

Literature.org:

[Authors](#)
[Contact](#)

[Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar](#)

[Edgar Rice Burroughs](#)

This Book:

[Contents](#)
[Previous Chapter](#)
[Next Chapter](#)

Chapter 6 - The Arab Raid

After their first terror had subsided subsequent to the shock of the earthquake, Basuli and his warriors hastened back into the passageway in search of Tarzan and two of their own number who were also missing.

They found the way blocked by jammed and distorted rock. For two days they labored to tear a way through to their imprisoned friends; but when, after Herculean efforts, they had unearthed but a few yards of the choked passage, and discovered the mangled remains of one of their fellows they were forced to the conclusion that Tarzan and the second Waziri also lay dead beneath the rock mass farther in, beyond human aid, and no longer susceptible of it.

Again and again as they labored they called aloud the names of their master and their comrade; but no answering call rewarded their listening ears. At last they gave up the search. Tearfully they cast a last look at the shattered tomb of their master, shouldered the heavy burden of gold that would at least furnish comfort, if not happiness, to their bereaved and beloved mistress, and made their mournful way back across the desolate valley of Opar, and downward through the forests beyond toward the distant bungalow.

And as they marched what sorry fate was already drawing down upon that peaceful, happy home!

From the north came Achmet Zek, riding to the summons of his lieutenant's letter. With him came his horde of renegade Arabs, outlawed marauders, these, and equally degraded blacks, garnered from the more debased and ignorant tribes of savage cannibals through whose countries the raider passed to and fro with perfect impunity.

Mugambi, the ebon Hercules, who had shared the dangers and vicissitudes of his beloved Bwana, from Jungle Island, almost to the headwaters of the Ugambi, was the first to note the bold approach of the sinister caravan.

He it was whom Tarzan had left in charge of the warriors who remained to guard Lady Greystoke, nor could a braver or more loyal guardian have been found in any clime or upon any soil. A giant in stature, a savage, fearless warrior, the huge black possessed also soul and judgment in proportion to his bulk and his ferocity.

Not once since his master had departed had he been beyond sight or sound of the bungalow, except when Lady Greystoke chose to canter across the broad plain, or relieve the monotony of her loneliness by a brief hunting excursion. On such occasions Mugambi, mounted upon a wiry Arab, had ridden close at her horse's heels.

The raiders were still a long way off when the warrior's keen eyes discovered them. For a time he stood scrutinizing the advancing party in silence, then he turned and ran rapidly in the direction of the native huts which lay a few hundred yards below the bungalow.

Here he called out to the lolling warriors. He issued orders rapidly. In compliance with them the men seized upon their weapons and their shields. Some ran to call in the workers from the fields and to warn the tenders of the flocks and herds. The majority followed Mugambi back toward the bungalow.

The dust of the raiders was still a long distance away. Mugambi could not know positively that it hid an enemy; but he had spent a lifetime of savage life in savage Africa, and he had seen parties before come thus unheralded. Sometimes they had come in peace and sometimes they had come in war--one could never tell. It was well to be prepared. Mugambi did not like the haste with which the strangers advanced.

The Greystoke bungalow was not well adapted for defense. No palisade surrounded it, for, situated as it was, in the heart of loyal Waziri, its master had anticipated no possibility of an attack in force by any enemy. Heavy, wooden shutters there were to close the window apertures against hostile arrows, and these Mugambi was engaged in lowering when Lady Greystoke appeared upon the veranda.

"Why, Mugambi!" she exclaimed. "What has happened? Why are you lowering the shutters?"

Mugambi pointed out across the plain to where a white-robed force of mounted men was now distinctly visible.

"Arabs," he explained. "They come for no good purpose in the absence of the Great Bwana."

Beyond the neat lawn and the flowering shrubs, Jane Clayton saw the glistening bodies of her Waziri. The sun glanced from the tips of their metal-shod spears, picked out the gorgeous colors in the feathers of their war bonnets, and reflected the high-lights from the glossy skins of their broad shoulders and high cheek bones.

Jane Clayton surveyed them with unmixed feelings of pride and affection. What harm could befall her with such as these to protect her?

The raiders had halted now, a hundred yards out upon the plain. Mugambi had hastened down to join his warriors. He advanced a few yards before them and raising his voice hailed the strangers. Achmet Zek sat straight in his saddle before his henchmen.

"Arab!" cried Mugambi. "What do you here?"

"We come in peace," Achmet Zek called back.

"Then turn and go in peace," replied Mugambi. "We do not want you here. There can be no peace between Arab and Waziri."

Mugambi, although not born in Waziri, had been adopted into the tribe, which now contained no member more jealous of its traditions and its prowess than he.

Achmet Zek drew to one side of his horde, speaking to his men in a low voice. A moment later, without warning, a ragged volley was poured into the ranks of the Waziri. A couple of warriors fell, the others were for charging the attackers; but Mugambi was as cautious as well as a brave leader. He knew the futility of charging mounted men

armed with muskets. He withdrew his force behind the shrubbery of the garden. Some he dispatched to various other parts of the grounds surrounding the bungalow. Half a dozen he sent to the bungalow itself with instructions to keep their mistresses within doors, and to protect her with their lives.

Adopting the tactics of the desert fighters from which he had sprung, Achmet Zek led his followers at a gallop in a long, thin line, describing a great circle which drew closer and closer in toward the defenders.

At that part of the circle closest to the Waziri, a constant fusillade of shots was poured into the bushes behind which the black warriors had concealed themselves. The latter, on their part, loosed their slim shafts at the nearest of the enemy.

The Waziri, justly famed for their archery, found no cause to blush for their performance that day. Time and again some swarthy horseman threw hands above his head and toppled from his saddle, pierced by a deadly arrow; but the contest was uneven. The Arabs outnumbered the Waziri; their bullets penetrated the shrubbery and found marks that the Arab riflemen had not even seen; and then Achmet Zek circled inward a half mile above the bungalow, tore down a section of the fence, and led his marauders within the grounds.

Across the fields they charged at a mad run. Not again did they pause to lower fences, instead, they drove their wild mounts straight for them, clearing the obstacles as lightly as winged gulls.

Mugambi saw them coming, and, calling those of his warriors who remained, ran for the bungalow and the last stand. Upon the veranda Lady Greystoke stood, rifle in hand. More than a single raider had accounted to her steady nerves and cool aim for his outlawry; more than a single pony raced, riderless, in the wake of the charging horde.

Mugambi pushed his mistress back into the greater security of the interior, and with his depleted force prepared to make a last stand against the foe.

On came the Arabs, shouting and waving their long guns above their heads. Past the veranda they raced, pouring a deadly fire into the kneeling Waziri who discharged their volley of arrows from behind their long, oval shields--shields well adapted, perhaps, to stop a hostile arrow, or deflect a spear; but futile, quite, before the leaden missiles of the riflemen.

From beneath the half-raised shutters of the bungalow other bowmen did effective service in greater security, and after the first assault, Mugambi withdrew his entire force within the building.

Again and again the Arabs charged, at last forming a stationary circle about the little fortress, and outside the effective range of the defenders' arrows. From their new position they fired at will at the windows. One by one the Waziri fell. Fewer and fewer were the arrows that replied to the guns of the raiders, and at last Achmet Zek felt safe in ordering an assault.

Firing as they ran, the bloodthirsty horde raced for the veranda. A dozen of them fell to the arrows of the defenders; but the majority reached the door. Heavy gun butts fell upon it. The crash of splintered wood mingled with the report of a rifle as Jane Clayton fired through the panels upon the relentless foe.

Upon both sides of the door men fell; but at last the frail barrier gave to the vicious assaults of the maddened attackers; it crumpled inward and a dozen swarthy murderers leaped into the living-room. At the far end stood Jane Clayton surrounded by the remnant of her devoted guardians. The floor was covered by the bodies of those who already had given up their lives in her defense. In the forefront of her protectors stood the giant Mugambi. The Arabs raised their rifles to pour in the last volley that would effectually end all resistance; but Achmet Zek roared out a warning order that stayed their trigger fingers.

"Fire not upon the woman!" he cried. "Who harms her, dies. Take the woman alive!"

The Arabs rushed across the room; the Waziri met them with their heavy spears. Swords flashed, long-barreled pistols roared out their sullen death dooms. Mugambi launched his spear at the nearest of the enemy with a force that drove the heavy shaft completely through the Arab's body, then he seized a pistol from another, and grasping it by the barrel brained all who forced their way too near his mistress.

Emulating his example the few warriors who remained to him fought like demons; but one by one they fell, until only Mugambi remained to defend the life and honor of the ape-man's mate.

From across the room Achmet Zek watched the unequal struggle and urged on his minions. In his hands was a jeweled musket. Slowly he raised it to his shoulder, waiting until another move should place Mugambi at his mercy without endangering the lives of the woman or any of his own followers.

At last the moment came, and Achmet Zek pulled the trigger. Without a sound the brave Mugambi sank to the floor at the feet of Jane Clayton.

An instant later she was surrounded and disarmed. Without a word they dragged her from the bungalow. A giant Negro lifted her to the pommel of his saddle, and while the raiders searched the bungalow and outhouses for plunder he rode with her beyond the gates and waited the coming of his master.

Jane Clayton saw the raiders lead the horses from the corral, and drive the herds in from the fields. She saw her home plundered of all that represented intrinsic worth in the eyes of the Arabs, and then she saw the torch applied, and the flames lick up what remained.

And at last, when the raiders assembled after glutting their fury and their avarice, and rode away with her toward the north, she saw the smoke and the flames rising far into the heavens until the winding of the trail into the thick forests hid the sad view from her eyes.

As the flames ate their way into the living-room, reaching out forked tongues to lick up the bodies of the dead, one of that gruesome company whose bloody welterings had long since been stilled, moved again. It was a huge black who rolled over upon his side and opened blood-shot, suffering eyes. Mugambi, whom the Arabs had left for dead, still lived. The hot flames were almost upon him as he raised himself painfully upon his hands and knees and crawled slowly toward the doorway.

Again and again he sank weakly to the floor; but each time he rose again and continued his pitiful way toward safety. After what seemed to him an interminable time, during which the flames had become a veritable fiery furnace at the far side of the room, the great black managed to reach the veranda, roll down the steps, and crawl off into the cool safety of some nearby shrubbery.

All night he lay there, alternately unconscious and painfully sentient; and in the latter state watching with savage hatred the lurid flames which still rose from burning crib and hay cock. A prowling lion roared close at hand; but the giant black was unafraid. There was place for but a single thought in his savage mind-- revenge! revenge! revenge!

