

JUNGLE HAWK SERIES

6. Revolution in the Jungle



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REVOLUTION IN THE JUNGLE

by

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SUMMARY

In the depths of the untamed Belgian Congo, chaos and rebellion ignite a deadly game of survival. When Poponoulis, a steadfast Greek shopkeeper, and his family are attacked by vengeful natives, the Jungle Hawk, a formidable hero of the wild, is thrust into a battle against an unseen foe. As villages are engulfed in flames and innocents flee for their lives, the Hawk unravels a sinister plot orchestrated by foreign agitators seeking to plunge the region into turmoil.

Amidst the carnage, the Hawk encounters Lena Landman, a determined yet vulnerable woman fleeing for her life through the jungle. Meanwhile, Colonel Fleerackers and his team of security officers fall prey to a mysterious force at a secluded mission station. Guided by relentless determination and unparalleled jungle prowess, the Hawk braves a lion-man and a torrent of enemies to uncover a conspiracy that threatens to consume everything he holds dear.

This gripping adventure crescendos in a daring assault on the mission station, an epic clash where survival is uncertain, loyalties are tested, and heroes are forged in the fires of revolution. With danger lurking in every shadow, the Jungle Hawk must rely on wits, courage, and unexpected allies to restore peace to a world on the brink of chaos.

EXTRACT

The pliers click and a wire breaks in two. Again the pliers click. Again and again until the hole is big enough to let the Jungle Hawk through. On his heels follow Mbiza and the Matonga warriors. They stand in the dark shadows within the fence. Electric lights shine deeper into the terrain, but here it is dark. Far to the right, two guards are in a deep conversation with each other. To the left is another one. The Hawk whispers something. Mbiza and a warrior then slip away along the wire. He himself slips in the opposite direction. The rest hide in the dark shadows of the trees. Not one of the three guards ever knew what hit them. One moment they had still stood there unsuspecting and the next moment they had slumped lifelessly.

The group goes deeper into the terrain. In strategic places, the Hawk leaves behind some of the Matonga, with the instruction to shoot and kill if it should become necessary.

However, he, Mbiza, and ten others stay together. They approach the first buildings from which a faint light shines. A white man comes out of the door, right in their direction. The Hawk whispers an instruction softly. The Matonga move back slightly.

The white man is in front of him, but fortunately does not see them in the shadows. The Hawk grabs him and gives him a hard blow. With a broken jaw, the man collapses unconscious. Hastily, he is dragged into the shadows.

6. REVOLUTION IN THE JUNGLE

Chapter 1

HERE EVIL IS BREWING

“Here nasty things are brewing. Here death can strike tonight or tomorrow, in a week or maybe even within an hour. No white person is safe here anymore. We will have to fight or move. These are the only two alternatives.” The broad-shouldered, middle-aged Greek slams his fist on the battered counter in front of him. His dark eyes glow in those of the Jungle Hawk, who is looking at him inquisitively.

Poponoulis, the Greek, points to the inside of his spacious shop, in the heart of the tropical jungle. “For fifteen years we have toiled here, me, my wife and my three sons. Here we have worked, here we have anchored and here our earthly means have increased with the coming and going of the years. Now...” He shrugs his shoulders, while his eyes wander towards the door, along the two-track road, to where he sees about five natives coming closer.

“Now I don’t know anymore. Nobody knows anymore. The feeling of security is gone. It simply does not exist anymore. Who can blame us? The whole of Africa is a pressure cooker, a festering sore, a powder keg. The whole world is seemingly against us few whites here. The East hates and despises us, sees us as a stumbling block in their path, and the West wants to surpass the East in its own game.”

The Greek wipes the sweat from his sunburnt forehead. “Bring us something cold,” he orders one of his two sons, who are just standing and listening wordlessly to their father. However, their eyes are admiringly focused on the strong figure of the half-naked Jungle Hawk. The Jungle Man suddenly feels deeply sorry for the Greek in front of him. Poponoulis was a great friend of his deceased missionary parents. Poponoulis, the big-hearted one, the man of integrity, the man who came to the Belgian Congo almost penniless and made an honest, small fortune for himself here.

Meanwhile, the five natives had reached the shop. Under the awning they stop still, while sly eyes wander inside. Then they fall into a whispered conversation.

The Jungle Hawk’s eyes narrow slightly as he sees the point of a

machete sticking out of a bag carried by one of the natives. A quick assessment with his eyes assures him that the others are similarly armed.

He looks at Poponoulis and notices the significant expression on his face. The Greek leans slightly forward. "Did you see the machete?"

The Hawk nods. "But that doesn't necessarily mean anything."

"Exactly right," continues Poponoulis. "But who can say when the day will come that they will indeed use it and suddenly use it?"

He takes the cold drinks from his son and hands a glass to the Hawk.

"But we are ready for them, my friend. Here by my hand is a double-barrelled shotgun and in my pants pocket is a German Luger. My sons and my wife are also constantly armed. If there are natives in the shop, one of us is always watching them, especially for the last month or so. They won't easily catch us unprepared, at least."

He suddenly turns to his son. "What time is it now? Shouldn't your mother and Alexander have been back already?" He indicates to the Hawk that they left in the truck to go and get fresh supplies for the shop.

"Impossible, Father," his son replies after first checking his watch.

"They should still be at least an hour and a half away."

"By the way, haven't a group of South Africans passed through here recently? About a week or two ago? I'm actually on their trail..."

"South Africans? Oh yes, of course. Instead of telling you about them long ago, but this brewing evil has completely taken over me as well. It keeps me awake long into the night." Poponoulis laughs apologetically and continues. "Yes, there were about six of them, together with a group of natives. They apparently want to make a film or something about jungle life..."

"Did they perhaps mention where they were heading?"

Poponoulis thinks for a moment, his attention divided between the natives in front of the shop, his wife and son somewhere on the road through the jungle, and the Jungle Hawk's question.

"Let me see now... oh yes, they spoke of the Mountains of the Moon."

"We warned them about the dangers of the jungle and the natives, but they just laughed," says one of Poponoulis' sons in between.

"I see." The Hawk stares thoughtfully ahead of him. "How long ago was that?"

“About ten days ago. They bought supplies here and drove on the same day. They had a truck and three Land Rovers with them.”

“Ten days! Then they could be very far by now...” The Hawk sighs slightly dejectedly. He would like to get in touch with his compatriots. Maybe he could find one among them who knows Lena Landman or her father. He thinks back to those days, several years ago, when he rescued Lena, her father and two other South Africans from the clutches of the fanatical Basan, in the Valley of Sheba. After that, she was nearly sacrificed to a barbaric Octopus god by the dreaded Octopus. (read Gold City of Sheba and The Octopus). Fortunately, he was able to save her in time then too... Lena Landman, the girl for whom he had developed a special affection at the time, but whom he had never seen again since those days.

Poponoulis, full of his own worries, brings the conversation back to the topic he had originally raised.

“And what do you think of the conditions here in the Congo, Deon?” he asks the Jungle Hawk.

The Hawk takes his bamboo bow from his back and lays it down next to him on the counter. He combs his lush hair back with his fingers and then says. “The time is ripe for an eruption. There are agitators and instigators from overseas everywhere. They are stirring up unrest and only talking about bloodshed. The cries of freedom and Africa for the Africans, have a sweet allure for them...”

“And it seems to me that the colonial powers are playing right into their hands,” whispers Poponoulis, his eyes now again on the natives who still have not made any attempt to come inside.

Suddenly his eyes narrow. One of the natives is waving a white cloth above his head.

“Something underhanded is definitely going on out there,” says Poponoulis softly. “I think the trouble has just come. And my wife and one son should now be on their way back with the supplies they went to fetch...” He is suddenly very worried.

At that moment, the five natives decide to walk into the shop. They look suspiciously at the Hawk as they walk in.

Seemingly casually, but inwardly ready to act at any moment, the Hawk leans forward on the counter. Poponoulis asks in Ki-Swahili what the

natives want. The black Congolese each stand a few steps away from the other. One turns around and suddenly walks back outside.

Near Poponoulis, his two sons are busy behind the counter. Outside, a swarm of birds are making a racket. A bunch of pesky flies swirl around the Jungle Hawk.

The Jungle Man lightly plays with the string of his bow, his ears now sharply pricked. Trouble is brewing here, he feels it intuitively. There must be more natives nearby, because these five are just spies.

He suddenly turns around and looks the nearest native straight in the eye. Hastily, the native looks away. Under his arm he holds a rather long object, wrapped in a piece of sack.

The Hawk starts to move towards the door, his bamboo bow back behind his back. In front of him is a muscular native, who is tall and solidly built. His black eyes rest challenging on the white man in front of him. His feet are planted wide and a half smile plays on his face. He has the piece of sack by one end.

One of Poponoulis's sons ducks behind the counter. The broad-shouldered Greek lets his hand disappear into his pants pocket, where he touches the cold handle of his Luger.

Then things happen very quickly. Out of the corner of his eye, the Hawk sees a group of natives coming into view through the window, from the jungle direction. The natives are all covered in war paint. In front of him, the native suddenly acts too. The sack is raised and swung in a chopping motion towards the Hawk. Behind the Hawk, Poponoulis calls out a warning.

But it was superfluous. Faster than the eye can almost see, the Jungle Hawk acts. He dodges the murderous blow of the razor-sharp machete in the sack, trips the native over and charges at a second one, who is preparing to attack one of Poponoulis' sons. The big Luger of Poponoulis barks deafeningly in the confined space of the shop and one native collapses with a sigh, a round hole through his head.

Total chaos reigns afterwards. Machetes move with murderous chopping motions through the air. A stand with bicycles, leather goods and other wares crashes down with a clatter. The Hawk wrestles with another native. Several pistol shots thunder in the shop and two more natives sag to the ground in their tracks.

Outside, a barbaric war cry rises up. Black bodies are moving everywhere now. Like ants they come closer, bloodthirsty, with swinging spears, machetes and guns.

Then the Hawk throws his opponent backwards. Immediately he grabs him by his feet and hurls him out through the shop door. Suddenly there is no more enemy in the shop, but outside the world is trembling with blood-curdling screams.

“Quick! The plates in front of the windows! Get the guns and close the door. Open with the shooting holes,” bellows the deep voice of Poponoulis. His sons dart around like wild hares to carry out their father’s orders as quickly as possible.

Then a dark mass of natives is in front of the door. Pistols and rifles crack and bare black bodies collapse with almost every shot. Blood spurts and spatters into the shop. Wounded people groan everywhere, but no one hears it above the war cries.

On one side, a steel plate closes in front of the large window. Seconds later, the second window is also covered. Only the door remains, where the natives are already clustering together like furious bees. Several spears are hurled inwards, but fortunately they still fall harmlessly. A burning piece of wood follows shortly afterwards and it hits a pile of material, which ignites almost immediately. The Hawk grabs the piece of wood and hurls it against a native who is about to burst through the door. He screams out a long and horrible sound. Flaming material follows the piece of wood. The scorching heat drives the foremost natives back and then the door closes.

“Thank God the building is made of stone, but the house isn’t!” Poponoulis calls to one of his sons and storms towards the door, which gives access to the few rooms next to the shop.

He tears open the door and storms into the bedroom. A heavy spear hits him in his chest and makes him stagger back. His son grabs him before he falls. Then they are back in the shop. Through the open door, a native storms into the shop, but stops in his tracks as an arrow from the Hawk’s bow hits him in his throat.

More natives are visible through the open door. Several firearms bark heavily almost at the same time. The natives scatter and hide behind the bed and cupboards, wherever they can find a spot to shelter from the

deadly hail of bullets.

One of Poponoulis's sons lets go of his father and slams the inner door shut. He lets the heavy crossbar down into position and kneels down again next to his father. The Hawk is there now too. Poponoulis's breath comes heavily and panting. Blood streams from the wound in which the spear point is still stuck.

"Hold your father so that we can get the spear out," orders the Hawk. The son obeys immediately, his face ashen. Behind them, gunshots crack where Poponoulis's eldest son, Cicero, is firing away through one of the shooting holes at every native he can see.

The muscles bulge out on the Hawk's arms as he grabs the spear's shaft. Carefully he pulls. Poponoulis grinds his teeth and groans in pain.

"We will have to cut loose the barbs. Quickly get antiseptic and bandages!" There is authority in the Hawk's voice. The grown son, fearing that his father will die, reacts quickly. After this the painful operation begins. Poponoulis, despite his toughness, writhes and whimpers like a small child, as the Hawk's hunting knife cuts open the flesh around the spear's barbs. Then the Hawk pulls out the spear and throws it aside. Skilled, sunburnt fingers work with the wound and rinse it out with antiseptic. It is immediately soaked by the red, sticky blood, which grows into a puddle on the floor.

Dumb and pale from shock, the son carries out the Hawk's slightest wish. Roll after roll of bandage is wrapped around the wound and finally the Hawk is finished.

"Will father live?" asks the son, trembling and scared. The shots at the shooting hole have stopped. Cicero is standing behind the Hawk, his eyes wide on the blood-soaked bandage around his father's hairy chest. "Let's hope he survives. Your father is luckily strong and tough, but the wound is serious. We must try to get him to a doctor as soon as possible," says the Hawk.

Cicero kneels next to his father. He takes the limp hand in his, leans forward and kisses it. He looks at the Hawk. "Then we must get out of here. Immediately!" His eyes are big, wild and full of hatred as he listens to the noise of the natives outside. His knuckles, which are clenching tighter around the rifle again, appear white and bloodless. A heavy blow makes the outside door tremble. Pieces of plaster break

away from the frame and splatter over the floor. Again there is the thud, like a heavy object banging against the door. This time a hinge comes loose and the door gives a few inches. A cheer rises immediately from outside. Cicero fires three shots in quick succession through the heavy wooden door. Someone outside groans, apparently badly wounded. At the side door, which gives access to the house, everything has gone silent. The Hawk hurries there and listens with his ear at the keyhole. A sharp smell, of smoke, hits his nostrils. It also begins to seep into the shop from under and above the door.

“We are doomed,” whispers Poponoulis hoarsely. But no one hears his words above the noise. He coughs and bites on his teeth as the pain shoots through his whole body again. He thinks of his wife and his one son who are now out there with her somewhere. Somewhere in the jungle, possibly already in the face of death. Why did he, Poponoulis, not listen to the small warning voice within him? The little voice that has been warning for more than a year now that he should get away from here.

He looks at the supplies in the shop and at his sons, who are both standing and shooting at the shooting holes. Also at the Hawk who is now shooting with a rifle.

“It’s over,” he thinks. Then he sits upright and grinds his teeth against the hot pain. It cannot be, he thinks. There must be a way out somewhere. He must see his wife just one more time. Exhausted, he collapses. His chest feels raw and he gasps for breath. The smoke burns his lungs. His tired eyes burn like hot coals of consuming fire. Where is the smoke coming from and why aren’t they putting out the flames? Poponoulis begins to rave.

On one side, the Hawk calls out loudly. “They’re falling back!”

“We must get out of here immediately,” screams Cicero.

“I’ll get father,” says Cicero’s younger brother.

“They’re away from the door. Now is our chance.” Cicero fires a hasty shot after a fleeing native. Through the small shooting hole he sees corpses everywhere. A few wounded people are struggling, stumbling towards the jungle.

More and more dark, suffocating smoke swirls into the shop. On the other side of the side door, the red flames are dancing wildly and