
TARZAN OF THE APES

Edgar Rice Burroughs, 1912

Player and Developer Manual

Release 1.0.0 · Tronsoft Interactive Fiction Engine, Core 2.3.0

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1 The Story

In 1888 the barkentine *Fuwalda* mutinies in the South Atlantic and puts John Clayton, Lord Greystoke, and his wife ashore on a stretch of West African coast that appears on no chart. They are never taken off. A year later a she-ape of Kerchak's tribe, whose own baby has just died, comes through the cabin door and carries the living child up into the trees.

You play the father for the first act and the son for the other four. Act I is an hour of carpentry with a rifle propped against the wall: fell the timber, bar the window, hang a latch that opens only from within, and write the last entry in a diary nobody will read for twenty years. What you leave in that cabin is what your son will find in it.

The rest is Burroughs's own spine, kept step for step. A boy raised by animals who is worse than all of them at everything except thinking. A locked door he cannot open, behind which are books. A child's illustrated primer, and the single most improbable thing in the novel: a boy teaching himself to read a language he has never heard spoken, out of pictures, without ever learning that letters make sounds. His father's knife in a drawer under his father's hand. Sabor the lioness. Mbonga's village and the black arrow poison. Kerchak, and the kingship. And then a party of Americans lands at the cabin, and a girl reads a notice nailed to the door.

The end is Burroughs's too, and it is why the book has lasted. On a porch in Wisconsin, D'Arnot's telegram from the Bureau of Records at Paris proves by finger-prints that the wild man is John Clayton, Lord Greystoke. The title, the estate and the woman are all his for one true sentence. He looks at the man who will otherwise lose everything, and he lies.

1.1 What kind of game this is

A parser adventure for one player, in 20 rooms across 5 acts, scoring 150 points. A first careful playthrough runs two to three hours. The measured full route is 110 moves and the measured lean route — every required step, no keepsakes, no optional chest — is 95. Nothing is timed, nothing is on a turn clock, and looking, reading, talking, consulting the map and asking for hints all cost nothing at all.

2 Playing

2.1 Beginning

Launch the game from the Tronsoft Games library. A cover card appears with two optional switches — story narration and jungle ambience — and the game begins when you press the button. Both switches can be changed later from the ACCESSIBILITY panel, and the game is fully completable with sound and narration off.

Type commands into the field at the bottom of the screen, or build them from the button bands beneath it: choose an action and the CONTEXT band offers every valid target in the room. Nothing in the game requires typing, and nothing requires the mouse.

2.2 Standard commands

Group	Commands
Movement	N S E W UP DOWN IN OUT, or GO NORTH
Handling	LOOK, EXAMINE x, TAKE x, DROP x, USE x, OPEN x, CLOSE x, SEARCH x, READ x
People	TALK TO x — speak again to hear more; people run out of new things to say
Records	INVENTORY, JOURNAL, QUESTS, ACHIEVEMENTS, STATS, SCORE
System	HINT, SAVE [name], RESTORE [name], RESTART, TRANSCRIPT, HELP, ABOUT

HINT, SAVE, RESTORE, RESTART, LOOK and every record command are free: they do not advance the move counter.

3 Jungle Craft: the eight story verbs

Beyond the standard verbs the game adds eight of its own. They appear as their own button band, labelled JUNGLE CRAFT, and each is used at several points in the story rather than once.

Verb	Meaning	Where it matters
SPELL	the signature verb — write, and work out the little bugs	Act I: SPELL alone writes Clayton's diary. Acts III–V: SPELL BOY, SPELL APE, SPELL MAN and two more, then SPELL WARNING and SPELL LETTER.
CLIMB	go up something that is not an exit	Over Mbonga's palisade, which is the only safe way into the village.
SWING	travel by the middle terrace, carrying what you must	Carries Jane home from Terkoz's trail, and D'Arnot out of the village.
HUNT	kill, with whatever you are holding	Sabor, Kerchak, Terkoz. Never attempt any of them without the knife.
NOOSE	the grass rope, and the running loop worked into one end	Humbles Tublat, takes Kulonga out of the trail, lifts D'Arnot off the stake.
BURY	dig, and cover over again	The bones in the cabin, Kala, and the mutineers' chest — twice.
LISTEN	stop moving and let the jungle tell you	In the cabin at nightfall, on the elephant trail, at the amphitheatre.
LIE	say the thing that is not true	Once, at the very end, and it is how the game is won.

3.1 The little bugs

The primer in the cabin is a child's alphabet book: pictures, with lines of small black marks underneath. Tarzan cannot know that the marks stand for sounds, because he has never heard the language spoken. What he can see is that the same marks keep coming back in different orders under different pictures, and from that alone he reasons his way to the whole of written English.

READ PRIMER lists the pictures. SPELL followed by a word works out that word, and each one you work out is added to the strip in the right-hand panel. The words available are BOY, APE, MAN, GOD, KILLER. The first three complete the objective; the other two are worth finding for

their own sake. Nothing later in the game will open without them: the notice on the cabin door and the letter to Jane are both written with the same verb, and both are mechanically required.

4 Scoring

150 points in total: 130 from objectives (8 required at 15 points each, 1 optional at 10) and 20 from four keepsakes worth 5 points apiece.

Objective	Points	Required
Put Ashore	15	yes
The Cabin by the Sea	15	yes
Kala's Child	15	yes
The Little Bugs	15	yes
His Father's Knife	15	yes
Bow, Arrows and Poison	15	yes
King of the Apes	15	yes
The Woman	15	yes
The Chest Twice Buried	10	optional

4.1 The four keepsakes

Four objects score five points each simply for being picked up. None of them is needed to finish the story and none of them is hinted at as an objective; they are there for a player who looks. The mate's note can only be taken in Act I, before the boat is lowered, and Act I never comes back — so a perfect score has to be planned for from the first four moves. This is deliberate. It is not a dead end: every remaining point stays winnable.

Keepsake	Act	Points
the mate's scrawled note	I — on the deck of the Fuwalda	5
a diamond-studded locket	III — the sea chest in the cabin	5
the pelt of Sabor	III — after the lioness is killed	5
a brass anklet	IV — Kulonga, on the elephant trail	5

5 Dying

There are four commands in the game that will kill you. All four are warned about in the room description before you can type them, and three are warned about a second time in something you can read or somebody you can talk to. Death is never arbitrary and never a surprise.

Where	The fatal command	The warning you were given
The landing beach	NORTH, into the trees	The mate's note, and Black Michael's third speech: keep off the trees.
Sabor's clearing	DOWN, to the ground, without the knife	The room says it plainly: the trees are safety, the ground is not.
Outside Mbonga's village	IN, through the open gateway	The room describes the men beside the gate and the black arrow tips. CLIMB instead.
Terkoz's trail	HUNT TERKOZ without the knife	Terkoz is described as the one bull you cannot take bare-handed.

After a death the game offers RESTORE and RESTART, and a save made before the mistake restores cleanly — a death is not a lost game. There are no unwinnable states anywhere in the story: the build is checked by resuming the full route from 27 separate points and finishing from every one of them.

6 Saving, restoring, restarting

SAVE and SAVE name write a slot; RESTORE and RESTORE name bring one back; the SAVE MANAGER in the footer lists, restores and deletes them. Saves are held in this browser's local storage under the single key `tronsoft_tife_tarzan_of_the_apes_save`, in accordance with section 23 of the Tronsoft Games Package Specification. They are local to one browser on one machine; the game reads and writes nothing else, and sends nothing anywhere.

7 Accessibility

The ACCESSIBILITY panel in the footer offers six profiles — Standard, Low Vision, Blind / Screen Reader, Hard of Hearing, Motor Assistance and Cognitive Support — plus individual switches for narration, captions, visual sound indicators, high contrast, larger controls, reduced typing, simplified layout, reduced motion and contextual hints, and a text-size slider. Choices are remembered on this device.

Every sound in the game is synthesised in the browser and every sound has a caption. Nothing in the story is conveyed by sound or by colour alone, the whole game can be completed from the keyboard without typing a word, and the live browser check counts 20 keyboard focus stops on the play screen.

8 Developer Notes

This section documents how the package is put together, for anyone maintaining it or authoring another story on the same engine.

8.1 Engine purity

Eleven files ship byte-identical to the TIFE Core 2.3.0 kit: the nine services under `js/core/`, the DOM adapter `js/game.js`, and `css/game.css`. Their SHA-256 digests are recorded in `docs/engine-purity.json` and re-checked by the in-package validator, which also sweeps those eleven files for leaked story text. No engine file is edited for this or any story.

All story behaviour is therefore added from the game side, by patching prototypes at load time in `js/interface.js`, with the region chart and primer strip in `js/map.js`, the synthesised audio in `js/sound.js` and the skin in `css/theme.css`.

8.2 What the patch layer adds

Core 2.3.0 understands 8 rule conditions and 10 rule actions. This story needs 38 and 28, so the rule service is re-implemented from the game side over the same data shape, and two new triggers are added: `move.attempt`, which resolves before the engine performs a movement so a warned-about step can be refused or fatal, and `verb.<name>` for each of the eight story verbs.

The layer also fixes eight defects in the stock kit, all of them found by the build harness rather than by reading:

Stock behaviour	What the patch layer does
RESTART calls <code>reset()</code> , which nulls <code>lastAction</code> , and <code>dispatch()</code> then reads <code>lastAction.type</code> and throws.	RESTART is handled before the field is read, so it can never crash.
The once-guard is written after the do-list, so a rule that cascades back into itself can fire twice.	The guard is written before the do-list.
Rule narration prints in the middle of the turn, so consequences can appear before the action that caused them.	All rule output is buffered for the whole dispatch and flushed after, with the destination room description always last.
USE, SEARCH and READ accept any object anywhere in the world by name.	Presence checks on USE, SEARCH, READ and OPEN, with OPEN extended to carried items.
Companions do not travel with the player.	<code>WorldService.move</code> relocates followers before <code>room.enter</code> rules run, so a rule that needs them finds them.
The save key is fixed to the story id and assigned in the constructor.	An accessor with both getter and setter yields the specification's slug-derived key.
HINT and RESTART consume a move.	Information and system commands are free; the winning and fatal commands are still counted.
Once the story ends, every command is refused.	RESTORE, SAVE, HELP and the record commands still work, so a death is recoverable.

8.3 The shipped data

Measure	Value	Measure	Value
Rooms	20	Rules	82
Regions	5	Rule triggers	16
Objects	44	Rule conditions	38
of which portable	21	Rule actions	28
of which scored	4	Exits	34
Speaking parts	8	of which story-gated	8
Objectives	9	Journal entries	19
Achievements	14	Hint ladders	29
Story verbs	8	Maximum score	150

8.4 The world

Room	Act	Exits
The Deck of the Fuwalda	The Shore	down
The Landing Beach	The Shore	up
The Little Plateau	The Shore	down, in
Inside the Cabin	The Shore	out
The Nest in the Fork	The Tribe of Kerchak	down
Kerchak's Glade	The Tribe of Kerchak	east, north, up
The Jungle Pool	The Tribe of Kerchak	up, west
The Middle Terrace	The Tribe of Kerchak	east, north, south, up, west
The Door of the Strange Lair	The Cabin of His Father	east, in, west
Within the Cabin	The Cabin of His Father	out
The Clearing of the Great Cat	The Cabin of His Father	up
Tarzan's Aerie	The Cabin of His Father	down
The Elephant Trail	King of the Apes	north, south, west
Outside Mbonga's Village	King of the Apes	south, up
Above the Thatch	King of the Apes	down
The Amphitheatre of the Apes	King of the Apes	east
The Strangers' Camp	The Strangers	east, north, out
The Point of Fresh Sand	The Strangers	south
Terkoz's Trail	The Strangers	north
The Woods in Wisconsin	The Strangers	—

8.5 Achievements

Achievement	Earned by
Marooned	Put ashore on a coast that is on no chart.

Achievement	Earned by
Built Shut	Finish the cabin: walls, bars and latch.
In a Hand No Ape Can Read	Write the last entry in the diary.
Kala's Child	Take Tublat off his feet with a thing he has no word for.
What the Pool Said	Look at your own face in the jungle pool.
The Little Bugs	Work out BOY, APE and MAN without ever hearing a letter spoken.
His Father's Knife	Take the hunting knife out of the cabin.
Sabor Is Dead	Kill the lioness with the steel.
Over the Stakes, Never Through the Gate	Take the arrow poison out of Mbonga's village.
King of the Apes	Kill Kerchak and hold the amphitheatre.
The Chest Twice Buried	Rebury the mutineers' chest where the tribe dances.
The Frenchman Speaks	Cut D'Arnot off the stake and carry him out through the trees.
Carried Her Into the Trees	Take Jane Porter back from Terkoz.
Every Point	Reach the porch in Wisconsin with all 150 points.

8.6 Verification

The build harness runs 786 assertions against the real shipped engine files in a sandbox with a stub DOM: engine purity, a duplicate object-literal-key scan, per-room object and speaker name-collision audits, the points ledger, teleport-aware connectivity, hint coverage for every room, and playthroughs covering the full route, the lean route, all four fatal commands with a sweep of every other direction in those rooms, save/restore/restart including restore after death, parser junk, reading order, presence gating, and a dead-end sweep that resumes the route from every fourth move. A real Chromium run typing all 110 commands of the route into the shipped command form finishes 150/150 in 110 moves with zero console errors, visits all 20 rooms, completes all 9 objectives and all 14 achievements, and produces the four 1920×1080 screenshots in the package.

A dependency-free `validate.js` ships inside the package and re-checks the whole of it — specification conformance, engine purity and a set of playthroughs — from the extracted archive, so the package can prove itself on the portal without any of the build tooling. Section 21 of the specification forbids `.py` and `.sh` files inside a package, so the archive-level verifier is kept outside it.

9 Source material

Tarzan of the Apes by Edgar Rice Burroughs was first published in The All-Story in October 1912 and in book form in 1914. It is in the public domain in the United States, which is why this adaptation keeps the novel's title and the names of its characters. Tronsoft Games claims no ownership of the underlying novel; all prose, code, artwork and audio in this package are original to it. TARZAN is a trademark of Edgar Rice Burroughs, Inc., which is not affiliated with this package and has not endorsed it.

The adaptation is faithful to the novel's structure and compresses it. Some incidents are conflated, the burial of Kala and the second burial of the chest are dramatic inventions of this adaptation, and the arithmetic of scoring is a game convention rather than anything in Burroughs.