

The Witch Doctor Seeks Vengeance *Being the Sixth of the Series of the Jungle Tales of Tarzan By Edgar Rice Burroughs*

LORD GREYSTOKE was hunting, or, to be more accurate, he was shooting pheasants at Chamston-Hedding. Lord Greystoke was immaculately and appropriately garbed—to the minutest detail he was vogue. To be sure, he was among the forward guns, not being considered a sporting shot, but what he lacked in skill he more than made up in appearance. At the end of the day he would, doubtless, have many birds to his credit, since he had two guns and a smart loader—many more birds than he could eat in a year, even had he been hungry, which he was not, having but just arisen from the breakfast table.

The beaters—there were twenty-three of them, in white smocks—had just driven the birds into a patch of gorse, and were now circling to the opposite side that they might drive down toward the guns. And far away in a matted equatorial jungle another Lord Greystoke, the real Lord Greystoke, hunted. By the standards which he knew, he, too, was vogue—utterly vogue, as was the primal ancestor before the first eviction. The day being sultry, the leopard skin had been left behind. The real Lord Greystoke had not two guns, to be sure, nor even one, neither did he have a smart loader; but he possessed something infinitely more efficacious than guns, or loaders, or even twenty-three beaters in white smocks—he possessed an appetite, an uncanny woodcraft, and muscles that were as steel springs.

Later that day, in England, a Lord Greystoke ate bountifully of things he had not killed, and he drank other things which were unceremoniously accompanied of much noise. He padded his lips with snowy linen to remove the faint traces of his repast, quite ignorant of the fact that he was an impostor and that the rightful owner of his noble title was even then finishing his own dinner in far-off Africa. He was not using snowy linen, though. Instead he drew the back of a brown forearm and hand across his mouth and wiped his bloody fingers upon his thighs. Then he moved slowly through the jungle to the drinking place, where, upon all fours, he drank as drank his fellows, the other beasts of the jungle.

It had been at least a moon since the ape-man had called upon the Gomangani. Not since he had restored little Tibo to his grief-stricken mother had the whim seized him to do so. The incident of the adopted balu was a closed one to Tarzan. He had sought to find something upon which to lavish such an affection as Teeka lavished upon her balu, but a short experience of the little black boy had made it quite plain to the ape-man that no such sentiment could exist between them.

The fact that he had for a time treated the little black as he might have treated a real balu of his own had in no way altered the vengeful sentiments with which he considered the murderers of Kala. The Gomangani were his deadly enemies, nor could they ever be sought else. Today he looked forward to some slight relief from the monotony of his existence in such excitement as he might derive from baiting the blacks.

It was not yet dark when he reached the village and took his place in the great tree overhanging the palisade. From beneath came a great wailing out of the depths of a near-by hut. The noise fell disagreeably upon Tarzan's ears—it jarred and grated. He did not like it, so he decided to go away for a while in the hopes that it might cease; but though he was gone for a couple of hours, the wailing still continued when he returned.

With the intention of putting a violent termination to the annoying sound, Tarzan slipped silently from the tree into the shadows beneath. It was just as he was about to spring forward with a savage roar that a figure appeared in the doorway of the hut. It was the figure of the wailer whom he had come to still, the figure of a young woman with a wooden skewer through the septum of her nose, with a heavy metal ornament depending from her lower lip, which it had dragged down to hideous and repulsive deformity, with strange tattooing upon forehead, cheeks, and breasts, and a wonderful cleft built up with mud and wire.

A sudden flare of the fire threw the grotesque figure into high relief, and Tarzan recognized her as Momaya, the mother of Tibo. The fire also threw out a fitful flame which carried to the shadows where Tarzan lurked, picking out his light brown body from the surrounding darkness. Momaya saw him and knew him. With a cry, she leaped forward and Tarzan came to meet her. The other women, turning, saw him, too; but they did not come toward him. Instead they rose as one, shrieked as one, fled as one.

Momaya threw herself at Tarzan's feet, raising supplicating hands toward him and pouring forth from her mutilated lips a perfect cataract of words, not one of which the ape-man comprehended. For a moment he looked down upon the upturned, frightful face of the woman. He had come to slay, but that overwhelming torrent of speech filled him with consternation and with awe. He glanced about him apprehensively, then back at the woman. A revulsion of feeling seized him. He could not kill little Tibo's mother, nor could he stand and face the verbal geyser. With a quick return of impudence at the spilling of the event, entertainment, he wheeled and leaped away into the darkness. A moment later he was swinging through the black jungle night, the cries and lamentations of Momaya growing fainter in the distance.

As Tarzan followed the fresh spoor of Horta, the boar, the following morning, he came upon the tracks of two Gomangani, a large one and a small one. The ape-man, accustomed as he was to questioning closely all that fell to his perceptions, paused to read the story written in the soft mud of the game trail. You or I would have seen little of interest there, even if, by chance, we could have seen aught. Perhaps had one been there to point them out to us, we might have noted indentations in the mud, but there were countless indentations, one overlapping another into a confusion that would have been entirely meaningless to us. To Tarzan each told its own story. Tantor, the elephant, had passed that way as recently as three suns since. Numa had hunted here the night just gone, and Horta, the boar, had walked slowly along the trail within an hour; but what held Tarzan's attention was the spoor tale of the Gomangani. It told him that the day before an old man had gone toward the north in company with a little boy, and that with them had been two hyenas.

Tarzan scratched his head in puzzled incredulity. He could see by the overlapping of the footprints that the beasts had not been following the two, for sometimes one was ahead of them and one behind, and again both were in advance, or both were in the rear. It was very strange and quite inexplicable, especially where the spoor showed where the hyenas in the wider portions of the path had walked one on either side of the human pair, quite close to them. Then Tarzan read in the spoor of the smaller Gomangani a shrinking terror of the beast that brushed his side, but in that of the old man was no sign of fear.

At first Tarzan had been solely occupied by the remarkable juxtaposition of the spoor of Dango and Gomangani, but now his keen eyes caught something in the spoor of the little Gomangani which brought him to a sudden stop. It was as though, finding a letter in the road, you suddenly had discovered in it the familiar handwriting of a friend.

"Go-bu-balu!" exclaimed the ape-man, and at once memory flashed upon the screen of recollection the supplicating attitude of Momaya as she had hurled herself before him in the village of Mbonga the night before. Instantly all was explained—the wailing and lamentation, the pleading of the black mother, the sympathetic howling of the shes about the fire. Little Go-bu-balu had been stolen again, and this time by another than Tarzan. Doubtless the mother had thought that he was again in the power of Tarzan of the Apes, and she had been beseeching him to return her balu to her.

It had all happened to little Tibo very suddenly and unexpectedly within the brief span of two suns. First had come Bukawai, the witch-doctor—Bukawai, the unclean—with the ragged bit of flesh which still clung to his rotting face. He had come alone and by day to the place at the river where Momaya went daily to wash her body and that of Tibo, her little boy. He had stepped out from behind a great bush quite close to Momaya, frightening little Tibo so that he ran screaming to his mother's protecting arms.

But Momaya, though startled, had wheeled to face the fearsome thing with all the savage ferocity of a she-tiger at bay. When she saw who it was, she breathed a sigh of partial relief, though she still clung tightly to Tibo.

"I have come," said Bukawai without preliminary, "for the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the bit of copper wire as long as a tall man's arm."

"I have no goats for you," snapped Momaya, "nor a sleeping mat, nor any wire. Your medicine was never made. The white jungle god gave me back my Tibo. You had nothing to do with it."

"But I did," mumbled Bukawai through his fleshless jaws. "It was I who commanded the white jungle god to give back your Tibo."

Momaya laughed in his face. "Speaker of lies," she cried, "go back to your foul den and your hyenas. Go back and hide your stinking face in the belly of the mountain, lest the sun, seeing it, cover his face with a black cloud."

"I have come," reiterated Bukawai, "for the three fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the bit of copper wire the length of a tall man's arm, which you were to pay me for the return of your Tibo."

"It was to be the length of a man's forearm," corrected Momaya, "but you shall have nothing, old thief. You would not make medicine until I had brought the payment in advance, and when I was returning to my village the great, white jungle god gave me back my Tibo—gave him to me out of the jaws of Numa. His medicine is true medicine—yours is the weak medicine of an old man with a hole in his face."

"I have come," repeated Bukawai patiently, "for the three fat—" But Momaya had not wanted to hear more of what she already knew by heart. Clinging Tibo close to her side, she was hurrying away toward the palisaded village of Mbonga, the chief.

And the next day, when Momaya was working on the plainland field with others of the women of the

tribe, and little Tibo had been playing at the edge of the jungle, casting a small spear in anticipation of the distant day when he should be a full-fledged warrior, Bukawai had come again.

Tibo had seen a squirrel scampering up the hole of a great tree. His childish mind had transformed it into the menacing figure of a hostile warrior. Little Tibo had raised his tiny spear, his heart filled with the savage blood lust of his race, as he pictured the night's orgy when he should dance about the corpse of his human kill as the women of his tribe prepared the meat for the feast to follow.

But when he cast the spear, he missed both squirrel and tree, losing his missile far among the tangled undergrowth of the jungle. However, it could be but a few steps within the forbidden labyrinth. The women were all about in the field. There were warriors on guard with-

He grasped it by the scruff of the neck and hurled it across the cavern

in easy hail, and so little Tibo boldly ventured into the dark place.

Just behind the screen of creepers and matted foliage lurked three horrid figures—an old, old man, black as the pit, with a face half eaten away by leprosy, his sharpened teeth, the teeth of a cannibal, showing yellow and repulsive through the great gaping hole where his mouth and nose had been. And beside him, equally hideous, stood two powerful hyenas—carrion-eaters consorting with carrion.

Tibo did not see them until, head down, he had forced his way through the thickly growing vines in search of his little spear, and then it was too late. As he looked up into the face of Bukawai, the old witch-doctor, seized him, muffling his screams with a palm across his mouth. Tibo struggled futilely.

At last the witch-doctor tired of the futile chase. With a snarl quite as bestial as those of the beasts, he turned toward Tibo. "I go to collect the ten fat goats, the new sleeping mat, and the two pieces of copper wire that your mother will pay for the medicine I shall make to bring you back to her," he said. "You will stay here. There," and he pointed toward the passage which they had followed to the chamber, "I will leave the hyenas. If you try to escape, they will eat you."

Wearily the horror-ridden hours dragged their slow way. Night came, and for a time Tibo slept, but it seemed that the hungry beasts never slept. Always they stood just beyond the lattice growling their hideous growls or laughing their hideous laughs. Through the narrow rift in the rocky roof above him, Tibo could see a few stars, and once the moon crossed. At last daylight came again. Tibo was very hungry and thirsty for he had not eaten since the morning before, and only once upon the long march had he been permitted to drink, but even hunger and thirst were almost forgotten in the terror of his position.

It was after daylight that the child discovered a second opening in the walls of the subterranean chamber, almost opposite that at which the hyenas still stood glaring hungrily at him. It was only a narrow slit in the rocky wall. It might lead in but a few feet, or it might lead to freedom! Tibo approached it and looked within. He could see nothing. He extended his arm into the darkness, but he dared not venture farther. Bukawai never would have left a way of escape, Tibo reasoned, so this passage must lead either nowhere or to some still more hideous danger.

To the boy's fear of the actual dangers which menaced him—Bukawai and the two hyenas—his superstition added countless others quite too horrible even to name, for in the lives of the blacks, through the shadows of the jungle day and the black horrors of the jungle night,



He grasped it by the scruff of the neck and hurled it across the cavern

fit strange, fantastic shapes peopling the already hideously peopled forests with menacing figures, as though the lion and the leopard, the snake and the hyena, and the countless poisonous insects were not quite sufficient to strike terror to the hearts of the poor, simple creatures whose lot is cast in earth's most fearsome spot.

And so it was that little Tibo cringed not only from real menaces but from imaginary ones. He was afraid even to venture upon a road that might lead to escape, lest Bukawai had set to watch it some frightful demon of the jungle.

But the real menaces suddenly drove the imaginary ones from the boy's mind, for with the coming of daylight the half-famished hyenas renewed their efforts to break down the frail barrier which kept them from their prey. Rearing upon their hind feet they clawed and struck at the lattice. With wide eyes Tibo saw it sag and rock. Not for long, he knew, could it withstand the assaults of these two powerful and determined brutes. Already one corner had been forced past the rocky protuberance of the entrance way which had held it in place. A shaggy forearm protruded into the chamber. Tibo trembled as with ague, for he knew that the end was near.

Backing against the farther wall he stood flattened out as far from the beasts as he could get. He saw the lattice give still more. He saw a savage, snarling head forced past him, and grinning jaws snapping and gaping toward him. In another instant the pitiful fabric would fall inward, and the two would be upon him, rending his flesh from his bones, gnawing the bones themselves, fighting for possession of his entrails.

Bukawai came upon Momaya outside the palisade of Mbonga, the chief. At sight of him the woman drew back in revulsion, then she flew at him, tooth and nail, but Bukawai threatening her with a spear held her at a safe distance.

took a few steps away from them, and then he turned angrily back.

"His medicine will not bring the child back—that I know, and I also know that when you find him it will be too late for any medicine to bring him back, for he will be dead. This have I just found out, the ghost of my father's sister but now come to me and told me."

Now Mbonga and Rabba Kega might not take much stock in their own magic, and they might even be skeptical as to the magic of another, but there was always a chance of something being in it, especially if it were not their own. Was it not well known that old Bukawai had speech with the demons themselves and that two even lived with him in the forms of hyenas! Still they must not accede too hastily. There was the price to be considered, and Mbonga had no intention of parting lightly with ten goats to obtain the return of a single little boy who might die of smallpox long before he reached a warrior's stage.

"Wait," said Mbonga. "Let us see some of your magic, that we may know if it be good magic. Then we can talk about payment. Rabba Kega will make some magic, too. We will see who makes the best magic. Sit down, Bukawai."

"The payment will be ten goats—fat goats—a new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of a tall man's arm from the shoulder to the ends of his fingers, and it will be made in advance, the goats being driven to my cave. Then will I make the medicine, and on the second day the boy will be returned to his mother. It cannot be done more quickly than that because it takes time to make such strong medicine."

"Make us some medicine now," said Mbonga. "Let us see what sort of medicine you make."

"Bring me fire," replied Bukawai, "and I will make you a little magic."

Momaya was dispatched for the fire, and while she was away Mbonga dickered with Bukawai about the price. Ten goats, he said, was a high price for an able-bodied warrior. He also called Bukawai's attention to the fact that he, Mbonga, was very poor, and that ten goats were at least eight too many, to say nothing of a new sleeping mat and the copper wire; but Bukawai was adamant. His medicine was very expensive and he would have to give at least five goats to the gods who helped him make it. They were still arguing when Momaya returned with the fire.

Bukawai placed a little on the ground before him, took a pinch of powder from a pouch at his side and sprinkled it on the embers. A cloud of smoke rose with a puff. Bukawai closed his eyes and rocked back and forth. Then he made a few passes in the air and pretended to swoon. Mbonga and the others were much impressed. Rabba Kega grew nervous. He saw his reputation waning. There was some fire left in the vessel which Momaya had brought. He seized the vessel, dropped a handful of dry leaves into it while no one was watching and then uttered a frightful scream which drew the attention of Bukawai's audience to him. It also brought Bukawai miraculously out of his swoon, but when the old witch-doctor saw the reason for the disturbance he quickly relapsed into unconsciousness before any one discovered his faux pas.

Rabba Kega, seeing that he had the attention of Mbonga, Ibeta and Momaya, blew suddenly into the vessel, with the result that the leaves commenced to smolder, and smoke issued from the mouth of the receptacle. Rabba Kega was careful to hold it so that none might see the dry leaves. Their eyes opened wide at this remarkable demonstration of the village witch-doctor's powers. The latter, greatly elated, let himself out, and made frightful grimaces; then he put his face close over the mouth of the vessel and appeared to be communing with the spirits within.

It was while he was thus engaged that Bukawai came out of his trance, his curiosity finally having gotten the better of him. No one was paying him the slightest attention. He blinked his one eye angrily, then he, too, let out a loud roar, and when he was sure that Mbonga had turned toward him, he stiffened rigidly and made spasmodic movements with his arms and legs.

"I see him!" he cried. "He is far away. The white devil-god did not get him. He is alone and in great danger; but," he added, "if the ten fat goats and the other things are paid to me quickly there is yet time to save him."

Rabba Kega had paused to listen. Mbonga looked toward him. The chief was in a quandary. He did not know which medicine was the better. "What does your magic tell you?" he asked of Rabba Kega.

"I, too, see him," screamed Rabba Kega; "but he is not where Bukawai says he is. He is dead at the bottom of the river."

At this Momaya commenced to howl loudly.

Tarzan had followed the spoor of the old man, the two hyenas, and the little black boy to the mouth of the cave in the rocky canyon between the two hills. Here he paused a moment before the sapling barrier which Bukawai had set up, listening to the snarls and growls which came faintly from the far recesses of the cavern.

Presently, mingled with the

have taken him. Return him to me or I shall tear your eyes from your head and feed your heart to the wild hogs."

Bukawai shrugged his shoulders. "What do I know about your child?" he asked. "I have not taken him. If he is stolen again, what should Bukawai know of the matter? Did Bukawai steal him before? No, the white jungle god stole him, and if he stole him once he would steal him again. It is nothing to me. I returned him to you before and I have come for my pay. If he is gone and you would have him returned, Bukawai will return him—for ten fat goats, a new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of a tall man's arm from the shoulder to the tips of his fingers, and Bukawai will say nothing more about the goats and the sleeping mat and the copper wire which you were to pay for the first medicine."

"Ten fat goats!" screamed Momaya. "I could not pay you ten fat goats in as many years. Ten fat goats, indeed!"

"Ten fat goats," repeated Bukawai. "Ten fat goats, the new sleeping mat and two pieces of copper wire the length of—"

Momaya stopped him with an impatient gesture. "Wait!" she cried. "I have no goats. You waste your breath. Stay here while I go to my man. He has but three goats, yet something may be done. Wait!"

Bukawai sat down beneath a tree. He felt quite content, for he knew that he should have either payment or revenge. He did not fear harm at the hands of these people of another tribe, although he well knew that they must fear and hate him. His leprosy alone would prevent their laying hands upon him, while his reputation as a witch-doctor rendered him doubly immune from attack. He was planning upon compelling them to drive the ten goats to the mouth of his cave when three warriors—Mbonga, the chief, Rabba Kega, the village witch-doctor, and Ibeta, Tibo's father. They were not pretty men even under ordinary circumstances, and now, with their faces marked by anger, they well might have inspired terror in the heart of any one; but if Bukawai felt any fear, he did not betray it. Instead he greeted them with an insolent stare, intended to awe them, as they came and squatted in a semicircle before him.

"Where is Ibeta's son?" asked Mbonga.

"How should I know?" returned Bukawai. "Doubtless the white devil-god has him. If I am paid I will make strong medicine and then we shall know where Ibeta's son, and shall get him back again. It was my medicine which got him back the last time, for which I got no pay."

"I have my own witch-doctor to make medicine," replied Mbonga with dignity.

Lakawai sneered and rose to his feet. "Very well," he said, "let me make his medicine and see if he can bring Ibeta's son back." He

bestly cries, there came faintly to the keen ears of the ape-man the agonized moan of a child. No longer did Tarzan hesitate. Hurling the door aside, he sprang into the dark corridor; but long use of his eyes in the stygian blackness of the jungle nights had given to the ape-man something of the nocturnal visionary powers of the wild things with which he had consorted since babyhood.

He moved rapidly and yet with caution, for the place was dark, unfamiliar and winding. As he advanced, he heard more and more loudly the savage snarls of the two hyenas, mingled with the scraping and scratching of their paws upon wood. The means of a child grew in volume, and Tarzan recognized in them the voice of the little black boy he once had sought to adopt as his balu.

There was no hysteria in the ape-man's advance. Too accustomed was he to the passing of life in the jungle to be greatly wrought even by the death of one whom he knew; but the lust for battle spurred him on. He was only a wild beast at heart and his wild beast's heart beat high in anticipation of conflict.

In the rocky chamber of the hill's center, little Tibo crouched low against the wall as far from the hunger-crazed beasts as he could drag himself. He saw the lattice giving to the frantic clawing of the hyenas. He knew that in a few minutes his little life would flicker out horribly beneath the repeding, yellow fangs of these loathsome creatures.

Beneath the buffetings of the powerful bodies, the lattice sagged inward, until, with a crash it gave way, letting the carnivora in upon the boy. Tibo cast one affrighted glance toward them, then closed his eyes and buried his face in his arms, sobbing piteously.

For a moment the hyenas paused, caution and cowardice holding them from their prey. They stood thus glaring at the lad, then slowly, stealthily, crouching, they crept toward him. It was thus that Tarzan came upon them, bursting into the chamber swiftly and silently; but not so silently that the keen-eared beasts did not note his coming. With angry growls they turned from Tibo upon his lips, he ran toward them. For an instant one of the animals stood its ground; but the ape-man did not deign even to draw his hunting knife, against despised Dango. Rushing in upon the brute he grasped it by the scruff of the neck, just as it attempted to dodge past him, and hurled it across the cavern after its fellow, which already was sinking into the corridor, bent upon escape.

Then Tarzan picked Tibo from the floor, and when the child felt human hands upon him instead of the paws and fangs of the hyenas, he rolled his eyes upward in surprise and incredulity, and as they fell upon Tarzan, sobs of relief broke from the childish lips and his hands clutched at his deliverer as though the white devil-god was not the most feared of jungle creatures.

When Tarzan came to the cave mouth the hyenas were nowhere in sight, and after permitting Tibo to quench his thirst in the spring which rose near by, he lifted the boy to his shoulders and set off toward the jungle at a rapid trot, determined to still the annoying howlings of Momaya as quickly as possible, for he shrewdly had guessed that the absence of her balu was the cause of her lamentation.

"He is not dead at the bottom of the river," cried Bukawai. "What does this fellow know about making magic? Who is he, anyway, that he dares say Bukawai's magic is not good magic? Bukawai sees Momaya's son. He is far away and alone and in great danger. Hasten then with the ten fat goats, the—"

But he got no further. There was a sudden interruption from above, from the branches of the very tree beneath which they squatted, and as the five blacks looked up they almost swooned in fright as they saw the great, white devil-god looking down upon them; but before they could flee they saw another face, that of the lost little Tibo, and his face was laughing and very happy.

And then Tarzan dropped fearlessly among them, the boy still upon his back, and deposited him before his mother. Momaya, Ibeta, Rabba Kega and Mbonga were all crowding around the lad trying to question him at the same time. Suddenly Momaya turned ferociously to fall upon Bukawai, for the boy had told her all that he had suffered at the hands of the cruel old man; but Bukawai was no longer there—he had required no recourse to black art to assure him that the vicinity of Momaya would be no healthful place for him after Tibo had told his story, and now he was running through the jungle as fast as his old legs would carry him toward the distant lair where he knew no black would dare pursue him.

Young Lord Greystoke did not know the magicians planned against him, nor, knowing, would have cared. He slept as well that night as he did on any other night, and though there was no roof above him, and no doors to lock against intruders, he slept much better than his noble relative in England, who had eaten altogether too much lobster and drunk too much wine at dinner that night.

The next complete "Jungle Tale" will appear Saturday, July 13.