

Literature.org:
[Authors](#)
[Contact](#)

[Jungle Tales of Tarzan](#)

[Edgar Rice Burroughs](#)

This Book:

[Contents](#)
[Previous Chapter](#)
[Next Chapter](#)

Chapter 4 - The God of Tarzan

AMONG THE BOOKS of his dead father in the little cabin by the land-locked harbor, Tarzan of the Apes found many things to puzzle his young head. By much labor and through the medium of infinite patience as well, he had, without assistance, discovered the purpose of the little bugs which ran riot upon the printed pages. He had learned that in the many combinations in which he found them they spoke in a silent language, spoke in a strange tongue, spoke of wonderful things which a little ape-boy could not by any chance fully understand, arousing his curiosity, stimulating his imagination and filling his soul with a mighty longing for further knowledge.

A dictionary had proven itself a wonderful storehouse of information, when, after several years of tireless endeavor, he had solved the mystery of its purpose and the manner of its use. He had learned to make a species of game out of it, following up the spoor of a new thought through the mazes of the many definitions which each new word required him to consult. It was like following a quarry through the jungle-- it was hunting, and Tarzan of the Apes was an indefatigable huntsman.

There were, of course, certain words which aroused his curiosity to a greater extent than others, words which, for one reason or another, excited his imagination. There was one, for example, the meaning of which was rather difficult to grasp. It was the word GOD. Tarzan first had been attracted to it by the fact that it was very short and that it commenced with a larger g-bug than those about it--a male g-bug it was to Tarzan, the lower-case letters being females. Another fact which attracted him to this word was the number of he-bugs which figured in its definition--Supreme Deity, Creator or Upholder of the Universe. This must be a very important word indeed, he would have to look into it, and he did, though it still baffled him after many months of thought and study.

However, Tarzan counted no time wasted which he devoted to these strange hunting expeditions into the game preserves of knowledge, for each word and each definition led on and on into strange places, into new worlds where, with increasing frequency, he met old, familiar faces. And always he added to his store of knowledge.

But of the meaning of GOD he was yet in doubt. Once he thought he had grasped it--that God was a mighty chieftain, king of all the Mangani. He was not quite sure, however, since that would mean that God was mightier than Tarzan-- a point which Tarzan of the Apes, who acknowledged no equal in the jungle, was loath to concede.

But in all the books he had there was no picture of God, though he found much to confirm his belief that God was a great, an all-powerful individual. He saw pictures of places where God was worshiped; but never any sign of God. Finally he began to wonder if God were not of a different form than he, and at last he determined to set out in search of Him.

He commenced by questioning Mumga, who was very old and had seen many strange things in her long life; but Mumga, being an ape, had a faculty for recalling the trivial. That time when Gunto mistook a sting-bug for an edible beetle had made more impression upon Mumga than all the innumerable manifestations of the greatness of God which she had witnessed, and which, of course, she had not understood.

Numgo, overhearing Tarzan's questions, managed to wrest his attention long enough from the diversion of flea hunting to advance the theory that the power which made the lightning and the rain and the thunder came from Goro, the moon. He knew this, he said, because the Dum-Dum always was danced in the light of Goro. This reasoning, though entirely satisfactory to Numgo and Mumga, failed fully to convince Tarzan. However, it gave him a basis for further investigation along a new line. He would investigate the moon.

That night he clambered to the loftiest pinnacle of the tallest jungle giant. The moon was full, a great, glorious, equatorial moon. The ape-man, upright upon a slender, swaying limb, raised his bronzed face to the silver orb. Now that he had clambered to the highest point within his reach, he discovered, to his surprise, that Goro was as far away as when he viewed him from the ground. He thought that Goro was attempting to elude him.

"Come, Goro!" he cried, "Tarzan of the Apes will not harm you!" But still the moon held aloof.

"Tell me," he continued, "if you be the great king who sends Ara, the lightning; who makes the great noise and the mighty winds, and sends the waters down upon the jungle people when the days are dark and it is cold. Tell me, Goro, are you God?"

Of course he did not pronounce God as you or I would pronounce His name, for Tarzan knew naught of the spoken language of his English forbears; but he had a name of his own invention for each of the little bugs which constituted the alphabet. Unlike the apes he was not satisfied merely to have a mental picture of the things he knew, he must have a word descriptive of each. In reading he grasped a word in its entirety; but when he spoke the words he had learned from the books of his father, he pronounced each according to the names he had given the various little bugs which occurred in it, usually giving the gender prefix for each.

Thus it was an imposing word which Tarzan made of GOD. The masculine prefix of the apes is BU, the feminine MU; g Tarzan had named LA, o he pronounced TU, and d was MO. So the word God evolved itself into BULAMUTUMUMO, or, in English, he-g-she-o-she-d.

Similarly he had arrived at a strange and wonderful spelling of his own name. Tarzan is derived from the two ape words TAR and ZAN, meaning white skin. It was given him by his foster mother, Kala, the great she-ape. When Tarzan first put it into the written language of his own people he had not yet chanced upon either WHITE or SKIN in the dictionary; but in a primer he had seen the picture of a little white boy and so he wrote his name BUMUDE-MUTOMURO, or he-boy.

To follow Tarzan's strange system of spelling would be laborious as well as futile, and so we shall in the future, as we have in the past, adhere to the more familiar forms of our grammar school copybooks. It would tire you to remember that DO meant b, TU o, and RO y, and that to say he-boy you must prefix the ape masculine gender sound BU before the entire word and the feminine gender sound MU before each of the lower-case letters which go to make up boy--it would tire you and it would bring me to the nineteenth hole several strokes under par.

And so Tarzan harangued the moon, and when Goro did not reply, Tarzan of the Apes waxed wrath. He swelled his giant chest and bared his fighting fangs, and hurled into the teeth of the dead satellite the challenge of the bull ape.

"You are not Bulamutumumo," he cried. "You are not king of the jungle folk. You are not so great as Tarzan, mighty fighter, mighty hunter. None there is so great as Tarzan. If there be a Bulamutumumo, Tarzan can kill him. Come down, Goro, great coward, and fight with Tarzan. Tarzan will kill you. I am Tarzan, the killer."

But the moon made no answer to the boasting of the ape-man, and when a cloud came and obscured her face, Tarzan thought that Goro was indeed afraid, and was hiding from him, so he came down out of the trees and awoke Numgo and told him how great was Tarzan--how he had frightened Goro out of the sky and made him tremble. Tarzan spoke of the moon as HE, for all things large or awe inspiring are male to the ape folk.

Numgo was not much impressed; but he was very sleepy, so he told Tarzan to go away and leave his betters alone.

"But where shall I find God?" insisted Tarzan. "You are very old; if there is a God you must have seen Him. What does He look like? Where does He live?"

"I am God," replied Numgo. "Now sleep and disturb me no more."

Tarzan looked at Numgo steadily for several minutes, his shapely head sank just a trifle between his great shoulders, his square chin shot forward and his short upper lip drew back, exposing his white teeth. Then, with a low growl he leaped upon the ape and buried his fangs in the other's hairy shoulder, clutching the great neck in his mighty fingers. Twice he shook the old ape, then he released his tooth-hold.

"Are you God?" he demanded.

"No," wailed Numgo. "I am only a poor, old ape. Leave me alone. Go ask the Gomangani where God is. They are hairless like yourself and very wise, too. They should know."

Tarzan released Numgo and turned away. The suggestion that he consult the blacks appealed to him, and though his relations with the people of Mbonga, the chief, were the antithesis of friendly, he could at least spy upon his hated enemies and discover if they had intercourse with God.

So it was that Tarzan set forth through the trees toward the village of the blacks, all excitement at the prospect of discovering the Supreme Being, the Creator of all things. As he traveled he reviewed, mentally, his armament--the condition of his hunting knife, the number of his arrows, the newness of the gut which strung his bow--he hefted the war spear which had once been the pride of some black warrior of Mbonga's tribe.

If he met God, Tarzan would be prepared. One could never tell whether a grass rope, a war spear, or a poisoned arrow would be most efficacious against an unfamiliar foe. Tarzan of the Apes was quite content--if God wished to fight, the ape-man had no doubt as to the outcome of the struggle. There were many questions Tarzan wished to put to the Creator of the Universe and so he hoped that God would not prove a belligerent God; but his experience of life and the ways of living things had taught him that any creature with the means for offense and defense was quite likely to provoke attack if in the proper mood.

It was dark when Tarzan came to the village of Mbonga. As silently as the silent shadows of the night he sought his accustomed place among the branches of the great tree which overhung the palisade. Below him, in the village street, he saw men and women. The men were hideously painted--more hideously than usual. Among them moved a weird and grotesque figure, a tall figure that went upon the two legs of a man and yet had the head of a buffalo. A tail dangled to his ankles behind him, and in one hand he carried a zebra's tail while the other clutched a bunch of small arrows.

Tarzan was electrified. Could it be that chance had given him thus early an opportunity to look upon God? Surely this thing was neither man nor beast, so what could it be then other than the Creator of the Universe! The ape-man watched the every move of the strange creature. He saw the black men and women fall back at its approach as though they stood in terror of its mysterious powers.

Presently he discovered that the deity was speaking and that all listened in silence to his words. Tarzan was sure that none other than God could inspire such awe in the hearts of the Gomangani, or stop their mouths so effectually without recourse to arrows or spears. Tarzan had come to look with contempt upon the blacks, principally because of their garrulity. The small apes talked a great deal and ran away from an enemy. The big, old bulls of Kerchak talked but little and fought upon the slightest provocation. Numa, the lion, was not given to loquacity, yet of all the jungle folk there were few who fought more often than he.

Tarzan witnessed strange things that night, none of which he understood, and, perhaps because they were strange, he thought that they must have to do with the God he could not understand. He saw three youths receive their first war spears in a weird ceremony which the grotesque witch-doctor strove successfully to render uncanny and awesome.

Hugely interested, he watched the slashing of the three brown arms and the exchange of blood with Mbonga, the chief, in the rites of the ceremony of blood brotherhood. He saw the zebra's tail dipped into a caldron of water above which the witch-doctor had made magical passes the while he danced and leaped about it, and he saw the breasts and foreheads of each of the three novitiates sprinkled with the charmed liquid. Could the ape-man have known the purpose of this act, that it was intended to render the recipient invulnerable to the attacks of his enemies and fearless in the face of any danger, he would doubtless have leaped into the village street and appropriated the zebra's tail and a portion of the contents of the caldron.

But he did not know, and so he only wondered, not alone at what he saw but at the strange sensations which played up and down his naked spine, sensations induced, doubtless, by the same hypnotic influence which held the black spectators in tense awe upon the verge of a hysteric upheaval.

The longer Tarzan watched, the more convinced he became that his eyes were upon God, and with the conviction came determination to have word with the deity. With Tarzan of the Apes, to think was to act.

The people of Mbonga were keyed to the highest pitch of hysterical excitement. They needed little to release the accumulated pressure of static nerve force which the terrorizing mummy of the witch-doctor had induced.

A lion roared, suddenly and loud, close without the palisade. The blacks started nervously, dropping into utter silence as they listened for a repetition of that all-too-familiar and always terrorizing voice. Even the witch-doctor paused in the midst of an intricate step, remaining momentarily rigid and statuesque as he plumbed his cunning mind for a suggestion as how best he might take advantage of the condition of his audience and the timely interruption.

Already the evening had been vastly profitable to him. There would be three goats for the initiation of the three youths into full-fledged warriorship, and besides these he had received several gifts of grain and beads, together with a piece of copper wire from admiring and terrified members of his audience.

Numa's roar still reverberated along taut nerves when a woman's laugh, shrill and piercing, shattered the silence of the village. It was this moment that Tarzan chose to drop lightly from his tree into the village street. Fearless among his blood enemies he stood, taller by a full head than many of Mbonga's warriors, straight as their straightest arrow, muscled like Numa, the lion.

For a moment Tarzan stood looking straight at the witch-doctor. Every eye was upon him, yet no one had moved-- a paralysis of terror held them, to be broken a moment later as the ape-man, with a toss of head, stepped straight toward the hideous figure beneath the buffalo head.

Then the nerves of the blacks could stand no more. For months the terror of the strange, white, jungle god had been stolen from the very center of the village: their warriors had been silently slain upon the jungle trails and their dead bodies dropped mysteriously and by night into the village street as from the heavens above.

One or two there were who had glimpsed the strange figure of the new demon and it was from their oft-repeated descriptions that the entire village now recognized Tarzan as the author of many of their ills. Upon another occasion and by daylight, the warriors would doubtless have leaped to attack him, but at night, and this night of all others, when they were wrought to such a pitch of nervous dread by the uncanny artistry of their witch-doctor, they were helpless with terror. As one man they turned and fled, scattering for their huts, as Tarzan advanced. For a moment one and one only held his ground. It was the witch-doctor. More than half self-hypnotized into a belief in his own charlatanry he faced this new demon who threatened to undermine his ancient and lucrative profession.

"Are you God?" asked Tarzan.

The witch-doctor, having no idea of the meaning of the other's words, danced a few strange steps, leaped high in the air, turning completely around and alighting in a stooping posture with feet far outspread and head thrust out toward the ape-man. Thus he remained for an instant before he uttered a loud "Boo!" which was evidently intended to frighten Tarzan away; but in reality had no such effect.

Tarzan did not pause. He had set out to approach and examine God and nothing upon earth might now stay his feet. Seeing that his antics had no potency with the visitor, the witch-doctor tried some new medicine. Spitting upon the zebra's tail, which he still clutched in one hand, he made circles above it with the arrows in the other hand, meanwhile backing cautiously away from Tarzan and speaking confidentially to the bushy end of the tail.

This medicine must be short medicine, however, for the creature, god or demon, was steadily closing up the distance which had separated them. The circles therefore were few and rapid, and when they were completed, the witch-doctor struck an attitude which was intended to be awe inspiring and waving the zebra's tail before him, drew an imaginary line between himself and Tarzan.

"Beyond this line you cannot pass, for my medicine is strong medicine," he cried. "Stop, or you will fall dead as your foot touches this spot. My mother was a voodoo, my father was a snake; I live upon lions' hearts and the entrails of the panther; I eat young babies for breakfast and the demons of the jungle are my slaves. I am the most powerful witch-doctor in the world; I fear nothing, for I cannot die. I--" But he got no further; instead he turned and fled as Tarzan of the Apes crossed the magical dead line and still lived.

As the witch-doctor ran, Tarzan almost lost his temper. This was no way for God to act, at least not in accordance with the conception Tarzan had come to have of God.

"Come back!" he cried. "Come back, God, I will not harm you." But the witch-doctor was in full retreat by this time, stepping high as he leaped over cooking pots and the smoldering embers of small fires that had burned before the huts of villagers. Straight for his own hut ran the witch-doctor, terror-spurred to unwonted speed; but futile was his effort--the ape-man bore down upon him with the speed of Bara, the deer.

Just at the entrance to his hut the witch-doctor was overhauled. A heavy hand fell upon his shoulder to drag him back. It seized upon a portion of the buffalo hide, dragging the disguise from him. It was a naked black man that Tarzan saw dodge into the darkness of the hut's interior.

So this was what he had thought was God! Tarzan's lip curled in an angry snarl as he leaped into the hut after the terror-stricken witch-doctor. In the blackness within he found the man huddled at the far side and dragged him forth into the comparative lightness of the moonlit night.

The witch-doctor bit and scratched in an attempt to escape; but a few cuffs across the head brought him to a better realization of the futility of resistance. Beneath the moon Tarzan held the cringing figure upon its shaking feet.

"So you are God!" he cried. "If you be God, then Tarzan is greater than God," and so the ape-man thought. "I am Tarzan," he shouted into the ear of the black. "In all the jungle, or above it, or upon the running waters, or the sleeping waters, or upon the big water, or the little water, there is none so great as Tarzan. Tarzan is greater than the Mangani; he is greater than the Gomangani. With his own hands he has slain Numa, the lion, and Sheeta, the panther; there is none so great as Tarzan. Tarzan is greater than God. See!" and with a sudden wrench he twisted the black's neck until the fellow shrieked in pain and then slumped to the earth in a swoon.

Placing his foot upon the neck of the fallen witch-doctor, the ape-man raised his face to the moon and uttered the long, shrill scream of the victorious bull ape. Then he stooped and snatched the zebra's tail from the nerveless fingers of the unconscious man and without a backward glance retraced his footsteps across the village.

From several hut doorways frightened eyes watched him. Mbonga, the chief, was one of those who had seen what passed before the hut of the witch-doctor. Mbonga was greatly concerned. Wise old patriarch that he was, he never had more than half believed in witch-doctors, at least not since greater wisdom had come with age; but as a chief he was well convinced of the power of the witch-doctor as an arm of government, and often it was that Mbonga used the superstitious fears of his people to his own ends through the medium of the medicine-man.

Mbonga and the witch-doctor had worked together and divided the spoils, and now the "face" of the witch-doctor would be lost forever if any saw what Mbonga had seen; nor would this generation again have as much faith in any future witch-doctor.

Mbonga must do something to counteract the evil influence of the forest demon's victory over the witch-doctor. He raised his heavy spear and crept silently from his hut in the wake of the retreating ape-man. Down the village street walked Tarzan, as unconcerned and as deliberate as though only the friendly apes of Kerchak surrounded him instead of a village full of armed enemies.

Seeming only was the indifference of Tarzan, for alert and watchful was every well-trained sense. Mbonga, wily stalker of keen-eared jungle creatures, moved now in utter silence. Not even Bara, the deer, with his great ears could have guessed from any sound that Mbonga was near; but the black was not stalking Bara; he was stalking man, and so he sought only to avoid noise.

Closer and closer to the slowly moving ape-man he came. Now he raised his war spear, throwing his spear-hand far back above his right shoulder. Once and for all would Mbonga, the chief, rid himself and his people of the menace of this terrifying enemy. He would make no poor cast; he would take pains, and he would hurl his weapon with such great force as would finish the demon forever.

But Mbonga, sure as he thought himself, erred in his calculations. He might believe that he was stalking a man-- he did not know, however, that it was a man with the delicate sense perception of the lower orders. Tarzan, when he had turned his back upon his enemies, had noted what Mbonga never would have thought of considering in the hunting of man--the wind. It was blowing in the same direction that Tarzan was proceeding, carrying to his delicate nostrils the odors which arose behind him. Thus it was that Tarzan knew that he was being followed, for even among the many stenches of an African village, the ape-man's uncanny faculty was equal to the task of differentiating one stench from another and locating with remarkable precision the source from whence it came.

He knew that a man was following him and coming closer, and his judgment warned him of the purpose of the stalker. When Mbonga, therefore, came within spear range

the ape-man, the latter suddenly wheeled upon him, so suddenly that the poised spear was shot a fraction of a second before Mbonga had intended. It went a trifle high and Tarzan stooped to let it pass over his head; then he sprang toward the chief. But Mbonga did not wait to receive him. Instead, he turned and fled for the dark doorway of the nearest hut, calling as he went for his warriors to fall upon the stranger and slay him.

Well indeed might Mbonga scream for help, for Tarzan, young and fleet-footed, covered the distance between them in great leaps, at the speed of a charging lion. He was growling, too, not at all unlike Numa himself. Mbonga heard and his blood ran cold. He could feel the wool stiffen upon his pate and a prickly chill run up his spine, as though Death had come and run his cold finger along Mbonga's back.

Others heard, too, and saw, from the darkness of their huts--bold warriors, hideously painted, grasping heavy war spears in nerveless fingers. Against Numa, the lion, they would have charged fearlessly. Against many times their own number of black warriors would they have raced to the protection of their chief; but this weird jungle demon filled them with terror. There was nothing human in the bestial growls that rumbled up from his deep chest; there was nothing human in the bared fangs, or the catlike leaps.

Mbonga's warriors were terrified--too terrified to leave the seeming security of their huts while they watched the beast-man spring full upon the back of their old chieftain.

Mbonga went down with a scream of terror. He was too frightened even to attempt to defend himself. He just lay beneath his antagonist in a paralysis of fear, screaming at the top of his lungs. Tarzan half rose and knelt above the black. He turned Mbonga over and looked him in the face, exposing the man's throat, then he drew his long, keen knife, the knife that John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, had brought from England many years before. He raised it close above Mbonga's neck. The old black whimpered with terror. He pleaded for his life in a tongue which Tarzan could not understand.

For the first time the ape-man had a close view of the chief. He saw an old man, a very old man with scrawny neck and wrinkled face--a dried, parchment-like face which resembled some of the little monkeys Tarzan knew so well. He saw the terror in the man's eyes--never before had Tarzan seen such terror in the eyes of any animal, or such a piteous appeal for mercy upon the face of any creature.

Something stayed the ape-man's hand for an instant. He wondered why it was that he hesitated to make the kill; never before had he thus delayed. The old man seemed to wither and shrink to a bag of puny bones beneath his eyes. So weak and helpless and terror-stricken he appeared that the ape-man was filled with a great contempt; but another sensation also claimed him--something new to Tarzan of the Apes in relation to an enemy. It was pity--pity for a poor, frightened, old man.

Tarzan rose and turned away, leaving Mbonga, the chief, unharmed.

With head held high the ape-man walked through the village, swung himself into the branches of the tree which overhung the palisade and disappeared from the sight of the villagers.

All the way back to the stamping ground of the apes, Tarzan sought for an explanation of the strange power which had stayed his hand and prevented him from slaying Mbonga. It was as though someone greater than he had commanded him to spare the life of the old man. Tarzan could not understand, for he could conceive of nothing, or no one, with the authority to dictate to him what he should do, or what he should refrain from doing.

It was late when Tarzan sought a swaying couch among the trees beneath which slept the apes of Kerchak, and he was still absorbed in the solution of his strange problem when he fell asleep.

The sun was well up in the heavens when he awoke. The apes were astir in search of food. Tarzan watched them lazily from above as they scratched in the rotting loam for bugs and beetles and grubworms, or sought among the branches of the trees for eggs and young birds, or luscious caterpillars.

An orchid, dangling close beside his head, opened slowly, unfolding its delicate petals to the warmth and light of the sun which but recently had penetrated to its shady retreat. A thousand times had Tarzan of the Apes witnessed the beautiful miracle; but now it aroused a keener interest, for the ape-man was just commencing to ask himself questions about all the myriad wonders which heretofore he had but taken for granted.

What made the flower open? What made it grow from a tiny bud to a full-blown bloom? Why was it at all? Why was he? Where did Numa, the lion, come from? Who planted the first tree? How did Goro get way up into the darkness of the night sky to cast his welcome light upon the fearsome nocturnal jungle? And the sun! Did the sun merely happen there?

Why were all the peoples of the jungle not trees? Why were the trees not something else? Why was Tarzan different from Taug, and Taug different from Bara, the deer, and Bara different from Sheeta, the panther, and why was not Sheeta like Buto, the rhinoceros? Where and how, anyway, did they all come from--the trees, the flowers, the insects, the countless creatures of the jungle?

Quite unexpectedly an idea popped into Tarzan's head. In following out the many ramifications of the dictionary definition of GOD he had come upon the word CREATE-- "to cause to come into existence; to form out of nothing."

Tarzan almost had arrived at something tangible when a distant wail startled him from his preoccupation into sensibility of the present and the real. The wail came from the jungle at some little distance from Tarzan's swaying couch. It was the wail of a tiny balu. Tarzan recognized it at once as the voice of Gazan, Teeka's baby. They had called it Gazan because its soft, baby hair had been unusually red, and GAZAN in the language of the great apes, means red skin.

The wail was immediately followed by a real scream of terror from the small lungs. Tarzan was electrified into instant action. Like an arrow from a bow he shot through the trees in the direction of the sound. Ahead of him he heard the savage snarling of an adult she-ape. It was Teeka to the rescue. The danger must be very real. Tarzan could tell that by the note of rage mingled with fear in the voice of the she.

Running along bending limbs, swinging from one tree to another, the ape-man raced through the middle terraces toward the sounds which now had risen in volume to deafening proportions. From all directions the apes of Kerchak were hurrying in response to the appeal in the tones of the balu and its mother, and as they came, their roars reverberated through the forest.

But Tarzan, swifter than his heavy fellows, distanced them all. It was he who was first upon the scene. What he saw sent a cold chill through his giant frame, for the enemy was the most hated and loathed of all the jungle creatures.

Twined in a great tree was Histah, the snake--huge, ponderous, slimy--and in the folds of its deadly embrace was Teeka's little balu, Gazan. Nothing in the jungle inspired within the breast of Tarzan so near a semblance to fear as did the hideous Histah. The apes, too, loathed the terrifying reptile and feared him even more than they did Sheeta, the panther, or Numa, the lion. Of all their enemies there was none they gave a wider berth than they gave Histah, the snake.

Tarzan knew that Teeka was peculiarly fearful of this silent, repulsive foe, and as the scene broke upon his vision, it was the action of Teeka which filled him with the

greatest wonder, for at the moment that he saw her, the she-ape leaped upon the glistening body of the snake, and as the mighty folds encircled her as well as her offspring, she made no effort to escape, but instead grasped the writhing body in a futile effort to tear it from her screaming balu.

Tarzan knew all too well how deep-rooted was Teeka's terror of Histah. He scarce could believe the testimony of his own eyes then, when they told him that she had voluntarily rushed into that deadly embrace. Nor was Teeka's innate dread of the monster much greater than Tarzan's own. Never, willingly, had he touched a snake. Why, he could not say, for he would admit fear of nothing; nor was it fear, but rather an inherent repulsion bequeathed to him by many generations of civilized ancestors, and back of them, perhaps, by countless myriads of such as Teeka, in the breasts of each of which had lurked the same nameless terror of the slimy reptile.

Yet Tarzan did not hesitate more than had Teeka, but leaped upon Histah with all the speed and impetuosity that he would have shown had he been springing upon Bara, the deer, to make a kill for food. Thus beset the snake writhed and twisted horribly; but not for an instant did it loose its hold upon any of its intended victims, for it had included the ape-man in its cold embrace the minute that he had fallen upon it.

Still clinging to the tree, the mighty reptile held the three as though they had been without weight, the while it sought to crush the life from them. Tarzan had drawn his knife and this he now plunged rapidly into the body of the enemy; but the encircling folds promised to sap his life before he had inflicted a death wound upon the snake. Yet on he fought, nor once did he seek to escape the horrid death that confronted him--his sole aim was to slay Histah and thus free Teeka and her balu.

The great, wide-gaping jaws of the snake turned and hovered above him. The elastic maw, which could accommodate a rabbit or a horned buck with equal facility, yawned for him; but Histah, in turning his attention upon the ape-man, brought his head within reach of Tarzan's blade. Instantly a brown hand leaped forth and seized the mottled neck, and another drove the heavy hunting knife to the hilt into the little brain.

Convulsively Histah shuddered and relaxed, tensed and relaxed again, whipping and striking with his great body; but no longer sentient or sensible. Histah was dead, but in his death throes he might easily dispatch a dozen apes or men.

Quickly Tarzan seized Teeka and dragged her from the loosened embrace, dropping her to the ground beneath, then he extricated the balu and tossed it to its mother. Still Histah whipped about, clinging to the ape-man; but after a dozen efforts Tarzan succeeded in wriggling free and leaping to the ground out of range of the mighty battering of the dying snake.

A circle of apes surrounded the scene of the battle; but the moment that Tarzan broke safely from the enemy they turned silently away to resume their interrupted feeding, and Teeka turned with them, apparently forgetful of all but her balu and the fact that when the interruption had occurred she just had discovered an ingeniously hidden nest containing three perfectly good eggs.

Tarzan, equally indifferent to a battle that was over, merely cast a parting glance at the still writhing body of Histah and wandered off toward the little pool which served to water the tribe at this point. Strangely, he did not give the victory cry over the vanquished Histah. Why, he could not have told you, other than that to him Histah was not an animal. He differed in some peculiar way from the other denizens of the jungle. Tarzan only knew that he hated him.

At the pool Tarzan drank his fill and lay stretched upon the soft grass beneath the shade of a tree. His mind reverted to the battle with Histah, the snake. It seemed strange to him that Teeka should have placed herself within the folds of the horrid monster. Why had she done it? Why, indeed, had he? Teeka did not belong to him, nor did Teeka's balu. They were both Taug's. Why then had he done this thing? Histah was not food for him when he was dead. There seemed to Tarzan, now that he gave the matter thought, no reason in the world why he should have done the thing he did, and presently it occurred to him that he had acted almost involuntarily, just as he had acted when he had released the old Gomangani the previous evening.

What made him do such things? Somebody more powerful than he must force him to act at times. "All-powerful," thought Tarzan. "The little bugs say that God is all-powerful. It must be that God made me do these things, for I never did them by myself. It was God who made Teeka rush upon Histah. Teeka would never go near Histah of her own volition. It was God who held my knife from the throat of the old Gomangani. God accomplishes strange things for he is 'all-powerful.' I cannot see Him; but I know that it must be God who does these things. No Mangani, no Gomangani, no Tarmangani could do them."

And the flowers--who made them grow? Ah, now it was all explained--the flowers, the trees, the moon, the sun, himself, every living creature in the jungle--they were all made by God out of nothing.

And what was God? What did God look like? Of that he had no conception; but he was sure that everything that was good came from God. His good act in refraining from slaying the poor, defenseless old Gomangani; Teeka's love that had hurled her into the embrace of death; his own loyalty to Teeka which had jeopardized his life that she might live. The flowers and the trees were good and beautiful. God had made them. He made the other creatures, too, that each might have food upon which to live. He had made Sheeta, the panther, with his beautiful coat; and Numa, the lion, with his noble head and his shaggy mane. He had made Bara, the deer, lovely and graceful.

Yes, Tarzan had found God, and he spent the whole day in attributing to Him all of the good and beautiful things of nature; but there was one thing which troubled him. He could not quite reconcile it to his conception of his new-found God.

Who made Histah, the snake?