



# NEW DETECTIVE

BEST IN CRIME FICTION 25c

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# STRANGE TRAILS

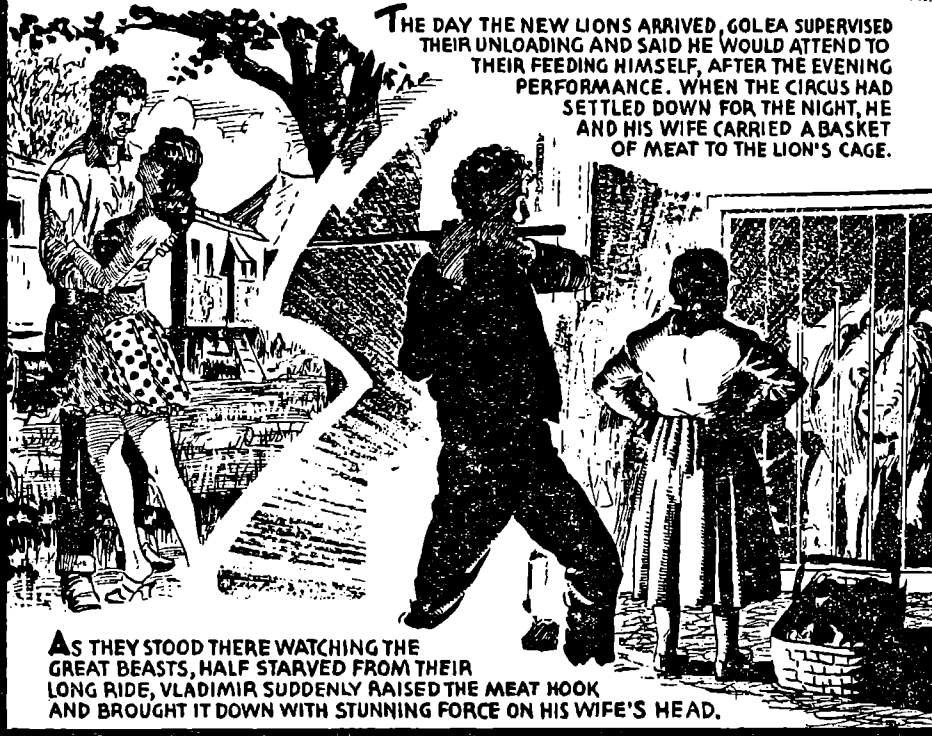
## MURDER--WITHOUT TRACE

SHORTLY BEFORE WORLD WAR II FLARED OVER EUROPE, THE SMALL CIRCUS OWNED BY MME. COLEA, WITH HER HUSBAND, VLADIMIR AS RING-MASTER, WAS PLAYING NEAR BUCHAREST, RUMANIA. BUSINESS WAS GOOD, AND WITH THE ARRIVAL OF TWO LIONS, SHOULD HAVE BECOME EVEN BETTER.

THE GOLEA'S MARITAL SITUATION, HOWEVER, WAS NOT HAPPY. VLADIMIR, WHO HAD JOINED THE CIRCUS AS A ROUSTABOUT, WAS YOUNG AND HANDSOME. HIS WIFE, WHO HAD RUN THE CIRCUS SHREWDLY SINCE THE DEATH OF HER FATHER, WAS NEARLY TWICE HIS AGE. RECENTLY VLADIMIR HAD SHOWN INTEREST IN A PRETTY TRAPEZE ARTISTE. MME. GOLEA DIDN'T LIKE IT.

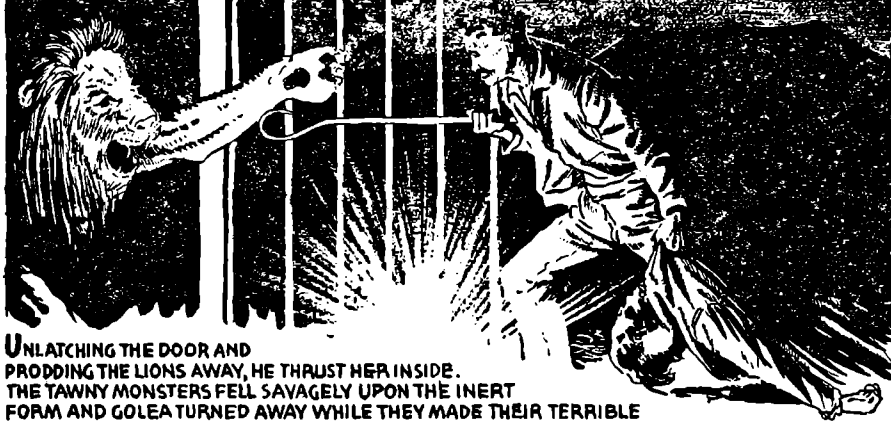


THE DAY THE NEW LIONS ARRIVED, GOLEA SUPERVISED THEIR UNLOADING AND SAID HE WOULD ATTEND TO THEIR FEEDING HIMSELF, AFTER THE EVENING PERFORMANCE. WHEN THE CIRCUS HAD SETTLED DOWN FOR THE NIGHT, HE AND HIS WIFE CARRIED A BASKET OF MEAT TO THE LION'S CAGE.



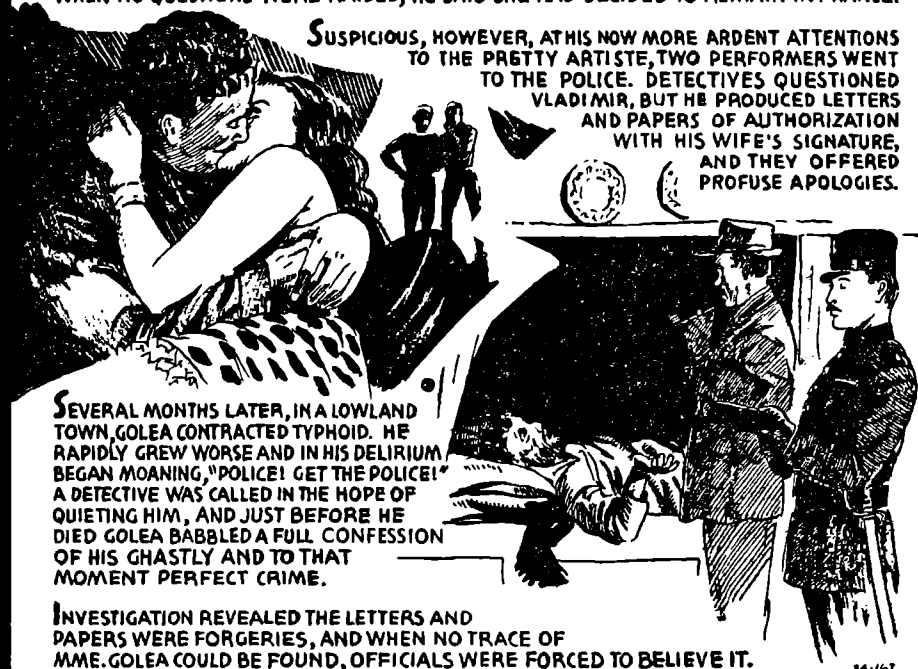
AS THEY STOOD THERE WATCHING THE GREAT BEASTS, HALF STARVED FROM THEIR LONG RIDE, VLADIMIR SUDDENLY RAISED THE MEAT BASKET AND BROUGHT IT DOWN WITH STUNNING FORCE ON HIS WIFE'S HEAD.

# to MURDER <sup>by</sup> LEE



UNLATCHING THE DOOR AND PRODDING THE LIONS AWAY, HE THRUST HER INSIDE. THE TAWNY MONSTERS FELL SAVAGELY UPON THE INERT FORM AND GOLEA TURNED AWAY WHILE THEY MADE THEIR TERRIBLE MEAL. THEN HE FISHED THE GARMENTS OUT WITH THE HOOK AND DESTROYED THEM.

NEXT DAY, GOLEA LET IT BE KNOWN HIS WIFE HAD RECEIVED A WIRE THAT SHE HAD INHERITED A LARGE ESTATE IN FRANCE AND HAD GONB TO CLAIM IT, LEAVING HIM IN CHARGE. LATER, WHEN NO QUESTIONS WERE RAISED, HE SAID SHE HAD DECIDED TO REMAIN IN FRANCE.



SUSPICIOUS, HOWEVER, AT HIS NOW MORE ARDENT ATTENTIONS TO THE PRETTY ARTISTE, TWO PERFORMERS WENT TO THE POLICE. DETECTIVES QUESTIONED VLADIMIR, BUT HE PRODUCED LETTERS AND PAPERS OF AUTHORIZATION WITH HIS WIFE'S SIGNATURE, AND THEY OFFERED PROFUSE APOLOGIES.

SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, IN A LOWLAND TOWN, GOLEA CONTRACTED TYPHOID. HE RAPIDLY GREW WORSE AND IN HIS DELIRIUM BEGAN MOANING, "POLICE! GET THE POLICE!" A DETECTIVE WAS CALLED IN THE HOPE OF QUIETING HIM, AND JUST BEFORE HE DIED GOLEA BABBLED A FULL CONFESSION OF HIS GHASTLY AND TO THAT MOMENT PERFECT CRIME.

INVESTIGATION REVEALED THE LETTERS AND PAPERS WERE FORGERIES, AND WHEN NO TRACE OF MME. GOLEA COULD BE FOUND, OFFICIALS WERE FORCED TO BELIEVE IT.