

The Cases of Alice Clement

True Stories of the World's Greatest Woman Sleuth as Told by Herself to Courtney Riley Cooper

A Bit of Fortune Telling

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To our right, the great, age-greened statue of George Washington held itself aloof from the steps of the Treasury Building. The staring eyes were far down the street, to where marching figures in the costumes of Colonial days were threading their way along to the music of bands.

Flags were flying. The clatter of hoofs sounded in front of the Stock Exchange. Crowds were cheering. The clicking of motion picture machines came as us from the ledge nearby, as the men of the camera put into short-lived history the sights of New York's Fourth of July parade. Miss Clement was silent, her eyes on the columns of figures as they turned, gay colored, into to chaem-like Wall street. I could see that the sight had gripped her, just as it had gripped me, and that she was thinking of other days, when determined little groups of men in the same sort of costume, marched up this same street to the music of life and drum, ready to fight—and fight until the last drop of blood was gone. It was a mixture of past and present—the skyscrapers of today sheltering the replica of more than a hundred years ago.

"A comparison that only New York could give," I remarked, and Miss Clement nodded her head.

An hour later, as we sat on the screened veranda of the Cafe Boulevard, watching the holiday life of toaming Second avenue, Miss Clement was still thoughtful—and still silent, a great deal of the time. I became focular and she looked at me with that little smile which always foretells the coming story.

"It's queer the hold that the past can get on one," she said. "Not that I've been thinking anything about the days of the revolution. I didn't like that long ago," was added with a laugh as the waiter served the cocktails. "But I have noticed when you want to do something with a person, you can paint the future forever without getting results. But paint the past a few times and you're pretty sure to get what you want."

"It was about eight o'clock one night three years ago when the buzzer of my apartment in Chicago announced someone at the door. A young girl who gave her name as Miss Charles, faced me a few moments later—stylishly dressed, pretty, and with every indication of a fair position in life about her. She hesitated a moment, looking around the room as if to assure herself that we were the only two there. Then she drew her chair close to me.

"Miss Clement," she said, "I have come to you to find out if you could do some work for me. It's—"

"Not without the consent of the captain," I answered. "But perhaps that can be arranged. Is it anything connected with criminals?"

"The woman studied a moment. "That is what I don't know," she answered at last. "If I only did, I would feel better. The truth is that my mother, who is fifty years old, is ruining our fortune. In three months she has gotten away with more than seventy thousand dollars. What has become of it, I cannot say. In fact, I cannot swear absolutely that she has parted with the money. All I know is that she has turned stocks into money and that she has been drawing from her account at the bank steadily. I have tried to find out what she has been doing with the money, but that has been impossible. She does not live at home with my brother and myself, but has taken an apartment on the North Side. I have gone there and tried to persuade her to allow me to live with her, but she has refused. She has also refused to come home—and there is nothing that I can do.

"And that is the reason I have come to you," the young woman continued. My brother has figured it out that my mother is insane, and that she should be taken before the probate court and adjudged so. You know what that would mean? You were continued with a heartbroken little sigh. "I just couldn't stand it. I thought that maybe if I should come to you, you could find out a way to straighten this whole thing out. How—I don't know."

"Has your mother anything to worry her?" I asked. "What does your brother base his belief of insanity on?"

"Nothing—except that she is evidently trying to spend all the money she possesses."

"On what? Have you any idea?"

"None at all."

"How many children are there?"

"Four—my brother and myself and two male sisters, who live in Spokane."

"No black sheep in the family?"

"No."

"How long has your father been dead?"

"The young woman looked at me quickly. "I can't tell you that," she answered at last, with a bit of hidden pain in her voice. "I am not sure. I have never been sure that he is dead—"

though we are reasonably satisfied. My father went on an exploring expedition into South America fifteen years ago, after a series of quarrels with my mother. Relations had not been good for some time. He never came back. Whether he died there or whether he has merely remained away, I do not know."

"I listened to that explanation intently. And with the explanation, there came a clue. The young woman as she talked, waved her gloves nervously. They bore to my mind familiar memories that I should recognize. My brain struggled with memory a long time. Then suddenly the flash came, and I smiled as I looked at Miss Charles, and asked:

"How long have you been carrying your mother's gloves?"

"There was a little start of surprise at the question. The young woman held up the gloves and her eyes grew wide.

"Why—so I am!" she exclaimed. "How did you know that?" A nervous little laugh followed the question. "Have you ever seen my mother—how did you know I was carrying her gloves?"

"We'll let that remain my little secret for the present," I answered. "Now, we'll revert to the original question of how long have you been carrying them?"

"Only since last night. I went to her flat to see if I couldn't persuade her to come home, and I guess as I left, I must have taken up her gloves by mistake."

"Then I became serious. 'Miss Charles,' I said. 'You probably will not hear from me for three or four days. In the meantime I wish that you would go back to your mother's flat and make just one more attempt to stay there—only for the few days—so that we may keep her from getting rid of any more of that money until the time comes when I can stop it forever. I have to take a little out of town trip.'

"With that I dismissed her and began to make the plans which would result in the saving of a fortune. And late that night I was still at my library table, figuring out means of finding the person whom I sought. One thing I knew would be fruitless, the attempt to shadow Mrs. Charles and learn with whom she associated. If the person whom I believed to be the one who was getting the money had anything to do with her actions, then certainly efforts at shadowing would be beyond the question. He would arrange for that. I consulted my case book and found the name I wanted, recorded there five years before. Then, late as it was, I stepped to the telephone and put in a long distance call for the warden of the state penitentiary at Joliet.

"When did Alem Haji get released?" I asked when the connection was made and I had explained my personality. There was a wait of a few minutes while the warden looked up the records.

"You mean the Indian fakir?" he asked at last.

"Yes. Sent up by me in the Clark street raids five years ago."

"The same one," said the warden. "He's been out about six months. We gave him transportation to St. Louis for his earned time in the penitentiary."

"However, I had a different belief about things as I hung up the telephone. The memory of those gloves was what had made me come to the decision and the next day a squad of detectives, obtained by me from headquarters was searching every available part of Chicago's underworld. That night Alem Haji, dealer in the occult, was resting as comfortably as possible in a steel room in the Harrison street jail, while his house girl remained in the matron's room. His place of business still was open, however, with another man in Haji's place—a detective who possessed the art of makeup and the brains to play a hard game.

"And it was a hard game that was before him. What clients Haji had we did not know, nor what they came for. Questioning had proved fruitless; the man only stared at us with his beady, snapping, black eyes and smiled grimly at the cross-fire of interrogation which was shot at him. Nor could anything more be gained from the girl. We were playing a game in the dark—but we had laid our trap to save more than one victim and we were going to 'use our resources.'"

Miss Clement ceased a moment and smilingly raised a hand.

"Did you ever try to read fortunes, distribute love potions, give seances and play magic when you didn't know a thing about the people you were dealing with?" she asked.

"No," I answered. "Why?"

"Simply because that was the game we had to play. Alem Haji's place was one of Indian magic. Everything about us was equipment, pots, funny little blow pipes, queer smelling perfumes, jars of colored liquids, dummies, velvet curtains and idols. To us, it was all a puzzle; we knew nothing more than that there was a collection of junk which must be worked and worked correctly to allay suspi-

cion until the proper time came. We had no information on which to work—there was only one thing which kept me at the job, my intuitive knowledge that I was working on the right track and that sooner or later the person I desired would show up. But in the meantime the detective and myself must find the key to this collection of material. We must know what to use for various persons, and we must know the prices that we've paid. Hour after hour we spent that night, searching everywhere, looking even under the carpets for what we knew must be somewhere about the place. Alem Haji did not keep all his information in his head, we felt sure of that. He did not depend on his memory for the earning of his money and we knew that sooner or later we would find his 'book of symptoms.' And sure enough, about daybreak, my detective came forth from a closet, bearing with him a small, closely written notebook. Anxiously we turned the pages. There we saw names, addresses, prices—in fact, a complete history of every client who followed the occult teachings of Alem Haji, the mystic. There were those who sought love and who paid for their love potions at prices worth while. There were others who sought power—and paid for it. There were still others who attempted to penetrate the veil which separates this world from the next, and under this heading we found the name of Mrs. Charles.

"Some way, that day, my detective, garbed in the robes of Alem Haji, and myself, dressed in the costume of an Indian woman, whose sole duty was to answer the bell and to roll her eyes and speak a jabbering, gibberish tongue, managed to work with those who came for their seances. And we gave those seances, we delivered the love potions, and we threw in free of charge things of which Alem Haji had never dreamed. If ever there was a day of real mystic free-for-all foolery, it was that one. More than once that day I gritted my teeth to keep from laughing. More than once that laughter would be choked back by a queer look in the face of the client—as fear would enter our hearts that it was suspected that something was wrong, that the real Alem Haji had not been before them in the dimmed, darkened room, after all. We were playing a dangerous game, we knew that. We felt that even though we had arrested Alem Haji, that we had sufficient evidence to send him over the road again for being a fakir and a thieving fortune teller, that we had not yet saved the woman we had started out to save. Did you ever know that such a person will trust the man who is robbing her implicitly, no matter what happens? We knew that if we proclaimed to the world that Alem Haji had been arrested and that he was charged with stealing money, there would not be one of the victims who would come forward to testify against him. More than that, there would be those who would look upon him as a martyr and who would even furnish money to aid him make his fight for freedom. And most important of these was Mrs. Charles. We must wait for her. We must play the game to the best of our ability and bide our time until the opportunity came to set her so hard against Alem Haji that she would be willing to do anything, now that her eyes were opened. A week passed. Still we floundered on, giving palm readings, gazing into the crystal globe and doing anything which, the key book designated as being necessary for those who came to be duped. We gave advice on business matters—attempts to make it such advice that it would do no harm. We gave advice in love matters. We handed out tablets and potions to make men and women happy and handsome, knowing that they were nothing but colored water or bread pills. And all the time we hoped for that moment when Mrs. Charles would come. We were also getting anxious for another reason. In that week or more of work we collected money, of course. The job of keeping books on it, so that it might be returned when the case was over, had fallen to me, and it was making me stay up late nights.

"Then came the test. The telephone rang one night, late. I had been working over my books, attempting to straighten out the list of persons who had paid in money during the day and to whom it must be returned. I looked at the clock, it stood exactly at midnight. A voice which seemed to have a familiar ring to it came over the phone.

"Alem Haji, please," it said. I roused the detective. He answered the telephone and I saw that the face was wrinkled as he said 'All right' and hung up the receiver.

"What is it?" I asked.

"A woman," he answered, "who merely said 'I am ready.' Do you suppose—?"

"I am sure of it," I answered. "I recognized her voice as being similar to that of her daughter's. We must get things in readiness."

"Long had we studied that little book of instructions. We knew every line by heart. Hastily we went to the seance room, arranged the statues of Buddha, fixed the lights, the phosphorescent figures, the heavy robes and curtains and then went downstairs and sat down to wait.

"Nothing happened for about twenty minutes—and then there came a sound which caused us both to start from our chairs. It was a knocking on the floor from beneath, three heavy taps, each with a space of time between, then five short, staccato ones. We stared at each other. Then my detective, with a lunge, pulled the rug from the floor and threw it into one corner. A trap door lay before us. I hurried to the seance room, to arrange the powders and illuminations that would



GAZING INTO THE CRYSTAL GLOBE, GIVING PALM READINGS, AND DOING EVERYTHING THE KEY BOOK DESIGNATED.

end the spending of the Charles fortune. As I worked in the darkness, shielded by heavy curtains, I heard the voices of the woman and of the supposed Alem Haji.

"I have brought you twice as much money tonight," the woman was saying. "I want to see him longer. I want to talk to him about that thing you have kept me from asking him about—what became of him. I want you to let him come near me and let me hold him in my arms. Won't you do that?" The woman's voice was pitiful. "Won't you be true?"

"Spirits are vague," was the guttural answer of the pseudo Haji. "Spirits are vague."

"But you have promised—oh, so many times. The spirits of life which you said would bring him to me in my dreams have not done it. Once I saw him—then he flitted away. You let me talk to him and ask him if he loves me. Why can't you let me ask him what I want to know—about that other woman?" Haji's voice seemed queer. It was choking.

"Tonight," came his reply at last. "you can see him and talk to him and hold him in your arms. The spirits will do it."

"A cry came from the woman. She hurried into the seance room and seated herself. I could hear her hard breathing. I could almost see her eyes gleaming in the darkness.

"Then began the seance. Strange lights played for a moment as I pulled the switches to the accompaniment of the chanting voice of the detective Haji. Then all was darkness. At last a voice broke upon the stillness.

"I have come to you, Esther. What is it? What is it?"

"The woman half sobbed. "Henry, where are you?"

"I am close to you. Close to you—"

"A vague figure floated through the air, near to the waiting woman, then disappeared in darkness. Again it came forth, at this time it carried with it an unanny glow, showing the dead face of man, his bloodless lips, his staring eyes. The woman reeled in her chair and thrust forth her arms. The figure vanished behind the curtains again.

"Once more the voice sounded. The strange light played again and again. The woman was becoming hysterical. She was screaming to Haji, begging that he allow her spirit to come to her, to be held in her arms. There was no answering voice, for Haji, the supposed, was stretched forth upon the divan, his whole body hidden except his arms and head. His eyes were closed. He was in a trance.

"Music began to play. For the last time the figure came forth, drifted into the air and then settled itself into the woman's arms. She sobbed aloud. She buried her head against that of the man she held.

"Henry!" he cried. "Henry—Henry—"

"There came a scream. A white light flared through the room. I ran forth from behind the curtain, crying for Haji.

"I'm on top!" I cried. "Haji—help me—help me—"

"A curse came from the couch as the detective jumped up. "You little fool!" he cried. "Get back there, you're not on fire. Get back there—get back there!"

"I'll not," I answered. "I'm not going to do your work for you any more. You frighten me! You make me do things that care me! I don't like it!"

"With that I preached to the switch on the wall and threw on the lights. Mrs. Charles stood before us open mouthed, arising from the wooden dummy in her arms, on me and then the detective; she believed to be Haji, at the strigs in his hands, which showed her he had manipulated the workings of the dummy she believed to have been the spirit of her husband. I had left the curtains open. The paraphernalia of the seance room was laid out bare here. She gasped once or twice, her eyes opened wide and then she bowed the dummy with its

waxen, staring countenance, to sink from her arms.

"Trickery!" she said, "all this is trickery! You've robbed me! You've stolen everything from me making me believe—"

"She rushed from the room and out of the house. We let her go. Then we hurried into the clothes of civilization we had not worn for more than a week.

"The plan worked well, didn't it?" the detective asked as we met downstairs and prepared to go to the home of Mrs. Charles to announce to her that we had arrested the man who had tricked her.

"That depends," I said, "on future developments. You know we can't prove in court that Haji was a fake. The evidence to show that he was a fake was concocted after he had gone. There's only one thing to do."

"And that is—" the detective asked.

"He got his answer an hour later, when Mrs. Charles went with us to the police station and faced the man who had been imprisoned there many days. But she did not know it. She believed he had just been taken there and the storm of her wrath descended. She screamed at him. She attempted to grasp him with her clawing hands. Hysterically she raved at him and he watched her smilingly.

"Is this fool woman going to act like this in court?" he asked me in purest English.

"Certainly," I answered.

"Then I think I'll plead guilty and

CHOSE HIS WIFE BLINDLY

Daring Scot Remembered Girls' Faces but Not Names, and Took a Chance With Happy Result.

I saw him staring disconsolately into the window of a cigar store, broad-shouldered, red-faced and sandy-haired, and instinctively I recognized a brother Scot. Some whim impelled me to speak to him. At first, I am sure, he imagined I was one of the many city sharks he had read of, but a few sentences put him at his ease.

He was diffident at first, and it was only after some coaxing that I extracted the simple story of his life before and after he had come to America.

Ten years ago he had left his native village in Ayrshire to go to Canada, and he had prospered to such an extent that he be thought himself of a wife. His fancy turned to the old country and he determined to ask a girl to come out to the new land and share his lonely farmhouse.

When he came, however, to making his choice, he was in a quandary. He had left home shortly after his school days, and the memory of his childish playmates was somewhat faded and dim. He could plainly see two girls; one strong armed, red haired and rosy cheeked, fit mate for a farmer; the other slim, dark and showing promise of early delicacy. One was Mary Johnston, the other Christina Davidson, but he was doubtful in his mind as to which was which. At school he had never called them by any other name than their nicknames of Roosty-pow and Toosey-head, from the red hair of the one, and the tangled curls of the other.

Finally he arrived at a conclusion and wrote home to Mary Johnston offering her the shelter of his strong arms and inclosing a substantial draft for her expenses.

The boat was to come in next morning, Sunday, and he left me early, bidding me good night, with a sly but sincere clasp of his great, hard hand.

On Sunday, drawn by some idle curiosity, I wandered down to the dock. What would be the greeting of this Scot—school to conceal emotion?

He was the first person I saw there and he met me with an anxious, silent smile. The boat was moored and its sides were lined with faces full

give her her money back. She gets on my nerves."

"And," added Miss Clement, "he did. Besides that, there were many thousands of dollars that went to other dupes, while Haji went to his old home in Joliet. And—"

"Pardon me," I interrupted, "but would you mind telling me one thing?"

"What?" Miss Clement smiled in anticipation of the question.

"What on earth that pair of gloves had to do with things?"

"I knew you would ask that," she said. "The truth of the matter is that the gloves had nothing to do with it, except in a roundabout way. When I was talking to Miss Charles I noticed a peculiar odor permeating the room. I had only noticed that odor once before in my life—and that was the time when I had raided Alem Haji's place five years before and learned that it was a concoction of his known as the Spirits of Life, with which he was supposed to bring back persons from the other world, that the one who sought them might see them in their dreams. I saw right away that the odor came from the gloves, because I had not noticed it so strongly until Miss Charles began to wave them. Then, as soon as I found out they were her mother's gloves I was sure of my ground. All that was needed then was the working out of things. Simple, wasn't it?"

"Exceedingly so," I answered.

"What'll you have to start out the meal on, cold consommé or—"

"Exactly," answered Miss Clement.

There Was One Merry Uprear.

voured three when he spied the turtle, that was just beginning to come to life and get his bearings.

The turtle telescoped his appendages when the pup signified his intention of being sociable. That was a new procedure to the pup. The fish hadn't done it. So the pup got out his paw. The turtle opened his domicile hospitably and took hold of the paw of friendship in anything but an amicable way.

Then there was one merry uproar and the turtle made circles in the air, clinging to the pup's fuzzy feet. By the time the strangle hold was broken the pup had lost some of his inequity. The proprietor arrived soon thereafter and found the pup sitting in a corner as far away from the turtle as he could get. His curiosity had all been satisfied and he was again contemplating the kitten.

The aquarium has been in the store for about seven years. As there was nothing on the floor that water would affect, little damage was done.

Cried for Help.

Portland, Ore.—Business Manager Metzger of the Portland coast league team cried loudly for help when a fan brushed by the gate and handed him a "rain check" of the vintage of 1916.

Fruits and Nuts.

Wayland, Mass.—Pansies, fruits and nuts composed the first fruitarian dinner served by Mrs. W. H. Henderson, president of the Anti-Vivisection society, to 30 girls.

Broke Even.

Chicago.—Mrs. Robert Bergman more than broke even with a robber who stole her empty purse. She "swiped" his false whiskers.

FISH IS AVENGED BY BRAVE TURTLE

Puppy Devours Three Companions of Amphibian.

IS OF HEROIC STUFF

Glass Tank Bursts in Bird Store and Survivor of Aquarium Disaster Clamps Jaws on Foot of Ghoulish Assailant of the Dying.

Indianapolis, Ind.—Three tiny goldfish met a tragic end; one frolicsome puppy indulged in a swim and a fresh fish dinner and one turtle about the size of a dollar-and-a-half, with a mean, snapping disposition, made things interesting for the pup when a glass aquarium, holding about four barrels of water, burst in a bird and animal store, in West Ohio street.

As it appeared to spectators, the goldfish were wiggling about contentedly in the big tank of water, thinking how much nicer and safer it is to be fed scientifically prepared fish food from a box than to get out in a stream or pond and forage for worms and maybe get hooked in the gills.

Mr. Turtle had nosed his way under a wad of moss at the bottom of the tank and was ruminating on what a heroic sacrifice had been made of his fellow creatures for the Friedmann cure.

The pup was peeping around the corner of a box of stock food on the floor and wishing with all his might that an obstreperous kitten that had been tantalizing him all morning would saunter around in his direction.

Then the crash came. One side of the glass case gave way with a roar. Water struck the pup like a tidal wave and bowled him over. Little fish scooted over the flood at a wonderful speed. The turtle clung to his tuft of moss and landed on top of a can of bird seed. A green parrot said something apropos and the other birds and beasts set up a hubbub that drew a score of persons to view the catastrophe. The door was locked. A policeman was called and notified the proprietor of the store, who appeared half an hour later.

In the meantime the inquisitive pup shook the water from his fur and set about on an investigation, forgetting all about the kitten, which sprang to the top of a bird cage for safety when the deluge came.

The pup found it awfully funny to play with the gold fish. He had de-



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