

# THE GOLDEN SANDS RIDDLE

By Alexander Campbell

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## Characters in the Story

**PETER CROSBY:** Young mining engineer, taking a modest seaside holiday when the story opens.

**SIR JOHN CARR:** A South African gold mining magnate; widower, rather pompous and purse-proud, but sound of heart.

**LUCY CARR:** His only child, a very attractive girl in the early twenties.

**TERENCE PARRY:** A rich young acquaintance of the Carr's. A man of great charm and good looks.

**FRANCIS GOULD:** Sir John Carr's secretary. Silent, reserved; much occupied with his work and with mining statistics.

**MR. XOSA:** A coloured man of European education, short of stature, but a giant in detective skill.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### EVIDENCE FROM MR. GOULD

The inquest on Mr. Monte was held in the Marathon court-house, a grey barracks of a building, with echoing corridors and the peculiar varnish-and-parquet smell of a big school. The proceedings were semi-private and wholly formal. The magistrate acted as coroner; there was no jury. The Press were admitted, and the public had a theoretical right to attend but Inspector Quayle seemed to have used his powers to keep it theoretical.

When Peter Crosby arrived the Inspector had smiled on him genially. "Ah, Mr. Crosby! Your interest in the case is natural. But you won't be called, you know. Will you take your place over there, on the public benches?"

Peter stared at him. "Won't I be asked questions?"

Quayle shook his tanned head. "No, I've consulted with the magistrate. I've told him the story you told me. We've decided that it won't be necessary to call on you."

Peter sat down, mystified. He could think of only one explanation, and that was that Quayle had abandoned him as a suspect. But that seemed too good to be true.

Or was Quayle hoping in some way to trap him?

"Good morning, Peter," said Sir John as he arrived with Lucy, Parry, and the grim Gould. He shook his fine head in massive reproach. "I'm sorry to see that you kept your word, and left the Orient. Very noble, of you, my boy, but you were barking up the wrong tree. Lucy will tell you about it when this business is over. Ah! Here comes the—um—beak."

Lucy smiled at Peter. It was, the puzzled young man noticed, a singularly care-free smile. Terence Parry nodded affably. But Francis Gould kept his dark eyes dourly fixed straight ahead of him.

The proceedings were austere formal, but they contained one or two surprises.

Sam Orion, the hotel manager, gave formal evidence of identification of the body. The magistrate looked at the witness shrewdly over his spectacles.

"The deceased was resident at your hotel?"

"Yes, sir," Mr. Orion straightened his tie. His voice was a well-satisfied purr.

"He had been there some time?"

"A matter of ten weeks."

"Your establishment, Mr. Orion is—ah—an exclusive one. The charges are such that the deceased, we may take it, was a man of wealth?"

"He appeared to have plenty of money."

"Before Mr. Monte came to stay at your hotel, you had not known him?"

"I had never set eyes on him before."

"I see. You had no difficulty with him? I mean, he paid his hotel bill regularly?"

Mr. Orion appeared unaccountably to hesitate. "None at all," he said, at length.

"He was not in debt to you at the time of his death?"

"No sir."

"How did he pay?"

"Always in cash," said Mr. Orion. He was very emphatic. "Never by cheque."

"Thank you. That is all."

Mr. Orion stood down.

Terence Parry was called. In easy almost conversational tones he described the finding of Monte's body on the beach. He had, he told the magistrate, met the man only once or twice at card parties. Though he had talked freely, he had never let slip the slightest fact about himself.

"That seems to be the general impression," agreed the magistrate. "I believe that for this reason he was referred to—no doubt lightly—as 'the mysterious Mr. Monte.'"

Terry stood down. Then, surprisingly, Francis Gould's name was called.

On the witness stand Gould faced the magistrate forbiddingly, a dark lock hanging down over his forehead and his arms folded, rather as if he were an accuser and the magistrate was a felon in the dock.

He agreed that he was Sir John Carr's secretary, that he had a considerable knowledge of mining affairs, and that he had met many people connected with mining in all its aspects. "Even gamblers in stocks and shares, and that kind of thing," added Gould. His tone was contemptuous.

"But," he continued, "I never met

this fellow Monte, and never heard of him either. And, if he had been in that sort of business in a big way I would have been pretty certain to know."

"You are expected to confine yourself to the question in the form in which it is put," said the magistrate. But the reproach was spoken mildly. However, you have interpreted the question aright. That is what I wanted to know. Thank you."

Gould shambled back to his seat.

"The magistrate glanced round the court-room, and addressed them all generally.

"That is all the evidence we have concerning the deceased at the moment. The police, of course, are pursuing their own investigations; but they prefer at this stage not to put their findings in as evidence. We come now to purely medical evidence."

This was given, shortly, by a burly, ginger-haired medico with a pronounced Scottish burr. It was brief and technical.

The magistrate nodded gently. "I shall put in a verdict accordingly. The deceased met his death as a result of a stab wound, and, as the doctor has informed us, death was instantaneous. The position of the wound rules out suicide and accident. I shall accordingly record that the deceased met his end at the hands of a person or persons unknown."

He rose, and the court followed suit.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### QUAYLE TALKS OF A WARRANT

From beginning to end the court proceedings had been ruled by Quayle. The policeman was not showing his hand yet.

After the hearing, Sir John proposed taking his little party for coffee at a country roadhouse. Gould begged to be excused, but the rest were soon on the move in the magnate's big car.

Terry drove rapidly and expertly. He stopped the car at a picturesque farmhouse with high Dutch gables.

They were escorted to little tables in a charming garden surrounded by high green hedges. Sir John, having ordered coffee, leaned back in his summer chair and surveyed the roses. The warm morning sunshine made patterns on the grass. "I owe you most hearty thanks, Peter," he said abruptly.

"Peter stared. 'I don't see—'

"The note-case," said Sir John. He grinned suddenly and boyishly. "Tell him, Lucy."

Lucy did. She told Peter of her interview with Xosa, and the truth about the note-case. "You see, there must have been two note-cases, and Tickey Charlie threw one of them away and tucked the card from it in dad's case," she explained.

Peter listened gravely. Then he turned shame-facedly to Sir John.

"I'm afraid it's I who owe you an apology, sir," he began. "I should have guessed—I had no right to dream of suspecting—"

"Nonsense!" Sir John spoke sharply. "The thing must have looked pretty obvious to you. I should still like to know where Monte got that information about Golden Deeps. To my mind that is the crux of the whole case. But the fact remains that you thought I had given him it, and you went out of your way to protect me. Heaven knows what the police would have thought, if they had stumbled on the facts in your possession—"

"That reminds me," said Peter. "Does Quayle know now? Have you told him about Tickey Charlie? Is he questioning him?"

"I hadn't finished the story," Lucy said. "No one will ever question Tickey Charlie, because he's dead."

She told him of Mr. Xosa's discovery.

"Dead!" Peter was horrified. "Then that's two murders in three days! Is Quayle on to it?"

"I saw the inspector last night," said Sir John grimly. "As soon as Lucy had given me the facts. It seems, however, that Xosa had approached Quayle before me. I don't know whether it's because he dislikes the idea of being done in the eye by a coloured man, but Quayle refuses to accept the death of Tickey Charlie as having any connection with the murder of Monte. He declares that Tickey Charlie was probably killed in a brawl after a beer drink."

"The body, you know, was found in a hut, in the native location. The man had been dead only a few hours when Xosa found him. Quayle points out that there are often brawls among the natives."

"But that doesn't explain how Tickey Charlie was released from prison," exclaimed Lucy. She told how the pickpocket's fine had been mysteriously paid.

Sir John nodded. "I think it is obvious that the fine was paid by the murderer. He probably bribed Tickey Charlie to keep his mouth shut, and sent the man where he could easily lay his hands on him. Then, discovering in some way that Tickey Charlie was going to be questioned, he murdered him."

"I wouldn't under-rate this bird Quayle," drawled Terry. He had been sitting back in his chair, lazily surveying the roses. "I was watching him in

court. He may have something up his sleeve. He was looking pretty pleased with himself."

Peter nodded. "I agree." He told them how Quayle had greeted him that morning. "He seemed to have changed his mind about me. From suspect number one, I seemed to have dropped down among the also rans. I can think of only one reason for that."

"Which is?" asked Terry.

"He believes that the death of Tickey Charlie and the death of Mr. Monte are linked. He was bliffling Sir John. And he had probably found out that I have a cast-iron alibi for the second murder, at any rate. After I moved back to the Voyagers yesterday, I didn't go out of the hotel again. And I was talking to other people all the time until I went to bed about midnight."

Sir John nodded. "That would explain it. I hope it's the truth, anyway."

Peter asked: "How about our little friend Xosa? He seems to have done most of the discovering in this business so far. Where is he now?"

After he seen him since yesterday. After he seen him since yesterday. After he phoned me he apparently got in touch with Quayle. He may be with Quayle now."

But in this surmise Lucy was wrong. Xosa preferred to work alone, and at the moment he was acting in a manner which would have annoyed Inspector Quayle exceedingly if the policeman had known what Mr. Xosa was up to. Happily for the little Bantu, Quayle did not.

Mr. Xosa had appeared at the Orient Hotel shortly after ten o'clock, and after Mr. Orion had been seen climbing into his car to drive to the inquest.

Xosa sought out his brother, the large and amiable Chocolate, drew him aside, and murmured in his ear.

Chocolate drew back, appalled. "Wouldst ask for the moon?" he demanded, in their own language.

"Hast thou no gratitude?" demanded Xosa in the same tongue. "Did I not rescue thee from the white man's prison? Do as I say, and no harm will befall thee. Go!"

Chocolate chastened went. He returned shortly, bearing furtively under his arm a bulky parcel.

"They will send me back to break stones for this!" he moaned.

Mr. Xosa took the parcel from him. "Enough of wailing!" he said briskly. "The coward dies a thousand deaths; the brave man only one. Take me to some place where we can be secure from prying eyes."

Mr. Orion had barely returned to his hotel, and was slipping into an armchair in his own snug suite, when Inspector Quayle was announced.

Mr. Orion cursed with fluency. "Ah, Mr. Orion!" said Quayle, and as he entered he sniffed expansively. "You get the sea air up here." Ostentatiously, he admired the room. "Quite right to make yourself comfortable. A man in your position needs tranquility if he's going to do his best work and please his employers."

"By the way, I'm right in that, aren't I?" he added anxiously, as though fearing to have offended. "The Orient isn't your property, is it?"

Mr. Orion shook his head. "No." He spoke jerkily and seemed to be suddenly perturbed. "No, it's not my property. He named a big company, with hotels throughout the country."

Quayle nodded affably. "Still," he remarked, "it's a pretty good wicket, isn't it? I sometimes think the professional man has really a better time of it than the capitalist. His work is usually enjoyable, or at least interesting, and he doesn't take the big

risks. Though no doubt you have your own worries. —Running a big place like this must carry its fair share of responsibilities and anxieties."

Mr. Orion did not seem appeased by this innocent dissertation on the light and shade of a hotel manager's existence. He watched Quayle warily.

"If you think the hotelier's life is entirely a happy one, you're certainly wrong," he said. "However I don't imagine that you've come here to discuss that. What can I do for you, inspector?"

Those who knew Mr. Orion well, or thought they did, would have been surprised at the change in his appearance. The round pink and white face had lost its softness. The eyes had narrowed, Mr. Orion looked like a man on his guard.

"No," agreed Quayle. "I have come with rather an odd request. I can't explain its significance—though you may just possibly guess that." He shot Mr. Orion a sharp look. "But I can tell you that it's got to do with the Monte case. I want to look at your books."

Mr. Orion had been in the act of lighting a cigarette. Now the white cylinder suddenly crushed and broke between his fingers. He gazed uncertainly at the policeman, and his look was one of pure terror.

He recovered himself with an effort. "My books?" he repeated. His voice sounded strained.

Quayle nodded easily. His affability if anything had increased. He appeared not to notice the other's perturbation.

"The books," he repeated. "You know—accounts, cash, receipts, and that sort of thing. I suppose it sounds odd to you," he said with a laugh. "And I may be on a wild goose chase. But I have an idea that I want to test."

Mr. Orion moistened his dry lips. "I don't know that I can help you. The books aren't readily available. I—they're being made up. And I really don't see what right—"

Quayle dropped his affability like a cloak.

"D'you want me to get a warrant?" he demanded shortly.

Mr. Orion made a final feeble attempt. "My employers—" he began to mutter.

"—would have no objection," Quayle finished for him. "Rather the reverse, I should imagine," he added dryly. "Come on, Sam," he went on rudely. "Let's have them."

Mr. Orion rose from his chair. He was trembling. Without a word, he crossed the room and began to open an old-fashioned rolltop desk. He paused halfway, and stiffened. Then he turned to Quayle; and the terror in his eyes was too real for Quayle to imagine that he was merely playing for time.

"They've gone!" croaked Mr. Orion. Quayle was at the desk in two strides. He ripped the top fully open. "You kept them in here?" he demanded. Orion nodded. "Yes. I—there seemed no need to lock them up in the safe. I—can't understand it."

Quayle stared down at the desk. "Neither," he muttered, "can I. Unless the murderer—"

"Not murderer, inspector," interrupted a bland voice from the doorway. "Merely humble co-investigator."

And Mr. Xosa made his little bow. (To be Continued)

## Spitzbergen Raid Described in Letter by Northern Lad

### Sapper Paton Writes About Arctic Foray by Canadians

The first personal Northern touch in connection with the recent expedition to Spitzbergen by some members of the Canadian army overseas is to hand through a letter received by Mr. and Mrs. T. G. Paton of Harley township from their son, Sapper Allan Paton, who is overseas with a Royal Canadian Engineers' unit. Sapper Paton is formerly of New Liskeard, although he had been working at Noranda for some time prior to enlistment.

"I am pretty slow with my writing lately," he tells his parents, "but we just came back from the Arctic, and left again, and arrived back last night, and I'm leaving again tomorrow. We had a great time up north and are the people making a fuss over us here? We were picked as the best company of engineers and there were 200 infantry with us. We were on the water about five days going up north and I was at the Russian camp.

"They loaded them all up and took

them on to Russia," continues Sapper Paton. "We blew up the coal pits and mines, and were blowing up some tracks and I guess the coal dust caught fire. We were called about 5.30 in the morning and the whole town was on fire, so we had a small Dunkirk. We had to carry all our stuff down to the beach. It was daylight all the time. We took some snaps at two o'clock in the morning. I will send them on later.

"There were about 600 pigs and some cows and about 60 horses and we had to kill them all," the letter proceeds. "I never ate so much in my life. They allowed us to carry off what we could, but we did not have much room. We stopped at Iceland too. It is a dreary-looking place. We were given leather coats and sleeping bags, so we were quite warm enough. We saw some whales and seals but no reindeer, but we were glad to get back to England. I guess you would be wondering where we were, eh!"

Sapper Paton expressed the hope that good crops written about by his parents were safely gathered in, and he concludes his letter with the note that "I will stop for now, as I have a month and a half of washing to catch up on." He mentions also having been on training for invasion tactics at Inverary, which is on Loch Fyne and not so very far from Glasgow, where the

## Mrs. Joseph Iannarelli Honoured at Gold Centre

Schumacher, Oct. 29.—(Special to The Advance)—Thursday evening Mrs. James Gold Centre, was hostess at a nicely arranged shower in honour of Mrs. Iannarelli (Jean Cowden) of Railroad St., Schumacher. The rooms were decorated in pink and blue and a baby carriage decorated in pink and blue and filled to the top with lovely gifts was wheeled into the room and presented to Mrs. Iannarelli. A nice social evening was enjoyed. Whist was played and the prize winners were:—1st, Mrs. Taylor; 2nd, Mrs. Hodgins; 3rd, Mrs. Moorish; 4th, Mrs. Fraser. Door prize, Mrs. Grist. After the cards the hostess assisted by Mrs. Harry Cowden served a delicious lunch. The following ladies attended:—Mrs. Ernest Dunbabin, Mrs. Alex Dunbabin, Mrs. Eden, Mrs. Fraser, Mrs. Byron, Mrs. Grist, Mrs. Moorish, Mrs. Cowden, Mrs. Findlay, Mrs. Pigeon, the guest of honour (Mrs. Iannarelli), and the hostess (Mrs. James). Unable to attend but sending gifts were Miss Joan Davis, Mrs. James Cowden, and Mrs. James MacKenzie.

unit stopped briefly, but its members were "not allowed out much, as they were afraid somebody would talk."



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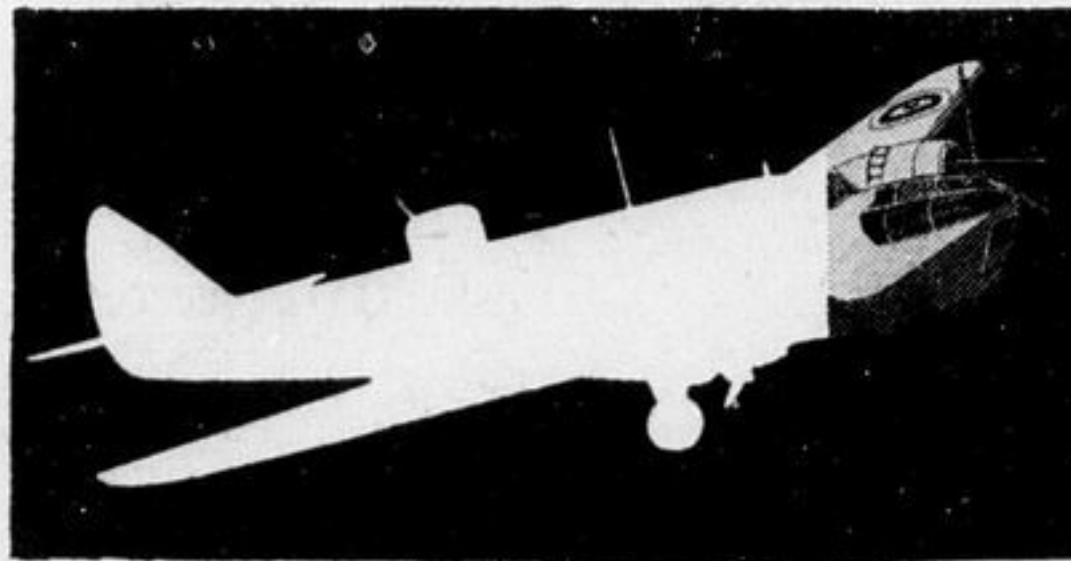
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