

JUNGLE HAWK SERIES

1. Gold City of Sheba



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GOLD CITY OF SHEBA

by

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SUMMARY

In this thrilling installment of The Jungle Hawk series, the enigmatic Hawk, a fearless jungle adventurer, hears the delirious words of a dying man. He mentioned tales of a lost valley teeming with prehistoric creatures, savage tribes, and a shadowy group of white survivors. With his keen instincts and unparalleled agility, he embarks on a perilous journey into the heart of Africa, armed with nothing but his wits, a bow, and a knife.

The lost valley is no myth, it's a world forgotten by time. Towering cliffs guard its secrets, and every shadow hides a new peril. From battling dinosaurs to navigating the tensions of tribal rivalries, the Hawk must rely on his unmatched jungle expertise. But this isn't just a fight for survival, it's a quest to uncover the truth about the white captives and the legend of the Gold Queen, whose fractured kingdom hides both untold riches and devastating danger. As the Hawk ventures deeper, he discovers that betrayal, loyalty, and power struggles among the valley's inhabitants are as treacherous as the physical threats. Allies emerge in unlikely places, but so do enemies who would stop at nothing to ensure the valley's secrets remain buried.

With suspense building at every turn, the Hawk's journey tests the limits of courage and humanity. Will he save the captives, or will the valley consume them all? And what is the true cost of tampering with a land untouched by civilization? Dive into The Gold City of Sheba for an adventure brimming with intrigue, danger, and the primal allure of the unknown.

EXTRACT

The Hawk jerked back to reality when a bowl of ice-cold water was poured over his bloodied forehead. He blinked his eyes, saw the torchlights burning around him. With a groan, he straightened up and looked directly into the woman's face who was sitting on a bench in front of him. Her face, long blonde hair, the glittering crown, swayed strangely before his eyes.

He was pulled upright roughly under his arms. Someone mumbled in an incomprehensible language. Slowly, his mind cleared. His eyes focused on objects again.

He looked around him. On either side stood a group of warriors with lowered spears. Diagonally in front of him stood a tall, armed warrior talking to the woman. A few feet from him was the bloodied Rakoe, his eyes worriedly directed at the Hawk. When he saw that the Hawk was looking at him, he smiled reassuringly.

The Hawk looked at the woman... and gasped for breath.

He had never seen so much beauty in one person. Blonde hair hung from her proud head. She was dressed in a long, white dress that shimmered as if in the numerous torchlights.

Her fine, white features had a feminine softness in the flickering light of the torches that made the Jungle Man's heart beat faster.

His lips murmured. "So this is Sheba..."

1. GOLD CITY OF SHEBA

Chapter 1 THE GOLD MEN

A community of forest parrots, which had been idly rustling among the broad leaves of the jungle giant, scream in terror and flee headlong with colorful feathers through the tangled branches when the human figure appears here among them and plants his two bare feet firmly on the rough bark of the thick branch.

Behind him, the tough baboon rope slowly moves back to its natural place in the tangle of branch and parasite plant. Colorful jungle flowers proudly cup their tender splendor upwards above the shadowy footpath that is almost invisible from up here, their slender roots struck deep into the jungle giants.

A troop of blue monkeys chatter panicky at the sudden disturbance and supple branches come alive under the weight of their fleeing bodies.

The young man with his sun-tanned skin smiles. His snow-white teeth gleam in the sun's faint ray that shyly slides down through an opening in the dense vines.

A strong hand sweeps a pert blonde quiff back over his broad forehead. He loosens the knitted pigskin thong at the back of his head, quickly catches the lush hair, and ties it back at his neck.

Then his hand wanders to the long hunting knife in its sheath along his lean hips. He shifts the bamboo bow on his back and lets his piercing blue eyes fall downwards.

As agile as a monkey, the muscular young man descends from branch to branch towards the ground. Above the jungle path, he hesitates on a sturdy tree branch, one hand clasping a thick ivy plant. His other hand strokes again over the hunting knife along his leopard skin loincloth. But no scent of game is picked up by his sensitive nostrils.

He wipes the sweat from his forehead. He is hungry and slightly tired after the hours-long shift he has completed since early morning. His innate instinct tells him that he can be at most an hour from his goal.

Those sharp blue eyes wander further, searching among the maze of branch and ivy, until he sees the wild grapevine. He grabs the baboon rope and, supported by hand and foot, he scurries closer.

For ten minutes he eats the delicious blue fruit with its slightly pulpy taste. He wipes his mouth clean and resumes his hasty trek through the jungle giants.

Once he almost collides with a black leopard that was lying asleep in a thick crotch. With a lightning jerk of his body, however, he brushes past the rare animal that flies up startled and growling.

Again, that peculiar smile appears on the youthful face with its strong features. Symmetrical muscles roll in swarms under the brown-tanned skin. It is grab and swing, jump and dive. Then he runs nimbly along a tree branch again and sails daringly to a liana, steps far, as only a jungle monkey can do.

He laughs aloud with exuberance. This is life! Not the false appearance of civilization, not the confinement of block upon block of concrete structures, which make people into ants like anthills. Not the awfulness of bored people. Not hatred and envy, thwarting and constant attachment to things that make man a slave.

Because here, man is free in a different way. Here there are no visible boundaries. Here one lives without attachments, here you laugh when you want and cry when you want.

The man stops his monkey journey through the jungle giants. His eyes graze over the clearing in front of him. He sees the dilapidated house of clay and branches, and homesickness slowly passes before his eyes. The strong jaws clamp together.

Then he hastily descends with a vine, his eyes and ears pricked.

He steps through the last undergrowth into the clearing. The tropical sun closes pleasurably around his half-naked body.

“Toto!” His single cry sounds loudly through the jungle. But no voice reaches his ears.

Doubt causes the young man to stop dead in his tracks and look around. He suddenly no longer trusts the peace. At the solitary pile of earth to the left, the vegetation has been cut away. Forest orchids lie all around on the pile.

The young man sighs. With measured steps, his hand on the hunting knife, he walks forward.

It has been six months since he was last here, where he spent a large part of his eventful childhood.

Beyond the dilapidated building is a larger one, just as ramshackle, with a wooden tower that leans askew against the green of the jungle, as if it could fall over at any moment.

A light groan makes him stop cautiously. The blue eyes search over the surroundings. The groan is repeated and with anxious heart, he runs to the dilapidated building, which long ago was his and his father's dwelling.

He stops in the doorway. A trail of blood leads from outside the building inwards. Again the groaning comes, now much louder.

The young man jumps into the room. In front of him, stretched out in full length, lies the glistening body of a native. A horrible wound gapes in his shoulder.

"Toto!" Again only the single word escapes the white man's lips. He hurries closer and bends beside the elderly native with his gray head. He turns the black body onto its back, listens for several moments to the labored breathing and then quickly runs out of the building in long strides. Outside, he plucks a broad leaf from a bush, folds it like a cup and sets off towards the broad stream of water nearby.

By the next afternoon, Toto had recovered so much that he can tell his story to the young man.

"My Basie, it was when I bent down to put the flowers on Mpingo's grave, that they caught me from behind. Tall men with light brown skins, almost like yours, but also not quite. They carried spears that looked different from ours."

The young man listens attentively. Toto's reference to Mpingo brings the homesickness back into his heart because Mpingo, or Good Heart, was the name that the natives here had given his father.

"There were only a few of them. Before I could do anything, they caught me with the spear, right here." With a groan, he points to his shoulder.

"Then I knew nothing more. I also don't know how I got here, where the little boss found me."

"And is everything else still alright, Toto?" he asks. The native nods affirmatively and feels half-guilty that he has to sit while the big son of Mpingo talks to him. He tries to sit up straighter, but groans loudly from the pain.

A fine smile of understanding appears on the young man's face.

"I'm going to call the Matonga, Toto. Maybe they noticed something about these strange people." He walks to the drum that is to one side of the building. Strangely, although he noticed the large sandal tracks of the strangers outside and inside the buildings, they apparently removed nothing. He laughs grimly. Actually, there is nothing to remove here either.

For minutes his hands drum nimbly on the buffalo skin drum's flat side. The sounds spread through the dense Congo forests to the furthest Matonga village.

After he has completed the message, he waits a while and then repeats it. "Jungle Hawk wants to speak to the Matonga chiefs tonight at Mpingo's place."

He completes the message and runs back to Toto. Both listen closely and after a while, they hear the first answer carried on the wings of the wind. "The Matonga have heard. They are coming to their great chief." The Jungle Hawk looks at Toto with a smile, who is staring at him with open admiration in his bloodshot eyes.

"And has everything else gone well here at Kala?" The Jungle Hawk's father, a missionary of the Dutch Reformed Church from distant South Africa, called this place, where he performed his work with unsurpassed dedication and love, Kala. It actually means "blessing" in the Matonga dialect.

"Yes, my little boss." The weathered teeth are bared in a smile. "And the Matonga still come here regularly every seventh day for the service."

"Why are the buildings so dilapidated, Toto?"

"It's the big storm that was here, little boss."

The young man thinks back to the days, more than twelve years ago, when his father and mother and he, then barely eight years old, came to this secluded part of the mighty Congo forest for the first time. After his father, who had a thorough medical knowledge, had brought the previous chief of the Matonga's son through a fever attack, he and his family were virtually carried on the hands by the Matonga.

His honesty, fairness, and love for his work soon made his stately father a favorite among the Matonga, while they idolized his mother.

The Jungle Hawk was sent to a boys' school in South Africa and could only visit his parents during vacations. He passed standard eight, and when he landed here during that December vacation, he found both his parents seriously ill after they had accidentally eaten a poisonous mushroom. Two days later, they died and both were buried by the Matonga in a solemn and ceremonial manner.

But his father's mission work continued. When the Jungle Hawk was there, he continued it, and when he wandered around on one of his numerous adventurous rambles through the jungles, Toto did it. Toto, who had no child or kith and who lived alone at the mission station.

The young man feels for the knitted sheepskin pouch at his side, a gift from his parents, opens it and takes out the small Bible. He opens it and looks at the photo of his parents that is glued into it. The leather pouch is waterproof.

Absently, he looks up. Against the snow-white clouds, a few black dots move in a circle. He knows that they are birds of prey.

"We must repair these buildings, Toto. We can't continue the great work like this," he says suddenly."

Toto nods in agreement.

By this time, the tropical sun had already disappeared behind the jungle canopy and most of the open area was shrouded in shadow.

"I'm just going to look for some meat for us, Toto," says the young man. He bends down and carries the native into the old dwelling. With care, he bolts the rickety door, after he has closed the bamboo shutters in front of the windows.

Outside, he sniffs the sweet, musty smell of decaying wood and shrubs, shifts the bamboo bow correctly on his back, feels whether he still has enough arrows in his quiver, and hurries quickly towards the river.

He clammers up a sloping tree trunk and swings leisurely through the trees. His eyes and ears search for the shy step of a wild antelope. Above a jungle path, which actually forms a kind of tunnel, he crouches down on a low branch. He knows that the stream flows only a hundred feet further.

Patiently, he begins his vigil. The minutes drag slowly by. The Jungle Hawk knows that the sun is already drawing water. While he sits crouched on the branch, his thoughts wander to the assault on old Toto

and the strangers he had spoken of.

He feels slightly disturbed because he, who believed that he knew the jungle and its inhabitants fairly well, cannot place these people. As far as he knows, only natives with pitch-black skin live in this part of the Congo forest. To the northwest is the pygmy area. Further to the north, he does not know the forest so well. However, he has often heard the natives talk about the mountains and valleys of the Gold Queen in the far north.

In fact, they could not tell him much about this, except that a strange race lives there, who at one time periodically carried out raids and especially kidnapped young natives.

Because he has never been able to find irrefutable evidence for the truth of this, he has rejected it in the past as flights of fancy.

The supple wild antelope is already almost under the hunter when he startles out of his reverie and sees his prey. The fine ears move suspiciously back and forth, the sensitive nostrils trembling to pick up the slightest suspicious smell that could lead to a hasty retreat.

The Hawk shifts slightly. At that moment, the gray antelope freezes in its hooves, lifts its head even higher and sniffs audibly. The next moment it is full of living energy, as it jumps away, but it is already too late.

A speckled streak slides out of the shrubbery and lands gracefully on the animal's back. Cruel claws find foothold on the withers on both sides and tearing fangs sink deep into the neck.

The antelope staggers, frantically trying to stay on its feet, gaffs backwards with its horns, shakes its body to throw off the attacker and bellows in terror.

Then the antelope stumbles against the ivy and shrubbery that surrounds the game trail like a wall and falls down. The leopard's jaws find the throat, long fangs disappear deep inside it, and blood spurts in an arc from the arteries.

The antelope bellows in death agony, kicking wildly with its sharp hooves, but it has already lost the battle against its arch-enemy.

In less than two minutes, everything is over.

The speckled leopard plants its forelegs over the dying antelope's neck and lets its green eyes wander into the path.

The Jungle Hawk has already decided that this wild antelope is his. He has waited long for him and he knows that Toto's stomach is rumbling just like his. Besides, the first Matonga should arrive at Kala soon and then he must already be back.

A slender arrow fits securely into the string of the bamboo bow. For a moment, the Woodsman takes aim, then the gut string twangs and the feathered arrow leaves the bowstring with astonishing speed.

The leopard's head jerks up when it hears the sound, and it roars furiously at the sudden pain in its shoulder. Shortly thereafter, it also dies because the arrow has found its heart.

It was already deep dusk when the son of Mpingo and Toto finished their supper. A large fire burned merrily in the open space, about two morgen in size, a little distance from Mpingo's house. The dry wood crackled invitingly and gave the muscular form of the young man, who was dragging heavy, dry stumps closer, a reddish-brown hue.

The Jungle Man stood up and looked at Toto, who was sitting on the porch step. "The Matonga should be here any minute now, Toto. They should just stay here for the night and sleep in the little church."

Toto nodded in agreement and stared into the heavy twilight. Under the massive jungle giants, barely fifty feet to his left, it was already pitch dark. Far away sounded the deep roar of a lion that was out hunting.

He saw how the big son of Mpingo, his beloved master, suddenly turned his head sideways, as if listening intently. When the white son turned to him, there was a light excitement in his voice.

"They're coming, Toto! The Matonga are coming to Mpingo's place." Toto, who now had considerably less trouble from the injured shoulder, pricked his practiced ears and then shook his head.

"I don't hear anything, little boss." He looked admiringly at the half-naked white man. "My ears are keen, but not like the Jungle Hawk's." The Jungle Man laughed teasingly. "And you have spent your whole life in the jungle, Toto."

Toto sounded embarrassed. "But I didn't grow up in the trees like a monkey."

Their conversation was interrupted when about fifty armed and adorned natives emerged from the dense jungle, the chiefs of the various Matonga villages and their bodyguards. As is the custom when they are