The Black Box

They struggled on once more. Night

came and brought with it a half-sooth-

ing, half-torturing coolness. That

vain straining of the eyes upon the

arm furiously. He was holding his

he was. He passed the glasses to the

"A caravan!" he exclaimed. "I can

The professor almost snatched the

"It is quite true," he agreed. "It is

our direction. Come! They will see

Presently three or four horsemen

They almost snatched the bottle

from him. It was like pouring life

into their veins. They all, at the pro-

fessor's instigation, drank sparingly.

The professor, who had been talking

"It is a caravan," he explained, "of

peaceful merchants on their way to

we shall be able, without a doubt, to

arrange for water and food and a

camel or two horses. The man here

asks if the ladies will take the horses

They started off gayly to where the

caravan had come to a standstill. They

had scarcely traversed a hundred

yards, however, before the Arab who

was leading Lenora's horse came to a

sudden standstill. He pointed with

his arm and commenced to talk in an

excited fashion to his two companions.

From across the desert, facing them,

came a little company of horsemen,

galloping fast and with the sunlight

pointing wildly. "They attack the

"The Mongars!" the Arab cried,

The three Arabs talked together for

moment in an excited fashion. Then,

without excuse or warning, they swung

the two women to the ground, leaped

"If You Value Your Lives, You Will

Do as You Are Bidden."

on their horses, and, turning north-

The professor looked on anxiously.

"I am not at all sure," he said in

an undertone to Quest, "about our po-

sition with the Mongars. Craig has a

peculiar hold upon them, but as a rule

they hate white men, and their blood

will be up. . . . See! the fight is all

over. Those fellows were no match for

the Mongars. Most of them have fled

The fight was indeed over. Four of

the Mongars had galloped away in

the temporary escort of Quest and his

them even fired a shot, which missed

"They say they are coming back,"

the professor muttered. "Who' this?

"Our search is over, at any rate,"

They came galloping up, Craig in

white linen clothes and an Arab's

Quest interrupted. "It's Craig!"

Quest by only a few inches.

wards, galloped away.

and left the caravan."

flashing upon their rifles.

caravan!"

to the men in their own language,

turned back towards the two girls.

"Some adventure, this!"

detached themselves from the main

body and came galloping towards

see the camels, and horses!"

us before long."

ing his arms.

clared.

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The BLACK BOX

By E. PHILLIPS OPPENHEIM

Author of "Mr. Grex of Monte Carlo," "The Vanished Messenger," "The Lighted Way,"etc.

Novelized from the motion picture drams of the same name produced by the Universal Film Manufacturing Company. Illustrated with

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SYNOPSIS.

Sanford Quest, master eriminologist of the world, finds that in bringing to justice Macdougal, the murderer of Lord Ashleigh's daughter, he has but just begun a life-and-death struggle with a horizon at any rate was spared to seen an anthropold ape skeleton and a | soon after dawn they were on their nhuman creature, half monkey, feet again. Suddenly Quest, who had containing sarcastic, notes, signed by a a low range of sand hills, waved his pair of armiess hands. Laura and Lenora, fessor's servant, of a double murder. The field-glasses to his eyes. It was wonblack boxes continue to appear in uncan-ny fashion. Craig is trapped by Quest, derful how that ray of hope transbut escapes to England, where Quest, Le-nora and the professor follow him. Lord he was the proceed the places to the Ashleigh is murdered by the Hands, Le-Craig is captured and escapes to Port Said, where Quest and his party also go, and beyond into the desert.

ELEVENTH INSTALLMENT

CHAPTER XXIII.

IN THE DESERT. Quest was the first the next morning to open his eyes, to grope his way through the tent opening and stand for a moment alone, watching the alabaster skies. He turned lazily around, meaning to summon the Arab who had volunteered to take Hassan's place. His arms-he had been in the act of stretching-fell to his sides. He stared at the spot where the camels had been tethered. incredulously. There were no camels, no drivers, no Arabs. There was not a soul nor an object in sight except the stark body of Hassan which they had dragged half out of sight

behind a slight knoll. High up in the sky above were two little black specks. wheeling lower and lower. Quest shivered as he suddenly realized that for the first time in his life he was looking upon the winged ghouls of the desert. Lower and lower they came. He turned away with a shiver. Jaffa. They are halting for us, and

The professor was still aleeping when Quest re-entered the tent. He woke him up and beckoned him to come outside.

Quest pointed to the little sandy knoll with its sparse covering of grass. deserted-with scarcely a sign, even, that it had been the resting place of the little caravan. The professor gave vent to a little exclamation.

The Professor hurried off toward the spot where the encampment had been made. Suddenly he stood still and pointed with his finger. In the clearer, almost crystalline light of the coming day, they saw the track of the camels in one long, unbroken line stretching away northwards,

He glanced around a little helpless ly. Quest took a cigar from his case

"No good worrying," Quest sighed "The question is how best to get out anyway?"

The professor glanced towards the son and took a small compass from his pocket. He pointed across the des-

"That's exactly our route," he said. "but I reckon we still must be two days from the Mongars, and how we are going to get there ourselves, much more get the women there, without camels, I don't know. There are no wells, and I don't believe those fellows have left us a single tin of wa-

in which the two women had slept. "Say, where's breakfast?" she exclaimed. "I can't smell the coffee."

They turned and approached her silently. The two girls, fully dressed, came out of the tent as they approached.

"Young ladies," the professor announced. "I regret to say that a misfortune has befallen us, a misfortune which we shall be able, without doubt, to surmount, but which will mean a day of hardship and much in-

"Where are the camels?" Lenora asked breathlessly.

"Gone!" Quest replied. "And the Arabs?" "Gone with them-we are left high and dry," Quest explained.

"And what is worse," the professor added, with a groan, "they have taken with them all our stores, our rifles and our water."

"How far are we from the Mongar camp?" Lenora asked. "About a day's tramp," Quest re-

plied quickly. "We may reach there

"Then let's start walking at once, before it gets any hotter," Lenora sug-

Quest patted her on the back. They nade a close search of the tents, but ound that the Arabs had taken everything in the way of food and drink, ex-

cone, their feet were sorely blistered. hundred yards away, waving their No one complained, however, and the arms and shouting furiously. One

"We have come farther than I had dared to hope, in the time," he announced. "Fortunately, I know the It's the chief and-" exact direction we must take. Keep up your spirits, young ladies. At any time we may see signs of our destination."

upright man with long, gray beard; behind, three Mongars, their rifles already to their shoulders. The chief wheeled up his horse as he came within twenty paces of the little party. "White! English!" he shouted. "Why do you seek death here?"

He waited for no reply, but turned to his men. Three of them dashed forward, their rifles, which were fitted with an odd sort of bayonet, drawn back for the lunge. Suddenly Craig, who had been a little in the rear, galloped, shouting, into the line of fire. "Stop!" he ordered. "Chief, these people are my friends. Chief, the

The chief raised his arm promptly. The men lowered their rifles. Craig saffoped back to his host's side. The chief listened to him and nodded gravely. Presently he rode up to the them. They slept in a fashion, but little party. He saluted the professor gravely and talked to him in his own language. The professor turned to the gone a little out of his way to mount

"The chief apologizes for not recognizing me," he announced. "It seems that Craig had told him that he had come to the desert for shelter, and he imagined at once, when he gave the order for the attack upon us, that we were his enemies. He says that we are welcome to go with him to his encampment."

Craig turned slowly towards them. It was a strange meeting. "It is necessary," he told them a caravan crossing at right angles to "that you should pretend to be my friends. The chief has ordered two of his men to dismount. Their ponies are for the young ladies. There will be horses for you among the captured

ones from the caravan yonder." them. The eyes of the little party They all turned towards the chief, glistened as they saw that the forewho remained a little on the outside most had a water-bottle slung around of the circle. The professor raised his neck. He came dashing up, wavhis hat and spoke a few words in the Mongar language, then he turned to "You lost, people?" he asked. "Want the others.

"I have accepted the invitation of the chief," he announced. "We had

"This may not be Delmonico's." Quest, with a great sigh of relief, lit Laura remarked, a few hours later with a little sigh of contentment, "but believe me that goat-stew and sherbet tasted better than any chicken and champagne I ever tasted."

They moved to the opening of the tent and sat looking out across the silent desert. Laura took the flap of the canvas in her hand.

"What do all these marks mean? she asked. "They are cabalistic signs," the

professor replied "part of the language of the tribe. They indicate that this is the guest tent, and there are a few little maxims traced upon it, extolling the virtues of hospitality." Lenora leaned forward to where a little group of Mongars were talking together.

"I wish that beautiful girl would come and let us see her again," she "She," the professor explained, "is

the chief's daughter, Feerda, whose life Craig saved." "And from the way she looks at

him," Laura observed, "I should say she hadn't forgotten it, either."

The professor held up a warning finger. The girl herself had glided to their side out of the shadows. She faced the professor. The rest of the party she seemed to ignore. spoke slowly and in halting English. "My father wishes to know that you are satisfied?" she said.

have no further wants? "None," the professor assured her "We are very grateful for his hos pitality, Feerda.

"Won't you talk to us for a little time?" Lenora begged, leaning for-

The girl turned suddenly to the professor and spoke to him in her own language. She pointed to the signs upon the tent, drew her finger along one of the sentences, flashed a fierce glance at them all and disap-

actly popular with the young lady," Quest remarked. "What was she saying, professor?"

"She suspects us," the professor said slowly, "of wishing to bring evil to Craig. She pointed to a sentence upon the tent. Roughly it means 'Gratitude is the debt of hospitality.' I am very much afraid that the young lady

The professor suddenly leaned for wrapped in this cloak. I'll join you ward. There was a queer change in in ten minutes." his face. From somewhere on the other side of that soft bank of violet darkness came what seemed to be the

clear, low cry of some animal. "It is the Mongar cry of warning." h said hoarsely. "Something is going to

The whole encampment was sud fongars ran hither and thither, getting together their horses. The chief with Craig by his side, was standing on the outskirts of the camp.

Quest muttered, as they rose to their feet. "I wonder if we are in it." A moment or two later Craig ap-

"Word has been brought to th hief." he announced. "that the Arab ldiers. They have already started have prepared hiding-places. We

start at once." "What about us?" the professor

"I endeavored," Craig continued, "to persuade the chief to allow you to remain here, when the care of vo would devolve upon the English sol diers. He and Feerda, however, have



Captured by the Mongars.

absolutely refused my request. Feerda into a corner of the tent and drew has overheard some of your conversarevolver from his pocket. tion, and the chief believes that you

They all rose at once to their feet, and a few moments later horses were

The little procession was already being formed in line. Craig approached

"You will mount now and ride in the middle of our caravan," he directed. "The chief does not trust you. If you value your lives, you will do as you are bidden."

CHAPTER XXIV.

"You can call this fairyland, if you want." Laura remarked, gazing around her: "I call it a nasty, damp, oozy

Quest motioned them to sit a little "I had a moment's talk with Craig

this morning, and from what he says I fancy they mean to make a move a little farther in before long. It'll be all the more difficult to escape them.' "You think we could get away?" Lenora whispered, eagerly.

Quest glanced castiously around They were surrounded by thick vegetation, but they were only a very short distance from the camp.

"Seems to me," he continued, "we shall have to try it some day or other and I'm all for trying it soon. Even if they caught us, I don't believe they'd dare to kill us, with the English soldiers so close behind. I am going to get hold of two or three rifles and some ammunition. That's easy because they leave them about all the time. And what you girls want to do is to hide some food and get a bottle of water." "What about Craig?" the professor

asked. "We are going to take him along." Quest declared, grimly. "He's had the devil's own luck so far but it can't last forever. I'll see to that part of

the business, if you others get ready

and wait for me to give the signal." They dispersed in various directions It was not until late in the evening when the Mongars had withdrawn a little to indulge in their customary orgy of crooning songs, that they were absolutely alone. Quest looked out of the tent in which they had been sitting and came back again.

Laura lifted her skirt and showed an unusual projection underneath. "Lenora and I have pinned up our

petticoats," she announced. "We've got plenty of food and a bottle of

Quest threw open the white Arab cloak which he had been wearing. He had three rifles strapped around him. "The professor's got the ammunition," he said, "and we've five horses tethered a hundred paces along the track we came by, just behind the second tree turning to the left. I want you all to go there now at once must have been listening to our con- and take the rifles. There isn't a soul in the camp and you can carry them

> "What about Craig?" the professor "I am seeing to him," Quest replied.

Lenora hesitated. "Isn't it rather a risk?" she whispered fearfully. Quest's face was suddenly stern.

"Craig is going back with us," he said. "I'll be careful, Lenora. Den't He strolled out of the tent and came

'Off you go. . . One moment," he little box of mine which one of you might take care of."

of the spaces of the wallet he drew out | ica. -Tve had enough of being hunted a small black box, removed the lid and all over the world. This time I think held out the card. They read it to I'll rid myself of one of you, at any Foole, all of you! The cunning

the ages defeats your puny efforts at every turn.-The Hands. Even the professor's lips blanche a little as he read. Quest, however, away, Lenora had suddenly appeared seemed suddenly furious. He tore the She, too, held a revolver, her hand card and the box to pieces, flung them | was as steady as a rock.

"This time," he exclaimed, "we are will betray us. You will have to come.

going to make an end of The Hands! Out you go now, girls You can leave | whispered. me to finish things up. One by one they stole along the path of little black specks, growing every

Quest came out and watched them disfirmly in his hand and turned towards | Mongars. Craig's tent. Then, from the thick growth by the side of the clearing, he saw a dark shape steal out and vanish in the direction of Craig's tent. He came to a standstill, puzzled. There had been rumors of lions all day, but the professor had been incredulous. Then the still, heavy air was suddenly rent by a wild scream of horror. Across the narrow opening the creature had reappeared, carrying something in its mouth, something which gave vent al! the time to the most awful yells. Quest fired his revolver on chance and broke into a run. Already the Mongars, disturbed in their evening amusement, were breaking into the undergrowth in chase. Quest came to a standstill. It was from Craig's tent that the beast had issued! When he reached the meeting place, he found

the professor standing at the corner with the rest. "From the commotion." nounced, "I believe that, after all, lion has visited the camp. The cries which we have heard were distinctly

the cries of a native." Quest shook his head "A lion's been here all right," he said, "and he has finished our little job for us. That was Craig. I saw him come out of Craig's tent."

The professor was dubious. "You see that tree that looks like a dwarfed aloe?" "What about it?"

"Craig was lying there ten minutes ago. He sprang up when he heard the yells from the encampment, but I believe he is there now."

"Got the horses all right?" "Everything is waiting," the profes-

sor replied. "I'll have one more try, then, Quest declared. He made his way slowly through the undergrowth to the spot which the professor had indicated. Close to the

trunk of a tree Craig was standing. Feerda was on her knees before him. She was speaking in broken English. "Dear master, you shall listen to your slave. These people are your enemies. It would be all over in a few

minutes. You have but to say the word. My father is eager for it. No one would ever know." Craig patted her head. His tone

was filled with the deepest despon-

"It is impossible, Feerda," he said "You do not understand. I cannot tell you everything. Sometimes I almost think that the best thing I could do would be to return with them to the countries you know nothing of."

"That's what you are going to do anyway," Quest declared, suddenly making his reappearance. "Hands

He covered Craig with his revolver but his arm was scarcely extended be fore Feerda sprang at him like a little wildcat. Heegripped her with his left arm and held her away with diffi

"Craig," he continued, "you're com ing with us. You know the way to Port Said and we want you-you know why. Untie that sash from your waist

Craig obeyed "Tie it to the tree," Quest ordered

Graig did as he was told. Then I turned and held the loose ends up Quest lowered his revolver for a m ment as he pushed Feerda towards it Craig, with a wonderful spring, reached his side and kicked the revolver He bent hastily over the little wallet, away. Before Quest could even stoop to recover it he saw the glitter of the other's knife pressed against his chest "Listen," Craig declared, "Tve made

rate."

"Will you?"

The interruption was so unexpected that Craig lost his nerve. Through an opening in the trees, only a few feet

He obeyed without hesitation. "Now, tie the sash around the girl." He obeyed mechanically. Quest took raig by the collag and led himstothe spot where the others were waiting. They hoisted him on to a horse; Already behind them they could see the flare of the torches from the returning Mongars.

"You know the way to Port Said," Quest whispered. "See that you lead us there. There will be trouble, mind, if you don't."

Craig made no reply. He rode off in front of the little troop, covered all the time by Quest's revolver. Very soon they were out of the jungle and in the open desert. Quest looked behind him uneasily.

"To judge by the row those fellows are making," he remarked. "I should think that they've found Feerda al-

"In that case," the professor said gravely, "let me recommend you to push on as fast as possible. We have had one escape from those fellows, but nothing in the world can save us now that you have laid hands upon Feerda. The chief would never forgive

They galloped steadily on. The moon rose higher and higher until it became as light as day. Quest fell a little behind the professor's side, although he never left off

watching Craig. "Look behind you, professor," he In the far distance were a number

moment larger. Even at that moment appear. Then he gripped his revolver they heard the low, long call of the "They are gaining on us," Quest muttered.

They raced on for another mile or more. A bullet whistled over their heads. Quest tightened his reins "No good," he sighed. "We'd better stay and fight it out, professor. Stick

close to me, Lenora. They drew up and hastily dismounted. The Mongars closed in around them. A cloud had drifted in front of the moon, and in the darkness it was almost impossible to see their whereabouts. They heard the chief's

"Shoot first that dog of a Craig!" There was a shrick. Suddenly Feerda, breaking loose from the others, raced across the little division.

She flung herself from her horse. "Tell my father that you were not faithless," she pleaded. "They shall not kill you!"

She clung to Craig's neck. The bul-

lets were beginning to whistle around



"I'll Be Careful, Lenora,"

up her arms. Craig, in a fury, turned around and fired into the darkness. Then suddenly, as though on the bidding of some unspoken word, there was a queer silence. Everyone was distinctly conscious of an alien sound -the soft thud of many horses' feet galloping from the right; then a sharp, English voice of command.

"Hold your fire, men. Close in the left there. Steady! The cloud suddenly rolled away

from the moon. A long line of horse men were immediately visible. officer in front rode forward. "Drop your arms and surrender,"

ordered, sternly, bered by twenty to one, obeyed without hesitation. Their chief seemed unconscious, even, of what had hap forty years proved to be a most value over the body of Feerda, half support- or

"Are you the party who left Port Compo Said for the Mongar camp?" he asked. "They took us into the jungle-just of female troubles should lose hope un-

escaped. They'd caught us here, til she has given Lydia E. Pinkham's though, and I'm afraid we were about | Vegetable Compound a fair trial finished if you hadn't come along. We are not English-we're American." "Same thing," the officer replied,

he held out his hand. (TO BE CONTINUED.)





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