

Once upon a time 2022

Once upon a time there was a chimpanzee. Up a tree, she was, eating this and that, as chimpanzees do. She wasn't feeling too good. She didn't notice at first, the men around her. They were African. She had seen, many African men before. They didn't bother her. She kept an eye on them, just in case. She noticed them looking at her, watching her. She became anxious, the men were getting closer. Closing in on her. She didn't know how hungry they were. The Frenchmen didn't care. They were drunk. They had wine but there was no food for the African bearers. A supply breakdown! The bearers were black. They were African. They were there because the French were there. The French were there because the Germans were there. The Germans were there, because there weren't other places around, other than there, where there weren't other Europeans. The French had their consignment of wine, they could at least get drunk. The chimpanzee was afraid. The Africans were getting far too close.

Down the tree she climbed. She tried to move away. The Africans were hungry, they needed to eat. She, the chimpanzee was on the menu. She tried to move away. There were Africans around her. All around her. They, the Africans attacked. She received a blow. Another blow followed. She attacked. She scratched and bit one. Another African struck her. Africans all around, clubs in hand. The Africans didn't have guns. The French didn't trust them with guns. The Frenchmen had guns. But they were drunk. The Chimpanzee attacked again, another African. Bitten he was and blood was drawn. She, the chimpanzee received a blow. Injured she was. She cried out. but there was no response. She was hit again. She could no longer fight back. Her injuries were far too

severe. She fell and was hit again and again. She couldn't move. She was not to move again but her legacy lived on. It was 1918. The Germans were losing the war in Europe. The Great War was coming to an end. The Germans were going to lose the Cameroons to the French. Eighty percent of it, that is.

The two African men mauled and bitten by the chimpanzee moved around. They had sex with prostitutes. They had more sex on the road. They lost weight. They became slim. The prostitutes lost weight, too, as did their clients. They became slim, too. The clients of the prostitutes arrived home and like many travelling Africans they made love to their wives. The wives began to lose weight. At first it was a blessing but they kept on getting thinner. Soon, the Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome was a condition that no one could escape from after contracting it. Eventually, it became a pandemic, sixty years after the transmission from chimpanzee to man. It was called Slim in Africa. It was known by the French in the 1950's. Did anyone in the West care? It was a third world disease, after all, wasn't it? And they were people of colour. Except, that is, for those in the French Foreign Legion.

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