



Detective Stories

These stories give the exploits of one of the craftiest and most daring criminals of French fiction. The stories are now appearing on the moving picture screen and have just been released.

FANTOMAS

These stories are along typical French lines, which portray the "crook" as he actually is, and not as a hero in any sense of the word.

SYNOPSIS

All Paris was uneasy, with police on the alert. Many dark crimes had been committed, all followed by some direct evidence that FANTOMAS was the guilty party. Juve, a noted detective, was assigned to capture FANTOMAS and did so several times, only to have the crook escape in some marvelous manner. A wine agent named Martiale was the next victim, and FANTOMAS, with a lady confederate, Josephine, robbed the agent of \$30,000, but found the bills cut in two. They had but half the money. Juve traced FANTOMAS to Bercy where FANTOMAS nearly trapped Juve in a fire. But Juve and his friend Fandor swam across the Seine and escaped a cruel fate to pursue FANTOMAS in his wild career of crime.

Episode II—"The Man in Black."

THE CHARACTERS

Dr. Chalek Loupart, "The Man in Black."
Inspector Juve.
Fandor.
Lady Beltham.
Josephine.

Second Part—At the "Crocodile." (A Parisian Restaurant.)

For several weeks after the fire at Bercy, Juve was without trace of Fantomas. He did not know that during that time Josephine's love for the bandit had cooled. There was too much danger involved, thought the cautious young woman. She was now devoting herself to a rich American pugilist who was spending his money on her freely.

Dining one night at the "Crocodile" with her new friend, who was a heavy drinker, Josephine saw Dr. Chalek as she came in. He was sitting on the balcony with two ladies, enjoying the cabaret. When her companion had fallen asleep on the table, she was surprised to see Fandor appear. He had just come in with Juve after the theater. By chance there was only one vacant table. This was next that where Josephine sat. On looking around after taking his seat, Fandor in turn could scarcely conceal his surprise.

"Why, that pretty girl is the very one I followed, the very one that was on the train with me," he exclaimed. "It's Josephine, Loupart's accomplice. I can't be mistaken. I'm going to speak to her. Inside an hour we'll know a lot more than we know now."

Fandor walked over to Josephine's table and greeted her as an old friend. She had so many passing boulevard acquaintances that she spoke pleasantly, despite the fact that she could not recall where she had met him.

"May I bring over a friend to meet you?" he said, after he had chatted idly for a few moments of nothing in particular.

"Certainly. Any friend of yours is always welcome."

Fandor beckoned to Juve. As the detective arose and walked toward them, the journalist continued pleasantly:

"You bet you do. If you don't talk, I'll take you away."

Josephine's eyes fell under the steady, commanding gaze of the master detective. She was torn by conflicting emotions. She knew all too well that there was a terrible fate reserved for those who betrayed Fantomas; yet she knew also that Juve was a man not to be denied.

"Very well," Juve said, after giving her time to make up her mind, "it's you for the station house."

"Wait a minute!" She saw that he was in earnest. "Dr. Chalek is here now. I saw him when I came in. But I've broken with him, honest I have. I haven't anything more to do with him."

In order not to be observed crossing the floor to the door, Juve waited until the next dance began. Then he had Josephine waltz with him through the maze of dancers. At the door, where Fandor joined him, the detective gave his card to the head waiter.

"See that gentleman dining on the balcony," he indicated the blond bearded Dr. Chalek. "Take this card to him, and say that Mr. Juve is waiting for him downstairs."

The functionary went to Dr. Chalek's bidding; and Josephine scurried back to her table, fearful lest Fantomas recognize the part she was playing in his discovery. The detective had no hesitancy in sending for Dr. Chalek, since the only means of egress from the balcony about the dining hall was down the stairs at the foot of which he now waited.

The two men watched Dr. Chalek as he took Juve's card and listened to the message brought by the head waiter. He did not seem disturbed by the news. He even smiled, a sure indication that he accepted the challenge to match his wits against those of the great detective. He excused himself, and walked to the balcony cloak room. Here he put on his overcoat with its long cape, donned his silk hat with an elegant gesture, tipped the maid, and walked nonchalantly down the stairs.

Juve and Fandor, hidden on either side the stairway, waited for him to reach the main floor. Then they stepped out and seized him by the arms. He made no effort to free himself.

"Ah, gentlemen, you have me," he smiled, "but do you know who I am?"

"That's all right who you are," retorted Juve. "We've got you. That's enough for the present. Later on we shall see if Dr. Chalek can set Loupart free or accompany Fantomas to the guillotine. Let's go."

Without losing his smile, Dr. Chalek walked out of the restaurant. Juve and Fandor kept tight hold of his arms. They walked at a rapid pace down the boulevard, wishing to put their prisoner behind the bars as soon as possible. Suddenly, when there was no thought in the mind of either guard that Fantomas would seek to escape, when they held him securely by the arms, the bandit threw them to the ground by a clever movement

which tripped them and sent them spinning. Slipping out of his overcoat, Fantomas sprang into an automobile which had been trailing him, and the car soon disappeared in the darkness.

Juve and Fandor had been tricked by one of the most clever manoeuvres Fantomas had ever executed. When they fell, each carried with him half the cape of the overcoat. The garment had been carefully planned so that the seam in the back parted at the slightest pull. Instead of having safe hold of Dr. Chalek, the men had been grasping rubber arms while the remarkable criminal had been holding

his own close against his body.

Part Three—The Haunted Villa.

After Gurn had escaped the guillotine by substituting Valgrand for himself in the death cell, Lady Beltham had immured herself in a convent at Neully. Here she remained as a boarder while building her health which had been shattered by the terrible experiences through which she had passed. If time did not pass happily for her, at least it was passing quietly. She was sincere in her efforts to forget. One day she received a letter that told her she was still held by chains of the past.

"Dear Lady:—Is it possible that you still refuse to see me? Last night I visited our deserted villa, where you have so heartlessly had set up a "For sale" sign.

"Be assured that I did not wake the gardener at the lodge. There in the villa, alone, I spent the night reviving the past.

"Lady Beltham, I must see you and speak to you. I shall wait for you Wednesday at midnight, in the room which has been the witness of so much of our happiness.

"Gurn."

All in a moment the unfortunate woman was a prey to the conflicting emotions of terror, joy and sorrow. She still loved the man who was responsible for her downfall. Yet at the same time she feared him. She knew that she could not refuse to see him. She knew that she could not refuse to see him without paying the penalty. She longed to see him with a deep yearning, yet equally strong within her was the desire to run away from him. She could arrive at no decision. Vacillating, hesitating, she spent her time in an agony of indecision.

At midnight on the following Wednesday a man stood in a room on the lower floor of the deserted Beltham villa at Neully. In the darkness he waited—and listened. Soon an automobile was heard. It was brought to a stop, and a moment later the great front door of the villa was heard to open and close. Gurn smiled as he heard a familiar step approaching through the dark rooms.

Lady Beltham had struggled against her desire to visit the man, but her power over her was too great. She entered the room and switched on the light. Gurn was waiting for her, she found, and despite her determination her heart gave a great leap of joy. What she had in mind to tell him, he never knew; for after a short struggle with her emotions Lady Beltham surrendered her heart again to the man for whom she had sacrificed so much.

When she left, she promised to return every Tuesday at midnight.

Dismayed by the sharp trick by which Fantomas had made his escape, but still as determined as ever to see that he was brought to justice, Juve started his search for the mysterious and elusive criminal as soon as he got to his feet on the boulevard. Your true Parisian is sensitive to ridicule, and Juve felt how ridiculous he looked as he sat on the pavement with half a cape and a rubber arm in his hands while the clever criminal disappeared in an automobile.

The detective was not discouraged because Fantomas was not to be found masquerading as Dr. Chalek or Loupart. He also decided that it would be useless to watch Josephine. What he could not get out of his head was the thought that perhaps a clue might be found by watching the deserted Beltham villa at Neully. Taking Fandor into his confidence, Juve asked him to meet him there the following day.

When the newspaper man reached the villa, his friend was nowhere in sight. Lounging near by was a fat old sot who finally walked up to him and touched him on the arm. Looking at the man closely, Fandor saw that he was laughing at him. It was Juve, so cleverly disguised that he had fooled his best friend.

"Come on," said the seeming loafer, "I'm glad to find you don't recognize me. We've been prowling around here so much that I thought I'd come this time incognito."

At the lodge gate they rang the bell, which was answered by the gardener.

"Pardon me," said the journalist, prompted by Juve, "this man told me this villa was for sale when he saw

me searching in the neighborhood for a home. May I look through it?"

The gardener was well pleased at the thought of showing the place and took them through the premises. Every where the house had the appearance of having been closed for some time. The furniture was dusty. The luxuriously furnished rooms seemed to have been without occupants for some time. When questioned, the gardener could give little information. There seemed little he could give until the visitors reached a room in what had been Lady Beltham's own suite. There on a table lay an ink-stand, a pen and some paper. It seemed as if they had been put there within the day. The ink had not dried in the well, and the pen had not rusted.

"Are you writing your letters in this room?" asked Juve.

"I? No, sir. What made you ask?"

"Some one has been using this pen within the last two days."

To find that this was known seemed to embarrass the man greatly.

"I—well, I don't want to say anything—but, honestly, sir, I believe the place is haunted. You may laugh, but every now and then at night I think I see a candle light in the house. I know no one can get in. I don't know what to think, sir."

"A light? That is queer, isn't it? Have the ghosts any special nights for lighting their candles?"

"Laugh, if you wish, sir, but I'm positive that I see such a light every Tuesday night."

"Have you tried to find out about the lights?"

The man shrugged his shoulders. "That is not my business. I lock the doors, and I always find them locked. I haven't been ordered to do anything else."

Juve and Fandor exchanged knowing glances. They then passed to the other rooms of the villa, but found nothing to arouse their suspicions. In the basement everything was in order. In a large barrel used to collect rain-water a bottle was floating, but it could have been there for months. The only other thing to arrest their attention was the enormous furnace. Through any of its pipes a man could easily crawl.

Fandor finally told the gardener that the matter would be considered, and the two men left. Yet they carried with them knowledge of every nook and cranny in the house. They could not have known it better if they had lived in it for years.

The following Tuesday night Lady Beltham thought that she had arrived at the villa unobserved, but Juve and Fandor had her well in view. After watching her let herself in through a small side door, the two climbed over the fence in the shadow of a great tree and jumped into the garden. Keeping well in the shade they made their way to the basement of the villa. Meanwhile, the man they sought had arrived. Upstairs Lady Beltham was beseeching him to leave the country. She promised to go with him and begin life anew somewhere else.

"Have pity on me," begged the unfortunate woman. "I cannot stand the constant peril in which you live."

"Perhaps it would be best," he assented. "Sooner or later I shall be backed into a corner again and have to fight for my life."

At this the woman shivered.

"I'm cold. Please close that ventilator."

Fantomas himself felt the chill of the long closed house. He closed the large grating through which a current of cold air was coming from the basement. Had he looked an instant later he would have found that it had been opened again. Juve was there, hearing every word the couple uttered.

"Very well," Fantomas decided. "We'll go away together. But before 4 days have passed my silent executioner will have killed Juve in his own bed, just as he has killed others. I shall leave his body as my final present for the police. Come, let us go."

When Juve and Fandor were able to get out of the house, no one was in sight. An automobile was whirling away in the distance.

Juve gave great thought to the words of Fantomas which were a threat against him. The words "silent executioner" reminded him of the body of the woman found in the office of Dr. Chalek which Fantomas had sought to make the police believe was that of Lady Beltham. From the cryptic words Fantomas had uttered Juve was unable to decide just what kind of adversary he would have to meet when at last he came to grips with the "silent executioner."

Remembering that the body of the woman found at Dr. Chalek's had the appearance of having been crushed by some terrible pressure, the wily detective took certain precautions. He had one of his friends, a manufacturer of harness, have made for him a large leather belt and two leather arm coverings from which projected long sharp nails. While wearing these protective pieces, he was immune from any heavy pressure that any human being could directly exert.

Remembering the boast of Fantomas that four days would not pass without the appearance of the silent

executioner, Juve put on his armor and waited. Fandor helped him. The plan was for the detective to lie on his bed in the darkened room, while the journalist concealed himself in a large basket at the foot of the bed. It was a warm night, and the window was open. A lamp ready for lighting was on a table beside the bed.

While the men waited they thought they heard an automobile stop in front of the house. Yet nothing happened. The long minutes went with not a sound to be heard but the ticking of the clock. It was after midnight. Finally the detective thought he heard a light sound as of some one grazing against the window sill. Then silence again. Juve began to think that the noise he had heard came from a distance.

Suddenly he felt something move against his leg. He started to get up to see what was on his bed when he was seized and bound as if with a cable of steel. He felt the pressure slowly but irresistibly increasing. He struggled to free himself. At first he did not call Fandor, not knowing what kind of danger he had to face. Yet when the pressure began to be so alarming that he feared he was about to be crushed as he was the woman found in Dr. Chalek's office, he cried for help.

Fandor struggled out of his basket, and rushed to his friend's assistance. Unfortunately, he upset the lamp and was unable to make a light.

Meanwhile Juve felt the pressure relaxing. Soon he was free. What had happened was that Fantomas had released in the room a giant boa-constrictor. The great snake had been unable to crush the detective because of his armor of nails. Unable to accomplish its purpose, the boa had slunk out the window through which it had entered the room.

When Fandor finally was able to light the lamp and rush to his friend, he found Juve staggering about, still suffering from the pressure that had been exerted despite his protective covering. Yet on his lips there was a smile of triumph.

"What's the matter?"

"I have escaped the most terrible of all deaths," replied Juve "but now I am certain that we shall catch Fantomas."

Outside could be heard an automobile as it made a sudden start and dashed down the street.

(To be continued)

It Couldn't Be Done.

They were getting up a charity concert in the small provincial town, and the committee determined to work hard to make a great success of it. The local magnates and tradesmen were called upon, and to one of the latter, a coal merchant whose place was somewhere in the North, an appeal was duly made.

"Ah'm very sorry," was the coal merchant's reply to the committee's representative, "but Ah's stopped subscribing tae a' these things."

"Well, you'll give us an order for an advertisement on the program?" suggested the caller.

The coal merchant shook his head. Then a sudden inspiration seized him.

"Ah tell ye what Ah'll dae, tho," he said. "Ah'll get ma dochter tae sing for ye."

"Right you are," said the other. "What will I put her down for?"

"Keep the Home Fires Burning."

"Can't be done," declared the concert man, emphatically, folding up his papers, "if you won't subscribe I'll take jolly good care you get no free advertisement on our program."

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PHOTOPLAYS—Whether a regular writer, or if you are looking for big money in spare time, send 25c stamps for "Photo Play" the "Movies" and list of studios to date. If \$3.00 deal you won't want to miss, if \$3.00 are an investment. Photoplayer, 335 Erie St., Toledo, Ohio.

FARMS—If you want one or have one for sale, or if you have half or stock for sale, send 50c cash for 24 word notice in best list weekly papers in Ohio and Michigan. The results are sure. Address Farm Lists, 335 Erie St., Toledo, Ohio.

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ANOTHER 60 ACRES, good buildings, everything in good shape, 5 miles from Adrian, \$115 an acre with \$1,000 down.

HERE ARE some bargains for either cash or time buyers. The same farms couldn't be bought for any less by paying cash, as the parties don't need the money.

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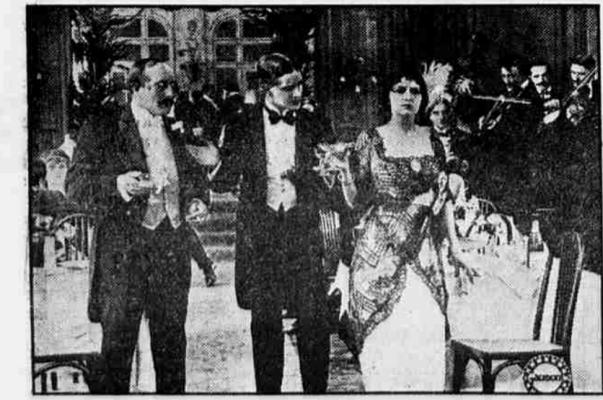
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"Allow me then to introduce my friend, Inspector Juve, the greatest detective in Paris."

The girl's face blanched with terror. She could not conceal the fact that she was trembling violently.

"How goes it, Josephine?" said Juve bluntly. "How are you making out since you became a fine lady?"

"I—I don't understand. I—"

"Don't give me any talk like that. And of you make a fuss, I'll lock you up. You can be nice about it, and I won't bother you this time; but if you try to hide anything, look out. Now, tell me, where is Dr. Chalek?"

"I—I don't know."

which tripped them and sent them spinning. Slipping out of his overcoat, Fantomas sprang into an automobile which had been trailing him, and the car soon disappeared in the darkness.

Juve and Fandor had been tricked by one of the most clever manoeuvres Fantomas had ever executed. When they fell, each carried with him half the cape of the overcoat. The garment had been carefully planned so that the seam in the back parted at the slightest pull. Instead of having safe hold of Dr. Chalek, the men had been grasping rubber arms while the remarkable criminal had been holding