

The
RETURN
of
TARZAN
By
EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS
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With friendly blows the ape-man felled all who came within reach of his powerful hands. So closely packed was the howling, cursing mob that no weapon could be wielded to advantage, and none of the Arabs dared use a firearm for fear of wounding one of his compatriots.

Finally Tarzan succeeded in seizing one of the most persistent of his attackers. With a quick wrench he disarmed the fellow, and then, holding him before them as a shield, he beckoned slowly beside Abdul toward the little door which led into the inner courtyard. At the threshold he paused for an instant and, lifting the struggling Arab above his head, hurled him as though from a catapult full in the faces of his oppressing fellows.

Then Tarzan and Abdul stepped into the semidarkness of the court. The frightened Ouled-Nails were crouching at the tops of the stairs, which led to their respective rooms, the only light in the courtyard coming from the flickering candles which each girl had struck with its own grease to the woodwork of her door frame.

Scarcely had Tarzan and Abdul emerged from the room ere a revolver sprang close at their backs from the shadows beneath one of the stairways, and as they turned to meet this new antagonist two muffled figures sprang toward them, firing as they came. Tarzan leaped to meet these two new assailants. The foremost lay a second later in the trampled dirt of the court, disarmed and groaning from a broken wrist. Abdul's knife found the vital of the second in the instant that the fellow's revolver missed fire as he held it to the faithful Arab's forehead.

The maddened horde within the cafe were now rushing out in pursuit of their quarry. The girls had extinguished their candles at a cry from one of their number, and the only light within the yard came feebly from the open and half blocked door of the cafe. Tarzan had seized a sword from the man who had fallen before Abdul's knife, and now he stood waiting for the rush of men that was coming in search of them through the darkness.

Suddenly he felt a light hand upon his shoulder from behind and a woman's voice whispering: "Quick, m'sieur! This way. Follow me."

"Come, Abdul," said Tarzan, in a low tone to the youth; "we can be no worse off elsewhere than we are here."

The woman turned and led them up the narrow stairway that ended at the door of her quarters. Tarzan was close beside her. Instinctively he knew that she was the same who had whispered the warning in his ear earlier in the evening.

As they reached the top of the stairs they could hear the angry crowd searching the yard beneath.

"Soon they will search here," whispered the girl. "Easier; you can drop from the farther window of my room to the street beyond. Before they discover that you are no longer in the court or the buildings you will be safe within the hotel."

But even as she spoke several men had started up the stairway at the head of which they stood. There was a sudden cry from one of the searchers. They had been discovered. Quickly the crowd rushed for the stairway. The foremost assailant then leaped upward, but at the top he met the sudden sword that he had not expected—the quarry had been warned before.

"It is he who followed me about the market today," exclaimed Abdul. "I saw him again within the cafe—him and another—the two went out into the inner court after talking with this girl here. It was they who attacked and fired upon us as we came out of the cafe. Why do they wish to kill you, m'sieur?"

"I do not know," replied Tarzan, and then, after a pause, "unless"—But he did not finish, for the thought that had come to his mind, while it seemed the only reasonable solution of the mystery, appeared at the same time quite improbable.

Presently the men in the street went away. The courtyard and the cafe were deserted. Cautiously Tarzan lowered himself to the sill of the girl's window. The room was empty. He returned to the room and let Abdul down then he lowered the girl to the arms of the waiting Arab.

From the window Abdul dropped the short distance to the street below, while Tarzan took the girl in his arms and leaped down as he had done on so many other occasions in his own forest with a burden in his arms. A little cry of alarm was started from the girl's lips, but Tarzan landed in the street with but an imperceptible jar and lowered her in safety to her feet. She clung to him for a moment.

"How strong monsieur is and how active!" she cried. "El adrea, the black lion, himself is not more so."

"I should like to meet this el adrea

in another instant. He put a foot upon the sill and leaped out, but he did not look down. Above him, within arms' reach, was the low roof of the building. He called to the girl. She came and stood beside him. He put a great arm about her and lifted her across his shoulder.

"Wait here until I reach down for you from above," he said to Abdul. "In the meantime shove everything in the room against that door—it may delay them long enough." Then he stepped to the sill of the narrow window with the girl upon his shoulders.

"Hold tight!" he cautioned her. A moment later he had clambered to the roof above with the ease and dexterity of an ape. Setting the girl down, he leaned far over the roof's edge, calling softly to Abdul. The youth ran to the window.

"Your hand," whispered Tarzan. The men in the room beyond were battering at the door. With a sudden crash it fell splintering in, and at the same moment Abdul felt himself lifted like a feather on to the roof above. They were not a moment too soon.

As the three squatted upon the roof above the quarters of the Ouled-Nails they heard the angry cursing of the Arabs in the room beneath. Abdul transmitted from time to time to Tarzan.

"They are beating those in the street below now," said Abdul, "for permitting us to escape so easily. Those in the street say that we did not come that way, that we are still within the building and that those above, being too cowardly to attack us, are attempting to deceive them into believing that we have escaped. In a moment they will have fighting of their own to attend to if they continue their bawling."

Presently those in the building gave up the search and returned to the cafe. A few remained in the street below, smoking and talking.

Tarzan spoke to the girl, thanking her for the sacrifice she had made for him, a total stranger.

"I liked you," she said simply. "You were unlike the others who come to the cafe. You did not speak coarsely to me. The manner in which you gave me money was not an insult."

"What shall you do after tonight?" he asked. "You cannot return to the cafe. Can you even remain with safety in Sidi Aissa?"

"Tomorrow it will be forgotten," she replied. "But I should be glad if it might be that I need never return to this or another cafe. I have not remained because I wished to. I have been a prisoner."

"A prisoner?" ejaculated Tarzan incredulously.

"A slave would be the better word," she answered. "I was stolen in the night from my father's domain by a band of marauders. They brought me here and sold me to the Arab who keeps this cafe. It has been nearly two years now since I saw the last of mine own people. They are very far to the south. They never come to Sidi Aissa."

"You would like to return to your people?" asked Tarzan. "Then I shall promise to see you safely so far as Bon Saada, at least. There we can doubtless arrange with the commandant to send you to the rest of the way."

"Oh, m'sieur!" she cried. "How can I ever repay you? My father can reward you, and he will, for he is not a great sheikh? He is Kadour ben Saden."

"Kadour ben Saden?" ejaculated Tarzan. "Why, Kadour ben Saden is in Sidi Aissa this very night. He dined with me but a few hours since."

"Hush!" cautioned Abdul. "Listen!"

of yours," he said. "I have heard much about him to the honor of my father. You shall see him," said the girl. "He lives in a spur of the mountains north of us and comes down from his lair at night to rob my father's domain. With a single blow of his mighty paw he crushes the skull of a bull, and we betide the belated wayfarer who meets el adrea abroad at night."

Without further mishap they reached the hotel and sent a messenger for Kadour ben Saden. They had waited perhaps half an hour when the messenger returned with the old sheik. He entered the room with a questioning expression upon his proud face.

"Monsieur has done me the honor to," he commented, and then his eyes fell upon the girl. With outstretched arms he crossed the room to meet her. "My daughter!" he cried. "Allah is merciful! And tears dimmed the martial eyes of the old warrior."

When the story of her abduction and her final rescue had been told to Kadour ben Saden he extended his hand to Tarzan.

"All that is Kadour ben Saden's is thine, my friend, even to his life," he said very simply, but Tarzan knew that these were no idle words.

Early next morning the party was on its way south toward Bon Saada. For a few miles the road was good, and they made rapid progress, but suddenly it became a waste of sand, into which the horses sank fetlock deep at nearly every step. In addition to Tarzan, Abdul, the sheik, and his daughter were four of the wild plainsmen of the sheik's tribe who had accompanied him upon the trip to Sidi Aissa. Thus, seven guns strong, they entertained little fear of attack by day, and if all went well they should reach Bon Saada before nightfall. But soon Abdul announced that they were being followed by six horsemen.

"At the next village I shall remain and question these gentlemen while you ride on," said Tarzan.

"If you stop we shall stop," said Kadour ben Saden. "Until you are safe with your friends or the enemy has left your trail we shall remain with you. There is nothing more to say."

Tarzan nodded his head. He was a man of few words, and possibly it was for this reason as much as any that Kadour ben Saden had taken to him, for if there be one thing that an Arab despises it is a talkative man.

All the balance of the day Abdul caught glimpses of the horsemen in their rear. They remained always at about the same distance. During the occasional halts for rest and at the longer halt at noon they approached no closer.

"They are waiting for darkness," said Kadour ben Saden.

And darkness came before they reached Bon Saada. The pursuing horsemen rapidly closed upon the distance that intervened between them and their intended quarry. Abdul whispered this fact to Tarzan, for he did not wish to alarm the girl. The ape-man drew back beside him.

"You will ride ahead with the others, Abdul," said Tarzan. "This is my quarrel. I shall wait at the next convenient spot and interview these fellows."

"Then Abdul shall wait at thy side," replied the young Arab, nor would any threats or commands move him from his decision.

"Very well, then," replied Tarzan. "Here is as good a place as we could wish. Here are rocks at the top of this hillock. We shall remain hidden here and speak with the gentlemen."

They drew in their horses and dismounted. The others, riding ahead, were already out of sight in the darkness. Beyond them shone the lights of Bon Saada. Tarzan removed his rifle from his boot and loosened his revolver in its holster. He ordered Abdul to withdraw behind the rocks with the horses so that they would be shielded from the enemies' bullets should they fire. The young Arab pretended to do as he was bid, but when he had fastened the two animals securely to a low shrub he crept back to lie on his belly a few paces behind Tarzan.

The ape-man stood erect in the middle of the road, waiting. Nor did he have long to wait. The sound of galloping hooves came suddenly out of the darkness below him. Abdul and Tarzan later he discerned the moving blotches of lighter color against the black background of the night.

"Halt!" he cried, "for we fire!"

The white figures came to a sudden stop, and for a moment there was silence. Abdul raised himself to one knee. Tarzan cocked his jungle twin-barrel, and presently there came to him the sound of horses walking quietly through the sand to the east of him, to the west, to the north and to the south. They had been surrounded. Then a shot came from the direction in which he was looking. A bullet whirled through the air above his head, and he died at the flash of the enemy's gun.

Instantly the soundless waste was torn with the quick staccato of guns upon every hand. Abdul and Tarzan were only at the flashes. They could not yet see their foe-men. But one came too close, for Tarzan was accustomed to using his eyes in the darkness of the jungle night, than which there is no more utter darkness than this side the grave, and with a cry of pain a saddle was emptied.

"The odds are evening, Abdul," said Tarzan, with a low laugh.

But they were still far too one-sided, and when the five remaining horsemen whirled at a signal and charged full upon them it looked as if there would be a sudden ending of the battle. Both Tarzan and Abdul sprang to the shel-

ter of the rocks that they might keep the enemy in front of them. There was a mad clatter of galloping hoofs, a volley of shots from both sides, and the Arabs withdrew to repeat the maneuver, but there were now only four against the two.

From one direction came the sound of a new charge. But scarcely had the first gun spoken ere a dozen shots rang out behind the Arabs. There came the wild shouts of a new party to the controversy, and the pounding of the feet of many horses from down the road to Bon Saada.

The Arabs did not wait to learn the identity of the newcomers. With a parting volley, as they dashed by the position which Tarzan and Abdul were holding, they plunged off along the road toward Sidi Aissa. A moment later Kadour ben Saden and his men dashed up.

"Why did you not tell me that you contemplated ambushing those fellows?" asked the sheik in a hurt tone. "We might have had them all instead of killing only two if the seven of us had stopped to meet them."

"It was to prevent the transfer of my own quarrel to another's shoulders that Abdul and I stopped off to question them. Then there is your daughter. I could not be the cause of exposing her needlessly to the marksmanship of six men."

Kadour ben Saden shrugged his shoulders. He did not relish having been cheated out of a fight.

The little battle so close to Bon Saada had drawn out a company of soldiers. Tarzan and his party met them just outside the town. The officer in charge halted them to learn the significance of the shots.

"A handful of marauders," replied Kadour ben Saden. "They attacked two of our number who had dropped behind, but when we returned to them the fellows soon dispersed. They left two dead. None of my party was injured."

This seemed to satisfy the officer, and after taking the names of the party he marched his men on toward the scene of the skirmish to bring back the dead men for purposes of identification if possible.

Two days later Kadour ben Saden, with his daughter and followers, rode south through the pass below Bon Saada, bound for their home in the wilderness. The sheik had urged Tarzan to accompany him, and the girl had added her entreaties to those of her father; but, though he could not explain it to them, Tarzan's duties loomed particularly large after the happenings of the past few days so that he could not think of leaving his post for an instant. But he promised to come later if it lay within his power to do so, and they had to content themselves with that assurance.

During these two days Tarzan had spent practically all his time with Kadour ben Saden and his daughter. He was keenly interested in this race of stern and dignified warriors and embraced the opportunity which their friendship offered to learn what he could of their lives and customs. In his head revolved an idea that when he had completed his mission he would resign and return to live for the remainder of his life with the tribe of Kadour ben Saden.

The front of the Hotel du Petit Sahara, where Tarzan stopped in Bon Saada, is taken up with the bar, two dining rooms and the kitchens. Both of the dining rooms open directly off the bar, and one of them is reserved for the use of the officers of the garrison. As you stand in the barroom you may look into either of the dining rooms if you wish.

It was to the bar that Tarzan repaired after speeding Kadour ben Saden and his party on their way. It was very early in the morning, for Kadour ben Saden had elected to ride far that day, so that it happened that when Tarzan returned there were guests still at breakfast.

As his casual glance wandered into the officers' dining room Tarzan saw something which brought a look of interest to his eyes. Lieutenant Gernois was sitting there, and as Tarzan looked a white-robed Arab approached and, bending, whispered a few words into the lieutenant's ear. Then he passed

out of the building through another door.

In itself the thing was nothing, but as the man had stooped to speak to the officer Tarzan caught sight of something which the accidental parting of the man's burmese revealed—he carried his left arm to a sling.

CHAPTER IX.
Numa "El Adrea."

ON the same day that Kadour ben Saden rode south the diligence from the north brought Tarzan a letter from D'Arnot which had been forwarded from Sidi-Beil-Abbes. Here is the letter:

My Dear Jean—Since last I wrote you I have been across to London on a matter of business. I was there but three days. The very first day I came upon an old friend of yours quite unexpectedly in Fenchurch street. Now, you never in the world would guess whom. None other than Mr. Samuel T. Philander. But it is not I who can see your look of incredulity. Nor is this all. He insisted that I return to the hotel with him, and there I found the other—Professor Archimedes Q. Fortner, Miss Porter and that enormous black woman, Miss Porter's maid, Esmeralda, you will recall. While I was there Clayton came in. They are to be married soon. On account of his father's death it is to be a very quiet affair—only blood relatives.

While I was alone with Mr. Philander the old fellow became rather confidential; said Miss Porter had already postponed the wedding on three different occasions. He commented that it appeared to him that she was not particularly anxious to marry Clayton at all, but this time it seems that it is quite likely to go through.

Of course they all asked after you, but I respected your wishes in the matter of your true origin and only spoke to them of your present affairs in picturing your desire and resolve to go back eventually to your native jungle. I was sorry afterward, for it did seem to cause her real anxiety to contemplate the awful dangers to which you wished to return.

"And yet," she said, "I do not know, there are more unhappy fates that the grim and terrible jungle presents to M. Tarzan. At least his conscience will be free from remorse. At times I long to return there, for I cannot forget the happiest moments of my life were spent there."

There was an expression of ineffable sadness on her face as she spoke.

Clayton appeared nervous and ill at ease while you were the subject of conversation. He wore a worried and harassed expression, but he was very kindly in his expressions of interest in you. I wonder if he suspects the truth about you?

Tarzan came in with Clayton. They are great friends, you know. He is about to set out upon one of his interminable cruises in that yacht of his and was urging the entire party to accompany him. Tried to inveigle me into it too. I am thinking of circumnavigating Africa this time. Yesterday met the Count and Countess de Coude at the races. They inquired after you. De Coude really seems quite fond of you. Doesn't appear to harbor the least ill will to Olga as beautiful as ever, but a trifle subdued.

She asked me to tell you that Nikolaus had left France. She paid him 20,000 francs to go away and stay. She is congratulating herself that she got rid of him before he tried to carry out a threat he recently made her that he should kill you at the first opportunity.

Have been ordered back to my ship. She sails from Havre in two days under sealed orders. If you will address me in her care the letters will find me eventually. I shall write you as soon as another opportunity presents. Your sincere friend,
PAUL D'ARNOT.

"I fear," mused Tarzan, half aloud, "that Olga has thrown away her 20,000 francs."

He read over that part of D'Arnot's letter several times in which he had quoted from his conversation with Jane Porter. Tarzan derived a rather pathetic happiness from it, but it was better than no happiness at all.

The following three weeks at Bon Saada were quite uneventful. Gernois, never cordial, kept more than ever aloof from Tarzan since the episode in the dining room of the hotel at Aumale. His attitude on the few occasions that they had been thrown together had been distinctly hostile.

That he might keep up the appearance of the character he was playing Tarzan spent considerable time hunting in the vicinity of Bon Saada. Once, probably because of the fact that he rode alone, he was like to have lost his life. He was riding slowly through a little ravine when a shot sounded close behind him and a bullet passed through the cork helmet he wore. Although he turned at once and galloped rapidly to the top of the ravine, there was no sign of any enemy, nor did he see aught of another human being until he reached Bon Saada.

"Yes," he soliloquized in recalling the occurrence, "Olga has indeed thrown away her 20,000 francs."

One night he was Captain Gerard's guest at a little dinner.

"Your hunting has not been very fortunate?" questioned the officer.

"No," replied Tarzan. "I think I shall move on farther south and have a try at some of your Algerian lions."

"Good!" exclaimed the captain. "We are marching toward Djelfa on the morrow. You shall have company that far at least. Lieutenant Gernois and I, with 100 men, are ordered south to patrol a district in which the marauders are giving considerable trouble. Possibly we may have the pleasure of hunting the lion together. What say you?"

Tarzan was more than pleased, nor did he hesitate to say so, but the captain would have been astonished had he known the real reason of Tarzan's pleasure. Gernois was sitting opposite the ape-man. He did not seem so pleased with his captain's invitation.

"You will find lion hunting more exciting than gazelle shooting," remarked Captain Gerard, "and more dangerous."

"Even gazelle shooting has its dangers," replied Tarzan, "especially when one goes alone. I found it so today. I also found that, while the gazelle is the most timid of animals, it is not the most cowardly."

He must have slept for several hours

for when he was suddenly awakened by the frightened snoring and plunging of his horse the morning was shining full upon the little valley, and there, not ten paces before him, stood the grim carcer of the terror of the desert. Superb, majestic, his graceful neck extended and quivering, and his two eyes of fire riveted full upon his prey, stood Numa, el adrea, the black lion. A little thrill of joy tingled through Tarzan's nerves. It was like meeting an old friend after years of separation. For a moment he sat rigid to enjoy the magnificent spectacle of this lord of the wilderness.

But now Numa was crouching for the spring. Very slowly Tarzan raised his gun to his shoulder. He had never killed a large animal with a gun in all his life. Heretofore he had depended upon his spear, his poisoned arrows, his rope, his knife or his bare hands. Instinctively he wished that he had his arrows and his knife. He should have felt surer with them.

Numa was lying quite flat upon the ground now, presenting only his head. Tarzan would have preferred to fire a little from one side, for he knew what terrific damage the lion could do if he lived two minutes or even a minute after he was wounded. The lion stood trembling in terror at Tarzan's back. The ape-man took a cautious step to one side. Numa but followed him with his eyes. Another step he took and then another. Numa had not moved. Now he could aim at a point between the eye and the ear.

His finger tightened upon the trigger, and as he fired Numa sprang. At the same instant the terrified horse made a last frantic effort to escape. The tether parted, and he went careening down the canyon toward the desert.

No ordinary man could have escaped those frightful claws when Numa sprang from so short a distance. But Tarzan was no ordinary man. From earliest childhood his muscles had been trained by the fierce exigencies of his existence to act with the rapidity of thought. As quick as was el adrea Tarzan of the Apes was quicker, and so the great beast crashed against a tree, where he had expected to feel the soft flesh of man, while Tarzan, a couple of paces to the right, pumped another bullet into him that brought him, clawing and roaring, to his side.

Twice more Tarzan fired in quick succession, and then el adrea lay still and roared no more. It was no longer M. Jean Tarzan. It was Tarzan of the Apes that put a savage foot upon the body of his savage kill and, raising his face to the full moon, lifted his mighty voice in the weird and terrible challenge of his kind—a bull ape had made his kill. And the wild things in the wilderness stopped in their hunting and trembling at this new and awful voice which died down in the desert the children of the wilderness came out of their goatskin tents and looked toward the mountains, wondering what new and savage scourge had come to devastate their flocks.

CHAPTER X.
Through the Valley of the Shadow.

HALF a mile from the valley in which Tarzan stood a score of white-robed figures, bearing long, wicked looking guns, baited at the sound and looked at one another with questioning eyes. But presently, as it was not repeated, they took up their silent, stealthy way toward the valley.

Tarzan was now confident that Gernois had no intention of returning for him, but he could not fathom the object that had prompted the officer to desert him, yet leave him free to return to camp. His horse gone, he decided that it would be foolish to remain longer in the mountains, and so man he set out on his lonely way toward the desert.

He had scarcely entered the confines of the canyon when the first of the white-robed figures emerged into the valley upon the opposite side. For a moment they scanned the little depression from behind sheltering boulders, but when they had satisfied themselves that it was empty they advanced across it. Beneath the tree at one side they came upon the body of el adrea. With muttered exclamations they crowded about it. Then, a moment later, they hurried down the canyon which Tarzan was guarding a brief distance in advance of them. They moved cautiously and in silence, taking advantage of shelter, as men do who are stalking man.

As Tarzan walked down the wild canyon beneath the brilliant African moon the call of the jungle was strong upon him. The solitude and the savage freedom filled his heart with life and buoyancy. Again he was Tarzan of the Apes—very sense alert against the chance of surprise by some jungle enemy—yet treading lightly and with heart erect in proud consciousness of his night.

The nocturnal sounds of the mountains were new to him, yet they fell upon his ears like the soft voice of a half forgotten love. Many an intuitively sensed—ah, there was one that was familiar indeed; the distant coughing of Sheeta, the leopard, but there was a strange note in the final wail which made him doubt. It was a panther he had heard.

Presently a new sound—a soft, stealthy sound—obtruded itself among the others. No human ears other than the ape-man's would have detected it. At first he did not translate it, but finally he realized that it came from the bare feet of a number of human beings. They were behind him, and they were coming toward him quietly. He was being stalked.



Why did you not tell me you contemplated ambushing those fellows?

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