

The Lion's Lodger

THEY spent a couple of hours on the circus ground, searching, questioning, and trying to discover how the brute got away.

It was some hours later when Terhune left Colson, and headed behind the menagerie tent.

Yet for some reason he did not enter by the front entrance. No one could see him where he stood, for other tents screened him. Having made sure he was not being watched, he pulled up a peg, raised the lower edge of the canvas, and wriggled underneath.

Terhune found himself underneath a large, travelling cage containing monkeys. It smelled worse than the others. He was about to hurriedly change position when a shadow fell across the opening at the farther end of the tent. He tensed, and peered out.

It was Ellis Uttley, coming in with a purposeful expression on his face. He was rolling from side to side in a manner very reminiscent of gorillas.

Terhune rested his head on his elbow as he remained flat on the ground and kept still.

Ellis Uttley made for the big cage in which a huge but mangy lion was pacing up and down. Every now and again it emitted a low growl. It was very old.

"Hullo, Monarch!" he grunted. "Fed up because you can't git into your sleeping-quarters? Never mind, you'll soon have 'em to yourself."

At the end of the lion cage there was an enclosed compartment in which the caged animal slept.

Uttley went to the door of this compartment, and undid the massive bolts. The door swung outwards, and he called softly into the gloom beyond.

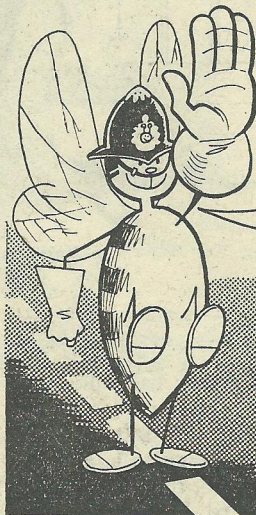
"You can come out now, Chako. The coast's clear!"

The hidden detective's eyes bulged when an immense greyish-brown form appeared in the opening.

It was the missing gorilla, and it looked about it like a criminal about to step beyond its prison gates.

Ellis Uttley was looking up at it with a smile on his ugly face. He reached and caught

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the hideous brute by one hand, and helped it down.

"Sorry I had to shut you in that stinkin' place," he apologised, "but it's the only place where they wouldn't look. They were goin' to take you off to prison for killin' Hahn an' Layton. What d'you think o' that?"

The gorilla turned its head, and the amazed detective saw its lips part as though in a grin. It seemed to shake with laughter.

One thing was certain. The gorilla had been there all the time they had been searching for it. It had been hidden in the lion's sleeping-compartment, where nobody had thought to look for it.

Uttley had lied to them. Why?

What was the bond between him and his hairy monster? Often keepers become attached to the animals in their care, but this seemed an exceptional case.

Furthermore, the gorilla acted more like a human being than ever in Uttley's presence.

Now the brute was teetering from side to side, distending its wide nostrils and sniffing noisily. Its eyes roved the dark

spun round at once, and glared in that direction.

"What was that? Seek it out, Chako!" muttered Uttley, and the gorilla dropped on all-fours as it shambled into the far corner.

As soon as their attention was directed over there, Paul Terhune wriggled backwards to the canvas, raised it sufficiently for him to pass through, and hurried outside.

He had an idea that things would be unhealthy for him if he was found spying on those two.

He lost no time in getting behind several tents, and after reaching one of the side-entrances from the ground, he went outside.

He knew where to find Chako when he wanted him. The keeper could be trusted to put his pet back in the same hiding-place if there was danger.

The only thing that worried Terhune was the possibility that the gorilla might escape and get up to mischief. Was it wise, not to tell the police that the man was hiding the hairy suspect?

He thought over this on the way home, and decided for the moment to say nothing. It might be wiser to keep secret watch on Uttley, and to see just what his interest in the gorilla was.

Who Was John Woodward?

ARRIVING at the police depot, the British detective found Lieutenant Staunton in a state of great excitement. Routine inquiries had been going on about the three dead men. Some result had been obtained.

"You said you believed the murder of Cyrano was just a means of silencing him when the murderer didn't want him

corners around. It seemed to be seeking something.

"What's the matter?" asked Uttley, who seemed to know the signs. "You can smell a stranger?"

"Ugh!" grunted Chako, and Paul Terhune felt cold shivers down his spine. It probably detected him. Its keen sense of smell would guide it to him.

He had to act quickly. Right beside him, on the ground, was a scrubbing-brush which was used for scrubbing the cages. He reached out and picked it up, and without raising himself more than a few inches, tossed it right across the tent beneath the lion's cage.

Thud! The noise was very distinct. The gorilla and the man, so much alike in stature,

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