

L. M. GRIST'S SONS, Publishers.

ESTABLISHED 1855.

TARZAN OF THE APES

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS

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CHAPTER III.

A Jungle Battle.

The picture in the books which Tarzan found in the cabin interested him greatly. There were many apes with faces similar to his own, and farther over in the book he found under "M" some little monkeys such as he saw daily flitting through the trees of his primeval forest. But nowhere was pictured any of his own people. In all the book was none that resembled Kerchak or Tublat or Kala.

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.

The boats and trains and cows and horses were quite meaningless to him, but not quite so baffling as the odd little figures which appeared beneath and between the colored pictures—some strange kind of bugs he had legs, might be, for many could be found one with a mouth and a tail. It was his first introduction to the letters of the alphabet, and he was over ten years old.

Of course he had never before seen print, or never had spoken with any living thing which had the remotest idea that such a thing as written language existed, and never had he seen any one reading.

So what wonder that the little boy was quite at a loss to guess the meaning of these strange figures?

Near the back of the book he found his old enemy, Sabor, the tiger, and, just above him, coiled Mistah, the snake.

Oh, it was most engrossing! Never before in all his ten years had he enjoyed anything so much. So absorbed was he that he did not note the approaching dusk until it was quite upon him.

He put the book back in the cupboard and closed the door, for he did not wish any one else to find and destroy his treasure, and as he went out to the gathering darkness he closed the great door of the cabin behind him as it had been before he discovered the secret of its lock, but before he left he had noticed the hunting knife lying where he had thrown it upon the floor, and this he picked up and took with him to show to his fellows.

He had taken scarce a dozen steps toward the jungle when a great form rose up before him from the shadows of a low bush.

At first he thought it was one of his own people, but in another instant he realized that it was a huge gorilla.

So close was he that there was no chance for flight, and little Tarzan knew that he must stand and fight for his life; for these great beasts were the deadly enemies of his tribe, and neither one nor the other ever asked or gave quarter.

Had Tarzan been a full grown bull ape of the species of his tribe he would have been more than a match for the gorilla, but being only a little English boy, though enormously muscular for such, he stood no show against his cruel antagonist. In his veins, however, flowed the blood of the best of a race of mighty fighters, and back of this was the training of his short trunk among the fierce brutes of the jungle.

He knew no fear, as we know it; his heart beat the faster, but from his excitement and exhilaration of adventure. Had the opportunity presented itself he would have escaped, but solely because his judgment told him he was no match for the great thing which confronted him. And as flight was out of the question he faced the gorilla squarely and bravely without a tremor in a single muscle or any sign of panic.

In fact, he met the brute midway in its charge, striking its huge body with his closed fists and as futile as if he had been a fly attacking an elephant. But in one hand he still clutched the knife he had found, and as the brute, striking and biting, closed upon the boy accidentally turned the point toward the hairy beast.

As it sank deep into the body of him the gorilla shrieked in pain and rage. But the boy had learned in that brief second a use for his sharp and shining toy, so that as the tearing, striking beast dragged him to earth he plunged the blade repeatedly into its breast.

The gorilla, fighting after the manner of its kind, struck terrific blows with its open hand and tore with its teeth at the boy's throat and chest with its mighty tusks.

For a moment they rolled upon the ground in the fierce frenzy of combat. More and more weakly the torn and bleeding arm struck home with the long sharp blade, then the little figure stiffened with a spasmodic jerk, and Tarzan, the young Lord Greystoke, rolled senseless upon the dead and decaying vegetation which carpeted his jungle home.

A mile back in the forest the tribe had heard the fierce challenge of the gorilla, and, as was his custom when any danger threatened, Kerchak called his people together, partly for mutual protection against a common enemy, since this gorilla might be but one of several, and also to see that all members were accounted for.

It was soon discovered that Tarzan was missing, and Tublat was strongly opposed to sending assistance. Kerchak himself had no liking for the strange little wail, so he listened to Tublat, and finally, with a shrug of his shoulders, turned back to the pile of leaves on which he had made his bed.

But Kala was of a different mind. In fact, she had waited but to learn that Tarzan was absent ere she was fairly flying through the matted branches toward the point from which the cries of the gorilla were still plainly audible.

Darkness had fallen, and an early moon was sending its faint light to cast strange, grotesque shadows among the dense foliage of the forest.

Presently Kala came upon them, lying in an open space and full under the brilliant moon—Tarzan's torn and bloody form and beside it a great bull gorilla, stone dead. With a low cry Kala rushed to Tarzan's side and, gathering the poor, blood covered body to her breast, listened for a sign of life. Faintly she heard it—the weak beating of the little heart.

Tenderly she bore him back through the ink jungle to where the tribe lay, and for many days and nights she sat guard beside him, bringing him food and water and brushing the flies and other insects from his cruel wounds.

Of medicine or surgery the poor thing knew nothing. She could but lick the wounds, and thus she kept them cleansed, that healing nature might do her work.

At last Tarzan would eat nothing, but rolled and tossed in a wild delirium of fever. All he craved was water, and this she brought him in the only way she could, bearing it in her own mouth.

No human mother could have shown more unselfish and sacrificing devotion than this poor wild brute for the little orphaned wail whom fate had thrown into her keeping.

At last the fever abated, and the boy commenced to mend. No complaint passed his tight set lips, though the pain of his wounds were excruciating.

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PRIZE WINNERS

Among Live Stock Exhibitors in Recent York County Fairs at Rock Hill.

Horses and Mules.

Best stallion, any age or breed, shown to halter—R. B. Plexico, first; J. S. Kennedy, second, Carhart farm, third.

Best jack, shown to halter—Steele Stock farm, (one entry).

Best horse colt 2 to 3 years old—W. L. Lathan first, J. R. Wallace second; W. W. Paris, third.

Best horse colt 1 to 2 years old—W. J. Powell first, W. J. Powell second, E. Jackson third.

Best horse colt 2 to 3 years old—W. W. Alexander first, S. T. McElhenny second, W. N. Biggers third.

Best horse colt 2 to 3 years old—Steele Stock farm first, J. L. Aycock second, W. W. Paris, third.

Best horse colt 3 to 4 years old—Carhart farm first, J. L. Aycock second, Hugh Miller third.

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