

EBONY TORSO

By John C. Woodiwiss

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CHAPTER VI

Hopton Vanishes

"By jove, that's interesting!" cried Hopton triumphantly as he knelt down and examined the print. "There's no doubt this was made by the same creature as the other, sergeant. But what sort of animal do you think would have the intelligence to shove over that coping as we passed beneath it? Get to the nearest phone box and ask the station to rush some men round here; whatever it was, can't get much of a start. We must have this place properly searched as soon as possible."

"Roight, sorr," nodded the officer doubling away and leaving his superior bending over the footmark with a tape measure which he had produced from his waistcoat pocket.

The sergeant ran down the steps with surprising agility for so heavy a man, clambered through the open window and blew his whistle to call up the officers whom he knew to be patrolling the district. He then dashed on to the corner of the street, entered the phone box and put through an emergency call to headquarters. By the time he had finished two constables had answered his signal, and telling them in a few words what had occurred he sprinted back with them to the empty house.

To O'Mara's astonishment, however, there was no sign of Hopton. He had completely vanished! The three men searched the premises from top to bottom, together with a strong reinforcement which had been rushed from headquarters in a police tender, but nothing was to be found of the detective or the creature he was hunting. After half an hour's extensive exploration of every nook and cranny, Sergeant O'Mara and his companions were forced to admit they were beaten, and, posting four officers in case of any further trouble, left the building to report to Lambeth Police Station.

Hopton heard the sergeant's footsteps descending the stairs as he bent over the footmark, measure in hand, and entered the details in his book. It seemed so remarkable that here, again, there was only a single print. Was it possible that it could have been left by a one-legged creature? Yet, even supposing this to be the case, why should it only leave the single mark? If it had placed its foot in this puddle of slush, it necessarily followed that its damp, muddy paw could leave other tracks the next time it came in contact with the ground—and yet there was nothing!

He hunted carefully again, flashing the beam from his torch into every conceivable corner, but not a sign of mud or moisture could he see, save the marks left by the soles of O'Mara's boots. Determined not to give up the search easily, he crossed to the open skylight and had climbed in again to examine the staircase, when he suddenly heard a suspicious sound from one of the rooms on his left and, throwing the door open, was just in time to see an indistinct figure climb through the window and disappear. He leapt to follow it, and caught a glimpse of the dim outline of the thing he was pursuing.

It had dropped on to a high wall, whose top was not more than two feet wide, along which it scuttled, without the slightest regard for the slaking drop on either side. So dark and foggy was it, that Hopton knew if he wasted time in raising the alarm the creature would escape; he therefore made up his mind to give chase at once, in spite of the terrible risk. As he clambered over the sill, he could just see the shadowy form reach the end of the perilous crossing, swing itself easily upwards and scramble through the window of a house at the far end.

The sight roused him to immediate action! He lowered himself on to the top of the wall and stepped warily forward across that nightmare bridge. One false step meant instant death, but he deliberately dismissed that knowledge from his mind, kept his eyes steadily fixed on his goal, and walked slowly on. He had almost reached his objective and actually had his hand against the wall of the house when the creature he was pursuing appeared at the window above him. The detective caught one fleeting glimpse of a fierce, hairy face and two flaming eyes as, leaning out with a savage, snarling cry, the thing struck at his upturned face. The attack was so utterly unexpected that, had Hopton not been able to

steady himself, he must inevitably have overbalanced into space; but he fell on his knees and somehow managed to avoid the deadly sweep of its claws. Straddling the narrow pier of masonry with his legs, he made an instinctive dive for his hip pocket.

His murderous opponent having failed in its attack, abruptly disappeared; but Hopton had no intention of remaining in his perilous position an instant longer than was necessary, and drawing up his legs, got his knees on to the wall-top, again scrambled to his feet sprang upwards, clutched the sill and drew himself into the house. He found himself in a deserted building evidently marked for demolition, for the roof was in such a dilapidated state that it had partly fallen in and lay on the floor in a confused pile of debris. He switched on his lamp, picked his way among the wreckage and reached the doorway, from which the door had long disappeared, when a violent blow on the head behind felled him to the ground. The monster had been waiting for him!

Dimly he heard a savage, half human cry of triumph and felt his head wrenched back as something seized his throat in an iron grip. . . . a strong, hairy paw, armed with talons, tore at his flesh and then utter unconsciousness mercifully came to release him from the tortures of strangulation.

Chase Continues
"He's coming round all right," were the first words the detective heard as he woke, to find several men standing round him, and made a feeble attempt to sit up.

"Take it easy now, inspector," went on the voice, as a restraining hand was gently placed on his shoulder. "The ambulance will be here in a few minutes."

"Who are you?" inquired the injured man vaguely, as the memory of what he'd been through flooded in on him with alarming suddenness.

"It's all right; it's only the doctor," answered the person who was bending over him.

"What the deuce has happened?" Hopton continued. "I thought I was a gone case as that brute gripped me." "So you would have been if one of the police officers hadn't seen you climb along that wall from the street below and given the alarm; your men only got here in the nick of time."

It was the Rev. Galesbourne's voice that so surprisingly broke in on the conversation and which made the detective gasp with astonishment.

"Yes, it was very fortunate the constable saw him," agreed the doctor, "or there's no doubt the monster would have added another officer to its victims."

"It almost seems like an act of Providence that the constable happened to be there, doctor," remarked the parson. "He tells me he saw Inspector Hopton climbing across that wall and, realizing something was wrong, gave the alarm."

"Pity we didn't get here a few minutes earlier, sir," another voice joined in. "Whatever this thing was, it evidently heard us and made a get-away. It's hurt his throat pretty badly."

Hopton opened his eyes again and saw a policeman bending over him. "I'm all right now," he said, realizing for the first time that his throat was bandaged. "Still a lot of fight in me yet."

"You really mustn't do anything more tonight, Inspector!" cried the doctor firmly. "You've had a nasty shock, you know!"

"Sorry, sir, I never let little things like that stand in the way of duty," the detective assured him. "I was only temporarily knocked out, but I'm perfectly all right again now. I'm very thankful the officer acted so promptly; his warning undoubtedly saved my life. Did he see the thing I was chasing?"

"He says he just had time to see something scuttle across the wall in front of you, inspector," replied the padre. "But so quickly that it was gone before he had a chance to see it properly."

"There's no doubt it was an ape," the detective assured him. "No human being could have been so incredibly sure-footed. You say you've searched this house thoroughly, officer?"

"Yes, sir," replied the man. We heard something moving as we broke in, and a queer snarling cry, but there wasn't a thing to be found except you, sir."

Confesses Kidnap-Murder



Franklin Pierce McCall, 21-year-old farm hand of Princeton, Fla., who, according to police, has confessed to the kidnap-murder of five-year-old James Bailey Cash, Jr. McCall was placed in a cell on the 21st floor of the Miami skyscraper jail to prevent possible mob violence.

National Museum of Canada Field Program Announced

Six parties have been placed in the field this year by the National Museum of Canada. The programme as announced by the Mines and Geology Branch, Department of Mines and Resources, Ottawa, includes biological and botanical investigations in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. The work is being directed toward the gathering of new information on Canadian fauna, flora, and native races, and the acquiring of new specimens for the National Museum.

R. M. Anderson, chief of the Division of Biology, is studying mammals in the Waterton Lakes district of Alberta.

H. M. Laing is continuing a biological survey of the coast of British Columbia, with particular reference this year to the area in the vicinity of Bella Coola.

Angus Shortt is continuing a study of birds in Manitoba which is being carried out from Churchill southward to the International boundary. Work this year will be chiefly in the vicinity of Dauphin.

R. C. Hosie is continuing with his botanical studies of the region north of Lake Superior.

W. J. Wintemburg will make excavations in the vicinity of Wauaubasene, on what may prove to be the site of an old fort of great historic interest.

The Amplifier

(Just Staff Stuff)

The Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus that visited Timmins recently brought with it many morsels of food for thought. Why is it that people always laugh at clowns—besides the very apparent reason that they look funny and are supposed to be laughed at. But did you ever stop to think that the clown that caused so very much mirth, was probably a much greater aerialist or acrobat performer than the star who brought forth your "Ohs" and "Ahs?"

Did you notice that he would clumsily slip and slide, and quickly regain his balance, amid the laughter of the crowds, whereas if the "great performer" slipped, it usually meant a breathless moment of suspense and a dangerous fall. The next time you visit a circus just remember that the clown is not so dumb, in fact, he is very clever, and well-worth your admiration as well as delighted laughter.

At the dance recital presented by Miss Margaret Easton's pupils, a young lady whose name did not appear on the

programme entertained the audience during the intermission at the last evening performance. She was a very young lady, about two or three years old, and as the dancers left the floor she eagerly stepped out on the floor. Shuffling her feet back and forth (she had a good idea of what she wanted to do) the young miss tried to tap, as the performers had done. And she also smiled at the laughing faces around her and was not in the least embarrassed. But she seemed awfully disappointed because "her shoes" would not tap as the other girls' shoes had done. If ever this young lady does appear before an audience again, it is not likely that she will be stage-struck!

With the circus again—a local Miss remarked the other day, "I like the elephants; they seem so babyish." Several tons of baby there, it must be noted.

News travel fast and far—and gathers a lot as it goes along. A member of The Advance staff has received a letter from a friend in North Bay, enquiring if the family home was one of the many buildings carried away by the floods on Saturday last. The answer will probably be to the effect that the people in this supposedly "flooded" area, have not seen any houses floating around.

Impressed with Progress of Timmins and the North

The following is a brief extract from the excellent report of the recent visit of the newspapermen to Timmins and Kirkiand Lake as given by The Petrolia-Advertiser-Topic:

"Arrangements were made to show the visitors the 'town' and it was our good fortune to draw Mr. S. A. Caldwell, the crown attorney of the district. He made an excellent escort and took us from Timmins to the adjoining town of Schumacher, the home of the McIntyre Mine, and the town of South Porcupine, a few miles away, where the Dome Mine is located. Other mines he pointed out to us were the Naybob, Delnite, Paymaster, Buffalo-Ankerite, Preston East Dome, Moneta, Pamour and Hallnor. We hope none of these cause any sad recollections in stock market memories to our readers!"

"Living around gold mining towns, one becomes accustomed to talking in big figures, so we may state here that

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the Porcupine district has a gold production of \$35,000,000 each year and a lumber output valued at nearly a million dollars. New building during the past two years has been valued at a million and a half dollars. Only this past week, newspapers carried the news item that all these mines paid their employees on one day, (a rather rare occurrence), a total of one million dollars, a large amount to be put into circulation for two weeks work. The total assessment of Timmins is \$10,047,738 and the tax rate is 63.95 mills for the public school supporters and 77.47 for separate school supporters. So much for that.

"The dinner at the Empire Hotel at 7 p.m. given by the town council and board of trade was, to use Bill Fry's word, a "wow." During the banquet hour music was supplied by the high school orchestra and the Porcupine Pipe Band, whose members marched twice around the diners. Hearty welcomes were given by Mayor J. P. Bartleman and W. O. Langdon, president of the board of trade. Addresses were given by Hon. Mr. Leduc, R. E. Dye, of the Dome Mines, G. A. Macdonald, editor of The Porcupine Advertiser and Press Association officials. The applause that greeted these oratorical features was far above the appreciation shown to the tap dancing of Lake twins, five-year-old daughters of the Advance publisher and of the pupils of Miss Easton."

North Bay Nugget: Possibly Mr. Aberhart is now convinced Canada doesn't desire his get-rich-quick scheme. Albertans should demand that he do for them what he promised the people of Saskatchewan.

Too Many Transients in North Land These Days

In its report of the recent visit of Ontario and Quebec newspapermen to Timmins and Kirkiand Lake, The Petrolia-Advertiser-Topic says:

"In this connection we were advised that the unemployment situation would not be serious in Timmins as they were left to themselves, as they would be well able to take care of their own relief. But transients arrive in the city by every freight train, as many as 60 being counted at one time, and the editors were asked to make it plain in their home districts that there is no work to be had in Timmins for outsiders."

"Later the men were taken in private cars on a tour of the city, and at 7 o'clock the entire party were guests of the council and board of trade at a splendid banquet, presided over by Mayor Bartleman. A lengthy program of speeches, music and dancing followed during which the dancing representatives quietly withdrew from the dining room and went by bus to the home of Roy Mumford, former Glencoe boy, where they were pleasantly entertained by Mr. and Mrs. Mumford. At midnight another bus took us back to the railway station at Timmins, where our coaches were parked, and at 6:45 next morning we were awakened when the train pulled out for the southbound trip."



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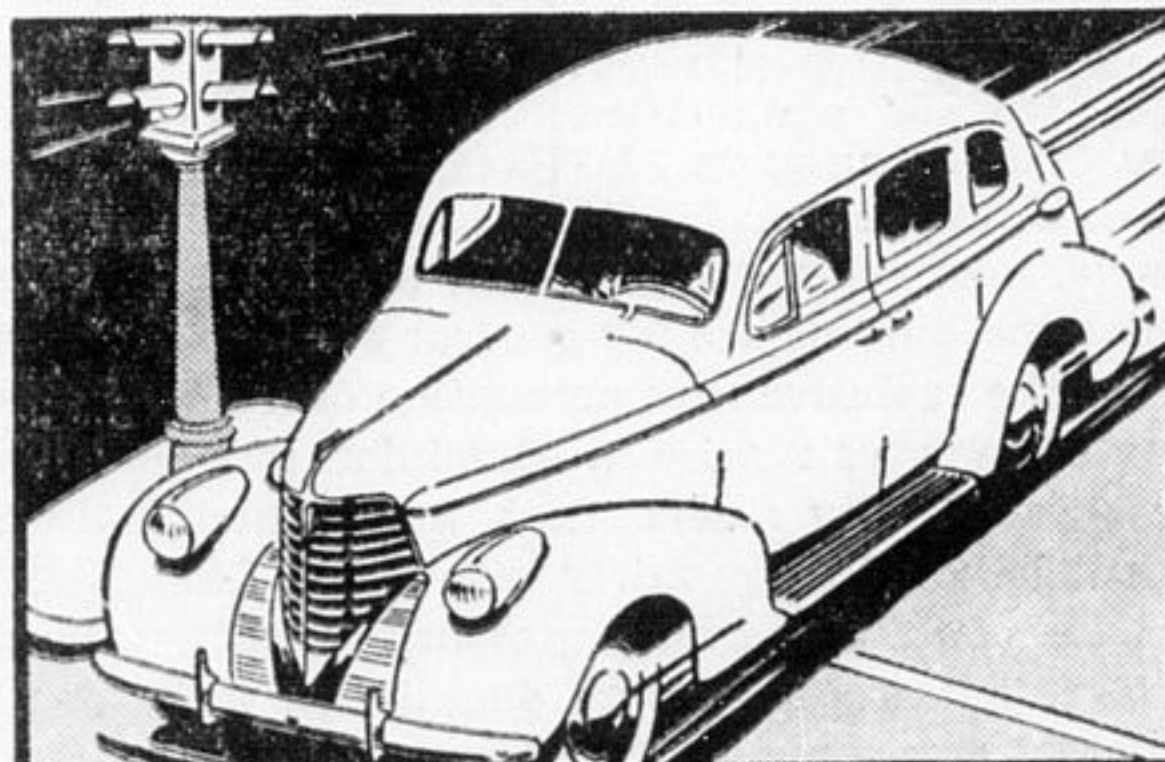
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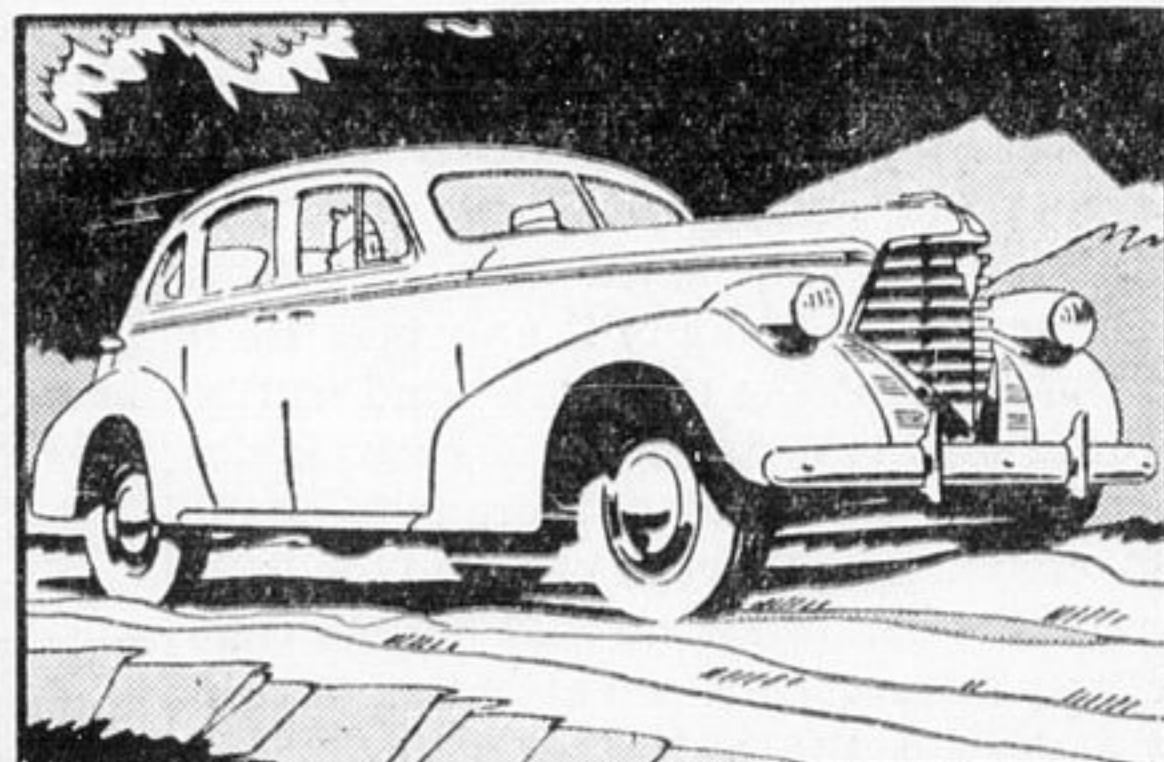
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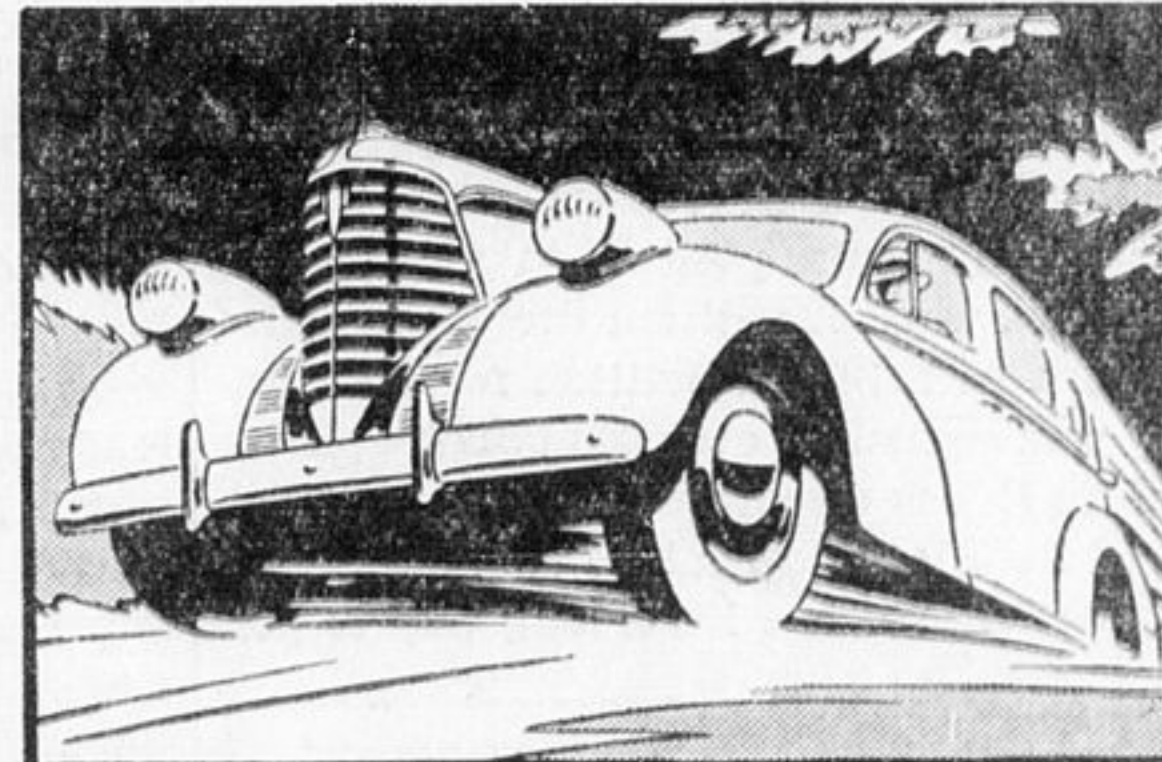
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