

THE DARK KNIGHT

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ing left look to his adversary's body. Latzo bent double for a second, then backed away barely in time to miss a sizzling right uppercut which Rod launched.

By now Rod's opponent was patiently slowing up. Rod danced lightly in and out, ostentatiously pretending to be trying to land a punch in Latzo's body. Suddenly he shot his left hand with dazzling speed at Latzo's solar-plexus. Involuntarily the other fighter dropped both arms in an effort to evade the dangerous blow. When he thus relaxed his guard, Rod sent over a fast right to the jaw and as Latzo staggered away, leaped after him and sent another crushing blow to his head.

Latzo's eyes glazed. His body sagged in the middle, then his knees crumpled. He tumbled to the floor on his face, where he lay inert, obviously knocked out.

The spectators went wild. Seat cushions, hats, newspapers came flying through the air as the referee began the unnecessary count. When it was finished Kelly and Kling were in the ring dancing around like two maniacs, so that Rod had to pull away from them in order to drag Latzo, who was still unconscious, to his corner.

For a few minutes such pandemonium reigned that police interference was required to restore the crowd to order. Jubilantly, Kling half led, half dragged Rod to his dressing room where he promptly shut and locked the door.

"Boy, what a sock, what a sock!" he exulted, as he did a little jig step around the room meanwhile lunging playfully at Kelly and at anything else he could find.

Kelly made Rod lie on the rubbing table while he went over him with swift hands.

"OK, Kid?" Rod looked up with a happy smile. "You betcha!" he ejaculated.

A FEDERAL AGENT

There was a peremptory knock at the door. Kling did not want to be disturbed.

"Whaddya want?" he shouted. "Open the door! I want to see the Cowboy!" a voice returned.

Unwillingly Kling opened the door. The Chief of the Federal agents strode in. Seeing Rod, he went to him and shook his hand heartily.

"Great fight, Kid," he congratulated. "Glad you won. Are you all set," he looked around the room cautiously, "for tonight?"

"Sure," Rod told him. "Soon as I get my clothes on."

"What's all this?" Kling demanded suspiciously. "If you think you can get my boy away from me you might as well forget it. I got a contract on him and—"

"Aw, wait a second, brother," the Federal agent admonished as he flipped his coat to display his gold government badge.

"Is the Cowboy in trouble?" Kling

demande quickly, protectively. "Not a bit of it," the agent said. "We've just got a date together to-night—that's all."

II

Kelly insisted on accompanying Rod to the Swamp Hut. News of who Rod was, and of his sensational victory had preceded him. Men crowded around his table anxious to meet him.

None of the Federal agents whom Rod recognized were in sight, but he supposed that they were scattered around the place at various tables. Rod patted his breast where reposed unseen the gold prohibition badge given him by the agent. Wolf had not appeared yet, so Rod merely ordered a meal for himself and Kelly.

ROD'S SHARE OF THE RECEIPTS

The place was filled with revelers, and for a while the attentions showered on Rod by many of his suddenly acquired admirers made him forget his purpose in coming to the Swamp Hut.

Dancers filled the polished square dancing space. Rod remembered the last time he had been in the place, and with wonder reflected on the things which had happened to him since then. In his pocket reposed a neat package of bills representing his night's earnings to the amount of twenty-six thousand dollars. He had requested his part in cash, but when Kling had given him the money he had counted it with unbelieving eyes.

"All this money for—for just the little fightin' I did?" he questioned his manager.

Kling smiled broadly. "Sure, Kid, and I've got my cut out of it already. But that's not the time. That twenty-six grand you made to-night is not a drop in the bucket to what you'll make when you get to be champion."

"I've been kinda thinkin' I want to get out of the game, Mr. Kling," Rod had told him, "but all this money sort of changes my mind. I want to go back out in Montana for a while anyway."

"That's OK," Kling had assured him heartily. "You deserve a good rest, my boy. While you're gone I'll cook up a good match for you—a tune-up maybe for the champ, since you're bound to get the next fight with him after the way you licked Latzo."

Rod was remembering this, and trying to decide what he would do, when Kelly called his attention back to his surroundings.

"Look, Rod," he exclaimed. "Who's that tough looking bird givin' us the once-over?"

ROD BLUFFS THE WOLF

Rod looked up and into the leering eyes of Wolf, who stood, immaculately garbed in an expensive tuxedo, staring at him with a puzzled air.

"I did give you credit for having some sense," he growled at Rod, "but you've either got a lot of guts, or no brains."

Remarkable Interpretations of African Jungle Life

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must have been fully alive when on a fine morning he saw over the brow of a hill a tall Soudanese soldier bearing Gordon Bennett's yacht flag. Behind him and astride of a fine Lienna-stained mule, whose silver trappings shone in the bright sun, was his friend, Stanley, attired in his famous African costume.

Following him were his personal servants, Somalis with their curious braided waistcoats and white robes; then came Zanzibaris, with their blankets, water bottles, ammunition belts and guns; stalwart Soudanese soldiery with dark hooded coats, their rifles on their jacks and innumerable straps around their bodies; Zanzibari porters bearing iron-bound boxes of ammunition, to which were fastened axes and shovels—the whole making a marvelous picture of the new order that had come to the distant Southland.

On these marches the young Englishman soon developed wonderful powers of endurance. The natives have a great admiration for any exhibition of personal strength, skill or endurance, and the white man who can shoot an elephant or buffalo, or

walk some long distance is sure to win their regard. Ward earned his name of "Mayala Mbemba," i. e., "The Wings of the Eagle," for having once accomplished the journey from Kimpete to Lukungu in one day—a distance of forty miles, over a wearisome and fatiguing road.

Ward found the tribesmen who inhabit the cataract region to be careless and indolent beings,—a condition which was undoubtedly due to the enervating tropical sun. He would come upon them gathered in groups in the market place or in the doorways of their huts, basking in the sun the livelong day, and it was with the greatest difficulty that he could rouse them to the slightest exertion when he needed their aid in the work of an expedition.

While at Bwende he marveled at the display of copper necklets and rings and bracelets by the dark-skinned beauties on market days. They were very fond of having Ward sketch them in the fullness of their adornment and they would wait with the utmost patience their turn to pose.

Later he learned that the copper that they displayed so lavishly formed originally part of the copper tubes that had been started over the hills for the steamer that was being put together at Leopoldville. It appeared that the porters had found the copper a very enticing metal and they had been exceedingly anxious to view its lustre in conjunction with their dark complexions.

He noticed keenly the many conflicting emotions that betrayed themselves in the lives of these savages; swayed one moment by a thirst for blood and indulging in the most horrible orgies, yet they may next be

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