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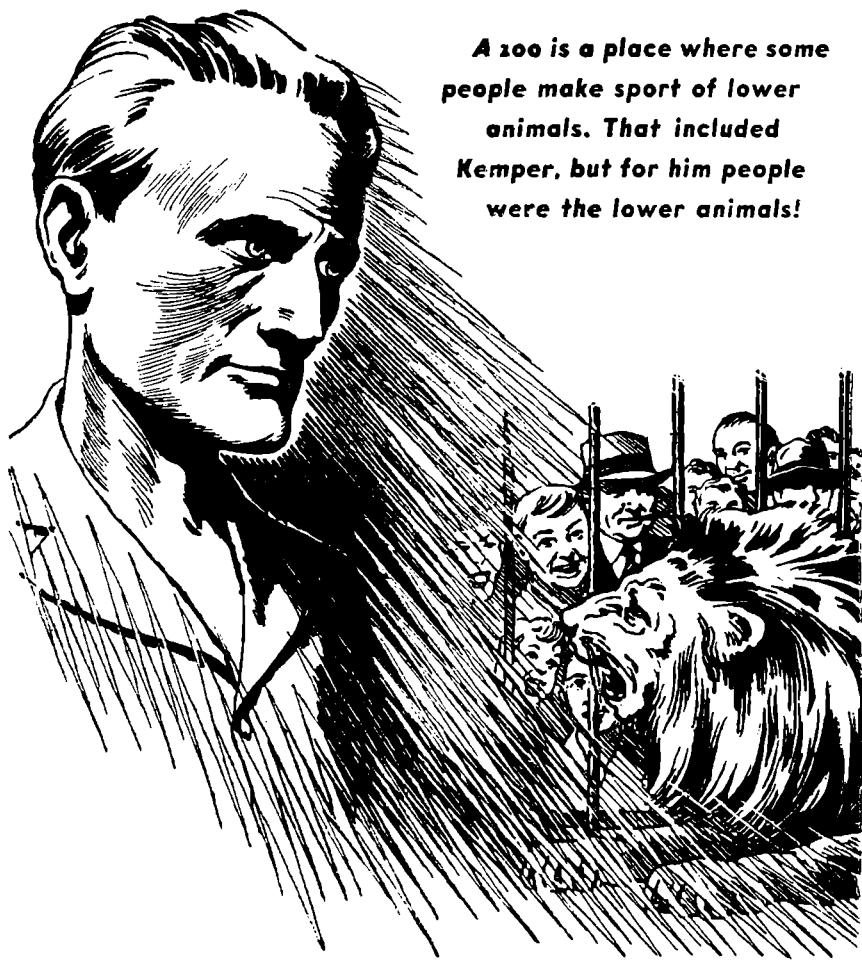
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Production Manager—HELEN SKALET **Art Director—ROBERT ENGLE**
Associate Editor—JOHN C. JOHNSON **Art Associate—WILLIAM BOWMAN**
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The Man Who Liked Lions

A zoo is a place where some people make sport of lower animals. That included Kemper, but for him people were the lower animals!



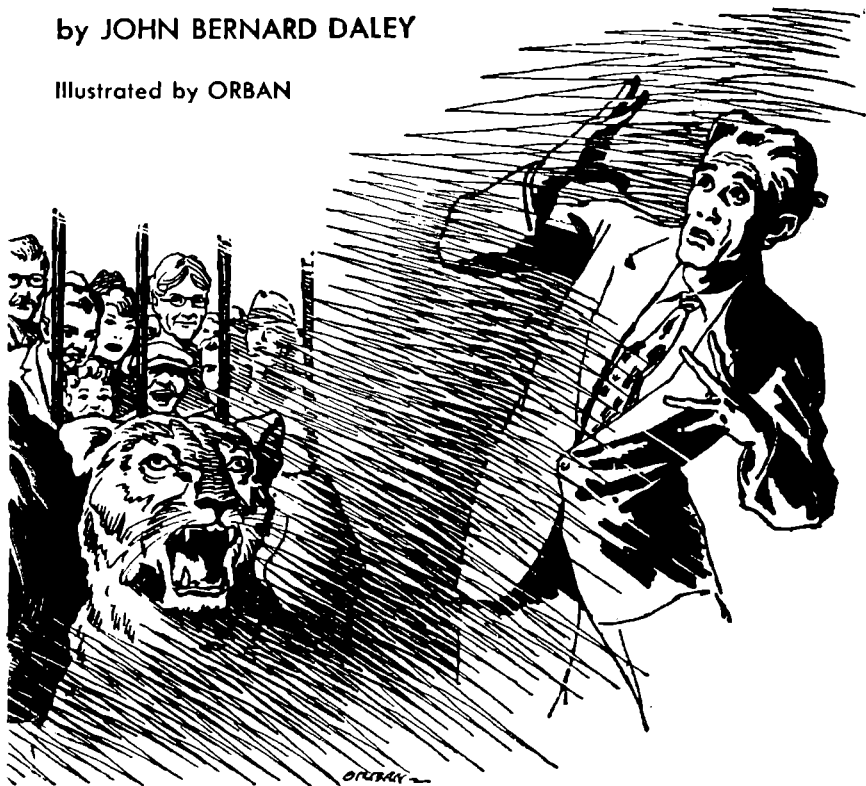
MR. KEMPER leaned on the rail, watching the caged lions asleep in the August sun. At his side a woman lifted a whimpering little girl to her shoulder and said, "Stop that! Look at the lions!" Then she jiggled the girl up and down. The lion opened yellow eyes, lifted his head from between his paws and yawned. Immediately the

girl put her fingers over her face and began to cry. "Shut up!" said the woman. "You shut up right now or I'll tell that big lion to eat you up!" Looking through her fingers the girl said, "Lions don't eat little girls." The woman shook her. "Of course they do! I said they did, didn't I?"

"Lions seldom eat people," said Mr. Kemper. With all of

by JOHN BERNARD DALEY

Illustrated by ORBAN



her two hundred pounds the woman turned to face him. "Well!" she said. The word hung like an icicle in the warm air, but Mr. Kemper waved it aside. "Only old lions resort to human flesh. Except for the famous incident of the Tsavo man-eaters, of course." The woman pulled her arm tighter around the girl, elbow up, as if to ward him off. "Come on, Shirl," she said. "Let's go look at the taggers." And with a warning look over her shoulder she lunged away from the rail. A big man with an unlit cigarette in his mouth took her place.

As her wide back swayed down the walk, Mr. Kemper wondered if she had a special intuition about him, like dogs, whose noses warned them that he was not quite the kind of man they were accustomed to. Women, particularly those with children, seemed to feel that way. He watched her leave, having decided that she was unsuited for what he had in mind.

Two things happened simultaneously, interrupting his thoughts. The big man beside him tapped him on the shoulder and asked him for a match; at the same time Kemper saw, just beyond the retreating woman, a man in a tweed jacket and gray slacks, watching him. For a second they stared at each other and Kemper felt a mind-probe dart

swiftly against his shield. He tightened the shield and waited. The man was heavily tanned, like Kemper, with unusually wide eyes and a dolichocephalic head. He had remarkable cheekbones; they appeared to slant forward toward the middle of his face, which was very narrow and long in the jaw. He looked a lot like Mr. Kemper, the way one Caucasian looks like another to an Eskimo. His glance swerved from Kemper to the lion cage; then he turned his back, a little too casually. Breath hissed softly from between Mr. Kemper's teeth.

THE BIG MAN said, "Hey, buddy, I asked do you have a match?"

"What? No, I don't smoke." His thoughts racing, he faced the lion cage. The tanned man had turned away, obviously not wanting to contact him, but why? He knew who Kemper was; there was no doubt of that. Frowning slightly, Mr. Kemper looked at the chewed hunks of horsemeat and bone on the cage floor, and the vibrating flies. The only logical answer was that the man was waiting for reinforcements. Even now he was probably contacting the Three Councils. Still, that gave Kemper a reasonable chance; it took a while for even the most powerful minds to move along the pathways of

JOHN BERNARD DALEY spent three years teaching technical writing and English composition at the University of Pittsburgh. But, he says, "you seldom find stories with life in them in classrooms and English offices." His present post of technical editor is livelier and gives him more time to write. It was science fiction that inspired him to begin, and this is his second published s-f story. We think you'll join us in hoping that there will be more.

time. Beside him the big man was talking again. "You feel okay, pal? You looked kind of far away there all of a sudden. Maybe you oughta go over in the shade."

"Not at all. I was only thinking of something."

"Yeah?" The man took the cigarette from his mouth and put it in his shirt pocket. "Say, I heard you telling that broad there lions don't eat people. You sure about that?"

"Quite sure. Look at them. Do you think they need to depend on anything as slow as Homo Sapiens for food?" With another part of his brain he wondered how many men would be sent to take him back. There was one point in his favor, however. He had nothing to lose.

"I don't know, pal. All I ever see them do is sleep. Always laying on their fat backs, like now."

"Well, that's not unusual. Lions sleep in the daytime and hunt at night."

"Yeah? What the hell good is that? The zoo closes at 5:30, don't it?"

Kemper looked at him dispassionately. He thought: "You fool, what would you say if you knew that you were talking to a man who hunted your ape ancestors through the forests of a million years ago? Could your pigmy brain accept that?"

The man jabbed him on the shoulder again. "Look at that big one with the black streaks in his hair. Ain't he something? Why don't he jump around in there like the chimps do?"

"Maybe he doesn't know. it's expected of him," Kemper answered, hoping that the arrival of the man in the tweed jacket would not affect his sport of the moment.

"You know, I'd like to see a couple of those babies mixing it up. Like the lion against the tiger, maybe. Who do you think would win a hassle like that, anyway?"

"The lion," Mr. Kemper said. He decided that the game would go on; an idea was beginning to scratch at the corners of his mind. Looking around with what he hoped was a conspiratorial

air, he jabbed his elbow into the big man's stomach. "Listen, you'd like to see some action, would you? Suppose you be here in say—two hours. At three o'clock."

"Yeah? What kind of action? You ain't trying to kid me, are you, buddy?"

Shrugging, Mr. Kemper looked at the flies swarming in the cage. "It's just a tip. Take it or leave it, buddy." He turned, brushed by the scowling man, and left the rail. Although it was getting hotter he walked down the cement in the sun, avoiding the shade of the tall hedges opposite the row of cages. He went toward the stairway that lifted from the lion court to the terrace where the central zoo building stood. Behind the building was the main enclosure; the zoo itself was terraced along two hill-sides, with more hills in the distance. It was not a large zoo, nor was it a good place to hide. But Mr. Kemper did not intend to hide.

In the cages he passed were other cats: cheetahs, leopards, puma and tigers, lying with heaving flanks, or lolling red-tongued on the stone floors. They hadn't changed too much, he decided, except in size. Even the streak-maned lion was puny in comparison with the lions that Kemper had known. He walked up to the drinking fountain by the stair-

way, the sun in his face. He was almost tempted to stare contemptuously up at it. Bending over the fountain he caught the dusty smell of the cats among popcorn, rootbeer and ice cream smells and the sweat stink of people. He straightened, wiping his lips, and remembered the somber jungles of the Pliocene, black-green in the sun that was a fist against your head; the plains of javelin-tall, yellow grass swinging to the horizon; and in the hills the lions with hides like hammered brass, the deadly, roaring lions. He remembered too, with the smell of those lions thick as dust in his mouth, the cities of his people, the proud people who had discovered the secrets of time through the science of their minds, a science unknown to the world he was in now. He looked up slowly and saw the man in the tweed jacket standing at the top of the stairway.

When their eyes met, Kemper probed with an arrow-swift thought but the other had his mind-shield up. The man turned, and moved behind a group of women. The man was gone when Kemper got to the top of the steps. "So that's the way you want it," he said, looking around. Two sidewalks led from the stair top; one went up the hill to the aviary, the other around the south wing of the building. He

took the one that rounded the wing. "I doubt," he said, "if we'll play peek-a-boo all afternoon, however." An old lady twitching along the walk gave him a nasty look as he passed.

HE WENT by the zebra corral where a small boy was picking up stones and turned into the side entrance of the wing. He went down the dim corridor, turned left at the men's room, then right and left again, and came finally to a small yard partially hidden from the main enclosure by an extension of the wing. In the yard was only one exhibit, a beaver pool surrounded by a waist-high stone wall. Two teen-aged boys sprawled on the wall; otherwise the place was deserted. Mr. Kemper studied the boys. Here was game to his liking. He went over and sat down on a bench in the sun.

The boys, twins in levis, saddle-shoes, T-shirts and long hair, leaned over the pool. There was something odd about the actions of the blond one who tilted dangerously near the water. He moved, spasmodically, and Mr. Kemper saw the flicker of sunlight on the long stick held like a spear in his hand, and heard a splash. Cursing, the boy pushed himself upright and dropped from the wall, shaking water from the stick. "You missed," said the other one.

"I'll show that flat-tailed rat," said the blond boy. From a back pocket he took a clasp-knife and snapped it open, and from a side pocket a length of twine. With swift, vicious twists he started to tie the knife-handle to the end of the stick. He made two knots and said, "Man, look at that. That'll hold it, man."

"What about the cat on the bench over there? What if he sees us?"

"Him? So what if he does? We can handle him. Anyway, he's got his eyes shut, ain't he?"

The sun tingled on the tops of Mr. Kemper's ears as he listened, his eyes half-shut. "Okay, give me lots of room on the wall," the blond boy said. There was a rasping of cloth on stone. Then Mr. Kemper closed his eyes and made a picture in the darkness of his mind, a small, bright picture that he blotted out immediately after it was formed. By the pool, metal clattered on stone.

The blond boy yelled, "Hey, what'd you shove me for? Look what you did!"

"Me? I never touched you, you jerk!"

"The hell you didn't. Look at that damn knife!"

Opening his eyes, Mr. Kemper looked at the pieces of knife blade scattered at the boy's feet and, a little to one side, the broken stick. He smiled and settled back on the bench, listening

to the argument. The boys shouted and waved their arms, but that was all. As for their invective, he felt it lacked originality; he tired of it quickly. He got up from the bench and walked toward them. The argument stopped.

They looked at him with cold arrogant eyes. "Hello," he said.

They looked away. "You hear something, man?" said the blond boy.

"Not a thing, Jack, not a thing," the other answered.

The smile on Mr. Kemper's face was his best, his friendliest; it had taken him hours of practice in front of mirrors. "*Apes, your fathers were not arrogant when they died screaming on our spears. They were not bold when our hunting cats ripped their bellies.*" Aloud he said, "You know, I'm a stranger around here and I thought you might be able to help me. Just what is it that's going on at the lion cage at three o'clock today?"

"We ain't heard nothing about no lion's cage, dad. We got our own troubles."

"Yeah, our own troubles. Get lost, dad."

"It sounded very interesting, something about a big hassle in the cages."

The boys lifted their eyebrows and looked sidelong at each other. The blond one said, "I told you to get lost, dad. Take

five. You know, depart away from here."

Mr. Kemper said, "Well, thanks anyway," and was still smiling as he left them.

IT WAS hotter when he reached the main enclosure, but still cool by his standards. At a refreshment stand he ordered a hot dog with mustard. As he waited, leaning against the counter, he saw the man in the tweed jacket among a group of people walking toward the elephant yard. He paid for the hot dog, picked it up, and walked along the path, keeping the jacket in sight.

The man in tweed went by the elephants, past the giraffes and the zebras, then around the south wing of the building. Up the walk toward the aviary he went, with Kemper not too far behind. At the top of the hill the man stopped in front of the aviary. It was a wide enclosure fenced by bars thirty feet high. In the larger section were the myriad ducks, cranes, gulls and other harmless birds; walled off from these were eagles, vultures, and condors squatting on carved balconies. From the hilltop there was a fine view of the zoo grounds below. The man in the tweed jacket turned, apparently to look down the hill, but instead looked squarely at Mr. Kemper standing a few feet away.

Neither of them said anything. The man in tweed seemed embarrassed. Mr. Kemper took a bite of the hot dog and chewed reflectively. After a while he said, "I suppose I ought to recognize you, but I don't. Council of Science, no doubt."

The man answered stiffly: "Ulbasar, of the First Science Council. Lord Kjem, you are under arrest."

"You'd better use words; it's less liable to make anyone suspicious. You might have dressed a little more intelligently, too."

Ulbasar ran his hand over his jacket lapels. "But it's cold. How do you stand it in that light shirt?"

"Very simple; I'm wearing long underwear."

"Well, you've obviously been here much longer than I have."

"Yes," said Kemper. "I've been here quite a while."

They didn't speak again for several minutes. In front of them some girls pressed against the mesh screen that reinforced the bars, eyeing a pompous small duck. "Let's go," said one of the girls. "These birds are too disgusting. I mean, they're so ugly!"

"She thinks the birds are ugly," said Mr. Kemper. Laughing, he turned to Ulbasar. "Well, what do you think of the scavenging little ape of our marshland now?"

Ulbasar shook his head. "In-

credible. Thoroughly incredible."

Mr. Kemper said, "Look at them. They laugh at the birds, they laugh at the monkeys; I have even seen some of them laughing at the lions." He scanned the people at the bars, the sweaty men with crooked noses, sagging bellies, bald heads and hairy arms. There were women in shorts, gray women whose legs pillared up to fearsome, rolling buttocks; girls with smeared mouths and rough-shaven legs and sandals strapped across their fat, wiggling toes. "The females are unbelievable," Kemper said, "but you should see the children."

He finished his hot dog and wiped his hands on his handkerchief. "Well, Ulbasar, where are the others?"

"Others? There are no others. I came alone."

Kemper, his eyes on the people at the cage, slowly folded his handkerchief. Without warning he flung the full force of his mind-probe at the man beside him. Ulbasar staggered and lurched to his left, throwing out a desperate block that was contemptuously brushed aside. Kemper reached out, gripped his arm, then eased the power of the probe. "Don't lie to me," he said softly. "It will take more than one of you to force me to go back; you know that. Now, where are the others?"

"Only one other," said Ulbasar, shaking his head. "Lord Gteris. He's on his way. None of the rest were close enough to contact."

"That's better. So they sent Gteris, eh? It's been a long time since Gteris and I hunted together, a very long time." He looked up as the condor on the highest perch spread its wings and cocked its head toward the wire mesh roof of the cage.

Words burred from Ulbasar, who still looked shaken. "The Nobles demanded that Lord Gteris come. The Science Council insisted that only our men handle it, and they're considerably agitated. There's been open conflict between Nobles and Scientists at the Sessions, and the tribunal is worried. They want you returned, and they want you returned quickly."

"Politics, always politics," said Kemper, letting loose his grip on Ulbasar's arm.

"The Scientists are putting a lot of pressure on the tribunal. They feel there's danger to us each moment you spend here in the future. They're worried about the time-pattern."

"That's ridiculous. How can a man from the past affect the future? Besides, it isn't our future; it belongs to the ape-people."

"I know, but that makes no difference."

"I've been to their libraries.

There are no records of us, unless you count some foolish legends of continents sinking in the sea." He looked at a man a few feet away who was throwing popcorn at a gull. A piece of popcorn bounced off the gull's head, and the man laughed. People standing nearby laughed too, and the man pitched more popcorn. Sighing, Kemper looked at his wrist watch. "When is he coming?"

"I don't know, precisely, and that's the truth."

Kemper thought about it. It would take a while. After Gteris arrived there would be important details to occupy him, such as assimilating the manners and mores of this era and getting proper clothing. He said, "When he comes you'll have no trouble finding me. I won't leave the grounds; I give my word."

"The word of a renegade and a fugitive?" Ulbasar was himself again.

"The word of a Noble," said Kemper, turning away from him coldly.

"One thing more, Lord Kjem," Ulbasar said. "The time rift. We have orders to go back with you along the rift you used, making certain that you seal it behind us. Is it close by?"

"That I will tell you when I have to," said Kemper, turning completely around this time and walking away.

ULBASAR would keep close watch on him, he knew, until Gteris came. That they intended to make him close his time rift made sense; the rift was dangerous to the over-all pattern. When he had left hastily he had forced his way through time with his mind-matrix, knowing that pursuit would have been swift if he had taken one of the normal time paths. The rift he had made was obvious, but would respond to no one but him. Others could accompany him through it, however, as he led the way. Gteris and Ulbasar could go with him and, controlling his mind, make him close the rift behind him.

So he walked briskly, knowing he had much to do in an uncertain amount of time. The sun was higher, pale in the glazed sky. Disheveled, harassed-looking people passed him, sweat stains dark on their clothes, and with them were fretful children. Mr. Kemper walked, and the people went by him, on their way to laugh at the monkeys, throw stones at the bears, and call "Kitty, kitty, kitty" to the leopards.

At a stand opposite the polar bears, near the north wing of the central building, he stopped to get a cup of coffee, but there was none for sale, so instead he bought a paper cup full of a green drink. He sipped it, watching a big white bear loafing in

the pool. A little to one side of him a young man was arguing with a boy who wanted cotton candy. From below them, and to their right, came a low rumbling. "What's that, Daddy?" said the boy. "It's only the lions roaring," his father answered.

"They're not roaring, actually," said Mr. Kemper. "They're grunting, and clearing their throats."

The boy looked at Mr. Kemper with interest, but his father frowned. "It sounds like roaring to me," he said.

Mr. Kemper smiled at the boy. "Oh no. If the lions were roaring you could hear nothing else. It's a sound you never forget, a sound that rips the wind and shakes the trees with thunder."

"I could forget it, Mac," said the counterman, leaning on his elbows and winking at the boy's father.

"I want to hear the lions roar," the boy said.

"For Pete's sake, what do you want? Make up your mind; do you want lions or cotton candy?" The boy's father looked exasperated.

"If you go to the lion cage at three o'clock today you'll hear them roar," Mr. Kemper said.

Shortly after that the young man dragged away his little boy, who was still insisting he wanted to hear the lions roar. Eventual-

ly, everyone who talked with Mr. Kemper went away rather rather suddenly. Mr. Kemper, unabashed, drank from his paper cup and thought about the ravages of time.

A woman and a man came around the corner of the building that faced the polar bears. The woman was red-faced, her voice a thin rasping. "All you want to do is watch those damn chips. You'd watch those chips all day if I didn't drag you away from there. Chips, chips, I'm sick of chips."

"Chimps," said Mr. Kemper as they went by. "Chimps, not chips. Chimps, lady, with an 'm' in it."

The counterman, moving toward him, wiped the counter with a soggy rag and said, "Listen, Mac, what's all this with the lions?"

Mr. Kemper looked at him. "Oh, do you like lions?"

"Well, it's like this," the counterman said. But he had no chance to finish. There was an animal shriek of pain from the other side of the building. The polar bears lifted their heads. Putting his unfinished drink on the counter, Mr. Kemper went toward the sound.

IN THE high cage that housed the chimpanzees, at the corner of the wing, a chimp swung violently on a trapeze, scolding at

another on the cage floor. Kemper saw that the one on the trapeze was a female, the other a bigger, older male. The male, his face grotesque with anger, climbed the bars and got as close as he could to the trapeze. He hung there, grabbing at the female as she swung past just out of reach. There were only a few people near the cage, but most of them were smiling. One of them, a gangling, tall man, ran about pointing a camera first at the female, then the male. A lean woman, possibly his wife, stood close to him. She put her hand on his arm. When Kemper saw her eyes he moved behind the others and went toward her and the man with the camera, taking a position a little to their right.

"Do it again, Al," the lank woman said. "Make them mad again." Al was sweating. He laughed, looked at the people around him, then pushed black hair from his forehead and handed her the camera. "Okay, okay," he said. "You get the shots now and don't goof it." He moved disjointedly, like a puppet, as close to the cage as he could, directly beneath the periphery of the trapeze's swinging arc.

He started to jiggle, then jumped up and down, making faces at the female. "Chee, chee!" he called. He danced, capering loosely, flapping long arms against his thighs. "Haaah,

haaah, haaah," he yelled.
"Haaah! Aargh!"

Angered, the female chattered at him. When the trapeze swung to the top of its arc she leaped and caught the cage bars, then dropped down them until she was only a few feet above the capering man. She screeched at him, pounding one hand against a bar, and the spectators laughed. On the opposite side of the cage the male chimp dropped to the floor and scuttled toward her. Stopping beneath her, he lifted his arms and growled low in his throat. She turned, snarling, and began to climb bars. With a last wild screech at the shouting, dancing man outside the cage she jumped, just as the male's fingers brushed her foot. Far over his head she went, then thumped to the floor. He dropped, and ran after her. She was climbing toward the trapeze again when he caught her. He sidled in, cuffing at her, then they grappled. A scream split the air as his teeth sank into her shoulder. Added now to the smells of popcorn, sweat and cotton candy was the smell of blood.

There was quiet in the cage and out of it as the female backed away from the hunched male. Unmolested, she climbed the bars slowly and swung to the trapeze, where she sat with one hand held to her bleeding shoulder. On the floor of the cage the

male lifted both arms to her.

The spectators breathed again. "Did you get it?" said Al. "Did you? What a shot! Terrific, but terrific!"

"I got it, Al, I got it!" his wife said, eyes shining.

Mr. Kemper grinned at Al and shook his head admiringly. "Say, that was quite a performance." Still breathing hard, Al shoved his hair out of his eyes and returned the grin.

"Oh, Al's great," his wife said. "You ought to see him sometime at a party."

Mr. Kemper said, "He certainly does have talent."

"Ah, it's nothing," Al said. "Nothing to it, fella. You sure you got those shots, Baby?"

Moving closer, Mr. Kemper lowered his voice. "Listen, would you like to get some really terrific shots? Ones you'd remember all your life?"

Al looked at him. "Yeah. Shots of what?"

"Be at the lion cage at three o'clock. You'll never have a chance like this again, believe me."

"Sure, sure, but shots of what, friend?"

So Mr. Kemper bent his head and whispered to him, and as he did he saw the gleam start deep in Al's eyes and swell to the pale surfaces. But Al's eyes didn't gleam the way his wife's did. And after a while Mr. Kemper

left them, and the cage that was silent except for the slow creaking of the trapeze.

After looking at his watch Mr. Kemper walked faster. The sun dropped in the sticky sky and there was only a faint wind. And for the next hour or so Mr. Kemper was here, there and everywhere. If there was a bunch of little boys shouting at the rhinoceros, then Mr. Kemper was there, smiling and nodding. When a party of college students stood making dirty jokes about the baboons, there too was Mr. Kemper, eventually saying something that made everyone stare at him.

He was ubiquitous. He was with the people who craned their necks at the giraffes, and the ones who laughed at the sleek sea lions darting in their narrow troughs. He was with a family watching the anacondas drooping in green cubicles; he was at the bison corral; he saw the crocodile, the yak and the blesbok. And always, wherever he was, he had a few words to say about the lions. And time passed.

IT WAS exactly three o'clock when he stood again at the top of the stairway above the lion court. A lot of people were milling and shoving in front of the cages, a noisy crowd that made the lions nervous. They were awake now, pacing their cells, and the leop-

ards were awake, and the jaguars. In the center cage the streak-maned lion put his head to the floor and coughed. Behind him the lioness waited, tense. The lion curved a paw around one of the bars and some of the people clapped their hands. Others whistled; several looked at their watches. Kemper, who was starting to smile again, watched the crowd. There was Al, his camera, and his wife, close to the center cage. The two teen-aged boys were near them. The little boy and his father were there, and many others that Mr. Kemper was glad to see. Hands clasped behind him, he stood looking down on them. Suddenly he felt powerful bonds clamp onto his mind.

Turning slowly around he saw Ulbasar walking down the hill toward him, a tall man at his side. They stopped in front of him, their faces dark in the sun. "Here he is," said Ulbasar. The tall man at his left made the greeting sign of one Noble to another. "Lord Kjem," he said. Returning the sign, Mr. Kemper said, "Lord Gteris."

Gteris said, "I hate to do this; you know that. We were friends once. I hope you won't try to resist."

"I told Ulbasar I wouldn't. Together you're considerably stronger than I am. I'd be a fool to try anything."

"That's smart of you," said Gteris. "Now let's get to business. Ulbasar says you wouldn't tell him the location of your time rift. Is this true?"

"Certainly. Does a Noble answer to a Scientist? But of course I'll tell you, Gteris. The time rift is down there, behind the hedge opposite the lion cage."

All signs of friendliness left Gteris's face. He spun and gave orders. "Ulbasar, you heard him. Go down there and see if he's telling the truth. I'll stand guard over him. And keep the mind-block tight."

Ulbasar nodded, and went down the steps. Mr. Kemper tested the vise that pressed against his mind; it held much too well. Gteris was looking at him reproachfully. "Really, Kjem, yours is conduct unbecoming a Noble. If you had to murder somebody why did it have to be a Scientist? And then all this forcing your own rift into the time-pattern. The Nobles are unhappy with you, Kjem."

"You know, I don't regret any of it," said Mr. Kemper, watching Ulbasar moving close to the crowd by the cages. "Tell me, how's the hunting back home?"

"Not too bad; I got some fine hawks a while back. I still wish I could handle cats the way you do, instead of—what's wrong with that crowd in front of the cage down there?"

Mr. Kemper said, "It's past three o'clock."

Below them a big man pushed through the crowd toward Ulbasar, shouting, "There's the guy told me to be here! There's the faker!" Ulbasar hesitated, looked around, and stopped. The big man caught Ulbasar's shoulder, and jabbed a finger against his chest. The crowd moved toward them.

Gteris said, "He's in trouble."

"He's as good as dead right now," Kemper said.

Gteris stared down at the crowd, then at Kemper. Swiftly he shot a warning thought to Ulbasar, who caught it. As he did the pressure eased slightly from Kemper's mind. It was enough. Kemper lashed out against Gteris' block. They stood there, minds twisting in combat. Then as Ulbasar was hemmed in by the crowd his support weakened, and Gteris fought alone. Slowly, but inexorably he was forced back and out, and Kemper's mind went free. Gteris' face was haggard. "Good gods, Kjem!" he said. "Look at Ulbasar!"

"You can still help him. I'm not holding you."

Gteris looked wildly at him, then ran, bounding down the steps two at a time. He ran toward the crowd and began shouting at Ulbasar. Kemper saw the concentration on his face and knew he was trying to control the

crowd. It was then that Mr. Kemper closed his eyes.

First he shut out the world around him: The dim sun on his ears, the smells of dusty summer and popcorn, the sounds of the small wind and the people. In the blackness of his mind he saw the lion court; each bar of the cage and the yellow lions inside it; the crowd and the two dark men. Then he made a picture of the bars loosening at the top of the cage and the bottom, and the entire section of the cage front sliding ponderously sideways.

There was no sound anywhere. Then below him rang a gonging of steel on cement and after that, the screaming, and over all of it, dwarfing the yells and the echoing clangs, came a roar that ripped the wind and shook the trees with thunder.

HIS EYES still closed, Kemper loosened the fronts of all the cages, one by one. After that he put all his mind to directing the lions. To Ulbasar he gave a quick death. Gteris he singled

out for a special favor; he sent the streak-maned lion at him. As the lion crouched, Gteris stood unmoving, covering his face with his hands. "Stand and fight!" Kemper shouted. "At least die like a Noble!" But Gteris did not move, and the lion sprang. Kemper laughed, the old excitement of the hunt surging in him as he sent the cats leaping and clawing. He made sure that a special few of the ape-people died very slowly. In the distance a siren wailed.

Kemper did not hear the rushing sounds behind and above him. When he did, he called the lions to him, desperately. He looked up at the condors, hurtling like javelins, and behind them the eagles. And he knew why Gteris, the hunter of condors and eagles, had not tried to hold off the lions. Then the condors smashed down.

The streak-maned lion came to him, but it was too late. Mr. Kemper lay dying in the cold sun with the smell of lions like dust in his throat. ∞ ∞

