

The King of Diamonds

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Now the chance use of that language, no less than his perfect accent, went a long way toward removing the manager's suspicions. A boy whose name so well educated must be quite out of the common. Perhaps some eccentric parent or guardian encouraged him to act independently thus early in life. He might be the son of a rich man coming to London for a special course of study. The name, Anson, was an aristocratic one. But his clothes—they were odd. Good enough, but not the right thing.

"Will you oblige by recommending a good tailor?" said Philip. "I need a complete outfit of wearing apparel, and it will save me a lot of trouble if somebody will tell me exactly what to buy and where to buy it."

His uncanny trick of thought reading disconcerted the manager greatly. Undoubtedly the boy was a puzzle. Never had this experienced man of the world met anyone more self-possessed, more direct, and yet, with it all, exceedingly polite.

"Are you lunching in the hotel?" "I would like something sent here, if you please, and, there again, your advice will be most gratefully accepted."

"I will see to it. Do you—take wine?" Philip laughed, that pleasant, whole-hearted laugh of his which instantly reassured him.

"Not yet, Monsieur—"
"That is my name."
The manager felt that a generation of Well, Monsieur Foret, I am far too young for either wine or tobacco. I promised my mother I would touch neither until I am twenty-one, and I will keep my word. I think I would like some safe at last."

"I understand. Your dejeuner will be sent up in ten minutes. By the time you have finished I will have people here who will meet all your requirements in the shape of clothes and the rest."

"An hour's talk and the payment of checks on account worked wonders. Before many days had passed Philip was amply provided with raiment. His As for the ragged youth with the diamonds, he was forgotten apparently. The newspapers dropped him, believing, indeed, that Isaacstein had worked some ingenious advertising dodge on his own account, and Messrs. Sharp & Smith never dreamed of looking for the lost Philip Anson, the defunct from Johnson's Mews, in the Pall Mall Hotel, the most luxurious and expensive establishment in London.

That afternoon, Philip visited the Safe Deposit Company. He had little difficulty, of course, in securing a strong room. He encountered the most surprising at his youth, but the steely argument of his banking account and the payment of a year's rent in advance soon cleared the air.

He transferred four of his portmanteaus to this secure environment—the thing was sent to his hotel. When the light failed, he drove to the East End, and made a round of pawnbrokers' shops. Although some of the tickets were time-expired, he recovered nearly all his mother's belongings, excepting her watch.

The odd coincidence recalled the inspector's implied promise that he should receive one as a recognition of his gallantry.

How remote, how far from each other, the main events in his life seemed to be at this eventful epoch. As he went westward in a hansom, he could hardly bring himself to believe that barely twenty-four hours had elapsed since he travelled to the Mile End Road in company with Mrs. Wrigley.

And the curious thing was that he felt in no sense awed by the possession of thousands of pounds and the many palatial chambers in a great hotel. His career had been too checkered, its recent developments too stupendous, to cause him any undue emotion. Existence, for the hour, was a species of well-ordered dream, and his imagination was untrammelled save by the need to exercise his wits in order to keep the phantasy within the bounds, not of his own mind, but of other men's.

At the hotel he found the French waiter setting forth a shirt. The man explained that he required a spare set of studs and links.

This reminded Philip that there was still a great deal of shopping to be done. He was about to leave the room for the purpose, when the valet asked:

"Another portmanteau has arrived from Monsieur. Will you be pleased to check it?"

"No," said Philip. "It must remain untouched. He smiled at the thought of the sensation his tattered rags and worn boots would make in that place.

Yet, just a week ago, he passed through the streets outside, bound in the pitiless rain for Johnson's Mews, and bent on suicide.

He walked into Regent Street and made a number of purchases, not forgetting some books. A double silver-mounted photograph stand caught his eye. It would hold the two best pictures he possessed of his father and mother, so he bought it. He also acquired a dispatch box in which he could store his valuables, both jewelry and documents, for he had quite a number of letters, receipts and other things to safeguard now, and he did not wish servants' prying eyes to examine everything belonging to him.

When alone in his room, he secured the album and locked that special portmanteau again, after stowing therein the letters found beneath Mrs. Anson's pillow. Soon his mother's face smiled at him from a beautiful border of filigree silver. The sight was pleasant to him, soothing to his full mind. In her eyes was a message of faith, of trust, of absolute confidence in the future.

It was strange that he thought so little of his father, but the truth was that his childhood was passed so much in his mother's company, and they were so inseparable during the last two years, that memories of his father were shadowy.

Yet the physiognomist would have seen that the boy owned a great deal of his strength of character and well-knit frame to the handsome, stalwart man whose name he bore.

Philip loved his mother on the compensating principle that persons of opposite natures often have an overpowering affinity for each other. He resembled her neither in features nor in the more subtle traits of character.

After a dinner, the excellence of which was in nowise diminished by lack of appreciation on his part, he undertook a pilgrimage of curiosity to which he had previously determined to devote the evening.

He devoted unceasingly to whom he was indebted for the good meals he had enjoyed in prison. Now he would endeavor to find out.

A hansom took him to Holloway, but the first efforts of the driver failed to discover the whereabouts of the "Royal Star Hotel."

At last Philip recollected the warder's added direction—"opposite." He dismissed the cab and walked to the prison entrance. Directly in front he saw a small restaurant called the "Star." Its titular embellishments were due to the warder's gift of humor.

He entered. A woman was knitting at a cash desk.

"Until yesterday," he said, "you sent food regularly to a boy named Anson, who was confined in the prison—"

"Yes," interrupted the lady. "I only heard this mornin' that he was let out."

"Would you mind telling me who paid the bill? I suppose it was paid?" "Well, as a matter of fact, it was overpaid," was the reply. "You see, the pore lad was remanded for a week, and Mr. Judd, a man 'oo lives in the Farringdon Road, kem 'ere an' arranged for 'is week's board. Hav' ye heard wot 'appened to 'im."

Philip's heart was in his mouth, but he managed to answer that the boy was all right; there was no charge against him. Then he escaped into the street. The one man he had for gotten was his greengrocer friend, who had indeed acted the part of the Good Samaritan.

There was some excuse for this, but the boy's abounding good nature would admit of none. He hastened to Farringdon Road with the utmost speed, and found his fat friend putting up the shutters of his shop.

The restaurant next door was open. Philip approached quietly.

"Good-evening, Mr. Judd," he said, holding out his hand.

"Good-evenin', sir," said the greengrocer, his eyes revealing not the reproach, his idea of identity of the smart, modest idea of identity of the smart, young gentleman who addressed him so familiarly.

And now, here he was, back again, dressed like a young gentleman, and hailing Judd as a valued friend. No wonder the greengrocer lost his breath and his power of speech.

But Philip was smiling at him and talking.

"You were the one man out of many Mr. Judd, who believed in me, and even stuck up for me when you saw me led through the street by a policeman to be imprisoned on a false charge. I did not know until an hour ago that I was indebted to you for an abundance of excellent food while I was remanded in prison. I will not offer to refund you the money you spent. My gratitude will take another form, which you will learn in a few days. But I do want to pay you the ninpence I borrowed. Would you mind asking the proprietor of the restaurant to step in here for a moment? Don't say I am present. I wish to avoid a crowd, you know."

Judd had time to collect his scattered ideas during this long speech.

"Blow the ninpence!" he cried. "Wot's the ninpence for the treat I've ad? People I never set eyes on in my life afore kem 'ere an' bought 'abbages, or taters, or mebbe a few 'lums, an' then they'd stawt: 'Mr. Judd, wasn't it you as stood a dinner to the Boy King of Diamonds?' That's wot they christened yer, sir. Or it's: 'Mr. Judd, cahn't yer tell us w'ere 'at young Moreland lives? Surely yer know summat about 'im or yer wouldn't hev paid 'is bill.' Oh, it's bin a beano. Hasn't it, Eliza?"

"But we never let on a word," put in Mrs. Judd. "We was as close as wax. We told none of 'em as 'ow Mr. Judd went to 'olloway that night, lid we, Willyum?"

"Not us. Ye see, I took a fancy to ye. If ahr little Johnnie 'ad lived 'e'd ha' bin just your ige. Fifteen, aren't ye?"

At last Philip got him to summon his neighbor. Judd did so with an air of mystery that caused the bald-headed restaurateur to believe that a burglar was bottled up in the greengrocer's cellar.

Once inside the shop, however, Judd's manner changed.

"Wot did I tell yer, Tomkins?" he cried, elatedly. "Wot price me as a judge of karak-ter! 'Ere's Mr. Moreland come back to pay me that ninpence. Eh, Tomkins! 'Oo's right now, old cock?"

Philip solemnly counted out the money, which he handed to his delighted baker.

"There was a bet, too," he said. "'Ra-ther!' roared Judd. 'Two bob, w'ich I've pidd. Out w' four bob, Tomkins. Lord lumme, I'll stand treat at the George for this!'"

"There's something funny in the kise," growled Tomkins, as he unwillingly produced a couple of florins. "I was sure you would see the joke at once," said Philip. "Good-night, Mr. Judd. Good-by, ma'am. You will hear from me without fail within a fortnight."

He was gone before they realized his intention. They saw him skip rapidly up the steps leading into the Holborn, and London had swallowed him forever so far as they were concerned.

Ten days later a firm of solicitors wrote to the greengrocer to inform him that a client of theirs had acquired the freehold of his house and shop, which property, during the life of either himself or his wife, would be tenable free of rent, rates or taxes.

So Mr. Judd's investment of ninepence, plus the amount expended on eatables at the Royal Star Hotel, secured to him and his wife an annual revenue of one hundred and seventy-five pounds.

And Tomkins never heard the last of it.

CHAPTER XIII.
The Close of One Epoch.
Before retiring to rest, Philip ascended Mr. Abingdon's London address, and wrote asking for an appointment the following evening.

He also interviewed the manager. "I want the help of a thoroughly reliable solicitor," he said. "I wish to purchase some property—not valuable property, but of importance to me. Can you give me the address of some one known to you?"

M. Foret named a reputable firm in the locality.

"They may refer to you," added Philip. "Of course I do not ask you to say more than I am staying here, but the point is, I do not wish you to mention my age."

"Will you see them, then?" "No. I will endeavor to conduct the whole business by post."

The manager laughed.

"You certainly are the coolest young gentleman I ever met. However, Mr. Anson, it may please you to know that your bank gave you the best of recommendations. I will say so to anybody."

So Philip first drafted and then copied the following letter:

Dear Sirs: M. Foret, of this hotel, has given me your names as a firm likely to transact certain negotiations for me. I want to purchase a small property in the Mile End Road, known as Johnson's Mews; also a shop near the entrance to the Mews, tenanted by a marine-store dealer named O'Brien. The mews is owned by the Cardiff and Havre Coal Company, Ltd. I do not know who owns the shop. I wish to acquire these properties for a philanthropic purpose, but I am most desirous that my name should not figure in the transaction. I propose, therefore, when you have ascertained the price, which should be at the earliest possible moment, to pay to your credit the requisite amount. You can have the properties transferred to any nominee you choose, and again transferred to me. Kindly add your costs, etc., to the purchase price. My movements are somewhat uncertain, so please send me all communication by letter. It will be an obligation, and lead to future business, if you attend to this matter to-morrow morning. Yours faithfully,

PHILIP ANSON.

He did not compose this letter without considerable trouble. The "philanthropic purpose" he had already decided upon, but he thought it was rather clever to refer to the possibilities of "future business."

As for the double transfer, he distinctly remembered copying letters dealing with several such transactions at the time of the coal company's conversion into a limited liability concern.

He was early to bed, and his rest was not disturbed by dreams. He rose long before the ordinary residents. Deferring his breakfast, he walked to Fleet Street and purchased copies of morning and evening papers for the whole of the week.

He could thus enjoy the rare luxury of seeing himself as others saw him. He read the perfriv descriptions of the scene in court, and found himself variously described as "pert," "masterful," "imperious," "highly intelligent," "endowed with a thin veneer of education," and "affected."

Philip could afford to laugh at the unfavorable epithets. Up to the age of thirteen he had been trained in a first-class lycee, and his work was supervised by his mother, a woman of great culture. He spoke French as well as English, and spoke both admirably. He knew some Greek and Latin, and he had a special penchant for history and geography.

It was in the glowing articles which appeared during the imprisonment that he took the keenest interest. Oddly enough, one ingenious correspondent blundered onto a clue. Gifted with an analytical mind, he had reasoned that the diamond-laden meteor had fallen during the extraordinary storm of the nineteenth, and the Meteorological Department in Victoria Street helped him by describing the centre of the disturbance as situated somewhat to the east of the London Hospital.

The writer had actually interviewed a member of the staff of that institution who amused himself by noting barometrical vagaries. His instrument recorded an extraordinary increase of pressure soon after ten o'clock on the night of the storm.

"Alas!" added the scribe, "it did not indicate where the meteor fell, and not a policeman, 'bus driver or railway official can be found who observed anything beyond a phenomenal electrical display and a violent downpour of rain."

That was too close to be pleasant, and Philip was glad to hear from M. Foret that the solicitors, after telephoning to ask for some particulars concerning Mr. Anson, were giving prompt attention to his instructions.

"What did you tell them?" asked Philip.

"I said that you impressed me as the kind of young gentleman who would pay well for services given unsparingly."

"Did that satisfy them?" "Perfectly. Such clients do not abound in these hard times."

Three hours later, a letter came for "Philip Anson, Esq.," by hand. It was from the solicitors, and read:

"We are in receipt of your esteemed instructions. Although Saturday is a day on which it is difficult to do business, we lost no time in inspecting the premises in the Mile End Road, accompanied by a surveyor. We found that the mews stand approximately on an area of three thousand two hundred superficial feet, while the shop tenanted by O'Brien has a frontage on the main road of eighteen feet, with a probable depth of thirty or thirty-five feet. The owner of this shop is a resident in the neighborhood, and he will accept four hundred and fifty pounds for the freehold.

"We were fortunate in finding the managing director of the Cardiff and Havre Coal Company, Limited at his office. Although the company require the mews for the purpose of a depot they are not unwilling to sell, with a stipulation that the premises shall not be used by any competing company during a period of twenty years from the date of transfer. We stated that the site was required for philanthropic purposes, but the latter stipulation is insisted on. The price asked is two thousand two hundred pounds,

which we consider excessive, there being a very inadequate approach. Moreover we wish to point out that O'Brien's shop does not adjoin the mews, and it would be necessary to purchase two other houses to make the entire property a compact one.

"However, adhering to the letter of your instructions, we have pleasure in informing you that the two properties can be acquired with very little delay, for two thousand six hundred and fifty pounds. The legal and other charges will not exceed one hundred and fifty pounds. We trust, etc."

Philip immediately wrote:

"I am greatly obliged by your promptitude in the matter of Johnson's Mews and the shop. I enclose check herewith for two thousand eight hundred pounds. The purchase of the other houses can stand over for a few days."

This he dispatched by special messenger, and in a few minutes he held a formal receipt.

A telegram came for him. It was from Mr. Abingdon.

"Can see you after six at my house."

Then Philip enjoyed his first real breathing space during hours of daylight. He went by train to the cemetery where his mother was buried, carrying with him a beautiful wreath.

It was a remarkable fact that this was the first visit he had paid to her grave. During the days of misery and partial madness which followed her death he never lost the delusion that her spirit abide with him in the poor dwelling they called "home."

Hence, the narrow resting place beneath the green turf in no way appealed to him. But now, that a succession of extraordinary external events had restored the balance of his mind, he realized that she was really dead and buried; that what he revered as her spirit was in truth a fragrant memory; that he would be nearest to her mortal remains when standing in the remote corner of the burial ground allotted to the poorest of the poor—those removed by one degree from pauperism and a parish grave.

It happened, by mere chance, that since Mrs. Anson's funeral no one had been interred on one side of the small space purchased for her. There were three vacant plots here, and a surprised official told Philip there would be no difficulty in acquiring these for the purpose of erecting a suitable monument.

The boy filled in the necessary form there and then. It was some consolation to know that he could perpetuate her memory in this way, though he had formulated another project which should keep her name revered through the ages.

On the site of Johnson's Mews should arise the Mary Anson Home for Destitute Boys. He would build a place where those who were willing to work and learn would be given a chance, and not driven, starving and desperate, to pick up an existence in the gutter.

Soon after leaving the cemetery he came face to face with Bradley, the policeman, who was in plain clothes, and walking with a lady, obviously Mrs. Bradley, judging by the matronly manner in which she wheeled a perambulator containing a chubby infant.

"Well, I'm blowed!" cried the policeman, "who would have thought of meeting you! I looked in at the mews last night but you had gone. Some one is looking after you pretty well, eh?"

He cast a patronizing eye over Philip's garments, which were, of course, considerably smarter in appearance than those in which the constable had seen him on Thursday evening.

"Yes," said Philip. "I am in good hands now."

"They haven't given you a watch?" This anxiously.

"No. I am watchless."

"That's right. You'll have one soon. The inspector has your address. By the way, he wants to know your Christian name."

"Philip."

"Thanks. I won't forget."

Philip raised his hat and took the quickest route westward. He did not count on being recognized so easily.

Mr. Abingdon received him with some degree of reserve. The magistrate could not understand the receipt of a letter bearing the address of the Pall Mall Hotel, a place where he had been entertained at dinner occasionally by one of his wealthy friends, but which was far removed from the limit imposed on the pocket of any man whose resources depended on the exercise of an ordinary profession.

But Philip still figured in his mind as a ragged urchin. Not even the skilled police magistrate could picture him as the actual owner of millions of pounds worth of portable property. Hence, the boys appearance now told in his favor. Cursory impressions soon yielded to positive bewilderment when Philip began to relate his story faithfully from beginning to end, neither exaggerating nor suppressing any salient detail save the actual locality where his astounding adventures found their centre and genesis.

Mr. Abinkdon did not doubt for one moment that the boy was telling the truth. The romance of his narrative

was far beyond fiction.

Philip himself grew enthusiastic as he went on. His brown eyes blazed again with the memory of his wrath and shame at the arrest. He told the magistrate exactly how the proceedings in court had affected him, and gave him a vivid picture of his bargaining with Isaacstein, the packing of the diamonds, the fight between the policeman and a burglar, his interviews with all sorts and conditions of men, and the ruses he had adopted to preserve his secret.

At last he came to the transaction which secured for him the ownership of the mews itself. He read copies of his letters to the solicitors, and their replies, and then, of course, the magistrate knew where the meteor had fallen.

"That is a very clever move on your part," he said, smiling. "It invests you with all the rights and usages of that particular piece of earth, and effectually stops anyone from disputing your possession of the meteor. How did you come to think of it?"

"You put the idea into my mind, sir," said Philip, modestly.

"? In what manner?" "That hinted, at our last meeting, that some one might lay claim to my diamonds on the ground that they had fallen on their property. I do not intend that anyone living, except myself, shall ever know the history of my meteor, but I thought it best to buy the place outright in the first instance, and then devote it to a charity, which I intend to found in memory of my mother."

Mr. Abingdon smiled again.

"Your confidence is very flattering," he said. "I suppose you took your quarters at the Pall Mall Hotel in order to impress people with your importance and secure instant compliance with your wishes."

"That was my motive, sir."

"Then, my young millionaire, in what way do you wish me to serve you? Of course, you have not sought this interview and told me your story so unreservedly without an ulterior object in view? You see, I am beginning to understand you a little better than when we first met."

Philip did not reply immediately. He did not want to risk a refusal, and he was not yet quite sure that the magistrate fully comprehended the extent of the fortune which had been showered on him from nature's own mint.

Mr. Isaacstein returns from Amsterdam he will pay me something like forty thousand pounds," he said.

"Yes. It would seem so from the receipt you have shown me."

"That will be determined on Wednesday next at the latest."

"Yes."

"If the money is forthcoming it will be proof positive that my diamonds are of good quality, and, as I picked up these dirty stones quite promiscuously, it follows that the others are of the same standard?"

"Well, Mr. Abingdon, I can form no estimate of their collective value, but they must be worth many millions. According to Mr. Isaacstein's views, I will be able to command a revenue of between a quarter and half a million sterling per annum."

"It is marvellous, perfectly appalling in some senses," cried the perturbed lawyer, throwing up his hands in the extremity of his amazement.

"You are right, sir. I am only a boy, and the thing is beyond my powers. I can see quite clearly that while I ought to be at college obtaining a proper education, I will be worrying about the care of great sums of money. I do not know anything about investments. How should I? Isaacstein is a Jew, and he will probably endeavor very soon to get the better of me in the necessary business transactions. How can I stop him? I have no older relatives, no friends whom I can trust. For some reason, I do feel that I can have faith in you. Will you take charge of my affairs, advise me during the next few years, tell me how to act as my mother would have told me—in a word, become my guardian?"

For a little while Mr. Abingdon was silent. When words came he could only gasp:

"You certainly are the most extraordinary boy I have ever encountered."

Then Philip laughed merrily.

"I don't think, sir, that I am so much an extraordinary boy as a boy who has been pitchedforked into an extraordinary position. I hope most sincerely that you will do what I ask. If I may say so without presumption, it will be a good thing for you. I suppose a man who looks after millions of money is entitled to a vastly bigger income than one who sits hours in a police court dealing with offences against the law."

"Such has certainly been my experience," said the magistrate, who appreciated the nice manner in which Philip hinted at a good, fat salary for controlling the estate of the King of Diamonds.

"Then you agree," cried Philip joyously.

"Not so fast, my youthful friend. Even a police magistrate must bow to his wife. Mrs. Abingdon would never forgive me if I took such an important position without consulting her."

(Continued on page 4.)

Will you remain to dinner?"

Then Philip knew that he had gained his point. Nothing was said before the servants, but when they were cozily ensconced in the library before a pleasant fire, he was asked to relate again his entrancing history for Mrs. Abingdon's benefit.

That good lady was overwhelmed. She, like everyone else, had read the newspapers, and, of course, had the additional benefit of her husband's views on the subject of the unkempt boy with his small parcel of valuable gems.

But the presence of Philip under their roof, the glamor of his tale as it fell from his lips, cast a spell over her. She was a kindly soul, too, and tears gathered in her eyes at some portions of the recital.

"What a pity it is that you mother died," she murmured, when he had ended.

The words endeared her to Philip instantly. A worldly, grasping woman would have thought of nothing save the vista of wealth opened up for her husband and herself. Not so Mrs. Abingdon. If anything she was somewhat afraid of responsibilities proposed to be undertaken by her spouse, to whom she was devoted.

The magistrate did not promise definitely that night to accept the position offered to him. He would think over the matter. He could retire on a pension at any time. This he would now do without delay, and Philip could certainly count on his friendship and advice, while his house would always be open to him.

Meanwhile, he would give one word of advice—intrust no human being with the power to sign any binding document without his (Philip's) consent. Then-it would be difficult for anyone to deal unscrupulously with him.

The boy went away at a late hour. He left behind him an exceedingly perplexed couple, but he felt that when Mr. Abingdon had time to assimilate the facts and realize the great scope of the work before him, there was little doubt he would associate himself with it.

At the hotel a telegram awaited him:

"Have realized fifty-two thousand. Returning Monday. ISAACSTEIN."

Here was the final proof, if proof were wanting that Philip was a millionaire many times over.

CHAPTER XIII.
After Long Years.

A tall, strongly built man, aged about forty-five, but looking older, by a reason of his grizzled hair and a face seamed with hardship—a man whose prominent eyes imparted an air of alert intelligence to an otherwise heavy and brutal countenance, disfigured by a broken nose, stood on the north side of Mile End Road and looked fixedly across the street at a fine building which dwarfed the mean houses on either hand.

He had no need to ask what it was. Carved in stone over the handsome arch which led to an interior covered court was its title—"The Mary Anson Home for Destitute Boys." A date followed, a date ten years old.

The observer was puzzled. He gazed up and down the wide thoroughfare with the manner of one who asked himself:

"Now, why was that built there?"

A policeman strolled leisurely along the pavement, but to him the man addressed no question. Apparently unconscious of the constable's observant glance, he still continued to scrutinize the great pile of brick and stone which thrust its splendid campanile into the warm sunshine of an April day.

Beneath the name was an inscription: "These are they which passed through great tribulation. A queer smile did not improve the man's expression, as he read the text. "Tribulation! That's it," he continued. "I've had ten years of it. And it started somewhere about the end of that fine entrance, too. I wonder where he Sailor is, and that boy. He's a man now, mebbe, twenty-six or so, if he's alive. Oh, I hope he's alive! I hope he's rich and healthy, and engaged to be married to a nice young woman