

The Mysterious Monogram

An Absorbing New Novel

By Howard P. Rocky

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER 1—On the day after a dinner at the Grill Club which was announced by his engagement to Grace Marston, Lord Harcourt is informed of the murder of one of his guests, Captain Townsend. Harcourt was the last man seen with Townsend and his valet dines a strangely monogrammed dinner jacket. Harcourt's mind is a blank on the subject.

CHAPTER 2—Harcourt determines to leave no stone unturned to find the murderer, or to accept nobly himself if guilty. At meeting of Governors of Grill Club, question of innocence of Harcourt is put to all who attended dinner. Harcourt admits he doesn't know. Suspicion points to an Indian prince, Kishin Kandawar, who attended dinner.

CHAPTER 3—During an interview with Inspector MacBee, the Yard Harcourt finds in the room where the murder was committed a cigar bearing a monogram like that which he smokes these cigarettes.

CHAPTER 4—Harcourt offers to re-examine the Grill Club. He is refused until the mystery of Townsend's murder is solved. He refuses to desert him in his trouble. In the revolution room of the Marston home he again comes across The Mysterious Monogram, and by refusing to answer questions Grace Marston leads Harcourt to believe that she is in some way connected with the crime.

CHAPTER 5—The police find Dr. Danson, doorkeeper of the Grill Club, strangled to death at the bottom of the fire escape leading from the room in which Townsend was killed. Clutched in his hand is the smudge of a cigar bearing the mysterious monogram and the initials "K. K."

CHAPTER 6—At a reception in the home of Harcourt, an American millionaire, Harcourt meets a man in a tuxedo, a servant. Near her he again finds the monogram. He is again asked questions and he declares unhesitatingly that he does not know the monogram and pretends to protect the guests.

CHAPTER 7—Returning from Harcourt's reception Harcourt finds Kandawar has broken into his study and stolen the dagger which was concealed under a cushion. Kandawar admits he is his.

CHAPTER 8—Kandawar is arrested while returning to three dagger in the study.

CHAPTER 9—At a house party at Harcourt Manor the monogram in silver found. Grace Marston is again asked questions and she refuses to answer them. Harcourt convinced of her connection with the crime, he tries to protect her. Harcourt and other guests refuse to believe him.

CHAPTER 10—A warrant is issued for Harcourt's arrest. Harcourt is forced to flee.

CHAPTER 11—Farnside and Carrington try to find detectives of the sort that are not sure of their success.

CHAPTER 12—The search for the yacht "Murita." Harcourt bribes crew to find it.

CHAPTER 13—Harcourt's plot is discovered by Carrington's daughter, and fails.

CHAPTER 14—Detectives taking Kandawar to police headquarters for evidence are attacked and Kandawar disappears.

CHAPTER 15—His yacht pursued by a motor launch, Harcourt is obliged to put Harcourt in launch and escape to Scottish coast.

The storm seemed to grow in intensity. The rain was coming down in torrents, making a great, slippery stream of the deck and the wind drove three gusts into the faces of the men gathered by the rail. Now a vivid flash of lightning made the scene like a flash for an instant, and while the light lasted they could see the pursuer plainly—not half a mile behind them.

Cornish noticed its nearness, and swore under his breath as Capt. Whitford, in dripping slippers approached hurriedly.

"I think we're far enough to land the launch now," he said. "On a night like this I don't want to run too close. It's going to be a risky undertaking for you though," he added anxiously looking toward the shore.

"How long will it take us to reach land?" Cornish asked, ignoring the warning.

"You ought to do it in an hour against this sea—provided nothing happens," the captain replied.

"Then let's get off," said Cornish without a moment's hesitation.

"Mr. Cornish!" Harcourt broke in. "I protest! I refuse to go."

"Lower the launch!" Cornish directed without heeding him.

As he gave the command Adele appeared in the companionway, completely enveloped in a seaman's oil-skin. Harcourt looked at her in surprise and she laughed mischievously at him. "Oh, you are not going to get rid of me just yet!" she said.

"You don't mean to say that you intend to go in the launch?" Harcourt asked.

"Certainly," said Adele. "You're entirely at our troublesome for dad to handle alone."

Again a dull boom sounded above the storm and this time, as Cornish had anticipated, they heard the shriek of a shell as it flew close to the yacht.

"Come on!" shouted Cornish. "There's no time to lose!"

"The launch is ready, sir," Whitford announced. The Murita had swung her nose about to the weather and the launch had been dropped from the port side, so that now the yacht lay between it and the cutter. Whit-

fully and momentarily eluded the watch of the other vessel.

Now that the chance of the launch being discovered was extremely remote, Cornish eased up a bit, and for the first time since they had started, turned to glance at the unconscious form behind him. Adele, too, elated at the success of their little strategy, was wondering how Harcourt fared, and called out to her when she appeared if he could relieve her at the wheel.

Satisfied that the engines were running properly, Cornish arose and made his way cautiously aft. Reaching Harcourt he bent over and looked down at him anxiously. The captain had Cornish had thrown over the rail had kept him dry in spite of the spray, but he lay pale and very still, breathing only faintly. Raising his head, Cornish saw a deep red stain upon Harcourt's temple, and observed with alarm, an ugly gash on the side of his head. Adele could only make them out dimly, but she heard her father's exclamation and asked anxiously what was wrong.

"I must have hit him harder than I intended," Cornish said. "I didn't notice that he had such a cut. Wait a minute—I'll come back, and then you can look after him."

Slipping into the seat beside Adele he took the wheel and she made her way quickly to Harcourt's side. She bent close to him, trying to see more distinctly, and felt the man blood upon his face and hair. Hurriedly throwing open her slicker, she tore a strip from her petticoat, and wetting it, carefully washed the wound before she laid the cloth over it, as best she could. Then she rudely bandaged the cut and placed the limp head more comfortably.

"Do you think he's badly hurt?" she asked fearfully.

"I don't know," Cornish called back. "I didn't dream of his falling like that. Give him a good drink of this."

Still holding the wheel, Cornish reached into his pocket, and pulling out a flask, passed it to Adele.

She pressed it to Harcourt's lips and poured a generous quantity into his mouth. Gradually his heart began to beat more quickly and his breathing grew more regular, but he did not open his eyes or show any sign of returning consciousness.

"What are we going to do with him now?" she asked in perplexity.

"We haven't time to get a doctor the minute we land."

"We haven't landed yet," Cornish reminded her, as a great wave threw the launch high upon its crest, and then dropped it down into a deep valley between angry seas that towered above them on every side.

"Take a good pull at that flask yourself, and don't lose your nerve," he added kindly.

"I'm not the least bit frightened," Adele assured him. "I'm only worried about him."

"There's no use worrying," said Cornish. "He's not dead, and I don't think he's seriously hurt. We'll get a doctor, somehow, or if we can't, we can catch him up when we get ashore. As long as we'll be well he won't be so."

It will prevent his making trouble for us, and we'll have difficulty keeping him quiet once we land, if he knew of it."

Not even the occasional flashes of the lightning, which blazed overhead now, and in another quarter of an hour, Cornish heard the roar of the surf breaking on the beach. He welcomed it, but he knew that the most difficult part of his job still lay before him. It would be no easy matter to get the launch in through the breakers, and the least accident might result in their being dashed to pieces on the rocks. He touched the wheel, and the only possible way, however, since he knew they could never get Harcourt ashore if they left the little craft.

Adele sat quietly by Harcourt's side, peering ahead, and then looking down at him anxiously at the pale face in her lap. Frequently she felt Harcourt's pulse, relieved each time to find it beating faintly. She was perfectly well aware of the danger that she was in, but she tried bravely to control her nervousness with the remembrance of her father's sickly.

At last Cornish could see the whitecaps and the dance of the spray as the great waves pounded wildly against the beach. It was still dark, but the rain had ceased and he could see quite a little distance across the water. Eagerly he looked to the right and left along the strand. At first he saw no sign of a sign of the launch, but after a moment or two he caught the wheel sharply and the launch veered about to the north. He did not know what hidden danger might be ahead, but the course looked clear and the chances seemed in his favor.

Far ahead he saw a break in the line of the raging surf—a narrow strait where the waves rose and fell evenly and beyond that the wide expanse of a sheltered inlet. Carefully he steered for it. The current was running strong and he held the wheel in a vice-like grip for he knew every twist depended upon his making the shelter.

Seeing his purpose Adele watched breathlessly as the launch drew nearer and nearer the haven of safety. Twenty minutes more and the little launch was safely in the sheltered waters, and lashing the wheel firmly, went forward to shut off the engines. Slowly the launch drifted toward the shore.

He felt the keel grate upon the sand and Cornish leaped out, up to his loins in the water, lifting Adele in his arms and carrying her in safety up to the beach.



CORNISH LEAPED OUT, LIFTING ADELE IN HIS ARMS.

"I'm proud of you, little girl!" he said. "You're a trump!"

She smiled happily as he turned away and hurried back to the launch for Harcourt. In a moment he was back again and together they went far back from the surf, placing Harcourt tenderly upon the sand.

"I wonder where we are?" Adele said, for it was still too dark to make out their surroundings accurately.

"I do know exactly," Cornish answered, "but we're somewhere along the Scotch coast. We'll have a look about for a sheltered spot where you can keep him hidden until I get my bearings and find a physician."

CHAPTER XVII.

FOOTPRINTS IN THE SAND.

Eager to have Harcourt safely hidden from the gaze of chance wanderers or whoever might lie nearby, Cornish started off on a hurried tour of investigation. He knew it would soon be daylight, and already the darkness was fading. Great clouds rolled seaward, and the wind was a gale, but, although there was no sign of the sun, the storm seemed to be over.

Alert against discovery Cornish moved cautiously along the beach in the dull gray of the morning. He was elated over the trick he had played the officers of the cutter, but he realized only too well the difficulties that now lay before him. The care of an injured man wanted by the police would be no easy matter, and he was trying his best to invent some plausible reason for their presence on the coast, wet and bedraggled at so early an hour.

Just round a little mound of sand dunes, covered with tall, rank grass, he stopped short. There stood a rude shack or lean-to, apparently a shelter set up by fishermen. The door stood partly open, but there was no sign of life about the place. Peering down behind the grass, he saw a dark figure, and he knew that he was watching carefully for several minutes. Then, drawing a revolver from his pocket, he slowly approached the hut. He listened, alert for the slightest sound within, but hearing nothing, walked boldly up and looked inside. It was deserted—a hovel devoid of furniture or fittings, and apparently unoccupied.

As he stepped inside, however, he noticed a change of temperature. It was much warmer than the air outside. The place had a smoky odor, too, and in the far corner he saw a blackened stove with ashes scattered over it. "The fire was dead," but the stove was still hot as he stepped down to touch it. Apparently someone had spent the night there and had only recently left, although there was nothing to indicate that the place had been recently inhabited.

Satisfying himself that whoever might have been there was not now about, Cornish hurried back to Adele. She was weary after the strain of the night, but she smiled brightly when he told her what he had found, and at once assented to accompany him.

Once inside the hut, Adele made a rude bed for Harcourt with the greatcoats of the two men. Cornish spread out Adele's slicker for her to lie upon.

"Now I'm going off to find the nearest village," he said when she had stretched herself out with a little sigh. "I'll bring back a doctor if I can find one, and I'm going to telegraph to Sir Harry."

"Isn't that rather dangerous?" Adele asked apprehensively. "Both he and Mr. Carrington are probably being watched by the police in anticipation of just such a communication."

Cornish smiled. "Sir Harry can read the message to MacBee himself if he likes. When I find out where we are I'll send him a message that no one else can understand. I'll sign my name that comes into my head and Sir Harry will be on in a minute."

As Cornish finished speaking, Harcourt stirred uneasily and murmured something faintly. They bent over him and Adele removed the bandage from the wound.

"It doesn't seem to be much of a cut," she said, examining it closely.

"No. The trouble is apparently inside," Cornish answered. "It looks to me like a fractured skull, in which case there's no time to lose. I'm off now." He handed his revolver to Adele. "You'd better have this," he said. "I don't expect you'll have the slightest use for it, but you'll feel more comfortable with it, here alone."

As she took the weapon she smiled confidently at him. "Don't be anxious, dad. I shall be safe enough. I shan't

venture outside as someone might see me if I did."

When her father had gone she sat for a long time looking at Harcourt. He was quiet now and his pulse was beating more evenly. Gradually as she watched him a drowsiness came over her, and in the day brightened over her, she dropped off into a restless sleep.

Several hours passed before she awoke. Then, with a sudden start, and a sense of surprise and fear, she sat up quickly. It was almost dark in the little shack, but through the cracks in the rough boards she could see the sunlight streaming in. A vague sense of uneasiness gripped her, and she reached out to grasp the revolver at her side. She turned to look at Harcourt, but he lay quietly and she noticed the faint rise and fall of his chest as he breathed evenly.

Although she listened intently she heard no sound but the roar of the sea and the faint rustling of the tall grass about the hut. But somehow she seemed to feel instinctively the presence of someone lurking outside.

Continuously she crept toward the door and pushed it open a crack, holding the revolver, tightly in her hand, ready for instant use. A pistol was a familiar toy in her hand, and she had the confidence of knowledge that she could use it as well, but there was no one within the range of her vision. Then, as her eyes dropped to the sand before the door, she started violently and a little tremor passed through her body.

Drawing back hastily, she pulled the door nearly shut and peered about its edge. There on the sand directly in front of the shack were a man's tracks, and within reach of her hand was the impression of a scraw bare foot.

She was positive they had not been there when she had entered with her father, and a feeling of nervousness came over her. The footprint might be that of a wandering fisherman, but it seemed more likely to her that someone had opened the door and looked in, and it occurred to her that his doing so might have awakened her. Even now he might be concealed behind the sand dunes close by.

Leaning back against the shanty wall, she thought for a moment. Then, as the uncertainty grew too great to bear, she boldly threw open the door and stepped out. Her finger firmly pressed against the trigger of the revolver. She glanced about quickly, but saw nothing to arouse her suspicion. Still she was not satisfied. Advancing a few steps farther she passed out to the flat stretch of beach and looked down toward the inlet where they had landed. A little cry escaped her as she saw the launch they had left getting slowly out through the narrow channel. Three figures were crouching down in the stern and in the bottom of the boat she could see some heavy balise-like objects. The launch was outside the inlet now and was swinging about to the north, where there was a sharp bluff marking an abrupt turn in the coast.

Spellbound, she stood looking after the little craft, unable to understand the meaning of what she saw or to figure out who could be making off in that way. She could only see the backs of the three men and they were now too far away for her to make out their faces. She recognized them even if their faces had been turned toward her.

Suddenly, as she watched, she became conscious of a figure coming from the left, down close by the water's edge. Just as she turned to look in that direction a second figure appeared, and she saw them both, point excitedly after the launch.

"That's the man who shot up the beach on a run. Fascinated she stood watching them hurry along, curious as to what it all meant, and not in the least frightened. There seemed to be something strangely familiar about one of the men, but at first she could not make out what it was. In another moment, however, his identity flashed across her mind, and she knew the man was MacBee.

The recognition gave her a start, as she realized the danger of his presence. She gave no thought to the reasons of his being there, nor to how he might be pursuing in the escaping launch. Her one thought was to keep Harcourt concealed, and she closed the door hurriedly, barring it as best she could with the rough stick that served for a bolt.

Peering through the boards she watched the inspector and his companion, who were still running rapidly. In another moment they had disappeared around the bluff and, as she saw them, she was relieved from view. When they had gone she turned to look at Harcourt, lying helpless and unconscious of it all. For the first time she felt glad that he could not see her search for the mysterious visitor who had eluded him so successfully. He had been able to see MacBee. In spite of her efforts she felt sure he would have stepped out and given himself up presently.

For another hour she sat quietly, watching and waiting, dreading every moment that the detective might return. The seemingly endless time slipped by, and gradually the daylight began to fade. As the darkness came on her fears increased, and although it was growing colder now, she hesitated to light a fire lest it betray their presence in the hut. Several times she felt that the match in her father's greatcoat, but each time she resisted the temptation although she had seen nothing of MacBee since the morning.

And shivering, she sat huddled in the corner, anxious too for Harcourt, who should have been in a doctor's hands long ago. Now she heard someone approaching, and hurriedly caught up her slicker to throw it over Harcourt. "This done, she crouched down in the corner opposite the door and waited, resting the revolver upon her knee.

"There was someone just outside the door now, and everywhere in her slender body was trembling, but she did not move and scarcely dared to breathe. Someone touched the latch of the door and rattled it and her heart gave a great jump. Then, from behind the sand dunes she heard a familiar whistle, and she knew that her father was approaching.

The rattling of the latch ceased abruptly and she heard a smothered exclamation through the thin walls. In another instant she heard a faint swishing sound as someone darted through the tall grass, and a moment later Cornish's voice called to her.

"Running up quickly she threw open the door and felt sobbing into her father's arms.

"Why what's happened, little girl?" he asked soothingly. "Did my silent approach startle you?"

"No—not that," she whispered. "Someone was here at the door—just a moment ago!" And in a low tone she told him quickly of all that had happened.

Cornish stood thinking for a moment. Then he took the revolver from Adele and went outside. Impatiently she awaited his return, but it was more than 10 minutes before he slipped quietly back again.

"I can't find anybody loitering about," he said uneasily. "I can't understand what MacBee can be doing about here. He couldn't have possibly been there, where we were going to land. Whoever told the boat was a good turn, however, as the inspector would have been able to place it in an instant. Don't worry. The man at the door may have been a change of some sort seeking shelter for the night. In any event, you go to sleep and forget it. I'll keep a sharp lookout."

His reassuring tones were like a tonic to her, and, rallying quickly from her fright, Adele asked eagerly what he had been doing all day.

"Carrington and Sir Harry will be here tomorrow," Cornish told her. "You had an answer to your wire?" she asked indulgently.

"I did better than that," he replied. "I talked with Farnside over the long distance telephone. I spoke guardedly, of course, and even if Scotland Yard had been listening to the wire, they will not be able to make anything of what passed between us."

"How splendid!" Adele exclaimed with enthusiasm. "Luck certainly seemed to be with us."

"Doesn't it?" Cornish agreed, although he was far from sanguine after having heard of the day's happenings about the shack.

"Carrington and Farnside will leave London tonight in Sir Harry's motor, announcing their intention to spend a fortnight at Sir Harry's shooting lodge, which is only a few hours' ride from here. They'll run out to the village about a mile from here to pick up a Mr. Gilmore, the centurion, who suggested the trip by telephone this afternoon."

"But what about Lord Harcourt—and a doctor?" Adele went on.

"I couldn't take the chance of bringing one out here tonight," Cornish explained. "The village is only a small one and I wouldn't trust the medico's keeping his mouth shut. I'll meet Farnside when he arrives tomorrow and then we'll make a detour of the village, running close enough to the shack here to carry Harcourt to the machine. How does he seem?"

"About the same, I think. It's strange he doesn't regain consciousness. It frightens me sometimes, yet I believe he is safe enough," Adele said. "Oh, dad, it would be terrible if anything happened to him—if you were to lose him!"

"He will be all right," Cornish said, quieting her. "You're just tired and overwrought, that's all. We'll pull him through this and the other things we will. Thus far we've succeeded in outwitting MacBee, and everything will come out right before long, I'm sure."

"Oh, I hope so!" Adele said, wearily.

"I must forget!" Cornish said with a smile. "You must be nearly starved. And he handed her a package of food he had brought from the village."

"I haven't thought of eating until now," Adele said, "but I believe I am a bit hungry."

"I don't wonder," her father answered. "When you've been fishing back, it's not surprising that you should turn in and get a sleep. I'm going out to watch the ocean and smoke a cigar. The smoke won't do him any good in here."

And he stepped out, eager to renew his search for the mysterious visitor who had eluded him so successfully. "A nice mess you've got yourself into, Henry Cornish!" he muttered to himself. "But you've started this thing, and you're going to see it through!"

To be Continued

Can't Get Your Fishing Rod Back.

When a fisherman is fishing unlawfully, he cannot get his fishing tackle back. It is confiscated, and should be destroyed. Not only that, but any lawyer or sheriff issuing or serving a writ in any attempt to get it back is guilty of contempt. So says the Attorney-General of Connecticut, in an official opinion. A man arrested for illegal fishing had demanded that his fishing tackle be returned to him.