

# The RETURN of TARZAN

By EDGAR RICE BURROUGHS



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## PROLOGUE.

Readers of "Tarzan of the Apes"—there were millions of them—have been awaiting with eagerness "The Return of Tarzan." They need no introduction to the ape-man, who was an English lord by ancestry and an inhabitant of the treetops by fate until the same fate brought him out and made him a civilized man after twenty years of life among the great apes of Africa. His adventures, as wonderful and interesting as any set forth in words, have been the center of interest in a story that is unique in its originality.

Now we have "The Return of Tarzan," as thrilling as its forerunner. In it are told the further adventures of the splendid ape-man, who at last wins his way to the side of his true love after facing countless perils by land and sea.

Whoever read "Tarzan of the Apes" needs no invitation to peruse this story. Others are warned that after they read this sequel to "Tarzan of the Apes" they won't be satisfied until they have read that story also.

## CHAPTER V.

### A Plot Against a Woman.

**F**OR a month Tarzan was a regular and very welcome devotee at the shrine of the beautiful Countess de Coude. Often he met other members of the select little coterie that dropped in for tea of an afternoon. More often Olga found devices that would give her an hour of Tarzan alone. She grew to speculate much upon the strange force which seemed to attract her toward the gray-eyed stranger. She did not wish to love him, nor did she wish his love. He was honorable and chivalrous. She was not afraid of him. That she could trust him she had felt instinctively from the first.

From a distance Rokoff had watched this growing intimacy with malicious glee. Ever since he had learned that Tarzan knew that he was a Russian spy there had been added to his hatred for the ape-man a great fear that he would expose him. He was but waiting now until the moment was propitious for a master stroke.

Tarzan was nearer to contentment than he had been since the peace and tranquillity of his jungle had been broken in upon by the advent of the marooned Pouter party.

Sometimes D'Arnot accompanied him on his visits to the De Coude home, for he had long known both Olga and the count. Occasionally De Coude dropped in, but the multitudinous affairs of his official position and the never ending demands of politics kept him from home usually until late at night.

Rokoff spied upon Tarzan almost constantly, waiting for the time that he should call at the De Coude palace at night, but in this he was doomed to disappointment.

Finding that it seemed impossible to trap Tarzan through any voluntary act of his own, Rokoff and Paulvitch put their heads together to hatch a plan that would trap the ape-man in all the circumstantial evidence of a compromising position.

For days they watched the papers as well as the movements of De Coude and Tarzan. At length they were rewarded. A morning paper made brief mention of a smoker that was to be given on the following evening by the German ambassador. De Coude's name was among those of the invited guests. If he attended this meant that he would be absent from his home until after midnight.

On the night of the banquet Paulvitch waited at the curb before the residence of the ambassador, where he could scan the face of each guest that arrived. He had not long to wait before De Coude descended from his car and passed him. That was enough. Paulvitch hastened back to his quarters, where Rokoff awaited him. There they waited until after 11, then Paulvitch took down the receiver of their telephone. He called the number of the apartments of Lieutenant D'Arnot.

"M. Tarzan?"

"Ah, yes, monsieur, this is Francois—in the service of the Countess de Coude. Possibly monsieur does poor Francois the honor to recall him—yes? Francois, monsieur, I have a message, an urgent message from the countess. She asks that you hasten to her at once—she is in trouble, monsieur."

Paulvitch hung up the receiver and turned to grin at Rokoff.

"It will take him thirty minutes to get there. If you reach the German am-

ambassador's in fifteen De Coude should arrive at his home in about forty-five minutes. It all depends upon whether the fool will remain fifteen minutes after he finds that a trick has been played upon him, but unless I am mistaken Olga will be loath to let him go in so short a time as that. Here is the note for De Coude. Hasten!"

Paulvitch lost no time in reaching the German ambassador's. At the door he handed the note to a footman. "This is for the Count de Coude. It is very urgent. You must see that it is placed in his hands at once," and he dropped a piece of silver into the willing hand of the servant. Then he returned to his quarters.

A moment later De Coude was apologizing to his host as he tore open the envelope. What he read left his face white and his hand trembling:

M. le Count de Coude—One who wishes to save the honor of your name takes this means to warn you that the serenity of your home is in jeopardy.

A certain man who for months has been a constant visitor there during your absence is now with your wife. If you go at once to your countess' boudoir you will find them together.

A FRIEND.

Twenty minutes after Paulvitch had called Tarzan, Rokoff obtained a connection with Olga's private line. Her maid answered the telephone, which was in the countess' boudoir.

"But madame has retired," said the maid in answer to Rokoff's request to speak with her.

"This is a very urgent message for the countess' ears alone," replied Rokoff. "Tell her that she must arise and slip something about her and come to the telephone. I shall call up again in five minutes." Then he hung up his receiver. A moment later Paulvitch entered.

"The count has the message?" asked Rokoff.

"He should be on his way to his home by now," replied Paulvitch.

"Good! My lady will be sitting in her boudoir, very much in negligence, about now. In a minute the faithful Jacques will escort M. Tarzan into her presence without announcing him. The count will break in upon a very pretty love scene in about fifteen minutes from now. I think we have planned marvelously, my dear Alexis. Let us go out and drink to the very good health of M. Tarzan in some of old Platon's unparalleled absinthe, not forgetting that the Count de Coude is one of the best swordsmen in Paris and by far the best shot in all France."

When Tarzan reached Olga's boudoir was awaiting him at the entrance.

"This way, monsieur," he said and led the way up the broad marble staircase. In another moment he had opened a door and, drawing aside a heavy curtain, obsequiously bowed Tarzan into a dimly lighted apartment. Then Jacques vanished.

Across the room from him Tarzan saw Olga seated before a little desk on which stood her telephone. She was tapping impatiently upon the polished surface of the desk. She had not heard him enter.

"Olga," he said, "what is wrong?"

She turned toward him with a little cry of alarm.

"Jean!" she cried. "What are you doing here? Who admitted you? What does it mean?"

Tarzan was thunderstruck, but in an instant he realized a part of the truth.

"Then you did not send for me, Olga?"

"Send for you at this time of night? Jean, do you think that I am quite mad?"

"Francois telephoned me to come at once; that you were in trouble and wanted me."

"Francois? Who in the world is Francois?"

"He said that he was in your service. He spoke as though I should recall the fact."

"There is no one by that name in my employ. Some one has played a joke upon you, Jean," and Olga laughed.

"I fear that it may be a most sinister joke," Olga, he replied. "There is more back of it than humor."

"What do you mean? You do not think that—"

"Where is the count?" he interrupted.

"At the German ambassador's."

"This is another move by your estimable brother. Tomorrow the count will hear of it. He will question the servants. Everything will point to what Rokoff wishes the count to think."

"The scoundrel!" cried Olga. She had arisen and come close to Tarzan, where she stood looking up into his face. She was very frightened.

In her eyes was an expression that the hunter sees in those of a poor, terrified doe—puzzled, questioning. Her look, her attitude, her words were eloquent of the age old appeal of defenseless woman to her natural protector—man. Tarzan took one of the warn-

little hands in his own strong one. The net was quite involuntary and almost equally so was the instinct of protection that threw a sheltering arm around the girl's shoulders.

The result was electrical. Never before had he been so close to her. In startled guilt they looked suddenly into each other's eyes and where Olga de Coude should have been strong she was weak, for she crept closer into the man's arms and clasped her own about his neck. And Tarzan of the Apes? He took her into his mighty arms and covered her lips with kisses.

Raoul de Coude made hurried excuses to his host after he had read the note handed him by the ambassador's butler. Never afterward could he recall the nature of the excuses he made. Everything was quite a blur to him up to the time that he stood on the threshold of his own home. Then he became very cool, moving quietly and with caution. For some inexplicable reason Jacques had the door open before he was halfway to the steps. It did not strike him at the time as being unusual, though afterward he remarked it.

Very softly he tipped up the stairs and along the gallery to the door of his wife's boudoir. In his hand was a heavy walking stick—in his heart murder.

Olga was the first to see him. With a horrified shriek she tore herself from Tarzan's arms and the ape-man turned just in time to ward with his arm a blow that De Coude had aimed at his head. Once, twice, three times the heavy stick fell with lightning rapidity and each blow aided in the transition of the ape-man back to the primordial.

With the low, guttural snarl of the bull ape he sprang for the Frenchman. The great stick was torn from his grasp and broken in two as though it had been matchwood, to be flung aside as the now infuriated beast charged for his adversary's throat.

Olga de Coude stood a horrified spectator to the terrible scene which ensued during the next brief moment, then she sprang to where Tarzan was murdering her husband—choking the life from him—shaking him as a terrier might shake a rat.

"Mother of God!" she cried. "You are killing him, you are killing him! Oh, Jean, you are killing my husband!"

Tarzan was deaf with rage. Suddenly he hurled the body to the floor, and, placing his foot upon the upturned breast, raised his head. Then through the palace of the Count de Coude rang the awesome challenge of the bull ape that has made a kill. From cellar to attic the horrid sound searched out the servants and left them blanched and trembling. The woman in the room sank to her knees beside the body of her husband and prayed.

Slowly the red mist faded from before Tarzan's eyes. Things began to take form—he was regaining the perspective of civilized man. His eyes fell upon the figure of the kneeling woman. "Olga," he whispered. She looked up.

"The smile of welcome from upon the Russian's face as he looked into the hard, gray eyes of his visitor.

"Name of a name!" he shouted, springing to his feet. "What brings you here?"

"Sit down," said Tarzan so low that the men could barely catch the words, but in a tone that brought Rokoff to his chair and kept Paulvitch in his.

"You know what has brought me here," he continued in the same low tone. "It should be to kill you, but because you are Olga de Coude's brother I shall not do that—now."

"I shall give you a chance for your lives. Paulvitch does not count much—he is merely a stupid, foolish little fool—and so I shall not kill him so long as I permit you to live. Before I leave you two alive in this room you will have done two things. The first will be to write a full confession of your connection with tonight's plot—and sign it."

"The second will be to promise me upon pain of death that you will permit no word of this affair to get into the newspapers. If you do not do both these things by the time I pass next through that door. Do you understand?" And without waiting for a reply: "Make haste. There is ink before you and paper and a pen."

Rokoff assumed a truculent air, attempting by bravado to show how little he feared Tarzan's threats. An instant later he felt the ape-man's steel fingers at his throat, and Paulvitch, who attempted to dodge by them and reach the door, was lifted completely off the floor and hurled senseless into a corner.

When Rokoff commenced to blacken about the face Tarzan released his hold and shoved the fellow back into his chair. After a moment of coughing Rokoff sat sullenly glaring at the man standing opposite him.

Presently Paulvitch came to himself and limped painfully back to his chair at Tarzan's command.

"Now write," said the ape-man. "If it is necessary to handle you again I shall not be so lenient."

Rokoff picked up a pen and commenced to write.

"See that you omit no detail and that you mention every name," cautioned Tarzan.

Presently there was a knock at the door. "Enter," said Tarzan.

A dapper young man came in. "I am from the Matin," he announced. "I understand that M. Rokoff has a story for me."

"Then you are mistaken, monsieur," replied Tarzan. "You have no story for publication, have you, my dear Nikolaus?"

Rokoff looked up from his writing with an ugly scowl upon his face.

"No," he growled. "I have no story for publication—now."

"Nor ever, my dear Nikolaus," and the reporter did not see the nasty light in the ape-man's eye; but Nikolaus Rokoff did.

"Nor ever," he repeated hastily.

"It is too bad that monsieur has been troubled," said Tarzan, turning to the newspaper man. "I bid monsieur good evening," and he bowed the dapper young man out of the room and closed the door in his face.

less ages to accomplish in the white race."

"I do not judge you at all, Jean. The fault is mine. You must go now. He must not find you here when he regains consciousness. Goodbye."

It was a sorrowful Tarzan who walked with bowed head from the palace of the Count de Coude.

Once outside his thoughts took definite shape, to the end that twenty minutes later he entered a police station not far from the Rue Maule. Here he found one of the officers with whom he had had an encounter several weeks previous. The policeman was genuine-ly glad to see again the man who had so roughly handled him. After a moment of conversation Tarzan asked if he had ever heard of Nikolaus Rokoff or Alexis Paulvitch.

"Very often indeed, monsieur. Each has a police record, and while there is nothing charged against them now we make it a point to know pretty well where they may be found should the occasion demand. It is only the same precaution that we taken with every known criminal. Why does monsieur ask?"

"They are known to me," replied Tarzan. "I wish to see M. Rokoff on a little matter of business. If you can direct me to his lodgings I shall appreciate it."

A few minutes later he bade the policeman adieu and, with a slip of paper in his pocket bearing a certain address in a semirespectable quarter, he walked briskly toward the nearest taxi stand.

Rokoff and Paulvitch had returned to their rooms and were sitting talking over the probable outcome of the evening's events. They had telephoned to the offices of two of the morning papers, from which they momentarily expected representatives to hear the first report of the scandal that was to stir social Paris on the morrow.

## CHAPTER VI.

### A Duel.

**A** HEAVY step sounded on the stairway. "Ah, but these newspaper men are prompt!" exclaimed Rokoff, and as a knock fell upon the door of their room, "Enter, monsieur."

The smile of welcome from upon the Russian's face as he looked into the hard, gray eyes of his visitor.

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"Nor ever," he repeated hastily.

"What a fool I have been," he concluded. "De Coude and his wife were both my friends. How have I returned their friendship? Barely did I escape murdering the count. I have cast a stigma on the name of a good woman. It is very probable that I have broken up a happy home."

"Do you love Olga de Coude?" asked D'Arnot.

"Were I not positive that she does not love me I could not answer your question, Paul, but without dissimulation to her I tell you that I do not love her, nor does she love me. For an instant we were the victims of a sudden madness—it was not love—and it would have left us unharmed as suddenly as it had come upon us even though De Coude had not returned. As you know, I have had little experience of women."

Olga de Coude is very beautiful, that and the dim light and the seductive surrounding and the appeal of the defenseless for protection might have been resisted by a more civilized man, but my civilization is not even skin deep—it does not go deeper than my clothes."

"Paris is no place for me. I will but continue to stumble into more and more serious pitfalls. The man-made restrictions are irksome. I feel always that I am a prisoner. I cannot endure it, my friend, and so I think that I shall go back to my own jungle and lead the life that God intended that I should lead when he put me there."

"Do not take it so to heart, Jean," responded D'Arnot. "You have acquitted yourself much better than most 'civilized' men would have under similar circumstances. As to leaving Paris at this time, I rather think that Raoul de Coude may be expected to have something to say on that subject before long."

Nor was D'Arnot mistaken. A week later on M. Flaubert was announced about 11 in the morning as D'Arnot and Tarzan were breakfasting. M. Flaubert was an impressively polite gentleman. With many low bows he delivered M. le Count de Coude's challenge to M. Tarzan. Would monsieur be so very kind as to arrange to have a friend meet M. Flaubert at as early an hour as convenient that the details might be arranged to the mutual satisfaction of all concerned?

Certainly, M. Tarzan would be delighted to place his interests unreservedly in the hands of his friend, Lieutenant D'Arnot. And so it was arranged that D'Arnot was to call on M. Flaubert at 2 that afternoon, and the polite M. Flaubert, with many bows, left them.

When they were again alone D'Arnot cocked quizzically at Tarzan.

"Well?" he said.

"Now to my sins I must add murder, or else myself be killed," said Tarzan. "I am progressing rapidly in the ways of my civilized brothers."

"What weapons shall you select?" asked D'Arnot. "De Coude is accredited with being a master with the sword and a splendid shot."

"I might then choose poisoned arrows at twenty paces or spears at the same distance," laughed Tarzan. "Make it pistols, Paul."

"He will kill you, Jean."

"I must die some day."

"We had better make it swords," said D'Arnot. "He will be satisfied with wounding you, and there is less danger of a mortal wound."

"Pistols," said Tarzan, with finality. D'Arnot tried to argue him out of it, but without avail, so pistols it was.

D'Arnot returned from his conference with M. Flaubert shortly after 4.

"It is all arranged," he said. "Everything is satisfactory. Tomorrow morning at daylight—there is a secluded spot on the road not far from Etampes. For some personal reason M. Flaubert preferred it. I did not demur."

"Good" was Tarzan's only comment. He did not refer to the matter again even indirectly. That night he wrote several letters before he retired. After sealing and addressing them he placed them all in an envelope addressed to D'Arnot. As he addressed D'Arnot he heard him humming a music hall ditty.

"This is a most uncivilized hour for people to kill each other," remarked the ape-man when he had been routed out of a comfortable bed in the blackness of the early morning hours. He had slept well, and so it seemed that his head had scarcely touched the pillow ere his man deferentially aroused him. His remark was addressed to D'Arnot.

In silence they entered D'Arnot's great car, and in similar silence they sped over the dim road that leads to Etampes. Each man was occupied with his own thoughts. D'Arnot's were very mournful, for he was genuinely fond of Tarzan.

Tarzan of the Apes was wrapped in thoughts of the past, pleasant memories of the happier occasions of his lost jungle life. He recalled the countless boyhood hours that he had spent cross-legged upon the table in his dear father's cabin, his little brown body bent over one of the fascinating picture books from which unaided he had gleaned the secret of the printed language long before the sounds of human speech fell upon his ears. A smile of contentment softened his strong face as he thought of that day of days that he had had alone with Jane Porter in the heart of his primeval forest.

Presently his reminiscences were broken in upon by the stopping of the car. They were at their destination. Tarzan's mind returned to the affairs of the moment. He knew that he was about to die, but there was no fear of death in him. To a denizen of the cruel jungle death is a commonplace. The first law of nature compels them to cling tenaciously to life—to fight for it—but it does not teach them to fear death.

D'Arnot and Tarzan were first upon the field of honor. A moment later De Coude, M. Flaubert and a third gentleman arrived. The last was introduced to D'Arnot and Tarzan. He was a physician.

Presently M. Flaubert spoke together in whispers for a brief time. The Count de Coude and Tarzan stood apart at opposite sides of the field. D'Arnot and M. Flaubert had examined both pistols. The two men who were to face each other a moment later stood silently while M. Flaubert recited the conditions that they were to observe.

They were to stand back to back. At a signal from M. Flaubert they were to walk in opposite directions, their pistols hanging by their sides. When each had proceeded ten paces D'Arnot was to give the final signal—then they were to turn and fire at will until one fell or each had expended the three shots allowed.

While M. Flaubert spoke Tarzan selected a cigarette from his case and lit it. De Coude was the personification of coolness—was not he the best shot in France?

Presently M. Flaubert nodded to D'Arnot and each man placed his principal in position.

"Are you quite ready, gentlemen?" asked M. Flaubert.

"Quite," replied De Coude.

Tarzan nodded. M. Flaubert gave the signal. He and D'Arnot stepped back a few paces to be out of the line of fire as the men paced slowly apart. Six! Seven! Eight! There were tears in D'Arnot's eyes. He loved Tarzan very much. Nine! Another pace and the poor lieutenant gave the signal he so hated to give. To him it sounded the doom of his best friend.

Quickly De Coude wheeled and fired. Tarzan gave a little start. His pistol still dangled at his side. De Coude hesitated, as though waiting to see his antagonist crumple to the ground. The Frenchman was too experienced a marksman not to know that he had scored a hit. Still Tarzan made no move to raise his pistol. De Coude fired once more, but the attitude of the ape-man—the utter indifference that was so apparent in every line of the nonchalant ease of his giant figure and the even, unruffled puffing of his cigarette—had disconcerted the best marksman in France. This time Tarzan did not start, but again De Coude knew that he had hit.

Suddenly the explanation leaped to his mind—his antagonist was coolly taking these terrible chances in the hope that he would receive no staggering wound from any of De Coude's three shots. Then he would take his own time about shooting De Coude down deliberately, coolly and in cold blood. A little shiver ran up the Frenchman's spine. It was fiendish—diabolical. What manner of creature was this that could stand complacently with two bullets in him, waiting for the third?

And so De Coude took careful aim this time, but his nerve was gone, and he made a clean miss. Not once had Tarzan raised his pistol hand from where it hung beside his leg.

For a moment the two stood looking straight into each other's eyes. On Tarzan's face was a pathetic expression of disappointment. On De Coude's a rapidly growing expression of horror—yes, of terror.

He could endure it no longer.

"Shoot, monsieur!" he screamed.

But Tarzan did not raise his pistol. Instead, he advanced toward De Coude, and when D'Arnot and M. Flaubert, mistaking his intention, would have rushed between them he raised his left hand in a sign of remonstrance.

"Do not fear," he said to them. "I shall not harm him."

It was most unusual, but they halted. Tarzan advanced until he was quite close to De Coude.

"There must have been something wrong with monsieur's pistol," he said. "Or monsieur is unstrung. Take mine, monsieur, and try again," and Tarzan offered his pistol, butt foremost, to the astonished De Coude.

"Mon Dieu, monsieur!" cried the latter. "Are you mad?"

"No, my friend," replied the ape-man, "but I deserve to die. It is the only way in which I may atone for the wrong I have done a very good woman. Take my pistol and do as I bid."

"It would be murder," replied De Coude. "But what wrong did you do my wife? She swore to me that—"

"Do not mean that," said Tarzan quickly. "You saw all the wrong that passed between us. But that was enough to cast a shadow upon her name and to ruin the happiness of a man against whom I had no enmity. The fault was all mine, and so I hoped to die for it this morning. I am disappointed that monsieur is not so wonderful a marksman as I had been led to believe."

"You say that the fault was all yours?" asked De Coude eagerly.

"All mine, monsieur. Your wife is a very pure woman. She loves only you. The fault that you saw was all mine. The thing that brought me there was no fault of either the Countess de Coude or myself. Here is a paper which will quite positively demonstrate that." And Tarzan drew from his pocket the statement Rokoff had written and signed.

De Coude took it and read. D'Arnot and M. Flaubert had drawn near. They were interested spectators of this strange ending of a strange duel. None spoke until De Coude had quite finished; then he looked up at Tarzan.

"You are a very brave and chivalrous gentleman," he said. "I thank God that I did not kill you."

De Coude was a Frenchman. Frenchmen are impulsive. He threw his arms about Tarzan and embraced him. M. Flaubert embraced D'Arnot. There was no one to embrace the doctor. So possibly it was pique which prompted him to interfere and demand that he

be permitted to dress Tarzan's wounds.

"This gentleman was hit once at