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# The BOYS' HERALD

No. 90.

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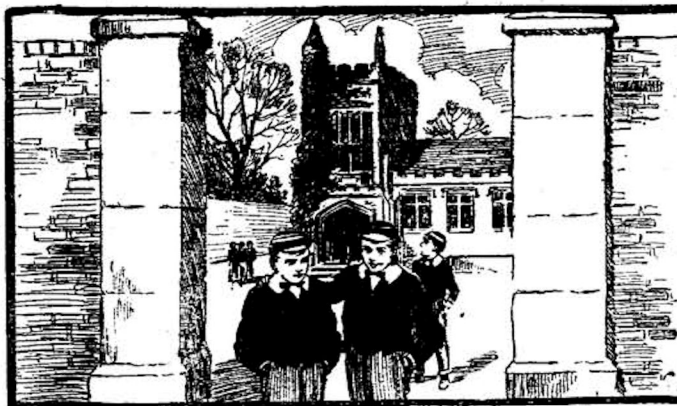
July 16, 1921.



The sudden energy of the Bohemians was amazing. "Ah!" chuckled Stringer. "Isn't it marvellous? Look at the giddy Bohemians! They're gambolling like lambs!" "What about the match?" demanded Mallison with a grin. "I thought we were here to play cricket—not witness a leap-frog display!"

See the Magnificent Story "STRINGER AND THE BOHEMIANS!"—Inside.

## Splendid, Long Complete Story of Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake!



A Friend in Need!

## Drake Wins Through!

A Grand, Long Complete Detective Story introducing Ferrers Locke and Jack Drake.

**"DRAKE!"**

Dick Rodney uttered his chum's name in startled tones.

Rodney came into No. 3 Study, in the Remove at Greyfriars, with a cricket bat under his arm and a cheery look on his face. But the cheery look faded away at once as he caught sight of Drake.

Jack Drake was seated in the armchair, with a letter in his hand. He had evidently been reading the letter—and it had given him a shock. Another letter, unopened, lay on the table beside him.

Drake's face was white, and his lips set.

He looked up as his chum came in, and made an effort to smile, but it was a failure. His face quivered.

"I—I've had some bad news," he muttered.

Rodney threw down the cricket bat, and came over to his chum. His face was full of concern.

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. You can tell me what it is."

"The game's up for me here, that's all! It's from my father," said Drake, with a nod towards the letter. "It's awful hard lines—on him. Poor old pater! He's put it as gently as he can, but it's clear enough! He's ruined, and I've got to clear out of Greyfriars. I—I don't care so much for myself; but—" His voice faltered.

"So bad as that?" said Rodney.

Drake made an effort to pull himself together. He had received a shock—a terrible one. But his pluck, which had never been found wanting in an emergency, came to the rescue.

"I can stand it," he said. "I—I was thinking of the pater, chiefly. He had all his money tied up in the tin mines of Nigeria, and the slump in tin has knocked him out—the coal strike finished it. He's held on as long as he could. He wouldn't tell me 'till there was no further hope; but now the crash has come."

Rodney was silent.

His heart was heavy for his chum; but there was little he could say to comfort him under this blow.

"There's enough left for the pater and mater to rub along, in a small way," went on Drake. "Thank goodness for that. But it won't run to my fees at Greyfriars after the end of this term—and we're close on the end now. I sha'n't be able to come back next term. And—and the pater's going to see some of his old friends in the City, and—and try to get an opening for me there—to begin work."

"You!" muttered Rodney. "Oh, old chap—"

Drake smiled faintly.

"Lots of chaps have to begin work at my age," he said. "I've been lucky so far, that's all. I'll try to look at it like that. I—I want to find something to do as soon as I can. I want to be able to help them at home. It—it's rather a sudden change." His voice faltered again. "But I'm getting used to it already. I can face it."

"And—and there's no hope?"

"The pater's got an interest in the new goldfields in Nigeria," said Drake. "If that turns out well, it may pull him out all right, in the long run, but it's a chance, and there's nothing in it at present, at any rate. It's all in the future. For the next year or two, anyhow, we shall be pretty hard up, and I've got to make up my mind to it. It will be a bit rotten leaving you, Rodney, old chap, and all the fellows, too. I shall be sorry not to see even Bunter again. But it can't be helped. No good grousing."

He thrust his father's letter into his pocket, and drew a

deep breath, squaring his shoulders as if already bracing himself to face his new and altered prospects.

Rodney made a gesture towards the letter that lay unopened on the table. Drake had evidently forgotten it.

"There's another letter, old fellow. Aren't you going to open it?"

"Blessed if I hadn't forgotten it," said Drake. "I opened the pater's letter first, and it knocked everything else out of my mind." He picked up the letter from the table, and glanced at it without interest. "I don't know this fist, it's not from home. Nothing of consequence, I suppose."

He dropped the letter, still unopened, into his pocket. He was in no mood for ordinary correspondence now. The letter could wait.

Drake moved to the door.

"I think I'll take a stroll in the quad, and think it over a bit," he said.

"Right-ho, old fellow."

Rodney understood that his chum wanted to be alone just then. Drake went slowly down the Remove passage to the stairs. Harry Wharton and Co. were standing in a cheery group outside No. 1 Study, and they nodded to the junior as he passed. Drake forced a smile; he intended to keep a brave face in his misfortune. There was no need for a word to be said, excepting to his chum Rodney. He did not want compassion. He would leave Greyfriars a few days before the end of the term, and he would not return when the school re-opened. That was all.

Jack Drake walked out into the sunny quadrangle.

There was a cricket match going on, on Big Side, and a crowd of fellows were watching the game, and cheering. Drake turned his steps in another direction; he was in no mood then to mingling in a cheery, careless crowd.

In the shade of the old elms the junior paced to and fro, thinking of the blow that had fallen, and thinking, too, of what the dim future held for him. All the life he was used to was to be left behind in a few days now, his future surroundings would be new and strange.

The first shock had hit him hard, but he was recovering now. He sat down on one of the old benches under the elms, and thrust his hands deep into his pockets, thinking. A shout from the cricket field reached his ears.

"Bravo! Well hit, Wingate!"

In his pocket, his hand touched the letter he had placed there, unopened. He drew it out at last, and glanced at it carelessly. The handwriting on the envelope was strange to him; he did not remember having seen that clear, firm caligraphy before. The postmark was Baker Street. It brought back Ferrers Locke to his mind.

Only a week had elapsed since the famous detective had visited Dr. Locke, the Head of Greyfriars, and Drake had made his acquaintance. It had been his fortune to help the famous detective to secure a pair of rogues, and he remembered Ferrers Locke's parting words. If he ever wanted a friend, he was to call upon Ferrers Locke in Baker Street. He wanted a friend now, that was certain.

Was the letter from Ferrers Locke? Did he know already? Jack Drake tore the envelope open with almost feverish fingers.

His eyes ran hastily over the letter, and they brightened as he read:

"My dear Drake,—You have probably not forgotten me yet, and I certainly have not forgotten you. From certain information that has reached me, it appears to me possible that it may be to your advantage to remember the offer I made you at Greyfriars. If this should prove to be the

case, I trust you will have no hesitation in coming to me. You will find in me a sincere friend able and willing to help you.

"Your friend,  
"FERRERS LOCKE."

Ferrers Locke knew! He had worded his letter carefully, in order not to make the junior uneasy if the black news had not yet reached him; but it was evident that the detective, in close contact with City affairs, knew of the crash that was coming—that had now, indeed come. And so he had written, that the junior might know that he had a friend to stand by him, able and willing to set his feet upon a new path! The kindness of that brief letter went straight to Drake's heart.

#### Ferrers Locke At Home.

**J**ACK DRAKE stood before the solid, green-painted door in the stone porch and hesitated. Behind him sounded the dull roar of City traffic.

Crowds passed and repassed; motor-buses rolled roaring on their way. The taxi-cab that had brought Drake to Ferrers Locke's house backed and turned and glided away, and was lost in the sea of traffic, and Drake, standing at the door, hesitated.

It was some days since he had left Greyfriars.

A brief visit to his home had filled in the interval. With his father's approval he had written to Ferrers Locke, and the famous detective had answered, making an appointment. And now Jack Drake stood at his door, his hand raised to push the electric bell, but pausing.

There was hope in his heart, but it was mingled with misgiving. His surroundings were new and strange—the thick crowds, the jostling pedestrians, the dull roar of the streets; after the green old quad and the quiet of Greyfriars. After all, what had he to hope for? Ferrers Locke was kind and generous, and, somehow had formed an high opinion of his abilities. But Drake's heart misgave him now—now that he was upon the very threshold of his new life.

But he had not come so far to turn back. His hesitation lasted only a minute. Then, with a firm hand, he pressed the electric bell. The door opened almost immediately.

Drake had a glimpse of a large, dusky hall; but his eyes were fixed upon the figure that stood in the doorway. It was a Chinaman that opened the door. A little, lithe, yellow-complexioned man in the loose garments of his native land, a strange enough figure in the Baker Street doorway.

The quiet, almond eyes dwelt inquiringly on Drake. The Chinaman's age it was impossible to tell by his face; it might have been anything between twenty and fifty. He stood quite silent, his eyes on Drake, waiting for the junior to speak. In his looks and manners there was a strange stillness, almost a stealthiness.

"Is—is Mr. Locke at home? I've called to see him."

"Namee Drakee?"

"Drake—yes."

"You follee me."

Drake stepped into the hall, and the ponderous door closed softly. The Chinaman glided on before him, and Drake followed.

The Chinaman opened a door further along the hall, and signed to Drake to enter. He passed into the room.

"You waitee."

The Chinaman withdrew, closing the door softly behind him. Drake looked round him. The room in which he stood was not a large one, and the walls were almost covered from floor to the high ceiling with bookcases.

A tall window looked upon a high-walled little garden, with a neat lawn and flower-beds, and an ancient oak that had probably stood where it was now standing many a long year before the old house was built. Drake looked into the little shut-in garden with brightening eyes. The sight of that tiny green oasis in the desert of London was cheering to him.

He sat down by the window to wait.

Ferrers Locke had told him to come that afternoon, but the exact hour of the interview had not been specified. Drake was aware that the famous detective must be a very busy man; and he was willing to wait.

After ten minutes or so he rose to his feet, and moved about the bookcases, glancing at the titles of the books behind the glass doors. They were in many languages, some of which Drake did not understand. He made the round of the room, his footsteps making no sound upon the thick carpet. The quiet of the room, and the whole building, struck him more than anything else; so near, as it was, to the hum of busy streets.

Drake was reading the titles in Greek, of a row of books, when he suddenly turned. He had heard no sound; and he knew the door had not opened, but an instinct warned him that he was no longer alone in the apartment.

"Mr. Locke!"

The famous detective stood before him.

A slight smile played over the calm, clear-cut face of

Ferrers Locke, as he met the surprised glance of the school-boy. He held out his hand.

"I am glad to see you, Drake."

Drake shook hands with him mechanically. He was wondering how Locke had appeared so suddenly in the room. But it was not his business to ask questions.

"Sit down, my boy," said Ferrers Locke. "I am very glad that you have made up your mind to come to me."

"I was very glad to get your letter at Greyfriars," said Drake. "I was feeling a bit rotten when it came, and it bucked me."

"You have not forgotten what I said to you?"

"I was not likely to, sir."

"That I believed you had the gifts of a detective, and that I should be glad if the opportunity came to me to take you in hand, and gave you the training to follow my profession," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "I was quite in earnest, Drake. What I said then I still mean. I am in need of just such an assistant, and you may be very useful to me."

"I hope so, sir," said Drake. "I shall try my hardest. If—if I fail it won't be my fault."

"Quite so," said Ferrers Locke. "I shall certainly put you to the test, Drake, before we come to a definite decision. Now for a few details." He smiled. "You know how to obey orders?"

"We learned that at Greyfriars, sir."

"Good. And you are not afraid of danger?"

"I think not."

"You are prepared to carry out instructions, even at the risk of your life?"

"I don't think the risk would worry me," said Drake. "I've been in danger more than once, and I don't remember getting rattled. More than that I can't say."

"You can keep a secret, and refrain from indulging your curiosity in matters that do not concern you?"

"I am sure of that."

"I think I may be sure of it, too," said Ferrers Locke, smiling, "for you have not asked me how I entered the room, and my sudden appearance must have surprised you."

"It did, sir!" admitted Drake.

"Obedience, courage, and silence will be required in my assistant," said Ferrers Locke, "and, even more important than these, observation. I shall expect you to keep your wits constantly about you, and to fall into the habit of noting even details that seem of little or no consequence. A detective cannot be too observant. Who admitted you to this house?"

"A Chinaman," said Drake.

"How tall was he?"

"Just about five feet four," answered Drake at once.

"Within half an inch," said Ferrers Locke approvingly.

"How did he wear his pigtail?"

"Coiled on his head."

"What colour were his eyes?"

"Brown, with a tinge of green."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke. "I shall not be disappointed in you, Drake. You use your eyes unconsciously, and can recall what you have noticed. Now tell me how I entered this room?"

Drake glanced about the apartment.

He knew that neither the door nor the window had opened, and certainly Ferrers Locke had not come down the chimney. But the walls all presented the same appearance of book-lined shelves. That there was a secret door was obvious, and that it was not upon the side where Drake had been standing when he became aware of Locke's presence, was equally certain. Neither could the detective have entered by the wall next the window, abutting on the garden.

There remained two walls to examine, and Drake left his seat to examine the book-lined walls, Ferrers Locke watching him from his chair.

The schoolboy was very keen to discover the secret mode of entrance if he could. But the bookcases presented exactly the same appearance; he touched them and tested them at intervals, but they seemed as firm as rock.

But Drake turned suddenly towards Ferrers Locke, with a glimmer in his eyes.

"The door is fastened now, sir," he said.

"What door?"

"The secret door you entered by," said Drake coolly. "I should say that it fastens with a silent spring. And it is here." He laid his hand on a glass door before one of the bookcases. "I should say that this whole bookcase moves on hidden hinges."

"Why that bookcase rather than the others?" asked Ferrers Locke. "Are they not all the same to the eye?"

"Quite the same."

"There are eight others to choose from, on those two walls, and as they join side by side—"

"You came in here!" answered Drake quietly.

"Then explain why you feel so certain."

Drake pointed to the carpet at his feet.

"The carpet tells you something?" asked Ferrers Locke. "You do not mean to tell me that you can trace footprints there?"

"No, sir. But the carpet is a trifle more worn in front of this bookcase than near the others. It has been trodden on more often."

"By gad!" said Ferrers Locke. "I was not mistaken in you, Drake. But—as a suggestion—might not the books in that case have been used more often than those in the other cases, and might not that account for your clue?"

"I think not, sir."

"Why?"

"Well, then, I should figure it out that you've shoved the most uninteresting-looking books in this case, so that anybody in the room, wanting a book, would be the least likely to come to it," said Drake. "If it's the secret door, that makes it all the safer from discovery."

"Excellent!" exclaimed Ferrers Locke, rising from his chair. "I'm not disappointed in you, Drake. I shall have further tests for you; but we will let them stand over for the present. You will be hungry after your journey, and I shall ask Sing-Sing to look after you. You will excuse me, as I have much to do."

Ferrers Locke touched a bell. The door on the hall opened, and the Chinaman appeared. Ferrers Locke spoke to him in a language of which Drake did not understand one word.

Sing-Sing made a sign to Drake, who followed him from the room.

**At The Pistol's Point.**

**D**RAKE leaned back in a comfortable armchair, feeling at ease with himself and all the world. He had eaten, alone, and in silence; the Chinaman, who waited upon him, did not speak a word. Sing-Sing had shown him to his room—a little room high up in the old building, with a window that looked out over a vista of roofs. The room was small, but it was furnished with great taste and comfort, and Drake liked it at once.

He understood that this was to be his quarters while he remained in Ferrers Locke's house. He had brought only a little bag with him, and that had been conveyed to the room. He sat in the armchair, resting and thinking, looking about the room and planning in his mind where he would bestow all his little personal belongings when his baggage came along. For he felt that the interview with the famous detective had been satisfactory; he knew that he had earned Ferrers Locke's approval.

He thought of Greyfriars, as he leaned back in the chair, and stared at the patch of sky visible through the window. His old life seemed far enough behind him now. Only a few days before he had been a schoolboy; now he was in the great city, with his foot upon the first rung of the ladder of life. He did not regret the change.

The shades of falling night blotted out the patch of sky at the window, and Drake turned on the electric light.

He moved about the room rather restlessly. He was content to wait till he was called upon, but he wondered how long he was to wait. There was a tap at the door at last, and the Chinaman appeared.

"You follee me."

"Right-ho!" said Drake cheerily.

He followed Sing-Sing down the winding stairs, which was thickly carpeted and gave no sound. He was led into the same room where he had met Ferrers Locke. It was vacant now.

"You waitee!"

The door closed on the Chinaman, and Drake sat down and picked up a book. He was tempted to keep an eye on the big bookcase, in order to see how the secret door opened, if the detective came in that way. But Mr. Locke had warned him not to indulge his curiosity in matters that did not concern him, and Drake was loyal to his compact. He turned his back to the secret door, and fixed his attention upon his book. For half an hour silence reigned, and then there was a sound, but it did not come from the bookcase, it came from the door of the hall. The door opened quietly, and a man stepped into the room.

Drake's eyes were lifted from his book. The man glanced at him and gave a start. He closed the door after him, and came quickly towards Drake.

"Who are you? What are you doing here?" he asked in low, quick tones.

The man's looks were not pleasing. He had a mottled chin, two black patches in the place of teeth, and a deep scar on his cheek. His eyes glittered under bushy, black brows. There was something stealthy, and at the same time threatening in his look and manner, and it put Drake on his guard. He rose from his chair, and backed away a pace.

"Do you hear me? Answer!" muttered the scarred man, glancing back at the door he had entered by as he spoke.

Without waiting for the surprised schoolboy to speak, however, he crossed back quickly to the door, and turned the

key silently and swiftly in the lock. Then he came towards Drake again.

"Silence!" he muttered. "Speak in a whisper. If you make a sound that can be heard outside this room, your life will pay for it."

"What the thump—" began Drake.

"Silence, I say."

The scarred man's hand was in the pocket of his coat, and it came out, and there was a glimmer of metal in the electric light. Drake caught his breath. It was a revolver that glimmered under his eyes, and the muzzle bore full upon him.

"One call, and you die the next second!" hissed the threatening voice. "Put your hands above your head."

Drake's mind was in a whirl. But with a pistol looking him in the face he had no choice but to obey.

He raised his hands over his head; his eyes fixed steadily on those of the man before him. He wondered whether he had to deal with a madman or with some enemy of the famous detective who had succeeded in penetrating into Ferrers Locke's house.

"That is right. Keep your hands there, and do not move. Now tell me—who are you?"

"My name is Drake."

"What are you doing here?"

"I am here to see Ferrers Locke."

"You are expecting him—in this room?"

Drake did not answer.

"Speak—in a whisper."

"I shall say nothing!" answered Drake quietly, though his heart was thumping against his ribs.

"Do you value your life, you young fool?"

"I have nothing to say—only—if you use that pistol the shot will be heard throughout the house," said Drake quietly. "That's all."

The scarred man gave him a savage look.

"Listen to me," he said in a low voice. "I know something of Ferrers Locke's habits. I know there is a secret door in this room, and that he may enter by it. Is it so?"

Drake did not speak, and his face expressed nothing.

"Fool! I know it is true." The scarred man fingered the pistol, and a sick feeling came over Drake. But he did not falter. Not to save his life would he have uttered a word to imperil his benefactor.

There was a long pause. The man had bent his head a little, and he seemed to be listening intently.

Drake listened, too, in anguish of spirit. At any moment Locke might enter the room, and the pistol was ready; the detective would step in unsuspectingly, and he would be greeted by the scarred man's bullet. If he came—

Footsteps were heard in the passage without.

The scarred man caught his breath. He came closer to Drake, his hand dropped on the boy's shoulder, and the pistol was pressed to Jack Drake's head.

"Silence—on your life!"

Drake stood motionless.

The footsteps passed the door, and died away in the distance, and all was still again. The scarred man breathed hard.

"Listen!" he muttered. "I know the secret door is



"Who are you? What are you doing here? Do you hear me? Answer!" muttered the scarred man. The boy backed a pace. "My name is Drake!" he said.

here—I have certain information on that. I am risking my life for revenge on Ferrers Locke, and I shall not hesitate at a trifle. Point out the secret door! You hear me?"

Drake's heart gave a sudden throb. He could not look at the bookcase, for fear of giving the ruffian a clue to the secret door; but the corner of his eye was upon it. It moved!

The secret door was opening from the other side. Drake heard the scarred man's teeth click together. He had seen it at the same moment.

The whole bookcase, on well-oiled hinges, was turning out from the wall, without a sound. The scarred man grasped Drake's collar with his left hand, the revolver gripped in his right.

"Not a whisper!" he hissed, almost inaudibly.

He raised his right hand, with the revolver levelled at the secret doorway. A second or two more, and the secret door would be wide open, and then—

Drake did not hesitate. He had entered Ferrers Locke's service to serve him loyally; the test had come sooner than he could have dreamed, but he was not found wanting. He gave a sudden, ringing shout.

"Look out! Danger!"

And as he shouted he turned upon the scarred man, and grappled with him desperately, heedless of the deadly weapon in his hand.

#### Ferrers Locke Is Satisfied.

"BY heck!"

The sudden exclamation was in a voice that Jack Drake knew well—the voice of Ferrers Locke! But it did not come from the secret doorway. It was Sing-Sing, the Chinaman, who had entered there.

The exclamation came from the scarred man, with whom Jack Drake was grappling.

"Drake, my boy—"

It was the scarred man speaking!

Jack Drake released his grasp, and staggered back, his brain in a whirl.

He stared blankly at the scarred man, who had spoken with the voice of Ferrers Locke. For the moment Drake was overwhelmed, and he wondered dizzily whether his senses were forsaking him.

The Chinaman, standing by the secret door, gave a low, soft chuckle. His yellow face was twisted into a grin.

"You—you—what—" panted Drake. "You—you are—"

The scarred man laughed quietly.

"Calm yourself, my dear boy. I am afraid I have rather astonished you."

"You—you are Ferrers Locke?" stammered Drake. "You—whom I—I thought—"

"You do not recognise me even now?"

"Oh, I know you now, sir," said Drake, recovering himself a little. "But I don't understand. I—I thought—"

"You thought what I intended you to think, Drake," said Ferrers Locke, with a smile. "That I was a deadly enemy of Mr. Locke, and had penetrated into his quarters for revenge upon him. When you know this house better, my boy, you will learn that it is not easy for an enemy to penetrate here undiscovered."

Drake understood at last.

"It has been a hard experience for you," said Ferrers Locke. "But I had to know that I could rely upon you, Drake, even in the deadliest danger. You have proved equal to the test. If matters had been as you supposed, your life would have paid the forfeit."

"I—I suppose so," stammered Drake. "I—"

"I know now what to expect of you, in an emergency," said Ferrers Locke. "I am satisfied with you, Drake, you have been equal to the test, as I fully expected; and tomorrow you begin your new duties."

Jack Drake slept that night under the roof of the old house in Baker Street. If he dreamed, it was not of Greyfriars, but of his new surroundings, and the strange possibilities of the new life before him.

#### Drake's First Case.

**B**UZZZZZ! The telephone bell rang sharply, and Jack Drake jumped up.

He had been seated at a table in the room, half library, half study, which was Ferrers Locke's private den—the room with book-lined walls in which he had met the detective a week before. For a week had passed since Drake had taken up his place in the house in Baker Street, and he had grown quite accustomed by this time to his new surroundings and his new duties.

He had been engaged in sorting Press cuttings, and pasting them in a large volume, lettered alphabetically, when the bell rang, and he jumped up to hasten to the telephone.

"Hallo!"

"Hallo! Is that Ferrers Locke?"

"Mr. Locke's assistant," replied Drake, with a thrill of pride. It was the first occasion upon which he had been able to describe himself so. "What is wanted?"

"I must speak to Mr. Locke personally." The voice on the telephone was that of a man, and it sounded breathless and agitated. "It is important—very important! Call Mr. Locke at once."

"Mr. Locke is away at present," he answered. "I can take a message."

"When will he be back?"

"Any minute, perhaps—or perhaps not for hours."

"I will come then, and hope to see him. Tell him I am coming, if he should return. It is important—most important." The voice trailed off on the telephone.

"What name?" asked Drake.

Continued on page 23.

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LONG  
LAUGH!**



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### DRAKE WINS THROUGH—Continued from page 20.

But there was no reply; his agitated interlocutor had already rung off.

Drake shrugged his shoulders, hung up the receiver, and returned to his work. It was half-an-hour later that the door opened, and Sing-Sing's almond eyes looked into the room.

Drake looked up and nodded cheerily. He had taken quite a liking to Ferrers Locke's Chinese attendant.

"A caller?" he asked.

Sing-Sing nodded.

"Waiter in consulting-room?" he answered.

Drake left his task again, and passed through a door into the consulting-room adjoining. There was a sound of hurried footsteps in the room. A man was pacing to and fro, his hands behind him, holding his hat and stick. He swung round with an exclamation of relief as Drake stepped into the room—followed by another of disappointment.

"Mr. Locke—eh—who—what?"

Drake looked at him. He saw a rather tall young man, with a handsome fair face, which was ablaze with excitement and agitation.

"Where is Mr. Locke?"

"He has not yet returned. Had you an appointment with him?" asked Drake, in his most business-like manner.

The young man gave a hard, mirthless laugh.

"No, no; but I must see him—I must see him at once. If you know where he is, get him on the telephone; tell him that a man's life is at stake—that it may be too late already." He broke off, with a gasp, and strode to the wide, tall window overlooking Baker Street, and the next moment he backed away from the window, with a startled look of terror in his face. "Too late! Too late already!"

"Take a seat, please," said Drake calmly. "I will take your name, and when Mr. Locke returns—"

"I cannot stay his return!" said the young man hoarsely.

"It is too late! But tell him—tell Ferrers Locke—that Cyril Medway has called to ask for his assistance. Tell him that I am innocent, although I shall be taken away from here by the police on a fearful charge—"

He broke off, as the door of the consulting-room opened.

A stout, official figure appeared in the doorway, and Drake recognised Inspector Pycroft, of New Scotland Yard, whom he had already seen once or twice in Ferrers Locke's rooms.

Behind the inspector loomed the burly figure of a con-

stable, and behind him again the startled face of Sing Sing, the Chinese.

The inspector strode into the room. Cyril Medway backed round the long table, a desperate look in his eyes.

The inspector raised his hand.

"I thought so!" he said placidly. "I thought I was not mistaken. Rather a strange burrow for you to bolt into, my man. You could not expect any help here, I fancy."

"I am innocent!" said Medway hoarsely.

The inspector smiled slightly.

He signed to the constable, who came round one end of the table, whilst the inspector came round the other. Drake looked on in silence and amazement. Cyril Medway grasped his stick, as if intending a fierce resistance; but he suddenly threw it down, with a bitter laugh, and held out his hands for the handcuffs.

"I am your prisoner!" he panted huskily. "Oh, if Locke were only here! I risked all to see him—"

"This way," said the inspector, unmoved. "Simmons, get a taxi." The handcuffs clinked on Medway's wrists.

"This way, and don't make a scene in Mr. Locke's quarters. I'm dashed if I can guess why you bolted in here, and gave yourself away."

"Because I am innocent—because Ferrers Locke can save me, if anyone can," muttered the prisoner, hoarsely.

Drake stood looking after them, almost dumbfounded. The strange and sudden scene had taken his breath away.

But as the inspector emerged into the hall with his prisoner, Drake caught the official by the sleeve.

"One moment," he gasped. "What is the charge against this man?"

Inspector Pycroft glanced down at him.

"Murder!" he answered briefly.

Drake stepped back, with a chill at his heart. Sing-Sing held open the door as the inspector passed out with his prisoner. The latter turned his head in the doorway, his face white and working.

"Give Ferrers Locke my message!" he panted. "Tell him —"

He had no time for more. With the inspector's iron grip on his arm, he was led down the steps. Drake returned to the consulting-room, his heart beating. An hour later he was making his report to Ferrers Locke.

THE END.

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