

# EBONY TORSO

By John C. Woodiwiss

PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

COPYRIGHT

## FIRST INSTALMENT

### CHAPTER I

#### DEATH STRIKES A ROGUE

Detective Inspector Hopton gazed out over the snow-covered expanse of roofs from the window of Kensington Road Police Station while Superintendent Ellis anxiously waited for an answer to his question.

"I'm afraid I can't give you the exact details just now," said the C.I.D. man at last, "but I'll look up the information you want the moment I get back to the Yard."

"Very good," agreed the other, "I'm anxious to put a stop to this outbreak of forgery as soon as possible; it's becoming a nuisance and we feel certain that all the cheques come from the same source."

Hopton nodded, but any further comment was interrupted by the telephone on the Superintendent's desk which began to ring harshly.

"Dash the thing!" muttered Ellis, taking off the receiver. "Excuse me a moment: Hello . . . yes . . . Ellis speaking!"

Hopton had picked up his hat preparatory to leaving his colleague, when the latter stopped him.

"Yard wants you," he announced, handing over the phone to his superior. "I fancy it's another murder job."

The detective turned up his eyes in an expression of much annoyance, but the receiver to his ear, and began to speak:

"Hello!"

"That Inspector Hopton?"

It was sergeant Morrell's voice which asked the question:

"Speaking?"

"You're to go to Lambeth Station at once, sir; it's a murder case."

"Oh, Lord!" muttered the detective. "Inspector Carlingford's out of his depth, and the Assistant Commissioner wants you to get there as soon as possible." Morrell went on.

"Very good; I'll go right away. Any thing else?" asked Hopton.

"No, I think not, sir; you'll hear all the gruesome details on arrival."

"All right, I'll be getting along; goodbye."

"Goodbye, sir."

The Inspector snapped on the receiver again with a grunt of annoyance.

"No peace for the wicked," he sighed. "I've got to report to Lambeth as soon as possible on a murder job!"

"Well, it's nice sharp weather for you," commented Ellis facetiously. "I find it hard enough to keep warm in here."

"Not enough to do," grinned Hopton, making for the door. "Cheerio, and I'll get Sergeant Paget to phone those particulars about the forgery business as soon as I've a moment to spare."

"Very good," nodded the Superintendent rising. "So long . . . and good hunting!"

Half an hour later the detective was scraping the congealed snow from his boots before the roaring fire at the Lambeth Police Station while Divisional Detective-Inspector Carlingford, a big man with a red face and sandy hair, went over the chief incidents of the case.

"Well, Hopton, this looks like being a real corker," he began, taking a pile of papers from his desk and flattening them out before him.

"I suppose that's why I'm here?" suggested the detective with a chuckle. "But, go on."

"Well, to begin with," said the Divisional Inspector, referring to his notes. "Police Constable Maggs was on point duty as eleven forty-five this morning at the junction of Mayford and Streatham roads, when a boy came dashing along in a very excited state and asked him to go to 84 Little Street, S.W. 8, as a man had been murdered."

"Eleven forty-five?" asked Hopton, taking out his pocket-book and writing down the time.

"Yes, eleven forty-five exactly," repeated the other.

"Very good, go on."

"Realizing from the lad's rather jumbled statement that something serious had happened, the officer accompanied him to the address mentioned where he

found that a man, Frederick David Scutt, aged 55, had died under very unusual circumstances."

"Um," nodded Hopton.

"A doctor was sent for, and the constable immediately telephoned to me," continued the Divisional Inspector, in a flat, official voice. "I went along at once, and arrived at about the same time as the doctor, who examined the deceased man and satisfied us that death had been caused by strangulation. Great violence had been used, and there were also several cur scratches and punctures on the throat, suggestive of the marks made by the talons of some large animal or bird."

"Inspector Carlingford paused and raised his eyes to his brother officer's face to see how he was reacting to the story."

"That's certainly out of the common," remarked Hopton, with growing interest. "Talon marks, you say?"

"Well, that was the doctor's opinion, and mine," said the other impressively. "The deceased was dressed in pyjamas and was lying in bed . . ."

"Was the bedding disarranged? Any sign of a struggle?" Hopton broke in, looking up eagerly.

"No, nothing particularly noticeable," Carlingford assured him. "Scutt wasn't a big man, and his murderer, whatever it was, must have been extremely powerful."

"Whatever it was?" Hopton's eyebrows shot up as he emphasized the pronoun. "I don't follow you."

"I'm coming to that point," nodded the Divisional Inspector gravely. "But I want to take the events in their logical order, so as make myself perfectly clear."

"Very good, go on."

"There were no visible injuries on the dead man, except these deep scratches on the throat; but his face was very contorted . . . as if he'd seen something horrible and was scared stiff."

"I see," agreed the detective, making another note.

"Apparently, the last person to find him alive was a parson, the Reverend Mr. Galesbourne, of St. Luke's Church, Stockwell, who called in to see him the same morning. I've got Mr. Galesbourne in the waiting room to tell you his own story."

"Do you know anything about the gentleman?" asked Hopton.

"Oh, yes, my dear chap; everyone knows him in Lambeth. He's been at St. Luke's for years. Wonderful man, too. Done no end of good in the district. A real worker, you know."

"I see. And you'd met him before?"

"Yes, quite frequently," returned Carlingford. "He's helped the police in a good many cases. Always working among the very poor, and that sort of thing."

"He's more or less above suspicion, then?" suggested the detective.

"That's for you to decide, but I should certainly say he was," remarked his colleague. "He's got an absolutely unblemished record in the neighbourhood."

"And have you any suspicion as to the person responsible?"

"Well, the deceased man was a shady bit o' goods," remarked Carlingford, with a doubtful shake of the head. "I must admit he hadn't been in trouble with the police for some time; but he'd done two 'stretches' for blackmail in the past. Since then, he'd managed to steer clear of jail; but it's possible he may have been at his old tricks again. You see, he was mixed up with these fortune-telling games."

"Professionally?"

"I don't know if you describe that sort of tomfoolery as 'professional,' but he made his living by it," replied Carlingford, turning over his papers. "He was connected with the local Spiritualists for a short time; but I understand they found he was bogus and kicked him out."

"You mean he was a fraudulent medium?" questioned Hopton.

"I think he became unbalanced with all this psychic stuff," returned Carlingford. "But perhaps you'd better hear what Mr. Galesbourne's got to say; he's been waiting for some time."

"Yes, perhaps it would be as well," agreed the detective. "And then I'd like to see the house where the murder took place."

"Very good," nodded the Divisional Inspector, rising and going to the door. "I'll get the padre."

**MR. GALESBOURNE'S STORY**

In a short time he returned with the Vicar, a white-headed, aesthetic-looking

man wearing a long cloak over a black cassock, dark trousers and black boots. He shook hands cordially with the famous detective.

"Good-morning, sir," began Hopton, as he took a quick, appraising glance at the newcomer. "Won't you sit down, please?"

"Ah, thank you, Inspector," smiled the parson, taking a chair. "I've often heard of you, but quite frankly, I never expected to meet you in such . . . er . . . tragic circumstances."

"Yes, I've no doubt this business has upset you, sir," replied the other, as he made a mental note of his visitor's careful rather drawing voice.

"Indeed it has," sighed the Vicar. "I'm not so young as I was, and my nerves are not well . . . so able to stand up to these sudden shocks since my breakdown last year."

"Oh, you've been ill, sir?" enquired the Detective.

"Well . . . er . . . rather overworked, you know, Inspector. A poor parish, like mine, is a continual source of anxiety. So much needs to be done, and yet there's always a shortage of money to do it with. It's heartbreaking at times, as Inspector Carlingford will tell you."

"That's true," nodded the Divisional Inspector, sympathetically. "But now, perhaps you'd tell Inspector Hopton the facts concerning Mr. Scutt's death, sir?"

The parson cleared his throat.

"Well, Inspector, to start with, you probably know this unfortunate man's record," he began deliberately. "Of course, I'd rather not speak ill of the dead . . ."

"Quite so," agreed Hopton, "but in a case like this there's no option."

"Exactly. You see, this man was really in a very poor way. He'd been a whisky drinker for many years, and suffered from fits of intemperance which left his nerves in a bad state."

"D.T.s?" questioned Hopton.

"I wouldn't go so far as to say that, Inspector, but he had queer delusions which were partly attributable, I imagine, to drink and partly to dealing in occult matters."

"You mean Spiritualism?"

"No, something far more objectionable. The fellow had been dabbling a good deal in what he called Black Magic—at least, that was how he expressed it."

"I see, sir, please go on."

"I was first asked to call on Scutt by his wife, who was seriously alarmed at his mental state, and got me to look in and see whether I could do anything. That was about six months ago, and I found him just recovering from a severe bout of drinking, and in an extremely excited and nervous state."

"Had he got to the 'blue devils' stage?" inquired Hopton facetiously.

"More or less," Galesbourne agreed with a sad smile. "He told me he had been associating with a woman called Mrs. Abershaw, a widow, I understand who had lived in Hong Kong for some years, and had been practising this magical business with disastrous results to her mental balance. It seems this unfortunate woman imagined herself to be in the power of some evil spirit—an incubus, she called it, which had attached itself to her and of which she was quite unable to rid herself."

"Was she a drinker too?" Hopton inquired sceptically.

"I never saw her," replied the parson. "And, quite frankly, I'm glad I didn't; such cases are very painful."

"That's true, sir," agreed Carlingford. "There are one or two borderline cases round here."

The vicar shook his head without commenting on the officer's statement.

"Scutt told me he had been making attempts to remove this entity from the unfortunate woman," he continued after a pause. "But he had got the idea firmly into his head that the thing which he described as being black and formless, had transferred itself to him and was sapping his vitality. This dreadful delusion became so firmly fixed in the poor wretch's brain that his nerve went completely, and he behaved more like a lunatic than a rational being."

"He used to lie and rave for hours on end that this demon was waiting to kill him and seemed only able to escape from his terrors by means of alcohol, which he took in increasing quantities."

Hopton noted the fact in his book, but made no comment.

"It was a very distressing case, Inspector," the parson continued, "and I did everything I could by calling repeatedly and trying to reason with the poor wretch. However, to cut a long story short, things came to a climax this morning, when Mrs. Scutt called at the vicarage in an almost hysterical state, and begged me to come and talk to her husband as he had one of his attacks."

"I was so sorry for the poor woman that I did as she asked me, although I knew my efforts were hopeless, and found him in a very violent and excited condition."

"I see," remarked the detective. "But not worse than you'd seen him before, I suppose?"

"Well, yes and no," replied the padre. "He sat up as I came in and cried, 'Thank God you've come, Vicar! I've had an awful night keeping it off!'"

"Alluding to this demon?" queried Hopton, in a sarcastic tone.

"Quite so," agreed the Vicar. "I tried to soothe him down by showing him how foolish these terrors were, but it was no use, and he started to tell me the entity was becoming increasingly powerful, and that it would eventually kill him."

"Pretty bad case, I should say," commented the Inspector.

"Well, I thought it sounded like the ravings of a maniac at the time," Galesbourne reluctantly agreed. "But in view

of what happened afterwards, I have begun to think . . ."

His voice trailed off into an awed silence, broken at last by the detective. "Yes, sir," he prompted, leaning forward. "Please go on."

The parson coughed nervously, and continued his story.

## Some More of Those Schoolboy Howlers

### Another Collection of Those Humorous Slips.

Following is another list supposed to be compiled from replies by students to questions on examinations.

Taxes are things that people won't pay. They are used to keep the roads nice.

Milk is very good for babies. It keeps them quiet while mother has a gossip.

The Arctic Circle is the circle in the Arctic Region where it is day all day long.

A theoscope is a spy-glass for looking into people's chests with your ears. Paraffin is the next order of angels above seraphims.

A mosquito is a child of black and white parents.

Mussolini is a sort of material used for ladies' stockings.

A pedestrian is one of those people motorists run over.

The Gorgons looked like women, only more horrible.

The function of the stomach is to hold up the petticoat.

Immortality is running away with another man's wife.

The cold at the North Pole is so great that the towns there are not inhabited.

Ambiguous means having two wives and not being able to get rid of them.

An optimist is a man who looks after your eyes, a pessimist looks after your feet.

Explain the phrase, "missing the mark." This means a woman who hasn't got a man.

The lifeboat is wonderfully constructed so that it can carry more than it can hold.

Mars is a star so far off that it would take a million years to walk there in an express train.

What is the difference between a widow and a window? You can see through a window.

When Englishmen on one side fight Englishmen on the other it is called a General Election.

Shakespeare was a very polite man. He often said "Go to" but he never finished the sentence.

Babies have very little clothes when they are born. Some are fed by the bottle, others by the chest.

Oliver Cromwell had an iron will

and a large red nose, but underneath were deep religious feelings.

Liberty of conscience means being able to do wrong without bothering about it afterwards.

Rhubarb is a kind of celery gone bloodshot.

The feminine of bachelor is lady-in-waiting.

The population of London is a bit too thick.

The inhabitants of Paris are called Parisites.

A quack doctor is one who looks after ducks.

Doctors say that fatal diseases are the worst.

A polygon with seven sides is called a heptagon.

A grass widow is the wife of a dead vegetarian.

What was Adam's punishment? He was to keep Eve.

My father has been decapitated for a number of years.

The opposite of an upright man is a downright. A is an upright idiot but B is a downright idiot.

Milk is chiefly bought in tins but it also grows in coconuts and goats.

When is the best time for picking apples? On Sunday afternoons when the folks is in church.

Who is the wisest man mentioned in the Bible? Paul, because he didn't marry. Father says so.

A sincere friend is one who says nasty things to your face.

**Introducing a New Pink Border Plant**

New York Botanical Gardens Featuring New Plant.

A pink border plant. An attractive low-growing border plant which is covered with delicate pink flowers all summer long has been recently introduced at the New York Botanical Garden. It is "Chironia linoides," a member of the Gentian family, which looks somewhat like a stocky flax plant about 5" high. It is not strictly herbaceous and is not entirely hardy in the north, but when renewed from cuttings it will bloom in the garden from May until frost.

Two-year-old plants from Kew Gardens, England, were set in the border at the Botanical Garden in 1936, and these, with their offspring from cuttings, have been blooming profusely every summer since.

When Chironia linoides was first brought to England from South Africa in 1787, it was grown only in the greenhouse where, except for the cold wet seasons, it flowered persistently nearly all year around. While it is raised to some extent now on the West Coast of the United States, its behavior since it reached New York would in-



"With a wife and family to support, I couldn't save \$6,000 in a hundred years. But I've just found a plan that makes it worth that much to my family. It's the North American Life Preferred Policy. If anything happens to me, they'll get \$50 a month for 10 years—long enough for the kids to get a start at earning their own living."

"And there's something in it for me too—an income for the rest of my life when I'm 65—and dividends every year on this profit-sharing plan."

If you are in good health and can afford \$25 cents a day, you can provide this protection for your family.

\*Example at 30 years of age.

**NORTH AMERICAN LIFE**

Representatives

F. N. WHALEY 8 Reed Block  
A. NICOLSON 10 Marshall Bldg  
W. M. ADAM, 10 Marshall Block

**ALL PROFITS FOR POLICYHOLDERS**

dicte that the climate of eastern America suited it perfectly.

—Carol H. Woodward, N.Y.

## Bulletin Tells About Delphinium Troubles

Delphinium troubles. The dreaded curling, distortion, blackening and malformation of the leaves and blossom buds of these plants is due to the pallid mites or cyclamen mites which feed on the young leaf and flower tissues. They avoid light and need a damp environment, reproduce rapidly and work on parts of the plant most difficult to reach with sprays or dusts. Badly infested shoots should be removed and destroyed, handling them carefully to avoid spreading the pests. The mite

injury may be greatly reduced if the plant is sprayed weekly with a rotenone insecticide, beginning in April, continuing until the plants come into bloom, and resuming the treatment on the new growth after the flower stalks are cut back in midsummer. Most rotenone sprays are used in solutions of one tablespoonful to a gallon of water. Finely ground sulphur dust is effective against the exposed mites, and dusting the plants between spraying increases the degree of control. The suggested methods come from the Bulletin of the American Delphinium Society, which always gives the latest developments in these plants.

Sudbury Star.—The pessimists already have been remarking on the brevity of summer.

Don't Miss This Amazing Value!

**PYREX** for only **25¢**  
**MEASURING CUP**

—and label from a tin of Magic Baking Powder — any size. We pay all shipping costs . . .

## 2-YEAR GUARANTEE

If this PYREX Measuring Cup should break from hot liquid within two years, it will be replaced absolutely free by any Pyrex dealer in exchange for the broken pieces.

**Transparent**—You can see to measure quarters, thirds and halves.

**Accurate two-way graduations**—Can be read with cup held in either hand. They read for either cups or ounces.

**Smooth inside**—Graduation marks are outside. Easy to keep clean and sanitary.

**Cool handle**—No burnt fingers, no matter how hot the liquid in the cup. **Always bright and new**—Resists fruit juices and vinegars. No discoloration or corrosion.



• ACTUAL SIZE



You've wished for it a thousand times! A measuring cup you can see through—that you can use with hot liquid without fear of breakage. Clean, sparkling glass that cannot dent or corrode. Always looks new—through a life-time of service. Accurate, convenient—a joy to own!

And here is your opportunity to get this measuring cup for only 25¢—far less than its actual value.

## CONTAINS NO ALUM

Complete list of ingredients on every tin. Magic Baking Powder is free from alum or any harmful ingredient. (Alum is sodium aluminum sulphate and is never used in Magic Baking Powder.)

MADE IN CANADA

Our sole reason for making this valuable offer is this: We want every woman in Canada to try Magic, and find out for herself what delicious results she can get with this finer baking powder.

All you do is get a tin of Magic from your grocer, and send the label with 25¢ and the order blank below. But send your order right away. This offer is good only while the supply of cups lasts.

## ORDER BLANK

Magic Baking Powder, Toronto, 2 Ont., Box 5. Please send me, free of shipping costs, one 8 oz. PYREX measuring cup, with 2-year guarantee against breaking from hot liquids. I enclose 25¢ and a wrapper from a tin of Magic Baking Powder, any size.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ Province \_\_\_\_\_

This offer good only while supply of PYREX cups lasts, and is limited to the Dominion of Canada only.



## BARGAIN Coach FARES

From T. & N. O. and N. C. R. Stations  
Via North Bay and C. N. Railways

Also from North Bay.

TO

**TORONTO**

AND TO

Barrie, 'Beardmore, Belleville, Buffalo, Brantford, Brockville, Chatham, Cobourg, Cornwall, Detroit, Gananoque, 'Geraldton, Goderich, Guelph, Hamilton, Huntsville, 'Jellison, Kinross, Kingston, Lindsay (via Toronto), London, 'Longlac, Meaford, Midland, Morrisburg, Napanee, Niagara Falls, Oshawa, Owen Sound, Paris, Peterboro (via Toronto), St. Catharines, Sarnia, Southampton, Sudbury, Windsor, Woodstock and to many other points.—SEE HANDBILLS.  
† Sturgeon River Gold Fields area.

FRIDAY, MAY 27th, 1938

</