

AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF THE UNTAMED JUNGLE, MONA SAW THE THIN VENEER OF HER LOVE EXPOSED TO FORCES SHE COULDN'T CONTROL! HER MIND KEPT TELLING HER THAT SHE WAS PLEDGED TO DON BUT HER HEART KEPT YEARNING FOR THE STRANGER WHO TAUGHT HER THE MEANING OF...

UNTAMED Love

FRANK RABBIT



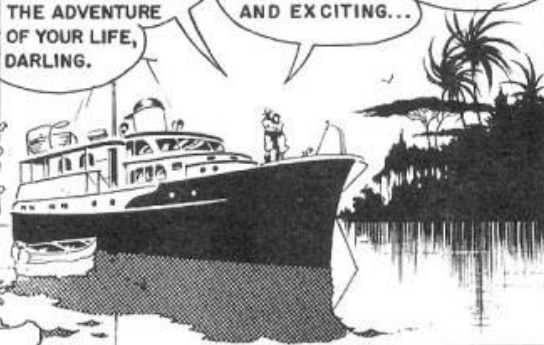
When Don first suggested I accompany him on a hunting safari in Africa, I was luke warm to the idea, but now that we had reached the dark continent, I felt a mounting excitement engulf me...

I KNEW YOU'D LOVE IT ONCE WE ARRIVED HERE. YOU'RE IN FOR THE ADVENTURE OF YOUR LIFE, DARLING.

I ALWAYS CONSIDERED MYSELF A HOT HOUSE FLOWER, DON. BUT THIS -- IT SEEMS SO MYSTERIOUS AND EXCITING...

YOU'RE JUST A BEAUTIFUL ANIMAL AT HEART, MY DARLING. THAT'S WHY I WANT YOU FOR MY VERY OWN.

IS THAT WHY YOU WANT TO MARRY ME, DON? BECAUSE I'M JUST ANOTHER ANIMAL YOU'VE CAPTURED?



BUT YOU'LL BE THE MOST WONDERFUL CATCH I'VE EVER MADE. I LOVE YOU, MONA-- LOVE YOU VERY MUCH.

I LIKE THE WAY YOU SAY THAT DON---THAT'S WHY I'M GOING TO BE MRS. DON LONGWORTH II!



NOTHING MATTERS WITHOUT YOU, DARLING --- NOTHING!



SORRY TO INTERRUPT, SIS-- BUT THE TENDER IS READY TO TAKE US ASHORE.

RIGHT WITH YOU CHARLIE!

DO I REALLY LOVE HIM--OR IS IT HIS MONEY THAT MADE ME SAY YES?



But as we neared the jungle vastness of Africa, qualms began to assail me once more. No-- it wasn't the hunting trip that bothered me . . .

I MUST STOP THINKING ABOUT IT. OF COURSE I LOVE HIM--OR I WOULDN'T HAVE CONSENTED TO MARRY HIM. I MUST BELIEVE THAT.



HERE WE ARE, DARLING--- AFRICA AT LAST!

WHERE'S THE GUIDE AND CARRIERS WHO WERE TO MEET US?





TRACY SAID HE'D MEET US AT THE FIRST CAMPING SITE LATER TODAY. HE'S SUPPOSED TO BE THE BEST AND HE'S ROUNDING UP EXPERIENCED CARRIERS FOR THE HUNT.

WELL-- WE'RE OFF!

It seemed that we walked endlessly that day, and when we finally made camp that night, I felt exhausted...



LISTEN TO THOSE ANIMALS HOWLING OUT THERE. IT SOUNDS EERIE!

WHERE THE DEVIL IS TRACY? HE SHOULD HAVE BEEN HERE BY NOW. THESE OTHER CARRIERS ARE NERVOUS ABOUT STAYING IN THE JUNGLE AND MAY RUN OUT ON US ANY MINUTE.



I NEVER SHOULD HAVE LISTENED TO HIM WHEN HE INSISTED WE MEET HERE. THEY TOLD ME HE WAS AN INDEPENDENT CUSS, BUT HE'S STILL WORKING FOR ME!

RELAX, DARLING. IF HE SAID HE'D BE HERE--HE WILL!



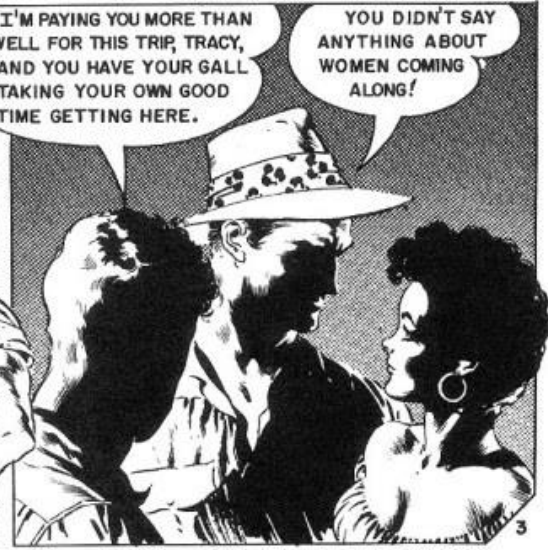
DID I HEAR MY NAME MENTIONED?

HUH?! WHO'S THAT?



BLAST IT, TRACY-- WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY SNEAKING UP ON ME? WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN?

JUST THOUGHT I'D SEE HOW CLOSE I COULD COME WITHOUT BEING DISCOVERED. YOU WOULDN'T MAKE A GOOD GUARD AGAINST MARAUDERS, LONGWORTH.



I'M PAYING YOU MORE THAN WELL FOR THIS TRIP, TRACY, AND YOU HAVE YOUR GALL TAKING YOUR OWN GOOD TIME GETTING HERE.

YOU DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING ABOUT WOMEN COMING ALONG!

THIS IS MY FIANCEE -- MISS MONA TRENT. MONA--THIS IS TRACY-- OUR GUIDE.

HELLO--- TRACY.

MISS TRENT ---IT'S A PLEASURE.

Maybe it was the firelight dancing on his handsome, rugged features-- his broad chest--those keen, gray eyes that seemed to look right through me--but I found my heart pounding violently when he touched my hand...

YOU DON'T SEEM VERY HAPPY ABOUT FEMALE COMPANY, TRACY.

FRANKLY---I'M NOT. A HUNTING PARTY IS NO PLACE FOR A WOMAN, BUT IT'S LONGWORTH'S PARTY--SO I GUESS IT'S UP TO HIM.

The following day, we started our trek deep in the interior, but try as I might, I couldn't tear my eyes away from Tracy...

Days passed ---days filled with all kinds of thoughts about Tracy---but he was rigidly polite on all occasions. We had only shot some small game and hadn't encountered anything worthwhile until one afternoon.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME? I'M LIKE A SCHOOLGIRL WITH HER FIRST CRUSH!

BWANA TRACY! KING--THERE! MANY!

GET YOUR GUN, LONGWORTH--- THEY'VE SPOTTED SOME LIONS!



LIONS! I'D LIKE TO COME ALONG, DON. I PROMISE TO STAY OUT OF THE WAY.

WELL---IT MIGHT BE RISKY. BUT IF YOU WANT TO---

STEP ON IT, MAN--THOSE LIONS AREN'T GOING TO WAIT FOR US.

The thrill of the hunt had completely engulfed me and I found myself eagerly pressing forward. But Don seemed completely unnerved and was assuming false bravado to cover it up...

GET THEM RIGHT BETWEEN THE EYES, LONGWORTH. THEY'RE MIGHTY NASTY WHEN THEY'RE WOUNDED.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME.



Tracy seemed so confident--so sure of himself--and his attitude dissipated any fear I might have had. In fact, I found myself eagerly pressing forward as if to be the first one to reach the animals...



But Don kept fingering his safety catch and wetting his lips. He was obviously frightened. When suddenly...

DON'T SHOOT YET, WE'RE NOT NEAR ENOUGH FOR A GOOD SHOT.



SHUT UP!

Before Tracy could stop him, Don had raised his rifle, took a perfunctory aim and fired. . .



WAIT!



PING!

YOU FOOL --- YOU ONLY WOUNDED HIM. THIS MEANS TROUBLE!



GET A BEAD ON HIM, MAN! HURRY! HE'S HEADING FOR MONA!



SHOOT, MAN -- SHOOT!

I--I C-CAN'T!

I could see those gaping, slaving jaws of the wounded beast and froze in terror in my tracks--unable to move--unable to scream...



GIVE ME THAT!



I-I THINK I'M GOING TO BE SICK!

YOU'RE ALL RIGHT NOW! BUT HE SURE WAS A BIG ONE AND OUT FOR REVENGE!

I'VE HAD A LITTLE MORE EXPERIENCE AT THESE THINGS THAN YOU, LONGWORTH, AND I EXPECT YOU TO LISTEN TO ME IF I'M GOING TO BE YOUR GUIDE. OR ELSE GET YOURSELF ANOTHER BOY. I DON'T WANT BLOOD ON MY HANDS.



WHY-THE INSOLENT PUP. HOW DARE HE TALK TO ME LIKE THAT? ARE YOU ALL RIGHT DEAR?



LUBAGO! GET BWANA! HURRY--ON THE DOUBLE!

I WAS ABOUT TO SHOOT, MONA--BUT HE-- HE WANTED TO SHOW OFF FOR YOUR BENEFIT I GUESS. YOU'RE SURE YOU'RE ALL RIGHT?



YES, DON.



Somehow, the touch of his hand made me crawl with revulsion and I quickly turned and began to follow Tracy back to camp...

MONA!
WAIT!

That night, as I sat alone with my confused, jumbled thoughts--thoughts that kept revolving around Tracy, I looked up and saw him standing there...



MIND IF I COME IN?

N-NO---!



I WOULDN'T JUDGE HIM TOO HARSHLY, MISS TRENT. EVERYBODY IS BOUND TO GET BUCK FEVER NOW AND THEN.

I KNOW-- AND PLEASE STOP BEING SO FORMAL TO ME, TRACY.



HE'LL BE ALL RIGHT BY THE MORNING--ALTHOUGH HE'S BEEN AT THAT BOTTLE ALL DAY. I'D HATE TO SEE YOU TWO BREAK IT UP!

I KNOW YOU WOULD, TRACY.



IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY? I KNOW--I KNOW-- I KNOW! DO YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU? DO YOU KNOW THAT?



OH, TRACY-- I TRIED TO FIGHT IT!

WHEN I SAW THAT LION COMING AT YOU, I KNEW THEN THAT NOTHING ELSE WOULD EVER MATTER IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO YOU.

I DO LOVE YOU, TRACY-- WITH ALL MY HEART!

A VERY PRETTY AND TOUCHING PICTURE INDEED!

DON!



PLAYING THE BIG HERO WITH MY GIRL, EH? SHOWING HER WHAT A BIG MAN YOU ARE! BUT WHAT'S A BIG MAN GOING TO DO WITH A BULLET IN HIM?

I'M DOING A LITTLE HUNTING MYSELF TONIGHT.

PUT THAT GUN DOWN!

SURE I WILL--- AFTER I GET RID OF YOU!

DON! DON'T--!



There was a loud explosion and a searing burn in my arm and then complete blackness...

Slowly, slowly--I came out of the bottomless pit to find Tracy kneeling next to me with a look in his eyes every woman recognizes...

IT WAS JUST A SUPERFICIAL WOUND, DARLING! HE'S GONE NOW--AND I GUESS PRETTY SORRY FOR WHAT HE DID. BUT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?

STAY WITH YOU, MY SWEET--- FOREVER AND EVER.



THE END 8