

The KING of DIAMONDS.

By Louis Tracy.

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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.

"Where did he come from?"

"Nobbut a loony had been jumped off a boat."

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

At last one of them noticed his broken scalp. He pointed out the wound to his companions.

"That was never done by fallin' in 't water," 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 fishermen 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 swarmin' down 't cliff after 't birds," he cried. "Mebbe fotygraffin' 'em. I've heard 't sike doin' s."

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

This was unwelcome. 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 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 stimulant 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 lure spread beneath the cliff inveigled an unprecedented 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 millions 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. It was out of the question. But

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er reason with him "in the morning and if needful bring his friends to Yorkshire rather than send him to London.

But the police must be informed at once. It was more than likely the criminals had left the Grange House poor after the attempted murder. Yet, if Philip did not object, a policeman should be summoned, and the tale told to him. The man should be warned to keep the story out of the papers.

The arrival of the constable at a late hour created consternation in the household. But the doctor knew his people.

"Have no fear, Mrs. Verrill," he whispered to the fisherman's wife; "your husband caught a fine fish when he drew Mr. Anson into his net. He will not need to poach salmon any more."

The doctor sat by Philip's bed while the policeman made clumsy notes of that eventful Tuesday night's occurrences.

Then in his turn he amazed his hearers.

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, only, now that I see you, he wasn't sike a—sike a gentleman as you, an' he talked w' a queer catch in his voice. T'uther chap 'ud be Jocky Mason, 'cordin' to your description, so it seems to me 'at this 'ere Dr. Williams, 'oo druv' you frae 't station, must 'ave took yer clothes an' twisted his face to luke as m'ch 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 you will recollect, and another man 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 may 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 retard it. He subsequently wrote a telegram on his own account:

Mr. Anson is convalescing, but a journey today is impossible. A reassuring message from you will save him from imaginary 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.

Evelyn'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:

Am absolutely bewildered. Cannot help feeling sure that news received today really comes from you. In that case, who is it who has been writing repeatedly 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.

If ever there was need for action it was needed now. Anson's strenuous energy brought forth the full strength of his indomitable will. The pallor fled from his cheeks, the dullness from his eyes.

"Dr. Scarth," he cried, "you must not keep here in view of that telegram from the woman I love. Believe me, I will be worse, not better, if you force me to remain inactive, chained almost helpless in this village and miles away from even a telegraph office. Help me now, and you will never regret it. I ask you."

The doctor cut short his excited outburst.

"Very well," he said, "Whatever you do try and cease from troubling yourself about circumstances which a few hours will put right. I must return to my dispensary for one hour. Then I will come for you, bring some clothes and the necessary money, and we will leave Scarsdale for York at 2:30 p. m. That is the best I can promise. It must satisfy you."

He gave hasty directions as to his patient's food and left him.

Another telegram arrived, with it the policeman, in the dogcart of the Fox and Hounds inn.

Abingdon went to Devonshire yesterday. His wife says he suspected that something had gone wrong. Unhappily we do not know his address, but he writes that he is not to be expected home today.

Do ask Dr. Scarth to send further news if unable yourself. EVELYN.

Philip hesitated to be explicit as to the real nature of the outrage inflicted on him by Jocky Mason and his unknown accomplice. He hastily determined that the best assurance he could give to the distracted girl was one of his immediate departure from the village.

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

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

York 5:30. Dr. Scarth permits journey and accompanies me. Send any further messages care of respective station masters prior to hour named. Accept statement implicitly that I will reach London tonight. Will wire you from York certain, earlier if necessary. As for present, 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-tongued 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 age and the hardships of convict life.

At last came the doctor with a valise.

"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 halfpence," he 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 into her eyes when Philip shook hands with her, saying that he would see him again in a few days.

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

At Scarsdale and at Malton again came loving words from Evelyn. Now she knew who it was who telegraphed to her.

And the mysterious Philip Anson at York remained dumb.

"The wretch," she said to her mother, "to dare to open my letter and send me impudent replies!"

More than once she thought of going to York to meet her lover, but she wisely desisted.

He was "acc to face with Philip Anson," he decided against this course. Mr. Abingdon was out of town, and Philip might need some one he could trust to obey his instructions in London.

At ten minutes past 5 Anson and Dr. Scarth arrived in York.

A long discourse in the train gave them a plan. They would not appeal at once to the police. Better clear the mist that hid events before the aid of the law was invoked. There were two of them, and the assistance of the hotel people could be obtained if necessary.

They hurried first to the station master's office. Anything for Anson? Yes. Only a few words of entreaty from Evelyn to avoid further risk.

Then to the hotel. They sought the manager.

"Is there a man staying here who represents that his name is Philip Anson?"

The question was unusual in its form, disturbing in its innuendo. The man who asked it was pale, with unnatural 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 his 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?"

"Yes."

"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 aside without knocking.

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

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 all power to move. He harbored no doubts. 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 were staring.

Philip advanced towards him. Grenier

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 jostled 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 a spent fox will vainly try the last despairing device of climbing a tree in the sight of the hounds, so did Victor Grenier evolve the desperate scheme that perhaps—perhaps—he might carry out a feeble pretense of self assertion.

If only he could get away into the crowded station, into the streets, sink into obscurity while the chase swept past, he might yet endeavor to escape.

"You Philip Anson! You vile impostor! I am sorely inclined to wring your neck!"

Philip came nearer. In sheer fright lest the other might give effect to his words Grenier backed his chair violently. It caught against a thick rug, and he fell headlong. For an instant he 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 some 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 betrothed's 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, rushing 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 halfway.

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

"No, you don't! A word with me first if the devil was at your heels!"

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

"Which 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 covering 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 murderer 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.

"You and I will enter," said Anson to Dr. Scarth. "You to the manager, 'might kindly remain here with your men for a few minutes.'"

"Shall I summon the police?"

"Not yet. I want to clear matters somewhat. They are dreadfully tangled."

Mason, spellbound, but fearless as ever, heard the dead man speak, saw him move. He could not refuse the evidence of eyes and ears. As Philip advanced into the room, a giant put his hands wildly to his head and sobbed brokenly:

"Thank God! Thank God! For my boys' sake, not for mine!"

His extraordinary attitude, his no less extraordinary words, amazed at least two of his hearers. Grenier, rendered callous now by sheer hopelessness, was pouring out some brandy and lighting a cigarette. The revulsion of feeling at the sight of Mason had calmed him. He would make the most of the few minutes that were left before he was handcuffed.

Dr. Scarth took the precaution of locking the door and putting the key into his pocket. It is doubtful if he would have done this had he known Mason's violent character. But, unknown to Philip, he carried a revolver, which he whipped forth when Grenier bolted and as rapidly concealed when it was not needed.

"You did not kill me, you see," said Philip, sinking into a chair, for the excitement was beginning to tell on him. The big man slowly dropped his hands. His prominent eyes seemed to be fascinated by the sight of one who had thrown apparently lifeless into the sea.

"I could kick your boots," he said thickly.

"Blue Atom! Blue Atom! is a nobler

specimen of a dog than yourself. He is a prize toy Pomeranian. You are a mongrel."

Grenier for an instant grew confused again. He sighed deeply.

"A dog?" he murmured. "A blue Pomeranian! Who would have guessed it?"

Philip turned to Mason.

"If I leave you here alone with this man, Grenier, will you keep him out of mischief?"

Jocky gave his associate a glance which caused that worthy to sit down suddenly.

"And yourself? Promise that you will remain as you are until I return?"

"I promise."

Anson led his friends from the room. He thanked the manager for the assistance he had given and told him the affair might be arranged without police interference.

Long and earnestly did he confer with Mr. Abingdon. It was a serious thing to let these men off scot free. Grenier's case was worse in a sense than that of Mason.

There were three banks involved, and forgery to a bank is a crime not to be forgiven. There was a dubious way out. Philip might accept responsibility for Grenier's transactions. If the London bank accepted Grenier's signature for his, surely the local institutions would accept his for Grenier's.

Mr. Abingdon was wroth at the bare suggestion.

"You will be forging your own name," he protested vehemently.

"Very well, then. He shall write checks payable to self or order, in-dorse them, and I will pay them into my account."

"I dare not approve of any such procedure."

So Philip, though sorely tried, again labored his arguments that the trial of Grenier would be a cause celebre in which his Anson's name would be unpleasantly prominent. Evelyn would be drawn into it and Abingdon himself. There would be columns of sensation in the newspapers.

Moreover it was quite certain that Jocky Mason would commit suicide unless they captured him by a subtle device, and then the whole story would leak out.

It ended by Philip gaining the day, for at the bottom of his heart Abingdon was touched by Mason's story, thorough-paced ruffian as he was.

They re-entered No. 41. The pair were sitting as they were left. Grenier was not even smoking. The affair of the Blue Atom had deeply wounded his vanity.

Philip walked straight to Mason and took him by the shoulder.

"Now, listen to me," he said. "I gave you one crack on the head, and you have got me one. Shall we say that accounts are squared?"

"Do you mean it, sir?"

"Yes, absolutely."

"Then all I can say is this, sir: During the rest of my life I'll make good use of the chance you have given me. God bless you for the boys' sake more than my own."

"And you," went on Philip, turning to the disconsolate Grenier, "will you leave England and make a fresh start in a new land? You are young enough and clever enough in some respects to earn honest living."

"I will, sir. I swear it."

The utter collapse of his castle in Spain had sobered him. The gates of Portland were yawning open for him, and the goodness of the man he had wronged had closed them in his face. Never again would he see their grim front if he could help it.

He readily gave every assistance in the brief investigation that followed. Mr. Abingdon looked on askance as he wrote checks for £3,000 and £5,000 on the York and Leeds banks respectively, but even Philip himself gave an astonished laugh when he saw his own signature written with quiet certainty and accuracy.

"Oh, that's nothing," cried Grenier in momentary elation. "I took in Mr. Abingdon and sent a complete letter to the London bank."

"You did not take me in," growled Abingdon. "You made one fatal mistake."

"And what was that, sir?"

"You alluded to the annual report of the 'home.' Every one connected with that establishment, from the founder down to the latest office boy, invariably calls it the 'Mary Anson home.' Mr. Anson would never write of it in other terms."

Grenier was again abashed.

"Have you any money in your pocket?" said Philip when the forger had accounted for every farthing.

For one appreciable instant Grenier hesitated. Then he flushed. He had resisted temptation.

"Yes," he said, "plenty. Langdon supplied me with funds."

"How much?"

"Two hundred and fifty pounds. I have over seventy left."

"I will arrange matters with him. Come to my West End office next Monday, and you will be given sufficient to keep you from poverty and crime until you find your feet in Canada. Remember, you sail on Wednesday."

No fear of any failure on my part, sir. I can hardly credit my good fortune. I want to