

# Triumphs of M. Jonquelle



by MELVILLE DAVISSON POST  
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## THE FORTUNE TELLER.

Begin Here Today.

Seated in the quiet of his Paris study M. Jonquelle, greatest of French detectives, reads from his father's diary a tale of crime and its detection in long-ago Virginia. The story was that of the will of Marshall, which had strangely disappeared. The writer of the diary, your Lewis, were suspicious of Mr. Gosford, the Englishman who had exerted such a strange influence over the deceased Marshall. Gosford, claiming that money was left to him in the stolen will, charged Marshall's son with the theft.

Go on With the Story.

### CHAPTER II.

"And now, sir," continued the Englishman, turning to my father, "we will inquire into the theft of this testament."

But my father did not appear to notice Mr. Gosford. He seemed perplexed and in some concern.

"Lewis," he said, "what is your definition of a crime?"

"It is a violation of the law," replied the lawyer.

"I do not accept your definition," said my father. "It is, rather, I think, a violation of justice—a violation of something behind the law that makes an act a crime, I think."

He went on, "that God must take a broader view than Mr. Blackstone and Lord Coke. I have seen a murder in the law that was in fact, only a kind of awful accident, and I have seen your catalogue of crimes gone about by feeble men with no intent except an adjustment of their rights. Their crimes, Lewis, were merely errors of their impractical judgment."

Then he seemed to remember that the Englishman was present.

"And now, Mr. Gosford," he said,

"will you kindly ask young Marshall to come in here?"

The man would have refused, with some rejoinder, but my father was looking at him, and he could not find the courage to resist my father's will. He got up and went out, presently returned followed by the lad and Gaeki. The old country doctor sat down by the door, his leather case of bottles by the chair, his cloak still fastened under his chin. Gosford went back to the table and sat down with his writing materials to keep notes. The boy stood.

My father looked a long time at the lad. His face was grave, but when he spoke, his voice was gentle.

"My boy," he said, "I have had a good deal of experience in the examination of the devil's work." He paused and indicated the violated room. "It is often excellently done. His disciples are extremely clever. One's ingenuity is often taxed to trace out the evil design in it, and to stamp it as a false piece set into the natural sequence of events."

He paused again, and his big shoulders blotted out the window.

"Every natural event," he continued, "is intimately connected with innumerable events that precede and follow. It has so many serenate points of contact with other events that the human mind is not able to fit a false event so that no trace of the joiner will appear. The most skilled workmen in the devil's shop are only able to give their false piece a blurred joiner."

He stopped and turned to the row of mahogany drawers beside him.

"Now, my boy," he said, "can you tell me why the one who ransacked this room, in opening and tumbling the contents of all the drawers about did not open the two at the bottom of the row where I stand?"

"Because there was nothing in them of value, sir," replied the lad.

"What is in them?" said my father.

"Only old letters, sir, written to my father, when I was in Paris—nothing else."

"And who would know that?" said my father.

The boy went suddenly white.

"Precisely!" said my father. "You alone knew it, and when you under took to give this library the appearance of a pillage room, you unconsciously revealed your map to the robber with the thing you know yourself. Why search for loot in drawers that contained only old letters? So your imaginary robber reasoned, knowing what you knew. But a real robber, having no such knowledge, would have ransacked them lest he miss the things of value that he searched for."

He paused, his eyes on the lad, his voice deep and gentle.

"Where is the will?" he said.

The white in the boy's face changed to scarlet. He looked a moment about him in a sort of terror; then he lifted his head and put back his shoulders. He crossed the room to a bookcase, took down a volume, opened it and brought out a sheet of folded foolscap, its top-up and faced my father and the men about the room.

"This man," he said, indicating Gosford, "has no right to take at my father had. He persuaded my father and was trusted by him. But I did not trust him, for my father saw this plan in a light that I did not see it, but I did not oppose him. If he wished to use his fortune to help our country in the thing which he thought he foresaw, I was willing for him to do it."

"But," he cried, "somebody deceived me and I will not believe that I was my father. He told me all about this thing. I had not the health to fight for our country, when he came, he said, and as he had no other son, our fortune must go to that purpose in our stead. But my father was just. He said that a portion would be set aside for me, and the remainder turned over to the son."

Then he came forward and put the paper in my father's hand. There was silence except for the sharp voice of Mr. Gosford.

"I think there will be a criminal proceeding here!"

My father handed the paper to Lewis, who unfolded it and read it aloud. It directed the estate of Peyton Marshall to be sold, the sum of fifty thousand dollars paid to Anthony Gosford and the remainder to the son.

"But there will be no remainder," cried young Marshall. "My father's estate is worth precisely that sum. He valued it very carefully, item by item, and that is exactly the amount it came to."

"Nevertheless," said Lewis, "the will reads that way. It is in legal form, written in Marshall's hand, and signed with his signature, and sealed. Will you examine it, gentlemen? There can be no question of the writing or the signature."

My father took the paper and read it slowly, and old Gaeki nosed it over my father's arm, his eyes searching the structure of each word, while Mr. Gosford sat back comfortably in his chair like one elevated to a victory.

"It is in Marshall's hand and signature," said my father, and old Gaeki nodded, wrinkling his face under his shaggy eyebrows. He went away still wagging his grizzled head, wrote a memorandum on an envelope from his pocket, and sat down in a chair.

My father turned now to young Marshall.

"My boy," he said, "why do you say that someone has deceived you?"

"Because, sir," replied the lad, "my father was to leave me twenty thousand dollars. That was his plan. Thirty thousand dollars should be

set aside for Mr. Gosford, and the remainder turned over to me."

"That would be thirty thousand dollars to Mr. Gosford, instead of fifty," said my father.

"Yes, sir," replied the boy; "that is the way my father said he would write his will. But it was not written that way. It is fifty thousand dollars to Mr. Gosford, and the remainder to me. If it were thirty thousand dollars to Mr. Gosford, as my father said his will would be, that would have left me twenty thousand dollars from the estate; but giving Mr. Gosford fifty thousand dollars leaves me nothing."

"And so you adventured on a little larceny," sneered the Englishman.

The boy stood very straight and white.

"I do not understand this thing," he said, "but I do not believe that my father would deceive me. He never did deceive me in his life. I may have been a disappointment to him, but my father was a gentleman." His voice went up strong and clear. "And I refuse to believe that he would tell me one thing and do another!"

One could not fail to be impressed, or to believe that the boy spoke the truth.

"We are sorry," said Lewis, "but he will be valid and we cannot go behind it."

My father walked about the room, in face in reflection. Gosford sat at his case, transcribing a note on his portfolio. Old Gaeki had gone back to his chair and to his little case of bottles; he got them up on his knees, as though he would be diverted by fingering the tools of his profession, for he held the law and its de- scription to be inviolable; the boy stood with a fine defiance, ennobled by the trust in his father's honor. He could not take his stratagem or a criminal act; he was only a child, for all his twenty years of life. And yet Lewis saw the elements of time, and he knew that Gosford was writing down the evidence.

The concluding installment of "The Fortune Teller" will be published in our next issue.

We will count it a privilege to meet personally all our boyhood friends at the auction sales of the Five Points lots on the Greensboro road, Friday, December 8th, at 1 p. m., and at the J. Elwood Cox lot on East Green street, Saturday, December 9th, at 1 p. m. Horney Brothers, selling agents, Asheville, N. C.

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