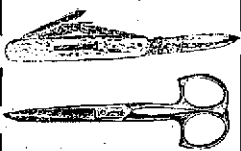


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SYNOPSIS

The infant son of Lord and Lady Grey-stone is mothered by Kala, an ape, after the death of his own parents.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

If he could catch his fellow apes with his long arm of many grasses, why not Sabor, the tiger?

The wanderings of the tribe brought them often near the closed and almost uninhabited by the little handkerchief harbor. To Tarzan this was always a source of never ending mystery and pleasure.

It was on the next night to the vicinity following the adventure with old Sabor that as he approached the cabin Tarzan noticed that from a distance the floor appeared as though an independent part of the wall in which it was set, and for the first time it occurred to him that this might prove the means of entrance which had so long eluded him.

He was alone, as was often the case when he visited the cabin. The apes had no love for it. The story of the murder stick, having lost nothing in the telling during these ten years, had quite surrounded the white man's deserted cabin with an atmosphere of weirdness and terror for the stultus. The story of his own connection with the cabin had never been told him. In a dim, vague way had Kala explained

to him that his father had been a strange white ape, but he did not know that Kala was not his own mother.

On this day he went directly to the door and spent hours examining it and fusing with the hunk, the knot and the latch. Finally he staid upon the door swung creakingly open before his astonished eyes.

For some minutes he did not dare venture within, but finally, as his eyes became accustomed to the dim light of the interior, he slowly and cautiously entered.

In the middle of the floor lay a skeleton, every vestige of flesh gone from the bones, to which still clung the moldered remnants of what had once been clothing; upon the bed lay a similar grewsome thing, but smaller, while in a tiny cradle near by was a third, a mere wisp of a skeleton.

To none of these evidences of an old tragedy did little Tarzan give but passing heed. His wild jungle life had inured him to the sight of dead and dying animals, and had he known that he was looking upon the remains of his own father and mother he would have been no more greatly moved.

The furnishings and other contents of the room it was which riveted his attention. He examined many things minutely—strange tools and weapons, books, papers, clothing—what little had withstood the ravages of time in the humid atmosphere of the jungle coast.

He noted chains and embowments, such as did not make his small experience, and in these he found the contents much better preserved.

Among other things he found a sharp hunting knife, on the keen blade of which he immediately proceeded to cut his finger. Nothing daunted, he continued his experiments, finding that he could hack and saw splinters of wood from the table and chairs with this new weapon.

For a long time this amused him; but, finally, he continued his experiments. A cupboard filled with

books he came across one with brightly colored pictures. It was a child's illustrated alphabet.

At first he tried to pick the little figures from the paper, but he soon saw that they were not real, though he knew not what they might be, nor had he any words to describe them.

In his hands, was a primer opened at a picture of a little ape similar to himself, but except for hands and face, with straight, slender ears, such he thought the jacket and trousers to be.

Honored the picture were three little bugs: BOY.

And now he had discovered in the text upon the page that these three were repeated many times in the same sequence.

Another fact he learned, and that was that there were comparatively few individual bugs. But these were repeated many times, occasionally alone, but more often in company with others.

Slowly he turned the pages, scanning the pictures and the text for a repetition of the combination "boy," which stood for every pictured figure in the little primer and in one or two of the picture books.

Of the meaning and use of the articles and conjunctions, verbs, adverbs and pronouns he had but the faintest and least conception.

One day when he was about twelve he found a number of lindenpins in a little cardboard drawer beneath the table, and in reaching upon the table with one of them he discovered to his surprise that he had found a black line left behind it.

He worked so assiduously with this new toy that the table top was soon a mass of narrow loops and irregular lines and his pencil point worn down to the wood. Then he took another pencil, but this time he had a definite object in view.

It was a difficult task, for he held the pencil as one would grasp the hilt of a dagger, which does not add greatly to ease in writing nor to the legibility of the results.

But he persevered for months, at such times as he was able to come to the cabin, until at last by repeated experimenting he found a position in which to hold the pencil that best permitted him to guide and control it, so that at last he could roughly reproduce any of the little bugs.

Thus he made a beginning at writing. Copying the bugs taught him an other thing, their number; and, though he could not count as we understand it, yet he had an idea of quantity, the base of his calculations being the number of fingers upon one of his hands.

His search through the various books convinced him that he had discovered all the different kinds of bugs most often repeated in combination, and he arranged them in proper order with great ease because of the frequency with which he had perused the fascinating alphabet picture book and the huge illustrated dictionary.

By the time he was seventeen he had learned to read the simple child's primer and had fully realized the true and wonderful purpose of the bugs.

No longer did he feel shame for his childish body or his human features, but he was now a man, and he was of a different race from his wild and hairy companions. He was a "M-A-N," they were "A-P-E-S," and the little ape which scurried through the forest top were "M-O-N-K-E-Y-S."

He knew, too, that old Sabor was a "T-I-G-E-R" and Huhah a "N-A-R-K-E-T" and Tantor an "E-L-E-P-H-A-N-T."

From then on his progress was rapid. With the help of the great dictionary and the native intelligence of a healthy mind, he was able to master the mysteries of his fascinating vocabulary.

Nor did he neglect the stern duties of life while following the bent of his inclination toward the solving of the mystery of his library.

He practiced with his rope and played with his sharp knife, which he had learned to keep keen by whetting upon flat stones.

CHAPTER IV. Tarzan Mightiest of the Apes. THE tribe of apes had grown larger since Tarzan had come among them.

Under the leadership of Kerchak they had been able to frighten the other tribes from their part of the jungle, so that they had plenty to eat and little or no loss from predatory incursions of neighbors.

The older apes either looked him over or else hated him as an individual, but not for his tremendous agility and speed and the fierce protection of his huge arms, which would have been useless at an early age.

Tarzan was his most consistent enemy, but it was through Tarzan that when he was about thirteen, the mere mention of his name suddenly ceased, and he was left severely alone, except on the occasions when one of them ran amuck in the throes of one of those strange fits of insane fury which attack the minds of many of the fiercer animals of the jungle. Then none was safe.

On the day that Tarzan established his right to respect the tribe was gathered about a small natural amphitheater which the jungle had left free from its entangling vines and creepers.

Here the tribe often gathered. In the center of the amphitheater was one of those strange earthen drums which the anthropologists build for the drummers of the apes, the sound of which men have heard in the fastnesses of the jungle, but which none has ever witnessed.

On the day that Tarzan won his emancipation from the persecution that had followed him remorselessly for twelve of his full ten years of life the tribe, now a little 100 strong, trooped silently through the lower terraces of the jungle trees and dropped noiselessly upon the drum.

The first of the drummers, marked important events in the life of the tribe—a victory, the capture of a prisoner, the killing of some large, dread-dent animal of the jungle, the death or accession of a king.

Today it was the killing of a giant ape, a member of another tribe, and as the people of Kerchak entered the arena two mighty bulls might have been seen leaping the body of the vanquished before they were slain.

As the light increased the females augmented the frequency and force of their blows until presently a rhythmic drum pervaded the jungle for miles in every direction. Huge brutes stepped in their hunting, with upreared ears and raised heads, to listen to the dull booming that betokened the drumming of the great apes.

As the din of the drum rose to almost unbearable volume, the males sprang into the open spaces between the squatting males and the drummers. Standing erect, he threw his head far back, and looking full into the eye of the rising moon, he beat upon his breast with his great hairy arms and emitted his fearful roaring wail.

Once—twice—thrice that terrifying cry rang out across the teeming multitude of the unsuspectingly quick, yet unthinkably deaf crowd.

Then, crouching, Kerchak stunk noiselessly around the open circle, veering far away from the dead body lying before the altar drum, but as he passed keeping his little, fierce, wicked red eyes upon the corpse.

Another male then sprang into the arena and, repeating the horrid cries of his kind, followed stealthily in his wake. Another and another followed in quick succession until the jungle reverberated with the now almost senseless notes of their bloodthirsty screams.

It was the challenge and the hunt. When all the adult males had joined in the thin line of cowering dancers the attack commenced.

Kerchak, seizing a huge club from the pile which lay at hand for the purpose, rushed furiously upon the dead ape, dealing the corpse a terrific blow, at the same time emitting the growls and snarls of combat.

The din of the drum was now increased, as well as the frequency of the blows, and the warriors, as each approached the victim of the hunt and delivered his bludgeon blow, joined in the mad wail of the death dance.

Tarzan was one of the wild, leaping horde. His brow, sweat streaked, muscular body glistening in the moonlight, some simple and graceful among the death, awkward, hairy brutes about him.

For half an hour the wild dance went on, until, at a sign from Kerchak, the noise of the drums ceased, the female drummers scampering hurriedly through the line of dancers toward the outer rim of snarling spectators. Then, as one man, the wails rushed headlong upon the thing which their terrific howl had reduced to a mass of hairy pulp.

Flash after flash came to their eyes in satisfying quantities, so a fit flame to their wild revel was a bit of fresh killed meat, and it was to the purpose of diverting their late enemy that they now turned their attention.

Tarzan more than the apes craved and needed death. Desecrated from a race of meat eaters, never in his life, he thought, had he once satisfied his appetite for animal food, and so now his agile little body worried its way in an endeavor to strangle any ape in his endeavor to take a share which his strength would have been unequal to the task of winning for him.

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