

TARZAN RESCUES THE MOON : And Takes a Long Stride : Toward Attaining Kingship : By Edgar Rice Burroughs

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The moon shone down out of a cloudless sky—a huge, swollen moon that seemed so close to earth that one might wonder that she did not brush the crowing tree tops. It was night, and Tarzan was abroad in the jungle—Tarzan, the ape-man; mighty fighter, mighty hunter. Why he swung through the dark shadows of the somber forest he could not have told you. It was not that he was hungry—he had fed well this day, and in a safe cache were the remains of his kill, ready against the coming of a new appetite. Perhaps it was the very joy of living that urged him from his arboreal couch to pit his muscles and his senses against the jungle night, and then, too, Tarzan always was goaded by an intense desire to know.

The jungle which is presided over by Kudu, the sun, is a very different jungle from that of Goro, the moon. The diurnal jungle has its own aspect—its own lights and shades, its own birds, its own blooms, its own beasts; its noises are the noises of the day. The lights and shades of the nocturnal jungle are as different as one might imagine the lights and shades of another world; its blooms and its birds are not those of the jungle of Kudu, the sun.

Tonight he had swung a wide circle—toward the east first and then toward the south, and now he was rounding back again into the north. His eyes, his ears and his keen nostrils were ever on the alert. Mingled with the sounds he knew there were strange sounds—weird sounds which he never heard until after Kudu had sought his lair below the far edge of the big water—sounds which belonged to Goro, the moon—and to the mysterious period of Goro's supremacy. These sounds often caused Tarzan profound speculation. They baffled him because he thought that he knew his jungle so well that there could be nothing within it unfamiliar to him. Sometimes he thought that as colors and forms appeared to differ by night from their familiar daylight aspects, so sounds altered with the passage of Kudu and the coming of Goro, and these thoughts roused within his brain a vague conjecture that perhaps Goro and Kudu influenced these changes. And what more natural that eventually he came to attribute to the sun and the moon personalities as real as his own? The sun was a living creature and ruled the day. The moon, endowed with brains and miraculous powers, ruled the night.

As Tarzan swung north again upon his wide circle the scent of the Gomangani came to his nostrils, mixed with the acrid odor of wood smoke. The ape-man moved quickly in the direction from which the scent was borne down to him upon the gentle night wind. Presently the ruddy sheen of a great fire filtered through the foliage to him ahead, and when Tarzan came to a halt in the trees near it he saw a party of half a dozen black warriors huddled close to the blaze. It was evidently a hunting party from the village of Mbonga, the chief, caught out in the jungle after dark. In a rude circle about them they had constructed a thorn boma, which, with the aid of the fire, they apparently hoped would discourage the advances of the larger carnivora.

That hope was not conviction was evidenced by the very palpable terror in which they crouched, wide-eyed and trembling, for already Numa and Sabor were moaning through the jungle toward them. There were other creatures, too, in the shadows beyond the firelight. Tarzan could see their yellow eyes flaming there. The blacks saw them and shivered. Then one arose and grasping a burning branch from the fire hurled it at the eyes, which immediately disappeared. The black sat down again. Tarzan watched and saw that it was several minutes before the eyes began to reappear in twos and fours.

Then came Numa, the lion, and Sabor, his mate. The other eyes scattered to right and left before the menacing growls of the great cats, and then the huge orbs of the man-eaters flamed alone out of the darkness. Some of the blacks threw themselves upon their faces and moaned; but he who before had hurled the burning branch now hurled another straight at the faces of the hungry lions, and they, too, disappeared as had the lesser lions before them. Tarzan was much interested. He saw a new reason for the mighty fires maintained by the blacks—a reason in addition to those connected with warmth and light and cooking. The beasts of the jungle feared fire, and so fire was, in a measure, a protection from them. Tarzan himself knew a certain awe of fire. Once he had, in investigating an abandoned fire in the village of the blacks, picked up a live coal. Since then he had maintained a respectful distance from such fires as he had seen. One experience had sufficed.

For a few minutes after the black hurled the firebrand no eyes appeared, though Tarzan could hear the soft padding of feet all about him. Then flashed once more the twin fire spots that marked the return of the lord of the jungle and a moment later, upon a slightly lower level, there appeared those of Sabor, his mate.

For some time they remained fixed and unwavering—a constellation of fierce stars in the jungle night—then the male lion advanced slowly toward the boma, where all but a

single black still crouched in trembling terror. When this lone guardian saw that Numa was again approaching, he threw another firebrand, and, as before, Numa retreated and with him Sabor, the lioness; but not so far, this time, nor for so long. Almost instantly they turned and began circling the boma, their eyes turning constantly toward the firelight, while low, throaty growls evidenced their increasing displeasure. Beyond the lions glowed the flaming eyes of the lesser satellites, until the black jungle was shot all around the black men's camp with little spots of fire.

Again and again the black warrior hurled his puny brands at the two big cats; but Tarzan noticed that Numa paid little or no attention to them after the first few retreats. The ape-man knew by Numa's voice that the lion was hungry and surmised that he had made up his mind to feed upon a Gomangani; but would he dare a closer approach to the dreaded flames?

Even as the thought was passing in Tarzan's mind, Numa stopped his restless pacing and faced the boma. For a moment he stood motionless, except for the quick, nervous up-curling of his tail, then he walked deliberately forward, while Sabor moved restlessly to and fro where he had left her. The black man called to his comrades that the lion was coming, but they were too far gone in fear to do more than huddle closer together and moan more loudly than before.

Seizing a blazing branch the man cast it straight into the face of the lion. There was an angry roar, followed by a swift charge. With a single bound the savage beast cleared the boma wall as, with almost equal agility, the warrior cleared it upon the opposite side and, changing the dangers lurking in the darkness, hotted for the nearest tree.

Numa was out of the boma almost as soon as he was inside it; but as he went back over the low thorn wall, he took a screaming negro with him. Dragging his victim along the ground he walked back toward Sabor, the lioness, who joined him, and the two continued into the blackness, their savage growls mingling with the piercing shrieks of the doomed and terrified man.

At a little distance from the blaze the lions halted, their ensues a short succession of unusually vicious growls and roars, during which the cries and moans of the black man ceased—forever.

Presently Numa reappeared in the firelight. He made a second trip into the boma and the former grisly tragedy was re-enacted with another howling victim.

Tarzan rose and stretched lazily. The entertainment was beginning to bore him. He yawned and turned upon his way toward the clearing where the tribe would be sleeping in the encircling trees.

Yet even when he had found his familiar crotch and curled himself for slumber he felt no desire to sleep. For a long time he lay awake thinking and dreaming. He looked up into the heavens and watched the moon and the stars. He wondered what they were and what power kept them from falling. His was an inquisitive mind. Always he had been full of questions concerning all that passed around him; but there never had been one to answer his questions. In childhood he had wanted to know, and, denied almost all knowledge, he still, in manhood, was filled with the great, unsatisfied curiosity of a child.

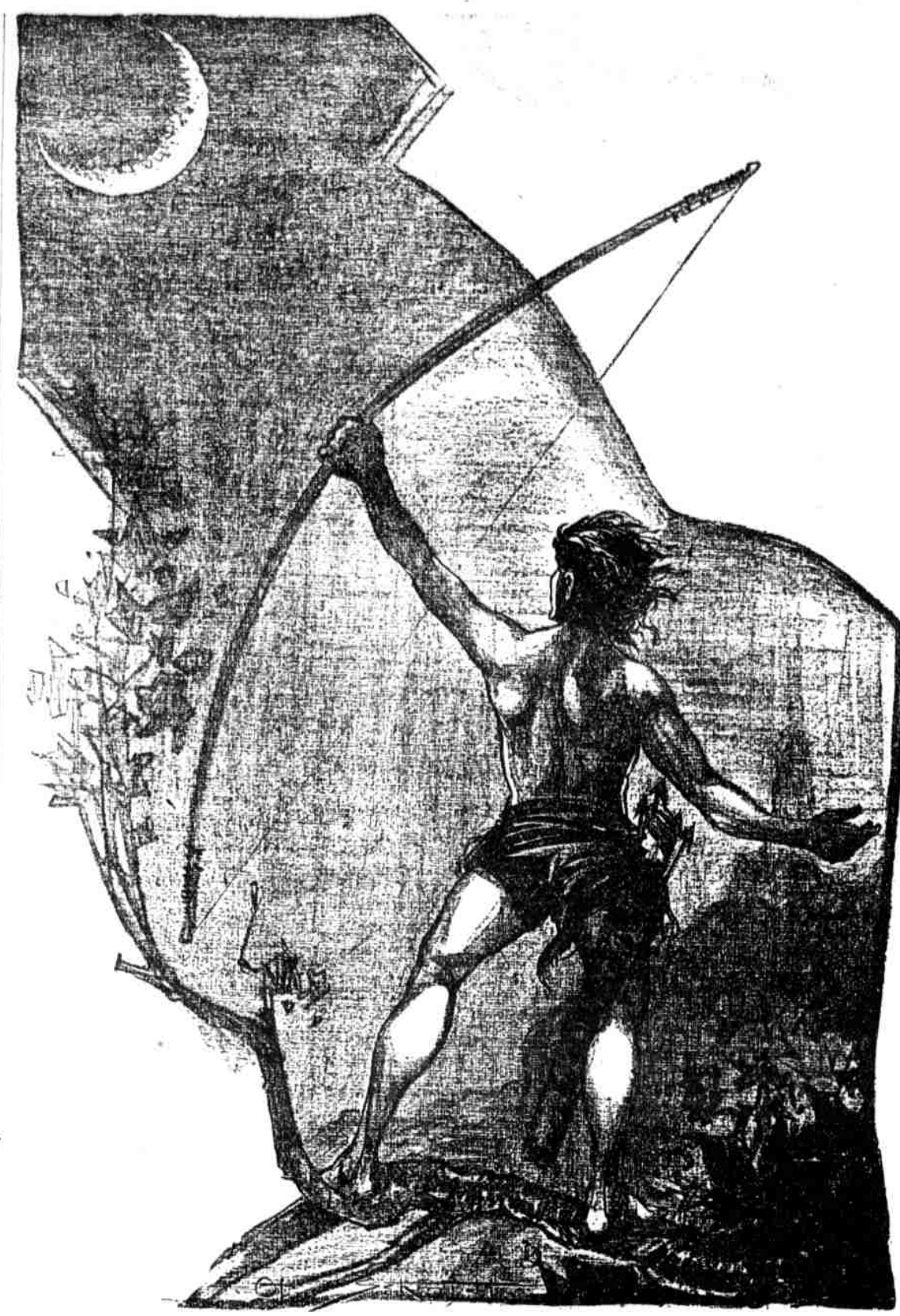
He was never quite content merely to perceive that things happened—he desired to know why they happened. He wanted to know what made things go. The secret of life interested him immensely. The miracle of death he could not quite fathom. Upon innumerable occasions he had investigated the internal mechanism of his kills, and once or twice he had opened the chest cavity of victims in time to see the heart still pumping.

He had learned from experience that a knife thrust through this organ brought immediate death nine times out of ten, while he might stab an antagonist innumerable times in other places without even disabling him. And so he had come to think of the heart, or, as he called it, "the red thing that breathes," as the seat and origin of life.

The brain and its functionings he did not comprehend at all. That his sense perceptions were transmitted to his brain and there translated, classified, and labeled was something quite beyond him. He thought that his fingers knew when they touched something, that his eyes knew when they saw, his ears when they heard, his nose when it scented.

He considered his throat, epidermis, and the hairs of his head as the three principal seats of emotion. When Kala had been slain a peculiar choking sensation had possessed his throat; contact with Hstah, the snake, imparted an unpleasant sensation to the skin of his whole body; while the approach of an enemy made the hairs on his scalp stand erect.

Imagine, if you can, a child filled with the wonders of nature, bursting with queries and surrounded only by beasts of the jungle to whom his questionings were as strange as Sanskrit would have been. If he asked Guntio what made it rain, the big old ape would but gaze at him in dumb astonishment for an instant and then return to his interesting and edifying search for fleas; and when he questioned Munga, who was very old and should have been very wise, but wasn't, as to the reason



Again and again did Tarzan launch his arrows

for the closing of certain flowers after Kudu had deserted the sky, and the opening of others during the night, he was surprised to discover that Munga had never noticed these interesting facts, though she could tell to an inch just where the fattest grubworm should be hiding.

To Tarzan these things were wonders. They appealed to his intellect and to his imagination. He saw the flowers close and open; he saw certain blooms which turned their faces always toward the sun; he saw leaves which moved when there was no breeze; he saw vines crawl like living things up the boles and over the branches of great trees; and to light the apes danced to the beating of their earthen drums. If Goro should be eaten by Numa there could be no more Dum-Dums. Taug was overwhelmed by the thought. He glanced at Tarzan half fearfully. Why was his friend so different from the others of the tribe? No one else whom Taug ever had known had had such queer thoughts as Tarzan. The ape scratched his head and wondered, dimly, if Tarzan was a safe companion, and then he recalled slowly, and by a laborious mental process, that Tarzan had served him better than any other of the apes, even the strong and wise bulls of the tribe.

Tarzan it was who had freed him from the blacks at the very time that Taug had thought Tarzan wanted Teeka. It was Tarzan who had saved Taug's little balu from death. It was Tarzan who had conceived and carried out the plan to pursue Teeka's abductor and rescue the stolen one. Tarzan had fought and bled in Taug's service so many times that Taug, although only a brutal ape, had had impressed upon his mind a fierce loyalty which nothing now could swerve—his friendship for Tarzan had become a habit, a tradition almost, which would endure while Taug endured. He never showed any outward demonstration of affection—he growled at Tarzan as he growled at the other bulls who came too close while he was feeding—but he would have died for Tarzan. He knew it and Tarzan knew it; but of such things apes do not speak—their vocabulary, for the finer instincts, consisting more of actions than words. But now Taug was worried, and he fell asleep again still thinking of the strange words of his fellow.

The following day he thought of them again, and without any intention of disloyalty he mentioned to Guntio what Tarzan had suggested about the eyes surrounding Goro, and the possibility that sooner or later Numa would charge the moon and devour him. To the apes all large things in nature are male, and so Goro, being the largest creature in the heavens by night, was, to them, a bull.

Guntio bit a siver from a horny finger and recalled the fact that Tarzan had once said that the trees talked to one another, and Goro recounted having seen the ape-man dancing alone in the moonlight with

Numa does not hunt above the trees." But he looked curiously and a little fearfully at the bright stars above him, as though he saw them for the first time, and doubtless it was the first time that Taug ever had seen the stars, though they had been in the sky above him every night of his life. To Taug they were as of gorgeous jungle blooms—he could not eat them and so he ignored them.

Taug fidgeted and was nervous. For a long time he lay sleepless, watching the stars—the flaming eyes of the beasts of prey surrounding Goro, the moon—Goro, by whose light the apes danced to the beating of their earthen drums. If Goro should be eaten by Numa there could be no more Dum-Dums. Taug was overwhelmed by the thought. He glanced at Tarzan half fearfully. Why was his friend so different from the others of the tribe? No one else whom Taug ever had known had had such queer thoughts as Tarzan. The ape scratched his head and wondered, dimly, if Tarzan was a safe companion, and then he recalled slowly, and by a laborious mental process, that Tarzan had served him better than any other of the apes, even the strong and wise bulls of the tribe.

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ing breeze, and lifting his trunk trumpeted loudly. Tarzan stretched back luxuriously, lying supine at full length along the rough hide. Flies swarmed about his face; but with a leafy branch torn from a tree he lazily brushed them away.

"Tantor," he said, "it is good to be alive. It is good to lie in the cool shadows. It is good to look upon the green trees and the bright colors of the flowers—upon everything which Bulamutumumo has put here for us. He is very good to us, Tantor; he has given you tender leaves and bark, and rich grasses to eat; to me He has given Bara and Horta and Pisah, the fruits and the nuts and the roots. He provides for each the food that each likes best. All that He asks is that we be strong enough or cunning enough to go forth and take it. Yes, Tantor, it is good to live. I should hate to die."

Tantor made a little sound in his throat and curled his trunk upward that he might caress the ape-man's cheek with the finger at its tip.

"Tantor," said Tarzan presently, "turn and feed in the direction of the tribe of Kerchak, the great ape, that Tarzan may ride home upon your head without walking."

The tusker turned and moved slowly off along a broad, tree-arched trail, pausing occasionally to pluck a tender branch, or strip the edible bark from an adjacent tree. Tarzan sprawled face downward upon the beast's head and back, his legs hanging on either side, his head supported by his open palms, his elbows resting on the broad cranium. And thus they made their leisurely way toward the gathering place of the tribe.

Just before they arrived at the clearing from the north there reached it from the south another figure—that of a well-knit black warrior, who stepped cautiously through the jungle, every sense upon the alert against the many dangers which might lurk anywhere along the way. Yet he passed beneath the southernmost sentry that was posted in a great tree commanding the trail from the south. The ape permitted the Gomangani to pass unmolested, for he saw that he was alone; but the moment that the warrior had entered the clearing a loud "Kreeg-ah!" rang out from behind him, immediately followed by a chorus of replies from different directions, as the great bulls crashed through the trees in answer to the summons of their fellow.

The black man halted at the first cry and looked about him. He could see nothing, but he knew the voice of the hairy tree men whom he and his kind feared, not alone because of the strength and ferocity of the savage beings, but as well through a superstitious terror engendered by the manlike appearance of the apes.

But Bulabantu was no coward. He heard the apes all about him; he knew that escape was probably impossible, so he stood his ground, his spear ready in his hand and a wary tremble on his lips. He would sell his life dearly, would Bulabantu, under-chief of the village of Mbonga, the chief.

Tarzan and Tantor were but a short distance away when the first cry of the sentry rang out through the quiet jungle. Like a flash the ape-man leaped from the elephant's back to a near-by tree and was swinging rapidly in the direction of the clearing before the echoes of the first "Kreeg-ah!" had died away.

When he arrived he saw a dozen bulls circling a single Gomangani. With a blood-curdling scream Tantor sprang to the attack. He hated the blacks even more than he did the apes, and here was an opportunity for a kill in the open. What had the Gomangani done? Had he slain one of the tribe?

Tarzan asked the nearest ape. No, the Gomangani had harmed none. Gozan, being on watch, had seen him, coming through the forest and had warned the tribe—that was all. The ape-man pushed through the circle of bulls, none of which as yet had worked himself into sufficient frenzy for a charge, and came where he had a full and close view of the black. He recognized the man instantly. Only the night before he had seen him facing the eyes in the dark, while his fellows groveled in the dirt at his feet, too terrified even to defend themselves. Here was a brave man, and Tarzan had deep admiration for bravery. Even his hatred of the blacks was not so strong a passion as his love of courage. He would have joyed in battling with a black warrior at almost any time; but this one he did not wish to kill—he felt, vaguely, that the man had earned his life by his brave defense of it on the preceding night, nor did he fancy the odds that were pitted against the lone warrior.

He turned to the apes. "Go back to your feeding," he said, "and let this Gomangani go his way in peace. He has not harmed us, and last night I saw him fighting Numa and Sabor with fire, alone in the jungle. He is brave. Why could we kill one who is brave and who has not attacked us? Let him go."

form charged through them, hurling those it came in contact with to one side as a strong man might scatter children. It was Taug—great, savage Taug.

"Who says 'kill Tarzan'?" he demanded. "Who kills Tarzan must kill Taug, too. Who can kill Taug? Taug will tear your insides from you and feed them to Dango."

"We can kill you all," replied Guntio. "There are many of us and few of you," and he was right. Tarzan knew that he was right. Taug knew it; but neither would admit such a possibility. It is not the way of bull apes.

"I am Tarzan," cried the ape-man. "I am Tarzan. Mighty hunter; Mighty fighter. In all the jungle none so great as Tarzan."

Then, one by one, the opposing bulls recounted their virtues and their prowess. And all the time the combatants came closer and closer to one another. Thus do the bulls work themselves to the proper pitch before engaging in battle.

Guntio came, stiff-legged, close to Tarzan and sniffed at him, with bared fangs. Tarzan rumbled forth a low, menacing growl. They might repeat these tactics a dozen times; but sooner or later one bull would close with another and then the whole hideous pack would be tearing and rending at their prey.

Bulabantu, the black man, had stood wide-eyed in wonder from the moment he had seen Tarzan approaching through the apes. He had heard much of this devil-god who ran with the hairy tree people; but never had he seen him in full daylight. He knew him well enough from the description of those who had seen him and from the glimpses he had had of the marauder upon several occasions when the ape-man had entered the village of Mbonga, the chief, by night, in the perpetration of one of his numerous ghastly jokes.

Bulabantu could not, of course, understand anything which passed between Tarzan and the apes; but he saw that the ape-man and one of the larger bulls were in argument with the others. He saw that these two were standing with their back toward him and between him and the balance of the tribe, and he guessed, though it seemed improbable, that they might be defending him. He knew that Tarzan had once spared the life of Mbonga, the chief, and that he had succeeded Tibo, and Tibo's mother, Momaya. So it was not impossible that he would help Bulabantu; but how he could accomplish it Bulabantu could not guess; nor as a matter of fact could Taug, for the odds against him were too great.

Guntio and the others were slowly forcing Tarzan and Taug back toward Bulabantu. The ape-man thought of his words with Tantor just a short time before: "Yes, Tantor, it is good to live. I should hate to die." And now he knew that he was about to die, for the temper of the great bulls was mounting rapidly against him. Always had many of them hated him, and all were suspicious of him. They knew he was different. Tarzan knew it too; but he was glad that he was—he was a MAN; that he had learned from his picture-books, and he was very proud of the distinction. Presently, though, he would be a dead man.

Guntio was preparing to charge. Tarzan knew the signs. He knew that the balance of the bulls would charge with Guntio. Then it would soon be over. Something moved among the verdure at the opposite side of the clearing. Tarzan saw it just as Guntio, with the terrifying cry of a challenging ape, sprang forward. Taug roared a peculiar call and then crouched to meet the assault. Taug crouched, too, and Bulabantu, assured now that these two were fighting upon his side, couched his spear and sprang before them to receive the first charge of the enemy.

Simultaneously a huge bulk broke into the clearing from the jungle behind the charging bulls. The trumpeting of a mad tusker rose shrill above the cries of the anthropoids, as Tantor, the elephant, dashed swiftly across the clearing to the aid of his friend.

Guntio never closed upon the ape-man, nor did a fang enter flesh upon either side. The terrific reverberation of Tantor's challenge sent the bulls scurrying to the trees, jabbering and golling. Taug raced off with them. Only Tarzan and Bulabantu remained. The latter stood his ground because he saw that the devil-god did not run, and because the black had the courage to face a certain and horrible death beside one who had quite evidently dared death for him.

But it was a surprised Gomangani who saw the mighty elephant come to a sudden halt in front of the ape-man and caress him with his long, sinuous trunk.

Tarzan turned toward the black man. "Go!" he said in the language of the apes, and pointed in the direction of the village of Mbonga. Bulabantu understood the gesture, if not the word, nor did he lose time in obeying. Tarzan stood watching him until he had disappeared. He knew that the apes would not follow. Then he said to the elephant: "Pick me up!" and the tusker swung him lightly to his head.

"Tarzan goes to his lair by the big water," shouted the ape-man to the apes in the trees. "All of you are more foolish than Manu, except Taug and Teeka. Taug and Teeka may come to see Tarzan; but the others must keep away. Tarzan is done with the tribe of Kerchak."

He prodded Tantor with a caloused toe and the big beast swung off across the clearing, the apes watching them until they were swallowed up by the jungle.

Before the night fell Taug killed Guntio, picking a quarrel with him over his attack upon Tarzan.

For a moon the tribe saw nothing of Tarzan of the Apes. Many of them probably never gave him a thought; but there were those who missed him more than Tarzan imagined. Taug and Teeka often wished that he was back, and Taug determined a dozen times to go and visit Tarzan in his seaside lair; but first one thing and then another interfered.

One night when Taug lay sleepless looking up at the starry heavens he recalled the strange things that Tarzan once had suggested to him—that the bright spots were the eyes of the meat-eaters waiting in the dark of the jungle sky to leap upon Goro, the moon, and devour him. The more he thought about this matter the more perturbed he became.

And then a strange thing happened. Even as Taug looked at Goro, he saw a portion of one edge disappear, precisely as though something was gnawing upon it. Larger and larger became the hole in the side of Goro. With a scream, Taug leaped to his feet. His frenzied "Kreeg-ahs!" brought the terrified tribe screaming and chattering toward him.

"Look!" cried Taug, pointing at the moon. "Look! It is as Tarzan said. Numa has sprung through the fires and is devouring Goro. You called Tarzan names and drove him from the tribe; now see how wise he was. Let one of you who hated Tarzan go to Goro's aid. See the eyes in the dark jungle all about Goro. He is in danger and none can help him—none except Tarzan. Soon Goro will be devoured by Numa and we shall have no more light after Kudu seeks his lair. How shall we dance the Dum-Dum without the light of Goro?"

The apes trembled and whimpered. Any manifestation of the powers of nature always filled them with terror, for they could not understand.

"Go and bring Tarzan," cried one, and then they all took up the cry of "Tarzan! Bring Tarzan!" "He will save Goro." But who was to travel the dark jungle by night to fetch him?

"I will go," volunteered Taug, and an instant later he was off through the Stygian gloom toward the little land-locked harbor by the sea.

And as the tribe waited they watched the slow devouring of the moon. Already Numa had eaten out a great semicircular piece. At that rate Goro would be entirely gone before Kudu came again. The apes trembled at the thought of perpetual darkness by night. They could not sleep. Restlessly they moved here and there among the branches of trees, watching Numa of the skies at his deadly feast, and listening for the coming of Taug with Tarzan.

Goro was nearly gone when the ape heard the sounds of the approach through the trees of the two they awaited, and presently Tarzan, followed by Taug, swung into a near-by tree.

The ape-man wasted no time in idle words. In his hand was his long bow and at his back hung a quiver full of arrows, poisoned arrows that he had stolen from the village of the blacks; just as he had stolen the bow. Up into a great tree he clambered, higher and higher until he stood swaying upon a small limb which bent low beneath his weight. Here he had a clear and unobstructed view of the heavens. He saw Goro and the inroads which the hungry Numa had made into his shining surface.

Raising his face to the moon, Tarzan shrilled forth his hideous challenge. Faintly and from afar came the roar of an answering lion. The apes shivered. Numa of the skies had answered Tarzan.

Then the ape-man fitted an arrow to his bow, and drawing the shaft far back, aimed its point at the heart of Numa where he lay in the heavens devouring Goro. There was a loud twang as the released bolt shot into the dark heavens. Again and again did Tarzan of the Apes launch his arrows at Numa, and all the while the apes of the tribe of Kerchak huddled together in terror.

"At last came a cry from Taug. 'Look! Look!' he screamed. 'Numa is killed. Tarzan has killed Numa. See! Goro is emerging from the belly of Numa,' and, sure enough, the moon was gradually emerging from whatever had devoured her, whether it was Numa, the lion, or the shadow of the earth; but were you to try to convince an ape of the tribe of Kerchak that it was aught but Numa who so nearly devoured Goro that night, or that another than Tarzan preserved the brilliant god of their savage and mysterious rites from a frightful death, you would have difficulty—and a fight on your hands.

And so Tarzan of the Apes came back to the tribe of Kerchak, and in his coming he took a long stride toward the kingship, which he ultimately won, for now the apes looked up to him as a superior being.

In all the tribe there was but one who was at all skeptical about the plausibility of Tarzan's remarkable rescue of Goro, and that one, strange as it may seem, was Tarzan of the Apes.

The first of a new series of complete jungle tales will appear Saturday, August 23.