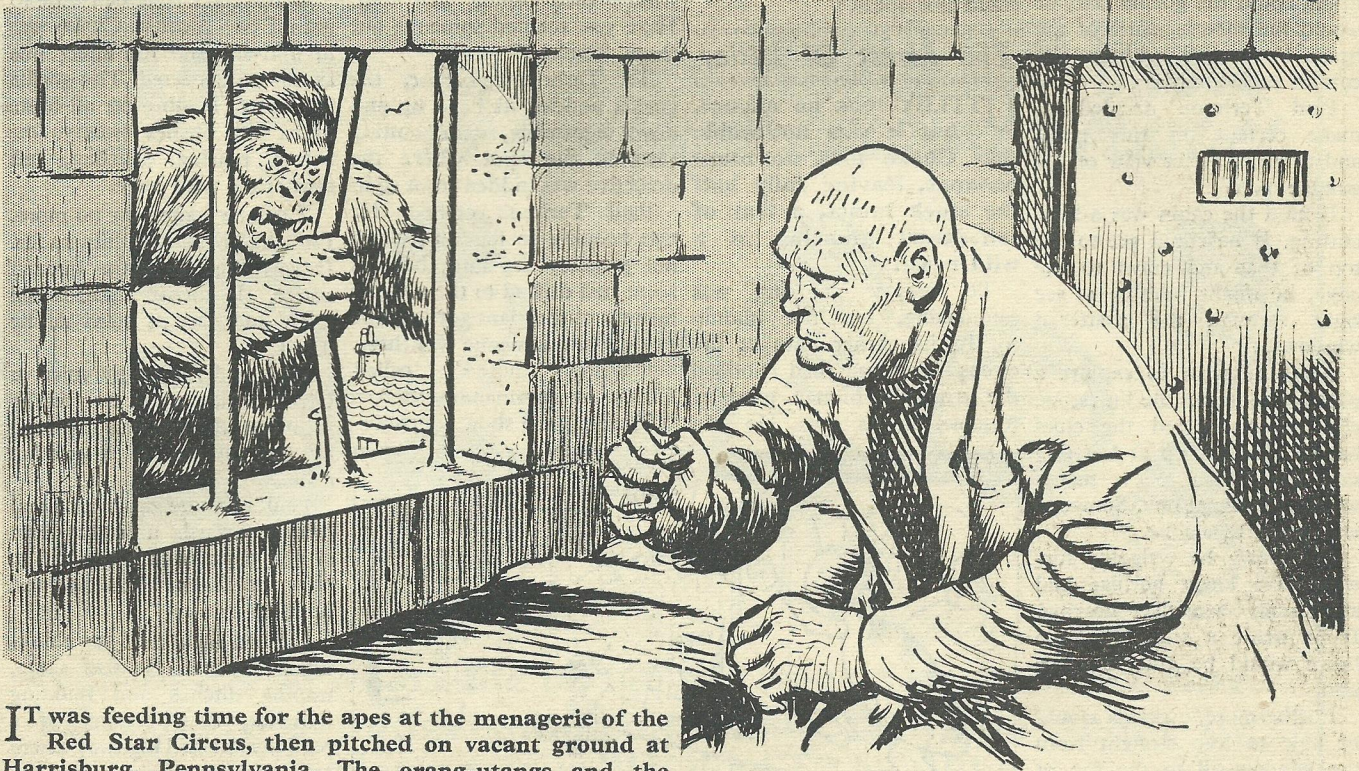


The cell bars could contain the strongest criminal—but they were no obstacle to Chako when he came to rescue his keeper!

WAS IT THE GORILLA?



IT was feeding time for the apes at the menagerie of the Red Star Circus, then pitched on vacant ground at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The orang-utangs and the chimpanzees, each in their different cages, were roaring and chattering.

The flap over the tent entrance had been dropped. Outside, darkness was closing down. Ellis Uttley, the man in charge of the apes, never allowed anyone inside the tent when he was feeding the animals.

Yet there was an unseen watcher who now saw him sorting out the mixed vegetables, the bags of rotting apples, the bunch of bananas, and the lettuces which had been assigned for the apes. Under one of the lion cages crouched Paul Terhune, the British detective.

Growling and muttering, poking the apes back with a stick, Uttley poured half the apples into each cage, then piled in the lettuces, scattering them over the floor of the two apartments. It was quite clear he had no intentions of giving the bananas to the apes.

The hidden detective was satisfied. Earlier that previous day he had seen the occupants of these cages go half-mad at the sight of one banana. He guessed they had not eaten any for weeks, though a bunch was assigned for them every day.

There was little wonder they looked thin and emaciated. Bananas were their staple diet.

Leaving the apes to their unsatisfactory meal, Uttley

stood up in the light of the lantern and glared about at the other cages.

He put on his old tweed jacket, then picked up the bunch of bananas as though it was a bunch of carrots, reached for a big sack, and dropped this in.

On it he piled hay until some bulged out at the top, and to all intents and appearances the sack contained only hay.

The orang-utangs had their arms around each other in some attempt at consolation, and their dark eyes followed Uttley as he went out of the tent with his sack on his back.

Paul Terhune slipped out through the entrance which he had made at the rear and got

in the shadows to watch Uttley pass.

The keeper trudged on his way. Terhune was never far behind. He saw Uttley reach the edge of the clearing, but he did not stop there. After glancing to right and left to make sure he wasn't watched, Uttley climbed a fence and dropped on to the railway track.

He trudged along the track to the right, until a dark shape loomed up ahead. Terhune, who had kept on the further side of the fence, saw it was an old signal box.

The steps leading up to it had fallen away. There was no glass in the windows. There had been a regrouping of signal blocks since it had been built, and it was now unnecessary.

Uttley quickened his steps as he drew near, then suddenly stopped, pursed his lips, and emitted a low whistle.

To Terhune's amazement

there came a low whistle or screech in reply—from within the signal box.

Uttley went forward and paused where the ladder had been. There was no means of reaching the door above, which now opened wide.

A dark shape appeared in it, and a monstrously long, hairy arm reached downwards almost to the ground.

With a chuckle Uttley handed the sack containing the bananas into the grip of the mysterious hand, and it was whisked upwards almost quicker than sight could follow.

Not three seconds later the same arm was reached down, and Uttley gripped the hand with both his. The same thing happened.

The hefty keeper was jerked aloft and vanished through the doorway. The door closed with a slam.

Paul Terhune felt like pinching himself. Even yet he thought it was a nightmare. It was incredible that Uttley should be keeping the missing gorilla in this empty cabin, so close to the camp!

Uttley was talking, and in a normal tone of voice, as he would have done to another man. There was another mumbling noise, but whether

FOR NEW READERS.

Paul Terhune, the famous English private detective, had been invited by Lieutenant Dick Staunton of the Spring City, Pennsylvania Police, to investigate the broken-neck murders.

Terhune had discovered that, seven years before, Chako, a gorilla, had had the brain of Brogan Carr, a dead murderer, transplanted soon after Carr's execution. Carr had vowed vengeance on all connected with his trial before he was convicted.

Now, the surgeon responsible for the operation, and many of the trial officials and jurors, had had their necks broken. Chako was the chief suspect, but the gorilla had disappeared from the Red Star Circus where it was part of the menagerie.

Terhune suspected that Ellis Uttley, Chako's keeper, was hiding it. Terhune became a circus hand and spied upon Uttley at the normal feeding time for the circus apes.