



# The BLACK GANG

A Sequel to Bulldog Drummond.  
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W. N. U. Service

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### SYNOPSIS

**CHAPTER I.**—To a gathering of anarchists in Harking, London suburb, Zaboloff, foreign agitator, tells of the operations of a body of men who have become a menace to their activities. He is interrupted by the men he is describing (the Black Gang), who break up the meeting, sentencing some of the participants to condign punishment and carrying away others. A memorandum found on Zaboloff gives the address in Hoxton, London, which the leader of the attacking party considers of importance.

**CHAPTER II.**—Sir Bryan Johnston, director of criminal investigation, hears from Inspector Melver, sent to arrest Zaboloff the night before, of his discovery. He had been seized and chloroformed and his raid frustrated. Hugh Drummond, man of leisure and old friend of Johnston's, arrives and tells of seeing the kidnappers and their victims. He becomes an unpaid agent of the police, to be under the direction of Melver, and takes up his duties at once.

**CHAPTER III.**—A "Mr. William Atkinson," ostensibly pawnbroker and money lender, really Count Zadowa, director of anarchy in England, does business in another London suburb. A mysterious stranger invades the premises. Count Zadowa, after a brief glimpse of the intruder, is strangely disconcerted.

**CHAPTER IV.**—Drummond, having knowledge of Atkinson's anarchistic activities, arranges to surveil the latter's office to secure evidence of the fact. While so engaged, with two companions, a bomb is hurled at them from an adjoining room.

**CHAPTER V.**—The explosion kills "Ginger Martin," expert burglar whom Drummond had employed to open Atkinson's safe. Drummond and his friend escape, taking with them a bag they find on the floor. Neither Drummond nor his companion at the time find out what it contains.

### CHAPTER VI

#### In Which There is a Stormy Party at the Ritz.

IT WAS just about the time that Ginger Martin's wife became, all unconsciously, a widow that the sitting-room bell of a certain private suite in the Ritz was rung. The occupants of the room were two in number—a man and a woman—and they had arrived only that morning from the Continent. The man, whose signature in the register announced him to be the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor—looked a splendid specimen of the right sort of clergyman. Tall, broad-shouldered, with a pair of shrewd, kindly eyes and a great mass of snow-white hair, he was the type of man who attracted attention wherever he went, and in whatever society he found himself. A faint twang in his speech betrayed his nationality, and, indeed, he made no secret of it. He was an American, born and bred, who had been seeing first hand for himself some of the dreadful horrors of the famiae which was ravaging Central Europe.

And with him had gone his daughter Janet—that faithful, constant companion of his, who since her mother's death had never left him. She was a good-looking girl, too—though perhaps unkind people might say girlhood's happy days had receded somewhat into the past. Thirty, perhaps—even thirty-five—though her father always alluded to her as "My little girl."

There was something very sweet and touching about their relationship; his pride in her and her simoniacally a charming couple, had ple, loving adoration for dad. Unbent the verdict of their chance acquaintances—so simple, so fresh, so unassuming in these days of complexity and double dealing.

After dinner, because his little Janet was tired, the Reverend Theodosius and his daughter remained in their suites. And for two hours until he got up and rang the bell, the Reverend Theodosius was engrossed in work; while his little Janet, lying on the sofa, displayed considerably more leg than one would have expected a vicar's daughter even to possess. And once she finally gurgled off laughter seemed to prove that Guy de Maupassant appeals to a more catholic audience than he would have suspected.

his senses. With a last spasm of fury he hurled the wretched Zadowa into a corner, and left him lying there; then his iron self-control came back to him.

"Get up," he ordered tensely, "and answer some questions."

"I admit," he murmured. "Up to date they have scored a faint measure of success—exaggerated, my friend, greatly exaggerated by the papers. Tonight came the reckoning, which incidentally is the reason why I am a little late. Tonight—he leaned forward impressively—"the leader of the gang himself honored me with a visit. And the leader will lead no more."

"You killed him?" said the girl, helping herself to the champagne. "I did," answered the count. "And without the leader I think we can ignore the gang."

"That's all right as far as it goes," said the Reverend Theodosius in a slightly mollified tone. "But have you covered your traces? In this country the police get peevish over murder."

The count gave a self-satisfied smile. "Not only that," he remarked, "but I have made it appear as if he had killed himself. Listen, my friends, and I will give you a brief statement of the events of the past few days. I suddenly found out that the leader of this gang had discovered my headquarters in Hoxton. I was actually talking to Latta in my office at the time, when I heard outside the call of an owl. Now, from the information I had received that was the rallying call of their gang, and I dashed into the passage. Sure enough, standing by the door at the end was a huge man covered from head to foot in black. Whether it was bravado that made him give the cry, or whether it was a ruse to enable him to see me, is immaterial now. As I say—he is dead. But—and this is the point—it made me decide that the office there, convenient though it was, would have to be given up. I was completing the final sorting out of my papers with my secretary, when the electric warning disk on my desk glowed red. Now, the office was empty, and the red light meant that some one had opened the door outside. I heard nothing, which made it all the more suspicious. So between us we gathered up every important paper, switched off all lights and went out through the secret door. Then we waited."

He turned to the clergyman, who sat motionless save for a ceaseless tapping of his left knee with his hand.

"As you know, monsieur," he proceeded, "there is an opening in that door through which I can see into the room. And through that opening I watched developments. After a while a torch was switched on at the further door, and I heard voices. And then the man holding the torch came cautiously in. He was turning it in to every corner, but finally he focused it on my desk. I heard him speak to one of his companions, who came into the beam of light and started in to pick the lock. And it was then that I switched on every light, and closed the other door electrically. They were caught—caught like rats in a trap."

The hunchback paused dramatically, and drained his champagne. If he was expecting any laudatory remarks on the part of his audience he was disappointed. But the Reverend Theodosius and his little Janet might have been carved out of marble, save for that ceaseless tapping of the man's left knee. In fact, had Count Zadowa been less pleased with himself and less sure of the effect he was about to cause he might have had a premonition of coming danger. There was something almost terrifying in the big clergyman's immobility.

"Like rats in a trap," repeated the hunchback gloatingly. "Two men I didn't know, and—well, you know who the other was. True, he had his mask on by way of disguise, but I recognized him at once. That huge figure couldn't be mistaken—it was the leader of the Black Gang himself."

"And what did you do, Zadowa? How did you dispose of one or all of these men so that no suspicion is likely to rest on you?"

The hunchback rubbed his hands together gleefully.

"By an act which, I think you will agree, is very nearly worthy of yourself, monsieur. To shoot was impossible—because I am not sufficiently expert with a revolver to be sure of killing them. No—nothing so ordinary as that. They saw me watching them; I can see his eyes, Hugh," said one of them to the leader, and I remembered suddenly that in the past I saw not far from where I stood were half a dozen bombs—What is it, monsieur?" he paused in alarm at the look on the clergyman's face as he slowly rose.

"Bombs!" he snarled. "Bombs! Tell me what you did, you dog!"

"Why," stammered the frightened hunchback. "I threw one into the room. I no longer wanted it as an office, and . . . Ah, heaven, don't murder me! . . . What have I done?"

"I wonder," she said, "I wonder. Let us, as you say, go to bed."

### CHAPTER VII

#### In Which Hugh Drummond Makes a Discovery.

THE prospect in front of Count Zadowa, alias Mr. Atkinson, was not a very alluring one, and the more he thought about it the less he liked it. Either the diamonds were blown to dust, or they were in the hands of the authorities. In the first event he had the Reverend Theodosius to reckon with; in the second the police. And for preference the police won in a canter.

He was under no delusions, was the hunchback. This mysterious man who ained all his communications by the enigmatic letter X, and whose real appearance was known probably only to the girl who was his constant companion, so wonderful and varied were his disguises, was not a person whom it paid to have any delusions about. With a shudder Count Zadowa remembered the fate of certain men he had known in the past, men who had been employed, even as he was now employed, on one of the innumerable schemes of their chief. No project, from the restoration of a monarch to the downfall of a business combine, was too great for the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor. All that mattered was that there should be money in it. Why he should be interesting himself in the spread of Communism in England it was not for Count Zadowa to inquire, even though he was the head of that particular activity. Presumably he was being paid for it by others; it was no business of Count Zadowa's.

As he undressed that night in the quiet hotel in Bloomsbury where he lived the hunchback cursed bitterly under his breath. It was such a cruel stroke of luck.

He had finally decided that his only method lay in going down to the office the next morning as usual. He would find it, of course, in the possession of the police, and would be told what had happened. And then he would have to trust to luck to discover what he could.

Punctually at half-past nine the next morning he arrived at 5 Green Street. As he had expected, a constable was standing at the door.

"Who are you, sir?" The policeman was barring his entrance.

"My name is Atkinson," said the count, with well-assumed surprise. "May I ask what you're doing here?"

"Haven't you heard, sir?" said the constable. "There was a bomb outrage here last night. Is your office upstairs?"

"A bomb outrage?" Mr. Atkinson gazed at the constable in amazement, and a loafer standing by began to laugh.

"Not 'arf, guv'nor," he remarked cheerfully. "The 'ole ruddy place is gone to blazes."

"My name is Atkinson," said the policeman, "dry up," admonished the policeman. "Move along, can't you?"

"Orl rite, orl rite," grumbled the other, shambling off. "Not allowed to live soon, we won't be."

"You'd better go up, sir," continued the constable. "The inspector is upstairs."

Mr. Atkinson needed no second invitation. Viewed by the light of day which came streaming in through the great hole in the wall the ruin was complete. In the center—and it was there that Mr. Atkinson's eyes strayed continually while he was acknowledging the greetings of the inspector—stood the remnants of the desk. And as he looked at it my faint hope he may have cherished vanished completely. It was literally split to pieces in every direction; there was not left a hiding-place for a pea, much less a bag of diamonds.

owner was a girl, sitting close by, busily engaged in knitting some obscure garment, and Hugh handed her the wool with a bow.

"Thank you so much!" she said with a pleasant smile. "I'm afraid I'm always dropping my wool all over the place."

"Don't mention it," remarked Hugh politely. "Deuced agile little thing, a ball of wool. Spend my life picking up my wife's. Everybody seems to be knitting these jumper effects now."

"Oh, this isn't a jumper," answered the girl a little sadly. "I've no time for such frivolities as that. You see, I've just come back from the famine-stricken parts of Austria—and not only are the poor things hungry, but they can't get proper clothes. So just a few of us are knitting things for them—silk, you know—big, medium and small."

"How fearfully jolly of you!" said Hugh admiringly. "Dashed sporting thing to do. I must tell my wife about it. She's coming here to lunch, and she ought to turn 'em out like bullets from a machine gun—what?"

The girl smiled faintly as she rose. "It would be very good of her if she would be so good as to remark gently, and then with a slight bow, she walked away in the direction of the lift."

"You know, old son," remarked Hugh, as he watched her disappearing. "it's an amazing affair when you really come to think of it. There's that girl, with a face far superior to a patched boot, and positively oozing virtue from every pore. And yet, would you leave your happy home for her? Look at her skirts—five inches too long; yet she'd make a man an excellent wife. A heart of gold, probably, hidden beneath innumerable strata of multi-colored wools."

Completely exhausted he drained his cocktail, and leaned back in his chair, while Peter digested the profound utterance in silence. A slight feeling of lassitude was beginning to weigh on him, owing to the atrocious hour at which he had been compelled to rise, and he felt quite unable to contribute any suitable addition to the conversation. Not that it was required; the furious frown on Drummond's face indicated that he was in the throes of thought and might be expected to give tongue in the near future.

"I ought to have a bit of paper to write it all down on, Peter," he remarked at length. "Where are we, Peter? That is the question. Point one: we have the diamonds—more by luck than good management. Point two: the hunchback gentleman who has a sufficiently strong constitution to live in the South Surrey hotel in Bloomsbury has not got the diamonds. Point three: he, at the present moment, is cloistered with the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor upstairs. Point four: we are about to consume intricate cocktail downstairs. Well—bearing that little lot in mind, what happens when we all meet?"

A slight stare was his only answer, and Hugh continued to ponder on the obscurity of the situation in silence. That several rays of light might have been thrown on it by a conversation then proceeding upstairs was of no help to him; nor could he have been expected to know that the fog of war was about to lift in a most unpleasantly dramatic manner.

"Coincidence? Boah!" the girl with the heart of gold was remarking at that very moment. "It's a certainty. Whether he's got the diamonds or not I can't say, but your big friend of last night, Zadowa, is sitting downstairs now drinking a cocktail in the lounge."

"Amazing though it is, it certainly looks as if you were right, my dear," answered her father thoughtfully.

"Of course I'm right!" cried the girl. "Why, the darned thing is sticking out and barking at you. A big man, Christian name Hugh, was in Zadowa's office last night. Hugh Drummond is downstairs at the moment, having actually tracked Zadowa here. Of course, they're the same; an infant in arms could see it. His wife is coming here to lunch. You remember her—that silly little fool Phyllis Benton? And they live in Brook street. It might be worth trying. If, by any chance, he has got the diamonds—well, she'll be very useful. And if he hasn't, she shrugged her shoulders, "we can easily return her if we want her."

The Reverend Theodosius smiled. Long-winded explanations between the two of them were seldom necessary. Then he looked at his watch. "Short notice," he remarked; "but we'll try. No harm done, if we fail." He stepped over to the telephone, and put through a call. And having given two or three curt orders he came slowly into the room.

"Chances of success very small, I'm afraid; but as you say, my dear, worth trying. And now I think I'll renew my acquaintance with Mr. Drummond."

With a short chuckle he left the room, and a minute or two later a benevolent clergyman, reading the Church Times, was sitting in the lounge just opposite Hugh and Peter. Through half-closed eyes Hugh took stock of him, wondering casually if this was the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor. And when a few minutes later the clergyman took a cigarette out of his case, and then commenced to fumble in his pockets for matches which he had evidently forgotten, Hugh rose and offered him one.

"Allow me, sir," he murmured, holding it out.

"I thank you, sir," said the clergyman, with a charming smile. "I'm so terribly forgetful over matches. As a matter of fact I don't generally smoke before lunch, but I've had such a distressing morning that I felt I must have a cigarette just to soothe my nerves."

"By Jove! that's bad," remarked Hugh. "Bath water cold, and all that?"

"Nothing so trivial, I fear," said the other. "No; a poor man who has been with me since ten has just suffered the most terrible blow. I can hardly have believed it possible here in London, but the whole of his business premises were wrecked by a bomb last night."

"You don't say so," murmured Hugh, sinking into a chair, and at the table opposite Peter Darrell opened one eye.

"All his papers—everything—gone. And it has hit me, too. Quite a respectable little sum of money—over a hundred pounds, gathered together for the restoration of the old oak chancel in my church—blown to pieces by this unknown miscreant. It's hard, sir, it's hard. But this poor fellow's loss is greater than mine, so I must not complain."

The clergyman took off his spectacles and wiped them, and Drummond stole a lightning glance at Darrell. The faintest shrug of his shoulders indicated that the latter had heard, and was as much in the dark as Hugh. That this was the Reverend Theodosius Longmoor was now obvious, but what a charming, courteous old gentleman! It seemed impossible to associate guilt with such a delightful person, and, if so, they had made a bad mistake. It was

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