

The Mystery of the Red Flame

By GEORGE BARTON
Author of 'The World's Greatest Military Spies and Secret Service Agents'

Copyright, 1919, by the Page Co.
Published daily, by Evening Public Ledger

THIS STARTS THE STORY

Hugh Garland of the United States customs service is assigned by Colonel Wharton, his chief, to discover the whereabouts of a wonderful red diamond which has been smuggled into the country in some manner unknown.

AND HERE IT CONTINUES

"YOU know, Hugh," he said after a few more enjoyable puffs on the pipe, "the solution of the matter in which that diamond was smuggled into this port has caused me to lose two nights' sleep, but I take my hat off to the smuggler—namely, you—because he has proved that there is something new under the customs sun."

"You bet. His plan was not only new to me, but it was simplicity itself. I thought I knew an imaginable way in which a diamond could be smuggled, and when I saw a diamond I mean a diamond in a setting, one that is bulky enough to make it appear to be well trained."

"Well, I got the passenger list of the Dom Pedro after we'd sent you here and I went over the list of names until I knew by heart I sent for the inspectors who examined the trunks and I cross-questioned them about their work."

"I adopted the system of elimination. One by one they were all set aside until they were all accounted for."

"All," he interrupted.

"All," he continued gravely, "except the Spanish ambassador."

"Well, I got the passenger list of the Dom Pedro after we'd sent you here and I went over the list of names until I knew by heart I sent for the inspectors who examined the trunks and I cross-questioned them about their work."

"Precisely, and they were passed without examination."

"Was the diamond in one of the ambassador's trunks?"

"It was not."

A new thought came to my mind. "Perhaps the fact that he came to this country by way of Brazil—"

"No," interrupted Barnes. "There was no significance in that, although it did make it possible for the rascals to carry out their scheme."

"I was becoming impatient at the provoking slowness of the old man. I threw my hands up impulsively."

"Well, I'm not going to guess any more," I cried. "My dear friends, will you kindly tell me just what they did?"

"He smiled in his benevolent, fatherly way. "I'm trying to do that," he said. "If you'll only stop interrupting me."

"I promised to keep as quiet as a church mouse."

"My mind kept going back to the ambassador's baggage," resumed Barnes, "and I finally went to the surgeon and got transcripts of the returns from the Dom Pedro."

"There was an impressive silence, after which I asked Barnes if he had gone to the Clark street house."

"I did," he answered, "and found that my bird had flown. It is an ordinary rooming-house, and the bit of baggage was delivered to a Mr. Marshall who had rented the room the week before and who left immediately after the trunk was delivered. It goes without saying that the name was an assumed one. I tried to get a description of the man, but he was so smooth-faced man and wore a light gray suit."

"I jumped to my feet in my excitement. "A man answering that description, I've been lurking about Hedgewater House ever since I came here."

"Quite likely," agreed the old man, "but let me finish my story. The next day I did what you told me to do. I went down to the Dom Pedro. I explained the business to the captain and asked him to line up all of the ship's company. He did so, and my expression promptly sank into a leaden gray. The steward of the ship, and said that he was the man who told him to deliver the trunk to the Clark street address. Johnson couldn't deny the soft impeachment, but he tried to explain it away by saying that he was acting under instructions from some member of the Spanish Embassy. I wanted to know which member it was and he couldn't tell me. His story was so palpably false that I took him into custody and he is now in prison, awaiting a hearing before the United States commissioner."

"But what is the charge against him—that is what legal charge can you make?"

"I dunno," he was the cheerful response. "I've just taken a chance in the hope of digging up something definite before he is given a formal hearing. But I'm satisfied that he is a crook, but I've got to prove it."

"This is interesting," I commented. "You let it be. Now I've got to leave you. I wanted to get your story at first hand and I've told you mine because it may help you in your future operations. I'm going back to town to round up the dealers in diamonds and precious stones. And, in the meantime, I'll keep you posted of anything which occurs."

"But this Johnson; haven't you tried to get him to confess?"

"This fellow cried the old man with a snort of disgust. "If there is anything we haven't tried it is because it is unknown to the police of this or any other country."

"I've given him the third degree in about thirty-three different forms and all he does is to look at us and say nothing. He won't talk, and that's all there is about it."

"But you're going to hold him in long as the law allows?"

"Longer—something may turn up at any moment to loosen his tongue."

"You won't want me to stay at Hedgewater House," ventured Barnes.

"Want you?" he cried. "Why, man alive, you've got to stay there!"

"By this time he was on his feet and he was shouting. He went in the direction of the station while I headed for Hedgewater House. He waved his hand at me and gave me a parting shot. "Well," I answered. "If you don't bring the bacon you needn't come home," were his final words."

"I thought that over as I trudged toward the house of mystery. I was truly in a dilemma. If I failed to recover the diamond my prestige at the Custom House would be lost. If I did it might involve Dora Wharton in serious trouble. How would it all end?"

"My mind reverted to the silent steward in the station house. He was the Sphinx whose lips I was expected to unlock. Could I do it? How was it to be done?"

"One thing was clear. If there was a conspiracy in the smuggling of the diamond, this man Johnson was the first, if not the most important, link in the chain."

Victor Jayne Speaks

When I returned, Hedgewater House lay basking in the splendor of the morning sun. The atmosphere of mystery which had surrounded it seemed to have been dispelled with the mist of the night. The casual traveler passing that way so surely have envied the occupants of such a beautiful home. It presented all of the outward appearance of happiness and prosperity. But what a difference within! Doubt, misunderstanding, fear and suspense gripped the hearts of more than one of the inmates.

"There isn't any circle there," said Rollo. "They must go through a circle to go home."

"Turn me back into my true form, and I'll show you the circle," said the parrot.

Billy threw the Dream Stick at the parrot, holding tight to the string that was tied to it. The stick hit the parrot, and instantly it vanished. Below, on the pool of mud, was Mrs. Great Brown Dragon, in her snake form, her long body making a circle.

"Here is the Magic Circle," hissed Mrs. Great Brown Dragon. "Go through it if you dare. Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!"

(Tomorrow will be told how Billy gets the better of Mrs. Great Brown Dragon and they go through the Magic Circle.)

the scheme away. It was kept hidden until the Dom Pedro docked at this side."

"Even then," I suggested, "it could not have been done except with the connivance of some one on the boat."

"Hoy," said Bromley Barnes, beaming and positively brilliant this morning. "It may please you to know that your supposition hits the nail precisely on the head."

"I nodded."

"You were saying," I prompted, "that you found the expressman who carried the trunk from the wharf?"

"Yes, and he said that when he was about a half block from the wharf one of the officers of the Dom Pedro came running after him and told him that he was to leave the thirteenth trunk at a house on Clark street. He obeyed the order, of course, and left the trunk at the address indicated. That trunk contained the Red Diamond!"

"There was an impressive silence, after which I asked Barnes if he had gone to the Clark street house."

"I did," he answered, "and found that my bird had flown. It is an ordinary rooming-house, and the bit of baggage was delivered to a Mr. Marshall who had rented the room the week before and who left immediately after the trunk was delivered. It goes without saying that the name was an assumed one. I tried to get a description of the man, but he was so smooth-faced man and wore a light gray suit."

"I jumped to my feet in my excitement. "A man answering that description, I've been lurking about Hedgewater House ever since I came here."

"Quite likely," agreed the old man, "but let me finish my story. The next day I did what you told me to do. I went down to the Dom Pedro. I explained the business to the captain and asked him to line up all of the ship's company. He did so, and my expression promptly sank into a leaden gray. The steward of the ship, and said that he was the man who told him to deliver the trunk to the Clark street address. Johnson couldn't deny the soft impeachment, but he tried to explain it away by saying that he was acting under instructions from some member of the Spanish Embassy. I wanted to know which member it was and he couldn't tell me. His story was so palpably false that I took him into custody and he is now in prison, awaiting a hearing before the United States commissioner."

"But what is the charge against him—that is what legal charge can you make?"

"I dunno," he was the cheerful response. "I've just taken a chance in the hope of digging up something definite before he is given a formal hearing. But I'm satisfied that he is a crook, but I've got to prove it."

"This is interesting," I commented. "You let it be. Now I've got to leave you. I wanted to get your story at first hand and I've told you mine because it may help you in your future operations. I'm going back to town to round up the dealers in diamonds and precious stones. And, in the meantime, I'll keep you posted of anything which occurs."

"But this Johnson; haven't you tried to get him to confess?"

"This fellow cried the old man with a snort of disgust. "If there is anything we haven't tried it is because it is unknown to the police of this or any other country."

"I've given him the third degree in about thirty-three different forms and all he does is to look at us and say nothing. He won't talk, and that's all there is about it."

"But you're going to hold him in long as the law allows?"

"Longer—something may turn up at any moment to loosen his tongue."

"You won't want me to stay at Hedgewater House," ventured Barnes.

"Want you?" he cried. "Why, man alive, you've got to stay there!"

"By this time he was on his feet and he was shouting. He went in the direction of the station while I headed for Hedgewater House. He waved his hand at me and gave me a parting shot. "Well," I answered. "If you don't bring the bacon you needn't come home," were his final words."

"I thought that over as I trudged toward the house of mystery. I was truly in a dilemma. If I failed to recover the diamond my prestige at the Custom House would be lost. If I did it might involve Dora Wharton in serious trouble. How would it all end?"

"My mind reverted to the silent steward in the station house. He was the Sphinx whose lips I was expected to unlock. Could I do it? How was it to be done?"

"One thing was clear. If there was a conspiracy in the smuggling of the diamond, this man Johnson was the first, if not the most important, link in the chain."

Victor Jayne Speaks

When I returned, Hedgewater House lay basking in the splendor of the morning sun. The atmosphere of mystery which had surrounded it seemed to have been dispelled with the mist of the night. The casual traveler passing that way so surely have envied the occupants of such a beautiful home. It presented all of the outward appearance of happiness and prosperity. But what a difference within! Doubt, misunderstanding, fear and suspense gripped the hearts of more than one of the inmates.

"There isn't any circle there," said Rollo. "They must go through a circle to go home."

"Turn me back into my true form, and I'll show you the circle," said the parrot.

Billy threw the Dream Stick at the parrot, holding tight to the string that was tied to it. The stick hit the parrot, and instantly it vanished. Below, on the pool of mud, was Mrs. Great Brown Dragon, in her snake form, her long body making a circle.

"Here is the Magic Circle," hissed Mrs. Great Brown Dragon. "Go through it if you dare. Hiss-s-s-s-s-s!"

(Tomorrow will be told how Billy gets the better of Mrs. Great Brown Dragon and they go through the Magic Circle.)

good was sitting in the sun, sucking a straw with true rural contentment. He arose, saluted me in military fashion, and reported that a stranger had called during my absence. This person had asked to see Victor Jayne and being denied that privilege had departed in great indignation. He was an undersized person, decently but not fashionably dressed in a gray suit.

"Did you follow him?" I asked.

"Mr. Haggood shook his head mournfully. "I did not—my job was to stay here until you returned."

"Yes, yes," I cried, "but it was necessary that he should be shadowed." Mr. Haggood looked at me reproachfully.

"My dear sir," he said, "I know my business. He was followed."

"Yes, sir, by the most trusted men in the department. It was my business to stay here until you returned. You have returned—hence I returned."

We walked away with all the solemnity of a pallbearer and left me to my meditations. They were not pleasant. I felt about as cheerful as a man sitting on the lid of a volcano. It was time for me to be about my business, or rather, the business of Colonel Wharton, arranging his collection. Before going into the museum I glanced into the living room and saw that Mrs. Crilly, who was sitting there in solitary state, saw me and called to me. There was a curious look on her face, but she merely smiled and set me guessing. She pointed an aristocratic finger at a chair opposite her.

"Sit down," she commanded. "I did so. It would have been almost impossible to disregard that imperative manner. Aunt Sarah was usually the most composed of women, but at this moment she looked as if she were a young girl who had just seen her first sweetheart. Her eyes were sparkling. She pressed promptly across the room and sat down as though she were talking to herself. "You seem almost like one of the family."

"I'm fairly bursting to take some one into my confidence," she went on with vivacity, "and you must be the victim."

"Complimented. I'm sure," I said. "Well, it's happened at last!" she exclaimed, shaking her head with decision.

"What?" I asked blankly.

"Victor's proposal to Dora."

"I drew back as though I had been snatched in the face. And as the significance of the words dawned upon me my heart began to throb. "Yes," she went on, "he has asked"

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

her to be his wife, and—and she has not declined."

"You mean she has accepted?" I asked, bitterly.

"No, she has not. She has asked for time and he has reluctantly consented. Colonel Wharton favors the match, and as it is most desirable, I eventually give her consent. Victor Jayne is a fine young man and he will make a good husband."

"Why do you tell me all of this?" I asked with rising irritation.

"Because I like you."

"I laughed joyfully."

"So, liking me, you torture me?"

"I'm not blind. I notice that you are growing fonder of Dora every day you are here. Now you have one of two things to do. You must crush her, or you must leave this house. Dora is not for you. She is intended for Victor Jayne."

"It is her uncle's wish and it is my wish. I don't blame you for loving Dora. I love her myself. But it is hopeless so far as you are concerned, and I feel that I am doing you a real kindness by telling you. You must crush her. Dora won't do it and my brother is too blind and too much taken up with other worries to see what is going on beneath his nose. Hence the ungrateful talk that I have just given you."

"Has Dora asked you to say this?"

"No," admitted Aunt Sarah, "she has no intimation of what I was going to say to you."

"Her eyes were blinked at this, but reaching over she took me by the hand. "So," I cried bitterly, "you are going to compel her to marry this man?"

"The old lady's smile disappeared. "There's no compulsion—please do not forget yourself."

"But what do you know about Jayne—how do you know that he is all that he claims to be?"

"She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

"I realized in a moment that I had given my consent to a friend and turned her into a possible enemy. But I was so upset by the news that she had given me that I did not fully realize what was going on. It was only when she said that she was going to marry me that I came to my senses. She arose with a laughing gesture and left the room. At the door she paused for a moment and wished me something. "We know as much of him as we do of you."

"I bowed."

BEWARE OF WITCHES; TONIGHT'S THE NIGHT

City Will Turn Into Land of Hobgoblins and Fairies, Elves and Gnomes

Witches will dance about a cauldron tonight and odd sights will be seen everywhere.

A queen in regal robes will walk the streets and then a clown with painted face will do strange tricks.

The queerest sort of things will happen to door bells and grinning pumpkins will peek behind dry corn shocks.

The biggest Halloween in several years is planned for tonight, and false faces and costumes have been pulled from the attic trunks to celebrate in an endless line of parties that will stretch from one end of the city to the other.

A ghost dance will be given about a cauldron at the Waterview Annex on Haines street Germantown. This will be a neighborhood party. At the center proper the Unous Club will have a masquerade.

Permits have been granted by City Hall for more than 200 dance halls and 150 organizations have received permits to give Halloween parties.

Great quantities of supplies for Halloween fun have been purchased and the stocks in dry stores are virtually exhausted. The demand has very far exceeded the anticipation of the shopkeepers.

Superintendent Robinson is looking forward to a busy evening and has sent a bulletin to all police stations saying that every effort must be made to prevent disorderly conduct and destruction of property by the festive crowd. Disappearing shutters and pail fences removed without a permit are likely to bring trouble to the owners. Even an otherwise bonfire party might be spoiled by the absence of some of the guests.

LOCUST ST. STILL A PASTURE

High School Girls Complain of Block in West Philadelphia

Locust street between Forty-seventh and Forty-ninth is not a street at all, but a field overgrown with weeds, and the mud from the street pours into Forty-seventh street in such volume that a long plank is necessary for dry-foot navigation from the high school to the Leas School corner.

Even in dry weather students of the schools can not reach the buildings without making a detour around part of Locust street which lapses into the north and southbound thoroughfares.

The street is not navigable by wagon, unless an extra horse or two is added to pull the vehicles. And if the rain falls, the mud from the street pours into Forty-seventh street in such volume that a long plank is necessary for dry-foot navigation from the high school to the Leas School corner.

Even in dry weather students of the schools can not reach the buildings without making a detour around part of Locust street which lapses into the north and southbound thoroughfares.

DAVIES HERE WEDNESDAY

Noted Oratorio Singer to Appear Before Organist Guild

Merlin Davies, noted oratorio singer of Montreal, and formerly tenor in the royal chapel at Windsor, will come to Philadelphia and sing at the public service of the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Guild of Organists, Wednesday night at St. Mark's Church, Sixteenth and Spruce streets.

Mr. Davies won the open scholarship at the Royal Academy in England. He will sing the solo part of Spohr's "Last Judgment," and two oratorio songs, including recitative and solo from Sullivan's "The Prodigal Son." Lewis A. Wadlow, organist of St. Mark's, who has charge of the service, will accompany Mr. Davies. On Thursday the program will be repeated at the Church of Our Savior in Jenkintown.

Ox Roast at Habero's Tonight

Featured by a parade of several hundred persons, an ox roast and Halloween demonstration will be staged at Habero's tonight. Special committees of residents and business men are engaged in preparation for the affair.

IN ALL COLORS

SHAFCO-WYT A Smooth Durable Finish for Metal and Wood