

# The Mysterious Monogram

## An Absorbing New Novel

By Howard P. Rocky

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### SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS.

The morning after a dinner given at his club by Lord Harcourt, an English nobleman, to announce his engagement to Miss Grace Marston, one of his guests, Townshend by name, is found dead, evidently stabbed while sitting at a table in one of the card rooms. Later the old door of the fourth floor of the club struggled to death. The only strangers at the dinner were Kandwar, an Indian prince, and Cornish, an American.

Harcourt, having been intoxicated, remembered nothing of what he did after dinner, and his valet, having found a stiletto in his pocket and blood on his clothes, is afraid he might be guilty of the murder.

On the stiletto is carved a strange



monogram, which Harcourt finds later on a cigarette stub on the table by the dead man and another on the Marston's drawing room and still another in a flower box near Miss Marston at the Cornish reception.

Returning home early, Harcourt finds Kandwar has broken open his valet's door and is taking the stiletto. Harcourt realizes it is best not to call the police but later Kandwar is arrested while attempting to throw the knife into the river.

(Now go on with the story.)

"I don't quite understand you," said Marston. "Of course, as my prospective son-in-law, Lord Harcourt is most dear to me, and I have known him, like him, since he was a child. If there is anything I can do to aid him, I shall of course stand ready to do it, but—"

Cornish extended his powerful hand. "It is agreed, then," he said heartily. "I have a pet little scheme up my sleeve, and when the time comes I'll tell you about it."

"May I ask you to be a little more explicit now?"

"Certainly, if you like. It is simply this, I have my steam yacht, the *Murita*, moored off Southampton. If it is necessary, we can get Harcourt aboard her within six hours."

"But my dear sir, Jack would never consent to run away—whatever happens."

"Exactly," Cornish explained. "Of course we won't conceal that you don't want him to run his neck into the noose if he's innocent, do you?"

"Of course not—but—"

"You use too many 'buts' Sir Thomas," [out in Arizona. In the States, I've seen a good many scrapes like this, and out there I'm a sort of law unto myself. I never yet saw a sheriff who wasn't a damned fool! If it's possible to fasten a crime on the wrong man, they invariably do it. Give the police time enough and they'll always weave an unbreakable net about some one who is innocent. One thing in our favor in this affair is the fact that this fellow MacBee seems to be on Harcourt's side, but he'll go crazy sooner or later just the same. All I ask is your help in preventing a miscarriage of justice. Is it a go?"

"Of course," said Sir Thomas. "I don't know that I can agree to you entirely, but I shall of course do whatever I can."

"Good. That chap Carrington will do whatever I tell him—at least anything my daughter may suggest," Cornish said with a smile. "And Adele is worth more than a dozen men in a scrape like this. It's really a pity she wasn't born a man!"

"I should say it would have been a great shame, for she should then be a very depraved of a most beautiful young woman," Sir Thomas said gallantly.

Cornish looked at him in amusement. "You Englishmen get me a great laughing. I talk to you of saving a man's life, and you reply by paying compliments to my daughter. Your calmness and the brawn of my co-punchers would make a cracker-jack combination!"

"You are not planning anything immediately?" Sir Thomas asked anxiously.

"It may come at any time," Cornish answered. "Remember not to word to any one until I begin to fly danger signals. Then it's quick action!"

"You look tired, Jack," he said anxiously, laying his hand upon the earl's arm. "Don't you feel well my boy?"

"Oh, perfectly," Harcourt assured him. "This business has been a trifle wearing, that's all."

"I hope you'll stay here for a few days and take a good rest," Sir Thomas advised.

"I'll remain until mid-week, if you all care to stay that long," Harcourt said. "I promised Inspector MacBee that I'd either be here or in town until then. If by that time this miserable affair is ended, I think I'll run up to Scotland for a bit of shooting."

Cornish had gone on, and Sir Thomas stepped closer to Harcourt. "Jack," he said in a low tone, "is anything worrying you—anything you'd care to tell me?"

Harcourt smiled. "Really, there's nothing—nothing at all. Unless you can tell me what I'm going to do to entertain you all up here, if it continues to rain like this. I'm quite worried."

His tone was light, but it did not deceive Sir Thomas. But he saw there was nothing to be gained by further questioning, so he, too, went up to Adele.

Harcourt sat before the fire, wondering what Kandwar might have told the police and what effect the Indian's arrest might have upon himself.

As he turned the thought over in his mind he recalled bidding farewell to his guests as they had taken their leave, one after another. Quite distinctly, too, he seemed to remember saying good-night to Kandwar, Townshend and the others, then, standing by the open window, looking out. He was quite sure of that, and he knew that he had turned to go to the cloak room.

After that everything was hazy—he could recall nothing. Yet he asked himself, since he remembered Kandwar's departure—and Kandwar might now be in danger—was it not his duty to tell the police what memory he had come back to?

As he sat wondering over it all, Ferguson entered and stood waiting for him to speak. Harcourt looked up slowly, and nodded to the man.

"If you please, sir, I just found this trinket on the stairs, sir."

Harcourt took it from him—a small piece of carved silver, with a bit of finely jointed chain hanging from it. With either hand he turned it over, and then, with a wave of his hand, dismissed the servant.

The pendant was a skillfully carved replica of the mysterious monogram.

For several minutes he stared at it, fascinated, and as he held it in the palm of his hand, there came a rustle of skirts behind him. With a start he arose as Grace came toward him smiling, and then, with a wave of his hand, dismissed the servant.

"This is yours?" Harcourt asked hesitatingly.

"Yes, it is," she nodded, and held out her hand for it.

"Where did you get it?" he questioned sharply.

"That is a secret—I can't tell you."

"You shall tell me," he cried angrily. "I have not had opportunity to speak with you alone since—since what occurred last night. In view of what happened then, I wonder that you came here today."

"Jack!" she exclaimed, the color coming into her cheeks. "Be careful! I came here because I felt it my duty to stand by you in your danger."

She returned his gaze steadily, and her manner grew more haughty as he leaned forward angrily.

"You heard Carrington say that another and more important arrest is expected at any moment. Now the detectives may be on their way here to make that arrest!"

His voice trembled with suppressed emotion.

Her lip quivered and she grew pale. Her foot stepped forward and was about to take a step, but she only held out her arms appealingly, and sank into his chair. Harcourt did not move. He was watching her intently.

"Do not say another word, she burst into tears.

Her body shook as she wept bitterly, and as Harcourt stood staring down at her, Adele, who had entered the room, just behind them, were Marston and Faradale, and the little group paused, started, upon the threshold.

"What—what has happened?" Sir Thomas exclaimed, hastening forward.

Harcourt turned and faced them calmly. "I have just told her that I am Townshend's murderer," he said quietly.

An exclamation of horror broke from their lips, and with a scream Grace rose quickly to her feet. "No! No!" she cried in anguish. "Don't believe him! He is mad!"

"He is mad with great sob, she fell unconscious into her father's arms. Her nerves had given way. To tell Harcourt how the charm came into her possession would only arouse unjust suspicion in his mind. To tell the others was impossible, especially now that the mysterious monogram had attained so gruesome a significance.

### CHAPTER X.

#### A WARRANT FOR HARCOURT.

Tenderly Marston and Sir Harry carried Grace to her room, followed by Grace's maid, Carrington was telephoning to the village for a physician and Cornish found himself alone in the living room with the stiletto.

He had not spoken since the declaration that had caused all this confusion, and from the opposite corner of the room, Cornish was observing him curiously. He was trying to determine what he presumed Harcourt to make such a statement—whether his words had been sincere, based upon the nervous tension he was under, or whether he had deliberately lied with an ulterior motive.

Finally the American came forward, a look of determination upon his face.

"Harcourt," he said quietly. "Why lie to me, and stand here before me and lie like that?"

Like a flash Harcourt turned upon him. "Mr. Cornish!" he said sharply. "Do you realize what you are saying?"

"Yes?" Cornish returned.

"Perfectly."

"Then you are either a remarkably clever knave, or a particularly crazy idiot."

"In either case," said Harcourt, "it is none of your business."

"You are not to make it my business," Cornish persisted. "You are trying to shield someone. I cannot help you unless you tell me what you know."

"I have not asked your help," Harcourt reminded him. "In fact I don't concern myself further in the matter."

"You seem to overlook the fact that I have invited my daughter and you to be my guests at such a time, some explanation of your announcement is due me," Cornish said, taking another tack in his effort to force the information he sought.

"You are right," he said. "Having done so, I can only offer my deep apologies, however. I shall not ask you to forgive me. I can only say that I regret having dragged you into the mire into which I have cast myself. You will naturally wish to leave by the first train."

And without another word, Harcourt turned upon his heel and left the room.

Hardly had he gone when Carrington came in hastily.

"Oh, there you are!" he exclaimed, catching sight of Cornish.

"Is this the doctor?"

"Yes, he's on his way," said Carrington. "But that isn't what I want you for. There is someone outside asking for Harcourt. Ferguson believes it is a man from Scotland Yard."

"That's a good enough whistle!" Carrington said, a little while.

"They've come to arrest him!" Carrington said, terrified.

Cornish nodded. "Don't get excited," he said. "They haven't got him yet."

Carrington looked at him questioningly. "What can we do?" he asked.

"Everything," Cornish told him. "Of course this declaration of Harcourt is all nonsense. He may believe it, but I'm more inclined to think there's something more behind his nonsense. Carrington, he's confessed in order to save someone else from arrest."

"Who?" Carrington demanded.

"I don't know, and it doesn't make any difference. The thing to do now is to prevent the detective finding him. His only getting and tell Adele what has happened. Then go to Harcourt. He's probably in his study. Keep him there until I come, no matter what you have to do."

Encouraged by Cornish's calm self-possession, Carrington took heart. His faith in his friend had come to be shaken by the words that had come to him like a blow in the face, but now a new hope held him, and he hurried out to do as Cornish bade.

Cornish followed him into the hall, and then went quickly to the little parlor where Ferguson had ushered the Scotland Yard man.

"You are now Lord Harcourt," the detective said as he entered.

"Hardly," Cornish admitted with a smile. "I merely came to say that the earl is engaged with some friends at the moment. He is usually wise. He has nothing to come to upset them, so he asked me to come and explain that he will be with you in just a few moments."

"Very sorry, sir," the man objected. "But I'm afraid I'll have to see him at once. I'm afraid His Majesty's war-

rant for Lord Harcourt's arrest."

"His arrest?" Cornish repeated, spacing for time.

"Yes, sir. Inspector MacBee directed me to show his lordship every consideration, but he must go with me to Scotland Yard immediately. I wish you would take me to him or inform me to come here at once."

"I'll ask him to come as quickly as possible," Cornish assured him. "You understand that because of the ladies present, we wish to avoid all sensation."

"Of course, sir, but murder is a charge that hardly permits a gentleman to appear in the morning, as he might if he had run down someone in his motor."

"Then Lord Harcourt is directly accused?"

"I'm afraid so, sir."

"Tell me about it," Cornish requested, ringing the bell at his elbow.

"Ferguson, please ask Lord Harcourt to come to us at once."

"Yes, sir," the servant answered with a bow.

"Speak to Lord Harcourt privately," Cornish went on. "Say that this gentleman must see him personally at once. By the way, Ferguson, do not, on any account permit the others to suspect who is asking for your master."

"Quite so," the valet returned and departed.

Hardly had he passed from the room, however, when the two heard a drawing voice from the hallway.

Had a moment later, a figure in an evening dress, covered by a great coat and cap, appeared upon the threshold. Just behind him stood Carrington, pale and nervous. The walk, in his manner, and even the peculiar fashion of handling the monocle, was Harcourt's, but instantly and with quiet satisfaction, Cornish recognized his daughter.

"You wanted to see me, my man?" she said in a perfect imitation of Harcourt's voice.

"Yes, my lord," the man replied.

"Very well—you need say nothing further. I understand what has brought you here, and I am ready to go with you."

"I am sorry, sir," the detective said, "but I arrest you in the king's name."

"Then let us start at once," she said.

"If you please, my lord."

"You have brought a carriage? Never mind, I will have the motor around in no time. It's too wet a night to walk to the station."

Calmly she lit a cigarette and turning, spoke in a low tone to Cornish. "In either case, the detective waited awkwardly in the corner."

Then, as Ferguson announced the arrival of the car, she walked out with a nonchalance that aroused the admiration of the two men who watched her anxiously. The ruse was working perfectly. The detective had never seen Harcourt, and this elegant, self-possession young person took him in completely.

The big automobile was standing under the portico, and as they stepped out into the stormy night, and the prisoner turned up the collar of his warm overcoat. In another minute, farewells had been hurriedly said, the door of the car slammed, and the high powered machine was running swiftly down the water-soaked road towards the gateway.

It was dark, and the storm howled furiously as the rain beat against the window panes, but the detective with his prisoner safe and dry inside, and extending Harcourt's gold cigarette case with its diamond smoked ring, invited the detective to smoke in an excellent counterfeit of Harcourt's tone.

While he sat upon the ground through the night, those at the Manor house were acting hurriedly, fearing that at any moment the deception might be discovered and that the detective would return to defeat their plans. No longer had the machine left the door than Cornish and Carrington hurried up stairs, followed by Ferguson.

Faradale was with Harcourt, when they reached the study, and he was pouring himself a generous drink from the decanter. At a glance Cornish saw that he had been drinking heavily in the short time since he had left them, and already the liquor was beginning to effect him.

"Harcourt demanded, struggling against them, 'What has developed?'"

"The gas?" Cornish demanded sharply, and taking it from Sir Harry's hands, he deftly inserted it, trying the springs firmly behind Harcourt's head.

Like a ghost, Grace, followed by her father, appeared in the doorway, staring with frightened eyes at the scene before her. "Father, what are they doing?" she exclaimed in terror.

"Hush, my dear," Marston reassured her tenderly. "It is all for the best."

Before she could speak again, Cornish and Sir Harry were carrying her out of the room and down the stairway that led to the servant's quarters. The door had been opened before them, and they made their way along quickly and stealthily.

In another moment they were on the little veranda, beside which Cornish's panting French touring car stood eager to be off. With scant ceremony, they placed their burden upon the floor of the machine and jumped in themselves.

"Now drive like hell!" Cornish said sharply to his chauffeur, and, with a flourish of the whip, he started forward. He was lost in the pouring rain as it came madly through the grate of the estate.

Like a wild thing the machine sped on through the dripping night. Now a flash of lightning lit up the road for the fraction of a second, and the wheels splashed and hissed as they churned through the streams of water that ran rapidly along the muddy roadway. And as the car flew, and all the time Cornish profanely urged the chauffeur to greater efforts. Now he consulted his watch, and at last, when 10 minutes had elapsed, he directed a sharp look-out to the road ahead.

The car was racing forward madly, but now, through the darkness ahead, they saw the lights of another car ahead of them. Drawing closer they saw that it was a motor car, and beside and the driver was kneeling in the soggy road, apparently searching for the cause of his machine's failure to run smoothly. Cornish smiled. Thus far, and he had gone, as he had predicted. The stalled car was Harcourt's—the same in which Adele and

the detective had left the Manor house a short time ahead of them. By Cornish's direction, the chauffeur driving it had purposely missed the last train to London by taking the wrong road to the station, and, as Ferguson advised, Adele, posing as Harcourt, was to suggest making the trip in the machine.

The detective, with every reason to feel safe as to the security of his prisoner, and conscious of the persuasive power of the revolver in his pocket, had readily consented to the suggestion, as this made it possible for them to reach Scotland Yard before daylight. Now, however, an accident that he had not counted upon prevented their going on, and he began to feel vaguely uneasy, fearing the wrath of his chief, who was even then impatiently awaiting the arrival of the prisoner.

"What's wrong?" the detective called out to the chauffeur. "Can't you fix her?"

"As he shouted through the rain, the second car drew up beside the stalled machine and Cornish put his head out of the window. "Can we be of any assistance?" he asked solicitously.

"It would be very good of you, if you would have your man look over the car," the detective answered gratefully. But before he could say another word, a violent gust sent him through the half open door of his own machine, and he pitched headlong into the wet and mud of the road. And as he lay sprawling upon his face in the filthy ooze, his companion leaped lightly over his body and clamped into the machine opposite.

A sharp word of command, a loud chug-chugging, and the heavy car shot away, disappearing completely in the darkness. Safe inside it, Adele was laughing gleefully, making a place for herself between her father and Sir Henry. "Oh, what a lark, dad!" she exclaimed with genuine enthusiasm.

"Didn't he look funny scrambling around in all that mud and poor fellow!"

"Don't worry about him," Cornish advised. "He'll get quite a jolt when he realizes what has happened, but the lark is still ahead of us. Did you put oil on the license tag?" he asked.

"Good. With the roads in this condition the number won't be detectable inside of 10 minutes."

"They were running forward now with the speed of locomotives, and the lights of the houses in little towns flashed through faded away like ghost cities, so quickly did the car pass them. In spite of its weight and size the car rocked frightfully as they struck a long, even stretch of roadway, it gained an even greater impetus.

"That chauffeur's a corker!" Cornish said with satisfaction. "He can't speak a word of English, but he can understand it and he isn't afraid of the devil!"

Huddled on the floor of the car, he examined the automobile in his camped and wondered what his words would do to him. He recognized their voices, but puzzle it out as he might, he could not satisfy himself as to their purpose. Of course he had not known of the detective's arrival, nor had he understood how Adele had happened to join them on the lonely road, and now, as she stirred uneasily at her feet, she looked down at him, compassionately. In the darkness she could not see his face, but she knew that he must be suffering from the strain of his position.

"Dad, couldn't we take the gas out of his mouth and make him a little more comfortable?" she suggested.

"No," her father said grimly. "I'm not taking any chances of his kicking up a row until he can get safely aboard the yacht. Then he can raise all the hell he likes—it won't do him any good."

"But if he should give us his word not to attempt to escape?" she urged.

"He won't—if we tell him what we've done—and if we release him, we'll have to explain that. There's neither time nor use of doing that now."

Cornish struck a match and looked at his watch. It was after midnight, but it would be nearly dawn before they reached Southampton, barring the chance of a breakdown. Suddenly he remembered that Adele was dressed in male attire.

"Take off those clothes and get into your own," he said to her. "You'll find your things in the bag beneath the seat."

"Dad!" she demurred, blushing as she glanced through the darkness at Sir Harry.

"Oh, Faradale won't look," her father said with a smile. "Even if he should see, this is no time for girlishness. Hurry—I want to throw that rig out in the road."

Realizing that further objection would be useless, Adele dragged the bag from its hiding place, and took off her evening suit, began to take off a little sigh of thankfulness for the blackness of the night, and hoping that no sudden flash from the heavens would light up the interior of the machine, she with difficulty slipped on her own dress and adjusted it as best she might while the car jarred and swayed on its mad course.

At last she had done so, and bundling the discarded garments together, she stuffed them into the leather bag. A moment later, Cornish dropped the glass in the door and threw the case out among the bushes at the roadside.

The cramped positions were becoming irksome, but the thought of Harcourt's greater discomfort, and the thought of harder work yet to be accomplished, kept up their spirits as the miles were passed. They were becoming irksome, but the thought of Harcourt's greater discomfort, and the thought of harder work yet to be accomplished, kept up their spirits as the miles were passed. They were becoming irksome, but the thought of Harcourt's greater discomfort, and the thought of harder work yet to be accomplished, kept up their spirits as the miles were passed.

"Stop them!" he cried wildly, drawing his revolver and shooting vainly after the escaping car, already far out of sight. The chauffeur, crawling from under the machine, stared up at the Scotland Yard man with well feigned surprise.

"What's wrong?" he asked innocently.

"Wrong, you idiot!" yelled the detective. "Can't you see he's gone?"

"Who's his lordship?"

"Who else blockhead!" he called the impatient retort. "He's gone away in that car—escaped!"

"Escaped?" The chauffeur stared at the detective. "He was following out his instructions to let go. His lordship wouldn't try to escape, sir. If he's gone away in that machine it was because they forced him to go. He's bound to do that!"

The detective gave a low whistle of surprise. Suddenly the possibility of it dawned upon him, and in spite of his doubts the idea seemed reasonable. "Kidnaped!" he muttered. "It's all possible—yes, say, for the love of Heaven, get me to a telephone!"

"I can't make her go," the chauffeur protested, pointing with his finger to the stranding automobile.

"I can't do anything the matter with it—the trouble's inside somewhere. You might walk," he added, turning away to hide a broad grin.

The detective shivered. The rain was wet to the skin. But there was no help for it—he knew he must trudge on to the nearest village and there report his failure to Sir Henry. "To a man in line for an inspectorship the situation was anything but a pleasant one, and he realized only too well, that the loss of mean his dismissal. He swore and stamped his foot in the puddle that had formed beneath him.

"I'm off," he said dismally. "If you do find a telephone," the chauffeur called after him, "send someone to me from a garage!"

Then as the detective trudged slowly away into the night, the chauffeur climbed into the back of the car and closed the door, pulled a hamper of clothing from the seat, and began to make sure that his pipe and tobacco were safe, he felt for matches, and proceeded to make himself comfortable against the leather cushions.

His instructions were to wait there, until daylight and then run the car back to the Manor house.

(To be Continued.)



WITHOUT A WORD HE CAUGHT HARCOURT IN HIS BRAVWY ARMS.

There was no time to lose, however, and with a signal to the others, Cornish stepped forward quickly. Without a word he caught Harcourt in his brawny arms and plucked him from his coat pocket, Faradale produced a cord and in an instant had passed it about Harcourt's body.

National Library Connection. To-day the collection in the National Library in Washington City, 1,500,000. Of course he had not known of the detective's arrival, nor had he understood how Adele had happened to join them on the lonely road, and now, as she stirred uneasily at her feet, she looked down at him, compassionately. In the darkness she could not see his face, but she knew that he must be suffering from the strain of his position.