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**THE MASTER KILLER**  
By Brent Brabazon  
Copyright by Publishers' Press Ltd.  
El Delgado Terrible — so he had  
been dubbed — was a tiger, a small  
Campeche tiger of south-eastern  
Mexico. In all the lumber and chili  
camps, the rubber and cane planta-  
tions, and little villages that were  
sprinkled throughout the wide, vast  
expanse of jungle, he was known and  
hated and feared; this animal that  
seemed supernatural, so great was his  
prowess — The Terrible One — truly.  
Never before had the district been  
visited by a tiger whose methods were  
so peculiar, so inexplicable, so phe-  
nomenal, for always was his prey  
the same — a steer, a bull, a cow —  
never anything smaller, never the  
favourite flesh of his kind, a young  
calf. One day he would kill at a  
certain place, and the next day he  
would be heard from some forty or  
fifty miles distant.

Heywood swore that he would have  
that beast — alive, and got busy.  
Then he went to work; at the  
watering holes, the tiger's own little  
intricate paths, around the cattle cor-  
rals, he set steel traps, cunningly  
placed and hidden by his master hand.  
But all to no avail.

By and bye he located the animal's  
lair, a small hole in the base of a  
rocky cliff with a couple of fuzzy  
little cubs rolling around in front.  
Trap after trap of many kinds were  
fixed in vain and at length Heywood  
packed a month's food and established  
himself in a hollow giant mahogany  
close by the water hole. Early  
morning of the sixth day his eyes  
caught a huge black-gray boar wad-  
dling slowly, majestically along, and  
Heywood knew that a jungle tragedy  
was at hand. And he saw some-  
thing he never could forget.

From an intricate tangle of dense  
vine work a form shot out — a long,  
thin, serpentine, tawny form — front  
paws outstretched, tail rigidly poised,  
and the cruel, sardonic mouth open.  
For twenty feet it passed through the  
air like a well-hurled dart, and then  
the tiger landed on the enemy's back.  
As the tiger struck the boar, the  
bristles that ran along the back-bone  
under the short, woolly hair, rose in  
a formidable mane; the thick lips  
curled up and showed all of the two  
long, dangerous tusks and sharpened  
teeth. It roared angrily, heaved itself  
up on its short massive hind legs,  
and with all its force flung itself  
backward. At the same instant, the  
tiger withdrew his two hind claws  
from his opponent's haunches; took a  
firmer grip with his fore claws; sank  
his punishing teeth and jaws into the  
back of the boar's neck, and with  
marvellous rapidity, coupled with all  
his strength, he whirled his body  
around in a circle.

Again the boar rose up; the tiger  
crouched, the grey beast jumped for-  
ward, hoping to crush the other be-  
neath his hoofs, but the black and  
yellow bunch of steely muscles sprang  
to meet him, and they struck with  
terrible impetus. There was the  
gnashing of teeth on teeth, a fire-  
work display of swinging feet, each  
one trying to rip the other open.

Following on some severe and  
bloody tackling on both sides, in  
course of which the tiger had his  
throat slit, the big boar became an-  
tagonised and goaded to such a state  
that he was rendered almost crazy.  
His foaming lips screwed up in a  
snarl; his blazing eyes almost closed,  
and like some huge, awkward mon-  
ster, he bounded wildly forward,  
grunting and bellowing his rage. But  
as he came on the elusive tiger side  
stepped, and just as the boar struck  
the ground, he sprang and twined  
his limbs about the hairy body. The  
boar toppled over and for a moment  
lay kicking on his back.

The Terrible One had been waiting  
for this moment. Every muscle in  
his body seemed tingling and twitch-  
ing; his cruel, long mouth was open  
wide, and his eyes glinted red and  
green. Like a fearfully powerful  
piston-rod his serpentine form shot  
forth. He struck the boar squarely  
and pinned him down to earth. Deep  
— deep he buried his teeth in the gory  
throat and swayed his body from side  
to side. And then sounded a muffled  
shriek of satisfied longing; once more  
the tiger threw his body free from  
his opponent, and another life had  
gone out.

Heywood in his hollow tree trunk,  
relaxed his tense, clasped fingers and  
firmly compressed lips. It was the  
greatest, bravest battle he had ever  
seen.

And now, with eyes of respectful  
homage, he watched the tiger, stand-  
ing silent, trembling a bit with weak-  
ness from his loss of blood, red fluid  
dripping from his mouth and sides,  
and the gashes on his neck and belly.

Heywood saw him walk painfully  
and softly forward in the direction of  
the watering hole — the trap sur-  
rounded water. For the fraction of a  
second the man deliberated, then his  
heart flew to his throat and he  
stepped forth, his mind made up,  
"Back," he yelled, pointing his arm at  
the tiger, "I don't want you now —  
no — you can live. You're the grandest  
thing I ever seen. Back!"

The weakened, battered tiger moved  
not an inch. He raised his stooping  
head and stared haughtily, scornfully,  
at the man.

Heywood's heart went out. At that  
moment he loved him as he would  
have loved a brother of whom he was  
vastly proud. He walked forward and  
spoke as if to a human being. "Back,  
boy, I tell you there's traps there,  
back."

The tiger moved his eyes and gazed  
stolidly at the spring. He seemed to  
understand. Heywood sprang to with-  
in five feet of the animal. He stretch-  
ed his arm at the brazen face and

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broke out excitedly, "I tell you, boy,  
there's traps there. Get back — get  
back to you're mate an' young and let  
'em fix you up. You're game — the  
gamest thing I ever seen, an' by  
God, I ain't agoin' to hunt you."  
Once again the proud, fearless head  
was raised with kingly grace, the  
brazen, cunning eyes seemed to pierce  
the man through, and slowly, grace-  
fully, arrogantly, El Delgado Terrible  
— the master killer of the bush —  
strode off through the thick, black  
jungle.

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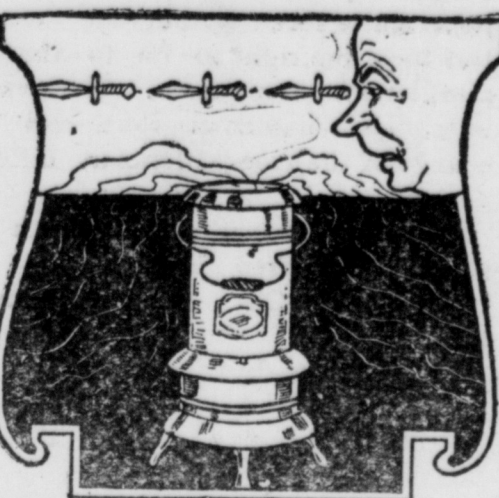
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