

EBONY TORSO

By John C. Woodiwiss

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**CHAPTER IX
INFORMATION RECEIVED**
A gorilla!

At last the darkness of this apparently inexplicable mystery was beginning to be pierced by the light of concrete facts, and Hopton rubbed his hands with satisfaction as he settled down to extract further information.

"That certainly was an unusual cargo, Mr. Prosser," he smiled. "Was the animal loose?"

"No, inspector," replied the man. "Hannington used to keep it in a big wooden case in his cabin. He only exercised it at night when everyone had turned in except the night watch. He told us it wasn't dangerous, and that it was remarkably intelligent, provided it didn't get excited by a lot of strangers."

"And you never actually saw it?"

"No, sir," said Prosser. "He said it might get upset and out of control aboard ship. I suppose the thing wasn't used to the motion of the boat and the noise of the engines and so forth, so he wouldn't let strangers disturb it or even see it."

"I follow," nodded the detective. "What was this couple's idea in dragging the creature round?"

"Mr. Hannington told me they were in the variety business—sort of performing animal act, I suppose."

"I see. And you put 'em ashore at Tilbury?"

"I was just coming to that sir. You know that any animal landed at a British port has to go into quarantine, don't you?"

"Yes," agreed the inspector. "Well, when we went to carry the damned thing ashore, blow me if it hadn't somehow managed to get loose and escape. Gosh—I shall never forget how Hannington and his missus carried on; they nearly tore their hair out, sir; went for the skipper bald-headed, they did; the police were sent for, and there was no end of a palaver. I'll never forget how the old skipper cursed and swore it'd be the last time he'd ever ship freight of that sort. Everyone spent the entire day hunting the docks for the blessed thing, but no one ever saw it again; it had just vanished."

"Um!" smiled Hopton. "That was unfortunate."

"Too true, it was, especially for the Company," nodded the sailor ruefully. "Mr. Hannington put in a big claim for damages."

"And the beast was never recaptured?"

"No, sir, my opinion is, it fell overboard and got drowned," remarked Prosser. "There's a pretty fast tide, you know, sir."

"Bad luck on the Company," mused the detective.

"Oh, I think they'd have fought it out in Court if Hannington had pressed the claim," replied the sailor. "But it all fizzled out in the end."

"Did he withdraw his claim, then?"

"Yes, sir, I understand he wrote saying that on thinking the matter over calmly he'd come to the conclusion he hadn't taken proper precautions with the animal's cage, and accepted all liability; so the matter was just dropped."

"I think he acted wisely there!" said Hopton with a grim smile. "Anything else you can tell me that might prove interesting, Mr. Prosser?"

"Only that they never picked up the thing's body, which struck us all as rather unusual."

"Quite so; and what sort of food did they give it?"

"Oh, a lot of fruit and tinned stuff," replied the other. "I believe them big apes eat rabbit food, generally speaking."

"Yes, I believe they do," agreed the detective. "But I don't know much about wild animals."

"Anything more you want to ask, sir?" enquired Prosser, after a pause, during which Hopton sat pondering over the information he had been given.

"There's just one more point I'd like you to help me with if you can: do you remember Mrs. Hannington sufficiently well to give me a rough description of her?"

MRS. ABERSHAW IDENTIFIED
"Certainly," returned Prosser. "I remember her well. She wasn't exactly an ordinary looking woman. She was about my height—that's pretty tall for a woman, very dark hair, plaited round over the ears, and a big mole on the neck."

While the sailor was speaking Hopton had been comparing his remarks with the particulars which he had got from Mrs. Abershaw's landlady in Kensington, and was not surprised to find that the two descriptions tallied in a remarkable way.

"She had dark grey eyes, hadn't she?" he enquired reading from his notes.

"Quite correct, sir," nodded the other. "And a big nose that was rather hooked."

"Thank you, anything else?"

"She seemed to have a slight limp with it—now let me see—which leg was it?—with the left leg. She also had a line of hair on the upper lip like a moustache, sir, and she'd be about forty."

The final peculiarities settled the matter, and Hopton put away his book with a sigh of relief. The two descriptions tallied beyond all fear of mistake!

"Anything else you can think of, Mr. Prosser?" he asked.

"Not unless there's anything you want to ask, sir," replied the man.

"No, that's about all, I think," smiled the detective, rising and shaking hands with his visitor. "I'm very grateful for your valuable information."

"Don't mention it, sir," answered the sailor cordially. "I'm very fond of reading crime stories, you know, and it's a real experience to meet a genuine 'tec, and get a peep inside Scotland Yard. It'll be something to tell the kids and the missus about."

Once rid of the obliging Mr. Prosser, Hopton rang up Inspector Carlingford, who seemed mildly amused at his report.

"Of course I tumbled to the fact that it was a big ape, days ago," he replied with humptic complacency. "In fact, I've had inquiries made at all the wild animal dealers in London to find out if the creature of unusual size had passed through their hands in the last year or so."

"Well, you needn't waste any more time on that scent," retorted Hopton acidly. "And in any case, you must remember that it would take years to train an animal to act independently, as this creature does."

"Of course it would," agreed Carlingford as if the idea was an old one to him.

Hopton was so exasperated by his colleague's patronizing tone that he snapped out a curt "Good-bye" and jammed on the receiver again with a venomous bang.

"Confound the idiot!" he muttered. "I'm hanged if I'll try to keep in touch with him in future."

He was just going out when the phone bell rang again. He answered it and found it to be a message from Morrell ordering him to go to the Chief Commissioner's room at once.

He found Sir Hallard Costigan sitting at his desk, monocle in eye, poring over a great huddle of official documents.

"Hello, inspector," said the Commissioner, motioning his visitor to a chair. "Anything turned up in the Torso inquiry?"

"We're steadily progressing, sir, and I'm hoping to make an arrest shortly."

replied Hopton sitting down with a sigh. "I've got a warrant out for Galesbourne and the woman for attempted murder."

"Darned sporting attempt, too," commented the Chief facetiously. "You had the devil's own luck to escape from Mr. Ikey Frost's place with your life."

"There's no doubt about that," agreed the detective. "I see you're going over the reports, sir."

"Uum," nodded Sir Hallard. "But I've just heard something rather interesting in connection with that carving thing—the Torso, you know."

"Really, sir?"

"Yes, I took it along to a friend of mine at the British Museum; he's the head of the African section."

"Oh, yes, sir?"

THE TORSO'S SECRET
"Well, he happened to be out when I called, so I left the thing with his chief of staff. I've just had a report on it, Inspector, and he tells me quite emphatically that it isn't of African origin at all."

"Really, sir?" replied Hopton, wondering where all this was leading.

"No, they're quite definite on that point, and assure me it's a fairly skillful copy, probably made in this country."

"That's interesting, sir."

"Just shows what a lot of precious bunk these people talk about curses and that sort of thing, doesn't it?" the Commissioner went on, screwing the glass more firmly into his eye and taking up his pencil.

"I always thought that from the first, sir," remarked the Inspector. "There's little doubt that Galesbourne and his wife . . ."

"His wife?"

Sir Hallard Costigan looked up smartly as he interrupted Hopton, and began to tap the edge of the table with the pencil, a nervous habit of his when thinking.

"His wife, Inspector?" he repeated. "I thought the gentleman was a celibate."

The detective told him of his conversation with Prosser.

"By George, that thing out the field pretty extensively," commented the Commissioner as he ended: "so Mrs. Abershaw is really Galesbourne's wife, is she. The man wasn't the Vicar at all—he was merely an impostor? That's your idea, eh?"

"Yes, sir, I think there's no doubt on that point," replied Hopton. "And, as I was saying, there's no question that the pair of them played on Scott's superstitious terror by means of the carving. Of course the poor devil was so drunk-sodden he was prepared to believe anything; he was half-mad, and on the verge of D.T.s."

"You'll excuse me, Inspector," interjected Sir Hallard with a chuckle, "but I rather think you're doing Scott an injustice. In my opinion, he was not nearly so mad with terror as you think."

"But all this stuff he talked about the figure, or Incubus, or whatever you like to call it, killing him?"

"He was just leading Galesbourne up the garden path, my dear fellow," smiled Sir Hallard. "He never thought the thing'd kill him. Never for a moment!"

"Then what the dickens did he hope to gain by bluffing everyone?" cried the detective.

"About £8,000, Inspector," replied the Commissioner. "You remember the room in which he was killed, don't you?"

"Perfectly, sir."

"Well, it didn't offer many hiding places for valuable loot, did it?"

"No, certainly not."

"That's exactly what the deceased man must have felt."

"But, one moment, sir," interrupted the Detective eagerly. "What's this?"

"This loot? I'm coming to that, but in my own good time," said the Chief, with an irritating chuckle. "Sorry to keep you on tenterhooks and all that, Inspector, but I must tell you things in their proper order."

"Very good, sir," returned Hopton resignedly.

"My friend at the museum examined the Torso yesterday morning, and was struck by a definite peculiarity. He hadn't much time then, but he investigated it again in the afternoon and went over it with a powerful magnifying instrument they use, when he saw at once that the navel was surrounded by traces of some dull stuff suggesting wax."

"It's funny I never noticed that, sir. I examined the thing pretty closely," Hopton said.

"That's where the instrument came in, my dear fellow," continued the Commissioner. "I can assure you it was there, whether you noticed it or not. My friend now really got to work and found the indentation in Master Torso's tummy showed signs of having been drilled, and of being afterwards carefully refilled with black wax. So he took a fine bradawl and a pair of tweezers, removed the stopping and found this . . ."

Sir Hallard fumbled with his finger and thumb in his waistcoat pocket and drew out a small, round pill-box and, as he finished speaking, removed the lid and emptied a magnificent diamond on to the blotting paper.

"That's what he found, Inspector," he cried triumphantly, as his subordinate leaned eagerly forward. "Nice stone, eh?"

"By gad, that's a knock-out, sir," commented the detective.

"Yes, pretty curious, isn't it? Well, I think that little chap is the cause of

all the trouble. There's enough value in that stone to cause a dozen murders."

"Rather," nodded Hopton picking up the diamond and examining it. "A magnificent stone. But I don't think it could have been the motive for Scott's murder, because, had that been the case, why did the murderer leave the figure behind? Why didn't he get away with it at all costs before calling the police?"

"Yes, that certainly is a snag," agreed Sir Hallard dubiously. "But I feel pretty certain the stone will have an important bearing on the crime, when the entire facts are known. You've already proved that this so-called Rev. Galesbourne isn't the sort of gentleman who'd stick at murder, and that Mrs. Clara Abershaw, from whom the Torso first came, is really his wife. This gorilla story is most interesting, as it gives us an almost certain clue to who actually did the killing. The pieces in this jig-saw puzzle are gradually being fitted into place. Hopton."

"I'm hoping for an arrest at any time now, sir, and once we can land the woman, or old Smith, Galesbourne's servant, the complete solution will soon be on your table."

"I sincerely hope so," smiled the Commissioner, replacing the jewel in its box. "In the meantime, I'm putting out information concerning this stone through the usual channels, and hope to get hold of the name of its lawful owner in a few days' time. We shall probably get some interesting information from him about the person who originally stole it, and the manner in which the theft was carried out."

"More than likely," replied Hopton rising. "Now sir, I'll be getting down to Lambeth, if you'll excuse me."

"Right, Inspector, that's all I want to say at the moment," replied Sir Hallard, returning to the papers in front of him. "Let me know how things progress."

"Very good, sir," agreed the Detective as he closed the door.

(To be Continued)

If You Like Books

(By A. H.)

One of the better-known poems written by John Greenleaf Whittier is "My Playmate." Its rhythmic wording and its story of a friend who is gone, are things that appeal to the average reader, and Whittier tells the tale in a charming manner. Some lines are very descriptive, and linger in one's mind even after the poem itself may be forgotten. "If ever the pines of Ramoth wood, are sounding in her dreams," is a thought that has occurred to many people who have wandered far away, and look back on the beloved ones they left behind, and in bringing back old scenes and haunts, Whittier brings back to the friend, memories of days long gone.

My Playmate
(By John Greenleaf Whittier)
The pines were dark on Ramoth hill,
Their song was sweet and low;
The blossoms in the sweet May wind
Were falling like the snow.

The blossoms drifted at our feet,
The orchard birds sang clear;
The sweetest and the saddest day
It seemed of all the year.

For, more to me than birds or flowers,
My playmate left her home,
And took with her the laughing spring,
The music and the bloom.

She kissed the lips of kith and kin,
She laid her hand in mine;
What more could ask the bashful boy
Who fed her father's kine?

She left us in the bloom of May;
The constant years told o'er,
Their seasons with us sweet May morns,
But she came back no more.

I walk, with noiseless feet, the round
Of uneventful years;
Still o'er and o'er I sow the spring
And reap the autumn ears.

She lives where all the golden year
Her summer roses blow;
The dusky children of the sun
Before her come and go.

There haply with her jewelled hands
She smooths her silken gown,—
No more the homespun lap wherein
I shook the walnuts down.

The wild grapes wait us by the brook,
The brown nuts on the hill,
And still the May-day flowers make
sweet

The woods of Pollymill.
The lilies blossom in the pond,
The bird builds in the tree,
The dark pines sing on Ramoth hill
The slow song of the sea.

I wonder if she thinks of them,
And how the old time seems,—
If ever the pines of Ramoth wood
Are sounding in her dreams.



(by James W. Barton, M.D.)

That Body of Yours

Preventing Children from Becoming Idiots

The saddest sight in life is not the adult who is confined in a mental hospital because, of every ten that enter, perhaps six may come out cured. These mental patients have their complete development mental and physical, and have lived for years a normal life.

The saddest sight is that of the little child who has not, nor will ever have, his full mental and physical equipment. He is doomed at birth to a life where everything must be done for him and as he gets older others may have to be protected from him. He is the child whose thyroid gland is absent or nearly absent and little or no thyroid juice is being manufactured. He is an idiot.

Fortunately research workers have been experimenting on these children who have little or no thyroid gland, and have found that just as the removal of all or a greater part of the thyroid gland will slow up these overactive (mental and physical) thyroid or goitre patients, so will the use of thyroid extract in these slow or non-developing children cause them to develop mentally and physically.

Unfortunately this condition—lack of a thyroid gland—cannot usually be discovered until the child is six months to a year old and sometimes the youngster may be two or years old before the condition is discovered. The earlier the treatment is given, the sooner the child begins to catch up or approach his normal mental and physical development.

In the Medical Press, Paris, Dr. R. Le Fort reports the history of a child who, in 1925 at the age of 2½ years, showed the symptoms of idiocy due to lack of thyroid juice or extract. There was apparently a complete absence of the thyroid gland. A part of a human thyroid gland taken from the neck of a man who had been suddenly killed was immediately transplanted into the abdominal muscle of the child. Four days after the operation the child had lost much of his useless fat and the expression on its face was greatly changed. The teeth which were much behind in developing began to grow rapidly and its intelligence improved. The child continued to improve although not so rapidly so that at the age of 14 it had the mental and physical development of a child of 9. However it is still improving showing that the thyroid graft is still manufacturing juice.

The lesson for parents is not to hesitate to speak to their physician if their child seems heavy, slow, and not as bright as they think it should be.

Health Booklets
Eight health booklets are available for readers of The Advance, Timmins. They may be obtained by sending Ten Cents for each one desired to The Bell Library, 247 West 43rd St., North York, N.Y., mentioning the name of this newspaper. They are: Eating Your Way to Health; Why Worry About Your Heart?; Neurosis; The Common Cold; Overweight and Underweight; Allergy or Being Sensitive to Foods and Other Substances; Scourage (gonorrhoea and syphilis); and How Is Your Blood Pressure?

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Sudbury Star.—A lotus seed, dormant 400 years, is sprouting in Chicago. Now I guess we can be patient about that lawn.

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I see her face, I hear her voice;
Does she remember mine?
And what to her is now the boy
Who fed her father's kine?

What cares she that the orioles build
For other eyes than ours,—
That other hands with nuts are filled,
And other laps with flowers?

O playmate in the golden time!
Our mossy seat is green,
Its fringing violets blossom yet,
The old trees o'er it lean.

The winds so sweet with birch and fern
A sweeter memory blow;
And there in spring the weeries sing
The song of long ago.

And still the pines of Ramoth wood
Are moaning like the sea,—
The moaning of the sea of change
Between myself and thee!

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