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The BLACK BOX

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of "Mr. Gray 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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THIRD INSTALLMENT

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. Lenora becomes one of Quest's assistants. The detective is called in to investigate the theft of the skeleton of an ape, of Lord Ashleigh. MacDougal escapes while on his way to prison. A string of diamonds is mysteriously stolen from Mrs. Rheinholdt during a reception.

THE POCKET WIRELESS.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mr. Sanford Quest sat in his favorite chair, his cigar inclined toward the left-hand corner of his mouth, his attention riveted upon a small instrument which he was supporting upon his knees. He glanced across the room to where Lenora was bending over her desk.

"We've done it this time, young woman," he declared triumphantly. "It's all O. K., working like a little peach."

Lenora rose and came toward him. "Is that the pocket wireless?"

He nodded.

"I've had Morrison out at Harlem all the morning to test it," he told her. "I've sent him at least half a dozen messages from this easy chair, and got the replies. How are you getting on with the code?"

"Not so badly for a stupid person," Lenora replied.

Laura, who had been busy with some papers at the farther end of the room, came over and joined them.

"Say, it's a dandy little affair, that," Mr. Quest, she exclaimed. "I had a try with it, a day or so ago. Jim spoke to me from Fifth avenue."

"We've got it tuned to a shade now," Quest declared. "Equipped with this simple little device, you can speak to me from anywhere up to ten or a dozen miles."

Quest rose to his feet and moved

"The hand which placed that box there," Quest continued slowly, "is capable of even more wonderful things. We must be cautious. Hello!"

The door had opened. The professor stood upon the threshold.

"I trust that I have done right in coming up?" he inquired.

"Quite right, professor," Quest assured him. "They know well enough downstairs that I am always at home to you. Come in."

"I am so anxious to learn," the professor continued eagerly, "whether there is any news—of my skeleton."

"Not yet, professor, I am sorry to say," Quest replied. "Come in and shut the door."

"There is a young lady here," he said, "who caught me up upon the landing. She, too, I believe, wishes to see you."

He threw open the door and stood on one side. A young woman came a little hesitatingly into the room. Her hair was plainly brushed back, and she wore the severe dress of the Salvation Army.

"Want to see me, young lady?" Quest asked.

She held out a book.

"My name is Miss Quigg," she said. "I want to ask you for a subscription to our funds."

Quest frowned a little.

"Very well, Miss Quigg, you shall have a donation. I am busy today, but call at the same hour tomorrow and my secretary shall have a check ready for you."

The girl smiled her gratitude.

The professor laid his hand upon her arm as she passed.

"Young lady," he observed, "you seem very much in earnest about your work."

"It is only the people in earnest, sir," she answered, "who can do any good in the world. My work is worth being in earnest about."

"You compel my admiration. My most respectful admiration. May I, too, be permitted?"

He drew out a pocketbook and passed over toward her a little wad of notes.

"It is so kind of you," she murmured. "We never have any hesitation in accepting money. May I know your name?"

"It is not necessary," the professor answered. "You can enter me," he added, as he held open the door for her, "as a friend—or would you prefer a pseudonym?"

"A pseudonym, if you please," she begged. "We have so many who send us sums of money as friends. Anything will do."

The professor glanced around the room.

"What pseudonym shall I adopt?" he ruminated. "Shall I say that an oak sideboard gives you five hundred dollars. Or a Chippendale sofa? Or," he added, his eyes resting for a moment upon the little box, "a black box?"

The two girls from the other side of the table started. Even Quest swung suddenly around. The professor, as though pleased with his fancy, nodded as his fingers played with the lid.

"Yes, that will do very nicely," he decided. "Put me down—'Black Box,' five hundred dollars."

The girl took out her book and began to write. The professor, with a little farewell bow, crossed the room toward Quest. Lenora moved toward the door.

"Let me see you out," she said to the girl pleasantly.

Lenora opened the door. Both girls started. Only a few feet away Craig was standing, his head a little thrust forward. For a moment the quiet respect of his manner seemed to have deserted him. He seemed at a loss for words.

"What do you want?" Lenora demanded.

"I was waiting for my master," Craig explained.

"Why not downstairs?" Lenora asked suspiciously. "You did not come up with him."

"I am driving the professor in his automobile," Craig explained. "It occurred to me that if he were going to be long here I should have time to go and order another tire. It is of no

consequence, though. I will go down and wait in the car."

Lenora stood at the top of the stairs and watched him disappear. Then she went thoughtfully back to her work. The professor and Quest were talking at the farther end of the room.

"I was in hopes, in great hopes," the professor admitted, "that you might have heard something. I promised to call at Mrs. Rheinholdt's this afternoon."

Quest shook his head.

"There is nothing to report at present, Mr. Ashleigh," he announced.

"Dear me," the professor murmured, "this is very disappointing. Is there no clue, Mr. Quest—no clue at all?"

"Not a ghost of one," Quest acknowledged. "I am as far off solving the mystery of the disappearance of your skeleton and Mrs. Rheinholdt's necklace as I have ever been."

The professor took a courteous leave of them all and departed. Lenora crossed the room to where Quest was seated.

"Mr. Quest," she asked, "do you believe in inspiration?"

"I attribute a large amount of my success," Quest replied, "to my profound belief in it."

"Then let me tell you," Lenora continued, "that I have one, and a very strong one. Do you know that when I went to the door a few minutes ago the professor's servant, Craig, was there, listening?"

"Inspector French has had his men watching Craig ever since the night of the robbery," quietly remarked Quest.

"What's that? Answer the telephone, Lenora."

Lenora obeyed.

"It's Inspector French," she announced. "He wants to speak to you."

Quest nodded and held out his hand for the receiver.

"Hello, French!" he exclaimed.

"Anything fresh?"

"Nothing much," was the answer. "One of my men, though, who has been up Mayton avenue way, brought in something I found rather interesting this morning. I want you to come round and see it."

"Go right ahead and tell me about it," Quest invited.

"You know we've been shadowing Craig," the inspector continued. "Not much luck up till now. Fellow seems never to leave his master's side. We have had a couple of men up there, though, and one of them brought in a curious-looking object he picked up just outside the back of the professor's grounds."

"What is the thing?" Quest asked.

"Well, I want you to see whether you agree with me," French went on. "If you can't come round, I'll come to you."

"No necessity," Quest replied. "We've got over little difficulties of that sort. Laura, just tack on the phototelesme," he added, holding the receiver away for a moment. "One moment, French. There that's right," he added, as Laura, with deft fingers arranged what seemed to be a sensitized mirror to the instrument.

"Now, French, hold up the article just in front of the receiver. There, that's right. Hold it steady. I've got the focus of it now. Say, French, where did you say that was found?"

"Just outside the professor's back gate," French grunted. "But you're not kidding me—"

"It's a finger from the professor's skeleton you've got there," Quest interrupted.

Quest hung up the receiver. Then he turned toward his two assistants.

"Another finger from the professor's skeleton," he announced, "has been found just outside his grounds. What do you suppose that means?"

"Craig," Lenora declared confidently.

"Craig on your life," Laura echoed.

"Say, Mr. Quest, I've got an idea," Quest nodded.


"Go right ahead with it."

"Didn't the butler at Mrs. Rheinholdt's say that Craig belonged to a servant's club up town? I know the place well. Let me go and see if I can't join and pick up a little information about the man. He must have a right out sometimes. Let's find out

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