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The Return of SHERLOCK HOLMES

By A. CONAN DOYLE

Illustrated by R. D. STEWART

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The Adventure of the Six Napoleons

No. 8 of the Series

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The development for which my friend had asked came in a quicker and an infinitely more tragic form than he could have imagined. I was still dressing in my bedroom next morning when there was a tap at the door, and Holmes entered, a telegram in his hand. He read it aloud: "Come instantly, 131 Pitt street, Kensington. LESTRADE."

"What is it, then?" I asked. "Don't know—may be anything. But I suspect it is the sequel of the story of the statues. In that case our friend, the image breaker, has begun operations in another quarter of London. There's coffee on the table, Watson, and I have a cab at the door."

In half an hour we had reached Pitt street, a quiet little backwater just beside one of the briskest currents of London life. No. 131 was one of a row, all flat chested, respectable and most unromantic dwellings. As we drove up we found the railings in front of the house lined by a curious crowd. Holmes whistled.

"By George, it's attempted murder at the least! Nothing less will hold the London message boy. There's a deed of violence indicated in that fellow's round shoulders and outstretched neck. What's this, Watson? The top steps swilled down and the other ones dry. Footsteps enough, anyhow! Well, well, there's Lestrade at the front window, and we shall soon know all about it."

The official received us with a very grave face and showed us into a sitting room, where an exceedingly unkempt and agitated elderly man clad in a flannel dressing gown was pacing up and down. He was introduced to us as the owner of the house—Mr. Horace Harker of the Central Press syndicate. "It's the Napoleon bust business again," said Lestrade. "You seemed interested last night, Mr. Holmes, so I thought perhaps you would be glad to be present now that the affair has taken a very much graver turn."

Holmes sat down and listened. "It all seems to center round that bust of Napoleon which I bought for this very room about four months ago. I picked it up cheap from Harding Bros., two doors from the High Street station. A great deal of my journalistic work is done at night, and I of course wrote until the early morning. So it was today. I was sitting in my den, which is at the back of the top of the house, about 3 o'clock when I was convinced that I heard some sounds downstairs. I listened, but they were not repeated, and I concluded that they came from outside. Then suddenly, about five minutes later, there came a most horrible yell—the most dreadful sound, Mr. Holmes, that ever I heard. It will ring in my ears as long as I live. I sat frozen with horror for a minute or two; then I seized

the poker and went downstairs. When I opened this room I found the window wide open, and I at once observed that the bust was gone from the mantelpiece. Why any burglar should take such a thing passes my understanding, for it was only a plaster cast and of no real value whatever.

"You can see for yourself that any one going out through that open window could reach the front doorstep by taking a long stride. This was clearly what the burglar had done, so I went round and opened the door. Stepping out into the dark, I nearly fell over a dead man who was lying there. I ran back for a light, and there was the poor fellow, a great gash in his throat and the whole place swimming in blood. He lay on his back, his knees drawn up and his mouth horribly open. I shall see him in my dreams. I had just time to blow on my police whistle, and then I must have fainted, for I knew nothing more until I found the policeman standing over me in the hall."

"Well, who was the murdered man?" asked Holmes. "There's nothing to show who he was," said Lestrade. "You shall see the body at the mortuary, but we have made nothing of it up to now. He is a tall man, sunburned, very powerful, got more than thirty. He is poorly dressed, and yet does not appear to be a laborer. A horn handled clasp knife was lying in a pool of blood beside him. Whether it was the weapon which did the deed or whether it belonged to the dead man I do not know. There was no name on his clothing and nothing in his pockets save an apple, some string, a shilling map of London and a photograph. Here it is."

It was evidently taken by a snapshot from a small camera. It represented an alert, sharp featured simian man, with thick eyebrows and a very peculiar projection of the lower part of the face, like the muzzle of a baboon. "And what became of the bust?" asked Holmes after a careful study of this picture.

"We had news of it just before you came. It has been found in the front garden of an empty house in Campden House road. It was broken into fragments, I am going round now to see it. Will you come?" "Certainly, I must just take one look round." He examined the carpet and the window. "The fellow had either very long legs or was a most active man," said he. "With an area beneath, it was no mean feat to reach that window ledge and open that window. Getting back was comparatively simple. Are you coming with us to see the remains of your bust, Mr. Harker?"

The disconsolate journalist had seated himself at a writing table. "I must try and make something of it," said he, "though I have no doubt that the first editions of the evening papers are out already with full details. It's like my luck! You remember when the stand fell at Doncaster? Well, I was the only journalist in the stand and my journal the only one that had no account of it, for I was too shaken to write it. And now I'll be too late with a murder done on my own doorstep."

As we left the room we heard his pen traveling shrilly over the foolscap. The spot where the fragments of the bust had been found was only a few hundred yards away. For the first time our eyes rested upon this presentment of the great emperor, which seemed to raise such frantic and destructive hatred in the mind of the unknown. It lay scattered in splintered shards upon the grass. Holmes picked up several of them and examined them carefully. I was convinced from his intent face and his purposeful manner that at last he was upon a clue.

TO BE CONTINUED.

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Dr. Chase's Kidney-Liver Pills, 25 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edman-son, Bates & Co., Toronto. Portrait and signature of Dr. A. W. Chase, the famous receipt book author, are on every box.

COMING EVENTS. Next meeting Lodge Prince Edward Tuesday night 14th inst.—Red Rose. City Council meets on the second Monday in each month. Dr. F. F. Kelly, Mayor; W. W. Clarke, City Clerk. Minard's Liniment Cures B. rns. etc.

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TENDERS

Department of Public Works, Ch'town, Oct. 12th, 1905.

Sealed Tenders will be received at this office until noon on

Tuesday, Nov. 14th, 1905

from any persons willing to contract for the rebuilding of Naufrage Bridge, Lot 43, Kings County, according to plan and specification to be seen at the office of John O'Hanley, Monticello, Road Inspector, and at this office.

The names of two responsible persons willing to become bound for the faithful performance of the contract must accompany each tender.

The Department does not bind itself to accept the lowest or any tender. Tenders to be addressed to the undersigned and marked "Tenders for Naufrage Bridge."

L. B. McMILLAN, Sec'y Public Works.

1-13dfr twfwd

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