

## The Dream Detective

By SAX ROHMER

"Now, Mr. Grimsby," said Morris Klaw when we four investigators had gathered together again, "you will hide in the case with the mummies."

"But I may find myself helpless! How do we know that any particular case is going to be opened? Besides, I don't know what to expect!"

"Blessed is he that expecteth little, my friend. It is quite possible that no attempt will be made tonight. In that event you will have to be locked in again tomorrow night!"

Grimsby accordingly set out. He held a key to the curator's private door, which opened upon the Greek room, and also the key of a wall case. Morris Klaw had especially warned him against making the slightest noise. In fact, he had us all agree with curiosity and expectation. As he and Coram and I, having opened, very carefully, the landing window, looked down through the skylight into the Egyptian room, Grimsby appeared beneath us. He was carrying an electric pocket torch.

Opening the wall case nearest to the lower end of the room, he glanced up rapidly, then stepped within, reclosing the glass door. As Klaw had pointed out, earlier in the evening, an ideal hiding place existed between the side of the last sarcophagus and the angle of the wall.

"I hope he has refastened the catch," said our eccentric companion, "but not with noise!"

"Why do you fear his making a noise?" asked Coram, curiously.

"Outside, upon the landing," replied Morris Klaw, "is a tall piece of a bas-relief; it leans back against the wall. You know it?"

"Tonight, you did not look behind it, in the triangular space so formed."

"There's no occasion. A man could not get in there."

"He could not, you say? No? That exploits to me, Mr. Coram, that you

have no eye for capacity! But if you are wrong, what then?"

"Anyone hiding there would have to remain in hiding until the morning. He could not gain access to any of the rooms; all are locked, and he could not go downstairs, because of the night attendant in the hallway."

"No? Yes? You are two times wrong! First—someone is concealed there."

"Mr. Klaw," began Coram, excitedly, "Ssh!" Morris Klaw raised his hand. "No excitement. It is noisy and a tax upon the nerves. Second—you are wrong, because presently that hidden one will come into the Egyptian room."

"How? How in heaven's name is he going to get in?"

"We shall see."

Utterly mystified, Coram and I stared at Morris Klaw, for we stood one on either side of him; but he merely wagged his finger enjoining us to silence, and silent perforce we became.

The view was a cramped one, and standing there looking out at the clear summer night, I for one grew very weary of the business. But I was sustained by the anticipation that the mystery of the headless mummies was about to come to a climax. I felt very sorry for poor Grimsby, cramped in the

corner of the Egyptian room, for I knew him to be even more hopelessly in these manoeuvres than I was myself. In vain I racked my brain in quest of the link which united the ancient "Book of the Lamps" with the singular case which had brought us there that night.

Coram began to fidget, and I knew intuitively that he was about to speak. "Ssh!" whispered Morris Klaw.

A beam of light shone out beneath us, across the Egyptian room.

I concluded that something had attracted the attention of Grimsby. I leaned forward in tense expectancy, and Coram was keenly excited.

The beam of light moved; it shone upon the door of the very case in the corner of which Grimsby was hiding, but upon the nearer end, fully upon the face of a mummy.

A small figure was dimly discernible, the figure of the man who carried the light. Cautiously he crossed the room. Evidently he held the key of the wall case, for in an instant he had swung the door back and was hauling the mummy on to the floor.

Then out upon the midnight visitor leapt Grimsby. The light was extinguished—and Morris Klaw, drawing back from the window, seized Coram by the

arm, crying, "The key of the door! The key of the door!"

We were down and into the Egyptian room in less than half a minute. Coram switched on all the lights; and there with his back to the open door of the wall case, handcuffed and wild-eyed, was Mr. Mark Pettigrew.

Coram's face was a study—for the famous archaeologist whom we now saw manacled before us was a trustee of the Menzies Museum.

"Mr. Pettigrew!" he said, hoarsely. "Mr. Pettigrew! there must be some mistake."

"There is no mistake, my good sir," rumbled Morris Klaw. "Look, he has with him a sharp knife to cut off the head of the priest!"

It was true. An open knife lay upon the floor beside the fallen mummy. Grimsby was breathing very heavily and looking in rather a startled way at his captive, who seemed unable to realize what had happened. Coram cleared his throat nervously. It was one of the strangest scenes in which I had ever participated.

"Mr. Pettigrew," he began, "it is incomprehensible to me—"

"I will make you to comprehend," interrupted Morris Klaw. "You ask"—he raised a long finger—"why should Mr. Pettigrew cut off the head of his own mummy? I answer for the same reason that he cut off the head of the one at Sotheby's. You ask why did he cut off the head of the one at Sotheby's? I answer for the same reason that he cut off the head of the one at my house, and for the same reason that he came to cut off the head of this one! What is he looking for? He is looking for the 'Book of the Lamps'!"

He paused, gazing around upon us. Probably, excepting the prisoners, I alone amongst his listeners understood what he meant.

"I have related to Mr. Stables," he continued, "some of the history of that book, contained the ritual of the ancient Egyptian ceremonial magic. It was priceless; it gave its possessors a power above the power of kings; and when the line of Pharaohs became extinct it vanished. Where did it go? According to a very rare record of which there are only two copies in existence—one of them in my possession and one in Mr. Pettigrew's—it was hidden in the skull of the mummy of a priest or priestess of the temple."

Pettigrew was staring at him like a man fascinated.

"Mr. Pettigrew had only recently acquired that valuable manuscript work in which the fact is recorded; and being an enthusiast, gentlemen—he spread wide his hands continentally—"all we poor collectors are enthusiasts—he set to work upon the first available mummy of a priest of that temple. It was his own. The skull did not contain the priceless treasure! But all these mummies are historic; there are only five in Europe."

"Five?" blurted Pettigrew.

"Five," replied Klaw; "you thought there were only four, eh? But as a blind you called in the police and showed them how your mummy had been mutilated. It was good. It was clever. No one suspected you of the outrage after that—no one but the old fool who knew that you had secured the second copy of that valuable work of guidance."

"So you did not hesitate to use the keys you had procured in your capacity as trustee to gain access to this fourth mummy here?"

"Gentlemen," he said, "there will be no prosecution. The fever of research is a disease; never a crime."

"I agree," said Coram, "most certainly there must be no prosecution; no scandal. Mr. Pettigrew, I am very, very sorry for this."

Grimsby, with a rather wry face, removed the handcuffs. A singular expression proclaimed itself upon Pettigrew's shrivelled countenance.

"The thing I'm most sorry for," he said, dryly, but with the true fever of research burning in his eyes, "if you will excuse me saying it, Coram, for I'm very deeply indebted to you—is that I can't cut off the head of this fourth mummy!"

Mr. Mark Pettigrew was a singularly purposeful and rudely truculent man.

"It would be useless," rumbled Morris Klaw. "I found the fifth mummy in Egypt two years ago. And behold!—he swept his hand picturesquely through the air—"I beheaded him!"

"What?" screamed Pettigrew, and leapt upon Klaw with blazing eyes.

"Ah," rumbled Klaw, massive and unflinching, "that is the question—what? And I shall not tell you!"

From his pocket he took out the scent spray and squirted verben into the face of Mr. Pettigrew.

NINTH EPISODE  
Case of the Haunting of Grange.  
CHAPTER I.

A large lamp burned in the center of the table, a red-shaded candle stood close by each diner; and the soft light made a brave enough show upon the snowy napery and spotless silver, but dispersed nothing of the gloom about us.

The table was a lighted oasis in the desert of the huge apartment. One could barely pick out the suits of armor and trophies which hung from distant paneled walls, and I started repeatedly when the butler appeared, silent, at my elbow.

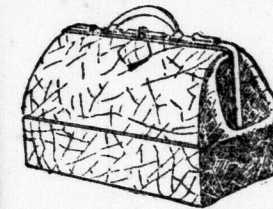
Of the party of five, four were men—three of them (for I venture to include myself) neatly groomed and dressed with care in conventional dinner fashion. The fourth was a heavy figure in a dress coat with broad satin lapels such as I have seen, I think, in pictures of Victorian celebrities. I have no doubt, judging from its shiny appearance, that it was the workmanship of a Victorian tailor. The vest was cut high and also boasted lapels; the trousers, though at present they were concealed beneath the table, belonged to a different suit, possibly a morning suit, and to a different sartorial epoch.

The woman, young, dark, and exceedingly pretty, wore a gown of shimmering amber, cut with Parisian daring. Her beautiful eyes were more often lowered than raised, for Sir James Leyland, our host, was unable to conceal his admiration; his face, tanned by his life in the bush, was often turned to her. Clement Leyland, the baronet's cousin, bore a striking resemblance to Sir James, but entirely lacked the latter's breezy manner. I set him down for a man who thought much and said little.

However, conversation could not well flag at a board boasting the presence of such a genial colonial as Sir James and such a storehouse of anecdotal oddities as Morris Klaw. Mr. Leyland and myself, then, for the most part practised the difficult art of listening; for Sir James, I learned, could talk almost as entertainingly as her father.

CONTINUED TOMORROW.

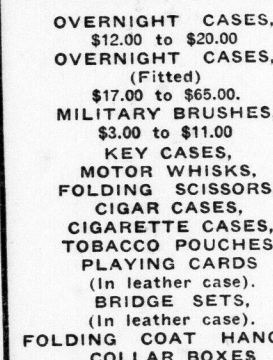
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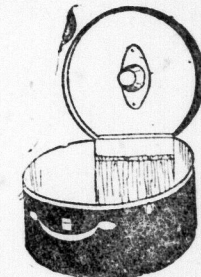
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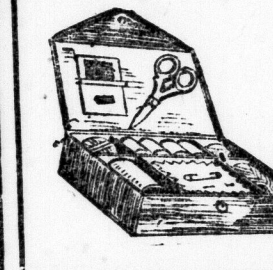
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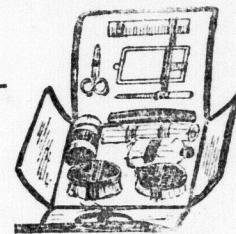
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