

# The Exploits of Elaine

A Detective Novel and a Motion Picture Drama

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### SYNOPSIS.

The New York police are mystified by a series of murders and other crimes. The principal clue to the criminal is the warning letter which is sent to the victims, signed with a "clutching hand." The latest victim of the mysterious assassin is Taylor Dodge, the insurance president. His daughter, Elaine, employs Craig Kennedy, the famous scientific detective, to try to unravel the mystery. What Kennedy accomplishes is told by his friend, Jameson, a newspaper man. After many fruitless attempts to put Elaine and Craig Kennedy out of the way the Clutching Hand is at last found to be none other than Perry Bennett, Elaine's lawyer and the man she is engaged to marry. Bennett flees to the den of one of his Chinese criminals. The Chinaman forces from Bennett the secret of the whereabouts of \$2,000,000. Then he reaches the lawyer's position which will suspend animation for months. Kennedy rescues Bennett's side just after he has lost consciousness.

### TWENTY-SECOND EPISODE

#### THE OPIUM SMUGGLERS.

George, the Dodge chauffeur, had just returned to the garage in the rear of the house with the car and was working over it. He was so intent on locating a strange noise in the engine that he did not see the serpentine eyes of Wu as he peered into the garage through a small window.

Wu was not alone. As always, he had been able to secure an assistant in the devilish scheme he had in mind, not a sinister, evil-faced fellow, but a neat, quiet, apparently honest-looking young mechanic.

George was bending closely over the engine as he speeded it up to see what was the cause of the rattle, when the door of the garage opened quietly. On tiptoe Wu and the young mechanic, a man named Johnson, slipped in, Johnson carrying an automobile robe.

The next moment the two had leaped upon the defenseless George. Johnson threw the robe over his head, while Wu wound him about with a rope. He was completely and instantly put out.

Just then, working as if by the clock, for such was the precision of Wu's plans, a closed car, muffled down, slipped up to the garage door. They hustled the unresisting George into the car, Johnson taking the place at the wheel and Wu sitting on guard in back with George, bound and almost suffocated.

George was loyal, if anything. Threats and bribes had no effect on him, even after he had come to in Wu's secret den.

"There is paper, pen and ink," threatened Wu. "Write what I tell you."

George remained motionless, defiant. "You will not?" shrugged Wu, masking his impatience behind an assumed nonchalance.

Slowly he picked up a murderous dirk, which lay on the table before him, and felt the point thoughtfully. A deep, guttural order hissed from the serpent's lips. Instantly two of the servants seized George, while the third bent his head back. As Wu raised the knife, it was more than even the iron nerves of George could stand.

He broke down. "Take the pen," directed Wu, adding, as George took it mechanically, "Write."

Both Elaine and Aunt Josephine were much surprised at the nonappearance of George in the morning.

It was explained, apparently, when Jennings, the butler, ushered in the neat and quiet young man who politely told a story of an accident to his dear friend, George, as he handed a note to Elaine.

"I think you'll do," nodded Elaine. "Jennings, will you show Johnson how to get to the garage?"

For a long time Kennedy had been perfecting a miniature wireless telephone of his own invention, and the activities of Wu Fang now caused him to hasten his work.

It was the next morning after the capture of Long Sin that Craig got the instrument working to his satisfaction. I was delighted, for I had been much interested in following his work on it.

"You, see, Walter," Kennedy explained, setting a little black box on the laboratory table, "I've got this thing down to an irreducible minimum. It's the most compact affair imaginable. See. I open the face of the box. I lift up these miniature aerials of the inverted L type. Here is the transmitting apparatus, there the receiving, all tucked. I press this lever."

He paused. At the other end of the table stood an exact duplicate of the first instrument.

"He pressed the lever the buzzer in the other telephone sounded."

"I'm going to ask you, Walter," he went on, folding down the little aerials and shutting up the box, "to take this other instrument over to Elaine."

Out on the Atlantic, tossing over the choppy seas, a dingy old schooner was tacking her way toward New York harbor. The captain, Jake Gregor, was a disreputable looking man, as were both his craft and his crew of mixed whites and Chinese.

Gregor had come out on deck and

stood there gazing off at where the land ought to be. He had just finished scrawling a note on a piece of paper resting on the after cabin roof when one of the men reached down and from a small wooden cage took a struggling white carrier pigeon. They fastened the note, rolled up in a sort of quill, to the bird's leg and let the bird loose. It circled up, then, straight as an arrow darted off landward.

"They'll be glad to know we're safe and so near," nodded Gregor. "And confound any revenue men that stand between us!"

In a room in a tenement Wu Fang and several Chinamen were steated talking and smoking.

Outside a nearby window was a large box which had a small sliding door on the outside, arranged so that it fell almost at a touch, working a little signal flag on the back of the box toward the room in which the Chinamen were seated.

Suddenly there was a flutter of wings outside. A pure-white pigeon seemed to glide into the box and, as the homing bird did so, the door automatically shut. It was a cage such as is used for carrier pigeons.

The little flag in the room moved, and the Chinamen crowded about the box as Wu opened it, reached in and caught the bird. Carefully he took the message from the bird's foot. As one of them placed the bird in another box and reset the trap, Wu unrolled the paper and read:

Twenty-six miles southeast of Sandy Hook. Will drop anchor off Staten Island tonight.

"You will let me know if any later message comes," directed Wu to one of his men as, a moment later, the Chinese master criminal left the tenement.

Cautiously he made his way to the secret entrance to his own apartment. He had scarcely entered when a Chinaman who had evidently been waiting for him rose and bowed. It was Hop Ling, the proprietor of the opium den. "Is there any news yet, master?" he asked.

"Yes, Gregor is landing your opium tonight. I'll have a girl for him to take back to Shanghai with him, where she can be sold."

Kennedy had begun to get closer on the trail of Wu and, having dispatched me to Elaine with the wireless telephone, it occurred to him that he might spend a few hours profitably sleuthing about Chinatown searching for clues to the Serpent.

He donned the roughest of his old suits and turned his coat collar up, while an old slouch hat was pulled over his eyes. But it was not so far over as to dim his sight.

He paused once by an electric light pole to watch a gangster saunter past. Twice the fellow had walked up and down the street.

As the gangster slouched by, he lurched over to the electric light pole, and Kennedy felt his hand touched by that of the gangster. He was more than surprised to feel something like a piece of cardboard surreptitiously shoved into his hand, and he clutched it. The gangster passed, and, as he did so, Kennedy looked at him, then bent over and read:

Capt. John Brainard,  
U. S. Secret Service.

Written underneath the engraved name was "Follow."

Slowly Craig followed. Brainard entered a saloon by a side door and seated himself in a back room. A moment later Kennedy slouched in and sat down at the same table. Brainard nodded and Craig extended his hand quietly. He looked about. They were alone.

"What brings you down here?" asked Kennedy in a low tone.

"A big shipment of opium is going to be landed tonight and I'm trying to locate the Chinese gang back of it. Think you can help me?"

"Anything to do with that hop joint up the street?"

Brainard nodded. Would it prove a clue possibly to Wu Fang?

"I'll help you," agreed Kennedy. For several minutes they talked, laying out a plan. Finally they paid the check and rose to go out. As they reached the side door a Chinaman passed. Kennedy drew Brainard back.

"What's the matter?" whispered the secret service man.

"Did you see that Chinaman?" returned Kennedy. "That's Hop Ling. He runs the opium joint. I think he is worth shadowing."

Keeping discreetly in the rear of the Chinaman, Kennedy and Brainard followed until Hop paused before a ramshackle tenement. No sooner had he disappeared inside than Craig and Brainard advanced, careful that they in turn were not followed.

They entered and went upstairs. At last they came to a door outside which they paused to listen.

"Can you make out what they are saying?" asked Brainard.

"Something about birds," returned Craig. "We've got them. There are only two. Let's rush the door."

Together they catapulted them-

selves at the door and it flew open. Instantly, before the Chinamen could recover from their surprise at the sudden attack, Craig and Brainard were on them. One rushed for a window, smashing it with a chair and trying to get out. Craig seized him and helped corner the other, who turned out to be Hop Ling. It was the work of only a moment to snap the bracelets on the two and cover them with a gun.

"What's that?" demanded Brainard, looking at the box in the window, as Kennedy moved over toward it.

"A pigeon trap, I suspect," Craig replied. "Let's wait."

They sat there for several minutes. Evidently the Chinese had been waiting for something. Craig felt that waiting might pay.

At last he was rewarded by the sound of a flutter outside. A click followed as the little door shut, trapping the pigeon. The signal flag in the room moved.

Kennedy looked at it a moment, then carefully opened the door in the back of the trap and seized the bird. From the quill on its leg he took a tightly rolled note and read.

5 P. M.

Will be off Van Dort jetty in two hours.

What did it mean? Threats, imprecations, nothing could extract a word from the two impassive prisoners.

"Come," ordered Kennedy sharply of Hop Ling, not for a moment letting his vexation show in his face. "Walk ahead of me."

Two of the gang had been captured, but Wu seemed as far away as ever. He marched Hop along sullenly, while Brainard kicked the other Chinaman to his feet and followed.

He did not have far to go. Scarcely a block away stood a policeman, and Craig waved to him.

Quickly Craig produced cards of identification and they left their handcuffed prisoners with the understanding that they were to be held until full charges could be made against them.

At the first telephone pay station Craig turned in and called up the laboratory, to which I had returned.

"I think I've got the best clue yet, Walter," he called. "You remember Brainard? Well, I want you to meet me at the Battery, where a revenue cutter will be waiting. Bring along that wireless telephone, too. Don't forget."

I hung up the receiver excitedly and tucked the little black box under my arm as I hurried out.

Elaine had decided to motor down to the country home of one of her friends who lived on the shore of New Jersey, and accordingly, late in the afternoon, called the garage and ordered Johnson to have the car ready.

As Elaine was whirled downtown and over the ferry from New York she

to the lower bay side of the island, instead of the New Jersey ferry.

It was very late in the afternoon. I did my best to get down to the Battery with the wireless telephone to meet Kennedy and Brainard, but it was dark before I got there.

As I hurried down to the dock I saw that they had already boarded the revenue cutter and were waiting impatiently. It was a fairly sizable craft.

They hauled me aboard and we cast off. The wind blew in keenly from the bay and we spun down the harbor, keeping a sharp lookout for any suspicious craft.

Already Wu Fang and a couple of his lieutenants had gone down to the Van Dort jetty. No message had been received from Gregor, but they felt sure that he would be there with the schooner.

Finally Wu directed one of his men to set off a signal, a flashlight on the end of the jetty, while he strained his eyes through the darkness for some answering signal.

He had not reckoned wrong. Far out over the water came an answering signal from the schooner.

"Good!" exclaimed Wu with satisfaction, as he turned and picked his way back up the dock.

On he went alone until he came to one of the deserted mansions of a generation or two ago which lined the shore at that point. There, in a yard beside it, stood Elaine's car.

"Where is the white girl?" asked Wu, calling Johnson.

"In the house, master," replied the mechanician submissively.

"Wait for me here, then," nodded Wu.

Down in a musty room in the basement of the deserted house was Elaine. She was neither bound nor gagged. In fact, there was no necessity for it. No one could hear her cries, nor could she escape, for her roughnecks who had seized her were guarding her, besides a couple of Chinamen.

Wu Fang came in silently and moved over close to her. He said not a word, but an evil smile spread over his sinister face as she shrank from him.

Meanwhile a yawl had put out from the schooner loaded with cans of the precious contraband drug and had pulled up at the old stone jetty and dock. Chinamen hastily unloaded it and started up to the house laden with the heavy tins.

As Wu stood before Elaine the Chinamen carrying the dope tins entered and began piling them up in an old closet in the room. At last they finished putting it away.

"All is done, master," bowed one who seemed to be leader.

Wu nodded, then turned to Elaine. "Go!" he hissed, raising his finger and pointing to the door.

Trembling, she obeyed, and Wu Fang and the two toughs followed.

"Oh, will it work—will it work?" she breathed in prayer to herself as she lifted out tenderly the little wireless telephone.

She opened it, pulled up the little aerials, and pressed the lever.

"Hello—hello—Craig—hello!" It was her last chance. Would it work?

By this time we had come in the revenue cutter to the old dock that was known as the Van Dort jetty.

As we swung around to it, with Kennedy and Brainard I leaped out. We gazed about, hunting for signs of the opium smugglers. All was as still as a grave, except for the ominous lapping of the waves.

I happened to look down at the ground. There in the light of the lantern I saw one of those square-toed footprints which we had come to know so well—the print of a Chinese shoe.

The footprints led up from the dock to an old, deserted, dilapidated house. We paused a moment before it. Just then a door opened and a Chinaman appeared.

With a cry he darted back, but we were at his heels. There were others inside, too, but they were almost overpowered.

Prodding the reticent Celestials, we retraced our steps to the jetty. Brainard's men carrying the opium. At the dock we loaded our prisoners and the contraband on the cutter.

It was plain that although we had captured the dope, the ship which had brought it had escaped, and, worst of all, Wu had again slipped through our fingers.

Brainard gave the order, and we left the wharf. As we stood gazing from the captured opium to the prisoners, Brainard was visibly elated.

"Shake," he said ironically to Craig. "Whether it was that he was disappointed at the failure to land Wu or whether he had a premonition that all was not well, somehow Kennedy did not share the elation. He extended his hand mechanically.

Just then a buzz, as if a bell had rung started us. It was so unexpected that I exclaimed, although the next minute I realized that it was from the wireless telephone Craig had asked me to bring from the laboratory.

Kennedy seized the box, opened it hastily and clapped the little receiver to his ear.

"Hello—hello—yes, this is Craig. Where are you—what?"

Of course we could hear only one side of the conversation, but from the look of intense horror that passed over Kennedy's face I knew that something terrible must have happened to Elaine.

But at Craig's next words I myself gasped.

"If you can get a light," he almost shouted, "thrust it out of the porthole to guide us. But we'll find you anyway. Keep up your nerve."

We crowded about him.

"Brainard—a pair of glasses—quick!" he cried, dashing to the bow of the cutter, "and full speed down the bay."

Briefly, as he swept the horizon ahead, he repeated the tale of Elaine's kidnapping.

"We strained our eyes.

"That's it—Brainard—more speed!" cried Craig at last.

Far off, almost out on the ocean, we could see a tiny twinkle of light slowly waving back and forth.

In her prison Elaine had talked to Craig, afraid to raise her voice too high.

As she heard Kennedy's instructions, she replaced the receiver and rose quickly to her feet from beside the suitcase. She looked about. There was a dingy oil lamp suspended from a beam of the deck above.

She seized it and ran to the porthole. Back and forth she waved it as far as her arms would permit.

As the schooner now slipped along, Gregor, who had left the man at the wheel, was gazing off, not particularly happy at the prospect of not touching a port for a long time again. Suddenly he became aware of a peculiar, though slight, gleam on the water. He leaned over the rail farther. Below and a bit forward of him he could catch a glimpse of a light moving along the side of the boat.

"Confound that wench!" he muttered in a sudden fury, turning and seizing up a bathhook lying on the deck.

Raising it, he leaned far over the rail. Then he brought the bathhook down suddenly on the lamp, smashing it into a thousand bits as they hissed into the water.

Elaine drew back in horror. In her hand was merely the handle of the lamp. It seemed as if her last hope had been blasted.

"Cap'n—look over the stern—to port!" cried one of the men on watch.

He pointed, and Gregor raised his glass as the rest, including the Chinaman to whom Wu had entrusted Elaine, crowded about.

There was a searchlight sweeping the water, as if a fast boat were hunting for something and were rapidly overhauling them.

"It's a revenue cutter," growled Gregor, lowering his glass after a quick scrutiny of the mysterious craft. "Crowd on more sail—start the auxiliary motor."

He volleyed forth his orders hoarsely. Instantly the deck was in an uproar. For the moment, in their anxiety to escape, they seemed to have forgotten Elaine—all except the Chinaman who had been set to guard her. Silently he drew from his blouse a knife and slipped down the companionway.

Elaine, her ears now sharpened by fear at the mysterious smashing of the light, had heard the commotion

on deck. She seized a chair and propped it against the door.

She had acted not a minute too soon. Down the passageway, already, he could hear some one creeping stealthily. It was the Chinaman with his murderous knife. She heard him pause at the door as he looked again at his knife. Then the lock turned.

The door creaked. But she had propped the chair well, and it held. Just then she heard a loud report outside, and an instant later another. Then followed the crash of something heavy on the deck above accompanied by a volley of vile oaths and quick footsteps, as Gregor gave hasty orders to his crew.

The Chinaman at the door redoubled his efforts. He seized a fire ax hanging near by and attacked the door with that, hacking furiously.

One after another, the table, a chest, everything movable, Elaine piled up against the door as it splintered. But it was of no use.

She moved over fearfully as far away as she could to the porthole and looked at the black water, as she leaned far out, then up at the deck only a few feet above her.

With frantic strength born of fear the heroic girl wriggled out of the porthole, as the schooner heeled over and managed just to catch the scuppers of the deck. Fear lent her strength. She succeeded in pulling herself up to the rail and then over on the deck just as the piled-up furniture tumbled over after the door gave way.

The Chinaman, infuriated, caught just a glimpse of her through the porthole, turned and rushed for the stairway.

In the commotion Elaine had actually come over the rail unobserved. But she knew that she could not be that way long. There was just a chance that a white man might heed her appeal. Forbidding though he was even in the moonlight, Elaine started toward Gregor.

Just then the maddened face of the Chinaman appeared at the hatch. A moment later his lithe body wormed itself out on deck. As he came nearer, Elaine retreated further toward Gregor.

"Oh, sir," she pleaded, "save me! I have done nothing!"

Gregor, one eye on the approaching revenue cutter, the other on his ship and crew, had not seen her till then. "Get out of the way," he growled roughly, pushing her aside. "Save yourself!"

The Chinaman came a step nearer, knife upraised. She fled along the deck. There in the shrouds was a ladder. In desperation she seized a rung, swung herself around, and started up.

Her relentless pursuer followed, hand over hand, clenching the knife in his teeth. In her terror she tore off a piece of spar that had been loosened by a shot from the cutter and threw it full in his face.

Still, on he came. She drew herself up. There was no escape. A moment she trembled aloft.

Then, from a crosstree, she jumped, diving far out into the water. The Chinaman followed.

Hand over hand he churned the waves after her.

We were now nearing a low, rakish craft. Though we signaled it, they paid no attention. Instead, we could hear the chug-chug of an auxiliary gas engine.

Brainard sent a shot across the schooner's bow. Still she did not stop. Instead, the topsails broke out in spite of the gale and she headed away faster.

Another shot flashed out from our gun. This time a spar was carried away, as the searchlight playing on the schooner clearly showed.

We were rapidly gaining now.

"Brainard—stop firing—for heaven's sake," shouted Craig from the bow. "Look!"

We followed his finger as he peered forward tensely.

There in the rigging, hanging perilously, was Elaine. She was clinging there holding a Chinaman at bay.

Suddenly we saw her draw herself up and deliberately dive into the water. The Chinaman dived also. Hand over hand he went after her. We watched, speechless.

Kennedy turned and seized the rapid fire gun, whirling it around and aiming carefully.

The Chinaman was a powerful swimmer and was rapidly gaining on Elaine. We could even see the gleam of the knife in the searchlight. Carefully Craig sighted the gun. The mistake of a hair's breadth meant life or death.

He fired.

Not a minute too soon the shot ricocheted over the waves. The Chinaman's arms went up in mute surrender. His head sank below the surface of the water.

Instantly, Craig and I were leaning far over the side of the cutter as, with power off, she slipped along, close to that figure swimming in the cold, black water. Neither of us paid any attention to Gregor's frantic signals of surrender as Brainard covered the schooner.

As we passed, Craig reached over and caught Elaine, lifting her bodily into our boat.

"Oh, Craig!" she gasped, as Kennedy, wrapped his greatest about her.

"Brainard—some hot drinks—quick," he ordered as he carried her, half fainting, to the cabin.

"Thank heaven for the wireless telephone," he muttered as he worked frantically to bring her around.

"No—it was the inventor—that did it," she murmured, looking up at him, safe.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

### CRETONES IN THE SUMMER

By Careful Selection, the Housewife May Make Her Rooms Things of Beauty.

It seems ages since the sorriest and smart cretonnes were introduced for hangings, coverings for furniture and cushions, etc., yet it still holds its place among the newest of goods shown for these purposes. Porch furniture, comfortable cushions and cane chairs for use on the summer piazzas are covered and, going further, large armchairs and low rockers for the living room are to be upholstered in this same good-wearing fabric.

But, of course, designs have changed somewhat; colors are brilliant, as usual, but among the newest are those with birds of gorgeous plumage on a background of black. Indeed, brilliant applies to most of the new cretonnes; they are vivid and still launder perfectly, making them an excellent choice for the hot suns of summer days.

The frill or founce across the top of windows is still liked, only now it should be cut narrow and lifted a little directly in the center, with side draperies of the goods. The sides of these frills are a little longer than last year, and a variation liked is to catch the fullness in cluster of three or four tiny tucks or folds about three or four inches apart, not pressing them flat, but allowing them to stand out. Also the bottom of the frill, where caught up in the center, must be finished with a braid; as it should be cut in a curve, not in a straight line to be puckered shorter in the center, but cut curved. Still another variation shows the bottom of this frill cut in deep scallops and bound with braid.

Small tables covered with cretonne, over which the useful glass is placed, will be sought for porch and living room for various uses. One that should appeal to the housewife who just "loves a pretty darning" is to change ordinary furnishings into things of beauty by covering chests, tables and so on with cretonne; the table with the glass top bringing an almost elegant air into the atmosphere. If woodwork and furniture are hopelessly faded and worn a coat of light enamel with a slight tracery of blue or pink or delicate green and cretonne hangings, etc., to match will make a charming room of one that might be termed dismal and depressing, as some rooms have a habit of being.

A caution is to use plain paper or paper with small figures where a room is to be fitted out in gay cretonne; huge or startling designs will only cause discord.

FITTING UP THE BATHROOM

Some of the Requisites That Must Find a Place in the Modern Establishment.

In the days of the old tin tub almost anything in the way of a towel was good enough, so long as it was free from holes. The advent of sanitary plumbing, the white enamel tub and basin, the tile or tile-effect walls and the nickel and glass fixtures have made the up-to-date bathroom a different proposition. For instance, utility is no longer the sole standard by which the bathroom linens are judged. They must also harmonize with the enamel and glass fittings. As a result housewives now buy their towels in sets in white, with an initial or monogram in color. Many toilet sets are bought in plain or fancy material without a monogram, which is worked by the housewife herself.

Bathroom sets of terry cloth are composed of two bath towels, a bath mat, and two face cloths, all with a plain or fancy border and an initial or monogram.

Jacquard figured bath towels are new and attractive. They have a deep pink or blue border and the hem is faintly embroidered in color. The edge is finished with a deep border or crochet of white and color. Turkish and huck towels are almost always embroidered in color and finished with a scalloped or crocheted edge.

When making cocoa, you can greatly improve the flavor, obviating the "flat" taste, by adding a pinch of salt and a few drops of extract of vanilla.

Rolling several minutes makes cocoa richer in taste and more digestible, while it stands to reason that milk and not water makes much the richer beverage, although milk and water may be mixed. Condensed or evaporated milk makes delicious cocoa. Beat the cocoa for a few minutes before serving it.</