

THE BOY

OF PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

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 Mr. Sanford Quest, the world's greatest criminologist of the world. He takes Lenora, Ella's maid, to his own apartments and through hypnosis and the use of electro-telpathic appliances discovers her connection with the crime. However, he fails to find out the name of the murderer. 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, previously owned by Lord Ashleigh. Mardonius 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 easy 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 knee. 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 restlessly about the room.

"Say, girls," he confessed, "this is the first time in my life I have been in a fix like this. Two cases on hand and nothing doing with either of them. Criminologist, indeed! Whose box is this?"

Quest had paused suddenly in front of an oak sideboard which stood against the wall. Occupying a position upon it of some prominence was a small black box, whose presence there seemed to him unfamiliar. Laura came over to his side and looked at it also in puzzled fashion.

"Never saw it before in my life," she answered.

Quest grunted.

"I'm! No one else has been in the room, and it hasn't been empty for more than ten minutes," he remarked. "Well, let's see what's inside, anyway."

He lifted off the lid. There was nothing in the interior but a sheet of paper folded up. Quest smoothed it out with his hand. They all leaned over and read the following words, written in an obviously disguised hand:

You have embarked on a new study—anthropology. What characteristic strikes you most forcibly in connection with it? Cunning? The necklace might be where the skeleton is. Why not begin at the beginning?

The note was unsigned, but in the spot where a signature might have been there was a rough pen drawing of two hands, with fingers extended, talon fashion, menacingly, as though poised to strike at some unseen enemy. Quest, after their first moment of stupefaction, whistled softly.

"The hands!" he muttered.

"What hands?" Lenora asked.

"The hands that gripped Mrs. Rheinholdt by the throat," he reminded them. "Don't you remember? Hands without arms?"

There was another brief, almost stupefied silence. Then Laura broke into speech.

"What I want to know is," she demanded, "who brought the thing here?"

"A most daring exploit, anyway," Quest declared. "If we could answer your question, Laura, we could solve the whole riddle. We are up against something, and no mistake."

"The hand which placed that box here," 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 liberty 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 onto 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 here 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 to her a little wad of notes.

"It is 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 "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 self-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

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.

"Get 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 night out sometimes. Let's find out what he does. How's that?"

"Capital!" Quest agreed. "Get along, Laura. And you, Lenora," he added, "put on your hat. We'll take a ride towards Mayton avenue."

CHAPTER IX.

The exact spot where the bone of the missing skeleton was discovered, was easily located. It was about twenty yards from a gate which led into the back part of the professor's grounds. Quest wasted very little time before arriving at a decision.

"The discovery of the bone so near the professor's house," he decided, "cannot be coincidence

a club, and gripped it. Quest drew a long breath. His eyes were set hard.

"Drop that club," he ordered.

The creature suddenly sprang up. The club was waved around his head.

"Drop it," Quest repeated firmly. "You will sit down in your corner. You will sleep."

The club slipped from the hairy fingers. The tense frame, which had been already crouched for the spring was suddenly relaxed.

They found nothing unusual until they came to the distant corner, where a huge piano box lay on its side with the opening turned to the wall.

"This is where the brute sleeps, I suppose," Quest remarked. "We'll turn it around anyway."

They dragged it a few feet away from the wall, so that the opening faced them. Then Lenora gave a little cry and Quest stood suddenly still.

"The skeleton!" Lenora shrieked. "It's the skeleton!"

It was a skeleton so old that the bones had turned a dull gray. Quest glanced towards the hands.

"Little fingers both missing," he muttered.

"Remember the message?" she exclaimed. "Where the skeleton is, the necklace may be also."

Quest nodded shortly.

"We'll search."

They turned over everything in the place fruitlessly. There was no sign of the necklace.

"You get outside, Lenora," Quest directed. "I'll just bring this beast round again and then we'll tackle the professor."

Quest turned towards the creature which still huddled up in its corner.

"Look at me," he ordered.

The creature obeyed. Once more its frame seemed to grow more virile and natural.

"You need sleep no longer," Quest said. "Wake up and be yourself."

The effect of his words was instantaneous. Almost as he spoke, the creature crouched for a

"Where? Where exactly did you find it?" the professor insisted.

"I found it in a hut," Quest said. "Hidden in a piano box. I found there, also, a creature—a human being. I must call him—in a state of captivity."

"Hidden in a piano box?" the professor repeated wonderingly. "Why, you mean in Hartoo's sleeping box, then?"

"If Mr. Hartoo is the gentleman who tried to club me, you are right," Quest admitted. "Mr. Ashleigh, before we go any further I must ask you for an explanation as to the presence of that person in your grounds?"

The professor hesitated for a moment. Then he slowly crossed the room, opened the drawer of a small escritoire, and drew out a letter.

"You have heard of Sir William Raymore, the president of the Royal Society?" he asked.

"Quest nodded.

"This letter is from him," the professor continued. "You had better read it."

The criminologist read it aloud. Lenora looked over his shoulder.

To Prof. Edgar Ashleigh, New York.

My Dear Professor: Your communication gratifies and interests me. I can say no more. It fell to your lot to discover the skeleton of the anthropoid, a marvelous thing, in its way, and needing only its corollary to form the greatest discovery since the dark ages. Now you tell me that in the person of Hartoo, the last of the Raymore race of South Africa, you have found that corollary. You have supplied the missing link. You are in a position to give to the world a definite and logical explanation of the evolution of man. Let me give you a word of warning, however, before you go any further. Anthropologists are affected more, even, than any other race of scientific men, with jealousy. Guard your secret well, lest the honor of this discovery should be stolen from you.

WILLIAM RAYMORE

The professor nodded deliberately as Quest finished the letter.

"Now, perhaps, you can understand," he said, "why it was necessary to keep Hartoo absolutely hidden. In a month's time my papers will be ready. Then I shall electrify the world. I shall write not a new page but a new volume across the history of science. I shall—"

The door was suddenly thrown open. Craig sprang in, no longer the self-contained, perfect man-servant, but with the face of some wild creature. His shout was one almost of agony.

"The hut, professor! The hut is on fire!" he cried.

His appearance on the threshold was like a flash. They heard his flying feet down the hall, and without a moment's hesitation they all followed. The professor led the way down a narrow and concealed path, but when they reached the little clearing in which the hut was situated, they were unable to approach any nearer. The place was a whirlwind of flame. The smell of kerosene was almost overpowering. The wild yell of the leopard rose above the strange, half-human gibbering of the monkeys and the hoarse, bass calling of another voice, at the sound of which Lenora and even Quest shuddered. Then, as they came, breathless, to a standstill, they saw a strange thing. One side of the hut fell in, and almost immediately the leopard with a mighty spring, leaped from the place and ran howling into the undergrowth. The monkeys followed but they came straight for the professor, wringing their hands. They fawned at his feet as though trying to show him their scorched bodies. Then for a single moment they saw the form of the ape-man as he struggled to follow the others. His strength failed him, however. He fell backwards into the burning chasm.

The professor bade them farewell, an hour later, on the steps of the house. He seemed suddenly to have aged.

"You have done your best, Mr. Quest," he said, "but fate has been too strong. Remember this, though. It is quite true that the cunning of Hartoo may have made it possible for him to have stolen the skeleton and to have brought it back to its hiding-place, but it was jealousy—cruel, brutal, foul jealousy which smeared the walls of that hut with kerosene and set light to it. The work of a lifetime, my dreams of scientific immortality, have vanished in those flames."

He turned slowly away from them and re-entered the house. Quest and Lenora made their way down the avenue and entered the automobile which was waiting for them, almost in silence. The latter glanced toward his companion, as they drove off.

"Say, this has been a bit tough for you," he remarked. "I'll have to call somewhere and get you a glass of wine."

She tried to smile but her strength was almost gone. They drove to a restaurant and sat there for some little time. Lenora soon recovered her color. She even had courage to speak of the events of the afternoon when they re-entered the automobile.

"Mr. Quest," Lenora murmured, "who do you suppose burned the hut down?"

"If I don't say Craig, I suppose you will," he remarked. "I wonder whether Laura's had any luck."

They were greeted, as they entered Quest's room, by a familiar little ticking. Quest smiled with pleasure.

"It's the pocket wireless," he declared. "Let me take down the message."

He spelled it out to Lenora, who stood by his side:

Have joined Servants' club disguised as your butler. Craig friend visitor here ten years ago, comes now occasionally. Tuesdays evening most likely time. Shall wait here on chance of seeing him.

"Good girl, that," Quest remarked. "She