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## [Jungle Tales of Tarzan](#)

### [Edgar Rice Burroughs](#)

This Book:

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

## Chapter 7 - The End of Bukawai

WHEN TARZAN OF the Apes was still but a boy he had learned, among other things, to fashion pliant ropes of fibrous jungle grass. Strong and tough were the ropes of Tarzan, the little Tarmangani. Tublat, his foster father, would have told you this much and more. Had you tempted him with a handful of fat caterpillars he even might have sufficiently unbended to narrate to you a few stories of the many indignities which Tarzan had heaped upon him by means of his hated rope; but then Tublat always worked himself into such a frightful rage when he devoted any considerable thought either to the rope or to Tarzan, that it might not have proved comfortable for you to have remained close enough to him to hear what he had to say.

So often had that snakelike noose settled unexpectedly over Tublat's head, so often had he been jerked ridiculously and painfully from his feet when he was least looking for such an occurrence, that there is little wonder he found scant space in his savage heart for love of his white-skinned foster child, or the inventions thereof. There had been other times, too, when Tublat had swung helplessly in midair, the noose tightening about his neck, death staring him in the face, and little Tarzan dancing upon a near-by limb, taunting him and making unseemly grimaces.

Then there had been another occasion in which the rope had figured prominently--an occasion, and the only one connected with the rope, which Tublat recalled with pleasure. Tarzan, as active in brain as he was in body, was always inventing new ways in which to play. It was through the medium of play that he learned much during his childhood. This day he learned something, and that he did not lose his life in the learning of it, was a matter of great surprise to Tarzan, and the fly in the ointment, to Tublat.

The man-child had, in throwing his noose at a playmate in a tree above him, caught a projecting branch instead. When he tried to shake it loose it but drew the tighter. Then Tarzan started to climb the rope to remove it from the branch. When he was part way up a frolicsome playmate seized that part of the rope which lay upon the ground and ran off with it as far as he could go. When Tarzan screamed at him to desist, the young ape released the rope a little and then drew it tight again. The result was to impart a swinging motion to Tarzan's body which the ape-boy suddenly realized was a new and pleasurable form of play. He urged the ape to continue until Tarzan was swinging to and fro as far as the short length of rope would permit, but the distance was not great enough, and, too, he was not far enough above the ground to give the necessary thrills which add so greatly to the pastimes of the young.

So he clambered to the branch where the noose was caught and after removing it carried the rope far aloft and out upon a long and powerful branch. Here he again made it fast, and taking the loose end in his hand, clambered quickly down among the branches as far as the rope would permit him to go; then he swung out upon the end of it, his lithe, young body turning and twisting--a human bob upon a pendulum of grass--thirty feet above the ground.

Ah, how delectable! This was indeed a new play of the first magnitude. Tarzan was entranced. Soon he discovered that by wriggling his body in just the right way at the proper time he could diminish or accelerate his oscillation, and, being a boy, he chose, naturally, to accelerate. Presently he was swinging far and wide, while below him, the apes of the tribe of Kerchak looked on in mild amaze.

Had it been you or I swinging there at the end of that grass rope, the thing which presently happened would not have happened, for we could not have hung on so long as to have made it possible; but Tarzan was quite as much at home swinging by his hands as he was standing upon his feet, or, at least, almost. At any rate he felt no fatigue long after the time that an ordinary mortal would have been numb with the strain of the physical exertion. And this was his undoing.

Tublat was watching him as were others of the tribe. Of all the creatures of the wild, there was none Tublat so cordially hated as he did this hideous, hairless, white-skinned, caricature of an ape. But for Tarzan's nimbleness, and the zealous watchfulness of savage Kala's mother love, Tublat would long since have rid himself of this stain upon his family escutcheon. So long had it been since Tarzan became a member of the tribe, that Tublat had forgotten the circumstances surrounding the entrance of the jungle waif into his family, with the result that he now imagined that Tarzan was his own offspring, adding greatly to his chagrin.

Wide and far swung Tarzan of the Apes, until at last, as he reached the highest point of the arc the rope, which rapidly had frayed on the rough bark of the tree limb, parted suddenly. The watching apes saw the smooth, brown body shoot outward, and down, plummet-like. Tublat leaped high in the air, emitting what in a human being would have been an exclamation of delight. This would be the end of Tarzan and most of Tublat's troubles. From now on he could lead his life in peace and security.

Tarzan fell quite forty feet, alighting on his back in a thick bush. Kala was the first to reach his side--ferocious, hideous, loving Kala. She had seen the life crushed from her own balu in just such a fall years before. Was she to lose this one too in the same way? Tarzan was lying quite still when she found him, embedded deeply in the bush. It took Kala several minutes to disentangle him and drag him forth; but he was not killed. He was not even badly injured. The bush had broken the force of the fall. A cut upon the back of his head showed where he had struck the tough stem of the shrub and explained his unconsciousness.

In a few minutes he was as active as ever. Tublat was furious. In his rage he snapped at a fellow-ape without first discovering the identity of his victim, and was badly mauled for his ill temper, having chosen to vent his spite upon a husky and belligerent young bull in the full prime of his vigor.

But Tarzan had learned something new. He had learned that continued friction would wear through the strands of his rope, though it was many years before this knowledge did more for him than merely to keep him from swinging too long at a time, or too far above the ground at the end of his rope.

The day came, however, when the very thing that had once all but killed him proved the means of saving his life.

He was no longer a child, but a mighty jungle male. There was none now to watch over him, solicitously, nor did he need such. Kala was dead. Dead, too, was Tublat, and though with Kala passed the one creature that ever really had loved him, there were still many who hated him after Tublat departed unto the arms of his fathers. It was not that he was more cruel or more savage than they that they hated him, for though he was both cruel and savage as were the beasts, his fellows, yet too was he often tender, which they never were. No, the thing which brought Tarzan most into disrepute with those who did not like him, was the possession and practice of a characteristic which they had not and could not understand--the human sense of humor. In Tarzan it was a trifle broad, perhaps, manifesting itself in rough and painful practical jokes upon his friends and cruel baiting of his enemies.

But to neither of these did he owe the enmity of Bukawai, the witch-doctor, who dwelt in the cave between the two hills far to the north of the village of Mbonga, the

chief. Bukawai was jealous of Tarzan, and Bukawai it was good near proving the undoing of the ape-man. For months Bukawai had nursed his hatred while revenge seemed remote indeed, since Tarzan of the Apes frequented another part of the jungle, miles away from the lair of Bukawai. Only once had the black witch-doctor seen the devil-god, as he was most often called among the blacks, and upon that occasion Tarzan had robbed him of a fat fee, at the same time putting the lie in the mouth of Bukawai, and making his medicine seem poor medicine. All this Bukawai never could forgive, though it seemed unlikely that the opportunity would come to be revenged.

Yet it did come, and quite unexpectedly. Tarzan was hunting far to the north. He had wandered away from the tribe, as he did more and more often as he approached maturity, to hunt alone for a few days. As a child he had enjoyed romping and playing with the young apes, his companions; but now these play-fellows of his had grown to surly, lowering bulls, or to touchy, suspicious mothers, jealously guarding helpless balus. So Tarzan found in his own man-mind a greater and a truer companionship than any or all of the apes of Kerchak could afford him.

This day, as Tarzan hunted, the sky slowly became overcast. Torn clouds, whipped to ragged streamers, fled low above the tree tops. They reminded Tarzan of frightened antelope fleeing the charge of a hungry lion. But though the light clouds raced so swiftly, the jungle was motionless. Not a leaf quivered and the silence was a great, dead weight--insupportable. Even the insects seemed stilled by apprehension of some frightful thing impending, and the larger things were soundless. Such a forest, such a jungle might have stood there in the beginning of that unthinkable far-gone age before God peopled the world with life, when there were no sounds because there were no ears to hear.

And over all lay a sickly, pallid ochre light through which the scourged clouds raced. Tarzan had seen all these conditions many times before, yet he never could escape a strange feeling at each recurrence of them. He knew no fear, but in the face of Nature's manifestations of her cruel, immeasurable powers, he felt very small--very small and very lonely.

Now he heard a low moaning, far away. "The lions seek their prey," he murmured to himself, looking up once again at the swift-flying clouds. The moaning rose to a great volume of sound. "They come!" said Tarzan of the Apes, and sought the shelter of a thickly foliated tree. Quite suddenly the trees bent their tops simultaneously as though God had stretched a hand from the heavens and pressed His flat palm down upon the world. "They pass!" whispered Tarzan. "The lions pass." Then came a vivid flash of lightning, followed by deafening thunder. "The lions have sprung," cried Tarzan, "and now they roar above the bodies of their kills."

The trees were waving wildly in all directions now, a perfectly demoniacal wind threshed the jungle pitilessly. In the midst of it the rain came--not as it comes upon us of the northlands, but in a sudden, choking, blinding deluge. "The blood of the kill," thought Tarzan, huddling himself closer to the bole of the great tree beneath which he stood.

He was close to the edge of the jungle, and at a little distance he had seen two hills before the storm broke; but now he could see nothing. It amused him to look out into the beating rain, searching for the two hills and imagining that the torrents from above had washed them away, yet he knew that presently the rain would cease, the sun would come out again and all be as it was before, except where a few branches had fallen and here and there some old and rotted patriarch had crashed back to enrich the soil upon which he had fattened for, maybe, centuries. All about him branches and leaves filled the air or fell to earth, torn away by the strength of the tornado and the weight of the water upon them. A gaunt corpse toppled and fell a few yards away; but Tarzan was protected from all these dangers by the wide-spreading branches of the sturdy young giant beneath which his jungle craft had guided him. Here there was but a single danger, and that a remote one. Yet it came. Without warning the tree above him was riven by lightning, and when the rain ceased and the sun came out Tarzan lay stretched as he had fallen, upon his face amidst the wreckage of the jungle giant that should have shielded him.

Bukawai came to the entrance of his cave after the rain and the storm had passed and looked out upon the scene. From his one eye Bukawai could see; but had he had a dozen eyes he could have found no beauty in the fresh sweetness of the revived jungle, for to such things, in the chemistry of temperament, his brain failed to react; nor, even had he had a nose, which he had not for years, could he have found enjoyment or sweetness in the clean-washed air.

At either side of the leper stood his sole and constant companions, the two hyenas, sniffing the air. Presently one of them uttered a low growl and with flattened head started, sneaking and wary, toward the jungle. The other followed. Bukawai, his curiosity aroused, trailed after them, in his hand a heavy knob-stick.

The hyenas halted a few yards from the prostrate Tarzan, sniffing and growling. Then came Bukawai, and at first he could not believe the witness of his own eyes; but when he did and saw that it was indeed the devil-god his rage knew no bounds, for he thought him dead and himself cheated of the revenge he had so long dreamed upon.

The hyenas approached the ape-man with bared fangs. Bukawai, with an inarticulate scream, rushed upon them, striking cruel and heavy blows with his knob-stick, for there might still be life in the apparently lifeless form. The beasts, snapping and snarling, half turned upon their master and their tormentor, but long fear still held them from his putrid throat. They slunk away a few yards and squatted upon their haunches, hatred and baffled hunger gleaming from their savage eyes.

Bukawai stooped and placed his ear above the ape-man's heart. It still beat. As well as his sloughed features could register pleasure they did so; but it was not a pretty sight. At the ape-man's side lay his long, grass rope. Quickly Bukawai bound the limp arms behind his prisoner's back, then he raised him to one of his shoulders, for, though Bukawai was old and diseased, he was still a strong man. The hyenas fell in behind as the witch-doctor set off toward the cave, and through the long black corridors they followed as Bukawai bore his victim into the bowels of the hills. Through subterranean chambers, connected by winding passageways, Bukawai staggered with his load. At a sudden turning of the corridor, daylight flooded them and Bukawai stepped out into a small, circular basin in the hill, apparently the crater of an ancient volcano, one of those which never reached the dignity of a mountain and are little more than lava-rimmed pits closed to the earth's surface.

Steep walls rimmed the cavity. The only exit was through the passageway by which Bukawai had entered. A few stunted trees grew upon the rocky floor. A hundred feet above could be seen the ragged lips of this cold, dead mouth of hell.

Bukawai propped Tarzan against a tree and bound him there with his own grass rope, leaving his hands free but securing the knots in such a way that the ape-man could not reach them. The hyenas slunk to and fro, growling. Bukawai hated them and they hated him. He knew that they but waited for the time when he should be helpless, or when their hatred should rise to such a height as to submerge their cringing fear of him.

In his own heart was not a little fear of these repulsive creatures, and because of that fear, Bukawai always kept the beasts well fed, often hunting for them when their own forages for food failed, but ever was he cruel to them with the cruelty of a little brain, diseased, bestial, primitive.

He had had them since they were puppies. They had known no other life than that with him, and though they went abroad to hunt, always they returned. Of late Bukawai had come to believe that they returned not so much from habit as from a fiendish patience which would submit to every indignity and pain rather than forego the final vengeance, and Bukawai needed but little imagination to picture what that vengeance would be. Today he would see for himself what his end would be; but another should impersonate Bukawai.

When he had trussed Tarzan securely, Bukawai went back into the corridor, driving the hyenas ahead of him, and pulling across the opening a lattice of laced branches, which shut the pit from the cave during the night that Bukawai might sleep in security, for then the hyenas were penned in the crater that they might not sneak upon a sleeping Bukawai in the darkness.

Bukawai returned to the outer cave mouth, filled a vessel with water at the spring which rose in the little canon close at hand and returned toward the pit. The hyenas

stood before the lattice looking hungrily toward Tarzan. They had been fed in this manner before.

With his water, the witch-doctor approached Tarzan and threw a portion of the contents of the vessel in the ape-man's face. There was fluttering of the eyelids, and at the second application Tarzan opened his eyes and looked about.

"Devil-god," cried Bukawai, "I am the great witch-doctor. My medicine is strong. Yours is weak. If it is not, why do you stay tied here like a goat that is bait for lions?"

Tarzan understood nothing the witch-doctor said, therefore he did not reply, but only stared straight at Bukawai with cold and level gaze. The hyenas crept up behind him. He heard them growl; but he did not even turn his head. He was a beast with a man's brain. The beast in him refused to show fear in the face of a death which the man's mind already admitted to be inevitable.

Bukawai, not yet ready to give his victim to the beasts, rushed upon the hyenas with his knob-stick. There was a short scrimmage in which the brutes came off second best, as they always did. Tarzan watched it. He saw and realized the hatred which existed between the two animals and the hideous semblance of a man.

With the hyenas subdued, Bukawai returned to the baiting of Tarzan; but finding that the ape-man understood nothing he said, the witch-doctor finally desisted. Then he withdrew into the corridor and pulled the latticework barrier across the opening. He went back into the cave and got a sleeping mat, which he brought to the opening, that he might lie down and watch the spectacle of his revenge in comfort.

The hyenas were sneaking furtively around the ape-man. Tarzan strained at his bonds for a moment, but soon realized that the rope he had braided to hold Numa, the lion, would hold him quite as successfully. He did not wish to die; but he could look death in the face now as he had many times before without a quaver.

As he pulled upon the rope he felt it rub against the small tree about which it was passed. Like a flash of the cinematograph upon the screen, a picture was flashed before his mind's eye from the storehouse of his memory. He saw a lithe, boyish figure swinging high above the ground at the end of a rope. He saw many apes watching from below, and then he saw the rope part and the boy hurtle downward toward the ground. Tarzan smiled. Immediately he commenced to draw the rope rapidly back and forth across the tree trunk.

The hyenas, gaining courage, came closer. They sniffed at his legs; but when he struck at them with his free arms they slunk off. He knew that with the growth of hunger they would attack. Coolly, methodically, without haste, Tarzan drew the rope back and forth against the rough trunk of the small tree.

In the entrance to the cavern Bukawai fell asleep. He thought it would be some time before the beasts gained sufficient courage or hunger to attack the captive. Their growls and the cries of the victim would awaken him. In the meantime he might as well rest, and he did.

Thus the day wore on, for the hyenas were not famished, and the rope with which Tarzan was bound was a stronger one than that of his boyhood, which had parted so quickly to the chafing of the rough tree bark. Yet, all the while hunger was growing upon the beasts and the strands of the grass rope were wearing thinner and thinner. Bukawai slept.

It was late afternoon before one of the beasts, irritated by the gnawing of appetite, made a quick, growling dash at the ape-man. The noise awoke Bukawai. He sat up quickly and watched what went on within the crater. He saw the hungry hyena charge the man, leaping for the unprotected throat. He saw Tarzan reach out and seize the growling animal, and then he saw the second beast spring for the devil-god's shoulder. There was a mighty heave of the great, smooth-skinned body. Rounded muscles shot into great, tensed piles beneath the brown hide--the ape-man surged forward with all his weight and all his great strength--the bonds parted, and the three were rolling upon the floor of the crater snarling, snapping, and rending.

Bukawai leaped to his feet. Could it be that the devil-god was to prevail against his servants? Impossible! The creature was unarmed, and he was down with two hyenas on top of him; but Bukawai did not know Tarzan.

The ape-man fastened his fingers upon the throat of one of the hyenas and rose to one knee, though the other beast tore at him frantically in an effort to pull him down. With a single hand Tarzan held the one, and with the other hand he reached forth and pulled toward him the second beast.

And then Bukawai, seeing the battle going against his forces, rushed forward from the cavern brandishing his knob-stick. Tarzan saw him coming, and rising now to both feet, a hyena in each hand, he hurled one of the foaming beasts straight at the witch-doctor's head. Down went the two in a snarling, biting heap. Tarzan tossed the second hyena across the crater, while the first gnawed at the rotting face of its master; but this did not suit the ape-man. With a kick he sent the beast howling after its companion, and springing to the side of the prostrate witch-doctor, dragged him to his feet.

Bukawai, still conscious, saw death, immediate and terrible, in the cold eyes of his captor, so he turned upon Tarzan with teeth and nails. The ape-man shuddered at the proximity of that raw face to his. The hyenas had had enough and disappeared through the small aperture leading into the cave. Tarzan had little difficulty in overpowering and binding Bukawai. Then he led him to the very tree to which he had been bound; but in binding Bukawai, Tarzan saw to it that escape after the same fashion that he had escaped would be out of the question; then he left him.

As he passed through the winding corridors and the subterranean apartments, Tarzan saw nothing of the hyenas.

"They will return," he said to himself.

In the crater between the towering walls Bukawai, cold with terror, trembled, trembled as with ague.

"They will return!" he cried, his voice rising to a fright-filled shriek.

And they did.