

The RETURN of TARZAN



By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

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SYNOPSIS

Tarzan, ape-man, who lived in the African jungle twenty years, is returning to Europe after rescuing 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.

Rokoff plots against the Countess de Coude and Tarzan. He deceives the latter to the countess' rooms at night by a false message and then notifies the count. Rokoff is the countess' brother.

De Coude, infuriated when he finds Tarzan and the countess together, challenges Tarzan to a duel. Tarzan forces Rokoff to sign a confession of his plot.

In the duel Tarzan refuses to fire. He tells De Coude of the plot and is reconciled to him. Tarzan is employed by the French ministry to watch Lieutenant Gerolais, suspected of being a spy in Algeria.

(Continued From Saturday.)
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 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 unarmed before.

With a cry the man toppled back upon those behind him. Like tennins they rolled down the stairs. The ancient and rickety structure could not withstand the strain of this unwonted weight and jarring. With a creaking and rending of breaking wood it collapsed beneath the Arabs, leaving Tarzan, Abdul and the girl alone upon the frail platform at the top.

"Come!" cried the Ouled-Nail. "They will reach us from another stairway through the room next to mine. We have not a moment to spare."

Just as they were entering the room Abdul heard and translated a cry from the yard below for several to hasten to the street and cut off escape from that side.

"We are lost now," said the girl simply.
"We?" questioned Tarzan.
"Yes, m'sieur," she responded; "they will kill me as well. Have I not aided you?"

Alone Tarzan could have sprung into the midst of that close packed mob and, laying about him after the fashion of Numa, the lion, have struck the Arabs with such consternation that escape would have been easy. Now he must think entirely of these two faithful friends.

He crossed to the window which overlooked the street. In a minute

there would be enemies below. Already he could hear the mob clambering the stairway to the next quarters—they would be at the door beside him in another instant. He put a foot upon the sill and leaned out, but he did not look down. Above him, within arm's 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.

"We are lost now," said the girl simply.

"We?" questioned Tarzan.

"Yes, m'sieur," she responded; "they will kill me as well. Have I not aided you?"

"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 translated from time to time to Tarzan.

"They are berating 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 Bou Saada at least. There we can doubtless arrange with the commandant to send you 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 shepherd? 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!"

CHAPTER VIII.
The Fight in the Desert.

FROM below came the sound of voices, quite distinguishable upon the still night air. Tarzan could not understand the words, but Abdul and the girl translated.

"They have gone now," said the latter. "It is you they want, m'sieur. One of them said that the stranger who had offered money for your slaying lay in the house of Akmed din Soulet with a broken wrist, but that he had offered a still greater reward if some would lay in wait for you upon the road to Bou Saada and kill you."

"It is he who followed m'sieur about the market today," exclaimed Abdul. "I saw him again within the cafe—him and another—and 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.

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 commenced, 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 Bou Saada. For a few miles the road was good, and they made rapid progress, but suddenly it became only 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 plainmen 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 Bou 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 but 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 Bou Saada. The pursuing horsemen rapidly closed up 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 my 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 Bou Saada. Tarzan removed his rifle from its 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 horses came suddenly out of the darkness below him, and a moment later he discerned the moving blotches of lighter color against the solid background of the night.

"Halt!" he cried, "or 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 trained ears, 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 fired 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 fired only at the flashes. They could not yet see their foemen. 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 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 shelter 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 Bou 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 Bou 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 Bou Saada, bound for their home in the far 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 Bou 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 yet 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 Gerolais 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 on 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 burmose revealed—he carried his left arm in a sling.

(To Be Continued.)
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