

Chapter VIII - Tarzan and the Great Apes

Three days the ape-man spent in resting and recuperating, eating fruits and nuts and the smaller animals that were most easily bagged, and upon the fourth he set out to explore the valley and search for the great apes. Time was a negligible factor in the equation of life--it was all the same to Tarzan if he reached the west coast in a month or a year or three years. All time was his and all Africa. His was absolute freedom--the last tie that had bound him to civilization and custom had been severed. He was alone but he was not exactly lonely. The greater part of his life had been spent thus, and though there was no other of his kind, he was at all times surrounded by the jungle peoples for whom familiarity had bred no contempt within his breast. The least of them interested him, and, too, there were those with whom he always made friends easily, and there were his hereditary enemies whose presence gave a spice to life that might otherwise have become humdrum and monotonous.

And so it was that on the fourth day he set out to explore the valley and search for his fellow-apes. He had proceeded southward for a short distance when his nostrils were assailed by the scent of man, of Gomangani, the black man. There were many of them, and mixed with their scent was another--that of a she Tarmangani.

Swinging through the trees Tarzan approached the authors of these disturbing scents. He came warily from the flank, but paying no attention to the wind, for he knew that man with his dull senses could apprehend him only through his eyes or ears and then only when comparatively close. Had he been stalking Numa or Sheeta he would have circled about until his quarry was upwind from him, thus taking practically all the advantage up to the very moment that he came within sight or hearing; but in the stalking of the dull clod, man, he approached with almost contemptuous indifference, so that all the jungle about him knew that he was passing--all but the men he stalked.

From the dense foliage of a great tree he watched them pass--a disreputable mob of blacks, some garbed in the uniform of German East African native troops, others wearing a single garment of the same uniform, while many had reverted to the simple dress of their forbears--approximating nudity. There were many black women with them, laughing and talking as they kept pace with the men, all of whom were armed with German rifles and equipped with German belts and ammunition.

There were no white officers there, but it was none the less apparent to Tarzan that these men were from some German native command, and he guessed that

they had slain their officers and taken to the jungle with their women, or had stolen some from native villages through which they must have passed. It was evident that they were putting as much ground between themselves and the coast as possible and doubtless were seeking some impenetrable fastness of the vast interior where they might inaugurate a reign of terror among the primitively armed inhabitants and by raiding, looting, and rape grow rich in goods and women at the expense of the district upon which they settled themselves.

Between two of the black women marched a slender white girl. She was hatless and with torn and disheveled clothing that had evidently once been a trim riding habit. Her coat was gone and her waist half torn from her body. Occasionally and without apparent provocation one or the other of the Negresses struck or pushed her roughly. Tarzan watched through half-closed eyes. His first impulse was to leap among them and bear the girl from their cruel clutches. He had recognized her immediately and it was because of this fact that he hesitated.

What was it to Tarzan of the Apes what fate befell this enemy spy? He had been unable to kill her himself because of an inherent weakness that would not permit him to lay hands upon a woman, all of which of course had no bearing upon what others might do to her. That her fate would now be infinitely more horrible than the quick and painless death that the ape-man would have meted to her only interested Tarzan to the extent that the more frightful the end of a German the more in keeping it would be with what they all deserved.

And so he let the blacks pass with Fraulein Bertha Kircher in their midst, or at least until the last straggling warrior suggested to his mind the pleasures of black-baiting--an amusement and a sport in which he had grown ever more proficient since that long-gone day when Kulonga, the son of Mbonga, the chief, had cast his unfortunate spear at Kala, the ape-man's foster mother.

The last man, who must have stopped for some purpose, was fully a quarter of a mile in rear of the party. He was hurrying to catch up when Tarzan saw him, and as he passed beneath the tree in which the ape-man perched above the trail, a silent noose dropped deftly about his neck. The main body still was in plain sight, and as the frightened man voiced a piercing shriek of terror, they looked back to see his body rise as though by magic straight into the air and disappear amidst the leafy foliage above.

For a moment the blacks stood paralyzed by astonishment and fear; but presently the burly sergeant, Usanga, who led them, started back along the trail at a run, calling to the others to follow him. Loading their guns as they came the blacks ran to succor their fellow, and at Usanga's command they spread into a thin line

that presently entirely surrounded the tree into which their comrade had vanished.

Usanga called but received no reply; then he advanced slowly with rifle at the ready, peering up into the tree. He could see no one--nothing. The circle closed in until fifty blacks were searching among the branches with their keen eyes. What had become of their fellow? They had seen him rise into the tree and since then many eyes had been fastened upon the spot, yet there was no sign of him. One, more venturesome than his fellows, volunteered to climb into the tree and investigate. He was gone but a minute or two and when he dropped to earth again he swore that there was no sign of a creature there.

Perplexed, and by this time a bit awed, the blacks drew slowly away from the spot and with many backward glances and less laughing continued upon their journey until, when about a mile beyond the spot at which their fellow had disappeared, those in the lead saw him peering from behind a tree at one side of the trail just in front of them. With shouts to their companions that he had been found they ran forwards; but those who were first to reach the tree stopped suddenly and shrank back, their eyes rolling fearfully first in one direction and then in another as though they expected some nameless horror to leap out upon them.

Nor was their terror without foundation. Impaled upon the end of a broken branch the head of their companion was propped behind the tree so that it appeared to be looking out at them from the opposite side of the bole.

It was then that many wished to turn back, arguing that they had offended some demon of the wood upon whose preserve they had trespassed; but Usanga refused to listen to them, assuring them that inevitable torture and death awaited them should they return and fall again into the hands of their cruel German masters. At last his reasoning prevailed to the end that a much-subdued and terrified band moved in a compact mass, like a drove of sheep, forward through the valley and there were no stragglers.

It is a happy characteristic of the Negro race, which they hold in common with little children, that their spirits seldom remain depressed for a considerable length of time after the immediate cause of depression is removed, and so it was that in half an hour Usanga's band was again beginning to take on to some extent its former appearance of carefree lightheartedness. Thus were the heavy clouds of fear slowly dissipating when a turn in the trail brought them suddenly upon the headless body of their erstwhile companion lying directly in their path, and they were again plunged into the depth of fear and gloomy forebodings.

So utterly inexplicable and uncanny had the entire occurrence been that there was not a one of them who could find a ray of comfort penetrating the dead blackness of its ominous portent. What had happened to one of their number each conceived as being a wholly possible fate for himself--in fact quite his probable fate. If such a thing could happen in broad daylight what frightful thing might not fall to their lot when night had enshrouded them in her mantle of darkness. They trembled in anticipation.

The white girl in their midst was no less mystified than they; but far less moved, since sudden death was the most merciful fate to which she might now look forward. So far she had been subjected to nothing worse than the petty cruelties of the women, while, on the other hand, it had alone been the presence of the women that had saved her from worse treatment at the hands of some of the men--notably the brutal, black sergeant, Usanga. His own woman was of the party--a veritable giantess, a virago of the first magnitude--and she was evidently the only thing in the world of which Usanga stood in awe. Even though she was particularly cruel to the young woman, the latter believed that she was her sole protection from the degraded black tyrant.

Late in the afternoon the band came upon a small palisaded village of thatched huts set in a clearing in the jungle close beside a placid river. At their approach the villagers came pouring out, and Usanga advanced with two of his warriors to palaver with the chief. The experiences of the day had so shaken the nerves of the black sergeant that he was ready to treat with these people rather than take their village by force of arms, as would ordinarily have been his preference; but now a vague conviction influenced him that there watched over this part of the jungle a powerful demon who wielded miraculous power for evil against those who offended him. First Usanga would learn how these villagers stood with this savage god and if they had his good will Usanga would be most careful to treat them with kindness and respect.

At the palaver it developed that the village chief had food, goats, and fowl which he would be glad to dispose of for a proper consideration; but as the consideration would have meant parting with precious rifles and ammunition, or the very clothing from their backs, Usanga began to see that after all it might be forced upon him to wage war to obtain food.

A happy solution was arrived at by a suggestion of one of his men--that the soldiers go forth the following day and hunt for the villagers, bringing them in so much fresh meat in return for their hospitality. This the chief agreed to, stipulating the kind and quantity of game to be paid in return for flour, goats, and fowl, and a certain number of huts that were to be turned over to the visitors. The details having been settled after an hour or more of that bickering argument

of which the native African is so fond, the newcomers entered the village where they were assigned to huts.

Bertha Kircher found herself alone in a small hut to the palisade at the far end of the village street, and though she was neither bound nor guarded, she was assured by Usanga that she could not escape the village without running into almost certain death in the jungle, which the villagers assured them was infested by lions of great size and ferocity. "Be good to Usanga," he concluded, "and no harm will befall you. I will come again to see you after the others are asleep. Let us befriends."

As the brute left her the girl's frame was racked by a convulsive shudder as she sank to the floor of the hut and covered her face with her hands. She realized now why the women had not been left to guard her. It was the work of the cunning Usanga, but would not his woman suspect something of his intentions? She was no fool and, further, being imbued with insane jealousy she was ever looking for some overt act upon the part of her ebon lord. Bertha Kircher felt that only she might save her and that she would save her if word could be but gotten to her. But how?

Left alone and away from the eyes of her captors for the first time since the previous night, the girl immediately took advantage of the opportunity to assure herself that the papers she had taken from the body of Hauptmann Fritz Schneider were still safely sewn inside one of her undergarments.

Alas! Of what value could they now ever be to her beloved country? But habit and loyalty were so strong within her that she still clung to the determined hope of eventually delivering the little packet to her chief.

The natives seemed to have forgotten her existence--no one came near the hut, not even to bring her food. She could hear them at the other end of the village laughing and yelling and knew that they were celebrating with food and native beer--knowledge which only increased her apprehension. To be prisoner in a native village in the very heart of an unexplored region of Central Africa--the only white woman among a band of drunken Negroes! The very thought appalled her. Yet there was a slight promise in the fact that she had so far been unmolested--the promise that they might, indeed, have forgotten her and that soon they might become so hopelessly drunk as to be harmless.

Darkness had fallen and still no one came. The girl wondered if she dared venture forth in search of Naratu, Usanga's woman, for Usanga might not forget that he had promised to return. No one was near as she stepped out of the hut and made her way toward the part of the village where the revelers were making merry

about a fire. As she approached she saw the villagers and their guests squatting in a large circle about the blaze before which a half-dozen naked warriors leaped and bent and stamped in some grotesque dance. Pots of food and gourds of drink were being passed about among the audience. Dirty hands were plunged into the food pots and the captured portions devoured so greedily that one might have thought the entire community had been upon the point of starvation. The gourds they held to their lips until the beer ran down their chins and the vessels were wrested from them by greedy neighbors. The drink had now begun to take noticeable effect upon most of them, with the result that they were beginning to give themselves up to utter and licentious abandon.

As the girl came nearer, keeping in the shadow of the huts, looking for Naratu she was suddenly discovered by one upon the edge of the crowd--a huge woman, who rose, shrieking, and came toward her. From her aspect the white girl thought that the woman meant literally to tear her to pieces. So utterly wanton and uncalled-for was the attack that it found the girl entirely unprepared, and what would have happened had not a warrior interfered may only be guessed. And then Usanga, noting the interruption, came lurching forward to question her.

"What do you want," he cried, "food and drink? Come with me!" and he threw an arm about her and dragged her toward the circle.

"No!" she cried, "I want Naratu. Where is Naratu?"

This seemed to sober the black for a moment as though he had temporarily forgotten his better half. He cast quick, fearful glances about, and then, evidently assured that Naratu had noticed nothing, he ordered the warrior who was still holding the infuriated black woman from the white girl to take the latter back to her hut and to remain there on guard over her.

First appropriating a gourd of beer for himself the warrior motioned the girl to precede him, and thus guarded she returned to her hut, the fellow squatting down just outside the doorway, where he confined his attentions for some time to the gourd.

Bertha Kircher sat down at the far side of the hut awaiting she knew not what impending fate. She could not sleep so filled was her mind with wild schemes of escape though each new one must always be discarded as impractical. Half an hour after the warrior had returned her to her prison he rose and entered the hut, where he tried to engage in conversation with her. Groping across the interior he leaned his short spear against the wall and sat down beside her, and as he talked he edged closer and closer until at last he could reach out and touch her. Shrinking, she drew away.

"Do not touch me!" she cried. "I will tell Usanga if you do not leave me alone, and you know what he will do to you."

The man only laughed drunkenly, and, reaching out his hand, grabbed her arm and dragged her toward him. She fought and cried aloud for Usanga and at the same instant the entrance to the hut was darkened by the form of a man.

"What is the matter?" shouted the newcomer in the deep tones that the girl recognized as belonging to the black sergeant. He had come, but would she be any better off? She knew that she would not unless she could play upon Usanga's fear of his woman.

When Usanga found what had happened he kicked the warrior out of the hut and bade him begone, and when the fellow had disappeared, muttering and grumbling, the sergeant approached the white girl. He was very drunk, so drunk that several times she succeeded in eluding him and twice she pushed him so violently away that he stumbled and fell.

Finally he became enraged and rushing upon her, seized her in his long, apelike arms. Striking at his face with clenched fists she tried to protect herself and drive him away. She threatened him with the wrath of Naratu, and at that he changed his tactics and began to plead, and as he argued with her, promising her safety and eventual freedom, the warrior he had kicked out of the hut made his staggering way to the hut occupied by Naratu.

Usanga finding that pleas and promises were as unavailing as threats, at last lost both his patience and his head, seizing the girl roughly, and simultaneously there burst into the hut a raging demon of jealousy. Naratu had come. Kicking, scratching, striking, biting, she routed the terrified Usanga in short order, and so obsessed was she by her desire to inflict punishment upon her unfaithful lord and master that she quite forgot the object of his infatuation.

Bertha Kircher heard her screaming down the village street at Usanga's heels and trembled at the thought of what lay in store for her at the hands of these two, for she knew that tomorrow at the latest Naratu would take out upon her the full measure of her jealous hatred after she had spent her first wrath upon Usanga.

The two had departed but a few minutes when the warrior guard returned. He looked into the hut and then entered. "No one will stop me now, white woman," he growled as he stepped quickly across the hut toward her.

Tarzan of the Apes, feasting well upon a juicy haunch from Bara, the deer, was vaguely conscious of a troubled mind. He should have been at peace with himself and all the world, for was he not in his native element surrounded by game in

plenty and rapidly filling his belly with the flesh he loved best? But Tarzan of the Apes was haunted by the picture of a slight, young girl being shoved and struck by brutal Negresses, and in imagination could see her now camped in this savage country a prisoner among degraded blacks.

Why was it so difficult to remember that she was only a hated German and a spy? Why would the fact that she was a woman and white always obtrude itself upon his consciousness? He hated her as he hated all her kind, and the fate that was sure to be hers was no more terrible than she in common with all her people deserved. The matter was settled and Tarzan composed himself to think of other things, yet the picture would not die--it rose in all its details and annoyed him. He began to wonder what they were doing to her and where they were taking her. He was very much ashamed of himself as he had been after the episode in Wilhelmstal when his weakness had permitted him to spare this spy's life. Was he to be thus weak again? No!

Night came and he settled himself in an ample tree to rest until morning; but sleep would not come. Instead came the vision of a white girl being beaten by black women, and again of the same girl at the mercy of the warriors somewhere in that dark and forbidding jungle.

With a growl of anger and self-contempt Tarzan arose, shook himself, and swung from his tree to that adjoining, and thus, through the lower terraces, he followed the trail that Usanga's party had taken earlier in the afternoon. He had little difficulty as the band had followed a well-beaten path and when toward midnight the stench of a native village assailed his delicate nostrils he guessed that his goal was near and that presently he should find her whom he sought.

Prowling stealthily as prowls Numa, the lion, stalking a wary prey, Tarzan moved noiselessly about the palisade, listening and sniffing. At the rear of the village he discovered a tree whose branches extended over the top of the palisade and a moment later he had dropped quietly into the village.

From hut to hut he went searching with keen ears and nostrils some confirming evidence of the presence of the girl, and at last, faint and almost obliterated by the odor of the Gomangani, he found it hanging like a delicate vapor about a small hut. The village was quiet now, for the last of the beer and the food had been disposed of and the blacks lay in their huts overcome by stupor, yet Tarzan made no noise that even a sober man keenly alert might have heard.

He passed around to the entrance of the hut and listened. From within came no sound, not even the low breathing of one awake; yet he was sure that the girl had been here and perhaps was even now, and so he entered, slipping in as silently as

a disembodied spirit. For a moment he stood motionless just within the entranceway, listening. No, there was no one here, of that he was sure, but he would investigate. As his eyes became accustomed to the greater darkness within the hut an object began to take form that presently outlined itself in a human form supine upon the floor.

Tarzan stepped closer and leaned over to examine it--it was the dead body of a naked warrior from whose chest protruded a short spear. Then he searched carefully every square foot of the remaining floor space and at last returned to the body again where he stooped and smelled of the haft of the weapon that had slain the black. A slow smile touched his lips--that and a slight movement of his head betokened that he understood.

A rapid search of the balance of the village assured him that the girl had escaped and a feeling of relief came over him that no harm had befallen her. That her life was equally in jeopardy in the savage jungle to which she must have flown did not impress him as it would have you or me, since to Tarzan the jungle was not a dangerous place--he considered one safer there than in Paris or London by night.

He had entered the trees again and was outside the palisade when there came faintly to his ears from far beyond the village an old, familiar sound. Balancing lightly upon a swaying branch he stood, a graceful statue of a forest god, listening intently. For a minute he stood thus and then there broke from his lips the long, weird cry of ape calling to ape and he was away through the jungle toward the sound of the booming drum of the anthropoids leaving behind him an awakened and terrified village of cringing blacks, who would forever after connect that eerie cry with the disappearance of their white prisoner and the death of their fellow-warrior.

Bertha Kircher, hurrying through the jungle along a well-beaten game trail, thought only of putting as much distance as possible between herself and the village before daylight could permit pursuit of her. Whither she was going she did not know, nor was it a matter of great moment since death must be her lot sooner or later.

Fortune favored her that night, for she passed unscathed through as savage and lion-ridden an area as there is in all Africa--a natural hunting ground which the white man has not yet discovered, where deer and antelope and zebra, giraffe and elephant, buffalo, rhinoceros, and the other herbivorous animals of central Africa abound unmolested by none but their natural enemies, the great cats which, lured here by easy prey and immunity from the rifles of big-game hunters, swarm the district.

She had fled for an hour or two, perhaps, when her attention was arrested by the sound of animals moving about, muttering and growling close ahead. Assured that she had covered a sufficient distance to insure her a good start in the morning before the blacks could take to her trail, and fearful of what the creatures might be, she climbed into a large tree with the intention of spending the balance of the night there.

She had no sooner reached a safe and comfortable branch when she discovered that the tree stood upon the edge of a small clearing that had been hidden from her by the heavy undergrowth upon the ground below, and simultaneously she discovered the identity of the beasts she had heard.

In the center of the clearing below her, clearly visible in the bright moonlight, she saw fully twenty huge, manlike apes--great, shaggy fellows who went upon their hind feet with only slight assistance from the knuckles of their hands. The moonlight glanced from their glossy coats, the numerous gray-tipped hairs imparting a sheen that made the hideous creatures almost magnificent in their appearance.

The girl had watched them but a minute or two when the little band was joined by others, coming singly and in groups until there were fully fifty of the great brutes gathered there in the moonlight. Among them were young apes and several little ones clinging tightly to their mothers' shaggy shoulders. Presently the group parted to form a circle about what appeared to be a small, flat-topped mound of earth in the center of the clearing. Squatting close about this mound were three old females armed with short, heavy clubs with which they presently began to pound upon the flat top of the earth mound which gave forth a dull, booming sound, and almost immediately the other apes commenced to move about restlessly, weaving in and out aimlessly until they carried the impression of a moving mass of great, black maggots.

The beating of the drum was in a slow, ponderous cadence, at first without time but presently settling into a heavy rhythm to which the apes kept time with measured tread and swaying bodies. Slowly the mass separated into two rings, the outer of which was composed of shes and the very young, the inner of mature bulls. The former ceased to move and squatted upon their haunches, while the bulls now moved slowly about in a circle the center of which was the drum and all now in the same direction.

It was then that there came faintly to the ears of the girl from the direction of the village she had recently quitted a weird and high-pitched cry. The effect upon the apes was electrical--they stopped their movements and stood in attitudes of intent listening for a moment, and then one fellow, huger than his companions,

raised his face to the heavens and in a voice that sent the cold shudders through the girl's slight frame answered the far-off cry.

Once again the beaters took up their drumming and the slow dance went on. There was a certain fascination in the savage ceremony that held the girl spellbound, and as there seemed little likelihood of her being discovered, she felt that she might as well remain the balance of the night in her tree and resume her flight by the comparatively greater safety of daylight.

Assuring herself that her packet of papers was safe she sought as comfortable a position as possible among the branches, and settled herself to watch the weird proceedings in the clearing below her.

A half-hour passed, during which the cadence of the drum increased gradually. Now the great bull that had replied to the distant call leaped from the inner circle to dance alone between the drummers and the other bulls. He leaped and crouched and leaped again, now growling and barking, again stopping to raise his hideous face to Goro, the moon, and, beating upon his shaggy breast, uttered a piercing scream--the challenge of the bull ape, had the girl but known it.

He stood thus in the full glare of the great moon, motionless after screaming forth his weird challenge, in the setting of the primeval jungle and the circling apes a picture of primitive savagery and power--a mightily muscled Hercules out of the dawn of life--when from close behind her the girl heard an answering scream, and an instant later saw an almost naked white man drop from a near-by tree into the clearing.

Instantly the apes became a roaring, snarling pack of angry beasts. Bertha Kircher held her breath. What maniac was this who dared approach these frightful creatures in their own haunts, alone against fifty? She saw the brown-skinned figure bathed in moonlight walk straight toward the snarling pack. She saw the symmetry and the beauty of that perfect body--its grace, its strength, its wondrous proportioning, and then she recognized him. It was the same creature whom she had seen carry Major Schneider from General Kraut's headquarters, the same who had rescued her from Numa, the lion; the same whom she had struck down with the butt of her pistol and escaped when he would have returned her to her enemies, the same who had slain Hauptmann Fritz Schneider and spared her life that night in Wilhelmstal.

Fear-filled and fascinated she watched him as he neared the apes. She heard sounds issue from his throat--sounds identical with those uttered by the apes--and though she could scarce believe the testimony of her own ears, she knew that this godlike creature was conversing with the brutes in their own tongue.

Tarzan halted just before he reached the shes of the outer circle. "I am Tarzan of the Apes!" he cried. "You do not know me because I am of another tribe, but Tarzan comes in peace or he comes to fight--which shall it be? Tarzan will talk with your king," and so saying he pushed straight forward through the shes and the young who now gave way before him, making a narrow lane through which he passed toward the inner circle.

Shes and balus growled and bristled as he passed closer, but none hindered him and thus he came to the inner circle of bulls. Here bared fangs menaced him and growling faces hideously contorted. "I am Tarzan," he repeated. "Tarzan comes to dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers. Where is your king?" Again he pressed forward and the girl in the tree clapped her palms to her cheeks as she watched, wide-eyed, this madman going to a frightful death. In another instant they would be upon him, rending and tearing until that perfect form had been ripped to shreds; but again the ring parted, and though the apes roared and menaced him they did not attack, and at last he stood in the inner circle close to the drum and faced the great king ape.

Again he spoke. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he cried. "Tarzan comes to live with his brothers. He will come in peace and live in peace or he will kill; but he has come and he will stay. Which--shall Tarzan dance the Dum-Dum in peace with his brothers, or shall Tarzan kill first?"

"I am Go-lat, King of the Apes," screamed the great bull. "I kill! I kill! I kill!" and with a sullen roar he charged the Tarmangani.

The ape-man, as the girl watched him, seemed entirely unprepared for the charge and she looked to see him borne down and slain at the first rush. The great bull was almost upon him with huge hands outstretched to seize him before Tarzan made a move, but when he did move his quickness would have put Ara, the lightning, to shame. As darts forward the head of Histah, the snake, so darted forward the left hand of the man-beast as he seized the left wrist of his antagonist. A quick turn and the bull's right arm was locked beneath the right arm of his foe in a jujutsu hold that Tarzan had learned among civilized men--a hold with which he might easily break the great bones, a hold that left the ape helpless.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes!" screamed the ape-man. "Shall Tarzan dance in peace or shall Tarzan kill?"

"I kill! I kill! I kill!" shrieked Go-lat.

With the quickness of a cat Tarzan swung the king ape over one hip and sent him sprawling to the ground. "I am Tarzan, King of all the Apes!" he shouted. "Shall it be peace?"

Go-lat, infuriated, leaped to his feet and charged again, shouting his war cry: "I kill! I kill! I kill!" and again Tarzan met him with a sudden hold that the stupid bull, being ignorant of, could not possibly avert--a hold and a throw that brought a scream of delight from the interested audience and suddenly filled the girl with doubts as to the man's madness--evidently he was quite safe among the apes, for she saw him swing Go-lat to his back and then catapult him over his shoulder. The king ape fell upon his head and lay very still.

"I am Tarzan of the Apes!" cried the ape-man. "I come to dance the Dum-Dum with my brothers," and he made a motion to the drummers, who immediately took up the cadence of the dance where they had dropped it to watch their king slay the foolish Tarmangani.

It was then that Go-lat raised his head and slowly crawled to his feet. Tarzan approached him. "I am Tarzan of the Apes," he cried. "Shall Tarzan dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers now, or shall he kill first?"

Go-lat raised his bloodshot eyes to the face of the Tarmangani. "Kagoda!" he cried "Tarzan of the Apes will dance the Dum-Dum with his brothers and Go-lat will dance with him!"

And then the girl in the tree saw the savage man leaping, bending, and stamping with the savage apes in the ancient rite of the Dum-Dum. His roars and growls were more beastly than the beasts. His handsome face was distorted with savage ferocity. He beat upon his great breast and screamed forth his challenge as his smooth, brown hide brushed the shaggy coats of his fellows. It was weird; it was wonderful; and in its primitive savagery it was not without beauty--the strange scene she looked upon, such a scene as no other human being, probably, ever had witnessed--and yet, withal, it was horrible.

As she gazed, spell-bound, a stealthy movement in the tree behind her caused her to turn her head, and there, back of her, blazing in the reflected moonlight, shone two great, yellow-green eyes. Sheeta, the panther, had found her out.

The beast was so close that it might have reached out and touched her with a great, taloned paw. There was no time to think, no time to weigh chances or to choose alternatives. Terror-inspired impulse was her guide as, with a loud scream, she leaped from the tree into the clearing.

Instantly the apes, now maddened by the effects of the dancing and the moonlight, turned to note the cause of the interruption. They saw this she Tarmangani, helpless and alone and they started for her. Sheeta, the panther, knowing that not even Numa, the lion, unless maddened by starvation, dares meddle with the great apes at their Dum-Dum, had silently vanished into the night, seeking his supper elsewhere.

Tarzan, turning with the other apes toward the cause of the interruption, saw the girl, recognized her and also her peril. Here again might she die at the hands of others; but why consider it! He knew that he could not permit it, and though the acknowledgment shamed him, it had to be admitted.

The leading shes were almost upon the girl when Tarzan leaped among them, and with heavy blows scattered them to right and left; and then as the bulls came to share in the kill they thought this new ape-thing was about to make that he might steal all the flesh for himself, they found him facing them with an arm thrown about the creature as though to protect her.

"This is Tarzan's she," he said. "Do not harm her." It was the only way he could make them understand that they must not slay her. He was glad that she could not interpret the words. It was humiliating enough to make such a statement to wild apes about this hated enemy.

So once again Tarzan of the Apes was forced to protect a Hun. Growling, he muttered to himself in extenuation:

"She is a woman and I am not a German, so it could not be otherwise!"