

The RETURN of TARZAN



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SYNOPSIS

Tarzan ape-man, who lived in the African jungle twenty years, is returning to Europe after renouncing his birthright as Lord Greystoke for the sake of Jane Porter, engaged to his cousin, William Clayton. He assists Count de Coude and the countess against their enemy, Nicolas Rokoff.

In Paris D'Arnot, Tarzan's friend, reproves him for giving up his position in the world. Tarzan asserts his preference for jungle life.

Rokoff tries to have Tarzan assassinated, but the ape-man's enormous strength and agility save him. D'Arnot receives a letter from Clayton. The latter and Jane are to be married.

(Continued From Yesterday.)

"Have not his attempted crimes against you and your husband forfeited whatever rights the bonds of kinship might have accorded him?" asked Tarzan. "The fact that you are his sister has not deterred him from seeking to besmirch your honor. You owe him no loyalty, madame."

"Ah, but there is that other reason. If I owe him no loyalty, though he be my brother, I cannot so easily disavow the fear I hold him in because of a certain episode in my life of which he is cognizant."

"I might as well tell you all," she resumed after a pause, "for I see that it is in my heart to tell you sooner or later. I was educated in a convent. While there I met a man whom I supposed to be a gentleman. I knew little or nothing about men and less about love. I got it into my foolish head that I loved this man, and at his urgent request I ran away with him. We were to have been married."

"I was with him just three hours—all in the daytime and in public places—railroad stations and upon a train. When we reached our destination, where we were to have been married, two officers stepped up to my escort as we descended from the train and placed him under arrest. They took me also, but when I had told my story they did not detain me, other than to send me back to the convent under the care of a matron. It seemed that the man who had wooed me was no gentleman at all, but a deserter from the army as well as a fugitive from civil justice. He had a police record in nearly every country in Europe."

"The matter was hushed up by the authorities of the convent. Not even my parents knew of it. But Nicolas met the man afterward and learned the whole story. Now he threatens to tell the count if I do not do just as he wishes me to."

Tarzan laughed. "You are still but a little girl. The story that you have told me cannot reflect in any way upon your reputation, and were you not a little girl at heart you would know it. Go to your husband tonight and tell him the whole story just as you have told it to me. Unless I am much mis-



She Found Herself Face to Face With Nicolas Rokoff.

taken he will laugh at you for your fears and take immediate steps to put that precious brother of yours in prison, where he belongs."

"I only wish that I dared," she said, "but I am afraid."

As Tarzan was leaving her a short time later he wondered a little at the clinging pressure of her hand at parting and the firm insistence with which she exacted a promise from him that he would call again on the morrow.

As the countess turned back into the room after Tarzan's departure she found herself face to face with Nicolas Rokoff.

"How long have you been here?" she cried, shrinking away from him.

"Since before your lover came," he answered with a nasty leer.

"Stop!" she commanded. "How dare you say such a thing to me—your sister!"

"Well, my dear Olga, if he is not your lover accept my apologies, but it is no fault of yours that he is not."

means to warn you that the sanctity of your home is this minute in jeopardy. A certain man who for months has been a constant visitor there during your absence is now with your wife. If you do at once to your countess' boudoir you will find them together. A FRIEND.

Twenty minutes after Paulvitch had called Tarzan, Rokoff obtained a connection with Olga's private line. Her maid answered the telephone, which was in the countess' boudoir. Olga's maid in answer to Rokoff's request to speak with her.

"This is a very urgent message for the countess' ears alone," replied Rokoff. "Tell her that she must arise and slip something about her and come to the telephone. I shall call up again in five minutes." Then he hung up his receiver. A moment later Paulvitch entered.

"The count has the message?" asked Rokoff. "He should be on his way to his home by now," replied Paulvitch. "Good! My lady will be sitting in her boudoir, very much in negligence, about now. In a minute the faithful Jacques will escort M. Tarzan into her presence without announcing him. The count will break in upon a very pretty love scene in about fifteen minutes from now. I think we have planned marvelously, my dear Alexis. Let us go out and drink to the very good health of M. Tarzan in some of old Piancon's unparalleled absinth, not forgetting that the Count de Coude is one of the best swordsmen in Paris and by far the best shot in all France."

When Tarzan reached Olga's Jacques was awaiting him at the entrance. "This way, monsieur," he said and led the way up the broad marble staircase. In another moment he had opened a door and, drawing aside a heavy curtain, obsequiously bowed Tarzan into a dimly lighted apartment. Then Jacques vanished.

Across the room from him Tarzan saw Olga seated before a little desk on which stood her telephone. She was tapping impatiently upon the polished surface of the desk. She had not heard him enter.

"Olga," he said, "what is wrong?" She turned toward him with a little cry of alarm.

"Jean!" she cried. "What are you doing here? Who admitted you? What does it mean?" Tarzan was thunderstruck, but in an instant he realized a part of the truth. "Then you did not send for me, Olga?"

"Send for you at this time of night? Jean, do you think that I am quite mad?" "Francois telephoned me to come at once; that you were in trouble and wanted me."

"Francois? Who in the world is Francois?" "He said that he was in your service. He spoke as though I should recall the fact."

"There is no one by that name in my employ. Some one has played a joke upon you, Jean," and Olga laughed. "I fear that it may be a most sinister joke," Olga, he replied. "There is more back of it than humor."

"What do you mean? You do not think that—"

"Where is the count?" he interrupted. "At the German ambassador's."

"This is another move by your estimable brother. Tomorrow the count will hear of it. He will question the servants. Everything will point to what Rokoff wishes the count to think."

"The scoundrel!" cried Olga. She had arisen and come close to Tarzan, where she stood looking up into his face. She was very frightened. In her eyes was an expression that the hunter sees in those of a poor, terrified doe—puzzled, questioning. Her look, her attitude, her words were eloquent of the age old appeal of defenseless woman to her natural protector—man. Tarzan took one of the warm little hands in his own strong one. The act was quite involuntary and almost equally so was the instinct of protection that threw a sheltering arm around the girl's shoulders.

The result was electrical. Never before had he been so close to her. In startled gully they looked suddenly into each other's eyes and where Olga de Coude should have been strong she was weak, for she crept closer into the man's arms and clasped her own about his neck. And Tarzan of the Apes? He took her into his mighty arms and covered her lips with kisses.

Rokoff de Coude made hurried excuses to his host after he had read the note handed him by the ambassador's butler. Never afterward could he recall the nature of the excuses he made. Everything was quite a blur to him up to the time that he stood on the threshold of his own home. Then he became very cool, moving quietly and with caution. For some inexplicable reason Jacques had the door open before he was halfway to the steps. It did not strike him at the time as being unusual, though afterward he remarked it.

Very softly he tiptoed up the stairs and along the gallery to the door of his wife's boudoir. In his hand was a heavy walking stick—in his heart murder.

Olga was the first to see him. With a horrified shriek she tore herself from Tarzan's arms and the ape-man turned just in time to ward with his arm a terrible blow that De Coude had aimed at his head. Once, twice, three times the heavy stick fell with lightning rapidity and each blow aided in the transition of the ape-man back to the primordial.

With the low, guttural snarl of the bull ape he sprang for the Frenchman. The great stick was torn from his grasp and broken in two as though it had been matchwood, to be flung aside as the now infuriated beast charged for his adversary's throat.

Olga de Coude stood a horrified spectator to the terrible scene which ensued during the next brief moment, then she sprang to where Tarzan was murdering her husband—choking the life from him—shaking him as a torrid might shake a rat.

Frankly she tore at his great hands. "Mother of God!" she cried

(To Be Continued.)

"You are killing him, you are killing him! Oh, Jean, you are killing my husband!" Tarzan was deaf with rage. Suddenly he hurled the body to the floor, and placing his foot upon the upturned breast, raised his head. Then through the palace of the Count de Coude rang the awesome challenge of the bull ape that has made a kill. From cellar to attic the horrid sound searched out the servants and left them blanched and trembling. The woman in the room sank to her knees beside the body of her husband and prayed.

Slowly the red mist faded from before Tarzan's eyes. Things began to take form—he was regaining the perspective of civilized man. His eyes fell upon the figure of the kneeling woman. "Olga," he whispered. She looked up.

She tore herself from Tarzan's arms, expecting to see the maniacal light of murder in the eyes above her. Instead she saw horror and contrition.

"Oh, Jean!" she cried. "See what you have done. He was my husband. I loved him, and you have killed him."

Very gently Tarzan raised the limp form of the Count de Coude and bore it to a couch. Then he put his ear to the man's breast.

"Some brandy, Olga," he said. She brought it, and together they forced it between his lips. Presently a faint gasp came from the white lips. The head turned, and De Coude groaned.

"He will not die," said Tarzan. "Thank God!"

"Why did you do it, Jean?" she asked. "I do not know. He struck me, and I went mad. I have seen the apes of my tribe do the same thing. I have never told you my story, Olga. It would have been better had you known it—this might not have happened. I never saw my father. The only mother I ever knew was a ferocious she ape. Until I was fifteen I had never seen a human being. I was twenty before I saw a white man. A little more than a year ago I was a naked beast of prey in an African jungle. Do not judge me too harshly. Two years is too short a time in which to attempt to work the change in an individual that it has taken countless ages to accomplish in the white race."

"I do not judge you at all, Jean. The fault is mine. You must go now. He must not find you here when he regains consciousness. Goodby."

It was a sorrowful Tarzan who walked with bowed head from the palace of the Count de Coude.

Once outside his thoughts took definite shape, to the end that twenty minutes later he entered a police station not far from the Rue Maube. Here he found one of the officers with whom he had had an encounter several weeks previous. The policeman was genuinely glad to see again the man who had so roughly handled him. After a moment of conversation Tarzan asked if he had ever heard of Nicolas Rokoff or Alexis Paulvitch.

"Very often indeed, monsieur. Each has a police record, and while there is nothing charged against them now we make it a point to know pretty well where they may be found should the occasion demand. It is only the same precaution that we taken with every known criminal. Why does monsieur ask?"

"They are known to me," replied Tarzan. "I wish to see M. Rokoff on a little matter of business. If you can direct me to his lodgings I shall appreciate it."

A few minutes later he bade the policeman adieu and, with a slip of paper in his pocket bearing a certain address in a semirespectable quarter, he walked briskly toward the nearest taxi stand.

Rokoff and Paulvitch had returned to their rooms and were sitting talking over the probable outcome of the evening's events. They had telephoned to the offices of two of the morning papers, from which they momentarily expected representatives to hear the first report of the scandal that was to stir social Paris on the morrow.

CHAPTER VI. A Duel.

A HEAVY step sounded on the stairway. "Ah, but these newspaper men are prompt!" exclaimed Rokoff, and as a knock fell upon the door of their room, "Enter, monsieur."

The smile of welcome froze upon the Russian's face as he looked into the hard, gray eyes of his visitor.

"Name of a name!" he shouted, springing to his feet. "What brings you here?"

"Sit down!" said Tarzan so low that the man could barely catch the words, but in a tone that brought Rokoff to his chair and kept Paulvitch in his

CHAPTER VII. A Duel.

CHAPTER VIII. A Duel.

CHAPTER IX. A Duel.

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CHAPTER XI. A Duel.

CHAPTER XII. A Duel.

CHAPTER XIII. A Duel.

CHAPTER XIV. A Duel.

CHAPTER XV. A Duel.

CHAPTER XVI. A Duel.

CHAPTER XVII. A Duel.

CHAPTER XVIII. A Duel.

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CHAPTER XX. A Duel.

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CHAPTER XXVI. A Duel.

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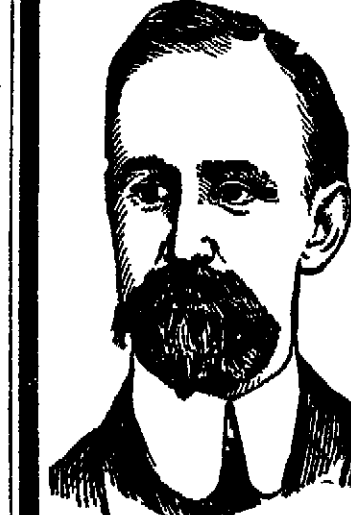
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