

SOMETHING STRANGE WAS HAPPENING AT WAMERU

First an injured and terrified African stumbled into the compound, crying weakly for help. . . .

Then Judy the Chimp found a mysterious cache of money, a walkie-talkie, and a bag of sparkling diamonds. . . .

Paula and Marsh Tracy suspected there was some connection between these events — but before they could find out what it was, someone kidnapped Judy, Clarence the Crosseyed Lion and the rest of Daktari's animals!



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A mystery comes to Wameru — and Judy the Chimp uncovers it!

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Jess Shelton





DAKTARI

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Chapter One

A STRANGER COMES TO WAMERU

PAULA REALIZED that her father, Dr. Marsh Tracy, was really determined this morning when he called to her from his laboratory as she and Judy, her pet chimp, were walking across the Wameru compound toward the long porch of the main house:

"Paula!" he said. "Tie Judy to the porch post and you come over here right away!"

"But, Dad," Paula objected, knowing it would be useless to argue, "do I have to tie her?"

"It's her own fault," he said, squinting in the morning sunlight, "so you get right to it, young lady!" He went back inside then, slamming the screen door after him.

"Yes, Dad," she sighed.

Judy had pulled out of Paula's hand and was already on the porch, lying on her back with her feet in the air, now and then edging her toes toward Bini, the west African gray parrot with the bright red tail, so that

Bini would be tempted to try to pinch her with his beak. Each time Judy would jerk her toes back, causing the parrot to miss, and the chimp would giggle with mischievous glee.

"Oh, Judy," said Paula, tossing her blonde hair off her shoulders, "what can I do with you?"

Bini cocked his head and said, "Spank Judy! Judy a bad chimp! Bad chimp!"

"Shame on you, Bini," said Paula, shaking her finger at the parrot. "Judy's only playful, that's all!" Paula sighed again, however, and added, "But she gets into too much trouble with her tricks." Seeing that Judy was apparently contented to play with Bini here on the porch, she tied a ten foot length of cord to the chimp's collar and fastened the other end of it to the post, then ran toward the lab, Judy hardly noticing her leave.

But then Paula changed her mind; she retraced her steps to the kitchen, fixed a tall glass of iced tea in hopes that it would make her father feel a little less stern, told Ignatius and Silas to fix more, and went back to the laboratory. Her father was taping up the hurt leg of a baby dik-dik, a tiny little antelope which when grown up would only be about the size of a chihuahua, maybe a foot tall at best. This baby was golden tan and buff gray in color, and was about six or seven inches tall, its little legs barely the size of pencils. It made a sad, chattering noise while Marsh with gentle, strong hands wrapped the wide surgical tape around its left foreleg. He saw Paula come in, frowned, and said, "Thanks, Paula," when she set down the iced tea.

"His leg was sprained," her father explained. "We'll keep it splinted with this tape, and after a few days he'll be well enough to run around the compound, even if we can't send him right back into the bush country." He stopped wrapping the tape for a moment, took a drink of the iced tea, said, "Oh, boy!" and then asked Paula, "Is Judy tied?"

"Yes, Dad," replied Paula, worried all over again.

"Well, then," he told her slowly, as if intent on making his every word perfectly clear. "The others will be coming in soon from their morning research trip, as usual, and I do *not* want a repetition of Judy's misbehavior. Is that clear?"

Paula felt terrible about it. Myra Templeton, with a Master of Science degree in zoology and a Ph.D. in Primate Mammology, an expert on monkeys and apes and baboons, was staying at the Wameru compound while she studied the local baboon populations. She had clashed with Judy, the pet chimpanzee, the very first time the two of them had ever met, and since then the relationship had steadily deteriorated until now Paula almost dreaded Dr. Templeton's return from the bush every morning at 9:30, because she knew Judy would try some other trick to make the woman of science yell or scream. It had been going on for weeks now, getting worse all the time, and the more Judy was scolded, it seemed, the worse she became. Not that she was a mean chimp, not at all—it was only that something about Dr. Myra Templeton fascinated Judy, and the poor chimp couldn't help being mischievous. And Paula's father had certainly warned Paula enough times to cage up Judy, or to keep the animal away from Myra, at least.

Now all Paula could do was lower her eyes and nod her head and say, "Yes, Dad, I understand. I'm *really* ashamed of her behavior, Dad, honest!"

"So this morning you'll put her in the cage—agreed?" he added, his voice still firm.

"Yes, Dad," she agreed, her eyes burning.

"All right, then. Now, check to see if there's a small animal cage out in the compound, will you, and then take care of Judy before they get back?"

Paula glanced up and saw that her father looked tired and hot after this morning's check of the animals and of the compound, weary and lovable. She thought, *If*

everybody had a father like . . . And she stood on her tiptoes and gave him a kiss on the cheek, then ran outside. She checked the cages, including the cage which she would use for Judy, and then she noticed that there were two empty and already disinfected small antelope pens, so she thought she would suggest to her father that he put the dik-dik into a pen instead of a cage so it wouldn't get too frightened. First, though, she decided to put Judy away, and she ran back over to the porch, calling, "Judy!"

Then she saw the piece of rope, which Judy had obviously untied from her collar. Judy was nowhere in sight. Paula stopped, staring glumly toward the plains lying west of Wameru Animal Refuge, and suddenly she felt weary and older than her seventeen years, as if she were carrying more than her own share of the world's problems.

She was just starting to turn back toward the laboratory when she heard the truck motor and a horn, and she waved to Jack Dane, her father's young assistant, as he beeped the horn again at her. The truck bounced in the hole at the curve of the road just inside the compound, and three people in the cab all went *whooff!* from the bounce, and Jack skidded it to a stop beside the jeep and the Landrover.

Clarence, the cross-eyed lion, had been dozing over by the flamboyant tree, which was all covered with scarlet flowers in this dry season, and at the sound of the horn and the rattling of the truck he raised his great shaggy head, blinked, yawned prodigiously, and looked at all of them, of course seeing everybody double. Prince, the German shepherd dog, went "*Raouff!*" happily, and some green monkeys raised a chatter of welcome, so Clarence apparently felt it was impossible to continue his siesta.

It was the same every morning, anyhow. He would wait for Jack and Mike Mkula to get back with Dr.

Templeton, and he would get up and do just what he did now. He rose, stretched, and walked over to the truck, getting there just as Myra Templeton was reaching for her clipboard of notes and asking Mike to bring along her briefcase, and when Dr. Templeton turned there was Clarence, feeling very happy to see her. Clarence really liked her, although nobody quite knew why.

Myra Templeton, turning around and having Clarence nuzzling against her hand as usual, gasped, then gingerly patted his ears and said, "Nice kitty, Clarence." Then she tossed her head very proudly and started toward the house, Jack and Mike grinning at one another as they followed her.

Paula watched all of it, but this morning she was unable to see its humor: it was obvious that Judy had deliberately run off again, and with a terrible sinking feeling in the pit of her stomach she realized that today was going to be like every other morning, and she and Judy were going to get into even more trouble because of the chimp's mischievous behavior. Shrugging her shoulders helplessly, Paula waited for Myra Templeton to walk to the porch. The woman glanced about once or twice, said, "Good morning, dear," and then asked, "Where's the chimp?"

"Good morning. She's out back, Dr. Templeton," Paula replied, wanting to bite her tongue. But it really wasn't a lie, because Judy probably really was out back of the animal hospital trying to catch some bug or lizard or some other crawling thing to scare Dr. Templeton with.

"Hi, Paula," said Jack, hanging his camera on a hook just inside the living room door. Mike set down the briefcase beside the raffia wicker chair which Dr. Templeton seemed to favor and which she had more or less adopted as her own since she had first come to Wameru,

and Myra put her clipboard down on the small table by the chair.

"Good morning, Jack," Paula replied. She smiled at Mike Mkula and said, "Hello, Mike."

"Hello, Paula," he said. He tipped his head toward the kitchen, asking, "Does Silas have some tea ready?"

"I think so," she replied. "I'll . . ."

He held his hand toward her and shook his head. "I'll tell Silas," he said. "I want to wash off a bit of this dust, anyhow." His dark eyes told Paula: *Keep your eyes open for Judy!* Mike was a graduate student of animal husbandry and zoology and head of the six native workers at Wameru. After another year's work with Daktari, he would return to the university at Dar-es-Salaam for his degree. He was always especially alert about the animals, wild and domesticated, around the Wameru compound, but he hadn't been able to do any more than Paula about correcting Judy.

Marsh came walking across the compound from the animal pens into which he had just put the baby dikdik; he stopped halfway to wrestle for a moment with Clarence, who then trotted after him like Africa's biggest pussycat. Glancing around apprehensively while trying not to be too obvious, Marsh cast a quick glance at Paula which said, *Judy's not in her cage!* then smiled pleasantly at Myra Templeton and Jack Dane.

"Well, how's the research team this morning?" he inquired.

"Good morning, Marsh," Myra said, dropping her voice slightly. Although she was always making remarks about Marsh Tracy settling for the life of a glorified animal nursemaid when he was actually a fully qualified medical doctor, she nevertheless liked him, because the woman certainly showed interest in him, just like this lowering of her voice. She never did that when she was talking with anybody else. She wasn't interested in Mike or Jack, who was too young for her, anyhow, and she

thought of Paula as a child. She was pleasant to District Officer Hedley, who came around rather frequently—perhaps a bit more frequently since Dr. Templeton had begun her research study of the baboons—but even with him she spoke in an ordinary way, sometimes slightly scornfully, always superior in her own manner. But with Marsh, despite her desire to remain haughty, she would lower her voice and her smile would change, and even when she made critical remarks they didn't sound nearly so harsh as when she said the same things to any of the other people at Wameru.

Marsh sat down in a wicker chair across from Myra, sighed pleasantly, and wiped his forehead. "What's new out in the bush?"

"We saw another Government survey team," said Jack. "As poor as the land on the Reserve is, I don't know what good it could do to give it to the natives as farmland. That's ridiculous."

Paula noticed another wave of even greater weariness sweep across her father's face, and she worried about it. The land was poor, and since the rinderpest epidemic had hit the local animals two years ago a lot of the natives had been making hints about closing all the animal reserves so that people could have the land. "It is ridiculous," Marsh agreed, "but it sounds good to politicians. The Reserve land is almost all semi-desert, but when people think they're getting land, it sounds good to them, and they don't worry so much about other problems."

Mike walked out onto the wide porch just then, followed by Silas, the steward, who served everyone a tall glass of iced tea, then disappeared. Mike dropped into a chair with his own glass in his hand and remarked, "The big problem with our people is that since the rinderpest came and killed off so many cattle, they're poor, and they can't get their herds breeding very well on this kind of land, so they get poorer and

poorer, and many of them take up poaching and other things like that—

"Go into crime, you mean," said Myra Templeton.

Marsh corrected her sharply: "It's crime from the point of view of Government, Myra, but most of the village Africans don't see it that way at all. Their attitude is that the animals are there and can be eaten, and this is Africa, so the African can go catch or kill them and eat them or sell their hides or ivory for profit. It's not a simple matter of going into crime."

"Yes, thank you, Marsh," said Mike. "No, Clarence, no, no," he said to the big cross-eyed lion, who had tired of lying at Marsh's feet and had stood up and was trying to get a drink of Mike's iced tea. To Marsh and Myra the African explained, "The Africans are suffering badly. They can't put in vegetable crops, and there's not enough good grass left for the few cattle they own. They just keep praying for a miracle to happen, before all the young people run off to Nairobi or Mombasa or Tanga and other cities."

Jack came back out, looking a lot cooler now. "I heard what Mike was saying," he remarked. "We heard some gunshots from the northwest early this morning when we were out beyond the Mpwapwa waterhole. It must have been poachers, but whether on the Reserve or not we couldn't tell."

Myra Templeton clumped her iced tea glass down hard on the table. "That shooting got the baboons terribly disturbed," she said sharply, a frown wrinkling her forehead. "I don't know how I can conduct my studies properly with a bunch of criminals running around shooting off guns. Surely your Officer Hedley can do something about it, can't he, Marsh?"

Marsh nodded slowly, his eyes revealing a slight hint of laughter at her anger and even at her foolish selfishness. He was a patient man. He had to be, of course, since he had to handle wild animals almost every day of

his life—animals in pain, sick animals, the lost, the foundlings, in every case animals with no good reason to trust a human being. He said to Myra, "Well, let's remember that here in Africa there are lots of problems, and sometimes one problem is more important than another. Hedley's out this morning, in fact, patrolling the border of the Reserve to try to check some of the poaching."

"It's not all poaching, of course," added Jack. "With the political troubles in the Congo and in Central Africa, there are lots of people on their way back and forth across Africa . . ."

Mike looked grim. "And their purposes are often *very* bad."

Myra looked miffed, still slightly angry over her baboons, and she said, "It's nevertheless still difficult to carry on *proper* scientific study with all these things happening!"

"The baboons will settle down," remarked Jack. "They're adaptable."

Glancing out across the compound, Mike apparently noticed something. "Is Officer Hedley coming by for lunch today?" he asked Paula.

"He said he was, Mike," she replied, a little puzzled over his manner. "Dad, didn't he say so?"

"Yes, I think so, Paula."

Mike rose to his feet. "Perhaps we'd better go check with Silas about it," he suggested.

There was really no need to check with Silas, Paula knew. They always had plenty of food on hand, and Hedley came past every Wednesday, regardless, which Silas knew. But she stood up and walked toward the kitchen with Mike anyhow, sensing that it was something else.

It was. As soon as they got around the corner of the building, Mike stopped and said, "Judy's out! I saw her run past the equipment shed just a minute ago!"

"Oh, Mike," said Paula, "she untied her rope and got away!"

"We have to catch her," he said, his dark eyes revealing his worry. "Your father will be mighty angry, young lady, if . . ."

"You go that way, Mike," Paula suggested, pointing toward the far side of the equipment shed, "and I'll cut through the kitchen and ask the servants there if they saw her. Then I'll meet you out back, and if we don't find her by then, we . . ."

"By then we'd better get back to the porch, just to prevent her from causing more trouble!"

They separated, each running in a different direction. In the kitchen, Paula startled Silas, who dropped a cup, which clattered on the concrete floor. "Did you see Judy?" Paula asked him and the cook, Ignatius.

"She go by the quarters, Madame," said Ignatius, who was always terribly formal.

"Thank you!" shouted Paula, dashing past the two men and out the back screen-door. Outside, she tried to call without raising her voice too loudly, "Judy! Judy, you had little girl, come back! Judy!" And she moved steadily past the quarters, then toward the equipment shed, where she met Mike, who was coming from the other way. They stared helplessly at one another for a second, then hurried back toward the house porch, where Myra Templeton was discoursing on the social behavior of baboons, claiming that such study was much more sensible than a lot of things "other" people were engaged in. Of course, everyone knew that the "other" people she so coolly referred to were themselves, but weeks ago they had stopped arguing with her, feeling that sooner or later she would learn some common sense.

Mike and Paula stopped together about ten feet from the porch, each of them seeing the big wolf spider not three inches from Dr. Templeton's foot. Judy seemed

nowhere about. Bini sat on his perch, his head cocked sideways, staring down at Myra's foot. Clarence, too, must have seen the spider, because he stood up and was staring at it, probably seeing two wolf spiders and thus doubly nervous.

Dr. Templeton was saying, her voice now quite haughty, "You must understand, Marsh, that it's not personal at all, but merely a matter of academic concern for me, when I make such remarks about the baboon study, and . . ." She stopped talking and looked at Bini and Clarence for a moment. Then she glanced downward, and she seemed to rise straight out of her wicker chair! A howl like that of a terrified olive baboon came from her throat, and Marsh yelled and grabbed her arm and comforted her as Jack tried to stamp on the wolf spider, which saw them all coming and skittered across the porch to safety.

Then, suddenly, there was Judy, that mischievous chimpanzee, howling, screaming with laughter, doing first a back flip and letting out a howl in imitation of Myra's cry, then doing a front somersault and letting out an ear-splitting scream of glee.

"Judy!" Paula cried, rushing for the chimp.

Myra Templeton was shaking like a tree in a wind, her breath a series of gasps, and when she found her voice she sobbed, "She's done it again! You promised, Marsh!" She wiped her face with her hands, her shoulders trembling. Unafraid of wild animals out in the bush country, ready and willing to stalk a pride of lions or walk right into the midst of a herd of baboons, Dr. Templeton was utterly terrified of small crawling creatures, particularly insects and spiders. Unfortunately for her, of course, Africa had lots of them. And Judy, the scamp, had found it out, and had turned lately into a practical joker who really needed to be corrected.

"That nasty little beast!" said Dr. Templeton.

"There, there, Myra," said Marsh, his voice soothing.

"It'll be all right." He glanced out in the compound at Paula, who had just managed to catch Judy, and said in a stern voice, "I want to have a serious word with you after lunch, Paula."

"Yes, Dad," she replied quietly.

"I'm sorry, Paula," whispered Jack, who had run out to help her and Mike catch Judy.

Mike said in a low voice, "You simply have to put her in the cage for a little while every day to teach her not to do that."

Paula felt tears hot and wet in her eyes, and she hugged Judy, who was now chattering like a baby, suspecting that she was to be punished. "She can get out of the cage, anyhow, Mike!"

"We'll set it up on something where she can't find any sticks or nails to work the hinges out, and she'll be all right. She'll learn quickly," he said, trying to reassure Paula.

"Mike's right, Paula," said Jack, not sounding very convinced himself.

Paula hugged Judy even tighter and started walking with her toward the cage on the other side of the compound.

"A car's coming," said Mike. "It sounds like Officer Hedley's jeep. Hear the gears grinding?"

The jeep was less than a mile away, just starting up the hill, but then it stopped. Jack and Mike and Paula, who was still holding Judy, had paused in the compound while they all listened. Now Jack said, "If it's Hedley, he's stopped for something. Come on, Paula, let's put Judy in the you-know-what."

"Poor Judy," whispered Paula, "you have to go in that old cage!"

That was the magic word for Judy, who let out a screech, jumped out of Paula's arms, and dashed across the compound to disappear in the forest along the road

going down the hill. "Judy!" Paula shouted after her. "You're a bad girl!"

On his perch at the end of the porch, Bini said, "Bad chimp!"

Myra and Marsh, who had seated themselves again, laughed, and Myra said, "That's very true, Bini! She's a nasty bad little chimp!"

Paula walked back to the porch with Jack and Mike, stood in front of Dr. Templeton and said, "I'm terribly sorry about Judy."

"Surely you can learn to control the creature," the woman replied.

Cutting in with an edge of anger in his voice, Jack said, "We'll see that Judy learns not to play any more tricks like that."

"Very well," said Myra, her voice cool, her green eyes sweeping disinterestedly over all of them. "We'll see, then."

Paula turned away, almost too quickly, because her father always insisted that she be polite, yet now she could scarcely control herself. She walked over to Bini, the gray parrot, who said to her, "Want some milk."

"You can't have any," she replied, rubbing the back of his head with her fingertips. He liked that. He stretched out his neck for a moment, then straightened up again, scratched his neck with his left foot, and said, "Want some Coke."

Paula couldn't keep from laughing at him, he was such a little beggar. "Can't have any," she said.

He said, "Oooooohh!" in disapproval, and she laughed, then noticed that Clarence had come over by her, along with Rikki, the mongoose, who was trotting quickly toward the porch, for he had seen her talking with and petting Bini, and he was getting jealous for some of the attention. When he bounded up, Paula scratched him under the chin, which he liked, and after a moment he jumped on top of Clarence, who had stretched out on

the porch floor again and started to nap. With the mongoose jumping on him, he raised his huge head, then cocked his ears with interest, made a sound like "Ggrrummp!" at Rikki, who trotted away again, and stood up.

"What do you hear, Clarence?" Paula asked the big lion.

Clarence sniffed the air, then sauntered down the steps and out toward the drive coming up the hill.

Mike said, "It's the jeep again. It grinds just like Hedley's."

They all heard the grinding of the gears now, and Hedley honked twice halfway up the hill and continued on, stopping his car right in front of the porch itself. Seated next to him in the rider's seat was Judy, looking distressed, her lips drawn back. "Good morning, all!" Hedley said in his jaunty British manner, but his expression wasn't at all jaunty, and of course everyone could see precisely why.

Lying in the back of the jeep was a young African, apparently a villager although not one from terribly deep in the bush, since he was wearing an old shirt and a pair of khaki shorts. The young man was bleeding from some cuts or bad scratches on his legs, his left arm appeared to be hurt rather badly, if not broken, and his face was swollen, with several bad cuts on his right cheek.

Marsh and the others ran down from the porch, and Mike ran calling to Silas and Ignatius to bring clean water out while Marsh immediately began to examine the African, asking Hedley, "Where'd you find him, Hedley?"

"Just at the bottom of your hill, remarkably. Surely you heard me stop down there, didn't you? He was face-down in the road, looking like he'd come a few miles already. Judy certainly heard me, because she came running along, and was fussing around while I tried to

get the chap into my car, then she met me halfway up the hill again and rode in with me. How badly is he hurt, Marsh? Or can you tell yet?"

Marsh gestured to Paula. "Paula, honey," he told her, "run back and tell Mike to have one of the others fix up an iron bed and mattress with clean covers and sheets in one of those empty servants' quarters rooms."

Paula ran off, and Marsh took a water-dipped cloth from Ignatius and gently wiped the hurt man's forehead and eyes. The injured African opened his eyes, for a few moments appearing shocked and terrified, his legs moving weakly, but then he looked at Marsh Tracy and mumbled thickly, "Jambo, Daktari."

"You're safe here," Marsh told him. "We'll get you fixed up soon." To Hedley he said, "Some contusions and cuts and a bad sprain, but nothing that will kill him. Let's get him inside the clinic and lab room and get some of these wounds patched up. Then a few days rest and a short recuperation and he'll be as good as new."

"There's only one very serious matter, it seems to me," said Myra Templeton, her eyes fixed on the injured man lying in the jeep.

Marsh Tracy and Jack and Hedley all looked at her.

She said, "This man wasn't on the road forty-five minutes ago when we came up, and he must have been coming here. Most important, however: he was obviously beaten up by human beings."

Hedley looked grimmer than ever, his sandy moustache twitching as he said, "That, dear Myra, is precisely what is bothering me. As soon as Marsh patches him up a bit, I'll want to ask some searching questions, be certain of that."

"No, *bwana Dio*," muttered the native, his eyes rolling with fear. "No, sah, no go talk! Please, Daktari, no let *Dio* make me talk! No, sah!"

"There, there!" Marsh said, his voice calming the man.

He replaced the cool cloth on the injured man's forehead, then signaled to Jack and Hedley to help him carry the man inside. When they had placed him on the table and Marsh was scrubbing his own hands preparatory to caring for the African's wounds, he said to Hedley and the others, "He's been beaten up, and he's frightened half out of his wits, so it wasn't a village fight."

"Not at all, I should say," Hedley agreed.

"Then, what?" inquired Myra Templeton, looking puzzled.

Mike Mkula supplied the answer, his brown face grim and angry: "Criminals of some kind, Dr. Templeton, but not Africans."

Chapter Two

DEATH AT WAMERU

THE NEXT DAY dawned bright and clear save for the dry-season haze of pinkish dust in the air, still with no hint of the *mvua*, the rains which were awaited by everybody in the area and which should be coming any day now. Myra, Jack and Mike didn't go out on the research project at the usual pre-dawn hour, because she planned on photographing and making sound recordings of the baboon herds during much of the afternoon.

At breakfast Marsh suggested that they all drive up to Nairobi on the following day to do some necessary shopping and to get away from Wameru for a day, at least, but Myra shook her head and said, "What about your patient, Doctor?"

Marsh grinned. "He'll recover, with good food and rest."

"And I'll recover just by having Wameru all to myself," she said. "You all can go, and I'll watch the station." She sighed pleasantly and raised her eyebrows. "I

could use a day's peace and quiet to go over my field notes, anyhow."

"When is Hedley coming around again, Marsh?" Jack inquired over his coffee cup.

The room smelled of breakfast: fried eggs, bacon, toasted homemade bread, butter shipped all the way from New Zealand, Chivers jam from England, and especially the rich dark coffee, called "liqueur coffee," grown right in Africa itself. When this coffee was shipped abroad, it was always mixed with cheaper, coarser types of coffee simply to enrich them, but at Wameru it was brewed by itself, and its rich heady odor pervaded the entire kitchen and dining room every meal time. Whenever things were looking really bad for Dr. Marsh Tracy, instead of complaining he would say something like, "Well, maybe everything else is terrible . . . maybe people are killing each other in wars . . . maybe there are riots and sickness and starvation all over the world, and even here. But at least the Wameru coffee is tremendous, and once you drink it you can look at the problems and start to solve them!"

Marsh now looked at Jack and replied, "This afternoon. He wants to speak with our victim . . . if only to find out what the man's a victim of."

Paula asked, "Didn't Mike say the man told him he was *Wenyeji*?"

Marsh and Jack both started to laugh, and Jack said, "And we're *Wageni*, ourselves!"

"Well, I don't see what's so funny!" she said, tipping up her chin and looking away from them.

Her father explained, because Myra Templeton was also looking puzzled. "When Mike asked the man who his people were, the man said *wenyeji*, which simply means people of this part of Africa. *Wageni* means foreigners, such as Americans and Asians and Europeans."

"So the man wouldn't identify himself according to his tribe?" said Myra. "Rather suspicious, isn't it?"

"He's scared."

"*Real* scared," Jack added, glancing with a friendlier smile at Paula, who couldn't really stay mad at them now that they had explained her mistake. "I think Hedley will be able to talk him into telling what happened, unless this guy himself was mixed up in something hot."

"Paula," said her father, rising from the breakfast table, "come along with me, will you, and we'll take a look at our patient and make one or two other plans, too."

"Okay, Dad," she said, not feeling quite so cheerful as she hoped her voice sounded.

Yesterday afternoon they had sat down together and he had told her that he would personally cage up Judy if Paula felt she was unable to do it, because the chimp couldn't be permitted to go on victimizing Myra Templeton with the practical jokes—particularly since one of these times one of the insects or spiders would possibly bite Myra (or, for that matter, Judy herself) and they'd have much more serious trouble than a mere practical joke to contend with. Paula had really promised then that she would watch Judy, and she told her father that she would have Judy make up with Dr. Templeton after breakfast, and there would be no more practical jokes at all.

She followed her father out of the dining room and down the hallway out past the sitting room, across the porch, where Bini said, momentarily lowering a chunk of pineapple he was eagerly gobbling, "Want some milk!" and Paula replied, "After a while I'll give you some, if you're good!"

"Doesn't that parrot ever stop eating?" her father asked her, pausing for a moment to scratch the back of Bini's head. Bini blinked at him, said, "Want some milk!" and when Marsh merely laughed he barked out "Rrr-

aggh!" and resumed the eating of his pineapple, apparently feeling that pineapple was preferable to nothing, especially if they weren't going to give him any milk.

When they crossed the compound, Clarence stood up, rose to his hind feet and grabbed Marsh, who tousled his ears and mane for a minute or two, then backed off, breathing heavily as Clarence rolled over on his back like a playful kitten.

"Whew!" said Marsh, wiping his face with a handkerchief. "I think I started too much when I began to play with him three years ago!"

Paula laughed. "He only weighed ten pounds then, and he was a cute little tabby cat."

The servants' quarters which doubled as hospital rooms for people joined the Wameru compound behind the kitchen, near the equipment shed, on the opposite end of the whole compound from the hospital and the animal pens and cages for those animals which they collected and held temporarily for banding or marking or because of ailments which Marsh had to treat.

The injured African was lying on a bed in the clean little room, and when he heard them come in he turned his head quickly to look at them, his eyes wide, but then he calmed down immediately, whispering, "Daktari, *ndio. Jambo, sah! Jambo, Memsahib,*" he mumbled to Paula, his voice weak and nervous.

"Good morning," she replied. She felt sorry for him, yet deep down a little angry because he wouldn't trust her father enough even to tell his name.

Marsh checked the man's bandages and splinted left arm, then put a thermometer in his mouth, waited for a minute or two while Paula watched the antics of several green monkeys chasing one another through the branches of one of the great crimson-flowered flamboyant trees at Wameru, and afterwards murmured, "Not bad," and said to the African, "How do you feel today?"

"*Jambo, bwana Daktari,*" replied the man, frightened further by having to answer questions.

"Now, we said *hello* already," Marsh told him quietly. "I'm Daktari, and I'm here helping you, so you can tell me your name, and what people you come from, and what your trouble is, and maybe we can help you with that, too."

Tears welled up in the African's eyes, and Paula realized that in fact he was little more than a boy. "Bwana Daktari," he said, after gaining control of his voice and wiping his eyes with his free hand, "I go for Goment, bwana."

"But it was a Government man, a D.O., who brought you here, and you wouldn't tell him anything. Do you want to tell me your name, and the name of your people, so I can . . ."

"My people, bwana, *wanyika.*"

Marsh shook his head, frowning. "That's not a tribe. We already know you come from bush-country people. Don't try to fool us with those words."

"Oh, Dad!" said Paula. "He's scared, can't you see? He's only trying to protect himself—that's why he won't tell!"

Marsh sighed, but then smiled at the African youth. "All right, my friend," he said. "Sometime you'll tell us, won't you?"

"*Bado kidogo, Daktari.*" (*In a little while, Daktari.*)

"Make it soon, though."

"Daktari, I go for Goment, tell my chief about *mbaya* . . . bad things, Bwana, and . . ." Thinking he had already said too much in his nervous chattering, the African youth clamped his mouth shut and nervously turned from Marsh and Paula and looked steadily at the wall.

Marsh patted the youth's forearm, then stood up. "You're safe here at Wameru," he said. "When you're better, you can go to your chief and tell him."

The youth turned to look at them for a moment, and Paula saw that his eyes were wet again as they left his room. She heard him cough out one heavy sob of misery behind them, and a thick lump of sympathy rose in her own throat.

His voice tight, Marsh said, "Poor devil. Whoever beat him up like that has some terrible hold over the boy." He stopped for a moment, briefly raised his hands and dropped them at his sides, saying, "Well, we keep trying."

Paula gave him a quick kiss on the cheek and said, "I love you, Dad. Sometimes you're almost too patient."

His long white gown which the Swahili call *kansu* flapping about his ankles, Ignatius was hurrying toward the youth's room with a covered metal pan. "*Jambo*, Daktari," he said. "I take breakfast for this bushman." He stopped, lifted the lid to show them the pastry, stiff porridge made of a mixture of ground maize and wheat flour, which they called *ugali*, grinned, and said, "He soon go be strong-strong, Bwana!"

"Give him some meat, too," said Marsh, "and get him to eat some fresh fruit, like orange or pawpaw."

"Yes, Bwana," said Ignatius, who paused as if he wanted to say something else.

Marsh asked him, "What is it, Ignatius?"

"This *nyika*-man, sah, ask me to bring his satchel, say it have *msala*, his prayer-rug, in it. Bwana Daktari, we see no satchel, sahl Silas is one good Muslim, sah, and I know these things, but we see no satchell!"

"Don't worry about it, Ignatius," replied Marsh. "I know you men didn't steal it, and if he left it in Officer Hedley's car, we'll get it this afternoon. Otherwise it's in the bush, probably near where Hedley found him. If he'll talk, try to learn his name and his tribe. That's more important right now."

Ignatius looked very doubtful about that. "He is

some bad fellow, sah," he muttered, and he walked off toward the room.

"Well," said Marsh, "let's get along with things. What about Judy, now?"

"I'll see that she behaves, Dad."

"You promised that yesterday, Paula."

She swallowed hard. "I really promise this time, though!" she said.

He sniffed as if he found this hard to believe. They walked together out into the open part of the compound, where Mike and Jack were busy loading photographic and sound recording equipment into the back of the truck. Myra Templeton was sitting on the porch going over yesterday's notes, and Clarence was dozing beside her chair. She had brought Bini's perch out of the sun and placed it by her chair, and already he was off it, perched on the back of the wicker chair, now and then leaning forward to say something to the woman. When he spotted Paula and Marsh he said:

"Want some Coke!"

Paula replied, "Not now, Bini. You just had some fruit!"

He ruffled himself, opened his gray beak in a grand yawn, said, "My goo'mess," which made Myra Templeton laugh delightedly, and looked like he was about to take a nap.

Marsh glanced toward the sky. "It looks like a hot one coming up," he said to Jack and Mike, who bobbed their heads in agreement. "I think you'll need the portable refrigerator for the film today, and for shopping tomorrow."

"You'd better believe it!" Jack laughed as he and Mike went back out toward the equipment shed.

Myra glanced up from her notes and said, "Marsh, did you say *refrigerator* for *film* and shopping?" She laughed lightly. "If most people back home heard *that*, they'd think you live in the lap of luxury."

He chuckled, struck a match to light his pipe, which he had been filling as he strolled over, and explained, "I guess they would. But it keeps a lot of film and food from spoiling out here."

Bini wiggled his red tail feathers and said, "Hi!"

"Hi, Bini," said Marsh.

"Want some milk?"

"I don't," Marsh said with mock gravity, "but I think you do. I'll tell Silas to give you some after a while."

Myra laughed. "It's hard to keep from talking with him, isn't it? But . . . I wonder if it isn't silly to talk with a parrot."

Softening his voice, Marsh said to her, "Maybe you worry too much about seeming silly, Myra."

The woman reddened, caught her lower lip momentarily in her teeth, then smiled, trying to appear bright and friendly. Paula didn't feel like watching the two of them any longer, and it was time by now to let Judy out, so she walked around the end of the lab and stopped there, feeling very sad over poor Judy.

As the men had suggested yesterday, they had put Judy's cage up on two carpenter's horses under the metal canopy which protected the animal pens and cages from the sun and from the worst effects of storms and rain. Judy knew how to remove the pins from the cage-door hinges by using a small nail, piece of wire, or even a twig or splinter of wood, but this more or less suspended her in the air where she couldn't reach anything that she could use for an escape tool. So now she had been stuck in her cage since yesterday afternoon, and had had to sleep in the cage out here last night, rather than in the baby bed in Paula's room where she usually slept. This morning Paula had scolded her again for playing tricks on Myra Templeton, and Judy had screeched back at Paula, but when Paula had left Judy had cried for a while.

Now the chimpanzee was sitting in the middle of her

cage, dejected and forlorn, as if her last friend in the world had deserted her, and she barely lifted her head even when Paula walked all the way over to the cage. Paula said, "Judy, will you be a good girl now?"

Judy looked up sadly, nodded her head twice as if she couldn't really believe what was happening, but when Paula removed the peg holding the door and reached for her, she sprang happily into Paula's arms, hugging her, promising her (although Paula couldn't understand the "words" Judy used) that she'd be good and not bring any more spiders, even if it was the greatest fun in the world to see Dr. Templeton jump and hear her scream. It was even more fun to be loved by Paula and not be put out in that old cage.

"All right, then," said Paula, hugging the chimp and carrying her back around to the porch. "Now, I want you to go apologize to Dr. Templeton. Will you do that?"

Judy nodded, making her high-pitched grunting sounds which meant, *Yes, I'll do it happily! I promise!*

So Paula put her down, but just then Myra Templeton saw Judy bounding down the porch toward her and she stood up nervously and said, "Marsh, that chimp is loose again! *Now* what?"

Frowning, Marsh said, "Paula, what are you doing?"

"Judy wants to apologize to Dr. Templeton, Dad, that's all."

Judy had stopped halfway between Myra and Paula, and was sitting on the porch hiding her head with her hands. Myra glared at her for a moment, her mouth a tight line, her hands trembling. "Apologize?" she finally demanded. "This creature?"

Judy looked up, saying in her grunting fashion, *Yes, me!*

"Come on, Judy," Marsh gently ordered her. "Apologize to Dr. Templeton. Shake hands and be friends . . . and no more tricks!"

Judy listened attentively to him, shaking her head

to show that she wasn't going to play any more tricks at all, and Paula said, "See, Dad? She can't stand being in that cage, so she promises to be good now!"

Forcing a grin for Myra Templeton's sake, Marsh explained, "She'll behave herself if you'll accept her apology now. Just let her shake your hand, look firmly at her, and then give her a little smile." He paused, then added significantly, "It won't really hurt, Myra. She's only a young animal."

"All right," the woman sighed, offering her right hand.

Judy came forward and shook hands with her, looking very sad and solemn and sorry for all her pranks, and in a vast assortment of grunts and attempted words tried to tell Dr. Templeton exactly how she felt. Myra smiled then, ever so slightly, and Judy turned a back flip, chattered with happiness, and ran back to Paula, telling her in chatters of gaiety, and Paula said, "There, now, honey, that's a good girl!"

Jack and Mike came onto the porch out of the sunlight, both of them breathing hard and perspiring from the heat. "We'll get ourselves a cold drink, Marsh," said Jack, "and then I guess we can go. We've got the refrig and equipment loaded, and the cameras and recorders are thoroughly padded."

"I've plugged in the refrig on the accumulator," Mike explained before he followed Jack into the house.

"Good," said Marsh. To Myra he said, "Well, have a good day, although I don't envy you, having to go out in the afternoon heat."

She smiled, shrugged her shoulders, and replied, "The sacrifices of science," as she started to get up. Then she froze, the blood drained out of her face, and she let out a piercing cry which made Bini almost leap from the back of the chair. Marsh quickly knocked the spider off her skirt, killed it, and was all apologies and sympathy with her. Ignatius came running from the kitchen with a glass of cold water a moment later.

"That *chimp* again!" Myra moaned. "What did I ever do to her, Marsh?"

Bini said, "Judy's a bad chimp! Ooh, my goo'mess!"

Marsh lifted the little parrot onto his regular perch, then said to Paula, "Well, you know where Judy goes again, young lady."

"Oh, Dad, Judy didn't do it this time! She couldn't have! After all, this *is* Africa, and there *are* wolf spiders all over!"

"Paula," he said firmly, his jaw set, "I don't want to have to argue!"

Paula spun about, reaching for Judy, who ducked away suddenly, chattering with indignation. Angered herself, Paula shouted, "Judy, come back here! You bad girl, come here right now!"

Judy was defiant, turning backflips and barking at Paula, shaking her head, trying desperately to argue that she was innocent, and when Paula made a dash for her she raced out of the compound and was gone.

"All right, Paula," her father told her, "you can catch that little scamp later this afternoon! When she gets hungry enough, or wants some companionship, she'll come back."

When Paula screamed so accusingly at her, Judy ran until she was at least a hundred yards away from the compound and out of sight. There she climbed onto a favorite branch and grumbled and cried for a while, because Paula was mean for not trusting her; that all would be well, she knew, if only she stayed away from the compound for a while. If she stayed away, by evening Paula would have forgotten about almost everything, even about that latest spider, which Judy really hadn't had anything to do with. *That* spider had just crawled from somewhere, and in fact, when Dr. Templeton had screeched, Judy hadn't even laughed or enjoyed it at

all, because she hadn't wanted to get in trouble. Yet she had gotten blamed, after all.

She grumbled to herself for a little while longer, but after a bit she stopped crying and was feeling pretty good up in the tree, except for two things: she wanted to look at the things she had found near the African Hedley had picked up, and she wanted company.

She rolled sideways off the branch, hung with her left hand for a minute while she tried to think, and then she heard the truck driving down the road. Quickly she climbed high in the tree until she could see it, and from where she was she saw Paula go back inside the house, and Marsh walk toward the laboratory. Judy chattered angrily for a few minutes because she felt rejected, and now she felt even more determined to look at her treasures. She would get her *own* friends, first, and take them to see what she had.

She hurried back to the compound, circled it warily and saw that no one was about. Clarence heard her and raised his head, and Bini stretched out his right wing and leg, then cocked his gray head sideways to watch the chimpanzee and the lion. Judy ran into the house for the leash, hooked it onto Clarence's collar, and chattered at him to get up. He rose slowly, lazily.

Bini said, "Hi!"

Judy shook her head and chattered softly at him to make him be still, but he chattered back, so she reached a forefinger up, he stepped on it, and she set him on Clarence's back. Clarence glanced over his shoulder at the little red-tailed gray parrot as if to say, *Just behave, that's all!*

Judy ran quickly past the cages under the animal shelter, then spotted Rikki, who was still trying to dig under the sunken wire of the cage in which Daktari kept a small boa. Judy hissed and chattered at him, trying to tell him to come with her, and he hissed back, chattering in his mongoose way, because he was more

interested in getting at a snake—any snake, in fact—than most anything else. Nevertheless, since there was always some fun to be had with Judy, he gave up on the snake, and trotted along behind her, a little brown weasel-like animal, furry and whiskery. When they got back to where Clarence and Bini were waiting, Rikki chattered at Bini, who flapped his wings defiantly and said, "*Rrraggh!*"

Judy grabbed Clarence's leash, and the four friends crossed the open compound and went down the hill road for a hundred yards or so, then cut off into the forest to a clearing, hidden and shaded from the sun, pleasantly cool. Clarence and Rikki sat down while Judy climbed a tree and brought down a brown rucksack from which she took some pieces of paper money, a bright, shiny walkie-talkie, and a little bag filled with brilliant, glittering diamonds.

She held the walkie-talkie toward the other animals, each of them sniffing it. Clarence smelled a truck-odor on it, and also the odor of the injured African, who had screamed earlier today when Clarence had merely walked into his room just to have a look at him. It didn't interest Rikki, who glanced all around the clearing with his darting little eyes, wondering if a snake or a lizard might be near. He couldn't smell any right now, but that didn't always matter—sometimes one of them could be right next to you, ready to strike, and you wouldn't be able to smell it at all. Bini cocked his head and watched curiously as Judy jerked out the long shiny antenna of the walkie-talkie. It was really bright, and he would have liked to grab it with his beak, or at least lick it. Judy was excited, chattering happily at all of them. She had seen radios like this one. Daktari had some of them, and he and the other people at Wameru used them when they were out in the bush, and kept some of them in the cars. But this wasn't one of those.

Judy pressed one of the buttons on the side of the

radio, and a humming sound filled the quiet air of the little clearing. Rikki jumped to his feet, chattering, thinking a snake was nearby, but then he looked closely at the radio, sniffed it and listened, and sat on his haunches. Clarence cocked his ears and sniffed, and kept staring at Judy, seeing two of her, of course, and wondering what silliness she was up to now.

Then suddenly the radio said, "There's a transmission! Gatimu's transmittin'! Charley!"

Clarence roared and jumped backwards and, chattering, Judy pressed another button and the voice suddenly stopped, the radio going silent.

Bini said, "My goo'mess!" his voice loud and clear in the silence, and Judy laughed and screamed with delight.

She pressed the next button in the line, and there was no humming or voices from this one, either, so she shoved the antenna back in, then held the radio against her and rolled back and forth on the ground, hugging it and giggling and chattering. For a long while she lay there holding the walkie-talkie, and when she finally noticed anything else she realized that Rikki had gone off, and Clarence and Bini were both dozing, the lion with his big chin on his forepaws, the gray parrot perched on one foot on Clarence's mane, his other foot folded up under his belly. Judy found the rucksack, put the money and diamonds and the walkie-talkie back into it, carried it back up in the tree, and grabbed Clarence's leash.

They had been back at the compound for less than an hour when they heard the truck returning, and suddenly Judy remembered that Paula was angry at her and she didn't know at first what to do, because if she ran out in the compound Dr. Templeton would probably yell and scream and Paula would be mad again, and if she was in her room Paula would take her to the cage,

and . . . Judy thought of the cage for a minute, shaking her head with disapproval and chattering at the image of the thing. But now she heard the laboratory door slam, and she heard Paula say to Silas in the kitchen, "Well, they're back already. Fix tea, please."

Judy ran from the porch, Bini shouting from his perch, "Bye! Bye-bye!"

But before she reached the forest, Judy stopped. She wanted to see Paula. She wanted Paula to love her. She started to cry, then stopped as the lorry rounded the bend of the road and pulled up in front of the house. Deciding finally, Judy raced to the roofed part of the shelter, fixed the door to her cage open, and sat there inside the cage, looking very sad as she waited for Paula to come out of the house, for she remembered that Paula was always especially good to her if she looked sad. She heard Paula call her a few minutes later, and she wanted to go running out to her, but she resisted the temptation. She sat in the cage, waiting and trying to be sad. But Paula didn't come. Judy yawned, grumbled and squeaked a few things to herself, and felt very drowsy.

"Oh, Judy, honey!" It was Paula's voice, waking her.

Judy let out a shout of joy when she saw Paula and Daktari standing there looking at her, both of them smiling, not at all mad at her any longer, so she leaped out of the cage and into Paula's arms and chattered how happy she was as she hugged Paula.

Somewhere in the back of her brain she felt she would show Paula the walkie-talkie and the shiny diamonds and the money and the funny-looking papers, but in the excitement of the moment she forgot all about that.

"She can stay out, Paula," said Daktari, "just so long as she behaves."

"She will, Dad," Paula replied. "I promise!"

"All right, then." He patted Judy's shoulder for a

moment and told Paula, "Check with Ignatius and Silas about supper, now. Tell them to be sure the African boy gets some fruit juice and some meat this evening."

Paula and Judy ran hand in hand back to the kitchen, both of them happy that everything was working out so well, and even after supper and at bedtime it seemed that everyone at Wameru was happy and that the world itself was peaceful.

But the peace did not last very long.

Judy was permitted to sleep in her baby bed in Paula's room, and Clarence slept in the hallway just by Paula's door. Bini's perch was always put in the room at night, and Rikki could run in and out, because he was rather nocturnal and was out in the compound and the nearby bush trying to catch snakes most of the nights. All of them had gone to bed and were sleeping when, sometime late in the night, Clarence let out a low-pitched snort, pushed open the door, and walked into the bedroom, where he snorted again.

Paula raised herself on one arm and heard the sound of an automobile engine in the distance. Then the sound increased for a minute, and afterwards gradually receded as the car drove farther away until it was out of earshot. Clarence snorted, the sound mostly in his throat, not very loud at all, the sound he made whenever he smelled something strange or dangerous. Paula got up and noticed that Judy was awake, sitting up in her bed wide-eyed and listening.

Then, suddenly, from the direction of the servants' quarters, the air of the tropical night was burst with the sound of a man screaming in horror.

Paula and Judy and Clarence ran outside, where already Mike and Marsh were hurrying with flashlights toward the quarters. The native was still screaming when they all got to the doorway to his room, and he had thrown himself out of his bed, clutching the side of his

face. Two tiny spots of blood were on his chest as well.

Suddenly Mike yelled, "Marsh, look out!" and Marsh leaped backwards away from the twelve-inch long asp, a sand-viper.

Jack got there just then with a lantern, leaning over Paula's shoulder to look, and a chittering little bundle of angry fur came racing across the room and, before the sand-viper knew what happened, Rikki had it behind the head and with one crunch killed it and ran off with its body.

"Tomorrow-Never-Comes!" said Jack.

Marsh rushed to the injured African, who was now moaning and delirious. "Jack, Paula, go to the lab and get the antivenin kit!"

"It won't help, Marsh!" said Mike. "That was a sand-viper, and we have no antivenin for it! Look at the man—he's almost dead already!"

It was so. The native youth's eyes were rolling in his head. He focused once on Marsh and reached for him, saying, "Daktari, much bad tief-man . . . Daktari . . . animal . . ." Then he let his head drop sideways, and he was limp. With his hand off his face, they all saw that he had been bitten on the cheek as well as on the chest. The man's body shuddered violently, his back arched for a second, and then he fell limp again, and this time it was obvious that he was dead.

Paula turned away, her heart pounding from the horror of it all. For a moment she breathed deeply, trying to catch control of herself, and she said, "Clarence smelled something, Dad," but her father wasn't even listening. He and Mike and Jack were lifting the dead African back onto the bed.

When they were finished, Mike commented, "It's an iron bed, Marsh, not even close to the wall, and it had a mosquito net on it."

"Yes," said Jack, his eyes round with wonder in the

yellowing light of the coal-oil lamp, "so how does a sand-viper climb right on top of a man like that?"

All of them stared at one another, shock and awareness in their eyes.

Chapter Three

PAULA INVESTIGATES

DISTRICT OFFICER HEDLEY ran a finger along his sandy-colored moustache and, his brows lowered over his inquisitive blue eyes, said to Marsh, "I'm the last to jump to conclusions, Marsh, but I'd agree that, without a doubt, the poor chap was done in—murdered."

Hedley had arrived at dawn. Last night they had radio-telephoned to the district station, but he had been out after a rogue hippo which had been destroying native farms and crops near Natron. As soon as he had returned, apparently, and heard the message, he had driven to Wameru. By then Mike Mkula had had the workers dig a grave to bury the dead man, although Marsh had insisted that they leave the corpse in the bed at least until seven, in case Hedley should be late. Hedley arrived well before seven, heard the story from each of them, carefully looked over the room, inspected the mosquito netting on the iron bed, the distance from the bed to the window, and then ordered all of them ex-

cept Marsh out and told Mike to have his men bury the dead African. When the workers were finished and gone, Mike and Jack went along with them, but Paula stayed behind, remaining out in the hallway while her father and Officer Hedley discussed the killing. That was when she heard Hedley declare that it looked like murder.

Marsh nodded, his face looking weary and very grim to Paula as she watched from the doorway, neither of the two men yet aware of her presence, or so she thought. "I don't think it's very surprising, Hedley. Last night when it . . . it happened, and we all rushed in here, I think we came to the same conclusion immediately." After a grim, thoughtful pause, he said quietly, "What a brutal way to kill a man, though."

In his clipped British voice, Hedley replied, "Very neat, one must admit. No murder weapon at all, especially since your mongoose ate it. It's the kind of murder which results from particularly warped but cunning and desperate persons, Marsh, and I'm bloody well going to find out who they are. It was only yesterday morning I picked up the poor chap, all knocked about and beaten up down at the bottom of your hill, and already his enemies have got to him in the final way." He took a quick breath. "Well, then, no sense standing about here, is there? I can't think of any more policeman-like things to say for Paula's sake, can you?"

Marsh chuckled as he and Hedley walked to the door where Paula was standing red-faced at being caught, and he said, "No, I can't, either, so let's ask her to fix us something cool to drink while we figure out the next thing to do."

"Oooh!" snapped Paula. "Both of you ought to be ashamed!"

"Eavesdropping is impolite," said Marsh, nevertheless smiling. "I'll have some lemonade, Hedley?"

"That sounds jolly good," Hedley replied.

Paula ran ahead of them down the hallway and turned off toward the kitchen as the men continued out of the quarters and across the compound to the porch of the main building, where Myra Templeton was sitting looking nervous and angry.

She obviously had been thinking about something disturbing, for she said, her voice too high to be normal, "Marsh, I— Oh, Hedley, I wanted to say . . . I was thinking . . ."

"There, now," said Hedley. "Do sit back down and don't worry! You're quite safe!"

"No, it's not that!" she said, shaking her head almost angrily, her green eyes flashing. She took a big breath, tossed her head dramatically, and looking at both of them announced, "I have been thinking about the . . . difficulties . . . I've been put through by Paula's nasty little chimpanzee, and it seems to me that . . . well . . . couldn't Judy have—" She bit her lower lip to cut off her voice at the look on Marsh's face.

He said, "Myra, you don't seriously believe Judy could handle a poisonous viper!"

"She handled poisonous spiders, didn't she?"

"Here, now," said Hedley, interceding. "Myra, we appreciate your feelings and, indeed, to someone not familiar with these asps, the idea isn't too far-fetched. But we know it's impossible. Only a human being could have put the snake on that poor fellow's bed."

Myra, breathing hard, with spots of bright red high on her cheekbones, raised her face to look at the two men, and said, in a very small voice, "I'm sorry I said that."

"It's a natural response," Marsh told her; "but, as Hedley explained, it's impossible. Furthermore, Myra, the man was the victim of a beating only yesterday morning, so the combination of circumstances is too much to overlook. Let's forget you said that, shall we?" he asked her, placing his hand on her wrist for a moment.

She smiled, her eyes moist, and nodded.

Marsh glanced up as Paula came out onto the porch carrying a tray with two tall frosted glasses on it. She gave him and Hedley each a glass and told Myra that Silas was bringing more in a few moments, but the woman shook her head.

"Thank you, dear," she said, "but I see that Jack and Mike are coming back already, so I think we'll go out for bush again today . . . unless you want us to stay close to the compound?" she added, glancing at Hedley.

"No, of course not. The African's buried and taken care of. There's no need to disrupt routine otherwise, so go on with your research work."

"Good. I presume," she asked Marsh, "that you've put off the Nairobi shopping trip, too?"

"Until tomorrow, anyhow," he replied, running his fingers through his hair and taking a long drink of the lemonade.

Jack and Mike separated from the two workers and came over to the porch, both of them looking rather sad. Jack remarked, "It was a dirty shame about that poor guy. We didn't even know his name or his tribe or where he came from, so we can't even notify his people. Marsh, let me help investigate, will you?"

Her voice gentle, Myra told the young man, "Jack, leave it to Marsh and Hedley, and they'll find out."

"I agree," said Mike. "Will we go out on the Reserve today, Dr. Templeton?"

She nodded. "Yes, let's get to work again. We can get some more sound recordings of the baboons while they're feeding."

With a quick glance at Marsh, who hadn't objected to or agreed with his request, Jack started back across the compound toward the garage, saying, "That's that, then. I'll go get the truck ready."

"Oh, Mike," said Hedley, "before you go, tell me

something. Hadn't you said you'd heard some shooting northwest of the Reserve a day or two ago?"

"I did, Officer Hedley."

"Where were you when you heard it?"

"All three of us heard it," added Myra. "We were by that one waterhole . . . uh—"

Mike grinned handsomely and said, "Mpwapwa, Hedley. Actually, we were beyond that point, out near Wadi Kaola, and the direction of the shooting was pretty much due northwest from there."

"Yes, yes, of course," Hedley grumbled into his moustache. "The Trekboer, Limited, Company *was* working out that way, but by now they've probably moved in closer to Wameru, although they're of course supposed to remain *off* the Reserve. Strange they've not sent someone around."

"What would they be shooting at?" asked Paula. "And what is it?"

"The company?" Hedley laughed lightly. "An animal collecting firm, properly licensed and all that, of course—quite legitimate. They've gun licenses, too, although as a rule they don't do much shooting at all."

"Well, then," said Myra, rising, "time to get things together and be off to work." She and Mike walked out to where Jack had brought the truck, and the three of them apparently were discussing their equipment needs for the day's research among the baboons.

On the porch, Hedley said to Marsh, "Why don't we drive about and make at least a preliminary investigation of things? The snake, as we're all agreed, didn't come by itself, and whoever brought it had to get here by some means."

"I distinctly heard a car motor last night," volunteered Paula.

Hedley raised his eyebrows and drew down the corners of his brown moustache. "Not much help, I fear. Well, Marsh?"

"Okay," Marsh agreed, finishing his lemonade. "Paula, you can stay around the station today and, among other things, sit down with Silas and Ignatius and finish up the shopping list. We have to get to Nairobi tomorrow for supplies, barring any more troubles."

"All right, Dad," she replied, somewhat disappointed at not being asked to ride along with him and Hedley—but of course she realized that they wanted to investigate matters by themselves. A half hour later they drove off in Hedley's jeep, and she waved goodbye to them and, as Judy took her hand and chattered sadly up at her, Paula said, "Well, Judy, I guess we're left here alone today."

Clarence raised his shaggy head from his nap at the far end of the porch and grumbled, looking at the two Judys and the two Paulas and the two Binis; then he went back to sleep, or seemed to. But when Paula sighed and said, "Well, let's go out to the kitchen and make out the shopping list," he cocked up his right ear even though his eyes were closed. Too much had been happening lately to disturb his sleep, and he felt drowsy and a bit grumpy: Judy at least seemed to have stopped her mischievousness, so there'd be some peace and quiet with her, but on the other hand there were strange odors and wounded people and poisonous snakes and screaming in the night, and Clarence simply had had his fill of it, so now he dozed, ignoring the red-tailed gray parrot, Bini, who for a while tried to get his attention by talking to him, but who finally dozed off, too.

Paula and Judy went to the kitchen, where Silas was just finishing cleaning off the large table. Ignatius found a small, tree-ripened banana and gave it to Judy, and then he looked sad-faced at Paula and said, "Is sad, Madame, about the *nyika*-man."

"Yes, it is, Ignatius," she agreed.

Silas glanced at them and added, "Some bad things go happen, *Memsahib!*"

"Didn't you men hear anything last night?" she inquired. Her father and Officer Hedley had thoroughly interrogated the servants and other African workers at Wameru earlier, but Paula felt perhaps she could learn something privately from them if only because they liked her and knew her so well. But both of the Africans shook their heads and looked quite serious and somber about it all.

"I go hear Clarence make *simba*-cough, *Memsahib!*" said Silas.

Ignatius shrugged his shoulders. "I hear only the *nyika*-man scream, Madame," he said.

Paula sighed. "Well, that's that, I guess," she murmured. Louder, she said, smiling, "Ignatius, bring me the pad and pencil, and you can tell me what stores we'll have to buy when we go over to Nairobi tomorrow."

"Indeed, Madame," he responded, swishing his *kansu* as he turned for the things she requested. Silas went back to work polishing the appliances as Paula and Ignatius made out the list.

An hour later they were finished, and Paula walked out into the compound with Judy. It was a hot day, but not nearly so scorching as it had been for the past week, and Paula wondered if perhaps later on in the afternoon they might get the first of the rains—always a thrilling spectacle in Africa, and welcome after the long dry season. Now, though, she felt bored, and she made up her mind when she and Judy reached the edge of the equipment shed and she saw the jeep in the garage.

"Come on, Judy," she said. "We'll take a ride and look for the murderer ourselves!" Judy did a back flip, chattered happily, and ran toward the jeep. "You wait here," Paula instructed her, "until I go inside for a bush hat and a jacket and some canteens of water. Be a good girl, now!"

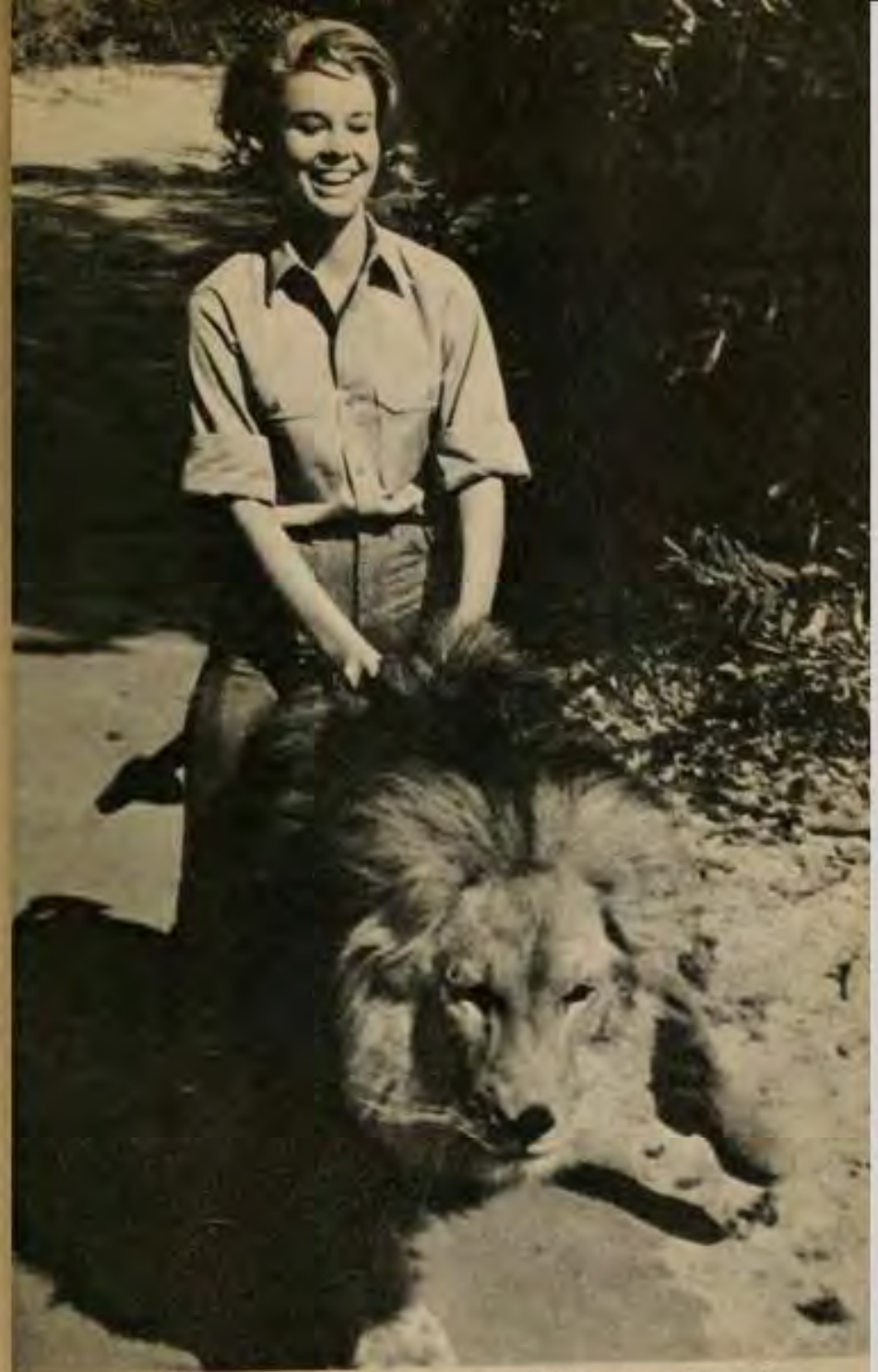
Judy chattered, nodding her head, but when Paula ran into the house the chimp dashed from the garage

to her hiding place, collected her walkie-talkie, and brought it to the jeep, where she stuck it under the seat. She had just gotten it hidden when she heard Paula saying, "All right, Bini, you can come, too, if you're good and you can be quiet. Clarence is the one with the detective nose, though, aren't you, Clarence?"

With Clarence trotting at her side and Bini riding on Clarence's mane, Paula came around the corner and walked over to the jeep, tossing the two canteens into the front seat and waiting for Clarence to get himself seated in the back. Then she got in and started the car and down the hill they went, Paula laughing and stepping hard on the brakes as a chattering little ball of brown fur came racing in the dust after them. "Come on, Rikki!" she called to the mongoose, who stopped momentarily, then leaped up into the jeep. Paula started up again, all her pets with her.

Paula decided that they could drive slowly out along the borders of the Reserve, and maybe Clarence would pick up the scent he had smelled last night when the African boy had been murdered, the scent which caused Clarence to make the "simba-cough," as Silas had called his grunting. It was worth a try, Paula thought, because the murderer would probably have gone somewhere along the edge of the Reserve, rather than into the interior, where he could too easily get lost or, on the other hand, get caught by Wardens. Regardless, this was better than sitting at Wameru with nothing to do, so on she drove, now and then stopping the jeep at side roads and telling Clarence to smell the air, but each time the big lion simply sniffed, then shook his mane, cocked up his ears at Paula as if he were being asked to do the impossible, and on they would travel.

Judy began to get bored after an hour or so of this, so she reached under her seat and took out her walkie-talkie, but she hadn't even gotten the aerial halfway up



Clarence the Crosse-eyed Lion is a willing jungle-style "pony" for Paula.



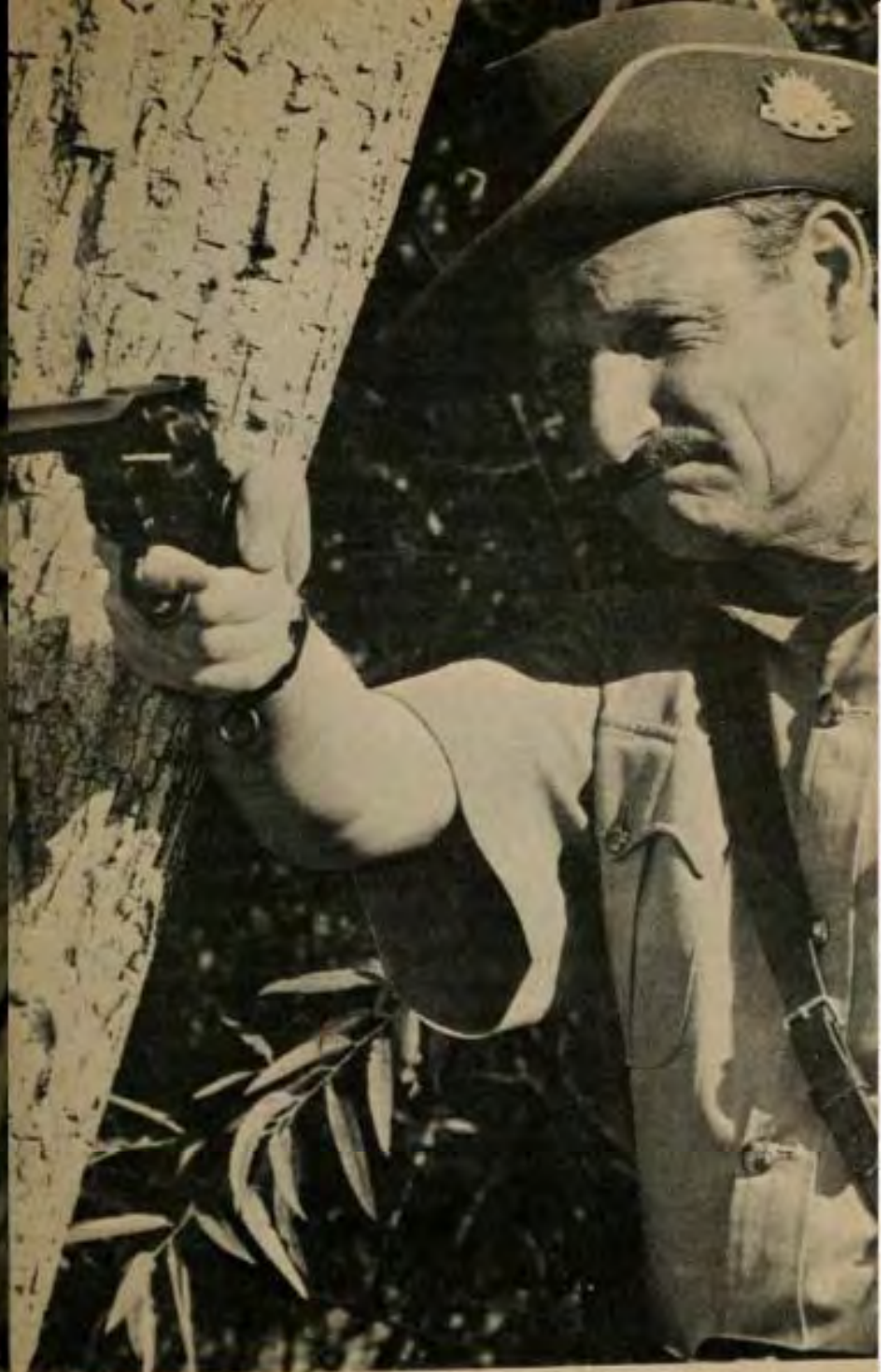
Dr. Marsh Tracy is ready in case of trouble.



Jack gets acquainted with some frisky lion cubs.



Mike Mkula and Jack, with Rikki the mongoose.



District Officer Hedley, who represents the law around Wameru.



Silas, the steward at Wameru, also helps Jack and Daktari treat sick animals.



Judy the chimp amuses Jack, Hedley and Paula with her antics.

when Paula noticed it, stopped the car, and grabbed the radio from her, scolding:

"Judy, you know you're not supposed to play with Dad's walkie . . ." Paula's voice dwindled away to nothingness as she looked at the walkie-talkie, in the edge of which was stuck a slip of paper. "Judy, honey," said Paula, dismayed, looking over the radio much more carefully now. "This isn't one of Dad's, at all! And . . ." She drew the piece of paper from the battery plate, where it had been caught, and read it. It looked to her like an invoice or bill of lading, and it was for nine hundred pounds of link-bolts purchased by Trekboer Animal Enterprises, Ltd. Paula gasped and said, "Judy, where did you get this?"

Judy shook her head, hid her eyes with her hands, and whimpered.

"I won't spank you, Judy. But when we get home you must show me where you got this!"

Judy chattered, showed her teeth, whimpered, and hid her eyes again as Paula put the radio down on the floor, the slip of paper in her pocket, and again started up the jeep. "You will keep your little hands off it, young lady," Paula said sternly. "Do you hear me?"

Judy chattered to indicate that she heard.

They had driven through some lowland bush country for a half hour, where the brush was heavier, with some stands of green-foliaged trees indicating the presence of water, and were coming more into the open savanna land, rolling grass country spotted here and there with patches of thorn bush and acacia, but most of it dry and grassy. Paula slowed up the jeep to shift gears to climb a small knoll and to pull out of the more sandy, looser soil here, when suddenly Clarence raised his great shaggy head and let out a distinct *simba*-cough, then nuzzled the back of Paula's head with his big nose.

She stopped the jeep immediately and spun about in her seat, whispering, "What is it, Clarence?"



Daktari and Paula take a tiger for a stroll.

Judy was sitting wide-eyed on her seat, not making a sound, and although Rikki chattered softly, Bini the parrot sat on Clarence's mane with his neck stretched out and his eyes wide open.

Clarence lifted his head higher in the air, and Paula heard a grumbling like an underground waterfall in his throat. She looked at the grass and noticed that it was waving down toward them from the knoll, so she said, "The wind's coming from that direction, isn't it? Come on, we'll sneak up to the top and look from there! Stay close by me, all of you!"

Paula and Clarence led the way, the big lion crouched low in the grass, Paula on her hands and knees, while Judy, whimpering softly with fear, kept so close to Paula that she almost knocked her down. Rikki trotted along beside Clarence, apparently choosing the biggest one in the crowd for protection. Together they crept up the knoll until they were lying in the grass at the very top, and Paula could scarcely believe her eyes.

Down below was a shaded and very pleasant-looking valley filled with cages, supplies, a couple of big Bedford trucks, and native workers going back and forth. In the midst of all of it, seated in folding chairs in the shade of a small flame tree, were two strange Europeans and a strange Swahili in a green turban, one of the white men at this very moment carefully pouring hot tea for her father and Officer Hedley, who seemed to be enjoying the pleasantest of visits one could imagine.

Bini, seated on Clarence's mane, said in a loud, clear voice which seemed magnified immeasurably in the still air, "My goo'mess!"

And all eyes in the camp below turned to the knoll. The Swahili jumped up, and one of the Europeans said, "Good Lord, Charley! There's a bloody cross-eyed lion there on the ridge!"

Red-faced with embarrassment, Paula stood up and, leading her pets, walked down to the camp, to the as-

tonishment of the strangers and even Hedley and her father, who explained, "Gentlemen, this is my daughter, Paula, who apparently has been out for a ride and found out where we were."

"Hi, Dad," Paula said, her voice wanting to stick in her throat. "Hello, Officer Hedley."

"Well, Paula, you've the gang along, too, I see."

"Paula," her father said, "this is Mr. Van Wiet, Mr. Stokes, and Mr. Hakim of Trekboer."

"How do you do," Paula said politely to each of the men.

Immediately she knew she didn't like the Arab-Swahili named Hakim, nor the one who seemed to be the leader, Charles Van Wiet. Both of them had cruel casts to their faces, like men who would stop at nothing to get what they wanted. The third one, Stokes, didn't seem to be particularly agreeable, but he appeared to be more stupid than absolutely mean. Paula caught herself then, wondering why she was thinking this way, why she was making judgments so quickly after meeting these men. Then she noticed Clarence, who was staring in his cross-eyed fashion at Hakim, who was suddenly sweating profusely as the lion continued to watch him.

"Clarence," she said to the big animal, "come here."

The cat took one or two steps closer to her, but continued to stare at Hakim as if the Swahili were a tempting morsel he was contemplating for dinner.

"Very interesting looking cat," Van Wiet commented, sitting down again. "Sit down, Miss Tracy, and have a spot of tea. Grizeh!" he shouted, and an African came running up with another cup and saucer and served Paula. Van Wiet struck a match to a large cigar, puffed for a moment, and, peering through the bluish smoke, said, "Wouldn't like to sell him, would you? I know a circus in Hamburg, Germany, that'd love to have a cat like him."

"No, absolutely not!" said Paula, shaking her head.

Stokes, who had graying black hair, English blue eyes, and a ruddy face which looked rather knobbish, laughed a silly laugh and said, "Hey, Hakim, why's ee lookin' at you like 'at, eh?"

"It is nothing," the Swahili replied coldly, his dark eyes menacing and hateful, but his lean brown face composed so that it appeared almost calm. "The *simba* is merely interested, that is all, because I have the odor of some of our cats on my *kansu*."

Hedley chuckled uncomfortably. "Clarence is always interested in something or other," he said. "Usually means nothing at all."

Resenting the remark, Paula had all she could do to keep from speaking out, but she controlled herself, realizing deep down that something wasn't right about all this. Clarence, after all, *had* smelled Hakim: that was why Clarence was still so interested in him. And because Clarence had never seen Hakim before in his life, then it was too much to be mere coincidence, and the fact of matters was simply this: Hakim was probably the murderer, or had been with the murderer last night!

Paula felt Hakim's dark eyes staring at her, and she felt her face get hot from blushing. She glanced back at him once or twice, feeling the claws of terror rake down her spine, and quickly she turned her eyes away again and paid attention to her tea and to the desultory conversation carried on by Van Wiet and Stokes and Hedley and her father, all about the animal business, the problem of poaching, the difficulties of collecting animals, maintaining animal health during transportation, and the usual professional talk that goes on among animal men.

Some time later one of the native workers came running from a tent and spoke in very rapid Swahili to Hakim, who jumped to his feet and looked toward the knoll behind which Paula had left the jeep.

Paula and the others turned at the same time, and Marsh laughed and said, "It's Judy, with one of my walkie-talkies! Paula, go take that away from her, will you?"

"I beg your pardon, *effendi*," Hakim said to Marsh. "It is not *your* radio at all. The chimp has one of *our* radios."

"I see," commented Hedley. "The fellow who ran out . . . you have a receiver inside that tent over there?"

"Quite so," replied Van Wiet, his bushy, reddish eyebrows in a frown. "We use those radios a lot. Right now we have a couple of game-spotters out across those ridges. We keep everything on Band 12, so there's no difficulty in sending or recognizing. The chimp's chattering on Band 12, if it is *your* radio, Doc Tracy."

"It's theirs," said Paula. "Judy!" she called. "Bring the radio to me right now!"

Holding the walkie-talkie above her head, Judy came down the slope and gave the radio to Paula, who handed it to Van Wiet. Her face still red, she explained for everyone's benefit, "Judy found it, and I didn't know she had it until she took it out of the jeep. There was this, too," she added, handing the big man the invoice slip from her pocket.

"I see," he replied, his big ruddy hand shaking as he took the paper, glanced at it, and handed it and the radio to Hakim. The Swahili's face almost blanched, and Stokes, who had been watching all of it, blinked nervously. "That was all?" asked Van Wiet.

"I'm very sorry, Mr. Van Wiet," Paula replied. "Judy found it somewhere."

"We had some stealing lately, you know," Van Wiet explained, his voice heavy, each word carefully pronounced, as if he was worried that his voice might somehow betray him. "That radio itself, and a few business receipts, and even some money."

Hedley cleared his throat. "The dead chap we men-

tioned before—he had a rucksack with him, but the thing disappeared, and we never did locate it. Judy must know where it is, hey, Judy?" The chimp trotted to Hedley, leaped up, and he caught her and chuckled as she chattered at him.

The three men of the Trekboer, Ltd., Company stared at Judy in rock-hard silence, Van Wiet now and then trying to force a slight smile. He finally said, "We'd appreciate her help very much, Miss Tracy. We'd like to get the papers back, and one or two other items. That dead African sounds a great deal like Gatimu, who ran off when he couldn't get a raise from me. Probably got himself knocked off by one of his thieving brothers."

Marsh and Hedley exchanged glances, Marsh frowning darkly. Hedley said, "Well, then, gentlemen, we'll be off. I'm sure Miss Tracy will have her chimp find the rucksack, and they'll send one of their people over here with it in a day or two."

"I'm sorry again," said Paula, but Stokes and Hakim merely stared at her, while Van Wiet forced a weak smile, shrugged his huge shoulders as if it really wasn't all that important, and replied:

"Very good, Miss. You just get the chimp busy, and we'll see, eh?"

Marsh rode back to Wameru with Paula and the animals, Bini sitting on his shoulder as he drove. As soon as they had driven away from the Trekboer camp area, Paula said, "Dad, those people are the ones who did it!"

"Did what, Paula?"

"Killed that African boy! Dad, can't you see?" she said. "Clarence smelled that one called Hakim and led us there. The African boy had *their* radio, and he was beaten up by them, I'll bet on it, and then he got away, but they murdered him!"

"Paula," Marsh said patiently, "there's an awful lot of

circumstantial evidence in what you say. It *can* be explained by coincidence, you know."

"Dad, I *know* they're the ones! And there's more to it now than ever, only I just don't know yet what it is!"

Chapter Four

THE MURDER PLOT

AS PAULA TRACY had guessed when she'd first met the men, Joe Stokes was the relatively stupid bungler of Trekboer, Ltd., whereas Charley Van Wiet and Ahmadu Bakir Hakim were the more intelligent and much more cruel of the group, although the three of them did not otherwise comprise any neat division of persons or types. As soon as the sounds of Hedley's and Marsh's cars had disappeared in the African distance beyond the ridges, Stokes signaled to Grizeh, the African servant, and ordered him to bring whisky and soda, which made Hakim sneer with disgust.

"What're you lookin' at, you bloody 'eathen?" Stokes demanded, red-faced and angry for a reason even he couldn't understand.

Hakim glowered at him darkly, wrinkling his thin lips downward to indicate his disapproval of the man, and replied, "I am looking at a man who will bring our operation to ruin, at a fool, at a dumb thing—that is what

I am looking at," he snarled, maintaining perfect calm, his right hand hidden in the folds of his white cotton *kansu*.

"You two stop it now, hear me?" Charley Van Wiet ordered them, slapping his big ham-like hand against the top of the folding aluminium table, which clattered from the blow. "Hakim, blast you, you've bungled the whole job! Joe, you're a stupid drunk, and it'll pay you to keep your mouth shut! Both of you are the worst incompetents I've ever had to work with in anything, and it's beyond me how I've been with you for three years without flogging both of you and kicking you out!"

"It's this stupid dumb Swahili, Charley, what's messed up ever'thing, makin' them people from Wameru come snoopin' around 'ere!"

Like a wild cat Hakim's right hand came out of his garment holding a gleaming knife with a curved blade, which seemed to be a flash of light as it swung through the air and stopped, the needle-sharp point of the weapon on the side of Joe Stokes' face just below his left eye. Stokes dropped the glass of whisky and soda from his hand but otherwise froze, trembling, his eyes saucers of terror. "Easy now, there, Hakee, ol' boy, eh?" he stammered. "Eas . . . easy now, eh?"

"Put the knife down, Hakim," Charley Van Wiet said calmly, in a quiet and controlled voice, for this sort of thing had happened before, and each time the men resorted to violence he had to be the one to straighten out the problem. He slowly drew the pistol from his belt holster and placed the gun on his crossed leg. "Hakim, put it down," he repeated, still in a calm way, "or I'll blow your bloody head off, hear me?"

"You fools!" the Swahili hissed. "Who will take snakes to people who must be killed? Who? You, Joe, you drunken coward? You, Charley? Maybeso you are tough and strong, but Hakim knows you are afraid of the snakes! So kill me, and before I am dead I will kill this

stupid friend of yours. Then you try to get back our diamonds by yourself, my big Dutchman! Try it!"

Charley leaned back in his chair and sucked on a tooth, contemplating the scene before him: Hakim was leaning over Stokes, who had become absolutely pale, his face bloodless from fear of the sharp knife being held against his face. Down Stokes' cheeks were the grimy tracks of tears, which had begun to roll automatically from his eyes, and he whispered hoarsely, "Please, Hakim, don't cut on me!"

Charley Van Wiet swallowed hard. Hakim was right, of course. He could do lots of things, but he couldn't do some things that Hakim could do—like handle poisonous snakes. And now he could kill the Swahili, but then Joe would be killed, too, by the Swahili's knife, and he'd be all alone, and not even have the diamonds. So he swallowed again and slowly put away the gun, took a breath that hurt his chest, and said, "Okay, Hakim, we'll keep our mouths shut. Let him go."

Hakim said between his white teeth, "He will apologize to me!"

Stokes gasped, "Sure, Hakim! Sure, pal! I'm sorry, 'at's true, Hakee, ol' pal! Okay?"

Hakim jerked the knife back, and it disappeared again somewhere in the folds of his *kansu*. He turned from Stokes to look with dark, cruel eyes at Van Wiet. "I have forgotten the insult," he said.

"Thanks," said Van Wiet. "That's decent of you, Hakim, and we'll . . . ah . . . keep it from happening again, won't we, Joe?"

"Oh, surely, Hakee, ol' boy!" Stokes babbled. "Boy, never again!"

"What's important for all of us," said Charley, "is that rucksack Gatimu ran off with. There's a pile of diamonds in that little bag he got his hands on, plus the paper money he took off, too."

"The girl probably has it," said Hakim. "Did you see

her face? She was hiding something! She had the radio and one bill of lading, so she has everything, and she probably *knows* everything!"

"Aw, now, Charlie," said Stokes, grumbling across the table at Van Wiet, "there's your dumb Swahili again!" He raised his hand suddenly in a defensive gesture toward Hakim and said, "Not *dumb*, Hakim! I didn't mean *that*! I meant, what you said is just overdoin' it all, ain't it? Maybe it's pretty much we got in the rucksack Gatimu stole, but it's only the *latest* payment from them boys over there, and there's a lot more where that come from, ain't there? The money can't be traced to us, and them bills of lading don't really mean nothing!"

Hakim and Van Wiet stared at one another, each in his face reflecting his shock and disgust at Joe Stokes' utter stupidity. Finally Van Wiet said very slowly, "Hakim, there's times when I just ought to let you knife him. He's so bloody dumb he wouldn't know the difference for a week, I swear it!"

"Well, what's wrong with—" Stokes started to say.

Hakim cut in with, "Money is money, you fool! The diamonds are contraband, and police will be looking everywhere for smugglers if they hear of diamonds!"

"The bills of lading," added Van Wiet, "can give away our whole operation. Of course, I don't know why Hakim and I bother to explain what you already know, or what you're supposed to know already!"

Several big cats, in cages under tent-roof shelters some fifteen yards behind the place where the men were sitting, began to snarl and roar, and the men stood up quickly. "Check that, Joe," said Van Wiet. "What're them beasts fussing about?"

Hakim resumed his chair, smiling slightly. "The leopards were excited because a dog came too close to their cages, and the lions became excited because of the leopards."

"Listen to that! It's more than a dog caused that ruckus!"

Hakim shrugged his shoulders and didn't answer.

Charley Van Wiet looked down at the side of the Swahili's face, at the beak-like nose, the sharply-etched brows and cheekbones, and then said in a low voice, "Keep an eye on Joe, Hakim, hear me?"

The Swahili turned his dark eyes toward the Boer. "Hakim hears it, Charley," he said.

Van Wiet felt nervous. "He ain't to be trusted too much."

Hakim simply stared at Charley until Joe Stokes came back and, panting, reported, "They'll quiet down in a minute, Charley. It was just a dog went wanderin' by the leopard cages, and . . ."

"Yeah," said Charley, his face flushed. "Hakim and me were just talking about that." He told Grizeh to fix him a drink and bring it, then sat down heavily. "We have got to do something, boys, about that rucksack. Anybody got any bright ideas, now's the time to talk."

"I have already sent two men to Wameru to watch the people," said Hakim.

"Like I said," Stokes remarked, licking his lips and still breathing heavily, "what's the—"

"Fool!" snapped Hakim, suddenly wrathful, as if he had lost his patience. "No more of your foolish talk! We have enemies all around us, and now they have evidence!"

Van Wiet frowned thoughtfully, looking much like a big, lumbering wrestler, thick-necked and round-headed. "Daktari Tracy's bright-eyed little blonde gal, like Hakim here says, acted just a little *too* innocent to suit me."

"I think so, too," said Stokes, now trying to act as if he really had a sound idea, his eyes wide open and rounded as he presumed other people looked when they

were thinking. "That little girl's got the rucksack, all righty!"

"Not yet, perhaps," murmured Hakim.

"Oh, no?" Stokes protested angrily. "'Oo says?"

Van Wiet smacked the table with his big hand again to get their attention. "Hakim's right, Joe," he said. "If the gal had them diamonds and that money, she'd be yelling to high heaven and we'd have coppers by the hundreds swarming over us like driver ants. We come close to it when that District Officer Hedley picked up Gatimu and noticed the rucksack, but then that chimp must've come along and stole it and, by the bye, saved our blooming necks—for a while, at least."

"Well, if Gatimu hadn't got away like that, we wouldn't have no troubles now," Stokes remarked, looking at Hakim, whose face twisted with rage.

"He's right, Hakim," said Van Wiet. "You and your boys let him escape, so here we are, needin' to get back our stuff and keep ourselves in one piece."

"We all make mistakes," Hakim growled. "I had him beaten. I had no idea he could get away!"

"Okay, then. It's done, and the chimp *did* get the rucksack." Van Wiet's eyes narrowed. "You and some of your boys have got to get back to Wameru on the sly, Hakim—find out where Hedley picked up Gatimu, and start looking every possible place you can think of where that chimp could've put it, hear me?"

Stokes said grumpily, "Aw, Charley, why'n't we let the gal do it? She said she would, and her chimp'll bring the rucksack to her, and we just claim the stuff." He grinned at both of the others with his knobby face, and made a small flourish of triumph with his hand.

For a long moment again neither Hakim nor Van Wiet could speak. Both stared at Stokes, but finally Hakim said quietly to Charley, "He is the strange child of a wild donkey and a warthog, without the brains of either one."

"Hey!" Joe protested.

"Joe," said Van Wiet, trying to remain patient, "it can't work that way, because when the gal or any of them other do-gooders see our diamonds, they'll scream bloody murder to the law! Now, we told you once, and this is the second time: Don't come up with any more stupid ideas like that, hear me?"

Stokes blinked and looked away. "Okay, Charley," he grumbled.

Hakim coughed lightly, covering his mouth with his long, slim fingers. Then he said to Van Wiet, "I and my men cannot do as you suggest, either, Charley. We will be too close to the lion, and it knows my odor. It would become nervous if it were to smell me nearby."

Van Wiet frowned, then said slowly, "Yeah, I guess you're right."

"We got to do somethin', I guess," Stokes said, still trying to contribute to the discussion.

"We will kill the chimp," said Hakim, "and we will kill the daktari's daughter."

His face getting redder, beads of glistening sweat popping out on his forehead, Van Wiet said, "I don't get you, Hakim."

"The chimp first," said the lean-faced Swahili. "If we do not kill her, she will bring the rucksack from wherever she has hidden it, and then those people will find out about us."

"All righty, so far," said Stokes. "That still don't give no sense to murdering the girl, not in my book it don't!"

Hakim went on, "The girl is the person who speaks loudest among them about what is happening, so she will still seek us out, because it was *her* chimp which stole the rucksack. She will try to find the rucksack and she will send the askaris after us. More than this, the girl might know at this moment where the rucksack is hidden, which will explain how she had the bill of lading that she gave to us."

There was another roar from the direction of the big cats, and Van Wiet bellowed out to a worker, "You over there, keep that dirty mutt away from the leopards!"

Hakim called out something in ki-Swahili to the worker, who replied, and then he turned back to Stokes and Van Wiet and said, "If she has the rucksack, she could be saving it because she does not yet know *how* it must be used, or how it is related to us. Do you understand me?"

"It's comin' through real clear to me, Hakee, ol' boy," said Stokes.

"Go on, Hakim," said Van Wiet. "You're making sense."

"Ah, well, then. If any of the others would have the rucksack, the police would know of it, but the girl is wise-foolish, and she might be hiding it. So if we kill the chimp, the chimp cannot lead anyone to the rucksack, and if we kill the girl, she cannot lead anyone to it."

"And we *still* ain't got our bloomin' diamonds!" said Stokes.

"He's right," said Van Wiet. "What about that, Hakim?"

"It is this," said the Swahili. "We will search, we will do all we can to find the bag, but if *they* find it first, it can put a rope around our necks. I prefer to lose that money rather than to die on the gallows!"

"Now, wait," Van Wiet argued, rubbing his jaw thoughtfully. "Why not snatch that chimp, take her down to the coast to the depot, treat her real nice for a while, then *use* her to find the rucksack?"

"What about the gal?" Stokes asked apprehensively.

Hakim grinned. "We will leave a small pet with her very soon," he replied.

Van Wiet chuckled, then he and Hakim laughed together when he said, "And that fool, Daktari, said they were going off to Nairobi tomorrow, shopping! They won't be taking no chimp along, will they?"

Hakim stopped laughing and stood up quickly. "It is

all good," he declared. "I will find a snake for tomorrow night."

Van Wiet laughed again. "Sure! Let the gal have fun shopping in Nairobi before she meets her creepy little executioner!"

Chapter Five

KIDNAPPED!

ALTHOUGH THE SUPPLY TRIP had been postponed for a day, Myra Templeton still agreed to remain behind at Wameru while the others all went—Marsh and Paula intending to take the Landrover, Jack and Mike already gone in the truck.

"Nothing's changed, really," Myra explained to Marsh, "except for that poor boy's murder setting the trip back a day." She raised her chin, smiling prettily. "I *do* need some peace and quiet to work on some of my field notes, and the break in everybody's routine will certainly do all four of you worlds of good."

"You're right about that," he agreed. "We can get things done and be back in Wameru before dark, so you shouldn't get too lonely."

"I can stay here with her, Dad," Paula suggested.

She and Marsh had already argued that out, and his opinion was final and definite: "No, Paula," he said. "You will not play detective."

"Just lock up all the animals, please?" Myra begged them. "Including Judy?"

Paula said, "I'll do it, Dad." She called to Clarence and Judy went off toward the cages.

Marsh slipped on a tan bush jacket and grabbed his wide-rimmed hat off a hook. "Everything will be all right," he said. "The jeep's in the equipment garage if you need it, and Silas and Ignatius will be here, so . . ."

"All right, Marsh! Please stop treating me like a guest, or like a child! Here, Paula's coming already!" She waved to the girl as Marsh started the Landrover, and called out, "Paula, I simply must have some typewriter ribbons!"

"I won't forget!" Paula promised as Marsh backed the car around in the compound, waved, honked the horn, and drove off down the hill.

In just a moment the pink dust had settled, and the entire compound seemed utterly deserted except for herself and Bini, who was sitting on his perch in his usual daytime place on the porch. When Myra turned to go in, he said, "Hi!"

"Hi, Bini," she said, smiling. She called Ignatius and asked him to carry the parrot's perch into the sitting room, where she had already laid out all her work-notes, some black and white photographs of baboons eating and nursing their young and searching for food and fighting and posing for the camera, a tape recorder set to play back tapes of baboon-sounds she had recorded, and several stacks of field jottings, some typewritten, most of them written in her flowing, graceful script.

"Madame?" said Ignatius, after he had carried Bini and the perch inside.

"Yes, Ignatius?" Myra smiled at the worried look on his dark face, realizing that she appeared to be quite an ogre to the servants much of the time. She re-

solved to try to correct her image somewhat: even Judy, the chimp, might be less rascally then.

"Is market day, Madame, at Kiambi-side, and we go buy fruit today. Madame Paula forgot it, Madame."

"All right, Ignatius, go to market," she said with a friendly smile. "And don't rush back if you want to look at things and talk with your friends for a while."

"Thank you, Madame," he said.

As Myra walked back into the sitting room Bini cocked his head and said, "Want some Cokel?"

"You are a greedy bird," she laughed, but she called to Silas to bring some pineapple for him, and when the parrot had a chunk of the fruit to chew on he was quiet, and Myra was able to get to work.

She turned on the tape recorder to listen to some of the cries that mother baboons used to signal their babies, and for a long while she was engrossed in the problem of two-toned cries which she felt were different but which she could not clearly distinguish, when the buzzer for the radio-telephone rang. She heard it, but the sound didn't immediately register on her mind, and it buzzed again, this time seeming more distinct than before. Myra switched off the tape recorder and reached for the phone.

"Wameru Animal Hospital," she said. "Who is calling, please? Over."

The voice seemed far away, a man's voice which she could not recognize as one she might have heard in the past: "Doctor Templeton? Over."

"Yes indeed, this is Dr. Templeton. Who is calling, please? What can I do for you? Over."

"You don't know me, Doctor. I'm John Whiteley of Engare Vaso and a friend of Hedley's. You know the District Officer there, don't you? Over."

"Oh, yes," she replied. "What is it, Mr. Whiteley? Over."

"An emergency camp-up, Dr. Templeton. We've a

poisoned or drugged waterhole out here by Magadi, and Dr. Tracy asked me to call and tell you to drive in the jeep to District Office, where Hedley will meet you and take you with him to Mpwapwa, then up here." The man's voice paused for a moment. "A couple herds of baboons seem rather sick, Doctor. Tracy and Hedley thought you would want to be on hand. Over."

Myra's heart seemed to stop momentarily when she heard these words. Herds of baboons poisoned or drugged! Who could have done anything like that? It was almost unthinkable!

"Dr. Templeton?" said the man on the telephone.

"Oh, yes," she replied, her voice quavering with nervousness. "Of course I'll come. I'll leave immediately, and be at the District Office in less than an hour. Over."

"Cheerio, then. See you here. Over and out."

"Goodbye," she said, hanging up.

She glanced about for a moment, trying to think. Then she grabbed her camera and bag, checked her supply of film, and took a bush hat from the hook on the wall. There were first aid supplies in the jeep. The station was all right, although Silas was the only person here now, since Ignatius had already pedaled off to market on his bicycle, and the workers had the day off. But nothing could happen here. Every animal except Bini was caged and safe, and of course Silas could handle everything quite well until she got back. Undoubtedly Marsh would have Jack and Mike working to help the drugged animals, too, and he might already have sent Paula back to Wameru to help watch over things here.

"Silas?" she called, walking down the hallway toward the kitchen.

The Swahili steward met her at the entrance to the kitchen, his face revealing his puzzled concern. "Memsahib is going out?" he asked.

"Silas, there's an emergency at Magadi and Mpwap-

wa, with drugged waters, and I have to drive out there to help Daktari and the others."

"*Ndio*, Memsahib," he said politely. "But no one is at Wameru now, only Silas," he added, his eyes wider.

"Someone will be back soon, Silas. Put Bini in that mynah-bird cage so that he's safe, and set him out by Judy so they can talk with each other." She gave him a confident smile. "Nothing will happen, Silas."

"*Ndio*, Memsahib," he replied, his voice very low, almost a whisper.

Silas waited until the woman started the jeep and drove away, then took Bini in the cage out to where Judy and Clarence were caged. Clarence glanced sleepily up at the steward, and Judy chattered at him to let her out, but he ignored both of them and returned to the house, where he busied himself for a half hour or so by polishing the wooden furniture with red, pungent-smelling furniture polish.

Then he heard a big truck coming up the hill toward the station, and when it was drawing close he started out toward the front door. There was a slight swishing noise behind him, he turned quickly and caught a glimpse of a white *kansu* just before something that felt like the trunk of a tree smashed into the back of his head, and he knew nothing until hours later.

"Did you check and see that there's nobody else?" Charley Van Wiet growled at one of the two Africans with him.

"*Ndio*, bwana, this fellow the only one-o."

Van Wiet gestured with his ruddy, ham-like hand at one of the Africans. "You stay here, Mogadu. Kwambe, come with me." He walked back to the animal cages and the first thing he saw was Judy sitting inside her cage and staring blankly at him. Over to the side was Clarence, his head raised, a rumbling growl in his throat.

Bini, seated on his perch swing inside the mynah-bird cage, said, "My goo'mess!" Then Judy chattered and barked angrily at Van Wiet, who laughed and said to her:

"Well, me fine feathered chimp, you're going on a trip."

"Many fine animals here, bwana," remarked Kwambe, tapping Clarence's cage especially.

"You know, boy, you got a point," said Van Wiet. "If we take a truckload, it won't be so obvious why we took this chimp, eh?"

The African laughed with Van Wiet, who hurried over and backed the big Bedford truck closer, opened the loading doors, and began selecting caged animals and loading them rapidly until the truck was packed.

"That's it, boys!" Van Wiet told them then. "Let's go!"

Judy's cage was placed against a wall of the truck, on the floor, and the first thing she noticed, despite her screaming and protesting about being kidnapped, was a big loose splinter of wood on the truck wall just at the edge of her cage. She chattered eagerly, almost happily, at the sight, and began to work steadily at it, tugging and straining, her fingers now and then slipping, but finally getting a good grip and, struggling hard, ripping it loose. She looked at it when she got it into her cage. It was perfect! Now she shifted her position and, using the small end of the big splinter, she tried to get it set against the top pin of her cage door, but just as she got it almost set, the truck started up, and she dropped the splinter.

Screaming furiously, she stretched out her left arm and barely reached the splinter, having to drag it with her fingernails until it was close enough to pick up. By now the truck was bouncing too much, and although she tried and tried to get the hinge pin loose, either she kept dropping the splinter or it kept slipping. Frustrated,

chattering and crying, Judy finally threw the splinter down in the floor of her cage and rolled back and forth hugging her knees and crying for Paula or Daktari or anyone she knew.

It was twilight, and night soon would fall. Paula and Marsh were driving in the Landrover in front of the loaded truck as they came up the hill on their return to Wameru, and Paula had just sighed and said to her father, "Oh, Dad, it'll be good to get home, won't it?" when he swung the car around the curve.

The first thing they saw was District Officer Hedley's jeep, not even parked straight in front of the porch, but at a crazy angle. Then the cook, Ignatius, came running out and said excitedly to Marsh, "Daktari, come quick-quick!"

"What is it?" asked Marsh, braking the Landrover fast and leaping out. He and Paula ran together into the house, where Myra, white-faced and distraught, was bathing Silas' forehead with a cloth she was dipping in ice water. Silas looked like a dead man, his normally bright brown skin now grayish and drab. He was apparently in a coma, and there was a large smear of blood on the floor which someone had tried to clean up, but the stain of blood remained despite the cleaning.

When Marsh and Paula rushed in with Ignatius, Myra burst into tears, and Hedley walked stiff-legged toward them, his face stark with anger.

Hedley said to Marsh, "I'm afraid somebody tricked Myra into leaving Wameru today." He blinked slowly at Paula. "Then they came and overpowered poor Silas. Paula, dear, they . . . they stole the animals." Hedley swallowed hard, and patted Myra's shoulder.

Myra said, "Forgive me, Paula, please!"

Paula stared down at the injured Silas. She felt as though she couldn't quite comprehend all that had hap-

pened. "They took Judy?" she said faintly. "And Clarence? Bini was on his perch, so they couldn't—" But the look on Myra's and Hedley's faces told her that all of them were gone. The girl turned, starting away from the room, from the pool of blood, but a pair of strong hands caught her shoulders and when she looked up she saw that Mike Mkula was stopping her.

The young African said gently but firmly, "There is no place to run from grief, Paula."

Behind her, her father said, "Silas looks seriously hurt, Paula. I'll need your assistance."

Still looking into Mike's face, she sobbed, "But Dad, how can I—"

"Silas is hurt badly, Paula," Marsh said quietly.

Paula shook her face to get rid of the tears, then turned back to her father and the others. "All right, Dad," she said bravely.

With this, Myra Templeton caught control of herself and stopped crying. Hedley coughed several times against the back of his hand and, as Marsh knelt down on the floor to begin his meticulous examination of Silas, explained, "Myra received a phone call, Marsh, from some devil calling himself John Whiteley of Engare Vaso, who said . . ."

"Serious cut here," Marsh murmured to himself, as he ran his skilled fingertips about the base of Silas' skull. Louder, and to Hedley, he said, "Whiteley's a friend of yours, isn't he?"

"Of course, Marsh. This wasn't Whiteley, at all. John's gone up to Kampala, in Uganda, and he'll not be back for two months, at least."

"Clever thieves, at least," Marsh mumbled, almost to himself again. He glanced at Myra's bleak face and said, "Help me turn him forward, Myra." Together they turned Silas slightly forward, Myra holding the African's face and forehead with the cold compresses. Marsh

said, without looking at the girl, "Paula, you and Ignatius get busy and prepare some food for all of us. First, fix some cold drinks. Bring me a dash of brandy for Silas, too."

"He's a Muslim, Dad," she said, her voice wanting to choke, "so he can't drink liquor."

"This is medicinal," said Marsh. "It isn't meant for pleasure!"

"I'm sorry," she murmured, her eyes burning with fresh tears.

"Forgive me for snapping, honey. Go do that now, huh?"

"Oh, God," moaned Myra, "what a mess I've made of things!"

"You can stop that right now," Marsh instructed her. "If you're looking for sympathy, you won't get it, because we've got more important problems. You were tricked, as anybody can be tricked, so please drop the histrionics!"

"Yes, Marsh," she replied meekly.

Hedley went on with his explanation, as if there had been no interruption at all: "So this rogue pretending to be a friend of mine told Myra that some water'd been poisoned, and some baboons were sick, and she was supposed to meet me at the Office and go to Mpwapwa. Bloody convincing, what?"

"I should say so," said Marsh, by now cutting Silas' *kansu* to expose the African's chest. Jack had just brought his bag and Marsh listened to Silas' chest and back for a while with the stethoscope. The African's heartbeat was steady but slow and not so strong as it ought to be, but with proper care Silas would soon recover. Removing the stethoscope from his ears, Marsh said to Hedley, "Very convincing."

"How is he?" Jack asked.

"We can handle it," Marsh replied. "You and Mike

get busy on those supplies, particularly the perishables. Get Ignatius to help you unload. Paula can do the cooking."

"I'll go help her," Myra suggested, getting up.

When she had gone, Hedley continued, "Naturally, Myra thought everything was all right at the station, and hearing that story about baboons being sick from a poisoned well aroused her emotions, and off she went. That's about it. Then the chaps came, overpowered Silas, and stole off most of your animals, including Paula's pets."

Ignatius came out from the kitchen with a small glass of brandy, which he set on the coffee table.

Marsh thanked him, then turned back to Hedley. "First," he said, "I think I'll stitch up that nasty gash while he's still unconscious. Then I think we can bring him around with brandy and salts."

During the operation Silas did not stir a muscle. When he was finished, Marsh gently, with Hedley's help, lifted the African's head and Marsh tipped the glass of brandy at the man's lips. Silas gulped once, swallowed hard, and tried to shake his head. When Marsh broke an ampule of spirits of ammonia and waved it under Silas' nostrils, the African shook his head harder and opened his eyes.

As his gaze focused he said, "Ooh, Daktari, I thank you much-much, but no give me more bad alcohol drink, no brandy, bwana!"

"It was for medicine, Silas," Marsh explained. "Now, now, don't move!" he said, as Silas tried to straighten himself up. "Hedley, call Jack and Mike in here. They and Ignatius can carry him to his room, and I'll give him a shot of penicillin, and he'll start to patch up fast."

"Bwana Daktari," Silas said, his words halting and weak, "I am sorry, bwana. What has happen, sah?"

"Nothing for you to worry over now," Marsh replied.

"Later on, Ignatius will explain, but now I want you to get well."

Ignatius came into the sitting room with Mike and Jack, and Ignatius exclaimed, "Silas, my friend, you are alive?"

"*Ndio*," said Silas. "Small-small alive, is all."

Mike got a stretcher from the laboratory and brought it out, they loaded Silas onto it, and took him out to the quarters. After giving Silas the shot of penicillin, Marsh finally returned to the sitting room, where Hedley was waiting for him.

"Well, then," he said. "Shall we take a look?"

They walked outside to the animal shelter, and Marsh suddenly felt as if someone had struck him too. Only a few of the animals remained—those too bulky, apparently, to carry. The young buffalo was in his pen, and the four lesser kudu, the giraffe which had gotten over the limp it had developed from a torn ligament and which Marsh intended to release (carrying a radio-homing device painlessly imbedded in its back so its future movements could be studied). Marsh stopped by the small antelope pen, surprised to see that the little dik-dik whose leg had been hurt had not been taken.

"That's strange," he said. "This fellow's no bigger than a fox terrier, but they left him."

"Maybe not so strange, Marsh," said Hedley. "He's in that pen, isn't he? By the time they'd find a cage, go in the pen and catch the dik-dik, it could take a bit of time. In fact, how many *penned* animals did they take?"

Marsh hurried along the row of pens, checking carefully, while Hedley remained where he was. From the far end of the row, Marsh said soberly, "None, Hedley."

"Only caged animals, then?"

"That's it," Marsh replied, rejoining Hedley.

"So they were hurrying, worried about being caught. They could load caged animals onto their truck and drive off with the least trouble, couldn't they?"

"But there's something else, Hedley," said Marsh. "This vague *they* is the real puzzler. Who are *they*?"

Neither of the men had heard Paula approaching them until she said from behind them, "Trekboer, Limited, Animal Enterprises. Clarence recognized the odor of that Hakim, and Hakim was scared of Clarence when we were there. And they admitted they knew the African who was murdered, Gatimu, and they were very interested in the satchel that Judy found and hid, so they came and stole her."

"They stole a lot of other animals, too, dear," Hedley reminded her.

Her eyes wet, Paula said, "I know they're the ones. It's the only possible answer!"

"It's not the only *possible* answer," said Marsh. "But it's certainly a probable one. What do you think, Hedley?"

"Certainly they're worth investigating further, although it's almost too obvious, since they're animal dealers and they'd know suspicion would be cast their way." Hedley scratched the side of his face. "Look here, it's about dark now, and I must get back to my station. There's little I can find out here at night, but at least to satisfy Paula I'll stop by the Trekboer camp on my way back home. I don't expect to find anything, Paula, but it's worth another stop, at least. I'll give you a radio call about ten, Marsh. All right?"

"Stay and have some supper first." Marsh suggested.

Hedley shook his head. "No, I must be off. I can eat when I get back to my place. But I will call." He turned to Paula. "You try to get some rest, and cheer up. We'll have Judy and Clarence and the other animals back in no time at all." He walked with them back to the house, grabbed his hat, and left.

It was almost ten by the time they finished eating, and all of them were bone-weary from not only the long hours of traveling during the day, but especially from the emergency situation in which Wameru now found itself.

At ten sharp, Officer Hedley called. He said, "Marsh, Van Wiet's out, but Stokes and Hakim and their workers were all apparently quite normal. Of course, no evidence whatsoever of any of your animals. Over."

"I heard you, Hedley," Marsh replied. "Where's Van Wiet? Over."

"Well, now, Marsh, that's a poser. They were a bit fuzzy, so I gathered he's out for bush somewhere. I think, upon reflection, that it might be well for us to pay them a visit first thing in the morning. Van Wiet might be back, and it can give us a chance to look over their camp in the daylight. Agreed? Over."

"Of course I agree," Marsh replied. "Come by here first for breakfast, and we'll go together. All right? Over and out."

"Cheerio, Marsh. Goodnight."

Marsh switched off the radiophone and explained everything to the others, who merely nodded wearily, except for Paula. She said, "Can I go in the morning, Dad?"

"We'll see, honey," he replied, doubt in his voice. "Probably you can. Right now, get some rest. All of us need it after today. Tomorrow's a new day, and we can get busy and solve the whole problem."

Paula lay in her bed for a long while, unable to go to sleep at first, then dozing fitfully. She would wake up now and then, wide awake from nightmares in which Judy and Clarence and Bini and Rikki were being slaughtered by monstrous brutes who resembled grotesque versions of Charley Van Wiet, Hakim and the

bumbling Joe Stokes. Once, upon awaking, she thought quite clearly, *I have to save them! Dad and Hedley don't really realize how terrible those Trekboer people are!* But then she dropped back to sleep and another nightmare.

This fretful sleep-dream-awakening-sleep again had happened several times before the last one, and at first in the dim back yard of her mind Paula thought she was just having another nightmare when she heard the swishing sound of cloth, that characteristic sound made by the Swahili *kansu* robes. The swishing was short-lived, and after it she felt a slight tugging at the mosquito netting on her bed. She had heard nothing else but the one soft swish, and now this tugging, and for a split second she imagined the African youth, Gatimu, who had lain sick and hurt in the bed while a murderer had sneaked into the quarters and dropped the deadly viper called Tomorrow-Never-Comes onto him.

Paula felt the tugging of the mosquito netting again, and with a shocked sensation of utter horror she realized that she was awake this time, that she was not dreaming at all. She gasped, and someone was breathing only a few feet from her, and she saw that her window was wide open.

"Murderer!" she hissed.

The edge of the net was ripped up and something was flung toward her, but at that very moment Paula leaped to the opposite side of the bed, tearing the mosquito net loose and falling to the floor, then jumping backwards rapidly and switching on the lamp just after the man got through the window and was gone. The viper was caught in a fold of the netting, and for a moment all Paula could do was stare at it in horrid fascination. Then she caught hold of herself, grabbed a decorative spear from the wall, and chopped at the snake until it stopped writhing.

Breathing hard, she listened for a moment to be sure no one else in the station had been awakened. All she heard were the crickets outside.

She bit her lip to control her rage, then quickly she dressed in khaki slacks, a white blouse, a bush jacket, and bush boots with heavy socks. Turning off the lamp, she carefully and quietly climbed out the window and crossed the silent compound to the equipment garage, where the jeep was parked with its keys still in it. A small voice seemed to nag at her from very deep in her mind, saying, *Careful!* but Paula told herself with the self-confidence of anger, *They'll have to admit the truth when I face them with the facts!* And now she saw in her mind's eye Stokes and Van Wiet and Hakim all meekly giving themselves up to Officer Hedley, confessing their guilt, returning the stolen animals, and throwing themselves on the mercy of the law.

Paula drove straight to the Trekboer Company camp. Before she came over the rise to the camp, she stopped the jeep and quickly turned off the lights, just to think for a moment, wondering whether she ought to walk from here on, or drive in. On foot, she would make a grand entrance, walking in upon them from the jungle night. But then she remembered the viper they had tried to throw on her to kill her; she shuddered and, her anger renewed, she switched on the headlights, gunned the engine, and drove across the knoll until she was in the midst of their camp.

Seated in a folding chair by a table near which a Tilley lamp hanging from a steel pole was hissing, illuminating a wide area, were Stokes and Hakim, both of whom stood up quickly to face the girl when she leaped out of the jeep and rushed furiously at them.

"You filthy thieves!" she shouted. "It was you, Hakim, who tried to kill me! Admit it!" she demanded, her fists clenched at her sides.

Hakim's dark eyes caught the light of the Tilley lamp and glittered like the eyes of a serpent, and he smiled evilly at her, but then called out something in ki-Swahili which Paula could not understand. She heard another voice in the distance, in the direction from which she had come, and then even farther away a third voice. Then the third voice said something else, and the nearer voice called the same thing to Hakim, who was by now grinning as he said to her, "Of course we admit everything, you little fool. You eluded my pet, did you not, Mensahib? Well, you have come to the snake pit now, and we have you!"

Suddenly Paula tried to scream, but it was too late, for strong hands grabbed her arms, and a big African hand was clamped over her mouth. She stared helplessly at the Swahili and at Stokes, who was laughing wickedly now.

Hakim said, "I will have her killed now, and we will take her body to the river and sink it for the crocodiles to eat."

Stokes stopped laughing, gulped, and said, "No, Hakim, ol' pal. Le's take 'er to Charley an' let 'im decide, how about it?" His knobby, normally ruddy face had become quite pale with this talk of cold-blooded murder, and he shook his head and added, "The snake was one thing, Hakee, ol' pal, but not just killin' a girl right out."

"You're stupid," Hakim snarled, twisting his thin lips, his lean face a mask of evil. "But we will do it your way, and then Charley will see why I want to get rid of you. Come," he said to someone else behind Paula, "stuff some cloth in her mouth for a gag, and bind her and put her in the truck so we can go!"

Paula screamed, knowing even as she did it that the sound was completely muffled, that she was a captive, and she was sobbing and helpless with fear as they

bound her hands and feet and carried her like a sack of groundnuts and dumped her onto the hard floor of the truck.

Chapter Six

ESCAPE!

SOMETIME DURING the painful journey, thrown back and forth against the floor and sides of the bouncing truck, Paula had lost consciousness. But when the truck finally stopped, the silence and cessation of pain woke her, and a moment later she was dragged out into the dark.

Somewhere nearby she could smell the sea, and since it was still night they must have taken a direct route there—which meant they could not be very far from Tanga or Mombasa. They were probably at one of the smaller ports, because there would have been some traffic noises if they had been at one of the bigger cities. All this observation was not thought, but rather the submerged “thinking” at the back of her mind, for the forefront of her consciousness as the two big Africans dragged her across the dark compound was crowded with fear and desperation.

Paula noticed the sounds of some animals—but of course there would be animals about, because these criminals were using their animal export business as the

false front for something so evil that they would murder, steal and kidnap. She also smelled that it was an animal collection depot, for only in zoos and related places can one encounter that particular pungency of the air.

One thing which Paula did think, despite her fear, despite the miserable throbbing of her shoulders and hips from the hard floor of the truck, was this: *Judy and Clarence are here, too! They have to be!*

The Trekboer, Ltd., people were the ones who had stolen the animals, of course, and they would bring them here, probably for quick, pre-arranged shipment to places where the animals could not be traced. The very thought of this appalled her. She saw Judy crying and chattering, then becoming dulled by the stark awareness that she would never return to Wameru, never again be able to romp through the trees, chasing the wild vervet monkeys through the branches, racing after the red monkeys—the patas and nisnas—on the ground until she tired of the sport and let the wild monkeys chase after her for a while. Clarence, too, would stare cross-eyed and become simply a grumpy old male lion and nothing else as people would come to wherever he would be kept just to laugh at him, and he would remember his friends, including Paula and Marsh Tracy, but steadily the feeling that they had deserted him would overcome most of his pleasant memories of them.

Paula felt herself crying silently at these thoughts filling her mind, became aware of what was happening, and shook her head weakly, blaming herself now for everything.

"You move!" one of the Africans growled at her, squeezing her right arm until it hurt, and shoving her roughly ahead.

From behind her Hakim said something in ki-Swahili and the African replied, and then Stokes said in English,

"Put 'er in that storeroom off ter the side of the office. That way, we can duck 'er out fast, if need's be."

"A good thought, Joseph," Hakim replied in English. "Wonderful that you could think of it!"

"None of your bloody dumb Swahili wisecracks!" growled Stokes.

Paula heard the men speaking behind her as the Africans who were holding her stopped, making her stand on her weakened legs. She heard them breathing, she smelled the sweat of their bodies even over the animal odors of the compound, and then she heard the heavier footsteps made by a man wearing heavy boots, after which the angry voice of Charley Van Wiet boomed out:

"You bloody fools, what've you done?"

"She come to the camp, Charley," Stokes said lamely, all of his bravado suddenly gone like a wisp of dust in the wind.

"You mean you fouled up on the snake?" Van Wiet asked Hakim.

The Swahili snapped back, hatred hissing in every word, "She heard it, and she got away!"

"Then she come out!" said Stokes. "Honest ter God, Charley. Hakim 'ere, he said we was to kill 'er, but I said let's take 'er down to Charley and let 'im decide!"

"Get her in there, you two," Charley growled at the Africans, who shoved and dragged Paula to a small room just off the bigger room which looked like an office, where one of them flicked on an electric light. From the corner of her eye she saw Hakim come in, check the room carefully, say something to the Africans, and leave. One of the Africans then wrapped burlap bags about her feet and ankles and tied them securely, and they dropped her to the floor. With her hands tied behind her back, her head hit the floor hard, and for a while she lay motionless, moaning lightly, unable to remain silent, until the pain gradually subsided. Then

she felt herself crying, her eyes burning fiercely, and she sobbed against the gag in her mouth, "Oh, Dad, please find me! Oh, dear God, please help him to find me!"

Lying bound and gagged in the dark room, she could hear everything that was said in the office, which was the adjoining room—and what she heard gave her no reason to be optimistic.

The three men, Van Wiet, Stokes, and Hakim, had sent the Africans away and had come into the office, Stokes yawning loudly and complaining about his weariness, Hakim grumbling that he should have followed his own inclinations instead of letting Stokes talk him into bringing Paula here. She heard Van Wiet grunt with disbelief and say, "Like as not, you really didn't want to do her in neither, Hakim."

Hakim laughed wickedly, his voice a cackling sound from beyond the wooden door, which was outlined by a thread-like crack of light from the office. Paula heard the clinking sound of a bottle on glass, and the pouring of liquid. Hakim was still cackling diabolically, and Paula developed an image in her mind of a thin-faced, hook-nosed devil stirring a vast pit of sulphurous fire, laughing as evilly as Hakim, and then approaching her to toss her bodily into that awful pit, but suddenly there appeared a bunch of good spirits driving away not only Hakim but his evil comrades as well.

Paula tried to shake her head, then consciously blinked several times, in a serious, determined effort to control her mind and to listen—and when she did she was aware that Hakim had stopped his laughter and was saying, "In truth, I wanted to see how my great brothers would handle the problem." He sniffed scornfully. "But I see that you two are merely drinking alcohol instead of thinking about the girl. That is why we Muslims do not drink that stuff—it befuddles the mind."

Van Wiet took a drink, making slurping sounds as he

swallowed it, breathing out hard and saying, "Aaah! Whoosh!" and then he replied, "To be honest, Hakim, I don't think the Prophet Muhammad had *your* kind of thinking in mind when he set down them rules and regulations. You ain't exactly the Commissioner of Police or the Imam of Salaam, old boy."

"Do not speak to me of Abdelrahim," Hakim growled, a vicious edge suddenly coming into his voice.

There was a brief silence, then Van Wiet said conciliatorily, "Well, let's not argue among ourselves. We've got that gal on our hands, alive and kicking, last I could tell, and she's a problem to solve right now. The animals will go quick enough, and anyhow it's kind of hard to identify them legally, but old Daktari's daughter is a different little honey bee."

Hakim laughed. "I can dispose of the honey bee," he said quietly. "I can dispose of her so that there will be no bones, no remains, and no one will ever know what happened to her."

"Hakee 'ere's a bloody magician," remarked Stokes, his thick voice suggesting that he had been taking at least his share from the clinking liquor bottle. "Whoof! There goes li'l ol' Miss Tracy!"

Hakim ignored Stokes; he went on in his former, coldly controlled tone of voice, "Only the man who will own her will ever know her, and she can never escape from the mountains of Hadramaut."

"You mean make a slave out of her?" said Van Wiet. "Sell her to some Hadramauti Arab meaner than you are, Hakim?"

"It is precisely what I propose," said Hakim, unruffled.

"My God!" Van Wiet gasped.

Stokes added, "Amen! The Devil must be with you, ye lousy 'eathen!"

Hakim snarled, "Call me no names, you English fool, or I'll slit your throat!"

line from the small musty storeroom in which Paula lay bound and gagged, but Paula could only guess that her pets were close by. On the other hand, despite the many different odors in the Trekboer compound, Clarence had smelled what he thought was Paula's scent only shortly after he had heard a big truck driving through the gateway and stopping. He could not see out in the center of the compound where the truck was, but he felt it was Paula, and he was excited for a few moments, letting out what to him were little yowls of sound to let her know he was there, but nothing happened. For a short while he continued to smell the odor, but it diminished then, and later on he let out a *simba*-cough, that peculiar lion-grunt which sounds for quite a distance. Paula did not come.

Several yards away, Judy heard Clarence and chattered to him, and he growled back at her because he was angry at being ignored and left in this strange place, but soon he quieted down and dozed off. Unlike Clarence, Judy was in a spot where she could see all the way across the wide-open part of the compound. They had set her cage atop a larger empty cage, one of the very few now empty in this strange place. Behind her she knew there were lots of caged and penned animals, but her view back that way was blocked by the stable-like side of a pen which apparently separated the antelopes and related creatures from the noisier and more dangerous animals such as the carnivorous cats, baboons, apes and monkeys, hyenas and jackals, and wild dogs. Off to her right was Clarence, penned up and grouchy from all this confinement. He was next to two female leopards, another male lion younger than he, and several lionesses in individual cages. On the row facing Clarence's cage they had put Rikki's cage on top a cage in which a spotted hyena prowled back and forth.

There were striped hyena and a number of jackals, and, judging from the racket when Judy and her friends

had been brought here, a whole pack of wild dogs. In her own row were mostly apes and monkeys and some baboons, and Bini's small mynah-bird cage had been set atop a cage close enough to Judy's that she could see him blink his gray eyes now and then in the light cast out across the compound from the open doorway to the office. There, Van Wiet, Stokes, and Hakim were seated around the wooden table, the two white men drinking and smoking, the Swahili merely sitting there looking disgusted, now and then talking, usually arguing with them.

Judy had been awakened by some commotion, and she saw a crowd of people go inside, but the only ones she could recognize in the darkness were her three enemies, who sent away the Africans and sat in the office, where they seemed to have remained since then. But Judy grew more attentive to them because she heard Van Wiet say, one time, ". . . Daktari's daughter is a different little honey bee." Then after Hakim said something else, Stokes said, "There goes li'l ol' Miss Tracy." Judy's heart beat faster at the words, which she recognized as referring to Paula, and she whimpered, hoping Paula would come and get her and take her back home, where Judy would sleep in her baby bed in Paula's room, and Clarence would always be dozing on the porch, and Bini would be jabbering away all the time, and Rikki would be running around happily chasing snakes, and . . . Then Judy heard Van Wiet say "Daktari's daughter" again, and she listened and she watched, as Stokes and Hakim laughed at something the big man had just said.

When Van Wiet took a step backwards he was more closely in Judy's sight, and she saw that he was holding a walkie-talkie, just like the one she had found in her satchel and which Paula had taken away from her and given back to these very people. Fascinated now by having heard the word *Daktari* and by seeing the man

using the walkie-talkie, Judy watched and listened as closely as she could, in hopes of hearing "Daktari" or "Miss Tracy" again or even, hope of hopes, of seeing Paula.

Van Wiet was saying, "Yeah, Askia, there is a special load for you. Do you understand me? Over."

Again Van Wiet listened, nodding his big head as if Askia were right there looking at him, and he said, after another few minutes, "You understand it, Askia. . . . That's the thing. . . . That's right, now. . . . Like I said, you have got to come here when it's dark. Over."

He flicked the RECEIVE button and listened, nodding, then turned the set off and laid it on the table. "All set, boys," he said to Stokes and Hakim. "One more drink for me, and I'm for bed. We got a busy day tomorrow."

"I'm goin' now," mumbled Stokes, getting to his feet and on wobbly legs staggering from the room, while Hakim and Van Wiet stared at him with disgust showing on their faces.

Hakim said, "We can get rid of him, too, whenever you tell me."

Van Wiet gulped down another drink. "It won't be long, believe me on that," he growled.

Hakim said good night and went off, and Van Wiet sat alone for a few moments, drank a bit more, then clumped down a hallway and slammed a door somewhere.

Judy had been crouched forward in her cage listening to all of them, and now that they had gone to bed she, too, felt tired again, but she was also disturbed and wanted to chatter her feelings to someone, preferably Paula. She turned in the cage and her left hand struck something loose on the floor. She reached down and felt it, and as she did a flood of excitement came over her. It was the big wooden splinter which she had ripped off the wall of the truck, and which she had for-

gotten all the time she had been weeping and wailing!

She felt the splinter carefully with her fingers, then reached outside her cage door and felt the hinge. She chattered softly to herself, *chih-chih-chih!*, to express her feeling of gaiety, and only a deep fear of the Trek-boer men kept her from yelling out loud. Carefully Judy jiggled the splinter about at the bottom of the top hinge until it caught the pin, and she pressed steadily upwards on the piece of wood. The end of it snapped off with a sharp *Pop!* and Judy hissed at it, then tried again. This time the pin slid upwards a good three-quarters of an inch out of the hinge, and Judy got hold of it and pulled hard on it.

It squeaked out of its socket and she lay it quietly on the floor of her cage. Then she went to work on the bottom hinge, and soon, with a pronounced *eeekkk!* that made Judy freeze, fearful that she would be discovered, that pin too came out.

She pushed the cage door straight forward, holding it with her hands, then when it slipped off the hinges and hung only by the peg and chain at the top, she slipped out and dropped silently to the ground of the compound, taking a quick, thankful breath that she was thus far free. In the darkness, to which her eyes had grown accustomed hours earlier, she spotted Bini close by, and Clarence and Rikki, as well as the ape and carnivore cages near Clarence. All the cages were peg-held, the doors on hinges and secured on the side or on the top by wooden pegs. The tall iron gate some fifty yards away similarly was simply closed, not padlocked, if only because any human being who entered at night would rouse up all the animals, awaken the keepers, and be caught.

Now Judy looked toward the office, remembering the walkie-talkie. Something dimly and distantly like a thought in the back of her mind suggested a picture of her talking on the radio to Paula and to Daktari,

and then a picture of a wonderful reunion of all of them, and the radio seemed essential. Moreover, she liked it and wanted it. Silently she ran across the compound, paused at the doorway to glance around, and went inside the office, where she stopped, a weird feeling momentarily overcoming her. She felt that she smelled something, or *felt* the presence of something familiar to her, and she glanced out the open doorway in the direction of Clarence's cage, knowing that he would be able to identify it. But then she shook herself, grabbed the walkie-talkie from the table, and bounded back across the compound.

She went first to Clarence's cage. He had stood up, knowing she was coming, and he was perfectly silent as she undid the pin of his cage; then he walked out of it and licked her once on the cheek, she petted him briefly, and she dashed over to Rikki's cage and let him out. He hissed softly and trotted beside her, his little furry body touching her as she ran out to the big iron gate to the entire compound and carefully opened it wide. Then she dashed back to a large cage in which there were about a dozen vervet monkeys; she let them out and then freed, in succession, five baboons, two other chimpanzees, four or five jackals, a spotted hyena, two lionesses and three leopards.

By now the escaping animals had become confused in the melee, and a jackal snarled at a baboon which had hopped on its back to leap up to a wall, and the baboon bit the jackal, which snarled and yelped, and a leopard growled, and an African voice screamed in ki-Swahili, "Wild animals are running loose!" Judy hurried to Bini's mynah-bird cage, got him out of it, and put him on Clarence's mane, to which he held with all his might, amidst all the furor saying, "Ooh, my goo'mess!"

Judy noticed Van Wiet stagger out to the doorway, yelling, "Stop those animals!" Judy grabbed Clarence's mane, chattered at Rikki to stay close by, and hurried



Clarence the Cross-eyed Lion tries on a pair of extra-large glasses.



Daktari keeps in touch by walkie-talkie when he's out in the bush.



Jack is surrounded by affection from Clarence and Judy.



Paula helps her father tend a wounded zebra.



Paula, Jack and Hedley with a friendly tiger.



It's feeding time for two orphaned lion cubs.



Clarence poses happily with Paula.

toward the front gate. Van Wiet saw them and screamed, "That chimp did it! Get her and the lion!" Quickly Judy opened the gates of two pens of antelope, out of which galloped three wildebeest and five or six Thompson's gazelles.

Outside the noisy compound in the darkness Judy turned toward the right, but Clarence stopped, almost jerking her off her feet. Just behind them the Trekboer depot was suddenly ablaze with lights, and animals seemed to be running in all directions. Judy chattered at the big lion and jerked at his mane, and he growled at her, but as she held his mane he dragged her along in the opposite direction, so Judy followed, remaining quiet until they were far enough away that they could not hear the noise behind them. She chattered at him briefly then, but noticed that they were farther away from the sea than before, so she let Clarence lead them farther and farther away from the town into the countryside toward (she hoped) Wameru.

Paula heard the excitement from the small storeroom in which she lay bound and gagged. She had fallen asleep, but awoke at the sound of some animals snarling, after which the entire compound became a great mass of roaring, growling, yelling, screeching, snarling, running animals and people. The door to her room was thrown open, the light from the office blinding her, but then Van Wiet's voice growled down at her, "Well, it ain't you, little miss!" and he slammed and bolted it again.

Paula gulped for breath, frightened, wondering what had happened. She heard Stokes say, "How them bloody animals get out?"

And Hakim snapped at him, "Daktari's chimp did it! And she stole the radio again, also!"

Stokes said, "No, I don't believe it!"

Van Wiet shouted, "Joe, you stay here and keep an



Jack soothes a somewhat reluctant patient while Daktari prepares treatment.

eye open, round up all the animals you can, and get them back in their cages! Hakim and I've got to find that chimp! We'll use radios and beam her right in on that walkie-talkie! She can't escape! Boys, you got any idea what it would mean if they found her?" he raged. "We don't dare let her get away! Come on, Hakim, we'll find her and kill her, and if need be we'll kill the whole bloody nest of do-gooders at Wameru, get our money and diamonds back, and get out while we can!"

Chapter Seven

THE RESCUE

MARSH FELT that he had overslept and, a nervous feeling running through him, he got up quickly, bathed and dressed, and walked out toward the dining room, glancing at his watch after he strapped it on his left wrist. It was only seven forty-five, and he heard the others arising or moving about, so he stopped by Paula's door and was going to tap on it, then caught himself, thinking: *I'll let her sleep for a while.* Then he realized that she would really want to help search for the animals, and would resent being babied, so he tapped on the door, at first lightly. The second time he tapped he said, "Paula, honey? Wake up, now."

He waited. Myra came from her room looking fresh from her morning shower, smiled at Marsh, and said, with a sympathetic pout of her full, red lips, "Poor darling, she's so tired. Let her sleep, Marsh."

He laughed. "She'd never forgive me," he replied. "Paula, wake up, now!"

"Maybe she got up earlier?" Myra suggested.

Marsh saw Mike Mkula and Ignatius farther down the hallway, near the kitchen door, and called, "Ignatius, is Miss Paula awake yet?"

"No, Daktari," Ignatius replied.

Mike Mkula strolled toward them and said, "I haven't seen her this morning, Marsh, and I've been up since before Ignatius or the workers." He grinned handsomely. "She's tired and weary."

Marsh felt a gnawing anxiety suddenly, and tapped again, harder, saying, "Paula!"

"Marsh, really!" said Myra. "You're getting too upset!"

Mike came closer, trying the doorknob. "She should be awake, Dr. Templeton," he explained. "Paula is a light sleeper." He slapped the door hard with his hand and called, "Paula!" When there was no answer, he looked at Marsh and said, "Shall I break the latch, Marsh?"

Feeling his hands trembling, Marsh nodded. "Yeah, Mike," he said. "Something's wrong with her, and . . ." He swallowed hard.

Mike put his shoulder to the edge of the door, pushed steadily for a moment, and with a snapping sound the door catch burst loose, and the three of them, followed by Jack, who had heard the commotion, went into Paula's room.

It was a shambles: the window was open, the ledge covered with reddish dust, and there were prints of bare feet etched in the red dust on the gray floor. Paula's bureau drawers were pulled out and articles of clothing scattered about as if she had hurriedly scrambled for something to wear. In the middle of the room was her bed, and the mosquito net was dragged down from its supporting tie-strings, one of the strings ripped off the net and still dangling from the wooden frame up above. The net was pulled sideways off the bed onto the floor,

and in a heap of the netting was the blood-caked spear which had hung on the wall of the bedroom.

"Paula!" cried Marsh, rushing into the room.

Then Mike shouted, "Stop, Marsh!" and Marsh stopped where he was as Mike ran forward to the heaped-up mosquito netting, grabbed the spear, and gingerly pulled the netting up to expose the body of the dead viper. "Look at it, Marsh!" he gasped. "*Tomorrow-Never-Comes!*"

"Mike!" Jack said sharply.

Mike said, "Stupid of me to say that, Marsh. I didn't—"

"It's all right, Mike," Marsh replied, putting his hand on the young African's shoulder. "She must have killed the snake. What do you think?"

"It looks very much like that," Mike agreed. "If she were bitten, she wouldn't go very . . ."

"A snake again," said Jack. "Just like that African kid. *Who, Marsh? Who's doing it?*"

Marsh took a deep breath, which hurt his chest. He ached with a feeling to hold his daughter in his arms and make certain she was safe from harm, and he found he was grinding his teeth, so he forced himself to relax sufficiently to be able to think clearly and to get things done.

"I'm inclined to agree with Paula about the Trekboer crowd now," he said. "Too much points to them. But I'll get the facts—believe me, Jack, I'll get the facts. And when I do," he said, walking quickly toward the doorway, "then there'll be trouble. Those people won't know what happened to them if they do anything to . . ."

He stopped speaking when both Mike and Jack grabbed his arms and held him, Jack saying, "Marsh, come on, now! You're jabbering!"

Marsh shook his head and wiped his face with his hands. "All right, boys," he told them. "I'm all right now. Let's go radio Hedley to hurry over. He was supposed to come for breakfast, anyhow."

"I'll come with you, Marsh," said Myra Templeton, taking his arm, her eyes wet with tears of feminine sympathy. Jack began to inspect the room very carefully, and Mike went outside to search the grounds.

Marsh and Myra had just sat down at the radio set when Mike ran into the sitting room and said, "Marsh, the jeep's gone, so she must have driven somewhere, or—"

"Right, Mike," said Marsh, his voice hurting. "Send one of the workers on a bicycle down the road just to see what's what." He turned back to the radio, switched on the power, and said into the microphone, "Wameru calling District Office, Wampwepwe. Doctor Marsh Tracy calling District Office, Wampwepwe. Come in, Wampwepwe."

There was a pause, then a clicking sound coming in over the receiver, and after this Hedley's voice, almost obscured by static: "Marsh, are you there, old man? Over."

"Hedley, where are you?" Marsh asked.

Hedley answered, "In my car right now coming your way, old man. I'll be there in less than twenty minutes, I estimate—I'm your side of Inshallah now. Over."

"Hedley . . . Paula is missing," Marsh said tightly. "There's a dead viper in her mosquito net, and . . ." Marsh swallowed hard to control his emotions. "Hedley, hurry, please!"

"Of course, old chap—I'm coming! . . . Over and out."

Marsh clicked off the radio set.

"Daktari," said Ignatius from behind him, and Marsh turned about. Ignatius stood there with a tray of coffee, cups and saucers, some small sweet cakes, all of which he spread out on a low table. Then he stood up straight and said, "Have coffee, Daktari. We will find Madame Paula, sah."

"Thank you, Ignatius," said Marsh. "How is Silas this morning?"

"He is better, Daktari. He will be well today."

Hedley arrived only ten minutes later, his jeep gunning up the hill like a Mercedes, skidding around the bend and coming to a fast, dusty stop in the compound. But he came walking at a normal pace into the house, nodded silently to Ignatius for the coffee which the servant poured for him, and sat down across from Marsh, saying, "I've news that may tie up somehow with this business of Paula, so before we do anything else, I'll speak it out."

Hedley cleared his throat and touched the left part of his brown moustache with his fingertips. "Only two hours ago there was a wild animal melee at Ishanga, down on the coast. You know how radio newscasts are these days—with the exception of the BBC, one can't get a decent coverage of events. That was all there was to it, except that one eye-witness, an African, said it was all led by a chimpanzee."

"Judy!" said Myra. "There's no chimp in the world that could lead an animal melee like she could!"

Despite his worries, Marsh too had to chuckle at this. "That's really not much to go on," he said.

Jack speculated, "Paula could have had a hunch, driven there, and engineered the escape herself, but the African only saw Judy."

Hedley suggested, "Why not call Commissioner Abdullah and get a few facts before we imagine anything else? He's a personal friend of mine, remember?—ever since he saved my life when those ivory smugglers caught me in fifty-nine." Hedley stared flatly at Marsh, waiting for an answer.

"Here's the radio, Hedley," Marsh said, rising from his chair.

Hedley made the first call, then switched on the amplifier and called again: "District Officer Hedley calling ComPolSalaam, Ishanga. Over."

After three attempts, an answering voice resounded

in the sitting room: "National Police Command Post, Ishanga, here. . . . State your business, please, D.O. Hedley. Over."

"This is District Officer Hedley of Wampwepwe, now at Wameru Animal Refuge. . . . Serious problem. . . . Must speak with Police Commissioner Abdelrahim Abdullah, please! Over."

Marsh and the others heard muffled conversation in the background, then a strong, Swahili-accented voice sounded over the radio, saying: "Hedley, you English devil, is it you there?"

"Abdullah, old chap," said Hedley, grinning. "Marsh Tracy here at Wameru has a problem. Some of his animals were stolen off, and now his daughter's disappeared. We wondered if—"

"Terribly sorry about that, Hedley," Abdullah cut in. "We'll get right on it—please assure Daktari, will you? Over."

"Certainly I will. But we also wondered if you could tell us more about the animals that rioted in Ishanga last night."

From the other end there was a hubhub of voices as Commissioner Abdullah held his hand over the microphone and shouted orders to underlings. Then he said to Hedley, "Give me a moment, Hedley. Over."

"Of course," said Hedley. "Over and waiting."

They waited. Mike came in once, and then he and Jack went out of the room, back toward the kitchen, apparently to search the area carefully once more. Time seemed to drag by.

Finally Commissioner Abdullah said, "Sorry to keep you waiting, Hedley. Yes, several hours ago there was a wild time of it. Some animals escaped from an animal exporting firm's warehouse compound here." In a slightly lower voice, Abdullah said to someone else, "What's the name of the outfit, you?" Then clearly, to Hedley, he said, "Trekboer, Limited. I know that bunch—a couple

of Europeans and a Swahili who, unfortunately, has a bad record with us. But they run a legitimate enough business, it seems. . . . Some animals broke loose and got away during the night. . . . Does this help? Over."

"It certainly does," Hedley replied. "I have reason to believe some of those animals might have been stolen. Could you possibly put a guard on the Trekboer compound? Over."

There was a moment's silence, then Abdullah said, "That is a serious charge, Hedley. I trust your judgment, but have you anything to substantiate it? Over."

Hedley quickly ran through the pertinent events, ending up with Paula's disappearance. Abdullah on the other end said, "Hedley, I'll cooperate as much as I can, but I can't invade those people on such circumstances. I'll put an extra constable in the immediate area, though. That will be all right—I'll say I'm putting him there simply to protect the citizens of our country from the possibility of wild animals running loose and injuring them. . . . If this is all right with you, sign off."

"Thank you very much, sir, and I do understand. Over." Hedley switched off the radio and turned to the others. "There it is—the Trekboer warehouse at Ishanga. Perhaps Myra's hunch was right, Marsh."

Marsh nodded grimly. "Or Jack's. Whichever, we'd better get on it right away."

Jack said, "Mike and I ate already, Marsh, but you'd better have breakfast before you go. I've already told Ignatius to fix some for both you and Hedley. Meanwhile, what do you want us to do?"

Ignatius brought the breakfast, and the two men began to eat quickly. Marsh said to Jack, "Different things. Mike, I want you to stay at Wameru. Have some of the boys begin to scour the area and look for any signs of Paula or that rucksack the African, Gatimu, was supposed to have had. You can always contact us on the big radio if you find the least thing, whatever it

is." As an afterthought, Marsh suggested, "Why not send one of your workers to Xipelenge village to hire some young lads just to scout around the country looking for signs of Paula?"

"Good idea, Marsh," Mike said, getting up quickly. "Anything else?"

"No, just get them to work on that." Then to Jack and Myra he said, "I want you two to take the Landrover and carry a direction-finder and walkie-talkie with you so you can locate us if necessary, and go in to Ishanga. Go directly to Commissioner Abdullah's office and find out all you can about what happened. Don't go over to the warehouse unless you have to. Hedley and I will keep in touch with you by radio on the hour. If you don't hear from us in the five minutes before until the five minutes after each hour, keep your sets on RECEIVE and turned on."

"What are you going to do?" asked Myra.

"First Hedley and I'll check out the Trekboer camp, and if we don't find anything, we come directly down to Ishanga."

The Trekboer camp was virtually deserted.

When Hedley drove into the middle of the camp, both he and Marsh expected to see at least one of the persons in charge of the operation, or the bustle of activity as it had appeared only a couple of days ago when they had been sitting under the flame tree having tea with Stokes, Van Wiet, and Hakim. But now Hedley stopped the jeep, said in a low voice, "Be ready for almost anything, Marsh," and the two men got out and glanced around.

Coming toward them were two of the African workers, their brown faces set like wooden masks which would reveal nothing of their emotions. One wore a *kansu* of dirty white cotton; the other wore a singlet and a pair of khaki shorts. The one in the *kansu* said,

"*Jambo*, bwana. Our masters go-go make business for sell animals."

"When will they come back?" said Marsh. He touched Hedley's arm and with a brief nod of his head indicated the presence of three other African workers, all silently watching the two Europeans.

The African scratched his nostril and replied, "*Bado kidogo*, bwana."

"Not just after a while," replied Marsh. "When? What day?"

"Maybeso next tomorrow, bwana."

"Day after tomorrow," Hedley repeated. "Did they take many animals?"

"Yes, bwana, many animal. Two Bedford truck animals. Many."

"Any chimps among them?"

The African grinned, but not in friendliness. "*Ndio*, bwana: two chimpanzee, five lion, some leopard, some kudu, some many other animal, bwana."

Marsh said grumpily, "I suppose it wouldn't do any good to ask if you've seen my daughter?"

Both Africans shook their heads and looked puzzled.

"Come along, Marsh," Hedley suggested. "We're wasting time here."

So they drove back the way they had come, but at the turnoff toward Wameru Hedley stopped and said, "I've enough petrol to go straight on to Inshallah, where we can buy more, and keep right on down to Ishanga from there, rather than stop past Wameru again."

"Good enough," Marsh agreed.

Less than three hours later they were driving onto the wider road leading into the coastal town of Ishanga, feeling the sea breeze on their faces, and the differentness of the scenery and the moisture in the air gave Marsh a new feeling of hope and yet, strangely, a feeling of foreboding that there might be more danger here.

"We'll go first to the Police Commissioner's office," Hedley explained. "The others are probably there waiting."

Marsh nodded, busy watching the sides of the road for anything appearing particularly strange which could suggest the whereabouts of some of the animals. Yet, he realized, perhaps the Trekboer people had already rounded up the escaped animals and had them repenned. Or killed. It was possible.

Commissioner of Police Abdelrahim Abdullah was a tall, rotund Swahili who wore a white linen suit and a black fez. He was seated in his office having tea with Jack and Myra when Hedley and Marsh were let in by a neatly uniformed constable, and he quickly rose, shook hands with each of them, and pressed a buzzer on his desk, then told a servant who came in to bring more tea for the other guests.

"Well, then," he said, seating himself again, wiping his shiny brown face with a handkerchief, "I was just informing your charming Dr. Templeton that I personally will be quite happy to accompany you to the Trekboer Company depot. In that way, we can avoid a formal police investigation, yet gain entrance should those fellows be up to something." He chuckled complacently, his dark eyes twinkling. "And you, Daktari Tracy, please be optimistic. Whatever happened to your daughter will be explained, and she'll be in no danger. No rogues would dare injure her in *my* district, I assure you!"

Marsh sipped his tea which tasted good after the long drive with Hedley, and he did everything he could think of to remain calm. Commissioner Abdullah was right, he knew: running off pell-mell was not the sensible thing to do at all. One had to be optimistic. Of course, Abdullah might be overoptimistic, too, a possibility which worried Marsh all over again.

Hedley set down his teacup, tapped his lips and

sandy moustache with a napkin, and said brusquely, "Well, then, Commissioner, let's get over there, shall we?"

Abdullah had just had a servant pour him another cup of tea, and was liberally sugaring it when Hedley spoke. He stopped, the sugar spoon in his chubby brown fingers, looked fixedly at Hedley and Marsh as if he were undecided whether or not he ought to act offended at their hurrying him, but then his better nature took over and he grinned broadly and, dropping the spoon in his cup, rose to his feet and said, "Of course, gentlemen. I'm sitting here talking and having tea while a man's daughter is lost. Absurd, isn't it?"

He shouted out something in ki-Swahili, and a sergeant hurried in, looking terribly worried, saluted, and said, "Here, sah!"

"Bring my car around front immediately!" Abdullah ordered him. Then, to Marsh and the others, "Blame it on colonialism, dear people. We had pompous teachers, and sometimes . . . Ah, no matter. Let's go!"

Marsh and Hedley followed Commissioner Abdullah's car, with Jack and Myra driving in the rear. They went across the small city to the southern end, turned down a narrow winding lane, and stopped outside an extensive walled compound, above the iron gates of which was a wooden sign with faded painted lettering:

TREKBOER ANIMAL ENTERPRISES, LTD.

His swagger stick in his right hand, Commissioner Abdullah marched to the iron gate at the head of the others and, when an African guard asked their business, gave the man a withering look for but a moment, then reached out with his big left hand and caught the fellow by the front of his singlet and drew him close, saying in English, "If you have done anything wrong, not only Allah, but I will catch you!"

The guard's legs seemed to turn to jelly under him. "Ndio, bwana," he gulped to Abdullah. "I did not recog-

nize you at first, Excellency. Come in this place with your European friends, and I will take you to the white man. But he is sick, bwana, from drinking alcohol whiskey."

"Drunk, you mean," growled the sergeant.

Abdullah said, "Sergeant, you remain here by the gate, where you can see my car *and* the compound. I, Hedley, and Daktari can handle any problems which arise."

"Yes, sah," said the sergeant, snapping to attention with a salute.

Abdullah touched the brim of his hat with his stick, tapped the guard on the shoulder with it, and said, "Come along, then, all of you."

They walked across the wide open compound in which one large Bedford truck was parked, toward a building with a faded sign saying OFFICE over the doorway. Commissioner Abdullah was breathing hard by the time they reached their destination. They looked in the open doorway to see a somewhat dazed Joe Stokes sitting at the table inside, a half-empty whiskey bottle and a glass in front of him.

"Hey," he cried, "wha's up?" He shoved himself to his feet and stumbled to the doorway, half-drunk, looking mean and ragged. "Wha' you people want? Hullo, Officer Hedley, Docker Tracy. Hullo, 'mmissioner Abdullah, come on in, folks!" he said, his tone changing as he very obviously attempted to get control of himself.

"You're Stokes, aren't you?" Abdullah asked, as he climbed the three steps and entered the office, followed closely by Marsh and Hedley.

Jack and Myra hung back when Jack said, "Dr. Templeton, let's get a bit of sunshine out here, huh?" Myra Templeton started to reply, but then Marsh heard Jack add in a subdued voice, "He won't even notice us looking around out back. Come on!"

Stokes gestured to some chairs and said, "Sit down,

gents." He blinked his blue eyes and rubbed his nose with the back of his hand. "What . . . uh . . . brings you gents around 'ere?"

"You had some trouble last night with some animals," said Marsh. "Did you get them back?"

Stokes laughed in a weak attempt to cover up a deeper nervousness which made his hands tremble even though he held them hard on the wooden table. "Sure, Doc Tracy, we got most of 'em back, all right, surely! We ain't no amatoors at animal-handlin', take that from ol' Joe Stokes! The Trekboer Company can't let no wild animals go runnin' around the streets of Ishanga, 'mmissioner Abdullah, understand?"

"Very good, Mr. Stokes," replied Abdullah, with apparent distaste for Stokes' manner, for he wrinkled his fat lips with disgust even as he spoke, and his eyes were narrowed with obvious distrust. "Tell me, have you seen or heard anything about Miss Paula Tracy, Daktari's daughter? She is missing." He swung his swagger stick idly back and forth in the air.

Stokes wiped his face with a quick motion of his hand. "No, sir," he replied, shaking his head, his eyes round. "I'm certainly sorry to 'ear that, Doc Tracy."

Marsh simply looked at the man, unable to believe Stokes could be telling the truth.

"What of the animals?" said Hedley. "A large bunch of animals, including the girl's pets, were stolen from Wameru. A big animal concern like yours ought to hear something about a bunch of animals somebody might want to sell."

Stokes shook his head and pursed his lips. "No, sir," he said. "If we *do* hear, we sure will let you folks know, believe me."

Commissioner Abdullah fixed Joe Stokes with a cold look, staring for a long while, until even Marsh was becoming nervous, and Stokes was sweating in large drops. Finally Abdullah said, in a terrible and final

voice, "You speak like a man who has eaten lies for ten years."

"Sir, Mr. Commissioner!" said Stokes, blustering, his face turning bright red. "I'm a honest taxpaying resident, and if you got a charge on me or my partners in Trekboer Company, by law you got to state it, sir, or let us be!"

Abdullah sighed and turned a baleful, disgusted glance toward Hedley and Marsh, saying, "I fear that he is quite right, gentlemen—"

Just then Jack burst into the office shouting, "It's Judy's cage! That one right over there, Marsh! You can see it from here!"

As Marsh and Hedley turned to look, there was a loud whishing sound and Hedley went down immediately from the blow of the shepherd's crook which Stokes had snatched up as a weapon. Marsh yelled and ducked, and Jack ran forward, only to receive the next blow of the pole on the side of his head. Stokes shoved past Marsh, who tried to grab him, but was struck a glancing blow and knocked aside.

Commissioner Abdullah roared out, "Stop, you scoundrel!" and Stokes stopped momentarily at the doorway and swung deliberately at Abdullah's head. The African raised his left arm to protect himself, and Marsh leaped forward to catch the blow, but the staff hit, and there was an awful cracking sound. The force of the blow threw Abdullah's heavy body against Marsh, crashing him back against a wall and dazing him as his head struck a shelf.

Dimly, as he shook his head to clear it, he heard a brief hubbub outside as Stokes apparently surprised and clubbed the sergeant. Marsh had fallen to his knees when he'd hit the shelf; now he managed to stand up again, and saw Abdullah on the floor nearby, groaning and rocking back and forth with pain, holding his injured arm.

"Lord, that man was fast for a drunk!" gasped Hedley, rubbing his back as he got to his feet.

Myra Templeton raced into the office. "What happened?" she cried. "He knocked me down, and then— Oh, Marsh, what's wrong with the Commissioner?"

Marsh was already making a quick examination. He looked up and said, "His arm's broken. Myra, you'd better call police headquarters and tell them what's happened—and have them send an ambulance."

He turned to Jack, who was groaning as he pushed himself to his elbows. Jack said, "Was that only one man, or a hurricane?"

"One man as desperate as a hurricane," said Marsh. "Are you all right?"

Jack got to his feet, rubbing his head, grimacing with pain, and replied, "Yeah, Marsh. My pride's hurt more than anything else. He got away?" Marsh nodded. "These people took the animals, Marsh. I recognized Judy's cage and the mynah bird cage Bini was in, because the swing was bent."

"It's all deeper than merely stealing animals, Jack," said Marsh. "But you start looking around, now. Help's coming from police headquarters. Paula could be . . . Paula could be here somewhere, too."

Commissioner Abdullah motioned to Marsh and Hedley to help him sit up. They did, Marsh supporting the man's broken forearm with a sling ripped from a sheet, and Abdullah sat at the table, his brown face now twisted with a mixture of pain, indignation, and wrath. When he was able to, he said, gritting his teeth, "Forgive me for seeming to doubt you, gentlemen. Oh! *Insh'allah!* I will catch those devils! Oh! You called for a doctor, Daktari?" When Marsh nodded, he said, "*Ma'sha'Allah!* Hedley, these people were thieves. I now issue you orders to take all steps . . . oh! . . . necessary to apprehend and arrest them! Understood?"

"Yes, sir," said Hedley. "Orders received. Here, now,

you'll have to remain calm until you're patched up, old chap."

"Yes," Abdullah sighed, rolling his eyes mournfully. "But promise me that you'll catch those rogues!"

"Don't worry, sir," said Hedley. "It's as good as done."

With the sound of sirens the police came, along with an ambulance, and after issuing orders to other officers to conduct a proper investigation, Abdullah let them cart him off to the hospital, and when he was gone Jack trotted back into the office and said, "Nothing, Marsh."

Hedley gestured at a closed door on the opposite side of the office from the hallway leading to the bedrooms and said, "What's in there?"

"I don't know," said Marsh. "But we'll soon find out." He grabbed the door knob and turned it, but the door was locked. Glancing at Hedley, he asked, "Can we break it in?"

"Go ahead," Hedley replied. "We've carte blanche now."

Jack threw his shoulder against the wooden door and it splintered, then the lock gave, and the door sprang open. Jack gasped, "Marsh!"

But Marsh saw her lying there at the same time as Jack had spoken, and he threw himself to his knees, his eyes burning with tears, as he feverishly undid Paula's bonds, jerked the cloth gag from her mouth, and lifted her into his arms.

"Oh, Dad!" she wailed, "Daddy!"

Marsh carried her out to the office, where Jack and Hedley were wet-eyed and Myra, with a cry of thankfulness for the girl's safety, took her from him and said, "I'll take her to the bath, down the hallway. Come, darling, you're safe now," she said, hugging Paula warmly.

Marsh stood leaning on his knuckles on the wooden table, then angrily knocked the whiskey bottle off the table and to the side. "We have to find them," he said,

feeling like an angry lion growling. "Hedley, Jack, *we have to catch those criminals!*"

When Paula came out with Myra a few moments later, she hugged and kissed her father again, gave Jack and Hedley each a kiss on the cheek, and said, "They're tracking Judy and Clarence, Dad! Judy stole that walkie-talkie again, and they can locate her if she turns it on at all. They had money and other stuff like that in that rucksack Judy found and hid, and they're going to kill her, and then kill all of us if they have to, and then escape! Dad, they're murderers!"

Marsh glanced at Hedley, Jack, and Myra and, his arm about Paula's shoulders, asked them all, "Are you ready to start tracking them now?"

He didn't have to ask twice. The grim look on their faces gave him his answer.

Chapter Eight

JUNGLE SEARCH

FROM THE COASTAL PORT TOWN of Ishanga the road back to Wameru traveled in almost a direct line—a fairly heartening prospect, Marsh remarked to the others, because if Clarence's homing sense was still in decent shape that would make returning to Wameru much easier for all four of the pets. Marsh glanced at his watch as they started out, and saw that it was now 1:30 in the afternoon, with some rain clouds moving slowly inland from over the ocean.

Marsh said, "All right, now? Jack, keep the homing equipment turned on. Myra can watch the amplifiers to see that the power's up, and if you need extra power you can switch on the gasoline alternator in the back of the Landrover. Band 12 was the Trekboer band, and Judy's not likely to change that on the radio she swiped."

"It's all a slim chance, Marsh," Jack commented morosely.

Paula said, "It's our *only* chance, except to try to look everywhere from here to Wameru!"

"I'm sorry, Paula," he said. "Let's work it the best we can, shall we?"

Paula seemed weary to Marsh, and no wonder, but otherwise she appeared to be not much the worse for her experience, except that now she was boiling mad, determined to find her pets and help to apprehend the criminals. Nevertheless, because of that rashness which had caused her to get kidnapped in the first place, she was now more cautious than he had ever seen her. He said, "Paula will ride with Hedley and me, and we'll use the radio in Hedley's car as well as a walkie-talkie. If you two pick up anything at all, give us a honk and we'll stop. Agreed?"

So they drove off, Hedley taking the lead. From the town the road climbed for three or four miles until it was up on the higher plains of the plateau country, much of the land dry but with many more expanses of bushy forest country than out by Wameru, for there was much more water down this way. Marsh was grateful for the larger amount of forest, if only because it meant there would be less wild game for the pets to run into. On the other hand, it could make searching more difficult, too, because they would have to stay pretty much on the main road with the cars, and only now and then be able to take side roads.

The sun was a great white ball of fire in the sky, but ahead of the dark gray rain clouds steadily coming toward the coast was a cool sea breeze, reminding them of salty, sandy beaches and shading palm trees, smelling of the sea, fresh and invigorating, reducing the actual heat of the day to a pleasantly bearable temperature.

Hedley asked Marsh, "When that rain gets here, do you think it will affect Clarence's 'homing sense,' as you called it?"

Marsh continued to watch the road ahead of them and

the country to each side of the tarmac road, then glanced at the speedometer and said, "Slower, Hedley. Keep down to about fifteen miles an hour, or we'll overrun them. No, I don't think it'll affect his homing sense at all, but they'll all take cover from rain—that is, if they stick together."

"They'd stay together, Dad!" objected Paula. "Judy wouldn't just run away from them!"

"Paula," he said, as gently as he could, "she's only an animal. Don't hope too much, honey."

The girl bit her lip and made no reply. Instead, she paid closer attention to the heavy-duty walkie-talkie she was holding, and at the same time watched even more carefully the brush along the road. Ahead, perhaps a quarter of a mile, was a dirt road going off to the right, and Hedley asked, "Should I drive in for a look?"

Marsh nodded. "We have to investigate each side road until we get some lead on the animals, or on Van Wiet and Hakim. Stop for a minute, first, and we'll have Jack and Myra wait on the main road to check any traffic that comes along."

Paula ran back to tell them, returned, and Hedley drove up the winding dirt road for three miles into country which rapidly became wilder and bushier, dry thorn-bush prairies scattered with lush patches of green forest. When they reached a village, Hedley stopped his jeep by the nearest of the round mud huts, and a swarm of villagers ran out to greet them. One man, wearing a pith helmet, looked more important than the others as he strode through the crowd and stopped ten feet away.

Hedley got out of the jeep and said, "*Jambo*. Do you speak English?"

"You are welcome," the tall black man replied. The crowd of chattering women and children became silent

when he spoke, all of them now staring at Paula. "I am the *Mashaha* here."

Hedley said, "Mashaha, I am District Officer Hedley of Wampwepwe, near Wameru. We are looking for some animals: a chimpanzee, a big male *simba*, a parrot, and a mongoose—the snake-eater."

The tall African listened, nodded, then spoke loudly to the people in ki-Swahili for a few moments, apparently translating Hedley's words, and some people replied, others laughed and giggled, and finally he shook his head and replied to Hedley, "My people have seen no animals like these, *bwana dio*. Some of the people say it is strange to see those animals: *simba* and a bird and the snake-eater."

Hedley grinned. "Yes, it is, Mashaha," he agreed. "They belong to this girl, the daughter of Daktari Tracy."

The African nodded approvingly at Paula, but smiled at Marsh and extended his right hand. "You are welcome, Daktari," he said.

"There is a reward," Marsh told him. "If your people see these animals—the *simba's* eyes cross, looking like this—" And he crossed his eyes for a moment to illustrate it, making several young girls screech and giggle. "—So if your people see these animals, tell Commissioner Abdelrahim Abdullah of Ishanga, and if those are the proper animals, you will be rewarded." He paused for a moment, and named the amount: "Ten pounds."

"Marsh, really it's too much!" Hedley protested.

"No, it's not, Hedley."

"Then," Hedley said to the African, "we'll go, Mashaha. The reward will be ten pounds."

They shook hands with the African, said goodbye, and retraced their route back to the tarmac, where Myra and Jack were waiting patiently and reported no traffic whatsoever in either direction, and nothing on the direction-finder. It was four o'clock already. The animals had been free at least for twelve hours, most of

that time daylight. Marsh felt an empty sensation in the pit of his stomach, wondering if he and the others were simply wasting their time. Van Wiet and Hakim could have overtaken the animals hours ago, and either killed or recaptured them. He started to speak, then noticed Paula's eyes as she listened to the softly humming radio receiver. The girl's eyes revealed all the hope and optimism which he was feeling he had lost, and it made him sorry for her and angry with himself.

"Let me have your attention for a minute," he said to everyone. When they were listening, he explained, "We'll continue with this plan and method until dark. After that, we can head over to the Moshi Mission, where they'll put us up for the night. Then in the morning we can start early. How does that sound?"

Everyone agreed with the idea, with the exception of Paula, who bit her lip, her eyes growing moist. She said nothing, however, because she realized they couldn't search in the darkness, that the animals would have to be on their own throughout the night, which looked like it was going to be a stormy one, with the rain front getting close enough now that they all could hear thunder in the east.

"Let's go, Dad," she suggested, her voice wanting to catch in her throat.

Judy and the others had fled westward with hardly a pause since they had left the Trekboer compound and Ishanga in the early hours of the morning. They bypassed small villages close to Ishanga, listening to chickens crowing and goats bleating. At one place near a small stream where they all got a drink of fresh water, they hid in the brush while some girls and young women came in single file with pots on their heads and drew water, laughing and gossiping among themselves.

Judy was more cautious from then on, making a wider circuit about village areas, but nevertheless continuing

westward under Clarence's direction. The way they were traveling made sense to Judy, too, because every now and then, when they had to cross a ridge or a high hill, she could see that on their right was the tarmac road, sometimes less than a mile from them. A couple of hours after dawn, indeed, they had all stopped on a hill to rest, and Judy saw on the road a big Bedford truck which resembled the one Van Wiet had used to abduct them from Wameru. She chattered softly, not daring to make much noise, and Clarence, who had also spotted the truck—two of them to his eyes—grumbled low in his throat. Bini and Rikki, the littler members of the group, simply looked in wide-eyed silence.

At midday they came to another small stream and were able to drink their fill, but all of them by now were becoming hungry, and once or twice Bini even said, "Want some!" until Judy chattered angrily and he stopped begging. By the middle of the afternoon, however, they came to within a quarter-mile from a village, which was quiet while the majority of the Africans rested to escape the heat. Only a few grown men sat in a small open-sided hut drinking *tumbo* and speaking in low voices, now and then laughing. Judy stopped the others and they hid in some bushes and observed the place. Past the men, who seemed sleepily balmy from the effects of the wine, a woman had left several star-apples and three bright orangish-green ripe oranges on a wooden ledge, and near them what looked like two covered *ugali* pots. Judy tried to chatter in a low voice to Clarence, trying desperately to tell him to wait for her to steal some food, but he growled his disapproval and shook his head.

Taking off the walkie-talkie she had been carrying, Judy put her mouth by his ear and chattered at him again. He shook his head, so she angrily ran from the cover, skirting about the open space near the closest of the huts, while the others watched her, fascinated at

the scene of the chimp trying to sneak past the men drinking *tumbo*.

Judy went behind the nearest hut and emerged momentarily beyond it, but obviously saw that she would have to dash across the open space no matter how she might try. The Africans were still drinking, laughing, and talking. The sun beat down hotly overhead. From far to the east came the sound of thunder as the rain clouds drew steadily closer. Then Judy came out of her hiding place, not dashing, not running at all, but ambling along as if she were a member of the village. When she was well out in the open, the men drinking *tumbo* suddenly stopped speaking and laughing, all of them staring at the bold little chimpanzee who so nonchalantly made herself at home in their village.

After the first shock of astonishment, one of the Africans said in ki-Swahili, "That is a very hairy person."

Two of the other men laughed, and a third said, "It must be a foreigner, then," and they all laughed.

The first man said in a louder voice, "Chimpanzee, where are you going?"

Judy stopped, stood on her hind legs, and hooted at him. All the men laughed again. Judy continued on past them.

"Look at her," one of them remarked. "She wants some food, I think."

"A chimpanzee who is a thief?" laughed another.

But the first African said, "No, my brothers. She is hungry, and she wants some food. But this behavior is strange for a chimpanzee!"

The men grew very quiet as Judy opened the lid of one of the pots, saw that it was filled with *ugali*, the savory maize and wheat porridge eaten by so many Africans, replaced the lid and took the entire pot in her left arm, then gathered four star-apples in her right

arm and turned about, walking on her hind legs back across the open space.

One of the African men said, "Maybe it is not a chimpanzee at all. She does not act like a chimpanzee." Only God knows these things," said another. "As for me, that food is worth little, and if the woman complains, I'm willing to donate a few pence to help replace it. I wouldn't want to incur the wrath of some evil spirit coming here in the form of a chimpanzee!"

"That's sensible," agreed another. "Although it could be a good spirit, too, trying to test us, to see if we'll try to harm it. Who knows the ways of God?"

They all nodded and made sounds of agreement as Judy crossed before them and returned to the brush, where the others were waiting, each ready to bolt and run. Judy gave one of the star-apples to Bini, who clutched it in his left foot and began to devour it as rapidly as he could. She opened the pot of *ugali*, dipped her hand in it, and held a big glob of it to Clarence, who sniffed it, wrinkling his big nose with distaste. He ate it, nevertheless, licking all of it off her fingers before she dug out more for him. Rikki took one sniff of it and wouldn't even try it. As she fed the *ugali* to Clarence, Judy held a star-apple in her left hand and gnawed hungrily at it. She had never before particularly liked star-apples, but this one tasted like ambrosia, and when she had finished it she ate another, and after that the third.

When Clarence had finished the *ugali*, licked his chops and grumbled because he had no meat, they all got up and crept away through the bush country south of the village, and were completely past the place when, coming down a slight draw they suddenly stopped. With a shuddering hiss, a big black cobra rose up before them, its hood spread out, its evil little eyes watching them, its body swaying easily back and forth ready to strike.

Judy, Clarence and Bini all stopped in their tracks as if they were suddenly turned to stone, but Rikki leaped sideways and went into an agile roll as the great snake whipped the whole upper part of its body at him. Like a bundle of glossy, hungry fur, Rikki dashed forward, the cobra just missing him, and he spun around on the far side of the reptile, his friends backing away out of its reach should it decide to try for them again. But the cobra knew its real enemy, and the mongoose circled warily, keeping just out of its reach as the snake struck three more times. Chattering, his bright eyes blazing with fury, Rikki then ran forward, just before the snake had time to prepare itself for a big strike and, when it struck from a poor position, he darted aside and then leaped forward like lightning and had the big reptile just behind the head. The cobra slashed about for but a moment, literally throwing Rikki's body from side to side, but he did not let go. Then, with one audible crunch, he broke the snake's neck and the huge cobra shivered and went limp, only its tail quivering for a short while.

The others continued to watch as Rikki fed himself on the snake until his little belly was puffed and swollen so much that, when Judy chattered at him to come along, he waddled, hardly able to keep up with them.

The sun was still hot overhead when they came close to another African village, and Judy was about to lead the others in a wide circuit around it when a particular sound fascinated all of them and they crept closer until they could see and hear what was going on. There, some one hundred yards down a hillside from where they lay crouching in thick brush, was the open part of a very small village. Just beyond it was a big Bedford truck, and standing talking to some of the villagers were the enemies: Charley Van Wiet, big roundheaded and redfaced, and Hakim, now wearing a yellow tur-

ban, his swarthy face still as lean and mean-looking as ever.

Clarence grumbled softly to Judy, but she would not leave yet, holding stubbornly to his mane when he tried to turn away. She chattered at him quietly, and he lay on his belly. Bini, too, crouched low on Clarence's back, as if the evil men could clearly see all of them. Rikki, whose belly was still puffed with snake meat, lay on the ground next to Clarence, and Judy parted the brush slightly in front of her so she could see and hear as well as possible.

"... chimpanzee, and a lion with cross-eyes," Hakim was saying to the villagers in ki-Swahili, "and the red-tailed talking-bird and the snake-killer."

A villager who seemed to be of some importance, possibly a chief, replied, "We have seen no animals like those. Animals like those do not live together."

"Don't speak to me like that, son of a pig!" Hakim snarled at the man. "I say it, and I know it!"

Van Wiet growled, "What's the bloody devil arguing about, Hakim?"

"Nothing," Hakim grumbled. "Just the talk of stupid primitive savages!" In ki-Swahili he said to the villagers, "I am a man who knows more than any of you! I tell you we will give you much money if you find those animals for us! The man who finds them will get one pound—twenty shillings!"

"If the animals are that important," said the chief, "the reward should be greater."

Hakim's eyes narrowed. Spitting out his words, he said, "Offend me further, jackal, and your reward will be in the land of the dead!"

Judy turned back to the other animals, chattered softly, and they retreated silently into the forest southwest of the village, traveling two or three miles westward before they stopped, exhausted, in a small hillside clearing less than two miles from the tarmac road.

Clarence stretched out on the ground, Rikki curled close to him and Bini still perched on his mane. Judy sat down, her back against a tree trunk, and pulled the antenna from the walkie-talkie. At first she only listened to the radio without having turned it on, and of course it gave off no sound, so she barked angrily at it.

Judy pressed the ON button then and listened, but heard nothing at all, so she put the radio down and rolled back and forth on the ground. Her feet were sore from all the walking, and she grumbled about them. Lying on her back by Clarence, who gave her one hard look but then dozed off again, she yawned widely, and Bini said, "Judy's a bad chimp! Ooooh, bad!" Judy chattered at him, and he became quiet and perched on one leg, his eyes half-closed with sleepiness in this pleasantly shaded part of the forest.

Tiring of all this, Judy rolled over and ambled back to the tree and the radio, chattered at the shiny object for a few moments to express her disapproval, and flicked the RECEIVE button. Immediately afterwards, Van Wiet's voice came loud and clear, saying:

"There's a good baby! We're your friends, Judy! Just stay right where you are, little chimp, and we'll come get you and take you to Paula and Daktari!"

Judy screamed, Clarence let out a snort, and Bini shouted, "Ooh, my goo'mess!"

Then Judy switched off the radio, pressing buttons until all humming had ceased, shoved the antenna down and, wide-eyed with fear, led the others a couple miles farther to the west, terror dogging their heels. Deep in her brain, Judy wanted only to see Paula, to be hugged and held, to be able to sleep in her baby bed in Paula's room, and to be safe forever and ever. She thought of tormenting Dr. Templeton, and shook her head, chattering at the very image of the mischievousness, knowing she would never do things like

that again, for Dr. Templeton was good, unlike Hakim and Stokes and Van Wiet.

The animals found a place away from villages and human beings as twilight was coming down upon the countryside. Already the rain front of the oncoming storm was almost upon them, the sky being slashed by great jagged streaks of lightning and rent by clashing, crashing thunder. They huddled together in the forest as they waited for the rain itself to begin. Judy took the walkie-talkie strap off her neck and pulled out the antenna of the radio, flicked the ON switch and, fear making her heart pound, listened carefully. Nothing happened. She switched on SPEAK and chattered into the radio for a few minutes and even let Bini say, "Want some!" into it, and then switched it back to ON. When there was nothing but buzzing from it for a long time, she switched on the RECEIVE button, and she and the others were shocked at the sound of Paula's voice, saying:

"Judy, honey! Push the other button, Judy, and talk for me! Judy, push the other button! Then I can find you, honey!"

From beyond the sound of Paula's voice they heard Daktari say, "Paula, she's heard you now, and she'll probably keep it ON RECEIVE, just to hear you again."

"Oh, Dad," said Paula, "what can we do?"

Now from beyond her voice came Jack's voice, saying, "Marsh, we've got a tentative fix. But it's almost too late now, and that storm's coming fast!"

"Well, our Trekboer friends won't find her either," said Marsh.

"Judy, honey," said Paula, "turn off the radio! *Press the other button, Judy!*"

Judy cried, and Clarence grumbled at Paula and Marsh and Jack for not coming immediately and collecting all of them from this wild forest, because it was obvious that they were all going to be soaked very soon,

with the storm coming, and besides that, they were hungry and homesick, and enough was enough. Rikki chattered plaintively, almost like a baby, and Bini said, "My goo'mess!" while Paula continued to plead with Judy to turn off the set. Finally Judy did it, switching off the walkie-talkie altogether, then huddling with the other animals and whimpering softly as the hard, cold rain of Africa pelted down upon them.

It rained almost all night, stopping only two or three hours before dawn, and by the time warmer daylight came all four of them were shuddering from the cold. They were hungry and more forlorn and frightened than ever. Judy barked at them, and Clarence stood up with a low growl of discomfort, so they started westward again, down one sloping hill and up the side of another.

Perhaps an hour later they approached another village and stopped in the brush, their bellies throbbing with hunger as they watched two women and a girl preparing food in front of a hut. One of the women had just plucked a chicken and dropped it into a pot of boiling water which already smelled savory from herbs and porridge, while the girl steadily pounded maize mealie-meal in a mortar. The third woman was cutting paw-paw with a wide-bladed knife. All the food looked and smelled very good to the four travelers.

Judy put down her walkie-talkie, glanced at the others, and walked out into the open. The two women and the girl stopped their work and looked at her, and when the chimpanzee stood up on her hind legs and walked toward them, they backed away slightly, making no sound at all.

Her voice quavering slightly, one of the women said to Judy, "What do you want, Thing-Of-The-Forest?"

Judy went straight on ahead to the mortar, sniffed at the mealie-meal in it, then looked around. The young girl dropped the pestle she had been using to crush the

maize, and nervously gave Judy a small pot of prepared *ugali*. The chimp took it and turned to leave the compound when suddenly a grown man ran out to the open and shouted:

"These are bad things! There is a *simba* with crossed eyes and a bird on his mane, a snake-killer, and this chimpanzee! They are evil spirits! They are dangerous things!"

Judy ran, dropping the pot, and when she reached the others she snatched up the walkie-talkie and all of them fled, the sound of angry drums beginning to throb through the damp air of the African morning, the booming, monotonous throbbing sound like the beat of their own frightened hearts, seeming to come from all directions at once.

Two miles away, Marsh tapped Hedley's arm and said, "Hold it! Listen to that!" Hedley stopped the jeep and they listened, hearing the throbbing drums from a village ahead of them and to their left. Several hundred yards ahead, a bare red footpath led off the tarmac road, and Hedley gunned the jeep ahead and turned off on the footpath, slapping down weeds as he drove inland to the village itself. He stopped amidst the dwellings, where people were gathering, some with spears, others with bows and arrows, a few with long muskets. The noises slackened up appreciably when the people saw the cars suddenly enter their village, and several came running excitedly over, saying, "*Jambo, bwana! Jambo!*"

"Who speaks English?" Hedley asked them.

Several shouted, "I do! Bwana, there are evil things here!"

"What evil things?" Marsh demanded, already out of the jeep, with Paula close behind him.

"A *simba* with his eyes crossed, a chimpanzee with no fear, a talking-bird, a snake-killer! These are the forms the evil things take, bwana!"

"They're my pets!" said Paula. "They're animals!"
 "Memsahib," gasped one of the English-speakers. "You tell me they are animals?"

"They're mine!" she cried. "Please help me find them!"

The African shouted out the news to all the others, who shouted back replies, some arguing, but most of them giving in to reason when he argued back more sharply at them, and finally he said to her, "*Ndio, Memsahib. We will help you find your animals. Come!*"

Myra ran with Paula ahead of the others, and just behind the African who had spoken with them. They went along a small ravine for several hundred yards, then turned up the slope of a ridge, Marsh and Jack now taking the lead ahead of the women.

At the top of the ridge they all stopped, and Marsh shouted, "Look!"

Across a small valley, running frenziedly up the side of the next ridge, were Judy, Rikki and Clarence, with Bini barely visible on Clarence's mane. "Judy!" Paula called.

Marsh cupped his hands to his mouth and shouted, "Judy! Come back!"

The animals stopped, looked curiously, continued to stare for a moment or two, and then Clarence tossed his big head and let out a *simba*-cough and the animals started back down the slope. Marsh and Paula ran down the hill to meet the animals at the bottom. There was little cover there, chiefly open elephant grass three or four feet high.

Marsh reached the bottom first and, yelling with glee, Judy bounded ahead of the other animals and leaped through the air into his arms, chattering her delight, then jumped from his arms into Paula's, and Clarence stood up with his forepaws on Marsh's shoulders, his big, rasp-like tongue licking Marsh's face. Bini was shouting, "My goo'mess!" until Myra took him on her shoulder, and Jack grabbed up chattering little Rikki.

Then a rifle shot shattered the air, the bullet slashing through the grass, and one of the African villagers screamed in pain and fell, a great stream of bright red blood spewing from his left leg.

"Back to those trees!" Marsh shouted. "Paula, you and Myra take the animals, while Jack and I help that man! Come on! Hedley, get those others back!"

He looked up the far slope to the southwest and spotted the glint of a telescopic rifle sight. That was all it could be. "Keep low!" he called to Paula and Myra as they hurried to cover with the animals. Then there was another shot, the bullet whistling through the grass only inches from Paula and Judy.

Hedley yelled, "Paula, get away!"

The girl and the chimp ran, fast.

From the patch of bush, Marsh, Hedley, and several of the Africans saw Van Wiet and Hakim, both of them recognizable even at this distance. The Trekboer men ran back over that hill and out of sight. Then everyone hurried back to the village. When they had loaded the animals into the Landrover, Myra decided to ride with Marsh and Hedley while Paula and the animals stayed with Jack.

The English-speaking Africans stopped at the cars for a moment, one of them explaining, "Our people go chase those men, bwana!"

"Good hunting!" said Hedley. "If you catch them, hold them and send word to Commissioner Abdullah!"

The expression on the faces of the Africans indicated that, if they caught Hakim and Van Wiet, Commissioner Abdullah would probably never hear of it.

At the tarmac road, Hedley stopped the lead car, and they all got out, Marsh explaining to the others, "They're west of us, that's clear. Judy and the other pets were heading straight into an ambush. Now, Jack, you and Paula and the pets stay behind us. We'll head straight back to Wameru, but the Trekboer bunch are

probably getting desperate by now. They're undoubtedly on their way back to Wameru, or they're preparing another ambush, or both. We've got to get back there to help Mike and to have Judy find that satchel, and we want to keep our skins in one piece at the same time. So be careful!"

"Right, Marsh," said Jack. "Understood."

So they started back to Wameru, Hedley taking the radio as Marsh drove, calling to Wampwepwe for eight askaris to muster, and ordering his radio operator there to spread an all-points alert. "Wanted for theft, kidnapping, and attempted murder," he said into the radio: "Charles Van Wiet, Ahmadu Bakir Hakim, and Joseph Stokes, all of Trekboer, Ltd., Company. Descriptions follow."

And as Marsh drove steadily toward Wameru, where a final showdown with the criminals would take place, Hedley recited the descriptions of the three men.

Chapter Nine

FINAL EVIDENCE

IT WAS ONLY eleven o'clock in the morning when they arrived at the bottom of the hill near Wameru. For the past fifteen minutes Hedley had been trying to radio Mike Mkula, who had remained at the Refuge, but he had received no answer at all. Now that they were less than a mile away from the house, however, they all realized why Mike hadn't answered: from up on the hill came the clattering of rifle fire, followed shortly afterwards by the booming sound of three shotgun blasts in rapid succession.

"That's Mike with the shotgun!" said Marsh. "Come on, Hedley, let's get up there!"

They heard a man yowl in pain far ahead of them, there were one or two more shots, and then the sound of a truck motor on the far side of the station. Marsh accelerated up the hill, and they skidded to a stop in the compound, where Mike had been hiding behind the

equipment garage. When he recognized them he ran out, the big shotgun still in his hands.

"They were just here, Marsh!" he shouted. "A white man and two Africans, and I hit one of the Africans, I think! The white man was Stokes!"

Marsh jumped from the jeep and waved to Ignatius, who had run out to the porch with a machete in his hand. "Send some of the workers out to warn us if they try to come back," he told the cook.

Ignatius grinned and ran off, shouting in ki-Swahili to the men. Mike had hurried over to greet Paula and to pet the animals, saying to Jack and Paula, "Better let them stay in the car for a while, just in case those criminals return, so you can get them to safety quickly."

"Good idea," said Jack. "Are you all right? We heard the shooting from down below."

Mike smiled, then glanced sheepishly at the shotgun. "I don't think I care to be a soldier," he replied. "Medical work makes much more sense."

Hedley had gone inside the house, and now he returned to the porch with the other double-barreled shotgun. Marsh took it and said, "The first order of business is to get Judy to find that rucksack."

"Precisely," said Hedley, mopping his ruddy face with a large kerchief. "Then I suggest we get over to that Trekboer camp and try to apprehend those devils. The askaris will be there quite soon, I imagine."

Marsh gestured to Paula, who was now holding Judy on her lap. "Bring her over here," he said, "and let's coax her to locate that rucksack."

"Okay, Dad," Paula replied. She and Judy got out of the Landrover and ran over, the chimp hooting with happiness as she bounded along. When they got to the porch, Paula stooped down by her and said, "Judy, honey, will you show me your satchel?"

The chimp stared blankly at her.

Jack ran into the house and brought out a small knap-

sack and a walkie-talkie, put the radio into the knapsack, then took it out again. Judy watched him, then shrieked and did two backflips and jumped up and down, flapping her arms. "Come on, Judy," he told her. "Show us yours, now!"

"Please, Judy?" Paula begged her.

Judy grabbed Paula's hand and tried to run off the porch with her.

"Let go of her, Paula," Marsh suggested. "Go on, Judy, and we'll follow. Show us where it is, honey!"

Judy bounded across the compound as Marsh, Jack, and Paula followed, Jack carrying one of the shotguns and stuffing shells in his pocket as he ran. They followed Judy down the road about fifty yards, then into the brush, thick and tangled, to a tiny clearing which none of them had known about, it was so well hidden from the road. There Judy stopped, jumped up and down, hooted to show off, and agilely climbed some twenty feet up to the crotch of a tree, from which she took the brown rucksack and brought it down to Marsh. He opened it, took out the small bag of diamonds and opened it carefully, the uncut precious gems glittering in the palm of his hand.

All three of them were breathless. "Diamond smugglers!" gasped Jack. "So they used the animal business as a front, a cover for smuggling diamonds!"

"This is certainly what Van Wiet and his gang were after," said Marsh.

A few minutes later, when they returned to the house and showed the others, Hedley said almost the same thing, adding, "But I suspect it's a bit more than simple diamond-smuggling, if one can call that crime *simple*. See here—several hundred pounds in money, too, and these peculiar bills." He straightened out the crumpled handful of invoices and bills of lading which had been in the rucksack, spread them on the table in front of everyone, and read them off one by one: "Nine hundred

pounds of studding nails, four hundred pounds of corner braces, thirteen hundred pounds of wire screening, a thousand pounds of steel fencing." He glanced up at the others. "Odd, isn't it?"

Paula added, touching her fingertip to her lips, "And seven hundred pounds, I think it was, of link bolts. Remember that slip I gave back to them?"

Hedley had a very grave expression on his face. "Terribly huge quantities, what? Marsh, you and I had better get over to that camp and—"

"Let's all go," said Jack. "There's more safety in numbers."

"Please, Dad!" Paula pleaded. "Besides, Clarence will be able to smell that awful Hakim if he tries to sneak up on us!"

Hedley nodded curtly to Marsh. "The askaris should be along quite soon," he said. "Let's all be off, then, shall we?"

The Trekboer camp appeared to be deserted, but for safety's sake they drove about it before they parked in the central area and got out.

"Hullo, there," Hedley called out. "Is anyone here?"

There was no answer. A forlorn nanny goat let out a bleat, and Jack opened her pen so she could get out to the grass and eat. There were ten or fifteen gazelles in three other pens, but their water was fresh and there was fresh hay in the pens, indicating that very lately they had been fed and watered.

"The workers heard us, or saw us coming," Marsh suggested, "so they probably ran."

Hedley walked briskly to his jeep and dug out a claw hammer. The others followed him to the several large crates covered with heavy tarpaulins. The top crate had stenciled on it in black paint the words
CORNER BRACES: INSIDE. 400 LBS. AVOIR.

"Well, then," said Hedley, catching the claw of the

hammer under the top board of the crate and prying until the board was lifted up. Inside the crate the contents were sealed in opaque plastic, so Hedley began to work at the next board. It was evident that several of the boards would have to be removed before they could see what was inside the crate. "Check on things, would you, Marsh?" Hedley said, his face marred by a frown revealing his nervousness. "Those Trekboer devils have got to be close by somewhere, and it won't do at all to have them get away when we're this close to them."

Marsh grinned. "I don't think they'll run off, Hedley," he replied. "Not without that loot of diamonds and money. I'll check anyhow, though."

Taking Hedley's jeep, Marsh drove around the camp, but he saw nothing at all abnormal. On the far side of the camp, past the temporary animal pens, he stopped the jeep for a moment and listened. There was no sound at all, so he drove back to rejoin the others, parking the car next to the one where Clarence was sitting with Bini on his back. Rikki had jumped out at Wameru and wasn't along now. Judy and Paula had gone over by Hedley, who was sweating and holding down one end of the crate while Jack tried to rip out more of the boards.

Something bothered Marsh: the same thing, apparently, which was disturbing Hedley, who told Jack to stop for a moment, and then listened carefully. "Everyone be still for a moment," he told them.

Judy chattered softly, but Paula hushed her, and Myra petted Bini to keep him from speaking out. They all listened. They heard nothing. Then it dawned on them.

They heard *nothing!*

Normally there were dozens of assorted bird and animal sounds out on the plains at this time of day: cheeps, grunts, snorts, warbling, whistling, growls. But

now the whole area seemed to be locked in a weird, unnatural silence.

Making a clucking sound with his tongue, Hedley said, "They're about, Marsh."

Marsh nodded his agreement and noticed Clarence, who now was listening closely, his big head in the air. Judy, too, had quieted down, and had a nervous, toothy grin on her face, reflecting her fear. "I didn't see a thing, though," said Marsh.

"It could be something else, of course," suggested Myra. "Out among the troops of baboons we've seen this sort of thing happen, where there'd be absolute silence for a while, but it was all natural."

"Quite so," said Hedley. "It's very possible, granted. Well then, Jack, let's get this top off, shall we, and let's all hope the askaris get here soon." He shivered briefly. "I'll feel a lot more secure when they do."

Jack ripped the last board from the top of the crate, then reached down and pulled open the plastic covering protecting the inside cardboard cartons, and dragged one of the cartons out. "I never saw corner braces packed like this," he remarked. The carton was five inches thick by eighteen inches square and was unmarked.

"Tear it open," Hedley instructed him.

"Yes, sir." Jack ripped the top off the carton, looked, blinked, and said, "Wowie!"

They all hurried over to look at the one dozen hand grenades neatly packed in styrofoam.

"Be very gentle now," said Hedley. "Put the top back on and replace it in the crate, then let's slide this one aside and try the next crate."

Marsh helped Jack and Hedley with this one, while Paula and Myra Templeton watched over the men's shoulders. This crate had stenciled on it STEEL FENCING: 10 ROLLS. It contained ten long boxes, again unmarked, and each box held four automatic military rifles.

"It's enough to equip a small army," said Marsh.

"Precisely," Hedley replied. "This of course explains the diamonds, doesn't it? Diamonds come from our neighbors to the west, and right now they're in the throes of a revolution, so our enterprising Trekboer friends were in a two-way illegal supply business: selling contraband military arms and ammunition to the rebels, and taking in payment not only cash but the jewels, which are worth quite a bit more if they're smuggled out of the country. That's why they have an animal depot on the coast—the perfect cover for loading and unloading heavy items, for bringing in these big crates of materials that look like building materials necessary for cages and kraals and that sort of thing. Who'd bother to really question it?"

From behind them simultaneously came the click of a rifle and a snort of surprise from Clarence, then Van Wiet's coarse laughter broke through the still air: "Very clever, Officer Hedley!"

They all spun about to face Van Wiet, Stokes, and Hakim, who was grinning with evil delight. Judy screamed and clung to Paula, but then quieted down as Jack and Marsh each took two or three steps to opposite sides and Stokes shouted at them:

"Oh, no, you don't, lads!"

"Don't try a bloody trick!" snarled Van Wiet. "Now, Daktari Tracy, let's have the diamonds, and fast!"

"You're all fools!" said Marsh. "You can see it's all over for the three of you! If you add the murder of all of us to your crimes, no government in the world will hide you!"

"Shut up yer bloody mouth!" Stokes yelled, his face livid.

Hedley said, quite formally, "Dr. Tracy is right. In the name of the law, I hereby charge you men with murder and kidnapping, and I warn you that anything you say may be held against you. Now, drop your

weapons and give yourselves up. Reinforcements are coming, so you'll never get away."

"The diamonds, Tracy," Van Wiet growled.

"Don't tell him, Marsh," said Hedley.

Then Hakim let out a snarl like the sound of an enraged leopard, jerked his knife from his belt, and flung it at Hedley, who ducked sideways just in time so that the blade slashed into his left arm instead of his heart. Myra screamed and grabbed for him as he fell.

Marsh saw Van Wiet's rifle swinging toward him now, and he threw himself sideways into a roll on the ground as the gun roared and the bullet hissed only inches over his head. Jack was rushing forward and, before Van Wiet could chamber another cartridge, he dived in a flying tackle and brought down the big man. Hakim, after flinging the knife, ran forward at Paula, but Marsh was on his feet already and caught Hakim with a powerful left hook, and the Swahili was flung backwards, knocking Stokes' aim off, his shot going wild in the air.

Stokes quickly recovered, swinging his rifle butt and hitting Marsh a hard blow on the side of the head, and by the time Marsh scrambled back up the knobby-faced man had grabbed Paula's arm, and the girl was screaming. Jack ran forward, Stokes fired, and the bullet caught Jack in the leg, knocking him weakly to the ground.

Judy grabbed up Van Wiet's gun and, while Stokes tried to hold the screaming, struggling Paula, the chimp swung the rifle hard against Stokes' back. The man staggered sideways, losing his grip on Paula. Myra rushed over from where Hedley was struggling to his feet, grabbed Paula, and pulled her away behind the crates to safety, then tried to reach inside the first crate for the carton of hand grenades. Hedley had drawn his pistol now and, as Van Wiet ran at Judy to retrieve his rifle, he fired two quick shots into the big man's leg,

dropping him, and Van Wiet lay on the ground ten feet away, cursing and yowling with pain.

"Hakim!" Hedley shouted. "Don't move, or I'll drop you, too!"

The Swahili froze, his face a picture of furious hatred.

"No!" Stokes yelled desperately when he saw his companions stopped. He tried to chamber another cartridge in his rifle, then frenziedly threw down the weapon and started to run, flapping his arms in the air and screeching like some terrified bird. But he ran past the Land-rover and, with one great leap, Clarence came out of the back of the vehicle, landed on the ground just behind the man, and then let out a majestic roar. Stokes screamed, glanced back, tried to run again, and then Clarence was on him, knocking him down and standing over him.

Stokes lay motionless on his back on the ground, staring up into Clarence's cross-eyed but triumphant gaze, and was blubbering, "Oh, no! Don't let the lion eat me! No, no, don't let him! Oh, please, Docker Tracy, help me!"

Marsh stumbled over to Jack and said, "Is it bad?"

Jack grinned bravely. "Just my leg. Better tie up Hakim, Marsh. He's a danger."

"I've several sets of manacles in the gray steel case under the seat in my jeep, Marsh," Hedley told him.

Marsh found the manacles, then pulled Hakim's arms behind his back and handcuffed him. Afterwards he stopped the bleeding in Hedley's left arm and then in Jack's leg before he did the same for Van Wiet, who had stopped cursing and was now grim-faced, his eyes hollow with despair.

Marsh made a radio call to Wampwepwe, asking that an ambulance truck be sent and that they call up a medical doctor. Stokes was still bawling and begging for help when moments later a truckload of askaris

drove into the camp. A sergeant leaped out, saluted Hedley, and, his black face filled with astonishment, said, "Reporting as ordered, sah! You have fought a battle, sah!"

Hedley grimaced, then grinned as he glanced around at the group. "Yes, Sergeant, we've fought a battle."

Marsh smiled at Myra, who was holding Judy in her arms as Paula went to lead Clarence away from the terrified Joe Stokes, and he said, "But I think we've got almost everything under control again, Sergeant."

The askari sergeant chuckled, "This will be one more story about the Daktari at Wameru, sah. I will be the first to tell Commissioner Abdullah."

"Well then," said Marsh, looking about. "Let's get Jack and Hedley into the cars, and we'll get back to Wameru."

"Sorry, Marsh," said Hedley. "I'll supervise here until the ambulance comes. I'm quite all right."

"I'll stay, then," said Marsh.

"You'll go, please," Hedley insisted. "You've things to get done, and you'd be little help here, since it's purely police business, now that we've caught these rogues."

"Well, then," Marsh repeated, "it's back to Wameru for the rest of us."

"And some peace and quiet?" asked Myra Templeton, with a smile.

Paula laughed and hugged her. "And peace and quiet," she said. "No mischief from Judy any more at all—isn't that right, Judy?"

Bini, who was sitting on the steering wheel of the Landrover, said in a loud voice, "Judy's a bad chimp!"

But Judy shook her head firmly. She was no longer a mischievous chimp at all, and she would prove it from now on.

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