

overtaking us, and but for my knife we are unarmed."

Nu bent to his paddle. On the wallowed toward the open sea. There was no chance to elude the pursuers and turn north.

First they must put sufficient distance between them that the others might not see which way they turned. But there seemed little likelihood of their being able to accomplish this, for, strive as they would, they could not shake off the silent twain upon their trail.

The darkest hours of the night were upon them—those that precede dawn.

They struggled to outdistance their pursuers. That they were lengthening the distance between the two boats seemed certain. In another few minutes they might risk the stratagem.

But they had scarcely more than turned when the surge of surf upon a beach rose directly before them. Both were non-plused.

What had happened? Where were they?

They had been moving straight out to sea for some time, and yet there could be no mistaking that familiar sound—land was directly ahead of them. To turn back now would mean to run straight into the arms of their pursuers—which neither had the slightest desire to do.

Had Nu been armed he would not have hesitated to grapple with the two occupants of the boat that had clung so tenaciously to their wake, but with only the woman's knife and a couple of wooden paddles it would have been a fruitless thing to do.

Exerting all their strength, the two drove the dugout through the surf until its nose ran upon the sand. Then they leaped out and dragged the boat still farther up beyond the reach of the mightiest roller.

Where were they?

Nu guessed a part of the truth. He reasoned that they had fallen upon the same island from which he had seen Natul snatched by the Boat Builder, and from which he himself had escaped so recently.

But he was not quite right.

He knew when to fight and when to flee. At present there was nothing to flee from, but a place of safe hiding must be their first concern. He grasped Gron by the wrist.

"Come!" he said. "We must find a cave



make the best of it until daylight returned—it would never do to roam through the woods unarmed at night longer than was absolutely necessary.

Nu was accustomed to sleeping in trees.

His people often did so when on the march, or when the quarry of the chase led them overfar from their caves by day, necessitating the spending of the night abroad; but Gron was not so familiar with life arboreal. She clung, fearful, to the bole of the tree in a position that precluded sleep.

Nu showed her how to compose herself upon a limb with her back to the tree stem, but even then she was afraid of falling should she chance to doze.

At last Nu placed an arm about her to support her, and thus she slept, her head pillowed upon the shoulder of her enemy.

The sun was high when the sleepers awoke. Gron was the first to open her eyes. For a moment she was bewildered by the strangeness of her surroundings.

Where was she? Upon what was her head pillowed? She raised her eyes. They fell upon the sun-tanned, regular features of the godlike Nu.

Slowly recollection forced its way through the misty pall of somnolence. She felt the arm of the man about her, still firmly flexed in protective support. This was her enemy—the enemy of her people.

She looked at Nu through new eyes. It was as though the awakening day had brought an awakening of her soul. The man was undeniably beautiful—of a masculine beauty that was all strength.

Gron closed her eyes again dreamily and let her head sink closer to the strong, brown shoulder.

But presently came entire wakefulness, and with it a full return of actively functioning recollection.

With a sudden intaking of her breath that was almost a scream, Gron sat erect. The movement awakened Nu. He opened his eyes, looked at the woman, and removing his arm from about her stood upright upon the tree branch.

"First, we must seek food and weapons," he said, "and then return to the land that holds my country. Come."

His quick eyes had scanned the ground below. There were no beasts of prey in sight. Nu lowered the woman to the base of the tree, leaping lightly to her side.

Fruits, growing in plentitude, assuaged the keenest pangs of hunger. This accomplished, Nu led the way inland toward higher ground, where he might find growing the harder wood necessary for a spear-shaft.

A fire-hardened point was the best that he might hope for temporarily, unless chance should direct him upon a fragment of leek-green nephrite or a piece of flint.

Onward and upward toiled the searchers, but though they scaled the low and rugged mountains that paralleled the coast they came upon neither the straight, hard wood that Nu sought nor any sign of the prized minerals from which he might fashion a spear head, an ax, or a knife.

Down the further slopes of the mountains they made their way, glimpsing at

*They were not yet out of reach of the weapons. He reached down with his right hand and picked up a loose bit of rock, hurling it toward the nearest spearman.*

an should thus flee her own people to save him, a stranger and an enemy. Again he raised the question that Gron had so illy answered.

"Why do you seek to save me," he asked, "from your own people?"

"I do not seek to save you," replied the woman. "I wish to make Tur mad—that is all. He will think I have run off to mate with you. When he thinks that, you may die for all I care. I hate you, but not quite so much as I hate Tur."

CHAPTER XII.

As Nu led Gron through the dark night amidst the blackness of the tropical

forest that clothed the gentle ascent leading inland from the beach he grinned at the thought of Tur's discomfiture, as well as at the candor of his rescuer.

But now Nu was the protector. He might have left the woman to shift for herself, but the idea of deserting Gron never occurred to him.

She was a woman. She had saved Nu's life. Her motive was of negligible import.

In the darkness Nu found a large tree. He entered the lower branches to reconnoiter. There were no dangerous foes lurking there, so he reached down and assisted Gron to his side. There they must

or a tree to preserve us until the day comes again."

The woman cast a backward glance over her shoulder—a way with women.

"Look!" she whispered, and pointed toward the surf.

Nu looked, and there upon the crest of a great wave, outlined against the dark horizon, loomed a boat in which sat two figures, plying paddles. One glance was enough.

The pursuers were close upon them. Nu, still holding Gron's wrist, started toward the black shadows above the beach. The woman ran by his side.

Nu wondered not a little that the wom-



Their strenuous paddling during the hours of darkness had carried them to the north of the nearer island and beyond it. As a matter of fact they had been deposited upon the southern coast of the largest island of the group, which lay several miles northeast of the one with which Nu had had acquaintance.

But what mattered it?

One was as bad as another. Both belonged to the mysterious country. They were inhabited by hideous flying reptiles, and legend held that frightful men dwelt upon them. And Nu was without weapons of defense!

Nu was lost, but far from hopeless.

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