

Wild Parties

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Playing the animal game is great sport—if you win. Years of experience with cagey creatures have made Dr. Ditmars a champion

I LOVE my fellowmen, but I get a lot more fun out of the animals I deal with.

For a quarter of a century it has been my task to capture, transport, feed, nurse, soothe, fight, guard and cajole various specimens of the animal kingdom. I have been on intimate terms with snakes, bears, apes, monkeys, elephants, jaguars, tigers, buffaloes, ostriches, giraffes, deer, kudus, hippos, wild horses, kiangs, rhinos, lions, cougars, leopards, kangaroos, emus, cassowaries, beasts of almost every sort and many other species.

The average wild animal has character, personality and conscience, pretty much like the average human being. He is temperamental, perverse, vicious, phlegmatic, diffident and deceitful as the case may be. Entertainment lies in discerning these traits and adroitly checkmating them. Only in this way can one gain the upper hand.

It's a sort of game. Where some men play golf, those of us at the New York Zoological Park play *animals*.

Usually we win. Once in a while we lose.

One morning the head elephant keeper was carried away with excitement when he found that his favorite charge had gained weight. Not waiting to return the elephant to its cage, he started for my office to tell me the glad tidings.

The elephant, a small one, patiently followed her keeper not only across the yard but also down the passageway which led to my office.

"Dora's doing fine, sir!" gayly cried the keeper as he entered. The next moment he gave a loud grunt and advanced rapidly toward me. Dora had come up behind and butted him out of the way. Never having been a stenographer, she probably was curious to find out what the inside of an office looked like.

Before we could stop her, Dora tried to enter. Her big black head got through the door all right, but her bulging body stuck. She tried to back off for a push.

To her consternation—and ours—she couldn't move. Instantly she raised her long black trunk and emitted a blast of sound that nearly deafened us.

As Dora struggled to free herself, trumpeting wildly, the whole wall threatened to cave in. That was bad enough. What concerned us more painfully was that we knew she would attack us the minute she was free. The elephant mind is childishly literal. She had come to visit me. She had been pinched in a trap. Therefore, I was to blame.

Taking Her Out of It

Through the window I could see other keepers, always on the alert for trouble, running to our assistance. I knew they would be on the job in a moment or two. Our immediate problem was therefore to calm Dora, first, to save the wall; and, second, to protect ourselves.

There was no dramatic climax to the incident, illuminating as it is of our problems. The keeper and I simply engaged in a loud fake dispute, pretending not to notice Dora. Almost at once she quieted down, distracted by what must have seemed a more important trouble than her own. The other keep-

A little inconvenient, perhaps, but still highly satisfactory. The baby giraffe spreads himself in the matter of the evening meal

A manicure for Maria assumes the aspect of a major operation and, due to the lady's skittishness, is not entirely unattended by its own peculiar risks and thrills



If it's a question of relative meanness, the insolent Mr. John J. Jaguar ranks right up at the top, and he wants it to be well understood



we knew he was a "bad" elephant little did we dream of the sinister passion for revenge that was boiling in his little brain.

In accordance with routine Thuman took Gunda out of the inner cage into his yard one afternoon for recreation. He walked beside the towering beast, holding by one hand to the wide, flapping ear and with the other hooking his elephant iron not ungently under Gunda's loose chin.

Just before Gunda

ers quickly removed the door from its hinges, extracted Dora and led her back to her own quarters, somewhat subdued by her first and last experience with "big business."

Not all elephants—or other animals, for that matter—are as easily susceptible to suggestion or as tractable as was Dora. There are criminals among animals just as there are among men.

We had a big Indian elephant named Gunda, with wicked eyes and a distinctly cunning look on his face. For no reason at all that I was conscious of, he hated me with a deep abiding hatred. He had other pet and violent aversions among those who worked about the place. His own keeper, an intelligent fellow named Thuman, he greatly feared. An angry shout from Thuman would send the huge Gunda cowering into a corner.

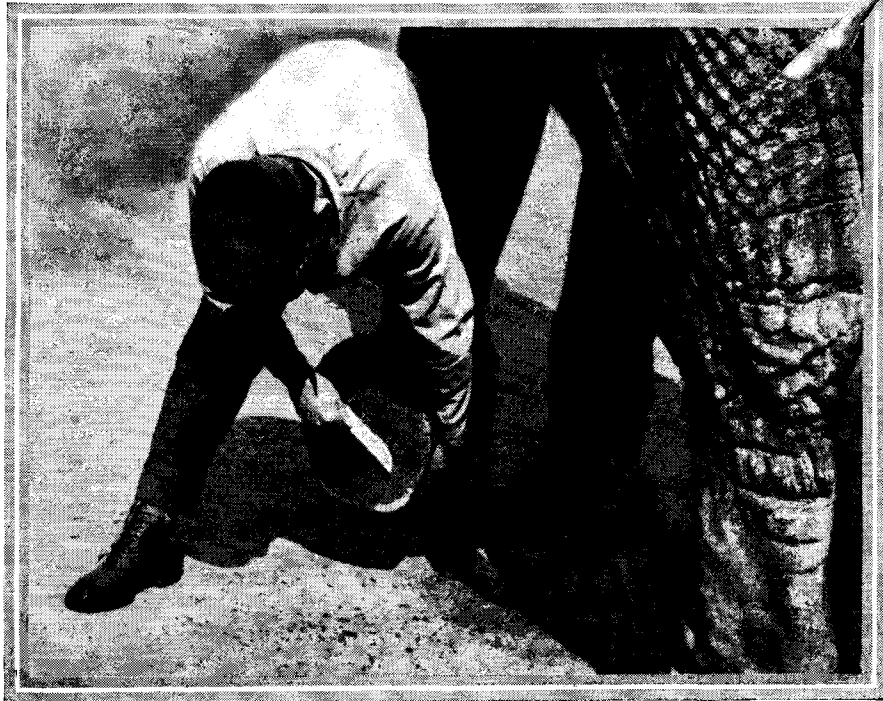
Gunda bided his time. And though

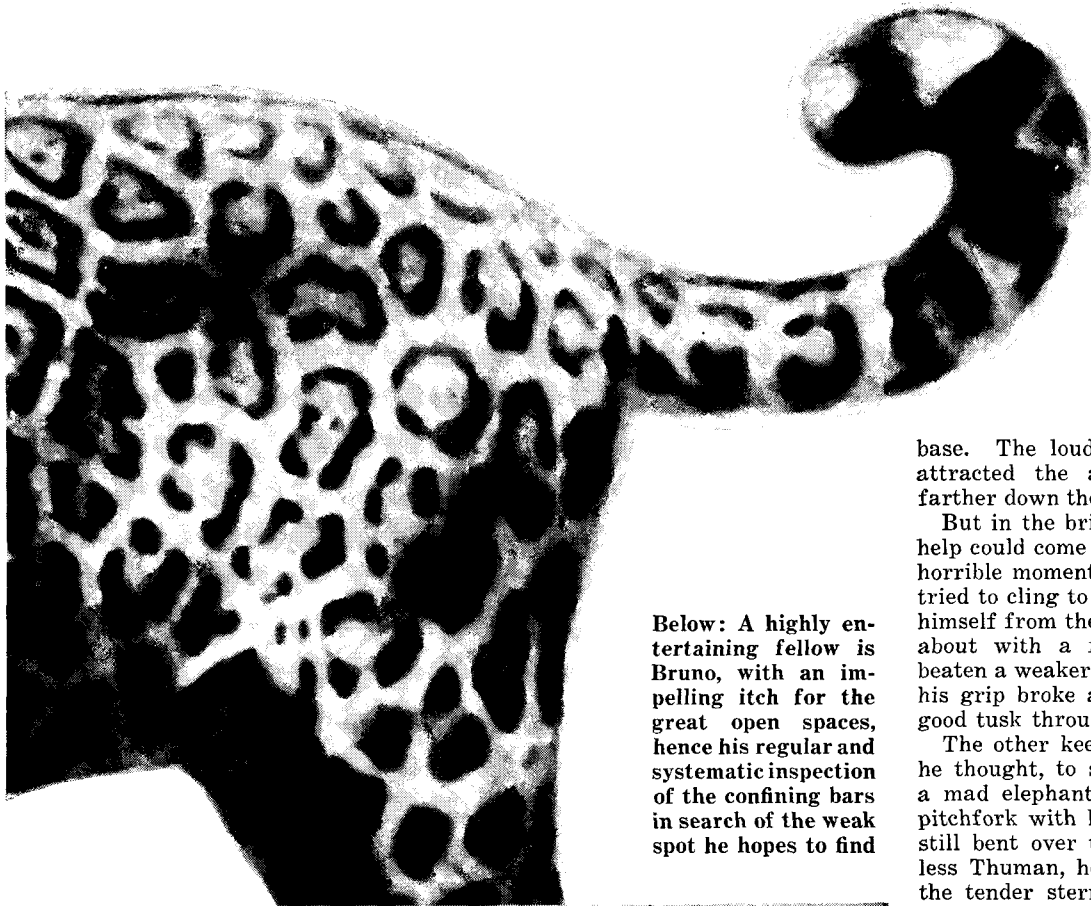
reached the door he gave a sharp sideways jerk of his head which knocked Thuman off his feet and sent the elephant hook spinning across the pavement. In an instant he flew for the helpless man with the cold fury of a deliberate murderer who at last has his victim at his mercy.

Gunda Takes the Warpath

One has to know the incredible recklessness of elephant anger to appreciate the dreadful predicament in which Thuman now found himself. Only for a second was he stunned by his fall. Before Gunda reached him he knew that his chance for escape from the small box-like room was very slight, especially so long as Gunda's mountainous bulk filled the only exit.

Gunda now set about dispatching his man in the ordinary elephant way. In





Below: A highly entertaining fellow is Bruno, with an impelling itch for the great open spaces, hence his regular and systematic inspection of the confining bars in search of the weak spot he hopes to find



the dim light he tried to stamp on Thuman's body. Had he succeeded in planting one big foot he would have finished the job then and there, crushing the life out of Thuman in the twinkling of an eye.

But luckily Thuman had fallen near a corner. As a result Gunda couldn't get his big head in close enough to place either of his forefeet.

Gunda tried kneeling. This was more effective. And though Thuman wedged himself as close to the wall as he could get, Gunda's massive knees grazed his body and jammed him painfully against the timbers.

As Gunda wrathfully rose Thuman made a quick move to wriggle through to a refuse box which was connected by a small trapdoor. But Gunda was too quick for him. He seized Thuman's leg in his trunk and jerked him back with a wrench that nearly dislocated the hip.

Before Thuman could crawl away again Gunda swung viciously down with his terrible tusks which were nearly four feet long. One tusk struck a steel upright and broke off halfway to its

base. The loud noise of the fracture attracted the attention of a keeper farther down the row of cages. But in the brief space of time before help could come Thuman spent the most horrible moments of his life. While he tried to cling to the broken tusk to save himself from the other, he was threshed about with a force that would have beaten a weaker man to a pulp. Finally his grip broke and Gunda rammed the good tusk through Thuman's thigh. The other keeper arrived in time, as he thought, to see his friend killed by a mad elephant. He had brought his pitchfork with him. And while Gunda still bent over the prostrate and helpless Thuman, he plunged its tines into the tender stern of the hysterical elephant. With a scream Gunda turned and rushed through the doorway to annihilate his tormentor. The rescuer neatly side-stepped and closed the door. Thuman lived, but we had to execute Gunda. Carl Akeley did the job mercifully with a single round from a small-caliber high-powered hunting rifle. Thuman knew, as we all knew, that the criminal elephant takes no heed of consequences. For instance, there was the case of a wild elephant in Burma that sighted a railroad train coming down the track which led through a portion of the jungle. Probably he had never seen a locomotive before. Anyway, his actions showed that he at once concluded that this long, large, black

and noisy creature had no right to share the neighborhood with him. He charged and met the train head-on. Although the locomotive weighed nearly fifty tons he smashed its front end in and completely derailed it. Of course the elephant was instantly killed.

I remember another elephant that was a rogue only when aroused. Early one Sunday morning, just before the time when automobiles started to roll into the park, the superintendent received an excited telephone call to come to the elephant house. He arrived to find a pale and trembling keeper and no elephant. The keeper pointed to a great hole in the side of the building. The elephant had battered his way through the side and was gone. Bricks and debris were scattered as from a blast. Already visitors were beginning to filter into the place.

"Bawling Out" an Elephant

A gardener dashed upon the scene. He told a gasping tale of the elephant cavorting in the creek several hundred yards away and of a trail of overturned benches and broken guard wires.

The superintendent grasped the keeper by the shoulder and spoke slowly and kindly.

"Open the yard gate and the door leading into the good stall. I'm going down to get him."

The agitated keeper watched his chief depart.

I'll continue the story in the words the superintendent told it to me:

"I went down to the creek and there he was—an awful sight. He was covered with glistening mud up to the top of his back and raising his trunk he shot spray twenty-five feet high. He was having a wonderful time, but the novelty was wearing off. I expected to see him lunge out at any minute and continue on the rampage.

"I went right up to him and, although my knees were inclined to wobble, spoke to him in the most matter-of-fact tone:

"Hey, what on earth are you doing down here! Ain't you ashamed of yourself? You come right along back with me or you'll get lost."

"He wheeled around and I was ready to jump, but he came out of the mud, looked around and gave a little squeal. I know that sound. It means friendly greeting from an elephant.

"Come on now—you come right along home with me," I said, as if speaking to a child who needed advice, and he trudged along after me. I didn't have a pick or anything in my hands, just walked along a little in advance of his head, putting a hand behind me, beneath his trunk to guide him. I felt chilly all over, but we were half back to the elephant house before anything happened. Then he stopped. (Continued on page 75)



The Girl who Blushed

By George Weston

It was a dangerous experiment, and Tony, who was in love with Ann, should never have let her try it. However—

ALL day it had rained. And now at a quarter past eight in the evening it was coming down harder than ever—so that the taxis, hurrying southward to the theaters, looked like so many lines of glistening porpoises swimming more or less silently down to the sea.

In one of these taxis, at the right, sat a young man—a light overcoat and muffler covering his tuxedo. He was one of those good-looking, quiet, self-possessed young men—tall, broad and careful looking, as though, if he fished, he would bait his hook with patience and would do his best to cast his line without following it into the brook.

By his side sat a girl, a shawl around her shoulders in lieu of a wrap—a shawl of such warm colors that it relieved the shadows of the taxi. She wasn't tall, and she certainly wasn't broad, but against the calm quiet of her escort her vivacity gleamed as warmly as her shawl and marked her at once as the leading figure in the cab.

"Tony," she was saying, "I wonder if you could tell me something—"

He looked at her without speaking, as if, even in this, he was being careful not to commit himself.

"I wonder if you could tell me why I blush so easily—when—whenever I'm the least bit embarrassed."

If you could have been there, sitting, say, by the side of the driver and keeping one ear against the opening of the glass slide just behind your head, you would have heard Tony chuckle—a human sound which might have raised your opinion of him.

"No; please don't joke about it," she earnestly, impulsively pleaded. "You're the only man I can talk to like this. It's getting quite ghastly. I've been thinking a lot about it lately; and the more I think about it, the more I seem to blush. Even now—just from talking about it—I'll bet I'm as red as a beet."

Gravely he struck a match and looked at her—another act which might have raised your opinion of him. For a moment a warm, lively little face was visible in the gloom of the cab; and then she blew out the match.

"YOU see?" she said, with something like a sigh.

"It looks good to me," he nodded in his careful way. "You're probably the only girl left in New York who can still do it. Why not continue to cultivate it—to keep it from becoming one of the lost arts?"

"But it isn't an art!" she exclaimed. "It's a nuisance! This evening at dinner, for instance, Dad mentioned Mrs. Curtis in a fond voice—and I tried to hide my face behind my napkin." Her voice became muffled. "Honestly, Tony," she mourned, "it's awful. Don't you suppose there's any way I can stop it?"

The taxi was stopped for traffic; and before replying Tony looked carefully out at the rain.

"Your father's rushing Mrs. Curtis pretty hard?" he asked.

"Awfully hard."

"Seriously, you think?"

"They're going to be married this June. One can't expect him to stay a widower forever. Myself—I think he's a dear to have waited ten years. And now if I'm to blush like a fool every time he mentions her—"

Tony seemed to be thinking in his careful, self-possessed manner, his companion watching him with a touch of vivacious impatience from her corner of the cab.

"Ever study psychology, Ann?" he finally asked her as the taxi splashed forward again.

"Well—I could spell it once," she doubtfully told him.

"Psychology: the study of the mind. You meet it a lot lately. Mass-psychology. Mob-psychology. The psychology of the purchaser. The psychology of the individual. How—why—and when to think."

"I love that!" she said, looking at him with admiration.

"Now, I would say that blushing is probably an involuntary sign of shyness," he continued. "And the way to stop being shy is to do things which require a corresponding amount of boldness."

If you had turned then, and had been blessed with a sufficient amount of imagination, you might have seen the ghostly figure of a certain clever old gentleman enter the cab—a certain clever gentleman who

"What would you try first?" she asked then, suddenly turning to him in her eager young way.

"You'll have to decide that," he replied in his careful manner. "It ought to be something which would ordinarily make your hair curl: you'll have to think it out yourself."

She was still thinking it out when

Illustrated by
William
Hoople

He was moving away from her, now and then snatching a nervous glance at a splintery wound in the floor near the window seat

is sometimes known as Old Gooseberry and who hates the very name of holy water. He gave one glance at Ann and vanished.

"But, Tony," she protested, "I don't want to spend the rest of my life doing bold things—just to keep myself from blushing!"

"Of course you don't," he said, blinking a little, as though perhaps he too had caught that momentary glimpse of Old Gooseberry. "Once cured, always cured. I doubt if you'd have to do the trick—well—say more than three times."

"The same trick?"

"No-o-o," he hesitated. "They'd probably have more value if—if they were different."

They rode along in silence for half a block, he busy with his thoughts, and she busy with hers.

the cab stopped. The door opened, and an admiral of Senegambia stood waiting to give them the shelter of his huge umbrella. As they crossed the sidewalk a gust of wet wind caught the back of her shawl and blew it around her head. Some woman in the lobby laughed. . . . Ann's face, when at last she subdued her shawl, was as red as a red, red rose.

Intermittently, throughout the first act, Ann continued to think it out. And indeed she had done a lot of thinking these last few weeks. Her father and Mrs. Curtis, for instance—there was a subject which had kept her mind busy.

And the cautious, good-looking Tony—who didn't seem to be quite sure at times whether men married any more—he would have been surprised if he had known how often he had figured in the

thoughts of this eager-looking girl by his side.

Now she had this new problem to add to the others.

She was to think of three different tasks that would break down her shyness and stop her trick of blushing, so that she could hear Mrs. Curtis' name without looking as though someone had touched off a pound of red fire—so that she would always look cool and unconcerned like other girls—those girls of her graduating class, for instance, whose names were printed in the year-book on the page which was decorated by the two plump cherubim and the cluster of wedding bells.

Meanwhile, on the stage, the show had commenced—a piece which had

been written around the personality of Mr. Arnold Bolingbroke, who always played the part of a charming villain.

In the play a fashionable younger set had decided to give a performance for charity, and they had engaged the heart-breaking Mr. Bolingbroke, described on the program as "A Professional and Popular Actor," to coach them.

He was coaching one of the girls now in his own apartment—giving her a private lesson—teaching her with such fascinating villainy that the audience instinctively knew that Tragedy, masked and cowed, would soon be walking on with dragging feet.

"NO, NO, dear child!" Mr. Bolingbroke was exclaiming. "To act well, you must have *lived*! You must have *loved*! You must have *suffered*!"

And then slowly, but as inexorably as the rising sun, he turned the Bolingbroke glance upon her—a glance like a deep vibration from the D string of a steel guitar; rich, significant and disturbing; a glance, in short, for which he considered himself justly famous.

"Mmm . . ." thought Ann. "If Tony would only look at me like that. . . ."

She couldn't have told you, herself, the exact moment of her great inspiration. It was probably soon after the