

Chapter III - In the German Lines

Tarzan was not yet fully revenged. There were many millions of Germans yet alive--enough to keep Tarzan pleasantly occupied the balance of his life, and yet not enough, should he kill them all, to recompense him for the great loss he had suffered--nor could the death of all those million Germans bring back his loved one.

While in the German camp in the Pare Mountains, which lie just east of the boundary line between German and British East Africa, Tarzan had overheard enough to suggest that the British were getting the worst of the fighting in Africa. At first he had given the matter but little thought, since, after the death of his wife, the one strong tie that had held him to civilization, he had renounced all mankind, considering himself no longer man, but ape.

After accounting for Schneider as satisfactorily as lay within his power he circled Kilimanjaro and hunted in the foothills to the north of that mightiest of mountains as he had discovered that in the neighborhood of the armies there was no hunting at all. Some pleasure he derived through conjuring mental pictures from time to time of the German he had left in the branches of the lone tree at the bottom of the high-walled gulch in which was penned the starving lion. He could imagine the man's mental anguish as he became weakened from hunger and maddened by thirst, knowing that sooner or later he must slip exhausted to the ground where waited the gaunt man-eater. Tarzan wondered if Schneider would have the courage to descend to the little rivulet for water should Numa leave the gulch and enter the cave, and then he pictured the mad race for the tree again when the lion charged out to seize his prey as he was certain to do, since the clumsy German could not descend to the rivulet without making at least some slight noise that would attract Numa's attention.

But even this pleasure palled, and more and more the ape-man found himself thinking of the English soldiers fighting against heavy odds and especially of the fact that it was Germans who were beating them. The thought made him lower his head and growl and it worried him not a little--a bit, perhaps, because he was finding it difficult to forget that he was an Englishman when he wanted only to be an ape. And at last the time came when he could not longer endure the thought of Germans killing Englishmen while he hunted in safety a bare march away.

His decision made, he set out in the direction of the German camp, no well-defined plan formulated; but with the general idea that once near the field of operations he might find an opportunity to harass the German command as he so well knew how to do. His way took him along the gorge close to the gulch in

which he had left Schneider, and, yielding to a natural curiosity, he scaled the cliffs and made his way to the edge of the gulch. The tree was empty, nor was there sign of Numa, the lion. Picking up a rock he hurled it into the gulch, where it rolled to the very entrance to the cave. Instantly the lion appeared in the aperture; but such a different-looking lion from the great sleek brute that Tarzan had trapped there two weeks before. Now he was gaunt and emaciated, and when he walked he staggered.

"Where is the German?" shouted Tarzan. "Was he good eating, or only a bag of bones when he slipped and fell from the tree?"

Numa growled. "You look hungry, Numa," continued the ape-man. "You must have been very hungry to eat all the grass from your lair and even the bark from the tree as far up as you can reach. Would you like another German?" and smiling he turned away.

A few minutes later he came suddenly upon Bara, the deer, asleep beneath a tree, and as Tarzan was hungry he made a quick kill, and squatting beside his prey proceeded to eat his fill. As he was gnawing the last morsel from a bone his quick ears caught the padding of stealthy feet behind him, and turning he confronted Dango, the hyena, sneaking upon him. With a growl the ape-man picked up a fallen branch and hurled it at the skulking brute. "Go away, eater of carrion!" he cried; but Dango was hungry and being large and powerful he only snarled and circled slowly about as though watching for an opportunity to charge. Tarzan of the Apes knew Dango even better than Dango knew himself. He knew that the brute, made savage by hunger, was mustering its courage for an attack, that it was probably accustomed to man and therefore more or less fearless of him and so he un-slung his heavy spear and laid it ready at his side while he continued his meal, all the time keeping a watchful eye upon the hyena.

He felt no fear, for long familiarity with the dangers of his wild world had so accustomed him to them that he took whatever came as a part of each day's existence as you accept the homely though no less real dangers of the farm, the range, or the crowded metropolis. Being jungle bred he was ready to protect his kill from all comers within ordinary limitations of caution. Under favorable conditions Tarzan would face even Numa himself and, if forced to seek safety by flight, he could do so without any feeling of shame. There was no braver creature roamed those savage wilds and at the same time there was none more wise--the two factors that had permitted him to survive.

Dango might have charged sooner but for the savage growls of the ape-man--growls which, coming from human lips, raised a question and a fear in the hyena's heart. He had attacked women and children in the native fields and he

had frightened their men about their fires at night; but he never had seen a man-thing who made this sound that reminded him more of Numa angry than of a man afraid.

When Tarzan had completed his repast he was about to rise and hurl a clean-picked bone at the beast before he went his way, leaving the remains of his kill to Dango; but a sudden thought stayed him and instead he picked up the carcass of the deer, threw it over his shoulder, and set off in the direction of the gulch. For a few yards Dango followed, growling, and then realizing that he was being robbed of even a taste of the luscious flesh he cast discretion to the winds and charged. Instantly, as though Nature had given him eyes in the back of his head, Tarzan sensed the impending danger and, dropping Bara to the ground, turned with raised spear. Far back went the brown, right hand and then forward, lightning-like, backed by the power of giant muscles and the weight of his brawn and bone. The spear, released at the right instant, drove straight for Dango, caught him in the neck where it joined the shoulders and passed through the body.

When he had withdrawn the shaft from the hyena Tarzan shouldered both carcasses and continued on toward the gulch. Below lay Numa beneath the shade of the lone tree and at the ape-man's call he staggered slowly to his feet, yet weak as he was, he still growled savagely, even essaying a roar at the sight of his enemy. Tarzan let the two bodies slide over the rim of the cliff. "Eat, Numa!" he cried. "It may be that I shall need you again." He saw the lion, quickened to new life at the sight of food, spring upon the body of the deer and then he left him rending and tearing the flesh as he bolted great pieces into his empty maw.

The following day Tarzan came within sight of the German lines. From a wooded spur of the hills he looked down upon the enemy's left flank and beyond to the British lines. His position gave him a bird's-eye view of the field of battle, and his keen eyesight picked out many details that would not have been apparent to a man whose every sense was not trained to the highest point of perfection as were the ape-man's. He noted machine-gun emplacements cunningly hidden from the view of the British and listening posts placed well out in No Man's Land.

As his interested gaze moved hither and thither from one point of interest to another he heard from a point upon the hillside below him, above the roar of cannon and the crack of rifle fire, a single rifle spit. Immediately his attention was centered upon the spot where he knew a sniper must be hid. Patiently he awaited the next shot that would tell him more surely the exact location of the rifleman, and when it came he moved down the steep hillside with the stealth and quietness of a panther. Apparently he took no cognizance of where he stepped, yet never a loose stone was disturbed nor a twig broken--it was as though his feet saw.

Presently, as he passed through a clump of bushes, he came to the edge of a low cliff and saw upon a ledge some fifteen feet below him a German soldier prone behind an embankment of loose rock and leafy boughs that hid him from the view of the British lines. The man must have been an excellent shot, for he was well back of the German lines, firing over the heads of his fellows. His high-powered rifle was equipped with telescope sights and he also carried binoculars which he was in the act of using as Tarzan discovered him, either to note the effect of his last shot or to discover a new target. Tarzan let his eye move quickly toward that part of the British line the German seemed to be scanning, his keen sight revealing many excellent targets for a rifle placed so high above the trenches.

The Hun, evidently satisfied with his observations, laid aside his binoculars and again took up his rifle, placed its butt in the hollow of his shoulder and took careful aim. At the same instant a brown body sprang outward from the cliff above him. There was no sound and it is doubtful that the German ever knew what manner of creature it was that alighted heavily upon his back, for at the instant of impact the sinewy fingers of the ape-man circled the hairy throat of the Boche. There was a moment of futile struggling followed by the sudden realization of dissolution--the sniper was dead.

Lying behind the rampart of rocks and boughs, Tarzan looked down upon the scene below. Near at hand were the trenches of the Germans. He could see officers and men moving about in them and almost in front of him a well-hidden machine gun was traversing No Man's Land in an oblique direction, striking the British at such an angle as to make it difficult for them to locate it.

Tarzan watched, toying idly with the rifle of the dead German. Presently he fell to examining the mechanism of the piece. He glanced again toward the German trenches and changed the adjustment of the sights, then he placed the rifle to his shoulder and took aim. Tarzan was an excellent shot. With his civilized friends he had hunted big game with the weapons of civilization and though he never had killed except for food or in self-defense he had amused himself firing at inanimate targets thrown into the air and had perfected himself in the use of firearms without realizing that he had done so. Now indeed would he hunt big game. A slow smile touched his lips as his finger closed gradually upon the trigger. The rifle spoke and a German machine gunner collapsed behind his weapon. In three minutes Tarzan picked off the crew of that gun. Then he spotted a German officer emerging from a dugout and the three men in the bay with him. Tarzan was careful to leave no one in the immediate vicinity to question how Germans could be shot in German trenches when they were entirely concealed from enemy view.

Again adjusting his sights he took a long-range shot at a distant machine-gun crew to his right. With calm deliberation he wiped them out to a man. Two guns

were silenced. He saw men running through the trenches and he picked off several of them. By this time the Germans were aware that something was amiss--that an uncanny sniper had discovered a point of vantage from which this sector of the trenches was plainly visible to him. At first they sought to discover his location in No Man's Land; but when an officer looking over the parapet through a periscope was struck full in the back of the head with a rifle bullet which passed through his skull and fell to the bottom of the trench they realized that it was beyond the parapet rather than the parapet that they should search.

One of the soldiers picked up the bullet that had killed his officer, and then it was that real excitement prevailed in that particular bay, for the bullet was obviously of German make. Hugging the parapet, messengers carried the word in both directions and presently periscopes were leveled above the parapet and keen eyes were searching out the traitor. It did not take them long to locate the position of the hidden sniper and then Tarzan saw a machine gun being trained upon him. Before it had gotten into action its crew lay dead about it; but there were other men to take their places, reluctantly perhaps; but driven on by their officers they were forced to it and at the same time two other machine guns were swung around toward the ape-man and put into operation.

Realizing that the game was about up Tarzan with a farewell shot laid aside the rifle and melted into the hills behind him. For many minutes he could hear the sputter of machinegun fire concentrated upon the spot he had just quit and smiled as he contemplated the waste of German ammunition.

"They have paid heavily for Wasimbu, the Waziri, whom they crucified, and for his slain fellows," he mused; "but for Jane they can never pay--no, not if I killed them all."

After dark that night he circled the flanks of both armies and passed through the British out-guards and into the British lines. No man saw him come. No man knew that he was there.

Headquarters of the Second Rhodesians occupied a sheltered position far enough back of the lines to be comparatively safe from enemy observation. Even lights were permitted, and Colonel Capell sat before a field table, on which was spread a military map, talking with several of his officers. A large tree spread above them, a lantern sputtered dimly upon the table, while a small fire burned upon the ground close at hand. The enemy had no planes and no other observers could have seen the lights from the German lines.

The officers were discussing the advantage in numbers possessed by the enemy and the inability of the British to more than hold their present position. They

could not advance. Already they had sustained severe losses in every attack and had always been driven back by overwhelming numbers. There were hidden machine guns, too, that bothered the colonel considerably. It was evidenced by the fact that he often reverted to them during the conversation.

"Something silenced them for a while this afternoon," said one of the younger officers. "I was observing at the time and I couldn't make out what the fuss was about; but they seemed to be having a devil of a time in a section of trench on their left. At one time I could have sworn they were attacked in the rear--I reported it to you at the time, sir, you'll recall--for the blighters were pepperin' away at the side of that bluff behind them. I could see the dirt fly. I don't know what it could have been."

There was a slight rustling among the branches of the tree above them and simultaneously a lithe, brown body dropped in their midst. Hands moved quickly to the butts of pistols; but otherwise there was no movement among the officers. First they looked wonderingly at the almost naked white man standing there with the firelight playing upon rounded muscles, took in the primitive attire and the equally primitive armament and then all eyes turned toward the colonel.

"Who the devil are you, sir?" snapped that officer.

"Tarzan of the Apes," replied the newcomer.

"Oh, Greystoke!" cried a major, and stepped forward with outstretched hand.

"Preswick," acknowledged Tarzan as he took the proffered hand.

"I didn't recognize you at first," apologized the major. "The last time I saw you you were in London in evening dress. Quite a difference--'pon my word, man, you'll have to admit it."

Tarzan smiled and turned toward the colonel. "I overheard your conversation," he said. "I have just come from behind the German lines. Possibly I can help you."

The colonel looked questioningly toward Major Preswick who quickly rose to the occasion and presented the ape-man to his commanding officer and fellows. Briefly Tarzan told them what it was that brought him out alone in pursuit of the Germans.

"And now you have come to join us?" asked the colonel.

Tarzan shook his head. "Not regularly," he replied. "I must fight in my own way; but I can help you. Whenever I wish I can enter the German lines."

Capell smiled and shook his head. "It's not so easy as you think," he said; "I've lost two good officers in the last week trying it--and they were experienced men; none better in the Intelligence Department."

"Is it more difficult than entering the British lines?" asked Tarzan.

The colonel was about to reply when a new thought appeared to occur to him and he looked quizzically at the ape-man. "Who brought you here?" he asked. "Who passed you through our out-guards?"

"I have just come through the German lines and yours and passed through your camp," he replied. "Send word to ascertain if anyone saw me."

"But who accompanied you?" insisted Capell.

"I came alone," replied Tarzan and then, drawing himself to his full height, "You men of civilization, when you come into the jungle, are as dead among the quick. Manu, the monkey, is a sage by comparison. I marvel that you exist at all--only your numbers, your weapons, and your power of reasoning save you. Had I a few hundred great apes with your reasoning power I could drive the Germans into the ocean as quickly as the remnant of them could reach the coast. Fortunate it is for you that the dumb brutes cannot combine. Could they, Africa would remain forever free of men. But come, can I help you? Would you like to know where several machinegun emplacements are hidden?"

The colonel assured him that they would, and a moment later Tarzan had traced upon the map the location of three that had been bothering the English. "There is a weak spot here," he said, placing a finger upon the map. "It is held by blacks; but the machine guns out in front are manned by whites. If--wait! I have a plan. You can fill that trench with your own men and enfilade the trenches to its right with their own machine guns."

Colonel Capell smiled and shook his head. "It sounds very easy," he said.

"It IS easy--for me," replied the ape-man. "I can empty that section of trench without a shot. I was raised in the jungle--I know the jungle folk--the Gomangani as well as the others. Look for me again on the second night," and he turned to leave.

"Wait," said the colonel. "I will send an officer to pass you through the lines."

Tarzan smiled and moved away. As he was leaving the little group about headquarters he passed a small figure wrapped in an officer's heavy overcoat. The collar was turned up and the visor of the military cap pulled well down over the eyes; but, as the ape-man passed, the light from the fire illuminated the features

of the newcomer for an instant, revealing to Tarzan a vaguely familiar face. Some officer he had known in London, doubtless, he surmised, and went his way through the British camp and the British lines all unknown to the watchful sentinels of the out-guard.

Nearly all night he moved across Kilimanjaro's foothills, tracking by instinct an unknown way, for he guessed that what he sought would be found on some wooded slope higher up than he had come upon his other recent journeys in this, to him, little known country. Three hours before dawn his keen nostrils apprised him that somewhere in the vicinity he would find what he wanted, and so he climbed into a tall tree and settled himself for a few hours' sleep.