

# WAS IT THE GORILLA?

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stack of fodder, and grinning.

"C-c-cats are his speciality," he mocked. "Go ahead, pardner, an' let's see your lion act."

His voice made the others turn, and some of them gasped with horror. All rushed towards the cage. One tall, thin man, with well-waxed moustaches, tried to open the door.

Uttley reached out and caught him by the neck. With an ease that was deceptive, he lifted the fellow off the ground and planted him on the pile beside himself.

"What's the hurry?" he demanded. "He won't hurt your lions, Marco!"

"I—I know, but maybe they kill him!" gasped the lion-tamer. "I must get him out of there at once."

He tried to jump down, but Ellis Uttley checked him with one hand.

"Leave him be!" he ordered harshly. "He says cats are his speciality. Let him give an act. Say, Anstey, we're waiting! Don't let them get lazy. Make 'em kick the bucket, or balance the broom on their noses."

He seemed to think that a good joke, and those who were evidently his cronies laughed dutifully.

All this Terhune noticed and took in as he warily backed before the four tawny monsters which had now invaded the

cage.

He had lifted the bucket in one hand, and held the long pole in the other. It occurred to him the best thing to do was to walk coolly towards the exit door.

"I'm no lion-tamer, but I'm not scared of 'em!" he growled as he sallied forward as bravely as possible.

Step by step the detective approached the door to escape, and was only six or seven paces from it when the biggest lion gave a low growl and began to run towards him. It did not leap, but ran on all-fours.

Terhune was ready for that. He tossed the bucket under its nose, and the resulting crash

a powerful figure leapt inside with amazing speed.

It was Ellis Uttley, his face transfigured. One moment he had been at the foot of the stack of fodder, the next he was beside the lion.

With both hands he reached for the creature's massive neck as it bent over the prostrate man, and a roar of fury escaped it as it was lifted straight off its feet.

The lion must have weighed five-hundred pounds, but Uttley hurled it the full length of the cage, with such force that it bounced against the bars and fell half-stunned.

Turning with the same flash of movement, the man snatched Terhune up by one arm, nearly dislocating it as he did so, and tossed him out through the doorway, where others caught him.

Harry the Hornet says:—



made the brute leap back with a roar.

That gave the detective time to reach the door. Safety was within his grasp.

He tugged at the catch, then horror gripped him when he found he could not open it. There was a knack in handling these cage doors from the inside, and he did not know that knack. He had never opened one from inside before.

The lioness came in swiftly, and Terhune fetched it a crack on the nose with the pole. That sent it back with a howl.

At the same time the lion sprang from the other flank, and although the detective did his best to side-step, he was too late.

The weight of the brute caught him on one shoulder, and down he went, the creature astride him, tail lashing, eyes glaring.

Terhune would have given much for a revolver at that moment. He felt sure he could measure his life's span in seconds only, then the door was suddenly flung open, and

Before the lion could recover or renew the attack, Ellis Uttley had gained safety and was unfastening the door. A roar of applause went up.

Uttley glowered at the shaken, panting Terhune.

"Fool!" he snorted. "I only meant to give you a fright. I thought you'd come right out. Serves you right if you've got a few bruises. You won't last long with lions if you're as slow as that."

He stalked away, and the men dispersed to their work, muttering something about Uttley's uncomfortable practical jokes.

Terhune, once he had got over the shock, could think of only one thing, the amazing strength of the man. The way that lion had been handled was a revelation. It seemed incredible that a human being could be so strong.

When he had been gripped and jerked from the floor of the cage, he had been like a puppet in Uttley's hands.

He had felt every bit as helpless as when in the hands of the mysterious attacker out at the

research hospital.

The apes were fed just before dusk, as was their custom in the jungle. Uttley saw to this personally, and allowed nobody else in the menagerie tent when he did this. He said the presence of anyone distracted his charges.

They worked at various tasks until almost dusk, when Uttley glanced at his watch and said it was time his apes were fed. Everyone took the hint and slowly went from the tent.

Terhune went as well, but he had made certain preparations. At the back of the lion cage he had loosened and pulled up three of the ground-pegs that held down the bottom edge of the tarpaulin.

No sooner was he outside than he ran round to this point, glanced about him to make sure he was not watched, then dived down and wriggled under the loosened tarpaulin.

He was again inside the menagerie tent, but was hidden by the big cages. Down at the further end Uttley was about to feed the orang-utangs and other apes.

Paul Terhune crawled close enough to see just what happened. He was wondering if that bunch of bananas was going to be shared out amongst them, and if not, he was wondering what Uttley was going to do with the fruit!

NEXT WEEK — Uttley and Chako begin a hunt for Paul Terhune!

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