

THE SON OF TARZAN

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AND Korak? Tantor carried him deep into the jungle, nor paused until no sound from the distant village reached his keen ears. Then he laid his burden gently down. Korak struggled to free himself from his bonds, but even his great strength was unable to cope with the many strands of hard-knotted cord that bound him.

While he lay there, working and resting by turns, the elephant stood guard above him; nor was there jungle enemy with the hardihood to tempt the sudden death that lay in that mighty bulk.

Dawn came, and still Korak was no nearer freedom than before. He commenced to believe that he should die there of thirst and starvation with plenty all about him, for he knew that Tantor could not loose the knots that held him.

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. It had not occurred to her that the ape-man might not be able to burst his bonds. Baynes had been wounded by a shot from the rifle of one of the Arabs, and the girl wanted to get him back to Bwana's home, where he could be properly cared for.

"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. When she had finished he seemed to have forgotten Baynes. His thoughts were occupied with another subject.

"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; "though he might be older. He is remarkably muscled, and very tanned."

"His eyes and hair, did you notice them?" Bwana spoke rapidly, almost excitedly. It was Meriem who answered him.

"Korak's hair is black and his eyes are gray," she said.

Bwana turned to his head man. "Take Miss Meriem and Mr. Baynes home," he said. "I am going into the jungle."

"Let me go with you, Bwana!" cried Meriem. "You are going to search for Korak. Let me go, too!"

Bwana turned sadly but firmly upon the girl.

"Your place," he said, "is beside the man you love."

Then he motioned to his head man to take his horse and commence the return journey to the farm. Meriem slowly mounted the tired Arab that had brought her from the village of the sheik. A litter was rigged for the now feverish Baynes, and the little cavalcade was soon slowly winding off along the river trail. Bwana stood watching them until they were out of sight.



"I know you! I know you!" she cried. "Oh, now I remember."

Not once had Meriem turned her eyes backward. She rode with bowed head and drooping shoulders.

Bwana sighed. He loved the little Arab girl as he might have loved his own daughter. He realized that Baynes had redeemed himself, and so he could interpose no objections now if Meriem really loved the man; but, somehow, some way, Bwana could not convince himself that the Hon. Morison was worthy of his little Meriem.

SLOWLY he turned toward a near-by tree. Leaping upward, he caught a lower limb and drew himself up among the branches. His movements were catlike and agile. High into the tree he made his way, and there commenced to divest himself of his clothing. From the game-bag slung across one shoulder he drew a long strip of doeskin, a neatly coiled rope, and a wicked-looking knife.

The doeskin he fashioned into a loin-cloth; the rope he looped over one shoulder, and the knife he thrust into the belt formed by his gee-string.

When he stood erect, his head thrown

back, and his great chest expanded, a grim smile touched his lips for a moment. His nostrils dilated as he sniffed the jungle odors. His gray eyes narrowed. He crouched and leaped to a lower limb, and was away through the trees toward the southeast, bearing away from the river. He moved swiftly, stopping only occasionally to raise his voice in a weird and piercing scream and to listen for a moment after for a reply.

He had traveled thus for several hours when, ahead of him and a little to his left, he heard far off in the jungle a faint response—the cry of a bull ape answering his cry. His nerves tingled and his eyes lighted as the sound fell upon his ears. Again he voiced his hideous call and sped forward in the new direction.

Korak, finally becoming convinced that he must die if he re-

turned to the south of him heard his calls faintly, and came. There was another who heard them, too.

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."

"You refuse to let me go?" asked the girl.

The black nodded, and fell to the rear, where he might better watch her. Meriem half smiled.

Presently her horse passed beneath a low-hanging branch, and the black head man found himself gazing at the girl's empty saddle. He ran forward to the tree into which she had disappeared. He could see nothing of her. He called, but there was no response, unless it might have been a low, taunting laugh far to the right. He sent his men into the jungle to search for her, but they came back empty handed.

After a while he resumed his march toward the farm, for Baynes by this time was delirious with fever.

Meriem, shedding the awkward Arab robe they had given her in the sheik's douar, raced in riding breeches and bare-foot straight back toward the point she imagined Tantor would make for—a point where she knew the elephants often gathered deep in the forest, due east of the sheik's village. She moved silently and swiftly. From her mind she had expunged all thoughts other than that she must reach Korak and bring him back with her.

Then, too, had come the tantalizing fear that all might not be well with him. She upbraided herself for not thinking of that before—of letting her desire to get the wounded Morison back to the bunga-

low blind her to the possibilities of Korak's need for her. She had been traveling rapidly for several hours without rest when she heard ahead of her the familiar cry of a great ape calling to his kind.

She did not reply, only increased her speed until she almost flew.

Now there came to her sensitive nostrils the scent of Tantor, and she knew that she was on the right trail and close to him.

she sought. She did not call out because she wished to surprise him, and presently she did, breaking into sight of them as the great elephant shuffled ahead, balancing the man and the heavy stake upon his head, holding them there with his upcurled trunk.

"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. The ape-man, recognizing the girl's voice, felt a sudden lump in his throat.

"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 paused. "Tantor!" she called to the huge brute. "Don't you remember

mained where he was, waiting for the succor that could not come, spoke to Tantor in the strange tongue that the great beast understood.

He commanded the elephant to lift him and carry him toward the northeast, and carry him toward the northeast. There recently Korak had seen both white men and black. If he could come upon one of the latter it would be a simple matter to command Tantor to capture the fellow, and then Korak could get him to release him from the stake. It was worth trying, at least—better than lying there in the jungle until he died.

As Tantor bore him along through the forest Korak called aloud now and then in the hope of attracting Akut's band of anthropoids, whose wandering often brought them into this neighborhood. Akut, he thought, might possibly be able to negotiate the knots—he had done so upon that other occasion when the Russian had bound Korak years before. And