



By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

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CHAPTER XVII. Tarzan Returns.

And Korak? Tantor carried him deep into the jungle, nor paused until no sound from the distant village reached his keen ears.

And while he struggled through the night with his bonds Baynes and Meriem were riding rapidly northward along the river. The girl had assured Baynes that Korak was safe in the jungle with Tantor.

"Then," she said, "I shall get Bwana to come with me and search for Korak. He must come and live with us."

All night they rode, and the day was still young when they came suddenly upon a party hurrying southward. It was Bwana, himself and his sleek, black warriors.

At sight of Baynes the big Englishman's brows contracted in a scowl, but he waited to hear Meriem's story before giving vent to the long pent anger in his breast.

"You say that you found Korak?" he asked. "You really saw him?"

"Yes," replied Meriem; "as plainly as I see you, and I want you to come with me, Bwana, and help me find him again."

"Did you see him?" He turned toward the Hon. Morison. "Yes, sir," replied Baynes; "very plainly."

"What sort of appearing man is he?" continued Bwana. "About how old would you say?"

"I should say he was an Englishman about my own age," replied Baynes, Bwana turned to his head man.

"Take Miss Meriem and Mr. Baynes home," he said. "I am going into the jungle."

Then he motioned to his head man to take his horse and commence the return journey to the farm. Meriem slowly mounted the tired horse that had brought her from the village of the sheik.

Bwana stood watching them until they were out of sight. Slowly he turned toward a nearby tree. Leaping upward, he caught a lower branch and drew himself up among the branches.

After Bwana had left his party, sending them back toward the farm, Meriem had ridden for a short distance with bowed head. What thoughts passed through that active brain who may say? Presently she seemed to come to a decision. She called the head man to her side.

"I am going back with Bwana," she announced. The black shook his head. "No!" he announced. "Bwana says I take you home. So I take you home."

Presently her horse passed beneath a low hanging branch, and the black head man found himself gazing at the girl's empty saddle.

"Korak?" cried Meriem from the foliage above him. Instantly the bull swung about, lowered his burden to the ground and, trumpeting savagely, prepared to defend his comrade.

"Meriem!" he called back to her. Happily the girl clambered to the ground and ran forward to release Korak, but Tantor lowered his head ominously and trumpeted a warning.

"Go back! Go back!" cried Korak. "He will kill you!" Meriem was almost at Korak's side when Tantor saw a long knife in her hand, and then he broke forth, bellowing horribly, and charged down upon the frail girl.

Korak screamed commands to his huge protector in an effort to halt him, but all to no avail. Meriem raced toward the bordering trees with all the speed that lay in her swift little feet, but Tantor, for all his huge bulk, drove down upon her with the rapidity of an express train.

What was that? Korak's eyes started from their sockets. A strange figure had leaped from the tree the shade of which Meriem already had reached—leaped beyond the girl straight into the path of the charging elephant.

It was a half naked white giant. Across his shoulder a coil of rope was looped. In the band of his gee-string was a hunting knife. A sharp command broke from the stranger's lips. The great beast halted in his tracks, and Meriem swung herself upward into the tree to safety.

Korak breathed a sigh of relief, not unmixed with wonder. He fastened his eyes upon the face of Meriem's deliverer, and as recognition slowly filtered into his understanding they went wide in incredulity and surprise.

Tantor, still rumbling angrily, stood swaying to and fro before the giant white man. Then the latter stepped straight beneath the upraised trunk and spoke a low word of command. The great beast ceased his muttering. The savage light died from his eyes, and as the stranger stepped forward toward Korak, Tantor trailed docilely at his heels.

Meriem was watching, too, and wondering. Suddenly the man turned toward her. "Come, Meriem!" he called. And then she recognized him with a startled "Bwana!"

"Jack!" cried the white giant, kneeling at the ape man's side. "Father!" came chokingly from the Killer's lips. "Thank God that it was you! No one else in all the jungle could have stopped Tantor."

Quickly the man cut the bonds that held Korak, and as the youth struggled weakly to his feet and threw his arms about his father, the older man turned toward Meriem. "I thought," he said, sternly, "that I told you to return to the farm."

Korak was looking at them wonderingly. In his heart was a great yearning to take the girl in his arms, but in time he remembered the other—the dapper young English gentleman—and that he was but a savage ape man. Meriem looked up pleadingly into Bwana's eyes.

"You told me," she said in a very small voice, "that my place was beside the man I love." And she turned her eyes toward Korak, all filled with the wonderful hope that no other man had yet seen in them and that none other ever would.

The Killer started toward her with outstretched arms, but suddenly he fell upon his knees before her instead, lifting her hand to his lips, kissed it more reverently than he could have kissed the hand of his country's queen. A rumble from Tantor brought the three, all jungle bred, to instant alertness. Tantor was looking toward the trees behind them, and as their eyes followed his gaze the head and shoulders of a great ape appeared amid the foliage.

For a moment the creature eyed them, and then from his throat rose a loud scream of recognition and of joy, and a moment later the beast had leaped to the ground, followed by a score of bulls like himself, and was waddling toward them, shouting in the primordial tongue of the anthropoid:

"Tarzan has returned! Tarzan, lord of the jungle!" It was Akut, and instantly he commenced leaping and bounding about the trio, uttering hideous shrieks and mouthings that to any other human beings might have indicated the most ferocious rage, but these three knew that the king of the apes was doing homage to a king greater than himself.

Korak laid his hand affectionately upon his father's shoulder. "There is but one Tarzan," he said. "There can never be another."

CHAPTER XVIII. A Family Reunion.

Two days later the three dropped from the trees on the edge of the plain, across which they could see the smoke rising from the bungalow and the cookhouse chimneys. Tarzan of the Apes had regained his civilized clothing from the tree where he had hidden it, and as Korak refused to enter the presence of his mother in the savage half raiment that he had worn so long and as Meriem would not leave him for fear, as she explained, that he would change his mind and run off into the jungle again, the father went on ahead to the bungalow for horses and clothes.

My Dear met him at the gate, her eyes filled with questioning and sorrow, for she saw that Meriem was not with him. "Where is she?" she asked, her voice trembling. "Muviri told me that she disobeyed your instructions and ran off into the jungle after you had left them. Oh, John, I cannot bear to lose her, too!"

And Lady Greystoke broke down and wept as she pillowed her head upon the broad breast where so often before she had found comfort in the great tragedies of her life. Lord Greystoke raised her head and looked down into her eyes, his own smiling and filled with the light of happiness.

"What is it, John?" she cried. "You have good news. Do not keep me waiting for it." "I want to be quite sure that you can stand hearing the best news that ever came to either of us," he said.

"Joy never kills!" she cried. "You have found—her?" She could not bring herself to hope for the impossible. "Yes, Jane," he said, and his voice was husky with emotion, "I have found her and—him!"

"Where is he? Where are they?" she demanded. "Out there at the edge of the jungle. He wouldn't come to you in his savage leopard skin and his nakedness. He sent me to fetch him civilized clothing."

She clapped her hands in ecstasy and turned to run toward the bungalow. "Wait!" she cried over her shoulder. "I have all his little suits. I have saved them all. I will bring one to you."

Tarzan laughed and called to her to stop. "The only clothing on the place that will fit him," he said, "is mine—if it isn't too small for him. Your little boy has grown, Jane."

She laughed, too; she felt like laughing at everything or at nothing. The world was all love and happiness and joy once more, the world that had been shrouded in the gloom of her great sorrow for so many years. So great was her joy that for the moment she forgot the sad message that awaited Meriem.

She called to Tarzan after he had ridden away to prepare her for it, but he did not hear and rode on without knowing of it himself. When they arrived the mother faced Meriem, an expression of sadness erasing the happiness from her eyes.

"My little girl," she said, "in the midst of our happiness a great sorrow awaits you—Mr. Baynes did not survive his wounds."

The expression of sorrow in Meriem's eyes expressed only what she sincerely felt, but it was not the sorrow of a woman bereft of her best beloved. "I am sorry," she said quite simply. "But it was not love, I did not know what love was until I knew that Korak lived," and she turned toward the Killer with a smile.

Lady Greystoke looked quickly up into the eyes of her son, the son who one day would be Lord Greystoke. No thought of the difference in the stations of the girl and her boy entered her mind. To her Meriem was fit for a king. She only wanted to know that Jack loved the little Arab waif.

The look in his eyes answered the question in her heart, and she threw her arms about them both and kissed them each a dozen times. "Now," she cried, "I shall really have a daughter!"

It was several weary marches to the nearest mission, but they waited at the farm only a few days for rest and preparation for the great event before setting out upon the journey, and after a long and a weary journey had been completed they left on to the coast to take passage for England.

They had been home but a week when Lord Greystoke received a message from his old friend D'Arnot. It was in the form of a letter of introduction brought by one General Armand Jacot. Lord Greystoke recalled the name, as who familiar with modern French history would not? For Jacot was in reality the Prince de Cadrenot, that intense republican who refuses to use, even by courtesy, a title that had belonged to his family for 450 years.

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"There is no place for princes in a republic," he was wont to say. Lord Greystoke received the hawk nosed, gray mustached soldier in his library, and after a dozen words the two men had formed a mutual esteem that was to endure through life. And the soldiers' words laid vividly before

his host scenes and events nearly two decades old. He told his host how he had been a captain in the Foreign Legion of France stationed at that time in Africa. He told how he had hunted down marauding bands of Arabs and blacks in the heart of the great desert of Sahara. He told how he had in camp with him his little four-year-old daughter and how he came back to camp one day to find that she had mysteriously disappeared.

Neither the wealth of her father and mother nor all the powerful resources of the great French republic were able to wrest the secret of her whereabouts from the inscrutable desert that had swallowed her and her abductor. A reward of such enormous proportions was offered that many adventurers were attracted to the hunt, among them Janssen and Maibinh. This was no case for the modern detective of civilization, yet several of these threw themselves into the search. The bones of some are bleaching beneath the African sun upon the silent sands of the Sahara.

"I have come to you," explained General Jacot as he concluded, "because our dear admiral tells me that there is no one in all the world who is more intimately acquainted with Central Africa than you.

"We did all that love and money and even government resources could do to discover her, but all to no avail. A week since there came to me in Paris a swarthy Arab, who called himself Abdul Kamak. He said that he had found my daughter and could lead me to her. I took him at once to Admiral D'Arnot, who I knew had traveled some in Central Africa. The man's story led the admiral to believe that the place where the girl the Arab supposed to be my daughter was held in captivity was not far from your African estates, and he advised that I come at once and call upon you—that you would know if such a girl were in your neighborhood."

"What proof did the Arab bring that she was your daughter?" asked Lord Greystoke. "None," replied the other. "That is why we thought best to consult you before organizing an expedition. The fellow had only an old photograph of her, on the back of which was pasted a newspaper cutting describing her and offering a reward. We feared that, having found this son, where, it had aroused his cupidity and led him to believe that in some way he could obtain the reward, possibly by feigning upon us a white girl on the chance that so many years had elapsed that we would not be able to recognize an impostor or a snitch."

"Have you the photograph with you?" asked Lord Greystoke. The general drew an envelope from his pocket, took a faded photograph from it and handed it to the Englishman. Tears dimmed the old warrior's eyes as they fell again upon the pictured features of his lost daughter.

Lord Greystoke examined the photograph for a moment. A queer expression entered his eyes. He touched a bell at his elbow, and an instant later a footman entered. "Ask my son's wife if she will be so

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good as to come to the library," he directed. The two men sat in silence. General Jacot was too well bred to show in any way the chagrin and disappointment he felt in the summary manner in which Lord Greystoke had dismissed the subject of his call. As soon as the young lady had come and he had been presented he would make his departure.

A moment later Meriem entered. Lord Greystoke and General Jacot rose and faced her. The Englishman spoke no word of introduction. He wanted to see the effect of the first sight of the girl's face on the Frenchman, for he had a theory, a heaven-born theory, that had leaped into his mind the moment his eyes had rested on the baby face of Jeanne Jacot.

General Jacot took one look at Meriem, then turned toward Lord Greystoke. "How long have you known it?" he asked, a trifle accusingly. "Since you showed me that photograph a moment ago," replied the Englishman.

"It is she," said Jacot, shaking with suppressed emotion, "but she does not recognize me. Of course, she could not." Then he turned to Meriem. "My child," he said, "I am your—"

But she interrupted him with a quick, glad cry as she ran toward him with outstretched arms. "I know you! I know you!" she cried, "the way I remember!" And she threw her arms about her in his arms, and then she and her mother were embraced, and when the story had been told them they were only half sisters. Meriem had found a father and a home.

"Why didn't you marry me?" he asked. "After all," said Meriem, "I am your—"

"I married my little Meriem, and I don't care for my part whether she is an Arab or just a little Maingak."

"She is a noble young woman," said General Armand Jacot. "She is a princess in her own right."

(THE END.)

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"I Know You! I Know You!" She Cried.