

Tarzan Character Descriptions for Auditions and Callbacks

FATHER is a strong, determined man who braves the unknown to provide for his wife and son after a shipwreck leaves them stranded in an unfamiliar jungle.

- Male
- Non-speaking role
- Possible acting callback: interaction with MOTHER

MOTHER protects her son to the end, braving the shipwreck, storm, and jungle. Together with her husband, she builds a house in the canopy of the trees, trying to create a safe haven for her family to live in.

- Female
- Non-speaking role
- Possible acting callback: interaction with FATHER

KALA is a motherly ape who raises Tarzan after he loses his parents to SABOR. She is very strong, even after suffering the loss of her own child. She shows a richness of emotion equal or deeper to that of any human.

- Female
- Range: Eb3 - Eb5 (the very low notes may be cheated/spoken)
- Callback songs: "You'll Be In My Heart" and "Son of Man" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFyyajzRVx4> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5TuPYGhaFOg> (Son of Man is a chorus number but KALA begins the first verse solo. These songs are stylistically very different and the actor must be versatile enough for both)
- Possible acting callbacks: sides with YOUNG TARZAN pp. 18 - 20, sides with KERCHAK p.23, sides with TARZAN and TERK pp. 26 - 28, sides with TERK p. 56

KERCHAK is the gruff bull-ape who leads the tribe and insists that Tarzan, even as a baby, poses a threat to the family. He is conflicted by his dedication to his mate Kala and his responsibilities as leader of the tribe.

- Postadolescent male
- Large build
- Range: Ab2 - Gb4
- Callback song: "No Other Way" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhsFBWIIHHas>
- Possible acting callback: sides with YOUNG TARZAN and YOUNG TERK pp. 11 - 13, sides with KALA p. 23

SABOR is the king - or queen! - of the jungle. A fearsome leopard, SABOR kills for pleasure and terrorizes the inhabitants of the jungle without conscience.

- Male or Female
- Ideally light enough for TARZAN to lift
- Non-speaking role
- Possible movement callback: improvised feline movement

YOUNG TARZAN is an innocent ten-year-old human, raised by apes. He is immensely curious and possesses a keen ingenuity. Tarzan is daring but desperately wants to fit in with the rest of the family.

- Preadolescent male (A preadolescent girl may audition and might be cast depending everyone's vocal quality and also costuming ideas)
- Range: C4 - Eb5
- Callback song: "I Need to Know" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QuYXcNjqB6c>
- Possible acting/movement callbacks: sides with YOUNG TERK pp. 7 - 9, sides with KERCHAK and YOUNG TERK pp. 11 - 13, sides with KALA pp. 18 - 20
- Boys will be expected to act bare-chested
- This character swings from vines

YOUNG TERK is a witty and sarcastic young ape, more intelligent and more curious than most of the rest of the ape ensemble. He/she leads a gang of other young apes. He/she finds a kindred spirit in Tarzan, the other outcast of the family.

- Male or female, preferably the same gender or at least similar build to TERK, just smaller.
- Range: G3 - B4
- Callback song: "Who Better Than Me" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bZIRyb1Kj2c>
- Possible acting/movement callback: sides with YOUNG TARZAN pp. 8 - 10, sides with YOUNG TARZAN and KERCHAK pp. 11 - 13

TARZAN is twenty years old and a complete stranger to civilization. His curiosity has only increased over the years as have his confidence and competence in the jungle. Tarzan is long, lean and very athletic. He has great integrity and a strong sense of fairness. Tarzan falls passionately in love with Jane at first sight and wonders if she is the key to unlocking his mysterious past.

- Postadolescent male
- Large build
- English accent, may be learned during rehearsals
- Range: B2 - Bb4
- Callback songs: "Two Worlds" and "Strangers Like Me" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pGiJT4PsegA> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eDSH8fLeeb4>
- Possible acting/movement callbacks: sides with KALA and TERK pp. 26 - 28, sides with JANE, p 34 - 36, sides with CLAYTON, JANE and PORTER pp. 49 - 53, sides with JANE, PORTER, 71 - 73
- You will be expected to act bare-chested
- This character swings from vines

TERK is a young adult ape whose friendship with Tarzan has only grown stronger through the years. Other than Kala, Terk is the only ape who visits Tarzan in exile. By now Tarzan can think and swing circles around Terk and Terk feels sometimes confused or exhausted by Tarzan. But he/she remains a loyal friend. Terk is a quintessential "static character" not growing much in life experience or knowledge.

- Male or female, preferably the same gender or at least similar build to YOUNG TERK, just bigger
- Range: Eb3 - C5 (Originally for a high tenor. Sopranos may transpose some passages up an octave, but altos or tenors singing unchanged pitches will probably feel most at ease with this music)
- Callback song: "Trashin' The Camp" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqHmy58j1nY>
- Possible acting/movement callbacks: sides with TARZAN and KALA pp. 26 - 28, sides with KALA, p. 56

JANE is a proper, well-bred, British young lady, but a bit of a tomboy, too. She is very much the turn-of-the-century- independent female adventurer and scientist. Jane is an attractive ingénue with a bit of a motor mouth brought on by her fascination and passion for all the expedition has to offer. Once meeting Tarzan, this young girl blossoms into a woman. A full triple threat.

- Female
- English accent, may be learned during rehearsals
- Range: Gb3 - F5
- Callback songs: "Waiting for this Moment" and "For the First Time"
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SiwVRNELvj0> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5ooxyXNk7Q0&spfreload=10>
- Possible acting/movement callbacks: sides with TARZAN pp. 34 - 36, sides with CLAYTON, PORTER and TARZAN pp. 49 - 53, sides with PORTER and TARZAN pp. 71 - 73
- This character swings from vines

PORTER is a British professor and a gentleman who is traveling to Africa to prove his theory on the social habits of apes. A single father to Jane, he maintains his temper and demeanor to the very last moment. He offers a bit of humor through his slightly eccentric, mad-scientist enthusiasm.

- Male
- English accent, may be learned during rehearsals
- Range: Bb2 - C4 (preadolescent boys may transpose up an octave)
- Callback song: "Like No Man I've Ever Seen" <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAczX88X8H8>
- Possible acting callbacks: sides with CLAYTON, JANE, and TARZAN pp. 49 - 53, sides with JANE and TARZAN pp. 71 - 73

CLAYTON is a brutish British expedition guide and the villain of the show. He has been hired by Professor Porter to lead a scientific research trip but is actually planning to hunt apes for profit. Clayton is a greedy and self-centered macho male who will stop at nothing to get what he wants.

- Male
- English accent, may be learned during rehearsals
- This is a non-singing role
- Possible acting callbacks: sides with JANE, PORTER, and TARZAN pp. 49 - 53 sides with SNIPES pp. 72, 73

SNIPES is head of the expedition crew.

- Male or female
- English accent, may be learned during rehearsals
- This is a non-singing role
- Possible acting callback: sides with CLAYTON pp. 72, 73

Actor must demonstrate clear speech, sufficient to progress the plot without the aid of a fair character introduction.