Bwana

by Mike Resnick

Ngai rules the universe from His throne atop Kirinyaga, which men call Mount Kenya, and on His sacred mountain the beasts of the field roam free and share the fertile green slopes with His chosen people.

To the first Maasai He gave a spear, and to the first Kamba He gave a bow, but to Gikuyu, who was the first Kikuyu, He gave a digging stick and told him to dwell on the slopes of Kirinyaga. The Kikuyu, said Ngai, could sacrifice goats to read their entrails, and they could sacrifice oxen to thank Him for sending the rains, but they must not molest any of His animals that dwelt on the mountain.

Then one day Gikuyu came to Him and said, "May we not have the bow and arrow, so that we may kill _fisi_, the hyena, in whose body dwell the vengeful souls of evil men?"

And Ngai said that no, the Kikuyu must not molest the hyena, for the hyena's purpose was clear: He had created it to feed upon the lions' leavings, and to take the sick and the elderly from the Kikuyu's _shambas_.

Time passed, and Gikuyu approached the summit of the mountain again. "May we not have the spear, so that we can kill the lion and the leopard, who prey upon our own animals?" he said.

And Ngai said that no, the Kikuyu could not kill the lion or the leopard, for He had created them to hold the population of the grasseaters in check, so that they would not overrun the Kikuyus' fields.

Finally Gikuyu climbed the mountain one last time and said, "We must at least be allowed to kill the elephant, who can destroy a year's harvest in a matter of minutes -- but how are we to do so when you have allowed us no weapons?"

Ngai thought long and hard, and finally spoke. "I have decreed that the Kikuyu should till the land, and I will not stain your hands with the blood of my other creatures," announced Ngai. "But because you are my chosen people, and are more important than the beasts that dwell upon my mountain, I will see to it that others come to kill these animals."

"What tribe will these hunters come from?" asked Gikuyu. "By what name will we know them?"

"You will know them by a single word," said Ngai.

When Ngai told him the word by which the hunters would be known, Gikuyu thought He had made a joke, and laughed aloud, and soon forgot the conversation.

But Ngai never jokes when He speaks to the Kikuyu.

* * * *

We have no elephants or lions or leopards on the Eutopian world of Kirinyaga, for all three species were extinct long before we emigrated from the Kenya that had become so alien to us. But we took the sleek impala, and the majestic kudu, and the mighty buffalo, and the swift gazelle -- and because we were mindful of Ngai's dictates, we took the hyena and the jackal and the vulture as well.

And because Kirinyaga was designed to be a Utopia in climate as well as in social organization, and because the land was more fertile than Kenya's, and because Maintenance made the orbital adjustments that assured us that the rains would always come on schedule, the wild animals of Kirinyaga, like the domestic animals and the people themselves, grew fruitful and multiplied.

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us. But we took the sleek impala, and the majestic kudu, and the mighty buffalo, and the swift gazelle --and because we were mindful of Ngai's dictates, we took the hyena and the jackal and the vulture as well. And because Kirinyaga was designed to be a Utopia in climate as well as in social organization, and because the land was more fertile than Kenya's, and because Maintenance made the orbital adjustments that assured us that the rains would always come on schedule, the wild animals of Kirinyaga, like the domestic animals and the people themselves, grew fruitful and multiplied. It was only a matter of time before they came into conflict with us. Initially there would be sporadic attacks on our

livestock by the hyenas, and once old Koboki's entire harvest was destroyed by a herd of rampaging buffalo, but we took such setbacks with good grace, for Ngai had provided well for us and no one was ever forced to go hungry.

But then, as we reclaimed more and more of our terraformed veldt to be used as farmland, as the wild animals of Kirinyaga felt the pressure of our land-hungry people, the incidents grew more frequent and more severe.

I was sitting before the fire in my _boma_, waiting for the sun to burn the chill from the morning air and staring out across the accacia-dotted plains, when young Ndemi raced up the winding road from the village.

"Koriba!" he cried. "Come quickly!"

"What has happened?" I asked, rising painfully to my feet.

"Juma has been attacked by _fisi_!" he gasped, striving to regain his breath.

"By one hyena, or many?" I asked.

"One, I think. I do not know."

"Is he still alive?"

"Juma or _fisi_?" asked Ndemi.

"Juma."

"I think he is dead." Ndemi paused. "But you are the _mundumugu_. You can make him live again." I was pleased that he placed so much faith in his _mundumugu_ --his witch doctor --but of course if his companion was truly dead there was nothing I could do about it. I went into my hut, selected some herbs

that were especially helpful in combatting infection, added a few _qat_ leaves for Juma to chew (for we had no anesthetics on Kirinyaga, and the hallucinogenic trance caused by the _qat_ leaves would at least make him forget his pain). All this I placed into a leather pouch that I hung about my neck. Then I emerged from my hut and nodded to Ndemi, who led the way to the _shamba_ of Juma's father. When we arrived, the women were already wailing the death chant, and I briefly examined what was left of poor little Juma's body. One bite from the hyena had taken away most of his face, and a second had totally removed his left arm. The hyena then had devoured most of

Juma's torso before the villagers finally drove it away.

Koinnage, the paramount chief of the village, arrived a few moments later.

"_Jambo,_ Koriba," he greeted me.

"_Jambo,_ Koinnage," I replied.

"Something must be done," he said, looking at Juma's body, which was now covered by flies.

"I will place a curse on the hyena," I said, "and tonight I shall sacrifice a goat to Ngai, so that He will welcome Juma's soul."

Koinnage looked uneasy, for his fear of me was great, but finally he spoke: "It is not enough. This is the second healthy boy that the hyenas have taken this month."

"Our hyenas have developed a taste for men," I said. "It is because we leave the old and the infirm out for them."

"Then perhaps we should not leave the old and the sick out any longer."

"We have no choice," I replied. "The Europeans thought it was the mark of savages, and even Maintenance has tried to dissuade us --but we do not have medicine to ease their suffering. What seems barbarous to outsiders is actually an act of mercy. Ever since Ngai gave the first digging-stick to the first Kikuyu, it has always been our tradition to leave the old and the infirm out for the hyenas when it is time for them to die."

"Maintenance has medicines," suggested Koinnage, and I noticed that

two of the younger men had edged closer to us and were listening with interest. "Perhaps we should ask them to help us."

"So that they will live a week or a month longer, and then be buried in the ground like Christians?" I said.

"You can not be part Kikuyu and part European. That is the reason we came to Kirinyaga in the first place."

"But how wrong could it be to ask only for medicine for our elderly?" asked one of the younger men, and I could see that Koinnage looked relieved now that he himself did not have to pursue the argument.

"If you accept their medicine today, then tomorrow you will be accepting

their clothing and their machinery and their god," I replied. "If history has taught us nothing else, it has taught us that." They still seemed unconvinced, so I continued: "Most races look ahead to their Utopia, but the Kikuyu must look _back_, back to a simpler time when we lived in harmony with the land, when we were not tainted with the customs of a society to which we were never meant to belong. I have lived among the Europeans, and gone to school at their universities, and I tell you that you must not listen to the siren song of their technology. What works for the Europeans did not work for the Kikuyu when we lived in Kenya, and it will not work for us here on Kirinyaga."

As if to emphasize my statement, a hyena voiced its eerie laugh far off in the veldt. The women stopped wailing and drew closer together.

"But we must do something!" protested Koinnage, whose fear of the hyena momentarily overrode his fear of his _mundumugu_. "We cannot continue to let the beasts of the field destroy our crops and take our children."

I could have explained that there was a temporary imbalance as the grasseaters lowered their birthrate to accomodate their decreased pasturage, and that the hyenas' birthrate would almost certainly adjust within a year, but they would not have understood or believed me. They wanted solutions, not explanations.

"Ngai is testing our courage, to see if we are truly worthy to live on Kirinyaga," I said at last. "Until the time of testing is over, we will arm our children with spears and have them tend the cattle in pairs." Koinnage shook his head. "The hyenas have developed a taste for men --and two Kikuyu boys, even armed with spears, are no match for a pack of hyenas. Surely Ngai does not want His chosen people to become meals for _fisi_."

"No, He does not," I agreed. "It is the hyenas' nature to kill grasseaters, just as it is our nature to till the fields. I am your _mundumugu_. You must believe me what I tell you that this time of testing will soon pass."

"How soon?" asked another man.

I shrugged. "Perhaps two rains. Perhaps three." The rains come twice a year.

"You are an old man," said the man, mustering his courage to contradict his _mundumugu_. "You have no children, and it is this that gives you patience. But those of us with sons cannot wait for two or three rains wondering each day if they will return from the fields. We must do something _now_."

"I am an old man," I agreed, "and this gives me not only patience, but wisdom."

"You are the _mundumugu_," said Koinnage at last, "and you must face the problem in your way. But I am the

paramount chief, and I must face it in mine. I will organize a hunt, and we will kill all the hyenas in the area."

"Very well," I said, for I had forseen this solution. "Organize your hunt."

"Will you cast the bones and see if we shall be successful?"

"I do not need to cast the bones to foresee the results of your hunt," I replied. "You are farmers, not hunters. You will not be successful."

"You will not give us your support?" demanded another man.

"You do not need my support," I replied. "I would give you my patience if I could, for that is what you need."

"We were supposed to turn this world into a Utopia," said Koinnage, who had

only the haziest understanding of the word, but equated it with good harvests and a lack of enemies. "What kind of Utopia permits children to be devoured by wild animals?"

"You cannot understand what it means to be full until you have been hungry," I answered. "You cannot know what it means to be warm and dry until you have been cold and wet. And Ngai knows, even if you do not, that you cannot appreciate life without death. This is His lesson for you; it will pass."

"It must end _now_," said Koinnage firmly, now that he knew I would not try to prevent his hunt. I made no further comment, for I knew that nothing I could say would dissuade him. I spent the next

few minutes creating a curse for the individual hyena that had killed Juma, and that night I sacrificed a goat in the middle of the village and read in the entrails that Ngai had accepted the sacrifice and welcomed Juma's spirit.

Two days later Koinnage led ten of the village men out to the veldt to hunt the hyenas, while I stayed in my _boma_ and prepared for what I knew was inevitable.

It was in late morning that Ndemi -- the boldest of the boys in the village, whose courage had made him a favorite of mine --came up the long winding path to visit me.

"_Jambo,_ Koriba," he greeted me unhappily.

"_Jambo,_ Ndemi," I replied. "What is the matter?"

"They say that I am too young to hunt for _fisi_," he complained, squatting down next to me.

"They are right."

"But I have practiced my bushcraft every day, and you yourself have blessed my spear."

"I have not forgotten," I said.

"Then why can I not join the hunt?"

"It makes no difference," I said. "They will not kill _fisi_. In fact, they will be very lucky if all of them return unharmed." I paused. "_Then_ the troubles will begin."

"I thought they had already begun," said Ndemi, with no trace of sarcasm. I

shook my head. "What has been happening is part of the natural order of things, and hence it is part of Kirinyaga. But when Koinnage does not kill the hyenas, he will want to bring a hunter to Kirinyaga, and that is _not_ part of the natural order."

"You know he will do this?" asked Ndemi, impressed.

"I know Koinnage," I answered.

"Then you will tell him not to."

"I will tell him not to."

"And he will listen to you."

"No," I said. "I do not think he will listen to me."

"But you are the _mundumugu_."

"But there are many men in the village who resent me," I explained. "They see

the sleek ships that land on Kirinyaga from time to time, and they hear stories about the wonders of Nairobi and Mombasa, and they forget why we have come here. They become unhappy with the digging-stick, and they long for the Maasai's spear or the Kamba's bow or the European's machines."

Ndemi sqautted in silence for a moment.

"I have a question, Koriba," he said at last.

"You may ask it."

"You are the _mundumugu_," he said. "You can change men into insects, and see in the darkness, and walk upon the air."

"That is true," I agreed.

"Then why do you not turn all the hyenas into honeybees and set fire to their hive?"

"Because _fisi_ is not evil," I said. "It is his nature to eat flesh. Without him, the beasts of the field would become so plentiful that they would soon overrun our fields."

"Then why not kill just those _fisi_ who kill us?"

"Do you not remember your own grandmother?" I asked. "Do you not recall the agony she suffered in her final days?"

"Yes."

"We do not kill our own kind. Were it not for _fisi_, she would have suffered for many more days. _Fisi_

is only doing what Ngai created him to do."

"Ngai also created hunters," said Ndemi, casting me a sly look out of the corner of his eye.

"That is true."

"Then why do you not want hunters to come and kill _fisi_?"

"I will tell you the story of the Goat and the Lion, and then you will understand," I said.

"What do goats and lions have to do with hyenas?" he asked.

"Listen, and you will know," I answered. "Once there was a herd of black goats, and they lived a very happy life, for Ngai had provided them with green grass and lush plants and a nearby

stream where they could drink, and when it rained they stood beneath the branches of large, stately trees where the raindrops could not reach them. Then one day a leopard came to their village, and because he was old and thin and weak, and could no longer hunt the impala and the waterbuck, he killed a goat and ate it.

"'This is terrible!' said the goats. 'Something must be done.'

"'He is an old leopard,' said the wisest of the goats. 'If he regains his strength from the flesh he has eaten, he will go back to hunting for the impala, for the impala's flesh is much more nourishing than ours, and if he does not regain his strength, he will soon be dead.

All we need do is be especially alert while he walks among us.'

"But the other goats were too frightened to listen to his counsel, and they decided that they needed help.

"'I would beware of anyone who is not a goat and offers to help you,' said the wisest goat, but they would not hear him, and finally they sought out a huge black-maned lion.

"'There is a leopard that is eating our people,' they said, 'and we are not strong enough to drive him away. Will you help us?'

"'I am always glad to help my friends,' answered the lion.

"'We are a poor race,' said the goats. 'What tribute will you exact from us for

your help?'

"'None,' the lion assured them. 'I will do this solely because I am your friend.'

"And true to his word, the lion entered the village and waited until next the leopard came to feed, and then the lion pounced upon him and killed him.

"'Oh, thank you, great saviour!' cried the goats, doing a dance of joy and triumph around the lion.

"'It was my pleasure,' said the lion. "'For the leopard is my enemy as much as he is yours.'

"'We shall sing songs and tell stories about you long after you leave,' continued the goats happily.

"'Leave?" replied the lion, his eyes seeking out the fattest of the goats. 'Who

is leaving?'" Ndemi considered what I had said for a long moment, then looked up at me.

"You are not saying that the hunter will eat us as _fisi_ does?"

"No, I am not."

He considered the implications further.

"Ah!" he said, smiling at last. "You are saying that if we cannot kill _fisi_, who will soon die or leave us, then we should not invite someone even stronger than _fisi_, someone who will not die or leave."

"That is correct."

"But why should a hunter of animals be a threat to Kirinyaga?" he continued thoughtfully.

"We are like the goats," I explained. "We live off the land, and we have not the power to kill our enemies. But a hunter is like the lion: It is his nature to kill, and he will be the only man on Kirinyaga who is skilled at killing."

"You think he will kill us, then?" asked Ndemi.

I shrugged. "Not at first. The lion had to kill the leopard before he could prey upon the goats. The hunter will kill _fisi_ before he casts about for some other way to exercise his power."

"But you are our _mundumugu_!" protested Ndemi. "You will not let this happen!"

"I will try to prevent it," I said.

"If you try, you will succeed, and we

will not send for a hunter."

"Perhaps."

"Are you not all-powerful?" asked Ndemi.

"I am all-powerful."

"Then why do you speak with such doubt?"

"Because I am not a hunter," I said. "The Kikuyu fear me because of my powers, but I have never knowingly harmed one of my people. I will not harm them now. I want what is best for Kirinyaga, but if their fear of _fisi_ is greater than their fear of me, then I will lose." Ndemi stared at the little patterns he had traced in the dirt with his finger.

"Perhaps, if a hunter does come, he will be a good man," he said at last.

"Perhaps," I agreed. "But he will still be a hunter." I paused. "The lion may sleep with the zebra in times of plenty. But in times of need, when both are starving, it is the lion who starves last."

* * * *

Ten hunters had left the village, but only eight returned. Two had been attacked and killed by a pack of hyenas while they sat resting beneath the shade of an acacia tree. All day long the women wailed the death chant, while the sky turned black with the smoke, for it is our custom to burn the huts of our dead. That very same night Koinnage called a meeting of the Council of Elders. I waited until the last rays of the sun had vanished, then painted my face and

wrapped myself in my ceremonial leopardskin cloak, and made my way to his _boma_.

There was total silence as I approached the old men of the village. Even the night birds seemed to have taken flight, and I walked among them, looking neither right nor left, finally taking my accustomed place on a stool just to the left of Koinnage's personal hut. I could see his three wives clustered together inside his senior wife's hut, kneeling as close to the entrance as they dared while straining to see and hear what transpired.

The flickering firelight highlighted the faces of the elders, most of them grim and filled with fear. By precedent no one

--not even the _mundumugu_ --could speak until the paramount chief had spoken, and since Koinnage had still not emerged from his hut, I amused myself by withdrawing the bones from the leather pouch about my neck and casting them on the dirt. Three times I cast them, and three times I frowned at what I saw. Finally I put them back in my pouch, leaving those elders who were planning to disobey their _mundumugu_ to wonder what I had seen.

At last Koinnage stepped forth from his hut, a long thin stick in his hand. It was his custom to wave the stick when he spoke to the Council, much as a conductor waves his baton.

"The hunt has failed," he announced

dramatically, as if everyone in the village did not already know it.

"Two more men have died because of _fisi_." He paused for dramatic effect, then shouted: "It must not happen again!"

"Do not go hunting again and it will not happen again," I said, for once he began to speak I was permitted to comment.

"You are the _mundumugu_," said one of the elders. "You should have protected them!"

"I told them not to go," I replied. "I cannot protect those who reject my counsel."

"_Fisi_ must die!" screamed Koinnage, and as he turned to face me I detected a strong odor of _pombe_ on

his breath, and now I knew why he had remained in his hut for so long. He had been drinking _pombe_ until his courage was up to the task at hand, that of opposing his _mundumugu_.

"Never again will _fisi_ dine upon the flesh of the Kikuyu, nor will we hide in our bomas like old women until Koriba tells us that it is safe to come out! _Fisi_ must die!" The elders took up the chant of "_Fisi_ must die!" and Koinnage went through a pantomime of killing a hyena, using his stick as a spear.

"Men have reached the stars!" cried Koinnage. "They have built great cities beneath the sea. They have killed the last elephant and the last lion. Are we not men too --or are we old women to be

terrified by unclean eaters of carrion?"

I got to my feet.

"What other men have achieved makes no difference to the Kikuyu," I said. "Other men did not cause our problem with _fisi_; other men cannot cure it."

"One of them can," said Koinnage, looking at the anxious faces which were distorted by the firelight. "A hunter."

The elders muttered their approval.

"We must send for a hunter," repeated Koinnage, waving his stick wildly.

"It must not be a European," said an elder.

"Nor can it be a Wakamba," said another.

"Nor a Luo," said a third.

"The Lumbwa and the Nandi are the

enemies of our blood," added a fourth.

"It will be whoever can kill _fisi_," said Koinnage.

"How will you find such a man?" asked an elder.

"Hyenas still live on Earth," answered Koinnage. "We will find a hunter or a control officer from one of the game parks, someone who has hunted and killed _fisi_ many times."

"You are making a mistake," I said firmly, and suddenly there was absolute silence again.

"We must have a hunter," said Koinnage adamantly, when he saw that no one else would speak.

"You would only be bringing a greater killer to Kirinyaga to slay a lesser

killer," I responded.

"I am the paramount chief," said Koinnage, and I could tell from the way he refused to meet my gaze that the effects of the _pombe_ had left him now that he was forced to confront me before the elders. "What kind of chief would I be if I permitted _fisi_ to continue to kill my people?"

"You can build traps for _fisi_ until Ngai gives him back his taste for grasseaters," I said.

"How many more of us will _fisi_ kill before the traps have been set?" demanded Koinnage, trying to work himself up into a rage again. "How many of us must die before the _mundumugu_ admits that he is wrong, and that this is

not Ngai's plan?"

"Stop!" I shouted, raising my hands above my head, and even Koinnage froze in his tracks, afraid to speak or to move. "I am your _mundumugu_. I am the book of our collected wisdom; each sentence I speak is a page. I have brought the rains on time, and I have blessed the harvest. Never have I misled you. Now I tell you that you must not bring a hunter to Kirinyaga." And then Koinnage, who was literally shaking from his fear of me, forced himself to stare into my eyes.

"I am the paramount chief," he said, trying to steady his voice, "and I say we must act before _fisi_

hungers again. _Fisi_ must die! I have spoken."

The elders began chanting "_Fisi_ must die!" again, and Koinnage's courage returned to him as he realized that he was not the only one to openly disobey his _mundumugu's_ dictates. He led the frenzied chanting, walking from one elder to the next and finally to me, yelling "_Fisi_ must die!" and punctuating it with wild gesticulations of his stick.

I realized that I had lost for the very first time in council, yet I made no threats, since it was important that any punishment for disobeying the dictates of their _mundumugu_ must come from Ngai and not from me. I left in silence, walking through the circle of elders without looking at any of them, and

returned to my _boma_.

The next morning two of Koinnage's cattle were found dead without a mark upon them, and each morning thereafter a different elder awoke to two dead cattle. I told the villagers that this was undoubtedly the hand of Ngai, and that the corpses must be burned, and that anyone who ate of them would die under a horrible _thahu_, or curse, and they followed my orders without question. Then it was simply a matter of waiting for Koinnage's hunter to arrive.

* * * *

He walked across the plain toward my _boma_, and it might have been Ngai Himself approaching me. He was tall, well over six and one-half feet, and

slender, graceful as the gazelle and blacker than the darkest night. He was dressed in neither a _kikoi_ nor in khakis, but in a lightweight pair of pants and a short-sleeved shirt. His feet were in sandals, and I could tell from the depth of their calluses and the straightness of his toes that he had spent most of his life without shoes. A small bag was slung over one shoulder, and in his left hand he carried a long rifle in a monogrammed gun case. When he reached the spot where I was sitting he stopped, totally at ease, and stared unblinking at me. From the arrogance of his expression, I knew that he was a Maasai.

"Where is the village of Koriba?" he

asked in Swahili.

I pointed to my left. "In the valley," I said.

"Why do you live alone, old man?"

Those were his exact words. Not _m'zee_, which is a term of respect for the elderly, a term that acknowledges the decades of accumulated wisdom, but _old man_.

Yes, I concluded silently, _there is no doubt that you are a Maasai._

"The _mundumugu_ always lives apart from other men," I answered aloud.

"So you are the witch doctor," he said. "I would have thought your people had outgrown such things."

"As yours have outgrown the need for manners?" I responded. He chuckled in

amusement. "You are not glad to see me, are you, old man?"

"No, I am not."

"Well, if your magic had been strong enough to kill the hyenas, I would not be here. _I_ am not to blame for that."

"You are not to blame for anything," I said. "Yet."

"What is your name, old man?"

"Koriba."

He placed a thumb to his chest. "I am William."

"That is not a Maasai name," I noted.

"My full name is William Sambeke."

"Then I will call you Sambeke."

He shrugged. "Call me whatever you want." He shaded his eyes from the sun and looked off toward the village. "This

isn't exactly what I expected."

"What did you expect, Sambeke?" I asked.

"I thought you people were trying to create a Utopia here."

"We are."

He snorted contemptuously. "You live in huts, you have no machinery, and you even have to hire someone from Earth to kill hyenas for you. That's not _my_ idea of Utopia."

"Then you will doubtless wish to return to your home," I suggested.

"I have a job to do here first," he replied. "A job _you_ failed to do." I made no answer, and he stared at me for a long moment.

"Well?" he said at last.

"Well what?"

"Aren't you going to spout some mumbo-jumbo and make me disappear in a cloud of smoke, _mundumugu_?"

"Before you choose to become my enemy," I said in perfect English, "you should know that I am not as ineffectual as you may think, nor am I impressed by Maasai arrogance." He stared at me in surprise, then threw back his head and laughed.

"There's more to you than meets the eye, old man!" he said in English. "I think we are going to become great friends!"

"I doubt it," I replied in Swahili.

"What schools did you attend back on Earth?" he asked, matching my change in

languages again.

"Cambridge and Yale," I said. "But that was many years ago."

"Why does an educated man choose to sit in the dirt beside a grass hut?"

"Why does a Maasai accept a commission from a Kikuyu?" I responded.

"I like to hunt," he said. "And I wanted to see this Utopia you have built."

"And now you have seen it."

"I have seen Kirinyaga," he replied. "I have not yet seen Utopia."

"That is because you do not know how to look for it."

"You are a clever old man, Koriba, full of clever answers," said Sambeke,

taking no offense. "Why have you not made yourself king of this entire planetoid?"

"The _mundumugu_ is the repository of our traditions. That is all the power he seeks or needs."

"You could at least have had them build you a house, instead of living like this. No Maasai lives in a _manyatta_ any longer."

"And after the house would come a car?" I asked.

"Once you built some roads," he agreed.

"And then a factory to build more cars, and another one to build more houses, and then an impressive building for our Parliament, and perhaps a

railroad line?" I shook my head. "That is a description of Kenya, not of Utopia."

"You are making a mistake," said Sambeke. "On my way here from the landing field --what is it called?"

"Haven."

"On my way here from Haven, I saw buffalo and kudu and impala. A hunting lodge by the river overlooking the plains would bring in a lot of tourist money."

"We do not hunt our grasseaters."

"You wouldn't have to," he said meaningfully. "And think of how much their money could help your people."

"May Ngai preserve us from people who want to help us," I said devoutly.

"You are a stubborn old man," he said. "I think I had better go talk to

Koinnage. Which _shamba_ is his?"

"The largest," I answered. "He is the paramount chief." He nodded. "Of course. I will see you later, old man."

I nodded. "Yes, you will."

"And after I have killed your hyenas, perhaps we will share a gourd of _pombe_ and discuss ways to turn this world into a Utopia. I have been very disappointed thus far." So saying, he turned toward the village and began walking down the long, winding trail to Koinnage's _boma_.

* * * *

He turned Koinnage's head, as I knew he would. By the time I had eaten and made my way to the village, the two of them were sitting beside a fire in front of

the paramount chief's _boma_, and Sambeke was describing the hunting lodge he wanted to build by the river.

"_Jambo,_ Koriba," said Koinnage, looking up at me as I approached them.

"_Jambo,_ Koinnage," I responded, squatting down next to him.

"You have met William Sambeke?"

"I have met Sambeke," I said, and the Maasai grinned at my refusal to use his European name.

"He has many plans for Kirinyaga," continued Koinnage, as some of the villagers began wandering over.

"How interesting," I replied. "You asked for a hunter, and they have sent you a planner instead."

"Some of us," interjected Sambeke, an

amused expression on his face, "have more than one talent."

"Some of us," I said, "have been here for half a day and have not yet begun to hunt."

"I will kill the hyenas tomorrow," said Sambeke, "when their bellies are full and they are too content to race away at my approach."

"How will you kill them?" I asked.

He carefully unlocked his gun case and pulled out his rifle, which was equipped with a telescopic sight. Most of the villagers had never seen such a weapon, and they crowded around it, whispering to each other.

"Would you care to examine it?" he asked me.

I shook my head. "The weapons of the Europeans hold no interest for me."

"This rifle was manufactured in Zimbabwe, by members of the Shona tribe," he corrected me. I shrugged. "Then they are black Europeans."

"Whatever they are, they make a splendid weapon," said Sambeke.

"For those who are afraid to hunt in the traditional way," I said.

"Do not taunt me, old man," said Sambeke, and suddenly a hush fell over the onlookers, for no man speaks thus to the _mundumugu_.

"I do not taunt you, Maasai," I said. "I merely point out why you have brought the weapon. It is no crime to be afraid of _fisi_."

"I fear nothing," he said heatedly.

"That is not true," I said. "Like all of us, you fear failure."

"I shall not fail with _this_," he said, patting the rifle.

"By the way," I asked, "was it not the Maasai who once proved their manhood by facing the lion armed only with a spear?"

"It was," he answered. "And it was the Maasai _and_ the Kikuyu who lost most their babies at birth, and who succumbed to every disease that passed through their villages, and who lived in shelters that could protect them from neither the rain nor the cold nor even the flesh-eaters of the veldt. It was the Maasai and the Kikuyu who learned

from the Europeans, and who took back their land from the white men, and who built great cities where once there was only dust and swamps. Or, rather," he added, "it was the Maasai and _most_ of the Kikuyu."

"I remember seeing a circus when I was in England," I said, raising my voice so that all could hear me, though I directed my remarks at Sambeke. "In it there was a chimpanzee. He was a very bright animal. They dressed him in human clothing, and he rode a human bicycle, and he played human music on a human flute --but that did not make him a human. In fact, he amused the humans because he was such a grotesque mockery of them ... just as the Maasai

and Kikuyu who wear suits and drive cars and work in large buildings are not Europeans, but are instead a mockery of them."

"That is just your opinion, old man," said the Maasai, "and it is wrong."

"Is it?" I asked. "The chimpanzee had been tainted by his association with humans, so that he could never survive in the wild. And _you_, I notice, must have the Europeans' weapon to hunt an animal that your grandfathers would have gone out and slain with a knife or a spear."

"Are you challenging me, old man?" asked Sambeke, once again amused.

"I am merely pointing out why you have brought your rifle with you," I

answered.

"No," he said. "You are trying to regain the power you lost when your people sent for me. But you have made a mistake."

"In what way?"

"You have made me your enemy."

"Will you shoot me with your rifle, then?" I asked calmly, for I knew he would not. He leaned over and whispered to me, so that only I could hear him.

"We could have made a fortune together, old man. I would have been happy to share it with you, in exchange for you keeping your people in line, for a safari company will need many workers. But now you have publicly opposed me,

and I cannot permit that."

"We must learn to live with disappointments," I said.

"I am glad you feel that way," he said. "For I plan to turn this world into a Utopia, rather than some Kikuyu dreamland."

Then, suddenly, he stood up.

"Boy," he said to Ndemi, who was standing at the outskirts of the crowd. "Bring me a spear." Ndemi looked to me, and I nodded, for I could not believe that the Maasai would kill me with _any_

weapon.

Ndemi brought the spear to Sambeke, who took it from him and leaned it against Koinnage's hut. Then he stood

before the fire and slowly began removing all his clothes. When he was naked, with the firelight playing off his lean, hard body, looking like an African god, he picked up the spear and held it over his head.

"I go to hunt _fisi_ in the dark, in the old way," he announced to the assembled villagers. "Your _mundumugu_ has laid down the challenge, and if you are to listen to my counsel in the future, as I hope you will, you must know that I can meet any challenge he sets for me." And before anyone could say a word or move to stop him, he strode boldly off into the night.

"Now he will die, and Maintenance

will want to revoke our charter!" complained Koinnage.

"If he dies, it was his own decision, and Maintenance will not punish us in any way," I replied. I stared long and hard at him. "I wonder that you care."

"That I care if he should die?"

"That you care if Maintenance should revoke our charter," I answered. "If you listen to the Maasai, you will turn Kirinyaga into another Kenya, so why should you mind returning to the original Kenya?"

"He does not want to turn Kirinyaga into Kenya, but into Utopia," said Koinnage sullenly.

"We are already attempting to do that," I noted. "Does _his_ Utopia

include a big European house for the paramount chief?"

"We did not discuss it thoroughly," said Koinnage uneasily.

"And perhaps some extra cattle, in exchange for supplying him with porters and gunbearers?"

"He has good ideas," said Koinnage, ignoring my question. "Why should we carry our water from the river when he can create pumps and pipes to carry it for us?"

"Because if water is easy to obtain, it will become easy to waste, and we have no more water to waste here than we had in Kenya, where all the lakes have dried up because of far-seeing men like Sambeke."

"You have answers for everything," said Koinnage bitterly.

"No," I said. "But I have answers for this Maasai, for his questions have been asked many times before, and always in the past the Kikuyu have given the wrong answer." Suddenly we heard a hideous scream from perhaps half a mile away.

"It is finished," said Koinnage grimly. "The Maasai is dead, and now we must answer to Maintenance."

"It did not sound like a man," said Ndemi.

"You are just a _mtoto_ --a child," said Koinnage. "What do you know?"

"I know what Juma sounded like when _fisi_ killed him," said Ndemi defiantly. "That is what I know." We waited in

silence to see if there would be another sound, but none was forthcoming.

"Perhaps it is just as well that _fisi_ has killed the Maasai," said old Njobe at last. "I saw the building that he drew in the dirt, the one he would make for visitors, and it was an evil building. It was not round and safe from demons like our own huts, but instead it had corners, and everyone knows that demons live in corners."

"Truly, there would be a curse upon it," agreed another of the elders.

"What can one expect from one who hunts _fisi_ at night?" added another.

"One can expect a dead _fisi_!" said Sambeke triumphantly, as he stepped out of the shadows and threw the bloody

corpse of a large male hyena onto the ground. Everyone backed away from him in awe, and he turned to me, the firelight flickering off his sleek black body. "What do you say now, old man?"

"I say that you are a greater killer than _fisi_," I answered. He smiled with satisfaction.

"Now," he said, "let us see what we can learn from this particular _fisi_." He turned to a young man.

"Boy, bring a knife."

"His name is Kamabi," I said.

"I have not had time to learn names," replied Sambeke. He turned back to Kamabi. "Do as I ask, boy."

"He is a man," I said.

"It is difficult to tell in the dark," said

Sambeke with a shrug. Kamabi returned a moment later with an ancient hunting knife; it was so old and so rusty that Sambeke did not care to touch it, and so he merely pointed to the hyena.

"_Kata hi ya tumbo_," he said. "Slit the stomach here." Kamabi knelt down and slit open the hyena's belly. The smell was terrible, but the Maasai picked up a stick and began prodding through the contents. Finally he stood up.

"I had hoped that we would find a bracelet or an earring," he said. "But it has been a long time since the boy was killed, and such things would have passed through _fisi_ days ago."

"Koriba can roll the bones and tell if this is the one who killed Juma," said

Koinnage. Sambeke snorted contemptuously. "Koriba can roll the bones from now until the long rains come, but they will tell him nothing." He looked at the assembled villagers. "I have killed _fisi_ in the old way to prove that I am no coward or European, to hunt only in the daylight and hide behind my gun. But now that I have shown you that I can do it, tomorrow I shall show you how many _fisi_ I can kill in _my_

way, and then you may decide which way is better, Koriba's or mine." He paused. "Now I need a hut to sleep in, so that I may be strong and alert when the sun rises." Every villager except Koinnage immediately volunteered his

hut. The Maasai looked at each man in turn, and then turned to the paramount chief. "I will take yours," he said.

"But --" began Koinnage.

"And one of your wives to keep me warm in the night." He stared directly into Koinnage's eyes. "Or would you deny me your hospitality after I have killed _fisi_ for you?"

"No," said Koinnage at last. "I will not deny you." The Maasai shot me a triumphant smile. "It is still not Utopia," he said. "But it is getting closer."

* * * *

The next morning Sambeke went out with his rifle.

I walked down to the village in the morning to give Zindu ointment to help

dry up her milk, for her baby had been stillborn. When I was finished, I went through the shambas, blessing the scarecrows, and before long I had my usual large group of children beside me, begging me to tell them a story. Finally, when the sun was high in the sky and it was too hot to keep walking, I sat down beneath the shade of an accacia tree.

"All right," I said. "Now you may have your story."

"What story will you tell us today, Koriba?" asked one of the girls.

"I think I shall tell you the tale of the Unwise Elephant," I said.

"Why was he unwise?" asked a boy.

"Listen, and you shall know," I said, and they all fell silent.

"Once there was a young elephant," I began, "and because he was young, he had not yet acquired the wisdom of his race. And one day this elephant chanced upon a city in the middle of the savannah, and he entered it, and beheld its wonders, and thought it was quite the most marvelous thing he had ever seen. All his life he had labored day and night to fill his belly, and here, in the city, were wonderful machines that could make his life so much easier that he was determined to own some of them.

"But when he approached the owner of a digging stick, with which he could find buried accacia pods, the owner said, 'I am a poor man, and I cannot give my digging stick to you. But because you

want it so badly, I will make a trade.'

"'But I have nothing to trade,' said the elephant unhappily.

"'Of course you do,' said the man. 'If you will let me have your ivory, so that I can carve designs on it, you may have the digging stick.'

"The elephant considered this offer, and finally agreed, for if he had a digging stick he would no longer need his tusks to root up the ground.

"And he walked a little farther, and he came to an old woman with a weaving loom, and he thought this was a wonderful thing, for with it he would be able to make a blanket for himself so that he could stay warm during the long nights.

"He asked the woman for her weaving loom, and she replied that she would not to give it away, but that she would be happy to trade it.

"'All I have to trade is my digging stick,' said the elephant.

"'But I do not need a digging stick,' said the old woman. 'You must let me cut off one of your feet, that I may make a stool of it."

"The elephant thought for a long time, and he remembered how cold he had been the previous night, and finally he agreed, and the trade was made.

"Then he came to a man who had a net, and the elephant thought that the net would be a wonderful thing to have, for now he could catch the fruits when he

shook a tree, rather than having to hunt for them on the ground.

"'I will not give you the net, for it took me many days to make it,' said the man, 'but I will trade it to you for your ears, which will make excellent sleeping mats.'

"Again the elephant agreed, and finally he went back to the herd to show them the wonders he had brought from the city of men.

"'What need have we for digging sticks?' asked his brother. 'No digging stick will last as long as our tusks.'

"'It might be nice to have a blanket,' said his mother, 'but to make a blanket with a weaving loom we would need fingers, which we do not have.'

"'I cannot see the purpose of a net for catching fruit from the trees,' said his father. 'For if you hold the net in your trunk, how will you shake the fruits loose from the tree, and if you shake the tree, how will you hold the net?'

"'I see now that the tools of men are of no use to elephants,' said the young elephant. 'I can never be a man, so I will go back to being an elephant.'

"His father shook his head sadly. 'It is true that you are not a man --but because you have dealt with men, you are no longer an elephant either. You have lost your foot, and cannot keep up with the herd. You have given away your ivory, and you cannot dig for water, or churn up the ground to look for accacia pods.

You have parted with your ears, and now you cannot flap them to cool your blood when the sun is high in the sky.'

"And so the elephant spent the rest of his unhappy life halfway between the city and the herd, for he could not become part of one and he was no longer part of the other." I stopped, and stared off into the distance, where a small herd of impala was grazing just beyond one of our cultivated fields.

"Is that all?" asked the girl who had first requested the story.

"That is all," I said.

"It was not a very good story," she continued.

"Oh?" I asked, slapping a small insect that was crawling up my arm. "Why

not?"

"Because the ending was not happy."

"Not all stories have happy endings," I said.

"I do not like unhappy endings," she said.

"Neither do I," I agreed. I paused and looked at her. "How do _you_ think the story should end?"

"The elephant should not trade the things that make him an elephant, since he can never become a man."

"Very good," I said. "Would you trade the things that make you a Kikuyu, to try to be something you can never become?"

"Never!"

"Would any of you?" I asked my entire audience.

"No!" they cried.

"What if the elephant offered you his tusks, or the hyena offered you his fangs?"

"Never!"

I paused for just a moment before asking my next question.

"What if the Maasai offered you his gun?"

Most of the children yelled "No!", but I noticed that two of the older boys did not answer. I questioned them about it.

"A gun is not like tusks or teeth," said the taller of the two boys. "It is a weapon that men use."

"That is right," said the smaller boy, shuffling his bare feet in the dirt and raising a small cloud of dust. "The

Maasai is not an animal. He is like us."

"He is not an animal," I agreed, "but he is not like us. Do the Kikuyu use guns, or live in brick houses, or wear European clothes?"

"No," said the boys in unison.

"Then if you were to use a gun, or live in a brick house, or wear European clothes, would you be a true Kikuyu?"

"No," they admitted.

"But would using a gun, or living in a brick house, or wearing European clothes, make you a Maasai or a European?"

"No."

"Do you see, then, why we must reject the tools and the gifts of outsiders? We can never become like them, but we can

stop being Kikuyu, and if we stop being Kikuyu without becoming something else, then we are nothing."

"I understand, Koriba," said the taller boy.

"Are you sure?" I asked.

He nodded. "I am sure."

"Why are all your stories like this?" asked a girl.

"Like what?"

"The all have titles like the Unwise Elephant, or the Jackal and the Honeybird, or the Leopard and the Shrike, but when you explain them they are always about the Kikuyu."

"That is because I am a Kikuyu and you are a Kikuyu," I replied with a smile. "If we were leopards, then all my

stories would really be about leopards."

I spent a few more minutes with them beneath the shade of the tree, and then I saw Ndemi approaching through the tall grass, his face alive with excitement.

"Well?" I said when he had joined us.

"The Maasai has returned," he announced.

"Did he kill any _fisi_?" I asked.

"_Mingi sana_," replied Ndemi. "Very many."

"Where is he now?"

"By the river, with some of the young men who served as his gunbearers and skinners."

"I think I shall go visit them," I said, getting carefully to my feet, for my legs tend to get stiff when I sit in one positon

for too long. "Ndemi, you will come with me. The rest of you children are to go back to your _shambas_, and to think about the story of the Unwise Elephant." Ndemi's chest puffed up like one of my roosters when I singled him out to accompany me, and a moment later we were walking across the sprawling savannah.

"What is the Maasai doing at the river?" I asked.

"He has cut down some young saplings with a _panga_," answered Ndemi, "and he is instructing some of the men to build something, but I do not know what it is."

I peered through the haze of heat and dust, and saw a small party of men

approaching us.

"_I_ know what it is," I said softly, for although I had never seen a sedan chair, I knew what one looked like, and it was currently approaching us as four Kikuyu bore the weight of the sedan chair --and the Maasai --upon their sweating shoulders.

Since they were heading in our direction, I told Ndemi to stop walking, and we stood and waited for them.

"_Jambo_, old man!" said the Maasai when we were within earshot. "I have killed seven more hyenas this morning."

"_Jambo_, Sambeke," I replied. "You look very comfortable."

"It could use cushions," he said. "And the bearers do not carry it levelly. But I

will make do with it."

"Poor man," I said, "who lacks cushions and thoughtful bearers. How did these oversights come to pass?"

"That is because it is not Utopia yet," he replied with a smile. "But it is getting very close."

"You will be sure to tell me when it arrives," I said.

"You will know, old man."

Then he directed his bearers to carry him to the village. Ndemi and I remained where we were, and watched him disappear in the distance.

* * * *

That night there was a feast in the village to celebrate the slaying of the eight hyenas. Koinnage himself had

slaughtered an ox, and there was much _pombe_, and the people were singing and dancing when I arrived, re-enacting the stalking and killing of the animals by their new saviour. The Maasai himself was seated on a tall chair, taller even than Koinnage's throne. In one hand he held a gourd of _pombe_, and the leather case that held his rifle was laid carefully across his lap. He was clad now in the red robe of his people, his hair was neatly braided in his tribal fashion, and his lean body glistened with oils that had been rubbed onto it. Two young girls, scarcely past circumcision age, stood behind him, hanging upon his every word.

"_Jambo_, old man!" he greeted me as

I approached him.

"_Jambo_, Sambeke," I said.

"That is no longer my name," he said.

"Oh? And have you taken a Kikuyu name instead?"

"I have taken a name that the Kikuyu will understand," he replied. "It is what the village will call me from this day forth."

"You are not leaving, now that the hunt is over?"

He shook his head. "I am not leaving."

"You are making a mistake," I said.

"Not as big a mistake as you made when you chose not to be my ally," he responded. Then, after a brief pause, he smiled and added: "Do you not wish to know my new name?"

"I suppose I should know it, if you are to remain here for any length of time," I agreed. He leaned over and whispered the name word to me that Ngai had whispered to Gikuyu on the holy mountain millions of years earlier.

"Bwana?" I repeated.

He looked smugly at me, and smiled again.

"_Now_," he said, "it is Utopia."

* * * *

Bwana spent the next few weeks making Kirinyaga a Utopia --for Bwana. He took three young wives for himself, and he had the villagers build him a large house by the river, a house with windows and corners and verandas such as the colonial Europeans might have

built in Kenya two centuries earlier.

He went hunting every day, collecting trophies for himself and providing the village with more meat than they had ever had before. At nights he went to the village to eat and drink and dance, and then, armed with his rifle, he walked through the darkness to his own house.

Soon Koinnage was making plans to build a house similar to Bwana's, right in the village, and many of the young men wanted the Maasai to procure rifles for them. This he refused to do, explaining that there could be only one Bwana on Kirinyaga, and it was their job to serve as trackers and cooks and skinners. He no longer wore European clothes, but always appeared in

traditional Maasai dress, his hair meticulously pleated and braided, his body bright and glistening from the oils that his wives rubbed on him each night.

I kept my own counsel and continued my duties, caring for the sick, bringing the rains, reading the entrails of goats, blessing the scarecrows, alleviating curses. But I did not say another word to Bwana, nor did he speak to me.

Ndemi spent more and more time with me, tending my goats and chickens, and even keeping my _boma_ clean, which is woman's work but which he volunteered to do.

Finally one day he approached me while I sat in the shade, watching the cattle grazing in a nearby field.

"May I speak, _mundumugu_?" he asked, squatting down next to me.

"You may speak, Ndemi," I answered.

"The Maasai has taken another wife," he said. "And he killed Karanja's dog because its barking annoyed him." He paused. "And he calls everyone 'Boy', even the elders, which seems to me to be a term of disrespect."

"I know these things," I said.

"Why do you not do something, then?" asked Ndemi. "Are you not all-powerful?"

"Only Ngai is all-powerful," I said. "I am just the _mundumugu_."

"But is not the _mundumugu_ more powerful than a Maasai?"

"Most of the people in the village do

not seem to think so," I said.

"Ah!" he said. "You are angry with them for losing faith in you, and _that_ is why you have not turned him into an insect and stepped on him."

"I am not angry," I said. "Merely disappointed."

"When will you kill him?" asked Ndemi.

"It would do no good to kill him," I replied.

"Why not?"

"Because they believe in his power, and if he died, they would just send for another hunter, who would become another Bwana."

"Then will you do nothing?"

"I will do somethng," I answered.

"But killing Bwana is not the answer. He must be humiliated before the people, so that they can see for themselves that he is not, after all, a _mundumugu_ who must be listened to and obeyed."

"How will you do this?" asked Ndemi anxiously.

"I do not know yet," I said. "I must study him further."

"I thought you knew everything already."

I smiled. "The _mundumugu_ does not know everything, nor does he have to."

"Oh?"

"He must merely know more than his people."

"But you already know more than Koinnage and the others."

"I must be sure I know more than the Maasai before I act," I said. "You may know how large the leopard is, and how strong, and how fast, and how cunning -- but until you have studied him further, and learned how he charges, and which side he favors, and how he tests the wind, and how he signals an attack by moving his tail, you are at a disadvantage if you hunt him. I am an old man, and I cannot defeat the Maasai in hand-to-hand combat, so I must study him and discover his weakness."

"And what if he has none?"

"Everything has a weakness."

"Even though he is stronger than you?"

"The elephant is the strongest beast of all, and yet a handful of tiny ants inside

his trunk can drive him mad with pain to the point where he will kill himself." I paused. "You do not have to be stronger than your opponent, for surely the ant is not stronger than the elephant. But the ant knows the elephant's weakness, and I must learn the Maasai's."

He place his hand to his chest.

"_I_ believe in you, Koriba," he said.

"I am glad," I said, shielding my eyes as a hot breeze blew a cloud of dust across my hill. "For you alone will not be disappointed when I finally confront the Maasai."

"Will you forgive the men of the village?" he asked.

I paused before answering. "When they remember once more why we came

to Kirinyaga, I will forgive them," I said at last.

"And if they do not remember?"

"I must make them remember," I said. I looked out across the savannah, following its contours as it led up the the river and the woods. "Ngai has given the Kikuyu a second chance at Utopia, and we must not squander it."

"You and Koinnage, and even the Maasai, keep using that word, but I do not understand it."

"Utopia?" I asked.

He nodded. "What does it mean?"

"It means many things to many people," I replied. "To the true Kikuyu, it means to live as one with the land, to respect the ancient laws and rituals, and

to please Ngai."

"That seems simple enough."

"It does, doesn't it?" I agreed. "And yet you cannot begin to imagine how many millions of men have died because their definition of Utopia differed from their neighbor's." He stared at me. "Truly?"

"Truly. Take the Maasai, for example. His Utopia is to ride upon his sedan chair, and to shoot animals, and to take many wives, and to live in a big house by the river."

"It does not sound like a bad thing," observed Ndemi thoughtfully.

"It is not a bad thing --for the Maasai." I paused briefly. "But do you suppose it is Utopia for the men who

must carry the chair, or the animals that he kills, or the young men of the village who cannot marry, or the Kikuyu who must build his house by the river?"

"I see," said Ndemi, his eyes widening. "Kirinyaga must be a Utopia for all of us, or it cannot be a Utopia at all." He brushed an insect from his cheek and looked at me. "Is that correct, Koriba?"

"You learn quickly, Ndemi," I said, reaching a hand out and rubbing the hair atop his head. "Perhaps some day you yourself will become a _mundumugu_."

"Will I learn magic then?"

"You must learn many things to be a _mungumugu_," I said. "Magic is the least of them."

"But it is the most impressive," he said. "It is what makes the people fear you, and fearing you, they are willing to listen to your wisdom."

As I considered his words, I finally began to get an inkling of how I would defeat Bwana and return my people to the Utopian existence that we had envisioned when we accepted our charter for Kirinyaga.

* * * *

"Sheep!" growled Bwana. "All sheep! No wonder the Maasai preyed on the Kikuyu in the old days." I had decided to enter the village at night, to further observe my enemy. He had drunk much _pombe_, and finally stripped off his red cloak and stood naked before Koinnage's

boma, challenging the young men of the village to wrestle him. They stood back in the shadows, shaking like women, in awe of his physical prowess.

"I will fight three of you at once!" he said, looking around for any volunteers. There were none, and he threw back his head and laughed heartily.

"And you wonder why I am Bwana and you are a bunch of boys!" Suddenly his eyes fell on me.

"_There_ is a man who is not afraid of me," he announced.

"That is true," I said.

"Will _you_ wrestle me, old man?"

I shook my head. "No, I will not."

"I guess you are just another coward."

"I do not fear the buffalo or the hyena,

but I do not wrestle with _them_, either," I said. "There is a difference between courage and foolishness. You are a young man; I am an old one."

"What brings you to the village at night?" he asked. "Have you been speaking to your gods, plotting ways to kill me?"

"There is only one god," I replied, "and He disapproves of killing." He nodded, an amused smile on his face. "Yes, it stands to reason that the god of sheep would disapprove of killing." Suddenly the smile vanished, and he stared contemptuously at me. "En-kai spits upon your god, old man."

"You call Him En-kai and we call him Ngai," I said calmly, "but it is the same

god, and the day will come when we all must answer to Him. I hope you will be as bold and fearless then as you are now."

"I hope your Ngai will not tremble before _me_," he retorted, posturing before his wives, who giggled at his arrogance. "Did I not go naked into the night, armed with only a spear, and slay _fisi_? Have I not killed more than one hundred beasts in less than thirty days? Your Ngai had better not test my temper."

"He will test more than your temper," I replied.

"What does _that_ mean?"

"It means whatever you wish it to mean," I said. "I am old and tired, and I

wish to sit by the fire and drink pombe."

With that I turned my back on him and walked over to Njobe, who was warming his ancient bones by a small fire just outside Koinnage's _boma_.

Unable to find an opponent with which to wrestle, Bwana drank more _pombe_ and finally turned to his wives.

"No one will fight me," he said with mock misery. "And yet my fighting blood is boiling within my veins. Set me a task --any task --that I may do for your pleasure."

The three girls whispered together and giggled again, and finally one of them stepped forward, urged by the other two.

"We have seen Koriba place his hand

in the fire without being burned," she said. "Can you do that?" He snorted contemptuously. "A magician's trick, nothing more. Set me a true task."

"Set him an _easier_ task," I said. "Obviously the fire is too painful." He turned and glared at me. "What kind of lotion did you place on your hand before putting it in the fire, old man?" he asked in English.

I smiled at him. "That would be an _illusionist's_ trick, not a magician's," I answered.

"You think to humiliate me before my people?" he said. "Think again, old man." He walked to the fire, stood between Njobe and myself, and thrust his hand into it. His face was totally

impassive, but I could smell the burning flesh. Finally he withdrew it and held it up.

"There is no magic to it!" he shouted in Swahili.

"But you are burned, my husband," said the wife who had challenged him.

"Did I cry out?" he demanded. "Did I cringe from pain?"

"No, you did not."

"Can any other man place his hand in the fire without crying out?"

"No, my husband."

"Who, then, is the greater man -- Koriba, who protects himself with magic, or I, who need no magic to place my hand in the fire?"

"Bwana," said his wives in unison.

He turned to me and grinned triumphantly.

"You have lost again, old man."

* * * *

But I had not lost.

I had gone to the village to study my enemy, and I had learned much from my visit. Just as a Kikuyu cannot become a Maasai, this Maasai could not become a Kikuyu. There was an arrogance that had been bred into him, an arrogance so great that it had not only elevated him to his current high status, but would prove to be his downfall as well.

The next morning Koinnage himself came to my _boma_.

"_Jambo_," I greeted him.

"_Jambo_, Koriba," he replied. "We

must talk."

"About what?"

"About Bwana," said Koinnage.

"What about him?"

"He has overstepped himself," said Koinnage. "Last night, after you left, he decided that he had drunk too much _pombe_ to return home, and he threw me out of my own hut --_me_, the paramount chief!" He paused to kick at a small lizard, that had been approaching his foot, and then continued. "Not only that, but this morning he announced that he was taking my youngest wife, Kibo, for his own!"

"Interesting," I remarked, watching the tiny lizard as it scurried under a bush, then turned and stared at us.

"Is that all you can say?" he demanded. "I paid twenty cows and five goats for her. When I told him that, do you know what he did?"

"What?"

Koinnage held up a small silver coin for me to see. "He gave me a _shilling_ from Kenya!" He spat upon the coin and threw it onto the dry, rocky slope beyond my _boma_. "And now he says that whenever he stays in the village he will sleep in my hut, and that I must sleep elsewhere."

"I am very sorry," I said. "But I warned you against sending for a hunter. It is his nature to prey upon all things: the hyena, the kudu, even the Kikuyu." I paused, enjoying his discomfort.

"Perhaps you should tell him to go away."

"He would not listen."

I nodded. "The lion may sleep with the goat, and he may feed upon him, but he very rarely listens to him."

"Koriba, we were wrong," said Koinnage, his face a mask of desperation. "Can you not rid of us this intruder?"

"Why?" I asked.

"I have already told you."

I shook my head slowly. "You have told me why _you_ have cause to resent him," I answered. "That is not enough."

"What more must I say?" asked Koinnage.

I paused and looked at him. "It will

come to you in the fullness of time."

"Perhaps we can contact Maintenance," suggested Koinnage. "Surely _they_ have the power to make him leave."

I sighed deeply. "Have you learned nothing?"

"I do not understand."

"You sent for the Maasai because he was stronger than _fisi_. Now you want to send for Maintenance because they are stronger than the Maasai. If one man can so change our society, what do you think will happen when we invite many men? Already our young men talk of hunting instead of farming, and wish to build European houses with corners where demons can hide, and beg the

Maasai to supply them with guns. What will they want when they have seen all the wonders that Maintenance possesses?"

"Then how are we to rid ourselves of the Maasai?"

"When the time comes, he will leave," I said.

"Your are certain?"

"I am the _mundumugu_."

"When will this time be?" asked Koinnage.

"When you know _why_ he must leave," I answered. "Now perhaps you should return to the village, lest you discover that he wants your other wives as well."

Panic spread across Koinnage's face,

and he raced back down the winding trail to the village without another word.

* * * *

I spent the next few days gathering bark from some of the trees at the edge of the savannah, and when I had gathered as much as I needed I added certain herbs and roots and mashed them to a pulp in an old turtle shell. I added some water, placed it in a cooking gourd, and began simmering the concoction over a small fire.

When I was done I sent for Ndemi, who arrived about half an hour later.

"_Jambo,_ Koriba," he said.

"_Jambo,_ Ndemi," I replied.

He looked at my cooking gourd and wrinkled his nose. "What is that?" he

asked. "It smells terrible."

"It is not for eating," I replied.

"I hope not," he said devoutly.

"Be careful not to touch it," I said, walking over to the tree that grew within my _boma_ and sitting down in its shade. Ndemi, giving the gourd a wide birth, joined me.

"You sent for me," he said.

"Yes, I did."

"I am glad. The village is not a good place to be."

"Oh?"

He nodded. "A number of the young men now follow Bwana everywhere. They take goats from the _shambas_ and cloth from the huts, and nobody dares to stop them. Kanjara tried yesterday, but

the young men hit him and made his mouth bleed while Bwana watched and laughed." I nodded, for none of this surprised me.

"I think it is almost time," I said, waving my hand to scare away some flies that also sought shade beneath the tree and were buzzing about my face.

"Almost time for what?"

"For Bwana to leave Kirinyaga." I paused. "That is why I sent for you."

"The _mundumugu_ wishes me to help him?" said Ndemi, his young face shining with pride. I nodded.

"I will do anything you say," vowed Ndemi.

"Good. Do you know who makes the oils with which Bwana annoints

himself?"

"Old Wambu makes them."

"You must bring me two gourds filled with them."

"I thought only the Maasai annoints himself," said Ndemi.

"Just do as I say. Now, have you a bow?"

"No, but my father does. He has not used it in many years, so he will not mind if I take it."

"I do not want anyone to know you have it."

Ndemi shrugged and idly drew a pattern in the dirt with his forefinger. "He will blame the young men who follow Bwana."

"And has your father any arrows with

sharp tips?"

"No," said Ndemi. "But I can make some."

"I want you to make some this afternoon," I said. "Ten should be enough." Ndemi drew an arrow in the dirt. "Like so?" he asked.

"A little shorter," I said.

"I can get the feathers for the arrows from the chickens in our _boma_," he suggested. I nodded. "That is good."

"Do you want me to shoot an arrow into Bwana?"

"I told you once: the Kikuyu do not kill their fellow men."

"Then what do you want me to do with the arrows?"

"Bring them back here to my _boma_

when you have made them," I said. "And bring ten pieces of cloth in which to wrap them."

"And then what?"

"And then we will dip them into the poison I have been making." He frowned. "But you do not wish me to shoot an arrow into Bwana?" He paused. "What shall I shoot, then?"

"I will tell you when the time comes," I said. "Now return to the village and do what I have asked you to do."

"Yes, Koriba," he said, running out of my _boma_ and down the hill on his strong young legs as a number of guinea fowl, squawking and screeching, moved resentfully out of his path. It was less than an hour later that Koinnage once

again climbed my hill, this time accompanied by Njobe and two other elders, all wearing their tribal robes.

"_Jambo_, Koriba," said Koinnage unhappily.

"_Jambo_," I replied.

"You told me to come back when I understood why Bwana must leave," said Koinnage. He spat on the ground, and a tiny spider raced away. "I have come."

"And what have you learned?" I asked, raising my hand to shade my eyes from the sun. He lowered his eyes to the ground, uncomfortable as a child being questioned by his father.

"I have learned that a Utopia is a delicate thing which requires protection

from those who would force their will upon it."

"And you, Njobe?" I said. "What have you learned?"

"Our life here was very good," he answered. "And I believed that goodness was its own defense." He sighed deeply. "But it is not."

"Is Kirinyaga worth defending?" I asked.

"How can you, of all people, ask that?" demanded one of the other two elders.

"The Maasai can bring many machines and much money to Kirinyaga," I said. "He seeks only to improve us, not destroy us."

"It would not be Kirinyaga any

longer," said Njobe. "It would be Kenya all over again."

"He has corrupted everything he has touched," said Koinnage, his face contorted with rage and humiliation. "My own son has become one of his followers. No longer does he show respect for his father, or for our women or our traditions. He speaks only of money and guns now, and he worships Bwana as if he were Ngai Himself." He paused. "You must help us, Koriba."

"Yes," added Njobe. "We were wrong not to listen to you." I stared at each of their worried faces in turn, and finally I nodded.

"I will help you."

"When?"

"Soon."

"_How_ soon?" persisted Koinnage, coughing as the wind blew a cloud of dust past his face. "We cannot wait much longer."

"Within a week the Maasai will be gone," I said.

"Within a week?" repeated Koinnage.

"That is my promise." I paused. "But if we are to purify our society, his followers may have to leave with him."

"You cannot take my son from me!" said Koinnage.

"The Maasai has already taken him," I pointed out. "I will have to decide if he will be allowed to return."

"But he is to be the paramount chief when I die."

"That is my price, Koinnage," I said firmly. "You must let me decide what to do with the Maasai's followers." I placed a hand to my heart. "I will make a just decision."

"I do not know," muttered Koinnage.

I shrugged. "Then live with the Maasai."

Koinnage stared intently at the ground, as if the ants and termites could tell him what to do. Finally he sighed.

"It will be as you say," he agreed unhappily.

"How will you rid us of the Maasai?" asked Njobe.

"I am the _mundumugu_," I answered noncommittally, for I wanted no hint of my plan to reach Bwana's ears.

"It will take powerful magic," said Njobe.

"Do you doubt my powers?" I asked.

Njobe would not meet my gaze. "No, but..."

"But what?"

"But he is like a god. He will be difficult to destroy."

"We have room for only one god," I said, "and His name is Ngai." They returned to the village, and I went back to blending my poison.

* * * *

While I waited for Ndemi to return, I took a thin piece of wood and carved a tiny hole in it. Then I took a long needle, stuck it lengthwise through the entire length of the wood, and withdrew it.

Finally I placed the wood to my lips and blew into the hole. I could hear no sound, but the cattle in the pasture suddenly raised their heads, and two of my goats began racing frantically in circles. I tried my makeshift whistle twice more, received the same reaction, and finally put it aside. Ndemi arrived in midafternoon, carrying the oil gourds, his father's ancient bow and ten carefully-crafted arrows. He had been unable to find any metal, but he had carved very sharp points at the end of each. I checked the bowstring, decided that it still had resilliancy, and nodded my approval. Then, very carefully making sure not to let any of the poison come in contact with my flesh, I dipped

the head of each arrow into my solution, and wrapped them in the ten pieces of cloth Ndemi had brought.

"It is good," I said. "Now we are ready."

"What must I do, Koriba?" he asked.

"In the old days when we still lived in Kenya, only Europeans were allowed to hunt, and they used to be paid to take other Europeans on safari," I explained. "It was important to these white hunters that their clients killed many animals, for if they were disappointed, they would either not return or would pay a different white hunter to take them on their next safari." I paused. "Because of this, the hunters would sometimes train a pride of lions to come out and be killed."

"How would they do this, Koriba?" asked Ndemi, his eyes wide with wonder.

"The white hunter would send his tracker out ahead of the safari," I said, pouring the oil into six smaller gourds as I spoke. "The tracker would go into the veldt where the lions lived, and kill a wildebeest or a zebra, and slit open its belly, so that the odors wafted in the wind. Then he would blow a whistle. The lions would come, either because of the odors or because they were curious about the strange new sound.

"The tracker would kill another zebra the next day, and blow the whistle again, and the lions would come again. This went on every day until the lions knew

that when they heard the whistle, there would be a dead animal waiting for them --and when the tracker had finally trained them to come at the sound of the whistle, he would return to the safari, and lead the hunter and his clients to the veldt where the lions dwelt, and then blow the whistle. The lions would run toward the sound, and the hunter's clients would collect their trophies."

I smiled at his delighted reaction, and wondered if anyone left on Earth knew that the Kikuyu had anticipated Pavlov by more than a century.

Then I handed Ndemi the whistle I had carved.

"This is your whistle," I said. "You must not lose it."

"I will place a thong around my neck and tie it to the thong," he said. "I will not lose it."

"If you do," I continued, "I will surely die a terrible death."

"You can trust me, _mundumugu_."

"I know I can." I picked up the arrows and handed them carefully to him. "These are yours," I said. "You must be very careful with them. If you cut your skin on them, or press them against a wound, you will almost certainly die, and not all of my powers will be able to save you."

"I understand," he said, taking the arrows gingerly and setting them on the ground next to his bow.

"Good," I said. "Do you know the

forest that is half a mile from the house Bwana has built by the river?"

"Yes, Koriba."

"Each day I want you to go there and slay a grasseater with one of your poisoned arrows. Do not try to kill the buffalo, because he is too dangerous -- but you may kill any other grasseater. Once it is dead, pour all the oil from one of these six gourds onto it."

"And then shall I blow the whistle for the hyenas?" he asked.

"Then you will climb a nearby tree, and only when you are safe in its branches are you to blow the whistle," I said. "They will come --slowly the first day, more rapidly the second and third, and almost instantly by the fourth. You

will sit in the tree for a long time after they have eaten and gone, and then you will climb down and return to your _boma_."

"I will do as you ask, Koriba," he said. "But I do not see how this will make Bwana leave Kirinyaga."

"That is because you are not yet a _mundumugu_," I replied with a smile. "But I am not yet through instructing you."

"What else must I do?"

"I have one final task to set before you," I continued. "Just before sunrise on the seventh day, you will leave your boma and kill a seventh animal."

"I only have six gourds of oil," he pointed out.

"You will not need any on the seventh day. They will come simply because you whistle." I paused to make sure he was following my every word. "As I say, you will kill a grasseater before sunrise, but this time you will not spread oil on him, and you will not blow your whistle immediately. You will climb a tree that affords you a clear view of the plains between the woods and the river. At some point you will see me wave my hand _thus_" --I demonstrated a very definite rotating motion with my right hand --"and then you must blow the whistle _immediately_. Do you understand?"

"I understand."

"Good."

"And what you have told me to do will rid Kirinyaga of Bwana forever?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I wish I knew how," persisted Ndemi.

"This much I will tell you," I said. "Being a civilized man, he will expect two things: that I will confront him on my own territory, and that --because I, too, have been educated by the Europeans --that I will use the Europeans' technology to defeat him."

"But you will not do what he expects?"

"No," I said. "He still does not understand that our traditions supply us with everything we need on Kirinyaga. I

will confront him on his own battleground, and I will defeat him with the weapons of the Kikuyu and not the Europeans." I paused again. "And now, Ndemi, you must go slay the first of the grasseaters, or it will be dark before you go home, and I do not want you walking across the savannah at night."

He nodded, picked up his whistle and his weapons, and strode off toward the woods by the river.

* * * *

On the sixth night I walked down to the village, arriving just after dark. The dancing hadn't started yet, though most of the adults had already gathered. Four young men, including Koinnage's son, tried to block my way, but Bwana was in

a generous mood, and he waved them aside.

"Welcome, old man," he said, sitting atop his tall stool. "It has been many days since I have seen you."

"I have been busy."

"Plotting my downfall?" he asked with an amused smile.

"Your downfall was predetermined by Ngai," I replied.

"And what will cause _my_ downfall?" he continued, signaling one of his wives --he had five now --to bring him a fresh gourd of _pombe_.

"The fact that you are not a Kikuyu."

"What is so special about the Kikuyu?" he demanded. "They are a tribe of sheep who stole their women

from the Wakamba and their cattle and goats from the Luo. Their sacred mountain, from which this world took its name, they stole from the Maasai, for _Kirinyaga_ is a Maasai word."

"Is that true, Koriba?" asked one of the younger men.

I nodded. "Yes, it is true. In the language of the Maasai, _kiri_ means _mountain_, and _nyaga_ means _light_. But while it is a Maasai word, it is the Kikuyu's Mountain of Light, given to us by Ngai."

"It is the Maasai's mountain," said Bwana. "Even its peaks are named after Maasai chieftans."

"There has never been a Maasai on the holy mountain," said old Njobe.

"We owned the mountain first, or it would bear a Kikuyu name," responded Bwana.

"Then the Kikuyu must have slain the Maasai, or driven them away," said Njobe with a sly smile. This remark angered Bwana, for he threw his gourd of _pombe_ at a passing goat, hitting it on the flanks with such power that it bowled the goat over. The animal quickly got to its feet and raced through the village, bleating in terror.

"You are fools!" growled Bwana. "And if indeed the Kikuyu drove the Maasai from the mountain, then I will now redress the balance. I now proclaim myself Laibon of Kirinyaga, and declare that it is no longer a Kikuyu world."

"What is a Laibon?" asked one of the men.

"It is the Maasai word for king," I said.

"How can this not be a Kikuyu world, when everyone except you is a Kikuyu?" Njobe demanded of Bwana.

Bwana pointed at his five young henchmen. "I hereby declare these men to be Maasai."

"You cannot make them Maasai just by calling them Maasai." Bwana grinned as the flickering firelight cast strange patterns on his sleek, shining body. "I can do anything I want. I am the Laibon."

"Perhaps Koriba has something to say about that," said Koinnage, for he knew that the week was almost up.

Bwana stared at me belligerently. "Well, old man, do you dispute my right to be king?"

"No," I said. "I do not."

"Koriba!" exclaimed Koinnage.

"You cannot mean that!" said Njobo.

"We must be realistic," I said. "Is he not our mightest hunter?" Bwana snorted. "I am your _only_ hunter."

I turned to Koinnage. "Who else but Bwana could walk naked into the veldt, armed only with a spear, and slay _fisi_?"

Bwana nodded his head. "That is true."

"Of course," I continued, "none of us saw him do it, but I am sure he would not lie to us."

"Do you dispute that I killed _fisi_ with a spear?" demanded Bwana heatedly.

"I do not dispute it," I said earnestly. "I have no doubt that you could do it again whenever you wished."

"That it true, old man," he said, somewhat assuaged.

"In fact," I continued, "perhaps we should celebrate your becoming Laibon with another such hunt --but this time in the daylight, so that your subjects may see for themselves the prowess and courage of their king."

He took another gourd from his youngest wife and stared at me intently. "Why are you saying this, old man? What do you really want?"

"Only what I have said," I replied, spitting on my hands to show my sincerity. He shook his head. "No," he said. "You are up to some mischief." I shrugged. "Well, if you would rather not..."

"Perhaps he is afraid to," said Njobe.

"I fear nothing!" snapped Bwana.

"Certainly he does not fear _fisi_," I said. "That much should be evident by now."

"Right," said Bwana, still staring at me.

"Then if he does not fear _fisi_, what _does_ he fear about a hunt?" asked Njobe.

"He does not wish to hunt because _I_ suggested it," I replied. "He still does

not trust me, and that is understandable."

"Why is that understandable?" demanded Bwana. "Do you think I fear your mumbo-jumbo like the other sheep do?"

"I have not said that," I answered.

"You have no magic, old man," he said, getting to his feet. "You have only tricks and threats, and these mean nothing to a Maasai." He paused, and then raised his voice so that everyone could hear him. "I will spend the night in Koinnage's hut, and then I will hunt _fisi_ tomorrow morning, in the old way, so that all my subjects can see the their Laibon in combat."

"Tomorrow morning?" I repeated.

He glared at me, his Maasai

arrogance chiselled in every feature of his lean, handsome face.

"At sunrise."

* * * *

I awoke early the next morning, as usual, but this time, instead of building a fire and sitting next to it until the chill had vanished from my aged bones, I donned my _kikoi_ and walked immediately to the village. All of the men were gathered around Koinnage's _boma_, waiting for Bwana to emerge. Finally he came out of his hut, his body annointed beneath his red cloak. He seemed clear-eyed despite the vast quantities of _pombe_ he had imbibed the previous night, and in his right hand he clutched the same spear he had used

during his very first hunt on Kirinyaga.

Contemptuous of us all, he looked neither right nor left, but began walking through the village and out onto the savannah toward the river. We fell into step behind him, and our little procession continued until we were perhaps a mile from his house. Then he stopped and held a hand up.

"You will come no farther," he announced, "or your numbers will frighten _fisi_ away." He let his red cloak fall to the ground and stood, naked and glistening, in the morning sunlight.

"Now watch, my sheep, and see how a true king hunts."

He hefted his spear once, to get the feel of it, and then he strode off into the

waist-high grass. Koinnage sidled up to me. "You promised that he would leave today," he whispered.

"So I did."

"He is still here."

"The day is not yet over."

"You're _sure_ he will leave?" persisted Koinnage.

"Have I ever lied to my people?" I responded.

"No," he said, stepping back. "No, you have not." We fell silent again, looking out across the plains. For a long time we could see nothing at all. Then Bwana emerged from a clump of bushes and walked boldly toward a spot about fifty yards ahead of him. And then the wind shifted and suddenly the air was

pierced by the ear-splitting laughter of hyenas as they caught scent of his oiled body. We could see grass swaying as the pack made their way toward Bwana, yelping and cackling as they approached.

For a moment he stood his ground, for he was truly a brave man, but then, when he saw their number and realized that he could kill no more than one of them, he hurled his spear at the nearest hyena and raced to a nearby acacia tree, clambering up it just before the first six hyenas reached its base. Within another minute there were fifteen full-grown hyenas circling the tree, snarling and laughing at him, and Bwana had no choice but to remain where he was.

"How disappointing," I said at last. "I

believed him when he said he was a mighty hunter."

"He is mightier than you, old man," said Koinnage's son.

"Nonsense," I said. "Those are just hyenas around his tree, not demons." I turned to Koinnage's son and his companions. "I thought you were his friends. Why do you not go to help him?" They shifted uneasily, and then Koinnage's son spoke: "We are unarmed, as you can see."

"What difference does that make?" I said. "You are almost Maasai, and they are just hyenas."

"If they are so harmless, why don't _you_ make them go away?" demanded Koinnage's son.

"This is not my hunt," I replied.

"You cannot make them go away, so do not chide us for standing here."

"I can make them go away," I said. "Am I not the _mundumugu_?"

"Then do so!" he challenged me.

I turned to the men of the village. "The son of Koinnage has put a challenge to me. Do you wish me to save the Maasai?"

"No!" they said almost as one.

I turned to the young man. "There you have it."

"You are lucky, old man," he said, a sullen expression on his face. "You could not have done it."

"_You_ are the lucky one," I said.

"Why?" he demanded.

"Because you called me old man, rather than _mundumugu_ or _m'zee_, and I have not punished you." I stared unblinking at him. "But know that should you ever call me old man again, I will turn you into the smallest of rodents and leave you in the field for the jackals to feed upon." I uttered my statement with such conviction that he suddenly seemed less sure of himself.

"You are bluffing, _mundumugu_," he said at last. "You have no magic."

"You are a foolish young man," I said, "for you have seen my magic work in the past, and you know it will work again in the future."

"Then make the hyenas disperse," he said.

"If I do so, will you and your companions swear fealty to me, and respect the laws and traditions of the Kikuyu?"

He considered my proposition for a long moment, then nodded.

"And the rest of you?" I asked, turning to his companions. There were mumbled assents.

"Very well," I said. "Your fathers and the village elders will bear witness to your agreement." I began walking across the plain toward the tree where Bwana sat, glaring down at the hyenas. When I got within perhaps three hundred yards of them they noticed me and began approaching, constantly testing the wind and growling hungrily.

"In the name of Ngai," I intoned, "the _mundumugu_ orders you to begone!" As I finished the sentence, I waved my right arm at them in just the way I had demonstrated to Ndemi. I heard no whistle, for it was above the range of human hearing, but instantly the entire pack turned and raced off toward the woods.

I watched them for a moment, then turned back to my people.

"Now go back to the village," I said sternly. "I will tend to Bwana." They retreated without a word, and I approached the tree from which Bwana had watched the entire pageant. He had climbed down and was waiting for me when I arrived.

"I have saved you with my magic," I said, "but now it is time for you to leave Kirinyaga."

"It was a trick!" he exclaimed. "It was not magic."

"Trick or magic," I said, "what difference does it make? It will happen again, and next time I will not save you."

"Why should I believe you?" he demanded sullenly.

"I have no reason to lie to you," I said. "The next time you go hunting they will attack you again, so many _fisi_ that even your European gun cannot kill them all, and I will not be here to save you." I paused.

"Leave while you can, Maasai. They will not be back for half an hour. You

have to time walk to Haven by then, and I will use my computer to tell Maintenance that you are waiting to be taken back to Earth." He looked deep into my eyes. "You are telling the truth," he said at last.

"I am."

"How did you do it, old man?" he asked. "I deserve to know that much before I leave." I paused for a long moment before answering him.

"I am the _mundumugu_," I replied at last, and, turning my back on him, I returned to the village.

* * * *

We tore his house down that afternoon, and in the evening I called down the rains, which purified

Kirinyaga of the last taint of the corruption that had been in our midst. The next morning I walked down the long, winding path to the village to bless the scarecrows, and the moment I arrived I was surrounded by the children, who asked for a story.

"All right," I said, gathering them in the shade of an acacia tree. "Today I shall tell you the story of the Arrogant Hunter."

"Has it a happy ending?" asked one of the girls.

I looked around the village and saw my people contentedly going about their daily chores, then stared out across the tranquil green plains.

"Yes," I said. "This time it has."