on the highest knoll.

JANE
That's where the terrible Tarzan
used to watch me, too scared to
approach.

George looks up at it. So does John.

JOHN
She was the only thing that
terrified me.

They stride over the hill, taking in a serene view of--

EXT. THE KUBA VILLAGE - DAY

-- JUNGLE stretches uphill. On a flat area, A WIDE BAND OF THORNY ACACIA BUSHES encircles the village, interwoven with branches to create an impenetrable thicket.

IN THE MAIN LONG HOUSE-- open on all sides, CHIEF MUVIRO (60) sits with his WIVES and VILLAGE GIRLS, making jewelry. All smiles here. Muviro complimenting them as John strides through the gate. Hands behind his back. Looking at the FIFTY ROUND MUD HUTS WITH THATCHED ROOFS.

JOHN
Pardon me, I do believe I'm lost.
Can you help me?

Chief Muviro stands regally, strides out, chuckling.

CHIEF MUVIRO
You still smell the same, Tarzan!
But you look very ridiculous--
(re: John's boots)
-- you used to call them hooves!
(looking past John)
Where is my American daughter?

Jane pokes her head around the thicket. Screams with joy, running towards Muviro and all the WOMEN. Racing into their arms. Chief Muviro thumps his chest, moved.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KUBA WOMAN

What have you done to Tarzan?
He's so pink and tender!

John laughs, surprised at how happy he finds himself as a HUNDRED KUBA filter in. So welcoming. George introduced to 'Chief Muviro' and others. Smiling ELDERS place hands on foreheads. JANE marvels at the children of her childhood friends.

John puts his lips to his huge fist and blows-- a BIG RED RUBBER BALLOON. Jane's surprised, delighted he brought gifts; George blows one up too. Giggly Kids play.

JOHN

(to George)
Hot potato's universal.

Jane laughs with the children. Beaming at John.

KUBA WOMAN #1

(Janie, how many young ones do you have now?)

JANE

(None quite yet.)

KUBA WOMAN #2

(None?! You must work harder.)

The ladies laugh, Muviro's ELDEST WIFE reads Jane's face.

ELDEST WIFE

(When the time is right.)

John sees a beautifully ATHLETIC WARRIOR (20) enter the gates, followed by TWENTY FORMIDABLE KUBA WARRIORS with ARROWS, LONGBOWS, throwing KNIVES (SAPA). Two hold OLD RIFLES. Athletic Warrior and John eye each other.

ATHLETIC WARRIOR

You cannot be Tarzan. You are much too fancy.

JOHN

You cannot be the son of Muviro, you are much too pretty.

Chief Muviro roars, Jane steps around John to get a view.

JANE

Wasimbu!? Oh my God, look at you!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Athletic Warrior, WASIMBU, reaches down to pluck a melon.

WASIMBU

Shoot this off my head, and I will
believe it is you.

George confused, eyes Chief Muviro, who grins back.

JANE

I'm even better now. Archery is
quite popular among English women;
I wouldn't have had to fight tooth
and nail to learn it there.

EXT. WIDE ON A FIELD - SUNSET

Wasimbu pacing it out. Turns. Puts a MELON on his head.
Everyone loves it. Especially his KUBA WARRIORS. John
masks his discomfort as Jane notches an arrow.

GEORGE

You sure this is a good idea?

John winces. Chief Muviro notices.

CHIEF MUVIRO

Why are you nervous? If she
doesn't believe she can do it, she
won't shoot. Jane has not changed
at all.

Jane doesn't hesitate, firing-- we follow the arrow, the
metal tip an inverted moon-- straight *through the melon,*
blowing it to pieces. Wasimbu laughs as everyone cheers!

John and Chief Muviro, amongst the Kuba walk towards
them. John speaks softly.

JOHN

The outside world has been locked
out of Congo's interior for years.

CHIEF MUVIRO

That is why you've returned.

JOHN

The Belgian King claims he's spent
his fortune preventing other
powers from exploiting this land.

Muviro's smile remains, but the joy drains from his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
But something feels very off.

CHIEF MUVIRO
You have not lost your awareness.

JOHN
What's happening?

Chief Muviro pauses, watching KUBA youngsters surround Jane, spontaneously breaking into song. They start dancing. Jane joins in.

CHIEF MUVIRO
There is strength in joy, Tarzan.
It should not be wasted.
(off John's look)
Please.

Chief Muviro waves for John to follow him. Heads off towards the party. John remains. Disturbed.

George, in the midst of dancing, singing children, hitches his fingers under his belt. Grinning.

JANE
Come on, George!

GEORGE
I don't dance!

Jane waves Kids towards him. Surrounding him, it's all damned infectious. Jane sings, a smile slathered on her face. All the Kuba join in, now. Jane owns her place among them as dancing builds, Single Women line up. Warriors next. Then the Older Women. George, no choice, kids pulling on him to dance, starts dancing, too! Jane laughs, part of all of it. Looking at John, so happy. So 'home'. John smiles, sees her get swallowed up by the crowd, and we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT/INT. JANE'S OLD HOUSE - NIGHT

Sounds of singing and partying carry up from the village as Jane approaches. Creaking up the dark stairs.

JANE
John?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

No answer. She quietly slips inside. Her eyes adjust, John is nowhere to be seen. Then she hears a FUNNY BIRDCALL. Hyena-esque. Smiles.

JANE
Blue Bottom Rufus Toe-hee. Mating
call. Be still my beating heart.

Another noise. From another room. She looks around.

JANE
Mandrill. Also a mating call.

Jane, pulse quickening, led to the kitchen. FLOWERING VINES on cabinets. A purring. Growling in her ear.

JANE
Cheetah. Mating call.

John's behind her, hands on her waist. Kissing her neck, fingers bunch her dress, lift-turns her onto the counter, she wraps her legs around him, kissing him like it's going somewhere. Steamy, romantic, very hot as we...

DISSOLVE TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. JUNGLE - SNIPPETS OF TARZAN'S PAST - DAY

-BLACKNESS. Insects buzz. Birds chatter. Twigs snap as--

-KALA knuckles up to an ANT HILL. A branch with flowers in hand, pops a pink one in her mouth. Yum! Jams the branch under the mound, levers a piece up. ANTS swarm. She scoops a handful into her mouth. Munching happily. Looks around to share. Hears something. Moving fast--

-POV: LOOKING DOWN ON OUR HARDENED FISTS-- knuckle-running, keeping pace with AKUT, a massive teenage Billi ape, his shoulders a foot higher than ours.

-POV CHARGING-- blasting through jungle. Goddamn, we're fast. Slipping through impossible gaps, contorting. Green jungle/black shadow/white light blurring past.

-A primal SCREAM, not quite human, and we're blasting out of shadow, and into a YOUNG NATIVE (16), hitting him like a fucking wrecking ball! Rolling gracefully to our feet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-YOUNG NATIVE, utterly terrified when he looks upon us. Starts begging, but we smash him headfirst into a tree trunk. Stunned, but trying to reason with us, desperate, pleading to no avail. Our fists blur at him as we...

SMASHCUT BACK TO:

PRESENT - EXT. THE LONG HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

-- SHAME on John's face. Eyes open, head resting on Jane's chest, her hand resting on his neck as he looks out into mist. Then stiffens. He hears FAINT VOICES in the jungle. John stands, hurries uphill.

EXT. IN FRONT OF THE LONG HOUSE - PRE-DAWN

John still can't tell what's going on. Then, emerging from the jungle above, like ghosts in breaking light, REFUGEES appear.

Staggering down. Exhausted, starving. John breaks into a run. Behind him, Jane runs up with the KUBA.

John and Kuba Men scooping up the weakest Refugees. George is here, scooping up a WOMAN who collapses with utter and absolute exhaustion. Jane and the women putting arms over their shoulders to support others. Jane looks at John: what is this?

EXT. THE KUBA VILLAGE - SUNRISE

Mobilizing to help TWENTY REFUGEES. Everyone wrapping bandages, helping them drink. Clear from the Kuba's careful treatments, this is nothing new Jane passes, John speaks softly. Thinking.

JOHN

They invited us here.

JANE

Not to see this.

We may notice SIX REFUGEES have bandages over their RIGHT HANDS, we definitely notice there are no children. John looks at Chief Muviro, who meets his eyes. This is what he didn't want to talk about.

EXT. UNDER A THATCHED CANOPY - DAY

Kuba facilitate interviews with the strongest refugees.
George writing; legal-scholar background on full display
as John, Muviro, and Jane translate tribal languages.

CHIEF MUVIRO

They forced my village to cut down
the forest. When there was nothing
left to take, they took *us*.

JOHN

There were no animals, no people,
no life when they were done.

(odd)

The Belgians even managed to steal
the color from the earth.

A WOMAN won't talk to the men. Jane takes over. Coaxes
her on. As Jane translates, George writes.

JANE

The soldiers took us. They raided
the Bembee next, but killed *all of*
them for fighting back. We were
forced to carry their goods, too.

Woman is emotionally blank. No energy left for tears.

JANE

I had--

(too hard, switches
to third person)

She had a baby girl, and couldn't
carry both. The soldiers took her
child from her breast, and left it
behind in the jungle to die.

John looks heartbroken by what this woman has endured.
Also looks on edge. Then, the Woman looks at him. And
breaks. Tears. Runny nose. Everything true about how it
feels to have your heart crushed beyond repair.

ELDEST WIFE

There are thousands by thousands
of stories like this, Tarzan.

John forces himself to watch as Jane grips both of the
Woman's hands. He speaks to Chief Muviro:

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
When did it begin?

CHIEF MUVIRO
Five years ago. The Bembee call it
the 'Lonkali'. The devastation.

John looks around the Village. At the Kuba. Growing more
nervous by the moment. Clearly worried about them.

JOHN
We need to leave.

Jane, looking at the Kuba, nods.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LONG HOUSE - MINUTE LATER

Kuba still tend to the Refugees. George and Jane pack, as
John eyes jungle above.

JANE
We'll have to get our hands on
another camera.

George nods. John, eyeing George coldly--

JOHN
-- absolutely not. We've heard
plenty to report back to the Queen
and put a stop to this.

GEORGE
Without proof, it'll be your word
against a king. But hard
photographic evidence combined
with your testimonials would cause
a firestorm in the European press.

JOHN
-- because of the information, or
their provenance?

GEORGE
Does it matter?

JANE
No. Finally our celebrity will
have some use.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

Word is ol' Leopold's having
financial difficulties. We burn
him in the press, turn him into a
pariah, his hold on Congo falls
apart. We should make for Bangala.
Once we get proof, we head north,
and out through French territory--

George stops. His head turns to meet John's fiery face.

JOHN

What's in Bangala?

GEORGE

(owning it now)
One of their slave trading hubs.

JOHN

You knew.

GEORGE

I'd heard whispers.

Whew, John's barely containing himself now.

JOHN

My wife is here.

GEORGE

You brought her--

JANE

-- I brought myself, and thank
God, or I'd have never known my
country was being enslaved.

Jane nods to George: she's in. John's fists curl.

JANE

I do wish you'd told us.

John's tensing further, coiling up now.

GEORGE

Sorry. I couldn't take the chance
he'd bail out. I've been trying to
find a way in here for two years--

-- John explodes! So fast, grabs GEORGE, runs him
backward, slamming him up against a tree, growling.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JOHN

*You will not put my wife in
further danger.*

George is a big man-- both his feet are off the ground,
tries to struggle. Zero chance against John, seeing red.

GEORGE

GET YOUR MITTS OFF ME!

JANE

STOP IT! JOHN! RIGHT NOW!

John tosses George five feet. Jane steps between them.

GEORGE

You'd sacrifice a whole country to
keep one person safe? I find that
downright revolting.

(re: Jane)

And obviously, I'm not alone.

George grabs his shit, stalks out the gates, heading up
into the Jungle. Guns jingling away. Jane grabs her bag.

JANE

I am not asking permission, John.

JOHN

Your safety is a luxury-- paid for
by my vigilance.

Jane does not like that. Jane starts saying quick
goodbyes to the Kuba as they walk out the gates.

JOHN

(trying to stay calm)
Jane, we are nowhere near as
powerful as the British
government. If we're caught, or
killed, this continues unnoticed.

JANE

Listen to yourself. Tarzan wants
to leave it to the courts while
his world gets destroyed? *This is
our home, John.*

The dam begins to burst--

JOHN

-- *our home is England.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JANE
Greystoke is a cold, sad place.

JOHN
My heritage is a duty I am charged
with upholding and passing on--

JANE
-- I do not want to raise our
family there!

JOHN
A family requires children. And we
have NONE!

Boom, hammer down, Jane turns dark as John.

JANE
What's happened to you?

JOHN
Be careful what you're asking me
to become. You will not like it.

A WARRIOR near the front entry looks back, WHISTLES. Then
YELLS: *some kind of a call*, that carries across the land.

Chief Muviro looks down on TEN FORCE PUBLIQUE, heading up
towards the village. *They're looking at Jane and John.*

JOHN shifts down with CHIEF MUVIRO, WASIMBU, and TEN
ARMED WARRIORS. Only Wasimbu and two others have
FLINTLOCK RIFLES.

JOHN
Jane. Go inside the fence.

John slows, pauses, turns, eyes uphill, past the village.
Hawking jungle. Inhales. Breaks into a run uphill.
Yelling to the village--

JOHN (O.S.)
-- EVERYONE DOWN!!!!

Wasimbu clicks his rifle. His Warriors tensing, Muviro
pausing. Looking down at Force Publique, non threatening
posture. Jane hurries over to Children, playing outside
the fence. Their MOTHERS hurrying in behind and--

-- TWENTY FORCE PUBLIQUE FIRE from the *jungle above!*
Charging downhill! Throwing grenades into the THICKET,
blowing holes to enter! Winging torches on huts.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Muviro, Wasimbu, and Warriors drop, fire, and fight.

JOHN spins trying to see Jane, spots her right as FORCE PUBLIQUE snatch her! Now he has one focus. Absolutely bulling his way through Force Publique to get to her. *He dodges most blows, not fast enough to dodge them all, shrugs them off as he sprints through enemies--*

-- A ROPE WINGS AROUND JOHN'S NECK!

CAPTAIN ROM yanks it. John's hands go up as he's ripped off his feet. Rom hands the rope off, loops legs. OTHERS loop arms. Like tying a bronco down as JOHN bucks.

Rom, tugs, all the ropes constrict. John's legs are yanked under. Arms back. All pressure on John's neck.

INSIDE THE FENCE, WARRIORS fight in thick smoke. Covering the women, children, and Refugees. Firing arrows. Hurling Sapa through fire and embers.

FROM THE HILLS, KUBA FARMERS race in courageously. But the KUBA are outgunned, and quickly overrun.

EXT. EDGE OF THE JUNGLE - DAY

Rom looks down at John, red-faced, can barely breathe, and straining with every muscle in his body to get free.

ROM

When you slipped away, I thought you were on to me. That we'd have a chessmatch. But it was dumb luck. Must've been; I've had more difficulty catching pigs in a pen.

Rom strips John of his KNIFE. Looks at the OPAR GODDESS. Smiles, passes it to LIEUTENANT #2 for safekeeping.

ROM

The mighty Tarzan. Some legend. Chief Mbonga will be disappointed.

Even though every muscle strains, that clicks for John.

ROM

Truth be told, I am as well.

John looks out on the tragedy. *Knowing they came for him. That this is his fault.*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROM
But a deal is a deal, and as you
are my key to civilizing the
entire Congo, I shouldn't
complain.

That lands on John, too. Rom sees KUBA WARRIORS, running
for cover-- blasted in smoke. Yells to his troops--

ROM
*-- don't kill all of their men. We
need porters!*

Rom, a boot on John's chest, his prize, looks out, gun in
hand, sees CHIEF MUVIRO, aiming a bow at one of his men.
Rom fires! Hitting Muviro, staggering him, he looks back
as Rom FIRES again! Shooting Chief Muviro dead. John sees
it all go down, flexing like a tired down bronco.

Warriors fire arrows, fighting, using smoke for cover.

ROM
For godsakes, use the children!

CLOSE ON-- Force Publique aiming rifles.

WARRIORS-- have no choice but to drop their weapons. And
give themselves up.

EXT. DOWNHILL - MINUTE LATER

Rom and EIGHT MEN, drag John, flexing with fury and
anguish. Rom eyes his STEAMSHIP, 1/4 mile downhill,
pulling up on the bank below. Wasimbu, Warriors, TEN KUBA
HOSTAGES, and Jane are being dragged onboard.

ROM
I'm still astounded you brought
your wife. Proof positive you
never sensed the invitation was a
set up. She truly is a jewel.

John's muscles bulge, rope fibers fray. He's actually
that strong. Rom flicks his PRAYER ROPE. Readying it.

ROM
Must've been something, the first
moment you laid eyes on her.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FORCE PUBLIQUE #1
(chortling)
After all the negresses and baboo--

-- the bastard gets whiplashed OUT OF FRAME! SOUND catches up, BOOM! George's massive handguns with Dum-Dum rounds! Another BULLET arrives, whiplashing A SECOND MAN. A THIRD. BOOM! BOOM! Rom scans for the source. They lift John, running down towards the boat.

OVER A FORCE PUBLIQUE SHOULDER-- looking uphill George appears from the jungle. His GUN BARREL FLASHES-- the guy rockets back, OUT OF FRAME then the BOOOM arrives!

WEASELLY FORCE PUBLIQUE
What guns's he got?

ROM
(knowingly)
Walker Colts.
(yelling to the ship)
Get the Maxim guns ready!!

EXT. A STAND OF BAMBOO - LOOKING DOWNHILL - DAY

George, duck-running forward. Behind him, KUBA FARMERS and MORE WARRIORS have answered the call for help, leapfrogging in. The KUBA GRAB RIFLES from DEAD MEN--

GEORGE
Focus fire on the engine! Right in front of the paddlewheel!

GEORGE steadies his gun on a rock. FIRES-- we follow the bullet at LIEUTENANT #2 (helping hold John), and--

-- as Lieutenant #2 buckles back, John's using the moment, rolling, all his might, yanking ROM back, but cinches Rom's special knot further. John *can't breathe at all*. But he is able to hop-roll-over a berm.

George, keeps blasting cover fire for John's escape.

ROM

And his men dive below a berm. Rom waves TWO OF THEM to run after John-- notices his own little finger has been shot off! His TWO MEN dive across the gap, towards the bamboo and John-- GEORGE BLASTS both of them!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rom, damn, spins back to look at his ship. Sees KUBA BULLETS pinging and sparking all around his ENGINE!

JOHN

Leap-rolling down through bamboo, can't breathe. Face red. Veins gorged. Throws his back against a sharp rock, rips his body up and down, trying to shred the ropes.

ROM

Duck-runs towards his boat, getting riddled with bullets! His SOLDIERS pinned down. Maxim Guns aimed at the snipers, but not firing. Rom yells down at them:

ROM

Open Fire! Tarzan's not with the snipers!

JOHN

Is not going to get free. Fighting it, collapsing-- as George slides in. Slaps him awake. Looks for the knife, not here, tries to loosen the knot. Johns straining everything.

GEORGE

Never seen a knot like this.
(right in his face)
You need to stay calm.

Yeah right. George runs off, heading towards TWO DEAD FORCE PUBLIQUE.

ROM

Running down, the boat still getting DRILLED WITH KUBA BULLETS. Lieutenant #1 finally sees-- Rom, exasperated, waving to the Kuba sniper area again--

ROM

OPEN! FIRE!

Lieutenant #1 waves to MEN manning MAXIM GUNS. *They open up, raking the sniper area with THOUSANDS OF ROUNDS!*

ROM leaps aboard, directing his men to drag Jane, Kuba Captives, and Wasimbu, all bound together, in front of the engine. Human shields.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Rom presses his missing finger nub on a boiler.
CAUTERIZING the wound. Looking uphill, he sees more Kuba
Warriors and Farmers arrive. Grabbing rifles. Ducking
behind rocks.

As MAXIM GUNS stop to reload, PING! A bullet, a perfect
shot, through a gap, hits the ENGINE AREA!

ROM

Shove off, shove off, we're a
sitting duck.

Rom, staring up, at the bamboo forest, as the ENGINES
CHURN them off the bank. He turns to--

JANE, hands bound behind her, twisting to see behind her.
ROM grabs her by the hair. Kuba yell, guns in their face.
Jane face-to-face with Rom, her neck and collarbones
holding more interest than her heaving bosom.

ROM

-- scream for me.

JANE

Like a damsel?

Jane takes a big breath, then spits in Rom's face! Rom
wipes it off. Smiles. Been a long time since he
encountered someone who doesn't fear him.

ROM

No matter. He's Tarzan. You're
Jane. I told him where we're
going; he's sure to follow.

EXT. THE BAMBOO GULLY - MINUTE LATER

George skids in, KNIFE IN HAND, John's eyes flutter
closed. Muscles flexing. Then his body goes slack. George
shakes him. Doesn't work. Digs the blade under the neck
ropes, SO TIGHT, has slide it in sideways. Sawing.

Air eases into John's lungs. SUCKING. Final rope cut.
John's body reacts, a huge gulp. George peeks up. Sees
MAXIM GUNS rake the sniper area. But the SOUND is
distant. John's eyes flash open. Heaving, tries to stand--

GEORGE

(holding John down)
-- you can't save her now. Not on
open ground against those guns!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

John slows his breathing, knows George is right. Stands, stumbles up the berm. The steamboat is gone. But the village-- is a disaster.

EXT. KUBA VILLAGE - DAY

George and John survey. Some Children cry. Others have the heartbreaking thousand yard stare. FORTY WOMEN are left. They finish putting out fires. Mourning.

GEORGE

I was too far away. Goddamn.
Goddamn, John.

George is horrified, but it's seasoned with something more: guilt. John, shirt torn, rope burns, scars on a body that would make Achilles jealous, grabs an IRON AXE.

FIVE KUBA WARRIORS gather WEAPONS. KWETE (30's) clearly their leader. Tucking SAPA KNIVES in belts.

JOHN

They came for me. I brought this.
I brought this to you-- again.

George doesn't know what that means, but can see John is a man crushed with shame.

KWETE

Only whites think that way. This
was done by Belgians, not you.

John nods. Thankful. George unhooks his holsters, sets the GUNS down on a STUMP. Slings a FORCE PUBLIQUE RIFLE on his back. Mutters softly.

GEORGE

Used all my ammo.

John ignores him, using a spear to draw a map in dirt. FIVE KUBA circle up.

JOHN

Rom's steamboat must take this
route to get to Mbonga's mountain.

GEORGE

You know where they're going?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
(ignoring George)
We'll have to cut through here.

John draws an overland route between two rivers. Kuba shake heads, use spear tips to trace a different line.

KWETE
This is the route.

JOHN
It's longer.

KUBA #2
Yes, but it is where they are building the railroad.

KUBA #3
We can ride it part of the way.

John nods, good news. He and the Kuba step over to KUBA WOMEN, who hand them supplies, making their desires known. George grabs an AXE, and follows.

GEORGE
John? JOHN?

John doesn't want to even look at George right now.

GEORGE
That's fine. I'm still comin'.

JOHN
You can't keep up.

Nothing friendly about George's tone right now.

GEORGE
I can't keep up with Tarzan, but I can keep up with you.

John marks Lieutenant #2's corpse. Heads down to his body. Snatches his OPAR KNIFE. Kwete eyes George.

KWETE
It is not wise. Falling behind means certain death.

GEORGE
I've spent half my life in the wilds. And none of you are better than me with a rifle.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE (CONT'D)
(muttering, eyeing
John)

He'd still be choked out redder n'
a cardinal's ass if that weren't
the truth.

John spins, locks furious eyes on George.

JOHN
*If it weren't for you, where would
Jane be? Where would the Kuba be?*

John tears himself away, jogs into brush, Kuba following.

GEORGE
(to himself)
That's why I'm here.

John-- hears it. George hustles after 'em. A WHISTLE
BLASTS and we...

CUT TO:

EXT. STEAMBOAT - AFTERNOON

KUBA HOSTAGES on the bottom deck. Wasimbu, Warriors,
farmers. A GREEN AND ORANGE BUTTERFLY flits up to the TOP
DECK, alights on Jane's shoulder. As if the jungle's
trying to keep her strong. Cuffed to a rail.

Jane looks out, sees FORCE PUBLIQUE stationed at various
spots. Some with binoculars. Looking for John. Jane
senses something, turns. Rom's right there, devouring her
with his eyes. He reaches out to her ripped dress. She
doesn't flinch.

ROM
Musn't have this.

Gathers pieces of her torn blouse, tucks them around to
make her more presentable. The butterfly remains. She
bitch-smiles 'thanks'. Loathing every moment he's near.

JANE
We are here by royal invitation.
Protected by your king--

ROM
-- Lady Clayton--

JANE
-- if anything happens to us--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROM

-- *I orchestrated the invitation.*

(that shuts her up)

I'm afraid so. There is a tribe of savages chomping at the bit to tear your husband apart. Perhaps even eat the man. After that, my parliament, John's queen, and your president will have no qualms about legalizing the army I will use to wipe them out and civilize this gorgeous land. Mr. Williams will not be left as a witness, which begs the question, where does that leave you?

Eyes sweep her collarbones. Tracing a bead of sweat down. Then looks down the stairs, at the Kuba.

ROM

You'll notice the natives aren't smiling.

Jane and Wasimbu's eyes meet. He speaks in Kuba.

WASIMBU

(If he frees you, you must jump.)

Jane looking at all of the Kuba, shakes her head: no.

ROM

(smiling at Wasimbu)

That one's your friend.

JANE

They all are.

ROM

I suppose their senses are far more attuned to danger than the wife of a British Lord.

JANE

Mine say you are a monster and a pervert who will soon be a corpse.

Rom runs his finger under the butterfly. Scoops it up.

ROM

By whose hand? The Colonel? You certainly can't mean your husband. Not anymore, at least.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JANE

A normal man can do the impossible
to save the woman he loves. My
husband-- is no normal man.

Rom lifts the shimmery wings. *Pinches them off.*

ROM

Neither am I.

Jane stares at the doomed creature on his finger. He
crunches the wings up, blows the dust in her face.

EXT. DENSE JUNGLE - LATE AFTERNOON

John running, in the lead. No path, skirting MASSIVE TREE
TRUNKS. LOUD with insects and animals. A TWO FOOT WALKING
STICK INSECT picks its way along a vine. DRAGONFLIES
shimmer past MONKEYS and GOLDEN POTTOS.

John's path is blocked by a huge FICUS ROOT spreading
out, he pulls himself up, Kuba spread, doing the same.
John's foot catches a vine, he misses a hold, falls down
in the mud. Looks back: George isn't here yet. Looks up
at Kuba #1, amused since Tarzan fell. Kweke drops a hand
for John, who's not too proud to take it.

KWETE

You should have fallen in front of
George, so he would feel better.

George appears, crashing through vines and nettles. If he
had a cowboy hat, he'd be throwing it on the ground.

EXT. A CRAGGY LOOKOUT - DAY

John and the Kuba reach a precipice, the cliff drops
straight down two hundred feet, then flattens out. But
the HUGE TREES on the ground have grown up so high, their
TOP BRANCHES are within leaping distance.

Beyond, the canopy looks like an undulating blanket of
green as far as the eye can see. Except for *one stripe of
cleared land*: RAILROAD TRACKS slicing through a mile off.
FIFTEEN MILES away, they see the SMOKE TRAIL of a train.

They hear George stumble out. Arms cut. Hair filled with
burrs. Panting, trying to hide it, catches his foot,
disappears in grass. Pops back up as if it didn't happen.
Jogs up, stopping.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE

It's a different-- kinda-- wilds.

Looks out, sees the train. Trying not to breathe hard.
Which, in George's state, is pretty tough to pull off.

GEORGE

How are we going to catch a train
going forty miles an hour?

KUBA #4

What is a mile?

GEORGE

It's-- never mind. I hope you got
ponies in the thicket down there.

JOHN

There are no horses in the Congo.

GEORGE

Why the hell not?

JOHN

They die.

And with that, John, and the Kuba, sprint forward, and
leap out-- into the highest branches of the canopy.
Landing smoothly, and continuing. George peers over the
lip, straight down to the ground hundreds of feet below!
John looks back. This is goodbye. Glad to be rid of him.

GEORGE

Shit--

-- George leaps out, too. Lands on a huge branch, slips,
steadies. And does his best to keep up.

They stay at the top of the canopy. Made easier by the
STAGGERING SIZE of the ancient old trees, with thick wide
branches growing close to each other, and WOODSY VINES
growing off the bottom of most branches, hanging down.

George, being very careful not to look down, loses his
balance, just for a moment, but looks down. Shit! Looks
ahead. Kuba #2 is watching him.

KUBA #2

George! You are scared of heights?

GEORGE

Yeah! No shame in it either!

EXT. TREE TOPS - SUNSET

Moving towards the TRACKS, a slice, cleared of trees. When they're overhead, John and the Kuba stop. IN KUBA, John explains the plan. They spread out. George doesn't have a clue what's happening. They hear and see the TRAIN: cookin'!

John finds a spot he likes. A BRANCH spanning over the tracks, with a WOODSY VINE, fused to the underside, stretching down. Kuba find similar set ups. Then all yank up, hard as they can on VINES below their trunk, wrestling them from tangles and the earth, and drawing them up.

George yanks a vine attached right next to John's. Kuba and John hack the root/dirt end off, then wrap the vines around waists. George hacks his end, too. Wraps it. Train's a comin'. Fast!

GEORGE

Physics of this don't square. Even if the vine holds, you can't get goin' fast enough.

JOHN

I'm not jumping from this branch--

John nods up to ANOTHER BRANCH, thirty feet higher.

JOHN

-- I'm swinging from that one.

George looks up as John climbs higher. The Kuba all doing the same, climbing up with balletic grace. Fuck it, George climbs up after John. Kuba smile. George, so damned tenacious, they can't help but like this guy.

THE BRANCH - THIRTY FEET HIGHER

John leap-climbs. Above the canopy, adds to the vertigo. George follows, looking down. Tracks so small they look like a line of chopsticks.

John unties his VINE from his waist. George too.

JOHN

Don't do this. There is no margin for error.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

George shrugs, he's doing it. ENGINE BARRELS UNDERNEATH, CARS FILLED WITH METAL RAILS blur past, they yell:

JOHN

*Fine. Then wrap your arms and legs
around me.*

GEORGE

*I'm not ridin' on your back like
some kinda strumpet!*

John swats George's vine from his hand, it swings doooooown. Seems like forever. George heaves. Pissed. No choice, wraps his arms around John.

GEORGE

*I would've been fine, so don't act
like you just saved my life.*

JOHN

Lift your legs.

Gawd! George curses as he wraps his legs around John. Like an angry backpack. John yanking, testing the vine.

GEORGE

*Quit that. Bad enough without you
tryin' to cut a rug with me.*

JOHN

Get in front.

GEORGE

Why?

JOHN

Suit yourself.

George knows John's probably got a reason, so he unwraps himself, steps in front of John, grabs the vine.

John, behind George, makes sure the vine running up is taught, anchored to the branch out and below-- looks back at passenger cars. John whacks George's thighs.

JOHN

Thighs up. Squeeze it tight.

George can't tell if John's milking it or not. But he hates it. Lifts his legs. Squeezes the vine.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE

Quit pantin' in my damn ear.

Around them, KUBA leap. End of the train sweeping in, composed of THREE OPEN TOPPED PASSENGER CARS filled with ENSLAVED NATIVES. And ONE LONG CLOSED-TOP CABOOSE.

John leaps, we DROP WITH THEM-- holy-- shiiiiit! Gaining speed, a pendulum. BELOW, FIRST CAR OF CHAINED NATIVES streaks past. SECOND CAR. The THIRD, we've nearly matched speed. Over THE LAST CAR, George lets go--

JOHN

George, no!

-- George sticks the landing with a CLANG! John lands, soft as a spider. All the Kuba land softly behind them. George clamps John on the back. Exhilarated.

JOHN

There goes the element of surprise.

INT. THE CABOOSE - CONTINUOUS

Windows open. Filled with BELGIAN SOLDIERS. All armed, and looking up. REDHEADED MAN stands, heads forward.

EXT. ABOVE HIM - FRONT OF THE CABOOSE DAY

John looks out over the THREE RAIL CARS OF NATIVES. Packed in, chained up knee-to-knee tightly. John darkens. Then the REDHEADED MAN'S HEAD pops up. Looks at John, who snatches him up, and tosses him off the train!

INT. CABOOSE- CONTINUOUS

Twenty soldiers see Redheaded Man screaming past the windows. What the hell? They look forward--

-- where John's already entering the door. Soldiers forced to line up, he gets 'em one-on-one. Good for John-- bad for the Belgians. John's not fighting like Tarzan yet. *But the power and speed of the most physically gifted man in the world is on full display. Fists like brickbats! Knocking heads!*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Behind him, George snatches a HANDGUN, pistol whipping. Belgians get smart, they try to pull back into a crescent, TWO FIRE! First shot hits ONE of their own guys, the other blasts a hole between TWO CONSCRIPTS.

Other Belgians, aiming handguns through the chaos, trying to get a shot on John and George. Almost got it when--

-- *THE KUBA barrel in from the rear entry! Wrecking Conscripts with their own fighting style, raising terrifying Sapa Knives-- aimed right at BELGIAN CONSCRIPTS faces-- and they give up.*

THE REST see George, gun up-- beside the best fighter they've ever seen. All Belgians drops guns. Hands up!

JOHN

Give me the keys to the chains.

Soldiers eyes suddenly grow more confident, George turns and sees a BELGIAN GOLIATH standing in the door. George and John, without communicating, switch spots.

GEORGE

Want me to shoot him?

JOHN

I've got him.

(recklessly)

You shall have one warning, big boy; you do not want to fight me.

GOLIATH swings at John, who dodges, kicks his knee, pitching Goliath's face forward, into the path of John's fist, blasting upward, a haymaker to end all haymakers!

GOLIATH crashes against the side windows. John forward-donkey kicks him so hard *the wooden barrier between the windows bursts out-- and Goliath flies out of the train.*

John turns back to everyone. Dark as the devil. Even George and the Kuba blanch at what he just did. An OFFICER steps forwards. Looks like a librarian. Hands shake as he passes John a CHAIN OF KEYS.

JOHN

You're the commander?

OFFICER/RUSSIAN ENGINEER

(thick accent)

N-no! An engineer. For the bridge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JUG-EARED SOLDIER
Don't tell him anything!

George looks at him. Cocks his gun.

GEORGE
Dang, those are mighty big
earlobes you got there, son.

BLAM! Guy grabs his ear. Looks at his hand: bloody.

GEORGE
Think that was a lucky shot?

JOHN
How many men have you enslaved to
build this bridge?

RUSSIAN ENGINEER
(ashamed)
They have eight hundred workers
there. Plus this group of natives.

George eyes him ferociously.

RUSSIAN ENGINEER
Please, I came here to build
bridges for the army, I have no
part in that--

JOHN
-- what army?

Engineer looks at Belgians, watching him.

RUSSIAN ENGINEER
I'm not supposed to know.

George, handling it perfectly, softens his voice.

GEORGE
The only thing necessary for evil
is *good men* doin' nothin'.

JOHN
Do *something*.

INT. THE CABOOSE OFFICE - MOMENT LATER

Russian Engineer ROLLS OUT BLUEPRINTS FOR THE RAILROAD.
Marked along the tracks are: 50 NEW FORTS *lining rivers*.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RUSSIAN ENGINEER

The railroad, combined with the navigable rivers, will put sixty percent of Congo within three days of a fort. The forts are done, but the army has not come. They were supposed to be here months ago.

GEORGE

Where are they?

Russian Engineer shrugs.

JOHN

How many?

RUSSIAN ENGINEER

50,000. And--

George and John look stunned by the number.

RUSSIAN ENGINEER

(hating this part)
-- they aren't regular soldiers. They're mercenaries; men known to enjoy killing for a living.

Looking the forts on the map. *All. Over. The country.*

GEORGE

Fifty forts. 1,000 bloodthirsty bastards at each one armed with the maxim gun and smokeless powder repeating rifles. Jesus H. Christ, if they sweep in here--

-- George just exhales. Awful. John's wheels are turning.

EXT. THE OPEN CARS - DAY

Chains are dragged through rings, freeing the captives. John, George, and Kuba #1 and #2, working together. Hand over fist. Hard to see men enslaved. Feels great to free them. John and George's eyes meet: good shit.

RISING UP

John and George climb over the cars, wind pressing chests as they move forward-- to take the train.

EXT. THE TRAIN ENGINE - SUNSET

Barrelling along, gaining precious time. Giraffes and Elephants. Like a lush green 'Out of Africa' One-sheet. TWO BEMBEE, with engineers hats on their heads, drive the train. The TWO BELGIAN ENGINEERS, filthy, are now shoveling coal from the tender.

Heading towards MBONGA'S MOUNTAIN looming in the distance. Dark clouds over it. George, standing on a walkway, studies it beside John, looks very conflicted.

JOHN

That's where Rom is taking Jane.

GEORGE

What did you call it?

JOHN

Chief Mbonga's mountain. He is an exceptional warlord.

GEORGE

What's he want with Jane?

JOHN

Nothing. He wants me. Years ago, he put a bounty on my head.

GEORGE

What did you do to him?

John's looks out. Uncomfortable answering. So he doesn't.

JOHN

If Captain Rom gets me to Mbonga, he'll be granted access to Opar. At the top of that mountain.

GEORGE

What's in Opar?

JOHN

It is both a place, and a thing. It means 'unbreakable'.

GEORGE

Diamonds.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

Yes. Rom said I was his key to civilizing the country.

GEORGE

Take it the diamonds'd be enough to pay for those mercenaries.

JOHN

And more. If Rom gets his army, he will enslave and destroy this entire land. All he needs-- is me.

George looks out at Mbonga's Mountain. Dark, ominous. John looks down at grasses, waving in the wind, as we...

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK - EXT. JUNGLE - IMAGES OF TARZAN'S PAST - DAY

-LOOKING DOWN ON OUR FISTS. Grass a blur below. Knuckle-running, leading AKUT through dense jungle.

-Flying into the Young Native again. Throwing him against a tree. Young Native, hands up, tries to reason, begs, since he's looking at a man, or a version of one:

-Seeing TARZAN IN FULL, tanned, scarred, terrifying, as he unleashes a fusillade of blows to Young Native's face, Tarzan's fists generating ungodly power. The teenager doesn't stand a chance. Tarzan lets him stagger to his feet. To feel the fear. Akut beside him now. Growling.

-Young Native draws THE OPAR KNIFE, hands shaking. Sets it down. A peace offering. Tarzan steps over it and mercilessly pile drives him into the ground, crunching ribs. It's terrible. The Young Native WAILS from the pain. OUR knee on his chest. OUR FIST closing over a ROCK. The ROCK smashing down. Then again.

-On Tarzan's brutal, psychotic eyes. A murderer.

PRESENT - THE TOP DECK - INSIDE A FOG BANK - MORNING

Rom's men, front and back, keep up their vigil. Won't be easy to spot John through this fog.

Lieutenant #1 pushes Jane towards a table. A CIVILIZED BREAKFAST is set. Fascinating FRUITS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Turns her roughly, so she can see AN ARM BAR for loading supplies, supporting a METAL CAGE HANGING over water.

And Wasimbu is inside. On his haunches. Stoic. Rom exits his room, drying his hands on a fresh towel.

ROM

Good morning, mademoiselle. I was hoping you'd join me for breakfast. Please sit.

JANE PORTER

Please go to hell and rot.

ROM

There's that American ugliness I'm so fond of; chest pounding and empty threats. Remember the Alamo!

He nods to Lieutenant #1, who forces Jane into a chair. She sees Rom has a SHARP KNIFE for his food. Jane has a blunt BUTTER KNIFE for hers.

ROM

Good conversation and a pleasant disposition keeps the negro alive. Or, I'll drop him to drown.

He whips his PRAYER ROPE off. Places it on the table. Eating with refined manners, now. Jane studies the rope.

ROM

Madagascar spider silk, ounce for ounce twice the strength of steel--

THUNDER rumbles from somewhere ahead.

ROM

-- my priest purchased it in Jerusalem for me when I was ten.

JANE

Sounds like you and your priest were awfully close.

ROM

He taught me kings are the closest a man gets to God. Followed by clergy, then soldiers.

JANE

I'd put you on the bottom rung.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

Rom is enjoying this battle of wits. The rumbling again, but it isn't thunder. It's something HUGE CRASHING down. Mists thin, revealing SMOKE, FIRE.

ROM

A soldier's duty is to keep His Majesty's soul pristine. Few things are more noble, and more rewarding for a man of my lot.

Rom smiles, Jane looks out. They're floating through a wasteland. Ash on mud. Drained of color. Not a blade of green for half a mile on either side.

ROM

We both know the son of a potato farmer cannot become a king, nor a bishop. But a soldier?

Jane looking at hell, but working to remain unaffected.

ROM

A soldier can become a legend.

JANE

Would you pass the preserves?

Rom reaches for the jar, Jane snatches the PRAYER ROPE to fling it overboard. *Like a striking snake, Rom grabs her hand and releases. Her wrist is noosed.* He tut-tuts. Holds his palm out. Showcasing the pads of his fingers. A stripe of SCARS.

ROM

I added the rubber pads. Before, when I would bear down, the rope would cut into me like a garrote--

-- he drags her hand to the preserves, pulling her over the table, cutting off circulation. Jane grabs the jar, and like a marionette, he pulls her back into her seat.

Rom grabs her other hand, *pries the SHARP KNIFE she's palmed away.* He whips the rope off. Back round his wrist. Then continues with his meal as if nothing happened.

Passing burning stumps. Jane, at the far edges of visibility, sees ELEPHANTS, chained, getting whipped as they drag HUGE ANCIENT TREES from the earth. Cracking. Thundering down. TOO-SKINNY NATIVES sawing trees by hand. Jane tries not to wince. Knows Rom is watching, waiting for her to react. Relishing any emotion.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROM

On my last trip to Europe, I went to a lecture at the Sorbonne. The King of France got a soft-clap. Henry Morton Stanley, a bastard orphan by birth, got a standing ovation. Why?

Takes a bite, chews. Won't talk with his mouth full.

ROM

People love an underdog.

Then Jane hears CLASSICAL MUSIC.

ROM

While few are born blue bloods like your husband, *everyone* can relate to a low-born scrapper who rescued his bankrupt king and the honor of his nation. That is a man who will never be forgotten.

A VICTROLA plays on the bank ahead, a COMPLETED FORT in the background. BELGIAN OFFICERS eating lunch under a canvas fly tent. CHAINS WITH SHACKLES looped in piles.

*

ROM

My army arrives in three days, at which point the governor will be dismissed, and I shall take over.

All around the fly tent, are huge piles of IVORY. Jane goes to the rail, she and Wasimbu are looking at piles of ELEPHANT TUSKS. And the ends-- are still red.

ROM

All I must do is deliver Tarzan to Chief Mbonga.

Jane's face flashes with recognition. But she keeps her body turned away.

ROM

Now. I know of his obsessive desire to kill the White Ape. But I've yet to figure out why. What did your wild man do?

JANE

I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

Rom waves Lieutenant #1, who steps to a HANDLE, latched to the chain running out to the cage. He hits a release. Wasimbu drops a foot before a latch catches.

ROM
Be civil and answer my question.

JANE
There are certain things about his past he never talks about.

ROM
Even with you?

JANE
Especially with me.

Rom-- finds this intriguing. Looming close. Then, Jane looks down, he's deftly re-shackled her to the rail. Dances off, down the stairs. Lieutenant #1 follows. Jane heaves. Looks at Wasimbu.

WASIMBU
(You have become a very good liar.)

INT. CABOOSE/ARMORY - DAY

John and the Kuba pass out weapons to FREED NATIVES. George opens a footlocker. A FANCY NEW LEBEL RIFLE inside with BULLETS. Sets his Mauser down. Upgrading. Lifts BULLETS out, and below, finds LEDGERS, and a CODE OF CONDUCT MANUAL. He flips them open.

EXT. AFRICAN SAVANNAH - DAY

The train hissing to a stop as it nears a bend. The tracks turning away from Mbonga's mountain.

EXT. THE TRAIN - DAY

Hissing to a stop, John and the Kuba step off a CAR. From above, freshly armed NATIVES watch.

JOHN
You should not go where I must go.

GEORGE approaches from the CABOOSE. Carrying TWO BOOKS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KWETE

They have our families, too.

A stormy look on George's face as he holds the books up.

GEORGE

This says goods shipped to Congo
cannot be traded with the natives.

(flipping pages)

This says any native caught with
currency gets put to death, so by
law, it's illegal for a Belgian to
pay a native for their work. I'm
holdin' incontrovertible evidence
of state-sanctioned slavery, and
crimes against humanity.

JOHN

You've got your hard proof.

GEORGE

(zero triumph)

If we don't stop Rom now, there
won't be much left to save.

John turns back to the Kuba--

JOHN

-- seven will be considered a
raid. None of us would survive.

The Kuba look out at hills, rising up to the wettest area
on the entire African continent.

KWETE

You should not do this.

JOHN

I have no choice. I'd lose two
days going around.

GEORGE

Around what?

KWETE

(spitting the word)

The Mangani.

George's face is a mask. Kwete looks at John, then looks
at the train. Packed with a NATIVE ARMY.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

KWETE

You will save our families. And we
will save theirs.

JOHN

(nods to the Kuba)
Boma, then.

Hard ass warrior nods all around. Then Kwete says
something to John in Kuba he doesn't like. At all. George
recognizes two words: 'Mbonga' and 'Mbolongo'. John stews
as George turns to Kuba #2.

GEORGE

What'd Kwete just say?

JOHN

(interrupts sharply)
He said they'll help you get your
books home.

Clear that's not what Kwete said, but George doesn't
press, and passes BOTH BOOKS to the Kuba.

JOHN

George--

GEORGE

-- I never left a partner in the
lurch; don't plan on starting now.

Maybe, just maybe, John likes it. The Kuba certainly do.

JOHN

If we don't return--

GEORGE

-- we will. With your families.

JOHN

(growing annoyed)
You must send those to my
grandfather.

The Kuba take the books.

JOHN

I'm still not waiting for you.

George shrugs, spots a GOLD COIN on the ground.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE

Fine by me--

Reaches down, wipes the dirt off the reveal the VISAGE OF LEOPOLD II. Stamped with his name.

GEORGE

-- I'd rather watch Hyenas eat my innards than be in your debt.

Looks up, John's already running. Kuba smile at George as he takes off after John. Muttering curses (of course).

ON THE TRAIN-- The tribes CHEER George and John! The BEMBEE pull the cord, the TRAIN WHISTLES, WHEELS CHURN.

ON A RISE

John and George head towards Mbonga's mountain, looking back at an immense view of Africa. The tracks bending, the train chugging off towards a SLASH OF DESTRUCTION ten miles distant. FIRES BURN. Forests cleared along the confluence of TWO RIVERS and a BRIDGE under construction.

John reacts with fury. George with guilt. But they can take solace in the fact that the rebellion-- has begun.

EXT. SPORADIC JUNGLE - DAY

John and George running up, up, up through the wettest part of the Congo. One of George's boots appears to be splitting as they run over a lip, looking out over a valley. GORILLAS, BABOONS. Herds of ORYX, ELEPHANTS. An astounding cornucopia of life.

WATERFALL MIST creates RAINBOWS all around. Bright flowers, technicolor BIRDS, WESTERN BLACK RHINOS (*extinct as of 2011*) roll like dogs in mud. BONGO (antelope) munch away. John, still on the move, takes a moment to appreciate the splendor. George is too winded to notice anything but the ZEBRAS, shivering flies off.

GEORGE

-- what I wouldn't give for one regular horse. How come no one rides Zebras, anyway?

JOHN

The difference goes far deeper than stripes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN (CONT'D)
A zebra attack continues until it
has killed the threat.

They hear a LION ROAR ahead of them. George slows.

JOHN (cont'd)
There is no margin for mercy here,
not when any injury turns the
fiercest predator into prey.

GEORGE
Even lions?

JOHN
Yes, but those aren't lions.

GEORGE
I know what a--

-- OSTRICHES run out. The MALE roars like a lion (true).

GEORGE
You're tellin' me those are
deadly?

JOHN
They leap up, knock the threat to
the ground, then disembowel them
with three inch talons.

GEORGE
No ostrich is killin' me.

JOHN
Then try and ride one.

GEORGE
You'd like that wouldn't ya?

John looks at George-- and nods.

EXT. VALLEY - DUSK

John and George splash through puddles. Small waterfalls
everywhere. Large one in the distance-- John's hearing
imperceptible sounds. Inhaling.

And then-- a smell hits George like a fist.

GEORGE
Whew. That is one odious aroma.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN
Keep your voice low.

GEORGE
That's them?

John nods. Whatever John's heading into weighs heavily.

GEORGE
The Kuba don't scare easily. Sure
we can't just high tail it around?

George hears hooting warnings. Uh-oh.

JOHN
No, they would hunt us down.

The warnings spread to a CACOPHONY. John slows, studying
a ridge line above. George lock and loads his rifle.

JOHN
You can't shoot them. Mangani are
the only animal besides man who
relish taking revenge. Kill one,
the rest will tear you to pieces.

GEORGE
(exasperated)
Then, how do you want to play it?

JOHN
There is no strategy. Their leader
will come down. And we will fight.

FIVE MANGANI crest the hill, looking down on the
invaders. They're truly frightening. George's first look
at the rarest primates on earth.

GEORGE
You're gonna fight one of those?

John nods. George studies the Mangani. Standing tall.

JOHN
If I can best their leader, we may
have an army of our own.

GEORGE
One big 'if'. I mean, are those--
(looking closely)
-- fangs.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

John's posture changes, slips his shoes off with his feet. Toes grip the earth, hunches close to the ground.

GEORGE

You know which one it is?

JOHN

You will too, when you see Akut.

John's breathing changes. A MIGHTY ROAR ECHOES from beyond. George looks at John: Akut? John nods.

JOHN

He was my brother once. Now, I
will be considered a deserter.
*Whatever happens, you can't
interfere. Understand?*

George nods. At the top of the incline AKUT appears. Six feet tall. Massive rippling muscles.

GEORGE

Christ almighty, that's Akut?!

JOHN

(growling)
You will promise me.

GEORGE

You had one when I nodded.

Akut charges. Knuckle running down. Boom. BOOM. BOOM!

GEORGE

John. You're not really gonna--

-- John charges forward, fast, rushing to meet his old friend. Now an enemy. Both throw themselves at each other, airborne, meeting with a gnarly crunch of muscle and sinew. PUNCHING, BITING. SEPARATING.

Circling, fiercely primal. Growling. Akut lunges, John, fists together, axe chops down, smashing Akut's head as he bites John's shoulder. Deep and savage. Blood streams. John ducks, grabs a handful of fur, slips around Akut, ARMS around his neck, to choke him out--

-- but he's not the man he used to be. AKUT slowly--
peeeeels John's hands off, lifts him, smashes him to the ground. On him in a flash, beating. Insanely painful!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

George, rifle in hand, looks at John as Akut steps back and HOWLS. Beating his chest. Making sure the others saw what he just did to Tarzan! Jogs over to George. Eyeing him. *You want some of this, bitch?* George, like with the gorillas, looks down. Very worried about his partner.

Akut lopes back to John, looks him in the eyes. Grabs an ARM. Vengefully dislocates John's shoulder. John stifles a scream. Barely. Akut saunters off, back to his troop. George hurries over, skids in beside him.

GEORGE

How bad is it?

JOHN

I've had worse.

GEORGE

You've lost worse than this?

John nods, in pain. Mangani disappear over the hill.

GEORGE

Are they gonna come back?

JOHN

No. It was decisive.

GEORGE

Those bites get infected, you'll have problems. Then there's this.

George takes John's arm. John looks ahead, stoically. George yanks, John's eyes flash in agony.

EXT. NEAR A STREAM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON JOHN'S HANDS in firelight. His fingers hold a LEAFCUTTER ANT against a GASH on his chest. Its PINCHERS bite the gash. He spins the head off. He's got a line of ANT-HEAD SUTURES over one of his jagged cuts.

RUBBER VINES and two piles of flowers beside him: FEVERFEW, and MORNING GLORY. He puts the Morning Glories on a ROCK in the fire to cook, hands the Feverfew back to GEORGE, ant-suturing a BITE on John's back. Both sit by a line of LEAFCUTTER ANTS, crossing a stream.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

When you finish suturing, chew the feverfew into a poultice, and press it over the cut.

GEORGE

(eyeing the sutures)
These won't hold, once we get moving.

George notices John's popping each ant body in his mouth.

GEORGE

Are you eating them?

JOHN

They taste like bacon.

GEORGE

We get us a nice fat snake, I'll grub on that. It's good meat. But I'm not eatin' no damn ants.

John breaks up Morning Glory ash, then squeezes RUBBER VINE over it. Stirs it on the hot rock. They keep working, like two rug knitters. George, thinking John's not watching, pops an ant in his mouth. Not bad.

JOHN

Are you aware that you always say something you're not going to do right before you do it?

GEORGE

That's new. Only since I've been saddled with your company.

Chewing feverfew, covering John's wounds with poultice. John rips the arms off his shirt, uses them as bandages. Dons the remainder of it, favoring his arm. He swings.

GEORGE

How bad?

JOHN

Manageable. You'd be hard pressed to find anyone with a higher tolerance for pain.

GEORGE

Because of the Mangani?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

John nods.

GEORGE
And I used to complain about
gettin' the belt.

Since there's nothing funny about it, it's kind of funny.

JOHN
Pass me your boots.

George pulls his wrecked boots off. Socks dark with blood
as he rolls them off, revealing his feet: pulped.

JOHN
You should've told me.

GEORGE
Didn't want you to speed up.

Both crack smiles. George cleans his feet in the creek,
John begins wiping hot rubber all over George's boots.

GEORGE
Those flowers have sulfur in 'em?

John nods. George is impressed. Knows what John's doing
now. John tears more strips of his shirt off, hands them
to George-- who uses them to wrap his feet. Then John
uses his hands to wipe the rubber over his wounds.

JOHN
Once it sets, they'll hold.

GEORGE
Sharp fix.

George wipes rubber on John's back. Burns his fingers,
keeps going anyway.

GEORGE
What'd Kwete say at the train?
(off John's reaction)
He said something about Mbonga
that chapped your ass to no end.

JOHN
Have you told me everything?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

GEORGE

I'll tell you whatever you want; I fought in the Civil War at fourteen, then against Maximilian in Mexico, then the Indians, which I ain't proud of to say the least. I've been a minister, lawyer, and politician; seen most everything there is to see, heard everything else, and in all that livin', I've never met a powder keg like you.

John, carving treads in rubber, eyes George, knows there's more. George can't hold the look, eyes the fire.

GEORGE

I'm not asking out of curiosity; I need to know what I'm walkin' into, and who I'm walkin' with.

JOHN

He told me to keep my head when I see Mbonga.

GEORGE

Why the warning?

JOHN

Our feud goes back a long time. Mbonga kept trying to catch me, but never came close. So-- the Mbolongo attacked a Kuba village.

GEORGE

They found out you'd grown close.

John nods.

GEORGE

But you didn't go after him?

JOHN

If I had killed a Mbolongo king, they'd have made war on the Kuba. The Mbolongo are the Spartans of Africa. It would've been a slaughter.

GEORGE

You left to save them.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

John's answer here is a study of conflict. Guilt, anger, embarrassment, brutality, and an admission of madness.

JOHN

I left so I wouldn't kill Mbonga.

GEORGE

Anyway?

John-- nods. Jesus! George really starting to understand his partner. Doesn't look remotely comfortable with it.

GEORGE

And now?

JOHN

Now they have my wife.

GEORGE

Puts us in a hell of a pickle,
doesn't it?

John nods, eyes his rubber. Satisfied, stands. Looks down at his boots, sitting by the fire. George pulls his nicely rubbered boots on. Smiles at John. Heaves, since John's gone. Then George notices-- *John has left his boots behind.*

EXT. WIDE ON A RIVER - DAWN

Storm clouds gather, pregnant with rain. The river, half a mile wide, runs towards MBONGA'S MOUNTAIN. CROCS on banks. HIPPOS in the water. Watching ROM'S STEAMBOAT.

ON THE TOP DECK, Jane's tied to a rail. Wasimbu, still in his cage. Rom's chatting with SOLDIERS on the deck below. Looks up at Jane, heads towards the stairs.

WASIMBU

(He is coming to untie you. You
must jump. Even with the hippos.)

JANE

(None of us are out of this until
we are all out of this.)

WASIMBU

(If he has no bait, Rom will have
to come after you-- into Mangani
lands, and Tarzan's jungle.)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Wasimbu prepares himself. Jane looks at the CHAIN running from the cage down to a winch on the deck.

JANE
(I'll do it. But only if you
promise to run for help.)

WASIMBU
(I am in a cage, Jane.)

Lieutenant #1 arrives ahead of Rom. Unshackles Jane.

JANE
Is Captain Rom ready for more
scintillating conversation?

Jane scans the bank-- spots partially submerged TREES--

LIEUTENANT #1
Be grateful. He's the only reason
you haven't been serviced, yet.

JANE
Serviced?
(calling out to Rom)
Is that what your mother would
call it?

Rom smiles. Jane fixes her hair back, looks at Wasimbu.

JANE
(Promise me you won't stay and
fight.)

LIEUTENANT #1
(right in her face)
Shut your mouth.

JANE
(-- will you round up the tribes?)

Lieutenant #1 steps to the CRANK. METAL CHAIN SPOOLED UP--

ROM
You're leaving him no choice.

WASIMBU
(I promise.)

Lieutenant #1 yanks the HANDLE. Chain unspools. Cage hits the water, KAPLOOSH! Sinking with Wasimbu inside and Jane dives in! HIPPOS spin. Rom can't believe it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BURLY FORCE PUBLIQUE
I'll get the wench!

He tears his shirt off, a beautiful dive into the water. Rom shakes his head as a HIPPO turns to the splash; only its ears and back visible. Force Publique lift rifles.

ROM
Save your bullets for the clucker,
they won't pierce a hippo hide.

BURLY FORCE PUBLIQUE crawl-strokes towards where Jane went under. A powerful swimmer, but the HIPPO is closing. In front of him, SECOND HIPPO, out of nowhere, proves John's lecture: with one MASSIVE SWIRLING WHITEWATER CHOMP, Burly Force Publique is gone!

FORCE PUBLIQUE start firing--

ROM
Cease Fire! You'll hit the girl!

Still can't see Jane, HIPPOS sure do, they turn-- SLAM the cage so hard the CHAIN wags like leather, sound of crushed metal carries from underwater and the top of the cage breaks the surface as Hippos slam it from two sides!

Can't see much but churning froth! Then Jane appears, gasping for air, scrambling atop the CAGE. Terrified!

JANE
I'm sorry! Crank me up! Please!

Rom nods. MEN crank the handle. Cage rises. Wasimbu gasps, hanging to the top slats, legs up. Cage rising, 2/3 out, bent, coming up on its side, odd-- Rom sees the chain has been wrapped around the lock, all the weight on it. Realizes what's happening at the exact moment Jane jumps up, landing hard as Wasimbu yanks down, and--

THE CHAIN SNAPS THE LOCK! Wasimbu kicks the door open, he and Jane dive out! Back into hippo infested waters, swimming underwater, heading towards the bank. Rom waves his ship to come around. So damn impressed.

ROM
This woman!

SHIP TURNS, heading towards shore, towards the TREE TRUNKS, mostly underwater. No Jane or Wasimbu. Still holding their breath. Rom marks their location by the HIPPOS-- gray backs cruising after them. Fast!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

We see Jane's foot kick down into THE MATRIX OF ROOTS as the Hippos attack! Massive jaws mashing through roots! Heads whipping the trunks back and forth! Jesus!

Rom's face drops. Looks like his prize is gone. The attack astounding in it's power and fury. Time ticking.

And then-- he hears Jane and Wasimbu inhale, marks them-- duck stumbling in waist-deep water, on the other side of the tree (they swum under it)-- Rom's men start FIRING at Wasimbu! Jane heaving, pushing Wasimbu ahead of her, using her own body to shield him from being shot--

ROM

-- stop firing, you dolts!

-- Wasimbu and Jane dive into the jungle, and disappear.

EXT. WIDE OVER MOUNTAIN FOREST - MOMENT LATER

-- SOUND OF GUNFIRE ECHOES. Over undulating trees. Over stony outcroppings. Petering out as the distance grows.

ON A ROCKY RISE

John jogs up, stiffening as he looks out over STEEP-WALLED CANYONS, cut by tributaries gushing down towards the WIDE RIVER. Can't see much other than 100 FLAMINGOS, rising in a group, three miles distant.

GEORGE

What is it?

John, not sure, heads down, George keeping up. Barely.

EXT. FIELD OF HIGH GRASS - DAY

Jane and Wasimbu hurtle through head-high elephant grass, edges like blades. Cutting clothes and arms.

EXT. ENTERING THE SAME FIELD - DAY

Rom and his men are tracking, hot on their heels. Raindrops begin to fall, as we INTERCUT THE CHASE:

Jane, looking back, seeing grasses getting hacked a hundred yards behind, and a glimpse of Rom's Group.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JANE
We must split up; they'll follow
my tracks.

Wasimbu doesn't like it; knows it must be done. Nods.

ROM AND HIS MEN keep after her as the skies open up. They see the tracks split. Jane's smaller prints are obvious.

AHEAD-- Jane, duck running, inhales *a rank odor*.

ROM AND HIS MEN-- spot JANE, on her knees, bowing. She's run into the middle OF TEN MANGANI FEMALES with BABIES. In full protection mode. They ROAR!

Rom's men start FIRING! In rain, Mangani get whiplashed into brush. Jane screams as MANGANI FEMALES get shot--

JANE
-- stop it! STOP!

EXT. ROCKY RISE - DAY

John, standing, listening. Then he hears a distant mixture of everything: a whisper of gunfire. And maybe-- his wife. Now, there's no way George can keep up with John: one goal in life, but he's two miles from Jane. Two very difficult miles.

EXT. JUNGLE CLEARING - DAY

Rom's men blast away. Five Mangani dead. Now Seven-- BO-BOOOM! Mangani in a frenzy. Trying to get away, covering babies, getting shot. Bullets flying, FORCE PUBLIQUE dive on Jane as she bites and kicks in a fury!

EXT. JUNGLE - DAY

AKUT and SNARLING MANGANI MALES race towards the sound of slaughter. Hearing their FEMALES shrieking ahead.

EXT. NEAR A CHASM - CONTINUOUS

John barrels towards the cliff, doesn't pause, dives out-- into thin air. WE GO WITH HIM! Falling!

Fifty feet below, TREES cling to the vertical cliff. He crashes through the canopy.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Grabbing branches to slow himself. Monkey-like. Zero hesitation or planning. Bleeding edge of human capability.

Dodging a GREEN MAMBA SNAKE-- AS MANY LONG ONE SHOTS as possible, as he leap-drops down. CAMERA BEHIND HIM, the next obstacle is only revealed after he's reacted to it-- slipping through a branch-- free-falling-- grabs a rubber vine to slow-swing-sprint along a branch, HUGE BAMBOO on the banks of a SMALL RIVER below-- sees CROCS. A GUTTERAL MATING CALL carries as he dives out, grabs the top of a HUGE TOWERING BAMBOO TRUNK-- it bends, down, over the crocs, that are suddenly, strangely, moving away from where he-- dives in, across in a flash.

UP THE OTHER SIDE-- leaping for holds. Muscles bunching. All coming back. Survival mechanisms not letting him forget what he has always known.

EXT. JUNGLE PATH - DAY

Rom leads FIFTEEN MEN back to the boat, takes THREE to carry Jane. He yells back to the last FIVE MEN in line.

ROM

Cover the retreat. Don't dally.
We've got a schedule to keep.

EXT. IN THICK JUNGLE - DAY

John charges like a bull with cats feet. Hears Mangani and gunfire. Close. Somehow, he moves even faster!

EXT. JUNGLE NEAR MANGANI - DAY

The FIVE MEN fire and reload, enjoying the slaughter.

GERMAN FORCE PUBLIQUE

What are these ungodly things?

They laugh as MANGANI retreat, then-- see Akut. Looming, barely visible in brush. Rifles ease up--

AMERICAN FORCE PUBLIQUE

Oh, I want that big boy.

They FIRE. And JOHN, from nowhere, BARRELS INTO AKUT-- smashing him out of the path of the bullets, into brush.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

AKUT spins on John, Looks down at his own body, at John. Clear he knows what John just did for him. John looks out at DEAD MANGANI, in a rage, rips the remnants of his shirt off. Curls his toes. Akut eyes John's feet. His posture changes, too. The tension between them eases. They got a job to do. They SEPARATE. Circling around.

THE FIVE SOLDIERS

Have no targets. Seeing nothing but heavy rain.

AMERICAN FORCE PUBLIQUE
We'd best git.

They all nod and turn. Face-to-face with John and Akut.

Rifles up, not fast enough-- *Akut and John are BLURS-- Akut yanks arms out of sockets. John blasting faces.*

The American swings on John, who catches his fist, he swings the other, John catches that too. Face demonic, CRUNCH! Mashes bones in both fists! Kicks him against THICK BAMBOO. John's eyes far from human.

FROM BEHIND THE AMERICAN-- backed against BAMBOO as John punches the American's neck. Thrown with such force, BAMBOO behind his neck-- SPLINTERS OUT INTO CAMERA!

John looks at what just did. All rage. No sense of humanity, and then maybe, *a tiny flash of recognition crosses his visage* as he spins towards-- THE GERMAN, running away. John's about to follow when--

GEORGE (O.S.)
-- Goddamn! John?!

John desperately wants to follow the German, knows Jane is close, but sees Akut hurtling back to his troop where--

EXT. CLEARING - DAY

-- GEORGE is encircled by Mangani. Ready to kill. Rifle up, but it's 20-1. God, George hates it, but yells--

GEORGE
--- HELP!!!

-- AKUT barrels in, bellows. John runs in behind, coming out of his rage, has to shake it off or George is dead--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

-- *get on your knees and bow.*

George watches Akut, knuckle-running in. Accelerating.

JOHN

Expose your most vulnerable parts.

GEORGE

How come you don't have to?

JOHN

Right now!

George drops to his knees, prostrates himself, Akut slows his charge. Closes in. Grunts, breath on George's face.

GEORGE

I gotta lick his nuts too?

JOHN

If you want to live.

George glances at John. Then at Akut's hairy---- knees.

JOHN

George--

GEORGE

-- I wasn't going to.

JOHN

It looked like you were.

GEORGE

Well, I wasn't.

Akut looks at John-- backs off. Lets George stand. Then all Mangani disappear in the woods to mourn. George looks back at John. Not there. Already on the move.

EXT. JUNGLE - SPOT OF THE FIGHT - DAY

George passes FORCE PUBLIQUE CORPSES. Drops the Lebel. Grabs a LEE METFORD 303 RIFLE with a clip protruding from the bottom. He collects CLIPS from corpses. And freezes, looking at the dead American, crushed fists. Neck flattened. No blood. He blanches at the savagery.

EXT. RIVERBANK - DAY

John charges out. Animals are gone, so is the ship. But the mud tells the tale. Drag marks where they took Jane.

EXT. BOTTOM DECK OF STEAMSHIP - DAY

The GERMAN, rattled, gulps in front of Rom.

GERMAN

He was the devil, with minions.

Rom turns to Jane, dripping, held by TWO MEN. She smirks at him: told you. Something in Rom snaps. He flicks his PRAYER ROPE, swirls it around her neck, over a pipe above, and pulls down.

EXT. RIVERBANK - CONTINUOUS

George appears. John's kneeling, places his hand over Jane's handprint. His breathing is ragged.

FROM NOWHERE a CROC lunges! John slams its mouth shut, tucks the jaws in his armpit, twists it over and heaves. Bested, clear it should not fuck with John, it retreats. John stalks into the water, looking upriver as--

EXT. BOTTOM DECK OF THE STEAMSHIP - DAY

-- Jane, up on her toes, claws at the Prayer Rope, choking. Rom studies her. Pulling down more, Jane rising to her tippy-toes, blood drips from his fist, Kuba yell, Force Publique regulate.

ROM

See what happens, Lady Clayton?
Everything shuts down. One can't
even think, it's all survival.

(right in her face)

You are bait, a trail of your chum
will still do the trick.

A SOUND sears the air; a *lions roar + thunder!* A weapon, to terrorize. The call of Tarzan. We see its effect, striking fear in the hearts of heartless men.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GERMAN

I told you. I told you. No man can
make that noise.

Rom, as if snapping back to reality, yanks his rope back.
Jane gasps. A huge breath. But she isn't cowed.

FRECKLED FORCE PUBLIQUE

What was it?

ROM

Tarzan. Though it sounded
different than I thought. Better.

JANE

He's coming for you. All of you.

ROM

Good. We'll be there by dawn.

EXT. THE SPINE OF A MOUNTAIN RANGE - SUNSET

Golden hour. John and George pass a deep, dark CRACK in
the stones, a few CHATTERING BATS stream out, then MORE,
then THOUSANDS, blotting out the deep amber sun.

GEORGE

Well, that's just great.

JOHN

You're scared of bats, too?

GEORGE

Nothing wrong with that. Big ol'
blood suckin' monsters--

JOHN

-- that eat fruit and look like
puppies. It's all mixed up
legends, George. Like me talking
to animals and swinging on vines.

GEORGE

You do talk to animals and swing
on vines.

JOHN

I learned to mimic them, not speak
with them. And vines have never
been my primary form of transport.

EXT. A CLEARING - NEAR DARKNESS

John slows, looking at OLD ELEPHANT BONES. Nearby, TWO TUSKS jut from the ground over a gathering of stones. George stumbles in. Hands on his knees, panting.

GEORGE

Johnny-- I-- sorry-- I need a--

John nods, George, thank god, collapses. John clears brush from around the stones.

GEORGE

What is it? Some kinda grave?

JOHN

Yes. I killed Chief Mbonga's son.
Over there.

Boom. George gets it now. All the pieces of the puzzle.

GEORGE

Then, you-- *buried him?*

John, on his haunches now. Grabs a handful of dirt.

JOHN

This isn't his grave.

FLASHBACK - EXT. JUNGLE - IMAGES OF TARZAN'S PAST - DAY

-KALA, at the anthill, looking behind her. Silence. So-- she jostles her flowered stick in the anthill. ANTS swarm up, she monkey lips them. Then-- hears something again. Turns as YOUNG NATIVE/MBONGA'S SON fires an arrow at her.

-Tarzan (18) hunched over, beastly, sees Kala knuckling towards him. Something's wrong, she sees her son-- and plops down. Heaving, with two arrows in her chest. Akut comes up beside Tarzan. The Mbonga's Son sees them, and sprints away. Tarzan and Akut ROAR!!!

-Tarzan swinging under branches, hurtling, an anguished YELL-- barrelling through branches into Mbonga's Son!

-Tarzan has killed him. Looks back, the hatred evaporates, replaced by desperation as he sprints away.

-Running to Kala. He sees her. Still breathing.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-Tarzan carefully draws her up on his lap. Looking at her wounds. Kala's glad she won't die alone. Glad to be in her sons arms. Her hand reaches up, placing it on the side of his neck. He rocks her gently, until Kala, the only thing that ever loved him-- moves no more.

Tears fall. He looks out. And for the first time in his lonely, bleak life-- he is utterly alone.

PRESENT - EXT. CLEARING - DARKNESS

John, feeling the loss as George wolf's beef jerky. Too tired to notice John looks like he's waiting for something. Looking out in the dark. Then up at the moon.

JOHN

Have you ever had anything like
this happen to someone you love?

George, drinking from a canteen, puts it down. Reading John's worry, sadness, and helplessness, knows he's talking about Jane. George shakes his head: no.

GEORGE

I never apologized for gettin' you
both into this. I'm sorry.

JOHN

Jane does not regret coming back.
Even now. She's the most heroic
person I've ever known. I knew it
the first moment I ever laid eyes
on her.

John looks out, winces. Thinking of Jane. And what's happening now; growing angry. George finishes chewing.

GEORGE

John?

(waits until he looks
at him)

Did Akut crush that fellas fists
and jelly his neck, or was it you?

(off John's look: me)
Seemed like it should've been
either-or.

John is a man at war with himself, uncertain which side
to embrace.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

JOHN

I saw red. Like I used to. Why?

GEORGE

Rage makes soldiers stupid. We're
a two man army, John. We got no
margin for error. You see red,
Jane dies-- and Rom wins.

John is actually listening this time. Or maybe he just
knows what's about to step out from the darkness. Hard to
tell. But George stiffens-- as MASSIVE SHAPES emerge.

JOHN

It's okay. I know them.

ELEPHANTS. A BIG BULL steps delicately towards John. Who
holds up a palm, steps forward. Touching his tusk.

JOHN

My old friend. Healthy and
thriving, thankfully.

John waves George forwards. He looks into his huge eye.

GEORGE

It's like they can see right
through you.

JOHN

An elephant's eye has the power to
speak a great language.

John studies George, looks guilty, as he touches the
tusk, too. A BABY steps out. It's trunk searches George.

GEORGE

And the Belgians wipe 'em out as
if they're nothing.

John's now eyeing George the same way the elephant did.

GEORGE

Does guilt have a smell?

John's silence is a yes. But--

JOHN

-- we've all done things we're not
proud of. You don't have to tell--

(CONTINUED)

EXT. A CLEARING - BELOW OPAR - DAY

KUBA HOSTAGES, chained, carry supplies. MAXIM GUNS. AMMO. A heavy iron STRONGBOX with handles and a thick padlock. They head uphill, into SMOKE. Jane in the middle, hands cuffed. Rom has been here before.

MBONGA'S VOICE (O.S.)
None shall pass into these lands.

Rom's MEN gulp. Guns up.

ROM
Weapons down! Ventriloquism goes
back to the Greeks, ladies.

Rom moves to the front. With Jane beside him.

ROM
Chief Mbonga. If you're close
enough for vocal tricks, I'm sure
you can recognize my voice. I've
brought you a gift.
(thrusts Jane
forward)
The White Ape's mate. He is coming
for her now.

FIRES burn brighter, smoke thins. CHIEF MBONGA, alone,
steps forward like a God in his BLACK LION COWL.

ROM
Guns down! Everyone! Guns down.

His men do it, but GERMAN (who ran from John) loses it.
Gun rises. BLAM! ROM shoots him. Mbonga doesn't flinch.

ROM
I apologize.

CHIEF MBONGA
Where is Tarzan?

ROM
Coming.

CHIEF MBONGA
There is no other trade.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROM

This is better. His woman is the thing he loves most in the world. Kill her, let him watch, then take his life.

Mbonga steps to JANE. She tries to stay strong. But his hatred is overwhelming. His eyes remain in shadow. Then, he nods to Rom: deal. Turns, heads into SMOKE.

LIEUTENANT #1

Sir, how can we trust him?

Smoke thins even further. Rom senses something--

ROM

We're still alive, aren't we?

-- they are entirely surrounded by MBOLONGO WARRIORS, less than thirty feet away. Arrows and spears at the ready. Rom turns to Jane, keeping her close.

ROM

Brrr. Just imagine what they'll do when the deal is done.

Jane, hiding everything, responds with steel:

JANE

Eat you, most likely.

Rom laughs. Sees carvings, OPAR RUNES on rocks. Smiles.

EXT. MIST COVERED RIVER - DAY

Swimming across, old CARVED STONES and TOTEMS on the other side. And the MARKS ROM'S STEAMBOAT, left on the banks. John eyes them, swimming, then throws his voice, making a GUTTURAL CROAKING (like before). A splash, FIVE CROCODILE WAKES slip into fog-- right in front of them.

GEORGE

What'd you just do?

JOHN

Crocodile mating call. One thing you should remember about animals: it's always about the women.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

George smiles, likes that, and they SWIM TOWARDS THE BANK. Slip out, and charge uphill-- following the tracks left by Rom's expedition.

EXT. FLYING HIGH OVER THE MISTY MOUNTAINS - DAY

Catching up to John and George, clambering up slick slopes. A BARELY AUDIBLE GRUNT hits John's ear. He heaves with relief, looks behind them, tenses his jaw, and BARKS! A low pitch, definitely throwing his voice far behind. He waits. His call is not answered.

John passes an ORYX SKELETON, grabs a femur.

WE RISE UP THE TOWERING CLIFF in front of them, over waterfalls, moss, trees, clinging to the craggy rocks--

RISING HIGHER, FLYING FORWARD-- over cliffs, up into mist. Sun breaks through, revealing THE MBOLONGO CAPITAL, 100 HUTS on a mountaintop that's been mined and carved for generations. Spikes studded with monkey and human skulls covered in mosaics of jade line pathways.

The far side falls straight down into a deep gorge. ONE LONG BRIDGE spans the gap.

EXT. ROM'S ENCAMPMENT - NIGHT

Rom shaves as a VICTOROLA plays Mozart. For once, the mist is minimal. Tents surround him on an area below the CAPITAL. Carved flat from mining.

His music shuts off suddenly. He looks. Someone moved the needle back to the stand, unseen. Rom snaps his face clean with a towel. Looks up at the capital.

Then, just ten feet in front of him, in darkness, LEOPARD WARRIORS reveal themselves by lifting their heads, making the emeralds in their COWLS dance with firelight. AN ELDER, chalked black and white, carries a SATCHEL towards Rom. Then stops. Standing sentinel over it. With LEOPARD WARRIORS beside him. Rom eyes the satchel hungrily.

DOWNHILL FROM ROM

GRASSY MOUNDS rise up here and there, and beyond, the slope plunges down into a DEEP LONG PIT MINE. Rising back up to an adjacent HILLSIDE where--

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

-- JOHN AND GEORGE are taking stock in darkness.

John using vines to weave ropes as George studies what they're up against: a RING OF EMPTY SPACE around the camp. TORCHES and LANTERNS glow at the edges, making sure the open space is well-lit. Tents in the middle. MAXIM GUNS able to rotate and cover all approaches. Can't see Jane or the Kuba from here.

GEORGE

(grimacing)

That's one solid perimeter.
Interlocking fields of fire, Maxim
guns covering every approach, all
lit up bright as day.

John's not paying attention. George waves at him.

GEORGE

You set with that?

John's toes are curled in mud, but John ignores him again. Weaving, looking out, knowing his wife is close.

INT. MIDDLE OF ROM'S CAMP - CONTINUOUS

JANE is chained up with the KUBA, eyeing MAXIM GUNS with loads of ammunition. Manned and ready. Then, she sees a LINE OF TORCHES rounds into view, coming down from the capital. Looks at a Kuba Woman, both scared.

*
*
*

Then a birdcall carries, hits Jane's ear (same one from John's presentation). She heaves with relief, but Mbonga stiffens. Rom sees it. Raises an arm. All Mbolongo Warriors and Force Publique fall silent. Ready weapons.

Mbonga heads over to the edge of the encampment. Taking in a view of the massive pit mine. Searching the dark.

BEHIND HIM-- Warriors carry a THICK WOOD LANCE in. They drag Jane over to it. She doesn't scream, but struggles mightily as they strap her to it-- lift her upright-- and drive it into the earth.

*

EXT. ADJACENT HILLSIDE - MOMENT LATER

John and George see the lance. John drops the ropes, and bolts! George, shit, follows, fast as he can.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE
(hissing after John)
Goddamn it, that ain't the plan!

JANE

Trying to stay calm, struggling, as down below her,
Warriors empty MESH SACKS under the lance. FILLED WITH
WOOD, KINDLING, and DRIED GRASS.

EXT. EDGE OF THE ENCAMPMENT - MOMENT LATER

Mbonga, still watching, still searching. Knows he's out
there. Then, on the other slope, he marks a SHADOW--
moving down at a blistering pace. He raises a hand.

The Elder carries the satchel over to Rom. Dumps SILVER
DOLLAR-SIZE ROUGH DIAMONDS into Rom's STRONGBOX. Not cut,
but rubbed clean. A vast fortune.

God, Rom wants to watch the end, but even Tarzan John has
no chance, not against this many warriors. Rom has his
treasure. And Mbonga's letting them leave, so--

ROM
Mbonga's got his man.

-- his MEN grab the STRONGBOX, and hurry up the hill.

MBONGA

Can no longer see John.

MBONGA
(sotto)
Now, you will feel my pain.

He heads towards the FIRE STACK; Jane in the middle like
Joan of Arc. He grabs a TORCH, and throws it into the
grass without even looking at her. Fire crackling.
Grasses smoldering. Mbonga, turns, yells out:

MBONGA
TAR-ZAN! LOOK UPON YOUR WOMAN!!

EXT. BELOW THE CLIFF - CONTINUOUS

JOHN AND GEORGE have crossed the pit mine, climbing up carved slopes. George can't catch up to John. Can't call after him either, not now. John is a blur above.

EXT. THE ENCAMPMENT - MOMENT LATER

Jane, struggling in smoke. Knows what calling out means for her husband, can't hold back any longer. MBOLONGO WARRIORS surround her. Waiting. Weapons up. Facing out.

*

JANE
JOHN?! JOHN!!!

JUST BELOW THE CLIFF-- John leaps over the lip, able to see Jane as kindling catches, and she finally-- SCREAMS! John, face curling with rage, runs faster, heading in a blind rage-- *towards the open area of torchlight.*

MBONGA
WILL YOU NOT SAVE YOUR MATE?!

GEORGE-- races up a grassy mound. Suddenly, a MBOLONGO SCOUT rises in front of him. George, no choice, fires! Blasting him off the mound! But giving them away.

Mbolongo react to the gunshot as George drops to a sniper position. Sees John, a smudge in the darkness, blurring towards light, towards Jane. George starts blasting torches in half. Lanterns. Creating POOLS OF DARKNESS.

*

JANE, hyperventilating and hacking, coughing in smoke, desperately trying to pull her legs up, twisting against her bonds, but it's impossible. The fire catches.

MBONGA'S WARRIORS-- have arrows drawn. Javelins in hand. Ready as John appears. Arrows blast out, but he's duck rolling, diving. In an out of pools of light. George creating new ones-- John using them instantly. Holy fuck fast. From the Mbolongo's vantage point, it's easy to see why they can't hit him. Pouncing, spinning, using light and dark (*and a human's inability to see both at once*) to his advantage. Appearing closer, further left, further right than he should be, an impossible target.

JOHN-- rips in, dodging javelins, crashing into his enemy, ORYX BONE and KNIFE in hand. Killing his way towards Jane, George's BULLETS cut down Mbolongo as John bashes enemies, firelight in his eyes.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

TARZAN'S EYES. 100% Animal. What every man dreams of being able to do to save his wife. Dives into the fire, rips the spike out, slicing Jane's bonds. No time for words, he lifts his Oryx bone, blocks a spear, axe chops the guy with it. Hovering over Jane. No one's going to touch her. Looks up with demonic eyes.

JOHN

Mbonga!!

WARRIORS fall on John in numbers, but it doesn't matter. Time slows for him. His eyes focus on enemy muscles-- tensing before strikes, allowing him to predict, slipping past SPEARS, FISTS, CLAWS. Sneering at them.

*

JOHN

Are you trying to weaken me?!!

Warriors pause, they've got FORTY ARROWS up and aimed at John and Jane. John, feral, beastly, holds Jane close. All he cares about. Jane looking at her husband. Knowing this is the end. At least they're together.

*

*

GEORGE-- sags. No more shots. Can hardly even see them, blocked by all the Mbolongo Warriors. It's hopeless.

*

Then, below him-- he spots a SHADOW. Then more. And a ROAR rockets out from blackness-- Akut's ROAR! AN ARMY OF MANGANI JOIN IN! All around camp!

JOHN AND JANE-- look out, able to see the MANGANI SHAPES encircling them, at the edge of the torches, firelight dancing off savage eyes. AKUT knuckles into view. And stands there. Taunting them without moving.

THE MBOLONGO-- proud, fierce suddenly look different. Aiming arrows and javelins out now, but none fire. All being very careful not to incite a Mangani charge.

TARZAN-- eyes hunting for Mbonga as Warriors part. And their Chief appears, he and Tarzan the only two humans still lust for blood. Looking ghoulis, electrified.

Mbonga has the size advantage, he's taller, even more muscular. Accelerating, Tarzan dodges claws. Mostly. One cuts him. Tarzan grins. A big fuck you: he tucks THE OPAR KNIFE into his belt. Drops his bone. Flexes his fists.

*

*

They smash together again! Mbonga a master with his claws. But Tarzan is predicting. Mbonga misses. Tarzan lands a punch, younger, stronger, and his fists are unconscionably powerful.

*

*

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

GEORGE-- watching, trying to find a way out for his friends. Failing. All down to John and Mbonga.

MBONGA-- takes a blow that would snap the jaw of a lesser man. His Warriors let it happen. This is their way.

Jane and the Kuba, Mbolongo spears in their face, watch Tarzan take Mbonga to the ground, intertwines his legs with Mbonga's, pulling them apart, and back. Tarzan in total control. KULONGA'S KNIFE across MBONGA'S NECK.

JOHN
YOUR CHIEF IS UNDER MY KNIFE!
(evil, wicked)
You are under my knife.

Bloodthirsty eyes. About to do it. Loving this moment.

JANE
*No! John! You know what happens if
you kill their king!*

There are thirty arrows aimed at John and the Kuba Captives. And twenty more aimed-- at Jane. Akut at the edge of darkness. Breathing slowly. Waiting with his troop. Waiting for someone to hurt Tarzan or his mate.

George, above, slaps a fresh clip in. Chambers a round. Akut knows George is there. Seems to appreciate it.

JOHN
(in Mbonga's ear)
The Mangani will kill all of you.

MBONGA
Then finish it.

JANE
He wants you to do it! Think!

John, in a flash of recognition, notices, there's no Force Publique around. No Rom. Looks at Jane. And Akut. And George above him, and the Kuba, and something inside John-- seems to click.

JOHN
*Your son-- killed the only person
who ever cared about me.*

MBONGA
She was an ape.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

JOHN
She was my mother.

MBONGA
*How was he to know? He was just a
man. Not like you.*

The pain in Mbonga's voice is overwhelming.

MBONGA (CONT'D)
Where was your honor?

The flaming brutality in John's eyes-- softens. John's toes-- *slowly*-- uncurl. Not a return to his old self, something different. Tested in a crucible; the synthesis moment. All the power, none of the blind rage.

JOHN
I had none.

Mbonga is surprised by the admission. The *apology*. John, eyes on Jane-- *slowly*-- places KULONGA'S KNIFE on Mbonga's chest. Releases. Mbonga leaps to his feet. John stands powerfully. Face-to-face with his old foe.

JOHN
Captain Rom is going to buy an
army with your diamonds--

JANE
He already did. It's nearly here.

GEORGE-- out of the tree, passes Mangani, *carefully*. Passes Akut, who's staring back. Not sure he likes George, but-- he might.

JOHN
No man was ever handed a fortune
without wanting more. He will come
back with fifty thousand soldiers
and wipe your tribe from the face
of this earth. This must end. Now.

George Steps through the Mbolongo. Crazy to be face to face with all of them. Mbonga steps up to John. Eyeing him fiercely. The hatred still there, but tempered.

MBONGA
(nods, then an order)
Never come back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

John, guts his reaction, nods. Arrows come down. John looks at Jane, a moment, but this is not the time for an embrace, not the time for anything-- but stopping Rom.

John bolts, snatching a ROPE, blurring up the path after Rom and his Men. 9 on 1, doesn't matter. Jane and George run to free the Kuba and--

EXT. PATH LEADING DOWN FROM THE CAPITAL - NIGHT

John, a blurred shadow, dancing down soundlessly. Huge leaps, the path switch-backing downhill, but he's charging straight down. Splitting in two. Tarzan, not stopping, is *smelling* his enemies. *Hearing* a barely audible clank, a boot in a puddle. Tracking. Hunting.

EXT. PATH - STEEP DECLINE - NIGHT

Rom in the lead, his EIGHT MEN running as fast as Force Publique #1 and #2 (carrying the strongbox) can move.

They round out, skirting a WIDE CHASM, booking towards.

EXT. A WOOD AND ROPE BRIDGE - NIGHT

Rom and Co. race across in a line. Sound of water rushing, far, far below.

Force Publique #7 brings up the rear. He glances back, and notices the bridge, moving differently since--

UNDER THE BRIDGE

-- Tarzan is swing-leaping underneath, grabbing slats, ropes. Hurtling across, the world's most skilled acrobat! Swinging faster than Rom's men can run! Catching up to Force Publique #7, above him, torquing his body up, feet first *smashing through the slats!* Force Publique #7 plummets right past John-- to his death!

Rom's Men OPEN FIRE! Straight down, but John's already swinging out to the side, rounding

-- over the top of the bridge--

-- barreling into Force Publique #6 from the side, smashing him off the bridge, falling just ahead of John as he continues arcing around, and back underneath.

ROM

Reaches the other side. As his Men pass by with the strongbox, Rom sees Tarzan shaking the bridge just beyond the halfway point, his men still running across. Saber out, Rom starts hacking ropes--

-- his MEN, seeing he's willing to sacrifice them, book it across, eyes wide as ropes snap.

Lieutenant #1 charges past Rom, along the cliff edge, away from the bridge, gun up, trying to get an angle on the shadow, swinging underneath, two thirds across when--

-- Rom hacks the last strand supporting the bridge, and WHOOSH! it falls. With TWO OF HIS MEN STILL ON IT and--

JOHN

-- underneath leap-scamper-launches himself out! Not going to make it to the other side. But he's arcing down towards a TREE growing from the cliff face below. Crashes hard. Smashing ribs. He's made it across, but looks up--

-- Lieutenant #1 has him, dead to rights, about to open fire when an arrow buries itself in his chest!

ROM

Sees Lieutenant #1 buckle, slipping off the side, cat-quick, he leaps back and to the side as ANOTHER ARROW whizzes past. Jane on the other side of the chasm, firing arrows. Fast and fluid. Kuba and George running down behind her. Also firing arrows.

ROM

Wants to make sure Tarzan is gone, but can't risk it. He legs it off with all that's left of his company:

Force Publique #1, #2, and #3.

EXT. DENSE JUNGLE - PRE-DAWN

Rom, racing, a gun in each hand. Force Publique #1, and #2 on his heels, carrying the strongbox between them, each with a gun in their outside hand. They're dropping into lowland fog, now. Mist enveloping them.

Force Publique #3, covering the rear, panting, scanning the strangely silent jungle. No animals. No birds. Then a GROWL to his left. Spins, weapon up as-- TARZAN blurs out from behind him, snatching him into foliage--

FORCE PUBLIQUE #1 AND #2

-- look back at the CRUNCH of their companion's death. Rom, finger up for silence, takes the strongbox, waves for Force Publique #2 to cover the rear, and they keep on.

EXT. THE BRANCH OF A TREE - MISTY DAWN

Looking down on Rom and Force Publique #1 stumble-slipping down thinning jungle, towards open savannah.

ROM

Bursts out with the strongbox. Looks back, to see Force Publique #2 flying backwards, and up and into the trees! Spooky as hell.

Just Rom and his Last Force Publique now. In the fog, they pass the red BEADED MASKS. Rotted LEATHER BOOTS with half a FEMUR jutting out of one. They've crossed out the other side of the Mbolongo frontier.

Hustling through grassy savannah. The strongbox tiring them. Breathing hard. Rom's trying to get his bearings. But even he's grown tentative now. He doesn't spook at sounds of animals, flashes of colorful birds flapping out of brush, but one thing is crystal clear:

Rom, the predator, has turned into Tarzan's prey.

Acacias here and there, but no place for Tarzan to hide and ambush them. Rom grows more confident. But Force Publique #1 is scared. Ahead, to the side ghostly silhouettes of animals in pre-dawn light emerge.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Then, off in the distance, somewhere ahead of them, a
LONE FOGHORN blasts. Rom looks at his man--

ROM

-- Mr. Frum, punctual as ever.

-- and Force Publique #1 catches his foot, the strongbox
twists him, and he torques a knee. About to cry out, but
Rom's covering his mouth with a hand. Whispering.

ROM

Not a sound.

FORCE PUBLIQUE #1

(eyes flashing
around)

He's close? He's right here?

Rom pulls him up, His limping Man slowing them down, but
something's ahead of them. Guns up. Barely able to make
out a PRIDE OF LIONS stalking towards them. Lowering
themselves in grass. Hidden again.

Rom's going to have to circle around them. Drags his man
with him, away from the last foghorn blast.

EXT. BEHIND THE LIONS - DAWN

Tarzan arms out, directs them towards Rom. Using them to
herd his prey away from safety.

MALE LION looks back, growls, Tarzan doesn't care. He
fearlessly keeps coming, arms out, staring at him, Male
Lion backs off, plodding back to follow his Females.

ROM

Fog brightening from slate gray to gold. Thinning above,
a whisper of red sunrise. Ahead of him, they're moving
towards a deep river, cutting through savannah in wide,
snaking S-curves.

Rom's limping Last Man falls. He helps him towards an
Acacia. Helping to lift him up into it. Whispering.

ROM

Pick him off.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LAST MAN-- nods. Checking he's got a round in his rifle.
And looking out at Rom, Strongbox on his shoulder,
heading towards the river, and disappearing in mist.

ROM

Jogs downriver. Hasn't heard the FOG HORN for minutes.
Straining to listen. Then, nervous gunshots echo from
Last Force Publique. Followed by a MUFFLED SCREAM. And
silence.

Rom is all alone now. Then--

-- a HORN responds to the sound of gunfire. Three low
BLOWS. Rom smiles, redoubling his efforts. The river
turning in towards the sound. Water getting shallower,
rushing faster. A crossing ahead. Glimpsing in morning
mist: ANIMALS feeding, drinking, wading across.

The rising sun, breaking through, reddening the world.

LOADS OF CROCODILES feast on hunks of game along the
muddy banks. Rom hears the steamboat HORN coming from
beyond the crossing. Sees BLACK SMOKE billowing up out of
the fog, downstream, somewhere on the other bank.

He wades across, up to his shins, his knees. Sets the
strong box down. Unslings his rifle. And turns back. This
is a great spot to kill Tarzan. He keeps his eyes on the
animals. Hoping they'll give him a clue.

MR. FRUM (O.S.)
(yelling, far off)
Captain Rom!!!

ROM
Over here, Mr. Frum!!

A moment passes, Animals looking at him. Then turning
their focus *away from him*. Sensing Tarzan. Rom smirks.
Kneels in water. Spots-- A SHADOW, sprinting along the
bank. Rom starts POPPING OFF SHOTS! CRACK! CRACK! CRACK!

ON JOHN

-- juking, diving, and getting blasted in the shoulder!

ROM

-- a crack shot, sees his nemesis fly back at the force. Disappearing from view, as hissing CROCS, disturbed by gunfire, thrash into the water, dragging carcasses, rolling over. Chumming the river. Rom smiles. Knows Tarzan can't hit him from out of the deeper water--

-- wrong. A CROC TAIL, slashing water, turns Rom as John launches out right from the deeps! CROC chomping air just behind him as-- Tarzan ploughs into Rom, knocking him on his back in two feet of water.

John fights differently now, without the rage, it's more fluid, his decisions more clinical. One arm holding Rom under, another punching Rom's liver. Same spot, over and over as Rom thrashes, gets his fingers in John's gunshot wound. John doesn't cry out, but it weakens his grasp, and Rom rolls off, kneeling up into John's face. Speedbagging John's ribs.

ROM

I heard these-- crunch when you
fell-- from the bridge--

Punching down on his gunshot wound. A viciously good fighter. Bashing John's face. Sound of wild animals all around in muddy, bloody, croc infested water. Rom doesn't care about any of it-- since he gets to kick. Tarzan's. Ass!

Then Rom leaps back. Giggling. John, gains his feet. The PRAYER ROPE so tight around his neck, he can't breathe. But he looks strangely peaceful as Rom laugh-pants:

ROM

That cannot be cut. You cannot
untie it. I just killed a legend.

John just digs his fingers underneath. Staring at Rom.

ROM

I can only imagine the horror of
this moment! You were-- so close.
Mr. Frum! Come get your diamonds!

MR. FRUM (O.S.)

(still a ways off)
What were you shooting at?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ROM

Bring your men and find out.

MR. FRUM (O.S.)

*That sounds suspiciously
convenient, Captain Rom.*

John, still no fear, can't breathe. Zero rage. Even
clocks a KEYCHAIN, hanging from Rom's neck. Catchers
mitts under the rope. Tensing.

ROM

Best of luck.

John, knowing he can break it, snaps the wretched thing!
Rom's face changes, John lunges at him! So fast.

-A blow to Rom's stomach buckles him.
-Dislocates his shoulder.
-Snatches the KEY from Rom's neck. Then one-hands the
STRONGBOX, tosses it into the deeper water.

No crocs visible. A bloodied Rom, spitting fury, dives
for it. Lifting it. With one arm. Clutching it in chin
high water. John is not going to let him back up to the
shallows. He squats. Watching Rom. Knows what's coming.

ROM

*All you've done-- is delay the
inevitable. I am the future.*

Rom's body bucks from below. From a Croc hit. John speaks
softly, almost intimate.

JOHN

Captain Rom, no one will even
remember your name.

Rom's body shudders again-- yanked under. Water churning
frothy, muddy copper-red from the prehistoric frenzy. And
Rom's head up to his eyes appear, and rolls on its side.

JOHN

(softly)
And the jungle protects itself.

EXT. DOWNRIVER - DAWN

Mr. Frum on the bow of his skiff. Twenty men paddling him
against the current. Fog hovering low over deeper water,
burning off above. Sunlight cutting through.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

All trying to hear or spot Rom. A Steamboat behind him,
packed with armed up Force Publique.

The skiff is heading towards a wide spot on the banks.
Clear of crocodiles. Clear of all animals. Mr. Frum sees
blood in the water, flowing past, and then-

- Rom's Prayer Rope. Snapped in half. His men hush.
Stiffening now, since they're watching--

-- Tarzan emerge from the fog, stalking down on the
banks. Gladiator, gangster, Jungle God all in one. Never
been more confident or more powerful as he mad-dogs--

-- Frum, all Force Publique on the skiff. And the
Mercenaries on the Steamboat. Rounds are chambered. Guns
are aimed. John could not care less.

Mr. Frum and his men don't understand. Then--

BEHIND JOHN

-- the fog lifts. Elephants, Giraffes, Zebras, and
Ostriches in the background. A gorgeous sunrise.

George and Jane on the banks behind John. With Wasimbu.

And HUNDREDS UPON HUNDREDS OF ARMED UP AFRICAN WARRIORS.
All kinds of different styles of camouflage. All kinds of
different weapons. But all ready for war (the Mbolongo
aren't the only tribe that can move silently in brush).

MR. FRUM

They followed us?

JANE

There is nothing easier than
tracking what does not belong.

MR. FRUM

And the diamonds?

JOHN

There aren't any.

GEORGE

That's the problem with legends,
Mr. Frum, it's hard to figure out
which one's are true.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Mr. Frum looks at Tarzan and Jane. May not believe it,
but knows it doesn't matter. Looking around the Warriors.
Takes his out:

MR. FRUM
I have no intention of wading into
this mess for free.

EXT. THE BANK OF THE RIVER - CONTINUOUS

George, smiling, next to Wasimbu, and the freed Kuba, and
all the Native Warriors of Africa.

GEORGE
Ain't this a hell of a thing.

Watching Frum's ship chug away, downriver. Looks around.
John is not here. Neither is Jane. George smiles.

QUEEN VICTORIA (O.S.)
Where'd they go, then?

EXT. SAVANNAH GRASSES - MORNING

No one around. John's carrying Jane off, her legs wrapped
around him. BUTTERFLIES glimmer in the dew and sunlight.

Lays her down in the high grass. Marvelling his wife--

GEORGE (OVER)
Home.

-- Jane runs her hands through his hair, wraps her body
around her husband, hearing a low growl, just a touch of
the wild man as she smiles, and they melt together with
one beautiful, long, epic kiss.

INT. DARK ROOM - NIGHT

George, Jane and John write in candlelight. Can't really
tell where they are. But George's BIG PISTOLS hang from a
hook. Next to the MARKINGS OF JANE AND WASIMBU on the
doorjamb, buffed up. Archimedes house has been restored.

Jane's referencing the TWO BOOKS (from the train) George
rolls the GOLD COIN across his knuckles as he writes. It
falls off his knuckles, landing face up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

GEORGE (OVER)

Here's how we decided to play it.

John stares at the FACE OF KING LEOPOLD II stamped on it.

INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE LIBRARY - DAY

Grandfather perched on every one of George's words. So is Queen Victoria. The Men sip scotch and smoke cigars.

GEORGE

If, by some miracle, King Leopold
doesn't know, he'll embrace the
facts and launch an investigation.

George slides BOTH BOOKS-- to Queen Victoria

GEORGE

But. If he tries to discredit me,
we'll know he was in on it.

QUEEN VICTORIA

That would be a necessary bit of
information, wouldn't it?

GEORGE

Gotta know who your enemies are.

GRANDFATHER

(with relish)
Especially if we have to bring a
king to his knees.

QUEEN VICTORIA

The Claytons will return to
England? If it comes to that?

GEORGE

'course. We make a hell of a team.

Queen Victoria nods, impressed. And Grandfather beams.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE LONG HOUSE - DAY

John's on his haunches. Wasimbu and all the Kuba Warriors
hang out with Eyes fixed on the LONG HOUSE, where Kuba
Women are spilling out.

*

INT. THE LONG HOUSE - DAY

Muviro's Wives, and all the Kuba Women that can reach, are touching Jane. Lower than them (squatting, but all we see are her face and shoulders) she looks peaceful, heaving calm breaths, drawing strength from her family.

EXT. BACK ON JOHN - DAY

He hears a BABY CRY. It's really loud. The Men laugh. John places both hands on the earth, giving thanks. Then the Kuba Women part, smiling, beckoning for him, and he hurries towards the long house, accompanied by the men. All smiles everywhere. None wider than John's--

INSIDE THE HOUSE

-- when he sees Jane, standing, holding their BABY BOY. Tears of joy as she looks at her husband, and we leave them here, in the single best moment of their wondrous, legendary lives.

CLOSE ON A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

-- specifically, the exact text of the real OPEN LETTER TO THE KING written by George Washington Williams.

OVER END CREDITS, we find ourselves reading along as certain phrases from the ACTUAL LETTER LIFT OFF THE PAGE:

An open letter to his Serene Majesty Leopold II, King of the Belgians, and Sovereign of the Independent State of the Congo by Colonel, The Honorable, Geo. W. Williams of the United States of America, July 18th 1890. Every charge which I am about to bring against your Majesty's personal government in the Congo Has been carefully investigated; a list of competent and veracious witnesses, documents, letters , official records and data has been faithfully prepared, which will be deposited with Her Britannic Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, until such time as an international commission can be created to send for persons and papers, to administer oaths, and attest the truth or falsity of these charges.

CREDITS ROLL.

TO THE VERY END.

THEN:

INT. BELGIAN ROYAL PALACE - DAY

The man from the COIN, KING LEOPOLD II (55) himself sits in his office. DIRECTORS stand in front of him.

DIRECTOR #1
You've been called before
Parliament, your highness.

Leopold taps George's 'Open Letter To The King' article.

LEOPOLD II
Discredit the author. Kill
everyone who knows.

SMASH TO BLACK.