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FROM EVERY POINT of VIEW

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Undertaker
—AND—
Embalmer,

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Mr. Pritchett comes from Hillsboro, where he has been engaged as an Undertaker and Embalmer for several years, to continue the business established and conducted by his father.

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The Best Equipped Drug Store in Caroline County
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Mystery of the Topaz Cat

Luck a Queer Jewel Brought to a Pair of Lovers

By JONAS BRYANT

Roger Holden stared disconsolately in the window of the antique shop. There was no hope of finding anything here within his means, and yet he wanted to buy a birthday present for Dorothy Williams. But Dorothy's tastes were simple in the extreme, and he was quite sure that none of the bizarre jewelry heaped on the dusty velvet trays would appeal to his sweetheart.

Now he inventoried the contents of the velvet lined tray—an antique silver ring, a chatelaine of tarnished copper coins, an amethyst cross, some odd filigree finger rings, a necklace of garnets, a jumble of odds and ends of trinkets, among which gleamed a topaz cat.

"That's odd," muttered Roger, with another quick glance at the little trinket. "Topaz is Dolly's lucky stone. No harm in asking the price."

He entered the shop and was approached by a grizzled old man in a black alpaca smoking cap set rakishly over his jet black eyes.

"Well, my son?" he grinned.

"I would like to examine a trinket in your window—the little topaz cat," said Roger.

Roger held it in his hand and marveled at the delicacy of workmanship that had carved from a bit of topaz half an inch long a perfect likeness of a sitting cat. There was a tiny hole bored through the humped back of the animal, in which was inserted a small ring. The topaz cat might have been used as a charm.

"What is the price?" asked Roger.

"Whatever any one can afford to give is the price of the topaz cat," returned the old man sleekly.

Roger stared at him in surprise.

"Isn't that rather unusual in your business?" he asked dryly.

The other shrugged his shoulders.

"May be, but it is so in this particular instance. I may not set a price on the little trinket. Whatever you can afford to give is the price of the topaz cat," he repeated, with a confident glance at Roger's well dressed person.

The young man turned the trinket over in his hand and hesitated. What was the use of his offering $2 for the little jewel? It was probably worth much more, and the shopkeeper would laugh at such a paltry offer.

"I can afford to give only $2 for it," he said reluctantly. "But I want it. Will you take that?"

The old man looked at him from under grizzled brows.

"It is yours, sir," he said with simple dignity.

Roger was still dazed as he walked out of the shop with the topaz cat tucked away in his waistcoat pocket.

"I WOULD LIKE TO EXAMINE A TRINKET IN YOUR WINDOW," SAID ROGER.

There was only one solution to the mystery—the topaz was probably a good imitation of a genuine stone. It would be easy to ascertain the truth of this suspicion.

In a Fifth avenue jewelry shop they examined the topaz cat and told Roger its real value—about $50, the dapper clerk said with a keen glance at Roger as he spoke.

When Roger Holden left the shop he did not know that one of the jewelry firm's detectives shadowed him to his modest boarding place and that the man carefully noted the street and number of the house before fading away in the early autumn twilight.

That evening Roger gave the topaz cat to Dorothy Williams. In the bleak parlor of the boarding house which she called "home" while working and waiting for her marriage with Roger, Dorothy received the birthday gift with unalloyed pleasure.

"But, dear, you must have spent a lot of money for it," she objected as she slipped it on her watch chain where the topaz cat caught the rays of light and gave them back in a golden shower.

Roger confessed his adventure of the afternoon, and the two marveled at the peculiar circumstances of the case—the odd behavior of the dealer in antiques and the surprising value of the trinket as appraised by the jewelry salesman.

Dorothy was dressed for the theater, and presently the two set forth, quite unconscious that they were followed from the house to the theater.

As they were leaving the playhouse a man touched Roger on the arm.

"Come with me, sir," he said in a low tone. "I will explain what I wish with you in a very few words."

"But," objected Roger, "can't you wait? I have a lady with me"—

"It is necessary that the lady should be present also," said the other in a tone of authority.

"Do you mind, dear?" asked Roger of his fiancee.

"Certainly not, Roger. Let us go with him by all means and see what he wants," said Dorothy in her quick decisive manner.

The man led the way to a nearby drug store and placed a chair for Dorothy and another for her companion.

"You are Mr. Roger Holden?" asked the man quietly.

"Yes."

"You bought a topaz from Moses, the antique dealer, this afternoon?"

Roger was surprised, but he nodded an affirmative.

"In connection with this topaz I am about to ask you if you will not call at a certain address this evening—with the lady, who I see wears the jewel on her chain."

"Why all this concern over a paltry topaz cat?" demanded Roger impatiently.

"It is of immense importance to my client," returned the stranger.

"And the name of your client is?"

The man leaned forward and whispered a name that was so well known throughout the world that Roger and his sweetheart stared incredulously. "But," he added, "my client prefers to be known as 'Mr. Brathwait.' Now, Mr. Holden, will you go and do a great service to a grief stricken old man?"

"If your credentials are satisfactory," was Roger's cautious reply.

Mr. Brathwait's private secretary, for such he proved to be, produced documents that satisfactorily established his identity, and without further demur Roger and Dorothy entered a taxicab with Mr. Linn and were driven to a certain address on Fifth avenue.

Although it was on the stroke of midnight when they entered the great mansion, the windows were brilliantly lighted, and they were evidently expected, for the man servant who admitted them conducted them at once to a handsome library on the second floor.

"If you will sit down I will summon Mr. Brathwait," said Linn pleasantly as he left the room.

The two young people so unexpectedly occupying comfortable chairs in the library of the great magnate looked at each other with rueful smiles.

"I am afraid that you are about to lose your topaz cat," remarked Roger.

"Who knows!" nodded Dorothy wisely. "Perhaps the topaz cat has brought us good luck, Roger!"

Before Roger could make answer the door slowly opened and there entered a tall, dignified old man whose lean form was clad in a faded silk dressing gown.

"You will pardon my appearance," he said in a deep voice, "but I am recovering from a serious illness, and this is my first venture out of my own room for several weeks."

Roger placed a chair for Mr. Brathwait, who sat down rather heavily. He possessed a gentle, refined face, cleanly shaven, but emaciated from long illness. His snowy hair hung over the collar of his dressing gown.

"I am greatly indebted to you for coming to me at this late hour," began Mr. Brathwait in a very tired voice, "but I learned today that the topaz cat had come into your possession, and I knew that I must get it again at once before it was lost from sight.

"I suppose you are wondering, Mr. Holden, how I knew that you had bought the topaz cat. Well, my jewelers knew that I was searching for it, and as soon as you showed it to one of their salesmen he placed a detective on your track, and your movements this afternoon were easily learned. He followed you to the theater and pointed you out to my private secretary, who met you and brought you here."

"Is it stolen property?" asked Roger, with an unpleasant tightening of the heart.

"In a way—yes." A pained smile curved the old man's lips. "It was taken from my cabinet by one who is very dear to me. Out of revenge, because I refused to countenance his dissipated habits by advancing him more money, he stole the topaz cat and sold it to Professor Dinkwalz of Berlin, who is my bitter rival in the acquisition of rarely cut antique gems. The topaz cat was found in the coffin of an Egyptian princess, and to me—or Professor Dinkwalz—it is worth a fortune.

"Professor Dinkwalz, although informed that the stone was stolen property, refused to part with it. I believe him to be an honest man in every regard save that he loses all principle when his hobby is at stake.

"Awhile ago I received a message from my—from the one who stole from me, and he told me that he had stolen the topaz cat back from Dinkwalz and left money in its place, the very sum the professor had paid for it. And he was bringing the cat back to me. He was broken, repentant, eager to begin life anew. The ship that he engaged passage on was lost at sea, and one who was saved in the few boats that withstood the gale was intrusted with the topaz cat and a letter to be given to me.

"The messenger sent me the letter when he reached land, and he told me that my—that he who had sent it had died a hero's death, but the messenger kept the topaz cat. He succumbed to greed and sold it and then disappeared. I have searched for it ever since. The young lady has it now—so Mr. Linn tells me."

Dorothy detached the topaz cat from her chain and, stepping forward, laid it in Mr. Brathwait's palm.

"I am happy that we can restore it to you," she said gently.

Mr. Brathwait smiled down at the little jewel in his hand.

"And you give it to me freely, without knowledge or hope of reward?" he asked sharply.

Roger arose and stood beside his sweetheart.

"That is a quite unnecessary question, Mr. Brathwait," he said stiffly. "I purchased the trinket for Dorothy's birthday, and I paid only $2 for it. We are very glad to be the means of restoring it to you. Come, Dorothy; it is very late."

"Not so fast!" cried Mr. Brathwait, with a fine smile curving his thin lips. He touched a button near his desk, and the private secretary appeared at once.

"Please find a copy of the Herald and show Mr. Holden the advertisement I inserted for the topaz cat," he requested.

Mr. Linn went to a drawer and brought a newspaper which he showed to Roger and Dorothy. There, under

"SO IT IS STOLEN PROPERTY?" ASKED ROGER.

date of six months before, they read Mr. Brathwait's skillfully worded advertisement for the return of the topaz cat. "Large reward and no questions asked," it said.

"Through Moses, the antique dealer, I have bought seven cats, all of which were alleged to have been the original topaz cat. The seven were cut from yellow glass and had been skillfully manufactured for the purpose of cheating me. The topaz cat is described in many works on Egypt and in my own monograph on Egyptian gem carving, so it was comparatively easy for a skilled artisan to copy it in every detail save the one that actually identifies it. Moses undoubtedly thought he was getting rid of another fake when he handled this one; but, young man, it happens that you have found the genuine gem. The identification mark is here, imperceptible to any eye but my own." Mr. Brathwait laid down the powerful magnifying glass with which he had been studying the topaz cat and leaned back in his chair.

"Mr. Linn will arrange for you to have the reward, Mr. Holden, and I hope it will bring you as much happiness as money may in this world." The millionaire smiled bitterly as he arose and shook hands with his visitors. "Thank you for coming Mr. Holden—and Miss Williams—am I right in congratulating you both?"

Dorothy blushed and thanked him prettily, and when they were alone with the secretary that dark eyed young man extended a friendly hand to Roger.

"Let me congratulate you on gaining the reward," he said heartily. "If you will give me your full name, Mr. Holden, I will make out the check now."

Roger did not even glance at the check as he folded it away in his pocketbook.

"I feel like thirty cents taking this for doing a perfectly square thing by a poor old man," he said.

"Look at the check and perhaps you won't feel like thirty cents," smiled Linn kindly.

Roger looked and gasped. Dorothy looked and gasped and almost fainted from excitement, and it took all of Linn's persuasion to make the young couple believe that the $5,000 written on the check was in return for the tiny topaz cat.

At last they went dizzily home, and Dorothy planned to give up her clerical position at once and prepare for the coming wedding, and they both agreed that the very next Sunday they would go out and look for a home that they might call their very own.

But up in the front chamber of a Fifth avenue mansion there sat a world weary old man, who clutched to his heart the tiny topaz cat which had brought luck to two people that night.

Ralph Braithwait did not care for the cat any more save for one thing—it's only value lay in the fact that it was his last message from a scapegrace who had died a hero's death.

FOOD SUPERSTITIONS.

Dyak Warriors Won't Eat Deer For Fear of Becoming Timid.

In rural Germany one still meets with a superstition that he who eats during a thunderstorm will be struck by lightning. Abstaining from food during an eclipse is common among savages; also a belief that in eating the flesh of any animal one absorbs that animal's characteristics. Thus an Indian tribe highly prizes tigers' flesh as food for men, but forbids women to eat it lest it make them too aggressive.

In the Kongo women are forbidden to eat birds of prey on the same principle, but are encouraged to eat frogs, which the men on no account ever touch. In the Caroline islands blackbirds are a favorite dish with women, but men must not eat them, because if one did and afterward climbed a cocoa tree he would surely fall to the ground and be killed.

Among the Dyaks warriors must not eat venison because it would make them as timid as the deer. Fowls and eggs are forbidden to women of a Bantu tribe because on eating either a woman would certainly fly into the brush and never again be seen. Again, the flesh of many animals is forbidden because the animals themselves—for example, swine—are disagreeable to the eye or have untidy habits.—Exchange.

GRIPPED BY A LION

Livingstone's Fearful Ordeal and His Narrow Escape.

A BATTLE WITH A MANEATER.

The Wounded and Maddened Monster, In a Paroxysm of Dying Rage, Caught the Explorer In His Jaws and Shook Him as a Terrier Would a Rat.

David Livingstone, the famous African explorer and missionary, once had a singular encounter with a wounded lion that almost put an end to the explorer's remarkable career before it had fairly begun. But the story must be unfamiliar to many persons who have never read Dr. Livingstone's books. The adventure occurred while he was living among the Bakatlas, not far from the present town of Mafeking. This account is from his own narrative:

The people of Mabotsa were troubled by lions, which leaped into the cattle pens by night and destroyed their milk and draft animals. They even attacked the herds boldly by daylight, and although several expeditions against the wild beasts were planned the people had not the courage to carry them through successfully.

It is well known that if one in a troop of lions is killed the others leave that part of the country. I therefore went out with the people to help them destroy one of the marauders. We found the animals on a small hill covered with trees. The men formed round it in a circle and gradually closed up. Being below on the plain with a native schoolmaster named Mabalwe, I saw one of the lions sitting on a piece of rock. Mabalwe fired at him, and the ball hit the rock. The lion bit at the spot as a dog does at a stick or stone thrown at him, and then, leaping away, broke through the circle and escaped. The Bakatlas ought to have speared him in his attempt to get out, but they were afraid.

When the circle was reformed we saw two other lions in it, but dared not fire lest we should shoot some of the people. The beasts burst through the line, and as it was evident the men could not face their foes we turned back toward the village.

In going round the end of the hill I saw a lion sitting on a piece of rock, about thirty yards off, with a little bush in front of him. I took good aim at him through the bush and fired both barrels.

The men called out, "He is shot, he is shot!" Others cried, "Let us go to him!"

I saw the lion's tail erect in anger and said, "Stop a little till I load again!" I was in the act of ramming down the bullets when I heard a shout, and, looking half round, I saw the lion in the act of springing at me.

He caught me by the shoulder, and we both came to the ground together. Growling horribly, he shook me as a terrier dog does a rat. The shock produced a stupor like that felt by a mouse in the grip of the cat. It caused a sort of dreaminess, in which there was no sense of pain or feeling of terror, although I was quite conscious of what was happening. This placidity is probably produced in all animals killed by the carnivora, and, if so, it is a merciful provision of the Creator for lessening the pain of death.

As he had one paw on the back of my head, I turned round to relieve myself of the weight and saw his eyes directed to Mabalwe, who was aiming at him from a distance of ten or fifteen yards. The gun missed fire in both barrels. The animal immediately left me to attack him and bit his thigh. Another man, whose life I had saved after he had been tossed by a buffalo, tried to spear the lion, upon which he turned from Mabalwe, and seized this fresh foe by the shoulder.

At that moment the bullets the beast had received took effect, and he fell down dead. The whole was the work of a few moments and must have been his paroxysm of dying rage. In order to take out the charm from him the Bakatlas on the following day made a huge bonfire over the carcass, which was declared to be the largest ever seen.

Besides crunching the bone into splinters, eleven of his teeth had penetrated the upper part of my arm. The bite of a lion resembles a gunshot wound. It is generally followed by a great deal of sloughing and discharge, and ever afterward pains are felt periodically in the part. I had on a tartan jacket, which I believe wiped off the virus from the teeth that pierced the flesh, for my two companions in the affray have both suffered from the usual pains, while I have escaped with only the inconvenience of a false joint in my limb.

A Limit to His Power.

A curious historical anecdote is handed down from the time of James I. James, being in want of £20,000, applied to the corporation for a loan. The corporation refused. The king insisted. "But, sire, you cannot compel us," said the lord mayor. "No," exclaimed James, "but I'll ruin you and the city forever. I'll remove my courts of law, my court itself and my parliament to Winchester or to Oxford and make a desert of Westminster, and then think what will become of you!" "May it please your majesty," replied the lord mayor, "you are at liberty to remove yourself and your courts to wherever you please; but, sire, there will always be one consolation to the merchants of London—your majesty cannot take the Thames along with you."

True Kindergarten Spirit.

Master Harold had returned after his first day at a kindergarten school, says the Manchester Guardian.

"Well, Harold," said a friend of his mother who was calling, "how do you like school? I suppose you are the youngest there."

"Oh, no," said Harold indignantly, drawing himself to his full height and throwing out his chest—"oh, no! Some of our chaps come in perambulators."