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J. J. CARR, La Grande, Ore. FURNITURE AT LESS THAN MANUFACTURERS' COST

The BLACK BOX

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of "Mr. Grex of Monte Carlo," "The Vanished Messenger," "The Lighted Way," etc.

Novelized from the motion picture drama of the same name produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Illustrated with photographs from the motion picture production

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SYNOPSIS.

In her apartment at the Leland Ella, daughter of Lord Ashleigh, is murdered and the Ashleigh diamond necklace stolen. The New York police place the case in the hands of Sanford Quest, known and feared as the master criminologist of the world. He takes Lenora, Ella's maid, to his own apartments and through hypnotism and the use of electro-telepathic appliances discovers her connection with the crime, recovers the diamonds and arrests the murderer, MacDougal, Lenora's husband, though nearly trapped to his death in a tough tenement house while engaged in the work.

SECOND INSTALLMENT.

"THE HIDDEN HANDS."

CHAPTER VI.

Sanford Quest and Lenora stood side by side upon the steps of the courthouse, waiting for the automobile, which had become momentarily entangled in a string of vehicles. A little crowd of people were elbowing their way out on to the sidewalk. The faces of most of them were still shadowed by the three hours of tense drama from which they had just emerged. Quest, who had lit a cigar, watched them curiously.

"No need to go into court," he remarked. "I could have told you, from the look of these people, that MacDougal had escaped the death sentence. They have paid their money—or rather their time, and they have been cheated of the one supreme thrill."

"Imprisonment for life seems terrible enough," Lenora whispered, shuddering.

"Can't see the sense of keeping such a man alive myself," Quest declared, with purposeful brutality. "It was a cruel murder, fiendishly committed."

They were on the point of crossing the pavement toward the automobile when Quest felt a touch upon his shoulder. He turned and found Lord Ashleigh standing by his side. Quest glanced towards Lenora.

"Run and get in the car," he whis-

pered. "I will be there in a moment."

"I would not have stopped you just now, Mr. Quest," said Lord Ashleigh, "but my brother is very anxious to renew his acquaintance with you. I think you met years ago."

Sanford Quest held out his hand to the man who had been standing a little in the background. Lord Ashleigh turned towards him.

"This is Mr. Quest, Edgar. You may remember my brother—Professor Ashleigh—as a man of science, Quest? He has just returned from South America."

The two shook hands, curiously diverse in type, in expression, in all the appurtenances of manhood.

"I am very proud to make your acquaintance again, professor," Quest said. "Glad to know, too, that you hadn't forgotten me."

"My dear sir," the professor declared, as he released the other's hand with seeming reluctance, "I have thought about you many times. Your doings have always been of interest to me."

"I am sorry," Quest remarked, "that our first meeting here should be under such distressing circumstances!"

The professor nodded gravely.

"If you'll excuse me, professor," said Quest, "I think I must be getting along. We shall meet again, I trust."

"One moment," the professor begged, eagerly. "Tell me, Mr. Quest—I want your honest opinion. What do you think of my ape?"

"Of your what?" Quest inquired dubiously.

"Of my anthropoid ape which I have just sent to the museum. You know my claim? But perhaps you would prefer to postpone your final decision until after you have examined the skeleton itself."

A light broke in upon the criminologist.

"Of course!" he exclaimed. "For the moment, professor, I couldn't follow you. You are talking about the

skeleton of the ape which you brought home from South America, and which you have presented to the museum here?"

"Naturally," the professor assented, with mild surprise. "To what else? I am stating my case, Mr. Quest, in the North American Review next month; I may tell you, however, as a fellow scientist, the great and absolute truth. My claim is incontestible. My skeleton will prove to the world, without a doubt, the absolute truth of Darwin's great theory."

"That so?"

"You must go and see it," the professor insisted. "You shall be permitted a special examination."

"Very kind of you," Quest murmured.

"We shall meet again soon, I hope," the professor concluded cordially. "Good-morning, Mr. Quest!"

The two men shook hands and Quest took his seat by Lenora's side in the automobile. The professor rejoined his brother.

They entered the taxicab and were driven almost in silence to the professor's home—a large, rambling old house, situated in somewhat extensive but ill-kept grounds on the outskirts of New York. The Englishman glanced around him, as they passed up the drive, with an expression of disapproval.

"A more untidy looking place than yours, Edgar, I never saw," he declared. "Your grounds have become a jungle. Don't you keep any gardeners?"

"I keep other things," he said serenely. "There is something in my garden which would terrify your nice Scotch gardeners into fits if they found their way here to do a little tidying up. Come into the library and I'll give you one of my choice cigars. Here's Craig waiting to let us in. Any news, Craig?"

"Nothing has happened, sir," he replied. "The telephone is ringing in the study now, though."

"I will answer it myself," the professor declared, bustling off.

The professor took up the receiver from the telephone. His "Hello!" was mild and inquiring. He had no doubt that the call was from some admiring disciple. The change in his face as he listened, however, was amazing.

"George," he gasped, "the greatest tragedy in the world has happened! My ape is stolen!"

His brother looked at him blankly. "Your ape is stolen?" he repeated.

"The skeleton of my anthropoid ape," the professor continued, his voice growing alike in sadness and firmness. "It is the curator of the museum who is speaking. They have just opened

the box. It has lain for two days in an anteroom. It is empty!"

Lord Ashleigh muttered something a little vague. The theft of a skeleton scarcely appeared to his unscientific mind to be a realizable thing. The professor turned back to the telephone.

"Mr. Francis," he said, "I cannot talk to you. I can say nothing. I shall come to you at once. I am on the point of starting. Your news has overwhelmed me."

He laid down the receiver. He looked around him like a man in a nightmare.

"The taxicab is waiting, sir," Craig reminded him.

"That is most fortunate," the professor pronounced. "I remember now that I had no change with which to pay him. I must go back. Look after my brother. And, Craig, telephone at once to Mr. Sanford Quest. Ask him to meet me at the museum in twenty minutes. Tell him that nothing must stand in the way. Do you hear?"

The taxicab man drove off, glad enough to have a return fare. In about half an hour's time the professor strode up the steps of the museum and hurried into the office. There was a little crowd of officials there, whom the curator at once dismissed. He rose slowly to his feet. His manner was grave and bewildered.

"Professor," he said, "we will waste no time in words. Look here!"

He threw open the door of an anteroom behind his office. The apartment was unfurnished except for one or two chairs. In the middle of the uncarpeted floor was a long wooden box from which the lid had just been pried.

"Yesterday, as you know from my note," the curator proceeded, "I was away. I gave orders that your case should be placed here that I myself should enjoy the distinction of opening it. An hour ago I commenced the task. That is what I found."

The professor gazed blankly at the empty box.

"Nothing left except the smell," a voice from the open doorway remarked.

They glanced around. Quest was standing there, and behind him Lenora. The professor welcomed them eagerly.

"This is Mr. Quest, the great criminologist," he explained to the curator. Quest strolled thoughtfully around the room, glancing out of each of the windows in turn. He kept close to the wall, and when he had finished he drew out a magnifying glass from

(Continued on page 3.)

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