

JANE OF THE JUNGLE

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Consider the daring and heroic characters created by Edgar Rice Burroughs, and who leaps to mind? Tarzan? John Carter? David Innes? Billy Byrne? Shoz-Dijji?¹

Intrepid adventurers all, but no list of ERB protagonists would be complete without inclusion of his heroines. They were as brave and as bold in many ways as their male counterparts, and shone with matchless beauty as well.

And taking a back seat to no one in this department is the daughter of



¹ This article was originally researched and written by me in 1989 and published in ERBapa No. 22 in summer of that year.

a genteel Baltimore, Maryland family who, over the space of 11 books, developed into a true queen of the jungle.

Jane Porter Clayton mastered the ability of coping with wild beasts and wild humans alike, without ever losing any of the grace and charm that her upbringing by a professor-minister must have included.

Here is an admirable lady indeed, one who, as Lady Greystoke, can properly entertain guests, whether in her London town house, her African bungalow, or the Cafe Savoy in Paris. She can also lead a group of city people who are stranded in the jungle, or command a platoon of jungle-wise Waziri warriors, and in many ways perform as competently as Tarzan of the Apes himself.

Fate brought her to the shores of a hostile jungle. but she came to love that jungle as much as her savage but noble mate, Tarzan of the Apes, who had been reared in that unforgiving land by the fierce mangani.²

If Tarzan is Lord of the Jungle, then Jane has as much right to the female version of that title as she does to the appellation of Lady Greystoke.

Dian the Beautiful, empress of Pellucidar; Dejah Thoris, princess of Helium; La, high priestess of Opar—these beauties were raised in savage surroundings and at an early age learned the art of survival in their respective worlds. But in Jane's Baltimore there was no training for how to deal with abducting apes, hungry lions and murderous *femme fatales*.

If Robert Canler was the worst man she had to deal with in America, of what preparation was that for the likes of Nikolas Rokoff, Albert Werper, Lt. Obergatz, Mo-Sar, or Luvini?

² For those unfamiliar, mangani are a (fictional) type of ape/human in which John Clayton, Lord Greystoke was raised from infancy to adulthood.

Yet, Jane proved more than equal to the requirements her savage society of choice—she loved Tarzan and lived in his jungle—thrust upon her.

Why? How? What circumstances in her life brought about this change from soft-spoken Maryland debutante to seasoned Jane of the Jungle?

I believe there are four forces that stand out in the stories of Edgar Rice Burroughs:

1. Tarzan of the Apes
2. The Waziri tribe
3. Her father, Professor Archimedes Q. Porter
4. Jane and her own indomitable spirit

Jane's Education by Tarzan

Neither Jane nor Tarzan would have thought of it at the time as training, but such instruction technically began right after Tarzan rescued her from Terkoz, the enraged ape, as told in *Tarzan of the Apes*.

Jane's first lesson was one of observation—that a human, if properly skilled, could easily move through the middle terraces of the forest, Tarzan carrying her along as he made his way through the trees. The next lesson Tarzan taught was which jungle fruits were safe and good to eat, as he brought her an armload of sustenance.

Not exactly an intensive training course in jungle survival, but it was the seed of what was to grow into a store of know-how for Jane.

Tarzan and his mate-to-be fell in love, but the two were to endure myriad adventures alone before reunion and marriage at the end of *The Return of Tarzan*.

Jane's training continued in the unrecorded moments which passed between husband and wife. Some

do not regard *The Eternal Lover*³ as part of the Tarzan series, since Tarzan and Jane are only in "cameo roles." But, in that story, we find them living on their African estate, and there were probably lots of times that Tarzan told Jane about the ways of the jungle.

We see evidence of this training in the next full-fledged Tarzan book, *The Beasts of Tarzan*, when we find Jane taken by enemies into the depths of the jungle. She escapes her captors and begins to put her training to work.

Note: Hereafter any *emphasis* which is *not* a novel title highlights the *teaching/learning* of Jane of the Jungle:

"That night she slept in the crotch of a tree, as *Tarzan had so often told her* that he was accustomed to doing...." Page 216⁴

What else did Tarzan tell her? We next read that Jane spies a great ape coming her way and:

"The wind was blowing directly across the clearing between them, and Jane lost no time in putting herself *down-wind* from the huge creature."

It's logical to conclude that Tarzan was also the teacher of that tactic.

The crisis past, we find Jane in the next book enacting the role of lady of the Greystoke estate, playing



³ A cross-over tale linked to *The Mad King*, 1913

⁴ Page numbers are from the early hardback editions.

the charming hostess while adventure rages all about her in *The Son of Tarzan*.

In *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar* page 177, we are again reminded of the benefits of Tarzan's training. Escaping from captors, we read Jane "...had *followed the old game trail* toward the south, until there fell upon *her trained hearing* the stealthy padding of a stalking beast behind her. The nearest *tree gave her instant sanctuary*, for she was *too wise in the ways of the jungle* to chance her safety for a moment after discovering that she was being hunted."

Jane's presence hangs over *Tarzan the Untamed*, though she herself appears in the opening pages only long enough to be kidnapped by German soldiers who maintain that captivity into the next book, *Tarzan the Terrible*.

This long period of captivity enabled Jane to exercise and develop her endurance and skills:

"The long and perilous journey with Obergatz had trained her muscles and her nerves...." Page 279

It is in *Terrible* where Jane escapes Obergatz and comes of age at last as a Jungle Girl, ERB calling her "Diana of the Jungle" in a complimentary comparison to Diane, the goddess-huntress of Greek mythology.

Again, we read of Tarzan's training in *Terrible*:

—Page 279, "She found a safe resting place such as *Tarzan had taught her* was best and there she curled herself, thirty feet above the ground, for a night's rest."

—Page 301, "As quickly as might be she *skinned and cleaned* her kill, *burying the hide and entrails*. That she had *learned from Tarzan*. It served two purposes. One was the necessity for keeping a sanitary camp and the other the obliteration of the scent that most quickly attracts the man-eaters."

—Page 305. "To the woodcraft she had *learned from Tarzan*, that master of the art, was added a consid-

erable store of practical experience derived from her own past adventures in the jungle and the long months with Obergatz, nor was any day now lacking in some added store of useful knowledge."

A difference between Tarzan and Jane is that Tarzan is, at heart, as the beasts of the jungle, one who can act the part of a civilized man when it is required. Jane, at heart is the proper lady, who can act the part of jungle survival expert when necessary, but there are some things which Tarzan would do which Jane would never do.

Tarzan, for example, upon making a kill, would be happy to sink his teeth into the still warm flesh, enjoying his "hot" meal with relish. Jane, when killing for food in *Terrible*, builds a fire and cooks her meat "thoroughly and all the way through." We read on page 302:

"And never had aught more delicious passed her lips."

Earlier, we're told:

"She might learn to eat raw flesh as had her lord and master; but she shrank from that. The thought even was repulsive." Page 300.

Jane and the Waziri

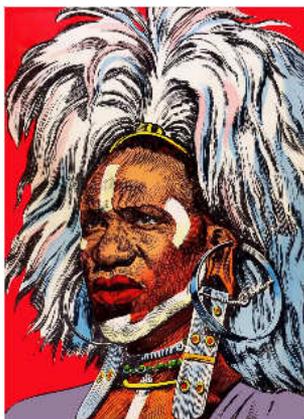
When ERB wrote of Tarzan and Jane, it was because some great adventure had come into their lives, and so the idyllic times spent upon the Greystoke estate in British East Africa are seldom recorded, except to set the stage for that which will soon disrupt that tranquility.

And so, we must be satisfied with mere glimpses of what the normal life there was like, and we get these glimpses in *The Eternal Lover*, *The Son of Tarzan*, *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar*, *Tarzan the Untamed*, *Tarzan and the Golden Lion* and *Tarzan and the Ant Men*.

The Waziri tribe was a part of that Greystoke estate life, in both peace and war.

What a wonderful relationship has existed between this tribe and their mentor and leader emeritus, Tarzan of the Apes, from the time their paths first crossed in *The Return of Tarzan* when John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, became their white chief and led them in avenging themselves upon their enemies.

And from that time on the Waziri became Tarzan's cavalry, manning the "fort" of his estate and—at the call of their chief and leader—charging through the jungle, their white head plumes flashing in the forest. They would defend to the death Tarzan, his mate, his family, and in *Jewels of Opar* and *Untamed*, some of them did just that.



Tarzan surely had a hand in the training of Jane in the use of all jungle weapons, but it is the training by the Waziri of which Burroughs decides to give us details.

In her sojourn alone in *Terrible*, Jane finds just the right materials she will need to make a spear, the first weapon in the arsenal she had to develop to defend herself. She finds obsidian, volcanic glass with razor-like edges, just in the right shape for a spear point. Then:

"...searching out a slender sapling that grew arrow-straight she hacked and sawed until she could break it off without splitting the wood. It was just the right diameter for the shaft of a spear—a hunting spear such as

her beloved Waziri liked best."

The account continues, on page 282, revealing that Jane frequently watched the Waziri as they fashioned such spears:

"...and *they had taught her* how to use them, too—them and the heavy war spears—laughing and clapping their hands as her proficiency increased."

Page 283: "Later, she promised herself, she should have others—many of them—and they would be spears of which even the greatest of the Waziri spear-men might be proud."

Well, *Terrible* was one Tarzan book in which the Waziri did not make an appearance, but they no doubt saw the spear later, in its place of honor:

"Tarzan still carried the spear that Jane had made, which he had prized so highly because it was her handiwork that he had caused a search to be made for it through the temple in A-lur after his release, and it had been found and brought to him. He had told her laughingly that it should have the place of honor above their hearth as the ancient flintlock of her Puritan grandsire had held a similar place of honor above the fireplace of Professor Porter, her father." Page 399



This was not merely pride. Tarzan also had confidence in Jane's spear, using it himself to subdue a fierce gryf⁵ mount. The Waziri were undoubtedly proud of it, too.

Then, in *Tarzan and the Golden Lion*, we see another development in the relationship of Jane and the Waziri. Jane takes a leadership role over the tribe and none of them question her right or ability to do so:

⁵ A creature of Pal-ul-don, similar to a Triceratops.

Page 222: "It was the second day after her return that the Waziri, who had accompanied Tarzan, returned without him. Then, indeed, was her heart filled with fear for her lord and master. She questioned the men carefully, and when she learned from them that Tarzan had suffered another accident that had again affected his memory, she immediately announced that she would set out on the following day in search of him, *commanding the Waziri who had just returned to accompany her.*"

Only Korak, her son, attempts to dissuade her, but she has words of confidence for him:

"I am not alone when the Waziri are with me," she laughed. "And you know perfectly well, boy, that I am as safe anywhere in the heart of Africa with them as I am here at the ranch....You know that my *jungle-craft*, while not equal to that of Tarzan or Korak, is by no means a poor asset, and that, surrounded by the loyalty and bravery of the Waziri, I shall be safe."

The Waziri love Jane. They taught Jane. Now, they follow Jane.

Jane's Life with her Father

Jane was "about 19" at the time of the events in *Tarzan of the Apes* (Chapter 13) and we learn in Chapter 16 that Professor Porter's "other Jane," presumably his wife and Jane's mother, had been taken away by God 20 years before, perhaps at the time of Jane's birth.



What affect did a motherless childhood have on her who was to become Lady of the Jungle?

I believe the widowed Professor Porter helped shape Jane's life in four ways:

First, there was the training in social graces that he, as a man of some standing in the community, would surely impart to her, either teaching her himself or seeing that she was properly school by others in such things. We certainly find ample evidence of her proper rearing in her adult adventures.

Second, the professor was also an ordained minister, and he instilled in Jane a love for and a trust in God who, on many occasions, was seen to be Jane's "refuge and strength."

Jane is seen praying, or otherwise acknowledging her God, probably more than any other character in a Burroughs book. Not only is she a woman of prayer, but her prayers get results, and sometimes spectacularly so! In *The Return of Tarzan*, a hunger-weakened Jane closes her eyes in prayer as a lion prepares to charge, and opens them a few moments later to find the lion dead with a spear in its side!

Jane must have been along at many times when Professor Porter performed his duties as a clergyman. In *Tarzan's Quest*, standing beside the fresh grave of her friend, Kitty, Jane "recited as much of the burial service as she could recall."

Though the exact words of a ritual have faded by this time of Jane's life, her belief in God is as strong as ever. Asked on page 286 of *Quest* by Kavuru ruler Kavandavanda if she believes in God, she replies, "Yes, most assuredly."

Jane never is reluctant to call on supernatural help. Her penchant to pray is not a sign of weakness, but of wisdom.

Third, the professor's lifestyle as an archaeologist and adventurer probably gave Jane a chance for

many occasions in which a love for the outdoor life could be instilled in her. The voyage which first brought her to the African shore may have been just one of many expeditions with her father to exotic lands.

There was likely a fourth area in which Professor Porter's upbringing influenced Jane. And though it was a negative influence, it had positive results. In *Tarzan of the Apes*, Professor Porter is seen to be a bit absent-minded, or at the least to have a rather dominant one-track mind. He says, "God alone knows how hard I have tried to be 'human' for Jane's sake." So he tried hard, but, by his own admission, there must have been some things he was unable to teach Jane, some things which only a mother could have taught her, and there must have been times when his multi-career duties left Jane pretty much on her own. So, though skilled in social niceties, I wonder if the Professor's occasional "neglect" could have made Jane into a bit of a tomboy. Such a penchant could have helped to develop muscles and skills and predilections that would come in handy in learning jungle survival.

Jane's Indomitable Spirit

Some psychologists say that most of a child's personality will be formed by the time they are six years old.⁶ So, Professor Porter must surely get the credit for the early spark of Jane's indomitable spirit, and she herself must be credited with having the spunk to develop it.

All the training provided, no matter how skilled the teacher, how patient the mentor, is of no use if one does

⁶ <http://moms.today.com/news/2010/08/09/4849430-your-6-year-olds-personality-may-be-here-to-stay?lite>

not desire to learn and have the guts to put what is learned into practice.

How does Jane's fighting spirit manifest itself?

In *Tarzan of the Apes*, it is Jane who retains a presence of mind in the face of a lion climbing through the window of a cabin occupied by her and Esmeralda. And, when Jane herself is kidnapped by a giant ape, Terkoz, it is both Jane and Esmeralda who scream, but only Esmeralda who faints.

Jane, being carried along under the hairy armpit of this gruesome anthropoid, would have every right to faint, but she doesn't:

"But Jane Porter did not once lose consciousness. It is true that that awful face, pressing close to hers, and the stench of the foul breath beating upon her nostrils, paralyzed her with terror; but her brain was clear, and she comprehended all that transpired." (Chapter 19)

There are many men who might feel a little faint in such a situation and no one would blame them. There are times in the Tarzan books when Jane does faint, such as when she is strapped to the altar of the Flaming God, but this is not one of those times.

After Tarzan and Terkoz battle for possession of her, she must face Tarzan who, at this point, is as unknown a factor to her as the ape. When he reacts instinctively and starts kissing her, however, she's not afraid to fight back:

"She turned upon him like a tigress, striking his great breasts with her tiny hands."

In *Return*, we find that Jane's character is one which prefers a death of starvation to the cannibalism proposed by Rokoff. In *Beasts*, we find a woman who believes her husband dead and her baby son who-knows-where and yet has enough fighting spirit to battle her way to freedom and single-handedly capture a

ship and two sailors.

And through her other adventures already referred to which show examples of her courageous spirit, we finally arrive at the Jane who upstaged Tarzan himself in the 19th ERB Tarzan story, *Tarzan's Quest*. Perhaps, by this time, most Tarzan fans had never expected to hear of Jane again. From the first magazine appearance of a Tarzan story in 1912, to the publication of *Tarzan and the Ant Men* in 1924, Jane had been featured along with Tarzan, sometimes in the forefront and sometimes in the background, in nine of the ten Tarzan books, as well as *The Eternal Lover*. With the magazine appearance of *Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle*, in 1927, Jane dropped from sight with no explanation. And she wasn't even mentioned as having an existence as Tarzan went solo adventuring through seven more stories.

Then, 12 years after *Ant Men*, in 1936, ERB came out with *Tarzan's Quest*, the one Tarzan story in which perhaps Jane should have shared in the title. In fact, ERB's working title for the story actually was *Tarzan and Jane*.

Dejah Thoris, Thuvia of Ptarth, Llana of Gathol, Nadara, Fou-tan. all had books named for them or their titles. But Jane stays ever in the shadow of Tarzan, title-wise (and maybe that's just the way Jane prefers it).

But, in *Tarzan (and Jane's) Quest*, more than half of the book's 318 pages—163 by my count—are devoted to the adventures of Jane, while Tarzan himself is featured on just 108 pages.

The rest of the book's pages feature both Tarzan and Jane on the same page, or are devoted to the adventures of Nkima, the Waziri, or the story's incidental players.

And what adventures Jane has!

She remains calm and competent in the face of an impending airplane crash over hostile jungle, then proceeds to take command of the survivors to lead them

out of the wilderness. Along the way she shows off all kinds of jungle skills, often taking to the trees like Tarzan, fashioning weapons, providing the party with food, eluding and taunting lions, killing a panther, asserting her leadership authority when necessary, showing her tracking skills and displaying her indomitable spirit in the face of a hopeless future as captive of the Kavuru.

But what about the ending of the book one might ask. After all, in spite of all that Jane accomplishes on her own, she still has to be rescued by Tarzan.

Well, what of it?

If we take anything away from Jane simply because she needed rescuing, then we should also take things away from Tarzan of the Apes himself. For there were many times in the course of the Tarzan books when the fate of the ape man was surely sealed had it not been for the intervention of someone or some thing.

Perhaps the most galling of all rescues for Tarzan, if any rescue from certain death may be called "galling," came in *Tarzan the Untamed* when the Jungle Lord was rescued from cannibals by a band of apes led—not only by a woman—but by a woman he personally despised because, at the time, he believed her to be a German spy!⁷

So, if Tarzan can be rescued by a woman, an ape, an elephant, or blind chance and still be our hero, then Jane can be rescued by Tarzan and still be our heroine.

Epilogue: The Future

You go to Africa. You are strolling through the deep jungle. In the lush rain forest you wander and suddenly the hairs on the nape of your neck stand up as a sixth

⁷ Fraulein Bertha Kircher (the Honorable Patricia Canby)

sense tells you something is dreadfully wrong. You stop and turn slowly. Your heart nearly stops as you see a huge leopard crouched on a limb above you, gathering his hind legs underneath him in preparation for the spring. The creature does!

But the low growl rumbling from the feline's throat changes to a scream of rage and pain as an arrow from nowhere is suddenly buried in his chest. Then, as the doomed beast bats angrily at the protruding shaft, two more arrows quickly appear in the same part of the cat's anatomy and it falls, with a sickening thud, to the forest floor.

It may not be Tarzan who has rescued you.

It may have been Jane, the Lady of the Jungle.

And you'd better have a darned good reason for why you're trespassing in Clayton Country!

The "Jane" Books of Edgar Rice Burroughs:

Tarzan of the Apes, 1914. Jane Porter and others are stranded on an African shore by mutineers, where Jane meets and falls in love with Tarzan of the Apes.

The Return of Tarzan, 1915. On another African cruise, Jane is shipwrecked, eventually makes it to shore, only to be kidnapped by savage residents of the lost city of Opar, who plan to sacrifice her to their god. Tarzan intervenes; Jane is saved; they are wed.

The Eternal Lover, 1925. Tarzan and Jane entertain guests on their African estate, but it is the guests who have the adventures.

The Beasts of Tarzan, 1916. Jane is kidnapped and taken into the interior of Africa and must use her own resources to get free and find her way out.

The Son of Tarzan, 1917. After their son mysteriously disappears in England, Jane and Tarzan move back to Africa where they are eventually reunited with their boy, who has become Korak the Killer.

Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar, 1918. Jane is captured by Arabs, escapes, and is recaptured, and turns a bad man good (for awhile) before she and Tarzan are reunited.

Tarzan the Untamed, 1920. Jane is kidnapped by German soldiers in World War I and Tarzan believes her dead until he finds out differently at the end of the book.

Tarzan the Terrible, 1921. Jane frees herself from Lt. Obergatz and captivity by others, takes command of her life in the jungle, and has a joyful reunion with Tarzan.

Tarzan and the Golden Lion, 1923. Jane commands the Waziri as she goes in search of Tarzan, who she believes has amnesia.

Tarzan and the Ant Men, 1924. Tarzan look-alike Esteban Miranda decides to take the missing ape man's place. But can he fool Jane?

Tarzan's Quest, 1936. a plane carrying Jane and friends crashes in the jungle and Lady Greystoke handles well the responsibility of leading the party through many dangers.