

The KING of DIAMONDS.

By Louis Tracy.

Author of "Wings of the Morning," "The Pillar of Light," etc.

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He only used the slight force needful to support him until another could grasp him.

Then they lifted the half drowned man on board, turned him on his face to permit the water to flow out of his lungs and, instantly reversing him, began to raise his elbows and press them against his sides alternately.

Soon he breathed again, but he remained unconscious, and a restored circulation caused blood to flow freely from the back of his head.

Of course the men were voicing their surprise throughout this unparalleled experience.

"Who is he?"

"Where did he come from?"

"Nobbut a foony wad ha' jumped off your crag."

"He's neakin' as when he was born."

"At last one of them noticed his brother's scalp. He pointed out the wound to his compatriots."

"That was never dear by fallin' it's watter," he said.

They agreed. The thing was mysteriously serious. Philip's youth, his nature, his delicate skin, the texture of his hands, the cleanliness of his teeth and nails, were quick tokens to the fisherman that something quite beyond the common run of seaside accidents had taken place. The oarsman, a man of much intelligence, hit on an explanation.

"He was swimmin' doon t' cliff after birds," he cried. "Mebbe fotografin' 'em. I heerd o' sike doins."

"Man alive," cried one of his mates, "he wouldn't strip t' skin for that job."

This was unanswerable. Not one gave a thought to the invisible Grange House.

They held a hasty consultation. One man doffed his jersey for Philip's benefit, and then they hastily covered him with oilskin coat and overalls.

It was now nearly dark, so they ran out a marking buoy for their net, shipped oars and pulled lustily to their remote fishing hamlet, three miles away from the outlet of the river which flowed through Scarsdale.

Arrived there, they carried Philip to the house of one who was the proud owner of a "spare" bed.

And now a fresh difficulty arose. A doctor and a policeman should be summoned. A messenger was dispatched at once for the nearest medical man, who lived a mile and a half away, but the policeman, who dwelt in the village, was a bird of another color.

These men were poachers, lawbreakers. At various times they had six been fined for illegal fishing. The policeman was of an inquiring turn of mind. He might fail to understand the mystery of the cliff, but he would most certainly appreciate every detail of their presence in that particular part of the sea which lapped its base.

So they smoked and talked and tried rough remedies until the doctor arrived.

To him they told the exact truth. He passed no comment, examined his patient, cut away the hair from the scalp wound, shook his head over it, bound it up, administered some stimulants and sat down to await the return of consciousness.

But this was long delayed, and when at last Philip opened his eyes he only rallied sufficiently to sleep.

The doctor promised to come early next day and left.

Throughout Wednesday and Thursday Philip was partly delirious, waking at times to a vague consciousness of his surroundings, but mostly asking vacantly for "Evelyn."

Often he fought with a person named "Jocky Mason" and explained that "Sir Philip" was not in Yorkshire at all.

The wife of one of his rescuers was assiduous in her attentions. Most fortunately, for these fisher folk were very poor, that lass spread beneath the cliff in unpreceded number of salmon, so she could afford to buy eggs and milk in abundance, and the doctor brought such medicines as were needed.

Gradually Philip recovered until at 9 o'clock on Thursday night he came into sudden and full use of his senses.

Then the doctor was sent for urgently. Philip insisted on getting up at once. He was kept in bed almost by main force.

With the doctor's arrival there was a further change. Here was an educated man, who listened attentively to his patient's story and did not instantly conclude that he was raving.

He helped, too, by his advice. It was utterly impossible to send a telegram to London that night. No matter what the sufferings of anxious friends concerning him, they could not be assuaged until the morning.

Yes, he would find money and clothes, accompany him, if need be, on the journey if he were able to travel tomorrow—attend to all things, in fact, in his behalf—for millionaires are scarce birds in secluded moorland districts. But meanwhile he must take a drink of milk and beef essence, rest a little while, take this draft, in a small bottle indicated, and sleep.

Sleep was quite essential. He would awake in the morning very much better. The knock on the head was not so serious as it looked at first sight. Probably he would not even feel it again if he wore a soft cap for some days. The broken skin was healing nicely, and concussion of the brain had many gradations as fever, which ranges from a slight cold to Yellow Jack.

In his case he was suffering from two severe shocks, but the crisis was passed, and he was able, even now, to get up if it could serve any possible purpose.

All this, save the promise of help, the doctor said with his tongue in his cheek. He had not the slightest intention of permitting Philip to travel next day. It was out of the question. But

York 5:30. Mr. Scarth permits journey and accompanies me. Send any further messages care of respective station masters prior to hours named. Accept statement implicitly that I will reach London to-morrow. Will be there for you at certain, earliest, if necessary. As for identity, you will recall May 15, Hyde park, near Stanhope gate, 4 o'clock.

Evelyn and he alone knew that at that spot on the day and hour named they became engaged.

The policeman valiantly lent the few shillings necessary, and the sturdy horse from the Fox and Hounds tore back to Scarsdale.

But the constable was of additional value. His researches in Scarsdale provided a fairly accurate history and description of the two denizens of the Grange House.

Philip himself had, of course, seen "Dr. Williams" in broad daylight and undisguised—not yet could he remember where he heard that smooth-toned voice. Jocky Mason he only pictured hazily after the lapse of years, but the policeman's details of his personal appearance coincided exactly with Philip's recollection, allowing for the age and the hardships of convict life.

At last came the doctor with a visit.

"I am sorry," he laughed, "but all the money I can muster at such short notice is £12."

"I began life once before with three half-pence," was the cheery reply.

The few inhabitants of the hamlet gathered to see them off, and the fisherman's wife was moved to screw her apron to her eyes when Philip shook hands with her, saying that she would see him again in a few days.

"Eh, but he's a bonny lad," was her verdict, "Twas a fair shamus to treat him son."

He described his encounter with another Philip Anson in the highroad at an hour when the real personage of that name was unquestionably being attended to by the doctor himself in the fisherman's cottage.

"Aye," he said in his broad Yorkshire dialect, "he was as like you, sir, as two peas, ony, now that I see ye, he wasn't sike a-sike, a gentleman as you, an' he talked wi' a queer catch in his voice. 'Tuther chap 'ud be Jocky Mason, 'cordin' to ye description, so it seems to me 'at this 'ere Dr. Williams, 'oo druv you frae t' station, must ha' took yer clothes an' twisted his feace to leuke as much like you as he could."

The doctor cut short further conversation. He insisted on his patient seeking rest, but in response to Philip's urgent request he wrote a long telegram, which he promised would be handed in when the Scarsdale telegraph office opened next morning.

And this was Philip's message to Evelyn:

I have suffered detention since Tuesday night at the hands of Jocky Mason, whose name I now learn for by friends unknown. I am now cared for by friends and recovering rapidly from injuries received in a struggle. I return to London today. My only fear is that you must have endured terrible uncertainty if by any chance you imagined I was missing. TELL ABINGDON.

And then followed his address, care of the doctor.

"Is that all?" said Anson's new found friend.

Philip smiled feebly, for he was very weak.

"There is one matter, small in many ways, but important too. You might add, 'I hope you have not lost Blue Atom by this mischance!'"

He sank back exhausted.

It was on the tip of the doctor's tongue to ask:

"What in the world is a blue atom?"

But he forbore. The sleeping potion was taking effect, and he would not rouse it. He subsequently wrote a telegram on his own account:

Mr. Anson is convalescing, but a journey today is impossible. A reasonable message from you will give him from patience and help his recovery. He has been delirious until last night. Now all he needs is rest and freedom from worry.

His man waited at Scarsdale post-office until a reply came next day. Then he rode with it to the village where Philip was yet sleeping peacefully. Indeed, the clatter of hoofs without aroused him, and he opened his eyes to find the doctor sitting as though he had never quitted his side.

Philip's message must have caused much speculation as to its true significance in the minds of those telegraphic officials through whose hands it passed. It read:

Mr. absolutely bewildered. Cannot help feeling sure that news received today really comes from you. In that case, please give me a brief return telegram in your name from Station hotel, York? Do not know what to think. Am going immediately to Abingdon. Please send more information. Suspense unbearable. EVELYN?

The question was unusual in its form, disturbing in its innuendo. The man who asked it was pale, with unnaturally brilliant brown eyes, a gentleman in manner, but attired in ill-fitting garments, and beneath his tweed cap he wore a surgical bandage.

And Philip Anson, the millionaire, of whom he spoke thus contemptuously, was staying in the hotel and paying for its best rooms.

But the manager was perfectly civil. The presence of Dr. Scarth, a reputable-looking stranger, gave evidence that something important was afoot. Mr. Anson was in his rooms at the moment. Their names would be sent up.

Dr. Scarth, quick to appreciate the difficulties of the situation, intervened quietly.

"Is he alone?"

"Then it will be better if you accompany us in person. An unpleasant matter can be arranged without undue publicity."

This was alarming. The manager went with them instantly. They paused at the door indicated.

"Come with me," said Philip, turning the handle without knocking.

Grenier, intent on the perusal of a letter he had just written, looked up.

He was face to face with Philip Anson.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE one man stood, the other sat, gazing at each other in a silence that was thrilling.

Dr. Scarth and the hotel manager entered noiselessly and closed the door behind them. Grenier, adroit scoundrel that he was, was bereft of speech, of the power to move. He harbored no delusions. This was no ghost coming to trouble his soul in broad daylight. It was Philip Anson himself, alive and in full possession of his senses, a more terrible apparition than any visitor from beyond the grave. His presence in that room meant penal servitude for life for Victor Grenier, a prison cell instead of palatial chambers, bread and skilly in place of Carlton luncheons.

No wonder the scoundrel was dumb, that his tongue was dry. He went cold all over, and his eyes swam.

The policeman helped him as to local information, and he wrote the following:

Leaving Scarsdale at 2:30 p.m. Passes through Malton at 4 o'clock and reaches

could not move. He was glued to his chair.

"Who are you?" said Anson sternly.

"No answer. As yet the acute brain refused to work. Lost—ruined—no escape—were the vague ideas that jolted each other in chaos.

"Can you not speak? Who are you that dares to usurp my name after striving to murder me?"

No answer. The shifty eyes—the eyes of a detected pickpocket—wandered stupidly from Philip's set face to that of the perplexed hotel manager and the gravely amused doctor.

Philip never used strong language, but he was greatly tempted at that moment.

"Confound you!" he shouted. "Why don't you answer me?"

"I—my name is Philip Anson. The manager—the bank."

As Philip told him briefly. His astonishment was extreme at the nature of the gathering, but he instantly noticed Philip's wan appearance and the bandage on his head.

"My dear, dear boy," he cried, "what has happened?"

Philip told him briefly. As the ex-magistrate's glance rested on Mason and Grenier it became very chilly. It brought Portland prison near to the soul of one of them. He poured out more spirit.

The respite given by Mr. Abingdon's arrival gave Mason time to focus his thoughts. The man had lived in an inferno since he slipped away from his sons that morning on a plea of urgent business in order to catch a fast train for York in the afternoon.

He knew that Grenier would make the Station hotel his headquarters, and his sole desire was to stop that enterprising rogue from committing further crimes which might be damaging to Anson's estate and disastrous to the peace of mind of the girl he loved.

In no way did he hold Grenier responsible for urging him to commit murder. The journey to York was undertaken in the first place to save Philip's memory from the slur which was intended to be cast upon it and secondly to afford a plausible pretext for a platform accident whereby his own life should be dashed out of him by an engine.

It only he could get away into the crowded station, into the streets, sink into obscurity while the chase swept past.

"You Philip Anson! You will forgive me, I am sorely inclined to write you my neck."

Philip came nearer. In sheer fright the other might give effect to his words. Grenier again backed his chair violently. It caught against a thick rug, and he fell headlong. For an instant they all thought he had hurt himself seriously.

The doctor and manager ran to pick him up, but he rose to his knees and whined:

"I will tell everything. I mean there is no mistake. Look at my letters, my bank books. They are Philip Anson's. Indeed, there is a mistake."

On the table were many documents and a pile of bank notes. Everything was in order, neatly pinned and docketed. A number of telegrams, of which the topmost was signed "Evelyn," caught Philip's eye. He took them up. Not only were his betrothel messages preserved, but copies of Grenier's replies were inserted in their proper sequence.

And Evelyn's letters, too, lay before him. He flushed with anger as he read.

"Oh," he cried in a sudden blaze, "if I talk with this scoundrel I shall do him an injury. Send for the police. They will know how to deal with him."

The mere mention of the police galvanized Grenier into the activity of a wildcat. He had risen to his feet and was standing limply between the doctor and manager when that hated word electrified him.

With one spring he was free of them, running frantically to the door. After him went all three, the manager leading.

Grenier tore the door open and got outside. It was a hopeless attempt. He would be stopped by hotel porters at the foot of the stairs by the manager's loud voiced order. Yet he raced for dear liberty, trusting blindly to fate.

And fate met him more than half-way.

A tall man coming upstairs with a page boy encountered Grenier flying downward. He grabbed him in a clutch of iron and cried sardonically:

"Not you, you don't! A word with me if the devil was at your heels!"

Intent on his prize, he paid no heed to others.

"What is his room?" he said to the boy.

"No. 41, sir," stammered the youngster, who thought that millionaires should be treated with more ceremony than this wolf-eyed stranger bestowed on the great Mr. Anson.

"Go on, then! I'll bring him!"

"It is Jocky Mason," murmured Philip to Dr. Scarth. With the manager they had halted in the corridor. Mason strode past them with eyes only for the cowering Grenier, who was making piteous appeals to be set free.

The stronger ruffian threw his confederate into room 41 and was about to close the door when he saw Philip close behind him.

He stepped back a pace, mute, rigid, seeking with glaring eyes to learn whether or not he was the victim of hallucination.

Philip knew him instantly. The voice he heard on the stairs, the policeman's rough but accurate picture, the recollection of the captive of Johnson's Mews, all combined to tell him that in truth Jocky Mason stood before him.

More than that, the would be master handled his accomplice in a way that promised interesting developments. Now, perchance, the truth might be ascertained. Escape was out of the question for either of them. The manager's cry had brought four strong porters pell-mell to the spot.