# The Mysterious Monogram

## An Absorbing New Novel

By Howard P. Rockey

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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, Townehende by name, is found dead, evidently stabbed while sitting at a table in one of the card rooms. Later the old door man is found back of the club strangled to death. The only strangers at the dinner were Kandwahr, 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 in the Martson's drawing room and still another in a flower box near Miss Marston at the Cornish reception.

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

Harcourt nearly distracted with worry over the affair receives a new surprise when he finds a pendent with the mysterious monogram carved in silver which Grace claims is hers. A warrant is issued for Harcourt's arrest but his friends cleverly contrive to get him away and aboard Cornish's yacht.

THE KIDNAPPED PRISONER.

Dawn was just breaking as the mud bespattered automobile neared he little landing on the coast just beyond the city. Cornish had given instructions to the captain of the Murita to have his launch there, and now the American leaned forward to ask the chauffeur if the boat was in sight. It was, moored loosely to the dock, its engines ready to be off in an instant.

Drawing up at the edge of the planking, the big machine stopped and Cornish sprang out with a little grunt of relief. As he did so three men from the launch hurried forward with a great tarpaulin.

Adele slipped from the car and without a word ran down the wharf to the launch, while the men hastily wrapped Harcourt in the rubber blanket and carried him aboard unceremoniously.

Turning to Farndale, Cornish grasped his hand warmly. "Sir Harry, you're a brick!" he exclaimed enthusiastically. "I leave it to your ingenuity to get back undetected and to cover up the real movements of the car. Good-bye—and good luck!"

Then he stepped into the launch, and the little craft shot out rapidly over the water to where the yacht lay all ready to weigh anchor. The day was coming fast now and there was no time to be lost. Cornish's instructions to the captain had been most explicit. The Murita had cruised off Southampton until nearly daybreak and had then run in close enough to permit the landing of the launch. Officially, the trim little vessel had not been noted, and now if they were able to get away before being observed, or before the news of Harcourt's disappearance could cause a lookout for departing craft, Cornish knew they were safe—that the success of his carefully laid plan was assured.

His muscles stiff and sore, his head aching violently, and his mouth chafed and sore from the gag, Harcourt breathed a sigh of relief when he felt himself placed gently upon what seemed to be a bed. In another moment the suffocating tarpaulin was pulled from about him and someone began to cut the bonds that cut into his wrists and ankles.

The two men who had carried him departed noiselessly, and in the dim light of the little cabin, Harcourt made out someone standing in the doorway. A second later the electric lights were switched on and he saw Adele smiling mischievously at him.

Harcourt sat up with difficulty and surveyed his disheveled appearance. His evening clothes were sadly disarranged, and he blinked at the lights as he rubbed his wrists ruefully.

"Good morning, Lord Harcourt," Adele said gaily.

"I say—what's this all about?" he stammered, still winking at the lights. "Isn't this a bit tough on a chap, Miss Cornish?"

"Perhaps—just a bit" she agreed. "But you must blame dad—not me."

"His American idea of a joke is certainly rather rough, I must say."

The girl laughed merrily. "Do you think it all a joke?" she asked.

"Isn't it?"

"Well not exactly," she explained. "Dad will be down as soon as we are safely away, and he will tell you all about it."

"My dear Miss Cornish," said Harcourt anxiously. "Surely we are not leaving England?"

"I'm afraid we are. But I must leave you now. You'll find clothing and I think everything you'll need, in that chest in the corner."

"Am I being—ah—stolen?" he demanded in astonishment.

Adele laughed again at his perplexity. "Yes, you are a prisoner," she told him. "But do not fear—you will not have to marry me in order to ransom yourself! Now promise me that you will not try to leave this cabin until father comes to see you. Then I can leave you to dress in peace."

"But, Miss Cornish—if this vessel is leaving——"

"There are guards at the door," she said, interrupting him. "If you should try to get out they would only be obliged to use force—so I hope you will do as I ask of you."

He stared at her questioningly, unable to believe his ears. For a moment the girl returned his gaze quite seriously, then, as he was about to speak again, she turned and fled, closing the door noiselessly behind her.

Sitting on the edge of the bed—alone in the cabin—Harcourt tried to puzzle out the events of the night. Unquestionably these people had deliberately carried him off by force against his will. And the most astonishing part of it was the fact that Carrington and Farndale—and even Sir Thomas—had taken part in the abduction.

He crossed to the narrow porthole and looked out. The yacht was certainly heading out to sea—and he swore to himself as he realized that he was being forced to break the word he had given to MacBee—his promise not to go away without advising the inspector. Then the thought of Grace and the mysterious monogram returned. What was her association with the horrible thing? How was she mixed up in the events that had culminated in the murder of Townshend? Because he feared that she would become involved—perhaps even suspected and arrested—he had confessed to the murder himself. And after all, he thought again, in spite of all his doubts—his confession might be the truth.

But at any event he must get back—and at once. He would not break his word to MacBee and if the woman he loved was in danger he meant to be there to protect her from it. He could not leave the cabin now and there was nothing to do but wait. The moment Cornish should appear, however, he would insist upon being put on shore at once, and he knew that he could easily be back in London within a few hours.

At the sight of himself in the mirror the clothing Adele had mentioned, he determined to take advantage of. A plentiful wardrobe had thoughtfully been provided for him, and he hurriedly selected fresh linen and a suit of tweeds. The change made, he grew impatient for Cornish to appear, and crossing to the cabin door, listened carefully. There was no sound outside, and opening the door, he put his head out into the passageway. The guards were in sight, and with a sigh of relief he stepped out. At that moment, however, he saw Cornish's tall form coming from the deck, and he advanced angrily to face him.

The American cut him short abruptly, refusing flatly to return to Southhampton.

"Harcourt," he said, not unkindly, "come into the cabin and sit down. I have a great deal to say to you."

"Meanwhile we are getting farther away from the coast," Harcourt reminded him.

"Go back into the cabin!" Cornish directed, and he forced the earl to do as he bade him.

"This is unwarranted!" Harcourt protested. "It is the most high-handed—"

"Perhaps it is—but I'm doing it," said Cornish calmly. "Last night Scotland Yard sent a man to arrest you for complicity in Townesend's murder. I knew you would not go away willingly, and I knew—after the fool statement you made to all of us—that you would have no chance if you stayed. Hence my little plan to abduct you."

"And do you imagine I will remain away with such a charge hanging over me?"

"Not willingly, no," said Cornish. "But whether you like it or not, you will remain aboard this yacht until it pleases me to set you on shore again. I didn't believe you when you said you killed Townesbend, but I do believe you know who did it. You are a fool to make this quixotic attempt to shield the guilty person, but since you are determined to do so, I adopted this means of preventing your carrying out your idea. With you out of the way, the police will have to find someone else to pin their suspicions upon, and I believe they will discover the real culprit—or at least prove that you could not have been the murderer."

"But I have said that I am the murderer."

"Nonsense!"

"Do you mean to say that I lied?"

"I mean to say that you are crazy!"

"Mr. Cornish——I——"

"Now look here," Cornish said with a gesture of impatience. "I own this yacht and the crew would do exactly what I directed even though we had the king himself on board. You may not be able to understand what I am doing now, but when you're in a different state of mind, you'll thank me for it. Anyway—whether you ever do or not—I'm going to carry out what I've started to do. I don't want to make things unnecessarily unpleasant for you, and if you'll promise not to attempt any nonsense, I'll treat you just as I would any other guest. If you don't—I'll put you in irons!"

"You can't be serious!" Harcourt pleaded. "Think of my promise to MacBee— think of——" But he bit his lip and ended abruptly.

Cornish smiled. "If you go on talking now you'll confirm my suspicions," he warned. "As to your breaking your word—you're doing nothing of the sort. You can't help it if I keep you a prisoner, can you? Of course you can't. None of the crew know who you are or why you are here. They don't care, and even if they did, not one of them would question what I choose to do. They take my orders and obey them—and it all ends there. I suppose you have a number of names—most Englishmen of family do have. If you haven't, it doesn't make any difference, but you'd better pick out a couple that you'd like to wear and can remember easily, and use them for the present at least. It may save trouble later."

Speechless, Harcourt gazed at the man, and read the determination in his face. He felt powerless as a baby, and the fact made him furious. Yet he realized that he could not hope to change Cornish's mind.

"You absolutely refuse to set me ashore—to permit me to do as I wish?" he asked, still hoping.

"I do," said Cornish. "Breakfast will be ready in half an hour, and if you're as hungry as I am, you'll be in the dining cabin promptly. If you want anything in the meantime, just ring the bell over there."

And without another word he turned on his heel and strode through the door.

CHAPTER XII.

A VISIT TO MacBEE.

By noon Sir Harry Farndale had finished a luxurious tub in his London lodgings and was just setting down to a long delayed breakfast, when Carrington arrived.

The muddcoated automobile—taken on a long detour by Cornish's chauffeur—had rolled into the garage at Harcourt Manor only half an hour before, and Farndale had just been advised of the fact by telephone. He had spoken with Sir Thomas and learned that his daughter, although confined to her bed, was resting quietly and during the conversation, had also been advised of the departure of Carrington for the city.

Now Carrington was eager for news, and briefly, Sir Harry told him all that had occurred. "To cover our tracks and to avoid suspicion, I suggest we take a cab to Scotland Yard and report ourselves to MacBee, pleading ignorance of Harcourt's whereabouts and expressing surprise that he is not also there," Farndale said.

"Right-oh!" Carrington agreed. "There is hardly a chance that they'll know we didn't come in last night in Cornish's car—just as we tell them. Of course none of the Manor servants except Fergus know what happened, and we can rely upon him absolutely."

Sir Harry nodded over his coffee.

"The only difficulty lies in the possibility of the yacht being stopped and searched," Carrington went on a bit anxiously.

"Remote chance," said Sir Harry. "No reason for anyone being suspicious of her, and the alarm couldn't have spread in time anyway."

"I hope not," Carrington said. "Cornish might even deceive them if he should be overhauled."

"He'd never submit to a search of the yacht," Farndale asserted. "If a lookout has been set for him—which I doubt—he will simply cruise about trying to avoid discovery until the opportunity to land Harcourt arrives."

"Surely he won't try that!" Carrington protested. "It would be mad to take such a risk now."

"On the contrary," Farndale assured him. "It is the safest and best plan of all if the landing can be made unobserved, and the yacht then slips away quietly without him. Rather than risk Harcourt being found on board, Cornish may bring him ashore to a safe biding place and then let the yacht run for it. If MacBee gets suspicious, it is better that he be led to believe that Harcourt is aboard the Murita, when he is really in England. In that event he will be safest right here, while the police, having searched the yacht without finding him, will be more puzzled than ever."

"But where the devil can we hide Harcourt if Cornish does land him?"

"That is the question," Farndale replied. "If they are forced to land, Cornish will communicate with me at once—if we can do so without taking chances of discovery. Then we must find some safe place quickly. But I have every confidence in Cornish's ability to outwit the police. Dicky, that man is a wonder!"

"And his daughter is simply magnificent!" Carrington added with enthusiasm.

Sir Harry smiled knowingly. "She certainly saved the situation last night," he said. "Her ruse worked splendidly. Fortunately the man MacBee sent did not know Harcourt personally, but even if he had seen him often, her imitation was almost perfect."

"Well," said Carrington, "let's get along and see MacBee. I want to satisfy myself that he doesn't know too much that he shouldn't."

The inspector looked tired and worn when they were ushered into his presence, but he greeted them pleasantly and thanked them for calling.

"I understand that some of the others concerned in this matter have been less considerate," MacBee said. "I am told that Mr. Cornish and his daughter sailed last night."

"I believe the yacht left this morning," said Sir Harry. "They contemplate a somewhat extended cruise, as Miss Cornish is not particularly well."

Something very like a smile twitched about MacBee's lips for an instant. "I am rather surprised at Mr. Cornish not having advised me of his intentions when he knew that I wished everyone who attended Lord Harcourt's dinner to be within easy reach. But you are of course seeking news of Lord Harcourt himself."

MacBee was looking squarely at them, and instantly the two realized the folly of pretending to be ignorant of his disappearance. "You have had no news of him?" Carrington asked, trying to conceal his disappointment.

"None," MacBee answered. "His disappearance is complete. The officer I sent to arrest him that he could not identify the men who carried off the earl, as the whole incident only occupied a few seconds under most unfavorable conditions."

The memory of the detective's discomfiture nearly caused Sir Harry to smile, but MacBee appeared not to notice his amusement and continued without hesitation.

"I have censured the man heavily," MacBee went on, "yet I cannot really blame him much, as it seems to me he took every precaution that seemed needful. The possibility of his lordship deliberately attempting to escape would never have occurred to me—and even now it seems incredible that he could have done so."

"Naturally," said Carrington. "Do you, too, believe that he has been kidnapped?"

"Beyond a doubt," MacBee replied. "As a rule I do not believe in discussing cases upon which I am working—especially with those involved in them—but I think I may be frank with you in this matter. I have received a cable from my agents in Madras which gives me much valuable material to work upon. For one thing, I have learned positively that Kirshin Kandwahr was not born to his princely title."

Sir Harry looked up in surprise. "You astound me," he said. "None of us like these fellows, but naturally we of the army are obliged to associate with them for diplomatic reasons. That is why poor Townesbend went to such pains to secure decent introductions for Kandwahr—at least so he said to me—and I cannot believe that he would have done so unless he was certain that Kandwahr's official position warranted his going to such trouble."

"Capt. Townesbend had no choice in the matter," MacBee explained. "Kandwahr is a real prince, although he was not born to the rank. He is Capt. Townesbend's half brother—son of the late Gen. Edward Townesbend and an Indian woman. The elder Townesbend served in India in the early seventies and it was then that Kandwahr was born."

"But how could that make him a prince?" Carrington asked.

"Under the Indian laws," MacBee informed them, "an adopted son has all the rights of a natural heir. Kandwahr's mother later became the wife of the Maharajah of Kandwahr, who took a liking to the child and adopted him. The woman was very clever and my agents say that she induced the Maharajah to make her son his heir. The result was that upon the death of the Maharajah, Kandwahr succeeded to the title and the estates."

"But do you see how this would lead to any quarrel between Kandwahr and Townesbend?" Sir Harry asked.

"No, frankly I do not," said MacBee. "On the contrary I have every reason to believe that a genuine affection existed between the two men and that makes me feel more strongly that I have been wrong in suspecting Kandwahr. In fact I am becoming more and more strongly convinced that Kandwahr is not the murderer, and unless I discover some further evidence against him, I shall release him shortly."

"But why do you suppose Townesbend never told us of this relationship?"

"The reason for that is frankly admitted by Kandwahr himself. He feels the prejudice society holds toward all Indian princes, and if the facts of his birth had been divulged, his entre would have been all the more difficult. I have talked with Kandwahr several times, and he seems to feel Townesbend's death most keenly, although—with the characteristic calmness of his race—he shows but little feeling openly. On the other hand, it seems equally impossible that Lord Harcourt could have done it. I believe implicity in his innocence, yet, as things stand now, everything points to his having struck the blow, and I have been obliged to order his arrest."

"But what do you make of the death of Dodson, the door man?" Sir Harry inquired.

"That is the one weak spot in the case against Harcourt," said MacBee. "The murder of Townesbend could easily have been done by Harcourt. The death of Dodson bears the ear marks of the kind of killing an ordinary thug would do. Dodson died by strangulation, and whoever did it possessed great strength, for Dodson, although old, was a powerful man. It is, of course, possible that the two died by different hands, but I believe that both murders were done by the same person, and this makes me cling to the idea Lord Harcourt is innocent."

"Had Townesbend no enemies that you can discover?" Carrington suggested.

"I can learn of none," MacBee answered. "Townesbend's Indian record seems clear, and I can find none here who had any quarrel with him. The kidnapping of Lord Harcourt suggested one theory to me, but I shall not speak of that now. I suppose I need not enjoin the strictest silence upon you, for you realize the importance of mentioning nothing of what I have said to you."

"What object could anyone have in abducting Harcourt?" Sir Harry asked, hoping that MacBee would yet show his hand on the subject.

"Several," said MacBee. "His abductors doubtless wish him out of the way for good reasons. What they are I have yet to learn, but I am satisfied that no harm has come to him. By nightfall I hope to have something tangible in this regard. By the way, do you happen to know the first port at which Mr. Cornish will touch?"

"I haven't the slighest idea," Sir Harry answered.

"Nor I," said Carrington with perfect truth.

"Nor when he will return?"

"No."

"Thank you," said MacBee. "If anything of importance develops I shall advise you at once."

He shook hands with the two, and they left him far from satisfied that the inspector was as ignorant of Harcourt's whereabouts as he pretended to be. And they were correct in their surmises, for MacBee had already been in communication with the admiralty offices, and a sharp lookout for the yacht Murita had been ordered.

There was a knock at the door and an official entered at MacBee's bidding. Without a word he set down upon the floor a mudstained and battered valise. Quietly MacBee looked the bag over, puffing away at his pipe without visible concern or satisfaction. There were no initials upon the grip and no marking to suggest the name of its owner."

"We found it in the clump of bushes by the roadside, about five miles from Southampton," the man said as MacBee looked up inquiringly. "It contains a full set of evening clothes such as a tall man would wear. The stuff was thrown into the bag in a most disorderly way, everything mussed up together, but the outfit is complete."

MacBee stooped down and opened the case, examining its contents curiously. There was no name sewed in any of the pockets, but MacBee was sure that the clothes were those of the prisoner who had escaped the night before. He picked up a plaid cap and looked it over carefully. In it was the name of a fashionable shop, but there were hundreds of similar caps worn by Londoners. The garments were wet and badly creased, but there were no rips or tears to suggest rough handling, and no telltale stains upon them anywhere, and MacBee's face showed enthusiasm as he continued to turn the things over. At last a smile spread over his features and he began to refill his pipe.

"Jamelson," he said. "Take that coat and find the tailor who made it. I suppose you have gone over the country near the place where you found this?"

"Yes, sir," the detective replied. "We've made a thorough search, but there is no trace of any strangers thereabouts. The bag was over a mile from any house, and no one in the neighborhood saw or heard anything unusual during the night. We thought, sir, that the bag might have been thrown from a passing automobile, although the roadway shows no tracks of a machine having passed."

"Naturally not," said MacBee. "The heavy rainfall would have obliterated any wheel marks in a short time. You are right, though, beyond a doubt. The bag was thrown from a machine—an automobile on its way to Southampton. The man who wore these clothes discarded them deliberately. They were not taken from him. I do not think they belong to Lord Harcourt, or at least that it was he who wore them, but I do wish to find the man who did wear them. I am beginning to see things in a new light. If there is any news of the yacht Murita, advise me as soon as you receive it."

(To be Continued.)

## *To Vanish Flies*

Flies dislike the fragrance of mignonette and will be scarce in a room with this plant in it.

A cheap and reliable fly poison, which is not dangerous to human life, is bichromate of potash in solution. Dissolve one dram, which may be brought at any drug store, in two ounces of water, add a little sugar, and place about the house in shallow dishes.

To clear rooms of flies use carbolic acid, heating a shovel and pouring on it twenty drops of the poison. The vapor will kill the flies.

Another method: Burn pyrethrum powder in the room. The flies will fall to the floor stupified and may be swept up and burned. The powder should be moistened and molded into cones, and after drying each cone should be placed upon a dish and lighted at the top. It will burn slowly, and the odor is not disagreeable.

## PROFESSIONAL FOOLS.

### They Occupied Important Places and Were Beloved and Trusted Often.

According to Garzoni, the lord was never without the fool, the fool never without a lord; while he adds that so necessary was the one to the other that if the master were compelled to forego temporarily his toy he straightway fell ill from melancholy.

The statement is corroborated by the evidence supplied by history of the extraordinary affection borne by kings to their jesters—an affection perhaps the result in part of licensed familiarity permitted to the fool alone. Traces of it are everywhere apparent. Here and there a magnificent tomb, such as that erected in the church of St. Maurice de Senlis to the memory of Thevenin de Saint Ligier, "fool of the King our Lord," testified to the gratitude of the master toward the man who had made him laugh. Or again the proof of it is to be found in gifts such as the rich chapelle of ermine covered with a rose bush, with stem of gold of cypress and leaves of wrought gold presented by John the Good, the prisoner of Poictiers, to his fool, Jehan Arcemalle. So dear was Caillette, his official jester, to Francis I. that when death had removed him from his post the King paid to his memory the unwelcome compliment of insisting that his son, made after quite another pattern and regarding the calling with abhorrence, should carry on the family tradition by assuming the cap and bells. Of Charles V. of France it is recorded that he maintained at his court a number of the craft with whom, his morning devotions concluded, he was accustomed to exchange "paroles joyeuses et honnestes" before proceeding to the more serious occupations of the day. Poor mad Charles VI. surrounded himself with jesters, hoping thus to find a means of distraction from his melancholy; and, to come to a prince of the Church, so close and intimate was the tie uniting Pope Leo X. and his favorite buffoon that the latter assisted at his death-bed, and has been asserted—one would hope erroneously—to have been the sole watcher there.

## "BRONTIDI."

### Hollow Noises That Came from Somewhere.

Interesting acoustic phenomena called, in Italy, "brontidi," have been investigated by Prof. T. Alippi, of the meteorological and seismical observatory of Urbino, Italy. These brontidi are mostly hollow noises, resembling the echo of a distant explosion, and are usually observed with a bright sky and calm air, occurring rather seldom in windy or rainy weather. They usually occur in the afternoon, both in winter and summer. These noises would seem to be of atmospheric origin. They do not produce any physiological effects of their own, nor do they seem to be connected with local earthquakes, though they sometimes cause window panes to vibrate. They are nearly everywhere considered as presages of bad weather, and are popularly supposed to be due to strong tides or storms at sea, whose echoes are transmitted to a distance. Prof. Alippi has obtained his results by means of a circular letter to which 217 observers have replied and 155 of whom had noticed the sounds. The observers in question were distributed throughout the whole of Italy and its African colonies.

These noises do not appear to be due to artificial causes such as mine explosions or gun shots, as they mostly occur in central mountain regions, where such causes are absent, while in some populated valleys where mines are common their existence is never noticed. The author is not inclined either to ascribe this phenomenon to natural causes, such as winds, while the hypothesis sometimes suggested of thunderbolts under the horizon cannot be maintained either, owing to the equal distribution of brontidi over summer and winter.

There may be some connection between certain brontidi and seismical phenomena, while another class of brontidi may be connected with meteorological phenomena; and in order fully to elucidate this question, the observations will be continued from the Italian Central Meteorological and Geodynamical Office, which intends to send out more inquiry forms.—Scientific American.

### Alpine Clubs.

The largest number of the "Alpine Journal" publishes a list, as complete as can be made, of the Alpine Clubs of all countries. Most people will be surprised to learn that there are as many as 165 such societies. They are most numerous in Austria, where there are thirty-five of them. Italy is a good second with thirty-four. Great Britain is a bad third, with seventeen. Then comes Switzerland, with sixteen, followed by France and Germany with fourteen each. There is an Alpine Club even in Holland, where there are no mountains; and in China, where one would have expected that there would be no climbers. Our own club was the first to be founded, dating from 1857. The first of the Austrian clubs was instituted in 1862, and a year later France Italy, Switzerland and America all came into the field.

Some of the best pupils of the world are outside church walls altogether.