

# The BLACK BOX

by E. Phillips Oppenheim

Shown at the Arcade Theatre on Wednesdays and Thursdays

CHAPTER XVII.

The professor roused himself from what had apparently been a very gloomy reverie.

"Well," he announced, "I must go home. It has been very kind of you, Mr. Quest, to keep me here for so long."

Quest glanced at the clock. "Don't hurry, Mr. Ashleigh," he said. "We may get some news at any moment. French has a dozen men out on the search and he has promised to ring me up immediately he hears anything."

The professor sighed. "A man," he declared, "who for twenty years can deceive his master as utterly and completely as Craig has done me, who is capable of such diabolical outrages, and who, when capture stares him in the face, is capable of an escape such as he made today, is outside the laws of probability. Personally, I do not believe that I shall ever again see the face of my servant, any more than that you, Quest, will entirely solve the mystery of these murders and the theft of the Rheinholdt jewels. What can we do against men who have revolving staircases and trolley-loads of river pirates waiting for them? You may be a scientific criminologist, Quest, but that fellow Craig is a scientific criminal, if ever there was one."

Quest crossed the room towards his cigar cabinet, and opened it. His little start was apparent to both of them. Lenora laid down the bag which she had just lifted up. The professor leaned forward in his chair.

"What is it, Quest?" he demanded. Quest stretched out his hand and picked up from the top of the cigars a small black box! He laid it on the table.

"Unless I am very much mistaken," he said, "it is another communication from our mysterious friend."

"Impossible!" the professor exclaimed hoarsely.

"How can he have been here?" Lenora cried.

Quest removed the lid from the box and drew out a circular card. Around the outside edge was a very clever pen and ink sketch of a lifebuoy, and inside the margin were several sentences of clear handwriting. In the middle was the signature—the clenched hands! Quest read the message aloud:

In the great scheme of things, the Supreme Ruler of the universe divided an inheritance amongst his children. To one he gave power, to another strength, to another beauty, but to his favorite he gave cunning. They all looked at one another.

"What does it mean?" Lenora gasped.

"A lifebuoy!" the professor murmured.

They both stared at Quest, who remained silent, chewing hard at the end of his cigar.

"Every message," he said, speaking half to himself, "has had some significance. What does this mean—a lifebuoy?"

He was silent for a moment. Then he turned suddenly to the professor.

"What did you call those men in the motortruck, professor—river pirates? And a lifebuoy! Wait!"

He crossed the room towards his desk and returned with a hat in his hand. He ran his finger down it, stopped and glanced at the date.

"The Durham," he muttered, "cargo cotton, destination Southampton, sails at high tide on the 16th. Lenora, is that calendar right?"

"It's the 16th, Mr. Quest," she answered.

Quest crossed the room to the telephone.

"I want number one, central," he said. "Thank you! Put me through to Mr. French's office. Hello, French! I've got an idea. Can you come round here at once and bring an automobile? I want to get down to the docks—not where the passenger steamers start from—lower down."

"Good! We'll wait."

Quest hung up the receiver. "See here, professor," he continued, "that fellow wouldn't dare to send this message if he weren't pretty sure of getting off. He's made all his plans beforehand, but it's my belief we shall just get our hands upon him, after all."

Presently he heard the automobile stop outside and French appeared.

"Anything doing?" he asked. Quest showed him the card and the sailing list.

The inspector glanced at the clock. "Then we've got to make tracks," he declared, "and pretty quick, too. She'll be starting from somewhere about number twenty-eight dock, a long way down. Come along, gentlemen."

They hurried out to the automobile

and started off for the docks. The latter part of their journey was accomplished under difficulties, for the street was packed with drays and heavy vehicles. They reached dock number twenty-eight at last, however, and hurried through the shed on to the wharf. There were no signs of a steamer there.

"Where's the Durham?" Quest asked one of the carters, who was just getting his team together.

The man pointed out to the middle of the river, where a small steamer was lying.

"There she is," he replied. "She'll be off in a few minutes. You'll hear the sirens directly when they begin to move down."

Quest led the way quickly to the edge of the wharf. There was a small tug there, the crew of which were just making her fast for the night.

"Fifty dollars if you'll take us out to the Durham and catch her before she sails," Quest shouted to the man who seemed to be the captain.

They clambered down the iron ladder and jumped on to the deck of the tug. The captain seized the wheel. The two men who formed the crew took off their coats and waistcoats.

"Give it to her, Jim," the former ordered. "Now then, here goes! We'll just miss the ferry."

They swung around and commenced their journey. Quest stood with his watch in his hand. They were getting up the anchor of the Durham and from higher up the river came the screech of steamers beginning to move on their outward way.

"We'll make it all right," the captain assured them.

They were within a hundred yards of the Durham when Quest gave a little exclamation. From the other side of the steamer another tug shot out away, turning back towards New York. Huddled up in the stern, half concealed in a tarpaulin, was a man in a plain black suit. Quest, with a little shout, recognized the man at the helm from his long, brown beard.

"That's one of those fellows who was in the truck," he declared, "and that's Craig in the stern! We've got him this time. Say, captain, it's that tug I want. Never mind about the steamer. Catch it and I'll make it a hundred dollars!"

"We've got her!" he captain exclaimed. There's the ferry and the first of the steamers coming down in the middle. They'll have to chuck it."

Right ahead of them, blazing with lights, a huge ferry came churning the river up and sending waves in their direction. On the other side,

Quest stood on guard, unnaturally large, loomed up the great bows of an ocean-going steamer. The tug was swung round and they ran up alongside. The man with the beard leaned over.

"Say, what's your trouble?" he demanded.

The inspector stepped forward. "I want that man you've got under the tarpaulin," he announced.

"Say, you ain't the river police?"

"I'm Inspector French from headquarters," was the curt reply. "The sooner you hand him over, the better for you."

"Do you hear that, O'Toole?" the

other remarked, turning around. "Get up, you blackguard!"

A man rose from underneath the olskin. He was wearing Craig's clothes, but his face was the face of a stranger. As quick as lightning Quest swung round in his place.

"He's fooled us again!" he exclaimed. "Head her round, captain—back to the Durham!"

The sailor shook his head. "We've lost our chance, gunvor," he pointed out. "Look!"

Quest set his teeth and gripped the inspector's arm. The place where the Durham had been anchored was empty. Already, half a mile down the river, with a trail of light behind and her siren shrieking, the Durham was standing out seawards.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Notice of Proposed Street Improvement.

To whom it may concern: You are hereby notified that the Committee on Estimates, appointed by the commission of the City of La Grande, Oregon, to make an examination of the property, upon which assessments are to be levied to pay the costs and expenses of the street improvement hereinafter described, as to the valuation and extent, if any of the benefits to be derived by said property by reason of said improvement, have made their report in writing to said Commission, which report has been received by said Commission, and is on file in the office of the Recorder of said city, and is open for your inspection. That it is the intention of the said Commission to levy a special assessment against all the property hereinafter described for the purpose of paying the costs and expenses of improving the alley in block 107, of Chaplin's Addition to the City of La Grande, Oregon, between Washington Avenue and Adams Avenue, said improvement extending from the southeasterly property line of Elm Street to the northwest property line of Fir Street, by grading said alley in said block 107, in said Chaplin's Addition, to the proper sub-grade and constructing thereon a concrete pavement, twenty feet in width between the property lines in said alley and constructing the proper catch basins and pipes for drainage purposes, according to the plans and specifications therefor heretofore adopted by said Commission and on file in the office of the Recorder of said city.

That the real property included in and the boundaries of the district benefited and affected by said proposed improvement are as follows: Commencing at the northeast corner of block 107 of Chaplin's Addition to the Town of La Grande, Union County, Oregon, and running thence southwesterly along the west line of Fir Street to the southeast corner of said block; thence northwesterly along the north line of Washington Avenue to the southwest corner of said block; thence northeasterly along the east line of Elm street to the northwest corner of said block and thence southeasterly along the south line of Adams Avenue to the place of beginning, all in the City of La Grande, Oregon, and the estimated cost of said proposed improvement is \$850.00.

You will further take notice that said City Commission will meet at the Commission Chamber in the City Building of said city on the 26th day of May, 1914, at 7:30 o'clock, p. m. of said day to consider making said proposed levy and will then and there grant a hearing to any and all persons feeling aggrieved against, or on

account of, said proposed assessment. Dated at La Grande, Oregon, this 13th day of May, 1915. CITY COMMISSION OF LA GRANDE, OREGON, By LEE WARNICK, Recorder of the City of La Grande, Oregon. High Grade Job Printing costs no more than the other kind—Observer.

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### IF BACK HURTS BEGIN ON SALTS

Flush the Kidneys at once when Back-ache or Bladder bothers—Meat forms uric acid.

No man or woman who eats meat regularly can make a mistake by flushing the kidneys occasionally, says a well-known authority. Meat forms uric acid which clogs the kidney pores so they sluggishly filter or strain only part of the waste and poisons from the blood, then you get sick. Nearly all rheumatism, headaches, liver trouble, nervousness, constipation, dizziness, sleeplessness, bladder disorders come from sluggish kidneys.

The moment you feel a dull ache in the kidneys or your back hurts, or if the urine is cloudy, offensive, full of sediment, irregular of passage or attended by a sensation of scalding, get about four ounces of Jad Salts from any reliable pharmacy and take a tablespoonful in a glass of water before breakfast for a few days and your kidneys will then act fine. This famous salt is made from the acid of grapes and lemon juice, combined with lithia and has been used for generations to flush clogged kidneys and stimulate them to activity, also to neutralize the acids in urine so it no longer causes irritation, thus ending bladder disorders.

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