

Tarzan, the Panto



It's PANTO time again, and this year we are taking Hickling back (80 years) and south (thousands of miles) into the deep, dark jungle of 1930s Africa. As you can imagine, and in true panto tradition, we haven't left it there; we've done our best to bring in a little contemporary jungle action where 'I'm a Celebrity' meets 'X Factor'; where 1930s pith helmets (& standards of caddishness) meet a Russian Oligarchess; and where Cadburys chocolate (with Kong on the drums!), hissing snakes and grunting gorillas mix a concoction for your delectation. There's Botox, 'closure', cocktails, talking parrots, dancing monkeys and much, much more!

Poor old Tarzan is finding that growing up is not as easy as he imagined it would be - he doesn't seem to look like the other gorillas, he can't understand his hairless state or his fear of the jungle or work out why everyone else seems to know what's going on, except him. When the beautiful Jane swings in to his life, he finally finds the strength to stand up to his father (Kong), his mother (much scarier than a gorilla!), the 'beautiful' Dame Lotta Doshtojetski and to fight the evil snake who terrorises the jungle and won't share the chocolate ...

Once again, the show will be an hour long - short, sharp and (we hope) funny! If you didn't join us last year, you won't know about the wonderful food that is included in your ticket price - a feast fit for the most discerning of appetites; there's certainly no need to eat before you come!!!

This may be a version of Tarzan that Edgar Rice Burroughs would struggle to recognise ...

The Tarzan Story!

<http://www.tarzan.org> - the official website for Edgar Rice Burroughs and packed with all the information you could possibly wish for!

Pulp Fiction:

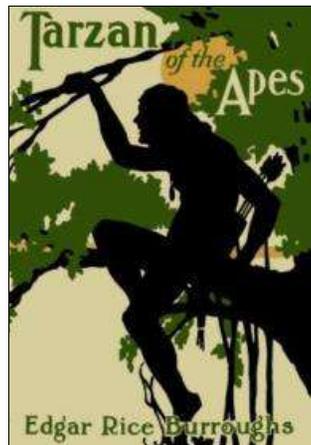
During the first half of the twentieth century the American reading public had access to a source of entertainment now long gone: "pulp" magazines. These magazines were printed on cheap paper with a high pulp content (hence the name), wrapped in garishly illustrated covers, and were brimming with every type of fiction imaginable: westerns, romances, science fiction, tales of courtly intrigue, stories of historical adventure, the exploits of hardy explorers in foreign climes. Every issue brought you a handful of short stories and the latest installment of two or three different serials, so you had to buy the next issue (and the next) to find out how the tales ended. And then another serial would begin ...

If you happened to be walking by a news stand in 1912 you might have stopped to look at the October issue of the All-Story magazine. Perhaps the cover caught your eye: a barbarously clad man sits astride a rampaging lion, his knife raised for the kill, as another man (probably the lion's intended dinner) looks on in horror. The title was as exotic as the illustration: "Tarzan of the Apes ~ A Romance of the Jungle." Fifteen cents would have gotten you a copy.

The author bore the rather weighty name of Edgar Rice Burroughs. And glancing at the magazine's contents page you might have realized this story was special, because instead of serializing this lengthy novel the All-Story's editor had decided to run it complete in this single issue. "If you will stop and realize how many thousands and thousands of stories an editor has to read, day in, day out, you will be impressed when we tell you that we read this yarn at one sitting and had the time of our young lives."

So wrote Thomas Metcalf in the previous issue's buildup to Tarzan. "It is the most exciting story we have seen in a blue moon, and about as original as they make 'em." The All-Story readers, and eventually the world, agreed.

From this one novel sprang two dozen more, over forty movies, hundreds of comic books, radio shows, television programs, Tarzan toys, Tarzan gasoline, Tarzan underwear, Tarzan ice cream, Tarzan running shoes ~ the list is virtually endless. Edgar Rice Burroughs became one of the twentieth century's most popular authors, and Tarzan one of the world's best-known literary characters.



Oxana. "I'd heard stories that she could fly off the handle, that she was very unco-operative, that she was socially inept, but she did everything I asked of her. "Her language is odd. She speaks flatly as though it's an order. There is no cadence or rhythm or music to her speech, no inflection or tone. But she has a sense of humour. She likes to be the centre of attention, to make people laugh. Showing off is quite a surprising skill when you consider her background. "She made a very striking impression on me. When I made her a gift of some wooden toy animals we had used in tests, she thanked me. Superficially, you would never know this was a young woman raised by dogs."

In the film, Oxana looks unco-ordinated and tomboyish. When she walks, you notice her strange stomping gait and swinging shoulders, the intermittent squint and misshapen teeth.

Like a dog with a bone, her first instinct is to hide anything she is given. She is only 5ft tall but when she fools about with her friends, pushing and shoving, there is a palpable air of menace and brute strength.

The oddest thing is how little attention she pays to her pet mongrel. "Sometimes, she pushed it away," says Fry. "She was much more orientated to people."

After a series of cognitive tests, Fry concluded that Oxana has the mental capacity of a six-year-old and a dangerously low boredom threshold. She can count but not add up. She cannot read or spell her name correctly.

She has learning difficulties, but she is not autistic, as children brought up by animals are sometimes assumed to be. She is proud of her huge wristwatch with its many ringtones - but can't tell the time.

Experts agree that unless a child learns to speak by the age of five, the brain misses its window of opportunity to acquire language, a defining characteristic of being human.

Oxana was able to learn to talk again because she had some childish speech before she was abandoned. At an orphanage school, they taught her to walk upright, to eat with her hands and, crucially, to communicate like a human being.

The definition of a feral child (or "wild child") is one who, from a very young age, has lived in isolation from human contact, unaware of human social behaviour and unexposed to language.

Cry of an enfant sauvage

Elizabeth Grice

Telegraph.com: 17 Jul 2006

For five years, Oxana Malaya lived with dogs and survived on raw meat and scraps. When she was found she was running around on all fours barking. Elizabeth Grice hears her incredible story

She bounds along on all fours through long grass, panting towards water with her tongue hanging out. When she reaches the tap she paws at the ground with her forefeet, drinks noisily with her jaws wide and lets the water cascade over her head.

Up to this point, you think the girl could be acting - but the moment she shakes her head and neck free of droplets, exactly like a dog when it emerges from a swim, you get a creepy sense that this is something beyond imitation. Then, she barks.

The furious sound she makes is not like a human being pretending to be a dog. It is a proper, chilling, canine burst of aggression and it is coming from the mouth of a young woman, dressed in T-shirt and shorts.

This is 23-year-old Oxana Malaya reverting to behaviour she learnt as a young child when she was brought up by a pack of dogs on a rundown farm in the village of Novaya Blagoveschenka, in the Ukraine. When she showed her boyfriend what she once was and what she could still do - the barking, the whining, the four-footed running - he took fright. It was a party trick too far and the relationship ended.

Oxana is a feral child, one of only about 100 known in the world. The story goes that, when she was three, her indifferent, alcoholic parents left her outside one night and she crawled into a hovel where they kept dogs.

No one came to look for her or even seemed to notice she was gone, so she stayed where there was warmth and food - raw meat and scraps - forgetting what it was to be human, losing what toddler's language she had and learning to survive as a member of the pack. A shameful five years later, a neighbour reported a child living with animals. When she was found, at the age of eight in 1991, Oxana could hardly speak and ran around on all fours barking, mimicking her carers.

Though she must have seen humans at a distance, and seems occasionally to have entered the family house like a stray, they were no longer her species: all meaningful life was contained in a kennel.

Judging from the complete lack of written documentation about her physical and psychological state when found, the authorities were not keen to record her case - neglect on this scale was too shameful to acknowledge - even though it has been of huge and continuing interest to psychologists who believe feral children can help resolve the nature-nurture debate.

What is known about "the Dog Girl" has been passed down aurally, through doctors and carers. "She was like a small animal. She walked on all fours. She ate like a dog," is about as scientific as it gets.

Last month, the British child psychologist and expert on feral children, Lyn Fry, went to the Ukraine with a Channel 4 film crew to meet Oxana, who now lives in a home for the mentally disabled.

Five years after a Discovery Channel programme about her, they wanted to see if she had integrated into community living. Fry was keen to find out how far the girl was still damaged - and to witness a reunion with her father.

"I expected someone much less human," says Fry, the first non-Ukrainian expert to meet

Tarzan Trivia!

- Tarzan has never been out of print, variations of the story remain popular and new ones crop up all the time; from Disney's cartoon version to the worldwide bestselling novel which made the Man Booker Prize shortlist last year—'Me Cheeta'.
- 'Me Cheeta'. is the autobiography of the chimpanzee who played Cheeta to Johnny Weismuller's Tarzan. It is an outrageous critique on life with Tarzan and in Hollywood which was seriously reviewed on publication as a ghostwritten but genuine autobiography. It was only when the Booker nomination was announced that the real author, James Lever stepped forward. He was horrified that his rather salacious spoof was being taken seriously; however, his revelation only seems to have made the book more popular. It's a fabulous read, full of revelations such as the time Cheeta made off with 'Jane's' clothes when she went skinny dipping and tales of 'bottoms I have bitten' ...
- Tarzan is a fictional character, an archetypal feral child raised in the African jungle by great apes, who later returns to civilization only to largely reject it and return to the wild as a heroic adventurer. (Wikipedia)
- Jane Goodall cites Tarzan as her inspiration to work with the great apes— she was attracted to the 'back to nature' philosophy & primitivism believing that she would have made a better Jane than the original.
- Olympic champion Peter John Weissmuller, who, after winning an unprecedented five gold medals at the Olympic Games in 1924 and 1928, went on to become the best known and best loved of all the screen Tarzans.
- Before Weissmuller was well known, he and his brother Peter saved 11 lives when a Lake Michigan tour boat capsized in a sudden storm. As an Olympic swimmer, Weissmuller was already a hero to many even before his portrayal of Tarzan.
- Although not the first Tarzan in movies (that was Elmo Lincoln), Weissmuller was the first to be associated with the now traditional ululating, yodelling Tarzan yell - recordings of three vocalists were spliced together to get the effect—a soprano, an alto, and a hog caller. This famous yell is still used in films.



Feral Children!

Feral children are children who have grown up 'wild' (there's a 'Not the 9 O'Clock News' quote in there somewhere ...), that is without any human guidance.

In literature & mythology, the innocence which this lack of experience of the human world brings with it, makes the feral child a powerful metaphor to voice criticism of the evils of human civilisation; they carry with them a kind of closeness to nature, simplicity and moral superiority.

Romulus & Remus (raised by wolves) are said to have founded Rome; Mowgli (also raised by wolves) is Rudyard Kipling's hero & was based on true stories prevalent in India; Tarzan was raised by apes and was known for using his strength to defend the innocent; and lastly, Peter Pan who ran away to Neverland and refused to grow up.



These are all wonderful stories, but probably more intriguing are the true stories which emerge in the papers periodically. These vary from tales of children brought up by animals to children held captive or grossly neglected and alone, who grow up completely isolated.

From The Times, January 19, 2007

Half-human, half-animal: return of the girl who was lost in the wild for 18 years

To the man who insists that he is her father, there is no doubt that the filthy, naked woman caught stealing rice from loggers in the jungle like a wild animal is the daughter he gave up as lost 18 years ago.

The woman, found last Saturday in a remote area in Cambodia, has long, matted hair, grunts and screams instead of speaking and has a hunted expression and a fear of people. But Ksor Lou said that he instantly recognised the daughter he had last seen when she was 8. The girl, Ro Cham H'pnheng, had been herding buffalo in the jungle when she vanished in 1989. Mr Ksor always believed that she had been killed by wild animals.

When rumours reached his village that a naked woman had been caught by loggers he decided to have a look.

To his astonishment he recognised her from a childhood scar on her arm from a knife cut. The reconciliation was a joyous one for the father, but apparently not for the daughter, who refuses to wear clothes or eat with chopsticks, fights off anyone who approaches, will not wash and has tried to escape back to the jungle.

Because she can apparently speak no language, it is impossible for her to explain who she is or how she has been living.

Bye, Child

Seamus Heaney's poem is inspired by the story of Kevin Halfpenny & is from Wintering Out London: Faber & Faber, 1972.

When the lamp glowed
a yolk of light
In their back window,
The child in the henhouse
put his eye to the chink.
Little henhouse boy,
Sharp faced as new moons
Remembered your photo still
Glimpsed like a rodent
On the floor of my mind.
Little moon man,
Kennelled and faithful
At the foot of the yard,
Your frail shape luminous
Weightless, is stirring the dust,
The cobwebs, old droppings
under the roosts
And dry smells from scraps
She put through your trapdoor,
morning and evening.
After these footsteps, silence,
Vigils, solitudes, fasts,
Unchristened tears,
A puzzled love of the light,
But now you speak at last.
With a remote mime
of something beyond patience,
Your gaping wordless proof
of Lunar distances
Travelled beyond love.

**Kevin Halfpenny;
the Hen House boy of Ireland**

Date found: 1956; Age when found: 7
<http://www.feralchildren.com>

CNN.com

August 2008.

A dog sheltered a newborn baby abandoned by its 14-year-old mother in a field in rural Argentina until the boy was rescued, a doctor said Friday. A resident of a rural area outside La Plata called police late Wednesday night to say that he had heard the baby crying in a field behind his house. The man went outside and found the infant lying beside the dog and its six newborn puppies, said Daniel Salcedo, chief of police of the Province of Buenos Aires.

The temperature was a chilly 37 degrees, Salcedo said. The dog had apparently carried the baby 50 meters from where his mother had abandoned him to where the puppies were huddled, police said. "She took it like a puppy and rescued it," Salcedo said. "The doctors told us if she hadn't done this, he would have died."

Assoc Press June 21, 2005

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia -
A 12-year-old girl who was abducted and beaten by men trying to force her into a marriage was found being guarded by three lions who apparently had chased off her captors, a policeman said.

**Kamala and Amala, the Wolf
Girls of Midnapore**

If you look at no other case
histories look at this one!!

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A good place to start is:  
<http://www.feralchildren.com>.

Hitckling Local History Group