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The SEVEN DIALS MYSTERY

By Agatha Christie

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INSTALMENT XII.

She was somewhat surprised to see her niece, but accorded her a frigid cheek which Bundle duly kissed.

"This is quite an unexpected pleasure, Eileen," she said coldly.

"We've only just got back, Aunt Marcia."

"I know. How is your father? Much as usual?"

Her tone conveyed disparagement. She had a poor opinion of Alastair Edward Brent, ninth Marquis of Caterham. She would have called, had she known the term, a "poor fish."

"Father is very well. He's down at Chimneys."

"Indeed. You know, Eileen, I never approved of the letting of Chimneys. The place is, in many ways, a historical monument. It should not be cheapened."

"It must have been wonderful in Uncle Henry's day," said Bundle with a slight sigh.

"Henry realized his responsibilities," said Henry's widow.

Her Political View

"Think of the persons who stayed there," went on Bundle ecstatistically. "All the principal statesmen of Europe.

Lady Caterham sighed.

"I can truly say that history has been made there more than once," she observed. "If only your father——"

She shook her head sadly.

"Politics bore father," said Bundle, "and yet they are about the most fascinating study there is, I should say. Especially if one knows about them from the inside."

She made this extravagently untruthful statement of her feelings without even a blush. Her aunt looked at her with some surprise.

"I am pleased to hear you say so," she said. "I always imagined, Eileen, that you cared for nothing but this modern pursuit of pleasure."

"I used to," said Bundle.

"It is true that you are still very young," said Lady Caterham thoughtfully. "But with your advantages, and if you were to marry suitably, you might be one of the leading political hostesses of the day."

Bundle felt slightly alarmed. For a moment she feared that her aunt might produce a suitable husband straight away.

"But I feel such a fool," said Bundle. "I mean I know so little."

"That can easily be remedied," said Lady Caterham briskly. "I have any amount of literature I can lend you."

"Thank you, Aunt Marcia," said Bundle, and proceeded hastily to her second line of attack.

"I wondered if you knew Mrs. Macatta, Aunt Marcia?"

"Certainly I know her. A most estimable woman with a brilliant brain. I may say that as a general rule I do not hold with women standing for Parliament. They can make their influence felt in a more womanly fashion." She paused, doubtless to recall the womanly way in which she had forced a reluctant husband into the political arena and the marvelous success which had crowned his and her efforts. "But still times change. And the work Mrs. Macatta is doing is of truly national importance, and of the utmost value to all women. It is, I think I may say, true womanly work. You must certainly meet Mrs. Macatta."

Bundle gave a rather dismal sigh.

"She is going to be at a house party at George Lomax' next week. He asked father, who, of course, won't go, but he never thought of asking me. Thinks I'm too much of an idiot, I suppose."

Bundle "Grown Up"

It occurred to Lady Caterham that her niece was really wonderfully improved. Had she, perhaps, had an unfortunate love affair? An unfortunate love affair, in Lady Caterham's opinion, was often highly beneficial to young girls. It made them take life seriously.

"I don't suppose George Lomax realizes for a moment that you have—shall we say, grown up? Eileen, dear," she said. "I must have a few words with him."

"He doesn't like me," said Bundle. "I know he won't ask me."

"Nonsense," said Lady Caterham. "I shall make a point of it. I knew George Lomax when he was so high." She indicated a quite impossible height. "He will be only too pleased to do me a favor. And he will be sure to see for himself that it is vitally important that the present-day young girls of our own class should take an intelligent interest in the welfare of their country."

Bundle nearly said "Hear, hear!" but checked herself.

"I will find you some literature now," said Lady Caterham, rising.

She called in a piercing voice, "Miss Connor."

A very neat secretary with a frightened expression came running. Lady Caterham gave her various directions. Presently Bundle was driving back to Brook Street with an armful of the driest looking literature imaginable.

Her next proceeding was to ring up Jimmy Thesiger. His first words were full of triumph.

"I've managed it," he said. "Had a lot of trouble with Bill, though. He'd got it into his thick head that I should be a lamb among the wolves. But I made him see sense at last. I've got a lot of thingummy bobs now and I'm studying them. You know, blue books and white papers. Deadly dull—but one must do the thing properly. Have you ever heard of the Santa Fe boundary dispute?"

"Never," said Bundle.

"Well, I'm taking special pains with that. It went on for years and was very complicated. I'm making it my subject. Nowadays one has to specialize."

"I've got a lot of the same sort of things," said Bundle. "Aunt Marcia gave them to me."

"Aunt who?"

"Aunt Marcia—father's sister-in-law. She's very political. In fact, she's going to get me invited to George's party."

Unblushing Liars

"No?" Oh, I say, that will be splendid." There was a pause, and then Jimmy said:

"I say, I don't think we'd better tell Loraine that—eh?"

"Perhaps not."

"You see, she mayn't like being out of it. And she really must be kept out of it."

"Yes."

"I mean you can't let a girl like that run into danger!"

Bundle reflected that Mr. Thesiger was slightly deficient in tact. The prospect of her running into danger did not seem to give him any qualms whatever.

"Have you gone away?" asked Jimmy.

"No, I was only thinking."

"I see. I say, are you going to the inquest tomorrow?"

"Yes; are you?"

"Yes. By the way, it's in the evening papers. But tucked away in a corner. Funny—I should think they'd have made rather a splash about it."

"Yes— so should I."

"Well," said Jimmy, "I must be getting on with my task. I've just got to where Bolivia sent us a note."

"I suppose I must get on with my little lot," said Bundle. "Are you going to swot at it all the evening?"

"I think so. Are you?"

"Oh probably. Good night."

They were both liars of the most unblushing order. Jimmy Thesiger knew perfectly well that he was taking Loraine Wade out to dinner.

As for Bundle, no sooner had she rung off than she attired herself in various nondescript garments belonging, as a matter of fact, to her maid. And having donned them, she sallied out on foot, deliberating whether bus or tube would be the best route by which to reach the Seven Dials Club.

THE SEVEN DIALS CLUB

Bundle reached 14 Hunstanton Street about 6 p.m. At that hour, as she rightly judged, the Seven Dials Club was a dead spot. Bundle's aim was a simple one. She intended to get hold of the ex-footman, Alfred. She was convinced that, once she got hold of him, the rest would be easy. Bundle had a simple autocratic method of dealing with retainers. It seldom failed, and she saw no reason why it should fail now.

The only thing of which she was not certain was how many people inhabited the club premises. Naturally, she wished to disclose her presence to as few people as possible.

Whilst she was hesitating as to her best line of attack the problem was solved for her in a singularly easy fashion. The door of No. 14 opened and Alfred himself came out.

"Good afternoon, Alfred," said Bundle pleasantly.

Alfred jumped.

"Oh! good afternoon, your ladyship. I—I didn't recognize your ladyship for a moment."

Paying a tribute in her own mind to her maid's clothing, Bundle proceeded to business.

"I want a few words with you, Alfred. Where shall we go?"

"Well—really, my lady—I don't know—it's not what you might call a nice part round here—I don't know, I'm sure—"

Bundle cut his short.

"Who's in the club?"

"No one at present, my lady."

"Then we'll go in there."

Alfred produced a key and opened the door. Bundle passed in. Alfred, troubled and sheepish, followed her. Bundle sat down and looked straight at the uncomfortable Alfred.

Against the Law

"I suppose you know," she said crisply, "that what you're doing here is dead against the law?"

Alfred shifted uncomfortably from one foot to the other.

"It's true as we've been raided twice," he admitted. "But nothing compromising was found, owing to the neatness of Mr. Mosgorovsky's arrangements."

"I'm not talking of the gambling only," said Bundle. "There's more than that—probably a great deal more than you know. I'm going to ask you a direct question, Alfred, and I should like the truth please. How much were you paid for leaving Chimneys?"

Alfred looked twice round the cornice, as thought seeking for inspirations, swallowed three or four times and then took the inevitable course of a weak will opposed to a strong one.

"It was this way, your ladyship. Mr. Mosgorovsky, he come with a party to visit Chimneys on one of the show days.

"Mr. Tredwell, he was indisposed like—an ingrowing toe-nail as a matter of fact—so it fell to me to show the parties over. At the end of the tour, Mr. Mosgorovsky, he says behind the rest, and after giving me something handsome, he falls into conversation."

"Yes," said Bundle encouragingly.

"And the long and the short of it was," said Alfred, with a sudden acceleration of his narrative, "that he offers me a hundred pound down to leave that instant minute and to look after this here club. He wanted someone as was used to the best families—to give the place a tone, as he put it. And, well, it seemed flying in the face of providence to refuse—let alone that the wages I get here are just three times what they were as second footman."

"A hundred pounds," said Bundle. "That's a very large sum, Alfred. Did they say anything about who was to fill your place at Chimneys?"

"I demurred a bit, my lady, about leaving at once. As I pointed out, it wasn't usual and might cause inconvenience. But Mr. Mosgorovsky he knew of a young chap—been in good service and ready to come any minute. So I mentioned his name to Mr. Tredwell and everything was settled pleasant like."

(To Be Continued Tomorrow)

Public Gathering Last Night in Interests of Cyril Orme Was Large

(continued from page two)

been planned by the 1927 council and had been underestimated by that body. There were also the power negotiations about which he had heard no complaint. The council had also pressed for continuation of the highway, the Peace River outlet and had even taken up the matter of having the C.P.R. come in here. He criticized Ex-Mayor Newton for casting a reflection upon the honesty and integrity of the men who might be elected aldermen in 1930 by urging that the money bylaws not be passed until the complexion of that council became known. He did not think it was consistent for Ald. Prudhomme to say in one breath that the city was on the verge of a receivership and in the next declare his belief that great things were in store for Prince Rupert.

J. H. Pillsbury

J. H. Pillsbury stated that he was running to the council because he believed his experience and knowledge of local conditions might be of some use to the city. He considered the Peace River outlet and the highway the two most important matters before the city at this time. He would do all in his power to further these projects. He had never before sought public office but he had been identified with matters of public interest. If the voters approved of his record, he asked for their support at the polls.

James Black

James Black explained that he was seeking election as an alderman, first, because he felt that labor was entitled to representation on the council equal with that of other interests, and, second, because, as a resident of 20 years standing, he had been closely identified with civic affairs. The workers, particularly through the fishing industry, had been the backbone of this city and, whatever future developments might be would continue to be. As for himself, he believed that he had acquired a fair knowledge of civic government and of the present and future needs of the city. If elected, he would endeavor to merit the confidence and respect of the citizens as a whole.

Approves Bylaws

Before bringing the meeting to a close, Mayor McMordie said that he desired to briefly explain the situation pertaining to the two money bylaws that were being offered for ratification. As for the sewer bylaw, the overexpenditure had already been incurred and would have to be met. He thought the people were entitled to the completion of the McClymont Park road and bridge. He advised the ratepayers that it would be to their best interests to pass the bylaws and spread the cost over a period of years.

WERKHOVEN A COMPOSER

The following is from a Honolulu paper:

"That Fred van Werkhoven's work is appreciated in his native land is proven by the publication in an important magazine devoted to art, poetry and music in Holland, called 'De Nieuwe Gids,' of several of his songs. There are two exquisite little things, setting to music the words of the Canadian poetess, Pauline Johnson. The poems are taken from her book, 'Flint and Feather,' and are called 'The Cedar Trees have sung their Vesper Hymn' and 'Goodbye.' Other settings are Longfellow's 'Into the Silent Land,' and Eugene Field's 'Dream, Dream, Dream'.

"To have one's compositions accepted by Breitkopf and Hartel, is something of an honor in itself, for they publish only the best. Recently the New York house of this firm has published two short pieces of van Werkhoven's for the piano, a Gavotte and Minuet in ancient style; and a critic says that 'he has accomplished the difficult task of writing in classic style without becoming reminiscent of some of the classics'."

T. W. Falconer, well known Alice Arm merchant, was a passenger aboard the Catala this morning going through to Vancouver where he will spend a vacation with Mrs. Falconer and family, who are in residence in the south.

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